



Interview: Heidi Duss / Foto: Marco Duss

Interview with the Poverty Neck Hillbillies at the CMA Festival 2007, Nashville

Q: You all come from the surrounding area of Pittsburg Pennsylvania, did you always know each other?

A: No, we all kind of grew up differently, but together at the same time. We grew up in different areas and now, here we are.

Q: Two of you played Polka, how did you get into Country Music, its completely different?

A: I worked at our county fairgrounds back home, where I had one of my first experience of seeing a country act and met Kenny Chesney in 1998. It was nothing really large, but real cool, everybody was down to earth and it made me want to do it. So I quit playing Polka and went to Country.

Q: Do you still play Polka sometimes?

A: Yes, actually I just got married and had a polka Band at my wedding.

Q: One of you also is into Southern Rock and another into 80's music?

A: Yes, everyone in this group has a slightly different musical background and interest. When you blend it all together, you get the Povertyneck Sound. We don't really know why it works, it just does. We don't question it.

Q: Chris, you came to the name “PovertyNeck Hillbillies“ thru a sign you found?

A: Yes, the name came from a nickname of the farm we had, PovertyNeck. It got the nickname thru the depression and in the 70’s my father bought a Pickup Truck, drove my brothers around in parades and they called themselves PovertyNeck Hillbillies. I found the sign that they used on the side of the Truck, hence the name. The sign also ended up on our video, it gets held up at the end by a child. It’s the original wooden sign that Dad had on his old Truck.

Q: Speakin of videos, you have one out so far, “Mr. Right Now”?

A: Yes, and it did very well for us too. We’re very happy with it. It was written by a good friend of ours from Pittsburg, Bob Corbin. So it is nice to keep everything in the hometown as well, Pittsburg. The video was in the top 20 for thirteen weeks, so we got quite a bit of exposure from that.

Q: Is not the Quarterback from the Pittsburg Steelers in the video as well?

A: That’s right, big Ben is in it.

Q: You were named the official nr. 1 Band for the Pittsburg Steelers, is that right?

A: That’s right. We got to play the pep rally before they went to the super bowl, that was our first Stadion show. We got to play for 30 to 35,000 people . It was quite an experience for us. We are all diehard Steeler fans and to get the opportunity to course our music, our living with something that we’re equally as passionate about, which is football, was a great day.

Q: Do you play at every Game of the Steelers?

A: No, once a year we go in and sing the national anthem. You know, out on that field, with 65,000 people screaming, it gets you goosebumps.

Q: You have one CD released, is there another following soon?

A: We’re working on new music right now. We just got a new management, we are looking for a new record label. We’re working on brand new music, as a matter of fact, we’re on the third song, started up on Monday, while we’re down here. Hopefully, by the end of the year, we’ll have a new project out. It would be nice, we’re looking forward to that.

Q: How do you get your songs, do any of you write your own?

A: We write and we also take outside songs.

Q: Are the songs you write about things that happen to you?

A: We write about everyday things, something you go thru, someone you see, something that happens, the obvious.

Q: What is your next CD going to be like?

A: I would say, very high energy, lots of high energy songs.The new ones are really going to be power bound. So we are excited about the new stuff that comes out, because it shows a lot of maturity from us growing up of what we did in the last part.

Q: What do you expect from the future?

A: Hopefully in the next six months, a new record label and a new home. Getting a new single out. We are looking to get back out, being accessible to the nation, like nationwide.

Q: Are you looking to go to Europe?

A: We'd love to go over there.

Q: What is the story behind the homeless guy that locked you out of your tour bus?

A: Now this is really funny, on the way down here, we said to each other we need to do something to get our names in the media. This is the best thing that could have happen to us. Actually, it was not a homeless guy, it was a drunken individual. It was 5 in the morning and I was the first out of bed. He says to me "hey man, you got a beer?" So, thinking that he was a friend of somebody on the bus, I went to the refrigerator, cracked a beer and gave it to him. He takes a couple of swigs and passes out. Then Abby comes out and he is very blunt and says "who are you"? The guy says to him "you have a light for my cigarette"? Abby says "who are you"? So the guy goes thru all of the name droppings, naming all these people that perhaps brought him on the bus. We did not know any of them. We finally ask the guy to step outside and take a look at the massive picture of the band on the side of the bus. Abby says to this man, "do you know any of these guys"? He says "no". Abby says, "get out". So we go to shower, come back to find the bus door is locked. I'm thinking Abby locked it, so that this guy would not get back in. I unlock the bus door, walk back to the couch, walk back up in the front lounge and there he is again, he had taken his boots off and he had locked the door behind so we could'nt get in. We had to throw him out a second time. Well, Abby did, he is more intimidating than me.