

## Eli Young Band | Bio

### *FINGERPRINTS*

The **ELI YOUNG BAND** has always been unique in modern Country music – a true band of brothers who play their own instruments, write their own songs and cling fast to their Texas roots. They'd even go so far as to call themselves "misfits," but with their fourth major label album, ***FINGERPRINTS*** (The Valory Music Co.), they're finally embracing what makes them different once and for all.

"With 17 years of experience comes a little bit of wisdom and freedom in knowing who you are," says lead singer Mike Eli. "And what you're really good at."

Although their sound has evolved over time, what they're good at has always been the same – organic, live-show focused Country dripping with authenticity and perfected in clubs, amphitheaters and stadiums from coast to coast.

Eli founded the band with guitarist James Young, bassist Jon Jones and drummer Chris Thompson at the University of North Texas in 2000, building a grass-roots fanbase that propelled each of their previous three albums into the Top 5 of *Billboard's* Country Albums chart, with 2014's *10,000 TOWNS* bowing at No. 1.

Three No. 1 singles gave the band an edgy, romantically-charged identity ("Crazy Girl," "Even If It Breaks Your Heart" and "Drunk Last Night"). Their stable of hits collected Platinum and Multi-Platinum certifications that lead to Grammy and CMA Award nominations, Billboard Awards and an ACM trophy for *Song of the Year* ("Crazy Girl"). All of these accolades combined with their loyal fanbase and successful touring have resulted in over 500 million streams of their career catalogue.

Confident in their soulful, hearts-on-fire brand of Country, the group headed back into the studio to co-produce *FINGERPRINTS* alongside Ross Copperman and Jeremy Stover. Eight of the 11 new tracks were penned by the band members themselves. They've returned to a live-show-first mentality, trading in studio tricks for the "meat and potatoes" of a touring band; ringing guitars, driving bass lines, thundering drums and heartfelt, genuine vocals.

"There were so many organic sounds on those first records, and you can hear a lot of that in this album," says Eli. "But mostly, I think it's about passion and soul and believe-ability."

Co-writing with some of Nashville's hottest hit makers like Ashley Gorley, Lori McKenna, Ryan Hurd and Shane McAnally, that honesty is paired top-notch song craft and vivid imagery.

The album's *FINGERPRINTS* title comes from a fist-pumping anthem about a smooth romantic criminal, but its meaning invokes the band's quest to unmask themselves. No two fingerprints are the same, and their newest collection represents the most personal music they've ever made.

"So many of the songs we were writing and connecting with felt personal," Eli continues. "So many songs came from a place of passion, and something I just really wanted to say."

New single "Skin & Bones" is a prime example. A tender, epic love song built on real-life devotion and decorated with a dash of Tejano flair, it's a direct reflection of Eli's enduring love for his wife, Kacey.

"Walking into the writing room with Phil Barton and Lori McKenna was such a treat," he explains. "I felt in my gut we were gonna walk out of that room with a special song, and it turns out we did. My wife and I have been together for a lot of years now, and there comes a point where so much of who you are is intertwined and connected. You sometimes lose that line of where they end and you begin."

Meanwhile, the band was keenly aware of longtime fans' thirst for "old school" EYB, and their calls on social media led to one of the project's most nostalgic and heartwarming standouts, "Old Songs." A feel-good anthem about days – and tunes – gone by, the song celebrates happy memories in a way that harkens back to their first Gold single, "Always the Love Songs."

“When somebody says, ‘We love the old stuff,’ so much of that is built around the memories that come along with the old songs,” Eli says. “When you hear one, they come back right away.”

Backed by harmonica and perfect for a campfire sing along, Carolyn Dawn Johnson provides gorgeous backup vocals on the track, as she does on another laid-back, life-is-good ballad – “God Love the Rain.” But the band was also excited to revisit its rocking side.

“I think we pushed ourselves to dial it up a notch,” Young says, flashing a playful grin. “Maybe that’s why a lot of this reminds us of our earlier days.”

Songs like “Drive,” “Once” and “The Days I Feel Alone” will energize established fans and newcomers alike, while the clever “Never Land” offers a soaring fairy-tale head fake.

An irresistible groove defines “Never Again,” and even songs the band did not write – of which there are only three – feel incredibly true to them ... just like some of their biggest hits. “Heart Needs a Break” is so catchy it can’t be ignored.

“The first time you hear it, you’re singing along,” says Eli. “We were lucky with ‘Never Again,’ ‘Heart Needs a Break’ and ‘Saltwater Gospel.’ We knew right away that we needed to record those, and songs like that seem to end up like ‘Crazy Girl.’ They’re undeniable.”

What’s also undeniable is the band’s unique connection with fans. Even through sonic evolutions and changes to the Country industry, their obsessive following has continued to grow as “Saltwater Gospel” became one of the best reactions from Highway listeners all year on SiriusXM. And that they put on one of the best loved live-shows around – the very fingerprint of the Eli Young Band itself.

Maybe that makes them misfits, but so be it. This is who they are – some of the last true brothers of the road.

“We’ve been through everything together,” Eli says. “We’ve had this inner support system even before we had families of our own, and I think we still turn to that. Whatever the road is in front of us, our friendship will always be the priority.”

This summer, the road will take them from California to Maine, headlining shows with a set of brand new – but classic sounding – Eli Young Band tunes. And it will likely be just as much fun for them as it is for fans.

“We still look at each other as college buddies – not business partners,” says Young. “We get to share our lives with each other and we’ve done some really cool stuff, and our music has been the greatest byproduct of that.”

