



Debuts At Hatheway Cultural Center: East Alton Native/Nashville Artist Tommy Karlas To Release His Own 'Put It In Drive' Album With Powerful Songs

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
August 4 2021 12:15 PM

A black price tag hangs from a rearview mirror. The background is a blurred night scene with bokeh lights from cars, suggesting a parking lot or a busy street at dusk or night. The tag is centered and hangs vertically.

PUT IT IN DRIVE

TOMMY KARLAS



NASHVILLE, TENN. - After two decades of writing songs professionally for some of the biggest names in country music in Nashville, East Alton native Tommy Karlas is releasing his first album called “Put It In Drive,” on October 16, 2021. The other good news is he will do the album release show at Lewis and Clark Community College’s Hatheway Hall in Godfrey with a performance that evening.

Karlas has written songs for big-name artists Montgomery and Gentry, Tricia Yearwood, Blake Shelton, Randy Travis, and many more. He wrote songs on an album with Cy Young Award winner Barry Zito. The first single "All Over Me" was written with him. He said one word describes what it has taken for him to make it in Nashville - “persistence.”

One of Yearwood's releases this summer was "Ran Into You," written by Karlas. His biggest all-time hit was Montgomery-Gentry's "Roll With Me," released in August 2008 and became the 20th single to reach the Top 40 Billboard Hot Country Songs charts on the weeks of December 20-27, 2008, and became their number one song. The song features the vocals of Troy Gentry and is built around learning the life lessons about which are pointed out in the song. Karlas added a second verse to the song when he thought about a high school friend who died.

A heartfelt story that emerged from the "Roll With Me" single was about how one younger person was a firefighter in Crossville, Alabama, and he died in a terrible fire trying to save an elderly woman. The way they found the firefighter in the fire debris was that both the firefighter and his father had the same ring tone from the song 'Roll With Me.' That was pretty powerful, and the song touched a lot of people, and there were so many good stories that surrounded it.

Karlas graduated from Roxana High School. His father - Kenny Karlas - died in 2014. His mom, Kathy, and many other family and friends, plus high school classmates, will be attending the Hatheway Hall opening. Tommy said he couldn't have had parents who were any more supportive of his dreams and life than his parents, Kenny and Kathy. He also valued the support of his family and network of friends.

Tommy said he has a girlfriend - Kimberly - who will also attend the show. He said Kimberly has been extremely supportive of him in his career and life in general. July 1, marked Tommy's 20th year in Nashville. He just turned 40 last week he said. Good friends - performers Charlie Brown and Billy Hurst - will open for Karlas on October 16 at Hatheway Hall.

Tommy said some singles will be released from the new "Put It In Drive" album on Aug. 31.

"Basically I have written some songs for some big artists in Nashville for 20 years, now I will release some of the best songs I have written in the past five to seven years that have not been cut. 'Without Lessons' will be released as a single on August 31. It is a song about the lessons of life and spending time having a cup of coffee in your mama's kitchen and not missing a day with the old man fishing. It is definitely a reflection of me and all those hard-earned lessons we learn one time or another. I have had a strong reaction to the song, and I would be really surprised if it isn't a hit one day."

Another favorite on the new album for Tommy is "The Lie." Tommy describes it as a "heartfelt heartbreak song."

“'The Lie' is about somebody not being with a certain loved person anymore and trying not to tell them they miss them, but they really do,” he said. “It is a heartbreak ballad.”

“I just received a publishing deal as a songwriter for Sony Music on September 1, and that is probably the biggest deal I have had,” he said. “It has been an incredible experience in Nashville. I have had 20 years of what I call AA ball, and now after 20 years, I feel I have been called up to the Majors with the Sony songwriting deal. Hopefully, I will be writing with all the big artists.”

Tommy dreamed that one day he would be able to do a huge show at Hatheway Concert Center at Lewis and Clark Community College, and now after 20 years that too, will come true. He said that is why he releasing the album at the LCCC concert hall.

Again, Tommy said for anyone wishing to fulfill their dreams as he did in Nashville, it takes “non-stop persistence” and “perseverance.”



For tickets, click:

TommyKarlasLive.eventbrite.com

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