

Tracks of the Deep South; A DIY roadtrip- Part 4, Nashville

Nashville, TN

For as long as I can remember, as a musician it's been on my radar to visit Nashville. Keefy is the same. It's kind of been in our minds we must visit, but I'll be honest we had no idea what to expect. So - on arrival to Nashville, our first 30 mins were spent literally with our mouths hanging open. The first walk you

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take down Broadway, the main strip, is an attack on every sense you've got. First of all it's very busy, but the vibe on street feels non intimidating- just fun. Every single bar has a different band in the window, all playing different material. This starts at 10am and finishes at 3am. Constant music from every single bar. We've never we experienced a sensation like it!

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Our first stop was a drink in the famous legends corner. It's said everyone who's made it here in Nashville started here- so this stage has had so many incredible artists perform here.

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Legends corner is practically next door to Tootsies, another famous 3 story bar- said to be where the artists used to come to enjoy a drink post show.

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We enjoyed a few songs from a band on the top floor, whilst recovering from the shock of a price of a bottle of beer- \$9!



We decided it would be wise to get something to eat so gravitated towards Jack's BBQ, a few doors down from Tootsies.

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We both had smoked Turkey sandwich which was great whilst we caught our breath from a whirlwind first few moments of Nashville.

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As tempting as it was to just sit and enjoy the bar scene, we decided to walk up to the Musician's Hall of Fame, a museum dedicated more to the unknown session musicians that back up the famous names of music.

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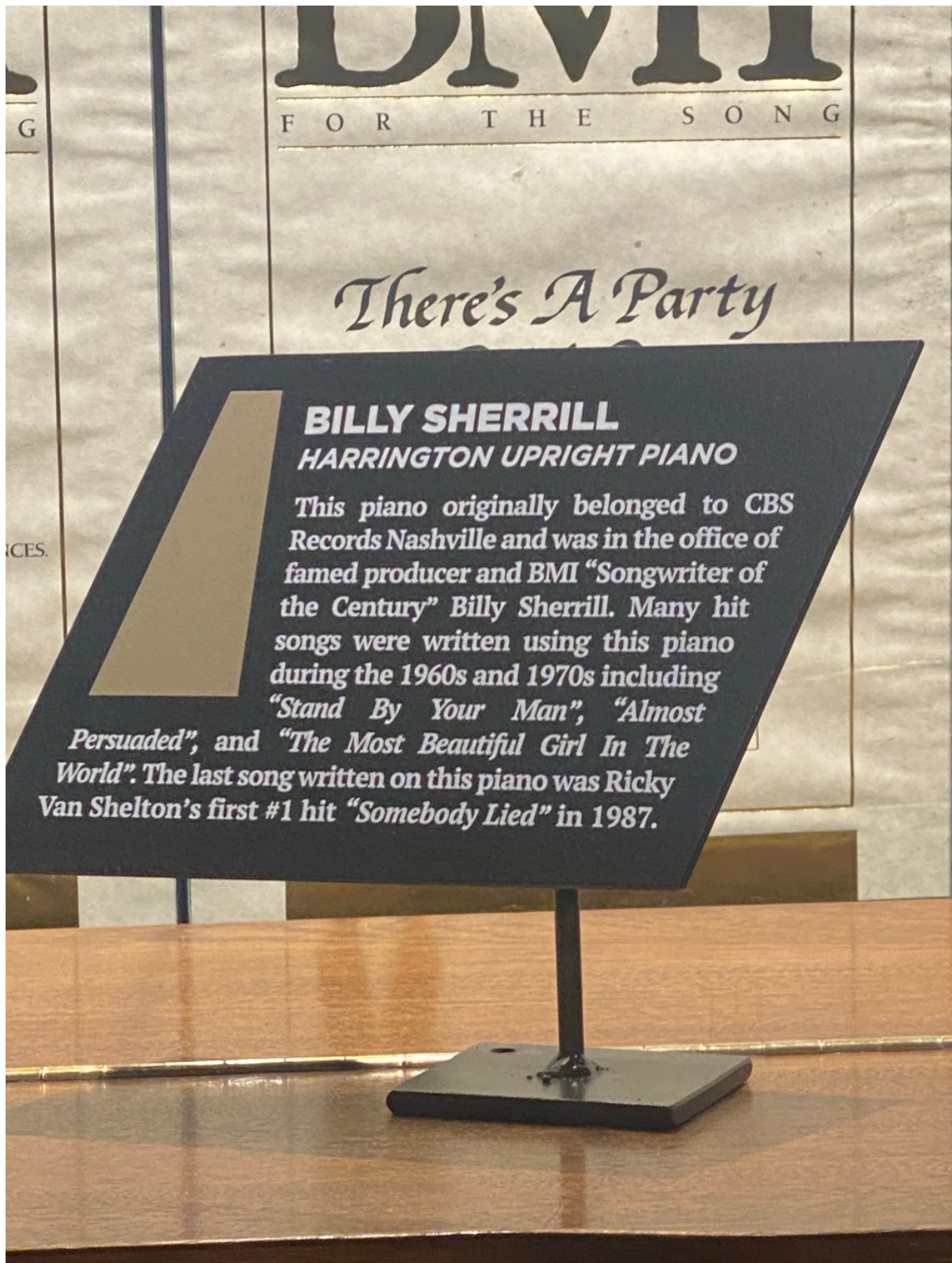
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We saw the drum kit that Sitting on the Dock of the bay was recorded on, the flute which was played during Frank Sinatra's recording sessions, Bob Dylan's harmonica, Jimi Hendrix's outfits. It was a fascinating visit.

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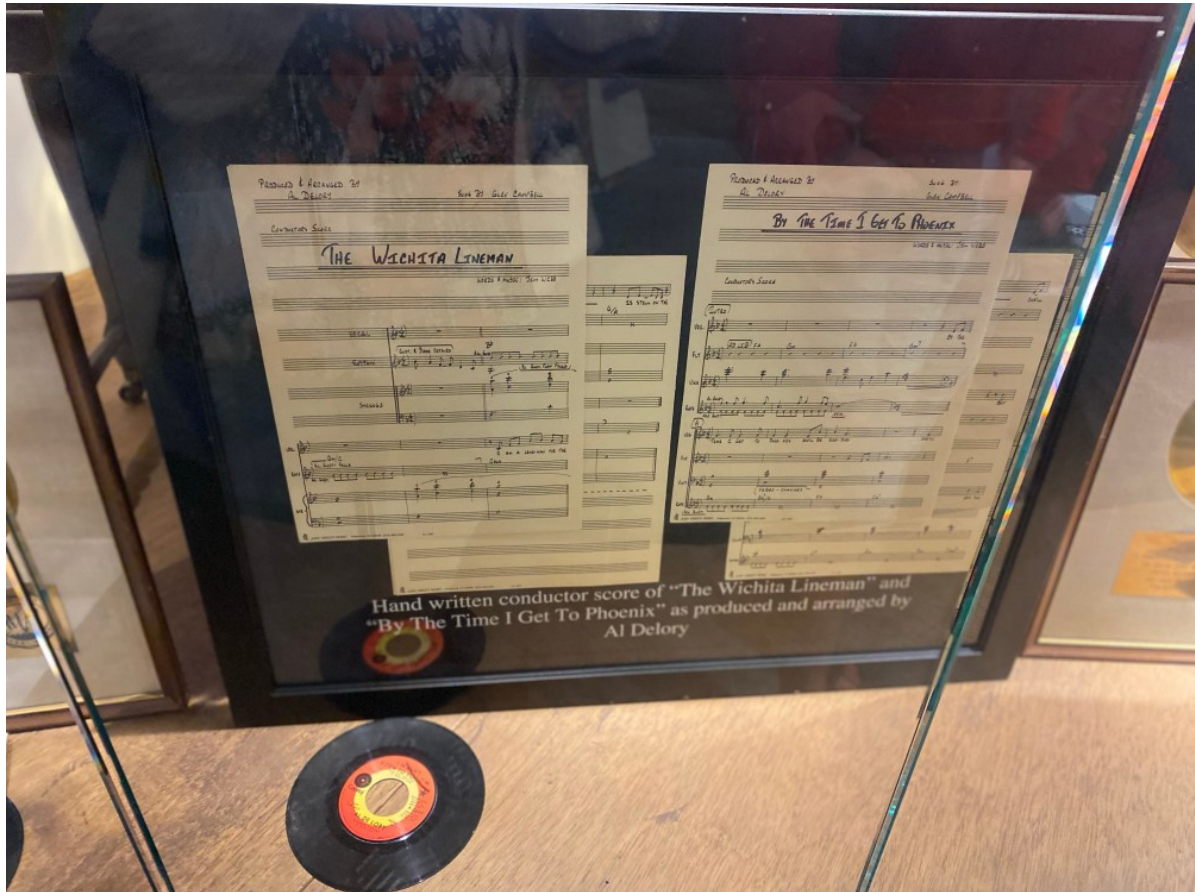
WAYNE JACKSON

ANDREW LOVE

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A museum display of Jimi Hendrix's 1967 Fender Sunburst Stratocaster guitar. The guitar is shown in profile, with its headstock and neck visible. Above the guitar is a large gold record and a small portrait of Hendrix. A plaque below the guitar reads: "JIMI HENDRIX 1967 FENDER SUNBURST STRATOCASTER This guitar, owned by Jimi Hendrix, was used for songwriting and recording sessions." To the left, a sign reads: "THIS MUSICIAN PERFORMED AT MONTEREY INTERNATIONAL POP FESTIVAL JUNE 16-17-18 1967". Below that, a sign reads: "JIMI HENDRIX 1967 Fender Revolution". The display is set against a red background.



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From here we rode an Uber back to the hotel to freshen up and take advantage of the complimentary happy hour here. Our hotel, Club Nashville Suites is on the outskirts of the city, but as close as we could get without re-mortgaging our house! It does run a shuttle to the centre for €10 return pp, and is a nice base as our room is huge, it's clean etc etc.

Our return to Nashville on Thursday evening was clouded with a bit of worry- our driver told us it was busier than normal and we were worried we'd not get in anywhere or there would be huge queues. We shouldn't have worried- we headed straight for Lucky Bastard Saloon - the band in here caught our ears as we wandered by and there was space and we even got a table!

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We remained here all night – the band were TERRIFIC. Playing a mix of rock and pop and a few country classics here and there, the vocalists were outstanding, especially the female who absolutely nailed Janice Joplin and reduced me to tears on Lady Gaga’s Shallow.

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We returned to the hotel by shuttle bus, and slept like logs!

Friday morning, after a nice breakfast, we drove the short distance to the Grand Ole Opry. As we were early for our tour, we killed an hour in the mall next door, even picking up a few pairs of jeans from Levi outlet store-

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£22 a pair!

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When our tour time arrived, we didn't really know too much what to expect- neither of us knew anything about the Grand Ole Opry.



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We were shown a great introductory film which captured our heart strings immediately as it showed the immense emotion and passion country stars hold for the Grand Ole Opry.

We were taken on a backstage tour where we saw dressing rooms and the green room- some of Carrie Underwood's shoes.

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And then the main feature, we taken on the artist's route on to the stage- capturing the first view of the stage and auditorium just as a performer would (well ok there wasn't anyone in the audience!!) really took our breath away.

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We were allowed to step inside the historic circle - a wooden circle brought from the original Oprey stage at the Ryman in town, be-

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fore our tour concluded. It was informative
and an interesting tour which we enjoyed.



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We drove back to the hotel, dropped the car off, changed into our new jeans and headed into Nashville for the afternoon and evening. Our first stop was the distillery bar, where we sampled some gin and whiskey made on site, it was delicious! A chat with the barman resulted in us then heading to Robert's Western world on Broadway.

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We were in the mood for some more traditional country music this afternoon, and this was place to find it. We LOVED it! We lucked out and found a table - which we then stayed put on for 3 hours- enjoyed some fried chicken and just sat and enjoyed the exceptional music.

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When our band stopped at 6 (they'd been playing since 11am!) we took a walk to Printer's Alley where we'd been told we could expect some blues style music. Again, we lucked out arriving at Bourbon Street Blues and Boogie bar as a band was about to start- a TERRIFIC band may I add. Needless to say, we settled in for another 3 hour stint here (happily the beers were only \$4 here too!) and sat in awe watching the band, having a boogie and just soaking in every single drop of the experience.

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We lasted til 9pm before making our way back via Uber. Nashville will forever hold a place in our hearts. Fun, lively- a severe attack on our senses, but there really is something for everyone here. Everyone here is partying like there are no cares in the world. I can't remember the last time I saw so many Insanely happy, smiley people in one area. It was infectious. We've had a blast and would love another day here but it's time to move on!

Until next time

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