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Billy Edd Wheeler

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The urge to write songs and sing came to me earlier than the urge to paint. But they were equally strong urges and both surprised me, for nobody in my West Virginia family had painted or been musical.

My first experience with oil paint began at age 18 at Warren Wilson College, with tips on perspective and mixing colors from First Lady, Mrs. Arthur Bannerman, who would, 13 years later, become my mother-in-law.

Now, 57 years later, I paint with alkyd oil, acrylic and pastel. I am attracted to rhythm and motion, doing mostly landscapes. Just as most of my songs begin with rhythm, then melody, then color, (words)—I start a painting with motion in mind, then melody (motif), adding color and rhythmic shapes until it says what I think it wants to say. Not the essence of truth, philosophical enlightenment or the meaning of life. Nope. Just honoring the urge and getting caught up in the exhilarating, unadulterated joy of painting.

—*Billy Edd Wheeler*