



This must be the place

BY GARRET K. WOODWARD

music a familiar comfort for you?

KC: I think it is for a lot of people, and certainly I can mark where I was at with music. But, you're right about that. It wasn't so much about making friends, I just got tired of trying to do it.

SMN: Are there any similarities between making a record and making a film?

KC: The similarities are that you don't want to stop until you've got it right. And sometimes you've got to just stop tinkering with it and say, "Look, this is the best that I can do it." I have to know that it's as good as I can do it. And I also have to believe in the song.

SMN: Do you find it hard having your name attached to your music and having people take it seriously with them knowing you as an actor?

KC: I knew that was going to happen going into this, and

it still happens to a certain extent now. There's a level of curiosity that brings people through the door, but there are also people that have been following us for the last nine years. This isn't a vanity project. It's something I like to do. If this was a vanity project, I wouldn't be getting on buses, traveling, going to a hotel room, showering and then getting to the sound-check. I really love performing live, and if you were to really boil me down to the bone, I guess I'm a performer.

SMN: Where do you go in your head when you're onstage?

KC: It's as good of a feeling as you might get. It's like a big wave. You can sit out there on the ocean on your board and all of a sudden this wave comes and picks you up. No matter how bad you're feeling, once the guitars start and the drums kick in, I swear my face just grows into a big smile.

SMN: A lot of the films you've done are very sentimental about America — the Midwest, baseball, the Wild West. And you see a lot of those sentiments in the lyrics of your music.

KC: I don't know if it's intentional. Maybe it's all I know in this world. Sometimes I talk about love and things you just can't seem to get right. John [Coinman] and I share a big Midwestern root. My fami-

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ly is from Diamond, Okla., and his is from Clayton, N.M. Our families came out of the Dust Bowl. Our songs are rooted in that Americana, not so much country, but they're just American stories.

SMN: You're coming up on 35 years in the entertainment industry. What does that number mean to you?

KC: I've never really thought about it. I just live my life and I don't know where it'll take me. It's been a real journey, but it has also been a real reminder that if you do the things in life that you love doing, it's really interesting to see where it takes you. If I didn't feel like these songs spoke to people, I'd just keep them in the living room.

SMN: What do you want people to feel when they leave your show?

KC: I do want people to drive away with more than they expected. I don't think some people know what to expect when they come to see us. That's the beauty in life, whether it's a first date or first day on the job, you didn't expect to feel that way, but somehow you felt really comfortable. You can't just show up and say look, "I have this resume of movies." You have to give people something, songs they haven't heard and hold their interest.

Want to go?

Kevin Costner & Modern West will perform at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, April 24, at the Smoky Mountain Center for the Performing Arts in Franklin. Tickets are \$40, \$45 and \$50. www.greatmountainmusic.com or 866.273.4615.

Costner is also starring in his latest film "Draft Day," which opens in theaters April 11. The sports comedy/drama features Costner as the general manager of the Cleveland Browns, who are desperate to land the #1 draft pick. The film also stars Jennifer Garner, Denis Leary, Ellen Burstyn and Sam Elliot. www.draftdaythemovie.com.

Kevin Costner & Modern West will play Franklin on April 24.

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So, what are you going to ask him? That was the question constantly asked to me when friends and curious folks alike found out I was interviewing Kevin Costner. Yes, that Kevin Costner. You see the Academy Award-winning actor/director fronts a country/blues band called Modern West. They'll be performing at the Smoky Mountain Center for the Performing Arts in Franklin on April 24.

Costner is one of the more recognizable pop culture icons of the last 25 years. He was Ray Kinsella in "Field of Dreams," Lt. John J. Dunbar in "Dances with Wolves" and Crash Davis in "Bull Durham," just to name a few of the actor's well-known portrayals. Those roles dust off eras of America beloved by those who never forgot the beauty of this land and its people.

And that sentimentality permeates through his music, too. Alongside his long-time musical collaborator John Coinman, Costner and Modern West conjure the sights and sounds of this country. The melodies run through the wheat fields of the Midwest, the thick forests of New England, up the Rocky Mountains and down the highways of everywhere in between — stretching out and intertwining like veins in the soul of humanity.

The Smoky Mountain News recently caught up with Costner. He spoke of his early love of music, how being onstage is like riding a wave of happiness, and how people will be pleasantly surprised when they put aside Kevin Costner, the actor, and embrace Kevin Costner, the performer.

HOT PICKS

- 1 The DuPont Brothers will perform at 7 p.m. April 10 at The Classic Wineseller in Waynesville and at 8 p.m. April 11 at Nantahala Brewing Company in Bryson City.
- 2 The Sylva Photo Club will feature photographer Gary Montanari at 3 p.m. April 12 at Coggins Office Park in Sylva.
- 3 A concert to benefit landslide victims in Washington will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. April 11 at Bridge Park in Sylva.
- 4 A revitalization project on Cherokee weaving and a talk will be held April 11-12 at the Museum of the Cherokee Indian.
- 5 The Homebrew Competition and Chili Cook-off will be held at 3 p.m. April 19 at Frog Level Brewing in Waynesville.

Smoky Mountain News: Where did it all start with you and music?

Kevin Costner: I was trained classically in the piano, was in traveling choirs, so obviously I was exposed to music. And I grew up smack dab in the 1960s and the music that was coming out at that time. The acid groups, The Four Seasons, Motown, Carole King, James Taylor. It was just such a wide variety of music that was thrusting out.

SMN: As a teenager you moved around a lot, and it was hard to make friends. Was