

SOUTHERN ANTHEM

PLAYS 'REAL' COUNTRY MUSIC

Country music has always changed and evolved into new and different versions of itself. The infusion of hip-hop, R&B and rock genres into the mix have some people worrying about the future of what they call "real" country music. This is not the case in the heart of Texas, and this is certainly not the case with Southern Anthem.

Southern Anthem is a four-piece travelling band of singers and musicians that remain faithful to the longstanding and beloved traditions of

country and gospel music. With their thumb firmly on the pulse of today's country fans, Southern Anthem delivers scorching guitar solos by 16-year-old guitarist Dereck, rock solid rhythms and the surprisingly big, angelic voice of 15-year-old Mikaela and show stopping fiddle work courtesy of a 10-year-old firecracker named Logan. With Wendy at the helm -- and sometimes on saxophone -- Southern Anthem also executes the type of harmonies that would make the Eagles envious, the type only family is capable of delivering.

Their journey started five years ago when Wendy Pausewang was directing a play in her hometown and found herself in need of entertainment between acts. When no one volunteered, she asked her children if they would like to sing some gospel songs at the event and they were ecstatic. Armed only with a guitar and the four chords she knew, they started rehearsing a list of classic songs for the big night. The response was amazing and unexpected. Many in the audience that day encouraged the group to take their show to the next level. The family loved performing together so much that Wendy contacted a local vocal coach and teacher that immediately recognized the potential in these young

singers. It wasn't long before she became their booking agent!

Since their hometown debut, Southern Anthem has been performing full time all over the country, including shows in Branson, Nashville and even appearing on RFD-TV. They're also scheduled to appear on the Penny Gilley Show airing on RFD-TV in 2016. The band wowed crowds during last year's Winter Texan Expo and were invited back to perform again -- an honor not bestowed upon just anyone. And as if that wasn't honor enough, Southern Anthem was inducted into the Gatesville Country Music Hall of Fame in July this year.

Wendy admits that balancing home life, school and a hectic touring schedule is something of a magic trick, but with the help of husband Mike, who serves as the band's chauffeur, sound engineer, toughest critic and biggest fan, they manage just fine. "Most of the credit belongs to the kids," she said. "They really are great kids that love the Lord and love performing."

Even with their schedule packed tighter than their suitcases, they managed to release two complete albums. "Somewhere Out West" is a collection of their favorite country songs and "Savior Save Me" is an album of original and traditional gospel music. Both are available at www.southernanthem-band.com, iTunes or at their shows. "The albums are based on our live show," says Wendy. "We play mostly classic country with a couple of contemporary hits thrown in and some good old hometown gospel... served up with a healthy dose of comedy!"

You can catch Southern Anthem at the 2016 Winter Texan Expo at the McAllen Convention Center on Jan. 20 at 9:30am or as part of the Rio Grande Valley Tour, 40-show, 40-venue tour from

Jan. 3 to Mar. 17. They are also slated to play The Valley Star Awards at Mission Bell on Feb 10, where they are nominated for "Entertainer of the Year." Or you could simply visit their website and catch up with them at any of the many shows they have booked two years in advance. Or, as Wendy puts it "If we're not on the road, we're usually at home, with the screen door open, playing and singing the music we all love so much."

Wherever they are, with bands like Southern Anthem playing their hearts out night after night...we have nothing to worry about when it comes to the future of "real" country music.

By Greg Kevorkian



WHAT'S ON THE venue!

EVENTS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

arts/museum

Moscow Ballet's Great Russian Nutcracker, 7 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 30 at McAllen Civic Center & Auditorium. Tickets start at \$28 and are available through Ticketmaster.

festivals/events

McAllen International Travel Show, Wednesday, Jan. 6 and Thursday, Jan. 7 at McAllen Convention Center. Stalls may be booked at 10times.com.

Annual "Steak" in Your Community Fundraiser, 6 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 9 at the Boys & Girls Club - The Legacy Center on 702 Cullen St. in Edinburg. Additional details are available at eventbrite.com

Annual Winter Texan Expo & Health Fair, Tuesday, Jan. 19 and Wednesday, Jan. 20 at McAllen Convention Center. Stalls may be booked at 10times.com

sporting events

Texas Rio Grande Valley women's basketball vs. Evangel, 7 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 30 at UTRGV-Edinburg Fieldhouse.

Texas Pan American Broncs Basketball vs. Our Lady of the Lake

Saints, 7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 2 at UTPA Fieldhouse in Edinburg. Tickets are available through stubhub.com.

Texas Rio Grande Valley women's basketball vs. Utah Valley, 7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 9 at UTRGV Fieldhouse in Edinburg.

Texas Pan American Broncs Basketball vs. Chicago State Cougars, 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 14 at UTPA Fieldhouse in Edinburg. Tickets available through stubhub.com.

Texas Pan American Broncs Basketball vs. UMKC Kangaroos, 7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 16 at UTPA Fieldhouse in Edinburg.

Texas Rio Grande Valley women's basketball vs. Cal State, 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 21 at UTRGV Fieldhouse in Edinburg.

Texas Rio Grande Valley women's basketball vs. Seattle, 7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 23 at UTRGV Fieldhouse in Edinburg.

Texas Rio Grande Valley women's basketball vs. New Mexico State, 7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 30 at UTRGV Fieldhouse in Edinburg.

Texas Pan American Broncs Basketball vs. Utah Valley Wolverines, 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 4 at UTPA Fieldhouse in Edinburg. Tickets available through stubhub.com.

Texas Pan American Broncs Basketball vs. Grand Canyon Antelopes, 7 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 6 at UTRGV Fieldhouse in Edinburg.

concerts/nightlife

Eli Young Band, 7 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 30 at Bogus Ford Events Center in Pharr. Tickets start at \$22 and are available through Ticketmaster.

Madelyn Victoria, 7 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 30 at Boggus Ford Events Center in Pharr.

Southern Anthem, 9 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 7 at Green Gate Grove in Mission.

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Brady Honeycutt, 7 p.m. Friday, Jan. 8 at American Legion Post 37 at 1305 E. Jasmine Ave. in McAllen.

Stella Lost, 8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 8 at Simon Sez in McAllen.

Richard Lynch Band, 8 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 9 at Bentsen Palm Village RV Park.

Southern Anthem, 8:30 Monday, Jan. 11 at Rollin Homes Park in Mission.

Southern Anthem, 9 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 13 at Paradise Park in McAllen.

Richard Lynch Band, 7 p.m. Friday, Jan. 15 at Tropic Star RV Resort in Pharr.

Southern Anthem, 8:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 15 at Pleasant Valley Resort - Main Hall in Mission.

Southern Anthem, 8:30 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 17 at Bentsen Grove Resort in Mission.

Southern Anthem, 9 p.m. Friday, Jan. 22 at Bentsen Palm Village RV Park in Mission.

SSouthern Anthem, 9 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 23 at Enchanted Valley in Mission.

Matt & The Herdsmen, 10 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 23 at Monster Car Wash in Edinburg.

Southern Anthem, 6:30 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 24 at Citrus Valley in McAllen.

SSouthern Anthem, 9 p.m. Monday, Jan. 25 at Hidden Valley Ranch in Mission.

Southern Anthem, 9 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 30 at Fiesta Village in Mission.

Southern Anthem, 8:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 1 at Bluebonnet RV Park in Mission.