

Created by: Debra C. Argen

Casey James - Interview



Blues singer, songwriter, guitarist Casey James took time from touring to speak with Luxury Experience about his new fabulous release, **Strip It Down**, as well as about his life. From learning to play guitar at age 13, to being a finalist on **American Idol**, to his musical journey through life, Casey James is clearly an inspired talent who looks ahead and builds on each experience; he is also an extremely nice person.



Casey James

LE

Casey, thanks for taking time to speak with Luxury Experience.

As a way of an introduction, you grew up in Texas, started playing guitar at age 13, and from there you kept building upon the music, becoming a finalist on American Idol on Season 9, and ultimately launching your solo career.

What can you tell me about your musical journey to get you there? What inspired you to start playing guitar?

CJ

When I say I picked up the guitar at 13, that actually happened. My father is a guitar player and he was trying to show my older brother, a bass player, how to play a chord or a lick, and he wasn't getting it. He kept showing him how to do it, yet my brother wasn't grasping it. I was sitting around near them playing with a game, and I asked my father to show me how to do it. My dad said that what he was trying to teach my brother was really hard and that my brother had been playing for several years, but he could show me how to play something else. He taught me how to play a chord, and when I played the chord it "rang" and it sounded really nice. My dad said Casey, that's good, and that was the beginning of a journey.

When I started playing at 13, I think a lot of guys I knew wanted to play guitar to get girls. I literally picked

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up the guitar and thought I'll do this and make the guitar do something. It brought such a feeling of joy. I loved playing the guitar. I liked the sound, and how I could make it do what I wanted to do. Create, and soothe the soul.

LE

Did you take lessons?

CJ

No, I went and bought a chord book, and learned to switch from one chord to another. I learned that going from a G to an E minor was beautiful, and as I was learning, I was giving myself guitar lessons. When I learned to play it was before the Internet, so I learned from a book. I would love to take lessons though. If I see a guitar player doing something interesting, I'll go up to him and ask him how he did that, and usually they will show me. I'm like a sponge, I love learning more.

LE

What music did you listen to growing up?

CJ

I listened to traditional country like Merle Haggard, heavy metal, big bands, hip hop, R & B, folk, funk, gypsy jazz, Latin, and I always loved the blues. I like all types of music and agree with BB King who said there are two kinds of music: good and bad.

LE

I love your new release, *Strip It Down*, with its tri-fold design, booklet with liner notes, lyrics, and musician information, that really connects the listener to the music.

I also love that you wrote 13 of the 14 songs on the album.

CJ

Thanks for noticing. I'm really very proud of this release. I put a lot of time to put together the booklet, but I felt the extra time and effort was worth it.

As for writing, I'm from Texas originally and I had no idea that not everyone wrote their own music, as 99% of Texans write their own music. It wasn't until I moved to Nashville that I found out not everyone does that. I like to convey my own thoughts and feelings - for me, that's the best way.

The inspiration for the project was a healing thing for me. I went through not hard times, but wonderful blessings, but now I had the opportunity to do what I wanted to do; to be 100% honest in what I wanted to do and hear. I write songs for myself, which is the way that I'll make all my records from now on.

I've got a lot to say, and the overall theme (of the album) is to be happy where you are, to keep your hopes and dreams, but remember that the journey is more important than the destination, and think that perhaps others can relate to the music; to be at peace, be happy, and self-empowered.

American Idol opened a lot of doors for me, and I've learned that I would not change anything. I toured the world, did a USO tour, and traveled to the Middle East, and Africa.

LE

What's next for Casey James?

CJ

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Personally, on November 30, 2017 our baby boy makes his arrival. My wife and I have a little girl, Alexandria, who will be in 2 years old in January 2018, so I blocked some time off from touring. For Christmas we will go to LA to be with my wife's family, and we will spend New Year's in Georgia with my family.

Professionally, I'll be playing on the [Delbert McClinton & Friends Sandy Beaches Cruise](#) from January 6 - 13, 2018, the **Blues Foundation** asked me to be a judge for the [Blues Foundation - International Blues Challenge](#), January 16 - 20, 2018, and then I go back to touring.

LE

Will your tour dates include Europe?

CK

No, however I really want to do a European tour, and there may be an Australian tour.

LE

When not writing new music or playing gigs, how do you like to spend your time?

CJ

My wife and I like to have folks over and cook; we love to host friends. We live in Nashville, and like to travel, shoot pool, I like gaming and competitions, play golf, hike, and although not super outdoorsy, I like offshore fishing. I'm a jack-of-all-trades in life - musically and personally, and my wife likes it that I can fix things and fix cars.

LE

Casey, thank you for taking time to speak with Luxury Experience. I wish you much continued success. Keep enjoying the music!

Read **Luxury Experience's** review of *Strip It Down* in the **Music Scene** section.

For information on Casey James and his upcoming tour calendar, please visit the website: www.CaseyJamesOfficial.com

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