

## Cherokee Casino hits pay dirt with Jenkins

By [KAREN SHADE](#)  
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Brandon Jenkins cuts an imposing figure — as if he should be riding a Harley at night while wearing dark sunglasses on his way to hear the latest death metal band.



Red Dirt crusader Brandon Jenkins comes home to play the Cherokee Casino Will Rogers Downs in Claremore Saturday night.

This Red Dirt stalwart, however, is more likely to hit Peace of Mind bookstore when he returns home to Tulsa to play at the Cherokee Casino Will Rogers Downs in Claremore on Saturday.

Jenkins is a man who calls his mother on a regular basis, reads George Orwell, plays audio books on the road between shows and takes regular coffee breaks. In short, he's a nice, low-key kind of guy.

"Usually, coffee and books are a good combination," said the singer and guitarist.

He's currently working on "The Art of War" by Sun Tzu and the Orwell classics, "Animal Farm" and "1984."

He laughs at the contrast.

"Not that I didn't conform to the (rebel) image a lot more in the past, but I'm a lot older now," Jenkins said. "Not that I don't like to cut it loose sometimes, too, but when you're my age — late 30s, early 40s — you can't be on the road hitting it like you used to. You've got to recharge, not only physically but also mentally and spiritually."

Spirit plays a large part in the music, and on "Brothers of the Dirt," Jenkins can hear several things — months of endless writing and production, his identity today and the spirit of collaboration among Red Dirt musicians and beyond.

"Brothers of the Dirt" was released only this week and features some familiar names contributing to the sound.

"The best thing about it," he said, "is it's a collaboration (with) a lot of different guys that are all doing the same thing that we're doing down here in Texas and Oklahoma (from) across the country — Stoney LaRue, Jason Boland, Cody Canada from Cross Canadian Ragweed."

On the single "We Could Go to Paris," keyboardist Brian Haas of the Jacob Fred Jazz Odyssey puts an avant garde edge to the album that even has Jenkins fascinated.

"In a way it feels like giving back. I don't know why," he added, laughing.

Perhaps it "feels" that way because Jenkins has taken cues from others who have perhaps unknowingly influenced his career. The Jenkins at work today is another shade of earth from the Tulsa kid who left home to attend Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, but he is very much still Red Dirt and a guiding force in the field.

"I was having this conversation with my mom today," he said. "I just try to follow my muse. Fortunately, I guess, what you put in, the muse finds its way to put out the music. We listen to so many different styles of music and different socially philosophy that filter into my music whether I want it to or not.

"It's not really a conscious effort."

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