

## The Louvin Brothers

The Louvin Brothers are one of the most famous of country music's brother duets. They wrote and performed a plethora of songs that have influenced bluegrass music. Charlie and Ira Louvin (Ira on mandolin, Charlie on guitar) wrote songs like "When I Stop Dreaming", and "Cash on the Barrelhead" a song that has been performed by the likes of Emmylou Harris, Leftover Salmon, Gram Parsons, Jim & Jesse, Carl Jackson, Dolly Parton, Alison Krauss, the Dreadful Snakes, The Cox Family, The Brothers Comatose, and many more (two examples below). One of their most popular (but morbid) songs was "Knoxville Girl", a murder ballad that was an Americanized version of an English song. They also recorded topical songs like "The Great Atomic Power", and patriotic ("Weapon of Prayer") and religious ("Satan Is Real") tunes during their time together as a duet from 1952 to 1962. Dig into their work on youtube, or find their complete recorded works box set. There's a lot to listen to.

Ira and Charlie Louvin's last name was Loudermilk before adopting Louvin as a stage name. In life Ira Louvin was not an exemplary human, notorious for his short temper and heavy drinking, being shot multiple times by his third wife after beating her, and according to Charlie, smashing a few mandolins on stage. Ira's drinking broke up the duo. Ira later died in a car crash in 1965.

### **Cash on the Barrelhead** - Louvin Brothers

<https://youtu.be/OHdCy4BtuMc?si=PMnVysl3rYA2t7PX>

Covered by Dreadful Snakes

<https://youtu.be/V2sNRemp-E?si=xlsb3vHMgStj78eU>

Covered by Dolly Parton - **The Grass Is Blue**

<https://youtu.be/5CmhGGkR2BQ?si=bvGWV17hMdr1a6X->

### **When I Stop Dreaming** - Louvin Brothers

<https://youtu.be/yh6lkKwTHss?si=2gePtrTBgdvIH0xA>

### **The Great Atomic Power** - Louvin Brothers

<https://youtu.be/AojCqHwsbX0?si=2ZkQXeDqCJ1t28Qh>

### **Tiny Broken Heart** - Louvin Brothers

[https://youtu.be/C2f\\_16AnFLM?si=OEoHDgozciwZjk0-](https://youtu.be/C2f_16AnFLM?si=OEoHDgozciwZjk0-)

Covered by Dan Tyminski with Alison Krauss and Union Station - Live

[https://youtu.be/f-xGj47bka0?si=W8MB-xQ\\_-iP9Zcpv](https://youtu.be/f-xGj47bka0?si=W8MB-xQ_-iP9Zcpv)

Covered by Hazel Dickens and Alice Gerrard

[https://youtu.be/Lw2qW2OeZ04?si=4T7RM\\_OS1ns\\_R3G/](https://youtu.be/Lw2qW2OeZ04?si=4T7RM_OS1ns_R3G/)

### **I Don't Believe You've Met My Baby** - Louvin Brothers

(written by Autry Inman)

<https://youtu.be/2nglSYZk0N8?si=GqPdFokvr9ekgMLD>

### **Knoxville Girl** - performed by the Louvin Brothers

<https://youtu.be/CQCHV0CtDNc?si=4dKbSRMCBEqpd14F>

### **I Wonder Where You Are Tonight** - performed by the Louvin Brothers

(written by Johnny Bond)

<https://youtu.be/ApxUqfbx7TI?si=5meRRbu8-xzxxnl3>

The video below is a good listen about brother duets that includes the Stanley Brothers and the Monroe Brothers, as well as the Louvin Brothers. Commentary by Emmylou Harris, Gillian

Welch, Sharon White, Earl Scruggs, Vince Gill, and more. There are other segments to this series, too, if you like this one..

**The History of Country Music** - episode 2 (includes brother duets)

(including the Louvin Brothers at 8:35 in the video)

<https://youtu.be/07-8WYiKqo?si=rFPA5q2Wuz4pu-p9>