

TANYA TUCKER

by Tamela Meredith Partridge
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After thirty years in the music industry, "Delta Dawn" singer, Tanya Tucker, has finally made the record of her dreams with the self-titled '02 album, "Tanya."

"My fiancée, Jerry Laseter, co-producer Barry Beckett and myself spent a lot of time on this album," says Tucker, who is scheduled to perform at The Little Nashville Opry on Saturday, October 11 at 6 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.

"The difference between this album and the other albums I've made in the past," Tucker continues, "is that I had total control over this one. I had control over when I went to the studio -- and when I decided not

to. Which is so unusual for me. I've made so many records when I just didn't feel like being there. But this time we were able to record when we wanted to."

Making music her way, the "Tanya" album was manufactured and distributed by Capitol Nashville Records under Tucker's imprint, Tucker Time Records.

"Everybody had been saying that I should start my own label," Tucker says. "But it was kind of a scary thing for me. We came up with the name, Tucker Time Records, because everybody is always saying, 'You're on Tucker Time now, because you're not on normal time!'"

The twelve-song collection and its first single, "A Memory Like I'm Gonna Be," marked Tucker's return to radio after a five-year absence.

"I co-wrote one song, my fiancée co-wrote seven and we also took in a few outside songs for this album," Tucker says. "Co-writing is one of my favorite things. Especially with certain songwriters who are really learned and have been doing it for a long time. I can really get some stuff out of myself with them. Which feels great. They're not only creative, but they have song smarts as well. They know what's going to go -- and what isn't."



Tucker credits her father, Beau, as being her first musical influence.

"My dad helped me get the country career," Tucker says. "If it wasn't for him, there would be no me, that's for sure. I was the one who wanted a singing career. He asked me when I was nine years old, 'Do you want to do this, or do you want to be normal?' And I said, 'I want to be a singer.' He started working for me that very day and he never quit."

Tucker first hit the charts at age 13 with the Top Ten debut single, "Delta Dawn." And by age 15, she had her first greatest hits collection, a Grammy nomination and was the first country artist to grace the cover of "Rolling Stone" magazine.

"I was still going to school and had two or three number one records out," Tucker says. "The kids at school would make fun and tease me. I was working some dates and then getting up and going to school in the morning. Which was hard. I didn't want to, but I finally just had to quit going to school. I chose the music and the music kind of chose me. And from that time on, I never stopped. I never looked back."

The '91 ACM Top Female Vocalist Of The Year has since garnered over thirty albums, forty Top Ten hits and ten No.#1 singles including, "What's Your Mama's Name?," "Would You Lay With Me (In A Field Of Stone)," "Here's Some Love," "I Won't Take Less Than Your Love," and "Strong Enough To Bend."

Besides parenting her three children -- Presley, 14, Beau Grayson, 12, and Layla, 4 -- Tucker has also enjoyed pursuing such non-musical interests as her own line of salsa, gourmet chocolates and porcelain dolls.

"I think I'm an entrepreneur at heart," says Tucker, whose current line of merchandise is available through her official website, www.tanyatucker.com. "I'm not just a singer. Sometimes its been helpful and other times its held me back. I could probably be good at a lot of things, but as my dad is always telling me, 'Don't forget that singing is what got you here.' Some artists might let other outside interests interfere with their music, and I do that too at times. But I've always come back."

Tucker always comes back to her life-long love of cutting horses as well.

"The cutting horse is a working cow horse." says Tucker, a '96 National Cutting Horse Association Celebrity Champion. "I love working and herding cattle. And I love the power, control and the wonderful feeling I get riding cutting horses. Two minutes and thirty seconds is what you get in the arena when you're showing, and that's one of the most exciting two minutes and thirty seconds I've ever had in my life."

"Buck worked with one of my horses," Tucker says. "Obviously it went very well, because when I was at the barn the other day the horse came right up to my daughter. I think part of Buck's God-given gift is trying to help the owners get to the point of understanding their horse. It's really for us."

For Tucker, music has always been the center of her life - past, present and future.

"Making music and creating new music fills me with all kinds of emotions," Tucker says. "A little bit of fear, a hopefulness that people will like what I'm doing, some excitement in trying something different and a satisfaction in figuring out how to make a particular song the best it can be. There's always something more you can do, a way to make it bigger and better."