

close up

March-April 2000



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130.7 million television viewers, 182 countries, 72,000 fans in attendance ... were you one of the few people who caught Country Music's own Faith Hill singing the National Anthem at Super Bowl XXXIV?

Or are you one of those people who tune in to the Super Bowl just to see the commercials? Then you saw the Cover Girl commercial featuring Faith, their newest spokesperson. If you missed that, surely when you walked out to get your Sunday paper that morning you saw her on the cover of PARADE magazine which ran in newspapers all over the country.

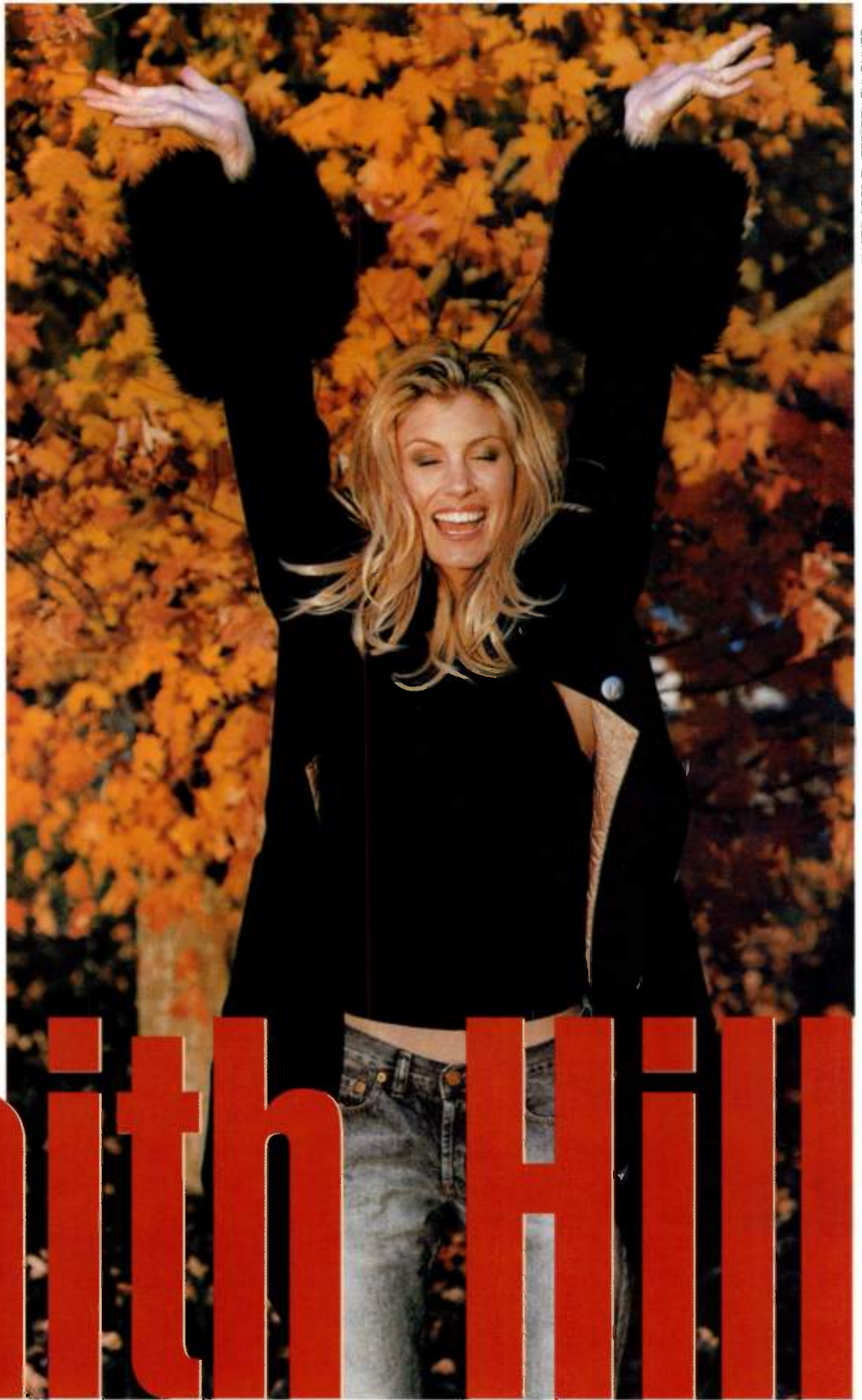


PHOTO CREDIT: JEFFREY THURNHER

Faith Hill

If you happened to be in a bubble on Super Bowl Sunday, there are still many places you have probably run across this multi-platinum-selling Warner Bros. recording artist. Maybe you saw her onstage with Tina Turner, Cher, Aretha Franklin and Brandi (VH1 DIVAS LIVE '99); maybe you were standing in the checkout line at the grocery store and saw her on the cover of TV GUIDE (Sept. 18, 1999) or the cover of GLAMOUR magazine (Jan. 2000). Maybe you were just flipping through and read the features on Faith in VOGUE, ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY, HARPER'S BAZAAR, PEOPLE, GOOD HOUSEKEEPING or ALLURE; or maybe you were channel surfing and caught her on OPRAH,

GOOD MORNING AMERICA, THE VIEW, THE TONIGHT SHOW or CNN's SHOWBIZ TODAY? If you still haven't seen her, there are plenty more places to look. Faith will be featured on the popular Lifetime INTIMATE PORTRAIT series which airs in late February; you can log on to supermodels-online.com where she is featured, you can see her in her "mommy" role working alongside Big Bird, Elmo, husband Tim McGraw and Cookie Monster in an April 5 episode of the ever-popular SESAME STREET, or you can pick up the April issue of REDBOOK where she will be gracing yet another major cover.

Behind all the extraordinary press and publicity you will find an even more extraordinary woman and her music ... and beyond that, a loving wife to McGraw and devoted mother to Gracie and Maggie ... a girl from Star, Mississippi who was adopted by two loving parents — all the ingredients that make her so appealing, not only to the mass media, but to the average television viewer, magazine reader, music lover and every person who wants to believe in true happiness.

Faith's Super Bowl performance is the crowning achievement to the type of year the songstress had in 1999 and is more than likely a good indicator of the opportunities that lie ahead for her in 2000.

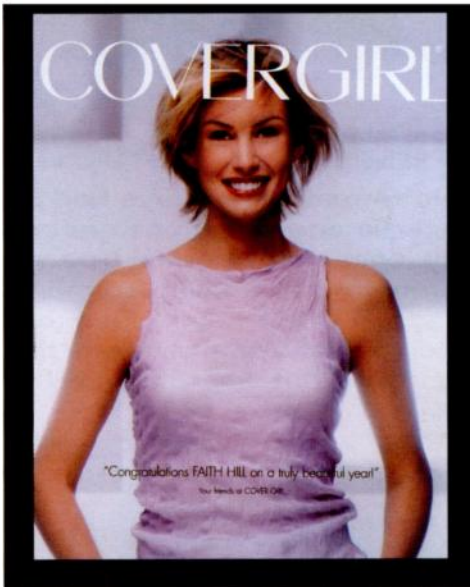
"[1999] was a very busy year. I think there was a point last year where we had made the plan, gotten the schedule and about three months after we set the schedule it completely went the opposite direction, and every single day was filled. In the midst of it, I didn't realize how much I was doing. But to look back on the year, I was able to do so many different kinds of things. It was a very productive year. When I've got more on my plate, I tend to do a better job and stay more focused. It got to be a little much toward the end of the year - a little bit too much pressure and too many deadlines. But it certainly paid off, so I can only look back now on that time and really enjoy it and look forward to what this year brings."

In spite of the fact that she juggles such a public career while maintaining a happy and solid family life, Faith maintains that she is no different than other women doing the same. She is quick to note that she does not do it alone.

"I'm not really doing anything differently than what [career women the world over] do. I just do it in the public eye. It takes a lot of good scheduling and organization, and Tim is a great help. He's a great father, and we both give and take. That's how it works."

A true reflection of Faith Hill would not be accurate without her thoughts on the most important part of her life — her family. She reflects how her and Tim's commitment to "family first" has helped play a key role in maintaining a healthy balance of family, career, success and overall happiness.

"Tim and I met each other, and ultimately got together, at a



"After all of this is gone, I want my children to know me and I want my husband to know me. We will have a life together, and we will have that to look forward to."

point in our careers where it was just a good time for both of us. We had gone through all of the difficult first few years of a career where you are working basically 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. When we first started dating, and once we realized we were going to be together for the rest of our lives, we just made a commitment that, more than anything else, our family will come first. We had the opportunity to experience a lot within our own careers before we joined together, which made a big difference. We were mature in that area. We had established ourselves, and we had already gone through things a lot of people go through when we met. It was time for us to make the commitment we made to each other, and it is the most important. To find someone who has the same dreams and goals for family that you do is rare. It's also very valuable. So you know when you find it you are going to do everything you can to keep it."

From her first album TAKE ME AS I AM to her fourth, and latest, Warner Bros. release BREATHE, Faith says she has grown by "leaps and

bounds." She feels it has all been a very natural progression.

"It's all been part of the changes I've made as an artist — just growing and challenging myself is what I've always tried to do with each record that I've made. I've become better — more comfortable — and I feel I work harder now than I did at the beginning of my career. When it comes time to go back into the studio and try and create the music, I feel I am more passionate about it now than I was on my first album."

Her passion for music is reflected throughout BREATHE. Influences ranging from Country, gospel, R&B and rock make up this collection. It has a little something for everyone, and for those who criticize that she is straying from the Country mainstream, Faith sees it differently.

"I think it's very dangerous any time you try to categorize yourself. It just doesn't work for me because if someone were to ask me 'What is your music?' I wouldn't know what to call it. It's just a collection of music and things that I really love. You can certainly hear what my influences are. I would never be able to pigeonhole or give it a title, really. I have just never been able to do that. I don't feel criticized. Everyone has an opinion. I don't think it's pop music. If anything it's just a collection of things that have inspired me throughout my life. There are a lot of gospel, R&B and rock influences which I had."

Faith reflects back to one of her earliest musical influences as an example: "The first artist I ever had my teeth into was Elvis Presley, and he was a little bit of everything. The first album I had of his was a greatest hits collection of everything that he had recorded, like 'Peace In The Valley.' He loved gospel music. It was a collection of everything. That is how I made my record. Each album that I've recorded, I think it just becomes more obvious."

c o n t i n u e d o n p a g e 3 4 . . .

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR COUNTRY MUSIC RADIO?

The road for the Country Music format has always had its ups and downs, just as any other format. But lately the concerns and questions are growing. With mergers and consolidation, artist crossover and listener shifts, and fast-paced technology among the major concerns, how is the radio community coping with so many major issues at hand?

CLOSE UP delved into the minds of a few key radio executives and asked: What is the biggest issue Country radio is facing this year and how is the radio community coping with and/or remedying it? Read on and find out what they had to say...



Jaye Albright,
President/Country -
McVay Media

We are in the midst of an evolution of our artist base, the target audience and of our delivery systems. If you like worrying, this is a lot to worry about.

There are disquieting rumors that today's hottest act – the Dixie Chicks – is fatigued and just wants to take a few months

off. Tim McGraw's voice is the only Country thing about Faith (Hill's) new BREATH album. Shania (Twain), who earned her CMA Award for all she did for us in 1999, has decided it's time to "Rock This Country." Meanwhile, I guess we have to take Garth (Brooks) at his word that he would like to retire.

As a result, unless some very exciting new stars emerge from the ranks of the artists currently signed to Nashville labels, at the end of 2000 the Country radio format will be flat to down another fraction or two. Fewer stations will be broadcasting Country Music full time, while the ones that are left will be playing the dwindling number of hit songs longer than ever.

Radio can help by listening to our loyal core of heavy-users and responding to their concerns, while listening to everything new and taking musical risks when emerging sounds prove exciting. And, we need to continue to hold onto things that generate positive passion long enough to build awareness, name-identity and careers.

There is also a lot to feel very optimistic about. Historically, Country Music tends to move upward at times of economic recession, and I predict the economy will stay solid and Country will stay soft until this year's Presidential election. Then, once the new chief exec has been sworn in – if the past is a guide – we'll be in for a market correction that cools off the economy. And, that's the GOOD news! Because, within the next 18 to 36 months, Country Music will have an opportunity to rebound – if Music City finds a way to amalgamate an eclectic, roots-driven sound that draws Gen X and Gen Y males and females with both relatable lyric themes and contemporary values – both musical and cultural.

Meanwhile, the emerging digital technologies are going to provide numerous new stages for Country niches to be heard – all shades of Country gold and alt Country. The long-

predicted fragmentation of the format will finally occur, as new media does what it takes to draw from the edges of our cume.

Country radio has always been a niche format that tries to build as large a mass audience as possible. To continue to succeed, mainstream Country is going to have to stay adaptable while picking and choosing very carefully from the best of Internet and satellite radio.

More diverse voices means additional creative avenues and more opportunity. Of course, the marketplace is changing. Certainly, the media are changing and Country can't be what it was in the past. Not that it ever was a musical form to stand still. So long as there are honest, relatable lyrics that resonate with true human emotions, and simple melodies that touch the human spirit, the music will endure and radio will consolidate and converge with new technology in all its emerging forms in order to be there to broadcast it to as large an interactive audience as possible, one listener at a time.



Beverlee Brannigan,
Program Director -
KJJY (Des Moines, IA)

Country radio's biggest issue is finding a way to create excitement and growth in our radio stations at a time when Country Music is not pulling us along for the ride. We could sit on our hands, conjecturing when Country Music might

peak again, but what if it doesn't? Who is guaranteeing that our success comes in cycles? Today in Country radio, we are challenged to create our own success. On top of a soft Country Music environment, radio stations are under tremendous pressure to produce profits with smaller staffs and increased spotloads ... and against fiercer competition than ever before.

Rating book after rating book, the Country stations with strong community ties consistently rise to the top of their markets ... even when "record sales are down" and "Country concert ticket sales are soft." We, in Country radio, are trying to remedy the situation by thinking beyond the music we play. Country Music is a great franchise, and is the reason people come to our spot on the dial. But, it's not the ONLY reason they tune us in.

Country radio programmers have been throwing bricks at Nashville over the past several years over the issue of music quality.

If we want to succeed in the next year we will learn from our format's leaders and make sure our stations *mean* something in our market. Compelling, creative radio in the next 12 months will be built on a Country Music foundation, but will reach far beyond it.

We could sit on our hands, conjecturing when Country Music might peak again, but what if it doesn't?



Bob Raleigh,
VP/Director of Country -
Stratford Research

The biggest issue facing Country radio is what it has always been ... generating the biggest share of the market in ratings and revenue. Country radio programmers have been throwing bricks at Nashville over the past several years over the issue of music quality. With the

volumes of music testing we have done over the past couple of years, it is safe to say that, with few exceptions, passion level scores are at lower levels than they were in the early to mid-'90s. You should not, however, lay your bad ratings solely at the feet of what's coming out of Music Row. Music is only *half* of what you do on the air. In order to survive the ratings game, you have to grow outside the music.

Do you have a good strategy in place for your station? Arbitron can tell us how many listeners we have, but it doesn't really tell us why they are listening. Are you reaching out to the current pop culture ... entertainment, fashion and, yes, technology ... which are all an offshoot of music. Have you devised a solid plan to address "at work" and "in-office" listening? While 80 percent of Country's cume is in the car, that additional 20 percent can translate to more AQH's (Average Quarterly Hours). Is your station truly "plugged in" to the community, outside of the usual car remotes, bar remotes and Country Music shows?

What it all comes down to is you don't have exclusivity to your music. The truly successful Country stations are compelling between the songs. They have more than "card reader" talent. There's great production, great sound imaging and an attention to all the things between the songs that reinforce the station's brand.

If you're a Program Director who spends the bulk of your time on the music adds, rotations and what's new out of Nashville, then you better get your resume in order. You are nothing more than a music director on steroids and have neglected protecting the brand image of your station, which is truly your job. If you want to help out Nashville, then do a better job programming your station beyond the music.



Alan Sledge,
Program Director - KNIX
(Tempe, AZ)

The issues facing Country are really no different from those issues that all broadcasters face: diminished market shares, new sources of audio transmission, reception from the Internet and satellite-based sources, and greater expectations to maximize revenues and shareholder value.

With that said, the best way to compete in this changing environment is to concentrate on those things that can be controlled, such as quality programming. As long as radio continues to play to its strengths, local stations will be able to compete with well-produced local programming.

Recent consolidation within the radio industry probably happened much more rapidly than many industry or government leaders expected. It's very important not to leave individual employees adrift in the wake of uncertainty during these changing times. The industry leaders of today must create work environments that nurture the creative processes while taking the time to educate these individuals on their new roles within the new radio landscape. Generating ratings to maximize market share is one thing; creating new ideas that enhance cash flow through non-traditional thinking is what will help all radio survive the new competitive challenge.



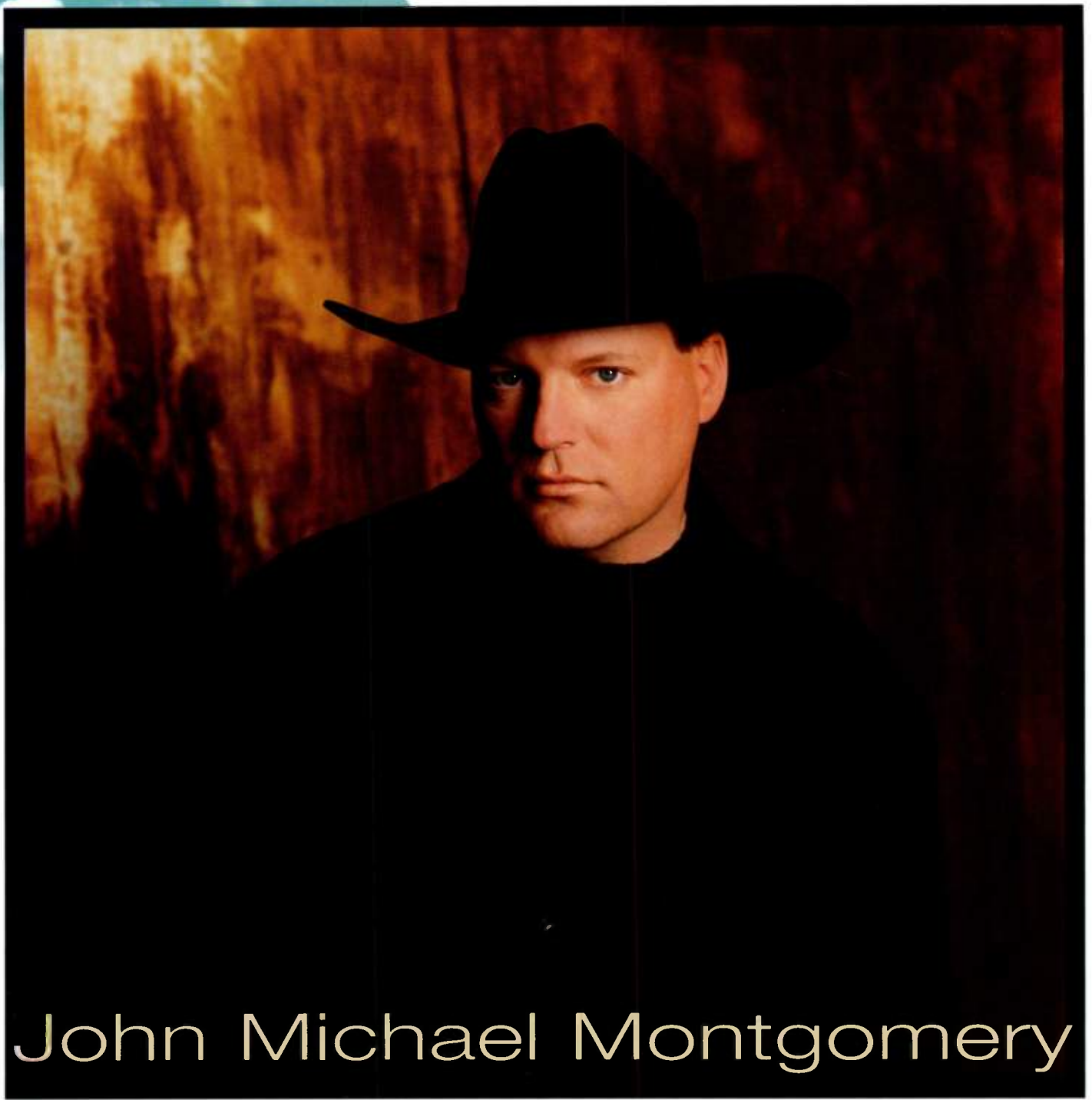
George Toulas,
(recently retired) Senior
Vice President/Operations -
AM/FM, Inc.

Is there a format in our future? That's the big question that faces us as Country radio broadcasters look ahead. We have prospered through the past three decades as the one radio format that was unobstructed, easy to understand

and consistent. But now three major shifts in listener attitudes and lifestyles will impact that "safe zone" in which we have traditionally operated.

1. Music is now totally homogeneous. Some would suggest it's all totally pasteurized. The big stars of Country - Garth, Shania and Faith - have all crossed over. We can no longer program mutually-exclusive formats. We will continue to share T.S.L. (Time Spent Listening) with other formats and not just because of the crossover. It's clear that the addressable Country market is limited going forward, and our opportunity to grow will be affected by this homogenization.

c o n t i n u e d o n p a g e 3 8 . . .



John Michael Montgomery

I imagine this scenario for a moment if you will...900 acres of rolling, mountainous Kentucky land that is filled only with natural shrubbery to accompany the countless variations of trees. There is nothing but the sound of silent peace, with the exception of the natural wildlife from time to time. The trill sounds of bird whistles can be heard in the distance as the mother and her nestling sing. The smell of clean air flows briskly through your body as a cool winter's breeze graces your face. And most importantly, there's nothing to remind you of the city chaos that often clouds one's mind. It's just you and you alone. You are the only person in the world in that place.

That scenario sounds a bit like a fictional place or the start of a good Country song. And if you have ever been in that "moment," you too, will know the feeling.

During a recent interview with John Michael Montgomery, he gave me a description of this special place - his farm. At a time when most people cringe at the thought of cold weather, John Michael welcomes it with open arms, especially during his off time.

"In the fall, when it starts getting cold around October and November, I like to be off the road because I like the cold season. I have a 900-acre farm with lots of woods and wildlife. I have an old hunting cabin, and my buddies and I go out there and just do some male bonding. It's such a peaceful place. It cleanses my mind

"All I ever wanted was to try to get a hit song on the radio and be able to cut albums."

when I'm there. A lot of times I just go out there and sit on the porch of this old hunting shack that's made out of barn lumber. It's only a little one-room deal, but it has a great porch on it. When you've got 900 acres, it's just you looking out as far as you can see.

"When you're out on the road, whether you are on a bus or a plane, you meet a lot of people, and you've always got somebody around you all the time. It feels good just to go somewhere and not see anybody. You're all by yourself. There isn't anyone around and it's kind of like a cleansing. I feel like I've got a re-charge in my batteries or something when I go there."

With all the fun that comes in the winter months, John Michael wants to be as close to home as possible and with good reason: his family, which includes wife Crystal; daughter Madison; and son Walker.

"I love the snow. I have four-wheel drive, so I usually want it to snow like a foot or more. I want to get Madison out there and let her make some angels in the snow and build snowmen. And, of course, I've got my little toys. I like to get out there and do some four-wheeling. Since I live on a farm, I have a creek and trees and stuff, but I certainly love the wintertime and all its effects.

"Plus, I don't like to be out on the road when the temperature is like this. When you have two young children and a wife, you want to be as close as you can to home. If anything happened or went wrong, like the electricity going off, you don't want to be far away."

Aside from his Kentucky home life, John Michael says that being away from his Nashville-based career is really somewhat of an easier adjustment than most people may think.

"If I lived in Nashville, I think I might stop

appreciating what Nashville 'is.' Before I became famous, I was always fascinated with Nashville, but I think if I lived there, that fascination would die. If I made it my home, I would feel like I was at work every day of my life. It's easier to just get through every day and not say, 'I think I'll stop by and see how things are doing in the

office.' It would especially be easier on my publicist if I lived down there. She could say, 'I just need you to do these interviews, and we'll do this or do that and it won't take but five minutes.' So the continual thought of always working would be there.

"There are certainly benefits and downsides to not living in Nashville. Honestly, there's just no place that I'd rather be than right here where I grew up. I love it up here, and I always have.

"Nowadays, there are so many ways that I can still keep in touch. Nashville's always going to be a part of my career. I can't have a career without Nashville. Hopefully, being three and a half hours away won't hurt it. Hey, look at George Strait, it hasn't hurt his career and he lives even further away."

"Barry Coburn is the president now and I'm extremely excited about working with him. I think he has a lot of fresh, new ideas, and I think he's really got everybody at the label excited."

Throughout his career, John Michael has recorded a variety of songs, including the fast-paced "Be My Baby Tonight" and "Grundy County Auction," but his forte is love ballads that go straight to the heart. ("I Swear," "I Can Love You Like That" and "Angel In My Eyes")

Still, he feels that the music he makes is "his kind."

"I just basically sing the songs that are love songs. I sing the ones that are joyful and bring hope. But I still like to sing the

'good old cry-in-your-beer' Country songs too. They're made for radio, and that's what I grew up on. When I played the bars, I sang top 40. I didn't sing the album cuts, I sang what was on the radio. When I make albums, they are made-for-radio albums; that's why I have success on the road and on the charts and fans still come out and see me. As far as the industry goes, I may not be impressing anybody, but as far as the fans and radio, I'm consistent. All I ever wanted was to try to get a hit song on the radio and be able to cut albums. That's what I'm going to work the hardest to keep doing."

Since the beginning of his Nashville career, John Michael has recorded under the Atlantic Records label. With a recent change of control at the label, he remains excited and is looking forward to working under the new leadership.

"Atlantic records has made a lot of changes. Barry Coburn is the president now and I'm extremely excited about working with him. I think he has a lot of fresh, new ideas, and I think he's really got everybody at the label excited. I think that Atlantic, for the last two years, had become a little stale. It seemed like it was kind of back peddling. All of a sudden, though, Barry came in and brought fresh new people with fresh new ideas.

"I've been with Atlantic since 1991 as an artist. I've been there for seven or eight years now, and it's got me excited about

making a new album under Barry and Atlantic for the next year. It's going to be interesting to see, because Barry's a very good song man, having owned a publishing company. He knows that side of it very well and has managed artists before. There is a lot he is able to relate to, and he understands where the artist is coming from. He will get involved in your career, whether you want him to or not. And I like that."

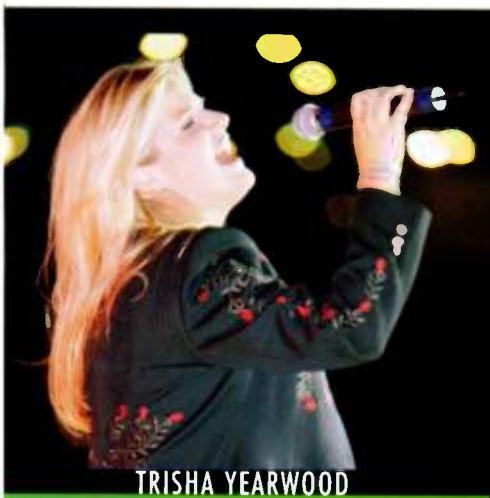
Christy Grealis

**It's Country
Music's biggest
week just for fans.
We're packing
your favorite
stars into one
spectacular week.**

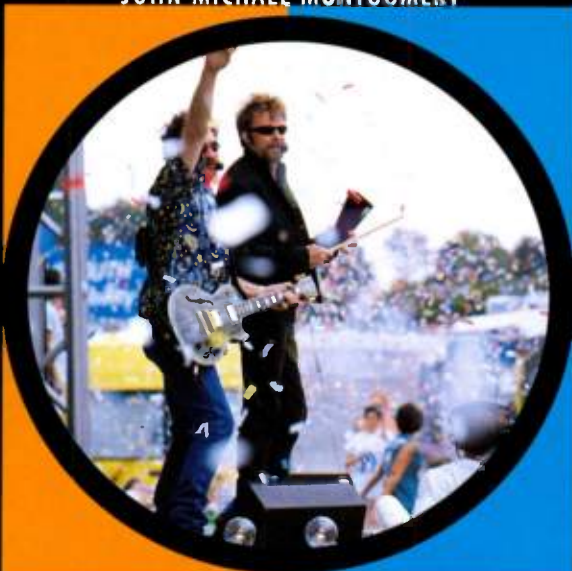


JOHN MICHAEL MONTGOMERY

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Join the more than 20,000 Country Music lovers who journey to Nashville each year for the International Country Music Fan Fair. Make your plans now to attend this unique, week-long festival that allows fans to meet their favorite artists for autographs and photos.

You will hear over 30 hours of live performances on the Fan Fair stage, with more than 200 artists, from top stars to developing acts, participating. CMA and the Grand Ole Opry, invite you to be a part of this special celebration.

TENTATIVE 2000 FAN FAIR SCHEDULE

NOTE: FULL SCHEDULE OF MAJOR SHOWS BEGINS MONDAY. TNN AWARDS MOVE TO THURSDAY NIGHT.

MONDAY, JUNE 12

9:45 am
Opening Ceremonies

10:00 am - 12:30 pm
Atlantic Records /
Asylum Records

2:30 pm - 5:00 pm
Warner Bros.,
Reprise Nashville &
Giant Records

7:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Sony Music
EXHIBIT HALLS OPEN

9:15 am - 6:00 pm

TUESDAY, JUNE 13

10:00 am - 12:30 pm
The Curb Group

2:30 pm - 4:30 pm
Mercury Records

7:00 pm - 9:30 pm
MCA Records
EXHIBIT HALLS OPEN

9:30 am - 6:00 pm

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14

10:00 am - 11:30 am
Lyric Street Records

11:30 am - 1:00 pm
DreamWorks Nashville

2:30 pm - 4:30 pm
Arista Nashville

7:00 pm - 10:00 pm
RCA Label Group
EXHIBIT HALLS OPEN

9:30 am - 6:00 pm
EXHIBIT HALLS OPEN
(For Handicap Viewing Only)

6:30 pm - 7:30 pm

THURSDAY, JUNE 15

10:00 am - 11:30 noon
Virgin Records Nashville

1:30 pm - 2:30 pm
International Show

2:30 pm - 5:30 pm
Platinum
Rounder Records
Step One Records

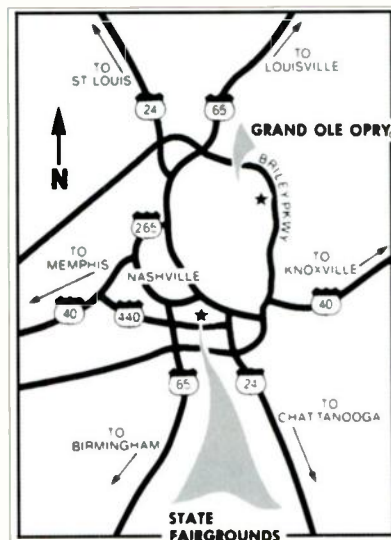
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Bluegrass Show

7:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Country Weekly
Presents: The TNN Music
Awards (Gaylord
Entertainment
Center - Separate
ticket must be
purchased for this
event)
EXHIBIT HALLS OPEN

9:30 am - 6:00 pm

FRIDAY, JUNE 16

Area Attractions
(program subject to change)





From Pink Floyd to the Pope, MTV to Mickey Mouse and George Strait to Saturn, it seems that everyone who's anyone has turned to Stage Craft to make their events happen.

STAGE CRAFT

Founded in 1987 by John Procaccini, the independently owned and operated company specializes in event marketing tours, theatrical shows and corporate presentations. As the music industry has evolved over the past decade, Stage Craft has kept on the cutting edge of building and touring entertainment extravaganzas, including concert tours, themed environments and interactive events.

Over the last year and a half, the 40-person company was involved with the design, construction, staffing and tour management of high profile events for the St. Louis Papal visit, Houston Livestock and Rodeo, MTV's "Campus Invasion" tour, Saturn's "Homecoming," George Strait Country Music Festival's "Straitland," International Goodwill Games, Disney Channel's "PremEARS in the Park" tour and Fox Television's "Fox Kids World Tour."

During its 12-year history, Stage Craft has worked on everything from the world's largest rock 'n' roll music extravaganzas to corporate product roll outs, themed events, touring promotional events, themed retail environments, Broadway shows, Country Music, R & B, rap and contemporary Christian music tours.

"Our business has evolved from primarily set construction for the big production '80s rock 'n' roll tours to

above - St. Louis Papal visit

right - one of the many sets for Vince Gill

far right - Rock Across America

opposite page - Amy Grant



being on the conceptual and developmental side of interactive event marketing tours," says Stage Craft President John Procaccini. "Our theory is to take what we've learned in the touring rock 'n' roll business and apply it to events."

As touring has shifted to multi-artist bills and corporate sponsorship and away from large scale single artist tours, Stage Craft has helped develop ways to get fans excited while keeping sponsors happy.

"As artists continue to look for ways to give the audience more entertainment value, the need to incorporate interactive activities is more apparent," Procaccini says. "You've got to dazzle the fans the minute they walk in the arena with lobby activities, computer kiosks. It really has become about the event experience. Corporate sponsors are driving the theming of set construction. You can spend \$20,000 on a banner without really reaping any benefits but if you spend \$200,000 and do interactive activities, you get a lot more bang for your buck. The 'Fruit of the Loom Country Comfort Tour' is a perfect example of working to create that experience."

Procaccini certainly has seen the touring industry evolve during his 20-year career. After working on the road with the legendary Frank Sinatra and rock greats such as Starship, Procaccini founded Stage Craft from his home base in Carson City, NV. One of Stage Craft's first clients was MTV, a then up-and-coming music network hoping to launch its first touring event, "The Museum of Unnatural History."


"They wanted an interactive consumer event tying in music, fashion and lifestyles. I had no idea what that was," Procaccini admits. But he soon became an

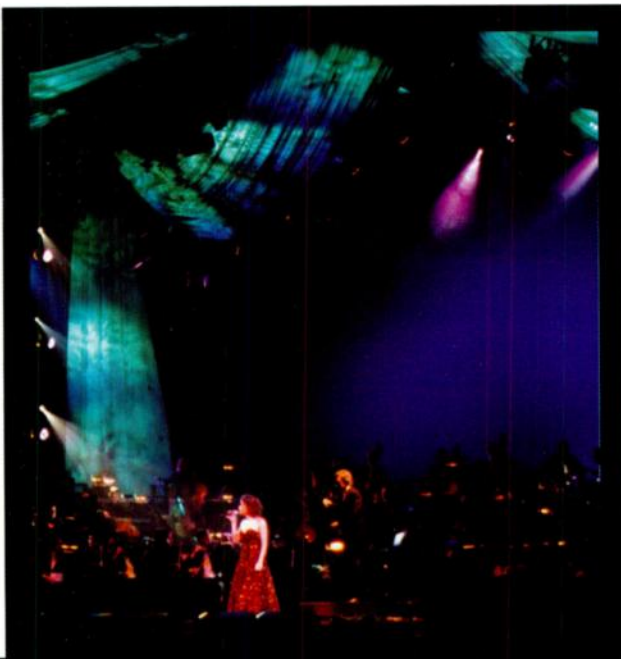
expert, serving as touring production contractor/manager for a very successful, six-truck, 30-week tour in malls across America. "We were drawing crowds like it was the holiday season," Procaccini recalls. Stage Craft can design a tour or build sets and staging based on outside plans. MTV has called on Stage Craft at different times in the process of many events, including its current "Campus Invasion" tour.

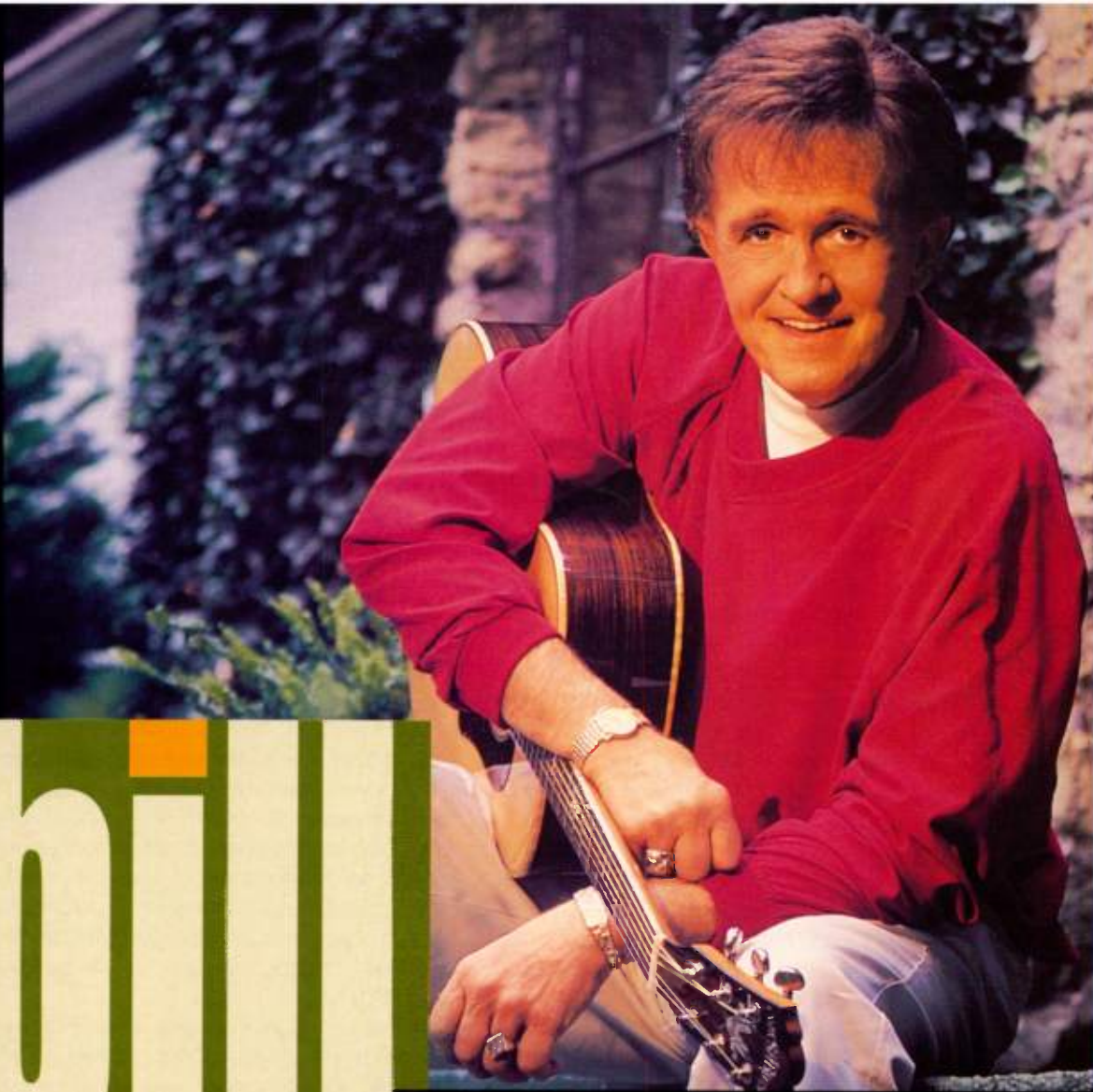
"We have a long-term relationship," says MTV Manager of Promotion Jeff Frank. "We know what they're capable of creating and that they do quality work. John (Procaccini) gets it. He's not just a suit. He's been in the trenches. His whole team is very user-friendly." On the heels of his early success with MTV, Procaccini wanted to help companies diversify and expand their presentations. Though corporate presentations had been primarily trade show driven, Procaccini envisioned taking them to audiences around the country. He began to retool the company to work in this new market. By 1992 Stage Craft began to take on more event marketing projects, though the company's primary business continued to be rock 'n' roll set production. "At that time, our business was 70 percent rock 'n' roll and 30 percent event marketing," Procaccini says. "Now, that's reversed, with event marketing accounting for 70 percent of Stage Craft's business."

Designing cutting edge sets and incorporating the latest technology into a musical production is still fun and challenging for Procaccini and his crew. "Kiss' 1996 tour brought together the epitome of arena rock with the latest technology," Procaccini recalls. "Applying the technological wizardry of the time to Kiss' 20-year-old gags made that tour one of the most fun projects I've ever worked on."

With a multitude of Country artists on their client roster, Stage Craft opened a Nashville office in 1994. Since trucking costs are such a large part of transporting tour shows, the company is able to offer the convenience of having construction work or set refurbishing done from a location near either coast. The full-service shops in Carson City and Nashville encompass 65,000 square feet, where Procaccini and his crew can work on project management and technical design, scenic services in painting and sculpting, metal, wood and softgoods; fabrication and graphics applications and mechanical design and motion control.

Stage Craft opened an office in New York earlier this year. "Combining the heart of Corporate America in New York with the entertainment world in Nashville will, without a doubt, positively effect our Nashville operation and our business overall," Procaccini says. 





Bill ANDERSON

Just recently, I was talking with someone at a radio station about becoming a member of CMA. As we spoke, he explained to me the format of their Country radio station and the variety of old and new songs they play in their daily rotation. He told me how he also had the ability to write Country songs and has been a fan of the industry for years. I explained to him the benefits of becoming a member; one of which we spoke about was CLOSE UP magazine.

When I began talking about some of the articles I had written as well as the upcoming issues, he struck a strong chord when he mentioned he had no earthly idea who Bill Anderson is. As I rattled off a list of Anderson's credentials (Opry member; known as 'Whisperin' Bill because of his gentle voice; wrote "City Lights" at age 19 for Ray Price; 37 top-10 Country hits; and current Grammy nominee for "Two Teardrops" co-written with Steve Wariner) the gentleman still said the name didn't ring a bell.

During my interview with Mr. Anderson I told him this story. He let out a chuckle and humbly explained his version (or opinion) of the story. "I have always thought there should be a little schoolhouse at the edge of Music Row where those people who are new to the industry should take a class called 'Country Music History 101.' That will teach 'em."

With a career spanning over four decades, Anderson explains that nothing can extinguish the fire or the burning desire of a true Country Music songwriter/performer. The challenges keep coming from day to day.

"The thrill doesn't ever go away. I get just as excited today if I hear one of my songs on the radio, or walk in a place and see one of them on a jukebox or in a record store. That is probably one of the things that has kept me going. The thrill of writing or performing hasn't gone away. The fire in the old belly hasn't gone out, it hasn't even flickered.

"If I sit around for a long time and do nothing but write songs, then I get itchy to do the other part of what I do - get on a bus and go out on the road. After a couple of weeks on the road, I'm ready to come back home again. I've always been interested in the different facets of the business. I guess it's always been the diversity and the various challenges that keep me going. And, I still feel challenged. I feel very challenged by the music business today because it is so different from when I came."

"I just wish I could see the commitment (to the Opry) in the eyes and the hearts of a lot of young people. There are some of the younger people who have it and I can see it, but there's not enough."

Over the years, Anderson has been part of the ups and downs of the industry. He came into the business when being original was the key to success, industry shake-ups weren't a common situation and songs truly were the art of storytelling.

"Well, I don't sit around and worry about that (industry changes). I had some awful good years in the sun during my career, and still do. I know that we can still entertain an audience. When I'm booked on a concert date, the people that come to see our show are going to be entertained. If they want to play my records on the radio, that's fine. If they don't, that's fine too. I just don't sit around and worry about that, because it's something that I don't have time to worry about.

"You can't write the same old three chord, hurtin' Country song that you could write in the '60s and be successful today. The challenge is to take what I learned from writing that three chord Country song and draw off other people I'm writing with to make it adapt for today."

Making that first impression and being unique, along with talent, Anderson says, is the answer to success. Marketing yourself as something you are not is perhaps the biggest change any artist could be faced with in the business.

"Just as I thought I knew the answers to this business, they changed all the questions. When I came here, if you had asked me about being a success years ago, I would have said to be yourself. Be original. Be different. Don't worry about being like everybody else. What is that old thing about not following the path? Go where there is no path and leave a trail.

"When I came here, if you weren't different, you didn't stand a chance. If you turned on the radio and heard Marty Robbins, he didn't sound like anybody else. Merle Haggard didn't sound like anybody; Ernest Tubb, Buck Owens, everybody had their own style. I remember one time that a guy came into a publishing company where I was and said that he could sing

just like Johnny Cash. I said, 'We've already got a Johnny Cash, go home and learn to sing like yourself and come back.' That was always the advice that I would give and yet, now, everything sounds alike, looks alike and feels alike. That is where we're making a mistake. So many people come in here today and they don't know who they are. Somebody else has to tell them who they are, and that is not a true artist. I think that you're supposed to tell everybody who you are through your talent.

"Without a doubt, I think that (allowing someone else to tell you who you are) is the single biggest change there has been since I have been in the business. You see, feel and hear that all across the music. Whether you're listening to the radio or watching videos on television, you just see this parade. I'm not saying they're not good, because a lot of them are very good, but where is that uniqueness? Where is that thing that stands out from the pack?"

"I've always thought songwriting was this lonely thing that you did by yourself, at three in the morning, after everybody had gone to bed and you pulled the shades down, and saw how miserable you could get, and then wrote a song about it."

continued on page 38...

the cma broadcast award of excellence

for the best in country radio/station of the year

The best of Country radio is honored each year by CMA with Broadcast Awards presented to the Broadcast Personality of the Year and the Station of the Year in four market categories. Any full-time Country radio station or broadcast personality in the U.S. and Canada is eligible to enter.

Market sizes are determined by Arbitron ranking: Major market (Arbitron 1-25); Large market (Arbitron 26-50); Medium market (Arbitron 51-100); and Small market (all others). Canadian markets are ranked by a population equivalency.

FOLLOWING ARE THE GUIDELINES FOR ENTRY:

- All entries must be submitted in a standard (10 1/2 " x 11 3/4") three-ring binder not to exceed one inch in thickness.
- Market category/ranking **must** be displayed on the front of each entry.
- Five copies of each entry for Station of the Year and five copies of each entry for Broadcast Personality of the Year must be sent.
- Entry events must have occurred between June 1, 1999 and May 31, 2000.
- Entries must be received by June 12, 2000. No exceptions will be made.

Previous Broadcast Personality of the Year winners are ineligible. However, if a previous winner has changed market size, then he/she is eligible to enter again in the new market size.

MATERIALS REQUIRED FOR STATION OF THE YEAR ENTRIES ARE:

- 20-25 minute aircheck with all dayparts represented. No specially produced tapes accepted. Judging is based on the overall sound of the station, its flow, production, entertainment value and cohesiveness.
- Station should exhibit its community involvement, including news and public service as well as responsiveness to the needs and problems facing its marketplace.
- Describe the competitive position of your station with ratings information. Indicate overall position among adult shares and how station ranks among the Country competitors in the market. Any statistical survey is acceptable.

- Describe station's impact on the Country radio / Country Music scene on a national and local basis.
- List any awards or accolades received.
- Include media kit, coverage kits, sales kits, etc.

BROADCAST PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR ENTRIES SHOULD INCLUDE:

(IMPORTANT: Information in each section excluding the final section may not exceed one typed/written sheet, printed front and back.)

- Aircheck, not to exceed 10 minutes, should demonstrate strong entertainment value, technical value of show, ability to communicate, sense of community, pride of association with station and Country Music; knowledge of Country Music.
- Briefly describe your show's ratings for the past 12 months. Any statistical survey is acceptable.
- Provide details of community involvement which may include any awards or recommendations from community leaders.
- List how many years you have been involved in Country radio, the Country stations where you have been employed, how many years employed at each station and membership in Country Music organizations.
- Additional information can be included in the final section. This section may not exceed three sheets (each printed front and back) and can include newspaper articles pictures, awards and letters.

Broadcast Personality teams will be judged as a single entry.

Entrants must follow all rules and determined criteria.

For more detailed rules and information, contact CMA's Marketing at (615) 244-2840.

Submit entry to:

Broadcast Awards / Country Music Association
c/o Mailer's Choice
1924 Air Lane Drive / Nashville, TN 37210-3810

- Market Category/ranking **must** be displayed on the front of each entry

HOW ARE THE BROADCAST AWARDS JUDGED? Judging takes place in two rounds for each award category, with the first round determining the finalists. The combined score of the first round and second round judging will determine the winners.

WHO ARE THE JUDGES? All entries are judged by a panel of 45 judges. Each of these judges is considered an expert in the broadcasting industry.

WHERE ARE THE JUDGES FROM? The panel of judges is dispersed throughout all regions of the U.S. and represent all market sizes.

WHO TABULATES THE JUDGES' BALLOTS? The judges' decisions will be tabulated by the international accounting firm of Deloitte & Touche.



CMA
2000
COUNTRY MUSIC RADIO DIRECTORY

NOW AVAILABLE

CMA's annual

Country Music Radio Directory is

now available. The volume was compiled for the seventh year in partnership with M Street Journal, the highly respected organization which tracks the formats of all radio stations. The publication provides the most comprehensive list of stations broadcasting Country Music in the U.S. and Canada. "Radio is the backbone of the industry because it connects the creators to the consumers," said Ed Benson, CMA executive director. "In continuing our partnership with M Street Journal, CMA has taken every possible measure to assure that the annual CMA Country Music Radio Directory is the most accurate, informative source of its kind concentrating on Country radio, America's most listened-to format."

There are 2,105 full-time Country radio stations in the U.S. 285 additional stations play Country Music along with sports and talk programming. Country radio has more stations than the next biggest format, adult contemporary (1,482 stations).

The 2000 CMA Country Music Radio Directory is available to CMA members for \$15. Non-members may obtain the directory for \$65. To order copies, contact the CMA membership department at (615) 244-2840. Organizational members will receive complimentary copies per their membership level.

In conjunction with the CMA Country Music Radio Directory, M Street Journal also provides mailing labels which can be customized by state, region, market, reporting stations and many other configurations.

ORDER FORM

Mail CMA's 2000 Country Radio Directory to: (please print)

Name _____ Business _____

Address _____ Phone () _____

City/State/Zip _____

CMA Member Price: \$15 / Non-Member Price: \$65 CMA Membership Number _____

Please send _____ copies. Total payment due _____ Check or money order enclosed

You may charge payment to: Visa M/C American Express Card No. _____

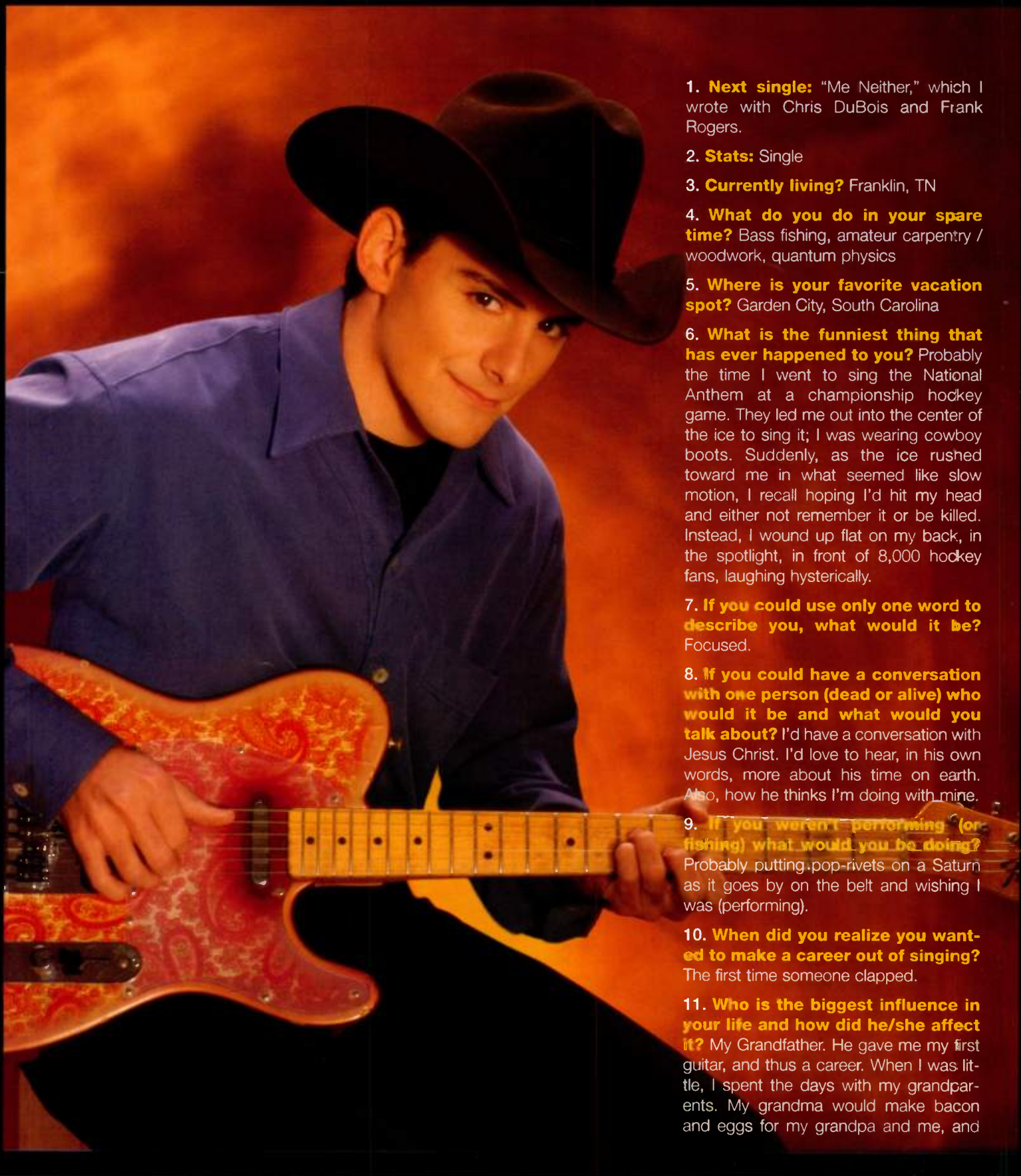
Expiration Date _____ Signature _____

(Required for charge authorization)

All orders must be prepaid. Price includes postage & handling.

Send order form to: CMA Country Music Radio Directory, One Music Circle South, Nashville, TN 37203 Fax:(615)726-0314

BRAD PAISLEY



1. Next single: "Me Neither," which I wrote with Chris DuBois and Frank Rogers.

2. Stats: Single

3. Currently living? Franklin, TN

4. What do you do in your spare time? Bass fishing, amateur carpentry / woodwork, quantum physics

5. Where is your favorite vacation spot? Garden City, South Carolina

6. What is the funniest thing that has ever happened to you? Probably the time I went to sing the National Anthem at a championship hockey game. They led me out into the center of the ice to sing it; I was wearing cowboy boots. Suddenly, as the ice rushed toward me in what seemed like slow motion, I recall hoping I'd hit my head and either not remember it or be killed. Instead, I wound up flat on my back, in the spotlight, in front of 8,000 hockey fans, laughing hysterically.

7. If you could use only one word to describe you, what would it be? Focused.

8. If you could have a conversation with one person (dead or alive) who would it be and what would you talk about? I'd have a conversation with Jesus Christ. I'd love to hear, in his own words, more about his time on earth. Also, how he thinks I'm doing with mine.

9. If you weren't performing (or fishing) what would you be doing? Probably putting pop-rivets on a Saturn as it goes by on the belt and wishing I was (performing).

10. When did you realize you wanted to make a career out of singing? The first time someone clapped.

11. Who is the biggest influence in your life and how did he/she affect it? My Grandfather. He gave me my first guitar, and thus a career. When I was little, I spent the days with my grandparents. My grandma would make bacon and eggs for my grandpa and me, and

they'd watch me until my parents got home from work. Papaw (as I called him) never had a son, just daughters; so he would take me fishing, pass football in the backyard, and treat me like the son he never had. He passed away in 1987, but to this day, the smell of bacon fryin' makes me look around to see if he's nearby.

12. Based on your experiences, what advice would you give to an artist just starting out? Go listen to old Buck Owens albums, old George (Jones) and Tammy (Wynette) albums, old George Strait albums, the Roger Miller box set, the Opry, etc. Take all that and make it part of what you do. Then sing your heart out in your hometown 'till they're tired of you. Then go to Belmont University. After that, the sky's the limit.

13. What song on your album, WHO NEEDS PICTURES, represents you the most? "Holdin' On To You." This song is very much me. Mostly because as I sing it night after night, I can easily take myself back to the time when I was trying to date while still being pre-occupied with the one I had just parted with. The song is a lot like my personality – even though it's a serious song, there are overtones of humor ... there's a smile to it. Part of life includes finding a little bit of humor in even the difficult situations.

14. Some of the songs you've written are very comedic ... does that comic sense reflect your personality? Were you always the class clown? No, not always. I was pretty shy in school. I'm a little more laid back than that. Plus, my sense of humor is very sardonic. Often times people can't tell if I'm joking or not. A good rule of thumb when getting to know me is to assume I'm always kidding. That's a pretty safe bet anyway.

15. You've been writing songs since you were 12 years old. Who or what influenced you to start writing? I can't remember any big reason why I began to write songs. Most likely, it just came from holding a guitar for so long that it was inevitable. It just sort of happened I guess.

16. When you look back at your album, is there anything you would do differently? Musically, believe it or not, no. On the liner notes, however, I'd

remember to thank Chris DuBois, Frank Rogers and Kelley Lovelace so that they'd shut up about it. Also, I'd thank Zane Baxter.

17. You've had many accomplishments this past year, were you prepared to handle this kind of success? Has any of it overwhelmed you? It's all been a bit overwhelming. I rely more than ever on my faith, remembering that there are things more important than where a record winds up charting. The key is to not let too many people take over doing things for you that you would normally take care of yourself.

18. What is your ultimate career goal? To become one of those members of the Opry who continues to play it even after being inducted.

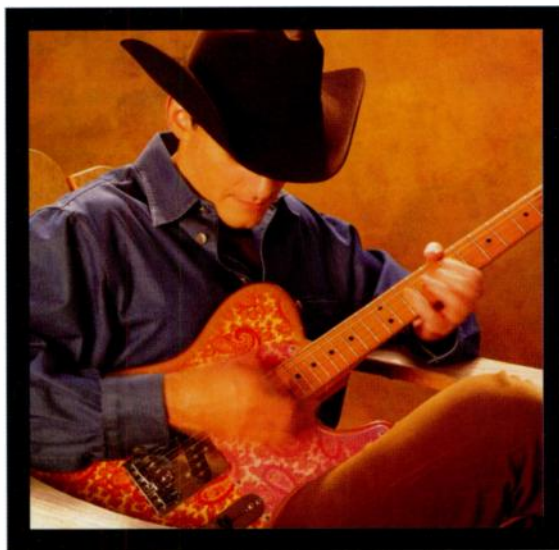
19. You are one of the few new artists who has very strong feelings about performing at the Opry. What are your motivations behind that? My feelings on playing the Opry run very deep. It has as much to do with the people who play there as it does the institution itself –

which I totally revere. I feel like I wouldn't have a career without this institution. It has nurtured Country Music throughout the years. It used to be one of the few ways to get exposure on a national radio show – and it was the premiere show of its kind. Coming from a live radio background, it has made me that much more of a fan of its cause.

To have the opportunity to play this famous stage and not take advantage of it – I don't understand. I try to block out time and figure out any open Friday or Saturday that I can be there – and not necessarily just sing there, but hang there with my Opry heroes and be around the ones that have become family to me in the 20-some times I've played there. I really enjoy the experience so much – it's my favorite place in the world.

20. What do you have planned for the year 2000 (career and personal)? We're gonna start recording again in March for the next album. I've got a year's worth of tour dates booked as we speak, and hopefully in there somewhere I can get outside and use my boat a time or two. I really can't envision a better life for me than the one I'm presently blessed with. Isn't this business a blast?

Chris Gusa



awards

Shania Twain was named Favorite Female Musical Performer at the "26th Annual People's Choice Awards." She was selected over fellow

personal accomplishments for and in the state of Oklahoma. Past recipients of the awards include New York Yankee great Bobby Murcer, astronaut Thomas Stafford and former governor David Boren.

on the move

Several key promotions have been made within **Gaylord Entertainment's** Interactive Media Group: **Cindy Wilson** has been named president of Gaylord Cable Networks; **Randy McCabe** has been named senior vice president and general manager of GETdigitalmedia; **Mark Floyd** has been named senior vice president, chief operating and financial officer of the Interactive Media Group; and **Dennis Worden** has been named general manager of Lightsource.com, a property of Gaylord Entertainment's GETdigitalmedia.

The **Country Music Hall of Fame** recently announced the following promotions: **Mark Medley** has been named curator of collections; **Frankie L. Tallent, Jr.** is upped to the museum's archival and collections staff as registrar; and **Brian K. Hedges** is special projects administrator.

Jon Tabeling has been appointed general manager of **Stage Craft's** Nashville office and **Preston Broach** has been hired as shop foreman.

Ellen Bligh Jones has been promoted to the newly-created position of director/corporate relations at **SESAC**. Jones will oversee the marketing efforts at SESAC.

Charity Thomas has joined **Life Music Group** as creative services assistant.

Shari Reinschreiber has joined the promotion staff of **Virgin Records Nashville** as Midwest regional promotion director.

Misti Filipiak has been promoted to manager/creative services for **Dreamcatcher**



Canadian Celine Dion and teen sensation Britney Spears.

The votes are in, and the winners have been announced for the "27th Annual American Music Awards." Here's a list of Country stars who took home awards:

Favorite Male Country Artist - **Garth Brooks**
 Favorite Female Country Artist - **Shania Twain**
 Favorite Female Pop/Rock Artist - **Shania Twain**
 Favorite Country Band, Duo or Group - **Brooks & Dunn**
 Favorite Country Album - **DOUBLE LIVE, Garth Brooks**
 Favorite New Country Artist - **Montgomery Gentry**
 Artist of the Decade - **Garth Brooks**

Loretta Lynn has been honored by ABC's Real Country Network as the recipient of this year's Real Country Listeners' Choice Award as Legend of the Year. She was recognized as a traditional Country artist who embraces the musical values of past winners.

DreamWorks recording artist **Toby Keith** has been honored with the Native Son Award from the South Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce. Recipients are recognized for their



Tri Chord recording artist **Marty Rabon** gets some coaching from producer **Mary Said** on the video shoot for "Cracker Jack Diamond," the first single from **Raybon's** self-titled album.

Giant recording group **The Wilkinsons** recently shot the video "Jimmy's Got A Girlfriend," on location in an urban neighborhood of **Los Angeles**. The single is the first from their sophomore album. The video was directed by **Jim Shea** and produced by **Robert Sexton**.

Entertainment and **Melissa Beckham** has been upped to executive assistant.

Veteran TV reporter/producer **Storme Warren** has joined **Travis Television** as producer/creative director.

John Fagot joined the staff of **Mercury Nashville's** promotion department as director of alternative marketing and promotion.

Kemp Buntin has joined the staff of **Big Tractor Music** as creative director.

The Farm, a co-publishing venture between **Jackie Solomon** and **Hamstein Music Group**, has relocated to 800 18th Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37203. Phone: (615) 244-4576; Fax: (615) 244-8153.

Eminent Records has moved to a new location: 2410 Belmont Blvd., Nashville, TN 37212. Phone: (615) 386-8373; Fax: (615) 386-8379; Website: www.eminentrecords.com.

RPR Media has moved to the following address: P.O. Box 330267, Nashville, TN 37203-7502. Phone/Fax: (615) 297-2316.

Carnival Music has moved to their new offices: 814 19th Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37203. Phone: (615) 322-9820; Fax: (615) 322-5486.

new companies

The Boston-based **Rasky/Baerlein Group** has purchased Wortman Works Media & Marketing. **Jules Wortman** is now vice president and head of Rasky/Baerlein, Nashville. The nationally-recognized company handles clients such as the Boston Celtics, Tufts University and CBS Cable. The Nashville offices will move to a new location in the near future.



Jessica Andrews' latest video "Unbreakable Heart" was recently shot in Los Angeles. Director David Hogan specifically purchased the \$4000 ice blue Ralph Lauren gown the DreamWorks artist wore for the video.

signings

RECORDING: **Clay Davidson** to *Virgin Records Nashville*...**John Anderson** to *Epic Records Nashville*...**Neal McCoy** to *Giant Records*...**Travis Tritt** to *Columbia Records*. PUBLISHING: **Kenny Beard** to *Big Tractor Music*...**Amber Leigh White** to *Texabama Music*...**Sam and Annie Tate** to *Carnival Music*...**Ashley Gorley** to *Broadvision Publishing*...**Bobby Fuller** to *Castlestreet Music*...**Roger Ferris** to *MusicHighway.com*. BOOKING: **Tracy Lawrence** to *Buddy Lee Attractions*.

send us your E-mail!

If you have not submitted your e-mail address to CMA or if it has changed recently, send your current e-mail address to membership@CMAworld.com. When sending an e-mail, indicate "e-mail address update" in the subject header field to help us process the submissions more efficiently. Be sure to include your full name and your membership

music videos

artist/label

Jessica Andrews/DreamWorks
Toby Keith/DreamWorks
Shelby Lynn/Mercury
The Mavericks/Mercury
Martina McBride/RCA
Marty Raybon/Tri Chord Records
Julie Reeves/Virgin Nashville
Chalee Tennison/Asylum
Shania Twain/Mercury
The Wilkinsons/Giant

song title

"Unbreakable Heart"
"How Do You Like Me Now"
"Your Lies"
"Here Comes My Baby"
"Love's The Only House"
"Cracker Jack Diamond"
"What I Need"
"Just Because She Lives There"
"Rock This Country"
"Jimmy's Got A Girlfriend"

director

David Hogan
Michael Salomon
Liz Freeland
Steven Goldmann
Tom Oliphant
Mary Said
Steven Shepard
Jim Shea
Larry Jordan
Jim Shea



GARTH BROOKS



KIM RICHEY

Garth Brooks dubbed it the "World Series" of music shows. Nanci Griffith compares it to playing Carnegie Hall. Martina McBride simply calls it "classy." Austin City Limits — public television's crown jewel — is celebrating 25 years of bringing more than 500 diverse artists into the homes of America. "Nobody really thought the show would last five years, let alone 25 years," says producer Terry Lickona, who joined the show in its fourth season. "When Austin City Limits first started, the original intent was that it would be a showcase for Austin and Texas music. One of my goals at the time was to stretch the limits of the show and showcase other kinds of American music."

"It's just about the music and nothing else."

So Lickona started booking eclectic acts like Taj Mahal, Tom Waits and Leon Redbone. He also began including Nashville Country artists. "I remember before I became the producer, I tried to convince the original producers that they should have George Jones on the show, just because he was the voice of Country Music — and they didn't understand why.

"I thought it would be great to bring in other kinds of music, and that's how the show has grown and developed over the years. It's really all about American roots music. That's the label I think fits best, since people like to have a label on everything. It's a showcase for authentic, original, American roots music. And to me, it doesn't matter what style that is, whether it's traditional Country, or modern Country or bluegrass, blues, folk, rock 'n' roll, or regional sounds like cajun, Tex Mex and other types of music. I think they all deserve wider exposure on national TV. And there really aren't many, if any,

other outlets for the eclectic kind of music that we like to present."

Lickona remembers the early days, when booking talent was an uphill climb. "When I would call agents or managers, their first question was, 'What is that — is that a local music show down there in Texas? Well, we don't do local shows.' And I'd explain, 'No, it's actually seen nationally on public television all over the country.' Fortunately, I haven't had to explain it to anybody in a long time."

Lickona certainly didn't have to explain it to Country superstar Alan Jackson, who appeared on ACL in 1994. "I'm really obligated to do this show," Jackson says. "Years ago, back

"It's really relaxed. I've been on a couple of other TV shows, and this one had such a great vibe. It's more like you're playing in a friendly bar than playing a pressurized TV performance."

In his 22 years of producing ACL, Lickona has had the privilege of watching many unknown artists become stars. "Garth did the show for the first time in 1990 — before his first million records," he says. "He just came back and was featured on our premiere for the 25th anniversary season. As he said at the time, 'The only reason I keep coming back is that this show is about the music and nothing else.'

"Little did we know when Garth taped our show last November that he was

going to shortly thereafter announce his retirement. He taped a two-and-a-half-hour show and brought his Country band down from Nashville - which he said he hadn't played with in over a year — as well as his Chris Gaines band. It was the first and only time that Garth has actually performed both his Country Garth and Chris Gaines songs in the same show in front of the same audience. So that's turned into a really big deal, now that he's not going to be performing again for awhile."

Lickona recalls booking George Strait in 1981. "He is from the central Texas area and started out playing with his band in a bar just south of Austin. He used to play a lot of fraternity parties. The first time George did our show, he was not well known at all outside that part of Texas.

"And I remember when Alabama did the show for the first time. We're talking about 20 years ago. Back then they were still driving around in an RV, going from gig to gig. I think they had just



EMMYLOU HARRIS



THE MAVERICKS

signed with RCA that year. I think they'd probably be embarrassed if we ran that old show again, because they were all wearing blue jumpsuits," Lickona says, laughing at the memory. "If I recall, that was the fashion back then."

Fashions change, but for Austin City Limits, the song remains the same. Lickona credits the show's longevity to two factors — being on public television and keeping it simple. "Nobody from PBS has ever told me who I should or should not book for the show," he says. "It's just about the music and nothing else. We don't do any backstage profiles or interviews. No gimmicks — it's just straight ahead music. We don't have any fancy sets or lighting effects.

"I think the person watching at home likes

the diversity, too. We might go one week with George Jones, and the next week have Sheryl Crow or somebody like Buddy Guy. Then we might have Bonnie Raitt or **Buck Owens**. We also like to do songwriter shows from time to time, which are always popular. Like this one we're going to tape in February with **Emmylou Harris**, Dave Matthews, **Buddy and Julie Miller**, and Patty Griffin — which is an interesting mix in itself."

Austin City Limits has another ace in the hole — the equal time given to up-and-comers and established stars. "We've made that an important part of the show's philosophy from the very beginning," Lickona says. "In fact, most of our shows are split between two different acts — one, a well-known headliner, and the other usually a lesser-known act. But they get an equal amount of time. And that's just unheard of on national TV — that a new artist can get that much exposure."

Lickona likens the show's chronicle of American music to another musical institution, the Grand Ole Opry. "The Grand Ole Opry, of course, was there first, and they've been around a lot longer," he points out. "But when Alan Jackson made that comment about how watching our show inspired him, that was the first time it ever hit me that there are younger people out there watching these shows, who may really be influenced or inspired to go into music themselves. It's sort of like when Loretta Lynn would sit around the radio listening to the Opry, and dream of being a Country star herself."

As the show heads into the 21st century, Austin City Limits itself will be getting more exposure. "I think the next five years could bring some radical changes to the show," Lickona predicts. "We're making plans to convert the format of our show to high definition television, which will mean a totally different look. And we would probably build a new set. There's even talk of relocating it to a larger facility where we could have a

bigger audience.

"We're also talking about doing webcasting in the future and upgrading our website. Someday, people will be able to access this huge library of shows that we have. We have people calling every day wanting to know if they can buy a video of an old show from 15 or 20 years ago. And of course, we don't have the rights or the clearances to do that right now. But the technology is

"When I would call agents or managers, their first question was, 'What is that - is that a local music show down there in Texas?'"

there. I don't think it will be long before somebody could go to the Austin City Limits website and look up our anthology. If they wanted The Judds' first show in 1980, and they wanted to download that show or a song from that show, they'd be able to do that."

Lickona notes, "Everybody keeps trying to predict how television's going to change in the future — or if public television, for that matter, will become a thing of the past. But I still think there is always going to be interest in the kind of a show that we present — whether it's on public television, conventional television, or on the Internet someday. As long as we make smart talent bookings and find the right artists, I believe there will always be an Austin City Limits somewhere."

Lynn Graham

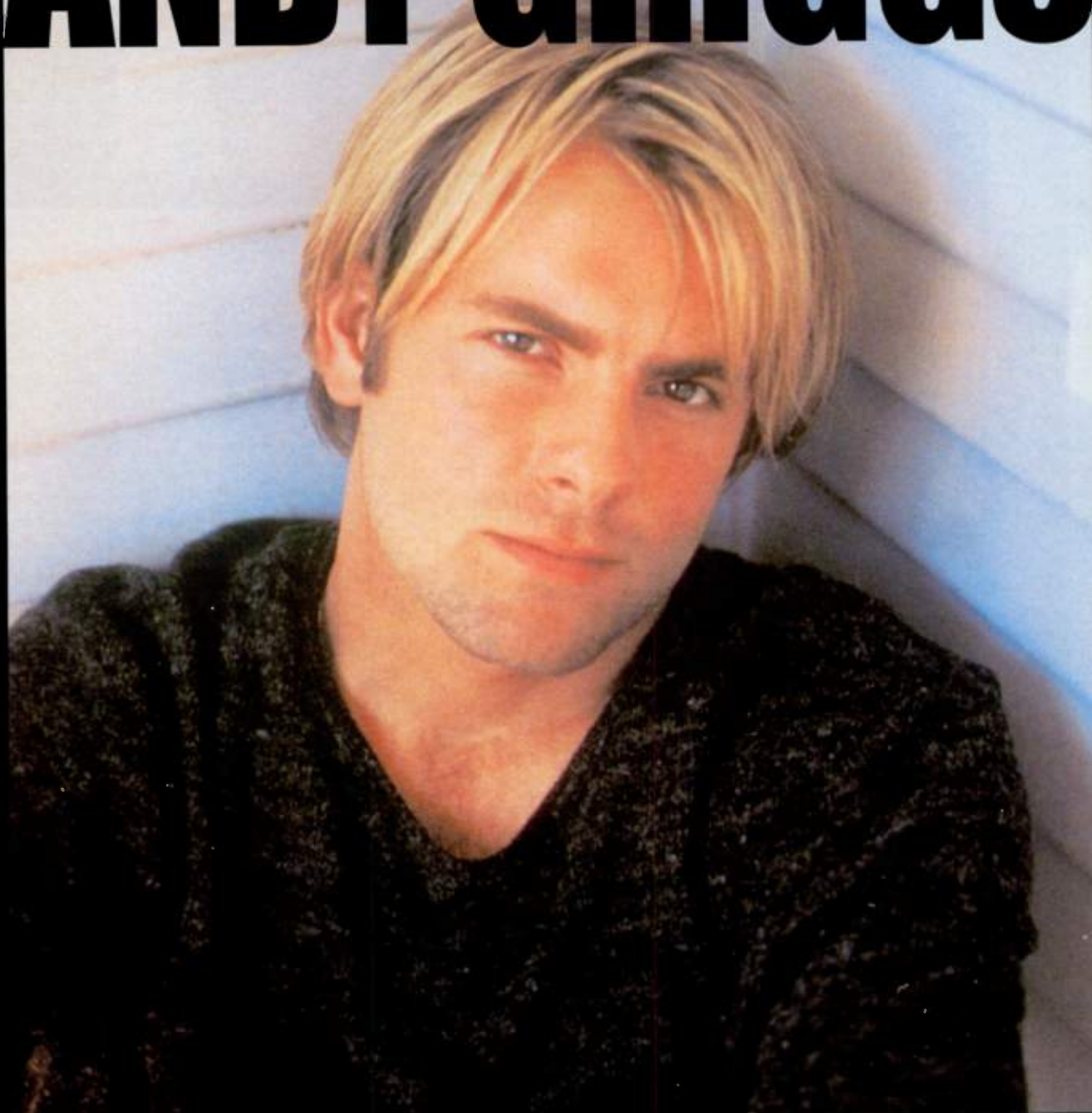
NANCI GRIFFITH



CLINT BLACK



ANDY GRIGGS



andy Griggs swaggered onto the Country Music scene with the attitude of an outlaw. Although he's not your typical renegade, he demonstrated endearing signs of rebellion from the beginning. When Andy had his first opportunity to land a record deal at a meeting with Joe Galante at RCA Records, he bucked the tradition of playing a soft love ballad and instead sang something that no one would have expected - "Arms Of Cocaine." Even Andy admits, "It was a hard-headed, stubborn, rebellious thing to do. I probably shouldn't have done it, but it proved a point. Either they would get me, or they wouldn't."

RCA Records got him and so do the fans. In December 1998, he released his first single, "You Won't Ever Be Lonely," and it soared up the charts to the top spot. But according to Andy, it wasn't a fast ride.

"I would rather have Waylon (Jennings) and all of those guys approve of my music than the industry in general."

One year ago, I was like a desperado waiting on a train. It's just amazing what one year can do with the help of God's hand and a little bit of luck. I was praying to God that 'Lonely' would just chart. If it charted, I would be happy. So, last year was a really good year, which kind of puts the pressure on for 2000."

This spring, Andy plans to go in the studio to work on his sophomore release. The young star is already feeling pressure to repeat his success.

"I start to feel the panic and the pressure all the way from the label to the outside. I'm still so proud of my first album (YOU WON'T EVER BE LONELY), and now there are other things to look at. But, I need to remember that this is supposed to be the most fun part of my career. To get in the studio and make albums is the most fun. So, I'm trying to keep myself locked up and away from all the fears and the pressure and just go in and have fun. I'm going to do the music that I want to do and add just enough so that radio and the record label will approve. I don't want to make something black and cold and unrealistic. But, at the same time, I would rather have Waylon (Jennings) and all of those guys approve of my music than the industry in general."

Being on the road this past year he found it "extremely hard" to write songs for the new album, but he's currently working on finding the time to dedicate to his writing.

"I'm hoping that by the time we go in to make the album I will have had enough time to write and feel comfortable about how many songs of mine I wish to put on the album."

For some artists it is imperative that they have lived the song to be able to sing it, while others say they don't have to walk in the lines of the song to be able to sing it and feel the meaning of the lyrics. For Andy, it's both.

"I'd have to say that most songs do have to really be me. I'm my own worst critic. I am also the pickiest person for the album, not just because I'm the artist, but because I want the song to describe and fit me. If there is a story that I can't identify with, it is extremely hard for me to sing it. There is one song on the last album, 'Waiting on Sundown,' and it is about a guy picking up a girl whose husband has been abusing her. I haven't been in that situation and that is the song that I struggled with the most and I think that's why. It was hard to nail it home. I think you can, but it is a lot easier and deeper if you've been there."

It seems odds are better at winning a lottery than making it in the music business. When asked what attributed to his debut success, Andy is hard-pressed for an answer.

"Well, I don't know. I hope I never will. That's why I consider myself one of the luckiest guys in town. Sometimes I really don't think I deserve any of this.

"RCA was the first label we went to, and somehow they said yes. It kind of started from there, but that was forever ago. I guess the biggest thing that people don't realize is that you wait. It's a long time between a record deal and having a song out. It was about a year and a half for me, maybe even two years. I don't really know what I have because I don't really think I'm a great singer or a great musician at all. Sometimes I see myself as an artist, sometimes I don't.

"My favorite scripture in the Bible says, 'When God is on your side, who can be against you.' I try to put that into everyday use. I think that has a lot to do with it. I go to Him a lot for advice. I'm not going to lie to you, sometimes I don't hear back. It's not like I get the advice every time I need it. But, I think a lot of times doors are opened or closed because of that."

Outlaws of the past - Waylon Jennings, Merle Haggard, Buck Owens - continue to influence the artists of today. And none seems more affected by the "outlaw sound" than Andy Griggs.

"I would not want to say that I am the only (outlaw), or that I am *the* one, or that the town is full of them either. I'm a big fan of old school. Does my music really sound like old school? No. I'm kind of doing it my way and adding a little bit of edge and a little bit of solid rock. That's why I think the class of '99 was so big, because whether it was the people who hit or the people who didn't hit, people had a style of their own. Montgomery Gentry kind of had that edgier, rowdy, Hank Williams Jr. style. Brad Paisley is the young cowboy everyone said Alan Jackson was in '90 or '91. Then you go all the way to SHeDAISY or Sara Evans. I respect all those singers. But, to tell you the truth, only time will tell, and you're only as good as your next album. I'm friends with all of them, and I think that we're all pulling for each other. But, it's not a matter of who's going to last, hit or make the most success. It's a matter of who can stay the truest. I'm always the first one to say don't let Nashville contaminate us. We came here for one reason and that is to play music the way we heard it. Don't let anybody tell you different. If radio won't play that, we've still succeeded."

Angie Crabtree

"Sometimes I see myself as an artist, sometimes I don't."

congratulations

PEOPLE magazine recently named **Garth Brooks** the Country Music Star of the Century. **Patsy Cline** came in second, followed by **Johnny Cash**, **Dolly Parton** and **Hank Williams**.



Reprise recording artist and USO Tour veteran Paul Brandt headlined at the USO Holiday Gala where the USO recognized five American heroes and presented the prestigious "Spirit of Hope" award to John Glenn. Pictured (left to right): General Carl E. Mundy, Jr. (USMC retired president & CEO/USO); Annie Glenn; Senator John Glenn; Paul Brandt; and his wife Elizabeth.

In other **Garth** news, the 1997 album SEVENS, has recently been certified seven times platinum by the RIAA. This brings his total RIAA certifications to 99 million; second to the Beatles at 106.5 million.

The North America Country Music Hall of Fame (NACMA) will soon have two new members. Country Music greats **Janie Fricke** and **Freddy Fender** will be inducted during the third annual ceremony in early March. The event takes place at the Governor's Palace Theater in Sevierville, TN.

MCA Recording artist **Alecia Elliott** has been touted as one of the "Faces To Watch In 2000" according to the *Los Angeles Times*. She was the only female artist, out of the four listed, to be selected. (William Orbit, Common and Oscar de la Hoya were the others named in the piece).

Ralph Stanley is the newest member of the Grand Ole Opry. His induction took place January 15 after he played to a sold-out crowd at the historic Ryman Auditorium. **Patty**

Loveless, **Porter Wagoner** and many others were on hand for the induction.

rings, bells and babies

President and CEO of Virgin Records Nashville **Scott Hendricks** and his wife Teri welcomed a new addition to their family. Shaye Leigh was born January 3. Her big sister Keely is 2 years old.

Billy Ray Cyrus and his wife Tish are the proud parents of a baby girl. Noah Lindsey Cyrus, was born on January 8. Between them, the couple has six children.

Jennifer Kinley, half of the recording duo of The Kinleys received a marriage proposal at the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve from fellow artist Adam Hughes. One week later, her sister **Heather** also received an engagement ring from pharmaceutical sales representative Mark Mendenhall. Jennifer plans to wear their mother's original wedding ring and Heather will wear her mother's wedding dress.

leading the cause

Doug Stone recently received the American Heart Association National Volunteer Award. The Country singer was honored for helping the organization raise awareness about heart disease.

The Kinleys, Jackson Browne, Bruce Hornsby, Fleetwood Mac's John McVie, Bonnie Raitt, baseball slugger Mark McGwire and many others recently participated in the ninth annual Stars to the Rescue concert. The show was part of a benefit for Tony LaRussa's Animal Rescue Foundation. The funds raised in the event help rescue, rehabilitate and place homeless animals in loving homes.

Tracy Byrd is lending his hometown of Beaumont, Texas a helping hand in a new literacy effort that encourages people to read more and to utilize their public library. Byrd is the honorary chairman of the endeavor.



take me out to the ballgame

Garth Brooks is doing it again. The Country superstar will take part in baseball spring training with the New York Mets in efforts to support his Touch 'Em All Foundation. Last year the foundation raised \$1.8 million with 67 players participating.

on the tube

Nashville's Orange Blossom Productions recently began filming the television project "On Music Row." The one-hour dramatic comedy, which centers around the lives of five struggling songwriters/musicians, stars Jennifer O'Neill and **Lari White**.

Faith Hill will take part in a televised good-bye to "Peanuts" cartoonist Charles Schulz, who recently retired the comic strip. Hill will sing "Poor Sweet Baby" on the CBS Television special, "Charlie Brown's 50th Anniversary," which is scheduled to air in May.

LeAnn Rimes' upcoming single "I Believe In You" will be featured in the CBS miniseries "Jesus" (April 30 & May 3). When Rimes performed for Pope John II in December 1999, she presented him a copy of the song.

Ty Herndon was recently in front of the cameras taping episodes of two network television series - CBS's "JAG" and NBC's "The Pretender."

Dolly Parton is keeping herself busy with numerous television/movie projects. She recently acquired the movie rights to a book called "The Jew Store" and will have the starring role. A Christmas movie entitled "A Christmas Rap" is also in the works as well as a CBS movie of the week, "Heavens To Betsy." The Country Music Hall of Famer is also considering a remake of "Solid Gold Cadillac" for the Turner Network.

on Broadway

Mary Chapin Carpenter is planning to write the music and lyrics for a Broadway stage adaptation of the western "Shane." According to VARIETY magazine, the show will be ready for the Great White Way this spring.

Larry Gatlin has taken on the lead role of the Broadway musical "Civil War," a musical of love and life inspired by the passion and efforts of the men and women who defined a nation. The musical will hit major cities all over the United States through the end of June. It marks Gatlin's fourth stage production lead.

gracing the pages

The Mavericks recently graced the pages of GQ magazine as part of a fashion spread. They were featured alongside members of the rock group Smash Mouth, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Latin star Marc Anthony, and rapper Busta Rhymes, just to name a few.



The Bank of America recently honored Chet Atkins with a life-size bronze statue set in the heart of downtown Music City. The statue was a gift to all Nashvillians in support of the Downtown Partnership's Avenue of the Arts initiative. Bank President Doyle Rippee (right of statue) presented the life-size bronze statue to the Hall of Famer in a ceremony at the Bank of America Plaza in Downtown Nashville. Admiring the statue (left to right): Rippee, Mrs. Leona Atkins, Chet Atkins and John Stein of Bank of America.



While performing at the Grand Ole Opry during its return to the Ryman Auditorium in January, Reba, Loretta Lynn and Patty Loveless (left to right) met backstage for a photo opportunity. Reba had never performed an Opry show on the stage of the historic auditorium; Lynn had not been back to the Ryman since the Opry moved to its current home in 1974; and Loveless was on hand to induct bluegrass icon Ralph Stanley as a Grand Ole Opry member.

C O U N T R Y

Country is enjoying its highest position in American culture yet, and it's not only moving up; it's moving out. One of the most remarkable areas of expansion is Country comedy. Jeff Foxworthy has become a household name, and Minnie Pearl is an American icon. The competition is increasing for these established entertainers, though, as talented funny guys carve highly specialized niches for themselves in the changing face of Country's Mt. Rushmore.

One of comedy's funniest rising stars is Tim Wilson, a stand-up comedian, songwriter and singer who makes "bland white boys" the target of his act. "To say that Country comedy is all the same is kind of stupid," he explains. "It's like saying Lyle Lovett sounds like George Strait just because they're both Country singers, but he doesn't. People who don't know any better have a tendency to lump it all together, and that always irritates me."

After talking with five comedians who have shared the spotlight on Country and comedy charts, one thing is perfectly clear - they are completely unique. Anyone who has complained about predictability in Country Music albums can turn to the genre of comedy for originality, variety and, more often than not, a personal affront. If you're looking for interactive entertainment with a bite and without the risk of repetitive stress injury or the cost of Mario upgrades, it's about time you jumped on the Country comedy bandwagon.

TIM WILSON's latest album from Capitol Records, *GETTING MY MIND RIGHT*, is his second with the label and includes reflections on his childhood aspirations. "I always wanted to be a cult leader when I was a kid," he asserts. In a way he's accomplished that goal



by establishing what he calls "a little cult following," a group of disciples with thick skin who agree to keep it all in the family. When asked to describe a typical fan, Wilson says it's the same guy who inspires his jokes. "I pick on the people who are there (at the shows). It's not my job to pick on black people, and it's not

my job to have a whole lot of opinions on Asian people. I just decided that I would pick on my own pretty much. I'm real hard on them, but you know, they laugh. As long as you say it right to them they don't mind."

Wilson is a husband and father of two who deals with irritating neighbors and home repairs just like the next guy. His daughter Sophia is 10, and his son Ari is almost one. He met Terry, his Israeli wife, at a wedding in his hometown of Columbus, GA. "Luckily I was as good lookin' as I was ever going to be, in a tux and everything," the funnyman maintains. After moving to America from Israel, Terry adjusted to hillbilly humor nicely and now helps write songs and bits for the act.

Most of the time Wilson's fans have no problem laughing at themselves, but occasionally he runs into a group of non-energetic, serious audience members. It's never anything he can't handle. "I rarely ever get a heckler," he adds. "Sometimes you get guys

who are overly enthusiastic. They may be familiar with what you do, and they want to help. And sometimes they don't realize that their trying to help is really hurting."

Wilson majored in English at a Presbyterian college and says he "accidentally" minored in history. One of the most articulate examples of his hillbilly interpretation of historical and political events is a character called Uncle B.S., a crafty old relative who has questionable alibis for his whereabouts during monumentally tragic moments in America's history. "I don't really have a hook," Wilson explains. "I do a lot of different things. I have my political mad guy, my Uncle B.S. character and my gas station people, and I do a lot of gun control humor. Uncle B.S. is some of the best stuff I've written. Honestly, Country comedy kind of bores me because a lot of it's reshaped. I've always thought we need to stretch the envelope a little bit. That's kind of what I try to do."

When Wilson succeeds in his effort to come up with funny, original material, he considers it a victory worth celebrating. His theory is: "All comedians, in my opinion, will come up with something good once in a blue moon. Eighty percent of it's junk; if you get 20 percent that ain't, then you're doing something. There's nothing new under the sun, but I try to find something that nobody else really concentrates on. I watch the news a lot, and I read a lot. There're a lot of redneck jokes, but it's hard to write a joke about a bland white guy, and that's what I want to do - try to take on things that haven't necessarily been taken on."

CLEDUS T. JUDD, aka Barry Poole, grew up in a little town called Cartersville, GA, and except for a four-year stint in Nashville, TN, has lived there his entire life. "It's really small," he muses. "I'm not sure of the population, but I can count 'em from where I'm sitting right now, if that tells you anything."

Judd may have come from small beginnings, but it didn't take him long to start producing hit parodies of songs held near and dear to



Country audiences. He's parodied songs by Diamond Rio, Faith Hill, Trisha Yearwood and Garth Brooks, to name a few. Parodies are often born in an atmosphere of spite and sarcasm, the prime ingredients of most satirical material, but Judd accentuates the positive and gets warm responses from the artists and the audiences. "I've had Shania Twain, Vince Gill, Trace Adkins, Deana Carter; just about everybody I've ever parodied, has been in the videos. So I think it's a compliment to what I do. They know it's going to be done in good taste, and it won't be something that makes fun of them personally. That's a real thrill to get them in the videos."

Judd is working on his eleventh video and fourth album and is writing an autobiography with an expected completion date next winter. The book, called

"Just Glad to Be Here," documents Judd's beginnings in comedy as a kid, his childhood and the journey to his current successes.

C O M E D I A N S

"It's going to be funny and let people know what Cledus is about," he explains.

Part of his childhood experiences include bringing home almost perfect report cards and fulfilling his role as the class clown. "My report card was always good until it got to conduct. They didn't even grade it an A through F. I usually got a U in conduct for unsatisfactory. I've always had a real creative, flamboyant kind of personality, you know, but back then I didn't know exactly how to channel it into making a living and recording records and doing videos. I feel like all of it did pay off. I'm just glad it didn't go the other way where I'd ended up in jail or something!"

Judd keeps his material fresh and feels like he's found his niche in the entertainment world. "I kind of have the market right now. I'm sure somebody will come along someday, and I'll have to step aside, but hopefully I've got a long time left. I've always been a big fan of Minnie Pearl and String Bean and different comedians like that. I was a big fan of Weird Al Yankovich, and that's similar to what I do. I didn't start out to become the 'Weird Al of Country.' It just kind of evolved into that."

TOM MABE may soon become better known as "the guy in the red phone car." He's a Louisville, KY-based jingle writer traveling



across the country in a Volkswagon Beetle he affectionately calls the "Revenge-Mobile." Telemarketers are the source of his angst, and they're in for a tough customer when they dial the home of Tom Mabe. He owns a recording studio in his home and writes jingles for companies like Kentucky Fried

Chicken. He calls his jingle business his "bread and butter." When telemarketers continuously interrupted recording sessions, Mabe decided to make a profit off them to make up for the money they were costing him with every minute they kept him on the phone. Just for fun, he would record telephone conversations with the unsuspecting salesmen.

"I just got frustrated trying to make a living, and they kept calling me," he explains. "I was showing my buddies these tapes, and they said, 'Man, Tom, you're a great (song) writer and stuff, but this here is funny! You have a better chance at making it with this than you do in music.' It's definitely a niche."

Is the success of his CD's threatening to shut down the jingle business? "I have too much good business, too many hours and too much equity in my jingle company to just get up and leave," he contends.

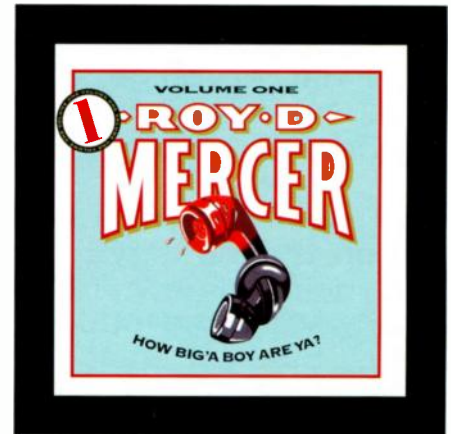
So where is this revenge-based career going to take Mabe? "My first goal is to try to turn people against telemarketers," he outlines. The second goal is to try to get people to buy my CD, and along the way to educate people, especially senior citizens." He's spent over four years researching the damage fraudulent telemarketing companies can do to senior citizens, and he's passionate about turning things around. He maintains, "The passion comes when you start looking at people who get ripped off. Some con-artist will travel from town to town and go to people and say, 'Hey, we'll

black-top your driveway,' and they just put something on top of it to make it look like it was black topped. It's just a scam."

Does Mabe have any other pet peeves? "I have a problem with drive-through windows, the ones who are always messing up my order," he answers. Has he always been this way? He laughs: "Every report card said, 'Tommy's a nice guy and a real sweet boy, but he makes the other kids nervous. He's always banging on his desk.' I was a hyperactive kid who ate fruit loops or rocket cereal for breakfast, and I would go to school wired.

"The big picture is to make somebody say, 'No matter how bad things are, I'm not going to rip off people or mislead them by being a telemarketer.' My goal is to make someone go, 'Man, no! There's too much bad rap on telemarketers. I'll be a waiter, or I'll bartend, but I'm not going to be a telemarketer.'"

ROY D. MERCER is a creation of two energetic, smart radio guys, and, without the benefit of even being a real person, has sold over 1.5 million copies of his comedy CD's. Brent Douglas and Phil Stone work together at KMOD, a classic rock station in Tulsa, OK and have, together, created a famous disgruntled individual who's the scorn of innocent business owners around the country. "It was all pure mistake - an accident," Douglas and Stone emphasize. "We were radio guys just trying to be funny on the radio, and one day Virgin Records' Scott Hendricks, who heard a bootleg tape, called and wanted to make a deal."



Neither of the men dreamed that the deal would blossom into a successful career for their fictional character. Most of the time victims of Mercer's wrath recover with no major injuries; however, there is an occasional sourpuss who can't swallow the humiliation and retaliates. Stone recounts an encounter with a revengeful listener:

"Brent was gone for the day, and I was left up here. There was an FBI agent in the lobby, and they called me to the front. He pulled handcuffs out and was going to arrest me for making threatening phone calls. He flashed his FBI badge and started putting handcuffs on me. I was saying, 'But I'm not the one! Brent, Brent!' The guy started laughing and said he was actually just there to pick up a prize. He turned the tables right smack in the middle of my face."

He continued, "Every once in a while you'll run into somebody with no sense of humor at all. A lot of times after they calm down and think about it, they get a better sense of humor, but that doesn't happen very often."

With the popularity of the show comes the difficult task of choosing which requests to grant for a Mercer phone call. Phil and Brent make only two phone calls a week from their hundreds of requests. How do they determine who will be next? Stone explains, "We get tons (of requests). We get telephone calls, faxes and emails. We really have to be selective. Usually the ones who have the most details and who have concocted a pretty good story already with a funny angle are the ones that we choose."

c o n t i n u e d o n p a g e 3 5 . . .

SHeDAISY

What do you get when you cross three sisters, killer harmonies and an entertainment giant with a simple white and yellow flower? One of the hottest up-and-coming groups to break out of the Country Music scene - SHeDAISY.

Like many struggling artists, Kristyn, Kelsi and Kassidy Osborne have ridden the industry roller coaster to success. Their mother taught them everything she knew about singing harmony, while their father sent demo tapes to anyone in the industry who would listen. Arriving in Nashville when they were just barely in their teens, the girls saw one record deal come and go. Eleven years later, Lyric Street Records, and their parent company of Disney, is backing the group's gold-selling debut album THE WHOLE SHeBANG. Since the album was released 10 months ago, the group has been touted as one of the best-selling new Country acts of 1999. They have seen their achievements reach far beyond what they expected, proving that SHeDAISY's sibling harmony has long been a key ingredient for their success.

"It's so easy to walk into a record label and say, 'Here, take me, push the buttons, tell me what I'm supposed to do and make me who you want me to be.' That's not who we are."

On music in the family...

KASSIDY: We come from a family with six kids: four girls and two boys (Kristyn, 29; Cade, 27; Kelsi, 25; Cassidy, 23; Clayton, 17; Karli, 15), and all of us were required at a young age to take piano lessons. We're all very familiar with music, but our parents never pursued it professionally. They never would claim to be singers or instrumentalists or anything like that, but having them provide the opportunity for us to play piano at such a young age got us really interested in music.

My two brothers are both the jocks of the family. They're very athletic and would never be caught singing. They could carry a tune if they wanted to, but their thing is sports. Our little sister Karli really wants to move out to Nashville and eventually be involved (in the business) somehow. Maybe as a back-up singer. [laughing] Actually, she's a jock, too. Her dream is to sing the National Anthem and then play in the basketball game.

On sibling harmony and heading to Nashville...

KASSIDY: As little kids we performed all the time. Kelsi performed by herself a lot, and then I jumped in, and we did the little local functions in our hometown (Magna, Utah). It wasn't until Kristyn joined that we were like, "Man, this is awesome!" Sibling harmony gives us the chemistry that is hard to find outside of a family.

We got to the point where we had to go where the music was if we wanted to go any further. We soon made our first trip to Nashville just to check things out. We felt we had something to offer and something worth pursuing. There weren't any girl groups in Nashville at the time we moved. We were something different and fresh, and we thought that we could have a place here. We were very naive; we didn't have any material, and we didn't know what we were doing. If we had known then what we know now, we wouldn't have done it. We'd have been very afraid.

On their second chance at making a first impression...

KELSI: When we first looked at Lyric Street, we analyzed everything. What are the pro's? What are the con's about signing? There's always going to be a risk, but we felt we had one more chance to make a first impression. It had been 10 years since we had our first record deal (with RCA), but the stuff never came out. So throughout those 10 years, before we had this next chance, we honed our skills and sound to perfection. It's so easy to walk into a record label and say, "Here, take me, push the buttons, tell me what I'm supposed to do and make me who you want me to be." That's not who we are. We've always known what we wanted to do and what we were shooting for, but we just wanted it defined. We met with Lyric Street and talked about our career goals and they listened to our music - they were really impressed. We talked to them for a few months, and then committed to them on Halloween of '97. From our first meeting, as soon as we walked in the door, we felt at ease. There was just this comfort feeling there. We knew we were where we wanted to be.

On signing to a newly developed label and an entertainment giant...

KELSI: Because Lyric Street was a new label, people thought, "Oh here's another independent company opening up." Yet, their backing from Disney was appealing to us. With that backing, we knew we weren't limited to just singing and making an album; there were other opportunities out there in the entertainment business that would give us even more exposure. We've had to prove ourselves to them and show them what we could do, just like anyone else. Because we are a part of the (Disney) family, we hear about more opportunities than other artists in the business. We've done a couple of things with Disney already (featured in the ABC-TV special "Walt Disney World Very Merry Christmas," closing credit songs in "Doug's First Movie" and "Disney's — Mickey's Once Upon A Christmas"), and because of that, we've had great exposure. A lot of other labels in town can't do that, they can only go so far. We

look at it as a funnel. You start from the bottom with Lyric Street and it grows and grows to unlimited things that we can do.

On sticking to their traditions...

KELSI: A lot of people have said that we're way too pop, and we need to come back into the fold. But, if you think about Country Music and its roots, it all started with family harmony. Look at the Carter Sisters. If you think about all of the people who have come before us in Country Music, harmony is a big thing. For years we have been harmony driven. It has taken a long time for us to make our mark here and for us to find our place in Country Music, yet we've never changed. Country Music changes every day, and it's now our time, because what we do is more accepted. We've never said that we needed to be more Country or more pop. We just wanted to make an album of the kind of music we've always done. We've always done really thick harmonies with a lot of interwoven type of things. We are definitely Country-grounded, and we wouldn't want it any other way. We don't fit in with that other genre. This is our home.

On SHeDAISY's music standing out from the crowd...

KRISTYN: When we were first pitching to record labels, they thought that we were almost too different. But as I started studying everybody else around me a little more, I understood what they were saying. I've seen too many talented artists go by the wayside because there wasn't anything that allowed them to rise to the top. Not that they weren't good enough to be there, but because they got caught in that whole "cookie-cutter" thing.

When we were making our demos, we had no guidance. I didn't have a publisher, we didn't have a label, a manager ... so we could do whatever we wanted. We would just go nuts. We would be as creative and free as we wanted to, and we were able to maintain that with this album. We know what's out there, and we don't want to copy anybody because that doesn't work. We really feel like we nailed it down, and we're proud of that. In this industry, we wanted to be taken seriously, and if you just follow a trend you're not going to be.

On their success...

KASSIDY: It's kind of weird for all of us. It's like we're all going through this success thing together. My brothers and sisters say that they are so sick of people at school asking them to get our autograph. But, they keep us very grounded. They're learning, like we are, how it all works and the things you go through.

KELSI: We've been here so long, but to the public and to the people who know who SHeDAISY is, it's incredible because our album has only been out 10 months. It's incredible to see these nominations (American Music Award, Grammy) and to think that people actually like us and nominate us for these types of things so early. I always thought it would take a couple of years for people to notice, but I think that with the success of our first single "Little Good-byes" (number three on BILLBOARD Country chart), our latest single "This Woman Needs" and with future singles, people have caught-on a little bit. They see what our label has seen for so long.

KRISTYN: For me, I was ready to fight tooth and nail to say, "Take me seriously," especially because of the Dixie Chicks comparison. That made it really hard at first. But now, I feel like I don't have to say that. People (in the industry) are really giving us a fair shake, and I appreciate that. I would like to say "thank you" just because it's been such a good place for us to grow up. I appreciate all the good and bad things that I have learned. I want them to know that we're not going to leave any time soon. We'll be here for a long while.

"With that backing, we knew we weren't limited to just singing and making an album."

Chris Gusa

SHANIA TWAIN

sets new standard
for success

Shania Twain's latest hit, "Rock This Country!" seems to be her new mantra, evidenced by Twain's widespread dominance of Country and pop charts both here and abroad. Since her first foray into international waters two years ago with the single "You're Still The One," Twain is fast becoming a household name all over the world.

With worldwide album sales over the 25 million mark, Twain has raised the bar for Nashville-based artists, proving Country Music's appeal knows no geographic boundaries, no matter what name you call it. Germany's closest version of American Country Music is known as schlager. It sells roughly 11 percent of the total albums in a country of 81 million people, which is also the third largest music market in the world. In 1999, Twain's COME ON OVER was the best-selling debut album in Germany by an artist since Tracy Chapman's self-titled effort more than 10 years ago. Twain is the first female Country artist ever to sell more than 750,000 units in Germany - in honor of this, CMA was presented with a platinum sales award from executives at Mercury in Germany.

Those who doubt her international popularity can ask Bill Gates of Microsoft. He was scheduled to be on an interview program that followed Shania's appearance on the live German TV show "Geld Oder Liebe" ("Money Or Love"); the program went 30 minutes over, and Gates was forced to wait in the studio wings while Twain dazzled the crowd.

Elsewhere in Europe, Twain continued to set sales

records - a year and a half after its release in the UK, COME ON OVER landed the top spot on the sales charts. It was the highest-selling album in 1999, a feat that had never been achieved by a Country artist. With sales surpassing the 2.4 million mark in the UK, COME ON OVER is on the verge of shattering Alanis Morissette's JAGGED LITTLE PILL as the most successful record by a solo female artist.

In Australia, COME ON OVER sales indicate one in every six households owning a copy. With success this widespread, many industry figures in Nashville find themselves debating an issue that is arguably best exemplified by Twain. It could be described as "purist vs. pop." Should music be re-mixed and re-packaged to appeal to a larger audience? And is the format itself turning to a genre that is chasing a younger demographic and alienating the hard-core traditionalist audience who collectively twinge at the pop influences that are so prominent in today's Country Music? Those who favor the pop-flavored Country defend its mass appeal and larger consumer base. Many would argue Twain is the product of a fusion of musical styles - an accurate description, as she has displaced both Madonna and Patsy Cline at the top of the sales charts.

When the U.S. version of COME ON OVER debuted in the UK in March of 1998, the album made an impressive entry at number 15, due largely to the success of the single "You're Still The One," Twain's first European top-10



- 1 You're Still The One
- 2 When
- 3 From This Moment On
- 4 Black Eyes, Blue Tears
- 5 I Won't Leave You Lonely
- 6 I'm Holdin' On To Love
(To Save My Life)
- 7 Come On Over
- 8 You've Got A Way
- 9 Whatever You Do! Don't!
- 10 Man! I Feel Like A Woman!
- 11 Love Gets Me Every Time
- 12 Don't Be Stupid
(You Know I Love You)
- 13 That Don't Impress Me Much
- 14 Honey, I'm Home
- 15 If You Wanna Touch Her, Ask!
- 16 Rock This Country!

Produced by
Robert John "Mutt"
Lange

988-170 123-2

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SHANIA TWAIN

COME ON OVER





- 1 Man! I Feel Like A Woman! (3:53)
- 2 I'm Holdin' On To Love (To Save My Life) (3:30)
- 3 Love Gets Me Every Time (3:33)
- 4 Don't Be Stupid (You Know I Love You) (3:35)
- 5 From This Moment On (Guest Vocal: Bryan White) (4:43)
- 6 Come On Over (2:55)
- 7 When (3:39)
- 8 Whatever You Do! Don't! (4:04)
- 9 If You Wanna Touch Her, Ask! (4:04)
- 10 You're Still The One (3:34)
- 11 Honey, I'm Home (3:39)
- 12 That Don't Impress Me Much (3:38)
- 13 Black Eyes, Blue Tears (3:39)
- 14 I Won't Leave You Lonely (4:13)
- 15 Rock This Country! (4:23)
- 16 You've Got A Way (3:24)

Produced by
Robert John "Mutt"
Lange

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single. She built momentum with subsequent singles "When" and "From This Moment On," keeping the album on the charts for six months and selling almost 175,000 copies through the end of 1998. Sales began to slow as time passed, according to London-based Kate Farmer, VP/Marketing of Universal Music Group. "It is true to say that sales had leveled off from July through December of 1998, before the release of the re-mixed 'That Don't Impress Me Much' in March."

The album was both re-packaged and re-mixed for the international market, and has broken sales records in Europe upon release in June, 1999. On the heels of "That Don't Impress Me Much," the new international version of COME ON OVER ensconced itself at number three on the charts and has not left the top five since. The album enjoyed an 11-week run at the top of the charts, including one-week with 277,000 units. The album is now 8x platinum in the UK with sales over 2.4 million.

Were modifications to the original product necessary to achieve such international success? Farmer believes it was: "The re-mixes of 'That Don't Impress Me Much' were crucial to the success of the single. Especially the dance mix, which was used extensively throughout Europe."

In the States, we often champion radio as the driving force behind sales. Internationally, it is less common to find stations formatted by genre. On BBC Radio 2, listeners are likely to hear the Mavericks followed by Aretha Franklin, followed by Elvis Presley or Elvis Costello. As mainstream (i.e. broad-based listeners) stations are geared more to pop and dance, re-mixing tracks translates to more appearances on playlists and higher-charting singles.

Twain's first chart entry in Germany was a result of a benefit show on the ZDF TV network program, "Stars 98." Bolstered by radio support, she appeared on the afore-

mentioned "Geld Oder Liebe" and sold 250,000 units immediately following that performance. She enjoyed heavy rotation for videos on the VIVA (pop) and ONYX (adult contemporary) music channels, as well as positioning as part of the CMA Awards-based retail campaign in connection with her appearance on the CMA Awards telecast seen on major network WDR, as well as in 13 other countries.

Building on Twain's initial success in Germany has resulted in an aggressive marketing campaign for the latest single, a re-mixed version of "Don't Be Stupid (You Know I Love You)." According to Mercury/Germany Managing Director Boris Löhle, "One thing is for sure, there is no recipe for success in the rest of the world but it definitely helps when you try to understand the structure and needs of the individual markets. Individual re-mixing gives you access to media outlets which you could not reach before." Ironically, both banjo and fiddle riffs are prominent throughout this disco mix.

While re-mixing and radio hits are integral pieces of the puzzle, executives also attribute Twain's global impact to extensive media appearances and her international touring schedule. Nearly 100,000 people, including Prince Charles, saw her perform as part of the "Party In The Park" festival in London last June. Though she only played three dates in the UK, Farmer says the label capitalized on them by flying in record company personnel and media from all over Europe to attend the shows. Twain's other tour stops included six sold out shows in Australia last February, as well as dates in Germany and Ireland.

As Twain continues to captivate record buyers all over the globe, and the debate about re-mixes and pop crossovers continues, Country legend Willie Nelson may have summarized it best: "There are only two kinds of music: good and bad." Shania Twain clearly impresses people very much.

Katie Dean

The numbers indicate that consumers and radio, alike, have responded positively to BREATHE. Released in November 1999, the album, to date, has already sold over two million copies and made the list of top-10 selling Country albums of 1999 (in two short months) as did her quintuple-selling FAITH. BREATHE produced this year's first multi-week number-one single, "Breathe," which held the top spot for six consecutive weeks.

Each of Faith's four albums has now sold multi-platinum. The songs and the song selection is often the key to an artist's continued success. Faith has had great success with songs and has had great songwriters contribute to each album. She agrees that she has developed good relationships with some of the industry's best, but she also notes that she keeps her mind and ears open to all good songs, no matter where they come from, which is good news for up-and-coming songwriters.

"For the most part, I just listen to a lot of songs. I really don't mind where they come from. Like 'Breathe,' Holly Lamar is the co-writer along with Stephanie Bentley. It's [Holly's] first cut. I've loved that. It's just great to find material like that."

Faith goes on to praise the industry's storytellers.

"Songwriters ... I would not have a job if it were not for the songwriters. I have *the* most respect for them and their craft. It's a tough job finding material for an album. I had so many songs for this album, but I could only put 12 on the record. I actually put 13 on it, but I had

"I feel I work harder now than I did at the beginning of my career."

a really, really difficult time deciding. I just had to try and figure out what made the best package — what was the most pleasant listening from start to finish. It was very difficult. It's a tough process. It is probably the toughest process we, as artists, go through."

Faith may be a multi-platinum-selling recording artist, Cover Girl spokesperson and gracing the covers

of some of the country's biggest magazines, but all you have to do is read just a few of those articles to get a small taste of what she is about. She embodies the values that traditionalists claim Country Music is about, and the people it appeals to. On top of that, she just "breathes" confidence and happiness.

"I have a wonderful life. I have a wonderful husband and a great family. I love my job. I am at a good place in my life, and I'm happy in my skin. I feel good with myself ... which I think is very important. It's not to say I don't wake up some days and have a bad day. I just have a good life, and I don't take it for granted. I try and do the best I can. The opportunities I have in front of me, I really try and tackle full force because I know that it's not always going to be there.

"I don't drive myself crazy with the issue that this is all going to be gone someday, because the most important thing in my life is my family. That is what I want there more than anything. After all of this is gone, I want my children to know me and I want my husband to know me. We *will* have a life together, and we *will* have that to look forward to. I certainly think this is an exciting time for Tim and an exciting time for me. We are fortunate enough to have each other and our family to share it with. It makes it so much more rewarding."

One last thing...

"I'm humbled to be living a dream that is better than what I ever dreamt. The entire industry has been very good to me — thank you, thank you, thank you."

It's important to take note ...

The Tennessee Titans have had Faith since the beginning, she sang the National Anthem at their home opener at Adelphia Coliseum, and look where it got them — to the Super Bowl — where they also had Faith, she sang the National Anthem at their last game of the season — and look where it took them — to a place that they had never seen — streets and a stadium full of thousands of ever-loyal fans mixed amongst, better yet, even more of their newfound-loyal fans. It sounds like a winning combination!

So it just goes to prove that everyone needs to have a little FAITH.

Dixie Weathersby



Robert E. "Bob" Tanner

Robert E. "Bob" Tanner died in his San Antonio home on January 11. He was 90. Tanner, a charter and lifetime member of the Country Music Association, established the music recording, publishing, phonograph record manufacturing and record distributing companies known as TNT Music, Inc., Tanner 'N' Texas, Inc. Record Manufacturing and Tanner 'N' Texas Record Distributing Inc. The companies provided local Country and Mexican artists, as well as independent record label owners, the ability to publish and record their songs and contribute to the growth of the music industry in South Texas. He organized and promoted the "TNT Jamboree," a live concert tour in West Texas, and in 1957, he recorded Whisperin' Bill Anderson singing "City Lights" on the TNT label. Tanner is survived by his daughter Lana Tanner Taus; son-in-law Robert Taus; and one granddaughter.

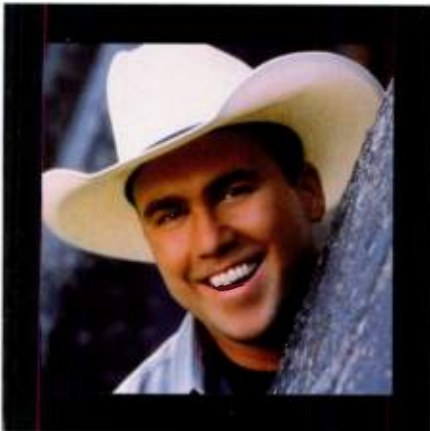
Marion Worth

Marion Worth died on December 19, 1999 at age 64. She suffered from complications with emphysema. Worth, whose given name was Mary Ann Ward Wilson, joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1963 and was one of the first Country singers to appear at Carnegie Hall. Best known for her hit "Shake Me I Rattle (Squeeze Me I Cry)," Worth first reached the national Country charts in 1959 with "Are You Willing, Willie," which peaked at number 12 in BILLBOARD magazine. Four more top-20 singles were added to her list of hits within the next four years including two top-10 releases: "That's My Kind of Love" and "I Think I Know." She retired from the Opry during the 1980s when the disease caused her health to deteriorate. Worth is survived by daughter Joyce Laughlin; brothers Jerry Ward and Jesse Ward; two grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

COMEDIANS

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RODNEY CARRINGTON's philosophy about comedy is that you have to have a certain amount of natural ability to really make it work. After his first experience in front of a live audience, which happened while he was in junior college, he developed the skill of deliv-



erance, and since then hasn't been nervous about appearing on stage. It comes naturally now. "It's my job. It's what I do," he said. "If I get nervous or anxious about something, it's only because I'm ready for it to happen. It's like going to take a test. If you're prepared, you're just ready."

The crowd, big or small, is what drives Carrington and gives him energy on stage. "As a performer you go out and you feed off the energy of the crowd. The performance really relies on whether the crowd's into it or not," he adds. The rewards go beyond the high of getting laughs and applause. "If I ever retire from doing this, I think all I would ever do is play golf," he laughs.

Comedy wasn't Carrington's life-long dream. "It wasn't something I dreamed of," he stressed. "I think I was destined to be in this, because I wasn't excited about anything else. I never really took anything seriously other than the things I wanted to do. If I wanted to play baseball, I took it seriously. I wanted to do things that were fun, and comedy was fun."

Carrington is married and has three children. When asked about his experience as a parent, he gave a little background information: "My mother was married five times, so I couldn't pick a role model, because I knew it was going to change at any moment. For me, being a parent is a whole new thing. I didn't have a real strong father figure around the house, so being a daddy is something I'm having to learn on my own. I love it. The topic of my conversations with my kids is how much I love them. I mean, I maul my children. The only thing that they're ever going to have to complain about is the fact that daddy kisses on 'em too much and loves on 'em too much. I don't care. When they're 30 years old, I'm going to be the same way."

His home life is the foundation for everything he does with his career. "My wife and my kids are my foundation," he points out. "Without them I don't have a real reason to be out here. My wife provided me with a focus I didn't have in the beginning. She provided me with a reason. It was no longer just me out here running around partying and having a good time. She gave me a feeling of, 'Ok, if I'm going to do this, I've got to put the hammer down.' She's my biggest fan, and to me, that means a lot."

His children are also an inspiration. "My wife stays with my kids 24 hours a day, which is a harder job than anything I've ever been through. If I'm with them three hours I want to pull my hair out. I can't take it, and they're my children! My kids are well-rounded, well-adjusted, and it's because of her," he concludes.

Weslea Bell

February board event

Universal Studios Escape rolled out the red carpet for the CMA Board of Directors at their February meeting. Largely through the efforts of Joanne Grant, director of entertainment production for Universal, working with members of the CMA board and staff, a personal invitation was extended for the board to meet in Orlando, and Universal put on a dazzling display of their facilities during a special event designed just for the CMA Board members.

The board members were transported from Universal's Portifino Bay Hotel by water taxi to Universal's CityWalk where they were greeted by flame and knife throwers, belly dancers and many other entertainers on the way to a cocktail reception at Mythos Restaurant. CMA guests were treated to a private walk-thru of Universal's show-place Islands of Adventure. Following the reception, CMA guests joined the general public and swarms of media for a concert by Montgomery Gentry and Rebecca Lynn Howard at Universal's CityWalk Lagoon stage.

Among the Universal executives joining in the planning and festivities were CEO of Universal Studios Felix Mussenden; Skip Sherman, senior vice president of entertainment; Dennis Johnson, vice president of marketing; and Jim Stout, director of talent booking. Country station K92 FM in Orlando was a promotional partner with Universal, and Golden Corral joined as a retail partner.



from the top...

1. Industry executives stop for a photo opportunity with some of the artists on hand for the event. Pictured are (left to right): CMA Board Chairman Lon Helton; CMA Executive Director Ed Benson; Randy Owen of Alabama; Lance Bass of 'N Sync; RCA Label Group Chairman and CMA Board Member Joe Galante; and CMA Board President Bud Wendell.
2. Columbia recording duo Montgomery Gentry headlined the entertainment for the evening. After the show, the two met backstage with key executives including Sony Records General Manager/Vice President Allen Butler, CMA's Ed Benson and President of AristoMedia Jeff Walker. Pictured is Troy Gentry signing Universal's autograph wall before the show as Teddy Montgomery awaits his turn.
3. CMA Board Chairman Lon Helton (left) and board member Steve Moore (right) met up with Universal's Senior Vice President of Entertainment Skip Sherman during the event.
4. MCA recording artist Rebecca Lynn Howard gave an incredible opening performance at Universal's outdoor amphitheater - CityWalk Lagoon stage.





rebecca lynn howard

RECORD LABEL: MCA Records
 ALBUM: WHEN MY DREAMS COME TRUE
 FIRST SINGLE: "When My Dreams Come True"
 INFLUENCES: Patty Loveless, Michael Bolton, Celine Dion

This 20-year-old Kentucky native is not only a gutsy, powerhouse singer, she's also a successful songwriter. Gold and platinum artists including Reba McEntire, John Michael Montgomery, Patty Loveless and Lila McCann have recorded Rebecca Lynn's songs, and her debut album is full of songs she penned. Although she has faced challenges in her journey to musical success, she attributes her longevity to determination and hard work. "I've been through a lot in the past couple of years, but I've got a lot of discipline," she says. "My manager and I used to run 8, 10 or up to 12 miles a day for about six to eight months. I'm sure that kind of physical challenge helped me to endure the business struggles."

Because of her youth, it may be hard to believe that she has had time to face many struggles, but her career began when she was only 10 years old. By the time she was in grammar school she had taught herself piano and was beginning to write her own songs. "I was really wrapped up in music all the time," Rebecca explains. Her stamina and confidence has helped her become one of Country Music's hottest new acts.



sisters wade

RECORD LABEL: Blue Hat Records
 ALBUM: SISTERS WADE
 FIRST SINGLE: "How Much Longer"
 INFLUENCES: Emmylou Harris, Loretta Lynn, Patsy Cline

Sisters Julie and Debbie Wade combine explosive vocal talent and relentless creative energy to form one of Country Music's most unique debut groups. Determined to sing their lead vocals at the same time, Sisters Wade is arriving on the Country Music scene with a fresh approach and a sound crossed between Allison Krauss and Emmylou Harris. Such an approach was enough to land the Wades the spot as the first act to be signed to two-year-old Blue Hat Records, a label co-owned by Country legend Charlie Daniels and artist manager David Corlew. Julie and Debbie commented that singing together was what they really wanted to do. "When one sings the verse and the other comes in to put the harmony on it, it kills the energy," Julie states.

Natives of Massachusetts, the siblings began singing together at age 10. Julie moved to Nashville in 1990 and Debbie arrived six years later. Upon their reunion in Nashville, the two began writing songs and performing at showcases and writers nights. Joined by their band, the Hip-Waders, Julie and Debbie were discovered at the world famous Tootsie's Orchid Lounge, and soon after, landed their record deal. Surprised and enthused by the occurrence, Debbie comments, "Everything's exciting, because everything's for the first time."



phil vassar

RECORD LABEL: Arista Nashville
ALBUM: PHIL VASSAR
FIRST SINGLE: "Carlene"
INFLUENCES: Billy Joel, James Taylor, Tom Jones

Phil Vassar is no stranger to success. His multi-dimensional talent has already garnered him victory in the area of songwriting with chart-topping hits for other Country artists including Jo Dee Messina ("Bye Bye," "I'm Alright"), Tim McGraw ("For a Little While"), Collin Raye ("Little Red Rodeo") and BlackHawk ("Postmarked Birmingham"). In addition, he has amassed honors including: ASCAP's Song of the Year and Songwriter of the Year Awards and BILLBOARD's Country Songwriter of the Year.

With those credentials, Vassar has made no plans to stop now. Since he arrived in Nashville in 1987, he has coupled his songwriting talent with an entertainment career. That commitment has since exploded into one of the most energetic and powerful acts to develop in some time. Vassar's dynamic talent on keyboards, reminiscent to that of Billy Joel, highlights his new music. His debut album contains 11 songs, all of which he co-wrote. His enthusiasm and talent radiate throughout the collection. "What makes an album really great is all the songs," says Vassar. "I think we've got some really great ones on this project. I've been working towards this my whole life. This is all I've ever wanted to do."



yankee grey

RECORD LABEL: Monument Records
ALBUM: UNTAMED
FIRST SINGLE: "All Things Considered"
INFLUENCES: Kansas, Restless Heart, Bill Monroe

Yankee Grey's onstage energy and musical persona is summed up perfectly in the title of their debut album, UNTAMED. "We have been known to get more than a little 'untamed' when we play," says lead vocalist Tim Hunt. "We're extremely energetic, not just for the sake of the show, but because we're just having so much fun out there night after night." The album's 10 tracks express the band members' burning desire to produce quality music. After years of competing against one another on the same local club circuit in Cincinnati, Ohio, the six talented musicians joined together to form a versatile, high energy band.

Tim Hunt, Joe Caverlee, Matt Basford, Jerry Hughes, Kevin Griffin and Dave Buchanan represent six very different personalities who have learned to surpass all barriers of taste or preference for the sake of their music. "No one in this band tries to stand out - we are a unit - and the biggest compliment we ever get is when someone tells us we are a great band, instead of singling one of us out," says drummer Kevin Griffin. Guitarist Matt Basford agrees, "We are a real band and we all have an absolute blast playing together. We love it so much, we could stay on the road forever."

BILL ANDERSON

continued from page 15...

Along with his songwriting success, performing 50-60 dates each year and being a family man, there's also another love in Anderson's busy life ... the Grand Ole Opry.

"The Opry, to me, is the Yankee Stadium of Country Music. It was where you wanted to be every Friday and Saturday night. It is what Broadway would be to an actor, or Hollywood to someone who wanted to be in the movies. There isn't any higher place to be than the Grand Ole Opry. I grew up as the biggest Opry fan in the world. I don't think that this town would be here today if not for the Opry.

"For the month of January, we (Grand Ole Opry) were back at the Ryman Auditorium and it really was cool. I had forgotten how intimate the Ryman is. I had forgotten how close you are to the people. I tell you what, if I had to spend very many Friday and Saturday nights at home or on the road, and not be able to go to the Opry, I'd go nuts. That's just where you're supposed to be on Friday and Saturday nights. If you're not out on the road, you're supposed to be there.

"I'm probably happier now than I've ever been in my life. I figure I'm spending about one-third of my time writing, which includes co-writing; something I haven't done a lot of in the past. I still enjoy going out on the road. I spend the other third of my time with the Opry. Doing the Opry and the "Opry Backstage" television show keeps me off the road. If I weren't doing that I might even be on the road more than I am. It's been a real nice balance for the last few years and I don't want to tinker with that balance."

Influenced prior to coming to Nashville by his three legends (or the three Hank's: Williams, Snow and Thompson), Anderson knows the true meaning of a Country song, but isn't too sure about calling himself a "legend."

"I've always loved the story songs - including, the words, the lyrics, the simple melodies - it was those things I was listening to when I was growing up back in the '50s. I was about 10 or 11 years old when Hank Williams was writing at the end or peak of his career. I would look on his records and see that he sang and wrote them, so I thought, in my childish mind, that he lived them too. I came to find out later, he did live most of them. He was a man who could put his feelings and his emotions into poetry and put tunes to it. I've always loved the simplicity and the heartfelt emotion that, over the years, has been in Country songs. I think that drew me towards it, because I wanted to create some of that, and I wanted to be a part of that.

"Hank Snow was a big favorite of mine because until Hank Snow came along, I didn't really like the up-tempo songs. You talk to 20 songwriters and 19 of them would tell you that they'd rather write ballads than anything else because there's just something about that heartfelt ballad and emotion. Hank Thompson also influenced me by being a wonderful songwriter and musician. He carries a great band with him, and there is just something about him personally.

"I guess a 'legend' is another way of saying that someone's an old man, or that you've lived a long time. That's actually kind of funny. I will never forget the first time I ever heard that word associated with me. I stopped and I said, 'Wait a minute! Only yesterday I was just this guy struggling to write songs, make records and try to do good live shows. Now they're saying legend? Who drew the line?' Well, it's a very nice compliment. I guess it means that you're a survivor and I've survived."

And it's a good thing for Country Music you have survived, Mr. Anderson.

Christy Grealis

RADIO

continued from page 7...

2. Digital technology is here and music listeners are getting into it. We've safely programmed our Country stations without fear of major competition. But now, the digital revolution has arrived, and commuters and at-home Internet listeners will be programming their own. This is a response to the predictable menu we have served up for some time now. Radio listening across all music formats will be affected.

3. The youth movement in Country is over. Yes, futurist Faith Popcorn accurately predicted the boom of young Country listeners among 12 - 20 year olds in the '90s. Teen shares rose dramatically, and in many markets they have disappeared. Can we rebuild this market segment? I think not ... not with the coming changes I've described above.

So now what? It's time for broadcasters to open up and provide a homogeneous music format that will

"It's time for broadcasters to open up and provide a homogenous music format that will attract the 15 - 40 year-old listener."

attract the 15 - 40 year-old listener. Most programmers will insist it will not work to hear "Genie In A Bottle" (Christina Aguilera); "This Kiss" (Faith Hill); "Torn" (Natalie Imbruglia); and "Amazed" (Lonestar), all in the same "format." But the listeners will love it. We've already discovered that splintering Country Music into specific formats, i.e. young and classic, doesn't work. It is time for radio to step forward and provide listeners with what they really want ... or they will keep doing it themselves, by the thousands.



Rusty Walker, President - Rusty Walker Programming Consultants, Inc.

I believe the biggest problem facing Country radio today is that many broadcasters have somehow decided that there is some mysterious "global issue" facing the industry. Therefore, they seem to think we need some "global fix." We're looking to others for the solutions, rather than taking the responsibility for our own individual stations and situations. It seems we, as individuals, are spending too much time worrying about the world, and not near enough time "cleaning up our own back yard."

compiled by Chris Gusa

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CMA events

APRIL

26 ASOC (America's Sold On Country) / Beverly Hills Hotel / Los Angeles, CA

27 - 28 CMA Board of Directors Meeting / Beverly Hills Hotel / Los Angeles, CA

JUNE

12 - 15 International Country Music Fan Fair / Tennessee State Fairgrounds / Nashville, TN

OCTOBER

4 34th Annual CMA Awards / Grand Ole Opry / Nashville, TN

datebook

FEBRUARY 4 - MARCH 19

Albisquetli Festival / Zurich, Switzerland

MARCH

1 - 4 CRS 2000 / Nashville Convention Center / Nashville, TN

10 - 19 SXSW (film, 10 - 18; Interactive, 11 - 14; Music, 15 - 19) / Austin Convention Center / Austin, TX

APRIL

2 - 8 Tin Pan South / Nashville, TN

7 - 8 Music Row 2000 (Songwriter's Symposium) / Nashville, TN

22 BBC Radio 2 Country Festival / London Arena / London, England

23 Easter Country Festival / Glasgow S.E.C.C. / Glasgow, Scotland

24 Easter Country Festival / Dublin's The Point / Dublin, Ireland

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While debuting his new self-titled album to the CMA staff, Tri Chord recording artist Marty Raybon stops to pose with label executives and CMA Executive Director Ed Benson. Pictured (left to right): Steve Miller (Tri Chord); Benson (CMA); Raybon; Bill Glenn (Tri Chord President); Dena DiVito (Tri Chord Vice President).

