

PAT GREEN BIO 2012

It's impossible to know your limits without testing them.

It's a truth that Pat Green has employed in his career, one that has propelled him to repeatedly refashion his sound, his approach and his own perception of who he is.

He's simultaneously a Grammy-nominated hit maker with an outsider reputation, a Texas inspiration and a mainstream country artist who can rock arena and stadium stages with the likes of Keith Urban and Kenny Chesney.

Each of those roles has its own place. But each of them is too small to define Pat Green, who after 15 years in the recording business has earned the right to be everything Pat Green can be. Without limitations.

"I'd much rather be me and comfortable in my own skin than trying to be five different guys to get to the top," he says.

In fact, after building a reputation as an ace songwriter of his own material, Green is fighting even that limitation with *Songs We Wish We'd Written II*, a sequel to a 2001 album he recorded with longtime friend—and fellow Texan—Cory Morrow.

Stocked with music penned by the likes of Lyle Lovett, Tom Petty, Shelby Lynne and Jon Randall, the disc—Green's first for the acclaimed Sugar Hill label—mixes country, rock and blues in a manner that defies categorization. Petty's "Even The Losers" and Collective Soul's "The World I Know" will be familiar to just about anyone who gives the album a listen. Others, such as Aaron Lee Tasjan's quirky "Streets Of Galilee" and Todd Snider's burning "I Am Too," are introductions from the underground to a large majority of music fans.

Songs We Wish We'd Written II is an expansive step in Green's ongoing development. By piecing together songs from a variety of writers, he was able to assemble an album that reflects the multiple genres that influence him as an artist. The source of the songs wasn't as important as the quality of the music and its ability to connect with Green's maturing sense of his craft.

"If you listen to my young music or anybody's young music, it's all over the place," he suggests. "It sounds like that because the thoughts are all over the place. You were sleeping on mattresses on the floor, the TV was on a cinderblock – that's all cool. That's all we needed, then. Now, I've grown up a bit. As my life has evolves, my taste for music continues to evolve with it."

While Green was looking for songs for the album from outside sources, he was adamant about recording music that ultimately seemed designed specifically for him and his band. With drummer Justin Pollard co-producing, Green drew up an initial list of 10 titles and recorded them during a concentrated

week of sessions in Austin. They tracked another five in Tyler, Texas, then culled the best to get the final 10 cuts on *Songs We Wish We'd Written II*, creating a cohesive package from disparate sources.

“We all just sat around discussing and if somebody’s idea would sound better than my idea, I’d get fixated on it,” Green says. “I would very much encourage them to bring an idea. For instance, the Walt Wilkins song ‘If It Weren’t For You,’ that was somebody else’s idea completely. There were all kinds of ideas going around from Genesis and Peter Gabriel, Colin Hay from Men at Work – all kinds of crazy stuff from the ‘80s. Of course, we ended up with Petty from 1979.”

They also ended up with a stellar list of guests. Collective Soul’s Ed Roland brings an authentic cynicism to “The World I Know,” Jack Ingram’s threads a snarling desperation into “I Am Too,” Cory Morrow adds a craggy earthiness to “If I Had A Boat,” and former Sons of the Desert member Drew Womack adds a smooth, Vince Gill-like presence as a backing vocalist on the driving “Austin.”

Monte Montgomery provides a thick, expressive blues voice on the Allman Brothers’ “Soulshine” and trades licks with Green’s guitarist, Chris Skrobot, in some of the most riveting moments on *Written II*, with their dueling lines careening like pinballs.

Skrobot also introduced Green to Aaron Lee Tasjan, who’s something of a new discovery on the album. Tasjan’s “Streets Of Galilee” combines a seemingly random parade of images into an escapist story while Tasjan makes a wry vocal appearance, adding an ethereal presence in the mold of AAA talent Brett Dennen.

“Aaron is a super guy, an amazing talent, and he has a band in New York called The Madison Square Gardeners, so he’s obviously a very funny, very clever human being,” Green assesses. “He’s definitely the kind of writer I really enjoy listening to.”

“Galilee,” “Soulshine,” “Jesus On A Greyhound” and the imagery in “Austin” combine to form a spiritual undercurrent on the album akin to the message of Green’s biggest hit, “Wave On Wave.” It’s appropriate – Green spent much of the last two years searching his conscience as he battles the prism of limitations that were created by his own successes in Texas, and on a national stage.

And in a way, *Songs We Wish We'd Written II* is the first chapter in the next act of his career.

“There’s a man inside of me now that didn’t used to live here, whereas there was only a boy before,” he says. “The boy was so strong and had done so much, so I’m kind of seeing things in a new way. The last couple years have really been an eye opener, much more intense and richer.”

That’s a large statement – Green’s life and career have already been filled with rich experiences. He’s co-written songs with Willie Nelson, Brad Paisley, Jewel and Rob Thomas. Appeared on such national TV shows as *Austin City Limits*, *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* and *The Late Show With David Letterman*. Been hailed by *Billboard*, *USA Today*, *Esquire*, *People* and *Country Weekly*. Toured with the likes of Kenny Chesney, Keith Urban and the Dave Matthews Band. And become a concert force in his own right,

regularly selling out venues from Los Angeles to New York, where he's now sold out his last seven appearances.

All of that is impressive. But it's also history. As much as he appreciates it, Green puts it in his place on his cover of "Even The Losers," where he highlights a lyric that Petty obscured in the original: "It's such a drag when you're living in the past."

Green may be recognized for those past achievements, but he doesn't intend to be limited by them as he continues to progress creatively. And that progress will come by simply testing what it means to be Pat Green.

"I want to be me," he says. "There are so many people who live with so many masters in their lives. I really just need one."