

NOW WE'RE TALKIN

By Helen Marketti



Interview with Wayne Nelson of Little River Band

For over thirty years, Wayne Nelson has been part of the Little River Band. His lead vocals can be heard on many of the band's signature hits such as *Reminiscing*, *Cool Change*, *Lady*, *Lonesome Loser*, *Man on Your Mind*, and *Night Owls*. The Little River Band will be performing at Hoover Auditorium in Lakeside on Saturday, June 23.

Wayne takes some time to share his thoughts on his early beginnings, being part of a classic band, and inspiration for his music. "I love music across the board. I have multiple interests and enjoy listening to different styles. I always liked the vocal bands such as The Beach Boys, The Four Seasons, and The Beatles. I also enjoyed listening to Dion, Motown, Chicago, and Blood, Sweat and Tears."

He continues, "I was immersed in music ever since I was a little kid. My parents sang in the choir and were involved with local theatre. They brought me along to many functions and I would sing with them. That's where the power and foundation for music originated."

"I learned to play bass when I was in high school so I could join a garage band. One path led to another. I eventually was in a band that had opened for the Little River Band. I was in Jim Messina's band after he and Kenny Loggins split up. I was in the right place at the right time."

"When I wasn't working with Jim, the rest of the band, including myself, were working on our own material and recording," recalls Wayne. "When we were working with the Little River Band they were using a studio musician as their bass player. Eventually, the band approached me and said they were

looking for someone who could sing and play. They asked me if I would like to join them in Australia and tour. When they first asked me, I had turned them down because I was excited about what we were doing in Jim Messina's band. I felt that was where I was meant to be but unfortunately what we were doing fell apart a couple of months later. So I took a chance, called the Little River Band in Australia, and asked them if the bass player spot was still available. They told me the spot was still open but at that moment, they were going to take some time off and they would call me once they were ready to begin a new tour. After I hung up the phone, I felt I would never hear from them again. I was pleasantly surprised when they did call three months later and sent me their touring itinerary which included Europe, America, and the Orient. After the tour, they were going to return to Australia and record a new album. I have to admit I was shocked when they called back but it obviously was meant to happen."

Wayne shares his thoughts regarding inspiration and keeping the musical spark lit. "The band is blessed to have hit songs. The fans react when they hear those songs. The fans are energized by the music and so are we. Our audiences have fun. We are now moving into playing for four generations. At the same time, as a musician, our job is to continue to create new music. That's why we are here. We have a stable line up of great musicians and friends. We create new music together. It's not the point if we will be on the charts again or make it on the radio. Creating new material keeps

things fresh and new. I am inspired by life, conversations of others, and other people's music. It's all different versions of telling a story. I also tour manage the band. I spend a lot of time with contracts and so forth. I am the person who gets us there and gets us back. We have a production crew that takes care of the equipment and I take care of the travel and logistics."

"The band is a full time job. We took three months off last year because the label wanted to release a box set of our original music since 2000. There is some DVD footage of us playing in front of an orchestra which is another layer and level of emotion and art that is added to the band's music," explains Wayne. "Our keyboard player wrote all of the music for the orchestra to play. It's rewarding. It adds a bit of culture to the show. We will work on new music this year. Our shows are interactive. It's sing along. We are not just an old band. We try to make sure the memories feel brand new and for people to have fun."

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