

McKay Brothers - Noel & Hollin – Bio

Noel McKay was born, circa 1968, in Corpus Christi. Brother Hollin appeared, circa 1973, in the flatlands of West Texas. The McKay family went on to spend some time living in Lubbock, followed by a move to Bandera, Texas, the self-proclaimed “cowboy capital of the world.” It was in Bandera County that this pair of fifth generation Texan brothers began their musical education. In the sphere of Texas music, Bandera is Robert Earl Keen’s adopted home, while the Robison brothers, Charlie and Bruce, were raised there although the pair no longer reside in the town.

Their grandfather built and operated the first radio station in Frio County [located south of Bandera County], and he introduced Noel and Hollin to the music of Jimmie Rodgers, Ernest Tubb and Kitty Wells. As young teens, the brothers would sit on the banks of a nearby river and pick Beatles and George Jones songs with a favourite, guitar-playing relation. Two decades later, those ‘knock about’ sessions still resound in the music that the brothers perform and write. Turning professional in their late teens, for almost a decade and a half they played under various names, but officially became the McKay Brothers – they co-write most of the material they perform, and alternate on lead vocals - early in the new millennium.

These days their Chevy pick-up is utterly familiar with the highways and by-ways of Texas, all the way from the Gulf Coast to the red dirt on the northern Texoma border, and from the piney woods in the east, to El Paso in the west. One night, the venue may be a honky-tonk in Austin, the next a San Antonio biker bar followed by a coffee shop in Port Aransas. You name it - Gruene Halls, Broken Spoke, Luckenbach Dance Hall, John T. Floore Country Store – the brothers have played there. In addition, the McKay Brothers have shared stages with Willie Nelson, Guy Clark, Ray Wylie Hubbard and ‘local boys’ made good Charlie Robison and Robert Earl Keen. As for performances nationally and internationally, they’ve appeared at the nearby, and legendary, Kerrville Folk Festival, while on the international stage they’ve played the annual Blue Highways Festival in Utrecht, Holland.

Their subtly titled debut disc, “**McKay Brothers**” [2003], was recorded in Austin during February that year at Root Ball Studios and produced by studio owner Gurf Morlix [Lucinda Williams, Robert Earl Keen, Slaid Cleaves]. The eleven-song collection included nine originals, plus a cover of Guy Clark’s “The South Coast Of Texas” and Steve Jordan’s “Las Olas.” Their sophomore release “**Cold Beer & Hot Tamales**” [2006], recorded during the Fall of 2005, was produced by Lloyd Maines [Joe Ely, Terri Hendrix] father of Dixie Chick Natalie and a stunning pedal steel/guitar player in his own right. The support players on the twelve-track album include their sometime road companion Mark Patterson [drums], plus Corby Schuab [mandolin] and Joel Guzman [accordion].

Discography : “**McKay Brothers**” [2003] ; “**Cold Beer & Hot Tamales**” [2006] :

Arthur Wood

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