

TRACY LAWRENCE**LMG RECORDS****2011 PUBLICIY BIO**

The new Tracy Lawrence album is titled The Singer, but the collection is much more than a showcase for one of the most unforgettable voices in contemporary country music.

"I'm at a time in my life where I am about to blossom, artistically -- as an artist, as a songwriter, as a producer and all these things," says the multi-million-selling entertainer. "I'm learning how to express myself more, in many ways."

Tracy Lawrence co-wrote six of the new CD's songs. He co-produced the entire record. And perhaps most significantly, he created a striking new sound for himself. In an era when rock-influenced bombast and cluttered over production seem to dominate Nashville's country recordings, Tracy Lawrence is offering a refreshing, stripped-down, "unplugged" record that throws the spotlight on songs' lyrics and his beautifully resonant voice.

"This was such an easy record to work on," Lawrence comments. "There's something to be said for going back to being understated, taking a breath and getting back to basics."

He has been silent on disc for more than two years. Along with fellow stars John Anderson, Lorrie Morgan, Darryl Worley and a number of others, Tracy Lawrence was trapped in a contract with a label that sank.

"I thought, 'What am I going to do?' My fans need some new music. I need to get something done. So in May, we decided we were going into the studio and do an acoustic project. The album was recorded, pressed, packaged and released in four weeks, in time for my Fan Club Party at the CMA Music Festival in June.

"Originally, I just intended it to be a 'bridge' project, to have something out there while we worked on the next, full-production album. But as it started coming to life, I realized we have something special here. The fans told us how unique it was and how much they liked it. So now we've realized that we have something really refreshing in the market. I think it's something that is needed."

The Singer includes the haunting story song "Saving Savannah," as well as the tongue-in-cheek "Pills." On the relationship front, there's the heartache of "Cloud of Dust," the romance of "Tender Enough" and the enigma of "Roswell and Marilyn Monroe." The philosophical "Jealousy," the deeply painful "Heaven for Awhile" and the timely "Hard Times" are all

illustrations of Lawrence's new maturity as a songwriter. The album's title tune and debut single seems strikingly autobiographical, as does the restless "Whole Lotta Me."

Rounding out The Singer are lovely new versions of 2004's "Paint Me a Birmingham" and 2006's "Find Out Who Your Friends Are," two major hits that brought Tracy Lawrence renewed popularity in the new millennium. All 12 of the tracks collected on this extraordinary disc ring with emotional authenticity and country conviction.

"I think everybody else seems to so busy trying to be pop stars that they've forgotten what they came here for," Lawrence observes. "I didn't come here to be a pop star. I came here to be a country singer. I've been passionate about country since I was a kid. I still love it, and I'm desperately trying to hold onto it, in spite of what the marketplace says is 'fashionable.'"

Tracy Lawrence's respect for country-music tradition has made him one of his genre's cornerstone stylists. The Arkansas native burst on the scene with 1991's Platinum-selling Sticks and Stones. The album contained four massive radio hits, including its title tune. Alibis, issued in 1993, sold more than two million copies and spawned four consecutive No. 1 hits, "Alibis," "Can't Break it to My Heart," "My Second Home" and "If the Good Die Young."

"Can't Break it to My Heart" and "My Second Home" were the first hits that he co-wrote. Lawrence also had a hand in penning "If the World Had a Front Porch" (1995), "Stars Over Texas" (1996), "How a Cowgirl Says Goodbye" (1997) and "Lessons Learned" (2000).

"Back then, I had a lot of confidence issues about my songwriting," he reflects. "I got placed with tremendously talented co-writers. Working with them, I realized how inadequate I was as a songwriter. It really made me hard on myself and very critical of the material that I wrote. But it also made me want to work harder.

"Over the past three or four years, I've become much stronger at it. It took me a long time to know that a song I wrote had the caliber to stand up to anything else that was out there. I've found that as I've matured, my favorite songs to write are ones that have a moral foundation, some insight, some substance and a message."

His journey as a record producer began with 1993's "Renegades, Rebels and Rogues" from the soundtrack of the movie Maverick. His Platinum-selling 1994 CD I See it Now had three self-produced songs on it.

The Double Platinum Time Marches On (1996) and Gold-selling The Coast Is Clear (1997) each contained five tunes that the artist co-produced. Then came the 1999 all-star collection The Civil War: The Nashville Sessions, the first full album he guided.

“That was a big step for me as a producer, working with other vocalists and taking things I’d learned by working with myself and applying them to people like Trace Adkins, Travis Tritt, Deana Carter and John Berry.”

He co-produced his own Lessons Learned (2000), as well as its successors Tracy Lawrence (2001), Strong (2004), For the Love (2007), All Wrapped Up in Christmas (2007) and the Grammy Award nominated The Rock (2009). Along the way, Tracy Lawrence has picked up a number of other accolades. He was Billboard’s Top New Male Vocalist in 1992. The following year, Performance named him New Country Artist of the Year and the Academy of Country Music honored him as Top New Male Vocalist. Country Weekly gave him top awards in 1995 and 1996, and both the Country Music Association and Academy of Country Music gave him 2007 statuettes for his No. 1 smash “Find Out Who Your Friends Are.”

“In my career, I don’t really need to prove any points anymore. I don’t feel like I’m searching for anything. I just want to keep on being creative.”

The Singer is certainly proof of that. Its sounds are among the most creative in Nashville today.

“It was so refreshing for me to sing on it,” Tracy Lawrence comments. “And I think it’s going to find a home. The albums are selling as fast as I can make them. I’m very happy with it.”

The former hell raiser has found happiness in his personal life, too. His 2000 marriage to wife Becca and his devotion to their daughters Skylar, born in 2001 and Keagan, born in 2003, have matured him immensely.

In Nashville, he is famed for his massive annual turkey frying for the homeless each Thanksgiving. His golf tournament raises funds to battle breast cancer. Over the years, he has devoted his time and talent to many other causes and charities.

“I feel very content,” says Tracy Lawrence. “I feel very happy in my life, in my home and in my career. It’s a really good place to be in my life. I’m moving on, and I plan to be around for a long while.”