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Old Crow Medicine Singer Talks Opry, Sharing a CMA Nomination With Bob Dylan

By [Chuck Dauphin](#), Nashville [Twitter](#) | October 24, 2013 3:00 PM EDT



The string band Old Crow Medicine Show was invited to become a member of a rather exclusive club in August: The Grand Ole Opry. "There always seems to be these dream moments in a country music life – like when Merle Haggard whispers something in your ear," lead singer Ketch Secor tells *Billboard*. "Our lives have been full of these moments where you can't really believe they are happening."

To keep the word from leaking out, Opry brass decided to bestow the invitation far away from Music City. "It happened in Cleveland, so I think that helped us to be clearly confused when Marty Stuart appeared on stage. We had been led to believe that something else was happening with the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame that night. We had been deceived by our manager, and everyone fell for it."

The band was officially inducted as Opry members on September 17, and Secor says they can definitely feel a difference being a member of the country music institution as opposed to being a guest.

"We look up and down the hallways backstage a little differently. We saw Little Jimmy Dickens, whom we've seen and spoken to a number of times. But, now we were a part of the family. It was a powerful feeling. I've met Jeannie Seely before, but her welcome into the family was something that never happened before. Being such an avid listener of the Opry for fifteen years, I've really come to know who the old guard is. They all came out to welcome us out, like George Hamilton IV."

Darius Rucker – whom the Old Crow Medicine Show replaced as the most recent inductee into the Opry – figures into the band's success story – as well as Secor's this year. It was through their record that Rucker became reacquainted with the classic "Wagon Wheel," prompting him to record the tune. It became not only a top record – but also earned an nomination for Song of the Year at the upcoming 46th Annual Country Music Association Awards – meaning that Secor shares the nomination with the legendary Bob Dylan. Dylan penned the chorus and melody during the sessions for Pat Garrett and Billy The Kid. Never commercially released by Dylan, Secor landed a copy of the bootleg of the unfinished sketch, and penned the verses. How does it feel to be included in the category with one of America's most respected lyricists?

"It made me think a lot about Bob Dylan as a country singer – a country music pioneer," he says. "He grew up listening to Roy Acuff. When you hear his records, you hear Hank Williams. You hear a lot of Roy. He credits Wayne Raney as his harmonica inspiration. These are country music makers. I think that Bob has more to do with country music than anyone in country music is willing to take note of. I think 'Lay Lady Lay' is one of the ten greatest country songs ever sung. I'm real excited that he's nominated, as much as myself. I'm just glad that he's being recognized by the music industry that is so hugely indebted to his talent over the past half-century."

The Old Crow Medicine Show is busy in the studio working on a new project – due out in 2014. As Opry members, Secor says the pressure is on. But, they wouldn't have it any other way.

"There's something different when it comes to being in the recording studio. Everything has a longer shelf life. I just feels like there's more of a legacy at stake with to the music that we make when it comes to being Opry members. It's been exciting to make a record where you know that in addition to our fans who will enjoy it, there's a whole lot of other new fans that haven't heard us yet that will dig it too."