

SIMPLE LIFE, COMPLEX MUSIC

By Cindy Peters

Today Charlie Daniels died at age 83. I really admired that man with the magic fiddle fingers. My husband saw him in concert 20 years ago. The speed and accuracy that he played the violin was amazing. Man, he could make that fiddle sing!

Daniels was born October 28, 1936 in Wilmington, North Carolina. He was exposed to Gospel, Bluegrass, Country, and Rock music at an early age. He was skilled on the guitar, fiddle, banjo, and mandolin. He graduated from high school in 1955 and afterwards he formed a rock and roll band and hit the road.

Charlie Daniels was a simple man who wrote and performed complex music. Daniels made huge contributions in his career to Southern Rock, Country, and Bluegrass Music. He was best known for his number one country hit in 1979, "The Devil Went Down to Georgia." Daniels won a Grammy Award for that song and it was used in the movie, "Urban Cowboy." He made an onscreen appearance in that movie. Daniels played on three of Bob Dylan's albums 1960-1970. Daniels was honored with 6 BMI Awards throughout his career. He was inducted into the Cheyenne Frontier Days Hall of Fame in 2002, the Grand Ole Opry in 2008, the Musicians Hall of Fame in 2009 and the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2016. The only criticism his music received was when he wrote a 1989 song entitled "Simple Man." It was considered by some a vigilante song. He used such lyrics as, "Just take them rascals (rapists, killers, child abusers) out on the swamp. Put 'em on their knees and tie 'em to a stump. Let the rattlers and the bugs and the alligators do the rest "

Daniels married his wife Hazel in 1964 and he had one son Charlie Daniels, Jr. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, snowmobiling and other outdoor activities. Daniels kept working despite his multitude of health problems. In 1980 he suffered three complete breaks in his right arm, and two broken fingers when his shirtsleeve caught on a spinning auger. This injury required surgery and sidelined him for four months. Daniels was successfully treated for prostate cancer in 2001. In January 2010 he suffered from a stroke while snowmobiling in Colorado. He recovered and was released from the hospital two days later. In 2013 during a routine doctor visit it was discovered that he had pneumonia and he needed a pacemaker to regulate his heart rate. Again, he was released from the hospital within a few days. He was one tough man. He could no longer cheat death with his passing today from a stroke. There will never be another musician like Charlie Daniels.