



Interview: Heidi Duss / Foto: Marco Duss

Interview with Dion Pride, Nashville 07.06.2013

You have a very famous father, did you always want to follow his footsteps?

Yes, absolutely, my father put a guitar in my hands when I was five years old. I started playing left handed and I remember him saying I'll have to change the strings on it. I wanted to keep that guitar so bad and I was afraid he would have to take it back to the store, so I changed over to the right side. Actually, he did me a favour, left handed guitars are way to expensive. But yes, when I was five, my father showed me the first three cords. I used to take the phonograph player and put Dad's records on, listened to them and pretend I was Dad. I have a good ear and I have perfect pitch. I learned the songs and played them in my room. And because I would play them day and night, my Mom tookd the phonograph player and put it on top of the dresser so I could not get to it. Then I started using chairs, dragging them in my room to get on top of them so I could reach the player. It would be in the middle of the night when I'd be putting the records on and start playing. All I knew was Dad played a lot, so I just practiced and practiced and practiced.

And it was clear that you wanted to play country music?

Yes, I always knew that I wanted to do this. I like all kinds of different music, my music background is very cultic. My Mother raised me listening to Jack Jones, Frank Sinatra, Mel Tormé, Herp Albert and the Tijuana Brass. Thru my brother I also listened to a lot of R & B. But my main influence has always been Dad. When I got older and went to college in North Texas State, I went to Jazz studies, so I got that in my background too. My

favorite is country, but I like doing different styles of music. I try to incorporate everything, because to me, when it is good quality music, there is a place for all of it. The way country has opened up lately musically, you can throw different styles of music into it now. There's some people that don't like that, they still like the more traditional country music. I still do traditional, the single "We all gotta Live here" that I released, is very traditional, it was the most requested song in Ireland. They are very passionate about their country there.

Is it easier or harder to start your own career with a famous parent?

It's a double ressort to be honest, it cuts both ways. It is difficult sometimes to get recognized for your own accomplishments and your own achievements. Yesterday I played over at one of the clubs here and one lady said, you know, you don't sound like your father. I said no, I'm not trying to sound like my father. I think I would be doing a disservice to him and it would not be honest to try to duplicate what he's done. He came up at a time when it was a perfect storm, with the civil rights movement and all that. There is only one Charley Pride and there is only one circumstance that could happen that way. But our voices are different, our deliveries are different. People seem to be very happy with my style and I like it that it is different from him. When I open up his shows, his fans are appreciative that I do my own style. Some people will come up and say you should be more like your Dad. I think that is narrow minded, as we just said, there is only one of him. I'm my own person and I'm confident of my talents. I have my fathers Blessing and backing. There are times when he's referred to my talent as being over his, but I'd never say that. My feeling is, because of the time that I grew up in, if we swapped places, he would probably be doing the same thing that I'm doing and I would do what he did. So I like to think, that everything I'm doing is directly because of him.

What has been your greatest challenge so far?

It's been trying to get out from under his shadow. As difficult as it is, I still see it as a blessing because he accomplished so many good things. And immediately, there is the name recognition. People will take me in and embrace me because of his success and I'm grateful for that. But the greatest challenge is, to establish my own mark.

What is your biggest disappointment?

I can't say that there has been any, there are always some things that you would like to have turned out a different way. Maybe certain shows or certain performances that I would have liked to have done better. I guess that would be my disappointment. One thing my Father has passed down, is perfectionism, but I don't think that is a bad thing to strive for, to want everything to be perfect.

You are about to start your own solo career?

Yes, we just released a single called "Might as well be Me". You know, we're based in Texas and it went to Nr. one on the Texas Music Chart for two straight weeks. On that, it was picked up by a station called [WCMN](#) in Atlanta and from there it has been played across the country and limited places. I don't have a lot of money to put into this, so I'm proud it's making out on its own merit. I called Bill [Kelly](#), the DJ from this Atlanta Station and thanked him for playing my song. He said listen, I'm not playing the song because

you're Charley Pride's son, I'm playing the song because I like it and I like you. That was really a great feeling. I think with just that phone call alone, I'm achieving that mark. It just takes a little time for people to look at both of us in our own unique ways.

Did you write that song yourself?

No, that single was written by someone else, but the majority of my music, I write myself.

Where do you get the texts for your songs, what inspires you?

It depends, on my Dad's last album he released, there is a song that I wrote called "I miss my Home" and the way that came about is, I had been commuting between here and Nashville and my wife was in Dallas. I think I had been away for three or four months straight without having seen my family. I missed them and I was feeling very lonely, so I sat down and wrote this song. You see, that's how good songs come about, they come from the heart. I was opening my Father's show in Canada and my Mother came to me asking if I had written any music lately. I told her yes, she wanted to hear it so I played it for her. She asked me could she keep it and I said yes. She played I miss my home for my Dad and later he came and said to me in his Baritone voice, now I want you to know something Son, I'm not recording this song because you're my son, I'm recording it because I like it. So there is another endorsement to what I'm doing on my own. Because, he's serious about these things. You have to earn everything. When I was opening his shows, he always told people, I have him on my show because he is genuinely good. Other friends of his, like Waylon Jennings and people like that told me also, that he would never have me opening up his show if I was not good, because that is his requirement.

How many albums do you have released?

I have three albums and they are all on I-Tunes.

You have performed for Troops, how was that?

That was really a life changing experience, getting to commute and talk to the Troops, seeing the sacrifices they make. I'm not a supporter of war, nobody wants war, but I do respect highly the sacrifices that those men and women make. I feel very rich to have performed for our Troops.

Have you been anywhere else overseas?

I have been in England, Scotland, all over Australia, thru my Father again, It was a blessing to be able to tour with him. I played lead guitar for my Father for two years. And I also played Keyboard for him.

Have you been to Germany or Switzerland?

No, not so far, my manager has been talking to some booking agents and venues over there just last month, so we are working on that.

Your Dad was an avid Baseball Player, have you played any sports?

Yes, I was a four-sport letterman at my highschool, I played Basketball, Baseball, Football and I ran track, I was all state track. The University of Arkansas offered me a full scholarship for Baseball. I love Baseball, but my favorite was Football, I was Runningback at football, I loved it.

Are you working on a new project?

Yes, it's been a little while, it's been two, three years between albums, my last one was 2010 and now it is 2013, so it is time. I've been writing with some good friends of mine in Texas and there are some friends of mine here, so we are working on a new album right now.

Do you already know when it might be released?

You never know about that, I haven't made up my mind who is going to produce it yet. I like songwriting because you create something. But these things take time, maybe the end of this year or early next year, it depends on a lot of different things.

What would you like to tell your fans?

I would like to say that the fans make you and are what we do this for. The fans are the most important part of music. It means a lot when you perform and you see the smiles on people's faces. A few weeks ago there was a young lady at one of my shows and she loved what we did, I was selling CD's there and she said to me, I wish I could buy a CD. So I gave her one and she started crying, she couldn't believe I actually gave it to her. That's what it is all about, you want to touch people's hearts. You want them to come and hear those songs, so they can relate them to their lives. I want to say thank you to everyone who supports me, buys the songs and comes out to hear me. I'm very touched and honored to have a fanbase like that.

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