

The Brothers Robison

Bruce and Charlie play together for first time on latest tour

BY SCOTT HARRIS
The Battalion

Maybe it's love — for each other or for the music — but there definitely is a driving force behind Lucky Dog's "Unleashed tour," featuring Jack Ingram and brothers Charlie and Bruce Robison. But do not get confused — the brothers are not touring together as one act, they are each playing their own sets.

The Robisons grew up in Bandera playing music together, so it is no wonder the two often are compared to each other. But just because they are compared to each other does not mean they have to like it.

"That has always bugged me, because someone will be the loser," Bruce said. "They say Charlie is the rowdy one and Bruce is the introspective one — it just doesn't tell the whole story."

They both are quick to point out touring together is giving them a chance to relive their childhoods.

"We grew up together, we have lived together, we play together — we are real close," Bruce said. "We haven't spent too much time together lately, [but] this tour is bringing us together and is a lot of fun."

Older brother Charlie said, "This tour is great," he said. "We've played together forever, and this thing is like forced family time." The brothers have long been a staple on the music scene, both in Texas and in Nashville. The brothers said there is a noticeable difference between the two music scenes.

"Nashville is not centered around live music; everything is studio," Bruce said. "In Texas people want to hear a live show, and it's about the music. In Nashville, it's all about the business — it's an industry."

Charlie said the Nashville scene is geared toward having radio hits.

"In Texas I can play my music the way I want to and not change it," he said.

"If the radio wants it, great, but I'm not going to give them an alternative. In Nashville

they try to make the world a perfect place. In Texas we write about real life, things that actually happen."

Both said they prefer the Texas style of music because it offers more chances to be creative, and because of this they both have experienced rising popularity despite limited radio play.

"I would love to have a radio hit," Charlie said, "but not at the expense of my music. I feel that if you put it out there and it's good, then they will play it."

Bruce credits his success to a grassroots following in Texas.

"We don't get a lot of radio play, and it's neat to go to a show and see people familiar with my songs," Bruce said. "I guess people just pass my name along."

Having only played a couple shows in College Station, Bruce's name is not as familiar as his brother's, but he said he has high hopes for the show tonight at Hurricane Harry's.

"My brother has played there [College Station] many times," Bruce said. "He said it is just like any other college crowd, so I can expect some rowdiness. But I like to put on the same kind of shows for the same kind of people. I just hope people will be there."

Charlie said he expects a similar kind of show he has always had here in town.

"College Station has great music fans," he said. "The college crowd is great."

Even though the brothers are similar to an extent, they said they have found inspiration for their songs in different places.

"I like to keep an open mind about things that are going on," Bruce said.

"The older, I get the less time I have to search out and find new things, I have to make an effort. There is so much out there, I just have to slog through life, because writing songs is how I make my living."

Charlie said he finds inspiration in his marriage to musician Emily Erwin of the Dixie Chicks.

"Marriage is something you go through; it's a life experience," Charlie said. "You start out really happy, then you end up fighting — then you write a song about that."

Although the brothers have played together most of their lives, they have yet to collaborate on an album, something both said they want to do.

"I've always wanted to do one with my brother," Bruce said. "We've been talking about it, and it's something we both want to do."



PHOTO COURTESY OF LUCKY DOG

Bruce Robison is playing tonight at 8 at Hurricane Harry's with his brother Charlie and Jack Ingram.

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