

Chris Young Biography

When an artist looks back on his or her own career, there are always moments he or she can point to where there was a shift to another level. Those defining moments tend to be easy to spot with the benefit of hindsight but more difficult to see without the passage of time. Yet Chris Young has a sense that something is happening.

“I really do believe in timing,” says Young. “Everybody has a different point in their career when things start to come together and click, when it’s *your* time.”

With the release of his third studio album, *NEON*, Chris Young leaves no doubt. Now is his time.

How’s this for everything clicking – *NEON*’s first single, “Tomorrow,” one of an impressive seven songs on the album co-written by Young, is the fastest-rising hit of his career. It hit the Top 20 in only six weeks and earned first week sales in excess of

30,000 downloads as Chris celebrated his highest opening sales number ever for a debut single.

And as far as timing – Young’s career is ticking like a Swiss watch. The last three singles Chris Young has released have all hit #1 on the charts, including the smash hit “Gettin’ You Home,” a song that earned him his first-ever Grammy nomination.

While all the sales numbers, accolades and awards are certainly appreciated, what Young values most about this time in his life is that he can make a living doing what he loves most.

“Music is why I’m here and it’s something I can’t live without,” says Young. “It’s what I’m built to do.”

That thrill of entertaining took hold of Young at an early age. His first moments on a stage involved acting in school plays, but it wasn’t long before he realized he wanted to showcase a different talent in the spotlight. “I love to sing,” admits Young. “I was the kid in high school who lived and breathed music every moment of every day.”

Totally focused on making his passion a career, Young was playing 150 dates a year by the time he went off to college to major in music. While dead serious about the subject of his studies, he soon felt the need to get a different kind of higher education.

“I did the thing all parents love to hear,” says Young with a mischievous gleam in his eye. “I dropped out of school and started making music full time. I knew without a shadow of a doubt that music is what drives me and it was what I had to do.”

The honky tonk school of hard knocks – including a PhD-level class fronting a seven-piece band on a run through Texas -- and countless hours honing his craft at writer’s nights in Nashville paid off with a record deal and debut on RCA. The self-titled album would go on to earn Young the title of best-selling new male artist for 2006 and a nod for the Academy of Country Music’s Top New Male Vocalist award.



Young doubled-down on the success of his first record with the release of his second CD, *The Man I Want To Be*. Any concern over maintaining momentum vanished when the album powered right through the dreaded sophomore slump with three back-to-back #1 singles.

The impressive streak started with the title-track, picked up steam with “Gettin’ You Home,” and was then followed by a song that would earn Chris Young a place into the history books. “Voices” was originally the first single released from *Man*. It made its initial run up the chart in late 2008 but stalled just inside the Top 40. When the label made the decision to give it a second go two years later, it soared all the way to #1.

“The last time (that) happened was 25-years ago with ‘On The Other Hand’ for Randy Travis,” beams Young, thrilled to have that connection with one his musical heroes.

All the chart success quickly earned Young the attention of his peers. He was tapped as an opening act for Alan Jackson and Rascal Flatts, where he learned a few tricks of the trade from two very successful entertainers with very different styles. “It’s such a great opportunity as an artist,” says Young. “To hang with those guys and watch them perform every night and see how they engage their fans.” Chris will have another chance to learn a few more tricks and earn several thousand more admirers when he joins Jason Aldean on his *My Kinda Party Tour* in July.

Young’s all-around accomplishments as an entertainer also earned him one the industry’s highest honors: his first-ever Grammy nomination for Best Male Country Vocal Performance for “Gettin’ You Home.”

“It was so cool and humbling to receive a Grammy nomination,” remembers Young. “It’s one of those moments I’ll never forget. It’s exciting to have your name in the hat. Win or not, it confirms that you’re doing something right.”

To insure that he continued doing “something right” with the new record, Young made sure a trusted friend and seasoned pro was with him in the studio. James Stroud, the veteran producer who worked with Young on *Man*, was back again for *NEON*. “Until it stops working, I honestly don’t want anyone else to produce my albums. It’s so inspiring to be able to work with someone who you have that much admiration for and that much respect for in the studio.”

When fans listen to *NEON*, that strong familiarity between Young and Stroud pays off in the very first track. “I Can Take It From There,” is a song that has Young revisiting the romantic vibe of “Gettin’ You Home.” Expect similar, swoon-worthy results with female fans.

“It’s a great way to kick off the record,” says Young. “When you pop the CD in, there’s no way you’ll be confused about what you’re listening to. Immediately it’s the low end of my voice, some cool guitar tones, steel and a kind of cool, sexy vibe. This was kind of a kindred spirit to the last album.”

With the upbeat “Lost,” a song celebrating broken GPSs, long country drives and looking deep into someone’s eyes, country music fans have found their soundtrack for summer. “There are so many people who are going to be able to connect with this,” says Young. “Put that song on repeat and roll the windows down.”

Young follows the debut single “Tomorrow” with the tongue-in-cheek public service announcement/party anthem “Save Water Drink Beer.” And then there’s the title track.

“When I first heard ‘*Neon*,’ I thought to myself, “Man, I’ve got to cut this before George Strait finds it,” laughs Young. “If anybody’s looking for classic country music, it’s that track. I knew immediately that it was going to be the title of the album.”

“I wanted to write with Brett James and Tim Nichols who wrote ‘The Man I Want To Be,’” recalls Young. “So I had this title, ‘When An Old Love Feels New.’ Immediately Brett picks up a guitar and sings, ‘Granddaddy always said.’ I wanted to know why he started with Granddaddy, and he said, ‘I don’t know. It just sounds kind of cool.’ Well, my grandparents are that song - they met, fell in love and that was it. We finished it in under an hour.”

With “You,” Chris Young realized one of his guiltiest pleasures just might be listening to his own music. “That was honestly one of my favorites to put on and listen to on the record,” tells Young. “I know I shouldn’t be rocking out to my own album, but it’s just a great feeling song.”

Writing “Flashlight,” a surprisingly sweet song about a boy who holds the light as his father works on the car, required a quick co-write with Chris’s own dad. “I actually called him and said, ‘Hey, when we were working on that Camaro, what size tool did we use?’” recalls Young. “And he immediately answered, ‘Nine-sixteenths.’ So we put that right in the song.”

By including the song “When She’s On,” Chris gives a helping hand to tongue-tied fellas everywhere. “Every guy wants to find the way to say what that song says to the girl he’s dating,” Young says with a smile. “And that song is exactly what they all want to hear. So anytime I hear a song like that I want to cut it...because I can never manage to say it correctly.”

For the final track of *NEON*, “She’s Got This Thing About Her,” it’s Chris Young like you’ve never heard him before. Showcasing one of country music’s most striking voices accompanied only by piano and a string section, the song reveals just how much Young has grown as an artist and a word-smith...and gives us a glimpse on just how far his talent can take him. It’s a fitting finale for a country album made for the modern age but delivered by a classic performer with total confidence in his craft.

“I get to do exactly what I love, which is write and create and put it in permanent ink,” Young says with a grin. “We didn’t put it in pencil.”