

Dance Entertainment

Simon Balkey and the Honky Tonk Crew

If you've ever wondered what Nashville recording acts did right before they entered the national market, here is your chance! **Simon Balkey** is in the midst of a transformation from local act to Nashville recording artist.

For the last seven years, Simon and six of his closest friends have been lighting up stages in New Mexico, West Texas, and Southern Colorado as the band *Wyld Country*. They plowed through the Southwest turning thousands of onlookers into fans (or as Simon says "friends"). A decision to chase his dream of Nashville recording artist put Simon on a new track. Although extremely competent and capable, only half of the band *Wyld Country* was able to pursue the same dream. With full band support, Simon set out to complete the set of musicians to reach the national market.

A dream, hard work, and a lucky phone call have landed him in the middle of a recording project and some record label attention. *"After eight years of pursuing record label attention through entertainment lawyers, agents, demo submissions, and various producers.....a phone call to a fellow musician is what connected me with Nashville. The funny thing about it is that I didn't make the phone call. My drummer, helping me to replace his own position made the call. A few phone calls with his replacement and some forwarded emails landed me a publishing agreement and an invite to record a CD and pitch to some labels."*

Simon Balkey plans to make the transition from "cover band" to recording artist over the 2009 calendar year. "My goal is to create the kind of music that people love to listen to but can also dance to. I love the honky-tonk scene and don't think I want to ever stray completely away from it. Concerts are awesome but when I think country music...two steppin' comes right along with it. I have a great bunch of guys with me and I can't wait for everybody to see what they can do."

A little background on Simon's "**Honky Tonk Crew**".....

Sam Montoya (Bass-BG Voc)

Experienced, talented, and degreed in Music Education. Sam has taught and put to use guitar, violin, and music theory. A man of many instruments including guitar, bass, guitarron, vihuela, and cello. Sam has played with multiple bands including Mariachi, Tejano, and most recently Country with *Wyld Country*. This guy has played everything from a High School Graduation to the nationally televised second Inaugural for Bill Clinton. Sam hails from Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Joe Salas (Fiddle/Mandolin)

Picked up fiddle at 10 years of age. Growing up it was nothing but the best classical training for this guy with of course honky tonkin' on the side as his dirty little secret. Through his time in the service and college Joe continued to play wherever and whenever he could to hone his skills as an entertainer. Joe ultimately found his way into a band finding much success and radio airplay as a part of the well received singles "One More Lonely Night" and "Lady for Me" in the late eighties. Joe since then has played with various symphonies including Midland-Odessa, Roswell, and the Southwest Symphony. Joe found his way back to his honky-tonk roots with the band *Wyld Country*. A true entertainer, Joe hails from Roswell, New Mexico.

Roddy Gallegos (Piano/Guitar & BG Voc)

At age fifteen, Roddy decided he was meant to play music. Picking up a pawned guitar, he realized what better way to learn to play than make a band. Putting in thousands of hours of stage time over the next several years Roddy many times took the position of lead vocalist as well as adding piano to his skill set. Roddy settled into piano and vocals with a honky-tonk band where he focused himself with the music he loved and grew up on. Joining the band *Wyld Country* in early 2001 he helped round out their honky-tonk sound with crisp harmonies and piano while helping to create more technically sound arrangements and the bands signature hard hitting country sound. Roddy hails from Santa Rosa, New Mexico.