



Lesas Hudson's "Step Out in Faith"



By Foster McKinney, SOS Treasurer

She needs no rabbit's foot, no genie in a bottle, nor magic potion to conjure up good fortune. Good fortune is relative and holds different values for different people. It is within her nature to find it abounding in simple blessings. I can easily picture her chasing rainbows and finding rays of sunshine in small measures of modesty that in the end tender far greater value than pots of gold. Rainbows, occasionally appearing across the sky in the aftermath of a storm, are signs of safe haven. Many things in life can precipitate violent storms desperately searching for rainbows. Finding one takes a lot more than just good fortune—it takes a bold step out in faith. Every day, Lesa Hudson steps out in faith and follows rainbows the Word of God shows her. With her song "Step Out in Faith," she challenges others to follow, assuring them that "it's the only way to do it because if He takes you there, He'll be there to lead you through it." As a highly talented and accomplished singer, songwriter, and musician, Lesa steps out with pronounced footprints of musical notes and lyrics. They trace her inspirational footsteps for others who wish to step out in faith and follow the grace the Good Lord gives with rainbows.

Many of us beach music enthusiasts are well acquainted with Lesa's most recent hit, "Amazingly Amazing," which topped the beach music charts at number one. We love to stroll out onto the dance floor hand-in-hand with our dance partner, then cuddle-up, sway and lightly dip to her hit smoothie, "When You Look at Me"—it still raises goose bumps. We celebrate Christmas with her holiday shuffle, "Santa Can You Teach Me How to Shag." We enjoy her center-stage performances alongside Rick Strickland with the award-winning Rick Strickland Band. We admire her two CBMA Cammys and we cheer her on for more—even pushing for a Grammy. But most of us are less acquainted with the contemporary Christian side of Lesa Hudson's musical repertoire. As a matter of fact, this is the genre in which she first launched her musical career.



Lesas comes from a family whose musical background and Christian faith are central focuses. They have been passionately engrained and passed down for generations. Lesa's mother played piano at church worship services for over thirty-five years while her father sang bass in the choir of the First Church of God in their hometown of Darlington, South Carolina—a church for which her ancestors were founding members. Lesa jests that when her mother was pregnant with her, she is sure that while in the womb her head would rest against the piano as her mother played. Her brother and sisters also sing in church, and many of her aunts, uncles, and cousins, who are musically inclined, also proudly carry on their family's musical heritage. Taught by her church's music director, Lesa began her musical journey with piano lessons at age six. As a teenager, she followed in her mother's footsteps and began playing piano for church worship services. At first it seemed like a chore that any youngster would naturally come to dread. But as time passed, she began to see little blessings snowball into huge blessings. She found that through her simple gift of playing piano she could positively touch the complex lives of other

people. This realization strengthened her faith and eventually led her to expand out into writing and producing contemporary Christian music. In 1995, she along with two other church members—her niece Debbie Anderson, who currently joins Lesa in the Rick Strickland band as bassist and backup vocalists, and her distant relative Heather Anderson Corbett—founded a contemporary Christian music trio named N' Accord. It was a harmonious vocal and musical trio dedicated full-sail to praise and worship releasing three CD's in the wake of their musical inspirations—*Here to Worship* in 2004, *Christmas Joy* in 2005, and *Worship* in 2007.



In May 2006, Lesa released her first solo CD, entitled *Not Me*, which included nine songs she had written or co-written. Three of these songs charted on several Christian Country music billboards—"Not Me" peaked at number eight on the PowerSource Christian Country Top 100 (June 2007) and number eleven on the Christian Country Music Weekly (January 2007); "Lukewarm Christian" peaked at number three on the PowerSource Christian Country Top 100 (January 2008); and "Step Out in Faith" peaked at number two on the PowerSource Christian Country Top 100 (January 2007) and number eight on the Christian Music Weekly (November 2008). "Step Out in Faith" also peaked at number eleven in January 2007 on the PowerSource Top 20 syndicated radio program hosted by Rich Miller. It airs on eighty U.S. stations covering nearly three-thousand cities and gives playing time to such renowned country music artists as Tim McGraw, Rascal Flatts, Sara Evans, Joe Nichols and many others. "Step Out in Faith" is one of those powerful, inspirational songs to which you instantly grow attached. It seems to just stop you dead in your tracks and force you to listen and think.

Many songs from the *Not Me* CD, along with a treasure trove of others, are featured on the *Lesas Hudson Live @ The Center Theater* CD and DVD, released in June 2008. Both, the CD and DVD, capture Lesa with her band, The Lesas Hudson Band, live in concert on March 7, 2008 at the beautiful Historic Center Theater in Hartsville, South Carolina. One song written by Lesa, in particular, performed during what she refers to as the "acoustic set" of the concert, entitled "Field of Dreams," just really snares your heart. The song is brilliantly written and chronicles the dreams of

a little league baseball player. Its lyrics make it a pure gem worthy of sparkling right here on this printed page. They flow together beautifully in part like this—

“See the little league ballplayer with his cap turned to the side. He’s ready for the majors, although he’s only five. He knows he’s gonna be the best the world has ever seen. He’s gonna be a big star on this field of dreams. His daddy showed him how to catch and to lay one down the line. But he gets so discouraged if he misses just one time. Well his daddy kneels beside him and says son listen to me. There’s so much more to baseball than you can ever dream. And he said, ‘Welcome to my field of dreams where the sun’s always shinning and the grass grows tall and green. Son you might not always win here; that’s not bad as it seems. You’ll leave a better man from my field of dreams.’”

Many years down the road we find the boy that we once knew has now become a teacher and his playing days are through. Well he never made the majors; it just wasn’t meant to be. It seems the Lord was working on a different destiny. There’s a brotherhood of souls who have walked across the plate learning from his presence how to live through love and faith. There are so many men who’ve been blessed by what they’ve seen because they’ve learned much more than baseball on this field of dreams. Well now *they* say, ‘Welcome to my field of dreams where the sun’s always shinning and the grass grows tall and green. Son you might not always win here; that’s not bad as it seems. You’ll leave a better man from my field of dreams.’”

“Field of Dreams” is about Lesa’s husband, Curtis, who is a teacher and head baseball coach at Socastee High School in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Lesa says it’s a tribute to a wonderful husband who is also guided by faith.

I had the great pleasure of visiting and interviewing Lesa at her home in Murrells Inlet, South Carolina, which includes the in-home recording studio where “Amazingly Amazing” and many of her other beach music hits were recorded. I curiously asked her exactly how songwriting works. She indicated that there is no secret formula or recipe for songwriting. You just work at it and develop your own niche. She maintains a composition notebook where she collects her thoughts for putting songs together. She says that sometimes these thoughts may not be fully composed into a finished song right away—they may be set aside and patiently wait for years. It all depends on a lot of different variables such as timing, inspiration or just simply finding the right fit. As an example, she opened the notebook, found and pointed to the page dated January 10, 2008 on which she jotted down the chord progression along with her thoughts for “Amazingly Amazing,” which originally started out as a praise and worship song. Each thought was put into a phrase that was numbered with an encircled numeral—a couple were scratched through and renumbered. The final numbers are the sequence in which the phrases would end up within the song. This is just a glimpse of how songwriting works for Lesa Hudson. Although it is not a secret formula or recipe, her approach appears to be working very well. It earned her two Carolina Beach Music Award Cammys in 2011 for Smoothie of the Year and Songwriter of the Year for her signature song, “When You Look at Me”—her first single release from her second solo CD entitled *Sweet Wonderful You*. Although, it is not a praise and worship CD, *Sweet Wonderful you*, as stated in her biographical write-up, is a collection of ten songs about love, life and relationships.



In addition to her beach music awards, Lesa has a long list of accolades for her contemporary Christian country music efforts, which include being a three-time finalist for the Inspirational Country Music Awards (ICMA) Female Vocalist of the Year and a two-time finalist for the ICMA New Artist of the Year. Lesa made a big splash when she was chosen for the cover of PowerSource magazine’s January 2007 issue as its “Artist to Watch for 2007.” She spent valuable time in Nashville, Tennessee, performing in many of its legendary venues.

True happiness can only come with self-fulfillment. Self-fulfillment to Lesa Hudson has to be singing, playing music, and writing songs. She feels extremely blessed with all the good things in life she has experienced. Her cup runneth over with good fortune from the ability to do the things that she does best. She says faith is the key. The notion that the end of a rainbow is the secret hiding place for an Irish leprechaun’s pot of gold is, of course, just a myth. Or is it? We’ll never know, because rainbows, just like faith, have no end.

