

cma **C I S e u p**

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2007



**CMA AWARDS
PREVIEW**
Brad Paisley and
George Strait
Top Nominations
with Five Each

**CMA BROADCAST
AWARDS
Finalists
Announced**

**COUNTRY MUSIC
HALL OF FAME**
to Welcome
Ralph Emery,
Vince Gill
and Mel Tillis

**NEW CMA
MEMBER
BENEFIT**
Affordable
Health Insurance
Available Now

JACK INGRAM
Texas Maverick
Widens His
Horizons

RCA STUDIO B
Inside
"The Home
of 1,000 Hits"

**JOHN PRINE and
MAC WISEMAN**
Celebrating
Classic
American Songs

**CMA AWARDS
VOTING ONLINE**
OCT. 9
FINAL BALLOT E-MAILED
OCT. 23
ONLINE VOTING CLOSES

photo David McClister

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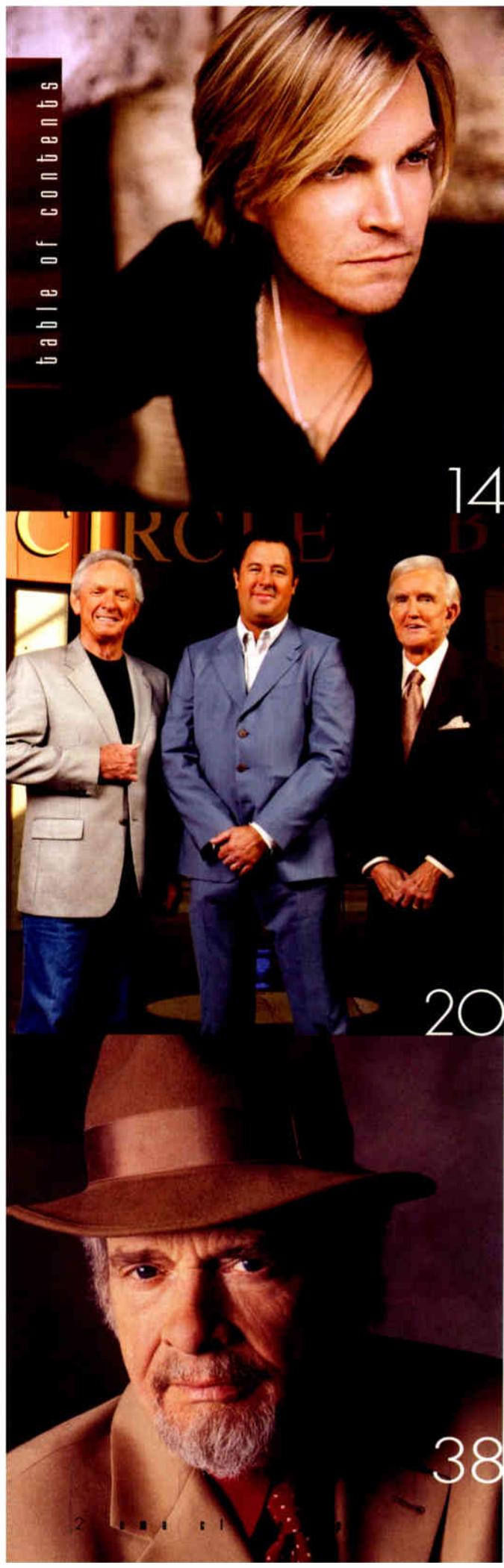
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'THE 41st ANNUAL CMA AWARDS,' COUNTRY MUSIC'S BIGGEST NIGHT™ — WEDNESDAY, NOV. 7, LIVE ON ABC-TV (8-11PM/ET)

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photo John Russell

photo Pamela Springsteen



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Founded by CMA in 1961, the Country Music Hall of Fame holds a unique place in the hearts of all who sing, play, write and love Country Music. Other awards measure achievement, popularity, album sales and so on. Many of these carry great prestige, especially those presented annually at the CMA Awards ceremony.



LETTERS FROM THE COO

Yet membership in the Hall of Fame is unlike any other hallmark. First of all, it is timeless, based on excellence sustained throughout the course of a career instead of a single year. Also, rather than being documented solely with a statue or other item that might be kept in the recipient's home or office, this honor is displayed permanently and publicly, as a bronze plaque featuring facial likenesses and thumbnail biographies, mounted in the Rotunda of the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, on display for future generations to honor and enjoy.

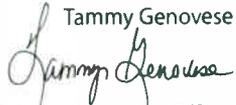
There is no place like this room in the music world. Awash in natural light from windows 70 feet above, its handsome columns and polished marble floor suggest an ancient and enduring aesthetic. This ambience encourages visitors to take their time, speaking softly or reflecting in silence as they view the images and stories immortalized with each inscription, and get a feel for the honorees who have defined our industry and made it great.

The fact that members are voted into the Hall of Fame by CMA's Hall of Fame Panel of Electors adds another level of distinction. Chosen by the CMA Board of Directors, this anonymous group includes more than 300 of the most distinguished individuals in Country Music, whose vote on the Hall of Fame's list of nominees determines which three candidates, in three categories, will be inducted each year.

It's easy to understand, then, why one of the greatest delights of my work at CMA occurs when it's time for me to notify the winners of their welcome into this pantheon of legends and then to share the news with the world at the press conference that follows.

This year the event took place at the Ford Theater, a wonderfully intimate venue within the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. Our three inductees — Ralph Emery, Vince Gill and Mel Tillis — mingled backstage before the ceremony began, savoring the moment with friends and family.

Stories were swapped, including one I found especially delightful, as Ralph described how I "tricked" him into coming to CMA, ostensibly on business but actually so that I could surprise him with news of his election to the Hall. Memories were shared. And, shortly, history would be made, for those who visit the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum to appreciate for years to come.

Tammy Genovese

CMA Chief Operating Officer

CMA Close Up welcomes your letters and feedback.
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or e-mail at closeup@CMAworld.com

photo: Kristin Barbone

BRAD PAISLEY and GEORGE STRAIT LEAD FINALISTS with FIVE NOMINATIONS EACH for

"THE 41st ANNUAL CMA AWARDS" COUNTRY MUSIC'S BIGGEST NIGHT™

KENNY CHESNEY, ALISON KRAUSS AND MARTINA McBRIDE RECEIVE FOUR NOMINATIONS
JOHN RICH, CARRIE UNDERWOOD AND KEITH URBAN SCORE THREE NOMINATIONS



Taylor Swift announces some of the CMA Awards nominations.



Montgomery Gentry announces some of the final CMA Awards nominees.



CMA Awards Nominees Press Conference in New York City on ABC News' "Good Morning America." (l-r) "Good Morning America" News Anchor Diane Sawyer, Jennifer Nettles and Kristin Bush of Sugarland, Sara Evans and "Good Morning America" Weather Anchor Sam Champion.



CMA COO Tammy Genovese welcomes the audience at the CMA Awards Nominees Press Conference in Nashville.

The final list of nominees for "The 41st Annual CMA Awards" covers the broadest spectrum of the format from traditionalists, Country Music hit makers and crossover innovators, with several fresh faces added to the mix.

"Country Music is thriving on the talent and creativity of an outstanding group of artists and they are well represented with our nominees," said CMA COO Tammy Genovese. "These talented performers, musicians, songwriters, producers and directors demonstrate the artistic depth and creativity of our format. It is an exciting time for Country Music and the CMA Awards will definitely reflect that in November."

"Since our inaugural broadcast of the Awards last year with the historic 40th anniversary, we've enjoyed a special and growing relationship with the Country Music Association as true partners to bring the very best of the country's music to ABC," said Vicki Dummer, Senior VP, Alternative Series, Specials and Late-Night, ABC Entertainment. "We're proud and honored to be the network that is home to the CMA Awards and we congratulate all of the outstanding nominees for their achievements."

"The 41st Annual CMA Awards" will be broadcast live from the Sommet Center in Nashville, Wednesday, Nov. 7 (8 - 11 PM/ET) on the ABC Television Network.

For the second year, the announcement of the final nominees in five of the 12 CMA Awards categories was made on ABC News' "Good Morning America." Sara Evans and Sugarland delivered the news from the "Good Morning America" studios in the heart of New York City's Times Square.

The remaining categories were announced by Montgomery Gentry and Taylor Swift on a special edition of CMT's "CMT Insider" live from the CMA Awards Nominees Press Conference at the Sommet Center in Nashville.

"Having both 'Good Morning America' and 'CMT Insider' broadcast our CMA Awards final nominees live brings a whole new level of excitement to these highly-anticipated announcements and allows fans across the country to experience the same thrill our artists and the industry feel as the names are read," Genovese said.

At the conclusion of the announcements, Brad Paisley and Country Music Hall of Fame member George Strait led the list of nominees with five nominations each. Paisley was nominated for Entertainer, Male Vocalist, Album for *5th Gear* (produced by Frank Rogers and Chris DuBois), Single for "Ticks," and Music Video of the Year for "Online," which was directed by actor-turned-video director Jason Alexander.

Strait received nominations for Entertainer, Male Vocalist, Album for *It Just Comes Natural* (co-produced by Tony Brown), Musical Event with Jimmy Buffett and Alan Jackson on the live version of "Hey Good Lookin'" and Single of the Year for "Wrapped." Strait could win two additional trophies as producer for Single and Album of the Year. Other nominees benefiting from Strait's windfall are songwriters Bill Anderson, Buddy Cannon and Jamey Johnson, who were nominated for Song of the Year for "Give It Away." Strait now has 70 career CMA Awards nominations, trailing only Jackson, who has 75 with this year's nomination for Musical Event of the Year.

Reigning CMA Entertainer of the Year Kenny Chesney received four nominations this year for Entertainer, Male Vocalist, Musical Event with Tracy Lawrence and Tim McGraw on Lawrence's "Find Out Who Your Friends Are," and Music Video of the Year for "You Save Me" directed by Shaun Silva.

Alison Krauss received four nominations including Female Vocalist, Vocal Group of the Year for Alison Krauss and Union Station Featuring Jerry Douglas, and two for Musical Event of the Year with John Waite (his first CMA Awards nomination) on "Missing You" and with Vince Gill on "The Reason Why." Douglas was also nominated for Musician of the Year. Krauss last won the Female Vocalist of the Year category in 1995. She has been nominated in the category five times including each year from 2002-2005.

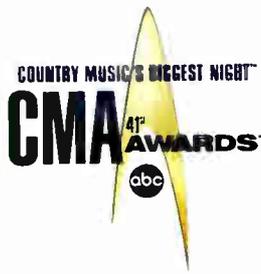
Martina McBride also had four nominations, including Female Vocalist, Single, Song and Music Video of the Year for "Anyway," which she co-wrote with Brad Warren and Brett Warren. The music video was directed by Robert Deaton and George J. Flanigen IV. McBride could pick up an additional trophy as producer for Single of the Year for the inspiring ballad.

John Rich scored three nominations, including Vocal Duo and Single of the Year for "Lost In This Moment" with partner Big Kenny Alphin as Big & Rich (which they also produced), and as a songwriter with Keith Anderson and Rodney Clawson for "Lost In This Moment."

After winning CMA Female Vocalist of the Year and the Horizon Award in 2006, Carrie Underwood is back in 2007 with three nominations for Female Vocalist, Single for "Before He Cheats" and Music Video of the Year for the same song directed by Roman White. Songwriters for "Before He Cheats," Josh Kear and Chris Tompkins, were nominated for Song of the Year.

41st ANNUAL CMA AWARDS

CMA AWARDS WILL BROADCAST LIVE FROM THE SOMMET CENTER IN NASHVILLE WEDNESDAY, NOV. 7, 8/7C, ON THE ABC TELEVISION NETWORK



Clarence Spalding, CMA Board President; Julie Talbott, Executive VP, Affiliate Marketing, Premiere Radio Networks; Robert Deaton, CMA Awards Producer; Eddie Montgomery of Montgomery Gentry; Taylor Swift; Troy Gentry of Montgomery Gentry; Tammy Genovese, CMA COO; and Walter Miller, CMA Awards Executive Producer.

Reigning CMA Male Vocalist of the Year Keith Urban had three nominations for Entertainer, Male Vocalist and Album of the Year for *Love, Pain & the whole crazy thing*, which he co-produced with Dann Huff, who is a Musician of the Year nominee. Songwriters Dave Berg, Deanna Bryant and Sarah Buxton received a nomination for Song of the Year for Urban's "Stupid Boy." Urban has won the Male Vocalist Award every year he has been nominated (2004-2006). He won Entertainer of the Year in 2005.

Rounding out the nominees for Entertainer of the Year is Rascal Flatts. The group was first nominated in the category in 2006. The category has only been won by two groups in CMA Awards history: Alabama (1982, 1983, 1984) and Dixie Chicks (2000). Rascal Flatts has swept the Vocal Group of the Year category the past four years and is nominated in that category again in 2007.

Completing the list of nominees in the Vocal Group of the Year category are Dixie Chicks, Emerson Drive and Little Big Town. Dixie Chicks have won the category four times (1998, 1999, 2000 and 2002) and were last nominated in 2003. This marks Emerson Drive's first CMA Awards nomination. They also received a nomination for Music Video of the Year for "Moments," directed by Steven Goldmann. Little Big Town was nominated for the first time in the Vocal Group category in 2006. They also received their second Horizon Award nomination this year.

Expectation surrounds the Female Vocalist of the Year category. Rounding out the list with McBride, Krauss and Underwood are Miranda Lambert and Reba McEntire. This marks Lambert's first nomination in this category. She received her first CMA Awards nomination in 2005 for the Horizon Award and in 2006 was nominated for Horizon and Music Video of the Year.

McBride and McEntire are tied with the most wins in the Female Vocalist category in history — surpassing Loretta Lynn's and Tammy Wynette's previous records. McBride won in 1999, 2002, 2003 and 2004. McEntire won in 1984, 1985, 1986 and 1987. McEntire was last nominated in the category in 2004. With her two nominations, McEntire solidifies her position as the female artist with the most nominations (45) in the 41-year history of the CMA Awards. She is also nominated in the Musical Event of the Year category with Kelly Clarkson for "Because of You," marking the "American Idol" winner's first CMA Awards nomination.

This is the first year that Josh Turner's name is on the list of nominees for Male Vocalist of the Year. Turner was nominated for the Horizon Award in 2004 and 2006.

An artist may be nominated only twice for the Horizon Award and this year several new hopefuls join two-time nominee Little Big Town on the list, including Jason Aldean, Rodney Atkins, Kellie Pickler and Taylor Swift.

Dierks Bentley won his first CMA Award in 2005 with the Horizon trophy and in 2007 he received his first nomination for Album of the Year for *Long Trip Alone*, produced by Brett Beavers. A CMA Awards voter favorite, Vince Gill, is also nominated for Album of the Year for *These Days*. Gill could pick up an additional trophy as producer with John Hobbs and Justin Niebank.

Sugarland makes its debut in the Vocal Duo of the Year category this year with fellow nominees Big & Rich, Brooks & Dunn, Montgomery Gentry and The Wreckers.

The 2006 CMA Awards, held in Nashville during November Sweeps (Nov. 6), ranked in the Top 5 with the Academy Awards, the Golden Globes, Grammy Awards and Emmy's during the 2006-2007 season for awards shows among total viewers. With "The 40th Annual CMA Awards," ABC won Monday evening in both total viewers (16.0 million) and adults 18-49 (5.4/13). According to Nielsen, research estimates that more than 30 million viewers watched all or part of the ceremony.

The CMA Awards nominees and winners are determined by the 6,000 industry professional members of CMA, founded in 1958 as the first trade organization formed to promote an individual genre of music. The first "CMA Awards Banquet and Show" was held in 1967. The following year, the CMA Awards were broadcast on NBC Television for the first time, making it the longest running, annual music awards program on network television. The show aired on NBC through 1971 and on the CBS Television Network from 1972 through 2005.

Winners of "The 41st Annual CMA Awards" will be determined in a third/final round of voting by eligible voting members of the Country Music Association. CMA Awards balloting is officiated by the international accounting firm of Deloitte & Touche LLP.

In addition to live coverage of the CMA Awards nominees press conference, the special edition of CMT's "CMT Insider" re-aired several times and footage from the nomination special is available on CMT's broadband channel, CMT Loaded at CMT.com.

Additionally, a video news release, including footage of the nominee announcements, exclusive interviews, performance footage from the 2006 CMA Awards, music video clips and more, was serviced.



Taylor Swift jumps for joy as her CMA Horizon Award nomination is announced.

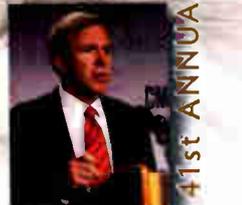


Montgomery Gentry is interviewed by ABC-TV affiliate WWRN news anchor Brad Schmitt.



Sara Evans with Kristian Bush and Jennifer Nettles of Sugarland announce some of the CMA Awards final nominees.

Mayor Bill Purcell greets the attendees at the CMA Awards Nominees Press Conference in Nashville.



41st ANNUAL CMA AWARDS

STAGE DESIGNER BRUCE RODGERS CAPTURES THE COMPLEX BEAUTIES OF COUNTRY MUSIC

As founder and President of Tribe Inc., Bruce Rodgers has built a reputation throughout the past 10 years as an innovator in stage design. His work has traveled on tours for Mary J. Blige, Fleetwood Mac, Madonna, Ricky Martin and Sting, and been viewed by millions during Prince's halftime show at this year's Super Bowl.

But there's another reason why his assignment to create the stage for this year's CMA Awards is especially inspired.

Long before he came up with the concepts behind the Reba McEntire with Brad Paisley tour of 2005, the "Nashville Star" set, and three Rascal Flatts tours, Rodgers grew up in rural West Texas feeling an especially strong connection to Country Music. In fact, part of his family folklore was that they were related to The Singing Brakeman himself.

"I never really proved that," Rodgers said, "but if you look at pictures of Jimmie Rodgers and my dad, the resemblance is uncanny. And when I sat with him at the kitchen table, listening to Merle Haggard's album of Jimmie Rodgers songs [*Same Train a Different Time*, 1969], I could feel the imagery in this music very strongly."

Sensing a visual essence within Country songs helped lead Rodgers to focus on stage design as a major in architecture at Texas Tech and then head to Hollywood to launch his career. So getting the call from CMA to come up with a new look for the Awards was like moving forward while also revisiting some of the reasons behind his climb toward the peak of this profession.

The work began in L.A., where Rodgers met with Awards Executive Producer Walter Miller and Producer Robert Deaton. "It was their need to create a look that is in keeping with modern Country Music," Rodgers said. "They wanted to be respectful of the past but totally forward-thinking too. They wanted it to be elegant but interactive, with an excellent connection between the performers and the audience."

It was a tall order, but Rodgers dove quickly into the first stages of the job — in his words, "studying and thinking and dreaming about how I could attack this ancient/modern element in Country Music. How could I take historic aspects of architecture and structure and put them together with modern technology and construction, so that you get the strength as well as the love stories, the masculine and the feminine?"

These ruminations led to a vision that incorporates all of these priorities while radiating sheer excitement as well. The modern side of the equation is evident in its three giant screens and the dynamic lighting built into translucent components. It deals with the challenge

of accommodating more than 20 acts in quick sequence by placing identical performance spaces on the left and right wings of the stage.

These elements would be critical for any large-scale television event involving live music, regardless of genre. It's in the details that the qualities of Country emerge.

First, there's the "header," the long construction that rises and slopes high above the stage ensemble. Its effect is to unify Rodgers' design, but its appearance stirs subliminal impressions of rural America. "It derives from 100-year-old train bridges," he explained, "by topping the set with a gritty, strong feeling of an aged, manmade structure. And it mirrors the floor of the stage, which is made from black wood with silvery graining. It's a weathered look, like you'd find in an old mansion, and it's beautiful on camera."

These historical associations sandwich a sleeker and in some ways more feminine reflection of Country, beginning with the shining, undulant tubes that swoop upward from the floor on either side of the artist entrance at the center of the stage. Graceful, even sensual, and illuminated from within by multicolored LEDs, these sculptures stem as well from Rodgers' childhood memory — in this case, of tall grasses growing and blowing in the wild.

From here, it's a short walk to where the "thrust," a narrow extension of the stage, juts into the audience, symbolizing the ties that bring artists and audiences together in Country, though it has an agricultural symbolism as well, inspired by the shape of sorghum growing out from its pod.

The populism of Country Music is suggested again by the steps that rise from the floor along the gently curving front of the stage, which winners will climb after leaving their seats to accept their Awards. Here, too, Rodgers drew from his upbringing: "In the Southern Baptist church I attended, there were always a few short steps leading up to where the preacher stood. Access was really easy; it was an inviting image. That's what I had in mind with these steps and with the entire middle section of the stage, between the floor and the roof piece."

A Nashville firm, Green Enterprises, began constructing Rodgers' stage in August and planning to finish shortly before Oct. 27, when installation will begin at the Sommet Center. Rodgers' masterpiece will remain there, under wraps, until the ABC Television Network unveils it to the world on Nov. 7.

On the Web: tribedesign.net

FIRST ROUND OF PERFORMERS ANNOUNCED

The star-packed lineup for CMA Awards is beginning to take shape with the announcement in September that Kenny Chesney, Martina McBride, Rascal Flatts, George Strait and Keith Urban will perform.

"The CMA Awards is the industry's biggest single opportunity to expand the format and reach a broader audience with our music," said CMA COO Tammy Genovese. "And we have a strong slate of nominees and an incredible pool of music to draw from. We are dedicated to delivering the best-of-the-best and this is a great start."

REACH VOTING MEMBERS WITH CMA AWARDS MAILING AND E-MAIL SERVICE

CMA provides an opportunity for CMA Awards finalists to educate CMA voting members about them and their nominated products. This service is available to all nominees, but those nominees who are CMA members may take advantage of discounted rates. In addition to the regular mailing service, CMA offers the CMA Awards e-mail service, operated by Hi-Fi Fusion, through which e-mails are sent to voting members. Under NO circumstances will the authorized mailing house, Southern Post, or Hi-Fi Fusion release the CMA Awards mailing or e-mail list to anyone. Fees vary, based on level of CMA membership. Visit CMAworld.com/Events for options.

Questions? Contact Brandi Simms at (615) 664-1607 or Bsimm@CMAworld.com.

CMA AWARDS FINAL NOMINEES

ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR

KENNY CHESNEY
BRAD PAISLEY
RASCAL FLATTS
GEORGE STRAIT
KEITH URBAN

FEMALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR

ALISON KRAUSS
MIRANDA LAMBERT
MARTINA McBRIDE
REBA McENTIRE
CARRIE UNDERWOOD

MALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR

KENNY CHESNEY
BRAD PAISLEY
GEORGE STRAIT
JOSH TURNER
KEITH URBAN

VOCAL GROUP OF THE YEAR

ALISON KRAUSS and UNION STATION
featuring JERRY DOUGLAS
DIXIE CHICKS
EMERSON DRIVE
LITTLE BIG TOWN
RASCAL FLATTS

VOCAL DUO OF THE YEAR

BIG & RICH
BROOKS & DUNN
MONTGOMERY GENTRY
SUGARLAND
THE WRECKERS

SINGLE OF THE YEAR

(Award goes to artist and producer)

"Anyway"

MARTINA McBRIDE
Produced by Martina McBride
RCA Records

"Before He Cheats"

CARRIE UNDERWOOD
Produced by Mark Bright
19 Recordings Limited/Arista Records

"Lost In This Moment"

BIG & RICH
Produced by Big Kenny / John Rich
Warner Bros. Nashville

"Ticks"

BRAD PAISLEY
Produced by Frank Rogers / Chris DuBois
Arista Nashville

"Wrapped"

GEORGE STRAIT
Produced by Tony Brown / George Strait
MCA Nashville

HORIZON

JASON ALDEAN
RODNEY ATKINS
LITTLE BIG TOWN
KELLIE PICKLER
TAYLOR SWIFT

ALBUM OF THE YEAR

(Award goes to Artist and Producer)

5th Gear

BRAD PAISLEY
Produced by Frank Rogers / Chris DuBois
Arista Nashville

It Just Comes Natural

GEORGE STRAIT
Produced by Tony Brown / George Strait
MCA Nashville

Long Trip Alone

DIERKS BENTLEY
Produced by Brett Beavers
Capitol Records Nashville

Love, Pain & the whole crazy thing

KEITH URBAN
Produced by Dann Huff / Keith Urban
Capitol Records Nashville

These Days

VINCE GILL
Produced by Vince Gill / John Hobbs / Justin Niebank
MCA Nashville

SONG OF THE YEAR

(Award goes to songwriter and primary publisher)

"Anyway"

MARTINA McBRIDE / BRAD WARREN /
BRETT WARREN
Deleemava Music / Bucky and Clyde Music

"Before He Cheats"

JOSH KEAR / CHRIS TOMPKINS
That Little House Music / Mighty Under Dog
Music / Sony/ATV Cross Keys

"Give It Away"

BILL ANDERSON / BUDDY CANNON /
JAMEY JOHNSON
Sony/ATV Tree / Mr. Bubba Music / Slow Run
Music / EMI Blackwood

"Lost In This Moment"

JOHN RICH / KEITH ANDERSON /
RODNEY CLAWSON
Rich Texan Music / Warner-Tamerlane / Writer's
Extreme / EMI April Music / Romeo Cowboy

"Stupid Boy"

DAVE BERG / DEANNA BRYANT /
SARAH BUXTON
Song Planet / That Little House Music / Cal IV
Songs / BergBrain Music

MUSICAL EVENT OF THE YEAR

(Award to each artist)

REBA McENTIRE with KELLY CLARKSON
"Because of You"
MCA Nashville

TRACY LAWRENCE featuring TIM McGRAW
and KENNY CHESNEY

"Find Out Who Your Friends Are"

Rocky Comfort Records/CO5

JIMMY BUFFETT with GEORGE STRAIT and
ALAN JACKSON

"Hey Good Lookin'"

MCA Nashville

ALISON KRAUSS and JOHN WAITE

"Missing You"

Rounder Records

VINCE GILL with Guest Vocalist

ALISON KRAUSS

"The Reason Why"

MCA Nashville

MUSIC VIDEO OF THE YEAR

(Award goes to artist and director)

"Anyway"

MARTINA McBRIDE
Directed by Robert Deaton and George J.
Flanigen IV

"Before He Cheats"

CARRIE UNDERWOOD
Directed by Roman White

"Moments"

EMERSON DRIVE
Directed by Steven Goldmann

"Online"

BRAD PAISLEY
Directed by Jason Alexander

"You Save Me"

KENNY CHESNEY
Directed by Shaun Silva

MUSICIAN OF THE YEAR

EDDIE BAYERS – Drums
JERRY DOUGLAS – Dobro
DANN HUFF – Guitar
MAC McANALLY – Guitar
RANDY SCRUGGS – Guitar

REACTIONS FROM SOME OF THE CMA AWARDS NOMINEES

"It cannot get any better than this. We have worked extremely hard this past year. Thank you, CMA members, for recognizing that hard work. It means more to us than you know."

— **BIG KENNY of BIG & RICH**
Vocal Duo and Single of the Year

"Kenny and I were blown away when 'Lost in This Moment' reached No. 1 on the Country radio charts for multiple weeks, but now hearing we are nominated for Song and Single of the Year, in addition to Vocal Duo, we are truly 'Lost in This Moment.' Thank you."

— **JOHN RICH of BIG & RICH**
Vocal Duo, Single and Song of the Year

"It's not just another year for us. Touring with Alan and Chesney has been some of the biggest business we've ever done, and 'Proud of the House We Built' is introducing maybe the best album we've ever made. It's great to still have a job and good to know people still notice."

— **KIX BROOKS of BROOKS & DUNN**
Vocal Duo of the Year

"Kix and I are happy just to be there. Win or lose, we're glad to have jobs."

— **RONNIE DUNN of BROOKS & DUNN**
Vocal Duo of the Year

"I was already having a great day when I got the phone call from my manager that 'Stupid Boy' was nominated. Dave [Berg], Deanna [Bryant, co-writers] and I were excited to have Keith record the song, and now this — it's over the top. I couldn't be happier."

— **SARAH BUXTON**
Song of the Year

"It's kinda crazy, what's happening. But it's really about the fans. I think you make music that hits them where and how they live, you get out there and you give them a reason to come, to have fun, to let it all go when they're at your show ... they're gonna respond. There's been plenty of times I can't believe how far I've taken it onstage — and when I look back, it's because of what they're giving us when we're up there."

— **KENNY CHESNEY**
Entertainer, Male Vocalist, Musical Event and Music Video of the Year

"We got the wake-up call of the year this morning. We were on our bus, headed to our gig in Ohio, when we got a call telling us about our CMA nominations. What a great way to wake up."

— **BRAD MAPES of EMERSON DRIVE**
Vocal Group and Music Video of the Year

"This comes at the heels of the news about my induction into the Country Music Hall of Fame and I couldn't be prouder about this. It's been a pretty good while since I've been nominated for anything so this is extra special."

— **VINCE GILL**
Album and Musical Event of the Year

"All I have to say is I'm in a category with REBA. I'm sure all the other nominees will agree that it is an honor to be nominated with a true music icon."

— **MIRANDA LAMBERT**
Female Vocalist of the Year

"I am humbled by the overwhelming support of Country radio and so many of my friends and colleagues in the music industry, a business that I dearly love. ... I assembled a very strong team around me and I feel very proud of our accomplishment."

— **TRACY LAWRENCE**
Musical Event of the Year

"Wow! The CMAs are such a huge part of Country Music. It's such an honor to be nominated for these Awards and to be in categories with our friends and artists we've been big fans of for years."

— **KIMBERLY ROADS of LITTLE BIG TOWN**
Horizon and Vocal Group of the Year

"You know, as much competition as there is in Nashville right now, not only in the Duo category but airplay and everything, it's a wonderful feeling to be nominated year after year."

— **TROY GENTRY of MONTGOMERY GENTRY**
Vocal Duo of the Year

"My old man always told me one thing. He said, 'Boy, always remember, if people are talking about you, you're still alive.' So long as we're nominated, we know we're still in the game."

— **EDDIE MONTGOMERY of MONTGOMERY GENTRY**
Vocal Duo of the Year

"So here I am on yet another Awards announcement day, wondering if it's gonna be a good day or a bad day. I wake up on the bus and look at my phone, which hasn't rung yet and it's almost 10 o'clock. That's not good. So I check messages anyway and I hear 'you have no new messages.' I then check my e-mail on my new iPhone. I have two new messages: One is junk mail with the subject 'Eliminate E.D. Now.' The other is a spam which makes absolutely no sense: 'Quickness Goat Radishes Envelope.' Not a good sign."

"So I go online and look at the headline: 'Brad Paisley and George Strait lead CMA Nominations.' Good day. Definitely."

"I'm humbled by this fantastic news. Thanks again to all who voted so far, and my fans, for making this such a good day. Can't wait for November."

— **BRAD PAISLEY**
Entertainer, Male Vocalist, Single, Album and Music Video of the Year

"This is what dreams are made of."

— **KELLIE PICKLER**
Horizon

"I'm going to have such an awesome week. I'm going to be so obnoxiously excited. I apologize to everyone who were watching the announcements, when I started screaming and jumping up and down. But I was not expecting it. It's been a really, really good day."

— **TAYLOR SWIFT**
Horizon

"Man, I'm just floored. I'm speechless. What a way to start the day. I'm in mighty fine company in the Male Vocalist category, and I'm so thankful to everyone who voted for me."

— **JOSH TURNER**
Male Vocalist of the Year

"I really only intended for *Love, Pain & the whole crazy thing* to be the title of an album, not a premonition of the year ahead. But with the extraordinary love of my wife and the support of the industry, I've been able to get back on the road to do what I love to do most, and to watch these songs connect in a way that I've never seen before. But for this particular year to culminate with these nominations has truly blown me away. I'm so looking forward to actually being at the show this year."

— **KEITH URBAN**
Entertainer, Male Vocalist and Album of the Year

"I've had some great opportunities in my musical career. I have been able to not only grow as an artist in the pop/rock format, but I've also been able to grow in the Country genre. To be nominated for CMA Vocal Duo of the Year is such an honor. It's exciting to know CMA members recognize Jessica's and my contributions to Country Music."

— **MICHELLE BRANCH of THE WRECKERS**
Vocal Duo of the Year

"It is a dream come true to be acknowledged by CMA and the Country Music industry. It was exciting to be nominated for Vocal Duo of the Year in 2006, and to be nominated again in 2007 amongst such talented artists and musicians in this category is a thrill. Thanks to everyone for this honor."

— **JESSICA HARP of THE WRECKERS**
Vocal Duo of the Year

MONTGOMERY GENTRY PARTICIPATES IN ABC SATELLITE TOUR

After joining Taylor Swift to announce some of the CMA Awards finalists on a special edition of "CMT Insider" on CMT live from the CMA Awards Nominees Press Conference at Nashville's Sommet Center on Aug. 30, CMA Vocal Duo of the Year nominee Montgomery Gentry (Eddie Montgomery and Troy Gentry) regrouped at the StagePost studios to participate in the ABC Satellite tour to help build awareness of nominations and the Awards. They were interviewed live by on-air personalities from ABC-TV affiliates in markets that included Atlanta, Austin, Baltimore, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Houston, Indianapolis, Las Vegas and Sacramento.



Montgomery Gentry participates in the ABC-TV Satellite tour

FINAL CMA AWARDS BALLOT ONLINE VOTING

Oct. 9 – Eligible CMA voting members receive e-mail notice for Final CMA Awards ballot. CMA Awards voting is entirely online.

Oct. 23 – Final CMA Awards ballot online voting site closes at 5 PM CT.

Again this year, CMA will stream 30-second clips in the Single, Song and Music Video of the Year categories on the online voting site.

MARY KAY DEBUTS AS CMA AWARDS SPONSOR

Following its involvement as a sponsor of this year's CMA Music Festival, Mary Kay joins as well with the CMA Awards as Official Beauty Sponsor of the event. The match, pairing the respected company with "Country Music's Biggest Night™," is as natural as the beauty enhanced by Mary Kay's skin care and color cosmetics products.

"We are thrilled to play the part of beauty ambassador for the CMA Awards," said Rhonda Shasteen, Mary Kay Senior VP, Global Brand Strategy. "Just as the CMA Awards celebrates the best of Country Music, Mary Kay helps women recognize and celebrate their inner beauty."

"Our partnership with Mary Kay is a great opportunity to extend the CMA Awards brand nationwide," added Tammy Genovese, CMA COO. "We are really looking forward to developing creative and engaging ways to reach consumers of Mary Kay who also love Country Music."

The company's participation in the CMA Awards began publicly on July 13, when it launched "The Beauty of Country," a sweepstakes dedicated to presenting its winner with round-trip transportation, accommodations in Nashville and two tickets to the Awards — as well as a pre-Awards makeover by Dallas-based professional makeup artist Susie Jasper and an official backstage makeup artist toolkit, complete with an assortment of Mary Kay products.

News about "The Beauty of Country" was spread by the more than 700,000 independent beauty consultants who represent Mary Kay products in the United States, through their Web sites, direct e-mail to customers and on select ABC programming in September. Participants were directed to take part by visiting beautyofcountry.com up to the Sept. 30 closing date.

In addition to the sweepstakes winner makeover, Jasper will be backstage during the ABC live broadcast, making sure that artists appearing at the CMA Awards will be ready for their close-ups.

"Being involved with the fashion industry, Susie is very familiar with all the latest trends in makeup," Shasteen said. "She's been using Mary Kay products for years, so she knows the products and techniques for creating the variety of appearances that Country artists embrace, from very natural all the way to glamorous."

Further joint projects are being finalized, all of them based on the synchronicities that exist between CMA and Mary Kay. "Country Music, without a doubt, has the most passionate fan base of all music genres," Shasteen said. "And Mary Kay has the most passionate sales force and consumers of any company in our field. That makes this a partnership that promises to be extremely successful for both of us."

CHEVROLET'S RELATIONSHIP WITH COUNTRY MUSIC AND CMA CELEBRATED IN ANNUAL CALENDAR

Music has long been an integral part of Chevrolet. Chevy celebrates its relationship with Country Music again this year with the fourth consecutive CMA calendar photo shoot by photographer Ron Strong, featuring artists and Chevy vehicles at various Middle Tennessee locations.

As the annual "Year in Country Music" calendar shows, one can learn something about someone by the car they drive.

Sarah Buxton leans out the window of a bright yellow Cobalt in Nashville. Buxton owns two — a '65 Impala and a '72 Chevelle — that she takes antique shopping and loads up their trunks and back seats.

Sara Evans poses with the all new Malibu in Downtown Franklin. Evans owns a Tahoe and a 1970 Chevy pickup named Harold, that lives on her farm in Oregon.



Chevy Calendar pages featuring Sara Evans and Danielle Peck.

Danielle Peck, a NASCAR fan, stands alongside Jimmie Johnson's No. 48 Impala SS race car, at the Nashville Super Speedway.

Phil Vassar, sporting a Chevrolet T-shirt, stands next to a Corvette Z06 at the historic Texaco gas station in Cowan. His new song, "My Chevrolet," looks back at his teens and the fun he had with his friends, which included riding around with them in his Malibu.

Other artists featured in the calendar include Rodney Atkins, Luke Bryan, Bucky Covington, Emerson Drive, Jennifer Hanson, Jack Ingram, Jamie O'Neal and Craig Morgan with Chevy vehicles: Avalanche, Cobalt, Colorado, Corvette, HHR, Impala, Malibu, Silverado, Suburban and Tahoe.

The calendar will be distributed at Chevy events and inserted in magazines including *CMA Close Up*, *Country Weekly*, *NASCAR Illustrated*, *People* and *Progressive Farmer*.

MONTGOMERY GENTRY AND TAYLOR SWIFT MAKE CMA BROADCAST AWARDS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Final nominees for the nation's top Country radio stations and broadcast personalities were announced on Aug. 30 when Montgomery Gentry and Taylor Swift revealed the 2007 CMA Broadcast Personality and Radio Station of the Year finalists during the CMA Awards Nominees News Conference at the Sommet Center in Nashville. The announcements were carried live to Country radio stations by CMA's official radio partner Premiere Radio Networks.

The winners will be notified in October and will be acknowledged at "The 41st Annual CMA Awards."

Many of the radio stations and personalities were first-time finalists for a CMA Broadcast Award. Nineteen percent of the stations and 45 percent of the radio personalities have never been on the final ballot.

"It is very exciting to see so many new faces and stations on the list of finalists," said CMA COO Tammy Genovese. "The talent, time and creativity the stations and broadcast teams put into their entries is really amazing. It is obvious they take this competition very seriously and they set the bar higher each year for everyone."

Five finalists are selected for Broadcast Personality of the Year and Radio Station of the Year in four categories (Major, Large, Medium and Small Markets) which are established by market size based on

population as ranked by Arbitron. Entries for Broadcast Personality are judged on aircheck, ratings, community involvement and biographical information. Candidates for Radio Station are judged on airchecks, ratings history, community involvement and format leadership.

Three finalists are selected for National Broadcast Personality of the Year. To be eligible these candidates must be syndicated, short-form and hub voice-tracking personalities heard in at least three markets with a minimum of 40 shows per year.

CMA members who are full-time, on-air personalities and CMA member radio stations in the United States and Canada were eligible to enter. The entries are judged by a panel of distinguished broadcast professionals, representing all market sizes and regions.

An aggregate score of the first round of judging and the second round, which is done by a different panel of judges, determines the winners. The international accounting firm of Deloitte & Touche LLP tabulates scoring by the judges.

CMA Broadcast Awards winners are not eligible to enter in consecutive years; therefore, those who received trophies in 2006 were not eligible in 2007.

BROADCAST PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR NATIONAL

"BIG D and BUBBA SHOW" (Derrick Haskins and Sean Powell) Premiere Radio Networks
"FOXWORTHY COUNTDOWN"
(Jeff Foxworthy) Premiere Radio Networks
"THE LIA SHOW" (Lia Knight) Jones Radio Networks

MAJOR MARKET

CHRIS CARR – KEEY, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minn.
MICHAEL J – WPOC, Baltimore, Md.
RANDY and DAVE (Randy Price and Dave McKay) – WYQK, Tampa/St. Petersburg-Clearwater, Fla.
"THE DOCTOR DON SHOW with RACHAEL and GRUNWALD" (Don Carpenter, Rachael Hunter and Steve Grunwald)
– WYCD, Detroit, Mich.
"TIM & WILLY in the MORNING" (Tim Hattrick and Willy D. Loon) – KNIX, Phoenix, Ariz.

LARGE MARKET

BILL WHYTE and AMANDA ORLANDO
– WUBE, Cincinnati, Ohio
"GERRY HOUSE & THE HOUSE FOUNDATION"
(Gerry House, Mike Bohan, Duncan Stewart, Al Voecks and Richard Falklen)
– WSIX, Nashville, Tenn.
"JIM DENNY and FRIENDS" (Jim Denny, Kevin Freeman and Deborah Honeycutt)
– WFMS, Indianapolis, Ind.
"THE MOO CREW MORNING SHOW" (Karen Dalessandro, Scott Dolphin and Tony "Radar" Hess) – WMIL, Milwaukee/Racine, Wis.
VICKI MURPHY – WFMS, Indianapolis, Ind.

MEDIUM MARKET

"DAN TOOKER In the MORNING with JON WATKINS and COLBY ERICSON"
– KFDI, Wichita, Kan.
BUZZ JACKSON – KIIM, Tucson, Ariz.
"ELLIS and BRADLEY in the MORNING"
(Bill Ellis and Beth Bradley)
– WSSL, Greenville/ Spartanburg, S.C.
"SCOTT INNES – CAR TUNES"
– WYNK, Baton Rouge, La.
"WIVK at NIGHT with JACK RYAN"
– WIVK, Knoxville, Tenn.

SMALL MARKET

"GATOR & THE STYCKMAN" (Gator Harrison and Greg "Styckman" Owens)
– WGSQ, Cookeville, Tenn.
JIMMY LEHN and SHELLY MARTINEZ
– WCTY, New London, Conn.
"JJ THOMAS" (Jerry Butler) – KOFM, Enid, Okla.
"MARK and DANIELLE and the MORNING WAKING CREW" (Mark Erickson and Danielle Carrier)
– WOKQ, Portsmouth/Dover/Rochester, N.H.
"THE Q106.5 MORNING SHOW with the BREAKFAST FLAKES, PAUL DuPUIS and JR MITCHELL" – WQCB, Bangor, Maine

RADIO STATION OF THE YEAR

MAJOR MARKET

KEEY – Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minn.
KNIX – Phoenix, Ariz.
KSON – San Diego, Calif.
KYGO – Denver/Boulder, Colo.
WKHX – Atlanta, Ga.
WXTU – Philadelphia, Pa.

LARGE MARKET

KNCI – Sacramento, Calif.
WGH – Norfolk/Virginia Beach/ Newport News, Va.
WMIL – Milwaukee/Racine, Wis.
WSM-FM – Nashville, Tenn.
WTQR – Greensboro/Winston-Salem/ High Point, N.C.

MEDIUM MARKET

KUZZ – Bakersfield, Calif.
KXKT – Omaha/Council Bluffs, Iowa
WBBS – Syracuse, N.Y.
WGNA – Albany/Schenectady/Troy, N.Y.
WYRK – Buffalo/Niagara Falls, N.Y.

SMALL MARKET

KTTS – Springfield, Mo.
WKXC – Augusta, Ga.
WQCB – Bangor, Maine
WUSY – Chattanooga, Tenn.
WXBM – Pensacola, Fla.



Taylor Swift announces the CMA Broadcast Awards finalists.



Montgomery Gentry is interviewed by the media.

CMA BROADCAST AWARDS NOMINEES REACTIONS

"It's a big honor to be nominated and I'm especially happy for Shelly who was in a very serious car accident in May, when a drunk driver hit her. It almost took her life. She was off the air for about two months while recovering and has been broadcasting from her home recently. She's been a real trooper though all of that and definitely deserves this honor. She's the heart of the show."
— JIMMY LEHN / WCTY

"It's an incredible honor. This is the first time we've been nominated for a CMA Award. It's a good reflection of the amount of work everybody on our staff has done to get to this point. We understand our market. We're locally owned and operated, so we've got the freedom to do whatever serves our market best. We have a really big military market – Norfolk is home to the biggest naval base in the world, and we're mindful of that, especially during the times we live in now, as we super-serve the folks in the military."
— MARK MCKAY / WGH

"Who-hoo! You know how everybody's mama tells 'em how good they are? To hear that from CMA is a dream come true. When I was growing up, my buddies wanted MVP trophies and a date with Daisy Duke. I just wanted to be onstage with Reba, getting a CMA Award. But if I have to settle for Kix and Ronnie giving it to me, that's good too."
— GATOR HARRISON / WGSQ

"This is our fifth nomination, so our running joke is that we're the Susan Luccis of the CMA Awards. But we do enjoy the process. We love hearing our names announced and going all the way up to that moment when ... we don't win [laughs]! Truthfully, though, it was very disappointing during those years that we didn't get nominated."
— MARK ERICKSON / WOKQ

"I'm thrilled and honored to be nominated and share it with three out of four members of The House Foundation."
— GERRY HOUSE / WSIX

"We're thrilled. Everybody has worked hard this year and we're proud of our accomplishments. We're especially happy to be nominated because we do things a little differently. We absolutely put the music in the forefront. We play some songs that other stations don't. That makes us different. We have to be different, because there are four really good Country radio stations here in Nashville. That makes it especially satisfying to be nominated."
— KEVIN KING / WSM-FM

"We're extremely excited. We've worked hard to grab hold of our audience. We're all about interactions with our listeners. Even our air personalities and promotions staff are always on the street, doing countless events and being close to the people. That's a big reason why we're one of the top radio stations in the Northeast as well as one of the most listened-to stations in the Country format."
— MARK VIZZA / WXTU

"This feels fantastic. It's a first for me and, in all honesty, something I never thought would happen. I'm tremendously honored not just for myself and rest of my radio crew but, really, for the city of Detroit. A lot of times, people are like, 'Wait a minute. There are Country fans in Detroit?' But it's a huge Country market, so it makes me feel good to have Detroit recognized too."
— DR. DON CARPENTER / WYCD



Kristian Bush and Jennifer Nettles of Sugarland with Sara Evans announce some of the CMA Awards final nominees.



Taylor Swift is interviewed by GAC-TV's "Country Music Across America" Host Storme Warren.



CMA COO Tammy Genovese, Taylor Swift and Montgomery Gentry.

PRE-ORDER YOUR CMA AWARDS PROGRAM BOOK TODAY

Visit CMAawards.com to pre-order the official 2007 CMA Awards program book featuring nominees information, history, members of the Country Music Hall of Fame, CMA Broadcast awards nominees and past winners, international and industry awards recipients, CMA Board of Directors, CMA Platinum and Organizational members, 2006 winners and highlights photos and more. CMA Awards Program books are only \$20 plus shipping and handling and will ship in early November. Each CMA Awards ticket holder will receive a free CMA Awards program book. Additional copies of the program book are available to purchase while supplies last.

GLOBAL MARKETS SHOWCASE MIXES MUSIC WITH ONLINE STRATEGIES

This year's CMA Global Markets Showcase, scheduled for 1:30 - 4PM on Monday, Nov. 5 at Nashville's Cabana Restaurant, continues the pre-Awards tradition of combining topics of concern to the music industry with performances by some of the finest emerging talent in today's Country Music.

The keynote speaker, Ant Cauchi, co-founded the innovative digital marketing agency Outside Line in 2000 as well as Now Play It, a musical tuition service, in 2007. Previously, he worked as New Media Manager at EMI/Parlophone, where he created some of the music industry's earliest digital marketing campaign for The Beatles, Blur, Coldplay, Queen, Radiohead, Supergrass, The Verve and other artists. As Director of Outside Line, he counts EMI, LG, Playstation, Sega and Universal Pictures among his current clients.

Cauchi's address is expected to focus on viral strategies directed toward international markets and explore how the Now Play It service can benefit the music industry commercially as well as on a marketing level.

In addition to Cauchi's presentation, attendees at the Showcase will be treated to live music from an impressive lineup of artists, including Joanna Cotten (Warner Bros.), Jennifer Hanson (Universal Records South), Lady Antebellum (Capitol Records Nashville), David Nail (Mercury Nashville) and Whiskey Falls (Midas Records).

To attend the CMA Global Markets Showcase, RSVP by Oct. 31 to (615) 263-3697 or e-mail CMA International Director Bobbi Boyce at Bboyce@CMAworld.com.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY CLOSES CIRCLE OF GENEROSITY

The circle began during the 2007 CMA Music Festival, when Greased Lightning teamed with Habitat for Humanity to begin construction on a home to be presented to a deserving family.

With construction complete on this home and plans to open it to a single mother and her three children, that circle becomes complete and the dreams of a deserving family come true.

Blue County, Ty Herndon, Jason Meadows, The Roadhammers and Bryan White were among the artists who worked on the early stages of this home at the Festival. Another team of volunteers, including artists Katie Armiger, Jeremy Boz, Ansel Brown and Jo Dee Messina, as well as CMA staff members and others, will add the finishing touches on Sept. 29 and 30.

Dedication ceremonies will take place on Oct. 21 for this house along with 16 others in Providence Park, a Nashville neighborhood that consists entirely of dwellings built by Habitat for Humanity.

On the Web: habitatnashville.org



Members of the Roadhammers, Bryan White and GAC-TV host Suzanne Alexander.

CMA AWARDS RAISES THE BAR ON BROADCAST AUDIO

It would be hard enough to feature upwards of 20 world-class artists in a backyard party or a neighborhood club, one following the next in a tight, three-hour sequence. Add to that the challenge of making sure that their music breaks every precedent for sounding great while being broadcast around the world, whether through old-fashioned analog monophonic television sets or surround-sound entertainment centers.

Impossible? Not at all, say the wizards working behind the scenes at the CMA Awards. That's been their plan from the start. Their strategy boils down to two essentials, the first being equipment. This year's gear sets a new standard for sophistication, from the Digidesign ICON integrated console system that will handle the mix to XM/Effanel Music's L7 mobile production trailer, brought to Nashville from New York.

Reflecting advances in consumer audio, the Awards will be mixed for the second consecutive year in 5.1 surround sound. However, where television networks typically receive 5.1 mixes of concert, sports and other live events and then break them down into the stereo and mono formats required by local cable companies and other vendors, the Awards crew will finesse those mixes themselves so that, in the words of Audio Coordinator Michael Abbott, "we know we've given them the best product."

And that nods toward the second part of the equation: the human talent. This year's team was chosen carefully so that their skills intersect as well as excel. "The interesting thing," Abbott said, "is to watch how they interface with everyone involved. They have a responsibility to the artist, but they also have a responsibility to the broadcast, so we've put a crew together that can juxtapose everyone's concerns and work collaboratively. More than ever, this year's Awards is a real team effort."

This is one reason why respected Nashville professionals, including audio engineer Tom Davis and producer Dann Huff, are members of

this year's Awards team. "Tom is very highly regarded in the television world and among musical artists," said Awards Producer Robert Deaton. "He's very instrumental in bringing a fresh approach to the process. And with Dann, I wanted someone at rehearsals who is trusted in Nashville and knows how to work with artists, engineers and management from an audio perspective. It was absolutely the right thing to do, because the artists trust him — and he's making records right now that are the sound of today's Country Music."

"It's not about being technically proficient," said Huff, whose credits include producing multi-Platinum albums by Rascal Flatts, Carrie Underwood, Keith Urban and many more. "It's about understanding the content. Knowing the music is very important. A lot of specialists in television broadcast are stunningly talented, but they may not know the specific music they're mixing. They may not live in that world. That isn't a problem unless you don't have somebody to bridge that knowledge gap. And since I'm a record producer, that's right in my backyard."

The audio team at the Awards combines television specialists with Nashville music industry insiders, all representing the top of their game and empowered with the finest tools of their trade. For Huff, it's an especially sweet gig, in that it gives him a chance to work with some of most respected colleagues, on a mission to make the sound of the Awards the new standard for music broadcasts.

"In a way, I'd rather sit in the audience with my wife and watch the show," he said, laughing. "After all, this is definitely the Cadillac event of our genre. But the unique thing about it is that even though many of us who are involved are competitors, we lay down the weapons and help each other with this show. I love that, because we all love Country Music."

DISCOUNTS ON AWARDS MERCHANDISE AVAILABLE TO CMA MEMBERS

Why wait for your souvenirs from this year's CMA Awards? A wide range of merchandise is available now for purchase in advance: an array of T-shirts, polo shirts, track jackets and hats, along with a duffie bag, a mug and more.

All items can be viewed and ordered at CMAawards.com, at prices slightly below those that will be charged at the Awards. Not only that: CMA members may type in the code CMAA7 when placing their order and an additional 25 percent discount will apply.

CMAawards.com also features up-to-date news and information on the CMA Awards, including a list of all nominees and partners, updates on performers, a searchable Awards history database, answers to FAQs, games and multi-media, CMA Broadcast Awards finalists and much more.

"The 41st Annual CMA Awards" is a production of the Country Music Association. Walter C. Miller is the Executive Producer, Robert Deaton is the Producer. Paul Miller is the Director. The special will be shot in high definition and broadcast in 720 Progressive (720P), ABC's selected HDTV format, with 5.1 channel surround sound.

Premiere Radio Networks is the official radio packager of the CMA Awards, including a stereo-radio simulcast of the gala event. American Airlines is the official airline of the 2007 CMA Awards. Chevy: The Official Ride of Country Music. Mary Kay is the Official Beauty Sponsor. Additional promotional partners include Crisco, Gibson Guitar, Greased Lightning Cleaning Products and The Yankee Candle Company.

CMA Awards preview by Bob Doerschuk, Athena Patterson, Wendy Pearl Brandt Sanford and Scott Stem. Nashville photos: John Russell. "Good Morning America" New York photos: Heidi Gutman/ABC TV.



TUNING AMERICA IN TO CMA AWARDS

The drama of the CMA Awards, as well as the background stories leading up to the event and the festivities that follow, will once again be offered to radio and television audiences nationwide, thanks to Premiere Radio Networks.

As the largest radio network in the United States, Premiere will continue its partnership with CMA through producing an array of programs centered on the Awards while also giving radio stations throughout the country an opportunity to enhance their coverage by pooling their resources with ABC Television Network affiliates in local markets.

More than 150 Country radio stations are expected to make use of the Premiere Radio Package, which includes a four-hour CMA Awards Preview Special, featuring interviews and music from nominees; a three-hour live broadcast of the Awards ceremony from the Sommet Center; a live, one-hour Wrap-Up Show that includes backstage interviews with winners; excerpts from previous Awards shows, dating back through the '90s; and Red Carpet Features, each with a different perspective on the Awards and its history.

Additionally, broadcast personalities from 50 stations will be on site three days up to the Awards, broadcasting live back to their respective markets. Stations will be divided into two key drive times, morning and afternoon. They'll also be making use of Premiere's television facility in the Hilton Nashville Downtown to send exclusive reports to their home markets via satellite.

"We're always looking for ways to engage radio in CMA Awards activity and to offer more comprehensive coverage of this spectacular event," said Ilycia Deitch, Senior Director of Events, Premiere Radio Networks. "A tremendous synergy happens when radio and TV merge, and with our comprehensive pre-event efforts and on-site, turn-key TV studio, Premiere is working to make that happen."

KEEY/Minneapolis, KFRG/Los Angeles, KMPS/Seattle/Tacoma, KSD/St. Louis, KYGO/Denver, WDSY/Pittsburgh WKHX/Atlanta, WPOC/Baltimore, WQYK/Tampa and WXIU/Philadelphia are among the radio stations that have confirmed their participation with Premiere Radio Networks for the 2007 CMA Awards.

AWARDS TICKETS ON SALE TO CMA MEMBERS AND PUBLIC

For the third consecutive year, the public will have the opportunity to purchase tickets to attend the CMA Awards. Tickets went on sale to the public beginning Aug. 30 and can be purchased now by logging on to ticketmaster.com; calling (615) 255-9600; or visiting the Sommet Center box office at 501 Broadway. Ticket prices begin at \$164 (excluding handling fees), with prices increasing depending on seating level.

"Having the public attend the CMA Awards adds an extra level of excitement to 'Country Music's Biggest Night,'" said CMA COO Tammy Genovese. "The enthusiasm of the fans mixed with the anticipation of the nominees creates an exciting evening for everyone."

CMA members are able to purchase tickets via online only beginning Aug. 27 through the CMA membership site, my.CMAworld.com. Ticket prices are \$155-\$505 (including handling fees), depending on seating level.

CMA members will need their username and password to purchase Awards tickets and may obtain this information, ask questions and/or report technical problems at membership@CMAworld.com.

"Our membership is working tirelessly for the advancement of Country Music, and we want to make purchasing tickets to the CMA Awards easier and more efficient for them," Genovese said. "Putting the ticket purchase process online is also a 'greener' option that benefits the environment, which we are proud of as well."

Attention Radio and Television Stations: GIVE YOUR LISTENERS A TRIP OF A LIFETIME CMA Awards trip packages sold out in 2006 so make your reservations now!

Contact Grace Reinbold or Darlene Williams at What A Trip! Entertainment (615) 269-0039; grace@whatatrip1.com or darlene@whatatrip1.com.

Trip packages are from Monday, Nov. 5 to Thursday, Nov. 8 and only \$1,850 (for two people) as a CMA Organizational member benefit.

Visit whatatrip1.com for a listing of activities including several exclusive events.





JACK INGRAM

PONDERS LIFE'S LESSONS ON *THIS IS IT*

by HOLLY GLEASON

"This world is tough and we all know it," said Texas firebrand Jack Ingram, unapologetically. "Music is my touchstone. For me, songs that turned a line never made me cry, but songs about people's lives ..."

His voice, raspy from throwing his whole soul at what he sings and then talking about it to anyone who'll listen, drifted off. He didn't need to complete the thought. It was, after all, obvious.

The truth is that with his first No. 1 for last year's "Wherever You Are," stints opening for Brooks & Dunn, Sheryl Crow and Brad Paisley, his upset win of the CMT "Wide Open Video of the Year" for the Top 10 single "Love You," anointment from Mediabase as Most Played New Artist of 2006, and *This Is It*, his breakout Big Machine Records album, debuting in the Top 5, whatever Ingram is doing seems to be working.

It's hard to believe it began with a friend's father's copy of Willie Nelson's *Red Headed Stranger*, which Ingram heard when he was just 17. "That was all we listened to for two straight weeks," he remembered. "Very simple but very, very real — and the more you listen, the more that stuff cuts through all the circumstances, right to the basic emotion."

Distilling the essences of life has been Ingram's standard since he signed with Rising Tide in 1996 and later with Sony/Lucky Dog Records, which in 1999 released his album *Hey You* featuring the snarling "Mustang Burn" as well as "Biloxi," a jagged song of reckoning from an abandoned teenage son to a returning father. But this once brash young man, now a tawny-haired guitar slinger, is seeking broader truths.

It's not so much that he's mellowed. Rather, he's lived and, in living, seems to have found a deeper place from which to write and record.

"The thing I experienced when I heard *Red Headed Stranger*, or *Born to Run*, or Guy Clark for the first time is that sense of immediacy, the realness of it," he explained. "I want people to experience that when they hear my records."

Certainly, "Measure of a Man," his recent hit, moves beyond the bitterness of "Biloxi" toward resolution as the song's hero realizes that wisdom can be achieved by striking out on his own, putting his faith in another and knowing there are many paths and truths on the way to adulthood. It also proves that growing up and settling down don't necessarily mean giving up one's edge.

Always a Texas maverick, Ingram drew from Nashville's top

session players for *This Is It*, a move akin to burning the Lone Star flag in certain circles back home. "How do you go in there without walking over the line?" he remembered thinking. "These are the best players in the world, but what I want is their emotion. If I could get them to feel it, then I knew I was going to be fine."

Whether embracing the complicated, sexually tangled triangle of the Oklahoma band Hinder's "Lips of an Angel" or the raving kiss-off "Love You" (which means anything but), Ingram found ways to incinerate a dozen songs about a fully engaged life. It's not preaching, nor is it empty swagger; it is, simply, the view from where Ingram stands.

"I first saw Jack when Rising Tide brought a bunch of us out to a showcase in Arizona," said Lon Helton, *Aircheck* publisher and host of "Westwood One's CMT Country Countdown USA." "And you could tell then, it wasn't a matter of if but when. He always knew how to connect with people. It was just a matter of getting him on a label where they understood what he did and had the time to devote to getting it across to the audience."

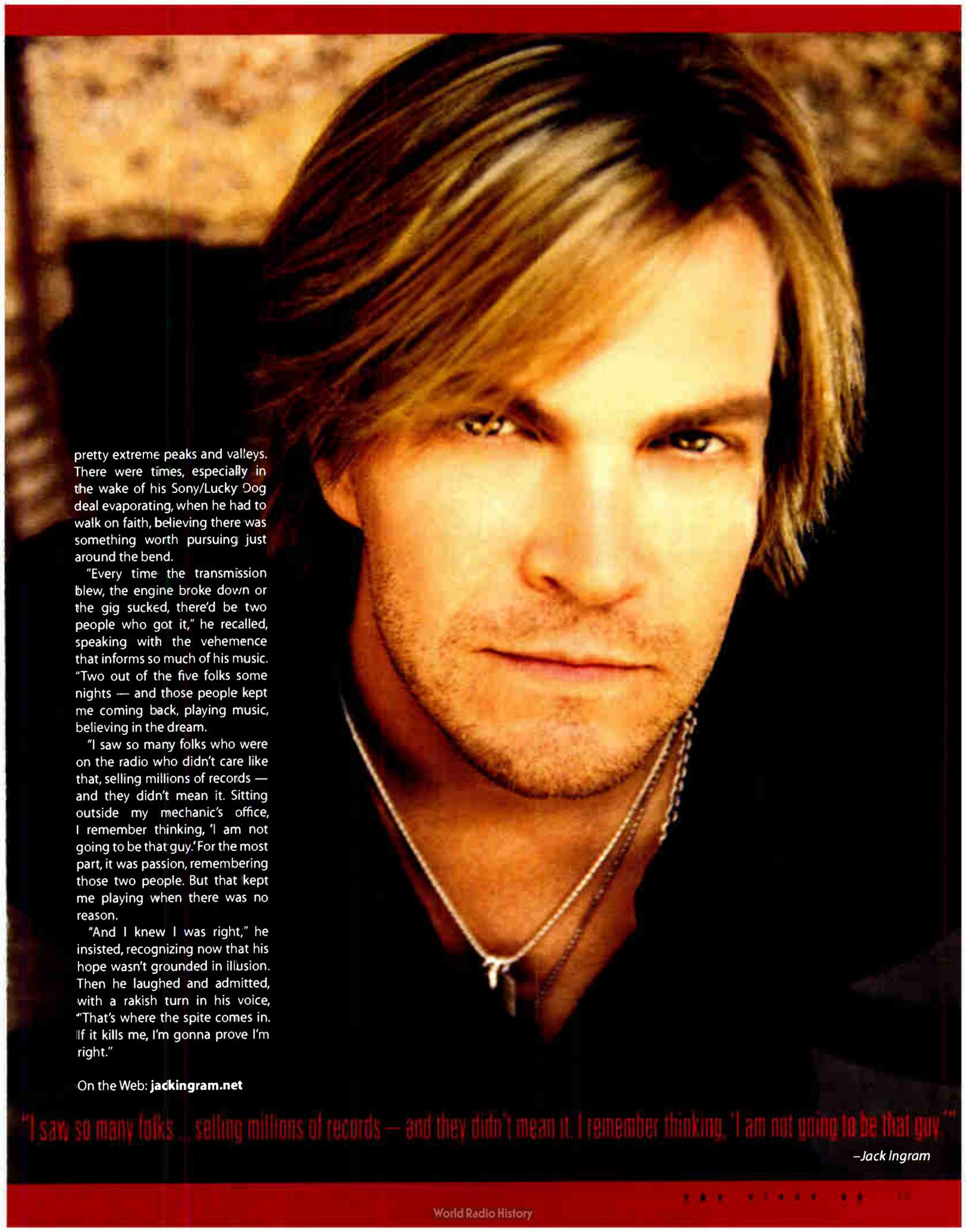
Until then and to this day, Ingram has roamed between what's considered mainstream Country and the roots high ground that artists such as Crow inhabit. "Sheryl's audience reacted exactly like mine did for the 10 years previous to this current step," Ingram said. "Her audience buys Johnny Cash's *American Recordings*, and I think when they saw us, they were connecting with that part of what we do. They recognize the roots of my music from the most basic places."

And also the most personal places: *This Is It* includes "Ava Adele," a pretty ballad that seems like the ultimate love song to a woman with the power to bewitch. In a way, that's true, since Ingram wrote it about his daughter.

"I know," he said, laughing over the fact that even angry young men can embrace sentimental realities. "It's funny coming from the guy who wrote 'Biloxi,' the guy who used to make fun of those kinds of themes. But I think I'm talking a lot about commitment and being there for your people. That is pretty universal, whether you're blue collar, white collar or no collar."

That willingness to evolve, to embrace life's deeper moments, intensifies what Ingram does. Contrast is often an artist's friend, through whom he or she can make the raucous more so and the tender sweeter.

That seems to be true for Ingram, whose career has unwound over



pretty extreme peaks and valleys. There were times, especially in the wake of his Sony/Lucky Dog deal evaporating, when he had to walk on faith, believing there was something worth pursuing just around the bend.

"Every time the transmission blew, the engine broke down or the gig sucked, there'd be two people who got it," he recalled, speaking with the vehemence that informs so much of his music. "Two out of the five folks some nights — and those people kept me coming back, playing music, believing in the dream.

"I saw so many folks who were on the radio who didn't care like that, selling millions of records — and they didn't mean it. Sitting outside my mechanic's office, I remember thinking, 'I am not going to be that guy.' For the most part, it was passion, remembering those two people. But that kept me playing when there was no reason.

"And I knew I was right," he insisted, recognizing now that his hope wasn't grounded in illusion. Then he laughed and admitted, with a rakish turn in his voice, "That's where the spite comes in. If it kills me, I'm gonna prove I'm right."

On the Web: jackingram.net

"I saw so many folks ... selling millions of records — and they didn't mean it. I remember thinking, 'I am not going to be that guy.'"

—Jack Ingram



STUDIO

"THE HOME OF 1,000 HITS"

B

by TED DROZDOWSKI

Country Music has its hallowed places, and among the most revered is Nashville's RCA Studio B.

The outside of this rectangular brick building at 1611 Roy Acuff Place is nondescript, save for the chink a nervous Dolly Parton put in the wall with her car as she arrived for one of her early recording sessions. Even so, it didn't take long, after opening its doors, for this studio to become known as "The Home of 1,000 Hits."

Studio B's first sessions transpired in November 1957, a milestone celebrated this year by the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum through tour packages, live broadcasts from the studio, recording workshops and panel discussions, all of which have a rich history to examine. Researchers are still trying to verify the very first artist who recorded there, but some of the earliest include The Stanley Brothers and Don Gibson, whose "Oh, Lonesome Me" was the first big crossover hit to emerge from the facility.

Eddy Arnold's majestic "What's He Doing in My World?," Bobby Bare's "Detroit City," The Everly Brothers' "Cathy's Clown," Waylon Jennings' "Only Daddy That'll Walk the Line," Roy Orbison's "Only the Lonely," Dolly Parton's "Coat of Many Colors," Elvis Presley's "Are You Lonesome Tonight," "Good Luck Charm," "It's Now or Never" and "Little Sister," and smashes by Skeeter Davis, Donna Fargo, Don Gibson, Hank Locklin, Jim Reeves, Porter Wagoner and many more are all part of Studio B's legacy.

Nashville businessman Dan Maddox built and leased the facility to RCA Records to accommodate the label's local recording interest and in particular its hot young Country producer, Chet Atkins. But it was seasoned by the work of Nashville's top session musicians.

Although many of the players had rural roots, they were a sophisticated lot with a strong grasp of music history. Some were classically trained. Some played in jazz bands and were deft improvisers when not obliged to follow charts. They were also dedicated craftspeople who wanted to get the best performances at every turn.

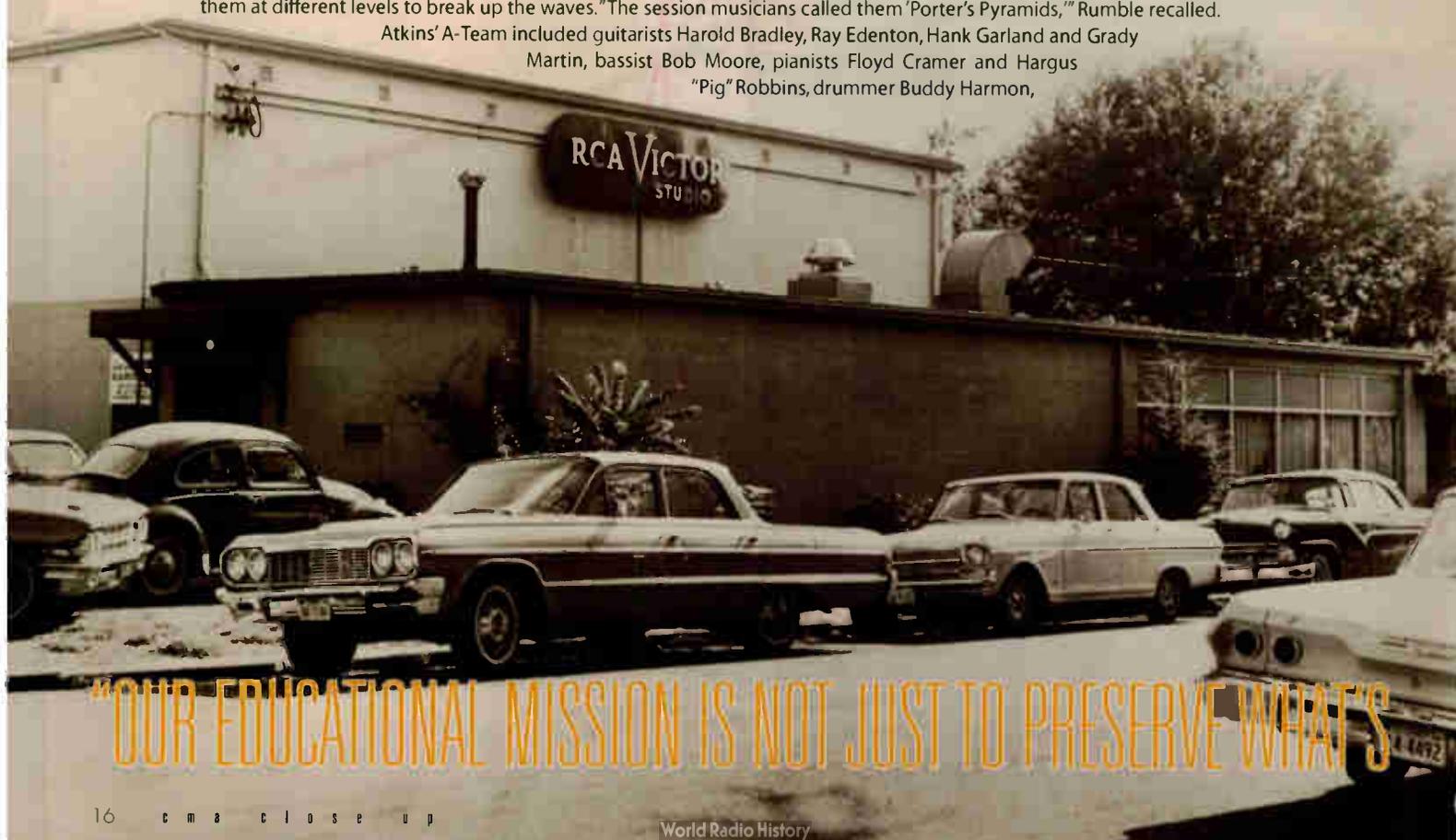
"They were really committed to studying the room right from the start," said John Rumble, Senior Historian, Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, "so they'd know how to adjust their own sound to get excellent results for the artists they were supporting."

The musicians often held Sunday afternoon picking parties around a galvanized tub of cold beer. Chief Engineer Bill Porter's tapes of these jams revealed that the room had a problem with "standing waves" — points where an amplified sound would bounce off a wall and cancel out, or where volume would swell suddenly. To remedy the problem, Porter cut pieces of acoustical ceiling tile into small pyramids and hung them at different levels to break up the waves. "The session musicians called them 'Porter's Pyramids,'" Rumble recalled.

Atkins' A-Team included guitarists Harold Bradley, Ray Edenton, Hank Garland and Grady

Martin, bassist Bob Moore, pianists Floyd Cramer and Hargus

"Pig" Robbins, drummer Buddy Harmon,



OUR EDUCATIONAL MISSION IS NOT JUST TO PRESERVE WHAT'S

saxophonist Boots Randolph, harmonica ace Charlie McCoy and others whose names recur on credits for the 35,000 songs cut at Studio B during its 20 years of operation.

The same players would also record at the Bradley Film and Recording Studios, which included a surplus Army "Quonset Hut," located on 16th Avenue South, a stone's throw from RCA Studio B. In fact, Studio B was built to compete with the Bradley studios, which were owned by Bradley and his brother, producer Owen Bradley. They ran their operation from 1955 until 1962, when Columbia Records purchased the Hut and operated it until 1982. Throughout the decades it was the home of hits recorded by Johnny Cash, Patsy Cline, Bob Dylan, Merle Haggard, Burl Ives, George Jones, Brenda Lee, Loretta Lynn and Tammy Wynette.

"I don't think Studio B compared favorably to the Quonset Hut for sound," said Harold Bradley, who still does sessions and is President of the Nashville chapter of the American Federation of Musicians (AFM 257). "The Hut was very large and my amp was at the very back of it. So I was 35 or 40 feet away from Patsy Cline when we were recording 'Crazy' there, but you could hear everything well, which was important since that was before they started using headphones in studios.

"But somehow," he continued, "whether we recorded at the Quonset Hut or Studio B, the songs turned out great and I always got the guitar sound I wanted on tape."

Rumble agreed that Studio B was not a remarkably designed room. "It's concrete block construction. There's nothing fancy about it. Between the engineers and the players, there was a genuine *esprit de corps*. They were aware that they were doing something special in Nashville and building its reputation as Music City U.S.A."

The product of these historic interactions between the players, engineers, producers and vocalists, defined what would become known as the "Nashville Sound."

Up to that point, Country spun on an axis of fiddle- and guitar-driven honky tonk, or the jazz-inspired beat of Western swing, or the high and lonesome strains of mountain folk or bluegrass. In the mid '50s, sales declined as rock 'n' roll lured young listeners. In response, Country record label executives signed Carl Perkins, Elvis Presley and other rockabilly artists to reach this burgeoning market, while also helping hard-edged Country acts update their sounds and adapt to changing tastes.

Additionally, to appeal to the pop audience — and, as Atkins later joked, to keep their jobs — he and Bradley replaced Country's raw fiddles, weeping pedal steel guitars and down-home singing with lush string sections, cocktail piano and crooners nestled on cushions of three- and four-part harmony from vocal backing groups.

In 1957 Atkins applied this formula at Studio B to produce Don Gibson's catchy "Oh, Lonesome Me." Two crossover classics, Jim Reeves' "He'll Have to Go" and The Browns' "The Three Bells," further proved the Nashville Sound's viability in the marketplace.

Aside from occasional projects such as Gillian Welch's *Time (the Revelator)* in 2001, Studio B has been closed as an active recording center since 1977. It is, however, far from mothballed. In 2002, The Mike Curb Family Foundation purchased the studio from the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, to which Dan Maddox had donated the facility in the early 1990s. It is operated now by the Museum and Nashville's Belmont University as a tourist attraction and learning laboratory. Students in Belmont's Mike Curb College of Entertainment and Music Business get hands-on experience on its vintage gear, which is augmented now by a computer-based Digidesign Pro Tools system used exclusively for mixing two-track masters.

"Our educational mission is not just to preserve what's here at the studio but to preserve the history of recording," explained longtime RCA Studio B Manager Michael Janas. "We literally make students relive the entire history of recording at Studio B. They start with 16-track tape. When they're ready to mix to a master, they do it to quarter-inch analog two-track tape and then to the two-channel Pro Tools system so they can see the similarities."

Except for the computer, all of Studio B's gear is either original or was manufactured during its halcyon years. That includes a 1972 API recording console that is historic in its own right. It came from a mobile recording unit used for The Band's *The Last Waltz*, Peter Dinklage's *Frampton Comes Alive!* and U2's *Rattle & Hum*, as well as concert tapings by Fleetwood Mac and Neil Young with Crazy Horse.

"The music that came out of RCA Studio B in the late '50s and early '60s not only changed Country Music," reflected Janas. "It also influenced what The Beatles and countless other artists wrote and recorded. It affected how we make and listen to music in Western culture."

On the Web: countrymusichalloffame.com/site/studiob.asp

Right: Eddy Arnold records a vocal track.



Influential Country Music producer and entrepreneur Frank Foster with John Rumble, Sammie Hildebrand, Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum.



A contemporary image of the console.



Producer Chet Atkins works the console as artist Waylon Jennings observes.



Jim Reeves records with his backup band.

HERE AT THE STUDIO BUT TO PRESERVE THE HISTORY OF RECORDING."

— Michael Janas, Manager, RCA Studio B

MEMBERSHIP HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN

by BOB DOERSCHUK

In conjunction with the National Business Association and Vanderbilt Medical Center, CMA offers an opportunity to all domestic Regular and Sterling Individual CMA members to obtain comprehensive health insurance coverage at an affordable price.

The CMA healthcare plan, CMA Sound Healthcare, addresses the concerns of CMA members who are self-employed, involved with small businesses that cannot easily offer strong coverage, or otherwise not in a position to obtain coverage that fits their needs and budgets.

It also allows participants a choice of program options, each of which can be shaped individually to address the customer's priorities.

Best of all, because the program is being offered under the auspices of the National Business Association, costs to CMA members will be very competitive with those set by plans designed for larger groups.

By bringing that level of ease and security to CMA members, including those who operate independently as artists or entrepreneurs, the CMA healthcare plan represents a true fusion of imagination, creative planning and compassion.

"Making medical insurance available to CMA members, including those who operate independently as artists or entrepreneurs is a tremendous benefit to our industry," said CMA COO Tammy Genovese. "CMA is proud to launch CMA Sound Healthcare with our partners at the National Business Association and Vanderbilt Medical Center."

"CMA [offers] the best way to reach the largest number in our community on a personal level."

— Tatum Hauck, Music Industry Relations Manager, Vanderbilt Medical Center

this vision to life stems from an idea hatched by Kix Brooks of Brooks & Dunn, who is a CMA Board member and Chair of the Artist Relations Committee.

According to Tatum Hauck, Manager of Music Industry Relations at Vanderbilt Medical Center, the seed for this project was planted when Brooks sensed that what the Medical Center had to offer fit with what the Nashville musical community, as represented by CMA, needed. When he suggested that Hauck and her colleagues look into how to bring these two elements together, they went to work.

"We started doing research to figure out how to honor Kix's request," she said. "The best idea we had was to figure out how to offer some sort of health insurance benefit. But as we started looking into that, it turned out to not be as easy as we had hoped, because insurance is such a profit-driven business."

This was a topic of conversation between Hauck and a friend, producer Bil VornDick, as they sat together during a Tennessee Titans game at LP Field. He suggested that RJ Stillwell, who had helped VornDick negotiate his own insurance policy, might be the go-to guy for this situation.

It was a fateful recommendation. As Regional Director for the National Business Association, Stillwell had already played a significant part in setting up insurance policies for different groups of independent contractors, including realtors, attorneys, small-practice physicians and locksmiths. His organization also boasted 25 years of experience as an advocate in other areas, such as education and lifestyle, as well as an active

lobbying presence on Capitol Hill and a history of cooperation with the Insurance of America Agency, which focuses exclusively on maximizing coverage choices for the self-employed and small businesses.

Beyond all that, Stillwell was especially attuned to the challenge that Brooks had posed, given his previous and ongoing involvement with music as a performer, publisher, producer and manager.

When Hauck explained the situation, Stillwell said, he felt "that for the first time in my life, my two worlds have come together. I could be helpful to my people, so to speak — the music people. This demographic means so much to me, because I'm part of it myself."

It didn't take long to identify CMA as their best partner in this endeavor. As CMA Board President at the time, Brooks made it clear that, in Hauck's words, "CMA represents the Nashville community as well as the Country Music industry. We felt that it was the best way to reach the largest number in our community on a personal level."

Through discussions that began in November 2006, all three organizations pooled their resources to forge a plan for Brooks to present to the CMA Board, who unanimously voted their approval during their meetings in July.

The fundamental strength of the plan stems from its affiliation with several different providers, in order to open as many options as possible while keeping expenses low. One, for example, allows a 90/10 split of expenses for treatment received at the Vanderbilt Medical Center in Nashville, which beats the industry norm of insurance companies paying 80 percent and their customers paying 20 percent. But this plan extends as well beyond the Music City limits, to CMA members residing in the United States who may be traveling anywhere in the world.

For musicians on the road, this "portability" can be especially valuable. Countless non-emergencies can make life difficult, from a sore throat to a bout with the flu. To ensure that covered members of CMA can get the treatment they need, the CMA healthcare plan maintains a phone line, staffed 24/7 by a physician who will, in many instances, be able to provide a long-distance diagnosis and call in a prescription to the nearest pharmacy. Means for treating vocal strain, hearing damage, tendinitis and other occupational hazards, through conventional and holistic procedures, can also be included through CMA healthcare plans.

CMA members are able as well to set up their own health savings account (HSA). This program enables investment of up to \$5,450 per calendar year in an interest-bearing account. All interest earned is tax-deferred until account holders choose to make withdrawals at or after age 65 — but they can also be taken out earlier to cover whatever medical expenses require attention. But as Stillwell put it, "What you don't use, you don't lose."

All that's required to join one of these or the other plans under the CMA healthcare umbrella is active domestic Regular or Sterling Individual CMA membership — although spouses and children are eligible too, whether or not they are CMA members themselves. Organizational CMA members may sign up their staff as Individual CMA members (if they qualify for membership) to also receive this benefit.

As Stillwell noted, this can make enrollment worthwhile even for members who have coverage for themselves but not for the rest of their immediate families.

"I have one client, a well-known producer, who has been a CMA member for more than 25 years," he said. "His wife is not. Now, he doesn't need the CMA healthcare plan right now — but she does, and so she will be able to qualify through his affiliation with CMA for a 90/10 co-insurance at Vanderbilt."

Visit the CMA member-only Web site, My.CMAworld.com, and click on the CMA healthcare plan link that leads you toward the answers to your questions about what it can do for you.

CMA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MAPS NEW STRATEGIES

A wide range of topics was on the table during the July CMA Board of Directors meetings, held in New York City. The focus ranged from developing technologies to finding effective strategies for targeting and building wider audiences for Country Music. After-hours entertainment transpired at Joe's Pub, where Kix Brooks of Brooks & Dunn, Bob DiPiero, Brett James, Tim Nichols and Victoria Shaw performed in the latest installment of the CMA Songwriters Series.



David Ross, Chairman of the CMA Future Markets Task Force, leads a panel on developing technologies.



Cary Sherman, President, Recording Industry Association of America, outlines actions taken by RIAA to meet challenges that face the music industry.



Bob Lobb (center), with CMA CSO Ed Benson and CMA COO Tammy Genovese after a luncheon at which Lobb received a special award to commemorate his retirement and service as a consultant on marketing initiatives going back nearly 20 years to his work on CMA's "America's Sold on Country" campaign.



At a request from CMA Marketing and Communications Committee member Steve Schnur, Worldwide Executive of Music and Marketing for Electronic Arts, product specialists introduce "Rock Band," a new interactive platform for creating and sharing new music with other users online. (l-r) Product specialists Emily Greenfield, Marc Nesbitt and Rachel Zylstra, with Peter Banks, Product Manager, MTV Games, MTV Networks.



Robert Deaton, CMA Awards Producer; Mark Bracco, Director, Alternative Series & Specials, ABC-TV; Mike Mellon, Senior VP, Research, ABC-TV; Tammy Genovese, CMA COO; and Mike Benson, Executive VP, Marketing, ABC Entertainment.

photos: Wendy Pearl



KIX BROOKS OF BROOKS & DUNN, BOB DiPIERO, BRETT JAMES, TIM NICHOLS AND VICTORIA SHAW PERFORM AT THE CMA SONGWRITERS SERIES AT JOE'S PUB IN JULY.

Nichols, DiPiero, Shaw, James, CMA COO Tammy Genovese and Brooks.



DiPiero, Brooks, Nichols, James and on piano, Shaw.

photos: Stuart Ramson

GREEN PASTURES, WOMEN'S NIGHT AND MORE AT CMA SONGWRITERS SERIES

SONGWRITER SPOTLIGHT

by BOB DOERSCHUK

The cream of Nashville's creative community has found a solid foothold at Joe's Pub, home base for the ongoing CMA Songwriters Series in New York City. But its horizons have expanded with two milestone events.

On Sept. 20, the CMA Songwriters Series will move uptown and outdoors to the Delacorte Theater, longtime home base for "Shakespeare in the Park" productions. The lineup will include Bob DiPiero, Gretchen Peters, Rivers Rutherford and Victoria Shaw, each bringing an echo of Music Row to Manhattan's sylvan core.

And on Oct. 4, at 6:30 and 9:30 PM/ET, a special "Women of Country Music" theme heralds the return of the CMA Songwriters Series to Joe's Pub. Participants will include Matraca Berg ("Strawberry Wine," Deana Carter), Sarah Buxton ("Stupid Boy," Keith Urban), Carolyn Dawn Johnson ("Single White Female," Chely Wright) and Gretchen Peters ("Independence Day," Martina McBride).

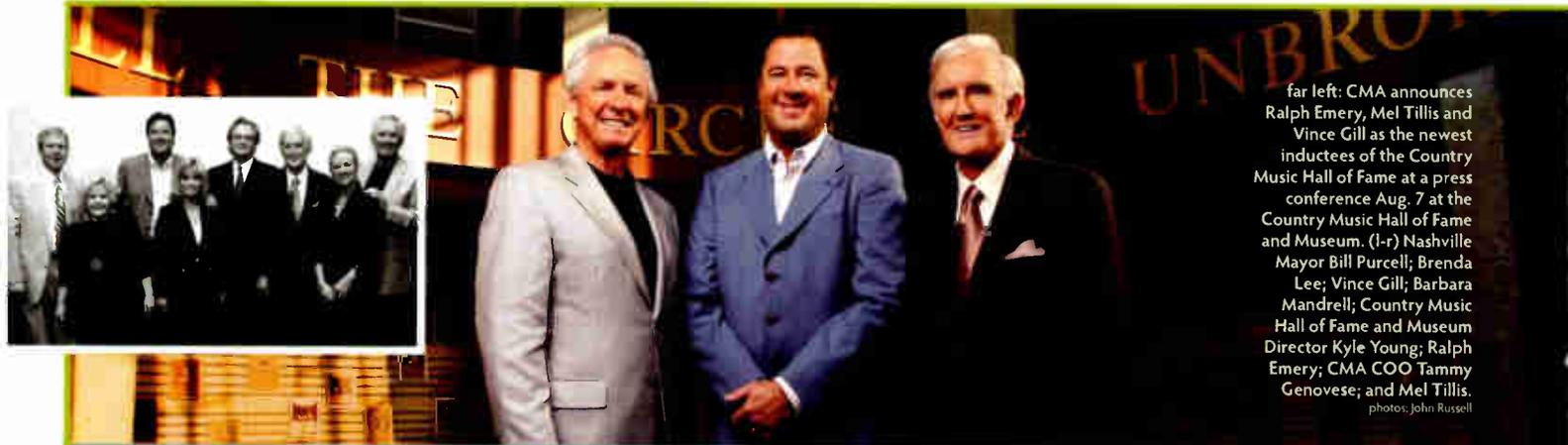
Anticipation seems to run even higher than usual for this particular gig. Feelings range from pride ("I'm proud of the legacy of women in Country Music, and it's great to be able to celebrate that" - Peters) to playful ("I'm sure the stage patter will be slightly different from your usual writers circle" - Berg) to maybe a little amused, as Johnson attested: "When I got into the music business, I was at some conference where somebody said, 'Just remember, girls, 90 percent of this industry is male.' And I remember thinking, 'Well, I'm going to be part of that 10 percent!'"

Tickets to this and all future CMA Songwriters Series at Joe's Pub events, including the "Groups/Duos of Country Music" program scheduled for Nov. 29, may be purchased by visiting joespub.com or calling (212) 967-7555. The CMA Songwriters Series is sponsored by American Airlines, ASCAP, BMI and *Country Weekly*. American Airlines is the official airline of the CMA Songwriters Series.

On the Web: CMA-songwritersseries.com, joespub.com

cma AT JOE'S PUB
songwriters series





far left: CMA announces Ralph Emery, Mel Tillis and Vince Gill as the newest inductees of the Country Music Hall of Fame at a press conference Aug. 7 at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. (l-r) Nashville Mayor Bill Purcell; Brenda Lee; Vince Gill; Barbara Mandrell; Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum Director Kyle Young; Ralph Emery; CMA COO Tammy Genovese; and Mel Tillis. photos: John Russell

COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME TO INDUCT MEL TILLIS VINCE GILL RALPH EMERY

by **BOB DOERSCHUK** and **SCOTT STEM**

Hours before they were presented to the public as this year's three inductees into the Country Music Hall of Fame at a press conference at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, radio giant Ralph Emery, triple threat singer, songwriter and instrumentalist Vince Gill and legendary entertainer and songwriter Mel Tillis gathered in the Rotunda at the Museum to share thoughts with each other, pose for pictures and prepare to receive the greatest honor bestowed in Country Music.

They spoke quietly in the reverberant room, their moods subdued in the early morning. Each had known for a very short while of his own election [by CMA's Hall of Fame Panel of Electors, consisting of more than 300 anonymous voters appointed by the CMA Board] in three categories: Emery in the "Non-Performer" category, which is rotated every third year with "Career Achieved National Prominence Prior to World War II" and "Recording and/or Touring Musician Active Prior to 1980;" Gill will be the third artist inducted in the "Career Achieved National Prominence Between 1975 and the "Present" category, which was created in 2005; and Tillis in the "Career Achieved National Prominence Between World War II and 1975" category.

Each had also been sworn to secrecy, to the extent that none knew who his colleagues in this year's selection would be until their arrival. When Gill and Tillis pulled into the parking lot behind the Museum at the same time and caught each other's eye, neither was sure whether they could yet be candid about why they were there.

Gill recalled as he spoke tentatively to Tillis: "So ... you're the other one?" His friend smiled and nodded, and with that the secret was out.

As preparations for their photo shoot began in the Rotunda, and as media crews set up their cameras and microphones in the Ford Theater downstairs, Gill took a moment to walk off by himself, strolling slowly around the room, contemplating the plaques that honored the 98 artists, writers, executives and other individuals who had been welcomed into the Hall of Fame since its establishment by CMA in 1961.

Later, as the last of the three to address the friends, family, reporters and a handful of surprised Museum visitors assembled at the theater, Gill drew from that moment to speak for the other inductees as well as himself on the significance of the occasion.

"When you go up into that Rotunda," he said, his voice breaking with emotion, "and walk around that circle, and you read those names of those people, it is the most wonderful thing in the world to realize that every living soul on that wall had something to do with me, with Mel, with Ralph, with all of us learning to do what we wanted to learn how to do and get to do. We're so lucky and so blessed to get to be able to do this."

In referring to the pleasure and privilege of making music or serving

the interests of those who do so, Gill pinpointed the actual significance of the Hall of Fame: The music itself, more than the distinction it brings, is the point. This was clear in conversations with the inductees at the Rotunda. Speaking individually, each of the three emphasized his surprise at having been selected as well as his conviction that there were others worthy of the honor. Said Gill, "An awful lot of people deserve to be here ...," while Tillis said, "I hope I deserve it. There are a lot of them out there who deserve to get in." And Emery put it simply: "I can't really imagine my being in the Hall of Fame."

There was no artifice in their words. One could sense, in the quiet of the Rotunda and the more festive bustle that followed in the Ford Theater green room, that humility walks hand in hand with greatness. And through the dignity of Emery, the buoyant humor of Tillis and the love for the music and its practitioners expressed so movingly by Gill, there was no doubt that these new members exemplify those qualities that distinguish their predecessors and the art that they celebrate.

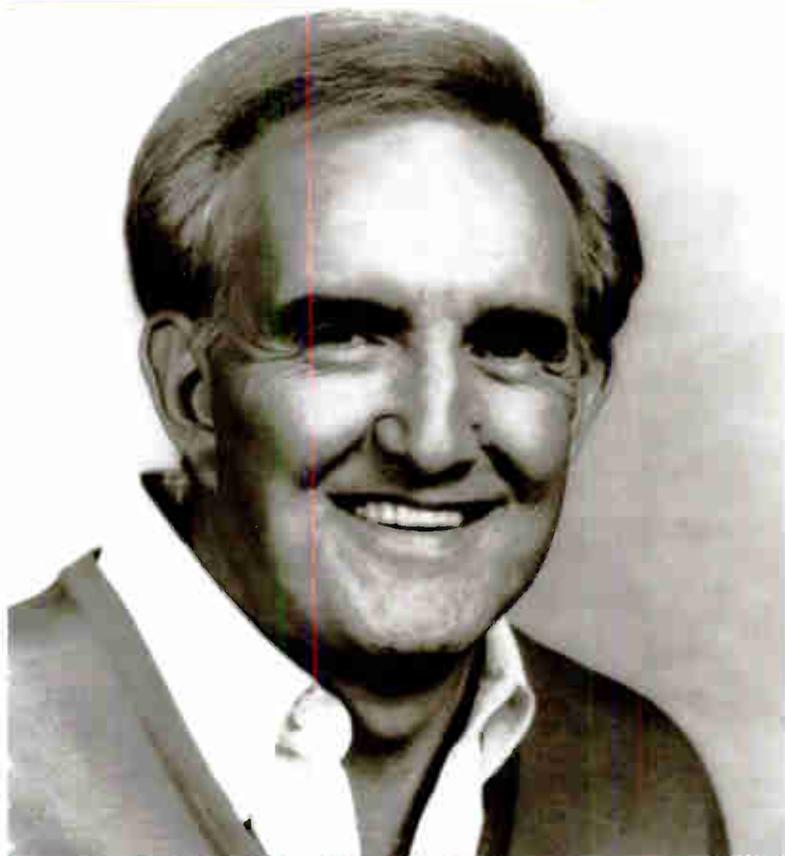
"Induction into the Country Music Hall of Fame is the highest musical honor a Country Music artist and industry veteran can attain," said Tammy Genovese, CMA COO. "All three of these extraordinary men are highly deserving of this honor."

Emery, Gill and Tillis will be officially inducted in October during the traditional, invitation-only Medallion Ceremony at the Museum.

"It is with great pride that CMA will induct these three outstanding artists and personalities into the Country Music Hall of Fame, where they will join a small yet monumental group of entertainers and industry veterans whose influence on Country Music is enormous," said Genovese.

"The Country Music Hall of Fame's Medallion Ceremony, which takes place during the annual reunion of the membership, has historically been the occasion where new inductees are presented the keepsake medal commemorating their ownership of Country Music's paramount honor," said Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum Director Kyle Young. "The medals traditionally are presented by a member of the Hall of Fame during an intimate and emotional evening of homecoming, storytelling, music, memories and fellowship. We are honored that CMA sees our ceremony as the appropriate setting for the official induction of new members."

The press conference, hosted by Genovese, took place Aug. 7. Nashville Mayor Bill Purcell congratulated the new inductees on behalf of Music City U.S.A. Emery was introduced by his longtime friend and former two-time CMA Entertainer of the Year, Barbara Mandrell. Gill was introduced by Young, while Tillis was introduced by his good friend and Country Music Hall of Fame member Brenda Lee.



"I want to thank [CMA's Hall of Fame Panel of Electors] who had enough faith in me to let me spend an eternity in this building. It is one of the greatest moments of my life to share space with so many of my treasured friends who are already here and those who are soon to arrive. ... I'm so happy to share this day with my wonderful wife Joy, with whom I celebrated 40 joyous years of marriage on the 26th of March this year. ... In closing, I want to thank my Heavenly Father for holding my hand, especially when my life would get a little shaky. Thank you."

— Ralph Emery

(excerpts from speech at Aug. 7 press conference)

RALPH EMERY

Walter Ralph Emery was born March 10, 1933, in McEwen, Tenn. In 1951, after attending the Tennessee School of Broadcasting, he accepted a job at WTPR/Paris, Tenn., and later worked at WNAH/Nashville and WAGG/Franklin before obtaining a position at his first major network radio station, WSIX/Nashville.

In 1957, Emery began a 25-year run as late-night disc jockey on WSM/Nashville. On this show, which was heard over much of the southern and central United States, he interviewed artists and often hosted impromptu jam sessions. Thanks to this program, Emery grew to be a friend and trusted confidante to some of the biggest Country Music stars while also winning the Country Disc Jockey of the Year Award six times.

In the 1960s and '70s Emery became an announcer on "The Grand Ole Opry." A few years later, he hosted and produced a 90-minute, live morning show on WSM-TV/Nashville that would run for nearly 30 years. "The Ralph Emery Show" featured an in-studio band of local session musicians and rising singers, including Lorrie Morgan and The Judds. In its prime, the show was watched by two out of three Nashville homes every weekday. Using the same format, he also hosted "Sixteenth Avenue South," an afternoon program for WSM-TV in the late '60s.

From 1974 through 1980, Emery hosted the syndicated TV series "Pop! Goes the Country," and in 1976 he served as announcer for Dolly Parton's syndicated TV series, "Dolly." In 1981 and '82, he hosted "Nashville Alive," which was filmed at the Opryland Hotel's Stagedoor Lounge and aired on the WTBS cable channel, making it Nashville's first foray into cable TV.

In 1983, The Nashville Network (TNN) chose Emery to host its flagship program, "Nashville Now." Infused with his personable style, and enlivened by his sidekick puppet Shotgun Red, this nightly program ran for 10 years and drew not only every major and rising Country artist

but also then-President George H. W. Bush, future President Bill Clinton and non-Country celebrities Steve Allen, Jay Leno, Mickey Rooney, Cybill Shepherd and Lily Tomlin, among others. In 1986, *Cable Guide* magazine named Emery its Favorite Cable Personality of the Year over competition that included Dick Cavett and Larry King. In 1989, he was inducted into the Country Music DJ and Radio Hall of Fame.

Seeking other creative outlets, Emery played himself in three movies — "Country Music on Broadway" (1965), "Nashville Rebel" (1966) and "The Road to Nashville" (1967) — and acted in "The Girl from Tobacco Row" (1966) and in the TV movie "Country Gold" (1982). He wrote several books as well. The first, *Memories: The Autobiography of Ralph Emery*, co-authored with Tom Carter, lodged high on the *New York Times* Best Sellers list for more than six months. Emery collaborated with Carter on another book, *More Memories* (1993) and with Patsi Bale Cox on *The View from Nashville* (1998) and *50 Years Down a Country Road* (2001).

After ending "Nashville Now" in 1993, Emery produced and hosted several specials for TNN, including "On the Record," that featured in-depth interviews with celebrities including Vince Gill, Andy Griffith, Reba McEntire, Dolly Parton, Tammy Wynette, and the first nationally televised interview with former President George Bush and First Lady Barbara Bush after leaving the White House. He also hosted TNN's first daytime talk/variety series and produced "Ryman Country Homecoming" and "Ralph Emery's Country Homecoming," on which Country Music legends performed and shared stories from their lives. He currently hosts "Ralph Emery Live" on RFD-TV.

Earlier this year, Emery celebrated 40 years of marriage with his wife Joy. They have three children, five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

VINCE GILL

Born on April 12, 1957, in Norman, Okla., Vincent Grant Gill played an array of instruments well enough to join the bluegrass band Mountain Smoke as a high school student. After graduation in 1975, he moved to Louisville, Ky., where he played with Bluegrass Alliance and briefly with Ricky Skaggs' Boone Creek band before leaving for Los Angeles, where he worked with fiddler Byron Berline's bluegrass group Sundance.

With Pure Prairie League, Gill recorded three albums and sang lead on the Top 10 hit "Let Me Love You Tonight." In 1981, he joined the Cherry Bombs, Rodney Crowell's backing band, where he met Tony Brown and Emery Gordy Jr., both of whom would produce many of his future solo albums.

Signed to RCA Records, Gill relocated with then-wife Janis and daughter Jenny to Nashville. Gordy produced his mini-debut album, *Turn Me Loose*, which featured his first charting solo single, "Victim of Life's Circumstances." A full album, *The Things That Mattered*, followed later that year and yielded two Top 10 singles, a duet with Rosanne Cash on "If It Weren't for Him" and a solo hit, "Oklahoma Borderline." His first Top 5 single, "Cinderella," dropped from *The Way Back Home* in 1987.

After moving to MCA Nashville in 1989, Gill released *When I Call Your Name*. Its debut single, a duet with Reba McEntire titled "Oklahoma Swing," reached the Top 20, but the title cut peaked at No. 2, and earned Gill his first CMA Award (Single of the Year) and Grammy Award (Best Male Country Vocal Performance). The third single, "Never Knew Lonely," climbed to No. 3 and helped drive the album to Platinum sales. A second Platinum album, *Pocket Full of Gold*, followed in 1991, with four Top 10 hits. That same year he earned his first CMA Vocal Event of the Year Award for his performance with Mark O'Connor and the New Nashville Cats. Gill broke the quadruple-Platinum barrier in 1992 with *I Still Believe in You*, whose title cut became his first No. 1 single. He topped the charts again on another duet with McEntire, "The Heart Won't Lie," featured on her album *It's Your Call*.

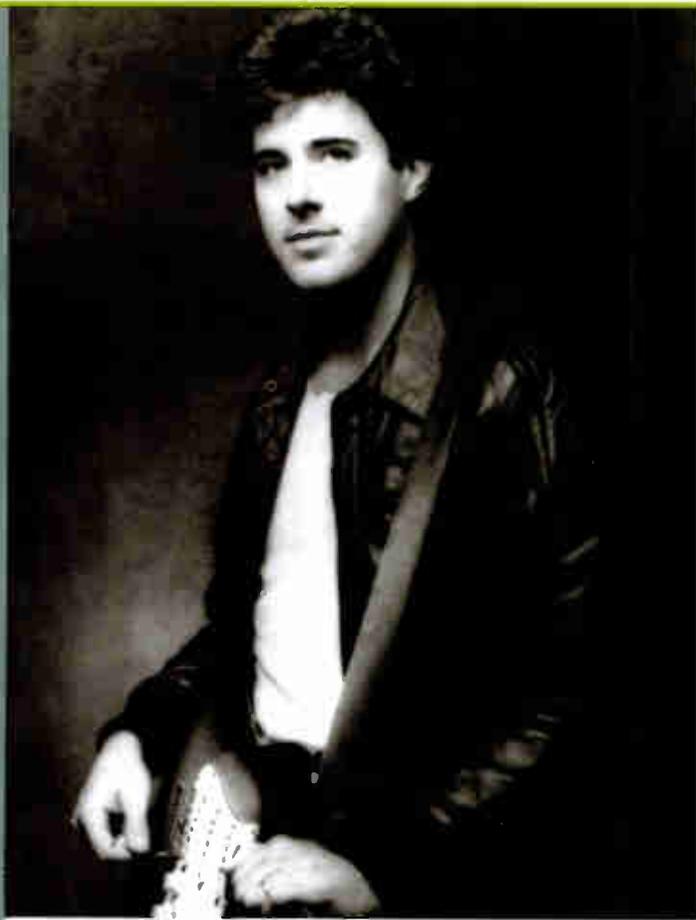
His 1993 Christmas album, *Let There Be Peace on Earth*, was followed a year later by *When Love Finds You*, whose sales topped 4 million. In 1994 he also sang duets with Amy Grant on the title cut of her album *House of Love*, with Gladys Knight on the all-star *Rhythm, Country and Blues* album and with Dolly Parton on her signature "I Will Always Love You," which earned them the CMA Vocal Event of the Year honor in 1996.

Gill revisited his bluegrass roots in 1996 with *High Lonesome Sound* and then dug into hardcore Country on *The Key* in 1998, his first album to top the *Billboard* Country Albums chart. Furthering his reputation as a masterful duet partner, he sang "If You Ever Leave Me" with Barbra Streisand on her album *A Love Like Ours* in 1999.

Gill commemorated his marriage to singer Amy Grant in 2000 with *Let's Make Sure We Kiss Goodbye*; their daughter Corinna was born in 2001. Three years later he released his first self-produced album, *Next Big Thing*, and then united with Richard Bennett, Tony Brown, Rodney Crowell, Hank Devito and others as the Notorious Cherry Bombs for a 2004 release on Universal Records South. In 2006, he released a four-CD tour de force, *These Days*, which featured 43 new songs in a variety of musical styles and paired him with a dazzling lineup of guest artists, including Grant and his daughter Jenny Gill.

With more than 22 million albums sold, Gill has accumulated a collection of honors that includes 18 CMA Awards (second only to Brooks & Dunn), two of them for Entertainer of the Year in 1993 and '94, and 18 Grammy Awards, the most earned by any Country artist. He is tied with George Strait for having won the most CMA Male Vocalist Awards (five). From 1992 through 2003, Gill hosted the CMA Awards, setting a record for the most times anyone has consecutively hosted a television awards show. He serves currently as President of the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum's Board of Officers and Trustees.

An avid golfer as well as an outstanding humanitarian, Gill helped create the annual Vince Gill Pro-Celebrity Invitational Golf Tournament — aka, "The Vinny" — in 1993 to help support junior golf programs throughout Tennessee.



"I so much love that relationship I've had with CMA for so many years. Even before I became the host of their [Awards] show, I went to the Awards every year since I lived here and loved it and just marveled at all the talent and all the people and everybody that came into this Hall of Fame. I never believed for an instant that I would be here. Then, after a lot of years of living, you wonder if you might. Maybe you start to see your own mortality a little bit.

"I see so many friends in this room. My daughter Jenny came. She's been crazy enough to jump into this business right behind me. My wife Amy is here. We've been married for the last seven and a half years, without a doubt the kindest, most gracious years I've ever spent on this earth, and I thank you for that. Bless you."

"When I found out I was being inducted, it took me under in a big way. I was not expecting that. I don't think I've ever really done much in my life that was the result of something. It was just that the work seemed like fun. One band led to another band to another town to another gig. I just loved living life right at the moment. I never planned ahead. ... When I heard the news, I got in the car and took off driving. I turned on 'Willie's Place' on [XM] Satellite Radio. The first three songs I remembered so vividly as a child. And I wept as they played, one after the other. Out of all the things I've ever done, it matters. It matters so very much. Thank you so much."

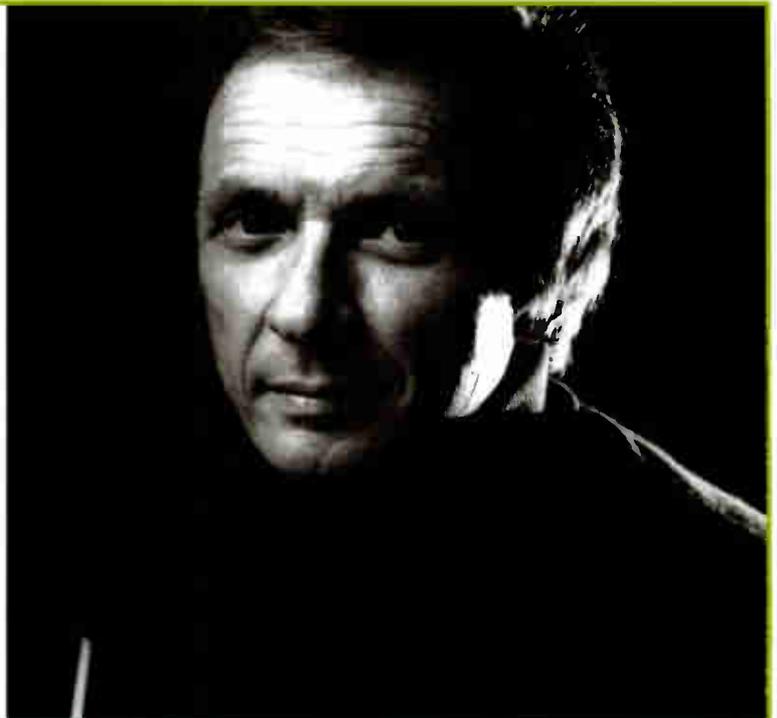
—Vince Gill

(excerpts from speech at Aug. 7 press conference)

"Man, can you believe this? I'll tell you what, folks, I was surprised when I got the message from Tammy. I was in my garden, holding an eggplant. My cell phone went off. It was Tammy, and when she told me, I dropped my eggplant. The hardest part of it was that you're not supposed to tell anybody. And you know I'm a blabbermouth, but I kept my word. Well, I'm not going to lie to you. I think I told my son ... I suppose that an honor such as this deserves a speech. Well, lucky for you folks, I don't do speeches, because we'd be here forever ... I want you to meet my significant other. She's put a little stability in my life — Kathy DeMonaco. Last but not least, I want to thank this little angel that has been on my shoulder since the beginning and took care of me. Thank you."

— Mel Tillis

(Excerpts from speech at Aug. 7 press conference)



MEL TILLIS

Born Aug. 8, 1932, in Tampa, Fla., Lonnie Melvin Tillis was just 3 years old when he survived a bout with malaria, believed now to have caused his lifelong stuttering problem. He made his debut in a local talent show at age 16 and continued playing music after joining the United States Air Force, at military clubs in Okinawa, Japan, with a group called The Westerners.

Leaving military service in 1955, Tillis worked as a fireman on the Atlantic Coastline Railroad in Dover, Fla. A year later, he left for Nashville to seek his fortune. When Webb Pierce cut his song "I'm Tired," he also signed the young songwriter to his Cedarwood Music Publishing Company. Tillis composed several more hits for Pierce as well as for Bobby Bare ("Detroit City"), Patsy Cline ("Strange" and "So Wrong"), Stonewall Jackson ("Mary Don't You Weep"), Brenda Lee ("Emotions") and Ray Price ("One More Time," "Burning Memories" and "Heart over Mind").

His own performing career began with his cover of "It Takes a Worried Man to Sing a Worried Song" in 1957. Tillis reached the Top 40 with "The Violet and a Rose" in 1958 and "Finally" in 1959. Columbia Records released his first album, *Heart over Mind*, in 1962, along with singles that included "The Brooklyn Bridge," "Loco Weed" and "Walk On, Boy."

The mid-to-late 1960s brought more and greater successes, including the Top 15 single "Wine" in 1965 and his first Top 10 hit "Who's Julie?" in 1968. His renown as a writer grew as well, through covers by Waylon Jennings ("Mental Revenge"), Charley Pride ("The Snakes Crawl at Night") and Kenny Rogers and the First Edition, who turned Tillis' "Ruby, Don't Take Your Love to Town" into a Top 10 pop hit in 1969. Tillis himself reached the Top 10 twice in 1969, with "These Lonely Hands of Mine" and "She'll Be Hanging Around Somewhere."

Sales grew even stronger in the '70s, as Tillis sent a series of singles — "Neon Rose," "Midnight, Me and the Blues," "Stomp Them Grapes," "Memory Maker" and "Woman in the Back of My Mind" — into the Top 5, most of them released by MGM Records. All of this led to his selection as CMA Entertainer of the Year, his induction into the Nashville Songwriters International Hall of Fame and a contract with MCA Nashville in 1976, after which he scored a succession of No. 1 hits that included "Good Woman Blues," "Heart Healer," "I Believe in You" and "Coca Cola Cowboy." He ended the decade by signing

with Elektra Records in 1979, with whom he once again topped the singles charts, this time with "Southern Rains" in 1981.

While maintaining his momentum as a songwriter, with hits that included "Honey (Open That Door)," a No. 1 single for Ricky Skaggs, Tillis has also continued to record successfully since the 1980s. In 1993 he released his first gospel album, *Beyond the Sunset*, and in 1998 he took part in a two-album set as a member of The Old Dogs, an all-star assembly that included Bobby Bare, Waylon Jennings and Jerry Reed; this collection of Shel Silverstein tunes earned a nomination for CMA Vocal Event of the Year. In 1999, BMI named Tillis "Songwriter of the Decade" for two decades. He was named Golden Voice Entertainer of the Year in 2001, the same year he received the Golden R.O.P.E. Songwriter Award.

Tillis has distinguished himself as an actor, beginning with an appearance on "Love, American Style" in 1973. Other TV series appearances included "Nashville 99" (1977), "The Dukes of Hazzard" (1979), "The Tim Conway Show" (1980) and "Love Boat" (1983). He also co-hosted "Mel and Susan Together," an ABC series that paired him with Susan Anton in 1978, and acted in made-for-television movies that included "Skinflint: A Country Christmas Carol" (1979), "The Stockers" (1981) and "Bandit: Bandit Goes Country" (1994). His movie credits include "W.W. and the Dixie Dancekings" (1975), "The Villain" (1977), "Every Which Way But Loose" (1979), "Smokey and the Bandit II," "Cannonball Run" (1980), "Cannonball Run II" (1984) and "Uphill All the Way" (1986). Tillis also debuted as an author in the late '80s, with his autobiography, *Stutterin' Boy*.

In 2002, Tillis sold his theater in Branson, Mo., where he had performed more than 4,000 shows, and returned home to Florida. When not on the road, giving approximately 100 concerts each year with his band The Statesiders, he enjoys painting, fishing, gardening, cooking and attending ballgames at the University of Florida. Blessed with six children and six grandchildren, he was inducted by his daughter, Country Music vocalist Pam Tillis, into the cast of the Grand Ole Opry in June 2007. In 2002, they recorded together on "Come On and Sing," the last track of *It's All Relative: Tillis Sings Tillis*, Pam's tribute album to her father.



Connie Bradley, ASCAP
Senior VP



DEDICATED
TO EXCEEDING
EXPECTATIONS



Phil Crosland, ASCAP
Executive VP / Chief
Marketing Officer



John LoFrumento,
ASCAP CEO

And so ASCAP joined earlier this year with iSafe, a nonprofit program funded by Apple, Microsoft, Verizon, the United States Department of Justice and others, to launch an anti-piracy road show that's expected to reach more than 2 million junior high school students by the end of 2007.

This one-hour presentation is now being offered at school assemblies in an effort to dispel myths about illegal downloading and provide overall internet safety information.

For the anti-piracy section of the show, Crosland and his department created Donny the Downloader, an animated teenager who learns the truth about illegally downloading music.

"Donny tells the story that when you download music illegally, you're hurting a lot more people than you think," Crosland said. "Donny is based on the insight from kids who think they are hurting only the artists who are already in the back of a Learjet, drinking champagne."

Donny is succeeding. Seventy-three percent of teens surveyed after experiencing the Donny the Downloader segment said they are less likely than before to accept downloaded files from friends. And 66 percent indicated they are more likely to use legal sites for downloading music.

Despite these impressive results, Crosland is realistic about the magnitude of this challenge. "Intention is one thing," he pointed out. "Actual behavioral change is always a challenge, but you have to start with kids believing this is new information."

In another move to address an area of concern for music creators, ASCAP joined with the insurance company Sterling & Sterling in 2000 to form MusicPro Insurance. The program offers high-quality coverage, ranging from equipment rental insurance to long-term care, to everyone who earns part or all of their income through music. Rates are competitive, and the service is not exclusive to ASCAP members.

by **CRYSTAL CAVINESS**

Service is the key word at ASCAP, The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, where senior management keeps the focus on its songwriter and publisher members when discussing the 93-year-old organization's goals.

"ASCAP is the only performing rights organization in the United States that's owned by its members," said John LoFrumento, ASCAP CEO. "We never have a conflict in our business objectives, because we're negotiating on behalf of our songwriters and their publishers."

More than 300,000 songwriters and publishers — Beyoncé, Kenny Chesney, Alan Jackson, Jay-Z, Dave Matthews, Brad Paisley, Rascal Flatts, Sugarland, Justin Timberlake, Diane Warren and Stevie Wonder, to name just a few — have elected to make ASCAP their PRO.

Providing advantages for its members and positioning the company to most effectively represent their interests is the core of ASCAP's mission, according to LoFrumento.

These advantages range from providing competitively priced insurance to proactively fighting piracy — the illegal duplication and distribution of licensed content that plagues the entire entertainment industry.

"Piracy doesn't impact ASCAP directly as an organization, but it impacts our members who are entitled to a public performance royalty, which ASCAP provides," said Phil Crosland, ASCAP Executive VP / Chief Marketing Officer.

ASCAP leadership spotted a problem in the anti-piracy campaign headed by the Recording Industry Association of America, in which fining random illegal downloaders made front page headlines and did little to improve the music industry's public relations.

"No one was addressing the educational component," said Crosland. As a result, ASCAP decided to research how it might make a difference in correcting the problem.



ASCAP writer
Brad Paisley;
Connie Bradley,
Senior VP,
ASCAP; and John
LoFrumento,
CEO, ASCAP at
the 2006 ASCAP
Country Music
Awards.
photo: Guy Williams



ASCAP honors
2006 Country
Song of the Year,
"Jesus, Take
the Wheel,"
and ASCAP
Songwriter of
the Year (l-r)
Song of the Year/
Songwriter of
the Year Brett
James; Song of
the Year writer
Gordie Sampson;
Connie Bradley,
Senior VP, ASCAP;
Songwriter of
the Year Rivers
Rutherford; Song
of the Year writer
Hillary Lindsey;
and John
LoFrumento,
CEO, ASCAP.
photo: Guy Williams



ASCAP Senior VP
Connie Bradley
with ASCAP
writer
Kellie Pickler.
photo: Brad Miller/Rediff

ASCAP celebrates longtime ASCAP member Alan Jackson's Platinum success with *Friday's Memories*. (l-r) Connie Bradley, Senior VP, ASCAP; Alan Jackson; and Joe Galante, Chairman, Sony BMG Nashville. Photo: Tony Wilson



ASCAP honors John Rich of Big & Rich as Songwriter/Artist of the Year. (l-r) John LoFrumento, CEO, ASCAP; songwriter Rivers Rutherford; Brett James and John Rich; and Connie Bradley, Senior VP, ASCAP. Photo: Tony Wilson



CMA and ASCAP host a party at Nashville's Omni Bradley Park to celebrate Kenny Chesney's first solo-written No. 1 hit single "Beer in My Hand" from his multi-Platinum album *The Road and the Radio*. (l-r) Producer Roddy Cannon; Troy Tomlinson, President and CEO, Sony/ATV Music; Tammy Groves, CMA COO; Kenny Chesney; Connie Bradley, Senior VP, ASCAP; and Joe Galante, Chairman, Sony BMG Nashville. Photo: Tony Wilson



Another high point on the ASCAP calendar is the annual Country Music Awards, held at the Ryman Auditorium and scheduled this year for Oct. 15. Now in its 45th year, the event honors the most performed songs of the year and the writers who created them.

"There's nothing like hearing [songwriter] Rivers Rutherford perform [the Brad Paisley/Dolly Parton duet] 'When I Get Where I'm Going' or [songwriter] Craig Wiseman perform [the Brooks & Dunn hit] 'Believe,' in their own ways," said Connie Bradley, ASCAP Senior VP.

ASCAP members charted 24 No. 1 Country singles in 2006, with 12 more to date in '07. Bradley credited member-friendly innovations as a key reason for this very strong performance.

"ASCAP is growing faster than ever in our 93-year history," she noted, pointing out that the organization welcomed 40,000 new members in 2006 as well as 31,000 more during the first six months alone of '07.

"One hundred percent of what we do is for the benefit of our member owners," Crosland summed up. "The innovation that comes is demanded by our members because we are totally focused on their success."

And watching that success, Bradley added, makes everyone's dedication worthwhile.

"It's really exciting when you sign a new songwriter/artist like Kenny Chesney or Brad Paisley, who was an intern at ASCAP, and watch their careers explode," she explained. "You are there when they get their first publishing deal, their first chart song, their first No. 1. And then, when they're named Entertainer of the Year, like Kenny, or Male Vocalist of the Year, like Brad, that is really the most fun part of our jobs."

"The innovation that comes is demanded by our members because we are totally focused on their success."

—Phil Crosland,
ASCAP Executive VP,
Chief Marketing Officer

Details are available at the benefits page of the ASCAP Web site.

Guided by what LoFrumento called the "business mind of publishers," ASCAP formed a joint venture four years ago with ConneXus Corporation to create Mediaguide, a digital tracking service that provides real-time performance data in the United States, Africa, Asia and Europe. Mediaguide tracks approximately 3.5 million radio performances of songs per week and in excess of 80 million ad detects per year.

Operating independently, Mediaguide provides ASCAP with data for determining royalty distributions. It also serves clients who may use the information to track advertising placements, consumer trends and for other purposes, according to Mike Sistad, ASCAP Director of Membership Relations.

Mediaguide differs from Broadcast Data Systems (BDS), Mediabase and other tracking services, he said, because it was tailor-made to track the information ASCAP desires, rather than execute random surveys.

"Mediaguide tracks twice as many Country radio stations as any other tracking service in the United States," Sistad explained.

"The good news about Mediaguide is that it is a profit-making company," LoFrumento added. "The profits we are getting will be used to lower operating costs, and that will morph into distributions for our members."

ASCAP has implemented other ways of growing the careers of its members, including the I Create Music Expo, now in its second year in Los Angeles.

"We bring together the best of ASCAP's members into a panel to help in career development for our members," Crosland said, adding that the seminars are also open to non-members.

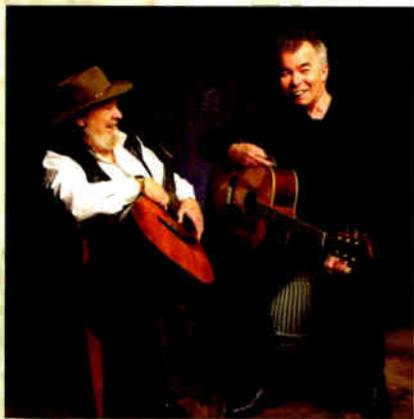
More than 1,500 music creators attended the inaugural Expo in 2006. That number rose to exceed 2,500 in '07, with 250 speakers that included Hal David, Jimmy Jam, Randy Newman, John Rich, ASCAP President and Board Chairman Marilyn Bergman and other ASCAP notables.



ASCAP executives visit Fallsview Casino Resort in Niagara Falls, Ontario, to check out the Hitman of Music live performance. (front) songwriter Al Anderson; Connie Bradley, Senior VP, ASCAP; and Pat Riffe, VP Membership, ASCAP; (back) songwriters Tim Nichols, Bob DiPiero, Jeffrey Steele, Craig Wiseman and Tony Mullins. Photo: Michael Scalet



Bluegrass legends and music industry VIPs at ASCAP celebration of Cherryholmes CD *Cherryholmes II: Back and Blue*. (l-r) Dan Kohn, VP, ASCAP; Connie Bradley, Senior VP, ASCAP; Ricky Skaggs; Cla Leigh Cherryholmes; Earl Scruggs; and Elizabeth Long. Photo: Michael Scalet



At Nashville's Station Inn, the mood was festive. A crowd had filled the legendary bluegrass club to help John Prine and Mac Wiseman celebrate the release of their album, *Standard Songs for Average People* (Oh Boy Records). But as the sounds of revelry rose in the bar, the objects of this festivity joked and chatted on their own in the dressing room.

"Mac," said Prine, taking a swig of bottled water, "I've never attended a release party. Do you know what we're supposed to do?"

"Well, I haven't either," replied Wiseman. "But I think we just mingle with folks as they listen to the record. It appears they're gathering some sort of steam out there. I'm thinking about taking up a collection shortly."

As the album pulsed through the sound system, Wiseman's sweet tenor and Prine's gravelly baritone intertwined through classics written by Tom T. Hall, Kris Kristofferson, Ernest Tubb, Bob Wills and other Country Music giants. Against this backdrop of timeless tunes and exuberant party guests, the two legendary writer/performers revealed how their ambitious collaboration came about.

PRINE: "It all started a good seven years ago — and these days, when I say seven it's probably 10 or 12 — when I stopped in to see Cowboy Jack Clement. He said, 'Mac Wiseman was over the other day. Do you know Mac?' I said, 'Well, I'm a big fan, but I don't know him.' And Cowboy said, 'I mentioned your name and Mac likes your music. You guys ought to get together and record some songs.' I was amazed Mac even knew I existed, but when Cowboy says something, he's not just talking off the top of his hat. Then a couple of years ago, Fergy [David Ferguson, who engineered and co-produced *Standard Songs*] started up talking about it. He kept working at us both, until we got it together."

How did you select the songs?

WISEMAN: "We each agreed to draw up a list of 15 songs and then get together to make the final selection. Well, John came over to my house, and seven out of the 15 on our lists were duplicates. That seemed like an omen, you know? It meant we were on the same wavelength."

What were some of the duplicates?

WISEMAN: "'Death of Floyd Collins' was one, 'Pistol Packin' Mama' and maybe the Ernest Tubb songs, like 'Don't Be Ashamed of Your Age.'"

"It's not work at all when I'm singing covers."

— John Prine

PRINE: "Yeah, that was one we'd both picked out. A couple of songs on both our lists didn't make the record; I think 'Old Flames' was one. When we tried it, for some reason it didn't work out. Sometimes you have to find a couple of wrong songs to find the right one."

WISEMAN: "'Old Dogs, Children and Watermelon Wine' was on both our lists, and that did make it. I was intimidated by it, I don't mind telling you. It is such a perfect record, both in arrangement and feel, I didn't know if I could add anything."

PRINE: "Tom T. Hall's version is so set in stone, I don't think most people would even try to do it. But I knew if we both got into telling the story, it would work. Part of the song is narration, and part of it's like you're a character in it, which works great for two voices."

Describe the sessions.

WISEMAN: "John and I sat across a table from each other, and we'd sing through the songs on our list. We'd find out pretty quickly if one was going to work, and if it did, we'd cut the song with just four pieces to start with. It was Jamie Hartford on lead guitar — he was excellent with these songs — and the rhythm section [often including bassist Dave Jacques and drummer Kenny Malone]. That was it. We got a lot of first takes, which is always extra good. I didn't even play guitar, and John only played guitar on a couple of songs."

[Guitarist Pat McLaughlin and pedal steel legend Lloyd Green also contributed].

Did you work out the arrangements ahead of time?

WISEMAN: "No, we'd just try out a song right there with the band."

PRINE: "They were sitting all around us, and everybody could see each other's eyes. The stuff the guys played pretty much determined the arrangements, plus Fergy had a few ideas to go this way or that. The band would start playing with me and Mac singing, and everybody just kind of ..."

WISEMAN: "... fell into it. I was amazed because many of these songs aren't easy to play."

PRINE: "It's a good thing I didn't have to play them; I'd still be learning the chords to 'Old Cape Cod.' The song has nothing but diminished chords and those ones you hold five fingers on. For me, the Carol Lee Singers really made that song with their background vocals. It was a good version up until then, but when they got on it, man, it sounded like a record."

WISEMAN: "They come from the old school, with that classic Nashville sound. We used to do songs with vocal groups here, like the Jordanaires and the Anita Kerr Singers, and Carol Lee has taken that style and developed it to such a degree. Being the daughter of Wilma Lee and Stony Cooper, she heard this music from the day she was born."

PRINE: "She comes up with a vocal arrangement so quickly, and she'll give you three or four different choices of sounds. She'll say, 'Do you want us singing the words, or do you want more of these oohs in there?' And then they'll all sing to illustrate the different ideas. For me, it was like having a full orchestra at our disposal all day long. We'd order in ribs and listen as they'd sing anything and everything we wanted to hear."

The music has more of a relaxed, open and timeless quality than you hear on most modern albums.

WISEMAN: "I'm glad to hear you say that, because really that was the feeling John and I had when we cut these songs."

PRINE: "For a while we were calling ourselves 'the old Cape codgers.'"

John Prine and Mac Wiseman

Visit the Great American Standard Songs



photos: Jim McGuire

How did you divide up the verses and choruses in each song?

PRINE: "Trial and error, mostly, although the words are so good in some songs that one of us would want to jump in and claim a section. I knew what I wanted to sing on 'Saginaw Michigan' before we even got into it. When we did 'Old Dogs, Children and Watermelon Wine,' Mac got to sing, 'I was sittin' in Miami.' Man, I would have loved to have that line, but even more, I wanted to hear Mac sing it."

WISEMAN: "Speaking of 'Saginaw Michigan,' we had fun with the modulations. John started off low, then I took it up to sing my lines, then we went back down for John to do an additional verse, and then back up a second time for me. You often hear modulations go up a step, but seldom down. Yet we did that twice, which is almost unheard of."

As a songwriter, John, do you find it harder to record covers than your own songs?

PRINE: "Oh, no, for me it's more gratifying to sing covers. See, I'm basically a big fan, and I love being in the studio when I'm enjoying myself, when it's not work. And it's not work at all when I'm singing covers. When it's something I've written, I worry the thing right up to the point where I finally get a recording I'm satisfied with. And even then sometimes I don't know whether it's done or not. But going in and singing your favorite songs, especially with Mac Wiseman, that is nothing but pleasure. If I could make records like that all the time, I'd be in the studio five days a week."

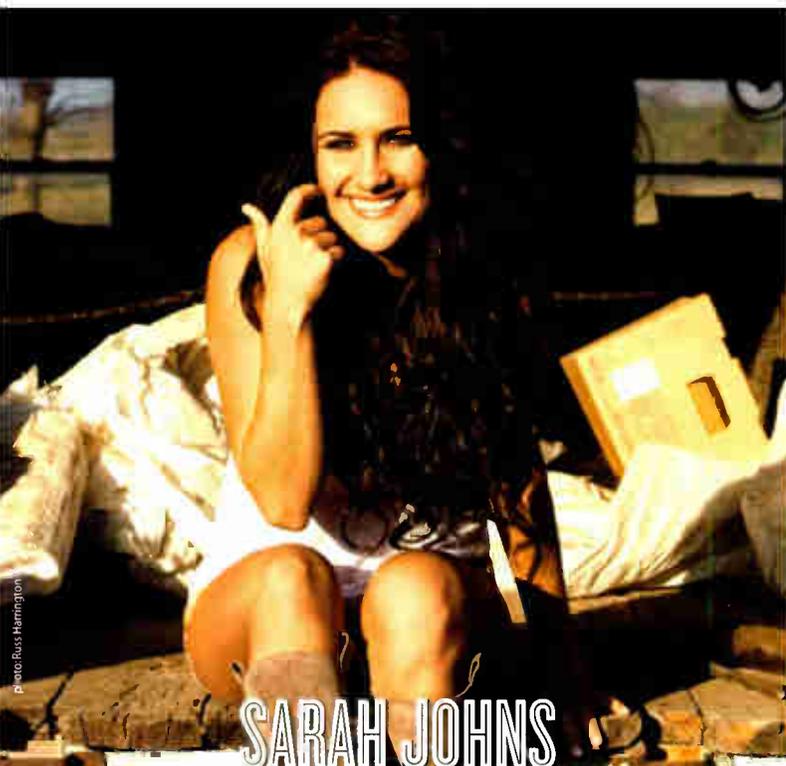
WISEMAN: "This was a labor of love, except there wasn't any labor in it."

On the Web: johnprine.net, ohboy.com, groovegrass.com



JASON ISBELL

photo: Trent McGinn & Hilary Wash



SARAH JOHNS

There are already plenty of Jason Isbell fans who have come to appreciate his writing, singing and playing within a three-guitar attack during his run with Southern rock mainstay Drive-By Truckers. These listeners will hear something different in his solo debut on New West Records, *Sirens of the Ditch*: 11 original songs written by Isbell that add up to a more personal sound, with a wider range of emotion and a subtle sense of exhilaration that comes from striking out on your own.

This last quality is evident from the first seconds of the opening track and single, "Brand New Kind of Actress," with its no-nonsense drum beat and grungy guitar hook. His voice, rough and dusty as a Country road winding outside his hometown of Muscle Shoals, ties the diverse elements of the album together and brings each lyric to life, whether through reciting a mournful paean for young lives lost in "Dress Blues" or evoking classic R&B balladry on "Hurricanes and Hand Grenades."

Raised in a musical family in one of America's most musical towns, Isbell grew up in a community that was used to seeing Duane Allman, Aretha Franklin, Otis Redding and other giants pull up to FAME Studios, also where Isbell recorded his album, to lay tracks with David Hood and Spooner Oldham, local guys who happened to be members of one of the hottest studio rhythm sections on Earth. They're among the artists who appear on *Sirens of the Ditch* too — a gesture that says as much about the endurance of soulful music in northern Alabama as it does about Isbell's right to a place within that tradition.

IN HIS OWN WORDS:

Who is your musical hero?

"Neil Young. He always seems to do exactly what he wants."

What book is on your nightstand?

"*I'll Sleep When I'm Dead*, by Crystal Devon (Warren Zevon bio)."

What song do you wish you had written?

"'Room at the Top,' by Tom Petty. I'm glad I didn't have to go through what he was dealing with when he wrote it, though. That's usually the case with my favorites."

What phrase do you find yourself saying over and over again?

"Stop apologizing."

What mode of transportation do you prefer?

"Prevost XLIs with a Ducati in the trailer."



On the Web: jasonisbell.com, myspace.com/jasonisbellmusic

Like the sound of her music, the story of Sarah Johns is classic. Raised in a fly-speck Kentucky town, with a father so strict that she was punished when caught listening to a Faith Hill album, Johns learned to raise her head and sing in church before mastering the art of telling life's sad and joyful tales by singing a Country song.

Johns didn't start performing until after she'd enrolled at the University of Kentucky at Lexington, but a long residency at Regatta's seafood restaurant sharpened her skills to the point that she felt good about quitting school, bidding her boyfriend adieu and heading down to Nashville to build a career from scratch.

Eventually she won an invitation from Toby Keith's manager, who had caught her act back at Regatta, to do two songs on one of his client's tours. She chose a pair of originals, the rollicking "When Do I Get to Be a Woman" and the kiss-off anthem "The One in the Middle," probably the rowdiest celebration of a particular finger set to music in recent years.

The response she earned led straight to a record deal with BNA Records and a debut album, *Big Love in a Small Town*, produced by Joe Scaife and loaded with both of those barn-burners plus nine more songs that include a wickedly funny ode to love at first sight ("He Hates Me") and power ballads ("Touch Me" and "Baby My Heart") that add raw physical spice into her formula for romance. All of these bear her co-writing credit and reflect the promise that Johns has lots more to say with her pen, her voice, her country-bred charisma and maybe that middle digit every now and then.

IN HER OWN WORDS

What CD is on your stereo?

"George Jones' *My Very Special Guests*. I warm up my voice singing along with this album."

Who is your dream duet partner?

"Loretta Lynn, because I'm as feisty as she is."

What's your pet peeve?

"People who don't give 100 percent."

What word or phrase do you find yourself saying over and over again?

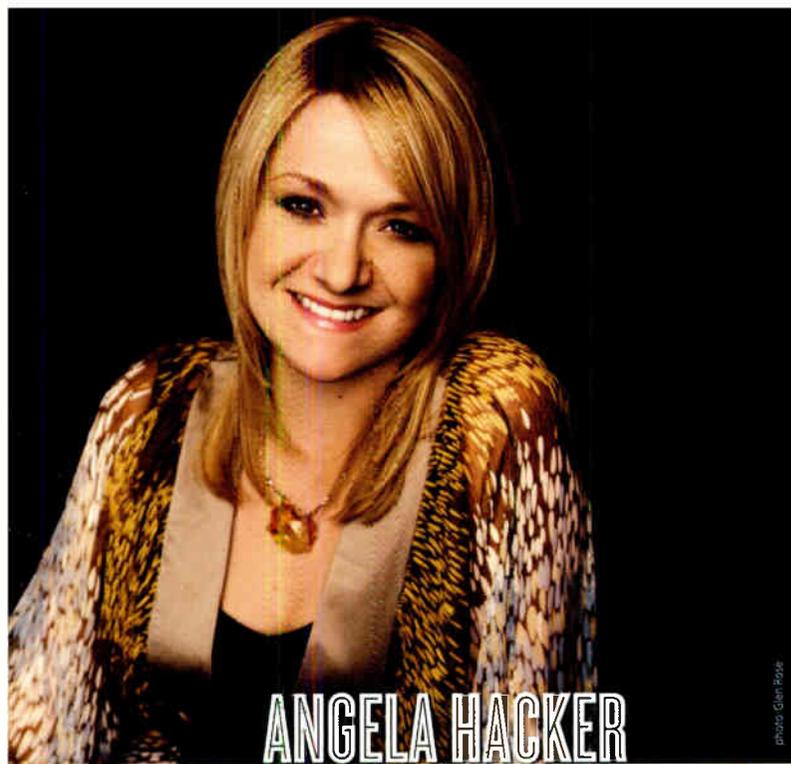
"What city are we in?"

Do you have a lucky charm?

"A horseshoe ring that my father gave to my mom on the day I was born — oh, and a push-up bra."

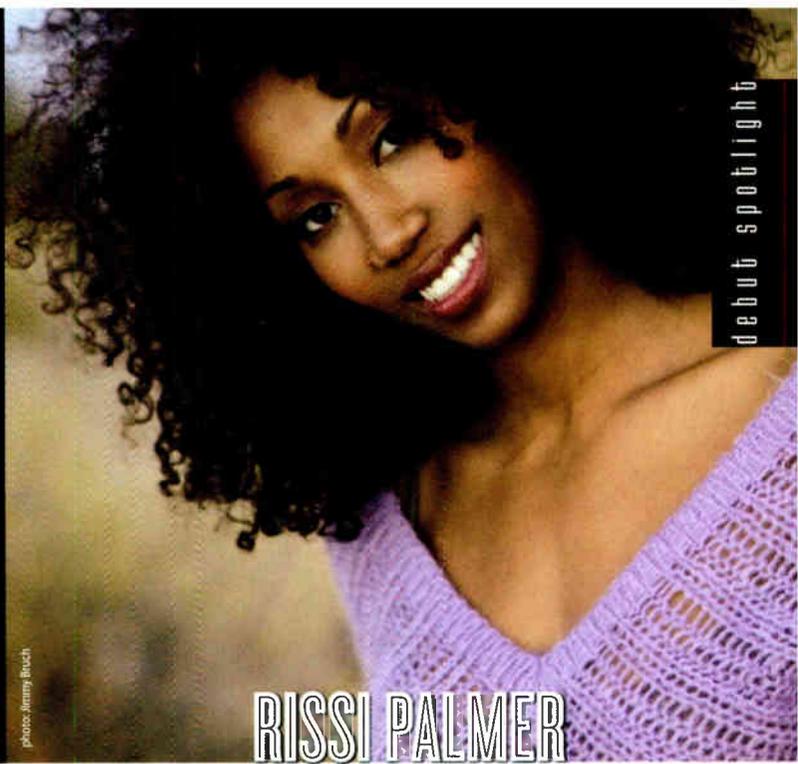


On the Web: myspace.com/sarahjohns1



ANGELA HACKER

photo: Glen Faye



RISSI PALMER

debut spotlight

photo: Jimmy Bruch

Battling to the top on this year's "Nashville Star," Alabama-born Angela Hacker emerged as a prototype for the modern Country chanteuse: Her voice was raw, switching from tenderness to gut-wrench passion on a dime. Onstage she radiated charisma yet resembled the girl next door. She seemed ready to take on the world, including her brother Zac; they were the last two contestants standing, but when Angela emerged as the winner, no one could miss the love and pride that each harbored for the other.

The dust had barely settled before Hacker's debut, produced by Nathan Chapman and Tracy Gershon, hit the display racks. *The Winner Is Angela Hacker: Nashville Star Season 5* is the culmination of a story dating back to childhood appearances at talent shows and festivals. She and Zac grew up on a diet of live Country rock, courtesy of their father's band. By age 13 she was leading her own group and well on her way to a young life spent selling cars, waitressing and doing whatever day work had to be done to allow her to play the bar circuit at night.

Hungry for a more fulfilling creative life, she began writing with James LeBlanc — two of their songs can be heard on the album — before signing a publishing deal with Rick Hall Music and auditioning for "Nashville Star." Her performances, all the way to her showdown with Zac, tempered a gig-toughened professionalism with the grit one picks up on the rougher roads through life, not to mention a rich residue of soul that comes from paying dues around her hometown of Muscle Shoals.

Her gutsy personality comes into full view through the decision to follow Aretha Franklin and Barbara Mandrell to the well of "Do Right Woman, Do Right Man" — and to bring it back with a taste of something that's already all her own. Forget "Season 5": Hacker is obviously a winner for many seasons to come.

IN HER OWN WORDS:

Who is your musical hero?

"The Outlaws: Merle, Willie, Waylon and Kris."

What CD is on your stereo?

"A compilation of originals by me and other writers I know, studying songs for my next album."

Who is your dream duet partner?

"My brother Zac and James LeBlanc."

What song do you wish you had written?

"I Hope You Dance."

On the Web: angelahackeronline.net



When Rissi Palmer invites all the women in the house to "clap your hands ... show the world you're a Country girl," she's doing more than delivering a show-stopping vocal over a stomping, fiddle-lashed groove. She's actually practicing what she preaches.

That's the main reason why the world didn't get the chance to know her first as an R&B superstar. That opportunity beckoned when legendary producers Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis invited her into their stable of big-time clients, which at that time included Boyz II Men, Mary J. Blige, Mariah Carey, Janet Jackson and Michael Jackson.

But as a finalist in "Star Search" in 2003, the glitzy talent hunt phenomenon of the 1980s and early '90s that CBS-TV had revived, she found her true path, thanks to a few simple words from celebrity judge Naomi Judd: Awarding Palmer the maximum score of five stars, the Country legend said, "There are only two kinds of music, good and bad — and Rissi is good."

That's made clear on her self-titled debut, which releases on Oct. 23 with nine songs written or co-written by Palmer. The swaying romanticism of "Hold Onto Me," thoughtful introspection of "Anybody Out There" and irresistible strut of "Country Girl" testify to Palmer's refined, soulful singing. But her writing chops are just as evident, making it no surprise that one of her songs, "Faith," was included in the soundtrack for the Miramax film "The Woodsman" in 2004.

For all the travels she's taken, creatively and personally, from the talent shows of her teenage years in St. Louis to the publishing deal she signed with Song Planet in Nashville at age 20, she presents her message with the assurance you'd expect from a down-home Country girl on her way to the big time.

IN HER OWN WORDS:

Who is your musical hero?

"I admire Dolly Parton and Barbra Streisand. They both have had amazing careers, succeeding in music and film, and in Dolly's case, songwriting. And they still do it today. They have longevity, and that's what I want."

Which song would you secretly like to cover?

"Sweet Lorraine" by Patty Griffin. That song gave me chills the first time I heard it."

What CD is on your stereo?

"I have a six-CD disc changer: Mindy Smith, Patty Griffin, Sugarland, Craig Morgan, Robin Thicke and me."

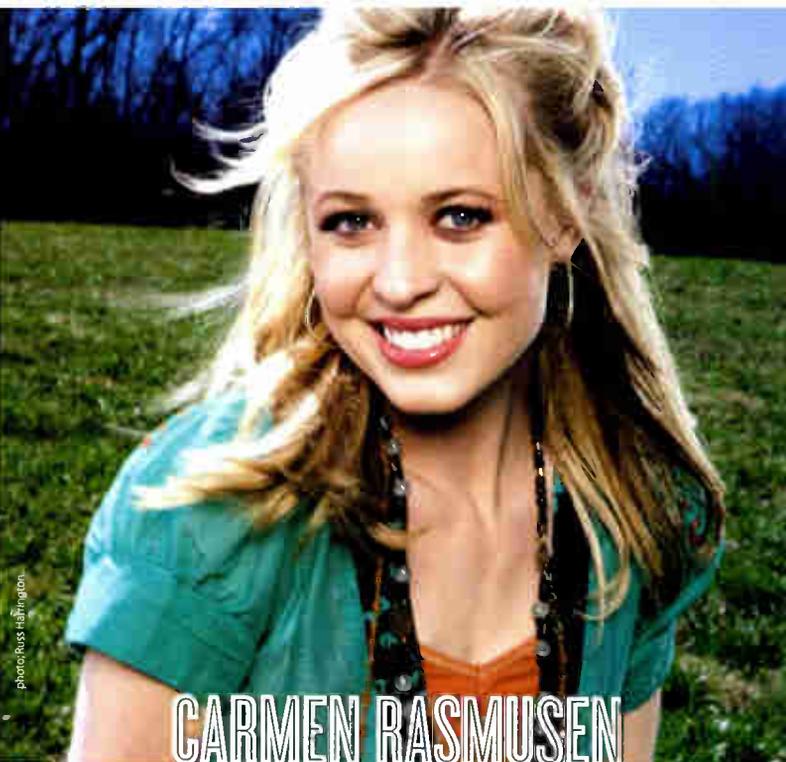
On the Web: rissipalmer.com

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entertainment

Debut Spotlight compiled by Bob Doerschuk

HALFWAY TO HAZARD

photo: Josh Victor Robinson



CARMEN RASMUSEN

Long journeys start with a single step. For David Tolliver and Chad Warrix, the urge to explore began with the occasional short trip to Hazard, whose movie theater and fast-food stands beckoned to those from even smaller Kentucky towns not far away.

From there they made their ways to Nashville. Warrix came first, to study at Belmont University. Tolliver lingered for a while, working a restaurant job to pay for classes at Hazard Community College and the University of Kentucky at Lexington. Purely on impulse, he hung up the apron one night in 1998 and headed for Music City, right around the time that Tolliver secured his music industry degree. Fate, played here by the manager of Warrix's band, brought them together.

Working a regular Tuesday night gig at 3rd & Lindsley, they honed a tough Country sound, with a gritty rock inflection and harmonies that cut sweet and strong at the same time. Their following grew to include influential A&R scouts, but when Tim McGraw took note, the die was cast and they settled at StyleSonic/Mercury Nashville.

With McGraw and Byron Gallimore producing, their self-titled debut benefits from both a high-profile blessing and sure-fire studio sensibility. But the focus is on the artists, whose raw, fist-pumping delivery suggests how the Who's Roger Daltrey might have rocked it had he cut his teeth in Dixie. Bass and drums add muscle to the duo synchronicity at the heart of their music. As for their songs, all but two of which were written by Tolliver and Warrix, suffice it to say that "Country 'Til the Day We Die" might match Skynyrd at the peak of their defiance, passion and pride.

And for anyone tempted to follow in their footsteps, "Welcome to Nashville" closes the album by delivering this twist of ironic wisdom to a body-slam beat: Halfway to Hazard just might be as far as you need to go to follow your dream.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Who is your musical hero?

TOLLIVER: "Garth Brooks."

WARRIX: "Led Zeppelin, George Jones."

What song would you secretly love to cover?

TOLLIVER: "Big Bottoms" by Spinal Tap."

WARRIX: "Bohemian Rhapsody."

What book is on your nightstand?

TOLLIVER and WARRIX: "The Bible."

What CD is on your stereo?

TOLLIVER and WARRIX: "Let It Go, by Tim McGraw."



On the Web: halfwaytohazard.com

Canadian-born Carmen Rasmusen has pulled off what some artists twice her age have yet to achieve. She doesn't just stir memories among those who watched her rise at age 17 to the finals of "American Idol" in 2003 — or, for that matter, those who caught her first stage appearances when she was just 4 years old. More than that, Rasmusen establishes herself as a vocal stylist with a sound so distinctive that it can be recognized almost instantly.

That sound takes full shape on the title track and first single of her debut album, *Nothin' Like the Summer*. Over a reverie of mandolin, acoustic guitar and low-key drums, Rasmusen offers a honeyed, smile-warmed sound that feels innocent and romantic, young and nostalgic, all at once. These same qualities permeate the images painted by the music and lyric, which she co-wrote with Jason Deere and Victoria Shaw, and flow through the album, like a cool stream through pastoral fields.

Of course, that stream picks up a little momentum now and then, as on the rousing "Shine" and playfully teasing "Spend That Money." It even churns into a stretch of rapids on the hard-hitting, backbeat-driven "You Scare Me to Death," another co-write with Deere — but that only makes the *Summer* landscape more varied and compelling.

A member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Rasmusen lives now in Bountiful, Utah, with her husband Brad Herbert, son of the state's Lieutenant Governor.

IN HER OWN WORDS

Who is your musical hero?

"Carole King."

Who is your dream duet partner?

"Garth Brooks."

What book is on your nightstand?

"Jan Karon's *Mitford Series*."

What do you sing in the shower?

"The national anthem."

What's your pet peeve?

"People who wipe their hands on their pants."

What song do you wish you had written?

"From This Moment On," by Shania Twain and Mutt Lange."

When they look back on your life in 50 years, what do you hope people will say about you?

"She stayed true to who she was."

On the Web: carmenrasmusen.com,
myspace.com/carmenrasmusenonline





Tattoo body-art shop.



Festival attendees stroll the streets of Downtown Nashville.



Kix Brooks of Brooks & Dunn greets fans on Broadway.



Music City nightlife on Broadway.

Music Plays and Cash Registers Ring at CMA Music Festival

by TOM ROLAND

Downtown Nashville buzzed during the 2007 CMA Music Festival — not just the honky-tonks up and down Broadway and the restaurants and clubs along Second Avenue, but also the stores whose wares have little to do with Country Music.

A visit to Tattoo, for instance, the body-art shop in the historic building at 301 Broadway, would have revealed 10 artists working full-time to leave indelible Festival impressions. Actually, the impressions were mutual: Patrons walked away with visible memories of their visit, and Tattoo owner Billy Joe Warren went home with bulging pockets, having collected about six times his usual weekly receipts.

"There were some times when we were piled six to seven customers deep per artist," he said. "We had their telephone numbers so that they could go out and do their thing, and then we would call them when they were 10 minutes out from getting their tattoo. So that's [a waiting list of] 60 people deep during the course of that week."

This kind of success was hardly unique to Tattoo. Area restaurants were packed well before and after the typical rush hour. Seventeen clubs involved in the CMA Music Festival After Hours™ program kept the party going long after midnight. During the afternoons, the sidewalks were packed so tightly that many who wanted photos of all the excitement at Tootsie's Orchid Lounge could only lift their cameras above the throngs at the door, click and hope for the best.

Add to that the money spent for hotels, transportation, food and souvenirs, and CMA Music Festival generated a record-setting \$21 million in direct visitor spending for Music City, according to the Nashville Convention & Visitors Bureau.

"The clubs had record weeks, just sales through the roof," observed Butch Spyridon, NCVB President. "The hotels that offered 2008 packages have sold out next year already. They're getting four-night minimums and premium rates, and the fans are not complaining. They want the convenience, they want the logistics, they want the experience. What used to be more of a camping

audience is now a Downtown hotel-stay audience."

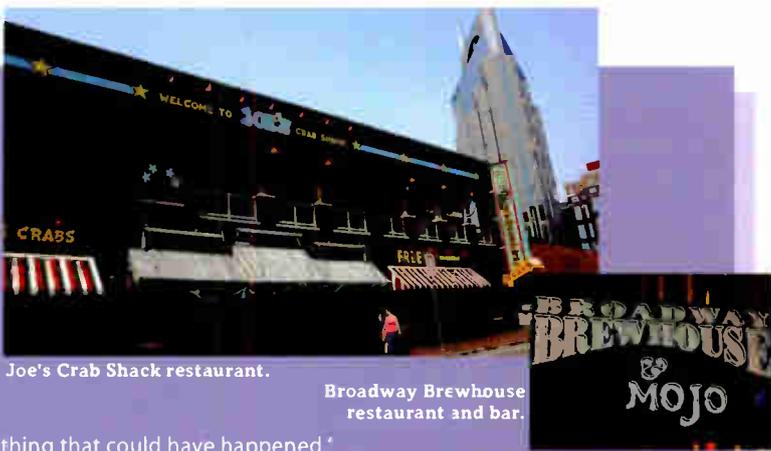
One example of this new-breed customer would be Tattoo customer Maria Tooma of North Arlington, N.J., who has made a ritual out of getting a new tattoo inked at the Festival each year. During this year's Sunday-to-Sunday visit, she took in the CMA Music Festival Kick-Off Parade, the Chevy Music Tour shows outside the Sommet Center, the Nightly Concerts at LP Field, the Grand Ole Opry's Tuesday night show and one of the "CMA Celebrity Close Up" interview tapings presented by GAC at the Ryman Auditorium. By her estimation, she spent \$2,500 on Festival-related activities which included about \$400 in cab fare to get her from the Renaissance Hotel in Downtown Nashville to malls and the Opryland Hotel in the days before the Festival began. It also included dinners, most often at The Palm on Fifth Avenue in Downtown.

As Tooma saw it, the atmosphere of the Festival resembles that of the neighborhood that surrounds another favorite destination, the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y. "This stretch of Broadway reminds me of Main Street in Cooperstown," she said. "A few blocks away, you wouldn't know it was a baseball town."

So it was with Lower Broadway during the Festival. The area is already a tourist destination, so the presence of people sporting lime-green CMT tote bags, cameras and Festival lanyards was to be expected. Still, longtime Nashville residents expressed surprise at the number of 20-somethings attending this year's event.

"It was a much younger crowd this year than I've ever seen," noted Hardy Ross, owner of Rippy's and the Broadway Brewhouse, where tables were completely filled during the brief rains that fell on Friday during the Festival. "It was a much more sophisticated crowd, a crowd on a higher economic scale."

"The economic impact Downtown has gone through the roof with this thing," he continued. "Now you're seeing it broadcast on television. That only adds to the mystique. People see that: 'Wow, next year I'm going to that, because I know for four days, I can see anybody I want to see!' It's a great environment, a fun town, hotels everywhere, a beautiful area. Moving it to Downtown was the best



Joe's Crab Shack restaurant.

Broadway Brewhouse restaurant and bar.

thing that could have happened."

Ross has the numbers to prove it, as the Brewhouse tripled its typical weekly revenue during the Festival, while Rippy's did four or five times its usual business.

Likewise, Joe's Crab Shack, located a block off of Broadway on Second Avenue, did \$120,000 worth of business during the Festival — double its usual income for the period.

"We run with approximately 20 to 25 servers, but during that week we'll have anywhere from 35 to 40 servers, so we hire, hire, hire," said Kojo Asanta, Assistant GM. "You don't necessarily worry about the cost, so to speak. You worry about taking care of the guests and making sure everything goes really smooth. The money's going to come in, so you don't worry about spending it."

Employees, as well as business owners, benefit during the Festival. Most servers bring in from \$200 to \$300 per night in tips during the week, Asante noted, which suggests Country Music fans can be generous tippers.

In earlier decades, when the event was still called Fan Fair, Nashvillians weren't always this happy to see the tourists streaming into town. Traffic jams often resulted, and with visitors spending their time at the Tennessee State Fairgrounds, they were less apt to spend money on the local economy.

That antagonism is pretty much a thing of the past. "There's definitely more local support from the average citizen and the business community, and that support is an appreciation of the event," said Spyridon. "CMA has worked extremely hard on that side. They've had a group of people meet regularly to brainstorm how we can communicate it better to the local community and have the community embrace it, both in attendance and value. I think that's beginning to take hold."

That local support is evident in the 14 percent increase in single-concert ticket sales and more than 191,000 aggregate attendance at this year's Festival. It's evident from the positive vibes of the Downtown merchants. And it reflects CMA's efforts at plowing half of the receipts back into the community, represented by CMA donating \$368,502 (to date) for music education in Nashville Public Schools through "Keep the Music Playing," as well as the stamp of importance lent to the event by ABC-TV's special, "CMA Music Festival: Country's Night to Rock."

"CMA Music Festival has done as much or more for Downtown Nashville than any sports team has," Ross emphasized. "It's wonderful to see Nashville embrace what makes them unique from any other town in America. The city's musical heritage makes us different. We need to glorify it, hold it out, cherish it and embrace it."

"CMA Music Festival is a showcase for Nashville that drives tourism, generates a strong base of local revenue and contributes needed funds for music education in our public schools," said CMA COO Tammy Genovese. "This is Nashville's signature musical event and our success and continued growth would not be possible without the support of Mayor Bill Purcell, the mayor's office and the city, Metro Council, Butch Spyridon and the NCVB, the Nashville Chamber of Commerce, the business community and local residents. What makes this event special is that everyone benefits as the Festival continues to achieve new heights generating additional income for the community and money for music education."

Album Sales Rocket After "CMA Music Festival: Country's Night to Rock"

According to Nielsen SoundScan, 14 of the 20 artists who performed on "CMA Music Festival: Country's Night to Rock" enjoyed a significant increase in album sales during the week that followed the July 23 broadcast on the ABC Television Network.

In some cases, these upticks were nothing short of spectacular: Martina McBride's *Timeless*, which had experienced a 30 percent increase in sales during the week ending July 22, exploded with a 184 percent surge over the following week while jumping from No. 62 to No. 29 on the Nielsen SoundScan Country Albums chart.

Other artists who apparently benefited from their exposure on the ABC-TV special included Dierks Bentley, Big & Rich, Brooks & Dunn, Little Big Town, Reba McEntire, Rascal Flatts and Taylor Swift. The greatest gainers were:

PERCENT INCREASE	ARTIST	ALBUM
184	Martina McBride	<i>Timeless</i>
174	Sara Evans	<i>Real Fine Place</i>
45	Josh Turner	<i>Your Man</i>
42	Kellie Pickler	<i>Small Town Girl</i>
19	The Wreckers	<i>Stand Still, Look Pretty</i>
17	Suga Land	<i>Enjoy the Ride</i>
11	Alan Jackson	<i>Precious Memories</i>
11	Martina McBride	<i>Waking Up Laughing</i>

Save 40 percent off all 2007 CMA Music Festival apparel while supplies last! Visit CMAfest.com/2007



CMA Honored for Supporting Nashville Public Schools

The Nashville Alliance for Public Education (NAPE) presents its Bell Award to CMA on Aug. 14, during a meeting of the Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) board. NAPE, a nonprofit consortium of corporate and civic leaders dedicated to improving public education in Nashville, recognizes CMA for its "Keep the Music Playing" program, which donates half the net proceeds of CMA Music Festival to NAPE for music education in Nashville public schools. After receiving a standing ovation, rare in school board meetings, CMA COO Tammy Genovese noted, "CMA has stepped up to the plate in a mighty big way to make a huge dent in our music program needs and keep the music playing in our schools." (l-r) Pam Garrett, Executive Director, NAPE; Tammy Genovese, CMA COO; Dr. Pedro Garcia, Director, MNPS; and Marsha Warden, Chairman, Board of Directors, MNPS. photo: Amanda Eckard

JERRY CASE, pedal steel guitarist, 52, died Aug. 26 aboard the General Jackson Showboat in Nashville. Born in Heath, Ohio, he embarked on his long career at age 15, as a member of Jimmy Case & The Cherokees. Following another stretch of touring with Leon Everette, he performed with his wife as a steel guitar and vocal duo. After winning a battle of the bands in Wisconsin, he was introduced to Steve Hall, who carried Case's business card in his wallet for three years before calling him to perform in his "Shotgun Red Country Music and Comedy Revue" in Branson, Mo. Several months later, the act transferred for a 12-year run aboard the General Jackson. Four years ago, when Hall decided to take the act on the road, Case started running sound on the showboat; he was on the job, setting up the sound system, when he succumbed to a heart attack.

WILLIAM DOUCHETTE (SHERIFF TEX DAVIS), songwriter, record executive and radio personality, 93, died Aug. 29 in Hendersonville, Tenn., of natural causes. Born in New Britain, Conn., Davis is known as the likely co-composer of "Be-Bop-a-Lula." Different accounts of the rockabilly composition exist, but what's indisputable is that Davis was manager of the singer who made it famous, Gene Vincent. A World War II veteran, Davis broke into radio in the late '40s and hosted a Country Music show on WLOW/Norfolk, Va., where he invented his jovial "Sheriff Tex Davis" persona. After transferring to WCMS/Norfolk, Davis hosted "The All-Star Record Roundup," was station manager and booked concerts. In 1967, Davis began work as a radio promoter at Monument Records, where he worked singles by Kris Kristofferson and Dolly Parton among others.

LEE HAZLEWOOD, songwriter, producer and singer, 78, died Aug. 4, at home in Henderson, Nev., after a two-year struggle against renal cancer. Born in Oklahoma, he moved frequently throughout childhood, as his father sought work in the oil fields. Drafted into the Army, he alternated duty in Korea with shifts as a disc jockey for Armed Forces Radio in Japan. Hazlewood continued this line of work after returning to the States before launching his own label, Viv, in Phoenix. Some of his early productions, including Sanford Clark's "The Fool" and Duane Eddy's "Rebel Rouser," influenced Phil Spector and anticipated the atmospheric film scores of Ennio Morricone. Hazlewood debuted as an artist with *Trouble Is a Lonesome Town* in 1963, but his greatest success was as composer and producer of Nancy Sinatra's "These Boots Are Made for Walkin'," which topped the charts in 1966. He produced "Somethin' Stupid," her duet with father Frank Sinatra, and joined her on three duo albums, including 1968's Platinum *Nancy & Lee*. He signed Gram Parsons to his first recording contract as a member of The International Submarine

Band and produced sessions by Eddy Arnold and Waylon Jennings, among others. His last album, *Cake or Death*, was released in 2005.

CECIL D. "SONNY" SIMMONS, talent agent, 75, died July 30, in Nashville, following a long illness. Simmons helped launch the Gospel Music Association and founded Century II Promotions, an early Southern Gospel music agency that later expanded into the Country market. Under his leadership, Century II pioneered organizing package tours under corporate sponsorship with a 57-city tour that included Alabama, Mickey Gilley, Johnny Lee, Juice Newton and the Thrasher Brothers in 1983-84. His gospel clients included The Blackwood Singers and The Fox Brothers, with Garth Brooks, The Oak Ridge Boys and Dolly Parton among the Country artists he has represented. Williams served for six terms as President of the Nashville Association of Talent Directors. His charitable activities included donating his services for 18 years to organizing an annual fund-raising concert in Greenville, S.C., with each one raising more than \$100,000 for a Shriner's fund for disabled children and burn victims.

JIM TONER (THE GLASGOW COWBOY), artist, 68, died Aug. 10 in Hawke's Bay, New Zealand, as a result of a diabetes-related leg infection. Toner grew up in a working-class section of Glasgow, Scotland, before emigrating with his family to Napier, New Zealand, in 1974. He established himself in his adopted homeland's Country Music scene, through a vigorous performing schedule as well as through his service as founder and first President of the New Zealand Country Music Awards. Toner opened for Alabama, Glen Campbell, Freddy Fender and other headliners, but was best known among fans for his work and countless performances for charitable causes.

LAWTON WILLIAMS, songwriter, 85, died July 26, in Fort Worth, Texas, from a respiratory ailment. Born in Troy, Tenn., Williams learned the basics of songwriting from Floyd Tillman while stationed in Houston during World War II. His song "Fraulein," recorded by Bobby Helms, topped the charts for four weeks in 1957; *Billboard* and *Cashbox* subsequently named it Country Song of the Year, and Townes Van Zandt paid tribute to it by including it on *The Late Great Townes Van Zandt* in 1972. Williams' other hits included "Color of the Blues" (George Jones), "Farewell Party" (Gene Watson), "Geisha Girl" (Hank Locklin) and "Shame on Me" (Joe Nichols). As a recording artist, Williams charted two singles, "Anywhere There's a People" and "Everything's OK on the LBJ," in the early '60s and appeared frequently on the weekly Dallas radio program "Big 'D' Jamboree." A member of the Grand Ole Opry, he recorded his last album, *Mending Fences*, in 2003.

SHEREME SIEWNARINE has joined CMA as Manager of Financial Services. Born in Trinidad and equipped with an accounting degree from Volunteer State Community College, she has lived in Nashville since 2000, when she accepted an administrative position at the Gaylord Opryland Culinary Institute. Six months later she managed administrative functions in the operations department of the Grand Ole Opry, with responsibilities that ranged from booking shows and overseeing staff to editing a monthly

publication, *The Backstage Bulletin*.

"We handled everything that involved running the Opry shows and special events," Siewnarine said. "If I had to be a bartender or work at the concession stand, I'd do that too. It was very hands-on."

Her responsibilities also included serving as liaison with CMA in preparing daily schedules for three CMA Awards. "I wanted to get more into the financial field," she explained, "so I made use of my connections with CMA when this position opened."

Siewnarine devotes much of her time away from CMA to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. For three years she has served as treasurer of the organization's Nashville branch and is on the chapter's board of directors.

"Shereme has 12 years of experience in accounting, including budgeting, accounts payable, auditing and reconciliation of accounts," said Amy Smartt, CMA Senior Director of Finance and Administration, to whom Siewnarine will report. "The team is fortunate to have someone with Shereme's experience and abilities. I am excited that Shereme will be working with us where she will be a real asset to CMA."



**SOURCE AWARDS
HONOR FEMALE
MUSIC INDUSTRY
PIONEERS**



This year's Fifth Annual SOURCE Foundation Awards, honoring women whose influence left a strong and positive impact on the music industry, were presented to six recipients in August at the Musicians Hall of Fame and Museum in Nashville. The honorees included: songwriter, publisher and Country Music Hall of Fame member Felice Bryant (posthumously); artist manager and record label executive Mary Martin (Asylum, Mercury, RCA, Warner Bros.); photographer Hope Powell; Maggie Carter-Ward (Tree Publishing, Mel Tillis Enterprises, Fireside Studio); Trish Williams Warren (Mercury, Gallico Music, JK Productions); and Jan Ray Suk, hired at CMA as an assistant to Jo Walker-Meador, then CMA Executive Director. After her departure from CMA in 1976, Suk remained involved in both the CMA Awards and CMA Music Festival, with responsibilities ranging from talent coordination to production management. CMA is a proud sponsor of the SOURCE Foundation Awards.

(above) Winners and VIPs at Source Awards presentation. (l-r) Nashville Mayor Bill Purcell, Trish Williams Warren, former CMA Executive Director Jo Walker-Meador, Hope Powell, Brenda Lee, Jeannie Seely, Mary Martin, Jan Ray Suk and Dane Bryant (accepting for Felice Bryant). (right) CMA COO Tammy Genovese, event hostess Brenda Lee and former CMA Executive Director Jo Walker-Meador. photos: Kay Williams



photo: Amanda Eclard

CMA LAUNCHES NEW PODCAST SERIES

With the launch of the "CMA Road Stories" podcast series, CMA takes an important step forward in its commitment to bring the artists and fans of Country Music closer together. Inspired by the "Road to CMA Music Festival" concerts that took place in the months before this year's Festival, and hosted by Dave Beronja, CMA Manager of Web Development, these podcasts present artists as they recount their most memorable experiences while on tour.

"If we have discovered one thing after presenting CMA Music Festival for 36 years, it is that our fans really enjoy a behind-the-footlights glimpse at the lives and careers of our artists," said CMA COO Tammy Genovese. "This series will offer them an opportunity to get to know these artists and their music in a new and exciting way."

The series began with Carter's Chord, followed by Ray Scott, Eric Church, Bucky Covington, Cowboy Crush, Flynnville Train, Rissi Palmer, Trick Pony, Jon Wolfe and Chris Young are among the artists scheduled to follow in the next few months.

"These are more conversations than interviews," said Daphne Larkin, CMA Director of Online Marketing. "They're fun and interesting, and they're a great way for fans to have a behind-the-scenes perspective into the lives of these artists."

While the "CMA Road Stories" interviews will continue, plans are underway to broaden the focus of upcoming podcasts by addressing other subjects as well.

New podcasts will be announced by e-mail to CMA Exclusive subscribers and noted at MySpace.com/CMAawards. To access podcasts, visit CMAworld.com and click on "multimedia." Fans may also subscribe to podcasts via CMAworld.com, CMAfest.com or itunes.com. For those who don't have iTunes or want a direct download, an MP3 is also available.

COUNTRY ARTISTS DOLL IT UP FOR CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Big Kenny of Big & Rich, Jimmy Buffett, George Jones, Martina McBride, Brad Paisley, George Strait, Carrie Underwood, Keith Urban and LeAnn Womack are among the celebrities who have decorated wooden versions of hand-in-hand paper dolls for auction on givingworks.ebay.com. All proceeds will be donated to Nashville's Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt, whose logo is two red paper dolls, holding hands. Bidding begins Nov. 23. Sony BMG Chairman Joe Galante serves as Honorary Chairman. "A lot of people don't realize that Vanderbilt Children's Hospital is nonprofit," said Bryan Frasher, Arista Nashville National Director of Promotion and an organizer for the "Project Paper Doll." "They need to raise money, just like St. Jude or any other hospital. This auction helps get word out across the country." On the Web: projectpaperdoll.org or vanderbiltchildrens.com.



NEW CD RELEASES

OCT. 2

Ryan Bingham / *Mescalito* / Lost Highway
Brooks & Dunn / *Cowboy Town* / Arista Nashville
DVD: Glen Campbell Good Times Again / Time Life
Cross Canadian Ragweed / *Mission California* / Universal Records South
Merle Haggard / *The Bluegrass Sessions* / McCoury Music
Faith Hill / *The Hits* / Warner Bros.
Toni Price / *Talk Memphis* / Antone's
Chuck Prophet / *Soup and Water* / Yep Roc
The Sadies / *New Seasons* / Yep Roc
Chip Taylor & Carrie Rodriguez / *Live from the Ruhr Triennale: October 2005* / Train Wreck
B.J. Thomas / *Love to Burn* / BJ Thomas Music
Various Artists / *Songs 4 Worship: Country* / Time Life
Various Artists / *Hear Something Country Christmas* / BNA

OCT. 9

Patterson Barrett / *I Must Be Dreaming* / So' Fish Records
Deana Carter / *The Chain* / Vanguard
Charlie Daniels Band / *Deuces* / Blue Hat/Koch
Deadstring Brothers / *Silver Mountain* / Bloodshot
Diamond Rio / *A Diamond Rio Christmas: The Star Still Shines* / Word
Bill Emerson & the Sweet Dixie Band / *Bill Emerson & the Sweet Dixie Band* / Rebel
Sara Evans / *Greatest Hits* / RCA Nashville
LeAnn Rimes / *Family* / Curb/Asylum
Van Zant / *My Kind of Country* / Columbia
Various Artists / *Christmas Grass 3: 3 Fox Drive and Friends* / Koch
Various Artists / *The Gift: A Tribute to Ian Tyson* / Stony Plain Records
Various Artists / *True Bluegrass Instrumentals* / Rebel

OCT. 15

Stephen Cochran / *Stephen Cochran* / Aris
Toby Keith / *A Classic Christmas* / Show Dog Nashville

OCT. 23

Gary Allan / *Living Hard* / MCA Nashville
Shooter Jennings / *The Wolf* / Universal Records South
Larry the Cable Guy / TBD / Warner Bros.
Tracy Lawrence / *All Wrapped Up in Christmas* / RCR/COS/A2M
Lisa O'Kane / *It Don't Hurt* / New Light Ent./Universal
Mountain Heart / *The Road That Never Ends* / Rural Rhythm
Rissi Palmer / *Rissi Palmer* / 1720 Ent.
Robert Plant and Alison Krauss / *Raising Sand* / Rounder
Dwight Yoakam / *Dwight Sings Buck* / New West
Carrie Underwood / *Carnival Ride* / 19 Recordings/ Arista
Corinne West / *Second Sight* / Make Records

OCT. 30

Josh Turner / *Everything Is Fine* / MCA Nashville

NOV. 6

Garth Brooks / *Garth Brooks: The Ultimate Hits* / Pearl
Little Big Town / *A Place to Land* / Equity
DVD: Marshall Tucker Band Carolina Dreams Tour '77 / Shout Factory
Jo Dee Messina / TBD / Curb

NOV. 13

The Wreckers / TBD / Warner Bros.
Trisha Yearwood / *Heaven, Heartache and the Power of Love* / Big Machine
DVD: The Johnny Cash Christmas Special 1976 / Shout Factory
DVD: The Johnny Cash Christmas Special 1977 / Shout Factory

DEC. 4

Trace Adkins / TBD / Capitol

*Release dates are subject to change without notice.

compiled by Athena Patterson

CONGRATULATIONS

15
YEARS

by BOB DOERSCHUK

As CMA International Director, Bobbi Boyce is a fixture in Music City and in Country Music circles beyond American shores. From venues and media offices in Europe to seemingly every event with a global spin at CMA Music Festival and the CMA Awards, her presence after 15 years at CMA has become essential and welcome.

With roots dug deep in both London and Nashville, Boyce, a member of the CMA Strategic Marketing Department, dedicates her professional life to raising the visibility of Country Music in every possible foreign market. It is, obviously, a mandate with its own set of unique challenges.

"Each territory is different," Boyce explained. "Soon after I started with CMA, for example, the first 24-hour Country radio station got licensed in the UK. That indicates a different level of acceptance than when you're dealing with some other areas."

It takes just a few minutes of conversation to see that Boyce is as enthusiastic about Country Music as anyone at CMA. But it takes only a second to realize that her background isn't exactly typical for the organization.

"I'm a Cockney," she admitted, laughing, "born in the East End of London."

Quicker than you could say "enry'iggins," Boyce worked her way up from her neighborhood and into the entertainment business. She left a job with a major UK charity in London to work independently as a talent representative, with former Monkees lead singer Davy Jones as her most prominent client.

"Working with Davy was not unlike what I do now at CMA," she explained. "I traveled with him and handled all the areas of his career: publishing, radio, publicity, administration and so on. At CMA, I do all of those things with the Communications Department during the Music Festival and Awards, in the work that I've done with New From Nashville and in the day-to-day work at CMA. So my experience with Davy was actually very helpful in preparing me for what I do now."

Her introduction to CMA came after she moved to Nashville. Through a friend who worked at CMA, her husband, a songwriter, learned that a position as "European Assistant" had opened in the company's London office. Boyce got the job, and with that her peripatetic routine, ongoing now for 15 years, began.

"Things were so different then," she remembered. "You had to knock on doors just to make yourself known. Nowadays, Country Music has become a part of the general music industry. The CMA Awards are broadcast on BBC 2 and BBC Radio 2 and in more countries than 10 years ago. We've benefited from incredibly loyal supporters, such as Mark Hagen, Executive Producer, BBC UK and Georges Lang, who's had a Country Music show for years on the largest radio network in France, RTL. A strong foundation has been built."

"Bobbi has a unique ability to bridge the established with the new," said Tammy Genovese, CMA COO. "She can endeavor herself to industry legends just as easily as with young hipsters from Berlin, Dublin and London. But perhaps her greatest strength is her ability to spot strategic trends, peel the onion back and help develop relationships for the future."

As for that future, Boyce targets both specific and general goals. "I'd like to see a 24-hour Country Music video channel in Europe," she said. "I'd like to see a viral marketing campaign to encourage younger people to get onboard. In fact, more young people than ever are listening to Country Music over there. Maybe Keith Urban, Faith Hill and Shania Twain aren't marketed as Country, but it is making an impact. To me, that's what counts."

photo: Amanda Eckard



10 YEARS

by **BOB DOERSCHUK**

Music draws out-of-towners to Nashville, whether to attend CMA Music Festival, shop their demos or enroll in a music business program.

Kris Kennedy, Senior Manager of Events in the CMA Events and Special Projects Department, seemed to fit the last category when she came to Music City — until you looked a little closer.

"I was one of the few students at Belmont University who wasn't interested in performing," she said. "I came here because I wanted to study business."

Originally from Nebraska, she had moved with her family to Arkansas and began her college studies at the University of Central Arkansas. But when a friend pulled into Conway,

Ark., and began talking about how much she enjoyed life back in Nashville, Kennedy began rethinking her plans.

"I went on a visit to Nashville," she said. "And I decided to move because everything seemed so creative and exciting. I just wanted to study business — just not straight-up business."

Kennedy was in her senior year at Belmont when one of her professors passed along the news that an internship opportunity had opened up at CMA. She came in for an interview and went to work shortly after that in Events and Special Projects. It was January 1995, just a month after she'd earned her diploma, when Kennedy hit the ground at full speed as an intern with an assignment to work at the Exhibit Hall during the CMA Music Festival.

"I learn more by doing than by reading a book," she explained. "And one thing I learned that year was how important internships are. That's helped me a great deal in supervising interns for our department now."

She stayed onboard through the CMA Awards later that year as a temp worker, and then left to take other positions. These carried her through to January 1997, when Bobette Dudley, who headed the Events and Special Projects Department, called to offer her a job, which she accepted, for full-time employment as an assistant.

Kennedy rose steadily through a series of positions: Assistant, Coordinator, Senior Coordinator, Manager and Senior Manager. Her ability to learn on the job served her well especially when the CMA Music Festival relocated from the Fairgrounds to Downtown Nashville in 2001.

"That first year, we didn't know what to expect," she said. "I remember calling Bobette and saying, 'I don't know what to do!' Bobette is a great manager of people because she trusts us to do our jobs, so she just said, 'Do whatever you need to do to make it happen.' We made it up as we went along — and what we learned grew into a good system."

The size as well as location of the Festival has changed dramatically over the past decade. "It's massive," Kennedy said. "It used to be that we could put it aside at a certain point and not have to work on it. Nowadays, we work on so many elements of the Festival year-round."

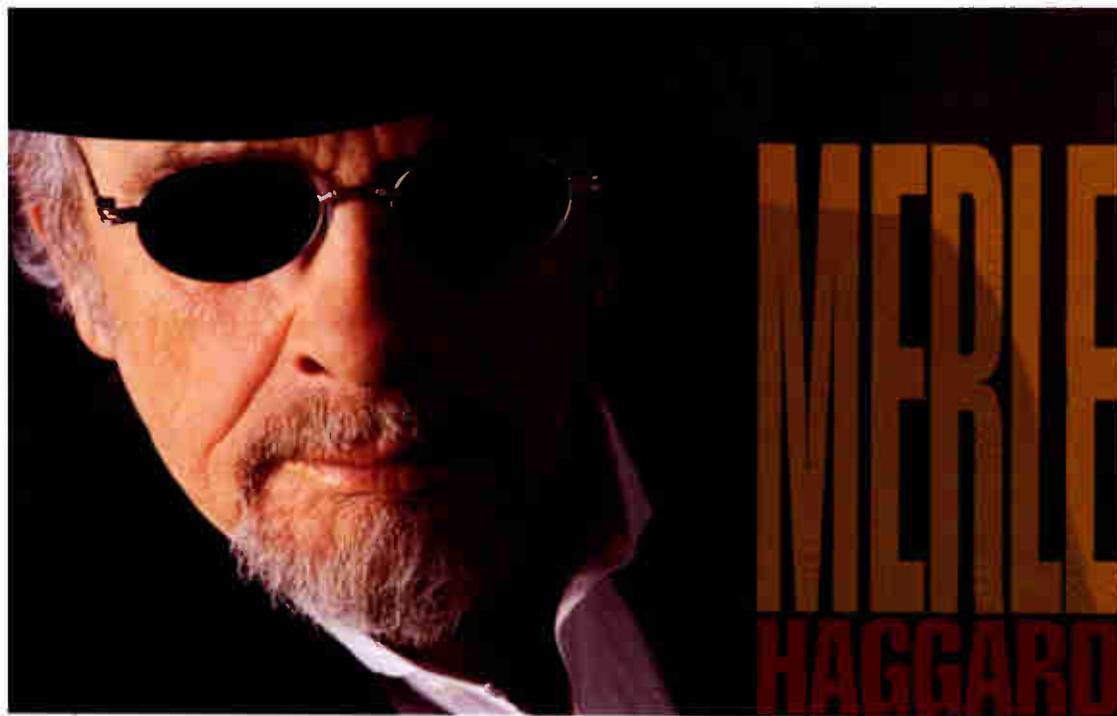
Through much of the year, Kennedy deals with issues related to the Exhibit Hall for the Festival, including set-ups for CMA Media and Premiere Radio Networks, staffing, keeping costs under control and more. She also oversees merchandise, helps with credentials and prepares to manage activities at the Nashville Convention Center, more or less as a general maps out a military campaign. This means hiring supervisors to serve as her liaisons to an event staff of 80, reviewing each day's schedule with them in advance, showing up at 7 AM to walk through the facility and check with security staff, making sure it's shut down at 4 PM and empty by 5, handling all expected and unexpected problems related to meals, artist schedules, fan accessibility and every other concern. Like the CMA Music Festival, the CMA Awards is a year-long project for Kennedy. When the event moved from Nashville to New York City's Madison Square Garden in 2005, ticket sales opened for the first time to the general public. With the numbers of available tickets rising from 4,000 in 2004 to 11,000 in '05, the fact that all went smoothly says a lot for Kennedy's grasp of the logistics and flexibility in dealing with changes in venue, magnitude and other issues.

"Kris is a respected and valuable team member — to me, to our department and to CMA in general," said Bobette Dudley, CMA VP of Events and Program Development. "It's rare to find someone so dependable and organized who also possesses self-starting initiative and always strives for the best. I knew Kris had great potential right from the start, and I am proud of what she's accomplished both professionally and personally over the last 10 years. She is a wonderful asset, and I am very proud that we are celebrating her 10th Anniversary with CMA this year."

Her CMA experience hasn't been only a professional pleasure. Back in 2000 she met a new employee, John Kennedy, now a staff songwriter at Universal Music Publishing Group. Married in 2001, they have one daughter, Emerson, who was born last year — just one month after the Festival.

"People were making bets that I wouldn't make it through the Festival, but I did," Kennedy said, proving in more ways than one that it doesn't pay to bet against Kris Kennedy.

photo: Amanda Eclard



THE BLUEGRASS SESSIONS: MERLE HAGGARD'S NEW

by **BOB DOERSCHUK**

For maybe 10 years, Country Music Hall of Famer Merle Haggard has been thinking about recording a bluegrass album. But with McCoury Music poised to release *The Bluegrass Sessions*, on Oct. 2, the fruits of his ambition are somewhat surprising.

After all, these performances don't rocket along on banjo-driven, Scruggs-style adrenaline. No tenor harmonies soar over the instrumental foundation. Only one of its 12 songs, "Blues Stay Away from Me," stems from the genre's standard repertoire; the rest, aside from a Jimmie Rodgers medley, comes from Haggard's catalog.

The question, then, is whether this is really a bluegrass album at all.

"Well, I've thought about that several times," Haggard, the 1970 CMA Entertainer of the Year, admitted. "It's a good question. It's certainly worth answering, and I don't know if I'm qualified to answer it. So I'm going to let the people decide what they think."

The will of the people has always been important to Haggard, composer of "Workin' Man Blues" and other hymns to the wisdom and strength of blue-collar America. Parsing his music into one or another category is less of a priority. Certainly it was far from his mind when Haggard and a group of all-star musicians gathered for two days at Ricky Skaggs' studio near Nashville to cut these tracks.

"We could have gone deeper into bluegrass," he reflected. "We could have put harmony on it, because we had good harmony singers all around us. We could have done this and we could have done that. But there's no way to change me. I'm 70 years old, so Merle Haggard just went down there with some good bluegrass pickers and made an album. It was a three-way choice between Ronnie, Marty and me to leave it alone, because what we were playing was so fresh and unrehearsed. And that's the result, right there."

Ronnie Reno and Marty Stuart were among the musicians on *The Bluegrass Sessions*, along with younger players who also boast strong bluegrass credentials. Some of them were strangers to Haggard; Reno, however, had been a Stranger for nine years, an experience that coupled with the deep bluegrass lineage of his family to put him in a key position on this album.

"When I was with The Strangers, from 1972 through '81, Merle was playing the fiddle a lot," said Reno. "Of course, he played a lot like Bob Wills at that time, but he knew a lot of old breakdowns, which I also knew from bluegrass. So we'd play them as we were going down the road on his bus,

and we'd get into singing songs like 'Molly and Tenbrooks' or 'Love, Please Come Home.' We talked a lot about the earlier years, when he used to listen to my dad, Don Reno, and his partner Red Smiley on the radio."

"Ronnie was working with Sonny and Bobby Osborne when I hired him," Haggard remembered. "I learned a lot about bluegrass from Ronnie, about the inside of it. So when the time finally got right to do this album, I called him. And it took off right then."

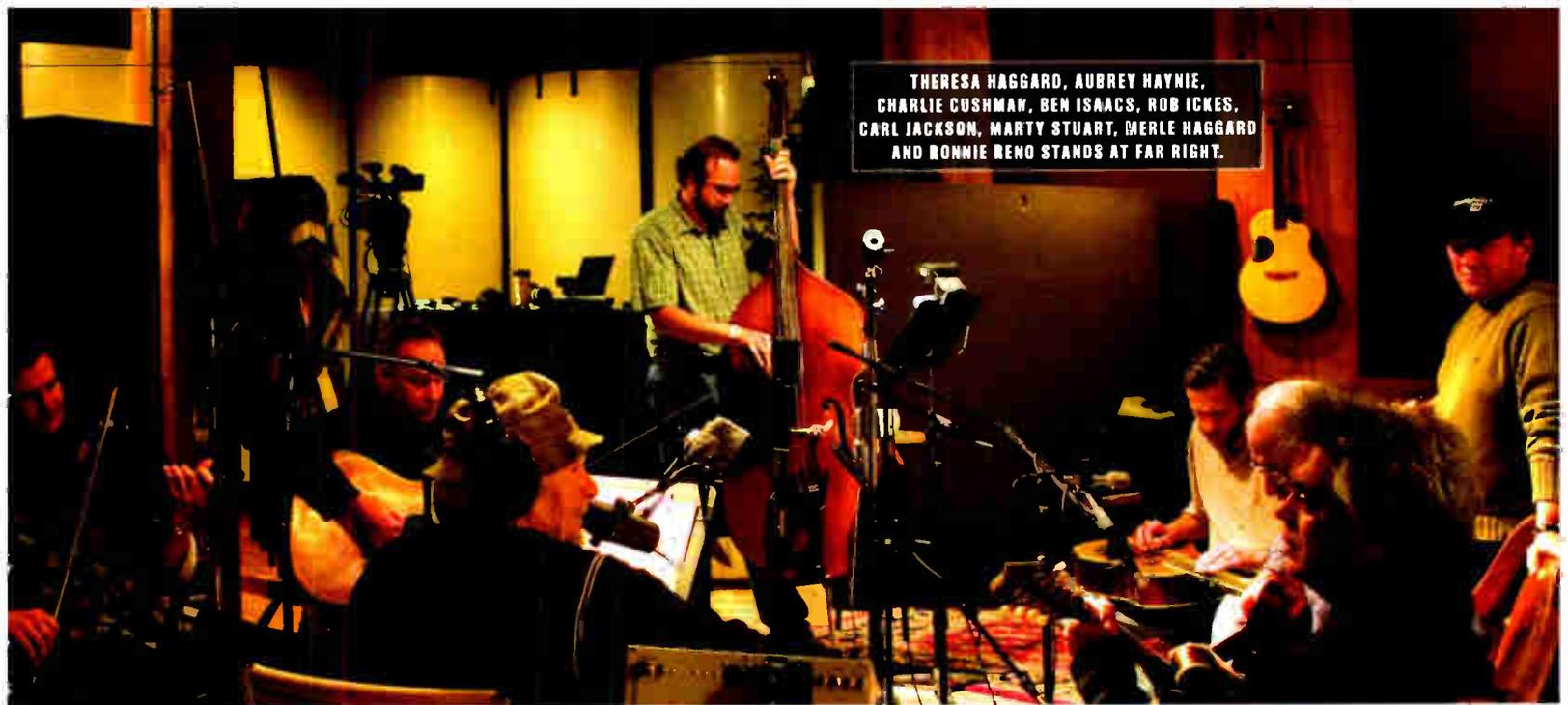
Aside from asking him to invite Stuart to join them, Haggard left it up to Reno to put the band together and work out the logistics. Early in this process, it became clear that a by-the-book bluegrass approach was not the likely outcome. "We went through several attempts to pick some material," Reno said, "but it always kept going back to new songs that Merle was writing."

"We thought about confining ourselves to the standards," Haggard added, "but it just didn't make much sense to us. I'm Merle Haggard, that's bluegrass music, and why can't it be new? So we just picked a bunch of songs that I had."

They settled on a mix of classic and new works. "Big City" made the cut in part because Haggard enjoyed the bluegrass-flavored version that Iris DeMent contributed to the Haggard tribute album, *Tulare Dust: A Songwriter's Tribute to Merle Haggard*. "Hungry Eyes" is there too, with poignant chorus harmonies added by Alison Krauss. Highlights from the new compositions include "Pray," a waltz-time meditation on love that Haggard wrote with his wife Theresa while reconciling after an argument, and "What Happened," a funny/sad reflection on America's loss of innocence.

"I wrote that one a couple of years ago, after taking my wife to the hospital over the Christmas holidays," he said. "I was driving back home from the Bay Area in my Hummer when a real fierce storm hit on Interstate 5. I had to negotiate this hurricane with trucks all around me and a cross wind of 60 or 70 miles an hour when this song hit me. It took me three hours to wrangle that song in the midst of this storm. Songwriters never know when something great will come by. When it does, you don't want to miss it."

Haggard showed up at the studio late in the morning with his list of songs, his guitar and trust that Reno had put the right combination of players together. It didn't take long after that for everyone to connect, though it took a little creative arrangement to make that happen.



Theresa Haggard, Aubrey Haynie,
Charlie Cushman, Ben Isaacs, Rob Ickes,
Carl Jackson, Marty Stuart, Merle Haggard
and Ronnie Reno stands at far right.

TAKE ON TRADITION

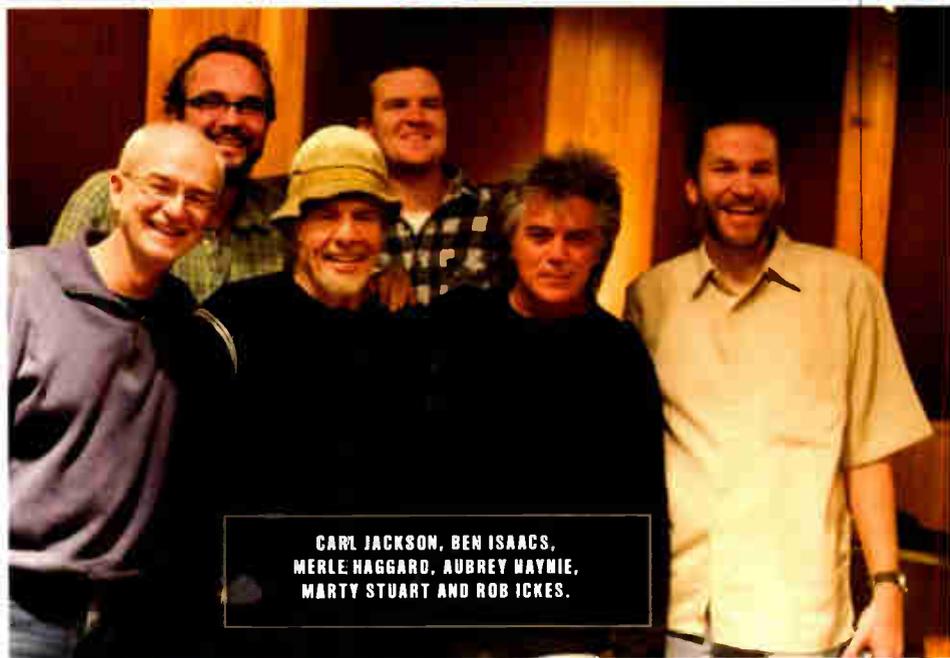
"Merle just put everybody at ease when he came into the studio, sat down and said, 'This is one I want to do,'" dobro player Rob Ickes said. "It was 'Pray.' He sang a little bit of it and it was perfect. Then Marty said, 'How about this?' He played this awesome mandolin kickoff and everything fell into place."

The excitement level was high after that, as everyone scattered into their isolation booths to lay down their first track. It's not clear now what that song was, because right off the bat something didn't feel right. That energy they had felt while playing in the same room wasn't so easy to tap with everyone out of sight and separated from each other.

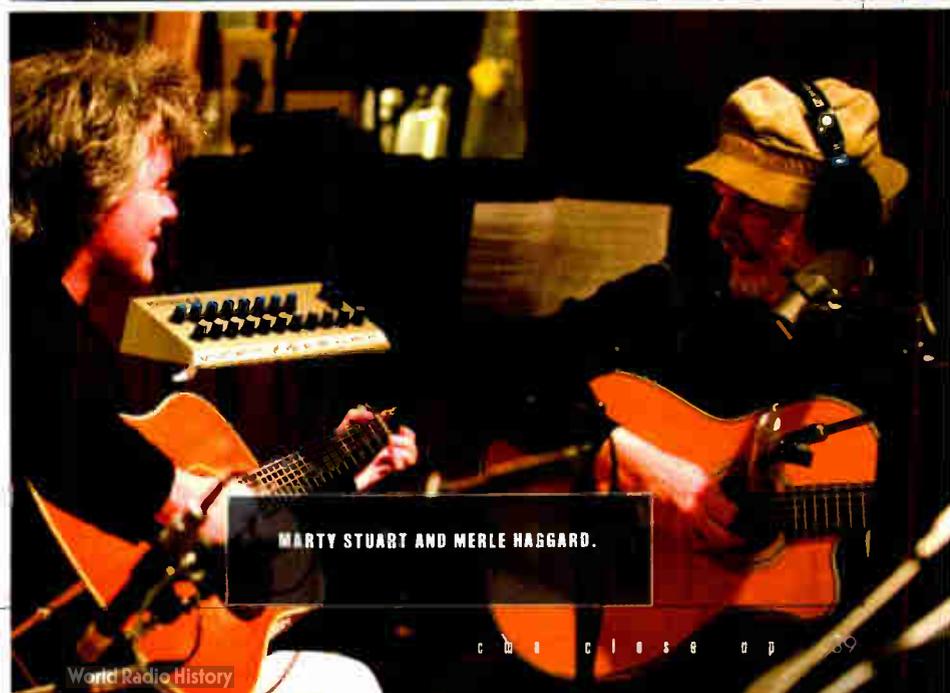
Then Stuart had an idea. "He said, 'Hey, get that mic back out there in the middle of the floor. Let's circle around out there and see what happens.' That's what we did," Haggard recalled. "I got to the end of the circle and we played those tunes, just like we were in your front room. There were no overdubs, none of that crap. It was all live. There were little warts here and there, but we played the best we could play and it felt good to us."

From that point, *The Bluegrass Sessions* became less about evoking a style of music and more about letting the creative process happen as it would, without preconception. Even so, Reno insists that the heart if not the letter of this music is pure bluegrass. "A good bluegrass band will put a little drive in their music," he said. "Once Merle sets the tempo, he does that same thing with his voice. So I knew that these players would accommodate that for him and even put a little more energy into it."

Bluegrass giant Del McCoury, who is issuing *The Bluegrass Sessions* as the third album on his McCoury Music label, agrees. "Is this a bluegrass album? Well, it is Merle, isn't it?" he said, chuckling. "It doesn't matter what kind of band it is. Just listen to this great singer and his great songs. Really, that's what it comes down to."



Carl Jackson, Ben Isaacs,
Merle Haggard, Aubrey Haynie,
Marty Stuart and Rob Ickes.



Marty Stuart and Merle Haggard.

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2007 cma events

OCTOBER

Tuesday, Oct. 2 - Thursday, Oct. 4

CMA Board of Directors Meetings / Nashville

Thursday, Oct. 4

CMA Songwriters Series / Joe's Pub / New York / Matraca Berg, Sarah Buxton, Carolyn Dawn Johnson and Gretchen Peters / Tickets: JoesPub.com

Saturday, Oct. 6

Travel Writers Luncheon / Wildhorse Saloon / Nashville / Performance by Chris Young / Invitation only

Tuesday, Oct. 9

Eligible CMA voting members receive e-mail notice for final CMA Awards ballot.

CMA Awards voting is entirely online.

Sunday, Oct. 14 - Tuesday, Oct. 16

iebaLIVE! / Hilton Suites Downtown Nashville / ieba.org / CMA is a proud sponsor.

Tuesday, Oct. 16

Election of CMA Board of Directors / Loews Vanderbilt / Nashville

Wednesday, Oct. 17

Election of CMA Board of Directors-at-Large / ASCAP / Nashville

Tuesday, Oct. 23

Final CMA Awards ballot online voting site closes at 5 PM/CT.

NOVEMBER

Monday, Nov. 5

CMA Global Markets Showcase / Cabana / Nashville / 1:30 - 4 PM/CT

Tuesday, Nov. 6 - Wednesday, Nov. 7

CMA Marketing Summit / Invitation only

Wednesday, Nov. 7

"The 41st Annual CMA Awards" / Country Music's Biggest Night™ / 7 - 10 PM/CT / Sommet Center / Nashville / Live on the ABC Television Network / Tickets on sale to the public at Sommet Center box office, Ticketmaster.com or (615) 255-9600

Thursday, Nov. 29

CMA Songwriters Series / Joe's Pub / New York / Tickets: JoesPub.com

DECEMBER

Wednesday, Dec. 26

Deadline for CMA members to join muziklink.com and create an account for FREE.



Lyric Street Records artist Bucky Covington stops by CMA to perform several songs from his self-titled debut album, including his hit single "A Different World." (l-r) Ed Benson, CMA CSO; Doug Howard, Senior VP of A&R, Lyric Street Records; Connie Bradley, Senior VP, ASCAP; Bucky Covington; Tammy Genovese, CMA COO; and Herky Williams, Director of Creative Services, Lyric Street Records. photo: Amanda Eckard



Show Dog Records Nashville artist Flynnville Train brings its version of Southern rock/Country to CMA to perform songs from their forthcoming debut album. (l-r) Curt Motley, Monterey Peninsula Artists/Paradigm; Johnny Rose, VP of Sales and Marketing, Show Dog Records Nashville; Terry Patterson, Brent Flynn, Jeremy Patterson and Brian Flynn of Flynnville Train; Tammy Genovese, CMA COO; Tommy Bales and Tim Beeler of Flynnville Train; Tom Moran, VP of Promotion, Show Dog Records Nashville; and Mark Sissel, Manager, TKO Artist Management. photo: Amanda Eckard



Curb Records artist Cowboy Crush (Trenna Barnes, Debbie Johnson, Becky Priest and Renae Truex) visits CMA to perform songs including their single, "Miss Difficult." (l-r) Tammy Genovese, CMA COO; Renae Truex; Ed Benson, CMA CSO; Becky Priest; Tony Conway, President, Buddy Lee Attractions; Trenna Barnes; and Debbie Johnson. photo: Amanda Eckard



Macy's Glamorama annual fashion and entertainment charity event, featuring performances by MuzikMafia members, raises \$800,000 for the Children's Cancer research fund and the Art Institute of Chicago. (l-r) Frank Guzzetta, Chairman/CEO of Macy's North; Tammy Genovese, CMA COO; "Two-Foot" Fred Gill; Damien Horne; Cowboy Troy; Gretchen Wilson; John Rich; Shanna Crooks; and Big Kenny. photo: courtesy of Sony BMG

ADDRESS CHANGE?

Visit <http://My.CMAworld.com> to correct your address information so you don't miss any issues of *CMA Close Up!*

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