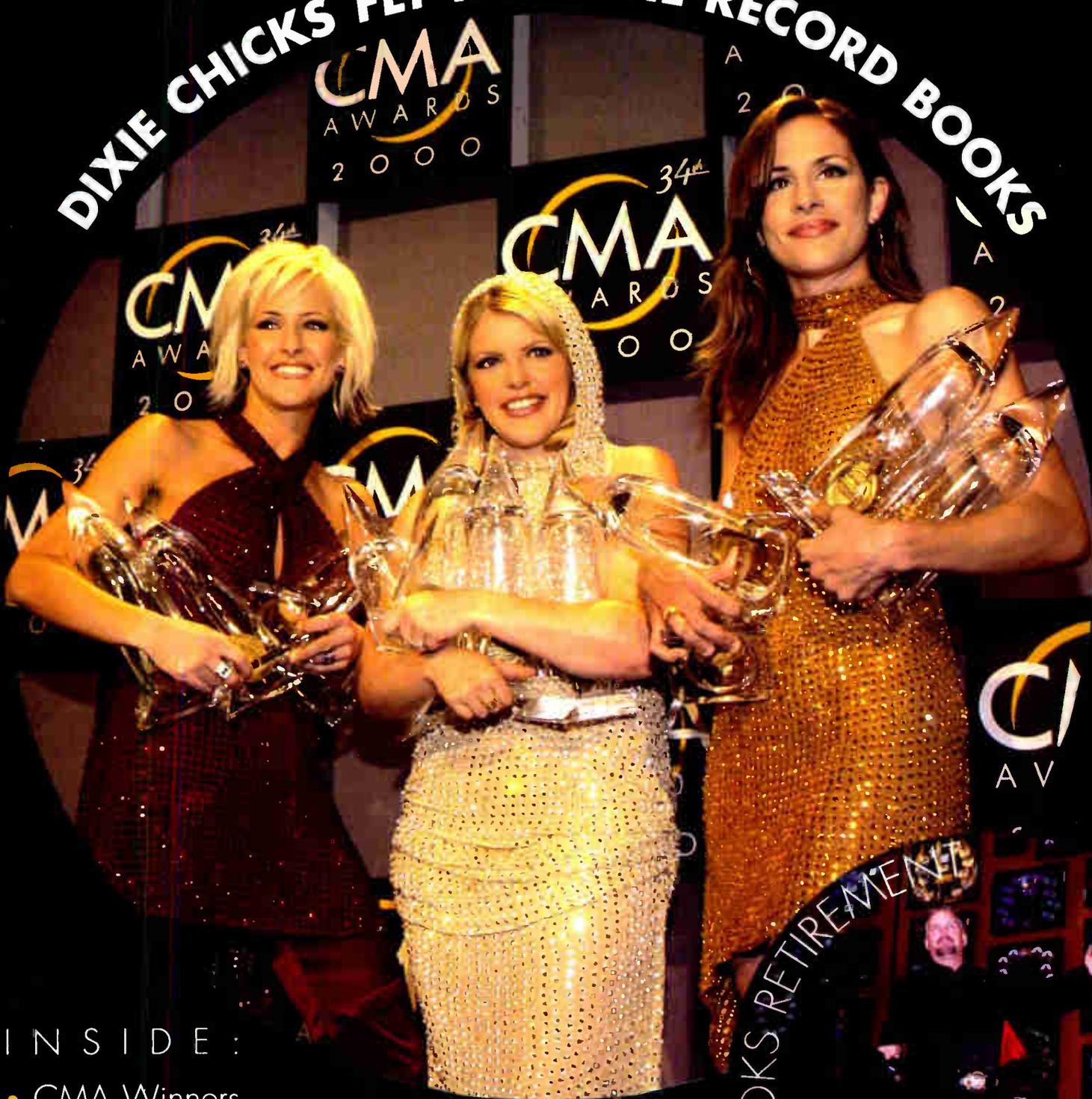


CMA C I ● S E E U P

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2000

DIXIE CHICKS FLY INTO THE RECORD BOOKS



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- New Board Members
- Fan Fair Ticket Info

BROOKS RETIREMENT



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2000 CMA AWARDS RECAP

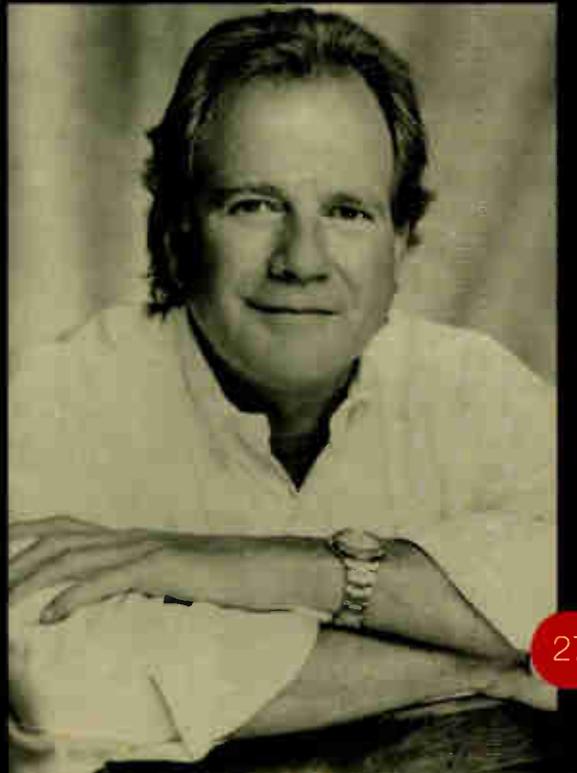
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CMA Close Up welcomes your letters. You can reach us at (615)244-2840; Fax(615)242-4783; or email: infoworld.com

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CMA Award winners



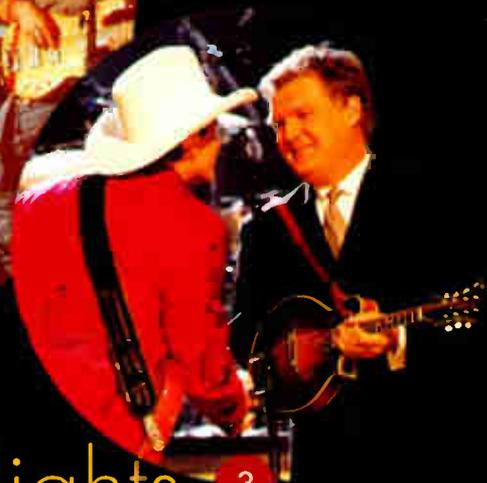
Winning Moments. 1. Brad Paisley - Horizon 2. Dixie Chicks - Entertainer, Vocal Group, Album and Music Video 3. Lee Ann Womack - Single of the Year, 4. Faith Hill - Female Vocalist 5. Alan Jackson & George Strait - Vocal Event 6. Mark D. Sanders & Tia Sillers - Song of the Year, 7. Tim McGraw - Male Vocalist 8. Montgomery Gentry - Vocal Duo



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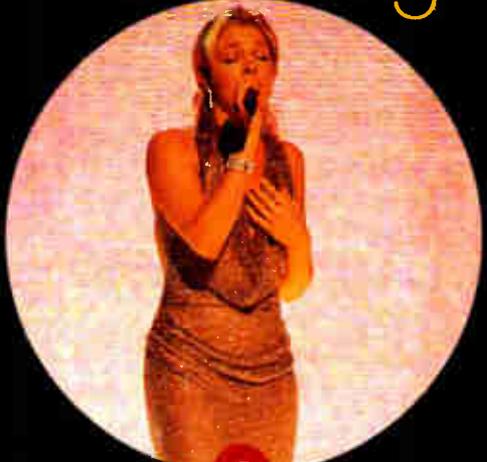


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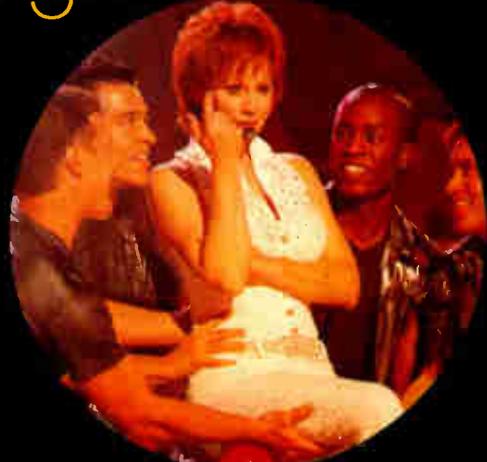
performance highlights



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7



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Under The Lights. 1. Tim McGraw 2. Montgomery Gentry 3. Brad Paisley & Ricky Skaggs
4. George Strait 5. LeAnn Rimes 6. Reba McEntire 7. Dixie Chicks 8. Faith Hill

photography by Chris Hallo

stars shine on Country



Brad Paisley, Jeannie Seely, Bill Anderson & Chely Wright

Clint Black & mother, Ann Black



Shania Twain



Heather & Jennifer Kinley



Pam Tillis



David & Howard Bellamy

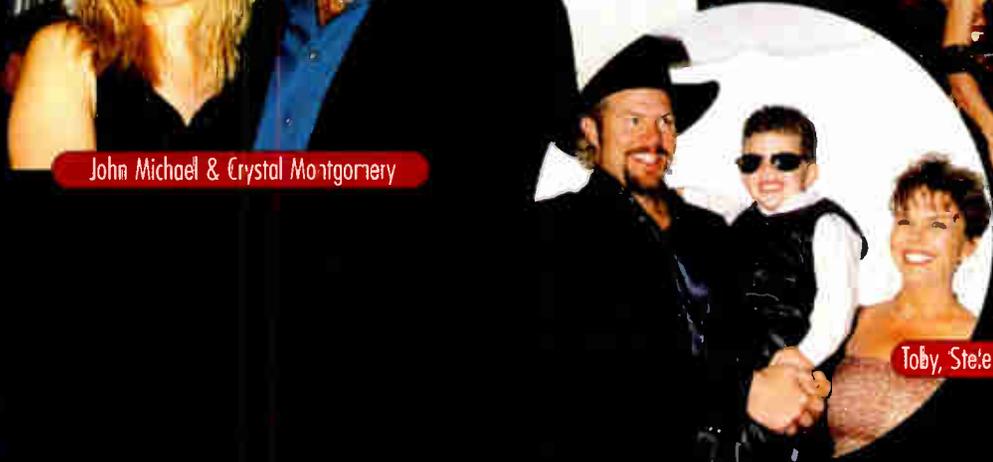
Music's biggest night



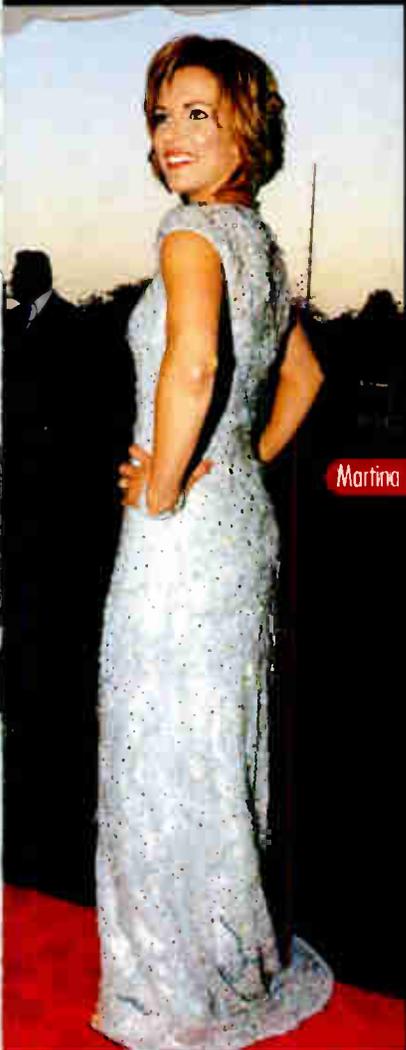
John Michael & Crystal Montgomery



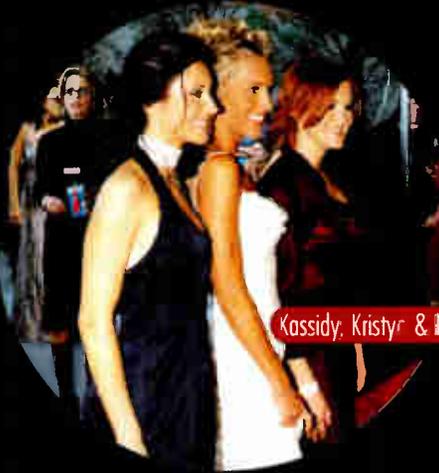
Keech Rainwater, Donna Daniel, Michael & René Britt, Dean & Kim Sams, Lori & Richie McDonald



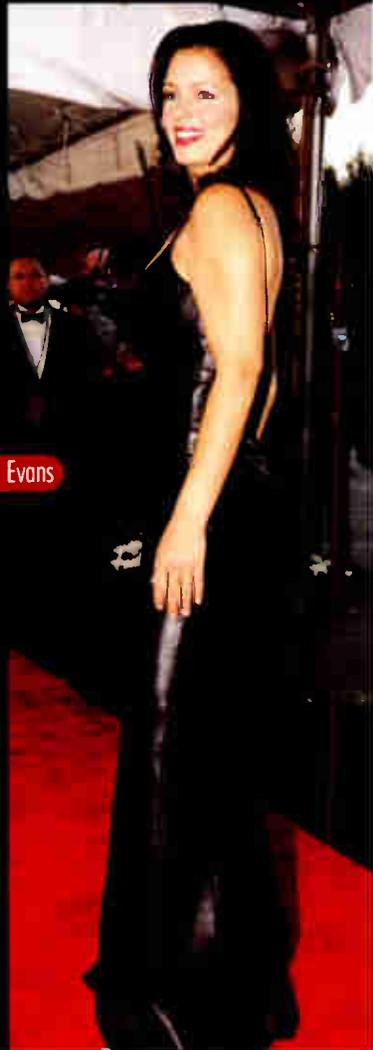
Toby, Stelen, & Tricia Keith



Martina McBride



Cassidy, Kristyr & Kelsi of SheDAISY



Sara Evans



Travis & Theresa Tritt

photography by Chris Halle

hall of fame inductees



Charley Pride was honored this year as a roaring crowd welcomed his induction into the Country Music Hall of Fame. Inducted by the legendary Merle Haggard the emotional Pride was overcome with excitement, but managed to sum up his experience by exclaiming, "I'll never forget this night!" The late Faron Young was also inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame.



Pride performed a medley of his hits during the induction ceremony.



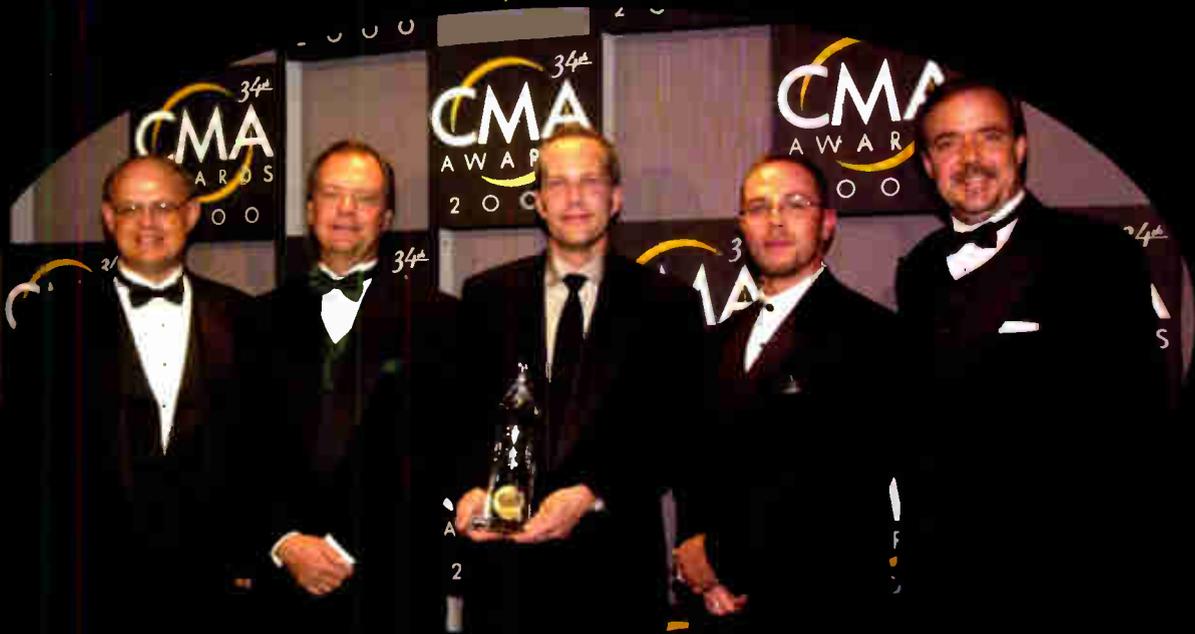
Longtime friend and Baseball Hall of Fame member, Ernie Banks, joined Pride for the joyous occasion.

broadcast personality of the year award winners



(left - right) Angie Ward, Large Market - WTQR Greensboro/Winston-Salem, NC; Lynn Sharpe, Small Market - WUSY Chattanooga, TN; Sean McMaster and Richie Phillips, Medium Market - WGNA Albany, NY; Danny Wright, Major Market - WGAR Cleveland, OH

station of the year award winners



Left to right : Mike Hammond, WIVK Knoxville, TN - Medium Market; Howard Moll, WUSY Chattanooga, TN - Small Market; Bob Richards, WFMS Indianapolis, IN - Large Market; Garrett Doll, KYGO Denver, CO - Major Market; John St. John, KYGO Denver, CO - Major Market

CMA Awards Fact List

CMA Awards Nomination
Video Highlights viewers
36.4 Million

"CMA Awards" Rehearsal Video
Highlights viewers
34.8 Million

Domestic Media outlets attending
98

International Media outlets
attending
24

Total "CMA Awards" show Viewers
38 Million

BACKSTAGE MEDIA



PRINT/RADIO



STILL PHOTOGRAPHY



RED CARPET INTERVIEWS



PHOTO CORPS

the international award



The Wesley Rose Award was established in 1990 to recognize outstanding achievements in the media, which contribute to the development of Country Music outside the United States. Gil Robert Managing Director of CMT Australia/Pacific Rim, received this year's award. (Left to Right: CMA Executive Director Ed Benson, At-Large Director Roger Sovine, Gil Robert, CMA Australia Representative Trevor Smith, Senior Director International & New Business Development Jeff Green)



Reba McEntire was presented the CMA International Artist Achievement Award, which recognizes global impact. McEntire was honored because of her exceptional commitment to international markets, her appeal, tremendous airplay and successful tours.



media achievement award

Media Achievement Award - Country Weekly Editor Neil Pond was presented the CMA Media Achievement Award before the "CMA Awards." The award was established in 1982 to recognize outstanding achievements in the media as they relate to Country Music. (Left to Right: Benson, Pond and Vice President/Group Publisher Sheri Warnke)



the board of directors award

Wayne Halper, General Manager of DreamWorks Nashville, was presented with the Connie B. Gay Award. The award, which was established by the Board of Directors in 1963, is given in recognition of someone who has rendered outstanding service to the CMA, but is not currently a member of the Board. (Left to Right: Ed Benson, Lon Helton, Wayne Halper, Bud Wendell)



CMA President Bud Wendell presented the President's Award to Fan Fair Committee Co-Chair Jerry Bradley. The award is not an annual award, but given when the President feels an individual merits the recognition. (Left to Right: Jerry Bradley and Bud Wendell)

STROUD SPEARHEADS IMPROVEMENT

At the “CMA Awards,” looks aren’t everything. In fact, how it sounds determines a lot about how the Country Music industry looks to the world.



“What we needed to do this year was say, ‘Hey, we are as good or better than any other market and genre of music.’ And we accomplished that.”

James Stroud

“It is a television show, but it puts our community on the line,” said James Stroud, President of DreamWorks Records Nashville, and the driving force behind several changes to improve sound quality this year. “Our music is song driven and artist driven and we have to make sure that those two things are represented in the best possible light. This show conveys to the world how good we are - or, how bad we are. What we needed to do this year was say, ‘Hey, we are as good or better than any other market and genre of music.’ And we accomplished that.”

Stroud spent nearly a year investigating ways to improve the audio quality on-air and in the Opry House. He credits the cooperation of the artists, record labels, sound engineers, sound technicians, road crews, production staffs, and support of the CMA Television Committee and Board of Directors for instituting the changes.

“We had two very different situations to work with,” he said. “We had to treat the house like a concert venue and we wanted to make sure there were safety measures in place so that we felt equally confident about the television feed.”

The ‘CMA Awards’ were mixed on two audio consoles. A Neve V3 was used when there was a recorded music bed mixed with live vocals and live instruments; and a Neve digital console was used exclusively for live performance. Several additional equipment pallets were added to reduce the number of instrument/band microphone changes. Improvements were made to the wireless microphones for more consistent sound quality.

“We brought in extra equipment, but the information the artists gave us really helped prepare us for the equipment they were bringing, so that we could make sure what they had was compatible with what we were using,” Stroud said.

At rehearsals, there was increased input from artists’ support teams, but to insure the sound quality of the television feed, Stroud enlisted the help of world-renowned producer and engineer Elliot Scheiner. Scheiner served as Audio Producer and was the last person to tweak the sound before the television feed.

“We had fewer miscues,” Stroud said. “The times when a mic was not on, or the mix was a little left of center, didn’t happen as often and when it did was corrected quickly. Everyone was on their toes. Our community paid attention to the changes that needed to be made and cared enough to make them.”

Wendy Pearl



MJI Helps Stations Send The Excitement Of The “CMA Awards” Home

More than 200 Country Radio stations teamed up with MJI Broadcasting on Oct. 4, to bring “Country Music’s Biggest Night” into the homes, cars, boomboxes and hearts of music fans across the country. More than 38-million viewers watched the “34th Annual CMA Awards” on television, while countless others were able to tune-in the excitement on radio.

In addition to simulcasting the “CMA Awards,” 50 of the nation’s biggest Country stations camped out with MJI at the Grand Old Opry complex to deliver live morning and afternoon drive-time updates, artist interviews and music in the days leading up to the Awards. Broadcasters came from near and far including Riverside, Calif.’s KFRG-FM and Nashville’s own WSM-AM and WSM-FM, which is within walking distance of the Grand Ole Opry.

Why would a station pack up and move a few hundred yards? “For us, it helps bring Nashville to Nashville,” said WSM-FM Program Director Tim Murphy. “This gives us the opportunity to be right in the middle of an important community event, making it as big in Nashville as it is in Dallas.”

Stopping by the station just wouldn’t be the same. “Atmosphere,” said Murphy, who has been part of the CMA-sanctioned MJI radio event for the past five years. “I can’t think of a better way to capture the excitement of Country’s biggest week.”

WUBE’s Program Director Tim Closson agreed. “I like bringing the excitement of CMA Awards Week back to Cincinnati,” he said. “The stories from all the stars make for great radio.”

More than 50 Country artists came by the virtual round up of radio royalty at the MJI remotes including CMA nominees Lonestar, LeeAnn Womack, Toby Keith, Brad Paisley,

Montgomery Gentry and SheDaisy. Kenny Chesney, Billy Ray Cyrus, Steve Wariner and Dwight Yoakam were also among those making the rounds - some starting as early as 6 A.M.

Newcomer Billy Gilman provided one of many memorable moments during the week when he performed a live rendition of “Your Cheatin’ Heart,” according to WUSN Program Director Justin Case. Closson was delighted with Aaron Tippin, who came by to celebrate his No.1 record “Kiss This,” and celebrate the Gold status of his new album.

Many stations worked with their local television affiliates to maximize exposure during the Awards. Among those was the CMA Large Market Station of the Year, WFMS/Indianapolis. The Susquehanna-owned station developed a “Watch, Listen and Win” contest that ran in conjunction with CBS-TV affiliate WISH-TV. WFMS’ morning talent provided live remotes from Nashville during television newscasts, and the two broadcast outlets co-hosted a major “CMA Awards” viewing party in Indianapolis.

Closson is among many top programmers who see long-term benefits from participating in the CMA Week broadcast. “Stronger bonding with the artists, managers and record companies,” he said. “Plus getting liners from all those stars at one time. It also makes for a great contest in September to give away a trip [to the “CMA Awards.”]

Several programmers, including WMIL/Milwaukee’s Kerry Wolfe, have made CMA Week a tradition feature of their programming for many years. Meanwhile, KZSN/Wichita’s Program Director Dan Holiday was participating in his first MJI remote.

He’ll be back in 2001. “I was impressed with how hard MJI worked to make sure we were happy,” he said.

Kim Leslie

left: RIA recording artist Sara Evans visits with CMA Station of the Year WFMS personalities Trapper John and Jim Denny.

right: Columbia recording artist Eddie Montgomery stops to say hi to WUBE personality Duke Hamilton.

ASCAP



38th ASCAP Country Awards: Dione Warren named Songwriter of the Year, Sony/ATV Music Publishing scores Publisher of the Year, "How Forever Feels" (written by Tony Mullins, published by Warner/Chappell Music Group) and "Write This Down" (written by Dana Hunt, published by Neon Sky Music) tie for Song of the Year. l-r Woody Bomor and Don Cook of Sony/ATV, Tony Mullins, Michael Knox, Rick Shoemaker, Dale Bobo and Tim Wipperman of Warner/Chappell, Sony/ATV's Donna Hilley, Connie Woolsey of Neon Sky Music, Warren, ASCAP's John LoFrumento and Connie Bradley, Dana Hunt, Eddie Tidwell of Neon Sky Music and Sony/ATV's Arthur Buenahora, John Van Meter and Terry Wokefield



ASCAP Country Awards: l-r SheDAISY's Kelsi and Cassidy Osborn, Kenny Chesney, Kristyn Osborn of SheDAISY and ASCAP's John LoFrumento and Connie Bradley

BMI



BMI's Roger Sovine applauds Alabama's Randy Owen (c) as he receives the President's Award from Frances Preston



The evening's other top accolades were bestowed on "Amazed" as Country Song of the Year and Sony/ATV Tree Country Publisher of the Year. Pictured (l to r) onstage at BMI Nashville are BMI's Roger Sovine, Skip Ewing, Shania Twain, BMI's Frances Preston, Mortie Seidel and Al Anderson.



"Amazed" writers Marv Green, Chris Lindsey and Aimee Mayo with BMI's Frances Preston



BMI's Mark Mason, Amy Grant & Vince Gill, Sonyo Isoocs, and BMI's Alison Smith

SESAC



SESAC's Christian Songwriter of the Year Regie Homm is shown celebrating the award (his fourth!) at Nashville's Valentino's restaurant. Shown from left to right are Pat Rogers, SESAC's Senior VP, Writer/Publisher Relations; Rebecca Brown SESAC's Associate VP, Writer/Publisher Relations; Rebecca Brown, SESAC's Associate VP, Writer/Publisher Relations; Homm; and Bill Velez, SESAC President/COO. Homm shared this year's top honors with co-winner Peter Furler of the Newsboys, who was unable to attend the awards ceremonies.



Arlon Smith, SESAC's Country Songwriter of the Year is pictured celebrating his award with (l. to r.) SESAC President/COO Bill Velez, Shannon Brown and Jimmy Metts from Good Ole Delta Boy Music (Smith's publisher and SESAC's Publisher of the Year); Smith, Good Ole Delta Boy's Tommy Couch, Jr., and Pat Rogers, SESAC's Senior VP, Writer/Publisher Relations



Shown soaking up the vibe at SESAC's 2000 Country Music Awards Dinner are (l. to r.) SESAC affiliated songwriter (and Mercury recording artist) Mark Wills; Pat Rogers, SESAC's Senior VP, Writer/Publisher Relations and SESAC President/COO Bill Velez.

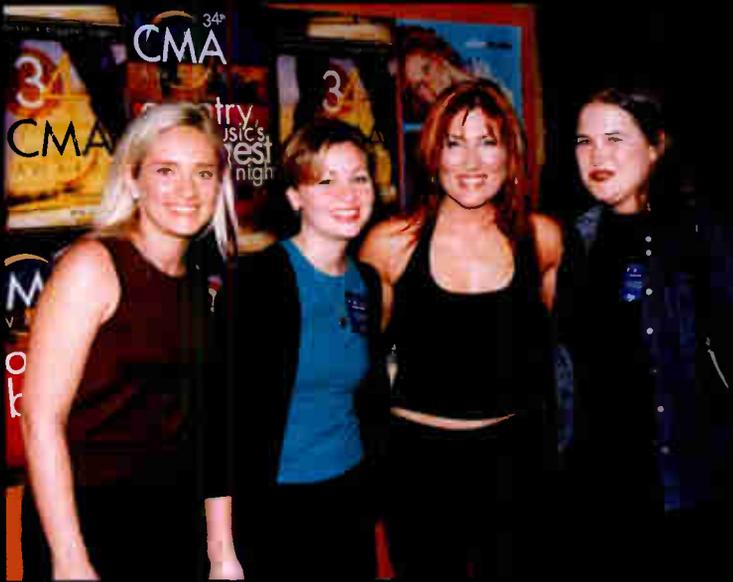


Pictured from the left are: Mark Alan Springer (President, NSAI), Allen Reynolds, Billy Edd Wheeler, Bart Herbison (Executive Director, NSAI), Mac Davis, Randy Goodrum, Wayland Holyfield (Chairman, NSF).

NS

Listener Promotion Concert

Curb recording artist Jo Dee Messina and Arista recording artist Phil Vassar performed for an audience of CMA listener promotion contest winners and corporate sponsors. The concert was held October 3 as part of the festivities leading up to the "CMA Awards."

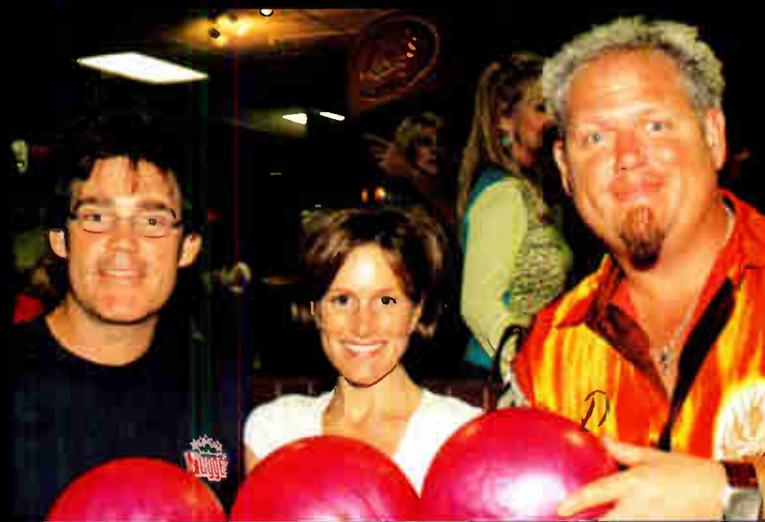


(Left - Right: Shannon Turner & Rachel Brewster of Grey Advertising/Febreze, Jo Dee Messina, Heidi Drucker of Universal McCann/Jerzees)

(Left - Right: Phil Vassar and Mac Whisner/Chevrolet Trucks)

photos: Chris Hollo

Charity Events



Marty Rayban, Susan Ashton and Cleetus T. Judd (Pictured Left-Right) spared no fun at the 10th Annual Music Row Celebrity Bowling Bash, held October 2 at the Hermitage Lanes. The Bowling Bash is the finale in a weekend of events held annually to benefit the T.J. Martell Foundation for Leukemia, Cancer and AIDS Research. In Nashville, the T.J. Martell Foundation supports the Francis Williams Preston Laboratories at the Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center. (Beth Gwinn)

Reading and Writing with Wright...MCA Records' Clely Wright continues to be a champion for public school music education with her Reading, Writing and Rhythm Foundation. Whitsitt Elementary School in Nashville became the third recipient school of her nearly one-year-old non-profit organization and Wright visited the school recently to present them with their wish list of 10 acoustic guitars, 75 flutes and a rack stereo system. While at the school Wright was honored by the National Association for Music Education (MENC) with their Stand For Music Award. (Left-Right: Madeline Bridges, Tennessee president/MENC, Dr. John Mahlmann, executive director/MENC, Mel Clayton, president/MENC, Wright, LuAnn Landrum, principal/Whitsitt Elementary School, Hillary Parks, music teacher/Whitsitt Elementary School)

75TH ANNIVERSARY

Grand Ole Opry Pulls Out the

With as much flash and flair as one of Porter Wagoner's suits, the Grand Ole Opry opened its doors to embrace its past, present and future in a 75th anniversary celebration held the weekend of Oct. 13 and 14 at the Grand Ole Opry House in Nashville. The show Wagoner calls "the cornerstone of the entire [Country] Music industry" welcomed thousands of music fans. The climax came on Saturday night, when the majority of Opry cast members made their way down a red carpet amid popping flashbulbs and enthusiastic cheers.

Ronnie Milsap, during a surprise appearance, voiced the mood of those inside the Opry House when he shouted, "Ain't we having fun tonight at the Grand Ole Opry?" Huge birthday cakes were wheeled out during each show and Opry members

such as Jim Ed Brown and Wilma Lee Cooper passed out pieces of cake to the audience as cast members sang "Happy Birthday." Vince Gill thrilled a fan at the front of the stage when he grabbed her camera and took her picture.

Scores of red balloons were

released, and people in the crowd good-naturedly battered them around to each other, even after the performances resumed. While the new backdrop of the Opry stage has a contemporary look and even features a www.opry.com moniker, guest announcers such as WSM's Eddie Stubbs and CBS television network's Jane Clayson (The Early Show) continued the tradition of the world's longest-running radio show

"I kind of feel there's a new energy and a new awareness now."

by peddling Martha White Flour and the Standard Candy Company during commercial breaks, just as they have for decades.

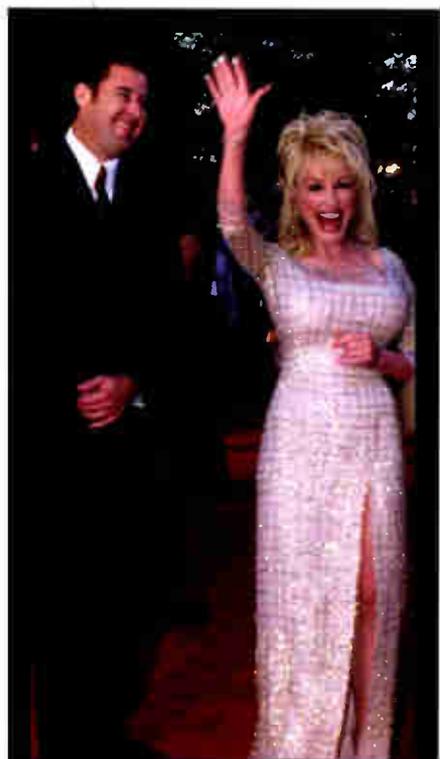
Along with Wagoner, Gill, Milsap, Cooper and Brown, the list of Opry members in attendance was long. Also celebrating were Garth Brooks, Loretta Lynn, Dolly Parton, Ralph Stanley, Pam Tillis, Bill Carlisle, Holly Dunn, Mary Stuart, Billy Walker, Steve and Rudy Gatlin, Travis Tritt, Jack Greene, Alison Krauss, Little Jimmy Dickens, Jimmy C. Newman, Steve Wariner, Bashful Brother Oswald, Jean Shepard, Ray Pillow, Riders in the Sky, Lorrie Morgan, Jeannie Seely, Ernie Ashworth, Ricky Van Shelton, Trisha Yearwood, Connie Smith and The Melvin Sloan Dancers, among others.

Despite the festive atmosphere on stage and off, the focus of the Opry remained where it always has - on the music. Music of the past and present was offered, and Country legends now gone were not forgotten. Lorrie Morgan remembered by name many members of the cast, including her father, Hall of Famer George Morgan, in "Opry Walls," before rendering a version of Patsy Cline's "Crazy." Trisha Yearwood, an Opry member since 1999, sang Tammy Wynette's 1972 hit, "Till I Get It Right." Loretta Lynn brought her singing twin daughters, Peggy and Patsy, to the stage to help her finish "Coal Miner's Daughter." Dolly Parton reminisced about her "Coat of Many Colors."

There were a number of duets, too. Travis Tritt and Marty Stuart were "ready to pick one" when they sang their hit, "The Whiskey

Ain't Working," and Garth Brooks and Steve Wariner got the crowd roaring with "Longneck Bottle." The longest-standing member of the Opry, Little Jimmy Dickens (inducted in 1948), brought Pam Tillis, the newest member (inducted this past August), to the stage for a rousing rendition of Dickens' 1954 hit, "Out Behind the Barn."

At the adjacent Acuff Theater, Opry members were meeting with the press. In keeping with the rest of the evening, the mood was celebratory and light, but the artists occasionally waxed reflective as they considered the past 75 years and the future of what Lynn calls "the greatest show on Earth." Several shared memories of their early Opry experiences, including





Stops for 75th Anniversary Bash

Brooks, who witnessed an episode with the late Roy Acuff, whose heart was so close to the Opry that he lived next door.

"I was just passing Mr. Acuff's dressing room, and there were just people everywhere," said Brooks. "There was something about that guy, he never seemed to get tired of all those people. Some guy yelled out from the crowd, 'Mr. Acuff, don't you wish you had a dollar for every autograph you've signed?' And he just simply looked up and said, 'I do, son, I do.'"

"Mr. Roy" had an impact on other members, also. Tritt credits Acuff for helping him to get into the Opry. Known more for his Country-rock music than more traditional Country sounds, Tritt feared that he would never be asked to join. Acuff took a shine to the young Georgian, however. "for whatever reason, and I don't know what it was," Tritt said. "The very first night I played, Mr. Acuff sent somebody over to my dressing room because he wanted my autograph. The next time I came on, I was standing backstage playing bluegrass with some of my buddies, and I felt an arm come over my shoulder and a voice said, 'Boy, can you play "Cripple Creek" on that thing?' It was Mr. Acuff, and I had a bond with him from that day forward, and it thrilled my soul to be inducted into the Opry."

For some artists, the memories went further back, to the days when the Opry called the Ryman Auditorium home. Pam Tillis, often visiting the old auditorium when her father, Mel Tillis, performed, remembered "the way the light fell in the old Ryman, no air conditioning, and the little funeral home fans with Jesus in the middle."

Dickens remembered his first Opry performance. "After having a lot of musical and stage experience, I thought that by the time I got to sing a song on the Grand Ole Opry, I'd be ready for it," he said. "I was waiting for Red Foley to call me on as a guest, and I looked around and there stood Minnie Pearl, Roy Acuff, Rod Brasfield and all these wonderful people. They were looking at me and wondering what I was going to do when I went out there, and it was like starting all over again, like entering your first talent contest. To sum it all up, I came unglued. I don't know what I did. I just went out there and did whatever it was and it worked. I've been here 53 years."

**"It's bigger than all of us
put together."**

Cast members are optimistic that the future of the Opry is secure, even if some are cautiously so. Tritt says he fears that younger artists don't respect the Opry in a way that's necessary to carry on the tradition, a thought that concerns him greatly.

"That scares me," he says, "because the fact of the matter is, if we're going to continue for another 75 years, it's going to have to come from new, young people who come in and recognize the tradition that we carry on."

Gill agrees that artists must believe in the Opry for it to succeed. "All it takes is a handful," he notes. "It just takes a few who are willing to step up to the plate and believe that this place needs them. We need to get the people out here who are having hits today, to make it a place where they want to come now instead of when their careers are over. But, I'm also here to tell you that...if they don't want to come, that's okay, because this show will go on, no matter how big anybody is, or whether they decide to come or not. It's bigger than all of us put together."

The Opry generally provides its members with a permanent home for them to share their music, but while membership has its privileges, it also has its responsibilities. Becoming a cast member implies a willingness to make regular appearances, a detail that some members overlook as busy schedules and other commitments lead them away from Nashville. Tillis believes that the Opry's future success depends on the commitment from both the organization and its

cast.

"People have to be responsible to the Opry to become a member," she notes. "It's an honor, but it's also a responsibility. It's got to take a commitment from the younger artists to keep this thing going, to make it a good show. It's exciting to think that years from now, however long I can do it, there's a place for me...I kind of feel like there's a new energy and a new awareness now, I really do. There's a lot of music going on with the Grand Ole Opry. There are some people who are really working to bring it to a whole new level. I'm impressed with it, and I think I came on at a good time."

Shannon Wayne Turner

Y2 CHICKS



The Year of the Dixie Chicks

As celebrations were underway around the world ringing in the new millennium, the Dixie Chicks were preparing to embark on an unforgettable and memorable year. Now, in the final two months before winding down one of the year's hottest Country tours, Dixie Chicks' Emily Robison takes some time to talk about their whirlwind year. This isn't a whirlwind, it's a tornado.

The Chicks (Natalie Maines, Emily Robison and Martie Seidel) saw numerous awards (four CMA Awards, two Grammy Awards, two Academy of Country Music awards), a wedding, a pregnancy, their first mega-successful headlining tour, an RIAA Diamond Award (10 million albums sold for *Wide Open Spaces*) - and an upcoming network television special. The Dixie Chicks also were the top winners at the "34th Annual CMA Awards" in October taking home the night's highest honor - Entertainer of the Year, Vocal Group of the Year, Album of the Year (*Fly*) and Music Video of the Year ("Goodbye Earl.") In 1999 the Dixie Chicks became the first act in the history of the CMA Awards to be nominated for Entertainer of the Year on the strength of a debut album. This year, they became the first group since Alabama (1984) to win the highly coveted and prestigious Entertainer of the Year award. "We've really worked hard to be as entertaining as possible and to put on a show that raises the bar a little bit for Country Music tours," says Robison. "I think we've done that. So, to win [Entertainer of the Year] helped to justify all the work. Last year we were on Tim McGraw's tour and George Strait's tour and we got great exposure. But to not have put on our own tour, we didn't feel very worthy last year. There's a lot of work that goes into it, and this year having put as much as we did into the 'Fly Tour', it was wonderful to be recognized for all the hard work." The fans showing up each night for their shows and snatching up 17 million albums to date proves that they are truly the real deal - a girl band with true talent. From Martie's masterful fiddle playing, Emily's rousing banjo licks and Natalie's critically acclaimed original sounding vocals, they have won over the critical media and industry skeptics, who pick apart or doubt the style and substance of many female artists.

From the start, the media reviews made only glancing references to their being a girl band and their looks, but instead quickly filled the space talking about their talents as true musicians and pickers. "I think women overall have to prove themselves a little bit harder," says Robison. "We used to get girl band questions like 'Do you all cat-fight?' Do they ask Diamond Rio that question? Because we're women, they think we fight. What is the stigma in male groups? We kind of went up against a little bit of that, but then people see our dynamic and realize that that's not the case. We've been very lucky, and the press has always been very kind to us from the beginning. I

We feel very lucky being able to have the critical acclaim and also be able to have the record sales because sometimes they don't go together.

think because we did so much to prove ourselves, to not be perceived as a put together studio act," says Robison. "We feel very lucky being able to have the critical acclaim and also be able to have the record sales because sometimes they don't go together. So, that's a double wonderful thing for us." The saying goes, "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts." The Dixie Chicks are a prime example. As many awards and achievements the group has received this year, they have also experienced their own individual successes. The individual recognition adds depth to the group dynamic and drives them to reach new heights. "We're always working as a band so much, when you're recognized individually, that's always fun," says Robison. "I think it's a different kind of high than the high you get when you win a group award or something like that." Martie Seidel received her first-ever BMI Awards this year, winning the BMI Songwriter/Artist Award for "Cowboy Take Me Away," "Ready To Run" and "You Were Mine" (written with sister/Chick Emily Robison.) Seidel shared the night's honor with fellow artist and superstar Shania Twain. "I know Martie was really proud of her BMI award, being able to stand up there with someone as prolific as Shania Twain," says Robison. "Martie is hitting her stride as far as songwriting goes. So, I think if you're encouraging, it makes her say 'All the time and effort I've put into writing has really paid off.' So, it kind of gives you a kick in the butt as far as continuing with that."

Robison has had her own individual successes this year. She was nominated by the Academy of Country Music for Specialty Instrument for her talents on the banjo, a gift long admired by critics. A May 1991 article for *Buddy - The Original Texas Music Magazine*, elaborated "Emily on the banjo, she of the quick and complicated finger rolls, is plenty hot for a player of any age. Thank heavens for Earl Scruggs when Chicks like Emily come along." Maines, Seidel and Robison's individual successes can also be found on *Fly's* liner notes, co-writing with some of the industry's top songwriters - Marcus Hummon, Stephony

Smith and Eric Silver. Each of the Chicks contributed their own songwriting talents, writing or co-writing five of the album's 14 cuts. The multi-platinum selling Monument Records trio is obviously excited about the successes they have had since making their major label debut in 1998, but they are just as excited for the people around them who have contributed to their achievements. "To me, that's the best," explains Robison. "I love being able to affect other people around us. I love to share the wealth as a general rule," Robison said. "We definitely feel like the people around us are just as responsible for everything that's happened as the core three of us. Someone like Susan Gibson ["Wide Open Spaces"] who was just an obscure songwriter, who had never had a cut with anyone, and probably never even had been to Nashville before the song. She is in this group called the Groobies in Amarillo, Texas, and I love being able to see them be able to afford to go back in the studio and make a killer album because they have the means to do that now. That's really a very rewarding part." In their live show, the Chicks bring out a couch to recreate "Emily's living room," to take their fans back to their early days of what it was like writing, picking and playing music. Robison explains, "Looking back, you can always say, 'Those were the good ol' days.' But I wouldn't go back for anything. It's one of those things where once you have surpassed a certain point, it's easy to romanticize about the way it used to be. But I feel like I'm having the best time of my life right now, and those were really tough days, struggling to make ends meet and playing these gigs that you didn't want to be playing. Sometimes you do humiliating things to be able to make sure you had a gig, and you do certain things to be able to completely make the right artistic decisions. That's the best by-product of success is being able to put your foot down and say, 'Now, this is our vision, this is how we're going to do it, and if you don't like the way we're going to do it then we have the means to be able to do it on our own.'" To see a Dixie Chicks concert is to also have the opportunity to get a glimpse into their musical roots and influences, extending as far as the hand-picked opening acts. The artists are a combination of each of their tastes and talents. Robison explained that

A lot of people don't realize how cool bluegrass music is until you're actually sitting there. It's a very much alive music

the artists are an extension of the Chicks. Their selection says to the audience, "This is a piece of us. This is the music that we listen to, and we'd love for you to hear it too." Robison said, "We had the opportunity to expose our fans to a lot of the music that we love or that we grew up on. Patti Griffin was a given. She's been a constant in all our CD players since the moment we saw her open for Shawn Colvin one night at the Ryman Auditorium when we were recording (*Wide Open Spaces*.) "And Ricky Skaggs, of course, comes from the bluegrass blood that

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ROGER SOVINE RETIRES

35 Years of Commitment to the Country Music Industry

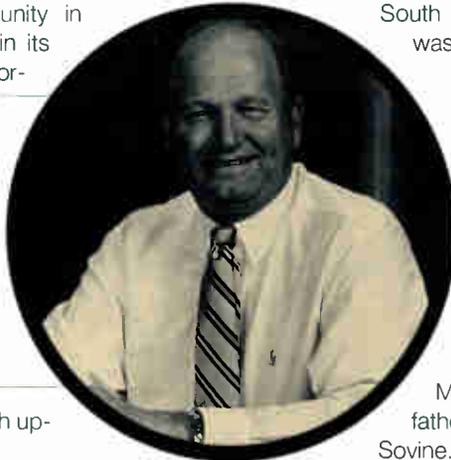
Nearly everyone on Music Row has a story to tell about BMI's Roger Sovine. The problem is most won't let us repeat them.

Sovine, who is Vice President of Writer/Publisher Relations at BMI, retires Jan. 1, but his reputation as one of the most respected leaders in the Country Music industry will continue long after his first cast into the waters off Gulf Shores, Ala.

With his quick wit, passion for Country Music, tenacity for the causes he champions and blunt, but well-thought-out delivery, Sovine has made many friends and earned the admiration of countless others since he entered the music industry in 1965 at Nashville's Cedarwood Publishing Company.

Nancy Shapiro, a member of the CMA Board and Vice President of the Recording Academy, illustrated how Sovine has influenced the music community in Nashville over the past 35 years. Already in its third year, the Academy has an annual mentor-

"He's real. He's honest and I hate to use cliches, but what you see is what you get. You know whatever he is telling you is true and from the heart. People say you can count on one hand your true friends. I think Roger shows up on everybody's hand."



ing program partnering industry veterans with up-and-comers.

"We ask the mentors to talk about *their* mentors and their mentoring experience in the music industry so that the young people coming up will understand how important it is," Shapiro said. "And in nearly every case, people say their most meaningful mentoring relationship was with Roger. I don't mean one or two people. Everyone mentions Roger as their mentor.

"He's real. He's honest and I hate to use cliches, but what you see is what you get. You know whatever he is telling you is true and from the heart. People say you can count on one hand your true friends. I think Roger shows up on everybody's hand."

Longtime friend, Jimmy Gilmer of JAG Management, said Sovine is the first person he calls when there is money to be raised for a cause. "He is one of those rare individuals that doesn't mind serving people," Gilmer said. "I promise you that if anybody asked him to do something he would do it. He can't say 'No.' I know because I've called on him enough times myself."

Over the years, Sovine has served as President and Chairman of the CMA Board of Directors; he has been a trustee of the Country Music Foundation; a national trustee of The Recording Academy; a member of the board of governors and past president of the Nashville Chapter of NARAS; past chairman of the Copyright Society of the South; and executive vice president and board member of R.O.P.E. He is a former commissioner of the Tennessee Film, Entertainment & Music Commission and a charter organizer and founding board member of Leadership Music. He is an alumnus of Leadership Nashville and an executive committee member of the T.J. Martell Foundation. He will continue to serve as chairman for the Country in the Rockies fundraiser to benefit the Frances Williams Preston Research Laboratories at

the Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center.

Gilmer concedes that while Sovine's philanthropy is saintly, he has a devilish sense of humor. He recalled an incident involving Sovine 20 years ago when Sovine was one of the first people in town to own a new jogging watch with a built-in timer.

"A lot of us didn't know what it was and he had this thing on at lunch," Gilmer recalled. "A half-dozen of us were watching when it goes off - beep, beep, beep. He looks at it, clicks it off and leans in to it and says, 'Frances, the car is washed and will be around to pick you up at 2 o'clock.' We all fell out laughing."

CMA Board member David Conrad, who is Senior Vice President of Almo Irving Music, met Sovine in the late '60s, shortly after he left Cedarwood for Show-Biz Publishing and South Publishing Productions. Even then Sovine was a snappy dresser with a tie and jacket.

"Roger was always out where the songwriters were and where the music was," Conrad said. "He is part of the creative scenery in Nashville, so to speak. His job was to integrate himself in the creative community and he did that so well because of his family history, and his understanding and love for Country Music, the songs and the songwriters. It was a lifestyle as much as a career."

Sovine comes by his passion for Country Music naturally. In fact, he was born into it. His father was legendary Country entertainer Red Sovine.

Sovine joined BMI Nashville in 1972 as Director of Writer Administration and was promoted to Assistant Vice President in 1976. He remained with BMI until 1979, when he became Vice President of Professional Services at the Welk Music Group. Three years later, he became Vice President of Tree International (now Sony/ATV Tree.) He returned to BMI in 1985 to assume his current role.

CMA Board member and music broadcast veteran Paul Corbin will take Sovine's place. Corbin, who is currently Vice President/General Manager of CMT's Music Industry Development division, will join BMI in early December. The popular Corbin could well be up to the task, but Sovine's loafers will be hard to fill.

"At a time when personal agendas abound, I have never known him to have one," Conrad said, of his experience with Sovine on the CMA Board. "He has been the voice of reason and common sense and he's not afraid to make a point or shake things up if he believes in it. Even when what he says sounds gruff or cynical, it always has the ring of truth - and most of the time, he is right."

"Considering the profile he has maintained and the number of years he's been at it, hell, he deserves some rest and some fishing time!"

CMA Executive Director Ed Benson was quick to validate Conrad's observations. "For over 20 years, Roger has been a most valuable advisor to me," Benson said. "His consistent candor and unique wit cannot be replaced, and we will all miss him greatly."

Wendy Pearl

BRAD PAISLEY'S POSTCARD FROM JAPAN

Country Gold Festival, Sushi and a Volcano

O.K., I admit it. I have always been skeptical about Country Music's potential outside of this continent.

Oh sure, countries like England, Australia, and Ireland aren't such a stretch. But Japan? English is not the primary language, their culture is based on a totally different system of beliefs and traditions, and heck, even the music they would consider indigenous uses quarter tones and a totally different note scale. It is with this frame of mind that I boarded a plane and reluctantly flew half-way round the world.

Lets fast forward to a day or two before the Country Gold Festival. Myself, The Wilkinsons, Chalee Tennison, The Derailers, Claire Lynch, and our bands are at a club in Kumamoto owned by Charlie Nagatani. We are watching his band of Japanese Country musicians play everything from Ricky Skaggs to Ernest Tubb. They painstakingly have learned every lick, every nuance of the original recordings note for note. Except for the occasional "herro" instead of "heilo," you'd swear you were in Texas. Charlie has pictures on the walls of everyone he's ever worked or brushed shoulders with from Roger Miller to Bill Clinton. You get the sense that this is no ordinary Country club owner. It was as I sat and soaked in the surroundings of this bar (and my band soaked in the stuff in bottles behind the bar) that I had my first chill-bump, Country-is-alive-and-well feeling.

My next one came the morning of the festival. Twenty thousand people gathered in a plush amphitheater on the side of a volcano, some waving American flags. All, and I mean ALL, wearing cowboy hats, jeans, and anything else they think we wear here in Nashville everyday. Even the occasional holster. And, as Miss Minnie would say, "They're just so proud to be here." But it's not here, it's there, and once a year it's a dream come true for 20,000 Japanese, 5 or 6 very lucky Country artists, a sainthood shoe-in promoter/singer named "Good Time Charlie", and a musical genre itself.

You see, as The Derailers took the stage, it was afternoon in Japan where, ironically, this format called Country Music was obviously very much alive and well. Simultaneously, it was 11 pm in Nashville and a little 75th birthday celebration was still underway for our beloved Grand Ole Opry. Again, alive and well. I watched as the good people of Japan hung on every note, every steel or fiddle lick, every song of every performer on

the bill. And it occurred to me I had been wrong in my thinking. You see, I used to think that Country Music being so lyrically based would be limited to English speaking nations. I guess I forgot that the fiddle and steel, the Telecaster and the harmony vocal, are universal languages themselves. These people not only speak these languages, they are starved for them. They appreciate every last drop of reverb off of every last lick from the instruments we so often take for granted here in Music City. The irony of it all is that with all their enthusiasm to learn everything they can about Country Music, with their pure love for it and all that it encompasses within it's borders, we could learn a thing or two from them.

The sightseeing alone would have been enough of a life-changing experience. From sushi bars (which I am now convinced beyond all shadow of a doubt are not my bag) to an active volcano within a hike or two of the venue, never before has exposure to a culture and country so radically changed my thinking. If I had to pick a word to sum up the overall "vibe" of the people of Japan, it would be grace. I truly encourage any and all performers/executives/professionals in our industry to see this festival if you ever get the chance. In fact, the treatment of the performers, the efficiency of the crews, the attention to detail, and the activity planning was unlike anything I've ever seen. Never felt like work to me!

In closing, one thing really hit me as I boarded the plane to come home (just as reluctantly as I boarded it to go away, ironically.) I am very proud to be a part of the music row community. These avenues are responsible for a musical art form that better represents America than any other. As we inhabit these offices up and down these streets, we sometimes forget that. What we do musically has the potential to act as an ambassador for our way of life, worldwide. I think Country Music's obligation to be international goes beyond business. It shows the world who we really are. I for one am "just so proud..." of that.

Brad Paisley



Top: Paisley poses for a picture with a local fan

Bottom: Paisley greets Country Gold promoter Charley Nagatani at his club in Kumamoto, Japan.

Country Night Gstaad

Ray Benson and
Chad Brock

Country Music
Ambassadors Travel
to the Alps



Swinging In Switzerland

After a 12 hour flight and a two hour drive through the mountains we rounded a bend in the much winding road and entered the valley that is Gstaad! What a sight! The most beautiful "quaint" Swiss Village with traditional chalets

and a backdrop usually seen on postcards. We then went to the Castle Hotel and what a place. As the jet lag set in the hospitality and grandeur of the place seemed to offset the thousands of miles of travel!! "This aint Lubbock" was all I seemed to be able to conjure up as I met up with the Swiss promoters and my band.

The soundcheck went real well and we chatted with old friends we had made on our previous trips to Switzerland. The tent we were to play in is a permanent affair and quite a structure. Outside the tent was another giant hall with bands and a beer garden like atmosphere. We were to play a late night jam out there after the last concert the next night. We had a wonderful lunch at the hotel and went to the press conference. Wynonna and me! I've known Wynonna for over 25 years, from when she and her Mom were not yet the singing duo The Judds, but just mom the nurse and the little 13 year old, so it was a pleasure getting to hang out with her and renew old stories and recollections. The press conference went great and we got ready for the show!

This being our fourth trip to Switzerland, we were well aware of the Swiss audiences and they us. Wynonna was eager to see how her show would go down in a foreign country. She needn't have worried! Over the last 20 years the Swiss, Germans and Italians have all been exposed to all kinds of Country Music. There are a number of European country bands and they are constantly learning more about the traditions as well as the new artists of Country Music.

Our show went incredibly well. We received an encore and really enthusiastic responses to all our tunes! So many Swiss understand English so the language barriers that might exist are really small. One thing that we all have in common is the rhythm that drives music and the desire to dance or clap hands to the beat of a song. The Swiss especially liked our fiddle hoe-down numbers and our foot tappin' western swing. Even if a few couldn't understand all the words as the song says, "The Rhythm's Gonna Get You." In closing, I'd have to say that the trip was a big success and we will be performing in Switzerland and ALL of Europe for a long time to come! Judging from all the Jeans, cowboy hats and shirts, western music and attire have a bright future in this scenic land of Alps and cheese!!

Ray Benson





Guitars in Gstaad

What happens when you take 50 or so Country singers and musicians, put them on a plane for 10 or so hours and ship them all to a foreign land? If that foreign land is Gstaad, Switzerland, you have one of the coolest Country Music festivals ever produced. Let me tell you a little about the Country Night Gstaad, continental Europe's most incredible Country Music festival.

Country Night Gstaad is a festival conceived of and produced by Marcel Bach and the Walker's, Trisha and Rusty. You may know of Marcel Bach as he has been voted the CMA's International County Promoter. Trisha & Rusty Walker make up Trisha Walker International. She is one of Country Music's driving forces in the move to expose and promote our music overseas. Together, Bach and the Walker's have produced their festival for 12 consecutive and successful years.

This year, myself, Jo Dee Messina, Asleep At The Wheel and Wynonna were honored to have been asked to perform at the festival. We performed to capacity crowds (3,000+ per night) in an opulent climate controlled tent. This was no circus tent! It was red carpeted and was a beautiful structure in and of itself. The sound, by Audio Rents/Clair Brothers was incredible as well. Plenty of lights (fixed and moving) made me feel extremely comfortable with the look of my show. Everything associated with the production and its coordination was top notch. The festival was broadcast live on Swiss national television as well.

The shows started at 7:00 PM on Friday and 6:00 PM on Saturday. First I would play then Jo Dee. Then there was an hour and a half break to let the people out of the tent to eat, drink, smoke, whatever. The show would resume with Asleep At The Wheel and would close with Wynonna. Well, by the time Wy was finished with her set, it would be around midnight, maybe a little later. Each night Marcel Bach would throw a fabulous dinner for all artist and bands - that began at 1:00 am! After eating a supper consisting of filet mignon, Swiss sausages, fresh vegetables, local cheeses and potato dishes, all would usually head back to the hotel -where the bar had a magnificent piano. Some nights Jo Dee, my wife Marty and I would head to the piano bar and sing, cut up and have an all around great time until 4:00 to 5:00 am in the morning! I think that the hotel staff got a kick out of us and we enjoyed their company a bunch. I wonder though, how much they enjoyed ours until the early morning hours?

The Swiss people are at the top of the heap, worldwide, for their warmth and love of Country Music. Most of the audience sang along to the hits of all of the artists. Those that were not familiar (or maybe did not speak English too well) never failed to clap, dance and rock along with us as we performed. Standing ovations were the norm for all acts. At the close of each artist's sets Marcel Bach's daughter, Roseanna and her friend Tatiana, brought fresh flowers to each of us on stage. The children were adorable and the flowers were beautiful.

Switzerland is one of the prettiest countries that I have ever seen. Beautiful flowers pop out of every window box and flowerbed as far as the eye could see. One of our guides and all around assistant for the festival, Elsie, told me that the Swiss love the color and beauty of flowers and plant them everywhere they can as winter white blankets the landscape for six to seven months a year. We also toured a castle built in the 1500's in a small town called Gruyere. Yes, Gruyere, like the cheese. The surrounding village has a particular aroma about it for sure! Our hotel was palatial and was a beauty unto itself. It sat atop a mountain that towered magnificently above the village of Gstaad. Walking down the hill from the hotel to the village to shop, have coffee, etc. was fine. Walking back up, well that was another thing! I must tell you that I saw Ms. Messina, in the great shape that she is, running up and down the hills of Gstaad on more than a couple of mornings. You go Jo Dee!

All in all, I think that it is safe to say that everyone had the time of our lives in Gstaad, Switzerland. The beauty of the land, the warmth of its people and their love of Country Music made this trip a one in a million experience for me. To Marcel, Trisha and Rusty- thanks for the experience of a lifetime.



Chad Brock

Garth Brooks Announces Retirement

Garth Brooks has never done anything halfway. He doesn't sing a song; he lives it. He doesn't perform on stage; he inhabits it. He doesn't sell records; he shatters them by selling 100 million albums to date.

It seems that if he isn't giving 110 percent, somehow he feels he has failed. And this is a guy who hates to fail. Eighty or 90 percent isn't enough. But after a decade of recording and touring, 100 percent is too much and Brooks announced his retirement Oct. 26 at a press conference in Nashville.

"The people in LA, the people here are so damned scared. They've asked me please don't use the word retirement," Brooks said to the crowded room of reporters at the Gaylord Entertainment Center in Nashville. "You guys know me. I can only be as honest as I can be and I am here to announce my retirement. It's a thing I feel good about. I feel what I am trading it for is more than worth it. Today we start a new life."

Scaling back isn't an option. Cutting back means cutting into his commitment and he is an all-or-nothing performer. He set his priorities in stone as the press corps was recording them in ink when he called it quits. Actually, it's not difficult to understand. As Brooks turns all his attention to his family, he has nothing left for Garth Brooks the artist.

But, he won't be leaving quietly.

Brooks has agreed to make one more album for Capitol Records Nashville. He starts work immediately and plans to release it on Mothers Day or Fathers Day in 2001. He doesn't want to refer to it as his "last" or "farewell" album. It is a reflection of where he is at this point in his career and the direction the project takes - like Brooks' own future - is not exactly clear.

"It's not crystal clear, but we begin today the attempt to bring a record to Mike Dungan and Capitol Records," Brooks said. "We all grow older and formats change. I'm not sure what we do fits the format today, but we are going to make a serious attempt to do the best record we can."

Brooks will be collaborating with longtime producer Allen Reynolds. He says if the typical song search results in 3,000 to 4,000 pitches, he'll listen to 10,000. At this stage in his career, Brooks said, "You have to work 10 times harder to establish the par that has been set in the past. But we are ready for that task."

As a prelude, Brooks plans to release "Wild Horses" from his No Fences album as a single. "It's a song I would cut today on a new album and it will be an interesting ride to see how the format responds," he said, adding that the response to the single "will determine the kind of music I bring to the format over the next year."

If the music meets his rigorous standards, Brooks plans to support the album with a possible appearance at Country Radio Seminar during the ASCAP luncheon and a network summer replacement television series with a half dozen concerts from different locations. "It's not marketing," he said. "It's what you owe the music; to let people know that it is out there."

One thing is certain. Brooks won't tour.

"The days of Garth Brooks touring are behind us," he said. "I never wanted to look at the music or touring as a weekend warrior. If I tour, I want to bring the best I can and if I can't tour like that, I don't want to do it."

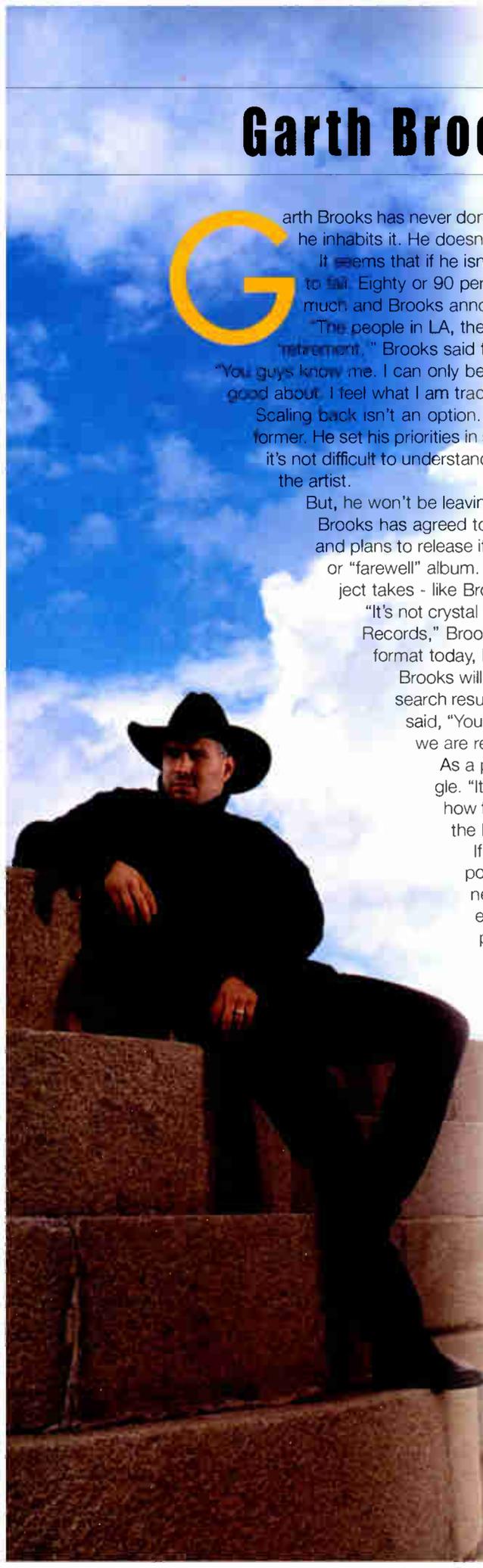
He is slowing down to focus on his personal life: his three daughters and determining the future of his marriage to college sweetheart Sandy. Despite media reports announcing a divorce, Brooks said they are "discussing divorce," but haven't made a final decision. Their priority is the impact on the children and they are doing it in their own time. "Sandy and I are very close to a decision," he said.

"My children and I are together every day and every night I tuck them in and I am responsible for their safety," Brooks said. "I asked my wife to be father and mother and it's time I accepted the responsibility and accept the true rewards that come with being a father."

Retirement doesn't mean that Brooks is going to stop working. He would like to record an album of duets with Trisha Yearwood. If Paramount Pictures wants a Chris Gaines soundtrack for *The Lamb*, Brooks will do it. He has a recording session on the books with New Grass Revival in November. He wants to keep producing longtime friend and ex-bandmate Tyler England. And he wants to write screenplays in the hours between dropping his children off and school and picking them up in the afternoon.

What isn't he doing? Baseball spring training with the N.Y. Mets probably won't happen this year. Brooks' Touch 'em All foundation for children will "go behind the scenes." And acting is out of the question.

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the world's biggest country music festival

fan fair

30th annual

june 14-17, 2001
nashville ★ music city u.s.a.

CMA ANNOUNCES TICKET PRICE STRUCTURE FOR FAN FAIR 2001

Ticket prices are divided into three categories. Each category corresponds to a different level of seating at Adelphia Coliseum. All seating is general admission within each level. For the first time, CMA is also offering an 18 and younger discount, making Fan Fair an even more attractive family vacation destination.

PLATINUM: Floor (Field) & Club Level

18 and under	Full Price
\$79.00	\$115.00

The 4-day Platinum pass includes All Fan Fair related activities including Exhibit and Autograph Sessions Riverfront Performances Main Stage Performances at Adelphia 30th Anniversary Program Book Special discounts to area attractions, restaurants and shops.

GOLD: Lower Level - Sections 109-118; 129-138

18 and Under	Full Price
\$69.00	\$100.00

The 4-day Gold Pass includes All Fan Fair related activities including Exhibit and Autograph Sessions Riverfront Performances Main Stage Performances at Adelphia 30th Anniversary Program Book Special discounts to area attractions, restaurants and shops.

STERLING: Lower Level Sections 119-128

18 and Under	Full Price
\$59.00	\$90.00

The 4-day Sterling Pass includes All Fan Fair related activities including Exhibit and Autograph Sessions Riverfront Performance Main Stage Performances at Adelphia 30th Anniversary program book Special discounts to area attractions, restaurants and shops.

An Adelphia Coliseum parking pass is available to purchase with all ticket packages. The price is \$20 for cars, \$60 for buses and \$120 for RVs. The parking pass is good for four days and spaces are limited. Shuttle service will be provided from Adelphia to the Nashville Convention Center and other downtown locations.



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Be prepared with your CMA membership number.

For group travel (ten or more) CMA members may contact Travel for the Stars or American Airlines Entertainment Desk at 1-800-922-5154.

*also available to any person employed by a CMA member organization

In each issue of CMA Close Up, Executive Director Ed Benson addresses issues of concern facing the CMA and Country Music industry. In this issue, we have reprinted Benson's response to an independent record company's recent request that CMA create a special CMA Award category for independents. Benson discusses the role of CMA and its relationship with independent artists and labels and the overall mission of the organization.

CMA's main mission since it was formed in 1958 has always been "to broaden the awareness of Country Music among the general public." We go about this mission in many ways. Two of the best known are the CMA Awards and Fan Fair. But we also extend our reach in an ongoing effort to influence and assist the international media who write about and cover the music and the artists.

Additionally, we are the only music trade organization which has continually targeted ad agencies and corporate marketers with campaigns to get them to understand the scope and quality of the Country Music audience, and how valuable a target they are for selling all kinds of goods and services. This unique and important initiative helps to keep them advertising on Country radio and in Country fan publications as well as supporting Country programming on television, all of which serve to accomplish that main CMA mission I mentioned above.

So, in fact, what CMA tries to do is support the "whole" business.

Now, let me address a couple of the things CMA does not try to do.

CMA does not become directly involved in the business interests or endeavors of any of its members. Our job is to try to elevate the commerce of the industry as a whole. We want to make the pie bigger so that everyone's slice can be more handsome. I strongly believe that the CMA's efforts have had a very direct impact on the growth of Country Music over the past four decades.

During this time, many companies and many artists have come and gone, and there really isn't anything CMA can do about the specific business fortunes of any of its individual members. Who succeeds, who becomes a star, etc. are matters completely out of our control.

About opportunities for independents: You can find me on



record many times in the press talking about the importance of independents and individual entrepreneurs as a vital component of our industry. Nothing makes me happier than to see a healthy independent operation, whether it is a label, a publisher or a radio station. Independent business people, writers and artists are a large portion of CMA's 6,000 industry members.

When it comes to the CMA Awards, who appears on the telecast is primarily dictated by the award nominations. All independents are eligible in the CMA Awards voting process. In fact, it takes only ten qualified nominations to make it onto the second ballot. This year I was proud to see two independent labels with final nominees. Dreamcatcher had Kenny Rogers as a finalist for Single of the Year, and Kenny performed on this year's show. Also, the Bellamy Brothers on Blue Hat Records were a final nominee for Vocal Duo of the Year.

Every one of CMA's individual members has the right to vote throughout the awards process, and they decide who gets this important recognition. It is not me, it is not the CMA board or any committee. And, I reiterate, any artist is eligible if nominated by at least 10 CMA members.

What I hope you will understand is that CMA does not create opportunities for artists or companies. They must do that for themselves. CMA provides the mechanism for the industry's preeminent recognition of accomplishment, the CMA Awards. And CMA strives to provide a more receptive media and more willing advertisers to support the media and make Country Music available to more consumers.

I cannot promise you that CMA is ever going to attempt to advance the fortunes of any individual or company. But I can promise you that we will continue to work year round to enhance the image and popularity of Country Music, and to create a more viable commercial potential for all our members.

Ed Benson

CMA Executive Director

NEW MEMBER PROFILES

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NAME: Michele Alford
TITLE: Marketing Coordinator
COMPANY: Country Music Media Group
JOB DESCRIPTION: Works closely with Marketing Director, Tracy Rogers, in the creation and execution of all marketing programs, events, contests and promotions for Country Weekly and Country Music magazines.
ALL TIME FAVORITE COUNTRY ALBUM: *TRIO* (Dolly, Emmy Lou, Linda)



NAME: Craig Headen
TITLE: Agent
COMPANY: Buddy Lee Attractions
JOB DESCRIPTION: Agent responsible for Performing Arts Centers
ALL TIME FAVORITE COUNTRY ALBUM: *DON'T CLOSE YOUR EYES* (Keith Whitley)



NAME: Pat Higdon
TITLE: Senior Vice President/General Manager
COMPANY: Universal Music Publishing Group
JOB DESCRIPTION: Oversees the creative activities of Nashville's most impressive writer roster including Bob McDill, Gordon Kennedy, Gary Burr, Mark D. Sanders, Matraca Berg, Stephanie Bentley and others
ALL TIME FAVORITE COUNTRY ALBUM: *CHISELED IN STONE* (Vern Gosdin)



NAME: Mike Voltz
TITLE: Artist Relations Manager
COMPANY: Gibson Guitar
JOB DESCRIPTION: Responsible for seeing that the Country Music community is supplied with the finest musical instruments Gibson has to offer. Mike has been with Gibson 16 years and has a rich background in guitar building and Custom product management.
ALL TIME FAVORITE COUNTRY ALBUM: *SAILS* (Chet Atkins)

CMA Staffers Celebrate Years of Service

Tammy Genovese

People traditionally give crystal to mark the occasion of someone's 15th anniversary. But after working at CMA since 1985, Associate Executive Director Tammy Genovese has earned Platinum status.



She has witnessed first-hand the evolution of a worldwide Country Music explosion from the birth of the neo-traditionalist movement, to Garth-mania, the advent of Napster and the process of buying music online instead of standing in one at the check out counter. There have been significant changes at CMA, too. The staff has grown from 12 to more than 30. CMA now has representatives in London and Australia. And the organization is actively marketing Country Music to Madison Avenue.

Genovese, who works side-by-side with CMA Executive Director Ed Benson, has been a vital part of the team keeping CMA in front of the changes impacting the music community, while also developing strategies for creative solutions.

"I love it," she said, without a second of hesitation. "When you work with great people, who do a good job - Ed, the staff, our Board and our members in the industry - it is easy to love what you do."

Genovese was working in the accounting department at a Nashville shoe company in 1985 when a friend-of-a-friend told her about a job opening at CMA.

"I loved Country Music and watched the [CMA Awards] growing up, but I didn't move to Nashville ever thinking I would be working in the music industry," she said. "But it seemed like the right thing to do at the time."

She remembers exactly the time and day she got: the call from then Executive Director Jo Walker Meador offering her the job of Administrative Services Coordinator - 9 a.m. on a Sunday in July.

"I had been on pins and needles until I found out - and I celebrated all day after she called," Genovese recalled.

After five years, Genovese was promoted to Director of Administrative Services, eventually being named Director of Operations in 1992. During her years at CMA, Genovese's personal life has changed, too. She married Ross in 1988 and had two children, Nolan (age 8) and Callie (age 4). Genovese, who holds a bachelor's degree in human resources also, earned an MBA from the University of Phoenix in 1994.

"I've grown up at CMA," she said with a bit of nostalgia. "Basically, my whole life has happened here. I don't move around when I like what I do."

But there was a point last year, when she nearly left. CMA after Ross was offered a job promotion in North Carolina. "At the time we felt it was best for our family to move, but I was reluctant to leave. I wanted to stay here until I retired."

That's an understatement. Genovese scaled back her hours, but never could bring herself to leave CMA entirely during Ross' transition. Eventually they changed plans and decided to remain in Nashville. Benson had some plans of his own.

"The board had been after me to identify one of my colleagues who would be best suited to run the shop if I weren't around," Benson said. "Tammy was the obvious choice, but then she hit me with the news about moving. When her plans changed, I went right to CMA Chairman Bud Wendell, and he helped get Tammy's promotion approved at the next Board meeting. Tammy has consistently demonstrated the important qualities of leadership, personal devel-

opment and commitment, along with loyalty and love for her work. Combine her wonderful talents with the knowledge and understanding gained in 15 years with CMA, and Tammy is a remarkable asset to the organization."

With all the changes that have taken place during the past 15 years at CMA is there anything that has stayed the same? "Our professionalism, ethics and sense of humor," she said. "We'd be lost without it."

Peggy Whitaker

Fifteen years ago Jo Walker-Meador needed a secretary and Peggy Whitaker needed a change. What they didn't know was each other.

At a Sunday School discussion on "What you would do if you only had six months to live?" Whitaker began to think it was time for a new job. She'd been at Metropolitan Life for 24 years-it was a job she thought would only be short term when she started. So in a brave move, she quit in search of a more fulfilling position.

After frying hundreds of pieces of chicken for a caterer on the hunch she might want to own a "meat and three" and thinking of working at a bed and breakfast, she hit on an idea while at an employment agency. The clerk told her

it was too bad she hadn't been in earlier because they had just hired someone to travel with Marie Osmond. That set bells off in her head to check out the music industry. Luckily, a friend of a friend knew they were hiring at CMA.

After several interviews Whitaker convinced Walker-Meador that she was ready and even willing to take a cut in pay for the opportunity to pursue a new dream. In September 1985 she became secretary to the CMA Executive Director.

There were 15 people in the office then and she marvels at the changes she has witnessed. "We had a computer person then, we didn't all have a computer...now our ability to communicate has expanded drastically. That is the biggest plus. For a trade organization that is so important to communicate with the members."

Over the years her title has changed four of five times because, Whitaker claims, "they didn't know what to do with me." They do now. Currently, she holds the title Director of Board Administration. "Peggy's unique and extraordinary talents are an enormous asset to the organization," remarks CMA's current chief staff executive Ed Benson. "Board members and her staff colleagues alike have come to count on Peggy's experience and her keen perceptive abilities. She is almost always right, and she forces us to keep reality in sight."

From her seat at the CMA she has witnessed first-hand Country Music history in the making. She says most of her favorite moments center around the Hall of Fame. She recalls watching Tennessee Ernie Ford's reaction as he realized it was his turn to be inducted into the Hall of Fame when Oak Ridge Boy Richard Sterban started singing his signature song, "Sixteen Tons," during the CMA Awards telecast. "I thought that was just wonderful." Said Whitaker. Another perk of the job was to be standing next to Charley Pride as he learned he was this year's inductee. "That is just the best thing that can happen to you if you're a Country performer, so when I watch someone get that kind of honor it's just one of the most fun things."



DIARY OF A RADIO TOUR

Going to meet the folks that will play your records is one of the most grueling exercises a new artist must endure. You could almost call it 'New Artist Boot Camp.' Going from town to town shaking hands with, and performing for, the people who can make or break your career. A daunting task that has become a routine requirement since the days when Loretta Lynn showed up at the doors of radio stations all across the country trying to convince the disk jockey to play her song. Asylum recording artist Chalee Tennison chronicles a leg of her radio tour and shows a glimpse of what really happens.



Our first step - dinner with WQIK/Jacksonville PD Mike James.



Welcome to Daytona Beach! Studio -- this way!



After hearing Chalee on the air at WQYK/Tampa, a fan shows up at the station for an autograph.



Chalee tells WGNE program director Bill Kramer about the new album.



On the air with WWGR afternoon drive personality.

Sunday, August 27th

- 10:30 a.m. return from Philly, get kids from the nanny
- Noon Lunchtime, start washing
- 5:00 p.m. go shopping with kids for groceries
- 8:00 p.m. return home, late supper
- 9:00 p.m. give kids baths, tuck'em in
- 10:00 p.m. finish washing
- 11:00 p.m. pack for week of radio tour
- Midnight shower and off to bed

Monday, August 28th

- 6:00 a.m. get children up and ready for school. Tyler is so excited. It's his first day of kindergarten!!
- 7:10 a.m. kids went out to the bus stop
- 7:30 a.m. coffee and walk the dog!!
- 10:30 a.m. meet the nanny and give instructions and itinerary for the week
- 11:45 a.m. leave for airport for 1:20 p.m. flight to Jacksonville, FL
- 3:45 p.m. arrive in Jacksonville
- 4:55 p.m. arrive at hotel
- 5:15 p.m. called and talked with my babies. Everything seems to be going well except for Tyler having a hard time sharing with Jan's little boy, Travis
- 7:00 p.m. meet Matt in the lobby
- 7:30 p.m. dinner with Mike James WQIK Program Director
- 9:30 p.m. Listened to new music
- 10:30 p.m. returned to hotel, goodnight.

Tuesday, August 29th

- 7:00 a.m. rise and shine!!!
- 9:00 a.m. meet in lobby, drive to WROO/Jacksonville for a station visit with Buzz Jackson Program Director and Rhonda Goff Music Director
- 10:00 a.m. listen to new music from my new album
- 11:30 a.m. drive to Daytona
- High noon must stop to eat something!! (Coffee, Cottage Cheese, Turkey sandwich. I am trying to eat good on the road. It's so hard!)
- 1:30 p.m. station visit at WGNE/Daytona with Program Director John Anthony, listen to new music, did interview for show to be aired tomorrow, cut some liners
- 2:30 p.m. station visit across town a WOGK/Daytona with Program Director Bob Forster, interview on air, cut liners for station, take pictures, etc....
- 3:45 p.m. depart for Tampa



Chae Tennison Hits the Road

- 4:30 p.m. call and check in with my babies, everything seems to be going smoothly back at home front
- 6:30 p.m. arrive at hotel
- 7:00 p.m. meet in lobby
- 7:30 p.m. dinner with Eric Logan Operations Manager of WQYK/WRBQ and Ronnie Lane Program Director of WRBQ
- 11:00 p.m. bedtime... oh bed how I love thee!

Wednesday, August 30th

- 5:30 a.m. Is this Wednesday? Why yes it is... I'm sure of it.
- 7:15 a.m. meet in the lobby and drive to WRBQ/WQYK Tampa
- 7:45 a.m. go on air with WRBQ morning show (Cooper & Ritter & Carmen) interview and play some new music
- 8:15 a.m. go on air with WQYK morning show (Skip, Les, Braden and Rita) interview and play some music
- 9:00 a.m. talk with Jay Roberts Music Director of WRBQ/WQYK
- 9:15 a.m. went into studio and taped an interview with John Ritter for a syndicated program called "The Rise Up Show"
- 9:30 a.m. took pictures with football great "Hall of Famer" Lee Roy Selmon...the only Buccaneer in the Hall of Fame if I might add!
- 10:00 a.m. we left a little later than planned so it is off to Sarasota
- 11:30 a.m. arrive in Sarasota, go to lunch with Mark Wilson Program Director of WCTQ (Cajun-fried Grouper!!!! I just had to do it! Okay I had French Fries too so sue me!!!)
- 1:30 p.m. dropped Mark off at the station, took some pictures and headed on down the road to Ft. Myers
- 1:45 p.m. It is raining so hard that Matt and I have to pull over on the shoulder of the road
- 2:20 p.m. we are 20 minutes late due to the rain of course... meet with Kerry Babb Program Director and Dave Logan Music director of WCKT /Fort Myers. play some music, go on air with Kerry do some liners for the station, sign some pictures and head out across town to WWGR /Fort Myers
- 3:10 p.m. arrive at WWGR, meet staff and sign pictures, do on air interview, listen to music with Mark Phillips Program Director of WWGR
- 4:00 p.m. departed for Fort Lauderdale, drove across Gator Alley... Oh my gosh!!!! 3 and 1/2 hours so we (Matt and I listened to some music) Darryl Worley, Patty Loveless, The Kinleys, and Rascal Flatts. A great time to check in on my babies...I miss them but they

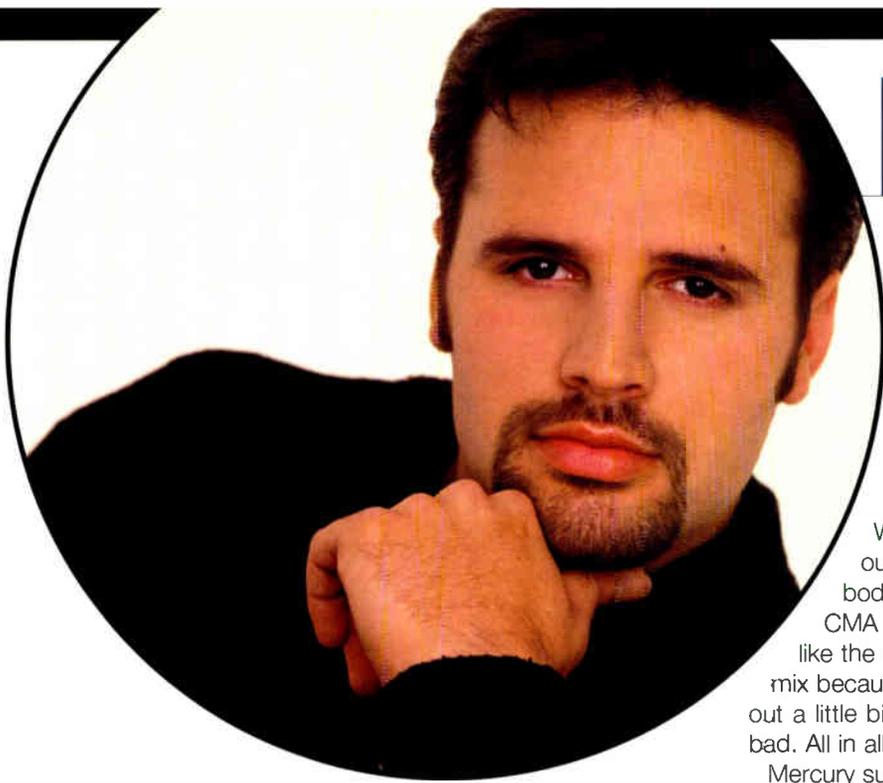
- 7:15 p.m. arrive at hotel
- 7:30 p.m. meet Matt in lobby for dinner with Mitch Mahan Program Director of WIRK/West Palm Beach
- 10:00 p.m. listen to new music and get back to hotel and crash so hard!!
- 11:15 p.m. yes the bed it calls my name!!

Thursday, August 31st

- 6:00 a.m. Oh yes!!!
- 7:30 a.m. meet in the lobby drive to WKIS/Fort Lauderdale
- 9:00 a.m. arrive at station meet with Bill Wise Program Director WKIS, interview with Darlene Evans Music Director cut some station liners and listen to new music in Joe Bell, the General Managers Office
- 10:10 a.m. leaving for the airport for an 11:05 flight to Akron/Canton, OH.
- 10:40 a.m. Matt drops me off. Thank goodness for the weather delay. It and all is well!
- 1:30 p.m. arrive in Cincinnati for connection and board about
- 3:40 p.m. arrive in Canton where I meet with Lisa Strickland and my two guitarists Ron and Scott (Rosco)
- 4:15 p.m. we arrive at hotel
- 5:00 p.m. we meet in the lobby for departure for show (fair grounds in Canton)
- 6:30 p.m. 45 min or so show
- 7:15 p.m. signed autographs, took pictures and said good-byes
- 8:20 p.m. we went through the drive through at McDonalds. I only got a coke. I ate a sandwich, chips, and a cookie before I went on stage. I'll have to run 5 miles for that meal. Ok, maybe not but it was a good thought
- 8:30 p.m. called the nanny, my babies were already in bed. Jane said they were good though and told me she would tell them in the morning when she got them up for school.
- 9:00 p.m. I must try to unwind after a long day and go to bed!! Goodnight.

Friday, September 1st

- 9:00 a.m. meet in the lobby to head Home Sweet Home
- 3:22 p.m. Here comes my babies.... they are home from school. YEAH!!!



Mark Wills

Heating Up the Charts and Keeping the Home Fires Burning

Nashville is a five-year town" goes the old saying on Music Row. The essential meaning is that aspiring singers and songwriters should anticipate pounding the pavement in Music City for half of a decade before success is granted to them. "It shows commitment," the powers-that-be say. And, although an unwritten rule, artists are certainly expected to live in Nashville after they are signed to a label. Of course, there are exceptions to every rule-and Mark Wills is one of those exceptions.

Wills sang for years at his regular gig at the Buckboard country nightclub in Marietta, Ga. before his voice reached the ears of Mercury Records' Keith Stegall in 1995. "Carson (Chamberlain) had played me some demos of Mark and I said, 'Let's get a couple of plane tickets and go down and see him'. I signed him after that night," says Stegall.

"I think it's important to have my career but it should always take a backseat to my family".

While many hopeful artists might pack their bags and head to Tennessee before the ink on the contract dried, Wills decided to commute from the Atlanta suburbs. Five years and several hit songs later, he is still making the drive.

"Actually, it wasn't really even a decision," Wills admits honestly. I was raised in Georgia. My family is in Georgia. My wife's family is in Georgia. For me there's never been any other choice. Georgia has always been my home.

It's not like I live in California. I live three hours away. If I need to get here, I can just climb in my truck and drive up. As long as I can do my job from home, I think it's a good idea." Wills made the commute to record all three of his Mercury releases, *Mark Wills*, *Wish You Were Here* and *Permanently*. Doing his job from Georgia is easier because Wills' manager, John Gallachio, also lives in the Atlanta area. While both admit there

are sacrifices for not living in Nashville, they agree it is entirely worth it. "We've talked about it, and we do think that neither of us living in Nashville does hold us back on some things," Wills says. "You know, if you're out of sight you're out of mind to some point. When its time for somebody to be lobbying for a performance spot on the CMA Awards or other similar appearances, it seems like the managers or artists that live here are more in the mix because they have those relationships. I think we miss out a little bit on that but the good definitely out weighs the bad. All in all, I don't think it's affected me negatively."

Mercury supports Wills' decision to stay in Atlanta and that, makes it easier for the singer to do business from home. Wills says. "I love Nashville and I'm here a lot. When I'm not on the road, I'm here at least once a month and I spend a couple of days taking care of business. I live close enough that I can commute easily. I try my best to keep relationships that I've built with people over the years current," Wills continues. "I just have to work a little harder at keeping up those relationships. It may hurt my visibility a bit that I'm not here all the time, but at the same time it's worth the trade off."

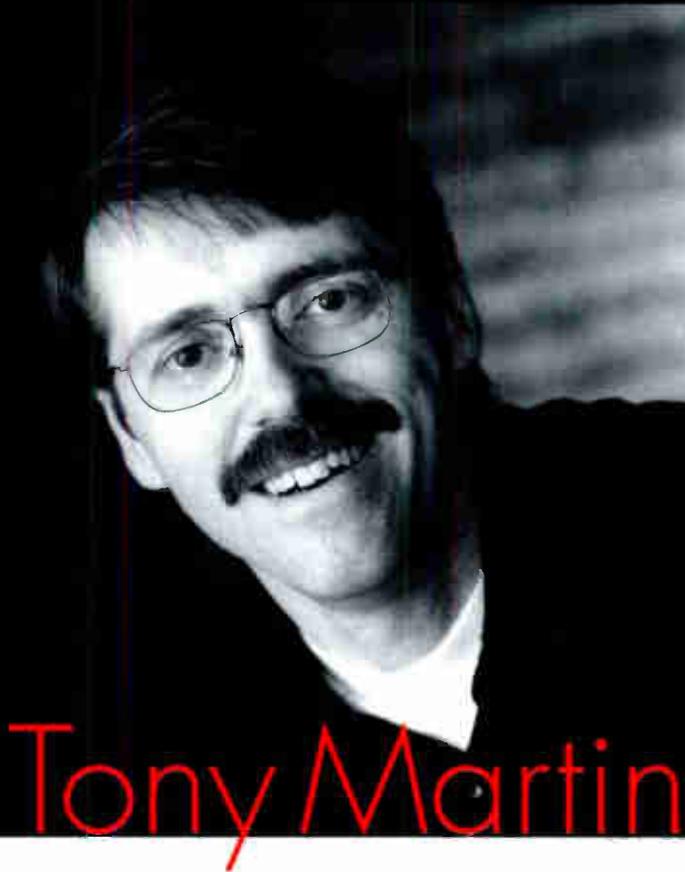
Wills also staunchly believes that some distance from the industry is a positive situation for his personal life, and allows him more quality time at home with his wife Kelly and two-year-old daughter Mally.

"I don't get as burned out or feel as trapped as I would if I lived in Nashville," Wills admits. "You can get too overwhelmed and caught up in what's going on. I'm a person that stresses out over things. I can drive myself crazy, not to mention the people around me, over worrying about getting stuff done. I love my job and I love the business, but I think if I were here in town, it would add a higher stress level to me which would add more stress to my family. It's good to have a little distance from the Mark Wills who's on the road and the Mark Wills who's at home." The bottom line for Wills is keeping his family together.

"The family bond is something that's very important in my life and I want to keep us close to each other," Wills says. "It's a better deal to have my wife and little girl closer to our families. I like for my little girl to be close to her grandparents. She sees them every other day and if we lived here, she wouldn't. Being a daddy and a good husband is more important than my career.

"I think it's important to have my career but it should always take a backseat to my family. Not to sound like I'm disrespectful toward the Country Music industry because I'm not, I love this business, but what's best for my family is to live together in Atlanta. It keeps us mentally and spiritually stronger and that makes everything better."

Tamara Saviano



As a kid, Tony Martin completely ignored the magic that was being created in his very own living room. His dad, successful songwriter/publisher Glenn Martin, would often have the likes of Merle Haggard and Mickey Newberry hanging out, writing songs at the house. The young Martin would hear the stories being told through song but was more interested in the stories in the newspaper lying in the driveway. "I must have been kind of weird. I liked newspapers," Martin admits.

It would be years before his interest in telling stories shifted from reporting on actual events to communicating a feeling in a song. Music inched its way into Martin's life by way of piano lessons his mother insisted on. "I didn't want to play piano," Martin says with a chuckle. "I wanted to play left field for the Atlanta Braves." Music started taking hold when he bought a Bob Will's record. "I played it in my Camero until it ate the tape up," he explains. That passion was still not enough to make him think songwriting was his calling.

After years of wanting to grow up to be a columnist like Chicago's Mike Royko, Martin got a job at his college newspaper as a copy editor. Journalism then led him to Chicago and a job with a chain of community newspapers. But the days of traveling from story to story in a pick-up truck with no radio were not wasted. Martin began writing parodies of the stories he was covering. Then his dad gave him the shove he needed. "Why don't you write a serious song?" he asked.

Not long after that challenge Martin hit what he calls "the Country sweepstakes lottery" by having George Strait cut the 10th real song he ever wrote. "Baby's Gotten Good at Goodbye" got its start in a Chicago traffic jam. "What a rotten

day this turned out to be" was the phrase going through Martin's mind as he looked at the sea of cars all around him. But he didn't want to write about a traffic jam. So, he wondered, what else is rotten? His wife leaving him would be rotten, and it would be worse if she didn't cry when she left.

Martin sang his song into a cassette recorder on a visit home to Nashville. His dad passed the cassette on to pal Dean Dillon, who then played it for Strait. It was the first demo Martin ever cut.

The budding songwriter was doing yard work for extra cash when he heard through his walkman headphones he had the No. 1 song in the country. He recalls thinking, "Wait a minute, I've got the No. 1 song in the country and I'm weed-eating for 50 bucks!"

Comparing the exciting possibility of a career as a songwriter with schlepping though more Chicago winters as a low paid newspaper reporter, Martin packed up and moved to Nashville. "When I got the George Strait cut I said to myself, this hobby is going to pay better than my job so let's turn pro."

But he was wise to the music business, having seen it through his father's experience. "I knew the pitfalls from dad, it's like a big slot machine that has to come up all bells." Once back in Nashville he did some newspaper work to keep afloat. His father had preached the benefits of having a catalogue of songs, so Martin got down to business. Not long after the Strait cut, he got a cut on Tanya Tucker's *Tennessee Woman* album. Then things got quiet. His family showed their support in the lean times. One day, years ago, Martin saw his wife and daughter carrying their garage sale couch and chair out the front door. Ten minutes later they came back in with money to buy groceries. They used the traffic of a neighbor's garage sale to raise a little cash.

Despite his success, Martin is diligent about his full time job

continued on page 39...

Martin Hits

"Just To See You Smile"	Tim McGraw
"No Place That Far"	Sara Evans
"I'll Think Of A Reason Later"	Lee Ann Womack
"Third Rock From The Sun"	Joe Diffie
"Whatever You Say"	Martina McBride
"For You I Will"	Aaron Tippin
"Places I've Never Been"	Mark Wills
"It's All In Your Head"	Diamond Rio
"Jacob's Ladder"	Mark Wills
"Politics, Religion & Her"	Sammy Kershaw
"Not On Your Love"	Jeff Carson
"She Can't Say I Didn't Cry"	Rick Trevino
"Baby's Gotten Good At Goodbye"	George Strait



carolyn dawn johnson

RECORD LABEL: Arista Records
ALBUM: *Room With A View*
FIRST SINGLE: "Georgia"
INFLUENCES: Amy Grant, Charley Pride, Patty Loveless, Marty Stuart, Jan Arden, Sheryl Crowe, Fleetwood Mac and A33A

Carolyn Dawn Johnson's road to Nashville began in 1994 when a television commercial on TNN prompted her to buy a videotape about songwriting. That same tape eventually led her to attend a yearly songwriting camp sponsored by Nashville Songwriters Association International (NSAI). After receiving numerous accolades at the camp, the Alberta, Canada native made several trips to Nashville and eventually moved in 1996.

Once in Nashville, she waited tables at Hard Day's Night (Phil Vassar's night club) and sang on the side. Eventually, she landed a publishing deal with one of Nashville's leading independent music publishers, Patrick Joseph Music.

That must have been some tape. Along with being named Music Row Magazine's reigning "Breakthrough Songwriter of the Year," Johnson co-wrote Chely Wright's No.1 hit, "Single White Female," and has penned songs for Jo Dee Messina, Patty Loveless, Chely Wright, SheDAISY, Pam Tillis, Linda Davis, Mindy McCready, Jennifer Day, Lila McCann, Suzy Bogguss, Kathy Mattea and more.

Johnson wrote or co-wrote all of the songs on her upcoming debut album and co-produced with renowned record producer, Paul Worley (Dixie Chicks, Martina McBride and more.) Guests on the album include Martina McBride, Al Anderson (NRBQ), Kim Ganes, Matraca Berg, Marty Stuart, Mary Ann Kennedy and Jason Sellers.



chris cagle

RECORD LABEL: Virgin
ALBUM: *Play It Loud*
FIRST SINGLE: "My Love Goes On And On"
INFLUENCES: Doobie Brothers, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Eagles, Conway Twitty and Charlie Daniels

Chris Cagle spans a wide range of emotions on his debut album *Play It Loud*. The newcomer pays homage to the likes of the Charlie Daniels Band and Travis Tritt, while blending rock and Country to create a new sound that is still rough around the edges.

Born in Louisiana, Cagle moved to Houston when he was four and soon became immersed in the Texas culture that remains so important to him today. At 19, he left Texas to pursue music full-time. Cagle moved to Nashville in 1994, spending the next five years doing odd jobs - from waiting tables and tending bar to being a golf caddy - all the while polishing his songwriting skills. His writing vastly improved after meeting legendary writer Harlan Howard, who taught Cagle how to write a true Country song. Howard was so impressed with his student's efforts that he was the first to publish one of Cagle's songs. He then landed a full publishing deal and had songs recorded by David Kersh.

Cagle co-produced the album and co-wrote eight of its ten songs. "I tried to put as much emotion and passion into the record as possible because that's who I am," Cagle says. "I love deeply and I hurt deeper. I want to create music that people can love to, hurt to, dance to, and always want to listen to."

"I will find a way to be busy," Brooks said. "But whatever I go into next, it will be from the start second in my life...I'm pulling away from stuff that takes me away from home, the touring and the recording."

In the process of getting to that point, Brooks has set some goals:

"I'd like to do something special solely for radio because of the 100 million mark," Brooks said. "Wal-Marts numbers don't lie and Wal-Mart says that 86 percent of Country Music sold is because of the Country Music station in the area. You take care of those people the best you can."

He's taking on Napster and the downloading of music on the Internet. He said digital down loading is "wrong and Napster is hiding within the laws and that's got to change." But, the situation has opened his eyes to the possibility of using new technology to reach his fans. Brooks is considering making music available on the net at a reduced price. "We are asking full retail on the Internet for what you can buy at Kmart or Wal-Mart without the CD and the artwork." He intends to work "shoulder-to-shoulder" with the retailers who helped make his career, but concedes that the Internet is "definitely a force to be reckoned with." In fact, Brooks, who has never had an official website, has now adopted the existing site, www.PlanetGarth.com, as his official web location for news and information.

At a time when Brooks has announced he is pulling back, he is reaching out - even to the Nashville music community.

"Between Jimmy Bowen, between Pat Quigley and between myself, we have done a pretty good job of alienating Capitol Records from Music Row," Brooks said. "I never want to kiss anybody's ass to be accepted into a family, but you've got to admit that to be part of the family is a great thing. And if there is anybody that can make Capitol Records sell records and still be part of the Music Row industry, Mike Dungan is that man."

Dungan, who serves on the CMA Board of Directors, took over as President of Capitol Records three months ago. Dungan's take on Brooks? "I have had several opportunities to have meetings with Garth and I have found him to be without a doubt one of the most charming, disarming, straight forward and straight up, honest men that I have ever worked with," he said.

Even as he is leaving, Brooks seems optimistic about the future of Country Music, pointing to the popularity of Dixie Chicks, and the talents of Lee Ann Womack and Brad Paisley. But he bristles at the notion that he has somehow contributed to the pop/country polarity in the format.

When he debuted, pop stations were playing very little Country Music. "If a pop station was playing our stuff, it was 'Friends in Low Places' as a gag every other week," Brooks said. "But our Arbitron ratings were up and retail was up. Now you are seeing a lot of pop airplay [for Country Music] and Arbitron ratings have dropped. So tell me, which was better for Country Music?"

"We were blamed for being a crossover, but my remembrance was that what was crossing over was the audience, who were crossing over from pop to Country."

Brooks has reached the milestone of selling 100 million records, making him the best-selling, solo artist in history and despite his plans for retirement it is not over yet. He will be busy writing songs, scouting new material, recording the album and delivering it to his fans in innovative, new ways. This doesn't sound like retirement. It sounds like he is redirecting his boundless energy and talent into a new endeavor - Garth Brooks the father, instead of Garth Brooks the superstar.

"My job now shifts to that with all the thankfulness in the world," he said. "With no offense to the music, I'm so glad that I got to go from one gig that was so rewarding to another gig that was 10-times more rewarding than music has ever been."

Wendy Pearl

John Michael Montgomery

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"It tells a story that kind of puts you right there in the seat and paints a picture for you. People, especially nowadays, they don't feel a lot. Songs today are mostly positive or in a different direction. Great songs don't always get heard. I felt like this was a great song. I was just lucky enough to be the guy who got to do the story telling on it and sing the song and see the impact it's had."

Ray Sells

Ronald M. Anton

Retired BMI executive Ronald M. Anton died on October 18 in an early morning fire at his Nashville home. Anton had worked for over three decades with songwriters in both Nashville and Los Angeles and had been described as "the best friend songwriters ever had." Anton, a Milwaukee native, worked with songwriters for more than three decades. After graduating from Northwestern University Law School, he was employed by MCI, Columbia Records and the William Morris Agency. He joined BMI in 1965 in the New York legal department and later headed the publishing department there. In the early 1970s he relocated to Los Angeles to direct all Writer/Publisher Relations activity, retiring in 1988 as Vice President, BMI Los Angeles. He and his wife, who maintained homes in Palm Springs and Nashville, were avid supporters of the Nashville Songwriters Association International (NSAI). The Anton's were among the founders of NSAI's Tin Pan South, an annual celebration in Nashville that has become the largest songwriting festival in America. Barton Herbison, director of the Nashville Songwriters Association, said not only was Anton someone who promoted songwriting and songwriters, he was a good and decent man. "When I think of everybody I ever met in the music industry, I think of Ron as the best listener. The music was important to Ron, but it came second to you as a person." Herbison added, "He's someone that can't be replaced." In addition to his wife, Dene, Anton is survived by children Peter Anton and Wendy Anton, Los Angeles; stepchildren Mark Mann, Oklahoma City and Dinn Mann, Kansas City, Kansas; granddaughters Brianna, Caroline, Dene IV, Anna Beth and Holly.

Denver Smith

Denver Smith, Nashville songwriter, performer, and arranger died September 7th after struggling with Lou Gehrig's disease.

Smith, 45, spent the last months of his life with his family, devoting his time to his two sons, Logan, 7, and Liam, 3. His wife, Angee, had left her job as a publicist at MCA to spend more time at home.

The songwriter was involved in a mix of musical niches that might seem offbeat to the Nashville mainstream. He had arranged on disco albums for Two Tons O' Fun (they went on to record It's Raining Men) and played a synthesizer on an album by Christian artist Randy Stonehill that featured Amy Grant. He had a popular club band in Los Angeles in the 1970s and 1980s called The Team, and produced interactive educational and entertainment CDs for children in the 1990s.

Along with his wife and children, Smith is survived by his mother, Cathy Smith, and brother, Curt Smith, both of Phoenix; and his sister, Cara Malmrose, of Gilbert, Arizona.

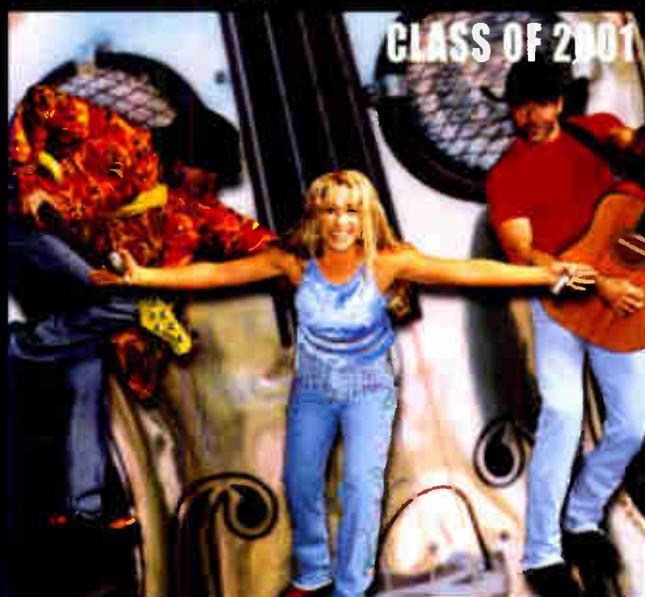


LEE ANN WOMACK



STAYING POWER

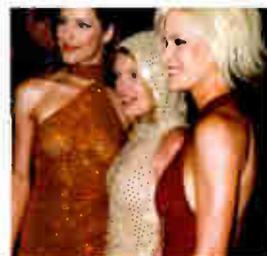
SAWYER BROWN



CLASS OF 2001

TRICK PONY

Y2CHICKS



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we have. Martie and I grew up listening to tons of bluegrass and going to festivals. We used to see him when we were kids, and he was always so wonderful and such a great inspiration to us. A lot of people don't realize how cool bluegrass music is until you're actually sitting there. It's a very much alive music. And Willie Nelson comes from our Texas, honky-tonk roots. Just the fact that he said, 'Yes.' We said, 'Let's just ask him and get it over with.' I was the one designated to call him, and I was so nervous." Joe Ely and Groupavida, a Cahunta band from San Antonio were recently added to some dates on the Fly Tour - which Robison said comes from living in San Antonio and developing a love of Mexican music and salsa. The Fly Tour wraps up in early December and the Dixie Chicks announced in October that they would be taking next year off. Robison says they "will go be with our hubbies and nest a little bit and have some fun doing some outside interests." Robison claimed they "haven't really planned it yet, and don't really want to plan it right now. "Natalie is going to take it easy and have her baby, and I think for the most part we're just going to go off and be creative, write and get our creative juices flowing again. Pretty much just get a life back outside of music," Robison commented. "You kind of feel like when you write songs you're writing songs based on real life, and unless you're living a real life, it's hard to write." Y2K was certainly not a disaster for the Dixie Chicks and their team. In fact, everywhere you turned there was another award being won, another record being broken or another certification being bestowed. With their fans showing, 17-million times over, that the "Chicks Rule," and their industry peers bestowing numerous awards, it truly has seemed to be "The Year of the Chicks." On behalf of the Dixie Chicks, Robison said "Thanks" to their industry friends..."It never ceases to amaze me the support we've gotten from everyone. I think sometimes, it's really easy when someone becomes so successful, the process of starting to pull them back down begins. I think, in a way, it's human nature, but everyone continues to be very supportive of us and I really want to let everyone know we are so proud of being in Country Music, and I'm not just saying that. I feel like we will wave the Country banner as long as everyone will allow us to. It's the kind of music we've come up through, and we have no intentions of going anywhere anytime soon. Thanks to everyone that voted for us. That's the ultimate compliment!"

Dixie Weathersby

Tony Martin

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as a songwriter. "I write every day of the week. I come to work in case the muse shows up. I'm here, my tools are sharp and I am ready. If I lay down and wait for the muse to find me, I'll be so lethargic. I'll be too lazy to get up and do anything about it."

A string of big hits later, Martin does not take success lightly. "I take every cut I get, and I treat that money like I won't have another one in my life." But don't think there isn't any fun involved. From a writing room at Hamstein publishing he says with a big smile, "Being a songwriter is the greatest job next to being the sheriff in Mayberry!"

Jennifer Meyer

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Top: CMA Executive Director Ed Benson and Senior Director of Strategic Marketing Rick Murray pose with the Dixie Chicks during a stop on the FLY tour in Atlanta, GA.

Middle: Reception honoring "Touched By An Angel" Executive Producer Martha Williamson hosted by BMI. CMA presented Williamson with a crystal angel for her use of Country Music and artists in her CBS television series. Left to right: CeCe Winans, Co-Executive Producer Jon Anderson, Joyce Rice, BMI Director, Writer/Publisher Relations, Nashville, Brenda Lee, Kenny Rogers, Williamson, CMA Executive Director Ed Benson.

Bottom: Benson visits with Billy Ray Cyrus and helps deliver the CMA's contribution to his Second Harvest Food Drive.