

JON PARDI

WRITE YOU A SONG

BIOGRAPHY

“If you can take a piece of life and put it in a song,” says Jon Pardi, “it’s going to be a good song—especially if it’s from the heart.”

It’s a formula he has followed since his days learning his craft with bands in his native California, and in the years since, he has become, both on stage and in the studio, one of country music’s most exciting young performers.

Pardi and co-producer/collaborator Bart Butler have captured both the craft and the energy in an eleven-song introduction that harkens to classic country’s best musical and lyrical elements while sounding as fresh as anything out there.

Write You A Song contains both of Pardi’s breakthrough hits—“Missin’ You Crazy” and “Up All Night”—as well as tracks that veer from pure honky-tonk and party songs to tales of love and romance. The bottom line, though, is pure, stage-worthy high energy.

“All I ever wanted to do coming to Nashville,” Pardi says with his characteristic grin, “was to write rowdy, in-your-face, straight country music, and that’s what this album is.”

The album’s title track packs the kind of punch that marks Pardi as heir to a honky-tonk line that runs through Buck Owens and Dwight Yoakam, and its spare instrumentation brings a purist’s grit to heartfelt tales of road life. “What I Can’t Put Down” is an ode to the addictive nature of cigarettes, alcohol, love and, above all, music. “Trash A Hotel Room” is not, as might be expected, a tale of road excess, but rather a tale of two lovers getting back to basics, and “Happens All The Time” makes a terrific song out of a pick-up line. If there is a bit of autobiographical philosophy here, it is in “Chasin’ Them Better Days,” an infectious look at hope and dreams in the worlds of music and love. “Love You From Here” is a bluegrass-influenced break-up song with an upbeat attitude, and Pardi slows down just long enough to sing “That Man,” a moving tale of friendship-turned-love.

Life and love, truth and energy wind their way all through *Write You A Song*, which showcases a young artist who is clearly no ordinary newcomer, something many of his fellow artists have noted.

“People ask me who I’d like to open up for,” Pardi says with a smile, “and I tell them I’ve already been lucky enough to have opened for several artists I look up to.”

It’s a list that includes Alan Jackson, Dwight Yoakam, Dierks Bentley, Gary Allan and Luke Bryan, singers who appreciate the kind of influences Pardi brings to the table—echoes of the crisp Bakersfield sound of Owens and Merle Haggard, hints of the driving beat of Waylon Jennings and the excitement of Jerry Lee Lewis. He brings all of it together and puts his unique stamp on it, topping it off with just a bit of swagger that gives a little edge to his undeniable appeal.

Like his heroes, Pardi is a longtime road warrior, a veteran of four-set shows and constant travel, someone who brings a wealth of experience to bear every time he steps in front of a microphone. He has gone on tour with kindred spirit and labelmate Eric Church, and earned a slot on the Austin City Limits Festival, one of the country world's most prestigious venues. His on-stage charisma and accessibility, his polished yet raucous sound, and his well-crafted and infectious songs earn him new fans wherever he goes.

The territory he covers on the CD—road life and the ups and downs of romance—has been the subject matter of many country classics through the decades, but Pardi, whose gift is a feel for atmosphere and an eye for detail, makes it all fresh and gives the project his indelible stamp.

A natural storyteller, Pardi writes what he knows, spinning tales born of his dues-paying days in the area around his native Dixon, California, and bringing it all together into a strong, cohesive musical statement.

All in all, it's an album by an artist who knows just where his strengths lie—the excitement, experience and songwriting skills that fueled his relatively fast rise to publishing and label deals after his arrival in Nashville are all present. His one-of-a-kind voice brings a positive edge to even the toughest emotional scenarios.

"I really don't have any negative songs," reveals Pardi. "It always feels good with me so when you come to a show or listen to the record, you're going to have a good time."

It's not hard to see where the earliest seeds of Pardi's approach lie. His musical journey began with a grandmother who loved classic country and had a karaoke machine in the house. Young Jon developed a special fondness for Hank Jr. and the two Georges—Jones and Strait—along with Alabama, Dwight Yoakam and Mark Chesnutt. He was just 7 when he sang "Friends in Low Places" for all he was worth at his dad's 30th birthday party at a local Legion hall.

At an even younger age, he walked out of a children's music class and asked for guitar lessons so he could sing like his heroes. Pardi was writing songs by 12 and playing them in a band at 14. A self-confessed "class clown," he was more interested in writing songs and playing guitar than in either sports or homework. After high school, he and buddy Chase McGrew began playing acoustically in small bars around Dickson and Winters.

"Those were some of the fun times," Pardi shares, "and that's when I learned that slow songs don't go over when you're trying to sell beer, so I learned a lot of really up, fast songs that I still like doing today."

The two moved to Chico to go to Butte Junior College, where Pardi started the band Northern Comfort.

"We played together for three years and it was a lot of fun," but when they disbanded temporarily, Pardi continues, "I went home and started saving money. I'd known I was going to move to Nashville since I was 19," and after visits to Music City where he met a few people, he knew the time was right.

"You need to have a level head to move here," he says, "to be confident enough to say, 'I'm going to do it.'" I felt like I was ready and I started out on February 23, 2008, with my mom crying as I drove away."

Pardi took his dog, his PA system and the \$7,000 he'd saved, which he claims he "went through pretty quick." Using a credit card to pay the fee for lifeguard training, he used that new skill to earn money until he landed a publishing deal, just 18 months after moving. Two of his first collaborations, "Write You A Song" and "Fighting The Fool," were instrumental in landing him his publishing deal, and he took full advantage of the opportunity to write for money.

"I did a lot of co-writing," he says. "There were a lot of headache mornings but I still showed up, and a lot of good songs came on days like that."

As demos he wrote and sang started making the rounds on Music Row, label execs, including those at Capitol Records, began asking, "Who is this Jon Pardi?"

"We started doing showcases," explains Pardi, "and about the third one we did with the full band, Mike Dungan gave me a handshake afterward and said, 'Let's do it.'"

As they talked about potential producers, Pardi suggested that he and his friend and collaborator Bart Butler, who had done the demos that had brought him this far, do the album.

"They [Capitol Records] said all right, we cut four songs and they loved them," Pardi shares. "Then we went back in and finished it up."

The key from his perspective, he says, is "knowing what you want. I had what I wanted to sound like in my head. It's what made doing the demos and then the record so much fun. You take a piece of this influence and a bit of that and make it your own. So much happens in the studio if you've got your lyric and song melody down."

Given the quality of his heroes, the strength of his talent and the depth of his experience, the album became just the right showcase. From there, he says, "it's about surrounding yourself with great people. If you show Nashville you've got talent and if you do it right, they'll help you make that talent even better and help you get it out there."

Life perspective gives his success a special sweetness.

"I know I'm lucky to be doing what I'm doing," he says appreciatively. "I could be back working construction or installing air conditioners in an attic that's at 115 degrees. There are a lot of people who work awfully hard to make a dollar. I'm glad the hard work I'm doing now goes into something I love this much. It makes me really happy to be here doing music."

As he makes his mark on a national level, that's a feeling being shared by more and more new Jon Pardi fans.