

## Shaking the boots off country

Zach Bryan partners with diverse artists to create a new sound

by Addy Warner

Zach Bryan. Sound familiar? Undoubtedly you've heard about him on the news or heard him singing on the radio. Earlier this year Bryan shocked fans with his fourth album titled *Zach Bryan*. While on the *Burn, Burn, Burn* tour, the singer dropped the album on August 25, 2023, and it quickly rose to be the number one listened to album in the country.

If you don't know much about Bryan, you should. In his short career, he has released four albums. Bryan began his jump into the country music genre when he, along with a few Navy buddies, decided to film and upload the song, "Revival," to YouTube. After the video started to go viral and get recognition, Bryan received an honorable discharge to continue his music career. In 2019, he released his first album *DeAnn* in honor of his late mother. After that he went on to release three more albums. His most recent, a self-titled album, has been gaining attention on the popular app TikTok. Bryan has always understood the power of social media marketing and had the album shaking things up and going viral before the release date was even announced.

In the newest album, Bryan has partnered up with other talented artists, some from different music genres, to write a few of his new songs which have shaken up the country genre. When Bryan announced he was writing a song with The Lumineers, fans from both genres were patiently awaiting its release. Bryan and The Lumineers created a piece, "Spotless," that expertly bridges country and folk rock. They found the perfect balance, making it feel as though they were equally involved in the performance of the song. It was a well-written and well-executed song. To me, it is about embracing one's imperfections within a relationship and finding self-acceptance. It's a message that everyone should think about and embrace in their personal lives.

If you are trying to reminisce on a past heartbreak, "I Remember Everything," is the song for you. This song included singer/songwriter Kacey Musgraves, whose songs always have a strong message behind them. Both artists come from the country genre and have been producing songs for some time. "I Remember Everything" is about remembering the little things from a past relationship, whether it ended on good or bad terms, that somehow pop into your mind at random times. Throughout the song, you hear different perspectives about how and why the relationship didn't work out. With the expertise of both Bryan and Musgraves, the song evokes an emotional response from fans and quickly became a favorite for many.

Though this was not my favorite album Bryan has released, many fans would beg to differ. Personally, I enjoyed when it was just Bryan and his guitar singing true country. I do enjoy some of his new collaborations with the various artists, but I will always prefer his true country tracks. After expanding his image on TikTok, Bryan gained a lot of attention and grew his fan base which caused a surge in the price of concert tickets. Older fans started to complain. I admire that Bryan has done his best to keep tickets at a fair price and even decided to perform more concerts. Older fans, such as me, have a hard time seeing tickets go to the new fan base who only know a few songs and often don't see the importance behind the lyrics.

Those wanting to hear songs from the new album performed live will have the chance in 2024. The *Quittin' Time* tour is scheduled to perform in Omaha on April 29 and 30. Bryan is a talented artist. Although he has shaken up the country genre with his new album, older and new fans alike can appreciate his music. The self-titled album, *Zach Bryan*, is worth a listen.

To purchase his albums, find concert tickets, or for more information on the artist, go to his official website

<https://www.zachbryan.com/>

## Superhero success on and off the stage

Southern Valley's One Act educates and entertains

by Kamden Bose

Superman, Spiderman, and Batman. Most know these famous superheroes, but there are many superheroes that don't receive the same attention. Enter *The Amazing Angelman*. This fall, the Southern Valley One Act team performed *The Amazing Angelman*, a play that follows the life of a 13-year-old boy named James Cooper who is confined to a wheelchair because he has Angelman Syndrome (AS).

The play takes the audience into the imagination of James, played by Kamden Bose, who is a self-professed superhero. By using his imagination, James escapes his wheelchair. In his fantasy, James has supersonic hearing and the ability to fly, to shoot lasers from his eyes, and to turn invisible. With the help of his sidekick Stargirl, played by Tori Bose, the Amazing Angelman uses his superpowers to help save lives and defeat villains.

The script not only highlights how Angelman Syndrome affects the person with the disability but also how the disability affects the parents. Isaac Hamilton and Laurel Stalder played the roles of James's parents, John and Tina Cooper. Hamilton and Stalder demonstrated the emotional shifts between uncertainty, sadness, optimism, anger, remorse, and acceptance that parents of children with AS often endure. "Acting as James's father in the play has taught me that having a child with a disability can lead to difficulties in marriage and at work," said Hamilton.

The One Act team performed the play a total of five times this year. They kicked off their season on November 3, by attending the Elm Creek Early Bird Competition. They performed at the Southern Valley Fine Arts Festival the following week. Later in November at the RPAC East conference competition, the Eagles came away as the runner-up performance. Receiving the honorable mention acting awards were Isaac Hamilton, Laurel Stalder, Adi Hunt, Tori Bose, and Bennet Jorgenson. Kamden Bose was awarded the Most Outstanding Male Performer Award.

Although the One Act team came up short at conference, they went on to win the C2-4 district competition, earning a trip to state One Act in Norfolk. Isaac Hamilton, Laurel Stalder, Ann Bose, and Sully Bantam received honorable mention male and female actor awards. Kamden Bose and Tori Bose were awarded Outstanding Male and Female Performer awards.

The Eagles ended their season on December 7, at the Johnny Carson Theatre in Norfolk. Competing against the best plays in the state of Nebraska, the team ended up placing 5th out of six teams. Southern Valley One Act director, Ashley Blickenstaff, said, "I am so proud of all the students who put in the time and effort to bring this amazing story to life. I'm certain that our play touched the hearts of many people and that wouldn't have been possible without our amazing cast and crew."

According to *angelman.org*, Angelman syndrome is a rare neuro-genetic disorder caused by a loss of function of the UBE3A gene in the maternal chromosome 15. People with AS experience seizures, difficulty walking, talking, and balancing, developmental delays, and hypermotoric havior. This disability may be difficult to initially diagnose because people with AS appear to have a happy and excitable demeanor. "By playing James's mother, I've learned that the mother may put a lot of blame on herself because AS is inherited from the maternal gene," said Laurel Stalder. Angelman Syndrome occurs in 1 of every 15,000 children. There are 500,000 known cases worldwide. To put condition, Down Syndrome, occurs in 1 of every 700 children.

Superman, Spiderman, and Batman have all had success at the box office, but the Amazing Angelman with qualifying for state One Act, the Southern Valley One Act team impacted every audience who watched their performance. "Seeing people crying in the crowd because they were so moved from our play assured me that we made a difference," said Blickenstaff.

Reflecting on this year's play, Hamilton said, "Prior to this year, I hadn't even heard of Angelman Syndrome. This play has helped me learn how Angelman and other disabilities can affect the parents and loved ones of the person with the disability."

Extra-curricular activities are designed to teach high school students life lessons beyond the classroom, but this year's play allowed the students to flip the script and teach a life lesson to each member of their audience. For more information on Angelman Syndrome, visit *angelman.org*.



Isaac Hamilton and Kamden Bose perform *The Amazing Angelman*.

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