

WADE HAYES

by Tamela Meredith Partridge
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Every now and then a country artist will arrive with enough talent, courage, and perseverance that Music City has no other choice but to take notice and listen.

And when it comes to Wade Hayes, a tall, handsome, country traditionalist, there is no denying he was destined to be heard.

Since his debut in '94, the TNN Music City News Male Star of Tomorrow has successfully carved a career out of putting the "country" back into contemporary Nashville music.



"I like all of the traditional songs," Hayes said. "I like a good ballad, but I really prefer the uptempo songs, mainly because it gives me the opportunity to pick my guitar on them."

The Bethel, Oklahoma native began playing in honky-tonks with his dad's band at the age of 14, and still considers performing to be one of the greatest perks of the music business.

"If I had to choose between what gave me the most satisfaction - writing a song, recording it in the studio, or performing it on stage, I would have to say performing it," Hayes says. "That is definitely instant gratification. The other ones you have to labor over for such a long time. I really like to perform live the best."

Hayes has two gold albums to his credit, *Old Enough To Know Better*, and *On A Good Night*, and his current '98 released album, *When The Wrong One Loves You Right*. The gifted singer/songwriter co-wrote eight songs for his three albums.

"Writing is one of the most difficult things I have ever tried to do," Hayes said. "When I'm co-writing with other songwriters, and they come up with some of those amazing songs, I am really in awe. It's not something that someone can just go out and do, it does take a lot of practice."

Many of his songs are based on real issues.

“My songs are more about the things that you go through in life,” Hayes said. “Sometimes it is just in the luck of the draw that a lot have been about relationships. It’s just one of those things. Unless you specifically set out to write about a certain theme, then you just kind of put some words and music together.”

Hayes has honed the art of listening into a successful songwriting process.

“My song ideas come by listening to people talk - their conversations,” Hayes said. “You can hear people say things, and get some great ideas.”

Hayes is best known for his hits, *I’m Still Dancin’ With You*, *Old Enough To Know Better*, *What I Meant To Say*, *On A Good Night*, *The Day She Left Tulsa (In A Chevy)*, and *How Do You Sleep At Night*.

Out of all the songs Hayes has recorded, there is one that will always be his favorite.

“I think that the one song that means the most to me is, *I’m Still Dancin’ With You*,” Hayes says. “That is the song that got everything started for me. When I first came to Nashville that song got me my writing deal, and then my record deal. And it also turned out to be a No. 1 song for me. It will always be real special.”

Another special aspect is his '99 nuptials with Danni Boatwright, a 23-year-old model.

“Danni is very kind hearted,” Hayes said. “That is one of the reasons I am with her. She is a good girl, she’s a Christian, and we have a great time together. I’m really, really fond of her. We are very lucky.”

Hayes video for his latest single, *Tore Up From The Floor Up*, features Danni as the love interest.

“With Danni in the video, it really made it a lot easier,” Hayes said. “In other videos, when we used another female, it made it a bit difficult to get warmed up. I kind of burned up a lot of camera time just trying not to be so nervous. But, this time it went quickly. Danni really made it easy for me.”

Hayes has been hard at work writing and recording songs for his new album.

“The fourth album is going really well,” Hayes said. “We just went in during the last week of January and cut the tracks. This album is a lot more traditional than the last two have been. The first single from it is expected to be released in late spring or early summer. I am hoping to be able to do some of the new songs from the new album when I’m in Streator.”

Hayes waited for just the right country songs to put on his new album.

“I think that a great country song really has to be saying something, instead of just being a bubblegum, do-wap thing, or a ditty,” Hayes said. “It is something that has an engaging melody and lyrics that actually mean something. A song either does something for you or it doesn’t. There are songs that I hear, and I know that they can be hits, but they just don’t do anything for me. So, I don’t cut them.”

When he is not on the road touring with his band Wheel Hoss, Hayes can be found in Nashville remodeling his new home.

“I just bought a house that I’m remodeling, and I’m having a good time doing that,” Hayes said. “I am doing most of the remodeling myself. It is satisfying, yet time consuming, because remodeling can be difficult at times, but I really enjoy it. I would like to see it finished.”

Hayes, a former construction worker, also enjoys creating a brighter future for others by donating his time, carpentry skills, and finances to the charity, “Habitat for Humanity”, which builds homes for the needy.

Hayes, who will be turning thirty on April 20th, believes his goals reflect a more mature outlook on his life and career.

“I’m getting more settled, I can tell that,” Hayes says. “And more mature, I guess. I’m just more easy going, and taking a lot more things in stride. I would love to write and have some more No.1 songs, and just continue to grow in my career by getting better at singing, writing, and guitar playing.”