

Native son embraces Nashville

by Mary-Ann Brandon

Since



I'm temporarily back in Nashville, I thought I'd spend

November talking with you about the connection that the Huerfano has to Music City U.S.A. (a.k.a. Nashville, TN).

First up is a young man who left Huerfano County with a big dream and a big dose of talent to back it up.

Andy Hackbarth is the son of llama ranchers who grew up studying Flamenco and Classical guitar. My first encounter with him was a few years ago at the Timbers restaurant in Cuchara. He was just a kid with a guitar and a sweet disposition. How could any of us have known at the time that he would go on to become a contender in, arguably, the most competitive music city on the planet?

Andy moved to

Nashville in 2006 and upon arriving did all the things that he was advised to do. He co-wrote with as many people as he could and went around to writers nights, put his name on the list and waited for his turn to do his one or two songs. His intention was simple, he wanted to be a songwriter and get others to record his songs, he had no illusions about becoming a country star, just simply wanted to write and develop his craft. It was during this period that he fell in love with performing. This discovery came as a great surprise and it led him down a very different path than what he had first envisioned.

When I asked about early musical influences he cited his parents' record collection including Jim Croce, Gordon Lightfoot, Harry Chapin and Kris Kristofferson as being his foundation. Interestingly, he says that it was the music of a variety of female singers, including; Joni Mitchell, Sara McLaughlin, Fiona Apple, Billie Holiday and Ella Fitzgerald that influenced him most as a performing

songwriter. He is trying to take country music into a pop/songwriter place by combining these influences with the years of classical and flamenco guitar study to create a hybrid. From what I've heard he is off to a great start and has a very promising future ahead as he continues to grow musically.

Andy has a new record out that is available through his website: www.andyhackbarth.com and also through all the normal digital downloading sites. On the 27th of October he is scheduled to perform for a record release party at the Bitter End in New York City. After a fairly grueling schedule this fall and winter he will return to Huerfano County for a show at the Francisco Center for the Performing Arts in La Veta Colorado on Dec, 23.

If you have a chance to catch him when he's back in the Huerfano neck of the woods, you just might be witnessing an early performance by someone who will go on to do remarkable things with his life. In the meantime, you will be supporting the efforts of a hard working, homegrown talent.