



## Sean McConnell – *SKIN* Biography

Sean McConnell has just one tattoo — his wife’s name. It represents a commitment, a sign that’s more than skin-deep. But on the cover of the Nashville singer-songwriter’s new album, *SKIN*, art and symbolism bloom like tattoo ink itself. An open palm beacons listeners, itself a symbol of his faith, while emblems of Earth and nature, faith and love serve as tangible and metaphorical guideposts along McConnell’s renewed musical journey.

“*SKIN*, to me, is kind of where I’m at on my journey with being comfortable in your skin, in your physical body. Divinity is in flesh and bone, not just in heaven somewhere, someday,” McConnell says. “Lyrically, the humanness of skin is obviously apparent, but I’m always attracted to this meeting of body and spirit, flesh and spirit.”

As McConnell crossed the threshold of 40 years old, he began to mine the depths of his identity as an artist, father, husband, and human. As such, many of the songs on the 11-track LP seek to find a sense of grounding in the chaos and change. The beauty of *SKIN*, however, is that McConnell manages to explore life’s paradoxes without needing to find answers. In fact, he hopes that the lyrics leave topics open ended for listeners to discover their own meanings.

The songs themselves, grounded in steady folk-rock practices and uplifted through purposeful piano lines and swelling strings, leave plenty of room for such external observation and internal introspection to shine. “Demolition Day,” which chugs at a steady, rocking pace, is a reckoning song that stands out from the rest of the record — “a ‘come to Jesus’ moment, as some say here in the South,” he says — that is as much about his understated sobriety as it is about other routines that need to be reassessed after 20 years in the music industry. Other songs, however, are as much for his loved ones, as himself. The sparse “Never Enough,” is an ode to his wife and soulmate Dr. Mary Susan McConnell. “The West Was Never Won,” the shortest, yet most affecting track on *SKIN*, encourages their daughter with disabilities, Abiella, to let her heart and her soul guide her through this life. It’s a flickering faith that also guides songs like “Divinity” and “New Sons and Daughters.”

After 10 solo records — as well as countless works as a sought-after collaborator with country stars like Tim McGraw, Brad Paisley, and Martina McBride, indie rock acts like Bethany Cosentino (Best Coast) and Michigander, pop-rock groups like Plain White T’s, and on hit television shows like *Nashville* — McConnell has reached another of life’s plateaus. Such steadiness and consistency can be unnerving, though, especially as an artist still grasping for growth and greater truths. This contradiction, of seeing how far one’s come, while recognizing that it’s only part of the journey, is exemplified on “Older

Now,” as he sings, “But I’ve got a ways to go / And in 20 years or so / Oh, this man I’ve come to know / He will seem to me a child.”

Another element of *SKIN*, at once seemingly obvious and revelatory, is the process of collaboration and the development of community. McConnell recruited longtime friend, bassist, producer, and engineer Justin Tocket, as well as members of his live touring band — keyboardist and producer Ben Alleman, drummer Logan Todd, and guitarist/singer-songwriter Taylor McCall — to his own Silent Desert Studio four times over the course of a year to make the record.

“When I listen to it now, I just hear all of these musicians — and now best friends — who I’ve been playing with for 10 years,” McConnell says. It sounds like it’s more of a band record, more the story of a collective than just me.”

Ultimately, *SKIN* serves as a reintroduction of McConnell, in and out of his music. It’s about, “discovering that the journey inward, underneath the skin, is truly more expansive, perilous, and enlightening than any journey outward.”

**For press information about Sean McConnell, please contact  
Jim Flammia [jim@alleyesmedia.com](mailto:jim@alleyesmedia.com) at All Eyes Media**