

## DWIGHT YOAKUM

by Tamela Meredith Partridge  
"Our Brown County" magazine  
Nashville, IN  
© 2002

The signature look of Dwight Yoakum - low-slung hat, tight jeans and well-worn custom cowboy boots - is as identifiable as the music that strikes a chord of truth within so many fans.

"I have never tried to put a boundary on the music we are doing," Yoakum says, who will be performing at the Little Nashville Opry on Sunday, October 13 at 3 pm.

The California-based singer, songwriter and guitarist created his own maverick style by combining the various contemporary influences of rock, pop and soul with traditional country, bluegrass, honky-tonk and mountain music.

"We first played in the rock clubs in Los Angeles and Southern California," Yoakum says. "Being born in Kentucky and raised in the Ohio Valley, you hear hillbilly music. That is what I knew how to do. And I think it was apparent to a lot of the rock audiences that we were playing to in the early 80's, that this is one of the parents of rock and roll. The audience had an affinity to what we were doing and how we carried the emotion right from the bar room stage to the recording studio. Much like Buck Owens, Merle Haggard, Ray Price and Hank Williams Sr. did in the 50's and '60's."

Since his debut in '86, the Grammy-winning recording artist has sold over 20 million albums and charted numerous hit singles, including, "Honky Tonk Man," "Little Sister," "Streets Of Bakersfield" and "I Sang Dixie."

"I have been fortunate to be able to have the career that I have had," Yoakum says. "And to have been able to have done it the way that I have done. And not feel that I have ever had to compromise. From the very point I signed with Warner Brothers/Reprise Records, they believed in me and stood by what I did through the highs and lows. Even though my regular contract with them is fulfilled and we are not officially attached to each other any longer, we had a great run of things. It is a tribute to what we have done at Warner Brothers/Reprise Records over the past 16 years that has allowed me to have the kind of success that came without compromise."



In conjunction with his music career, Yoakam has created an impressive stage, movie and television acting portfolio. Earlier this year, Yoakam received rave reviews along with co-stars Jodie Foster, Forest Whitaker, Jared Leto and Kristen Stewart, for the box-office smash, "The Panic Room."

"Acting puts me at the mercy of the opportunity that I may have at any given moment," Yoakam says. "Or the opportunity I am afforded by a director or film studio. "The Panic Room" was a great opportunity for me to be a part of a very well-crafted movie that was created by a very skilled film maker."

Even though his acting career is time-consuming, Yoakam still makes music a top priority. His 2002 schedule included a "State Fairs, Honky Tonks and Rodeos" solo tour, as well as performing over 40 dates with the "Brooks & Dunn Neon Circus and Wild West Show."

"I would never ever stop doing music," Yoakam says. "Because it is just second nature to me. Even if I wasn't getting paid, I would still be singing somewhere. It is so thoroughly an extension of me, that there is no way to escape it."