

JULY 16, 2007

People

Music

RIISING COUNTRY STAR

JASON ALDEAN

● The 30-year-old singer is riding high with his second album, *Relentless*, which, spurred by the hit single "Johnny Cash," debuted at No. 1 on the *Billboard* country chart.

ON "JOHNNY CASH" We were gonna cut it on the first album, but at the last minute the publishing company gave it to another artist. But [when I began recording *Relentless*] it still had never been released, so I said, "We're cutting it this time." I like the attitude—that's the Johnny Cash part of it to me. It has that outlaw spirit.

ON HIS MOST EXCITING NEW FAN Tim McGraw. I met him at the ACM Awards and he told me he loved my album. It never crossed my mind that someone like that would be listening to my records. When I first started, I was playing a lot of his stuff. So it was unbelievable.

ON HIS FAMILY My wife [Jessica] and I met when we were in high school. We grew up in the same hometown, Macon [Ga.]. Her cousin is my best friend. He introduced us. We have a 4-year-old daughter, Keeley. She takes band classes. And my wife is expecting another girl at the end of this year. I'm getting stuck with three women. I'm going to be outnumbered! —JENNIFER ODELL

