

Hear 'country music's hottest new sister duo' Sept. 9



The sister duo Presley, left, & Taylor, right, will perform at Lyman Orchards at the St. Jude Fest, Saturday. Contributed photo.

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MIDDLEFIELD » On the hallowed stage of the Ernest Tubb Midnite Jamboree, Hank Williams moaned, Patsy Cline torched, and Elvis Presley crooned. So did countless other country music luminaries like Skeeter Davis, Garth Brooks and Marty Stuart.

This past May, on the occasion of its 70th anniversary, the sister duo Presley & Taylor, who will be headlining the Harvest Music Festival at Middlefield's Lyman Orchards to benefit St. Jude Children's Hospital Saturday, Sept. 9, joined them.

The reason, according to thecountrynote.com, was "in keeping with the show's tradition, and Ernest Tubb's passion, to support new talent." Simply put, Presley & Taylor are "country music's hottest, new sister duo."

Not bad for a couple of Connecticut sisters. At 18 and 20 years of age, no less. As well as full-time college students.

"It was such an honor to perform there," said Taylor, 18, the younger of the two, and an incoming freshman at Sacred Heart University, on a recent phone call from their home in Middlefield. "It's a place where a lot of our heroes performed."

That's right: heroes. The two grew up in a household where Tammy Wynette, Alan Jackson and Randy Travis played on a constant

loop and weekend trips to their grandparents meant family singalongs of Loretta Lynn standards.

"Our mom sings, our dad plays guitar, and so do all our aunts and uncles," Presley, 20, said. "And it's all country."

Taylor performed "Your Cheating Heart" as a 5-year-old at a local talent show. The two performed in musicals. Together they practiced along with the radio.

Their future seemed preordained.

When they were 14 and 16 years old, they did their first session at a recording studio in Bloomfield.

"We just fell in love with the whole process," Taylor said. A year later, the teenage duo's first singles, "Looking for a Cowboy" and "Kickin' Back," released in 2015, charted in the Top 40. "While You Were Gone," their third single, topped out at No. 30.

Soon they were sharing the stage with Martina McBride and Restless Heart, and singing regularly at such Nashville hot spots as Tootsie Orchid Lounge, the Hard Rock Cafe and Margaritaville. Musicrow.com lauded their "whimsical charm" and "impeccable harmonies." This spring, they performed on stage of the Grand Ole Opry at the invitation of country music star Pam Tillis.

Starting this September, they'll be splitting their time between Sacred Heart University, which both at-



Album cover "This Phone."

tend, and Nashville. "Our professors are really understanding about our crazy schedule," said Taylor, who's a junior.

That'll be crucial given their recent signing with premier Nashville talent agency Buddy Lee Attractions. As well as forthcoming appearances at the world famous Wild Horse Saloon on Oct. 16 and a return to the Grand Ole Opry on Oct. 19.

Still, it's the local performances that remain close to their hearts. "It gives us a chance to share the experience with our family and friends," said Taylor. Not to mention the opportunity to lend their talents toward a worthwhile cause.

"To think we can use our voices to give sick children a chance at life, a chance to be the best they can be, that's pretty amazing," Tay-

lor said.

More amazing than the Grand Ole Opry and Midnite Jamboree?

"It's all good," said Presley with a laugh.

For more information about Presley & Taylor, visit www.presleyandtaylor.com.

The Ninth Annual Fundraiser for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital takes place from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sept. 9 at Lyman Orchards on 32 Reeds Gap Road in Middlefield. The free event features music by local and regional bands, wagon and hayrides, pony rides for the kids, an outdoor grill, food vendors and a silent auction. For more info email Anthony Raucci at tonyr1249@frontier.com or visit stjudectnetwork.org/events/event/harvest-music-festival.