FULL EPISODES

YOUR FAVORITE CMT SHOWS ARE ON PARAMOUNT+

SHOWS

PLUTO TV TV SCHEDULE

ADVERTISEMENT

LIVE TV

MUSIC NEWS

TRY PARAMOUNT+ FOR FREE **CMT SHOP**

By Lauren Tingle

July 24, 2019

12:00 AM

CMT

detailing three key points:

No. 2: She is a lady, and reputations are important.

No. 3: Rock 'n' roll and God are not mutually exclusive.

No. 1: She can rock.

WANDA JACKSON HAS MANY STORIES LEFT TO WRITE

REFLECTS ON TIME WITH ADELE, ELVIS PRESLEY AND HER RETIREMENT FROM TOURING



When Rosanne Cash started preparing her speech that would help induct Wanda Jackson into the Rock &

Roll Hall of Fame, Cash asked Jackson what she wanted everyone to know about her. Jackson replied by





Wanda Jackson - Thunder On The Mountain (Official Video) Share

the night of her induction, she was seated with Elvis Presley's backing musicians Scotty Moore and DJ Fontana, who all started touring together in 1955, and it was the start of a climactic final decade in Jackson's touring career. To see her live in that final decade, it felt like 1955 all over again. She could command any stage with her signature purr and growl with a ferocity that was unmatched by any other performer. She toured the venerated Jack White-produced The Party Ain't Over and the Justin Townes Earle-produced Unfinished Business. She joined Adele for select dates on the British singer's 2010 tour along with headlining sold-out engagements on her own worldwide. She has also represented rockabilly at several music festivals

including Stagecoach in Indio, Calif. and the Bonnaroo Music & Arts Festival in Manchester, Tenn.

Jackson writes about her 2009 induction in her memoir, Every Night Is Saturday Night: A Country Girl's

Journey to the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, a thrilling read that goes in-depth into her rise as a teen country

singing sensation through her evolution into the Queen of Rockabilly and the First Lady of Rock 'n' Roll. On

At 81, Jackson announced her retirement from live performing in April after encountering a series of health issues for the last three years. As she states above, she believes reputations are essential, and with that,

comes the belief that presentation is everything. Her father, Tom Jackson, instilled in her that belief when he

gave up his job as a taxi driver to facilitate her career full-time when she was a teenager. He was the one

CMT.com caught up with Jackson recently to get her thoughts on retirement from live performance after it

who called the promoter in Memphis who booked her first tours with Presley just as rock was being

NOEL VASQUEZ/GETTY IMAGES

people like that.

stage?

invented.

has been her life for more than 60 years.

Wanda Jackson and Jack White

But for about three years, I've had a lot of problems just in and out of the hospital. I haven't been able to work like I usually do. We decided this would be the best way. It's a good time to bow out gracefully and

CMT.com: What do you hope your fans understand about your decision to retire from the

Jackson: I always wanted to retire or let go of my career when I felt like I was at the top. And for me, right

now, has been the top. For the last eight to 10 years, I've had nothing but big crowds, many of them were

have so much enthusiasm, and they love our '50s rockabilly songs. It's been a lot of fun for me to sing for

sold out, standing-room-only, and my audiences have been so great. They're mostly young people, and they

Sharon Jones and Jackson

hang up my rock 'n' roll shoes.

It just seemed like this was the right time. My husband of 56 years, Wendell, died in 2017, and I'm still not over that by any means. He traveled with me, and we were together 24-7 usually. That has been very hard for me. But I went right back to work because I figured that was the best thing for me. I didn't quit singing or

couple of fairly large hits in the country field. That's a pretty good run.

What will you miss most about live performance?

and antsy. I've got plenty to do here at home. It never gets all done at once. But I've never been that much of a domestic girl. I just wanted to be on the road like Willie Nelson's song says, "Back on the road again, making music with my friends." **Jackson at Bonnaroo 2011**

anything. I wanted to get back on the road. I feel more at home there than I do at home. I get kind of fidgety

I've been sitting here thinkin' on that because all these other times, I always looked forward to going back on

the road on tour. I don't know all my feelings right now. I'm still sad about it. But I'll be 82 at the end of the

graduated from high school that year. I have been signed with Decca records since I was 16. I've had a

summer, and most people have been retired since they were 65. I've been touring since 1955, and I

I remember reading in your book when you were initially trying to get your first record deal, it

was believed that girls don't sell records. How much of that adversity made you want to prove

I probably didn't hear that statement directly at the time because I wasn't talking to [them] in person. Hank

Thompson was doing this on my behalf because I had been singing with him and his band for a good while.

remember if Hank actually told me what was said or not, but actually, the statement was true because there

weren't that many girls recording solo. In the pop field, you had Patti Page, Rosemary Clooney, and several

who were recording. But in country music, Patsy Montana was I guess the very first, and then Kitty Wells,

He was my mentor, and I just thought the world of him. So, he was the one trying to help me. I don't

FILMMAGIC/FILMMAGIC

Jean Shepard and then me. So, even when we toured, we went out on package shows with usually four to five artists. And usually there was just one girl on the bill for window dressing I guess. But that's just the way it was, and I didn't think much about it. When you don't have comparisons, you just go with the flow. **Darlene Love, Jackson and Cyndi Lauper**

SINGER WANDA JACKSON PERFORMS ON STAGE DURING BONNAROO 2011 AT THE OTHER TENT ON JUNE 10, 2011 IN MANCHESTER, TENNESSEE. (PHOTO BY FILMMAGIC/FILMMAGIC)

those who didn't believe in you wrong?

That's true. I think it makes you a stronger person. I think I covered it in my book how great my daddy was to

keep me grounded. As you get more and more success, it's a little harder to meet and greet people because

your crowds get larger. But I did that for every job that I worked. I did a lot of dances with the band here [in

Oklahoma] locally in my teenage years, but daddy would always tell me to go around to each table and say

hello to people, and see if they're having a good time. I kept it up the best I could. I didn't go out if they were

rowdy and then he also told me not to complain because this is my job. And he said, "You chose it, and you

you do have other responsibilities that most people don't have. That's part of the deal." That helped me in

the long run because you've heard the saying, you have to shake the same hands coming down as you did

As I understand it, she asked for me. I thought this is a strange combination having me open for her, but

that's what she wanted. I opened 10 dates for her, and she was a precious gal. I really liked Adele. And she

don't have to get up at seven in the morning, punch a time clock and work at a desk or something all day. But

did me, too. When I first met her, she was in the greenroom eating supper, and she had her hair in these big rollers. She was eating with everybody, and when she saw me, she came over to me and picked me up off the floor. She's so much taller and bigger than I am, and she just swung me around. She said she was so happy to meet me and have me on tour with her. Of course, touring with her was nothing but first-class all the way. It was really wonderful. I had my own band with me so I could do a good show.

going up. That made it easier for me.

How did the tour with Adele come about?

And it allows you to grow to be the first of your kind.

UNSPECIFIED - CIRCA 1970: PHOTO OF WANDA JACKSON PHOTO BY MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

With Elvis' encouragement to go into rock music, what were those first experiences as a rock

which surprised me. But after I saw [Elvis] work, I thought, "What am I doing on this show?" I found out

soon enough. One man told me, "If we knew we had a date on a night when Elvis Presley was in concert, we

knew where we were going. The girlfriends wanted to go see Elvis, but by golly, we had you." I thought that

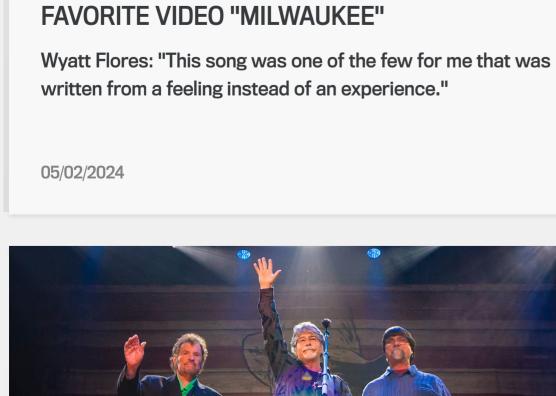
Jackson's autobiography, Every Night Is Saturday Night: A Country Girl's Journey to the Rock & Roll Hall of

performer like for you? Well, I didn't sing rock when I was touring with Elvis. I hadn't recorded any, and it was such brand-new music because I had been working with Hank [Thompson], and I hadn't traveled any. I didn't have that much experience. It was very exciting, but I just sang my country songs and was accepted by his audiences,

Fame, is available wherever books are sold.

was very flattering, of course.

UNSPECIFIED - CIRCA 1970: PHOTO OF WANDA JACKSON PHOTO BY MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES



ALABAMA TALKS JUNE JAM XVIII, REVEALS

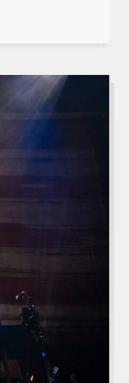
CMT will honor Alabama with an all-star "GIANTS" television

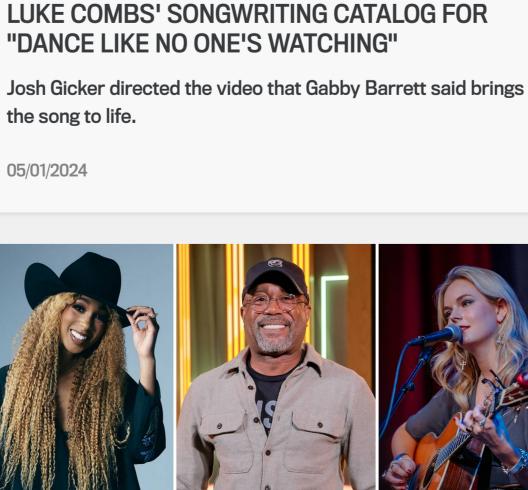
LINEUP

04/30/2024

special later this year.

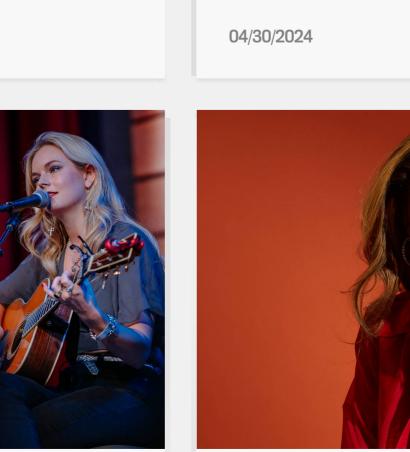
CMT PREMIERE: WYATT FLORES SHARES HIS





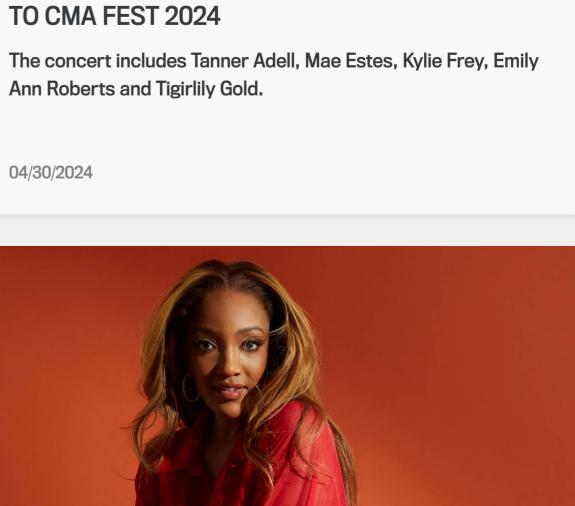
CMT PREMIERE: GABBY BARRETT TURNS TO

LATEST NEWS



THIS FALL

04/26/2024



MICKEY GUYTON TO HEADLINE CMT ON TOUR

The presale for the 22-city CMT On Tour Presents

Mickey Guyton will begin on Tuesday.

CMT'S NEXT WOMEN OF COUNTRY IS COMING

LOAD MORE

CMT ROUNDUP: NEW MUSIC FROM TIERA

COLLINS AND MORE

Roundup.

04/26/2024

KENNEDY, DARIUS RUCKER, KARLEY SCOTT

Hear the newest songs in country music on CMT's playlist, The

Q

Luxurious Ireland Train ADVERTISEMENT