

THE OAK RIDGE BOYS

BURIED TREASURES

The Oak Ridge Boys are paying tribute to their favorite songs without losing sight of their gospel roots in a stunning and inspiring new album, *Buried Treasures*.

Produced by Anderson East and executive produced by Dave Cobb, *Buried Treasures* gathers together classic songs made popular by seminal voices such as Louis Armstrong and Nat King Cole, as well as essential songs written by Billy Joe Shaver, Paul Simon, and Bill Withers. The vocal group's spiritual side shines through on recordings of "Deep River," "How Great Thou Art," and "Softly and Tenderly," yet there's also a hint of romance in the enduring ballad, "You Are So Beautiful." The album's only new song, "Buried Treasure," was written specifically for the project by Academy Award-winning songwriter Aaron Raitiere.

"Every song on the album is about something that's dear to us," Oaks member Duane Allen says. "These songs are all 'buried treasures,' meaning we had never previously recorded these great hits."

"It was a lot of fun, reaching back to some of these classic songs," fellow Oaks member William Lee Golden adds. "I feel like this album touched on our love of life, love of family, love of our mates that we've chosen in life, and also the love of God."

Recording *Buried Treasures* also provided healing after a period of personal challenges for The Oak Ridge Boys. Duane Allen's wife of 54 years, Nora Lee Allen, died in March 2024. The group then mourned the loss of tenor singer Joe Bonsall in July 2024. Just days before Bonsall's death, William Lee Golden lost his eldest son, William "Rusty" Golden Jr. In addition, last year bass singer Richard Sterban began scaling back his concert appearances due to an illness. Through it all, The Oak Ridge Boys continued to tour and record, finding solace in music.

Buried Treasures is the second studio album with the group's new tenor singer, Ben James, who joined the group in December 2023. Bass singer Aaron Lee McCune officially joined The Oak Ridge Boys' road lineup in August 2026 due to Sterban's extended leave of absence. Sterban still makes cameos when he can.

Producer Anderson East grew up in North Alabama, where he remembers The Oak Ridge Boys being so familiar, they felt like family. East knew he wanted to record the group live in his Nashville studio. (Dave Cobb joined the sessions remotely from his Savannah, Georgia, studio.) In an effort to capture their distinct personalities in the music, East placed four reclining chairs in a semi-circle.

"The chairs were down on the floor, and the whole album feels like that," Allen says. "You can listen to this album, and you can have a relaxing, comforting feeling, because these are such great songs. They never get old. When another voice in the group comes on singing, there's just another treat because you're hearing it a different way than you've ever heard it before."

East recalls, "Getting to watch them work out parts, and who's singing what – it was incredible to see it all happen. Everything was in the moment. Also, their enthusiasm was amazing. It's so inspiring to see a group of guys at this point in their career still excited, wanting to be there, and thoughtful about everything."

The opening track, “Bridge Over Troubled Water,” is indeed a full-circle moment. In the early 1970s, when the group was primarily known for their Southern gospel songs, Duane Allen met Paul Simon at the Grammy Awards and complimented him on the arrangement of “Love Me Like a Rock.” They eventually developed a professional relationship that led to The Oak Ridge Boys singing on Simon’s Top 5 pop hit, “Slip Slidin’ Away,” in 1977. That same year, the Oaks secured their breakthrough hit on country radio with “Y’All Come Back Saloon.”

The encouraging message of “Lean on Me” is a natural fit for *Buried Treasures*, lending itself perfectly to four-part harmonies. “Deep River” honors Duane Allen’s abiding love of black gospel and spiritual music, and is a reverent tribute to his father, a bass singer who used to sing “Deep River.” In concert, the Oaks’ rendition of “How Great Thou Art” is a showstopper, so it only made sense to capture it in the studio. “Softy and Tenderly” brings another subdued moment to the album.

Meanwhile, “What a Wonderful World” features exceptional guest vocals from Tim Duncan, who regularly performed the song with the group on tour while serving as a temporary replacement for Richard Sterban. *Buried Treasures* concludes with Ben James’ sterling vocal performance on the Joe Cocker classic, “You Are So Beautiful.”

Golden’s lead vocal on Billy Joe Shaver’s “Live Forever” is especially heartfelt because he had worked with the legendary country songwriter and his son, Eddy Shaver, on some past projects. The Great American Songbook staple, “Stardust,” was chosen at the request of their long-tenured manager, Jim Halsey, who guided their career from gospel music to country superstardom in the 1970s.

The Oak Ridge Boys’ impressive list of accolades includes five Grammy Awards, two CMA Awards, and four ACM Awards, as well as inductions into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame, the Grand Ole Opry, and the Country Music Hall of Fame. Their 1981 single, “Elvira” remains their signature song in a catalog spanning 34 Top 10 country singles, with 17 of those reaching No. 1.

“Music has been a healing thing for each of us when we get together and sing songs. It’s uplifting and it’s something we never get tired of,” Golden says. “Certainly at our age, we realize just how small we are, and how great God is, and without all the blessings that we’ve had from God, we wouldn’t be where we are today. So, it’s those things that hold us together.”