

## DARRYL WORLEY

by Tamela Meredith Partridge  
"The Times" newspaper  
Ottawa, IL.  
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If anybody is in touch with heartland America, it's "Have You Forgotten," country singer/songwriter, Darryl Worley.

"People say that my music is very real," Worley says. "What's real today, was real yesterday and a hundred years ago. The emotion, the passion, the things that we experience in life -- they are timeless. My manager adopted this little phrase that he's used since we first started working together. He said, 'Your music is timeless. It's like listening to a Norman Rockwell painting.' I just want to be behind the music that tells the story of our times."



Worley will perform at the Sandwich Fair on Wednesday, September 8, at 8 p.m.

Raised in rural Hardin County, Tn., Worley comes from blue-collar stock and a long line of musical influences.

"I grew up listening to country artists like Vern Gosdin, Merle Haggard, Willie Nelson and Gene Watson," Worley says. "Those guys sung songs about real life, real people and real experiences. I've patterned my craft after that, and I write those type of songs. I just hope that my music will someday inspire someone to pick up a guitar and write about what he or she is going through in life. Just continue the circle, keep the musical chain intact."

Worley's shoulder-to-the grindstone work ethic helped him earn an athletic college scholarship. Graduating with a degree in biology and organic chemistry, Worley pursued a musical career while working various jobs as a research biologist, teacher, and chemical salesman.

"Even when I was working, I was still playing in bars," Worley says. "Music is just what I always wanted to do and I never gave up the dream."

Worley's third album, "Have You Forgotten?" burst onto the country charts in 2003 with enormous intensity - it took only five weeks for the patriotic title track to reach #1 on Billboard's Hot Country Singles Chart.

"This album is a compilation of new music and some songs from my first two albums," says Worley, whose hit singles include "A Good Day To Run," "Second Wind," and "I Miss My Friend." "We had a vision that half the album would be a tribute to the American soldier and the other half is Darryl Worley's music from start to finish. It's kind of like a best of Darryl Worley type album."

Worley knew he'd created something powerful when he co-wrote "Have You Forgotten." The song came about as a result of Worley's USO tour of Afghanistan over the 2002 Christmas holidays. The singer/songwriter was profoundly moved by the dedication of the American armed forces stationed there and decided he needed to salute those men and women in some way when he returned home.

"I literally had soldiers come up to me and say, 'You know, we're over here fighting for you and your family, and we need for you to go back home and fight for us,'" says Worley. "And I knew exactly what they meant. It became a mission to me, a duty to come back here and do something to honor them. I didn't even think the song would get recorded -- I just had something to say."

Worley first played the song at the Grand Ole Opry on the weekend of January 11-12, 2003, and received a lengthy and enthusiastic standing ovation.

"By Monday morning, the record label had received so many e-mails about the song that it blew their computer firewalls out," Worley says. "Then the phones started ringing. Radio stations were calling saying that everybody wanted to hear the song. So we recorded the song and put it on an album."

Worley's current single, "Awful, Beautiful Life," is from his fourth album, "Darryl Worley," scheduled for a November release.

"The music on this upcoming album deals with real issues and is about as honest as it gets," Worley says.

For Worley, music is a reflection of life.

"Music is a whole other level," Worley says. "Music is about the only thing left in life that can pick me up to the point where my feet are barely touching the ground or hammer my emotions and leave me in tears. I've been through so many things in real life that I feel like there isn't much that will come my way that I can't filter through and deal with through music."