

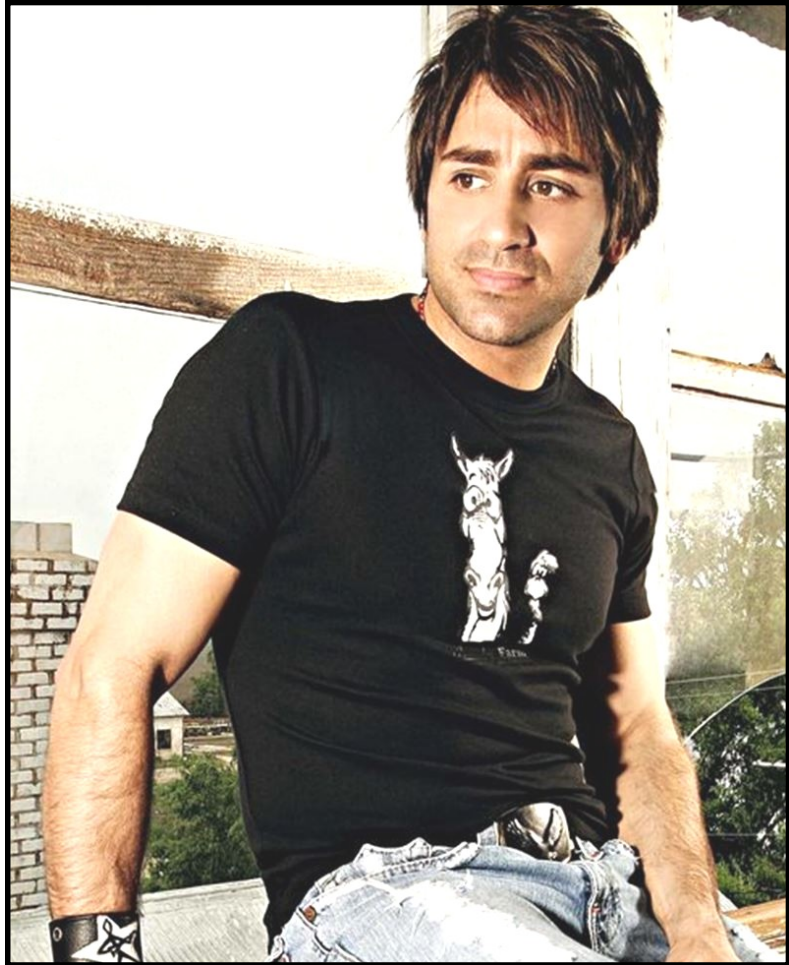
## STEVE AZAR

by Tamela Meredith Partridge  
Herald & Review newspaper  
Decatur, IL.  
© 2005

According to singer and songwriter, Steve Azar, making it in the country music business is simply a matter of "Doin' It Right."

"Doin' It Right is the first single from my upcoming second album," says Azar, who will perform at Nashville North USA in Taylorville on Saturday. "It's a song about coming of age, surviving mistakes, and thinking you knew it all when you were growing up."

Azar, a Greenville, Mississippi native, was born the next-to-youngest in a family of five children.



"I'm a Delta boy from generations back," Azar says. "I grew up on the Mississippi River -- it was my life. Because of its childhood importance, I always include a river song on my albums."

Musically inclined at an early age, Azar initially honed his craft by listening to the old blues and jazz musicians who congregated behind his father's liquor store.

"I was introduced to the Delta blues by musicians like Eugene Powell, a.k.a. Sonny Boy Nelson, Son Thomas, and Little Milton," Azar says. "They'd play, sing, and write about their pain, what was wrong with their life -- yet they made you feel good about it. They taught me how to write my way out of life problems and agitations by inserting a line of hope."

Azar graduated with a business management degree from the Delta State University in Cleveland, Mississippi, in conjunction to performing 200 gigs a year with the Steve Azar Band.

"Playing in the clubs is what fed me when I was in college," Azar says. "If it wasn't for my music, I wouldn't have graduated."

Azar eventually landed a Mercury Records contract, resulting in the #2 Billboard country single "I Don't Have To Be Me ('Til Monday)" in 2001 and a No. 1 video hit with "Waitin' On Joe" in 2002.

"My musical style is a combination of blues, jazz, rock, folk, and country," Azar says. "I was especially influenced by great entertainers who developed their own style, such as Bruce Springsteen, John Mellencamp, Jackson Browne, John Denver, Neil Diamond, Conway Twitty, Charley Pride, and Willie Nelson."

Azar, who successfully underwent throat surgery in 2004, is in the studio finishing his second album.

"This album is taking longer to make than I originally anticipated," Azar says. "Ironically the wait for making my first album, "Waitin' On Joe," also took awhile. It ended up being a record that I was proud of from song one to song eleven. Such is the case with this album as well."

For Azar, "Doin' It Right" consists of performing songs about everyday life for a variety of audiences.

"As an artist, you should be able to determine how an audience is feeling on a particular night and entertain accordingly," Azar says. "When you do this, the audience will let you into their world. It becomes a give-and-take experience, a musical sharing of emotion that's unique with each audience. No two shows are ever alike, which hopefully keeps things fresh and interesting for everyone concerned."