

CAROLYN DAWN JOHNSON
By Tamela Meredith Partridge
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Country singer/songwriter, Carolyn Dawn Johnson, has made music the core of her spirit ever since she was a small child.

"I remember asking my mother when I was young how anyone could live without music," says Johnson, who is scheduled to perform two shows at The Little Nashville Opry on Saturday, May 24th.

Johnson was raised on a farm in Deadwood, Alberta, Canada and surrounded herself with music by listening to her parents' Jim Reeves and Don Williams records, singing at church and school functions, playing piano and writing songs.



In college, Johnson studied non-music courses, but continued to sit-in with hometown bands at night.

"Maybe I can really do this," says Johnson in regards to receiving initial encouragement from local musicians. "Maybe I am good enough."

At age 20, Johnson took the first steps towards turning her country music dreams into reality.

"I began to see the merit in positive thinking," Johnson says. "I did a lot of goal setting. I'd ask myself, 'What are the little steps that can get me where I want to go?' And then I'd try to do something every single day to achieve a step or two. I'd write things down and make them come true."

Johnson's path to recording success began in 1992 when she finally decided to make music her life career goal.

"I knew I had to be in a city where there was a music community," Johnson says. "So I moved to Vancouver, British Columbia, and began attending recording engineering school. Once there, I continued to set small goals and worked to meet them."

Johnson applied her natural talent and incredible work ethic towards learning the technical aspects of the music business by day, while continuing to write songs and waitress by night. She honed her craft by viewing songwriting videos and studying weekly issues of Billboard and Music Row magazines to learn who was who in the business.

Johnson joined the Nashville Songwriters Association International and traveled to Nashville for the first time in 1994 to participate in one of its workshops. For three years, she commuted the 3000 miles between Vancouver and Nashville until she was able to obtain a work visa and move there permanently in 1997.

Never doubting the power of music, Johnson began singing demos and co-writing with other songwriters. She signed a publishing deal with Patrick Joseph Music in late 1997 and continued to wait tables and tend bar at Phil Vassar's "Hard Day's Nightclub."

"Carolyn and I are on the same record label," says country singer/songwriter, Phil Vassar. "She is one of my dearest friends and an awesome person and talent."

Johnson began getting attention from label executives when her songwriting demos and unmistakable studio vocalist credits began appearing on major label album releases by Patty Loveless, Martina McBride, Pam Tillis, Linda Davis and more.

Things all fell into place in 1999 when Johnson received a record deal and also scored a #1 songwriting hit single, "Single White Female," recorded by Chely Wright.

"My plan was to focus on writing," Johnson says. "And then in a year or two, aim for a record deal. That happened alright -- that and more! I feel like I got a few bonuses to my dream."

Johnson wrote or co-write all eleven selections for her 2001 debut album, "Room With A View," which includes the chart-topping singles, "Georgia," "Complicated," "I Don't Want You To Go" and "One Day Closer To You."

"I hope 'Room With A View' can show listeners what I've always believed about music - it's powerful, it can reach into our souls, it's important. I don't know what I'd do without it."

Current endeavors for the reigning 2003 AMA "Favorite New Country Artist" include exchanging wedding vows with fiancé Matt Fisher this spring, touring and recording her sophomore album.

For Carolyn Dawn Johnson, music has always been the center of her life – past, present and future.

"Music made me happy, it made me cry; it soothed me," Johnson says. "It did then, and it does now. Music still takes me to places nothing else can."