

= Krista Branch =

Krista Branch is an American singer whose 2010 song " I Am America " has been called the anthem of the Tea Party movement . Branch produced " I Am America " with her husband , who wrote the song , to protest the treatment of the Tea Party by Democrats . After being uploaded to YouTube , the song was aired on Glenn Beck 's radio show and it quickly grew in popularity . It was subsequently performed on Fox News and at events across the country . A former American Idol contestant , Branch was eliminated early in the process .

Branch was born in Mount Pleasant , Texas and later lived in Bixby , Oklahoma . She married Michael Branch in 2000 , and together they have three children . Early in the marriage her family faced serious financial difficulties , and later , while they were living in Colorado , faced the near death of their youngest daughter .

The Branches became supporters of 2012 presidential candidate Herman Cain after performing at several events where he was a keynote speaker , and " I Am America " was made the official theme song of the campaign . Another song released by Branch , " Remember Who We Are " , was made the official campaign anthem of Rick Santorum 's presidential campaign .

Branch 's music regularly expresses religious and political themes emphasizing American exceptionalism . Her music has been well received among conservative commentators and members of the Tea Party movement for its political message . The use of Branch 's music in the campaigns of Cain and Santorum has been seen as an indication of its appeal among outsider candidates . She has released nine singles and an EP , and is working on her debut album for release in 2013 .

= = Personal life = =

Branch was born in Mount Pleasant in East Texas , and began singing in her youth at church along with her four siblings . She also lived in Oklahoma for part of her childhood . Branch moved out of Texas with her family at the age of 14 , but remained proud of her Texas heritage . In order to focus on her music career , Branch and her family moved to Nashville , Tennessee in 2010 .

She married Michael Branch in 2000 , and they have since had three children together . Early in their marriage they had a low income , and Branch 's husband took on several odd jobs , in addition to his work as a youth pastor , in order to make a living . He describes living with Branch in a " shabby place " in Tulsa , Oklahoma where they struggled to pay \$ 480 a month in rent . Later they bought a house in Tulsa , and rented it out while they were living in Colorado ; they got into financial difficulties when the tenants stopped paying the rent , and they accepted the bank 's decision to foreclose the mortgage , as that cleared their debt . They appeared on the Christian news magazine program , the 700 Club , talking about an incident in which their baby daughter was revived after drowning in their bathtub , and they attributed their child 's survival to the power of prayer , having been inspired after seeing The Passion of the Christ a few days earlier .

= = Career = =

While living in Bixby , Oklahoma , Branch auditioned for the seventh season of American Idol and was chosen by the judges to move on to the preliminary round in Hollywood . Footage of her performance was not included on the show , but she appeared in a montage at the end of the episode . A week later she was eliminated from the competition . Branch told The New York Times her decision to enter the contest was not due to a desire to " be somebody " , but because she felt she should take any opportunity with the belief that God would bless her efforts .

Two years later , the video for Branch 's fourth single " I Am America " was released on YouTube . Her husband , Michael Branch , wrote the song partly in response to criticism of the Tea Party protests from Democrats , while also drawing on his own difficulties in life . In an interview for Billy Kelly of the Washington Times ' Tea Party Report , Branch told how soon after her husband wrote the song he had her quickly learn the lyrics and then recorded her performing the song . She

originally felt the song was too confrontational for her , but decided the message was so important that she should record the song . In the music video , footage of Tea Party rallies is interspersed with scenes of Branch singing on a sound stage and kids holding signs containing political messages and scripture . " I Am America " was played on the July 7 , 2010 , broadcast of Glenn Beck 's radio show and a week later Fox News host Bill O 'Reilly devoted a portion of his ? Pinheads and Patriots ? segment to the song , saying that " for honoring legitimate protest " Branch was a patriot . About 21 days after being uploaded the video had nearly 475 @,@ 000 views . " I Am America " soon became a popular song with the Tea Party movement and has been described as the movement 's anthem . The New York Times described Branch as having a " dynamic presence " on stage when singing the song .

Glenn Beck played another Krista Branch song titled " Remember Who We Are " on his Insider Extreme radio program early in August 2010 and the song was featured in a video from Branch promoting Beck 's Restoring Honor rally . The lyrics for " Remember Who We Are " contain a mixture of defiant metaphors with a Christian rock style of music . Branch 's husband said he wrote the song to " remind us of who Americans are in the wake of the most trying of times . " He stated that Americans stand up and come together in the face of adversity , saying he prayed the song would bring people hope . Calling it an " inspiring patriotic song " , the video for the song was made the " Video of the Day " on Glenn Beck 's site on September 3 2010 .

Her first EP I Am America was released on September 3 , 2010 by Soundmindpro Publishing , a company established by Branch 's husband . The EP included " Remember Who We Are " as well as " I Am America " and " Foreign Land " , a song about departed American soldiers . Jeremiah Holdsworth of IndieVision felt the songs were strong , noting their patriotic themes and subtle religious subtext , and said the song " Foreign Land " particularly moved him . Branch released a new single on July 22 , 2011 , called " Lead Me On " , a cover of the Amy Grant song and released a video for the song a month later . The song was described as pro @-@ Israel with the music video containing imagery related to the history of the Jewish people , including a prominent emphasis on the Holocaust .

In addition to her performances in the United States , Branch has performed for teens in Guatemala and Slovakia . She performed at the 2011 Sunbelt Ag Expo in conjunction with the American Bible Society , singing patriotic songs to support American soldiers and performing the national anthem for the Expo . Branch attended the Washington Times ' 30th anniversary celebration on October 3 , 2012 , and performed several songs for the event . Branch regularly performs with Oklahoma jazz saxophonist Grady Nichols . She is working on her debut album , which is scheduled to be released in early 2013 .

= = = 2012 Republican presidential primaries = = =

Branch 's music has gained prominence as a result of its use during the 2012 Republican presidential primary . When she was performing " I Am America " at events across the country , Herman Cain was often the keynote speaker . Branch and her husband came to appreciate his political views and her husband signed on with Cain 's campaign . " I Am America " was later adopted by the candidate as his campaign 's official theme . Cain said when interviewed about the song , " The first time I heard that song , the message was so right @-@ on I felt goose bumps just listening to it . " The song was later described by the National Journal as having " underscored Cain 's anti @-@ elitist appeal " with its lyrics . Campaign ads featuring " I Am America " gave the song increased exposure . A campaign ad using " I Am America " that included Cain 's chief of staff was the subject of numerous parodies also featuring the song . On The Colbert Report , comedian Stephen Colbert satirically claimed Cain got the line " I Am America " from Colbert 's book , I Am America (And So Can You !) . Several parodies of the ad were then shown on the program using the song .

Rick Santorum announced in March 2012 that he has adopted Branch 's song " Remember Who We Are " as an official theme song for his campaign , having been without a theme song prior to the announcement . Santorum said he chose the song because " few songs express the beauty and

strength of who we are as free Americans better than Krista ? s . " The song is seen as representing the emotion of his campaign effort . David Weigel described Branch as the " muse of the insurgent conservative candidate " due to her songs being used by Cain and Santorum in their primary campaigns .

= = Politics = =

Branch has said her patriotism and admiration for America is the unifying principle of her music . She suggests the Tea Party is animated not by rebelliousness , but by patriotism and love of freedom . Her music often incorporates political themes and religious views that have led to her songs resonating with Tea Party supporters and commentators such as Glenn Beck and Bill O'Reilly .

The artist has performed at political rallies led by Beck , and at campaign rallies for Herman Cain . Her husband joined Cain 's presidential campaign as state director for Tennessee after hearing him speak at events where Branch performed . Branch said Cain was a natural choice for her and her husband because she felt their beliefs aligned with Cain 's . Since 2010 , she received three payments that totaled \$ 10 @, @ 000 for live entertainment services provided at political rallies from several political action committees associated with Cain 's campaign .

= = Discography = =