



Belles & Gals

The Home of Female Country Music

Interviews

An Interview With Temecula Road

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Temecula Road. Picture: John Shearer

Formed in the city in California from which they got their name, *Temecula Road* are rising stars on the country music scene.

Sisters *Emma* and *Maddie Salute* met their childhood friend *Dawson Anderson* back when they were just thirteen years old and having singing lessons. Seven years later, they're signed to *Disney's* label, *Buena Vista Records*, touring across the pond playing sold out shows supporting *Scotty McCreery*, and are now getting set to perform at *The Opry* on Friday.

Belles and Gals' Craig Brooks and I attended the *Country Hits Radio Hub* at *Bush Hall* on Saturday, where we saw the Californian trio open the daytime event. Their set included their latest singles, '*Maybe Not*' and '*Never Knew I Needed You*', along with a cover of *The Eagles'* '*Desperado*'. We were really impressed with their set and were blown away by their beautiful harmonies.

We also had the great opportunity to talk to them afterwards. They were all super friendly and chatted to us about the exciting things they have coming up! Have a read about all of this and more below...

Craig: Hi Guys! We really hope you're enjoying your time here so far in the UK. Have you had a chance to do any sightseeing or shopping yet?

Maddie: We went shopping last night and went to *Zara*...twice!

Emma: The first time we were here we did all the touristy stuff! We went to *Big Ben*, the *London Eye* and *Buckingham Palace*.

Dawson: Yeah, we got to check that out! We also did a bus tour – that was really cool! That taught us so much history about the city.

Maddie: That was really cool! I wish we could do that again.

Dawson: We just got here yesterday afternoon from Germany, we were over there playing some shows – that was really fun. We love being in London so much and it's really good to be back.

Maddie: I wish we had one more free day here!

Megan: That's just what I was about to ask you about. So you're currently on a completely sold out tour across Europe supporting *Scotty McCreery* – what's your highlight been of the tour so far?

Maddie: It's all been so good! Just exploring different parts of the world.

Dawson: Have to agree with *Mad-dawg*! Seeing the new places and meeting the people, trying new food and experiencing the culture.

Maddie: I had my first crepe in Germany, they're SO GOOD!

Dawson: You both haven't had crepes?!

Emma: That was my first crepe as well!

Dawson: Crepes are delicious!

Maddie: Are crepes big here?

Megan: It's half and half really, because we either have scotch pancakes which are the fluffy, thicker pancakes. Then you have crepes which are thin – you can put *Nutella* and ice cream with them!

Dawson: (To Emma and Maddie) Wow! I can't believe you both haven't had crepes before. We've got them on the 'crepe-train' now!

Emma: Also another thing is the fans. That's been an amazing thing for us to see here. We've had people singing our music today, so it's been really cool to see that.

Dawson: A lot of familiar faces too, which is the BEST feeling for us.

Craig: The name *Temecula Road* comes from where you grew up and formed the band. What was it that initially drew you to country music in the first place? Were there any particular artists who inspired you?

Maddie: Yes! When I was four years old, *Carrie Underwood* was on *American Idol*. I remember saying to my parents "I wanna be just like her when I grow up!" To this day, *Carrie* is my biggest inspiration.

Megan: And you met her as well, didn't you? – I saw the picture of you both on your Instagram!

Maddie: Yes I have met her a few times – I was just saying that I'm going to wear my *Carrie* shirt tomorrow, I am *for real* her biggest fan!

Emma: Our Grandparents are from Oklahoma, so we just automatically grew up listening to country music. We watched *Idol* and I always sang with *Maddie*. We would sing harmonies from a young age. We never really had the conversation when we formed the group about whether we should be pop or anything else, it was always: "this is country music and this is what it is going to be". *Dawson* is from North Carolina originally.

Dawson: The Old South! Just living there and having my parents listening to country music meant it was always in my blood. I moved to Temecula, California when I was nine. There I started playing guitar and getting into music. This led me onto singing, and at that point I met these lovely ladies and we just became friends. It was never something for us where we thought we would meet, then become this band and do all of this – we were just singing at that time, because it's what we loved, and then we started playing shows. One thing led to another and we thought: "maybe we should start taking this a little more seriously", started up the band Instagram and all that good stuff. Five years later, here we are!

Megan: It's been really exciting watching your journey so far! We're in a really exciting time at the moment where country is collaborating with lots of different genres. It's so good hearing for example Willie Jones at the *CMW Hub* blending with Hip-Hop. You guys have blended with Pop very well. If you could collaborate with one artist each outside the Country genre, who would that be?

Maddie: Ooo, *Britney Spears* actually!

Emma: There's a Swedish producer/group, they just went on tour with *Zedd*, they're called *NOTD*. I would say *NOTD*.

Maddie: (To Dawson) You're going to say *Zedd*...

Dawson: Yeah that would be awesome just because I love electronic music. Probably somebody like *Bazzi* or *Lauv*, those are both really cool Pop artists. I love their vibe.

Craig: How did you guys come to the decision to move to Nashville?

Emma: We were there in September of 2018 recording music, and that was the exact moment we said: “we need to be here”. In a week of being there, we made more connections than we did in a whole year back in California. We moved to Nashville in May. It was definitely a big commitment. Our whole family moved with us, which made it easier. *Dawson’s* family is still back in California.

Dawson: I’m ‘*lone-wolfing*’ it, but these guys are my family right here! I feel like if you’re somewhere where there’s benefits and you’re making a lot of gains, that’s where you have to be eventually. If you really want to thrive, you’ve got to be there – that’s something that we noticed on that trip. We had to figure out the details of the move across the country, I think it was roughly twenty-four-hundred miles.

Emma: Thirty-one hours of driving!

Dawson: We drove together too! Once we got there in May, we realised it’s the best thing we’ve ever done. Things for us started taking off, we started meeting the best people and made some great connections. We improved and bettered ourselves; it was awesome.

Megan: Your new single, ‘*Maybe Not*’, is a fantastic song, I love it! It was great live at the show. Could you tell us a bit about the writing process?

Dawson: It was written by myself, *Trannie Anderson* and *Ian Christian* – two of our favourite writers! We were just in a room one day feeling sassy, and just wanted to write this up-tempo love song, which actually ended up becoming more of a ballad. We played it on the road for about a year and it took on a new life. We tried new things with it like upping the tempo and changing the keys. It’s definitely a new side of us that people haven’t seen yet. It’s sassy, It’s fun...

Maddie: It’s a little winky face!

Megan: The lyrics are amazing, what are your favourite ones from the song?

Emma: I'd say mine is *"maybe we'll burn right out before we ever glow."*

Dawson: mine is *"Maybe I should never kiss you, so the taste won't linger on my lips."*

Maddie: *"Instead of getting any closer, maybe I should get to leaving."* I think everybody thinks that at the start of a new relationship.

Dawson: There's always a little bit of doubt there. It's that "maybe I shouldn't, but you know what? Maybe it will work" feeling. Literally at the end of the hook it points to "just do it and dive in."



Craig: So you're talking to us right after playing *Bush Hall* as part of *Country Hits Hub*. It was really great to see you play live finally! Your harmonies are something that get you a lot of plaudits for as a band. Do you think this is because of your closeness as a group? Or is it just through sheer practice?

Dawson: *Emma* has been able to hear them since she was young. She's just incredible – she was able to teach us how to do it. We still need help here and there, but she's the reason we're able to do all of these harmonies.

Emma: It helps that me and *Maddie* are related so our vowels sound the same! *Dawson* has adapted his vowels to ours.

Dawson: We've come together, if you were to have seen us three years ago vs. now, there's a big change.

Emma: It's really cool for me, because before we couldn't hear harmonies at all, and now when we sing in the car or play covers, they'll just pick up a harmony. I'm like "awww I taught them!"

Dawson: We're most at home singing together. We love getting down to the nitty-gritty like: "change that vowel" or "make that breathier, do this, do that" you know? It helps make three voices become one.

Megan: You're signed to *Disney's* record label, which is incredible! I'm a big kid, I've grown up watching *Disney* movies and still love them. I have to ask you each this:

Which *Disney* character do you relate to the most?

Dawson: *Tow Mater*!

Maddie: I relate to one of the *Princesses*, but *Olaf* – I LOVE *Olaf*. Somebody at the label just sent me a box of *Frozen 2* stuff. I am so obsessed with *Frozen*!

Emma: I'd definitely say *Lightning McQueen*!

Maddie: what Princess do you think though? *Sleeping Beauty*?

ALL: *laughs*

Dawson: YES! Probably that one! Funny story, *Cars* (I think for Emma too) is one of my favourite movies. I think hearing *Rascal Flatts' 'Life Is A Highway'* is what made me love country music. *Rascal Flatts* was my first concert so one thing led to another. That essentially was one of the big stepping-stones, for me at least, in the beginning and I love *Tow Mater*!

ALL: (Quoting *Tow Mater*) *don't need to see where I'm goin', just need to know where I been!* *Laughs*

Craig: So you've recently been announced to play *Stagecoach*, which you've played before! What is it like going back home and playing festivals on that side of the country?

Emma: It's so cool! We grew up going to *Stagecoach*. Our friends and family go, it's an hour and a half from Temecula. It's our third time back!

Maddie: It'll be cooler this year, because we'll be going home. Not only that, we're playing the same day as *Carrie Underwood*!

Dawson: I'm sure we'll be able to go home before or after for a few days; which'll be really cool. Also, we have lots of friends still over in Southern California, and a lot of them go to *Stagecoach*. We'll be able to see not only close family, but our friends too. It's such a great festival, so much fun!

Megan: You're also playing *The Opry* on Saturday – that's huge! That's every country artist's dream right there. Have you started thinking about your set? Does it differ from what we saw today?

Maddie: We get to do two songs at *The Opry*, so we're going to do our single, '*Maybe Not*', and '*Desperado*'.

Megan: That was a brilliant cover!

ALL: Thank you!

Dawson: Well the story behind that is when we first went to Nashville to meet with record labels. '*Desperado*' was one of the songs that we sang for all of the publishing companies and agents. We had thirty meetings in a week! You only have time to sing two or three songs, so we were trying to figure out what songs would be good. We hadn't written many songs at that point, and were trying to do something that felt like us. '*Desperado*' was something that we could put our claws into and we put our own twist on it. It's been with us ever since. We still play it, you guys heard it earlier, and we'll play it tonight with *Scotty McCreery*. It's definitely fitting for *The Opry* to show where we came from, to where we are now. We're still the same, but yet so different!

Megan: You've taken it on your journey with you, so it's a really sentimental song I can imagine.

ALL: Absolutely!



Megan: This has been an absolute pleasure, thank you for talking with us here at *Belles and Gals*. We love what you're doing for country music. To finish, can you tell us where we can find you guys on social media?

Dawson: You guys are the BEST! Thank you!

Emma: We're on everything – Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube. Check our music out on any streaming platforms under *Temecula Road*!