

MUSIC

Torn troubadour

Chris Knight brings his blue-collar everyman talent to Cameo

By TOM NETHERLAND FOR BRISTOL NOW

Kentuckian Chris Knight left a coal mining job for life on the road as an introspective musician. Stardom never appealed to him.

Knight, who broke through in 1998 with such heartbreakers as “House and 90 Acres,” brands as a blue-collar everyman. He brings about 90 acres of talent to The Cameo Theater in Bristol, Virginia, on Saturday, Aug. 27.

“I’ve always been torn between wanting to work eight hours a day, five days a week, doing that and doing music,” said Knight from his home in Kentucky. “But this is what I do. Even 20 years ago, I didn’t want to be an irresponsible musician. I wanted to approach it as a job.”

Signed in ’98 to Decca Records, Knight formed a solid fanbase by steering into paths paved by the likes of such unrepentant troubadours as Steve Earle. His songs, raw as a gaping-wide bundle of nerves, addressed real-life issues facing Americans in peril.

Tunes including “Framed,” which addressed the justice system, resonated then and now.

“I’ve not experienced jail, but I wrote ‘Framed,’” Knight said. “People wonder if my songs are true, and I say every damn one of them is true.”

Take “House and 90 Acres.” It’s about a man who loses it all, his home and farm and 90 acres, on the auction block. Hard times hit hard.

In the song, the father of two kids loses his wife to a salesman. His house and land are about to be auctioned off.

“Born and raised has been damn easy,” Knight sings, “but lately living’s hard.” Its relevance remains as timely today as it was 25 years ago.

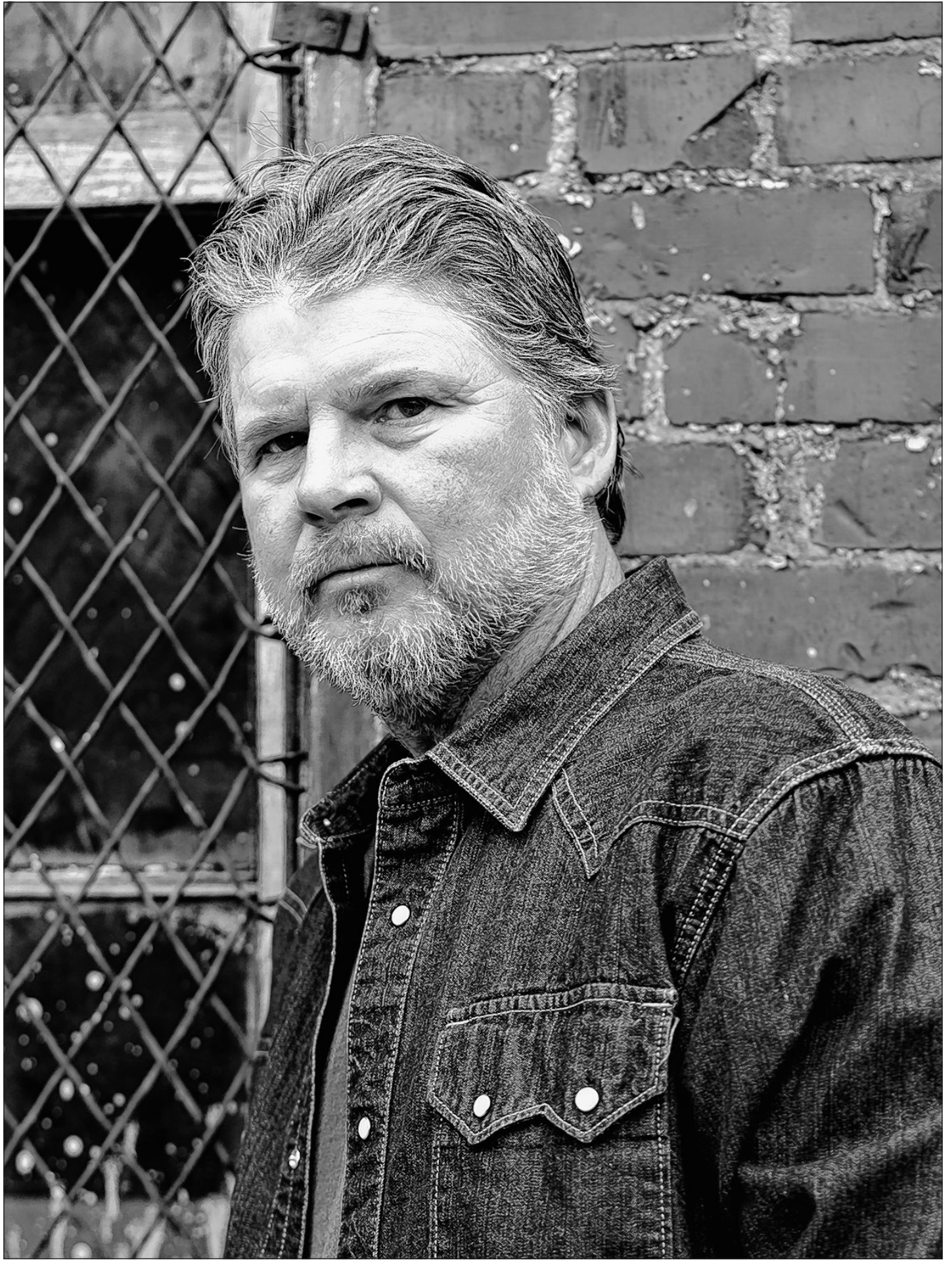
“That does attach me to a place,” Knight said. “I grew up way out in the country, surrounded by farmland. I live out in the woods now. That’s the main thing in that song. My granddaddy was a moonshiner and a sharecropper.”

Knight’s seen people’s livelihoods and homes under the hammer of the auction block.

“I have,” he said.

If You Go

Who: Chris Knight and Jason Eady
When: Saturday, Aug. 27, at 8 p.m.
Where: The Cameo Theater, 703 State St., Bristol, Virginia
Admission: \$42.50-\$52.50
For more information: (276) 296-1234
Web, audio and video: www.chrisknight.net



CONTRIBUTED/RAY KENNEDY

Chris Knight will perform Saturday at The Cameo Theater in Bristol, Virginia, on Saturday, Aug. 27, at 8 p.m.

Kitty Wells’ career-making take on ‘honky-tonk angels’ debuted 70 years ago

Ellen Muriel Deason was born in Nashville, Tennessee, 103 years ago this week.

OK, you don’t know that name.

But as Kitty Wells, Ellen Deason became known as the queen of country music.

Wells ticketed her stardom with 1952’s declarative “It Wasn’t God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels.” Rare for the time, Wells’ statement song was in direct contradiction to Hank Thompson’s “The Wild Side of Life,” which had hit months earlier. “It Wasn’t God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels” was Wells’ answer to Thompson.

Thompson recorded “The Wild Side of Life” at Capitol Records Studios on Melrose Avenue in Los Angeles on Dec. 11, 1951. Ken Nelson, who later produced country visionaries Buck Owens and Merle Haggard, produced the record.

Written by Arlie Carter, Thompson’s “The Wild Side of Life” debuted on Billboard’s country singles chart on March 15, 1952. It hit No. 1 on May 10, 1952, and stayed there for a stunning 15 weeks. Not even the mighty Hank Williams and his “Jambalaya (On the Bayou),” which rang the top spot for 14 weeks in 1952, could topple Thompson’s bombshell.

Thompson’s honky-tonk ballad became the No. 1 country record of 1952.

In the second verse of his song, Thompson’s silken-smooth baritone sang the fateful lines “I didn’t know God made honky-tonk angels.” He followed that with “I might have



Tom Netherland

the only one that ever loved you and went back to the wild side of life.”

As the years passed, such fellow country singers, including Bill Anderson and Willie Nelson, recorded “The Wild Side of Life.” Why, even rock’s Rod Stewart recorded it, as well as blues rocker Bonnie Tyler.

Back in Nashville circa 1952, 33-year-old wife and mother Wells heard it and was not pleased. She did not like the song’s message one bit.

“I just thought it was a bad message about women,” Wells said during an interview we did on her bus in November 2000. “So I wanted to say that it was not God who made honky-tonk angels.”

A few weeks later during an interview with Hank Thompson, he responded with a chuckle when I asked him about Wells’ response to his monster record.

“She’s a wonderful lady,” said Thompson. “We both did all right with those records.”

known you’d never make a wife.” And then he punctuated it with “You gave up



BILLBOARD

Kitty Wells, born Ellen Deason, was the first solo female singer to take the No. 1 spot for a country song, a feminist reply to Hank Thompson’s lyrics on ‘honky-tonk angels.’

J.D. Miller wrote “It Wasn’t God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels.” Wells recorded the song for Decca Records at famed Castle Studios in Nashville on May 3, 1952.

A mournful steel guitar begins and establishes the song’s mood.

“As I sit here tonight, the jukebox playing the tune about the wild side of life,” a mournfully voiced Wells sings, who then calls out Thompson directly. “As I listen to the words you are saying, it brings memories when I was a trusting wife.”

Men, Wells sings, are the ones charmed by the lurid glow of neon-flashing

honky-tonk dance halls — and by insinuation, sinful women. She blames men for the wicked tangle.

“It wasn’t God who made honky-tonk angels,” Wells sings in measured yet firm tones, “as you said in the words of your song. Too many times married men think they’re still single, that has caused many a good girl to go wrong.”

Released on June 23, 1952, after some initial reluctance by radio stations to play the song, Wells’ career-making answer song debuted on Billboard’s country singles chart on July 19, 1952. It dislodged Eddy Arnold’s “A Full Time Job” to snag

the No. 1 spot on Aug. 23, 1952, where it stayed for six weeks.

Wells became a star. Her signature fluttering voice, which sounds like a friendly neighbor’s wave of hello even on the saddest of songs, attracted the nation.

“When I was a child,” Wells said, “I would go to the WSM studios to watch the Grand Ole Opry.”

Those were the early days of the Opry. Back then, the show was strictly a live radio program. They broadcast from the National Life and Accident Insurance Co. building in downtown Nashville. There was a small window through which visitors could see the Opry as it broadcast over the airwaves of radio station 650 AM WSM.

“I can still remember seeing Uncle Dave Macon sitting in his chair while he was singing on the Opry,” Wells said. “He had his banjo, and he would get really excited and rear back in his chair. He seemed to be having so much fun.”

That inspired young Ellen Deason. As a teenager, she sang with her sisters as the Deason Sisters. They had their own radio show, a 15-minute program on Nashville’s WSIX in 1936.

She married fellow aspiring country singer Johnnie Wright in 1937. Wright earned country fame when he paired as a duo with Jack Anglin as Johnnie & Jack. Their band, the Tennessee Mountain Boys, often backed Wells on her early records from the 1940s.

Eventually, Wells and Johnnie & Jack became members of the prestigious Grand Ole Opry. Before establishment of the Country Music Hall of Fame, the Opry was without question the pinnacle of a country singer’s career. But Wells, who enjoyed decades of hits that followed “It Wasn’t God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels,” quickly eclipsed her husband’s fame.

But that record was more than a mere hit.

Wells became the first solo woman to record a No. 1 country song. She was the only woman to hit No. 1 with a country song in 1952. In those days, women simply did not enjoy nearly as much notice as their male counterparts in country music.

Maybelle and Sara Carter were among the women who made it possible for Wells. She, in turn, opened the doors for women including Goldie Hill and Jean Shepard. Most profoundly, Wells directly influenced country lightning bolts Patsy Cline and Loretta Lynn, and each accomplished country music legendary status.

Wells was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1976. She toured with her husband well into her 80s. She was a mother and grandmother and beloved by all who met the kindly and remarkably humble legend.

But it was Wells’ signature song “It Wasn’t God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels” that catapulted her dreams and journey to country music immortality, which happened 70 years ago.

MUSIC

Hank Williams never got out of this world alive



Midnight church bells rang as a cool breeze blew through a blue-black sky.

It looked and felt like the lyrics of a Hank Williams song.

And there I stood, after night one of the 21st Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion, in the tracks made by Hank Williams during his last ride.



Tom Netherland

On the night of Dec. 31, 1952, college freshman Charles Carr drove Williams' baby blue Cadillac. Williams lay in the back seat. Covered by his dark blue overcoat, country music's most important singer and songwriter had a show to perform the next night in Canton, Ohio.

Carr arrived in Montgomery, Alabama, on Dec. 30 to drive for Williams. They made it to Birmingham, Alabama, and stayed the night at the Redmont Hotel, which is still open today. Carr stated later that Williams sang a few songs in the car, and they chatted a bit about Williams' recent No. 1 single "Jambalaya (On the Bayou)."

Williams left a load of personal issues back in Montgomery. He was married to Billie Jean but had impregnated a woman by the name of Bobbie Jett a couple of months earlier. Before he left town for dates in Charleston, West Virginia, and Canton, Ohio, he prepaid the hospital bill and left \$50 for additional expenses in the aftermath.

All the while, and according to Williams' ex-wife Audrey — the inspiration for many, if not most, of his songs — he wanted her back. She apparently never wavered in the years after his death and up to her own passing in 1975 that he wanted to reconcile with her. She said that Williams had planned to visit her in Nashville on Jan. 3, 1953.

Who knows for certain?

Williams' eerily prophetic "I'll Never Get Out of This World Alive," debuted on Billboard's country singles chart on Dec. 20, 1952. It struck



Hank Williams performs with wife Audrey Sheppard Williams in the 1950s. The pair divorced on July 10, 1952.

No. 1 on Jan. 24, 1953.

The song was not Williams' last officially recorded song. During two hours in the early afternoon of Sept. 23, 1952, Williams embarked on arguably the greatest recording session of his life. He recorded four songs, all of them classics. In order, he made history with "I Could Never Be Ashamed of You," "Your Cheatin' Heart," "Kaw-Liga" and finally "Take These Chains from My Heart."

"I'll Never Get Out of This World Alive" was recorded on June 13, 1952, at Castle Studio in Nashville. Williams wrote the song with his producer, Fred Rose. More likely than not, Rose, who often served as a song doctor for Williams, cleaned up and perhaps streamlined the song's lyrics.

The song employs at least a modicum of artistic license. For

example, Williams was not, as the song notes, walking around in "these shabby shoes I'm wearin' all the time." However, his hook line "no matter how I struggle and strive, I'll never get out of this world alive" certainly bears the imprint of accurate.

Williams recorded "I'll Never Get Out of This World Alive" during the final month of his marriage with Audrey. They divorced for the second and final time on July 10, 1952. Perhaps not so inconsequently, he wrote and recorded the intensely melancholic "You Win Again" the very next day.

In "You Win Again," Williams calls out a woman for cheating on him. It's delivered with a tear-drop on his tongue. Few songs in the vast American canon of recorded music excellence can touch Williams' performance when he sings the line "just

trusting you was my great sin," and then he virtually howls through "what can I do" followed by his forlorn resignation with a final utterance of "you win again."

Even 70 years later, Williams' "You Win Again" stings as heart-breaking.

So does "I'll Never Get Out of This World Alive." Whereas "You Win Again" drapes a darkened cloak of sadness throughout its music and lyrics as led by Williams' aching voice, "I'll Never Get Out of This World Alive" features disarmingly free-as-the-breeze music.

It's a song about a man who simply cannot win. In that, it accompanies "You Win Again." He sings that "I had lots of luck, but it's all been bad." Later he notes that "everything's agin' me, and it's got me down," then later, "nothin's ever gonna be

alright nohow."

Don Helms' steel guitar break sounds almost happy. Same with Jerry Rivers' fiddle. Even Williams' voice, perhaps the finest in music's history at communicating heartbreak, doesn't sound so sad.

And yet the song's final point comes in the title of the song, "I'll Never Get Out of This World Alive." It doesn't bear obvious stamps of loneliness or heartbreak. Yet they're there, as witnessed by Williams' constant refrain of being on the wrong side of whatever coin that's been flipped. His life has turned upside down.

Chet Atkins played guitar on the song. Years later, he noted that Williams was "not jivin'." He added that Williams "was so weak that all he could do was just sing a few lines and then just fall in the chair."

And so it was on the night Hank Williams came to town. Absolutely no one knows for certain as to whether he was dead or alive upon arrival in Bristol. Charles Carr behind the wheel, they stopped on Piedmont Avenue. It was late in the night. That's known. He also took upon a relief driver who was a bus driver. That's known, too.

I spoke with Carr several times about that fateful last night. His account of the night changed multiple times through the years. At no time did he ever indicate to me that Williams stepped out of the car or even spoke a word while they were in Bristol. Who knows? Maybe Williams died before Bristol. Maybe not.

But Williams did ride through Bristol on that fateful last night of his life. Dead or alive, he left behind tracks that are as vivid today as they were back then.

We're less than four months from the 70th anniversary of Hank Williams' death. Though but 29, country's music's Hillbilly Shakespeare left a trail that extends from Alabama to Bristol, one that remains for people to drive along, walk in and listen to music in downtown Bristol.

Simply turn from State Street onto Piedmont Avenue. With Quaker Steak & Lube on your right and Burger Bar on your left, you're in the lane through which the great Hank Williams rode.

He never got out of this world alive. But Williams lives on through the songs he made, the people he touches and his last ride through Bristol.

Asheville's Hearts Gone South to play two local shows

By TOM NETHERLAND
FOR BRISTOL NOW

Country tornado Tricia Tripp leads Hearts Gone South with whirlwinds of hardcore country.

They're twangy. Their songs relate tales of heartaches and high times.

Side up to Hearts Gone South during two local shows. First, catch them on Friday, Sept. 23, at the bucolic Abingdon Vineyards in Abingdon. Then look for them on Friday, Oct. 7, at the dazzling Bristol Casino.

"The casino, there's a constant flow of people going in and out. It's such a bustling place," Tripp said.

Abingdon Vineyards is wildly different from the casino. People do not bustle in and hustle out. Patrons, oftentimes with a soothing glass of wine in hand, stay engaged with whoever is onstage.

"We've been playing there for a couple of years," Tripp said. "It's a gorgeous setting."

Trees in abundance in the foreground, lazy rolling water in the background.

"It's really fun," Tripp said. "And there's all kinds of people there."

As demonstrated on such songs as "Ghosts" and "Queen of the Curveball," Hearts Gone South features a sound built around Tripp's large voice. She embodies Tanya Tucker's spunkiness, Loretta Lynn's matter-of-factness and Dolly Parton's bubbly nature.

"We're all about laying

If You Go

FIRST SHOW

Who: Hearts Gone South
When: Friday, Sept. 23, at 6 p.m.

Where: Abingdon Vineyards, 20530 Alvarado Road, Abingdon
Admission: \$5
For more information: (276) 623-1255
Web and video: www.facebook.com/hearts-gonesouth/

SECOND SHOW

When: Friday, Oct. 7, at 7 p.m.

Where: Bristol Casino, 500 Gateway City Highway, Bristol, Virginia
Admission: Free
For more information: (276) 696-3660

all the cards on the table," Tripp said. "Our songs are not all of the same sound. You're going to get some sad, heartbreak songs."

They even have at least one murder ballad. Firmly within the tradition of country music, such murder ballads as "Knoxville Girl" and "Miller's Cave" connect country to its deepest past.

"It's not recorded yet, but I do have a murder ballad," Tripp said. "We haven't worked it up yet. It doesn't have a title. It sounds like nothing I've ever done, but I love it."

While their murder ballad waits, a batch of new songs are on the way



Tricia Tripp leads country band Hearts Gone South, which will play two local shows in the coming weeks.

from Hearts Gone South. Be sure to look for some music videos to roll out during the next month.

"The new album is coming out in November," Tripp said. "We will be releasing singles beginning in mid-October. I'm really proud of this album."

Written during the pandemic, the album, "Mercy of Your Tide," numbers as the third album from Hearts Gone South.

"And I'm already working on our fourth

album," Tripp said. "We have close to four hours of originals we can play live, but we do a few covers, too."

Members of the band Hearts Gone South define as road warriors. They've embarked on tours that have taken them across the country and even to Alaska.

"I'm our biggest advocate," she said. "We give 110% every single time because we love what we do. As much as we give, we

get that right back from the audience."

Tripp's Hearts Gone South includes Bristol's JP Parsons on lead guitar and Scott Thomas on drums. They're tightknit. Hear them play, and one can detect a band whose sound is taut and camaraderie obvious.

"Hearts Gone South, we're a band. We're a family," Tripp said. "It might be for two people. It might be for 2,000 people. We're dedicated to our

craft, dedicated to our songs. We want to leave it all for the people we play for. We want to leave it all onstage."

And when the shows hit certain highs, it can be akin to a magic carpet ride. Not all of them reach such heights, but when they do, Tripp and her bandmates walk a little taller and smile a little broader.

"It's complete euphoria," Tripp said. "Performing and playing music, it's my lifeblood."

MUSIC

Johnny Cash's 'Committed to Parkview' offers look at mental health in country music



By TOM NETHERLAND
FOR BRISTOL NOW

One can hear Johnny Cash's guitarist, Bob Wootton, play the opening notes in distinctive Luther Perkins style. Then Cash begins with the lines: "There's a man across the hall, who sits starin' at the floor, and he thinks he's Hank Williams, hear him singin' through the door."

As he sings, Cash's baritone gradually elevates for dramatic effect.

"There's a girl in 202, who stops by to visit me, and she talks about her songs, and the star that she should be," Cash sings. "There's a lot of real fine talent, stayin' in or passin' through, and for one thing or another, they're committed to Parkview."

Johnny Cash wrote "Committed to Parkview." Told from the perspective of a patient in a mental hospital, it's a matter-of-fact examination of a mental facility in Nashville that housed famous people and otherwise for one reason or another.

Included on his album from 1976, "One Piece at a Time," that original recording's nearly chipper music belied the song's somber content. Nearly a decade later, Cash revived "Committed to Parkview" with buddies Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings and Kris Kristofferson as The Highwaymen on their first album, 1985's "Highwayman."

Yet neither recording prompted more than a ripple of response.

Then came Porter Wagoner. Long since established as a legendary singer and songwriter in country music history, Marty Stuart decided to produce what became Wagoner's final album. Backed by Stuart and his band, the Fabulous Superlatives, "Wagonmaster" debuted to spectacular acclaim in the summer of 2007.

The eighth song on "Wagonmaster" was Johnny Cash's "Committed to Parkview." It contains a spoken word preface by Wagoner.

"You know, I've been a guest in a lot of great places in my lifetime," Wagoner said. "New York City and Carnegie Hall, Grand Ole Opry, Nashville, Tennessee. West Plains, Missouri, my hometown. And I was committed to



SONY MUSIC

Johnny Cash's 1976 'Committed to Parkview' put listeners inside a mental institution, but it may have made the biggest splash when real former Parkview patient Porter Wagoner recorded the song in 2007.

Parkview. Hope I never have to go there again."

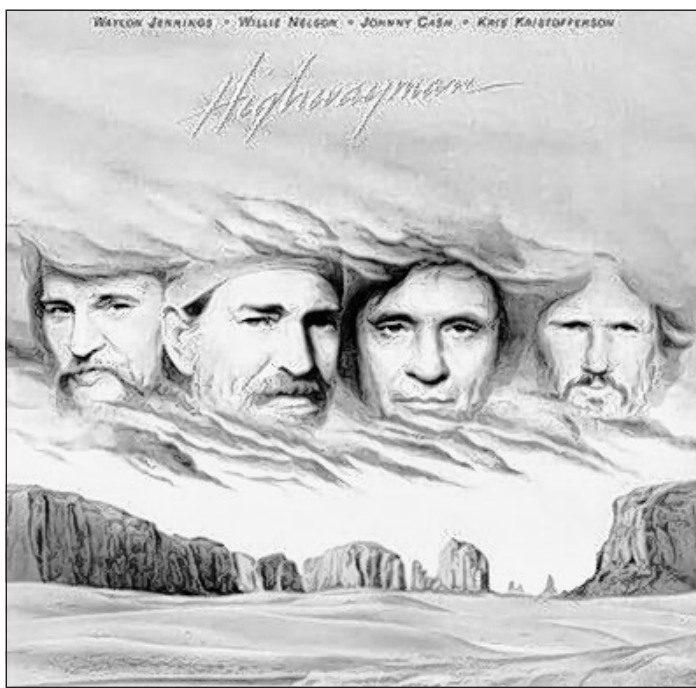
Wagoner's rendition of "Committed to Parkview" begins quietly. Nearly reverently, he sings the opening lines but with a quietly strummed guitar lining the background. Wagoner's voice is harrowing to the point he sounds like he's still at Parkview, with no idea what will become of him now.

Dial back to 1965 — Wagoner's personal life was in turmoil. His career was taking off. July of '65 welcomed one of the hot country singer's signature songs, "Green, Green Grass of Home." He would sing that song on stages around the world and nearly every Saturday night on the Grand Ole Opry stage for the rest of his life.

He followed with a song written by Freddie Hart, "Skid Row Joe." Hart, a middling country star, wrote "Skid Row Joe" about a fellow country singer who had fallen to the perils of drink and hard times. His family had forsaken him, and he hopes for reconciliation in the tune.

Coincidentally, Wagoner moved out of his home and from his family on Christmas Eve 1965, one day before "Skid Row Joe" debuted on Billboard's top 40 country singles chart. One week later, Wagoner ended up as a resident of Nashville's Parkview Hospital.

Perhaps surprisingly, Cash Box Magazine reported it in its Jan. 22, 1966, edition:



SUZU RECORDS

'Committed to Parkview' appeared on The Highwaymen's debut album in 1985, 'Highwayman.'

"A 'road-weary' Porter Wagoner is recuperating satisfactorily on a strict diet of food and sleep in Nashville's Parkview Hospital, according to his personal agent Larry Moeller," Cash Box reported. "Wagoner entered the hospital under his own willpower Jan. 4 to be hospitalized for approximately 10 days prior to beginning his 1966 series of personal appearances. Last year, the Grand Ole Opry artist made more than 230 personal appearances around the United States."

Cash's "Committed to Parkview" appeared almost exactly 10 years after Wagoner's visit to Parkview. No names are named. However, rumors of some of the hospital's famous visitors have persisted for decades. We know

of Wagoner's Parkview past simply because it was revealed at the time.

Yet the song and Cash and Wagoner's experiences highlight an absolute fact about country music and its makers: Mental health — as surely as cheating songs, drinking songs and songs about Mama — has a strong place within the mighty canon of country music.

So, when Cash wrote of "a real fine country singer, who has tried and tried and tried" in "Committed to Parkview," it's not obvious who he might be referencing. "They just brought him in this morning, an attempted suicide."

Real or not? Perhaps only Johnny Cash knew. Or maybe the singer is still with us and remains silent about the time he was committed to Parkview.

Vaden Landers brings rockabilly to Bristol

By TOM NETHERLAND
FOR BRISTOL NOW

BRISTOL, Tenn. — Bootheels land on a wooden plank porch. A flashing neon sign casts a long shadow as a man steps inside, quickly onstage.

Hat tilted to one side, guitar huddled close to his denim-clad chest, the fellow appears to have leapt straight out of Hank Williams' "Honky Tonkin'."

He's not Hank Williams, but Vaden Landers is a throwback to country eras of the past. And he's set to perform Thursday, Sept. 29, at Spence Flagg's Cascade Draft House in Bristol, Tennessee.

"I'm not trying to imitate," said Landers of Bristol, Tennessee. "I don't sound anything like Hank Williams. I take old favorites of country music and write new music, new melodies. It's tipping the cap."

For the better part of a decade, Landers' musical explorations centered largely around music of the 1920s, '30s, '40s and '50s. He's dived into Jimmie Rodgers' yodeling, Roy Acuff's string-band country and even Lonnie Donegan's skiffle music.

"The sound I try to go for includes Starday's George Jones, early to mid-'50s B-side country music," Landers said. "I love that nasally country music."

Landers also embraces American cowboy music and its makers. His latest album, "Old-Time Tales & Favorites," draws from such catalogs as Slim Whitman and Eddy Arnold.

"I've always wanted to do a cowboy and guitar album," Landers said. "I just did that album to tip my cap to my favorite cowboy folk singers."

Nods to cowboy composers and singers including Jimmy Driftwood, Tex Owens and Rex Allen turn up throughout Landers' eight-song album. Among the record's highlights, sheer brilliance eases from Landers' eloquent rendering of "Cowpoke."

"That song is something else," he said. "I believe in it. It's kind of eerie. It's great, and, man, there wasn't anything that Elton Britt, Slim Whitman and Eddy Arnold couldn't sing. It's a very hard song to sing. You've got to have a certain range to sing that one."

Much akin to Jerry Lee Lewis, Landers' shape-shifting musical styles

If You Go

Who: Vaden Landers
When: Thursday, Sept. 29, at 7 p.m.
Where: The Cascade Draft House, 828 State St., Bristol, Tenn.
Admission: Free
Info: 423-573-1185 or www.facebook.com/vadenlandersofficial/



CONTRIBUTED

Vaden Landers will dip into rockabilly and country tunes at an upcoming show at The Cascade Draft House.

leave him difficult to pigeonhole. He sings country, except for when he doesn't. He may sing rockabilly. But then he'll delve into a vintage cowboy song, or some smoky jazz, or perhaps even a banjo-plowing hill-billy number.

"Rockabilly, yeah, I can't help it," Landers said. "My grandpa was an Elvis impersonator. I'd ride around with my grandmother, and she loves Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins. Country's all wholesome and all. Rockabilly was like, slick back your hair and whoop somebody's ass."

Then there are Landers' Thursday night shows at The Cascade Draft House. They're different. He leads a free-for-all band that includes Bailey George and Jessica Stiles.

"We started a little band just for that gig," Landers said. "It's old-time country, fiddle tunes, sometimes rockabilly. It's fun, really. It's pre-war blues, skiffle and country music. Bailey sings 'Rock Island Line' every week."

Landers' weeks typically pass by while on the road, reminiscent of the days he would hobo around the country, guitar in hand and songs in mind. He's now settled in Bristol, where he has lived since earlier this year.

Yet, on the road, or here at home in the Birthplace of Country Music, Landers plays music you'll never hear on top 40 pop or country radio. Like a lyric from a Leonard Cohen song, he's a bird alone on a wire all his own.

"We play stuff," Landers said, "you can't hear every day."

Twin Creeks Stringband to bring old-time tradition to Carter Fold

By MARINA WATERS
BRISTOL NOW EDITOR

HILTONS, Va. — Old-time music has been handed down to the members of the Twin Creeks Stringband like a well-used fiddle or a broken-in guitar.

The band will bring its traditional music sound to the Carter Family Fold stage in Hiltons, Virginia, on Saturday, Oct. 1, at 7:30 p.m. as part of the historic music venue's 2022 season of shows.

The group hails from Southwest Virginia, where the band's hard-driving bluegrass and country music has been handed down to them for generations. The group is derived from the old-time bluegrass band the Dry Hill Draggers, which got its start in the '70s in the Dryhill and Ferrum areas of Franklin County, Virginia.

The band was originally named the Dry Hill Draggers after the band

fell behind, and musician Edgar Crowe said he was going to call the group the Dry Hill Draggers due to their sluggish timing. After its official start in 1981, the band produced more than seven albums, performed at the World's Fair in Knoxville in 1982 and at festivals and venues around the country.

The Dry Hill Draggers band was established by Jimmy Boyd and his brother, Billy Boyd, along with band members Carl Scott, Murphy Shively and Bob Trammel. Today, the Twin Creeks Stringband includes Jared Boyd — grandson of Jimmy Boyd and a third-generation clawhammer banjo player — his father Stacy Boyd on the upright bass, Chris Prillaman on fiddle and Jason Hambrick on guitar and vocals.

The Carter Family Memorial Music Center is a nonprofit organization featuring weekly old-time



CARTER FAMILY FOLD

The Twin Creeks Stringband will soon perform at the Carter Family Fold on Saturday, Oct. 1, at 7:30 p.m.

country and folk music at 3449 AP Carter Highway in Hiltons, Virginia. The

venue honors the legendary Carter Family (A.P. Carter, Sara Carter

and Maybelle Carter), whose first recordings in the 1927 Bristol Sessions

are credited with giving birth to the commercial country music industry.

Rita Forrester is the executive director of the Fold and the 2022 Outstanding Virginian Award winner for her work. Her mother, Janette, promised her father, A.P. Carter, on his deathbed that she would keep genuine country/folk/gospel music alive for future generations. The family also upholds A.P. Carter's wishes to keep all performances at the Fold "morally upright" and to allow disabled guests to enjoy the show free of charge.

Carter Family Fold shows are held on Saturday nights. Doors open at 6 p.m., and music begins at 7:30 p.m. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$2 for children 6 to 11, and children 6 and under get in free. For more information, go to <http://www.carterfamily-fold.org>.