

- listenN: Today, in Episode 14, I'm talking with musician, songwriter, and musical genre blender Devin Cuddy, who shares his inspirations, influences, songwriting process, and what it's like to be given a rare opportunity within the Canadian music scene. Whether it's bare bones local bar piano playing or performing on some of the biggest stages in front of Blue Rodeo fans, Devin takes us through his journey of defining himself as an artist and solidifying his unique musical sound.
- listenN: Well, hello, Devin, welcome to listenN.
- Devin Cuddy: Thank you for having me.
- listenN: It's a pleasure to be here. We're right now hanging out in the historic legendary Cameron House in downtown Toronto on Queen Street West. There's so much history in this building. Tell me some of your memories of this place when you were sort of a younger person getting into music.
- Devin Cuddy: Well, I first started coming here probably when I was about 19 I would say, obviously. It was just in search of music downtown. I think probably the first time I was here was during a North by Northeast Festival. My friend and I would have the passes or whatever, and we'd go around to see as much music as we could. This was often the place that had the folk stuff, which is what I was interested in.
- Devin Cuddy: So I came here kind of intermittently for a few years, and then when I was about 23 I met Cosmo Ferraro, who had just taken over from his mom, who was one of the original owners from 1981, looking to hand it off to the next generation. Cosmo was very, I wouldn't say green because he grew up around the bar, but it was all very new to him. We had mutual friends and we were all hanging out and he started to encourage me to play here, and that was when I said, "Sure, yeah, that's sounds great." They had a real piano in the front room.
- Devin Cuddy: That was when it really started, a relationship with myself and this building, which culminated in me playing here quite a bit over the years, often weekly shows, and now even living upstairs in one of the apartments. Yeah, it's very interesting to see even how it's changed in the last I guess it's been about nine years now. Yeah, a great music scene next wave that has kind of come through here, with still some of the old guard mixed in. It's very interesting because the new wave comes through and there's still enough of the old guard to have a sense of the ground upon which you stand and play.
- listenN: Yeah, and it's now got a record label associated with it, which that's new as well, right?
- Devin Cuddy: That was started by Cosmo and his partner in business, Mike McKeown, and it's winding down a bit now, but for a while it was quite a great entity in the Toronto music scene, obviously centered around the Cameron House and the

artists that played here. It was very cool to kind of get to know the ropes of the business through that. The two of them, Mike and Cosmo, were very keen, and also because of the venue and the history of the place, they were able to kind of tap in to a lot of the established sections of the music industry, or establishment, if you will. So we had some legs up in the early days. It was good.

listenN: And now it's got such a history to it, and so many places in Toronto, even though Toronto's got a huge music scene and a huge live music scene compared to a lot of cities, it's still decreasing as things get built out and as the city evolves. So somewhere like the Cameron House to still be here and to have that legacy, it's a very iconic place to be and spend your time.

Devin Cuddy: Totally. Especially of this size, because it's quite small, and that is pretty much a testament to the Ferraro family's love for it and willingness to keep it going. Because often you'll see owners will just burn out or they'll just be at the natural time to retire or move on, and that's often what is the final, the curtain call for these venues. Very few of them have an opportunity that Anne Marie had to hand it down to a semi-willing at the beginning but now fully willing son. And eventually all the brothers and sisters are involved now, a willing generation to take it on. I think that was a very important opportunity that both generations had to keep it alive. It's important to Queen Street because you don't want to erase the musical history of this place, and also if you were going to, like what happened on Young Street, you'd want there to be another place to take the reins, which I guess is what Queen Street was after the whole Yorkville scene, and I don't think there is one right now, God forbid if that torch had to be handed off.

listenN: Yeah, let's just hope it just hangs on, it just hangs on. And it's great because something that was so cool in the '80s and the '90s, it's interesting how to hand it to the next generation there was still some reluctance because it's still, "Hey, it's my parents. I don't want to do the same thing my parents did" kind of thing, right?

Devin Cuddy: Of course, yeah.

listenN: Which we'll talk with yourself about that as we go along as well, because there's a nice crossover there. You're talking about the past and the future, and I think that that's a nice segue into your music and your influences. Because when I heard you play live for the first time, I had a really hard time figuring out what was your original music and what was maybe something from another time, and I don't mean that you were doing covers. I just mean that some of your music sounds like it literally just came out of somewhere that doesn't exist anymore almost. I want to talk to you about your influences, your musical influences. I mean, that whole thing, like when was that moment?

Devin Cuddy: Well, my first memory of true love of a genre of music would probably have been early jazz, early blues, stuff like that. I think Louis Armstrong was my jump

in point, just a CD that I found in my dad's collection. He had CDs because it was the '90s, and I don't know, it was just something that clicked. I've thought a lot about it over the years trying to describe it, and it's hard to describe why or what exactly. I mean, I think that there's an imagery around that era of New Orleans that I really kind of attach to. Well, I ended up playing the trumpet quite a bit after that, but that was probably a result of liking it. It just kind of captured me. Then I kind of traced the history of jazz backwards out of that, or I guess forwards, slowly, and it also led me to New Orleans piano music, which probably was my first real kind of musical, in terms of learning the musical stylings and wanting to play the instrument. That was probably the first and that was in my mid-teens, 15, 16.

listenN: That's quite late in life so to speak to pick up something as complicated as jazz piano, right?

Devin Cuddy: Yeah, I never got very good at it, but it was just kind of, and especially at the end of high school, when I was trying to pick a direction, which you're supposed to do, right, it was the thing that I was the most passionate about. It was just playing. It wasn't necessarily I wanted to go on be an artist or whatever. I went to York for jazz school as a result of that, or jazz piano, fine arts or whatever.

Devin Cuddy: But I just enjoyed playing it, not even performing. I felt it brought me joy and even practicing was fun. Before that I had played piano out of being forced, because we were all forced to play piano until we were 16, and if we could find an adult that had regretted taking piano as a kid, in retrospect, then we could quit. And I still haven't found anybody, because nobody says, "Oh, that was such a waste of my childhood, was taking piano one hour a week."

listenN: That is such a good way around it. My father played the piano and he played a lot of ragtime kind of stuff, and he didn't do it professionally or anything. He just did it as a hobby. But we had an old upright piano in our basement, and he would go down, because he ended up becoming an accountant, four kids, that story. He would go down in the basement and he'd start to play the piano and the whole house would come alive with music. So he, as his kids, he forced us to take music and take the piano.

listenN: I'm the youngest of four, so my two older brothers, one went drums, one went guitar. My sister, I think she went piano, and then I came along and of course for me it had to be piano for him. When I was 12, he passed away, so at that moment in time I was too young and too stupid, so I used that as an opportunity to stop playing the piano and man, do I regret that. So when I moved to Toronto, I learned about the Conservatory of Music, and you could go and you could take piano lessons there and rent a studio space, a practice studio there. So I would go, and so in my 20s I went back to playing a bit of piano, got to about grade four or five, realized that I was a little bit tone deaf and it wasn't going to work out for me so well. But yeah, I love that story about if you can find somebody who regrets it.

Devin Cuddy: Well, you're an example of it right there, you know? Dead end. That wouldn't have gotten me out of it.

listenN: Yeah.

Devin Cuddy: Well, I think it's true for a lot of things. You lack that kind of thinking as a kid. I mean, I think that about learning French. I'm embarrassed that I squandered an opportunity. Now, I understand now they don't teach French the same way because it turned out to be not the right way to pick up a language with the just conjugations and stuff as opposed to conversationally. But I meet bilingual people and I'm just embarrassed, and because I squandered it. I took it for seven years or something in school and I can't read a menu.

listenN: Well, you know, I traveled in Europe. You'd be in Europe, "Oh, you're from Canada. You speak French." And you have to go, "No."

Devin Cuddy: It's complicated.

listenN: Yeah. I mean, I grew up in Vancouver so I had a bit of an excuse.

Devin Cuddy: That's a good excuse. I have less. The closer you are to Quebec the less excuse you have.

listenN: Exactly. So that's interesting, yeah. So the piano. You started out loving jazz and loving the trumpet, and then I read a quote where you said or somebody said about you maybe, but it was to do with something about you wanted to get as close to the music that you were inspired by as possible. In other words, to deconstruct it. Having heard you play live, I would say you've done that. What was that process for you? When you picked up the jazz piano, how did you tackle learning that?

Devin Cuddy: Well, I had a very thin base in theory already from doing, it was conservatory-based but I wasn't with the school, but it was all the basic theory. So I had that I guess. I just started taking lessons, and it was very cool because when I switched from the more traditional teacher to I guess more jazz teachers or more casual approach from the teachers, just stuff started to click. When you are passionate about something, learning it is easier because you want to put the time in and practicing isn't a drag. So I mean, I went about it trying to master certain aspects that I don't think I ever did, and then the rest was just trying to enjoy it. That could be something as simple as just playing a solo over a 12 bar blues or something and liking that. Eventually, it turned into writing simple 12 bar blues tunes to two line stanza things. Then it kind of grew out of that.

Devin Cuddy: As I hit university, my passion for jazz took me into the '50s and bebop and stuff. I never had the technical dexterity to play all that stuff, but I liked it enough to have it creep into aspects of what I was writing, which still were grounded in either New Orleans blues or early jazz kind of stuff. Then this element of country

music and songwriting found its way in, and that's what kind of stirred everything up into this more amalgamated mix. I mean, they call it roots now, but roots is this umbrella that half the world lives under, half the musical world lives under.

Devin Cuddy: So I just, at first it was certainly I wrote, this was a country song, this was a blues song. Then you realize that it all kind of came from the same spot in the history of music. You hear Ray Charles does those country albums and you're like, "Oh, it's not great, but it makes sense." There's this kind of Hank Williams Jambalaya is a great example of that. It's a song that is a straight country song but if you play it like Fats Domino it sounds like a New Orleans song. So I kind of tried to find this bridge between the two. That's when jazz influence started to fall off a bit, and just kind of mashed them together. Often that came out as, "This one's a country song," but sometimes they kind of crossed over.

Devin Cuddy: It really mixed up the influences, and when people say, "Who are your influences?" I'm like, "Well, I like Steve Earle and Professor Longhair," and they're like, "What?"

listenN: So you said the music, it all kind of came from the same place.

Devin Cuddy: Well, American. I would say American music, North American music.

listenN: Right, yeah. And then they kind of branch out into their genre. You mentioned how country and storytelling, and that's something in listening to your music comes across quite strongly, that you're a storyteller at heart. Did you express that in any other way growing up or did it finally come out through music?

Devin Cuddy: I'm not sure I expressed it, but I was interested in it through I guess literature or television. Certainly when I first started getting into music and the stuff around Louis Armstrong and the New Orleans imagery, I'd read and there would be stories about this musician doing this down this stretch or whatever. I was very intrigued by that. But when I started coming across country music, specifically Outlaw, early Outlaw, '70s Nashville sound, Guy Clark, Rodney Crowell, I was really attracted to the storytelling aspect of that. That was right when I was first starting to write music that I felt that I had through composed. That was just kind of timing. I wouldn't say that it was something... I wasn't a great storyteller as a teenager or anything like that. It just kind of happened at all the same time. I was at university and it was that type of time in your life when the lights start turning on all the time.

Devin Cuddy: So no, I'm not sure it was something that I was inclined to as a kid, but certainly in that time when I first started developing as a songwriter it was important to me. It still is in a different way, but yeah. I think part of the storytelling thing, especially if it's not self-reflection necessarily, and there's a great challenge in seeing something through the eyes of somebody else, which I've always enjoyed in songwriting, third person kind of stories. It just is an interesting challenge,

even as something as simple as the words you choose and you try not to choose ones that you use regularly, to kind of embody another character or person. So I just kind of was always intrigued by that.

listenN: Welcome back. I'm talking with musician and songwriter Devin Cuddy, who is sharing his songwriting process and what it's like to play on stage with Blue Rodeo and then come home to play bare bones and everything in between.

listenN: Is your songwriting process, maybe walk me through that a bit, because I know some people that they use dreams and imagination and these types of ways of creating things, and you said something interesting there about third person and seeing it through somebody else's, more observational. How does a song start for you?

Devin Cuddy: Well, I am one of those it's all different. Sometimes it's kind of a chord progression that I try. Well, actually, I would say it always kind of starts with an idea of a song now. It might be a full story or it might be one line that I write around. I would say there's always something in the middle or something at the center, rather, of it, that's usually lyrical. Sometimes I have a subject and I say, "I want to write about that," and those don't often turn out the way that I want them to. For me the most effective one is to have a line, whether it's a chorus or it's got to be an important line. It can't be the first, well, the first line of the first verse, but it can't be a middle verse line. It's got to be something that I can circle around in writing a song.

Devin Cuddy: Then now, I used to write on guitar a lot because it was easy and you could do it anywhere. Now I try to write on piano, so I'll sing a line, try and figure out it, and then work some chords around and write verses and try and kind of circle that thought. Sometimes it changes as you're writing. You have this line, you're like, "Okay, this song is going to be about this." And then it starts to come out a little different and it changes. I'm not one of those people that has this linear process. It's kind of random.

Devin Cuddy: I mean, I remember the only time I wrote a song called Radio and it was just a voice note that I had put on my phone late one night after, I'm not a pot smoker but I had a taste and had to go to bed. Terry Wilkins, thank you very much. So I did that, but only one time. I know a lot of people that do the voice notes all the time, and that was the only time I've done that. Other times something comes to your head and you have to run to the piano. Other times you sit at the piano staring blankly for an hour.

listenN: It's funny that you bring up Radio, because as you were talking, I right away was like, "I'm going to ask where Radio came from." The lyrics of that song are just, I don't know, it's very infectious, that song. So tell me how that song, add more to that story, I guess I'm saying.

Devin Cuddy: Yeah, yeah. Terry Wilkins will enjoy this if he hears this. He is a kind of famous bass player. He's from Australia but he's based in Toronto for a long time. He's played with Dr. John. He was in Rough Trade. He was in all sorts of bands. We were hanging out one night and he's like, "Come on, you got to try this pot." He's a pot advocate. I'm like, "Sure," watched a bit of his band, went to bed. Then I just had this melody in my head and it was the line, "I don't want to be on the radio no more." Voice noted it, came down, and I guess it had enough of a melody that it kind of had itself on the piano.

Devin Cuddy: Then it started, this came out of the line as opposed to it was a line I riffed on. I started thinking about musicians that I know, especially ones that were hitting their early 30s and were just burned out and not sure they wanted to do it anymore. They've kind of hit a wall with their careers. Nobody in particular, but kind of an amalgamation of different small stories that I'd heard from other artists, and it came out of that. It's funny because I know that it comes across as first person, but it is not about me at all. I've never even been on the radio really, so it can't be.

listenN: That was the part that kind of got me going, because I was thinking, "Yeah, you either are putting your stake in the ground going, 'I never want to be on the radio,' and so what is that about?"

Devin Cuddy: Yeah, I realized that as I recorded it, and then my producer was like, "You know, this will never get played on the radio. No channel's going to play it when it says I don't want to be on the radio." I'm like, "Yeah, I know, but it's written so it's got to be done now."

listenN: But it's great. I think it's, yeah.

Devin Cuddy: Well, the other thing is now there's digital platforms that they don't care.

listenN: Yeah, that are our radios.

Devin Cuddy: I mean, radio still has a lot of power, but this song was able to get out there. But yeah, so then it just kind of came together after that. I always try to disclaimer it at the shows with a practice line that I have. But yeah, no, that was unique, though. I hadn't really ever used the voice note process or whatever. It's another testament to technology, because I know a lot of songwriters that they will feel like they've lost a lot of work if they lose their phone.

Devin Cuddy: (singing)

listenN: You know, you were talking about songwriting and how you kind of don't have any one specific way of doing it. What's your process when you feel like you might? Do you ever get sort of stuck in that way then and then you're like, "I don't have a fallback. I don't go back to my process of one, two, three, step," kind of thing?

Devin Cuddy: Yeah. Yeah, I have a lot of songs that are stuck, and more now than ever in my life. I have a few songs that I am really attached to that aren't finished and I just can't. I don't know what to do. I think that's just now it's time for me to go and do some co-writes. Because I remember as a younger guy I was like, "This is a solo process. I don't want anyone in here with me." But now I've gotten to this point where I have these things that I just can't get through, and actually most of them have choruses written. I'm like, "This is a good chorus. I've got to figure out what this is about." So I think that'll be my next step as a songwriter, growing as a songwriter.

listenN: I mean, other than maybe when you were younger wanting to be independent or whatever, is there another reason that also... Doing that, stepping into that, what do you feel you'd lose?

Devin Cuddy: Well, I mean, what I would have felt, I've kind of shed some of these biases, but I always kind of felt it was self-expression or expression as an artist. Then I felt it kind of weird to share that, because I always felt it was a solitary pursuit, songwriting, for me it was. I'd felt that letting somebody into that would maybe kind of tarnish its purity or something like that. I don't really feel that way anymore, especially because I get stuck on these things and I'm like I want help now. It's not even that I begrudge that I need it. It's that I want it.

listenN: So when you're recording with your band or with other musicians, do you get input from them?

Devin Cuddy: Yeah, but usually it's from more of an arranging perspective. It's almost never lyrics, although one time there was a lyric and a subsequent fight about it. But it's usually more on the musical side, so arranging intros, outros, whatever, where we go at what point. More in-studio stuff than actual songwriting stuff.

listenN: Yeah, and that takes me to a point that I heard you say about when you first started out it was a little more off the floor, just raw, and now you're getting more studio. So the evolution is there's more fingers in that pie.

Devin Cuddy: Totally.

listenN: And maybe the co-creator is you, just older.

Devin Cuddy: Totally, yeah. Absolutely.

listenN: You might just wake up one day and go, "Now I know what I've been waiting, what that's been waiting for." So many artists, when you talk with them, they all have that story about I had this thing in the bottom of the drawer that had been there for 15, 20 years, and then I found out what it was waiting for. I think that that's the biggest challenge, is knowing when you just need to walk away from something or when you need to, like you say, go out and maybe introduce another layer to that creative process.

Devin Cuddy: Yeah. And I mean, I think one of the other fears is you hear mostly about what... This is more of a Nashville thing than any other kind of genre, but they put you in a room with people you don't know, even broken down to "This is the chorus guy, this is the bridge guy." And I guess there was a hostility I felt towards that. Also, I wasn't so keen on sharing with somebody I don't know. Even now, I still would be a little hesitant toward that. I know in my mind who I want to do it with. A friend, people that I've gotten to know to do co-writing, as opposed to getting paired with somebody. Although again, I feel that I've grown enough that I wouldn't be against that, but it wouldn't be my preference of the two options.

listenN: Right. I mean, one of the things that I noticed, my wife noticed, I think anybody who listens to you play live notices, is that you surround yourself with really good musicians.

Devin Cuddy: Yeah, so we went to, those guys that generally I play with, I have an A and B band, because everybody's got a lot of stuff on the go at our level. Not A and B, just kind of two different guys. They won't listen to this anyway. they get enough of my voice. The guys that I started out with, let's say, we went to school together at York, so we grew up as musicians together, which was cool. We were making music in a lot of different forms long before I started the band, and they actually, those two particular guys, Devon Richardson and Zach Sutton, bass and drums, they have their own band as well that they've been playing for even longer. We were all this kind of musical friend group. That makes it really easy to work with them, because first of all we all speak kind of a similar school language, and we've been making music together in a lot of different ways over a long period of time. So it's not just studio time or it's not just live time. It's jamming this, playing this music, all different types in different settings and different groupings. Those guys are great for me.

listenN: When I saw you perform, it was on Toronto Island, which is almost as, not rustic, but is almost as minimal as you can get for an artist, right?

Devin Cuddy: Yeah.

listenN: And as you said to me, it's the greatest view in music, and it's true. You've got this amazing view of the city and you've got this mixed group of people.

Devin Cuddy: It's like cottage country out there, man. It always blows me away.

listenN: Yeah, and I get a kick out of the fact of the mix of people. Because there's the people that live in the marina or like myself have a boat there and go there on the weekends or during the summer for long periods of time, and then you get all these sort of rich people in their yachts pulling in from some other place in Toronto. You've got people dressed to the nines, people in shorts and sandals and no shirt. It's just such an eclectic group of people.

listenN: So there you guys are, bare minimum stuff, but you just sounded so good together, and it makes sense now that if you say you've been around each other for such a long time.

Devin Cuddy: Yeah, we all started out in that kind of setting. Our first gigs were in stripped down, bare bones places. Here at the Cameron House, it's a bar gig in every sense of the word. You play three sets, you pass the hat around. It's like Nashville or Memphis or something. There's bands all the time. They turn over, the people turn over. You play, play, play, play. That was where we cut our teeth. It makes you adaptable, because we've learned to play the more theater places and stuff like that, but we can always go back to something. And there's always something very comfortable about it too, when you start playing something that's familiar from I wouldn't say the old days, because we still do it, but just less of it. There's always something kind of familiar and it loosens everybody up a lot too.

listenN: Yeah, and you have had the opportunity to play on a number of different stages of different sizes, shapes, that is not necessarily linear in a artist's career-

Devin Cuddy: Totally.

listenN: ... because of your father and your family. There must be some, when you go back to your grass roots, bare bones basic stuff, you can own that probably in a way that maybe some other artists would be like, "I never want to do that again. I've moved on. I'm now only doing this." Whereas you've gone forward and seen what it's like.

Devin Cuddy: Yeah, seen the greener grass.

listenN: At the end of that tunnel.

Devin Cuddy: No, it's true, and it makes you kind of, well, I guess nostalgic when you come back to it. I mean, we still do it pretty regularly, so never felt that we've stepped out of it fully. I mean, certainly there is that time. We did a tour in 2013 I think it was, with Blue Rodeo, playing all the biggest places or almost the biggest places, and came back to the Cameron a few months later and like, "Oh, it sounds like shit up here. I forgot." Like, "Oh, we don't have the perfect sounding thing. It doesn't sound the same every night anymore." But after the first set, you're like, "Oh yeah, this is the energy that I remember of being back." So cool.

listenN: I just want to go back to songwriting a little bit, because you were talking about Radio. You've written some kind of political types of songs, and one song you wrote is My Son's a Queer. You did that early on, right? It's a very sort of serious subject matter done in kind of a comical light-hearted music style way lyrically and musically. What does that song mean to you to be out there performing it and putting a political message like that out? Do you feel a need to perform that song?

Devin Cuddy: Yeah, I do actually, because it seems stupid that it's political issue to me. I grew up in Toronto too, and it seems so obvious that shouldn't even be an issue, but I recognize that it is in a lot of places. I'll backtrack a little. Randy Newman is one of my favorite artists in the whole world. I'm wearing a shirt right now with him on it. That song was very influenced from his style of doing the similar tongue in cheek things about serious subject matter. You think about the song Sail Away is about a slave ship owner is trying to convince an African to get on the boat and sail them to North America, where life is good. That's done playfully. There's kind of goofy lyrics and stuff. That is too serious for me to start at, but step back a little bit.

Devin Cuddy: I wrote it as kind of an homage to that and I had a bunch of gay friends who told me that the term queer had been taken back and it was okay to use, so I cite them to this day. Hopefully they won't turn on me. I have worried a lot about it being misinterpreted, because if it is then without having a moment to explain it, people just go away mad. Subconsciously I wrote it, it's pretty obvious. All you have to do is listen to a few of the lyrics to understand that it's not anti or anything like that. But for a while I didn't even think about it being important to play every night.

Devin Cuddy: Then it was actually my bass player Devon Richardson, who said one night, I forget what the setting was, but I had made a conscious decision not to play it and he gave me shit about it and was like, "You should never do that. Always play it. Don't think about the crowd. Play your tunes." I haven't skipped it, at least on purpose, since then, and I guess, yeah, I hadn't really thought about that, but it is probably important for me to play every night. It's not something that I had thought a lot about, but it's part of our repertoire, it's part of what we do, and so besides obviously I have no hesitation to express my feelings on that subject matter, it's just kind of part of our show and I wouldn't take it out. I shouldn't take it out.

listenN: No, no. You said some people, they'll just walk away and they're mad. Have you had that experience?

Devin Cuddy: Yes. In fact, we played it. I still don't know why we did this, but we played it at the Junos, at the Gala, which is the non-televised awards, which is where they give out most of the awards. I don't know why we chose it, because they have to approve it, how that got through. I couldn't tell you. But yeah, there was a tweet. Somebody said they were disappointed, blah blah blah. That stuff has never bothered me, maybe because I don't get a lot of it.

listenN: Right, yeah.

Devin Cuddy: So for a second, I was like, "Wow, this is a drag." I was hoping people would listen, but thinking people are going to listen at the Gala dinner at the Junos is foolish.

- listenN: Yeah, they're listening to a couple of words and then making their decision.
- Devin Cuddy: Yeah, it's like a wedding kind of thing. They're all at tables. But that was a big platform to play it on. Yeah, there's been some, very little, very little backlash I would say. I mean, we play mostly in Canada, so already there's a pretty good socially conscious audience that we mostly play to, so not really any serious backlash. I always try to say after, "Well, I never know if you're going to get applause after that, so thank you."
- listenN: Yeah.
- Devin Cuddy: We play a lot in the folk world and people do pay attention to lyric and all that in our world a lot, so I don't think a lot of people miss it.
- listenN: Welcome back. I'm talking with musician and songwriter Devin Cuddy about the benefits and challenges of performing across a country as large and diverse as Canada and how our respect for the arts seems to help us punch above our musical weight.
- listenN: So you mentioned about Canada, so that's a nice segue into performing across Canada. Canada is so diverse and so big, and it's hard for bands to get around in Canada. But there's also something very distinct I think for Canadian bands, is that you can become accepted nationally because you're forced to go from coast to coast, whereas you can be a grunge band in Seattle, for example, and you never leave the northwest. Or you can be a band in New York City or you can be a band in New Orleans or whatever, but in Canada you go from coast to coast. You see the whole thing. What's been your experience? Because you've done it yourself but you've also done it with Blue Rodeo and seen... It's almost like you get the luxury of two generations, right?
- Devin Cuddy: Yeah, totally. Well, exactly as you said. I mean, we're a very different and spread out nation, and yet we are all connected through arts and culture, I think. Now, a lot of that has to do with funding and grants and stuff that helps artists go coast to coast and get their stuff out there. There's national platforms like the CBC and things like that that kind of take things from coast to coast. It's totally interesting to have people that know your music in PEI and people in Vancouver. It's interesting driving from one to the other as well.
- listenN: It's just the bit in the middle that's tough.
- Devin Cuddy: Oh my God. Mostly our province is ridiculous. But yeah, it's totally intriguing. I think that from my experience it seems that there are institutions or some type of national identity that kind of ties us all together across, even though we're so spread out. And it's not nationalism, because there's no rah-rahing. I hesitate to even say a shared experience, because life in Newfoundland is not the same as life in Saskatchewan, but there's something. There's something that ties it all together. I mean, there's certainly a value of the arts from Canadians, and that

goes from coast to coast to coast all the whole nation. There's a support of it and there is a funding that goes up and down. Platforms and all these things come together to help artists of all genres go through across from coast to coast to coast, and it binds people together.

Devin Cuddy: It is kind of a great unknown, in a way. One of the famous things is there's all these Canadian bands that never broke in the States but they were huge in Canada, but what is it about them? What is it about so-and-so that's Canadian? I can't put my finger on it. I mean, The Hip, I mean they have some Canadian lyrics and stuff, but that certainly wouldn't make people in Philadelphia feel excluded from their music or whatever.

listenN: Well, I think the thing that was really bizarre about The Hip was people in the States were going, "Oh, but they're just an REM wannabe band and we already have REM." And you're like, "No, they're not."

Devin Cuddy: Yeah, that's totally wrong.

listenN: But they just, they wanted to categorize them as being. Maybe this is just my impression, but Canada kind of punches above its weight when it comes to music.

Devin Cuddy: I think all arts to be honest, but absolutely.

listenN: There's always somebody from Canada who's number one in the world in the music industry.

Devin Cuddy: There's three right now. It's true. I don't know. There's a great mystery around it, I guess. I don't know. I mean, I think that arts is still valued, as we were saying before, and that kind of heightens people's access to it and stuff like that, which gives them the opportunity, et cetera, et cetera. I don't know, it's interesting. I imagine a lot of countries of our size, our population size, have insulated arts scenes, but to have it so spread out, very interesting.

Devin Cuddy: I remember when I was at York they taught, I don't think it was a full course, on how to plan a tour in Canada viably. Where to stop, where to play, how to plan your routes, because you can go bust on gas alone. That's kind of unique to Canada. I mean, it's 30 hours to Winnipeg to go through Canada, and that's a long way. You could go through 10, 15 countries in Europe in that amount of time. You go through one province.

listenN: I know. Yeah, it's hard. It's hard for people to understand, because even in the States, where yes, it's a big country as well and they go from coast to coast, but if you think of the amount of population as you go, yeah, you wouldn't have to drive. If you're a band in the northeast, you don't have to drive that far to go from major urban center to major urban center.

Devin Cuddy: Two hours there.

listenN: Yeah, and here-

Devin Cuddy: Well, you hear a lot of American bands, there's always swaths of the states that they just haven't got into, whether it's the south or it's California and the desert or it's the northeast or northwest. There seems to always be some blacked out region. Often it's that Louisiana, Alabama, Florida stretch, or maybe northeast bands, maybe they don't play the West Coast. Which is interesting. Maybe that's part of, you have to be very, very, I hesitate to say hardworking, but touring is more difficult and maybe that hardens some of the artists. First of all, it makes you have to be very ambitious and willing to do it, because a Canadian tour is very hard. It takes a lot of time and a lot of driving.

listenN: Do you find your music is embraced more in certain areas? For example, and again I'm going to do a stereotypical statement here, but I would guess it would be more embraced in Newfoundland?

Devin Cuddy: Yeah. East coast for sure.

listenN: East coast, but when I think of Newfoundland, I just think of because one, it's so rich in culture and history and music and arts there and it is such a, feels like its own country. So I just was wondering about your experiences performing there.

Devin Cuddy: Well, we've only played there a handful of times and always had very great responses. Now, because the people are so friendly, they could just be being friendly, I don't know.

listenN: What a crime.

Devin Cuddy: I know, I know. As you go, you go and you have five friends and you go and visit them, and then you have 15 and then you have 30 and then you have 80. It goes up and up because everybody's so nice. We haven't played as much as I'd like to. Again, as is the Canadian thing, it's difficult to get there. The ferry's a lot to do and we always try to zip up there on one or two shows, but I haven't been there in a long time, unfortunately. But yeah, they do. And the east coast in general.

Devin Cuddy: Yeah, the east coast has always been good to us. Quebec is a challenging province to get into, because they're insulated in the insulated kind of Canadian thing. But the prairies, I don't know. Obviously when we started out, we had a lot of kind of crossover from Blue Rodeo fans, who are very serious music fans, I've found. They are willing to listen to anything and they're very willing to embrace us. Even though there are crossovers between what we do, I think the musics are very different and yet I think they're very open-minded, musically open-minded people, and we very much benefited from that.

- Devin Cuddy: I think that's also true for all of Canadians. Our sample size has been Blue Rodeo fans, but I think generally people want to take in culture in Canada and give anything a try. I'm sure there's limitations to that.
- listenN: Well, that's a nice segue to talk about Blue Rodeo and your father and his influence. But before I go there, because I think that's where everybody goes, right, you, and again I'm projecting or whatever my own personal experience of watching you perform, but you look so comfortable. The night that I met you, that's what I said to you. I said, "You look like that's exactly where you need to be and where you belong, is behind that keyboard doing what you do on stage." There's a comfortness or whatever it is, a confidence, comfortness, a relax that you project out that you don't normally see. At least, I don't experience that. Partly it's because of the type of music that you're playing and you're so passionate about it.
- listenN: But I just wanted to ask you a question because I know your mother's an actor. Is there any influence of that on your stage presence? Did growing up knowing that you have a father who's on stage, but you also have a mother who's in the box or on the screen, did that give you a sense of confidence?
- Devin Cuddy: Probably subconsciously. It wasn't something that I have been able to quantify, but certainly my mother's an influence on me. I mean, she's a character in herself in a good way, obviously. And yeah, I'm sure it did. I don't think it was something that consciously kind of bubbled up when I got on stage, but I would imagine that any type of comfortable feeling that I have onstage would be from an amalgamation, from a mix of both parents. We spent a lot of time with our mother growing up because my dad was on the road and whatever, and she always worked and we'd have to run lines with her and stuff like that. So yeah, there's just no way that I got out without an influence from that side.
- listenN: Did you spend time on set with her as a kid, as a small kid?
- Devin Cuddy: No, not really. No, because that was her time away from us.
- listenN: Mommy's got to work.
- Devin Cuddy: No, I mean, she did a lot of stage and is back to it now. So we were around that and actors, who are quite a cast of characters often. So we had a lot of those kind of personalities in our lives. We didn't have a lot of bland people around the house.
- listenN: I was going to say, you had such a unique upbringing from an arts perspective. Then you dove in, you know?
- Devin Cuddy: Yeah.

- listenN: What was that process like for you to go, "I'm going to do this too," almost? Was there ever a desire just to run away from it?
- Devin Cuddy: Yeah, probably, before I decided to do it, I think. As I was saying earlier, my first passion with music was not an intention to become a performer. It was just something I liked to do on my own, so as it came time for university I liked it enough and was good enough for York, at least, to pursue it. And even through university, it was slowly where I started performing a bit, but there was nothing in my head yet that said, "This is what you want to do. This is for you."
- Devin Cuddy: It didn't really... I had done some performing, some friends had encouraged me and we had little groupings or whatever at college pubs, which was fun, but again, it wasn't some eureka kind of moment. It wasn't until here at the Cameron House when Cosmo, the new owner, or the second generation owner, had say, "Hey, I'm looking for bands. You should come and play." And I said, "Yeah, whatever, sure. Does it pay?" And he said no. No, I'm just kidding.
- listenN: No, he said no.
- Devin Cuddy: Yeah. I started doing solo. I think it was Wednesday nights and I started playing solo piano on the stage, and that was when I really, I guess a fire lit under and I was like, "Okay, this is what I want to do. I make this decision on my own and it's something that I want to pursue." I did it for a while kind of, I don't know about quietly, but locally. I didn't have a band for the first year, just played solo, went up there and hammered away. Then slowly, I remember one specific conversation with a friend. He's like, "It's time." I was like, "What do you mean?" It's time to get a band. I was like, "Is that a criticism?" He's like, "Yeah."
- Devin Cuddy: So it started from there. Then I don't remember a specific eureka moment, but I remember in that first month of doing my residency thinking yes. Then there's a lot more positives to having a father in the music industry than there are challenges, so I never really let it bother me or anything like that because it really accelerated parts of my career. That's a good thing. It's hard. There's a lot of doors that are hard to get through for musicians, and I already had a little foot in it. So I recognize that I'm very lucky in that sense and that there's no room to be complaining about it, because it's a hard industry to be in, and you've got to fight for any leg up that you can have.
- listenN: so that leads me to the question do you feel a pressure because of that, or do you feel, when I say pressure, I don't mean I have to be as good as my father or better than my father. I don't so much mean that kind of pressure. Just a little bit of pressure around you moving music forward, let's say. Because you've picked a style of music that isn't every 30 year old's style of music to perform, and you come from a musical family with, as you say, a foot in the door. So is there any sense of, "Okay, if I'm going to do this, what's my mark? What am I going to do with this opportunity?" Do you feel that kind of pressure?

- Devin Cuddy: Yeah, I do. It's self-imposed, right? I find that pressure because I feel that I've been given a, it's not unique but it's a rare opportunity and squandering it would be foolish and a waste. I guess I feel pressure put on myself to at least accomplish what I want with my music, or at least do something with those opportunities. Yeah, I do. It can be challenging sometimes, especially because the music that we make is not mainstream and there are a lot of boundaries that you run into often with a full head of steam. That can be frustrating and stuff, but that's more of a self-inflicted kind of wound, and I also, if there's one thing I do want to live up to, it's the work ethic of my dad and the band, because it does take a lot of work to get to any level like that, and you got to do it. There's sacrifices, et cetera, et cetera, all the tropes about it. But I'd like to at least work as hard. I don't necessarily have aspirations to get to the same level of his success, because that was a different time, whatever.
- listenN: Yeah, that's sort of out of your control.
- Devin Cuddy: Yeah, absolutely.
- listenN: What's in your control is your work ethic and your passion and how much you care about it, but yeah, the rest is sometimes just-
- Devin Cuddy: Yeah, and that's fine. I've come to terms with that. But I would like to live up to that work ethic, at least. And I think that I just have the example in my life that I've been able to see growing up. I think that's true for all artists. There's certainly people who hustle a lot harder than me and don't have those same advantages.
- listenN: They don't live on top of a perfect music place.
- Devin Cuddy: That can be an advantage and disadvantage.
- listenN: Disadvantage.
- listenN: Welcome back. I'm talking with musician and songwriter Devin Cuddy, who is sharing his journey of defining himself as an artist while always remaining grateful for the opportunity he's been given with his famous last name.
- listenN: I want to read something that's a quote from you, or at least it's somebody quoting you. It was back in 2013. It's echoing what you just said, so you basically said, "I haven't struggled with carving out my own path, not yet, at least. I've met a lot of great people through Blue Rodeo's connections and had a good fortune and some doors opened for me." Then you say, "I imagine the difficulty will come in the future as I try to define myself as an artist and solidify my sound. So we're now six years later. Has that come true in a sense? Are you doing that now?"

Devin Cuddy: Well, you know what? We're just kind of wrapping up a new record and I would say that it, although it's not a huge deviation from what we do, it is definitely a change.

listenN: So put some words to when you say the words it's a change.

Devin Cuddy: Well, it's just, it's more produced, more composed. It's thicker musically. It's a little more rock. Certainly left behind aspects of our blues influences, and a bit of the country, but not all. I think the songs are evolved a little bit. That could just be a personal thing. And yeah, I just think sonically it's going to be different than what we've done. I have been working on it for a few years now, so that has come true in the sense of trying to mold this into something evolved or different. It has been a challenge. It's been harder to figure out what I like and figure out what I like the sound of. I've thought more about the actual music and the songs than I did in the past. About that, about rounding it into a sound that is-

listenN: Yours.

Devin Cuddy: ... your own and forward moving. Yeah, we used to, the first two records we prepped the songs, recorded the songs, put them out and went on tour. So I'm definitely trying to do something different this time, and trying to figure out how to round that out has been a challenge, absolutely. I guess old me was right. Or younger me.

listenN: Younger old you.

Devin Cuddy: I am older me.

listenN: Yeah. I think you've done that, how you've described, because your new stuff just sounds so much... Substance is such an overused word. It's not about substance or no substance, but your music in Amy's Dream, it's got a sound that you can see one day going, "Oh, that's Devin Cuddy."

Devin Cuddy: Yeah. That's from that session, that stuff. That's the tip of the next page, chapter, whatever. That is the beginning of, that was the first evolution of it, or at least the first output of what we're trying to do.

listenN: Yeah. It sounds great.

Devin Cuddy: Thanks.

listenN: I was going to ask you this question, and then as I did some more research I kind of went, "Well, I don't really want to ask that question." It was to do with, if you could time travel back, would you be in Blue Rodeo?

Devin Cuddy: That's interesting.

- listenN: And then, just because as a piano player, there was Bob Wiseman, right?
- Devin Cuddy: Yeah. They've always had the great players.
- listenN: Yeah, and so-
- Devin Cuddy: But I don't know if I'd want to be Bobby.
- listenN: Right.
- Devin Cuddy: Yeah, I mean, it was funny because growing up I never looked at their music subjectively, because it was always so present. I guess that's not true. There were songs as a kid that I liked, but it wasn't the same thing. Certainly when I started to get passionate about music, I don't know if it was purposeful, but it was just kind of always there and it was something that I just kind of looked past. Probably starting when we toured with them in 2013, because I hear it every night and was more in the music industry then, I started listening closer. Obviously, the hits and stuff I'd heard and thought about, but kind of the everything. I realized that there's a lot of crossover and influence and stuff like that. Yeah, I probably would be. Take me back to the '80s, I'd still be hanging out here I guess at the Cameron House.
- Devin Cuddy: But yeah, certainly. I mean, it's music that I like, and so yeah, I'd want to play it for sure.
- listenN: Yeah, I think that my question or the question came from more of a... And you started to answer it earlier, and I was going to ask you something about this, around when you were talking about songwriting. But it's to do with you're a front guy, right? I think that that's where, when the question first came up-
- Devin Cuddy: Oh, would I share?
- listenN: Yes. So when the question first came up for me was I was seeing you as a piano player, and I was like, "If you could go back in time, would you have wanted to be that in that band?"
- Devin Cuddy: I see, yes.
- listenN: Then as I did more and more research, I came to the realization that you are a front guy, a front man, and then you talked about sharing songwriting challenges. Then I thought, okay, is that something maybe you picked up? Because Greg and your dad are kind of like Lennon and McCartney in some sort of weird shape and way, even to the point of work ethic, where your dad has got the Paul McCartney work ethic.
- Devin Cuddy: Yeah, I've started to emulate it, right?

listenN: Yeah.

Devin Cuddy: Yeah, but as far as I know they write the songs separately and then work them out together. Yeah, getting along with another person for that long would be challenging for me. I see how much patience it takes for both sides. It would be for anybody. To get along with one person in that capacity for that long is challenging, and they just figured it out. I don't know. I don't know what the secret is. I mean, I'm sure it's a little just try and make decisions as a full group. I don't know the secret to it. I think that would be challenging, and if you were to ask me if I'd want to go back and be in a relationship like that musically, I'd probably say no, because I don't think that I could keep up something like that as long as they have, and that's just me personally. I admire it. I think it's incredible, but I come off a tour with my band and we all just want to kill each other. I think that's more natural than the other way around.

listenN: Oh, for sure. For sure. I mean, you do anything with a group of people, especially when it's something that's of a creative endeavor, because when you're doing something that has a creative focus, it's sort of like you're good at this job, you're good at this, and every other aspect of this person could be something that you just don't get along with or you wouldn't want to listen to them chew their food or whatever it is, or sit in the back of a bus with them forever.

Devin Cuddy: Absolutely. No, there's no doubt. They say 10% of the job is playing the gig and 90% is getting along with everybody. But that's also a skill to have in the music business. Good hang, is what they always say. I can't remember the whole checklist. But good player, driver, good hang. That's, when you ask somebody, you're going to hire somebody, I've seen them play but are they good hang? Yeah, good hang. Good tour guy. You're right, creative types are often, there's characters attached to them and that can be challenging.

listenN: Yeah. I mean, I spent a number of years in the creative side of the advertising business and people used to always ask me, "How do you work with creative people?" Because I was the chief creative officer, so I herded the cats. I used to always just go, "I have no idea. I have no idea." But at the end of the day something comes out. It's usually pretty good, and you move on. You know? You forgive everybody for their quirks and quarks. But yeah, I think it's unlike in most other jobs where you're dealing with that lack of... There's sort of a lack of practical focus sometimes in creative people that is required, but at the same time can just take the life out of you.

Devin Cuddy: Oh, absolutely. It's true for all arts and creative. I couldn't agree more.

listenN: Yeah. In doing my research, and this is to doing with the front guy thing and stuff, I saw the video clip of you performing Rain Down, and it was really good.

Devin Cuddy: Thank you.

- listenN: Then at the end, Greg says, and you know what he said, right? That's the best that song's ever sounded. What does that feel like?
- Devin Cuddy: Well, that's a jab at Jim more than it's a compliment to me, I think. You know, I didn't hear that, I don't think. Or maybe it didn't register until after I guess I watched it. No, it was fun. I had never done anything like that before. That's probably the first Blue Rodeo song I'd ever performed. I'd learned some in the privacy of my own practice room. But it was cool. I had to drop the key because Jim sings very high, and he gave me shit about that, which was funny as well. But it was fun. It was early-ish on. I think it was just after the tour or something. It was early on. I was nervous and I hadn't done a lot of stuff like that, and I knew it was going to be filmed, so it worked my heart up.
- Devin Cuddy: But it was a song that I liked, and I think I chose it. Well, I might have been guided to it, but it was one that I wanted to play, a piano song. It was cool to kind of learn the piano style of my dad, which I had learned a bit of in Falling Down Blue and stuff. It's funny to kind of be like, "Oh, these are the tricks that you use." It was cool, yeah. I've played with those guys since in a number of different settings, but the first time was a thrill. I always look back at Bazil as kind of this legendary Toronto bass player. He still plays here twice a week at the Cameron House in different country bands. He's just kind of the guy. And obviously everybody else as well, but Baz is still very present on the local scene, so he was the one that I remember kind of being, "Oh, cool." And obviously Greg and Jim and everything. Yeah, it was a good, fun night, and I was very proud to be a part of it.
- listenN: No, you just looked so in your element and you just owned the stage. Because again, with a lot of musicians there's certain aspects of instrumentation and singing that always resonates and piano and singing and owning the piano in the way that you can. I read something where you love a real piano, and I think in the quote it said something about you have a keyboard that you're comfortable with.
- Devin Cuddy: Yeah, yeah. It's not the same, though.
- listenN: it's not the same, but you play that keyboard like it's a standup piano.
- Devin Cuddy: Well, that's what I learned on and that's what I practice on too, so it's kind of what I have to do. That's why it shakes around all the time.
- listenN: Yeah, it looks like it's going to just have a life of its own, and I think that that's part of what mesmerized me when I saw you play live, because you were playing on that keyboard, was yeah, you were just so comfortable with it because this thing was just bouncing around and moving, and you were just performing. Yeah. It was almost like you were emulating, like if I close, not close my eyes, but if I imagined you could have been in New Orleans on a bright piano

and all the body language, all the movement, everything, was the same. I thought that that was really great to see. That's really cool.

Devin Cuddy: Yeah, that's what I learned on and I still practice upstairs at the Cameron House here and there's a piano in the front room and the back room and I play during the days often there. That is kind of my comfortable setting, so that comes out when you're playing because it's what's familiar to you. I like my keyboard, but it's not the same. It's hard to play. When you go to these places and they have real pianos, it's sometimes hard to play because we rock out a bit and when it gets loud, the piano can only go so loud even if it's miked. So that's kind of a drag sometimes, but yeah. I mean, when we play here I play the piano. I hammer away as hard as I can but it's still fun. You hear there's a real sound coming back at you and there's something very natural about that.

listenN: Like a vibration that just comes out of it.

Devin Cuddy: And energy, yeah. That kind of, totally.

listenN: Full circle back to when we started when I was talking about taking lessons at the conservatory. I would just go there and rent an hour in the practice room, and they had the baby grands, and I would just play chords and listen to them bounce and vibrate and you could just do that all day. It was such, the feeling coming from it was so good.

listenN: Speaking of performing, how do you modify, adjust your songs to a live performance? Is there a little of that jazz that comes up where you improvise a bit?

Devin Cuddy: Yeah. I think we really try if we're doing a show that's not a bar show where there's three sets or whatever, we really try to keep it as similar as we can. I think in the bar show setting often there's more kind of a loose vibe. People aren't as worried about making the odd mistake, and as a result there's probably more... I don't know about more improvisation, but looser improvisation. I think I would pick songs that were more open to that kind of stuff generally.

Devin Cuddy: But when we do a theater show or something we try to keep it the way we do it. I think often we'll get fewer slow songs in those bar shows, because you got to keep people up.

listenN: I just want to start to wrap up here. You have a new album coming out or it's already out?

Devin Cuddy: No, it's coming out. It's just kind of in its final stages of being created. I don't have a date or any information about that but everything's been recorded. It has to be mixed and set up and then-

- listenN: What's that process like for you?
- Devin Cuddy: Recording studios can be boring for me. I don't like listening back to my voice very much. This was the first one that we had a real producer on, a hands-on producer, and that made a big difference. Even when we didn't agree, it was nice to have somebody else take the reins a bit, because the repetitiveness of the studio can get to me a little bit. But I love when you're done and you get the mixes and stuff and listen to it, and then it's kind of exhilarating, the first stage of exhilaration that comes as you're putting something out. I like touring and playing, so in terms of the record cycle, that's my favorite part.
- listenN: Right.
- Devin Cuddy: So I wait for that, the shows. That's kind of my favorite part.
- listenN: Yeah, I have a very difficult time looking at my own creative output. One of the creative outlets I've had was photography. I'll go and I'll take a bunch of pictures but don't ask me to tell you which one's the best. I can't do that. I used to create a lot of video commercial work and stuff as well, and I would always just rely on my editor. You decide what's the best. Yeah, I'd have an opinion and an input, but just when it's your own work sometimes it's the worst feeling in the world. I'd rather just be out creating it as opposed to editing and producing. Yeah, that's why I asked about that process.
- Devin Cuddy: Yeah, yeah. No, I think that's the same. Well, I get people at the merch table. They say, "Which one's the best?" And I always say, "Well, I hate them all equally." Some people laugh and other people are like, "What are you talking about?" It's just a joke, but you get it.
- listenN: If you're an artist, you get it. You totally get it. It's never good enough. It's never finished. You hear every little imperfection. Yeah, and so it's such a... So I can imagine that process could be very, very daunting, to just have to go into the studio and not so much the recording part but the mixing and finalizing.
- Devin Cuddy: Listening and touching up can be, yeah, it's tough, but some people love it. A lot of people now, production's very, very popular kind of thing now. A lot of artists are getting into that side as well, whether that's to be more self-sufficient, because a lot of popular music now has got a lot of electronic sounds and samples and stuff, so you want to be versed in that. Et cetera, et cetera. Not me, though.
- listenN: Well, I mean, you're true to your art form in the sense of you like a genre of music that comes from a time where it wasn't over-produced.
- Devin Cuddy: Yeah, live in clubs and juke joints and stuff.

listenN: Yeah, I was listening to the podcast Switched On Pop. I don't know if you know it. It's where they dissect, and they're talking about the slap back process that they did in the Elvis days where the speaker's down the hall and stuff. To me, that's just so much more fun than a knob on a computer.

Devin Cuddy: You can put it on after now.

listenN: And then the same thing I think was when Led Zeppelin was recording in a mansion or something that had a huge cathedral entrance. That's where they put the drums, because it sounded better there and stuff.

Devin Cuddy: Natural reverb, yeah.

listenN: So that kind of stuff, that's the stuff that I get really nostalgic about, or you love to hear about, and not, "I got this filter. I got it off the internet."

Devin Cuddy: That's true.

listenN: But speaking of the internet, if people want to stay in touch and learn about your stuff, what's the best place for people to connect?

Devin Cuddy: Devincuddy.com is the best place to start. I also am active on Instagram and Twitter @DevinCuddy. D-E-V-I-N C-U-D-D-Y. Facebook too, although I'm a little slower to that, but Facebook is good on my band page. Yeah, there's even email on the website too that goes to me, so lots of ways to light my phone up.

listenN: Well, and I really appreciate spending time with you and hanging out and learning about your motivations and your inspirations.

Devin Cuddy: Pleasure.

listenN: It's been great to chat with you, thank you.

Devin Cuddy: Likewise. Cheers, Brian.

listenN: All right, same.

listenN: Well, that's another episode of listenN. Thanks for being. Please subscribe, leave comments, or head on over to our website at listennpod.com. That's listen with two Ns, pod.com, where you'll find episode notes, links to anything that we talked about in this episode, and you can connect with us about being a guest on listenN.