

ACOUSTIC GUITAR

March 2015



THE TENNESSEAN ARCHIVES

DYLAN, CASH & THE NASHVILLE CATS FOCUS OF NEW EXHIBIT

Like many music movements of the late 20th century, the mid-'60s trend of rock, pop, and folk musicians recording in Nashville started with Bob Dylan. It was August 1965, and Dylan was wrapping up *Highway 61 Revisited* when his producer, Bob Johnston, suggested that Nashville musician Charlie McCoy, who happened to be in New York City at the time, play acoustic guitar on "Desolation Row." McCoy's style cast an eerie Americana spell in the 11-minute ballad, and impressed Dylan so much that he trekked to Nashville to record the majority of his next album, *Blonde on Blonde*.

The rest, as they say, is history—and now the focus of a new Country Music Hall of Fame exhibit called "Dylan, Cash, and the Nashville Cats: A New Music City."

Between 1966 and 1974, other rock and folk-rock musicians including Neil Young, Paul McCartney, Leonard Cohen, Simon &

Paul and Linda McCartney and their girls in Nashville, with Dolly Parton and Porter Wagoner

Garfunkel, Ringo Starr, the Byrds, Joan Baez, Linda Ronstadt, Leon Russell, Moby Grape, Peter, Paul and Mary, and others recorded seminal albums in Music City, backed by the Nashville Cats, a group of A-list studio musicians that included McCoy.

Johnny Cash—who contributed to Dylan's third Nashville-based album, *Nashville Skyline*—is also credited with bringing together rock, folk, and country on his TV series *The Johnny Cash Show*. Filmed at the Ryman Auditorium, then home of the Grand Ole Opry, the show hosted artists such as James Taylor, Joni Mitchell, and Derek & the Dominos alongside traditional country acts like Dolly Parton and Porter Wagoner (above). Performances, instrument demonstrations, panel discussions, films, and more will accompany the new exhibit, which runs March 27 through December 31, 2016.

—Whitney Phaneuf