

# As the Crowe Flies

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The Crowe Brothers Band Keeps the Family Legacy Alive

By Stephen Pitalo

If I were to say we were interviewing two brothers with a long history in a “Crowe” band, that would need some clarifying. In the rock and roll dominion, multi-platinum artists The Black Crowes have the Robinson Brothers as their familial duo in arms; in the bluegrass world, The Crowe Brothers Band charted their course with a legacy that traces back to their father, bluegrass legend Junior Crowe.



Growing up in Clayton, Georgia, Josh, and Wayne began playing music as boys with their dad, according to Josh.

“Growing up in the household with Dad meant that music was all we ever knew,” Josh said. “We grew up with music being the structure of everything because, by the time I was three years old, dad and his band had already made it to the Grand Ole Opry. That gave us our drive and determination to strive always to be the best we could possibly be at anything we did in the music business. Daddy became something of a regional celebrity overnight after playing the Opry and growing up listening to his bands kept us interested in the music all up through the years until we started playing alongside him.”

“My heroes and biggest influences on my music and in my career are the Louvin Brothers, Jim and Jesse, and the Wilburn

Brothers, just to name a few,” Josh said. “The brother duets had some of the most significant influence in our career, but my dad has, and always will be the greatest and most important influence I’ve had in music and in general.”

“The first time I played music with Daddy on stage was in our hometown of Clayton, Georgia at the grand opening of Belk,” Josh recalled. “We made eleven dollars apiece. I was eleven years old at the time, so that would have made it about 1968. We played with dad and in other local bands all through our teenage years until meeting Raymond Fairchild.”





Teaming up with Fairchild in 1975, the brothers worked the bluegrass festival circuit and traveled the country with him full-time for the next 15 years, and moved to Maggie Valley, NC.

“We met Raymond at a small bluegrass festival in Walhalla, South Carolina where he was performing,” Josh said. “I played a couple of tunes with Raymond in a backstage jam session and

he hired me as his guitar player on the spot. Soon after that, I introduced him to Wayne and that was the start of Raymond Fairchild and the Crowe Brothers.

Josh said that his memories of that time help him articulate an answer to an oft-posed question: what's the best and worst thing about being in a band with your brother?

"The best part of being in a band with my brother is that we have sung and played together all our lives," Josh explained, "so it wasn't as hard to take it to the next level when we wanted to go out on the road and do it professionally. The worst part is that we were brothers (laughing) and we have fussed and argued our fair share through the years, but when it comes down to it, even though I'm the younger brother, I've always stepped in to handle the business end of things."

Josh likes to keep the music and fun at the maximum and keep the tensions and turmoil to a minimum.

*"Wayne took time off in 1990 because he sought more time with his family, and he wanted to spend less time on the road. He still continued to work with us at Raymond's Maggie Valley Opry House back in Maggie Valley, North Carolina. I formed the Josh Crowe band when Wayne left. During that time, I contacted David McLaughlin to fill in on some upcoming shows I had and that's when the idea started that led to Crowe and McLaughlin."*





“The upside of performing with Crowe and Mclaughlin was that we were delving into other genres and subgenres outside of the more traditional bluegrass music of Raymond Fairchild and the Crowe Brothers and the Johnson Mountain Boys. The downside of it is that we wish we had gotten more of the Crowe and Mclaughlin sound out than what we did. The Josh Crowe Band was formed around the music and sound of the Crowe Brothers, so it carried a lot of similarities to working as a brother duo.”

In 2005, Josh and Wayne began touring once again as the Crowe Brothers, reuniting their

brother harmonies. Josh is also an accomplished songwriter and has written many of the songs that they perform, including “The Winds Are Blowing in Maggie Valley,” “I Knew It Wasn’t You (Telephone Song),” “Broken Heart Bound,” “Take Me By The Hand,” “Million for a Broken Heart,” and “Grandma’s Little Boardside Cabin.” Along the way, The SPBGMA Association

(Society for the Preservation of Bluegrass Music of America) awarded them Best Bluegrass Rhythm Guitar and Best Instrumental Band, and the band gained a nomination from IBMA (International Bluegrass Music Association) for Emerging Artist of the Year.

[https://youtu.be/I\\_t7snIAoBs](https://youtu.be/I_t7snIAoBs)

Chart hits are no stranger to the band as well; in 2009, their recording of "Cindy Mae" (written by Cody Shuler), went number one on several bluegrass charts. Then in 2011, "He Could Pick the Hound" (penned by Steve Watts), also reached the number one slot, although Josh holds another song more nearly and dearly than the charted tunes.

"I would have to say that 'The Winds are Blowing in Maggie Valley' is my favorite song of the Crowe Brothers because it has done the most for us throughout our career," Josh noted. "I wrote the song sometime along 1982 and recorded it in 1985, and it has since become one of our most recognized and requested songs."

Since the pandemic, Josh and Wayne have been working on new material for their record company 615 Hideaway Records in Nashville, Tennessee, and trying to release a new single every few months for radio play. 615 Hideaway Records also works on producing new video content to go with their latest music upon its release. Josh wanted to give a big shout-out to all the fans and supporters.

"The Crowe Brothers would like to say a big thank you to all of our fans and supporters throughout the world who have made our music possible for going-on forty-six years," Josh said.