



## The **Nashville Rocks**® Audio Podcast

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### Episode 1 – Nathan Brumley

notes at: <http://nashvillerocks.com/2014/07/nashville-rocks-podcast-episode-1-nathan-brumley/>

**Jason Coleman:** Whats up Rockers... welcome to the first Nashville Rocks Audio Podcast episode, my name is Jason Coleman and I'm your host. This podcast is intended to help independent musicians, bands, songwriters and artists of all kind with their craft, I'll be interviewing artists of all walks so you could see what makes them successful and hopefully that will help you find some tricks and techniques that will help you with your career. It is also intended as an entertainment show; we'll have great artists with great music, so tune in close and enjoy the show.

My first guest is this successful songwriter Nathan Brumley- he has won many song writing competitions including the Embassy Music National Song Writing Contest in 2000, he has had publishing deals, he's had five albums, he's got his tunes on major television shows, he has written and recorded with well known producers here in Nashville, he has been compared to Ben Folds Five and he is here to share his experiences and some new tunes and he is here to talk about his career. Remember you can always check things out on NashvilleRocks.com, there you will find independent and music industry news, artist profiles, links to this podcast, t-shirts and there is a pilot episode of the video version of Nashville Rocks for you to check out. Also I want to remind you to stay tuned because we'll be giving away a prize at the end of the podcast.

Our first guest is Nathan Brumley, welcome to the podcast.

**Nathan Brumley:** thanks for having me on.

**Jason Coleman:** Man It's great to have you back and it seems like we've done this before.

**Nathan Brumley:** Yeah (laughs)

**Jason Coleman:** For those of you that don't know, this is the second time that I've actually had Nathan in the studio with me because we did a full episode and I had a horrible massive hard drive erasure happen at Mac Authority, they weren't supposed to be fooling with this

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hard drive and they accidentally erased it so we are recovering from that, we are doing a second interview so that we can get this thing out there.

Alright, so can you tell us a little bit about yourself and your music, just kind of in a broad scope.

**Nathan Brumley:** Yeah, basically I started off my songwriting in the Christian music market, and it's kind of basis as starter as a song writer and evolved into getting into a kind of production and then into kind of singing my own songs and doing the whole artist thing for a while but since then I just started as a songwriter that comes looking for an opportunity of my music.

**Jason Coleman:** Tell us a little bit about your experience with, we talked about the song writing competitions that you've won, can you tell us a little bit about your experience with that because I know a lot of people have a foul taste in the mouth with song writing competitions in general, do you love them or you hate them those people that are on either side of the line, how has it affected you with your song writing contest and your career.

**Nathan Brumley:** I think they've done me well I initially moved to Nashville on a publishing deal that I got from winning the national song writing competition with Embassy music so it has basically gotten me my start here in town and Nashville and then winning the USA song writing competition in 2008 allowed me to get some great gear for my studio. I really have no bad things to say about them, I will say that you can drop a lot of money and I will routinely enter 8-10 songs and either drop three to four hundred dollars on all of my songs. It can get pretty costly but the returns are always nice when I got the second or third prize, it was a bonus.

**Jason Coleman:** So you are mentioning gear, you got gear along with the cash prizes.

**Nathan Brumley:** Yeah, I think there was one where It was like I got close to 10 grand worth of gear and different prizes, there was no cash but there was like a recording gear, instruments, stuff like that and it was pretty cool, pretty sweet.

**Jason Coleman:** So you built a pretty good studio at this point?

**Nathan Brumley:** you know it's okay, definitely winning that helped a lot, I mean that was nice.

**Jason Coleman:** You record at home or you do it in someone else's studio, did you just do your demos at home or record in other studios?

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**Nathan Brumley:** I do most of my stuff at home, I sub out for drum work, live drum work or maybe guitarists or base players, but I do most myself you know the editing and vocals midi at my house.

**Jason Coleman:** Nice because you are primarily piano right?

**Nathan Brumley:** Yeah

**Jason Coleman:** That's song writing competitions, let's takes a step back and talk about how you used your music and your skills as a songwriter to give back, you're involved in Songs of Love, can you tell us a little bit about that?

**Nathan Brumley:** Yeah, I was actually looking for some opportunities one day in the Scene magazine which is a local Nashville publication and they were looking for song writers for their songs of love. Songs of love basically takes song writers and pair them with a child, usually a child with a terminal illness, but it can be really anything, I've written songs for everything from terminal brain tumours to kids with hyperactivity or it can have a broad range of different ailments but we just basically get a list of their interests and we kind of write a song that customised to them, kind of taking all of their hobbies and all other fun things that they like to do so basically just create the song from the scratch and then we send it to the child , so it's really been a gratifying experience for me.

**Jason Coleman:** So a child gets a custom song written about them for them, this is the first time I'm hearing this, it's pretty awesome

**Nathan Brumley:** Yeah it's cool and they encourage us to use their name a lot in the song, like it was pretty much every verse that says their name at least two or three times, like that the child really feels like it's singing to them. I can never forget my first case was a child with a terminal brain tumour.

**Jason Coleman:** Do you spend time with the child or you were given the information.

**Nathan Brumley:** I would have liked to actually did to perform live for the child but they lived in different cities but I'll tell you it was very rewarding and it was also very sad at the same time knowing that a lot of this children, especially when you have kids too. You know when you have kids and knowing that many of those kids are in their final days, it was very sad and it was bitter sweet.

**Jason Coleman:** So you first cry and then you write a song- pretty much guys can cry it's okay. Well that's awesome organization. I imagine if you Google Songs of Love you can find those guys, I encourage you for an organisation like that, if you are song writer and you have something to give, get out there that's a great thing.

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You have gotten your tunes on some television shows, we are going to talk more about those but let's listen first to the track that got so much attention "show me something real" by Nathan Brumley

### **Song: *Show Me Something Real***

**Jason Coleman:** Alright we are back with Nathan Brumley and that was "show me something real". So tell us a little bit how this song ended up driving so much interest in getting on these television shows.

**Nathan Brumley:** well, it was kind of funny because the album that it came from was a total flop in the Christian market when we promote to radio that it got no response from the Christian market and when I had started pitching for film TV opportunities, it's like the album just took on a whole new life of its own. Yeah the film supervisor seemed to like the commercial pop style that was produced in it. It really found more of a home in the TV market than it ever did in the Christian radio. So, it just kind of started by basically just pitching from a site Sonic Bids, this pitch for several opportunities I had found that several of the companies like the sound of the songs and that's one of the first ones that they picked out that they really liked.

**Jason Coleman:** Awesome. And so can we talk about which shows, is it that one song ended up on several shows?

**Nathan Brumley:** Yeah, one song ended up on several shows but kind of several on that album went to different shows that one went out to "Ugly Betty" was one show that I've seen that one, of course the other one was "Life unexpected" and then I had another track that I just heard on "the voice" the other night it was from the voice a few years ago.

**Jason Coleman:** And this was a licensing thing too and it was a buy-out

**Nathan Brumley:** this one was a buy out from Warner Brothers Which that on a side note can have its ups and downs.

**Jason Coleman:** You get to promote that you have a song but they paid you once and they are done and they can use it as many times as they want.

**Nathan Brumley:** Yeah exactly, they are seeing what's called the upfront or the sync fee, I still have the royalties to those songs but it's definitely a good way to get your name out there. Sometimes that's all you need is to get started in the industry.

**Jason Coleman:** So you said you mentioned "sonic bids" You found sonic bids and used them and they are the ones who pitch your songs, is that how it works, is it just [sonicbids.com](http://sonicbids.com)?

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**Nathan Brumley:** Yes sonicbids.com, they are basically a host a lot of different companies that promote their opportunities and all they'll say they are looking for a specific style or genre or film TV, opportunity, artist pitch and I was just kind of thrown a lot of stuff out there the TV market seemed to be my most successful pitches.

**Jason Coleman:** Right, that's great man. So you've been performing for a long time, writing and performing, you write more than you perform. Have you noticed your style changing at all or have you had people come up and say you sound like this person and then over time oh you sound more like this person, does that happen?

**Nathan Brumley:** Yeah, when I first move into town I was definitely much of a pop sound or a Rock sound and I think I've kind of evolved to more of pop-Rock, with the style of changes in music, I tend to write more ballad when I first moved into town but I just realized that pop-tempo songs are really where there most of commercial sales are, so I guess maybe I have gone from more of a subdued style to more of a top forty sort of style.

**Jason Coleman:** That kind of eludes to my second question in that are you intentionally writing for specific styles so that they are more commercially viable.

**Nathan Brumley:** Yeah I think I am over time, you know I start out doing whatever I felt like doing but with having kids it's definitely more intentional and it's focused on those specific opportunities because so many songs are out there and so many of them get shelved, I just try to be very specific.

**Jason Coleman:** I've heard of an entire artist repertoire being shelved, they just buy you to get you off the market and put you on the shelf.

**Nathan Brumley:** Yes it's really crazy you know even great artists put out amazing albums that get shelved. So I really just try to write for specific opportunities like on the day that this comes out I write specifically for that and that tends to be kind of striking when the iron is hot that way it doesn't get buried in a pile of other songs in the library.

**Jason Coleman:** Well you've got kind of a proximal reaction to that too.

**Nathan Brumley:** Yeah, it is time sensitive, since it says "hey we need something by Wednesday, so I know that if I pitch something it is going to get listened to for this specific opportunity, it's more like you said it is intentional and specific.

**Jason Coleman:** So have you changed your approach since the whole downloading thing has changed because you've been writing for so long that has actually occurred during your tenure of writing? What kind of changes have you had to make because of the downloading?

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**Nathan Brumley:** you know when I first moved to town, people were still buying CDs and it was actually after the Napster became big and all downloading spiral kind of went down from there. I've really felt like not hurting out, not playing out has really hurt me because that's where artists make a lot of their money like merch and other streams of income apart from CD sales but I really have the opinion that if an artist isn't out there performing then it's very hard to sell physical CDs or even make themselves known to have downloads. It is hard and I would say that streaming is definitely the new frontier but it is a lot harder to make a living off streaming just because of the percentages seems to be a lot lower what the artist gets out of that. Yeah it has definitely changed the ball game and I think that you know TV and film licensing is kind of the next biggest thing right now.

**Jason Coleman:** That has opened up in the last fifteen years or so.

**Nathan Brumley:** Yeah, but even still now the TV market is getting more competitive, so many more are just finding out about income avenue and that's getting a lot harder for me than it was for me five six years ago.

**Jason Coleman:** That kind of moves into my next question is that when writing becomes difficult, when writing can't be your full focus, you've got to maintain a day job what is it that you do?

**Nathan Brumley:** I'm a personal fitness trainer, and I've been doing it since my seventeenth year, actually the day I turned eighteen I started training at a gym in Idaho and basically just kind of carried that over to Tennessee when I moved here. Well it has been a nice job till I kind of worked out my writing and music into my day, still have time to balance the family and get my stuff done while the kids are at school, so it been a good schedule for doing both.

**Jason Coleman:** It's a social business too I imagine you run into a lot of people personal training.

**Nathan Brumley:** Yeah I do, I run into a lot of song writer producers, it's been kind of ...

**Jason Coleman:** and you're like "oh Yeah I'm a song writer too"...

**Nathan Brumley:** There are so many of them I've known for many years I don't even tell them I do it because

**Jason Coleman:** You don't want to be the guy that says "will you listen to my tape..."

**Nathan Brumley:** as I have my pocket stocked full of CDs, kind of tacky during a work-out, many of those guys that's all they've ever known me as is a trainer so it's funny when they happen to find out through the grape vine it is funny because they usually see me in the limelight of training.

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**Jason Coleman:** How has the writing and your day job really affected your family? Do you see any changes in them because of your writing? Do the kids have to be quiet while you are in the studio? How do you work your writing around your family?

**Nathan Brumley:** pretty much I do nothing while they are at home, or awake when they get home. I do most of my work in the afternoon or in and around appointments during the day or I'll do it when they're in bed at night. It's much too hard when they are awake and we always have so much going on in the house.

**Jason Coleman:** It's hard to keep train of thought, writing a song and you've got a kid coming in "will you come play with me?"

**Nathan Brumley:** you know practicing or any of that stuff, you know they will want to bang on the piano with me too it's tough to really get.

**Jason Coleman:** Are they picking it up yet?

**Nathan Brumley:** you know they are trying to, they've got so much energy that they can only focus for about fifteen seconds.

**Jason Coleman:** Like a gold fish...

**Nathan Brumley:** Or they think they already know it.

**Jason Coleman:** Great ok well lets take a quick break and we'll be back with more with Nathan Brumley...

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**Jason Coleman:** Alright we are back with Nathan Brumley on Nashville Rocks Audio Podcast. So let's talk about the kind of stuff you are writing right now, what are you writing right now?

**Nathan Brumley:** you know it's really diverse right now, I'm writing anything from Christian to pop to pop Rock to Indy Rock to electronica to dance pop. Really, these days I've kind of diversified, kind of focused on different markets so to kind of see what is gaining the best response that's basically doing a lot of collaborations in seven different styles discussing what hit's and what's popular.

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**Jason Coleman:** That's interesting to hear you say that because it reminds me of the first time that i got out of school, my degree is actually in multi-channel recording, I studied the recording industry and the place I had my internship they actually had me dubbing CDs at one point but what this publishing company's focus was they would look at what's going on the top charts. They would create a disk of all the top chart songs and send them all out to their top writers and say this is what's going on in the market, this is whats selling, write like this. I don't know if publishing companies are still doing that kind of thing but there has to be some business validity to doing that.

**Nathan Brumley:** I think it is a great idea because you've got to know thing change so fast and nuances in the writing and production. It's important to me, I'm always listening to what the freshest thing on radio, what's the hottest band, buzz band, you know it's very valuable. Like I said things change so quickly better to keep on top of that.

**Jason Coleman:** And there's a new generation around the corner every 5 years or ten years or whatever...Alright well let's take a listen to ...what is it shang?

**Nathan Brumley:** Shangri-la When I titled my mp3 I forgot to change the name of it. It is of the EP from the Bitter Selway.

### **Song: *Shangri-La***

**Jason Coleman:** Hi we are back with Nathan Brumley and that Shangri-La is a little more gritty than "show me something real"

**Nathan Brumley:** I was kind of inspired a lot by the black keys, jack white, the white stripes. Yeah we are kind of keeping the same pattern of song writing but just a little bit harder on the production. Just kind of branching out and reach some new fans.

**Jason Coleman:** Did you work with someone else on this production or is that the next song?

**Nathan Brumley:** this song was entirely produced by me, I did sub out to another producer for some guitar parts and he kind of gives it that kind of authentic Jack white.

**Jason Coleman:** And you've worked with him before too right?, tell us some more about your relationship with him.

**Nathan Brumley:** Yeah Brent Hendrich is one the first producers that I've worked with in town, he also produced my first record "show me a sign" in 2004 and he then went on to win a douve in Christian music business for his work, very talented he was like twenty-one when he produced my record but you'd never know it by the sound he is just a graduate from SAE very gifted producer and a guitar player.



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**Jason Coleman:** Nice, alright are you producing or mentoring any other artists?

**Nathan Brumley:** oh Yeah, right now am working with an artist Jenn Franklin, she is kinda more of a pop-Rock piano artist very similar to myself, very similar sound and I would say that I would like her to meet maybe like Tori Amos or sort of that line of female piano artist, Yeah a little darker but great well written songs, great pop and I brought Brent in on some of the guitar works on her stuff and now we are bringing in Kelly Clarkson's drummer on a few of the tracks for her that we are working on.

**Jason Coleman:** Is the drummer in Nashville?

**Nathan Brumley:** he is actually my neighbour.

**Jason Coleman:** There are so many big people in Nashville and you just trip over them all the time.

**Nathan Brumley:** It's crazy; I never would have guessed that he lived even in my neighbourhood how many people are in the music business and are phenomenal and are doing big things and they are just all around us.

**Jason Coleman:** You know I go to church in Franklin, Franklin is like the hub of Nashville music business right now and so many out there and artists living in Franklin, it's ridiculous. When you go to one of our church's sessions, the band that's up on stage is just so phenomenal because they are all music business folks and they play for their church because they love to do it.

**Nathan Brumley:** Yea when I first moved to Nashville I heard some of these bands play in churches it pretty make me feel like want to dig a hole and hide there because I felt so far below where some of these players were that it just blew my mind that even going to church sounded like a concert that was so great, you know the musicians were so talented and it just blew my mind.

**Jason Coleman:** Alright let's take a listen to another track and this is "unlovable" from Nathan Brumley.

**Song:** *Unloveable*

**Jason Coleman:** Alright we are back with Nathan Brumley and you just heard "unlovable" and that one has some up beatness to it as well.

**Nathan Brumley:** Yeah that's kind of a cross between the first one and kind of a grungier style, so it's kind of like the harder side of pop and yeah kind of trying some new stuff and Rockin out with guitars as well.

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**Jason Coleman:** I love guitar music

**Nathan Brumley:** There's something to be said about a ballad but there is just something about a good Rock song and really it gets me excited. I love a beat-Rock.

**Jason Coleman:** So let's move forward. One of the intentions that I have for the Nashville Rock podcast is good and concrete information for up and coming artists, song writers, even people who are in Middle America who are thinking "I should move to Nashville and become a star", something that people can use and help their own careers. So can you give us kind of an actionable something that song writers or an artist can use right now that will help them, something like a tip that will help them right away be better at their art?

**Nathan Brumley:** the one thing that I am going to say that has helped me is going to take time that is the one thing, you've got to give yourself you know they say: give it the five year plan. This is my fourteenth year and there are still places that I thought I would be and I've not arrived there yet. The one thing that I'm going to say is: just get ready for a long haul and try to do at least one thing daily to further yourself towards your dreams whether it is a song writer, reach out to two or three collaborations on Facebook or twitter or networking with somebody. I heard a recent tip that a guy told me about where it's called the five rule, it is basically you know in week try to reach out to five new people five days a week, whether it be a publisher, producer, song writer over time once a day and over the year that amounts to about a thousand people. So if you are doing one thing to further yourself every day, then you've only felt what you've given up trying. And just because you are not successful in five years does not mean your music is bad because I said my first record totally was not a success in Christian but I believed in it I knew that I had some song with potential, I kept pushing it and found a whole new success in the TV market.

**Jason Coleman:** The perfect example.

**Nathan Brumley:** if I had kept pursuing the radio or the Christian market, I think I would have been defeated, I wouldn't have achieved the success that would on the TV market on the same songs. Music is very subjectible you know, one crowd may not very much like it, you may get to another and it may be the best thing that they've heard. So, persistence, just because you are not getting immediate response doesn't mean the music is bad, just finding the right target audience is really a big thing.

**Jason Coleman:** That's right, there are so much music out there and there are so many different types of fans. I love hard Rock but my wife loves country, she doesn't even know who Metallica is you know she has no clue whatever, unfortunately I've had to go to a few country concerts but that's the nature of being in Nashville but you know moving on with the interview there are some things that we missed from last time and one of them is that: can

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you tell us a little about some of your performances because you've performed in a lot of different places as well, do you have any experiences performing you will like to share with us?

**Nathan Brumley:** Yeah, I've been fortunate to play at Blue Bird four or five times. And the blue bird is for people in that town is a pretty big song writing venue in town and a lot of the big Nashville writers will play there who have had number ones mainly in the country market but also in the pop market as well. I was able to do a big round one time with Keith Steagall who is a big country producer who produced Allen Jackson and a host of other ones that I was able to play with a lot of number one writers for an event even Nashville. Songs of who I've had a big benefit of playing with big Nashville writers. But most has ever been I play, I do have a band, I have a full band, I don't do a whole lot of full band stuff anymore, the stuff now is me just being a song writer. But I've always been a big supporter of causes, I've done some stuff at the Lupus foundation.

**Jason Coleman:** That's where we met actually.

**Nathan Brumley:** Yeah, and of course the songs of love and I also I've worked with MS groups a little bit, so I'm all about.

**Jason Coleman:** And those are big crowds usually, there's plenty of benefit because there used to be a lot of folks that show up for those and you get more feedback that way too.

**Nathan Brumley:** those have been really good. Yeah I've been able to get a better feel for how the music hit's with audiences like that, I get some really good bands in there too, it's cool to be able to see everyone come together both a good cause and to hear some good music.

**Jason Coleman:** You got anything you are promoting right now?

**Nathan Brumley:** Yeah I'm actually working on a new Christian pop project here that should probably shoot from maybe the first of the summer, releasing it in basically trying to get to the basics. I took a break for a while from the Christian kind of got into Indie Rock, dance pop, this is kind of getting back to basic you know Christian radio, friendly songs, getting a whole bit of worship songs and you know some of the old pop I used to do on my first record so I'm excited to kind of see where this goes, as it kind of going on in a new direction yet again just trying to see how it all pans out.

**Jason Coleman:** Well, how do fans out there find Nathan Brumley?

**Nathan Brumley:** probably my best site now, my revermation site is <http://www.revermation.com/nathanbrumley> or my sound cloud at <http://soundcloud.com/nathanbrumleysongwriter>

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**Jason Coleman:** You add that song writer because there is another Nathan Brumley, are you kidding me?

Nathan Brumley: actually there is a guy on Facebook that I know.

**Jason Coleman:** Okay, you know now that we are in the digital age you find out that there are people with your name all over the country.

**Nathan Brumley:** Yeah I thought for sure, there is this one more but what's funny is that I think Facebook acts to secure of one these persons pages as mine so whenever I go from like a mobile device I go in there and I get all these feeds and I think I've got to get that fixed but not that Nathan Brumley.

**Jason Coleman:** And you have a twitter?

**Nathan Brumley:** I do and it's <http://twitter.com/nbrum7770>

**Jason Coleman:** You have a youtube?

**Nathan Brumley:** I do and it's <http://youtube.com/user/NathanBrumley>

**Jason Coleman:** Sweet and you can have [nathanbrumley.com](http://nathanbrumley.com) real soon. So we got that going on and Nathan I want to sincerely thank you for being the first guest on Nashville Rocks Audio Podcast, it's been a pleasure having you and we look forward to hearing more about your songs and what you are up to you know here in the near future. You know let me know what's going on, we want to hear your new songs when you release it, we'll get it on the show, I'd love to have more songs on the show so that's something that I'm going to be doing in the future.

**Nathan Brumley:** that sounds good I'm excited.

**Jason Coleman:** Awesome. Alright we thank you all for listening to Nashville Rock Audio Podcast. As we said we are going to give away some Nathan Brumley tunes and his first release "show me a sign" and even maybe a mystery gift. So here is what you'll do, go to [nashvilleRocks.com](http://nashvilleRocks.com) and sign up for our newsletter, every newsletter subscription that comes in will be an entry into the contest. We'll announce the winner on the next podcast. Now don't go and sign up a bunch of times, we'll be watching out for that kind of thing if you don't care about the newsletter then just send an e-mail to <mailto:info@nashvillerocks.com> with the subject line Nathan Brumley.

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Well that's the show I hope you enjoyed it, join us next time when we have another exciting musical guest on Nashville Rocks Audio Podcast. Goodbye and God bless.

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