

VAN ZANT

by Tamela Meredith Partridge
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Van Zant, the new duo comprised of southern rock brothers, Johnny and Donnie Van Zant, encourage country fans to "Help Somebody."

"We sing about what's real in our lives," says younger brother Johnny, whose Van Zant debut single, "Help Somebody," was a recent Top Ten country hit. "By telling our musical stories, sometimes it can make a difference, or help somebody else, which is what it's all about for us."

Van Zant is scheduled to perform at Nashville North USA on Saturday. Opening act will be country/southern rock band, Pinkeye D'Gekko.



"Van Zant has become a cross-over concert for us," says Nashville North USA co-owner, Mike Myers. "We've sold tickets to both rock and country fans of all ages, which should make for a fantastic and entertaining show."

Van Zant originated in '85 as a quintet, disbanded in '87, and later revived as a duo when Johnny and Donnie released "Brother to Brother," (1998), "Van Zant II," (2001), and current project, "Get Right With The Man," (2005).

"The first two albums were more rock, but this is our first full-blown country album," Johnny says. "People ask us if we've gone country, and I say 'we ain't gone country, we were born country.'"

Van Zant's traditional songs about sin, salvation, family, work ethic, value, independence, and love are evident in '05 album, "Get Right With The Man," its debut single, "Help Somebody," and steadily-rising Top Twenty country single, "Ain't Nobody Gonna Tell Me What To Do."

"Our music is for the ordinary, working class people, because that's where Donnie and I are from," Johnny says. "Our fans are the people who helped make this great country of ours and we're honored to share a common thread with them."

Van Zant, who co-wrote 7 out of 11 songs for "Get Right With The Man," delivers each track with a heavy dose of attitude, authenticity, and southern boogie flair.

"We just tell it like it is through our music," Johnny says. "We've learned a lot over the years in regards to what's really important in life. It's been a musical journey for us, and we hope the listener enjoys the ride as much as we did."

In addition to their Van Zant tour, Johnny and Donnie both front other bands. Johnny is the lead singer of legendary southern rock group, Lynyrd Skynyrd, since 1987, ("Sweet Home Alabama," "Free Bird") while Donnie is the lead singer and founder of popular southern band, .38 Special, since 1975 ("Hold On Loosely," "Caught Up In You").

"In our family, music has gotten us through both good and bad times," Johnny says. "It's been a constant companion, loyal friend, and source of strength."

An integral musical influence for Van Zant was older brother and Lynyrd Skynyrd founder, Ronnie Van Zant, who died in a plane crash on October 20, 1977.

"Making this album not only fulfilled our dreams," says Johnny. "It's also a way of fulfilling one of Ronnie's dreams as well. He loved country music. I think that if he'd been around today, he'd have been a big country star."