



Interview: Globalcountry.Media Heidi Duss / Foto: Marco Duss

Interview with Rick Monroe CMA Fest Nashville, 11.06.2017

What got you into the music business?

I always loved music, even as a little kid. My family were big music fans. My brother was head of new music trans so he tried me out on all kinds of different stuff. For some reason, I'm the one that stuck to it, all the rest of my family are lawyers, I'm the outlaw.

What inspired you to become a songwriter?

My mom used to be fan to Jim Croce and James Tylor, real songwriters, you know the John Denver kind of stuff. Then I realized, Country music is all about Songwriting, so I kind of evolved into it.

Did you start singing before you started writing or was it the other way around?

It happened about the same time, I started out playing drums, then I thought this is too much gear to carry, there's got to be more fun. Then I started to teach myself guitar and as soon as I did that I started writing right away.

Do you write all your songs?

Yes pretty much, we'll do a couple of covers once in a while, if I find a song that really works with me I'll do it. But on the CP's I wrote everything.

How do you choose your songs?

It could be anything, it could be a saying or a phrase. "Great minds drink alike", which was on the last CD, came from a T-shirt. Ryan Griffin was telling us about his vacation and he said man I never seen this side of my life, I thought this is the hook, so I wrote "This side of You", which is the single right now. Always keep your eyes and ears open.

Can you tell me something about your EP Gypsy Soul?

"Gypsy Soul" is actually a prelude song that we put in the set about a year ago and it really seemed to resonate. Looking at my Bio, I've lived in Florida, England, Connecticut, Kansas, North Carolina, California and now in Nashville, we've traveled about one hundred thousand miles last year, so pretty much I am a Gipsy, it kind of resonates with who I am. It is a six song EP, "Gypsy Soul" I wrote by myself, the other songs I've co-written with some great writers. "This side of You" was written with Ryan Griffin and Jason Duke. "Ease on Down" with Adam Craig and Michael Howard. "Moment Like This" with Jay Brunswick and Gary Ray. "Better" with Eric Torres and Michael Freeman. One of my favorite tracks is "Rage On", which I wrote with J.D. Shuff and that was completely out of left field. He took it on himself to record it and it just ended up on the EP.

What is the difference from your last CD and your current one?

Part is growth as an artist and experience. One of the greatest changes on how I approach music is, I was on tour with Lee Brice, after most shows everybody always came down to our bus wanting me to play music. "Ease on Down" was a crew favorite. One day Wayne Pauly pulled me aside and said to me, I've heard you on the bus and I've heard you live, I want to hear the guy on the bus next time you step up to the mike, the guy on the bus is relaxed, easy going, I want that guy. That changed my entire way of singing. That was a pivotal point in my growth and even in doing my new EP.

How many CD's do you have?

I have "Against the Grain" and a couple EP's, and some stuff we put out digitally, about three or four, maybe more.

How about videos?

We have a bunch of videos, the first video was "Midnight Rider", which was shot in Germany and Switzerland. We shoot all our footage overseas with our own cameras while we are there and then mix it together. Our last video was "Great Minds Drink alike."

Have you been to Switzerland?

Yes we have been in Thun and Zurich, we've done a bunch of shows over there.

With all your traveling, do you find some time for your family and friends?

It's just my wife and my dog, so when I'm home - I'm home, I don't go out much because of that. I don't have a lot of hobbies because we are so busy right now. I would love to go out and hunt or just shoot my guns, or go fishing but I don't have time.

You have appeared in every US State except Oregon so far, is that still so?

That is still so, it is nothing against Oregon, but for some reason we never been there. Therefore, Oregon If you want me, bring me on.

What do you think about the music business as it is today?

It's great, I think there are a lot of opportunities because of the internet. I know there are a lot of people that aren't happy with where country is going. But the beautiful thing is, Country is now like Rock used to be, a huge format, like Abba to ZZ Top was all considered Rock, that's what country is now. Country used to be very small, but now country is everything from Colt Ford, Florida Georgia Line to Jamey Johnson. I think it's cool. I think the fan base is growing, everybody brings in more fans and that is good for the whole thing.

What is the nicest experience you have had so far?

One of the most emotional moments is when we were touring Russia, I've done a private concert for Mikhail Gorbachev and afterwards he invited me to go and raise some money for the orphanages there. His wife had passed away and Jelzin's wife had the Frank Foundation, when we showed up at one of the foundations and wanted to do the show, they said no, you're not doing the show, the kids put together a show for you. All those kids were victims of Chernobyl, they were all severely disabled, they put on the most amazing show for us, we just sat there trying not to cry.

What is the biggest disappointment?

Hopefully I have not had that yet, but anything bad happening usually is for a reason and it ends up working out somehow.

What message would you like to give to the people?

The message would be, keep supporting the music, new music. Keep spreading the word if you like an artist, buy their stuff and / or promote them. Because with the industry as it is, it's our fans and our friends that create our success. Without them there's nothing. I love to create music and I hope it inspires people, but it is up to them to help spread the word. If you love an artist, share their post, look them up, go see them live, definitely go see them live.

