

Camp-Burnette Bios

Shawn Camp

Some careers can be described with a couple of words, but Shawn Camp's isn't one of them. A bold and distinctive singer, a songwriter who's provided material for artists ranging from Ralph Stanley, Del McCoury and Ricky Skaggs to Garth Brooks and Brooks & Dunn, and a multi-instrumentalist who's played with everyone from Yonder Mountain String Band and Alan Jackson to the Osborne Brothers and John Prine—Camp's music sprawls across the lines that divide country, Americana, bluegrass and roots rock.

"I dragged around a guitar from the time I could walk," Camp says. But it was with the fiddle that he first walked through the door to a career in music. Born and raised in Arkansas, Camp grew up surrounded by music—everything from his mother's Elvis and his father's Merle Haggard records to picking parties at his home to the sounds of living legends and local heroes at the bluegrass festivals his family regularly visited. "That's kind of where I learned to play, under the shade trees," he notes, and before he had finished high school he was playing for country dances around his home and hitting festival stages around the Midwest as a member of bands with names like the Grand Prairie Boys and Freddie Sanders & Signal Mountain.

Spotted by the Grand Ole Opry's Osborne Brothers at an Iowa festival when he was 20, Camp moved to Nashville in 1987 to play fiddle with the legendary bluegrass act, and over the next few years, he lived the life of a sideman, touring for short runs and long stretches alike with country stars and newcomers ranging from the Burch Sisters to Jerry Reed, Alan Jackson, Suzy Bogguss and Trisha Yearwood. Before long, he became a prolific songwriter, too—thanks to a fortuitous encounter at Nashville's songwriting Mecca, the Bluebird Café. "I'd always written little sketches of what I thought would be songs, but I'd never really thought enough of them to finish anything," he recalls. "And then one night I was sitting at the bar at the Bluebird, and I got to talking with this guy, and kind of just said, 'yeah, I'm a songwriter.' It turned out to be Dean Miller, and before the night was through, we had written a song together. After that, we just kept going, non-stop, and wound up with about 40 of them."

Camp got his first cut in 1991 with "Fallin' Never Felt So Good." Though he claims that he began singing simply in order to pitch his songs—"I think it just evolved from having to perform them in order for somebody to hear them," he says—Camp was signed to Reprise Records the following year. He released his self-titled major label debut in 1993. But mainstream success proved elusive, especially when work on his second album ground to a halt over creative differences the following year. "Emory Gordy produced that album," he says proudly. "And I had Bill Monroe and the Blue Grass Quartet; Patty Loveless was singing a couple of songs; we had players like James Burton, Jerry Douglas and Bobby Hicks on it. Looking back on it today, every song on it might not play exactly the way I'd like it to, but mostly I was proud of and felt strongly about it. But the head of the label wanted me to take it all off and put electric guitars on it; he said it didn't sound like the current John Michael Montgomery album. I told him I'd think about it, but I wound up calling him back and telling him that I couldn't change anything—that he needed to give me a release date or a release from the record label."

Undismayed, Camp remained in Nashville and plunged into a songwriting career supplemented by occasional forays as a sideman. His catalog grew steadily, and so did the list of his songs

recorded by major country artists, including his first No. 1—Garth Brooks' 1997 recording of "Two Piña Coladas." Yet even as Camp was scoring hits with the mainstream, he kept close to his roots, too, co-writing with friends like Guy Clark and another writer with a bluegrass background, Jim Lauderdale. The commercial success of songs like "How Long Gone," a No. 1 for Brooks & Dunn in 1998 was matched by critical acclaim for the likes of "Forever Ain't No Trouble Now," which appeared on the 2002 Grammy-winning Lauderdale-Ralph Stanley collaboration, *Lost In The Lonesome Pines*.

Still, by the end of the 90s, Camp grew intent on recording his songs in his own voice, and in 2001 he released *Lucky Silver Dollar* on his own Skeeterbit Records label. Combining his own versions of songs like "How Long Gone" and "Can't Have One Without The Other" (previously recorded by Tracy Byrd) with new material like "Tune Of The Twenty Dollar Bill," the Mark Miller-Allen Reynolds produced album earned rave reviews. Yet despite the enthusiastic reception it got from those who found it, *Lucky Silver Dollar* was stymied by a lack of exposure—"I had no airplay, and I had no booking agent, so I had no shows," Camp recalls. He continued to focus on songwriting until early 2003, when a spur-of-the-moment decision to record a couple of bluegrass shows at a favorite hang-out resulted in *Live At The Station Inn*, released the following year on John Prine's Oh Boy Records.

Camp called together an all-star bluegrass cast showcasing a trio of fiddle-driven numbers he'd written with Guy Clark; favorites from the *Lost In The Lonesome Pines* album; originals that had already found their way into the Del McCoury Band's repertoire; and others soon to be recorded by some of bluegrass's biggest names. *Live At The Station Inn* jump-started Camp's performing career by re-introducing him to the tightly knit, supportive bluegrass community. Appearances followed at high-profile venues like Colorado's famed Rockygrass festival, the Northwest String Summit and the International Bluegrass Music Association's annual World of Bluegrass convention including performances with Yonder String Band throughout the year.

John Prine invited Camp to open for him on an extended tour of the northwest. "I was so nervous, because he's got such a great audience, and such an intelligent one—I was thinking, 'Man, am I smart enough to sing for these people?'" Camp laughs, but like the bluegrass audience, Prine's fans embraced his music.

In 2006 Camp released *Fireball*. Loaded with a fresh batch of songs the album reveals his strengths as a rootsy yet modern country stylist—and, as always, a songwriter who memorably connects contemporary sensibilities to forms that evoke memories of classics that traverse the range of country music history.

In 2007, Josh Turner's recording of Camp's "Would You Go With Me" was nominated for an Academy of Country Music Award.

Billy Burnette

Billy Burnette is the epitome of a rock star – he exudes talent, good looks, and the overall rock star aura wherever he goes and understandably so, given his journey as a musician, singer, songwriter, and guitarist of choice and his personal history. Born in Memphis,

singer/songwriter/guitarist, Dorsey William Burnette III (aka Billy Burnette) spent most of his youth in the presence of father Dorsey and uncle Johnny (of the legendary Rock and Roll Trio). Billy even got into the family tradition of making great music. The Trio made the Rockabilly name famous by combining the name Billy and his cousin Rocky for the 1953 “Rockabilly Boogie” – thus making the term Rockabilly a household name. The legendary Rock and Roll Trio influenced a diverse array of Rock icons including: the Elvis, Beatles, Led Zeppelin, Rod Stewart, Aerosmith, and Ricky Nelson. Elvis used to spend many evenings jamming with the band in the Lauderdale Courts laundry room. “I met Paul McCartney once and he said that the Trio were one of his and John’s (Lennon’s) influences – nobody was making music like that back then.”

It’s not surprising; given his upbringing that Billy’s list of accomplishments in the music arena is both impressive and diverse. With over four decades of recording music, writing songs, and performing, Billy embarked upon his career at age 7. His first single, a Christmas song, “Hey Daddy” was recorded on Dot Records. When only 11 Billy recorded several songs for A&M Records, including one from Dr. Seuss titled “Just Because We’re Kids,” which Herb Albert produced and played trumpet on. By 13, the young Burnette was entertaining the troops with Brenda Lee to the Far East. But, it wasn’t until he was fifteen or sixteen that Billy picked up a guitar and began writing songs. Heavily influenced by the Beatles, Delaney, Bonnie & Friends, and his dad’s music, Billy embarked upon his songwriting journey learning the craft from some of the greats. “It’s really funny because I grew up thinking that everyone wrote songs. I mean my dad did it, my uncle did it...”

At 18, Billy Burnette was only a week out of high school when he recorded his Columbia Records album with famed Memphis hit-making producer, Chips Moman (Elvis “Suspicious Minds” and “In the Ghetto” as well as multiple hits for the likes of Aretha Franklin and BJ Thomas). Burnette continued to write and record numerous records as a solo artist as well as a band member. In his early 20’s, Billy played guitar for Roger Miller as well as for his father, Dorsey Burnette. Billy continued his solo career, recording records and writing for such hit makers as Rod Stewart, Ray Charles, Roy Orbison, Tammy Wynette, Jerry Lee Lewis, The Everly Brothers, Conway Twitty, Loretta Lynn, Glen Campbell, Eddy Raven, and many more.

In 1980, Billy Burnette made the biggest solo record recording deal in history with Columbia Records. Shortly after signing on with Columbia Records, Burnette met Mick Fleetwood (of Fleetwood Mac) at an “American Bandstand” party. The two musicians became fast friends and formed the band, Mick Fleetwood’s Zoo in 1983, establishing a relationship that eventually led to collaborating with all Fleetwood Mac members. The Zoo was a Hollywood star-studded jam band, who was sometimes joined by artists such as Stevie Nicks, Roy Orbison, Bob Seger, Eddy Van Halen and others. During that time, Burnette did not stray from his solo career, constantly penning tunes and introducing Country music to a new sound. By 1985 Burnette signed on with MCA/Curb.

During that year, Billy was nominated as “Best New Male Vocalist” by the Academy of Country Music, competing against Randy Travis, Keith Whitley, Marty Stuart, and T.Graham Brown. His promising Country music career took a sudden turn with one phone call. Burnette tells the

story: “I was in an LA studio with Roy Orbison, cutting a song I’d written, “Dream You,” for the Mystery Girl album when Mick (Fleetwood) called and ask me to join Fleetwood Mac.” With a number one record worldwide and a sold out world tour, Billy began his journey with one of the greatest rock bands of all time. Burnette toured with Fleetwood Mac between 1987-1995 and appears on such records as: The Chain, Fleetwood Mac/Greatest Hits, Behind the Mask and The Very Best of Fleetwood Mac.

At the height of his Fleetwood Mac stint, Billy’s songs were being recorded by such famed artists as: Roy Orbison, Ray Charles, Rod Stewart, Cher, Faith Hill, Greg Allman, **(see.... for compiled list)**. Billy’s natural good looks and ease on stage did not go unnoticed in Hollywood, as Burnette landed parts in several feature films including: Richy Rich, The Addams Family Reunion, Casper and Wendy, Not Like Us, and the leading role in Saturday Night Special, which featured Burnette’s songs throughout the film.

Burnette returned to Nashville and landed a recording contract with Warner Bros. Records, and recorded the aptly named Coming Home. With Coming Home, Burnette re-entered the Country charts with the hit “Tangled Up in Texas.” Burnette teamed up with Bekka Bramlett, also of Fleetwood Mac association, to record Bekka and Billy. The Bekka and Billy record was well-received by music fans, artists, and critics alike.

Fast forward to 2003 – when Billy Burnette was tapped to play with none other than one of the most prolific songwriters of our time, Bob Dylan. Burnette’s talent as one of the most solid guitarists worldwide has garnered him more attention, complete with backing vocals and his stellar stage presence. And, the legendary Creedence Clearwater Revival lead man, John Fogerty has also rallied for Billy to come on board as part of several tours, including the current Willie Nelson Tour.

This year, 2006, Billy Burnette also recorded one of the most revered Rockabilly albums of his career, for its display of raw talent, Memphis in Manhattan. Memphis was recorded “live” in Manhattan at the St. Peter’s Church altar.

Burnette thrived on the vibe, “Doing it live brings out a certain energy in you, because you know you’re under the gun and you have to get it right then and there. And there’s something to be said for that. It was pretty wild. I had a lot of fun recording this record...it was a great experience, and it’s something I’m really proud of overall.” On Memphis, Burnette not only recorded several original tunes – five of which were written with friend Shawn Camp (a successful songwriter and Bluegrass recording artist), but also payed tribute to his father and uncle, by recording “It’s Late” and “Tear it Up”. Burnette also recorded an Everly Brothers classic, “Bye, Bye Love” and a song made popular by none other than Burnette’s own Memphis neighbor, Elvis “Big Hunk of Love.”

Billy has just put together a new band with Mick Fleetwood – expect to see them touring in 2007. When asked what the future holds for Billy Burnette: “to write that one great song and do another solo record next year.”