

Making a full orbit

Terry McBride is back on the road with radio tour plugging his latest release, "Boots Off."
by Mary Jane Farmer, Scene In Town

TERRY MCBRIDE IS MEETING HIMSELF coming in the music business. He's made a full orbit, from performing, to backing other musicians, to writing songs for others, to traveling with the stars, and now he's back to performing again. And it's only taken a few decades.

You might know him, for now, as the McBride who led the multi-award winning band McBride & The Ride to several nationally charted hits. Soon, you will know him as a kick-in-the-pants country singer with more hits under his belt. One song of his 2017 EP, *Hotels & Highways*, has now been released to radio nationwide and McBride will soon be making a radio tour to plug that release, "Boots Off."

McBride, or TMc as he signs himself on emails and text messages, is Texan, born and raised the son of traveling rockabilly musician Dale McBride. He got his first guitar at the age of 9, learned how to play it pretty quickly, and spent his high school summers traveling with his dad. "My grandparents practically raised me, and I was pretty good for them. I hated those conversations with Dad over the phone, when I'd done something wrong. Maybe it was the fear of losing my car. I'd rather him just

go ahead and give me a spanking. I looked up to him. He was an exceptionally gifted musician. He'd write it all out — old school," Terry said. "Typing was the only class I did well in high school. I was so into music, not into school at all."

Austin influences

HE THEN MOVED TO AUSTIN where he met and played with the early powerhouse Texas musicians including Joe Ely, Jack Ingram, Rosie Flores, Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Johnny Duncan, and such. Mostly, TMc said, he learned from so much from Bill Carter, who fronted the band Bill Carter & The Blame, and Bill's wife, Ruth.

"It was wonderful hanging with them. Me and Bill wrote together, and made little demos. It was those demos that landed me a job in Nashville later on," McBride said. "They (Bill and Ruth) were a true songwriting

team. They are still around the Austin area."

He had a two-year stint as bass player with Delbert McClinton, and learned even more about the business from that experience. But, he said, he didn't want to remain a bass player forever. It was time to grow and he and his young family moved to Nashville. That was 1989.

McBride & The Ride rode it hard until their final breakup in 2002. By then, Terry was concentrating on his songwriting. Successfully. So far, George Strait, Reba, Alan Jackson, Kenny Rogers, John Anderson and space won't allow naming all of them who have recorded his songs. Except — to mention that Brooks & Dunn have recorded more than 25 McBride-penned songs.

And except — to say that he backed Casey James (featured in the December issue of *Buddy Magazine*) on his new blues album. "I introduced Casey to (producer) Tom (Hambridge) and they hit it off. Tom produced the record for Casey." And inside the CD is this quote from Casey, "(Thanks to) Terry McBride for bringing humor and levity to a tough business, and for introducing me to Tom."

"This business works by connecting one dot to another," McBride said.

Co-writing

EVERY SONGWRITER CAN have a bit of a different writing style, and TMc considers it to his advantage to co-write. His first co-writer in Nashville was perhaps the best one to learn from, the Einstein of songwriters.

"I wrote with Guy Clark, he was literally my very first co-writer. Guy being from Texas, and me, too, they naturally paired us up. I had grown up on Jerry Jeff Walker, so I knew Guy. I had a couple of good ideas for songs and, really, well — he welcomed me in.

"We visited. I tried to gemy him at first, and he didn't like that. We wrote, he took that song home; we finished it and then went to his place. I never wrote any masterpiece song with him, and that's OK. He was doing me a favor."

Jon Pardi recently recorded a song that McBride co-wrote 11 years ago, he said, with Ronnie Dunn and Chris Stapleton. "I met Chris early on (in Nashville) and just loved him. And I travelled for 13 years with Ronnie." He co-wrote "Every Scar Has a Story" with Cody Johnson and went out on the road with him for a while, too, he said. He's also



He enjoys working in both music capitals — Austin and Nashville: Terry McBride

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—TERRY MCBRIDE

toured with Wynonna.

"I've certainly tried to learn, over time, and be dedicated to the craft (of songwriting.) I'm open to suggestions and listen to things. I don't spend as much time on bad ideas as I did when younger."

His performance style has changed since McBride & The Ride, where he was lead vocalist and bass player. "With The Ride, everything had to have some sort of a harmony aspect. As we got more successful, the arrangements grew. I'm just a country guy and a singer in a country band. It sounds country. It will always move forward in a country path."

Terry has been behind the scenes for the last 20-25 years, not performing. "The company where I write are very encourag-

ing and my music life seems to be snowballing. I signed with the Buddy Lee agency. I'm hitting the road with the promotions team for 'Boots Off.' He'll be in Abilene, Texas, for a radio interview in late February, then moving northward from there.

Having worked in both music capitals — Austin and Nashville — the question "Is it harder in Austin than Nashville?" begged an answer. McBride answered simply, "Nashville has so many more live music venues and opportunities, but those gigs don't pay a lot. That's a problem."

And with McBride & The Ride, he played the bigger venues packed with full crowds. Now, he's starting over again. When asked which of the two crowds — big or small — he enjoyed the most, Terry said,

"These days, I can tell you I enjoy all of it, even more so than I did back then. In the early days it just exploded, but it's like a blur. Now, it doesn't matter to me. I played a smaller show in Watertown, N.Y.; it was only about 100 people.

"They all sang along, and it was humbling in a way. I'm embracing this whole intimate crowd thing, and look forward to making the most of it. You've got to be real open-minded to be where I am at now. I want to write good, I want to play good, and that requires a lot of practice. The best practice is in front of people."

And summing it up the EP, the release of "Boots Off," and the radio tour, he realizes that, "Airplay, getting a song on the radio, is a home run."