

20 Questions with Kevin Black

Katy's Country Music Sensation

By Emily Ng

A talented country musician, Kevin Black got his start in Katy. He grew up with a family full of musicians, including his brother, Clint Black, who *Katy Magazine* first profiled in our spring 2005 issue. With a style all his own, Kevin Black is taking the Texas and country music scene by storm. We caught up with the homegrown musician to talk about his passion for music, life in Katy, and being a proud father and family man.

Writing most of his own songs, Kevin Black enjoys performing his country favorites for fans around the state and nation

Photo by David Clements / DW/C Photography



Brothers Clint and Kevin Black are both talented country and western musicians

Photo by David Clements / DW/C Photography

1 How long have you lived in Katy?

I left Katy after high school and went to work in construction by day and played music each night. It was a struggle managing both my day and night jobs with little sleep. I went back and forth until I was able to make a living in music alone. It was my dream and it came true. In 1982, I moved back to Katy and have lived here ever since.

2 What do you like most about the area?

Katy was separated from Houston where I grew up as a kid. It was small, laid back, and friendly. Houston was close enough where we could run into the city for things we needed, until one day I realized we had everything we needed right here. You can travel anywhere in Katy in under 15 minutes. We have a great police force, fire department, golf courses, our own festivals, and any type of restaurant you can imagine. My kids went to Taylor High School, which is one of the top-rated schools in the nation.

3 How long have you been playing music?

I'd say I started at 9. I took my first and only guitar lesson then. The teacher taught me to teach myself. That's the only formal training I've had. The rest came from listening to records, learning from other musicians, and a lot of practice.

4 Does music run in the family?

A lot of you are already familiar with my younger brother country music superstar Clint Black, who is one of the greatest songwriters of all time. My brother, Brian is also a talented singer and entertainer. He now lives in Bandera, where he owns and operates the Longhorn Saloon. Then there is the next generation of musicians in the Black family. My two sons Marshall and Coleton, without prejudice, are very talented individuals along with my nephew Brandon. Coleton and I have joined musical forces, performing live together pretty often these days (or should I say nights). Marshall and Brandon have their own band Cavernous.

5 How did you get your start in the music industry?

I don't remember there being a starting point. In the mid '70s, I played locally for friends at parties, small clubs, and beer joints. That lasted for a few years. From there, I spent almost 12 years playing private parties and at larger-sized clubs. My big break came when my brother Clint got his big break! Suddenly, I was in demand. With Clint Black considered too expensive and too busy, [they'd say], "Let's hire his brother Kevin," a more affordable alternative around Texas and the Midwest. I have been fortunate to have succeeded on my own talent and personality, rather than working continuously off being Clint Black's brother.

6 Do you have any hobbies outside of music?

Being realistic is a hobby of mine. Also being a positive person. Music and movies, along with hunting and fishing are all high on my hobby list.

7 If you weren't a musician, what would you picture yourself doing?

I would have been an actor or director in the movie industry or maybe a music producer; something to do with artistic expression.

8 How does your music style differ from your brothers'?

We all enjoy a large variety of music. In songwriting, my country music has a bit of a pop edge to it. My audience feels as though I rock things up more than my brothers. I would have to agree.

9 Do you have any funny anecdotes about you and your brothers?

We love to watch people in public places and make up stories about who they are and where they come from.

10 What is something that would surprise people to know about you?

Many are surprised to hear that my daughter Courtney died at age 16 with a rare disorder called Rett syndrome. She lived her entire life as an infant due to this neurological disorder that is mainly found in females. The girls seem to be born with normal growth until the characteristics start showing. After about 12 to 24 months, all their social skills and motor skills cease to progress and they regress back to infancy. They live out the rest of their life totally dependent on caregivers and medicine. Rett syndrome robbed Courtney and us, her family, of the joy that comes from raising a beautiful daughter. Since her death and really before, I have been heavily involved in helping to raise awareness and fundraising to find a cure for Rett. Each year, the Black family holds a Spending Time Ending Rett concert and golf tournament toward that end, benefitting rettsyndrome.org.

Kenna Seiler, a Rett mom, has joined us in the fight, holding a Stroll Across Texas Strollathon for the last couple of years in conjunction with our concert and tournament. For information about how you can be involved, please contact Dave Clements at 713-410-6076 or me at kevin@kevinblack.com.

11 Do you write your own music?

I wrote most of the music on both CDs, which you can order at kevinblack.com. The ones I didn't write are some of the songs I cover and most enjoy playing live!

12 What inspires your music?

Usually, it's a thought or it might start with a melody. Sometimes, it's an emotion over a personal experience, whether it's mine or someone else's that I've heard about. Sometimes, it's a simple observation.

13 What experiences do you draw from when writing music?

Mostly from relationships. That's why they are mostly songs about love or the loss of love.



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14 Who are some of your musical influences?

I think I have mostly been influenced by individual songs, but not so much any one particular artist. When I was young, Elvis was the coolest person, and I am certain he has had an impact on my musical style.

15 What song do you listen to over and over again?

I have been listening to the same 300 songs over and over for years - I can't think of just one. I perform many of them live.

16 What is it like performing live?

When I connect with the audience while on stage, for me it's like seeing one of the seven wonders of the world with your own eyes, hugging someone I love very much, or picking up the aroma of one of my favorite foods cooking on the stove. When the band is firing on all cylinders and the audience is tuned in to the performance, it's a feeling that's hard to put down after exiting the stage.

KEVIN BLACK



SOLD OUT

Live at Dosey Doe

Kevin Black performs a variety of original, country songs with a rock edge on his latest CD, *Kevin Black Sold out Live at Dosey Doe*. His first CD, *Dream On* also carries on the tradition of homegrown western music. Visit kevinblack.com.

17 Do you have any fun fan stories?

I was at Fan Fair one year in Nashville when a fan in line informed me she was a hair stylist. I needed a hair cut at the time, but didn't think she would take me serious when I said if she returned tomorrow I would let her cut my hair. Ooops! The next day, she showed up with all her tools of the trade, so I had to keep my word. She cut my hair in the middle of Fan Fair with cameras flashing one after another. Thankfully, they didn't have Facebook back then.

18 What would you say is your greatest accomplishment?

I am very proud of my sons. Anytime your children grow up to be good men, it's a wonderful accomplishment. Outside of that, bringing awareness to Rett syndrome and being a part of the effort to find a cure is pretty big for me. I hope some of your readers will come join us. We are always looking for volunteers and support!

19 What do you hope people take away from listening to your album?

I hope that people will listen to *Kevin Black Sold out Live at Dosey Doe* and say that it was a fun musical experience and I provided a unique way of saying something other writers have been saying for years.

20 Do you have any advice for aspiring Katy musicians?

Get an education! KM