

# CLOSEUP



**CMA**

SUMMER 2015

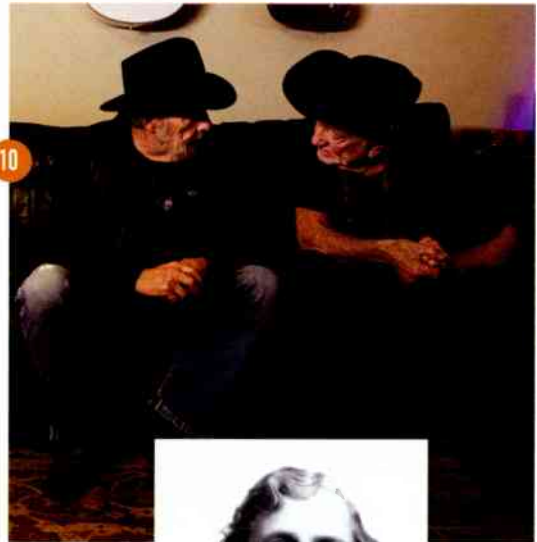
**ALAN  
JACKSON'S  
BIG 25<sup>TH</sup>**

**WILLIE &  
MERLE  
TOGETHER  
AGAIN**

**CMA MUSIC  
FESTIVAL  
SOARS**

**JIM ED  
BROWN  
IN MEMORIAM**

- 4 LITTLE BIG TOWN UP TO CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL CHALLENGE
- 6 SOCIAL MEDIA GIVES FEST FANS SCREEN TIME
- 7 BRAND PARTNERS DOUBLING DOWN ON COUNTRY MUSIC
- 8 KACEY MUSGRAVES DELIVERS SPARKLING SECOND ALBUM
- 10 WILLIE & MERLE, TOGETHER AGAIN
- 12 MIDTOWN HILLS PRECINCT SERVES MUSIC ROW
- 14 REMEMBERING JIM ED BROWN
- 16 25 AND COUNTING FOR ALAN JACKSON
- 20 SALLY WILLIAMS' 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY RYMAN UPDATE
- 23 SALLY WILLIAMS ON MISS LULA C. NAFF
- 24 KRISTIAN BUSH PROVES YOU CAN CAPTURE THE MAGIC AGAIN
- 27 CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL RESEARCH
- 28 CMA PULSE
- 29 DEBUT ARTIST SPOTLIGHT
- 30 MASTHEAD
- 31 ENCORE



8

16

10

23



# CMA

MUSIC FESTIVAL  
COUNTRY'S NIGHT TO ROCK

Tuesday Aug 4 8|7c



HOSTED BY LITTLE BIG TOWN





# FANTASTIC FOUR

## LITTLE BIG TOWN PULLS DOUBLE DUTY AT CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL

by CHRIS TALBOTT

**Any act can tell you CMA Music Festival is a workout, full of long days, quick on-and-off setups and so many grips and grins. Even a day at Country Music's biggest gathering takes a certain kind of toughness, especially when it's 95 degrees on the asphalt in downtown Nashville. Try surviving four days — while hosting a TV show taping in constant motion, performing two nights at LP Field and dealing with unforeseen complications that might set any other performer back.**

Little Big Town made it look easy. Again.

The CMA Award-winning vocal quartet comprised of longtime Nashville survivors hosted the ABC special "CMA Music Festival: Country's Night to Rock," airing Tuesday, Aug. 4, at 8 p.m. ET on ABC for the third year, and finished with a flourish by putting on

the weekend's most visually interesting show while member Jimi Westbrook dealt with vocal problems and the group's team leader, manager Jason Owen, was pulled away by a death in the family.

As always, Karen Fairchild, Kimberly Schlapman, Phillip Sweet and Westbrook got through it with teamwork.

"I think being part of a group makes it so much easier," Schlapman said in her lilting voice. "I can't imagine just being a single person having to run to the top of the stadium or over across the street and change shoes and clothes and all that crazy stuff. We love to do this because we get to split up and we do it just girls and just guys and Phillip and I do something together or Karen and Jimi do something together. It just keeps it so exciting and so fun. It's just different. We're always just singing songs. It's fun to do something different and a little more of a challenge."

That challenge started at 9:30 a.m. sharp on June 11 when the group cut the ribbon and kicked off a Festival they first encountered in 1999 when they opened for Wynonna at the old Fairgrounds





**BRIAN COLLINS,** VP OF WIRELINE CONSUMER MARKETING, AT&T HOME SOLUTIONS, CMA BOARD PRESIDENT-ELECT SALLY WILLIAMS AND CMA BOARD PRESIDENT JOHN ESPOSITO LOOK ON AS LITTLE BIG TOWN WELCOMES FANS TO THE RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY AT THE AT&T U-VERSE FAN FAIR X.

**FACING PAGE:** LITTLE BIG TOWN SUPPORTS THE CMA FOUNDATION'S MUSIC EDUCATION MATTERS INITIATIVE BY INVITING STUDENTS FROM THE NASHVILLE CHAPTER OF NOTES FOR NOTES TO THEIR SOUND CHECK AT LP FIELD.

location. "She patted me on my little head," Sweet remembered with a big smile. This time around they're in Nashville's new Music City Center, the sprawling host to AT&T U-verse Fan Fair X, and unlike the Tennessee State Fairgrounds every square inch of it is air-conditioned. The challenge this morning is there are a lot of square inches to cover between the ribbon cutting, their first round of many media sessions and a Festival-opening interview at the CMA Close Up Stage.

Twelve minutes into the Festival a member of the group says for the first (and definitely not the last) time, "I'm going to change my shoes" (Schlapman, this time, fading fast on a pair of impossibly high spikes). The walk's worth it, though, as the group opens the CMA Close Up Stage with an interview and a game of Heads Up with members of the crowd, one of her favorite moments from the weekend.

There were a lot of big ones along the way. On Friday, the group surprised the LP Field crowd by joining 2015 Country Music Hall

of Fame inductees The Oak Ridge Boys on stage for an octet's take on Oaks classic "Elvira."

For Fairchild, it was a transcendent moment. She fell in love with four-part harmony as a child when she saw the Oak Ridge Boys in concert.

"It was a full-circle moment for me," Fairchild told reporters. "Their hearts, they have generous, kind, beautiful hearts, and we can only hope and pray we have long careers like them."

The group was up early the next morning for soundcheck and a special gathering of middle and high school children from the Nashville Notes for Notes program, a beneficiary of the CMA Foundation's music education philanthropy. The children watched as the group went through songs, directed stilt walkers and a horn section. Activity swirled all around and the kids' heads moved on a swivel.

"It was awesome because it gives them the ability to see other options, other careers," said Philip Gilley, CEO of Notes for Notes, *continued on page 30...*

# HER OWN VOICE

by HOLLY GLEASON

**"BECAUSE I'VE BEEN ABLE TO CREATE FREELY AND BE WHO I WANTED TO BE FROM DAY ONE, I'VE NEVER FALTERED FOR ANY REASON," SINGER-SONGWRITER KACEY MUSGRAVES SAID OF MAINTAINING HER TRUE VOICE. "A LOT OF PLANS FOR ARTISTS ARE TO PUT OUT YOUR MORE WATERED-DOWN STUFF FIRST, GET CRAZY LATER. YOU KNOW, SHOW THEM WHO YOU REALLY ARE LATER."**

It has "allowed people to see who I am from the beginning, and to know they're either going to like it or not."

With her mahogany hair teased at the crown and tumbling down her shoulders, the slight 26-year-old from Golden, Texas, looks like a throwback to when Wurlitzer jukeboxes painted honky-tonks and taverns broken-hearted or hell-raising. She mines classic influences on her second album, *Pageant Material*, invoking Glen Campbell, Bobbie Gentry, Ronnie Milsap, Marty Robbins and Charlie Rich as people she was listening to when she returned to the studio.

Co-producing again with Luke Laird and Shane McAnally, she sought to capture the live energy of her shows — and to evoke the whimsical vibe of her songs, she brought her neon cactus into RCA Studio A, along with tiaras for the players. By keeping the mood light, a definite exuberance permeates tracks like the Mexican-influenced Country of the back-to-your-roots "High Time," the satiny romance of "Late for the Party" and the plucky be-your-own-person "Cup of Tea."

Musgraves' first album, *Same Trailer, Different Park*, provided a stark look at cul-de-sac hypocrisy with "Merry Go 'Round" and embraced alternative lifestyles with "Follow Your Arrow." Her second album continues her instinct for incisive human commentary: "This Town" evokes the notion of gossip's quick movement keeping people nice, while "Good Ol' Boys Club" impales cronyism.

"Maybe because I am a young female who speaks her mind, that might empower someone; maybe not the specific ideas, although those might, too," Musgraves said. "I do feel like I have a lot more sides than just the 'Follow Your Arrow' girl, or the girl who has an opinion. I want you to listen to the record as a whole, and see all sides of it."

"I do have a little bit of a rebellious side. There are some sweet moments on here that I haven't really had before that I really love."

To hear the gentle acoustic "Die Fun," airy and looking to embrace life's sweetness, Musgraves follows a philosophy to find

the joy along the way. Just as the hilariously endearing "Pageant Material" and straight-up quirky "Family Is Family" are songs of live and let live, as well as love and just love.

"I don't think my writing has changed" the two-time CMA Award winner said. "Maybe it's grown up a bit. It's coming from the same person, just one who's seen a little bit more. I took the same approach with this one almost as the last one: I wanted the songs to represent where my head was. Nothing preachy, just this is what's made an impression on me."

Musgraves has made an impression on plenty. Beyond her second No. 1 *Billboard* Top Country Albums debut, she's done tours with Katy Perry, Kenny Chesney and co-headliners Willie Nelson and Alison Krauss, demonstrating her music's diversity.

"(Katy) was a sparkly, glittery, just fantastic time," Musgraves enthused of her unlikely tour mate. "I enjoyed getting to see a different side of music that I don't normally get to see. And props to her for having the balls to do something different and take somebody out who's wildly different, and be a total champion for them."

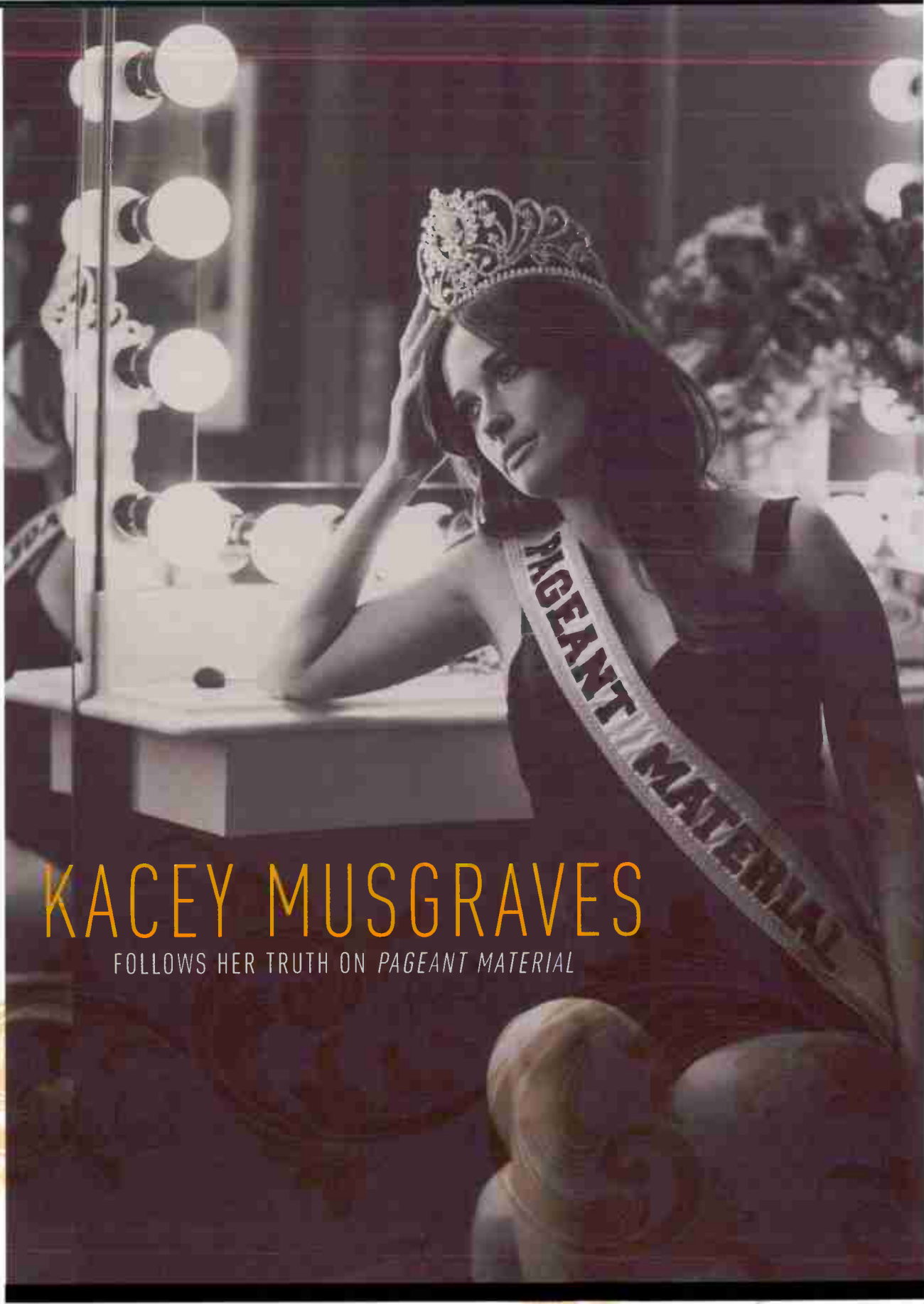
"Then to go from that tour to Willie Nelson and Alison Krauss. I just had to smile so big at that! It made me feel really good about being able to cross bridges and play music, to see all these different sides of music and be part of them."

Nelson even guests on the *Pageant Material* surprise track, "Are You Sure." A song of considering where you are and what you want, the Spanish gut-strings of Nelson's famed acoustic guitar Trigger set the tone even before Nelson's voice emerges as the questioning presence of wisdom.

"It's one of his first records," Musgraves said. "I'd never heard him play it, but I brought it up one day. He seemingly pulled a guitar from out of nowhere, and we kind of worked it up. It just fell together. It was crazy."

Like Musgraves. Crazy ... like a fox.

**kaceymusgraves.com**



# KACEY MUSGRAVES

FOLLOWS HER TRUTH ON *PAGEANT MATERIAL*



# TOGETHER AGAIN

by HOLLY GLEASON

**"WE STARTED OVER A YEAR AGO, TESTING THE WATER AND SEEING IF THERE WAS A HUNGER FOR THE RECORD," MERLE HAGGARD SAID OF THE ORIGINS OF HIS RECENT COLLABORATION WITH WILLIE NELSON.**

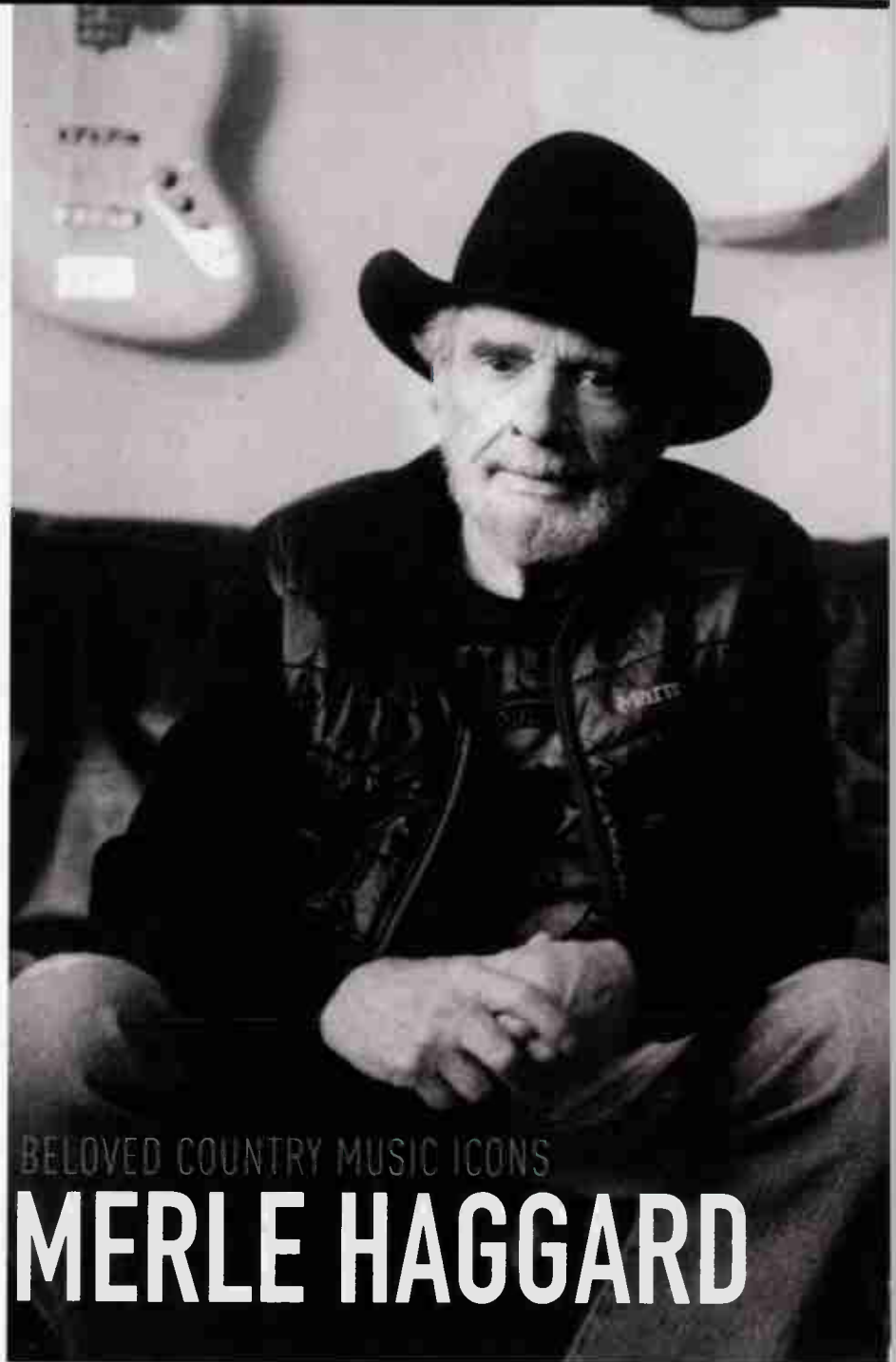
**"WE HAD A TELEVISION SHOW WE WERE DOING WITH A BUNCH OF PEOPLE," NELSON RECALLED OF THE SAME PROJECT. "WE WERE ALL SITTING AROUND PLAYING MUSIC IN MY NEPHEW'S STUDIO. ONE THING LED TO ANOTHER, AND NEXT THING YOU KNOW, WE'D MADE A RECORD."**

**T**wo legends, two very different stories. But what matters is *Django and Jimmie*, the iconic pair's fifth collaboration in 32 years. Marrying irony and commentary, classics and new songs, the homage to influences, friendship, life and each other's catalogs debuted at No. 1 on *Billboard's* Top Country Albums chart — and has been holding its own ever since.

Produced by Buddy Cannon, *Django and Jimmie* includes Nelson singing Haggard's classic "Swinging Doors," Haggard singing Nelson's seminal "Family Bible," a percolating take on Bob Dylan's "Don't Think Twice, It's All Right," a hilarious remembrance of The Man in Black on "Missing Ol' Johnny Cash," also featuring Bobby Bare, and the heartbreaking "Where Dreams Come to Die." Plus, the buzzworthy cannabis 'n' commentary first single "It's All Going to Pot."

"We really enjoy working together," Haggard said. "We're both writers and we have an excellent understanding of great songs, which brings us together. Our focus isn't on 'Who wrote it?,' but 'That's good! That, and how do we make it work.'"

Nelson, who's been teaming with Cannon since *Moment of Forever* in 2007, thinks Cannon's streamlined process is the key.



## BELOVED COUNTRY MUSIC ICONS MERLE HAGGARD

"Buddy has the connections with *all* the great musicians in Nashville, so when he calls, they all come out to play. It's a lot of fun to record like that ... These songs and those players? And it's even better when you think you're doing something special.

"And there's this creative thing that happens," he added. "You can do something with another person, from that creative energy coming together, you can't do for yourself. Really, two people can make more music than one. It's pretty simple."

"There are songs that don't get considered on our own," Haggard explained, "that we could do together. If it's a love song, we can sing it together — make it about the





# WILLIE NELSON

TEAM UP AGAIN FOR *DJANGO & JIMMIE*

woman you love rather than singing to her.”

The duo can talk exhaustively about songs, history, parallels in their lives. Both started at the same time, shared influences, were bass players for major stars early in their careers, wrote songs for other people and had a tough time for not compromising how they pursued their music. They also, Haggard likes to point out, “have been married almost the same amount of times to much younger ladies who love their husbands.”

For those reasons, *Django and Jimmie*, an homage to gypsy-jazz guitarist Django

Reinhardt and the Singing Brakeman Jimmie Rodgers, is the perfect title track. Nelson laughed, admitting, “I have a little poker room I call Django’s in my hideaway in Hawaii. He’s the best guitar player who ever lived. Ever. I listen to him every chance I get.”

“When we were young,” Haggard said, “we chased the same heroes. Django and Roy Nichols as guitar players, Jimmie Rodgers, Gene Autry, Lefty Frizzell, Bob Wills and Ernest Tubb, those people playing dance halls when America was still really alive. This song is about all that.”

Haggard and Nelson know roots, Country, jazz and blues. They bring their sense of humor to the honky-tonk friendly “It’s Only Money” and Hawaiian guitar-bathed portrait of a groupie “Alice in Hulaland,” as well as spark raggedly roadhouse brio on “The Only Man Wilder Than Me.”

Having topped the charts in 1983 with their triumphant album *Pancho & Lefty*, the pair knows the power of their alchemy. Haggard joked, “Everybody wants to be wilder than it’s accepted to be. They wanna do and be more than people think is right, they wanna step out of line.... Old as I am, it’s hard to step anywhere, let alone out of line.”

At Haggard’s 78 and Nelson’s 82, they kick up more than their share of dust. But where once they shot out the lights, now the storied songwriters take time to savor the moments. Though the album was made for fun and songs, they’re taking the response to heart.

“Here we are with a No. 1 record — and we’re successful. *That’s* inspiring. The idea people want to hear what we have to say, because the world with terrestrial radio has changed so much,” Nelson said. “We’re not getting any AM/FM airplay, really, so we didn’t have that to count on.”

As for the future, Nelson continued, “It’s too early to plan anything. It just went to No. 1, you know, and I want to enjoy this one for a little bit. Just enjoy this without moving on to the next thing.”

[merlehaggard.com](http://merlehaggard.com); [willienelson.com](http://willienelson.com)



# ON THE BEAT

## NEW MIDTOWN HILLS PRECINCT SERVES MUSIC ROW, DIVERSE COMMUNITY

by CRYSTAL CAVINESS

**A QUICK SURVEY OF THE NASHVILLE POLICE OFFICERS SITTING AROUND THE CONFERENCE ROOM TABLE AT THE MIDTOWN HILLS PRECINCT FINDS A FAIR NUMBER OF COUNTRY MUSIC FANS, WITH THE NAMES OF BLAKE SHELTON AND HANK WILLIAMS JR. GARNERING NODS OF APPROVAL FROM THE GROUP.**

Of course, being a fan of Country Music isn't a job prerequisite for the 123 men and women assigned to the Midtown Hills Precinct, which oversees Music Row and much of the music industry's infrastructure. The precinct, located on 12th Avenue South near Wedgewood Avenue, is the city's newest and eighth full-service police facility.

Insiders call the Midtown Hills Precinct "The Tens," because it includes the "teen" avenues. The actual jurisdiction, however, is a much broader area, covering 47.2 square miles with a diverse district that stretches from Nolensville Road to Hillsboro Road and includes Green Hills, Nipper's Corner, Crieve Hall, Edgehill Homes, Forest Hills and Oak Hill. The area also encompasses three college campuses: Vanderbilt, Belmont and Lipscomb Universities.

"Crime in The Tens is following the city trend of decreasing year



by year for six consecutive years," said Kay Lokey, commander of the Midtown Hills Precinct. "And things have only gotten better since the precinct opened."

"I think we've substantially lowered crime compared to one year ago," she said, crediting education as a key reason for the decrease. "We'd rather have people prevent crimes than report crimes."

Visitors to the precinct find an airy, bright reception area decorated with bright orange chairs sitting atop floors that glisten. A couple of smiling faces greet newcomers with "Can I help you?" And then they do.

Maintaining a helpful, friendly public persona, as well as being a good neighbor to the area, is part of a key strategy of the Midtown Hills Precinct. One goal for 2015 is for police officers

to get out into the neighborhoods, speak with residents and business owners and their employees, and introduce themselves to two new businesses per week.

"The officers are trying to have ownership of a zone," said Officer Po Cheng, part of the day shift at Midtown Hills.

Becoming a familiar face in a specific area, building relationships and helping to educate the people in that zone tops the list of priorities. When it comes to education, the main message the officers want to communicate is to be alert.

With the primary crimes in the Midtown Hills Precinct being property crimes, police officers caution folks to remove valuables from cars to discourage break-ins. In the workplace, employees should keep purses and cell phones out of view and, if possible, locked away.

Many times, Lokey said, thefts are crimes of opportunity with criminals perusing parking lots to find unlocked cars or walking through an office building to see what may be easily carried out.

The police officers at Midtown Hills readily admit keeping areas safe involves a team mentality. Eighty-four watch groups exist within Midtown Hills' jurisdiction. Working together – police officers and citizens – is the best plan, they said.

Sgt. Raymond Jones, Midtown Hills Precinct Community Coordinator, spends his shifts meeting and fielding calls from the public. He develops materials, such as the Shoplifting Prevention flier and the Holiday Crime Prevention Program flier,

and holds seminars and training sessions for neighborhoods and businesses.

"As the Community Coordinator, I am the direct line to the concerns of the neighborhood," Jones said.

One issue the precinct faces is the area's changing demographic on weekends. Officers serve employees and residents primarily during the week, then shift to focusing on tourists on weekends. Parking issues, venue security and keeping the area safe are the key concerns. In order to maintain safety during these high-volume periods, four to five officers are dedicated to foot patrol along Demonbreun and Church streets and into The Gulch, a strategy police say is working in an area known for revelry.

"It has kept our aggravated assaults down," Lokey said.

Looking at the diverse needs of the area forces Lokey and the other officers to be creative in how they address situations, with an eye on how all the components of the area work together.

"We don't live in a bubble," Lokey said. "It's about economics, law enforcement and education. We have to make our streets safe to have successful businesses. We understand a good business situation is the foundation to a good city."

#### MIDTOWN HILL PRECINCT

ADDRESS: 1441 12th Avenue South PHONE: (615) 880-1411

KEY PERSONNEL: Commander Kay Lokey and Community Coordinator Sgt. Raymond Jones. Jones can be reached at (615) 880-1350.



OFFICER  
EMILY DAVIES,  
OFFICER  
TIM MILLER  
AND OFFICER  
PO CHENG.



# JIM ED BROWN

1934-2015

by CHRIS TALBOTT

**The Gatlin Brothers sang an impromptu version of The Browns' "The Three Bells" when they heard that Jim Ed Brown had passed away. Alan Jackson played Brown's classic "Pop a Top" during his set at CMA Music Festival. And several stars shared personal memories of the Country Music Hall of Fame member.**



There was an outpouring of emotion for Brown, who passed away at 81 on June 11 after fighting lung cancer for more than a year. A beloved figure in Nashville for more than 50 years, Brown helped reshape the future of Country Music with his sisters in family trio The Browns. His legacy still resonated on the day he died with those he influenced taking the LP Field stage at CMA Music Festival.

Joe Don Rooney of Rascal Flatts knew Brown for 20 years, first meeting him at a local family theater in the Oklahoma town where he grew up.

"Once a month they'd bring out Opry members to sing, so I got to meet Brown when I was 17," Rooney said. "He was such a warm, gentle, kind man, and the times we got to see him at the Opry now, the past 15 years of our career — my heart's heavy. Wow, amazing to know that I got to meet him at a young age and he inspired me all that time."

Dierks Bentley got to know Brown because of the elder singer's open-door policy backstage at the Grand Ole Opry. Bentley called Brown gracious and kind and "a great ambassador to the next generation of how Country should be, even as it grows and leaves some of its roots behind. He's a great example of what it's all about."

Bill Anderson, Country Music Association CEO Sarah Trahern and Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum Director Kyle Young inducted Brown into the Hall of Fame on June 4 in a private ceremony. Brown was due to be inducted with sisters Maxine and Bonnie later this year at the Medallion Ceremony.

Induction into the Hall of Fame was the last piece missing from a career that crossed decades and the world, kicking up a little dust along the way. The Browns helped define an era while also taking Country Music to wider, more cosmopolitan audiences. Perhaps the most important vocal group of the Nashville Sound era, their smooth three-part harmonies brought a certain sophistication to Country Music.

Not everyone appreciated that sound, executed perfectly in songs like "The Three Bells" and "The Old Lamplighter," and the Browns were once considered somewhat controversial figures in Nashville. They wondered if they might never make it into the Hall of Fame until learning the news they'd been chosen earlier this year.

"Friends, it's been a long journey from when Jim Reeves introduced us to Chet Atkins to this wonderful

photo: Ford Fairchild



MAXINE (FRONT),  
BONNIE AND  
JIM ED BROWN IN  
A PORTRAIT OF  
THE BROWNS

morning here at the Country Music Hall of Fame," Brown told the crowd March 25, the morning CMA announced the 2015 class of inductees. "No words can express to you how I feel now."

The Browns' harmonies were among the most influential of the time, immediately catching the attention of groups like the Beatles and the Osborne Brothers. And the trio's take on what Country Music can aspire to be can still be felt decades later in the music of modern vocal groups such as Lady Antebellum and Little Big Town.

Brown was born April 1, 1934, in Sparkman, Arkansas. The Brown siblings began performing at church and social functions as teenagers in Southwestern Arkansas. Eldest sister Maxine signed up Brown for a talent contest on Little Rock radio station KLRA's "Barnyard Frolic." Brown didn't win, but he was invited to join the cast. Maxine eventually joined him on stage and the two found quick success as a duo, landing a spot on the popular and influential "Louisiana Hayride" in 1954 and recording "Looking Back to See," a surprise hit that rose to No. 8 on *Billboard's* Country chart.

Bonnie filled out the trio by joining formally in 1955 and The Browns quickly scored another hit with "Here Today and Gone Tomorrow." Fans found the family's natural harmony entrancing.

"I can sing a song, put it on tape, and send it to my sisters and they will sing their part and not somebody else's," Brown said during the

Hall of Fame news conference. "Bonnie would sing the third part, Maxine would sing the second part, and when you put it all together it would all fit. It was the timbre of the voices that brings us together, which is a little bit different from most groups. And that sound is part of The Browns. I don't think anybody's ever duplicated it."

They soon found themselves on the road with good friend Elvis Presley early in their career and helped further establish Nashville as Music City USA, along with acts like The Everly Brothers. They signed with RCA Records later that year, teaming with Atkins, and eventually recorded 250 sides with the label, including sizeable hits "I Take the Chance" and "I Heard the Bluebirds Sing." They toured the U.S. relentlessly during this period and also went to Europe with fellow RCA acts.

The Browns reached new levels of popularity with the recording of 1959's "The Three Bells," a song originally performed by Edith Piaf in France. The song displayed The Browns' willingness to explore folk and pop modes in their music and the public responded, making it No. 1 on the pop and Country charts. It even rose to No. 10 on the R&B charts, showing its universal appeal.

**"Friends, it's been a long journey from when Jim Reeves introduced us to Chet Atkins to this wonderful morning here at the Country Music Hall of Fame. No words can express to you how I feel now."**

-Jim Ed Brown

The song and subsequent hits like "The Old Lamplighter" also proved widely popular and led the group to huge television appearance opportunities like "The Ed Sullivan Show," "American Bandstand," and "The Perry Como Show." After initial friction because of their pop leanings, The Browns joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1963. The trio formally disbanded in 1967 when Maxine and Bonnie chose to retire to raise their young families.

Brown, meanwhile, continued his solo career after the trio separated, scoring Top 10 hits with signature songs "Pop a Top," "Morning," "Southern Loving," "Sometime Sunshine" and "It's That Time of Night." And he managed to recapture the magic of boy-girl harmony again in 1976 when he began recording duets with Helen Cornelius. They were named the CMA Vocal Duo of the Year in 1977.

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





# CMA Close Up

DECEMBER 2011 | JANUARY 2012

## CMA AWARDS

Unforgettable Moments

## "CMA COUNTRY CHRISTMAS"

Warms Up the Season

## THE PISTOL ANNIES

Aim for the Top

## KELLIE PICKLER

Tough and True

## QR CODES

New Marketing Horizons



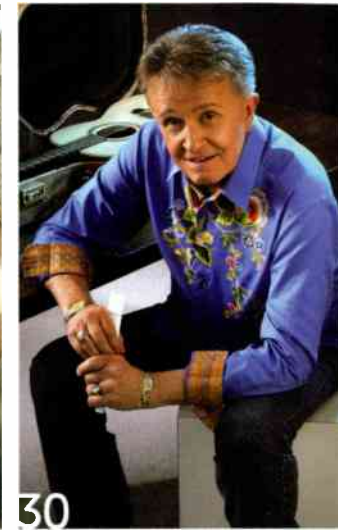
## LADY ANTEBELLUM CELEBRATES THE STATE FAIR CIRCUIT



4



20



30



16



12



24

december 2011 | january 2012

cma close up

issue date | dec. 7

- 4 "The 45<sup>th</sup> Annual CMA Awards"  
"Country Music's Biggest Night"<sup>™</sup>
- 12 "CMA Country Christmas"
- 13 Songwriters Series Goes Overseas
- 14 Media Prep
- 15 Statement of Ownership
- 16 Lady Antebellum
- 18 QR Codes

- 20 Pistol Annies
- 22 CMA Member of the Month  
DECEMBER: Tony Byworth  
JANUARY: Rondal Richardson
- 23 Matching Publishers and  
Songwriters
- 24 Kellie Pickler
- 26 Debut Artist Spotlight  
Lauren Alaina  
Sonia Leigh  
Nick 13  
Tyrone Vaughan

- 28 Marketing Innovations  
Sarah Darling  
Zac Brown Band
- 29 New CD Releases
- 30 CMA Presents the  
Country Music Hall of Fame  
Bill Anderson
- 32 CMA Events Calendar

photos: Lady Antebellum - Williams + Hruskawa (front cover and TOC), Pistol Annies - Bantee St. Nichols, Bill Anderson - Dennis Carney, CMA Awards - Jamie Schwamm, Jennifer Nettles - Donn Jones, Kellie Pickler - Kristin Barlowe



**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**

DONNA HUGHES | JOSEPH HUDAK

DEBORAH EVANS PRICE | SARAH SKATES

**Proofreader**

EILEEN SISK

**Printing**

McQUIDDY PRINTING

**CMA STAFF**

**Executive**

STEVE MOORE *Chief Executive Officer*

JESSICA BROWN *Executive Assistant*

**Communications**

WENDY PEARL *Vice President of Corporate Communications*

SCOTT STEM *Director of Media Relations*

AMANDA ECKARD *Senior Manager of Creative Services*

BOB DOERSCHUK *CMA Close Up Editor*

CHRISTIAN BOTTORFF *Manager of Creative Services*

MARIA ECKHARDT *Manager of Media Relations*

DAWN COPLEY *Communications Coordinator*

**Events and Special Projects**

BOBETTE DUDLEY *Senior Vice President*

DIANE BEARDEN *Senior Manager of Meetings and Events*

JAMIE DOWNING *Senior Manager of Special Projects*

KRIS KENNEDY *Senior Manager of Events*

**Finance and Administration**

AMY SMARTT *Vice President of Finance and Administration*

KEN SANDERSON *Senior Manager of Information Technology*

AARON HARTLEY *Senior Manager of Administrative Services*

SHEREME SIEWNARINE *Senior Manager of Financial Services*

JODY PACE *Staff Accountant*

VERONICA COSTILLA *Finance and Administration Coordinator*

MELISSA MAYNARD *Operations and Administration Coordinator*

MARCO CASTILLO *Operations Assistant*

STEPHANIE HODGES *Receptionist*

**Membership and Balloting**

BRANDI SIMMS *Senior Manager of Membership and Balloting*

BETSY WALKER *Senior Coordinator of Member Relations and Services*

**Strategic Marketing**

TAMMY DONHAM *Vice President of Marketing*

CORY CHAPMAN *Director of Marketing*

GREG FUSON *Market Research Manager*

BEN BENNETT *Senior Manager of Digital Strategy*

CATHERINE BLACKWELL *Marketing Manager*

MARTY FILOGAMO *Jr. Web Designer / Production Coordinator*

AMANDA HORENKAMP *Marketing Coordinator*

**Strategic Partnerships**

SHERI WARNKE *Vice President of Strategic Partnerships*

LARA HENLEY *Senior Manager of Strategic Partnerships*

ANGELA MENDENHALL *Senior Manager of Strategic Partnerships*

SARAH McGRADY *Manager of Strategic Partnerships*

WES PERRY *Coordinator of Partner Programs*

**CMA AND ABC: A PARTNERSHIP BUILT TO LAST**

**In 1967, the CMA Board of Directors wanted to honor those whose talents were helping Country Music gain new mainstream acceptance and influence.**

The Board created a special Awards ceremony to be held Oct. 27, 1967 in Nashville's Municipal Auditorium during CMA's annual anniversary celebration. It was untelevised, but Kraft Inc. executives were impressed, and in 1968 they filmed the CMA Awards at the Ryman Auditorium for its national "Kraft Music Hall" show.

Broadcast live on the Kraft show the next two years, and after finally securing its own live television hour sponsored by Kraft in 1951 in its fifth year, the CMA Awards has since held strong as television's longest-running live awards broadcast.

Now, after six years of successful partnership between CMA and ABC Television Network, a new chapter has opened in the Awards' televised history. CMA joined ABC in November 2011 to extend a broadcast agreement through 2021, as announced by ABC Entertainment Group President Paul Lee and CMA Chief Executive Officer Steve Moore. This agreement assures another decade of broadcasting all the CMA franchises including the "CMA Awards," "CMA Music Festival: Country's Night to Rock," and "CMA Country Christmas."

"We value our partnership with ABC and their commitment to CMA and Country Music," Moore said. "ABC has demonstrated a passion for the format and our television properties. We have seen the CMA Music Festival special grow to three hours; we have added a holiday special, 'CMA Country Christmas'; and our crown jewel, the CMA Awards, has reached a new, enthusiastic audience."

"We are thrilled that the CMA and Country Music will continue to call ABC their home for the next 10 years," added Lee. "We have built an incredible partnership together, and that partnership will only grow stronger over the next decade."

This partnership embraces many of Country's traditions, including awarding Country Music's top acts, writers, directors and producers as chosen by the CMA membership. We'll continue to bring the star-filled events and performances that are reaching new global audiences. At the same time, a strengthened association with ABC builds on the already strong mix of unique CMA-driven television shows, Internet offerings, plus a range of new media efforts.

The numbers don't lie. CMA Awards has been a ratings boon for ABC, as detailed more explicitly in this issue of *CMA Close Up*. In this issue, we will wrap up the events surrounding the CMA Awards along with a close look at the 2011 ratings, which clearly show CMA's dominance and growth among key groups of viewers. The live Nov. 9 broadcast was by far the hit of the evening on national television, with 16.4 million viewers — which was 5.6 million higher than the number of viewers tuned to the closest competitor, CBS.

This partnership is a boon for CMA. We're excited about the next 10 years as we look forward to seeing what the power of Country — and the power of this new partnership — will bear for anyone who loves Country Music.

CMA Close Up® welcomes your letters and feedback. 615.244.2840 | 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 contributors 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.



PLEASE RECYCLE THIS MAGAZINE

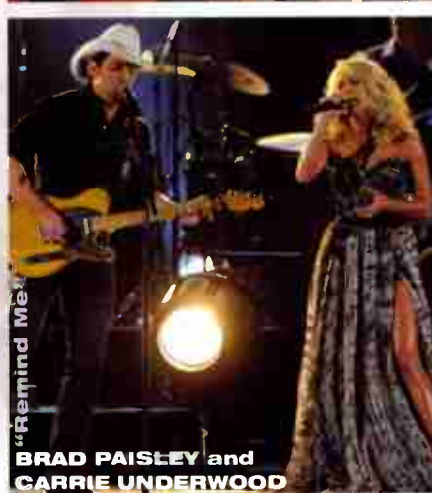


# 2011 CMA AWARDS PERFORMERS

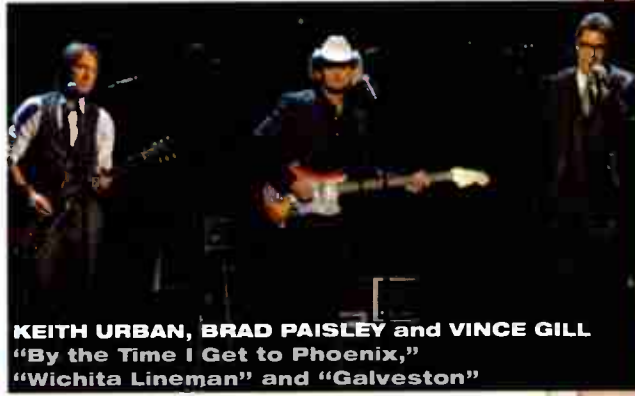
**JASON ALDEAN**



**BLAKE SHELTON and KENNY LOGGINS**



**SCOTTY MCCREERY**



**SARA EVANS**





**RASCAL FLATTS  
and LIONEL RICHIE**



**"Dancing on the Ceiling"**

**LADY ANTEBELLUM**



**"We Owned the Night"**

**MIRANDA LAMBERT**



**"Baggage Claim"**

**LIONEL RICHIE and DARIUS RUCKER**



**"Stuck on You"**

**GRACE POTTER and KENNY CHESNEY**



**"You & Tequila"**

**KEITH URBAN**



**"You Gonna Fly"**

**"Are You Gonna Kiss Me or Not"**



**THOMPSON SQUARE**



**ZAC BROWN BAND with GREGG ALLMAN**

**"Georgia on My Mind"**

**FAITH HILL**



**"Come Home"**

**MARTINA McBRIDE**



**"I'm Gonna Love You Through It"**

**THE BAND PERRY "All Your Life"**



**LUKE BRYAN**



**"Country Girl (Shake It for Me)"**



2011 CMA AWARDS WINNERS



TAYLOR SWIFT

entertainer of the year



music video of the year

"YOU & TEQUILA"  
Kenny Chesney featuring  
Girace Potter (not pictured)  
directed by Shaun Silva



musician of the year

MAC MCANALLY



song of the year  
"IF I DIE YOUNG"

written by Kimberly Perry



vocal group of the year

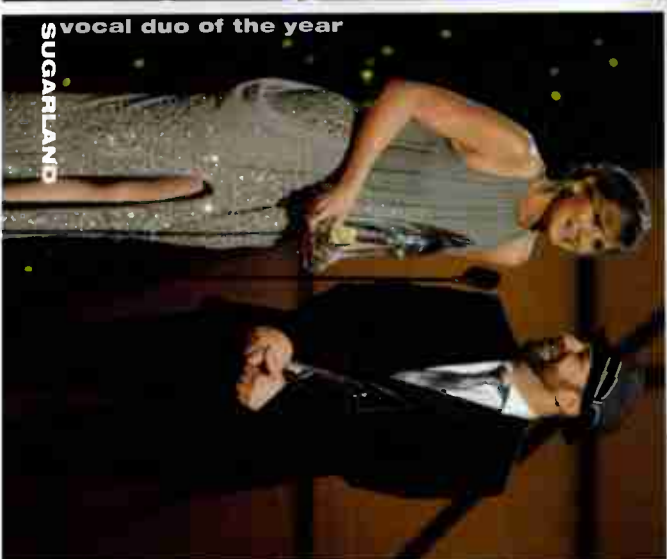
LADY ANTEBELLUM



single of the year new artist of the year

THE BAND PERRY

"IF I DIE YOUNG" produced by Paul Worley



vocal duo of the year

SUGARLAND



female vocalist of the year

MIRANDA LAMBERT



male vocalist of the year

BLAKE SHELTON



album of the year  
MY KINDA PARTY Jason Aldean  
produced by Michael Knox

musical event of the year  
"DON'T YOU WANNA STAY"  
Jason Aldean with Kelly Clarkson  
(not pictured)



# the 45<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CMA AWARDS

NEW STARS, HEADLINERS AND LEGENDS SHARE AN UNFORGETTABLE EVENING

Aired live on the ABC Television Network on Nov. 9, "The 45<sup>th</sup> Annual CMA Awards" celebrated another year's worth of great artists and achievements through presentation of Country Music's most prestigious Awards.

With Taylor Swift named Entertainer of the Year (only the second female singer, after Barbara Mandrell, to attain this distinction twice), Miranda Lambert receiving Female Vocalist honors, Blake Shelton taking the Male Vocalist Award, The Band Perry heralded as New Artist, Lady Antebellum three-peating as Vocal Group, Sugarland notching their fifth win in the Vocal Duo category and Mac McAnally notching his third Musician of the Year title, no one dominates the artist categories this year. The same pattern extends to Album of the Year, won by Jason Aldean's *My Kinda Party*, as well as Kenny Chesney's and Grace Potter's Music Video of the Year, "You and Tequila," produced by Shaun Silva. But Aldean made his debut as a CMA Award winner even more memorable by being recognized for Musical Event of the Year, along with his duo partner Kelly Clarkson on "Don't You Wanna Stay."

Lambert and Shelton follow Faith Hill and Tim McGraw in 2000 as only the second married couple to win in their respective Vocalist categories the same year. Shelton, who had won the same Award in 2010, laughed as he held his trophy aloft and protested, "You're spoiling me! I really didn't prepare anything to say at all. I didn't think y'all would let me get away with this two times." And when Lambert, who also won in 2010 (before she and Shelton had married), shouted with excitement, "It's gonna be a good night tonight, ba-bay," onlookers exploded with laughter as the camera caught her husband grinning and eagerly rubbing his palms together.

One notable winner was The Band Perry, who claimed both the New Artist Award and Single of the Year ("If I Die Young," produced by Paul Worley). Only five previous New Artist winners earned another CMA Award during that same year (Ricky Skaggs, Male Vocalist in 1982; Alison Krauss, Female Vocalist in 1995; The Dixie Chicks, Vocal Group in 1998; and Carrie Underwood, Female Vocalist in 2006). But Kimberly Perry tipped the scales further by also taking home the Song of the Year Award as the sole writer

of "If I Die Young."

There was plenty of star power on-site as Nashville's Bridgestone Arena filled to capacity with fans for the second year in a row. Performers included Brad Paisley and Carrie Underwood, who went beyond their roles as co-hosts to sing their emotional duet "Remind Me" for the first time live on television. They also spiced up their repertory with surprise appearances by Little Jimmy Dickens as Justin Bieber and Hank Williams Jr. as his rambunctious self. Exciting pairings kept the audience engaged from the opening number, on which Blake Shelton and Kenny Loggins tore it up on "Footloose," through Rascal Flatts and British pop star Natasha Bedingfield uniting on "Easy," Kenny Chesney and Grace Potter taking an acoustic route through "You & Tequila," Sugarland and Matt Nathanson getting together on "Run" and Zac Brown Band welcoming Gregg Allman for a simmering "Georgia on My Mind." The high points for teamwork, though, featured Lionel Richie doing a medley of his hits in sequence with Little Big Town, Darius Rucker and Rascal Flatts, and a beautifully executed tribute to Glen Campbell, who watched with emotion as Vince Gill sang "By the Time I Get to Phoenix," Keith Urban followed with "Wichita Lineman" and Brad Paisley brought it home on "Galveston," with Jimmy Webb, composer of all three classics, playing keyboards in the band.

Other performers included Jason Aldean, The Band Perry, Luke Bryan, Eric Church, Sara Evans, Faith Hill, Lady Antebellum, Miranda Lambert, Martina McBride, Scotty McCreery, Taylor Swift, Thompson Square, Keith Urban and Chris Young.

Presenters included Country luminaries Lauren Alaina, Dierks Bentley, Billy Currington, Jake Owen, Kellie Pickler, Reba and LeAnn Rimes. Actors Josh Dallas ("Once Upon a Time"), Ginnifer Goodwin ("Once Upon a Time"), Kellan Lutz (the "Twilight" series), Eric Stonestreet ("Modern Family"), Emily VanCamp ("Revenge") and Reese Witherspoon ("Water for Elephants") also presented Awards, along with sportscaster Erin Andrews, World Series MVP David Freese and the iconic Miss Piggy.

The city of Nashville also benefited greatly, with the Nashville Convention & Visitors Bureau estimating this year's Awards brought \$5 million in direct visitor spending — a significant increase over the \$3 million in visitor spending last year.



Hosts  
Brad Paisley and  
Carrie Underwood



Reba McEntire Reese Witherspoon



LeAnn Rimes and Billy Currington

## ABC'S "GOOD MORNING AMERICA" SPOTLIGHTS CMA'S KEEP THE MUSIC PLAYING



Mignon Grabois and Charley Woods, students from Nashville School of the Arts, join Brad Paisley and Sam Champion during ABC's "Good Morning America" live from the Bridgestone Arena Plaza in Nashville.

Appearing live from Nashville's Bridgestone Plaza on "Good Morning America," CMA Awards Co-Host Brad Paisley helped launch Awards Day by performing "Camouflage" onstage with his band and speaking with ABC News' Sam Champion about CMA's commitment to music education through its Keep the Music Playing program.

"CMA and Chevrolet have partnered up to help music education in schools, which is very important. Saying 'music education' is stretching it for me," Paisley said, with a laugh. "But it's something that can make a kid into what they want to be."

Joined by Nashville School of the Arts students Mignon Grabois and Charley Woods, Paisley then became the first of many artists to autograph the hood of a Chevrolet Camaro convertible that is being auctioned off until May 1, 2012 on [CMAworld.com](http://CMAworld.com) to benefit Keep the Music Playing; he playfully added "Drive Fast!" to his signature. Kenny Chesney also appeared on the popular morning show.





Lady Antebellum



Kimberly Williams Paisley



Grace Potter and Kenny Chesney



ABC's Emily VanCamp at the People Country bleachers.

## COUNTRY MUSIC ROYALTY GRACES MACY'S WALK OF STARS

This year's CMA Awards Red Carpet, a.k.a. Macy's Walk of Stars, stretched for a block along Demonbreun Street from Fourth to Fifth Avenues. A group of United States Marines helped artists, celebrities and other notables from their vehicles as they arrived across the street from the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum and made their way down into the vast media tent for interviews and photo ops.

Macy's, this year's presenting partner of the CMA Red Carpet, kept its 2.6 million fans informed about the Awards with a sweepstakes package and tune-in support from Sept. 27 through Oct. 20 on its Facebook page. Macy's also issued three e-mail blasts to its cardholders, and on Awards day, the company posted Red Carpet photos for its followers on **Macys.com**. A group of local customers had great seats as well in

the Macy's Walk of Stars bleachers, awarded in a local Macy's store shopping event as Awards week began.

Special seating was also provided by *People Country*, which had spread word about the Awards with a full-page ad in its Nov. 7 issue. *People* and *People Country* also provided editorial coverage. Five million return-of-sales impressions also responded to Awards promotions posted Oct. 24 through Nov. 8 on **People.com** — and on Nov. 9 access to those bleachers was awarded on the Web site to lucky winners.

Arriving artists, performers and VIPs were invited to autograph a Chevrolet Convertible Camaro SS, positioned along the Macy's Walk of Stars. This one-of-a-kind car will be auctioned off at **CMAworld.com**, with Chevy donating the winning bid to Keep the Music Playing.

## WORLDWIDE MEDIA COVER CMA AWARDS

For many of the top television shows, print publications and online services in the United States, the CMA Awards has been an essential event to cover live for many years. But this year also saw a number of newcomers on hand to capture the glamour and excitement.

For the first time, Associated Press Television hosted a live show from the Macy's Walk of Stars Red Carpet, viewable via Livestream on a variety of Web sites, including **CMAawards.com**. Hosts were Alicia Quarles, the wire service's top national television journalist, and Nashville correspondent Caitlin King. Also new to the Red Carpet was CHCH (Canada), which also did a one-hour live telecast leading into the Awards themselves. And **People.com** stepped up its Red Carpet live coverage with a 360-degree camera.

In the media room as well as alongside the Red Carpet, the celebrity news Web site **HollywoodLife.com** made its CMA Awards debut. KABC, the ABC affiliate in Los Angeles, was on hand for the second year in a row, hosted by national correspondent George Pennacchio. The station also created taped packages that were sent to ABC affiliates on the day of show; 68 of those affiliates used them on their evening news to help drive tune-in.

"The Ellen DeGeneres Show" got its own party going early. In response to a Twitter alert, around 1,500 fans had gathered on the Bridgestone Arena Plaza on Tuesday afternoon, Nov. 8. There, at 6 PM, Lady Antebellum appeared for a surprise performance, which aired the next day on the show's live Awards coverage. Luke Bryan served as the show's Red Carpet correspondent, interviewing Faith Hill and Tim McGraw, Reba, Lionel Richie, Darius Rucker and more. Later, Kellie Pickler took the "Ellen" camera out to the *People Country* bleachers and gave away a pair of tickets to a fan.

More than 400 journalists from more than 120 countries and international media outlets were either credentialed or ticketed for the 2011 CMA Awards. These include ABC Radio Network, "Access Hollywood," AOL/The Boot, Associated Press, Associated Press Television, "Better," CMT, CNN, *Country Weekly*, E! News, "The Ellen DeGeneres Show," "Extra," Fox News Channel, "Headline Country" (GAC), **HollywoodLife.com**, "Inside Edition," KABC-TV, MSN, *People*, **People.com**, Premiere Radio Network, Reuters, *The Tennessean*, *USA Today*, *US*

*Magazine*, Yahoo! and more.

International media included BBC Radio 2 (U.K.), CHCH (Canada), CMC (Australia), "Canadian Top 20," Virgin Radio (Canada), NHK (Japan), RTL (France), Today's Country 820 CHAM (Canada), and more.

Media also played a big role in whipping up interest as the Awards drew near. Co-hosts Brad Paisley and Carrie Underwood interviewed with "Access Hollywood" and *Entertainment Weekly*, as well as for a cover story in *Country Weekly*, and they did a three-hour ABC satellite tour on Nov. 7, hitting Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco and other affiliates throughout the U.S. Underwood also did a *TV Guide* interview, and Paisley appeared solo on "Nightline," "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart," "Good Morning America," "On the Record with Greta Van Susteren," "Piers Morgan Tonight" and other shows, promoting his new book, *Diary of a Player*, and also mentioning the upcoming Awards.

The Band Perry interviewed with the Gannett News Service and the Tribune News Syndicate, which also spoke with Blake Shelton. And on separate episodes, The Band Perry and Martina McBride appeared on "Dancing with the Stars." Scotty McCreery interviewed with *Entertainment Weekly*. Martina McBride interviewed with *OK Magazine*. Jason Aldean allowed a *USA Today* photographer and videographer to follow him the day before the Awards; the photos ran in *USA Today* and the videos ran on **USAToday.com**, both on Nov. 9. *USA Weekend* featured brief Q&As with Thompson Square and The Band Perry promoting the Awards. Glenn Beck put a spotlight on Country Music on his live show on Nov. 9, which he broadcast from Nashville.



Scotty McCreery poses for Red Carpet photographers.



## "THE 45<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CMA AWARDS" DOMINATES RATINGS

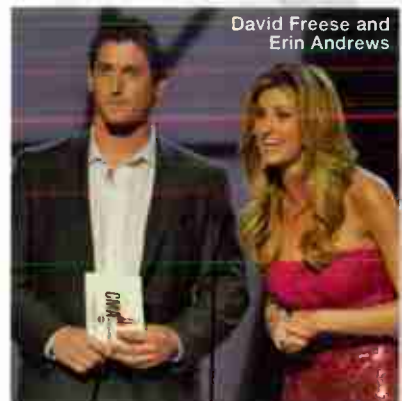
ABC's live Nov. 9 broadcast of "The 45<sup>th</sup> Annual CMA Awards" was by far the hit of the evening on national television. Total viewership was 16.4 million, or 5.6 million above the 10.8 million garnered by the network's closest competitor, CBS. For the week ending Nov. 13, the Awards special finished in fourth place among all other programs in number of viewers.

Key demographics were equally impressive, as ABC took first place on Nov. 9 among Adults 18-49 with 4.8/13 vs. 3.8/10 over runner-up Fox, which broadcast a two-hour "The X Factor." (Nielsen figures gauge the percentage of all television-equipped households tuning into a program and the percentage of households watching TV that viewed the same program during the given time slot.) On each of the three-hour special's half-hour blocks, ABC ranked No. 1 in both Total Viewers and Adults 18-49.

That key Adults 18-49 demographic also delivered the highest numbers of any ABC Wednesday-night show since "The 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual CMA Awards" aired Nov. 11, 2009 and the best numbers for *any* night during the current season. Despite facing heightened competition from "The X Factor," the CMA special drew more Adults 18-49 viewers than it had in 2010, rising 2 percent from 4.8/13 to 4.7/13.

Viewership trended positively in other groups too. Compared to 2010, this year's Awards drew 8 percent higher for Adults 18-34, 6 percent for Women 18-34, 11 percent for Men 18-34 and 24 percent for Teens. In fact, "The 45<sup>th</sup> Annual CMA Awards" matched its second-best Adult 18-34 number and its highest 18-34 number in seven years. And ABC hit the biggest non-sports numbers for any network in the 10 PM/ET hour among overall Viewers and Adults 18-49 and 25-54.

When data for Live+7 viewership (*i.e.*, total audience sum who watched the program live or played back within seven days of the initial broadcast) were compiled, the CMA Awards rose to 17.5 million viewers (6.7 percent growth) and a 5.2/14 rating among Adults 18-49 (8.3 percent growth).



David Freese and Erin Andrews



Big & Rich and The Farm welcome CMA Marketing Summit attendees.



Little Big Town takes questions and performs at Margaritaville.



Attendees at the panel "2011: A Country Radio Space Odyssey."

## OPPORTUNITIES BECKON AT THE CMA MARKETING SUMMIT

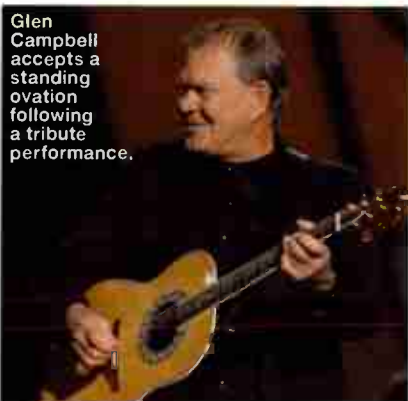
There is no more exciting time to introduce business leaders to the power of the Country brand than the days before the CMA Awards. For two days, 24 invited executives from a variety of businesses were treated to a comprehensive Country Music experience through this year's CMA Marketing Summit, starting with an optional gathering at Bridgestone Arena Plaza at 7 AM on Nov. 8 "Good Morning America" live from Nashville and leading to seats at the CMA Awards the following night.

Briefed with advance info from CMA's Strategic Partnerships Department, they witnessed expert panel discussions on Country radio, consumer engagement, songwriting and other topics. They visited Ocean Way Studios, Riverfront Park for a surprise concert by Jason Aldean, a private room at Margaritaville for an intimate acoustic concert and Q&A with Little Big Town, and John Rich's spectacular home, Mt. Richmore. A behind-the-scenes tour of Bridgestone Arena in the last stages of preparation for the Awards, a trip to Limelight Nashville for a Songwriters Series performance

featuring Deana Carter, Kelley Lovelace, Eric Paslay and Rivers Rutherford, more live music and a glittering pre-Awards reception at The Palm added even more opportunities for insight and adventure to their schedules.

According to several participants, the Summit achieved its goals of presenting Country as a strong potential partner. "I was impressed with how personal it is," said Brenda Jennings of ConAgra Foods. "We spoke with songwriters who gave us background on how they work and with artists about how personally they feel about the fans. It's not a consumer target; there's a genuine affection there."

And that, along with the format's many other positives, has already motivated many attendees to explore ways to put what they've learned into action. "A key in this economy especially is return on investment," noted Gregg Gulinson, Manager, Lifestyle Marketing, Sprint Nextel. "And showing that to investors is first and foremost. Coming here and learning about the industry has piqued my interest in a number of ways as far as connecting with consumer passion points."



Glen Campbell accepts a standing ovation following a tribute performance.

## STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHER BENNETT FARKAS RECEIVES 2011 CMA CLOSE UP AWARD OF MERIT

Belmont University senior Bennett Farkas was presented with the 2011 CMA Close Up Award of Merit backstage during "The 45<sup>th</sup> Annual CMA Awards." The Award honors outstanding journalistic and photographic coverage of the CMA Music Festival by selected college and university student volunteers. "I was not expecting to win this Award at all," said Farkas. "I'd seen some of the other photographers' work and I thought they did an equally good job, so I was very surprised and humbled. But this has been a really cool opportunity and I'm glad I could get so much out of it."



Wendy Pearl, CMA VP of Corporate Communications; Farkas; and Bob Doerschuk, Editor, CMA Close Up.





Tim McGraw and Faith Hill



Blake Shelton and Miranda Lambert

## VIEWERS TRAVEL THE "ROAD TO CMA AWARDS"

In New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, Dallas, San Francisco, Boston, Washington, D.C., Atlanta, Houston, Miami, Nashville ... actually, in more than 90 percent of ABC markets, anticipation for "The 45<sup>th</sup> Annual CMA Awards" broadcast was fanned by "CMA Close Up Presents Road to the CMA Awards," a half-hour preview of the excitement, glamour and drama that is part of this annual event's legacy.

The 2011 "Road to" special included artist interviews, which were often paired to the music or moment being discussed on split screen or in sequential segments. A recurring theme wove through recollections by prominent performers who admitted to being awestruck during their first Awards appearances. Looking back to her debut on the show when she was just 17, Taylor Swift described herself as "beyond nervous." Shania Twain noted, "I was very excited. I'd always watched the CMAs all of my life, for as long as I could remember. And I was finally there!"

As for Jason Aldean, he had one concern in mind when he bowed on the Awards: "You walk onstage, and here's all those people you grew up idolizing in the front row, and I was like, 'Oh, no, please don't forget the words to the song!'"

He didn't forget those lyrics. Neither have longtime viewers forgotten the many memorable moments that have illuminated CMA Awards shows. The "Road to" special brought many of

these back. Some raised a few eyebrows at the time, such as the infamous red dress worn by Reba on the 1993 show. Remembering that broadcast, Brad Paisley was deadpan as he shared that her outfit somehow made him feel a sudden craving for milk.

But one moment stirred deeper emotions, when Alan Jackson introduced "Where Were You (When the World Stopped Turning)" on the 2001 Awards. Jason Aldean described how hearing that performance touched him and so many other Americans just months after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. In the context of the "Road to" presentation, the feelings behind his words felt as immediate as if they had been spoken yesterday. Even more touching were the excerpts of Jackson's masterfully understated and dignified rendering of the song, written in the rhetorical tradition of Bob Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind" as a series of questions whose answers too many listeners already knew too well.

Produced by CMA, with Tigerlily TV President Sarah Brock serving as executive producer and writer, "CMA Close Up Presents Road to the CMA Awards" featured interviews and/or onstage footage of Jason Aldean, The Band Perry, Dierks Bentley, Kristin Chenoweth, Miranda Lambert, Little Big Town, Scotty McCreery, Brad Paisley, Rascal Flatts, Blake Shelton, Sugarland, Taylor Swift, Shania Twain and Chris Young.

## ADVENTURES AROUND ON CMAAWARDS.COM

The Web was buzzing with anticipation for this year's CMA Awards, especially at [CMAawards.com](http://CMAawards.com). Highlights included a MyPicks game, designed by Nashville-based Athlon Sports to allow players to gain points for correctly predicting the Awards night trophy winners. The process was simple: Visitors could select one artist from each of the 12 CMA Awards categories. The right choice for Entertainer of the Year yielded 10 points; in all other listings, a correct answer earned eight points. A final tie-breaker question offered a single point for predicting the last performer on the broadcast. If a tie score persisted, the victory would go to whoever posted earliest.

The top prize went way beyond bragging rights. The winner received a trip for two to the 2012 CMA Music Festival, including two four-day event tickets, airfare, hotel accommodations, a Wrangler shirt owned previously by CMA Award winner Jason Aldean, a pair of autographed Wrangler jeans and two new Wrangler outfits. The runner-up received a new Wrangler wardrobe consisting of four pairs of jeans and four shirts.

Fans could also pass the time leading up to the Awards by visiting the online store. Lots of new items were in stock, including a hat, tote bag, coffee mug and six items of apparel. The unisex black event T-shirt was inspired by the sculpture created by Nashville artist/designer Eva Ogländer

for the 2011 CMA Program Book cover, which is featured on both front and back with the tag line "Country Music's Biggest Night" on the back as well. A similar design adorns the commemorative coffee mug.

The Web site also featured Awards-themed mobile and desktop wallpaper, a CMA Awards flip game fully stocked with winners all the way back to 1967, EPK videos and more. Downloads of the official CMA app that offered Awards news, photos, a radio station and the MyPicks nominee game were made available for free at both the App Store (iPhone and iPad) and the Android Market. Visitors could also laugh along to outtakes from Brad Paisley's and Carrie Underwood's promotional interviews as well as the mock CMA Awards host auditions that featured Mickey and Minnie Mouse, Donny and Marie Osmond, Miss Piggy, and Atticus Shaffer and Eden Sher from ABC's "The Middle."

On Awards Day the online action heated up, with live streaming from the Red Carpet, pre-tel presentations and the press room. Viewers were prompted during the show to sign up for more content delivered via email, including EPK videos, the first-ever CMA radio remote coverage (hosted by Becky Brenner) and more. A FanChatter widget allowed visitors to interact using their Facebook or Twitter accounts without ever leaving the [CMAawards.com](http://CMAawards.com) homepage.



CMA BROADCAST AWARDS WINNERS ONSTAGE AT "THE 45<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CMA AWARDS"

CMA Broadcast Personality and Radio Station of the Year winners were notified live on the air in early October by Kid Rock, Tim McGraw and Taylor Swift and recognized during the CMA Awards broadcast. (front) Lisa McKay, WQDR; Janie Carothers, WQDR; Mike Wheelless, WQDR; Carissa Loethen, KCLR; Jeffrey "Maverick" Bolen, WUBE; Marty Young, WQDR (middle) Kix Brooks, "American Country Countdown with Kix Brooks"; JJ Herr, WQDR; Scotty Cox, KCLR; Chris Carr, WUBE; Jason Statt, WUBE; (back) Teresa Davis, KCLR; Brian Pierce, KFDI; Kellie Michaels, KFDI; Nikki Thomas, KATM; and Jerry "Bear" Musson, PD, KATM.

## CMA BROADCAST PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR WINNERS

### NATIONAL

"American Country Countdown with Kix Brooks"

### MAJOR

CHUCK EDWARDS and LINDA LEE

"Edwards & Lee"

WYCD / Detroit, Mich.

### LARGE

CHRIS CARR, JEFFREY "MAVERICK" BOLEN and JASON STATT

"Chris Carr & Company" WUBE / Cincinnati, Ohio

### MEDIUM

BRIAN PIERCE and KELLIE MICHAELS

"Mornings with Brian and Kellie"

KFDI / Wichita, Kan.

### SMALL

SCOTTY COX and CARISSA LOETHEN

"Scotty & Carissa

in the Morning" KCLR / Columbia, Mo.

## CMA RADIO STATION OF THE YEAR WINNERS

### MAJOR

WYCD / Detroit, Mich.

### LARGE

WQDR / Raleigh-Durham, N.C.

### MEDIUM

KATM / Modesto, Calif.

### SMALL

KCLR / Columbia, Mo.



## PREMIERE RADIO NETWORKS OFFERS MORE SPACE AND VIDEO POSSIBILITIES FOR RADIO REMOTES

Radio personalities, like musicians, look at life and their work with a unique kind of humor. So it wasn't a surprise to find Chris Young embracing and then autographing a life-size cardboard cutout of teen pop sensation Justin Bieber, with encouragement from DeAnn Stephens, as her show, "Officer Don and DeAnn," aired live from Nashville on KBUL-FM "The Bull" in Lexington, Ky.

Purchased at a shop on Nashville's Lower Broadway the day before, this cheerful souvenir would soon be covered by signatures from many of the approximately 75 Country artists who would appear at Premiere Radio Networks' broadcast center in the Hilton Nashville Downtown for live radio interviews Nov. 6-8. Forty-seven radio stations conducted interviews during morning and afternoon drive times; four of them took part remotely, with the DJs in their home-market studios. The rest were on site, in a setting more accommodating than ever in Premiere's long association with the CMA Awards.

"Last year we had 47 positions in the room," said Ilycia Deitch, Senior Director of Events, Premiere Radio Networks. "This year, we have 27 shared positions. Morning and afternoon drives are sharing booths, so there's much more space and a much more open floor



plan. It's more conducive to having a lot of people flow through the room within a very short period of time — and the studios are bigger too, with more working space for the radio stations."

Equally beneficial were the cameras provided by Polycom Inc., which recorded every interview at each booth. A nearby facility allowed participants to edit and quickly upload footage onto station Web sites. "The video is great because not everyone can come to Nashville and experience this," said Jerry Houston, Senior Online Editor, WMZQ-FM, Washington, D.C. "It goes on our Web site, and people can pick and choose what they want to view. As soon as we wrap here, we're going to post it."

Additionally, Premiere offered participating stations a four-hour "2011 CMA Awards Preview Special," hosted by Lady Antebellum, which included interviews and information about the Awards and nominees. During Red Carpet arrivals, before TV-ready step-and-repeats, Premiere Radio personality Larry Morgan, joined by Laura Bell Bundy, spearheaded live coverage and conducted post-event backstage interviews. Morgan also hosted a two-hour special, "CMA Awards: A Look Back," which broadcast the weekend after the Awards.

## CMA INVITES SPECIAL GUESTS TO POST-AWARDS PARTY

Brad Paisley and Carrie Underwood were still waving goodbye at Bridgestone Arena when CMA's post-broadcast party kicked off on the other side of Music City Walk of Fame Park. The spacious lobby and elegant Hall of Fame Rotunda at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum boasted hanging kiwi-green fabric panels, handsome white leather chairs and couches with accent green pillows, courtesy of Visual Elements; elegant table linens from Graceful Tables; and beautiful displays created by Ilex for Flowers, each one unique on tables, buffets and bars throughout the room. Food was provided by Two Twenty-Two Grill & Catering, with Patrón Tequila being poured at several stations.

Approximately 600 invited guests enjoyed live music by Country/jazz singer Anna Wilson, with guest appearances by saxophonist Jeff Coffin, Billy Dean, pianist Jeff Franzel, "American Idol" fifth-place finalist Matt Giraud, Cheyenne Medders, The Lunabelles and Connie Smith. A silent auction, running until midnight to raise money for Keep the Music Playing, also kept attendees engaged. Items included a \$1,000 gift card from The Container Store, a stunning CMA Awards artwork by Charles Fazzino and a SpiritWild Texas Ranch Ultra Exclusive Hunt with Ted Nugent. The most visible enticement, though, was a 10-foot resin sculpture of a Gibson guitar, offered by Patrón Tequila and Ultimat Vodka and covered with artist signatures collected backstage at the Awards. All proceeds were donated to CMA's Keep the Music Playing charity.

## CMA BOARD WELCOMES SPECIAL GUESTS TO PRE-TELECAST RECEPTION

The Patrón Platinum Club in the Bridgestone Arena was the site of this year's CMA Awards Pre-Tel Reception, hosted by the CMA Board of Directors and American Airlines.



Guests attend the silent auction in the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum's Rotunda.



Country/jazz singer Anna Wilson entertains.



Charmione Moore; Dr. Jimmy Simmons, President, Lamar University; Susan Simmons; and CMA CEO Steve Moore.

Jeff Walker, President, The AristoMedia Group; Julie Talbott, Executive VP, Affiliate Marketing, Premiere Radio Networks; Glenn Beck; and Tania Beck.

"The 45<sup>th</sup> Annual CMA Awards" is a production of the Country Music Association. Robert Deaton is the Executive Producer. Paul Miller is the Director. The special was shot in high definition and broadcast in 720 Progressive (720P), ABC's selected HDTV format, with 5.1 channel surround sound. | Premiere Radio Networks is the official radio packager of the CMA Awards. Chevrolet™ is a Proud Partner of the CMA Awards and Official Ride of Country Music. American Airlines is the Official Airline of the 2011 CMA Awards. Macy's is the official presenting partner of the CMA Awards Red Carpet. Patrón Tequila and Ultimat Vodka presented at "The 45<sup>th</sup> Annual CMA Awards." CMA is a Proud Supporter of DRIVE4COPD. | CMA Awards nominees and winners are determined by the more than 6,400 music industry professional eligible voting members of CMA, the first trade organization formed to promote a type of music, in 1958. CMA Awards balloting is officiated by Deloitte & Touche LLP. | The first "CMA Awards Banquet and Show" was in 1967; the second event was broadcast on NBC in 1968, making it the longest running annual music awards program on network TV. The show aired on NBC through 1970, on CBS from 1971 through 2005 and on ABC since 2006. | CMA Awards wrap-up content by Bob Doerschuk. Premiere Radio photography by Scott Hunter. All other photography by Bennett Farkas, Karen Hicks, Donn Jones, Theresa Montgomery, John Russell and Jamie Schramm for CMA.



# CMA COUNTRY CHRISTMAS CELEBRATES A SPECIAL SEASON IN SONG

It took less than a day to transform the stage in Nashville's Bridgestone Arena from one spectacular set to another. As soon as the last fans exited the venue after the CMA Awards on Nov. 9, crews pulled an all-nighter so that another capacity audience could file in to witness the taping of "CMA Country Christmas."

A towering Christmas tree divided the stage into two sections; behind both were huge projections of windows dusted with frost and looking out to a nighttime sky filled with snowflakes in gentle descent and shimmering illuminations that resembled the Northern Lights. Throughout the evening, these projections would change: As Scotty McCreery sang "First Noel," the image of a children's book appeared behind him, with stained-glass saints in projected church windows as illustrations. But when Brian Setzer traded guitar licks with Brad Paisley while a big band rocked through "Sleigh Ride" and "Boogie Woogie Santa Claus," the background gave way to visions of ornaments, a glowing jukebox and a turntable spinning an LP labeled "CMA Records."

"The Christmas show is about coming up with a piece of work that feels like one homogenous program, wrapped up in the values of Christmas as a family experience," explained Lee Lodge, whose animations and effects have also graced the stages for the CMA Awards, LP Field during CMA Music Festival and many major concerts. "For the CMA Awards, you have to look at each song in a slightly different way. But with the Christmas show, because we know the images so well, you can revel in a really strong bed of imagery."

As with last year's debut of the "CMA Country Christmas," Lodge's work was like astonishing wrappings around the true gift of music. Jennifer Nettles returned as host of the program; her ebullient personality warmed the audience and set the stage for a program that ranged from hilarity (a Vince Gill/Miss Piggy duet on "Baby, It's Cold Outside") to romantic (Keith Urban, seated before an orchestral string section, singing "The Christmas Song") and inspirational (a finely nuanced but powerful a cappella rendering of "Little Drummer Boy" by Faith Hill and 12 backup vocalists).

Other highlights included the exquisitely harmonized "White Christmas" and "Mary Did You Know," by Rascal Flatts; Darius Rucker swinging through an uptempo "Winter

Wonderland"; Lauren Alaina stirring nostalgic memories with "Grown Up Christmas List"; Kellie Pickler tearing it up and even handing out presents to surprised onlookers in "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree"; Gill returning for a buoyant "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year" and joining wife Amy Grant for the last chorùs on a medley of "Mary's Song" and "Breath of Heaven"; Little Big Town bathing "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" in gorgeous harmonies over a simple guitar accompaniment; and Martina McBride digging deep into the blues for "Please Come Home for Christmas." All came to the stage at the end for a spirited rendition of "Jingle Bells."

Nettles kept busy, joining partner Kristian Bush for a Sugarland take on "Silent Night," just the two of them on the first verse, with Bush on mandolin, and then soaring to a climax as the band joined in. Mostly, though, she emceed with skill that would do a variety-show veteran proud. When not introducing artists, she was joining Alaina to ask a group of children what they wanted for Christmas, sitting next to a young Make-a-Wish girl as McCreery serenaded her, and even joining a group of dancers for a choreographed number, after which she quipped, "This is a cardio workout, so I'm just warming up."

Throughout the taping, golf carts backstage whisked artists to what looked like a cozy living room, with gold-tinted leather furniture, a bowl of jellies on a coffee table, a Christmas tree, presents and a flickering fire. Here, another crew filmed the performers and family members as they answered questions from show writer David Wild, seated off-camera, on the meaning of Christmas.

"Who has been naughty? Who has been nice?" he asked Gary LeVox and his wife Tara as daughters Brittany and Brooklyn waited to hear their decision. "Both of our kids are nice," the Rascal Flatts tenor responded. "They have wonderful parents."

Segments from these "fireside chats" appear throughout "CMA Country Christmas," adding an intimate, family-oriented dimension to the program. ABC aired the two-hour special on Thursday, Dec. 1 and will show it again on Saturday, Dec. 17, 9 PM/ET.

"CMA Country Christmas" 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 was shot in high definition and broadcast in 720 Progressive (720P), ABC's selected HDTV format, with 5.1 channel surround sound.



Sugarland



Martina McBride



Miss Piggy with Vince Gill



Darius Rucker



Brad Paisley with Brian Setzer



Jennifer Nettles and Kristian Bush



Kellie Pickler



Keith Urban



Faith Hill



Scotty McCreery



# ROUND-TRIP TICKET

CMA SONGWRITERS SERIES DEBUTS IN IRELAND AND U.K.



by BOB DOERSCHUK

**Lots of great songs have made their way from Great Britain and Ireland to the U.S. over these past 50-odd years. It's about time to return the favor, which CMA will do abundantly in February 2012 as its Songwriters Series makes its first trek overseas.**

Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame member Bob DiPiero (who wrote Faith Hill's "Take Me as I Am," Tim McGraw's "Southern Voice" and George Strait's "Blue Clear Sky," among many other hits) launched the Songwriters Series in 2005 and has hosted almost all of its shows since then. Dedicated to informing the public on the writers behind today's great Country songs, the Series will again feature DiPiero as emcee on four dates.

Joining DiPiero on this mini-tour are Country Music Hall of Fame member Bill Anderson (Brad Paisley's and Alison Krauss' "Whiskey Lullaby" and Strait's "Give It Away") and former CMA Male Vocalist of the Year Clint Black, who wrote and recorded "Killin' Time," "State of Mind" and "When I Said I Do," a duet with his wife, Lisa Hartman Black.

On Feb. 21, DiPiero, Anderson and Black will tape an episode of the BBC Four series "Songwriters Circle" at Bush Hall in London. The tour — known from this point as "CMA/BMI Presents the CMA Songwriters Series" — continues to London's Hard Rock Café on Feb. 22, Whelan's in Dublin, Ireland, on Feb. 23, and finally to The Empire Music Hall in Belfast, Northern Ireland, on Feb. 25.

"When we began the Series in 2005, I never dreamed it would include such an honor as being asked to perform in England and Ireland," said DiPiero. "These CMA Songwriter shows are one-of-a-kind performances by some of the very best songwriter/storytellers on the planet. I've never seen a more honest, authentic, entertaining musical performance anywhere."

For Anderson, this tour represents a musical homecoming of sorts. "Put on a Bill Monroe record, close your eyes and you can feel yourself being transported back to an earlier time in Ireland and Scotland," he reflected. "Those folks dug the wells from which our music sprang."

Black amplified on the song-oriented focus of the Series. "When I'm performing in concert, everyone has a certain expectation because they know my hits," he said. "So you feel a certain obligation to deliver that. In a songwriter environment, the criteria are more geared toward performing with the idea of the composition rather than the commercial success."

Anticipation is high among those who operate the venues where these in-the-round events will take place. "This will help us to raise the profile of the Country songwriters at our festival here in Belfast," said Colin Magee, Director, Belfast Nashville Songwriters Festival. "I've been interested in the cultural connections between our music and American Country for many years now. Old folk songs from Ireland have similar structures (to Country songs) — and we've always loved a great story song! It's one of the reasons we started the festival back in 2004."

"This type of show, a focus on the writer, will have a great appeal to the songwriter community here," added Simon Aldridge, Senior Executive, Writer/Publisher Relations, Europe, BMI. "The Songwriter Series is a real slice of Nashville songwriting and culture all in one go, and to have it appear on Britain's shores in this format is a great opportunity. We're specifically extending invitations to our U.K. BMI songwriters who will know of Bob's, Bill's and Clint's works."

"British and Irish audiences have always had an appetite for authentic, artistic music, and I'm certain these performances will exceed all expectations," added Jody Williams, VP, Writer/Publisher Relations, Nashville, BMI. "I'm so proud, as a CMA Board member, that we are putting our best foot forward to expose Nashville's best in these markets."

"The CMA Songwriter Series began in 2005 in New York and has expanded to cities across the United States including Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Nashville, and Washington D.C.," said CMA CEO Steve Moore. "The popularity of our music overseas and the appreciation the audience in the U.K. has for our songwriters made this a good fit and an opportune time to travel the series abroad. And it is terrific to have BMI as a partner in this exciting initiative."

For updates and details on the CMA Songwriters Series in the U.K., visit [CMASongwritersSeries.com](http://CMASongwritersSeries.com).

***"PUT ON A BILL MONROE RECORD,  
CLOSE YOUR EYES AND  
YOU CAN FEEL YOURSELF  
BEING TRANSPORTED BACK  
TO AN EARLIER TIME IN  
IRELAND AND SCOTLAND."***

— Bill Anderson

# THE ART OF THE INTERVIEW

## How Publicists and Journalists Can Work Together on Stories Both Will Love

by DONNA HUGHES



One of the publicist's most important and daunting challenges is to ensure that their clients' interviews and media coverage are as positive as possible. Admittedly, this may put them at cross purposes with certain members of the media who may find it more enticing to spread dirt than sunshine. But more often than not, there are ways to ensure that both parties get what they want — a story whose angle is fresh enough for the writer and beneficial as well to the artist.

**T**he fundamental step in making this happen is for the publicist to be sure that interviewers have all the relevant tools and artist materials at their disposal, including a list of essential talking points. "When we arrange and prepare for an interview, we feed as much information as possible to the outlet, and a lot of times it is information that isn't readily accessible," said Ebie McFarland, President/CEO of Essential Broadcast Media. "We also reciprocate that information gathering with the artist, i.e., 'You met them last year and talked about golf, and they are especially interested in' whatever the angle is. By establishing common ground between the two parties, you automatically provide a more relaxed environment for the interviewer and interviewee.

"Publicists are gatekeepers to a lot of privy information," she continued. "The most important thing we can do with that information is to find a great outlet to help us share it. Where there is a true marriage between an artist and a journalist, it yields an article that not only furthers the artists' career, but it also reaches a larger audience for the media outlet."

And that ultimately serves an additional interest for the journalist representing that outlet. "Your relationship with a reporter or journalist is the most important

thing for you as a publicist," said Tree Paine, VP of Publicity, Warner Music Nashville. "That starts with trust. It starts with the journalist understanding that no matter what, we have the same agenda — to deliver the very best story."

Having experienced a head-swimming year of success and intense media coverage, Kimberly Perry of The Band Perry can offer insight into how an interviewer can help establish a mutually beneficial rapport. "As an artist, I always love it when an interviewer asks questions about your particular songs and what your creative process is, as opposed to, 'Hey! You kind of sound like this person. What does that mean to you?'" she said. "I understand because it's familiarity to us to liken us to other artists, and that's wonderful because those other artists have paved the way for you. But we certainly are working hard to contribute our own style and our own thumbprint to Country Music, so I love it when an interviewer talks about that."

That lesson is not lost on the better journalists covering the Country beat. It may be tempting to introduce new acts to the public through comparisons to their more familiar forebears, but it reflects better on both the artist and the discernment of the writer to instead share insights into what makes those acts unique.

"If you are interviewing them because they have new music coming out, it is always great to hear the new music first," said radio veteran Becca Walls, midday host on WKDF-FM Nashville as well as co-host on Today's Country WAXX-FM / Eau Claire, Wis., co-host of the nationally syndicated TV show "The Country Vibe with Chuck and Becca," writer and producer of the news blog at [TheCountryVibe.com](http://TheCountryVibe.com) and correspondent for numerous syndicated radio outlets and companies. "When you listen to a song or songs, you can formulate a more interesting question than, 'So tell me about your new single.' I would tell a publicist, the more you want me to ask questions that promote your artist, be sure I know all that they are promoting."

Tom Roland, who works currently as editor of "The Billboard Country Update" and music programmer for CMT's "The Singing Bee," adds that artists should understand who is interviewing them and what they need. "For me, it's a weird situation because I'm a freelancer and the kinds of publications I represent are different from day to day," he said. "Sometimes the artists themselves are not really prepared for what I'm writing about at the time."

Once all these pieces are in place, how does the game begin? It takes some skill on both sides to create a great interview. As Paine put it, "I hope I lead you on a nice scenic drive. I would want the journalist to trust me that I'm giving you good information and that when I give you the talking points or tidbits, you've got to trust when you ask that question that you're going to get a good sound bite or that you're going to find yourself following a path you're going to enjoy. The journalist has to be good at listening. Most are, but on a few occasions there are journalists that want to interject what they think the artist is about to say. When that happens, they can actually miss part of that scenic drive. It's like telling the artist, 'You want to make a left turn here,' and the reality is that the artist was going down a path that would give you the best views, and now you've taken them in a different direction."

According to Cindy Heath, founder of Monarch Publicity, writers can benefit as much as Boy Scouts from the mantra to "Be prepared. It can be frustrating as a publicist when you do everything you can to make sure the journalist has everything they need in advance to prepare for the interview, from the story line to music, talk points, bio and other materials, and the interviewer comes into the meeting unprepared. It reflects poorly on everyone involved."

"I personally spend a lot of time researching and familiarizing



myself with the subject of the interview," Roland said. "I'm always looking for the holes and what's not known that I can fill in, or something glaring at me that no one's ever spoken about."

"When you have a chance to interview someone, have enough respect to do your homework, write thoughtful questions and be prepared with all the information you'll need to get the most out of the interview," said Walls. "You should know why you're talking to them, and you should also be prepared to talk about other topics. Reading the talking points sheet you get from the publicist is not enough, unless you want to do the same, unoriginal interview that everyone else is doing."

Once the interview is underway, Walls' advice becomes even more pointed. "When they talk, *listen*," she emphasized. "If you go in with the goal of just zipping through your questions and don't pay attention to their answers, you may miss a valuable opportunity to have a great conversation and ask a great follow-up question."

"Be invested in the interview, be cognizant of your body language and come prepared," McFarland stated. "Let the interviewee know up front who your audience is and why *you* want to share their messages with your listeners or readers."

What happens if a journalist takes this advice a step too far? Publicists sometimes ask them not to get into certain sensitive areas, such as a divorce, romance or tabloid story. For publicists, it's good sense to expect and prepare for the unexpected with their artists. "We try our best to

## **"YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH A REPORTER OR JOURNALIST IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING FOR YOU AS A PUBLICIST."**

— Tree Paine, VP of Public Relations, Warner Music Group

prepare the artists for those responses and encourage our clients to be comfortable answering honestly when a reporter steps out of bounds on questions like that by saying, 'I don't feel comfortable addressing that topic in our interview, but thank you for asking,'" McFarland said. "If the journalist still pushes for a further response, we have unfortunately had to step in and redirect or cut the interview short."

"Honesty is the best policy," Heath added. "But you also don't have to give up too many details at the same time."

"The artist and publicist relationship has to be symbiotic," Paine noted. "This interdependent relationship is crucial especially when a journalist oversteps boundaries. I trust that we have gone over every single curve ball even before they sit down with a reporter. I always tell my artists, 'Answer the questions truthfully. If we get in a bind, it's my job to fix it.'"

Some media outlets offer both risk and opportunity. Many publicists feel that if it's the right artist the hip factor and possibility of major coverage outweighs the chance of embarrassment on "The Howard Stern Show" or "Chelsea Lately." "Blake Shelton was one of the first Country artists on E! Entertainment's 'Chelsea Lately,'" Paine said. "They have an amazing relationship. They have that similar comedic sense of timing and rapport. With Blake, there was no doubt in my mind that he could hold his own with Chelsea Handler."

A few years ago, while working at Lyric Street Records, Heath booked Trent Tomlinson on "The Howard Stern Show." "It made sense for Trent's music, image and persona," she said. "Anything that was potentially going to be said or done could be explained by his public persona. But it wouldn't make sense to put other artists in that position because it isn't in line with their brand or their image."

The lesson is that there are many possible directions for that scenic drive through the road map of any interview — as long as you find the turn toward the most suitable destination.



ASHLEY DVORKIN OF FOX NEWS CHANNEL RECEIVES  
2011 CMA MEDIA ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

CMA Board member and publicist Jessie Schmidt presented the 2011 CMA Media Achievement Award to FOX News Channel Entertainment Producer Ashley Dvorkin backstage during "The 45th Annual CMA Awards." Dvorkin also serves as Entertainment Producer for the FOX affiliated feed FOX News Edge and hosts and produces FOX 411 Country. "It's such an honor to receive this Award from CMA member publicists," the New Jersey native said. "Thank you to everyone involved. It's a true pleasure to work with you, and I'm very proud to be part of this Country Music community." (l-r) Wendy Pearl, CMA VP of Corporate Communications; Dvorkin; and Schmidt photo: Alexa Sullivant



AUSTRALIA'S THE MCCLYMONTS RECEIVE CMA 2011 GLOBAL COUNTRY ARTIST AWARD

The McClymonts were presented with the 2011 CMA Global Country Artist Award at the International Media Reception prior to the CMA Awards, in recognition of their role in furthering the popularity of Country Music and bringing attention to the format in a foreign territory. The Australian sisters — Brooke, Samantha and Mollie — have enjoyed strong successes in their home country, having won Best Group honors in four of the past five years at the Country Music Awards of Australia. "Wow, after five months of living here in Nashville, to have picked up the CMA Global Country Artist Award is an absolute honor," said Brooke McClymont. (l-r) Mollie and Sam McClymont, CMA CEO Steve Moore and Brooke McClymont photo: Christian Bottorff



# Lady Antebellum

LADY ANTEBELLUM HEADLINED CAVERNOUS ARENAS ON ITS OWN THE NIGHT 2011 TOUR, CULMINATING DEC. 18 AT THE WVU COLISEUM IN MORGANTOWN, W. VA. BUT JUST A FEW MONTHS EARLIER, DURING THE SUMMER, THE CMA AWARD-WINNING TRIO WAS PERFORMING IN FAR MORE INTIMATE SETTINGS, AT STATE AND COUNTY FAIRS AROUND THE COUNTRY.

Playing under the stars, often just yards from carnival rides, food vendors and even livestock, is a warm-weather tradition that's embedded deeply in Country Music. No matter how successful a Country act may become — and Lady Antebellum, who notched huge debut-week sales of more than 347,000 for the chart-topping *Own the Night*, is a perfect example of this — they often keep the summer fair-and-festival circuit on their itinerary.

In 2011, high-profile acts including Jason Aldean, Brad Paisley and Reba all entertained fairgoers in grandstands; even Sugarland soldiered on after the tragedy at the Indiana State Fair. In summers past, Rascal Flatts, Carrie Underwood and Keith Urban have passed through fair gates. Yes, pop artists are also well represented, but for Country artists fairs are often where they got their first big break.

"A huge milestone in our career was the Delaware State Fair," said Lady Antebellum's Hillary Scott, seated on a couch in the dressing room of bandmates Dave Haywood and Charles Kelley prior to their show that September night at The Great New York State Fair in Syracuse. "We drove a Winnebago up there to open for Carrie Underwood, and because Carrie was headlining, there were so many butts in the seats already. That was a huge, huge moment for us, and we've been back since."

"We come back to fairs year after year because a lot of them took a chance on us in the beginning," Kelley agreed. "Fairs feel a part of the tradition of Country Music. To a certain extent, you have a built-in audience. You have people that may come to the fair just because they come every year. They may not be fans of ours, but hopefully we can win them over and then they'll come see us on our headlining tour. There's a marketing aspect to it."

A few days later, Lady Antebellum's manager Gary Borman concurred with Kelley's assessment. "Not necessarily everyone at a fair is a fan of your artist," said the Owner/Founder of Borman Entertainment. "But they're there to enjoy the fair and all that it offers. You're able to reach people that you otherwise may not reach in an arena or in a theater."

Indeed, large fair attendances add significantly to what Borman calls "residual exposure," bringing a wide, diverse spectrum of people, often at very little expense. "You're not targeting a fan base as much as you are a lifestyle," he noted. "It used to be that you could call it 'rural,' but having been to some of these fairs, I wouldn't say they're all rural anymore. They're everything."

Perhaps surprisingly, there's also a hefty payday to be had for the artist. At first glance, having a smaller capacity and fewer seats than an arena or amphitheater would seem to equal less net. However, the stripped-down nature of the fair concerts prohibits, or even liberates, acts from hauling around big-budget set pieces and lighting.

"From a business standpoint, it's great," said Kelley. "People don't realize it, but the fairs usually take care of the artists really well. You don't have to take quite as much production as you would in an arena, so you can keep your costs down."

It's all a matter of routing, according to Borman. Plotting a tour of fairs and festivals is more complicated than routing an arena tour, as the dates and locations are often spread out, both on the map and on the calendar. As a result, promoters have to

sweeten the deal to secure a popular act.

"When you're on a normal tour, you're routing things in a very sequential, logical and geographical way," he said. "There's a great efficiency in doing that. But when you're booking fairs, that is somewhat of an impossibility."

As a result, the fairs must typically pay the artist more, both to attract them and get them to commit to performing a one-off date. In short, the more planning and travel required, the higher the artist's payday.

"Because it's a one-off, the fairs will pay you a lot more money than you otherwise would potentially make," Borman confirmed. "So your grosses go up, your expenses go down and the end result can be very lucrative, from both a financial and a marketing standpoint."

Given the financial upside, it's easy to see why artists might be happy to leave behind their elaborate productions. But the bare-essentials arrangement can also benefit fans eager to get the most musical bang for their buck.



DAVE HAYWOOD, HILLARY SCOTT and CHARLES KELLEY



# the importance of playing fair(s)

by JOSEPH HUDAK

By using the fair's stage and stock lighting and adding only an occasional flourish, such as a backdrop or additional lights, the bands and crews reduce the time needed to swap out equipment between performers. "The set changes are quicker," Scott said. "It's easier on us and then the fans hear more music. So it's a win-win."

Haywood added that fairgoers can reap more than just musical rewards: There are savings to be had, especially for families. "When you're in the middle of a downtown, at an arena, you have to pay to park. You have to pay to get in. There are all these hard ticket (add-ons)," he explained, noting how the price of entry to some fairs includes admission to the concert. "At some of the fairs we've played, it's free seating in the grandstand."

There's also the allure of accessibility for those who don't live near a major metropolis or would rather not fight city traffic to get to a concert. "It's a chance for people that wouldn't drive to, say, Atlanta to see you," said Haywood, who made his own annual pilgrimage to the Georgia State Fair as a teen. "You went every year, regardless of who was playing. Fairs are the lifeblood of Country Music. I don't think it's something we're going to be done with. They're always going to be a part of our career."

Kelley seconded that notion. "Realistically, we won't be selling out arenas for our entire career," he reflected. "Maybe we'll be lucky enough to, but if not, we want to build a piece of solid longevity in terms of a touring career. We can still come out here and expect to do 40 fairs every year."

The fair model also transcends business and financial concerns. The casual settings fulfill the very real need by artists to connect with their audiences on a human level. While arena shows often emphasize spectacle, there is a spontaneous, down-home nature inherent to the fairgrounds.

For Scott, that means the opportunity to talk onstage about the origin of a song or recount a moment from her own day at the fair. "This

is a much more listening crowd, where you can tell stories behind the songs," she observed. "In an arena, the show can sometimes come across as impersonal. With this, they get to see our personalities. It's not just a bunch of fireworks and lasers."

Later that evening, the band illustrated this in a personal way. Scott's fiancé Chris Tyrell and his family were in the audience, and Kelley took time to rib his engaged bandmate playfully, who gamely pointed out her soon-to-be in-laws.

"Some of our best moments at fairs and festivals are the spontaneous ones, where I catch the spirit a little bit and jump into the audience," Kelley said. "Or we point out somebody with a poster that is kind of funny and put them on the spot. That's when you get in those atmospheres. It feels less polished, which is nice."

"People want to know you in a setting like this and feel a connection," Haywood concurred.

But Borman cautioned that despite such an appealing environment, artists would be wise to not schedule fair tours every summer. In addition to risking overexposure, the artist might too often exclude the arena-fan demographic.

"From our strategic position, you don't do the fairs every year," he said. "You alternate with arenas. You're reaching slightly different audiences that way. When a fairgoer sees 'Lady Antebellum' on the marquee and they're at the fair, they may say, 'Well, shoot, we're here. Let's go to the show.' That may not be the same person who would go out and buy a Lady Antebellum ticket to the arena."

Still, as Kelley expressed earlier, that fair fan just might want to catch Lady A's full bells-and-whistles indoor show someday — especially if the group continues its upward trajectory and mimics the successes of past fair headliners frequently mentioned to the band during their fair meet-and-greets.

"Every time, fans tell us stories about when Kenny Chesney came. And these were at fairs and festivals that were as small as they come. They would say, 'It's so cool you all are here. Let me tell you a story about when Kenny came. Or let me tell you about when a guy named Garth Brooks was here,'" Kelley recalled. "It's cool to think that maybe one day they'll be saying, 'We had Lady Antebellum here a few years ago.'"

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



*"Fairs are the lifeblood of Country Music. ... They're always going to be a part of our career."*

— Dave Haywood of Lady Antebellum

# QR codes

NEW MARKETING HORIZONS IN BLACK AND WHITE

by SARAH SKATES

QR codes, the latest new media marketing method, are popping up everywhere from movie posters to album covers. Easily recognizable as black-and-white squares with black boxes in three of their corners, these powerful codes represent a step forward from the traditional barcode.

**B**ecause they hold more data than a standard barcode, QR (“quick response”) codes can store contact information, a geolocation, a link or a video. Unlike old barcodes, these new QR matrix codes do not need to access a database in order to reference their content. Instead, a QR code can hold enough information to stand on its own.

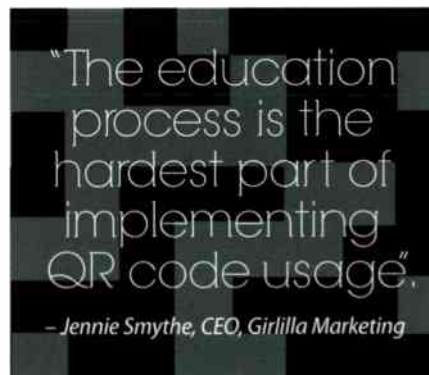
The value of this development is not lost on the music industry’s digital strategists. “QR codes give you the opportunity to take the marketing you are doing in the physical world and drive people to digital interactive content,” noted Heather McBee, VP, Digital Business, Sony Music Nashville.

There is in fact no limit to where a marketer might position a QR code, from stickers to postcards to a projection on the side of a building. Flipping through a magazine, readers can often find more than one QR code, whether in an advertisement or an article. Graphic designers who create ads might think these black-and-white boxes detract from their artwork, but techie marketers are working to make them more aesthetically pleasing. Recently, Zac Brown Band’s team even built the band’s logo into its QR code.

A smartphone or similar device is usually required to read a QR code. But that’s no problem, considering that 40 percent of mobile phone users have a smartphone, according to July 2011 data from Nielsen. These users can photograph the code with their smartphone cameras. Then a special

application — there are numerous ones available for free download — processes the code. Some scanners work better than others, so trying a few might be necessary to find the one most compatible with each mobile device.

Many Nashville labels and marketers are building promotions around QR codes, which open fan engagement opportunities limited only by how far creative teams can stretch their imaginations.



A retail shopper might see *This Is My Blood*, the debut album by The Dirt Drifters, in a store. If they’re curious, a quick scan of the QR code sticker on the CD case takes the user’s mobile phone browser to a site that allows them to stream the album instantly and in its entirety while standing in the store — or even to select specific tracks. Browsers can also preview 30-second segments from each song. This approach to promotion will soon be available on every release coming from Warner Music Group, including catalog product.

Sony Music Nashville has also used QR codes to promote recent album launches.

“Around CMA Music Festival, we put QR codes in the marketplace,” said McBee. “One of them took you to buy the (self-titled) album from Ronnie Dunn. We also ran some print ads for Jake Owen that included a QR code. It linked to the video for the first single (and title track), ‘Barefoot Blue Jean Night’ (written by Dylan Altman, Eric Paslay and Terry Sawchuk) because it was such an engaging visual that we wanted people to see it. It was a strong selling point.”

Trackable codes such as the ones used by Sony allow marketers to know how many people scanned them. Another way to gauge QR code usage is to offer fans a discount or coupon, which helps them track engagement when that coupon is redeemed.

Jennie Smythe, CEO, Girlilla Marketing, is offering coupons and other content through QR codes for a number of artists, including Zac Brown Band. In order to host its intimate preshow eat-and-greets with fans, the band has a cooking trailer affectionately known as Cookie.

“We have a QR code placed on Cookie, with the idea that as they’re stopping all across the country, people can get information about Cookie and the band,” she explained. “That’s where we started, and now we are implementing ways for people to learn about Chef Rusty (Hamlin), who helps prepare the food as well as the video recipes from Zac’s cookbook (*Southern Ground*), and his sauces and rubs. It gives us something to talk about in addition to the music — more than ‘come see us in concert, come buy our CD.’ It’s a lifestyle thing that we can offer the fans, which is fun and doesn’t cost them any money.”

Plans are in the works for the Cookie code to link to a coupon that will be redeemable





Southern Ground Executive Chef Rusty Hamlin and Zac Brown Band's cooking trailer "Cookie," with QR code near the rear wheel.



photo: below - Kim Davidson; Hamlin - Cole Cassell; Zac Brown Band QR image - courtesy of Southern Ground

on site at ZBB concerts and events. Brown's signature sauces and the recipes used for that night's cooking are among the items being discussed for this program. "It's an easy and cheap way to deliver a quick response," Smythe said. "If the fan is going to take the time to get out their phone, figure out how to scan it and then scan it, then I want them to walk right over to where they can get something of value or a piece of content that enhances the experience."

Common knowledge would suggest that QR code users are young or tech-savvy, two demographics that often go hand-in-hand. But, said McBee, "I don't think that any of us can prove that that's been who uses QR codes more often. No one knows that for sure. I haven't seen any research on it. But everybody that's using a smartphone can utilize a QR code."

Of the numerous QR codes that people encounter, many go unscanned for a variety of reasons, ranging from lack of time or interest to not knowing how to do it. "The education

process is the hardest part of implementing QR code usage," Smythe observed.

Additionally, some codes simply take the user to a regular Web site, which can be a bit of a letdown and may even discourage some users from scanning other codes in the future. In such cases, it would have been better for the marketer to simply provide consumers with a Web address. When linking to a site from a QR code, it's important to have a functioning mobile Web site that was designed for optimal use on a smartphone or similar device.

Creating a QR code is somewhat similar to creating a barcode. Many Web teams can build one for a nominal cost, which varies from basically free to a few hundred dollars, depending on the functionality and information stored within. When building a QR code, it is important to consider the size of the code and the surface on which it appears. The size matters in relation to a camera's scanning capabilities. And after trial and error, Smythe reports that putting a code on a glossy surface

isn't ideal because the reflection makes it harder to scan.

Though the code itself is inexpensive to create, there is a cost associated with its placement, whether on an ad, sticker, flier or poster. The codes can link to any number of items, including exclusive content, preorder opportunities, special deals on concert tickets or discounted items from the concession stand. Offering free or discounted merchandise can also take dollars out of the marketing budget. And giving away content, such as a recipe or a streaming video, costs little to nothing.

"As you can imagine, trying to bring something that is both dynamic and interactive into the physical world is a little bit tough," said McBee. "That is something that QR codes have started enabling us to do. We are really excited by the opportunities that are presenting themselves."

Smythe agreed. "There are all kinds of cool, crazy ideas for QR codes that we are just getting started on."



QR code on the jewel box for Stealing Angels' single "Little Blue Sky" leads to a Web site offering information about the song, a video and a fan contest launched Oct. 17.

1. CMA CLOSE UP STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP 2. 0896-372X 3. OCT. 1, 2011  
 4. BI-MONTHLY 5. SIX 6. \$25.00 BOB DOERSCHUK CMA (615) 664-1640 7. 8. / 10. CMA,  
 ONE MUSIC CIRCLE SOUTH, NASHVILLE, TN 37203-4312 9. STEVE MOORE, CMA, ONE MUSIC  
 CIRCLE SOUTH, NASHVILLE, TN 37203 BOB DOERSCHUK, CMA, ONE MUSIC CIRCLE SOUTH,  
 NASHVILLE, TN 37203 AMANDA ECKARD, CMA, ONE MUSIC CIRCLE SOUTH, NASHVILLE, TN  
 37203 11. NONE 12. HAS NOT CHANGED DURING PRECEDING 12 MONTHS  
 13. CMA CLOSE UP 14. AUG/SEPT 2011

15. AVE NO. COPIES EACH ISSUE	NO. COPIES SINGLE ISSUE		
A-7,650	D3-448	A-7,750	D3-185
B1-2,829	D4-380	B1-3,601	D4-218
B2-2,970	E-1,707	B2-3,060	E-954
B3-0	F-7,506	B3-0	F-7,615
B4-0	G-144	B4-0	G-135
C-5,779	H-7,650	C-6,661	H-7,750
D1-456	I-77%	D1-391	I-87%
D2-423			D2-160

16. DEC 2011 / JAN 2012 17. 10/01/10

# P I S T O L A N N I E S

## AIM FOR THE TOP

by DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

**FROM THE WILLIE NELSON, KRIS KRISTOFFERSON, JOHNNY CASH AND WAYLON JENNINGS SUPERGROUP THE HIGHWAYMEN TO EMMYLOU HARRIS, DOLLY PARTON AND LINDA RONSTADT'S FAMED TRIO, FRIENDSHIP AND CREATIVE CHEMISTRY HAVE INSPIRED SOME OF COUNTRY MUSIC'S MOST SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATIONS. DEBUTING WITH THEIR CHART-TOPPING ALBUM, HELL ON HEELS, THE PISTOL ANNIES IS THE LATEST GROUP OF DISTINCTIVE PERSONALITIES TO FORGE AN ENIGMATIC NEW ACT.**

**W**e all have something to say as individual women and as individual artists," Miranda Lambert said of herself, Ashley Monroe and Angaleena Presley. "You put all three opinions together and all three lifestyles and what we've all been through, and it just felt like that we were saying something that most people think and don't actually say. I'm like that in my solo career. I take risks and I'm honest in my music and we just carried it out with this Pistol Annies project."

"All three of us have different influences, but they all three have the same characteristic—honesty," Monroe added. "Miranda loves Merle (Haggard). I love Dolly and Angaleena loves Loretta. We're all very much inspired by the three of them. If you go back and listen to their records, you can relate to what they're talking about."

Although record companies sometimes encourage artists into collaborations that look commercially promising, that was not the case with The Pistol Annies. "Miranda and I have known each other for seven years," said Monroe. "One night we were at her house and I asked if she'd ever heard of Angaleena Presley. I'd written with her a few times in Nashville. She said she hadn't, so I went and got my computer and started playing her some stuff. She flipped out. She said, 'That's the girl! That's our missing link!' It fell together as easy as that."

Presley said the collaboration felt natural from the beginning. "We sat down and wrote these songs and we didn't overthink it," she said. "We didn't have any method to the madness. It's just songs from three different girls' perspectives and I guess a lot of people can relate to it."

"The chemistry was there from the very beginning," Monroe added. "We just started writing songs. We just sat down and were inspired. That's how it happened. We weren't trying for anything. We were just looking to write real songs about real things."

Before teaming with the Annies, Monroe had released a digital album, *Satisfied*, on Columbia Nashville in 2009. Presley has recorded an unreleased album and is looking for a deal. Lambert, of course, is an established headliner with multiple hits under her belt, including 2010 CMA Song of the Year "The House That Built Me" (written by Tom Douglas and Allen Shamblin).

The Pistol Annies' album, *Hell on Heels*, was released in August, two months ahead of Lambert's fourth album, *Four the Record*. When asked if she was concerned about how their debut might affect her latest solo outing, Lambert responded, "That did cross my mind, but I thought if it (Pistol Annies) was that organic and felt that right, then it had to be right. The music came so easily to us three, and the chemistry that we had made me realize that I needed to put my hesitation aside and let the music lead and just see what happens."

The result was a No. 1. album. *Hell on Heels* was initially a digital-only

release, and the demand from fans caught the label by surprise. When brick and mortar retailers began clamoring for physical copies, Sony Music Nashville rushed to oblige. Lambert said the trio was taking a little vacation in Mexico to celebrate the album's release when they received word that it might debut at No. 1 on *Billboard's* Top Country Albums chart. "It kind of shocked me to be honest," she said, "because we didn't have product. It was just digital."

"The great thing about The Pistol Annies project is it came from a very musical place," said Gary Overton, Chairman/CEO, Sony Music Nashville, noting that Lambert's manager Marion Kraft first mentioned the project to him. Intrigued, he asked to hear music and the trio came by to play some songs live. "We first talked about doing four sides but the music kept flowing. It was cool and there was a sound, so we ended up making a whole record. Then we said, 'Well, there's really not stuff on here that we thought was immediate go-to-radio, so let's put it online and see what's out there.' And it was like *bang*, a No. 1 Country album. It just shows when there is great music and great artistry people will find it."

Overton noted The Pistol Annies album has further enhanced Lambert's profile in the industry. "I think a lot of the industry has really gained a huge appreciation for Miranda," he said. "At a very tough time in our business, she scanned 1.4 million on the *Revolution* album, which is very difficult to do right now. But in the meantime, she wrote a new record and did this side project, which is a No. 1 Country record. I think a lot of people gained even more respect for her artistry."

Working on the project was an enjoyable process, and in that spirit the trio adopted pet names, dubbing themselves Lone Star Annie (Lambert), Hottie Annie (Monroe) and Holler Annie (Presley). The only outside writer who contributed to the album was Lambert's husband, Blake Shelton, who co-wrote on "Family Feud," and earned the nickname Pistol Andy.

"The girls had come to our house because we wanted to spend some time together, pick out the songs and to maybe write some more," Lambert recalled. "We were sitting at the house and Blake had cooked us dinner. None of us are great guitar players. We have different styles, but Blake was there and he's such a great guitar player, so we handed him a guitar and said, 'Play something. We want to write a song.' He ended up working up this really cool melody. We just wrote it together, all four of us, so he snuck one in on it."

The album boasts a diverse cache of songs from the sassy "Bad Example" (Lambert and Monroe) and humorous "The Hunter's Wife" (Presley) to "Beige" (Lambert and Monroe), a poignant tale of unplanned pregnancy. "You're gonna laugh. You're gonna cry and you're probably gonna give your husband a good talking to," Presley said, describing the contents of the album.

The title track, "Hell on Heels," written by the trio, captures their feisty spirit. "It just felt like that was, in a nutshell, what we're about. It's a





**"I TAKE RISKS AND I'M HONEST IN MY MUSIC AND WE JUST CARRIED IT OUT WITH THIS PISTOL ANNIES PROJECT"**

*— Miranda Lambert*

MIRANDA LAMBERT, ANGALEENA PRESLEY AND ASHLEY MONROE

catchy title and catchy phrase," said Lambert. "It makes people go, 'Why didn't I think of that?' I just feel like it encompasses everything that The Pistol Annies are."

The album also includes more somber fare such as "Housewife's Prayer," which Presley began writing when she was going through a divorce. "I was real broke, real depressed, desperate and didn't know what I was going to do," she said. "I thought about burning my house down, taking the money, getting me and my little boy an apartment and having a new start. But instead of doing that, I picked up my guitar and started writing a song about it. I played it for the girls and they helped me finish it."

"I like 'Housewife's Prayer,'" Presley continued, "because it represents a time in my life that was one of the hardest times I ever had and it reminds me that I had the strength to get through it. It reminds me to make better choices and not go back."

"Lemon Drop" is also a slice of Presley's life. "That's a true story," said Presley. "I was going home to Kentucky and my car broke down. I pulled over and saw my muffler had come halfway off. So I opened the trunk of my car, clipped a guitar string off, tied it on, drove on home and then drove back to Nashville. I drove around a while with my muffler tied up with a guitar string, so that's where that idea came from. That whole song is what my life was then, trying to make it, struggling and keeping the faith."

"Boys from the South" originated with Lambert. "I was driving home from the airport real late one night, trying to keep myself awake," Lambert recalls. "I was going from Texas to Oklahoma and I was thinking, 'Man, I

love where I live, going home to Blake, my cute Southern boy waiting at home on me.' I just thought it would be a cute song."

Fans got a chance to see The Pistol Annies live when they opened dates on Lambert's 2011 tour, and there are plans for more shows. Lambert is hoping that exposure in Pistol Annies will fuel the solo careers of her two pals. "I just want the world to hear these people," she said of Presley and Monroe. "They need to be out there because they are great. I hope that this helps to build their individual careers as artists and they can go and do their own things, release their own albums and will always still come back and do Pistol Annies stuff. I just hope that the world hears us together and hears us individually."

At press time, Monroe was working on her Warner Bros. debut and Presley was looking for a deal. "I've been in Nashville eight years and I don't know how many times I've been told I'm too country for Country," she said. "I did one record with (producers) Frank Liddell and Mike Wrucke. People loved it, but people were scared of it. We're still shopping it, but I have complete faith that we'll get it out there. If you liked Pistol Annies, you're gonna like Angaleena Presley. I hope that The Pistol Annies sets a precedent for me and Ashley and every other artist who is writing songs from their heart and can't find a place for them."

All three women agree that they plan to make music as The Pistol Annies for a long time. "One of our goals is for each of us to have our own tours and to stop every month and do a Pistol Annies reunion," said Lambert. "We're hoping to be making music together until we can't sing no more."

**PistolAnnies.com**



## TONY BYWORTH

Like many lovers of Country Music, Tony Byworth made a pilgrimage to Nashville to see the sights he'd heard about in song and Music City lore. Unlike most out-of-towners, though, he and 119 other British fans and fellow travelers were greeted on arrival by a CMA reception attended by Executive Director Jo Walker-Meador, Mayor Beverly Briley, Ferlin Husky and other dignitaries. Rarer still, after returning home, Byworth dedicated his life fully to Country Music.

Since his visit back in 1969, England's Tony Byworth has worked to educate his countrymen about Country Music and share his appreciation for it. That visit was the first official act undertaken by the British Country Music Association, of which Byworth was a co-founder.

"As this was the first time such a group visit to Nashville had ever been organized, I was asked to talk about it on 'Country Meets Folk,' which was a weekly BBC live radio program presented by singer/songwriter Wally Whyton," he said. "At that time, I wasn't involved in any aspect of music — I was working in international sales — but I struck up a lasting friendship with Wally, visited the show regularly and met other artists and people involved in the music. Becoming more and more enthused, I quit my job and decided to take a stab at earning a living writing about Country Music."

From selling ads for *Country Music People*, Byworth rose to become the monthly magazine's Editor as well as a Country Music correspondent for *Billboard* and other publications and Chairman of the Country Music Association (Great Britain). Hoping to raise the format's visibility, he created Britain's first Country Music charts, based on sales figures he obtained from specialist retailers, which encouraged other stores to start stocking product as well.

A CMA member since 1969, Byworth worked closely with the organization's London office when it opened in 1982 and served as CMA's International Development Chairman. Later, after launching the PR firm Byworth-Wootton International with Richard Wootton, he provided publicity services for CMA's annual marketing campaigns, as well as other clients.

"I consider myself fortunate enough to be involved in Country Music back in the 1970s and get to know many great characters in the business, like Tex Ritter, Wesley Rose, Joe Talbot, Pete Drake and Tompall Glaser," said Byworth. But many artists hold a similar regard for Byworth and his advocacy for Country Music, including one that the semi-retired industry veteran long represented in the U.K.

"Tony Byworth is the most upbeat guy I have ever met," said Garth Brooks. "He never stops working, and he believes in the potential of Country Music reaching around the globe more than anyone I have worked with. I love the guy."



Scott Borchetta, President/CEO, Big Machine Records/The Valory Music Co.; Joe Don Rooney and Jay DeMarcus of Rascal Flatts; Brenda Black, Director, Community Development, Vanderbilt; Gary LeVox of Rascal Flatts; and Rondal Richardson, Manager, Entertainment Industry Relations, Vanderbilt University Medical Center

## RONDAL RICHARDSON

By his own admission, Rondal Richardson isn't musically gifted. Neither is he particularly competitive by nature. But he's driven by a determination to aid others who are in need. The idea of service is central to Richardson; all of his achievements rise from that foundation.

"I never had aspirations to do anything other than help people," he noted. "It was almost a religious experience. Sewanee (the University of the South, from which Richardson graduated with a political science degree) helped me figure that out, that service to the world can be something bigger than yourself. That's what my life in the music business has been to me: that great message of community, hope and healing through music."

For this reason, his position as Entertainment Industry Relations Manager for Vanderbilt University Medical Center is a perfect fit. Since October 2010, Richardson has worked to develop and strengthen relations among the many sectors of the Vanderbilt community, including the University, and professionals in music, athletics and the performing arts. This mission began with his selling merchandise for Ricky Skaggs on the road at age 17, and it led to seven years as General Manager for Wynonna Judd. His music business ties proved vital to Greater Purpose Productions, which Richardson founded in 2007 with a goal of bringing nonprofits and major corporations together to raise money for charities, often with Country Music celebrities involved to heighten awareness.

"There were causes all over the country, from Make-A-Wish Foundation to Children's Miracle Network to the American Red Cross, where we did things with high-profile individuals," Richardson said. "Mostly it was about incorporating a beautiful spirit like Wynonna to come to an event, not specifically to ask for money but to make a connection in a deeper, more enriching way that has helped raise such significant capital. Even before I was charged with raising awareness for Vanderbilt, I was sending artists here and saying, 'Make sure that you connect to those kids in Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt. They need you.'"

Matching artist and cause is critical, a prime example being Keith Urban and the W.O. Smith Music School. "He even did a groundbreaking for W.O. Smith," Richardson said. "He showed up and got his hands dirty with those kids. He made sure his management sent them autographed guitars and, very privately, made personal donations because he knew the value of music education and music as a healer. He really wrapped his arms around it — but we made it easy for him."

Ultimately, the key to service is, as Richardson put it, "you lead with your heart. That's something I've been doing my whole career. I'm not the smartest guy, but what I'm doing with my life is meant to be. It was always meant to be."

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



# BEYOND TALENT

## HOW NASHVILLE PUBLISHERS PICK THEIR WRITERS

by SARAH SKATES

It's an elusive combination of traits that makes a songwriter win a music publisher's attention. Quality songs are part of the equation, of course, as are the writer's track record of hits and network of co-writers. But sometimes the writer's drive and determination are what seal the deal.

I want a person who's not only talented but is going to go for it with all they've got," said Troy Tomlinson, President and CEO of Sony/ATV Music Publishing's Nashville office. "Looking back on my first meeting with Kenny Chesney, I remember that determined look in his eye. That day at Acuff-Rose I saw something unique in the songs he played. But more importantly, he had this drive and intentionality when he talked about his songs and the people he was co-writing with. I knew that if we didn't sign him, someone else was going to, because he was so driven."

Fellow veteran publisher Pat Higdon, President, Universal Music Publishing Nashville, found similar qualities in Don Schlitz. His song "The Gambler" enjoyed monumental success when sung by Kenny Rogers, but afterwards Schlitz's career began to stall. "Before I got to know Don, I considered him someone who had written one great song but may not be able to repeat that feat," Higdon said. "But when I was at MCA, he wrote 'Where Did We Go Right?' with our writer Dave Loggins. As I got to know Don through that song, I soon realized he had a passion for what he wanted to achieve beyond 'The Gambler.' He was willing to dig in and work. So I signed him because I came to believe there was no way this guy was not going to succeed on a grander scale than he already had."

Higdon signed Matraca Berg to his own boutique company, Patrick-Joseph Music, in the late '80s for the same reasons he signed Schlitz: talent and determination. "When I was at MCA Music I had developed a working relationship with her through the songs she wrote with Don Schlitz," he said. I also got a chance to work with her at Warner/Chappell Music in the early 80's. When I signed Matraca, it was not only because she was writing great songs, it was that she had 'I want to be a successful songwriter' written all over her face. She had the gift, and she had the passion to go after it hard. When you find people with both of those, you know that you should be in business with them."

Publishers also look for

**"SIGNING SOMEONE IS BASED ON A GUT CALL BECAUSE THEIR MUSIC MAKES YOU FEEL SOMETHING."**

- Ben Vaughn, Executive VP, EMI Music Publishing Nashville

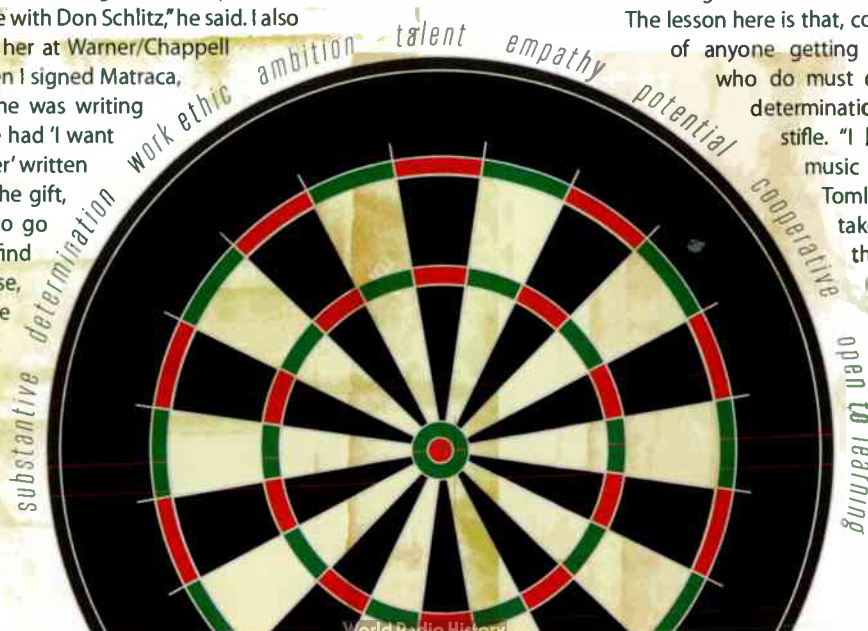
more than just one hit song. "We always aspire to work with career songwriters and grow that long-term relationship," said Ben Vaughn, Executive VP and GM, EMI Music Publishing Nashville. "I want to work with people that are going to write great songs over a long period of time, so I listen to a lot of their catalog. I pay attention to how they piece stories together. Signing someone is based on a gut call because their music makes you feel something. That is the key for me in deciding if it is somebody I want to do business with."

"When we signed Dallas Davidson and Rhett Akins, it was because there was really something in their songs," he continued. "We felt that they could be hit writers, so we made a commitment to each of them and they made a commitment to us. We all rolled up our sleeves and went to work. And we've had a tremendous result because of it."

The caliber of his writing alone persuaded Tomlinson to welcome Keith Gattis to Sony/ATV. "A few months ago, Keith walked into my office and played me a song that floored me," he recalled. "I thought to myself, 'That's probably a fluke, or it's the only outstanding thing he's got to play me.' But then I went on the press 'play' a second time, a third time and so on through an entire CD. I knew after the second song that I had to get this guy committed to me before he leaves this room."

Drawn initially by songs that spoke for themselves, Tomlinson has since built a full working relationship with Gattis, whom he describes as "a great writer with artist sensibilities." The hunch paid off: Kenny Chesney has recorded three Gattis songs for his next album.

The lesson here is that, considering the slim chances of anyone getting a publishing deal, those who do must come to the table with a determination that long odds cannot stifle. "I hear a lot of really good music from a lot of songwriters," Tomlinson said. "But when I take the meeting with them, if there isn't that drive, if they're not ready to work as hard as we're going to work for their careers, then I just can't do it."



"I WAS BORN IN THE WRONG GENERATION," SAID KELLIE PICKLER, LOOKING THROUGH THE WINDOWS AT SONY MUSIC NASHVILLE'S OFFICES TOWARD SOMEWHERE FAR SOUTH OF TOWN. "I WISH I WOULD HAVE BEEN IN THE GENERATION BEFORE TWITTER AND CELL PHONES, WHEN THERE WAS THAT MYSTERIOUSNESS ABOUT BEING AN ARTIST. I WISH I COULD HAVE BEEN A PART OF THAT GENERATION WHERE YOU'D GO TO THE RYMAN AND SING AND THEN WALK OUT THE BACK DOOR AND GO HONKY-TONKIN'. WELL, WE DO THAT ANYWAY, BUT BECAUSE IT'S ON YOUTUBE THE NEXT DAY, YOU CAN'T REALLY COMPLETELY CUT LOOSE."

It's not just the life that beckons toward Pickler. As she demonstrates on *100 Proof*, her latest album on 19 Recordings Limited/BNA Records, it's the music too. Maybe it's the music most of all. In the opening seconds of the very first track, "Where's Tammy Wynette" (written by Jimmy Ritchey, Don Poythress and Leslie Satcher), she kicks back and sings passionately, mashing anger and pain together in just a few notes: "I stay torn between killin' him and lovin' him. He stays torn between neon lights and home." And just like that, we're in a world lit by jukeboxes and perfumed by worn leather and spilled beer.

Where is Tammy Wynette? Maybe she lives somewhere in Pickler's soul, nurtured by the young singer's Southern roots and difficult early years. "Based on some of the things that I've recorded in the past, you wouldn't know that the biggest reason why I fell in love with Country Music is because of Kitty Wells and Tammy Wynette and Loretta and Dolly," she said. "I know that music has changed so much; the music today is so different than the music I listened to. And I guess everyone's definition of Country Music is different. But I'm excited about the sound that we have."

That sound is traditional, all the way down to mixing spoons into the rhythm track on the album's first single, "Tough" (written by Leslie Satcher). For fans drawn by the infectious pop flavor of her Platinum single "Best Days of Your Life" (Pickler and Taylor Swift) or the Gold-charting "Red High Heels" (Pickler, Chris Lindsey, Aimee Mayo and Karyn Rochelle) and "Small Town Girl" (Pickler, Lindsey and Mayo), the new direction is unmistakable.

"I really want people to take me seriously as an artist, which has been a little difficult coming off of 'American Idol' since there's such a stereotype. I was 19 and green when I did that show and you only got to know about *this* much of me," said Pickler, pinching thumb and finger together. "You don't really get to pick what you do. I mean, why would I sing a Queen song? You don't get to develop so much as an artist. You just become a star."

Pickler's finish among the final six of the show's 2005 season lofted her into unfamiliar territory. Her ascension was so quick that she had to record the vocals of her debut album, *Small Town Girl*, while on the road, singing to backing tracks sent from Nashville. The results broadened her appeal, but the working method and several aspects of its sound left her feeling somewhat off balance.

"I can't say I didn't have fun with songs like 'Red High Heels' and 'I Wonder' (Pickler, Lindsey, Mayo and Rochelle) is my life," she added. "But I've done the 'Best Days of Your Life' kind of songs. To me, that's not a Country production at all. Anything I sing kind of sounds Country just because of the way I talk. But for this record, I worked with a whole different group of people. I've been able to just go in the studio and play and have fun and figure out what cord plugs into what instrument and what this button does. I skipped all that developing because I just became 'American Idol Kellie Pickler,' so it's been a slow and long process of trying to get to the point where I am now."

Pickler is quick to credit co-producers Frank Liddell and Luke Wooten

as indispensable in helping achieve her goals for *100 Proof*. The fact that she had never worked with them previously encouraged her to break from her earlier routine and start fresh. Much of what drew her to him was his productions for singers with high Country credibility, including Miranda Lambert and Liddell's wife Lee Ann Womack. Once onboard, he persuaded her to bring Wooten in as well, partly because of his extensive hands-on engineering background.

"With Kellie, part of our goal was, 'How do we start over? How can we do some work that she hasn't done?'" Liddell explained. "I'd heard a handful of her singles before. A couple of them were actually brilliant. But she felt they were not her. At that point, you just want to get her in the right situation and the right room where she felt real comfortable. Then we went with our gut."

They also encouraged Pickler to dig down and write some new material that expressed what she wanted to say. "You don't think, 'Somebody's going to bring me 10 songs that sound like hits. I'll show up at the studio and sing them.' That's karaoke. She wanted to become more invested in what she was singing, and that entailed sitting down and writing with some people. Kellie would say, 'Well, I'm not much of a writer,' and she might see it as a wasted day if she didn't come out with a No. 1 hit. But I disagreed with her. She's learning that she is a writer and she's getting invested in a career in a way that other people had done from the beginning."


Liddell stayed just as involved in the tracking as in the album's early creative stages. "Frank pushed me, he pushed Kellie and the band," said Wooten. "There are things on this record I would never have thought of doing. One of my favorite things was a track called 'Arm Candy' (Pickler and Natalie Hemby, available exclusively on iTunes). We were cutting the track. It was feeling good. And Frank runs into the tracking room in the middle of the take and yells, 'Stop! Everyone out except for bass and drums!' Everyone was kind of shocked. But then, as we were listening back, we heard this amazing beat and bass part being laid down, which totally changed the sentiment of the song in a way I don't think any guy in the room would have come up with. The rest of the band didn't even play on it; they actually ended up singing kind of a doo-wop background part, with upright bass, drums and some percussion. It wouldn't have happened if Frank hadn't felt that we could get something better."

"To be completely honest with you, I didn't know the artist in me until I met Frank and Luke," Pickler said. "They pointed out things in me I didn't know I had. They saw it, but I didn't."

What they saw, and what *100 Proof* uncovers, is the core of Kellie Pickler's creative identity. The producers encouraged her self-discovery, whether by setting up and lighting candles around her as she recorded or bringing the musicians into a circle in the studio to track with her. "We cut in the old RCA Studio A, which is now Ben Folds' studio," Wooten said. "They don't have isolation for each guy. Kellie was literally about 25 feet in front of the drums. I'd never cut that way, but once again that was something Frank wanted to try. It turned out for the best."

## WHY WOULD I SING A QUEEN SONG?"





# Kellie Pickler

TOUGH & TRUE  
ON  
100 PROOF

"We were in a big circle in the big room," Pickler remembered. "And before we started, I'd go, 'All right, everyone, close your eyes. I want you to think about, if this was the last place you would ever be playing, what stage would it be on? Would you be at the Opry? Would you be at the Ryman? Would it be a bar in your hometown? Would it be the backyard at your grandma's? Whatever it is, just close your eyes and let's all go to that place and play.'"

Pickler's eyes were closed as she spoke, perhaps herself going to wherever she was when they cut "Unlock That Honky Tonk" (Pickler and Satcher), declaiming over a stomping, banjo-studded beat: "Don't tell me Country's gone, 'cause I'm 'bout to tie some on." She might have been revisiting "Stop Cheatin' on Me" (Morgane Hayes, Liz Rose and Chris Stapleton), where her performance, especially in the artfully shaped two- and three-part harmonies, might have been laid down decades ago. One place she knows especially well comes to view in "The Letter (to Daddy)" (Pickler, Dean Dillon and Dale Dodson), a guitar-and-voice rumination on

her father's hard but successful rise from self-destruction to standing on his own, strong enough at last to give and accept love.

"I want to sell records," she said, eyes now open, her voice self-assured. "But if I'm going to sell anything at this point, I don't want them to be one-hit wonders, you know? Not just a fad for this generation because it's hip and cool and right now. I want for somebody to sing one of my songs in the honky-tonks on Broadway in 50 years, like they do Loretta Lynn.

"We're in a time today where you can't afford to not be played on the radio," she continued. "So most people go into the studio and the first thing is, 'OK, how are we going to get this on the radio?' Right there, you're not making your record. You're making somebody else's record. That's not why I'm here. I mean, ultimately I want to be on the radio, of course, but this record, these songs and the production come from a real place. And regardless if it sells a million copies or one copy, I'm happy with how this album turned out. Because my music is my life."

**KelliePickler.com**



**MUSICAL HERO** "I have so many! Hank Williams, Bruce Springsteen, Jackson Browne, Sean Costello, Bob Dylan, Loretta Lynn ..."  
**CD IN YOUR STEREO** "I only have a record player. I think Ozzy Osbourne's *Bark at the Moon* is on the table right now."  
**BOOK ON YOUR NIGHTSTAND** "Steven Tyler's *Does the Noise in My Head Bother You? A Rock 'n' Roll Memoir*."  
**PET PEEVE** "Messy cooks — or putting a plate in the fridge uncovered with a fork. That is so gross!"  
**SOMETHING WE'D NEVER GUESS ABOUT YOU** "I never feel like I am good enough. And I am a huge Tupac fan!"

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

## SONIA LEIGH

You can feel Sonia Leigh's story throughout *1978 December*, her soulful, deep Country debut. She wrote eight of these songs on her own and the other two ("If You Won't Tell" and "Roaming") with Zac Brown, who guests on the latter, ska-seasoned cut. Her raw, stripped-down delivery makes each lyric feel urgent, personal and real.

Leigh's ears were wide open even at age 4, when she responded to a song at a Loretta Lynn concert by shouting, "Now, that's Country, Dad!" — a portent, perhaps, of Leigh's future working as many as three jobs, dealing with her parents' divorce, traveling with her father as he pursued odd jobs on the road and eventually striking out on her own at 17.

She'd gotten a good head start. A song she'd written at 14 prompted a management deal three years later. While burning up the club circuit in Atlanta, Leigh befriended another local up-and-comer, Zac Brown. When she cut an indie album, *Run or Surrender*, Zac Brown Band bassist John Driskell Hopkins served as producer. And after Brown signed her to his Southern Ground Artists label, he and Matt Mangano co-produced, along with Clay Cook and Hopkins.

Backed by what sounds like a tight, gig-toughened bar band, Leigh belts the up-tempo songs with a full-throated, Southern-tinged rasp on the first single, "My Name Is Money," a sly paean to what a fully-loaded bankroll can buy. With similar conviction she recounts lessons learned from the death of a close friend ("Ain't Dead Yet"), the comforts of "jumping off this wagon" ("Bar") and, on the other tracks, the beauties hidden within the rougher rites of life.

## TYRONE VAUGHAN

There's a ton of Country and lots of rockin' blues throughout *Downtime*. And all of it is unmistakably Texan, which of course is to be expected, given Tyrone Vaughan's Lone Star pedigree.

His father is Jimmie Vaughan, whose steely guitar tone and funk phrasing surfaces in the rhythm that drives "Ladies Man," with the spirit of his uncle — the late Stevie Ray Vaughan, summoned through wah-wah guitar fills. But though his playing evokes his illustrious relations, the younger Vaughan doesn't hesitate to also drop a banjo in the middle of that track.

Through The Fabulous Thunderbirds, with whom his dad played lead guitar, Vaughan became intimately familiar with the blues as a child. His fiery six-string chops and strong, assertive vocals propelled him full-speed into the Austin club circuit right after high school.

As lead guitarist and songwriter with Breedlove, a road-toughened band that packed rooms throughout the state, Vaughn rediscovered his family's Country roots. He also sharpened his game through gigs with Stevie Ray's Double Trouble, blues piano legend Pinetop Perkins and ZZ Top's Billy Gibbons, among others. Now, with *Downtime*, Vaughan takes the reins. He co-wrote all 10 of its songs, many of them musical cocktails with multiple influences stirred in. But from the wryly humorous, steel-glistened lament "She Could've Had Anything," to the single and title track, we are neck-deep in Country, not just in the feel and arrangements but in the blue-collar imagery of saloons, trucks, fishing and "working that line."

What's in a name? If that name is Vaughan, plenty.



**DREAM DUET PARTNER** "Miranda Lambert." **ITEMS IN YOUR PERSONAL TIME CAPSULE** "Patsy Cline's voice, Jimi Hendrix's music and Johnny Cash's biography." **LUCKY CHARM** "A juju bag blessed by a high priest in New Orleans." **FAVORITE FOOD ON THE ROAD** "Anything light — sushi, salads ..."  
**SOMETHING WE'D NEVER GUESS ABOUT YOU** "I like chess, golf, cooking and vocal meditations."

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





**MUSICAL HERO** "Ray Price. He's always played the style he wanted to, regardless of what was popular. You can't be true to anyone or anything musically if you're not true to yourself." **CD IN YOUR STEREO** "Reason and Rhyme, by Jim Lauderdale." **FAVORITE FOOD ON THE ROAD** "Barbecue, no question." **DREAM DUET PARTNER** "Emmylou Harris or Loretta Lynn." **SOMETHING WE'D NEVER GUESS ABOUT YOU** "When I'm off the road, I'm a real homebody."

[Nick13.com](http://Nick13.com)

## NICK 13

There's room on the dance floor for fans of West Coast Country, Americana and maybe mellowed-out punk whenever Nick 13 takes to the stage. You may recognize this L.A.-based singer/songwriter from his run as founder and core member of the psychobilly mainstay Tiger Army. But on his self-titled solo debut, he draws more from the 'billy than the psycho side of his past, with intriguing results.

Produced by Greg Leisz and James Intveld, these 10 tracks feature dreamy, shimmering Gretsch guitar, punctuated by spaghetti-Western low licks and bathed in mercurial sheens of steel guitar. All of this floats over grooves that focus drummer Mitch Marine entirely on the snare. The contrast between this sonic backdrop and these laid-back but insistent rhythms is heightened by the songs, all of them written by Nick 13 except for "Gambler's Life," a co-write with Alain Whyte. With their emphasis on minor modes, their restlessness suggests shadows drifting through the night toward far horizons.

Nick 13, whose name eulogizes his first band, Influence 13, shows a strong Bakersfield influence but infuses it now and then with vintage Texas elements, whether through the accordion on "Restless Moon" or the throwback instrumentation of acoustic bass, lap steel and a boom-chuck guitar gallop on "All Alone." In every setting, he sings with a detached but not dispassionate delivery that draws attention to the lyric without excess vocal distractions. Strangely, this same approach, tinged with reverb on "In the Orchard 2001," echoes Roy Orbison's without the rockabilly legend's dramatic, multi-range exhibitions.

Retro yet absolutely in tune with our times, *Nick 13* has hit its lucky number.

## LAUREN ALAINA

Lauren Alaina was just 3 years old when her mother was driving her somewhere in their hometown of Rossville, Ga. The Dixie Chicks were on the radio, and when Mom turned it off and heard her daughter singing the song on her own — in pitch and with every word correct — she did what any perceptive parent would do: She bought her a Dixie Chicks karaoke package and encouraged her to keep singing.

Not much time has passed since then, but Alaina, 17, has blossomed into a singer of precocious technique and sensitivity. She has worked hard for this achievement, singing lead roles in school plays throughout elementary school and winning the talent competition of the Southern Stars Pageant at 8. At age 10, she took top prize in Orlando's American Model and Talent Competition, beating out more than 1,500 participants, and at 12 Alaina made her first of many visits to Nashville's Lower Broadway clubs — before 6 PM, of course.

Of course, it was "American Idol" that lifted her into national celebrity in 2011. Finishing second to the equally young, gifted and future Mercury Nashville labelmate Scotty McCreery, she was soon at work on her debut album, *Wildflower*, with Byron Gallimore producing all but her first single, the power ballad "Like My Mother Does."

Amidst these 12 tracks crafted by some of Nashville's top songwriters (Alaina co-wrote one, "Funny Thing about Love," with Luke Laird and Brett James), "Like My Mother Does" stands out. Alaina heard it for the first time during her "Idol" experience and instantly connected with it. Composed by Nathan Chapman, Liz Rose and Nikki Williams, it whispers through verses, soars into the choruses and ultimately rockets skyward, fueled by Alaina's accomplished and even astonishing performance.



**DREAM DUET PARTNER** "Carrie Underwood." **PHRASE YOU SAY OVER AND OVER** "I'm just saying." **TITLE OF YOUR AUTOBIOGRAPHY** "I'm Just Saying." **SHORT- AND LONG-TERM CHALLENGES** "My short-term challenge is to get a driver's license because I turned 17 years old in November. My long-term challenge would be to think before I speak." **SOMETHING WE'D NEVER GUESS ABOUT YOU** "I'm a math whiz."

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

Debut Spotlight compiled by BOB DOERSCHUK

Zac Brown Band relaxes on the Jack Daniel Distillery grounds.



## ZAC BROWN BAND Meets Jack Daniel's Brand

More than a decade since Jack Daniel's last worked closely with a major music artist, the Lynchburg, Tenn. distillery is teaming with Zac Brown Band for a campaign that combines Southern gourmet food, the band's genre-bending music and the pleasures of good ol' fashioned Tennessee whiskey.

"There are so many synergies between the two," said Dave Stang, Assistant VP, Brand Awareness, Home Place, Jack Daniel's. "We get calls all the time: 'Sponsor our band' or 'sponsor our tour.' For years we didn't do it, but then this fell in our lap. There is nothing phony about Lynchburg. And with Zac Brown there is nothing phony about him. It works real well."

It all began more than four years ago when Zac Brown Band signed with ROAR management and Brown began thinking about brands he might consider as partners. One was Jack Daniel's, so over the next two years the band made several trips to Lynchburg, while the company's representatives saw their live shows. The band met with distillers to watch the whiskey-making process and to learn the Jack Daniel's history and traditions.

The partnership, launched in September 2011 with sold-out concerts at Red Rocks Amphitheatre near Morrison, Colo., includes advertising, social media campaigns and promotions across the U.S. and Canada as well as a responsible drinking campaign. It has a commemorative bottle program featuring whiskey from the band's unique barrel; proceeds support Brown's charitable organizations. Brown has even incorporated the whiskey into his famous Eat & Greet events, where he offers concert-goers original culinary creations prepared by Southern Ground Executive Chef, Rusty Hamlin. In addition Jack Daniel's is rolling with its "Lynchburg on Wheels," a mobile Lynchburg museum of sorts that appears at the band's select tour dates, Southern Ground Music and Food Festivals, ticket giveaways and other activities.

"There are just some brands out there that are uniquely American, that speak to all of us in a way that is hard to explain sometimes," said Bernie Cahill, a partner at ROAR. "Jack is one of those iconic brands that exhibit all of those pillars of authenticity that are so important to consumers these days."

Part of the appeal of Zac Brown Band is the demographic of the group's fan base, which tends to be on the younger side of legal drinking age, according to Stang. He also sees strong similarities between the artist and "Mr. Jack," as the brand's now-deceased founder is known around Lynchburg.

"Jack believed in fraternity and Zac also believes in fraternity," Stang said. "They've got Southern roots, and that's the epitome of Americana. Mr. Jack and Zac are both free-spirited people. And if you look at it in their trade, they do things their own way. Zac has his standards and sticks to those standards, and certainly Jack does. What we see is what we get, and we'll not change our ways."

[ZacBrownBand.com](http://ZacBrownBand.com); [JackandZBBMedia.com](http://JackandZBBMedia.com)

Sarah Darling at the Jarden Consumer Solutions headquarters in Boca Raton, Fla.



## SARAH DARLING Warms Up to Crock-Pot

Sarah Darling has landed a new venture as the first celebrity spokeswoman for the national Crock-Pot Crockstars Confessionals campaign to support recipe sharing for the line of slowcookers.

This is no small marketing campaign. Darling's image was printed on more than 1 million Crock-Pot packages that are shipping to U.S. stores. Plus, Darling helped kick off the brand's fall season of "Crocktober" by sharing her Crock-Pot slow-cooker recipes through viral videos, live streaming events and social media with Crock-Pot's estimated 1.5 million fans.

"Crock-Pot was attracted to me because I'm new in this industry, and they wanted to bring on someone who they could grow with," Darling said. "I'm also from the Midwest and I love to cook. It matched up perfectly."

The partnership began when John Alexander, VP, Marketing/Artist Management, Black River Entertainment, approached his friends at Crock-Pot's parent company, Jarden Corp., about Darling. Alexander has worked with Jarden products in the past, helping connect Country stars with popular consumer products.

Susan Selle, Crock-Pot's VP, Global Brand, Shopper and Customer Marketing, says the company's internal research show Crock-Pot consumers engage closely with Country Music and listen to Country more than other types of music. They are also driven by food and fashion.

"There is a natural affinity for the music," Selle said. "So, obviously, we identified Country Music as an influencer for our Crock-Pot consumers."

Darling's personality, fashion sense and artistic style matched especially well with Crock-Pot consumers. So much so, that beyond the traditional and social-driven marketing, Crock-Pot in early November launched a customizable Crock-Pot Create A Crock slowcooker through a live streamed concert on [Crock-Pot.com](http://Crock-Pot.com), featuring Darling with other Country stars. Darling played new songs and a Christmas song; it was hosted by TV and radio personality Storme Warren, and the singer shared her own favorite Crock-Pot recipes.

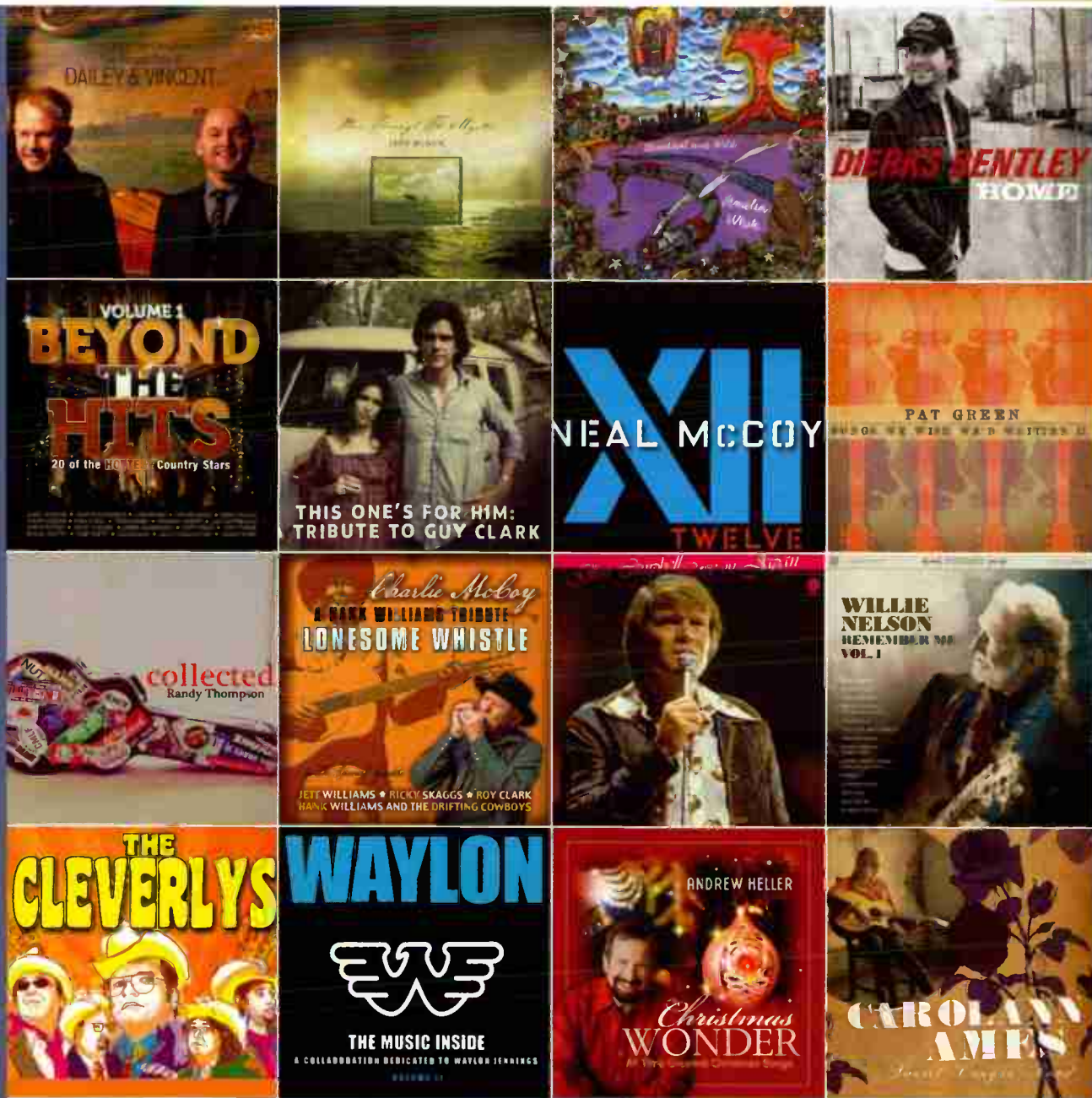
"The whole idea with Sarah is she is lovely, and she is an up-and-coming Country talent, and she also loves to cook," Selle said. "She is authentic, and she really does have great slow-cooking recipes."

Darling delights in her role as Crock-Pot's first "Crock-Star," signing Crock-Pot recipe cards for fans and using social media networks like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter to share recipes along with fashion photos and daily updates on her life.

"When I moved to Nashville, I didn't know anybody," Darling said. "And this is just one of those things that my grandmother did for me. She bought me a Crock-Pot and said, 'I know you're going to be living on your own. This is how you make a pot roast.' It's like a little piece of home, just like comfort food. To me, I think, Country Music is very much about home. It's about true stories and real things, and real life. And to me, it all ties in."

[SarahDarling.com](http://SarahDarling.com); [Crock-pot.com/Crock-Stars](http://Crock-pot.com/Crock-Stars); [Youtube.com/user/crockpotslowcooker](http://Youtube.com/user/crockpotslowcooker)





**NOV. 21**  
 various artists / *Bill Monroe 100<sup>th</sup> Year Celebration: Live at Bean Blossom* / Rural Rhythm

**NOV. 22**  
 Taylor Swift / *Speak Now World Tour* / Big Machine  
 Willie Nelson / *Remember Me, Vol. 1* / R&J Records  
 Phil Vassar / *Noel* / RodeoWave Entertainment

**DEC. 6**  
 Guy Clark / *This One's for Him: A Tribute to Guy Clark* / Music Road Records  
 Elise Davis / *Cheap Date* / Beech House Recording

Andrew Heller / *Christmas Wonder* / Catbone Music  
 Charlie McCoy / *Lonesome Whistle: A Tribute to Hank Williams* / Catbone Music

**DEC. 13**  
 The Cleverlys / *The Cleverlys* / Stabbin Cabin Records

**JAN. 3**  
 Randy Thompson / *Collected* / Jackpot Records

**JAN. 9**  
 Dailey & Vincent / *The Gospel Side of Dailey & Vincent* / Cracker Barrel Old Country Store

**JAN. 10**  
 Mark Wayne Glasmire / *Mark Wayne Glasmire* / Traceway Records  
 The Little Willies / *For the Good Times* / Milking Bull/EMI  
 various artists / *Beyond the Hits* / TriPower Records

**JAN. 12**  
 Carolann Ames / *Laurel Canyon Road* / Ear Candy Records

**JAN. 24**  
 Janie Fricke / *Country Side of Bluegrass* / New Music Deals

Glen Campbell / *Live in Japan* / Real Gone Music  
 Kellie Pickler / *100 Proof* / BNA Records  
 Neal McCoy / *XII* / Blaster Records  
 various artists / *Waylon: The Music Inside, Vol. 2* / Average Joe's Entertainment

**JAN. 31**  
 Darrell Scott / *Long Ride Home* / Full Light Records

**FEB. 2**  
 Dierks Bentley / *Home* / Capitol Nashville

**FEB. 14**  
 Kevin Gordon / *Gloryland* / Crowville Media

**FEB. 28**  
 Pat Green / *Songs We Wish We'd Written II* / Sugar Hill Records  
 Amelia White / *Beautiful & Wild* / White-Wolf Records

**New CD Releases compiled by BOB DOERSCHUK**

# THE MEASURE OF SONGWRITING EXCELLENCE **BILL**

by DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

IT'S BEEN MORE THAN FIVE DECADES SINCE A 23-YEAR-OLD BILL ANDERSON BECAME THE YOUNGEST WRITER TO EARN BMI'S COUNTRY SONGWRITER OF THE YEAR HONOR — A RECORD UNTIL 20-YEAR-OLD TAYLOR SWIFT'S WIN IN 2010. SINCE THEN, HE'S WON NUMEROUS ACCOLADES, INCLUDING TWO CMA SONG OF THE YEAR TROPHIES IN A THREE-YEAR SPAN. IN NOVEMBER, HE WAS HONORED BY BEAR FAMILY RECORDS' RELEASE OF A FOUR-CD ANTHOLOGY, *BILL ANDERSON: THE FIRST 10 YEARS, 1956–1966*. AND HE'S SEEN A LOT OF CHANGES ON MUSIC ROW.

One of the biggest changes is the proliferation of co-writing," he said. "When I came to Nashville, there were not that many of us writing songs for a living. Most of us wrote by ourselves. Back in those days, we were so restricted to who we could write with because they wouldn't split copyrights. Lord knows ASCAP wouldn't split things with BMI and vice versa, so you had to write with people in your own camp. Those walls have come down. Now we can write with anybody and everybody will split copyrights. It has opened up a whole world of freedom for songwriting."

Anderson's ability to adapt has allowed him to flourish in today's collaborative climate. His credits include Kenny Chesney's "A Lot of Things Different," which he wrote with Dean Dillon; the Mark Wills hit "Wish You Were Here" (Anderson, Skip Ewing and Debbie Moore); and The Oak Ridge Boys' "Jonah, Job and Moses" (Anderson and Tia Sillers), which won a Gospel Music Association Dove Award. Anderson won CMA Song of the Year honors in 2005 for the Brad Paisley/Alison Krauss hit "Whiskey Lullaby" (Anderson and Jon Randall) and again in 2007 for George Strait's "Give It Away" (Anderson, Buddy Cannon and Jamey Johnson).

"He still writes a lot of great songs and he also still works very hard," said Anderson's longtime fan and frequent collaborator Brad Paisley. "A lot of people have an era when they write great. For a decade or two they're on fire and can do no wrong, then for whatever reason perspective changes and they don't write like they used to — or maybe they do write like they used to but meanwhile styles and tastes change. Those things don't apply to Bill. He has the ability to write whatever needs to be recorded in that era. If you think about the hits that he's had over the last few years, they are important and current sounding and, at the same time, they sound like Bill Anderson songs. He's changed just enough to pull off that sort of thing. It's really inspiring."

Though his distinctive vocal style earned him the nickname "Whispering Bill" and his stage skills keep him on the road year after year, at his core Bill Anderson is first and foremost a songwriter. In fact, his most recent album is simply and aptly titled *Songwriter*, on TWI Records.

Born in Columbia, S.C., Anderson grew up around Atlanta. As a child, he was fascinated with music and began writing songs when he was 9. "I subscribed to *Country Song Roundup* magazine," he remembered. "I got

all those song lyrics every month, and the first thing I would look at was who the writers were. I formed little pictures of people of the names I kept seeing over and over, and I would look at who the publishers were."

Hank Williams was an early influence. "The reason I became such a big Hank Williams fan was that Hank Williams wrote most of his songs and that really appealed to me," Anderson said. "I figured that this guy writes and he sings it, so this must be him. This must be who he is. I sensed an honesty in that music, and that was very influential to me.

"I've always loved to write," continued Anderson, who began his career as a sportswriter. "I did some work for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and for some weekly papers around Atlanta, but when I got to the University of Georgia and met a couple of guitar pickers over there, that focus shifted to music and I started seriously to write songs."

Anderson wrote the classic "City Lights" when he was just 19 years old and then moved to Nashville after Ray Price turned the song into a hit. Signed to Decca Records, Anderson created more successful titles, including "Po' Folks," "Mama Sang a Song," "Tips of My Fingers," "Eight By Ten" (written with Walter Haynes) and his signature song, "Still."

Eventually, after a hiatus from songwriting, Anderson started working with a new group of collaborators and creating hit songs for a new generation. He credits Steve Wariner for providing the motivation that spurred a new chapter in his career when Wariner recorded "Tips of My Fingers" in 1992 and took the song to No. 1. "That knocked down the wall and opened up my mind," he said. "I was still shy because I thought 'This is a whole new generation of writers and publishers and record people. I don't know these people and they don't know me.'"

A mutual friend encouraged him to call Vince Gill, but Anderson was hesitant. "I said, 'Vince doesn't even know who I am,'" he recalled. "I was wrong. I called him and got his Code-A-Phone (answering machine) and he answered (on his outgoing message) impersonating me; he says, 'This is Whispering Gill.' That gave me a little more confidence. We got together and wrote two songs. He ended up recording both of them. One was a No. 1 record: 'Which Bridge to Cross (Which Bridge to Burn).'"

As he began collaborating more frequently, Anderson had to adjust his way of thinking. "One of the first things I had to do was totally put my ego aside as a writer because I had written most everything by myself," he said. "I had done very, very little co-writing. When I started thinking seriously about getting back into music again, I realized that music had changed. Chord structures and melodies were more complicated, so I knew that I needed help. I knew that I couldn't write songs for today's market totally by myself. I needed input from people who were out there doing it, so I just checked my ego at the door. Vince was the first person I wrote with. I had felt like I was there to learn from him. The answers were the same, but somebody changed the questions."

Since then, Anderson has paired with many of Music Row's top writers and built an enviable catalog of hits. "I love writing with the

"I KNEW THAT I COULDN'T WRITE SONGS FOR TODAY'S MARKET TOTALLY BY MYSELF. I NEEDED INPUT FROM PEOPLE WHO WERE OUT THERE DOING IT."

— Bill Anderson



# ANDERSON

young writers who have their perspective on it but who are open to listening to my perspective as well," he explained. "That is the best of both worlds. Lyrics have always been my strength, even though I have written a ton of melodies. But most of the young writers today are more sophisticated in writing melodies than I am. Melodies today are a little more pop-influenced and R&B-influenced, so I embrace what other writers bring in that regard."

Anderson had taken note of other aspects of songwriting that have also changed. "Today the first thing they want is an uptempo song with a positive message. Country Music kind of had the image of being a negative music, and in a lot of ways it was. It is much more positive music today, and as a result I think it appeals to a larger audience."

Ironically, one of Anderson's biggest hits flies in the face of that observation. The Dixie Chicks had a hold on "Whiskey Lullaby" when Brad Paisley put a secondary hold on it. "We did not write that song as a duet," Anderson said. "But Brad had the vision and foresight to picture it as a duet and then had the good sense to ask Alison Krauss to sing it with him."

Jamey Johnson is another one of Anderson's favorite younger singer/songwriters. "He is a genius," he declared. "I love writing with Jamey. He is so creative and one of the fastest writers I have ever worked with. I love him as a person. He has a deep sense of tradition and respects what has come before him, but he wants to take it to a new place and a new audience. That is exactly what our business needs."

When it comes to securing cuts, Anderson prefers letting his publisher do the pitching. He spent several years with Moss Rose Publishing and is currently signed to Sony/ATV Tree, but during his early days in Nashville, he was with Buddy Killen's Tree Publishing. "Buddy was more than a publisher," Anderson said. "He was a mentor. There may have been more of that in the early days, probably because the whole scene was so much smaller. It wasn't like Buddy had 50 or 60 writers over there, like some companies do today. There were probably less than half a dozen of us. Buddy could afford the time to do a lot of pitching. He was very close to the artists, particularly Jim Reeves. I had four Jim Reeves cuts, and I can credit every one of those to Buddy being out there pitching."

One constant in Anderson's lengthy career has been his relationship with BMI, which he joined in 1958 and never left. "He shows up every day and competes with the best of the best," said Jody Williams, VP, Writer/Publisher Relations, Nashville, BMI. "He knows the nuances floating in the air of the songwriting community. He's current."

He's also timeless. "Bill writes songs that become legends," Williams continued. "He's a legendary recording artist and songwriter, still creating more than 50 years after the beginning of his career, and his contributions remain relevant. He's a mentor and friend to countless singers and songwriters, and his energy level rivals that of a 25-year-old. *That's an icon.*"

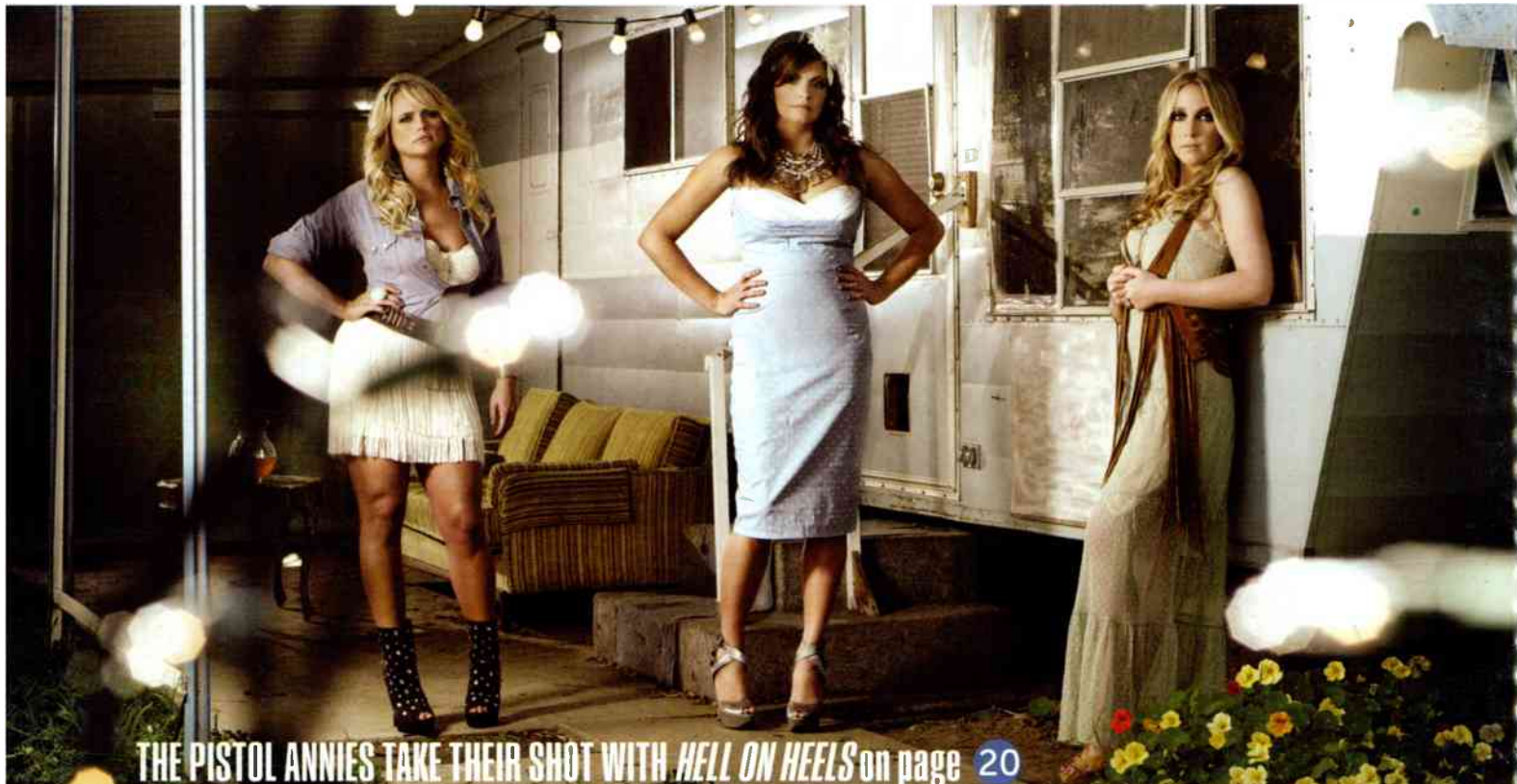
*CMA created the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1961 to recognize individuals for their outstanding contributions to the format with Country Music's highest honor. Inductees are chosen by CMA's Hall of Fame Panels of Electors, which consist of anonymous voters appointed by the CMA Board.*



photo: Dennis Carney

# CMA Close Up

CMAworld.com | My.CMAworld.com



THE PISTOL ANNIES TAKE THEIR SHOT WITH *HELL ON HEELS* on page 20

## cma events

### NOVEMBER

#### WEDNESDAY, NOV. 30

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

### DECEMBER

#### THURSDAY, DEC. 1

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

"CMA Country Christmas" | Hosted by Sugarland's Jennifer Nettles | 9 PM/ET – 11 PM/ET | ABC Television Network | [CMAChristmas.com](http://CMAChristmas.com)

#### SATURDAY, DEC. 17

"CMA Country Christmas" re-airs | 9 PM/ET – 11 PM/ET | ABC Television Network | [CMAChristmas.com](http://CMAChristmas.com)

### SUNDAY, DEC. 18

CMA Songwriters Series | Joe's Pub | New York City | 6:30 and 9 PM/ET | Bob DiPiero, Tim Nichols, Rivers Rutherford and Leslie Satcher | Tickets: [JoesPub.com](http://JoesPub.com), (212) 967-7555

### FEBRUARY

#### MONDAY, FEB. 13-WEDNESDAY, FEB. 15

First Quarterly Board Meeting 2012 | JW Marriott Desert Ridge Resort and Spa | Phoenix, Ariz. | Invitation only

#### TUESDAY, FEB. 21

CMA Songwriters Series tapes BBC Four Series "Songwriters Circle" | London, England | Bob DiPiero, Bill Anderson and Clint Black

### WEDNESDAY, FEB. 22

"CMA/BMI Presents the CMA Songwriters Series" | Hard Rock Café | London, England | Bob DiPiero, Bill Anderson and Clint Black

### THURSDAY, FEB. 23

"CMA/BMI Presents the CMA Songwriters Series" | Whelan's | Dublin, Ireland | Bob DiPiero, Bill Anderson and Clint Black

### FRIDAY, FEB. 25

"CMA/BMI Presents the CMA Songwriters Series" | The Empire Music Hall | Belfast, Northern Ireland | Bob DiPiero, Bill Anderson and Clint Black

### JUNE

#### THURSDAY, JUNE 7 – SUNDAY, JUNE 10

CMA Music Festival | Nashville | Tickets: 1-800-CMA-FEST, [CMAfest.com](http://CMAfest.com), [Ticketmaster.com](http://Ticketmaster.com), 1-800-745-3000



\*All times central unless otherwise noted.



# ALAN JACKSON

## 25 YEARS OF KEEPIN' IT COUNTRY

by KIP KIRBY

**The year was 1989. An earthquake jolted San Francisco. An Exxon tanker dumped millions of gallons of crude oil into Prince William Sound. The Berlin Wall collapsed. In Nashville, Country Music was about to undergo its own seismic jolt from a class of newcomers that included Garth Brooks, Clint Black and Travis Tritt. Noticing the winds of traditionalism shifting, music mogul Clive Davis decided to launch a Nashville imprint of Arista Records and chose for his first signing a lanky 31-year-old singer-songwriter from Newnan, Georgia. Alan Jackson signed his contract with Arista Nashville in June, never dreaming that just a year later he'd be nominated for a CMA Horizon Award, two years later he would become a member of the Grand Ole Opry or that he'd score CMA Entertainer of the Year a mere five years after first splashing onto the Country scene.**

**I**f all that Jackson has accomplished since then seems amazing, no one is more amazed or awed than the man himself. When he talks about the past 25 years, there's a somewhat stunned level of incredulity in his voice, as if even he can't believe how fast the time has flown — or all that's happened to him. He's written songs that have become defining moments for his generation, sold more than 60 million albums worldwide, charted 35 No. 1 singles, headlined stages from Brazil to Australia, yet changed almost nothing about how he writes and sings. He admits he doesn't understand his longevity — but don't think that Jackson isn't enjoying every minute of his anniversary celebration.

When his creative team approached the singer-songwriter with the idea of marking his silver anniversary, complete with tour and new album *Angels and Alcohol*, he didn't protest. "I never thought it was gonna be anything people would care about," Jackson said with a sheepish laugh, "but I was fine with it. I'm very proud that I've been able to survive this long and still be viable and still basically making the same music I came to Nashville to make." Does it really seem like a quarter century to him? Yes and no. "In a way, it seems like it's gone by really fast, but yet it seems like a long time ago. I should have kept a journal because there's no way I can remember everything."

Jackson's anniversary year officially kicked off in June 2014 when he was honored with CMT's first Impact Artist Award for his extensive contributions to Country Music videos. He chose to make his videography

*continued on page 18...*

**“I’VE ALWAYS  
TRIED NOT TO  
LOOK AT THE  
CHARTS OR  
THINK ABOUT  
AIRPLAY OR  
AWARDS.”**

– Alan Jackson

part of his yearlong 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary tour, eventually settling on extensive video flashbacks showing a much younger man through the years. “People told me, ‘Well, you’re a lot older now than you were in some of those videos,’” he chuckled. “I said, ‘It don’t matter. Let people see the old me and the young me or whatever, I don’t care!’ I just felt it was part of my history. You know, I’ve done 50-something videos, probably more than any other artist in the history of Country Music. Videos have played a really big part in my career, especially in the early years. So when we were designing the show for the 25<sup>th</sup>, I said, ‘I really want to go back and include most of the videos, even if we don’t play the whole thing.’”

Later that same month, the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum announced the opening of the exhibit “Alan Jackson: 25 Years of Keepin’ It Country,” also naming Jackson as the museum’s 2014 Artist-in-Residence (marking the first time a museum residency has coincided with an entertainer’s exhibit). In October, the usually reserved, laconic singer charmed audiences at a pair of concerts in the CMA Theater, scrapping his normal set list to sit comfortably onstage for nearly 2½ hours sharing rarely heard reminiscences about his family, his roots in Newnan, his early years in Nashville and his climb to stardom. And in November, ASCAP awarded Jackson with the prestigious Heritage Award, highlighting his achievement of being the most performed Country Music songwriter-artist in the organization’s 100-year history.

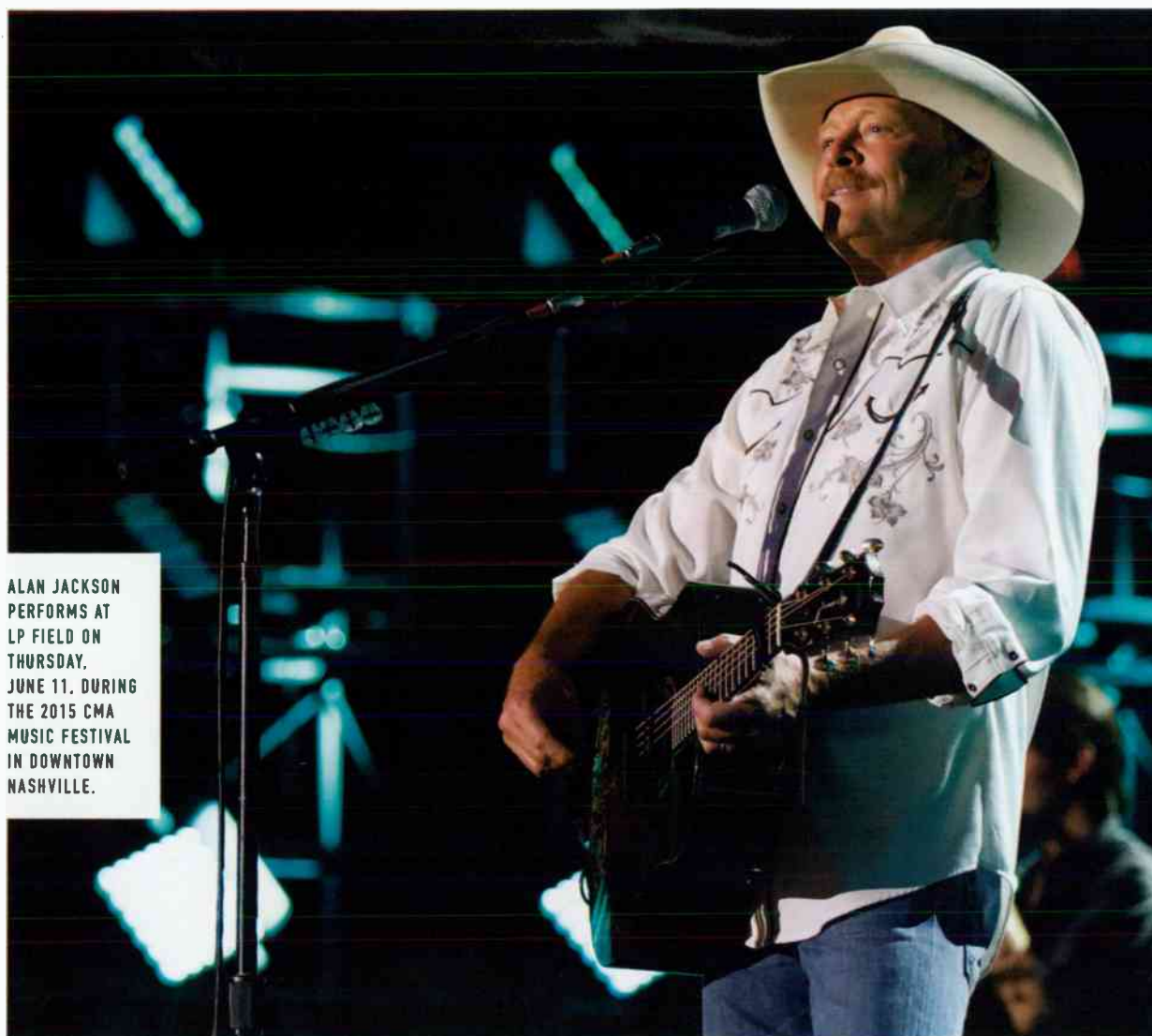
He capped his yearlong victory lap at LP Field where he helped kick off CMA Music Festival’s Nightly Concerts. He’s got a quarter century of Music Fest memories and poked a little fun at himself when he noted his daughters and their friends go every day: “Not to see me. But they come to see everyone else.”

Humble, self-deprecating and not always at ease in the spotlight, the singer said the high points of this anniversary year have been both overwhelming and unexpected. “I just feel so lucky to even be at a point where I can celebrate all this, and to realize I still matter,” he said. “I feel so fortunate when I look back at the early ‘90s where I came from, and so many of the artists who came along with me and after me — well, there’s hardly anybody else around that’s held up.” He laughed, then interjected a note of reality without rancor: “I’ve always tried not to look at the charts or think about airplay or awards when I was writing songs and making records. I’ve just tried to keep the same integrity in my music, to do what I love and that I think my fans want to hear.”

No silver anniversary would be complete without a new album, and Jackson won’t disappoint. *Angels and Alcohol*, out July 17, has seven new originals, which in true Alan Jackson fashion run the gamut from introspective common-thread themes to lighthearted, tongue-in-cheek looks at life. Longtime producer Keith Stegall, who has produced all but one of the singer’s albums over the years, thinks this may well be the underlying key to Jackson’s success. “Alan has a real talent to write about things that we’re all thinking about but wouldn’t expect him to think about,” he said. “There are a couple of tunes on the new album that when you hear them, you go, ‘Gosh, I’ve thought about that but I didn’t know he would think about that!’ Alan comes from a true singer-songwriter place, which is why we can identify with him so easily.”

Cindy Mabe, President of Universal Music Group Nashville, has worked closely with Jackson for years and has the highest regard for him personally and professionally. “I’ve been given the great gift of not just getting to work with Alan, but also to see the human being he is,” she said.





ALAN JACKSON PERFORMS AT LP FIELD ON THURSDAY, JUNE 11, DURING THE 2015 CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL IN DOWNTOWN NASHVILLE.

"I believe Alan Jackson is in a class of his own. He's an artist with that rare ability to let us in on his own life yet somehow make it feel like he's singing about our own. He's at times been the conscience of our format, a storyteller who's moved us to laughter and tears, and I really believe his career will be reflected as one of the greatest of all time."

For now, the man of the hour is content just to go onstage each night and play his music as he's done for the past 25 years. If there's a sense of nostalgia and reflection below the surface, it's mingled with liberal doses of gratitude and appreciation. "I think I've mellowed some in my older years," he said, "and I think I'm definitely wiser about life and about what matters, about what's important to me and what's not. I've played for four presidents, I've played in the grandest arenas, I've played in the nastiest bars, I've played everywhere and pretty much done everything you can ever imagine. It really is overwhelming when I start looking at it. It's been an incredible journey and a blur at the same time. It's been a crazy ride."

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



**GM SALLY WILLIAMS  
LEADS \$14 MILLION RYMAN  
RENOVATION, MOVES INTO  
LEADERSHIP ROLE WITH CMA**

# RYMAN REIMAGINED



by CHRIS TALBOTT

**Sally Williams has a grand vision for Ryman Auditorium,  
and it's one that won't fit into a five- or 10-year plan.**

"My hope is in 100 years people are going to feel as excited and reverent about this building as they are now, and it's important what we're doing now is propelling the building toward that," said Williams, General Manager of the Ryman and Vice President of Concerts and Entertainment for Opry Entertainment. "We should not be stagnant. We should always be looking for ways to improve."

The latest round of improvements was recently completed with \$14 million invested in a new lobby, restaurant, concession and gift shop areas, and general upgrades and updates for nighttime visitors to a building that was last renovated 20 years ago. The changes also include a 21<sup>st</sup> century reimagining of daytime activities at one of Nashville's most-visited attractions with Lula C. Naff, the Ryman's late guardian angel, taking center stage in an immersive experience room that can leave you with chill bumps.

"One of the most exciting experiences here at the Ryman is when artists put down their instruments, walk to the front of

the stage and sing completely a cappella," Williams said. "The Ryman is known for these pure, intimate and very authentic moments. But for our daytime tours we needed something a bit more high-tech to help us tell the full story of the Ryman."

They hired BRC Imagination Arts to use video and sound technology in a new way to tell the Ryman's story from the very beginning with humor and emotion. The exhibit was kept under wraps and referred to as "The Secret Room" around strangers during construction, and even now Ryman employees don't want too many details given to the public so as not to ruin the experience.

"It's sort of soul-stirring because you're surrounded by the sights and the sounds of what has happened in this auditorium, beginning back in 1892," Williams said. "It's amazing. It's a beautiful room."

Under Williams' leadership, the Ryman has won a number of awards, including multiple Pollstar Theatre of the Year Awards and the SRO Venue of the Year Award presented by CMA. She's

*continued on page 22 ...*



raised the building's visibility even more in a crowded tourism market and attracted some of the most unique acts to the stage.

The latest reincarnation of the building will bring in even more patrons. The restaurant, dubbed Café Lula, will include a coffee shop and a varied lunch menu built around a rotisserie that should offer downtown workers something different. It will stay open late on show nights to increase options for concert goers as well.

"I'm so invested in all of it," Williams said. "I think the soul of Nashville is so special. There is so much about this building that people don't know. It amazes me. We continue to learn."

That enthusiasm for her mission has made Williams one of Nashville's most dynamic entertainment industry leaders. Along with her work at the Ryman, she is the President-Elect of the Country Music Association Board of Directors and will soon take over the position from Warner Music Nashville's John Esposito, who will become Chairman of the Board.

"Her leadership over the last few years at the Ryman has had a demonstrative effect on the success of that business and the experience for both artists and our guests," said Steve Buchanan, President of the Opry Entertainment Group. "And that is really a direct result of her vision for the business and the way she and her team collaborate to bring that result to reality. It's been great to see her emerge as a leader and I feel confident that she will have a very positive impact on CMA as an organization. I think one of the things that's important for CMA leadership is a person's broad-based perspective of the industry. Her role as the general manager of the Ryman really helps give her that sort of perspective, which I think can be utilized by the industry as a whole through CMA."

Williams moves into a top leadership position on the Board as Country Music enjoys its widest popularity ever. And new technology is making it available to new listeners every day. Williams believes the industry is at a pivotal point and hopes she can use her enthusiasm, team-building ethos and open mind to help drive the genre forward.

"We're definitely at a peak, and of course there are peaks and valleys," Williams said. "The Country Music Association was created at a time when rock'n'roll was growing in popularity and members of the Country Music industry found that by joining forces to work together they could more effectively strengthen and expand their genre."

We're at another point where the industry seems to be changing rapidly. New technologies are opening up new opportunities for Country Music to continue to grow stronger and expand. CMA gives us the opportunity to take off our corporate hats and work together to figure out how to maximize the opportunities for our industry for the future."

**Ryman.com**

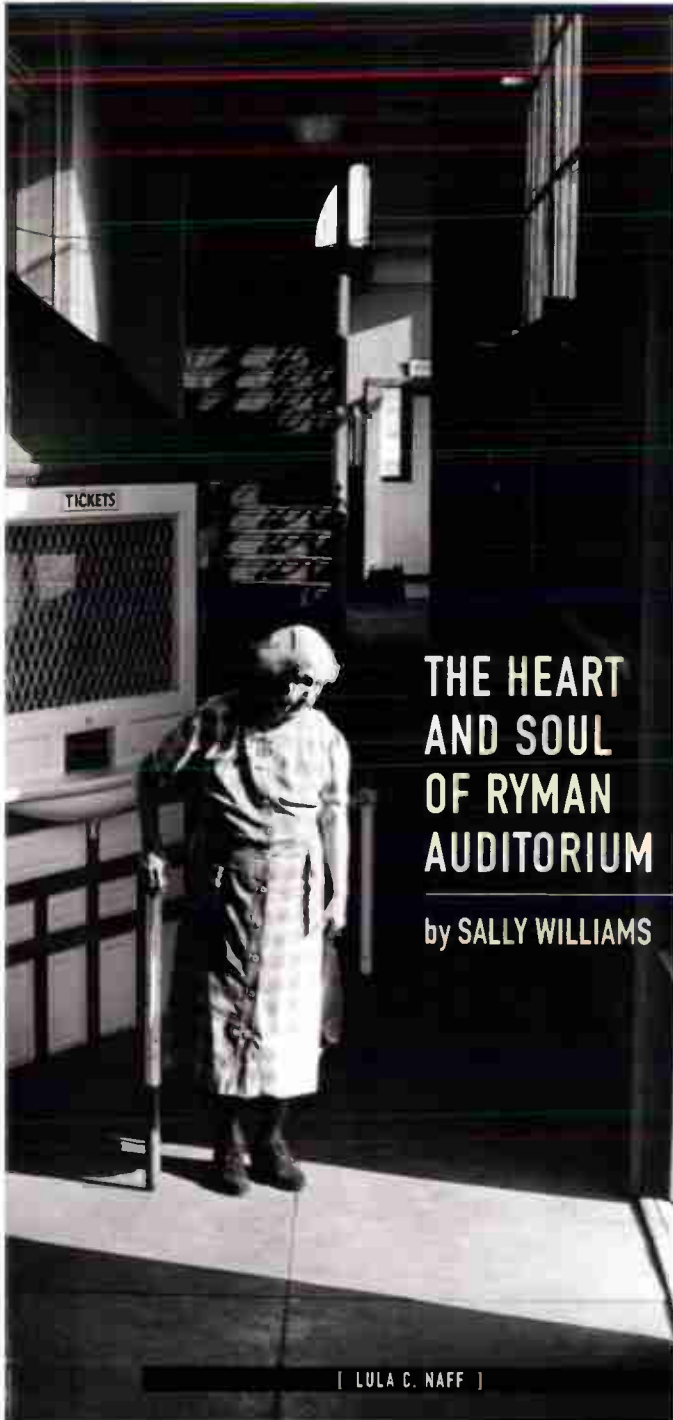
#### A LIST OF THE MOST NOTABLE NEW FEATURES:

- **Café Lula will serve tourists and the downtown community with coffee and a rotisserie-based menu. The airy, glass-enclosed restaurant will stay open late on concert nights as well.**
- **The cramped lobby space has been widened and upgraded to eliminate the serpentine lines and congestion with new concessions and a larger gift shop that will now be open during shows.**
- **The Ryman's eight historic dressing rooms retain their themes but have been modernized to make them more comfortable for performers.**



photo: courtesy of Nashville Public Library, Special Collections





## THE HEART AND SOUL OF RYMAN AUDITORIUM

by SALLY WILLIAMS

[ LULA C. NAFF ]

**O**ne of the most exciting parts of the Ryman's recent expansion and improvement project is the fact that people will learn about Lula C. Naff. She's a true legend that most people have not yet discovered. But she now plays a starring role in the Ryman experience — the virtual host of our new pre-tour show "Soul of Nashville" and the namesake of Café Lula.

Lula was a young widow when she moved to Nashville in 1904. It was the same year Captain Tom Ryman died. Although there's no evidence the two ever met, they both were fiercely devoted to Ryman Auditorium and had significant impacts on the city of Nashville.

Lula worked as a secretary for a Lyceum bureau that provided lectures, concerts and other entertainment and educational events for the public — the Ryman was one of the venues they used.

In 1914 the bureau closed. Lula was faced with a choice. After working at the lyceum bureau for over a decade, Lula was confident that she knew the way the business worked and she knew the right people. Lula made the decision to hang out her own shingle — in today's terms she opened up shop as an independent concert and event promoter.

Keep in mind that when Lula made this decision she didn't even have the right to vote in the United States. And there certainly wasn't the well-oiled formula for promoting events that exists today. Lula was blazing trails. Lula was doing her own research, negotiating her own deals, handling her own marketing, printing and selling her own tickets (out of a shirt-box!), advancing her own production and managing her own finances. She also was forging her own relationships ... with local business people, politicians and media; with world-class artists and the entertainment gatekeepers in New York; and with the Nashville community who grew to trust that she would bring the best performers of the day for them to enjoy at the Ryman.

In 1920 the board of directors hired Lula to work as the Ryman's General Manager. She remained in the position until she retired in 1955. During her time at the Ryman she did, indeed, welcome an astonishing array of performers to Nashville via the stage door of the Ryman: Bob Hope, Charlie Chaplin, Enrico Caruso, Harry Houdini, Katharine Hepburn, Mae West, Ziegfeld Follies, "Guys & Dolls," "Oklahoma!" and so many more.

Lula is important to the Ryman's story because she represents a significant but sometimes overlooked chapter. People know what the Ryman was — the Union Gospel Tabernacle. They know that the Ryman hosted the likes of Hank Williams, Johnny Cash and Patsy Cline on the Opry for decades — the Mother Church of Country Music. By learning about Lula they learn that Nashvillians have been enjoying their favorite performers of all genres at the Ryman for more than a century — All are Welcome.

Lula is important to me personally because I am inspired by her courage, her confidence and her business savvy. Imagine her fearlessness, to travel to New York, to be confident enough to say, "You need to come to Nashville, Tennessee, with your world-class Entertainment." Imagine her drive and business acumen. Imagine ending every year during her time at the Ryman in the black. We would admire and respect anyone who accomplished today what she accomplished in her day, but in 1914 and 1920 and 1955 she was a true groundbreaker. Take into consideration that she was a woman and that admiration gets dialed way up.

Lula C. Naff was a badass. We should all strive to be as fearless and driven as she was.



by BOB DOERSCHUK and CHRIS TALBOTT

**KRISTIAN BUSH FIGURES IT TAKES 20,000 DISCRETE MOVES OVER EIGHT YEARS TO BECOME SUCCESSFUL IN THIS BUSINESS, AND HE'S MAKING EVERY ONE OF THEM. AS COUNTRY MUSIC'S MOST ANONYMOUS SUPERSTAR, BUSH IS EMBARKING ON A SOLO CAREER THAT'S ALREADY OPENED EYES AND CHANGED MINDS.**

Bush is a master of transition, reinventing himself every decade or so. This time he's stepping away from the supernova that is Jennifer Nettles, his partner in Sugarland, a duo that won six CMA Awards and two Grammy Awards in 10 years atop the charts before going on hiatus. He's still reaching milestones in his latest incarnation, and he's taking on multiple roles — singer, sage, statesman and, for four nights at LP Field in June at CMA Music Festival, even journalist.

He put in as much work on that final entry as all the others, laboring over bios and album credits to come up with something truly interesting to talk about for four-minute segments that will run on BBC2 in the UK during the run up to CMA Awards.

"I'm not sure if I feel it as a calling, but I would say I feel it as a responsibility," said Bush, who began the duties two years ago. "I know how it feels when I'm being interviewed by an artist rather than a journalist. You're guiding conversation in order to coax a story out. In this case I feel a responsibility to ask a question they wouldn't be normally asked."

Bush talked shop for a minute with each artist after the interview. Songwriting with the boys in Zac Brown Band. Audio engineering with LP Field rookies Maddie & Tae. The untapped possibilities of Japan with Lady Antebellum. All

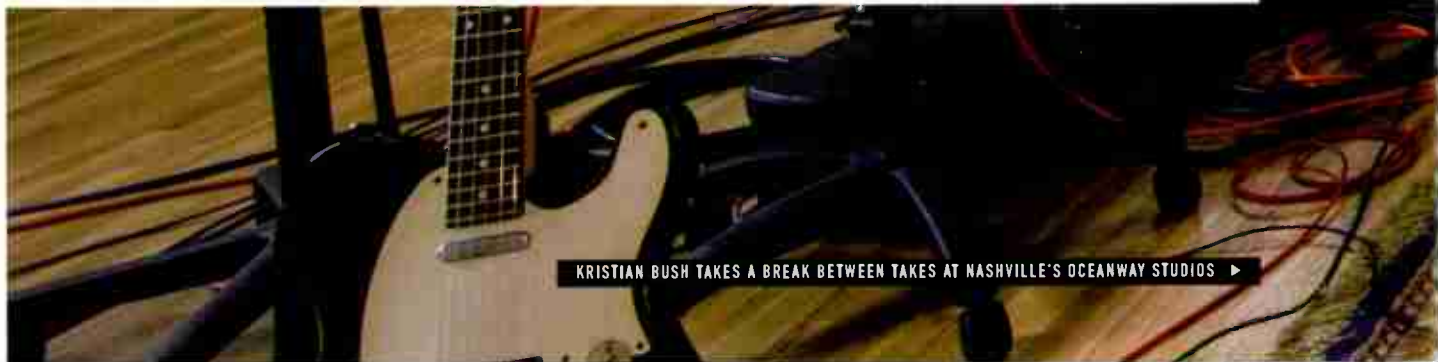
pieces of knowledge he's picked up along the way, from his days in rock band Billy Pilgrim to his unlikely, but highly successful, leap into Country Music.

And he's doing it again with the release of his solo album *Southern Gravity* released in April on Streamsound Records. He writes this time for himself, defining and refining his solo identity. From the first single, "Trailer Hitch," an ambling meditation on life unfettered by worry, to the romantic anthem "Make Another Memory" and "Flip Flops," one of the album's several beach idylls, *Southern Gravity* paints a picture of Bush as an easygoing guy, unabashed by the challenge of introducing himself — again — as a solo artist.

"Having very little to lose, I think, has been the piece that's worked well for me," Bush said. "Transitioning from a rock world or a pop world, which is where I was competing with Billy Pilgrim, when that kind of slowed down and the record deals started to go away, as long as you had nothing to lose, starting a Country band, what are they going to tell you? You're crazy? They did that. Everybody told me I was crazy. They're going to say this will never work. Everybody said that. It wasn't like you had a lot to lose, so you are terribly dangerous at that moment. What happens if you make it?"

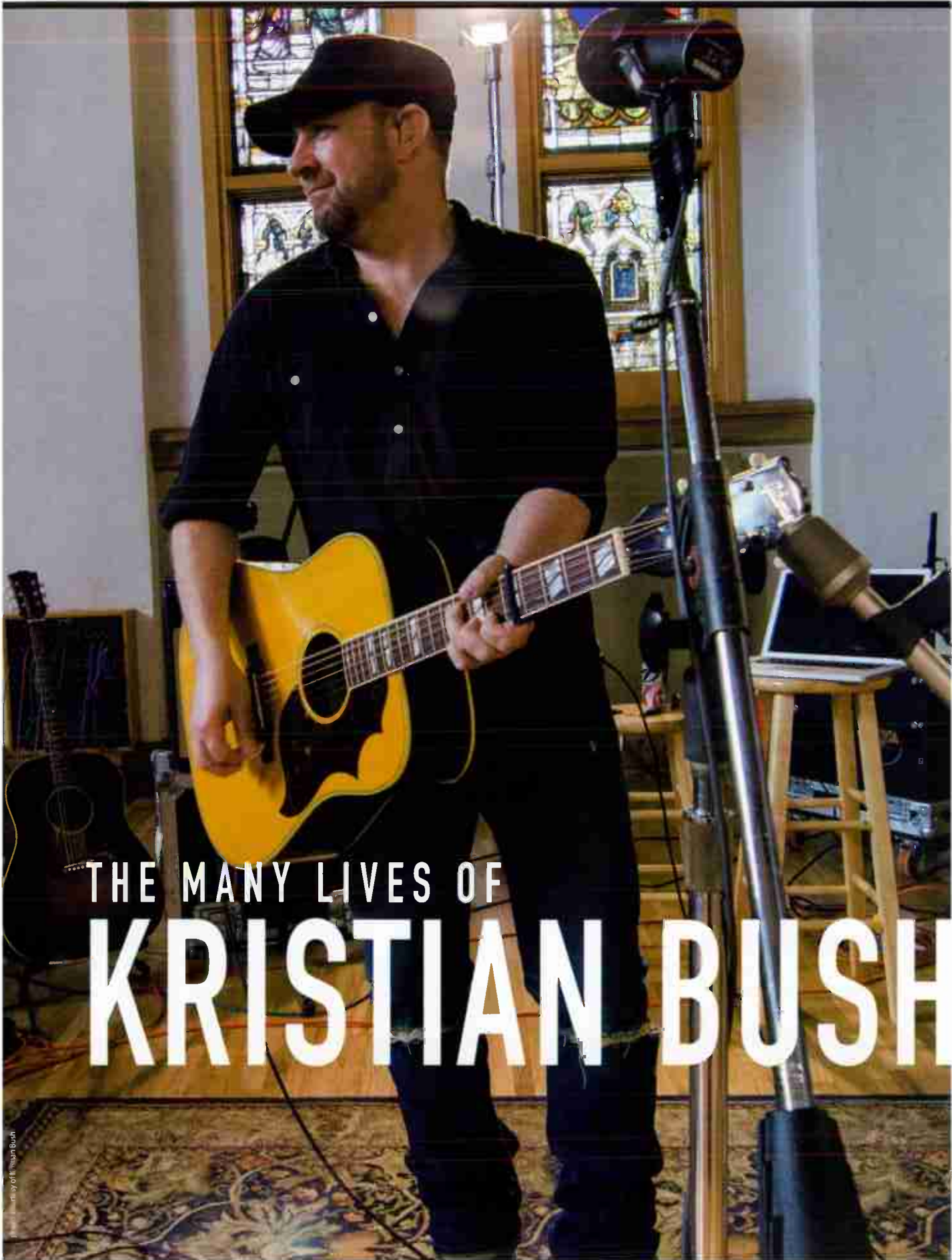
Bush happily notes *Southern Gravity* is "my third try at having a first album. So I have experience at it." He understands just how hard it is to break through, having put in the work to launch Sugarland's first hit, "Baby Girl," a song that was peaking when the duo made its first LP Field appearance a decade ago. He's doing it again, with positive results. "Trailer Hitch," the first single from *Southern Gravity* reached No. 20 on the Mediabase Country songs chart and

*continued on page 26...*



KRISTIAN BUSH TAKES A BREAK BETWEEN TAKES AT NASHVILLE'S OCEANWAY STUDIOS ▶





THE MANY LIVES OF  
**KRISTIAN BUSH**

World Radio History

© 2011 by Kristian Bush

KRISTIAN BUSH PERFORMS AT THE HGTV LODGE ON SUNDAY, JUNE 14, DURING THE 2015 CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL.



**"MY REDEFINITION STARTED IN THE CMA SONGWRITERS SERIES."**

— Kristian Bush

... continued from page 25

put him in a unique club of duo members like Wynonna Judd and John Rich who've charted that high as a solo act. He achieved that milestone one station at a time.

"Modern Country radio existence, if you are a new artist, you have to go and visit everybody, so you go and do radio tour," Bush said. "You're not really on a tour. On Sunday night you get your information about where you're going and you travel somewhere. You go to Kansas and you get into a minivan with a guitar on your back and you go over to the local radio station, and you eat lunch with the guy who programs it. And you see if he will allow you to play your song for him on the car radio or maybe you can plug in your guitar and play it for him. In my case, I was already in a pretty famous band at the time. Since they didn't quite know what to expect from me they'd invite listeners in who nervously wait to see if I can sing."

*Southern Gravity* answers any and all questions you might have had about Bush, from who he is to what he is, and pushes his persona to the front of the stage. Bush credits the CMA Songwriters Series with helping to facilitate this process, starting on June 26, 2012, at the House of Blues in Los Angeles.

"While I'm singing 'Baby Girl,' the conversation was, 'I know that guy! That's the guy from Sugarland!'" Bush said. "Then the next

thing they say is, 'Wait a minute! He can sing?!' And then they get to the point where they're like, 'I had no idea he wrote that!'"

That songwriting ability caught longtime Nashville producer Byron Gallimore's attention as CEO of Streamsound Records.

"Before we started doing this project, Kristian sent me about 65 songs," Gallimore said. "The first time through, I cut it to 20 or 25 songs. And then the second time I listened, instead of cutting it further, I upped the list because there were so many I really liked.

"The thing that excites me about this record is that Kristian writes with a '70s/'80s flair," he continued. "It's different. It's not hard-core Country, but it is very Country, with a fresh edge to it. I can't think of anyone else in the marketplace that is in quite the same place."

The trick will be building on the fans and program directors who were into "Trailer Hitch." Bush will hit the road this summer in support of his album. His plan is to eventually go coast to coast, head to Canada and back overseas. Anywhere they'll listen.

"I'm completely aware we're still at the beginning, even though we've got some pretty cool success that a lot of people are never afforded as a new artist," Bush said. "But I'm proving it one show at a time, and that doesn't seem to be changing in the foreseeable future. There are a lot of places to visit when you're starting over again."

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



# CMA Music Festival 2015

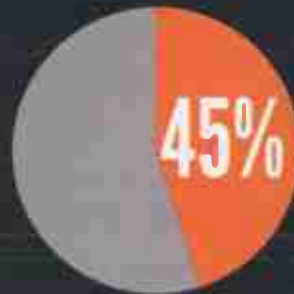


## Attendee Snapshot



**87,680**

Average  
Daily  
Visitors\*



Visiting  
Nashville  
for the first time



## Attendees from Around the World



Attendees from  
all 50 states



Attendees from 27  
international countries

### Top 5 Countries

- 1 Canada
- 2 England
- 3 Australia
- 4 Germany
- 5 Norway



Average distance  
traveled to attend



**90%**

Discovered an  
artist that they are  
now a fan of and  
interested in  
following



2h  
12 min

Average time spent at  
Fan Fair X each day



**75%**

Visited  
Fan Fair X

LP Ticket Holders 18+, not including daily and four-day AT&T U-verse® Fan Fair X ticket holders

\*Includes all free attendees and ticket holder types

Source: CMA Proprietary Attendee Research 2015

Content may not be reprinted or distributed for public or media use without express permission from the Country Music Association

# THE INTERSECTION OF FOUNDATION AND FESTIVAL FUN



**cma** MUSIC FESTIVAL HAPPENS FOR ONE WEEK IN JUNE, BUT THE PROCEEDS RAISED RESONATE WITH SPECIAL MUSIC EDUCATION PROJECTS YEAR-ROUND.

(TOP) BRAD PAISLEY HELPS CLOSE OUT THE NIGHTLY CONCERTS AT LP FIELD; (CENTER) NOTES FOR NOTES CEO PHIL GILLEY, KEITH URBAN AND METRO MUSIC SPECIALIST AT JOHN F. KENNEDY MIDDLE SCHOOL LINDA FRIEND PARTICIPATE IN A MUSIC EDUCATION PANEL DURING URBAN'S SPECIAL APPEARANCE ON THE CMA CLOSE UP STAGE AT AT&T U-VERSE FAN FAIR X DURING CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL WHERE HE WAS NAMED THE FIRST NATIONAL AMBASSADOR FOR THE CMA FOUNDATION'S "MUSIC EDUCATION MATTERS" CAMPAIGN. (RIGHT) THE CMA FOUNDATION PRESENTS A GRANT TO TENNESSEE ARTS PROGRAM THE QUEST CENTER AT CHARLIE WORSHAM'S FAN CLUB PARTY DURING CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL. (L-R) WORSHAM; TIFFANY KERNS, CMA COMMUNITY OUTREACH MANAGER; JIM LUTZ, CO-FOUNDER AND CEO THE QUEST CENTER FOR ART & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT; AND RON SAMUELS, CMA FOUNDATION BOARD CHAIRMAN.



photos: Paisley - John Russell / CMA, Urban, Charlie Worsham - Donn Jones / CMA



## OLD DOMINION

It helps to have a good-looking lead singer and a guitarist who can really play, but when it comes right down to it chemistry is the key ingredient to any band's success. You have it or you don't. The five guys in Old Dominion have it, and they knew it from the start.

Matthew Ramsey, Trevor Rosen, Whit Sellers, Geoff Sprung and Brad Tursi all knew each other as friends long before they formed Old Dominion 10 years ago. When they finally did put the band together, the spark was immediate.

"We automatically kind of create our own sound just by playing our own instruments and making it all up ourselves," guitarist Tursi said. "Right off the bat, we stumbled onto a little bit of a different sound."

The first song they wrote together, "Break Up With Him," released on last year's self-titled EP debut release, has been embraced by fans and radio programmers alike. It caused such a stir, the band was signed by RCA Records Nashville earlier this year.

The song is a byproduct of that elusive band chemistry. Rather than sitting in a writer's room with an acoustic guitar — like it's usually done in Nashville — the group plugs in and gathers around an amp. "Break Up With Him" came out of its very first soundcheck, starting with a bass-and-drum groove.

"If we think it sounds cool, somebody holds up a phone and records it and maybe mumbles a little melody in there," Tursi said.

This particular melody has helped Old Dominion join a new wave of popular bands — something that's unique in Country Music, where solo acts garner most of the attention.

"Maybe it's just people looking for something different," Tursi said. "I think in the past there have been bands like Alabama that have been successful in Country Music, and I think it's cool we're just getting more of a shot."

**OldDominionBand.com**



Photo: David McClister



Photo: David McClister

## A THOUSAND HORSES

Talk about stampeding out of the gate: A Thousand Horses has had one of the most auspicious debuts in the modern history of Country Music.

"Smoke," the debut single for Michael Hobby, Bill Satcher, Zach Brown and Graham DeLoach, once again proved the old maxim about the power of a great song. It set records when it debuted on the charts and reached No. 1 before the band's debut album, the Dave Cobb-produced *Southernality*, hit stores. It was the first time a new Country group with three or more members sent their first single to No. 1 since 2008 and Zac Brown Band's "Chicken Fried."

"I loved it the minute we wrote it," Hobby said. "Sometimes that happens where you write a song and you're just so excited about it."

The Republic Nashville quartet with roots in Georgia and South Carolina has blended its natural love for Southern rock with the lyrical poetry of Country Music. The combination has grabbed the attention of fans on both sides of the aisle.

"It's just us. It's our sound," Hobby said. "I guess it's not your traditional Country sound per se. There's a lot of lanes for all types of music and genres with Country Music. We lean more Southern rock. It's just kind of Southern rock with a story. The lyrics are Country. That's kind of what we've always been about. We just sound like us, man, you know."

**AThousandHorses.com**

Debut Spotlight compiled by CHRIS TALBOTT

... continued from page 5

which will open five recording studios for children around the nation this year thanks to its association with CMA. "Because for us it's not just about making music. There's all kinds of career paths you never imagined. Being behind the board, on stage, guitar tech. It's great for them to see that because you never know what will cause a spark."

Miles Slay, a 17-year-old member of the program who is headed to Tennessee State in the fall, is an aspiring singer, but soaked up the total scene as hundreds of workers swirled about: "It's really cool to see that it's like a living, breathing thing with all the TV cameras and all the people."

After soundcheck, LBT met with the students, taking selfies and talking shop. Westbrook can't help himself and excitedly whispers to them: "What did you guys think about the guys on stilts? They were amazing. Did you see them go up on one leg?"

"We all grew up in music education and it was a part of all of our lives and we are such believers in that," Schlapman said. "Anything extracurricular that a child can do in their downtime to build their self-esteem or keep them out of trouble is vital for a growing child, and music is so healing and it's such an escape if you need it to be. We also feel like it's our responsibility to give back. We have been given so much and so much is expected from us. We want to fulfill that duty, and we want to be a part of something that has deep meaning."

Later that night, the group sets aside its hosting duties briefly to take the stage. During "Painkiller," Westbrook's long-wished-for horn section kills it and the stilt walkers amp up the spectacle as they amble over the singers and members of their band. LBT reassembles at the satellite stage at the Tennessee Titans' 50 yard line.

"When we did 'Girl Crush' in the middle of the crowd and everybody lit up their phones, just being in the middle of the stadium with all the beautiful lights everywhere was just heavenly," Schlapman said. "It was amazin' and I will never forget that moment. I have a lot of little jewels in my memory and that one will stay with me always."

**LittleBigTown.com**



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

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

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

©2015 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 quarterly 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.



## CMA CLOSE UP

**EXECUTIVE EDITOR** WENDY PEARL  
**ASSISTANT EDITOR** COURTNEY BEEBE  
**CONTRIBUTING EDITOR** CHRIS TALBOTT  
**DESIGN** EVAMARIE OGLANDER

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS** CRYSTAL CAVINESS | BOB DOERSCHUK  
 HOLLY GLEASON | KIP KIRBY |  
 TOM ROLAND | SALLY WILLIAMS

**PROOFREADERS** MICHAEL MCCALL

## CMA STAFF

### EXECUTIVE

SARAH TRAHERN CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
 MECHALLE MYERS EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

### COMMUNICATIONS

WENDY PEARL VICE PRESIDENT OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS  
 JAY JONES DIRECTOR OF MEDIA RELATIONS  
 KRISTA DIAL MANAGER OF MEDIA RELATIONS  
 COURTNEY BEEBE COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

### FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

AMY SMARTT SENIOR VP OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION  
 KEN SANDERSON DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
 JENNIFER CROWDER SENIOR MANAGER OF ACCOUNTING SERVICES  
 AARON HARTLEY SENIOR MANAGER OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES  
 BEN BALCH MANAGER OF ACCOUNTING SERVICES  
 MELISSA MAYNARD MANAGER OF OPERATIONS  
 JUSTIN RANDALL NETWORK ADMINISTRATOR  
 TAYLOR TAPP SYSTEMS AND APPLICATION MANAGER  
 ANGELA BROWN ACCOUNTING COORDINATOR  
 MARYANN DICKS FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COORDINATOR  
 LINDSEY JONES OPERATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION COORDINATOR  
 MARCO CASTILLO OPERATIONS ASSISTANT

### LIVE EVENTS

CHRIS CRAWFORD SENIOR DIRECTOR OF LIVE EVENTS  
 VILMA SALINAS SENIOR MANAGER OF EVENT LOGISTICS  
 KRIS KENNEDY SENIOR MANAGER OF EVENTS  
 DIANE BEARDEN-ENRIGHT SENIOR MANAGER OF MEETINGS AND LOGISTICS  
 GREG PITMAN PRODUCTION MANAGER  
 MANDI NAYLOR LIVE EVENTS COORDINATOR

### MARKET RESEARCH

KAREN STUMP SENIOR DIRECTOR OF MARKET RESEARCH  
 CAROLYN SZCZUREK SENIOR MANAGER OF MARKET RESEARCH  
 NATALIE WILSON SENIOR COORDINATOR OF MARKET RESEARCH

### MARKETING

DAMON WHITESIDE SENIOR VP OF MARKETING AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS  
 CATHERINE BLACKWELL DIRECTOR OF MARKETING  
 AMANDA ECKARD DIRECTOR OF CREATIVE SERVICES  
 CHRISTIAN BOTTORFF MANAGER OF CREATIVE SERVICES  
 SCOTT FRANS DIGITAL PROJECT MANAGER  
 MARY OVEREND DIGITAL MARKETING MANAGER  
 AMANDA HAEFFNER MARKETING MANAGER  
 ALINA THOMPSON MARKETING COORDINATOR  
 MARTY FILOGAMO DIGITAL DESIGNER

### MEMBERSHIP AND BALLOTING

BRANDI SIMMS SENIOR DIRECTOR OF MEMBERSHIP AND BALLOTING  
 TIFFANY KERNS COMMUNITY OUTREACH MANAGER  
 BRENDEN OLIVER COORDINATOR OF MEMBERSHIP AND BALLOTING  
 CARRIE TEKAUTZ MEMBERSHIP AND BALLOTING ASSISTANT

### STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

EMILY EVANS DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS  
 LARA HENLEY SENIOR MANAGER OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS  
 MICHELLE JACOBS SENIOR MANAGER OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS  
 CODY LYNCH MARKETING AND PARTNERSHIPS ASSISTANT





## THE BROWNS

.....  
pose for a promotional  
photo at the height of their  
popularity.

FOR MORE ON THE PASSING OF COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME MEMBER JIM ED BROWN, SEE PAGE 14.



COUNTRY MUSIC ASSOCIATION

CMAworld.com | My.CMAworld.com




\*\*\*\*\*5-DiGiT 37212  
104787 S26 P1  
FELICITY TIDWELL  
THE ERV WOOLSEY COMPANY  
1000 18TH AVE S  
NASHVILLE TN 37212-2184



**Kacey  
Musgraves**  
page 8

FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF CMA EVENTS VISIT [CMAWORLD.COM/CALENDAR](http://CMAWORLD.COM/CALENDAR)



It's CMA balloting season and there are several upcoming deadlines for members to be aware of as **"The 49<sup>th</sup> Annual CMA AWARDS"** draw near. All voting will be conducted online.

- ❑ The second ballot will be emailed to CMA members **TUESDAY, AUG. 11**, and voting closes at 6 p.m. CT **THURSDAY, AUG. 20**. The final nominees in each of the 12 categories will be announced Sept. 9.
- ❑ Winners of "The 49<sup>th</sup> Annual CMA Awards" will be determined in the final round of voting. The final ballot will be emailed to CMA members **THURSDAY, OCT. 8**. Voting for the CMA Awards final ballot ends at 6 p.m. CT **TUESDAY, OCT. 27**.
- ❑ Voting for the 2015 CMA Broadcast Awards has closed. Winners will be notified in early October and recognized at "The 49<sup>th</sup> Annual CMA Awards."

**COMING IN THE FALL 2015 ISSUE OF CMA CLOSE UP**

- **CMA Awards Nominee Recap**
- **CMA Radio Broadcast Award Finalists**
- **CMA Radio Remotes**
- **CMA Foundation Shifts Focus**
- **CMA Sponsors EC Accelerator Program**
- **And More**

## CONNECT WITH CMA



/CMA



@COUNTRYMUSIC



/COUNTRYMUSICASSOC



/CMAWORLD



/CMA