

# Songwriters Music Festival

## Artist Bio's

**CHRIS FARREN – Returning for the 4th straight year, and the reason we can bring you this fantastic event.**



**Chris Farren** and Combustion Music just marked 20 years and 100 Number #1 songs!

Chris is an American country music songwriter and record producer. He is the president of Combustion Music, a

publishing and music production company that was founded in 2001. After attending East Carolina University, Farren signed with MCA in 1983 for a songwriting contract, with which he composed songs for movies and television. He moved to Nashville, Tennessee, in the mid-1980s and sang backup vocals in addition to writing songs. Farren produced albums by Boy Howdy, Kevin Sharp, and "Strawberry Wine," Deana Carter's debut single, which became her first number-one hit in 1996. Chris was named Country Producer of the Year in 1997 by *American Songwriter* magazine. Farren credits the company's success and longevity to the team's vision and ability to take risks to get in front of the industry's friends. Combustion has since evolved from a publisher to an all-encompassing music company. Farren says he sees Combustion as two companies: a publishing business and an independent record label.



# Chris DeStefano



Chris DeStefano is a singer/songwriter, record producer and multi-instrumentalist based in Nashville, TN. He is a 3x CMA Triple Play Award Winner and has co-penned over 25 hit songs for artists like Carrie Underwood, Chris Young, Luke Bryan, Chase Rice, Mitchell Tenpenny, Rascal Flatts, Billy Currington, Dan+Shay, Miranda Lambert, and Morgan Evans. Chris also is the President and CEO of Winsongs Music focused on developing songwriters and artists.

A native of Mt Laurel, New Jersey, Chris is a Grammy Award-winning singer/songwriter, record producer/mixer, and multi-instrumentalist. Chris began singing at a very early age in the acclaimed Academy Boys Choir of Philadelphia. At age 13, he acquired his first guitar and

remembers writing his very first songs shortly after. Driven by his passion for music and knack for picking up new instruments, DeStefano's talents lead him to Boston's prestigious Berklee College of Music where he studied film scoring.

Upon graduating, DeStefano followed the natural migration for many aspiring film score composers and moved to Los Angeles, California. However, what he discovered in LA was not the soundstage, but his gift for songwriting and producing. Setting his sights on the Country Airplay chart, Chris began splitting time between LA and Nashville, collaborating with some of Nashville's hottest songwriters and artists. The transition was seamless and in early 2012 Chris charted his first country single with Jana Kramer's "Why You Wanna" which peaked at #3 on the Billboard chart. Right on the heels of this success, DeStefano achieved his first Country chart topper #1 with the song "Good Girl" recorded by Country superstar Carrie Underwood.

Chris' #1 songs include Carrie Underwood ("Good Girl", "Little Toy Guns", "Smoke Break", "Something in the Water", Super Bowl LII and 2018 Olympic Games Theme Song "The Champion"), Dan + Shay ("From the Ground Up", "Nothin' Like You"), Jason Aldean ("Just Gettin' Started"), Billy Currington ("Hey Girl"), Brett Eldredge ("Don't Ya"), Luke Bryan ("That's My Kind of Night", "Kick the Dust Up"), Miranda Lambert ("Somethin' Bad" [w-Carrie Underwood]), Chris Young ("Losing Sleep", "At the End of a Bar" feat. Mitchell Tenpenny), Morgan Evans ("Kiss Somebody") and Rascal Flatts ("Rewind"), Tyler Rich "Leave Her Wild" (XM The Highway #1) and Chase Rice ("Eyes On You").

## **PAYTON SMITH – RETURNING FOR HIS 3<sup>RD</sup> EVENT**



At just 25 years old, Louisiana native singer-songwriter and self-taught guitarist, Payton Smith has a lot to celebrate. Smith began releasing music in 2019; quickly amassing over 50 million streams on his debut single, "Like I Knew You Would". Known for not only high-energy guitar slinging and smooth vocals, the CMT 2021 Listen Up artist also composed and played every string instrument on each track of his debut project.

As Taste of Country noted his "raw talent, authenticity and strong work ethic are bound to bring him country music success for many, many years" as one of 2021's Hottest Country Artists Under 25. Music Row called Smith the 2021 Next Big Thing, while

"Like I Knew You Would" charted as the number 7 song of the year on Spotify's Hot Country.

Payton Smith signed with Combustion Masters in late 2022, releasing "Missed The Boat" in early 2023, marking a new era of music, being produced by



Combustion's Chris Farren. Smith's debut album, *What Colors Your Wild*, was released on March 19th, with playlisting features on Apple's New In Country, Spotify's New Music Friday Country, and Tidal's Country Waves, Rising: Country and Amazon Music's Breakthrough Country, gaining 3 million streams.

Payton recently concluded supporting Brantley Gilbert and Lily Rose on their 2025 spring tours. Payton has also shared the stage with artists such as Lee Brice, Chris Young, Mitchell Tenpenny, Conner Smith, and more. In 2025, he has had standout releases in "She Shouldn't Have" and "Girl Goin' Through It" and his current EP, **Three Circle Farm | Vol. 2**, is available now on all streaming platforms.

## Austin Goodloe



GRAMMY Award-winning writer, producer, and musician Austin Goodloe learns best by living. A skilled touring guitarist, playing with the likes of indie-pop favorite Ben Rector and outlaw country riser Corey Kent, Goodloe has seen what makes a song translate from the writing room to center stage, bringing a dynamic approach and fresh perspective. His hook-heavy, hit-making inclinations have resulted in breakthrough songwriting credits and cuts including "cowboy friends" and "people change" (Ella Langley), "Need To"

(Gavin Adcock), "Seventeen" (Kameron Marlowe), "When I Ain't Looking" (Tucker Wetmore), Gold-certified "Something's Gonna Kill Me" (Corey Kent), and many more. As a producer, Goodloe has recently worked with Marlowe, Kent, Langley, and Danielle Bradbery. One of The Nashville Briefing's 2025 Songwriters You Need To Know, Goodloe is a native of Middletown, OH, and currently resides in Nashville, TN.

# Jessica Ferran



Jessica Farren is a Nashville native who has grown up around songwriting her whole life. After graduating from college in California, she moved to Los Angeles where she released multiple independent singles and cut her teeth before she moved back home to Nashville in 2019. Jessica is a pop writer at heart, but ever since signing her first publishing deal with Combustion Music in 2021, she has leaned into and absorbed many qualities of country songwriting into her arsenal of talents. Jessica

has cuts with artists including Renee Blair, Faren Rachels, David J, JJ Wilde and more. She has built relationships with many writers and producers in town, and continues to write in rooms with a variety of artists across all genres.

# Sam Bergeson



Sam Bergeson is a Nashville based producer, songwriter and mixer. He has written and/or produced for artists in multiple genres like Travis Japan, Corey Kent, John Oates, Gabby Barrett and Danielle Bradbery. As a musician/engineer/mixer Sam has worked on songs for artists like Blake Shelton, Def Leppard, Gwen Stefani, Teddy Swims & Bebe

Winans.

**Excited to announce our opening acts for the Music Festival**  
**The Hope Social Club**



Hope Social Club band leader is Melissa Mitchell. Her Musical journey is a testament to resilience, talent, and unwavering dedication. Born and raised in Kasilof, Alaska, Melissa discovered her passion for singing at an early age, finding solace and therapy in music during challenging times.

Melissa's musical journey has been marked by numerous milestones, including opening for renowned artists like Jewel, K.D. Lang, and The Indigo Girls, and representing Alaska on prestigious stages such as Mountain Stage.

Over the years, Melissa has released several solo albums, each showcasing her evolution as an artist and songwriter. In 2017, she joined forces with fellow Alaskan musicians to form the Hope Social Club, delivering electrifying performances and earning acclaim for their self-titled album.

## Ted W. Matzen



Ted Matzen has traveled the roads of Baja searching for waves and wind for most of his life.

Long-time LB locals will remember him as part of THE ORIGINAL NEEDLEFISH band.

A guitar and an old 53' Fender Lap Steel guitar are always stored next to surfboards, windsurfing gear, etc., in the van. Many songs were written on these trips. The summers were spent traveling the west coast from Cardiff Calif. to the Columbia River Gorge,

searching for big wind and waves. Many songs were written on these trips. Inspiration comes easily in a place like Hood River, Oregon. Ted also traveled to Maui and is currently playing with a talented Hawaiian musician named Mondokane and the Kihei Sons.



## Carl Schwitzer – joining us for his 4th event

A local Los Barriles favorite, Carl Schwitzer, a Southern California native residing in Utah, is a singer/songwriter and self-taught guitar player who has been playing music and writing songs since the 70s. Having grown up listening to rock & roll and blues, he quickly discovered a love for Southern Rock and Country music. Carl is a very talented guitar player and fronts a 5-piece band, “CFS120” that usually plays local concerts and outdoor festivals. Their debut album titled, “Road Of Life”, is available on Spotify. Their sound is somewhere between country, blues, rock and funk. They perform their original songs and a few of their own renditions of select cover tunes. One of his originals, called “Cheaper To Keeper”, is always a fan favorite. Carl particularly enjoys performing at songwriter rounds, sharing his own songs. Local independent artists have recorded several of his songs. Carl writes songs about everyday life, some funny, some sad, but always entertaining

