

AFM Tête à Tête: Trace Adkins

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As one of the most well-known stars in country music, a father of five daughters and an on-the-rise actor, Trace Adkins is proving to be the ultimate multitasker. With his witty charm and Southern drawl, it's easy to see why America fell in love with this self-acclaimed roughneck. Adkins found time amidst his busy schedule to open up to AFM about life and his new album, "Proud to Be Here."



AFM: *The album title, "Proud to be Here," is also the title of the first song on the CD. Why was this the chosen title and what does it mean to you?*

TA: Well, it means a lot of things, but mostly I think the fact that I'm still around and still in this business. It's been several years now, so I'm just glad to just be around.

AFM: *The album seems to focus a lot on love, family, and appreciation for life. Would you say the album is descriptive of your lifestyle now?*

TA: Yeah I suppose, but it wasn't anything that I intentionally did. I didn't intentionally go in that direction. It just kind of ended up that way.

AFM: *You worked with Blake Shelton on this CD in "If I Was a Woman." How was that? How did the idea for this song come up?*

TA: Well, the song was an idea that Jeff Bates had. He and I came here and wrote that thing together and had a lot of fun with it and we wrote it toward Blake because I just thought, you know, he's the only guy that can do this and pull it off so I wanted to do it with Blake.

AFM: *You worked with your daughter Trinity in the "Just Fishin'" video. How did she like working with you and does she have any interest in the music industry?*

TA: Oh, I don't know; she's only six. I was very proud of her and she took direction perfectly and did everything she was asked to do and conducted herself like I professional. I was very proud.

AFM: *You've said that your co-writing is more prominent in "Proud to be Here" than on previous albums. What helped you to write more this time and do you feel like this album has more of you in it than previous ones?*

TA: Kenny Beard—I have to give him all the credit for that. He just kept shaming me into writing more and more. I don't write as much as I used to; I don't know why. I just don't feel that need to do it as much as I used to but he pulled it out of me and I enjoyed it.

AFM: *Are there any places you like to visit or things you like to do while in Arizona?*

TA: Well, you know, I'm not a big desert fan to be honest with you. I like the Grand Canyon and I like Flagstaff. (laughs)

AFM: *"Days Like This" is my favorite song on the album. What was the inspiration for this song and your involvement in developing it?*

TA: Casey Beathard and Kenny Beard and myself were all just sittin' on the back deck of my cabin early one morning, and we just literally wrote what we saw and the idea just came from that. 'Cause the news was on and we were just sittin' around having a cup of coffee talking about what we might want to write about. We were all just frustrated about what we were hearing on the news and turned it off and that's how it happened. That's where the song came from, simple as that.

AFM: *Between five daughters, your wife, Rhonda, keeping up your Nashville farm, acting, and performing, how do you manage to keep calm and balanced?*

TA: Well, you know, I don't know that I do that great of a job of it, to be honest with you. I do the best I can, and it seems to have been pretty fast and furious here for the last couple years and I am just tryin' to hang on.

AFM: *You have now been a major name in country music since the 1990s and still manage to produce chart-topping music. What do you think is the key to success and staying successful?*

TA: Well, I just keep pushing myself and trying to grow and expand and not be too easily defined. I just do whatever I want to do and then hopefully somebody will enjoy it.

AFM: *In the album, there are a lot of bluesy songs like "It's Who You Know," as well as straight country songs. How did you go about developing an album with such a broad range of music types?*

TA: That's just how it ends up, you know. We finish a record and we literally start looking for materials for the next one, writing it and having songs sent to us. So over the course of a year or 18 months or so we just end up with this hodge podge collection of stuff and sometimes it doesn't make a whole lot of sense, but it's just songs that I like.

AFM: *When you started in the music industry, did you always know that you wanted to sing country music or did you have interest in any other type of music?*

TA: Well, I try to sing a little bit of all of it but I have to know what my forte is and what I'm best at and I probably need to stay with that.

AFM: *In every performance I have seen of you, you are very energetic and you seem to captivate the crowd. How do you get pumped for each performance and keep the excitement going throughout your performances?*

TA: I usually get all my energy from the crowd so if I'm on stage and the crowd is energetic and into it, then that's what they'll get from me.

AFM: *Are you planning on coming back to Arizona any time soon?*

TA: I don't know if we have any Arizona dates or not. I don't keep up on it really, to tell you the truth. I know where I'm going this weekend and that's about it.