



## **DYLAN CASH & THE NASHVILLE CATS: A NEW MUSIC CITY** **WHO WERE THE NASHVILLE CATS?**

### **David Briggs**

b. Killen, Alabama, March 16, 1943

*“David Briggs could play any style, and he had that soul influence coming from Muscle Shoals.” – Mac Gayden, Member of The Nashville Cats*

David Briggs began playing piano on R&B, pop, and country hits in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, in his teens. After a brief stint as a pop singer, Briggs moved to Nashville in 1964 to focus on a career as a studio musician. The following year, Briggs backed Elvis Presley in the studio, an association that continued until Presley’s death.

Briggs juggled instruments and genres through the decades, playing piano and organ on country hits by Charley Pride and Jerry Reed, by Alabama and Reba McEntire, and by Kenny Chesney and Shania Twain. On the rock side, Briggs recording with by Eric Andersen, Joan Baez, Beau Brummels, J.J. Cale, the Monkees, and Bob Seger. The keyboardist was a member of the acclaimed band Area Code 615, made up of Nashville studio pros.

In 1969, Briggs and bassist-producer Norbert Putnam opened Quadrafonic Sound Studios in Nashville, and the studio became a favorite of visitors from New York, Los Angeles, and other music centers. Briggs also has been an arranger, producer, a songwriter, and a music publisher (including the Academy Award-winning song “Up Where We Belong” and the Steve Winwood hit “Higher Love.”)

### **Kenny Buttrey**

b. Nashville, Tennessee, April 1, 1945; d. September 12, 2004

*“He is a finesse player with a masters touch on any song he plays ... Kenny is a complete original who I was lucky to know and play with.”*

**– Neil Young on Kenny Buttrey**

Kenny Buttrey wasn't just a first-call Nashville session player; he was the preferred drummer for artists across America, building a lasting legacy with his work in R&B and rock.

At age fourteen, the Nashville native toured with Country Music Hall of Fame member Chet Atkins. Buttrey helped form the Escorts, a Nashville rock band that included future session masters Charlie McCoy and Wayne Moss. He also was a founding member of Area Code 615 and Barefoot Jerry, seminal bands that highlighted the instrumental chops of well-regarded studio musicians.

Buttrey described his work on Dylan's "Lay Lady Lay" as his proudest moment. Besides having him play on *Blonde on Blonde*, *John Wesley Harding*, and *Nashville Skyline*, Dylan recruited Buttrey to supply the rhythm on his Christian-themed work in the late 1970s.

Buttrey also can be heard on such classics as Jimmy Buffett's "Margaritaville," Steve Goodman's "City of New Orleans," Gordon Lightfoot's "Early Morning Rain," the Pointer Sisters' "Fairytale," Neil Young's "Heart of Gold," and endless others. His soulful touch also graces country hits by Larry Gatlin, Waylon Jennings, Ronnie Milsap, and the Oak Ridge Boys.

### **Fred Carter Jr.**

b. Winnsboro, Louisiana, December 1, 1933; d. July 17, 2010

*"They came in here, we recorded 'em, they got hits, and they left. We turned 'em out like water, man, for twenty years, you know?"* – **Fred Carter Jr.**

Fred Carter Jr. began his career in northeastern Louisiana playing rock & roll. He backed Dale Hawkins, known for his rock hit "Suzy Q," and later played with Ronnie Hawkins, Dale's cousin, in his backing group, the Hawks. Carter left and was replaced by Robbie Robertson before the group evolved into the Band. Carter played on the *Louisiana Hayride* in Shreveport, Louisiana, in the mid-1950s, before moving with fellow guitarist James Burton to Los Angeles, where both appeared on the TV program *Town Hall Party*.

When Carter landed in Nashville, in 1961, he became the first top Nashville session guitarist to specialize on the Fender Telecaster electric guitar—and proved just as outstanding on acoustic and twelve-string guitar. He also released several singles as a vocalist, and he had success as a songwriter.

After touring as guitarist for Roy Orbison and Conway Twitty, Carter settled into a career as a renowned studio player. His rock sessions included Joan Baez, Paul Butterfield, Bob Dylan, Ian & Sylvia, Simon & Garfunkel, and Muddy Waters. He also contributed to classic country hits by John Anderson, Bobby Bare, George Jones, Kris Kristofferson, and Dolly Parton. Carter is the father of country singer-songwriter Deana Carter.

## **Charlie Daniels**

b. Wilmington, North Carolina, October 28, 1936

*“I felt I had a lot in common with Charlie. The kind of phrases he’d use, his sense of humor, his relationship to work, his tolerance for certain things ... When Charlie was around, something good would usually come out of the sessions.”*

– **Bob Dylan on Charlie Daniels**

Charlie Daniels arrived in Nashville in 1967, at the behest of producer Bob Johnston, who also was responsible for bringing Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen to Music City. Johnston used Daniels on a few country sessions, including those of Johnny Cash and Marty Robbins. Daniels never became a top session player—he had other plans for his musical career.

However, the burly guitarist did prove pivotal to many of the Nashville recording sessions of Leonard Cohen and Bob Dylan. Because Daniels had a strong blues influence, Johnston felt he would fit with the adventurous singer-songwriters. Daniels first worked with Cohen, playing on 1968 sessions for the album *Songs from a Room*, on 1971’s *Songs of Love and Hate* and on 1973’s *Live Songs*. The latter was culled from two European concert tours, in 1970 and 1972, that featured Daniels on guitar.

Dylan included Daniels on three of his albums: *Nashville Skyline* (1969), *Self Portrait* (1970), and *New Morning* (1970). Daniels also contributed to Ringo Starr’s 1970 album, *Beaucoups of Blues*, recorded in Nashville.

After those experiences, Daniels focused on his own recording career. He released his self-titled debut album in 1970; scored his first pop hit, “Uneasy Rider,” in 1973; and his #1 country hit, “The Devil Went Down to Georgia,” in 1979.

## **Pete Drake**

b. Augusta, Georgia, October 8, 1932; d. July 29, 1988

*“My secretary rang and said ‘George Harrison wants to speak to you,’ and I said ‘Where he’s from?’ and she said ‘England’; I said ‘What company is he with?’ and she said ‘The Beatles,’ and I said ‘Let me talk to him.’”* – **Pete Drake**

At age eighteen, Pete Drake heard steel guitarist Jerry Byrd on the Grand Ole Opry during a trip to Nashville. Duly inspired, Drake purchased a steel guitar in an Atlanta pawnshop. The decision not only changed his life, but impacted the sound of country and rock music.

In Atlanta, Drake formed a band that, at various times, included future country stars Jack Greene, Doug Kershaw, Roger Miller, Jerry Reed, and Joe South. Not

long after arriving in Nashville, in 1959, Drake contributed to Roy Drusky's 1960 hit "Anymore" and quickly became one of Nashville's most prominent steel guitarists. His playing graced the recordings of Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, George Harrison, Ian & Sylvia, and an immense list of country artists.

As a producer, Drake worked with rockers Tracy Nelson, Leon Russell, and Ringo Starr as well as on country albums by the Oak Ridge Boys, Ernest Tubb, and Slim Whitman. He also founded Stop Records, which released albums by Johnny Bush, the Jordanaires, and George Morgan. As a music publisher, Drake worked with Ed Bruce and Dottie West. He brought the "talking" steel guitar to Nashville, which amplified words through a tube running from his mouth to his instrument.

## **Mac Gayden**

b. Nashville, Tennessee, June 5, 1941

*"I called Mac Gayden, and he came out, set up, and ran down 'Crazy Mama' with the tape. J.J. Cale said 'That's it! Let's go home.' Mac said 'I can do it better.' Cale said 'You can't do it better.'" – Audie Ashworth. Producer*

Mac Gayden grew up fascinated by the R&B acts he heard in his hometown of Nashville. That interest helped him develop a style as a guitarist, vocalist, and songwriter distinctly different from other Nashville studio pros.

Most notably, Gayden became known for playing slide guitar through a wah-wah pedal, as heard on J.J. Cale's memorable "Crazy Mama." Gayden's slide playing drew him work in all genres of popular music.

His songwriting also had a R&B bent. He co-wrote Robert Knight's 1967 hit, "Everlasting Love," with Buzz Cason; new versions of the song made it a hit again in four consecutive decades. Gayden also co-wrote "She Shot a Hole in My Soul," a Clifford Curry favorite subsequently recorded by the Box Tops and others.

Besides Cale, Gayden recorded with soul singer Gene Allison and singer-songwriters Hoyt Axton, Bob Dylan, Tracy Nelson, Loudon Wainwright III, and Jerry Jeff Walker. For country singers seeking a bluesy touch, Gayden contributed to cuts by Bobby Bare, Tompall Glaser, Kris Kristofferson, and Gary Stewart.

Gayden also participated in the acclaimed bands Area Code 615 and Barefoot Jerry, and he led his own band, Skyboat.

## Lloyd Green

b. Leaf, Mississippi, October 4, 1937

*"Lloyd Green was an integral part of our album Sweetheart of the Rodeo. His contribution on steel guitar made the record. He was flat out brilliant and a joy to work with."* – **Chris Hillman of the Byrds**

Lloyd Green developed an emotional, resonant style of pedal steel guitar playing that gave him a distinct sound apart from other top steel specialists. Along with Jimmy Day, Buddy Emmons, and Bud Isaacs, he revolutionized the instrument with his ability to elevate a recording through dramatic melodic runs and innovative rhythmic and harmonic effects.

Green began playing Hawaiian steel guitar at age seven. Three years later he was performing professionally around Mobile, Alabama. His interest in pedal steel drew him to country music, and he toured in the bands of Hawkshaw Hawkins, Faron Young, and Ferlin Husky before his studio career took off—thanks to the staccato chords and syncopated single notes he added to Warner Mack's 1965 hit "The Bridge Washed Out."

Green has contributed to hundreds of country recordings, including classic hits by Freddie Hart, Alan Jackson, Johnny Paycheck, Charley Pride, Don Williams, Tammy Wynette, and others. He also recorded with Ivory Joe Hunter, Henry Mancini, Paul McCartney, the Monkees, John Stewart, Billy Swan, and Jerry Jeff Walker. Beyond Nashville, his work on the Byrds' *Sweetheart of the Rodeo* album greatly influenced the sound of country-rock.

## Ben Keith

b. Fort Riley, Kansas, March 6, 1937; d. July 26, 2010

*"He was what held my records together from the first record I made with him to the last record I made with him ... He was so soulful and he played that steel guitar like nobody else. He just tried to do exactly what was right for the music and what was right for the song."* – **Neil Young on Ben Keith**

Ben Keith was a prominent Nashville pedal steel guitarist before becoming a producer and instrumentalist for Neil Young. Keith first recorded with Young on the landmark album *Harvest* in 1971. He would record and tour with Young for the rest of his life; Keith was living at Young's California ranch at the time of his death, at age seventy-three. The steel guitarist also played the role of Grandpa Green in the feature film *Greendale*, written and directed by Young.

Keith was born in Kansas and later moved to Bowling Green, Kentucky. His first country recording session found him playing on Patsy Cline's hit "I Fall to

Pieces.” He also recorded with country stars Emmylou Harris, Waylon Jennings, Anne Murray, Willie Nelson, and the Trio (Harris, Dolly Parton, and Linda Ronstadt).

Keith also worked extensively with rock musicians, including the Band, Paul Butterfield, Leonard Cohen, David Crosby, Mother Earth, Graham Nash, Bob Neuwirth, Ronstadt, Todd Rundgren, Ringo Starr, and Warren Zevon.

Along with co-producing several Young albums, Keith did production work on albums by Bobby Charles, Billy Cox, and Otis Williams, and on Jewel’s multi-million-selling album *Pieces of You*.

## **Grady Martin**

b. Chapel Hill, Tennessee, January 17, 1929; d. December 3, 2001

*“Grady Martin demanded attention, you just respected him so much ... Grady is the most underrated giant this town has ever known.”*

– **Buddy Spicher, Member of The Nashville Cats**

Grady Martin was a member of a loose collection of legendary studio musicians known as the Nashville A-Team. His versatility and creativity as a guitarist also appealed to younger rockers and singer-songwriters who came to Nashville at a time when increased recording activity broadened the pool of musicians working sessions on Music Row.

Martin was fifteen when he became the fiddler for Big Jeff & the Radio Playboys, in the mid-1940s. After a stint with Paul Howard, Martin recorded with Little Jimmy Dickens. He eventually led Red Foley’s band on ABC-TV’s *Ozark Jubilee* and, as a session player, provided essential contributions to classic hits by Patsy Cline, Lefty Frizzell, Loretta Lynn, Jeanne Pruett, Marty Robbins, Conway Twitty, and Billy Walker.

Martin recorded several jazzy instrumental albums, under his own name and with his band, the Slew Foot Five. He also recorded rockabilly with Johnny Horton and showed his adaptability on instrumental albums with clarinetist Pete Fountain, trumpeter Al Hirt, composer Henry Mancini, and jazz trombonist Kai Winding, and on recordings by singer-songwriters Joan Baez, Arlo Guthrie, Country Joe McDonald, John Prine, Leon Russell, and Buffy Sainte-Marie. Near the end of his life, Martin toured as a member of Willie Nelson’s band.

## **Charlie McCoy**

b. Oak Hill, West Virginia, March 28, 1941

*“This guy is everything great you ever heard about him. If it makes music, he can play it.”* – **Al Kooper on Charlie McCoy**

Best known for his harmonica expertise—distinguished by its speed, clarity, and exceptional phrasing—Charlie McCoy is a multi-instrumentalist who has been recorded on bass, guitar, keyboards, percussion, saxophone, trumpet, and tuba. McCoy’s ability to quickly summon up creative parts impressed Bob Dylan at a New York session and helped convince Dylan to travel to Nashville to record his album *Blonde on Blonde*. McCoy once stunned the singer by playing bass with one hand and picking up a trumpet to add a musical riff at the end of the chorus of “Most Likely You Go Your Way (And I’ll Go Mine).”

McCoy is just as proud of many other contributions, from the haunting harmonica in George Jones’s “He Stopped Loving Her Today” to the blue notes on Waylon Jennings’s “Only Daddy That’ll Walk the Line” to the touching intro on Tom T. Hall’s “(Old Dogs-Children and) Watermelon Wine.”

McCoy played in Nashville rock band the Escorts and session-player group Area Code 615. He also can be heard on recordings by Eric Andersen, Gary Burton, Gordon Lightfoot, Clyde McPhatter, Nancy Sinatra, and the Steve Miller Band.

## **Wayne Moss**

b. South Charleston, West Virginia, February 9, 1938

*“We used to think of Nashville sessions as being relaxed, but Dylan changed our whole approach. He was so relaxed and laid-back that your creative juices took on an entirely different aspect ... Anything we wanted to try, [we could] have at it.”* – **Wayne Moss**

Wayne Moss’s iconic guitar riffs helped forge the identifiable sound of classic country and rock songs.

Inspired by Country Music Hall of Fame members Chet Atkins and Earl Scruggs, Moss was performing in his teens, on radio and in bands, in his hometown of Charleston, West Virginia. Shortly after moving to Nashville at age twenty-one, he befriended fellow musicians Kenny Buttrey and Charlie McCoy. Moss became a founding member of two early Nashville rock bands, the Escorts and the Casuals. He later was a key member of groundbreaking country-rock bands Area Code 615 and Barefoot Jerry.

As a session guitarist, Moss played on top hits by Patsy Cline, George Hamilton IV, David Houston, Waylon Jennings, Loretta Lynn, and Charley Pride. His non-

country work included sessions with Joan Baez, Leo Kottke, the Steve Miller Band, Mike Nesmith, Roy Orbison, Linda Ronstadt, and soul singer Joe Simon. Moss also owns Cinderella Sound, a popular Nashville recording studio that has hosted thousands of master recordings, including those by Jackie DeShannon, Grand Funk Railroad, the James Gang, Moby, Tracy Nelson, and Ronstadt.

## **Weldon Myrick**

b. Jayton, Texas, April 10, 1939; d. June 2, 2014

*“Weldon was this great kind of an Einstein steel player, he was incredible; he could make the strangest, weird, and most beautiful sounds.”*

– **Eric Anderson on Weldon Myrick**

One of country music’s most admired and influential steel guitarists, Weldon Myrick taught himself to play lap steel and, at age thirteen, earned a job on a radio station near his hometown of Jayton, Texas. Later, while performing at a radio station in Lubbock, Texas, Myrick met local musicians Sonny Curtis, Buddy Holly, and Waylon Jennings.

Holding down jobs on radio and in bands in Texas, Myrick twice traveled to Nashville to contribute to recordings. In 1963, he moved his family to Tennessee and, shortly afterward, Bill Anderson invited him to join his band. Through Anderson, Myrick played on Connie Smith’s debut #1 hit, “Once a Day,” and his steel guitar would be an integral aspect of Smith’s sound for years.

A member of the Grand Ole Opry band for thirty-two years, Myrick can be heard on hits by Moe Bandy, Merle Haggard, Alan Jackson, George Jones, Loretta Lynn, Reba McEntire, George Strait, and Trisha Yearwood. A member of the country rock band Area Code 615, Myrick also graced songs by Joan Baez, Delbert McClinton, the Pointer Sisters, Elvis Presley, Linda Ronstadt, and Cat Stevens.

## **Norbert Putnam**

b. Florence, Alabama, August 10, 1942

*“I’m very proud of the fact that we made some very interesting records in thirty minutes, and take great pride in the fact that we could put something together that quickly, that good.”* – **Norbert Putnam**

Norbert Putnam is a widely admired bassist, record producer, and studio owner. He started his career in his teens recording with soul singer Arthur Alexander at Fame Studios in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, as part of a renowned rhythm section that included keyboardist David Briggs and drummer Jerry Carrigan. Putnam and



Briggs also performed with singer Tommy Roe as an opening act for the first American concert by the Beatles. After moving to Nashville, Putnam continued to record rock, pop, and soul—as well as country music. His initial Nashville sessions included “Bread and Butter,” a pop hit by the Newbeats, and “Everlasting Love,” by soul singer Robert Knight. He recorded often with Elvis Presley, and other sessions varied from country stars Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson, Dolly Parton, and Dottie West, to pop and rock recordings with Jimmy Buffett, Bobby Goldsboro, Mike Nesmith, Linda Ronstadt, the Vogues, and Tony Joe White.

A member of Area Code 615, an acclaimed band of Nashville studio pros, Putnam also co-founded the storied recording center Quadrafonic Sound Studios. As a producer, Putnam cut acclaimed albums with Eric Andersen, Joan Baez, J.J. Cale, Dan Fogelberg, Dave Loggins, and New Riders of the Purple Sage.

## **Jerry Reed**

b. Atlanta, Georgia, March 20, 1937; d. September 1, 2008

*“The dern fool never begs, steals, or borrows like the rest of us. He just sits around and makes up his own licks.” – Chet Atkins on Jerry Reed*

Jerry Reed is most famous for his colorful, catchy story songs steeped in Southern attitude and lore. But among those in the know, he was recognized as a groundbreaking guitarist who created a syncopated, fingerstyle guitar technique that gave his songs—and those he contributed to as a guitarist—an extra layer of funky, back-country grease.

Reed was championed by legendary guitarist-producer Chet Atkins, who incorporated some of Reed’s advances into his own style. Georgia-born Reed also influenced others, including artists Brad Paisley and Steve Wariner, and studio pros Steve Gibson and Brent Mason. Reed’s songs were cut by Atkins, Johnny Cash, Nat King Cole, Tom Jones, Brenda Lee, and Elvis Presley.

By his early teens, Reed appeared on concert bills with Ernest Tubb and Faron Young. He signed his first record contract with Capitol Records at age seventeen, later achieving his greatest success on RCA Records. As a guitarist, Reed played on hits by John Hartford, Homer & Jethro, Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson, Dolly Parton, and Porter Wagoner.

Popular with non-country acts, Reed recorded frequently with Joan Baez and the Beau Brummels as well as with Ian & Sylvia, Ringo Starr, and others. Reed also had a successful career as a movie actor.

## **Hargus “Pig” Robbins**

b. Rhea County, Tennessee, January 18, 1938

*“Pig Robbins is the best session man I’ve ever known ... anytime Pig’s on a session everyone else plays better.”*

– **Charlie McCoy, Member of The Nashville Cats**

Pig Robbins earned his stripes by creating the rocking piano on George Jones’s “White Lightnin’.” Over the ensuing decades, his integral role on Music Row recording sessions earned him membership in the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2012.

Blinded in a self-inflicted knife accident at age three, Robbins took piano lessons at the Nashville School for the Blind—where he earned his nickname after sneaking onto a fire escape and coming back covered in dirt.

After succeeding Floyd Cramer as Music Row’s most prominent session keyboardist in the 1960s, Robbins created several of the most storied piano parts in country music history. Those include such classics as Charlie Rich’s “Behind Closed Doors” and Crystal Gayle’s “Don’t It Make My Brown Eyes Blue.” Robbins also played on hits by fellow Country Music Hall of Fame members Bobby Bare,

Patsy Cline, Waylon Jennings, Loretta Lynn, Willie Nelson, Ernest Tubb, and Tammy Wynette.

After gaining notice for his work on *Blonde on Blonde* and other Bob Dylan albums, Robbins appeared on albums by Joan Baez, Ray Charles, John Denver, the Everly Brothers, Tom Jones, Doug Sahm, Ween, and Neil Young. Robbins also recorded several solo albums.

## **Buddy Spicher**

b. Dubois, Pennsylvania, July 28, 1938

*“Spicher’s a genius. I don’t think it ever got better than Buddy Spicher.”*

– **Norbert Putnam, -Member of The Nashville Cats**

In his distinctive fiddle style, Buddy Spicher combined a rich tonal quality with bluegrass precision and an adventurous sense of swing. After arriving in Nashville, he quickly gained attention as a dazzling instrumentalist capable of handling country, jazz, pop, and rock.

At age fifteen, Spicher became a staff musician on the *WWVA Jamboree* in Wheeling, West Virginia. At eighteen, he moved to Nashville at the request of singer Audrey Williams, widow of Hank Williams, and joined the staff band on *The Wilburn Brothers Show*, a syndicated TV program.

As a band musician, Spicher toured with Patsy Cline, Loretta Lynn, the Osborne Brothers, Ray Price, Hank Snow, and Faron Young. In the studio, he recorded with hundreds of country artists, including Country Music Hall of Fame members Waylon Jennings, George Jones, Roger Miller, Charley Pride, Marty Robbins, the Statler Brothers, Hank Thompson, and Bob Wills.

A favorite of non-country artists, Spicher can be heard on recordings by jazz players Gary Burton and Rosemary Clooney, orchestral bandleader Henry Mancini, folk-rockers Joan Baez and Dan Fogelberg, and rock's Steve Miller Band, the Monkees, and Linda Ronstadt. Spicher also was a member of the super-picker band Area Code 615.

**For more information about Dylan, Cash & The Nashville Cats: A New Music City, please contact Jim Flammia, [jim@alleyesmedis.com](mailto:jim@alleyesmedis.com) or Donica Christensen, [donica@alleyesmedia.com](mailto:donica@alleyesmedia.com) at All Eyes Media (615) 227-2770**