



CONCERTS FOR A CAUSE

by Tamela Meredith Partridge

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Nashville country music newcomers – Thomas Rhett, Cole Swindell, and Drew Baldridge – and Illinois-based country music opening act, Brushville, will headline the Lou's LaGrotto "Concerts For A Cause" at the Illinois Valley Regional Airport in Peru on Sunday, July 13.

"When we first started The Concerts For A Cause we always booked the up-and-comers," says Merry Noonan, co-owner of Lou's LaGrotto restaurant in Peru . "We haven't done that lately, so we decided to go back to the roots for this concert."

The country concert, which will benefit Lostant Elementary School, is the first in a series of Lou's LaGrotto "Concerts For A Cause" for the 2014 summer season.

The second concert, "The Rockstar Energy Drink Uproar Festival," will be held on August 16 and benefits the Streator Centennial Elementary School. "The Rockstar Energy Drink Uproar Festival" www.RockStarUproar.com, features a national tour lineup of 10 rock bands on 2 stages: Godsmack, Buckcherry, Seether, These Raven Skies, Suicide Girls, Escape the Fate, Redlight King, Three Years Hollow, Tattered, and Sons of Revelry.

A third concert is still in the planning stages for the fall.

Tickets for both concerts available at Lou's LaGrotto Restaurant, 815-223-3083, www.louslagrotto.com, or at Wyanet Carpet in Princeton, IL. Gates open at 4pm with a \$5/car parking fee. Seating is limited to blankets only; no chairs, no coolers, no tailgating.

On the Web: www.LousLaGrotto.com

On the Web: www.Brushville.com

THOMAS RHETT
Condensed from his
official website bio)

Thomas Rhett Akins Jr., 24, a Valdosta, GA native, is the son of country singer Rhett Akins, who charted such mid-1990s hits as the Top 5 “That Ain’t My Truck” and the No. 1 single, “Don’t Get Me Started.”

Rhett Akins musical aspirations eventually evolved into a successful songwriter career when he became BMI’s Country Songwriter of the Year in 2011.

Inheriting his dad’s singing/songwriting craft, Thomas Rhett’s big break occurred when Big Machine Label Group (which includes The Valory Music Co) President and CEO, Scott Borchetta, announced he wanted Thomas Rhett on their recording roster.



Thomas Rhett’s 2013 debut album, “It Goes Like This,” includes the chart-topping singles, “Something To Do With My Hands,” “Beer With Jesus,” “It Goes Like This,” “Get Me Some Of That,” and “Take Me Home.”

For Thomas Rhett, music is a central part of his destiny.

“I think I’ve been directed here for a reason,” he surmises. “I still don’t know why. I don’t know if it’s to be some big star or if it’s to make a difference in somebody’s life along the way or to make somebody’s Friday night entertaining. It doesn’t really matter. It’s a journey, and I’m learning something new every step along the way.”

On the Web: www.ThomasRhett.com



COLE SWINDELL

According to country singer/songwriter, Colden Rainey "Cole" Swindell, he's a 7-year overnight success.

Swindell, 31, a Bronwood, GA native, graduated in 2007 from Georgia Southern University, where he majored in marketing. From 2007 to 2010, Swindell sold merchandise for fellow Sigma Chi member, Luke Bryan.

Earning a publishing deal in 2010, Swindell penned six songs for Luke Bryan's "Spring Break EP's, as well as cuts for Florida Georgia Line ("This Is How We Roll"), Thomas Rhett ("Get Me Some of That"), Chris Young ("Nothin' but the Cooler Left"), Craig Campbell ("Outta My Head"), and Scotty McCreery ("Water Tower Town" and "Carolina Eyes").

Swindell independently released the single, "Chillin' It" in 2013. It generated enough attention to get the singer signed to Warner Nashville by the end of the year. Warner Nashville re-released the single and made it #1 on the Billboard Country charts.

Swindell's resulting self-titled 2014 debut album includes such hit singles as, "Chillin' It," and "Hope You Get Lonely Tonight."

"It's going to be so much fun to perform for the country music fans at the Concerts For A Cause," Swindell says during a recent phone interview with The Times. "Especially coming up through the years -- whether I'm playing for 20 people or a bunch of folks out there looking to have a good time and singing my songs -- as an artist, it doesn't get any better than that."

On the Web: www.ColeSwindell.com

DREW BALDRIDGE

Country singer/songwriter, Drew Baldrige, 22, a Patoka, IL. native, is returning home for the Concerts For A Cause concert.

“Being from the midwest, we’re kinda grassrooting ourselves,” Baldrige says during a recent phone interview with The Times. “These are the people that started my music career 100%, came out and watched us from the very beginning. So it’s really, really, cool to be back.”

Baldrige, who signed a publishing agreement with THIS Music/Warner Chappell, has a debut EP “All Good,” available online or at his merchandise stand. Baldrige wrote all six-songs on the EP including, “BYOB” and “She’s Taken (Love Worth Making Remix).”

“We put this EP together for people to get to know who I am,” Baldrige says. “It’s kinda the beginning of our music and allows people to sing along and party with us. And right now, we’re also in the studio making a new record.”

Baldrige’s music reflects small town life and transports listeners to their favorite memories all while making new ones.

“I was greatly influenced by the way small town living is, how close everybody is, and how humble everybody keeps you, no matter what,” Baldrige says. “My hometown has done a great job of teaching me how important it is to remember where you came from and your roots.”

On the Web: www.DrewBaldrigeMusic.com

