

JORDAN RAGER

Don't dismiss Broken Bow Records artist Jordan Rager as just another "bro." One reference to Fireball whiskey aside, Jordan's music isn't "Bro Country." It's YOUNG Country. Jordan is a 20-something guy who is living his life. He's ready for a party with his girl, for being young and running around his town.

Jordan Rager IS the Country audience and this is how the audience lives. Jordan is young. He's Country. He's "Young Country." And he's going to sing about it unapologetically.



Jordan's competitive nature began at a young age. Sports and music ran on parallel tracks for the Loganville, Georgia native. "My dad's from Chicago, a big Cubs fan and baseball is lifeblood up there," Jordan says. "So me and my brothers were raised with that and I was infatuated with it from a young age. I played from the time I could hold a ball up until I was about 16. My dad's also a pastor and sang a little bit – he'd lead a special song one Sunday a month. He tells a story about me being three or four singing along with the radio and he turned to my mom and said, 'He's on key!'"

Speaking of keys, it's his dad that Jordan credits as being key to shaping his musical influences. "My dad was a huge Country music fan – Kenny Rogers, Alan Jackson, Travis Tritt, John Michael Montgomery, Tracy Lawrence. All the guys from that '90s era have always been big influences for me as well."

But don't let that decade fool you: Jordan's music speaks to his peers – the millennials, the social media generation, the dreamers, the do-ers. The 21-year-old's music chronicles his everyday

life - from the parties to the tender moments to the lofty dreams attainable just over the horizon. It is, in a term, the voice of "Young Country."

Jordan picked up the guitar at 15, aided by a deal with his father. "If he saw me with the guitar in my hands every day when he came home from work, I didn't have to do any chores that summer. I was like, 'Deal!' Of course, I had no idea how hard it would be to learn. I'm completely self-taught. Watched a few YouTube videos and from there it was simply trial and error. I started writing songs about the same time and they were god-awful." Jordan's first gig was a county fair where he played four of his favorite covers for a crowd of 50. "When I got offstage I walked up to my mom and said, 'That was fun. I want to do that forever.'"

Easier said than done as a high school student, but Jordan's competitive drive found a way – with a little help from his family. "Most places you had to be 18 to even get in," Jordan says. "My mom would call to talk the manager into it. She'd walk me in, sit in the front row and walk me out. It was, 'Don't touch anything. Don't talk to anyone. Don't take anything from anyone. Just play and slip out.'"

Barry Williams, Jason Aldean's father, came on board at this time. "We met through a mutual friend from playing county fairs," Jordan says. "He booked shows, set up meetings and got songwriting appointments when I was about 17 or 18. That was my first connection to Nashville."

In 2013, after years of playing the club scene, frat parties and college bars - while also traveling to Nashville for a week each month to write - Jordan received a call from Jeremy Stover, producer for Justin Moore and Craig Campbell, among others. The #1 charting producer was looking for an acoustic opener for Justin Moore's *Off the Beaten Path Tour* and thought Jordan was the perfect fit.

Jumping onto a fast-moving national tour was a prodigious leap. The young artist held his own, playing acoustically between seasoned veterans and #1 hit makers Randy Houser and Moore. It also proved to be an invaluable education. "The biggest thing I learned offstage was how to treat people. Justin and his crew were always patient when stuff didn't go right. Onstage, I learned how to interact with a crowd. For the first month of that tour, I'd play my set, run all my stuff back to the bus, then sit front-of-house for Justin's whole show. I would just watch and learn everything I could. What does he do during different songs? How does he talk to the crowd? What does he do if something goes wrong? It was really great to see that at a young age. I learned so much about how to carry yourself on and off stage."

Rager spent fall of 2013 through the first half of 2014 on the tour. He signed a joint management deal with Barry Williams and Peter Hartung (Justin Moore/ Dustin Lynch) and signed with Broken Bow Records the following September. Shortly after landing his record deal, he went back on tour with Justin Moore – this time with a full band.

On stage, Jordan's competitive drive, instilled in him at such a young age, immediately shines through. There are moments at the plate where one must stand and deliver – and Jordan, unflinchingly, does. "When I go to a show, I want to be entertained just like everybody else. So when it's me onstage, I try to give the crowd what I would want to see. When the groove is going, the band is rocking and I'm rocking, then the crowd starts giving it back – that's as good as it gets."

Jordan's national debut single for Broken Bow Records, "Southern Boy" (with Jason Aldean) officially impacts Country radio on February 16.

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