

Summerville musician striking chords across the US

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At first glance, one might think Eddie Bush is at the top of the game — living the life many dream of, but to which few ascend.

To those who just have tuned into the rootsy, soulful harmonies of One Flew South, it may seem Bush's success is just another one of those overnight success stories -- the classic talent plus luck equals fame and fortune.

To be sure, Bush has been in some enviable places, playing gigs such as the Newport Folk Festival, Farm Aid, even the CBS Early Show.

With this present project, the acoustic trio One Flew South, he has written songs with such luminaries as Marcus Hummon and J.D. Souther. One Flew South has been signed with Decca Records; their debut CD, "Last of the Good Guys," is now released.

What most people probably don't understand is that this did not happen overnight; this is the latest destination in a journey spanning more than two decades.

Bush has extraordinary talent — and a drive to match. His calm, easy-going demeanor is contrasted with a deep intensity of spirit, a single-minded focus on the road ahead.

Bush splits his time between his home in Summerville, the studio in Nashville, and the road. He is always working; if he's not writing or recording he and his partners from One Flew South are touring.

Most recently, they got off tour with Phil Vassar and have played shows over the past year or so with artists such as Kelli Pickler and the Gatlin Brothers.

Even when he's home, he still teaches guitar lessons.

"People often are amazed at that," Bush noted. "But the truth is, why wouldn't I do that? I love guitar and I love teaching guitar."

Bush's love affair for the guitar goes back literally to the vestiges of childhood memory. Most kids go through spells of wanting to be something when they grow up — a firefighter, police officer, soldier, baseball player. Bush said he always told his parents he wanted to be a rock star. They, like most parents, thought it was just another fad, he said.

"I spent every moment with a guitar," he said. "I loved it and I just wanted to be great. When I heard Hendrix for the first time, I wanted to be as good as Jimi Hendrix."



He played his first paying gig when he was sixteen; he would form bands, play many, many gigs, and write and record for the better part of the next two decades.

Then, in the late 1990s, Bush said he had something of an epiphany.

One of his idols and influences, rock guitar legend Eric Johnson, had taken an interest in Bush, asking Bush to send him a demo tape of just him playing and singing. Bush did; Johnson then invited Bush to open several shows for him – but as an acoustic solo act. Bush, who had spent the last decade and a half being the wildly energetic front man/lead guitarist for his own band, found this caveat to be a little odd, yet ultimately very liberating.

“I finally asked him one night why he only wanted me to play acoustic,” Bush said. “He explained that ultimately, he felt like I was hiding behind all the orchestration. He actually compared me to Paul Rogers, but with a bigger range.”

Bush soon found himself writing material just for those type shows. And he said he made a discovery – that Johnson, by insisting he do these shows solo acoustic, helped Bush really find his voice, he said.

“What it did for me was make me realize that I was taking the fact that I can sing for granted,” he said. “It was almost like I found my voice by being pushed into a corner. I wanted to be that guy who can command a theater – and much to my surprise, I found I could.”

“Because of this, it also spurred me to do lots of theater shows – I was able to say yes to things that, had I not played with Eric, I might have said no to them,” he added.

Like anyone who wishes to make it in the music business, Bush spent years looking for the right break. He had his ups and his downs, his frustrations and celebrations. Eric Johnson’s interest in his career was an important and much appreciated break, he said. A change of direction from rock guitar hero to acoustic singer/songwriter was another important defining moment.

But it was a trip to Nashville in 2004 for a songwriting showcase that provided Bush with the opportunity that has turned into One Flew South.

“I met Marcus Hummon through a friend of a friend,” Bush said. “He is one of Nashville’s very finest songwriters – he’s responsible for number one hits for Tim McGraw, the Dixie Chicks, and Rascal Flatts, to name a few.”

Hummon told Bush he knew two musicians, Royal Reed and Chris Roberts who had been trying to put together a vocal trio.

“The one thing I have learned over the years is to be open-minded to all opportunities,” Bush said. “So that’s what I did. On August 7, 2005, I met with Royal and Chris for the first time.”

They spent a little while trying to figure out something they could play and sing together; one of them launched into an old song by Firefall, “Just Remember I Love You.”

“We hit those harmony parts – and I just couldn’t believe it,” Bush said. “It was absolutely amazing.”

They knew they had something special, he said, and the accomplishments of the past couple of years stands testament to it.

“When you listen, it’s a total amalgamation – there are the obvious references to influences, but there’s also a new edginess,” Bush said. “That, to me, is the whole point of music – the expression of it and the individuality of it.”

The group started writing together and trying to find a record label to sign them; ultimately, Decca Records offered them a contract. Thus far, the union seems to be a good one, Bush said, The group’s single, “My Kind of Beautiful,” from their debut CD, *Last of the Good Guys*,” reached #46 and stayed on the Billboard chart for more than 19 weeks.

Most important, the group’s management team brought them together with another important figure of American songwriting: J.D. Souther, who has written major hits for such bands as Poco and the Eagles.

“He had written a song called “It’s Good,” and went with us to the studio when we recorded it,” Bush said. “He was so taken by the group that he decided he was going to write with us.”

It was during one of those studio sessions that Bush came up with a guitar lick he found sufficiently intriguing, and decided to play it for Souther, who liked it enough to sit down and write lyrics for it. The result was “Let The Day Carry You.”

“That is one of my favorite songs I have ever written,” Bush said. “I am so proud to see my name next to J.D.’s on that.”

A second Bush-penned tune, “She’s a Gift,” written for Bush’s wife, also seems to have struck a deep chord with Souther.

“He told me he was listening to it, and although he didn’t know it right then, his wife was listening to it as well,” Bush said.

Souther told Bush that when he turned around, his wife was standing there crying. she was so taken with the song, he said.

“He ended up re-writing the verses,” Bush said.

While Bush is certainly enjoying a new level of success in a career that has literally ascended to the international level, he says he cannot underscore what an arduous journey it has been.

“It’s hard, hard work,” he said. “It has taken a level of perseverance that without question has been a challenge to me. I wish I had known more about the business a long time ago. Always remember, as things change, you change or you disappear. I am still out here every day doing everything I can to find a bigger stage for my music.”

“I’m proud of what I do and I want to share it,” he added. “I feel like my music can matter. It’s never easy, but if it were, everyone would do it.”