

## Wil Forbis: Country Gone Beautifully Wrong

Wil Forbis makes no effort to hide the improbability of his role as a country music songwriter. "As a kid, I hated country music," he states, perhaps too exuberantly. So what did he listen to? Show tunes. "My dad had a collection of all the great Broadway albums from the 40s and 50s—My Fair Lady, The Pajama Game, a lot of the Carol Channing productions. Growing up, I spent my summers living with him in a cabin he built near Flathead lake, Montana. A lot of nights were passed gathered 'round the fireplace with those albums playing. Of course, once I became a teenager, I started listening to what was popular at the time—The Cars, Prince, Led Zeppelin, Rush... that sort of thing."

By his late teens, Forbis was not just listening to music but performing it. "I played guitar in almost every type of band possible. Punk rock, reggae, blues, prog rock, funk... I did it all. Well, everything except country."

So how did the country conversion finally occur? "In my early 30s, I moved into an apartment in Los Angeles that happened to be up the street from a bar called the Cinema Bar. The Cinema is ground zero for the LA alt-country scene—on any night of the week you can go there and hear really great musicians playing anything from traditional country to bluegrass to Americana. It just got into my blood, particularly those bluegrass instruments." Not long after discovering the Cinema, Forbis purchased a second-hand banjo. Later he started picking out scales on a mandolin. And all the while, he was writing songs, combining the styles of music played at late night Cinema jams with his more eclectic influences. The result was a sound that music critic Billy Shepherd labeled "country gone beautifully wrong."

After several years of playing around Los Angeles, both as a side man and under his own name, Forbis assembled a crack team of local players he dubbed "The Gentlemen Scoundrels" and recorded a CD. The result is *Shadey's Jukebox*, a collection of offbeat country and Americana songs just released by Rankoutsider Records, label of such roots rockers as Pat Todd and the Rankoutsiders and The Condors. The album has been widely praised by members of the L.A. country scene—former Dave Alvin sideman and current solo artist Rick Shea stated, "Wil and his band show off excellent musicianship and remarkably clever songwriting chops." —and Forbis has been playing in and around the Los Angeles area to support it.

But the best part? Forbis grins. "Just after it came out, *Shadey's Jukebox* was added to the jukebox at the Cinema Bar. That was the cherry on top."



Photo credit: Didier Chevalier

Contact Wil Forbis:  
310-621-2311

[forbisthemighty@hotmail.com](mailto:forbisthemighty@hotmail.com)  
[www.myspace.com/wilforbis](http://www.myspace.com/wilforbis)

Purchase *Shadey's Jukebox*:  
<http://cdbaby.com/cd/wilforbisatgs>