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Casey Donahew Band lights up the crowd last March at James Maskus Auditorium during the Country Showdown Concert. Donahew returns to Liberal Thursday night for a concert in front of the grandstands at the Five-State Fair. L&T file photo/Chris Linenbroker

- www.caseydonahewband.com

If you build it, they will come. This might be the mantra of one of the greatest baseball movies of all time, “Field Of Dreams,” but it’s also a pretty accurate description of the career of Texas music sensation Casey Donahew.

The Burlson native has painstakingly carved out an impressive niche for himself on the country music scene over the past decade, attracting a solid base of loyal fans who flock to his

legendary live shows.

Building his career from the ground up one show at a time, he's managed to perform on countless stages night after night in front of thousands, topped the Texas music charts several times, released four albums independently to critical acclaim, and forged a path all his own through the music scene without the aid or muscle of a major record label or power-suit management company.

And the release of his latest CD, "Double Wide Dream," may just push him to heights he never could have imagined when he first plugged in on stage at the Thirsty Armadillo bar back in Fort Worth's Stockyards in the Fall of 2002, and began constructing his own field of musical dreams.

A big fan of 80s and 90s country, Casey had always admired the storytelling in the songs of that period, and when a wild-eyed Oklahoma boy named Garth Brooks began swinging from the rafters and employing all sorts of crazy, rock show antics during his concerts, Casey was immediately hooked.

"I've just always liked the country songs from the 80s," says Casey. "It seems like a time when there was a lot of great songwriting going on, and I just enjoy people who can tell a story with a song. And I've always been a big Garth Brooks fan, since the beginning. First there was George Strait, and then here came this guy from Oklahoma, Garth Brooks. And you'd see George standing there playing guitar, but then Garth comes along running all over the stage, playing guitar and singing all these songs that he wrote. And the thing I was always most enamored with about Garth was that he wrote most of those songs. He was just one of those guys who did it all. And he started in Stillwater, not too far from the Red Dirt scene. You could really take a lot of Garth Brooks songs and put 'em on a record of mine, and I think it would fit right in."

Within a few years, Casey had conquered the small club circuit and was packing out larger places like the Fort Worth Horseman's Club. He released his first independent CD, "Lost Days," (which included the autobiographical nod to his home turf, "Stockyards,") and the song quickly became a huge hit for the new band, even among fans who had never visited the Texas city.

"'Stockyards' is one of those songs we started out with," Casey said. "I've been to a lot of places, and I've never been anywhere quite like the north side of Fort Worth. It's just one of

those places...I grew up in all those bars, and there's such a history down there, and it's something I think everyone can relate to. It's weird, it seems like we go far from Fort Worth and people still sing that song, it's one of those things people relate to – everyone's got their own Stockyards if you will, their own place they grew up that they remember going to the bars and running the streets and getting into trouble, I guess.”

His latest studio CD, “Double Wide Dream,” is pretty much right in the wheelhouse of Casey's previous three...the songs contemplate all the highs and lows of real life, from the heartaches to the belly laughs and everything in between, and the CD is packed full of that unbridled, can-do indie spirit that has rocket-powered his entire career right from the start.

“Hopefully, I've grown as a songwriter over the past few years, but I don't try to get too carried away with it, I don't want to try to be too serious about everything,” Casey said. ““Double Wide Dream' is one of those songs that's just really fun. Those are songs that provide a little comic relief, and I want people to get out and jump up and down and have fun. Not every song has to change your life, there also has to be entertainment in the world. And I like to think we provide entertainment with those songs. And, I still think of myself as a redneck...I live in the country, I like to be outdoors, and shoot guns, and hunt, and drive trucks, so those are things we write about. This album is really not too far from what we've been doing from day one, just a continuation of it, really.”

And though his dream may soon grow much, much larger than a double wide, and reach heights even he couldn't have imagined, Casey is quite content with all he's accomplished thus far in this little career that could.

“I don't see anyone coming to make a deal where we're gonna change what we do,” he said. “I'm not sure how far we have left to go, hopefully forever, but you know nothing lasts forever, so I'm always mindful of that and prepared that one day this ride could be over. And I'm pretty proud of everything we've accomplished. I hope there's more, but if it were over tomorrow, I could look at my wife and say I was really proud of everything we've accomplished. I'm really excited about this record. I think the songs on here are great, and are a big step forward, and the fans, whatever their expectations are, I hope we blow em away!”

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