



## MARK LEACH BIO

*“Where are the great country baritones – guys like Jones, Frizzell, Whitley? Have no fear, if the question is, where are the true country singers, the answer is, wherever Mark Leach is.”*

-- Jimmy Olander  
Diamond Rio guitarist & Grand Ole Opry member

When Mark Leach set out to record “With Love From Tennessee,” he knew he wanted it to be a reflection on just how much he’d grown artistically since his debut EP three years earlier. A steady stream of live gigs had helped polish his onstage performance dynamics, while trips to Nashville sharpened Mark’s songwriting skills and gave him a stronger sense of his identity in contemporary country music.

Although just 23, Mark has always had an innate sense of who he is musically. In high school, he gained valuable experience playing with various bands, but he always knew that one day, he would front his own group. In 2008, while still in college, he formed Mark Leach and the Blue Collar Valors and began playing area clubs and festivals in the Ohio area, quickly establishing himself as a favorite with audiences wherever he was booked. While a lot of their material was cover stuff, a number of the songs were Mark’s own, written with his older brother and fellow

bandmate Chris. His themes often tend toward everyday life, since he comes from a blue-collar town where he grew up working side by side with his family in their locally-owned bakery/deli shop. His grassroots approach meant learning as he went, but with the help of industry mentors like Nashville-based producer/musician Chad Jeffers, Mark has been able to keep a keen-eyed focus on his career while developing his creative talents naturally without pressure.

*With Love From Tennessee* was recorded in Nashville with an A-team cast of musicians and contains nine of Mark's own tunes, including the it's-a-definite-smash "My Guitar Made Me Do It" and the highly-marketable "Tan Legs and Cowboy Boots." Mark spent over year writing songs for the album with his brother Chris. "I wanted *With Love From Tennessee* to be the title because it covers the whole process of what I've been doing for the past three years, living in Ohio near my family but making regular trips to Nashville to work on my career," he says. "Each song is either something I went through, or a friend went through, or relates to something we experienced as a band while the album was in production."

With the album finished, Mark plans to spend more time in Nashville, and he's also concentrating on starting to tour with his band outside the Ohio area. Currently, he performs about 75 shows a year at clubs, colleges and festivals as far away as Kentucky and South Carolina. In 2012, he won a "Rising Star" competition sponsored by radio station 99.5 FM (WGAR), which put him onstage as the opening act for Trace Adkins and Craig Morgan at the Cuyahoga County Fairgrounds' Country Jam Concert. He also landed an opening slot for Kip Moore after telling him, "I'm gonna open for you one day." (Moore remembered their meeting and a year later, invited Mark to open for him in Cincinnati.) Wherever Mark plays, his fan base (known as the Blue Collar Nation) continues to grow, and it's not uncommon to see repeat concertgoers happily singing some of his original lyrics right back at him.

"I'm still blown away by some of the experiences I've had," says Mark. "Every day, I realize that I've exceeded the expectations I set for myself three years ago. One of my friends made me promise way back that every day, I'd do at least one thing to help my career, and I've lived up to that promise. I'll always look up to those artists I've seen live, such as Eric Church, Justin Moore and Dierks Bentley, who stop for a second to take in the moment. I've seen all three of

them tear up because you know that a dream of theirs came true that night. I'll be one of those guys, whether it's for 30 people or 30,000 people."