

MULE MUSIC

Deb Kidwell, Lake Nowhere Mule and Donkey Farm

I had the good fortune to grow up in a family that enjoyed all sorts of different music. When we were in the mountains of Georgia we would listen to gospel choirs at local churches and bluegrass groups on the town square. When we were in the Caribbean, we'd listen to the different bands on any given island. When we were at home Mom and Dad would listen to Andy Williams, Elvis, Tennessee Ernie Ford, Vivaldi and even Bill Haley and the Comets.

I have noticed that when we meet up with mule friends for a ride, or to just hang out on the porch, music is always playing somewhere. This brings me to a musician that I have recently had the pleasure to listen to – Michael Gaither. The whole reason I found Michael's music was because he had written a song about a mule!!! Seriously. He doesn't have just one mule song on his CD's, he has three! How fortunate is that for a mule and music lover? Michael's first CD is titled "Spotted Mule and Other Tales". The title song "Spotted Mule" is a bluegrass song and has some great lyrics; "Dad was a donkey and mom was a roan...", so he has that part right!

I was really interested in how Michael got the idea to write a mule song. In one of his "Songs and Stories" podcasts, which explain the stories behind his songs, he said that he and his wife Cindy live in a relatively rural area. They were driving home one day, and in a field that had goats and horses in it Cindy saw a spotted mule standing up on the hill by itself. Cindy asked Michael, "Is that a mule?" and Michael replied, "Yes, that's a mule" and Cindy countered with "You need to write a song about that spotted mule", and that was that! (Leave it to the wife to have the good ideas!).

The mule on the hill turned out to be a mule named "Icing", and was owned by Krista Koenig. Krista has been a natural horse trainer for years and a few years ago trained her first mule. She told Michael that training the mule made her a better horse trainer. See, another convert! Icing has been to Bishop and maybe some of you have seen him there. Icing is also the star in Michael's YouTube video about filming a video for the CD.

Michael and Cyndi have trained guide dogs and currently foster animals for an animal shelter in California. Michael's music combines gospel, bluegrass and folk. "Spotted Mule" has two mule songs on it and Michael's latest CD "Dogspeed" has a mule song on it called "Pack my Mule". Seems to me, that like the rest of us, Michael has been bitten by the mule bug. So, if you are looking to add some toe tappin' music to your mule ride or porch sittin',

check out Michael's CD's. Shoot, play his songs for your mule. Your mule will thank you!

To learn more about Michael, his mule songs or his "Songs and Stories" podcasts, visit his website at michaelgaither.com