

If the Creek Don't Rise, Tommy Buller's Gonna Keep on Going

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by Kara M. Bachman

Nashville's Tommy Buller is doing mighty fine, despite the pandemic-wrought troubles experienced by most performers over the past year. He's doing better than most. Making music. Performing live. Charting. Things are pretty good.

"I've been doing a lot of recording in the last year in both country and bluegrass genres," he said, adding that he's "very excited and grateful for the success of our latest single, 'Nothing Said It All,' which has made it to number five on the Bluegrass Today charts."

He's fortunate, he said, since he's been back out there playing live since October of last year. "Things have really opened back up here in Nashville, and we are back to a full regular weekly schedule."

Buller's guitar playing and vocals have been a fixture in Nashville for years. He's working on a new country album and hopes for its release early this fall.

"It's coming along really well," he said, "and we have some very special guests on it. We will be releasing a single independently from the new album in a couple of months. I'm very excited about it, and very grateful that things are starting to open back up and we will be able to hit the road

more to promote it.”

Buller has done his thing a long time, playing little honky-tonks, dive bars, and places like Layla’s Bluegrass Inn in Nashville. He’s taken to the road and has been picking and singing for almost as long as he remembers. His passion for music ignited at age four, when he started performing with his parents’ bluegrass band.

“I’ve always been a big fan of bluegrass music, but also a huge fan of country music,” said the versatile musician who is firmly planted in not one, but two American roots traditions.



It was when he was age 12 that country music caught the eye (and ear) of this Nebraska native. He started getting into people such as George Jones, Merle Haggard, and Hank Williams, Sr.

“At that point in time,” he reminisced, “my dad took me to a friend of his who was the lead guitar player in the house band of a club he owned in Council Bluffs, Iowa called The Glass Front Tavern.”

Musician and owner Phil Kephart hired Buller immediately and Buller played with the band three nights a week through age 16. He explained how Kephart was “awesome” and an important person from his past who “supported me starting my own band, and I always had a spot at his place when we weren’t booked.”

It was there, while jamming at The Glass Front, that he decided at age 14 he wanted to make music for a living. “It just felt so good,” he remembered. “They were all great pickers, and very inspiring to me.”

Buller carries this love of music with him through life. Even as a boy, it moved him. “I remember at a very young age sitting and listening to Hank Sr. and George Jones and I’d just start crying. I never knew why, but I just could feel so much emotion from it,” he said, adding, “It’s still that way today.”

Buller hopes he can keep going and going, doing what he loves. “I’m so excited about everything we’ve got going on musically right now,” he said. “I don’t know what the future holds, but I do know, if the good Lord’s willing and the creek don’t rise, I’ll be pickin and singin’ somewhere.”

<https://youtu.be/nScen2I2zbk>