

# The Texas Sapphires

www.thetexasapphires.com

February 2010 will bring the second independent studio release by The Texas Sapphires, AS HE WANDERS (Ike Records), an album whose theme is semi-universal — wrestling with demons, winning and losing, but winning in the end and finding hopeful new beginnings: a collection of songs done in the sparkling Sapphire style, a blend of classic country with honky-tonk, bluegrass and mountain music that makes the band's sound hard to pin down.

Whether it's "Nashville Moon," "190" or "Teardrops or Rain" — just three of the songs on the upcoming album — it's the steel that matters, and the fiddle and mandolin, and the smooth harmony vocals, and the lyrics. Each song is in its own way part of the story of AS HE WANDERS.

Co-lead singers and songwriters Billy Brent Malkus and Rebecca Lucille Cannon fuel the band with their pens and their voices, and both come from brief forays into punk. Guitar player and primary songwriter Malkus grew up with classic country on a hog farm in Maryland and honed his instrumental and wordsmithing skills. He moved to Austin in 1997 and played with various country-based acts including Nathan Hamilton's No Deal.

Houston-born Cannon, after five years as a college radio DJ, wanted to make her own music. She's doing her best now to keep alive the tradition of good country music, out of respect and love of the beloved grandmother who helped raise her, and is succeeding — with a voice that commands the stage.

Cannon and Malkus surround themselves with seasoned players, onstage and in the studio, including multi-instrumentalist and backup vocalist Bob "Slim Bawb" Pearce, who moved from Northern California and induction in the Sacramento Area Music Hall of Fame to Texas in 2006 and joined The Sapphires in 2007. Also on the new album are band members Billy "Dee" Donahue on electric bass and Scotty Matthews on drums, who both play with Texas troubadour Dale Watson. Guest musicians include Nathan Fleming on pedal steel, Justin Kolb on upright bass and Dennis Ludiker on fiddle.

"Honorary" Texas Sapphires the band has played live or recorded with include GRAMMY Award-winning producer Lloyd Maines, Warren Hood (Warren Hood and the Hoodlums) and Kim Deschamps (Cowboy Junkies). They are veterans of the road, having toured with the likes of Ray Price, Dwight Yoakam and Junior Brown.

The Texas Sapphires' debut CD, VALLEY SO STEEP (Stag Records, 2005) — called "a great listen" by Maines — grabbed a lot of attention, and the combo was voted Best New Band in The Austin Chronicle readers poll and the 2006 Austin Music Awards. Its aptly named ROADHOUSE GEMS (Stag Records, 2008) cemented its place in the music world.

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