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AUGUST | SEPTEMBER 2008

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**MARTINA
MCBRIDE**
Lessons
in Live
Recording

CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL
Record Crowds,
Memorable Shows

**"CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL:
COUNTRY'S NIGHT TO ROCK"**
Airs Sept. 8 on ABC-TV

DIERKS BENTLEY
Revolutionary Changes
in Fan Involvement

ALBUM COVER TRENDS
The Look of Country
in the Digital Age

KEITH ANDERSON
Rockin' Hard

KEEP THE MUSIC PLAYING
Grateful Testimonials

MOBILE PHONES
Marketing Possibilities
Fly Off the Hook

PEOPLE COUNTRY
Birth of a Newsstand
Sensation

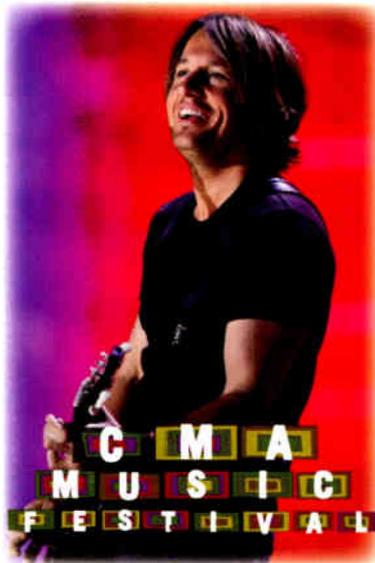
**CMA AWARDS
ONLINE VOTING**

SECOND BALLOT
AUG. 13 — AUG. 26

FINAL BALLOT
OCT. 17 — NOV. 4



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CMA CLOSE UP

Executive Editor

WENDY PEARL

Senior Managing Editor

ATHENA PATTERSON

Editor

BOB DOERSCHUK

Assistant Editor

AMANDA ECKARD

Design

EVAMARIE OGLANDER

Contributing Writers

MELISSA COKER | HOLLY GLEASON | VERNELL HACKETT
LORIE HOLLABAUGH | EDWARD MORRIS | DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

Proofreaders

JORDAN HILL | DREW MAYNARD | LAURA PRICE

Printing

LITHOGRAPHICS, INC

CMA STAFF

Executive

TAMMY GENOVESE Chief Executive Officer

BOBETTE DUDLEY Senior Vice President of Operations

LAURA NAIRON Senior Director of Executive and Community Relations

HANK ADAM LOCKLIN Senior Manager of Membership and Industry Relations

BRANDI SIMMS Manager of Executive Programs

BETSY WALKER Coordinator of Member and Community Relations

LONDON MORGAN Executive Assistant

Business Development

PAULA MILTON Senior Director of Business Development

LARA HENLEY Senior Manager of Corporate Development

KYLE QUIGLEY Senior Manager of Corporate Marketing Initiatives

ANGELA LANG National Partnership Development Manager

ASHLEY FUSSELL Senior Coordinator of Partner Programs

STEPHANIE HODGES Administrative Assistant

(Business Development and Strategic Marketing)

Communications

WENDY PEARL Vice President of Communications

ATHENA PATTERSON Director of Creative Services

SCOTT STEM Director of Media Relations

BOB DOERSCHUK CMA Close Up Editor

AMANDA ECKARD Creative Services Manager

MARIA ECKHARDT Manager of Media Relations

DAWN FISHER Communications Coordinator

Events and Special Projects

DIANE BEARDEN Senior Manager of Meetings and Events

JAMIE DOWNING Senior Manager of Special Projects

CHRISTY GREALIS Senior Manager of Events

KRIS KENNEDY Senior Manager of Events

SALLY WILLIAMS Senior Manager of Event Programming and Development

BOBBI BOYCE International Relations and Logistics

KATIE NELSON Events and Projects Coordinator

Finance and Administration

AMY SMARTT Senior Director of Finance and Administration

DANIEL OWEN Senior Manager of Information Technology

AARON HARTLEY Manager of Administrative Services

SHEREME SIEWNARINE Manager of Financial Services

NICK CARVER Finance and Administration Coordinator

DANA DAVIS Finance and Administration Coordinator

MARCO CASTILLO Operations Assistant

MELISSA MAYNARD Administration Assistant

Strategic Marketing

TAMMY DONHAM Senior Director of Marketing

CORY CHAPMAN Senior Marketing Manager

DAVID BERONJA Manager of Web Development

CATHERINE BLACKWELL Marketing Coordinator

RYAN NOREIKAS Marketing Coordinator

Each year, the story is the same and yet completely new.

It begins with the anticipation that builds as the summer nears and the weeks tick down to those four days unlike any other in any musical genre.

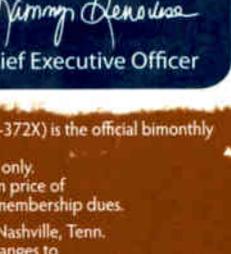
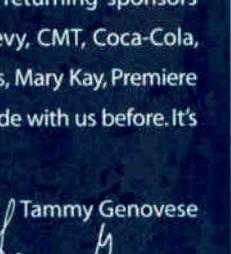
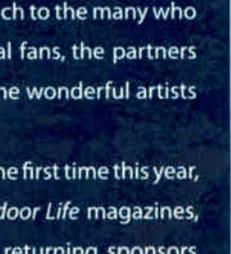
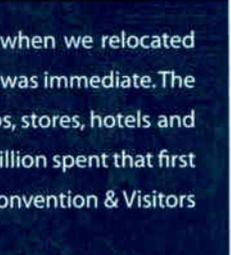
CMA Music Festival has always been about bringing many of the greatest artists together with their most loyal supporters. That mission was reflected in its original name, celebrated this year as the Fan Fair Hall and sure to endure as a permanent part of its legacy.

As important as the Festival is for fans, artists and the Country Music community, it has also become a major part of Nashville's local economy. CMA has valued its ties to Music City, but when we relocated the Festival to Downtown Nashville in 2001 its impact was immediate. The influx of visitors boosted business at restaurants, clubs, stores, hotels and elsewhere throughout the area, to the tune of \$15.5 million spent that first year, according to figures gathered by the Nashville Convention & Visitors Bureau (NCVB).

This figure has grown annually, to the point of reaching \$21 million in direct visitor spending in 2007 and topping that with nearly \$23 million in '08. NCVB surveys break that down to an average of about \$2,000 per travel party — per couple or family — over a six-night stay for the Festival.

With gas prices climbing and attendance at other major festivals showing signs of decline, the success of CMA Music Festival becomes even more impressive. Yet we at CMA know that we owe much to the many who have helped keep this event vital: the incredibly loyal fans, the partners whose participation means so much and especially the wonderful artists who donate their time and talent so selflessly.

Specifically, I'd like to thank those who joined us for the first time this year, including our new friends at *Field & Stream* and *Outdoor Life* magazines, McDonald's, Tetley Iced Tea, truTV, VAULT as well as returning sponsors American Airlines, Borders, Carl Black Chevrolet, Chevy, CMT, Coca-Cola, Dr Pepper, GAC, Greased Lightning Cleaning Products, Mary Kay, Premiere Radio Networks, Wrangler and all who have taken this ride with us before. It's been another great adventure — let's do it again in '09!



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FROM STAGES TO STREETS,

THE CELEBRATION REIGNS AT CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL

Children's laughter echoed beneath sunny skies and songs soared toward the stars. The scent of barbecue mingled with other enticing aromas in the summer air, and the sidewalks of Lower Broadway bustled around the clock with visitors drawn to Nashville to experience the greatest four days on the Country Music calendar.

So it was at 2008 CMA Music Festival, which proved a record breaker as well as a spirit lifter. Attendance was 9.4 percent higher than it was in '07, with an average of 52,000 fans per day filling venues, filing past exhibitor booths and partaking of the pleasures the Festival had to offer — up from 48,000 per day the previous year. They came from all 50 states and from 28 nations throughout the world, 18 of which showed increases in attendance over last year's figures.

Part of what attracted these crowds was the opportunity to enjoy the wares of nearly 70 Festival partners, who handed out more than 300,000 FREE samples, from more than 36,000 trial-sized samples of Greased Lightning Cleaning Products to 30,000 drink samples in the Fun Zone and 20,000 take-home samples at the truTV Fan Fair Exhibit Hall from Tetley Iced Tea.

Artists take part each year for several reasons including the unique possibilities at each Festival to meet with their fans and the knowledge that their participation helps benefit music education. Through CMA's Keep the Music Playing program, funded by half of the net proceeds of each Festival, CMA has been able to donate more than \$1 million to Metro Nashville Public Schools, in partnership with the Nashville Alliance for Public Education. In addition, 800 students were given tickets to attend the June 7 VAULT Concert Stage at LP Field show through the generosity of HCA/TriStar.

Lovers of Country Music who couldn't make it to Nashville were kept informed by more than 750 journalists who represented more than 200 media outlets from across the United States as well as from Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom — 14 countries in all, exceeding the number of reporters and outlets credentialed in 2007.

These and other indicators prove that Country Music, as well as the appeal specifically of CMA Music Festival, grow even in challenging times. "Even with gasoline prices around \$4 a gallon and weak economic conditions around the country, we saw an increase in our attendance on every level," said CMA CEO Tammy Genovese. "I believe that speaks to the strength of the event, the popularity of our artists, the dedication of our fans and the entertainment value of our Festival."

Record numbers of loyalists have already made that clear. Just 15 minutes after going on sale, the Gold Circle four-day ticket packages for the 2009 Festival were sold out. And as the Festival wound down the next day, sales for '09 were 4.2 percent ahead of where they'd been the year before for '08.

"You know you are giving the fans what they want when they put down their hard-earned money for an event and we haven't even announced who will be performing," Genovese observed.

The truth was in the words of those fans, as shared throughout these four extraordinary days and nights. "Once you come, you're addicted," insisted Maria Sutton of Allentown, Pa., as bluegrass rang from the Chevy Stage at Chevy Plaza. "Everywhere you turn, there's something to hear, see, smell and touch." In the midst of her hunt for celebrity autographs in the truTV Fan Fair Exhibit Hall, Tina Chace of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., exclaimed, "We come back every year and we will be back every year that we can get here." And near the Cumberland River flowing past the Greased Lightning Riverfront Stages, Harmony Gayne of Toronto, Ontario, Canada promised, "We'll be back next summer."

So will CMA and the finest artists in Country Music, ready to raise the bar once again.



DWIGHT YOAKAM



KEITH URBAN

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SPECTACLE AND SURPRISES UNFOLD AT VAULT CONCERT STAGE AT LP FIELD

All that CMA Music Festival has to offer during the day adds up to a hard act to follow. And yet the VAULT Concert Stage at LP Field, featuring 36 great acts in Country Music, brought it all home with four consecutive unforgettable all-star shows.

Opening night pre-show activities began with a presentation of the Stars and Stripes by the United States Marine Corps Recruiting Station Nashville Color Guard and a flyover by FA-18s from the Bengals of VMFA (AW)-224 from the Marine Corps Air Station at Beaufort, S.C., a tradition that was a crowd pleaser for all four nights. Phil Stacey sang the national anthem and Nashville Mayor Karl Dean officially welcomed fans to Music City for the 37th annual event. Beyond that, each evening had its own character, highlights and surprises.

Surprise has become a tradition at the nighttime Festival shows, so maybe you could say it was no surprise when an unannounced superstar took suddenly to the stage. The first of these electrifying moments came June 5, when Rascal Flatts emerged to deliver a varied set that included their ballads "My Wish," "Every Day" and led to a rousing finale, "Bob That Head," that set a sea of cowboy hats throughout the crowd to bouncing up and down with the beat.

A huge impact was made as well after Faith Hill's set June 6, when the sound of Keith Urban's Australian accent over the P.A. triggered bedlam throughout the stadium. Urban brought his seven-song set to a thrilling close by leaping into the audience and, at the end of his final number, whipping off his guitar, autographing it and handing it to an overwhelmed fan before making his exit.

A number of artists made their first LP Field appearances at this year's Festival, including Lady Antebellum. For others, including Julianne Hough, Jewel and another Australian sensation, John Stephan, their appearance on the nighttime bill marked their first-ever CMA Music Festival show. And for a handful of artists whose names have been long respected in Country Music, this year was a homecoming of sorts, with Hill returning to the Festival after a 10-year absence and Dwight Yoakam coming back after an absence of two decades and closing this year's LP Field concerts June 8 with an appropriate benediction, in his familiar Bakersfield style, of "Close Up the Honky Tonks."



MIRANDA LAMBERT



MONTGOMERY GENTRY



FAITH HILL



RANDY TRAVIS

COUNTRY MUSIC GOES GLOBAL AS CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL NEARS

Participants at the AristoMedia Global Showcase: Jeff Walker, President, AristoMedia; Mark Moffatt, Show Producer; Lee Bowman of Jetty Road; Bobbi Boyce, CMA International Relations and Logistics; Julian Sammut, Paula Bowman and Simon Ross of Jetty Road; Felicity Urquhart; Tracy Killeen; Amber Nicholson; Mark Wells; Jason Blaine; Victoria Banks; Adam Harvey; and Robert Reynolds.

Performers at the CMA Global Artist Party (standing): Kathleen and Katie Murphy of The Murphy Band; Kat'Lee Jones; Johnny Reid; Jessie Farrell; Troy Cassar-Daley; Shea Fisher; Wim van de Vliert; Jace Everett; and Jasmine Rae. (kneeling) Pat, Candy and Cindy Murphy of The Murphy Band.

In the days before CMA Music Festival, two events on Nashville's Lower Broadway have come to symbolize the unofficial launch of the week's festivities as well as the impact that Country Music continues to make on audiences worldwide. On June 2, the CMA Global Artist Party at The Stage, hosted by Jace Everett, featured performances by artists from Australia, Belgium, Canada, Ireland and The Netherlands, most of them backed by Pam Tillis' road band. And on the following afternoon, the AristoMedia Global Showcase, co-sponsored by CMA and hosted by Robert Reynolds, presented performers from Australia and Canada in an intimate setting at The Second Fiddle. Both events were sponsored by Diamond Coach and Digital Rodeo.com



SUGARLAND



SARA EVANS

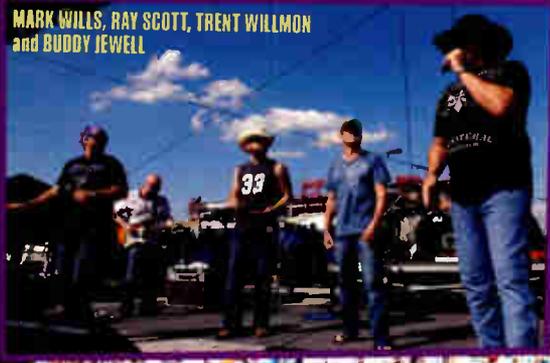
FANS STREAM TO GREASED LIGHTNING RIVERFRONT DAYTIME STAGES

The imposing scenery at the foot of Nashville skyline the dozens of food and souvenir stands and great live music all day long made the Greased Lightning Riverfront Daytime Stages an essential stop throughout CMA Music Festival.

Fans lined up before dawn to attend the first of 17 sets in this scenic spot, across the Cumberland River from LP Field; following the national anthem as sung by Deborah Allen and welcoming remarks from CMA CEO Tammy Genovese and CMA Music Festival Executive Producer Tony Conway, Phil Vassar and Jo Dee Messina opened their shows at a pace that didn't quit until all 106 acts had finished their stint on the stage and 34 hours of great Country Music had elapsed as the sun was going down on Sunday evening.



DARRYL WORLEY



MARK WILLS, RAY SCOTT, TRENT WILLMON and BUDDY JEWELL



JO-DEE MESSINA



JAMIE O'NEAL



JENNIFER HANSON



RAUL MALO



CMA CEO Tammy Genovese with The Oak Ridge Boys.

Butch Spyridon, President, Nashville Convention and Visitors Bureau; Crystal Shawanda; Tony Conway, President/CEO, Buddy Lee Attractions and Executive Producer, CMA Music Festival; and CMA CEO Tammy Genovese.

PREMIERE RADIO NETWORKS PUTS STARS ON AIR



Jack Ingram shares his thoughts live with listeners on WUBL/Atlanta.



Jewel addresses listeners of WQYK/Tampa.

photos Scott Hunter Photography

CMA's official radio partner, Premiere Radio Networks, kept early hours June 4 - 6, as they brought many of the top performers in Country Music together with radio emcees from 20 of Country's top-rated stations in the United States for live, drive-time interviews. More than 75 artists and celebrities participated in the remotes, reaching 10 million listeners.

Room 205 at the Nashville Convention Center buzzed with activity on those three mornings, from 6 to 10 AM, as approximately 40 volunteers escorted artists toward their next appointment. Each radio team manned its own table, on which microphones bristled; there, guests and on-air personalities traded

questions and answers, beamed back live to each station's home market for drive-time broadcast. All of this hectic but orderly action took place in half of this vast ballroom, screened behind a tall black curtain. The other half was devoted to taping promotions for Premiere Radio Networks sponsors Super 8 Motels and TracFone and providing a comfortable arrangement of couch and chairs, at which interviews were taped for the nationally syndicated radio program "After MidNite with Blair Garner."



MARTY STUART LATE NIGHT JAM DEBUTS AS FESTIVAL EVENT

CMA CEO Tammy Genovese welcomes the Marty Stuart Late Night Jam, the popular annual MusicCares fundraiser, also benefiting CMA's Keep the Music Playing, to the official CMA Music Festival schedule at the Ryman Auditorium June 4. John Rich of Big & Rich; Marty Stuart; Debbie Carroll, Executive Director, MusicCares Nashville; CMA CEO Tammy Genovese; and Tony Conway, President/CEO, Buddy Lee Attractions and Executive Producer, CMA Music Festival.



Bradford Anderson and Rebecca Herbst of "General Hospital" host the Saturday night concert at the VAULT Concert Stage at LP Field.



Bob Guiney helps introduce performers at the VAULT Concert Stage at LP Field.



Jason Thompson of "General Hospital" kicks off at the Celebrity Sports Challenge hosted by Steve Azar and presented by Glacéau Vitaminwater.



Kassie DePaiva of "One Life to Live" performs at the ABC Block Party.



Julianne Hough greets fans at the ABC Block Party.

ABC ROCKS THE BLOCK

When ABC-TV threw its gargantuan Block Party June 7 during CMA Music Festival, the McDonald's - Dr Pepper Family Zone teamed for four hours as fans mingled with network television stars. Bob Guiney kept the energy high as he emceed the event.

Along with appearances by ABC Daytime stars from "All My Children," "General Hospital" and "One Life to Live," events included audience participation games based on trivia from different ABC programs. One highlight was a pie-eating contest, which promoted the show "Pushing Daisies." Seven contestants, including Guiney, were served apple, berry or cherry pies and then given one minute to devour as much of them as possible. Though Guiney repeatedly predicted that his love for eating guaranteed him victory, a young boy named Jackson ended up the winner. With sticky apple residue covering his face, he summed up his strategy: "Don't be clean — get dirty."

The audience chuckled at Guiney's quips and anxiously shouted out answers to the trivia games, but their biggest reaction came when Julianne Hough took the stage for a question-and-answer session. They went wild as well for Kassie DePaiva of "One Life to Live" and Bobbie Eakes of "All My Children," who performed music from their Country albums. Marcel also sang four songs.

In addition to appearing at the block party, the ABC actors hosted day and night concerts, took part in celebrity storytelling, participated in Chevy Sports Zone activities and signed autographs and posed for photos with fans.

2009 TICKETS SELLING FAST

The 2008 CMA Music Festival was far from over when Gold Circle seating tickets for next year's event had sold out. And by the time attendees had returned to their homes, ticket purchases for 2009 had raced 4.2 percent ahead of the figures for 2008 — and 29 percent ahead of those for 2007.

Beginning with the 2009 Festival, fans will be able to buy seats in "renewable" sections with the option of renewing those same seats for the 2010 Festival.

Purchase tickets at 1-800-CMA-FEST (262-3378), (615) 255-9600, ticketmaster.com or CMAfest.com.

LP FIELD SEATING LEVEL	ADULT	AGE 12 AND YOUNGER
GOLD CIRCLE	SOLD OUT	N/A
FLOOR (FIELD) RENEWABLE	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT
FLOOR (FIELD)	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT
LOWER RENEWABLE	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT
LOWER	\$155	\$109
CLUB RENEWABLE	\$155	\$102
CLUB	\$145	\$102
UPPER RESERVED	\$120	\$84
UPPER GENERAL ADMISSION	\$110	\$78

Prices do not include applicable handling fees and are subject to change. All sales final and non-refundable. Four-day ticket categories correspond to a different level of seating at LP Field. Children 3 years and younger are admitted FREE. A four-day ticket will be required for any child occupying a seat at LP Field.

JUST WARMING UP: THE FESTIVAL STAYS HOT AFTER HOURS

CMA Music Festival After Hours presented by CMT was in full swing on all four nights as fans filed from LP Field and into Downtown Nashville. Sixteen clubs had signed on as official After Hours participants, which translated for customers into drink specials and several more hours of live-music celebration.

On their way into the Lower Broadway entertainment district, many fans stopped June 5-7 at the Hard Rock Cafe parking lot for a rockin' set on the Outdoor Stage. Some filed into the restaurant for a taste of the Hard Rock Cafe Writers Night presented by Stubhub, in which several of Nashville's most successful songwriters traded stories and sang the hits they'd penned for the stars.

And the rest headed straight for Cadillac Ranch, Coyote Ugly, Layla's Bluegrass Inn, Legends Corner, Tootsies Orchid Lounge and the other places identified by street or window signs as official After Hours venues, where the dancing, live music and partying wouldn't let up for hours to come.



JESSI ALEXANDER



ASHLEY GORLEY, TIM MICHOLS, LEE THOMAS and RODNEY CLAWSON



JASON MATTHEW, BOBBY PINSON, MARV GREEN and WALT ALORIDGE



WHISKEY FALLS:
DAMON JOHNSON,
SEVEN WILLIAMS,
WALLY BRADOT and
BUCK JOHNSON.



MARK WILLS



AUSTIN AND ASHLEY CLARK OF
THE CLARK BROTHERS
(not pictured: Adam Clark)

Daniel Lee Martin receives first prize for *Field & Stream* Celebrity Total Outdoorsman Challenge from emcee Rob Powers.



K9s in Flight "Ultimate K9 Sports Show Presented by Waggin' Train."



Bonner Bolton at CBR/RFD-TV Celebrity Bull Riding Challenge.



Canines "go for the gold" in DockDogs Competition Presented by Outdoor Channel.



Michael Petersen at the New Holland/Michael Peterson Celebrity Tractor Race.

Todd Armstrong, Marcel, Steve Azar, Steve Cole, Jessica Andrews, Aaron Benward and Wild Bill at Celebrity Sports Challenge Hosted by Steve Azar and Presented by Glacéau Vitaminwater.



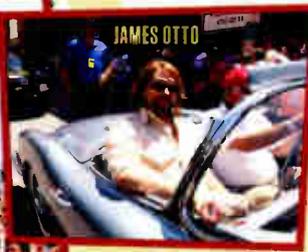
Trent Willmon wins Outdoor Life "Calling" for Conservation Competition.



CHRIS YOUNG



LUKE BRYAN



JAMES OTTO



KEITH ANDERSON

DAN TYMINSKI



Mark Wills with Jeff Brumm, winners of Celebrity Grilling Challenge Presented by Fiesta Grills.

CRUISIN' THE FESTIVAL WITH CHEVY

Even before CMA Music Festival officially began June 4, Chevy was staking its claim to being The Official Ride of Country Music by hosting the CMA Music Festival Parade and Block Party for an estimated 6,000 fans gathered on the Chevy Plaza. The day was hot but the music was hotter — and so it stayed all the way until Sunday.

Music rang nonstop on the Chevy Stage, from an opening set June 5 by the Lucky Bucks to a lively Latin/Country jam that brought the last set to a close June 8. In between, 33 daily performances transpired on the Chevy Stage as visitors picked up 34,700 giveaway items and took more than 1,000 test drives of a fleet of Chevy vehicles that included an Avalanche, a Cobalt Sport, an HHR, an Impala SS, a Tahoe Hybrid, an all-new Malibu, an Aveo, an Equinox Sport and two Silverados.

Performance highlights were too many to mention, but those who heard Keni Thomas surely took to heart what the patriotic service veteran declared as he ended his Friday afternoon set. "Country Music needs you," he shouted above the cheers of the crowd. "And I sure appreciate you."

The Chevy Sports Zone was also a hotbed of activity. Fans flocked to witness a series of competitions sponsored by *Field & Stream*, with Daniel Lee Martin taking first place in the Celebrity Total Outdoorsman Challenge, Cory Jones winning among the Local Qualifiers and advanced to the Regional Qualifiers and Chris Nischan and Martin heading the list of competitors in the Regional Qualifiers and earning the right to advance to the National Finals to be held at Springfield, Mo., in September.

The Celebrity Sports Challenge hosted by Steve Azar and presented by Glacéau Vitaminwater pitted teams of artists, athletes and other high-profile participants against each other in a series of athletic contests. The winning Navy Blue team consisted of Todd Armstrong, Azar, Aaron Benward of Blue County, Steve Cole, Craig Hentrich and Ken Purvis.

Other highlights included the *Outdoor Life* "Calling" for Conservation Competition, won by Trent Willmon; the CBR/RFD-TV Celebrity Bull Riding Challenge hosted by Tuff Hedeman, with first prize going to the team of Jason Brown and Jake Littlefield; and the New Holland/Michael Peterson Celebrity Tractor Race, whose winner was Darby Ledbetter. DockDogs presented by Outdoor Channel was open to four-legged participants and their trainers or, in the Celebrity Challenge round, to dogs and human celebrity partners. That event was won by Outdoor Channel host Mike Pawlawski and his friend Quasi, who leaped 24 feet, 10 inches into the 25,000-gallon pool.

Culinary artistry wasn't neglected in the Sports Zone either. The Celebrity Grilling Challenge presented by Fiesta Grills was won by Mark Wills and Jeff Brumm, chef at Nashville restaurant radius10. And the marathon, first-ever CMA Music Festival BBQ Championship, for which the winning team Lotta Bull, from Marietta, Okla., won \$2,500, a CMA Awards trip package for two, an invitation to participate in the prestigious American Royale championship and a chance to take part in the Jack Daniel's World Championship Invitational Barbecue during late October in Lynchburg, Tenn.

COUNTRY MUSIC TAKES TO THE STREETS

More than 12,000 fans lined Lower Broadway as the Fourth Annual CMA Music Festival Kick-Off Parade wound through Downtown Nashville June 4. With Grand Marshall James Otto in the flagship Corvette, a fleet of Chevy vehicles transported artists, Championship Bull Riding luminaries, NASCAR drivers and other celebrities past the cheering crowds. Marching between them, the Chevy Youth Baseball Club tossed baseballs to onlookers, the Girl Scouts of Middle Tennessee handed out cookies, the Antioch High School Marching Band and Overton High School Drumline played festive martial repertoire, a Nashville Predators cheerleader and team mascot Gnash waved and more attractions kept spirits high all the way to the CMA Music Festival Block Party on Chevy Plaza with performances from Keith Anderson, Luke Bryan, Joe Nichols, Otto, Phil Stacey, Chris Young and Zac Brown Band. Deborah Allen, The Grascals, Jedd Hughes, Julie Roberts, Dan Tyminski and Michelle Wright were among the more than 30 artists who performed on the Chevy Stage throughout the four days of the Festival.



EMERSON DRIVE



SARA EVANS

MARY KAY PRESENTS ACOUSTIC CORNER

Mary Kay Presents Acoustic Corner offers a unique opportunity to hear independent artists, some of them veterans and others taking their first steps into the business, in a relaxed and informal concert environment. Tucked into a roomy alcove on the second floor of the Nashville Convention Center, it played host to 30 solo or group acts.



BOBBY HEPTEN



WENDY PICKLER



BUCKY COVINGTON



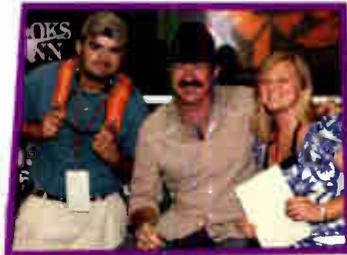
WYONNA



JUSTIN DAVID



MIKO MARKS



BOB STOKES



LADY ANTEBELLUM



WENDY AND BOB JACKSON



CASH CREEK: STEVE STOKES, MONTY DeVITA, KIMO FORREST and JAMIE DAVIS



SHANE AND JESSICA



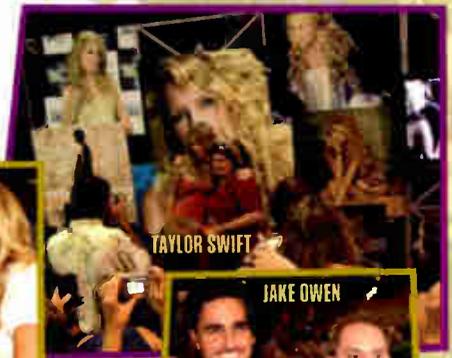
WYNNIE AND TERRY



WYNNIE



CHERRY CHRISTENSEN



TAYLOR SWIFT



BOB JACKSON



JAKE OWEN

AUTOGRAPH SEEKERS FILL truTV FAN FAIR HALL

The truTV Fan Fair Hall was one of the coolest destinations on any CMA Music Festival attendee's agenda. Not only did the vast space inside the Nashville Convention Center give relief from the heat of day outdoors, it also offered a dazzling array of distractions such as at the truTV booth, where visitors could preview "Black Gold," the gritty documentary series based on the lives of West Texas oil rig workers.

For autograph collectors these spacious aisles, lined by 110 exhibitors, are a gusher of opportunity to obtain signatures from their favorite stars. Throughout this year's Festival, 408 artists and celebrities made themselves available to 53,000 visitors, many of whom had camped out on the sidewalk outside as early as 8 PM the previous night, as much for the camaraderie of their fellow adventurers as for the best possible place in line.

Among the most buzzworthy events in the Hall this year were a surprise appearance by Kix Brooks, who wrote about 500 autographs at the Brooks & Dunn booth as well as another 100 at the Borders booth; the first visit since 1998 to the autograph arena by Alan Jackson, who signed his name 300 times alongside his wife, author Denise Jackson; and a marathon session by Taylor Swift, who held court nonstop and gave her signature 900 times from 10 AM until 6 PM at the Big Machine Records booth. Carrie Underwood undertook a four-hour shift of signing 400 autographs and Wynonna prefaced her appearance with a contest that invited visitors to text "WYCMMA" just before her arrival. The 10 participants who received a winning text in reply were invited to spend some quality time with the icon before she began her five-hour stretch of signing.

Other popular signatories included Bucky Covington, Emerson Drive, Sara Evans, Biliy Gilman, Julianne Hough, Lady Antebellum, Joe Nichols, James Otto, Kellie Pickler, Jessica Simpson and Chris Young.

"This is my first time at CMA Music Festival and I'm really impressed with the way fans form friendships here," said Taylor Young, 27, of Mountain View, Calif. "I definitely want to become a part of this community over the next several years."

SOCIAL NETWORKING COUNTRY FANS GET REAL

Saloon on Second Avenue. Attendees laid plans in advance through social networking sites **MySpace.com** and **Facebook.com** to meet at this event, where live music was provided by Lady Antebellum and Trent Tomlinson.

A new, fan-driven tradition launched at last year's CMA Music Festival continued as the Second Annual Fan Social convened June 7 at the Buck Wild



TRENT TOMLINSON

ALL AGES COME TOGETHER IN McDONALD'S-DR PEPPER FAMILY ZONE

The name says it: The McDonald's - Dr Pepper Family Zone at CMA Music Festival had something to offer for everyone and especially for kids.

Special events took place here throughout the Festival, including a McDonald's Family Picnic June 8, with 560 Southern Style Chicken Sandwiches, 720 Cherry Pies and 560 Apple Dippers distributed FREE. Throughout the Festival the company marked its debut as a sponsor by handing out thousands of coupons as well as bringing Ronald McDonald onto the Main Stage to regale children with comedy and magic.

"McDonald's participation in the CMA Music Festival was a terrific opportunity to connect to our customers' passion for Country Music," said Ted Bertuca, Jr., a local McDonald's owner and operator. And Cathy Kolumbus, Senior Brand Manager for another new sponsor, Tetley USA, added, "What I found most impressive was how nice the crowd was. Everyone we spoke to was genuine and seemed to be having a great time."

Other Family Zone highlights included a Strawberry Shortcake show, featuring the popular doll character and her friends, FREE cookies handed out by Girl Scouts, readings by artists and other celebrities from children's books, tutorials on knife safety, First Aid and other subjects and performances by child-friendly acts as well as by children themselves, including the Festival's youngest artist, 10-year-old Katie Chance.



Don Yates, a.k.a. Wolf from "American Gladiator," tells stories to kids.



Ronald McDonald welcomes one and all to McDonald's - Dr Pepper Family Zone.



Strawberry Shortcake and friends entertain on the Main Stage.



Rainforest animals visit from the Nashville Zoo.



Cabbage Patch dolls greet fans. Fans pose with their favorite Space Chimp.



MUSIC CITY SHINES WITH NEW RISING STAR

The second annual Music City Rising Star Youth Vocal Soloist Competition took place in the McDonald's - Dr Pepper Family Zone during the first three days of CMA Music Festival. From 25 states, 129 kids aged 12 through 18 vied for a grand prize that included a workshop with Linda Davis, who spoke to the contestants and their families during a breakfast June 7 at the Wildhorse Saloon before the five finalists were announced in seven groups for kids ages 12 and 18. That afternoon, Jernie Talles, 14, of Fort Pierce, Fla., was proclaimed the grand prize winner on the Greased Lightning Riverfront

Daytime Stage, where she performed "Broken Wing." The five finalists were (l-r): Jernie Talles, 14, of Fort Pierce, Fla., first place; Jennifer McIlwain, 16, of Nashville, fifth place; Anna Brooke Higdon, 17, of Sevierville, Tenn., fourth place; Morgan Grotheer, 17, of Savannah, Ga., second place; and Kaley Caterton, 15, of Waco, Texas, third place.

CELEBRITY AUCTION RAISES FUNDS FOR YWCA



Heidi Newfield joins Pat Shea, CEO, YWCA Nashville, at the YWCA Celebrity Auction. Photo: Steph Williams

Crowds gathered at CMA Music Festival in the McDonald's - Dr Pepper Family Zone June 7 to place bids and enjoy quality time with some of their favorite artists during the YWCA Celebrity Auction. Steve Virginia emceed the event, which raised approximately \$45,000 to benefit the Middle Tennessee YWCA. High bids included \$1,200 for a fiddle donated by Charlie Daniels, \$1,200 for an acoustic guitar from Keith Urban, \$1,100 for an electric guitar from Urban and \$1,000 for framed, hand-written lyrics to "Anyway" and an autographed picture from Martina McBride. Items given by Brooks & Dunn, Luke Bryan, Kenny Chesney, Rascal Flatts and Carrie Underwood also drew bids above \$500.

MERCHANDISE FLIES FROM THE RACK

As expected with attendance up from 2007, sales of official 2008 CMA Music Festival merchandise rose as well over the previous year's figures. According to Music City Merchandise, which has designed and produced CMA merchandise for the past 14 years, onsite sales climbed nearly 11 percent. Many of the T-shirt lines sold out, the most popular among them being three new designs that list the names of all artists who performed at LP Field. Fans were able to purchase these and other items from six Music City Merchandise booths.

Borders: The Exclusive Music and Book Retailer of CMA Music Festival sold merchandise at three locations. The Top 5 selling album titles belonged to (in order) Alan Jackson, Taylor Swift, Joe Nichols, Carrie Underwood and Chris Young — who all signed in the truTV Fan Fair Hall during the Festival. Other bestselling artists included Lady Antebellum, Jake Owen, Kellie Pickler, Josh Turner, Keith Urban, Whiskey Falls and Stephen Cochran.



"One of the goals with this event is to help build a marketing platform for developing artists," said CMA CEO Tammy Genovese. "With the variety of artists on the list, it tells me that our fans are discovering new music at CMA Music Festival and they aren't waiting until they get home to buy it."

FUN ZONE: WHERE FANS COME FIRST

Celebrity appearances and plenty of great music wafts over from the Greased Lightning Riverfront Daytime Stages or booms closer at hand on the Hard Rock Outdoor Stage.

The fan was the center of attention on this stretch of several blocks along Lower Broadway at CMA Music Festival. Fun Zone activities included several lottery drawings — for a \$500 gasoline card at the Geico booth, for coupons redeemable for free coffee and donuts from Dunkin' Donuts and more. Kids received special treatment on a "Euro Bungee" ride set up by the Nashville Shores water slide park and a "Slip 'n' Slide" belly-flop water ride.

FREE samples were available constantly in the Fun Zone: Blue Bell Creameries, for instance, handed out 20,000 ice cream samples there. Some came with a message: The BLT sandwiches at the Catfish Institute booth were offered with a reminder that domestic farm-raised catfish are fed on grains and free of chemicals. The Waggin' Train booth donated 20 cents for every bracelet won in a spin-the-wheel game to canine rescue, adding up to about \$20,000 by the end of the Festival. And visitors to the BP booth were invited to record their thoughts on how a \$10,000 gift might best serve their community. The participant in this nationwide program whose ideas most impress a panel of BP judges will see that \$10,000 invested as he or she suggests while also receiving another \$10,000 as a gift certificate.

During his performance on the Hard Rock Outdoor Stage, Zane Lewis smashes guitars. photo David Clements



NASCAR legend Bobby Labonte greets fans at the Super 8 booth.



Samples flow freely — and FREE — at the Fun Zone's VAULT booth.



Fun Zone visitor signs her best wishes to USO banners destined for U.S. troops overseas.



Gretchen Wilson and Lorianne Crook



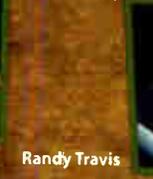
Sara Evans



Joe Nichols



Taylor Swift



Randy Travis

GAC HOSTS "CMA CELEBRITY CLOSE UP"

More than 3,400 fans jammed the Ryman Auditorium June 5 for two tapings of "CMA Celebrity Close Up" during CMA Music Festival. This series of one-on-one interviews featured host Lorianne Crook and guests Bucky Covington, Sara Evans, Joe Nichols, Jake Ower, Taylor Swift, Randy Travis and Gretchen Wilson, for subsequent broadcast on GAC: Great American Country.

"The participating artists are really in their element in front of a live crowd of fans, and we always see a side of them we never expected," said Sarah Trahern, GAC Senior VP of Programming. "Answering questions directly from their fans really gets to the heart of who they are, and the featured artists tell us they enjoy themselves as much as the audience does."

WHAT A TRIP! WINNERS ENJOY FINE WINE AND HIGH FASHION

Winners of radio promotions from across the United States were given the royal treatment at CMA Music Festival by What a Trip! For 10 years as the official promotional trip packager for CMA Music Festival and CMA Awards, the organization sweetened an already incredible deal involving travel, accommodations and tickets for the Festival with two additional enticements.

One of these special events was a visit to Arrington Vineyards, the beautiful 75-acre winery 25 miles south of Nashville owned by Kix Brooks of Brooks & Dunn and his partners, Fred Mindermann and Kip Summers. And the other involved tickets to the second annual *Country Weekly* Fashion Show presented by Wrangler, held June 4 at the Wildhorse Saloon for the benefit of Musicians On Call.

Hosted by Neal McCoy and emceed by Suzanne Alexander of "GAC Nights," this year's event gave What a Trip! winners and the rest of the audience an opportunity to appreciate the runway techniques of dozens of artists and celebrities.

STUDENT JOURNALISTS PROVIDE FESTIVAL COVERAGE

For the second consecutive year, a group of talented journalism student volunteers kept the world on top of developments at CMA Music Festival through on-the-scene reports filed daily and posted on **CMAfest.com**. Benjamin Kann, now entering his senior year as a music industry major at Belmont University, will receive the second CMA Close Up Award of Merit in recognition of his exceptional performance. Kann will be given his plaque at the CMA Awards in November. Benjamin Kann of Belmont University; Julee Cobb of Middle Tennessee State University; Tawney Milam of Vanderbilt University; Claire Carville of the University of Alabama; and Brenna Mader of Belmont University.



Montgomery Gentry strut their stuff at *Country Weekly* Fashion Show.

photo: Joe Hardwick

CMA Music Festival is organized and produced by the Country Music Association. CMA Board member Tony Conway is the Executive Producer of CMA Music Festival. THANK YOU TO THE ARTISTS, THE MUSIC INDUSTRY, CITY OF NASHVILLE, THE FANS AND OUR CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL PARTNERS FOR MAKING THE 2008 CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL THE BEST CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL EVER! Premier Radio Networks is the official radio broadcaster. Chevy: The Official Ride of Country Music. Borders: The Exclusive Music and Book retailer of CMA Music Festival. Wrangler: The Exclusive Jean of CMA Music Festival. Additional promotional partners include American Airlines, Armour Vienna Sausages, Assets Blue Bell Creameries, Bluegreen Corporation, BowTech Archery, BP BullFrog, Carl Black Chevrolet, Championship Bull Riding, Call2Recycle, CHILL Cooling Towel, Cici's Pizza, CMT, Coca-Cola, Coyote Ugly, Cutter, Diutal Rodeo, Dr Pepper, Dunkin' Brands, Inc., Facecard, Fidelity Investments Nashville, Field & Stream, Fiesta Gas Grills, GEICO, Girl Scouts of Middle Tennessee, GAC Great American Country, Glacéau Vitaminwater, Greased Lightning Cleaning Products, Hard Rock Cafe, Kansas City BBQ Society, MARTHA WHITE, FOODS, INC., Mary Kay, McDonald's, Mr. Coffee, Music City Rising Star, Nashville Shores, New Holland, Outdoor Channel, Outdoor Life, RFD-TV, Repeal, Rocky Boots, SELECT COMFORT, Shire Pharmaceuticals, Silpada Designs, Southern Living, Space Chimps, Sprint Nextel Corporation, Strawberry Shortcake, Super 8 Motel, Tennessee Education Lottery Corp., Tetley Iced Tea, The Yankee Candle Company, Inc., truTV, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Border Patrol, U.S. Farm-Raised Catfish, USO, U.S. Smokeless Tobacco, VAULT, Waggin' Train, Wrigley's Spearmint, Wrigley's Doublemint, Wrigley's Juicy Fruit, Wrigley's Big Red, Wrigley's Wintertfresh and XM Satellite Radio. EMT services provided by Vanderbilt Sports Medicine and Vanderbilt Life Flight. CMA Music Festival wrap up compiled by Bob Doerschuk, photos: Katharine Bombay, Amanda Eckard, Jim Hagans, Dan Harr, Karen Hicks, Donn Jones, Adam Larkey, Drew Maynard, Jennifer McVey, Theresa Montgomery, Stephanie Mullins and John Russell.

BIGGER, BETTER AND FASTER: A PREVIEW OF CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL SPECIAL ON ABC-TV

by **BOB DOERSCHUK**

Perfectly positioned to bring the summer to a spectacular close, "CMA Music Festival: Country's Night to Rock" airs 9-11 PM/ET Monday, Sept. 8, on the ABC Television Network with three of Country Music's hottest young ladies as hosts — Julianne Hough, Kellie Pickler and Taylor Swift.

"With these three beautiful and talented young women as our hosts and our 5.1 surround-sound mix, this year's special will feel physically different from anything we've done before," said Executive Producer Robert Deaton. "It will connect more directly with the television audience. And it will present the artists the way they should be presented, as the biggest touring and selling acts of any genre. Because that's what they are."

Hough, Pickler and Swift will welcome viewers, introduce each act, take to the stage themselves and hang out with fans who were surprised with a "lucky day" of special attention from the stars.

Filed in Nashville June 5-8 and directed by Gary Halvorson, the special features performances from several of today's most exciting Country Music stars including the hosts, Trace Adkins, Rodney Atkins, Bucky Covington, Billy Ray Cyrus, Faith Hill, Alan Jackson, Jewel, Lady Antebellum, Miranda Lambert, Rascal Flatts, Sugarland, Josh Turner, Carrie Underwood, Keith Urban, Gretchen Wilson and Dwight Yoakam.

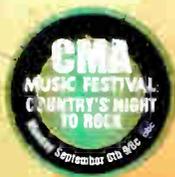
There's a new look for this year's special, the fourth consecutive summer ABC has given viewers a taste of one of the signature American music festivals, which was launched in 1972 as Fan Fair. A huge Barco MiTRIX LED screen at the back of the VAULT Concert Stage at LP Field complements each artist's performance with brilliant displays across its 30-feet-by-60-feet face. With 18 HD cameras capturing every angle and a helicopter circling above for dramatic overhead shots of the stage, the visuals promise to be as memorable as the music.

In addition to the performances, "CMA Music Festival: Country's Night to Rock" will follow Covington as he tries his hand as a tour guide, giving viewers a taste of the scope of CMA Music Festival, which dominates Downtown Nashville for four days each summer.

John Rich of Big & Rich tells the tale of the rise of his friend Gretchen Wilson, who went from bartender to singer in Nashville honky tonks before making it big with hits including "Redneck Woman." Swift gives an impromptu street performance on the steps of the Ryman Auditorium and signs autographs at the truTV Fan Fair Exhibit Hall.

Certain fans are surprised to learn they've been chosen for a "lucky day" meet and greet with their favorite stars. Faith Hill surprises admirers Juliette Warren and David Newton from Australia. Sarah and Elizabeth Marince, two young aspiring artists from Pittsburgh, Pa., take a trip with Hough to her recording studio and Pickler spends time with fans from Connecticut — Rob Levasseur from East Hartford, Nick Manciero from Bethany and Dan Orlovski from Woodbidge. Keith Urban meets Cara Corbett, Alex Hamel and Stephanie Hayward from Toledo, Ohio.

The special will be promoted on **ABC.com** for five days preceding the broadcast. This coverage will be posted in Webisodes: General Festival coverage, which will include events, interviews with artists and fans, performances, footage from the ABC Block Party and more; behind the scenes/making of the broadcast special, capturing the crew in action, backstage activities and similar glimpses into the technical and creative process; and After Hours with Jake Owen, who will take viewers on a tour of Nashville (including visits to music venues), interact with fans and more, along with excerpts from Owen's performance at LP Field.



Gari L'Vois, Joe Don Rooney, and Jay DeMarcus of Rascal Flatts



Jennifer Nettles and Kristina Bush of Sugarland



Billy Ray Cyrus



Trace Adkins



Faith Hill



Rodney Atkins



Alan Jackson



Kellie Pickler hangs out with special guests Rob Levasseur, Nick Manciero, and Dan Orlovski



Sarah and Elizabeth Marince meet with Julianne Hough.



Keith Urban



Taylor Swift performing on the steps of the Ryman Auditorium.



Bucky Covington and Jessica Simpson give Stephanie Hayward and Stephanie Hayward a recording studio experience.



Josh Turner



Carrie Underwood



Trace Adkins



Taylor Swift, Kellie Pickler, and Julianne Hough

World Radio History

photos: Katherine Bombay, Bob D'Amico, Donn Jones, Adam Lankey, John Russell and Craig Sjodin.

AOL INVITES COUNTRY FANS TO TRY ON

the Boot

by BOB DOERSCHUK

In pondering how to provide more targeted service to Country artists and their fans, AOL Music came up with a simple solution: Give 'em The Boot.

Beginning May 2, **theboot.com** became the company's designated destination for those who want access to videos, interviews, discussions, quizzes, "best of" lists and news concerning the established and emerging stars of Country Music.

Its launch was part of a larger campaign through which AOL Music has been adjusting its broad focus on covering music to one based on servicing niche audiences. From **spinner.com**, whose emphasis on non-Top 40 rock established a model for the company's subsequent genre-specific sites, to the urban-oriented **theboombox.com**, AOL Music is banking on a more genre-focused vision as a means of addressing the interests of consumers, artists, the music industry and advertisers more effectively.

Even among all pop music genres, though, AOL Music sees Country as a source of unique potential benefit. "Country Music is so much about stories and personalities," said Bill Crandall, Editor-in-Chief, AOL Music. "Yet when you look at how many people are listening to Country radio and buying the music, they're not getting the coverage they want. That's where we step in."

Crandall, who began in the print realm with *BAM Magazine* before his six-year run with **RollingStone.com**, believes that the time is right for the Country audience and online culture to come together. "People used to think about the Web, 'Wow, I can't feel it. I can't touch it. I can't take it with me,'" he said. "But now they understand that it's there forever, which allows us to follow artists' careers a lot more, so that if there's news about their next album, we can point back to a story we had posted before. That's what The Boot gives you: If you dive into a news story today and you keep clicking, the architecture gives you a mechanism for discovering what came before."

Based in New York, The Boot maintains its ties to the Country Music industry through Beville Darden. Born in Birmingham, Ala., Darden was a Nashville resident with on-air experience at WSM-AM and WSM-FM when she was called in 2004 to her present position as Editor/Director of Country Programming at AOL Music. Though the company offered more than 270 channels of online radio at the time, including more than 20 dedicated to Country Music, she was fully behind the idea of complementing that with editorial content.

"Our Top Country station ranked consistently among our Top 5 stations, as far as constant listening and unique users," she said. "That's still true today, and that told us that AOL users are Country fans. We're giving them what they want to hear on radio; now let's give them what they want to read and videos they want to see. That's why we started The Boot."

For Darden, maintaining ties to Music City is essential to the success of The Boot, in large

part through its freelance contributors. "I'm not going to run into Kenny Chesney at Kroger here in New York," she said, laughing. "But the other day one of our writers ran into Rodney Atkins and got exclusive quotes from him about what's going to be on his upcoming album. We want to be all-encompassing, and the way to do that is to work with the experts, and those experts are most likely going to be in Nashville."

The site's homepage offers a scroll of top stories as well as links to Features (Best Drinking Songs, Interviews, New Faces, Photo of the Week, Pop Gone Country, Story Behind the Song and Worst Pre-Fame Jobs), Hot Categories (Chatter, Concerts, Country News, Humor and Video of the Week) and a long list of All Categories whose topics range from Alt-Country, Americana and Crossovers to CMA Awards, CMA Music Fest, Humor, Legends, Pranks and OMG! Reader comments are invited; the most active forums are indicated in a Most Commented On section. In addition, visitors are able to watch music videos, take part in quizzes, search for lyrics and click on links to AOL Radio, AOL Sessions in-studio performances and OurStage.

It adds up to reporting on Country Music that is both more precisely defined and deeper than what AOL Music had offered previously. "Our interview with Josh Gracin, for example, has done well for us because the Country Music community knows who he is," Darden observed, "whereas if we had put it up on AOL Music I doubt it would have gotten as much click-through."

Ashley Heron, Senior Marketing Manager at Gracin's label Lyric Street Records, has certainly noted The Boot's potential for spreading the word about their artists. "It's exciting to see AOL's recognition of the broad reach of the Country format and their commitment to providing compelling content to their millions of loyal fans," he said.

"It's funny to use a term like 'Long-Tail' with Country," added Crandall, referring to the practice of marketing large volumes of information or product to niche consumer bases, particularly in a Web-based culture. "But that's what we're doing: taking more shots on goal by exposing more artists and nurturing an audience. My vision is that people who want to immerse themselves in Country Music will know that this is the place for them. We don't want to rope people in by tricking them. Basically, if you don't like Country Music, you won't like The Boot."

"People [who] are listening to Country radio and buying the music, they're not getting the coverage they want. That's where we step in."

— Bill Crandall,
Editor-in-Chief, AOL Music



above: Beville Darden (r), Editor/Director of Country Programming, AOL Music, interviews Taylor Swift at AOL Music Studios.
top of page: Phil Vassar records a concert exclusively for "AOL Sessions" and linked to **theboot.com**.

ONE FAN, ONE VOTE

by HOLLY GLEASON

It's two hours before he's scheduled to hit the stage in Albuquerque, N.M., and Dierks Bentley wields a Sharpie and a smile. He's surrounded by about 20 people, each of them a member of "the Congress," the community of hardcore Bentley fans, who are joining the singer/songwriter for an extended visit before the more traditional sponsor and radio meet-and-greet.

"There are those fans who are really engaged," said Bentley, whose *Greatest Hits / Every Mile a Memory 2003-2008* was basically executive-produced by his fans through their vote on tracks, title and the cover. "And the idea that I can give a handful of them a meaningful time to really talk about whatever, it keeps my connection to the people I'm making this music for real."

Bentley, who was recently named one of the "25 Fittest Guys in America" by *Men's Fitness* magazine and is the newest addition to Anheuser Busch's award-winning "Real Men of Genius" national advertising campaign, launched *Greatest Hits / Every Mile a Memory 2003-2008* with an extended series of "house concerts" and unplugged radio station events in Atlanta, Charlotte, N.C., Chicago, Greenville, N.C., Los Angeles, Minneapolis, New York, Philadelphia and Seattle.

"It lets me reach as many as personally as possible," he explained. "To play for free during the day for the fan club, and then to have the radio station pick a winner, and you go to someone's backyard or living room, that puts you right in the heart of it."

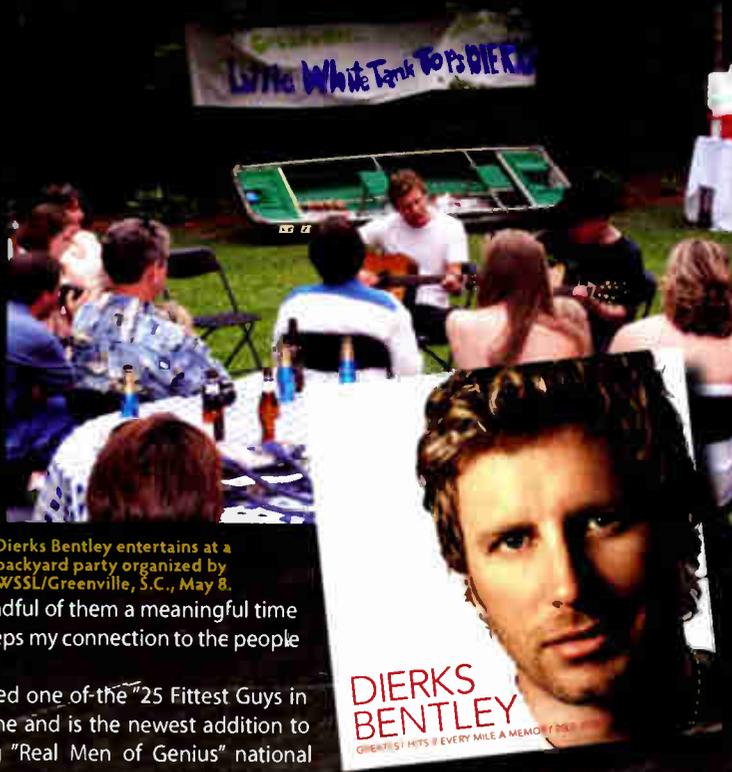
The extraordinary story behind this album sprang to life during his meeting with some Capitol Records Nashville executives who suggested they issue a greatest hits collection.

"The first thing he said was, 'There's nothing special about your typical greatest hits package,'" recalled Dustin Eichten, Director of Marketing, Capitol Records Nashville. "He wanted to find a way we could tie the fans into it, and we came up with this idea of signing up 3,000 people to vote on the cover art, potential live tracks and even the title. Then those 3,000 fans would have their names printed in the booklet. That way, the whole project became as much about the fans as it is about Dierks."

Capitol assembled those 3,000 fans by first e-mailing members of Bentley's fan club and inviting them to log onto their password-accessible section of dierks.com, where they could register on a first-come, first-served basis to take part in the project. After 24 hours that same notice was posted on the Web site's main page. Identities of the final group were announced by Bentley April 1, during an online "town hall meeting."

Each of the 3,000 fans was sent a selection of around 10 possible album titles, five cover images and all of his live tracks. Votes were cast, after which Bentley and his label went as promised with the winning selections. Participants were invited to pre-order the album, with most of the proceeds donated to the Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt University in Nashville.

Taking this ride a little further, Bentley launched a two-week promotional tour that combined meeting fans and doing radio station



Dierks Bentley entertains at a backyard party organized by WSSL/Greenville, S.C., May 8.

interviews during the day and then following with concerts in the backyards — or, in Indianapolis, the living room — of one fan and a few friends. "They were pretty special," said Eichten, who attended each of these intimate shows. "Dierks would show up, play for 30 or 40 minutes, sign autographs and hang out for a couple of hours. We didn't invent the backyard concert, but no artist at the level of Dierks Bentley had ever taken it this far."

It's that connection that gives this artist the freedom to blaze his own somewhat unconventional trail. "You have to say 'no' a lot," he said. "And it's difficult, because everybody wants the brass ring — a sold-out show, stadiums. But you also have to recognize that you need to be true to who and what you are. You do something not because it worked but because it's right, and the fans realize that difference."

As a fan, Bentley felt the power both of what's right and what works when he attended a Garth Brooks show in Phoenix. "Country was happening, but I couldn't tell you who all was there," he said. "All I saw was him."

That experience proved pivotal as Bentley pursued his idea of using his concerts to strengthen bonds with his fans. "To me, it's simple: tour, tour, tour. Go where no band has gone before. A lot of my education — what works, what doesn't — comes from the road, trying to be the best front man I can be and send the fans home entertained."

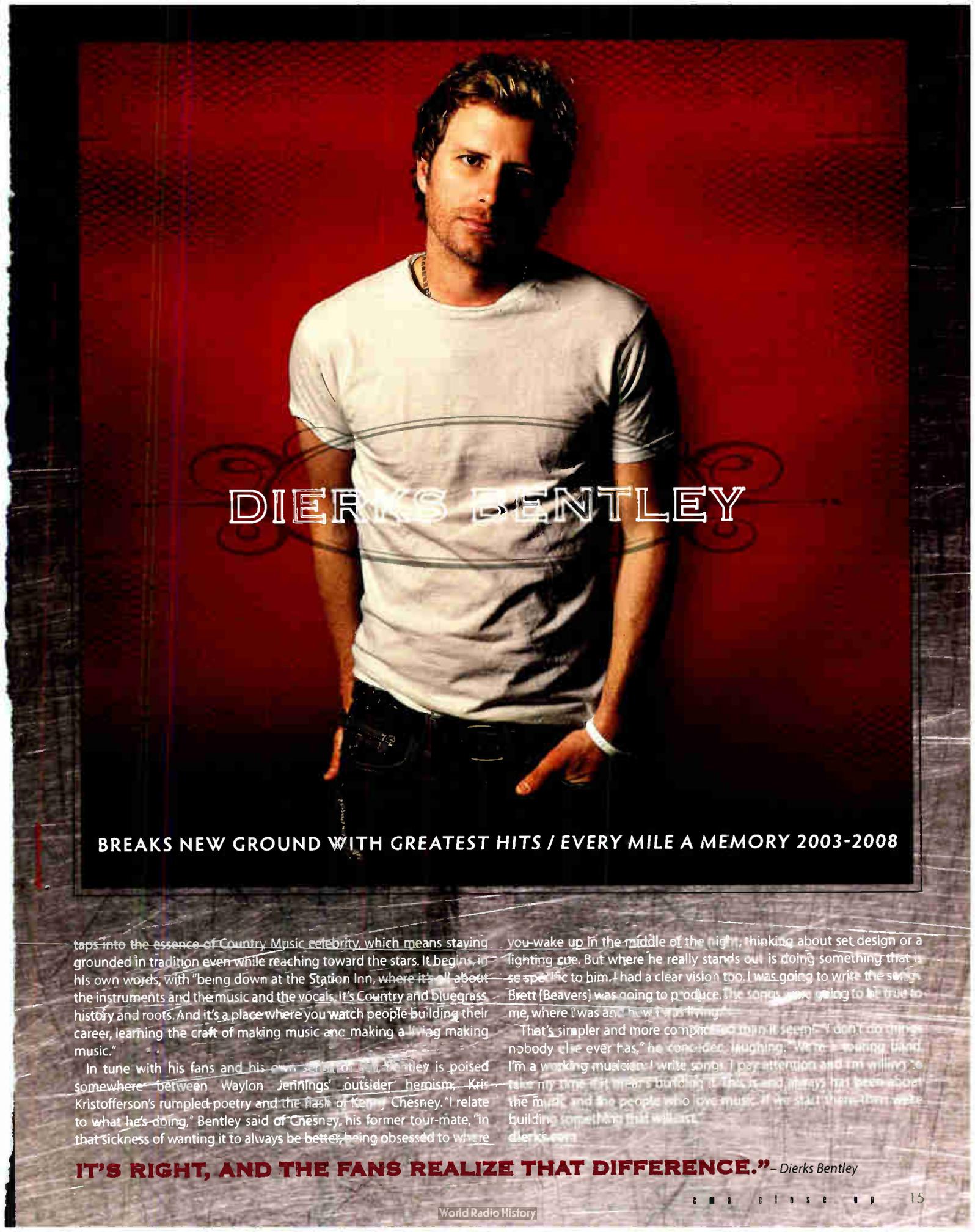
It's also about walking the line between artistic and commercial merit. The album features 17 tracks: Bentley's 10 Top 10 and No. 1 radio hits, two new songs and five live versions taped from concerts at Bonnaroo, the Fillmore and "Austin City Limits" among others. Many of his familiar songs, including "Free and Easy (Down the Road I Go)," "Lot of Leavin' Left to Do" and "Settle for a Slowdown," cast a postmodern drifter spin on an America weighted down by pressures to show up, achieve and fulfill, all of which stirred enough listeners to earn this 2005 CMA Horizon Award winner three Gold and two Platinum album certifications.

"I always went after the dudes who look like me and the girls who hung with them," he explained. "We spend a lot of time playing colleges, and there are older fans who know I know the history, bluegrassers who come because they relate to what we're doing — and the Texas audience can tell we're something different. All of those people may not have a lot in common, except they love songs and music."

The point is that Bentley, whose friends range from Ronnie McCoury to members of Pearl Jam, embraces all that Country has to offer. "I'm looking for great songs for me, not necessarily hits," he explained. "I passed on 'Whiskey Lullaby' and I knew it was a great song. But I'm trying to do something that's me, who I am — and in that, who my fans are too."

By identifying himself that closely with the listeners who have lifted him from the Lower Broadway clubs and into the limelight, Bentley

"YOU DO SOMETHING NOT BECAUSE IT WORKED BUT BECAUSE



DIERKS BENTLEY

BREAKS NEW GROUND WITH GREATEST HITS / EVERY MILE A MEMORY 2003-2008

taps into the essence of Country Music celebrity, which means staying grounded in tradition even while reaching toward the stars. It begins, in his own words, with "being down at the Station Inn, where it's all about the instruments and the music and the vocals. It's Country and bluegrass history and roots. And it's a place where you watch people building their career, learning the craft of making music and making a living making music."

In tune with his fans and his own sense of self, Bentley is poised somewhere between Waylon Jennings' outsider heroism, Kris Kristofferson's rumpled-poetry and the flash of Kenny Chesney. "I relate to what he's doing," Bentley said of Chesney, his former tour-mate, "in that sickness of wanting it to always be better, being obsessed to where

you wake up in the middle of the night, thinking about set design or a lighting cue. But where he really stands out is doing something that is so specific to him. I had a clear vision too. I was going to write the songs. Brett [Beavers] was going to produce. The songs were going to be made to me, where I was and how I was living."

"That's simpler and more complicated than it seems. I don't do things nobody else ever has," he concedes, laughing. "Were a working band. I'm a working musician. I write songs. I pay attention and I'm willing to take my time if it means building it. This is and always has been about the music and the people who love music. If we built them, then we're building something that will last."
dierks.com

IT'S RIGHT, AND THE FANS REALIZE THAT DIFFERENCE." — Dierks Bentley

CMA 50th ANNIVERSARY

TRANSITION AND EXPANSION:



1989-1998

by DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

As the 1980s wound down and the '90s began, Country Music enjoyed an explosion in popularity, which was mirrored in the continued growth of the Country Music Association. During this decade, the organization supported the Country Music community by donating to the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, marketing artists to major advertisers, subscribing to Simmons Research, launching CDX International Service to provide the latest singles to more than 130 international radio broadcasters in 18 countries and showcasing America's favorite music at the annual CMA Awards and Fan Fair in addition to producing two television specials commemorating CMA's 35th and 40th anniversaries, both of which aired on the CBS Television Network.

"Things were booming," said former CMA Executive Director Jo Walker-Meador, who retired in 1991 after 32 years of service to CMA. "It was really an exciting time for Country Music."

"Sales were good and life was good back in the late '80s and early '90s," added Connie Bradley, Senior VP, ASCAP. "That's when Garth Brooks and Alan Jackson both skyrocketed. We were sponsoring the Country Radio Seminar lunches back then, and we actually showcased Garth and Alan on the same ASCAP luncheon in 1990. Garth went first, Alan went next and both received standing ovations. And of course, they both went on to become superstars and take Country Music to a new level."

To make sure Madison Avenue advertisers were aware of Country Music's increasing appeal, the CMA Board approved hiring Bob Lobdell, owner of the consulting firm Cold Spring Harbor Group in New York, to help spread the word. "The early '90s were the best sales that Country Music ever had," recalled Bradley, who served as CMA Board President in 1989 and Chairman in 1990. "CMA had an active publicity department that was constantly putting out news releases. And CMA hired Bob to go to New York, Chicago, L.A., Dallas and Atlanta to sell Country Music to all the big advertisers. That's how the national sponsors came to realize that Country Music was a major force."

As Country Music became a more dominant force on the national cultural landscape, CMA increased its presence on Music Row by building its own headquarters. After



Wynonna performs at the "Marketing with Country Music" event in Chicago in 1996.

considering the purchase of one of several houses that were available at that time, the decision was made to buy a lot that became available on Music Circle South. Architect Tom Bulla was recruited to design the first building that CMA would own.

"It is a beautiful building," said Walker-Meador. "And Tom did a good job. The builder was Buchanan Construction Company. Bonnie Manson, President of Interior Design Associates, designed the atrium and all the décor inside. She's so creative and she continues to work with CMA."

Even with all these exciting developments, Walker-Meador was contemplating retirement before the new building was completed. A friend, however, persuaded her to stay longer. "I was talking to [former President and CEO, BMI] Frances Preston," she recalled. "And she said, 'Jo, you can't retire now. You have to spend some time in the new building.' So I stayed on another couple of years. And then I retired on Dec. 31, 1991."

"Jo's contributions to CMA are beyond measure," said CMA CEO Tammy Genovese, who was serving as Director, Administrative Services at CMA at the time of Walker-Meador's departure. "She set a standard of excellence, often against very difficult odds, that continues to guide and inspire me — and I treasure her friendship more than ever with each new day."

"Jo was such an inspiration to all with whom she came in contact, either Board members or staffers," said CMA CSO Ed Benson. "She had committed her life to CMA, and it was always her number one priority. We all should hope to ever become half as devoted to something as Jo was to CMA. Her strong love for the organization remains, and her influence is still felt among us who had the privilege of working with her."

Poignant as it was to leave CMA, Walker-Meador is enjoying her retirement. "I felt a lot of sadness thinking about how much I would miss it, but you know, it wasn't bad at all," she said. "I thought I would have all this free time after I retired, but that never did happen. I've stayed so busy. What I thought I'd miss the most was the people, but everybody in the industry has been so kind to invite me back to their events. Of course I go to all the CMA events, and other folks in the industry invite me to parties and events, so I get to see people a lot."

"There would not be a CMA if it had not been for Jo Walker-Meador and Frances Preston," Bradley insisted. "Jo was the



Tony Rounce, Ed Benson and Jeff Green at the 1992 CMA Board meetings in Dublin.

"[JO WALKER-MEADOR] WOULD HAVE TAKEN ON AN 800-POUND GORILLA. SHE WASN'T SCARED OF ANYTHING."

— Connie Bradley, Senior VP, ASCAP



Dolly Parton presents the Irving Waugh Award of Excellence to Jo Walker-Meador in 1991, the year she retired.



George Strait wins the 1989 CMA Entertainer of the Year Award.



Linda Davis and Reba McEntire (in her infamous red dress) perform at the 1996 CMA Awards.



Alison Krauss wins four CMA Awards in 1995.



Kenny Chesney greets fans at Fan Fair 1997.



LeAnn Rimes poses with a fan at the 1998 Fan Fair.

Ed Benson and Garth Brooks celebrate multi-Platinum certification of Brooks' album *No Fences* in 1990.



The first mock up of the CMA building on Music Row.



Vince Gill was the big winner and host at the 1994 CMA Awards.



President George Bush makes an appearance at the 1991 CMA Awards.



Tim McGraw meets fans at Fan Fair 1996.

Martina McBride, Chely Wright, Ed Benson and Pam Tillis at the 1998 "America's Sold on Country" event in Chicago.



Brooks & Dunn perform at the 1995 Fan Fair.



backbone of the organization. I've heard stories about how Jo used to borrow typing paper, pencils and other things for CMA because they didn't have enough money to buy their own. Times were tough and most people probably would have given up and gone home, but not Jo. She was very determined and she tackled problems herself. She didn't look for other people to do the work. She rolled up her sleeves and she would have taken on an 800-pound gorilla. She wasn't scared of anything."

As Benson stepped up from his position as CMA Associate Executive Director to succeed Walker-Meador as Executive Director, he inherited the challenges that she had been battling. "The biggest problem we had back in the late '80s and early '90s was piracy," said Bradley. "Truck stops would be loaded up with illegal CDs and cassette tapes. So CMA hired a lobbyist to represent us in Washington."

CMA raised the profile of Country Music on national television through its relationship with Vince Gill, whose casual elegance and quick wit captivated audiences during the 12 years he hosted the CMA Awards. Looking back, Gill had no trouble remembering his most lingering impression of his first year as host in 1992: "How big everyone's hair was," he said, with a laugh. "I was pretty nervous. The first year I co-hosted with Reba [McEntire], and I was smart enough to not try too hard. I didn't have any expectations of doing well at it because I had never done it before."

After one more year as co-host, with Clint Black in 1993, Gill took over the job solo. "They were crazy enough to let me do it and I had fun," he said. "It was important to me for everybody to be well represented. I wanted us to be viewed as a great experience musically, and I didn't want to embarrass anybody. The majority of the time, the jokes were at my own expense. The spirit of it was always kind. It was easy in the sense that I knew the audience, a majority of them, so it wasn't like an audience of strangers. That gave me great comfort, and I had fun when it was time to be fun."

Gill's working relationship with longtime CMA Awards Producer Walter Miller made his duties even more pleasurable. "There was a trust factor between the two of us that was great," Gill said. "He knew he could count on me, and I knew I could count on him. It wasn't rocket science we were trying to create up there, it was a good time. I think if you're not too uptight, all that translates to the person watching it too, that comfort."

Were there any embarrassing moments? "One thing that I remember that really went wrong was when I changed clothes one break too early," Gill said, chuckling. "We thought we had a window between when I had to be back out, but they came to the dressing room and said, 'You're on right now!' And I had no clothes on! I said, 'This isn't going to work.' That was the time I came running out in my stocking feet and probably slid about 10 feet to the microphone."

As the decade wound to a close, CMA prepared to commemorate its 40th anniversary by making a monumental donation of \$2 million to the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. "CMA's generous donation to our capital campaign was much appreciated," said Kyle Young, Director, Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. "It was among the major gifts that allowed us to construct a new, \$37 million state-of-the-art facility, which includes the Hall of Fame Rotunda, a reverent space in keeping with the honor of Country Music Hall of Fame membership."

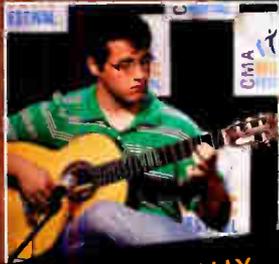
The close ties between the two organizations endure to this day. "Nothing better symbolizes the synergy between our educational organization and the Country Music Association than CMA's invitation, last year, to make our Medallion Ceremony stand as the official rite of induction for new members of the Country Music Hall of Fame," said Young.

When asked to explain CMA's longevity and continued viability, Young responded, "First and foremost, I would say that much of CMA's success has been rooted in the spirit of cooperation demonstrated by its members. The organization was formed by competitive industry leaders who came together and worked in harmony for the good of the industry. They have always gone to great lengths to prove this music's popularity and broaden its audience."

That mission would be extended, and its challenges met, through CMA's fifth decade, as recounted in the next issue of *CMA Close Up*.

METRO NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS STUDENTS THANK CMA FOR

KEEP THE MUSIC PLAYING



"MY INSTRUMENT HAS REALLY CHANGED MY LIFE." – LESLIE BERKELEY



**"I LOVE MY CELLO. I'VE NAMED HER LILAC."
– BAILEY SHELTON**

Launched in 2006, CMA's Keep the Music Playing program has won recognition as an innovative and effective means to help improve overall education through support for music education in Metro Nashville Public Schools. This charity initiative is a partnership with the Nashville Alliance for Public Education (NAPE), an organization

founded in 2002 by a group of corporate and civic leaders dedicated to improving education for students. Half the net proceeds of CMA Music Festival are allocated each year to Keep the Music Playing. To date, more than \$1.1 million has been donated to purchase hundreds of instruments, music labs and peripheral equipment, including stage curtains and baffling, computers equipped with software for recording and video editing and a Chevy Silverado truck used to transport band equipment to and from performances for the Nashville School of the Arts. Artists as well as Nashville community leaders have put their time and effort into this program. Artists at CMA Music Festival are not compensated, allowing CMA to show its appreciation for their dedication and time by passing a significant amount of money along to the schools on their behalf. The Hospital Corporation of America (HCA) supported the campaign by purchasing 800 tickets and making them available free for

continued on next page...

"I think it is so fun to learn songs and to play in front of an audience. I like to get out my instrument to learn our songs and to play with the other groups and to hear me play. Band is wonderful."

– Charlene Bard

"It has given me a great opportunity because now I can do something I have never been able to do. The viola can also give me another opportunity to get a scholarship to a great college."

– Jordan Bell

"Violin is really fun because you get to play lots of songs at concerts and when you play hard songs, you don't understand them at first, but when you practice them, you'll understand."

– Tauniasha Bokeyjack

"I think its fun to learn how to play new notes. But it's kind of tricky to get the notes C to A and B flat. But my practicing made it untricky."

– Diamond Braden

"I love to play music and I love to play the clarinet. And I am happy that the people chose me to be in this class. It is an honor to wake up and know that I get to play that afternoon."

– Ashley Brooks

"Playing instruments is very fun and I think I will always play the clarinet."

– Sydney Brooks

"Without band class this school would probably be very boring."

– Courtaijaha Brooks-James

"It is a privilege to be able to learn and play music of all sorts. Without this program many students wouldn't have the opportunity to follow their dream of playing music."

– Autumn Buchanan

"This was the first time I took and learned in band. This year has been the greatest experience."

– Mai Sheila Carter

"I am very appreciative for being a part of this group. I played for a nursing home once and they said I played very good so I went back a second time and they said that I have really improved. It was encouraging."

– Kiara Chatman

"I have enjoyed the experience, and I will continue to play as long as I can."

– Micala Clow



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high school students to attend the June 7 concert on the VAULT Concert Stage at LP Field during this year's Festival.

The public has seen the fruits of this investment in classrooms, at recitals and perhaps most visibly in the annual CMA Music Festival Kick-Off Parades, which take place the day before each Festival's official opening. In June, between Chevy vehicles bearing artists past cheering crowds in Downtown Nashville, the Antioch High School Marching Band and Drill Team and the Overton High School Drum Line displayed not only tight performance skills but an array of several instruments provided

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"I really thank CMA for donating instruments to my school I.T. Creswell [Middle Arts Magnet School], because after my instrument wood cracked and my neck broke on my instrument, Mrs. Voltz had good news for me. I had a new instrument." – Keisha Coleman

"Saxophone is better because you have more choices and I always want to be in band because I love it and I want never to get out of it because I love it." – Jabori Crutcher

"I love my violin and wouldn't trade it for the world." – Ke'Andrea Davis

"I thought band was kind of fun. At first, I thought it would be a complex environment, especially for a beginning fifth grader, but as we progressed, I began to become used to the complex, wild, vividly creative place." – Deamontay

"Everyday I come to school, this is the main class I look forward to." – Destiney

"Overall my experience in band has been great. If somebody took band away from me I wouldn't know how to survive." – Lestonja Diaz

"There's one thing that I like most about band and that is playing with my friends." – Dominique

"Me and my friends have been playing together for about four years. And I am very thankful for your generosity." – Michale Edwards

"I respect the fact that somebody took the time to donate instruments. We have creative minds and now we can express ourselves and I love the opportunity." – Jazz Fields

"All in all, band has been a life warming experience and I will never forget it." – Charity Furr

"When I first started out playing I didn't know anything about music. I didn't know how to read it or even play it. Since then, my knowledge for music has grown." – Terika Givens

"Band has been an experience to me because I have always wanted to play a clarinet or a flute." – Jamari H.

"When I play for my family now they say 'Grace you have improved tremendously' and they congratulate me with a large loud applause. When I grow up I want to be known as the amazing Grace and to be known all over the entire world and have millions of fans and get famous and be known as one of the best violin players in the world." – Grace Halverson

"I think it is great that you donated instruments to our school, because some people can't buy one or their parents won't let them." – Samira Hardcastle

"I'm glad I'm one of those people who can actually learn to play an instrument." – Maya Hernandez

"When I learn something new, I will take my instrument home and practice. At our concerts my mom would video it and I would go home and watch and look at how good I look." – Ashli Hill

**"MY DREAMS ARE COMING TRUE."
– SAVANNAH LOVELESS**



**"IT GIVES ME A NICE
JOY TO GO HOME AND
SHOW MY MOTHER
AND FATHER WHAT I
LEARNED. EVERY TIME
I PLAY A SONG FOR
THEM I LEAVE THEM
SPEECHLESS."**

– ANA GOMEZ



I thank you for all of the instruments.

"I think that every child should have the opportunity to have a band and play music."

- Hannah Isabella Hrabovsky

"I've come from not being able to play a note to 1st trumpet." - Sydney Hunt

"Ever since I was little I loved the way the violin sounded and always wanted to be just like that guy on T.V. who played like Yo Yo Ma. I hope I soon will be seen in a concert, not to be famous, not to get rich, but to provide a wonderful sound for me and others." - Juniper J.

"For me the bass means life. When I play the bass it makes me happy and calms me down." - Portia J.

"I always practice on my violin. Keeping up with violin is hard. Violin, violin, I love it. I'm always talking about violin. It's so fun." - Jameela Jenkins

"The things I love about band are the music. I also enjoy all my friends in band. My friend Lindsey can already play 'Lean on Me' perfectly and we just learned it." - Courtney Jennette

"I really enjoy band. I've gotten much better. I remember when I couldn't get a sound out, but now I can play almost any piece." - MyKaela Johnson

"The flute means a lot to me." - Destani Jones

"Being in band has been a great experience, because I know that this is going to carry me through high school and college." - Shania Jones

"I wish to grow up and know how to play Jazz, and also I wish to know how to play Blues." - Kyra Kennedy

"I didn't know how to play a single note but after awhile I could play number 20 in my book. I figured out how to read my notes instead of just listening to music." - Kobe

"I also think that it is important for kids to have an opportunity to play music and get to know what it's like to read it too." - Jada Locke

"I play the clarinet and it is a pretty sound you can also play hip hop songs and you can really get into it."

- Andresha M.

"Being part of an instrumental music group to me, means being different and weird, but in a good way. I love being creative, and smart. Thank you for donating instruments to our school." - Meyri S. Martinez

"Band is for being creative to me because sometimes in band you can figure out the rest of the music without the teacher and the teacher would appreciate you for telling her or him that so they can teach the rest of the students." - Teshara Mayes

"When I first heard I would be playing the viola, I didn't even know what a viola was. At first, I wasn't exactly sure I could handle playing the viola. But I'm really glad I decided to play the viola. I really enjoy it."

- Silvia Narvaez

"Strings are getting to be fun because I'm getting the notes." - Bianca Newsom

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courtesy of Keep the Music Playing.

Some of CMA's most prized accolades have come through essays by students who have benefited from Keep the Music Playing. Written by hand, they came to CMA by the dozens, from elementary through high school students. Each spoke from the heart; all are among the most treasured documentation of the program's impact on life at CMA.

"When we launched this initiative in 2006, we made a commitment to the students, the city and our artist community to use funds from the Festival to support a cause that is important to our industry and enriches lives," explained CMA CEO Tammy Genovese. "Thanks to our partnership with the Alliance and Metro Nashville Public Schools, these funds are already making a significant difference in the lives of countless students and their families."

The proof of this is in the words of the students themselves, excerpted here from their essays.

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"TRULY, WITHOUT YOU CMA, MANY STUDENTS WILL NOT HAVE A BETTER FUTURE. YOU MAY WONDER WHY, BUT BY YOU PROVIDING OUR INSTRUMENTS, THAT KEEP US OUT OF BAD THINGS, BECAUSE WE WOULD BE PLAYING OUR INSTRUMENT. OUR DREAMS HAVE BEEN MADE INTO A REALITY, AND DOORS OF BRIGHT LIGHT HAVE BEEN OPENED."
- SCHYLER GILES



- "I am so thankful that there are some nice people in this world. I am so glad that I won't have to pay a fortune just to buy an instrument." - Breana Norman
- "When you get to learn how to play your instrument it's a lot of fun. And I love music so that's probably why I joined band so I can play my favorite songs." - Tamara P.
- "I like strings because I get to play an instrument that nobody in my family would even think about playing."
- Taylor P.
- "I heard that classical music makes the brain smarter. I didn't think that it would make me a genius all of a sudden but I did think it would help to improve my intelligence - if that even makes sense. So it seemed like a good idea to play the violin." - Giovanni Perry
- "And right at that moment I knew which instrument I wanted to play and that was the alto saxophone."
- Jaren Prowell
- "Next year I want to learn even more than this year." - Lindsey Reeder
- "My violin sounds so beautiful like a red bird singing. When I found out that I was playing the violin I was so psyched." - Ericka Ridley
- "I like playing my viola because I enjoy the confused expressions on people's faces when they hear that I play an instrument they have never heard of before." - Katrina Roberts
- "I play the violin so much so I can get better and better." - Lanesia S.
- "To me music is an exciting experience because it's all of music all over the world and it's a lot of music to choose from also music you can relate to." - Teriyana Scales
- "I'm grateful that I, picked from hundreds of children, have had the opportunity to go through this experience, even though I probably wouldn't be able to afford a violin." - Robnesha Smith
- "I play the alto saxophone, the most common one. It is directly in the middle. Not too high. Not too low. Just right. At least to me." - Erica Spicer
- "Band this year for me, has been very important. It's been inspirational." - Maihayla Stephens
- "Since this is going on my record, it's like another step helping me to get into NSA, and hopefully Juilliard. These are just steps, helping me to make it to the top and someday perform not only for you, but everyone." - Kyla T.
- "Band has been the best part of school. Without band I wouldn't have anything to look forward to." - Thomas T.
- "I play the clarinet. And I love it. It is my life. Even though I don't play it a lot." - Alea Da'N'ay Taylor
- "What has benefited me from being in band is that I have gotten the chance to experience something new."
- Breanna Taylor
- "I like playing my instrument because I get to hear other people play, and we get to go on field trips."
- Britteny Tytlandsirk
- "I love playing in the band to learn about new cultures and other civilizations through music." - Alex Wells
- "It means that you can have fun doing what you want to do for yourself." - Mikaela Wiley

"SOME PEOPLE THINK THAT PLAYING MUSIC IS STUPID, BUT I THINK THAT PLAYING MUSIC IS REALLY SUPER."
- MONTEZ ELLISON



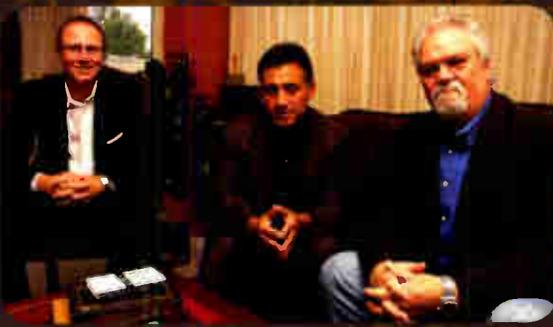
SPECIAL THANKS TO THE HCA FOUNDATION, a nonprofit organization and consortium of Nashville community leaders dedicated to making Middle Tennessee "the healthiest place for children and youth," for purchasing 800 CMA Music Festival nightly concert tickets to the VAULT Concert Stage at LP Field. These tickets were given to Metro Schools and distributed free of charge to students to attend the June 7 show.

"HCA supports CMA Music Festival for a number of reasons," said Jack Bovender, HCA Chairman and CEO. "Chief among these are our commitment to Nashville and our support for Metro Schools, but the Festival brings the added benefit of providing a special, entertaining event for HCA/TriStar employees to enjoy. We have consistently supported the Festival in the past, but this year, due to CMA's generous support of the music program in Metro Schools, we also made it possible for 800 students to participate in this great, city-wide event."

"HCA was one of the first members of the Nashville business community to support CMA Music Festival when we moved Downtown," said CMA CEO Tammy Genovese. "Through their generous donation we have been able to achieve our goal of involving more students in the Festival. This year, the number of students that were able to attend the Festival doubled."



Murrah Music Finds Group Insurance Answers Through CMA Sound Healthcare



R. J. Stillwell, Executive Director, CMA Sound Healthcare; Henry Badillo, Director, Group Health, CMA Sound Healthcare; and Roger Murrah, Chairman, Murrah Music Group.
photo: Drew Maynard

by **BOB DOERSCHUK**

Roger Murrah knows as much as anyone about writing songs. He has written or co-written 76 hit songs, according to *Billboard*. He served two terms as President of the Nashville Songwriters Association International and is currently serving a third term as Chairman of the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame Foundation. A Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame member since 2005, he also knows how to run a successful publishing company, which he has done for 18 years as head of Murrah Music Group.

But finding the best health plan for your employees can be even harder than earning a BMI Millionaire Award for composing "We're in This Love Together" with Keith Stegall. Just ask Murrah: He's done both.

"We treat [two-employee groups] the same way we treat a thousand-employee group."

- Henry Badillo, Director, Group Health, CMA Sound Healthcare

annual rite at Murrah Music. And when it became apparent that their carrier last year was charging the company 107 percent of the standard street rate to cover their small group of employees, Murrah decided to seek a more long-lasting solution.

The answer proved close to home — in a *CMA Close Up* article introducing CMA Sound Healthcare, which offers comprehensive health insurance for domestic CMA members, often well below rates available elsewhere to self-employed individuals as well as those employed by CMA member organizations. An appointment was set up with Henry Badillo, Director of Group Health for the program. One meeting was all it took to add Murrah Music to the growing list of companies to come onboard with a group policy.

"They had a \$5,000 individual out-of-pocket on their old policy," Badillo noted. "We got that down to \$2,500. And we were able to cut the cost of their dental plan literally in half while giving them a better plan too."

No company is too small to qualify for coverage, Badillo emphasized. "There are plenty of influential two-employee groups in the music industry. But we treat them the same way we treat a thousand-employee group. The key for the smaller companies is that while a carrier can decline to cover an individual policy, legislation ensures that they cannot decline coverage for groups from two to 50 employees. That's one reason why we're making sure that CMA Sound Healthcare offers the best options for group as well as individual plans."

"I'm an organizational member and a regular member of CMA," Murrah concluded. "I know how professionally CMA gets things done. That alone was enough for me to look into the plan — and I'm glad I did."

To learn more about individual and group insurance options, visit the CMA member-only Web site, MyCMAworld.com, and click on the CMA Sound Healthcare link.

"It's outrageous," he admitted, while seated behind a desk festooned with BMI Awards at his spacious attic office overlooking Music Row. "It's unbelievable that an independent company has been able to offer insurance at all."

Reviewing and often replacing their insurance program has become an



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

CMA provides an opportunity for CMA Awards nominees 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. The CMA Awards mailing service is available only for those nominees appearing on the second or final ballots during the balloting period from Aug. 13 through Nov. 4. In addition to the regular mailing service, CMA offers CMA Awards e-mail service, operated by Hi-Fi Fusion, where e-mails are sent to CMA voting members. Under NO circumstances will the authorized mailing house, Southern Post, and 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 (615) 664-1607 or Bsimmis@CMAworld.com.

GIVE YOUR LISTENERS A TRIP OF A LIFETIME

For the 10th consecutive year, What A Trip! returns as the exclusive CMA Awards trip provider. Trip packages include CMA Awards tickets and private after-party; Songwriter Spectacular brunch; exclusive celebrity events including a tour of Kix Brooks' Arrington Vineyards with a wine-tasting, desserts, live music, bonfires and surprises; Downtown hotel accommodations; roundtrip ground transport between airport and hotel; and What A Trip! staff on site 24/7.

CMA Awards trip packages sold out in 2007 so make your reservations now! Two- and three-night trip packages for two people are available. Contact Grace Reinbold or Darlene Williams (615) 269-0039; grace@whatatrip1.com or darlene@whatatrip1.com.

PURCHASE CMA AWARDS TICKETS ONLINE

Again this year, the process for CMA members to purchase tickets for "The 42nd Annual CMA Awards" is completely online.

Tickets go on sale Wednesday, Aug. 27 to CMA Individual Sterling and Organizational members in good standing through myCMAworld.com.

Members will receive instructions via e-mail from tickets@CMAworld.com. A user name and password will be required to purchase CMA Awards tickets. To obtain this information, contact membership@CMAworld.com.

CMA Awards tickets available for sale to the general public will be announced at a later date.

ADVERTISE NOW IN THE CMA AWARDS PROGRAM BOOK

Reach die-hard Country Music fans and the music community on "Country Music's Biggest Night™" by reserving your advertising space in the official publication of the CMA Awards.

AD SPACE RESERVATION DEADLINES

Aug. 4	EARLY BIRD RENEWALS RATES
Sept. 8	REGULAR RATES
Sept. 29	Artwork and payment due

CONTACT

Angela Lang (615) 664-1653 or Alang@CMAworld.com.

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ecording a studio album is an exercise in artistry. Each detail can be shaped as closely as possible to the performer's vision, exactly as a painter transforms a blank canvas into a reflection of life.

Live albums differ almost to the point of being opposite in nature. They are essentially journalistic endeavors, chronicling — or glossing over — each detail, from inspired moments to microphone malfunctions, wrong notes and sudden feedback.

Martina McBride knew this when the opportunity came to cut *Live in Concert*, her first live album and DVD. And her decision was ... do it anyway.

"I loved how it would document how our songs have evolved," she explained. "From performing songs like 'Where Would You Be' and 'A Broken Wing' for so many years, they've become richer and more soulful. But I also felt it was important because a lot of times people who haven't been to one of my shows might have a bit of a misperception about what they're like. They see me on television, standing in one spot and singing a song. I've always wanted to get it out there that we have a really high-energy show. We have a great production value. It's a bigger show than people might think."

The roots of *Live in Concert*, released in April on RCA Records as an eight-song CD with a 20-track bonus DVD, go back to PBS, who had tapped McBride as the first Country artist profiled on the network's "Great Performances" series. (Mikhail Baryshnikov, Leonard Bernstein, Luciano Pavarotti and James Taylor are among the many performers featured throughout the program's 36-year history. McBride's episode aired in March. Many local PBS stations offered the concert DVD and her *Waking Up Laughing* album as pledge gifts.)

The first step was to determine where and when to record. They settled on the i wireless Center in Moline, Ill., where McBride was scheduled to perform Sept. 29, 2007 during her "Waking Up Laughing Tour." "There were two things we cared about," explained John McBride, Martina's husband and longtime engineer and mixer. "One was the acoustics of the room and the other was how loud the crowds generally would be. We play in some places that I think are designed to reverberate the way they do because that's great for basketball — you want to have the home court advantage. But for music, it's murder. As you're closing the truck doors, you're still hearing the last note of the song hanging around in the room. But the acoustics in this particular venue work well with us, and the audiences there have always been great."

To prepare to track, a dress rehearsal took place the night before. Around 300 fans were welcomed into the room, mostly to let the crew work on audience close-ups with their HD cameras and to experiment with microphone placement in the much larger, sold-out crowd at the actual show.

"To me, that's absolutely what live concerts are about," the four-time CMA Female Vocalist of the Year insisted. "Sometimes I don't think audiences realize how important they are to the show — not that they have a responsibility to entertain me, but it really makes a difference. If I come out there and the audience is into it and they're excited, it just takes the show right up to another level. It *is* about them as much as it's about me."

McBride bases this conviction not just on her time in the spotlight but also on her years growing up and going to shows in Kansas. "I remember going to see Night Ranger when I was a kid," she said, laughing. "I was so excited. It was an hour-and-a-half drive to Wichita because I lived way out in the country. I was listening to their music all the way. I had my Night Ranger jersey on. And at the end of the show, they said, 'We love you, Wichita! You guys rock!' And I thought, 'They love us! Wow! We rock!' Looking back, I can see that was the first time I realized that what you say and do onstage is important."

Setting up that communication poses many challenges, beginning with the set list. Typically, McBride opens with a strong, up-tempo tune. But for this tour, as documented on the DVD, she decided to start with "Anyway," which had the advantage of a powerful chorus that complemented the "kabuki drop," or the sudden removal of a backdrop curtain to dramatically reveal the band.

"I've never started with a ballad before," she mused. "The hardest thing about doing a set list is the ballads. You can put three or four ballads together on an album, but you have to be really careful with a show because unless they're a certain kind of ballad, they can bring the show down. 'Anyway' has that huge chorus, though, and it's inspirational and powerful, so it seemed like it worked."

From the mix standpoint, John placed a high priority on the crowd's interactions with what transpired onstage. He positioned four stereo pairs of mics throughout the room, including

one 20 feet from the stage into the crowd and another 20 feet beyond that, each time-delayed so that the music they heard wouldn't be out of phase with what the onstage mics picked up.

Though studio mics are better at capturing sonic nuances, the stage mics used for *Live in Concert* performed brilliantly. Some entertainers might say *too* brilliantly, as when McBride's voice rasps slightly on the line "tonight I need a friend," from her rendition of "Help Me Make It Through the Night." In the studio, one might punch in a smoother timbre on that note — but at this moment, during a high point of the song, it feels real and right.

"The most important thing is to keep the emotion, always," she insisted. "It's not supposed to be perfect. I want to keep the authenticity of the live experience. I'm not saying I didn't fix anything on this record; I did take some moments from the dress rehearsal and put it on the live show, maybe because I couldn't hear as well at that point of the concert. But I didn't re-sing anything because that



THE ART OF THE REAL:

Martina McBride's

LIVE IN CONCERT
CD/DVD



"Sometimes I don't think audiences realize how important they are to the show."

— Martina McBride

defeats the purpose of having a live album."

McBride is focusing now on her next undertaking, a studio album yet to be titled, which she is co-producing with Dann Huff. She has also kicked off her summer tour, which began July 11 in Detroit. "This is the first time I have headlined an amphitheater tour, and we are really excited to be working with Brian O'Connell and Live Nation."

Live in Concert has left a special mark on McBride, in terms of offering something unique to fans. "Even though we filmed only one concert, when I watch it I feel like I am watching the culmination of 16 years of hard work, excitement and experience onstage," she said. "It's great to have a souvenir, if you will, of what we have worked so hard for and to be able to share it with my fans. It's equally exciting to look forward to sharing new music on tour and working to see just how far we can go with the tour, musically and from a production standpoint. My goal is to make people want to keep coming back again and again to share this experience with us."

McBride clearly shares that same excitement; it's evident on *Live in Concert* from her entrance to the opening strains of "Anyway" and the crowd's welcoming ovation. "I always get this feeling of excitement, of wondering how the audience is going to react," she said. "There's nothing like that feeling, when I come out of that lift from underneath the stage: The people see you, and there's that sound, and you think, 'Wow, I'm so lucky.'"

martinamcbride.com

photos: TeeCee Bailey, full stage shot: Rick Diamond, all microphone: Nerihar photo taken at Spot 29 live CD DVD taping.



THE LOOK OF Music

INDUSTRY PROS DISCUSS THE CHALLENGE OF ALBUM COVER DESIGN IN THE DIGITAL AGE

MELISSA COKER

Digital downloading has changed practically every aspect of making and marketing music, but what impact has it had on the more visually artistic types who make their mark through album cover design? On that long road from LP to CD to the virtual world, is their handiwork becoming literally a diminishing art?

"Design principles shouldn't change," insisted Wade Hunt, former Sony BMG Nashville VP Creative Services and current Associate Creative Director, Catapult Marketing, who has been at the forefront of album cover design for about 25 years. "Good design is good design. A good designer can make whatever format effective. But things do have to get 'cleaner' for online delivery, especially for album covers. The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper [Lonely Hearts Club Band]* album cover, for example ... it's so complex that it doesn't work well in today's online market."

The opposite principle — simplicity — seems to work best in today's online market. "The resolution sometimes is smaller and therefore more delicate designs or smaller typefaces don't translate well in the digital world," said Astrid May, Creative Director, Sony BMG Nashville. "It affects the way I pick colors and fonts and photos. The overall quality suffers, in my view."

Photos also "have to be more graphic for the online market — a cleaner look with a lot less details," she added. "Head shots or simple concept ideas work better."

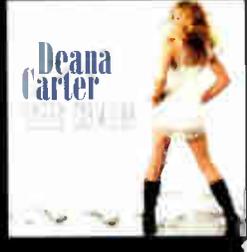
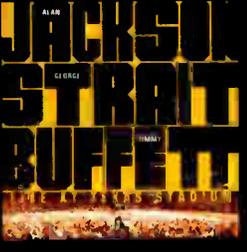
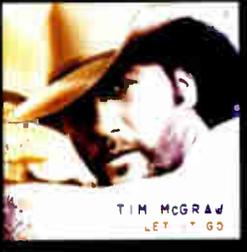
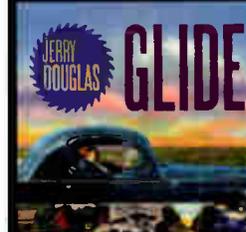
But other factors come to play on the mission of stimulating online purchases — and some of them lead to the conclusion that simplicity isn't always the best choice. "After designing squares for 12 years, it takes some adjustments," said May, referring to the time she's devoted to creating album covers. "The digital design is very colorful and busy. Things that work on print do not necessarily work in an environment with banners, pop-up ads and such. A minimal, plain cover with just a line of type, which would look very impactful on a store shelf, would be completely lost and overlooked online."

The key is to come up with a look that can be adapted for both the physical and virtual realms. Karen Naff, VP Creative Services, Universal Music Group Nashville, cited Vince Gill's *These Days* as an example. "That boxed set was printed with a linen fabric on the box, with 'VG' foil-stamped with dark brown and clear foil," she said. "It looked great in person but you couldn't read it on a digital file, so we created a version for advertising and online viewing that showed the 'VG' in a dark brown, which showed up really well on the neutral background."

For Naff, another legend's recent album was equally impressive, regardless of the fact that it happened to be designed by one of her coworkers. "One album of ours that, to me, features an especially memorable cover design is Willie Nelson's *Countryman*, designed by our very own Craig Allen, one of the best designers in town. The design and colors really popped and conveyed that it was a reggae album. Also, the Sugarland *Enjoy the Ride* cover represents them really well — energetic and fun. The image and logo are really impactful."

Images like these, which transfer effectively from one format to the other, aren't always easy to conceive. "I believe the Internet and sites like MySpace.com have changed design in a negative way," May suggested. "Everybody with software believes they can design, and design rules have been ignored and overlooked. Maybe I am old-school, but such things as kerning, typography and color theory seem to be completely obsolete."

Even so, May observed, the future of design lies online. "It seems to be the future place for imaging, marketing and A&R. Good news/bad news: I feel that we will be designing exclusively with digital in mind. Therefore, in my eyes, cover design integrity will suffer."





LOOKIN' GOOD: IDEAS FOR EFFECTIVE ALBUM COVER DESIGN

Hook the Listener: Create a design that will connect with viewers. Consider playing up the album or a song title or lyrics for a theme.

Nothing is Set in Stone: "Virtually anything is possible," said Drew Huddleston at echo. "It's limiting in some ways and quite freeing in others. But that also means that you can't put all your time, effort and money into a single format: The new opportunities will stretch creatively beyond simple design choices. It'll mean that you can create everything from scratch, right down to the business model."

Cross the Digital Image Divide: when transferring CD artwork into the digital domain, be prepared to deal with readability issues. "Depending on the cover, we sometimes have to tweak color and type for better readability resolution when it's displayed much smaller than actual size," said Karen Naff at UMG Nashville. "And in addition to the traditional cover, you want to help consumers connect the dots for a project, so using the cover image and the type treatment separately, not just when composed as a cover, allows us to reach a lot more folks than in the past."

Try Special Delivery: "Tie the packaging to art, animation or video," suggested Brad Henderson at echo. "It can even be tied to live performances, personal interaction with the artist, limited-edition vinyl of hand-printed versions — this is where it gets fun."

Don't Forget the Sticker: Make sure your design leaves room for a retail price sticker on the physical product, without looking too empty when transferred to digital format. "Larger chains have preset placement guidelines," Astrid May at Sony BMG Nashville advised. "So we consult with our Marketing and Sales departments for placement."

Use the Flip Side: Both sides of the jewel case can work together to create an effective impression, to the point that it may even be worth putting the artist portrait on the back. "I believe most consumers do pick up the CD and turn it around, if they are drawn to the cover," said May. "That gives you some freedom to try something new with the front, knowing that you have the back of the CD to fall back on for artist recognition."

Simple is as Simple Does: When viewed as a much smaller piece of art than on CD details can shrink to, effectively, nothingness. Wade Hunt at Catapult Marketing advises that fonts be cleaner and much larger, proportionate to the image, than they would be on larger physical products.

Naff does see a fun side to the possibilities offered by the Internet, particularly in its potential for customer involvement. "It might be fun to show different cover options and have people vote on their favorite," she mused.

Coincidentally, that's what the team behind Dierks Bentley was thinking. Capitol Records Nashville and Brad Henderson, VP, Brand Strategy & Creative, and Drew Huddleston, Senior Designer, both of echo, formerly echo music, are responsible for enacting the Dierks Bentley Fan Project, which enabled fans to choose the title, songs, cover art and other aspects of his recent greatest-hits collection. (Bentley shares his thoughts on this concept on page 14.)

"The greatest difference between creating covers for the physical and online markets is the ability to allow the audience to connect so quickly to the artist," Huddleston said. "With the instant connection the Internet provides, artists can quite literally ask their audience what they want, which is what we did for the new Dierks Fan Project. Because we could facilitate a direct connection to the fans, Dierks had the ability to create excitement in his audience through the album design process. Where in the past his audience's first exposure to a new album would be through advertising for the already packaged album, now the Internet has given him the opportunity to start building buzz earlier and even commit some of that core audience to purchase months before release."

"On a purely practical note," Henderson added, "looking good on a screen, whether that is a computer screen or a phone screen, is more important than ever. Print continues to be less frequent and less important. So you don't have the control you used to have over size, color and quality. If you're lucky, people are going to see it everywhere, and they have to recognize it and connect with it, whether it's huge on the cardboard sleeve of limited-edition vinyl or an icon on the screen of their iPhone."

Aesthetics aside, making the design process a communal adventure definitely enhanced the connections between Bentley and his following. "From getting sneak peeks at potential cover photos to picking the name and track list, the fans loved being involved," Huddleston said. "And the fact that 3,000 fans were so quick to join in the process proves how excited they were."

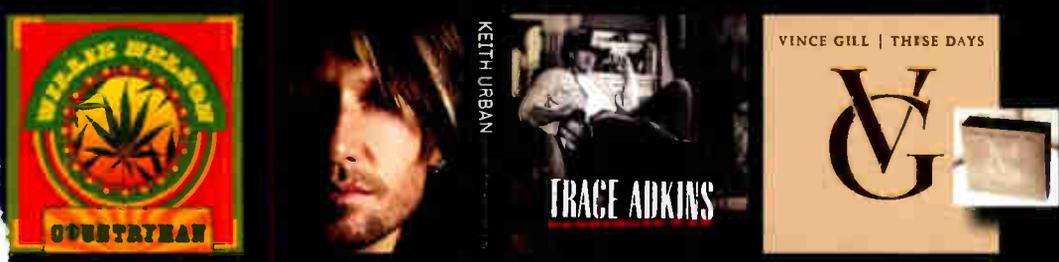
"Almost half of those people showed up in a live video chat room to see Dierks present the CD package, answer their questions and even do a couple of acoustic songs," Henderson added. "Dierks had a blast and so did those 1,500 people."

The Internet is changing the visual as well as the musical side of music, from basic questions of finding the most effective image for an album to whether that image might break beyond the static requirements of print to empowering consumers to be a part of the creative as well as the purchasing equations.

"All artist imaging must be consistent to be effective," Hunt said. "There will always be new ways to deliver ideas, and creatives have to adapt to the boundaries of the type of media they are designing for. Digital is just a new, additional way to deliver. As for whether we'll see 'glory days' in the near future of album art, well, creative is creative. A good creative designer has no limit. The computer and Internet are just tools and shouldn't alter the creative process."

THE GREATEST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CREATING COVERS FOR THE PHYSICAL AND ONLINE MARKETS IS THE ABILITY TO ALLOW THE AUDIENCE TO CONNECT SO QUICKLY TO THE ARTIST.

Drew Huddleston, Senior Designer, echo



KEITH ANDERSON HAS ONE WORD

by VERNELL HACKETT

Keith Anderson is living his dreams. It wasn't all that long ago that the Oklahoma native was working the Dallas club circuit with his band and dreaming of having a record deal. But Aug. 5, Anderson will follow his debut album, the Gold-certified *Three Chord Country and American Rock & Roll*, with *C'MON!* on Columbia Nashville — and it's no accident that he spells the name of his sophomore album and its opening track in capital letters with an exclamation point.

"You've got to say it loud ... *C'MON!*," he insisted. "I chose this as the title for a number of reasons. One, it says to my fans, 'Hey, we're gonna have more of the same on this album. Second, if you're not familiar with my music, it's an invite to c'mon and jump on the bandwagon, give it a chance, 'cause I think you're gonna like this party. It's such a rockin' intro to the album that we open our shows with it now."

Despite its rollicking introduction, this album actually offers a revealing look at the life of this singer/songwriter who's co-written hits for other artists that include Gretchen Wilson's "The Bed" and Big & Rich's "Lost in This Moment." Anderson and producer Jeffrey Steele were both going through some life-changing issues when they started collaborating on it.

"Jeffrey's son had died in a tragic accident," Anderson said, referring to 13-year-old Alex Levasseur's death after an all-terrain-vehicle mishap Jan. 28, 2007. "Four months later, my mom got diagnosed with brain cancer. We're still dealing with that. So this album is a reflection of where we were emotionally and mentally. I was singing with more passion, so the album probably did take a more introspective point of view than we did on the first one, just because of where we were at the time."

Because he and Steele were able to go deeper and ask some pretty hard questions through this music, Anderson thinks *C'MON!* will succeed even more than his first album. "I put a few songs on here that I wouldn't have put on a Keith Anderson party album," he admitted. "As hard as it was [to go through personal issues as part of the creative process], I think we came up with something really special."

Anderson's first single from *C'MON!*, "I Still Miss You," became the fastest-rising hit of his career. Though it's about a breakup at first listen, feedback from his fans has inspired Anderson to appreciate it now at a whole new level.

"When I wrote the song with Jason Sellers and Tim Nichols, we were pulling from the emotions of losing a girlfriend," he explained. "But after finding out about my mom and then hearing about how other people were reminded of someone they lost — a friend, parent, son or daughter — it's kind of taken on a new meaning for me and other people."

Nichols and Sellers typify the top-quality talents who have come to welcome the opportunity to work with Anderson, whose name appears as a co-writing credit on 10 of the album's 11 tracks alongside such heavyweights as Chuck Cannon, Bob DiPiero, Vicky McGehee, Rivers Rutherford and Steele.

"I've always been a fan of the people who wrote the songs," Anderson said. "My whole life I've dreamed of being a songwriter, so I studied them before I moved here. I knew their names before their faces because to this day, when I buy a record, I take the insert out to see who wrote the songs. I love the craft and the songwriting process. So now I've gotten to write with most of those guys, most of my heroes, and become friends with them, so it really has been a dream come true for me."

Anderson had been a fan of Boy Howdy, Steele's band back in the 1980s, and had performed a lot of their music in Texas. So one part of that dream became reality when they met at a writer's night, shortly after Anderson moved to Nashville.

"I went up and introduced myself that night and we hit it off," Anderson said. "Jeffrey invited me to his place the next day and we ended up writing songs right away. It was more of a casual meeting. We had fun, we laughed — it was like hanging out with my brother. Jeffrey has this energy he brings to the table that you just can't fabricate. It's a constant love of making music. My relationship with him is the same kind of chemistry I have with my brothers, just cracking each other up — that same sense of humor."

"Keith is a great guy and a good friend," Steele said. "I think he's singing great on this album. You know he was on the road for a long time and sometimes that ruins a singer's voice. With Keith, it just made it stronger."

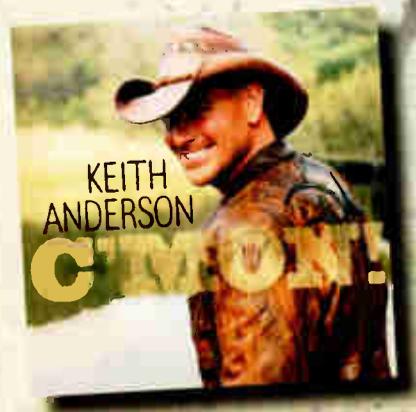
When sessions began for *C'MON!*, they had to be scheduled around Anderson's ongoing tour schedule. "We just took our time," Steele recounted. "If he got tired in the studio, we'd break and come back later. We didn't rush it, so we have ended up with a really good project with some great songs."

That sensitivity to Anderson's energy onstage is a major reason why they agreed to work together on *C'MON!* "We were making demos of the songs we wrote to pitch to other artists, and they had more energy than the other things I was recording," Anderson said. "When we started looking for someone to produce me, we went into the studio with a few producers, but none of them were able to capture what I do live, which is a big part of my musical equation — that big, high-energy party. That's something that Jeffrey just does naturally in the studio, so we tried a few things and it just worked."

It worked so well that they cut 17 songs — more than they needed. "I will say there are songs I thought

**"I PUT A FEW
SONGS ON HERE
THAT I WOULDN'T
HAVE PUT ON A
KEITH ANDERSON
PARTY ALBUM."**

— Keith Anderson



FOR FANS

C'MON!



would make the record that didn't," Anderson said, "and songs I wouldn't have imagined putting on it that we ended up cutting."

Two of those extra songs are being made available on a special version of the album sold exclusively through Best Buy. One of them is "Jake's Goin' All the Way," which Anderson and Steele wrote for the CMT series "Unsung Heroes." The other is the original version of "Beer Run (B Double E Double Are You In?)," which was a hit for Garth Brooks and George Jones. Anderson recorded it as he wrote it, faster and rockin' harder than the treatment given to it by Brooks and Jones.

"Thank God for Garth and George," he said. "That song changed my life — and my account balance and my address. But we do the original version at my shows, and the fans have been asking where they can get a copy of it. So we're putting it on as a bonus track."

The only other outside track on *C'MON!* is "Crazy Over You." Including this Foster & Lloyd hit was a no-brainer for Anderson, since he had performed much of their material back throughout the club circuit in Dallas. In turn, Bill Lloyd and Radney Foster showed their respect for Anderson by joining him as he cut this track. "I owned all their cassettes and I saw them three or four times when I lived there," Anderson said. "I love their vibe. I'm a big fan of their writing and harmonies."

"Overall, we know we picked the right songs for *C'MON!*," he added. "It has taken a long time to get it out there, but it also gave us the opportunity to go back in and remix something or do a vocal track over if we felt that we needed to. It's great to look at it and know it's the best product we could put out there. It has been hard to wait, because I'm like a racehorse at the gate. I'm glad it's going to finally get out there."

keithanderson.com

PEOPLE *COUNTRY SPECIAL*

WIDENS HORIZONS FOR COUNTRY MUSIC AND MARKETING

by **LORIE HOLLABAUGH**

Just like Trace Adkins on NBC-TV's "The Celebrity Apprentice," the *People Country Special* magazines, sold periodically on newsstands nationwide, make it clear that Country Music is rising higher into mainstream consciousness than ever before.

People, which has reported on popular culture for nearly four decades, has included Country Music in its editorial mix. Two years ago, the magazine tested the waters for extended and more specialized coverage with a trial issue of its *People Country Special*. Consumer feedback was so strong and sales numbers so robust that the magazine scheduled four issues for 2008 with a possible increase in the future.

"*People*, at its core DNA, is all about being a cultural force," explained Paul Caine, President, Time Inc., Entertainment Group. "It's about defining celebrity. It's about driving conversation and inspiring action. When you think about that core essence, then you know that can work not only for the weekly magazine but also everywhere else people are living and connecting with other people in very specific ways. So Country was one of those opportunities that really spoke to us, because there is a core reader or consumer that lives the Country life. It's the people they admire, the celebrities, the way they talk about their life and the people they admire most, and it's the ways they get involved. And it all adds up to a culture we can be a potential force in."

"Country was one of those opportunities that really spoke to us, because there is a core reader or consumer that lives the Country life." — Paul Caine, President, Time Inc., Entertainment Group

Caine noted that *People's* interest in providing greater focus on Country Music was piqued in large part by the CMA Awards being held at New York City's Madison Square Garden in 2005. But in the years since then, "American Idol" also played a significant role in drawing media attention to the Country genre. Recognizing that, *People* placed "Idol" winner Carrie Underwood on the cover of the first *People Country Special* issue for 2008 — and that issue sold nearly 400,000 copies through newsstand distribution alone. And since "Idol" alumni Bucky Covington, Josh Gracin, Kellie Pickler and Phil Stacey have captured their share of the spotlight, the timing seems perfect for a crossover Country Music publication.

"In *People Country*, we are able to include more news about Country stars, from weddings and babies to new books and movies they may be



working on," said Cynthia Sanz, Assistant Managing Editor, *People*. "We cover big industry events in a more timely, in-depth way and pack the issues with what the fans are talking about right at this moment. We've also added features like fashion and beauty and home and entertaining, which show readers how they can bring elements of the Country lifestyle into their lives. It's all about who's hot now, who people want to know more about and what fans are buzzing about."

From a Brad Paisley at-home cover with baby son Huck (William Huckleberry) and wife Kimberly Williams-Paisley to the stars' favorite rides, each issue provides an up-close and personal glimpse into the lives of Country artists. And according to Caine, they've been more than happy to open their lives to the public through the magazine.

"The artists have been fantastic," he said. "We've gotten great cooperation. It almost seems like they've been lending themselves in order to see the success of this, so we've been very, very happy with that. We've had reachouts from the top, top tiers of the Country world, giving us access to their homes, their closets, their lives and their talent, and that's been a phenomenal experience. We get that kind of permission because of the core franchise: They see what we do and they feel comfortable with the credibility on the weekly version and the digital version [of *People's* flagship magazine]."

The magazine has responded to this level of cooperation by exploring multiple avenues of involvement, including the recent "People Country Special on CMT," a half-hour program hosted by Allison DeMarcus of "CMT Insider." They are also sponsoring concerts with Country artists throughout the year and maintaining a presence at special events, including distributing magazines at the truTV Fan Fair Hall during CMA Music Festival.

"With the CMT Music Awards, we did all sorts of integrated marketing," Caine said. "We did bleacher seat sampling and sponsored the after-party along with CMT. We did a photo booth on site in the green room, with photos that you'll see in the core issues as well as the Country issues moving forward. We also did online programs with some behind-the-scenes footage. And we will do a number of music launches in all formats. We did one on May 15 with Jewel in Chicago, where we invited consumers, tastemakers and other VIPs to this incredible acoustic performance. We're also developing retail programs as well as other live

MEET THE COUNTRY READER

When Country fans aren't listening to music, they're reading about it — or, according to findings by MRI (Market Research Insight), one of the leading market research firms in the United States, they're reading about other things too.

These findings, summarized below, indicate the 50 most popular magazines among self-described devotees of Country Music; the figure next to each title indicates the percentage of readers surveyed by MRI who described themselves as Country fans. Further details on this and other market-related data are available to CMA members, the amount of information based on level of membership.

1.	<i>Country Weekly</i>	100
2.	<i>Ducks Unlimited</i>	76.7
3.	<i>American Hunter</i>	68.5
4.	<i>Hunting</i>	67.8
5.	<i>Four Wheeler</i>	64.6
6.	<i>North American Hunter</i>	64.1
7.	<i>Field & Stream</i>	62.9
8.	<i>Country Sampler</i>	61.2
9.	<i>Outdoor Life</i>	61
10.	<i>Game & Fish</i>	60.8
11.	<i>American Rifleman</i>	60.7
12.	<i>4 Wheel On & Off Road</i>	60.6
13.	<i>Bassmaster</i>	60.6
14.	<i>Popular Hot Rodding</i>	58.6
15.	<i>Hot Rod</i>	58.5
16.	<i>Stock Car Racing</i>	58
17.	<i>American Legion</i>	57.2
18.	<i>Dirt Rider</i>	57.2
19.	<i>Truckin</i>	57.1
20.	<i>Country Home</i>	56.7
21.	<i>Boating</i>	56.6
22.	<i>Country Living</i>	56.5
23.	<i>Guns & Ammo</i>	55.2
24.	<i>Redbook</i>	54.9
25.	<i>Street Rodder</i>	54.9
26.	<i>Town & Country</i>	54.6
27.	<i>Handguns</i>	54.2
28.	<i>Southern Living</i>	54.2
29.	<i>VFW Magazine</i>	54.1
30.	<i>Workbench</i>	54.1
31.	<i>Super Chevy</i>	53
32.	<i>Family Circle</i>	53
33.	<i>Texas Monthly</i>	53
34.	<i>Guideposts</i>	52.8
35.	<i>Handy</i>	52.5
36.	<i>Woman's World</i>	52.3
37.	<i>Saturday Evening Post</i>	52.2
38.	<i>In-Fisherman</i>	52.2
39.	<i>Ladies Home Journal</i>	52
40.	<i>Midwest Living</i>	51.7
41.	<i>Woman's Day</i>	51.5
42.	<i>Gardening How-To</i>	51.4
43.	<i>Soap Opera Weekly</i>	51.1
44.	<i>FamilyFun</i>	50.9
45.	<i>Soap Opera Digest</i>	50.6
46.	<i>Motor Boating</i>	50.6
47.	<i>Sport Truck</i>	50.3
48.	<i>Salt Water Sportsman</i>	50.2
49.	<i>North American Fisherman</i>	50.2
50.	<i>Family Handyman</i>	49.6



events programs to tie in with other Country events, festivals and concert tours.”

“I am so happy to have another viable national media outlet that promotes Country Music,” said Vanessa Davis, President/Owner, Splash! Public Relations. “People magazine has garnered a large subscription and newsstand readership over the years, so they can offer Country a built-in consumer base. I’m especially pleased that *People Country Special* gives our new artists a platform for exposure, not only in the magazine but also by the downloads offered on its Web site. This gives readers a chance to learn more about the artists and also hear their music, and that’s a great promotional tool. I’ve placed several of my ‘baby’ acts in the publication, with wonderful results.”

People’s incursions into Country Music have also awakened new groups of advertisers to the potential of marketing toward its fans. “Advertising response has been phenomenal,” said Caine. “People are very interested, but if anything I think we’re educating more of them to be interested in this market. When I launched *Teen People*, that was one of the biggest wakeup calls in that while many people were marketing to teens at that time, we were able to wake up two to three times that many marketers to the market based on the success they were having. The same thing is happening here with Country. We’re bringing new marketers to this world that are waking up and deciding that this is a market to focus on.”

With indicators in place that *People Country Special* will continue to succeed, Caine hopes to draw even more advertisers into the fold and possibly increase the number of issues published per year.

“Part of our incubation strategy at *People* is that we try to keep our fingers on the pulse of what people are talking about and what they want to read now, and so we constantly debate frequency on the specials and the number we produce,” he said. “It’s a fluid concept. We want to stay connected to the customer to make sure we’re not over-delivering or under-delivering the information. It’s a two-way communication. So with *Country*, we’ve gone from one time to four times a year. We’re listening to the consumer, and if there is an interest in increasing our frequency beyond that, we will.”

It’s not just the immediate public response that prompts Caine to consider bumping *People Country Special* to a busier publishing schedule; just as important is the genre’s enduring appeal. “Country has maintained its popularity for a very long time,” he said. “It’s not a trend. Other genres of music wax and wane in terms of relevance or lifestyle elements. You see it with pop and hip-hop and R&B: The market changes over time. But Country is unique. It’s been around for a long time and it will be around for a long time to come.”

TIM HENSLEY



Tim Hensley's debut album, *Long Monday* on Rural Rhythm/Blue Chair, promises that the future of traditional music is in safe hands. His renditions of 12 songs, three from public domain and one co-written by Hensley, conveys respect for those values, beyond the music itself, that make the foundation of modern Country Music so organic and enduring.

Some of that comes from the company this young artist keeps. With Buddy Cannon and Kenny Chesney sharing production credits, with Vince Gill and Patty Loveless sweetening the rugged timbre of the backup vocals and with neither drums nor electric guitar in sight, *Long Monday* seems almost to rise from the pages of some old family photo album, stirring echoes long dormant in the corners of memory.

Hensley cultivated his affinity for this music by listening to his mother's Flatt & Scruggs tapes while riding around with her in a '63 Falcon and later playing with Chesney, Loveless and Ricky Skaggs or relaxing after shows with unplugged jams on the bluegrass and old gospel tunes that he and the other members of the band all knew and loved.

Hensley displays a winning vocal style throughout *Long Monday* — a high tenor that enhances the melody while also making each performance sound like a conversation. His approach suits the newer material by Rodney Crowell, John Prine and other contemporary writers, but it elevates a brief a cappella version of "Working on a Building" into a haunting and timeless benediction.

Q&A

DREAM DUET PARTNER "Vince Gill or Patty Loveless." **BOOK ON YOUR NIGHTSTAND** "An old book about the mountains of eastern Kentucky, called *Dawn Comes to the Mountains*." **SONG YOU WISH YOU'D WRITTEN** "Kenny Chesney's 'Where You'd Be Today.'" **LUCKY CHARM** "Black jacket." **GREATEST PERFORMANCE TO DATE** "Debuting with music from my new album on the Grand Ole Opry."

timhensley.net

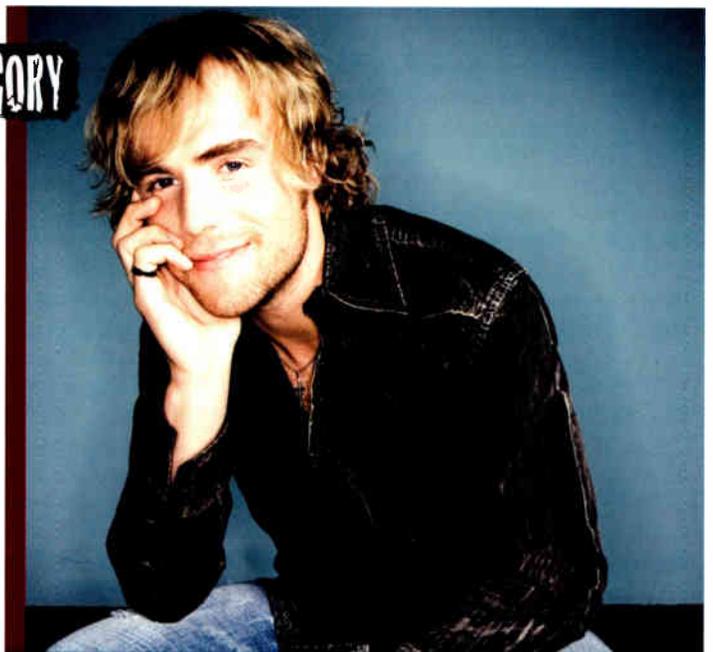
ADAM GREGORY

Technically, Adam Gregory isn't Adam Gregory's first album. But seeing as how he cut *The Way I'm Made* when he was just 13 years old, for distribution only in his native Canada, it can be asserted that his self-titled NSA/Midas Records debut album brings a more seasoned 22-year-old artist to audiences beyond the borders of his homeland.

That first album earned the teenager a series of distinctions, including a Prairie Music Award for Outstanding Country Music Recording, the Canadian Radio Music Award for Best New Country Artist, Canadian Country Music Association and Juno Award nominations and performance opportunities at festivals and venues. He would record three albums for the Canadian market, each one tracking his development as an expressive singer and rapidly evolving writer.

Gregory now bows in the United States with an album that's finely tuned to what communicates on Country radio. He'd written one track on his first Canadian album; that number rises to nine co-writes on Adam Gregory, including the first single "Crazy Days," which he penned with Lee Brice, Kyle Jacobs and Joe Leathers. But the urgent romanticism and surging rhythm of that song reflect only one side of his personality; on the dramatic "Tired" and the intimate "What It Takes to Be Your Man," he proves he stands strong as a ballad interpreter, while a self-deprecating humor as well as a knack for skipping between long notes and tongue-tripping lyrics emerge on the chorus of "Could I Just Be Me."

It adds up to this: From looks to voice and all points between, Gregory has what he needs to make an impact in any territory he targets.



Q&A

MUSICAL HERO "Vince Gill." **SONG YOU WISH YOU'D WRITTEN** "'Home,' by Michael Bubl ." **WHAT YOU SING IN THE SHOWER** "Anything and everything." **LUCKY CHARM** "My cross necklace." **FAVORITE FOOD** "Any kind of pasta." **SECRET ABOUT YOU THAT NO ONE WOULD GUESS** "I don't smoke or drink."

adamgregory.com



SIERRA HULL

Sierra Hull has played on the Grand Ole Opry, won instrumental contests, performed at Carnegie Hall and shared the stage with Sam Bush, Alison Krauss, Ricky Skaggs and other artists — not bad for a 16-year-old, though those who've known her for a while aren't surprised at the trajectory of her young career.

Born in Byrdstown, Tenn., Hull was 8 when she began picking the mandolin. Two years later, in 2002, she self-released *Angel Mountain* and made the first of many appearances at annual International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) conventions.

Throughout *Secrets*, her Rounder Records debut album, which she co-produced with Ron Block, Hull builds from a foundation of technique, not to dazzle but to convey the essence of all 13 songs, two of which she wrote and one a co-write. She sings in a warm timbre, sweetening the melody with a honeyed brush. When confronting a lyric that might require more life experience, Hull applies an innocence that appeals in a more nostalgic way to the seasoned listener.

Her work on mandolin and guitar reflects a similar restraint, except in moments when a few fireworks illuminate. On "Smashville," for instance, her solo flows gracefully, speeding up over occasional rapids but more often glistening with a linear beauty and endless inventiveness. Surrounded on tracks by members of her band and high-profile guests such as Jerry Douglas, Tony Rice and Stuart Duncan, she already sounds at home among the giants of her genre.



CD IN YOUR STEREO "Through the Window of a Train, by Blue Highway." **PHRASE YOU SAY OVER AND OVER AGAIN** "You know what I mean?" **LUCKY CHARM** "I ate Lucky Charms for breakfast, if that counts." **FAVORITE FOOD WHILE ON TOUR** "Probably chicken, although I will try and eat almost anything." **WHAT YOU HOPE PEOPLE WILL SAY ABOUT YOU 50 YEARS FROM NOW** "That I made a difference in the music world in some way, that I was a kind person and that I lived a life pleasing unto God."

sierrahull.com

THE BAND OF HEATHENS

The Band of Heathens came together more or less by happenstance at Momo's, in the heart of Austin's Sixth Street entertainment district. As regulars at the venue's weekly songwriter night, Colin Brooks, Ed Jurdi and Gordy Quist moved eventually from doing individual sets to getting together onstage as a group — unrehearsed, unpredictable, but a group nonetheless.

With Seth Whitney onboard as their bassist, they adopted a name and recorded a couple of these shows for a regional live album. The following year, 2007, they added drummer John Chipman, won "Best New Band" honors at the Austin Music Awards, appeared on a locally-produced DVD and took their show on the road. They also began work on their studio debut album, which fully captures the polish of their writing and the infectious energy of their performance.

Produced by Ray Wylie Hubbard, released on their BOH imprint and distributed nationally by Burnside, *The Band of Heathens* features 11 original tracks as well as guest contributions from Hubbard, Stephen Bruton, Patty Griffin and Gurf Morlix. Over the rocky ramble of their rhythm, vocals range from conversational to ecstatic, with an appealing roughness that suggests being worn by gospel shouts or whiskey shots, depending on the lyric. The instrumentation is unpretentious and evocative. Their spirit draws from The Band, early Neil Young and the mystique of Austin, brought to a peak of expression by this somewhat accidental yet enormously promising quintet.

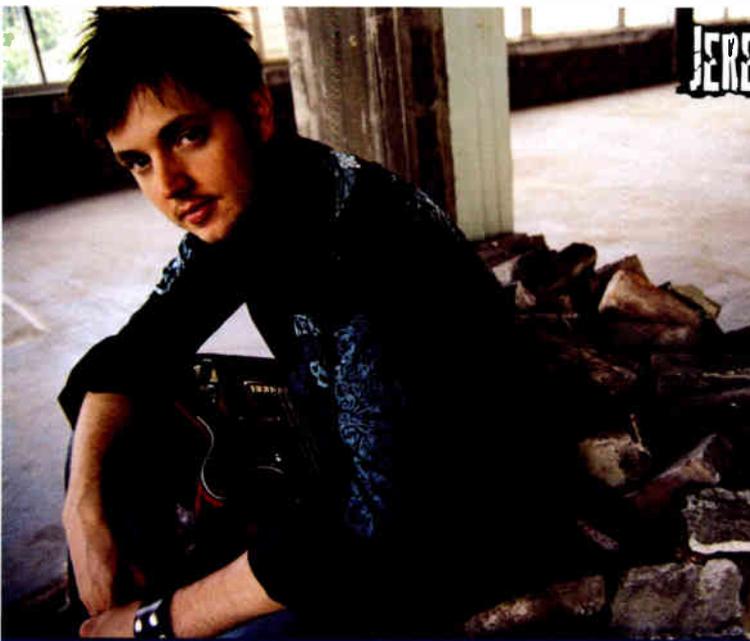


COLIN BROOKS, ED JURDI, GORDY QUIST, JOHN CHIPMAN AND SETH WHITNEY



CD IN YOUR STEREO "The Great Ride by Chris Brecht, Post-War by M. Ward and Coltrane Plays the Blues by John Coltrane." **BOOK ON YOUR NIGHTSTAND** "Across the Great Divide: The Band and America, by Barney Hoskyns." **FAVORITE MODE OF TRANSPORTATION** "Soul Train or levitation." **ACTOR TO PORTRAY YOU IN A BIOPIC** "Sean Penn for Colin Brooks, Christopher Walken for John Chipman, Orlando Bloom for Ed Jurdi, Johnny Depp for Gordy Quist and Jack Black for Seth Whitney — or the entire band could be portrayed by Jack Nicholson." (Answers provided by Quist on behalf of The Band of Heathens.)

bandofheathens.com



JEREMY MCCOMB

Some people are born to perform but they still need a little nudge toward the spotlight to fulfill that destiny. So it was with 8-year-old Jeremy McComb when his father, a full-time musician, pulled him onstage to sing a chorus of "On the Road Again." By age 17 he was on the road, and at 21 was mixing gigs at night with a day job as music director and on-air personality at KIX-96 (KIXZ) in Spokane, Wash.

Through his radio job, McComb got to know Larry the Cable Guy, who hired him as his tour manager in 2004. That led to an encounter with J. P. Williams, who signed McComb to his company, Parallel Entertainment, and sent him to Spartanburg, S.C., to record his debut album.

Produced by Paul T. Riddle of the original Marshall Tucker Band, *My Side of Town* showcases McComb's winning ways with a good lyric. His voice invites the listener in, as if to sit and swap a few stories, but can also ratchet up the intensity when the moment demands it. He tracks subtle shifts of feeling on his first single, "This Town Needs a Bar," written by Liz Rose and Jimmy Yeary, with a weary wisdom that's rare among younger singers. The same quality surfaces in the three songs that bear his solo writing credit, one of which, "You're Killin' Me," bids farewell to whiskey as if it were a lover who had scarred him one time too many. It's clever without being cute, a combination that may be difficult to achieve unless you're from McComb's Side of Town.

Q&A

SONG YOU'D SECRETLY LOVE TO COVER "Over My Head (Cable Car)," by The Fray." **BOOK ON YOUR NIGHTSTAND** "Where Did I Go Right? You're No One in Hollywood Unless Someone Wants You Dead, by Bernie Brillstein." **SONG YOU WISH YOU'D WRITTEN** "Songs about Rain," by Gary Allan." **SOMETHING WE'D NEVER GUESS ABOUT YOU** "I like 'Grey's Anatomy.'"

jeremymccomb.com

PARALLEL

TODD O'NEILL

There's more than one way to break into Country Music. But Todd O'Neill may be the first to seize his moment by doing the "Napoleon Dynamite" dance at a club in his hometown of Hammond, La.

Mac Barrient, who was playing guitar with the band that night, took this as a sign of sorts and invited the young man up to sing a tune. O'Neill, who had never been onstage before, grabbed the mic, nailed Travis Tritt's "Here's a Quarter (Call Someone Who Cares)" and sealed his fate. The band welcomed him as its lead singer, complete with top billing at their shows.

His debut album, *Real Life*, emanates the energy O'Neill mustered at those roadhouse gigs. There's some Nashville sweetening too, which he might have picked up during a visit to Music City in 2003 — just long enough to pack some songwriting polish when he went back home.

Produced by Jim Allison and released on Aria Records Nashville, *Real Life* stirs accordion into "Cajun Queen," sprinkles Southern-fried harmonized guitar into "Drinkin' a Cold One" and showcases O'Neill's deft writing chops on six of its 11 tracks, including the introspective single, "Can I Come Over Tonight," co-written with Brett Harrington with its unusual segues between 4/4 and waltz times. His voice is pleasing and melodic, a little husky and touched by old-school soul. Yet for all its diversity, *Real Life* is all about Country and showcases one of its promising new arrivals.



Q&A

MUSICAL HEROES "As a kid, I always looked up to Brooks & Dunn." **SONG YOU'D SECRETLY LIKE TO COVER** "These Arms of Mine," by Otis Redding." **DREAM DUET PARTNER** "Carrie Underwood." **WHAT YOU SING IN THE SHOWER** "Every time I get in there — and this is not a joke, I'm serious — 'Don't Worry, Be Happy.'" **SOMETHING WE'D NEVER GUESS ABOUT YOU** "My manager says I'm a pig."

toddoneillonline.com



Though raised on a reservation on Canada's Manitoulin Island, Crystal Shawanda grew up with Nashville in her soul. She experienced the Music City dream for the first time at 11, when she rode with her father on his trucking run and spent some time on Lower Broadway, peering through the window into Tootsies Orchid Lounge. Two years later, she worked up the courage to sit in there with the band. That's all it took for her to become a semi-regular at the venue whenever she was back in town.

By that time, Shawanda was taking deeper notice of life back home. Resisting the despair that pulled so many of her friends into addiction and early death, she channeled her emotions into a vocal and writing style that was steeped in Country but intensified by a wrenching passion reminiscent at times of Janis Joplin yet elevated by feelings of hope and celebration.

The title of her RCA Records Nashville debut album, *Dawn of a New Day*, is a translation of her Ojibwe last name, but it also reflects the essence of her music. Produced by Scott Hendricks, it reflects Shawanda's soulful side on her first single, "You Can Let Go," written by Cory Batten, Kent Blazy and Rory Lee Feek, which focuses on the moment when a bride is given symbolically by her father to her husband. Shawanda understands the lyric perfectly; her performance is a complex blend of love, affirmation and farewell — no easy achievement for a young singer and a harbinger of the artistry she seems sure to achieve.

Q & A

MUSICAL HEROES "Hank Williams and Loretta Lynn." **SONG YOU'D LIKE TO COVER** "'I'm Over You' by Keith Whitley." **CD IN YOUR STEREO** "A mix CD of Dwight Yoakam and Fergie." **WHAT YOU SING IN THE SHOWER** "Alicia Keys, Patsy Cline, opera music — basically, whatever pops into my head." **WHAT YOU HOPE PEOPLE WILL SAY ABOUT YOU 50 YEARS FROM NOW** "Wild child makes good."

myspace.com/crystalshawanda

CMA ANNOUNCES STAFF PROMOTIONS

CMA CEO Tammy Genovese has announced the promotion of several outstanding CMA employees. "PAULA MILTON and TAMMY DONHAM have contributed a great deal to CMA's initiatives and have been instrumental in developing new strategies to develop business opportunities for many segments of our industry," said Genovese. "These promotions are well deserved."

Donham has been promoted to CMA Senior Director of Marketing. Her responsibilities include overseeing advertising and promotional campaigns for CMA Music Festival and the CMA Awards, including print, broadcast and online initiatives. She is active in developing promotional campaigns with event partners that include the Grand Ole Opry, the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, CMT and GAC. She works with ABC network affiliates and other event partners to promote tune-in for the CMA Awards and CMA Music Festival television special and oversees CMA's recent consumer research initiative and music industry outreach campaigns.

Prior to being hired at CMA in 1996, Donham worked in various marketing positions, including Assistant Marketing Manager for Fruit of the Loom. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing from Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, Ky., and a Master of Business Administration from Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, Tenn.

"I'm very fortunate to have worked with so many dedicated and talented professionals at CMA," said Donham. "We've accomplished a lot and I'm looking forward to serving both the organization and the Country Music community in my expanded role even more successfully."

"Tammy has consistently taken on new challenges and expanded her role at CMA with enthusiasm and a high degree of creative energy that has resulted in outstanding results," said Bobette Dudley, CMA Senior VP of Operations.

Hired in 2002, Paula Milton has been elevated to the position of Senior Director of Business Development and is responsible for securing sponsorships for the CMA Awards and CMA Music Festival,



TAMMY DONHAM



PAULA MILTON



ASHLEY FUSSELL

by BOB DOERSCHUK and SCOTT STEM

the execution and evaluation of sponsorship programs and the development and implementation of CMA's world-class business development programs.

Milton was employed for 13 years at Gaylord Entertainment Company, serving as International Account Manager for Sales and Marketing for Opryland Productions and sales for Corporate Magic, before coming to CMA. She studied Business Management at Belmont University in Nashville as well as Youngstown State University in Youngstown, Ohio.

"I've enjoyed my six years at CMA, helping to grow our corporate business and introducing corporate America to the Country Music industry," Milton said. "And with all the great people in our leadership and staff, I'm looking forward to many more years of going beyond even what we've accomplished so far."

"Paula defines excellence and teamwork," said Dudley, to whom both Donham and Milton report. "She continues to raise the bar for our partnership efforts, resulting in increased awareness for Country Music and new brand relationships for the industry."

Hired just a year ago at CMA, Nashville native ASHLEY FUSSELL is now CMA Senior Coordinator of Partner Programs, a position that encompasses broader application of the responsibilities she exercised previously in concentrating on sponsorship fulfillment, with attention to facilitating both CMA and partner commitments for CMA Music Festival, the CMA Awards and other events. Fussell came to CMA initially as an intern in 2005, prior to earning her bachelor's degree from Trevecca Nazarene University in 2006.

"I've enjoyed learning everything that encompasses my job over the past year," Fussell said. "It's been a great experience. And it's exciting to take it a step higher in this new position."

"Ashley's enthusiasm and skills have proven her a great asset to CMA," said Kyle Quigley, Senior Manager of Corporate Marketing Initiatives, to whom Fussell reports. "Having worked within the entertainment business for only a few years, Ashley clearly has a lot to offer and we're fortunate to have her on our team."

DANNY DAVIS, record label executive, trumpeter and leader of The Nashville Brass, 83, died June 12 in Nashville, Tenn., of cardiac arrest. Born George Nowlan in Dorchester, Mass., he studied trumpet as a child and became proficient enough to solo with the Massachusetts All State Symphony Orchestra at 14. Davis attended the New England Conservatory of Music before finding work with bands led by Les Brown, Bob Crosby, Gene Krupa and other jazz artists. At MGM Records in New York, he produced six No. 1 hits by Connie Francis and discovered Herman's Hermits. Davis subsequently became a producer at RCA Records, where he worked with Nina Simone before transferring to the label's Nashville bureau as a producer and assistant to Chet Atkins. Though his successes continued there as he produced No. 1 hits for Don Gibson and Waylon Jennings, Davis took a career turn by founding Danny Davis and The Nashville Brass in 1968. The group was an instant success, winning the first of their six CMA Awards for Instrumental Group of the Year in 1969. Up to his final performance in 2005, Danny Davis and The Nashville Brass recorded more than 30 albums. Davis also recorded as a vocalist and performed as a member of the "Million Dollar Band" on "Hee Haw."

EARLE HAGEN, television composer, 88, died May 26 in Rancho Mirage, Calif., following a lengthy illness. His theme to "The Andy Griffith Show," which featured Hagen whistling the melody and his 11-year-old son Deane snapping his fingers to keep time, brought a Country flavor to the sound of network television in the early 1960s. He composed themes for other series including "The Dick Van Dyke Show," "The Mod Squad," "I Spy" and the "The Andy Griffith Show" spinoffs "Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C." and "Mayberry R.F.D." BMI's Classic Contribution Award, Richard Kirk Award and President's Award are among the honors he received for his contributions to television composition.

SUZY HAMBLÉN, songwriter/singer, 101, died June 2 in Santa Clarita, Calif., of congestive heart failure. Born Veeva Daniels in the Oklahoma Indian Territory, she met her husband Stuart Hamblen, future member of the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame and Texas Country Music Hall of Fame, while working as a secretary at a radio station in Los Angeles. After their marriage in 1933, Suzy devoted herself to his career as he became the first artist signed by Decca Records and rose to host the national radio program, "Stuart Hamblen's Covered Wagon Jubilee." Their union would last 55 years, until Stuart's death in 1989. After befriending Billy Graham, the Hamblens shifted their focus from Country to gospel as Suzy emerged as an artist, popular speaker at churches and conferences and CEO of Hamblen Music Publishing. She performed with Bill Gaither on his Homecoming revivals and albums.

HUGH JARRETT, member of The Jordanaires, 78, died May 31 in Atlanta, Ga., of complications from injuries sustained in an automobile accident in March. Born in Nashville, Jarrett worked as a DJ throughout much of his life, including a stint on WLAC/Nashville as "Big Hugh Baby" that began in 1960 and most recently as host of a Sunday morning gospel show on WVEV/Atlanta. He was also known as a member of The Jordanaires, who tapped him to replace departing bass singer Culley Holt in 1954. Impressed after hearing their backup harmony at an Eddy Arnold show, Elvis Presley hired the quartet to join him during concerts at the Paramount Theater in 1956. They backed him on "The Steve Allen Show" July 1, 1956 and recorded with him the next day for a session that included "Don't Be Cruel" and "Hound Dog." Jarrett remained with The Jordanaires until 1958, during which time they continued their work with Presley in the studio, onstage, on "The Ed Sullivan Show" and in films, as well as recording with other artists. Jarrett can be heard with the group on Presley's "All Shook Up," "Jailhouse Rock," and "Love Me Tender," Ferlin Husky's "Gone" and Ricky Nelson's "Hello Mary Lou" and "Traveling Man," among other recordings. In 1970, as leader of The Hugh Jarrett Singers, he reunited with Presley for a concert tour.

In Memoriam compiled by BOB DOERSCHUK

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS CALENDAR

JULY 31–AUG. 2
SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRY MUSIC FESTIVAL
Furuviik, Sweden
furuviik.se

JULY 31–AUG. 3
BIG VALLEY JAMBOREE
Camrose, Alberta, Canada
bigvalleyjamboree.com

AUG. 1–3
DRANOUTER FESTIVAL
Dranouter, Belgium
folkdranouter.be

AUG. 1–3
COUNTRY OPEN AIR GREIFENSTEINE
Ehrenfriedersdorf, Germany
greifensteine.com

AUG. 2–3
UTV COUNTRY MUSIC FESTIVAL
Northern Ireland
jwpromos.com

AUG. 8–10
SCC COUNTRY FESTIVAL
Silkeborg, Denmark
sccdk.com

AUG. 9–10
FLORALIA COUNTRY FESTIVAL
Oosterhout, Netherlands
floraliacountry.nl

AUG. 14–17
HAVELOCK COUNTRY JAMBOREE
Havelock, Ontario, Canada
havelockjamboree.com

AUG. 15–17
SUMMERFOLK
Owen Sound, Ontario, Canada
summerfolk.org

AUG. 16–17
FESTIVAL COUNTRY CHIHUAHUA
Chihuahua, Mexico
festivalcountrychihuahua.com

SEPT. 5–7
NORTH WALES COUNTRY MUSIC FESTIVAL
Llandudno, North Wales
venucymru.co.uk

SEPT. 12–14
COUNTRY NIGHT GSTAAD
Gstaad, Switzerland
countrynight-gstaad.ch

SEPT. 21
NUEZIDERS
Nueziders, Austria

SEPT. 26–28
SCHÜPFART FESTIVAL
Schupfart, Switzerland
schupfartfestival.ch

SEPT. 27–28
SAN PEDRO COUNTRY MUSIC FESTIVAL
San Pedro, Argentina
country2.com

**Events and dates are subject to change.
Visit CMAworld.com/international/touring
for more information.*

AUG. 5

Jason Allen / *The Twilight Zone* / Smith Ent.
Keith Anderson / *C'MON!* / Columbia
Vince Hatfield / *A Little More Time* / Blue Moon
Jamey Johnson / *That Lonesome Song* / Mercury Nashville
Heidi Newfield / *What Am I Waiting For* / Curb/Asylum
Jimmy Sturr / *Let the Whole World Sing* / Rounder

AUG. 12

The Grascals / *Keep on Walkin'* / Rounder
James Intveld / *Have Faith* / Molenaar
Various Artists / *Beer for My Horses* / Show Dog Nashville
Various Artists / *Elvis Presley: Viva Las Vegas* (DVD) / EPE
Ben Weaver / *The Axe in the Oak* / Bloodshot

AUG. 19

Randall Bramblett / *Now It's Tomorrow* / New West
Glen Campbell / *Meet Glen Campbell* / Capitol
Jerry Douglas / *Glide* / Koch
The Duhks / *Fast Paced World* / Sugar Hill
Kara Grainger / *Grand and Green River* / Craving
The Hot Club of Cowtown / *The Best Of* / Shout! Factory
George Jones / *Burn Your Playhouse Down: The Unreleased Duets* / Bandit
Chris Knight / *Heart of Stone* / Drifter's Church
Sherry Lynn / *It's a Woman Thing* / Steal Heart Music/Brady/Red
Brandon Rhyder / *Every Night* / Reserve
Marty Robbins / *Legendary Performances* (DVD) / Shout Factory
Crystal Shawanda / *Dawn of a New Day* / RCA Nashville
Valeire Smith and Becky Buller / *Here's a Little Song* / Bell Buckle
Tammy Wynette / *Legendary Performances* (DVD) / Shout Factory

AUG. 26

Backyard Tire Fire / *The Places We Lived* / Hyena
The Derailers / *Guaranteed to Satisfy* / Palo Duro
Roger Creager / *Here It Is* / Fun All Wrong
The Lost Trailers / *Holler Back* / BNA
Various Artists / *Never Forget* / Seasoning
Jimmy Wayne / *Do You Believe Me Now* / The Valory Music Co.

SEPT. 2

Zac Brown Band / *The Foundation* / Live Nation

SEPT. 9

Grayson Capps / *Rott'n'Roll* / Hyena

Murry Hammond / *I Don't Know Where I'm Going But I'm On My Way* / Hammond
Hal Ketchum / *Father Time* / Curb
Lonesome River Band / *No Turning Back* / Rural Rhythm
Patty Loveless / *Sleepless Nights* / Saguardo Road
John Michael Montgomery / *Time Flies* / Stringtown
Jessica Simpson / *Do You Know?* / Columbia Nashville
The Youngers / *Heritage* / Obuck

SEPT. 16

Eric Durrance / *Angels Fly Away* / Wind-Up Nashville
Eli Young Band / *Jet Black and Jealous* / Republic/Universal Records South
Mark Erelli / *Delivered* / Signature
Gary Louris and Mark Olson / *Ready for the Flood* / Hacktone
Kasey Chambers and Shane Nicholson / *Rattlin' Bones* / Sugar Hill
Mad Buffalo / *Wilderness* / Mad Buffalo
Nick Pagliari / *Please and Thank You* / Palagreeno
Darius Rucker / *Learn to Live* / Capitol
Redd Volkaert / *Redhead* / Telehog

SEPT. 30

Faith Hill / *Joy to the World* / Warner Bros.
Kellie Pickler / *Kellie Pickler* / 19 Recordings/BNA

OCT. 7

George Strait / *Classic Christmas* / MCA Nashville

OCT. 14

Little Big Town / *A Place to Land* (re-release) / Capitol
Derek Sholl / *Here* / Salt Creek/Spinville
Various Artists / *Johnny Cash Remixed* / Comoadre/Music World
Hank Williams / *Unreleased Recordings* / Ti meLife

OCT. 28

Toby Keith / *TBD* / Show Dog

NOV. 11

The Boxmasters / *Christmas Cheer* / Vanguard
Randy Houser / *TBD* / Universal Records South
Randy Owen / *One on One* / Broken Bow
Marty Stuart / *Country Music: The Masters* (book/CD) / Sourcebooks MediaFusion

NOV. 18

Billy Ray Cyrus / *Back to Tennessee* / Disney/Lyric Street

**Release dates are subject to change without notice.*





STEVE TURNER



MICHELLE NIXON



SONNY JAMES, LITTLE JIMMY DICKENS, BRENDA LEE, VINCE GILL, JO WALKER-MEADOR, GORDON STOKER and PHIL BALSLEY



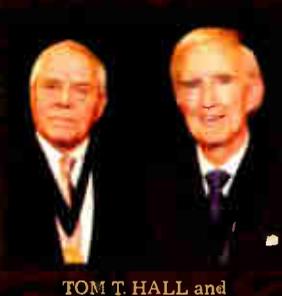
RAY WALKER, LITTLE JIMMY DICKENS, GORDON STOKER, PHIL BALSLEY, TOM T. HALL, BRENDA LEE, RALPH EMERY, EARL SCRUGGS, JIM FOGLESONG and JIMMY FORTUNE (OBSTRUCTED VIEW SONNY JAMES, VINCE GILL, JO WALKER-MEADOR, E.W. "BUD" WENDELL)



VINCE GILL, AMY GRANT, GORDON STOKER, MICHAEL BLACK, LOUIS NUNLEY and RAY WALKER



BOBBY BARE



TOM T. HALL and RALPH EMERY



DAILEY & VINCENT (JAMIE DAILEY, DARRIN VINCENT)



REBA McENTIRE

“WELCOME HOME”

Love, laughter and music filled the Ford Theater in the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum June 29, as Tom T. Hall and the Statler Brothers were inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame.

It was heard it in the remarks of Ralph Emery, minutes before he presented Hall with the Medallion that symbolizes his membership. “The induction tonight is very personal to me,” Emery said. “Tom has been my friend for over 40 years. I have no siblings, so Tom fills a void in my life to have a brother.”

Reba McEntire thanked the Statler Brothers for inviting her to open for them at a time when she was seriously considering abandoning her career. Stretching her arms toward them, she smiled and said, “You showed me how to be professional and to treat it like a business. And I’ll never forget it.”

In his opening comments, Kyle Young, Director, Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, included previously inducted new members Emmylou Harris and the late Ernest V. “Pop” Stoneman with Hall and the Statler Brothers in describing the entire “Class of 2008” as representing “a rich and enduring tapestry of music that will always recount the story of our homeland and its people over a period of almost 100 years.”

Steve Turner, who had recently succeeded Trustee Emeritus E.W. “Bud” Wendell as Chairman of the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, drew laughter when he outlined his credentials for the job: “My business background, my love of Country Music and its artists. I own a Manuel suit ... and I’m a pretty darn good shower singer.”

CMA CEO Tammy Genovese added a personal flavor. “When CMA made the announcement earlier this year about who would be inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2008,” she noted, “Don Reid said that they have always thought of the Hall as the place where their heroes lived.”

Then, turning to the front row, where Reid, his fellow Statler Brothers, Hall and their families sat, she smiled and added, “Well, tonight this is your house. Welcome home.”

The next few hours passed quickly, each one filled with nostalgic recollections, hilarious anecdotes and wistful moments. And there was music, as a succession of artists performed, most of them accompanied by the Medallion All-Star Band: Musical Director John Hobbs on keyboards, Eddie Bayers on drums, Paul Franklin on steel guitar and dobro, Brent Mason on electric guitar, Biff Watson on acoustic guitar, Michael Rhodes on bass and Deanie Richardson on fiddle and mandolin, with Tania Hancheroff and Wes Hightower providing background vocals.

The opener featured Vince Gill, his wife Amy Grant, Michael Black, Louis Nunley and Gordon Stoker and Ray Walker of The Jordanares in a stirring rendering of “Rock of Ages.” At one point, Gill sang a line with such passionate virtuosity that, even as the music rolled on, The Jordanares joined the audience in applause.

To celebrate Hall, Michelle Nixon delivered a sassy “Harper Valley P.T.A.” During his rendition of “That’s How I Got to Memphis,” Bobby Bare fixed his gaze somewhere distant, perhaps scanning back through the 45 years of friendship he and Hall have shared. Then came a duo, with Heather Berry on acoustic guitar and husband Tony Mabe on autoharp, their voices twining through “Can You Hear Me Now,” a song written for them by Hall and his wife Dixie Hall that has a Carter Family feel and triggered the first standing ovation of the evening.

The Statler Brothers — Phil Balsley, Jimmy Fortune, Don Reid, Harold Reid and the late Lew DeWitt — were honored by McEntire’s romp through “Flowers on the Wall” with Gill joining in on harmony; the thrilling high harmonies lofted by Dailey & Vincent through “Do You Know You Are My Sunshine,” and



HAROLD REID, PHIL BALSLEY, DON REID and JIMMY FORTUNE



GRANDSTAFF
(LANGDON REID, WIL REID)



KYLE YOUNG, HAROLD REID, JIMMY FORTUNE, PHIL BALSLEY, DON REID, TAMMY GENOVESE and TOM T. HALL



HEATHER BERRY and TONY MABE



TOM T. HALL



BRENDA LEE PRESENTS
A MEDALLION TO LEW
DEWITT'S DAUGHTER,
SHANNON GOODSON



PHIL BALSLEY, HAROLD REID, TOM T. HALL,
DON REID and JIMMY FORTUNE

CMA INDUCTS TOM T. HALL AND THE STATLER BROTHERS INTO THE COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME

by BOB DOERSCHUK

"The Statler Brothers Song," written and performed by duo Grandstaff, cousins Wil and Langdon Reid, sons respectively of Harold and Don.

"You know," Wil mused, strumming his guitar before they began, "you've got to sell a lot of records — millions of records — to get into the Hall of Fame. So, if y'all like this song we're getting ready to sing, it'll be available at iTunes."

"Stop it," Langdon interrupted, looking shocked. "That's horribly inappropriate."

"Well, our dads are in the Hall of Fame," Wil answered. "Somebody's got to go to work."

Following the presentation of his Medallion, Hall said, "They asked me if I'd prepared a speech. And I said, 'No, I don't have to make a speech. I'm in the Country Music Hall of Fame.'" To close, he shared an ironic thought. "You know, three weeks from now, I will be standing out on my farm, feeding the chickens and hoeing the ground," he mused. "I will have thought of 500 witty, profound exclamations for this very evening — and there won't be anybody there listening."

After Brenda Lee summoned the Statler Brothers to receive their Medallions with an affectionate command ("Come up here and let me hang you boys"), their comments proved as varied as their voices. Balsley made a brief but heartfelt statement of thanks. Fortune, his voice breaking, wished that his parents might have been able to share this evening with him. Don spoke at greater length, his reflections witty and then wise and finally deeply moved as he acknowledged his wife Deborah as "the reason I get up every morning. She gives me love. She gives me strength."

As the applause washed away, Harold stepped slowly to the microphone, head bent and hands clasped, and intoned in his rumbling bass, "His wife also gives me love and strength." The laughter went on for what seemed like a minute, only to erupt again as he solemnly added, "Don, I'm certainly sorry you had to find out this way."

More music marked another high point of the evening. Though Hall and the Statler Brothers retired years ago from the stage, they paid their respects to those who had honored them by returning briefly to the spotlight. With Jelly Roll Johnson mirroring the vocals on harmonica, Hall talked, sang in his gruffly poetic voice and brought to life his immortal "(Old Dogs, Children and) Watermelon Wine." The audience witnessed his final wave and exit through a soft-focus filter of tears.

As the Statler Brothers lined up to sing for the first time together since their farewell concert in 2002, the band broke into the gospel groove of "I'll Go to My Grave Loving You." The group had barely hit their first notes when cheers began to rise through the room, and as they drew together while singing the bridge, their arms flung around each other's shoulders and Fortune's tenor soaring above the unmistakable vocal blend, the accolade escalated into a standing ovation that never stopped until long after the last chord had sounded.

This, like the subsequent gathering of Hall of Fame members — Harold Bradley, Little Jimmy Dickens, Ralph Emery, Jim Foglesong, Vince Gill, Tom T. Hall, Emmylou Harris, Sonny James, The Jordanaires' Gordon Stoker and Ray Walker, Brenda Lee, Earl Scruggs, the Statler Brothers, Jo Walker-Meador and E.W. "Bud" Wendell — and guests to sing "Will the Circle Be Unbroken," was all about history, love, tradition — things which add up to the unique genius of Country Music.

The Country Music Hall of Fame Medallion and Induction Ceremony was taped for future broadcast by the Great American Country (GAC) cable network and WSM-AM 650.

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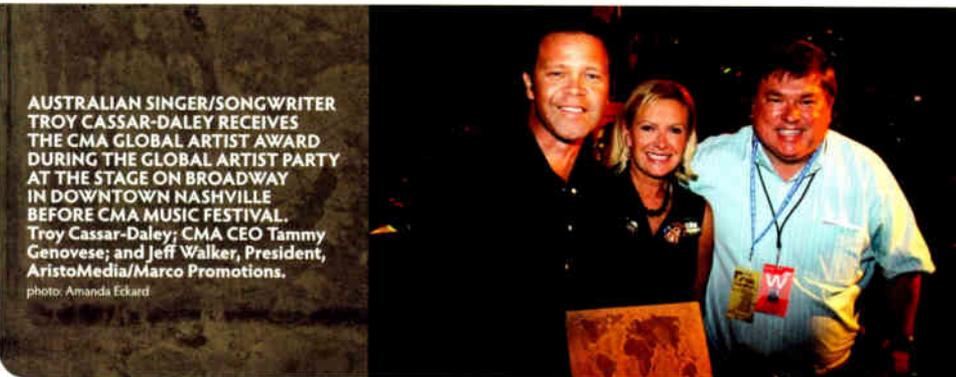
FORMER MEMBER OF THE JACKSON 5 JERMAINE JACKSON VISITS CMA TO SIGN UP FOR MEMBERSHIP. JACKSON HAS BEEN IN NASHVILLE RECORDING AND WRITING WITH BILLY LAWSON, ANTHONY SMITH AND OTHER SONGWRITERS.
Heather Taylor, CEO, Alliance Worldwide Communications; Billy Lawson; Jermaine Jackson; CMA CEO Tammy Genovese; Anthony Smith; and Hank Adam Locklin, CMA Senior Manager of Membership and Industry Relations. photo: Amanda Eckard



AUSTRALIAN ARTIST JOHN STEPHAN VISITS CMA TO PERFORM FOR THE STAFF. STEPHAN HAD RECENTLY PERFORMED AT THE VAULT CONCERT STAGE AT LP FIELD DURING CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL.
Tony Conway, President/CEO, Buddy Lee Attractions and CMA Music Festival Executive Producer; CMA CEO Tammy Genovese; John Stephan; Kitty Moon Emery, CEO, Kitty Moon Enterprises and Stephan's manager; and producer Scott Hendricks. photo: Drew Maynard



DECCA RECORDING GROUP ONE FLEW SOUTH VISITS CMA TO PERFORM SONGS FOR THE STAFF FROM THEIR DEBUT ALBUM LAST OF THE GOOD GUYS.
One Flew South's Eddie Bush; CMA CEO Tammy Genovese; One Flew South's Royal Reed and Chris Roberts; and producer Marcus Hummon. photo: Amanda Eckard



AUSTRALIAN SINGER/SONGWRITER TROY CASSAR-DALEY RECEIVES THE CMA GLOBAL ARTIST AWARD DURING THE GLOBAL ARTIST PARTY AT THE STAGE ON BROADWAY IN DOWNTOWN NASHVILLE BEFORE CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL.
Troy Cassar-Daley; CMA CEO Tammy Genovese; and Jeff Walker, President, AristoMedia/Marco Promotions. photo: Amanda Eckard

cma events

AUGUST

TUESDAY, AUG. 12

CMA membership renewal payment must be received at CMA to vote on second and final CMA Awards ballot.

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 13

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

TUESDAY, AUG. 26

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

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 27

CMA Awards tickets on sale to CMA Individual Sterling and Organizational members in good standing through myCMAworld.com

SEPTEMBER

MONDAY, SEPT. 8

"CMA Music Festival: Country's Night to Rock" airs at 9/8C on the ABC Television Network.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 9

CMA Songwriters Series | Joe's Pub | New York | Tickets: joespub.com

TUESDAY, SEPT. 23 - THURSDAY, SEPT. 25

CMA Board of Directors Meetings | Nashville

OCTOBER

FRIDAY, OCT. 17

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

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 29 AND THURSDAY, OCT. 30

CMA Songwriters Series | Joe's Pub | New York | Tickets: joespub.com

