

CrownMedia



THE WORLDWIDE LEADER IN *Celebrations*

'A NASHVILLE CHRISTMAS CAROL'

Cast Bios

JESSY SCHRAM (Vivienne Wake) – Film and television darling Jessy Schram just wrapped the latest season on the NBC hit series "Chicago Med" as OB-GYN surgeon 'Dr. Hannah Asher' and will next be seen starring in the Hallmark Channel original movie "Country at Heart," as struggling singer/songwriter 'Shayna Cook.' Schram is a familiar face on the Hallmark Channel with starring roles in a number of movies including "A Royal New Year's Eve," "The Birthday Wish," "Road to Christmas," and "Harvest Moon." Equally, she graces the screens of hit drama series on network television, as well as the bigscreen in acclaimed independent films.

Schram's television career includes leading series roles in Steven Spielberg's TNT drama "Falling Skies," with Noah Wylie and ABC's "Last Resort." Other TV credits include "Once Upon a Time," "Nashville," "Veronica Mars," and the award winning AMC drama "Mad Men."

As a film actress, Schram is continually drawn to the world of independent film. She appeared opposite Lake Bell and Jon Bernthal in "Shot Caller" and also worked alongside Finn Wittrock and Emilie de Ravin in "The Submarine Kid" and with Jeff Garlin, Sarah Silverman and Amy Sedaris in the ensemble comedy "I Want Someone to Eat Cheese With." Schram had the pleasure of working with the late director Tony Scott, playing Chris Pine's wife in the action-thriller trainblockbuster, "Unstoppable."

A singer/songwriter, Schram has shared her passion for music in clubs and concert venues all over the country. This summer, she will be sharing her voice with TV audiences in "Country at Heart," performing original music for the movie from the James Barker Band. Simultaneously, she'll be releasing original music, kicking it off with brand new single *Do I Dare*.

#

WES BROWN (Gavin Chase) – Wes Brown was born in Fort Worth, Texas, and raised in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where he attended Louisiana State University. Prior to graduating from LSU, Brown got his big break right in his home state, filming the Jerry Bruckheimer-produced 2006 sports drama *Glory Road* which shot on location in Southern Louisiana. Soon after, he relocated to Los Angeles and landed another supporting role in the Warner Bros. feature, *We Are Marshall*, playing actor Ian McShane's son.

Brown is perhaps best known for his role on HBO's hit vampire series, "True Blood," in which he played Luke, a former football player with a vengeance against vampires.

Brown has also had guest-starring roles on CBS's "CSI: Miami," "Criminal Minds," "NCIS," "NCIS New Orleans" and on ABC's "Desperate Housewives," along with recurring roles on the NBC medical drama "Trauma," The CW's "90210" and "Hart of Dixie," ABC's hit "Private Practice" and

David Lynch's "Twin Peaks." He also portrayed Disney's legendary Gaston on ABC's "Once Upon a Time."

Additionally, Brown was a series regular on the Lifetime network's "Beach Girls," starring Rob Lowe, as well as on NBC's "Deception."

A favorite of Hallmark Channel fans, Brown has starred in the Hallmark Channel Original Movies "June in January," "Love Begins," "Love's Resounding Courage," "Shadow on The Mesa," "Love Under the Stars" and "Christmas Cookies." Most recently, he starred in Hallmark Channel's "Over the Moon in Love" which premiered in October, last year's holiday movie hit "Christmas at Graceland" and in "Wedding at Graceland," as part of the network's annual "June Weddings" programming event.

WYNONNA JUDD (Marilyn Jinway) – "I've learned a lot being at home these last few months," Wynonna reflects. "When there's no touring, no concerts, no band, no lights, no action, all that's left is you and the song. All that's left is your gift."

And what a gift it is. Born into poverty in rural Kentucky, Wynonna first rose to fame as one half of legendary country duo The Judds, which she launched with her mother in the early 1980s. Over the ensuing decade, the pair would go on to release six studio albums that would yield an astonishing five GRAMMY Awards, fourteen number one singles, and sales in excess of 30 million records. In 1992, Wynonna embarked on a solo career with her five-times platinum debut, which established her as a critical and commercial powerhouse in her own right. Rolling Stone described her as "the greatest female country singer since Patsy Cline," and The New York Times raved that she "demonstrates that a country performer can explore vibrant pop, deep gospel and straightforward rock and still make sense even to country traditionalists."

"I feel like I'm right back where I started," says Wynonna Judd, "like I'm 18 all over again. When I sing these songs, it feels like I'm coming home."

Indeed, 'Recollections,' Wynonna's captivating new EP, marks both a literal and a figurative homecoming for the GRAMMY-winning icon, who recorded much of the collection while quarantining on her Tennessee farm in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Forced off the road for the first time in years, she found herself reconnecting with her roots as she sang once again for the sheer joy of it, performing a series of loose and lively covers with her husband, former Highway 101 drummer, multi-instrumentalist and producer Cactus Moser. The resulting EP is a testament not only to Wynonna's status as a jaw dropping vocalist and electrifying frontwoman, but also a consummate interpreter of song and a dedicated student of craft. She offers her singular take on tracks by Nina Simone, Slim Harpo, John Prine, Fats Domino and the Grateful Dead here, delivering spare, entrancing performances driven by deep empathy and gut intuition. Wynonna drills down to the essence of each song, stripping back layer after layer until she's laid bare the raw, emotional core of the music. There's no pretense or posturing on 'Recollections,' just pure heart and soul.

SARA EVANS (Belinda) – They say imitation is the sincerest form of flattery and Sara Evans is about to put smiles on a lot of faces with the release of Copy That. The 13-song collection finds Evans putting her distinctive creative stamp on some of the most iconic songs in country and pop music as well as shining a spotlight on some little known gems.

Released on her own Born to Fly Records, Copy That is Evans' first solo studio album since 2017's

critically acclaimed *Words on Copy That* she shines a spotlight on songs that have served as the soundtrack for the American experience for the last six decades. Little Big Town's Phillip Sweet joins Evans for a buoyant rendition of the Stevie Nicks and Kenny Loggins classic "Whenever I Call You Friend" and Old Crow Medicine Show adds their unique flavor to the Hank Williams standard "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry." Her cover of Dexy's Midnight Runners' 1982 hit "Come On Eileen" is absolutely infectious and her pulsating rendition of The Knack's "My Sharona" shows a rockin' side of Evans rarely heard.

Over the last two decades, Evans has carved a successful career anchored by her insightful songwriting and warm, evocative voice. With such enduring hits as "Suds in the Bucket," "A Real Fine Place to Start," "Perfect" and "A Little Bit Stronger," she's earned recognition as the fifth most played female artist at country radio and continues to be a force on the road with tour dates criss-crossing the country. For her ninth studio album, the Missouri native serves up an eclectic bounty of songs that have shaped her life and storied career.

"I've always put cover songs on my records just because I think they are so fun. My fans have been asking for a covers record for years and now just seemed like the right time," says Evans, who has always been a champion for great songwriting and has covered Gavin DeGraw, Radney Foster and others on previous records. "We first started out thinking we'd really change some of the songs, but then every time we started to record it we were like, 'That part is so good, let's just do that!' We wanted to honor those songwriters and musicians and say, 'what you did on this record was amazing. Now we're just going to make it a little more modern.'"

Evans co-produced *Copy That* with Jarrad K—known for his work with Ruston Kelly, Weezer and the Goo Goo Dolls—at Chateau Noir in East Nashville. "I started listening to Ruston Kelly's album and just became obsessed with it," she says. "That's what I do. I obsess over different artists and listen for months. Then my whole family gets addicted to it, so we became obsessed with Ruston Kelly and I said, 'I have to find out who produced that. I want to work with him.'"

When Evans met Jarrad, they quickly discovered they were kindred spirits. "We just immediately bonded. He's like my little brother now," she says with a smile. "At our first meeting, we immediately fell in love musically. We were talking about the Ruston record and had such a connection. We had another dinner and then we were like, 'Let's do it! Let's go for it!' So we started just sending song ideas to each other."

Evans admits it was difficult culling the thousands of songs they liked down to the 13 that made the album. "I knew I had to have a Patsy Cline song. I knew I had to have a John Mayer. I wanted a Wallflowers song because of how important Matt Chamberlain, the drummer, has been to my music," she says of recording the Wallflowers' "6th Avenue Heartache." "Things are so different these days the way people make records, but Jarrad and I both agreed that we had to have everything real, everything super authentic, people in the studio together."

That approach created magic that can be heard on every track. Evans recruited her son Avery to play guitar, which made the experience even sweeter. "The first day we did 'She's Got You' and Carole King's 'It's Too Late,' and then we did Chicago's 'Hard To Say I'm Sorry.' Avery ended up playing on the whole album."

The project further became a family affair when Evans' daughters Olivia and Audrey added their vocals to the album. "It was so fun. I can't even describe it," she says with a big smile and obvious maternal pride. "Some things are just magical, and you know they are from God. I know God put

me with Jarrad and having my girls with me in the studio all day every day was so special. They are truly my best friends.”

Evans admits some of the songs she chose might surprise fans, but that was part of the fun. “I was getting ready to go to my second song meeting with Jarrad and I heard ‘My Sharona’ in the car,” she says. “I was like, ‘Oh my God! We have to record that’ because it made me so happy. It’s badass! ‘My Sharona’ is worthy of being covered. It’s so iconic and I love surprising and shocking people who can’t believe that a female would cover that.”

As a big John Mayer fan, she knew she had to record one of his songs but opted for something lesser known and more personal. “My family was against me covering John Mayer because we love him so much,” she admits. “They were like, ‘You can’t cover anything that was really popular. It has to be something obscure,’ so that’s why I chose ‘All We Ever Do Is Say Goodbye.’ That was always mine and Jay’s song because I would travel so much.”

In early 2020, Evans and her family moved back to Nashville after spending the past 11 years near Birmingham, where her husband, retired quarterback Jay Barker, works as a radio personality. “It’s been the best decision,” she says of returning to Nashville. “I love the fact that I raised the kids in Alabama, and it was a great thing to do. But it’s simply so much easier doing my career from here, and that’s another reason why making this album was so awesome is because I could just wake up and drive across town to the studio and not figure out how to bus up from Birmingham.”

These days, Evans is enjoying the creative process more than ever and it’s easy to hear her passion in listening to Copy That. “I’m just having fun. I love being on the road,” says Evans. “We’re working a ton. I’m having so much fun and am just deeply in love with music and performing.”

RAELYNN (ALEXIS) - From the moment she came careening into Nashville, singer-songwriter RaeLynn has been the talk of the town for her refusal to color within the lines and play it safe. Within minutes of meeting the Texas native, it’s obvious you’re in the presence of a woman who’s entirely comfortable being 100 percent herself. Talking a mile a minute, telling stories in her rich twang, RaeLynn manages to be frank, funny, and feisty yet thoughtful and emotionally connected both in conversation and in her music.

Soon after making her debut with the chart-climbing single “Boyfriend,” RaeLynn scored her first PLATINUM-selling smash with 2014’s “God Made Girls,” then triumphed again with “Love Triangle”: the GOLD-certified lead single from her debut album Wild Horse, a 2017 release that hit No. 1 on Billboard’s Country Albums chart. But despite enjoying major success over the years—including two ACM New Female Vocalist nominations, more than 450 million total career streams, and the distinction of being the first Country face to represent global beauty brand Too Faced—RaeLynn long felt like something was amiss. Though she co-wrote 11 of the 12 songs on Wild Horse, those songs were penned when she was just 17 and 18. “My songwriting has changed, and my life has changed,” she says now. “I want to be able to show a more quirky, fun side of my personality. The things I say are kind of left-of-center. How can I put that into a song and make music that finds its own box within Country music?”

On Baytown, RaeLynn answers that question with gutsy confidence and unbridled joy. Taking its title from her Texas hometown, the EP channels her force-of-nature energy into six songs that perfectly capture Baytown’s one-of-a-kind spirit. “I’ve always been told I have a big personality,

and I feel like all that sassiness comes from growing up where I did," says RaeLynn. "I grew up a church kid, but I like to cuss, too. And I want all those flavors in the music because that is me, and it's my fans. The ones who send me messages about a scripture I post on my Instagram are the same fans who crack up at me dancing in a post the next day."

Kicking off with "Keep Up," Baytown instantly proves to be RaeLynn's freedom ride. As the track bubbles over with her all-out joie de vivre and whip-smart sense of humor, RaeLynn shares a fiery love letter to Country girls everywhere. "We can party just as much as any other dude, and I felt we needed a song to say that," RaeLynn says. "Yes, I rock Gucci sometimes, and yes, I drink pink drinks, and yes, I'm girly as hell, but that doesn't mean I can't drive a truck. That doesn't mean I can't change a tire. That doesn't mean that I can't do whatever the guys can do."

All throughout Baytown, RaeLynn flaunts the formidable vocal skills she's honed for almost her whole life. But while she grew up singing in church, it was a trip to the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo with her dad in her pre-teen years that left her determined to make a go at music. "I remember seeing the Dixie Chicks up on that revolving stage and thinking, "That's what I want to do," she recalls. After taking up drums when she was just nine, RaeLynn learned to play guitar at age 13 and then started writing her own songs, thanks in part to some encouragement from a cousin-lead singer in Grammy Award-nominated Christian rock band Leeland. Although her early material mostly consisted of what she now describes as "really heavy heartbreak songs," she soon carved out a songwriting voice that fully reflects her free-spirited personality—all while taking a page from the classic Country artists she's long admired. "Storytelling's a top priority for me in my songwriting, and there's nothing like the storytelling in older Country music," says RaeLynn. "Whenever I'm writing, I take the song line-by-line and read it out loud like it's an actual story—and if it doesn't make sense when I talk it out, then I'll change the lines from there. I put a lot of work into making sure my songs genuinely say something."

Leaving Baytown for Nashville at the age of 18, RaeLynn delivered her debut EP *Me* in 2015 and quickly made her name as a magnetic live performer. In the last few years alone, she's achieved such milestones as performing at the Grand Ole Opry in addition to taking the stage in such faraway cities as Seoul. And in a particularly meaningful moment for RaeLynn, 2019 saw her receiving a surprise welcome from local fans upon supporting Maren Morris at London's Royal Albert Hall. "At a fan party in Nashville two years ago, I'd given all my fans these light-up crowns I had left over from the launch of 'Queens Don't,'" RaeLynn explains, referring to her 2018 single. "So I'm at this huge show so far from home, and I look out in the crowd and there's ten girls wearing those same crowns. It turns out some fans in the U.S. had sent them over so that I could feel loved and represented in London. I just thought, 'My gosh, Country fans are the best. It still gets me all teared up to think about it now.'"

In bringing Baytown to life, RaeLynn set her sights on deepening her incredibly strong connection with her fans. "I always try to put myself in their shoes, and create something they'll feel inspired by," she says. "Anytime a fan tells me, 'I feel like you wrote my heart,' that means more to me than anything. "For help in matching her lyrical directness with a dynamic sound—anaesthetic she refers to as "Dolly Parton with some 80s"—RaeLynn turned to producer Corey Crowder (Chris Young, Florida Georgia Line) and purposely tapped into her Baytown roots. "Where I grew up, I didn't just listen to Country music," she says. "I listened to Pop. I listened to R&B. I listened to Rap. I listened to so many different things and I wanted it to really show that. I wanted something that makes me dance, that makes me feel good. I want to bring the fun."

Her first release for Florida Georgia Line's Round Here Records, Baytown brings the fun in spades.

The EP's infectious leadtrack "Bra Off" offers a full-tilt celebration of post-breakup freedom, hilariously comparing casting off an ex to shedding a "pink, lacy, suffocating" bra, while "Judgin' to Jesus" unfolds as the kind of big-hearted, signature Raelynn song that gives people permission to be themselves ("If you keep a Bible by your cigarettes/If you go to church in a cheetah dress...Don't worry, honey, around here we leave the judgin' to Jesus"). "That song is like my life statement," she says. "I'm the kind of girl who'd walk into church in a tight cheetah dress and a big coat. I like to dance ,but I also love the Bible. Being a person like that, I want to hear songs like this."

Revealing Raelynn's more introspective side, "Fake Girl Town" looks back on her early days in Nashville and the struggle to find a tribe of girlfriends ("I know they're out here somewhere / Chasing down their dreams / Sneaking the midnight stressing cigarettes /Talking Jesus, love and break up sex"). That melancholy mood also infuses "Me About Me," a brilliantly detailed track that speaks to "a situation with an ex where I knew everything about him, but he never asked me about me," according to Raelynn. In its wistful recollection of that experience, "Me About Me" showcases her gift for crafting lyrics both highly specific and powerfully resonant ("Your first ride was a 1990 Wrangler/Your first kiss was a game of spin-the-bottle/When it comes to you I can answer any question/That's what happens when you just sit back and listen"). And on "Still Smokin'," "Baytown shifts into ablistessed-outtone as Raelynn serves up a starry-eyed love song for her husband ("I was floating to heaven as soon as I met ya / We were burning tires, starting fires that are still going"). "We'd just celebrated our third-year anniversary, and I wanted to write a song about how we're still so gaga for each other," she says. "It's written almost like a story to our kids—like, 'This is how it all happened.'"

Since releasing the first tracks from Baytown, Raelynn has witnessed the undeniable impact of the bigger and bolder approach she's taken to her artistry. "One of my favorite things so far is how girls are posting of videos of themselves doing all this bad-ass stuff with 'Keep Up' playing behind them," she says. "There's one woman roping horses, another who's a firefighter, putting a fire ou—I think it's so epic." And in sharing all of Baytown with the world, Raelynn is eager for that cycle of inspiration to continue even further. "With these new songs, I feel like the person you meet in the room is being reflected in the music as well," she says. "I'm more confident in the woman I am now more than ever before, and I'm saying what I really want to say. I cannot wipe the smile from my face because I know the fans are going to love it."

KIX BROOKS (SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS PAST) - Kix Brooks is one-half of country music's most successful duo of all time, Brooks & Dunn. Along with his partner Ronnie Dunn, the duo amassed 20 chart-topping hits, 40 Top Ten songs, and over 80 industry awards. Brooks & Dunn have sold over 30 million albums making them the best-selling duo in country music history. Brooks & Dunn teamed up with Reba McEntire in 2015 for a Las Vegas residency called "Reba, Brooks & Dunn: Together In Vegas" which is the longest running country music residency in Las Vegas. Brooks, whom *Rolling Stone* calls "one of the most versatile guys in country music," is the recipient of three CMA "National Broadcast Personality of The Year" awards for his nationally syndicated radio show *American Country Countdown*. Brooks is co-owner of Nashville's award-winning winery Arrington Vineyards and was the first recipient of the CMA Humanitarian Award. Brooks serves on the boards of Vanderbilt Children's Hospital, the Country Music Association, and the CMA Foundation.

In 2019, Brooks & Dunn had the prestigious honor of being inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame.

KIMBERLY WILLIAMS-PAISLEY (Spirit of Christmas Present) - Kimberly Williams-Paisley has been starring in film, television and theater for over twenty-five years. Now a *New York Times* Best Selling Author, Williams-Paisley has garnered praise and admiration across the film, television and publishing arenas.

Williams-Paisley first lit up the screen as the radiant young bride in the comedy feature film series *Father of the Bride* and *Father of the Bride Part II*. Other film and then television roles followed, including the co-starring role of Dana on the ABC TV comedy series *According to Jim*. By the time that series concluded its impressive eight-season run, Williams-Paisley had fully evolved in her role opposite Jim Belushi and Courtney-Thorne Smith, increasing her involvement in the production by directing three episodes of the show.

She went on to star in such films as *How to Eat Fried Worms*, the film adaptation of the popular young children's book opposite Tom Cavanagh; the Warner Bros feature *We are Marshall* for director McG opposite Matthew McConaughey; and the indie film *Undiscovered Gyr!*, co-starring Christian Slater and Martin Sheen. Most recently she was seen in the latest installment of the popular *Alvin and the Chipmunks* franchise for Fox 2000, *Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Road Chip* co-starring Jason Lee and Tony Hale

On television she starred in *Amish Grace*, the story of the Amish schoolhouse massacre for the Lifetime Network, which debuted as the networks' highest-rated movie of the week at the time. She recurred for two seasons on the hit ABC TV drama *Nashville* as the mysterious Peggy Kenter, and had a recurring role on CBS's *Two and a Half Men*, opposite Jon Cryer. She also starred in the ABC Family Network's *Lucky Seven*, and the Lifetime Movie Network original feature *Identity Theft*, serving on both as Co-Producer. She co-starred in *The Christmas Shoes* for The CBS Network, in ABC's *Relativity*, in the NBC mini-series *The Tenth Kingdom* and in the Hallmark Hall of Fame film, *Follow the Stars Home*. Williams-Paisley made her Broadway debut in the Tony Award-Winning *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* and has appeared on stage in *The Vagina Monologues*, in NY and LA, and in *All in the Timing* at the Geffen Playhouse. She also performed on London's West End in David Mamet's *Speed-the-Plow*, opposite Mark Strong and Patrick Marber.

In addition to her acting work. Williams-Paisley is an accomplished writer, with her first full-length book [Where The Light Gets In](#) landing on the *New York Times* best-seller list in 2016. The book, for Crown Archetype, was born out of an essay she wrote for [Redbook](#) magazine in 2014 called *Is My Mother Gone?* which chronicled the impact of her mother's dementia. The piece created such national attention that she decided to delve deeper with a memoir, further exploring how she and her family coped with the illness, care and loss of her mother Linda. The paperback version was recently released. Williams-Paisley has become a spokesperson for the Alzheimer's Association, speaking at various fundraisers and events throughout the country over the last couple of years.

In the past, Williams-Paisley has also published articles for *In Style* and *New You* magazines and a year-long column for *Redbook* entitled *My Life as a New Wife*. She and her father Gurney Williams co-authored the children's book, [Henry and the Hidden Veggie Garden](#), and she wrote a chapter for the Zondervan-published book [The Mother and Child Project: Raising Our Voices for Health and Hope](#), a project to help support mothers and children around the globe.

In other charitable work, Williams-Paisley hosted the critically acclaimed series, *NPT Reports: Children's Health Crisis* for Nashville Public Television. The program won a Mid-south Regional

Emmy for its excellence in documentaries in the Community Service Category. She is actively involved with JP/HRO, Sean Penn's Haitian relief organization, which is currently working to improve the lives of the people of Port-Au-Prince. She is also a member of the Entertainment Council for Feeding America, a Nashville Zoo Board member, and a supporter of various animal rescue organizations.

Recently Williams-Paisley starred in the *Darrow & Darrow* four-film franchise and also *The Christmas Train*, all of which were for The Hallmark Network. She also co-starred opposite Kurt Russell in *The Christmas Chronicles* for Netflix and will appear in the film's sequel. for director Christopher Columbus.

Williams-Paisley also co-starred in "Jolene," one of the episodes of the Dolly Parton series *Heartstrings* for Netflix. Also for Netflix, Williams-Paisley filmed *FOTB3-Ish* a short sequel in the *Father of the Bride* series which debuted in September, 2020. In 2020 Williams-Paisley and her husband, country star Brad Paisley opened The Store, a grocery store for indigent families who are looking to rebuild their lives apart from public assistance. In association with Belmont University, The Store became an unexpected beacon of hope and inspiration when both the Hurricanes and COVID Pandemic devastated the Nashville Area.

Williams-Paisley also travels to meet families in less fortunate places such as Guatemala and speaks on Capitol Hill on behalf the world hunger crisis.

-- HALLMARK CHANNEL --