

'American Idol' Hopeful John Wayne Schulz Released Album As a Teen

By [Monica Herrera](#)

If cowboy, country singer and "American Idol" hopeful John Wayne Schulz [appeared comfortable during his Austin audition](#) that aired Tuesday night (Feb. 2), there's a good reason -- the 23-year-old released an album by the time he was 14 years old.

The ten-track set, titled "Ropin' Dreams," was recorded by a teenage Schulz in Austin and released on the Texas-based independent label [BSW Records](#) in the U.S., Europe and Pacific Rim, BSW president and CEO Frank Wilson confirms to [Billboard.com](#).

"He was very, very young when we first started," Wilson says, though he could not recall the exact year that Schulz was signed. [An article](#) from Texas A&M University newspaper The Battalion that interviewed the then-14-year-old about his album is dated Apr. 22, 2002. While the article also states that "Ropin' Dreams" received seven Grammy nominations, Willson clarifies that this was not the case: the album received enough votes to make it into seven categories in the first-round Grammy nomination ballots, but was ultimately not nominated after the final round of voting.

['American Idol' Hits Austin, John Wayne Schulz and Janelle Arthur Bring Country Charm](#)

"Ropin' Dreams" was the first and last album that Schulz recorded with BSW, Wilson says, as the teen went on a two-year mission trip shortly after its release. "We didn't really part ways," Wilson explains. "He's of Mormon faith, and he had to go on his church mission. He was gone for two years, and we just weren't able to reconnect once he returned."

Though Schulz is no longer on BSW's roster, Wilson says the label currently has about 16 active artists under its wing, including veteran country singer Lacy J. Dalton and saxophonist Marty Maggio, who was a member of [Roy Orbison's](#) band and played sessions for Elvis Presley as part of the Nashville Horns.

As for Schulz's chances to make it far on "American Idol," Wilson says he has yet to see the now-grown singer performing [Brooks & Dunn's](#) "I Believe" on tonight's episode, but he's seen qualities in him firsthand that are promising.

"I think he will [go far], yes," Willson says. "That whole family is really a super, super family. They really stick together. They work hard, and he's got the talent. I think he has a very good chance."