

Bryce Leatherwood Bio

Injecting new vitality into the country tradition, 24-year-old Mercury Nashville talent Bryce Leatherwood is a next generation traditionalist plugged firmly into the modern mainstream, with all the hallmarks of a rising star. But while he's come a long way in a short time, the singer-songwriter won't forget his raising.

"My music is a true representation of where I came from," he says with simple pride. "The early times in my life are my most fond memories, and really, I guess my life now is a translation of that. I want to live it every day, so I go and write it, I go and sing it when I'm on the road. It's just about keeping a connection to that place."

Gifted with a stop-you-in-your-tracks vocal and the warm, rumbling twang of his Woodstock, Georgia roots, that connection to home gives Leatherwood a deep reverence for the past – and also an open mind about what comes next. Now chasing a dream that began in the eighth grade when his father handed over a much loved Greatest Hits CD by Conway Twitty, much has changed, but some things have stayed exactly the same.

Solidifying his country-music obsession while bumping along in an old pickup on his granddad's farm, legends like George Jones, Merle Haggard and Conway Twitty crooned through fuzzy speakers, with their passion and conviction striking a chord. Those idyllic days set the stage for all that has followed. "There are a lot of influences in my life – but you can't hide the voice," Leatherwood says. "It's going to come out country no matter what."

Attending college in Statesboro, Georgia, it would be years before he discovered his own formidable voice. Leatherwood finally put it to use in 2021 (just four short years ago), forming a band and booking local gigs to pair country covers with flashes of his love for Curtis Mayfield, Stevie Ray Vaughn, The Allman Brothers Band and more. Soon, his booming vocal pushed the band out on to the Southeastern tour circuit, and as graduation neared, a fork in the road loomed. Enthralled with the rush of the stage and beginning to write his own songs, the future star could either put down his guitar and go get a job, or take a less-traveled route. He submitted his name for NBC's *The Voice* soon after.

"I was like 'It's either going to be landscaping or I'm going to try to chase this dream somehow,'" Leatherwood recalls. "So I literally sent in a YouTube video, and one shot in the dark changed my life."

Keeping fans and judges on the edge of their seat, the dark-horse contestant went on to win Season 22 in 2022 ... and then the real whirlwind began. Moving to Nashville in early 2023, he got to work developing his songwriting skills – learning alongside true masters of the craft – and applied that fan-favorite baritone with the single-minded authenticity he's always carried.

Hitting the road to headline his *Neon Does Tour* – a feeling he describes as "catching a bolt of lightning" each night – the up and comer also made an emotional debut at the Grand Ole Opry

(earning a standing ovation), and was named a 2024 Artist to Watch by *Music Mayhem* and *Country Now*. Now, after a series of story-building early tracks, his debut country radio single sets his creative heading.

Written by Brandon Lay, Jeff Middleton, and Neil Medley, the hazy twang rocker “Hung Up On You” hits like a cocktail of country roots and adventurous energy. Built on a fat-bottomed, fuzzed-out bass line, and featuring a rowdy bar-band stomp, Leatherwood’s swaggering vocal leads a tale of romantic intoxication he sees as his life in a song.

His debut album is the proof. A mix of originals and expertly crafted outside cuts, Leatherwood lets his resonate vocal loose over 12 diverse tunes – centered on his rock solid country roots, but ranging from the pure-emotion of classic balladry to an expanding genre’s bleeding edge. Taking a hands-on approach with producer Will Bundy (Riley Green, Ella Langley), Leatherwood threads the needle between the timeless and trendy with surefooted ease.

“I wanted to cover a lot of ground, and this is a sound I don’t think many people have heard yet,” he says. “It might have been a risk, but I think if you’re going to go for it, you better go big. Every single one of those songs has an inspiration somewhere in my life.”

Tracks like the rollicking “Neon Does” are a prime example, as Leatherwood taps his live show for a sweep-you-off-your-feet Saturday-night anthem. Others like “In Lieu of Flowers” proclaim his eternal honky tonk allegiance – requesting Joe Diffie and a longneck toast when his time finally comes – and the tongue-in-cheek attitude continues on “The Finger,” with Leatherwood tapping the fun side of country tradition for a sing-along send-up to getting shafted by love.

Meanwhile, the transformative jam “Something Bout A Girl” tracks the making of a man – with the help of a woman’s touch, and a rich country-soul sway. And while the feel-good “God Made” mixes twangy Telecaster with tasteful beats for a tale of physical perfection, the bluesy vocal stunner “What If She Does” imagines losing it all. Likewise, Leatherwood calls the tender ballad “Shenandoah” the embodiment of natural beauty.

Elsewhere, “The One My Daddy Found” (co-written with Lynn Hutton and Chris Dubois) offer a touching tribute to the search for a soul mate – inspired by the decades-long love shared by his parents – while the easy-rolling “Still Learning” pairs the wisdom of an open mind with a call to trust your gut. And though “Where the Bar Is” pops a country-rock top on a quick-hitting tale of late nights and open tabs, tracks like “Cheap Cologne” trace the other side of the story – an aching done-me-wrong anthem nodding to Leatherwood’s classic favorites.

To Leatherwood, the style might vary and the setting might change, but it all points back to who he is and where he’s from – not to mention the things he sees as most important. He might just be getting started, but he knows enough to keep that front and center.

“I want people listening to walk away knowing country music is not going anywhere,” he says. “Country music’s here. The next generation’s here – people who believe in country music. Let’s do this thing.”

