



## A Stony Plain Records Artist Bio

[www.stonyplainrecords.com](http://www.stonyplainrecords.com)

### **CHARLIE MAJOR: Tough music that's heading straight for your heart**

Charlie Major is all that's good in country music.

His music is tough. Direct. Straight to the heart. Real. As honest as a farmer's handshake. And sung for all the right reasons.

Meet Charlie on at his two-acre spread outside Ottawa, settle down with a cup of strong coffee as you look out over the berry farm on the next property, and talk about the music on what some people will call his "comeback record."

Inside Out, his debut on Stony Plain, the award-winning independent label based in Edmonton and distributed by Warner Music Canada, is a strong collection of great songs. And Charlie, coffee mug in hand, wants to talk about them.

The new CD includes "My Brother and Me" — the first single and an optimistic, warm recollection of a memorable childhood. And it closes with his first recorded version of "Backroads," the million-selling hit he wrote for Ricky Van Shelton a decade ago.

"Well," he grins as he drinks his coffee; "I haven't done a whole lot since 1999, when my last record came out. I'd been doing 135 gigs a year, living in Nashville, writing songs, getting some awards, working my butt off. Guess I needed to stop for a while. I read a lot of books; I played a lot of golf. I took the younger boys to hockey six days a week, I listened to those Ray Charles country records again, and reminded myself how good Roy Orbison, Glen Campbell and Jimmy Webb were."

#### **A well-deserved break**

If Charlie Major did need to back off from his career for a while, he certainly deserved the "vacation." Through the mid-'90s, he'd won the Juno Award as Country Male Vocalist of the Year — three years in a row. There were five major Canadian Country Music Association awards, songwriting honours from SOCAN, and a BMI Award in 1993 for "Backroads" as the "Most Performed Song in America."

Oh, yes, there was a double platinum album, another platinum one, and another, which went gold. There was a raft of hit singles — no less than 10 of which went to #1 on the charts. A Charlie Major live gig was a feel-good collection of songs like "I'm Gonna Drive You Out of My Mind," "I'm Feeling Kind of Lucky Tonight," "(I Do It) For the Money," "I'm Somebody" and a couple of dozen more.

And the country music world loved Charlie's music. Robert K. Oerman, Nashville's elder statesman writer and sage, said that the singer "has a tremendous gift for catching the ear and holding it." New Country Magazine said he "has the ability to touch people with his lyrical arrows which fly swiftly and directly to the heart." And Larry Delaney, Canada's leading authority on country music and the publisher of Country Music News, sums up Charlie Major this way: "He is a master at making you believe."

Inside Out, the new release on Stony Plain, is a collection of strong new tunes (with the exception of his classic "Backroads"), and they all have a strong autobiographical element to them. Major, like the very best country writers, writes what he knows about, and in recent years he's had the sort of domestic upheavals so many of us experience. On the upside he has a close relationship with his three sons, aged 24, 10, and eight.

The new CD features some of Nashville's top players, including Harry Stinson, Eddie Bayers, J.T. Corenflos, Brent Mason, Dan Dugmore and Joy Lynn White (who duets with Charlie on "I'm Alright" and "The Face of Love").

### **Coming back to a warm welcome**

"It just seemed that I took time off at the right time — women singers were swamping the airwaves, some of the big country festivals were in trouble, and the touring circuit was getting tougher," he says. "So I stayed home, wrote about the things that were on my mind, and relaxed.

"I've really missed performing more than I thought I would — I just did a set of dates in Alberta and I felt it all coming back to me; the excitement, the adrenalin, the connection you can make with your audience. Now it's time to go back to work."

He's finding a warm welcome. Said one radio programmer: "We've missed Charlie. Our listeners have missed him." True enough: Major's distinctive brand of straightforward, honest, blue-collar country rock has been part of the scene in Canada since the early '90s.

And it sounds great to have him back again. "I've been so fortunate," he says. "I really am one of the luckiest guys in the world."

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# The sound of honesty: The songs on **Charlie Major's** new **Stony Plain** CD

*The songwriter/singer talks about his new songs — and one classic oldie*

**When You're Good You're Good:** "...And when you're bad, you're better! Boy, that's the truth! I always loved the line, and it made a nice medium tempo rocker to start the record."

**You'd Better Go:** "Well, this one is pretty autobiographical, but then so are most of the songs on this release. And it's this tune that gives it the title — 'When you look at me that way; you know it turns me inside out...' We've all been there, haven't we? Temptation — I want you to stay but you'd better go — is such a confusing business."

**I'm Still Looking:** "Like everyone, I'm still looking. Dunno what the hell for, sometimes. But when and if I do figure it out, or I do actually find it, I'll write a damn good song about it!"

**My Brother and Me:** "I've got three boys of my own, and they remind you to look back at your own childhood and the memories for me are wonderful. I wrote this for my brother's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, and I hope it captures a childhood moment when everything was just perfect, and none of the problems that life was to bring our way mattered at all."

**Just for Old Times:** "Another piece of autobiography. Remember the first date, consider everything that's happened since, and just make-believe — once again — that it's just like that very first time so long ago. "

**I'm Alright:** "And I am, I suppose. This is a song about survival, and I suppose I've survived many things. I wrote the chorus for this in 1978, but I was never happy with the verses, or the music. I must have rewritten this one ten times in the last 20 years, but I think I've finally got it right. I've gone through all this shit, and I AM okay! Joy Lynn White joined me on this one — she's one of the very best singers there is in Nashville."

**Last Peaceful Place in the World:** "One thing I know is that being in the arms of a lover IS the last peaceful place you can find. I finished the song one night watching the news from the Middle East — bombings of folk in the market, and you can't find peace there. But you and I can go to bed at night and feel safe. Are we ever blessed!"

**The Face of Love:** "Joy Lynn joined me on this song as well. It's pretty self-explanatory; the dichotomy of love — the happiness, the bitter words; the passion and going through the same old motions. Love is bittersweet? Damn right it is!"

**Nothing But Alone Again:** "Well, you hardly have to read between the lines to know that this is autobiographical. Coming home after all these years, and finding nobody there, is the sort of thing you can't help but write a song about."

**Backroads:** "This is the song that Ricky Van Shelton made famous; I guess it helped me get a bit famous too! I wrote it, but I never put it on any of my albums, so having it here — more than a decade later — seems to make sense; I thought 'why not?' And anyway, I like my version better than Ricky's!"