

In it for life

Cody Jinks speaks candidly about his new Rounder CD *Lifers* and his recent health scare
by Jan Sikes, photos by Rock Williams

TEXAS CHART-TOPPER, CODY JINKS, recently signed with one of the most historic Americana/Bluegrass record labels of this century. Rounder Records has been at the forefront of the record industry for decades, and they released Jinks' newest album, *Lifers*, on July 27.

In an exclusive interview, Jinks spoke candidly about the partnership.

"I signed a one-record deal with Rounder for *Lifers*," Jinks said. "But, The Sonic Ranch will still be my recording home, as it has been in the past."

It would be safe to say that the new album, *Lifers*, is Jinks' best so far. The songs are eclectic as are the writers. The album cover, designed by Zachary Nelson, is unusual and expressive. Behind every album, there is a story.

Jinks said, "This is a concept record in the way that there's a bunch of what I call lifers that helped me create this work. The people on here I've either toured with a great deal over the years or I'm just a really big fan of their work. I had the idea to make a record like this several years ago, probably around the time I was doing the Adobe Sessions. But, at that point, I hadn't met all those wonderful people yet. So, it took me a few more years, and I was finally able to nail to down a bunch of great writers that I am extremely proud to have worked with."

From the songwriting aspect, this album is as unique and varied as are the writers. Collaborating with Austin Allsup, John Morningstar, Eric Alan, Tennessee Jet, Paul Cauthen, Ward Davis, Billy Don Burns, and Scott Copeland, brought fresh lyrics and diverse melodies.

"Must Be the Whiskey," is the first single release from this album.

"It was good for us to release an upbeat song as the first single," Jinks said. "I wrote it with Josh Morningstar. But really, Josh wrote most of it, and I just added my two-cents on a couple of different things. He's an amazing songwriter. I met him a few years ago in Maryland at a festival. He was on the bill, and I loved what he did. I saw him in Nashville last year at an acoustic show. It was the first time I'd ever heard him as just a storyteller, and I was blown away. So, when I started putting this record together, I contacted him. It has some heavy lyric content, but it moves really well, so you kinda get the best of both worlds. And, it's easy to get the crowd in on it with the hook line pretty quick."

"Lifers"

THE TITLE TRACK, "LIFERS," struck me as introspective and Jinks confirmed that thought.

"Lifers" was written by me and Tennessee Jet around my kitchen table sometime last year. We wrote two that day, and I can't remember if that was the first or second one, but both of the songs we wrote that day... I cut "Lifers," and he cut the other one," Jinks recalled. "We wanted to have a story about all kinds of lifers. People are called lifers in the music business, but they're called lifers in other jobs too. We wanted to pay tribute to those people. In the second verse, the hero is a heroine. We don't talk as much about women in the music business grinding it out, so we turned that verse into one



He is scheduled to headline the first ever Loud and Heavy Fest is coming to Fort Worth on August 18, at Panther Island Pavilion: Cody Jinks

about the female version of what we do. I know so many badass women in this business that are better and work harder than a lot of males I know."

I would have to agree with that statement. After all, even in these modern times, it is still basically a man's world.

I always find a song that stands out above the rest on any album I hear, and on *Lifers*, for me, it was "Somewhere Between I Love You and I'm Leavin'."

"That's a song I've been trying to write my entire life. I wrote it with Whitey Morgan in a motel room in South Carolina," said Jinks. "Whitey and I used to go on hellaciously long runs and toured this country together a number of times. We've gotten to know each other on a deep level. We're not just friends; we're brothers. It is one of my favorites on the record and my favorite to play live. It's very subjective and could fit a lot of people who have to make their living on the road away from their families. Or it could be about people nearing the end of a relationship."

Another song on the album that I wanted to know more about was "Can't Quit Enough."

Jinks laughed. "That's a really upbeat song poking fun at our bad habits. Ward Davis and I wrote that one together. I had this idea to write one of those Merle or Willie songs like "Reasons to Quit." You're going to do it regardless. Reasons to quit don't out number all the reasons why. So, the line in "Can't Quit Enough," is talking about 'well, I just might as well not quit anything because I've got to quit all that stuff and I'm gonna keep doing that and this, so I can't quit enough.' It's a fun song and a fun song to play live."

It's safe to say this new release from Cody Jinks is a crowd-pleaser from start to finish.

"The Ode"

Normally, someone doesn't have an "Ode" written about them until they've died. But, Deryl Dodd has written and released "The Ode to Cody Jinks." What are Cody's thoughts about this tribute?

"I think that on a more serious note, I should have written an Ode to Deryl Dodd years ago. That guy's been one of my best friends in this business for about fifteen years.

"Whenever I was really, really struggling years ago, I'd get on the phone and call him, and he'd talk me off the ledge. Knowing his past and what he's gone through, I figured what I was going through at the time couldn't be as bad as spinal encephalitis. Having said that, I love him dearly.

"He's been messing with that song for years and finally finished it. The first time I heard it, I laughed out loud at the number one flogger line at the end. It is also way cool that he had Courtney Patton come in and sing it with him. She is one of those badass women in this business I was talking about earlier. My dad called me last week, and he was laughing because "Must Be the Whiskey" and "Ode to Cody Jinks" were sitting in the number 20 and 21 spots on the Texas Music Chart."

Health scare

The big question everyone is asking due to the recent health scare Jinks experienced is, "What is going on with your health?"

Jinks said, "Thankfully, it turned out to be a bigger scare than a health issue. I was doing a show in Omaha, "and I made it through about seven or eight songs, and they finally had to help me off the stage. It was like the world was turning upside down. But, they ran all the tests and determined I have vertigo. So, I'm having to learn ways to adjust and manage it. Come to find out, I have a light sensitivity issue, so we've toned that down. I've always banged my head around when I perform, and rapid head movements will trigger vertigo, so, I can't do that anymore, and little adjustments like turning down my ear monitors like a notch help keep it all in check. We're trying to incorporate more deli trays than bottles of whiskey."

The first ever Loud and Heavy Fest is coming to Fort Worth on August 18, at Panther Island Pavilion.

"We, as in my manger and I, were talking about where I would be playing around the DFW area in the summertime because we always hit the hometown market in the summer. I don't know whose idea it was — mine or his — but we had a "light bulb" moment. We decided to create a festival, booked Panther Island that will hold 15,000 and started contacting bands to play. It will be on August 18, which is my thirty-eighth birthday," so it's like throwing a huge birthday party and inviting a whole bunch of people. We have such a killer eclectic lineup. We're going to have a bunch of metal-heads out there and a bunch country music fans, but most people don't realize that we're all kinda' cut from the same cloth."

With a lineup that consists of Whiskey Myers, Corrosion of Conformity, Whitey Morgan, Colter Wall, Nikki Lane, Sunny Sweeney, The Sword, Paul Cauthen, Ward Davis and Cody Jinks, there will be something for everyone. For more info about the Loud and Heavy Fest, and to purchase advance tickets, visit the website at: loudandheavyfest.com

What's next for Cody Jinks? He is already putting together new songs for another album project, but he'll be touring extensively throughout 2018 promoting *Lifers*. For a complete tour schedule, visit codyjinks.com

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