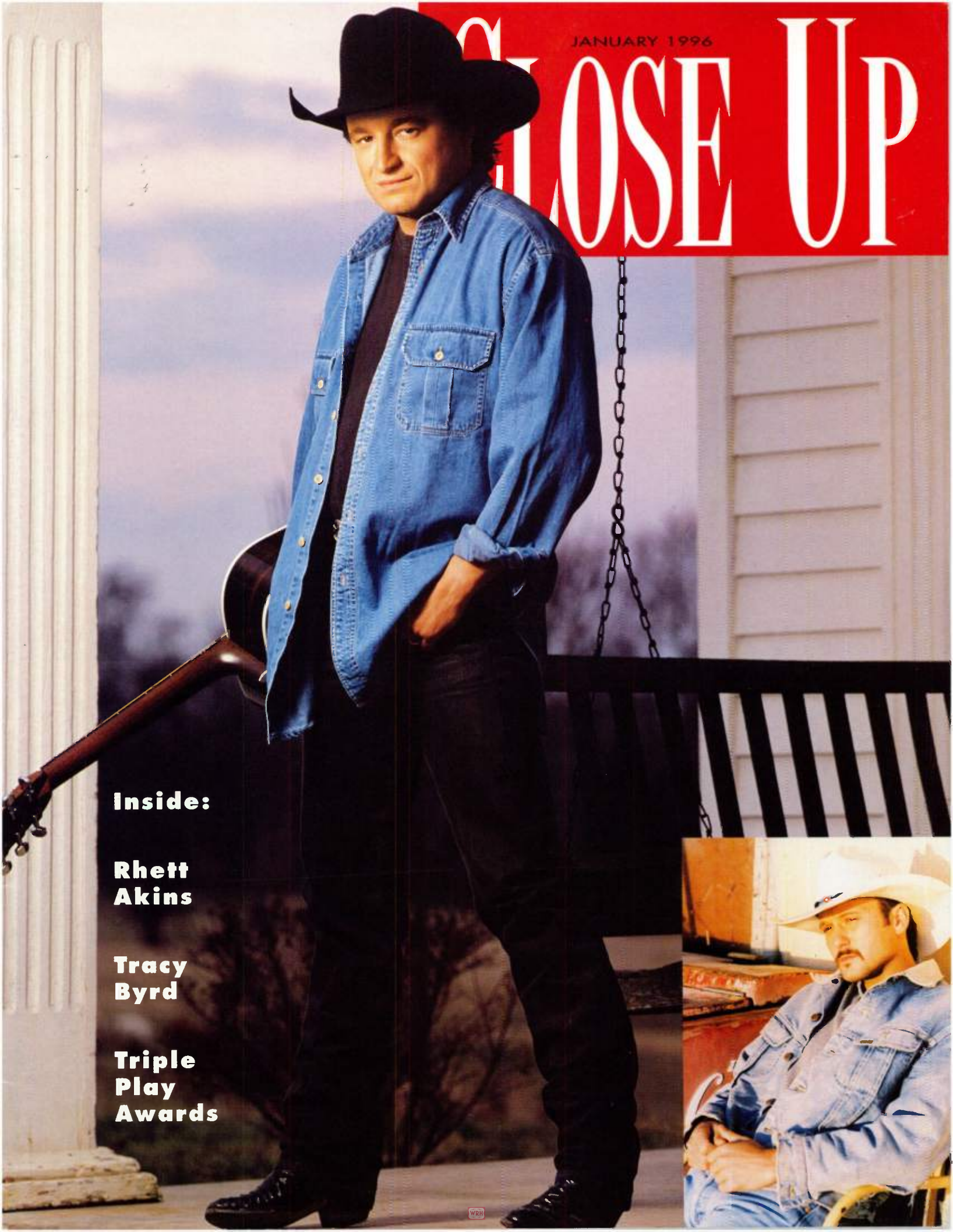


JANUARY 1996

CLOSE UP



Inside:

**Rhett
Akins**

**Tracy
Byrd**

**Triple
Play
Awards**





**"I'm lucky
to be
where
I am."**

**-Tracy Byrd,
page 4**

Executive Editor: **TERESA GEORGE**
Editor: **JANET E. WILLIAMS**
Assistant Editors: **SHANNON HEIM, MANDY WILSON**
Circulation Assistants: **RAINEY SIMS**
Design: **EVAMARIE OGLANDER** of **McConnell & Associates**
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MARK CHESNUTT

It's an overcast mid-December day in Nashville, but for Mark Chesnutt, life couldn't be sunnier. He'll soon be heading home to Texas for a good month or so, officially "off duty" after taking care of one last chore. "This is my last interview for the year! This is when it all comes to a close, and you're pretty much wore out! Not only me...I'm not as wore out as my band members and my road manager and the crew. They could work for anybody. A lot of them have. I want to keep 'em happy, make sure they're making a decent living and that they're proud of it."

Keeping the crew happy is just one of the lessons Mark has learned since he launched his recording career with "Too Cold At Home" in 1990. With the release of his fifth album, *WINGS*, Country fans and industry insiders can hear the continuing development of Mark's rich baritone. "I'm always working my voice and learning different things about myself. I mature each time, and I think you can hear it in each album."

The current Decca cd marked his first collaboration with producer Tony Brown. Mark took a more hands-on approach in the studio this time around, selecting musicians, making suggestions and sticking around for the final mix. He's also taken more control of the other aspects in his career.

"I'm making a lot more decisions than I ever did. That makes it a lot smoother. It's very stressful when you don't make all those decisions yourself. You end up doing things that you don't want to do. It's a lot better when you have the final say in everything."

"I was told by a lot of people to make the music your number one priority because that's what it's all about. The music tends to get lost in the business with all the lawyers and managers. Everybody has their own opinion, and the artist gets caught up in all that. He wants to please everybody and ends up doing songs he don't want to do. That shows up in the music. He's being led in so many different directions, he doesn't know which way to go. I've learned over the past five years that all that has nothing to do with the music. You have to do the best music you can, 'cause if you put out a bad album, everybody in the world's looking at you."

"I've tried to stay like George Jones told me...stay the way I was when I was found. That's kind of hard to do once you get up here in Nashville and start hanging around with all the business people. Next thing you know, you're not yourself anymore. That's one thing living in Texas has done for me - I still have all my friends I had growing up."

"I get a lot of input from 'em when I'm looking for songs to record. They're not in the music business at all, and they don't care to be. But they buy albums. They go to concerts. They listen to the radio. They work hard, and when they want to go see a concert, when they buy a cd or listen to the radio, they want to be entertained. That's all they know about the music business. That's the beauty of it."

"I'm the same way. I still go out and buy cds when I hear a song on the radio. I'm heading over to Tower before I leave town because I've got to buy a Junior Brown album.. Never met him, never talked to anybody about him, don't know what label he's on, and I don't care. I'm just like any other fan. If I want to hear something, I'll buy it."

•

**"I WAS 26 WHEN I STARTED,
AND I WAS NOT READY
FOR ANYTHING."**

•

With a wife and active year-old son to go home to, it's no wonder that Mark is anxious to get to the airport. His family has had a huge impact on his career outlook. "It made me grow up a lot, real fast. I was 26 when I started, and I was not ready for anything. I thought I was. I wasn't emotionally mature enough to handle it. And I didn't handle it very well. I was taking something pretty easy and making something real hard out of it. If I was just now getting my first record deal, I'd still be pretty stupid and wouldn't know what was going on, but at least my personal life would be leveled out enough to know how to handle it."



"It used to be I had no say over how many dates or where or when I worked. It was just all the time. I thought that's how it was supposed to be. But about two years into this thing, I was wore out and burned out and tired, aggravated at everybody. I thought, 'This ain't the way it's supposed to be. All I'm doin' is gettin' beat to death.' That's no way to live. I realized you don't have to do that. You can sit down with a calendar and pick the times you want to work. I learned that by talking to other artists that were in it for a long time. So I make time to go home and enjoy my family. Used to, I didn't have anything like that to look forward to."

In addition to figuring out how to balance his career, Mark's also managed to avoid the "star" syndrome. "I would much rather be seen as a singer - a successful singer. I don't think I'd want to be a superstar and have to outdo what I did previously, all the time. That would just be too stressful. I'm just like a lot of people - I'm pretty lazy! I like to kick back and relax. I don't know if I want to work hard enough to be a superstar! I'm just a guy with a job that entertains people. Can't sit back and rest on that and say, 'I'm a star, so I don't have to work.' You always have to work hard. To be a superstar - I don't know. That looks to me like it could be rough. I might be wrong. You'll have to ask Garth Brooks or George Strait about that!" **CU** - Janet E. Williams

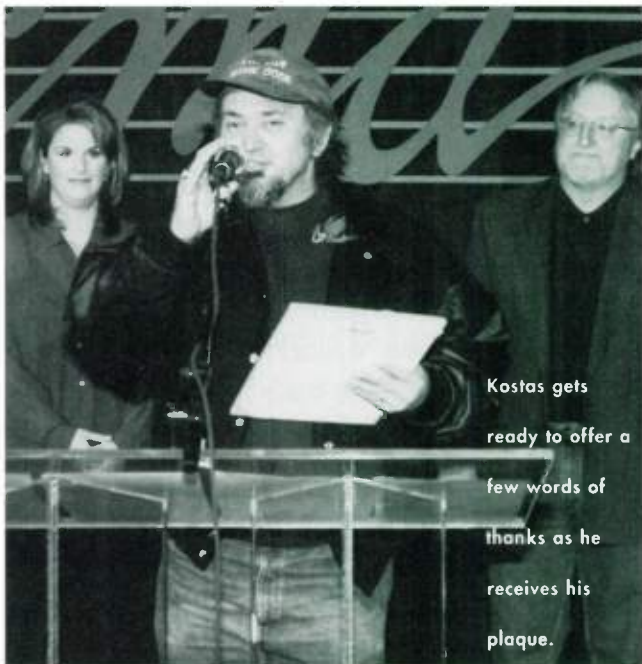
**TRISHA
YEARWOOD
AND
PAT ALGER
HOST
CMA TRIPLE
PLAY AWARDS
HONORING
SONGWRITERS**

A virtual who's who of *Country Music* songwriters celebrated the Triple Play Awards at the Country Music Association on November 15. Award-recipients Tony Arata, Ronnie Dunn, Vince Gill, Toby Keith, Kostas, Don Schlitz and many others joined hosts Trisha Yearwood and Pat Alger as well as CMA Executive Director Ed Benson and CMA board members for the invitation-only event.



Tony Arata and Victoria Shaw share a congratulatory hug after receiving their Triple Play Awards.

Initiated by CMA in 1991, Triple Play Awards recognize CMA composer members who have attained three number one songs within a 12-month period, based on the Country singles charts from BILLBOARD, RADIO & RECORDS and THE GAVIN REPORT.



Kostas gets ready to offer a few words of thanks as he receives his plaque.

"These songwriters receiving Triple Play Awards are among the Country Music industry's greatest assets," said Ed Benson, CMA executive director. "CMA is proud to recognize the extraordinary contributions that each songwriter has made to the continued popularity of Country Music."

Toby Keith chats with journalist Linda Fuller prior to receiving his award.



Honored with
Triple Play Awards were:

TONY ARATA

"I'm Holding My Own"
"Dreaming With My Eyes
Wide Open"
"Here I Am"

CLINT BLACK

"Wherever You Go"
"Summer's Comin'"
"One Emotion"
"A Bad Goodbye"
"No Time To Kill"
"Good Run Of Bad Luck"



Pat Alger and Trisha Yearwood, both CMA board members, kick off the Triple Play Awards

TONY MARTIN

"She Can't Say I Didn't Cry"
"Third Rock From The Sun"
"Not On Your Love"

BOB MCDILL

"She Don't Know She's
Beautiful"
"Why Didn't I Think Of That"
"If Bubba Can Dance (I Can
Too)"

MARK D. SANDERS

"Runnin' Behind"
"Whatcha Gonna Do With
A Cowboy"
"Money In The Bank"
"If You've Got Love"
"The Heart Is A
Lonely Hunter"
"They're Playing Our Song"

DON SCHLITZ

"Learning To Live Again"
"Almost Goodbye"
"He Thinks He'll Keep Her"



CMA Executive Director Ed Benson (front row, center) congratulates the Triple Play Award winners following presentation of the honors.

GARTH BROOKS

"Somewhere Other Than
The Night"
"That Summer"
"Ain't Goin' Down (Till
The Sun Comes Up)"

**MARY CHAPIN
CARPENTER**

"He Thinks He'll Keep Her"
"I Take My Chances"
"Shut Up And Kiss Me"

BOB DIPIERO

"Wink"
"Take Me As I Am"
"Till You Love Me"

RONNIE DUNN

"She Used To Be Mine"
"That Ain't No Way To Go"
"She's Not The
Cheatin' Kind"
"Boot Scootin' Boogie"
"Hard Workin' Man"
"We'll Burn That Bridge"

VINCE GILL

"No Future In The Past"
"One More Last Chance"
"Tryin' To Get Over You"
"Whenever You
Come Around"
"Whoa The Cowgirls Do"
"When Love Finds You"

PORTER HOWELL

"What Might Have Been"
"God Blessed Texas"
"My Love"

ALAN JACKSON

"She's Got The Rhythm (And I
Got The Blues)"
"Tonight I Climbed The Wall"
"Chattahoochee"
"([Who Says] You Can't
Have It All"
"Livin' On Love"
"If I Could Make A Living"

TOBY KEITH

"Wish I Didn't Know Now"
"Who's That Man"
"You Ain't Much Fun"

KOSTAS

"Goin' Out Of My Mind"
"Ain't That Lonely Yet"
"Blame It On Your Heart"

MARK MILLER

"The Walk"
"The Dirt Road"
"Some Girls Do"

ROGER MURRAH

"I'm In A Hurry (And Don't
Know Why)"
"It's A Little Too Late"
"Only Love"

PAUL NELSON

"My Second Home"
"If The Good Die Young"
"I See It Now"

HAYDEN NICHOLAS

"Wherever You Go"
"Summer's Comin'"
"One Emotion"

BRADY SEALS

"What Might Have Been"
"God Blessed Texas"
"My Love"

STEVE SESKIN

"No Doubt About It"
"If You've Got Love"
"For A Change"

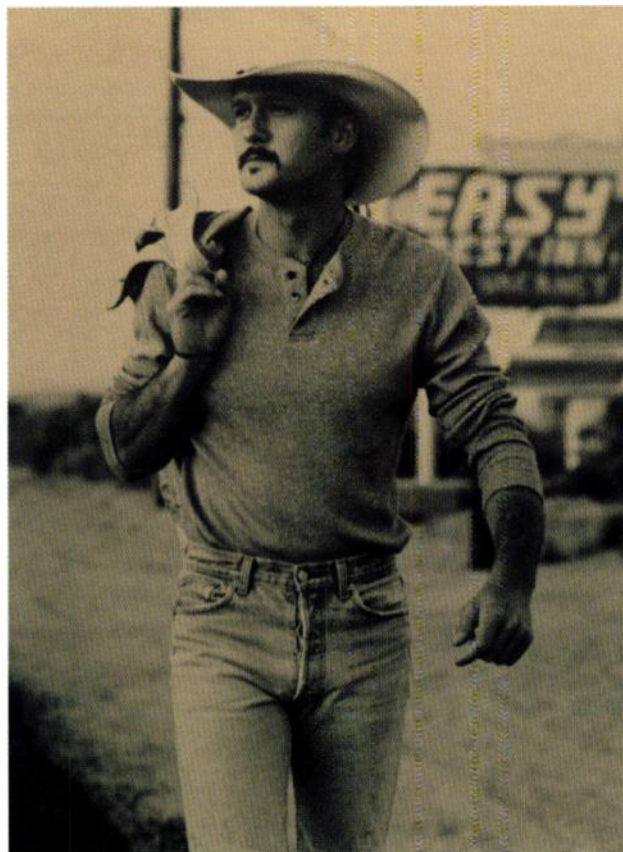
TOM SHAPIRO

"Thinkin' About You"
"Better Things To Do"
"That Ain't My Truck"

VICTORIA SHAW

"The River"
"Too Busy Being In Love"
"I Love The Way You Love
Me"

Photos by Kay Williams



Tim

McGraw

Tim McGraw was all over the music charts in 1994 with the success of his quintuple platinum lp, *NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON*. For starters, it was named *BILLBOARD*'s Best Selling Country album and charted number one on *BILLBOARD*'s Top 200 Album Chart. As if that wasn't enough, it was also one of *BILLBOARD*'s top five bestselling albums of the year in all categories. Three of the lp's singles, "Don't Take The Girl", "Down On The Farm", and the title track, reached the number one spot. Two other singles, "Indian Outlaw", and "Refried Dreams", reached the top five.

With all of this success to live up to, Tim had to find a unique way to introduce his most current lp, *ALL I WANT*, released in September. To do that, the native Louisianan decided to do a live radio show which would be broadcast to six continents. A massive undertaking by any standard, Tim now explains that he got a lot more than he bargained for when preparing for the program.

"When the whole radio special came together, I was on a private

32-acre island right off St. John's in the middle of a hurricane. The hurricane came through and tore everything up. No one heard from me for two days. They weren't sure if I was alive. It was turning into a eulogy. I flew from the island to Puerto Rico the morning of that show and caught another jet to the studio."

With his safety intact, Tim made it to the show on time. And after all his efforts, the lp's first single, "I Like It, I Love It", shot to the number one position, where it remained for five weeks.

"If you find a song with a great melody and lyric, you just close your eyes and jump into it."

"I made a conscious effort to take this album a step forward from *NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON*. Not that the last album didn't have any depth. I just wanted to evolve."

As he sits comfortably in the Music Row office of his company, Breakfast Table Management, a natural openness flows through his conversation. Tim hasn't pigeonholed himself into a particular category. He's aware of what he feels his limits are and goes after what he wants.

"I want to stretch myself but also be very aware of not breaking myself. I have to pick songs I can sing first and foremost. I'm not like Vince Gill or Joe Diffie, who are just incredible vocalists. I have to pick songs that really fit me. That is probably where some of the difference in my material comes from. I have to look for things that are unusual.

"Within the first couple of lines of a song, I know that I'm going to like it. It's got to be a combination of the melody and the lyric. I think if you find a song with a great melody and lyric, you just kind of close your eyes and jump into it."

The music business wasn't something that Tim jumped into immediately. At one time, he considered law and sports medicine as careers.

"My grades were awful. The first semester, I think I barely had a 2.0. I was pledging a fraternity. I had a couple of years of just cutting loose. My mother wanted me to stay in school. My dad didn't really have a lot to say about it. At the same time, my mother supported me in music, because she said she couldn't believe I hadn't decided to do it sooner.

"I was playing guitar for tips in bars and restaurants. I would sit in with bands. I just decided to move to Nashville. I was always into music, but I never really put it together that I could make records for a living until I got older and realized there was a whole other world out there besides Louisiana."

Did Tim learn anything from law and sports medicine that's helped him be more disciplined with his music?

"I think the only thing that could be applicable, because I didn't really go to class, was meeting people from different parts of the country. Not everybody talked like you and knew the same people that you knew. It's just a whole other world. The whole social experience of college helped me adjust to the music business lifestyle.

"We had like six guys living in a house, and most of the time there were 13 or 14 crashing there. I think part of the whole experience is teaching people to cohabitate."

Once Tim made the move to Nashville, he paced himself before trying to land a recording contract.

"I didn't know a thing when I moved here. People would ask me if I was trying to get a deal, and I wouldn't know what they were talking about. They would call me an artist, and I would think, 'I don't paint.' I think part of what helped me was being so green.

"I gave myself seven years. If it didn't work out, I would've gone back home and run for sheriff or something. I came here

"I have to put myself under pressure to feel like I'm accomplishing something."

"I didn't want anybody to know about me until I was ready."

for a year and didn't try to get a deal. I didn't want anybody to know about me until I was ready.

"A friend of my dad's at Capitol Records in L.A. told him that he'd call up Mike Borchetta at Curb Records. I waited around for three or four weeks and did a demo tape for Mike. It was the first place I went, so I got lucky.

"Wayne Perry went in the studio and produced it with me. Joe Diffie sang background on it. The songs were good, but I wasn't really singing that great. I had never really been in the studio and didn't know that much about it. I was surprised that we got a deal out of it. I still think it's because they heard Joe Diffie singing harmony."

Whether or not he'll admit to it now, Tim has become quite accomplished in the studio. He recently co-produced the debut album of JoDee Messina, an up-and-coming new artist also managed by Breakfast Table Management.

"I've known JoDee for years. I've always loved her voice and used to listen to every song she would demo. Byron Gallimore and I talked about co-producing an album on her. Curb Records loved her and offered her a deal."

Tim says working on JoDee's album was very different from working on his own.

"I'm very involved in picking the songs for my albums. I'm also involved in the tracking and sound. That's how I learn. At this point, I don't feel comfortable putting my name on one of my albums as a co-producer. I loved working on Jody's album though."

So whether he's weathering literal or figurative storms in life, Tim is prepared to go forth and conquer.

"I was talking with someone about success the other day. It's like success breeds confidence, and confi-

dence breeds success. At the same time you're having the success and your confidence is rising, there's an insecurity level that rises right along with it. You've got to do something better every time. You can't be average, and you can't come out with the same thing.

"I think I have to put myself under pressure to feel like I'm accomplishing something. I need to get everything I can get out of myself while I can."

-Mandy Wilson

Country Radio Broadcasters Leap Into Plans For CRS-27

.....

Country Radio Broadcasters, Inc. is gearing up for the 27th annual Country Radio Seminar with a resourceful four-day schedule set for February 28 through March 2 at Nashville's Opryland Hotel. The multi-faceted agenda is designed to attract all levels of radio industry personnel and features panel discussions, workshops, showcase performances and a state-of-the-art exhibit hall.

"The goal of the 26-member planning body is to provide attendees with practical information that they can take away with them to use on a daily basis," said Beverly Padratzick, chair of the CRB agenda committee. "With this in mind, there will be an increase in handout material for reference after the participants return to their home stations."

Aspiring to fulfill its theme of "Investing in the Present...Securing the Future", CRS-27 promises to address issues relevant to continued growth and related issues facing radio stations and the Country Music industry as a whole.

Panels and roundtables include:

GUESS WHO'S NOT COMING TO YOUR MARKET

- Exploring the positive and negative aspects of concert promotions. What happens when stations cooperate, what happens when they don't, and what's the long term price?

BETTER PROFITS & RATINGS FROM BETTER COPY & PRODUCTION

- Columnist/author/freelance announcer Ty Ford covers copywriting and production techniques essential to improved productivity for sales and programming.

RECORD INDUSTRY & RADIO MEET IN THE MIDDLE AGAIN

An in-depth discussion between radio and the record business, exploring ways to find common ground. Realizing that while we are in different businesses, successfully marketing new acts is essential to the continued growth of both industries.

MANAGING SALES FOR PROFIT - This workshop is an idea-sharing, solution-oriented roundtable session, covering non-spot revenue, sales training, motivating your sales staff, tools & packages and vendor programs.

ON THE AIR & ON-LINE: MAKING THE INTERNET WORK FOR YOU

A guided tour through cyberspace showing opportunities to promote your station as well as generate new revenue. Learn how to integrate your station on the Internet and stay ahead of the competition.

ASK THE NAB - From de-regulation to questions regarding the lotteries and gaming casinos that are cropping up around the country, featuring NAB's Jeff Bowman.

MUSIC SYSTEMS - Priorities and problems; how to get the most from your music scheduling system. Some of the best in the business will be available to work with stations on-site.

HOW A RECORD IS MADE: THE NUTS & BOLTS OF HITMAKING

- Have you wondered about the work that went into creating those cds sitting on your desk? Giant Records President/producer James Stroud will bring in a work tape, record new tracks and mix it down before your eyes.

THE ART OF THE INTERVIEW - Role playing scenarios designed to illustrate the elements of a great interview and how to avoid a not-so-great interview. Hear both success and horror stories from industry pros. If you have ever been involved with an artist interview, this is one not to miss.

WOMEN IN THE BUSINESS: MYTH VS. REALITY

As moderator, Mary A. Bufwack is uniquely qualified and brings a different perspective to this session. As a cultural anthropologist, she cowrote the book "Finding Her Voice", a history of women in Country Music. The talk show format will allow exploration of various formats.

Other CRS highlights include the annual Artist/Attendee Welcome Reception, daily luncheon performances, long-form speakers, an extended all-day Artist/Radio Taping Session and the always popular New Faces Show.

For information regarding CRS-27 registration, program book advertising, sponsorships and/or the exhibit hall, contact the CRB office at (615) 327-4487.

The two-step may never be the same. This month, Country Music hits the homes of the Tango, Tapatio and the Lambada as CMT Latin America launches new programming in Argentina, Brazil and Mexico. CMT is revamping its Latin American programming to include Tejano, Latin and international music as well as some segments "en español". The man behind the multi-cultural move is Bobby Lopez, program manager, Latin America.

"The CMT Latin America format is probably going to be unique in that it's one of the first network bilingual programs," Lopez explained during a recent interview in his Nashville office. "We're still going to have the same fantastic things that CMT is noted for, we're just going to regionalize it for all of Mexico and South America. That will mean mixing the hottest Country hits with the hottest Latin, Tejano and international music...As a matter of fact, probably the only minor change that you will see on the CMT Latin America side is tempo. In the Latin side of music, it's more dance and rhythm, so what we're going to do is make the domestic side of our feed a little more uptempo. I'm certainly not going to do away with all ballads because there is a lot of romantic music in Latin America as well. We're just going to pick and choose.

It will be an educational process and an introduction. However, Country Music is known in the region of Mexico, right outside California and Texas into Monterrey and those little towns there. You go into a Country club and you'd think you were at some Country club here in Nashville or Texas. That's how hip they are. Monterrey is like the pulse of what is hip and will be going into the mainstream of Mexico, Guadalajara, South America - it's just like a domino theory where everything will catch on from that point."

If you happen to visit Mexico and flip on the television, the CMT you see will be familiar. In fact, if you make it to Brazil, CMT's unmistakable "cow truck" may pass by. A showcase artist will be featured each month, and "CMT Beat" as well as the "Top Twelve Countdown" segments will continue, though they may be in Spanish.

"Some hours of the clock, the format, you'll see

us coming out of an Alan Jackson going into an Emilio Navaira coming out of a Luis Miguel or a Thalia...Our bread and butter here is Country Music. They don't know it, they don't recognize it, yet they like it."

Lopez is looking at CMT Latin America as a once in a lifetime opportunity. "You're looking at a guy who's been doing radio for about 20 years. I've



done just about every format - top 40, Country, Tejano and international...All that combined with the fact that I come from a house of musicians - I grew up with the Tex-Mex international type of music and aunts that play music from the Beatles on. My brother and sister were both fantastic musicians and eventually I got up to the mike and started announcing my brother's band and that's how I worked on the radio voice...All that musical knowledge that I've learned has enabled me to be here. I've got a sweet tooth for music."

"I've got a sweet tooth for music."

Along with his own sixth sense for popular music, Lopez used friends and family members as a gauge for the Country beat among people in the area.

"I went to Guadalajara to a convention, and I had an opportunity to go to a soccer game where the attendance was 65,000 people. I went with about 14 friends - I still have family in Guadalajara. I was asking them about cable systems and everything and I said, 'Do you guys know Country Music?' They call it folk music there; they call it

El Folklore. And I said, 'It's not folk music, it's Country Music'. They said, 'No, it's folklore. It's a guy strumming his guitar and singing about life.' I said, 'Well, in some instances you're right. But it's not folk music, that's something else.' They weren't really sure. I started naming some major artists, and they were recognizing Garth; they recognized Kenny Rogers and Dolly Parton and those artists. Then at halftime the cheerleaders came out and did a dance routine - to 'Boot Scootin' Boogie' by Brooks & Dunn. I looked at these guys and I said, 'You hear that music? That's Country.'

The music of Latin America already has made inroads into the domestic market. Artists like Gloria Estefan hit it big in pop and established Tejano artists like Emilio are making strides to crossover into Country. Lopez says these kind of artists make it easy for CMT Latin America to be effective. In fact, CMT Latin America sponsored Emilio's recent tour dates in Mexico City and Monterrey.

Some of Country's hottest and most traditional artists have shown interest in hopping on the bandwagon, Lopez says. "In the future we may do some special programming sort of like the Tracy Lawrence unplugged series. We may call it 'Guitars and Accordions' or something." An edited version of 'The 1995 CMA Awards' is also slated to air.

"What excites me is the artists are saying, 'We would love to go into Mexico. We'd love to go into Argentina'...There are a lot of people wanting to come in and make headway. Another move that's just perfect for us on the domestic side is that Emilio will be touring with Alan Jackson. I think you'll see a lot more of that. You may even see a resurgence of Kenny Rogers coming into the CMT format. Although for the most part he hasn't had any real big hits as of lately, in South America, he's still very, very popular. That's just how far behind they are as far as Country Music. As soon as they catch up, if they love Kenny Rogers, boy, wait till they get a hold of Tim McGraw and Garth Brooks and Reba and Shania Twain and these other newcomers!"

- Shannon Heim

To Have And To Hold: Broken Promises?

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When discussing the business of music publishing, probably no word causes more confusion and mixed feelings than "hold." The dictionary defines "hold" as: a) To maintain control over; b) To reserve or keep back from use; c) To have as a responsible position or a privilege; d) To bind by a contract.

A Nashville hold generally is a verbal agreement between writers, publishers, producers, artists and A&R executives to record a particular song. When the Nashville music community was smaller, there seemed to be fewer problems with holds. Today, with the proliferation of new companies, more competition and the influx of large numbers of people from other music centers, there is an increasing degree of confusion regarding the rules of conduct concerning holds and how to deal with them. Depending upon which side of the creative fence you happen to be - a song seller or user - there remains the potential for two very different points of view.

"A problem with holds has always existed," states Capitol A&R head Mark Brown. "There's always been a gentleman's agreement to hold songs, which means you're not going to pitch it to anyone else and I can have the song to record, but there've always been situations where songs got put on hold or were recorded by two artists...It just seems that lately things are reaching epidemic proportions....Part of the problem is there are too many artists looking for songs...As a result, producers and labels have gotten very aggressive about wanting to find a song first. It seems that when people hear a good song now, instead of taking a copy to listen to again and/or play for the artist, they just instantly say, 'Put it on hold.' It places a great deal of pressure on the song community."

"The hold problem is an offshoot of the pace these days," counsels Pat Higdon of Patrick Joseph Music. "There are so many new artists and so little time to get to know them. You have to be careful about where your songs land. Even if you get them in a project that you believe in, you're not always assured of success, so you need to have a lot of songs in a lot of places. Because of that need, the hold issue becomes a

problem - few publishers have so many hit songs that they can afford to squander them."

Hold Policies

Communication is a term used by all participants in the song world as a cure-all, much like the medical phrase, "Take two aspirin and call me in the morning." Unfortunately, even with regular exchanges there needs to be a mutually understood vocabulary. As the following discussion shows, there are a wide range of definitions currently in use.

"If we lack communication with all parties, then we have a breakdown in our system," adds Higdon. "We try to check with the artist and producers or whoever is holding the song to make sure it is moving forward in the process. That means that if the A&R person has heard it and needs to play it for the artist or producer, we try to make sure that process is moving along. We want to keep the period as short as possible

**"I'm the custodian
of the songs, and
I owe it to the
songwriters to
be diligent."**

**-David Conrad
Almo Irving Music**

so that we do have our song back in play if it isn't going to make it through the process. Sometimes we can allow people 30-60 days worth of cushion to take a song to the next place. But when we feel like we have a real hot song, we request a quicker answer... We understand that most of the time producers and labels aren't just freezing songs to take them out of circulation or holding songs because of indecision on their part. So I know that sooner or later the law of averages will catch up with us... if we have songs that are contenders, our time will come. You have to be more long-term and career-minded than a lot of people would like to be."

Almo Irving's David Conrad has been a Nashville publisher since the '70s and has a good sense of past and present. "Our policy here is on

a case-by-case basis," he explains. "The publisher has got to do his homework - to know where an artist is these days, how long before they go in the studio, and does the producer or the A&R person habitually hold songs indefinitely....I can easily give a producer a two or three week period of grace on a song to get to the artist. But the hold comes into play when I get a call saying, 'We are going to spend our money and cut this song, and we'll break your legs if anybody else hears it' - that's a hold! If I don't receive that call, then I try to find out if they canceled the sessions or they aren't as close as they thought. It's also my responsibility to check every month to make sure that the new doesn't wear off. The minute that I hear any reservation or change of tone, then all bets are off. I will start looking for a second opportunity. But if I was actually going to pitch it, I would ask, 'Are you going to park it or drive it?' I'm the custodian of the songs, and I owe it to the songwriters and company to be diligent."

Publisher Ree Guyer of Wrensong Music distinguishes between a hold and being "kept." "A lot of pluggers will leave the A&R/producer office and think they've got a hold just because the person says, 'Good song, I'm going to play that for the artist,'" Guyer says. "I do not consider that a hold - we call that 'kept.' I will always say, 'This is not officially on hold until the artist and everybody involved in the project hears the song.' Then it would be a strong hold for us."

"I tend to go back to the people that honor holds, whether it be writers or publishers," states Sony Tree Senior VP/President of DKC Music, Don Cook. "As a producer, I spend \$15-\$20,000 cutting a song, and I hate to have it jerked out from under me at the last minute when I think I have the slot filled and find out a week before the session that someone else is going to cut it. I don't have time to replace it in this song climate."

"I just hold songs that I really believe in," answers producer Gregg Brown. "I will try to get a song I really like to the artist right away so as to not hold up the process...In the event I put a song on hold, I don't leave it up to one publisher to get in touch with a co-publisher, either. It's

important for my office to confirm things with all the publishers involved in establishing a hold situation. It eliminates a lot of potential errors. Sometimes people will play me a song that is already on hold. Even if I really like the song, I will respect that first hold, but it is appropriate that person who has the song on hold be made aware that there is another party interested in the song - it can help test the commitment."

Sony A&R VP/producer Doug Johnson has a set formula for treating the hold process. "What I try to do," he says, "is ask for a two-week hold to give me time to make an initial attempt to get an answer from the artist or the producer and get back to the publisher. There are certain artists that need more time to live with a song, but I at

**"...the competition
for songs is so
fierce..."**

**-Thom Schuyler
RCA Record Label
Group**

least want to know that they are very interested in the song and they want to go in and spend more time with it... The main thing is to let the publisher know that song is on your mind, that you have it in front of you and your artist, and that you aren't just putting it on hold so that no one else can get it."

"I take holds very seriously and ask the other party to do the same," reports Warner Chappell VP/songplugger Dale Bobo. "In determining a hold, I want to know who else has heard the song, how committed they are to it, when is the recording date, what's the shape of the project and how many other songs are on hold. We all love to hear that people like a song, but it has to move along in the process of having everyone hear it in order to get to the hold stage."

Bobo responds that if the artist hasn't heard the song and there are many songs currently on hold for the project, then regardless of how "special" the producer or A&R department says the new song is, it would be difficult to grant a hold at this stage. "I'd ask to continue talking, but I would explain that there are other people that have heard the song and if one of them calls, it is going to be hard for me to tell them they can't have it since the commitment is not that strong on your side. But I do see the other side of things - the time, money and work that goes into putting together a record project. I know it is frustrating when one of those songs evaporates on you, but

many times there are projects that have more songs on hold than they could possibly use."

"Everyone is getting much better about communication, which I think is what it is really all about anyway," distills Ten Ten Music publisher Jewel Coburn. "If everyone knows what is going on and keeps everyone up to date, then people don't seem to get hurt. For us, a firm, serious hold is when you wouldn't dare pitch it to anyone else because everybody has heard it - the artist, producer and A&R department - and says they will cut it. It comes down to how well you know the people you're working with and treating everyone with respect."

"I must admit that if a major artist comes in after one that is shopping a deal, we'll give the song to the major, but we say that up front," confesses PolyGram's Doug Howard. "Unless someone has already spent thousands of dollars cutting something," he adds.

"During the years I was a tape copy guy here and then as a plugger, I was taught there was a pecking order. The top guy got to run with the song first, and they started at the top with a Garth or Alan Jackson, before other pluggers got to take the song around. It may sound cruel because I want new artists to happen, but McDill will get mad at me if I don't at least try at the top. Sometimes someone asks me for a letter saying they have the song until a specific date, and I've done that."

Howard has streamlined the hold process by setting up a central computer database in-house to track the company's holds. "A few years ago everyone was doing things by hand, but now a phone call to my tape copy room and it's either on hold or off, and everyone knows the next minute. We have a computerized hold system, and all the creative guys are on-line to this same information. So before we go to pitch a song we can check to make sure it isn't already on hold. Nothing is 100 percent effective, but this system works so much better than what we did a few years ago."

Capitol's Mark Brown is also trying to centralize all the holds for each project. "There is a rampant problem with songs being on hold at two or three places at the same time. There's also a new phenomenon of giving second and third holds on songs, which is fine, except that it is even more difficult to keep track of. What we're trying to do is institute several policies to help us be more responsible on our end. We are having a meeting every two weeks with every artist and producer currently looking for songs... The goal is to never have more than 15-20 songs on hold at

any one time for a particular project...We are centralizing the process so one person coordinates all the holds for each project. Publishers and writers can call and find out exactly what is going on. We've also gone one step further, because the situation has occurred that we have actually recorded songs where we thought we had a clear and understood agreement only to find out that someone else has it on hold due to a misunderstanding - or even worse, it has already been recorded and we can't have it."

Peter Cronin heads the new Nashville office of L.A.-based Maverick Music. "The competition is so stiff that the team around an artist has gotten larger and the number of people looking for songs for the artist has also gotten larger. So you have more people putting songs on hold, and as a result they can go into a project with a hundred songs on hold for the first meeting, which is ridiculous. A hold is something which should be taken very seriously by everybody."

Writer/publisher Paul Craft is also worried about the numbers of songs being put on hold for each project. "They're putting 40-50 songs on hold for a project, and it just makes it impossible for them to keep up with all those writers and publishers and let everybody know what's going on. Sometimes the labels say they'll hold a song two weeks and they'll let you know. Almost invariably, they don't let you know in two weeks, and when you call to find out, you are made to feel as if you're pestering them. It's becoming a big job at the label just handling holds. But everybody who has something on hold wants to be treated fairly. I had a Reba McEntire

**"Part of the problem
is there are too
many artists looking
for songs."**

**-Mark Brown
Capitol Nashville**

cut, 'Fallin' Out Of Love', which she put on hold three different times. The last two I had to write a letter promising to keep it on hold. She finally cut it. Warner Bros. had that song on hold five years ago, and I never heard anything. I guess it's still on hold."

"A hold is a very temporary thing until everyone is in agreement that the song needs to be on a project," points out writer, and new head of Nashville's Chrysalis Music office, Lewis Anderson. "Short of that, it should be viewed as a temporary test period. Some of the pluggers

are so anxious to have something to report, that they're willing to give holds based on fairly flimsy conviction. It makes their reports look good and gets everyone excited. Writers want activity, so a hold sounds like something to them. But a hold is pretty meaningless until it's a cut. If an A&R person asks me for a hold I say, 'I'll briefly let you have this hold until you play it for the artist, assuming that is a brief period of time.' After the artist and producer say they want to hold the song, then I'm willing to put it on hold for the duration, as long as there is communication. You've got to stay in touch because three weeks down the road, they may not be as happy about it, and you may never hear about it unless you keep asking."

RCA A&R/Senior VP Thom Schuyler focuses on the fact that there are many parties to be dealt with as part of the song choice process. "We're only one entity in a complicated puzzle. Our office has done an excellent job at communicating on a weekly or bi-weekly basis, exactly our situation regarding all of the songs we have on hold. Unfortunately, what we have been finding over the last nine months is that the competition for songs is so fierce, we have had songs on hold that were taken away from us...I guess it's part of the heavy baggage that has come with our great success. I would hate to see this town resort to the written hold kind of legalities. Those of us who have been banging away here for a long time still hold precious the way business has been done. It comes down to relationships and trust and communication."

While experiencing many of the same difficulties mentioned above, Noel Fox also realizes the fierce song competition stems from a strong business climate. "These days it's a wonderful world for publishers and writers," Noel appreciates. "The song is very valuable. But when they're looking through three or four hundred songs to find 10, there is going to be a tendency to hold too many songs. Companies are making more of an effort to communicate with us, but once in a while there's a management company that gets over-ambitious and holds too many things. When you find out the producer hasn't even heard the song, you better take that hold lightly. We have one of the best situations as far as having creative people in the A&R departments...People with real ears...They are mostly young turks who are song men to the core."

"If someone is not recording right now, we don't hold anything for them," says Arista A&R VP Jim Scherer. "We really try to keep holds to a minimum, and our artists are generally pretty

good about getting back to us. If we put a song on hold, we'll try to have an answer from the artist in three weeks."

Paying For Holds

The subject of paying for holds has often been discussed as a means to compensate publishers for song selection setbacks, but many in the community seem to feel the practice brings more trouble than gain. Others might like to give it a try, especially some of the smaller publishers.

Bruce Burch of Bruce Burch Music is tired of hold abuse. "Some labels are better than others," he says. "Seems like nowadays a cut doesn't mean anything because they overcut on every project. You get a call for a hold, but you find out 20 other people did, too. I'd like to see a policy like the screenwriters have. They get an option for scripts and get paid a little something whether they get used or not. It might stop labels from going so overboard with 50 songs on hold when they aren't even cutting for four months. I'd say on half the holds I get, if they get let go, I don't hear about it. I understand their predicament, but if they were taking these holds seriously, they'd be calling back. Reba asks for a written

"A hold is something which should be taken seriously by everybody."

**-Peter Cronin
Maverick Music**

hold letter from every publisher involved in the songs. It makes you feel like she takes these holds seriously, and she is always good about calling back and letting them go. I've had five songs on hold with her, and three have been cut. If I could get that kind of ratio with everyone who holds a song, I'd feel good about it."

"It would be neat if we could be compensated for a song that goes on hold for six months or more," speculates To The Moon Music's Leslie Schmidt. "It's not totally original, but if someone puts a song on hold, how about paying us fifty dollars a month as a deposit. If you cut it, you get the money back. If you don't, that money gets split between the publisher and the writer. It's all going to boil down to respecting each other and putting ourselves in the other's place."

Recently, Capitol Records has begun to experiment with a paid holds letter. Here's how Mark Brown explains it. "After everyone has lived

with the song and still wants to record it, we thought it might be a good idea to send a hold letter to the publisher. The period is for three months with the option to renew the hold for an additional three months. The theory is that sometimes you are six months out from a recording project and frequently three months. At the end of six months we would either take the song off hold or be prepared to offer \$100. One hundred dollars is not much money for holding someone's song that long, but it is more money than anyone else is offering as far as I know. The principle is correct, and I would guess that if the idea were to catch on and other labels followed suit, the figure might become negotiable. Our intent is to eliminate the confusion and to make sure that we are on the moral high ground in these situations. I don't think the point of the letter is to legally entrap anyone, only to be clear and precise about our intentions."

Brown is aware that for songs with multiple writers and co-publishers, the logistics of this hold letter would become more involved.

"Take a song with three writers who all have co-publishing arrangements," he postulates. "You'd have to send the letter to six publishers and three writers and get signatures from all parties. It can become a logistical paperwork nightmare. We have only attempted to send out a very few of these letters and haven't yet gotten any signed letters returned from publishers. Perhaps the publishers don't want to abide by this because they feel it hems them in somehow. Sometimes there is intent to shop or upgrade your hold, but mostly it is just poor communication between all the people involved."

"I already have 100 dollars," commented Almo Irving's David Conrad. "You're talking about tying up a song over six months for 100 dollars...personally, I don't think that is a workable idea. The way to work it is communication between people. The responsibility is mine, because the song is mine, to make as many phone calls as it takes to determine the seriousness of the situation. Then I've got a decision to make...The whole point is not to damage relationships and to leave a door open. If channeled wisely, communication will take care of that. We don't live and die by one song or one record. We live and die by catalogs and the maintenance and development of our writers' careers."

- David M. Ross

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DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that Chip Davis, half of the successful team that put together the "C.W. McCall" phenomenon, is also the creative force behind Mannheim Steamroller?

During a recent visit to Music City, Chip recalled the "Convoy" days.

CU: Your partner, Bill Fries, was C.W. McCall. What was your involvement with that project? Neither of you had any background in Country Music.

Chip: I wrote all the music for the C.W. McCall songs, produced all those records, went on the road as the music director and did all that. Music to me is music, and it can be in any style. I have learned over the years to be fluent in a bunch of different styles of composing.

I grew up around all different styles and forms of music. Ironically, the only one I never grew up around was Country. I was a jingle writer for about 10 years, so I had a lot of experience of jumping styles. One day I could be writing something like a classical sounding piano sonata behind some spot and the next day, it was some funk R & B thing. I will never forget the first time I had to write a reggae commercial for a car company in Detroit. I was like...Reggae? Who? This is back in the '70s.

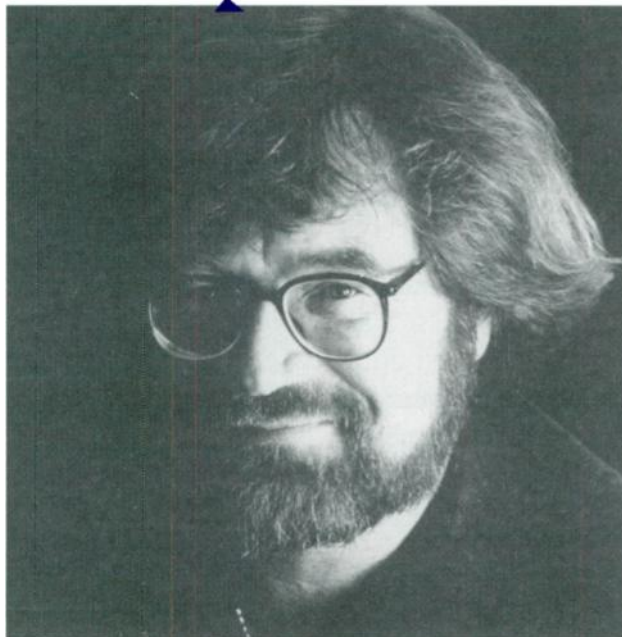
CU: And there probably wasn't a big reggae movement in Omaha.

Chip: I learned about Country and reggae and all those things. A lot of what I did I had to do by assignment. C.W. McCall started from a series of very popular commercials, and then we made a record. The first record "Old Home Filler-Up An' Keep On-A-Truckin' Cafe" did really well. Four or five records later, we had "Convoy". That was the one that really hit. At the same time that I was doing C.W. McCall, I was composing FRESH AIRE 1 (the first Mannheim Steamroller project).

CU: FRESH AIRE was a groundbreaking album - setting the stage for what is now the New Age movement. How did it come about?

Chip: The initial parts of FRESH AIRE 1, the heart of it and what gave me the idea,

Chip Davis



"C.W. McCall started from a series of very popular commercials, and then we made a record."

was composing music. Before I started doing all that, I taught music to junior high school kids. I composed some of the early FRESH AIRE pieces as examples of musical form. Instead of a 20-minute movement of a symphony to show them that this is a sonata form, I wrote a piece called "Sonata". It was two and a half minutes instead of 20 minutes, because they would never remember that song if it was that long. That is when I started thinking, "Hey, taking some of these old forms and putting new notes inside of them is not such a silly idea. Maybe I should write a couple more of those."

The next thing I knew I had an album's worth. That was FRESH AIRE 1. I made the topic of it spring. I put sounds that reflected sounds of spring with some of my piano solo - babbling brooks and birds. This is before New Age existed. I was saying all along that they should have been calling it Old Age, because I was using all these old forms. We have sold about 28 or 29 million now, but it took a while.

In the meantime, about 1973, C.W. McCall started taking priority because we started to go out playing concerts and all that. I didn't get off my schedule with FRESH AIRE, because after the first one, I started getting fan mail and pretty soon we had enough money recouped. That is all I wanted out of that project. I was making a pretty good living off of being part of C.W. McCall and my jingles and all that. I wasn't too concerned about it for the money aspect at all. Once the first one was paid for, I took the money and made another one. Much to my surprise, the first one kept selling and that is where it kind of got started.

CU: With some experience in Country Music under your belt, do you find any elements of that which you bring into the New Age music?

Chip: No question about it. "Morning" on FRESH AIRE 3 it has got a definite Country baseline. There are things that have snuck in and out. Maybe this is why Country turned out to be easy for me - it wasn't real hard for me to get a grasp of the sound. The basic elements of a lot of original Country come from hill music. Hill music comes from the Jacobean era in England, which is a renaissance era of things like the hammered dulcimer and a lot of instruments from the long lineage of Greek instruments and things passed on through centuries and centuries that end up in Country. The hill music...that is its origin, it comes from the minstrel music of England. A lot of times if I want to draw from the Country element and bring it into the

Continued on page 27...

PREDICTIONS 1996

CLOSE UP ASKED A VARIETY OF COUNTRY MUSIC LUMINARIES TO FORECAST WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON FOR THE COMING YEAR.



"I think 1996 will be the most exciting year for Country Music yet. I predict: they'll complete the bullet train between Nashville and Branson...Europe will figure out not all of us in America are dressed like Wild Bill Hickok...Yoko will break up the Statler Brothers...There will be a new superstar for '96, probably wearing men's underwear...and the

hit songwriters will have enough money to quit, leaving hope for the rest of us."

- In addition to anchoring morning drive time for WSIX-FM in Nashville, Gerry House is the talented tunesmith who cowrote Reba McEntire's "Little Rock" and George Strait's "The Big One", among others.



"In 1996, all of the music video producers and directors will take the massive fortunes they have pilfered from the record labels and invest in Swiss bank accounts. They will then move to the Cayman Islands, get facelifts and suntans and reappear as 25-year-old film school graduates. Moving back to Nashville, they will shoot \$30,000 videos that look like

\$70,000 videos and start the vicious cycle all over again!"

- George J. Flanigen IV of Deaton Flanigen Productions is part of the CMA Award winning team that produced Martina McBride's "Independence Day" music video, among others.



"In response to the recent trend of 'hat acts' (coupled with the chronic problems of windy fair days and over-processed hair), the babushka becomes the cutting-edge fashion rage for the women of Country Music."

- Karen Staley, on the cutting edge of fashion herself, recently sported go-go boots for the Faith Hill video "Let's Go To Vegas". Staley wrote the song along with another hit for Hill, "Take Me As I Am" as well as "The Keeper Of The Stars", a number one tune for Tracy Byrd.



"Hollywood will realize the error of its ways and decide that stereotyping all Southerners as toothless, uneducated inbred hicks whose only mode of transportation participates in "monster" truck exhibitions and requires a step ladder to get in, is as reprehensible as any other stereotype that has thankfully fallen by the wayside. Talent bookers on

either coast will acknowledge that if they book more than one Country act a week on their shows, viewers will not revolt, and televisions across the country will not explode in protest. Radio playlists will actually increase in size, incorporating more "oldies", new artists and basically good music. No one will ever say, 'there are just too many record labels in

Nashville.' Certain talent bookers at a certain morning show will suddenly regain their sense and understand that just because pop/rock artists like Amy Grant, Steve Winwood, Steve Forbert, Peter Frampton, etc. call Nashville home, it doesn't mean they are Country artists. In words you can understand, not all bagels are plain. And finally, everyone will simply get along. And yes, I did see Tattoo on that island when I was writing this."

- Jennifer Bohler was recently promoted to Vice President of Publicity at Starstruck Entertainment, where she oversees publicity for Reba McEntire, Aaron Tippin, Rhett Akins, Linda Davis, Ty Herndon and others.



"Several of the biggest names in Country Music realize that they are over-working the American market and, following the pioneering efforts of CMT and Garth Brooks, take a serious look at the rest of the world and appear as special guests with major rock and pop acts in high profile concerts from Europe to Australasia. Meanwhile, the unexpected success of two new radio formats - Nohat and

Oldhat - encourages million-selling albums from Gretchen Peters, Marcus Hummon and Waylon Jennings. The choice of Steve Earle and Lyle Lovett as co-hosts for 'The 30th CMA Awards' is controversial, but helps the telecast win the highest viewing figures in history."

- Richard Wootton is owner of Richard Wootton Publicity and co-owner of Byworth-Wootton, both London-based companies which provide PR services on behalf of Country Music artists among other clients. He is a member of CMA's board of directors and presents a weekly Country radio show for GLR, the BBC station in London.



"Sawyer Brown and Susan Lucci will host the CMA Awards Show. Garth Brooks will retire from touring to become a marketing professor at Harvard's Business School. Wonderbra will become the official sponsor of CMT. The impact of print and electronic media on an artist's career will force the Country Radio Seminar to officially become the Country Media Seminar.

Wade won't stop. After his initial venture with TNN, Dick Clark will move to Music City, acknowledge that he's really Dickey Ray Clark and lay claim to being Terri's dad and Roy's brother. The first all-female Country tour featuring Pam, Lorrie and Carlene will do so well, it will force Alan, Vince and John Michael to consider cross-dressing. Publicists will become the new power brokers."

- Publicist Ronna Rubin is the owner of Rubin Media, representing Pam Tillis, Sawyer Brown, Wade Hayes and Maura O'Connell, among others. She also manages newcomer Robert Lee.



"1996 will bring us THE ULTIMATE TRIBUTE BOXED SET, which of course pays tribute to all of the tribute recordings of 1995...Sony, Capitol, RCA and MCA will all merge into one label (collectively known as SCRAM Records) and will take over the Opryland Hotel as their world headquarters. Look for Gary Overton to run this new venture...

On a serious note: With the increased number of labels and artists, we as an industry will be forced to set new trends rather than following them. To break new artists, we will need to break new ground. Labels will be utilizing more innovative and cutting edge marketing techniques; the Internet and the information superhighway will play an increasing role in these efforts. I hope as a result of this, we can look forward to format-busting artistry and substance-driven music."

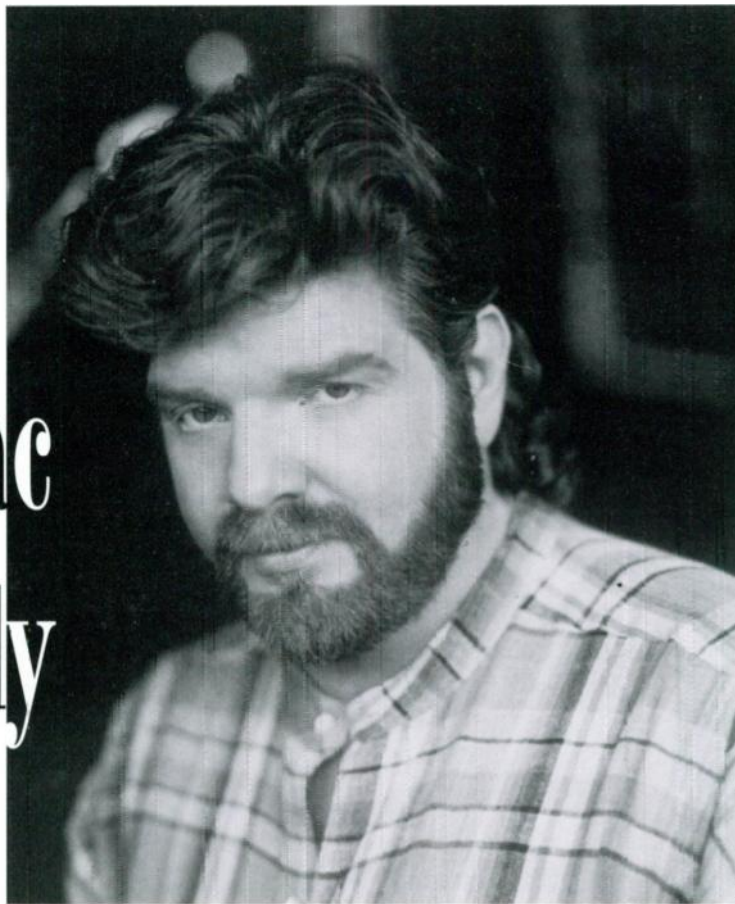
- Los Angeles native Tracy Gershon serves as vice president of A&R at Veritas Music Entertainment. She is also the sister of actress Gina Gershon ("Showgirls").



"Michael Jackson will be asked to join The Mavericks as Raul's dancing partner, and we will see the 50th new record label come to town."

- CMA board member Donna Hilley is president and CEO of Sony Tree Publishing.

Mac McAnally



At a posh Nashville restaurant, Mac McAnally has before him a \$6 bowl of chicken gumbo. He's sorting out the tough okra tops that found their way into his Creole stew. Mac's a tad picky about the vegetable. He remembers his grandmother's extra care in growing okra - only the varieties that were sweet and tender with small, white pods would make the trip from her garden to dining table. "It's amazing how I could be that poor and that spoiled at the same time," he says of his childhood in Belmont, Mississippi (population 904).

"My grandmother knew at 94 years old, how many days in her life since she was 12 that she did not cook biscuits...Usually the days her children were born was *not* one of those days." They totaled maybe 20 times in those 82 years.

A conversation with Mac over gumbo or a listen to one of his cds can conjure up memories of what was warm and wonderful about your own family - or what wasn't. But maybe the rocky recollections return waxed with a little more

gentle indulgence than you would normally afford them.

Being a songwriter wasn't that big a deal in Mac's family. The real attention-getter was his Aunt Maverine, who married Flavis Presley, Elvis' first cousin. "Everybody laughs at the name Flavis, like Elvis is a regular name. He was a truckdriver."

Mac was telling stories when he was 3 years old, then graduated to writing poetry and playing instruments. Even though, he yearned to be a lawyer or chemist, his parents encouraged his musical talents.

"I mean as far as my dad knew, Elvis wasn't even making a good living. It never seemed to him like something you would do to make money. It was just getting to do what you love was all that was appealing to him. That carries through with me. I can't believe we pay our light bills doing whatever floats through my head. I am thankful of that every day."

Other family members weren't so sure he had

made the right choice. Take his Uncle Claude who worked "up north".

"North meant either Kenosha (WI), Chicago (IL) or Waukegan (MI)...Nothing else was up north. He went up there all his life. He'd work for a couple of years three jobs at a time, never sleep and live for several years on the money that he made because the cost of living was nothing in Mississippi.

"He came back maybe four years ago, and I was down there visiting my grandmother, and Uncle Claude came over and said, 'I want to tell you something, Mac. I heard on the radio in Chicago, Illinois somebody talking about how good you were at what you do.' He said, 'I gotta tell you that when you were about 17, I drove through town one day, and it was pouring down rain as hard as it could rain, and you were standing out on the tennis court playing tennis with Sam Carter's little girl.' He said, 'Up until the time I heard them say that on the radio, I have always wondered if you knew how to get in out of the rain. I quit worrying about you when they said you were good at something.' "And I *don't* always know to get out of the rain.

"I can't believe we pay our light bills doing whatever floats through my head. I am thankful of that every day."

I could actually see that it was a literal burden lifted off my Uncle Claude, and I was glad of it."

His upbringing has trickled through his lyrics like spring rain soaks the roots of a weeping willow tree. And quirky cousins and greasy gas station attendant-philosophers take center stage in three-minute plays.

*"Do you know what you are capable of knowing
Do your hands son, ever touch the soil
And do you love all that you
are capable of lovin'
Do you want me to check
that oil?"*

"It is not infrequent at all for me to put out an album and have 10 to 12 different friends absolutely positive that they are this character in one of the songs, and have strangers come up and say they are the person in the song. I want it to be that way...A really good song - you marry your life into that song."

Mac's not the only one who's written hits about his upbringing. Paul Overstreet wrote a song called "Love Helps Those Who Help Themselves" after a conversation with Mac. Mac's dad had been sick and by the time he went to the doctor, he was near death. After a two-month stay in the hospital, he came home. That day, Mac walked through the woods out to the fields. "Everything that we normally plant was planted and up in the proportion that we plant it. They knew that we normally did five acres of peanuts, this many rows of sweet potatoes and this many rows of corn. I don't know to this day who did it...The fact that I got to see a place where that happened is a blessing and a responsibility."

Most writers fight fear. Mac says he's blessed because it doesn't get in the way. "Most songs are written against my will anyway, so it doesn't really matter if I'm afraid." The Sawyer Brown hit "All These Years" was nearly recorded that way as well.

"It was almost over my dead body that he (lead singer Mark Miller) did it...I tried to talk him out of it for a long time. He would admit that. Not because I didn't want him to cut the song, but I didn't want him to hurt himself with it. I couldn't see any purpose that it could serve for him."

The song, which became a hit for Sawyer Brown in spite of Mac's worries, depicts a husband having a conversation with his wife while she's in bed with another man. Mac tends not to write cheating songs "because it's a real competitive field." This was one he had no choice but to write. "That was just a gift. That song was written in the amount of time that it takes to play it. I just closed my eyes and sang that song, and it fell out."

He says his own 17-year marriage to Vicki has been a good one, especially since, because of his profession, they spend so much time together.

**"...you marry your life
into that song."**

"We probably got a normal 35-year marriage in at this point, I am entirely convinced."

Mac's dabbled with prose but says that what he writes "tends to be short stories that are mashed down or cooked too long until they are just a song."

Fellow Mississippian William Faulkner is a hero. "He said one time that writing was something that could be done by anybody that was willing to take the time to do it. He didn't think of it as a specialized thing, but it takes a lot of effort. You give a fair amount of childhood to become a musician and play, and you give up a lot of security to leave home and pursue doing that. I run into people all the time that say they would give anything to play guitar. I go, 'Well, play.' And they go, 'Well, it hurts my fingers.' 'Well, then you wouldn't give anything.'"

Mac writes "ridiculously few" songs a year - 12 to 15

- and says he's felt guilty sometimes for making a living out of his pen and his pick.

"It messed priorities up for me a couple of times back in the early '80s, mid '80s. I would go play \$15-an-hour guitar demos because that seemed like real work. I was embarrassed that writing was what I was supposed to be doing, even though our income was totally from that. I would sit there and fill up the day playing work that I was not dropped on the planet to do, because it was more like real work. I am slow, but I figure that stuff out eventually." **GU**

- Teresa George

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SONGS

WRITTEN BY
MAC McANALLY

"Old Flame"
Alabama

"Two Dozen Roses"
Shenandoah

"All These Years"
Sawyer Brown

"The Boys And Me"
Sawyer Brown

"Thank God For You"
Sawyer Brown

"Cafe On The Corner"
Sawyer Brown

"Crime Of Passion"
Ricky Van Shelton

"Back Where I Come From"
Mac McAnally

"It's My Job"
Jimmy Buffett

AWARDS

Frances Preston, president and CEO of BMI, was one of three honorees presented with the 1995 *Humanitarian Award* at the **Second Annual International Achievement in Arts Awards** held in New York in early December. Preston was honored for her many civic and humanitarian efforts, including serving as president of the T.J. Martell Foundation board at Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

♦ ♦ ♦

"I Swear", written by Gary Baker and Frank Myers, was named the *Most Performed International Song* at the 1995 **SOCAN Awards**, held November 15 in Toronto, Ontario. The awards are given to the creators and publishers of the most-performed songs by Canadian songwriters in the first year of release. Other Country tunes taking home honors were "Such A Lonely One", written by Russell DeCarle and recorded by Prairie Oyster; "Nobody Gets Too Much Love" and "The Other Side", written and recorded by Charlie Major; and "Sweet Sweet Poison", written by Jim Witter and Johnny Douglas.

MEDIA

John Berry, Karla Bonoff and the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Trisha Yearwood, Vince Gill, Alison Krauss, Bela Fleck and Chet Atkins, Amy Grant and Patty Loveless, Marty Stuart and Willie Nelson, Nanci Griffith, Raul Malo and Donna Summer; Lorrie Morgan and Mac McAnally and Mark O'Connor will be featured on **ONE VOICE**, the official 1996 Olympic Games album on MCA Records. The

lp will be produced by Michael Omartian. Royalties will support preparation of the U.S. Olympic Team and the Olympic Games.

♦ ♦ ♦

Multimedia Entertainment, Inc. and Jim Owens & Associates, Inc. will co-produce "The Crook & Chase Show", a new daytime, one-hour strip featuring Lorianne Crook and Charlie Chase. The program, featuring celebrity interviews and timely topics, will be available in January 1996.

♦ ♦ ♦

BMI is producing a two CD-ROM set containing repertoire information in a comprehensive searchable song title database. The **Repertoire CD-ROM**, which provides the ability to search for information on songs licensed by BMI, marks the second phase of the company's digital repertoire access program, which was initiated in July 1995 with the launching of its 7.5 million item song title database on the Internet's World Wide Web at <http://bmi.com/>. The Repertoire CD-ROM will be available in early 1996 and will be updated quarterly. For more information, contact Pat Baird at (212) 830-2528; pr@bmi.com.

NEW COMPANIES

Hal Willis has opened **Global Music & Media, Inc.**, a multinational, multimedia company dealing with television programming, distribution systems for Nashville's music-related products and the geographic and demographic expansion of Country Music. In addition to his position with Global, Willis will continue in his capacity at entertainment law firm **Frank & Frank**. Global can be reached at (615) 371-8536.

♦ ♦ ♦

The **International Entertainment Buyers Association** will open an office in Nashville. The organization can be reached at P.O. Box 128376, Nashville, TN 37212; (615) 244-0628; fax (615) 244-4466.

NEWSLINE

Pam Tillis, Lorrie Morgan and Carlene Carter will team for a 33-city tour sponsored by **Kraft** beginning in May. The **Kraft Country Tour** will benefit, in part, **Second Harvest Food Bank** and will take place primarily in the South and Midwest. A complete schedule of cities and dates will be announced shortly.

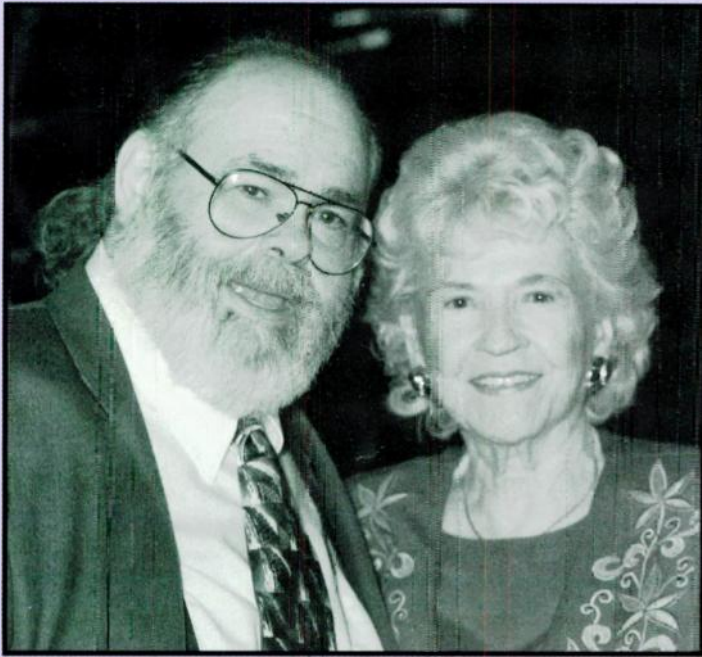
♦ ♦ ♦

Nashville-based **Buddy Lee Attractions** has acquired **World Class Talent**. The deal will unite both legendary and contemporary Country artists of the two talent agencies.

♦ ♦ ♦



Pam Tillis congratulates Bryan White on his Grand Ole Opry debut. Steve Wariner, Chet Atkins, Vince Gill and Ricky Skaggs were also on hand to applaud the Asylum Records singer/songwriter.



Entertainer Johnny Russell presents Mae Boren Axton with the Lifetime Achievement Award in Media on behalf of the Reunion of Professional Entertainers.

Ron Camacho has been contracted to collect stories for "Chicken Soup For The Country Soul", a new entry in the highly successful series of "Chicken Soup" best-sellers. To date, **Charlie Daniels, Tracy Byrd, Joe Diffie and Hal Ketchum** are among the Country entertainers who have participated in the project. For more information about contributing short stories that "open the heart and rekindle the spirit", contact Camacho at (800) 433-2314 ext.15.



Borman Entertainment has moved to 1250 6th Street, Suite 401, Santa Monica, CA 90401; (310) 656-3150; fax (310) 656-3160; e-mail borman-ent@aol.com. Country artists on the company's roster are **Dwight Yoakam, Mary Chapin Carpenter and Faith Hill**.

ON THE MOVE

Bruce Allen will team up with **Balmur Ltd.** to manage the career of multi-platinum artist **Anne Murray**. Working from his Vancouver headquarters, Allen will

work closely with Balmur's management group in Toronto. He also manages **Martina McBride**, pop star **Bryan Adams** and producers **Bruce Fairbairn and Bob Rock**.



Jody Williams is the new president of **MCA Music Publishing, Nashville**. Formerly assistant vice president at BMI, Williams will be responsible for all publishing activities, ventures and acquisitions in Nashville.



Donald A. Thurston, president of **Berkshire Broadcasting Co.** in North Adams, MA, has been re-elected chairman of BMI's board. **Frances Preston** has been re-elected president and chief executive officer of the performing rights organization.



Noted music publisher/songwriter **Roger Murrah** has been appointed to serve on the **Tennessee Film, Entertainment and Music Advisory Council** by Governor **Don Sundquist**. Murrah's appointment runs through June 30, 1997.



Cheryl Daly has been promoted to senior vice president, public relations at **Group W Satellite Communications**. She has been vice president, public relations since 1984. Daly oversees domestic and international public relations activities for **GWSC, TNN: The Nashville Network, CMT: Country Music Television, Group W Sports Marketing and Group W Network Services**. **Linda Ruggieri** has joined the company as director of communications. She is responsible for developing and implementing public relations programs. She was formerly with **NYNEX**.



Jennifer Bohler, Mike Allen, Cindy Owen and Trey Turner have each been promoted to the position of vice president at **Starstruck Entertainment**. Bohler services as vice president of publicity; Allen is vice president, concert booking, Owen is vice president of creative services, and Turner is vice president, concert promotions. All have been with the company since its inception in 1988.



John Grady has been named senior vice president, sales for **Mercury Nashville**. Formerly vice president, sales, Grady has been with the label since 1993. Prior to joining Mercury, his 20-year history included stints with **Arista, MCA and Capitol**. **Ken Robold** has been named vice president, finance & administration. He was formerly director of finance. Robold will continue to oversee all financial aspects of **Mercury Nashville** as well as for **Polydor Nashville**. He has been with Mercury Nashville since 1994. **Larry Hughes**, formerly national promotion director for **MCA**, signs on as vice president of promotion. His extensive background includes stints with **ABC Records and Ariola Records**.



Mark Brown has been promoted to vice president of A&R for **Capitol Nashville**. He had been senior director of A&R since joining the label in 1993. Brown's background also includes experience in music publishing, notably at Warner Chappell and Lorimar Music.



Jackie Solomon has been appointed vice president and general manager of **Bizzy Music**. Solomon, a former independent songplugger, will focus on the development of staff writers and working the company's growing catalog. **Jayme Calhoun** has been appointed office manager. Calhoun's was previously with Round The Row Music.



Brad Chambers has joined **Veritas Music Entertainment** as vice president of promotion. He was formerly with Management Associates, Inc. in addition to holding numerous positions in radio and television.



David Haley has been promoted to senior director of national promotion for **MCA Records/Nashville**. An 11-year veteran of the label's promotion department, he was most recently senior director of regional promotion, field specialist.



Rob Dalton has been appointed senior director, national Country promotion, for **Epic Records Nashville**. He began his career at the label in 1988.



Sam Ramage has been named senior director, artists and repertoire at **RCA Label Group RLG/Nashville**. Prior to joining the label, Ramage had an extensive background in music publishing.



David Ball enjoys an impromptu tryout for the 1996 USA Olympic Boxing Team by taking a playful punch at USA Olympic Boxing Coach **Patrick Burns**. Burns dropped by for a backstage visit following a recent Alan Jackson/David Ball concert in Macon, Georgia.



Elynn Citron joins **Borman Entertainment** as management associate. In her new position, she will work directly with **Dwight Yoakam**. Citron was formerly label manager for PRA Records. She has also held positions at Maverick, Capitol Records and Elektra Entertainment.



Tony Morreale has been appointed regional Country promotion manager, Southeast for **Columbia Records**. Morreale, who will be based in Atlanta, joined CBS Records in 1988 before going to Evelyn Shriver Public Relations. He returned to Columbia Records in 1993.



J.R. Hughes has joined **Polydor Nashville** as regional promotion manager/Northeast. Formerly with Columbia Records, Hughes will be based in Cincinnati, OH.



Joy Moran has been named manager, business affairs of **Gaylord Entertainment's Communications Group**. She will be responsible for the research and analysis of investments and development projects along with the negotiations and closing of acquisitions and divestitures. She joined the company as financial analyst in 1994.



Rosey Fitchpatrick has signed on as manager, Regional Promotion/Southwest at **Career Records**. Fitchpatrick, who will be based in Dallas, was formerly with MCA/Decca.



Laurie Stephens is the first executive director of the **International Entertainment Buyers Association**. Formerly advertising and promotion director at Shirley Zeitlin & Company Realtors, Stephens will oversee IEBA's day-to-day activities, including concentrating on increasing membership in the 450-member organization. **James M.**

Cudd has assumed the duties of president for the organization.



John Leonard departs his post as editor of **BBC Radio 1** to become a director at Cambridge-based **Smooth Operations**. Leonard will remain in the northwest region of England, allowing the company to enhance its regional coverage of British and American specialist musics.



Cynthia Chapman has joined the team at **Almo Sounds** to head the label's marketing and artist development department. She was formerly associate director of retail marketing and product development at MCA Nashville and Decca Records.



The **Reunion of Professional Entertainers** recently held an election of the board of directors. Newly elected officers are **Merle Kilgore**, president; **Joe Allison**, chairman of the board; **Roger Sovine**, executive vice president; **Shelby Singleton**, Secretary; and **Doc Holiday**, treasurer. Newly elected board members are **Hillous Butrum**, **Billy Deaton**, **Danny Dill**, **Charlie Lamb**, **Joe Taylor** and **Teddy Wilburn**.



Suzy Orr has been appointed news director/morning news personality at **WYYD** in Roanoke/Lynchburg, VA. She will be responsible for daily news operations as well as newscasts during the morning show. Orr was formerly with **WAVH-FM** in Mobile, AL, where she served as news and music director.



Kim Wiggins has been promoted to executive assistant at **Arista Nashville**. She joined the company in May 1995 as receptionist.



Skip Joeckel has been named Western regional affiliate sales manager at **Radio One Network**. Formerly vice president of affiliate sales for Business Radio Network, Joeckel's experience also includes station positions as general manager, sales manager and as an on-air personality.



Rick Taylor has joined the staff of **COUNTRY WEEKLY** as articles editor. Formerly with **SOAP OPERA DIGEST**, he brings 16 years of experience as an entertainment journalist and editor. Taylor will work in the magazine's Los Angeles office.

SIGNINGS

BOOKING: Mark Chesnutt to Monterey Artists...**Crystal Gayle** to MPI, Inc...**Tommy Cash** to Joe Taylor Artist Agency...**PUBLISHING:** Steve Mandile to Magnatone Music Publishing...**Gates Nichols** to ASCAP...**MANAGEMENT:** Neal Coty to Murrah-Petraitis

Entertainment...**Curtis Day** to Welch Entertainment Group...**RECORDING:** Joe Diffie to Epic Records (re-signing)...**Bryan Smith** to Step One Records...**T.J. And Annie and Joylene Riggie** to Playback Records...**Bill Crews** to Comstock Records...**PUBLICITY:** IEBA to White Horse Enterprises.

VIDEO

Dwight Yoakam directed his current music video, "Nothing". The **Reprise** artist chose surreal images of desolation as a motif for the clip, using both 35mm and 8mm film stock in order to give the video textural dimension.

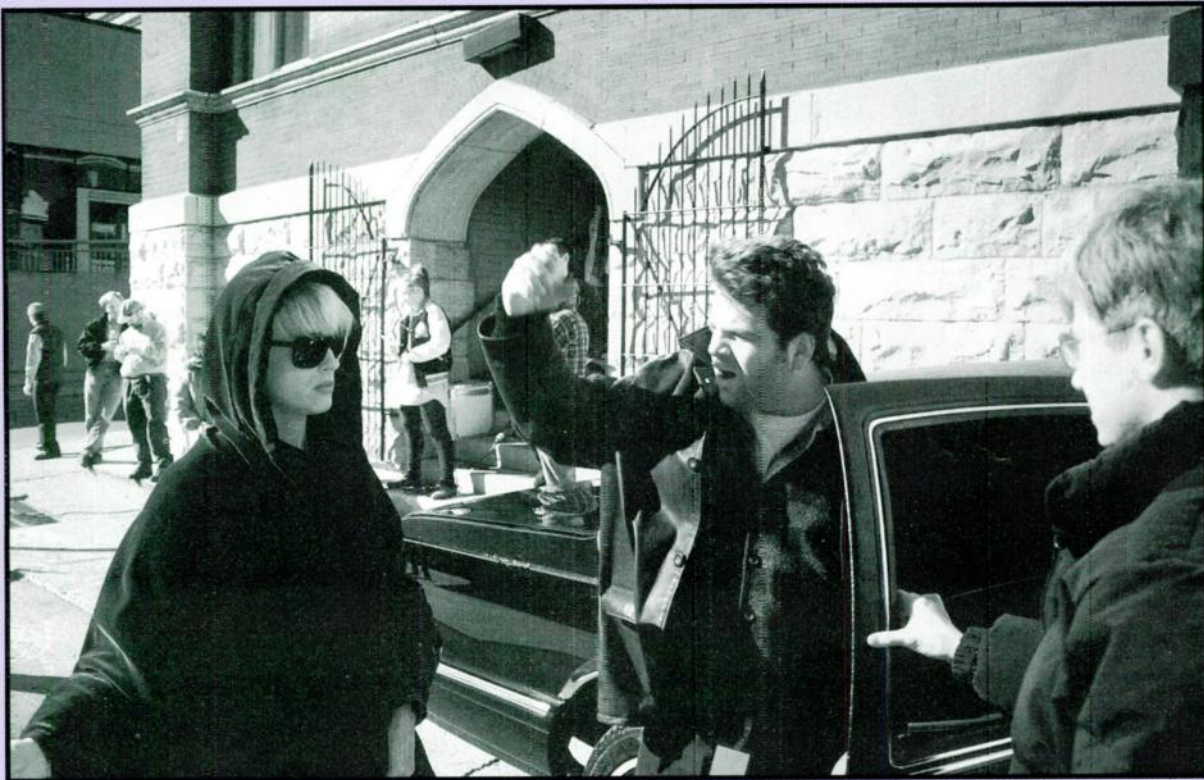


Martina McBride shot "Wild Angels", her current video, high atop the Clock Tower Building in New York. Director **Thom Oliphant** of **CloudLand Filmworks, Inc.**, oversaw the action for the **RCA** clip.



Loretta Lynn (right) presents **Martina McBride** with a plaque commemorating McBride's induction into the Grand Ole Opry. The presentation took place during a CBS-TV taping celebrating the Opry's 70th anniversary.

- Photo by Beth Gwinn



- Lorrie Morgan confers with director Steven Goldmann while shooting her latest BNA video, "Standing Tall".

Joe Diffie chose a Nashville night club and nearby motel for the location of his current music video, "**Bigger Than The Beatles**". **Peter Zavadil** produced the Epic clip. **Robert Deaton** and **George J. Flanigen IV** of **Deaton Flanigen Productions** directed the video.



Toby Keith got in the holiday spirit with a Christmas video, "**Santa, I'm Right Here**". **Marc Ball** directed the **Polydor Nashville** clip for **Scene Three**.



Lisa Brokop looked to **Pecos Films** director **Michael Merriman** to guide the action for her latest **Capitol** video, "**She Can't Save Him**". **Bryan Bateman** produced the dramatic clip.



Collin Raye filmed his latest video, "**Not That Different**", on the streets of **New York City** and at a **Nashville** soundstage. **Susan**

Bowman produced the Epic clip. **Steven Goldmann** directed for **GPA Films**.



Arista Texas singer **Joel Nava** completed his debut video, "**Mama's Boy**", in time for the holiday season. Special guest **Steve Wariner** was on hand for the filming at **Scene Three's Nashville** studio. **Dee Butler** produced the clip, and **Robert Gabrielsen** directed.



Newcomer **Philip Claypool** tapped **Chris Rogers** to direct his current **Curb** project, "**The Strength Of A Woman**". **Jamie Amos** produced the clip on location in **Franklin, TN** for **Pecos Films**.



The November/December issue of **CLOSE UP** incorrectly reported that **Tim Nichols** had signed a publishing agreement with **Maypop Music**. Nichols is actually signed to **EMI Music**.

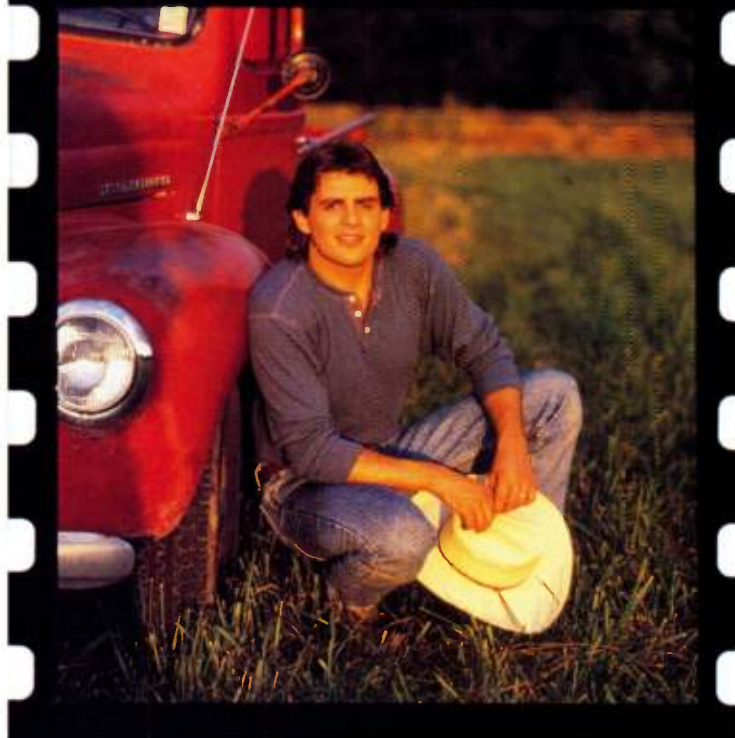
1995 was a year in which many dreams came true for Rhett Akins. He saw a progression of singles steadily jump higher on the charts, culminating with his first number one record, "That Ain't My Truck", shared a stage with Reba McEntire, appeared on "The CMA Awards" and even appeared in a Julia Roberts movie, "Something To Talk About". But as 1996 dawns, Rhett barely has time to reflect on last year's successes. Instead, he's working on his second album. With five songs in the can as of early January, he'll be trying to wrap up the lp before he hits the road again. He's quick to admit that 1995's non-stop schedule resulted in one problem - finding time for songwriting.

"The only time I could write was if songwriters come out on the bus with me," he admitted in late November. "Between now and January, I'm going to have them sleeping on the floor, hanging off the top and everything. I'm going to write as much as I can."

Although songwriting has been a challenge, his time in the studio has been much more relaxed than the first time around. "I think I was a lot more loose in the studio this time for the first five songs. I knew the players a lot better. I study records. Every time a song comes on the radio, I can almost tell you who every person on that record is, from drums to fiddle to bass to steel guitar. So I know who I wanted exactly on this record, and I am able to go in there with more confidence and say, 'Would you mind trying it this way?' They're still better than I am, so they take my idea and make it their own. It works out for both of us."

In addition to learning the players, the Georgia native has developed his intuition for other songwriters' tunes. "Most of the time when I hear a song, I go, 'I have been wanting to say that, but I just couldn't get it out on paper.' I'm not a great writer or great musician, so when I hear a song that in my head I know how this song is fixing to turn out and suddenly it takes a different chord progression than I thought, or a different twist, I go, 'I would have never thought of doing that.' A lot depends on the demo singer. Tim Mensy is one of my favorites. If I hear Tim singing on a demo, I have to go back and read the lyrics to make sure this song is a good song, because Tim can make any song sound awesome. Jeff Carson, who now has a record deal, is another great demo singer. If the demo singer really hits me in the heart, it makes me pay a whole lot more attention."

Singing demos is something that Rhett understands. He launched his own career by demoing the tunes he was writing for Tree. "I sang a few demos for other people, but I shied away from it. I guess I like to please people too much, and I was always scared that I couldn't get the song across like the writer intended it to be. I just didn't think I was a good enough singer. I have been in the studio with a lot of



demo singers who can go in there and do the song in one or two takes. It takes me forever to get a song the way I want it to be."

In fact, Rhett's own demos were what led him to a record deal. "I pitched my songs to Mark Chesnutt, and Mark Wright heard them. He didn't know me, he just said, 'I like this boy's voice, and I like his songwriting.' He wanted to sign me off the music only, before he met me, which I liked."

Wright, head of A&R at Decca as well as Rhett's producer, has provided the rookie with some sage advice.

"The one thing Mark always tells me is, 'I can tell you everything I can about my experience, but what

it all boils down to is that it says the new album is by Rhett Akins, not by Mark Wright. You are the one who has to live with it the rest of your life.' Mark lets me put in my ideas. I really don't have to throw in that many because he is just a genius. He grew up in the Baptist church, and his daddy is the choral director. Mark grew up hearing all these choral parts. I can play a song on the acoustic guitar, and when I start singing, Mark will close his eyes and you can see him just thinking. He can hear things that I can't."

Reba McEntire and manager Narvel Blackstock have also influenced his career. "I had been writing songs and trying to get a record deal, so I had not really been on stage in front of a lot of people. Narvel told me he was going to let me open for Reba. It was my first concert, in front of ten thousand people. I had three months to think about it. One day I thought, 'I can do it.' The next day, I would think,

continued on page 27...

COUNTRY MUSIC CARES



JOHN BERRY SCORES WITH AN ACOUSTIC VERSION OF "IF I HAD ANY PRIDE LEFT AT ALL".

In her first public appearance since her recent bypass surgery, K.T. Oslin hosted the annual Country Music CARES concert for the third year in a row. Held in conjunction with World AIDS Day at the Grand Ole Opry House, this year's all-star lineup included Mary Chapin Carpenter, John Berry, Pam Tillis, Bryan White, James House, Billy Ray Cyrus, Victoria Shaw, Gail Davies, Mark Luna, pop artist/Country songwriter Jim Lauderdale, tunesmith Tony Arata, former Miss America Leanza Cornett and female impersonator Dennis Russell of Nashville's Cowboy's LaCage. Ralph Emery and Karl Shannon assisted Oslin with co-hosting duties.

The benefit raised approximately \$90,000 for Nashville CARES, a non-profit AIDS awareness, support and educational agency. In addition to ticket sales, funds were generated via a silent auction which included items donated by top Country performers including Garth Brooks, Alan Jackson, Travis Tritt, Little Texas, Reba McEntire, Faith Hill, Wade Hayes, Sawyer Brown, Shania Twain, Tracy Lawrence, Lee Roy Parnell, Lorrie Morgan and numerous others. Other auction donors included *The Tennessean*, Absolut, Gibson Guitars, folk artist Maura O'Connell, Capitol Nashville and Rique.



PAM TILLIS CHARMS THE COUNTRY MUSIC CARES AUDIENCE WITH AN ACOUSTIC SET.



JIM LAUDERDALE TAKES A TURN AT THE MIKE WHILE (SEATED IN REAR) VICTORIA SHAW, TONY ARATA, MARK LUNA AND HARMONICA PLAYER KIRK "JELLY ROLL" JOHNSON LOOK ON.



DAVID BALL'S INTENSITY BELIES THE LIGHT-HEARTED MOOD OF "HONKY TONK HEALIN'"



FOLLOWING PRESENTATION OF ABSOLUT'S SPONSORSHIP CHECK, BILLY RAY CYRUS RECEIVED A SPECIAL AWARD COMMEMORATING HIS ON-GOING EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF COUNTRY MUSIC CARES.

Chip Davis

Continued from page 15...

FRESH AIRE sound, those are a lot of the elements that I draw from.

CU: *Has it ever crossed your mind to write a Country song again?*

Chip: Not so much. That is probably a chapter in my life that is closed now. Not because I don't want to, but because time is such a critical element. What I am working on a lot right now are what I would call non-vertical aspects of my music.

I work on a lot of film-oriented things to go along with our live concerts. I developed a 3-D film system that you don't need glasses for to see. I can put you in even bigger than 3-D. I can put you inside of a castle in the year 1490 and take you back to the time that these Christmas carols in our concert actually came from. I show you the way they would have celebrated Christmas with a Christmas feast. We hear all these song titles and a lot of times we sing these songs at church or at different functions, but we don't know what they really represent. I show you on the screen what they are. I have dug up those traditions, and I found how they would have done it.

CU: *Which was a greater surprise: the success of a song like "Convoy", or FRESH AIRE?*

Chip: Probably both. The big surprise to me was that I found out I could write Country Music. Then, to have the 18th century rock 'n' roll experiment turn out... As C.W. McCall was going along, FRESH AIRE started having a life of its own. That was a surprise too. But C.W. McCall definitely overshadowed it for many years. The beauty of it for me, just from a purely selfish standpoint, was that as C.W. McCall started winding down, Mannheim Steamroller was kind of up to speed, so to speak, and had its own momentum. So I got off the truck driving songs and got on the steamroller and got on that ride for a while. **CU**

- Janet E. Williams

"THE RED STROKES" TOPS CMT'S 1995 COUNTDOWN VIDEO AWARDS

"The Red Strokes" by Garth Brooks was named the top video of the year in the CMT 1995 Countdown. Videos were judged on the length of time needed to reach number one on CMT's weekly playlist, longevity at number one, viewer requests and overall entertainment quality and value.

Alan Jackson was named Male Video Artist of the Year, and labelmate Pam Tillis took honors as Female Video Artist of the Year. Sawyer Brown is CMT's Video Group of the Year. Michael Merriman of Pecos Films received the nod as Video Director of the Year, and Bryan White was named Rising Video Star of the Year.

Other honorees include Shelby Lynne, whose "Slow Me Down" was named Independent Video of the Year, and Lee Roy Parnell, Steve Wariner and Diamond Rio, whose collaboration on "Workin' Man Blues" resulted in the Video Event of the Year award.

CMT's Top 12 Videos of 1995 are:

1. "The Red Strokes"
Garth Brooks
2. "Sold (The Grundy County Auction Incident)"
John Michael Montgomery
3. "Tell Me I Was Dreaming"
Travis Tritt
4. "And Still",
Reba McEntire
5. "I Don't Even Know Your Name"
Alan Jackson
6. "Any Man Of Mine"
Shania Twain
7. "Gone Country"
Alan Jackson
8. "Party All Night"
Jeff Foxworthy
9. "This Time"
Sawyer Brown
10. "Mi Vida Loca (My Crazy Life)"
Pam Tillis
11. "Let's Go To Vegas"
Faith Hill
12. "The Keeper Of The Stars"
Tracy Byrd

RHETT AKINS

Continued from page 25...

'I have got to tell Narvel I can't do it.' On the day of the show, it was like I was in a dream. I had no idea whether I was going to go up there and fall flat on my face or if it was going to turn out good. I said, 'Lord, I know you gave me this opportunity for some reason, but please help me make the best out of it.' Walking down the hallway, I thought I was going to die. As soon as the lights went out, you just wouldn't believe the feeling that came over me! It was like, 'OK, it's time to either sink or swim.' And I chose to kick and paddle as hard as I could. It turned out that it was the greatest night of my life.

"Last year was my introduction year. This year, it is time to step up the pace a little bit.

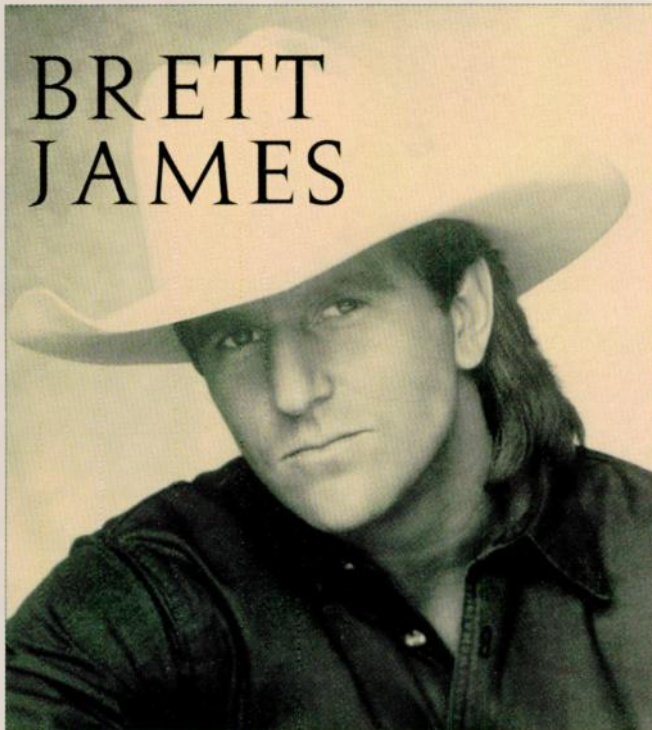
I want to be able to step it up another notch and let people know that this is what I want to do for the rest of my life. Hopefully, I can be like Porter one day...sitting there at the Grand Ole Opry hosting 'Opry Backstage', interviewing Rick Trevino and saying, 'Me and Rick, we did many a show together a long time ago', like Porter and Stonewall Jackson."

After a moment's reflection, the dimpled singer concludes, "I want 1996 to be a year where I take the training wheels off and start doing some wheelies!" **CU**

- Janet E. Williams

THANKS! CMA thanks the following members who recently recruited new members:

EVE ABDO, CONNIE BRADLEY, AMBROSE DONOHUE, DAN EKBACK, CATHY GURLEY, WAYNE HALPER, CHRIS KEATON, ROLAND KRAMM, DAVID MADDOX, JOHN MUSA, BRENT ROWAN, CHARLES SUSSMAN AND GENE WEED.

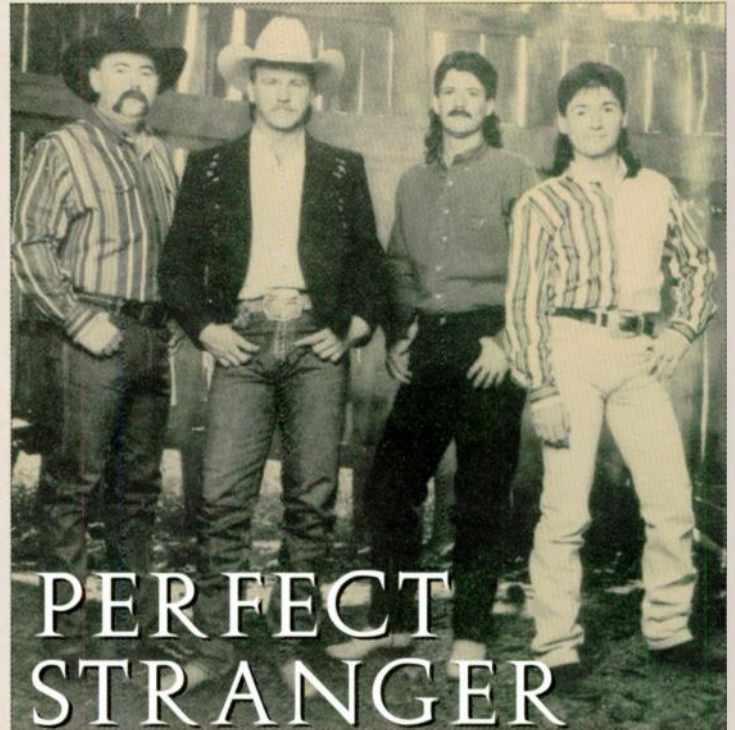


**BRETT
JAMES**

Record Label: Career Records
Album: BRETT JAMES
Singles: "Female Bonding", "If I Could See Love"
Management: Narvel Blackstock, Starstruck Entertainment
Booking Agency: William Morris Agency
Influences: Hank Williams, Patsy Cline

While some parents would cry if their son said he was leaving medical school to pursue a career as a singer/songwriter, Brett James' musically inclined mother and father were very supportive of his decision. The defection paid off, as Brett quickly landed a record deal with Career Records.

Growing up in Oklahoma and Texas, Brett was president of his county's 4H chapter. "I was always around that kind of thing - the rural American experience and its values. You get a sense of what's good and real about people - and you grow up with a pretty good idea of who you are. That's why singing and songwriting are so inseparable for me. A lot of the sound is just me - it's what I know, what I'm about."



**PERFECT
STRANGER**

Record Label: Curb Records
Album: YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT
Singles: "You Have The Right To Remain Silent", "I'm A Stranger Here Myself"
Management: Tony Tuthill, Pacific Management
Booking Agency: World Class Talent
Influences: Frank Sinatra, B.B. King, Merle Haggard, George Jones, Conway Twitty

Strangers no more, members of Perfect Stranger are Steve Murray, Shayne Morrison, Richard Raines and Andy Ginn. "We love Country," says Richard. "We all grew up in Texas, and we came out of the honky tonk scene. We love all kinds of music, but we're staying true to the roots of Country."

Between live performance dates with a list of artists including Tim McGraw, John Berry and Tracy Lawrence, the group managed to squeeze in time to record their debut album with the help of producer Clyde Brooks (Ronna Reeves, B.B. Watson.) One of the cuts, "Ridin' The Rodeo," was penned by noted songwriters Vince Gill and Kostas.

*Denotes birthdays

JANUARY



16

- * **RONNIE MILSAP**; Robbinsville, North Carolina
- * **JIM STAFFORD**; Eloise, Florida
- Alabama's **ROLL ON** certifies platinum, the first Nashville lp to do so, 1984
- Gary Morris' **WHY LADY WHY** lp certifies gold, 1992
- "Mending Fences" by Restless Heart debuts on the Country charts, 1993

17

- Randy Travis's **NO HOLDIN' BACK** certifies platinum, 1990
- Doug Stone hits the top of the charts with "A Jukebox With A Country Song", 1992

18

- * **MARK COLLIE**; Waynesboro, Tennessee
- * **BOBBY GOLDSBORO**; Marianna, Florida
- Merle Haggard hits number one with "Kentucky Gambler", 1974

19

- * **DOLLY PARTON**; Locust Ridge, Tennessee
- * **PHIL EVERLY**; Chicago, Illinois
- Marty Robbins makes his Opry debut, 1953
- Mary Chapin Carpenter earns a platinum lp with **COME ON, COME ON**, 1993

20

- * **SLIM WHITMAN**; Tampa, Florida
- Jerry Lee Lewis makes his Opry debut, 1973
- Wynonna's self-titled MCA debut disc hits the four-million mark, 1995
- Reba McEntire tops the charts

21

with "Till You Love Me", 1995

- * **MAC DAVIS**; Lubbock, Texas
- * **JIMMY IBBOTSON** *Nitty Gritty Dirt Band*; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Dwight Yoakam's **GUIARS, CADILLACS, ETC., ETC.** lp certifies gold, 1987
- Patsy Cline appears on "Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts", 1957
- Clay Walker tops the R&R chart with "Live Until I Die", 1994
- Jim Anglin dies, 1987

22

- * **TEDDY GENTRY**; Fort Payne, Alabama
- Hank Williams, Jr.'s **STRONG STUFF** lp certifies gold, 1986
- Glen Campbell earns a gold single for "Wichita Lineman", 1969
- Randy Travis takes home three trophies at the American Music Awards, 1990
- Doug Stone scores a number one Country hit with "Too Busy Being In Love", 1993



23

- * **JOHNNY RUSSELL**; Sunflower County, Mississippi
- Reba McEntire's **WHOEVER'S IN NEW ENGLAND** certifies gold, 1987
- **A DECADE OF HITS** by The Charlie Daniels Band certifies platinum, 1989
- Clint Black's **KILLIN' TIME** certifies platinum, 1990
- **STORM IN THE HEARTLAND** by Billy Ray Cyrus goes gold, 1995

24

- * **RAY STEVENS**; Clarksdale, Georgia
- * **DOUG KERSHAW**; Tiel Ridge, Louisiana
- Dolly Parton's "Nine To Five" hits number one on the charts, 1981
- **PURE COUNTRY** by George

25

- Strait certifies triple platinum, 1994
- Sawyer Brown tops the charts with "The Dirt Road", 1992
- The Judds' **HEARTLAND** lp certifies platinum, 1989

26

- T.G. Sheppard tops the charts with "I'll Be Coming Back For More", 1979
- Diamond Rio's **CLOSE TO THE EDGE** certifies gold, 1994

27

- Elvis Presley's first single for RCA, "Heartbreak Hotel", is released, 1956
- **CHEAP SEATS** by Alabama earns a gold lp, 1994
- Pam Tillis goes number one with "Mi Vida Loca", 1995

28

- John Michael Montgomery tops the R&R chart with "I Swear", 1994
- Elvis Presley makes first national TV appearance on CBS, 1956
- Al Dexter dies, 1984

29

- "Lucille" enters the Country charts, launching Kenny Rogers' career in Country Music, 1977
- Randy Travis' **ALWAYS AND FOREVER** lp certifies multi-platinum, 1988
- Travis Tritt tops the Country charts with "Can I Trust You With My Heart", 1993



30

- * **JEANNE PRUETT**; Pell City, Alabama

31

- Travis Tritt and Marty Stuart hit number one with "The Whiskey Ain't Workin'", 1992
- Alabama's **SOUTHERN STAR** lp certifies gold, 1989
- Tracy Byrd celebrates a gold lp for **NO ORDINARY MAN**, 1995

- 1**
- ***DON EVERLY;** Brownie, Kentucky
 - Mickey Gilley tops the charts with "City Lights", 1975
 - Ricky Van Shelton earns his 6th gold lp with A BRIDGE I DIDN'T BURN, 1994
 - Scotty Wiseman dies, 1981
 - BEST OF VINCE GILL certifies platinum, 1995

- 2**
- **GROUND HOG DAY**
 - ***HOWARD BELLAMY;** Darby, Florida
 - The Judds' HEARTLAND lp certifies gold, 1987

- 3**
- Lynn Anderson is awarded gold record for "Rose Garden", 1971
 - SUPER HITS by George Jones goes platinum, 1994
 - "This Time" by Sawyer Brown tops the charts, 1995

- 4**
- ***CLINT BLACK;** Houston, Texas
 - Billy Walker employed by Grand Ole Opry, 1960
 - Newcomer John Berry debuts on the charts with "Your Love Amazes Me", 1994
 - Jethro Burns of "Homer and Jethro" dies, 1989

- 5**
- ***CLAUDE KING;** Shreveport, Louisiana
 - George Jones and Tammy Wynette have the number one song with "Near You", 1977
 - Dan Seals' WONT BE BLUE ANYMORE certifies gold, 1987

- 6**
- David Frizzell and Shelly West chart a top 10 hit, "Another Honky Tonk Night On Broadway", 1982
 - Conway Twitty and Loretta Lynn's "After The Fire Is Gone" debuts on the charts, 1971
 - Ronnie Milsap makes his Grand Ole Opry debut, 1976

- 7**
- ***GARTH BROOKS;** Tulsa, Oklahoma
 - ***WILMA LEE COOPER;** Valley Head, West Virginia
 - John Conlee makes his debut at the Grand Ole Opry, 1981

- 8**
- ***MERLE WATSON;** Deep Gap, North Carolina
 - Webb Pierce's first charted Country disc, "Wondering", enters the charts, 1952
 - Clay Walker goes gold with IF I COULD MAKE A LIVING, 1995



- 9**
- ***TRAVIS TRITT;** Marietta, Georgia
 - ***JOE ELY;** Amarillo, Texas
 - ***DAN SEALS;** McCamey, Texas
 - ***ERNEST TUBB;** Crisp, Texas
 - The Oak Ridge Boys chart a number one hit, "Leavin' Louisiana In The Broad Daylight", 1980

- 10**
- Charlie Louvin employed by the Grand Ole Opry, 1955
 - Eddie Rabbitt tops the Country charts with "Every Which Way But Loose", 1979
 - Patty Loveless hits number one with "Here I Am", 1995
 - Randy Travis' STORMS OF LIFE lp certifies platinum, 1987
 - Arthur Edward Satherley dies, 1986

- 11**
- ***WESLEY ROSE;** Chicago, Illinois
 - Larry Gatlin & The Gatlin Brothers top the charts with "I Wish You Were Someone I Loved", 1978
 - George Strait has another number one with "I'd Like To Have That One Back", 1994

- 12**
- ***MOE BANDY;** Meridian, Mississippi

- 13**
- ***TENNESSEE ERNIE FORD;** Bristol, Tennessee
 - ***BOUDLEAUX BRYANT;** Shellman, Georgia
 - Billy "Crash" Craddock charts his first Country hit with "Knock Three Times", 1971
 - ASCAP organized in New York City, 1914

- 14**
- **VALENTINE'S DAY**
 - ***RAZZY BAILEY;** Lafayette, Louisiana

- 15**
- ***HANK LOCKLIN;** McLellan, Florida
 - T.G. Sheppard's "Devil In The Bottle" reaches number one status after a 19-week run on the charts, 1975
 - Don Gibson's double-sided hit "Oh, Lonesome Me"/"I Can't Stop Lovin' You" enters the charts, 1958

- 16**
- ***JO WALKER-MEADOR;** Orinda, Tennessee
 - Johnny Cash earns a platinum lp with THE JOHNNY CASH PORTRAIT, 1995

- 17**
- Johnny Cash earns his first number one record with "Ballad Of A Teenage Queen", 1952
 - Bill and Charlie Monroe's first recording session, 1936
 - Tanya Tucker celebrates five gold albums with WHAT'S YOUR MAMA'S NAME, WOULD YOU LAY WITH ME, STRONG ENOUGH TO BEND, GREATEST HITS and TENNESSEE WOMAN, 1995
 - Wade Hayes celebrates his first number one with "Old Enough To Know Better", 1995



18

*** PEE WEE KING;** Abrams, Wisconsin

• Dan Seals' "Big Wheels In The Moonlight" hits number one, 1989

• **STORMS OF LIFE** by Randy Travis certifies multi-platinum with sales of three million, 1992

• Collin Raye earns a gold album with **IN THIS LIFE**, 1993

• Mark Chesnutt reaches number one with "I Just Wanted You To Know", 1994

19

• Roy Acuff makes his first appearance on the Grand Ole Opry, 1938

• Sawyer Brown tops the charts with "All These Years", 1993

20

• Buck Owens tops the charts with "I've Got A Tiger By The Tail", 1965

• Dolly Parton and Porter Wagoner perform together for the first time since their 1974 breakup, 1988

• Kitty Wells is honored by the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences with a Lifetime Achievement Award, 1991

21

*** MARY CHAPIN CARPENTER;** Princeton, New Jersey

• Jimmie Rodgers records "Any Old Time" and "Desert Blues" at Victor Studios in New York City, 1929

• "Kawliga" by Hank Williams enters the Country charts, 1953

• Brooks & Dunn's "Neon Moon" debuts on the Country charts, on its way to number one, 1992

22

*** DEL WOOD;** *Adelaide Hazelwood;* Nashville, Tennessee

23

• Pam Tillis celebrates her first number one single, "Don't Tell Me What To Do", 1991

• Former rodeo champ Chris LeDoux earns his first gold album with **WHATCHA GONNA DO WITH A COWBOY**, 1993

24

• Hank Williams, Jr.'s **BORN TO BOOGIE** certifies platinum, 1988

• Barbara Mandrell tops the charts with "Years", 1980

• Porter Wagoner joins the Grand Ole Opry, 1957

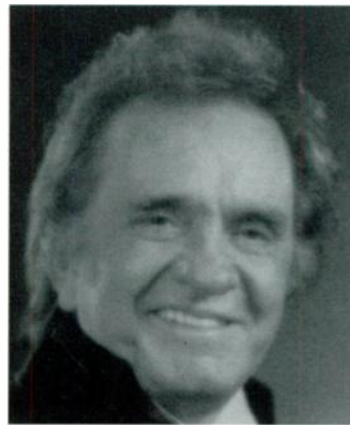
25

*** FARON YOUNG;** Shreveport, Louisiana

• "I Sang Dixie" by Dwight Yoakam tops **BILLBOARD's** Country chart, 1989

• **LOVE IN A SMALL TOWN** earns a gold album for K.T. Oslin, 1991

• Vince Gill's "Tryin' To Get Over You" hits number one, 1994



26

*** JOHNNY CASH;** Kingsland, Arkansas

• The Louvin Brothers first appear on the Grand Ole Opry, 1955

• Kathy Mattea's **COLLECTION OF HITS** certifies gold, 1991

• Toby Keith's first single, "Should've Been A Cowboy", debuts on the charts on its way to number one, 1993

27

• **HAVE I GOT A DEAL FOR YOU** by Reba McEntire certifies gold

28

10 years after its release, 1995

• Don Williams hits number one with "Lord I Hope This Day Is Good", 1982

*** JOE SOUTH;** Atlanta, Georgia

Beginning with the February issue of **CLOSE UP**, Factfile will no longer appear in in the magazine due to space limitations. However, a year-long version of Factfile will be mailed to all broadcast organizational members of CMA by mid-February. The year-long compilation is available to all other CMA members upon request. Please forward a written request to:

Country Music Association,
attn: FACTFILE,
One Music Circle South,
Nashville, TN 37203.
You may also fax your request to (615) 242-4783. Please include your mailing address.

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DATEBOOK

*denotes international telephone number with country code in parentheses

JANUARY

- 4** Grammy Award Press Conference / Vanderbilt Plaza / Nashville
- 24-25** CMA Board of Directors Meeting / San Francisco

FEBRUARY

- 28** 38th Annual Grammy Awards / Shrine Auditorium / Los Angeles, CA
- 28- Mar. 3** Country Radio Seminar / Opryland Hotel / Nashville

MARCH

- 22-25** 38th Annual NARM Convention / Sheraton Washington Hotel / Washington, DC / (609) 596-2221

APRIL

- 7- 10** Country Music Dance Seminar / Stouffer Nashville Hotel / Nashville / Country Club Enterprizes (615) 256-5600
- 16-20** Tin Pan South / Nashville / Nashville Songwriters Association International / (615) 251-3472
- 18-19** CMA Board of Directors Meeting / Toronto, Ontario, Canada

MAY

- 8-10** Marketing With Country Music Seminar / co-sponsored by CMA and ADVERTISING AGE / Opryland Hotel

JUNE

- 10-16** 25th Annual International Fan Fair / Co-sponsored by CMA and the Grand Ole Opry / Tennessee State Fairgrounds / Nashville



David Lee Murphy (center) celebrates his chart-topping hit, "Dust On The Bottle", at a party held at ASCAP. Joining the festivities are (l to r) MCA's Dave Weigand, Tony Brown and Scott Borchetta, ASCAP's Dan Keen, manager Doug Casmus and CMA's Ed Benson, who was on hand to make a special presentation to Murphy.

- Photo by Alan Moyer