

Hayes to Share Brownsville Coast to Coast



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Photo Credit: Danny Day

Songwriter, musician, performer – Brownsville native Bryan Hayes begins his first nationwide tour this summer to promote his new album. Hayes stated that he will be “spreading Brownsville hospitality coast to coast.”

“Obviously ‘small town’ resonates pretty strongly in our music,” said Hayes in an interview with the States-Graphic. With themes centering on patriotism, family, God and community, Hayes’ songs reflect his experiences.

After moving to Brownsville around the second grade, Hayes grew up in Brownsville and began playing the guitar in college around 1992-1993. During his college years, he joined Bobby Stokely and Lane Lewis in Brownsville to form his first band, The Waiting. Hayes’ Brownsville roots continue to anchor him in small town principles. Referring to people in a town like Brownsville or Moscow, Tennessee where he lives now, Hayes stated, “They instill the value of the love of God, love of family and love of country.” In a lot of ways, according to Hayes, “They are closer than neighbors...closer than friends.”

Especially for Hayes' first album *Just a Man* (2004), Hayes' songs were inspired by growing up in Brownsville where he spent time with his family outdoors and in a friendly community. For instance, referring to some Southern car drivers, Hayes stated, "They just give you a friendly wave even though they have no idea who you are." He used this example of close community in the song "Small Town Amazing Grace," included in his latest album *Farther Down the Line*, released on May 26.

As Hayes' fourth studio album, *Farther Down the Line* incorporates definitive experiences in his life, including his childhood in Brownsville and most recently his military service in Iraq. As a member of the National Guard, Hayes identified his deployment in 2009-2010 as "the big event that kind of spawned this record." In fact, Hayes wrote about half the record while in the service. Even though he took a break from recording during that time, Hayes grew as a person and self-reflected in some of the songs in his new album. As a way for Hayes to continue to give back to his country, all sales proceeds from his single "I Wanna Run" go toward the Wound Warrior Project, and Hayes and his band will perform at fundraisers for the Project.

After returning to the States, Hayes committed full-time to his music career. Before serving in the military, Hayes was a schoolteacher and recorded his music on the side. Now, Hayes serves as a producer and engineer at Farmhouse Recording Studio in Moscow, Tennessee – a town much smaller than Brownsville. He has toured throughout the Southeastern and Southwestern U.S. with about 150-200 shows a year. This year he will visit California, Nevada and Colorado for the first time on his tour, which spans June through September. "Busy is good," commented Hayes on his new full-time work. "Like any small business, you have to build it up." So, touring away from home increases his exposure.

With the mix of mellow acoustics, traditional twang and upbeat tempos in his music, Hayes' unique sound has been commended by Grammy-winning Producer/Engineer Andy Hunt, *Music Row Magazine*, *The Memphis Flyer* and *Texas Radio*. "Most folks classify us as Americana," said Hayes in regard to the blend of influences in his music. According to the Americana Music Association, "Americana is contemporary music that incorporates elements of various American roots music styles, including country, roots-rock, folk, bluegrass, R&B and blues, resulting in a distinctive roots-oriented sound that lives in a world apart from the pure forms of the genres upon which it may draw." Brownsville roots indeed flow through his songs.

Hayes still visits his hometown periodically, as his parents, John and Linda Hayes, and other relatives in the Hayes and Garland families reside in Brownsville. Hayes will perform his new album in Brownsville on June 27 at the Faith, Hope and Love House at 7 p.m. Hayes suggested to visit his website at www.bryanhayesmusic.com to reserve a spot because of limited seating.

When asked about his favorite aspect of his work, Hayes responded, "Definitely the performing." Writing came in at a close second as the two often intertwine. Hayes stated that there is "no substitute to come in and get to play your songs." Hayes labeled performing his handcrafted songs in front of a live audience as "a tremendous gift." Hayes described his background in Brownsville and his current home in rural West Tennessee as "a more simple, more honest lifestyle." In his lyrics and in the reverberations of his guitar strings, Hayes shares such observations with audiences across

the nation. Yet Hayes noted, “There’s nothing like coming back home to West Tennessee to do a show.”