

FEATURE

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**SUGARLAND'S  
JENNIFER  
NETTLES**

**BUILDS A SUCCESSFUL CAREER FROM  
HER GEORGIA ROOTS**

By Dana Hinders



## FANS OF THE RECENTLY LAUNCHED ABC REALITY SHOW SINGING COMPETITION DUETS MAY RECOGNIZE ONE OF THE SHOW'S CELEBRITY MENTORS AS A SINGER WITH STRONG LOCAL TIES.

**J**ennifer Nettles, best known as lead vocalist for Sugarland, grew up in the small town of Douglas, Georgia. She got her start performing at school assemblies, community theater productions, and in her Southern Baptist church.

Nettles is a 1997 graduate of Agnes Scott College in Decatur, where she studied sociology and anthropology. Agnes Scott College is the highest ranked women's college in the southeast, according to US News and World Report. It's also widely regarded as one of the top 100 best liberal arts colleges in the country.

In 2006, Sugarland was nominated for a Grammy in the Best New Artist category. They didn't win this award, but Nettles did receive a Grammy Award for Best Collaboration in 2007. She was a duet partner on the country version of rock band Bon Jovi's single "Who Says You Can't Go Home." In 2009, she received Grammys for Best Country Performance by a Duo or Group and Best Country Song for her work on Sugarland's "Stay." Sugarland has also won Country Music Association Awards for Vocal Duo of the Year in 2009, 2010, and 2011.

Even though her career continues to grow by leaps and bounds, Nettles still makes time for helping others. In

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During the 1990s and early 2000s, Nettles was a regular performer at Eddie's Attic in Decatur. Before joining Sugarland, she performed as part of Soul Miner's Daughter and the Jennifer Nettles Band. Soul Miner's Daughter released two studio albums and was the winner of the 1999 Lilith Fair Acoustic Talent Search. The Jennifer Nettles Band released three studio albums and was selected the grand prize winner from more than 2,000 bands in "The Big Deal \$100,000 Music Search" presented by Mars Music.

Nettles joined Sugarland in 2003. Sugarland's musical style appealed to a wide range of tastes, including several people who weren't normally fans of country music. Nettles attributes Sugarland's popularity to the universal themes covered in songs like "Fly Away" and "Baby Girl." "You speak to the human condition and write what you know in your life," she said.

2008, she launched Common Thread, a series of concerts where musicians perform to raise money for their favorite charities. After the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti, Nettles sang on the remake of "We Are the World" as part of Artists for Haiti. In February 2012, she made an appearance in the Heart Truth Red Dress Collection show during New York Fashion Week to raise awareness of the dangers of heart disease in women.

What can fans expect next from Jennifer Nettles? Despite rumors to the contrary, Sugarland is still together. Nettles has told reporters she's simply taking a short break and contemplating her next move. In an interview on Fox News, she expressed interest in appearing in a Broadway play. Her preference was the role of Elphaba in *Wicked*, but there's no doubt this talented lady will be successful in whatever she chooses.



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