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Hear Tucker Beathard Talk Playing Drums, Family Band With Chris Shiflett

Young singer-songwriter opens up about his famous father and why he can't be summed up by just an EP



Tucker Beathard signed his first record deal at 19 years old, tossing aside a baseball scholarship for the chance to get into the family business. The gamble has been paying off. The middle son of hit songwriter Casey Beathard — whose credits include Kenny Chesney's "The Boys of Fall" and Eric Church's "Homeboy" — Beathard scored big with last year's "Rock On," a debut single that peaked at Number 2. He's hoping his follow-up single, "Momma and Jesus," fares similarly. As the newest (and youngest) guest on Chris Shiflett's Walking the Floor podcast, Beathard is initially quite shy, only springing to life when he starts talking about his family and, in the interview's final moments, picks up Shiflett's acoustic guitar for a solo performance of "Momma and Jesus." That live performance speaks louder than anything else, showing off Beathard's rhythmic approach to the guitar — a byproduct of his earlier days as a drummer — and presenting him as the heir to his dad's chart-topping throne. Below, we've rounded up some more highlights from the conversation, followed by the premiere of the episode itself.

Tucker Beathard played drums on his own EP.

Long before he began writing his own songs, Tucker was a drummer, keeping time for the Beathard family band (more on that later) while paying attention to the arc of his father's career. Although he's been following into his dad's singer-songwriterly footsteps since high school graduation, Beathard hasn't lost his chops behind the kit. Fight Like Hell, his debut EP for Dot Records, features his percussion on every track, a rarity in a genre that often relies on session musicians.

"I think some people [at the label] were kind of scared by the idea, but I'm just really picky when it comes to drums," explains Beathard, adding that the instrument has influenced his guitar playing, too. "When I write a guitar riff, it's almost like I'm playing drums in my head. It's hard not to, when you're a drummer."

In the writing room, Beathard follows his father's advice.

"There's one thing I have to give credit to my dad for," says Beathard, whose days as a rule-breaking teenager served as the inspiration for his father's "Homeboy," which later became a hit for Eric Church. "When I was starting to write more, he told me, 'Man, you better come in there and bring something.' That's always how I work. I'll come in with a guitar riff or something."

A former high-school jock, Beathard formed his first band alongside his two brothers.

"Me and my brothers had a band, so we'd keep my parents up late, just jamming in my room," says Beathard, who played drums while his older brother, CJ — now a star quarterback for the University of Iowa Hawkeyes, as well as a potential pick in this spring's NFL Draft — strummed the guitar and sang. The pair's younger brother, Clay, played guitar, too. After a handful of gigs at talent shows and backyard parties, two of the Beathards turned their attention back to sports, leaving Tucker as a solo act. "Man, I thought we were going to be something," Beathard says, "but they wanted to do more sports. It was never a dull moment, whether we were playing football in the front yard or music in the house. . . I don't know how my mom did it."

Signing a record deal straight out of high school isn't all it's cracked up to be.

"Basically, if I had it my way, I'd come out with three albums tomorrow," says Beathard, expressing frustration with his label's release schedule. "I got nothing to complain about, because I've got such a great team. . . The only thing I would bitch about is, I just want to get out more music. It was already tough being represented by one song for a little while, and then it felt great getting five more out, from the EP, and it's like, 'That feels right, but still, just six songs in total to really represent me?'" He's already recorded enough material for a proper album, but its release is still to be announced.