

Mp3 Jarrod Johnson - Jarrod Johnson



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An artist's artist whose country music is unconfined. 12 MP3 Songs in this album (42:07) ! Related styles: COUNTRY: Contemporary Country, COUNTRY: Traditional Country People who are interested in Kevin Fowler Dierks Bentley Craig Morgan should consider this download. Details: Jarrod Johnson Bio: The Roads Led Back to Nashville Youve got to admit theres something laudable about a six-year-old kid who makes his public bow into country music by singing a Shel Silverstein lament about being swallowed by a boa constrictor. Such cheekiness bears watching. Jarrod Johnson has traveled many a bumpy road and faced a lot snakes since that long-ago recital in his hometown of Coon Rapids, Minnesota. Now hes taking his music to the world. Recognized initially for his songwriting, Johnson has just released his first single as a recording artist. Its called Empty Pillow. Coming soon is his debut album, Jarrod Johnson, on Y. I. Oughta Records. It was his eagerness to impress his country music-loving father that first drew Johnson into the spotlight. My older sister started taking guitar lessons when she was seven or eight years old, he recalls. I was around five at the time. My dad always had the radio on listening to country music. Hed spent a lot of his childhood in Elizabethtown, Kentucky, where hed picked up a huge love for bluegrass. When I heard all these songs and saw how much he loved them, I thought, this is what I want to do. I was jealous when my sister started playing. So I just pestered my parents until they gave in and let me take lessons, too, even though they thought I was too young. It wasnt long afterward that he sought to dazzle his classmates with Boa Constrictor. That, he says with a grin, set up the rest of my school career nicely. Given his background, its no surprise that Johnson would be familiar with the obscure Silverstein novelty song that Johnny Cash had recorded in 1966. My dad had tons and tons of records, he says, and my grandmother had quite a collection of 78s all these old Ernest Tubb and Bill Monroe songs. Shed let my dad borrow them once in a while, and hed bring them home and play them

for me. For my grandmothers 50th wedding anniversary, I learned to play every single song on a Hank Williams Luke the Drifter album. As with most songwriters, Johnsons earliest effort grew out of heartbreak. I wrote my first song when I was 12, he says, after my sixth-grade girl friend broke up with me on the last day of school. I could probably still play the song, but Im never going to. It was really bad. My older sister loved it, but my little sister made fun of me. Still, thats how I discovered I had a love for songwriting. In junior high and high school, Johnson divided his enthusiasms between music and basketball. I played on various all-state and all-star teams and traveled all over the country, he says. In the end, I wasnt good enough to make the pros, but I had a few decent scholarship offers. But music was calling, too. I had already started playing in some bands that were actually working in bars. I was still in high school and underage, but these places would make exceptions for me to come in and play. I played guitar and was the lead singer in a band that did mostly coversbut also a couple of originals I had written. We played mostly in Minneapolis and St. Cloud and into northwest Wisconsin. Johnson took a couple of shots at college, but music always got in the way. I was always having gigs pop up and then Id start missing classes. Then he got the bright idea of advancing his music career by getting into radio. He signed up for a nine-month program at Brown Institute in Minneapolis. Before he could complete it, though, he got a job at WXCE, a small AM outlet in Wisconsin. A couple of months after starting at that station, Johnson says, I met a guy named Ron Avis, who was then Randy Travis bus driver. We met backstage at the Hoedag Country Music Festival in Rhinelander, Wisconsin, and hit it off right away. Ron and I got to talking about the direction country music was going, and I found out he was a songwriter, too. Hes already had a couple of Randy Travis cuts and later he got a cut on Daryle Singletarys first album. After hearing a few of his songs, Avis invited the 20-year-old Johnson to come to Nashville to co-write with him. He taught me how the craft works and how to play on words, Johnson says. I never really knew what a hook was until I started writing with Ron. A few months into his Nashville venture, Johnson returned to Minneapolis to visit it family and wound up staying. There was a band up there called High Noon that had been around forever. They needed a lead singer, and I knew they worked a lot and made good money. So I took the job and began making a living doing that. Occasionally, I would come back to Nashville to check things out. While he was working with High Noon, Johnson got married. His wife thought it might be a good idea for them to move to Nashville. We finally saved enough money, and she got a job transfer to Memphis. That was as close as we could get to Nashville at the time. It was in

Memphis, Johnson explains, that his drinking problem became too big to ignore. I had a bad habit of starting to drink and then waking up in various other states. I did everything I could to make sure that marriage didnt work out. When his marriage tanked, Johnson came back to Nashville and moved in with Avis. But only briefly. I decided to get out of music, he says. It seemed obvious to me that I couldnt do music and still lead a good life. He then drifted to Oklahoma and for the next three years made his living installing home security and audio systems. Right when I decided to quit, I had this idea for a song called Closer Than They Appear. Its still my songpluggers favorite. I wrote it in about 15 minutes. Then I put my guitar in its case and didnt pick it up again for three years. Johnson quickly learned, however, that Oklahomas about the last place to live if you want to forget about music. In Oklahoma, they played a lot of the red-dirt and Texas music on the radio that has really influenced the direction Im taking with my music now. It was there that I found out that Deryl Dodd was still alive and well. Cross Canadian Ragweed was big there. And Kevin Fowler. They were still playing Bob Wills songs! It was awesome. It was something fresh, something I wasnt hearing on mainstream radio. Tempted though the music was, Johnson decided he would return to Minneapolis. I made up my mind to just be normal for the rest of my life and not even worry about music. I wasnt there for two weeks when Ron called me. Hed quit writing and had started a company that cleaned carpets on tour buses. He convinced me that now that my head was cleared up I should move to Nashville and try it again to push his catalog and my own songs. Johnson took Avis offer and resettled in Music City in August of 2006. I immediately started jumping in and playing every writers night that I could, he says. The idea of being an artist still wasnt of much interest to me because I was so worried about the lifestyle that comes along with it. To help Johnson support himself and his songwriting, Avis got him a job with a company that built and leased tour buses. It was a new company, Johnson explains, and I worked my way to the top of the ladder quite quickly. John Christie is the guy who owns the company. Hed spent years working for Image Management and had also done some publishing at API. Sony Music had hired him to manage Deryl Dodd when Deryl first got going at Columbia. Hed also managed Craig Morgan back in his Atlantic Records days. Ultimately, though, Christie decided to leave management for the relative serenity of the bus business. For a long time, Johnson kept his musical ambitions quiet around Christie. Then one day he played some of his songs for him. Christie was so impressed that he agreed to set up a publishing co-venture with Johnson. John introduced me to Deryl Dodd, and now hes one of the best friends I have. Johnson had long admired Dodds musicand once he

admired it too much. About 12 years ago, he says, when I was still drinking, I got thrown out of a bar in downtown Nashville because somebody was making fun of Thats How I Got To Memphis. [the Tom T. Hall song Dodd released in 1996.] That really ticked me off. So I stood up for it and started a fight. Dodd has reciprocated, albeit less violently. Deryl pushed me to be an artist, Johnson says. He heard something in me I wasnt sure about myself. And hanging out with Craig Morgan so much helped me see that you can be an artist and still be somewhat normal. Just beware of those boa constrictors.

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