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JULIANNE HOUGH BIO

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Every country artist once had a “day job” that commonly used music business term for an occupation that pays the bills and fills the void between hopeful aspiration and bonafide success. However, never in the history of country music has someone taken a more celebrated path on the road to their country music dream than Julianne Hough (pronounced “Huff”).

A triple threat as a singer, actress and dancer, Julianne is already known to millions of fans as the two-time professional dance champion on ABC-TV's top-rated *Dancing with the Stars (DWTS)*. The show, which pairs professional dancers with music, sports, film and television celebrities, has become a cultural phenomenon and Julianne its top star.

Though Julianne has been winning world dance titles since her early teens, her ultimate goal has always been a career in country music. Her newly signed deal with Universal Music Group Nashville (UMGN) is providing her the vehicle to realize that dream. “I’ve always wanted to sing country music,” says the 19 year-old blonde. “I’ve grown up with country music. I love how real everybody is, not just the artists, but the fans.”

Growing up one of five Utah-born siblings, Julianne says her family was sometimes referred to as the “blonde Osmonds,” earning a reputation for their talent and professionalism. At age 10 her parents separated and Julianne immersed herself in dancing. An opportunity presented itself to study performing arts in London, which started a period of intense training and being far away from family and in a fast-paced city, was forced to grow up fast.

After five years in the U.K., Julianne elected to leave behind a blossoming international career and move back to the U.S. “I really wanted to sing and I knew if I stayed in London, I wouldn’t be able to do that; I would only be dancing, so I had to make a really tough

decision: 'Do I stay here and pursue a career that I know I'm going to succeed at? Or do I go back home, start from scratch and pursue what I really want to do?' A lot of people told me that I was crazy and that I'd never make it."

Talent, discipline and determination are a potent combination that generally prove skeptics wrong, and that's exactly what Julianne did. She moved to Los Angeles, knowing she could earn her living as a dancer while pursuing her musical dreams.

She started making regular trips to Nashville in the rare time she had off from the TV show and the *DWTS* tour. Her Los Angeles management firm introduced her to management in Nashville, which led to her meeting veteran producer David Malloy (Eddie Rabbitt, Reba McEntire). The two teamed to record "Will You Dance With Me" for an American Red Cross fund raising project that benefited Kansas tornado victims. "It was so amazing," said Julianne. "We released the record to iTunes and Wal-Mart the week I won with Apolo. The song received quite a reaction on iTunes and peaked at #8 on their country charts despite never being released to radio."

Soon after, Julianne landed a deal with UMGN and a spot on the Mercury Nashville roster, a fitting home for a newcomer who cites McEntire and Shania Twain as her chief influences, both of which fall under UMGN.

Recorded in Nashville and produced by Malloy, Julianne's debut disc reveals her appreciation for country music's roots as well as her fresh-faced contributions to the genre's future. She has a warm, textured voice that is equally suited to feisty up-tempo tunes and contemplative ballads, both of which can be found on her debut. "I love story songs and message songs," she says, "but I also love quirky, fun, up-tempo songs that make you want to just get up and move."

The debut single, "That Song In My Head," is a buoyant effort that is incredibly infectious. The song captures the rapturous joy of a burgeoning relationship and celebrates the way a song can become the soundtrack for those emotions. Julianne's voice perfectly conveys the sense of delicious expectation in the lyric.

Julianne turns in a sultry performance on the sensual ballad "Hide Your Matches." "The chorus is 'I'm about to lose all I am, right here in your arms.' It's a romantic love song that is really sexy," she says. "It's really sensual and beautiful."

Though she loves songs that evoke a smile, a sigh or an occasional dance step, Julianne doesn't shy away from making music that says something profound. Among the favorites on her debut is a song called "Help Me, Help You." "That's a message song and it's pretty intense," she says. "It's about a girl who is trying to help her friend who is an alcoholic. It says what I'd want to say to a friend in trouble."

One of the songs on her new record speaks directly to young women. "'Jimmy Ray McGee' is a really great song," Julianne relates. "It talks about peer pressure and tells young girls 'If you don't want to do something, if you don't feel right about it, then don't do it!'"

"'My Hallelujah Song' is a Craig Wiseman tune," says Julianne, "and I just feel like everybody needs a hallelujah song. No matter what you're doing in life---whether you are working at your dad's company, playing soccer or being a little ballerina---that's your hallelujah song. It's when you feel like you're right where you're supposed to be and I'm happy right where I am."

Indeed, Julianne Hough is living her hallelujah song. After years of success in the dance field, she's finally landed an opportunity to sing country music and she's reveling in the opportunity. "I was scared that people would say, 'Just because she got a little bit of recognition on the TV show, she thinks she can make a record,'" she confesses, "but I've been wanting to do this a long, long time and I hope the music speaks for itself."

Indeed it does. Julianne Hough's debut is a compelling collection of songs about the joys and challenges of everyday life delivered by an evocative young voice. It's the perfect vehicle to carry her from her successful day job to the realization of a dream come true.