

**Country band Temecula Road talks about finding its sound,
performing with top county artists**



When Dawson Anderson, a member of rising country band Temecula Road, was growing up, he didn't know he would end up pursuing music professionally.

But he moved to Temecula, Calif., at the age of 9, began taking vocal lessons and met Maddie and Emma Salute through their vocal coach.

"Our vocal coach thought we would be friends, and we hit it off right away, started hanging out all the time and just singing locally," Anderson said. "We started writing, experimenting in the studio and it was about a year after we met, we decided we should do this for real and start the band."

Now the trio is touring with Sara Evans during her Christmas tour.

Temecula Road will open for Evans during her show at 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 12, at Prairie Band Casino in Mayetta.

The band most recently released the songs "Never Knew I Needed You," "Maybe Not," "Fades" and their Christmas song "Christmas in Dixie."

Anderson said performing with Evans creates a "full circle" for him.

When Anderson was 3 years old, his mom — who is an Evans fan — went to a show Evans performed with Brad Paisley.

"At the show, Brad Paisley said, 'Parents, I don't care what you have to do, but put a guitar in your kid's hands. It will change their life.' (My mom) was inspired by that, so she bought me a guitar and got me into lessons, and that led to singing," he said. "So without that night, without Sara Evans bringing her to that concert, we wouldn't be here."

Maddie Salute's motivation to pursue a career in music started when she saw Carrie Underwood on "American Idol."

"I remember telling my mom that I want to be just like her when I grow up, so this is just a dream come true," Maddie Salute said. "This is what I've always wanted to do with my life." Emma Salute said that what the group has been able to accomplish so far in their career — which includes making their Grand Old Opry debut, being named CMT Discovery Artist and making debut performances at Stagecoach Music Festival and the CMA Music Festival — is humbling.

“We definitely had goals, but we didn’t have expectations,” Emma Salute said. “So for how far we’ve come in the matter of five years has just been amazing, and it’s just so surreal to us. We are just really blessed by everything that’s happening, and we don’t take any second for granted. We are loving it.”

Temecula Road has previously toured with Jesse James Decker and Kenny Rogers and performed a show with Martina McBride.

Anderson said performing with Rogers has been one of his favorites so far.

“He’s such a legend, and he’s no longer playing music anymore,” Anderson said. “It’s crazy that we were not only able to see him perform, but be on the same bill for a couple shows with him.”

Maddie Salute said picking a sound for the band was never really a conversation they had, but they always knew they wanted to pursue country music.

“We would just pick a cover song to do, and we would just add harmonies and I think we naturally just fell into that,” she said. “It wasn’t something that we had to search for. Harmonies have always been our main thing.”

Anderson said performing live is one of their favorite parts of being in a band, and the fans make it better.

Temecula Road’s performance during the show at Prairie Band will be a mix of Christmas songs and the band’s original songs.

The band will also be performing some songs that haven’t yet been released, along with their new Christmas song.

Anderson also teased that the band may be performing with Evans at some point during the show.

“I hope people feel inspired when they leave our show,” Maddie Salute said. “If somebody is in that room debating if they want to be an artist — I feel like if we inspire them and push them in the right direction, that would be a win.”