

CMA Close Up

OCTOBER | NOVEMBER 2012



CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL:
COUNTRY'S NIGHT TO ROCK
Three Hours of Action on ABC

KIX BROOKS
Takes Control on *New to This Town*

COUNTRY PRODUCTION TIPS
It's All in the Mix

JAMEY JOHNSON
Leads an All-Star Tribute
To Hank Cochran

PASS IT ALONG
How Videos Go Viral

DIERKS BENTLEY
OnStage for CMA Songwriters Series

ROAD CREWS
Hire the Best for Your Tour

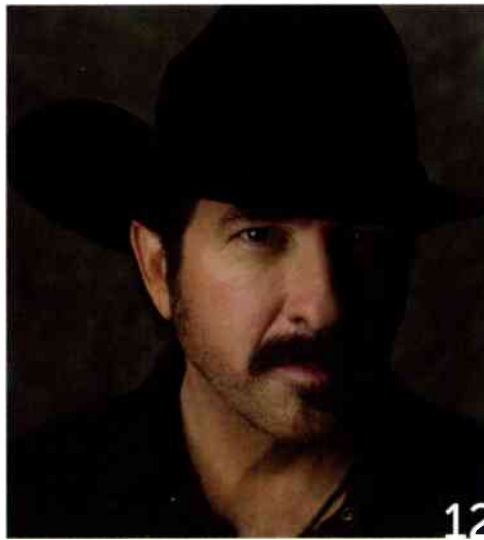
BRAD PAISLEY AND CARRIE UNDERWOOD
They're Back to Host

"THE 46th ANNUAL CMA AWARDS" THURS. NOV 1 8/7c ABC

CMA AWARDS ONLINE VOTING FINAL BALLOT OCT. 4 - OCT. 22



5



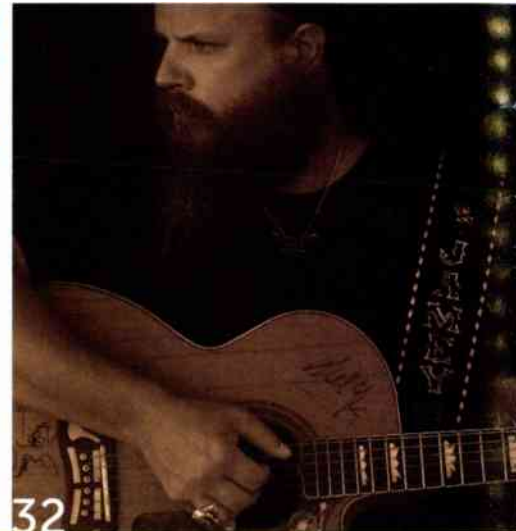
12 28



22



24 32



october | november 2012

cma close up

issue date | oct. 3

- 4 "The 46th Annual CMA Awards"
Country Music's Biggest Night
Thursday, Nov. 1 8/7c
- 5 CMA Awards Hosts
Brad Paisley and
Carrie Underwood
- 8 CMA Broadcast Awards
Finalists
- 9 CMA and ABC Present
"CMA Music Festival:
Country's Night to Rock"
- 10 CMA Board
Bob Shennan
- 11 CMA Research

- 12 Kix Brooks
- 14 Tumblr
- 16 Production Tips for
Country Sessions
- 18 Jamey Johnson
- 20 Tech Track
- 21 Road Crews
- 22 Viral Videos
- 24 CMA Member of the Month
OCTOBER
Cindy Heath
NOVEMBER
Kat'Lee Jones

- 25 CMA Songwriters Series
Dierks Bentley
- 26 Debut Artist Spotlight
Jordan Anderson
Kalleigh Bannen
JT Hodges
Dustin Lynch
- 28 Marketing Innovations
Carl Black Chevrolet
Montgomery Gentry
- 29 New CD Releases
- 30 CMA Presents the
Country Music Hall of Fame
Charlie McCoy and
Hank Williams
- 32 CMA Events Calendar

photos: Paisley and Underwood - John Russell (TOC) Bob D'Amico (front cover) Brooks - Robert Ascott, Moore - Somethin Bout a Truck - video-shoot, Ford and Lady Antebellum - Adam Braatman, Wiley the Cat - courtesy of Cindy Heath, Johnson - Jack Spencer

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 OGLANDER

Contributing Writers

MARK CRAWFORD | FETT | KIP KIRBY | NANCY MORAN
JEANNIE NAUJECK | ROBERT K. OERMANN
DEBORAH EVANS PRICE | DAVID M. ROSS

Proofreaders
EILEEN SISK

Printing
McQUIDDY PRINTING

CMA STAFF

Executive
STEVE MOORE *Chief Executive Officer*
JESSICA STEPP *Executive Assistant*

Marketing and Communications

SHERI WARNKE *Senior Vice President of Marketing and Communications*

Communications

WENDY PEARL *Vice President of Corporate Communications*
BOB DOERSCHUK *CMA Close Up Editor*
MARIA ECKHARDT *Manager of Media Relations*
DAWN COPLER *Senior Media Relations Coordinator*

Membership and Balloting

BRANDI SIMMS *Senior Manager of Memberships and Balloting*
BETSY WALKER *Senior Coordinator of Member Relations and Services*
BRENDEN OLIVER *Member and Balloting Assistant*

Marketing

TAMMY LIONHAM *Vice President of Marketing*
CORY CHAPMAN *Director of Marketing*
BEN BENNETT *Senior Manager of Digital Strategy*
AMANDA ECKARD *Senior Manager of Creative Services*
CHRISTIAN BOTTORFF *Manager of Creative Services*
CATHERINE BLACKWELL *Marketing Manager*
MARTY FILOGAMIO *Jr. Web Designer / Production Coordinator*
AMANDA FORENKAMP *Marketing Coordinator*

Market Research

KAREN STUMP *Senior Director of Market Research*

Strategic Partnerships

ANGELA MENDENHALL *Senior Manager of Strategic Partnerships*
LARA HENLEY *Senior Manager of Strategic Partnerships*
SARAH MCGRADY *Manager of Strategic Partnerships*

Finance and Administration

AMY SMARTT *Senior Vice President of Finance and Administration*
AARON HARTLEY *Senior Manager of Administrative Services*
KEN SANDERSON *Senior Manager of Information Technology*
SHEREME SIEWNARINE *Senior Manager of Financial Services*
MATTHEW SEATON *Community Outreach Manager*
KERIS PATTON *Staff Accountant*
LANCE MORTON *Network Administrator*
MELISSA MAYNARD *Manager of Operations*
TAYLOR TAPP *Technical Services Support*
MARCO CASTILLO *Operations Assistant*
MARY ANN DICKS *Finance and Administration Coordinator*
BRITTANY MOITON *Receptionist*

Events and Special Projects

CHRIS CRAWFORD *Senior Director of Live Events and Special Projects*
DIANE BEARDEN-ENRIGHT *Senior Manager of Meetings and Events*
VILMA SALINAS *Senior Manager of Projects*
KRIS KENNEDY *Senior Manager of Events*
GREG PITMAN *Production Manager*
JESSICA TURK *Production Coordinator*

OUR HOME IS YOUR HOME

For years, CMA has invited upcoming artists – and, occasionally, established ones too – to perform before staff members and guests in our atrium area. This has been a great way for us to get familiar with an amazing array of performers. Just as important, this has also given artists a way to connect with CMA and benefit from what we have to offer them as they launch their careers.

Still, the layout of our atrium and lobby wasn't conducive for many other types of events. That's one reason why work began last year on remodeling the space, updating its design and maximizing its potential.

CMA CEO Steve Moore and Operations and Administration Coordinator Melissa Maynard (now promoted to Manager of Operations) worked together to accomplish this mission. They recruited Shaub Construction to cover the floor with slate-like rectangular ceramic tiles, in a stack pattern to avoid making a boxy, repetitive impression. Subtly colored glass tiles were attached to the walls. Laminated wood panels complemented these details on the bottom of the soffits — the undersides of certain elements in the design. Smaller fixtures, some of them hanging from the ceiling, and strategically placed up-lighting took the place of the big tin lights in the old design.

Morris Light & Sound upgraded the sound system by installing new Electro-Voice equipment — eight Zx1i speakers, an ELX118-powered subwoofer and three Zx1a powered monitors. A Midas VeniceF-16R mixer runs the system. SETCO built a roomy stage, which fits into approximately 600 square feet of space added by lengthening the lobby into our outdoor patio. The visual *coup de grace* stands at the back of the stage: a tall fiberglass replication of an early CMA Award, designed and hand-painted by Rusty Wolfe of Wolfe Woodworking and constructed by the architectural firm InForm Smallwood+Nickle.

What's it all mean? It means that throughout 2012 CMA has been able not only to give visiting artists a better performance opportunity, but also to host a wider range of events than ever. These include No. 1 parties for the writers of Lee Brice's "A Woman Like You," Kenny Chesney's "Come Over," Eli Young Band's "Even If It Breaks Your Heart," Justin Moore's "If Heaven Wasn't So Far Away," Jake Owen's "Barefoot Blue Jean Night," Carrie Underwood's "Good Girl" and Chris Young's "You." We were also able to accommodate the media on Sept. 5 for the CMA Awards' nominee announcements, with Brice on hand to reveal the CMA Broadcast Awards finalists, and open our doors to all CMA membership for an informal mixer.

"CMA is here for its members," said Moore. "Now, with this beautiful space available to them, we're happy to have our members here at CMA too."

For more on reserving the CMA atrium and lobby for special events, members can contact Diane Bearden-Enright, CMA Senior Manager of Marketing and Events, at DEnright@CMAworld.com.

BOB DOERSCHUK Editor, CMA Close Up



Casey James and drummer Blaine Crews perform before the CMA Awards replica in the remodeled CMA atrium.

photo: Christian Bottorff

CMA Close Up® welcomes your letters and feedback 615.241.2840 Fax 615.242.4783 or e-mail CloseUp@CMAworld.com

ADDRESS CHANGE? Visit My.CMAworld.com to correct your address information so you don't miss any issues of CMA Close Up!



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

©2012 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.



The 46th Annual **CMA AWARDS** Country Music's Biggest Night

Eric Church Tops the List with Five Nominations; Miranda Lambert and Blake Shelton Earn Three Each

by BOB DOERSCHUK



Luke Bryan, Jason Aldean, and ABC's Lara Spencer cut up while announcing nominations in select categories for "The 46th Annual CMA Awards," Wednesday, Sept. 5, live on ABC's "Good Morning America" in New York.



CMA Chief Executive Officer Steve Moore, Lee Brice and CMA Board President Troy Tomlinson gather at the announcements of the 2012 CMA Broadcast Awards Finalists at CMA in Nashville.



CMA Senior Vice President of Marketing and Communications Sheri Warnke, Jason Aldean, CMA Awards Executive Producer Robert Deaton and Luke Bryan at ABC's "Good Morning America" in New York City.

2012 may be remembered as the year the CMA Awards went to Church, as Eric Church, a 2011 nominee for New Artist of the Year, led the field with nominations in five categories: Male Vocalist, Album, Single, Song and Music Video of the Year.

The world got the news about the finalists in five Awards categories live on the Sept. 5 edition of ABC's "Good Morning America." So many fans tuned in that #CMAAwards became the top non-paid or promoted tweet on Twitter during the broadcast.

Co-hosts for the announcements were Jason Aldean and Luke Bryan, a last-minute sub for Lady Antebellum, stranded by bad weather in Nashville. As tour mates, Aldean and Bryan were relaxed with each other, even cracking up while displaying a fake mustache they'd drawn on a picture of Blake Shelton.

Still, they took their jobs seriously, especially when revealing each other's nominations at GMA as well as later that morning at the B. B. King Blues Club & Grill, where their announcements of the seven remaining categories were streamed live on CMAawards.com.

Other artists who fared well were Miranda Lambert and Shelton, who each received four nominations. Aldean, Dierks Bentley, Kenny Chesney, Little Big Town and Taylor Swift each garnered three.

"The depth and variety of talent represented from this year's nominees is outstanding," said CMA CEO Steve Moore. "From Country Music legends to cross-format favorites to current superstars and an exciting crop of artists who have jumped to that next level, the 2012 CMA Awards are going to be an exciting evening of entertainment for any fan of great music and memorable performances."

The CMA Awards nominees and winners are determined by the 11,000 industry professional members of CMA. Winners of "The 46th 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 third and final ballot will be emailed to CMA members Thursday, Oct. 4. Voting for the CMA Awards final ballot ends Monday, Oct. 22 (5:00 PM/CT).

"The 46th 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.

"If I have to pay Dierks Bentley to run naked up Music Row, I will."

— Brad Paisley



Brad Paisley and Carrie Underwood

mark year five as **CMA AWARDS** co-hosts

by DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

As Brad Paisley and Carrie Underwood prepare to host the CMA Awards for the fifth consecutive year, they admit to achieving a certain level of comfort with Country Music's most high-profile gig. Yet complacency is never in the duo's vocabulary.

"I feel like each year our monologue and our jokes get better and better," Underwood said. "We want to top that every year. So it's a challenge to try to beat what you did the year before – but it's a good challenge."

Both co-hosts are gearing up to meet that challenge, which they say has gotten easier. "I definitely feel more comfortable hosting," Underwood said, with a smile.

Paisley agrees. "It just gets easier to picture what it will be like up there, what a joke would feel like or us performing something, whether that's with Barbie dolls or singing a parody of something," he noted, referencing their brief skit involving Faith Hill and Tim McGraw dolls at the 2011 Awards.

"We know a little more about what they will or won't laugh at," Underwood interjected.

It's obvious that these two have slipped into a comfortable rhythm as they gear up for the Nov. 1 telecast of the 46th Annual CMA Awards. Longtime friends and occasional duet partners, Paisley and Underwood bring an enviable level of sophistication to their hosting duties along with an abundance of down-home charm.

They also bring four years of experience to the stage as well as an earnest dedication to making the show the best it can possibly be. "The first year I think we did fine, but I feel like we've gotten better," Paisley said. "The first year, you have probably a fairly equal distribution of people who are excited and hopeful for you. You also have another faction of people who are skeptical that you'll do something like that because they hadn't seen us really perform together at that point. They hadn't seen us stand up and command a room or bring laughs, especially together. Everybody probably thought, 'This could work.' But there have been situations that obviously didn't."

Though both artists will be touring heavily this fall, they have built time into their busy schedules to prepare for the CMA Awards broadcast. "I feel

like now that we've done it for four years, we know approximately how much time things are going to take and meetings that we need to have," Underwood said. "It's easier to build that time in since I know what to expect."

"Basically, the last week of October, I say goodbye to my family for a week," Paisley added. "We're pretty busy that week, but it's a lot of fun to work on this. I really think this is such a privilege that they have entrusted us with this many years. We take this very seriously. We want to have fun with it but at the same time make everybody proud in our hometown because this show deserves to be great."

In putting together a great show, Paisley and Underwood are always on the lookout for timely material they hope will elicit laughs. "We've gotten really lucky. It's fun how the things have evolved," he said, citing last year's appearance by Hank Williams Jr. as a particularly timely bit. "It started out with us making fun of the uproar over Hank Jr.'s remarks last year. We wrote a little parody using the 'Monday Night Football' theme, and then someone said, 'We've got to run this by Hank.' We did, and he said, 'I want to be a part of it.' The next thing we know, he's walking out."

"That happened really fast," Underwood pointed out.

"It was bizarre," Paisley said. "And it was so much fun. I know Hank fairly well, and I knew all along he'd think what we were doing was funny. But the fact that he was willing to be a part of it says a lot."

As for this year's jokes and possible parodies, Paisley is keeping eyes and ears open for fodder. "I'm crossing my fingers for someone to say or do something stupid. If I have to pay Dierks Bentley to run naked up Music Row, I will. Whatever it is, whatever it takes," he said, with a mischievous grin.

Paisley and Underwood will once again be working with Executive Producer Robert Deaton and writer David Wild to put together the best show possible. "It takes a whole lot of people and a whole lot of time," Underwood said. "I would imagine as a viewer sitting out there and watching it all come together, you don't realize how much love does go into it and how much thought and how much time we spend sitting around and talking about things. We just want to get everything right."



2012 CMA AWARDS nominees

ENTERTAINER of the year

JASON ALDEAN
KENNY CHESNEY
BRAD PAISLEY
BLAKE SHELTON
TAYLOR SWIFT

SINGLE of the year

(Award goes to artist and producer(s))

"DIRT ROAD ANTHEM"

Jason Aldean
Produced by Michael Knox
Broken Bow Records

"GOD GAVE ME YOU"

Blake Shelton
Produced by Scott Hendricks
Warner Bros. Records

"HOME"

Dierks Bentley
Produced by Brett Beavers
and Luke Wooten
Capitol Records Nashville

"PONTOON"

Little Big Town
Produced by Jay Joyce
Capitol Records Nashville

"SPRINGSTEEN"

Eric Church
Produced by Jay Joyce
EMI Records Nashville

MUSICIAN of the year

SAM BUSH
mandolin

PAUL FRANKLIN
steel guitar

DANN HUFF
guitar

BRENT MASON
guitar

MAC McANALLY
guitar

SONG of the year

(Award goes to songwriter(s))

"EVEN IF IT BREAKS YOUR HEART"

Will Hoge and Eric Paslay

"GOD GAVE ME YOU"

Dave Barnes

"HOME"

Dan Wilson, Brett Beavers
and Dierks Bentley

"OVER YOU"

Miranda Lambert
and Blake Shelton

"SPRINGSTEEN"

Eric Church, Ryan Tyndell
and Jeff Hyde

FEMALE VOCALIST of the year

KELLY CLARKSON
MIRANDA LAMBERT
MARTINA McBRIDE
TAYLOR SWIFT
CARRIE UNDERWOOD

MALE VOCALIST of the year

JASON ALDEAN
LUKE BRYAN
ERIC CHURCH
BLAKE SHELTON
KEITH URBAN

VOCAL GROUP of the year

ELI YOUNG BAND
LADY ANTEBELLUM
LITTLE BIG TOWN
THE BAND PERRY
ZAC BROWN BAND

VOCAL DUO of the year

BIG & RICH
LOVE AND THEFT
SUGARLAND
THE CIVIL WARS
THOMPSON SQUARE

MUSICAL EVENT of the year

(Award goes to each artist)

"DIXIE HIGHWAY"

Alan Jackson
featuring Zac Brown
ACR/EMI Records Nashville

"FEEL LIKE A ROCK STAR"

Kenny Chesney
(duet with Tim McGraw)
Blue Chair Records/
Columbia Nashville

"ROLL ME UP AND SMOKE ME WHEN I DIE"

Willie Nelson (with Snoop
Dogg, Kris Kristofferson
and Jamey Johnson)
Legacy Recordings

"SAFE & SOUND"

Taylor Swift
(featuring The Civil Wars)
Big Machine Records/
Universal Republic Records

"STUCK ON YOU"

Lionel Richie
(with Darius Rucker)
Mercury Records Nashville

NEW ARTIST of the year

LEE BRICE
BRANTLEY GILBERT
HUNTER HAYES
LOVE AND THEFT
THOMPSON SQUARE

ALBUM of the year

(Award goes to artist and producer(s))

CHIEF

Eric Church
Produced by Jay Joyce
EMI Records Nashville

FOUR THE RECORD

Miranda Lambert
Produced by Frank Liddell,
Chuck Ainlay and Glenn Worf
RCA Nashville

HOME

Dierks Bentley
Produced by Brett Beavers,
Luke Wooten and
Jon Randall Stewart
Capitol Records Nashville

OWN THE NIGHT

Lady Antebellum
Produced by Paul Worley
and Lady Antebellum
Capitol Records Nashville

TAILGATES & TANLINES

Luke Bryan
Produced by Jeff Stevens
and Mark Bright
Capitol Records Nashville

MUSIC VIDEO of the year

(Award goes to artist and director)

"COME OVER"

Kenny Chesney
Directed by Shaun Silva

"OVER YOU"

Miranda Lambert
Directed by Trey Fanjoy

"PONTOON"

Little Big Town
Directed by
Declan Whitebloom

"REB SOLO CUP"

Toby Keith
Directed by Michael Salomon

"SPRINGSTEEN"

Eric Church
Directed by Peter Zavadi

reactions from some of the CMA AWARDS nominees

"Entertainer of the Year is obviously the big one and I think the Award that every artist hopes to win one day. My live show is the most important part of my career so this one feels extra special."

LAMARCAH Entertainer, Male Vocalist and Single of the Year

"It is an honor for us to be nominated. We don't take anything for granted. We always strive to work hard and do our best. Country Music is the people's music, and we are humbled to have the opportunity to play it."

THE BAND PERKY Vocal Group of the Year

"Man! Cool! Really? Awesome! Are you guys sure?"

DAVE GARRETT Song of the Year

"To have your friends and peers in the industry recognize your work as worthy of a nomination is a beautiful surprise, because you don't really think about that in the midst of the process. The nominations are honestly still kind of blowing my mind."

BEST BEATS Album and Song of the Year

"I'm so grateful for the nomination. It seems like we were working hard a long time, so it's always nice to have another notch on the belt and another step toward where we're trying to get to."

CEC OBIAS New Artist of the Year

"I've been blessed to have success with the two most honest people I know. One is from Checotah, Okla. And the other, Luke Bryan, is from Leesville, Ga. I'm deeply honored to be nominated with Luke and co-producer Jeff Stevens for *tailgates & tanlines*."

LUKE BRYAN Album of the Year

"Unbelievable! It's such a thrill to be recognized by my peers. We work hard on our albums and it really means a lot for me and my entire team to see *tailgates & tanlines* get an Album nomination."

LUKE BRYAN Male Vocalist and Album of the Year

"It's a testament to the fans that believed in the music, loved the music and told people about the music, because otherwise we don't really have the track record to be the most nominated at this point in our career."

CEC OBIAS

Male Vocalist, Album, Single, Song and Video of the Year

"Directing 'Over You' was the most heart-felt experience I've ever had in my career. The lyrics are about the death of a loved one. I lost my Dad during the making of this video. Miranda suffered heartbreak and loss too at the time. To have our lives so closely parallel the message of this song was surreal. We all kept moving through the pain wanting to make something great and beautiful to celebrate the loved ones we lost. So now, their part of us, the recognized music, lives on in me that I can't merely express."

REY HANCOCK Video of the Year

"It's really cool to be recognized for all our hard work. Let's ride this thing to the heavens for all!"

HARVEY CALVERT New Artist of the Year

"What an honor it is to be recognized by the Country Music family that I've always wanted to be a part of. I am absolutely over-the-top excited!"

HENDER JAMES New Artist of the Year

"There are more options to choose from for Single of the Year than most other categories, which makes this category so tough. 'God Gave Me You' was a special song for Blake and I'm simply honored to be in this group."

SEPT HENRIQUE Single of the Year

"Standing in the CMA building for the first time at the No. 1 party, seeing lyrics from the Song of the Year winners on the walls of that room and thinking there's a one in five chance that 'Even If It Breaks Your Heart' could be up there is just incredibly flattering. Plus, my wife gets to wear a pretty dress to the Awards show. Can't wait for Nov 1."

WILL BRITIC Song of the Year

"I am humbled by the recognition of my peers, who I respect and admire so much. It is an honor to be nominated, and to make it even better we were just having a good time."

JAY Z Album of the Year, Single of the Year (2x)

"I was lucky enough to have the right artist at the right time, who was not afraid to jump off that cliff with me and record a Country rap tune. Man, you gotta love an artist and a record label with cojones like that!"

MOSKELANT Single of the Year

"The feeling of being nominated by your friends and peers in the industry still makes me stop and pinch myself. I know how much this recognition means and really don't take it for granted. I know I can speak for the boys too when I say that we couldn't be any prouder to be Country Music singers than we are right now."

FOUR THE RECORD

Vocal Group and Album of the Year

"Miranda not only has great song sense, she also understands how to work with musicians so well. That makes for such a creative environment, and I'm honored to be able to work with her. Chuck, Glenn and the other talented people involved in the recording process. I'm also honored to see *Four the Record* nominated with so many other records by people I respect and call friends."

MARK LEISH Album of the Year

"We were all together when we found out about our CMA nominations and there were lots of cheers and hugs going around. To say that we were just excited is an understatement. What a huge honor for us."

DAVE WATKINS Vocal Duo, Single and Video of the Year

"I have been watching my wife on the CMA Awards since I was a little bit. I have been dreaming of this my whole life."

DAVE WATKINS Vocal Duo of the Year

New Artist and Vocal Duo of the Year

"We can't ever thank you enough! We can't thank everyone enough!"

JEFFERSON CARKER Vocal Duo of the Year

"The honor of being respected by your fellow music people is about as good as it gets. The only thing I know of that's better is getting to play with them. This year I'm supremely blessed and grateful to have both."

SUE MANALDI Musician of the Year

"I feel like a really lucky guy to be able to make my living doing what I love to do and be rewarded this way. Big ole thanks!"

ROBERT ALAZAR Musician of the Year

"I am so grateful to the Country Music community for embracing this project and making me feel so at home. To share this nomination with my friend Darius Rucker makes it even more special. I have a CMA nomination and a friend for life. It doesn't get much better than that."

LIONEL TICKET Musical Event of the Year

"I was so honored to have sung with Lionel and am overjoyed with this nomination."

DARIUS RUCKER Musical Event of the Year

"The video for 'Red Solo Cup' was intended to be a viral Internet goof — and, well, look at where we are now! Big thanks to all the CMA music professionals that voted for the best professional-looking video, while also recognizing the intent and spirit of this year's ultimate party song."

MOSKELANT Video of the Year

"I never get tired of these 'Oh-My-God-How-Did-This-Happen?!!' moments. Thank you to Country radio and everyone who casts a CMA vote. I am truly honored."

DAVE GARRETT Entertainer of the Year, Male Vocalist of the Year

"I've always hoped to get a CMA nomination. It's wild how a song for dreamers made one of mine come true."

ERIC BRADY Song of the Year

"Thanks to the members of CMA for listening to and nominating *tailgates & tanlines*! Luke and I had a lot of fun, kept our eyes and ears on the fans, made some honest music and it paid off!"

JEFF STEVENS Album of the Year

"To be able to write songs for a living is a blessing and to be recognized by my peers brings a great sense of thankfulness. But working with my co-writers Eric and Jeff on this album has been life changing and will forever be a treasured memory. Thank you, CMA. I am greatly honored."

MARCOLO PONDILLI Song of the Year

"I couldn't have been happier to get the news that *Home* was nominated. Britt, Dierks and I have been making music together for almost 12 years and have so much great history together that it means a lot to see our names alongside some of the best in the industry."

LUKE WARREN Album of the Year

2012 CMA broadcast awards finalists

by BOB DOERSCHUK

The CMA Lobby filled with media on the morning of Sept. 5 as CMA New Artist of the Year nominee Lee Brice announced the finalists for the 2012 CMA Broadcast Awards 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



Lee Brice announces the 2012 CMA Broadcast Awards Finalists at CMA.

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.

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 46th Annual CMA Awards" on ABC.

To read reactions from many of this year's CMA Broadcast Awards nominees, visit CMAawards.com.

photo: Donn Jones

CMA Broadcast Personality of the Year Finalists

NATIONAL

"AMERICAN COUNTRY COUNTDOWN WITH KIX BROOKS"

(Whitney Allen)
Dial Global

"CMT'S COUNTRY COUNTDOWN USA WITH LON HELTON"

(Lon Helton)
Westwood One

"THE CROOK & CHASE COUNTDOWN"

(Lorianne Crook and Charlie Chase)
Jim Owens Entertainment and Premiere Networks

MAJOR MARKET

"FITZ IN THE MORNING"

(Cory "Fitz" Fitzner, Ellen Taylor, Tony Russell, and Randy "The Biscuit" Stein)
KKWF, Seattle-Tacoma, Wash.

"K102 WAKEUP CREW"

(Donna Valentine and Mike Mussman)
KEEY, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn.

"LAURIE DEYOUNG MORNING SHOW"

(Laurie DeYoung)
WPOC, Baltimore, Md.

"MIKE & AMY"

(Mike Chase and Amy Faust)
KWJJ, Portland, Ore.

"PAUL SCHAT MORNING SHOW"

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

LARGE MARKET

ANGIE WARD

WTQR,
Greensboro-Winston-Salem-High Point, N.C.

"BIG DAVE AND CHELSIE"

(David Chandler and Chelsie Shinkle)
WUBE, Cincinnati, Ohio

"MORNINGS WITH DAVE O'BRIEN"

(Dave O'Brien)
WLHK, Indianapolis, Ind.

"O' MORNING CREW"

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

"KJ AND FRIENDS"

(Randy Carroll and Jamie Martin)
KAJA, San Antonio, Texas

MEDIUM MARKET

"THE 97 COUNTRY BREAKFAST CLUB"

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

"ANDY & ALISON AND THE MORNING CREW"

(Andy Ritchie and Alison Mencer)
WIVK, Knoxville, Tenn.

"BUZZ JACKSON"

(Buzz Jackson)
KIIM, Tucson, Ariz.

"ELLIS AND BRADLEY MORNING SHOW"

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

"KEVIN RICHARDS SHOW"

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

"PARTY MARTY MITCHELL & THE MORNING TAILGATE"

(Marty Mitchell)
WKMK, Monmouth-Ocean, N.J.

SMALL MARKET

"BARRETT, FOX & BERRY"

(Bill Barrett, Tim Fox, and Tracy Berry)
KKNU, Eugene-Springfield, Ore.

"DEX AND MO SHOW"

(Bill Poindexter and Melissa Turner)
WUSY, Chattanooga, Tenn.

"THE EDDIE FOX SHOW"

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

"GARY NELSON & KELLIE"

(Gary Greenwood, Josh Nelson, and Kellie Wesslund)
KFGE, Lincoln, Neb.

"DITCHER DON AND DEANN"

(Don Chase and DeAnn Stephens)
WBUL, Lexington-Fayette, Ky.

CMA Radio Station of the Year Finalists

MAJOR MARKET

KNIX Phoenix, Ariz.

KWJJ Portland, Ore.

WKLB Boston, Mass.

WMZQ Washington, D.C.

WPOC Baltimore, Md.

LARGE MARKET

KAJA San Antonio, Texas

WCTK Providence-Warwick-Pawtucket, R.I.

WFNS Indianapolis, Ind.

WLHK Indianapolis, Ind.

WUBE Cincinnati, Ohio

MEDIUM MARKET

KFOI Wichita, Kan.

KUZZ Bakersfield, Calif.

KXKT Omaha, Neb./Council Bluffs, Iowa

WIVK Knoxville, Tenn.

WSSL Greenville-Spartanburg, S.C.

SMALL MARKET

WSSO Cookeville, Tenn.

WKSE Asheville, N.C.

WXXO Augusta, Ga.

WLLP Quad Cities: Davenport-Rock Island, Iowa/Moline, Ill.

WUSY Chattanooga, Tenn.

**"CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL
COUNTRY'S NIGHT TO ROCK"**

by BOB DOERSCHUK



The horseshoe bar downstairs at the Hard Rock Cafe Nashville was almost hidden by dozens of upbeat visitors. New arrivals streamed through the front door; they seemed to know everyone already there. Conversation buzzed excitedly, most of it about what had drawn them on this drizzly evening of Monday, Sept. 10: the CMA member viewing party for ABC's "CMA Music Festival: Country's Night to Rock."

"I'm here with my friends because I didn't get to go the Festival this year," said Brittany Perlin, 28, former Music Booker/Coordinator at "The Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson." "I really appreciate being here with the people that worked so hard to make the Festival happen."

"The atmosphere here is great," said Caitlin Wade, 22, recently hired Publicity Coordinator at PLA Media, who was with five friends and expecting more shortly. "It's so much fun to come to the viewing party with others who appreciate Country Music. It's a lot better than watching at home!"

That was especially true because attendees got to meet, in his first public appearance, Eddy A. Ward, the CMA Awards mascot. But even without that privilege, millions of viewers from coast to coast tuned into the three-hour broadcast. Whether in their houses or partying with their fellow Country Music lovers, they experienced Country Music's Biggest Night from Carrie Underwood's sizzling opener "Good Girl" through "I'm Gonna Get Drunk and Play Hank Williams," featuring Brad Paisley and, appropriately, Hank Williams Jr.

They also saw a few changes from last year's special. "For one thing, we had two hosts," said Robert Deaton, Executive Producer. "I'd begun thinking three or four months prior to the show about who should host. I'd worked with Luke Bryan, and I knew he'd be funny and open. Then it was kind of like how I put Brad and Carrie to host the CMA Awards, and that led me to Kimberly Perry."

Where every previous host of "CMA Music Festival" has been a solo artist, Perry has achieved stardom as a group member, with her brothers, Neil and Reid. "I understand it's a tricky situation to present her as a solo co-host," Deaton admitted. "So I made sure that The Band Perry was represented as a unit at different places throughout the show. I had the entire Band Perry introduce Luke as our co-host. I also had them interview Rascal Flatts. And, of course, they had their own performance."

Bryan and Kimberly Perry went beyond introducing acts. They also conducted interviews with artists including Faith Hill, "Nashville" actress Hayden Panettiere (who announced that she had just moved to town and become an "official Nashvillian") and Underwood. Perry had Blake Shelton autograph an early PR shot of himself with super long hair. Bryan challenged multi-instrumentalist Hunter Hayes to play French horn. Together, they maintained the show's brisk pace as if they'd been on the job for years.

This was as important live at LP Field as it was throughout the broadcast. "We understand that it's a television show and that's important," Deaton said. "But equally important is that the LP Field concerts are live experiences. It's an event. We want fans who spend their money to have a good time. And Luke and Kimberly helped make that happen."

Competition for ratings was very challenging that night, with NBC showing "The Voice" leading into the series debut of "Revolution." ESPN aired its second installment of "Monday Night Football." And Fox offered the season premiere of "Bones" as well as debuting the series "Mob Doctor."

Even in this field, however, "CMA Music Festival: Country's Night to Rock" delivered ABC's biggest Monday night in more than two months. The online world responded enthusiastically too, as the Festival special trended all night on Twitter against "The Voice" and "Monday Night Football." It also delivered a significant milestone by breaking the 1 million level in "Likes" for CMA's Facebook page.

The 2013 CMA Music Festival will run Thursday through Sunday, June 6-9. Purchase tickets at CMAfest.com, (800) CMA-FEST (262-3378), Ticketmaster.com or (800) 745-3000. International orders can be placed at (615) 263-3691. Ticket prices are based on the level of seating at LP Field for the nightly concerts and range from \$125 to \$350 plus handling fees.

"CMA Music Festival: Country's Night to Rock," directed by Gary Halvorson, will re-air on GAC Oct. 20, 8 PM; Oct. 21, 12 AM and 5 PM; Dec. 19, 8 PM; Dec. 20, 12 AM and 5 PM; Dec. 25, 9 PM; and Dec. 26, 1 AM, 11 AM and 5 PM.

top - bottom: Luke Bryan photo: John Russell | Hunter Hayes photo: Donn Jones
The Band Perry photo: Donn Jones | Jake Owen photo: John Russell | Keith Urban photo: Donn Jones

British Radio Executive

BOB SHENNAN

Advocates for Country

by BOB DOERSCHUK



Bob Shennan, Controller, Radio 2 and 6 Music, with Carrie Underwood during her U.K. tour in June.

The membership of CMA's Board of Directors reflects the breadth and depth of Country Music's appeal — a point underscored by the presence of Bob Shennan, elected to the Board in late 2011. A leader in British radio, he parlayed his English Literature degree from Corpus Christi College, Cambridge University, into a position as a journalist on Hereward Radio. In 1987, he began a longtime affiliation with the BBC.

Shennan's ascension was swift but not exactly linear. His first specialty was sports, culminating in his appointment in 1998 to the position of Head of BBC Sport. Two years later, he became Controller of BBC Radio 5 Live, whose programming included news and talk shows as well as sports coverage. In September 2002, as Radio 5 listenership rose to nearly 7 million, Shennan oversaw the launch of BBC Radio 5 Live Sports Extra as a digital radio station as part of BBC's overall expansion into the digital format. A very different assignment followed late in 2004, when he assumed leadership of BBC Asian Network, dedicated to serving South Asian communities in Great Britain.

"The great thing about the BBC is that, if you have the appetite, it gives you a chance to satisfy all your interests and take your skills into a wide variety of genres," Shennan observed. "I guess the interesting thing about all these very different areas is that the disciplines of great radio that meets the needs of audiences are the same: Surround yourself with great people and trust them."

Music, as well as sports, had always interested Shennan. After accepting an assignment in early 2008 to lead Channel 4 Radio, he was able to incorporate music among his administrative and programming responsibilities. As Controller of Radio 2 and 6 Music since January 2009, he has applied his knowledge and passion for multiple musical genres through these terrestrial and digital channels.

"6 Music is an alternative music station," Shennan said. "Its great overseas heroes would be Lou Reed, Kraftwerk and Nirvana. But 6 would shy away from the big hits and play lesser-known album tracks. Radio 2 is a mainstream music station, specializing in timeless, melodic music, going back over seven decades from the present day. We also offer a dozen specialist music shows, from Country to jazz,

from folk to big band. Radio 2 reaches 14 million people, or about 33 percent of all British adults."

A staple especially on Radio 2, Country holds a special place in Shennan's life. "One of my earliest memories of listening to music would be my dad's collection of Jim Reeves and Johnny Cash records," he remembered. "I've been a big Johnny Cash fan ever since."

Shennan's support for Country Music strengthened in 2010, when he attended CMA Music Festival for the first time. "There is something unique about Nashville," he reflected. "I was struck by the way that the whole industry assembles for the Awards and the Festival. It is a brilliant production. Everyone is there, including the fans.

"In the U.K., the Country Music scene is currently doing really well," he continued. "Key artists have become mainstream. For our station, the best way to serve Country Music is to play it in the mainstream and not just in the specialist shows. That is not always easy to do, but it's the music that matters; sometimes the (stylistic) labels can get in the way."

"It's the music that matters; sometimes the (stylistic) labels can get in the way."

— Bob Shennan, Controller, Radio 2 and 6 Music

As Shennan sees it, presenting Country as a part of the wider popular music spectrum, as opposed to pushing it as a distinct entity, is appropriate for his market. "Country is less a part of the audience DNA than in the United States," he explained. "But artists including Lady Antebellum, Taylor Swift, The Civil Wars, Sugarland and now Carrie Underwood and The Band Perry have made a real impact in recent years. Artists like Carrie Underwood travel brilliantly. I don't think it's always been like that. In fact, I was talking to Ann Edelblute (Underwood's manager, at XIX Entertainment) at the CMA Board meeting in July, and she told me that even Carrie was surprised at the reception she received at her superb Royal Albert Hall concert. Amazingly, it was her first show in the U.K. and the crowd just loved her."

Shennan sees his membership on the CMA Board as an asset in his dedication to raising the profile of Country Music abroad. "There is a lot, I think, the U.K. music industry can learn from Nashville and CMA," he said. "I have already talked with music industry colleagues in the U.K. about how much our music scene could benefit by adopting some of CMA's characteristics. It is a world-class organization, and I hope I can contribute to the successful mission of CMA as a Board member."

COUNTRY FANS STAY LOYAL TO THEIR FAVORITE RIDE

by **BOB DOERSCHUK** and **KAREN STUMP**

A new CMA Research Department study shows Country fans have strong feelings about their cars, including whether to purchase or lease, and which makes and models they prefer.

From March 29 through April 3, 714 members of the CMA Insider Fan Panel responded to an online survey that focused on topics related to buying automobiles. This panel consists of more than 13,000 Country Music fans recruited from various industry social networks and events to serve as a source for insights to better understand the Country Music fan.

The results of this survey provide insight into what Country Music lovers are looking for when they get behind the wheel.

OWNERSHIP IS A PRIORITY

Ninety-five percent of those surveyed considered ownership important; only 5 percent indicated a preference for leasing automobiles. Twenty-two percent typically buy a vehicle every one to two years; most of these are between 45 and 54 years old with at least \$100,000 of annual household income. But 78 percent tend to keep their car for at least three years before thinking about replacing it. One particularly impressive finding notes that 24 percent plan to be in the market for a vehicle over the next 12 months, and 91 percent of these prospective buyers would rather purchase from a dealership than from an individual seller.

STAND BY YOUR BRAND

Chevrolet, Ford, Dodge and Toyota top the list of manufacturers favored by Country fans. Owners in all four of these categories are likely to stick with the same brand when buying their next vehicle. Chevy owners, for example, are most likely to consider another Chevy, with Ford and Toyota trailing as their second and third choices.

SMALLER GETS BIGGER

As they plan their next purchase, Country fans are increasingly considering compact and midsize SUVs — a potential shift away from the larger models they currently own.

	Type of vehicle owned or leased in HH*	Type of vehicle owned or leased in HH*
	Overall	Overall
Standard	28%	17%
Full-size pickup	25%	21%
Midsize SUV	23%	24%
Compact	22%	15%
Intermediate	15%	12%
Full-size SUV	18%	11%
Luxury	14%	14%
Compact SUV	9%	16%
Compact pickup	8%	7%

*Base: % based on respondents who stated they pay to purchase a new vehicle in the next 12 months.

PLUG AND DRIVE

Fifty-six percent of Country fans are likely to consider a hybrid or electric vehicle for their next purchase. Younger respondents are especially open to the possibility, with 71 percent of those between 18 and 34 expressing interest. Most would look toward Chevrolet or Ford, followed by Toyota, for possibilities.

INFORMED SHOPPERS

Four out of five fans consult the Internet for research and information when planning a vehicle purchase. Manufacturer websites would be their destination nearly twice as often as **Autotrader.com**, **Cars.com** and other car sites. Additionally, 59 percent would consult with families and friends, and 24 percent would look at automotive magazines, for pre-purchase information.

New Car Buying Criteria	Overall Rank	18-34 Rank	25-54 Rank
Safety	1	1	1
MPG	2	4	2
Reliability	3	3	3
Price	4	2	4
Look/Style	5	5	5

*ranked on a scale from 1 – 10 in order of importance to user

■ Safety: Air Bags / Anti-lock Brakes

SAFETY FIRST

In assessing potential purchases, Country fans rate safety as their most important priority in buying new vehicles. Gas mileage and overall reliability follow in importance, though for younger buyers price comes in second among their criteria.

TOP WEBSITES VISITED WHEN LOOKING FOR VEHICLE INFORMATION	
Manufacturer's website	72%
KBB.com (Kelley Blue Book)	47%
Autotrader.com	33%
Cars.com	31%
Edmunds.com	20%
Car magazine websites	15%

SEARCHING FOR PARTS

Overall, 47 percent of Country Music fans turn to Walmart when purchasing automotive maintenance products for their vehicles, ahead of AutoZone, Advance Auto Parts, O'Reilly Auto Parts and other auto parts stores. Windshield wipers, motor oil, antifreeze/coolant and automotive waxes/polishes are the primary automotive product Country Music fans have purchased in the past 12 months.

Each issue of CMA Close Up will feature timely new findings from the CMA Marketing Department's ongoing research into areas of interest to our membership. The overall goal is to analyze and derive useful insights into forces that influence consumer behavior, to understand industry trends and extend educational opportunities. More information is available at MyCMAworld.com.



KIX BROOKS

Takes Control on *New to This Town*

Few people on Music Row, if any, possess a more diverse résumé than Kix Brooks. He can be heard weekly as host of the syndicated radio show "American Country Countdown with Kix Brooks." He co-owns Arrington Vineyards, an award-winning winery just south of Nashville in pastoral Arrington, Tenn. He answers fan questions in a column for *Country Weekly*. He has launched an acting career and started a film company, Team Two Entertainment, in partnership with his son, Eric, director/producer Dustin Rikert and actor/producer William Shockley.

Then, of course, there's his music career, which these days finds the Louisiana-born entertainer embarking on a new path. After 20 years as one-half of the multi-award-winning, multi-Platinum duo Brooks & Dunn, he amicably parted with partner Ronnie Dunn in 2010. Dunn released his self-titled project last year, and on Sept. 11 Brooks issued his own 12-song collection, *New to This Town*.

Brooks actually came to Nashville as a solo artist. He had released a single on Capitol Records, "Sacred Ground," which peaked at No. 87 in 1989, and was establishing himself as a songwriter when he switched gears and paired with Dunn in 1990. Now, in striking out again on his own, he began by gathering material. Eventually, he wound up with 12 songs, nine of them with his credit as co-writer.

"I had a couple of songs that, being from Louisiana, were pretty rocky and swampy that I wrote early on," he said. "I just felt they were me and how I was feeling right now. Then I started looking for songs that would complement that stuff and kept trying to write things in that vein. They seemed to have a continuity to them, so I tried to build an album around that that made some sense."

Recruiting musicians was next. "I cut with the same guys I've been working with for a lot of years. I've known (bassist) Michael Rhodes for over 30 years; we even played with rival bands down in Louisiana. I'm sure with a lot of new artists, especially if you have studio players, trying to explain to them what you are about and where you come from can be difficult. But I've made so much music with these guys, so it was fun to bring some new songs in and they lit up and hit it real hard."

Brooks produced the entire album except for the title track, which he wrote with Marv Green and Terry McBride. "Jay DeMarcus (of Rascal Flatts) and I are doing a soundtrack for a Christmas movie," he

by DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

explained. "We got done a little early. The players were sounding good and the studio was rockin', so I asked Jay if I could do 'New to This Town.' We produced that song together, since we were already working. It came out really good and turned out to be the first single."

The Eagles' Joe Walsh added his legendary guitar skills to the track. That kind of happened by accident," Brooks said. "Lonnie Napier (Associate Producer, 'American Country Countdown') suggested adding 'some Joe Walsh-sounding guitar,' so I took a chance. I had met Joe when I was doing those stadium tours with Kenny Chesney. I took the liberty of calling Joe's manager, Irving Azoff (Chairman/CEO, Front Line Management Group), and asking him if it would be inappropriate to get in touch with Joe about playing on it. He really liked the song and he said, 'Heck, send it to him.' And I did."

"Joe was in rehearsals with Paul McCartney at the Grammy Awards at the time," Brooks continued. "He listened to the track when they were on break, called me up and said he wanted to play on it. He went home that evening, put those great slide tracks down and emailed them to me. I just dropped them in and we were done."

"New to This Town" peaked at No. 31. "Obviously, I would have wanted it to go multi-week No. 1," noted Brooks' longtime manager, Clarence Spalding, President, Spalding Entertainment. "That didn't happen, but some people who hadn't really had the opportunity to hear Kix sing alone came back and said, 'We love that song!' That's the 'new artist' way of doing things. We're going to get the consumer to taste this a little bit, and if they like it, we're going to feed them some more."

Written by Brooks, Rhett Akins and Dallas Davidson, "Bring It On Home" is the album's second single. "I'd come up with that chorus the morning they got there," Brooks said. "Dallas had a title, 'Speed of Life,' that we tried to stick onto it, but it was like we were forcing it. So we finished the song, and after they went home I got to banging around on it and came up with that idea of 'Bring It On Home.' I called them up and said, 'Hey, what do you think about going a little more simple?' They both liked that idea, because that's really what the song is about. We actually wrote 'Speed of Life' the way it needed to be written, so we got two songs out of that one."

These first singles invite listeners to open their ears and hear what Brooks has to offer on his own. "It's hard for any singer in this format to stand up beside Ronnie Dunn every night and sing," Spalding said. "Ronnie will go down in history as one of the greatest singers of all time. Kix got to sing a few songs on each album, but Ronnie's was the voice that sang more. I think that allowed Kix to sit back, so when it came time for him to make his record, he had a good idea of exactly what he wanted to do. That's what you hear. You don't hear a Brooks & Dunn record; you hear a Kix Brooks record. It's a lot easier being a solo act when it comes to making decisions. You don't always have to ask, 'What does Ronnie think?' It's 'I think this' and you move on with the decision. I couldn't be prouder of him and all the music on there."

Spalding also admires Brooks for the range of his interests and energy in pursuing them. "He does the radio show," he said. "He has his acting career. Everything he does that goes along with his music career makes Kix Brooks who he is."

"I like to think I can wear different hats," said Brooks, whose acting chops will be on display with his lead role in "To Kill a Memory," which will show at the Austin Film Festival on Oct. 23. The title takes its name from a song Brooks wrote with Randy Houser.

Not the least of his interests is CMA. A respected and productive CMA Board member, Brooks plans to continue to support his passion for Country Music through the organization and is proud of what it has accomplished throughout his involvement.

"I love our business," he said. "So, to be on the Board and get to hang out every couple of days with the leaders of our business, to hear what everybody is up to and where our business is going and the things that we're doing, is really fun for me. I enjoy that part of it, but I'm also really proud of the things that we've accomplished, like the CMA Music Festival in particular. We're making a serious effort at helping kids get into music in public schools that otherwise wouldn't be able to give them an opportunity. This year, we crossed the \$6 million mark in contributing to Keep the Music Playing and helping kids who need instruments in school and to teach them how to play music. We also helped victims of the flood two years ago in Nashville."

"EVERYTHING HE DOES THAT GOES ALONG WITH HIS MUSIC CAREER MAKES KIX BROOKS WHO HE IS."

— Clarence Spalding, President, Spalding Entertainment

"It makes me feel good to see something that we worked real hard

on go from the racetrack (at the Tennessee State Fairgrounds, former home of CMA Music Festival/Fan Fair) to LP Field and be an event that the whole city of Nashville and fans of Country Music everywhere can be proud of. It accomplishes something that's really meaningful."

Whether singing for wine lovers during a night of music at Arrington, writing music to accompany a movie project or answering fans' questions in *Country Weekly*, Brooks approaches each endeavor enthusiastically. "What brings me the most satisfaction is what I'm working on at the time," he said. "Dale Earnhardt told me something when he had a lot of different projects going. I asked him if he was interested in quitting driving and just getting into some of these other things he was into. He looked me in the eye and said, 'Don't ever forget the No. 3 car,' which was his way of saying 'Racing is what allowed all this to happen for me.' You can't take your eye off the ball. Music is my heart and soul and that will always be. As long as people want me to play music, I'll be doing that."

KixBrooks.com; @KixBrooks

Deborah Evans Price contributes regularly to *Country Weekly*, AOL's *The Boot*, *WatchGMCTV.com*, *Homecoming* and other outlets.

tumblr.

IN THE EVER-CHANGING WORLD OF SOCIAL MEDIA, FACEBOOK AND TWITTER ARE STILL THE UNDISPUTED LEADERS. AND WHILE GOOGLE+, LINKEDIN, MYSPACE AND RELATIVE NEWCOMER PINTEREST ALL HAVE THEIR PLACE, THERE'S A PLATFORM THAT'S NOT-SO-QUIETLY MAKING A NOTABLE SURGE.

According to the digital marketing firm comScore, Tumblr is one of the fastest-growing, consumer-oriented Internet sites over the past two years. Its audience has grown from 4.2 million visitors in July 2010 to more than 26.9 million in July 2012. As of July 30, Tumblr is home to 66.5 million blogs, which total more than 70 million daily posts with monthly page views of more than 17 billion.

In essence, Tumblr is a multimedia-focused blogging platform that marries the social networking of Facebook with the simplicity of Twitter and the full-featured aspects of Blogger or WordPress. But do we really need another social media technology?

Teenagers and college-age users seem to think so. In August 2011, comScore reported that half of Tumblr's visitor base is under the age of 25. History shows that these users tend to be early adopters of new technologies. Thus, predictions are that Tumblr will be the next household name of social media.

SocialMediaToday.com adds that "music lovers congregate on Tumblr, eager to share the next best thing, archive minutia or celebrate their collective good taste."

A number of artists and labels have already joined the Tumblr ranks, including The Band Perry (TheBandPerry.tumblr.com), Lady Antebellum (LadyAntebellum.tumblr.com), Thompson Square (ThompsonSquare.tumblr.com) and UMG Nashville (UMGNashville.tumblr.com).

But there's an even more compelling reason for artists and music industry entities to have blogs on Tumblr. The real reason is in the exceptional and often unique features this service already provides.

More Than Just Your Average Blog

When you sign up for an account on Tumblr, you'll notice quickly that most of the blogs it includes — they're often referred to as tumblelogs — differ from their text-based, editorial-style counterparts on other blogging platforms. Most posts tend to be short, and many tumbleloggers favor photos, videos and audio over long diatribes of words.

But in reality, anything goes. A tumblelog is yours to personalize any way that you see fit. And Tumblr gives you seven different post types to work with: text, photo, quote, link, chat, audio and video. Each post type brings up a different screen, making it super easy to post.

Want to post a long text editorial? The text post will let you type to your heart's content. Want to post a photo? You'll be prompted to choose a file and enter a caption. Posting a link instead? You'll be asked to enter a URL, a title and a description. Of course, some fields are optional, so to post a link you could also enter a URL and click "Create Post." That's it. You're done. You won't have to format a page or embed any HTML code. Everything is handled by Tumblr; simply fill in the fields you're prompted for and hit Enter.

There's even an option to either email or text in your posts. If you're away from your computer, you can take a photo with your smartphone, email it to your blog's custom email address and *voilà!* You've updated your blog.

Imagine how easy it'll be to keep fans updated with all of your activities on the road. Just a few minutes after taking a picture with the DJ who just hosted you on a morning radio interview, that photo can be up for everyone to see.

A particularly cool feature is the option to call in an audio post. Just dial an 866 number designated by Tumblr and leave a message. A few seconds later, that message appears as an audio post on your blog. Why not call in from your bus right after the show? Better yet, phone in a message from onstage and let your audience be a part of it!

The Queue and Scheduling features might be perfectly suited to a record label, publicist and fan club president in charge of an artist's tumblelog. Queue lets you stagger posts over a period of hours or days; it's an easy way to keep your blog active and consistent. You can also schedule posts to publish at specific dates and times in the future: If you always post a quote on Monday mornings, for instance, you can enter several quotes ahead of time and schedule them to post on subsequent Monday mornings.

SENDS MUSIC FANS HEAD OVER HEELS

by NANCY MORAN

Beyond Social Networking

By itself, a tumblelog is just a big virtual scrapbook or archive. But when you add an element of social interaction, it becomes a virtual community where people get to know and trust you — the person as well as the artist. This trust turns listeners into loyal fans. And that community is what social networking is all about.

As with Twitter, you can “follow” other tumblelogs. When you do, their posts will show up on your Dashboard (similar to your Twitter stream). When you find a tumblelog that you like, you can “like” it by clicking on the heart icon or you can reblog it to your own tumblelog, just like re-tweeting on Twitter or sharing on Facebook. You can even syndicate your tumblelog posts to show up on your Facebook and Twitter profiles.

Imagine how easy it'll be to keep fans updated with all of your activities on the road. Just a few minutes after taking a picture with the DJ who just hosted you on a morning radio interview, that photo can be up for everyone to see.

But Tumblr ups the ante with three features that promote direct and active engagement.

The first involves directly asking your followers a question. By simply ending a post with a question mark, you'll be given the option to “Let People Answer This.” If you check this box, a response field and an Answer button will appear on the post, and your followers will be able to give you direct feedback. This could be a great way to ask for opinions or run a contest.

The second feature is just the opposite. It allows your followers to ask you a question. By checking the “Let people ask questions” box under your Blog Settings, a link or button (depending on your theme) will appear on your tumblelog. The default is “Ask Me Anything,” but you can customize this message too. When someone clicks on this button, they'll see a screen in which they can type a question and click “Ask.” Their question will show up in your Messages inbox. It's up to you whether you answer these directly or publicly publish the answer on your tumblelog.

The third feature, “Submissions,” allows your audience to submit posts to your tumblelog. By checking the box beside “Let People Submit Posts” in our Blog Settings, a link or button will appear on your tumblelog. By default it says “Submit,” but you can change it to say whatever you want. Followers click

on that button to submit posts to you. You can choose which types of posts to allow as well as enter submission guidelines. All submissions will be delivered to your Messages Inbox, where you can review them and decide whether to publish them.

One way to get your audience involved and to use this feature would be to ask fans to submit photos and/or videos of your concerts. Or have them submit photos and/or stories of themselves, from which you can select a “fan of the week.”

Tumblr has apps for iPhone and Android. There's also a “Bookmarklet” that you can place on your Bookmarks Bar to help you share things you find on the Web. You can customize the look of your blog with themes, pages and even custom CSS (Cascading Style Sheets). You can add a custom URL, have multiple blogs and even set up group blogs. And it's all for free, with no ads, banners or logos.

Room for Improvement

But in case you were wondering, not everything is perfect on Tumblr.

Searching for other tumblelogs is clunky at best. If you search for the tag “Country Music,” you'll get a bunch of fans posting photos and commentaries on their favorite artists, but it will take a long time to sift through them to find an actual artist with a tumblelog. Even if you search for a particular artist, you'll still have to wade through other people talking about the artist before you find their actual official tumblelog. Basically, you have to know the email address or URL of the one you're looking for.

Because some tumblelogs are chock-full of photos and videos, they can be *s-l-o-w* to load. Themes that show lots of photos and videos at the same time can be particularly hazardous. Be careful when choosing how to display your posts if you plan to use a lot of images.

The Help documentation is also lacking quite a bit. As Tumblr continues to change and grow, some features can be hard to find. For example, the call-in audio feature mentioned earlier used to be found under the heading “Goodies.” That menu item no longer exists; it's now found by going to “About” and then to “Tips.” By the time you're reading this, that might have changed too.

Growing pains are inevitable. But all in all, Tumblr is feature-rich with few drawbacks and plenty of promise as a means to broaden and strengthen your fan base.

Nancy Moran is an independent singer/songwriter, recording artist, and artist development coach at Azalea Music Group in Nashville.



TRENDS IN COUNTRY MUSIC PRODUCTION

TIPS ON WHEN TO USE
- AND AVOID -
NEW TECHNOLOGY
AND AESTHETICS

Many of today's Country albums and singles share certain production sensibilities. Over the past 20 years or so, they've come to adapt numerous production techniques from other genres - particularly rock, pop and R&B - to the point that, if you strip away the vocal, fiddle and pedal steel, the remaining tracks sometimes don't sound that "Country" at all. This may partially explain why more Country songs cross over to other charts than in the past. But how do you balance this success against the idea of "keeping it Country"?

LEAD VOCALS OUT FRONT

One noticeable aspect of both modern and historic Country recordings is that the lead vocals tend to be positioned much more out front in the mix, above the music, than in other genres, especially rock. On a rock track, the producer and mixing engineer treat the vocals as an extra partner with the instruments; as a result, the vocals tend to sit back at generally the same volume as the instrumental bed.

"It's very important that the lyric be understood because, for the most part, Country songs are more descriptive," explained Nashville producer, engineer and CMA Album of the Year nominee Chuck Ainlay, whose lengthy credits include sessions with Dire Straits/Mark Knopfler, Peter Dinklage, Vince Gill, Miranda Lambert, George Strait and Taylor Swift. "Each word is quite important, so trying to make the vocal front and center has always been an objective with mixing a Country record."

Besides volume, there are several ways to make a vocal stand more out front. First, audio compression limits the dynamic range — the difference between the loudest and softest parts — of the material. That way, certain soft words aren't buried and other, louder words don't jump out unnaturally. Once a vocal track's dynamic range is compressed, its overall volume can be higher in the mix. Audio compression can also provide "presence" or, when used more aggressively, an "in-your-face" impact.

Similarly, a boost of equalization (or EQ, tech jargon for the balance of bass, midrange and treble), mostly in the 1 to 4 kilohertz (kHz) midrange, can help a vocal pop above the rest of the mix. Additionally, an EQ boost in the 6 to 10 kHz midrange and above can add "air" to the vocal and allow it to cut through the lower-frequency elements of the mix.

PITCH CORRECTION

While the debate continues over whether vocal pitch correction, aka "auto-tuning," is a good or bad thing, it is extremely rare to hear a modern Country record that doesn't use it extensively — not only on the lead vocal but also on all background vocals. It can be either very subtle or extremely noticeable, depending on how extensively it is applied and whether it is used across the board or only on certain passages or notes. Overuse of pitch correction can result in a tonally unnatural-sounding vocal track or a mechanical quality to intervals between notes.

"Sometimes imperfections are what make us hear the passion in what the singer is doing," Ainlay said. "Reaching for the note can be more powerful than just hitting it and holding it exactly on. I never use auto-tuning where it's just set automatically to even everything out. I'm always just drawing in the pitch only where it seems necessary. I try to leave as much of the way into the note alone as I can. If it goes a tad too sharp or doesn't reach it at the very end, I'll help it out a little bit. But I would prefer not to turn on pitch correction at all."

COMPRESSION AND LIMITING

Most elements of a modern Country mix, from guitars to drums to the entire spectrum, use a very heavy dose of audio compression. When applied correctly from the ground up, this can help each instrumental and vocal part stand out and give the overall mix presence and power.

Limiting is a form of compression with a very high ratio, meaning that the amount of compression applied to the material, when the compression is activated, is extremely high. This type of compression is often applied liberally to modern Country mixes at the mastering stage, where it's placed on top of all the compression already applied during mixing. Once a record has been compressed, limited and mastered, yet another layer of compression/limiting is added during radio broadcast.

RMS LOUDNESS

Why are so much compression and limiting applied at every level of production and broadcasting? The main force driving this trend isn't musical — rather, it's commercial. Radio stations want their signals to stand out above other stations as listeners move around the dial. The largest commercial stations tend to apply the most extreme levels of compression and limiting and are therefore the loudest as well. Record companies, in turn, want their singles and albums to compete with what's already on the radio, so they push the volume as far as possible. Thus, the "loudness war" becomes a self-perpetuating cycle.

Studies such as those reported in the September 2011 issue of *Sound on Sound* magazine show that the average volume of records has jumped dramatically since 1990. Many of today's up-tempo Country hits have an RMS ("root mean square," a mathematical measure of average) loudness in the -8 to -6 decibel (dB) range. By comparison, most hits from all genres in the 1970s rarely had RMS loudness levels above -13 or -11 dB. In simple terms, an increase of 5 dB on audio material results in 50 percent more perceived loudness to the listener. This means that today's Country records are one-and-a-half times louder than records of the 1970s.

"Often, it really doesn't actually make for a louder record," said Ainlay. "It makes for a more *distorted* volume by the time it gets to the radio. Radio station compressors are designed to equalize the volume differences between songs. A lot of times, the records that are really pushed up there are just distorted and actually end up sounding *softer*."

Bottom line: More volume simply for the sake of more volume eventually reaches a point of diminishing returns.

MIDRANGE-HEAVY FREQUENCY RANGE

Modern Country recordings tend to be very heavy in the midrange frequencies, especially the upper midrange (2.5 to 5.2 kHz). This is also designed to maximize perceived loudness and impact. It generally affects vocals, guitars and other stringed instruments and snare drums the most — all key elements in the genre. Contrast that with hip-hop, dance and R&B records, which have far more boost in the lower frequencies and emphasize bass guitar and kick drum.

SAMPLED/TRIGGERED SOUNDS

Country productions take full advantage of the latest capabilities in the studio. One example is the use of "virtual instruments" to augment or even replace real, acoustic instruments on a track. For example, many drum parts on Country records might have been played by a real

drummer, but the sounds we hear can be a combination of the original drum sounds as recorded through microphones and sampled sounds retrieved from a software library. Just as likely, those original sounds might be replaced completely by samples from different drum kits.

METRONOME TRACKS/TRACKING TO THE GRID

Many Country recordings adhere to a click track, an electronically generated metronome that is set to a tempo expressed in beats per minute (BPM). More sophisticated click tracks can be programmed to change tempo slightly between verse and chorus, for example, to mimic the natural tendency when songs are performed live. But most are set to one precise tempo that doesn't vary throughout the course of a song.

One primary reason for using click tracks is to make digital editing for recorded audio and MIDI parts faster and more accurate. But it also means that the tracks are laid out on a rigid digital grid. Further, many Country productions borrow from pop, hip-hop and R&B by quantizing, meaning that the original parts played by musicians — especially by drummers — are modified digitally to adhere more closely to the grid. This removes most of the natural, human variations in timing.

"I never put anything on a grid if it's been recorded live," Ainlay said. "I know a lot of people move the drums to the grid, but that's just not how a drummer plays. You can make an impressive-sounding record that way, where when you first hear it, you go, 'That sounds incredible!' But it doesn't last. There's no heart and soul in it that makes you want to listen more than once or twice."



"REACHING FOR THE NOTE CAN BE MORE POWERFUL THAN JUST HITTING IT AND HOLDING IT EXACTLY ON."

— Chuck Ainlay, producer/engineer

EASY DOES IT / LESS IS MORE

Many of the techniques and technologies embraced on Country sessions are apparently working, given the genre's health. But while Country recordings can sound more current and sonically competitive than ever compared with other genres, they also run the risk of developing a kind of sameness to the point of being hard to distinguish from other recordings, within and beyond the genre.

"I'm always trying to put the same kind of warmth in the bottom end and create the same sort of stunning listening experience in the records I make," said Ainlay, whose recent mixing projects include Lionel Richie's smash *Tuskegee*. "That entails a lot of dynamics. That's how you reach the heart and soul of the listener. There's something there, as opposed to where everything is sort of flat-lined. A lot of new people making records these days haven't been in the business very long. They're just using the technology, rather than allowing to technology to help them. And it's not just Country Music; it's in every genre. We need more people willing to stretch out and make great music. If they do, our business will flourish."

ChuckAinlay.com

Fett is an independent producer/engineer and music technology consultant at the Azalea Music Group in Nashville.

"IF YOU PUT THIS LIST OF ARTISTS TOGETHER IN ONE PLACE AT ONE TIME, I'M NOT SURE THE PUBLIC COULD HANDLE IT."

— Jamey Johnson

JAMEY JOHNSON

A LABOR OF LOVE FOR HANK COCHRAN

by ROBERT K. OERMANN

Following his Gold album (*The Guitar Song*), a Platinum album (*That Lonesome Song*), two CMA Awards for Song of the Year ("Give It Away" and "In Color"), five Grammy Award nominations and international critical acclaim, anticipation ran high about Jamey Johnson's next recording.

Some might be surprised to find that the music-industry maverick is issuing an old-school Country album of duets on the classic songs of the late Hank Cochran. Johnson's duet partners on *Living for a Song: A Tribute to Hank Cochran* include Vince Gill, Merle Haggard, Emmylou Harris, Kris Kristofferson, Ray Price, George Strait and Cochran's oldest friend Willie Nelson, all members of CMA's Country Music Hall of Fame. Contemporary artists are well-represented by Ronnie Dunn, Alison Krauss and Lee

Ann Womack. Veterans Asleep at the Wheel, Bobby Bare, Elvis Costello and Leon Russell are also onboard.

The songs they perform are all treasures. Whether widely known chestnuts or less familiar titles, each composition defines great Country song craftsmanship. To create a suitable framework for these classics, *Living for a Song* was recorded to sound like a vintage Nashville Sound LP.

"I knew I needed to be able to put together a better sound than I could on my own," Johnson said. "That's why I called Buddy Cannon. Buddy is one of the best musical conductors I've ever been around. Buddy is a master of that. He gets the sound in his head and goes after it. So I went to Buddy and Buddy just did it. I mean, by the time he was done, it was the easiest thing in the world.

"I can't give (Cannon) enough credit, because he went and put the band together," he continued. "He found the place to play and got the tracks recorded. He sought out each individual artist to get their input. If you put this list of artists together in one place at one time, I'm not sure the public could handle it. There would be traffic for days."

Johnson had been personally close to Cochran, who was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1974. The night before Cochran's passing in 2010 at the end of a long struggle against cancer, Johnson, Cannon and Billy Ray Cyrus gathered at his bedside to sing his great songs to him one last time.

"Hank's passing was kind of what kicked off the idea (for a tribute album)," Johnson said. "I came up with the idea to do it, but it took on a life of its own."

"Jamey and I started talking about this the night after Hank's memorial service," Cannon recalled. "Because it was just something that had to be done. I think Jamey, (former Chairman & CEO, Universal Music Nashville Entertainment) Luke Lewis and (Senior VP, A&R, Mercury Nashville) Brian Wright just kind of met out in the middle of a parking lot somewhere and said, 'We're doing this.' There wasn't a pitch to anybody. It was supposed to happen and everybody knew it."

The tribute's subject, Hank Cochran, was one of Country Music's most respected and beloved figures. He wrote 29 Top 10 hits over a four-decade period and provided career-defining hits for Eddy Arnold, Patsy Cline, Burl Ives, George Jones, Loretta Lynn, Ronnie Milsap and Keith Whitley, among many others. Several participants on *Living for a Song*, including Bobby Bare, Haggard, Nelson and Strait, also recorded and enjoyed success with Cochran material.

Co-producing the album with Cannon was Dale Dodson. Like Cannon, he was a close friend of Cochran's as well as a song collaborator. He also has an unparalleled knowledge of Cochran's creations.

"He knows the catalog inside and out," Cannon said. "He and Hank were awesome friends. Dale and I talked about the players. Some of the guys I put on there, I probably wouldn't have thought of if Dale hadn't brought them up."

"Buddy and Dale Dodson made every bit of this happen," Johnson said. "They really kind of took the reins. In fact, I first met Hank Cochran through Buddy and Dale. I think we met at Dale's office. Hank had a CD with him that he wanted me to hear. He reached out his hand and had a CD with my name already written on it. I gathered that this wasn't by chance. Hank always had a song."

The mechanics of recording so many star singers, deciding which songs to do and working out the other details of *Living for a Song* fell to Cannon and Dodson. Johnson's performances with *Asleep at the Wheel* ("I Don't Do Windows"), Price ("You Wouldn't Know Love"), Nelson ("Don't You Ever Get Tired of Hurting Me") and Strait ("The Eagle") were recorded with both duet partners present. For the other tracks, the producers had to accommodate the artists' schedules by pre-recording instruments and then cutting the vocalists separately.

"We asked all of the guest artists what they wanted to sing," Cannon remembered. "That's how we approached the thing. We could have gotten anybody. I had some great voices who aren't on there asking to be on it. But we couldn't do more than so many songs."

"Willie was the first person I wanted to include," Johnson said. "We met him in Austin at his Pedernales (Recording) Studio. He did a six-hour session that day with his sister Bobbie (on piano), where neither of them got up for any reason. The stuff he did for the Hank record with me was just kind of a warm-up for the day. So that was a seminar, right there."

"I asked Alison (Krauss) to be on it fairly early on. She came by," Cannon said. "I played her some (Cochran) songs. When I played her 'Make the World Go Away,' she said, 'I would love to do that one.' Merle immediately said he wanted to do 'I Fall to Pieces.' Bobby Bare wanted to do 'I'd Fight the World.' I just sent Elvis (Costello) a bunch of songs, and he picked out 'She'll Be Back.'"

"Ray Price is a good definition of an old Marine, a rock-solid spirit, a guy whose direction is so strong and whose will can't be bent," Johnson observed. "(But) I hear that his dogs don't even come when he calls! I knew I wanted to be with him when he sang."

"Jamey said, 'Why don't we get Leon Russell?'" Cannon added. "I'd never met Leon Russell, but I said, 'I'll try.' I had a friend of his, Steve Ripley (of The Tractors), send him a message. It wasn't 15 minutes later that I had a phone call: 'This is Leon. I'll do it.' And he wanted to sing on more than one song."

"*Asleep at the Wheel* were some of the best musicians I've ever gotten to play with," Johnson said. "Everybody had a different approach to 'I Don't Do Windows,' and when they all met, that was the best. It was incredible — and that song was the one that Hank was after me to cut!"

"I couldn't wait to cut 'The Eagle' (with Strait)," he continued. "I was visiting (songwriter) Dean Dillon in Gunnison, Colo., trying to figure out how to write songs again. It had been a long time since I'd written anything, and Dean was helping me break the cobwebs. We got to talking, and that was one of the songs that came to mind in one of our conversations. I sent it to Mr. Strait that night, and he agreed that it was one that was well worth doing."

"The recording sessions were done like this," Cannon pointed out. "I got Jamey's keys, coordinated with the other artists and got mutually agreeable keys (to sing in) for everybody. I cut the instrumental tracks in maybe two days or three. The band, man, everybody got so into the songs. I wanted it to sound like a Patsy Cline album and I think we got as close as you can."

The final song on the collection is the title tune, a little-known Cochran gem that sums up the life of a struggling songwriter. His widow, Suzi Cochran, suggested the song and provided a recording of Hank singing it. The album's version features the voices of Haggard, Johnson, Kristofferson and Nelson, as well as Cochran's.

"Those guys freaked out when they heard Hank's voice," Cannon said. "I remember when I had Merle in the studio doing his part, and when Hank's voice came on, Merle yelled, 'Whoa!' It was a goose-bump moment."

"This whole thing is about the quality of the songs," the producer reflected. "Where else could you find so many great songs that people would just rush to sing? I'm sure if I ever do another one of these multi-artist albums, it won't be this easy. It was a labor of love all the way around."

"For me, it was just as much a journey as it was for the band or anybody else involved," Johnson mused. "Almost every one of the songs was kind of a nice surprise. This was something that was breathed into the air by everybody. I can only take credit or blame for my half of it. The rest, that's everybody's own desire to make it something great."

JameyJohnson.com

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 Directors.

Robert K. Oermann writes weekly columns for the trade publication Music Row and has been published in more than 100 other national periodicals.

TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA TIME

by DAVID M. ROSS

You've probably noticed that the time it takes each day to engage consumers and build awareness seems to be expanding. Call it mission creep, but today's digital marketers are prowling through a growing variety of channels. Facebook and Twitter are a must, but YouTube, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Google+, GetGlue and others are arriving daily. Posting content and answering responses from all these data streams plus updating your brand's website can be overwhelming.

What to do? Adopt a few digital tools that can make your time more efficiently spent.

One such tool, HootSuite, is like a digital Swiss Army Knife designed to simplify the ways you listen and publish updates to your social networks. This Web-based app helps manage many accounts from inside one clean interface and allows you to monitor up to five social media profiles plus two RSS feeds under its free-version policy. In fact, the free version may be all you really need.

HootSuite will let you schedule messages so they go out when they will be seen by the most people. It also offers analytic reports, link shrinking and the ability to post to multiple networks at the same time. The paid version of the app adds team collaboration, messaging between team members and a way to provide different access levels.

A story can be posted from inside HootSuite simultaneously or individually to Facebook profiles and pages, LinkedIn, Foursquare, MySpace, Twitter and other networks. Adding Google+ Pages remains an option available only with one of the upper-level paid accounts, which seems a strange twist, but the platform is evolving constantly. The HootSuite App Directory connects HootSuite via third-party developers with an ever-increasing list of companies including Flickr, MailChimp, Tumblr and YouTube. And the HootSuite app is also available on Android, Apple iOS, BlackBerry and other mobile platforms.

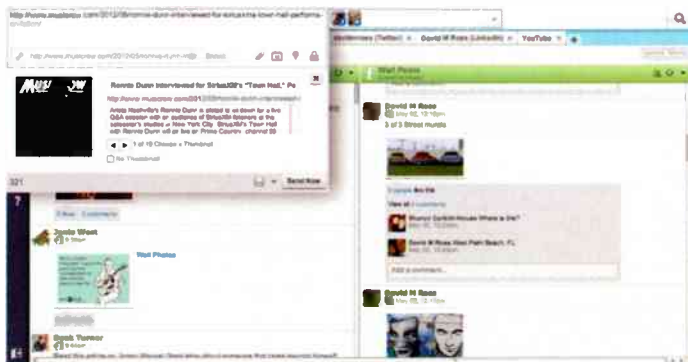
Pinky Gonzales, VP, Brand Strategy, BubbleUp, recently told *Billboard*, "Combined with tools like HootSuite (and) Twitalyzer and services like Klout, it's not an exaggeration to say that we have never had so much power to identify and influence music listeners as we do today."

That's a great point, but it's not just about the music. The online space is becoming congested with messages, analytics and data flying in every direction. To amplify your brand strategy and break through the clutter, it is necessary to benefit from all available tools.

For some, the idea of adding something new to the social media matrix may seem impossibly complex and perhaps unnecessary. The answer to this concern is: Start small and build. For example, begin your HootSuite experience with just one or two networks added to your dashboard. As the process of sending out posts and scheduling becomes more familiar, add additional network streams. Don't be afraid to click over to the app's rich archive area to browse some of the FAQs or search for answers to specific questions. Remember your first few days or weeks getting used to Facebook or Twitter? It gets easier, if you stay with it. Once you become fluid with one of these multipurpose social media tools, you'll be much better equipped to evaluate some of the many other available choices.

I wrote this in my new book, *Secrets of the List*: "Which (tools) best fit your needs will depend upon the various social networking sites that you frequent, the mobile and desktop hardware you use and the kinds of content you like to post. ... Tools have different functions."

As your confidence grows, you may also want to check out a few other tools. Bottlenose, still in beta, Crowdbooster and TweetDeck offer a well-implemented mix of visual features. The trick is to take your time, start slow and be patient.



These three HootSuite dashboards show the app's multipanel setup and content window, which allows users to share and/or post new content.

So get into the conversation. Follow, friend and circle people who are having fun with new technology and share your experiences with them. Follow me, for example, on Twitter at [@DavidMRoss](https://twitter.com/DavidMRoss). Tell me you read this article — and I promise to follow you back!

David M. Ross founded *MusicRow* magazine, which he sold in 2008 after a 30-year run as Publisher/CEO.

HOW TO BUILD THE PERFECT ROAD CREW by MARK CRAWFORD

Country Music wouldn't be where it is today without great artists. But those stars couldn't grow their audiences without virtuosic road crews.

In many ways, the road crew is just as important a part of the tour as the performer. As Chris Cagle put it, "Everyone is pretty much part of the band. We're all in it together. If the front-house guy has a bad day, no matter how well the band plays, we suck. If the monitor engineer is off, we can't hear ourselves play and we're off. Everybody is vital. We're all part of the team.

"My most important guy is my road manager, Mike Nash," he continued. "He knows how to handle me. He takes care of the band and all the logistics. He deals with people in a kind fashion. What you leave in your wake is just as important as what you accomplish. If the guy who represents you treats people with kindness yet sometimes has to be firm, but that firmness is still polite, that goes a long, long way and is one reason promoters have you back."

Road managers for smaller acts handle everything, while larger tours include both a road manager and a production manager, whose purviews are stage lighting and sound. "Rascal Flatts is a tour with lots of moving parts," said Mike McGrath, the band's former Tour Manager. "We have elevators, a video screen and complex lighting. We have departments that handle audio, lighting, sound, video and rigging. The crew has to be able to fix things and fix them quickly."

"Every crew member knows their job and nobody needs to be told what to do," added Mark Hively, Tour Manager for Martina McBride. "We have three buses, two semis, five drivers and 13 crew members. We pull in and everyone piles out and gets to work. I'd put my crew up against any crew on the road. They make a great show happen every night."

ASSEMBLING THE CREW

"It's sort of like fielding a baseball team," said Cagle. "For me, the most important thing is what we call 'the hang.' Will this guy be the kind of person you'll want to spend a lot of time with on tour? We're driving up and down the road in a tour bus, 500 to 600 miles a night, three or four days a week. The people you hire have to be people you'll want to be around."

Hively values work ethic. "I don't want to be a babysitter," he insisted. "Our people must be intelligent and know their gig. You often hire people you don't know, so you call around to check them out. Nashville is actually a pretty small community, so people know each other."

"We have guys who have never had a Nashville touring position," said Cagle. "I actually kind of like that because we can train them in our system. You can find people anywhere. I put the word out and will audition anybody. Also, when you have a management system in place, they can recommend people who will fit in. That's why we've had some guys stay with us for five or six years. When we find that fit, we want to do our best to keep them."

That's not always easy. Crew members sometimes move up and join artists who pay more money. Experienced roadies can make more than \$100,000 when they sign on with big-name acts that travel extensively.

"It's understood that you'll lose crew members," McGrath said. "Also, if we find guys from vendors who fit, we will hire them. For example, our front-house guy and monitor guy we hired from Sound Image. They understand. Sometimes they hire people away from us. That's the way careers are built."

BEST AND RECREATION

"Our crew hangs tight with the band," said Hively, who observed that some members have been onboard with McBride for 15 years. "We're like a family on the road. Many of us have to be away from our families and our kids, so it makes it even more important to work with people you like being around. Martina is like one of us. On days off, the crew and band go bowling together or golf and fish."

And when the unexpected happens, an ace crew will be ready to move swiftly and decisively to put on the best possible show. When Rascal Flatts played a private show in Dallas last year, a big storm blew in, heavy with lightning. "We got everyone inside the building," said McGrath. "They didn't expect the band to stay, but the guys said, 'C'mon, let's do it.' We got the sound crew together and within half an hour we were set up for a 45-minute acoustic show. The crew went into emergency mode. The success of that show is a testament to how important these guys really are."

Cagle summed it up. "I'm very proud to be associated with these guys who are very talented at what they do but who most of all are superior at being people."

"IF THE FRONT-HOUSE GUY HAS A BAD DAY, NO MATTER HOW WELL THE BAND PLAYS, WE SUCK."

— Chris Cagle

Mark Crawford is a full-time freelance writer based in Madison, Wis.

GOING VIRAL

THERE'S ONE VIRUS THAT EVERY ARTIST WANTS TO CATCH, AND THAT'S THE BUZZ

A video that captures the public's attention and gets spread through social media can be a huge boon in terms of visibility. Take Rebecca Black's video, "Friday." According to Visible Measures, a Boston-based social video analytics firm, the then-13-year-old's \$1,000 video took just 45 days to top 100 million YouTube views and has gone well beyond 430 million to date. It also became the subject of countless spoofs and launched the young singer onto a national stage, at least momentarily.

Justin Bieber, who ignited his career on YouTube, shared a video for Carly Rae Jepsen's "Call Me Maybe." That was enough to make it an Internet hit, with approximately 200 million views to date. Other acts, including Lana Del Rey and OK Go, also achieved huge visibility through the innovative use of video.

Not every artist will achieve that level of notoriety. And making a viral video shouldn't be the only goal of a digital media strategy. But most viral videos have certain qualities that can be appropriated to craft a clip that captivates fans and increases the chances of it being shared.

The videos most likely to be shared stir an emotional response in viewers. "The viral videos that work are either really funny or really sentimental," said Todd Cassetty, President, Hi-Fi Fusion, a Nashville-based video production company. "They evoke some kind of strong emotion. Humor or sentimentality — that's the first step."

A video can gain even more traction when it is spoofed, repeated or incorporated as part of a series. Black's "Friday" video spawned numerous spoofs and became part of the cultural zeitgeist. And Taylor Swift became part of a "challenge-and-response" series in 2010, when two Auburn University students posted YouTube videos as part of a campaign to meet the star.

After hearing about their "A Hug from Taylor Swift" campaign, Swift made a series of "challenge" videos, to which Ryan Leander and Michael Wekall posted their "response" videos. The series went viral and culminated with Swift traveling to Auburn on her own dime to put on a surprise show, all of it filmed and available to view on YouTube.

"It's just a charming, win-win, feel-good storyline that evolved over a series of viral videos," said Cassetty. "It was a very successful viral campaign."

Swift has proved to be a virtuoso at using online resources to maximize her connections to fans. As a new artist, she built her online presence on MySpace by posting short videos that allowed fans to see her in unguarded, ordinary moments. She continues to post videos,

letting viewers see her at home, hanging out with friends and playing pranks on the road.

"Taylor did a phenomenal job," Cassetty said. "It let people get to know her early, before mass media picked up on her."

Sloane Scott, a Partner at FLO (thinkery) and digital media strategist, adds that artists can create anticipation among fans by posting videos on a schedule, such as by adding a new short video on Facebook every week. "It's a way to train your audience without them knowing they've been trained," she said.

That's what Lady Antebellum did with *Webisode Wednesdays*. Every Wednesday since early 2008, the band has posted a candid video that captures the members' humor and lets fans experience their personalities. One video that went viral was their spoof of Easton Corbin's "A Little More Country than That." Lady A's "A Little More Preppy than That" spread rapidly on Twitter and has gotten more than 200,000 hits.

"It was brilliant," Cassetty said, referencing *Webisode Wednesdays*. "Their fan base got to know them even before radio was blowing them up. They were on all the TV shows and people felt, 'I know these people! I like these people! They feel approachable and real to me.' Those webisodes did a ton from a grass-roots standpoint to build a following for Lady A."

Cassetty suggests that artists build an online catalog of short personal videos — candid backstage moments, time spent with pets or pursuing hobbies — to let fans develop a sense of genuine connection. "If you go online and there are 10 videos of an artist and one is of him walking his dog, it makes you go, 'Oh, he loves dogs! / love dogs! We have that in common,'" he said. "There's nothing worse than going online to try to find something out about an artist and there's nothing there. It sounds silly, but it's those kinds of little connections that build interest and loyalty in an artist."

So how can artists and their teams get started?

FIRST, FIND OUT WHERE YOUR AUDIENCE SPENDS THE MOST TIME ONLINE. Do they use YouTube, Facebook, Twitter or Vimeo? Then, determine what the goal of the video is. Is it to promote a single, to grow audience or to get a sponsorship deal?

IDENTIFY WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT YOURSELF OR YOUR ARTIST. Use that insight to come up with an angle that will make either you or your client shine in a video. Has the artist recently adopted a puppy? Show her walking the dog. Does he love to cook? How about a three-minute video of



MAKE YOUR VIDEO A SOCIAL SENSATION

FROM HAVING A VIDEO GO VIRAL.

by JEANNIE A. NAUJECK

him showing his skills at the grill? Be sure the content feels true to the artist. A video of Miranda Lambert at the gun range feels authentic and genuine because she is known for her love of hunting. Another artist may not be able to pull it off.

CREATE LOTS OF VIDEOS. CREATE FUNNY VIDEOS. Edit ruthlessly. If a video feels more forced than funny, it will lose viewers. But a tightly edited video can make almost anyone look interesting. Take opportunities to turn negatives into positives. A clip of "American Idol" runner-up Lauren Alaina falling down a staircase went viral and was re-posted multiple times, garnering hundreds of thousands of views. But Alaina took it in stride — and that transformed an embarrassing moment into one that helped humanize her.

"You have to learn to use them, but if you do your audience will tell you what content they want to see and what they're willing to share with their friends," said Scott. "If you know how to use YouTube right and use all the free resources it provides, you can not only make a great amount of money for your artist, but you can also grow and nurture your fan base easily because they're already there. That's where they live."

DON'T OVERPRODUCE. A viral video doesn't need to have high production quality. "It's all about the content," Cassetty said. "You see stuff online that looks awful but gets a million hits. And you see stuff that's really polished and it gets a million hits. The point is, the quality doesn't matter. It's about content."

"THE VIRAL VIDEOS THAT WORK ARE EITHER REALLY FUNNY OR REALLY SENTIMENTAL."

— Todd Cassetty, President, Hi-Fi Fusion

"She loved to laugh at it and make fun of herself for being clumsy," Cassetty observed. "It makes her way more adorable that she can laugh at herself falling down the stairs. If you can be self-deprecating in a positive way, people will respond to that."

EDIT FOR LENGTH. The attention span for online videos is extremely short, according to research from Visible Measures. During the first 10 seconds of watching a video, 19.4 percent of viewers click away from it. After a minute has passed, 44.1 percent of the audience is gone.

The "viewer abandonment" rate is especially high for music videos. Videos with a storyline can go longer, but only if they engage viewers and draw them in emotionally. The half-hour "Kony 2012" video, which was meant to raise awareness about the Ugandan alleged war criminal Joseph Kony, went viral through sharing on Facebook, quickly passing 100 million views on YouTube and becoming at this writing the most viral video in history, according to Visible Measures.

"It's way too long for most people's attention span online," Cassetty conceded. "But it tapped into that emotion of injustice that people really responded to. It probably helped that it was so well-produced."

USE ANALYTICS TO MEASURE AUDIENCE RESPONSE. YouTube, Google and Facebook provide analytic tools that can be a powerful source of data on audience likes and dislikes.

"The less slick the better," Scott said. "If you want to make that million-dollar video, go ahead — but use the B-roll to create a behind-the-scenes video. Fans want something they can't get anywhere else. They want to feel like they're part of the process."

Support the video by driving fans to it through social media. Create a hashtag related to the content on Twitter, promote it on Facebook and integrate the video with the rest of your social media strategy. "It has to fit in well with what you're doing," Scott advised. "Fans are creatures of habit. You can't force someone to go somewhere they don't already go."

ABOVE ALL, BE COMMITTED AND HAVE A STRATEGY. "Can you shoot a video with a Flip camera?" Cassetty asked. "Absolutely, but keep in mind what you're shooting for. Quality is not a huge issue, but having a strategy is. You should not be without a tactical plan."

"You can't dip your toe in the water," Scott said. "If you decide to make a commitment, based on where your audience is, you have to keep doing it. Otherwise, you lose your audience. Get a regular schedule. Talk about what you're going to fill it with. Let it happen. Look at all the content and the content will tell you where it needs to go. Then measure it and give it time to take off."

Jeannie A. Naujeck has been a reporter for The Tennessean and the Associated Press as well as a radio producer for SiriusXM and National Public Radio.



Cindy Heath in training for the Sept. 22 Run Walk Wheel & Roll women's half-marathon.

CINDY HEATH

Cindy Heath, Founder and Owner of Monarch Publicity, actually has a very good reason for pushing 60 pounds of kitty litter around Nashville in a jeep stroller.

I'm in training, with the Run, Walk Wheel & Roll for the upcoming half-marathon," she explained. "My team and I race with kids in the ABLE Youth program in these strollers. It fills them with such joy because they are members of the team as well — and they help keep our morale up as we're racing."

There's an explanation for the kitty litter too. A lifelong cat lover, Heath got her good friend Wiley from Nashville Cat Rescue, a nonprofit organization dedicated to finding homes for cats that have been abandoned or rescued.

Though busy already at Monarch, Heath has made it a priority to add Nashville Cat Rescue to her commitments. Once the organization had earned 4,500 Likes on Facebook, she announced on her personal and company Facebook pages that she would match each additional Like up to 5,000 with a \$1 donation.

Heath's gesture drew attention online, as Monarch Publicity's Likes and interactions quickly escalated. "But that wasn't why I did this," she emphasized. "Really, my heart leads me to these things. I'm blessed and I've been given so much, so why not find a way?"

That includes mobilizing her own company through doing pro bono publicity for the Shalom Foundation, founded and chaired by CMA CEO Steve Moore to provide financial support and physical assistance to underprivileged children and their families.

Raised in a military family, Heath had a typical "Army brat" upbringing, which involved frequent relocations as her father picked up new assignments. When one of the moves ended up disrupting the family's Christmas holiday, they responded in a way that's come to characterize her view of service to others.

"I didn't want to move again, but we were packed up," she recalled. "It was Christmas, but there was no tree; everything in the house had been shipped. Instead of wallowing in not having a big, traditional Christmas, we went down to the mission and helped prepare and serve food that day. That's actually my favorite memory of my senior year."

In 1996, after graduating from the University of North Alabama in Florence, Heath moved to Nashville and began establishing herself in the music community, with staff positions at RCA and Lyric Street Records. She also explored her charitable options through Hands On Nashville, which she recommends as a gateway for anyone seeking a worthy cause to work with.

Even with a nine-mile run starting at 8:00 AM on her Saturday calendar for the half-marathon, Heath insists she is not spreading herself too thin. Smiling as she checked her smartphone for her next appointment, she explained, "I don't do well with down time."

MonarchPublicity.com; ABLEYouth.org; Facebook.com/beRWWR; Facebook.com/pages/Nashville-Cat-Rescue/106267715795; TheShalomFoundation.org



Kat'Lee Jones joins young beneficiaries of Autism Speaks after her Sept. 8 performance in Nashville.

KAT'LEE JONES

In "This Is Country Music," Brad Paisley averred that even cancer can inspire an honest lyric. The same is apparently true of autism, as Kat'Lee Jones can attest.

The Belgian-born Country singer/songwriter became familiar with the condition through friends whose children have been diagnosed with it. What struck Jones even more than its symptoms were the responses they triggered.

"The problem is mainly that the world needs to accept them," she said. "People think, 'Oh, no! I can't be friends with someone who has autism because they're going to have a big fit in the middle of a public place.' Or, 'I can't move stuff around because that might set them off.' They just say 'no' because they don't know anything about it."

It's not unusual for stars to support causes that touch them personally. Jones does have a strong following in Europe. Whether singing backup with Joe Cocker or fronting punk bands Purge and Red Zebra, she has built a following in Belgium that continues to turn out when she makes her frequent return visits.

In the States, though, she is in the early stages of her career. After a performance onstage at the CMA Global Artist Party just before the 2008 CMA Music Festival, she settled in Music City. Recently, she finished recording her U.S. debut album, to be released by the Nashville Enterprises imprint.

Still, Jones made it a mission to put her thoughts about autism to words and music. She began by joining with Ryan Cole, Marketing Manager, Nashville Enterprises, to watch the HBO movie "Temple Grandin," which recounts the life and work of the celebrated advocate for autism research.

Then they wrote two songs that examine the subject from different angles. In "You and Me," they adopted the perspective of Jada, the autistic daughter of a Nashville friend. "It started with the first two lines: 'When she walks through the door, she doesn't have to worry anymore,'" Jones said. "That whole HBO movie is about being afraid to walk to the door because it leads to something she does not know. At the end of the movie, she realizes that it's just a new beginning."

The second song, "Autism," takes a more general view yet still emphasizes humanity and understanding. "It's not sad," Jones insisted. "A kid spins around in a shop. Everybody thinks he's crazy, but I just take his hands and start dancing with him."

Both of these songs are available as downloads from Amazon and iTunes. Proceeds are being donated to Autism Speaks, a research and advocacy organization. Jones also performed Sept. 8 at the Fifth Annual Tennessee Walk Now for Autism Speaks event at Nashville's Bicentennial Capitol Mall State Park, where digital and physical copies of her songs were sold as well.

"I really hope these songs go all over the world," she said. "My name doesn't even have to be on them. Just sell these two songs and bring in money for these people because they really need it."

KatLeeJones.com; AutismSpeaks.org

Each CMA Member of the Month will be recognized in CMA Close Up and online at **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**, email **CloseUp@CMAworld.com**, or send information to CMA Member of the Month, One Music Circle South, Nashville, TN 37203.

Dierks Bentley Returns to CMA Songwriters Series in New York

by BOB DOERSCHUK

On Sept. 6, former CMA intern Dierks Bentley renewed his ties to the organization during a visit to New York City. Midday was devoted to a visit to PS 103, the Hector A. Fontanez School, in the Bronx, where a CMA donation of \$20,000 enabled the school to open a music program for students for the first time. To commemorate this first outreach beyond the Nashville area of CMA's Keep the Music Playing program, the artist shared his thoughts with an assembly of fourth-graders about the value of learning about music – and was delighted when they started singing along as he performed “5-1-5-0,” which they had rehearsed prior to his arrival.

It's a great honor to be a part of this, to get a bunch of musical instruments to the classroom so teachers for the first time can have music as an option for their curriculum," he reflected while on his way out from Manhattan for this event. "I'm really excited to see how all the money that's been raised through CMA is being used here."

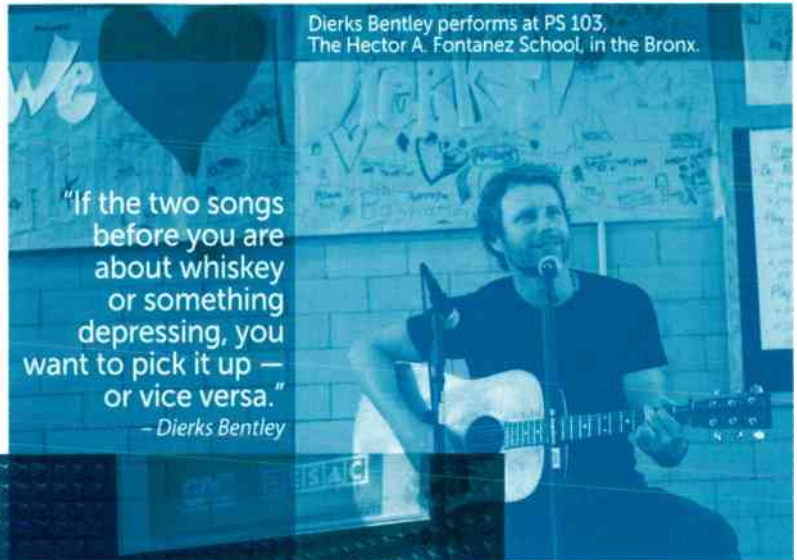
Hours after receiving his surprise serenade, Bentley was back in Manhattan to participate in that evening's CMA Songwriters Series show at Joe's Pub, along with Jim Beavers, Jaren Johnston and host Bob DiPiero. The atmosphere there was a bit different than at PS 103. Certainly the audience was older. But both of these CMA initiatives are about bringing music to people in ways they might not yet have experienced.

"The big goal tonight is just to represent Country Music and CMA, to show all the work that goes into Country Music and provide a wide spectrum of what it is," Bentley said. "What makes Country Music great, what comes out of these writers' nights, is the song. We pass along, hopefully, some great songs to people, whether they're Country fans or not. If they weren't Country fans before, hopefully they'll walk out as new ones."

Most who take part in the Songwriters Series work behind the scenes, writing words and music that singers might turn into hits. Usually, though, at least one participant is a high-profile performer too. For them, these shows provide an interesting contrast to their usual onstage presentations.

"It's totally different," Bentley acknowledged. "Before my live shows, I'll be listening to the Foo Fighters or Van Halen at the loudest possible volume, jumping up and down, going crazy. You have to get ready to go out and fight. Tonight, it'll be a laid-back hang with the guys. We'll have some beers, laugh and catch up. Then we'll go out onstage with that same vibe, sit down on our stools, tell some stories and have fun with the crowd."

Some preparation is involved, but spontaneity characterizes most of what happens in the CMA Songwriters Series. "There are definitely no set lists," Bentley said. "You keep some songs in the back of your head and pick what you're going to do



by feeding off the guy before you and setting up the guy after you. If the two songs before you are about whiskey or something depressing, you want to pick it up — or vice versa. That's completely different from

what I do every other day."

A key goal is to introduce the unsung heroes of Music Row and spotlight their songs as examples of modern Country craftsmanship. But there are performance elements in this setting too, just as on an arena stage. "This is really Bob DiPiero's thing," Bentley said. "He's the top — the Kenny Chesney of writers' rounds. He can hold the audience in the palm of his hand. Guys like Bob and Rivers Rutherford, they just smoke me every time in these writers' nights."

Having played his share of writer nights at the Bluebird Cafe, Douglas Corner Cafe and elsewhere as a newcomer to Nashville in the mid '90s, Bentley more than holds his own in any live situation — including a roomful of young fans at PS 103. That experience stirred memories of his experiences with music education, at Phoenix Country Day School in Arizona.

"They didn't have electric guitars in the school band," he remembered. "So I wanted to play bass guitar, but a guy named Ryan Fox had already lined that up. So I had to go with the saxophone, which was definitely not my instrument of choice. But it ended up being great. I learned to read music and to play along with other people. It definitely planted a seed and showed me that music could be played rather than just listened to."

Bentley thought for a second and then laughed. "I should have brought that saxophone along and donated it today. It might have had more use than it's getting now."

For more information, visit CMASongwritersSeries.com.



SONG YOU SING IN THE SHOWER "Depends on the mood. I do whistle 'The Andy Griffith Show' theme quite often — haha." **SONG YOU WISHED YOU'D WRITTEN** "Unanswered Prayers" by Garth Brooks." **MOMENT YOU'D LOVE TO RELIVE** "The day I first kissed my wife." **FIRST GIG** "The White Elephant Saloon in Fort Worth, Texas. Went great ... sang a lot of Blackhawk covers." **WHAT YOU HOPE PEOPLE SAY ABOUT YOU 50 YEARS FROM NOW** "He played by his own rules and made music his own way. He was unique."

JTHodges.com; @HelloJTHodges

JT HODGES

Counting down the days to his self-titled debut, JT Hodges proclaimed August "Prize Month." On his various social sites, he invited fans to vie for more than 160 prizes, ranging from personalized handwritten notes to autographed guitars, photos, hats, and Copperpeace guitar straps. Fifty lucky winners will also have their Twitter addresses included in the album's liner notes.

Clearly, Hodges knows both sides of the music business. That's no surprise: His parents met as band members. Their son grew up at their high-profile studio in Fort Worth, where he learned the ropes, from cleaning bathrooms to laying tracks. By the time he moved to Nashville, he was ready and eager to launch his career.

Signed in 2010 to Show Dog-Universal Music, Hodges' rock-toughened style won notice from SDU President Mark Wright, who shares production on the young artist's debut project, which marries crisp instrumental tracks and high-impact vocals. (One track was produced by Don Cook, Wright and Ross Copperman.)

JT Hodges hits full speed with the opener, "Rather Be Wrong Than Lonely," penned by Hodges, Mark Collie and Cook. One of the nine songs co-written by the artist, it's a nonstop four-beat *tour de force*, with a call to "come on, come on, baby" whisking listeners into an irresistible chorus hook, sung in solid harmony. A similar exuberance permeates the single, "Hunt You Down" (Hodges, Collie and Rivers Rutherford), where a simple I-IV chord sequence gives Hodges space to animate the playful, seductive lyric. "We never talked about tomorrow," he sings, although people will talk about this gifted newcomer for many tomorrows to come.

DUSTIN LYNCH

Lots of young artists come to Nashville to seek their musical fortunes. Dustin Lynch's plans were more focused. He wanted to come to a specific part of Nashville — specifically, as close as he could get to the Bluebird Cafe to hear and learn from the best songwriters in town as often as possible.

One day after his arrival, Lynch auditioned to play the Bluebird's openmic night the following evening. His performance so impressed host Barbara Cloyd that she offered to introduce him around the community. Not long after that, Peter Hartung, head of L3Entertainment and manager to Justin Moore, engineered a publishing deal for him. Word spread quickly of Lynch's talent; in less than two years, he finished more than 200 songs.

With his self-titled debut album on Broken Bow Records, another side of his talent emerges. Lynch's vocals enhance his fine-tuned writing on 10 of these tracks — and the craftsmanship of those who penned the remaining three. The first single, "Cowboys and Angels" (Lynch, Josh Leo and Tim Nichols), is built on an image-rich lyric, which flows out conversationally through verses a relaxed 7/8 and then opens wide over a spacious backbeat on the choruses.

The rest of *Dustin Lynch* conveys this same combination of understated but expressive singing, strong composition and lyrics with an unusual, dreamy depth. Even his upbeat study in down-home double entendre, "She Cranks My Tractor" (Lynch, Brett Beavers and Nichols), conjures vivid visuals, both pristine and suggestive. But the last track, "Your Plan," written by Lynch alone, confirms that he also possesses the courage to write honestly and the insight to find inspiration within.



SONG YOU'D LOVE TO COVER "Stellar," by Incubus." **SONG YOU SING IN THE SHOWER** "My go-to is 'Baby's Got Her Blue Jeans On,' by Mel McDaniel." **DREAM DUET PARTNER** "Ms. Reba McEntire." **ACTOR TO PORTRAY YOU IN A BIOPIC** "I'm a big fan of Matt Damon. He'd be cool." **FAVORITE FOOD ON THE ROAD** "I try my best to eat healthy, but there's something irresistible about the letters IHOP at night." **TITLE OF YOUR AUTOBIOGRAPHY** "Persistent Dreamer."

DustinLynchMusic.com; @DustinLynch

Debut Spotlight compiled by BOB DOERSCHUK



JORDAN ANDERSON

Where plenty of young singer/songwriters aspire to stardom, Jordan Anderson's dreams were more detailed — for example, to someday sing at LP Field during CMA Music Festival. "It seems like nothing could be better," she said. "You're surrounded by thousands of the most loyal fans who have traveled from all over to see you and hear your music."

Her priorities are admirable. Even more impressive is how far she's come in such a short time. She was born just 19 years ago and raised near her family's farm in Loveland, Colo. until she was 10. Relocated with her family to Florida, she performed at Disney World and other venues. She's now an undergraduate at Nashville's Belmont University. But unlike many of her classmates, she has already affiliated with a record label, Go Time Records, and released her debut album.

Produced by Kent Wells, *Key to My Heart* targets the young Country audience. Its 13 songs are rock-solid and pop-inflected, all with a focus on the pleasures and distresses of early romance. Small wonder too, since Anderson's name is on each of them — five as the sole composer and the rest as a co-writer.

The title track and first single exemplifies her perspective as well as her skill. Written by Anderson and Rob Crosby, it has a catchy declamatory chorus, laced by tasty touches of fiddle and steel. Her singing here nods toward Taylor Swift, as do her evocations of front porches, fireflies, good-night calls and lakeside strolls. But her delivery, a tad smoky yet buoyant, indicates that she has laid a foundation on which she is building a sound all her own.

MUSICAL HERO "Shania Twain." **DREAM DUET PARTNER** "Matthew West." **SONG YOU WISH YOU'D WRITTEN** "Don't Stop Believin' by Journey." **FIRST GIG** "It was at the town hall in my hometown. Two of my friends and myself put together a set to be the entertainment for a fundraiser when I was in seventh grade. It went as well as a show put together by seventh-graders could go!" **WHAT YOU'D BE IF NOT A MUSICAL ARTIST** "An electrical engineer or a professional golfer."
JordanAndersonCountry.com

KELLEIGH BANNEN

Kelleigh Bannen never made the trek to Nashville — she was already there. Born and raised in Music City, she was singing and writing songs when she was 2 years old. Well, actually, as she notes in her self-written bio, "it was a little song with two lines that I would sing to myself inspired by the 'word of the day' from 'Sesame Street.'"

Safe to say, at least, that her ears were wide open at an early age, taking in music beyond the Country playlist and kiddie show themes to include Frank Sinatra, Patty Griffin and other eclectic performers. However, Country proved to be her true calling, so after graduating from college in Virginia, she hastened back home to develop her writing and discover her own sound as a singer.

That sound shines on her upcoming debut album, produced by Paul Worley and Jerry Smith and set to release on EMI Records Nashville. Its first single, "Sorry on the Rocks," went to radio in July. Written by Bannen and Troy Johnson, it recounts a relationship melting down, like ice in an untended glass past last call. Bannen's strong, assertive vocals underscore the clever metaphor that flows through each verse and chorus.

Similarly, the words on another Bannen/Johnson tune, "Rose Colored Glasses," balance playfully between the prosaic poetry of getting up in the morning and more elevated appreciations of how love can add color to "the whole world covered in ashes." The music, strutting at medium tempo over a guitar riff that might recall "American Woman," underscores Bannen's ability to animate a sunny tale as handily as a lost-love lament. Her confidence and her Country soul make it sound like she never left Nashville at all.



CD IN YOUR STEREO Lee Brice's *Hard 2 Love* and the Gotye record (*Making Mirrors*)." **SONG YOU WISH YOU'D WRITTEN** "Easy — 'The House That Built Me.'" **PET PEEVE** "Loud chewing noises at the dinner table — gross!" **MOMENT YOU WISH YOU COULD RELIVE** "The last Christmas before my little brother passed away." **SOMETHING WE'D NEVER GUESS ABOUT YOU** "I was bitten by a rattlesnake the summer before my freshman year in high school."
KelleighBannen.com; @KelleighBrannen



Eddie Montgomery and Troy Gentry pose with standees of themselves at a Buffets restaurant.

BUFFETS RESTAURANTS

COOK WITH COUNTRY

Charlie Daniels is among many who are already nostalgic for the days when you could explore new releases in a CD store. "Of course, I hated to see vinyl go away first," he noted, smiling.

Plenty of fans feel the same, which is one reason why Daniels' partnership with Buffets Inc. feels right. With more than 350 restaurants operating in 35 states under a variety of names (Home Town Buffet, Old Country Buffet, Ryan's and others), Buffets serves around 100 million customers each year, many of whom are already fans of Country Music.

Beginning in November, they will be able to purchase *Hallelujah It's Christmas Time Again*, a compilation of holiday songs recorded by Daniels and offered now exclusively through Buffets. "The great thing is that you've got a point-of-purchase product. You can walk up, pick it out and take it home. You don't have to get online — especially if you're as technologically challenged as I am," said Daniels, with a laugh.

Buffets road-tested the idea of selling Country CDs in July, when it started stocking Montgomery Gentry's *Rebels on the Run*. "We were looking for ways to strengthen relationships with our guests," explained Jason Abelkop, Chief Marketing Officer, Buffets Inc. "One thing that we noticed with all the types of folks who come into our restaurants is that so many of them love Country Music. From there, it was about building that connection through great artist tie-ins and by bringing our military charity component in as well."

Beginning by "finding the lowest price there was out there in the retail space and then going lower, we wanted to offer our guests the same value on their CD purchase that they receive when dining in our restaurants," Abelkop said. He noted that his company saw this as an opportunity to give back by donating its profit margins from sales of both albums to the Armed Services YMCA. Dedicated to assisting children of military personnel during deployment, the ASYMCA applies contributions from Buffets to fund its Operation Outdoors camp program.

Buffets spread word of the project through in-store displays (including near-life-size standees of the artists), a satellite news tour for TV and radio, direct mail to more than 10 million households and outreach nearly 2 million guests registered in the company's ECRM (electronic consumer relations marketing) digital database and 350,000 Facebook fans. "We ended up selling north of three times our original projection for *Rebels on the Run*," Abelkop said. "And the last couple of months have been some of the strongest we've seen from sales and traffic perspectives in the past six years. The Montgomery Gentry campaign was absolutely a big part of it."

The arrangement apparently works for the artists too. "The feedback from the managers in our restaurants is that lots of folks purchased the CD who didn't even know who Montgomery Gentry is," Abelkop said. "They just wanted to support the ASYMCA, but while it's anecdotal it seems like we've been helping to create new fans of Montgomery Gentry and soon Charlie Daniels as well."

Buffet.com; CharlieDaniels.com; MontgomeryGentry.com



Kip Moore relaxes on a Chevy Silverado in his video for "Somethin' Bout a Truck."

CARL BLACK

KEEPS IT COUNTRY

That Chevy Silverado in Kip Moore's "Somethin' Bout a Truck" video didn't just happen to be out in that field when the cameras started rolling. No, it was borrowed from the Carl Black Chevrolet Automotive Group, whose support has helped shift more than a few young Country artists' careers into high gear.

The dealer's ties to Country reflect the musical preference of its president, Mike Bowsher. Even before the Nashville store opened in June 2003, Bowsher had built Carl Black's business in Atlanta (Kennesaw and Roswell, Ga.) by advertising year-round on partner Country radio stations and offering live performances, hot dogs, burgers and other snacks, all for free, via its "Live on the Lot" events.

"Live on the Lot" provides our company a unique opportunity," explained PD Sumner, VP, Carl Black Automotive Group. "Maybe you've never done business with us or even been to one of our stores. But you're a big Kip Moore fan or a Luke Bryan fan or whatever the case may be. You come out to the dealership. We get to offer our hospitality. You get to see a great show and hear some great music. There's a stage, the grills are smoking, the coolers are out and everyone is having a great time. Then, maybe somewhere down the road, when you're in the market for a new car, you can say, 'Hey, I'm going to give those guys over at Carl Black a chance.' That's how it works. All we can ask for is an opportunity."

The dealership's arrival in Music City raised its presence immediately within their targeted market. When it opened in Nashville, Carl Black partnered with CMA and exhibited at CMA Music Fest. "We had a popup tent, a popup table and two chairs," Sumner recalled. "People were blown away that we were there, in the middle of the Family Zone, with artists signing autographs."

Carl Black's lots have become venues for new artists to connect with a demographic that loves to crank up Country on a Chevy stereo. Recent promotions at the Nashville location have included "Win It Before You Buy It" events, at which pre-release copies of CDs by artists including Kix Brooks, Little Big Town, Love and Theft and Dustin Lynch are given to the first 50 in line. The dealer also sponsors "Tailgate Tour Parties" at the Grand Ole Opry, featuring Eric Church, Thomas Rhett, Josh Thompson and others. And those who tune in to Carl Black's partner stations in Nashville, Atlanta (Roswell) and Orlando have been hearing Lee Brice extol the dealer's vehicles, service and community spirit on commercial spots.

As for Moore, his relationship with Carl Black goes beyond the opportunity to win new fans through "Live at the Lot" appearances. For his June performance in Nashville, the company evoked "Somethin' Bout a Truck" by providing red sundresses for its Carl Black Girls, who are used for hospitality at events. "They give me women and they give me a truck," Moore said, with a laugh. "It doesn't get any better than that."

CarlBlackChevy.com; KipMoore.net

OCT. 2

Iris DeMent / *Sing the Delta* / Flariella Records
Lucky Ned Pepper / *Get Lucky* / Nine North Records
Tift Merritt / *Traveling Alone* / Yep Roc
Jerrod Niemann / *Free the Music* / Sea Gayle Records/Arista Nashville
Lindi Ortega / *Cigarettes & Truckstops* / Last Gang Records
Blake Shelton / *Cheers, It's Christmas* / Warner Nashville
Hank Williams / *Hank Williams: The Lost Concerts Limited Collector's Edition* / Time Life
Mac Wiseman / *Legacy: An American Treasure* / Mandolin Records/Music Mill
various artists / *Reno's Best of Bluegrass* / Mandolin Records/Music Mill

OCT. 9

Glen Campbell and Jimmy Webb / *In Session* / Fantasy/Concord
Alan Jackson / *Playlist: The Very Best of Alan Jackson* / RCA/Legacy
Wanda Jackson / *Unfinished Business* / Sugar Hill Records
George Jones / *Heartaches and Hangovers* / Time/Life Music / WEA
George Jones & Tammy Wynette / *Playlist: The Very Best of George Jones & Tammy Wynette* / Epic/Legacy
Willie Nelson & Waylon Jennings / *Playlist: The Very Best of Willie Nelson & Waylon Jennings* / Columbia/Legacy
Tim O'Brien and Darrell Scott / *We're Usually a Lot Better Than This* / Full Light Records
Collin Raye / *Playlist: The Very Best of Collin Raye* / Epic/Legacy
Kenny Rogers / *Amazing Grace* / Gaither Music Group
Mindy Smith / *The Essential Mindy Smith* / Vanguard (vinyl only)
Porter Wagoner & Dolly Parton / *Playlist: The Very Best of Porter Wagoner & Dolly Parton* / RCA/Legacy
Aaron Watson / *Real Good Time* / HTK Records

OCT. 16

Jason Aldean / *Night Train* / Broken Bow
Claire Lynch & Front Porch String Band / *Hills of Alabam* / Rebel Records
Rosie Flores / *Working Girl's Guitar* / Bloodshot
Joe Mullins & The Radio Ramblers / *They're Playing My Song* / Rebel Records

Jamey Johnson / *Living for a Song: A Tribute to Hank Cochran* / Mercury Nashville
Scotty McCreery / *Christmas with Scotty McCreery* / 19 Recordings/Interscope
Willie Nelson / *Heroes* / Yep Roc (vinyl reissue)
various artists / *A Very Special Christmas: Bringing Peace on Earth / Word* (includes Vince Gill, The Band Perry, Rascal Flatts, etc.)
various artists / *True Bluegrass Banjo* / Rebel Records
various artists / *True Bluegrass Fiddle* / Rebel Records

OCT. 22

Kasey Chambers & Shane Nicholson / *Wreck & Ruin* / Sugar Hill
Lady Antebellum / *On This Winter's Night* / Capitol Nashville
Taylor Swift / *Red* / Big Machine

OCT. 23

Billy Ray Cyrus / *Change My Mind* / Blue Cadillac Music
Donna Ulisse / *All the Way to Bethlehem* / Hadley Music Group

OCT. 29

Johnny Cash / *The Complete Columbia Album Collection* / Columbia/Legacy (63 CDs)

OCT. 30

LiveWire / *Livein' / Way Out West* / Records
Rosehill / *Crooked Thoughts* / Cypress Creek

NOV. 6

Charley Pride / *Did You Think to Pray* / Music City Records (reissue)
Ronnie Reno and The Reno Tradition / *Portfolio* / Mandolin/Music Mill

NOV. 13

Toby Keith / *Hope on the Rocks* / Show Dog-Universal
Aaron Lewis / *The Road* / Blaster/Warner Music Nashville

DEC. 6

Charlie McCoy / *Lonesome Whistle: A Tribute to Hank Williams* / DiamondDisc Records

DEC. 11

Buddy Miller and Jim Lauderdale / *Buddy & Jim* / New West Records

JAN. 22

Blue Sky Riders / *Blue Sky Riders* / Blue Sky Riders (Kenny Loggins, Georgia Middleman & Gary Burr)



New CD Releases compiled by **BOB DOERSCHUK**

by KIP KIRBY

If all the Hank Williams tribute albums were laid side by side, the line would stretch quite a ways down Music Row, and the artists who contributed to them would fill a who's who of music. Now, with the release of *Lonesome Whistle: A Tribute to Hank Williams*, you can add Country Music Hall of Famer Charlie McCoy's name to that list.

McCoy has crafted an album that's part instrumental, part vocals and part spoken memories and shared anecdotes, based on a format of the old-time radio shows that Williams used to do. With help from guest artists Roy Clark, Ricky Skaggs and Jett Williams, McCoy presents 11 Hank Williams classics, plus an original he wrote especially for this project, "The Hank Williams Song."

Listening to this album is like being in the studio with a group of musicians who are just sitting around and reminiscing about the man who's been called the greatest Country songwriter of all time. Classics including "Mind Your Own Business" (with Skaggs and Clark), "You Win Again," "Lovesick Blues" and "I Can't Help It" showcase the depth of Williams' skill with a lyric and a melody, as performed by McCoy and a list of A-Team session musicians.

"I've been thinking about this for six years," McCoy said. "Number one, I love the music. And number two, the music fits what I do. But the other thing is the strange connection between Hank and me. I was born in the town that he died in (Oak Hill, W.Va.). The funeral home that handled his body, the owners were friends of my mother's. I was only 11 and I was already living in Florida, so I didn't know anything about Country Music. But when I moved here to Nashville as a rock 'n' roller, I quickly understood. I knew Country Music was going to be what I would do the rest of my life. And when you start talking about Country Music, you gotta go back to the roots. Hank Williams is the man."

The most challenging aspect of recording *Lonesome Whistle* involved narrowing down the final song selections. McCoy wanted to do Williams songs that fit his instrument — "which," he observed, "most of them do." He was also certain he wanted "Your Cheatin' Heart" and "Jambalaya" for Jett Williams' participation. "Jett and I have toured together three

times, twice in Denmark and once in Japan," McCoy recalled. "Six years ago, I mentioned this project to her. And she said, 'Man, whenever you get ready to do this, I'm in.'"

With Hank's daughter onboard, McCoy put together a short list of artists to invite. "I first reached out to Hank Jr., but I never got a response," he said. "Then I reached out to Holly and Hilary (Williams, daughters of Hank Jr.), but they were on tour. So then I thought, 'Okay, it's me and Jett.' Then I was working a TV show with (CMA Country Music Hall of Fame member) Roy Clark, and Roy and I have so much history together because of 18 years on 'Hee Haw.' So just in passing, I said, 'Hey, Roy, I'm going to do a Hank Williams tribute. Would you be a guest on it?' He said, 'Any time! You just tell me where and when. I'd be honored.' After that, I was cutting a record project at Ricky's (Skaggs) studio and he walked through the control room. I said, 'Hey, Ricky, I'm going to do a Hank Williams tribute. Would you be a guest?' And he said, 'Absolutely!' I decided to let it ride at that with Jett, Ricky and Roy."

The album was recorded in a series of live takes over a two-day period in June 2011 at Skaggs Place Studio in Hendersonville, Tenn. Everyone except Clark was present. Nothing in the spoken segments was scripted. Tape rolled and memories flowed. "Ricky was there, Jett was there, all the musicians were there live," McCoy noted. "We just let it go the way we used to — under time and under budget."

Andrew Heller, who owns DiamondDisc Records with his wife, Mary Ann, didn't hesitate when approached by McCoy about releasing *Lonesome Whistle*. "Charlie was really passionate about it," he remembered. "And in my view, when Charlie is passionate about a project, his passion is going to come out in the music. He just had a whole different approach to doing this tribute to Hank. I'm a Hank Williams fan anyway, and my wife and I decided that we'd produce it on our label. It would be something we could be proud of even if it wasn't

CHARLIE MCCOY

Charlie McCoy performs in Kyoto, Japan, 2010. photo: Michio Yama

a big moneymaker. There are lots of Hank Williams tribute albums out there, but we just felt it was worth doing, that we'd have something very special even if it didn't make a lot of money."

The CD is being marketed in the United States and Europe by MVD Entertainment, with active radio promotion through the fall and the Skaggs/Clark track, "Mind Your Own Business," designated for single release. McCoy and Heller each believe the album has appeal for fans of Country Music as well as Hank Williams collectors.

"This album features some great, great musicians who may not ever get together like this again," Heller explained. "I was working with Boots Randolph. We were going to do a show on the West Coast. I was at his house a week after his 80th birthday at the farm. And two weeks later, he had a stroke and died. I don't want to see these guys not get together and not do things that are great and that we can remember them by. So this was an opportunity to see some great musicians get together on a great project."

A highlight of the album is a first-time duet with Hank and Jett Williams on "I Saw the Light." The original track, featuring Williams Sr. with The Drifting Cowboys, came from an appearance on a vintage radio show. Although a duet with her father had been "talked about in the past," as she put it, it always somehow remained on the back burner until now.

"I'm not prejudiced, but my dad, in my opinion, is the greatest songwriter and singer (ever) in Country Music, if not music overall," Jett insisted. "Charlie is a musical genius, and Hank Williams was a major influence on his love and pursuit and the magic that he lends to his seminal talent. To have Charlie honor my dad this way and ask me to be part of the album is a tribute. Hopefully, I bring some heart to the project."

"Jett helped tremendously," McCoy affirmed, enthusiastically. "When she brought me the Hank Williams radio show, we pulled a Natalie Cole and overdubbed Jett and me singing with Hank. It is so cool!"

All the musicians who played on *Lonesome Whistle* held Williams in the highest respect. "I don't think Charlie ever got to meet Hank," Skaggs mused. "None of us in the studio that day ever did. But 100 years from now, people will probably still be doing Hank Williams songs. When Charlie asked me to be part of this record, I thought, 'Gosh, I can't turn this down — a chance to sing a Hank Williams song and play with Charlie

McCoy.' I'm such a fan of Charlie's and his contribution to Nashville music. I think Charlie did well by choosing 'Mind Your Own Business' for me to do. It's a little uptempo and has a little swing to it, and it's one I've always loved to hear Hank do with The Drifting Cowboys, with that call-and-response thing going back and forth."

Now at the half-century mark in his musical career, McCoy has achieved legendary status in his own right. He has played on more than 13,000 studio sessions with artists of great renown, including Chet Atkins, Perry Como, Bob Dylan, Roy Orbison, Dolly Parton and Simon & Garfunkel. His harmonica can be heard on seven Elvis Presley film soundtracks. And that's not all: McCoy has also tracked on guitar, bass, organ, saxophone, trumpet and tuba, among other instruments. His honors have included a Grammy Award in 1972 for his album *The Real McCoy* and CMA Awards for Instrumentalist of the Year in 1972 and '73. In 2009, he was inducted into CMA's Country Music Hall of Fame; he is also a member of the International Musicians Hall of Fame and the West Virginia Hall of Fame.

Even so, McCoy keeps the spotlight on the man he honors with *Lonesome Whistle* and hopes others will agree. "Hank blows my mind," he said. "Just 29 years old, without a high school education, yet his songs are as popular today as they were 50 years ago."

He paused, and then added, "Other than a (Kris) Kristofferson, what other writer is going to have this longevity? It's not going to happen, I don't think, anymore. We live in a disposable society now. But the songs of Hank Williams are timeless. With this record, we just tried to portray them the way I thought they should be portrayed. I hope he would have liked it."

CharlieMcCoy.com

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.

Kip Kirby's articles have appeared in Country Weekly, Tune-In, Songwriter's Digest and other publications.

"One hundred years from now, people will probably still be doing Hank Williams songs."

— Ricky Skaggs

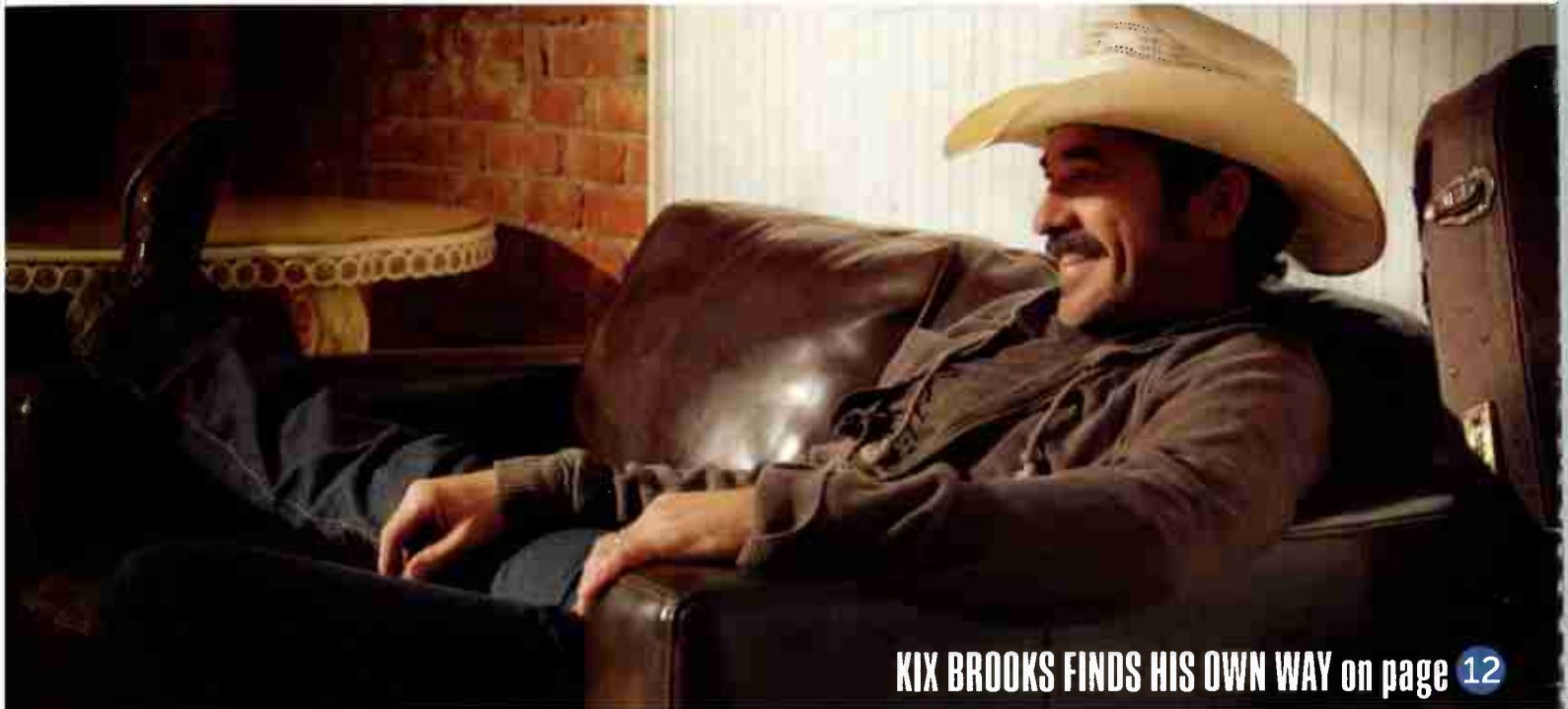
HONORS THE SONGS AND SPIRIT OF HANK WILLIAMS



AUTO **5-DIGIT 37206

515033 68

NATALIE KILGORE
DASHBOARD MEDIA, LLC
PO BOX 60467
NASHVILLE TN 37206-0467



KIX BROOKS FINDS HIS OWN WAY on page 12

cma events

OCTOBER

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 3

Third Quarterly CMA Board Meeting 2012 | Hilton Nashville Downtown and Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum | Nashville | Invitation only

THURSDAY, OCT. 4

CMA Awards final ballot emailed | 10 AM

TUESDAY, OCT. 9

CMA SRO Awards Presentations | "The 42nd Annual IEBA Conference" | Sheraton Downtown Nashville Hotel | 6:30 PM

SATURDAY, OCT. 20

"CMA Music Festival: Country's Night to Rock" | 8 – 11 PM | GAC

SUNDAY, OCT. 21

Medallion Ceremony for New Members of CMA's Country Music Hall of Fame | Garth Brooks, Hargus "Pig" Robbins and Connie Smith | Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum | 5 PM | Nashville | Invitation Only

"CMA Music Festival: Country's Night to Rock" | 12 – 3 AM; 5 – 8 PM | GAC

MONDAY, OCT. 22

Deadline for voting on CMA Awards final ballot | 5 PM

TUESDAY, OCT. 23

CMA Awards Nominees Luncheon | 11 AM | The Southern Steak & Oyster | Nashville | Invitation only

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 24

CMA Songwriters Series | Joe's Bar | Chicago | Bob DePiero, Sunny Sweeney and Friends | Tickets: CMASongwritersSeries.com

THURSDAY, OCT. 25

CMA Songwriters Series | Joe's Pub | New York | Bob DiPiero, Sunny Sweeney and friends | Tickets: CMASongwritersSeries.com

**All times Central unless otherwise noted.*

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 31

CMA Songwriters Series | Marathon Music Works | Nashville | Bob DiPiero and friends | Tickets: CMASongwritersSeries.com

CMA International Media Reception | Bredesen Terrace | Hilton Nashville Downtown | 4-5:30 PM | Invitation only

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 31 – THURSDAY, NOV. 1

CMA Marketing Summit | Nashville | Invitation only

NOVEMBER

THURSDAY, NOV. 1

"The 46th Annual CMA Awards" | Country Music's Biggest Night | Hosted by Brad Paisley and Carrie Underwood | 7 – 10 PM | Bridgestone Arena | Nashville | Live on ABC

Post CMA Awards Party | 10 PM – 2 AM | Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum | Invitation only

SATURDAY, NOV. 3

"CMA Country Christmas" taping | Hosted by Sugarland's Jennifer Nettles | 7:30 PM | Bridgestone Arena Nashville | Tickets: Ticketmaster.com

