

Relive the Good Ole Days

Tracy Lawrence and friends come together, both on his new CD and for his radio show
by Jan Sikes

THE EIGHTIES WERE KIND TO TRACY Lawrence as he rocketed up the charts with hit after hit song. By every standard of measurement, Tracy is a shining success story. With thirteen million albums sold, eighteen No. 1 singles and twenty-two songs on the Billboard Top 10 charts, multiple CMA and ACM awards and even a Grammy nomination, one might think he would be kicking back and taking it easy. Not so. In fact, he's working as hard or harder today than he did two decades ago.

He's recently released a new album entitled *Good Ole Days* which celebrates the country legend's indelible mark on country traditionalism with an album of duets. He's paired a selection of his biggest hits with some of country music's contemporary superstars and newcomers, as well as an old friend or two who share the legend spotlight with him.

When asked why remake these hits and invite peers to sing with him, he had this to say,

"The whole concept of the album was born from wanting to reconnect with some of the younger generation and see if we could make music together. I just felt like there were so many contemporary artists that had been influenced by this music that were great country singers. And when we started putting feelers out to see what kind of interest we had, the first two artists I got in touch with were Tim McGraw and Jason Aldean. So, once I got those marquee players on board, and they picked their songs, everything else just fell in line. It was exciting to see how it all happened. I had met Justin Moore previously at an awards show. I sat with him and his wife and got to know him a

little bit, and he was enthusiastic about doing this project, as was Easton Corbin. Chris Young and I met back in Arlington, Texas, years ago when he was in the house band at a club called Cowboys. There was so much history there, and we got to share some memories and some laughs, and we documented all that stuff, which was cool."

Here are the songs and artists who join Tracy Lawrence on *Good Ole Days*.

"Time Marches On" (Tim McGraw), "Sticks and Stones" (Luke Bryan), "Alibis" (Justin Moore), "Can't Break it to my Heart" (Jason Aldean), "Good Ole Days" (Big and Rich and Brad Arnold), "If the World Had a Front Porch" (Luke Combs), "Texas Tornado" (Dustin Lynch), "Stars Over Texas" (Kellie Pickler), "If The Good Die Young" (Chris Young), "Paint Me a Birmingham" (Easton Corbin), and "Finally Home" (Craig Morgan).

So, you can see how these timeless songs are given new life with collaborations from some of the finest singers in Nashville.

New tour

WHEN ASKED ABOUT TOURING with these artists, Tracy replied, "I know that I have some



He created a syndicated radio show, and received a ACMA Radio Award nomination for *Honky-Tonkin'* with Tracy Lawrence: Tracy Lawrence

shows with Jason Aldean next year and I'm sure Tim and I will share the stage at a couple of big festivals next year. We all do. We all work together. We're working on another tour concept right now, but you never know what's going to happen next year. There's so many options on the table right now that we're trying to assess. But, I don't know exactly which path we are going to go down right now. My year is filling up fast, and we are way ahead of where we normally are at this point."

I think it's safe to say that Tracy Lawrence will be coming to a town near you at some point in 2018 and could include a surprise guest or two.

Radio show

SPEAKING OF GUESTS, TRACY has diversified his job even more by creating a syndicated radio show, *Honky-Tonkin'* with Tracy Lawrence.

Tracy explained, "Honky-Tonkin'" is aired in eighty-four cities so far, scattered around the United States. It is not on satellite; we broadcast on mainstream AM and FM radio stations. It is a three-hour weekly show, and it has far exceeded my expectations of what I thought this thing would do. We are expecting to go over one hundred stations as we move into next year, which

makes us major contenders in the syndication world. But, I'm just enjoying it. I talk with my peers and play music. I got to sit down and visit with Gene Watson for an hour last week, and it was absolutely amazing. I've been a Gene Watson fan forever. We talked music and where songs came from and what was going on in his life. We talked about "Urban Cowboy" and how it impacted his career, and the things that were going on during that time period.

"I cannot tell you how much that meant to me and he's just one example. I've visited with Kenny Rogers, Reba McEntire, T.G. Sheppard, T. Graham Brown and Diffie and Chestnut and on and on. It is truly an honor to bring country music fans in and let them learn more about their, and my country music heroes."

Tracy Lawrence received a nomination for National On-Air Personality of the Year at the Academy of Country Music Radio Awards in Las Vegas in 2017 for his show.

You can tune in to the *Honky-Tonkin'* with Tracy Lawrence show locally on KTFW-FM 92.1 every Sunday from 8 am to 11 am.

Because of the different direction mainstream country music has taken today, I had to ask Tracy his thoughts on the

departure from tradition.

He gave a gracious and open answer. "Personally, a lot of it is not my style. There is some of it that I like, but you've got to understand that I listen to all kinds of music. I listen to Lady Gaga, Michael Buble, Britney Spears, Merle Haggard, Johnny Cash...I'm all over the place with it. But, as far as today's country music, I believe it could be wrapped in a little bit tighter because it's confusing to the listeners. I do think what we're starting to see now is a traditional language starting to come back in.

"There are some extremely well-written songs, and some good artists that have amazing vocal skills who are starting to find their place on the country music charts again and I'm proud to see that.

"We've had these ebbs and flows over the years. I get disheartened when I hear a lot of weak songs on the radio...when the bar drops, and we just accept mediocrity and praise mediocrity as being great. As long as everybody's doing great work, pushing the envelope and it's good quality, I don't have a problem with the evolution or direction of country music. But when everything gets weak and turns into fluff, that's when I have a problem with it."

Mission: Possible

NOT ONLY IS TRACY LAWRENCE a country superstar and radio host, he is well-known for his kind heart and generosity. For the past twelve years, he's been directly involved in an event he created that raises money for, and feeds the homeless. Last year, the Middle Tennessee Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals honored Lawrence as its Philanthropist of the Year for his work on behalf of Nashville Rescue Mission. Funds raised by the singer through his annual Mission: Possible Turkey Fry and benefit concert have helped provide more than 75,000 meals to those in need. And each year it expands to more cities. This year, he raised \$150,000 for the Nashville Rescue Mission through the turkey fry and benefit concert.

Mission: Possible is near and dear to his heart, and two years ago it expanded to the Dallas area with Dallas LIFE. If you would like to donate, volunteer or be involved in this yearly event, visit dallaslivfe.org. I have interviewed a lot of artists over the years, but Tracy Lawrence provided the most gracious and open interview I've ever done. Please support this artist's new CD, *Good Ole Days*, his *Honky-Tonkin'* radio show, and Mission: Possible Turkey Fry and benefit.

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