

Billy Currington Bio

Billy Currington has come a long way from working construction and living in a tiny attic apartment during his early days in Nashville. In the decade since he made his debut with the top ten hit “Walk a Little Straighter,” the Georgia native has parlayed his rich, emotion-laden tenor and unerring song sense into some of the country format’s most memorable hits, including such No. 1s as “We Are Tonight,” “Hey Girl,” “Good Directions,” “Must Be Doin’ Something Right” and “People Are Crazy.”

Currington’s songs have always been snapshots of life. His music is steeped in truth and possesses a relatability that makes his audience feel like they could drink a beer or catch a few fish with the curly-haired country boy. Currington has that heartfelt everyman quality that lends emotional weight to whatever he’s singing whether it’s a tender ballad or a rollicking party anthem. He demonstrates his ability to render both those scenarios and all points between on his fifth studio album *We Are Tonight*.

Led by the fast-climbing No. 1 single “Hey Girl,” *We Are Tonight* is filled with songs that evoke both wistful reflection and boisterous revelry with equal conviction. Throughout the collection, Currington exudes the easy going charm that has become his trademark yet also possesses a maturity and confidence that comes from a decade of churning out hits and earning accolades. He won the “Hottest Video of the Year” honor at the fan-voted CMT Music Awards for “Must Be Doin’ Somethin’ Right” in 2006, the same year he received an ACM nod for Top New Male Vocalist. His hit duet with Shania Twain, “Party For Two,” earned nominations from both the CMA and ACM, and “People Are Crazy” proved to be a career-defining hit that earned Grammy nominations for Male Country Vocal Performance and Best Country Song in addition to being nominated for Single and Song of the Year from the Academy of Country Music, as well as Single, Song and Video of the Year from the Country Music Association.

Currington could have continued in the same hit-making groove he had established with producer Carson Chamberlain, yet on *We Are Tonight* he steps out of his comfort zone. “This album is the first time that I ever worked with three different producers,” says Currington, who again partnered with Chamberlain and also engaged Dann Huff and Shy Carter. “Carson is one of the greatest producers in Nashville. I still enjoy making music with him and always will, but there were a couple of songs that I didn’t feel like fit Carson and I. So I called on Dann Huff, one of the magic men in Nashville. He’s a great producer, great guitar player and he just fit a couple of the songs perfectly.”

Currington was introduced to Carter by his former landlord. “He ended up living in their attic after I did and that’s how we met,” he says of Carter, who has collaborated with Nelly, Ashanti, Rob Thomas and co-wrote Sugarland’s No. 1 hit “Stuck Like Glue.” Currington decided to pay a visit to Carter in Los Angeles and wound up recording the final track for *We Are Tonight*, a quirky, up-beat love song titled “Hallelujah.” “Shy started laying down the beat and we started putting some guitars to it and by six o’clock the next morning we were done with the song,” Currington relates. “I put it at the end of the album because I thought the energy in the song and everything about it would be perfect to end the record.”

Carter joins Currington on the clever “Banana Pancakes.” “That was written by Jack Johnson, one of my favorite singer/songwriters,” Currington says. “It’s such a great laid back song. We recorded it and then I started thinking about background harmonies so Shy came in. He and Karyn Rochelle put the harmonies on. And if you listen to the end of ‘Banana Pancakes,’ it’s got a rap to it that Shy just laid down out of the blue. He didn’t write it or think about it or anything. He just walked up to the mic and said what it says and that’s how we got that.”

Currington cites “Hey Girl” as one of his favorite songs he’s ever recorded. “I was drawn to that song because of the amped up energy it has,” he says. “It was written by a couple of friends of mine, Rhett Atkins being one. I love that guy and he’s from Georgia. I always wanted to record one of his songs. He’s one of the first concerts I ever went to in Nashville. When I got the song and I had a choice. I could choose any producer out there to work this song. I thought Dann Huff would be perfect for this song, and he was. You hear that guitar in it. You hear the power of the drums. Everything about that recording – I’ll take a little credit, not much – but Dann Huff is the reason.”

“Hard to Be a Hippie” is a song that Currington discovered when he was surfing You Tube and ran across an acoustic performance by his pal Scotty Emerick. “I saw the great fan reaction and it’s a song I couldn’t get out of my head,” Currington says. “I called him up and I’m like, ‘Man, you’ve got to send me that Hippie song.’ My first thought when I was listening to the demo was this would be perfect to record with Willie Nelson. I mentioned it to Scotty and he’s like ‘Well I know Willie pretty good’ so he mentioned it to Willie and I ended up meeting Willie on his bus one afternoon. We played it for him and he was in. We went to Texas and recorded his vocal and that’s how ‘Hard to Be a Hippie’ came about.”

The anthemic title track is the first tune Huff sent Currington after the two agreed to work together. “I listened to it 20 times,” Currington says excitedly. “About the third time, I called Dann saying, ‘Man, count me in!’ I couldn’t wait. I was really, really antsy to get in the studio with this song. There was something about it. I knew he would bring a really amped up production on it and make it sound like it was in an arena or stadium. And he did. It came out exactly like I wanted it to.”

“Wingman” is a fun up tempo tune about barroom camaraderie gone awry when the wingman actually steals the girl and takes her home. Currington’s personality-packed delivery makes each track on *We Are Tonight* a memorable event. Among the album’s many highlights is “23 Degrees and South,” a tune that has already become a fan favorite in his live shows. “It sounds like a song that I could have written because it’s so much about me,” says Currington. “It’s about Key West and I go there quite often. I’ve spent so many days in the sunshine down there fishing and spear fishing, paddle boarding and just being a part of Key West. Everything about ‘23 Degrees and South’ explains my life and down there.”

The sea is in Currington’s soul and is a constant presence in his life and music. The Georgia born artist spent his early years on Tybee Island before his family moved inland to Rincon. He recalls his parents playing vinyl records by Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings and Kenny Rogers. His mom took him to see Rogers in concert when he was 10 and it proved to be a pivotal moment. “It was there that night I remember thinking, ‘man I’d love to be that guy. I’d love to be doing this,’” says Currington. “It was an amazing show, the energy in there and everything about it I never forgot.”

Like many country entertainers, Currington began singing in church. “I met this preacher when I was 17. I heard about this church and just went there. They had a rocking little band,” Currington remembers. The preacher invited him to sing the next week and Billy made quite an impression. Some of his musician friends from church asked him to sing with their band and then had to sneak the underage singer into clubs to perform. “It just started happening so fast,” he says. “The next thing you know I’m playing in a band and the preacher is taking me to Nashville.”

After that introductory visit, Currington decided Nashville was where he needed to be. He moved at 18 and began paying dues. He poured concrete and worked as a personal trainer at a gym during the day and played in bars at night. He began writing songs and singing on demos. “I was meeting all these songwriters. That led me into singing everybody’s songs. I was doing 10 demos a day,” he says. “Before you know it, I started getting deal offers from record labels.”

Currington signed with Mercury Records and released his self-titled debut in 2003. His first single, "Walk a Little Straighter," quickly established Currington as a singer/songwriter of depth and substance. The song peaked at No. 8 and he followed with "I Got A Feelin,'" which became his first top five. From there, the hits continued as his sophomore album Doin' Somethin' Right spawned his first No. 1 with "Must Be Doin' Somethin' Right" and his second No. 1 with "Good Directions." Released in 2008, his third album, Little Bit of Everything, featured five songs co-written by Currington. The Bobby Braddock/Troy Jones penned "People Are Crazy" became his third No. 1 and he followed that with a song he co-wrote, "That's How Country Boys Roll," which also hit the top of the charts. In September 2010 Currington released Enjoy Yourself, which included the No. 1 hits "Pretty Good at Drinkin' Beer" and "Let Me Down Easy."

We Are Tonight finds Billy Currington in peak form. The songs are sometimes whimsical, often poignant and always compelling. Seasoned by time and peppered with experience, his distinctive voice has never sounded better and he's a young man who appreciates the road he's traveled. He's humbled by the successes of his past yet always looking forward. "It's like you work so many years to get it and you finally got it," says Currington, who once again makes his home on Tybee Island. "I feel so blessed."