

# 2TON BRIDGE

**BIOGRAPHY by Tony Laiolo:**

2Ton Bridge is the musical persona of singer/songwriter/actor Alexander Wright, taking the name of the landmark connecting his childhood Maryland farm to the main road and the wider world. Similarly, his songs connect their down-to-earth characters – farmers, fishermen, migrants, prisoners – to society as a whole, bridging the gap with a passionate understanding of the struggle for personal dignity.

“I write,” he says, “because something’s working on me inside. I try to recognize the enormity and value of life within the written picture of a moment, a gesture, a task or desire. It all comes back to two essential questions: ‘Who am I and why am I here?’” Having survived several close brushes with death, these questions are truly valid.

The triumphant debut album “2Ton Bridge,” produced and arranged by Marvin Etzioni (Lone Justice, Counting Crows), is Wright’s first of all-original material. The songs, recorded live and primarily with acoustic instruments, are by turns jubilant, defiant, loving and proud. They hark back to the timeless sounds of people living and working together -- the field hollers, the campfire songs, the soft prayers – bringing their stories to life via natural imagery and vivid detail.

2Ton Bridge’s musical beginnings date to his earliest memories. As young Alex crawled around the floor of his grandfather’s Virginia farm, he heard the homemade sounds of accordion and ukulele playing “Old Joe Clark,” “Red River Valley” and others that got into his head and stayed there. “Music was pretty much everywhere,” Wright says of his youth. “When music was in the house, all was right with the world.”

Wright’s childhood was not the idyll one might expect at a family farm on Maryland’s eastern shore. An absent father and an overwhelmed mother caused him to largely raise himself. The results were predictably iffy – plentiful trouble at numerous schools, several instances of running away – but silver linings did appear.

First was the guitar at age 13, revealing an affinity for music and providing a lifelong companion. Before long he was winning county competitions, and just as importantly finding among his fellow musicians the missing sense of family and community.

Theater also beckoned, in surprising fashion. At 17, as part of a court-ordered community service, Wright began doing puppet shows for disadvantaged children in remote areas, instilling in himself a lifelong belief in the theater as an agent of social change.

It was theater, in fact, that became his career. After receiving a fine arts degree from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Wright moved to Los Angeles, where he directed and produced, performed everything from Shakespeare to punk-rock performance art, and founded several theater companies -- including the respected and influential Wallenboyd Theatre -- along the way.

Wright refocused on music in the 1990s, creating Chroma Music, an award-winning resource for the film, TV and advertising industries; producing albums on John O’Connor and Randy Kovitz; playing with Bolivian folk band Sol de America; and recording and playing festivals throughout California with the Eight Hand String Band.

Through the 2000s Wright dug deeper into Shakespeare and became heavily involved in the drama program of L.A.’s Waldorf schools, all while raising his growing family and running the family farm back east.

The songwriting also got its due, but it wasn’t until 2012 that the idea of 2Ton Bridge bubbled up, and it was a close call that catalyzed it. A trailer full of railroad ties slipped its chock and pinned Wright’s leg against his truck, badly slashing his thigh and just missing his femoral artery.

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It was the latest of several times Wright had gotten lucky, including one at 17, when he'd awakened on an operating table just in time to hear a doctor pronounce him dead. But this time something clicked. "Something's trying to tell me I'm here for a reason," he thought. "My work is to find that reason."

What he's found are new songs with unmistakable echoes of Steinbeck and Frost, songs that distill the experiences and lessons of his life into a kind of colloquial poetry, something at once new and old. Their traditional sounds nod back to his earliest musical memories, and their themes -- justice, family, love, work, death -- are timeless.

Alexander Wright is without question a renaissance man, with talents encompassing a broad range of theater and music, writing, teaching, woodworking, animal husbandry, and horticulture. From wild childhood through distinguished theatrical career and now to this newest incarnation as voice-of-conscience troubadour 2Ton Bridge, he continues his life story in an exciting and timely Act Three. Bravo.

**For more information about 2Ton Bridge, please visit [2TonBridge.com](http://2TonBridge.com)**