

Greg Blake: Love, Faithfulness, and No Broken Hearts

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by Susan Marquez

(feature photo by Eric Frommer Photography)

Greg Blake is living his best life. While singing and playing guitar in several bands, Greg enjoys a successful solo career and stays busy teaching live and via Zoom and conducting workshops and camps for aspiring bluegrass artists. Music is his full-time job and his passion, and Greg thinks it's "really cool" that what he does can make other people happy.

A native of West Virginia, Greg has made his home in the Kansas City, Missouri area over thirty years ago since his college days. These days, he is spending less time at home and more on the road with the separate groups he is involved in.

"Things are starting to open up and pick up," he says, and his events calendar reflects that, with gigs well into 2022. Greg is the newest member of The Special Consensus, a band formed in 1975.

"I also front two bands in Kansas City. One is Greg Blake & Hometown, and the other is a Gospel quartet. "I've recently gotten back together with three of my buddies I used to sing with in college. We have a group called Heartland, and we are kind of an Oakridge Boys cover band."

Greg sang all the lead vocals on Jesse Brock's new CD, *Streamliner*. "Jesse is a magnificent mandolin player – two-time mandolin player of the year at IBMA. Everyone on the project agreed to tour when our schedules – or the planets – align." And then there is Greg's solo career, which is taking off in a big way. He signed with Turnberry Records and released a new album, *People, Places, and Songs*. Featuring Greg's rich baritone voice, the album's title cut was released in February and hit the Bluegrass Unlimited chart in April. "It has been steadily climbing since that time," says Greg. "It's been an unbelievable experience for me." The song is currently number seven on the Top 30 chart.



As a high school student in West Virginia, Greg says he had two buddies who were "bluegrassers." Their families subscribed to *Bluegrass Unlimited*, and Greg loved seeing them on the coffee table.

"I always picked up the latest issue in their homes and read the record reviews first. I loved to see what new records were out. The next thing I looked at was the charts. I have to admit, to see my song on that chart was a pretty cool moment for me," he says, adding that the song is getting good

play on XM radio and other outlets.



A second single from the *People, Places, and Songs* LP will soon be released. Written by Wyoming songwriter David Stewart, *I'll Be Loving You* is a cheerful love song. "There are no broken hearts in this song," promises Greg. "It's a song about a pledge of love and faithfulness." It's got great lyrics, and it's good and grassy." Stewart is also a new Turnberry artist. "David is a great writer, and he has been around the music business for a long time. He has had several successful songs. I'm proud that he gave me this song to record." Greg loves a song with great lyrics. "For me, it's all about the song. In the past ten to twenty years, there have been a lot of virtuosic musicians like Béla Fleck, Tony Rice, Chris Thile, and Jerry Douglas. But good lyrics are just as important."

<https://youtu.be/ccH2ppcAwlk>

Coaching the various roles in a bluegrass band is something Greg includes in his workshops. "In addition to teaching guitar lessons live or via Zoom, I also teach bluegrass

vocals, and I do band and ensemble coaching. In addition, I teach the roles in bluegrass bands that have to be filled.”

Greg doesn't have much time for anything else between traveling to gigs, booking his local bands, teaching, and spending time with his family. “I'm glad I enjoy what I do. I enjoy making music for self-satisfaction, as well as to make other people happy. The success I've enjoyed is something I never dreamed of for my music career. I am so grateful. Music has so many therapeutic values. If what I do makes people happy, then I think that's so cool.”

***Stay tune for updates on Heartland and its release with
Turnberry Records.***