

Mp3 Stayton Bonner - Think I'm Gonna Move To Australia



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"Stayton has an artist's soul and a poet's eye. He's one of the most distinctive writers I've heard in a long time." -Hayes Carll 11 MP3 Songs COUNTRY: Country Folk, FOLK: Modern Folk Details: Since placing second out of over three hundred fifty entries in 2004's Merlefest songwriting contest, Stayton Bonner has been busy. Buoyed by the experience, Bonner wrote and recorded *Think I'm Gonna Move to Australia*, an album of original material as unusually refreshing as the song that won the young songwriter a ticket to the premier Americana music festival in the first place. The song they picked is called *Me and My Poodle*, Bonner explains with a smile. Growing up, my family had a standard poodle named Willie. My Mom had researched this dog book and concluded that poodles were supposedly the most intelligent breed. A couple of nights later, after Willie woke up the household barking at his own reflection in a dimly lit window, we realized the book may have been a little off. Ostensibly, the songs a story about a man and his poodle, but it also addresses the difficulties of growing up different in a small town. Born and raised in the rural outskirts of Henderson, Texas, Bonner grew up in a household that placed an importance on the arts. My earliest memory is reading a book in my Mom's lap, Bonner recounts. Growing up in a rural area, my brothers and I didn't have any neighborhood kids to play with, so it was important to be good at amusing ourselves from pretty early on. Besides reading, music offered a low-maintenance means of preoccupation. Initially, Mom made me take piano lessons, and I hated it, Bonner explains about his musical beginnings. I told my parents I thought the piano was boring and that I wanted to play guitar like Eric Clapton. So, the next Christmas I got an ancient six-string acoustic they'd taken from some ancient relative's attic. My parents didn't want to buy me a new guitar, because they weren't sure if I'd stick with it. For the next couple of years, I'd come home from school every day, turn on the radio, and try to figure out all the songs I was hearing. While attending boarding school in Washington, D.C., Bonner started

listening to country and bluegrass music. I was homesick in D.C. when a friend of mine played me Guy Clarks Old No. 1 album, Bonner says. I was already leaning more towards acoustic stuff like the early Grateful Dead, and the way Clarks songs told a complete story or gave a lucid snapshot of someone really had an impact on me. His music led me to Dylan, Kristofferson, Hank, and further back. The whole idea of the solitary songwriter just seemed kind of romantic and cool to me when I was stuck studying algebra in a Washington, D.C. blizzard. After high school, Bonner moved to Austin where he studied English at the University of Texas. While attending school, he began writing songs and even recorded an early album. But upon graduating, Bonner found himself with the same questions that most kids ask fresh out of school- What the hell do I do now? All my friends seemed to be either entering law school or going into the real estate business, Bonner says. About the only thing I did know was that I didnt want to do either one of those. Stuck in a stalemate, Bonner made an unusual move. Getting a work visa for Ireland, he left Texas with his backpack and guitar, and moved to the Irish west coast. Working odd jobs during the day, he played music in the pubs at night while starting to hone his stage abilities. Ireland had a really strong impact on me. I lived in Dunfanaghey, a small town on the northwest coast where there was a grocery/post office/hardware store and 8 pubs strung along one street, Bonner recounts. There wasnt much to do, so music was a real release and social glue for the locals there. I gave my best efforts at strumming along to their traditional music, and then played them Hank or Kristofferson songs in return. After a year of living abroad, Bonner moved back to Austin in January 2004. Playing songs for complete strangers in a foreign country really forced me to learn a lot more about myself, Bonner says about the experience. I came back a much better singer and writer, with a lot of new songs and the confidence to give the music career a real shot. Since placing second at last years Merlefest, Bonner has kept busy playing gigs in the Austin area while recording his new album Think Im Gonna Move to Australia. Featuring a sparse atmosphere of mandolin, guitar, and harmonica, the album puts a real emphasis on Bonners writing and melody without any pretense. I believe that less is more, Bonner explains. I wanted the album to be close to what youd hear if you saw me playing live, and I keep my stage setup pretty simple. Featuring stories about burned-out lovers, prison breaks, Australian dreams, and a poodle dog, Think Im Gonna Move to Australia is a remarkably original statement by a young artist. Im really proud of the record. Its been an unusual path getting to it, but I feel like everything Ive done has led me here for a reason, Bonner says. Im just excited to get it out there now.

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