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FEBRUARY/MARCH 2011

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SARA EVANS

12TH ANNUAL COUNTRYBREAKOUT AWARDS

THE VOICES
OF SECONDARY RADIO

SARAH TRAHERN
CMA RISING

MUSICROW
CHALLENGE
COIN

PROFILES
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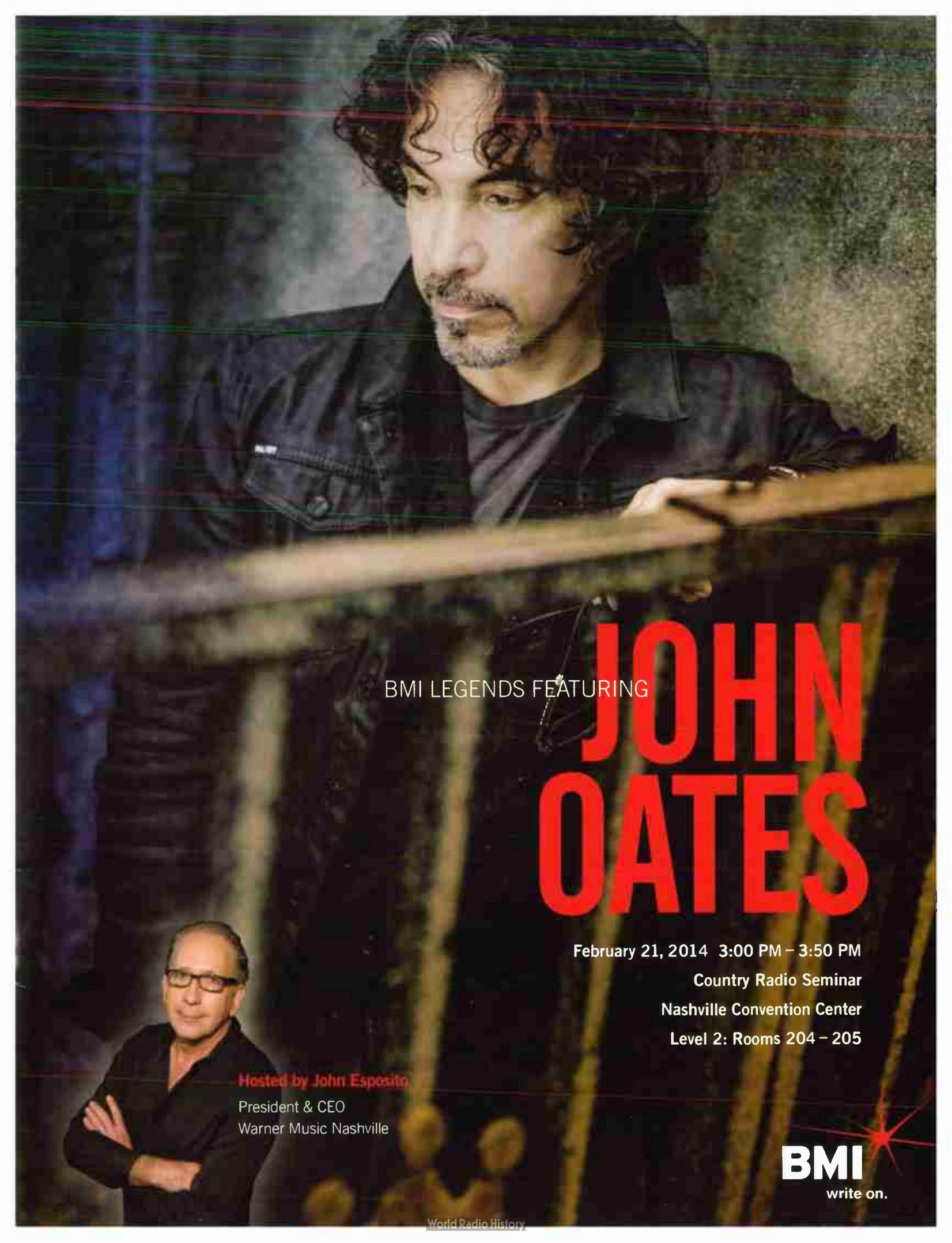


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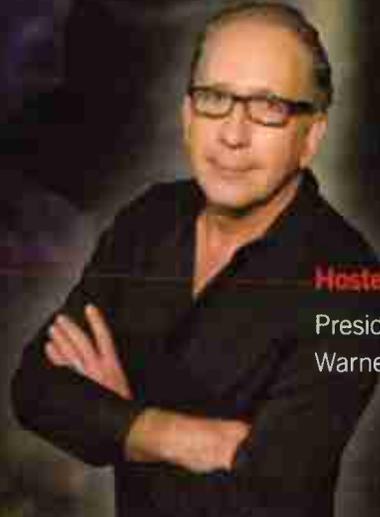
JOHN OATES

February 21, 2014 3:00 PM – 3:50 PM

Country Radio Seminar

Nashville Convention Center

Level 2: Rooms 204 – 205



Hosted by John Esposito

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write on.

ON THE COVER *Sara Evans*

Multi-Platinum selling Country singer and songwriter Sara Evans has been called “one of the most compelling vocalists of her generation.” Evans will release her highly anticipated seventh studio album *Slow Me Down* on March 11, 2014. The album comes more than two years after the release of *Stronger*, her second project to top the Billboard Country Album Chart. Despite five No. 1 hits, her new single “Slow Me Down” scored the most first-week adds of her career and was named one of *Billboard’s* “10 Best Country Singles of 2013.” The song has been steadily climbing the charts with the companion video featuring NASCAR great Carl Edwards in heavy rotation on CMT and GAC.

Slow Me Down is co-produced by Evans and Mark Bright (Reba McEntire, Rascal Flatts, Carrie Underwood), who Evans last worked with on her Platinum selling album *Real Fine Place* (2005). *Slow Me Down* sees Evans collaborating on three tracks: “Better Off” with Country legend Vince Gill; “Can’t Stop Loving You,” a duet with Isaac Slade of The Fray; and a cover of Gavin DeGraw’s “Not Over You” which features the pop/rock star singing harmonies. This album is what fans have waited for and newcomers are bound to fall in love with.

Slow Me Down is Evans at her finest, with her signature powerful vocals that will serve as a reminder of why she has had a level of success reserved for few. Evans co-wrote three of the album’s 11 tracks and some of Nashville’s finest songwriters are represented on *Slow Me Down*. A who’s who of songwriters on the project include Dave Berg (Keith Urban, Reba McEntire, Blake Shelton), Shane McAnally (Florida Georgia Line, Kacey Musgraves, Kelly Clarkson), Karyn Rochelle (Trisha Yearwood, LeAnn Rimes, Ronnie Milsap), Sarah Buxton (Keith Urban, The Band Perry, Gary Allan), and Shane Stevens (Lady Antebellum, Kellie Pickler, Montgomery Gentry).

Since emerging in the late 1990s, Evans has had a prolific recording career resulting in the sale of more than six million albums. She’s had five No. 1 songs, four others appearing in the Top 10, two No. 1 Billboard Country Albums, five appearing on *Billboard’s* Top 200 all-genre chart, and four consecutive RIAA certified Gold, Platinum or Multi-Platinum albums. She’s received awards from the Country Music Association, Academy of Country Music, a *Billboard* Music Award and garnered nominations for Grammy Awards, American Country Awards and CMT Music Awards.

Evans won the hearts of America as the first Country artist to compete on ABC’s *Dancing with the Stars*. She was also chosen as one of *People* magazine’s “50 Most Beautiful People.”

Always interested in and involved with charitable efforts, Evans has been an active member of the American Red Cross’ National Celebrity Cabinet since 2005 and was presented with the national Crystal Cross for her work with the organization.

Artist Name: Sara Evans

Label: RCA Nashville

Current Album: *Slow Me Down*

Current Single: “Slow Me Down”

Current Video: “Slow Me Down”

Current Producer: Mark Bright

Management: Craig Dunn, The Collective

Booking: WME

Hometown: New Franklin, MO.

Birthday: Feb. 5

Interesting Facts: Evans and her sister-in-law and stylist just launched “A Real Fine Place,” a lifestyle blog chronicling all of Sara’s travel, fashion advice and adventures.

www.arealfineplace.com

Musical Influences: Loretta Lynn, Patsy Cline, Reba McEntire, Patsy Loveless, Dwight Yoakam

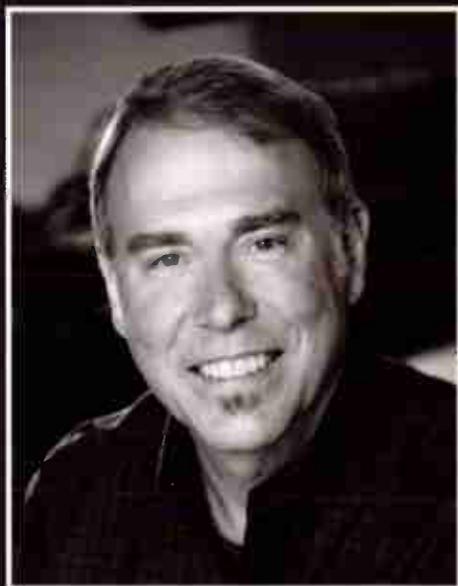
Recent Hits: Evans has enjoyed a prolific recording career with nearly 6 million records sold and 5 No. 1 Country singles including “Suds in the Bucket,” “A Real Fine Place to Start,” and “A Little Bit Stronger,” which spent two weeks at No. 1 and was certified Platinum by the R.I.A.A..

Awards: Evans has received awards from the Country Music Association, won the Academy of Country Music Award for Female Vocalist, a *Billboard* Music Award and has garnered nominations for Grammy Awards (2), American Country Awards (10) and CMT Music Awards (5).

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MUSICROW

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE



PHOTO: S WADE HUNT

Country Radio Seminar in Nashville is a time for new music discovery—from established superstars wanting to soar higher to fresh faces vying to get in the game. It's an exciting week to be in this business and hear the latest offerings of talent and what is coming next in Country music. The focus is definitely radio, but it also brings much more. It sets the stage for the upcoming year and highlights what Country radio listeners will hear in the months ahead. In addition to all of the great music are countless opportunities for networking and

relationship building, which is a critical component in our industry.

MusicRow is very excited to offer our own new tradition this year. Beginning in 2014, we have minted the *MusicRow* Challenge Coin to honor artists and songwriters who reach the No. 1 position on the *MusicRow* CountryBreakout Radio Chart. The Challenge Coin tradition dates back to WWI when they were initially given to American soldiers. Varying accounts exist, but the most common story behind the coin's name is as follows. After receiving a Challenge Coin, organization members carried it with them at all times. When challenged to prove membership, they would produce it to verify their membership status. Some stories add that if the member couldn't produce the coin, they had to buy the challenger a drink and vice versa. Sounds like a perfect tradition for the music business!

Another *MusicRow* tradition dating back to 2001 is honoring the artists who received the most airplay during the preceding year on our *MusicRow* Chart during our CRS Meet and Greet and CountryBreakout Awards party. For the first time since these awards were created, *MusicRow* is also honoring the songwriter with the most No. 1s on the *MusicRow* Chart. Recognizing the impressive craftsmanship and talent of our Nashville tunesmiths, *MusicRow* is pleased to add this new category to these awards.

Enjoy the convention, listen to the music, have a few drinks and enjoy time with your peers. And when it's all over, smile because you are blessed to have a front row seat to new music discovery. This is a position that holds a huge amount of responsibility, not just for us, but for the millions of Country music listeners in the world.

Drink (and Listen) responsibly.

Sherod Robertson, *Publisher/Owner*

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ProductionManager&GraphicDesigner CAITLIN RANTALA, *KELSEY GRADY* *SeniorNewsEditor* SARAH SKATES *OperationsManager* MICHAEL SMITH

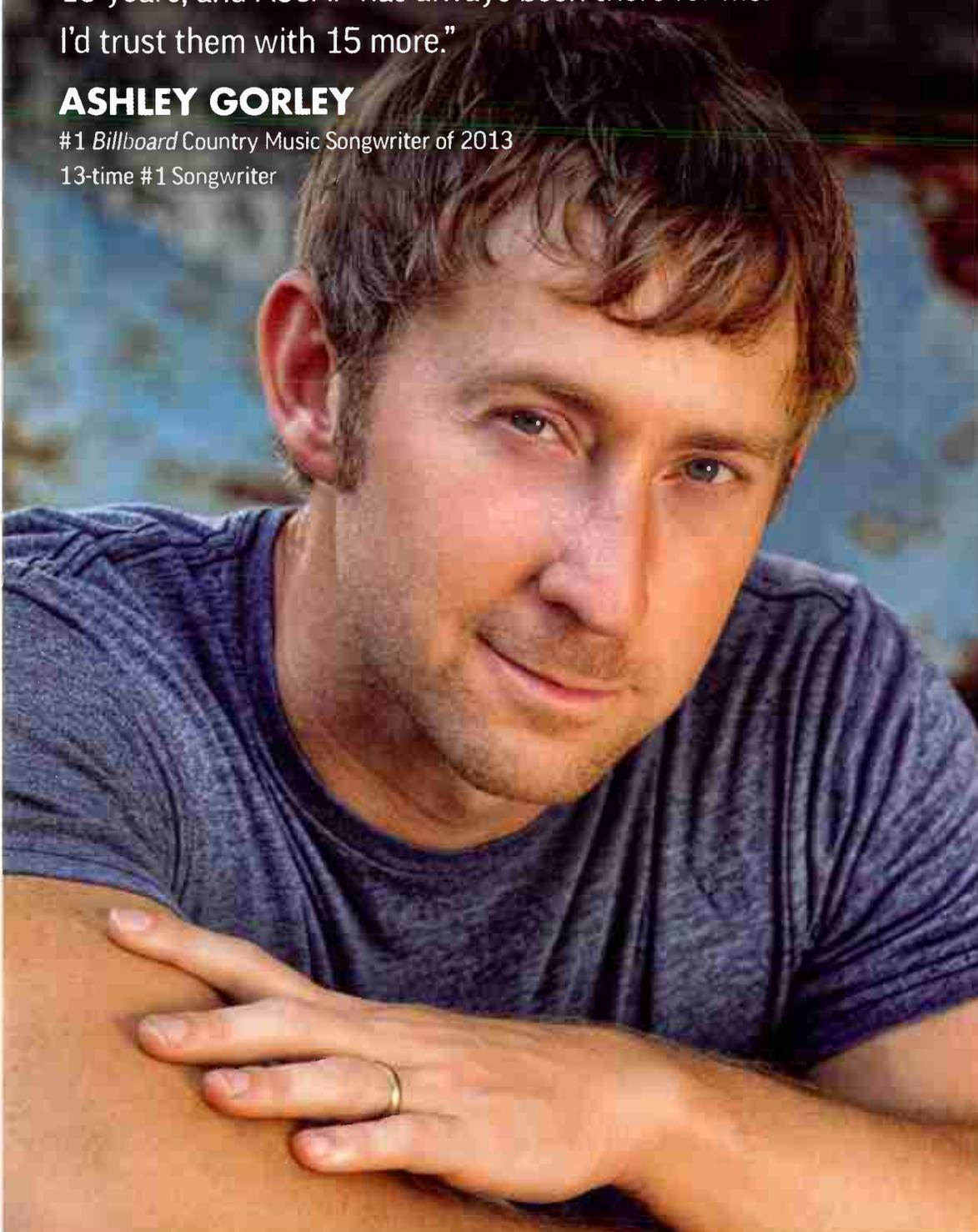
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— **Josh Kear**, *ASCAP Country Music Songwriter of the Year 2013*

"I love the consistency and the longevity of ASCAP as it supports writers. In a time when technology continues to change the medium of music and how it is shared, heard and enjoyed, the writing of the song is still the same, period. That's what ASCAP is about."

— **Jennifer Nettles**

"ASCAP is one of the first places in Nashville I ever called 'home.' I'm proud to be a member; it's been a crucial part of my career."

— **Dierks Bentley**

"ASCAP means family to me. And like family, I know the folks there are behind me no matter what. ASCAP is run by songwriters, to help songwriters, and I trust them to fight for my rights and protect my music."

— **Kip Moore**

"From the first time I walked through the door at ASCAP, I've felt like I'm a part of something special. I'm proud to say I'm a member of such an historic company and family."

— **Eric Paslay**

"I've been with ASCAP for over 18 years, and they're the people who look out for my songwriting interest. It's great to have an organization like ASCAP fighting for you."

— **Darius Rucker**

"I joined ASCAP because of the people and the philosophy of the organization. ASCAP is governed by publishers and songwriters - we are the people in charge - and that makes such a difference to me. I can trust ASCAP to always have my best interests at heart."

— **Brett James**

"When I moved to Nashville, I didn't have a clue about the music business, and I was sent to ASCAP. They took me in and put me where I needed to be to grow as a writer. They saw me all the way from that stage to Songwriter of the Year. ASCAP has been huge in my career."

— **Ben Hayslip**

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CMA RISING

SARAH TRAHERN TAKES THE HELM OF THE COUNTRY MUSIC ASSOCIATION AMID AN UPSWING IN RATINGS, AND A STRING OF SUCCESSFUL FRANCHISES.

BY JESSICA NICHOLSON

Sarah Trahern, former Sr. Vice President and General Manager at Great American Country, began 2014 as the Country Music Association's new Chief Executive Officer, replacing Steve Moore, who resigned in mid-2013.

"The decision to leave GAC was really hard," Trahern said. "We have a great staff over there and I've been with Scripps for 10 years, but the decision to come to CMA was easy."

Trahern, an Illinois native and graduate of Vanderbilt's Owen Graduate School of Management, moved to Music City in 1995 to work at TNN: The Nashville Network after spending nearly a decade in Washington, D.C. as a Sr. Producer for CSPAN. After joining The Nashville Network, Trahern played a key role in the TNN Music City News Awards when the awards show made its move from the Grand Ole Opry House to the then-newly built Bridgestone Arena. "The first time an awards show was held at Bridgestone Arena, it was a show I oversaw," recalled Trahern.

In 2005, she joined Great American Country, and was later promoted to Sr. VP of Programming. In 2010, she was named General Manager of the network, and took over leadership duties in early 2013, after the retirement of GAC president Ed Hardy.

Trahern joined the team at CMA as it prepares the awards show for its eighth time being held at Bridgestone Arena; it seems that Trahern has come full circle. In some ways, the change in roles seems nearly prophetic. "About three years ago, I was talking to a friend about my career goals—whether I was a TV person, or whether I was a music person," Trahern said. "I have been fortunate to spend the last 18 years

PHOTO: Courtesy of CMA

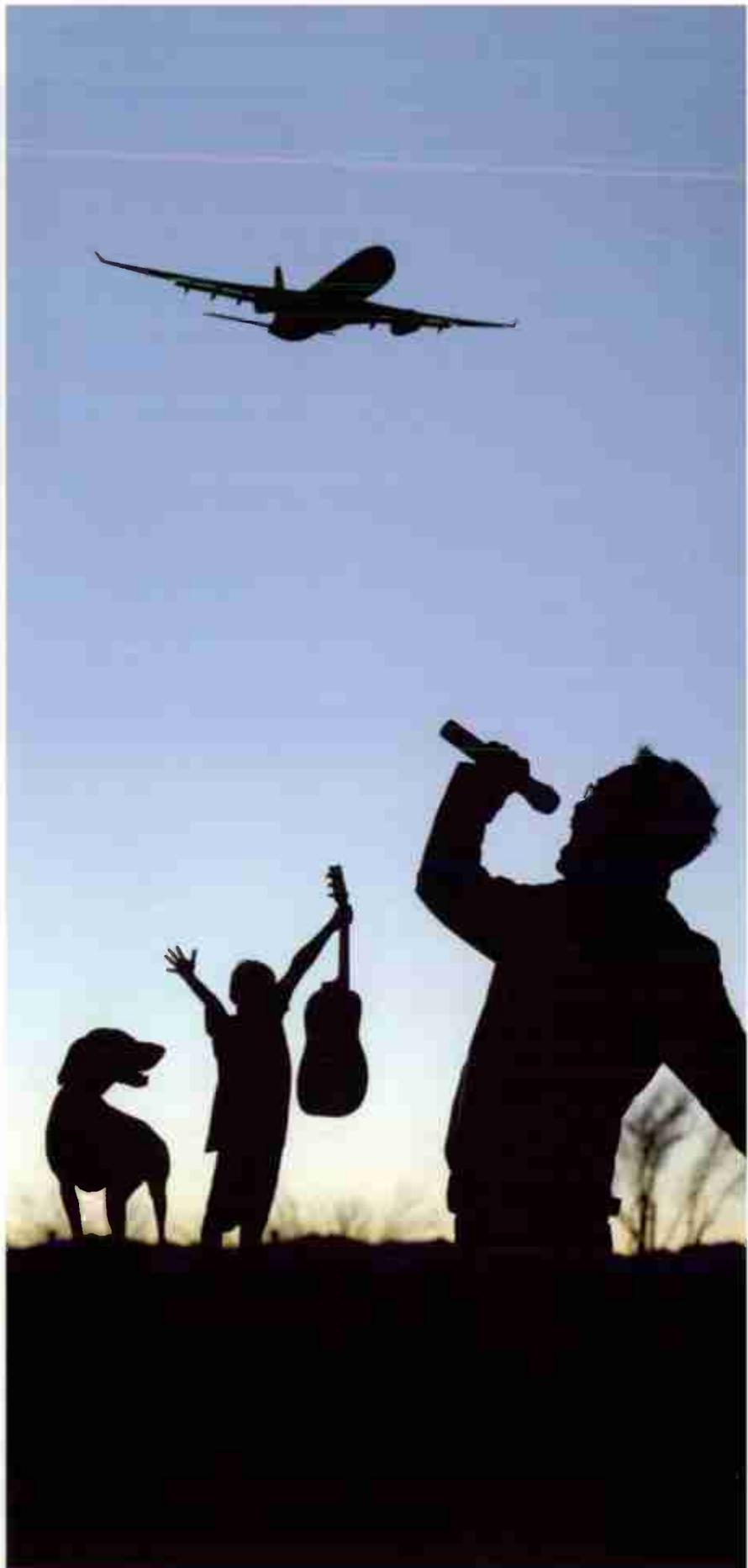
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little differently," she continued. "There are lots of things being worked on that I can't reveal yet. Some of the stalwarts will be handled in a different way, from an event standpoint. We have some big bookings already."

While the CMA currently produces three televised programs (*CMA Awards* in November, *CMA Music Festival: Country's Night To Rock* in August, and *CMA Country Christmas* in December), it seems likely that more programs could be added to the fold. "Surely, working with the CMA board on the five year plan, there should be a play for expansion of more content in different formats—television and online," she said.

"Our goal is expanding Country music on a worldwide basis. We should utilize all the tools in our kit and that involves multi-media platforms," she says. Extending Country music's international reach has been an ongoing effort for the organization, one that Trahern aims to continue. "One of the goals is to get the awards show and the summer show distributed in as many countries as possible, and finding other content besides those shows. Over the next year, we will look at content so we can be an aggregator to help get out information and support Country music."

Radio will be a strong conduit for reiterating content and updates to the Country Music Association's core audience. "Radio will continue to be a really big part of how we do our outreach from a marketing standpoint," Trahern said. "There's a strategy where you want to reach out to the core and the key is radio. We might use digital tools to reach new fans but radio is still one of the strongest formats. A number of the members of our board come from the radio world, and work across the board with their competitors to increase the outreach of Country radio."

"It's a great position for me to be in," Trahern summarized. "We have some very successful franchises. Our goal is to design the next chapter for those successful franchises."



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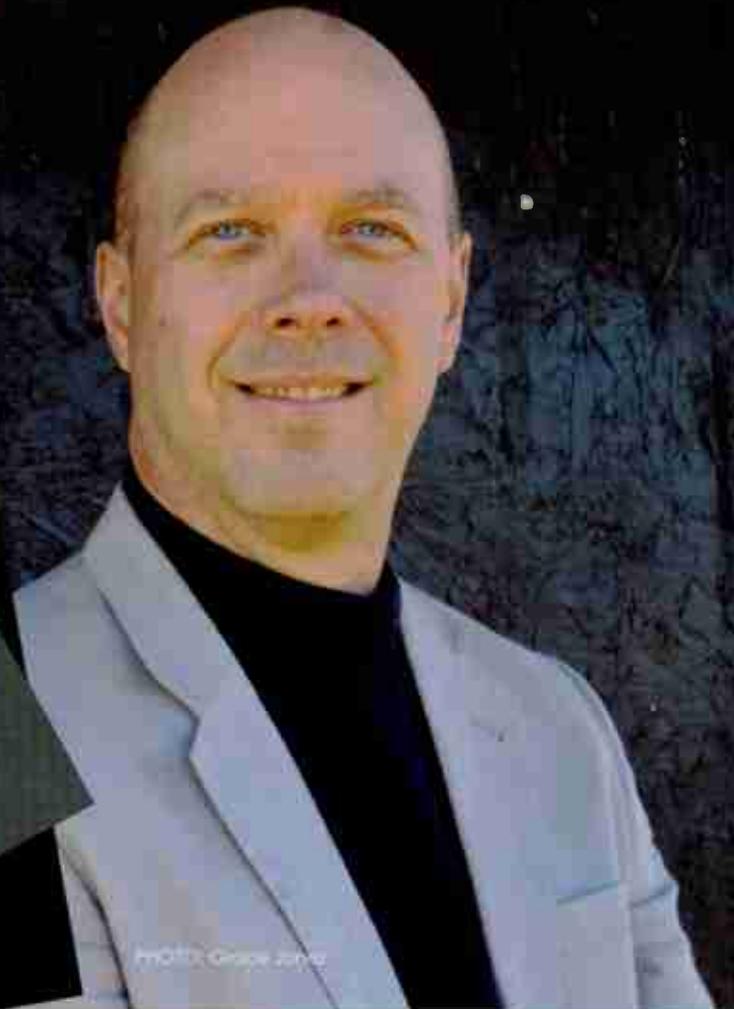
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ROWFILE RG JONES

DIRECTOR, PROMOTION/STRATEGY &
ANALYSIS, SONY MUSIC NASHVILLE

BY SARAH SKATES



RG Jones may downplay his important role at Sony Music Nashville—he laughs and calls it “geeky spreadsheet stuff”—but surviving 18 years at the same label is proof positive of his value.

As Director, Promotion/Strategy and Analysis, he has a keen eye for watching the activity on Mediabase, Nielsen ENcore BDS, and *MusicRow*'s CountryBreakout Chart. “We’re following the building charts, that’s our daily bible,” he says. “Ultimately the goal is exposing music to the marketplace, whether it’s via airplay, digital or videos. From our promotion side of the game, we want to get those No. 1s, we want to ring the bell.”

In 1996 he was hired by BNA Records, which was eventually absorbed by Sony following a string of mergers and acquisitions. Coming from a radio background, Jones found his niche not long after joining the label world. He more recently expanded his role to include secondary radio promotion. “About two years ago we re-emphasized our efforts to the secondary markets. They make up about 20 percent of sales, so it would be crazy to ignore those markets,” he explains. “A lot of those sales are physical product purchases from Walmart and Target. If we can impact sales in those marketplaces, we’re going to chase the airplay there just as much as in New York, Chicago, L.A. or Atlanta. There are a lot of good, smaller radio stations out there, especially the *MusicRow* panel, which is a little more aggressive and open to playing new

“There are a lot of good, smaller radio stations out there, especially the *MusicRow* panel, which is a little more aggressive and open to playing new music and new artists.”

music and new artists.”

Jones’ right-hand man calling on those secondary market stations is promo rep Rusty Sherrill. When possible, Sony artists visit the stations. “We do our best to take advantage of an artist in the market for a tour date,” continues Jones. “We also take out some of the developing acts we’re working with. We can do day trips from here.”

Inspired by his brother who worked in radio, Jones started putting in time at his hometown station WMOV/Ravenswood, W.Va. at age 14. He continued working during college at West Virginia University (he’s still a proud Mountaineer fan). His early career in AOR radio took him to Charleston, S.C. and Louisville, Ky., where he helped launch WQMF. He climbed the ranks as on-air talent, music director and program director. Jones cozied up to Country music when he returned to West Virginia for a nine-year run at WQBE. Eventually he moved to Nashville for the job at BNA. Today he jokes, “I did my 20 years in radio and got out on good behavior.”

Evolutions in technology and the radio industry have impacted his job since he moved to Music Row. “In 15-plus years a lot has changed. It’s crazy to think about what it was like when I first started. MP3s weren’t commonplace. We had computers but that was just the beginning of the real, live monitored era. We printed out *R&R* tracking reports once a week, they were static reports and that was all you had to work with. Now there are real-time updates. It can be addicting watching things swing up and down.”

He also notes that the airplay game has shifted significantly with the growing number of syndicated or nationally broadcast shows. Because they reach a larger audience, singles played on those shows carry more weight on the radio chart than spins from locally

broadcast shows.

The impact of radio airplay on sales isn’t cut and dry. “It’s case-by-case,” says Jones. “You get some records at the top of the radio chart that don’t really move the needle in terms of downloads or sales. But others do. You’re looking for early signs, when you see records that are in the middle of the chart and downloads start to increase, it tells you a lot of things. With Tyler Farr’s ‘Redneck Crazy,’ there were certainly early signs, primarily downloads, that it was connecting with the consumer.”

There have been plenty of changes in Jones’ career, but there have also been important constants. He’s thankful to God, wife Julie, son Rory and daughter Grace. In 2014 he’s looking forward to more chart-analyzing and spreadsheet-strategizing.



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MUSICROW'S NO. 1 CHALLENGE COIN

BY MICHAEL SMITH



For thousands of years, people have honored one another with coins, influencing posterity to do the same. After winning the decisive battle that would make him Rome's first emperor, Augustus Caesar minted coins to celebrate his victory, solidifying his legacy in small, round pieces of metal. Leaders have always minted coins to celebrate their achievements, or those of others, and *MusicRow* has joined the tradition with its No. 1 Challenge Coin, a hallmark of American accomplishment. As Nashville's leading music industry publication, *MusicRow* awards Challenge Coins to artists and

songwriters who reach the No. 1 position on *MusicRow's* weekly CountryBreakout Chart.

The coin's inaugural winners are artist Cole Swindell and songwriter Shane Minor, whose co-written smash "Chillin' It" was the first song to land at No. 1 on *MusicRow's* CountryBreakout Chart in 2014. Luke Bryan and songwriters Chris Stapleton and Jim Beavers are the next set of winners for their hit "Drink A Beer," which topped *MusicRow's* chart in the second week of 2014.

Readers who initially met the Challenge Coin with confused expressions will be surprised to learn of its rich history. Sources vary, but most accounts agree that Challenge Coins originated during World War I, when an American officer cast a group of coins marked with his unit's emblem and distributed them to the members of his squadron.

Later in the war, one of the squadron's soldiers was shot down flying over Germany, captured by enemy forces and stripped of all possessions except his coin. The soldier escaped his captors and reached French allies, who thought he was a spy until they recognized his troop's emblem on his coin and set him free. Although the story is dramatic to the bone, many support its validity.

During the Second World War, American soldiers stationed in Germany collected virtually worthless German currency called pfennigs. Soldiers often gathered for drinks and challenged one another to produce their pfennigs. If a soldier failed to do so, he bought his comrades in arms a round of drinks. Eventually, Challenge Coins, as they came to be known, replaced pfennigs.

Whether part history or mythology, the Challenge Coin's origins demonstrate its ability to unite individuals and stand as a marker of accomplishment and pride. Today Challenge Coins maintain special significance in the military, but have also spread to other avenues and are awarded to accomplished individuals in many fields.

MusicRow's No. 1 Challenge Coin will continue this tradition, honoring accomplished artists and songwriters each week, and commemorating the industry at large. "Much like how a story in a song can captivate our attention, the historical and legendary narratives behind the origin of the Challenge Coin are what first caught my attention," said *MusicRow's* Owner/Publisher Sherod Robertson. "As I read more about these unique medallions and their representations, it became obvious there was a place at *MusicRow* to utilize this symbolic coin, and honor the artists and songwriters that reach the top position on *MusicRow's* Radio Chart. I'm very excited to add this new tradition, full of rich history, to honor these immensely talented individuals."

The No. 1 Challenge Coin bears a unique design, showcasing a vintage microphone on the front and Nashville's iconic skyline on the back. Together, the images represent Music City, home to the best established and emerging players in Country music. Additionally, each coin is numbered so that it can identify its owner and distinguish them from other Challenge Coin recipients.

Among the coin's winners, *MusicRow* hopes that one champion will challenge another, and participate in this longstanding tradition, which should, at the very least, earn them a congratulatory nod and a free round of drinks. Regardless, these talented industry players are the first of many to receive a coin, which will hopefully remind winners of their triumph on *MusicRow's* chart and of those to be attained. Ultimately, we hope that Music City will continue to be filled with the sounds of Country music and, maybe, the sight of a few Challenge Coins.



Warner Bros. artist Cole Swindell receives the first ever *MusicRow* No. 1 Challenge Coin for his chart-topper "Chillin' It," which he co-wrote with Shane Minor. The song landed at the top of the CountryBreakout chart on January 9, 2014. Pictured (L-R): Tree Paine, Sr. VP, Publicity, Warner Music Nashville; Sherod Robertson, Publisher/Owner, *MusicRow*; Swindell; and Kerri Edwards, Manager, KP Entertainment/Red Light Management.



12TH ANNUAL COUNTRY BREAKOUT AWARDS

Marking 12 years since its debut, *MusicRow's* CountryBreakout Chart continues to provide an opportunity for Country music artists to reach the essential secondary radio market. After all, most of us grew up in secondary markets where our early and deepest influences from Country music were made, affecting us in ways only music can. The *MusicRow* Chart is uniquely positioned in the radio marketplace to provide airplay measurement in such a vital segment of our country. Our industry appreciates the value of the secondary market as an important vehicle for new and established acts. For talented independent artists, it offers a unique opportunity to be presented to radio listeners, and if successful, gain larger market airplay and visibility. The *MusicRow* Chart is also a conduit between radio personnel, booking agents, label executives, artists and others in the industry for engagement and building lasting relationships that are so crucial.

We are proud to present *MusicRow's* CountryBreakout Awards to artists and labels, both established and emerging, for their success at radio in the past year. These awards are based on the number of spins reported from January to December 2013 by the members of the *MusicRow* Chart panel. The award categories are Male Artist of the Year, Female Artist of the Year, Group/Duo of the Year, Breakout Artist of the Year, Label of the Year, Independent Artist of the Year, and Reporter of the Year. We

are also instituting the Songwriter of the Year award for achieving the most No. 1 songs on the *MusicRow* Chart last year. Like you, *MusicRow* strongly values the talented tunesmiths in this town and is proud to salute them.

Male, Female, and Group/Duo Artist of the Year goes to the artist who had the highest total spins from all singles in 2013. Label of the Year is awarded to the imprint, not label group, with the most overall spins. Breakout Artist of the Year is awarded to the new artist whose first single or album was released in the measurement

period and picked up the greatest amount of overall spins. Independent Artist of the Year is based on spins, as well as a number of factors including label size, distribution model, and promotion staff. The CountryBreakout Reporter of the Year award is an editorial decision and is given to a radio panelist who exemplifies the spirit of the chart.

THIS YEAR WE ARE HONORING ...

BLAKE SHELTON/MALE ARTIST OF THE YEAR
118,167 SPINS

MIRANDA LAMBERT/FEMALE ARTIST OF THE YEAR
94,465 SPINS

KACEY MUSGRAVES/BREAKOUT ARTIST OF THE YEAR
74,030 SPINS

THE BAND PERRY/GROUP OR DUO OF THE YEAR
116,391 SPINS

TRACY LAWRENCE/INDEPENDENT ARTIST OF THE YEAR
41,032 SPINS

CAPITOL RECORDS NASHVILLE/LABEL OF THE YEAR
552,807 SPINS

RODNEY CLAWSON/SONGWRITER OF THE YEAR

KELLY GREEN/REPORTER OF THE YEAR

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CROUSE**

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UNIVERSAL
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BLAKE SHELTON

MALE ARTIST OF THE YEAR

BY SARAH SKATES

118,167
spins



Down to earth as he may be, Blake Shelton is more than just one of the “Boys ‘Round Here.” His latest accolade is *MusicRow’s* Male Artist of the Year, for securing more radio airplay on the CountryBreakout Chart than any other male in 2013. He accumulated 118,167 spins with singles “Sure Be Cool If You Did,” “Boys ‘Round Here,” and “Mine Would Be You.” The latter marked Shelton’s tenth consecutive No. 1, and fifteenth overall.

Peter Strickland, Exec. Vice President and General Manager, of Warner Music Nashville explained why Shelton’s music hits home with radio programmers and fans. “Blake is very focused on recording songs his fans can relate to. He puts so much heart into every album and he always keeps his fans and radio in mind when he goes in the studio. Plenty of his fans live in small towns, so we are grateful to the secondary market stations that share Blake’s music with their listeners. Small towns are such an important part of our country, and the stations and listeners in those towns are equally important. We value those markets and thank the *MusicRow* stations for their support.”

Shelton added, “I grew up in a small town and still live in a small town, and small market radio stations are the only option where I come from. They have an enormous impact on the Country music

industry and the music that they choose to play has a huge impact on us, Country music fans. I am completely honored *MusicRow* named me Male Artist of the Year. Thank you.”

In 2013 the superstar’s winning streak included CMA Male Vocalist of the Year for the fourth consecutive time, and CMA Album of the Year with producer Scott Hendricks for Platinum selling *Based On a True Story...*

At the 2014 Grammys, Shelton was nominated for Best Country Album and his hit “Mine Would Be You” received nods for Best Country Solo Performance and Best Country Song.

On the heels of his sold-out *Ten Times Crazier 2013 Tour*, Shelton recently announced plans for a 20-plus date *Ten Times Crazier Tour 2014*, launching in June with sponsors including Pepsi. “I cannot wait to get back out on the road,” he said. “I had so much fun playing songs from *Based On A True Story...* and getting to see the crowd’s reaction to those songs was unforgettable. It is one of the most validating things for an artist like me, to have people sing along to your songs...it means what I’m doing is right and no matter what I’m doing, whether it is *The Voice* or a TV special, absolutely nothing compares to playing live for me.”

NATALIE STOVALL AND THE DRIVE



BABY COME ON WITH IT

LOOK WHO'S TALKING

"IT'S JUST AMAZING... YOU HAVE GOT TO SEE HER... IT'S AWESOME.. THE ENERGY WAS AMAZING"

JEFF KAPUGLI / CBS RADIO

"SHE'S THE BEST VOCALIST I'VE WORKED WITH IN 20 YEARS"

PAUL WORLEY / PRODUCER

"NATALIE ROCKS IT UP THERE MAN. SHE IS SO GOOD... I'VE BEEN BLOWN AWAY BY THESE GUYS... SHE OWNS THE STAGE... I'M A FAN"

BRIAN THOMAS / VP OF PROGRAMMING CBS TAMPA

"PINT-SIZED, FIDDLE-SHREDDING, SPITFIRE VOCALIST... TALENTED OUTFIT PUTS ON A MEAN LIVE SHOW - ARTIST TO WATCH IN 2014"

COUNTRY WEEKLY

"THIS WOMAN IS NOT HUMAN... I WANNA MAKE HER ONE OF CMT'S NEXT WOMEN OF COUNTRY... 2014 IS HER YEAR"

LESLIE FRAM / CMT

"TALENT LIKE I'VE NEVER SEEN"

IT BOSCH / KASB

"YOU GOTTA GO SEE HER LIVE. SHE IS AMAZING. THE BAND IS AMAZING."

BOSS MICHAELS / KXKE

"UN-FREAKING-BELIEVABLE. SHE IS JUST AMAZING"

COREY GARRISON / WHTT

"THIS GIRL AND THIS BAND SOLID... UNBELIEVABLE"

PAT GARRETT / KMPS

"ONE OF THE 10 COUNTRY ARTISTS TO WATCH IN 2014"

BILLBOARD / #15 PICKS

"I CAN'T BELIEVE HOW GOOD SHE IS ON THE FIDDLE. MANDOLIN. THE GUITAR"

BECKY HUBNER ALBRIGHT, O'MALLY, & HUBNER

"EXCELLENT MUSICIANS THESE GUYS RAISED THE BAR"

CAREY EDWARDS / KCTY

"VOICE IS INCREDIBLE"

TJ MCENTIRE / KXEQ

"NEVER SEEN A BAND LIKE IT"

DAVE AUSTIN / KVOU

"IT'S SOMETHING THAT IS ALMOST INDESCRIBABLE.. THE ENERGY AND TALENT COMING OUT OF THEM IS JUST UNBELIEVABLE"

ALISSA POLLACK PREMIERE RADIO NETWORKS

"THIS HIGH ENERGY MUSIC IS LIKE A SWIFT KICK TO YOUR SOUL... UNDENIABLY ONE OF THE BEST NEW BANDS OUT THERE"

ROUGHSTOCK 2014 ARTISTS TO WATCH

"ONE OF THE BEST, HONED IN, JUST SKILLED LIVE SHOWS THAT IS OUT ON THE MARKET RIGHT NOW"

STACY CATO / CMT

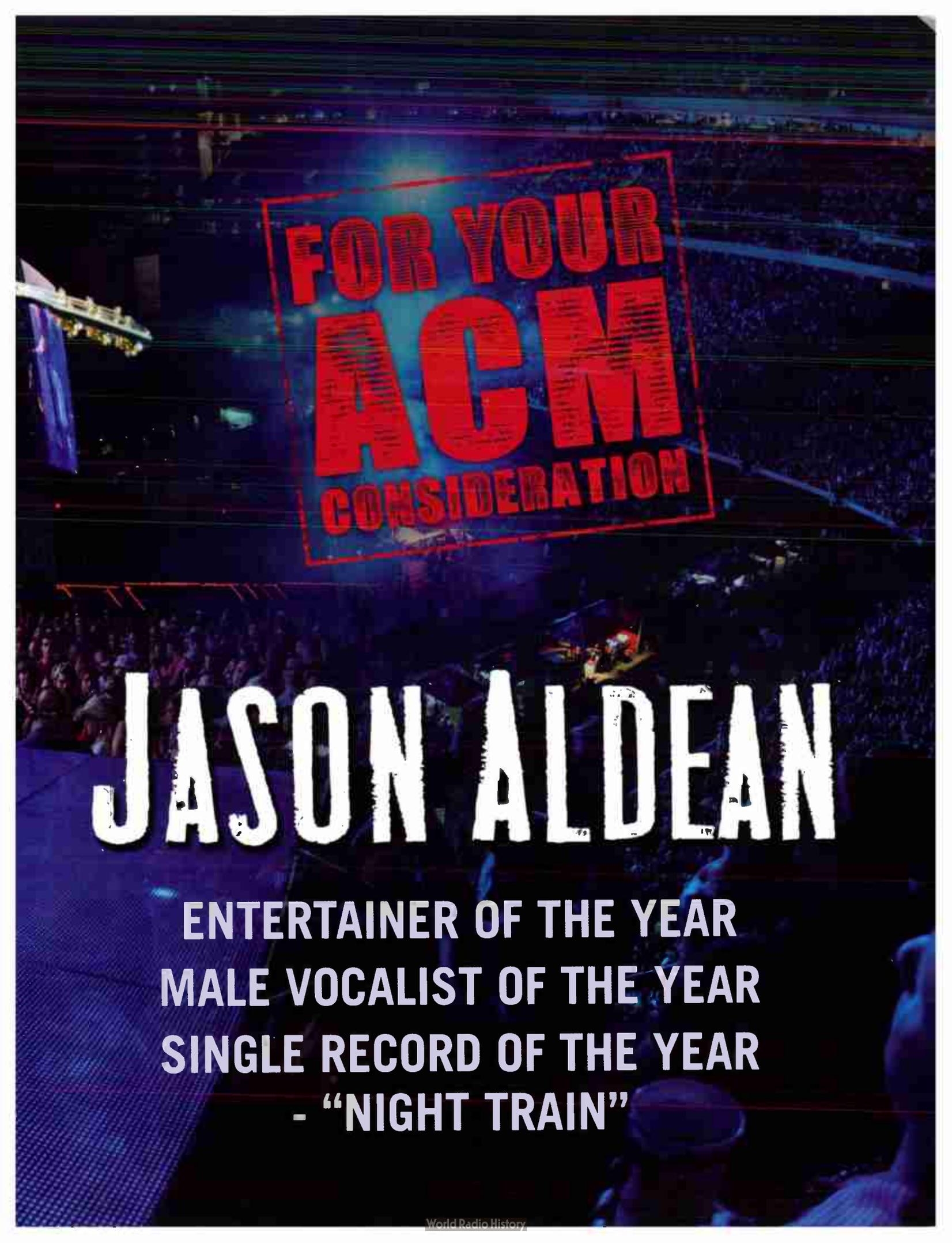
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A large crowd of people is visible at a concert, with a sign in the foreground that reads "FOR YOUR ACM CONSIDERATION". The scene is lit with blue and purple stage lights.

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CONSIDERATION**

JASON ALDEAN

**ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR
MALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR
SINGLE RECORD OF THE YEAR
- "NIGHT TRAIN"**

MIRANDA LAMBERT

FEMALE ARTIST OF THE YEAR

BY JESSICA NICHOLSON

94,465
spins

Country queen Miranda Lambert's reign over the *MusicRow* CountryBreakout Chart continues this year, as Lambert picks up her second consecutive Female Artist of the Year honor. A trio of eclectic songs from the Texan made it to the top of the *MusicRow* chart in 2013, including the feisty, bold lyrics of "Mama's Broken Heart," the lilting charm that inhabits "All Kinds of Kinds," and a duet with Keith Urban, "We Were Us," which made a rapid ascent up the chart.

"Miranda Lambert is a core superstar artist in the format," said Keith Gale, Sr. VP, National Promotion at RCA Nashville. "She remains true to her music, her artistry, her fans and Country radio. We appreciate the support from all of *MusicRow's* stations, and are thankful that they have again made her their CountryBreakout Female Artist of the Year. Miranda Lambert's songs have created an impact at radio because they have made an impact with the people who listen to radio."

Lambert joined Dierks Bentley for the co-headlining *Locked and Reloaded Tour*, bringing her music to fans across the country throughout 2013, and still found time to team with Ashley Monroe and Angaleena Presley to release the sophomore Pistol Annies effort, *Annie Up*. Pistol Annies also accompanied Blake Shelton on his single, "Boys 'Round Here."

Whether she is promoting a solo project or singing with Pistol Annies, perhaps one reason fans have taken a shine to Lambert and her lyrics is because the singer-songwriter reflects a bit of the fans themselves. Like her fans, Lambert is still a loyal radio listener. "I listen to the radio a lot," she said. "And every time one of my songs come on, it's still special. When I was growing up, I would record the Country Countdown on my cassette recorder. I love Country music and I want to thank each and every one of you for playing my music."

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THE BAND PERRY

GROUP/DUO OF THE YEAR

116,391
spins

BY JESSICA NICHOLSON

Three must be The Band Perry's lucky number. Three of the trio's songs summited the *MusicRow* CountryBreakout Chart in 2013, including "Better Dig Two," "Don't Let Me Be Lonely," and "DONE." What's more, "Better Dig Two" spent three consecutive weeks sitting pretty at the top of the CountryBreakout Chart rankings in January 2013.

"What an amazing year it has been for The Band Perry, with back-to-back-to-back No. 1 singles at *MusicRow* from *Pioneer*," said Matthew Hargis, VP of Promotion at Republic Nashville. "The teams at Republic Nashville and Diane Richey Promotions would like to send out a big thank you to Country Radio for your continued support."

This sibling trio, comprised of Reid, Neil and Kimberly Perry, bring limitless energy to their live performances and to their radio hits, so it's no surprise that radio listeners at *MusicRow* Country stations tuned in, lobbing the trio's songs up the chart. In late 2013, the trio took their infectious live show across the pond as part of the *We Are Pioneers World Tour*, which included dates in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany, France, Ireland and the United Kingdom.

The tour's namesake album, *Pioneer*, which was released in April 2013, has been certified Gold by the Recording Industry Association of America.

The Band Perry's tight-knit sibling harmonies, easygoing camaraderie, and talent for writing and finding songs with lyrical substance have made Neil, Reid and Kimberly one of Country music's most talked about groups since they released their self-titled debut album on Republic Nashville in 2010. 2013 brought nominations from the Academy of Country Music, CMT Music Awards and Teen Choice Awards. The group recently revealed that it will join Blake Shelton's *Ten Times Crazier Tour* in 2014.

"Wow. We're honored to receive such a special award from our friends at *MusicRow* and Country radio," said the trio. "Their overwhelming support is a driving force in our career and we are ever grateful for this recognition."



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World Radio History

Kacey Musgraves very well may prove that female success at Country radio isn't a thing of the past.

Leading the pack over any other new act in 2013 – including the boys – the Mercury Records Nashville newcomer seems to break all conventional barriers. *MusicRow* Chart reporters from across the country spun three singles from Musgraves' debut album, *Same Trailer, Different Park*, 74,030 times over airwaves last year.

"Thank you so much!" commented Musgraves on the radio achievement. "This is a huge honor. I really appreciate *MusicRow* and Country radio's support. I am able to connect with so many more people thanks to them!"

A role model among her generation, the 25-year-old's songs are not only substantive, but offer a relatable narrative about the struggle for self-identity. Her first No. 1, "Merry Go Round," portrays the dreariness of living as a misfit; "Blowin' Smoke" displays irresolute aspirations breeding pessimism; while perhaps the most liberating, "Follow Your Arrow," articulates how to confidently blaze a new trail.

"We had fun continuing the launch of Kacey Musgraves to Country radio last year," said Damon Moberly, Mercury Records Nashville VP Promotion. "'Merry Go 'Round' was a great start, and the format gave that song good exposure along with 'Blowin' Smoke' and now, 'Follow Your Arrow.' Kacey certainly has a point of view musically, and it's nice to see her get a foothold on what we believe is going to be a long and successful career."

The former *Nashville Star* contestant's heavy spin power

may run contrary to the notion that female acts are impossible to break at radio, but Musgraves has achieved both commercial success and a seemingly simultaneous stamp of industry approval. In less than a year, Musgraves was honored as *MusicRow's* 2013 Breakthrough Artist, Breakthrough Songwriter and co-writer for the Song of the Year, and also earned substantial awards at the 2013 CMA Awards and 2014 Grammys.

Although some national TV networks may censor her lyrics, her message reaches an audience with full potency. Nearly every "best of 2013" list lauded the Mercury Records diva as a weaver of lyrics, reuniting artistry and commercial sound to Country music.

And here we are again, adding yet another accolade to her awards shelf. Kacey Musgraves is not only well on her way to inspiring a generation, but also in need of a larger shelf for the recognitions she earns while doing so.

PHOTO: Kelly Christine Musgraves

KACEY MUSGRAVES

BREAKOUT ARTIST OF THE YEAR

BY ERIC PARKER

74,030
spins

Bill Wence

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TRACY LAWRENCE

INDEPENDENT ARTIST OF THE YEAR

BY SARAH SKATES

41,032
spins

More than 20 years and 13 million albums into his career, Tracy Lawrence continues to earn awards and radio airplay. His longevity is as unique as his voice—the vocal behind 18 No. 1s, including classics “Time Marches On” and “Alibis.”

In 2013, his singles “Stop Drop and Roll” and “Footprints on the Moon” reached the Top 20 on *MusicRow’s* CountryBreakout Chart, accumulating over 41,000 spins, more than any other small-label artist. Regina Raleigh and Ann Chrisman promoted the songs to radio.

“It’s a nice acknowledgement,” he said of being named Independent Artist of the Year. “The *MusicRow* chart has become a good home for me, and the programmers have been really supportive. I have a lot of long-standing relationships. I’m trying to nurture those relationships and keep doing what we do.”

The title of his 2013 album *Headlights, Taillights and Radios* is representative of the collection of songs; with headlights looking to

the future, taillights celebrating the past, and radio as a salute to his chart success. “I started recording in the direction to make a more traditional Country record,” he explained. “But as time progressed, I needed to explore and challenge myself musically. I wanted to go deeper and try a more edgy and progressive sound that reflected where I was going next.

“‘Stop Drop and Roll’ was reminiscent of some of my old stuff. It fit into a familiar vein production-wise and lyrically. So I think it was a good choice for the first single off the album. Casey Beathard was one of the cowriters on it and I’ve had a great track record with him with ‘Find Out Who Your Friends Are.’” Beathard penned the song with Brandon Kinney.

For the follow-up single, Lawrence and his team pushed the envelope. “‘Footprints on the Moon’ is pretty different from anything I’ve done in the past,” he said. “The format’s changed and I wanted to step outside my comfort zone a little bit. We’ve been opening the show with it for the last year or so and the impact’s been great.” The entertainer played approximately 120 dates last year.

He’s heading into 2014 with new single, “Lie,” the first ballad from the album to hit radio. It will be released along with his first music video in several years.



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“Anyone who truly loves radio knows that once it’s in your blood, you’re locked for life,” said *MusicRow’s* Reporter of the Year, Kelly Green, who has been locked into radio for more than two decades. After graduating from Western Kentucky University in 1989, Green entered the radio circuit, working at stations in Kentucky, Texas and West Virginia, before settling down at WEIO The Farm in Huntingdon, Tenn.

In addition to his music duties, Green hosts WEIO’s Green Team Morning Show, which allows him to connect meaningfully with station listeners. “There’s something magical about turning on a mic and making a listener laugh, cry or reach into their pocket and donate their hard earned money for a worthwhile cause,” he said.

Radio has also connected Green with top-notch acts like Florida Georgia Line. “We were probably one of the first stations in the country to play ‘Cruise,’ so they included us in their radio tour,” he recalled. “We were broadcasting from a single-wide trailer with warped floors, sagging ceilings, mice and mold. When they got out of the van, I’m fairly certain we heard a collective gasp.”

Sixteen months ago, WEIO’s workspace improved considerably

with the construction of its Big Red Barn Studio. The studio’s rustic, red exterior betrays a modern 100-seat concert hall inside, which frequently hosts live shows. “Each month, we produce a show called the ‘Chick-fil-A Barn Bash,’” explained Green. “It’s a 90-minute live show that features three rising Country stars.” Past performers have included Brent Cobb, David Bradley and former *The Voice* contestants Gwen Sebastian and Angie Johnson.

Green’s passion for up-and-coming artists makes him the ideal candidate for a reporter in secondary radio. “I’ve had a few offers in bigger markets, but I’ve always turned them down because what we’re doing here is special,” he said. “The pressure is low and the creativity is high. Major labels are starting to realize the importance of secondary radio, and they see that we can drive sales and can break a song.”

Considering his enthusiasm for independent artists and his attitude toward secondary radio, Green has proven himself worthy of *MusicRow’s* Reporter of the Year award. “I’m absolutely floored,” he said, commenting on the win. “It’s such an honor.”



KELLY GREEN

REPORTER OF THE YEAR

BY MICHAEL SMITH

RODNEY CLAWSON

SONGWRITER OF THE YEAR

BY JESSICA NICHOLSON

Big Loud Shirt's Rodney Clawson notched more No. 1 songs on *MusicRow's* CountryBreakout Chart in 2013 than any other songwriter. Seven songs co-written by the Gruver, Texas native reached the pinnacle of the chart over the past year, including tunes penned for Florida Georgia Line ("Round Here," "Get Your Shine On"), Tim McGraw ("One Of Those Nights," "Southern Girl"), The Band Perry, Blake Shelton and Luke Bryan. The chart-topping "Crash My Party" became the title cut on Bryan's most recent album, which was certified Platinum a mere six weeks after release.

"I think these songs just connect with a younger

audience," Clawson said. "Younger people are listening to Country, but they also listen to other kinds of music. These songs incorporate a little bit of other genres musically, but lyrically they are Country. 'Get Your Shine On' is what kids are doing today, just living in these small towns. I called it 'party Country' for a couple of years, but I think everyone calls it 'bro Country' now. I just called it 'party Country' because it feels good and is good to sing along with."

Clawson found co-writing success with fellow Big Loud Shirt writer Chris Tompkins, Clawson's co-writer for Shelton's "Sure Be Cool If You Did," The Band Perry's "Don't Let Me Be Lonely," and other top ranking songs. "Our writing rooms are about 30 feet apart on the top floor of Big Loud Shirt," he said. "I think he's the most talented songwriter in town. He's a track guy, he can come up with incredible song ideas, and he can write lyrics. He's great at every facet of songwriting."

Clawson also possesses that creative flexibility, something he says is essential to the modern Country songwriter. "I've written with some songwriters over the years that have one thing they do really well, and that doesn't necessarily lend itself to having a long, successful songwriting career," he said. "You have to be a little bit of a chameleon, depending on where you are needed. One day, I might be the guy who has to come up with the chord progression and the melody. Another day, I might need to create the lyrics."

Big Loud Shirt signed Clawson in 2008, and singles for George Strait ("I Saw God Today"), Jason Aldean ("Take A Little Ride"), and other artists followed. Clawson seems poised to continue his chart-topping success in 2014. Aldean's upcoming *Burn It Down Tour* was named after a tune Clawson penned. Clawson reports he has five songs on hold for Florida Georgia Line's forthcoming second album, and he has cuts with Chris Lane, a singer-songwriter newly signed to Big Loud Mountain.





Mike Dungan
UMG Nashville's
Chairman and CEO

Steve Hodges
Sr. VP, Promotion
Capitol Nashville

If you can't keep a good man down, what can be said of a successful record label? Apparently the answer is to earn *MusicRow's* Country Breakout Label of the Year for 9 years.

This year, as in eight years prior, Capitol Nashville has retained its crown for the most spins on *MusicRow's* Chart during the previous calendar year. The Universal Music Group imprint rings in with a total of 552,807 impressions to mark the achievement. Indeed, a stellar roster of artists, staffing, not to mention quality songs, is required to stay on top.

"Nine years is a long time!" commented UMG Nashville Chairman and CEO Mike Dungan. "Hell, we actually heard ballads on the radio nine years ago! With or without ballads, I am incredibly proud of this team, the artists and the staff."

To further emphasize Dungan's point, when Capitol Nashville received *MusicRow's* inaugural Label of the Year trophy in 2004, the label's Dierks Bentley was simultaneously named Breakout Artist of the Year with help from his ballad, "My Last Name."

Bentley went on to become Male Artist of the Year in 2013 and was part of the star-studded roster helping Capitol Nashville gain prominence last year, including Little Big Town ("Tornado"),

Lady Antebellum ("Downtown," "Goodbye Town"), Luke Bryan ("Crash My Party," "That's My Kind of Night"), Keith Urban ("Little Bit of Everything," "We Were Us") and Darius Rucker ("Wagon Wheel," "Radio"). Each of the nine aforementioned Capitol Nashville titles account for roughly 20 percent of the No. 1 titles in *MusicRow's* headlines.

"Congrats to the staff at Capitol and the team at Diane Richey Promotions!" said Steve Hodges, Sr. VP, Promotion, Capitol Nashville. "We are all proud to represent this stellar roster of artists and their music. Thanks to Country radio, especially the *MusicRow* panel, for being great partners and getting our music to their listeners!"

Secondary market radio promotion has been handled by Richey's office, promoting the same music as Capitol's in-house team led by Hodges. Each contributed to the invaluable momentum required to maintain Label of the Year for nearly a decade.

2014 is gearing up to be another monumental year for the imprint, with newcomer Jon Pardi's just released *Write You A Song*, and Bentley's highly anticipated *Riser* hitting streets Feb. 25.



LABEL OF THE YEAR
BY ERIC PARKER

552,807
spins

The Voices Of Secondary Radio

Compiled by Michael Smith

Each week, radio stations report hundreds of songs to *MusicRow's* CountryBreakout Chart, spinning artists closer to the coveted No. 1 position. Although many artists attribute their success to labels, publicists and other industry familiars, the role of a radio reporter shouldn't be overlooked. In a bid to discover the inner workings of radio, *MusicRow* asked its reporters a series of questions regarding artist visits, promoters, new music, and more. Below we have compiled their answers to produce the voices of secondary radio.



Kelly Green, WEIO/Huntingdon, TN

"I love that artists take the time to visit small towns like Huntingdon. Our listeners download songs just like listeners in Dallas and Nashville. I think artists are realizing that a small town station can break a song and I definitely take that into consideration."

Paul Ciliberto, WDNB/Liberty, NY

"We are proud to be instrumental in the careers of new artists," he says. "Being on *MusicRow's* panel affords us the opportunity to meet them." He's excited about several artists including David Bradley, Stephanie Grace and John Karl.



Toby Tucker, WDZQ/Decatur, IL

"A lot of it is gut instinct," says Tucker, referring to the criteria he uses to add new music into rotation. "Sometimes you hear a great song from an unknown artist; other times you get something bad from an established act. We test new songs every Monday at drive time and use listener feedback as a guideline."

Carey Carlson, WTCM/Traverse City, MI

"Six years ago I created a Sunday evening show, 'The Back Burner,' which features lesser known artists and songs. I truly believe WTCM is a leader in breaking music, not only in our market but in the region and the nation." Carlson's favorites include Striking Matches, Eric Church and the music of ABC's *Nashville*.



George Davis, KBXB/Sikeston, MO

"The promoters I speak with are fantastic. I listen, research and compare what they have said as to whether a song fits my station." Davis' station has received visits from several big name artists. "We've had Justin Moore at the local Harley-Davidson dealership, and LoCash Cowboys perform for our closest friends."

Fletcher Brown, WXFL/Florence, AL

Brown takes pride in his station's charitable initiatives. "We donate hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in air time for local charities, as well as the man power to emcee and organize events. WXFL and Big River Broadcasting are a big part of the local community."



Dave Tyler, WTRS/Ocala, FL

"I increase spins if a song is building with our audience," says Tyler. "Superstar artists get priority, because listeners are most familiar with them, but the best song will always move ahead first. When an artist visits our station we experience their passion, and we support them for the long haul."

Colby Ericson, KVWF/Wichita, KS

"We excel at social media. We also maintain a great presence at events, and we're very accessible." He adds, "Promoters are very important. They always bring our attention to new and exciting artists." Ericson plans to keep an eye on several artists in 2014, including Natalie Stovall and the Drive, and Weston Burt.



J. Brooks, KSMA/Mason City, IA

"It's great when artists visit the studio, because it shows that we have a relationship with Nashville and different artists. *MusicRow's* panel allows us to network, and make a difference in Country radio as well as an artist's career. You never know when the next Garth Brooks is going to visit!"

Ted Cramer, WIFE/Connersville, IN

"We're known for breaking artists. Whereas bigger stations rely on a consultant and play top 30, we play top 50 and independents. We also bring indie artists in for a few shows each year. It's nice to help an artist improve their career, and being on *MusicRow's* panel makes that possible."





Jeffrey Hunt, WFGE/State College, PA

"We hold music meetings every Monday, and ask ourselves questions like, 'Do we need a certain sound to balance our playlist this week?'" WFGE also serves the needs of the community. "Our ties with our listeners are very strong."

Mike Thomas, KFAV/Warrenton, MO

"I count on promoters a great deal, and as long as they respect me, I respect them. We both play key roles in spreading an artist's name to the public." Hunt values *MusicRow's* chart because it showcases hot new artists.



Dave Stanford, WDHR/Pikeville, KY

"Without promoters, there are several songs we may not even look at. Artist visits are also helpful. They can go a long way to help a song, but they don't necessarily guarantee airplay." Stanford forecasts a bright year for Kacey Musgraves and Danielle Bradbery in 2014.

Dave Young, KDKD/Clinton, MO

"Using radio, internet and social media, we raised \$5,000 in meals for local food banks before any of the bigger stations, and we're very proud of that." Young's roster of rising talent for 2014 includes Brothers Osborne, Josey Milner and Jordan Anderson.



Lee Richey, WKPQ/Hornell, NY

For Richey, it boils down to listener engagement. "Our studios sit in an all-glass storefront right on Main Street, so that listeners can connect with us. Additionally, we work hard to conduct unique interviews with people ranging from Kenny Chesney to Kevin Bacon, and our listeners appreciate that."

Gabe Buch, WQPC/Prairie du Chien, WI

Buch consults several resources to determine spins each week. "We reference multiple charts and we also consider regional popularity; artists who perform shows in the area will receive double spins from February to August."



Arnie Andrews, WCOV/Sparta, WI

"Artist visits are great: they provide you with something EPKs can't," says Andrews. "Sometimes we include the listeners and they love it. We love to expose listeners to new music and it's fun when they ask about a new artist we've played at the station."

Justin Tyler, WXXK/Lebanon, NH

Tyler says that artist visits play a large role in his station's music selection strategy. "Knowing the person behind the song helps to see how genuine they are," he says. "We excel at exposing our listeners to new music. There are so many great artists out there and we want our listeners to know who they are."



Dennis Banka, WUCZ/Carthage, TN

Banka supports music equality. "In 1982, I began my career and learned the responsibility we have as programmers to play great songs. Sometimes those songs come from the majors, sometimes from a new artist with no label. To be fair to the music as a programmer, we need to listen without prejudice."

Alan DuPriest, WBYZ/Baxley, GA

Although DuPriest enjoys artist visits, they don't play a huge role at WBYZ. Similarly, promoters only influence about 25 percent of DuPriest's music decisions. He is excited about a slew of artists in 2014, including homestate native Craig Campbell and Danielle Bradbery.



Tex Carter, WHMA/Anniston, AL

"I look at what 30 top radio stations around the southeast are playing, along with how songs are performing locally. I also have 30 years experience. Promoters may influence me from time to time. But at the end of the day, we play what we believe will be hits."

Rob Grayson, WKBQ/Covington, TN

"The best thing we offer is local content for our licensed area, and consideration for new artists and songs," says Grayson. "We can super-serve the communities we cover far better than bigger market stations."



Misty Smith, KTTI/Yuma, AZ

"I think it's important to have national input on an artist's success," says Smith, in response to why membership on *MusicRow's* panel is important. KTTI carries local input as well. "We excel at community involvement, our live morning show, and playing the hottest Country music in our area."

Rob Hendricks, KZZY/Devils Lake, ND

How does Hendricks decide which singles to add into rotation? "That's pretty simple," he answers, "if it's a good song, we play it. We have a great relationship with our listeners, because we play fresh new Country along with former hits."



Melissa Frost, KRRV/Alexandria, LA

"Artist visits play an important role. We occasionally invite listeners to our artist visits, and if a new artist can connect with our listeners then it's a win for everyone." Promoters are also important. "In most cases, they let us know what's happening in Nashville. They're our connection to what could be the next big thing."

Will Payne, KITX/Hugo, OK

"We excel at old school artist visits," says Payne. "We give time to everyone that schedules an appearance at the station. This year we built a large studio and stage to accommodate live band performances. This summer we will invite listeners to stop by and be a part of the live in-studio audience."

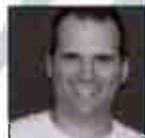


Jess Jennings, KTHK/Idaho Falls, ID

Jennings is proud of KTHK's involvement in the community. "We participate in local causes and charity events. For example, we were the first station to take Morgan Frazier to local schools with her song 'Hey Bully' and her anti-bullying campaign."

Brook Stephens, KZPK/St. Cloud, MN

"Artist visits drum up excitement for a new artist in the market. Back in the day we brought Miranda Lambert in when she was new on the scene, and three months later she was accepting a CMA Award. Visits allow us to help break new music and give listeners experiences that no one else is giving them."



Ryan McCall, WGLR/Platteville, WI

"We use a local testing feature called 'The Homework Assignment' where listeners grade songs. It's also important to look for what type of record we need to fill out our playlist. For example, if there are too many female artists, I'll consider adding a male artist."

Tom Duke, KQUS/Hot Springs, AR

Duke uses chart position and listener response to determine spins per song each week. Listeners also inform Duke's music decisions. "We try to get our listeners to give their opinion to new music," he says. "They like to use us as a sounding board, especially with shows like the CMA Awards, which they did not like."



Ken Scott, WBWI/West Bend, WI

"I work in a couple of markets and we do our best to present good, consistent radio and music choices. The competitive climate is different, which requires that music choices be unique to a station's region. I think the traditional sound will start creeping back into the format, although I enjoy an edgier sound."

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WRITER'S NOTES



by Eric Parker

CHASE RICE

PHOTO: Ann-Marie Hensley

It wasn't long before embarking on his music career, which includes co-writing Florida Georgia Line's "Cruise," the best selling digital Country single in Soundscan history, that Chase Rice's name was more closely associated with college football, Hendrick Motorsports, and the CBS reality show *Survivor: Nicaragua*.

"My career is an accident," said Rice, who moved to Nashville in part thanks to encouragement by childhood friend Brian Kelley. "[Brian and Tyler Hubbard] had just started this Florida Georgia Line (FGL) thing, they were putting up drywall in hotels, nobody knew who they were. They were cool enough to let me in their writing circle, and I'm glad they did because about a year and a half after I moved to town, we wrote 'Cruise.'"

With the luck of being at the right place at the right time, the breakout smash for FGL created a rising tide for everyone involved.

Surprisingly, Rice hadn't picked up a guitar long before moving to town. Somewhat prophetic advice came from his father, who recommended he also start to sing. "He wasn't saying to go be an artist, just let the girls hear you," recalled Rice. "A few weeks after, my dad passed. I wrote a song as my way to deal with it. Then I wrote another about a girl from Georgia."

By 2009, Rice had enough material to record a small project to pass around to friends, but still hadn't performed live. That opportunity came at a Hotel Indigo writer's round while visiting Kelley in Nashville during a weekend off from the NASCAR pits, a job he got after college. "That weekend I crossed off something on my bucket list: singing live in Nashville. That's all it was," claimed Rice, though he was unable to shake the experience from his mind in the following weeks.

"I didn't know what I was doing in my life so I went to do *Survivor*," he recalled. On the show he placed second for a million dollar prize. Thirty pounds thinner and unable to return to his job in the racing circuit, Rice took time to recuperate in a spare room at Kelley's house. "We joked about me moving in and by the end of the day, I called my mom to say I was moving to Nashville."

"That's when my songwriting really started with Brian and Tyler and Jesse Rice [no relation], but when you have your writers circle and a new guy wants to get in, it's like 'Whoa, hold on, we got our thing, don't mess it up.' At that time, I didn't even know what co-writing was."

After penning just six songs, Rice released his *Country As Me* EP, developed a small fanbase, and the itch for the road. "People say I was a songwriter first then wanted to be an artist, but I wanted to do both. I wanted to put out music through iTunes and then go out and sing it, not wait for someone in town to tell me when my songs were good enough."

One of the first venues to accept the freshman act was The Boathouse in Myrtle Beach, S.C. "The first show went from 30 people sitting down, to partying at the front of the stage by the end of the night. A couple months later we went back, and there were 300 people at the same venue!"

"We were booking venues here and there, but I wanted to be gone three days a week," said Rice, who – after a brief stint with Paradigm Agency – found himself serendipitously introduced to Jim Butler and Meredith Jones, who handle college markets at CAA. "I was shocked when Meredith invited me to lunch! Someone had actually gotten back to me, and it was CAA!"

His set list of course would not be complete without the FGL co-write, which kicked everything into overdrive. "We were at

Jesse's house off Charlotte and all of a sudden Brian pops out the first chord to 'Cruise,' mumbling 'Baby you a...' and trails off," said Rice. "We had been writing a slow song but we stopped right away and it came out in 45 minutes. Tyler and Joey Moi changed it up a little more in the studio from what it was that original day. I think that song is the epitome of stars aligning, with all five of us contributing – the perfect voice and production.

"Brian knew it was a life changing song for FGL, but as a songwriter I wanted to go big, like Luke Bryan, Eric Church. I'm glad Brian proved me wrong, and I still think he's the biggest part of that song's success because of how much he believed in it."

While FGL grew busier promoting the single to secondary radio with Big Loud Mountain and ultimately Republic Nashville, Rice was able to hit the road, himself. "CAA changed my life more than ever, more than 'Cruise,'" said Rice. "I'd do any show they threw my way; ride the bus with the headliner if they let me. It slowly started to happen where they got me club dates, then three shows in a row. That was heaven!

"Now I'm seeing sell-outs at places I've never played before," said Rice. The *Ready Set Roll* fall tour ended with a sold out show in Denver – Rice's second-ever show there – and Lincoln, Neb. for a crowd that sang every word. "If a show was good the first time, the second show blows you away."

Fans are hearing about Rice via social media, Live Nation promotions and radio. "SiriusXM's 'The Highway' has been instrumental in getting new fans to my shows," said Rice. "Words can't express how thankful I am for their support." That support for "Ready Set Roll" has been echoed across airwaves throughout the U.S. "We started meeting PDs a few months ago," said Rice, who is using RPM Entertainment's promotion team. "I wanted the labels to be more excited about my sales than my music and me, and RPM has done a great job."

On Oct. 15, a six-song EP, *Ready Set Roll* helped boost Rice's set list towards even more original material. "Up until the fall, we were only playing *Dirt Road Communion*," said Rice. "They sold well over 10,000 copies and I started getting emails from publishers who had writers on there with me." With the mentoring of Bobby Pinson, Rice was able to contract independent licensing to straighten out the royalty situation. "I didn't know how to pay writers – all of that was a learning process for me."

After signing a management contract with Bruce Kalmick at Triple 8, Rice's aim was to bolster an already lucrative catalog. "One offer for 'Cruise' was \$100,000 outright, they didn't want anything else," recalled Rice. "It was the stupidest deal I've ever heard! The funny thing is it was from people who were close to Nelly. I had no clue he was going to do that song and it would blow up even more."

Sony/ATV turned the key to unlocking co-writing doors, providing the publishing credentials Rice needed. He aligned with Josh VanValkenburg at Troy Tomlinson's powerhouse team in 2013. "As a songwriter, that's been the biggest step. Josh understands what I'm trying to do – I want to push the envelope." As it stands now, Rice's most lucrative title is still controlled by the writer, Sony/ATV handles administration.

One important connection was with Chris DeStefano and Rhett Akins, who ended up as Executive Producer on the *Ready Set Roll*

EP. By the end of one day, the trio turned out a completely produced title track. "I knew I'd found someone who could produce," said Rice. "Chris goes way outside the box, and I wanted someone who could take me there. We recently wrote a song called 'Fifty Shades of Crazy,' with a dubstep part. I have no clue if Country music will accept that, but I know my fans will.

"'Cruise' has been a huge blessing in my life. It allowed me to pursue my career without the funding of a record label and automatically gave me respect in this town. But look at Dallas Davidson or Rhett Akins, they've got big songs and tons more around them. For

me, it's important to not put all your eggs in one basket, because everyone will ask what else you've done.

"'Cruise' will probably be the biggest song I write, as far as numbers go. But that's okay with me, because if I get 1/6 the way there I've got a Platinum selling record." Rice not only used the song's success to fuel his drive to write more, but to take that material to audiences across the country. "When there's 2,000 people singing 'Ready Set Roll' every night, it's undeniable," said Rice. "We'll find out if Country radio thinks it's a hit, too."

So, he'll be on the road this year, first with Billy Currington's *We Are Tonight Tour*, starting in March. Radio visits will continue during the weekdays before weekend dates. Rice is also billed on Dierks Bentley's *Riser Tour*, after May 9.

"I think early summer before Dierks would be a good time to turn *Ready Set Roll* into a full album," concluded Rice, who has already created a buzz around the upcoming project. Are you set to roll with him?

THE FUNNY THING IS IT WAS FROM PEOPLE WHO WERE CLOSE TO NELLY. I HAD NO CLUE HE WAS GOING TO DO THAT SONG AND IT WOULD BLOW UP EVEN MORE.

Eric T. Schabacker



AS MUSIC SALES MOVE TOWARD AN ON-DEMAND STREAMING MODEL WHAT IS THE LONG TERM IMPACT TO PUBLISHERS?

By Craig Owens, O'Neil Hagaman, PLLC

As reported in January, sales of physical music product declined again in 2013. However, in addition to the continued decline of compact disc sales, for the first time digital downloads also experienced a decline. While not proven, many industry experts think that the movement toward streaming has cannibalized the sales of the traditional compact discs and digital downloads. If streaming is here to stay, how does it impact the royalties publishers and writers earn from the use of their works?

What is streaming? Basically there are two types, interactive streams (on-demand) and non-interactive streams. Non-interactive streams are those in which the listener has limited ability to choose the music that is played. These current services include Pandora and Internet streams of radio stations (iTunes radio and Spotify also have non-interactive, ad supported streaming components). The publisher and songwriter participate exclusively in public performance royalties since these types of streams do not have a mechanical portion. Interactive streams (on-demand) usually allow the listener unlimited access to a vast catalog of music for a monthly subscription fee (many services not supported by advertising cost approximately \$10 per month).

Mechanical Royalty Rates for On-Demand Streams

The rules associated with payments to publishers with regard to interactive subscription services are complex and depend on the specific type of subscription service (for example, there are differences in the rates between free/ad supported interactive services and subscription services that are "bundled" with other products like cell service). If we limit our review to the more traditional standalone services like Spotify's Premium Service (which in addition to on-demand streams of music, it also provides limited downloads that eventually expire) then the royalty rules can be seen in the chart below.

In the case of Spotify, it appears that it is currently paying about 21% of the master license fee to the publishers (i.e. combined mechanical royalty and performance royalty is 21%). Spotify also claims to be currently paying approximately 70% of its gross revenues in total licensing fees (the combined payments to master owner and publisher). Spotify estimates that it currently pays rights holders (both master and publisher) between \$0.006 and \$0.0084 per stream across all tiers of its service (free and paid).

Many publishers and songwriters expressed concerns about their share of these current rates (which could vary considerably since the rate is determined by allocated total revenue based on total plays). However, if subscription services grow and more people convert to the premium services, then these payout rates could grow as well.

Going Forward

It may be too early to say that on-demand music services will end up being a long term detriment to publishing earnings since the subscription services are still in the early stages as an industry. The music industry has successfully weathered many past challenges posed by changes in technology (for example the advent of radio and blank media), and based on recent data, it appears that streaming is here to stay.

The long-term outlook is unknown. The introduction of new on-demand services, adoption rates by customers of the streaming model, willingness of customers to pay for premium plans and future negotiations of the subscription mechanical rates will help determine the impact to publishing revenues by on-demand subscriptions services. In the near term, mechanical revenue collected by music publishers may experience additional decreases resulting from continued declines in physical and digital download sales. A key question is whether the losses can be offset by gains in streaming income.

REVENUE TO PUBLISHER (FOR A STANDALONE PORTABLE SUBSCRIPTION)

Greater of:

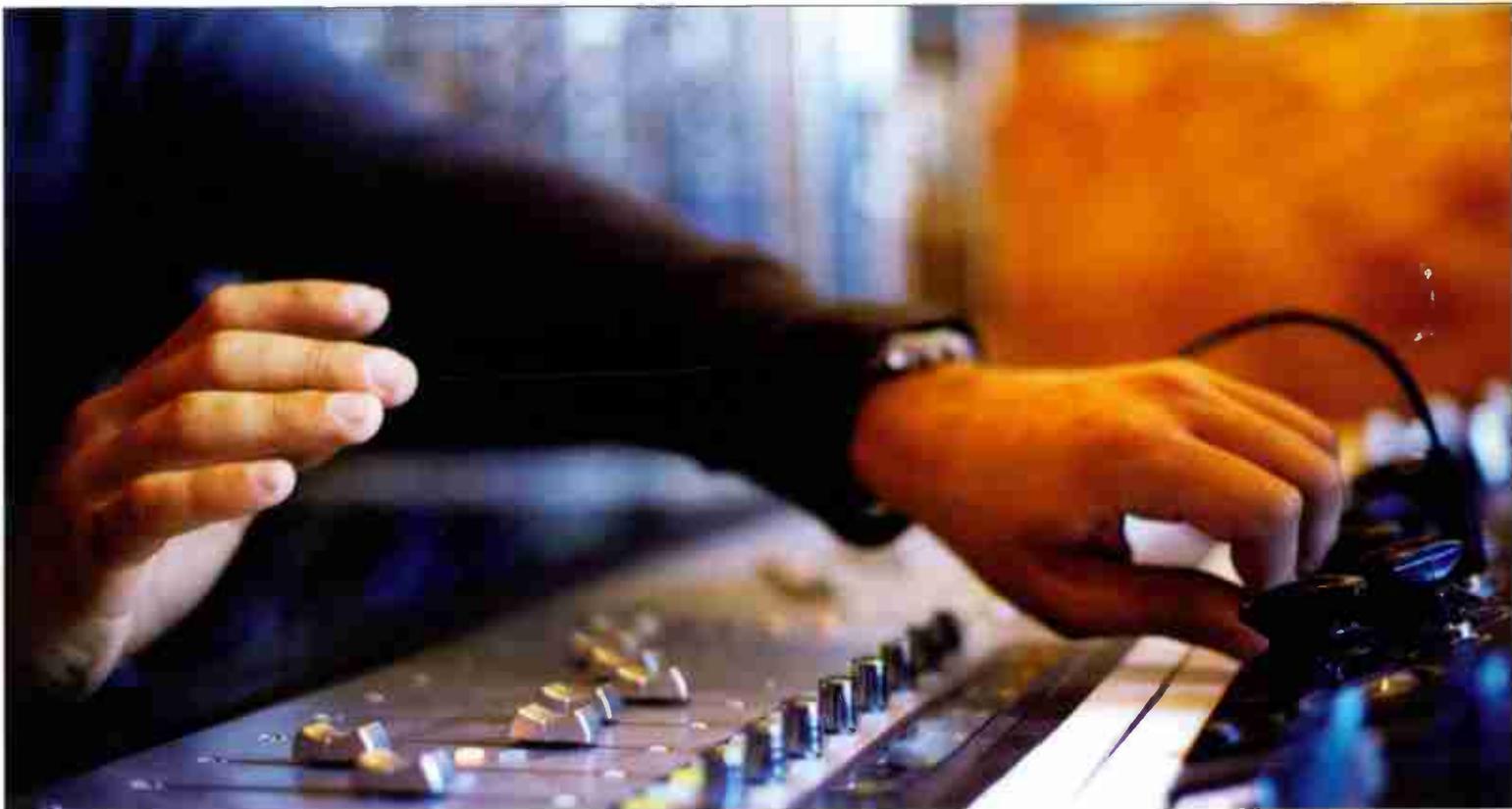
1) 10.5% of service revenue (generally subscription revenue and advertising revenue)

OR

2) Lesser of \$.80 per subscriber per month or 21% of the master rights payments made to labels by the subscription service (17.36% if the label passes through mechanical licensing fees to publisher).

From the results above, performance royalties paid to ASCAP, BMI or SESAC are subtracted and the resulting amount is then subject to a minimum amount of \$.50 per subscriber per month.

Finally, the royalties associated with an individual song are calculated based on the ratio of the individual song plays to all songs plays during the accounting period applied against the total royalty pool amount.



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