

# TRACY LAWRENCE

## FOR THE LOVE

### ARTIST BIO/HISTORY

Tracy Lawrence is one of the premier voices of his generation, a sensitive and intelligent singer who continues to stretch both as an artist and as a person. Lawrence's dedication to honesty and respect for tradition have enabled him to build one of the most respected careers in recent country history.

Along the way, Tracy has posted more No. 1 Billboard country singles than greats like Glen Campbell, Keith Whitley, Ernest Tubb, Wynonna or Barbara Mandrell, to name just a few; more Top 5's than Shania Twain, Faith Hill or The Judds; and more Top 10's than Ricky Skaggs, Charlie Rich, John Michael Montgomery or Dwight Yoakam.

Tracy hit the national spotlight in 1991. He was just 23, the product of a rough-and-tumble childhood in Foreman, Arkansas. A self-described "hellion" as a youngster, Lawrence found release in performing. He was playing at music jamborees at 15 and in honky-tonks at 17, learning, he says, "what it takes to keep them on the dance floor through four or five sets."

He moved to Nashville in 1990 in a 10-year-old Toyota Corolla that had, he says, "about 250,000 miles on it, expired tags, no insurance, only three cylinders and a fan with a piece of wire around it to cool the car." He was a huge fan of Keith Whitley, Waylon Jennings and Merle Haggard, and he idolized George Strait, complementing those influences with an appreciation for Southern rock, which he knew held a special place in the hearts of his honky-tonk audiences. He was also taken by a country tradition that was then finding its chief manifestation in Randy Travis.

Lawrence adopted elements from all of these sources, and his striking vocal instrument - distinctively country with a cutting edge - earned him attention from the beginning. While working a series of side jobs, he entered singing contests around town, regularly winning first prize. A live appearance on a Kentucky radio station and a showcase at Nashville's famed Bluebird Café led to his 1991 signing to Atlantic Records.

Lawrence's debut album, *Sticks And Stones* (1991) boasted four Top 10 country hits and launched him into the forefront of the decade's young talent. Journalists praised his style and fans pushed sales of the album to platinum certification. He proved he had the goods on the road as well, being named SRO's Best New Touring Artist in 1993.

As if that weren't enough, his second album, the double-platinum *Alibis* (1993), spawned four straight #1 smashes - the title cut, "Can't Break It To My Heart," "My Second Home" and "If The Good Die Young" - and earned raves everywhere from GQ to Newsweek. "That got us past the sophomore jinx," Lawrence says with a grin. During the mid-'90s, he was among the most-played artists in all genres.

Yet another quartet of major hits rose from the platinum *I See It Now* (1994), including "If The World Had A Front Porch" and "Texas Tornado." Then, Lawrence hit a creative and sales peak with "Time Marches On," a Bobby Braddock-penned blockbuster that led the 1996 album of the same name to double-platinum status and earned Lawrence nominations at all the major awards ceremonies.

Lawrence's next album, 1997's *The Coast Is Clear*, produced the trademark hit "Better Man, Better Off." It preceded *Lessons Learned* (2000), which found the singer re-energized by his country roots. Both discs earned critical praise and kept Lawrence's radio presence and catalog sales chugging along.

It's no surprise that over the years Lawrence has received widespread recognition: He was named Billboard's Top New Male Vocalist in 1992, garnering the Academy Of Country Music's Top New Male Vocalist trophy a year later; he earned the Country Weekly Golden Pick Awards' Video Artist Of The Year prize in 1995 and its Editor's Choice Platinum Pick crown in 1996, among other honors.

Lawrence has produced his own and others' work and co-wrote a number of the songs he's recorded, including "If The World Had A Front Porch" and "Can't Break It To My Heart." Moreover, he has had considerable impact beyond the record industry. Lawrence contributed the song "Renegades, Rebels And Rogues" to the *Maverick* soundtrack and has starred in two CMT specials, one of which included footage from a USO tour that saw him entertain troops in Kosovo. He also co-produced nine of the 13 songs on *The Civil War: The Nashville Sessions*, a collection of songs written for the Broadway theater production "The Civil War: An American Musical Event." It features Travis Tritt, Deana Carter, Trace Adkins, Kevin Sharp, Michael English, Trisha Yearwood and John Berry.

Lawrence has always been active in charitable causes, and he is annually at the helm of two events that are especially meaningful to him: a homecoming concert in his hometown that funds the Tracy Lawrence Foundation and a golf tournament in Texarkana, Texas, benefiting both the Tracy Lawrence Foundation and the local chapter of the Alzheimer's Assn. Lawrence's foundation has endowed scholarships and, most recently, provided funds to equip a high school computer science lab, a room that has been named after him. Lawrence helped raise more than a million dollars for the fight against Cystic Fibrosis; he's participated in numerous fundraisers for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital; generated awareness and funds for CASA, a non-profit organization providing trained volunteer advocates to abused and neglected children caught up in the legal systems; and supported a lengthy list of the charitable causes of fellow celebrities and media outlets through live concert appearances, autograph signings, auction item donations, and interviews. "People have a duty to help each other out," he says. "I'm happy I can give something back to society through my efforts to raise funds and awareness for these important causes."

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## **TRACY LAWRENCE FOR THE LOVE SONG-BY-SONG**

### **FIND OUT WHO YOUR FRIENDS ARE**

We talked a great deal about which song would be the leadoff single, and it was a tough call but the message of this one really stood out. As you look behind you, you can tell who your friends are by who's been there when times are a little bit tough. This song feels autobiographical and, at the same time, it's a very universal message I felt like everyone could relate to.

### **JUST LIKE HER**

I wanted something that was a little more nostalgic, and this kind of had that old Buck Owens feel to it. I've never done anything like that, the true honky-tonk shuffles. I knew it would add real spice to the album. I'm really pleased with how it turned out.

## **YOU CAN'T HIDE REDNECK**

I think this has got strong commercial appeal. It's edgy in a rock kind of way, and I think it's got a huge appeal to large portions of the country, especially in the South and Southeast. It's sort of a reality check that many can identify with whether they choose to admit it or not.

## **FOR THE LOVE (with Brad Arnold from Three Doors Down)**

This is a fresh sound. It feels more contemporary with a pop edge than, I think, anything on the album, yet it doesn't veer so far off the path that it clashes with the rest of the material. It's a real good fit, and lyrically it's right where I want to be going. Its message is about being passionate about what you do, about caring about the craft, and what you've chosen to do with your life, being happy with that and proud of a job well done. Brad Arnold and I have become good friends. We've been searching for a song that made sense to record together. This song seemed to fit both our genres and our respective musical styles.

## **AS EASY AS OUR BLESSINGS**

This may be my personal favorite on the album. For so long now, I've been a fan of Mark Nessler's writing, and this song is another reason why. It's the most reflective of where I am in my personal life right now, and what it is I'm so thankful for.

## **SPEED OF FLIGHT**

I've been trying to write more on my own, but it often takes more structure than I have by myself—my schedule keeps me pretty scattered. But out on the road one day, with the quiet all around me, I got an idea and thought, "I'll just pick up my guitar and see if I can wrestle this thing down." The melody started coming, the hook line was good, and I worked on it about four hours. I was able to finish it by myself and I was proud of that.

## **ROCK AND A SOFT PLACE**

A lot of people I've played this for tell me it reminds them of some of my earlier songs. I don't know that I really saw that originally, but I can see now where it's reminiscent of songs like "Better Man, Better Off" and "Can't Break It To My Heart." It's a groove I slip into sometimes when I'm producing myself.

## **'TIL I WAS A DADDY TOO**

I tried every way possible while we were writing this song to make it about girls because I don't have any boys yet, but when we got on a roll with it, it took on a life of its own. It turned out to be about a father and a son, and it still hit a nerve with me just as a parent. It actually reminded me a lot of my own dad.

## **YOU'RE WHY GOD MADE ME**

We cut a smoking track on this, and it's one of the most fun things on the entire album. It all started off with fiddle player Aubrey Haynie in his little room in the studio noodling around on the instrument, and the thing he came up with became the intro riff, a massive gang lick that's just amazing. It's wonderful to watch that kind of thing unfold, and it's something I've never tired of being a part of...those magic studio moments when real creativity takes place.

### **JUST LIKE THAT**

This is just one of those fun songs I had in my publishing catalog. I remember doing the demo, and when I went in with my band to cut some sides, we did this one and I really loved how it turned out. People love to dance to swing tunes like this in clubs, so I thought it would be something fun to include on this CD.

### **FIND OUT WHO YOUR FRIENDS ARE (with Tim McGraw and Kenny Chesney)**

I had so much fun recording this record with two of my dearest friends. Tim and Kenny and I have talked for a long time about getting together in the studio, so when I found this song I sent it to them. We just let our guard down for a couple of hours, recorded and hung out a while, and found that we picked up right where we left off the last time we were together. It's grounding. It was fun, like turning the clock back for a moment. It got us talking and laughing and reminiscing about our lives and the friendship we've shared over the years. We knew each other before we could afford more than hotdogs and fried potatoes, back when we were all struggling musicians hoping for a chance to step into the spotlight.