Songwriter Don Clayton composes songs that are raw and emotional, entertaining and honest, much like the human experience. His uplifting, and at times humorous, stories of life, friends, family, love, joy and beauty, pay homage to a lifelong passion for music.

From sentimental ballads to swampy Country Rock romps, Don’s music focuses on themes that all of us intrinsically connect with - love, family, and living in the moment. And although the subject matter of Don’s songs are enough to connect his music to mass appeal, it’s the unyielding groove - the kind that unknowingly causes foot-tapping and head-nodding – that makes his songs noteworthy.

Many of Don’s compositions can be described as “Happy Blues” – a mixture of emotional vibrations enveloped by an uplifting twist on traditional Rhythm and Blues. An example would be “Money Can’t Buy”, a Blues barnburner promoting the value of riches held in the heart instead of the hands. “There are many stories to be told,” says Don, “and if done right, songwriting can touch and exhilarate people. But no matter how sad a story may be, I still like to wind up my songs with a message of hope and light.”

At the age of 4, Don earned dimes for candy by playing harmonica in South Alabama. His curiosity for music led him to pick up guitar, piano, and trumpet all by Junior High. To pay for college, he played in local bars with mostly Blues, Southern Rock and cover bands.

After receiving his B.A. in Music Education at Auburn University, Don returned to Dothan, AL to open a recording studio with his brother. While in the studio working with other musicians, Don was perfecting his own songs. He realized that in music there is always a story to tell. He became determined to live a story worth telling.

In 1979, Don landed in Asheville, North Carolina where he fell in love with its Smokey Mountains, bluegrass history, and the sound of the fiddle. Many of the songs penned by Don reflect the distinct mood of a quiet fog atop the Blue Ridge Mountains, chirping crickets, and the warmth of a crackling campfire. On *Lucky Man*, Don’s newest album, the influence of the South can be found on “Time On My Hands,” a love ballad about the heart-healing power of whiskey and wine.

From an early age, Don learned the value of a dollar and knew as a young man that his passion for music would have to take a back seat to providing for a family. It was with hope and light in mind that Don took a leap of faith and started his own hospitality company, Festiva Resorts, in 2000. His business required him to travel extensively around the United States and throughout the Caribbean – a major feat for a guy from Alabama who was 30 before traveling out of the US for the first time.

“The success of Festiva and the support of my incredible wife has allowed me to go back and pursue my original passion – music and writing,” says Don. At the heart of all Don’s songs is home and family. Many of his songs were written for, or directly inspired by, his wife and partner Alexandra Clayton. More than a muse, Alexandra is often the first to hear Don’s songs and help with a missing verse or a rough patch – much like in life.

It is with joy that Don Clayton shares his songs of life, love, humor, and reflection. Music is a common bond and these snapshots of his adventures, thoughts, and feelings are stories we can all connect with. Through his music, Don expresses his appreciation for living, and offers his “Happy Blues” for others to enjoy.