

Interview

From page 3B

music, Bettye posted a YouTube video of an unreleased song, "Love Love Sweet Love," written and performed by Ricky, and she included photos from the fans in the video. I was ecstatic when I saw my picture of when I gave the rose to Ricky in the video.

After seeing how much success that Ricky's songs were having on the Born Country website, I found the courage to email Ricky and Bettye to ask their permission to conduct a short, informal interview with Ricky to share with the R.V.S. Facebook Club members. Bettye graciously responded quickly to my email and asked me to send my questions to her. She said that she would tell Ricky about my interview request, but she also stated that he had refused to do any interviews since he retired for privacy

reasons. So, I was surprised and thrilled when I received another email from Bettye informing me that Ricky had answered my questions. I was even more elated when she told me that Ricky immediately said, "Absolutely," when she asked if he would grant my interview request.

I believe that Ricky allowed me to conduct the interview because I didn't send him many questions or ask him anything too personal. The following is my interview with Ricky conducted in June.

Pam Blevins: Since your retirement ten years ago, have you missed anything about the music business? If so, what?

Ricky Van Shelton: Singing. Not traveling, but singing. And then, I miss the fans too.

Pam: What do you enjoy the most about not being a touring artist?

Ricky: Falling asleep in my lounge chair after supper, and then getting up and going to bed in a bed that doesn't

move or bounce like a bus. And having home-cooked meals vs. truck-stop food every meal.

Pam: Do you still enjoy your hobbies such as restoring old cars and painting beautiful pictures, or do you have other hobbies now?

Ricky: I still enjoy them but haven't worked on them since I retired. I'm too busy mowing grass, bush hogging, cutting wood, spraying, weed eating, and all the other things people do to keep their properties in good order.

Pam: Do you have any plans to write more Quacker stories or other children's books?

Ricky: Not at this time. But who knows what the future's going to bring?

Pam: We, your fans, appreciated so much that you took the time to write us the very clever thank-you note after we voted "I've Cried My Last Tear For You" #1 five weeks straight on the Born Country site making it the first Born Country certified song. It's

very likely that "I Meant Every Word He Said" will also be retired as another certified Born Country song this week. What does it mean to you to still have such a loyal fan base?

Ricky: I think it is just marvelous.

Pam: What is your favorite song? (It doesn't have to be one that you recorded.)

Ricky: That's a tough question. It would have to be Charlie Rich's "Behind Closed Doors" and Elvis' "I Did It My Way".

Pam: Do you still like to sing for your and Bettye's own pleasure?

Ricky: Not at this time, I have lost hearing in my right ear that requires surgery (surgery is too dangerous for my comfort at this time). When I sing, it is a real funky sound in my head.

Special note: Bettye later informed the Facebook group that Ricky's hearing loss was caused by a bone growth in his ear.

Pam: As much as we, Ricky Van fans, would love to see you in concert again, I believe that you enjoy being out of the spotlight too much to consider touring again. However, do you ever think about recording more albums for your fans? (We would love to have new R.V.S. music such as the album of original songs that you talked about or another gospel album!)

Ricky: I don't think I'll record again. But who knows?

Pam: Is there anything else that you would like to say or share with your fans?

Ricky: Yes, thank all of you very much! I'm just a simple man.

It was certainly a huge honor for me to interview my favorite country artist, Ricky Van Shelton. I'll always be extremely grateful to Ricky for allowing me to be the first person to interview him in ten years and to Bettye for relaying my request to Ricky. Now I can check this accomplishment off my bucket list.