

Steve Smith's journey through the world of music is already filled with legendary tale. There was the time a chance meeting at a business in Nashville led to Steve Jamming with country music legend Charlie Daniels. Or the story about how a 12-year-old boy traded away his old dirt bike to get his very first instrument, which Steve learned to play while listening to the radio in his father's car.

Since those days, Steve has gone on to open for some of music's biggest names, including Darryl Worley, Lee Brice, David Nail, David Allen Coe and The Oak Ridge Boys. His song "Wishing Well" spent three weeks at #1 on Indie Charts while another original charted at #12 in Australia in 2012. And to think it all started during a square dance at a store building owned by Smith's grandfather.

*"When I heard the live music it stirred something deep inside me. I had to get up and crack my heels with the other folks that were dancing. I was having one of the greatest moments of my life when I began watching the banjo picker's fingers. I was simply amazed by what I saw, " says Smith.*

It wasn't long before Steve had a banjo in his own hands. He was able to borrow one from a family friend and taught himself to play by listening to the radio in his dad's car. Steve remembers the day the family friend came back to collect the banjo and the realization that Steve's family couldn't afford to purchase it.

*"I swallowed real hard because it was a lot of money. I think my dad swallowed harder than me because he was just happy I didn't break the thing while I had it," he laughs as he recounts. Things worked out in Steve's favor.*

While the banjo was worth over eight-hundred dollars the family friend saw how much the banjo meant to Steve and agreed to trade it to him for a three-hundred-dollar dirt bike.

*"Words can't describe the joy I felt that day. I still have that very banjo and it was played when I won a banjo picking contest in Friendsville, Maryland in 2006."*

Little did Steve know, music was about to open up a lot of doors. He was invited by Bluegrass Queen Rhonda Vincent to play on her 2007 Bluegrass Cruise to the Bahamas. He also had an unexpected jam session with legendary musician Charlie Daniels.

*"I was working in Nashville in 1989 and I strolled into a country tack shop that was selling hats and boots, and stuff. It was right at closing time and I walked through the door and saw a fella who looked a lot like Charlie Daniels, " Steve remembers.*

It ends up the man in the store was the world-famous musician. He struck up a conversation with Steve and, upon learning Steve was a banjo picker, asked him to retrieve his instrument and play right there in the store.

Steve's love and passion for the banjo extend beyond playing the instrument; he also

loves building them. In 2010 he received the highest possible compliment concerning his banjo building when another legendary artist, Earl Scruggs, picked up one of Steve's banjos at a gathering in North Carolina.

*"Earl picked it up and said that he had signed a lot of banjo heads in his day but he wanted people to know that he signed that one and had played it himself. So he took the back off and signed it on the inside and signed the wood rim on the inside and the head."*

Steve was inducted into the Wheeling Jamboree, which is the second longest running country music broadcast in the United States (Grand Ole Opry is the longest). What does that mean to Steve?

*"I think it is a very huge honor being inducted into the Jamboree because of what they stand for and what they have done. To know that legends have passed through the Wheeling Jamboree the same as they have the Opry, it kind of gives me a sense of accomplishment."*

Recently, Steve had the opportunity to play with the Wheeling Jamboree at the Capitol Theatre in Wheeling, WV. When asked what it meant to him Smith said,

*" THIS Is why I feel God made me. You know I may never be famous and the good Lord knows I am far from rich. You may even ask why do you do what you are doing? And that my friend is a GREAT question!!*

*This is not for an ego trip, it is not even about leaving my mark in this business like the other greats have done, Paisley/Jones/Haggard and Cash to name a few, however, the very spot I am standing on is the same that those people stood and sang their heart out.*

*The reason I do this is so when my daughter's come back to the merch table after the show and stand next to me, one on each side and I ask them, what are ya gals doing? Their reply, we want people to know you are our Dad!*

*I have had people tell me that it would be a Sin if I didn't use the talent God gave me, I sing to see my wife's smile and last but not least but to share songs that I wrote with you that can take you to a place in time, in a moment, maybe a feeling or that happened to me. You see these Crazy times we live in can be hectic and I feel the reason God made me is to simply bring a smile to your face and possibly help you forget about life for just a little while. Many thanks to my many friends who have believed in me, even when I didn't believe in myself."*

Coming out in 2018 Steve will be featured in a forthcoming book, Songwriting in Contemporary West Virginia: Profiles and Reflections, written by Travis Stimeling, a musicologist at West Virginia University. Stimeling also included Steve in a recent album, Long Time on This Mountain: The Songs of Shirley Stewart Burns.

Armed with his many signature WVU ball caps, Steve is determined more than ever to make 2018 the best year yet~