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MUSICROW

INDUSTRY PUBLICATION

Patty Loveless

**NASHVILLE
EMBRACES
AUSTRALIA**

Top Industry Figures
Travel Down Under

CRS29

Radio Gets Down
In Music Town

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MARCH 23, 1998 • VOLUME 18 • NUMBER 5

MUSICROW

NASHVILLE'S MUSIC INDUSTRY PUBLICATION

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COVER ARTIST



Artist Name: Patty Loveless

Label: Epic

Current Single: "To Have You Back Again"

Current Album: *Long Stretch of Lonesome*

Current Video: "You Don't Seem To Miss Me"

Current Producers: Emory Gordy, Jr.

Hometown: Pikeville, KY

Management: Fitzgerald Hartley Co.

Booking: William Morris Agency

Hits: "To Have You Back Again," "Lonely Too Long," "You Don't Even Know Who I Am," "You Don't Seem To Miss Me"

Awards: 1997 R&R Readers Poll Best Female Vocalist; 1996 & 1997 Academy of Country Music Top Female Vocalist; * 1996 CMA Female Vocalist; 1995 CMA Album of the Year *When Fallen Angels Fly*; ** *Long Stretch of Lonesome* named in Top 10 Albums of 1997 in *Time*, *People*, *USA Today* and *Music Row*; Best of the Year in *Stereo Review*.

RIAA Certifications: Platinum: *The Trouble With The Truth*, *When Fallen Angels Fly*, *Only What I Feel*, *Honky Tonk Angel*, *Greatest Hits*; Gold: *On Down The Line*.

Special TV Appearances: 48 Hours—profile, 1997 Grammy Awards, *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*, *The Late Show with David Letterman*, *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*, *Later*, *Good Morning America*, *Live with Regis & Kathie Lee*, *CBS This Morning*.

Interesting Facts: *Patty is the only woman in the '90s and the third woman ever to win top vocalist honors two years in a row. **CMA Album of the Year honor makes Loveless the second-ever female recipient of this award. She's a leading country Grammy nominee, with three nominations for Female Vocalist, Vocal Collaboration, ("You Don't Seem To Miss Me" with George Jones) and Album for *Long Stretch of Lonesome*.

Musical Influences: Dolly Parton, Emmylou Harris, Linda Ronstadt, George Jones, the Stanley Brothers, the Louvin Brothers, Merle Haggard.

HE HAS ACHIEVED SUCCESS WHO HAS LIVED WELL,
LAUGHED OFTEN AND LOVED MUCH.



BUDDY LEE

1932 – 1998



We'll all miss you!



MUSICAL CHAIRS

by CHARLENE BLEVINS

NARAS Probed; Gaylord Sets Course

BUSINESS NEWS

NARAS PROBE—CMF Director and NARAS trustee **Bill Ivey** is calling for a review of National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences' finances in the wake of a *Los Angeles Times* report that revealed questionable management of NARAS by its chief executive, **C. Michael Greene**. The story was based on federal tax returns, court documents and interviews with current and former NARAS employees.

The Times reported that MusiCares, a philanthropic arm of the organization, consistently spends less than 10% of its income on its principal charity which is providing emergency financial assistance to professional musicians. Also reported was that a former NARAS employee had lodged a complaint with the IRS regarding the academy's accounting practices.

Ivey, who is the Presidential nominee to lead the National Endowment for the Arts, told *The Times* on Tuesday that he and unidentified members of the Nashville Chapter of NARAS intend to call for an internal review. Meanwhile, the non-profit New York group, Public-Private Initiative, Inc., which raised about \$625,000 for the Grammy Host Committee, has said it will demand an accounting of how the money will be spent...

THE NEW HILLBILLY INFORMATION HIGHWAY—N2K's *Music Boulevard* and CBS Cable's *country.com* have partnered to create the Internet's most complete country music resource. *Country Music Boulevard* will become the exclusive online country music store on both *Music Boulevard* and *country.com*. *Country Music Boulevard* will offer current music news, album reviews, the latest music charts and the Internet's largest selection of sound samples. N2K's 200,000-title online catalog will be available on both sites, and the group has plans for special Internet-only releases on the N2K Encoded Music label.

The new online offering will launch this

spring, and will be marketed with a mix of traditional and Internet media in a \$30 million campaign over the next five years. This will be the largest media support package ever for a country music Internet destination.

"*Country Music Boulevard* marks CBS Cable and *country.com*'s entrance into e-commerce," said Bob Kunath, Senior Vice President, Integrated Sales, CBS Cable. *Country.com* is already experiencing over one million hits per day, and Kunath believes the new association will "build a country music powerhouse on the Internet..."

LABEL TV—Access Entertainment Network (AEN) has announced plans to launch in 6 million TV households this spring with charter music programming from a rapidly growing list of major records labels and retailers, including Best Buy, A&M Records, Elektra Records,TVT Records and Virgin Records. AEN, created to meet the viewing needs of 18-49 year-old entertainment enthusiasts, is the world's first and only 24-hour cable television channel previewing choices in music, magazines and other products. AEN's initial music programming, mixing current music videos with artists interviews, concert footage and purchasing information is specifically designed to provide the record industry with solutions to consistently identify titles and artists of songs being played while enhancing and extending awareness of a variety of product at retail.

TIN PAN SOUTH—"Songs—And How They Impact People's Lives" is the theme for the 1998 TinPanSouth songwriter's festival, hosted by NSAI, and scheduled for April 14-18 in Nashville. TinPanSouth is the nation's largest festival featuring the songwriter and the song, offering more than 60 songwriter shows in local venues over four days. Composer **Paul Williams** will serve as the host of the *Legendary Songwriters Acoustic Concert* on April 14 at the Ryman, and will be in town to announce details of TinPanSouth week

on March 17. Festivities also include The NSAI Songwriters Golf Classic at Hermitage Golf Course on April 15; The NARAS-NSAI Songwriter Forum and NSAI's Annual Songwriter Achievement Awards at the Doubletree on April 17. 615-256-3354...

GAYLORD REORGANIZES—**Carl Kornmeyer** has been named President of Gaylord Entertainment Company and President of Country Music Television International. He was previously Senior Vice President of the Communications Group. Kornmeyer played a key role in the start-up of TNN and was involved in numerous acquisitions including CMT and the creation of the Wildhorse Saloon partnership.

Gaylord has named **Joseph B. Grace** Senior Vice President and CFO. Grace received his MBA from Vanderbilt and his law degree from Stetson University in Deland, Fl. He was former President and CEO of Hickory Specialties and Group Vice President of Bob Evans Farms, and is founder of The Blue Sky Group, a venture capital firm and marketing and business development resource for entertainment, sports and health care companies. The Blue Sky Group will continue under the guidance of **Sam Owen**.

Gaylord has also formed a new hotel management company to expand the Opryland Hotel concept to other areas of the country, and has named **Jack J. Vaughn** President of its Opryland Hospitality and Attractions division, as Chairman of the newly formed Opryland Lodging Group. **Jack L. Gaines**, a respected hotelier from San Antonio, will fill Vaughn's Opryland Hospitality presidency...

[continued on page 26]



CARL KORNYMEYER



Louis Marshall "Grandpa" Jones

October 20, 1913—
February 19, 1998

"He treated everyone like kinfolk," said Roy Clark, who revered Grandpa since their first road trip when Clark was just a green kid and Jones was the star.

Born Louis Marshall Jones in Niagra, Kentucky, a small industrial town on the southern banks of the Ohio River, Grandpa Jones grew up on the old ballads and Old-Time fiddle music of his parents. As a boy, listening to the Missouri and Chicago barn dances set him on his life's path. By his early teens, Jones himself was on the radio in

Akron, billed as "The Young Singer of Old Songs."

He was "Grandpa" by the time he was in his early twenties, less a radio pseudonym than a comment on his early morning demeanor made by WBZ-Boston musical partner and mentor Bradley Kincaid. If he was grouchy in the early morning at that young age, it was the only time, for he is widely held as one of the kindest, funniest men in all the country music family.

In 1937, Grandpa Jones set out on a solo career, working radio stations from Wheeling, West Virginia to Hartford, Connecticut, and back down to WLW in Cincinnati. During this time, he learned to play the banjo from Cousin Emmy (Cynthia May Carver), also a popular radio star. His banjo playing helped keep the instrument alive in country; it had all but disappeared from the music in the thirties and forties. At WLW Grandpa met the Delmore Brothers and Merle Travis, and the four formed a popular Gospel quartet called the Brown's Ferry Four. The group

recorded on King Records, and Grandpa himself cut "Eight More Miles to Louisville," "Rattler," and "Mountain Dew," which won him national fame.

Grandpa Jones first worked the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville for a short while in 1946, again from 1952-56, and finally returned to stay in 1959. That same year, he had a Top 25 hit with "The All American Boy" on Decca, and reached the Top 5 with "T for Texas" on Monument. When *Hee Haw* debuted in 1969, Grandpa Jones was among its regular cast members. He was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1978, and last March celebrated 50 years as an Opry member.

On January 3, Grandpa Jones suffered a stroke after his Opry performance. He died February 19.

Called "a natural comedian" and "one of the funniest souls that God created," Roy Clark perhaps said it best: "The world is a sadder place without the laughter that always surrounded Grandpa."

TODAYS NOMINEES



Tomorrow's Stars

ACADEMY OF COUNTRY MUSIC FINALISTS

Top New Male Vocalist

Rhett Akins

Top New Female Vocalist

Lee Ann Womack

Song Of The Year
The Fool

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World Radio History



SPINS

Everybody Wins With a Strait



George Strait's all-star stadium tour is shaping up to be a blockbuster. With tickets on sale for six of the eighteen dates scheduled this summer, sales are brisk to say the least. The March 14 Phoenix show at the Sun Devil Stadium is sold out; the Tampa, New Orleans and Birmingham shows are 85% sold; the Detroit and St. Louis shows also are sold out, the latter closing in just one day. The **"Nokia Presents The George Strait Chevy Truck Country Music Festival Brought to You by Wrangler"** is being produced by Pace Touring, Inc., who've produced the Strait

Labor day shows at the Alamo Dome for the last 5 years.

The day long "Festival" will include Tim McGraw, John Michael Montgomery, Faith Hill, Lee Ann Womack, Lila McCann and Asleep At The Wheel on the main stage inside the stadium, with a smaller stage in the outside "festival" which will showcase Big House and Shane Stockton during mainstage set changes. Pace has pulled in sponsors to help create the festival atmosphere—and to help subsidize the ticket prices, set at \$25, \$35 and \$45—including the Jack Daniels Saloon and the Skoal

Music Dancehall. The area will "have a smoking tent, food, beverage, games—we wanted to create an atmosphere," said Louis Messina, President and CEO of Pace Music Group. "It's a George Strait music festival. This is George's whole concept. Two things come first, his family and then his fans. This was about him giving something back."

—Charlene Blevins



Nashville Banner 1876-1998

The February 20 passing of the *Nashville Banner* is sure to dramatically change the character of print journalism in Music City. Run under a joint operating agreement with the Gannett-owned *Tennessean*, the 122-year-old afternoon daily's publishers watched circulation slip and finally sold the paper to Gannett, who promptly shut it down. Media pundits predict the competition-free morning paper will see quality deteriorate as Gannett implements standard

cost-cutting strategies. Nevertheless, the loss of the *Banner* means a gain for *Tennessean* music coverage. Recent CMA Media Achievement Award winner Jay Orr is one of a handful of prominent *Banner* columnists hired by the *Tennessean*. He joins a pop music staff that includes Tom Roland, Rick DeYampert, Will Pinkston, Brad Schmitt and freelancer (and *Music Row* contributor) Robert K. Oermann. All report in some manner on Nashville's music industry, but no clear division of responsibility has been set as yet. Said Orr shortly after hearing of the paper's demise, "The unfortunate part is I really like the people I work with and liked being the scrappy number two paper. It is that I will miss."

—Chuck Aly

GRAMMY WINNERS

Did I Shave My Pits For This?

The 40th Annual Grammy Awards were chock-full of surprises—any way you sliced, it came up nuts. Trophies were dispensed, however, and those with Nashville ties are listed below.

Female Country Vocal Performance	"How Do I Live"/Trisha Yearwood
Male Country Vocal Performance	"Pretty Little Adriana"/Vince Gill
Country Performance Duo/Group	"Looking In The Eyes Of Love"/Alison Krauss & Union Station
Country Collaboration With Vocals	"In Another's Eyes"/Trisha Yearwood, Garth Brooks
Country Instrumental Performance	"Little Liza Jane"/Alison Krauss & Union Station
Country Song	"Butterfly Kisses"/Bob Carlisle, Jeff Carson, Raybon Bros.
Country Album	<i>Unchained</i> /Johnny Cash
Bluegrass Album	<i>So Long So Wrong</i> /Alison Krauss & Union Station
Dance Recording	"Carry On"/Donna Summer, Giorgio Moroder
Rock Gospel Album	<i>Welcome To The Freak Show</i> /dc Talk
Pop/Contemporary Gospel Album	<i>Much Afraid</i> /Jars Of Clay
Southern Gospel, Country Gospel or Bluegrass Gospel Album	<i>Amazing Grace 2: A Country Salute To Gospel</i> /various artists
Traditional Soul Gospel Album	<i>I Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray</i> /Fairfield Four
Contemporary Soul Gospel Album	<i>Brothers</i> /Take 6
Gospel Album By A Choir or Chorus	<i>God's Property From Kirk Franklin's Nu Nation</i> /God's Property
Musical Album For Children	<i>All Aboard!</i> /John Denver

—Chuck Aly

THE BUZZ

Radio Week And More

They came. They saw. They got tanked. Country radio and Nashville concluded a long weekend's worth of reasoned discourse about challenges facing the genre. And in the real world—where *have* all those cowboys gone, anyway?



Downtown—The big move was a smashing success. Only the bleak performance hall and horrid banquet food service kept CRS 29 from a perfect "10."



Pay For Play—It's not about dollars for spins, it's about "growing the country life group."



Nashville Banner—Music City bemoans the afternoon paper's demise. Where were those folks at subscription time?



Garth Brooks—Keynote interview impressive, but what's this about music critics? Can't we all just get along?



Catering—Did we mention the cold food and bad service? Let's face it, good grub in large quantities is our best hope for "growing the country life group."



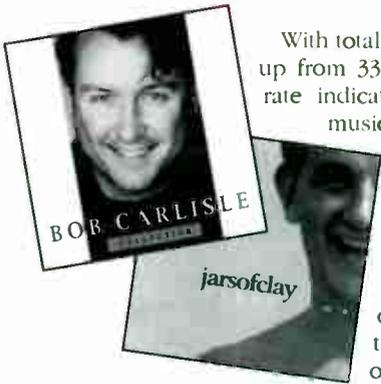
Stadium Tour—George and friends pack 'em in for landmark outing. They also set a record for longest name of a tour in history.



"Growing The Country Life Group"—The new "there is no improper relationship." We just wanted to say it *one more time*.



Christian Sales Ascend



With total sales near 44 million units in 1997—up from 33.3 million in 1996, the 32% growth rate indicates continued success of Christian music in reaching the mass market.

While the SoundScan figures include LeAnn Rimes' *You Light Up My Life—Inspirational Songs*, which some argue is country product, Rick Bowles, Christian Music Trade Association (CMTA) Director of Marketing explains the classification was made by *Billboard*, owners of the Contemporary Christian chart.

Rimes record is distributed to Christian retail outlets through Warner Christian Distribution. Deducting the Rimes figures still leaves a growth of 25% in 1997—the largest gain of any genre, a distinction Christian music held last year as well.

Both Bowles and Gospel Music Association President Frank Breeden cite major label ownership as one of the base factors in Christian/Gospel music's rocketing sales. "We've been able to put a lot more marketing muscle and dollars behind the music," said Breeden. Wal-Mart has announced plans to devote eight of its 45 linear feet of music space to Christian and Gospel music, which could further increase sales when instituted later this year. Breeden also cites video as very important in their marketing mix.

Bowles says the genre's niche segmentation [gospel, inspirational, pop, country, rap, black gospel, southern gospel and rock/alternative] targets a wide swath of consumers. "With artists like Jars of Clay, the younger audience can relate to the music," said Bowles. Artists including Jars, God's Property and Bob Carlisle are

getting mainstream airplay and television exposure—*The Late Show with David Letterman*, for instance.

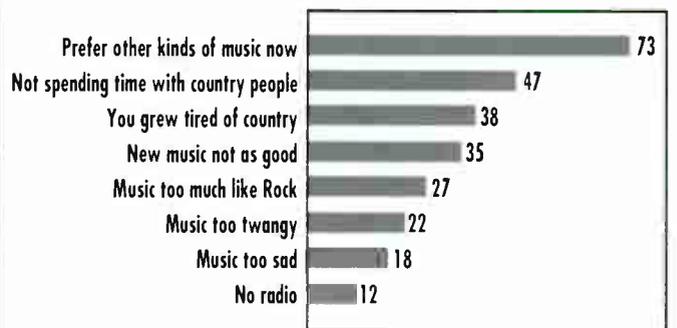
Finally, Breeden believes that spirituality itself is on the rise, that the baby boomer generation has become a consumer base of parents and individuals searching for quality in all areas of their lives.

One further indication of health in the Christian music industry is that the genre's top 10 albums account only for 17 percent of total units sold—a figure significantly lower than country music's 37.3%.

—Charlene Blevins

Country By The Numbers

Of those polled, 27% of country music listeners say they are listening to country less than they were one year ago. Reasons for listening less:



Base: Current country listeners
Source: Edison Media Research
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PHOTOS BY JOHN ELLIOTT

Top Industry Figures Travel Down Under

It was a great trip.

"The Australian market has a lot of potential. It's interesting that the percentage of Australians who list country music as their first choice is the same as in the U.S.," notes Tim DuBois, President of Arista Records.

"Overall the trip was a positive move for country music internationally. We changed a lot of perceptions on both sides," explains CMA Task Force leader Jeff Walker.

"The No. 1 Australian export is their spirit," says Bob Saporiti, Senior VP/GM of Warner Bros. Nashville and a veteran of four trips "down under."

"The Australian market comes with its problems, but it also comes with its opportunities," remarks Joe Galante, Chairman of the RCA Label Group. "It's very high on the list for cracking the marketplace with our international strategy—if not No. 1, then certainly No. 2.

"I'm very, very optimistic, but it's not going to be an overnight success story," Galante continues. "It took years for country music to develop in Canada."

Nevertheless, one consensus is that Australian artists are, as Saporiti terms it, "on a fast track" to success in America. "It's absolutely a talent source," he adds. "Sherré Austin and Keith Urban have already proven they are competitive, Dead Ringer Band is there, along with others. [The artists] just

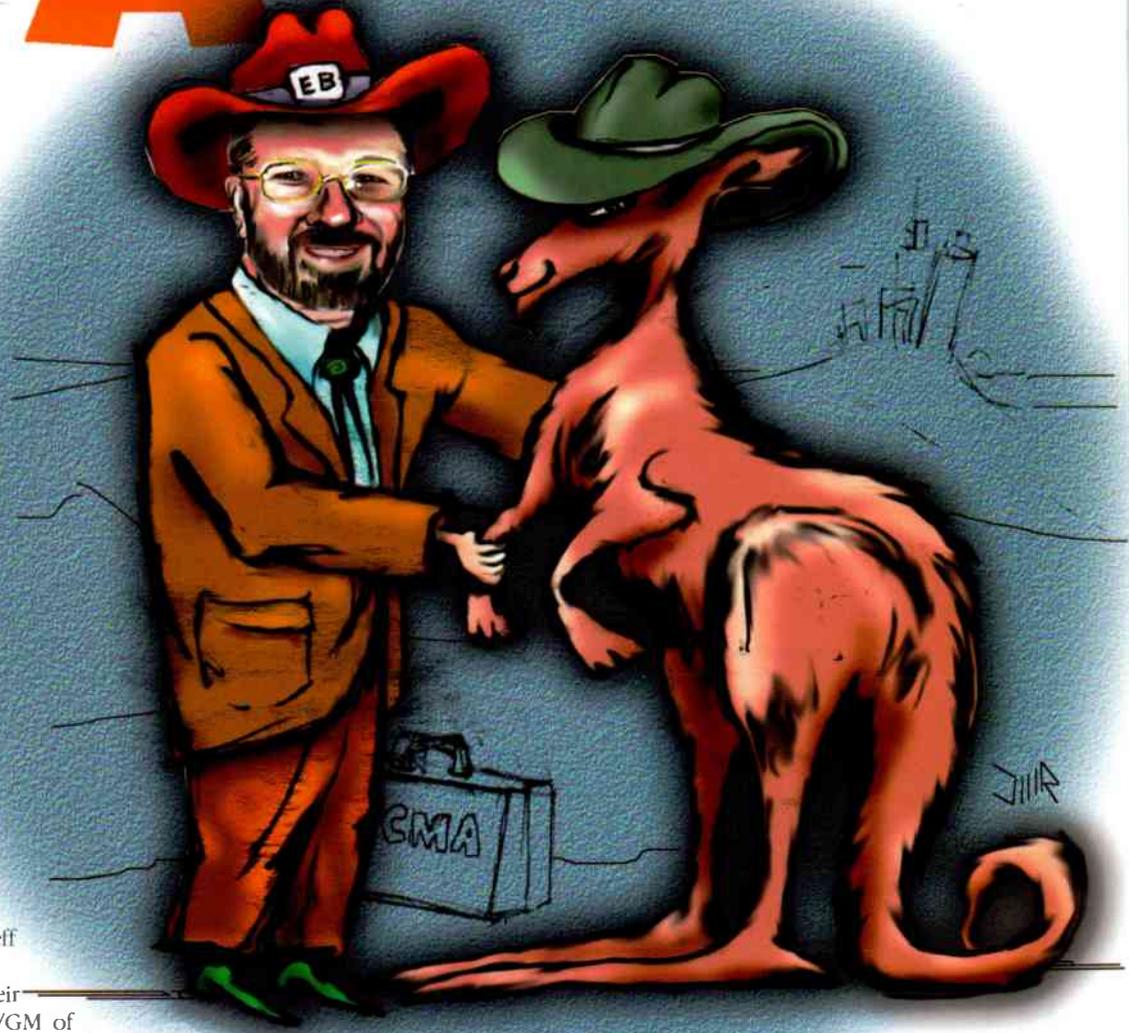
need to be exposed a little bit more and [the industries] need to be exposed to each other a little bit more."

For the first time in a generation, the Nashville country music industry sent an organized, official delegation to Australia, its purpose being to discuss ways our two nations can collaborate to promote the music we both love. The delegation came from L.A. following the quarterly CMA Board Meetings, arriving February 7 and 8; most returned to Nashville a week later.

"The Australian industry reacted very well. They accepted that this was meant to be a two-way trade, not just a powerful U.S. delegation coming to sell American country music to the exclusion of the growing and

vibrant Australian country music scene," remarks Australian native Dennis Muirhead, a manager, producer and publisher with offices in London and Nashville.

Walker assembled an extremely impressive group: label heads Galante, DuBois and Saporiti, Gaylord CEO Terry London, CMT International President Carl Kornmeyer, senior label execs Butch Waugh (RLG) and Wayne Halper (DreamWorks), hit songwriter Bob DiPiero, Nashville Arena GM Russ Simons, managers Stan Mores, Barry Coburn and Jimmy Gilmer, Muirhead, International Consultant Cindy Wilson and publisher Jewel Coburn. CMA execs Ed Benson, Jeff Green, Teresa George and Katie Dean joined Walker as expedition leaders; various children and spouses swelled the



total party to over thirty. Your intrepid reporter, in Australia over two weeks when the delegation arrived, was graciously invited by Walker and the CMA's Australian representative and event organizer, Trevor Smith, to attend delegation functions.

According to Smith, "Never before have we had such an impressive delegation of music executives come en masse to Australia, in any genre, rock, pop, country or anything else."

A bit of history: Thirteen years ago the CMA Board met in Auckland, New Zealand, then visited Sydney. One very vocal member of the Australian country "old guard" publicly insulted the U.S. delegation then, telling them, in effect, to "go back where you came from and take your music with you." So the country executives returned to Nashville and constructed a strategy for taking the music to Europe, a mission that has been only partially successful.

Despite the strong feelings of the more conservative element "down under," two things subsequently happened. Australian artists developed a hybrid style, fusing elements from both American and Australian country music. Secondly, no one can stop music from crossing borders—Australian DJs and fans began playing and buying more American country records.

By the time the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sony, EMI and Warner Chappell sent a thirty-person delegation to Nashville in June 1996, relations had thawed considerably. Many country stars had performed in Australia by then, including Garth Brooks, Trisha Yearwood, Dwight Yoakam, Merle Haggard, Don Williams, the Highwaymen and Tom T. Hall. More U.S. country albums were released in Australia and the country's talent level continued its climb.

A trip by CMA's Benson, Green and Pam Lovelace in July of 1996 returned the olive branch represented by the Australian delegation's visit. Planning between top officials of the two industries began in earnest. The first results are the appointment of broadcasting legend Smith as the CMA's representative "down under" and this trip.

What happened? In about eighty-four hours, the delegates met and held very candid discussions with representatives of the CMAA, ARIA (Australia's RIAA), key figures for the nationally telecast *Midday Show*, execs from all the top labels, the nation's top promoters and leaders from APRA and AMCOS (performance rights and mechanicals). We attended a panel discussion organized by Wilson featuring the top pay TV providers; heard a touching speech by John Laws, the dominant radio personality in Australia; were wined and dined like royalty; and, best of all, treated to musical performances from fifteen acts, including most of the top stars in the Aussie country firmament: Lee Kernaghan, Gina Jeffreys, Troy Cassar-Daley, Tania Kernaghan, Darren Coggan, Shanley Del, Colin Buchanan,



(L to R) Stan Mores, Tim DuBois, Russ Simons, Teresa, Bob DiPiero, Jimmy Gilmer, Jeff Walker, Bob Saporiti, Butch Waugh, Teresa George, Ron Adsett-CMT Australia. Photo taken at Double Bay Ferry landing.

Mitchell Shadlow and Becca Cole.

That's a lot to absorb in four days, especially while battling jet lag from the fifteen-hour nonstop flight and seventeen-hour time differential.

Nevertheless, the hectic pace suited the group. "Our setup was terrific. To cover this much ground in the space of just four days, to see as many people and hear as many acts as we did—my hat's off to Smith, Walker, Jeff Chandler, the CMAA and everyone who helped put it together," adds Galante—a sentiment endorsed by top manager Stan Mores. "(It was) certainly one of the very best business trips I've ever taken. I'm eagerly looking forward to working with the Australian music industry, both from the Australian and the U.S. side."

The two-way nature of the future relationship was a theme emphasized by numerous participants, all looking to create a "win-win" situation. "The feeling from the industry here is that Nashville is serious about wanting to achieve further sales for their artists," said Sydney-based Smith. "Also there is a feeling that if our artists are developed and nurtured in the right way, there is a real possibility of doors being opened in the U.S."

The CMA's Head of International, Jeff Green, feels those doors are already opening. "Tommy Emmanuel just won a Nashville Music Award, Troy Cassar-Daley's album is being strongly considered for release, Dead Ringer Band came very close to a deal, The Ranch are getting on their feet, Sherrié Austin is becoming established. In addition, Gina Jeffreys recorded her new album here, using Nashville writers and musicians and Shanley Del has been co-writing and recording in Nashville."

Saporiti, Green, Walker, DuBois and others also felt that the multi-label show at a Sydney club was a huge success. "The Basement Showcase was a high moment, maybe even a watershed moment, in showcasing much of the best talent Australia has to offer," notes Green.

The consensus was that Del, Cole, Shadlow and 1996-'97 Group of the Year The Wheel had made the biggest impressions though all the acts participating earned praise.

Australia has also developed their own

"A-Team" of gifted studio players, as Green notes. "I got the impression from talking with managers and others in the delegation that the idea of using Australian musicians when Americans tour down there is both attractive and sensible."

Despite these glowing reports and the growing Nashville interest, building this musical bridge won't be easy. Country music faces many problems in Australia, challenges which echo those country music here has faced and overcome. Australian country music has an image problem, there is precious little radio exposure, and recording and marketing budgets are minuscule by our standards.

Sound familiar? Thirty years ago there were 80 country stations in the U.S. and the format was perceived as the exclusive province of dim hillbillies. Today we have nearly 2,500 devoted country stations and fans come from all levels of society. Twenty years ago recording budgets here were a fraction of those for rock, pop and soul performers. Today our budgets have nearly caught up. And ten years ago marketing was a new concept in Nashville—few labels hired trained specialists. Today Nashville label marketing departments spend millions to sell and promote the latest superstar releases.

Everyone agrees the music videos shown by TNN and CMT from the mid-'80s onward helped eradicate misconceptions and increase country's profile. Once audiences

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Kim's credits include artists with:

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viewed the performers, especially the attractive, younger ones, via videos almost as impressive as the bigger budget MTV clips, the audiences and sales of country music skyrocketed.

That's why CMT International President Carl Kornmeyer's recent moves to position the network in Australia and the Pacific Rim are so encouraging. Kornmeyer, in a Sydney press conference, announced that the network was doubling their budget for the region and opening an office there.

CMT will develop a customized feed for Australia, add more local artists to the video rotation and create programming specifically for the market. In addition, the programming will, for the first time, be seen in "real-time" rather than via delayed transmission. "CMT's expansion is a *major* help," Galante emphasizes.

CMT walked it like they talked it that same night in Sydney, filming performances of eight Australian acts at the showcase. The footage "will be made available, free, to the Australian labels for them to use as clips or in other ways," Kornmeyer told the conference attendees. "We have over 1,200 clips of U.S. artists available to CMT—but only 87 from Australian acts," he added.

As overwhelming as the Australian hospitality and as superb as the artists proved to be, the biggest star of this show was Sydney itself, surely one of the world's most beautiful cities and home to the 2000 Olympics.

It's hard to imagine how drop dead gorgeous Sydney is—even when you're told it has 308 miles of harbor shoreline and more than 100 beaches within the city limits. You just have to experience this beauty. Blue water and green patches from the plentiful parks predominate to a degree unmatched by other major world cities.

Vistas from the rolling hills of that incredible bay, the stunning Opera House and the striking Harbor bridge are both unexpected and postcard lovely. Green and yellow commuter ferryboats chug along, while hundreds of white sailboats dot the azure waters. The climate is semi-tropical, the local beer is good, the pubs are numerous, there are over two dozen excellent ocean beaches within easy reach and topless bathing is commonplace. (Down boys). Visualize a place which features the best elements of San Francisco, L.A. and Maui and almost none of the worst things and you're on the right track.

Now that we're working together in concert, what's next? Well, watch for a huge Australian presence at Fan Fair—no fewer than three major tours are scheduled. One, organized by Sony, already has over 350 bookings and will feature John Laws broadcasting live from Fan Fair. There is a very good chance one or more Australian acts will perform at Fan Fair, now that Tommy Emmanuel broke the ice at the Sony show in 1996. And let's face facts: Nashville always needs new talent, new blood and new spirit—and the Australians have all those qualities in abundance. So, hey, y'all, come on over!♦

Artist manager, international consultant and journalist John Lomax III has made three trips to Australia in the past sixteen months, spending over seven weeks there in that time. He manages Dead Ringer Band and Kimber Clayton.



(L to R) Ed Benson, Jeff Green, John Laws, Slim Dusty, Jeff Walker



(L to R) Dennis Muirhead; Meryl Gross, ABC Records (Australia); Joe Galante

AUSTRALIA Embraces NASHVILLE

U.S. INFLUENCES DOMINATE ANNUAL AWARDS

Troy Cassar-Daley, Dead Ringer Band and Nashville influences were the big winners at the Toyota Country Music Awards of Australia, held late in January at Tamworth, the pocket-sized city claiming the title of "country music capitol" of the land "down under." The "Golden Guitars" began in 1973—the longest-running such honors outside the U.S.

Cassar-Daley, who took home three trophies, recorded part of his *True Believer* album in Nashville. The Dead Ringer Band, managed here by yours truly, was the other multiple winner, taking two awards. The Ranch performed on the show while Sherrié Austin made the promotional rounds. Adam Harvey and Tanya Self won the Vocal Collaboration category with a Nashville song, "Drive Away" (written by Mark Miller & Bill La Bounty).

Eight awards of 12 were won by acts with strong Nashville connections which is remarkable considering that recordings made in America by Australians were ineligible prior to this year.

The general membership of just over 400 generates the initial nominations. Twenty carefully chosen judges then selects the semi-final field and then those same twenty judges choose the winners.

APRA SONG OF THE YEAR—"Living In The Circle"

The Dead Ringer Band; writer, Richard Porteous

MALE VOCALIST—Troy Cassar-Daley

FEMALE VOCALIST—Tania Kernaghan

ALBUM—*True Believer*, Troy Cassar-Daley

VOCAL GROUP/DUO—Dead Ringer Band

VOCAL COLLABORATION—"Drive Away" Tanya Self & Adam Harvey

BUSH BALLAD—"Lady Is A Truckee" Slim Dusty; writer, Joy McKean

HERITAGE SONG—"Edge Of The Kimberley" Colin Buchanan; writer, Colin Buchanan

INSTRUMENTAL—"Clutterbilly" Keith Urban

NEW TALENT—Sherrié Austin

VIDEO TRACK—"Little Things" Troy Cassar-Daley; director, Ross Wood

TOP SELLING ALBUM—*Pipe Dream*, John Williamson

PRODUCER—Garth Porter

ROLL OF RENOWN—Rocky Page



DISCLAIMER

by ROBERT K. OERMANN

Decca's Chesnutt And Stockton Stand Out

With the sun having set on CRS 29, I am pleased to report that country music returns to center stage in this stack of new releases. In recent weeks, it seemed like the pop industry on Music Row was more industrious. But when you face a front line that includes Randy Travis, Steve Wariner, Sammy Kershaw and Mark Chesnutt you'd be a fool challenge the format.

In a tough race, I'll call **Mark Chesnutt** the winner as **Disc of the Day**.

Two of the three contenders for the **DISCOVERY Award** also come from the hill-billy camp. The Great Divide has something fresh sounding on Atlantic. The pop-pop-poppin' sound of Rich Young Ruler on Benson is definitely the Christian newcomer du jour. And our winner is country singer-songwriter **Shane Stockton**, who has a gem of a debut disc.

Stockton and Chesnutt both record for **Decca Records**, which sashays off with the **Label of the Day** prize with barely a backward glance at the competition.

COUNTRY

STEVE WARINER

"Holes in the Floor of Heaven"

Writer: Steve Wariner/Billy Kirsch; Producer: Steve Wariner; Publisher: Steve Wariner/Red Brazos/KidJulie, BMI; Capitol 12345.

He's the best, that's all.

THE RANCH "Just Some Love"

Writer: Cyril Rawson/Scott Phelps; Producer: Monty Powell/Keith Urban; Publisher: EMI Tower Street/Pugwash, BMI; Capitol 12342.

I have been waiting for this one from the album all along. This is what I call a hit song. And this band has so much talent it's ridiculous.

BRAD LEE "4 X 4"

Writer: Brad Lee/Tom Wild; Producer: Tom Wild; Publisher: Denny, BMI; Too Wild (track) (615-822-2663)

In a word, oafish.

SHANE STOCKTON

"What If I'm Right"

Writer: Shane Stockton; Producer: Mark Wright; Publisher: EMI Blackwood/Dos Vacas, BMI; Decca 72043.

He had me hanging on every word. Isn't that a hallmark of what we sometimes call "stardom?" The guitar solo, by the way, is poetry.

KEVIN SHARP

"Love Is All That Really Matters"

Writer: Annie Roboff/Annie Roman; Producer: Chris Farren; Publisher: Almo/Anwa/Romanesque/Annotation/WB, ASCAP; Asylum 1100.

What has this got to do with country music?

MARK CHESNUTT

"I Might Even Quit Lovin' You"

Writer: Mark Chesnutt/Roger Springer/Sluggler Morrissette; Producer: Mark Wright; Publisher: EMI Blackwood/Songs of Jasper/EMI April, BMI/ASCAP; Decca 72031.

Now this is more like it. And how. Chesnutt's smokey honky-tonk baritone glides brilliantly through this uptempo spin while the entire studio band plays like rockabilly maniacs behind him. Great listening.

LELAND MARTIN

"Long Legs Like Alan Jackson"

Writer: Leland Martin/Doug Driesel; Producer: Doug Driesel; Publisher: Hillbilly Ridge, BMI; Rival CDX

A hillbilly novelty that drops all the "hot hunk" names and makes ya grin.

TY HERNDON "A Man Holdin' On"

Writer: John Ramey/Bobby Taylor/Gene Dobbins; Producer: Byron Gallimore; Publisher: Sixteen Stars/Dixie Stars, BMI/ASCAP; Epic 78847.

Classy.

JIM COLLINS

"My First, Last, One and Only"

Writer: Jim Collins/Bob Regan/Chris Waters; Producer: James Stroud/Wally Wilson; Publisher: EMI Blackwood/Jelinda/BMG Songs/Sierra Home/Sony ATV/Chris Waters, ASCAP/BMI; Arista 3119.

A ferris-wheel ride with cotton candy.

SAMMY KERSHAW "Matches"

Writer: Roger Springer/Skip Ewing; Producer: Keith Stegall; Publisher: EMI April/Acuff-Rose, ASCAP/BMI; Mercury 199.

Power and might. I swear there are times when he just takes my breath away as a vocalist. This is one of them.

CHRISTIAN

AMY MORRISS "Wonder"

Writer: Ty Lacy/Dennis Matkosky/Floy; Producer: none listed; Publisher: Balby Baldy/Ariose/Edtion Dagobert-EMI Germany, ASCAP/GEMA; Myrrb 3.

Lotsa synth effects, stinging minor-key guitar, luxurious vocals and rhythm for days. Fabulous.

JOYCE MARTIN McCULLOUGH

"I'm At Your Mercy"

Writer: Harrie McCullough/Joyce Martin McCullough/Joel Lindsey; Producer: Michael Sykes/Phil Johnson; Publisher: Berlin Road/Joyce Martin McCullough/Willow

Branch/Paragon, BMI/ASCAP; Spring Hill 25447 (track).

Your basic Sunday-school-choir record.

MARGARET BECKER "Horses"

Writer: none listed; Producer: Tedd T.; Publisher: none listed; Sparrow 1552 (track)

Isn't the whole point of this format The Message? How come I can barely understand a word she's singing?

RICH YOUNG RULER

"Take It Anywhere"

Writer: Mead Cheseboro; Producer: Gene Eugene/Terry Taylor; Publisher: New Spring/Starchild, ASCAP; Benson 2266 (track)

Bouncy pop so bright ya gotta wear shades. Incredibly catchy.

JAZZ

CLAIRE MARTIN "Gettin' High"

Writer: Gino Vannelli; Producer: Joel E. Siegel; Publisher: Almo/Giva, ASCAP; Honest-Linn 5066 (track)

Two of the top-10 spots on the Gavin Jazz chart are occupied by records from the little ol' Nashville label Honest Entertainment. One of them is by this talented singer and the other is a Stephane Grappelli salute. Both are worth your while.

POP/ROCK

MAX CARL & BIG DANCE

"Show Me the Money"

Writer: Max Carl/Glenn Frey; Producer: Glenn Frey/Mike Harlow/Max Carl; Publisher: Irving/Too Tall Tunes/Red Cloud, BMI; Mission 2001 (track)

A world-of-grooves duet between one of Music City's most compelling singers and his co-producer, Glenn Frey. Elsewhere on the set you'll find one big muscular horn band showcased.

BLUEGRASS

BILL HARRELL & THE VIRGINIANS

"The Cat Came Back"

Writer: p.d.; Producer: Sonny Long; Publisher: p.d.; Rebel 1742 (track)

This rustic oldie gets a delightfully merry reading here. Full of wit, charm and silly smiles.

CLIFF WALDRON

"Reason To Believe"

Writer: Tim Hardin; Producer: Cliff Waldron/Bill Wheeler; Publisher: Trio, BMI; Rebel 1741 (track)

I wish I could tell you that this guy transforms this Tim Hardin/Rod Stewart song into an instant bluegrass classic. He don't.

BAUCOM, BIBEY, GRAHAM, HALEY
'Ready for the Times to Get Better'

Writer: Allen Reynolds; Producer: Baucom, Bibey, Graham, Haley; Publisher: Aunt Polly's, BMI; Rebel 1743 (track)

The transformation is somewhat better here. But in this case it's the performance that's strong while the Crystal Gayle hit is a tougher bluegrass "fit."

AMERICANA**KIERAN KANE "Six Months No Sun"**

Writer: Kieran Kane; Producer: Kieran Kane/Harry Stinson; Publisher: Little Duch/Moran, SESAC; Dead Reckoning 0008 (track)

This guy and his Dead Reckoner buddies practically define what this format is all about. If you don't dig this, you're deaf.

KATHY JOHNSON "Small Town Girl"

Writer: Kathy Johnson/Peter J. Newland; Producer: Kathy Johnson/Bryan Cumming; Publisher: Singing Bridge, BMI; Singing Bridge 0525 (track)

Appealing tremolo alto with a wistful slice-of-life lyric backed by a sparse little fiddle/guitar/rhythm section/harmonica combo. Sweet.

TOY CALDWELL "High Noon"

Writer: Tiomkin/Washington; Producer: Paul Hornsby; Publisher: Volta/Catharine Hinen/Patti Washington; Pet Rock/BMG 60041-2 (track)

Double-time drumming, twangy-guitar instrumental, Oscar-winning western classic, stalwart good ol' boy performer — what more could you ask?

THE GREAT DIVIDE "Never Could"

Writer: Mike McClure/Mike Shannon; Producer: Lloyd Maines; Publisher: Cowboys and Sailors, BMI; Atlantic CDX.

Gritty yelping lead vocal recalls Steve Forbert and the track kicks up some serious dust. Very cool.

BETH WOOD "String of Hard Luck"

Writer: Beth Wood; Producer: Don McCollister/Kristian Busb; Publisher: Mebaffey, ASCAP; Autonomous 5689-2 (track)

Promising, rootsy, with pop/folk female attitude that sounds very, very "today."

HONORABLE MENTION

Randy Travis/Out of My Bones/DreamWorks

Hal Ketchum/I Saw the Light/MCG/Curb

Michael Martin Murphey/Ponies/Warner Western

Jupiter Coyote/Snakehandler/Autonomous

Clay Walker/Then What (dance mix)/Giant

Ben Winship/One Shoe Left/Snake River

Claudia Payne/Baby Don't You Love Me No

More/Royalty

Chris Cummings/I Waited/Warner Bros.

The Good Sons/Angels In the End/Watermelon

Nikki Richard/Your Eyes/High Starz

Kris Tyler/I'm In Trouble Now/Rising Tide

Duane Jarvis/Far From Perfect/Watermelon

Van Zant/Brother to Brother/CMC Int'l-BMG

Jerry Jeff Walker/Cowboy Boots & Bathing Suits/

Tried & True

Nick Lowe/The Man That I've Become/Upstart

The Thompson Brothers/Back on the Farm/RCA

Debbie Nelson/It Doesn't Really Matter/Royalty

Sammy Kershaw & Terri Clark/Love of My

Life/Mercury

The Waiting/Still So Pretty/Sparrow

Carrie Newcomer/When One Door Closes/Philo

Ramblin' Jack Elliott/Rex's Blues/Hightone

The Rust Farm/Rust Farm Fire/Daring

Katrina Landon/The Lucky Ones/Encrypted

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ROW FILE

Pam Lewis

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It's a rare individual that gets to be on the ground floor of two phenomena. As a junior executive at Warner-ASEC in the early eighties, it was Lewis' onerous task to convince record company executives that music video was a viable way to sell records, and that it was worth the financial investment to air them on this wild-idea-of-a-show. And on cable TV, no less. It wasn't until radio stations in Duluth and Boston and Atlanta started getting requests for songs that weren't on their playlists that radio and records started taking note. And then began the cry: *I want my MTV!*

Lewis grew up in the Hudson Valley of upstate New York. She got a degree in Economics and Marketing with a minor in Communications from Wells College. She took graduate courses at Fordham University and the PR School in New York City, and then embarked on her real education at MTV.

Through a photographer friend, Lewis met the crew from RCA Nashville, and was lured to Music City by Joe Galante. She worked with Kenny Rogers and Dolly Parton and on the early careers of The Judds and Alabama. Music Row types, however, were taking bets at how long this smart, opinionated New York woman would last in Nashville's good old boy network. That happened to be only a year at RCA, which was a disconcerting experience, Lewis

admits. Destined to be self-employed, Lewis was unleashed right into her second phenom.

In 1985, Lewis formed PLA Media. In 1988, she partnered with Bob Doyle, got Trisha Yearwood her record deal, and helped launch the career of the biggest-selling solo artist in history—Garth Brooks. Eventually, a very public breakup sent tongues a-wagging. "It was an interesting seven years," says Lewis, "and I'm very proud of the work we did." A humble stance, to be sure. "The whole thing was humbling," she acknowledges, "and I'm very grateful for it all...the whole process was a spiritual awakening." But after such a public flurry, what's a girl to do?

For Pam Lewis, it's carry on, and take some time after the roller coaster ride to rediscover yourself. "When you're in a blur, you're travelling so quickly, you can't stop. It's important to have breaks and to learn to grow as a person."

In addition to staying busy with PLA's country clients, Lewis added a west coast office in 1993. She continues the management arm of her company, and has just procured a pop deal for Tiffany. She's growing the publishing arm, having joint ventured with Wrensong, and has another deal in the works. She's expanded her publicity clients to include book publishers, a Web strategy company and an Internet music network. And, to help attain a balance that was elusive during the whirlwind years, Lewis has started an education foundation, sits on numerous charity boards and is pursuing a second degree in religious science.

And where does Pam Lewis, a woman who's seen the gamut, see the industry today? "We're putting out better music, from better studios, with better musicians. There's more potential. And I'm baffled why there isn't more encouragement and belief. There seems to be such pessimism and negativity...you have to be a dreamer to a certain extent, you have to be a visionary and believe that it's possible."

With Pam Lewis, anything is possible. At least twice.

—Charlene Blevins

CRS 29

Radio Gets Down In Tune Town

by David Ross
and Chuck Aly with
Charlene Blevins

"IT'S BEEN SEVENTEEN YEARS SINCE we were downtown," commented Country Radio Broadcasters President **Ed Salamon** at the CRS 29 opening press conference. "Nashville has become more exciting and it's given us the opportunity to return."

This year's event posed many questions and featured a record-setting attendance of over 2,300 registrants. Some leaders were concerned that moving downtown might add too many distractions, hurting attendance at the educational sessions. There were also concerns that after being under one roof at Opryland Hotel for so many years, the new Convention Center location in conjunction with five downtown hotels might cause confusion and logistical problems.

"It worked because of the variety of locations that were available to the seminar participants. It was a breath of fresh air," said DreamWorks Promotion head **Bruce Shindler**, who seemed to echo the majority opinion.

CRS 29 also marked a dramatic year for the country format. Record labels have been feeling the pinch of leveling sales curves, and radio's focus, normally on listenership and ad revenues, has been side-tracked by a wave of station consolidations. Prices for station properties have escalated, creating the need to find non-traditional revenue sources to offset debt. These issues gave rise to the term "Pay for Play" which exploded shortly before the seminar and became a concern which many attendees were hoping to learn more about. It became clear, this year, that radio is ready to begin seriously challenging retailers to attract a share of record label dollars.

Radio, label, artist and manager relationships are a big part of the country format, but so is competition. CRS 29 brought out that spirit as labels tried to outdo each other in the quest to influence programmers and promote artists. The downtown streets were alive with swarms of country radio programmers. Decca had a large banner hung over Commerce Street and Rising Tide had its logo flashing on the side of a building. Limos and courtesy vans were patrolling, and MCA had large screen music video vans roaming the streets. Even the public buses were specially painted with radio faces and logos. Parties were everywhere: RCA offered the hospitality of the General Jackson; Decca hosted a

Caffé Milano showcase; Sony's label family invited attendees to Mardi Gras in Printer's Alley; Curb staged a concert at the Ryman Auditorium; DreamWorks rented the entire Hermitage Hotel; and that's only a partial list.

Of course, no country music gathering would be complete without some awards. The following stations received recognition

for outstanding promotions: WYGY/Cincinnati, WSIX/Nashville and KRMD/Shreveport. **Kenny Rogers** was presented with the '98 Artist Humanitarian Award by last year's recipient, **Joe Diffie**. Community efforts of radio stations were honored as well with WXXQ/Rockford, IL, KASE/Austin and WGAR/Cleveland taking awards.

Gina Preston (WXTU/Philadelphia) was named Agenda Committee Chairperson for CRS 30 which is scheduled to return to the Convention Center March 10-13, 1999.

MAY THE GARTH BE WITH YOU

What could be more exciting than having the largest selling solo artist in history deliver the Keynote address to launch CRS 29—especially when that artist is a card-carrying member of the country format named **Garth Brooks**? Set to host *Saturday Night Live* at week's end, Brooks broke tradition by leaving the rehearsal set mid-week to jet down to Nashville and be with radio programmers for the Thursday morning kickoff. Brooks appeared onstage with *R&R*'s **Lon Helton** in a one-on-one interview format and also took questions from the audience.

"I want country to be the first music to say goodbye to CDs and welcome DVD," said Brooks as he revealed plans to release a 26-cut DVD album next fall which would include several new singles and have video on every track. Brooks cautioned the crowd not to get scared over marketplace cycles. "We're alright, let's not panic. This is a lyric based format and not meaning to offend anyone, but our greatest research decision-makers are our hearts. So if you've got something

from Garth and you think it sucks, you can't play it. But, for the sake of the music, be a pain in someone's side and don't let go when it's a song you really love."

Brooks did a good job of selling the new crossover strategy for upcoming single "Two Pina Coladas." He reasoned, "LeAnn and Shania have been receiving pop airplay and getting lots of record sales. We're taking this record to pop, but just this single. My job is to present ourselves to that audience and bring them back to country. I'm doing it for one reason—to steal their audience!"

Helton teased Brooks about referring to himself in the third person to which Brooks easily responded it was because Garth the private person and Garth the artist are two such different entities in his mind.

Brooks also gave some details regarding a new experiment to create a Garth show using IMAX film technology which could travel from city to city selling tickets and concessions while allowing the star to have time off



CATTLE CALL—Label mates and executives line up to congratulate Eddy Arnold after his performance on the General Jackson Showboat. Pictured L-R: Joe Galante, Martina McBride, Arnold, Mindy McCready, BMG North America President/CEO Strauss Zelnick and Lorrie Morgan. Photo: Glen Rose

with his family.

Helton did a superlative job handling a complex situation with great aplomb and as the session ended, a waitress delivered two pina coladas onstage.

I'D LIKE A LARGER PIECE, THANK YOU

Alan Box, Executive VP of American Radio Systems moderated a key Thursday morning panel featuring three radio group heads: **Mark Mays**, President and COO for Clear Channel Communications; **John Gehron**, Co-COO for American Radio Systems; and **Larry Wilson**, President for Citadel Big Fork.

The swarm of acquisitions has generated many questions about how companies are dealing with rapid growth. "You grow the business by increasing revenue," Gehron cited. "We can now offer greater listener reach as a result of consolidation. Markets that have consolidated have grown faster."

"Cost cutting opportunities as a result of the telecom bill have not been that great," added Wilson. "We're trying to grab a larger

share of the ad pie from TV and newspapers, not slash programming costs."

"Record labels should be large revenue streams for radio," said Mark Mays. "But no one on this panel is going to force a programmer to play something that doesn't fit their marketplace. We've got to find creative ways to market with the labels."

John Gehron recognized country's power. "Country is its own life group. We have to sell that need to advertisers. Country's audience can't be duplicated by other stations. We need to find ways to present additional opportunities for the labels to spend money besides on normal spots. The record distribution systems cause money to be spent in newspapers—to get some of that we are going to have to be smarter."

Internet broadcasting was also a concern. "It's a game we will have to play," admitted Mays. "The audio quality will improve. People try to emulate success to lessen risk, but I'm pressing our people to try new ideas."

Wilson cautioned, "The Internet will effect radio and we'd better figure out how."

"It's another channel of distribution beyond our antenna—but it also means that anyone can have a station," added Gehron.

RADIO & RECORDS: REALIZING THE COMMON GOAL

According to its written description, this session was designed to be "positive...custom designed for radio and records with the thought 'good for you, good for me and good for us.'" Wyatt, Tarrant & Combs attorney **Robin Joyce** moderated a panel that consisted of Capitol Executive VP **Bill Catino**, MCA VP of National Promotion **David Haley**, KNIX OM **Larry Daniels** and WCOL Music Director **John Crenshaw**.

Naturally, questions about adding records surfaced and Crenshaw was quick to add, "I can't be on every record out of the box. Also, I resent it when labels say 'We won't be able to go No. 5 or No. 1 without your help.' Well, if a lot of stations aren't playing a song then it doesn't deserve to be top 5." Catino responded to that concern by agreeing that, "Most importantly as a format we need to focus on songs that work."

When the pay for play issue arose, Haley asked the question, "There are lots of people wanting to become a star, where do you draw the line about which records you allow to buy time?"

Representing the radio viewpoint, Daniels steered the discussion back on track by pointing out that pay for play didn't have anything to do with paying for airplay. "What's exciting," Daniels said, "are the prospects that labels can spend money advertising on the stations. We need to find ways to help them promote their product."

Catino suggested, "We need more TV events to build our format—to help us go out and get back the P2s—partnerships with major sponsors where we can tag radio."

Haley questioned why sales data doesn't seem to make a large difference when it comes to programming decisions and mentioned The Mavericks as an example. Crenshaw concluded that if an act wasn't getting airplay in his area and wasn't testing well, yet was selling product, then the sales must be due to TV exposure and that the sales weren't coming from country listeners. This topic wasn't fully explored due to time constraints, but sounds like it might be the foundation for a future panel.

FRIDAY'S FOCUS

Friday's sessions were preceded by a keynote address from author **Al Ries**. The presentation was built around the principles of his book "Focus: The Future of Your Company Depends on It." While interesting, his argument was largely anecdotal and failed to provide any media/broadcast examples for the assembled radio execs.

In a reprise of a similar session last year, *The Focus Group* addressed the application of that research tool for radio stations. **Dr. Roger Wimmer** and **Matt Hudson** from Wimmer-Hudson R&D joined KFKF-FM Kansas City PD **Dale Carter** in presenting 38 minutes of video culled from four hours taped during an actual focus group conducted in Kansas City prior to CRS. The session went a long

YOU MIGHT BE A REDNECK IF...

New Faces Roster (in order of appearance): *Big House, Anita Cochran, The Lynns, Matt King, Sherrié Austin, Sons Of The Desert, Kris Tyler, Lila McCann, Dixie Chicks, The Ranch.*

New Faces 1998 proved itself an evening of contrasts. Most of the women artists followed host Jeff Foxworthy's comic lead by showing their red-necks. One of the Lynns talked about "peeing in my pants;" Sherrié Austin remembered that



BIG HOUSE



ANITA COCHRAN

last year Trace Adkins said he would kiss butt for a hit record and noted that at only five feet tall, "I'm a lot closer to your butts than he is;" Kris Tyler talked about the bus stop billboards her label had placed outside the hotels and jokingly accused programmers of looking out their windows at the signs to "look down my blouse;" finally the Dixie Chicks outed themselves as being the Country Spice Girls and revealed their names as, "Old Spice, Easy Spice and Slutty Spice." Interestingly, the men showed sensitivity as Matt King, Sons of The Desert and The Ranch performed heartfelt ballads.



THE LYNNS



MATT KING

This was the first year that the New Faces class contained two Australian artists (The Ranch's Keith Urban/Peter Clarke and Austin) showing the growing international influence on Nashville, and if memory serves me well, it was the first time an act performed on instrumental. (The Ranch's "Clutterbilly," a raucous tornado of electric, bluegrass-flavored, guitar virtuosity earned the evening's only standing ovation.)



SHERRIÉ AUSTIN



SONS OF THE DESSERT

The New Faces show has traditionally been one of the warmest moments of the Seminar, but in the cold and cavernous Convention crypt there was little chance for intimacy. Most of the 2,200+ crowd could barely see the stage and were forced to rely upon the two giant video screens. As a result, while Foxworthy received continual applause, there was markedly less enthusiasm for the musical acts.

Fancy dining is really not the reason for attending this gathering, but this year's food and service was so deplorable that it earns special mention. The menu was much the same as in past years, but the ability of the unorganized Convention Center caterers was laughable. Cold food, dinners served late, ice cold coffee, chewing gum on the seats...you get the idea. Next time you decide to attend a convention-catered event, bring your own paper bag lunch, but be discreet because everyone around you will be jealous!



THE RANCH

While audience response was mixed throughout the evening, in this writer's notebook, the understated melodic lines and vocal intensity of Sons Of The Desert lead singer Drew Womack on "Leaving October" was the show's highlight.



KRIS TYLER



LILA MCCANN

—David M. Ross

way towards correcting the problems noted during last year's focus group. Other panels included *The Artists Panel—All Access*, *CRS University* and *Brand Management*.

GROW THE CATEGORY

Unquestionably the most anticipated panel of the week was Saturday morning's *Town Meeting*, alternately dubbed the "Pay for Play" discussion. **Erica Farber**, Publisher/CEO of *R&R*, moderated the panel which included **Joe Galante**, Chairman RCA Label Group; **Rick Blackburn**, President Atlantic Nashville; **Rick Torcasso**, VP CBS Cable; **Peter Smyth**, Senior VP Greater Media and **Jaye Albright**, Director of Country Operations for Jacor.

Torcasso, whose company has been at the center of the pay for play controversy in many published reports, started things off by clarifying the goal and methods of CBS Cable. As the top radio, television and Internet provider of country programming, CBS Cable is positioning itself to be at the forefront of bringing new consumers into the country fold. Torcasso said the goal is to "grow the country life group." Limited in what he could reveal about campaigns still in development, he did say. "One thing that is very clear and definite about the campaigns is they have absolutely nothing to do with money for playing a record. I don't know where 'pay for play' came up from. We didn't do it."

Galante addressed the controversy as radio's desire to have advertising dollars switched to them from print. "If that's the



DO IT AGAIN—It's a Reprise artist reunion at the Warner/Giant/Reprise show. L-R: Patsy Lynn, Paul Brandt, Dwight Yoakam and Peggy Lynn.

issue then radio's going to win," he said, but noted that securing that shift of resources is up to broadcasters. "Your mass retailers love newspapers," he warned. "It's up to radio to sell radio to K-Mart."

Blackburn and Galante addressed some of the business realities facing the record business for those radio folks unfamiliar with the high costs of price and positioning. "How much money are we really talking about?" asked Smyth of the funds radio might have access to. "Is the rate of return worth it?"

THAT DOES IMPRESS ME MUCH—Mercury Nashville staffers congratulate Shania Twain after Luke Lewis presented her with a 10 million plaque for *The Woman In Me* at the label's Planet Hollywood party. L-R: Norbert Nix, Retta Harvey, Sandy Neese, Kevin Lane, Twain, Lewis, John Grady, Larry Hughes. *Photo: Dan Loftin*

Galante responded. "We're only talking about a total pool of about \$10 million to be divided among the entire country format. Those dollars will come from fewer videos or less slotting allowance, but it's not going to be that we're adding money to that because we're in a very flat to down market."

"If we grow it back up, obviously there is more money in the pipeline for advertising," Blackburn added. "If we're going to place a buy on a radio station we expect to see units move through the door." Galante cautioned. "It's not a vanity buy, this is about selling product."

Attention then shifted to radio stations entering into exclusive agreements with promotion companies as is common in other formats. Galante stressed that country labels' promotion staffs don't need the assistance that these companies provide. "In the pop world, you've got 800 radio stations among

CRS: WORLD'S BIGGEST SHOWCASE

WITH CRS MOVING DOWNTOWN THIS YEAR, PARTIES AND PERFORMANCE VENUES WERE PLENTIFUL. HERE ARE THE HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE EVENTS MUSIC ROW STAFFERS ATTENDED:

WE HAVE LIFTOFF—The Seventh Annual Warner/Giant/Reprise Superstar Show has become the harbinger of Radio Seminar, taking place on the Tuesday before the start of CRS. Serving dual function as a WSM Listener Appreciation Concert, the early bird timing of the event creates a chance to focus the programmer's attention before they become besieged with a myriad of diversions. "Lucky

seven" took place at the Ryman Auditorium. Faith Hill closed, planting herself on the stage of country's Mother Church with all the self assuredness of a star come of age. She didn't just sing—she interpreted, she didn't make small talk—she brought the audience into her world. Her nine piece band sampled a variety of cuts from her new LP (due in April) while her emotionally charged vocal laser beam targeted the audience. New Giant family band The Wilkinsons received a standing ovation for their soon to be released single, "264." Dwight Yoakam delivered a surprise solo acoustic medley reinforcing his creative uniqueness, and surprisingly, host Bill Engvall (Foxworthy lite) actually made me grin once or twice.—D.M.R.

SUPERFACES—"I'm nervous," said John Michael Montgomery after his opening number, "Be My Baby Tonight," during Wednesday night's Superfaces dinner. "Does it show?" Frankly, yes. The Atlantic artist's performance, however, transcended his jitters at playing for the assembled radio and industry decision makers. Solid show.—C.A.

BACK AT THE RANCH—Capitol power trio The Ranch is a unique proposition in this town. Any time they have a show, industry types flock en masse and go a bit crazy. These are the same jaded folks that publicists struggle to turn out for other artists' shows, mind you, and I'm one of them. Capitol packed the radio folks into the Ace of Clubs for this post-Superfaces jam. The Ranch whipped the crowd into a frenzy, closing the set with their notorious version of "Devil Went Down To Georgia." Also looking on were Dixie Chicks, River Road, Sons of the Desert and members of Big House—Monty Byrom even hopped on stage to lead The Ranch in an encore. Here's hoping the newly won fans at radio give their listeners a chance to love this band as much as the Ace crowd did.—C.A.

CLOSE, AND HERE'S YOUR CIGAR—Curb Universal hosted an early Thursday evening intimate gathering at the Havana club where artists and attendees could mingle, unwind and torch a Cohiba. Cactus Choir performed some well-received a cappella renditions. Later that evening MCG/Curb's Hal Ketchum and LeAnn

Rimes entertained at the Ryman.—D.M.R.

HOT SHIP—Thursday night's annual RCA Record Label Group dinner cruise on the General Jackson showboat kicked off with The Thompson Brothers Band. The merry trio, assisted by one sideman, joked their way through a two song set. First, they riffed on A&R exec Thom Schuyler's head size ("...it's got it's own moons...") and eventually segued into sheep jokes (always funny). Mindy McCready became emotional after her first song, assuring radio that her upcoming sitcom pilot would not distract her from music. Her wonderful performance of "You'll Never Know" was graced by a mid-song stage crashing by TTBB bass player Mike Whitty, sans shirt with "Soy Bomb" painted on his torso. He flitted about the stage as the crowd roared. Gerry House emceed, Jason Sellers impressed (more later), Restless Heart officially re-united and Alabama's Randy Owen thanked the radio crowd for supporting St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Eight-months pregnant Martina McBride joked, "The show's not over, but the fat lady's sung." She received the evening's first standing ovation for "A

10 different formats," he said. "So one guy has got to have all those balls going. You don't have the same thing here." Many were in agreement that these types of arrangements would be short-term at best because there is no value to the record labels.

"Are we done with pay for play?" interjected DreamWorks exec Scott Borchetta from the floor. "Is it over already?"

Because I'm going to hold you to it. If we walk out and nobody speaks up about pay for play, great. That means we actually achieved something today. So if there are any GMs or corporate people in the room who are pursuing pay for play, let's hear from you." Farber said, "And it's very quiet in this room."

Peter Svendsen stood to address the relationship between radio and the record label promotion departments. "The spectrum has been stretched, but not to the point where we've lost our integrity," he said. "That I'm proud of." He drew applause for saying that the high prices being paid for radio properties is creating pressure which may damage that relationship.

Torcasso responded by saying radio group stock prices are rising. "If we were spending too much on properties it would have gone down, not up. What our goal at CBS is and continues to be is to grow the category. It really has nothing to do with coming in and saying, 'Gee, record companies, we really need help from you because we



STRIKE A POSE—DreamWorks execs and *After Midnight's* Blair Garner flash some enamel during the label's showcase for Randy Travis at the Hermitage Hotel. L-R: James Stroud, Travis, Garner and Scott Borchetta. Photo: Alan Mayor

need more money."

"Rick," Svensen replied, "I've got a 70 year-old mother with a pension and I told her drop every share in radio because when I go to a radio station that had 30 employees and you've got a lady from traffic, a lady in bookkeeping answering the phone and working on the computer, one gal who is the promotion director for four stations and stressed, you've got a PD who is an OM and an MD and he's in meetings when he's supposed to be on the air, this is not reality. It is a smoke screen to the investors because you want a bottom line." The room erupted in thunderous applause.

"There are probably radio stations that I would agree with on that," Torcasso responded. "The smart operators really aren't operat-

ing like that. I know CBS does not operate like that."

Albright offered, "I would be the first one to agree that when a company like ours grows from owning 12 stations to 191 stations, you bet we've made mistakes along the way.."

"Any radio station is only as good as the people who work there," Smyth said, echoing the thoughts of many. Some noted that the changes are reality. "I think, Peter, you're holding on to yesterday," said Albright. "Embrace tomorrow, you'll do better."

"It happens in every business," Galante pointed out. "You try to increase your margins." Torcasso, who had by then worn out the phrase, again asserted that the goal should be to grow the country category, to the groans of those in attendance.

Bob Moody noted that even though pay for play was not being championed by anyone in attendance, it is still a dark cloud on the horizon. "The people that are worrying the folks in this room are not in this room," he said.

The panel ended on a light note after an attendee from a small market station asked how she could partner with retail and record labels. Blackburn quipped, "If you come up here after this panel Torcasso will buy your station."◆



TOD MUCH FUN—Daryle Singletary schmoozes WUSN's Trish Bionde and Mick Kaylor backstage at the Warner/Giant/Reprise show.

Broken Wing." Goose bump moment: Show closer Eddy Arnold received three (yes, three) standing ovations.—C.A.

OPERATION OVERLORD—"Thursday Is Decca Day," their announcements proclaimed. To prove it Decca sponsored the CRS lunch and introduced the airwave modulators to new artist Shane Stockton followed by fave Lee Ann Womack. It's great to see artists evolve, and comparing Lee Ann '98 to the newcomer who took the stage at the Decca lunch '97 was gratifying. The trick of playing her video as an intro and then switching, mid-song, to live music was provocative. Stockton's self-penned new single "What If I'm Right" was the highlight of his set. That evening Decca hosted a guitar pull at Caffé Milano featuring Mark Chesnutt, Gary Allan, Rhet Akins, Chris Knight and Danni Leigh. Songwriter Knight's image-filled material seemed to garner an especially strong response.—D.M.R.

HANGIN' OUT IN THE ALLEY—The growing Sony family (Columbia, Epic, Monument)

laid claim to Printer's Alley and placed its artists in three different clubs on Thursday night. Monument promo icon Larry Pareigis looking outlandish in a faux pearls mardi gras necklace (pearls the size of ping pong balls) was leaning up against a wall in the packed Amber club watching his Dixie Chicks and smiling like the Cheshire cat from *Alice In Wonderland* as they mesmerized the crowd. Naively, I asked about the pearls and Larry offered this advice, "It's CRS week, you've got to wear your balls on the outside." Other acts makin' music on the Sony block included Ty Herndon, Sons Of The Desert, Joe Diffie, The Kinleys, Shana Petrone, Collin Raye, Gil Grand, Ricochet and Deryl Dodd.—D.M.R.

DOIN' LUNCH—Friday's luncheon, sponsored by ASCAP and Reprise Records, featured Jason Sellers and Michael Peterson. Reprise honcho Bill Mayne surprised a visibly moved Peterson with his first Gold plaque before Sellers launched the musical portion of the show. Singing with a surprising soulfulness—as he had the evening before—Sellers won new fans,

including this writer. He introduced ex-wife Lee Ann Womack to accompany him on "This Small Divide." "You look great," Sellers said as Womack took the stage, "I want you back." The crowd howled when she said, "You should've asked earlier." Peterson's performance left no doubt as to why he's becoming the top new male artist in the genre. His moving monologue about the importance of radio in his life was heartfelt, genuine and warmly received.—C.A.

REBECCA RISING—Friday at Caffé Milano Kentucky girl Rebecca Lynn Howard wowed the crowd with a fabulous voice that worked best on the countriest numbers, bringing whoops and whistles on the bluegrass ballad "Was It As Hard To Be Together," which she co-wrote with Carl Jackson. A little spit-shining and she's gonna be a contender.—C.A.B.

BLOND BEAUTIES—At Saturday's CMA Luncheon showcasing Bryan White and the lovely Deana Carter, comfort was key. Carter's flawless five-song set turned into a family affair with her little brother, Jeff, on guitar throughout,

and they were joined by dad Fred Carter, Jr. on a couple of tunes including "Did I Shave My Leg for This?"—singular, to point out her left leg is still in a cast for torn ligaments suffered while she was jumping to Alan Jackson's "Rocky Top." Carter was in great voice, and came off natural and at ease, sweet and happy. Bryan White seemed almost as comfortable as Carter, kicking off with a bluesy version of "Love Is The Right Place." A few sound problems made me uneasy, but White handled it admirably, good naturedly proclaiming "It's a little noisy here today!" The kid and his voice are so gorgeous.—C.A.B.

DREAM BIG—DreamWorks Nashville deserves special mention for commandeering the entire Hermitage Hotel and using it as its base of operations. Basking in the glow of its superb Randy Travis chart debut the previous week, the Hollywood hillbillies showcased Travis, Mac McAnally, and screened company movies such as *The Peacemaker*, *Amistad* and *Mouse Hunt*.—D.M.R.

ALBUM REVIEWS



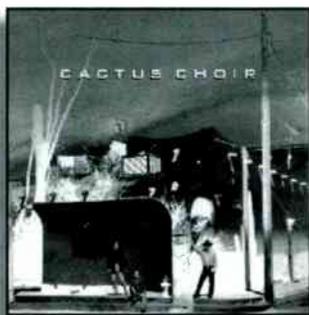
CACTUS CHOIR/Cactus Choir

(Curb/Universal 53065)

Producer: Mark Bright, Tom Shapiro

Prime Cuts: "It's Your Move," "Any One Will Do," "Musicland"

Critique: Fresh and warm as a prairie breeze blowing across the near-barren radio wasteland comes Cactus Choir. What immediately hits the listener is the sweet, rich blend of mellifluous voices (like a concoction of coffee, cream and Kahlua) that is unlike anything in country music. This California-based trio featuring lead singer and chief songwriter Marty Atkinson, bassist/vocalist Cal Ball, and utility musician/singer Tim Hensley draws much of its harmony arrangements and song subject matter from such '70s supergroups as Crosby, Stills & Nash and the Eagles. Co-producers Bright and Shapiro sensed the need for a group like Cactus Choir in the country format and so have delivered the warm and fuzzy, feel-good album of the year. Though the music is acoustic-based—a melding of folk rock, country rock, bluegrass and jazz ("New Frontier" is Bob James plays "Marakesh Express!")—like a series of black and white photographs, each is carefully matted with just the right touches of lilting fiddle, singing steel, gliding piano or crackling electric guitar. Much of the material features subtle Southwestern-dappled lyric imagery straight out of the Don Henley/Jackson Browne/America songbooks ("Mornings In Mexico," "Little Candles," "Any One Will Do"), and that's another refreshing thing about Cactus Choir. However, by Nashville standards, I didn't detect any real strong radio-friendly hook-laden tunes. Though if "Musicland" doesn't ring especially true with every Music Row-bound dreamer, nothing will. This band will happen, but, like Sons of the Desert, it may take a single or two ("Step Right Up" didn't fare well), before Cactus Choir pricks up the ears of radio programmers everywhere.



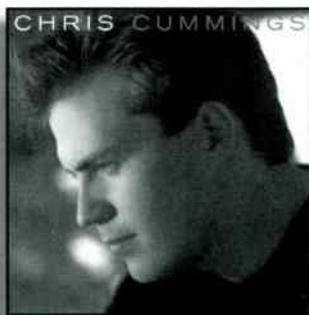
—Ron Young

CHRIS CUMMINGS/Chris Cummings

(Warner Bros. 46672) Producer: Jim Ed Norman, Rick Scott

Prime Cuts: "I Waited," "Til I See You Again"

Critique: It isn't hard to understand why Norman has shown interest in Cummings since the Canadian's school-boy days. There's gold in them thar pipes. Now 22, Cummings launches his debut with the nugget "I Waited" before careening into the Kevin Welch tune "Til I See You Again." That second cut is perhaps the quintessential marriage of contemporary and traditional country, and equal to anything this town has produced in the last year. If the album had even approached that level of brilliance three or four more times it might be noteworthy. As it is, that song is but a flash in the pan. The way I see it, if you're not going to say something fresh or compelling you better pummel me with hooks. And if you ain't got buckets-o-hooks, you had best do something besides trailblaze well-worn thematic pathways. Cummings has an excellent baritone voice for which his songwriting is, as yet, no match. A little more seasoning is definitely in order. Perhaps the most questionable song on the album is "Little Sister's Blue Jeans," one of three cuts from outside writers. First time through, many listeners may wonder if the protagonist is lusting after his sibling. Closer examination reveals that is not the case, but the mental image the song creates remains a bit unsettling. The experience made we want to skip directly to the album's final cut, "Never Thought Of You That Way."



—Chuck Aly

VARIOUS ARTISTS/The Horse Whisperer

(MCAD-70025A) Producer: Tony Brown, John Bissell, Kathy Nelson

Prime Cuts: "A Soft Place To Fall," "Slow Surprise," "Still I Long For Your Kiss," "Me And The Eagle"

Critique: From the opening "Hoo Hoo" of Dwight Yoakam's "Cattle Call" to the closing steel warble of George Strait's leisurely "Red River Valley," I pined to see the film, threatened to read the book again, fantasized about moving out where the sky is big and barn dances are held in barns and people dance. And while I can't imagine a better soundtrack, unlike many, it also works beautifully as a record. Chock full of western melodies, most notably Don Walser's "Big Ball's in Cowtown" and Don Edward's "Cowboy Love Song," and punctuated by the reunion here of the Hill Country Flatlanders, *The Horse Whisperer* is reason for celebration. Lucinda Williams is at her plaintive best in "Still I Long For Your Kiss," and Raul Malo's "Dream River" literally made me swoon. I thought that was the depth, the height of the musical experience and was welcoming an emotional break but then along comes Emmylou Harris with the darkly seductive Chris Smither-penned "Slow Surprise," one of the most evocative songs I've heard in years. Steve Earle's "Me And The Eagle"—in Earle's inimitable style—just might become the loner's anthem. But most moving of all is new MCA artist Allison Moorer's self-penned (with Gwil Owen) "A Soft Place To Fall," the soundtrack's first single. A lush production of a killer country voice over a personal bitter-sweet moment-song—this, my friends, is country music, and it is talent. It's no wonder this is the first

single and that Robert Redford put her in the picture. Prepare to be *wowed*. Thanks, Tony Brown. You give Nashville a good name. See you at the picture show.

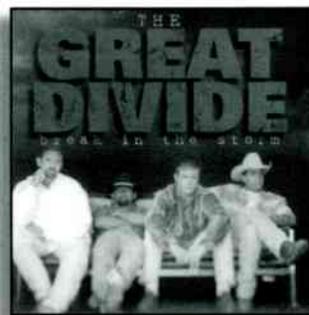
—Charlene Blevins

THE GREAT DIVIDE/Break In The Storm

(Atlantic 83086-2P) Producer: Lloyd Maines

Prime Cuts: "Never Could," "Billy Covington," "Pour Me A Vacation," "Round That Bend"

Critique: They may be a new act, but this foursome from the great southwest could take a lot of the established folks to school—and kick their butts at recess for good measure. In the manner of Mellencamp, Waylon and others, the Great Divide can conquer most any musical ground. But they're best when up is the tempo of choice, and none is better than the kicky opener, "Never Could." It's wonderful to hear reckless abandon on record again—searing vocal by Mike McClure, raging guitars and a tight rhythm section. Yet, they can follow that with "Billy Covington," about a misfit who longs to make his name in the world. When they sing of holdups and lime green pickup trucks, it sounds as if they might actually know something about them. "Heart Of Stone" is catchy shuffle country and "Pour Me A Vacation" (nice title) rolls along in a Buffett-like, Caribbean groove. The debut consists of twelve cuts, which is about a couple too many. "Dodgers Were In Brooklyn" adds nothing new to nostalgia, invoking the same tired images of Marilyn, James Dean and so on (how come nobody ever brings up Adlai Stevenson, for example). The same sort of theme, however, is approached far more credibly in "Used To Be." McClure tends to slip into Steve Earle mode a bit (check his pronunciations of "out," or "town," or "truck"), but mostly he's an interesting, jagged-edged vocalist. Overall, an impressive burst out of the blocks.



—Bob Paxman



EDGE OF THE ROW

by RUSTY RUSSELL

"...Why don't we get drunk and, well, you know."

Ever wondered just exactly how many emotions can be conveyed through music? Me neither, at least until a couple of minutes ago. Pretty hard to come up with a truly comprehensive list, but I scratched down the ones I could think of: Love, joy, heartache, bitterness, contentment, lust, happiness...those are most of the biggies. Then you've got your gray-area stuff, like pathos, which isn't officially an emotion, per se. Pathos, as Webster sees it, is "the quality or power, in literature, music, speech, or other expressive forms, of evoking a feeling of pity or compassion." So I'm listing along, and I realized I'd forgotten a really important entry—humor. ("A comic quality causing amusement...the faculty of perceiving what is amusing or comical." Boy, that Webster, what a bucket of yuks, huh?) There are all kinds of ways to apply or imply humor in music. You can go straight for the jugular with the ol' hilarious ditty. Let me tell 'ya 'bout Ahab, the A-rab...Why don't we get drunk and, well, you know. For a more subtle effect, you can pop in a cute colloquialism, malaprop or comical vocal bite. If you're really good (and funny), you develop a style wherein whimsy mixes seamlessly with your serious side. You're not being pointedly funny, exactly, but listeners get the impression that you don't take yourself *too* seriously, no matter how much talent you have.

I've had this album sitting around for a while now—can't figure out for the life of me why I haven't mentioned it until now, but *Help Wanted, Love Needed, Caretaker* from **Mount Pilot** pretty much embodies that intertwining thing. (doolittle records, <http://www.doolittle.com>) Guitarist Jon Williams is a ridiculously capable six-string slinger, with loads of bebop, country, country swing, roots and other chops, but he'll whip out a goofball phrase in a heartbeat. The band follows right along, too; a churning, chunking alt-country groove suddenly morphs into some kind of giddy sabre dance, then back, then off on another tangent. Very cool. It's like serving up a gorgeous ribeye with a big ol' doughnut for garnish—hey, why *not*? Great songwriting, too: "Taken All I've Got," "I'm Gone," "Walk Alone." Those'd be my favs.

Now, on the jugular-oriented side, Sugar Hill's just released the latest from the **Austin Lounge Lizards**, *Employee Of The Month*. These guys are a consistent hoot. They'll make fun of *anything*—Texas, tear-jerkers, love, death (in "Last Words," a concerned

family member asks our hero, "Can I have all your stuff when you're dead?") Ha! Dig "Hey, Little Minivan," a broadened boomer's update of classic surf/car tunes. Get this: "She gets 30 miles on a gallon of gas, and I can schlep all the girls to gymnastics class—hey little minivan, we're goin' to the children's museum." You gotta love these guys.

Okay, well, we've got to get ourselves together at some point and get serious. Serious *groove*, that is. Former .38 Special keyboardist and Jack Mack & The Heart Attack mainstay **Max Carl** (Max Carl & Big Dance) has *One Planet, One Groove* out on Mission Records (11777 San Vicente Blvd., Los Angeles, CA, 90049). Wow. Produced by Carl, Glen Frey and Mike Harlow, this baby really smokes. First of all, you got Max's unbelievable voice. He is absolutely, without question among the top handful blue-eyed soul singers ever. Writes his butt off, too. Check the 6/8 powerhouse "Hold On To Your Man" (written with Frey). It, like three or four others on the CD, could easily become a club standard. Deep stuff, not the least pretentious. Josh Leo turns in some great guitar work, and get a load of those horns! Woof! Carl includes a couple short instrumental "vignettes," too. Odd, but cool. Not to mention he does "Land Of A Thousand Dances." No kiddin'. Crank this one up and party down. And for the day after; **John Flynn** (Sliced Bread, www.slicedbread.com). If Flynn were a painter, I'll bet he'd work mostly in water-

color. His lyrics are thoughtful but accessible, his voice sweet and communicative, and his melodic & harmonic bents are, well, imagine an earthy folk stylist with a few years in music school. Okay, now that I've thoroughly muddied the water, how's this: Flynn turns in a respectable "I Want You To Want Me." (Yup, the Cheap Trick tune.) Know what I like most about this CD? He seems to be celebrating the songs rather than trying to prove some big point about himself.

Stay tuned. In our next episode, Annie The Wonder Dog reveals the truth behind the Nashville cats legend and calls for a special prosecutor to be appointed.♦

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Bobby Karl... Works The Room

When fabulous parties are your way of life, it's important to be reminded just how fabulous they are.

That is why we throw them for out-of-towners from time to time.

It is, dare I say, the very reason for the existence of Country Radio Seminar (2/24-2-28). They come from non-glamour spots like Boise and Paducah and Syracuse, where there are no glitzy nightclubs, major caterers, gleaming corporate entertainment headquarters, Hard Rocks, Planet Hollywoods, limousines nor stylists, not to mention beautiful and talented superstars. So this is what we offer them.

As is my custom, I began my CRS agenda with a trip to the Warner-Reprise/WSM Listener Appreciation Show. Staged this year at the Ryman (2/24), it featured schmoozing by such fabulons as **Dale Bobo, Sandy Lovejoy, Hugh Bennett, Peter Svendson, Bruce Adelman, Joe Casey, Mark Staycer, Connie Baer, Martha Moore, Doug & Anona Johnson, Shannon, Rodney King** (the cameraman, not the L.A. cause celebre), **Jimmy Collins, Gina Donegan, Kevin Anderson, D.B. Cooper, Cathy Martindale** and **Rich Miller**.

Bill Cody shouted into the mike about being in the Mother Church of country music, apparently unaware of acoustic qualities that make screaming unnecessary. Host **Bill Engvall** knew how to use the mike properly and has improved considerably as a funnyman since his '97 New Faces flop. "The Lynnheads," a WSM-boosted fan club, were out in force for their faves. **Chris Cummings, Daryle Singletary, Paul Brandt** and surprise guest **Dwight Yoakam** also drew cheers. Giant's new family act **The Wilkinsons** got the evening's spontaneous standing ovation. Headliner **Faith Hill** looked scrumptious in head-to-toe silver and sang splendidly.

I headed for the Convention Center for Wednesday's actual convention opening (2/25), instantly schmoozing **Carolyn McClain, Gillie Crowder, Phyllis Stark, Dave Mack, Jeff Walker, Angie Watson, Perfect Stranger, Devon O'Day, The Great Divide** and **Claudia Nygaard**. Worst news of the day: **Rick Rockhill** is being transferred to Atlanta to become a Big DreamWorks Poobah. I am so-o-o-o depressed. **Lon Helton** and **Garth Brooks** provided quotable keynote moments.

That evening, we headed for Capitol's showcase for **Suzy Bogguss** at Caffé Milano (2/25). **Sharon Allen, Steve Tillisch, Judy McDonough, Gayle Grasso, Doug Crider, Jan Snider, Larry Daniels, Bill Catino,**

John Huie, Sam Cerami, James Yellich, Rod Essig, Rick Alter and **Chas Hay** of Canada's fine *Inside Country* TV show made the scene. Suzy was luminous. Dinner was delish.

On into the night we plunged, for the cocktails and desserts offered by DreamWorks at The Hermitage Hotel (2/25). Oh yeah, **Randy Travis** showcased. The place was packed. **Gary Burr, Sharon Vaughn, Wally Wilson, James Stroud, Skip Stevens, Wayne Halper, Denise Stiff, Sandy Lovejoy, Scott Borchetta, Neil Pond** and **Blair Garner** worked the room as best they could.

There was no shortage of fabulousness on Thursday (2/26). **Eddy Arnold** was touchingly sentimental as well as witty at RCA's party on *The General Jackson* showboat in front of a crowd that included **Hazel Smith, Janet E. Williams, Jim Bessman** and **Marjie McGraw**. **The Thompson Brothers** smoked in performance, then provided hilarity when one of them appeared on stage with **Mindy McCready** with "Soy Bomb" painted on his bare chest. This was in reference to the Bob Dylan moment on the Grammy Awards, held in New York the previous night.

Meanwhile Sony was partying in Printer's Alley (2/26). **The Dixie Chicks** mimicked Tanya's boobs-baring escapade of last year's CRS by flashing t-shirts with strategically placed buttons on their chests. Decca, Rising Tide and Curb also threw open their party doors. MCA had groovy, large-screen video vans patrolling the streets.

I noticed these while entering Friday's Planet Hollywood bash tossed by Mercury (2/27). Inside, we rubbed shoulders with **Steve Goetzman, Al & Phyllis Schiltz, Sandy Neese, John Grady, Luke Lewis, Ron Baird, Kevin Lane, Jenny Alford, Russell Prowse, Barry Gould**, the great **Bob Kingsley, Neal Haislop, Billy Block, Danny Proctor, Libba Gillum, Brian Mansfield** and **Terri Stewart**, who jumped off a gig as a tour manager right into an internship at Mercury. I love this town. **Shania Twain** showed up, I think. **Billy Ray Cyrus** told me he's negotiating a big movie part (I'm sworn to secrecy). **Eric Heatherly, Kathy Mattea** and **Terri Clark** serenaded us while we drank, snacked and gossiped.

Back to the Convention Center for more seminar schmooze Saturday (2/28). Bonded with **Sean Ross, Dan Halyburton, Wade Jessen**, the great **Mike Oatman, Charlie Monk, Charlie Walker, Charlie Douglas, Shelia Shipley & Ken Bidy** (they were

everywhere I turned at CRS), **Don Cusic, Frank Mull, Ken Tucker** and **Kyle Cantrell**.

The New Faces Show (2/28) featured the worst banquet meal I have ever eaten. Fortunately, the music and the companionship were both excellent. Miss Mary and I made merry with **Ellen Wood, Matt Williams, Tom Roland, Debbie Holley, Summer Harmon, Janice Azrak, Fred Vail, Cathy Gurley, Bob Saporiti, Bob Colson, Bob Allen, Bob Romeo, Bob Moody** (in stylish Oxfords & pinstripes), **Stormie Warren, Pete Loesch, David & Susana Ross, Brad Schmitt, Susan Niles**, the CMA's **Lara Riser, Scott Morris, Fran Boyd, J.D. Haas, Elroy Kahanek** and I'm not through yet. At this point I should pause to tell you that at 2,240 this was the largest turnout for a New Faces showcase in history. Shall we continue? Very well—**Gary Morris, Bill Denny, Bryan Switzer, Steve & Ree Buchanan, Barry & Jewel Coburn, Denise Nichols, Kyle Lehning, Will Rambeaux, Mike Crawford** (wearing a Jerry Garcia tie), **Anita Mandell, Clay Myers, Maurice Miner, Mark Ketchem, Charlene Blevins, Kevin Herring, Dave Gibson, John Sebastian, John Lomax, John Rich** (in a too-small cowboy hat), **Gene Weed, Royce Risser, Bill Mayne, Donna Hughes, Steven Brooks** (of the U.S. Department of the Interior), **Randy Goodman, Ed Salamon, Jim Dolan, Gina Preston, Rob Simbek, Les Acree** and **Roger Sovine**.

In a rather blatant commercial for Lyric Street, **Lari White, Mickey Mouse** and **Goofy** took the stage to announce the winners of the Disney cruise ship vacation. Then host **Jeff Foxworthy** proved once again why he's the greatest country comic of our time. This guy never ceases to impress me. **Big House, Matt King, The Lynns** and **Kris Tyler** all performed admirably. My favorite vocal performance was by **Sons of the Desert**. But if there was a theme to the eve, it would be instrumental flash, notably by **Anita Cochran, The Ranch** and **The Dixie Chicks** (who announced they were "the country Spice Girls," namely Old Spice/Martie, Easy Spice/Natalie and Slutty Spice/Emily). Another subtheme was provided by two Aussies on the bill, Rancher **Keith Urban** and bellybutton-baring **Sherrié Austin**.

This was the first CRS staged downtown and spread through multiple hotels and clubs. I pronounced it a big success. Let's do it again next year. ♦



FINANCIAL

by Paul Hovda, O'Neil Hagaman, A Professional L.L.C.

Computing and the Year 2000 "Crisis"

Although the year 2000 is still roughly 500 business days away, an increasing amount of concerned attention is being paid to the turn of the millennium by businesses and consumers. What has captured everyone's attention is being dubbed by some the "Year 2000 Crisis." On January 1, 2000, computers around the world will be switching their internal dates from 1999 to 2000. While this seems like a trivial thing, the ramifications of failing to do this properly are far-reaching, and potentially very costly. To better understand the issues and impact of this computer bug, let's begin with a simple description.

THE PROBLEM

In a nutshell, the Year 2000 problem is the inability of many computer systems to properly handle dates in the next millennium. It stems from a programming shortcut used early in computing history, when computers had much less memory than they do today. In order to conserve memory space, programmers decided to cut dates down from eight digits to six digits. For example, the date December 31, 1997 is represented as 971231 instead of 19971231. The Year 2000 bug shows up on January 1, 2000, where the six-digit date is represented as 000101. Unfortunately, many computers will interpret this to mean January 1, 1900!

THE CONSEQUENCES

Consider the following scenarios if this bug goes unaddressed:

- Computerized royalty systems crash and can't produce statements checks
- people's ages start appearing as negative numbers
- driver's licenses and automobile registrations show up as expired in the state's computer system
- credit cards are rejected as expired
- bond maturity dates, and compound interest calculations are incorrect
- business losses from these and similar problems cause the bottom to fall out of the stock market

THE SOLUTIONS

In order to avoid problems like these, businesses are spending billions of dollars to inspect and correct their systems so that they are all "Year 2000 Compliant" by

December 31, 1999. Due to the complexity of many computer programs, rewriting the code to fix this bug is a painfully slow and expensive process—much of it needing to be done by hand. That is why in 1998, almost 2 years before the turn of the century, many businesses around the world already have special Year 2000 compliance plans in place. To help ensure that a crisis does not occur, and to serve as a wake-up call to businesses that are not addressing this very real problem, the legal staff at the Security and Exchange Commission has issued a missive requesting that publicly traded companies outline their Year 2000 efforts within this year's annual report.

LOCAL IMPACT

Contrary to what you may have heard, this bug is not limited to large mainframe computers. Individual computers and certain off-the-shelf software can also be adversely affected by Year 2000 problems. It is all dependent on what versions of software and hardware are being used. Examples of software that should have no trouble with the Year 2000 include: Quicken, Lotus 1-2-3, FileMaker Pro version 2.1 and above, MicroSoft Excel, and MicroSoft Access. The Macintosh operating system can handle dates past 2000 with no trouble, so most Macintosh applications should be compliant. If you have concerns about a specific business or about your current software/hardware, call or e-mail the business or manufacturer and ask if they have a Year 2000 plan. If they don't, at least you are forewarned, and your call might prompt them to put one in place. For even more information,

type "Year 2000" into any search engine on the World Wide Web and you will be presented with sites that cover every facet of the issue.

While it is still early in 1998, the clock is ticking and it is not too soon to begin taking action to make sure that your New Year in 2000 is indeed a happy one. ♦

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Topley Rocks, Knight Shines

NASHVILLE VIA JAMAICA, MON

William Topley's February 7 show at the Exit/In was one of the more enjoyable small club experiences I've had in some time. Peppered with industry types, the room was full, but thankfully not in that uncomfortable range where you're in danger of cigarette burns every time you turn around. With an 8 p.m. start and another bill at 10, there was no opening act to yawn through. Most significantly, the sound was fabulously clear which, with Topley on the mic, is no small gift.

The Mercury rocker's last Nashville outing had been almost precisely one year earlier at Caffé Milano. From the moment Topley took the Exit/In stage dressed in black, it was evident the time had served both him and his backing four-piece well. They opened with a new Topley composition, "Soul Love," sporting a confidence and command not seen at the Milano showcase. Topley quickly dipped into material from his phenomenal album—"Mannish Water" and "Sink Like A Stone." Guitarist **Luke Brightly**, drummer **James Kimberley**, Martin Swain on bass and **Mike Westergaard** on keys worked better developed arrangements that were tight as the sheets on a boot camp bunk.

Most impressive, however, was Topley's voice. By the time he rolled into "Uptown" you could hear his vocal chords warming. The full range and power of a voice wide as the plains and deep as an ocean left me stunned.

Topley's authority on the emotional crescendo of "The Ring" led to a soaring version of the title track from his album, *Black River*, and finally an energetic "Starbroeck Woman." The first encore featured only Westergaard's keys and Topley on "Drink Called Love." My mouth was hanging open by the time it ended. And just to give everyone something to think about, the former resident of Jamaica ended the evening with an extended reggae/funk jam. Need something else to think about? Word is Topley will have a new album this summer and that Mercury is planning to re-release two albums featuring him as frontman for The Blessing as well. Stick that in your spleef and smoke it.

—Chuck Aly

ALL IN A KNIGHT'S WORK

The final performance of **Gladys Knight** with the **Nashville Symphony Orchestra** at TPAC Valentine's weekend was one of the more thrilling shows in recent memory. It's a given that the lady has a powerful, effective voice—look how many fans she has touched throughout her thirty-eight-and-counting year career. But what an astounding performer. Even with pending foot surgery, Gladys strolled up and down the stage incorporating some trademark "soul steppin'" (normally relegated to her back-up ensemble, **The Pips**), all the while singing and speaking straight from the heart.

The NSO's Pop Series naturally had a lover's slant for their Valentine's program. The orchestra's exquisite version of Herb Alpert's "This Guy's In Love" was perfect for snuggling. Even the "Magic of Motown" medley bent towards Cupid's penchant, featuring "Stop In the Name Of Love" and "My Cherie Amour." Besides watching the intensity of the players, it was also fun playing name that tune.

After intermission, it was all Ms. Knight. Loosely themed "Magic in the Music," Gladys pined over the machination of modern music, dove head first into her own musical scrapbook and paid tribute to singers and songs, old and new, who have tingled her spine. These included seventies selections made popular by The Blue Notes, Teddy Pendergrass and The Spinners, along with newer classics like the dramatic "Wind Beneath My Wings" and "End Of The Road."

Gladys had us all in the palm of her hand with her personable storytelling and song introductions, then took us to new heights with soul-wrenching renditions of staples like "Heard It Through the Grapevine," and "Neither One Of Us." She was joined onstage by older brother/Pip **Bubba Knight** and co-Pip **William Guest** for the signature "Midnight Train to Georgia," which commanded a standing-O and an encore, the disco-era anthem "I Will Survive."

Totally inspirational and enjoyable from start to finish.
—Michael Hight



Music Row is packed with timely, pertinent information about Nashville's producers, songwriters, musicians and industry executives—the insiders who create the music and make the news.

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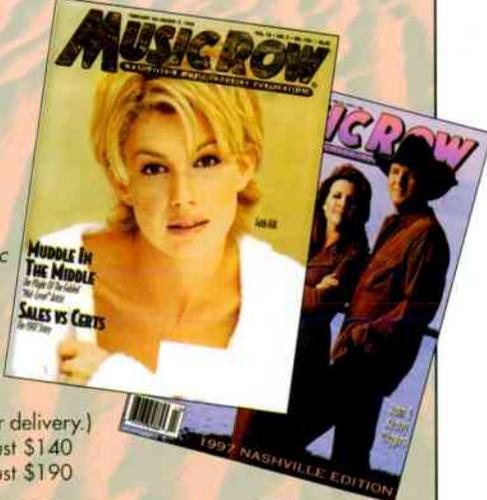

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MUSICAL CHAIRS

[continued from page 4]

BUSINESS NEWS

The domestic market for recorded music, measured in manufacturers' shipments to all market channels, declined in 1997 by 6.5% in total units and 2.4% in dollar value at list price. The 1997 downturn is primarily due to a pattern of downsizing and restructuring at retail that left manufacturers with a smaller yet stronger base of customers. The good news is that US record retailers and mass merchandisers reported a banner year, purchasing more efficiently and selling more consistently. Shipments of full length CDs grew 2.3%, CD singles were up 5.4% and most notably, 52 emerging artists—more than ever before—released albums in a variety of genres that achieved Gold or Platinum status...

Masterfonics, Inc. has filed a petition for protection under Chapter 11 of the US Bankruptcy code, effective January 29. Chapter 11, the reorganization arm of the code, allows a company to set up a repayment plan for existing debt, normally with longer terms than were originally set. Masterfonics owner, **Glenn Meadows**, said that significant downturn in overall business coupled with construction of The Tracking Room unfortunately occurred in the same time frame, and that restructuring was "the only real solution to this situation." Meadows also states that "Masterfonics intends to continue business providing the same high quality mastering and recording services that has been our reputation for these past 25 years..."

Boston's Berklee School of Music students will descend on Music Row for five days of workshops and clinics presented by Nashville songwriters and producers March 14-18. This year, Berklee celebrates 10 years of Nashville visits with a Berklee Recognition Award to be given to producer **Josh Leo**, and its Distinguished Alumni Award goes to **Joe Smyth** of Sawyer Brown. Both awards will be presented at the Bluebird Cafe on Tuesday, March 17...

The Creative Incentive Coalition has launched a new updated Web site at <www.cic.org>. The site contains intellectual property rights issue information, legislative updates, artists statements, Congressional testimonies, news clips and a variety of information concerning copyright on the Internet...

Michael Mueller has been named Vice President of Broadcast and Post Production for SSL North America, East Coast. He most recently served as Eastern Regional Sales Manager for AMS/Neve...

Don Light and **Bob Kinkead** have joined forces to form Light & Kinkead Management Group. PO Box 120308, Nashville, 37212. 615-298-9944...

OneMusic Library has promoted **Hal Jackson** to VP of Production, **Tom Hendrickson** to Senior Digital Editor, hired **Scott Neely** as Production Coordinator and appointed **Bill Carey** to the production staff...

Fred Bogert, **Melissa Brannan**, **Grant Fowler**, **Lee Groitzsch**, **Heather Johnson**, **Kathy Marshall** and **Cathy White** have been newly elected to the NAPRS Board of Directors...



HAL JACKSON

The Fruit of the Loom CountryFest '98 will be held in Nashville as a finale to Fan Fair, announced **William Farley**, Chairman and CEO of Fruit of the Loom...

Byron Gallimore has formed Byron Gallimore Productions, 244-8950. His new publishing venture is Song Garden Publishing, 244-8952...

John Seda has joined Audix as head of the company's Artist Relations program...

The Society of Professional Audio Recording Services (SPARS) will hold its annual business conference in Nashville on July 9 at Loew's Vanderbilt Hotel. The conference, presented with participation of NARAS and NAMM, will include panel discussions with executives of N2K and Liquid Audio on Internet Music Delivery and a forum on "Doing Business with the Producer." 1-800-771-7727 or <spars@spars.com>...

The eighteenth annual ASCAP Foundation Country Songwriters Workshop will begin April 15, 7pm at ASCAP's offices and will continue to meet for five consecutive Wednesdays. Moderated by Max T. Barnes, the Workshop will feature as guest panelists composers, lyricists, publishers, producers, and performers. Writers interested in applying

for the Workshop should send a resume or brief musical bio, typed lyric sheets and cassette tape with two original songs, including name, address and daytime telephone number to ASCAP Foundation Country Workshop, 2 Music Sq. W., Nashville, TN 37203...



DAVID DE BUSK

Eric Wright has joined Refugee Management International as Associate Manager. Previously an executive assistant at Blanton/Harrell Entertainment, Wright will assume all responsibilities of **John Dennis** who has departed for Borman Entertainment...

BSS Audio has named **Beth Stewart** Sales & Marketing Administrator...

David De Busk has been promoted to Director, Information Technology at BMI...

LABEL NEWS

Claudia Mize has been promoted to Senior Director of A&R Administration and **John Grady** is upped to Senior Vice President of Sales, Marketing and Promotion at Mercury Nashville...

Ted Wagner has been promoted to Vice President, National Country Promotion at Columbia Records/Nashville...

Toni Miller has exited the MCA publicity department...

Curb Records has added **Ken Mellons** to its roster, and is planning a summer album release...

Jon Elliot has joined the RLG Nashville team as Associate Director of artist development. Elliot is a four-year veteran of RCA



CLAUDIA MIZE



JOHN GRADY

ARTIST	\$GROSS	TIX SOLD	%FULL	VENUE	CITY/ST	DATE
Gaither Homecoming	\$300,222	27,672	92**	Lakeland Center	Lakeland, FL	1/23-24
LeAnn Rimes/Bryan White	\$215,674	8,803	100	Tupelo Coliseum	Tupelo, MS	2/8
BlackHawk, Kenny Chesney, Rhett Akins	\$65,111	3,339	69	La Crosse Center	La Crosse, WI	2/5
BlackHawk, Michael Peterson	\$44,781	1,947	57	Star Plaza Theatre	Merrville, IN	2/1
Grand Funk Railroad	\$44,278	1,920	96	Ovens Auditorium	Charlotte, NC	1/21
Tony Rice & Peter Rowan	\$12,348	704	100*	Wolf Trap Park Farm	Vienna, VA	1/9

source: amusement business *Two Sellouts **4 shows, 3 sellouts

Records Label Group in New York, working with such artists as The Dave Matthews Band, The Verve Pipe, Leah Andreaone, ZZ Top and more...

ARTIST NEWS

Lorrie Morgan has said she will seek legal recourse in response to an article in the February 24th issue of *Star Magazine* which claims that she had "a wild ride in the back-seat of a limousine with President Clinton." Morgan has dismissed the statement as totally untrue. "The only accurate information in the article with regard to my relationship with President Clinton was that I joined him on stage for the Christmas tree lighting in Washington, DC. Other than that, everything else is totally fabricated..."

Lee Roy Parnell was voted Best Male Country Guitarist in the 1998 Orville H. Gibson Awards at New York's Hard Rock Cafe in February. **Anita Cochran** took Best Female Country Guitarist. **John Fogerty** was recipient of the 1998 Orville H. Gibson Lifetime Achievement Award...

Recent RIAA certifications and upgrades for **Alabama** have brought their cumulative certified sales total to 36 million units, more than any other group or duo in country music history...

Hal Ketchum wed **Gina Paconi** at Grace Methodist Church in Austin on Valentine's Day...

Johnny Paycheck, who has been home recuperating from an asthma attack, joins the Country Jam USA bill this June 26 in Grand Junction, Colorado. Paycheck also got a nice surprise last month when **Tim McGraw** called him from the middle of one of his shows and had the sell-out crowd say hi...

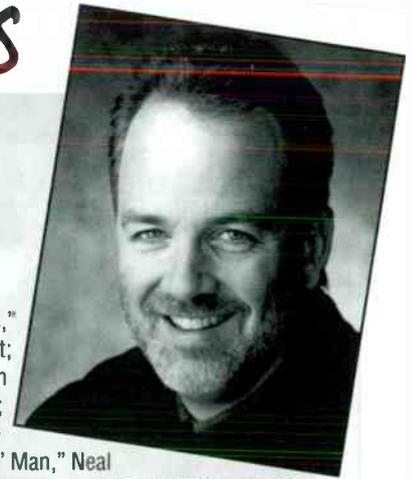
Hank Williams Jr. added his name to the long list of celebrities who have lent their voice talents to the animated sitcom *The Simpsons*. Williams' voice was heard singing a commercial jingle for a fictional vehicle called the Canyonero on the February 22 episode...

Deana Carter joined a host of luminaries honoring actor **Christopher Reeve** who suffered a spinal chord injury two years ago. *Celebration of Hope*, which aired on ABC March 1, also featured **Robin Williams**, **Glenn Close**, **John Lithgow**, **Willie Nelson**, **Mary-Chapin Carpenter** and **Stevie Wonder**. The event was a benefit for Reeve's foundation which raises funds for research to develop effective treatments for spinal cord injuries and supports programs that improve the quality of life for all people with disabilities. Carter was formerly a nurse in a rehabilitation center and worked with spinal cord injured patients. Christopher Reeve Foundation: 888-711-HOPE, PO Box 277 FDR Station, NY, NY 10150-0277...

Travis and **Theresa Tritt** welcomed 7 lb. 14 oz. daughter **Tyler Reese Tritt** into the world on February 18...

Trisha Yearwood and **Big House** have

Writer's Notes



BYRON HILL

BIRTHPLACE: Atlanta, GA

YEARS IN NASHVILLE: 20

PUBLISHER: MCA Music Publishing

HITS/CUTS/CHART ACTION: "Pickin' Up Strangers," Johnny Lee; "Fool Hearted Memory," George Strait; "Keepin' Me Up Nights," Asleep At The Wheel; "Born Country," Alabama; "Alright Already," Larry Stewart; "High Tech Redneck," George Jones; "Lifestyles Of The Not So Rich And Famous," Tracy Byrd; "If I Was A Drinkin' Man," Neal McCoy; "Politics, Religion, and Her," Sammy Kershaw; "I Broke It, I'll Fix It," River Road

FAVORITE SONG YOU WROTE: "Fool Hearted Memory"

FAVORITE SONG YOU DIDN'T WRITE: "Sunday Morning Coming Down" by Kristofferson

ON WHAT INSTRUMENT DO YOU WRITE? Guitar

INFLUENCES: My Dad, Kris Kristofferson, Jimmy Webb and Merle Haggard

ADVICE TO WRITERS: Keep in mind the difference between a hit record and a hit song, and strive to write the latter.

LITTLE KNOWN BIOGRAPHICAL FACT: Wrote George Strait's first number one.

ISSUES FACING SONGWRITERS TODAY: First and foremost, the decline in the number of "meat & three" restaurants. But seriously—there are so many issues facing songwriters today that I really don't know where to begin. Many of these issues directly threaten the future of our profession. Too many songwriters have no idea how serious the various attacks being waged against our income are and how far the front lines are from our own small music community. It is a costly battle and without the diligence of the Nashville Songwriters Association International we would not have a collective voice in these issues. I do not understand how any professional Nashville songwriter can proudly collect and deposit his or her royalties without being a member of NSAI. Whether a songwriter has the time to proactively participate in specific events, committees, or whatever, is not nearly as important as their basic support. Nothing speaks louder than the sheer size of the membership. I would like to urge every professional songwriter to become a member. Lunch is on me if you do. Take your pick—Varrallos, Sylvan Park, Arnold's—or we'll go to one of your favorites.

both been nominated for the prestigious Irish Recorded Music Awards in the Country Album of the Year category. IRMA nominations are equivalent to the Grammy, and are voted on by the Irish retail and critical press...

Don Williams has a new Web site <www.don-williams.com>...

Jeff Foxworthy has taped two shows in Cincinnati for an upcoming HBO special. *Totally Committed* will premiere on HBO on May 16. Foxworthy's fourth CD will hit stores on May 19...

PUBLISHING NEWS

ASCAP held its annual west coast membership meeting on February 17, and the performing rights society announced record domestic and foreign royalty distributions for 1997 of \$416.6 million. This is the first time any US performing rights



TERRY CHOATE

organization has ever exceeded \$400 million in distributions.

Other important developments discussed by ASCAP Chairman and President **Marilyn Bergman** and CEO **John LoFrumento** include becoming the first PRO to distribute royalties for Internet performances, and highlighted a significant number of important new members, including **James Taylor**, **Joni Mitchell**, **Hans Zimmer**, **Ronnie Spector**, **Hanson**, **Third Day** and the **Spice Girls**.

Harry Fox President and CEO **Edward Murphy** was awarded the ASCAP Board of Directors Award for his leadership in the successful battle to pass the La Cienega legislation...

Raleigh Squires has relocated the Hit Men offices to the Music Mill, 1710 Roy Acuff Place, 615-254-5925...

Doyle Brown has ended his representation of the Shedhouse/Millhouse catalogs. He can be reached at Makin' Music, 615-269-6770...

Terry Choate has joined McLachlan-Scruggs International as Vice President/Music

RIAA CERTIFICATIONS

F E B R U A R Y

PLATINUM

Alabama/*Greatest Hits, Volume III*/RCA (2M)
 Alabama/*Roll On*/RCA (4M)
 Alabama/*Mountain Music*/RCA (5M)
 Patsy Cline/*Greatest Hits*/MCA (8M)
 Patty Loveless/*The Trouble With The Truth*/Epic
 Martina McBride/*Wild Angels*/RCA

GOLD

Various/*A Country Christmas With The Stars Of Nashville*/Unison
 Various/*A Contemporary Gospel Christmas*/Unison
 Various/*A Country Christmas With The Stars Of Branson*/Unison
 Alabama/*Dancin' On The Boulevard*/RCA
 Sammy Kershaw/*Labor of Love*/Mercury
 Holly Dunn/*Milestones Greatest Hits*/Warner Bros.

LP RELEASES

A P R I L

ARISTA

Jim Collins—*The Next Step*—April 21

BLUE PLATE

Various Artists—*Lounge Music Live From Mountain Stage*—April 9

BNA

John Anderson—*Essentials*—April 28

INTERSOUND

Earl Thomas Conley—*Perpetual Emotion*—April 28

LUCKY DOG

Bruce Robison—*Wrapped*—April 28

MCA

George Jones—*It Don't Get Any Better Than This*—April 7

Various Artists—*Horse Whisperer Soundtrack*—April 7

George Strait—*Untitled*—April 21

RCA

Alabama—*Essentials*—April 28
 Aaron Tippin—*Essentials*—April 28

SWEETFISH

Victor Mecsnyssne—*Hush Money*—April 21

WARNER BROS.

Faith Hill—*Faith*—April 21

WORD

Petra—*God Fixation*—April 21

Publishing. Choate will oversee all creative and administrative activities of the publishing division and will set in motion "a long range plan of deliberate growth and expansion..."

Jackie Solomon has signed a co-publishing venture and administration agreement with Hamstein Publishing. The new company is called The Farm, and Solomon will be supervising the signing and development of writers and exploiting the company's catalog. The first signing is songwriter **Jim Rushing**, 1212 16th Ave. S., 615-321-1165...

Jennifer Rainwater has left Hamstein Music to join **Chuck Howard's** Kinetic Diamond Music as Creative Director. 615-320-3032...

INDEPENDENT NEWS

Honest Entertainment has promoted **Tanvi Patel** to Director of Marketing & Promotion, **Keith Gibson** to Director of Sales and has hired **Diane Neel** as Art Director and **Jen Giles** as Promotion Manager...

CD Alley, a new on-line record store, will present product of unsigned independent artists at <cdalley.com>. The site features 17 music genres and is free to any independent unsigned artist...



KEITH GIBSON

Hightone's Records artist **Ramblin' Jack Elliott**, whose label debut *Friends of Mine* is set for release on March 17, will celebrate with a special album release show at Caffé Milano on March 26. Special guests of the legendary folk singer will include **Guy Clark**, **Nanci Griffith** and **Roy Rogers**...

OTHER FORMATS

The father of comedy, **Bill Cosby**, will share his unique brand of humor in a rare Nashville engagement on Sunday May 31 at the Grand Ole Opry...

Waylon Jennings released his first children's album *Cowboys, Sisters, Rascals & Dirt* on Sony Wonder March 3. "You have to think of it as a big rascal singing about little rascals," said Jennings. <www.sonywonder.com>...

Six Nashville songwriters created a new "song cycle" for the Nashville Chamber Orchestra. **Craig Bickhardt**, **Beth Nielsen Chapman**, **Gretchen Peters**, **Karen Taylor Good**, **John Jarrard**, and **Richard Leigh** teamed with composers **Conni Ellis**, **Don Hart** and **John Mock** to create the song cycle, which is centered on the theme of family, with each song addressing a different aspect. The song cycle debuted on March 7 at Blair Recital Hall with **Kathy Chiavola** as the vocal soloist...

RADIO NEWS

Eric Hauenstein has been named

President and General Manager of Jones Radio Network. He joined the network three years ago as Vice President and General Manager, and has grown the company's 24 hour format operations from six full-time formats to twelve, creating the nation's largest 24 hour network...

BENEFIT NEWS

Little Dog Records will release *Will Sing for Food—The Songs of Dwight Yoakam*, a benefit album with proceeds earmarked for America's homeless. The album, due out mid-summer and distributed by PolyGram, features **David Ball**, **Gillian Welch**, **Kim Richey**, **Mandy Barnett**, **Joy Lynn White**, **Sara Evans** and **Bonnie Bramlett**, among others...

The annual fund raiser for Child Abuse Prevention of Tennessee (CAPT) will be held April 2 at the Ryman auditorium. This year's event will be called The Nashville Music Festival, and will include performances by **John Cowan**, **Rodney Crowell**, **Skip Ewing**, **Faith Hill**, **Tracy Nelson**, **Lari White** and **Wynonna**. The event will begin at 7pm with a silent auction preview, show at 8pm. Tickets are now on sale at Ticketmaster outlets and at the Ryman box office. Sponsorships are still available. 615-227-2273...

Pam Lewis, CEO & President of PLA Media and Pamela Lewis Enterprises & Management, has been named to the Vanderbilt Blair School of Music's "KeyBoard" and Belmont University's Friends of Belmont School of Music...

The Nashville entertainment Association (NeA) has announced the creation of the NeA Resource Grant, in support of the Metro Davidson County school system's art and music core curriculum. The '97-'98 \$10,000 grant fulfills a commitment which the NeA made several years ago to support art and music education in elementary schools. Monies will be awarded to individual teachers by the NeA's Music and Visual Arts Education Committee via an application process. 615-327-4308...

TV/FILM NEWS

The Film+Music Workshop will present a seminar on Soundtracks on April 16 at Belmont. Featured speakers will include **Sharal Churchill** and **Patricia Joseph** of TVT Records. 615-297-4646...

VH1 has announced it will fill in the gap left by CMT's recent vacancy of Europe. VH1 plans a dedicated country music show, exclusive performances, interviews, concert footage and specials from leading country artists including **Garth Brooks**, **Johnny Cash**, **Lyle Lovett**, **Emmylou Harris**, **Shania Twain** and **LeAnn Rimes**...

NuNoyz Sound Design and Filipiak Music have been tracking foley (incidental sound effects) for the motion picture *Aurora*, an

independent film being produced by Los Angeles-based Rara Avis Films...

Sony Music Soundtrax will release the original soundtrack from **Richard Linklater's** *The Newton Boys* in mid-March. **Mark Rubin** of The Bad Livers served as music supervisor for the film and called upon **Patti Griffin**, **Kris McKay**, **Guy Forsythe**, and Grammy nominee and Arista Austin artist **Abra Moore**, among others, to lend vocals. The film release date is March 20...

Balmur Entertainment has sold *An Intimate Evening with Anne Murray* to PBS. The one hour live special, which will be a part of the national PBS March pledge drive, was recorded in 1996 in Nova Scotia, and features performances by **Bryan Adams**, **Celine Dion** and **Jann Arden**...

CHRISTIAN NEWS

Bill and **Gloria Gaither** have announced the opening of Gaither Music Publishing. **Mike Porter**, formerly with Benson Music Publishing, will serve as President of the

company, pitch the Gaither catalog, and sign and develop writers...

Alex McDougall, VP of Special Projects for EMI Christian Music Group, has been named GM of Vineyard Music Group. MacDougall fills the slot vacated by **Chris Wimber** who died February 6 after a two year battle with cancer...

Steve "Rabbit" Easter has embarked on a solo career in the Southern Gospel music field. He has performed with Jeff and Sheri Easter since 1989, and with the Easter Brothers, The LeFevres, the Nelons and The Happy Goodman Family...

The winners of the first annual WoW Inspirational Awards were televised February 1 on INSP-the Inspirational Network. The biggest winner was **Jars of Clay**; their album *Much Afraid* was voted



MIKE PORTER

Christian Rock Alternative Album of the Year and the group won Performing Artist of the Year. Nashville publisher Thomas Nelson, Inc. won the Service Award. Other winners include: Contemporary Christian Album of the Year: *Signs of Life*, **Steven Curtis Chapman**; Black Gospel Album: *Under the Influence*, **Anointed**; Southern Gospel Album: *Southern Classics Vol. II*, **Gaither Vocal Band**...

Myrrh Records has announced several staff changes. **Steve Ford** joins the label as Executive Director of Marketing. **Michelle Younkman** serves as the new Director of National Promotions, **Karin Hogrefe** has been upped to Manager of Publicity and **Nicole Hemphill**, former Marketing Coordinator, will serve as Manager of Tour Promotions...

Damascus Road Records had their first No. 1 single as a label and the first No. 1 for the label's debut artist **Rhonda Gunn**. "Here In This Place" topped the Christian Inspirational charts the week of February 2. ♦

SIGNINGS

RECORDING
Heather Myles • *Rounder Records*

PUBLISHING
Gerald Smith • *Little Big Town*
Clay Mills • *Neon Sky*
Jamie Kyle • *Bases Loaded Music*

BOOKING
Sara Evans • *William Morris*

MANAGEMENT
Ray Vega • *AGF Entertainment*

TOP OF THE CHARTS CHRISTIAN

CHRISTIAN HIT RADIO
"Five Candles" • Jars Of Clay • Essential

INSPIRATIONAL
"Unto Me" • Steve Green • Sparrow

ADULT CONTEMPORARY
"Testify to Love" • Avalon • Sparrow

COUNTRY
"Somebody Set The Woods On Fire" • Zach Roberts • Mountainview

MAINSTREAM ALBUM SALES
You Light Up My Life: Inspirational Songs • LeAnn Rimes • Curb

CHRISTIAN ALBUM SALES
Mission 3:16 • Carman • Sparrow (Chordant)

Source: 2/23/98 issue of *CCM Update*.
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THE SONG POWER INDEX

→ predicting new single success ←

SPI MONDAY • MARCH 2, 1998 • #069

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	ARTIST/TITLE/LABEL (# of reports)	ADD FACTOR	PASSION
8.17	•	STEVE WARINER/Holes In The Floor Of Heaven/Capitol (23)	4.13	4.04
8.10	•	SAMMY KERSHAW/Matches/Mercury (20)	4.25	3.85
8.04	•	KENNY CHESNEY/That's Why I'm Here/BNA (22)	4.09	3.95
7.85	•	JOHN MICHAEL MONTGOMERY/Love Working On You/Atlantic (19)	4.11	3.74
7.81	6.77	MARK CHESNUTT/I Might Even Quit Lovin' You/Decca (21)	4.10	3.71
7.76	•	KEITH HARLING/Papa Bear/MCA (21)	4.00	3.76
7.00	•	KEVIN SHARP/Love Is All That Really Matters/Asylum (20)	3.75	3.25
6.80	6.62	LILA McCANN/Almost Over You/Asylum (25)	3.68	3.12
6.26	•	THE RANCH/Just Some Love/Capitol (19)	3.21	3.05
6.14	6.07	JIM COLLINS/My First, My Last, One & Only/Arista (22)	3.05	3.09
6.13	•	SHANE STOCKTON/What If I'm Right/Decca (23)	2.91	3.22
5.47	•	CHRIS CUMMINGS/I Waited/WB (19)	2.68	2.79
5.43	•	THE GREAT DIVIDE/Never Could/Atlantic (23)	2.65	2.78
5.04	4.97	BRAD HAWKINS/We Lose/Curb/Universal (25)	2.52	2.52
4.62	4.93	THE THOMPSON BROTHERS BAND/Back On The Farm/RCA (24)	2.33	2.29
4.40	4.44	JO-EL SONNIER/Broken Hearted Side Of New Orleans/Intersound (15)	2.07	2.33

SPI = Add Factor + Passion. Songs are ranked by SPI points. Ties are ranked according to highest Add Factor Average.

METHODOLOGY/RESEARCH SPI

The SPI number shows a new single's strength, as perceived by radio programmers, on a 2 to 10 scale. Our panelists rate each song up to five points for Add Factor (5=add), and up to five points for passion. Those scores are combined and averaged to compute the SPI score. The correlation between peak SPI number and ultimate chart success is detailed in the 2/8 issue of *Music Row*.



FINAL WORD

Stripped For Action

Dear Music Row,

This letter is in reference to Mr. Rusty Russell that/who so eloquently critiqued my song "The Note" (MR 2/8). I only wish that/who Mr. Russell had been around to correct the over 1,500 songs that/who I have written in the 22 years I've been in Nashville. I'm sure I would have had more than the 120 recordings that/who I have had on major recording artists.

I don't know how that/who one word got by Conway Twitty, Gene Watson, Tammy Wynette, Mark Chesnutt, Ricky Van Shelton, Randy Travis, Doug Supernaw, Daryle Singletary and over twenty less known artists that/who have recorded the song.

Mr. Russell has the distinction of being the first person that/who has found anything wrong with the song in the 14 years since my co-writer Michelle Ray came to me with the idea. But I will take all the blame for that/who mistake as I wrote that/who part of the song. I'm sure that/who great writers like Harlan Howard, Hank Williams and countless others wish Mr. Russell had been around to correct their songs.

There, that/who should hold Mr. Russell until my single on Confederate Railroad comes out this year. Then he will really have something to correct.

Buck Moore
Nashville

Dear Rusty,

The guy that/who I write with is a songwriter/journalist and we have these disagreements all the time. Journalism and songwriting are two professions that have nothing to do with each other. The reason nobody caught it is a lot of people say it that way, it sounds natural, and you understand it perfectly—grammatically correct or not. You must have really freaked when Collin Raye sang "nothing can slow down me."

I'm sure your old English teacher is really proud of you. I'm not too sure what Harlan Howard would think. Dude, try not to get your article writing mixed up with your songwriting.

Jerry Holthouse
Lake Worth, FL

Dear Kevin Johnston,

I was pleased you had the cojones to write something (Nashville Cliche Commission, MR 2/8) a lot of people are thinking and talking about who are not on the "inside track," but are nevertheless great writers. I for one think the industry has become inbred and if they don't wake up and look for the best song the whole country music thing is going to go down the tubes. Pop is becoming more brave in some of its songs about what really goes on in the world and maybe that is why it is selling well with so many young people. Remember in the '60s when young people wrote about injustices and real life issues in folk music and how popular it was at the time? We don't give them credit when we just hand them fluff.

Keep up the good work.

Suzanne Ravgiala
Nashville

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14-17—40th NARM Convention, San Francisco Marriott & Moscone Center, San Francisco, CA 800-879-1107

15—1998 Spirit of Sharing Celebrity Football Game, Nashville Arena, Nashville, TN 615-673-0536

19-22—National Festival of the West, Scottsdale, AZ 602-996-4387 or www.festivalofthewest.com

18-22—South By Southwest Music & Media Conference, Austin, TX 512-467-7979 or www.sxsw.com

31—SESAC/ARIS MusicCode Seminar, Renaissance Hotel, Nashville, TN 1-888-SESAC-10

APRIL

14-18—Tin Pan South, various venues, Nashville, TN 615-251-3472 or songs.org.nrai

16—The Film+Music Workshop Soundtrack seminar with Sharal Churchill and Patricia Joseph. Belmont University, Nashville, TN 615-297-4646

23-26—Merle Watson Memorial Festival (MerleFest), Wilkes Community College, Wilkesboro, NC 800-343-7857 or www.merlefest.org

MAY

8-10—1998 Country Music Expo, Edison, New Jersey 973-772-6566 or CntryRadio@aol.com

JUNE

7-12—NashCamp: Nashville Acoustic Music & Songwriting Camp, Montgomery Bell State Park, Nashville, TN 615-386-9765

14—IFCO Fun Fest, Ryman Auditorium, Nashville, TN 615-371-9596 or www.ifco.org

15-20—27th International Country Music Fan Fair, Tennessee State Fairgrounds, Nashville, TN 615-889-7503

22-28—Chet Atkins Musician Days, various venues, Nashville, TN

SEPTEMBER

23—The 32nd Annual CMA Awards, Grand Ole Opry House, Nashville, TN

OCTOBER

1-3—Oklahoma's International Bluegrass Festival, Guthrie, OK, 405/282-4446

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