



Your Country's Right Here: Jason Boland & the Stragglers Band Relish Red Dirt

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Taylor Swift, Tim McGraw, Sugarland and other big-name country musicians makes it easy to overlook some of the considerably less flashy but incredibly substantive performers—and that's really a shame.

Consider **Jason Boland & The Stragglers** that surely embody the heartfelt country sound—for lack of a better term—and spirit of such artists as **Waylon Jennings, Merle Haggard, Willie Nelson, Ray Wylie Hubbard** and **Jamey Johnson**.

Ever notice that the myriad of country music award shows almost never even give a nod to the aforementioned artists, despite their virtuoso playing and heartfelt, often profound, musical offerings?

Perhaps that's a conversation for another day, but the point is that only the drive-by fan should turn to such all-star entertainment extravaganzas to completely guide their music choices.

Before readers throw up their hands in disgust, please note the term "completely." I enjoy mainstream artists as much as the next person, but I'm likening them to exclusively eating one type of food—such as meat. Aren't you glad you also know about grains?

That's where Jason Boland and his band, perhaps one of the best-kept secrets out of Texas, come in. Although he and his band are well known on the Texas circuit, they are hoping to expand beyond with their latest album *Rancho Alto*.

"We went in there and tried to get live tracks," said Boland of the eleven-track album. "A lot of current music today is overdone. We try to get live drums, live bass, and [other live instrumentation] in there."

Boland's not boastful about his work far—from it. It's just his music shares more with the vision of Johnny Cash than many contemporary artists. Don't make the mistake of thinking **Steve Earle, Garth Brooks, Pat Green** or **Jack Ingram** belong in that category, though. Their music and attitude make Boland view them as kindred spirits.

"I learned that you need to do whatever you felt truly compelled to do," said Boland talking about the musical community in Stillwater, OK and its influence. "You don't make decision based on how much money you are going to make. Once I started meeting [such] like-minded people, I found my place."



So why so positive about Brooks and company whose music is often part of an extravaganza consumed by the masses?

"Everybody likes to hate on somebody," he said. "When people go out and do what they wanted to do, it's called an accomplished goal. He honed his music but stayed true [to his art]."

Check out the band's music and tour dates on their [Web site](#).

