



10 BURNING QUESTIONS FOR... Terry Cashman

Special to Page 2

Terry Cashman has been called "the Balladeer of Baseball."

During the strike of 1981, his song, "Talkin' Baseball (Willie, Mickey, and 'The Duke)'" - inspired by a photo of the three great New York outfielders together -- became a hit. Since then, he has written and recorded dozens of baseball songs, including "The Money Doesn't Matter To Me," "Ichiro," "The Ballad of Herb Score," and versions of "Talkin' Baseball" for almost every major-league team. His latest release is "A Tattered Flag in the Breeze ('Michael's Song)," about the emotional Sept. 21, 2001 game at Shea Stadium -- the first game played in New York after 9/11.

Cashman is a music biz veteran, having produced Jim Croce, co-written Spanky and Our Gang's '60s hit, "Sunday Will Never Be the Same," and written songs for the Partridge Family. He's also a former pro baseball player, having played for two years in the Tigers' farm system. If you want to look his stats up, his real name is Dennis Minogue.

Page 2's Jeff Merron recently caught up with Cashman for 10 Burning Questions.

1. Page 2: How many baseball songs have you written and produced?

Terry Cashman: If you count all of the "Talkin' Baseball" songs, there are probably about 70.

2. Who's your audience? Who are you writing for?

Cashman: It depends on the song. When I'm writing the team songs, I just picture myself as a fan of the team. What would I like if I'm a fan? What names would you want to hear as a fan?

On "Talkin' Baseball" songs, I do a lot of research. I'm a baseball historian, but still I have to go use Total Baseball and see who plays for what teams and make a list of names, and I need rhymes, so I need quite an extensive list. A guy can make the song just because his name rhymes with the name of another player.

Other times things just strike me. I wrote a song about Herb Score because I remember seeing him when he came up, and I felt that fate dealt him a bad hand. It was something that touched me. And Opening Day -- it's one of the great days of the year. It should be a national holiday. That inspired my song "Opening Day."



Terry Cashman says he's probably written around 70 songs about baseball.

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3. You're a Mets fan. If you had been an Opening Day DJ at Shea, what songs would have been in your rotation?

Cashman: I would have gotten a list of songs that had the message: Winter is over, spring is here, life starts again.

So, there'd be some of my own songs -- "Talkin' Baseball (Willie, Mickey, and 'The Duke)" and "Opening Day."

I'd also have played:

- "Center Field," by John Fogerty
- "Take Me Out To the Ball Game"
- "Here Comes the Sun"
- "When the Red, Red Robin comes Bob, Bob, Bobbin' Along"
- "It Might As Well Be Spring"

What's your favorite baseball song, other than your own?

Cashman: "Van Lingle Mungo." I've always wanted to do a version with a choir -- a big choir -- and a lot of harmonies. Maybe one of these days.

4. Can you make a living by writing songs about baseball?

Cashman: Not really. I'm lucky enough to have produced a lot of records and written other songs that provide most of my income. I do make some income from the baseball songs, though, and "Talkin' Baseball (Willie, Mickey, and 'The Duke)" has done well. But it's very hard to sell these records because it's very hard to get them distributed. You can't sell them at the ballpark because the markups are too high.



Mike Piazza's dramatic homer last Sept. 21 inspired Cashman's song "A Tattered Flag in the Breeze ('Michael's Song')."

What else do you do besides your baseball music?

Cashman: I've been in the music business all my life. I produce different artists. There's income from copyrights. And there are some people who have optioned all my baseball songs for a Broadway show. It's great. I've always felt that my baseball songs haven't got the exposure they should have.

5. You've written songs about other sports. Does baseball work better for writing songs?

Cashman: Oh yeah. There isn't any comparison. It's a pastoral, gentle game. There's no clocks, no helmets. There are so many analogies you can draw, and there's the lexicon. It's become part of the language and culture.

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6. What inspired your latest song, "Tattered Flag in the Breeze (Michael's Song)?"

Cashman: Sept. 11 had taken the starch out of everybody, but I'm a big Mets fan, and I had watched the three games in Pittsburgh. I was thinking, "Should I really care?" But as the days go by, you realize that you have to get back to as much of a normal life as you can. I was watching that first Mets game at Shea on TV, and there was "God Bless America" and Diana Ross, and then during the game there were shots of firemen in the stands.

I just felt strange, weird -- all the feelings about what had happened were bottled up. I was angry, and scared, and confused, and then the score was 2-1 and (Mike) Piazza comes up and I said to myself, "This guy is such a clutch hitter, this is asking too much ..." and before that thought was totally in my head the ball was out of the park. And I just started crying, and I had this tremendous release of anger and anxiety. I called my wife and I said, "You have to see this. This is why I love baseball." You could just feel how there was a release all over New York. Like we'd turned a corner.

The next day I thought, "I'll bet a lot of people felt the way I did." The symbolism was just so strong in terms of our country and the best of our ideals, and that flag and, in a lot of ways, baseball stands for that and those ideals. And I think the lyrics really portrayed the before and after. I'm very proud of it.



Cashman says Pete Rose has no place in Cooperstown.

7. You've recorded versions of "Talkin' Baseball" for both Minnesota and Montreal. If MLB contracts, are you going to "contract" the compilation CDs those songs are on?

Cashman: Oh, no. I'm going to keep the ones that are there. If the poor Twins disappear, that song would be valuable.

8. Your song, "The Money Doesn't Matter to Me," isn't the most flattering picture of today's players. You sing, sarcastically, "It's all about winning and a new beginning, the bucks don't matter to me." Is that your view of modern players?

Cashman: Well, last year, especially with (Mike) Hampton, A-Rod and (Manny) Ramirez, it was a joke. They sign for the most money, and if it's \$10 more they'll go to Siberia. Everyone knows that, but then they say it's not about the money. They're dishonest about it, and I thought I'd take a shot at them.



Cashman was disgusted by Mike Hampton's big deal with Colorado ... and it shows in "The Money Doesn't Matter to Me."

9. You wrote, "There Must Be Something Inside (Pete Rose)." Should he be in the Hall of Fame or not?

Cashman: That song really portrays him. Most of the songs I write about baseball players are ballads, but Pete Rose, I couldn't write a ballad about him. That song captures him and his personality in terms of the whole gambling thing. He thought he was bulletproof.

So no, he shouldn't be in the Hall of Fame. I resent the fact that he's lying. I know a lot of people in baseball, and not one person has ever said, "This guy's getting a bad deal." And I feel sorry for him. It must be awful to live a lie like that, to not own up, to not be able to admit a mistake.

10. Who was the best -- Willie, Mickey or The Duke?

Cashman: In 1952 and '53, it was Snider, then probably from '55 to '58, Mantle had the best stats. But overall it was Mays because of his longevity, and because he was the best fielder and had the best arm and was the best baserunner. If he's not the best player to ever have played, he's pretty close.



If he had to choose between Willie, Mickey and the Duke, Cashman would lean toward Mays.

"A Tattered Flag in the Breeze (Michael's Song)" is available on-line at www.AmericanOriginalsCD.com and www.Winthropmedia.com. Other Terry Cashman records can be ordered from the Metrostar records site at: <http://metrostarrecords.com/artists/terrycashman/discs.htm>.

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