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But it was actually a nightmare which turned this promising singer into the artist he is today. After a series of bad breaks Allen was forced to live in his car, too proud to ask for a bail out. For months he worked multiple jobs and finally saved enough for an apartment, but hit then another snag – country music wasn't ready for him.

“People were just trying to help,” he says now. “But they wanted me to change my sound and told me I had to lose my boots. The turning point came when I stopped listening, and finally let my music be a natural reflection of who I am.”

Since then Allen has been following his own compass, and it's leading somewhere special. In 2017, he caught his big break and signed a record deal with BBR Music Group/Stoney Creek Records and a team who embraced his individuality.

“I don't regret the hard times,” he explains about his trials. “I think each thing you do adds a layer, whether it's a layer of toughness, perseverance, motivation, or just a layer of wisdom. At the end of the day you come back to what you know, and what's embedded in you.”

What's embedded in Allen is a powerful, soulful sense of groove – “If my body don't move in the first four seconds, it ain't for me,” he says – a love of deep messages and a knack for razor-sharp hooks. Those driving forces formed the bedrock of Mercury Lane – a cutting-edge mix of country, rock, R&B, and pop, produced by Ash Bowers and Eric Torres, that received critical acclaim, with Rolling Stone raving that it “challenges the narrowly defined model of what constitutes a next big thing in country music” and The New York Times hailing it one of 2018's strongest, calling it a “conventional country album, filled with songs about the small details.”

With Mercury Lane, Allen made history as the first Black artist to launch a career with two consecutive No. 1 hits on country radio, with “Best Shot” claiming the No. 1 spot for three weeks and his second single “Make Me Want To” hitting the top spot in March 2020. Allen's hard-earned dreams are finally becoming reality, but he shows no signs of limiting himself. He followed up the success of Mercury Lane with his July 2020 collaboration project, Bettie James, which further established Allen as Country's next superstar. The star-studded seven-track project combined his deep love of family and genre-spanning taste in music. Named in honor of Allen's late grandmother, Bettie Snead, who passed away in 2014 and his late father, James Allen, who passed away in 2019, Allen hand selected artist that touched the life of Allen, his grandmother and father in some way, allowing their legacies to weave seamlessly throughout Bettie James. The wide array of hitmakers include Brad Paisley, Charley Pride, Darius Rucker, Mickey Guyton, Nelly, Noah Cyrus, The Oak Ridge Boys, Rita Wilson, Tauren Wells and Tim McGraw.

“My dad and grandmom were two completely different people, but both played a huge part in my life,” Allen says of the motivation for the project. “Since they died, I have been wanting to leave

trails of their legacies throughout my music.” The result is a musical composition of love, heartbreak, perseverance, hope and faith. His single “Freedom Was A Highway” pairs Allen with his friend and Country music superstar Paisley for a breezy, windows down track that joins Allen’s distinctively breezy grooves with a Paisley signature guitar solo. The song went No. 1 in February 2022, marking Allen’s third career chart-topping hit.

Bettie James received a slew of critical acclaim for not only the music, but the historic nature of various collaborations, and the project’s subsequent place in country music history. NPR calls the project an “announcement of [Allen’s] arrival” and a “huge step for country” while Billboard hails it “a powerful statement from a developing voice.” The EP appeared on several “Best of 2020” lists including Billboard, Rolling Stone and Sounds Like Nashville.

Rolling Stone describes “Why Things Happen” – which brings together three generations of Black country artists in Allen, Darius Rucker and Charley Pride – as “part polemic, part proclamation, and part prayer... opening up space for the artists to bear witness.”

Reflecting on Allen’s wide-ranging musical sensibilities, Music Row notes of the project: “While some artists still in the early sunrise of their careers, with a handful of hits to their credit, would be focused solely on extending their chart successes, it’s clear that Allen’s goals for his music are loftier than mere chart hits and No. 1 parties—he’s striving for music that testifies to his full spectrum of creative abilities.”

Allen, who has an incredible knack for connecting with people of all backgrounds and interests, enjoyed collaborating with other artists so much while making his monumentally successful predecessor that he didn’t want to stop – so instead, in trademark Allen fashion, he kept going. The result: Bettie James Gold Edition. Released June 25, 2021, the 16-track album doubles down on Allen’s expansive love for music across genres, with nine brand new collaborations with Babyface, Breland, Keith Urban, LANCO, Lathan Warlick, Lindsay Ell, Little Big Town, LOCASH, Monica, Neon Union, Pitbull, teamwork. and Vikina.

As Hits Daily Double notes, for Allen, “it’s about being grounded in the genre’s traditions and protecting the roots as much as it’s about creating a future for country music that’s more expansive and inclusive.”

“When it comes to music I love, I don’t really get wrapped up in boundaries or genres. After we finished Bettie James, I was like man, there’s so much music out there that I love, so many artists that I love, and I just wasn’t done making collaborations,” Allen says of the impetus for Bettie James Gold Edition; a sentiment that Billboard echoes, applauding that the album “broadens country’s borders.”

Allen has performed on The Kennedy Center Honors, Dick Clark’s Rockin’ New Year’s Eve, Jimmy Kimmel Live!, Good Morning America, TODAY, American Idol, Tamron Hall Show, Nick Cannon, The Steve Harvey Show, ACM Awards, CMA Awards, CMT Music Awards, Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade, Dancing With The Stars and more.

Beyond the music, Allen has also established Bettie James Fest in their honor. Consistently vocal about his deep reverence for his family, hometown, and home state, the inaugural sold out event took place August 7, 2021 in Allen's hometown of Milton, DE. The second one will take place August 13, 2022.

Allen is currently featured in The Country Music Hall of Fame® and Museum's annual American Currents: State of the Music exhibit through February 5, 2023. American Currents employs the museum's broad interpretation of the genre to explore notable music, artist achievements and events from the past year, as determined by the museum's curators. He was previously featured in the Museum's 2021's exhibit in the "Unbroken Circle" portion alongside his friend and fellow country artist Darius Rucker. Additionally, he was a member of the 2021 Artists Committee for the 44th Kennedy Center Honors and currently serves as a member for the 45th Kennedy Center Honors in 2022.

Much like his approach to music, Allen's other creative pursuits know no boundaries. Allen's debut picture book, *My Voice Is a Trumpet*, was published July 13, 2021 with Flamingo Books, an imprint of Penguin Young Readers. Illustrated by veteran illustrator Cathy Ann Johnson, the book is a powerful story about speaking up for what you believe in, at any age. The book has received a starred review from *School Library Journal*, who hails that "the rhythm and flow of words perfectly match the art while advising readers to choose love and use their voices in a powerful song."

"It's very important to me that kids learn at a young age that they have a voice, and that it is powerful. It is up to us as adults to teach them to use their voice to encourage and show love," Allen says of his first ever book. "Being a father of two kids, I try to encourage them to be themselves and love everyone around them. I'm hoping this book inspires at least one child and they always remember their voice is a trumpet."

Allen also serves as Executive Music Producer for Netflix's series *Titletown High*, which premiered globally on August 27, 2021. His song "Big In A Small Town" is the theme song for the series, which follows a Georgia town where football rules and winning is paramount, a champion high school team tackles rivalries, romance and real life as they work toward the ultimate goal: a state title. Full of high stakes sports action and relatable teenage drama, *Titletown High* delivers a complex portrait of the most unique football culture in America.

He most recently competed for the coveted mirrorball trophy as a contestant on *Dancing With The Stars'* landmark 30th season on ABC in the fall of 2021, reaching the quarterfinals with his pro partner Emma Slater. He joined select dates of the *Dancing with the Stars – Live Tour 2022!* He also participated in the 2022 NBA All-Star Celebrity Game in Cleveland, OH.

In February, Allen embarked on his *Down Home Tour 2022*. The trek marks his first headline tour. "I wanted to wait awhile before headlining because I wanted the timing to be right; I didn't want to rush it. I wanted to make sure I was ready, my band was ready, so we could give the audience what they deserve every night – which is greatness," he says of the tour.

In October, Allen joined superstar Carrie Underwood's The Denim & Rhinestones Tour as special guest on all 43 U.S. arena dates. The tour goes through Spring 2023.

His current single "Down Home" was released March 8 and is the first single from his third album, Tulip Drive. The song takes shape as a letter to his late father and showcases their special, enduring connection. Billboard hailed the song as a "winner" while MusicRow praised it as a "power ballad that exudes sincerity." While "Down Home" marks one of the proud Delaware native's most vulnerable and autobiographical songs to date, it simultaneously offers heartfelt relatability and comfort to the universal experience of loss and grief.

"'Down Home' is probably one of the most special songs I've ever written. I wrote it about my father – kind of like, hopefully he's in heaven and looking down on everything I'm doing and hope he'd be proud of me," Allen says of the song. "It's a song that's actually helped me a lot because in the midst of missing my father, I think about him seeing everything I've got going on and it's like... even though he's gone, he's always with me. I hope this song finds its place in the world and this song helps people that have lost not only a father, or a parent, or a loved one just like the song has helped me."

Allen co-directed the music video for the track, which was shot between Milton and nearby Lewes, DE to keep the spirit of his relationship and memories created with his late father alive. The video is a poignant visual complement to the song, purposely shot in black & white to keep focus on the song's subject matter and featuring many locations vital to Allen and his father's relationship – Allen's childhood home, the baseball field his father taught him how to play on, and his father's favorite restaurant, among others.

Tulip Drive arrived on June 24, 2022, and much like its predecessors, the title is deeply personal to Allen's family ties as it is the name of the street in Lewes, DE that his late grandmother lived on, and where Allen himself spent much of his formative years. Mercury Lane was named for the great Allen himself grew up on.

"This is the first album where a lot of the songs are actually written based off a lot of my own personal life experiences – from relationships, the hardships of life, to the parties & good times," he shares. "A lot of these songs are based off things I went through when I was in later in high school and college, at a place where I was just learning a lot of life lessons from my grandmother. I wanted to honor her by naming this album Tulip Drive, after the street she lived on in Lewes, DE."

As Allen's rising star power shows no signs of slowing down, he remains unapologetically himself and proof of what can happen when you never give up.

For more information on Allen, visit www.jimmieallenmusic.com or follow him on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).