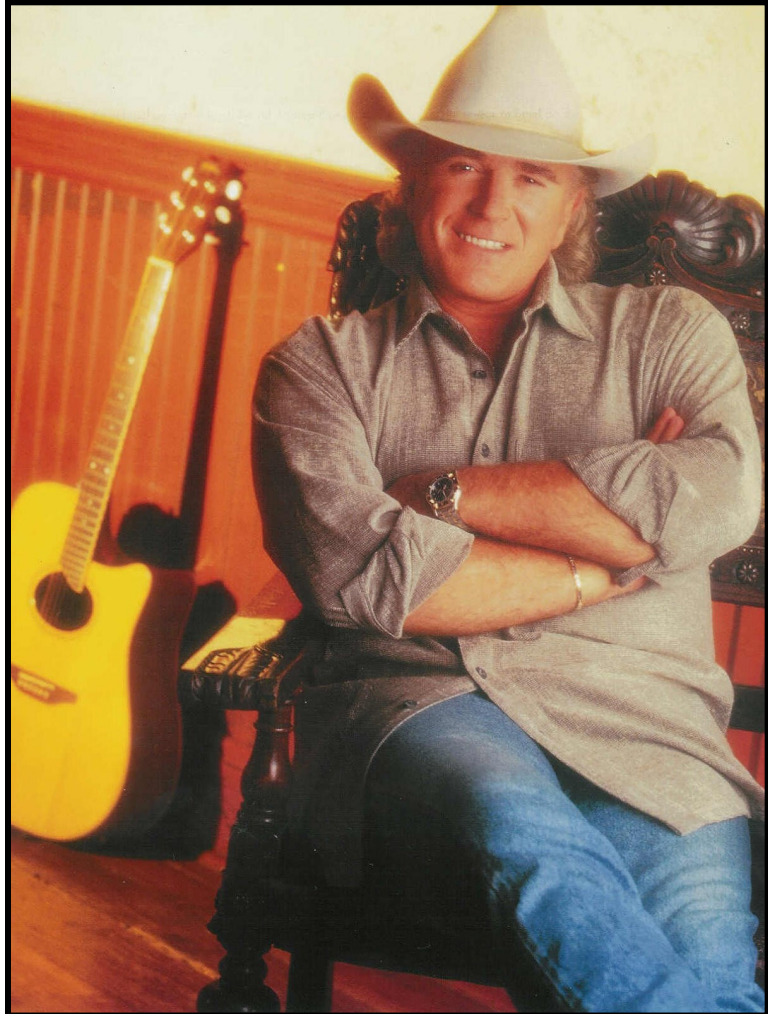


T.G. SHEPPARD

by Tamela Meredith Partridge
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When it comes to communicating to audiences through a great country song, no one sings it better than T.G. Sheppard.

"For me, a song has to hit you where you live - in your heart," Sheppard said during a phone interview. "If I can stand before someone and touch them with a song for three or four minutes, connect with them and make a difference, if for only a moment - that's the power of the music and the career that allows me a platform from which to sing and be heard. That is what it is all about."



Sheppard, whose real name is William Browder, left his Humboldt, Tennessee home at the age of 15 in search of a music career in Memphis. Honing his craft while working in various bands on the club, party and opening act circuit helped the singer/songwriter develop his steadfast stage presence and style.

Taking a slight detour from his musical path, Sheppard became one of the industry's most successful record promoters by focusing his passion for music into furthering the careers of other artists. He also developed a close and personal friendship with one of RCA's most prestigious performers, Elvis Presley.

"I first met Elvis back when I was about 16 years old," Sheppard said. "We were just close friends at that time. And then, in the early 70's, I became VP of Marketing and Promotions at RCA, and Elvis was one of my artists there. The association then became one of friendship and business."

Armed with an uncanny ability to pick a hit song and promote it, Sheppard discovered the song, "Devil In The Bottle." After unsuccessfully pitching the song to eight record labels in 18 months, he finally decided to give his singing dreams another try by cutting the song himself. Heading to Nashville, he acquired a recording contract under the stage name of T.G. Sheppard, released "Devil In The Bottle," and watched it skyrocket up the charts as his debut No. # 1 single.

"The T.G. in my stage name is really and truly just initials," Sheppard said. "A lot of people through the years have had fun putting what they want the initials to stand for, but they really don't mean anything, they are just initials. I used the stage name because I didn't want to jeopardize my RCA executive job due to recording the song with a different label, a RCA competitor. So, I was a RCA record executive by day under the name of William Browder, and in the evenings or weekends when I performed, I was T.G. Sheppard. I was able to keep it secret for about two years."

Sheppard, whose sound encompasses rhythm & blues, pop and country influences, has recorded over 30 albums, 33 Top-10 singles, and over a dozen No.1 hits including, "Last Cheater's Waltz," "I'll Be Coming Back For More," "Party Time," "Tryin' To Beat The Morning Home," and "Loved 'Em Every One."

"It is hard to pick a favorite out of all the songs I have recorded," Sheppard said, "because all of them are special and play a very important role in my life and career. To me, songs are like children. They are conceived and then given birth in the studio. When they are released, they are growing up in the world by themselves. Sometimes they are disappointing, and sometimes they make you very proud. Just like children."

For T.G. Sheppard, the definition of life and career happiness takes on a deeper level of understanding.

"Happiness is not a place, it is a state of mind," Sheppard said. "It is not something you can strive for, such as 'I'll be happy as soon as I get this or achieve that.' Happiness is a journey, a trip along the way of everyday life and it's experiences. All you have to do is take the time to stop and enjoy it. That is true happiness."