

SKY Kings



An 'Inspired' Riders In The Sky To Perform At WJ Ranch Sept. 10

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When Riders in the Sky fans needed inspiration, they knew just where to look.

In August, the two-time Grammy Award-winning band released "The Land Beyond The Sun," an album of inspirational music that was requested by the group's followers.

"You can blame the fans," said Ranger Doug, "Idol of American Youth" and the group's baritone vocalist and guitar player. "It became the question most asked at the merchandise table — 'When are you guys going to do a spiritual album?' People associate it with the outdoors. They associate it with harmony singing. And they wanted to hear us do it. So we finally sat down and picked out some tunes. It's spiritual, but it's not gospel in the sense of evangelical music. It's about a closeness to nature and the outdoors, and a connection with a higher power that most westerners feel from time to time."

The four-member Riders in the Sky will bring its unique blend of Western music and humor to the WJ Ranch seven miles south of Yankton near Fordyce, Neb., at 8 p.m. Sept. 10.

"I wish we played in Nebraska and South Dakota more," Ranger Doug said in a telephone interview from his Nashville home. "I love that country. It's the heart of the West, and there is nothing like singing western music in the heart of the West."

During 34 years in the music business, the band has been seven-time Western Music Association Entertainers of the Year, as well as stars of the stage, screen, Saturday morning network TV, the Grand Ol' Opry, National Public Radio and SiriusXM Satellite Radio.

The group's accomplishments are still being recognized. It was given the 2011 "Cowboy Keeper Award" and was recently immortalized on the Palm's Wall of Fame in Nashville with a caricature painting.

"When you start a career in music, you can never presume it's going to be successful or go on forever," Ranger Doug said. "To be here 34 years later and still yodeling and having a lot of tour dates, it's incredibly gratifying."

Having played more than 6,100 shows in all 50 states and 10 countries, the Riders in the Sky still do their share of touring. Ranger Doug said the key to touring as much as the Riders do and not succumbing to the strains that pull apart so many bands is simple: Separate hotel rooms.

"You don't want to have a bunk mate," he stated. "Because we spend so much time together on the motor home and in the air, when we land at a place for a while, we go our own ways. One guy likes to read, and one guy likes to work out. That's just fine with everybody else."

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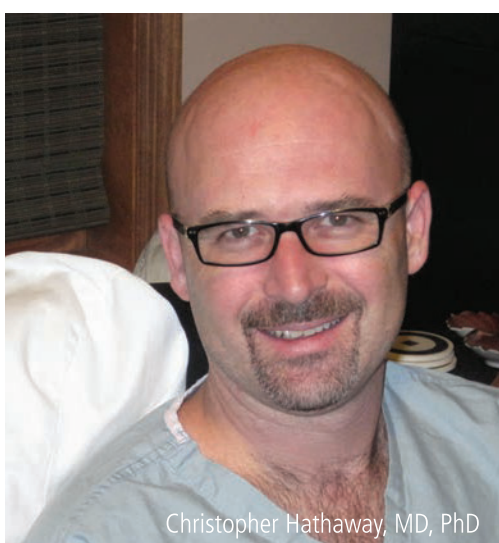
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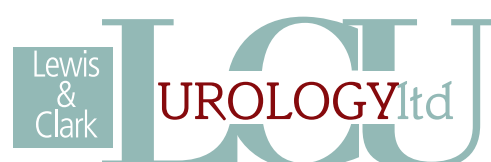
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