



'UPBRINGING'

Chase Bryant gets second chance at life and music

By Annika Tomlin

Following a bout with depression and self-discovery, Chase Bryant has come out on the other end ready to continue to do what he believes is his destiny: to play music.

Bryant is set to headline the two-day Country Music Festival at the Vista Center for the Arts in Surprise. Shooter Jennings, Lee Rocker and Kendell Marvel hit the stage on Friday, September 10, while Bryant, Jerrod Niemann and Austin Burke entertain on Saturday, September 11.

Bryant is touring in support of first full-length album "Upbringing." Calling it a "bittersweet and surreal moment," Bryant is eager to get back on stage after being unable to due to the pandemic.

"It's really tough, but it's incredibly gratifying to know that we are back to being able to do what we really love," Bryant says. "What I love is being out on the road with friends and buddies and getting out there and seeing we're all surviving this."

"There are a lot of us that are surviving this massive detriment to the world, and I'm just so proud to be back out on the road and healthy."

The road to "Upbringing" was a rocky

one, he says. He attempted suicide in 2018 but feels like he was given a second chance.

"Obviously I wondered if I was ever going to make another record and if music was for me, but it's all I've known all of my life," he says. "There is a reason that I'm on the path that I am on."

"For me it was kind of just follow your guts and your destiny. That's what it always felt like; it was my destiny."

Bryant describes three things that keep him motivated and on track: honesty with himself, finding clarity with things that were hidden before and "staying positive as much as I can."

"Obviously I still have good and bad days, but I've never had a day like that day," Bryant says. "It's just been those three things that have me keep climbing that mountain."

"Upbringing" is an honest portrait of his struggles and resilience. He hopes listeners can "find something to connect to" on the album.

"I think the record is sort of this roller coaster," Bryant explains. "Some people like the fast parts of the roller coaster and some people like the car that go slow and some people like the ones that go, 'Oh, this is about to be scary.'"

"It's just a matter of if somebody can find something that they can gravitate

toward and can live vicariously."

The hardest part about the album was choosing the songs, as he penned a plethora of them.

"Narrowing it down after writing so many songs was tough," he says. "I wrote, God knows, how many songs for this record, and then now narrowing it all down was a total pain, but we made it through it."

Bryant stepped away from the Nashville machine and returned to his roots, recording his album at Aryln Studios in Austin with producer Jon Randall (Miranda Lambert, Jack Ingram). Working with Randall, as well as Charlie Sexton, JJ Johnson and Jacob Sciba, was a "massive achievement" for Bryant.

Now, Bryant is excited for his return to the stage to play his new songs. He didn't have a direct answer about his favorite songs to perform in concert.

"It's funny because I wrote so much stuff that it's like I tend to want to try new things, so it's almost like what three songs did I write that week," Bryant says. "What is this going to be like? I tend to want to try on some new songs and just see what happens."

With the event taking place on the 20th anniversary of 9/11, Bryant will "make it a point to stop and honor those

people who have served and given their lives for us," as he does during every performance. Bryant lost a "really good friend years ago overseas fighting the wars of this country after the whole 9/11."

"I just always find a moment to thank those people and I do it every night on stage, so it doesn't matter whether it is 9/11 or not, that kind of never changes," Bryant says.

"I just kind of go there and sometimes I take it a little far and speak out of line. I'm obviously proud to be playing that show then and to be able to take a moment and salute those men and women." **E!**

Country Music Festival w/Shooter Jennings, Lee Rocker and Kendell Marvel the first day; and Chase Bryant, Jerrod Niemann and Austin Burke the second

WHEN: 5 p.m. Friday, September 10, and Saturday, September 11
WHERE: Vista Center for the Arts, 15660 N. Parkview Place, Surprise
COST: \$75 to \$135
INFO: thevistaaz.com