

JOLIE HOLLIDAY

10 Good Reasons



By Randy Cunningham

Jolie Holliday has figured out the secret to life.

She's also unlocked the key to success in the music business.

It's simple: Be comfortable in your own skin.

Yep, the Dallas singer-songwriter learned that lesson early in life, thanks to a great teacher – her grandfather. During summers in the piney woods of East Texas, Jolie's grandfather taught her hard work and responsibility while ingraining in her the classic sounds of Conway Twitty and Merle Haggard.

She learned well. Jolie's 2009 release *Lucky Enough* features enough soulful ballads and uptempo dance tunes to keep the toes of any country traditionalist tapping.

There's good reason to admire a performer who is doing exactly what she loves. In the case of Jolie Holliday, there are 10 good reasons:

1 - PRACTICAL JOKES

"We played the State Fair of Texas for 24 days straight, doing nine shows daily. The last day the band stopped playing and walked offstage, but I kept singing. Later I got them back. I had two lead guitar players at the time, so I took one of the guitars and plugged it into the other guy's amp, and vice versa. Later, neither of them could figure out why they couldn't get their tone. They were standing at their pedalboards, tuning and saying, 'Why do we have these sounds?' Definitely a *Spinal Tap* moment."

2 - COUNTRY MUSIC

"People ask, 'What kind of country are you?' That shouldn't even be a question. Country music is country music. If you want to have a Texas country, or pop country, I think that's fine and dandy but it needs to be labeled as a certain genre. Don't call all of it country music. It's not all country."

3 - NO SHORTCUTS

"Some people wake up and decide to join the music business. They think singing is easy. They don't pay their dues, sing at the bars, or meet all the great radio people. They say, 'I'm here with money behind me and - boom! I'm a star.' You need experience. It's like getting a job. With no experience, you won't get hired. That's something that needs to be on your music resume."

4 - FANTASY ROAD TRIP

"I'd take Willie Nelson. I respect him because he's so down-to-earth and remembers where he came from. Second would be Bill Mack [of Sirius-XM Radio], who's always supported my career. He was the "Midnight Cowboy" over at WBAP for years and worked with everyone. Listening to him talk with Willie about the good old days would be incredible. Third, Sandra Bullock. A few years ago I got to visit with her at a hockey game in L.A. She's a big country music fan, really down-to-earth, and a strong woman in today's world."

5 - IN TOUCH WITH REAL FOLKS

"Recently I played the Johnny Bush 75th birthday party at Hillsboro's Nightlife Theatre. Afterwards, this gentleman from Arkansas came up and said, 'I'm a truck driver. I spend long hours driving back and forth from Wisconsin to Texas, and I love hearing Bill Mack play your songs.' I gave him a CD, and you would've thought the world came to an end. He hugged my neck and said, 'You'll never know how much this means.' It was nice giving something back to an honest, hard-working member of our community who sometimes gets overlooked."

6 - DOING THINGS HER WAY

"What you hear is what you get on *Lucky Enough*. If you want traditional country with an edge, this is your record. I did what I wanted to do. I didn't cut a song because someone told me, 'You need to do this song.' I like the songs, and the public can relate to them because I'm singing something I've experienced."

7 - STEEL GUITAR

"The fiddle and steel guitar are the country sound. If I could do an acoustic show with only a steel guitar, I'd do it in a heartbeat. I'm true to my music roots, and that's showcased throughout *Lucky Enough*."

8 - LONG HOURS

"Driving to an interview with Bill Mack I had XM Radio on. He started playing, 'I'm Coming Home To You,' and I thought, 'I know that song. Wait,' I said, 'this is me!' I almost wrecked pulling over! I had my iPhone out trying to take a picture of the screen with my name on it. It's the coolest feeling, because you work hard and give a lot to your career. When you finally hear yourself on the radio, you think, 'It may just be three minutes, but now, my dreams have come true.'"

9 - COUNTRY AT HEART

"I spent a lot of time on my grandfather's farm in Marshall, Texas, and he taught me about life, loyalty, and treating others like you want to be treated. I took his words and applied them to my music. I believe what goes around comes around. Be true to yourself, be who you are, and in the long run, it will get you so much farther in life, not just in music."

10 - OLD-SCHOOL

"I'd love to have met Waylon Jennings, Johnny Paycheck, or Faron Young. To have been raised on the late 60s or early 70s country would have been awesome. I've met a lot of great artists from that time, and talking to them is amazing. I've always told people that I feel like I'm from that era. The best way to describe it is that I'm an old soul in a young body." ★

Randy Cunningham is a freelance writer based in Baytown.