

Getting to know the real Wynonna Judd before the Judds' show at Oregon State Fair



By Michele Coppola

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Naomi and Wynonna Judd play Oregon State Fair on Sept. 3.

Don't get Wynonna Judd wrong: She is down-on-her-knees grateful for her success, but if it's all the same to you, she'd just as soon be on the farm with her kids and her animals, and making time for the man in her life.

But she knows that it's not all the same to her fans. For 27 years, the Judds -- Wynonna and her mother, Naomi -- have been a fascinating stew of talent, drive and drama that bubbled over the country music slow-cooker and onto the television burner. Their lacy front-porch harmonies are one thing, but emotional talk-show appearances and sometimes-shocking tabloid headlines have fueled their celebrity enough to make the Judds' recent [OWN docu-series](#) one of the few bright spots on Oprah Winfrey's otherwise floundering new network.

Wynonna, 47, has had a successful solo career as well, but it's the twin engines of music and mom that are propelling her to go back on the road for some extra dates on "[The Last Encore Tour](#)," which will take a bow at the [Oregon State Fair](#) on Sept. 3. In a phone interview, she talked about music, motherhood, rural bliss -- and of course, that taffeta firecracker known as Naomi.

Q: I have a hard time imagining that your mother wants to do anything but die in a party dress on a tour bus. Is this really the last encore for the Judds?

A: I totally have made jokes along the way about putting rhinestones on her walker, but I spoke to my manager yesterday and the only reason why we added a couple of shows is because we literally got calls personally from a promoter saying, "Look, if

you don't come to Oregon, I'm gonna have to get a real job." And people have been so aggressive about "I cannot believe you did not come to our state" that it's almost been like they're offended. I hate disappointing anybody, and so mom and I made a decision that we would honor a few requests that we did not obviously get to during the bulk of the shows we did in December. One thing about my mom: you wind her up and you let her go. She is a force to be reckoned with, and you cannot tell her anything.

Q: Speaking of your mom being so real, you guys have always been such an open book for your fans, especially with the show on OWN. Is there a downside to having your personal life so exposed to the world, or have the positives outweighed the negatives for you over the years?

A: I almost got in a bar fight with a guy about six months ago -- he said that I had sold out doing a reality show. I said first of all, it's not a reality show -- there are two separate realities, when it comes to mom and me. She has her reality, I have mine. What this is, is a docu-series, and what was really hard about it was they got all the stuff and then they got to edit it the way they wanted to and they did not represent certain things the way that I feel like they really happened. I didn't have any creative control, and so that was really hard for me as a woman. I had to learn how to submit not only to a crew of people that I don't really even know very well, but I had to also sit there and talk to my mother about things that I didn't feel like doing.

Q: Given what you're saying, is there any chance we might get "The Continuing Adventures of the Judds" in 2012?

A: No. I'm not doing it again. I'm an artist, and I want to go back to singing and making records and living on my farm, and I have my 50 animals and I wanna hopefully someday get remarried and have a life. I think doing television -- and I'm being really honest -- I love and have known Oprah for 25 years and the reason I did it is because of our friendship and I trust her. I think that doing a TV show is like a full-time job, it's like running a restaurant. You have to put your entire being into that, and I'm not a TV person. I don't even watch TV.

Q: You mentioned getting married again -- is there a man in your life right now?

A: Yeah, I just celebrated my two-year anniversary yesterday, so it's a pretty big deal. I've known him (Highway 101 drummer Scott "Cactus" Moser) for 25 years. We make it work because we're both musicians and we're making a record together, and so we literally block out time ... and I think you make happen what matters to you. What I tell women, and I do a lot of speaking engagements, I say pick two to three things per day that are a priority. You don't prioritize your schedule; you schedule your priorities -- and whatever those are, you make those happen.

Q: So glad to hear that you've come back to a place where the music is a priority. On the CMT Awards you were talking about some new music, a new album. What's happening with that?

A: I had a meeting yesterday with two guys and ... I don't know what they thought when they left, but I do know this: They walked out that door saying, "Holy cow -- she is sassier than we even thought!" I told them I am not going to sing a song about being a bitter ex. I said you go out there and you help me find songs about affirmation and love and (being) real, though -- I'm talking about like, last night, my daughter says to me, "Mom, next week is Parent Night and I don't want you to come." 'Cause she doesn't want to be the fourth Judd. She wants to be Grace, a daughter of mine, but she wants to be her own person. So I can't go to Parent Night, but OK, I have five Grammys, but I guess I'm not needed. And I went in my room and sat on my bed and thought, "Well, I'm just gonna go get on a bus then, and go be a diva."

Q: As you were having that conversation with her did you kind of feel like it was a full-circle moment, the past coming back to haunt you?

A: Oh, paybacks are hell. That's why God put me on a bus with my mother for 10 years. I was so ready to be a Bonnie Raitt and have my own band and rock out and then God said no, we're gonna do this. And my daughter is really in a place right now -- and my son, too -- where they basically say three words to me every day, you know, "What's for dinner?" And that's all I get, and so I have to walk this thin line between being loved by millions, but yet my own two from my womb are looking at me like, she's from the dark ages because I don't let them have phones, I don't let them have a computer; they just think I'm crazy.

Q: There's lots of parents who might be happy to hear you say that.

A: You know why? Because there's too much. There is a point where enough is enough. Let's go play, OK?

Q: Let's circle back to the upcoming show. Some fans have been coming to see you for 25 years or more. When they come to see you for "The Last Encore," what's going to be different about the show? Are you better with time and age?

A: I think we're better, not bigger. I think there was a time when I was so introverted and forced to be this extrovert ... all I wanted to do was be on the farm and drive my tractor and hang out with my animals. My mother raised me to be a champion, so I was always struggling between not wanting to do anything and having to do everything. I always felt a little bit resentful of the fact that I had to be somewhere every 15 minutes, and it took me probably 25 years to make peace with the fact that this is really a privilege.

I got that when my mom had to quit. I watched her lose the very thing that she loved the most, and I said to God I will never again complain about a gig. I will never complain about being this tired; I'll be grateful. So for me onstage now, I can watch her twirl and I can enjoy her, and I don't feel like I have to fix it. I can just watch her hang herself or say something to the crowd and go, "Well bless her little pointy head." And I can love her -- 'cause she's not gonna change.