

ARTICLE BY REBECCA L. RHOADES | PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANIELLE MUCCILLO

FOR MUSICIANS KIRA BROWN AND SCOTTY JOHNSON, LOVE RUNS DEEPER THAN ART



# COUPLE GOALS



Popular music has a long history of couples blurring the lines between personal relationships and the creative process. From Johnny and June to Garth and Trisha, Elvis and Diana to Faith and Tim, collaborations between real-life romantic partners have resulted in timeless tracks and heartfelt duets that have inspired generations to come.

well as *Til I Hear It From You* from the cult classic film *Empire Records*.

As their relationship blossomed, so did Brown's dream of songwriting and singing.

"I'm a very late bloomer when it comes to music. I was much too shy to ever do anything on my own until I met Scotty," Brown explains. "His encouragement and, of course, his talents as a musician

## "ON OUR FIRST DATE, HE TOLD ME HE WAS IN THE GIN BLOSSOMS."

Some artists fall in love while working together. Others share their lives before sharing the mic.

For Kira Brown and Scotty Johnson of local band Honeygirl, however, performing together wasn't even a consideration when they first crossed paths.

The couple met 14 years ago at The VIG Arcadia. A mutual friend introduced them. Brown, who grew up in Queen Creek and went to Arizona State University, was a marketing and communications consultant. Johnson had already found musical stardom as the lead guitarist of '90s alternative rock band the Gin Blossoms.

According to Brown, the connection was immediate.

"We met on a popular Sunday Funday, and it was love at first sight," she recalls. "On our first date, he told me he was in the Gin Blossoms, and I didn't believe him."

Hailing from Tempe, the Gin Blossoms rose to international prominence with hit singles such as *Hey*, *Jealousy* and *Found Out About You*, as

have been inspirational and instrumental for me to start performing."

About 10 years ago, the couple formed Honeygirl. The name is a riff on Johnson's nickname, Honeyboy. The pair first performed as an acoustic duo, playing at open mic events in the Valley.

"I was so scared that my teeth would chatter," Brown says.

These days, she's backed by a full band.

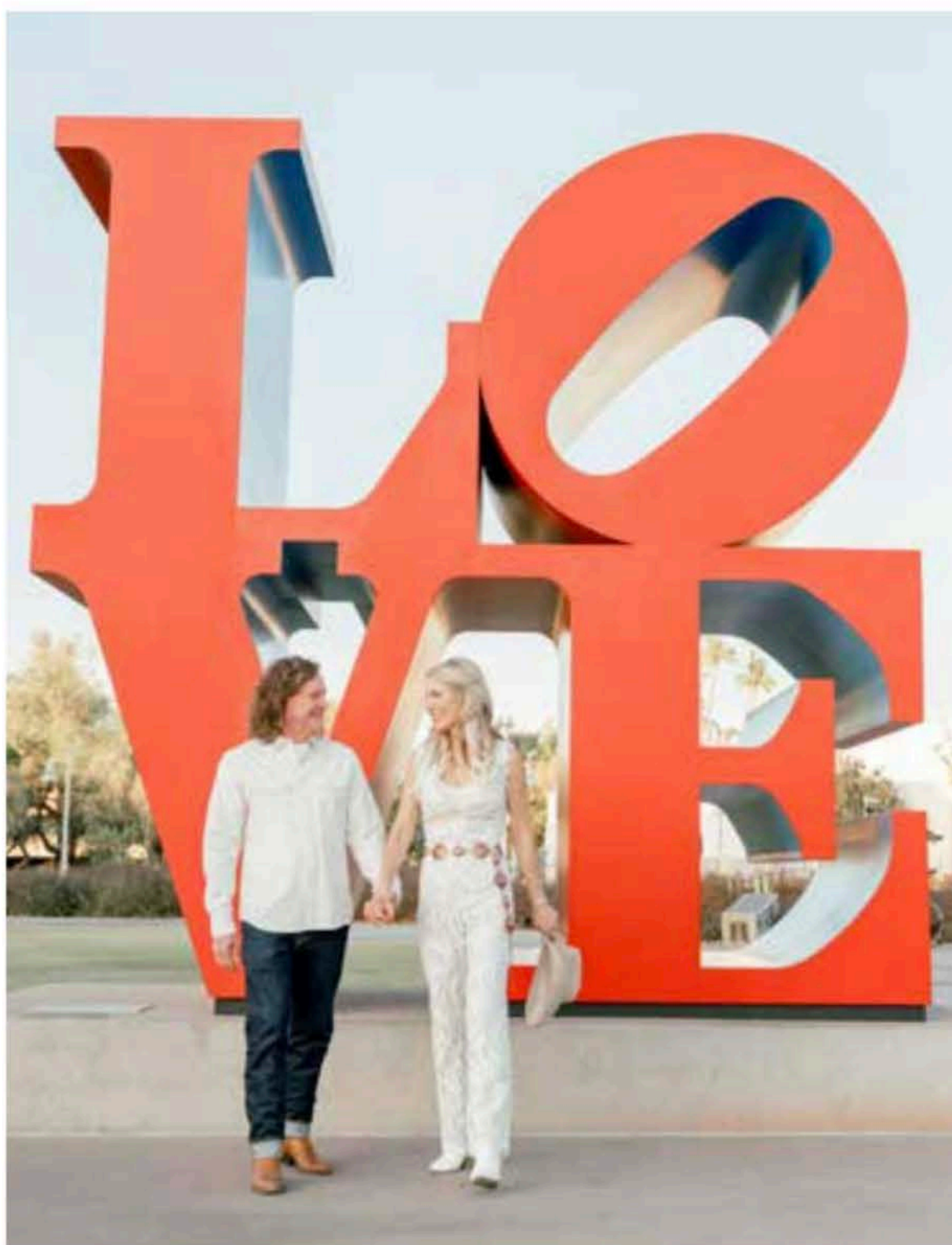
"I am so blessed to have Scotty and everyone else to play with," she says. "They're great friends, absolutely hilarious, and amazingly talented. They make everything fun and make me sound great."

Brown describes the band's sound as "a lot of country and a little bit of rock 'n' roll." She writes the lyrics, and Johnson writes the music.

"Songwriting is organic for me. I just hear a song in my head, most often," she explains. "I can sit down and write, as well, but typically, I'm driving or doing mindless stuff and a song will come to me, and then I need to run to a piece of paper to write it down."

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“Of course, not all the songs are about Scotty,” she adds with a laugh. “But you should see his face when he first hears something from me about himself. But he never judges or edits me or the song. He’s a pro.”

While Brown credits Johnson’s musical contributions, the guitarist is quick to return the praise.

“Kira is Honeygirl,” Johnson says. “I’m super proud. I’ve seen Kira grow as a songwriter and as a performer. It’s been a fun journey. Her level of confidence has grown with each show.”

Honeygirl performs regularly at venues throughout Scottsdale. They can be seen every third Friday of the month at Old Town Tavern, and they frequently play at Handlebar J.

“We play original music shows and high-energy club shows that mix my original music with cover songs by everyone from Alan Jackson, Morgan Wallen, Dolly Parton, and Miranda Lambert to Fleetwood Mac, Pat Benatar, Lynyrd Skynyrd, and more,” Brown says.

The couple also spends a lot of time in the recording studio. In 2024, Honeygirl released two new singles, including *I’ll Drink to This or That*, which can be found on the band’s website.

“We also just released *Hey Cowboy*, a full version of a song that Scotty and I put out as an acoustic version years ago,” Brown says. “Our longtime friend and co-lead guitarist of Honeygirl, Chris Orf, layered this amazing riff over it, and I was like, ‘Wow, that’s how it should sound!’”

Brown teases that more songs will be coming in 2025.

“I’ve got some new music coming in 2025 that I really love,” she says. “I’ve been really inspired over the last six months and have written so many new songs that I’m excited to record and share.”

When not on the road or in the studio, Brown and Johnson spend their time in the Valley, where they’re raising their son, Weston. In mid-November, the couple tied the knot.

“Arizona is an amazing place to live and raise children,” Brown says. “We travel a lot, but we always come home.”

**HoneygirlMusic.com**