

# NASHVILLE

LIFESTYLES

HOLIDAY LIGHTS + GIFT GUIDE



# NATE BARGATZE

*is making spirits bright*

*plus SUPER LAWYERS  
Nashville's top attorneys*

DECEMBER 2024 | \$4.99  
nashvillelifestyles.com



1 2>  
7 25274 97480 1

HEALING WITH MUSIC

# Danny Myrick

**M**usic can be a powerful instrument for coping with trauma. SongwritingWith:Soldiers is a program that pairs veterans and first responders with professional songwriters to utilize music as a tool for healing, fostering connections, and sharing experiences. SW:S hosts retreats across the US and offers a Warrior PATHH program: a six-day intensive that offers a group songwriting opportunity on the fifth night. Nashville songwriter Danny Myrick actively participates in the Warrior PATHH program and attends a couple retreats a year. Myrick has written songs for Kenny Chesney, Jason Aldean, Craig Morgan, and more. He is currently working on another record of his own. We had the pleasure of speaking with Myrick about his contribution to SW:S and how music helps heal emotional wounds. — *Destiny Mizell*

**SOOTHING WITH SOUND:** The impact is life changing. These participants have such a deep passion for service. They are all givers. They're simply not wired to look inward, care for themselves first, and address or deal with their weaknesses. They frankly, over the course of their career, rarely have time for that. They have to run into battle or run into the fire or crime scene when everyone else's instinct is to run away. As a result, they find it extremely difficult to address their trauma or any other mental health issues. There is something about music that softens that hard place in them, and as they begin to feel empathy from the songwriter, they open up and share even their deepest, darkest stories. At the end of the process, we have a song that they can then share with friends or family that will convey just a little bit of the pain they live with in a way they would never be able to share outside of music.

**EMPATHIZING:** I think the initial approach is to just listen. We don't try to be music therapists. We simply try to empathize, hear them out, and give them a safe space filled with love and acceptance. Songwriters can be really weighed-down people. Although my baggage or shame or trauma might be different from a veteran's, trauma and shame are still trauma and shame. So, our job is to listen and not make the participant feel judged in any way. We empathize and identify with their pain. Ultimately, our job is to filter that pain and their

stories into a song. As for the song, I approach it like any other song that I want to tell a story with. I guess the only difference would be that it doesn't matter if anyone ever records this song or if it becomes a hit. The only thing that matters is that we finish it and that the participant feels like it conveys their story.

**WRITE IT OUT:** I see songwriting as sort of bleeding out on paper (or iPhone or laptop) from the heart and the mind. You really can't be a great songwriter if you're not willing to go to your deepest, darkest places. It can be a personal, therapeutic process. I would never want to convey that it can take the place of therapy, and believe me, plenty of songwriters and artists could use some therapy, but the effect on your mind is that you release things that are often toxic and heavy, which can't help but positively impact your mental health as opposed to holding those things in.

**THE MISSION:** While we do an incredibly thorough job in our country recruiting strong men and women, training them with excellence and preparing them for their roles, we really do not do the best job of adequately preparing them to return home and reacclimate to civilian life. I'm sure they do the best they can with the resources they have, but the mission of SongwritingWith:Soldiers is to be a positive, healing part of that reacclimating process. SW:S does an amazing job, and I couldn't be prouder to be part of this organization.



ED RODE