

I Have A Confession To Make

By Donato (Danny) Pietrodangelo

I have a confession to make.

It's not easy.

First, let me make it clear: I have my creds.'

When I was about 12 my big sister took me to see Chubby Checker one afternoon at the Peppermint Lounge.

Been to two Rolling Stones concerts, was at the Atlanta Pop Festivals where I saw Janis Joplin, Led Zeppelin – and Jimmy Hendrix play the Star Spangled Banner on the 4th of July at midnight – to a massive fireworks show. It was real. Really,

I hitch hiked from Tallahassee to Palm Beach Pop Festival to see Jefferson Airplane, Steppenwolf, the Byrds, Sly, Vanilla Fudge and Country Joe.

Heck, I even sang in a band for three years. We were a big hit at Homestead Armory, under the roar of the B-52s. The bombers, not the band.

With that taken care of here it is:

I've become a country music fan.

I know what you're thinking: twang and beer and Tammy Wynette and pickup trucks and thanking God and waving flags and broken hearts and hot cowgirls

Granted, there's that – but it's more. It's real.

Sometimes a bit corny, frequently tender, often very funny, sometimes raunchy, as well as clever and insightful.

And it's unpretentious.

Sure, I *appreciate* Bruno Mars, Pink, Maroon 5, Prince's awesome performance at the MTV Music Awards.

But I *enjoy* country music.

Are any of those guys going to sing an ode to Red Solo Cups (Toby Keith): who loves how they stack but hate how they crack?

Take a listen. There are some great country musicians these days, some incredible vocalists – and Brad Paisley and Keith Urban are two of the best rock guitarists around.

And country offers some life lessons. Solid solutions to real problems.

Take spousal abuse. Dixie Chicks' solution: Earl's gotta die. Done with country panache – poison blacked peas

That high school beauty who looked down her perfect nose at everyone else. Pay back time. “For a good time call” and her phone number scrawled across the football stadium field.

And one of my personal favorites: Cheatin' boyfriend? Hell hath no fury like Carrie Underwood: keys the doors of his new 4-wheel drive, cuts her name into the plush leather seats, slashes all four tires and introduces his headlights to a Louisville Slugger. That'll make him think twice before stepping out on her again.

Then there's Brad Paisley's *Alcohol*. Is it a raise your glass drinking song or a put your glass down before you make a fool of yourself life lesson. Sure it helps white people dance, and it'll also make a party goer think he's hilarious with that lampshade on his head. Jimmy Buffet concert goers may wear shark fin hats. Huh. No match for a swinging and swaying and singing crowd -- dotted with lampshade headed fans.

There are poignant songs about soldiers going to war and not coming home, facing a terminal disease and living like you're dying, fathers talking to their sons about life and daddies telling their daughters' dates to have fun, be respectful and remember he'll be up still cleaning his gun when they get home

And I defy any father whose daughter is about to get married to hear “I loved her first” by Heartland and not sob. Because he did love her first, held her first – felt her first breath, saw her first smile, always his deepest love – and now he has to let her go.

I get teary-eyed just writing this. Whew.

Barely spoke to my son-in-law first two years after he took my little girl. (But it's all good now.)

The language puts it clean and concise. Toby Keith called 9/11 a sucker punch, something any guy can relate to.

And yes, like all music there's sex. Tanks tops and Daisy Dukes and sneaking off in the pickup, and to my discomfort – no horror – my sister jumping up at a country concert and joining the sing-along to the humorous ditty, “Get out of your clothes or get out of my car.” She got out of the car – in the song – not my sister

So, no award show meat dresses for me. No laments about Pimpin' Ain't EZ. No grandmas in fishnet stockings. No shirtless septuagenarians singing about my generation. No shaved head, rehab-repeating ex-Disney disasters.

Give me that country music. Any old way you choose it. (Okay, except for Loretta Lynn.)

Like when you're sitting in that tub, enjoying that glorious sunset, and your sweetheart is in a tub next to yours, could you whisper anything sweeter and spicier than a Toby Keith lyric: I ain't as good as I once was, but I'm as good once, as I ever was"

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