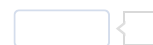


Vince Gill's *Guitar Slinger* Puts Positive Spin On Dark Moments

By [Nancy Dunham](#) October 24th, 2011 at 3:12 pm



Vince Gill's *The Guitar Slinger* is his first album since *These Days*, a four-CD box set that was released in 2006 and won a Grammy Award for Best Country Album.

Since his last release, Gill built a recording studio and the Nashville home he shares with his wife Amy Grant and their children. The much-honored artist -- who has 20 Grammy Awards and 18 Country Music Association Awards — recently took some time off to chat a bit about what inspired some of the songs on *Guitar Slinger* and what he hopes to bring fans in the not-too-distant future.

So we have to ask, why did it take five years to put out a new album?

I never felt the urge to have a new record out every year. I don't know if there's any reason for that. This time I wound up putting a studio in my house and it took more time than I ever anticipated. I wanted to make the record here at my house and I was patient enough to wait.

You've had some pretty big losses in the past few years, too. I know your steel guitar player John Hughley died, and you wrote "Buttermilk John" as a tribute to him.

Yes, John played on the road with me for 14, 15 years. I knew this would be the first record I'd make without him in a long, long time and it was really tough. He left a very big footprint on my music. We have Paul Franklin, he played on this record and he's started playing with me live. He's world class. There's probably nobody better on this planet. There's a great feeling to have that kind of musicianship right to your left.

Although some of your songs are about tragedies, you seem to always try to put a positive spin on them, for lack of a better term.

I know we all go through this and we're all going to leave this parade sometime but it's been tough. What I want to do is celebrate life. There's a song on this record called "Billy Paul," too, about a caddy at a golf course where I played every year. We got to be good friends. It was very tragic because he took a woman's life and then a couple

days later, took his own life. There's a line in the song about seeing you at your best and at your worst but the best of you is what I'll remember first. I've made enough mistakes in my own life that I've been forgive for.... That feeling of forgiveness and that feeling of loving someone at their worst is powerful. You have to find the positive spin on everything if you can. It's the only thing to do, I guess.

I hear that unlike some other writers you have a treasure trove of songs that you haven't recorded or published.

I have a ton of songs that haven't seen the light of day. I'm in the process of really trying to organization them with this computerization and flexibility we have now. I'm so excited about finding what I have in my treasure trove. There are a ton of songs... I've never been one to actively push my songs toward anything or anybody. I am at an age and place where I should do that now. I'm going to embark on a pretty extensive songwriting place whether I find my songs a home with other people or just find out what the heck I have got. That is what I am falling into. I have a lot of songs sitting around stockpiled, some in desk drawers, some half finished on cassettes. My kids are helping get that all organized.

Do you think you'll ever record any of those songs yourself?

Well, it's a new world out there. We will probably find a day when the 10, 11, 12 song record may become obsolete but if you have got 3-4 songs laying around you can record them and say "Here's something for you." I don't have any idea what this future is going to hold.

(Nude statues get a makeover to promote Vince Gill's new album on Nashville's Music Row.)

