

SHORT BIO

Call it Reckless Kelly's Last Hurrah.

From its roots as a barnstorming Idaho outfit to its modern-day status as a torchbearer for independent Americana music from coast to coast, Reckless has tied Austin rock and cowboy poetry together seamlessly for more than 25 years. Now, the band is slowly winding down its touring days.

Co-founders and brothers Willy and Cody Braun [told Rolling Stone in late 2022](#) that Reckless will pare its touring schedule back to roughly 35 shows a year from 2023-35 before retiring from the road altogether. This alone is a major change for a group that has neared or exceeded 200 shows a year for most of its career.

The reason for the long goodbye, according to the members, is to ensure fans have opportunities to catch more shows without the pressure a whirlwind farewell tour puts on both artist and the audience.

"The coolest thing about our fan base is, we got them one at a time," Willy — Reckless's frontman, says. "We didn't go out there with one big hit or music video or one big tour. We literally got our fans on an individual basis. I'm pretty proud of that part: Once we got a fan, they stayed with us."

Cody — who plays fiddle and mandolin — and Willy grew up in rural Idaho, near Stanley, in a family full of musicians. They are joined in Reckless by drummer Jay Nazz, bassist Joe Miller, and steel guitar player Geoff Queen.

Before wrapping up on the road, Reckless plans to release at least one more full-length album — a follow to the double album *American Jackpot/American Girls*, which was released in spring 2020 just as the pandemic shut down live music and scuttled a release tour — and the band intends to announce multiple projects, big and small, between now and 2025.

LONG BIO

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"The coolest thing about our fan base is, we got them one at a time," Willy — Reckless's frontman, says. "We didn't go out there with one big hit or music video or one big tour, whatever. We literally got our fans on an individual basis. People who came to see us play 25, 26 years ago are still coming to see us play, and they're bringing their kids. That doesn't even really make you feel old, honestly. It's kind of nuts to see the same people out to see our show now who saw us open for Robert Earl Keen at the Birchmere 25 years ago."

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Cody and Willy are two of four Braun brothers who grew up in rural Idaho, near Stanley and are now Americana mainstays. Younger brothers Micky and Gary are the core of Micky and the Motorcars. Their father, Muzzie, made his living as a touring musician — influenced heavily by Idaho contemporary Pinto Bennett as well as the Outlaw country movement of the 1970s — and had all four of his sons join him in bands during their youth.

Reckless has released 10 studio albums and two live albums, toured internationally, built the annual Braun Brothers Reunion festival into a three-day event that has become the bellwether for the town of Challis, Idaho, and perhaps most importantly won over its musical peers in the Texas, Red Dirt, and wider Americana genres.

"Reckless Kelly was different, in a way that was a breath of fresh air from the norm," Micky Braun told Rolling Stone. "They opened eyes in every aspect of independent music, from clubs to radio to booking agents and managers, and especially to hundreds of young musicians. It was inspiring to see what could be done on their terms."

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2020 just as the pandemic shut down live music and scuttled a release tour — and intends to announce multiple projects, big and small. The band plans to dig deep into the Reckless catalog, unearthing music that has rotated out of setlists in favor of new songs, so that each show can act as a retrospective. It's difficult to hear them talk about their slow walk toward the sunset and not believe them when they say their crowds are their top priority.

"We're trying to play larger venues, festivals and places that we love. We want to get back to those old haunts that we love and have played forever one more time," says Cody. "We're going to try to get as close to people as we can, but people will probably have to drive a little further than they're used to if they want to see us now.

"I want everyone who supported us to know how much we appreciated it over the years. All the fans, all the clubs who helped us along the way were just incredible. In the independent world, you survive by the kindness of others. There are people who let us sleep on couches or play their clubs when we weren't drawing flies, and the next three years are ones we're looking at as a thank-you to those people."

Long popular with other artists for his willingness to sit in with nearly anyone who asks, Cody has branched out into producing recently. When Roger Clyne wanted to re-record a handful of his early songs, both from the Peacemakers and Clyne's 1990s alt-rock outfit the Refreshments, he turned to Cody to produce "Never Thought," which Clyne released as a single in early 2022. Of the process, Clyne says, "It was just a jam, and it was a blast."

Willy — whose songwriting is grounded in his own life, in the same mold as his father and Bennett, but influenced just as much by wordsmiths like Tom Petty, Guy Clark, and Bob Dylan — believes the wind-down is a natural step forward for a lifelong musician.

"In a nutshell, I've been playing music professionally and touring since I was 7 or 8 years old," says Willy. "I still love playing, I still love traveling, and I still love all the guys in the band. I still love making music with these guys, and I always will. What it comes down to, really, is, I'm ready to do something different. By the time we hang it up in three years, I will have been on the road playing music for over 40 years, maybe 41 depending on how you count them."

There is a range in Willy's songwriting that rivals Americana icons such as Jason Isbell and Todd Snider. Reckless is as popular for his ballads (like "Wicked Twisted Road" and the Hurricane Katrina-inspired "Godforsaken Town," co-written with Keen) as it is for full-on rock jams like "Ragged as the Road" and "Nobody's Girl." They can follow an Irish jig ("Seven Nights in Eire") with a pointed protest song ("American Blood") and make it all sound uniquely theirs.

It has all resulted in that devoted fan base, which is the legacy Reckless wants..

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