

BILLY RAY CYRUS
by Tamela Meredith Partridge
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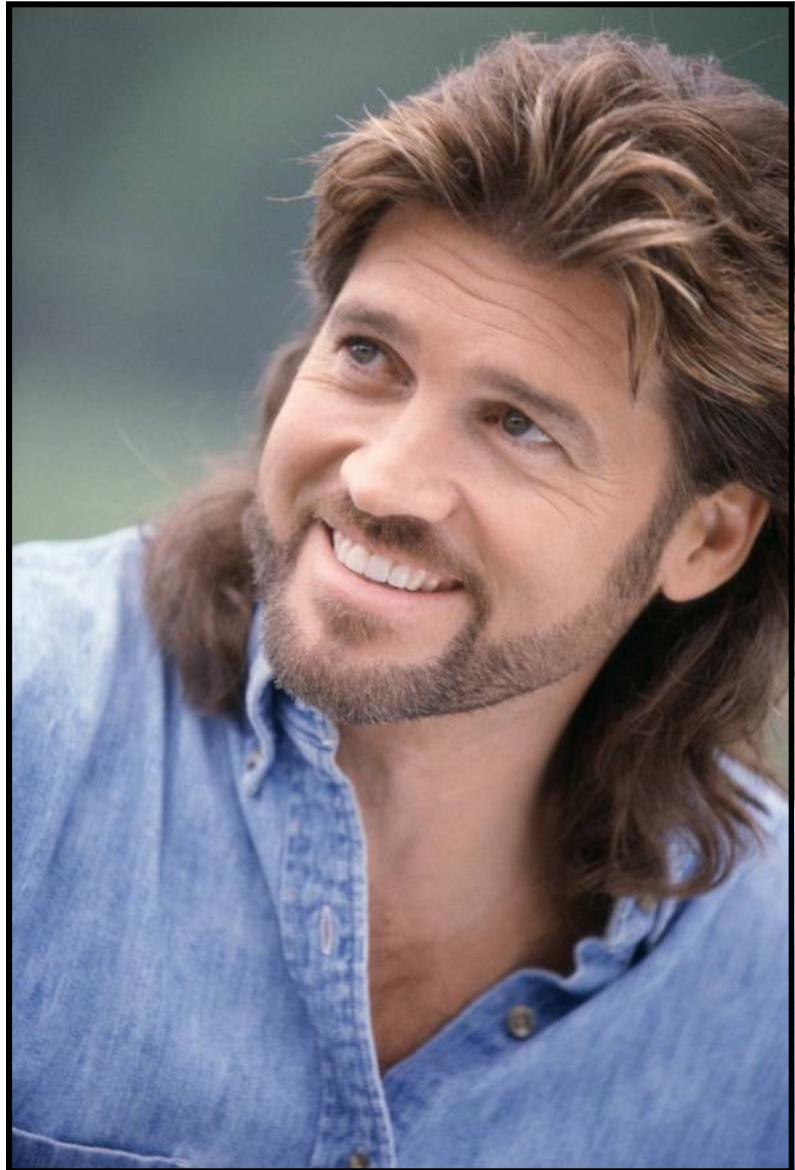
Whether he is crooning the lovesick lyrics of "Achy Breaky Heart," or reciting healing dialogue as the star of the PAX-TV hit series, "Doc," Billy Ray Cyrus is just what the doctor ordered when it comes to providing top-rate entertainment.

"Music is not a job, it's what I love to do," Cyrus says, who will perform his "Time Flies" tour at Nashville North USA on Thursday.

The "Doc" series, which features Cyrus' music throughout various episodes and in the theme song, captures the drama and comedy of the main character, "Doc" Clint Cassidy, played by Cyrus. The show unfolds as Doc's love for a woman takes him from a small medical practice in Montana to a large Manhattan HMO. Even though he initially ends up losing in love, Doc's down-to-earth style, caring bedside manner and common sense endears him to patients and colleagues alike.

"Week after week they keep turning out great episodes that really come from the heart," Cyrus says. "It seems to be making a difference by giving families a real chance to sit around the TV and share time together. I think families need more and more of that in the world today."

Family is important to the Flatwoods, Kentucky native. Born into a rich musical heritage comprised of a fiddling grandfather, gospel singing father, and piano playing mother, it could be said that Cyrus came by his talents the honest way - he inherited them.



Before reaching school age, Cyrus was singing with his father's gospel quartet and his mother's bluegrass group. At the age of 19, he began playing guitar and performing at an Ironton, Ohio bar called "Changes" with the houseband, "Sly Dog," aptly named after his childhood one-eyed pet bulldog.

When "Changes" burned to the ground in '84, it also reduced the band's equipment and dreams to ashes. Believing the event to be a sign to try his fortunes elsewhere, Cyrus left Ohio in search of stardom in Los Angeles, but found a dead-end job selling cars instead. Two years later he returned to Kentucky, re-formed "Sly Dog," and landed a job as the houseband for "The Ragtime Lounge" in Huntington, West Virginia.

Cyrus received his big break in '90 when he was discovered by Mercury Records talent scouts while opening for Reba McEntire in Louisville, KY.

Early in his career, critics slated the phenomenal popularity of his '92 debut No. #1 hit, "Achy Breaky Heart," as a novelty song, while dubbing Cyrus as a one-hit wonder.

Since then, Cyrus has repeatedly proven the critics wrong by achieving seven albums, a huge fan base and the Billboard Top Ten country singles, "It Could've Been Me," "She's Not Cryin' Anymore," "In The Heart Of A Woman," "Somebody New" and "Busy Man."

Cyrus amicably departed from Mercury Records in '99 and signed with Sony Monument Records. His second Monument Records album, "Time Flies" is scheduled for a 2002 release.

When he is not busy touring or on location filming, Cyrus can be found at "Singing Hills," his 500 acre farm south of Nashville, with his wife Tish and their combined family of six children.

For Cyrus, mixing music with acting has been the perfect prescription for a successful and satisfying career.

"I'm more comfortable now than I've ever been," Cyrus said. " I have so much more peace of mind. I understand who I am and what I do. I'm enjoying my career now more than I ever have."

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by Tamela Meredith Partridge
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Country music sensation Billy Ray Cyrus and special guest The Fox Brothers will be performing at the Lawrence County 4-H Fair Grandstand on Friday, July 16, at 7:30 p.m. Gates are scheduled to open at 5 p.m.

Tickets can be purchased in advance through any Ticketmaster outlet or by calling (317)-239-5151. Ticket prices are \$17.50 Reserved and \$15.00 Festival seating, plus an additional Ticketmaster surcharge. Chairs will be provided for Reserved ticket seating, but Festival ticket seating will need to bring their own chairs or blankets.



Further information can be obtained by calling (812)-275-4623 during the hours of 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Billy Ray Cyrus, with his distinctive style of realistic songs, has acquired legendary status for his deep and profound ability to connect with the ordinary listener.

"I tried to record songs that everybody seemed to like and that were also true to life," Cyrus said. "I wanted to make sure they were songs that I could relate to. The fans are passionate about the music. They have kept me in this ball game, so I wanted to be sure I was singing for them."

Early in his career, critics slated the phenomenal popularity of his '92 debut No. #1 hit, "*Achy Breaky Heart*," as a novelty song, while dubbing Cyrus as a one-hit wonder.

Since then, the talented singer, songwriter, and guitarist has repeatedly proven the critics wrong by achieving six successful albums, a huge fan base, impressive record sales of over \$13 million, and numerous industry nominations and awards.

Born in Flatwoods, Kentucky into a rich musical heritage comprised of a fiddling grandfather, gospel singing father, and piano playing mother, it could be said that Cyrus came by his talents the honest way - he inherited them.

Before reaching school age, he was singing with his father's gospel quartet and his mother's bluegrass group. At the age of 19, he began playing guitar and performing at an Ironton, Ohio bar called "Changes" with the houseband, "Sly Dog," aptly named after his childhood one-eyed pet bulldog.

When "Changes" burned to the ground in 1984, it also reduced the band's equipment and dreams to ashes. Believing the event to be a sign to try his fortunes elsewhere, Cyrus left Ohio in search of stardom in Los Angeles, but found a dead-end job selling cars instead. Two years later he returned to Kentucky, re-formed "Sly Dog," and landed a job as the houseband for "The Ragtime Lounge" in Huntington, West Virginia.

He received his big break in '90 when he was discovered by Mercury Records talent scouts while opening for Reba McEntire in Louisville, Ky.

As a result, his '92 debut album, "**Some Gave All**," topped the pop and country charts for an unprecedented 17 weeks, a record even the blockbuster "Titanic" soundtrack failed to surpass.

Other Billboard Top Ten hits for Cyrus include, "*It Could've Been Me*," "*She's Not Cryin' Anymore*," "*In The Heart Of A Woman*," and "*Somebody New*."

Cyrus, who virtually broke every rule in the Music Row handbook by recording his first five records with his band "Sly Dog," recently broke one of his own traditions when he recorded his current '98 album "**Shot Full Of Love**" with some of Nashville's finest studio musicians.

The decision to record with studio musicians was a result of Cyrus's re-emergence from a six month self-induced industry hiatus, where he explored greater depths in his highly personal musical style, outlook, and image.

"I adjusted my music, my attitude, and my appearance," he said. "I let go of the past. I just felt that it was time to come back to earth. I decided, 'I'm going to make a completely different album than I've ever made.'"

Radio and fans alike have embraced "**Shot Full Of Love**," by skyrocketing its single, "*Busy Man*," into a Billboard Top Five hit. Singing about fathers neglecting their families in pursuit of financial success was a journey of self-discovery for the 38-year-old entertainer.

"I thought, 'This is my life,' when I heard "*Busy Man*," Cyrus said. "When I look back, I can remember there were so many times when I wanted to see my dad and spend time with him. He always bent over backward to be there for me, but there were still times when he'd just be gone, working. Now that I'm a dad, I can feel the emotions from the other side, too. I relate to this song - past, present, and future. I think a lot of people will."

The video for his current single, *"Give My Heart To You,"* is receiving regular airplay on CMT, and features a 6 minute dramatic introduction scene between Cyrus and his good friend and country music colleague, Mark Collie.

"*"Give My Heart To You"* - that's a wonderfully written song," Cyrus said. "It struck me as a hit right off the bat. I love what it says and all the details in the lyrics. I think it could go a long, long, way."

Other Cyrus film credits include the television roles, *"Diagnosis Murder"* with Barbara Mandrell, *"The Nanny,"* with Fran Drescher, *"Return Of The Eagles"* a TBS documentary about the comeback of the American bald eagle, *"The Love Boat: The Next Wave,"* *"Mulholland Drive,"* with veteran actress Ann Miller, and his first TNN special, *"Give My Heart To You,"* (due to be re-aired on July 26 at 9 p.m.Central).

His latest project, *"Radical Jack,"* is a direct-to video independent movie currently being filmed in the quaint town of Rutland, Vermont with co-stars DeDee Pfeiffer (sister of Michelle Pfeiffer) and Noah Blake (Robert Blake's son). Limited theatrical releases are being arranged before the film goes directly to video, with plans of it also being shown as an opening act on Cyrus's next concert tour.

His next film project will be Bill Pullman's *"The Virginian,"* scheduled to air on the TNT channel.

Known throughout the industry for his generosity and caring heart, Cyrus makes a difference by donating his time, talent, and financial resources through his Ashland, Kentucky based Billy Ray Cyrus Charities Foundation.

The BRC Charities Foundation, which helps those who would normally fall through the cracks of the major charities, recently helped pay for a voice activated computer for a little girl born without arms and legs.

"I try to put on a real strong face for the kids," Cyrus said. " The hardest part is when they turn to leave and they go one way and I go another. It is emotionally draining, you just feel weak and sad. But, I have tried to make sure that I live up to my end of the deal with God. My dream was to be a successful singer, songwriter, and entertainer. I prayed that my music would be heard around the world and that God would give me the vision to use my music to do good things. So, I am going to see as many of these children as I can."

Always quietly helping, Cyrus was recently honored with a Humanitarian Award from the Entertainment Presenters after he provided aid for the Oklahoma tornado victims by filling his tour bus with supplies, traveling to the affected area, and passing the items out to the families in need.

When he is not busy touring or on location filming, Cyrus can be found at "Singing Hills," his 500 acre farm south of Nashville, with his wife Leticia "Tish", and their children.

Cyrus, by remaining true to himself and his music, has managed to carve his own distinct niche within the industry, and is quite content with the progression of his life and career.

“I’m more comfortable now than I’ve ever been,” Cyrus said. “ I have so much more peace of mind. I understand who I am and what I do. I’m enjoying my career now more than I ever have.”