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# MUSICROW<sup>®</sup>

NASHVILLE INDUSTRY PUBLICATION

**Pam Tillis**

**2001  
Independent  
Label Directory**

**Americana,  
Where Art  
Thou?**

**Improbable  
Indie Airplay**

**A Major's  
Indie  
Sensibilities**

**Into The Void,  
Creatively  
Speaking**

**Indie  
Marketing &  
PR 101**

**Distribution  
Solutions**

**IMMINENT  
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**2001  
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### On the Cover Pam Tillis

**Current Single:** "Please"  
**Current Album:** *Thunder And Roses* (to be released March 6)  
**Current Producers:** Billy Joe Walker, Jr.; Kenny Greenberg; Paul Worley and Dann Huff  
**Birthplace:** Plant City, Fla.  
**Management:** Terry Elam/Fitzgerald Hartley  
**Booking:** Steve Hauser/William Morris  
**Recent Hits:** "All The Good Ones Are Gone," "Mi Vida Loca," and "Spilled Perfume," among others.  
**Awards:** 1994 CMA Female Vocalist of the Year; three Grammy and 11 CMA nominations  
**Special TV/Film Appearances:** Appeared on Broadway in "Smokey Joe's Cafe." Guest star on "Diagnosis Murder" and "Promised Land." Appeared in the movie "The Thing Called Love."  
**Birthdate:** July 24  
**Interesting Facts:** Her father is country legend Mel Tillis. Pam was one of two artists inducted into the Opry in 2000.  
**Chart Success:** Four million records sold; six No. 1 singles, 13 Top-5 singles, and 17 Top-10 singles.  
**Outside Interests:** Reading, movies and collecting antiques.

Pam Tillis was born Pamela Yvonne Tillis in Plant City, Fla., and her love of music blossomed early. Her parents bought her a piano at age eight, and she took up the guitar at 11. By 13, she was writing songs and two years later she was singing in clubs.

A few years later she was pounding the pavement of Music Row. She began working as a back-up vocalist, jingle singer, club performer, songwriter and publishing company demo singer. "I sang jingles for Hardee's, Coors, Country Time Lemonade, and Equal to name a few," she recalls.

After a stint in California, she returned to Nashville in 1979 to focus on her songwriting, eventually getting cuts by Chaka Khan, Martina McBride, Gloria Gaynor, Conway Twitty, Juice Newton, Highway 101, and the Forester Sisters, among others.

In 1989, Tim DuBois signed her to Arista Records. Shortly after she released the album, *Put Yourself in My Place*. Tillis has



gone on to release several other projects and her upcoming album, *Thunder And Roses*, is set for release on March 6.

Tillis concludes, "There have been people that made it faster and hit it bigger, but I feel I have been blessed with a consistent career. And I've gotten to do it on my own terms."

**MUSICROW**  
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David M. Ross  
**Publisher/Editor**  
 ross@musicrow.com

Jamie Meyerhoeffer  
**Director Marketing/Sales**  
 jamie@musicrow.com

Chuck Aly  
**GM Operations**  
 c.al@musicrow.com

Susana Ross  
**Administrator**  
 s.ross@musicrow.com

Richard D. McVey II  
**Managing Editor**  
 mcvey@musicrow.com

Eileen Shannon  
**Receptionist**  
 eileen@musicrow.com

Christie King  
**Art Director/Prod. Mgr.**  
 christie@musicrow.com

Robert K. Oermann  
**Single Reviews**

John Hood  
**Senior Writer**  
 hood@musicrow.com

O'Neil Hagaman, **Financial**  
 Alan Mayor, **Photography**

**Contributing Writers:** Lisa Berg, Larry Wayne Clark, John Norris, David Smalls, Ron Young

Music Row Publications Inc., P.O. Box 158542, Nashville, TN 37215  
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# New Labels; Singles Shrink; Gassner Dies

## NEWS



Shriver

**NEW LABELS ON THE BLOCK**—Since exiting Asylum in January, **Evelyn Shriver**, the label's former President, and **Susan Nadler**, former Sr. VP of A&R, have made plans to launch their own label. They are currently raising funds for the start-up, which is still unnamed. They are expected to sign **George Jones** and a handful of other artists from the Asylum roster...RMG Records opened on Music Row under the direction of **George Collier**, who will serve as President. The label plans to release projects from **Don Williams**, **Ricky**



Nadler

**Lynn Gregg** and new duo **James/Dean**. RMG's first release is **Eddy Raven's** *Living In Black And White*...**WE Records**, recently formed by **Wrensong Entertainment** President **Ree Guyer-Buchanan**, jumped into country's mainstream with the release of "Jolene" by **Sherrie Austin**. Look for Austin's album to hit stores in early March. WE is planning a CRS album release party on Feb. 26 at Six Degrees.

**ARTIST NEWS**—**John Edwin "Eddy" Shaver**, famed guitarist and son of **Billy Joe Shaver**, died Dec. 31. Services were held Jan. 4 in Waco, Texas...**T. Graham Brown** has signed with

Relentless Nashville. Brown's initial release for the label is his first-ever live album, *T. Graham Brown Lives...* **Shania Twain's** *Come On Over* has been certified platinum 18 times and has surpassed the soundtrack to *The Bodyguard* by **Whitney Houston** to become the best selling album by a solo female artist...**Brad Paisley** will be inducted into the Grand Ole Opry on Feb. 17 at the Ryman Auditorium...**Whoopi Goldberg** will star in and **Garth Brooks** will contribute Christmas songs to the upcoming Turner Network Television (TNT) Original Film *Call Me Claus*, a comedy about the true meaning of Christmas. It's expected to air in December.

**SINGLES SHRINK**—*Billboard's* Hot Country Singles & Tracks chart and *Airplay Monitor* have downsized from 75 to 60 positions. Chart Director **Wade Jessen** explained the change as a reaction to "corporate consolidation, tighter playlists, a smaller reporting panel and the extended chart life of singles." The publication's recurrent rule also adjusted to, "remove descending titles that are more than 20 weeks old when they fall below 20."

**INTERNET NEWS**—**EMusic.com** announced a corporate restructuring aimed at reducing expenses and focusing the company on its two core sources of revenue—advertising and promotional revenue through *RollingStone.com*, and downloadable music sales through *EMusic.com*. **EMusic's** staff is being reduced by 66 employees in all departments including the closing of its Nashville office headed by Director of Artists & Labels **Steve Day**. **Gaylord Entertainment** has sold the Christian music

e-commerce Website *Musicforce.com* to **Christian Book Distributors Inc.**, the leading catalog company serving the Christian market. Terms of the sale were not disclosed. **Gaylord** has also sold its Opryland KOA Kampground back to **KOA, Inc.** The purchase price was not disclosed...**CountryCool.com** closed up shop on Jan. 31. The site was launched in 1996 and closed despite efforts by executives to secure more funds or form a strategic partnership.

**GASSNER DIES**—**Rudi Gassner** died Dec. 23 of an apparent heart attack while vacationing in Germany. The 58-year-old music executive had been forced out of **BMG** last February in power struggles with **Strauss Zelnick** over issues concerning **Clive Davis** and **Zomba Records**. He was scheduled to become **BMG** CEO on Jan. 1, 2001 in the wake of the ouster last November of **BMG** Chairman **Michael Dornemann** and **BMG** President/CEO **Strauss Zelnick** by **Thomas Middelhoff**. The company has since named **Rolf Schmidt-Holtz** as President/CEO of **BMG** Entertainment. **Holtz** previously served as Chief Creative Officer of **Bertelsmann's** Executive Board.

**CURB DONATIONS**—**Mike Curb** is donating \$10 million to **Belmont University** through the **Mike Curb Family Foundation**. In addition to expanding the educational opportunities for the School of Music Business, the gift will fund the construction of the **Curb Events Center**, a 5,000-seat multi-use facility. **MR**

## MUSICAL CHAIRS

**CMT** has promoted **Paul Hastaba** to Senior VP/GM; **Stacey Killian Hagewood** to VP Creative; and **Chris Parr** to VP, Music and Talent. Also, **Dixie Weathersby** has joined **CMT** as publicist...**Brenner Van Meter** has joined the team at **Dreamcatcher Artist Management**. **Van Meter** has been appointed Director, **Dreamcatcher Artist Management**. She will be the day-to-day contact for **Sara Evans**, as well as have other responsibilities within the **Dreamcatcher** organization...**Stokes Bartholomew Evans & Petree, PA.**, announced that entertainment and intellectual property attorney **Linda F. Edell** has joined the firm, heading its new Music Row office. **Edell** will lead the Entertainment & New Media practice group...**Dickinson Music** has named **Karen Russell** Manager/SongPluggger. She can be reached at 244-3570 or [Onemosong@aol.com](mailto:Onemosong@aol.com)...



Hastaba



Hagewood



Parr



Weathersby



Edell



Moore



Mark Janese

created position of Corporate Director of Artist Affairs...**Gary L. Churgin**, former VP Citibank, has become the new President/CEO of **Harry Fox Agency (HFA)**. **Churgin** will report directly to the boards of **HFA** and **National Music Publishers Association**...**Todd Flentje** has been appointed Southeast Regional Promotions Manager for **Epic**...**Dolores Canavan** joins **Naxos of America** as Marketing Manager...**George Briner** has been promoted to Co-National West, Promotion & Marketing for **DreamWorks**...**Jerry Cupit** has been named President and **Billy Wilbanks** is VP Operations at the newly-launched **HotSong.com Records**. The label will specialize in country, Americana and Christian music. For more info call 615-717-0027 or visit [www.HotSong.com](http://www.HotSong.com)...**TBA Entertainment** announced it will be acquiring **Moore Entertainment**. **Steve Moore**, President of **Moore Entertainment**, will join **TBA** as Executive VP and will focus his efforts on **TBA's** entertainment marketing services division...**Greg Janese** has been named President of **TBA Entertainment Corporation** and succeeds company founder **Thomas A.**



Wornick



Woods



Slinger



Wagnon

**Weaver**, who continues as Chairman and CEO...**Provident Music Distribution** has announced several promotions. **Randy Davis** has been promoted to VP of Sales. **Rich Serpa** has been promoted to National Director of Field Sales. **Rod Riley** has been promoted to Director of National Accounts and **Tim Marshall** has been promoted to Director of Sales and Marketing Systems...**Mark Janese** has been promoted to Associate Director of Regional Country Promotion for **Columbia** and **Lucky Dog**...**John Padgett** has been promoted to VP/GM of Nashville radio stations **WSM** and **WWTN**. He replaces **Bob Meyer**, who is retiring...**Leigh Brannon** has joined **Murrah Music** as Special Project Coordinator...**Ann Wornick** has joined **Capitol** as Sales Operations Manager...**Ken Woods** has joined **Delta Disc** as Director of Sales and Distribution...**John Slinger** joins **The Filmworkers' Club/Nashville** as Senior Editor/Henry Infinity Artist...**Cornelius & Collins** has expanded their practice to include entertainment and sports law, hiring entertainment lawyer **Deborah Wagnon** to manage the department. **MR**

# AMA WINNERS

The American Music Awards, which aired Jan. 8 on ABC, were full of country fair as Faith Hill accepted three trophies, SHeDAISY rocked, Martina McBride ruled, and Billy Gilman brought the crowd to its feet.

And the winners are...

- Pop/rock female artist:** Faith Hill
- Country male artist:** Tim McGraw
- Country female artist:** Faith Hill
- Country band, duo or group:** Dixie Chicks
- Country new artist:** Billy Gilman
- Country album:** *Breathe*, Faith Hill



## Musicians Get MADD

Eight-year music industry veteran Becky Sowers was shocked when she took over as Executive Director of the Middle Tennessee chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). "The Southeast is the worst region in the country [for drunk driving]," she says. "And Tennessee is the worst state in the region. I am astounded at how backwards it is. You have people getting off who have killed. It's frightening."



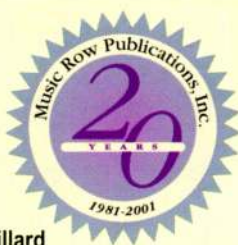
Bob DiPiero

Turning to her friends in the entertainment business, Sowers brainstormed a songwriters show to raise awareness and funds for MADD. Songwriter Bob DiPiero will host the quarterly series of shows, dubbed "MADD About Bob," at Nashville's Belcourt Theatre. "Originally we thought about doing two," DiPiero says, "but as Becky started getting other industry people on board, there seemed to be a lot of interest and excitement for the idea. So, it grew into four shows." The first is scheduled for Feb. 8, featuring DiPiero, Vince Gill, Al Anderson and Jeffrey Steele.

"I don't think it's my place to sermonize or soapbox," DiPiero says. "My job is to entertain and bring some joy into a place where there is a lot of sadness. Hopefully these shows will be a celebration of what MADD has accomplished, as well as a remembrance of people who have been affected tragically by drunk drivers."

—Chuck Aly

### FROM THE ARCHIVES SEPTEMBER 1982



In an article titled "Is Vinyl On The Way Out," *Music Row's* Bob Millard asks the late Joe Talbot, "Could vinyl records be pushed out of the way by cassettes or some other medium in the foreseeable future?"



**Talbot:** "It's very possible. ...I've been to a couple of meetings out of town lately trying to get a little better handle on that and I see the little three-and-three-quarters inch Sony disc that's digitally recorded and read by a laser beam and it's almost indestructible."

### The Buzz

#### Declaration of Independents Edition

Fighting the majors can be brutal, but at least most indies are in it for the music. How refreshing.

- MTV**—Kicks off anti-hate campaign with TV movie. It's sandwiched in between the Insane Clown Posse and Eminem videos.
- Mergers**—Steve Case wants to "embed the AOL/TW experience more deeply" in our lives. Can we get a little foreplay first?
- BMG**—Execs changing faster than Faith Hill's hairstyles.
- President Bush**—Redecorates Oval Office. Sources indicate he had the carpet cleaned five times.
- Temptation Island**—Eight programmers stranded with 20 cash-heavy promo types pushing bad music. Now that's reality-based TV.

## Site Survey: Where The Industry Surfs

In our ever-inquisitive manner, *Music Row* asked those in the music industry to tell us where they surf on the Web. Here's what they had to say:



**TIM MCFADDEN**  
Owner, Tim McFadden Promotions

[www.chopra.com](http://www.chopra.com)

Deepak Chopra's site includes essays, articles and daily meditations.

[www.crayon.net](http://www.crayon.net)

You customize a daily "newspaper" with links to all sorts of newspapers around the world, plus sports, lifestyles, entertainment, etc.

[www.urbanlegends.about.com/culture/urbanlegends/msubabt.htm](http://www.urbanlegends.about.com/culture/urbanlegends/msubabt.htm)

A site that keeps track of all the urban legends, hoaxes and e-mail junk chain letters that clog up the servers.

[www.netradio.com](http://www.netradio.com)

My favorite radio site. I surf around and listen to different format sites with music I don't hear anywhere else.



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## NOISE MAKERS

*Said, sung or heard in Nashville*



**Harold Shedd**—On opening an independent record company: "...Joe Galante indicated we don't need any more record labels. Well, we don't. We need some music, though." (See page 9)



**"There Is No Arizona"**—Jamie O'Neal's debut single hits top five, powering album sales past 100k units.



**O Brother, Where Art Thou**—Soundtrack sees 52 percent increase for week ending 1/14. Somebody give that Clooney guy a contract.



**"It's A Great Day To Be Alive"**—The SPI panel gives Travis Tritt's latest release a smashing 8.61. (@*MusicRow* No. 51)



**Jon Anthony**—WMZQ APD/MD on radio reality: "There's a perception that if an artist isn't on a major label that the talent level isn't as high." (See page 16)

**When It All Goes South**—*Music Row's* Ron Young calls album number 23 "Bama's best yet." (See page 36)

**"Rose Bouquet"**—Phil Vassar's new single has "Song of the Year" written all over it," according to RKO. (@*MusicRow* No. 52)

**Imminent Impact:**

## Mark McGuinn

If independent labels hope to make a serious run at mainstream country success it will take more than occasional chart flashes by familiar names like Kenny Rogers or T. Graham Brown. Any serious challenge to the country machine's status quo begs the breakthrough of a new artist with fresh, undeniable music. Enter Mark McGuinn.

With a sound heavy on banjo and drum loops, the 32-year-old former semi-pro soccer player is making a startling first impression. VFR Records began set-up work for the first single, "That's A Plan," late last year. By January, however, the label began to see monitored airplay on another song from a sampler they'd sent to influential stations. Turning on a dime, VFR shelved the video for "That's A Plan," switched singles and advanced the add date to February 12.

The new single, "Mrs. Steven Rudy," pines for a married neighbor, and is being showcased for radio and retail accounts in an acoustic setting that includes, banjo, guitar, drum machine and djembe drum. "His acoustic combination is a real asset," says VFR Director/National Promotion Nancy Tunick. One such performance for

VFR's distributor, Red, provided an early indication of McGuinn's appeal. "They had a lot of urban field staff there," Tunick recalls, "and they dug it. They said, 'This is like urban country.' When [Red President] Ken Antonelli heard the record he left Paul Lucks a voice mail that talked about how it was the greatest project he'd heard in years."

Lucks, VFR's Managing Director/Operations, is hopeful the project will be the exception to mainstream country's rule about independent product. "We're not at all trying to compete with the majors," he admits. "But when something like Mark McGuinn presents itself, the playing field is leveled. It may actually give us an edge. Radio is looking for something fresh and unique. If they're given it, I think they'll support it. We're already seeing that."

McGuinn, from Greensboro, N.C., secured a Nashville publishing deal, and his first cut, "Unusually Unusual," will be on Lonestar's next release. He came to Music City intent on being an artist, however, and VFR was eager to sign him. Tunick recalls the first time she heard a McGuinn-produced and performed demo of the Lonestar cut. "I was stunned," she says. "It was a hit song, incredible production and great vocal. When I came in the next day I told Harold to get a

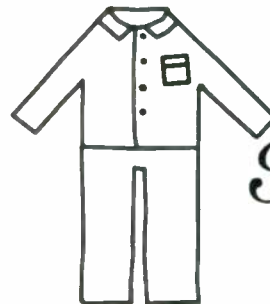
napkin and pen and sign him before somebody else does."

Managing Director/Creative for VFR, Shedd was enthused by McGuinn's artistic vision. "He had probably two thirds of the album done as demos," Shedd recalls. "We upgraded them to master and went from there. We did go back and recut a couple of things, but it was already so unique as it was.

"He's in a place musically that fills a huge void in the market and at radio," Shedd continues. "We need music that is more exciting and certainly more informative and interesting at radio. We feel like this is a step in that direction."

—Chuck Aly





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# Can Independents Fill the Creative Hole in Mainstream Country?

by Chuck Aly

Country music's ongoing marketplace slide can hardly be blamed on a lack of marketing muscle. More than 2,000 radio stations continue to play Nashville's music, country videos continue to anchor a handful of cable networks, and Music Row maintains strong retail relationships. Nowhere is this fact more evident than on the sales charts, where the best country music more than holds its own. If there is a finger to be pointed amidst country's declining market share, however, it is at an overall body of music less compelling than its competition. As country radio narrowcasts to its desired niche, and major labels play follow the leader, a question arises for the hearty few independents focused on mainstream country: Has a creative window opened for innovative and nimble independents seeking mass market nirvana?

The most intriguing answer to this question may come from one-year-old VFR Records and newcomer Mark McGuinn. Already earning substantial monitored airplay with an innovative sound described as "urban country," McGuinn has the potential to open doors long



Harold Shedd

closed to independents. Harold Shedd, VFR's Managing Director/Creative, says the time is right. "Back when we were opening up I read an article where Joe Galante indicated we don't need any more record labels," he says. "Well, we don't. We need some music, though. If independent labels are the only way to get that, then there's a great opportunity."

## ATTITUDES

One of the keys to any creative resurgence will be dispensing with preconceptions about what works. "Our whole concept was to find music we really liked and believed in, then try to figure out where it fits," Shedd explains. "We're not trying to do something for a particular format. For our industry to get out of the funk it's in, we're going to have to find better music."

"We're not naive enough to think we're going to replace anybody," Shedd continues. "A major label given the same amount of money will get more bang for the buck. But we do have a solidly financed company, so we figure on a level field we can compete. More so from the creative standpoint than from anything else."

That kind of thinking has been at the core of Nashville's most remarkable independent label success story. "Our mentality isn't different from a major," asserts Dreamcatcher VP/Creative Bob Burwell. "We started out focused around Kenny Rogers, got a couple hits and sold a million records. We don't perceive ourselves as [working the fringe]. We're playing a mainstream game."



Bob Burwell



Ree Guyer Buchanan

WE Records, a partnership between flagship artist Sherrié Austin and successful independent publisher Ree Guyer Buchanan, operates on a very simple premise. "As I've done with my publishing company, I work with stuff I love. And I figure if I love it, somebody else will. You're still looking for art to meet commerce, but I want to give an opportunity to people who want to find another way to do things."

## BUDGET BALANCE

Many have openly questioned the expense major labels attribute to producing an album project. For independents, finding ways to make competitive recordings for less than the hundreds of thousands spent by bigger companies is more than a nice idea...it's a necessity.

"Most of the artists we sign aren't new, so they tend to have a good sense of who they are and what they want to do in the studio," says



Nick Hunter

Audium's Nick Hunter. "They don't have the highest budgets, but they're experienced enough to know how to work efficiently. There's not a lot of experimentation going on. "We spend the biggest part of our budgets on promotion and marketing," Hunter adds. "Over the past year we've averaged \$75,000 to \$80,000 on making a record. We're doubling that in most cases for promotion and marketing. It's a sad commentary, but how much money you spend on marketing and promotion has more to do with it than what you put into the production."

Most agree that production expenses don't have to break the bank. "A lot of the \$300,000 CDs are cut on an ADAT in someone's kitchen," Shedd says. "It's not like those budgets go to great studios, they don't. Everyone has their own room."

"We all know it doesn't take a quarter million to create a great record," agrees Broken Bow VP of A&R Chris Neese. "You'd be



Chris Neese

surprised at how people are willing to help create art. It's one thing to clock in and clock out and have the job dictated to you. It's another thing to have the opportunity to create free flow art form. We just finished a record I'm really proud of that the musicians did on a low budget, and the tracks are phenomenal because they had that freedom."

Holding fast to a major label mindset, Dreamcatcher isn't limiting its recording budgets. "Let me put it this way," Burwell says, "Marshall Dyllon wouldn't have gotten near the budget we put on that project from any of

the majors. For Kenny's record, we made a financially substantial record. We watch our pennies, we have to. But if we do something we don't skimp, be it a record or video. We either do it as well as everybody else or we're just not going to do it. We don't want to come across looking like the poor stepchild label."

And perceptions can be important. "A lot of people think it can't possibly be good if you don't spend a lot of money on it," Hunter notes. "Radio, too. Give a programmer a record that cost \$75,000 and one that cost \$375,000 and there's an assumption that the more expensive one is better."

## MUSIC MATTERS

Not only must independents make competitive recordings, the artists and material must be as compelling as that found on major labels, if not more so. "It's the same way I feel about being an independent publisher," Buchanan says. "Your music has to stand out."

Whereas major labels often lock independents out of mainstream airplay, competition for songs isn't as one-sided. "When we first started looking for Kenny, he hadn't been on the radio or selling a lot of records," Burwell admits. "Do you have guys jumping up and down to give you the best tunes? Probably not. Even so, he's still Kenny Rogers and there were a lot of people dying to get a Kenny Rogers cut. But I don't think independents are at a disadvantage. Early on in the Marshall Dyllon project we ran into Phil Vassar, who basically opened up his catalog for them and said, 'What is it you want?' At the time he was the reigning ASCAP Songwriter of the Year and having his own first top five single."

Buchanan feels independent status may actually be an advantage during a song search. "I maybe have a little more time," she says, "or would cut something that's not mainstream." She also notes that working with singer/songwriters eases the pressure.

Neese, who is also focused on writer-artists, agrees. "I have done song searches for a couple of acts to augment what they already have. But I haven't seen a problem. With the belt tightening going on, people are looking for cuts. Publishers recognize the market has opened up and created room for independents to make their songs potentially worth something. The next big thing could come from anywhere."

And that, of course, keeps independent labels striving for mainstream success. If they can avoid the major label pitfall of allowing marketing and promotion concerns to dominate creative decision making, the lockout may be over. "I've worked at three major labels, and the reason I did this is I wanted to be able to create marketing plans around art instead of molding art to fit a system," Neese says. "That's the beauty of being an independent. We have that freedom." **MIR**

# Americana, Where Art Thou?

by John Hood

**A**s a radio format still in its infancy, Americana almost died in its crib last October when Gavin decided to discontinue publishing the Americana chart. Fortunately, what could have become a tragedy turned into a rallying point for those involved.

In November, over 350 people (more than double the expected turnout) attended the First Annual Americana Music Conference in Nashville. That led to frank and, at times, heated discussions about the future of the format and what to do about a chart. Now, all indications point toward the chart's revival in the near future.

So, the baby is recovering and, with the reintroduction of a chart, seems poised to begin taking steps toward adolescence, if not adulthood.

## What's In A Name?

One of the most lively debates at the Americana conference focused on whether the genre had to be better defined in order to be

marketed effectively. Everyone, it seemed, had a different opinion on the subject. And it appears they still do.

"The format is actually defined by the music and the artists making the music," says J.D. May, GM of Dead Reckoning. "I'm just a big believer that you know it when you hear it and you let the superstars in the format define what the music is going to be."



Steve Wilkison

Steve Wilkison, President of Eminent Records, believes time will help clarify the issue. "I'm not sure it's a matter of better defining it so much as better exposing it. If you look at jazz, rock, pop or soul, each of those formats covers a pretty wide array of music. They've just been around long enough for people to know, for example, what rock is. I think that's going to happen with Americana."



Gary West

"I think the definition of Americana could be too broad, at least as it relates to our experience," says Gary West, Co-owner of Compass Records.

He also believes that giving the format a name isn't going to sell any records. "It's tough to take records that fit into a previously unnamed genre that might sell anywhere from 2,000 to 50,000 units and then expect them to sell a lot more just because somebody tagged the genre with a new name. Maybe we expect too much of a name."

## Charting Success

No official announcement has been made as of press time, but several sources indicate that *Album Network* will begin publishing a new Americana chart, possibly as early as this month. Which begs the question, how important is a radio chart to the format?

"It's important," says Wilkison, "but it's not the only thing. Radio in every format is becoming harder and harder for independent labels. That world is just so expensive."

"The chart is another piece of the puzzle," says May. "The nice thing about a chart is it's something that people all over the world can put their fingers on. It also gives the consumer a place to look at 40 or 50 artists where they know five or 10 and say, 'I think I'll check out some of these other guys.'"

"Everything helps," says Al Bunetta of Oh Boy Records. "If they narrowed the chart down and played the same 20 or 40 songs everyday, then you'd have something where

people would say, 'I've heard this record.' Then if traditional brick and mortar supported that, it would help with sales."

Bunetta touches on another key issue, whether or not chart success translates into sales success.

According to West, it didn't for Compass. "Unfortunately the chart didn't really have an impact on sales. You had the same radio exposure for a roots oriented record that you always did. Why should that record then suddenly sell more because somebody decided to call it Americana?"

"Success on the charts did translate into better sales," states Wilkison, "but not as much as I'd like to see. The problem right now is that most of the stations playing Americana are not in the major markets and that's obviously going to affect your sales."

"Sales are more a function of how significant a radio station is in the city it's located in," says May. "You might see a small increase here and there. For the major labels looking for platinum and multi-platinum records those increases would be so small they would consider it a failure. That's not the level we operate on. If we sell 20,000 or 30,000 records, that's a successful and profitable record the way we run our business."

Although different labels had different experiences translating chart success into sales success, they all seemed to agree that for the chart to really have an impact there must be more stations in bigger markets.

Wilkison says, "as the format continues to grow, we've got to get more stations in major markets. We've got to get more stations that are all Americana format instead of specialty shows. It's great that a guy in Milwaukee has an Americana show on Sunday afternoons, but really, how much impact is that going to have?"

"We need to grow the number of quality stations that are playing a full-time Americana format," echoes May. "There needs to be key stations in key markets. It would be nice to have two or three hundred stations, but I'd trade that for 40 or 50 that do a really good job. Just like the music, we're trying to stress quality over quantity."

"I'd love to have a thousand Americana stations to send stuff to," concludes Bunetta. "Will that happen? It depends. Are we ever going to be more important to the pedestrian world than Britney Spears or 'NSync? I don't think so. If we keep nurturing the format and as the public becomes more aware of it, we'll get more airplay. But as long as the kids are buying the music, we're never going to be the obvious choice." **MJR**

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# Marketing and PR for Indies: The Basics

by Richard McVey II

The basic motive behind marketing and publicity for any label, independent or major, is to bring attention to the artists and their music. It's a simple concept, but for budget crunched independents the shotgun approach taken by many of their major label counterparts is not the answer. Instead indies have to focus their attention on a more micro-cosmic level.

"You have to take little steps and find out where you get little niches," says Jeff Walker of



Jeff Walker

AristoMedia, which handles press for several independents including Sherrié Austin and Len Doolin. "You can't expect overnight success, because you've got to build on these pockets. Once you get these, you can take it to

the next level.

"More specifically," he adds, "you build up from the reviews you get. You build up a press kit. You build up a collection of quotes and step by step you start to establish an identity and a base for that artist."



Mike Martinovich

Mike Martinovich, owner of Martinovich Associates, agrees. "Independent labels have to be more resourceful in their marketing efforts. They have to rely more heavily on local and regional press,

touring, Internet, video and other non-traditional street buzz to reach prospective consumers. They also have to focus a lot more on secondary and tertiary radio."

Yet if you're an indie, before you get too excited about hitting these "niches" and focused "pockets," it's important not to get ahead of yourself. The experts say not to jump in blindly, but to start with a plan of attack that will ultimately encompass a big-picture view. "You have to have a marketing plan the same way the major labels do," explains Walker. In that plan, he says, it's important to address strengths and weaknesses, and to go to those market strengths and make sure you're in sync with the imaging of others. It's also crucial to realize that the product is competing with the major labels, whether it's the music or the packaging.

Martinovich, whose marketing clients include major and independent labels, offers this valuable tip. "One of the biggest mistakes people make in marketing is that they sit back and say, 'What are the must-haves? What are the standard things to do?' You really have to look at the artist and feel intuitively what that artist and their music is about. Then you carve a plan, starting from zero-based thinking."



Traci Thomas

Part of any good plan involves a good team. But the question arises as to who's on the team. According to publicist Traci Thomas, whose clients include Steve Earle and Trent Summar, the team needs to encompass press, radio and retail. "You have to have all the pieces of the puzzle there before you begin," she says.

Publicist Martha Moore, who handles publicity for The Brooklyn Cowboys, Hank Cochran and Nuance Records, explains further. "When a label comes to me, I say, 'Do you have your radio promotion in place?' 'Do you have retail in place?' They have to have



Martha Moore

their team together. Luckily, there's an intense communication and a true team spirit with independents which makes things easier."

A good rule of thumb, according to the experts, is to have the team in place two to three months in advance of an album's release date. And all agree that touring is essential to optimize any strategy. "It's critical for artists to tour with their album," says Moore. "There are many newspapers that unless there is a local tie, they won't do anything. But if they're touring, it gives me a reason to call and tell them my client's story."

One group that's incorporated touring into their marketing strategy is The Great Divide, who are promoting their latest album, *Afterglow: The Will Rogers Sessions*. "We put together a street team concept," says Martinovich, "where we're doing secondary and tertiary radio. We're constructing very specific micro-marketing plans around each of their tour dates involving a street team to get the word out. There's between 15-20 people per market on the street team, which is comprised of people at record retail, a lot of Mom and Pop-type retail operations, and college kids. We've done that in 12-15 markets so far, and it's a building process. One of the goals with this is to build bigger audiences at their shows and heighten their presence in the marketplace."

All admit, however, that the best plan and all the money in the world won't help a project if the product isn't any good. Moore explains, "To get into *People* and *USA Today* it's still all about the music. First off, you have to have great music and then a great story that goes with it. It's an uphill battle to get that exposure because even though my client Hank Cochran is well known, he's still competing for space against Eminem. And there's only so much space in a publication to review albums."

Martinovich, a 30-year music veteran, best sums up the keys to any great marketing and PR strategy. "Overall, you have to have a great artist who you feel can make a difference," he says. "They can't be a clone of what already exists. Plus, you have to have a vision for your company, and you have to have the financial wherewithal to be around for a while. Whether we like it or not, the reality is that an independent label has got to have the resources to compete with the majors." **MJR**

## TIPS ON...

**VIDEO**—Video has been an excellent tool. It gives independents a national audience to broaden the appeal of the artist. In the old days the artist had to tour for two or three years to get the sort of recognition they can now get in five weeks by appearing on the national networks like CMT or GAC or the network of regional shows out there.

—Jeff Walker

**ARTISTS REPRESENTING THEMSELVES**—Journalists don't particularly like to be called by artists because it puts them in an awkward situation if they're not into the project. I've seen some artists do a fine job, but it's a fine line.

—Traci Thomas

**USING THE INTERNET**—The Internet has opened up so many doors PR wise. It's more efficient to e-mail than to call sometimes. Sending JPEG's is cheaper, a lot cheaper than mass producing press kits.

—Martha Moore

A lot of times when an independent artist calls me I don't recommend they hire us unless they have an avenue to sell their records. It doesn't make sense to do the press unless they can find the record. One of my favorite outlets for that is milesOfMusic.com, they're one of the best independent outlets for artists to sell their records.

—Traci Thomas



## A Nashville Major Takes on Indie Sensibilities

by Richard McVey II

The idea of a major record company getting excited about an album selling 100,000 units in today's market sounds absurd. But Sony Nashville is not only pleased with these figures, they're elated. The cause for celebration comes from a new way of doing business via their imprint Lucky Dog Records, which boasts a roster comprised of Charlie Robison, Bruce Robison, Jack Ingram and BR5-49.

Instead of acting like a big-budgeted major label, Lucky Dog has taken cues from independent labels, which operate on a grass roots level and measure their success with smaller sales and even smaller budgets. *Music Row* spoke with Mike Kraski, Sr. VP Sales & Marketing for Sony Music Nashville, to learn more about the concept and future of Lucky Dog Records.



Mike Kraski

### Music Row: Why was Lucky Dog formed?

It was Blake Chancey's brainchild. Initially it started with a different premise. There are a number of heritage country artists that are no longer on major labels that tour extensively and maintain an active and dedicated fan base. The question was, is there a way for us to sign these artists and to be able to do an independent label type deal with these guys with lower production costs, a lower marketing budget and use the extensive distribution system that only a big company has. That's how it started. In the midst of it, we had an early sense of alt.country or what everybody's calling Americana. Then it was the same question again. How can independent labels do this and major labels can't? We expanded Lucky Dog as we progressed and it's become more of the latter than the former at this point.

### MR: How did things go at first?

There were trips and stumbles. We did learn along the way that the big record companies aren't really good at this. (Laughs) But we learned how to become much better at it. We learned that it is harder to do low budget production deals when you're part of a major company because everyone has expectations. You have to sit down and make sure the artists that you sign are signed on for this philosophy that a Lucky Dog deal is different from the other kind of deals. Yes, we'll give you absolute, total artistic freedom to express yourself, but there's a price you pay. And the price is that it's a lower budget deal because it isn't geared toward the mainstream.

We had to learn how to grass roots market, and how to actually support a small club tour around the U.S. We've had some successes already. We're close to 100,000

units net on Charlie Robison, which is extraordinary for a first album on an act that did not receive any kind of mainstream country radio play. If we were never to have mainstream radio success, I still think Charlie will have a core fan base of somewhere between 150,000 and half a million fans just by continually touring and critical acclaim. Jack Ingram is going to realize the same type of success in the short term, without depending on the mainstream country radio success.

Where our philosophy differs from some other label concepts is, the acts that we sign, we believe have an important place in the future of mainstream country music. That's where ours is a little different than the new imprint Luke Lewis (at Mercury) is developing that has more

of a Triple A kind of intent behind it. I mean, Charlie Robison is a country artist. Same thing with Jack Ingram and BR5-49. These are country artists and if mainstream country radio is going to be fresh and compelling they're going to need artists like our artists on Lucky Dog to be part of the mainstream format. Our philosophy was never limited to "no airplay." It was building a business model that allowed these artists to find their own artistic direction and still be able to be a revenue neutral or profitable situation for all parties. And that's what it has been.

### MR: With this concept being so new, how did you go about setting up a budget?

We really left the budget open-ended. We had to experiment. You take unit assumptions then you figure how you can be profitable within that framework. This forces you to be a lot more strategic in your thinking. You can't do \$100,000 videos on Lucky Dog acts. We have a great video commissioner, our head of artist development, who has a degree in film, that found hungry young directors that wanted to get their foot in the door. We succeeded in having a number of \$25,000 or so cost videos on Charlie and Jack.

### MR: Has the knowledge you've learned from Lucky Dog helped with the other Sony labels?

Absolutely. We've gotten much better at focusing on making the artists stars on a marketplace by marketplace basis. When things were so great in country music in the early '90s, we all got kind of casual about taking the big shotgun approach at making a national star out of everyone. The fact of the matter is, that doesn't happen all that often. Where you have some glowing embers on a market by market basis, you have to learn how to pour gasoline on those embers until you have enough that you can build that into a national breakthrough. That's what the country business used to be. It's harder and more time consuming, but it's as effective, if not more so if you do it right.

### MR: How big is the Lucky Dog staff?

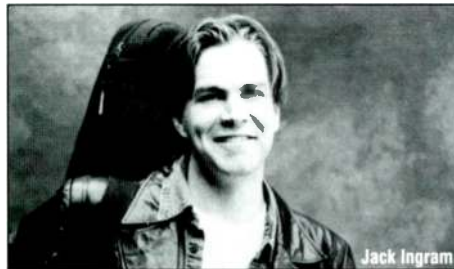
There's not a Lucky Dog staff for all intent and purposes. One of my product managers, Tracy McGlocklin happens to oversee all of our Lucky Dog artists from a product management and marketing vantage point. One of my in-house media people, Anita Mandell, she also has all of the Lucky Dog artists. Mark Janese in Texas works for Columbia as a regional promotion person and has just taken on a Lucky Dog promotion responsibility as well. Officially we don't have a staff, but we have a handful of people within the organization that have a tremendous passion for it and Lucky Dog is part of their responsibilities.



Charlie Robison



Bruce Robison



Jack Ingram



BR5-49

**MR: With things being on a smaller scale, how do you measure success?**

It's growth more than anything else. Charlie is an anomaly at this point. The test will be what happens from the first Jack Ingram album to the second. If we double our sales base in that time, regardless of the units, that's satisfactory growth for me. We have to take a long term perspective in supporting Lucky Dog acts. If the next Charlie Robison album is less than a 100,000 units, it's a dismal failure. If it's more than 150,000 units then it's a success by any standard because we're growing his audience in a significant way.

**MR: What are your aspirations for country radio with these artists?**

I can't answer that because I can't read into the mind of country radio. I am hopeful that country radio has the courage to give Lucky Dog acts a shot because country radio is going to be the biggest beneficiary of that courage. Acts like Charlie Robison and Jack Ingram could represent the next Outlaw movement in country music. Things have gotten so soft and so passive in presentation and content and politically correct that it's not honest anymore. Anytime you see this happen there's a swing back aggressively in the other way. We need musical leaders to do that and our industry leaders have to allow us to find those musical leaders. We have a listener base that's running screaming from radio out of boredom. There's nothing boring about these acts. There's a lot of independent labels that have these type of acts. They can be a part of this process as well. It's going to start at radio at one point if radio is smart about it. I think it's this year. It has to be this year.

**MR: Has there been any reaction from independent labels to what you're doing?**

There are different camps. Some independents look upon us as carpet baggers. Others realize that we could be the ones to build the bridge to mainstream acceptance so they can follow. In the short term there's a great opportunity for all the independent labels because they've been the courageous ones for the past decade in allowing these artists to find their voice and audience. They should reap the benefits as it grows.

**MR: Do you expect more major labels to try this?**

If Charlie breaks through, every label in town will try to find their own alt.country version of Charlie Robison.

**MR: Where do you see Lucky Dog in the future?**

I see it as being a much bigger roster that will house a number of realistic acts that won't have a realistic place in mainstream country radio. The requirements of Lucky Dog artists are that they tour aggressively, that they are true to country music and that they are unique and compelling in their own right. Another portion of the label will be acts like Charlie Robison and Jack Ingram that will have a place at country radio as well. **MR**



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# Distribution Solution

by John Hood

The relationship between a record label and a distributor is vitally important, especially where independent labels are concerned. Returned records can be the death of a small label, so they have to work closely with their distributors to place the right amount of product in the right outlets. *Music Row* spoke with Allison Brown and Gary West, owners of Compass Records; Al Bunetta, President, Oh Boy Records; and Steve Wilkison, President, Eminent Records to get their take on the world of distribution.



Al Bunetta

"What we look for is an understanding of what we're selling," says Bunetta. "It's a niche market we're in and we all have to know collectively where we're going—what types of stores we want to sell our product in, what stores we want to do our campaigns in."

Wilkison feels it is harder and harder for independents to place their product in stores, so that's where Eminent looks for help from their distributor. "There are two parts of distributing records. One is getting them into the stores. That's our distributor's job," he says. "The second is getting people to go in and buy them. That's our job. In the record business all product is returnable. You can have a great distributor placing 50,000 records in the stores, but if a year later only 2,000 people went in and bought those records, you're going to get 48,000 records back. That's killed a lot of labels over the years."

"What we look for in distribution is good product representation, plenty of field personal to solicit our records to the proper retail outlets, and good communication," says West, whose label is home to Victor Wooten, Paul Carrack and others.



Allison Brown

Brown adds, "The ability to access sales information on your artist electronically is really important. Some distributors are better at providing access to that online."

Speaking of online, independent labels, with their ability to move quickly and decisively, seem better positioned to take advantage of the Internet than their major label counterparts. Surprisingly, only Bunetta claimed significant growth in online sales.

"We do a considerable amount of business through our Website," he says. "Whenever we come out with a new John Prine record, we're usually Top 5 on sites like Amazon and CDNow. Our distributor fulfills orders for online retailers like that. We fulfill all the online sales that come through our site ourselves. We've got a great Website. We get between 30,000 and 40,000 thousand hits a week."

"It hasn't affected our distribution yet," says Wilkison, whose roster includes Greg Trooper and Rosie Flores. "We've seen some sales increase at Websites like CDNow and Barnes & Noble, but the vast majority of our sales are still going through traditional retail. Our distributor handles those sales as well."

"We haven't seen much of an increase in online sales," concurs West. "We've always had a pretty healthy direct order business. The way the Internet factors into our business is just as part of our direct-to-consumer business. Sales of product on our company Website don't seem to be increasing even though more people are using computers or shopping online."

One distribution opportunity independents take better advantage of than the majors is the

sale of records at live performances. In fact, the consensus seems to be that performance sales are an integral part of an independent label's business model.

"We encourage our artists to sell records at their shows. For developing artists, that's an important thing," says Wilkison. "That accounts for a lot of our sales. We sell the CDs to the artist at a reasonable price, then they can sell them at shows and make a good profit. For us, there's no downside to it. I'd love for our artists to sell even more at their shows. That's a captive audience. People go to a show and hear an artist and it's an impulse buy."

"Sometimes that's the best way to reach your target markets," says Brown. "As artists ourselves we recognize the importance of a label supporting an artist's touring efforts in a financial sense by encouraging them to sell records at their shows. So, that's something we emphasize."

"We've also set our company up with Soundscan," adds West. "We track artists sales at shows and report those to Soundscan, so those sales show up."

"No question about it," says Bunetta about performance sales, "we have to look for sales everywhere. If I can sell records to the artists at a fair price and they can make that \$3 or \$4 a record, then that gives them enough money to continue. It's also getting one fan at a time, one record at a time. That's what it's all about." **MIR**



Chris Parker

Chris Parker, a music industry veteran who founded Whistler's Entertainment, one of the more successful commercial jingle studios in the southeast, decided not to go the traditional route when he set up i.v. Records. He didn't seek a distributor and he doesn't plan to sell a lot of records on the i.v. imprint. So what's he up to? *Music Row* sat down with Parker to find out more about the business model behind i.v. and how he plans to make his company profitable.

## You say you're not really a record label, can you explain?

We came up with i.v. as an imprint name, but we're actually an artist development company.

We don't have any long term plans to become a full-fledged label with our own distribution. What we do best and what we're concentrating on is taking an artist who's not ready to go on a major label and putting them through our minor leagues. We have a development program that focuses on recording, their visual image, their live show, merchandising and developing a regional tour base.

## Why did you choose this business model?

Nobody's doing artist development. So, there's definitely a need there. There is such a great bubbling under of talent in Nashville, not only artists, but producers and engineers. We thought, 'Wow what a great community to be able to harvest from.'

## Where does your revenue come from?

We do a deal where we get points on the album. We also do a co-publishing deal with our artists when they sign with us. If we didn't have the co-publishing I'd never make any of my money back. Not even close. The way we're set up we need to have a significant artist, one who sells more than 100,000 records.

## What's in the future for i.v.?

We want to get Fair Verona off and running. We're really close to getting them signed. We've got Dexter Green and Louisa Lopez behind them. We should have their packages ready to go in the next year. We want to get those three acts into the pipeline and doing really well before we sign anymore acts. That's a lot of work right there.

**COUNTRY MUSIC CAREERS 101**, a new book for aspiring singers, songwriters and musicians will be made available through [www.MightyWords.com](http://www.MightyWords.com) in August of 2001. It will be country music author Carolyn Hollaran's sixth book.

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# The Improbability of Indies on Mainstream Radio

by Richard McVey II

Last May when independent label Dreamcatcher topped the charts with superstar Kenny Rogers' "Buy Me A Rose," the world of independent labels let out a collective, "Hey, maybe we can get on mainstream country radio." Nearly a year later, the charts, minus Dreamcatcher acts, are still barren of independent product with little hope in sight. It seems the waters of mainstream country radio are as tumultuous as ever for indies, perpetuated by stereotypes, major label influence and a lack of risk taking by radio stations. So what's an independent label trying to get widespread mainstream airplay to do?

The consensus seems to be, "Forget about it."



Jaye Albright

"Last year Dreamcatcher did something really great," says Jaye Albright, President, Country, McVay Media. "It was the combination of Kenny Rogers' name and a couple of really good songs and a tremendous marketing plan by a very aggressive promotion team that gave themselves six months to focus on one project. But that's given people false hope that five

other people can do the same thing, and I don't think they can."

Albright's sentiment is further enforced by the stereotype that indie artists are somehow sub-par to their major label counterparts. This, despite the fact that in genres like pop and rap, indie artists are mostly viewed as equals and often trendsetters. "There's a perception that if



Jon Anthony

an artist isn't on a major label that the talent level isn't as high," says Jon Anthony, APD/MD for WMZQ in Washington, D.C. "People don't think about it consciously, but it's somewhere in their thought process."

According to Bob Moody, VP, Country, McVay Media, "There's a self-fulfilling prophecy that a lot of programmers believe that an independent record can't be successful. It takes a really exceptional song to make it through. So if something is just good or a very good independent song, that's probably not good enough."

Although Moody can't recall recommending many independent artists over the years, he says he just recently gave a nod to indie artist Len Doolin on SunBird Records, but only after



Bob Moody

an exhaustive investigation. "The Len Doolin record is an optional add on my list this week," he says. "But that's only after I got a copy of the album to convince myself that it was more than a one-shot thing. I played it for programmers I work with and asked their opinion. I came away convinced that this was a record that could possibly break through."

Nick Hunter, President of Audium Records, thinks independents are just too risky for the play-it-safe shot-callers at country radio. "The problem at radio is everybody's neck is so much on the line," he says. "It's hard to step out because of the consequences if it fails. If you're successful in baseball three out of 10 times you can make \$14 million a year. In the music business, if you hit .300 they probably fire you."

When it comes to opportunities for independent artists, times are difficult even for well-known artist like Daryl Singletary and Ricky Van Shelton, who both had a hard time with their indie releases. Yet if the window is almost shut for famed artists, it's all but closed for new indie artists.

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"You're not going to get the resources (from an indie that) you get from a major label," explains Anthony. "You can take a risk to some extent on a major label with a new act knowing that the label is going to be behind you. They're putting a lot of money toward a listener show or they're committed to getting them hooked up on a national tour. There's a lot more strings the major labels can pull and you're hedging your bets better with a major label because of all the resources that they have to throw in." Anthony admits that Rogers is the sole indie artist his station has actively played in recent memory.

Yet if radio programmers and consultants aren't adding indies to playlists, the actions are certainly perpetuated if not influenced by the industry's 800 pound gorillas—the major labels—who have the financial clout and long-term relationships to promote and market artists on a whole different level. Moody says the majors don't actively discourage the playing of independent music, but they'll often ask, "How can you not be playing my record when you're playing Len Doolin?" or "My artist has sold all of these records and has a great video that's doing well on CMT, and you're playing this guy."

Bob Burwell, VP/Creative at Dreamcatcher, offers this example. "I can't come in and say if you'll play the new Jamie O'Neal record I'll get you an interview with Shania Twain. I've got Kenny Rogers and Marshall Dyllon to trade each other off of."

Albright, a 37-year radio veteran, believes that things are so tight at radio, even some of the major labels are having a hard time getting music played. "A couple of major labels have engineered a coup over the last couple of years on all the charts," says Albright. "Gavin, R&R and Billboard Airplay Monitor, are identical, because they're basically airplay monitor driven and the only difference is the supplier. As a result, the reporting panel is much smaller and the labels that engineered that and saw the advantage have really created a system that has made it very difficult for even real hits by major labels to get through."

"Unfortunately, there are some fundamental problems in the system itself that are going to make it tougher than ever for an independent. Because if Gary Allan on MCA, if Billy Gilman on Epic, if Daryl Worley on DreamWorks with the money those labels have are struggling, then just imagine."

In the end, the future for independents on radio looks bleak, but certainly not impossible as Dreamcatcher has proven. Yet despite this downtrodden outlook, there may be some indies like Len Doolin and VFR's Mark McGuinn who may just prove everyone wrong. But don't count on it. **MIR**

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# INDIE MUSIC SPECIAL

## Directory of Independent Labels

### **Aarrow Records**

POB 110455  
Nashville, TN 37222  
615-831-0872  
aarrowrec@aol.com

**Execs:** Ruthie Steele, President;  
Bethany Reynolds, VP/Creative Director  
**Roster:** Bill McConnell, Kitty Kelley, The EEEKKS,  
Nashville Nelly

### **Audium Records**

20 Academy Pl.  
Nashville, TN 37210

615-726-0060 Fax: 615-726-3788

audium@audiument.com • www.audiument.com  
**Execs:** Simon Renshaw, CEO; Nick Hunter, President  
**Roster:** Loretta Lynn, Ricky Van Shelton, Daryle Singletary, The Tractors, The Kentucky Headhunters,  
Billy Swan



### **Blue Hat Records**

1102 18th Ave. S.  
Nashville, TN 37212  
615-329-1102 Fax: 615-327-1103  
www.bluehatrecords.com

**Execs:** Alan Stewart, Angela  
Gresham-Wheeler, Ashley Corlew,  
Carole Chandler, Juli Newton, David Corlew  
**Roster:** The Charlie Daniels Band, Luke Reed,  
Sisters Wade, Bonnie Bramlett



### **Broken Bow Records**

646 W. Iris Dr.  
Nashville, TN 37204  
615-297-0148 Fax: 615-297-6423  
brokenbowrecords@aol.com •  
www.brokenbowrecords.com

**Execs:** Paul Brown, Director of Operations;  
Chris Neese, VP A&R; Mike Chapman, VP National  
Promotion; Jim Yenger, VP Marketing/Artist  
Development  
**Roster:** Damon Gray, Joanie Keller, Rick Stevens,  
Great Divide, Elbert West



### **Caption Records**

1300 Division St.  
Nashville, TN 37203  
615-244-8600 Fax: 615-244-3700  
caption1@bellsouth.net

**Execs:** Mike Borchetta, VP Promotion  
**Roster:** Ray Hood



### **CDMemphis.com**

149 Monroe Ave.  
Memphis, TN 38103  
901-544-9103 Fax: 901-543-0760



info@cdmemphis.com • www.cdmemphis.com

**Execs:** Norbert Putnam, CEO

**Roster:** Dobie Gray, Rufus Thomas, Ruby Wilson,  
Jerry Butler, Eddie Floyd, Jimmy Griffin, Don McMinn,  
CVC, Planet Swan

### **Compass Records**

117 30th Ave. S.  
Nashville, TN 37212  
615-320-7672 Fax: 615-320-7378  
info@compassrecords.com •  
www.compassrecords.com

**Execs:** Alison Brown, Owner; Garry West, Owner;  
Thad Keim, VP Sales & Marketing; Shari Lacy,  
Director of Publicity; David Haley, Director of Radio  
**Roster:** Alison Brown, Victor Wooten, Jeff Coffin,  
Swan Dive, Paul Carrack, Robbie McIntosh, Paul  
Brady, Kate Rusby, Fairport Convention, Eddi Reader,  
Vigilantes of Love, New Grange



### **Critter Records**

30 Music Sq. W. #202  
Nashville, TN 37203  
615-255-1212 Fax: 615-255-1414  
critterrec@aol.com

**Execs:** Joe Stampley, GM; Joe P. Ethridge, Head of  
Promotions; Terri Jo Stampley, Promotion Coordinator  
**Roster:** Billy Hoffman

### **Crossfield Records**

3003 Blakemore Ave.  
Nashville, TN 37212  
615-269-8661 Fax: 615-269-5999  
crossfield@crossfield.com •  
www.crossfield.com

**Execs:** Suzanne Elmer-King, President  
**Roster:** Cowboy Dan, Davis Raines, Tricia Walker



### **Dead Reckoning**

POB 159178  
Nashville, TN 37215  
615-321-0508

www.deadreckoners.com  
**Execs:** Harry Stinson, VP A&R; J.D. May, VP/GM  
**Roster:** Big House, Kieran Kane, Kevin Welch,  
Mike Henderson & the Bluebloods, Charlie Major,  
David Olney, Tammy Rogers, the Dead Reckoners,  
Dickie Freeman



### **DeltaDisc**

1114 17th Ave. S. #201  
Nashville, TN 37212  
615-329-4001 Fax: 615-329-0055  
www.deltadisc.com

**Execs:** Fred Clark, President/CEO;  
Tony Morris, Director of Artist Development;



Ken Woods, Director of Sales & Distribution;  
Jodi Laird, Promotion & Marketing Manager  
**Roster:** Beverly Ellis, Bellamy Brothers: The 25 Year  
Collection

### **Doobie Shea Records**

POB 68  
Boones Mill, VA 24065  
540-334-1118

bluegrass@doobieshea.com • www.doobieshea.com  
**Execs:** Tim Austin, President; Debbie Austin,  
Production Coordinator; Jeanette Williams, Radio  
Relations; Susan Sisk, Sales & Marketing; Donica  
Christensen, Print Media Relations  
**Roster:** Dan Tyminski, Mountain Heart, Dale Ann  
Bradley, Jeanette Williams, Craig Market, Kane's River



### **Dreamcatcher Records**

2910 Poston Ave.  
Nashville, TN 37203  
615-329-2303

Fax: 615-329-2350  
www.dreamcatcherenter.com  
**Execs:** Jim Mazza, President;  
Bob Burwell, VP Creative  
**Roster:** Kenny Rogers, Marshall Dyllon, Linda Davis



### **E-Squared**

1815 Division St. #206  
Nashville, TN 37203  
615-320-1200 Fax: 615-327-9455  
e2rex2@aol.com • www.e2records.com  
**Execs:** Jack Emerson, Owner/Operator; Steve Earle,  
Owner/Operator; Elisa Sanders, Label Manager  
**Roster:** Steve Earle, Marah, Varnaline, Cheri Knight

### **Eminent**

2410 Belmont Blvd.  
Nashville, TN 37212  
615-386-8373 Fax: 615-386-8379  
www.eminentrecords.com

**Execs:** Steve Wilkison, President  
**Roster:** Jon Randall, Kate Campbell, Greg Trooper,  
Eric Taylor, Heather Eatman, Elliott Murphy & Iain  
Matthews, Rosie Flores



### **FreeFalls Entertainment**

178 E. Washington St.  
Chagrin Falls, OH 44022  
440-247-5781

Fax: 440-247-7036  
www.freefalls.com  
**Execs:** Bob Freese, President; Lindsay Saylor,  
Coordinator  
**Roster:** Willie Nelson, Highway 101, Billy Burnette,  
Lee Greenwood, Shenandoah, Pat Haney



**Gearle Records**

POB 739  
Ashland City, TN 37015  
**615-792-9549** Fax: 615-792-6724  
gearlerecords@bellsouth.net •  
www.staceyearle.com  
**Execs:** Karen Stuart, Label Manager  
**Roster:** Stacey Earle, Mark Stuart



**Green Hill Productions**

2021 Richard Jones Rd. #180  
Nashville, TN 37215  
**615-383-5535** Fax: 615-383-6632  
greenhill@greenhillproductions.com •  
www.greenhillmusic.com  
**Execs:** Greg Howard, VP/GM  
**Roster:** Conceptual and instrumental recordings.



**Groovetone.com**

209 10th Ave. S. #409  
Nashville, TN 37203  
**615-301-8007**  
**Execs:** Nick Pellegrino, Creative Director; Holland Nix, A&R Assistant  
**Roster:** Walt Wilkins, Danny Flowers, Federal Weights And Measures

**Hightone Records**



220 Fourth St. #101  
Oakland, CA 94607  
**510-763-8500** Fax: 510-763-8558  
htrecords@aol.com • www.hightone.com

**Execs:** Larry Sloven, Bruce Bromberg, Managing Partners

**Roster:** Dave Alvin, James Armstrong, Aztex, astroPuppees, Big Sandy & his Fly-Rite Boys, Clarence Brewer, Bob Corritore, Deke Dickerson, Johnny Dilks, Ramblin' Jack Elliott, Chris Gaffney, Joe Goldmark, The Hollisters, Hot Club of Cowtown, James Keelaghan, Bill Kirchen, Kim Lenz, Carl Sonny Leyland, Little Willie G., Christy McWilson, Buddy Miller, Julie Miller, Katy Moffatt, Teddy Morgan, Geoff Muldaur, Mark Olson, Chuck Prophet, Tom Russell, Chris Smither, Sprague Brothers, Dave Stuckey, Hank Thompson, Redd Volkaert, Dallas Wayne, Randy Weeks, Rev. Billy C. Wirtz

**Hillsboro Jazz**

2021 Richard Jones Rd. #180  
Nashville, TN 37215  
**615-383-5535** Fax: 615-383-6632  
info@hillsborojazz.com • www.hillsborojazz.com  
**Execs:** Greg Howard, VP/GM  
**Roster:** Beegie Adair, Jack Jezzro, Antoine Silverman

**i.v. records**

1701 Church St.  
Nashville, TN 37203  
**615-320-1444**  
Fax: 615-3200750  
jdonaldson@ivrecords.com •  
www.ivrecords.com  
**Execs:** Chris Parker, CEO; Steve Keller, Director of A&R; Sean Brennen, GM  
**Roster:** Fair Verona, Dexter Green, Luisa Lopez



**IMI**

20 Music Square W. #106  
Nashville, TN 37203  
**615-255-0105** Fax: 615-255-5040  
IMImusic@juno.com • www.IMImusic.com  
**Execs:** Steve Ivey, Owner  
**Roster:** Crystal Gayle, Jesse Lee Campbell, Lynn Marie, Blindcamper, Ken Smith, BigStuf



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1100 18th Ave. S.  
Nashville, TN 37212  
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contactus@kinkajourecords.com •  
igorecords@aol.com •  
www.kinkajourecords.com • www.kaceyjones.com  
**Execs:** Kinkajou: Kinky Friedman, President; Kacey Jones, VP; Kezia Kidd, Label Manager; Peggy Bradley, Administrator; IGO: Kacey Jones, President; Kezia Kidd, VP; Peggy Bradley, Administrator  
**Roster:** Kinkajou: Kinky Friedman, Panama Red, Jonathan Yudkin & The Chainsmoking Altarboys, Clay Greenberg; IGO: Kacey Jones



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**Roster:** Confederate Fagg, The Visitors,  
Phone Militia, Red Martian, Celebrity Swearing



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7928 River Fork Dr.  
Nashville, TN 37221  
**615-673-2676** Fax: 615-662-7984  
rheatherly@home.com • www.musiccityrecords.com  
**Execs:** Bob Heatherly, President/CEO  
**Roster:** Sonny Burgess, Tim Murphy

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Entertainment**

809 18th Ave. S.  
Nashville, TN 37203  
**615-254-5925** Fax: 615-244-5928  
dawn@musicmill.com • www.musicmill.com  
**Execs:** Jack Key, Partner; Jeff Brothers, Sales;  
Rick Fowler, Sales  
**Roster:** Elvis Presley Good Rockin' Tonight, Louisiana  
Hayride Series, Fred Carter Jr., Dave Dudley, Will  
Jones, Freddy Weller, Chip Young, Kickin' Asphalt,  
Road Jams, Tango, Frankie Yankovic



**Nashville Sound Records**

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Vernon Hendricks, Jody Ray, Debrah Kay, Kayla  
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POB 120086  
Nashville, TN 37212  
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numole@aol.com • www.nashville-underground.com  
**Execs:** Lari White, President; Chuck Cannon, VP;  
Roger Osborne, Manager  
**Roster:** Gary Burr, Chuck Cannon, Chuck Jones, Pam  
Rose, Stephony Smith, Victoria Shaw



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rdavis@naxos.com • www.naxos.com  
**Execs:** Jim Sturgeon, President; Rebecca Davis,  
Manager of Publicity and Promotions  
**Roster:** Naxos American Classics Series (including  
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loujazz@aol.com • www.nuancerecords.com

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**Roster:** Louie Shelton, Dash Crofts, Nashville Guitars

**Oh Boy Records**

33 Music Sq. W. #102B  
Nashville, TN 37203  
**615-742-1250** Fax: 615-742-1360  
ohboy@ohboy.com • www.ohboy.com  
**Execs:** Al Bunetta, President; Dan Einstein, VP  
**Roster:** John Prine, Todd Snider



**OMS Records**

POB 52112  
Durham, NC 27717  
**888-522-5604**  
info@omsrecords.com • www.omsrecords.com  
**Execs:** Hugh Moore, President  
**Roster:** Johnny Russell, Bobby Osborne, Benny  
Martin, Josh Graves, Billy Troy, Kenny Baker



**Pinecastle Records**

5108 S. Orange Ave.  
Orlando, FL 32809  
**407-856-0245** Fax: 407-858-0007  
info@pinecastle.com • www.pinecastle.com  
**Execs:** Will Gailey, VP Marketing; Heather Gally,  
Promotions Manager; Tom Riggs, Owner  
**Roster:** The Osborne Brothers, Jim & Jesse, The  
Rarely Herd, Scott Vestal, Continental Divide, more



**Radio Records**

1216 17th Ave. S.  
Nashville, TN 37212  
**615-327-3178** Fax: 615-321-3346  
jgarysmith@bellsouth.net • www.radiorecords.net  
**Execs:** J. Gary Smith, CEO; John G. Smith, President  
**Roster:** Peter Dawson Band



**Raptor Records**

POB 120871  
Nashville, TN 37212  
**615-331-4742**  
Fax: 615-781-8259  
bmadden278@aol.com • www.stellaparton.com  
**Execs:** Stella Bishop, President; Brenda L. Madden,  
VP Marketing  
**Roster:** Stella.



**Relentless/Nashville**

3333 Graham Blvd. #102  
Montreal, Quebec H3R 3L5  
**514-341-5600** Fax: 514-341-6565  
**Execs:** Dave Roy, VP/GM  
**Roster:** Valerie DeLaCruz, Beth Proffitt



**Renaissance Records**

1622 16th Ave. S. #400  
Nashville, TN 37212  
**615-661-6598**  
**Execs:** John W. Edwards, President A&R; Scott Wold,  
VP A&R; Hugh Waddell, Dept. Manager A&R  
**Roster:** Juice Newton, Lacy J. Dalton, Sylvia,  
Sweethearts of the Rodeo

**Request Records**

1806 Division St.  
Nashville, TN 37203  
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steve@omnisoundstudios.com •  
www.request-records.com  
**Execs:** Pat Flynn, President; Steve Tveit, VP  
**Roster:** Crucial Smith, Alan Thornhill, Joe Nolan,  
Scott Carter, NJ3

**RMG Records**

1010 17th Avenue South  
Nashville, TN 37212  
**615-320-3009** Fax: 615-320-3032  
cdella@gatalent.com  
**Execs:** George Collier, President; Steve Pope,  
Creative Director/Publishing; Jessi Wilkerson,  
Office Manager;  
**Roster:** Eddy Raven, Ricky Lynn Gregg,  
Don Williams, James/Dean

**Rounder Records**

One Camp St.  
Cambridge, MA 02140  
**617-354-0700**  
Fax: 617-354-4840  
info@rounder.com • www.rounder.com  
**Execs:** John Virant, President; Scott Billington, VP A&R  
**Roster:** Alison Krauss, Riders in the Sky, Rhonda  
Vincent, Tony Rice, Wylie and the Wild West



**Scarlet Moon Records**

POB 320  
Pegram, TN 37143  
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Fax: 615-952-9546  
ivoryhorse@aol.com • www.pauloverstreet.com  
**Execs:** Paul Overstreet, President; Lisa Wysocky, GM  
**Roster:** Paul Overstreet



**Shell Point Records**

816 18th Ave. S.  
Nashville, TN 37203  
**615-782-8200** Fax: 615-782-8210  
shellpoint@hotmail.com  
**Execs:** Randy Harrell, President/CEO  
**Roster:** Larry Cordle & Lonesome Standard Time,  
Porter Wagoner, The Gram Parsons Notebook,  
Kim Fox, Davis Raines

**Skaggs Family Records/  
Ceili Music**

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Hendersonville, TN 37075  
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www.skaggsfamilyrecords.com •  
www.ceilimusic.com  
**Roster:** SFR: Ricky Skaggs;  
Ceili Music: Del McCoury Band,  
Jerry & Tammy Sullivan,  
The Gibson Brothers, The Whites



**Sound Art**

125 43rd Ave. N.  
Nashville, TN 37209  
**615-292-0324**  
Fax: 615-292-0824  
info@soundartrecordings.com •  
www.soundartrecordings.com  
**Execs:** Butch Baldassari, Owner/Founder  
**Roster:** Butch Baldassari, Nashville Mandolin Trio



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101 N. Maple St.  
Murfreesboro, TN 37130  
615-896-0770 Fax: 615-896-0330  
spongebathrec@spongebathrec.com

**Roster:** Self, The Katies, The Features, Count Bass D, Knodel, Call Florence Pow, Fluid Ounces, The C-60s, fleShpaiNT, The New System

## Sugar Hill Records

501 Washington Ave. Ste. A  
Durham, NC 27701  
919-498-4349

www.sugarhillrecords.com

**Execs:** Barry Poss, President

**Roster:** Terry Allen, Austin Lounge Lizards, Bad Livers, Alan Bibey, Bluebridge, Ronnie Bowman, Sam Bush, Guy Clark, John Cowan, Rodney Crowell, Donna The Buffalo, Jerry Douglas, Front Range, The Gourds, Aubrey Haynie, Chris Willman, Sonny Landreth, Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver, Lonesome River Band, Jim Mills, Nashville Bluegrass Band, Nickel Creek, Tara Nevins, Mollie O'Brien, Dolly Parton, Don Rigsby, Seldom Scene, Sammy Shelor, Kenny Smith, Bryan Sutton, Chris Thile, Sean Watkins, Doc Watson, Robin & Linda Williams, Jesse Winchester

## SunBird Records

1707 Division St. #100  
Nashville, TN 37203

615-248-8360 Fax: 615-248-8359

sunbirdt@bellsouth.net • www.sunbirdrecords.com



**Execs:** Nelson Larkin, President; Elroy Kahane, VP Artist Development

**Roster:** Len Doolin, Earl Thomas Conley, Claire Purcell, Traci Andrews

## Taffeta Records

POB 58175  
Nashville, TN 37205  
615-673-7171 Fax: 615-673-7170  
www.taffetarecords.com

**Execs:** Victoria Shaw, Pres.; Robert Locknar, Admin.  
**Roster:** Victoria Shaw, Sean Gibson

## True Songs

POB 158894  
Nashville, TN 37215  
615-463-7305  
info@truesongs.com • www.truesongs.com

**Roster:** Victor Mecsyste, Tom Mitchell, Carol Ponder



## UndergroundCountry

1303 16th Ave. S.  
Nashville, TN 37212  
615-329-3905 Fax: 615-321-3904  
clay@undergroundcountry.com •  
www.undergroundcountry.com

**Execs:** Clay Edmonds, Pres.; Eliza Hall, Dir. of A&R  
**Roster:** Brandon Sandefur



## Vanguard/Welk Music Group

POB 159159  
Nashville, TN 37215  
615-297-2588 Fax: 615-297-2510

**Execs:** Steve Buckingham, Senior VP A&R  
**Roster:** Tab Benoit, Peter Case, John Hiatt, Patty Larkin, Bill Miller, Terry Radigan, Mark Selby, Ian Tyson, Venice, David Wilcox

## VFR Records

1710 Roy Acuff Pl.  
Nashville, TN 37203  
615-369-3000  
www.vfrrecords.com

**Execs:** Harold Shedd, Managing Director Creative; Paul Lucks, Managing Director Operations  
**Roster:** Trent Summar, Mark McGuinn



## WE Records

1229 17th Ave. S.  
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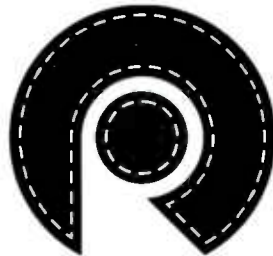
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# What A Hit Song Earns

One of the more enduring myths about our industry, embraced by the "civilian" world, is, "Write one hit song and you're set for life!" Most of us know better, but there are still some misconceptions about just how much the writer of a hit song can expect to earn. So let's dispel the myth and take a look at the facts.

## Mechanical and "Other" Royalties

There are so many variables in how mechanical royalties can be calculated that we must first briefly address the assumptions under which our calculations will be made:

- There is no co-writer involved—all of the earnings calculated are based on a 100% writer's share.
- The writer has a "basic" publishing deal, as opposed to a co-publishing or administration arrangement. (See our January 1999 article "Songwriter Deals" for more detail on these.) Also, any advances received and demo costs incurred have been fully recouped from past earnings.
- The song was licensed to the record company to be paid the full statutory mechanical rate for U.S. sales, currently 7.55¢ for each single or album sold, rather than at the reduced "controlled composition" rate commonly used for writer/artists. The license freezes the payment at 7.55¢ per unit, so the rate will not reflect future increases in the statutory rate. Writer and publisher share this equally, receiving 3.775¢ per unit each.
- For simplicity we estimate additional income from sources other than U.S. album sales (foreign, print, synchronization fees and sales of the single) as 5% of album mechanical royalties.

- The "gold" and "platinum" sales levels used below include 20% of the units sold through record clubs, and (as is their practice) paid at 75% of the statutory rate. They also include record label "free goods." We'll assume that 15% of units shipped by the label are free goods, and that the license requires royalties to be paid on one-half of these units.

With our assumptions in place, let's do the calculation: see chart 1.

## Performance Royalties

Royalties from radio and television performances are usually measured relative to the peak position achieved in the *Billboard* "Hot Country Singles" chart. But total royalties associated with a given chart position can vary substantially, depending on the number of weeks the song remains on the chart. The amounts listed in chart 2 represent a reasonable average of royalties earned at various chart positions, but the income for a specific song could easily differ from these amounts by 20% to 30% or more.

Chart 2

HIGHEST CHART POSITION ACHIEVED	100% WRITER'S SHARE OF PERFORMANCE ROYALTY
#1	\$235,000
#5	\$155,000
#10	\$125,000
#20	\$50,000
#30	\$30,000
#40	\$15,000

Chart 1

	"GOLD"	"PLATINUM"
<b>TOTAL UNITS</b>	500,000	1,000,000
Less Club (20%)	- (100,000)	- (200,000)
<b>RECORD LABEL UNITS</b>	400,000	800,000
Less Free Goods (1/2 of 15%)	- (30,000)	- (60,000)
<b>ROYALTY UNITS</b>	370,000	740,000
Rate (Statutory 7.55¢ ÷ 2)	x .03775	x .03775
<b>Label Royalty</b>	\$13,968	\$27,935
5% from "Other Sources"	+ \$698	+ \$1,396
<b>Total Label Royalty</b>	<b>\$14,666</b>	<b>\$29,331</b>
<b>CLUB UNITS</b>	100,000	200,000
Reduced Rate (75%)	x .02831	x .02831
<b>Club Royalty</b>	<b>\$2,831</b>	<b>\$5,662</b>
<b>TOTAL ROYALTIES</b>	<b>\$17,497</b>	<b>\$34,993</b>

## Timing of the Payments

Total royalties for a number one song on a platinum album, (about \$270,000 according to our calculations in chart 1), would certainly make for an impressive check. Unfortunately, however, it does not arrive all at once, and sound financial planning must take into account the "when" as well as the "how much." Performance royalties are paid quarterly, and due to the performance rights organizations' reporting procedures, the first payment could arrive as long as nine months after the song's initial airplay, with receipt of the total amount extending over two years or more. Initial mechanical royalties will be paid out over a two year period as well, due to the reserve policies of the record company. And finally, for all sources except performance royalties, earnings are reported initially to the publisher, who must in turn process the information and issue statements to the writer, delaying receipt of the monies even further.

Writing a hit song may not be the jackpot many outside the industry believe it to be, but it can certainly produce substantial earnings. But it's important that the writer anticipate the inevitable delays we've described, and exercise patience and restraint as the money, eventually, rolls in. NR



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# Americana Brings Innovation



Virtually all of the **DisCoverly Award** contestants are in the Americana field this month. And that's probably as it should be, since most of the innovative music in our community is occurring in that genre.

Reckless Kelly grabbed hold tightly. So did Greg Hawks & The Tremblers, Eddi Reader and Tom Landa. Also turning in fine debut work were the Vince Santoro pop/rock group Little Vinnie and the debut Christian project from Q/Atlantic, Reigning Mercy. But in the end, there was no denying the charms of West Coast singer-songwriter **Tim Easton**. Can't wait to see him live.

Your **Label of the Day** is surely **Sugar Hill**, who brings us the rootsy Gourds as well as that enduring treasure, Dolly Parton.

Simply for being brave enough to be a national classical force in a town of hillbillies, **Edgar Meyer** gets **Disc of the Day**.

## CLASSICAL

### EDGAR MEYER

#### "Suite for Solo Cello No. 2 in D Minor"

Writer: J.S. Bach; Producer: Steven Epstein; Publisher: public domain; Sony Classical (track) ([www.edgarmeyer.com](http://www.edgarmeyer.com)).

Along with the French horn, the Dobro and the steel guitar, I've always thought that the "vocal" tone of the cello was one of the most expressive sounds in music. Classical bassist Meyer worries the strings in ear-tickling fashion throughout his CD of suites celebrating the instrument's solo sensuality.

## BLUEGRASS

### DOLLY PARTON "Little Sparrow"

Writer: none listed; Producer: Steve Buckingham; Publisher: none listed; Sugar Hill/Blue Eye ([www.sugarhillrecords.com](http://www.sugarhillrecords.com)).

The title tune to Dolly's new collection is a hypnotic, minor-key gem that sounds like it's plucked from the pages of mountain antiquity. The album continues her brilliant exploration of her bluegrass roots. Unlike so many of her worn-out peers, she's making some of the most compelling music of her distinguished career.

### KARL SHIFLETT & THE BIG COUNTRY SHOW

#### "You're Gonna Miss Me When I'm Gone"

Writer: Bruce Phillips; Producer: Karl Shiflett & The Big Country Show; Publisher: Scruggs, BMI; Rebel (track).

The picking is like greased lightning. But I still don't like their vocals much.

### RALPH STANLEY "Man of Constant Sorrow"

Writer: traditional; Producer: Dave Freeman; Publisher: public domain; Rebel (track).

Issued to capitalize on his soundtrack appearances in *O Brother Where Art Thou*, this is yet another reminder of how hair-raising and haunting this living legend still is.

## POP/ROCK

### LITTLE VINNIE "Red Letter Day"

Writer: V. Santoro/B. Santoro; Producer: Billy Livsey; Publisher: Santoro, BMI; Vinnione (track) ([www.littlevinnie.com](http://www.littlevinnie.com)).

Fascinating stuff, layer upon layer of coolness. Babbling doo-wop elements, electro-crunch guitars and shouted joy. The cast here includes such Music City notables as Dave Pomeroy, Tia Sillers, Pat Buchanan and George Marinelli Jr.

### JOHN KAY "The Pusher"

Writer: Hoyt Axton; Producer: Bill Lloyd; Publisher: Irving, no performance rights listed; Freedom Sings (track) ([www.freedomforum.org](http://www.freedomforum.org)).

The Steppenwolf leader and Nashvillian was one of the highlights of The Bluebird Cafe event for the First Amendment Center. Performing solo with guitar, John Kay brought this powerful anti-drug anthem new power. The resulting live CD also features Tommy Womack ("Eve of Destruction"), Beth Nielsen Chapman ("Society's Child"), Greg Trooper ("Ohio"), Jonell Mosser ("Annie Had a Baby"), Dan Baird ("Street Fighting Man") and more performing lyrics that have been censored or considered controversial.

### STONE DEEP "Fight the Power"

Writer: Carlton Ridenhour/Keith Shocklee/Eric Sadler; Producer: Bill Lloyd; Publisher: Reach Back/Songs of Universal, BMI; Freedom Sings (track) ([www.freedomforum.org](http://www.freedomforum.org)).

At the same show, Music City's finest rap/rock group saluted one of the greatest rap acts in history, Public Enemy. This scaring performance, too, appears on the *Freedom Sings* CD. Support this compilation.

## COUNTRY

### JOHNNY BUSH "Lost Highway Saloon"

Writer: Brian Burns; Producer: Johnny Bush; Publisher: Lost Highway Music, BMI; Lone Star (track) (1-800-962-5837).

Texas legend Bush isn't as electrifying a singer as he once was. But there's plenty of warmth and "heart" here. And this homage to Ernest, Webb, Hank and Lefty on a haunted jukebox is by-god country.

### JOHN LILLY "Broken Moon"

Writer: John Lilly; Producer: John Lilly; Publisher: none listed; JL (track).

And speaking of country, this West Virginia boy's vocal is as backwoods as it gets. He is woefully underproduced, however.

### THE KENTUCKY HEADHUNTERS "Jessico"

Writer: Richard Young/Doug Phelps/Anthony Kenney/Greg Martin/Fred Young; Producer: Kentucky HeadHunters; Publisher: Them Young Boys/I.B. Headed/Song Garden/Mr. Eric Mitchell Fox, ASCAP/BMI; Audium ([www.audiument.com](http://www.audiument.com)).

The sweetest they've ever sounded. One big smile from start to finish.

### LAWTON WILLIAMS "Mending Fences"

Writer: Lawton Williams/Joe Price; Producer: Lawton Williams; Publisher: Lawton Williams/Joe Price, BMI; Tima (track) (214-321-5899).

Williams, 78, is best known as the writer of "Fraulein" and "Farewell Party." Sometimes it's best to rest on one's laurels.

### PAT GARRETT "In the Blue Mountains"

Writer: Pat Garrett; Producer: none listed; Publisher: Red Barn Farm, BMI; Golddust (track) ([www.patgarrett.com](http://www.patgarrett.com)).

The dullest set of lyrics in ages.

### LEN DOOLIN

#### "Breakin' What's Left of My Heart"

Writer: Len Doolin/Tim Curtis; Producer: Nelson Larkin; Publisher: Spider Jive/Zomba/Dream Chasers/Randon Songs, BMI; Sunbird.

Toe-tapping honky-tonk with nifty steel backing a solid singer with a cool little song. Revived label once launched the likes of Earl Thomas Conley.

### BILLY HOFFMAN "I Go Crazy"

Writer: Paul Davis; Producer: Joe Stampley; Publisher: Web IV/Paul and Jonathan Songs, BMI; Critter ([www.billyhoffman.com](http://www.billyhoffman.com)).

Such a great song. He's no Paul Davis as a singer, but then, who among us is?

## CHRISTIAN

### MORGAN CRYAR "I Suspect Myself"

Writer: Morgan Cryar; Producer: none listed; Publisher: Sophie Elle, ASCAP; Embassy ([www.embassymusic.com](http://www.embassymusic.com)).

Mind numbing.

### CARMAN "Faith Enough"

Writer: Dennis Matkosky/Ty Lacy/Darrell Brown/Carman/Glenn Rosenstein; Producer: Glenn Rosenstein; Publisher: Jaskar/Ty Me a River/Almo Irving, ASCAP; Sparrow (track) ([www.carman.org](http://www.carman.org)).

Bombastic disco.

**REIGNING MERCY "Freedom Found in You"**

Writer: K. Rowe/S. Rowe/M. Gareis; Producer: none listed; Publisher: none listed; Q/Atlantic.

Sunny femme vocal harmonies, cool choppy percussion and superb A/C production characterize the entry of this new act and label into the field. Extremely promising.

**HERB REMINGTON & CHARLIE SHAFFER "Precious Memories"**

Writer: none listed; Producer: none listed; Publisher: none listed; Glad (track) ([www.gladmusicco.com](http://www.gladmusicco.com)).

Steel guitar, snare drum and honky-tonk piano treatments of gospel standards like this. Eeek. Ick.

**AMERICANA****EDDI READER "Simple Soul"**

Writer: Hewerdine/Reader; Producer: none listed; Publisher: Chrysalis/Redemption, no performance rights listed; Compass (track) ([www.compassrecords.com](http://www.compassrecords.com)).

"Enchanting" is the only word that will do. Homey, living-room vocals and airy instrumental work.

**THE GOURDS "Meat Off the Bone"**

Writer: K. Russell; Producer: The Gourds/Mike Stewart; Publisher: Krakatowa McDinglefurry World, BMI; Sugar Hill/Munich (track) ([www.thegourds.com](http://www.thegourds.com)).

The rocking chair is on the dog's tail.

**TOM LANDA & THE PAPERBOYS "Mary"**

Writer: Tom Landa/Steve Mitchell; Producer: Tom Landa; Publisher: Stompy Songs/Grin Like

a Dog, SOCAN; Red House (track) ([www.paperboys.com](http://www.paperboys.com)).

Country-rock with a vaguely Byrds-ish approach. Listenable.

**RECKLESS KELLY "Basin Butte Blues"**

Writer: Willy & Nicky Braun; Producer: Merel Bregante/Reckless Kelly; Publisher: Fah-Q, BMI; Reckless (track) ([www.recklesskelly.com](http://www.recklesskelly.com)).

I loved everything about this. The thumpy attack, the drawling roots-rock attitude and the play-it-again melody all marched right into my heart. These Texas boys can stomp.

**TIM EASTON "Half a Day"**

Writer: Tim Easton; Producer: Joe Chiccarelli; Publisher: EMI-April/Last Heathen, ASCAP; New West (track) ([www.timeaston.com](http://www.timeaston.com)).

Rumpled sounding, like a checkered felt shirt nestled in the clothes bin. He's got a raspy whisper that's counterbalanced by some simply dreamy keyboard and electric guitar work. A disc to get lost in.

**GREG HAWKS & THE TREMBLERS "Fool's Paradise"**

Writer: G. Hawks; Producer: Danny Kurtz/Greg Hawks; Publisher: Soul Ranch, BMI; Yep Roc (track) ([www.greghawks.com](http://www.greghawks.com)).

Definitive Americana fare, drawing more from the Buck Owens side of country than, say, the Billy Gilman side. In other words, twang aplenty. I bet these guys are great live.

**FOLK****PAMELA DOVE O'DANIEL, CHRIS JAMES AND WHITE EAGLE "Sacred Ground"**

Writer: Pamela O'Daniel/White Eagle; Producer: Pamela Dove O'Daniel/Chris James; Publisher: none listed; Singing Wolf (track).

Preachy Native-American protest music. Virtually unlistenable.

**HOT CLUB OF COWTOWN "Devilish Mary"**

Writer: traditional; Producer: Lloyd Maines; Publisher: public domain; Hightone (track) ([www.hightone.com](http://www.hightone.com)).

The ancient Appalachian folk tune gets a zippy fiddle workout here, plus some jaunty vocalizing. Happy sounding.

**GINNY HAWKER & TRACY SCHWARZ "The Precious Jewel"**

Writer: Roy Acuff; Producer: Hawker/Schwarz; Publisher: Acuff-Rose, BMI; Copper Creek (track) ([www.coppercreekrec.com](http://www.coppercreekrec.com)).

I was prepared to dislike this, since I was such a fan of the Acuff original. But these two inject all the standards on this set, including this, with true hillbilly fervor. Rustic and righteous.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

**DENISE DAVIS/Eternally Grateful/Apsalm.**

**AUDREY/I'd Leave Me Too/Reckless.**

**APRIL VERCH/William Gagnon/Rounder.**

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When Dan Gillis bought a tour bus in the early '80s, he had no idea that it would eventually lead to becoming Steve Earle's manager.

"Sometimes you just get lucky," he says with a grin. "I started out as a music teacher in 1979 and taught music for about five years. I got really bored. I decided to do something different, so I packed up and moved to Nashville. I drove a semi for a year for something to do, something different."

After a year in Music City, Gillis ended up buying an old 1963 Golden Eagle tour bus at an auction. He didn't

know anything about the tour bus business, but he fixed the bus up and set out to find some clients.

"I had all these music business management books that you buy at Barnes & Noble, so I just went through, made a list and sent flyers to a bunch of people," he says. "It was July. I didn't know that in July you couldn't get buses. I was on my way up to Maine for a vacation. I stopped in Virginia and checked my machine and it was full, so I turned around and came back. Steve was my second client. I've sort of been with him ever since."

Gillis drove Earle for a couple of years in the mid '80s then became his tour manager for 10 years. He took over as Earle's manager in 1996.

So how did he transition from tour manager to manager?

"I was doing tour management for Steve, as well as some pretty major league rock bands. Steve and his manager at the time parted ways. He says, 'You've been around for a long time, why don't you give it a shot?' He gave me a shot as a bus driver, as a tour manager and as his manager. I owe him a lot for that."

Earle's career has seen a new resurgence in recent years. Gillis says the credit should go to his client for making such good music. He also praises the lawyers, agents and business managers who help oversee Earle's career.

"If you surround yourself with good people," he says, "managing artists is just common sense—common sense

and knowing what your artist is about. For me, the biggest challenge is always making the right call. With someone like Steve there's so much at stake with every decision you make because anything you do affects his credibility and his fans are adamant that he maintain that credibility."

Four years into managing one of the most respected songwriters and performers in the country, Gillis is ready to tackle some new projects. His management roster is about to triple in size. He is now managing the careers of new Columbia Records artist Rose Falcone, daughter of songwriter Billy Falcon (Bon Jovi, Cher), and rocker Garrison Starr. And he may not be through.

"I'd like to find another act or two. I've got enough on my plate now, but if I can find the right people to join our team, people who are right for what we do, then I can sign a couple of more acts."

—John Hood

# Bobby Karl...

# Works The Room

It's a ritual that comes as surely as winter follows fall. Every year we come back from Christmas vacation full of sniffles, fed up with our families, loaded with extra pounds and more than ready to get back to work. So we gather at Loew's Vanderbilt Plaza to remind ourselves who we are and what we do. The ritual is the annual ceremonial reading of the Grammy Award nominees (1/3).

This year's readers were the droll Trisha Yearwood and Brad Paisley, plus 1999 gospel Grammy winner Rebecca St. James, Recording Academy host Nancy Shapiro and NARAS chapter president Tony Brown. Brad deliberately mispronounced his buddy's name as "Trash" when he read the first of her two nominations for *Real Live Woman*. She immediately took the podium to quip, "Are the other categories really that important?" Brad picked up a nomination for Best New Artist.

Working the room and wishing one another "Happy New Year" were Katie Gillon, Schatzi Hageman, Hope Powell, Steve Buchanan, Mark Wright, Will Byrd, Donna Hughes, Pat Harris, Nancy Russell, Chuck Aly, Harry Chapman, Allen Brown, Claire Cook, Hazel Smith, Sarah Brosmer, Bruce Hinton, David Ross, Scott Stemm, Terry Choate, Brad Schmitt, Jennifer Bohler, Peggy Whittaker, Michael Gray, John Lomax III, Brenda Lee and nominated Christian popster Janna Long of Avalon.

Among Music City's Grammy highlights—"I Hope You Dance" and "Breathe" are both up for Song of the Year; Bela Fleck & The Flecktones compete for Pop Instrumental and Contemporary Jazz CD. Jo-El Sonnier—Traditional Folk; LynnMarie—Polka; Riders in the Sky—Children's Album; BeBe Winans—Best R&B Duo/Group; Kirk Whalum—Pop Instrumental CD; former resident Peter Frampton—Best Rock Instrumental; Jeff Foxworthy—Comedy; Willie Nelson—Traditional Blues; Edgar Meyer, Alison Krauss and former resident Mark O'Connor—Classical Crossover CD; and



The Grammy nominee press conference in Nashville was co-hosted by Trisha Yearwood, Brad Praisley and Rebecca St. James. Pictured at the event are (L-R): Tony Brown, President of both MCA Records and the Nashville Chapter of NARAS; Nancy Shapiro, VP of the Southern Region/NARAS; Yearwood; St. James and Paisley. (Photo: c j shelker)

event attendees Robert Deaton & George Flanigan—Short Form Video.

Naturally, Nashville dominates the country and gospel categories overwhelmingly. And as has been increasingly true these last few years, we also rule the Contemporary Folk field—Emmylou Harris, John Hiatt, Johnny Cash and Steve Earle. It was a lovely day for Tune Town.

I am also happy to report that the year's first artist showcase was a triumph. I've been listening to Elizabeth Cook's great appearances on The Grand Ole Opry for months and I'm simply wild about her. So when Atlantic Records offered a "sneak preview" of its newest signee, I positively sprinted to 12th & Porter (1/4). So did Steve Fishell, Pete Fisher, Pete Loesch, Peter Cooper, Barry McCloud, Barry Coburn, Barry Freeman, Phyllis Stark, Al Cooley, Craig Havighurst, Gerri McDowell, Walt Trott, Tracy Todd, Wade Jessen and Raeanne Rubenstein.

It was a packed house and everyone was in a post-holiday-cheer mood. Connie Baer was there celebrating the first anniversary of her independent marketing company. I warned her that she was in for some hard-core country music, but she still snapped back her head in surprise when Elizabeth opened her mouth.

The singer apparently noticed the startled expressions on several attendees' faces: "Y'all aren't afraid of a little country music, are ya?" she drawled. Elizabeth was sensational on her exquisite ballad "Please Don't Bother Me," the humorous "Dolly Did You Have to Go Through This?" and her cover of "Last Train to Clarksville." Heck, the whole dang set warmed me to my soul. The back-up band included the likes of Kenny Vaughn and Tim Carroll. I'm a huge fan of both of these pop/rockers, but wished for a little more hillbilly picking. Nevertheless, this lady is a major, major country talent with some terrific left-field lyrics. We brought her

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back to encore with "Mama You Wanted to Be a Singer Too," one of the songs I've heard her do on the Opry.

"We're back at it on Music Row; and Atlantic starts with the letter 'A,' so we thought we'd kick this year off right," said Coburn. "The excitement I feel with Elizabeth is a celebration of what this town is all about." Amen, brother. Sign me up for the fan club.

The next night (1/5), The Castle Door was the site of John Rich's birthday party. The rocking Big Kenny & luvjOi entertained merry makers including Sharon Vaughn and Britta Coleman. By the way, luvjOi is self-marketing its debut CD, including the local-fave single "Discoball" ([www.luvjoi.com](http://www.luvjoi.com)).

Ree Guyer Buchanan was next up to the plate. She hosted a luncheon at Wrensong (1/8) to introduce the new sounds of Sherrié Austin.

Then that Saturday night (1/13) Kim Carnes and other tunesmiths held forth at the grand opening party for the new restaurant Six Degrees. It's billed as the first of the hot-spots that will make The Gulch our newest downtown destination. Tell that to the durable Station Inn around the corner, which was hosting the fabulous Dale Ann Bradley that same night (1/13).

The distinctive pop/ethnic sound of Kim's Fable is now on CD ([www.mp3.com/kimsfable](http://www.mp3.com/kimsfable)). The band showcased the tunes of *Breathless* at

The Exit/In (1/13). Lamar Morris recently presented a showcase by Kristyn Smith at the same venue (1/8).

I got that three-week cough/crud thing in December, which meant I missed a lot of the holiday parties. Grace Reinbold and Darlene Williams kicked things off at their Music Row office with a reception (12/5) featuring Tarot Card readings by renowned psychic Damon. Cal IV Entertainment was next with its bash at Buffalo Billiards (12/7). Then Vanessa & Pete Davis invited the faithful to their historic house in Mt. Juliet (12/8). It was "old home week" with Ronna Rubin, Janet E. Williams, Terry Bumgarner, Tim DuBois, Jim Patterson, Neil Pond, new parents Linda Davis & Lang Scott, Maude Gilman, Butch Baker, Jewel Coburn, Brian Mansfield, Dale Dotson and Santa Claus, who made an appearance for the kiddies.

Buddy Lee Attractions showcased Stacy Mitchhart & The Blues You Can Use band at its holiday soiree (12/12). ASCAP, with hosts John Bettis and Michael McDonald, again gathered Nashville's pop community at Planet Hollywood (12/12). Tom & Cordia Harrington hosted a holiday-party/shower for Scott & Judy Siman, since the latter lost their home in a fire just before the holidays. The new Deston Songs office offered "Christmas Cocktails" (12/13). The NATD partied at Special Promotions on Music Row (12/13). Refugee Management

combined its celebration with a 10th-anniversary bash (12/14) at Cummins Station. Capitol's Fletcher Foster hosted his soiree at home (12/15). The Sound Vortex party featured Cajun/Creole cuisine (12/16). John Dotson, Alan Brewer and the BME staff rocked at their Music Row office (12/18). Ken Levitan & Gloria Dumas encored their New Year's Day open-house/pot-luck tradition (1/1).

The newly remodeled and re-named Coach Room at The Stock-Yard Restaurant was christened with a New Year's Eve show by Ronnie McDowell (12/31). Take note, Music Rowers: The new 7,000-square-foot venue is designed for showcases and special events and features state-of-the-art sound and lights. Capacity is 500.

Somewhere in the middle of all this, we paused to salute Marty Stuart. He was the featured fabulon at the Nashville premiere of Billy Bob Thornton's movie *All the Pretty Horses* at Regal Green Hills Cinema 16 (12/21). Marty was nominated for a Golden Globe Award for his soundtrack work on it with Kris Wilkinson. Combined with the outstanding music in the George Clooney flick *O Brother Where Art Thou*, Nashville is currently batting 1,000 in the soundtrack department. The night we screened *O Brother* at Regal 100 Oaks (1/5) we ran into David Ball, Wood Newton and Jim Sheradden. A word of advice: Buy your tickets early because this hilarious movie is frequently sold out. MR

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## Adkins Busy at Studio Six; New Gear

Cartee Day Entertainment, a new music production facility located in Nashville, chose a 72-channel AMS Neve VXS console to serve as the centerpiece of its main control room, Studio A. The facility opened in December 1999 and is currently undergoing renovations to expand its capabilities. Studio A will also feature 5.1 surround sound capabilities and monitoring. Michael Cronin Acoustical renovated the facility's three studios...Mackie Digital Systems announced that the HDR24/96, a 24-track, 24-bit, stand-alone hard disk recording/editing system is shipping. The portable device includes an internal 20+ gigabyte Ultra-DMA hard disk that delivers over 100 minutes of 24-track recording at 48kHz, plus an extra drive bay for pull-out Mackie Media M90 20+ Gb hard drives and Mackie Media PROJECT 2.2Gb removable cartridge drives. Sampling rates of 44.1 and 48kHz are currently implemented; 96kHz will be possible with future software upgrades...Solid State Logic announced the introduction of the SL 4000 G+ Classic, a special Classic configuration of the SL 4000 mixing console...County Q recently remodeled their tracking room.



Trace Adkins and producer Dann Huff have been busy in the studio working on Adkins' next Capitol Records release. Pictured are (L-R): Huff and Adkins in Emerald's Studio Six.

Artist	Producer	Engineer	Label	Project
<b>615 MUSIC</b>				
—	Rutherford/Wachtler	Aaron Grant	KPHO-TV	promo
—	Snider/Wachtler	"	HGTV	"Weekend Work Zone"
—	Williams/Wachtler	"	Fla. Commerce	"Live, Work, Join"
—	Rossi/Wachtler	Drew Rydberg	History	Enforcers: Wildlife...

### AUDIO PRODUCTIONS

Collin Raye	George Achaves	Scott Goudeau	Epic	CCUSA
Chely Wright	Craig Deitchmann	Travis Turk	MCA	narration
Allison Moorer	Paul Gagne	"	"	"
Joe Diffie	Craig Deitchmann	"	Epic	"
Lonestar	George Achaves	Scott Goudeau	BNA	CCUSA
Jamie O'Neal	Craig Deitchmann	Travis Turk	Mercury	narration

### BACKSTAGE

Thomas Kincaid	Rob Mathes	Brookshire/Delong	EMI	mix—5.1
Terri Schneider	Mark Pay	"	—	mix

### BENNETT HOUSE

Twila Paris	Daughtery/Hartley	Jim Dineen	Sparrow	trax
Mercy Bell	Roger Moutenot	Shaw/Moutenot	Interscope	trax/od's
Amy Grant	Sturken/Rogers	Al Hemberger	ATM	voc's
"	Keith Thomas	Bill Whittington	"	od's

### BRUSH HILL

Smokey White	Arvel Bird	Bird	White Sparrow	album
"	"	"	BSF Songs	demos

Artist	Producer	Engineer	Label	Project
Tina Marie	Bird/Million	"	—	"
Rother/Bird	Rother/Bird	"	Singing Wolf	albums
Hannah Michals	Jimmy Smart	"	—	demos

### CASTLE RECORDING

Jamie L. Thurston	Gregg Brown	Feaster/Purcell	Revelator	od's/mix
Brad Paisley	Frank Rogers	Barrow/Short	Arista	trax/od's
Stone Daisy	Steve Zaccane	Mike Janas	—	"

### COUNTY Q

Jennifer Phillips	Blair Daly	Chuck Pfaff	RCA	od's/mix
Austin/Rambeaux	Pfaff/Decker	Wrensong	trax/od's/mix	"
Rob Cheuvront	—	Cargile/Matson	Balmur	"
Marv Green	—	T.W. Cargile	Warner Chappell	"
Jerry Salley	—	—	EMI	"
Karen Staley	—	Cargile/Matson	Larga Vist	"
Martin/Nesler	Hardy	Buchanan	Crutchfield	mix
Ed Hill	—	Rob Matson	BMG	trax/od's/mix

### CREATIVE RECORDING

—	Archie Jordan	Paul Skaike	Major Bob	—
Kelly Lange	Stewart Harris	Eric Paul	Peer Music	—
Wilkinsons	Mac McAnally	Alan Schulman	Giant	—
Tim Wilson	Tim Wilson	Steve Melton	Capitol	—
Shelley & Dave	—	Paul/Skaike	—	—

### EAST IRIS

Color	Serletic/Golden	Thoener/Dobson	Melisma	mix
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# STUDIO REPORT

## Writer's Notes



### Kieran Kane

**PUBLISHER:** Co-publishing with Moraine Music Group and Little Duck Music

**BIRTHPLACE:** Born in Queens, N.Y., but grew up in Mt. Vernon, N.Y.

**HITS/CUTS:** "I'll Go On Loving You," Alan Jackson; "Gonna Have a Party," Alabama; "Forgive and Forget," Kathy Mattea; "Will You Travel Down This Road With Me," George Jones & Tammy Wynette; "Doctor's Orders," Oak Ridge Boys; and "Gonna Walk the Line," Randy Travis; among others.

**FAVORITE SONG YOU WROTE:** Songs at different times are more significant to me than others.

**FAVORITE SONG YOU DIDN'T WRITE:** Merle Haggard's "Kern River"

**ADVICE TO WRITERS:** Don't listen to the trends. Plus, you have to work. It's a job like anything else. As the cliché goes, it's one percent inspiration, 99 percent perspiration.

**ON WHAT INSTRUMENT DO YOU WRITE?** Guitar, but I also use my octave mandolin, which presents different grooves.

Kieran Kane has always been into writing songs and performing. "My first gig was a birthday party when I was 10 and I got \$6," recalls Kane. "I've never done anything else besides music to make my living."

His musical skills first began with the drums, often sitting in with his brother's band when still in elementary school. By his teens he focused more on bluegrass and folk. He later spent time in Boston, performing with a band called Sandy River.

"I left Boston when I was 23 and drove out to L.A.," he says. "I considered moving to Nashville, but thought it would be a huge mistake because I didn't think my stuff would be accepted. So I moved to L.A. and spent the '70s there. I moved to Nashville in 1979."

Kane's trek to Music City came in response to a publishing deal. "I was offered a publishing deal, which was pretty exciting to me because no one had shown any interest. I had given them some songs and they loved them. Then after two months they started calling me and asking me to re-write the songs. My feeling is if you don't like it, that's fine, but that doesn't mean I'm going to re-write them. So I didn't sign that deal, which was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do."

Eventually he found a home at Tree Publishing and within months his songs were getting cut. "The first single I ever had was 'Play Another Slow Song,' by Johnny Duncan. It was a Top 20."

In 1985, Kane teamed up with fellow songwriter Jamie O'Hara and the two later formed the duo The O'Kanes. By 1990 they split, but left behind three albums and a handful of hits. Going solo, Kane signed with Atlantic Records and released *Find My Way Home* in 1993. After separating from Atlantic, he formed his own label, Dead Reckoning, and has since released several projects.

**Does the best song always win out as far as getting cut?**

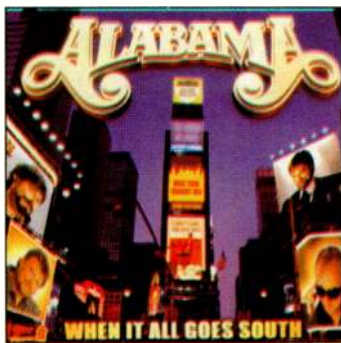
No. Rarely does the best song win out. People are sometimes fearful of doing something different. I was shocked and pleased when Alan Jackson recorded my song "I'll Go On Loving You." I don't know that anyone else would have done it because it was too different. He took a chance on it and there were radio stations out there that wouldn't play it. There are so many great artists and writers that don't get a chance on radio. **Did songwriting open a lot of doors for your performing career?** In terms of being an artist it was everything.

The reason I was able to get record deals over the years is because I did write songs. I don't think of myself as a singer in the sense of George Jones. **What do you do in your free time?** I paint a lot. I used one of my paintings for the cover of *Blue Chair*. **Tell us about your family.** I'm not married. I have three kids, a 21-year-old son, a 19-year-old daughter and a 15-year-old daughter. **What albums do you currently have out?** This has been a busy six months for me. I actually have three albums that came out in the last few months.

Kevin Welch and I did a live album in Melbourne, Australia, called *11/12/13*. Then I've got my new album called *The Blue Chair*, and Sony put out a compilation of about 10 O'Kanes tracks. I think it means I can rest. People will have heard enough of me for a while.

—Richard McVey II

Artist	Producer	Engineer	Label	Project
<b>GREY HOUSE</b>				
Frankie Moreno	Herzig/Moreno	Wendy Mazur	Primo	CD
Stephany Delray	Stephany Delray	"	High Seas	demos
Matt Williams	—	Billy Herzig	—	"
James Alton	Zig	Mazur/Herzig	Broken Arrow	CD
Bill Deasy	—	Mazur/Zig	—	demos
Wesley Robinson	Zig	Zig	—	"
<b>ISLAND STUDIO</b>				
Earl Bud Lee	Earl Bud Lee	Jeff Koval	—	demos
Canister	Freddy Wall	"	—	EP
<b>MONEY PIT</b>				
Alecia Elliott	Brown/Worley	Schleicher/Hellerman	MCA	mix
Martina McBride	McBride/Worley	"	RCA	trax/od's
Trisha Yearwood	Paul Worley	"	MCA	trax
BR5-49	"	Poole/Hellerman	Sony	trax/od's
Robin English	Patton/Worley	"	Sony-Dev.	"
Joanna Janet	"	Schleicher/Hellerman	DreamWorks	od's
<b>RECORDING ARTS</b>				
Barry Tambrin	Carl Tatz	Bob Bullock	—	voc's
Nydia Rojas	Mark Hammona	Shipen/Shike	Hollywood	mix
Anointed	Chris Harris	"	Myrrh	"
Katinas	Todd Collins	"	Gotee	"
Third Day	Monroe Jones	Dineen/Greene	Essential	"
<b>SCRUGGS SOUND</b>				
EMI	Kelley Lovelace	Richard Barrow	—	demos
Sea Gayle	Granger Smith	"	—	"
Scruggs/Stuart	Randy Scruggs	Ron Reynolds	—	album
Warner Chappell	Wynn Varble	Richard Barrow	—	demos
<b>SEVENTEEN GRAND</b>				
Josh Graves	Hugh Moore	Nicely/Clark	OMS	trax
Kenny Baker	"	"	—	"
Ron Block	Ron Block	Paczosa/Clark	Rounder	od's/mix
K. Williams	Vaughn/Johnson	Thomas Johnson	—	trax
—	Buddy Cannon	Cotton/Scherbak	—	demo
Barrelhouse Rockets	Gary Sadker	Sean Neff	—	voc's
A. Williams	—	George Tutco	Heavy Rotation	od's/mix
<b>SONG CELLAR</b>				
Ronnie McDowell	Ronnie McDowell	Jackie Cook	Indie	voc's/od's/mix
Mike Sheahan	Jackie Cook	"	Looking	artist proj.
Skywood	Cook/Skywood	"	"	alt. rock proj.
Holthouse/Holden	Jackie Cook	"	—	demos
Bard/Moorehead	"	—	—	"
Tom Long	"	—	—	"
<b>SOUNDSHOP</b>				
Lee Roy Parnell	Lee Roy Parnell	John Kunz	—	Children's Song
Aaron Tippin	Bradley/Watson	Bradley/Shapach	Lyric Street	mix
Dreve	Desmond Child	Mark Capps	Deston Songs	trax/od's/mix
Dobie Gray	Dobie Gray	Tim Roberts	—	mix
Demo's	Wyatt Easterling	Mark Capps	API/EMI	trax/od's/mix
"	Johnny Slate	"	API	od's/mix
<b>SOUND STAGE</b>				
Thomas Kincaid	Rob Mathes	Brookshire/Delong	EMI	mix
Lamar Campbell	Sanchez Harley	Mark Nevers	—	od's/mix
Grits	Russell Howard	Cross/Sheesley	Ruff Nation	od's
Meredith Edwards	Robin Wiley	Kelton/Rovey	Mercury	mix
Jeff Caron	Justin Niebank	Justin Niebank	Curb	od's
Boycott Soundtrack	Mookie	Marcello/Green	EMI	mix



**ALABAMA**  
**When It All Goes South**  
 (RCA) Producers: Rick Hall, Don Cook, James Stroud, Josh Leo, Michael Omartian

**Prime Cuts:** "When It All Goes South," "Down This Road," "Reinvent the Wheel," "Clear Across America"

**Critique:** After two decades in the business, it's amazing how this band keeps coming up with new

ways to define and reinvent itself. Still at the top of their game, album 23 (which took a year to make) is a cornucopia of the things that Alabama does best. More like, say, the Beatles' "White Album" than Sgt. Pepper, *When It All Goes South* is all over the musical map. From the aurally inventive title track (a Southern rock hallmark for the

new millennium) to the horn-laden R&B groove of "Reinvent the Wheel" and soulfully tender "The Woman He Loves" to the nostalgic epic ballad "Down This Road" and the Springsteen-like rocker "Clear Across America," this is Bama's best yet, and easily one of the best ever to come from Nashville. There's a heaping 15 tracks, including two duets; one, the wedding song, "Will You Marry Me," featuring Randy Owens and Canadian warbler Jann Arden, would've worked better as a solo vehicle; the other, "Love Remains," which pairs Teddy Gentry with the distinctive voice of popster Christopher Cross, is more successful. All that's missing is a beer to cry in for "I Can't Love You Any Less," which proves that Owens still is one of the finest straight country singers around. The cleverly-writ and funky "Reinvent the Wheel" is the song that best sums up this ever-evolving group with the catchy chorus: "In a world that's mostly imitation/It's hard to recognize the real/It takes a brave heart to resist temptation/To take the easy way, And reinvent the wheel." **Grade: A**

—Ron Young

**GEORGIA MIDDLEMAN**  
**Endless Possibilities**

(Giant Records) Producers: Russ Zavitsou, Tony Haselden

**Prime Cuts:** "No Place Like Home," "Rain On A River," "Tap Dancin' On The Highwire," "A New Pair Of Shoes"

**Critique:** Born and raised in Texas, with stints in New York, Paris and L.A., singer/songwriter Georgia Middleman is hardly your average country artist—especially with musical influences as varied as Randy Newman, Dolly Parton and Tony Bennett. But this eclecticism probably aligns Middleman with a sizable portion of today's audience, cultural gypsies



who've spent much of their lives with a remote control in hand and really couldn't care less whether their country heroes ever picked cotton, just as long as the groove's cool. By

turns feisty and fragile, Middleman could be the voice of today's 20-something single woman, confident yet confused, clinging

proudly to independence while smarting from its occasional stings. Like many debuts this one wanders stylistically at times, but if there's a prevalent theme it probably has to do with taking risks, seizing the moment with passionate abandon. Middleman's own "Tap Dancing On A Highwire" perfectly expresses that working-without-a-net philosophy, while "A New Pair Of Shoes" and the Newman-esque "Thrilled" exhibit a droll comedic touch. The lovely "Rain On A River" shows Middleman at her heart-in-the-throat vocal best, portraying a torn woman who has built a life with one man only to fall in love with another. *Endless Possibilities* does what a first album should—introduces us to the various facets of a talented newcomer in the early stages of her career journey. In Georgia Middleman's case, the title could not be more apt. **Grade: B**

—Larry Wayne Clark

**BOBBY OSBORNE**  
**The Selfishness In Man**

(OMS Records)  
 Producers: Billy Troy/Hugh Moore

**Prime Cuts:** "I'll Be There," "Just A Girl I Used To Know," "Just One More," "The Selfishness Of Man"

**Critique:** One of the legendary Osborne Brothers of bluegrass fame, Bobby Osborne has harbored a secret desire throughout his long career—he yearned to make a straight-ahead country album. Here it is. And make no mistake about it, this is country raw and plain, wearing no disguises. You probably won't see a Bobby Osborne video on CMT, and don't expect to ever hear a pop remix of any of these selections. Now in his 70th year, Osborne has wisely chosen to lend his still-robust tenor to a cross-section of country standards, paying tribute to a blue chip roster of songwriters including Harlan Howard, Jack Clements, Don Gibson, Lefty Frizzell, Buck Owens, Gordon Lightfoot and Osborne himself. The title song, written by the late Leon Payne and originally recorded by George Jones, is a glorious piece of work that deserves to be heard and admired by a fresh audience. Osborne also revisits Jones' own "Just One More," and if he lacks The Possum's trademark goosebump-raising ache, he nevertheless does a credible job on both ballads. The arrangements, though solidly performed, are somewhat stock, and on one or two selections (Lightfoot's "Ribbon Of Darkness" comes to mind) Osborne sounds as though he might have been more comfortable in a slightly lower key. But then we've all become too accustomed to hearing records that are shamefully expensive, over-produced and electronically tampered with till we don't really know *what* we're hearing. Bobby Osborne—who first stood in front of a radio microphone 52 years ago at the tender age of 17—plants both feet firmly, takes a deep breath and tells the simple truth...not a bad formula at all. **Grade: B**



—Larry Wayne Clark

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# Releases Rollin' In

2001 rolls on and new records are coming in fast and furious to Perimeter Land. In keeping with this month's independent label theme, I'll be reviewing records from Nashville's newly resurgent Eminent and continually diversifying Compass. Last, but not least, is Nancy Apple, a Memphis-based singer releasing her latest album on her own Ringo Records label. Let's get to it.

## REcordViews



### Eddi Reader *Simple Soul* (Compass)

Former Eurythmics background singer Eddi Reader has created a quiet, laid-back personal album that showcases her honeyed voice. Reader effortlessly conveys emotion in the reflective title track. The sparse acoustic guitars in "Adam" are fleshed out by dobro and some inventive keyboards. In fact, the judicious use of various instruments, from the glockenspiel on the opening "Wolves" to the Indian harmonium on "Lucky Penny" to the tanbura on "Prodigal Daughter," add an exotic complexity to the beautiful simplicity of Reader's songs. This album feels like sitting on the front steps the first warm night of spring as the sun sets—quiet, relaxed, neighborly. What could be better than that?



### Elliott Murphy & Iain Matthews *La Terre Commune* (Eminent)

Prominent and respected songwriters in their own right, Elliott Murphy and Iain Matthews have joined forces to create an engaging album that highlights their poetic

lyricism. Murphy's "Navy Blue," with its gritty but oddly gentle narrative, brings to mind '60s-era Dylan. Speaking of Dylan, they do a credible cover of his "Blind Willie McTell." They also cover Jesse Colin Young ("Darkness, Darkness") and Bruce Springsteen ("Sad Eyes"), among others. The album truly comes to life, however, on the duo's original songs like "Fading Fast," a wistful acoustic pop tune that finds Murphy and Matthews at their melancholy best. "She's A Mystery" is the album's highlight. The tune starts out as a rhythmically rocking toe-tapper, but by the end of the first verse Matthews unleashes an unexpected vocal wallop infusing the song with added emotional depth. It's also catchy as hell. *La Terre Commune* is Murphy and Matthews first collaborative effort. Let's hope it isn't their last.



### Nancy Apple *Outside The Lines* (Ringo)

Retro twang with a rockabilly heart—not a bad combination in this slicked up pop-country age we live in. The album kicks off with the groove infused "Slide Me Some Sugar," a grin inducing ode to new love. Throughout the album, Apple displays a wry wit most evident on "My Exercise Program," "Bears In Them Woods," and "Truck Driver's Woman." Apple's thicker-than-molasses accent makes everything she sings inherently country and she uses it to heart-breaking effect on the ballads "Fooled By The Heart" and "Outside The Lines." The album also includes "Why'd You Get So Gone," a rockin' little number that Apple co-wrote with Nashville's own songwriting sideman extraordinaire Duane Jarvis. If you like your country served up with a slow drawl and sly grin, this album is for you. **NIR**

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## LETTERS (Letters have been edited for space)

### WILL TECHNOLOGY SHRINK ALBUM COSTS (MR January 2001)

I feel that the major labels should return to the days when they individually owned their own in house studios. Acts on CBS would cut at CBS Studios; Capitol, the same.

Rather than pay outlandish studio charges resulting in overinflated budgets, why not demand that each label artist record at his or her label's in-house studio? Great records both in Nashville & L.A. came from that system. Why shouldn't it be that way today? Considering the affordable costs of recording gear these days, how expensive could it be to build a great in-house studio? Certainly the biggies like Sony, Capitol, etc., can afford the costs.

I believe album budgets are way out of control considering the format. I also believe that quite a few Music Row producers tend to be very self indulgent when setting production costs. After all, half a million dollars to cut a honky tonk album?

No wonder artists can't recoup from labels. No wonder artists are wising up and building their own studios. Perhaps the major's should follow their example.

Mark Wright says he can't cut an album for any less...I bet Billy Sherrill could.

—John Beland, [clib52@aol.com](mailto:clib52@aol.com)

### OBSERVATIONS FROM THE OUTBACK (Notes on country music videos from an outsider's perspective.)

1. The greater the amount of wailin' vocal gymnastics in a singer's performance, the poorer the quality of the song.

**Reason:** Hey, you gotta do *something* to distract the listener from noticing how weak the song really is!

2. The greater the number of background dancers in a video, the poorer the quality of the song.

**Reason:** See previous reason above. It's sort of a variant on The Cheerleader Principle. If you think about it, a truly great team doesn't need cheerleaders to maintain fan interest. And on the other hand, a poor team makes cheerleaders look a little silly.

3. The scantier the attire of a female artist, the poorer the quality of the song.

**Reason:** Again, see above. And what's up with the apparent rule that female country artists must sing in their lingerie today? Even if they're 15 years old! The last period of slumping country sales had a name: The "Urban Cowboy" Period. We need a name for the current few years' slump. May I propose: The Age Of Kiddies, Ditties, And Titties.

—Steve Bigler, [sbigler@gwest.net](mailto:sbigler@gwest.net)

P.S. Tell Oermann to keep carrying the torch for quality!

## INDUSTRY CALENDAR EVENTS

For updated listings: [www.musicrow.com](http://www.musicrow.com)

### February

- 5 SGA Ask-A-Pro with J. Kevin Lamb, noon, 329-1782
- 5 SGA Song Critique with Sherrill Blackman, 5:15 p.m., 329-1782
- 7 ASCAP Presents Straight Talk, 10 a.m., 742-5000
- 7 ASCAP Sponsors Publisher Writers Night at Bluebird Café, 6 p.m.
- 11 First Steps Benefit feat. Joe Diffie, Keith Urban, Mark Wills & more, Ryman, 6:30 p.m.
- 13 AWRT Mid-South News and Entertainment Network monthly meeting, The Gerst House, 6 p.m.
- 14 SGA Songmania Show, 3rd & Lindsley, 6 p.m.
- 14 ASCAP Presents Straight Talk, 10 a.m.
- 21 43rd Annual Grammy Awards, Staples Center, Los Angeles, CBS, 7 p.m.
- 21 ASCAP Presents Straight Talk, 10 a.m.
- 28 CRS 2001, Nashville Convention Center, (28-March 3)
- 28 ASCAP Presents Straight Talk, 10 a.m.

### March

- 3 Class of 2000 feat. Rascal Flatts, Darryl Worley & Jamie O'Neil, Wildhorse Saloon
- 4 NSAI Song Camp 101, (4-March 6)
- 5 Song Camp 101 Faculty Showcase, Douglas Corner Cafe, 8 p.m.
- 7 ASCAP Presents Straight Talk, 10 a.m.
- 12 SGA Song Critique with Ron Stuve, 5:15 p.m.
- 13 AWRT Mid-South News and Entertainment Network monthly meeting, The Gerst House, 6 p.m.
- 14 SGA Songmania Show, 3rd & Lindsley, 6 p.m.
- 14 ASCAP Presents Straight Talk, 10 a.m.
- 20 SGA Demo Workshop with Hank Levine, 5:30 p.m., 329-1782
- 21 ASCAP Presents Straight Talk, 10 a.m.
- 28 Winter Arbitron Period Ends (began 1/4)
- 28 ASCAP Presents Straight Talk, 10 a.m.
- 29 Spring Arbitron Period Begins (ends 6/20)

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The Belmont campus was all smiles Jan. 12 as (L-R) Eddy Arnold, Courtney Curb, Curb Group Chairman Mike Curb, and Belmont President Bob Fisher were on hand to announce the \$10 million Mike Curb Family Foundation gift to the school. In addition to expanding the educational opportunities for the School of Music Business, the gift will fund the construction of the Curb Events Center.

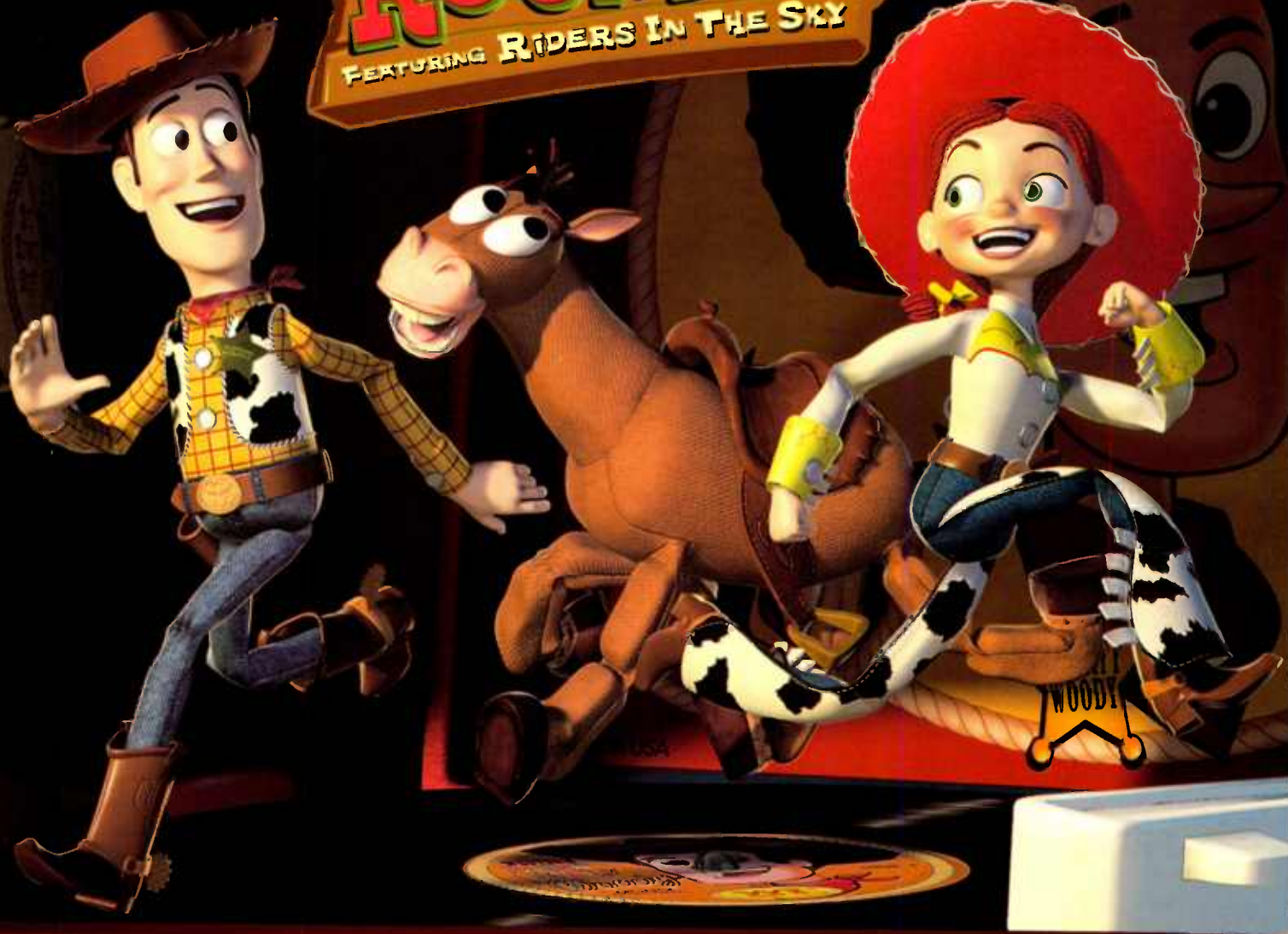
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# Woody's ROUNDUP

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World Radio History

# SOUTH 65 the most beautiful girl

"I think I had alcohol poisoning the day we wrote the song."  
—NORRO WILSON

"This is more than just a remake... this classic lyric gets a fresh new arrangement that is undeniably contemporary. Great vocals — and layered with so many production hooks the song imprints itself in your brain. Sounds great on-air."  
—JUSTIN CASE,  
WUSN-US99, Chicago

"What are you people trying to do...bring back the younger part of the audience to the country format? South 65, it's time!"  
—BILL HAGY,  
WXBQ WQBE, Bristol

"I was prepared to hate it. Boy was I wrong."  
—BRUCE LOGAN,  
WSSL, Greenville

"These guys found their groove...an amazing cover of a classic. Charlie Rich isn't turning in his grave, he's just tapping his feet."  
—JAY ROBERTS,  
WQYK WRBQ, Tampa

## A CLASSIC REBORN

SOUTH 65 revives "The Most Beautiful Girl"

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — A stunning new interpretation of the Charlie Rich hit "The Most Beautiful Girl" by Nashville vocal band South 65 takes a slice of venerated Nashville history and retools it for a new century.

"The Most Beautiful Girl"—written by Norro Wilson, Billy Sherrill and Rory Bourke—was a career milestone in 1972 for the late, great Rich. His tortured vocals and Sherrill's Nashville Sound production helped make it a No. 1 hit.

BMI awarded the song four "Million Airm" awards which salute the song for receiving four million radio plays. With a history of such enormous radio airplay, the song is still instantly recognizable to many of today's radio listeners.

The new, soon to be released version is a radical reworking, incorporating the classic melody and lovelorn lyrics with stellar vocals from South 65 and state-of-the-art production by producer Bobby Huff.

"One of the great joys with this record was calling Billy Sherrill, the most awarded songwriter in BMI history, and telling him I had something to play for him," said Barry Coburn, president of Atlantic Records in Nashville. "He just about jumped out of his seat with delight when he heard it."

Sherrill's co-writers are just as pleased. It was South 65 producer Norro Wilson who recommended the song for the group in the first place.

"I had pitched 'The Most Beautiful Girl' over the years but no one would even consider recording it,

because it's too hard to compete with the Charlie Rich version," Wilson said.

Wilson took a new arrangement to Coburn, who agreed that it was perfect for South 65—Lance Leslie, Brent Parker, Doug Urie, Stephen Parker and Jeremy Koeltzow.

"I love great songs," Coburn said. "I thought the arrangement was the key to a unique reinvention of this timeless classic. It's taken it to a new place."

Wilson (current co-producer of South 65, John Michael Montgomery, Kenny Chesney and Craig Morgan with Buddy Cannon) decided not to produce the new version, because he was "too close" to the song "having written the song and produced Joe Stampley's track years ago. Coburn brought in up-and-coming Nashville producer Huff to do the job.

"It's tough when you're dealing with a song that has been such a big hit," Huff said. "You don't want to offend anybody, but you want to give it a fresh spin that competes in the market now."

"But I couldn't go into the studio scared of things like that. All the guys and I have to do is make the best sounding record that we can."

The new version opens with a plaintive vocal by South 65 member Lance Leslie, draws listeners in with the classic melody, then shifts gears into a fiddle hoe-down.

"Ultimately, it gets back to a universal message that hasn't dated," Coburn notes.

"The Most Beautiful Girl" was written in 1968

in Chicago when Wilson stayed overnight at the home of Bourke.

"I was an artist on Smash records, and flew into Chicago to do promotional events," Wilson said. "Rory was a National Promotion manager for Smash Records based in Chicago."

Bourke was an aspiring songwriter determined to co-write with Wilson. After a night on the town, Bourke awakened Wilson with a cup of coffee and announced that he wanted to write a song right away.

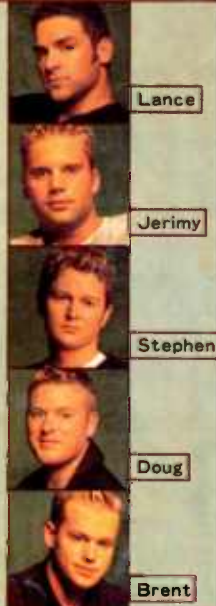
Bourke had already written a verse, and Wilson helped him write what they called "Hey Mister, Did You Happen to See the Most Beautiful Girl in the World." Sherrill shortened the title and added his own touches when he recorded it with Rich in 1973.

"The Most Beautiful Girl" and the title track from the "Behind Closed Doors" album marked the commercial highpoint of Rich's career. Rich is considered to be one of the most versatile artists in country music history, with a career stretching back to Sun Records in the 1950s.

The South 65 recording restores the "Hey Mister" lyrics to the song and adds additional fresh touches.

"We think it's what everybody in country music says they're wanting, which is something new," Leslie said.

"At the same time, the song has a real connection to the past and we're respectful of that."



Debut single from the forthcoming album, **DREAM LARGE**