



Interview: Heidi Duss / Foto: Marco Duss

Interview with Guy Penrod, CMA Festival, Nashville, 12.6.10

Q: You just came out with your first solo album, can you tell me about that?

A: Yes, I had the opportunity to sing for my supper, that's how I say it, I've sang for my supper all my life. I grew up singing, went to school singing. When I got out of school, I had the opportunity to get into session work, got into artist career and traveled the world for 14 years with a Christian Group called "The Gaithers". I had the opportunity to sing in many different settings in that. But I hadn't had the opportunity to make a solo record. Now it felt like the right time, I love country music, I love to wrap truth in story songs and communicate that way. I like the instrumentation of country music. I'm a Texan, I grew up in West Texas - New Mexico. I'm used to country music, that's what I grew up with. So at the first chance I had, to go into the studio and make a solo record, I jumped at it. It's called "Breathe Deep" and I'm excited about it.

Q: How did you pick the title Breathe Deep?

A: A friend of mine, Don Poythress and Tony Wood wrote the song. It is essentially a challenge to us, not to miss the important moments in life. You know, so often, the urgent takes precedence over the important. I have a kid, so when my kid comes around, you can't schedule that kind of time and if you're not careful, you'll miss those important moments with your kids because you are out doing the urgent things. So Breathe Deep is just a challenge, to take a deep breath and live the day, enjoy the moment.

Q: Is this your favorite song on the record?

A: It is not necessarily my favorite, I like them all having cut 13 of them. But I like the song title and the content enough to title the record like that, "Breathe Deep". I think it's one of the challenges we face in the 21st century. Life is arguable moving at the speed of light and I think one of the biggest challenges is just to slow down. Take a deep breath, enjoy sitting on the porch with your kids, enjoy some of the quiet things in live in the middle of a harried existence that we sometimes get sucked into.

Q: Can you tell me about the contents of your songs?

A: I kind of equate music to a train, to me, the cargo that you put on the train is philosophy. I have taken this up on this record, to put philosophy on the train of music that I believe strongly in. Those things are truths I have learned and people all around me have learned and want to communicate that to a younger generation. So that they don't make the same mistakes. And the things that we are able to do, in a positive way, we point out to

them. The successes and the good paths to take in live, we trumpet those out to them and the mistakes they shouldn't make likewise. Let them know, where the potholes are.

Q: What was it like with the Gaither Vocal Band?

A: It was a blast, I loved it. We never came to Switzerland. We did TV shows from Ireland, Belfast, London, Sidney Australia, South Africa and all over the United States. We sang Christian music and I loved the time with them. I was with them for 14 years. So it was a bit scary to step out on my own at this point, but I'm really experiencing a lot of rewards in doing so.

Q: Did you also appear in any shows?

A: Yea, in my career I sang on records, background for artists on their recorded projects out of Nashville and LA, all kinds of different places and on TV programs. TNN used to have a show called Music City Tonight with Charlie Chase and Lorianne Cook and I would sing there for sometime.

Q: Did you do this at the same time you were with the Gaither Vocal Band?

A: No, that was a precursor to the Vocal Band.

Q: Are you performing anywhere during the CMA Festival?

A: Yes, we performed over at Bridgestone Arena, on the Accoustic Corner Stage here at the Convention Center and also on TPAC.

Q: Is this the first time at CMA for you?

A: No, I have been here before with the Vocal Band. I also have a lot of friends here in the Country music industry, so I have been to it a lot. But it is the first time as a soloist here. It's exciting and new from that perspective.

Q: What are your plans from here?

A: Well, we're going to continue to kick this record out. As you know, with records, you release singles off of them, then you work those singles for a period of time and tour to expose the music to the market place. We have tours scheduled thru the end of the year in the United States and for the first part of August in Scandinavia.

Q: Do you already know which song you are going to cut for the single?

A: The one we've released off this record to begin with is called "Are you the One". Great song again, just challenging those of us with kids, to be proactive as far as communicating with them. Because, if we don't talk about the stuff of live with our kids, somebody is going to. At this present time I find, they're younger and younger, kids get exposed to more and more at earlier and earlier ages. So my wife and I really prioritize in passing on our believe system to our kids at young ages while their still at our house under our influence. Then when they get into their own lives, hopefully they're a little better equipped to deal with the struggles and opportunities of live. That's the challenge of this song.

Q: Which European Countries are you going to?

A: We're going to Norway, Sweden, Holland, Ireland and one pending in Germany and one in London. I'm excited about it.

Q: Do you live in Nashville?

A: We do, we live south of Nashville out in the woods. We have a couple of hundred acres which gives some elbow room for a bunch of kids. We have eight children, seven boys and a girl. We had the boys first, they are 18, 16, 14, 12, 8 and 6 years old, then came the girl, she is 4 years old. We're having a great time raising the kids.

Q: Do you also have animals?

A: Yes, we have cows, horses, dogs and cats. We see a lot of wild life, Deer, Turkey, all sorts of things.

Q: What was it like, growing up in Texas?

A: Obviously, it was all I knew and to me it was a lot of fun. I did a lot of bird hunting, horseback riding and hanging out with buddies that worked in oil fields. Texas is an interesting place and that part of the country has a

lot different terrain that what we are used to here in Nashville. There is a lot of desert, cactus, dirt. Grass doesn't grow very easily, trees are scarce and hard to come by. There are a lot of mesquite bushes and tumbleweeds. But there are some great, tenacious people.

Q: Did your parents have anything to do with music?

A: My dad was a preacher and also a great singer, he did not make his living with singing nor did he travel to do what I do. But he encouraged music a lot in our home. My mother did not sing at all.

Q: What influenced you most in music?

A: My Father was probably one of the strongest influences on me musically. He encouraged me to go out and chase something that I loved. The power of taking a melody and philosophy and putting them together is just a great format. It's a way to communicate, that is really powerful. I like the emotional part of music and was influenced by all sorts of music growing up. Here in America, our radio is very versatile, there are a lot of options to listen to. So as a kid, I was exposed to a lot of different sounds, from pop to rock, classical, country, all of those and they kind of melt together to form the kind of styles you end up with.

Q: Have you written any songs?

A: Yes, I've written a good bit, had some great cuts. But on my record I did not feel that any of my songs stacked up as well as a lot of the stuff we got in, so I cut better songs.

Q: Are you planning on a second CD?

A: Definately as soon as we get this one kicked out there.

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