

# WNC Drummer Turned Country Artist Unleashes First EP Nearly Six Years In The Making

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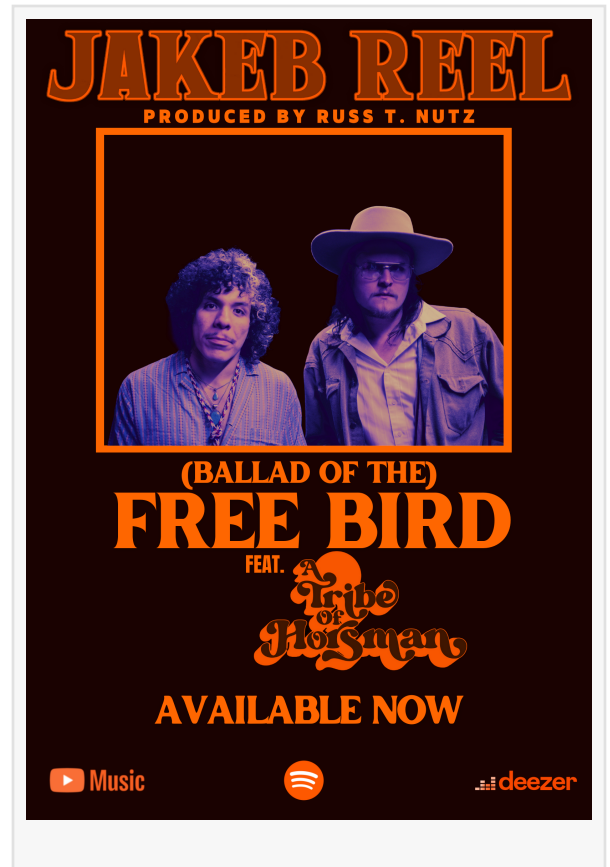
[/EINPresswire.com/](https://EINPresswire.com/) -- 2023 has been an interesting year for country music, with some journalists and fans alike arguing that the genre may be going through it's "Nirvana moment." As the industry experiences a wave of innovation, transformation and very much uncertainty, many independent artists have taken matters into their own hands; one being Western North Carolina native, Jakeb Reel. October 27, 2023 saw the release of Reel's first collection of original music; one that promises to show the unwavering love and dedication to his craft as well as being a fresh addition to the ever-evolving tapestry of country music.

For most artists, four songs doesn't seem like much of an undertaking; for Reel, it was very much a challenge and one that seemed impossible for the longest time. "There was absolutely no budget," says Reel, "this record got made because of the one of a kind friendships I've been fortunate enough to make driving back and forth to Nashville for years now and the hard work that we put into it." Reel went to Nashville for the first time in 2019 as a side man for Mississippi native, Chelsea Lovitt and has been making frequent trips ever since. Sessions for a solo outing had begun in Asheville roughly a year before, during Reel's five year stint working in the NC prison system. "For about three years, I would drive to Nashville on my weekends off," Reel said, "sometimes after a twelve hour shift, I would get off work around six in the morning and drive straight to Nashville, try to catch some rest and then go to the gig. I would drive back home early Monday morning, take a nap and then be back at the prison that evening; sitting and staring at the wall." He resigned from that role in 2021 and has been living hand to mouth ever since, playing whatever gigs that can be scrounged up along with ride share driving and carpentry work.



The initial sessions from Asheville sat in ‘development hell’ until 2022 when the idea of making a record was reignited with a newfound determination to see the project to completion. “I tried to salvage what I could from those early sessions but also wanted to start fresh; I think we had to dig a lot of it out of the trash but I took them back ;” ‘Cryin’ On Me’ is also the only song on the EP that Reel doesn’t play drums on; instead, drumming duties were handled by Richard Foulk of the Darren Nicholson Band. “I saved one or two more from the early sessions but that was definitely one of the best things we cut. The musicianship we managed to capture was just too good to let go of.”

At the producer’s helm is Russ T. Nutz, a “raunchy tonk” singer in his own right and a long time staple of the alt-country underground. Russ T. Nutz (aka Russell Anders) has worked as an engineer on several albums including Tellico’s Dehlia Low (2009), Town Mountain’s Steady Operator (2011) and The Big Ol’ Nasty Get Down Vols. 1 and 2. He currently works on the road as sound engineer for the Artimus Pyle Band. “Russ and I had met through some mutual friends years ago; he had actually moved to Nashville after the pandemic and we hadn’t seen each other in quite awhile but we reconnected and the next thing I know we’re gettin’ stuff



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*Jakeb Reel*

done.” Russ T. Nutz spent years on the road in the underbelly of the music business, self-releasing two albums and relentlessly touring punk rock and dive bar circuits both with his own act and as a member of the Punknecks. “I don’t think it would have worked without him,” said Reel, “it wouldn’t have gotten done. He brought a certain knowledge and understanding along with the right attitude and I couldn’t have asked for a better producer or engineer. I think together we approached it with this goal of doing a lot with very little and at the end of the day we’ve created something that we are both

proud of.” Anders and Reel have also combined their efforts for their live shows with Reel usually opening the show and closing the set behind the drums for Russ T. Nutz.

The EP features an impressive cast of musicians; among them is Mt. Airy native Daniel Haymore who, along with Ryan Stigmon, provides ethereal splashes of pedal steel that envelopes three of the songs. Louisville’s own Taylor Shuck, a rising virtuoso quickly gaining attention among Nashville’s bluegrass scene, lays down some gnarly banjo licks on this release as well. The lead

single, "(Ballad Of The) Free Bird," features A Tribe of Horsman, the Nashville by way of Tulsa hard rock band on the cusp of releasing their sophomore studio album.

The single, which has seen modest success so far and continues to gain traction, was released in hopes of raising funds and awareness for Reel's co-writer and childhood friend embroiled in his own battle with lymphoma. "We sat down and got him set up with BMI so even though he's fighting this awful thing, this is the year he also became a songwriter and got his first co-write under his belt," Reel said. "Even if the song doesn't go anywhere, there were so many talented people involved and everyone has given their absolute best to make this thing special...he hasn't been able to work like normal and they have two kids to feed so the potential to help one of my friends, my family has really pushed me to get this record out."

You can stream the self-titled EP from Jakeb Reel now on Spotify and YouTube.

Spotify:

<https://open.spotify.com/album/5gbnFjOIBdsQOKMWwtGKgV?si=qzisYvKtRwmTH4j3FJTvZw>

YouTube:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NjerfR5WUj4&list=OLAK5uy\\_kEu7sab3lhcjZDXp378jlEdOWv-IKOjug&index=2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NjerfR5WUj4&list=OLAK5uy_kEu7sab3lhcjZDXp378jlEdOWv-IKOjug&index=2)

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