



A UNIVERSAL MUSIC COMPANY

EASTON CORBIN BIOGRAPHY
EASTON CORBIN

Easton Corbin knew he wanted to be a country singer well before he learned how to play guitar.

"One of my earliest memories is from when I was three or four," he remembers. "I was sitting between my parents in the car and a song came on the radio—it was Mel McDaniel's 'Baby's Got Her Blue Jeans On'. I began using the gearshift as my microphone. The desire has always been there."

Born and raised in rural Gilchrist County, Fla., Easton spent much of his time on his grandparent's cattle farm after his parents divorced when he was young. "I lived a mile from the Suwannee River," he says. "I grew up fishing on it and I loved to work on the farm. Every weekend, that's where I'd be."

A member of FFA and 4-H, Easton showed cattle at the local livestock fair. Growing up in the smallest county in the state on farmland nestled between two small towns had its advantages. "It's a close community," he says. "Everybody knows everybody."

"There's no Walmart there," he says. "There was a Hardee's, but it closed. That was the only franchise fast food place in the county. Trenton has a red light; Bell has a blinking light. It's a great place."

While no one in his family played a musical instrument, music was a big part of his upbringing. "My grandparents liked to watch the Opry," Easton remembers. "We'd start Saturday night off with 'Hee Haw' and then 'Opry Backstage' and then 'Opry Live'."

It was also at his grandparent's house that he discovered a record player and his father and aunts' left-behind records in a front room. "I'd go in there and play those records for hours," he says.

When Easton was 15 years old he began taking guitar lessons from Pee Wee Melton, a local musician who had at one time played on sessions in Nashville. "He was a great mentor," Easton says. "He was a great player and a great teacher. He was a really big influence on me."

Every day when he got home from school, Easton would practice guitar for hours, sometimes until his fingers were raw, then help his grandfather around the farm.

Encouraged by Melton, Easton began playing lead guitar in a local band. "I'd always wanted to play and sing, but up until that time I never really did do it in public," he says. "We'd play school functions and parties. We were too young to play bars, but we played everything else."

An impromptu audition at a local music store led to a slot on the Suwannee River Jam, a nearby festival that attracts thousands of people and national touring acts. "It was just me and a guitar in front of a 40-acre field full of people," Easton remembers. "It was great."

Soon he was opening for other national acts when they played the area, including Janie Fricke and Mel McDaniel, the man whose song Easton had performed in the car years earlier.

After earning a business degree through the College of Agriculture at the University of Florida, Easton took two important steps. "My wife and I got married on September 2, 2006, and on October 14 we moved to Nashville," he says. "I always knew I wanted to move up here. There was never any question about it. I didn't want to wake up one day and wish I would have tried it, but I had to get my education first so I had something to fall back on."

Easton, who had been making regular trips to Nashville to perform at writer's nights, took a day job at a local Ace Hardware and his wife found a job at a doctor's office.

When a distant cousin, also a professor of music management at the University of Montana, heard Easton's music, he asked if he could send it to some of his Nashville contacts. Among those who were impressed by Easton's music was booking agent James Yelich, who asked if he could hear him play in person. Easton, eager for a shot to pursue his dream, quickly agreed.

Also at the meeting was Joe Fisher, who had recently joined Universal Music Group Nashville as Senior Director of A&R. The two men were blown away and Fisher quickly signed him to the label.

Easton, whose musical influences include George Jones, Merle Haggard, George Strait and Keith Whitley, found a kindred spirit in producer Carson Chamberlain, who years earlier had toured with Whitley as his steel guitar player and bandleader. "We really hit it off," Easton says. "I love traditional music and he does too. I knew he was the producer for me."

The two men began working in earnest. "We worked our butts off trying to find the right songs," Easton says. The result is an over-the-top album that includes cuts from Nashville's top songwriters, including Mark D. Sanders, Wynn Varble, Tony Lane and David Lee, among others.

Like his heroes Strait and Whitley, Easton is unapologetically country. His songs, while rooted in the present, call to mind simpler times when the back porch was where folks gathered to network. Steel guitars and fiddles are as much a part of his sound as his baritone drawl.

First single, "A Little More Country Than That," which was written by Rory Feek, Don Poythress and Varble, paints a picture of rural life that speaks to Easton's small town sensibilities. "Even though I didn't write it, this song identifies who I am," he says. "It shows character and that's important where I'm from. You learn to say 'yes, ma'am' and 'no, sir,' and to open the door for the ladies."

Among the songs included on the album are three Easton co-wrote with Chamberlain and Sanders during a trip to Colorado. "When I came to Nashville I realized how important it was to write songs," Easton says. "The opportunity to sit in a room with experienced songwriters and learn their craft has helped me become a better writer.

"I'm still working and developing as a writer, but I was fortunate enough to get some songs on the album," Easton says, perhaps more humble than he needs to be.

"The Way Love Looks," which Easton co-wrote with Chamberlain and Sanders, is a love song pure and simple. "It's just a fun upbeat song," Easton says. "I love the line 'when you beg and plead to go fishing with me and I have to bait your hook,' because that's what happens when I take my wife fishing."

Tony Lane, David Lee and Johnny Park wrote "Roll With It," which speaks to the important things in life like sunsets and pick-up trucks. "I love that one," Easton says. "I can imagine listening to it just floatin' down the river on the boat on a Saturday."

The tender "I Can't Love You Back," written by Chamberlain, Clint Daniels and Jeff Hyde, has a universal message of loss. "It can mean different things for different people," Easton says. "She could have died, she could have left him—people can interpret it the way they feel."

Now that his life long dream is upon him, Easton says he's ready. "I just want to make great country music," he says. "Just the opportunity to play music for a living is a great thing. I'm just thankful to have the opportunity to do what I'm doing now."