

Mp3 Todd O'Neill - Real Life



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Louisiana Country Artist Todd O'Neill releases his debut album with a rockin', soulful, heartfelt sound that captures his audience. 11 MP3 Songs in this album (35:02) ! Related styles: COUNTRY: Modern Country, COUNTRY: Country Pop People who are interested in Tim McGraw Keith Urban Trent Tomlinson should consider this download. Details: Down in Louisiana, when they're cooking up something in the kitchen, they tend to throw a little bit of everything in the pot. Applying that same homegrown creative philosophy to his life and to his music, singer/songwriter Todd O'Neill has concocted his own recipe for some seriously soulful, heartfelt and rockin' country music. Perfected in countless honky tonks and dancehalls in the region around his hometown of Hammond, just north of New Orleans, O'Neill's all-inclusive country music vision embraces everything from tear-in-your-beer ballads to flat-out country rock anthems, wrapped up in a tall, good looking package and delivered in a pure-country voice that sounds at once instantly familiar and like nobody you've heard before. Growing up in a musical melting pot, O'Neill was surrounded by a dizzying array of musical styles. "My mom listened to country, my brother listened to rock 'n' roll, my sister liked pop music and my dad, oldies," O'Neill says with a laugh. "Everybody listened to something different. So when I was little, I really didn't have a favorite genre." While he was absorbing all of his musical influences from the eclectic sounds around his house to the rhythms of the Big Easy to the south O'Neill was busy being a typical kid, concentrating on everything but music. "I think I've always been that country singer, even when I was two or three years old," he says. "I always loved to sing, but I didn't know I was good at it until I got out of high school and my friends started telling me I was good." His singing may have been restricted to the shower and "the typical karaoke stuff kids do," but O'Neill invariably found other ways to express his creative soul. A self-avowed "ham," he was known among friends to break out in a particularly inspired dance when the

spirit(s) moved him. Hitting the dance floor one night at a hometown club, his "Napoleon Dynamite" moves caught the attention of guitarist Scott Feske, who was onstage with his band, Big Cat Daddy. "Scott asked me where I'd ever learned to dance like that, and all my friends said, 'You ought to hear him sing!'" O'Neill recalls. "This was just a little club in Hammond on a Friday night. I got up and sang Travis Tritt's 'Here's a Quarter,' and I blew them away. That was the first time I was onstage, and I loved it. It was like an addiction." For O'Neill, that initial performance was the beginning of some important friendships, and, though he didn't quite know it at the time, the beginning of a great career in country music. Feske invited the young singer back, and O'Neill eventually joined the group on the road. Armed with the 110-proof power of their new singer's one-of-a-kind country voice and heartthrob appeal, Big Cat Daddy quickly morphed into Todd O'Neill and Big Cat Daddy, before the singer finally earned top billing as a solo artist. Feske left Big Cat Daddy a few years back, but he and O'Neill still regularly co-write songs together. Meanwhile, O'Neill and band have grown into one of the tightest, most compelling live acts in a region where the musical standards are high and the competition stiff. "A little south and west of here, the Cajun style of music is really big," O'Neill says. "It's hard to play in this area without an accordion, or a squeeze box as we call them. You've got to be on your A-game, so we keep things interesting and people keep coming out to hear us. I guess there's a certain appeal, because, around here anyway, we are so different." Ask any of his growing legions of fans, the throngs of country music lovers who hit the dance floor every time Todd O'Neill and Big Cat Daddy crank things up on a Saturday night. The band road-tight and ready to rock always kicks ass, but it's O'Neill the country singer that makes it happen. In the tradition of his role models Merle Haggard, Keith Whitley and especially Otis Redding O'Neill is totally committed to any song he's singing. "Otis was unique," O'Neill says. "He wasn't scared to go out on a limb and do what he felt, no matter if it was corny. That's what I've always liked about him. And I love Merle and Keith, but I really don't sound like them. Out of all the songs we do, every time we break out the Haggard or the Conway Twitty stuff, that's what really grabs people's attention. I think there's still a big market for that stuff." As he built his regional reputation at home, O'Neill was making regular trips to Nashville, actually moving to Music City for a year back in 2003 to get a feel for the business and to work on his songwriting. It was an invaluable experience that sent the fledgling artist back home and back to the drawing board. "Nashville really showed me how unprepared I was," O'Neill says. "At the time, I didn't realize my guns weren't loaded, but I spent a lot of time networking and finding

out what the deal was." Refueled, re-energized and armed with a world of experience and some world-class country songs, O'Neill is spending lots of time in Nashville these days, working with veteran producer Jim Allison on his forthcoming debut release for Aria Records Nashville. An artist at his creative peak, O'Neill draws on all of his influences once he gets in front of a microphone in the recording studio. "Country music today is like yesterday's rock n roll," he says. "Little Big Town with their harmonies, that's like the doo wop my dad used to listen to. And LeAnn Rimes' new single, 'Nothin' Better To Do,' is such a soulful tune, it reminds me of old R&B." His influences may be wide-ranging, but onstage and in the studio O'Neill's focus is unshakable, and whatever he sings is unmistakably, undeniably country. "On this album, we've got a little bit of everything pop, rock, old country, new country, classic rock and that's what my shows have always been," he says. "Everything from Otis Redding to Bon Jovi, everything and anything, and I think that's what country music has become. Any genre of music that welcomes Van Zant, the Eagles, and Bon Jovi, I'm proud of that and I'm embracing that."

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