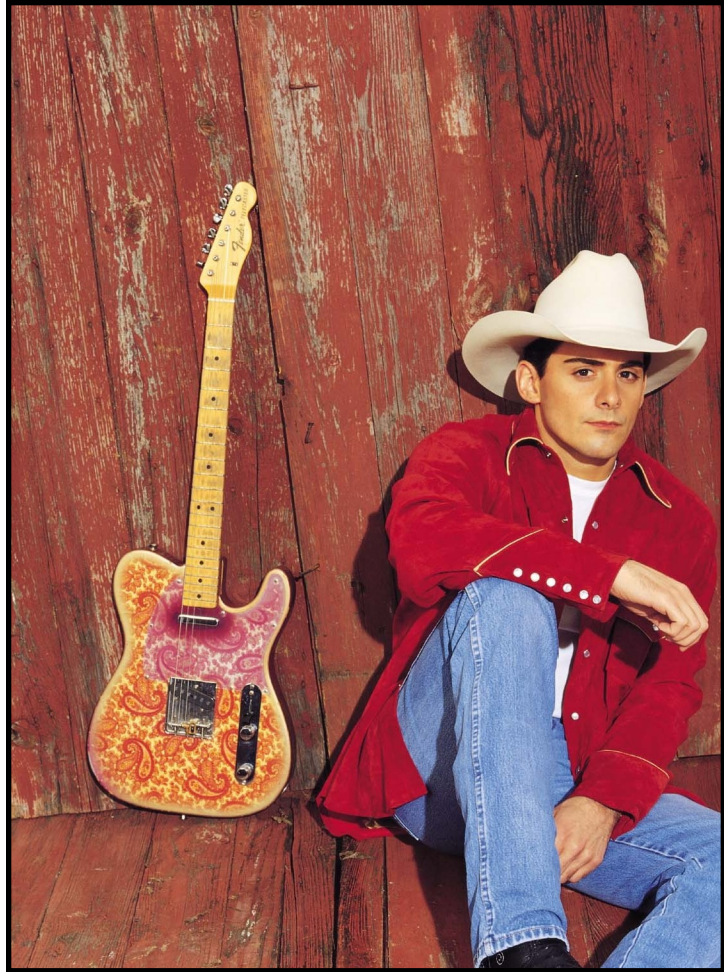


Brad Paisley
by Tamela Meredith Partridge
"American Country" magazine
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With a gold debut album, three successful singles and four nominations each from ACM and TNN/Country Weekly Awards, it's becoming quite apparent that country music fans don't need a picture in order to recognize the astounding musical talent of "Who Needs Pictures" singer, Brad Paisley.

The 27-year-old vocalist, songwriter and guitarist co-wrote all thirteen selections on "Who Needs Pictures?" and was propelled to nationwide fame when singles, "Who Needs Pictures?" and "He Didn't Have To Be" topped the Billboard country charts.



"If I had to pick a phrase that embodies the whole album, it would be 'laughter through tears'," Paisley said. "That's the feeling you get when you hear these songs, there's a little wink of humor along with the seriousness."

Even though the first two releases lean more toward serious issues, his current single, "Me Neither," is a smile-inducing romp through the trials and tribulations of dating.

"Every guy has been there," Paisley said. "You're talking to a girl and realizing that it's going nowhere, but you still keep trying. I know I've been turned down enough to feel like I've really lived this song."

Which is hard to believe, considering the hoards of screaming females the handsome and personable musician has been attracting since he was just a kid singing the Glen Campbell song, "Try A Little Kindness" at his tiny hometown church in Glen Dale, West Virginia.

"Growing up in the Ohio River Valley, the neat thing for me was that I didn't have to ask for a single gig," Paisley said. "They were always offered to me. I've always felt very lucky, as if there is a hand of fate guiding me toward this profession. I never had to wonder if people would like what I do, because there were always people there who did."

Paisley's greatest musical influence was his maternal grandfather, Warren L. Jarvis, who gave him his first guitar at age 8.

"My earliest memory is of running down the road to my grandfather's house," Paisley said. "He was a railroad worker who worked the night shift. So, he'd be at home all afternoon playing guitar. I'd go down there and spend the day watching him play. He loved Chet Atkins, Merle Travis and Les Paul. He'd play everything from 'Under The Double Eagle' to 'Wildwood Flower' to 'Shortenin' Bread.' "

Not an overnight-success-story by any stretch of the imagination, Paisley paid his dues by practicing guitar with his grandfather and forming a band with his guitar teacher and chief inspiration, Clarence "Hank" Goddard. The band, which consisted of Goddard and two other seasoned pickers over the age of 50, played back-up for the young performer.

"We called ourselves Brad Paisley & The C-Notes," Paisley reminisced fondly. "But some of my friends jokingly referred to them as the C-Niles. The greatest thing about Hank was that he would sit on stage and let me, as a kid, butcher solos and play out of tune and out of time. I'd be doing a solo, and I'd be horrible. But Hank would be yelling, 'Good job, Brad.' I owe him and those other guys for a lot."

When he was 12, Paisley landed a permanent eight year spot with the famed "Jamboree USA" radio show out of Wheeling, West Virginia.

"I ran through the house screaming, 'I'm going to play the Jamboree!' " Paisley said. "My grandfather was just super-proud. All of a sudden, he was seeing this guitar he'd given to me become my life."

One year after joining the Jamboree, Paisley received the devastating news that his beloved grandfather was diagnosed with inoperable pancreatic cancer.

"He basically had three or so months left," Paisley said. "At about that time, I secured my first major headlining gig, opening for The Judds. He was in bad shape, but he got to come see me play. And I think he left this world knowing that he had started something good for me."

And now, 15 years later, Grandfather Jarvis would be very pleased at the picture-perfect success of "Who Needs Pictures" and the heartfelt note his grandson inscribed on the album liner.

"I dedicate this album to the memory of Warren L. Jarvis, my grandfather. Thanks for that first guitar, Papaw. Can you pick up country radio in Heaven? I bet so. Hope you like what I have done."