



STEVE AZAR LONG BIO

A native of Greenville, Mississippi, Steve Azar is a hit songwriter-recording artist, music producer, music industry consultant, keynote speaker, podcast/radio show host, record label founder and best-selling author. His music traverses a blend of country, blues, folk, and rock n' roll, a genre he calls, "Delta Soul." Azar has had nine charted singles on Billboard Hot Country Songs and has released seven critically acclaimed studio albums.

Azar's debut album *Waitin' On Joe* was released in 2001. The title track video went to #1 on CMT and featured Academy Award-winning actor Morgan Freeman. From the same album the smash hit single "I Don't Have To Be Me ('til Monday)", also a #1 video, is the 4X recipient of the prestigious BMI Million-Air radio awards for reaching over 4 million in air plays and is one of the top five most played songs since 2000 on country radio. Azar was personally chosen by Bob Seger for his 2006-2007 Face the Promise Tour which was rated #1 Tour in America by *Pollstar Magazine*.

Indianola, the follow up album to *Waitin' on Joe*, was the debut release from Azar's own independent music label, Dang/Ride Records featuring the singles "You Don't Know a Thing" and "You're My Life". The video for "You Don't Know a Thing" starred PGA player, John Daly, and was an instant favorite at the country music video channels. "You're my Life", is still a strong seller and fan favorite to this day. *Indianola* also received strong critical reviews and landed the album at #1 on the XM Radio "Country Outlaw" channel, bumping Willie Nelson out of the #1 spot, and then giving up the #1 spot to John Mellencamp the next week.

In *People Magazine*, Taylor Swift said that her favorite song of the year 2010 was Steve Azar's "Sunshine." The album *Slide on Over Here*, featuring the hit single "Sunshine," was spotlighted in Oprah's *O Magazine* in her "Oprah's Favorite Things" edition in 2011. "Sunshine" was also featured in *US Weekly Magazine* in June 2012 as one of the most popular celebrity wedding songs.

An accomplished songwriter, Azar has had songs recorded by Reba McEntire, Danny Gokey, James House and Cedric Burnside among many others. He has written, and recorded songs for film and has been the music supervisor for several movies. "Doin' It Right" (Delta Mix) off the album *Delta Soul Volume One*, was the feature track for Sony Pictures 2013 movie *Here Comes the Boom* starring Kevin James. Steve wrote "Fly", the official song for the 2015 FIS Alpine World Ski Championships in Vail. His performance at the opening ceremonies reached an audience of one billion households. "Fly" was also used as the feature song for another Sony Pictures movie featuring Kevin James, *Paul Blart Mall Cop 2*.

Steve and his wife Gwen founded the Steve Azar St. Cecilia Foundation which produces the Delta Soul Celebrity Golf & Charity Event. Since its inception, the foundation has channeled over millions of dollars to many worthwhile causes in the Delta and beyond. Steve has additionally raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for charitable causes through the auctioning of songs. These songs are written for the highest bidder's charity of choice. Steve has been ranked one of the top five musicians that play golf by *Golf Digest Magazine* numerous times. He is a frequent guest at charity golf tournaments across the country.

In April of 2016, Steve became the first artist to record a full-length studio album at the legendary Mississippi landmark, Club Ebony. A long time in the making, and his first record in 5 years, Steve cut 13 new original tracks for the *Down At The Liquor Store* LP. Club Ebony now belonging to the BB King Museum, was turned into a recording studio capturing the rich history and vibe of the room and in turn inspiring incredible performances on the record. The album was made with the participation of The Kings Men, a group of musicians who backed BB King, Elvis Presley, and other musical kings. The combination of Steve's Delta songwriting approach and the band's musical background has created a unique and soulful sound.

Steve Azar & The Kings Men made their live debut headlining 2016's BB King Homecoming Festival. The band headlined both the Mississippi Night at The GRAMMY's in Los Angeles during February 2017 and the Mississippi Bicentennial Celebration in Jackson in December of 2017. The new record is accompanied by a full-length feature documentary combining the making of the record with the musical trajectory of The Kings Men and the Mississippi Delta's important musical influence on the world music scene. The film, titled *Something In The Water*, was released in 2017 on Quello-Stingray and GoUSA TV.

He is the co-founder of Ride Records and in 2013 co-founded the Mighty Mississippi Music Festival, dubbed "A Southern Gem" by the American Blues Scene magazine and included in Acoustic Guitar magazine's 2014 Roadside Americana: 50 States 50 Must-Attend Events.

Steve is an in-demand keynote speaker. His speeches highlight the importance of giving back and that it is never too soon to start. From the sports world to the world of entertainment, Steve has had success and has also had his share of trials and tribulations; his speeches are full of the lessons learned.

Steve narrated "Second Crossing: The Making of The Mississippi Bridge" for Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) back in 2007. Later in 2016 his voice was used for a series of 12 short documentaries celebrating MDOT's 100th Anniversary.

In 2016, Azar began his consulting company All Access Azar offering a wide range of consulting services in the areas of artist and songwriter development and coaching, music production, festival and special events production, music publishing and licensing, and talent buying.

2017 marks the bicentennial of the state of Mississippi. Steve has been appointed Music & Culture Ambassador of Mississippi and is working closely with the State of Mississippi in his official role. This position enables him to continue making a positive impact on the State's tourism and economy. His Delta Soul Celebrity Golf & Charity Event and Mighty Mississippi Music Festival have added millions in economic impact to the state. As ambassador Steve is making an even larger impact.

Steve is the recipient of the 2018 prestigious Mississippi Arts Commission Governor's Choice Award. In January 2018, Steve began hosting his own radio show and podcast In A Mississippi Minute with Steve Azar. Steve takes on the other side of the interview asking the questions and talking with friends from all walks of celebrity sharing their stories to success and what's going on in their lives now. The show is broadcast throughout the state on SuperTalk Mississippi radio network and available nationally online and via podcast.

In February of 2019, he co-founded and hosted his first Mockingbird Music Series. A bi-monthly musical dinner series featuring intimate performances with some of Nashville's best and prolific award-winning songwriters, telling the stories behind their hits and performing them as originally written. The first annual Mockingbird Songwriters Music Festival was held in 2021, co-founded and produced by Steve.

He was named to the 2019 class of Mississippi Top 50 in the Business, Media and Culture category. Mississippi Top 50 is an annual list of the people who are judged to be the most influential leaders in the state. This bipartisan selection of leaders comes from the ranks of elected and appointed officials, economic development professionals, business, media and government affairs. Steve has been honored with "Steve Azar Day" in the states of Mississippi (on March 13th) and South Dakota (on August 10th).

In October of 2019, Azar was enshrined on the Mississippi Country Music Trail as the trail's 32nd marker was unveiled in Greenville, Mississippi. Governor Bryant was in attendance and spoke at the marker unveiling ceremony. Azar's class also included the legends Jerry Lee Lewis (Nesbit, MS) and Marty Gamblin (Philadelphia, MS) as well as Johnny Cash's "Starkville City Jail" track and Jimmie Rodgers' Bristol, Tennessee music sessions.

Also, in 2019, Azar officially released the bicentennial anthem "One Mississippi" after a request from then Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant that Steve write the official song to commemorate the state's bicentennial anniversary. From slug burgers to The Muppets to the Natchez Trace Parkway, "One Mississippi" highlights the charm and history of the Magnolia State. The song was recorded at The Mississippi Arts and Entertainment Experience (The Max) in Meridian. The official music video, filmed and produced by Azar's son Strack, documents this recording session which was the very first recording at The Max.

In October 2020, Azar released a compilation exclusive vinyl, CD and digital release titled *My Mississippi Reunion* featuring "One Mississippi" along with a collection of new and remastered songs, all about home. The album won the 2021 Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters award for best contemporary album. In March 2022, legislature passed a bill to make "One Mississippi" the official state song and in April 2022 Governor Tate Reeves signed the bill into law. Azar published his first book, "One Mississippi", a

children's book based on the song which made the #1 Best Seller list in Mississippi out of all children's books released nationwide. Azar was presented with the Lifetime Achievement award at the 2023 Mississippi Music Awards.

With a keen interest in mentorship, Steve has enjoyed being the artist in residence since 2011 working with the students at the Delta Music Institute, part of Delta State University. He was also featured as a mentor on the reality show, "Banded the Music Competition" airing on AXS TV network in 2023-24.

In April 2024 Steve was featured at the Grammy Museum a Mississippi in an exhibit "Celebrating Mississippi's Influence", alongside Marty Stewart, Faith Hill, Jerry Lee Lewis, Bobby, Rush, Charley Pride, Mary Wilson of the Supremes and Leontine Price.

Azar is a featured artist with his song "Our Castle is Your Home" on the Grammy nominated *Rock for Children, Vol 1* album also featuring legendary artists Alice Cooper, Judas Priest's Rob Halford, Steve Cropper, Slash, DMC and more.

Azar serves as brand ambassador for the award-winning Dancing Rabbit Golf courses and Pearl River Resort in the rolling hills of Choctaw, Mississippi as well as Mississippi based food company Sherin Foods. In 2024, Steve launched the **I Don't Have to Be Me 'Til Monday Bloody Mary Mix**, his own signature blend, appropriately named after his weekend anthem.

"Steve Azar's Mississippi", Azar's resident show in his hometown of Greenville, is **Viking Cruise** line's number one rated show and event on the Mississippi.

For more information visit: www.steveazar.com