

# CMA Close Up

OCTOBER | NOVEMBER 2011

CMA AWARDS ONLINE VOTING

FINAL BALLOT  
OCT. 14 - NOV. 1

## VINCE GILL

Floor Plan for *Guitar Slinger*

## CMA MUSIC

## FESTIVAL:

## COUNTRY'S

## NIGHT TO ROCK

ABC RATINGS BONANZA

## DELUXE ALBUMS

Value-Added Strategies

## KENNY CHESNEY

Debuts in Songwriters Series

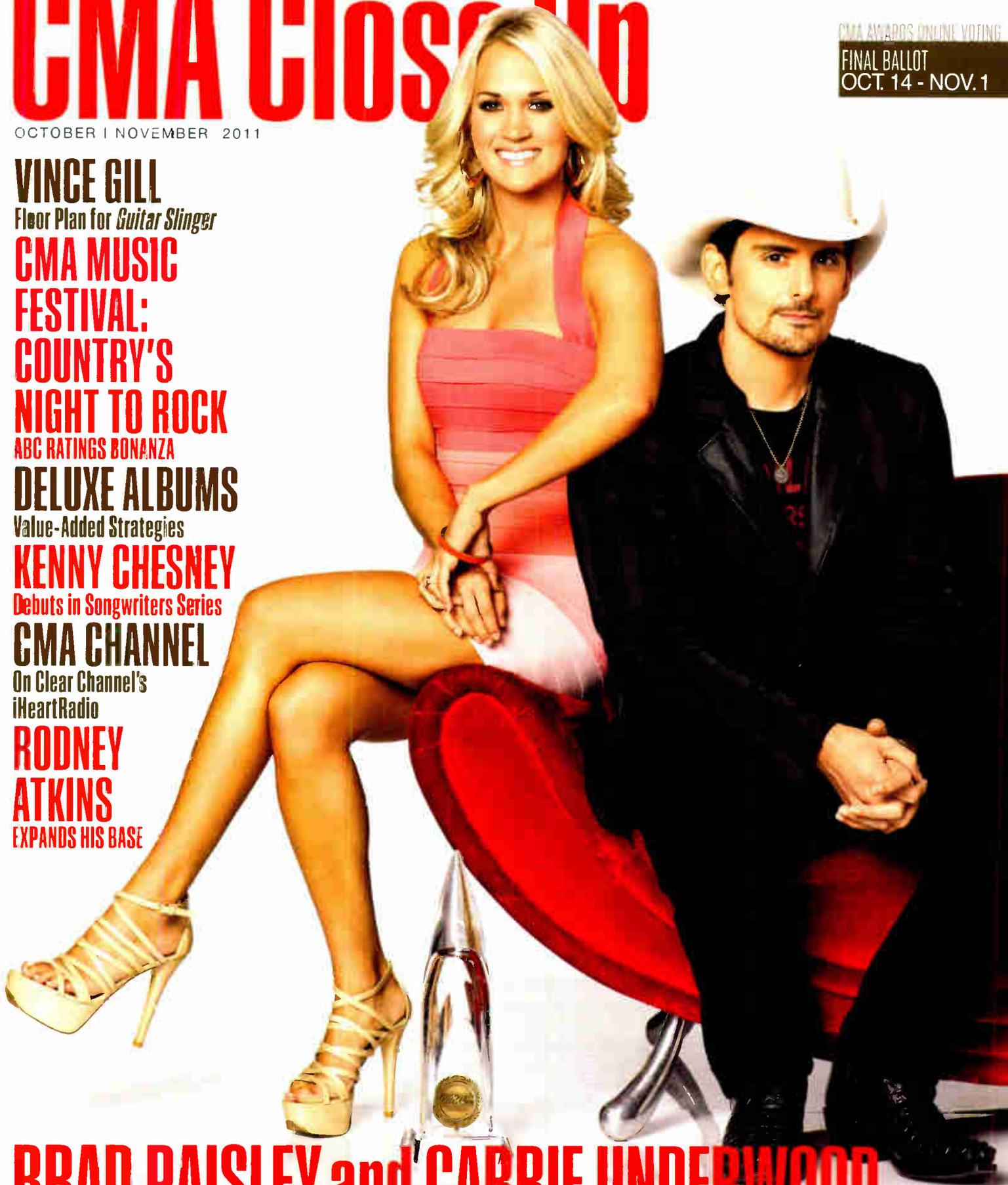
## CMA CHANNEL

On Clear Channel's  
iHeartRadio

## RODNEY

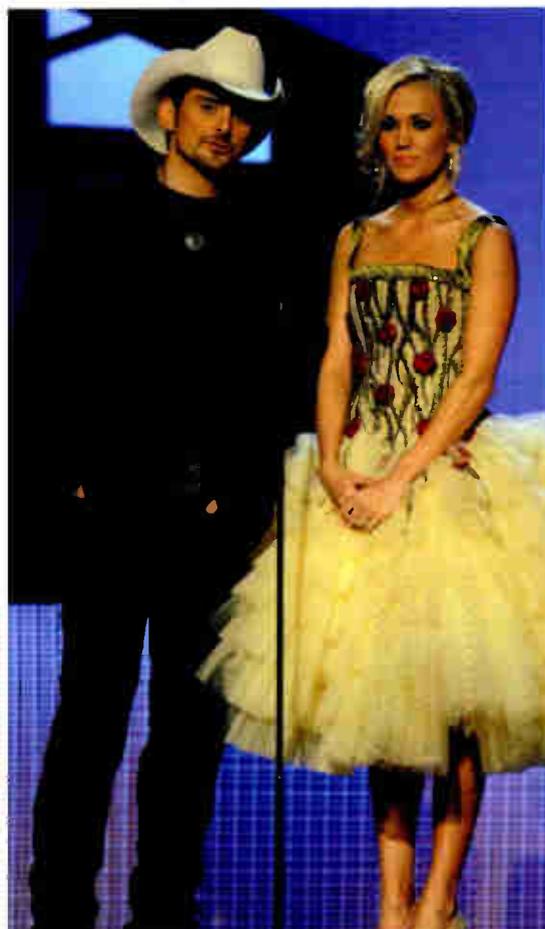
## ATKINS

EXPANDS HIS BASE



# BRAD PAISLEY and CARRIE UNDERWOOD

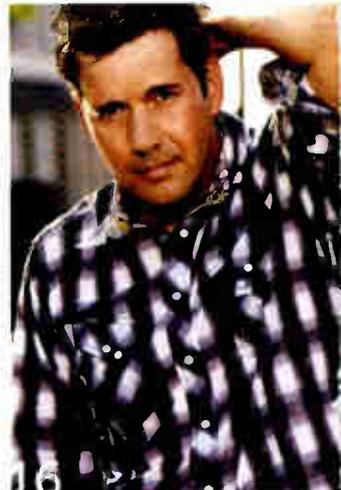
HOST "THE 45<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CMA AWARDS" WEDNESDAY, NOV. 9, 8/7C ABC



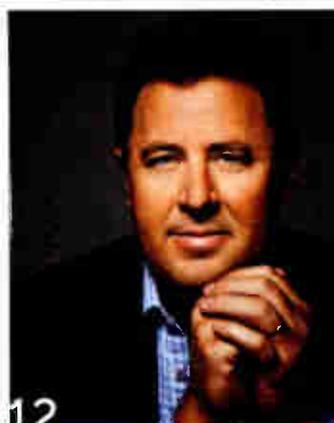
october | november 2011



cma close up



issue date | oct. 7



**4** "The 45<sup>th</sup> Annual CMA Awards"  
Country Music's Biggest Night  
Wednesday, Nov. 9 8/7c

**5** CMA Awards Hosts  
Brad Paisley and  
Carrie Underwood

**8** CMA Broadcast Awards Finalists

**9** "CMA Country Christmas"

**10** CMA and ABC Score with  
"CMA Music Festival:  
Country's Night to Rock"

**11** CMA Board Chairman  
Gary Overton

**12** Vince Gill

**14** Deluxe CDs

**16** Rodney Atkins

**18** Web Sites for Musicians

**19** CMA Channel in iHeart Radio

**20** Twitter Tips

**21** CMA Chairman's Award,  
International Broadcaster Award  
and Touring Musician Award

**22** Big & Rich

**24** CMA Member of the Month  
OCTOBER Ken Tucker  
NOVEMBER Smokey Smith

**25** Kenny Chesney Joins  
CMA Songwriters Series

**26** Debut Artist Spotlight  
The Dirt Drifters  
Hunter Hayes  
Scotty McCreery  
Robin Meade

**28** Marketing Innovations  
Alan Jackson  
Keith Urban

**29** New CD Releases

**30** CMA Presents the  
Country Music Hall of Fame  
Tom T. Hall

**32** CMA Events Calendar

**CMA CLOSE UP**

Executive Editor

WENDY PEARL

Senior Managing Editor

AMANDA ECKARD

Editor

BOB DOERSCHUK

Assistant Editor

CHRISTIAN BOTTORFF

Copy Editor

MARIA ECKHARDT

Design

EVAMARIE ÖGLANDEF

Contributing Writers

MELISSA COKER | MARK CRAWFORD

TIM GHIANNI | LORIE HOLLABAUGH | CHAD JEFFERS

KIP KIRBY | ROBERT K. OERMANN

DEBORAH EVANS PRICE | BRAD SCHMITT

Proofreaders

MELISSA COKER | PAULINA COMBOW | AMANDA SEVERS

Printing

McQUIDDY CLASSIC PRINTING

**CMA STAFF**

Executive

STLVE MODRE Chief Executive Officer

JESSICA BROWN Executive Assistant

Communications

WENDY PEARL Vice President of Corporate Communications

SCOTT STEM Director of Media Relations

AMANDA ECKARD Senior Manager of Creative Services

BOB DOERSCHUK CMA Close Up Editor

CHRISTIAN BOTTORFF Manager of Creative Services

MARIA ECKHARDT Manager of Media Relations

DAWN COPLEY Communications Coordinator

Events and Special Projects

BOB TIE DUDLEY Senior Vice President

DIANE BEARDEN Senior Manager of Meetings and Events

JAMIE DOWNING Senior Manager of Special Projects

KRIS KENNEDY Senior Manager of Events

KYLE QUIGLEY Senior Manager of Event Programming and Special Projects

Finance and Administration

AMY SMARTT Vice President of Finance and Administration

KEN SANDERSON Senior Manager of Information Technology

AARON HARTLEY Senior Manager of Administrative Services

SHEREME SIEVNARINE Senior Manager of Financial Services

JODY PACE Staff Accountant

VERONICA COSTILLA Finance and Administration Coordinator

MELISSA MAYNARD Operations and Administration Coordinator

MARCO CASTILLO Operations Assistant

STEPHANIE HODGES Receptionist

Membership and Balloting

BRANDI SIMMS Senior Manager of Membership and Balloting

BETSY WALKER Senior Coordinator of Member Relations and Services

Strategic Marketing

TAMMY DONHAM Vice President of Marketing

CORY CHAPMAN Director of Marketing

GREG FUSON Marketing Research Director

BEN BENNETT Senior Manager of Digital Strategy

CATHERINE BLACKWELL Marketing Manager

MARTY FILOGAMO Jr Web Designer / Production Coordinator

AMANDA HORENKAMP Marketing Coordinator

Strategic Partnerships

SHERI WARNKE Vice President of Strategic Partnerships

LARA HENLEY Senior Manager of Strategic Partnerships

ANGELA MENDENHALL Senior Manager of Strategic Partnerships

SARAH McRADY Manager of Strategic Partnerships

WES PERRY Coordinator of Partner Programs

**SOLD OUT!**

If you've been keeping track of how tickets have moved for CMA's flagship events, then these two words should be familiar. Ever since the CMA Awards ceremony opened its doors to the public and LP Field became the Festival's focal point for all-star, night-capping performances at CMA Music Festival, people have rushed to box offices, logged on to ordering sites and otherwise confirmed seating for some of the most important happenings on the Country Music calendar.

At last year's Festival, for example, every seat in the stadium was occupied during each night's extravaganza. Bridgestone Arena was filled to capacity for the Awards in both 2009 and 2010. For 2011, upper-level reservations for the CMA Awards went on sale Sept. 19 with the full venue seating opening on Sept. 24 — the same day purchasing began for the newest of our flagship events, "CMA Country Christmas." Bridgestone hosts the programs on consecutive nights, Wednesday, Nov. 9 and Thursday, Nov. 10, respectively, with the Awards broadcast live and the Christmas special airing later in the year, both on the ABC Television Network.

**SAVE YOUR PLACE**

As pleased as we are to welcome all attendees, CMA is committed to giving members unique opportunities for admission to the Awards and the Christmas taping. That's why we got into the holiday spirit early by gifting up to four general admission tickets to any interested CMA member. (Additionally, we offered them exclusive access to purchase Awards tickets up to Sept. 16.) All of these seats may be taken by now — but it wouldn't hurt to log on to **Ticketmaster.com** with the code word provided in our recently e-mailed CMA Member Newsletter, just in case.

You may also still be able to order tickets to the CMA Awards Post Party. Check your e-mail for a special invitation sent in late September for this exclusive, members-only offer, with sales on a first-come basis.

**A LIFETIME COMMITMENT**

There's more than one way to honor our members, particularly those who have been with us for the long haul. If you've been part of the CMA family for ten years or more, you can now sign up for a Lifetime Membership. At \$100, annual dues are already a bargain. But the new Lifetime option gives you just as much in return for a one-time payment of just \$1,000. Formerly reserved only for artists chosen as CMA Awards finalists, Grand Ole Opry members, CMA Country Music Hall of Fame inductees and recipients of the CMA Broadcast Personality Award, this is a choice that all longtime members might find especially attractive. In fact, one recently took advantage of this offer to ensure participation in our CMA Sound Healthcare program after retirement!

For more information, contact the CMA Membership Department or visit **CMAworld.com**. And to all members, we look forward to seeing you at "The 45<sup>th</sup> Annual CMA Awards" and "CMA Country Christmas."

CMA Close Up® welcomes your letters and feedback. 615.244.2840 | Fax: 615.242.4783 or e-mail [CloseUp@CMAworld.com](mailto:CloseUp@CMAworld.com)

ADDRESS CHANGE? Visit [My.CMAworld.com](http://My.CMAworld.com) to correct your address information so you don't miss any issues of CMA Close Up!

**cma**  
COUNTRY MUSIC ASSOCIATION

Statements of fact and opinion are the responsibility of the contributors alone and do not imply an opinion on the part of the officers, directors, members or staff of CMA.

©2011 Country Music Association®, Inc. Materials may not be reproduced without written permission. CMA Close Up is a registered trademark owned by CMA. All logos and photos used by permission.

CMA Close Up (ISSN 0896-372X) is the official bimonthly publication of CMA. Available to CMA members only.  
CMA Close Up subscription price of \$25 per year is included in membership dues. Periodicals postage paid at Nashville, Tenn. Postmaster: send address changes to CMA Membership | One Music Circle South Nashville, Tenn. 37203-4312.



PLEASE RECYCLE  
THIS MAGAZINE

the 45<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL  
**CMA AWARDS**  
 Country Music's Biggest Night

JASON ALDEAN, THE BAND PERRY, BRAD PAISLEY, BLAKE SHELTON, TAYLOR SWIFT  
 and ZAC BROWN BAND LEAD THE LIST OF FINAL NOMINEES

by BOB DOERSCHUK



ABC's "Good Morning America"'s Robin Roberts hosts as Jake Owen and Reid, Kimberly and Neil Perry of The Band Perry announce CMA Awards nominees in five categories.



CMA AWARDS NOMINEES IN SEVEN SELECT CATEGORIES AND CMA BROADCAST AWARDS FINALISTS ARE ANNOUNCED ON SEPT. 6 AT THE HISTORIC RYMAN AUDITORIUM IN NASHVILLE. CMA Board Chairman Steve Buchanan; Keifer and Shawna Thompson of Thompson Square; Jerrod Niemann; Jack Greene; Danelle Leverett and Susie Brown of the JaneDear girls; CMA Board President Gary Overton; and Robert Deaton of Deaton Flanigen Productions.



Shawna and Keifer Thompson of Thompson Square join Jerrod Niemann to announce CMA Awards finalists.

September 6 was a morning of firsts as the names of CMA Awards nominees for 2011 were revealed live on ABC Television's "Good Morning America" and at the Ryman Auditorium.

"GMA" unveiled its new set that day, relocated to street level so that passersby on Times Square got a close look at Jake Owen as he performed with his band and joined The Band Perry to announce the finalists in five of the Awards categories. And at the Ryman, where the rest of the nominations were revealed onstage by Jerrod Niemann and Thompson Square, Jack Greene, the inaugural winner of CMA's Male Vocalist, Single and Album of the Year honors in 1967, presented those three trophies to CMA as a gesture of appreciation.

For The Band Perry and Thompson Square, it was also a day of surprises, as both received news of their own nominations at the New York and Nashville announcements respectively. And for "GMA" viewers and those on site at the Ryman, a picture quickly took shape of how this year's Awards would play out.

If any single word could characterize the 2011 Awards, it would be "competitive." First-time nominees made their presence known in 12 CMA Awards categories, including Entertainer, Male Vocalist, Album, Vocal Duo, Single, Song, Music Video, Musical Event, Musician and New Artist. No one artist ran way ahead of the rest in terms of how many nominations they received. Indeed, four of them tied for first place in this tabulation with five each.

- Jason Aldean earned nominations for Entertainer, Male Vocalist, Album for *My Kinda Party* and Single and Musical Event of the Year, for "Don't You Wanna Stay" with Kelly Clarkson.
- Defending Entertainer of the Year Brad Paisley made the finals for Entertainer, Male Vocalist, Album for *This Is Country Music* and Musical Event and Music Video for "Old Alabama," (featuring Alabama). These raise Paisley's total career nominations to 57, placing him in third place on the all-time list behind George Strait (81) and Alan Jackson (80).
- Five nominations went as well to reigning Male Vocalist Blake Shelton, who is in contention for Entertainer, Male Vocalist, Album for *All About Tonight* and Single and Music Video for "Honey Bee."
- Taylor Swift also garnered five nominations, for Entertainer, Female Vocalist, Album for *Speak Now* and Song and Music Video for "Mean." And if she wins for Album of the Year, Swift will also receive a trophy as producer.



Jake Owen



CMA AWARDS  
 LIVE WEDNESDAY 7-10 PM/CT

That's not all. Two more acts are close behind with four nominations each. The Band Perry is up for Vocal Group, New Artist and Single and Music Video for "If I Die Young." And Zac Brown Band made the finals in categories for Vocal Group, Album for *You Get What You Give*, Musical Event for "As She's Walking Away" with Alan Jackson and Single of the Year for "Colder Weather."

All CMA Awards finalists were featured on "CMT Insider Special Edition: 2011 CMA Awards Nominations," featuring in-depth coverage of all the nominations, artist interviews, and more. The 30-minute special premiered Wednesday, Sept. 7, and re-aired Saturday, Sept. 10 and Sunday, Sept. 11.

The CMA Awards nominees and winners are determined by the 6,400 industry professional members of CMA, which was the first trade organization formed to promote an individual genre of music in 1958. The first CMA Awards Banquet and Show was held in 1967 at Nashville's Municipal Auditorium. The following year, the CMA Awards moved to the Ryman Auditorium and was broadcast on NBC television for the first time — making it the longest running, annual music awards program on network television. The show aired on NBC through 1971 and on the CBS Television Network from 1972 through 2005 before moving to ABC in 2006.

Winners of "The 45<sup>th</sup> Annual CMA Awards" will be determined in a final round of voting by eligible voting members of the Country Music Association. CMA Awards balloting is officiated by the international accounting firm of Deloitte & Touche LLP.

"The 45<sup>th</sup> Annual CMA Awards" will be hosted by Brad Paisley and Carrie Underwood for the fourth consecutive year and broadcasted live on Wednesday, Nov. 9, 7-10 PM/CT) on the ABC Television Network.

"The 45<sup>th</sup> Annual CMA Awards" is a production of the Country Music Association. Robert Deaton is the Executive Producer, Paul Miller is the Director, and David Wild is the writer. The special will be shot in high definition and broadcast in 720 Progressive (720P), ABC's selected HDTV format, with 5.1 channel surround sound. Premiere Radio Networks is the official radio packager of the CMA Awards. Chevrolet is a Proud Partner of the CMA Awards and Official Ride of Country Music. CMA is a Proud Supporter of DRIVE4COPD.

Text CMAINFO to 66937 to join the CMA Mob. Visit [CMAawards.com](http://CMAawards.com) for information on Awards nominees and past winners, highlights, games, merchandise and more, and to sign up for CMA Exclusive.

# Brad Paisley & Carrie Underwood return to co-host "The 45<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CMA AWARDS"

by DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

As Brad Paisley and Carrie Underwood prepare to host the CMA Awards for the fourth consecutive year, they've learned to expect the unexpected.

"You just keep it moving and you always have a job to do no matter what happens," said Underwood.

The longtime friends, who scored a No. 1 hit this year with the duet "Remind Me" (written by Paisley, Chris DuBois and Kelley Lovelace), have learned to roll with the punches in juggling their hosting duties. They've also both become more acutely aware of the ticking of the clock.

"I had 40 seconds to change my entire outfit," Underwood recalled of one particularly tight wardrobe change during the 2010 CMA Awards.

"She didn't make it in rehearsal," Paisley interjected. "She was a minute late."

"My zipper busted in rehearsal," Underwood explained. "I was like, 'Don't worry. I'll make it work. I'll make it.'"

And she did. She substituted another dress and the millions watching the ABC live telecast would never have known a stressful rehearsal had preceded the flawless live show.

As the three-hour broadcast neared its end, Underwood and Paisley experienced a new challenge, rarely heard of during an awards show. "We were two minutes under going into Entertainer of the Year," Paisley said of the unexpected surplus on the clock.

"That part is scary," admitted Underwood. "That never happens. You're never under. You're always over."

"[If] whoever gets it just gives a minute speech, you have a minute to kill," recalled Paisley of the discussion backstage.

"And that sounds like nothing, but a minute in TV Land is forever," Underwood said.

Paisley nodded his head in agreement. "You can only tap dance for so long before someone changes the channel."

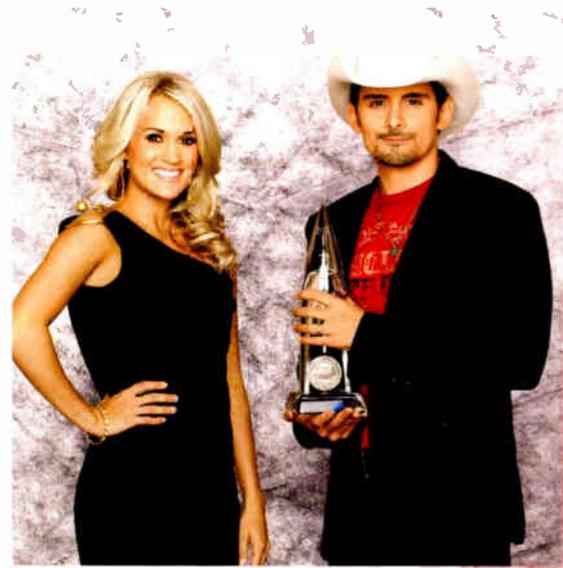
The time problem was happily solved when Paisley was named Entertainer. "Luckily someone was very long winded in his speech," he said with a grin.

Sitting in a Franklin, Tenn. recording studio, Underwood and Paisley demonstrated the easy camaraderie and playfulness during the interview that made them such a winning combination as co-hosts. "I love doing it and we're having a great time, so I hope everybody else is," said Paisley, who has earned 14 CMA Awards, including three consecutive Male Vocalist accolades (2007-2009).

"I look forward to that moment when we go out there to deliver the monologue," he continues. "That's really the thing that we spend the most time on in weeks prior. Garrison Keillor said something to me once when I went to see a production with him in New York City. He said, 'One of my favorite moments in life is when the lights go down in the theater, and it's like that. It feels like the highest stakes moment in the year for Country Music, as those lights go down and you hear Paul Miller's voice, the director, say 'Two minutes to show,' and those lights go down.'"

"It's like a nice date," Underwood said of the event. "I love everyone getting dressed up. I think it's really nice seeing most of the guys cleaned up and looking good and the girls all pretty. It's just a nice date that we're all on together."

Underwood has developed a reputation for being one of the best-dressed artists and her multiple wardrobe changes during the show are eagerly anticipated by viewers. "This year I've already decided I'm going to take a slightly different approach," said Underwood, a five-time CMA Award winner, including three consecutive Female Vocalist titles (2006-2008). "This is going to be a different direction. I want this year to feel different. When I look at pictures, I want to know 'That's from year four,' so I've got some ideas in mind."



**"You can only tap dance for so long before someone changes the channel."**

— Brad Paisley

Underwood and Paisley have distinct skills they bring to their hosting duties. "Brad is quick witted. He does a lot in the preparation stages as well," said Underwood, who earned a bachelor's degree in Mass Communications at Oklahoma's Northeastern State University. "I can deliver the news. I can say, 'Next up.' But Brad is quick. He's good on his feet and he contributes a lot in the planning stages, a lot of ideas and stuff for gags and things like that."

"She does too," Paisley interjected. "Some of the greatest things we've ever had, like last year she said, 'What if you sang Lady Gaga?' Then the year before that there was this discussion: 'Who do you want to talk about in the monologue?' I said, 'We'd love to mention Tim (McGraw) and Faith (Hill), but we just don't know how.' And Carrie said, 'They both have fragrances.' She has the best ideas of anybody."

Both Paisley and Underwood enjoy the collaborative process on the road to Country Music's Biggest Night. "I appreciate that it's a team effort," said Underwood. "Everybody brings their ideas. Nobody is telling us what we can or can't do. We come with ideas and they do too and we kind of mesh all of it together. We're all working towards the same goal, so it's not like somebody says, 'Read this and this is all you can do.' We tell them why things won't work and they tell us why things won't or will work and come up with the show."

"It's a great team of people," adds Paisley. "(Executive Producer) Robert Deaton is a tremendous guy, a good friend of mine now and so talented. Paul Miller has directed everything over the years and he's smart and sharp. David Wild, who writes the show, is a well-respected musical writer in many circles. It's a great team of people who have become like family to us and Vicki Dummer (Senior VP, Current Series and Specials, ABC Entertainment Group) and Mark Bracco (VP, ABC Entertainment Group), who come into town work so hard on it as well. It's neat how many people can get involved and really do put their iron in their fire and say, 'Here's some things that I think could benefit the show.' I love the process."

photos: Horis - Bob D'Amico; Greene - John Russell



## JACK GREENE DONATES ORIGINAL AWARDS TROPHIES TO CMA

During the CMA Awards nominee announcements at the Ryman Auditorium, Grand Ole Opry legend Jack Greene generously presented CMA with his trophies for Male Vocalist, Single for "There Goes My Everything" and Album of the Year for *There Goes My Everything*. Each had been presented to him during the first CMA Awards in 1967. (l-r) CMA Board President Gary Overton, Chairman/CEO, Sony Music Nashville; Greene; and CMA Board Chairman Steve Buchanan, Senior VP, Media and Entertainment, Gaylord Entertainment.

World Radio History

# 2011 CMA AWARDS NOMINEES

## Entertainer of the year

JASON ALDEAN  
BRAD PAISLEY  
BLAKE SHELTON  
TAYLOR SWIFT  
KEITH URBAN

## Single of the year

(Award goes to artist and producer(s))

### "A LITTLE BIT STRONGER"

Sara Evans  
produced by Tony Brown  
RCA Nashville

### "COLDER WEATHER"

Zac Brown Band  
produced by Keith Stegall  
and Zac Brown  
Southern Ground Artists/  
Atlantic Records

### "DON'T YOU WANNA STAY"

Jason Aldean with  
Kelly Clarkson  
produced by Michael Knox  
Broken Bow Records

### "HONEY BEE"

Blake Shelton  
produced by Scott Hendricks  
Warner Bros. Nashville

### "IF I DIE YOUNG"

The Band Perry  
produced by Paul Worley  
Republic Nashville

## Musician of the year

**SAM BUSH**  
mandolin

**JERRY DOUGLAS**  
dobro

**PAUL FRANKLIN**  
steel guitar

**DANN HUFF**  
guitar

**MAC McANALLY**  
guitar

## Song of the year

(Award goes to songwriter(s))

### "COLDER WEATHER"

Zac Brown, Wyatt Durrette,  
Levi Lowrey, and Coy Bowles

### "DIRT ROAD ANTHEM"

Brantley Gilbert  
and Colt Ford

### "IF I DIE YOUNG"

Kimberly Perry

### "MEAN"

Taylor Swift

### "YOU AND TEQUILA"

Matraca Berg  
and Deana Carter

## Female Vocalist of the year

SARA EVANS  
MIRANDA LAMBERT  
MARTINA MCBRIDE  
TAYLOR SWIFT  
CARRIE UNDERWOOD

## Male Vocalist of the year

JASON ALDEAN  
KENNY CHESNEY  
BRAD PAISLEY  
BLAKE SHELTON  
KEITH URBAN

## Vocal Group of the year

THE BAND PERRY  
LAOY ANTEBELLUM  
LITTLE BIG TOWN  
RASCAL FLATTS  
ZAC BROWN BAND

## Vocal Duo of the year

THE CIVIL WARS  
MONTGOMERY GENTRY  
STEEL MAGNOLIA  
SUGARLAND  
THOMPSON SQUARE

## Musical Event of the year

(Award goes to each artist)

### "AS SHE'S WALKING AWAY"

Zac Brown Band  
featuring Alan Jackson  
Southern Ground Artists/  
Atlantic Records

### "COAL MINER'S DAUGHTER"

Loretta Lynn, Sheryl Crow,  
and Miranda Lambert  
Columbia Records Nashville

### "DON'T YOU WANNA STAY"

Jason Aldean  
with Kelly Clarkson  
Broken Bow Records

### "OLD ALABAMA"

Brad Paisley  
featuring Alabama  
Arista Nashville

### "YOU AND TEQUILA"

Kenny Chesney  
featuring Grace Potter  
BNA Records

## New Artist of the year

THE BAND PERRY  
LUKE BRYAN  
ERIC CHURCH  
THOMPSON SQUARE  
CHRIS YOUNG

## Album of the year

(Award goes to artist and producer(s))

### ALL ABOUT TONIGHT

Blake Shelton  
produced by Scott Hendricks  
Warner Bros. Nashville

### MY KINDA PARTY

Jason Aldean  
produced by Michael Knox  
Broken Bow Records

### SPEAK NOW

Taylor Swift  
produced by Nathan Chapman  
and Taylor Swift  
Big Machine Records

### THIS IS COUNTRY MUSIC

Brad Paisley  
produced by Frank Rogers  
Arista Nashville

### YOU GET WHAT YOU GIVE

Zac Brown Band  
produced by Keith Stegall  
and Zac Brown  
Southern Ground Artists/  
Atlantic Records

## Music Video of the year

(Award goes to artist and director)

### "HONEY BEE"

Blake Shelton  
directed by Trey Fanjoy

### "IF I DIE YOUNG"

The Band Perry  
directed by David McClister

### "MEAN"

Taylor Swift  
directed by Declan Whitebloom

### "OLD ALABAMA"

Brad Paisley  
featuring Alabama  
directed by Jim Shea

### "YOU AND TEQUILA"

Kenny Chesney  
featuring Grace Potter  
directed by Shaun Silva

# REACTIONS FROM SOME OF THE CMA AWARDS NOMINEES

"Being nominated once (for 'Strawberry Wine') was a dream come true. Being nominated a second time, well, you don't even dream about that stuff! And with Deana? This is amazing!"

**MATRACA BERG** *Song of the Year*

"I'm totally proud to see my name listed with Sara Evans. CMA nominations are a big deal in our industry, but this particular nomination is especially important to me as this 'musical cycle' we're in, in all genres, seems to be leaning more toward spectacle than substance. I'm a bit of an idealist, and this song and this artist have the kind of depth that I love in a Country record."

**TONY BROWN** *Single of the Year*

"I am so fired up about the nomination for New Artist! These moments are life-changing. I am very thankful to have this opportunity to represent the future of our format along with the other four nominees, who I not only consider my peers but my friends as well."

**LUKE BRYAN** *New Artist of the Year*

"I am so blessed and grateful, especially for having another go-round with Matraca and being so supported by the Nashville community. Having my buddy Kenny sing it with Grace Potter — who I love and my brother turned me on to a few years ago — is just such a gift. I am beyond excited. I am blown away... What a wonderful gift from God. Thanks for including me!"

**DEANA CARTER** *Song of the Year*

"This is the first award show since the birth of my daughter. I'm really hoping to win so I can say the 'now go to bed' line parents always say to their kids during the acceptance speech."

**NATHAN CHAPMAN** *Album of the Year*

"Though I've tried to make my career not just about winning awards, it's always great to be recognized, and I'm especially honored in this case because the CMA voting members are my peers. It's always really rewarding when other people who also do this for a living acknowledge what you're doing."

**ERIC CHURCH** *New Artist of the Year*

"No one is more surprised by the CMA nomination than we are, it's truly an honor."

**THE CIVIL WARS** *Vocal Duo of the Year*

"I'm so excited to be nominated for two CMAs this year! I loved working with Jason and am excited for all his nominations and very thankful for him letting me tag along. This is one of my favorite songs I've had the chance to record. I'm so happy Country Music has welcomed me so generously! Thank you Country radio and the fans for all of your support!"

**KELLY CLARKSON** *Single and Musical Event of the Year*

"I am deeply honored to be nominated again this year for Musician of the Year by the voting body of the CMA. It's already been a wonderful year of touring with Alison Krauss and Union Station. I'm thrilled to be mentioned in the same field with my friends Mac, Sam, Dann and Paul and whoever wins, I'm sure we will all be happy. After all, we see each other out there in the trenches, trying to make music for people to have something to be happy about in these troubled times."

**JERRY DOUGLAS** *Musician of the Year*

"I am thrilled beyond words to be nominated for Female Vocalist and Single of the Year. After taking a little break, to come back and have the kind of year that I've had is amazing! I'm so grateful and blessed and happy! I'm so thankful to God!"

**SARA EVANS** *Female Vocalist and Single of the Year*

"I'm excited to be nominated with Blake at this particular moment in his career. It's an exciting time for him and I think we're just beginning to see the full range of his talents. He may be hugely popular but he's paid his dues. No one is more deserving than Blake Shelton."

**TREY FANJODY** *Music Video of the Year*

"I am so humbled to be nominated for this Award. When you look at the history of the great songs and songwriters from this category, I am truly blessed to be mentioned in the same breath. I wrote 'Dirt Road Anthem' with a friend, Brantley Gilbert, and another friend, Jason Aldean, made it the biggest song of my career. I never dreamed that anyone else would love it like we did."

**COLT FORD** *Song of the Year*

"I'm always humbled to be recognized by our industry and I'm sincerely honored to be a part of all the good things coming Blake's way. *All About Tonight* spawned two No. 1 singles and 'Honey Bee' has seriously moved the dial for Blake's career. Thank you to the CMA members who believed enough in what we are doing to put us in these categories."

**SCOTT HENDRICKS**

*Album and Single of the Year*

"Ditto to what Jerry Douglas said. It's always nice to be with this company of great players and friends."

**DANN HUFF** *Musician of the Year*

"This is the pinnacle of everything, to be nominated for the CMAs. To be nominated for a single like 'Don't You Wanna Stay' is amazing because it's such a crossover hit. From the moment Jason and Kelly walked in the door, you knew it was going to be something special. And I'm a huge fan of everyone in my categories; we grew up together in the business, so to be listed with people I respect so much is really cool."

**MICHAEL KNOX** *Album and Single of the Year*

"Yay!!!! Nom's Female and collaboration with 2 of my heroes!!!! Thanks CMA. And congrats to my hubby for dominating!!!!!"

**MIRANDA LAMBERT** (via Twitter)

*Female Vocalist and Musical Event of the Year*

"The guys my name sits among on the nominations are true heroes of mine as well as friends. They are a big part of why I came to town and I'm lucky to be mentioned in the same phone book with them. Thanks to the CMA voters for continuing to find some merit in what I do. I'm truly honored."

**MAC McANALLY** *Musician of the Year*

"SO HAPPY to be nominated for CMA Female Vocalist this year!"

**MARTINA McBRIDE** (via Twitter) *Female Vocalist of the Year*

"It's an incredible honor to be nominated for a CMA Award, especially for such a powerful song as 'If I Die Young.' I'm so proud to have gotten to know Kimberly, Neil and Reid (Perry) and to have the opportunity to collaborate with them on bringing their words and music to the screen."

**DAVID McCLISTER** *Music Video of the Year*

"You know, this never gets old. We can't thank Country radio and the music industry enough for keeping our name in the hat with some incredible artists."

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

"Hell, yeah, we can't thank those guys enough. We wouldn't get to do what we do without our friends at radio."

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

"I will say that I am completely over-nominated. My entire career I'm over-awarded and over-nominated, and this is another great year for that."

**BRAD PAISLEY** *Entertainer, Male Vocalist, Album, Musical Event and Music Video of the Year*  
**World Radio History**

"It's really heartening to see that real music is still alive and well and that a song like 'You and Tequila' and two artists that seemingly have nothing to do with each other could come together and create something that really resonates with people. It's so exciting and inspiring for the future of music. It gives me hope."

**GRACE POTTER** *Musical Event of the Year*

"There was a lot of great music made last year. To be considered by your peers to have made one of the five best albums of the year is truly an honor."

**FRANK ROGERS** *Album of the Year*

"Brad Paisley's lyrics always read like a movie script to me. Interpreting his songs and inventing images to accompany his words is always a fun challenge. 'Old Alabama' was especially enjoyable. Getting to work with Country legend Alabama and hanging on for dear life while filming Jeff Gordon in his 24 car are incredible experiences that don't come along very often."

**JIM SHEA** *Music Video of the Year*

"To be honest, I secretly hoped I'd get this (Entertainer of the Year) nomination one day, but I never thought I actually would. After 10 years of watching my friends receive this incredible honor, I got pretty used to being a cheerleader for them, you know? I didn't expect this, but I know I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for my band and crew. Most of them have been with me from the beginning of my career, and they are such a big part of why I get to do what I love. Tracy Broussard, Rob Byus, Kevin Canady, Philip de Steiguer, Brett Hardin, Travis Medlin, Jeff Parsons, Kevin Post and Beau Tackett — thank you guys for helping me get here. I love you."

**BLAKE SHELTON**

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

"I am honored and thrilled to be nominated by CMA for this year's body of work with Zac Brown Band. From the moment Zac played 'Colder Weather' for me in my kitchen two years ago, I knew that I was in the presence of greatness."

**KEITH STEGALL** *Single and Album of the Year*

"Thanks to you guys and the CMA voters, we got 5 CMA NOMINATIONS THIS MORNING!!!"

**TAYLOR SWIFT** (via Twitter)

*Entertainer, Female Vocalist, Album, Song, and Music Video of the Year*

"We worked so hard to get anything going on, and then to have two nominations, it means everything to me and Shawna. There's nothing else higher right now."

**KEIFER THOMPSON OF THOMPSON SQUARE**

*Vocal Duo and New Artist of the Year*

"Crazy cool CMA noms this morning!!!! It blows my mind how sweet they are when we get them. I'm euphoric and moved!!! Thank you. Thank you."

**KEITH URBAN** (via Twitter)

*Entertainer and Male Vocalist of the Year*

"It was a great privilege to work with the amazing Taylor and a real honor for the video to be recognized in this way. To me, we've already won."

**DECLAN WHITEBLOOM** *Music Video of the Year*

"The first time I heard the Perrys perform 'If I Die Young,' I knew it could be a big one. I'm grateful to the Perrys and everyone at Republic Nashville for letting me be a part of it."

**PAUL WORLEY** *Single of the Year*

"The phone rang early and I'm not a morning person. But then I found out I'm nominated for CMA New Artist, so I was OK with it! I'm really excited to be nominated. It's been an absolutely amazing year for me in so many ways, and this is definitely a high point."

**CHRIS YOUNG** *New Artist of the Year*

# CMA

## BROADCAST AWARDS FINALISTS

Announced on Ryman Auditorium Stage

by BOB DOERSCHUK

With the tall stained glass windows and pine church pews of the Ryman Auditorium providing a richly historic backdrop, the names of CMA Awards nominees in several categories, along with finalists in the Broadcast Personality and Radio Station of the Year listings, were revealed on the morning of Tuesday, Sept. 6.

Assembled media, as well as those following live coverage carried to radio stations from CMA's official radio partner Premiere Radio Networks, listened as Susie Brown and Danelle Leverett of the JaneDear girls announced the finalists in all radio personality and station categories. Nominees are grouped according to whether they operate in small, medium, large or major markets, based on population as ranked by Arbitron, with five candidates making the last round in each listing. Separate panels of distinguished broadcast professionals from all market sizes and regions select these nominees and ultimately the winners, with Deloitte & Touche, LLP, tabulating their votes.

National Broadcast Personality candidates are assessed on aircheck, ratings, community involvement and biographical information; each contender must be a syndicated, short-form, hub voice-tracking and

satellite personality heard in at least three markets with a minimum of 40 shows per year. Market-based Personality nominees must have been on the air for at least 12 months at their current stations. Radio stations are judged on airchecks, ratings history, community involvement and format leadership.



Danelle Leverett and Susie Brown of the JaneDear girls announce CMA Broadcast Awards nominees.

photo: John Russell

CMA members who are full-time, on-air personalities and CMA member radio stations in the United States and Canada are eligible to enter; winners, however, may not enter in consecutive years. Complimentary CMA memberships are awarded to Personality winners. CMA Broadcast Awards winners will be notified in mid October, receive a CMA Awards trophy and be acknowledged during "The 45th Annual CMA Awards" on ABC.

To read reactions from many of this year's CMA Broadcast Awards nominees, visit [CMAawards.com](http://CMAawards.com).

## CMA Broadcast Personality of the Year Finalists

### National

**"AMERICAN COUNTRY COUNTDOWN with KIX BROOKS"**

(Kix Brooks)  
Citadel Media

**"BIG D & BUBBA SHOW"**

(Derek Haskins and Sean Powell)  
Premiere Radio Networks

**"THE LIA SHOW"**

(Lia Knight)  
Dial Global

### Major Market

**"BEN & MATT SHOW"**

(Ben Campbell and Matt McAllister)  
KNIX, Phoenix, Ariz.

**"EDWARDS & LEE"**

(Chuck Edwards and Linda Lee)  
WYCD, Detroit, Mich.

**"KELLY FORD & RIDER"**

(Kelly Ford and Mark Newman)  
KYGO, Denver-Boulder, Colo.

**"LAURIE DeYOUNG MORNING SHOW"**

(Laurie DeYoung)  
WPOC, Baltimore, Md.

**"PAUL SCHATZ MORNING SHOW"**

(Paul Schadt, Meg Butterly, and Geof Knight)  
WKKT, Charlotte/Gastonia, N.C.; Rock Hill, S.C.

### Large Market

**"CHRIS CARR & COMPANY"**

(Chris Carr, Jeffrey "Maverick" Bolen, and Jason Statt)  
WUBE, Cincinnati, Ohio

**"COFFEE, COUNTRY & CODY"**

(Bill Cody)  
WSM-AM, Nashville, Tenn.

**"JEFF ROPER in the MORNING"**

(Jeff Roper and Angie Ward)  
WTQR, Greensboro/  
Winston-Salem/High Point, N.C.

**"JESS, BRIAN, and AMANDA"**

(Jess Tyler, Brian Phillips, and Amanda Leonardo)  
WCTK, Providence/Warwick/Pawtucket, R.I.

**"Q MORNING CREW"**

(Mike Wheless, Marty Young, and Janie Carothers)  
WQDR, Raleigh/Durham, N.C.

### Medium Market

**"KEVIN RICHARDS SHOW"**

(Kevin Richards)  
WGNA, Albany/Schenectady/Troy, N.Y.

**"MORNINGS with BRIAN and KELLIE"**

(Brian Pierce and Kellie Michaels)  
KFDI, Wichita, Kan.

**"THE 97 COUNTRY BREAKFAST CLUB"**

(Tom O'Brien, Roger Todd, Melissa Moran)  
WPCV, Lakeland/Winter Haven, Fla.

**"THE KAT 103 MORNING SHOW"**

(Steve Lundy and Gina Melton)  
KXKT, Omaha, Neb./Council Bluffs, Iowa

**"ELLIS and BRADLEY MORNING SHOW"**

(Bill Ellis and Beth Bradley)  
WSSL, Greenville/Spartanburg, S.C.

### Small Market

**"BARRETT, FOX & BERRY"**

(Bill Barrett, Tim Fox, and Tracy Berry)  
KKNV, Eugene/Springfield, Ore.

**"BEARMAN and KEN in the MORNING"**

(Benny "Bearman" Martin, Ken Hicks, Daniel Wyatt)  
WUSY, Chattanooga, Tenn.

**"SCOTTY and CARISSA in the MORNING"**

(Scotty Cox and Carissa Loethen)  
KCLR, Columbia, Mo.

**"THE EDDIE FOX SHOW"**

(Eddie Foxx and Sharon Green)  
WKSF, Asheville, N.C.

**"THE GOOD MORNING GUYS"**

(Brian Gary, Todd Harding, and Susan Moore)  
KUAD, Ft. Collins/Greeley, Colo.

## CMA Radio Station of the Year Finalists

### Major Market

**KMLE** Phoenix, Ariz.

**KNIX** Phoenix, Ariz.

**WKKT** Charlotte/Gastonia, N.C./  
Rock Hill, S.C.

**WMZQ** Washington, D.C.

**WYCD** Detroit, Mich.

### Large Market

**KASE** Austin, Texas

**KVET** Austin, Texas

**WFMS** Indianapolis, Ind.

**WQDR** Raleigh/Durham, N.C.

**WUBE** Cincinnati, Ohio

### Medium Market

**KATM** Modesto, Calif.

**KFDI** Wichita, Kan.

**KUZZ** Bakersfield, Calif.

**WBBS** Syracuse, N.Y.

**WYRK** Buffalo/Niagara Falls, N.Y.

### Small Market

**KCLR** Columbia, Mo.

**KUAD** Ft. Collins/Greeley, Colo.

**WKSF** Asheville, N.C.

**WKXC** Augusta, Ga.

**WUSY** Chattanooga, Tenn.

# Tis the SEASON for.

## CMA COUNTRY CHRISTMAS

by BOB DOERSCHUK

As TV viewers take in the final moments of ABC's live broadcast of "The 45th Annual CMA Awards" on Wednesday, Nov. 9, and as the last audience members file out from Bridgestone Arena in Nashville, one might imagine that lights dim throughout the venue and a long night's work comes to an end.

Not at all. Co-hosts Brad Paisley and Carrie Underwood will have just finished waving goodbye as the backstage crew sprints into action, moving sets and scenery, bringing Christmas-season decorations out from the wings and onto the stage. Work will continue throughout the night and the following day, up to the moment when taping begins for the 2011 "CMA Country Christmas."

According to Executive Producer Robert Deaton, overseeing two major television specials on consecutive nights actually makes the job easier. "Shooting the day after the Awards provides us the unique opportunity to produce a very high-end, polished-looking show," he said. "We would never be able to do it otherwise because we can take advantage of having all our 17 cameras, all the screens that are in the Awards set, the crew and everything else. So therefore we get a show that looks 10 times better than it would look as a stand-alone by incorporating the economies of scale."

For all he's done on the two older CMA television broadcasts, the live Awards show and the taped "CMA Music Festival: Country Music's Biggest Night," Deaton has a special affection for "CMA Country Christmas." Why? Well, it's Christmas!

"My dream was always to do a special at Christmastime that was reminiscent of the specials of Dean Martin, Bing Crosby and Judy Garland, where it was very warm and open and there was interaction between the artists," he explained. "You would literally stop between songs and do an interview maybe in a living room because Christmas is the one time of the year where you can be reflective and a bit sentimental."

That was the concept Deaton brought to ABC when discussions began on what would become the first "CMA Country Christmas," aired in 2010. Among the initial concerns was whether today's viewers would respond to the old-school model that he embraced. Then, having resolved to give it a shot, a more creative question arose: With two other annual CMA television spectacles already established, how could the new addition stand out with its own identity?

"It's different from the Festival broadcast, for example, whose tag line is 'Country Music's Night to Rock,'" he observed. "For that show, we put the pedal to the metal and we don't let up. For this one, we began by making sure it's a CMA *Christmas* special, not a holiday special. We wanted it to be something the whole family could watch without having to worry about whether somebody is going

to say something off-color."

To achieve that goal, Deaton again reached back to the classic Christmas specials. "I looked at old tapes and I saw, for example, one part of a Judy Garland special where she was sitting around the piano with Mel Tormé. They were just talking back and forth, almost like the cameras weren't there. So I thought it would be very cool, when we introduced Reba in last year's show, that Jennifer Nettles would be standing right beside her and they'd just talk about what they like about Christmas. Those kinds of moments don't just happen. You have to craft them out far in advance."

The 2010 special was an auspicious debut, with ABC drawing 18 percent more viewers than Fox and 12 percent more than NBC during that time slot, which persuaded the network to re-air the show a few weeks later, again in prime time. It also made it definite that Nettles, selected to serve as host, would be called back to duty for 2011.

"Jennifer is absolutely fantastic," Deaton said. "What you see is what you get with her. She's a dynamic performer. Onstage, she is always up, always smiling and engaging with her fans. She's the most positive person, I think, I've ever met, and I felt that would come across on camera. Those were all qualities I thought we needed for the Christmas special, and she is a big contributor to the overall feel."

Along with Nettles reprising her role, "CMA Country Christmas" this year will feature an all-star assembly of artists, including Lauren Alaina, Vince Gill, Amy Grant, Little Big Town, Scotty McCreery, Brad Paisley, Rascal Flatts, Darius Rucker, Brian Setzer, Sugarland, Keith Urban and more.

"The 45th Annual CMA Awards" is a production of the Country Music Association. Robert Deaton is the Executive Producer. Paul Miller is the Director. The special will be shot in high definition and broadcast in 720 Progressive (720P), ABC's selected HDTV format, with 5.1 channel surround sound.



photo: Dana Tyman

# "CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL: COUNTRY'S NIGHT TO ROCK" Tops ABC's Summertime Entertainment

by BOB DOERSCHUK

Always a strong performer, "CMA Music Festival: Country's Night to Rock" once again achieved impressive numbers when ABC aired this year's special on Aug. 14.

Competition was formidable during the three-hour time slot (7 to 10 PM/CT). CBS aired "Big Brother" and "Same Name," NBC featured "Minute to Win It" and the season finale of "Marriage Ref," while Fox debuted its new series, "In the Flow with Affion Crockett."

Even so, "CMA Music Festival" drew the largest audience of any entertainment programming on ABC in nearly five years, jumping above 2010's viewership by 1 million for its second biggest audience in six years.

The talent featured on this year's special was guaranteed to pull Country fans as well as much of the general public to ABC. This year's lineup included Trace Adkins, Jason Aldean with Kelly Clarkson, The Band Perry, Dierks Bentley, Luke Bryan, Big & Rich with Gretchen Wilson, Sara Evans, Kid Rock with Sheryl Crow, Lady Antebellum, Miranda Lambert, Little Big Town, Martina McBride with "American Idol" runner-up Lauren Alaina, Brad Paisley with Alabama, Rascal Flatts, Reba, Darius Rucker, Blake Shelton, Sugarland, Taylor Swift, Josh Turner with "American Idol" winner Scotty McCreery, Shania Twain, Keith Urban and Zac Brown Band with Alan Jackson.

Add to that the anticipation of the varied Festival coverage that viewers have come to expect, from the big stage at LP Field to an intimate club setting and a special segment documenting Alaina's and McCreery's first day at the Festival, and you have a formula for sure-fire success.

"This year was kind of a coming-out party for Scotty and Lauren," said Executive Producer Robert Deaton. "They were afraid they'd get out of the van and nobody would know who they are. They've been kind of secluded. So it was great for our attendees and viewers to see their rolling out. When they went into the Fan Fair Hall exhibit booth, it was just pandemonium. They were just blown away, but so were the fans. By doing things like following Scotty and Lauren throughout their first-time experience, we were able to show the scope of the event as they saw it."

Getting them into the show at all required a bit of improvisation and good luck, Deaton recalled. "(19 Entertainment's) Ann Edelblute, who is Lauren's and Scotty's manager, told me that they were going to be here for the Festival. At that point, all the slots were filled at LP Field, so we couldn't give them a set. So I reached out to Josh and Martina to see if they would be gracious enough to bring them out during their sets, and both were absolutely, hands-down, 'Let's do it. It'll be great.'"

"CMA Music Festival" surged from its lead-in (+218 percent in Total Viewers/+220 percent in Adults 18-49) to capture an average audience of 7 million and become the most-watched program in its three-hour time period. The special also ranked No. 1 during those three hours among Women 18-34 (1.6/5).

The young adult audience in particular grew with each hour of the show, moving into first place during its final hour of 9 to 10 PM/CT to best the season closer of "Marriage Ref" by 100 percent among Adults 18-49 (1.8/5 vs. 0.9/2).

The one-million increase over 2010 viewership measured a total of 17 percent. Its appeal widened as well as escalated, topping last year's figures by 8 percent for Men 18-49, 13 percent for Men 25-54, 10 percent for Adults 25-54, 29 percent for Teens 12-17 and 50 percent among Kids 2-11 — a seven-year high for that demographic.

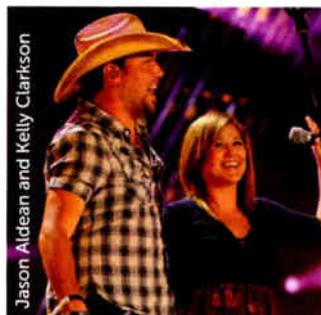
The 7 million viewers represent the network's biggest summertime numbers in the time period for entertainment programming since 2006. Plus, the 1.6/4 ratings achieved among Adults 18-49 were the highest earned by the special since 2008.

CMA did its part to mobilize tune-in through digital platforms. During the promotional window for the show, Aug. 10-15, nearly 170,000 Likes were added to [Facebook.com/CMA](https://www.facebook.com/CMA), while artists added an average of 8,100 followers on Twitter and 11,000 Likes on Facebook. This promotion also ranked among CMA's top three YouTube campaigns. Further interest was fanned by the premiere of CMA's artist-specific sneak-peek videos, highlighting the artist's LP Field performances and experiences at the Festival. These videos have been offered to artist management and record labels for use on artist Web sites as well as Facebook and Twitter pages. They're also archived on the CMA Mobile Database.

2012 CMA Music Festival will run Thursday through Sunday, June 7-10. Four-day ticket packages went on sale July 30. Purchase tickets at [CMAfest.com](http://CMAfest.com), 1-800-CMA-FEST, [Ticketmaster.com](http://Ticketmaster.com) or 1-800-745-3000. International orders can be placed at (615) 770-2041. Ticket prices are based on the level of seating at LP Field for the nightly concerts and range from \$115 to \$325 plus handling fees.

"CMA Music Festival: Country's Night to Rock," directed by Gary Halvorson, will re-air on GAC at 12 AM/CT and 4 PM/CT on Sunday, Nov. 6, 8 PM/CT on Wednesday, Dec. 28 and 12 AM/CT and 4 PM/CT on Thursday, Dec. 29.

[CMAfest.com](http://CMAfest.com)



Jason Aldean and Kelly Clarkson



Taylor Swift



Rascal Flatts



Brad Paisley



Sara Evans



Lady Antebellum



Sugarland



Miranda Lambert

Photos: Dawn Jones and John Ruppel

by **BOB DOERSCHUK**

Many leaders in our industry grew up in a world where Country Music was a part of life. Others sought it out when opportunity brought them into this community. Sony Music Nashville Chairman/CEO Gary Overton's story is a bit different: Country Music reached out to him.

The new CMA Board Chairman grew up in Verona, N.J., just outside of New York City. His friends lived on a diet of rock 'n' roll. Overton enjoyed it too, riding the No. 33 bus into Manhattan to catch shows by Led Zeppelin, The Who and other headliners at Madison Square Garden. But he was also tuned into a type of music that stood him out from his crowd.

"There was an AM station, WHN, that played Country Music," Overton recalled. "I found it on my mom's (Oldsmobile) Delta 88 radio. Back then they were playing Conway, Loretta and other great artists, and I thought it was cool. I put that on when I drove my mom's car, and my friends would go, 'What is this stuff?' But I loved it!"

When Overton left to study forestry and later agriculture business at the University of Tennessee, there was a lot more Country in the air, which encouraged him to start learning guitar. Soon he left school, moved to Nashville and started playing in local bands. He also began studying at Middle Tennessee State University, and after earning his Bachelor of Science degree in Recording Industry Management in 1984, he was on course to devote himself to Country Music.

From that point, Overton has experienced multiple aspects of the industry first-hand. "It was a great time to be around, the mid- to late-'80s," he said. "I learned to drive a tour bus. I carried amps. I became an independent songplugger, which is a difficult job because the doors don't open for you; you have to open them yourself. I worked for three or four years as a songplugger at Warner/Chappell Music and got to know some great writers, label A&R people and producers."

He also worked as personal manager for Alan Jackson before beginning a 15-year run with EMI Music Publishing's Nashville division. There, he rose to Executive VP and General Manager, where his performance at exploiting copyrights, acquiring catalogs, signing writers and artists, securing record deals and other day-to-day operations earned him an impressive 12 Publisher of the Year honors from ASCAP, BMI and SESAC.

"I accomplished everything I could hope for at EMI," he said. "So I left on a high note when an opportunity opened at Sony Music Nashville in 2010. I never really had my sights on going to work at a record company, but it was time to take the ball from where it had been and run it into the future."

A CMA member since July 1989, Overton understood the value of the organization years before his election to its Board in 2004. "I really embrace the mission of CMA as basically to perpetuate Country Music in every way, shape or form," he said. "And it's been a pleasure to serve on the Board because you get to know people who are very good at what they do, even if they're not necessarily on everyone's radar. One interesting point is that these artists, label heads, managers, publishers, producers or whoever they are take off their corporate hats, put on the CMA hat and look at what is best for Country Music. I've seen people vote for things that are not necessarily in their short-term interest because they're trying to help the whole industry, which is refreshing and quite remarkable. Country Music is a family like no other industry."

Elected Board President in 2010, Overton looks back on this past year as an invaluable period of preparation to assume the responsibilities of Chairman. "It's almost like training wheels on a bicycle," he noted. "You don't just push someone down a big hill and hope they're going to ride. It's been very helpful to have been brought into all the different committees and to develop an intimate working knowledge of what's going on with CMA. It's helped me understand where we've been, where we are and where we're heading."

Overton's immersion in these priorities has led him to target certain areas where development might yield especially beneficial results for Country Music. "We're doing great with the CMA Awards broadcast, the CMA Festival show and now the Christmas show,"



"I really embrace the mission of CMA as basically to perpetuate Country Music in every way, shape or form."

— CMA Board Chairman Gary Overton

he said. "But I'd like to investigate more TV opportunities. They don't have to be grandiose, but there are more and more cable channels out there, which could mean more ways to help expose our phenomenal artists, whether they're superstars or new.

"Also, CMA up until recently was mainly B2B, but now we have a Web presence for fans. We can reach out to those fans and ask for their input for research," he continued. "CMA has already done some major research projects, but we should also tap into our fan base."

Admittedly, it will be a challenge to balance already imposing responsibilities at Sony with those that come with chairing the CMA Board. But having had a year as President to familiarize himself, Overton is up for it — especially because fate, perhaps speaking years ago through WHN, has whetted his appetite to serve the music he loves.

"Music is both my vocation and avocation," he stated. "I always thought it would be a good life if I could get up every morning and do something with music."

Most importantly, Overton credits the love and support of his family that gives him the balance and strength in his life. "Without my wife Jan, to whom I've been happily married for 26 years, and our 20-year-old son Will, who is a junior at the University of North Carolina/Chapel Hill, I could not even begin to undertake any of the challenges and opportunities that the music business has put at my doorstep."

# VINCE

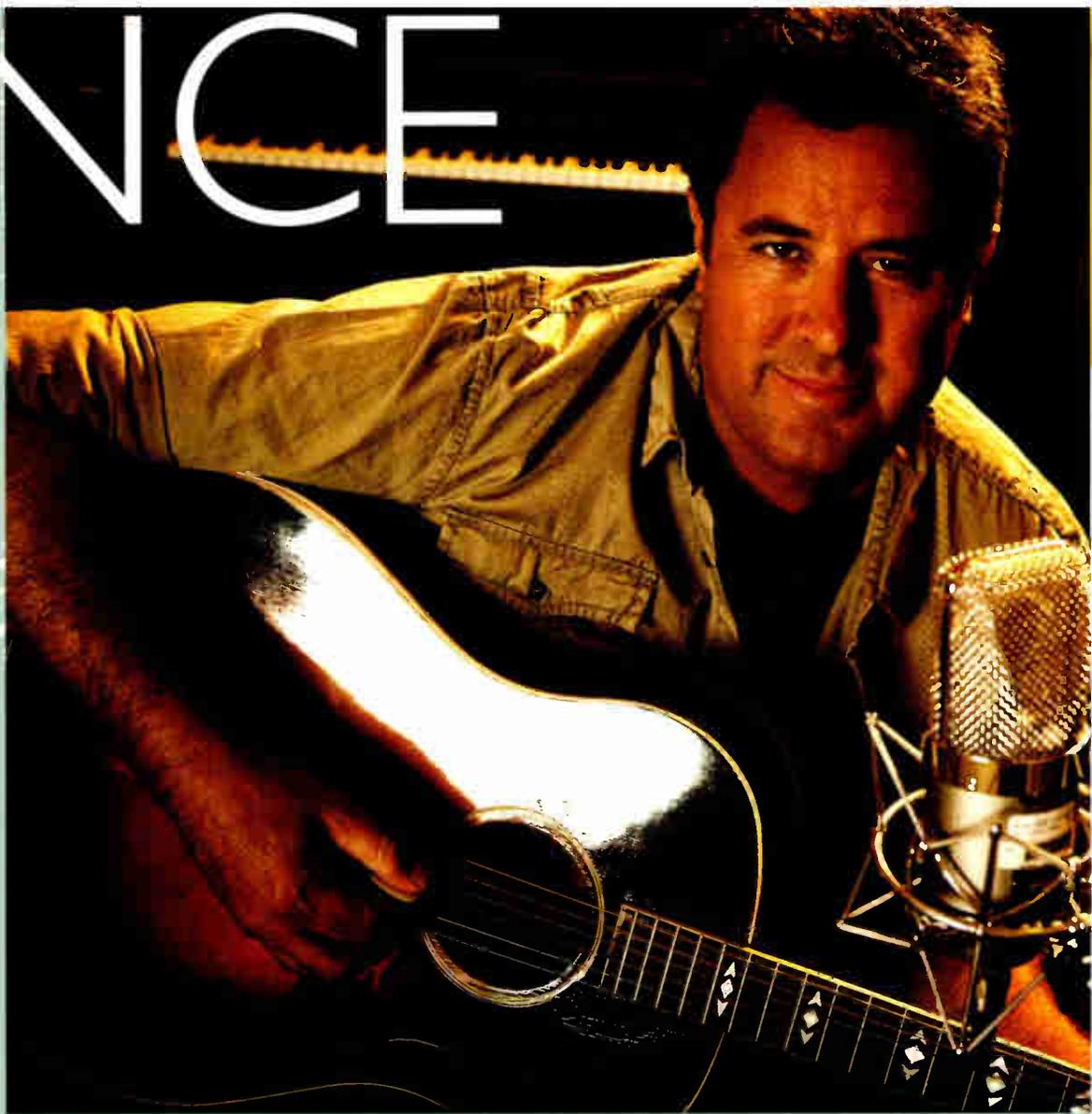
**"And this,"  
said Vince  
Gill, "is the  
LeAnn Rimes  
Memorial  
Bathroom."**

It's a small but comfortable room, just a few steps away from the 32-track recording studio that the CMA Country Music Hall of Fame member built in his Belle Meade, Tenn. home. The only thing that attracts attention is the amplifier positioned just to the left of the doorway.

It seems that Rimes was visiting one day during the sessions for *Guitar Slinger*, Gill's latest album on MCA Nashville. Musicians were gathered in the studio, going over parts and tweaking their sound. She had just gone into the restroom when a guitarist decided to check his tone. Unfortunately, his microphone and amp were in that restroom, the volume pumped up pretty high.

Gill, remembering that moment, mimed playing a bent-note, upper-neck feedback screech. "And LeAnn said she hit the ceiling," he remembered. "I don't know whether that's true or not, but she was out of there pretty quick."

Such are the things that can happen when an artist transforms part of his home into a working space. At the very least, you come up with stories you're not likely to hear about tracking in commercial studios. At best,



you save on multiple fronts, including travel time, rental costs and more.

"I haven't found any minuses to recording at home, to be honest," Gill said. "My biggest concern is, is it going to sound great? That's the whole purpose of any studio. At the same time, if you've got a great song, it doesn't matter where you record it. People are going to respond to a great song every time. If the bass sound isn't just so good, if the kick drum doesn't sound just so great, or if the guitar tone is a little thin, most people don't ever hear any of that. The mantra should be 'serve the song.'"

Gill's priorities don't diminish the importance of having a great production with state-of-the-art gear. Rather, they indicate that the purpose of production is to bring out the expressive potential of the tune. This has guided Gill on all of the sessions he's had, though with *Guitar Slinger* he took the concept further by doing some of the recording outside the studio doors, in an add-on acoustically dry room, at the end of a hallway, in his living room, even in a closet and of course in the Memorial Bathroom.

To put the conversion of these areas in context, go back to Gill's and his wife Amy Grant's decision to make a few changes in their living space. "We lived here for nine years before we even thought about putting a studio in here," he recalled. "I said to Amy, after we'd been married a few years, 'How are things?' She said, 'Well, to be real honest, there are times when I still feel like a stranger in my own house.' So after living here for a little bit of time, we said, 'Okay, we don't really need a pool table in this room. Nobody plays pool here.' We'd go through the house and ask, 'Do we really need a fancy dining room here? Let's make it a sitting parlor and I could have my desk in there.' Little by little, I felt like this part of the house could finally serve what would benefit me the most. You find ways to connect what you do and love and make them a part of your home."

That meant building a studio. Gill invested in the best equipment, relying on advice from friends who kept informed on gear. Eventually, anchored by a 32-channel API board, it took shape in a high-ceilinged space, with a sunken area next to a big working fireplace. It's as much a place to hang out with friends as it is a facility for top-

# GILL

by BOB DOERSCHUK

on the ceiling and the double walls, one external and the other internal, to keep sound from transferring from the inside or the outside. The floor is similarly layered, with two made of cement and two more of wood. "You can do guitar overdubs in here," Gill noted. "But I set up the drums in here more often than not. The first thought was that, with these two big windows, it was going to be too reflective and live, but as it turns out drummers freak out about the sound in here. They say there's a bigger depth in the bottom end of the kick drum. We do a lot of vocals in here too. If you need separation, if something needs to be on its own, this works."

The selection widened as one room led to the next. Just outside the studio door, the end of a hallway, with high ceilings and wood floor, is live enough to add depth to acoustic guitars and upright basses. A nearby closet proves perfect for miking a Leslie speaker, which connects to the Hammond B-3 organ in the living room, just steps away from a Yamaha concert grand piano.

John Hobbs, who has played piano, organ and other keyboards on many of Gill's sessions as far back as *Turn Me Loose* in 1983, sees one reason why the idea of "studio" has morphed into this network of rooms. "People that just have their home studios all in one room aren't usually cutting a band live, which is very much what the approach to this album was — and it always is with Vince," he said. "He doesn't like to do a lot of overdubbing, apart from taking vocal passes and doing the background vocals or maybe allowing for an instrumentalist that's not available on the day of tracking that he really wants to get on a particular song. But the piano really needs to be in a different room. Acoustic piano mics are really hot, so leakage is always an issue. Even the leakage from my headphones, if they're turned up loud while I'm sitting at the piano, can be an issue. And with the Leslie in a cabinet by itself, it's really a function of keeping the leakage down."

Produced by Gill, Hobbs and Justin Niebank, *Guitar Slinger* is sonically impressive, intimate and romantic on ballads ("True Love," written and sung by Gill and Grant), majestic where gospel exultation meets searing lead guitar ("Threaten Me with Heaven," by Gill, Grant, Will Owsley and Dillon O'Brian) and shimmering with steel and triple fiddles on the waltz-time "Buttermilk John" (Gill). But the composer/singer/guitarist proves correct in asserting that every note played and every knob turned takes the listener deeper into the music and the lyric.

Much of the material is narrative, from the (true) story of a friend's sad demise in "Billy Paul" (Gill) to its retrograde, chronicling the salvation of a hopeless man at the end of his journey in "Bread and Water" (Gill and Leslie Satcher). It's not just the quality of this work that distinguishes *Guitar Slinger*; it's the fact of its being done at all.

"That's important to me because I learned that great stories make great songs," he explained. "It's not very prevalent in what's going on today; instead, it's a little more attitude and a little more swagger. What shocks me is a song like 'The House That Built Me' (Tom Douglas and Allen Shamblin), that Miranda (Lambert) recorded. I just want to go, 'Guys! Look at this! This should teach you. People are still moved.' Guy Clark taught me that if you're not able to really see the picture that the words say, then find a way to say it where those pictures come alive. That, to me, is great songwriting: If somebody hears a song, they can perceive it any way they want and paint their own pictures. That's why I don't like videos: You don't give the imagination a chance to work."

"I think it would be so easy to put this music back on a great path with people writing and recording great songs again," he summed up. "It's not that hard."

VinceGill.com

"THE MANTRA SHOULD BE 'SERVE THE SONG.'"

— Vince Gill

## THE FLOOR PLAN FOR GUITAR SLINGER

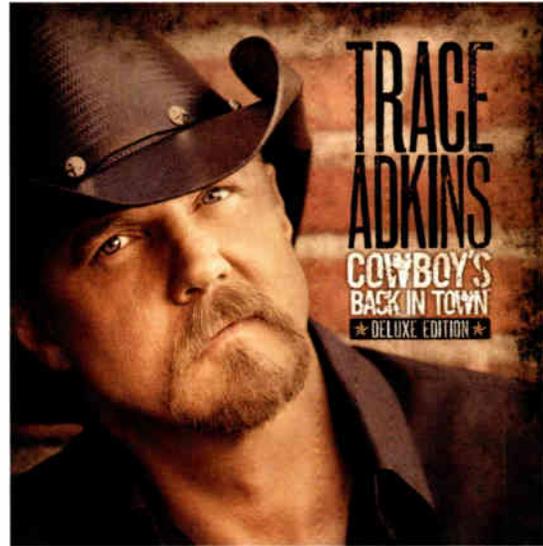
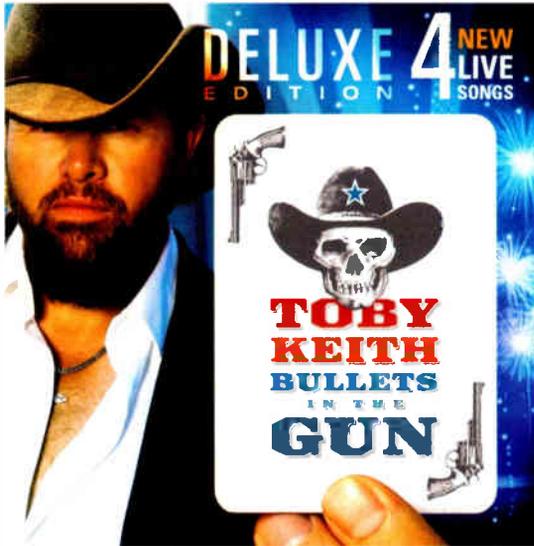
notch tracking, with tiny amps and car models, a clock with hands set against a Fender logo and amplifier grill cloth and other details enhancing the cozy, vintage décor. He's even stowed active amps in the bottom of cabinets that line one wall within soundproofing that allows tracks to be captured without any audio bleed.

Eventually, Gill began thinking about expanding his recording options beyond the studio doors. "I'm grateful that I went up to Sheryl Crow's house," he said. "She had a fantastic studio built in her basement. I was working on mine, and I was like, 'Man, she's got two rooms to do overdubs in. She's got a lounge. I could do this too; I could build a room onto the side of my studio.' I realized that if I didn't take it to a certain level, I'd always be trapped by headphones. That just didn't sound like fun to me, so I went further than I probably ever intended. I don't know if I ever intended to put a whole keyboard world in another room. I didn't think the API desk would be as big as the one I wound up buying. I wound up buying some really big speakers that could crank it up so it sounds like a million bucks. And I never intended to build an extra room. Why not? I'll be making music in there for 20 years or more."

That room, acoustically dry, is lined by amplifier grill cloth

photo: Tim Wright

# DELUXE ALBUMS



## Strategies for Value-Added Releases

by TIM GHIANNI

It could be called the Walmart Factor, given the role of the world's biggest retailer in influencing the ways Nashville record labels position their product. And this is where the brave new world of deluxe packaging — with extra tracks on CDs, DVD combo packs, four booklets and other attractions — comes in.

It's all about positioning, figuratively and literally. Figuratively, the artists and labels position themselves for different fan bases by using a double-barreled marketing approach. They aim for the casual fan with the traditional CD, with 10 or 12 cuts per disc. Then there's the offer the super fan can't refuse: a sometimes limited-edition CD with extra tracks and perhaps a DVD complement that carries a higher price.

As for literal positioning, that comes down to the battle for retail space. "The challenge out there as a genre is that while our physical sales are not declining as much as other genres, we are losing the square footage of retail at the same rate as other genres," said Kerri Fox-Metoyer, former VP, Sales, Sony Music Nashville.

To take advantage of what available space there is, Sony is among the labels offering a certain number of deluxe packages. But it is a cost/reward gamble. And getting the space is only part of the equation; decisions must be made about which artists can best capitalize on it. Is it, for example, more worthwhile to the label and the artist to issue the expanded, more expensive product? Is it better to cut the risk and issue a succession of inexpensive products, such as the six-paks that proved so successful for Blake Shelton, his fans and his label, Warner Bros. Nashville?

It all depends on the audience, insists Fox-Metoyer. "I think the philosophy is there will always be the casual Country listener or fan who will want just the music, so we obviously want to make our music available as an audio-only piece for those fans," she said. "But if we have an artist who is lucky enough to have a tribe of super fans, we want to be able to super-serve them."

One of Sony's biggest ventures in this direction was Kenny Chesney's *Hemingway's Whiskey*, which they offered in bonus and basic formats in September 2010 when the singer returned from a year-long performance hiatus. "We made the deluxe piece at a limited quantity," said Fox-Metoyer, who noted that long shelf life wasn't the goal of its release.

"We knew the real fans would be in the stores in the first few days, so we gave them an opportunity to have something special from Kenny," she added. "We did that by making it different from the standard piece. On the deluxe, we offered two additional bonus tracks (on the CD) as

*Speak Now*, we had an incredible partnership with Target and the time to create the content necessary for a true deluxe package to coincide with the studio release."

"Packaging has always played a key role in Taylor's releases," Rich observed. "She places cryptic messages in the liner notes and creates a theme with the imagery. Careful attention is paid to the overall package to round out each release."

Bill Kennedy agrees. The VP, Sales, Marketing and New Media for Show Dog/Universal Music places a high priority on choosing the right bonus content. "You can't just throw it out there with extra songs just because you have a few lying around," he cautions.

That was on everyone's mind as plans were laid for putting together a deluxe edition of Toby Keith's 2010 album, *Bullets in the Gun*. The regular album offered 10 tracks of rugged, masculine Keith music. For an extra fistful of dollars, fans could buy a package that included four new live songs, which showcased a slightly different side of the artist.

"Toby has a pseudo band called Incognito Bandito," Kennedy explained. "He has done a few side shows with those players, and this was a way to include that band in a low-key way. Toby and his management just said, 'Hey, this makes a lot of sense to introduce this, to not put it out forcefully but in a complementary way.'"

Show Dog followed a similar strategy with Trace Adkins and his *Cowboy's Back in Town*. While the album itself is pure Adkins, the deluxe package offers a big bonus: the "Hillbilly Bone" duet with Blake Shelton

"You can't just throw it out there with extra songs just because you have a few lying around."

— Bill Kennedy, VP, Sales and New Media, Show Dog/Universal Music

well as a DVD that had some insight into Kenny making the record and some special scenes. He opened it with a greeting to the fans, thanking them. It was a great piece, really intimate, and we got a lot of feedback from the fans."

The overall results made the investment worthwhile as retailers bought into the deluxe idea for Chesney. "I would say the retailers took an average of 30 percent of their initial orders on the deluxe," Fox-Metoyer estimated. "We feel that for artists like Kenny Chesney, the fans will pay that deluxe price for a special piece of Kenny. It depends on the fan base. The deluxe always has a question of whether the fans will go out and buy it. This is a risk, but there is a risk in all we do every day."

To a degree, this element of risk in physical sales was ameliorated by releasing a digital deluxe package of *Hemingway's Whiskey*, which Fox-Metoyer noted sold as strongly as its physical equivalent in the early stages of its release on iTunes. Even so, physical products offer reasons to buy that aren't easily replicated online.

"If we continue to offer the customer that's buying physical something special," she insisted, "they will continue to buy it."

This idea guided Big Machine's release of Taylor Swift's first two albums in deluxe format. Although she has sold prodigious numbers of digital tracks, approximately 80 percent of her sales are still in physical product. According to Kelly Rich, VP, Sales and Marketing, Big Machine Records, that's because "while Taylor has a substantial multi-generational appeal, she still has a significant Country base and they are predominantly physical (sales).

"With Taylor, the deluxe packages came natural, simply due to the content created over the 12 months post the studio release for the self-title and *Fearless*," she continued. "It was an effective way to document the events post-release with the value-added material."

While the deluxe issues of those two albums came a full year after the non-deluxe releases, standard and Target-only deluxe editions of her third CD came out simultaneously, featuring the same cover art but with Swift's dress in purple for the former and red for the latter. "Regarding

that had been released previously on Shelton's *Hillbilly Bone* Warner Bros. six-pak.

"We were fortunate to be able to secure 'Hillbilly Bone' (written by Luke Laird and Craig Wiseman)," Kennedy said. "In the end, it kind of helps both of them. It gives Blake another look and it gives Trace another look. That's one of the reasons why, for the right artist, we are trying to come up with a low-price package that can be sold in the retail stores and on-line for less than \$10 and something for the hard-core fans that might be a little more, \$12 to \$14."

Along with "Hillbilly Bone," the deluxe version of *Cowboy's Back in Town* includes three freshly recorded tracks.

Like Fox-Metoyer, Kennedy considers well-conceived deluxe packages to be good business sense on several levels. "Because there are less outlets, retail space continues to shrink," he noted. "Because of declining volume, you are trying to make up for some of that lost sales margin. Plus, it gives you an additional look on the racks."

Of course, finding the right price point is critical too. It's a delicate and somewhat intuitive endeavor to find that fulcrum on which additional production expenses and customer incentive to buy are balanced. "The cost of a deluxe would be indicative to the additional content while keeping it priced reasonably for the consumer," Rich observed. "The average list price is \$2 to \$4 more than the regular version, based on content. The *über* fans will want to the bonus content but we always make sure to have the regular version for the more casual fan."

The payoff can be significant. "In Toby's case, we've sold more of the deluxe than the standard one," Kennedy noted. "In Trace's case, it's not quite that way. Trace is 60/40 standard vs. deluxe. But Toby kind of flipped it the other way. And fans really seem to appreciate it. We've had really positive comments to not only the CDs but also the packaging and the care that is taken to provide that little extra."

As Kennedy sees it, there's a deeper level to this story too. "People have been predicting the demise of the album for a long time. There's always going to be albums. If there's retail support, it's going to stick around."

# RODNEY ATKINS

by LORIE HOLLABAUGH

Though he's sold millions of albums, Rodney Atkins has endured some lag time between releases since signing to Curb Records back in the late '90s. As a result, his image has become somewhat defined over time by his singles. This has been great for building a fan base, whose support has kept his batting average high for hit singles. But the flip side of this success is the tendency to get pigeonholed by the songs' subject matter.

**A**tkins is out to change all that, with help initially from "Take a Back Road," the first single and title cut from his fourth album, scheduled to release Oct. 4. Written by Rhett Akins and Luke Laird, it's a free-spirited tune about changing the scenery of your life. Though a bit of a departure from the subject matter addressed in some of his previous singles, it has struck a chord with fans, who made it the fastest-rising song of his career, averaging sales of around 40,000 copies a week after its August release.

"Take a Back Road" is one of those songs that the first time I heard it, I thought, 'Boy, that feels good,'" Atkins said. "It's pretty catchy, something you want to just crank up. But then the more you hear it, you realize it's not just a ditty. It's about life. If you want it to be just summer ear candy, it can be that. But it's also about getting right with your soul."

The first single set the stage for the changes Atkins is pursuing in his music as well as his presentation. "I wanted this album to be different, and it is in that it's got more edge on it," he said. "It's got a lot more dive-bombs. It's a smaller band this time, which is why songs like 'Back Road' feel like they're right in your face and not affected. And it's a more soulful album. My last album, *It's America*, didn't talk enough about the real world. It lost some grit for me."

For Atkins, a naturally shy, quiet, deep thinker who comes alive the moment he steps onstage, the challenge now is how to bring the grittier, real-world essence of his new songs to life. "The biggest thing in trying to do this is first of all to be authentic," said his manager, Greg Hill, President, McGhee Entertainment Nashville. "That's the most important thing for any artist. With that, nobody is one-dimensional. So how do you show other sides of an artist while still making people realize it's authentic and real? For us, it's also been about how do you let people see you evolving without totally disenfranchising your fan base? One of the most important things that come across any time you grow an artist and evolve is maintaining a connection with your core, but also how do you grow that core? And part of how you grow that core is to let people see more sides of you."

In Atkins' case specifically, Hill acknowledged that "we live in a world where people think of Rodney as a Country guy. But he's not just that. He grew up listening to Led Zeppelin and Lynyrd Skynyrd as much as Merle Haggard and Charlie Daniels. We're trying to play off of what people see live. It's the energy, the aggression. Rodney jokes that he lets his shadow come out and play onstage. How do we get that across in music? How do you do the unexpected that's still Rodney, the Rodney I know, that his friends know? Sometimes that's about approaching it differently."

"Evolving as an artist, I think that's just a part of life," Atkins reflected. "I don't know if it has as much to do with being an artist as your life just changes. The way I have always tried to approach pretty much anything I've ever done is, I love to read up on people and watch people and how

they become successful in what they do. You never have a chance if you don't take a chance. I've been told the reasons things won't work way more than why they will work. That goes back to Little League. My team was in last place. We wound up switching coaches, and the new coach was this coal miner that would show up in his pickup covered in coal dust and pick us up in the back of his pickup. He spent the time focusing on teaching us not only baseball and the little nuances that matter on the field, but also to not be afraid. He always talked about the three D's: drive, discipline and determination. I learned a lot from him."

Those lessons guided Atkins as he worked on *Take a Back Road*. He recorded several love songs for the album, including "Cabin in the Woods" (Jim Collins and David Lee Murphy), something he'd never done previously. And he took some chances on the marketing side, doing some unusual promotional photos and even appearing for the first time in a while without his signature baseball cap. Hill explains this all as being part of a campaign to present Atkins as a "broader person."

"We want to let people keep seeing who he is, which is engaging, intelligent, funny and talented," he continued. "We want to let people see how much time he takes in mixes. He's very engaged in the creative process. There's an artistic side to him that I don't think people have seen yet. For Rodney, it's not about being a star. He loves to make music. He's an artist. He loves to have his music connect with people. And to get his perspective and his personality across is the point of all this."

During one downtown shoot, for example, Atkins traded in his usual T-shirt, jeans and cap to show a different side, even crouching in a fountain with water spraying all over him. "If you're a relatively normal human being, particularly a male, you don't like having your picture taken," Hill noted. "It's going to make you feel uncomfortable, so we had to push

Rodney outside of his comfort zone on that. It was important to get the sides that we know about him, that he'll do for us when the camera isn't around. If you only do photo shoots every two years on an album cycle, a change is going to be perceived as more shocking than if you are around it every day."

"I almost didn't want to do it because of the suit," Atkins recalled. "They had me sitting in a fountain pond. It's the most unnatural thing for a guy to be on the other side of the camera. If you see the Christmas pictures at our house, I'm probably in very few of them because I'm the one taking them. That's normal. But Greg laid out pics one time of red carpets and then of me playing live. He said, 'Did you see the look on your face at the red carpets? OK, now look at your face when you're playing live.' It was drastically different, so you've got to figure out how to deal with that stuff."

It's especially challenging to evolve the image of a particularly cerebral artist in a 10-second sound-bite world. "We're not at the next

**"YOU NEVER  
HAVE A  
CHANCE IF YOU  
DON'T TAKE A  
CHANCE."**

— Rodney Atkins

level of where Rodney deserves to go," Hill admitted. "We jokingly call Rodney a flyover artist, not unlike Tim (McGraw) or Kenny (Chesney), who Nashville for so long didn't understand how they were connecting with Middle America. People in New York and L.A. understand the flashy cool, but they don't realize that here's a guy who's connecting with people in the heartland and singing their anthems.

"We're trying to focus on quality over quantity with media this time," he continued. "In our format, you want to talk to everybody, so it's 'here I go with a 10-minute phoner.' For us to get the message out, sometimes you need longer. That goes with the evolution of showing other sides of an artist. Everything we're focusing on with this record, from the music to the images to the interviews, has been 'let's do the unexpected.' For example, rather than have lyrics or little snippets from each song on this album, Rodney is writing a page on the process of making this record — what he thought, how he felt, not specifically to the songs but on the overall body of the work, to let people a little bit inside of his world and into his thought process. People want to relate to artists. It humanizes both the artist and the listener. And there's a realness when people look at Rodney. They want to connect the song with the music with the image."

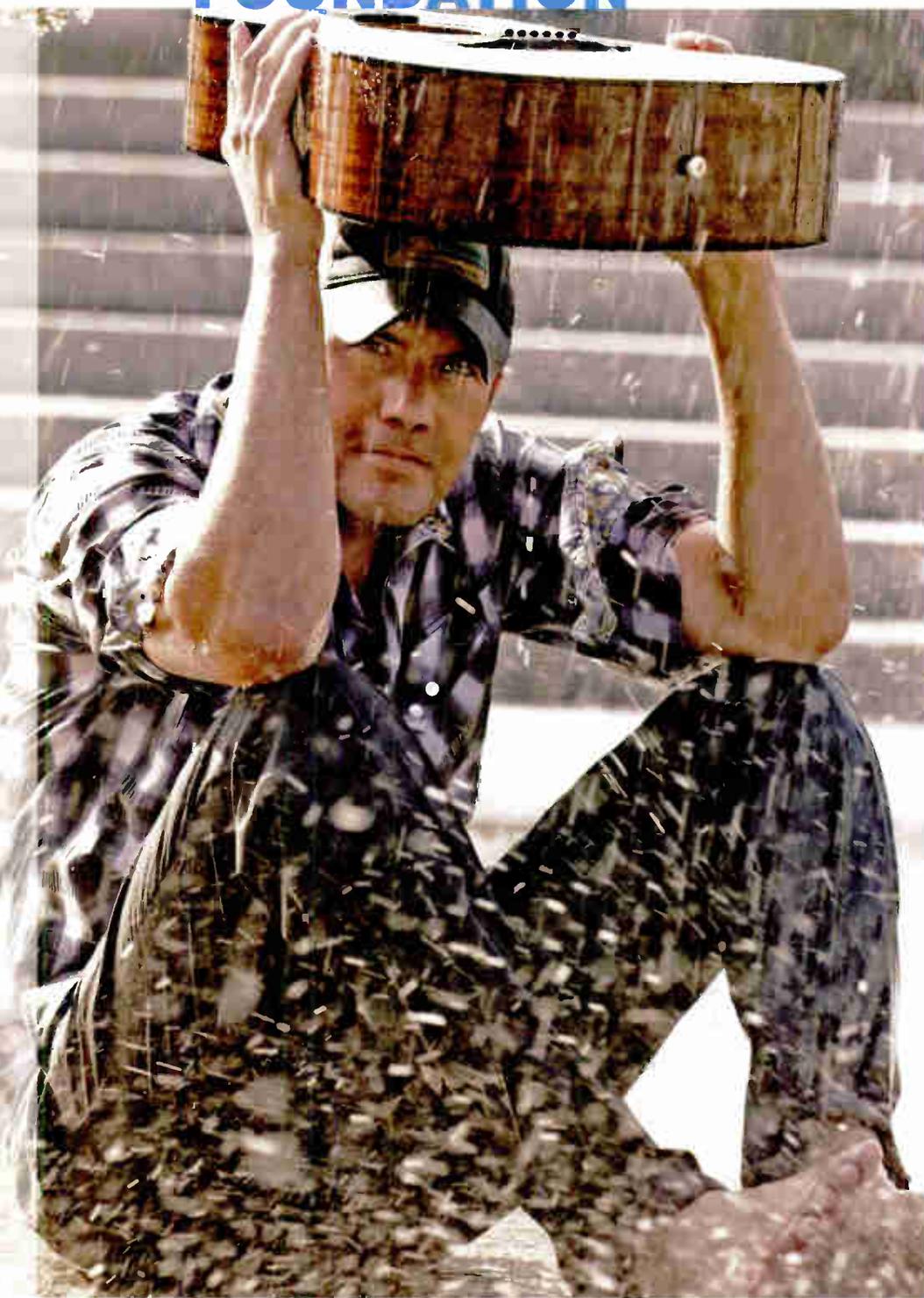
But no matter how he adjusts his image or amps up his music, for Atkins it will always be about connecting with his fans. "I'm just low-key," he said. "I get excited onstage, but if I walked in here being like that I'd feel like I was being fake. You just be yourself in the moment. I'm very much a thinker. Now you call it ADD, but I'm hyper-focused. I was that way even when I was little. I drive my wife crazy because she says I never talk. But I do, I just try to process things.

"If I didn't have the outlet of playing live, I'd be frustrated a lot," he added. "Music was definitely my savior. It's a way of saying things that hopefully, because it's in the form of music, it'll stay around awhile. You have to take risks if you're going to compete. Michael Jordan said, 'I didn't come here to be average.' I love the challenge of being inside a song, writing a song, having a song that gets people excited about the music. It's about finding those kinds of songs and fitting them into the landscape of Country Music. I'm very proud to sing Country Music, but the ultimate goal is finding what sets you apart."

**RodneyAtkins.com**

## BUILDING HIGH

### ON A STRONG FOUNDATION



# YOU CAN LOOK IT UP!

## A MUSICIAN'S GUIDE TO HELPFUL WEB SITES

by CHAD JEFFERS

Change is a part of life in the music business. In fact, that's the one thing you can bet won't be changing any time soon. And nowhere is this truer than in the online tools available now to everyone. For record labels large and small, and especially for artists, the resources now available on the Web have made it easier than ever to reach the public and achieve your goals.

As these resources proliferate, finding the ones best suited to your needs can become more confusing. While one never knows what new site might pop up tomorrow, these portals can be useful to artists and musicians today and for some time to come. Whether you're on the road, in the studio or shopping a song, check these out — they may be just what you need.

### ARTISTDATA.COM

Social media have become vital tools in connecting effectively with fans and creating movement within your fan base. This Web site is a one-stop shop for syncing your social media sites (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.), data and RSS Feeds, iCal Feeds and partner sites. Additionally, it can submit your concert information to top online concert databases and even local media. Management and publicists can update all of their artists' profiles at once. They can also send a message to all of their artists' fans or cross-market their acts.

**ArtistData.com** offers another helpful tool: tour documents. Communication is crucial while on the road, and this site helps you organize it all. You can send a document electronically or print it out for in-person distribution. It's a road manager's dream! Regardless of what size your tour may be, **ArtistData.com** is a strong potential asset.

### THEBIZMO.COM

Just a few short years ago, distribution was an uphill battle in particular for independent artists, who may have lacked the money and

resources that upper-tier performers could better afford. Nowadays, digital distribution is open to artists of any budget, via iTunes, AmazonMP3, eMusic and Napster, among many other options. Even big-name artists, including Eagles, Alison Krauss and Robert Plant, have used **CDBaby.com**, **Nimbit.com** and **TuneCore.com**, all of which have very similar platforms.

One particularly outstanding site in this category is **TheBizmo.com**. It includes a social media game called "Hit or Not" to help get listeners involved with certain artists. Fan engagement is a growing trend, especially in music, where consumers have always raced to discover a new artist and tell all their friends. When new artists come to town, it's fun to invite your friends to discover them too. With "Hit or Not" you can do just that but on a global scale. Whether telling 10 or 10,000 of your peers, word of mouth is the best marketing tool an artist can have.

### GETTING GIGS

Finding gigs is never easy. And if you're not working with a booking agent, it's hard to cold-call promoters and venue owners when you know you should spend that time practicing, recording and otherwise being creative.

**AnyGig.com** makes this easier by enabling users to create their own profile and press kit. Entertainment buyers can look through your profile and see past tour dates and YouTube videos or, of course, listen to your music. It's also a potentially rewarding place for A&R scouts to visit. Membership for the artist is very inexpensive.

**SonicBids.com** is similar to **AnyGig.com**, but it offers a bit more in helping you send out EPKs (electronic press kits) and gig calendars. It is super easy to set up your account, and each time you log in it will prompt you to update your profile. (**SonicBids.com** recently acquired **ArtistData.com**, but the two sites continue to operate independently.)

### APPS

Yes, there are more great tools for connecting with your fan base. But their sheer number might seem to make it harder to take the first step in defining what's best for you. A good place to start is to recognize that smartphones, and for now at least the iPhone, are already the primary interface for many users as they gather input worldwide. Consider having your own application built, especially now that iPhone prices have come way down.

**MobBase.com** is a Web site that helps you make apps for the iPhone. It's a do-it-yourself, easy-to-build-and-maintain process. With this app, you can share music, photos, videos, social media, gig information and even sell merchandise anywhere and everywhere. No

contracts are necessary; once it's up and running, it's yours. Submitting your app to Apple is much like submitting songs to iTunes; it takes about three to six weeks for them to approve it and make it "live."

Quite popular in Europe and now starting to surface in the States, **SoundCloud.com** is like MySpace on steroids. The music you post here plays back with outstanding audio quality and it's sharable with pretty much any social media. It also offers more than 100 apps you can use to connect with. One great feature is its ability to see what comments other people make about your track while it's playing, which gives you an opportunity for real-time interactivity with the listener. You can upload a final mix of the song or use the software on **SoundCloud.com** to create rough versions on the site.

### REVERBNATION.COM

In researching online options for artists and musicians, you're likely to come up with references to **ReverbNation.com** repeatedly. This site provides an integrated suite of powerful tools that include fan management, e-mail newsletters, digital distribution, direct-to-fan e-commerce, Web hosting, widgets, a Facebook "band profile" app and electronic press kits. Additionally, it offers access to opportunities for playing at festivals and getting your music licensed to commercials and films. A gig finder, venue database, controls for syncing with Facebook, MySpace and Twitter — all this and more awaits within one user-friendly dashboard.

### YOUR OWN WEB SITE

This would be your home base, where fans can find your latest news, product and performance information. If you use WordPress, a great, inexpensive and easy-to-use plug-in is **BandWPThemes.com**. It allows you to add your music into a clean music box and have fans sign up for your newsletter. It also adds links to your Twitter and Facebook fan pages.

If you're looking for more information and want to be part of an online community in your area, **IndieConnect.com** may be your ticket. This site has a plethora of resources, online training and forums. I've found it to be very helpful for both songwriting and performing.

None of these Web sites is exclusive, so it's good to try a variety until you find what fits best to your needs. But putting your music up on any of these sites doesn't guarantee success or mega sales; marketing yourself well, having professional pictures taken and a great bio written and performing in front of people are as essential as they were before the first time an artist booted up and went online.



## Clear Channel's iHeartRadio Launches CMA Channel

by MARK CRAWFORD

**Clear Channel Radio has partnered with CMA to create a CMA Channel for iHeartRadio, the advanced platform launched recently and spectacularly by Clear Channel Radio at their iHeartRadio Music Festival Sept. 23-24 in Las Vegas.**

Hosted by Ryan Seacrest, this event featured an array of superstars, including The Black Eyed Peas, Kelly Clarkson, Coldplay, Jane's Addiction, Alicia Keys, Lady Gaga and Sting. Country was well represented too, with Carrie Underwood expressing particular excitement about being part of the largest live radio concert in history.

"It sounded like a lot of fun and had an awesome lineup," she said. "It can be a great thing to play in front of an audience that isn't just yours. The shows had an audience full of music listeners of all different genres of music. Hopefully Kenny Chesney, Rascal Flatts and I showed what they might be missing."

"We have received very positive feedback from artists and are thrilled by the list of A-level talent that has joined us," said Jennifer Leimgruber, Senior VP, Network Programs and Services, Premiere Radio Networks/Clear Channel Radio. "People are seeing Clear Channel as a media and entertainment company, not just a radio company. This is our way of saying thanks."

"Music is the heart of our business," added Bob Pittman, Chairman, Media and Entertainment Platforms, Clear Channel Radio. "And there is no better way to celebrate the launch of the new iHeartRadio than with a groundbreaking, multi-day festival featuring the world's most exciting artists — and reaching the largest combined U.S. radio and online audience ever."

As dominant as Country is, iHeartRadio will stretch its horizons far across the listener spectrum. The platform combines 850 broadcast radio and digital-only stations from 150 markets with the ability to create custom stations, giving listeners the opportunity to enjoy to all their favorite artists and songs in one fully integrated, digital radio product.

"Clear Channel believes in radio, and recent studies on consumer trends show that Americans do too," said Leimgruber. "The online and mobile consumption of music is definitely on the rise. This is great news for us because we are adding new members to our overall audience as we expand our digital broadcasting capabilities. Consumers realize we are offering additional ways for them to enjoy their music and maximize their listening pleasure."

With almost 250 million monthly listeners across the country plus

an additional 100 markets and 4,000 stations through its syndicated products, Clear Channel Radio has the largest reach of any radio or television outlet in the U.S. The company's radio stations and audio/video content can be heard on AM/FM stations, HD digital radio channels, Sirius/XM satellite, **iHeartRadio.com** and iHeartRadio's mobile application for iPads, HP TouchPads, and smartphones.

Clear Channel Radio's digital presence is already well established — every month visitors rack up more than 45 million listening hours via the iHeartRadio Web site; about 30 million iHeartRadio mobile applications

have also been downloaded. This demand led to Clear Channel's decision to develop an advanced iHeartRadio platform so listeners can personalize their digital listening experience by creating custom stations packed with their favorite music and artists — all accessed via **iHeartRadio.com** and its mobile applications.

This expanded digital experience was enabled by Clear Channel Radio's purchase of a company called Thumbplay about two years ago. "This acquisition was a key part in growing our digital presence and capability," said Leimgruber. "We are using their technology to create the customized station feature that is similar to programs like Pandora but with more content, personality and warmth."

Specifically, the iHeartRadio app offers a song selection more than 10 times the size available on Pandora (approximately 11 million and 900,000 titles, respectively), along with the most popular radio stations and the ability to create their own custom stations, which will be commercial-free throughout the rest of 2011.

And Country plays a big role in iHeartRadio's plans. The CMA Channel, launched Sept. 26 to commemorate Country Music Month, features music of present and past CMA Awards nominees and winners. Some live special programming is also being discussed, particularly as part of the Channel's promotional content leading up to the CMA Awards.

"It will also highlight great moments from the CMA Awards, including acceptance speeches," Leimgruber noted. "The CMA Channel has tremendous listener appeal and can be accessed from Country Music radio stations and the iHeartRadio Web site."

**"The CMA Channel has tremendous listener appeal."**  
— Jennifer Leimgruber, Senior VP, Network Programs and Services, Premiere Radio Networks/Clear Channel Radio

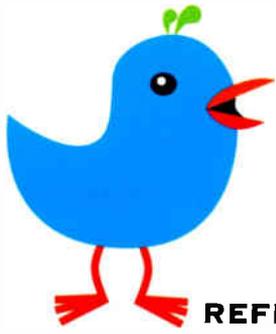
Carrie Underwood

Kenny Chesney

Natasha Bedingfield with Gary LeVox



photos: Getty Images



# TO TWEET OR NOT TO TWEET

## REFLECTIONS ON THE PROMISES AND PERILS OF TWITTER

by BRAD SCHMITT

### Blake Shelton is so drunk. How drunk is he?

"I'm so drunk right now I just threw my T.V. at the remote," he declared not long ago to his Twitter followers.

Shelton has also used his Twitter account to flirt shamelessly, to make often crass jokes and to put his own self-proclaimed "real redneck" spin on the news of the day.

Such a straight-ahead, unfiltered communication thrills many of his fans, turns some off and generates tons of buzz. But can an artist's use of Twitter help — or hurt — album sales?

"It's not a one-for-one exchange," said Heather McBee, VP Digital, Sony Music Nashville. "A tweet does not equal an album sale."

"As with any form of media, it's all in how the fan base interprets the response from the artist," said Kelly Rich, VP, Sales, Marketing & Interactive, Big Machine Label Group. "When you have an artist with millions of fans on one social media site and that artist posts that he/she has a new album out, there is no way to specifically correlate sales derived from the social site. One could assume there would be fans out there that weren't aware of the release until the call to action. I have personally never seen a post from an artist hurt their album sales but I can't say that it wouldn't happen."

According to Edison Research, approximately 8 percent of computer users age 12 and above used Twitter in 2011, one percentage point above the total for 2010 — that adds up to an increase from roughly 17 million to 20 million in one year. While that's considered impressive penetration, it doesn't reach enough people to sway sales one way or another — yet.

Shelton himself agrees. "I think it's such a small percentage of people who buy records that it doesn't matter," the reigning CMA Male Vocalist of the Year said. "What if I offend 1,000 people out there by taking a stand that I hunt — and those 1,000 people never buy another one of my albums again? If that is crucial, I was already screwed to begin with. That's kind of how I feel about Twitter."

Still Twitter, like Facebook and other online networks, is growing fast enough that most record labels have full-time social media staffers. *Music Row* magazine actually has a Twitter chart that lists artists and how many followers they have. Recently, Taylor Swift held the top position on that chart with more than 6 million followers. With just over 1 million, Dolly Parton was second. Shelton, with his nearly 750,000 followers, barely cracked the Top 10.

It's often not hard to convince artists to participate because it can be just as much fun for them as it is for their followers. "I get the most feedback on Twitter and Facebook when the fans and I are excited about the same thing at the same time," said Martina McBride. "Those networks lit up the night I performed on the Grammys. It's like I got to take the fans behind the scenes with me."

"Artists started realizing, 'Wow, this is such a great connection with my fans,'" noted Michael Deputato, VP, Digital, Universal Music Group

Nashville. "And it's immediate. There's instant gratification. I'm sure that's helped spark interest in its use."

Jay DeMarcus of Rascal Flatts, the group's main "tweeter," likes to keep up with what fans think of the group's new music and performances through Twitter. "It's a great way to get feedback from them, so it's a nice tool to use. Plus, I had a 16-year-old girl ask me to her prom," he said, smiling. "And I just might go. You never know."

McBride approaches Twitter similarly to how she would approach a conversation with a friend, relying more on spontaneity than premeditation. "I use Twitter as a way to show another side of my personality to my fans that they may not get to see in a two-to-three-minute interview," she said. "It's more of a personal, day-to-day side. I tweet things that I'm excited about in my career, like going on a TV show or writing a new song, and also just random thoughts. Sometimes I tweet pictures from behind the scenes or something I think is funny. I don't put a lot of thought into what I tweet. I really just tweet when a thought strikes me."

Record labels will often offer feedback to new artists on the do's and don'ts of tweeting, but executives say it's also important to keep their hands off because fans want sincere content coming straight from the artists.

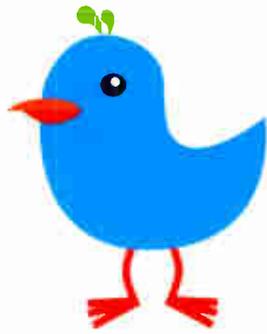
"Sometimes things can be polarizing," Deputato said. "But that's not necessarily bad, because there's a positive side to that. You might be reaching people who fall in love with the artists because they're so open. Laura Bell Bundy, for example, speaks her mind. She doesn't hold anything back."

Equally important to Deputato is the fact that Twitter is a two-way street. "There's more transparency now," he pointed out. "We learn things through these channels. Someone might comment about an issue we didn't see. It can be tough because you want to fix it before everyone else on Twitter knows there's a problem. But it does help in many ways."

With Twitter estimating that 300,000 new users sign up each day, and fans coming to expect direct, unfiltered talk from their favorites, the common wisdom grows that you can't succeed without social media. "That direct relationship with the fans is *the* most important relationship in this day and age," McBee noted.

Of course, many artists have achieved success with hardly a tweet to their name, as David Ross, Publisher, Music Row Publications, says, citing Carrie Underwood as an example. "She is kind of an anomaly on this front," he noted. "She launched on 'American Idol.' Another little detail: She happens to be incredibly talented. Could her career be larger if she was doing social networking? I think so. That being said, she seems to be doing pretty well without it."

Even so, Ross concluded, "If an artist today in 2011 doesn't have a hand in as many of these things as possible, they have no hope of success. It's absolutely critical. This is how you reach the fans now."



## TWITTER ETIQUETTE AN ESSENTIAL GUIDE

**Update statuses often. Keep feeding the beast because fans won't stick with it otherwise.**

**Don't hit fans over the head with direct sales pitches.**

**If an argument breaks out on your Twitter feed, don't take sides.**

**If you're going out, turn off your GPS.**

**Don't offer too much information.**

**A picture with easily identifiable landmarks can lead to a rush of fans to where the artist is eating or socializing.**

**Do not delete embarrassing tweets, unless they include racist, sexist, libelous and otherwise extremely offensive content. Fans may see deletion as a tacit admission of guilt. It's best to apologize and move on.**

**Be honest and have fun.**

**"I USE TWITTER AS A WAY TO SHOW ANOTHER SIDE OF MY PERSONALITY TO MY FANS THAT THEY MAY NOT GET TO SEE IN A TWO-TO-THREE-MINUTE INTERVIEW."**

*Martina McBride*



## WYATT BEARD RECEIVES INAUGURAL CMA TOURING MUSICIAN AWARD

Kenny Chesney and CMA CEO Steve Moore presented the inaugural CMA Touring Musician Award to Chesney keyboardist Wyatt Beard during the four-time CMA Entertainer of the Year's Aug. 27 concert at Foxboro Stadium in Boston.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime ride that I will never even comprehend for another 20 years or so," said Beard, referencing his 14-year ongoing run in Chesney's band. "I try to enjoy the moment."

The Touring Musician Award was established by the CMA Board earlier this year. It is presented to a touring musician known primarily as an instrumentalist or background vocalist in a non-headlining capacity. To qualify, a musician must have toured with a Country Music artist. CMA members in the Affiliated, Artist Musician, Personal Manager, Talent Agent/Promoter and Talent Buyer categories are eligible to nominate and vote for the award recipient.



(l-r) Wyatt Beard and his mother Shirley Beard, Kenny Chesney, wife Karyn Beard, CMA CEO Steve Moore and father RD Beard.  
photo: courtesy of Sony Music Nashville

## SANDY HARSCH RECEIVES CMA INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTER AWARD

Veteran broadcaster Sandy Harsch, host of "Country Time" on Ireland's RTÉ network, was surprised during an interview backstage at Dublin's Olympia Theater when headliner Brad Paisley presented her with the CMA International Broadcaster of the Year Award, surprised not only to be selected but also because the Award appeared to be a cell phone. In fact, the actual Award had been held up in Customs and would be delivered later.

"I never could figure out why people cried when they won awards, but now I know," said Harsch. "The CMA International Broadcaster Award is certainly the biggest thing that has ever happened to me, other than having my two children."

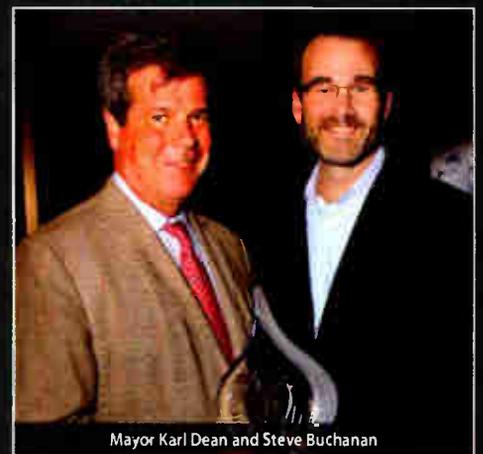
The CMA International Broadcaster Award recognizes outstanding achievement by radio broadcasters outside the United States who have made important contributions toward the development of Country Music in their country. Previous winners are listed at [CMAworld.com](http://CMAworld.com).



Brad Paisley and Sandy Harsch

## NASHVILLE MAYOR KARL DEAN RECEIVES CMA CHAIRMAN'S AWARD

In recognition of Nashville Mayor Karl Dean's many contributions to the music industry in Music City, CMA Board Chairman Steve Buchanan presented Dean with the CMA Chairman's Award during a Board reception at CMA on Sept. 20. "This is a real honor," said Dean. "I really do look forward to having four more years where we can keep moving forward because I think we've just barely scratched the surface."



Mayor Karl Dean and Steve Buchanan

**HOW DO YOU REMAKE AN ICONIC MOVIE WITH A CLASSIC SOUNDTRACK THAT'S STILL TIMELESS 27 YEARS LATER? IF YOU'RE PARAMOUNT PICTURES AND THE MOVIE IS *FOOTLOOSE*, THE ANSWER IS — VERY CAREFULLY. THREE YEARS IN THE MAKING, WITH MULTIPLE CAST CHANGES, THE FILM SEEMED AT ONE POINT DESTINED TO BE ONE OF THOSE "GREAT IDEAS IN THE WORKS" PROJECTS THAT NEVER MATERIALIZED.**

**B**ut patience on the part of those connected with the movie prevailed, and the result is a film heavily laced with music that borrows from the old while showcasing the new. The 1984 pop/rock soundtrack was replete with radio smashes that even today still get airplay. Original *Footloose* tracks including "Let's Hear It for the Boy," "Almost Paradise," "Holding Out for a Hero" and of course the title cut remain instantly identifiable and linked to the careers of the artists who sang them. So obviously it was crucial to the success of the remake to cast the songs smartly and give them a fresh start while still paying homage to the originals. And with the new *Footloose* set in the South (Georgia), the movie presented a perfect opportunity to showcase Country acts.

Grammy-winning producer Randy Spendlove, President of Motion Picture Music, Paramount Pictures, has been integrally involved with *Footloose* from the outset. He believes its soundtrack will boost some already-established careers — Big & Rich, Cee Lo Green, Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Zac Brown of Zac Brown Band — at the same time that it showcases newer artists including Whitney Duncan, Hunter Hayes and Jana Kramer. Paramount joined forces with Atlantic Records in New York and Warner Music in Nashville to coordinate a vigorous marketing campaign centered on Country radio and Country dance clubs across the U.S. Spendlove couldn't be more pleased with the final product.

"The music is the backdrop of the entire movie, and a featured backdrop too," he said. "It's a movie about what it's like to grow up in the South and be able to be free and have your time. It's a real celebration of music and dance in a coming-of-age story. The marketing method will be the movie itself, with the music a huge part of it."

"When I started working with this film," he continued, "one of the first things I did was to contact Anastasia Brown (head of Format Entertainment's Nashville office) and asked her to set me up with a dozen or two up-and-coming artists. I came to Nashville and met with about 20 young artists. Most of them weren't even signed at the time. I just didn't want it to be about some guy from L.A. coming in to take all these meetings and then nothing ever comes of it. I'm really proud of the fact that three of the artists from those initial meetings have ended up in the movie. We've got some newer artists sitting alongside acts such as Blake Shelton and Cee Lo in the movie and on the soundtrack."

Shelton got the nod to sing the iconic *Footloose* anthem, but it was Warner Music Nashville colleagues Big & Rich (John Rich and Big Kenny) who won the honor of releasing the soundtrack's first single and video, "Fake ID." Rich co-wrote "Fake ID" several years ago with L.A. hit songwriter John Shanks, thinking it might work for one of Big & Rich's projects. Rich's demo of the song caught the attention of Spendlove and *Footloose* director Craig Brewer, himself a major Big & Rich fan, even before filming began. The more they listened, the more they felt

the song deserved a key spot in the film.

"Craig loved the demo with John's voice and thought the beat and melody worked perfectly for the big Country line dancing scene," recalled Warner Music Nashville President and CEO John Esposito. "But he felt it would be enhanced even more if we could get it to be a Big & Rich song. So John and Kenny went back in and redid the song with Gretchen Wilson singing harmony."

"Fake ID" ended up becoming the music cue for the pivotal dance club scene in the film. Big & Rich's video was shot to resemble the movie scene as closely as possible. As luck would have it, "Fake ID," the first new music from Big & Rich in more than three years, tied in perfectly and helped add momentum to their summer tour, "Xtreme Muzik: The Tour."

Rich recalled being curious once he and Big Kenny decided to do the tour. "We were wondering, were the fans still there? Was anybody gonna show up? But all the shows were either sold out or almost sold out. It's great to feel yourself running out of breath because you're jumping up and down on the stage so much, and you get to the bus and your clothes are wringing with sweat, and your ears are ringing because the crowd was so loud and you're so pumped."

When the original *Footloose* came out in 1984, the singer was only 10 years old, but like so many people he's an admittedly ardent fan of the film. "It's definitely a 'bus movie,'" he said. "It's one of the movies you always keep on the bus so you can watch it any time." He also thinks that the new version completely lives up to its legendary namesake. "If you can improve on a classic — if it's possible — I think they've done it. People are going to be blown away."

Was having a song on the silver screen always atop Rich's constantly-evolving bucket list? (And has he started thinking about an Oscars acceptance speech?) "No — and no!" Rich insisted, with a laugh. "But I love movies. I've never had a song in a movie, so to be able to go sit and watch and then all of a sudden there's your song, and all your friends are elbowing you and going 'There it is! There it is!' and you hear your voice in the background, sure, it's exciting. It doesn't rank up there with 'Hey, I'd like to be a member of the Grand Ole Opry,' but it is exciting for sure. It gives you a sense that you're a little piece of pop culture, so it's really cool."

Rich relishes his artistic freedom and his ability to experiment freely in new avenues. He sees it as a safeguard against potential career boredom and burnout. He's also quick to defend his creative multitasking, insisting that prioritizing projects isn't a problem for him. "I never set out to be a record producer or a TV personality or anything like that," he explained. "But all the different parts of what I do — whether it be writing a song, recording, performing, producing, finding someone else and developing them — to me, it's all one thing because it's all Country Music. People ask me all the time, 'How do you do all those things at once?' Well, I don't do them all at once. I kind of do them in a circle. It's like a washing machine that figures out how to keep itself balanced. If I ever do too much of any one thing, I feel out of balance."

So what advice can those associated with the new *Footloose* offer to other artists and songwriters wishing to expand their own musical horizons into film? They all say there are no hard and fast rules, no guaranteed playbook for success to follow. They insist it comes down to timing, being in the right place at the right time, and staying true to

"If I ever  
do too  
much of any  
one thing,  
I feel out of  
balance."

— John Rich

# BIG & RICH

Take Center Stage on *Footloose* Soundtrack



who you are musically.

"Big & Rich were game changers from the minute they launched their career seven years ago," stated Esposito. "They brought a new spirit to the format. They've both made solo records, but there's something magic about those two voices together, and there's nothing like a Big & Rich show in terms of colorfulness and entertainment value. You can see it in the 'Fake ID' video. I think they help round out our Country format with something nobody else has done or I think could do."

"John Rich is very selective in the things he wants to be involved with, but once he's involved, he gives 110 percent," observed Peter Strickland, Senior VP of Brand Management and Sales, Warner Music Nashville. "He's one of the most creative and nonstop hard working artists I've ever seen. His career is very well rounded."

Rich goes a step further. "I would say to anyone reading this, keep mastering each level one step at a time. When you find yourself at the next step, challenge yourself to keep going. I never said to myself, 'Someday I'm gonna be on TV and movies and radio and touring and producing and writing hit songs and running a publishing company.' There was no way I would ever have even thought that. It's my reality now, but I think it's because it happened to me one step at a time and I was open to failure along the way as a part of the process. When I failed at something, I went back to the woodshed and figured out how to not fail at that again."

He paused before adding, "No matter what, you can't lose sight of why you're doing what you do. For me, playing music is where everything else came from. As big as it's gotten now for me, it wouldn't have happened at all without a guitar, a microphone and a honky-tonk."

**BigAndRich.com, JohnRich.com,  
FootlooseMovie.com**



Ken Tucker with MDA Goodwill Ambassador Sara Seavers

## KEN TUCKER

As a child back in Cleveland, Ohio, Ken Tucker was inspired by the MDA (Muscular Dystrophy Association) Labor Day Telethon to send away to the organization for a carnival kit. When the package filled with posters, tips on fundraising and other items arrived, Tucker put it all together and earned some money for his first donation toward finding a cure for this disease.

In the decades that followed, Tucker would establish himself as a music journalist based in Nashville, where currently he serves as Managing Editor at *Country Weekly*. But one day at the office, that part of his past came back to life unexpectedly, when Bill Mayne, Executive Director, Country Radio Broadcasters, invited him to join him on a trip to Scottsville, Ky.

Traveling with Mayne and other CRB officials, Joanna Smith and Trent Wilmon, Tucker visited a camp held annually for Kentucky and Tennessee children with MD. "It's amazing what these kids are able to do there," Tucker said. "They have a swimming pool that slopes so they can roll wheelchairs in. There's a swing you can lower to get kids into the pool. They have specially adapted bowling alleys and horseback riding. I was really impressed with what they do. For some of the kids, it was the first time they'd gone swimming, ever."

On learning that attendance at the camp cost \$800 per child, Tucker was immediately onboard when Eve Elliott, Art Director at *Country Weekly*, suggested that he join her on an official MDA "lockup." Using an e-mail template provided by MDA, they announced to all of their contacts that they were about to be put "behind bars for good" on July 27 at Fleming's Steakhouse in Nashville, where they would remain until enough donations came in to make their \$2,400 "bail."

"A policeman actually came and picked us up and put us in the back of his police car," Tucker reported. "He didn't handcuff us, although I did a photo to make it look like he had. Then at Fleming's, they put us in smocks with stripes on them and put us in 'jail!'"

Tucker's stretch ended after about 90 minutes, with more than \$2,550 in the kitty; surprise contributors included a number of artists and other Country Music industry luminaries.

"The money I raised means three kids can go to that camp next year," Tucker said. "I'm already working on some other ideas, like maybe a carnival on Music Row. Maybe we could put some executives in the dunk tank and pay a buck for a toss."

MDAUSA.org; CountryWeekly.com



Bill Anderson and Smokey Smith

## SMOKEY SMITH

More than a radio legend, booker and onetime popular recording artist, Country Music DJ Hall of Fame member Donald "Smokey" Smith is a living bridge between our times and those that marked the rise of Country Music as a worldwide phenomenon.

He was witness to this adventure first as a performer, beginning with a job singing and playing guitar on WREN Lawrence, Kan., in 1938, when he was 16 years old. From there, Smith played innumerable shows, released several hits and eventually settled in Des Moines, Iowa, where the monthly Country shows he booked at the KRNT Theater brought the stars of the Grand Ole Opry to heartland audiences throughout the northern Plains States and as far west as Colorado.

Major movements, such as the contemporary Country Music explosion, are ignited by small but vital sparks. These include Smith's willingness to book and encourage unknown future stars, including Wanda Jackson, Waylon Jennings and Charley Pride. It also includes the pivotal role that Smith played as one of the vanguard that founded and guided the Country Music Association in its earliest years.

Just as significantly, these connections can also be personal, made far from the spotlight yet important enough to change some people's worlds. They range from persuading Patsy Cline to visit a young fan in a hospital to adding "I'm a Fool to Care" to a recording list in 1946 so that royalties could help cover medical expenses for its composer, Ted Daffan. (Smith's version of that song eventually sold 50,000 copies and topped those of Gene Autry and Red Egnor at a Dallas radio station listener poll.)

Author Terry Manley remembers a similar event in his biography, *Smokey Smith: The Legendary Life of Iowa's "Mr. Country Music,"* in Smith's decision to grant the request of a 12-year-old fan to be allowed backstage to meet his hero, Whisperin' Bill Anderson. That moment inspired the young boy, Robbie Wittkowski, to pursue a career in Country Music — and to become Anderson's road manager decades later. The State Historical Society of Iowa lauds him with a retrospective exhibition, "Smokey Smith: Iowa's Mr. Country Music," which opened Sept. 24 at the Society's library at 600 E. Locust St., Des Moines.

Even in semi-retirement, Smith brought the music he loves to new potential listeners. For years he ran Smokey Smith's Tours, a bus trek that took tourists from Iowa to destinations including Branson, Dollywood, and Nashville (for CMA's Fan Fair as well as a summer tour, two fall tours and "Christmas Time in Nashville.")

"We had people who were not dyed-in-the-wool Country fans when they went on the tour," Smith recalls. "But when the tour was over, they were fast becoming that."

CMA congratulates Smith, a CMA member since Nov. 1, 1958.  
SmokeySmith.webs.com

Each CMA Member of the Month will be recognized in CMA Close Up and online at [CMAworld.com](http://CMAworld.com) for reaching significant career milestones, performing charitable acts and otherwise honorably representing Country Music through their deeds and words. To nominate any CMA member for this distinction, visit [CMAworld.com/News/CMA-Close-Up](http://CMAworld.com/News/CMA-Close-Up), e-mail [CloseUp@CMAworld.com](mailto:CloseUp@CMAworld.com), or send information to CMA Member of the Month, One Music Circle South, Nashville, TN 37203.

by BOB DOERSCHUK

More than 700 fans filled every seat at Boston's Royale on a blustery Thursday evening, Aug. 25. Many were there for the rare opportunity of seeing Country superstar Kenny Chesney in a venue more intimate than the stadiums he routinely sells out. But everyone left that night with something most had not expected: a glimpse into the world of Music City's greatest songwriters.

# BOSTON WELCOMES CMA SONGWRITERS SERIES

WITH SPECIAL GUEST  
KENNY CHESNEY



(left) Backstage at Royale in Boston (l-r): Clint Higham, President, Morris Artist Management; former ASCAP Senior VP Connie Bradley; CMA CEO Steve Moore; Bob DiPiero; Matraca Berg; Kenny Chesney; Brett James; Wendell Mobley and Craig Wiseman. (right) Kenny Chesney

For seven years, CMA Songwriters Series has illuminated audiences in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington, D.C. and Nashville. This was its first appearance in Boston, with Bob DiPiero reprising his role as emcee. Every other participant had penned one or more of Chesney's hits, including Matraca Berg ("You and Tequila"), Brett James ("When the Sun Goes Down" and "Out Last Night"), Wendell Mobley ("There Goes My Life") and Craig Wiseman ("The Good Stuff" and "Summertime").

"To debut the CMA Songwriters Series in a new city is the most fun thing you can do because they don't know what to expect," said James. "They came here tonight to hear Kenny Chesney. They don't know who I am. They don't know who any of these other songwriters are. But they're going to get something they've probably never experienced before."

"Especially when there's not an iconic performer like Kenny involved, people who come to CMA Songwriters Series are beyond being fans. They're Country Music archaeologists," added DiPiero. "They want to see what all this is about. You see this recognition on their faces while you're singing a song they've always connected to an artist, like, 'Didn't Tim McGraw write this song?' Well, no, this guy right here wrote the song. It's a real, immediate connection."

In line outside the Royale entry on Tremont Street, Rob Connor, 27, and his wife Dana, 26, from Peabody, Mass., identified themselves as serious Chesney fans; they even picked "You Save Me" (Brett James and Troy Verges) as their wedding song. But their broader appreciation of Country in general, as well as the CMA Songwriters Series concept, also drew them to this event.

"It's sung from the heart," Dana said. "I like how every song means something to whoever wrote it. You can always find a way to relate to it. I try to turn all my non-Country friends into Country fans, just by telling them, 'Listen to the words!'"

"This is actually our first Country gig," said Jamison LaGuardia, Director of Marketing and Events at Royale. "My concert promoter, The Bowery Presents, and I have been intrigued with getting the Country aspect involved here in Boston. It's got a huge fan base; I believe it took just three hours for us to sell out. Kenny has a huge name, but because this is our first dive into Country, people got excited really fast when they heard about it."

Built in 1918, Royale retains its historic elegance, with Deco statuary and original gold etchings on the dark red balconies and

black ceiling, all restored in 2010. All types of music are booked here, but the CMA Songwriters Series marked the first time that the dance floor was converted to table seating. Picture Vision Pictures was on hand with four stationary cameras and one handheld, streaming the event and subsequently posting an edited version at [CMASongwritersSeries.com](http://CMASongwritersSeries.com). A crew from Chesney's [NoShoesRadio.com](http://NoShoesRadio.com) was also set up to stream the event live.

Following an intro from Lori Grande of WKLB "Country 102.5," the songwriters filed in to wild applause. Chesney, the first to perform, helped frame the purpose of the Series by saying, "You all may or may not know, but these are my heroes up here. When I first moved to Nashville, I had a few songs and that's about it. I looked up to people like Matraca Berg and Bob DiPiero, and all the songs that Craig and Wendell and Brett wrote, to be able to learn from them and sit up here with them and swap songs. That's all I wanted."

His performance of "I Can't Go There" (Chesney and Skip Ewing) got the ball rolling on more than two hours of music, insight into the genesis of some major hits and a good bit of belly-laugh bantering. Recounting the process behind writing "Take Me There," Chesney said, "I'll call Wendell and another friend of ours, Neil Thrasher, at two or three in the morning, after I've had a little bit of Grandpa's cough medicine and I'm thinking that every dumb idea I have is genius. Sometimes when I call Wendell, there's silence. But every now and then he'll go, 'Awesome.' Thank God there wasn't silence with this song."

"I think I can speak for everybody up here," Mobley replied. "If Kenny drunk-dials you at midnight trying to rhyme 'alligator' with 'Volkswagen,' you're going to take the call."

The music, the stories and the camaraderie left a strong impression. Die-hard Bruce Springsteen follower Rocco Coviello, who has chronicled the Boss's career for more than 30 years in photographs, admitted to leaving with a new respect for Country Music.

"It took my three daughters to get me to look at Country and to realize that they're talking about love and loss and being thankful. They talk about heartland. They talk about America. They talk about family. They talk about values. To see the similarities with Bruce's music is so wonderful: The simplicity is in telling the story. The complexity is putting it into music that taps into the emotion that a greater number of people can feel. The passion is what it's all about."



## SCOTTY McCREERY

**R**aised in Garner, N.C., McCreery grew up on Country Music. He was a celebrity in his hometown, where he played local shows and toured with his high school's award-winning chorus. And ... that's about it as far as this young man's pre-celebrity background, since he had already rocketed to fame by winning "American Idol"'s top honors at 17.

McCreery has had a terrific year, including an appearance with Josh Turner onstage at LP Field during this year's CMA Music Festival and a debut single, "I Love You This Big" (written by Ester Dean, Ronnie Jackson, Brett James and Jay Smith), that reached the Top 20 in just seven weeks. His most impressive achievement thus far, though, is his debut album, in which he emerges as a superior vocal interpreter and unique stylist even before being old enough to vote.

Produced by Mark Bright and released by Mercury Nashville/19 Recordings/Interscope, *Clear as Day* includes no original McCreery compositions, but this allows us to appreciate his interpretive skill. On "I Love You This Big," his nuances — little slides into the first note of certain lines, the tasteful rubato he applies to emphasize key words — all enhance rather than disrupt the melodic flow. Especially impressive is how he holds back on the key change, letting the lift speak for itself and then giving it a push by saving his high note for the next few bars.

The maturity of his artistry plays well off his preference for small-town images ("Water Tower Town," by Lynn Hutton, Tammi Kidd and Cole Swindell) and paeans to young, innocent love ("The Trouble with Girls," Chris Tompkins and Phillip White); this interaction suggests that there's plenty of great music ahead as McCreery's horizons expand.

**SONG YOU'D LOVE TO COVER** "Our Song," by Taylor Swift. It has a good little feel to it." **BOOK ON YOUR NIGHTSTAND** "The Bible." **PET PEEVE** "When people don't say thank you when you hold a door for them or do something nice. Just say 'thank you.' It's not a big thing." **ACTOR TO PORTRAY YOU IN A BIOPIC** "Let's go with Shia LaBeouf." **PHRASE YOU SAY OVER AND OVER AGAIN** "Well, dad gum."

[ScottyMcCreery-Official.com](http://ScottyMcCreery-Official.com)

## ROBIN MEADE

**A**s host of HLN's "Morning Express with Robin Meade," this award-winning journalist and television personality lives in a whirl of 2:30 AM weekday wakeup calls, six hours of anchoring the news each day, assignments (like skydiving with President George H. W. Bush) and honors, including induction into the Ohio Broadcasters Hall of Fame and the 2010 Gracie Award for Outstanding Anchor from American Women in Radio & Television.

But she has also loved singing in front of audiences as far back as kindergarten and Country Music specifically since first hearing a Mary Chapin Carpenter CD.

Her two sides intersect on her debut album.

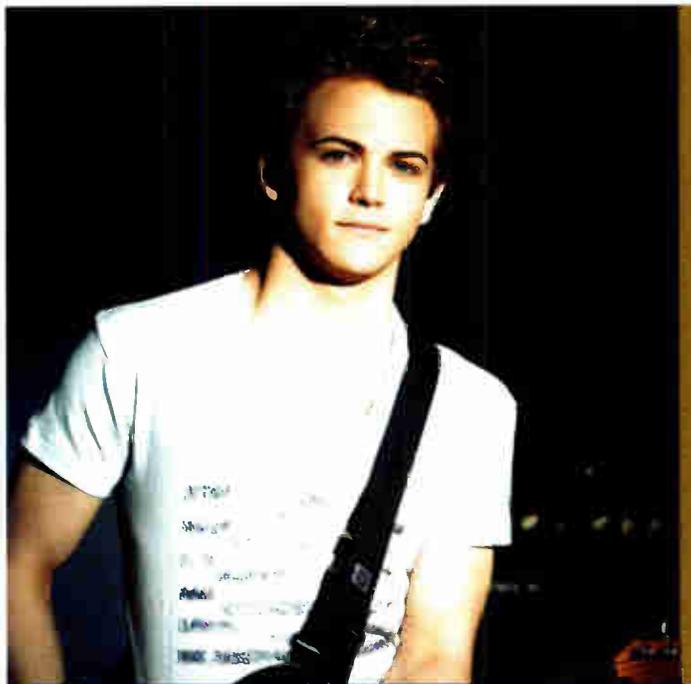
*Brand New Day* is produced by Victoria Shaw, with Billy Dean co-producing "Morning Sunshine," which he wrote and sings with Meade. That's one of six tracks that she co-wrote, most of them a mix of down-home and uptown. When she fumes about being stuck behind a car whose turn signal blinks for six miles on "Letting It Go" (written by Meade, Shaw and Matt Lopez) or revels in her command of big-city office politics on "Put My High Heels On" (Meade, Shaw and John Rich), you know she's writing about what she knows, which after all is the essence of Country.

Still, when called back to her roots, Meade doesn't disappoint. From her duet with Jim Brickman on the searing ballad "Welcome Home" (Brickman and Shaw) to her first single, a banjo-studded treatment of Don Henley's "Dirty Laundry" (Henley and Danny Kortchmar) featuring Bo Bice, Kix Brooks, Gary Burr, Sarah Buxton and Shaw, she proves that those roots thrive just under the surface.

*Brand New Day* is available exclusively on iTunes and in greeting card sections of Target stores.



**DREAM DUET PARTNER** "I have two: Kenny Chesney and Bono of U2." **SONG YOU WISH YOU HAD WRITTEN** "Never Alone," by Victoria Shaw, Gary Burr and Sarah Buxton." **BOOK ON YOUR NIGHTSTAND** "The Power," by Rhonda Byrne." **WHAT YOU HOPE PEOPLE SAY ABOUT YOU IN 50 YEARS** "She wasn't typical." **SOMETHING WE'D NEVER GUESS ABOUT YOU** "I grew up eating squirrel! Maybe it played into my vegetarianism now. Ha!" [CNN.com/Robin](http://CNN.com/Robin)



**SONG YOU'D LOVE TO COVER** "Another Way to Die," the James Bond theme by Jack White and Alicia Keys." **SONG YOU WISH YOU'D WRITTEN** "Heartbreak Warrior," by John Mayer." **LUCKY CHARM** "My necklace with a cross and dog tag." **FAVORITE MODE OF TRANSPORTATION** "I could spend years on a bus just fine." **TITLE OF YOUR AUTOBIOGRAPHY** "For the Love of Music."  
[HunterHayes.com](http://HunterHayes.com)

## HUNTER HAYES

At only 20 years old, Hunter Hayes has already picked up an impressive amount of experience as a performer and writer. Born in Breaux Bridge, La., he was immersed in music by age 2, when he began replicating songs on a toy accordion his grandmother gave him as a birthday present. Hayes was just 4 years old when he joined the house band at a nearby Cajun restaurant as an accordionist; a year later, he was fronting the group as its lead singer. Also at age 4, he sang "Jambalaya" with Hank Williams Jr., a performance that has since been viewed 15 million times on YouTube. Then, at 6, he went through triple rites of passage as he appeared in the film "The Apostle," began playing the guitar the film's star Robert Duvall had given him, and wrote his first song.

Fourteen years of stage seasoning followed. Empowered by lessons learned in the spotlight, Hayes moved to Nashville in 2009. Advancing quickly, he signed with Universal Music Publishing Group and with Atlantic Records, who will release his self-titled debut album on October 11.

The 12 tracks on *Hunter Hayes*, co-produced by Hayes and Dann Huff, are a *tour de force* even by recording veteran standards. Not only did Hayes co-write 11 songs and write the 12<sup>th</sup> by himself, he also played every instrument on the record — more than 30 to count. Hayes' diverse influences permeate the album. A hint of Stevie Wonder is evident in his artfully soulful vocals on several tracks. Blues riffs reminiscent of John Mayer find themselves on a number of tracks from his debut single, "Storm Warning," written by Hayes, busbee and Gordie Sampson, to the love ballad "Wanted" (Hayes and Troy Verges). Yet the overall feel is Country all the way, with a mix of drama and down-home that marks Hayes as a unique stylist.

## THE DIRT DRIFTERS

Words like "gritty" come to mind when The Dirt Drifters take to the stage. Of course, there's no shortage of grit out there, but something in the sound of this five-piece separates it from the pack.

Maybe it's the vivid images on these 11 tracks performed by band members: drummer Nick Diamond, lead singer/guitarist Matt Fleener, singer/guitarist Ryan Fleener, bassist Jeremy Little and singer/guitarist Jeff Middleton. The images — cigarettes and beer cans on "Sun Goes Down" (Matt Fleener, Middleton and Rivers Rutherford), the bullet holes, blue lights and traces of cheap perfume on "Married Men and Motel Rooms" (Middleton, Mark Irwin and Josh Kear) — seem to have been scraped up from a cellar of hard-time memories. (The group wrote or co-wrote all but one track on the album.)

Then there's the performance, the power chords, the galloping groove that feels like you're taking corners a little too fast on "Something Better" (written by Diamond, Matt Fleener, Ryan Fleener and Middleton), the blue-collar epic that John Mellencamp might have conceived had he grown up in a Southern factory town ("Always a Reason," Ryan Fleener, Middleton and Justin Wilson), the way that lyrics come to life in the union of Matt Fleener's whiskey-rough lead vocals and pristine backup harmonies.

Drawn from New Jersey, Oklahoma, Louisiana and Tennessee, The Dirt Drifters found each other in Nashville. Warner Bros. signed them and producer Justin Niebank captured their spirit on *This Is My Blood*. And they're not waiting for success to come to them; on all of their tour dates beginning in August, they're giving two copies of their debut CD to audience members, one to keep and the other to pass along. They call it "Give Blood"; we call it building a base one fan at a time.

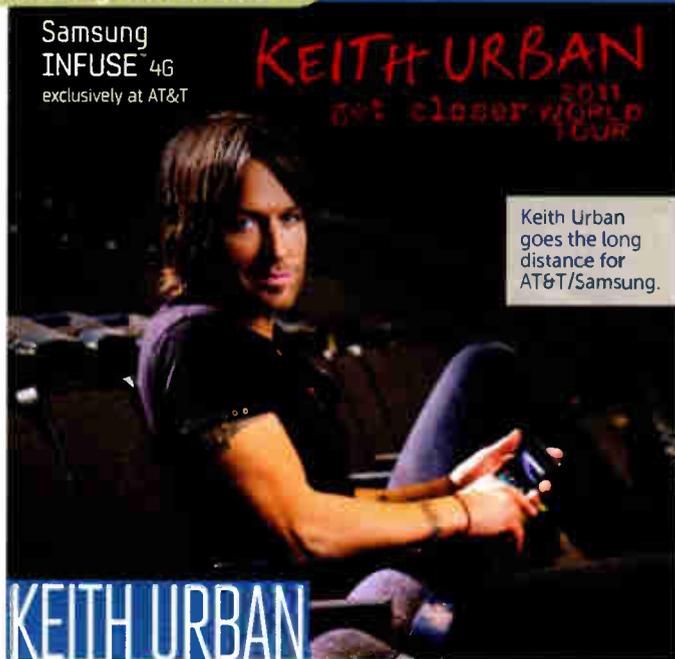


JEFF MIDDLETON, JEREMY LITTLE  
 MATT FLEENER, RYAN FLEENER  
 and NICK DIAMOND

**MUSICAL HERO** "Steve Earle because of his lack of boundaries. I like Johnny Cash for the same reason." **CD IN YOUR STEREO** "Guy Clark's *Somedays the Song Writes You*." **FAVORITE MODE OF TRANSPORTATION** "Anything but an RV." **FIRST GIG** "Me and my brother singing 'Modern Day Romance' and 'Pancho and Lefty' back in OKC. We butchered 'Pancho and Lefty' pretty bad." **TITLE OF YOUR AUTOBIOGRAPHY** "Day Dreamer." (ALL ANSWERS BY MATT FLEENER)

[TheDirtDrifters.com](http://TheDirtDrifters.com)

Debut Spotlight compiled by BOB DOERSCHUK



## Gets Closer with Samsung and AT&T

Keith Urban always tries to be there for fans when they call upon him. So when AT&T and Samsung Mobile found a new way for them to connect, the six-time CMA Awards winner had no hang-ups about the possibilities.

The partnership came about thanks to Marcie Allen, President and Founder of MAC Presents, described by Urban's manager Gary Borman as an "architect" of brand associations. As a result, Urban and AT&T/Samsung have partnered throughout the summer and beyond through a number of channels. His "Get Closer" tour uses elements of the new Samsung Infuse 4G (AT&T only) to engage fans in green-screened fun before the show. This can, to quote the Urban/Sarah Buxton/Jedd Hughes lyric, "put you in a song."

In addition to the ability to share these green videos and photos on Facebook at the "AT&T and Samsung Present Keith Urban" page, which boasts nearly 30,000 "likes," there are other popular page-exclusive features. These include "Urban Talk: 5 Minutes with Keith" videos, where the artist responds to fans while roaming in various cities with one of his own phones, plus VIP packages and more.

"Singles, couples, friends, families, total strangers, all coming together to share the music, the moment and the experience — that's what a concert is all about to me," Urban said. "AT&T and Samsung are doing the same thing. So for me, it's not only a natural fit but an honor to have them partner with us and help bring this Get Closer 2011 tour to life."

The tour's title, "Get Closer," is a "happy accident," says Borman, Owner and Founder of Borman Entertainment. He also called the brand association a "marriage in mission." Stacey Portnoy, Regional Marketing Manager at Samsung, who designed the campaign along with Allen and Borman, added, "Keith's a perfect fit. We're about connecting with people and so is he, so it goes hand in hand. He's great to work with because he's really excited about the partnership."

"We also do retail site promotions," Portnoy noted. "We'll post to come to a local AT&T store where we're giving away tickets and backstage experience passes. More people are discovering the device in that way, too."

"What's most exciting is that we got to be who we are," Borman continued. "Our goal in everything we do is to reach out and connect with the audience. I'm also sure there are new people who came into the fold and were exposed to Keith's personality through AT&T and Samsung. They helped us deliver and enhance our message in a very authentic way. It works, and we didn't have to compromise."

**KeithUrban.net; Facebook.com/KeithUrbanSamsungInfuse**



## Joins Eventful.com to Book a Free Concert

A new promotion has Country fans throughout the United States competing online for a free show by superstar Alan Jackson in their hometown. Already, more than 100,000 votes have been cast and lots of "demand" registered for the artist and his upcoming new album release.

Hatched by the creative minds at Capitol Records and Eventful, the campaign requires fans to use Eventful's "Demand It!" service to vote for their city and encourages them to promote the show to friends via social media, including Twitter and Facebook. The city with the most votes wins the free show.

This isn't a new idea to Capitol Records or to Jackson, who performed at the annual Capitol Street Party, a free concert in September on Nashville's Demonbreun Street near Music Row. At the time, Jackson saw the opportunity to reach out to people who otherwise might never be able to see him live in concert. In his vision, it's also a way of giving back to fans in tough times.

"It'd be nice if we could do this in all the cities," said Jackson at the Capitol Street Party. "Right now, the economy is so hard, I think a lot of people have trouble scraping up the money to come to a show."

"I think this is one of the most exciting campaigns we've worked on to date," said Jordan Glazier, CEO, Eventful. "This was a perfect way for us to help Capitol connect with Alan's fans."

The Jackson/Eventful endeavor actually began with a song, according to Cindy Mabe, Senior VP of Marketing, Capitol Records Nashville. Record label executives wanted to build buzz around "Long Way to Go," which Jackson wrote and was picked as his first single from his upcoming album. "We thought, 'OK, what can we build around this title? We wanted to make noise right out of the box,'" Mabe said.

The idea quickly gained traction after Mabe approached Eventful, which had collaborated with Capitol Records on past projects, and Jackson. With everyone onboard, the stage was set and fans heard loud and clear.

"We have an amazing team of digital music marketing experts," said Glazier. "So, when Capitol came to us and wanted to design this campaign, we built something together that lives and breathes on Eventful's Web site but is widely dispersed across the social Web." (Eventful estimates that more than 20 million users a month visit the site not only for the "Demand It!" service but also for a wide variety of information about live entertainment and local events.)

Fans have until Oct. 10 to vote for their city at **Eventful.com/AlanJackson**. Totals are counted in real time.

"It would be the biggest thing that's happened to some of these communities," Mabe said. "The viral nature of it is just incredible. It's a once-in-a-lifetime kind of competition, so they're competing but they're doing it by talking about Alan Jackson and his new music."

**AlanJackson.com; Eventful.com/AlanJackson**

**OCT. 4**

**Rodney Atkins** / *Take a Back Road* / Curb  
**Dale Ann Bradley** / *Somewhere South of Crazy* / Compass  
**Girls, Guns and Glory** / *Sweet Nothings* / Lonesome Day  
**Merle Haggard** / *Working in Tennessee* / Vanguard  
**Jason Boland & The Stragglers** / *Rancho Alto* / Apex Music  
**Scotty McCreery** / *Clear as Day* / Mercury Nashville/19 Recordings/Interscope  
**Dean Owens** / *Whisky Hearts* / Navigator  
**Courtney Stewart** / *Where Will I Fit In* / Lamon (EP)  
**various artists** / *The Lost Notebooks of Hank Williams* / Egyptian/CMF Records/Columbia

**OCT. 11**

**Lauren Alaina** / *Wildflower* / Mercury Nashville/19 Recordings/Interscope  
**Gene Autry** / *Playlist: The Very Best of Gene Autry* / Columbia/Legacy  
**Scott Biram** / *Bad Ingredients* / Bloodshot  
**Carolina Road** / *Back to My Roots* / Rural Rhythm  
**Johnny Cash** / *Bootleg, Vol. 3: Live Around the World* / Columbia/Legacy  
**The Crowe Brothers** / *Bridging the Gap* / Rural Rhythm  
**Joe Diffie** / *Playlist: The Very Best of Joe Diffie* / Columbia/Legacy  
**Hunter Hayes** / *Hunter Hayes* / Atlantic  
**Adam Hood** / *The Shape of Things* / Carnival  
**Joey + Rory** / *A Farmhouse Christmas* / Vanguard/Sugar Hill  
**Kris Kristofferson** / *Playlist: The Very Best of Kris Kristofferson* / Columbia/Legacy  
**Mac Martin & The Dixie Travelers** / *20 Bluegrass Instrumental Classics* / Rural Rhythm  
**Mac McAnally** / *Live in Muscle Shoals* / Mailboat  
**Martina McBride** / *Eleven* / Republic Nashville  
**Jeremy McComb** / *Leap & the Net Will Appear* / McCombOVER  
**Darrell Scott** / *Long Ride Home* / Full Light  
**Billy Swan** / *Playlist: The Very Best of Billy Swan* / Columbia/Legacy  
**Phil Vassar** / *Playlist: The Very Best of Phil Vassar* / Columbia/Legacy

**OCT. 18**

**Mandy Barnett** / *Winter Wonderland* / Rounder

**T Bone Burnett** / *Presents the Speaking Clock Review — Live from the Beacon Theatre* / Shout! Factory  
**Sandy Carroll** / *Just As I Am* / Catfood  
**Brantley Gilbert** / *Modern Day Prodigal Son (deluxe version)* / The Valory Music Co.  
**The Kenneth Brian Band** / *Welcome to Alabama* / Southern Shift  
**Laurie Lewis** / *Skippin' and Flyin'* / Spruce and Maple Music  
**Shelby Lynne** / *Revelation Road* / Everso  
**Montgomery Gentry** / *Rebels on the Run* / Average Joe's Entertainment

**OCT. 24**

**honeyhoney** / *Billy Jack* / honeyhoney/Lost Highway

**OCT. 25**

**Chris Cook** / *Remembering* / Tree-O Records  
**Vince Gill** / *Guitar Slinger* / MCA Nashville  
**Toby Keith** / *Clancy's Tavern* / Show Dog-Universal  
**John Prine** / *The Singing Mailman Delivers* / Oh Boy  
**Rickie Owens & The Farm Bureau** / *In Farm We Trust* / Red Dirt Music Co.  
**Russell Moore & Illrd Tyme Out** / *Prime Tyme* / Rural Rhythm

**NOV. 1**

**Mark Wayne Glasmire** / *Mark Wayne Glasmire* / Traceway  
**Josh Gracin** / *Redemption* / Average Joe's Entertainment  
**George Jones** / *Who's Your Favorite Country Singer?* / Vanguard  
**Miranda Lambert** / *Four the Record* / RCA Nashville

**NOV. 8**

**Joe Nichols** / *It's All Good* / Show Dog-Universal Music  
**Lionel Richie** / *Tuskegee* / Mercury Nashville  
**various artists** / *My Country: Smash Hits, Vol. 2* / Stadium Entertainment  
**various artists** / *This One's for Him: A Tribute to Guy Clark* / Icehouse Music  
**various artists** / *Rural Rhythm Salutes Bill Monroe: Live at Bean Blossom* / Rural Rhythm (CD only)

**NOV. 15**

**David Nail** / *TBD* / MCA Nashville

**New CD Releases compiled by BOB DOERSCHUK**



# the Magic of Tom T. Hall

Music Row's first children's album is making history again.

Tom T. Hall's *Songs of Fox Hollow for Children of All Ages* was an instant Country Music landmark when it was issued in 1974. Now its songs have inspired a multi-artist tribute album. *I Love: Tom T. Hall's Songs of Fox Hollow* is the first imprint released by the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum's CMF Records label that salutes a Hall of Fame member with newly recorded music.

The new versions of the Fox Hollow songs were recorded during live sessions in Hall's studio at his 60-acre Fox Hollow farm outside Nashville. Among the participants were such diverse talents as Bobby Bare, Tommy Cash, Elizabeth Cook, Duane Eddy, Patty Griffin, Jim Lauderdale and Buddy Miller.

"It was the greatest three days of my musical life," said co-producer Eric Brace, whose Red Beet Records label is partnering with CMF to market the project. "Tom T. was there for every single second, and that meant a lot to us."

"It is my favorite thing that I have ever done in music," concurred co-producer Peter Cooper. "Because I knew it was going to be something of high quality. Because I knew it was going to be something that I could share with my friends. And because Tom T. said that he liked it."

"I really love these people," said Hall. "I was so impressed with them. These kids love music and they do it for that reason. They don't have any attitudes. They're not competitive. They love each other. I thought about closing the gates and keeping them there for a couple of weeks, just to enjoy them."

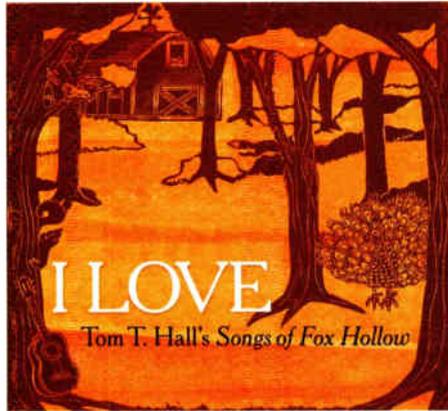
Hall was already a major Country star when he unexpectedly decided to record a children's album. "A Week in a Country Jail," "Homecoming," "Old Dogs, Children and Watermelon Wine," "The Year that Clayton Delaney Died" and other singles had made him a regular visitor to the top of the Country hit parade in the early 1970s.

Children's music had been recorded in New York by Country star Frank Luther in the 1930s. In Los Angeles in the 1940s, Gene Autry created such kiddie classics as "Frosty the Snowman," "Here Comes Santa Claus" and "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer." But none of Nashville's Country stars had tried making a children's album before Tom T. Hall did.

"I did the first one," he noted. "(Bobby) Bare did one afterwards (*Singin' in the Kitchen*) and Johnny Cash did one after that (*The Johnny Cash Children's Album*), as did Waylon Jennings (*Cowboys, Sisters, Rascals & Dirt*) and Anne Murray (*There's a Hippo in My Bathtub*). Mine never really made a wrinkle in the music business. It was just a Tom T. Hall album."

Known as the Storyteller, Hall was noted for traveling the back roads of America, picking up song ideas from overheard conversations and observations in truck stops, diners and bars. *Songs of Fox Hollow* had much the same origin, he reports. His British-born wife, Dixie, had a sister who'd married a chef and moved to Monaco to raise their children. Those kids inspired the album.

"My two little nephews came over from Monte Carlo and spent the summer with me," Hall recalled. "They were 5 and 6. They called me Hunkle Tom, with an 'H'. I'd be holding one on each hand and we'd be



by ROBERT K. OERMANN

walking along. They'd kiss my hand to let me know they liked me a lot. A French thing, I guess.

"That whole summer, we just toured this farm. I didn't know it, but walking around the farm with these kids was the same as driving around and stopping in little towns. We'd walk down by the lake, and they'd see 'Sneaky Snake.' We'd go feed the chickens and meet 'The One-Legged Chicken.' They'd wonder, 'Where's the Fox?' And I'd say, 'Well, he's a very mysterious fox. You won't see him, because he's afraid of the dogs.' So, 'The Mysterious Fox of Fox Hollow.' And of course,

the accumulation of all the things we loved around here was 'I Love.'  
"These things just started accumulating, and I was writing them down. Pretty soon, I had a whole bunch of these songs, almost without thinking about them."

Hall approached producer Jerry Kennedy with the idea of a children's album. Although the singer/songwriter was known for writing about digging graves, drinking beer, getting out of jail, switchblades and executions, Kennedy agreed to the unprecedented project.

"There never was an argument," said Hall. "We got along well, and it just happened."

After the LP was completed, Hall continued, "I did a great big show in Texas someplace. It must have been a fair, because there had to be 10,000 people out there in the dark. Now, 'I Love' is only two minutes long. We'd been rehearsing it, so I sang this little, bitty song, and the whole place went crazy. I got a standing ovation. I'm listening to all this applause for this little baby duck song. I thought, 'We might have something here.'"

Not long afterward, Hall was walking toward baggage claim in the Nashville airport when his Mercury Records labelmate and future fellow CMA Hall of Famer Faron Young approached. "Little baby ducks?" bellowed Young. "Have you lost your mind?" Only the language was considerably more colorful.

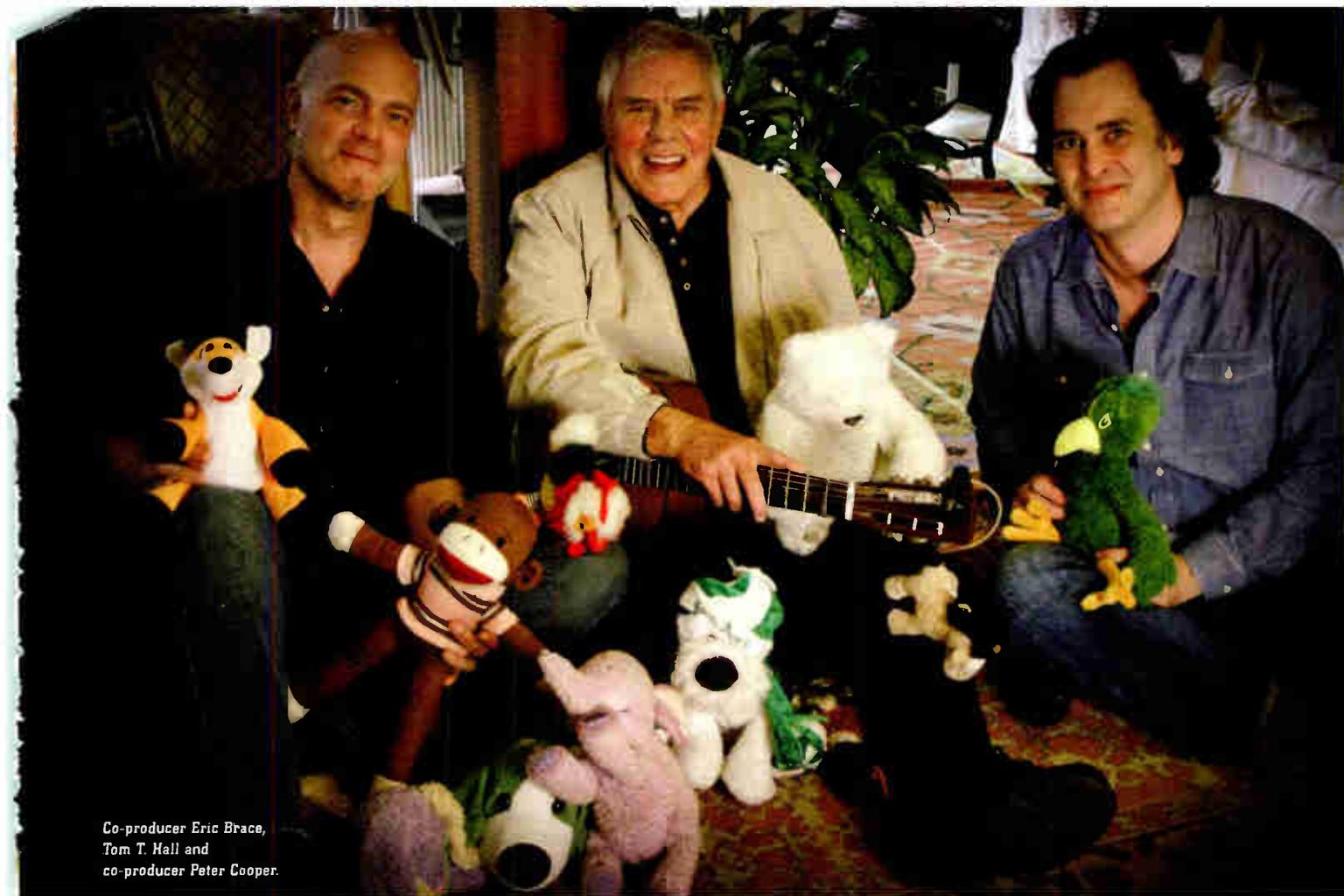
"Faron had a mouth on him," agreed Hall. At any rate, he concluded, "I must have a hit."

He did indeed. One of the people who heard it was a 7-year-old boy in South Carolina. Today, Peter Cooper is a Nashville singer/songwriter and music journalist. He still recalls the initial impact that the Fox Hollow songs had on him.

"It was that rare time when, as a kid, you could be exposed to children's music through Country radio," he said. "Now, that's just unimaginable. But I found this music on the radio. What Tom T. didn't do with any of his children's songs was to patronize or talk down to kids. He didn't use a funny voice. In my 7-year-old mind, it made Fox Hollow seem like a place I'd want to visit. And it turns out it's even cooler than I thought."

"I am fascinated by children," Hall commented. "And I'm seriously suspicious that they're smarter than we are."

As Cooper and his wife, Charlotte, prepared for the birth of their son, Baker, in April 2010, they found they had somewhat different agendas. "She was worried about silly stuff like, 'Where's the nursery going to



Co-producer Eric Brace,  
Tom T. Hall and  
co-producer Peter Cooper.

be?" he said. "I was worried about important stuff like, 'What's the first song he's going to hear?'"

So Cooper brought a boom box to the hospital bedside and played "I Love" for the newborn. That led to the notion of redoing *Songs of Fox Hollow*. "That record was the genesis of my interest in Tom T. Hall," he explained. "As I got older and got the other albums, I became even more awestruck. Unlike a lot of artists of his era, the entirety of his catalog is valuable and fascinating. Some of my favorite songs of his are album cuts, including 'Mama Bake a Pie,' 'A Million Miles to the City' and 'I Flew over Our House Last Night.'"

"I'm terribly fond of Peter Cooper," Hall said. "I think a lot of the good things he said about me in the newspaper actually helped to get me into the Country Music Hall of Fame or kept my name alive. We were sitting here at the house, drinking coffee. He said, 'What if we brought some people out here and rerecorded the children's album?' Well, we couldn't refuse. It had to be done in Fox Hollow. There was no other consideration."

"Going to the musicians, it's one thing to say, 'Hey, do you want to do a Tom T. tribute?'" Cooper said. "And they probably would. It's another thing to say, 'Do you want to go to Fox Hollow and hang out with the Storyteller and sing his songs in front of him, and Miss Dixie will bring biscuits by?' There was magic about that."

Eric Brace's response was "it sounds like nothing but fun." He added, "We had freewheeling (idea) sessions, listening to the songs and thinking about who would be good for them. The common thread was that all of these people are huge Tom T. Hall fans."

Hall recalled that he cried when Patty Griffin sang "I Love" in his studio. He loved meeting the legendary guitarist Duane Eddy. He was eager to get to know Buddy Miller, whose version of "That's How I Got to Memphis" rekindled widespread interest in the tune. He renewed his friendship with Bobby Bare, who popularized the same song in 1970. And Cooper and Brace persuaded Hall to join Fayssoux Starling McLean to record "I Made a Friend of a Flower Today," which he had written recently with Dixie.

"Getting Tom T. singing on that was a really special thing," Cooper said. "When he wrote that, he did what he has always done, taking a simple experience and making it into art."

The Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum introduced the album at a party on May 25. That date also marked Hall's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, but he's still a kid at heart.

"To be honest, I think I wrote these songs for myself, for the child that was still in me," said Tom T. Hall.

*CMA created the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1961 to recognize individuals for their outstanding contributions to the format with Country Music's highest honor. Inductees are chosen by CMA's Hall of Fame Panels of Electors, which consist of anonymous voters appointed by the CMA Board of Directors.*

• "I am  
• fascinated  
• by children.  
• And I'm  
• seriously  
• suspicious  
• that they're  
• smarter  
• than we are."

– Tom T. Hall

# CMA Close Up

CMAworld.com | My.CMAworld.com

## VINCE GILL TAKES IT HOME WITH *GUITAR SLINGER* 12

### cma events

#### OCTOBER

##### THURSDAY, OCT. 6

CMA Songwriters Series | Joe's Pub |  
New York City | 6:30 and 9 PM |  
Billy Currington, Bob DiPiero, Scotty  
Emerick and David Lee Murphy |  
Tickets: [JoesPub.com](http://JoesPub.com) or (212) 967-7555

##### FRIDAY, OCT. 7

CMA Songwriters Series | Joe's Pub |  
New York City | 6:30 and 9 PM | Bob DiPiero,  
Scotty Emerick, Craig Morgan,  
David Lee Murphy and Josh Thompson |  
Tickets: [JoesPub.com](http://JoesPub.com) or (212) 967-7555

##### THURSDAY, OCT. 13

CMA EDU Meeting | Belmont University |  
Vince Gill Room, Curb Event Center |  
Nashville | 5:30 PM

##### FRIDAY, OCT. 14

Final CMA Awards online ballot notice  
e-mailed to eligible CMA voting members.

##### TUESDAY, OCT. 18

CMA EDU Meeting | Lipscomb University |  
Bennett 181 | Nashville | 6 PM

##### WEDNESDAY, OCT. 19

CMA EDU Meeting | Middle Tennessee State  
University | Murfreesboro, Tenn.

##### WEDNESDAY, OCT. 26

CMA EDU Meeting | Belmont University |  
Vince Gill Room, Curb Event Center |  
Nashville | 6 PM

#### NOVEMBER

##### THURSDAY, NOV. 3

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

CMA Songwriters Series | Joe's Pub |  
New York City | 6:30 and 9 PM |  
Rodney Atkins, Dave Berg, Bob DiPiero  
and Marla Cannon Goodman |  
Tickets: [JoesPub.com](http://JoesPub.com) or (212) 967-7555

##### TUESDAY, NOV. 8

CMA International Media Reception |  
The Terrace | Hilton Nashville Downtown |  
4 PM | Invitation only

CMA Songwriters Series | Limelight |  
Nashville | 10 PM | Deana Carter,  
Kelly Lovelace, Eric Paslay and  
Rivers Rutherford | Tickets:  
[LimeLightNashville.com](http://LimeLightNashville.com) or (615) 780-3099

##### TUESDAY, NOV. 8 - WEDNESDAY, NOV. 9

CMA Marketing Summit | Nashville |  
Invitation only

##### WEDNESDAY, NOV. 9

"The 45<sup>th</sup> Annual CMA Awards" |  
Country Music's Biggest Night |  
Hosted by Brad Paisley and Carrie Underwood |  
7 - 10 PM | Bridgestone Arena |  
Nashville | Live on ABC |

Tickets: [Bridgestone Arena Box Office](http://BridgestoneArenaBoxOffice.com),  
[Ticketmaster.com](http://Ticketmaster.com) or 1-800-745-3000

Post CMA Awards Party | CMA Awards Silent  
Auction to benefit Keep the Music Playing |  
10 PM - 2 AM | Country Music Hall of Fame  
and Museum | Invitation only

##### THURSDAY, NOV. 10

"CMA Country Christmas" taping |  
Hosted by Sugarland's Jennifer Nettles |  
Bridgestone Arena

##### TUESDAY, NOV. 15

CMA EDU Meeting | Lipscomb University |  
Bennett 181 | Nashville | 6 PM

##### WEDNESDAY, NOV. 16

CMA Songwriters Series | Coolidge  
Auditorium | Library of Congress |  
Washington, D.C. | 8 PM | Clint Black,  
Bob DiPiero, Patty Loveless and Tim Nichols  
| Tickets: [Ticketmaster.com](http://Ticketmaster.com)

CMA EDU Meeting | Middle Tennessee State  
University | Murfreesboro, Tenn.

##### TUESDAY, NOV. 29

CMA EDU Meeting | Belmont University |  
Nashville

##### WEDNESDAY, NOV. 30

CMA Board Election of Directors |  
Hilton Downtown Nashville |  
Members welcome

#### DECEMBER

##### THURSDAY, DEC. 1

CMA Board Election of Directors at Large |  
ASCAP | Nashville | Invitation only

\*All times central unless otherwise noted.

