

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2017

VOL. 37 NO. 1 • EST. 1981 • \$10

# MUSICROW

LITTLE BIG TOWN



TIM WESTERGREN  
PANDORA

PHIL GUERINI  
RADIO DISNEY

15<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
COUNTRY **BREAKOUT**  
**AWARDS 2017**

ROAD WARRIORS  
LOCASH, CHRIS LANE'S DRIVE TO CHART SUCCESS

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# LITTLE BIG TOWN

## ON THE COVER

Consisting of members Karen Fairchild, Phillip Sweet, Kimberly Schlapman and Jimi Westbrook, the Grammy award-winning group Little Big Town releases *The Breaker* Feb. 24 on Capitol Records Nashville. The band's seventh studio album features its fastest-rising single to date, lead single "Better Man," written by Taylor Swift. *The Breaker's* release coincides with the "Little Big Town at the Mother Church" Ryman Auditorium residency, the first ever in the celebrated venue's 125-year history.



**LABEL:** Capitol Records Nashville  
**CURRENT ALBUM:** *The Breaker*  
**CURRENT SINGLE:** "Better Man"  
**CURRENT VIDEO:** "Better Man"  
**CURRENT PRODUCER:** Jay Joyce  
**MANAGEMENT:** Sandbox Entertainment  
**BOOKING:** CAA  
**RECENT HITS:** "Better Man," "Boondocks," "Bring It On Home," "Good As Gone," and the Grammy-nominated single "Little White

Church." No. 1 singles include "Pontoon," "Tornado," "Day Drinking," and most recently the history-making song "Girl Crush"

**RECENT AWARDS:** 2017 People's Choice award for Favorite Country Group, Reigning CMA and ACM Vocal Group of the Year, 2016 Grammy award for Best Country Group/Duo Performance and Best Country Song ("Girl Crush"), 2016

ACM Crystal Milestone Award, 2016 Music Business Association Artist of the Year award, and inducted into the Grand Ole Opry in 2014

**RIAA CERTIFICATIONS TO DATE:** Platinum Albums: *Pain Killer*, *Tornado*, and *The Road To Here*; Platinum Singles: "Girl Crush" (3x), "Pontoon" (2x), and "Boondocks"; Gold Singles: "Day Drinking," "Tornado," and "Little White Church"

**RECENT AND UPCOMING TV APPEARANCES:** 2017 Grammy Awards, *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, *TODAY*, *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, *Jimmy Kimmel Live!*

**INTERESTING FACT:** The two-time Grammy award-winning band will be the first act in the Ryman Auditorium's 125-year history to have an artist residency, beginning Feb. 24, 2017

**BIRTHDAYS:** Karen (9/28), Kimberly (10/15), Jimi (10/20), Phillip (3/18)

**MUSICAL INFLUENCES:** Oak Ridge Boys, Emmylou Harris, Dolly Parton, Fleetwood Mac, Alabama, Kris Kristofferson

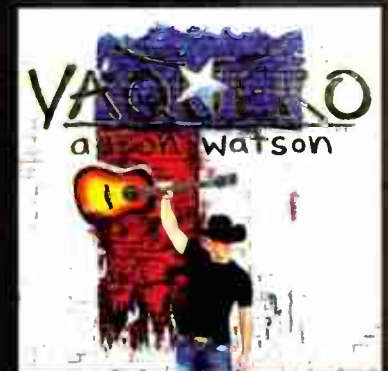


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3/7	HOUSTON, TX	4/8	MESCALERO, NM	6/3	GRAHAM, TX
3/9	NEW YORK, NY	4/13	ST LOUIS, MO	6/24	MANHATTAN, KS
3/18	GRANT, OK	4/14	SPRINGFIELD, MO	7/15	LA VETA, CO
3/23	LITTLE ROCK, AR	4/15	TULSA, OK	7/21	HASTINGS, NE
3/24	BOSSIER CITY, LA	4/27	LUBBOCK, TX	7/26	JACKSON HOLE, WY
3/25	FORT WORTH, TX	4/28	CORPUS CHRISTI, TX	7/28	MIDLAND, TX
3/30	BAKERSFIELD, CA	5/12	TAMPA, FL	7/29	NEW BRAUNFELS, TX
3/31	SAN BERNADINO, CA	5/13	FORT MYERS, FL	8/3	PRAIRIE DU CHIEN, WI
4/5	LOS ANGELES, CA	5/27	AUSTIN, TX	8/4	DODGE CITY, KS

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# MUSICROW

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2017 VOL. 37 NO. 1

- 8 PHIL GUERINI TALKS RADIO DISNEY COUNTRY
- 13 ROAD WARRIORS: LOCASH, CHRIS LANE'S DRIVE TO CHART SUCCESS
- 16 TIM WESTERGREN ON PANDORA'S NEW HORIZON
- 20 ANN POWERS SPOTLIGHTS NASHVILLE FOR NPR MUSIC, WORLD CAFE
- 24 BILL MILLER: PRESERVING COUNTRY MUSIC'S LEGACY
- 28 2017 ANNUAL COUNTRYBREAKOUT AWARDS
- 45 FACEBOOK: MISSION CONTROL, WE HAVE A PROBLEM



## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

"Music was my refuge. I could crawl into the space between the notes and curl my back to loneliness," the activist and revered poet Maya Angelou once said about her relationship with music and songwriting.

In a world where fake news and protests grab daily headlines, and where social media has become a war-torn playground for angry barbs, there is perhaps no better shelter from today's highly-charged political climate than music. Likewise, amid diverse political and cultural viewpoints, music can help bring people together.

Most of us can relate to the importance of music as we came into adulthood. Those formative years were peppered with songs that created the soundtracks that now often evoke memories from our coming of age. As adults we continue to use music to help navigate through trials and tribulations.

A fundamental step in that navigation has often been radio, which serves as a conduit of music discovery between fans and artists. The important role of music curation is often overlooked by fans, but with some reports suggesting up to a million songs being released annually in the United States, it would be impossible to self-curate so much content. From the complex mathematical algorithm Pandora uses to organize music, to the local music supervisor who selects songs for a radio station's playlist, content curation is a critical component of how we access music.

This issue of *MusicRow* is dedicated to country radio and to all the music industry team members who have a role in the curation process. In this edition, we value the opportunity to honor the artists who received the most airplay last year on *MusicRow's* CountryBreakout chart, and salute the labels, songwriters, promoters, music directors, and industry members that work so hard to keep the music playing and reaching our ears.

May we all find refuge in music.

Cheers,

Sherod Robertson, *Publisher/Owner*

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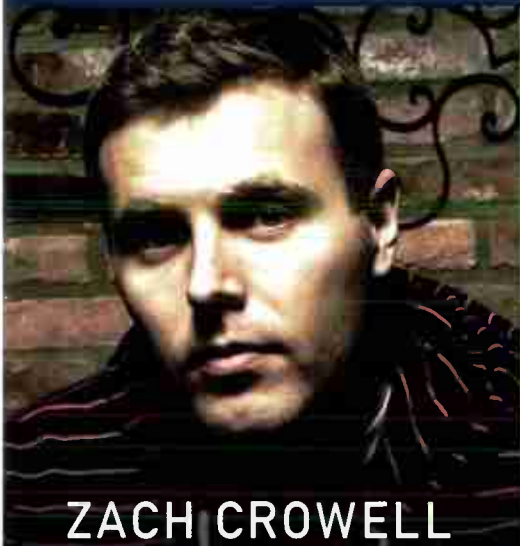
“  
 Every year I think, ‘These writers can’t top the experience we had last year.’ And every year they prove me wrong.  
 Great songs and great writers make for one of the most memorable evenings you’ll ever experience.”

- Bob Kingsley

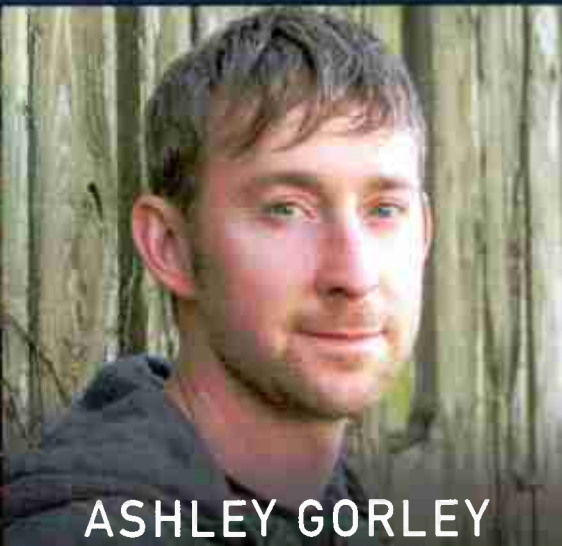



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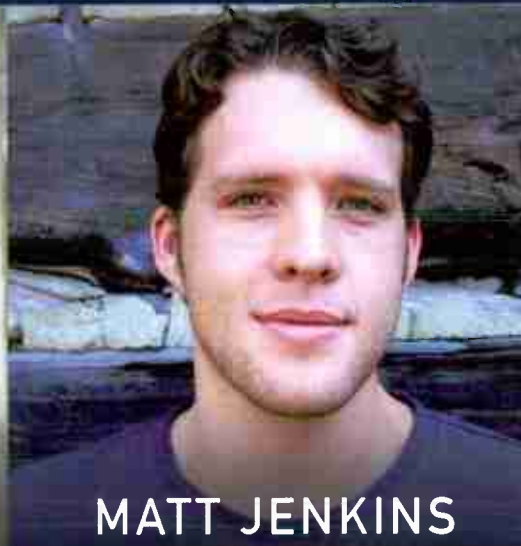
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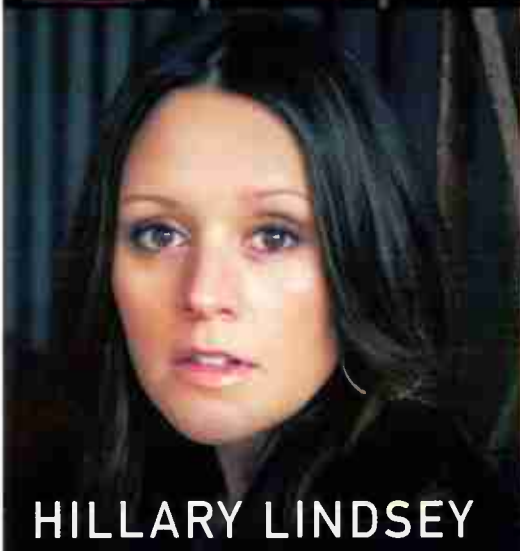
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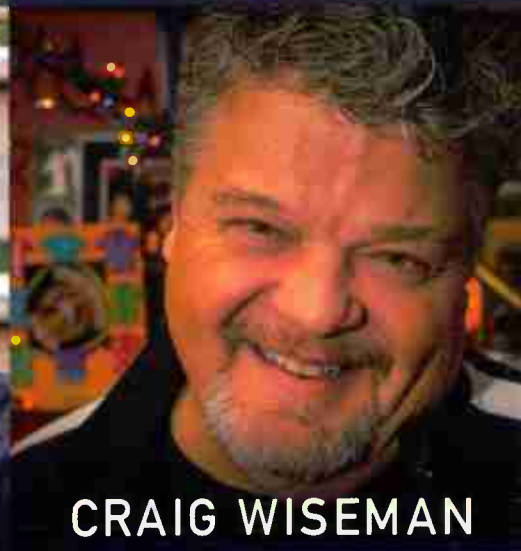
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# WE'RE ALL EARS

## PHIL GUERINI TALKS RADIO DISNEY COUNTRY

By Sarah Skates



Phil Guerini, VP Music Strategy

For 20 years, Radio Disney has been breaking new artists that would go on to be worldwide superstars, including today's headliners Justin Bieber, Demi Lovato and Nick Jonas. About a year ago, the brand expanded with the launch of Radio Disney Country, a streaming station

that can be heard via app, web, SiriusXM, Slacker, iHeartRadio and more.

"Anywhere, anytime," says Phil Guerini, VP Music Strategy Disney Channels Worldwide, and GM Radio Disney Networks.

A go-to tastemaker, Guerini oversees the stations and programming, but he says the playlists are ultimately "defined by their audience targets." This listener feedback comes in the form of online comments, likes, social media and more. The channel's Total Request Now show generates more than 100,000 requests each time it airs, allowing the audience to vote in real-time to move songs up the playlist to become the next track that plays.

"Radio Disney, at its core, is a younger, mainstream radio station that garners hundreds of thousands of requests every week which



Jan + Shay visit the Radio Disney Country Stage during CMA Fest. Photo: Courtesy of Radio Disney

inform, influence and all but dictate our playlist," says Guerini. "We certainly curate and editorialize the playlist based on our experience, and what music and content is being brought to us, but once we put it on the air, it only stays on the playlist as long as the audience is engaging with it. We play more currents on Radio Disney than any other station in the country, by upwards of 50 currents. It's directly correlative to what songs are being requested."

Guerini and his team in Los Angeles often discover new talent and introduce rising artists to listeners. He first met Kelsea Ballerini a few years ago, before she had even released her first single. He found her personality so engaging that she became a Radio Disney special correspondent.

"We hope that we can be additive to the country music community, artists and a new generation of listeners, by being aggressive, by being an outlet that affords new and developing artists an opportunity to have their songs on the radio and across our multitude of digital platforms. It is certainly a core way of engaging with that younger audience today because that is where they are.

"Artists are introduced to us in a myriad of ways early on in their careers," he says. "With 20 years of history there is a good level of awareness about who we are and our target audience. We are introduced by artist managers, agents, or other representatives,



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Kelsea Ballerini performs at the 2016 Radio Disney Music Awards with Daya. Photo: Courtesy of Radio Disney

not just labels. There is not a day that goes by that I don't receive some type of outreach. We are looking for and curating certain attributes we think would be engaging for our audience—a certain sound, or something we think they will respond to. The ultimate curator is the audience.”

Guerini's career dates back to the late 1980s at Y100 in Florida. During his time in radio he worked in everything from on-air talent to programming. Eventually he moved to Atlanta, switched to the label side of the business and became a record promoter. In 1992 he moved to Orlando for a job at the Walt Disney World Resort and a few years later was booking special events including the 2000 Super Bowl XXXIV Halftime Show. In 2004 he and his family relocated to Los Angeles for his job at Walt Disney Records, where he worked on blockbuster films and soundtracks for *High School Musical* and *Hannah Montana*, as well as with the now-defunct, Nashville-based country label Lyric Street Records. In 2008 he joined Radio Disney and has been making headway ever since.

About three years ago, Guerini began looking into ways to expand Radio Disney, and was particularly enthusiastic about country music.

“On an ongoing basis we evaluate the state of our business and opportunities for new growth and development,” he says. “We conducted a good amount of research, in partnership with the

“WE HOPE THAT WE CAN BE ADDITIVE TO THE COUNTRY MUSIC COMMUNITY, ARTISTS AND A NEW GENERATION OF LISTENERS...”

CMA, who helped us identify and better understand the country music audience. After a very extensive analysis, we determined there was not only an opportunity but an underserved community within the very successful country music format. It was a young audience, and we began efforts to build upon that. It's not as young as Radio Disney, which targets 9 to 12 year olds and 9 to

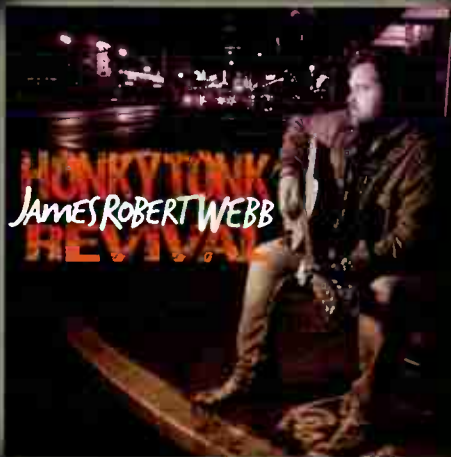
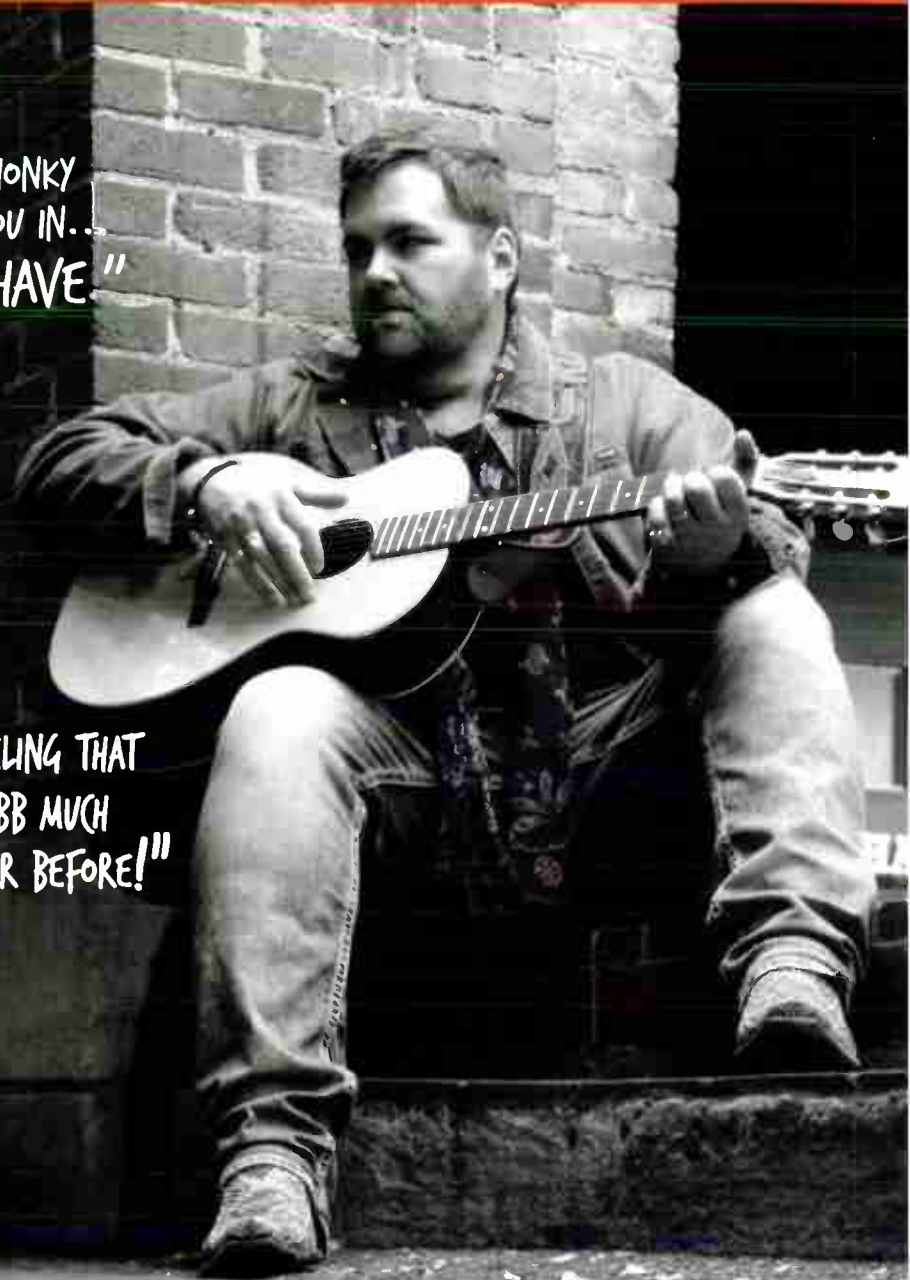
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16 year olds. Today Radio Disney Country broadly targets 13 to 24, with 17 to 21 being the sweet spot.”

After recognizing this opportunity in the marketplace, Radio Disney Country was built to attract that audience. It’s a natural fit, Guerini explains, because the core of country music is storytelling and the music’s lyrical content oftentimes attracts mature listeners seeking substance.

Still, Radio Disney recognizes that some songs aren’t appropriate for the young ears tuning in to its channels, and that these songs don’t match the brand’s values. To that end, about 60 percent of the playlist contains tracks with exclusive edits or that were re-recorded specifically for Disney.

“AFTER A VERY EXTENSIVE ANALYSIS, WE DETERMINED THERE WAS NOT ONLY AN OPPORTUNITY BUT AN UNDERSERVED COMMUNITY WITHIN THE VERY SUCCESSFUL COUNTRY MUSIC FORMAT.”

Guerini says Radio Disney Country is a way to boost the already successful country music format.

“Hopefully with the Disney brand, we can bring about a raised profile and increase all that is so good about the format. We are so appreciative and have been overwhelmed by how welcoming the Nashville community has been. We respect country radio, the labels, artists and everything the market has achieved. We can all agree that country music has never been more popular, never reached a broader audience, and never been as mainstream as it is today.” MR

# ROAD WARRIORS

---

Independent Artists Spin Secondary Radio Tours Into Chart Success

By Jessica Nicholson



LoCash. Photo: Jake Harsh

Big Loud Records artist Chris Lane, and Reviver Records duo LoCash share an underdog's story of success and struggle.

Both artists made a statement when, after signing as flagship artists to small independent Nashville labels, they each notched their very first No. 1 singles on the *MusicRow* CountryBreakout chart—Lane with the groove-fueled manic energy of “Fix,” while LoCash reveled in sincere gratitude on the feel-good country track “I Love This Life.”

For each artist, having success at secondary radio played a vital role in their songs scaling the pinnacle of the country charts, but that sweet first taste of radio success came after weeks of laying the groundwork at secondary radio, and watching as their songs inched up the charts week by week.

## THE ROAD TO RADIO

As smaller labels, Reviver Records and Big Loud Records each

had much at stake when launching their respective artists.

LoCash's Preston Brust says radio station visits can be a moment of truth. One performance, often acoustic, in a radio station conference room with no stage lights or sound equipment, as a music director or program director decides whether a song is worthy of adding to an already-packed radio playlist.

“You feel like your whole life is on the line when you are standing there and they tell you, ‘Hey I love your song,’ or maybe ‘I’m going to wait to start playing it,’” Brust says. “You hope and pray that they like it.”

Also on the road pounding the pavement with similar experiences was Big Loud Records.

“It was vitally important to show everyone in the industry that this was serious,” says Big Loud Records President Clay Hunnicutt. “This was not another little label opening up and if we got a Top



Pictured (L-R): Big Loud Mountain's Brandon Matthews, Big Loud Mountain Partner and Artist Manager Seth England, Chris Lane and Big Loud Records President Clay Hunnicutt. Photo: Courtesy Sweet Talk Publicity

40, we were happy. We wanted to take it all the way. Chris could have signed with other labels and gone on to be successful, but he waited an extra six months so he had our dedication and our full attention.”

For 21 weeks Hunnicutt and Lane, along with three musicians, spent 95 percent of their time in a van, traveling to numerous radio stations across the country. They would arrive at a station to do interviews or performances for a morning show, and then visit three or four additional stations throughout the day, before traveling through the night to the next market.

“Some weeks I would have four or five days of radio performances, then I would have concerts on Friday and Saturday. It was exhausting, with long days and hard work, but I had a great time. We treated it like a family atmosphere,” Lane says. “I don’t know many label presidents that would go out on a radio tour with an artist. Clay did that.”

Artists are not always met with success. In 2010, LoCash released the single “Here Comes Summer” to radio, but their label at the time folded before they could embark on a proper tour. LoCash signed with Reviver Records in late 2014 and released “I Love This Life,” leading to a full-fledged radio tour to support the single.

For all the grueling hard work that comes with a radio tour, both Brust and his LoCash partner Chris Lucas are thankful for the opportunity and to radio stations for enduring with them.

“They never gave up on us because they know we never had our shot,” Brust says. “It’s really cool, just visiting the stations now and they come to our shows. We don’t have to go see them all the time. They come see us. It’s a pretty cool friendship we have now with a lot of stations.”

Hunnicutt says the main obstacles in prepping for a radio tour include logistics and planning for the unknown.

“The single most challenging thing is scheduling, getting station visits lined up and making sure your routing is correct and you are not having to double back on a city,” says Hunnicutt. The other challenge is the unknown of travel. When there are five of you, it’s not always easy if a flight gets canceled or you miss a connection, or when you run into snowstorms and rain and ice storms. It is a band of brothers at that point. You have flat tires, or you get to the rental place and they don’t have a van so you get two minivans instead of one big van. It’s been a bit of everything.”

Routing into secondary radio markets can be especially challenging, as flying into a market isn’t always an option. But once they arrive, Hunnicutt says, the performances are the same.

## LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

Lane recalls a show in Indianapolis as the turning point as “Fix” rose up the charts. “It was one of the first times I heard the whole crowd singing the words back to me. Shortly after that, every place I was playing, it seemed like everyone knew every word of that song.”

“I would say the whole record lasted 35 weeks to No. 1 but we got to about week 20, that’s when we started seeing things start to click at all levels,” Hunnicutt says. “Chris’ socials were growing and we saw streams and sales and all those metrics click at the same time. Then from there on, it got exciting and we realized we could take this all the way. That’s when everyone started realizing we were here to stay.”

For LoCash, the turning point came via a strategic decision from the label. When “I Love This Life” reached the Top 40, Reviver Records brought in longtime radio veteran Gator Michaels to lead the charge.

“That was a huge moment for us,” says Lucas. “We were climbing but when you get into that Top 40 range, things get tough really fast. You have to keep those spins. Gator brought so much insight and knew the path we needed to take. There is magic in a hit song, but there is also strategy. We have to give a huge round of applause to our label for handling that strategy well.”

The strategy was sound, and brought “I Love This Life” to No. 1 on the *MusicRow* CountryBreakout chart, and its successor, “I Know Somebody” rose to No. 1 on both the *MusicRow* chart and on the Nielsen Soundscan rankings.

“Honestly, we didn’t know we’d be No. 1 with either song until the chart closed that day,” says Reviver Records Executive VP/GM Gator Michaels. “When you’re an independent label you take

nothing for granted. I remember that Chris, Preston and I were at the Newark airport when Rick Kelly called to tell us we were No. 1 for 'I Love This Life.' We may have freaked out the other passengers a bit with our celebration on the shuttle!"

## THE ROAD AHEAD

Fresh off the chart-topping success of "Fix," Chris Lane and his team are already hard at work prepping radio for his latest single, "For Her," written by Kelly Archer, Sarah Buxton and Matt Dragstrem.

"Just because Chris has a No. 1, we have the new single and we try to build this career so one day he is Luke Bryan or Florida Georgia Line," Hunnicutt says. "A radio tour never really stops. It is so integral to our success and breaking new artists."

LoCash and their team are currently working radio with "Ring On Every Finger," a song written by Jesse Frasure, Josh Kear, and Thomas Rhett.

"Over the years they have developed such good relationships with radio, the environment is always great and that allows us to focus on playing the brilliant music LoCash has made for *The Fighters*," Michaels says.



Pictured (L-R): Big Loud Records West Coast Region Director of Promotion Dave Kirth, KAWO/Boise, ID's Program Director Rich Summers, Chris Lane and Big Loud Records President Clay Hunnicutt. Photo: Courtesy Sweet Talk Publicity

LoCash's Brust and Lucas concluded similar sentiments. "We are always excited every single time we bring a new song to radio. The momentum never stops and we don't want it to stop. It's in our blood." MR

# SHANE OWENS

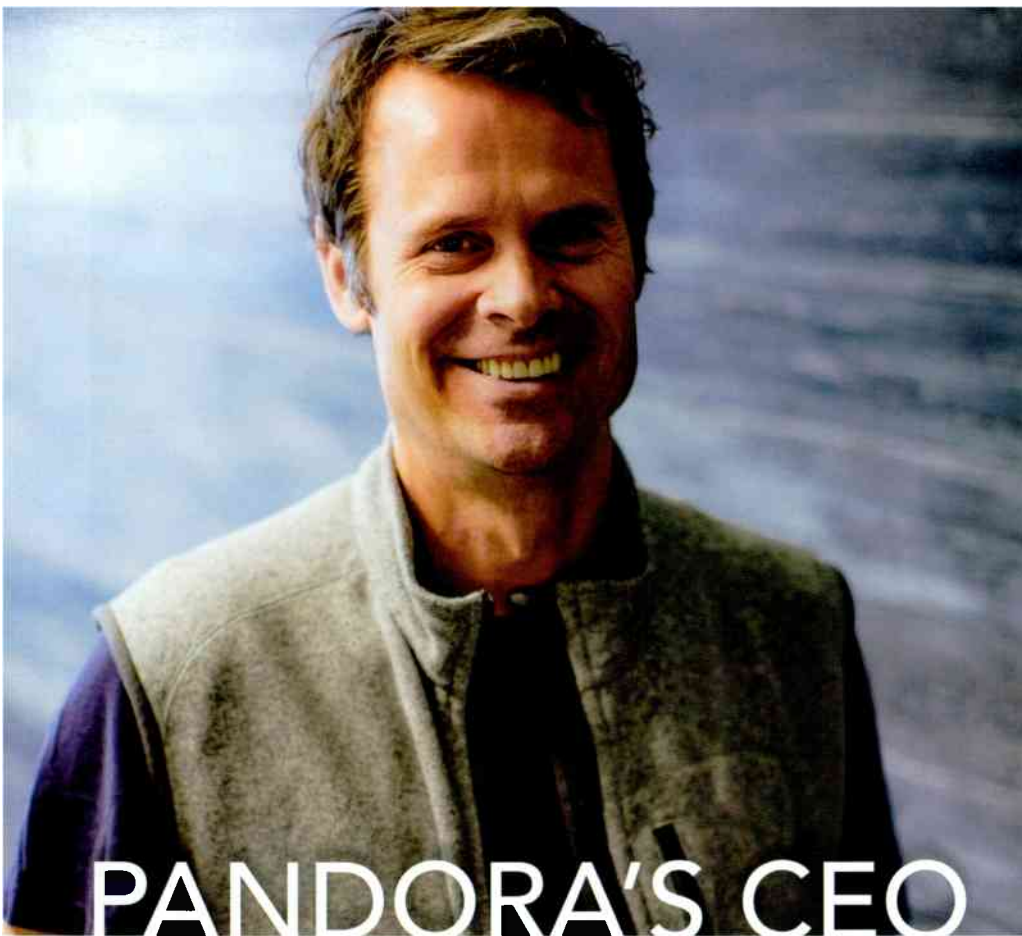
"Giving you an ADD on Shane Owens "All the Beer In Alabama" this week....great COUNTRY song! My GM said, "Keep sending us country songs like this!"

- Austin Daniels, KFTX

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# PANDORA'S CEO

## TIM WESTERGREN

### Look At What We're Doing Now

By Sherod Robertson

Before leading Pandora as CEO, Tim Westergren spent 12 years as a working artist getting rejected just like every other musician. That relatable experience, along with thick skin and tenacity, led Westergren down an entrepreneurial path following his passion of helping the working artist. Westergren now sits in the driver's seat navigating Pandora's current evolution. From the platform's artist marketing tools to an on-demand service slated for release early this year, the company has broadened its reach way beyond its core technology using the Music Genome Project methodology to program music.

Listeners of Pandora have created more than 10 billion stations and provided more than 75 billion pieces of thumbs up feedback since the launch of its service in 2005. With its 78 million active

monthly users, the company has also created a noticeable presence in Nashville by establishing a dedicated team in Nashville's music industry and producing local events. As the company swims the competitive waters of music-streaming, Westergren's relentless dedication and drive will be useful as he strives to make the company "the easiest to use, full-service personalized product that's ever been created."

**MusicRow:** There's a noticeable presence of Pandora in Nashville. Why is Nashville important to Pandora?

**Tim Westergren:** That's self evident to anybody in the music industry. Country is a huge category. It's the second largest category on Pandora. We have over 55 million people on Pandora that are regular country listeners so it's a centerpiece of our audience. In our experience, country

artists and country labels have been the most progressive in terms of taking advantage of the digital platforms.

**Why do you think the country genre has been so responsive digitally?**

Part of the reason is country has a lot of working artists. They think about, "How do I make a living? How do I bring people to shows? How do I turn this into a career?" For these artists, it's made them more inclined to explore and partner. One other dimension is that country artists are present online. They are very active with their fans. When people ask me about who is going to inherit the industry and who will be successful in the years to come, I think it's the artists and their teams that recognize you have to connect with your fans in a consistent and authentic way.

**Pandora has presented several events in Nashville. Why are these important to you?**

We have an assortment of events including our annual big event before the CMAs. We love events like that because it's a chance to establish your presence. You make noise as a company and a brand. You can bring people together. It's a chance to educate people and to forge relationships. Just in that one event alone, I probably met 50 people I hadn't met before who are journalists, managers, club owners, and the eco-system of Nashville.

**How would you describe your current relationship with the music industry? Are there any remaining misunderstandings about Pandora?**

I think we went through a very adversarial period. That was never intentional. We were communicating through legislation and members of congress, which is the least productive place to have a conversation. We're a very different company now but our intent has never changed. We've always been dedicated to the artists. I think we've been able to move past that and we're now directly licensed with the entire industry. We're offering a full suite of products that are going to expand not only what we offer to listeners but also allow artists to do a lot more on the platform themselves. The main message is if your impression of the company was formed three, four, five years ago, just throw that in the trash. It's





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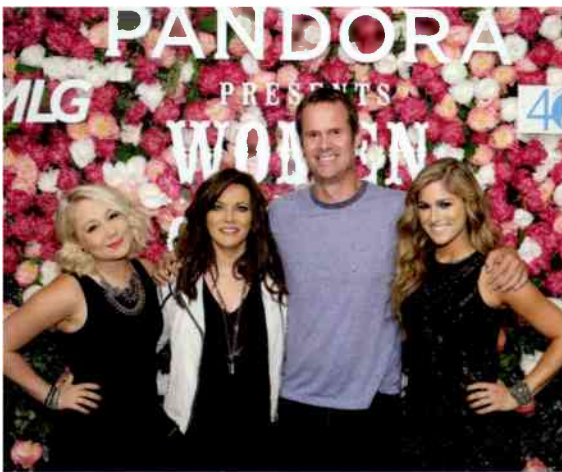
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Pictured (Left): RaeLynn, Martina McBride, Westergren, Cassadee Pope at Pandora Presents: Women In Country. Photo: Neilson Barnard/Getty Images for Pandora. (Middle): Westergren and Cam at Pandora Country. Photo: Jason Davis/Getty Images for Pandora. (Right): Mike Spinella, Westergren, Kip Moore, Lars Murray, Jeff Zuchowski at Pandora Country. Photo: Jason Davis/Getty Images for Pandora.

not relevant. It's not accurate. Look at what we're doing now.

**Pandora's evolution has also produced a tool for artists called the Artist Marketing Platform. How does it work?**

The central idea behind it is to give an artist the ability to harness their audience on the platform. Artists on Pandora typically have more listeners on the platform that have created a station using their name, than their Facebook likes, Twitter followers, and Instagram followers combined. Until recently, all they could do is obtain data around that audience about demographics and usage patterns, but there wasn't something they could do proactively to communicate and market to that audience. That's really the chapter that we're entering now. The idea is you can talk to your audience on the service using audio messages. You can promote whatever you want whether it's a show, a new CD, a video, or a single. In just a couple of months, we already have hundreds of millions of messages that have been sent from thousands of artists.

**What part of this marketing platform are you most excited about?**

There are many things about it I love. But one is that it can actually move the needle for your average working band, not just the Cam's and the Blake Shelton's and the star artists that already have gigantic audiences. The up-and-comers that aren't being played on radio can have audiences on Pandora that are enormous. Cody Jinks is a young artist on his own label. Over a quarter million people have added a Cody Jinks station recently. There are three country artists on our Top 20 Trendsetter

chart right now. One of them is Taylor Ray Holbrook. He doesn't even have a label, no publicist, no manager. These artists can log into Pandora and talk to hundreds of thousands of people directly. I think artists are going to make this their own. Artists are going to teach us how to use this thing.

**It's great that you have such a passion for helping working artists. How did starting out as a working musician yourself affect that vision?**

This is where I come from. My band wasn't a country band, but I was a part of that world. As we designed this product, I thought to myself, "What did I really need more than anything when I was in a working band? If I were king of Pandora as a musician, what would I do? What would I want?" We interviewed hundreds of artists to make sure we were building something that was relevant, useful and vital. There have been so many broken promises made since the web launched 20 years ago. One company after another came along promising the moon to working bands. We were determined not to be another one of those.

**You will soon be releasing Pandora's new on-demand streaming service, Pandora Premium. What led you in that direction?**

We realized a couple of years ago there was a growing appetite among our listeners to be able to do everything on Pandora, not just radio. They would listen to radio and when they heard a song they loved and wanted to hear it again, they had to go someplace else. For a while we thought, "That's okay. We'll stick to radio." We received feedback from our own listeners.

They're like, "Look, I don't want to have three different apps on my phone. I want to have one place that allows me to do what I want to do, whatever my mood is."

**How will you set yourself apart from the other on-demand music streaming services?**

There are two big pieces to that. One is the product itself. I think most subscription products are essentially 40 million songs with a search box and "good luck" for ten bucks a month. You throw in playlists and some gimmicky-curated experiences, but it's pretty hard work to navigate, collect and manage. No one has really offered a premium product yet. They've offered all you can eat for ten bucks a month. There's a small amount of power users for whom that's the idea of heaven, but for most people, it's just overwhelming. We can solve that problem because we have millions of people who listen to Pandora every quarter. They listen a lot and give us a ton of information about what they like and don't like. Starting with search and all the way to how playlists are created, Pandora Premium is completely personalized. That's going to be a massive differentiator.

The second piece that will be different is we're going to market this to millions of people who are already on the service. Our ability to get this in the hands of a huge audience quickly and inexpensively is important for the business model. We're in a perfect place to offer both a differentiated product and to bring it to market. You've got this enormous audience that we can talk to on our platforms and it's reaching an audience that is very hard for other people to reach. MR



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## ANN POWERS BRINGS NASHVILLE ATTENTION TO NPR MUSIC AND WXPN'S WORLD CAFE



Ann Powers interviewing artist Eric Church at the World Cafe Nashville launch party on Oct. 27, 2016 at City Winery. Photo: Kyle Dean Reinford

By Eric T. Parker

A rising tide is said to lift all boats. Ann Powers' move to Nashville in June 2015 elevated that bar throughout many aspects of the city's music culture for both musicians and writers.

Welcoming NPR Music's current critic and correspondent into the Music City fold has brought a national spotlight on both the mainstream and underground music scenes of the South. Local music journalists too have found support in the respected author and editor who has credits on five book titles and earned a creative writing degree from San Francisco State and a masters degree at UC Berkley in literature.

Before joining NPR Music in 2011, the Seattle native served as the chief pop critic for the *Los Angeles Times* and contributed to countless pieces and influential essays in similar roles at *Blender*, *The New York Times*, *The Village Voice* and *San Francisco Weekly*.

In a 2016 move spearheaded by WXPN General Manager and NPR Chair of the Board Roger LaMay, NPR Music partnered with World Cafe sharing the workload Powers takes on. Produced by WXPN, the 25-year-running program produces digital and on-air content broadcast on over 200 US radio stations, including Middle Tennessee's WMOT.

"I'm keeping track of what's happening in Nashville and then Bruce [Warren, World Cafe, Executive Producer] and I will get together on the phone or over the internet to share music," explains Powers of her role for World Cafe. "He and Kim [Junod, World Cafe Producer] will weigh in as we look at everyone from the most obscure talent to Eric Church—that's the range. We plan to cover everything from Americana, country, R&B, hip-hop, rock and punk from this region of the South."

Powers sat down with *MusicRow* to discuss the path that has led to her work today.

**MusicRow:** Explain you and your husband Eric's route to Nashville after leaving *The New York Times* as a pop critic after your role as Senior Editor at *The Village Voice*.

**Ann Powers:** We were ready for a change from New York when Seattle's Experience Music Project (EMP), now Museum Of Popular Culture (MoPOP), asked us to be part of the planning committee after 9/11. The museum was founded by Paul Allen, co-founder of Microsoft. He was a huge collector of Jimi Hendrix memorabilia specifically, and focused on the Pacific Northwest, but the museum became more than that. Eric and I stayed on after the museum opened when they offered us jobs. During that time I was writing for *Blender*, a magazine Maxim published.



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World Cafe contributor Ann Powers thanks attendees at the 2016 launch event. Photo: Kyle Dean Reinford

respect the boundaries of people in Nashville, artists are warm and the producers and amazing studio musicians are all open to connecting. I love that. It's such a rich field to look in on.

**For the layman, how does the structure of NPR work and what is your role?**

One thing that people often find confusing is, I'm not employed by WPLN (Nashville) or WMOT (Murfreesboro) or Morning Edition or All Things Considered. I'm employed by the NPR Music team. However, in Nashville we are working with partner stations to create new initiatives. Since moving to Nashville, I've also been working with World Cafe.

NPR creates and produces radio content, which is carried on partner stations around the country that each produce their own content too. Our partner stations in Middle Tennessee include WPLN in Nashville and WMOT in Murfreesboro. On WPLN for example, you can hear programs like All Songs Considered or Morning Edition, which are produced in D.C., and then broadcast on different partner stations.

The partner stations raise money and pay for the national content. NPR Music creates content separately and we have partnered with some of the shows. I'll be on Morning Edition sometimes, or All Things Considered. It's a big web and we're all connected.

**How does NPR Music fit into that overall NPR web and what does your chain of command look like?**

NPR Music is the digital aspect of NPR's music coverage, founded by Bob Boilen. He wanted to do a music podcast, and started All Songs Considered many years ago. Out of All Songs Considered grew this whole digital initiative, which includes several different podcasts and features like The First Listen, where we debut albums, and Tiny Desk Concert, where you go play Bob's desk in Washington D.C.

I report to Editor Jacob Ganz when I do digital content at NPR Music. But the World Cafe team is different than the NPR Music team.

Jewly Hight is a new addition and will be contributing digital content (interviews, reviews, topical pieces) for World Cafe Nashville as part of our initiative.

The NPR team is my favorite team I've ever worked with. There's so much creativity and energy. When different projects arise, I find myself working with a varied group of people. Bob Boilen, for example, Otis Hart who is our product manager who works with all the partner stations, or Lars Gotrich who handles our song premieres and our resident metalhead.

**How did World Cafe Nashville come about?**

One of the great things about moving to Nashville is NPR recognizes the incredible importance of Nashville's current and historic music scene. Establishing a base here has allowed me to spearhead some of those efforts. One thing that has been

In 2006, the longtime *LA Times* rock critic, Robert Hilburn, recommended me for this job when he retired. I got that job and moved to Los Angeles. It was the first time I had the main critic job. I loved living in LA—such a complex, fascinating place.

My husband finished his PhD and in 2009 got a job at the University of Alabama. I worked remotely for *The Los Angeles Times* for a year, but Eric and I agreed for my work, and for us as a family, he would make the sacrifice of commuting from Nashville—spending half the week down there working.

**Collectively, how might you see your life experiences preparing you for your work today in Nashville?**

I've never been one of those culture writers who thought New York was the center of the world. New York is the center of many things but it is only one of many centers. I have always appreciated that American music is vast and wide and varied. I feel very lucky to have lived in Los Angeles, Seattle, New York, and San Francisco. I understand how other places created, nurtured and sustained music scenes.

To me Nashville is the best music city in the country, especially connected to singer-songwriters or Americana. I love being in this little big town where crucial works are being made every day, and at the same time you can go to your local coffee shop, see a legend sitting next to you, and you can talk to them. That does not happen in New York or L.A. Even though we do

happening is World Cafe, which is the most-heard syndicated music show produced within the realm of public radio, out of WXPB/Philadelphia.

We did a test run last year of four interviews with music, which we call performance chats. We did Brent Cobb, Kelsey Waldon, Tomi Lunsford, and this band called Thelma And The Sleaze. We're going to be doing another round of those interviews shortly that are broadcast throughout the year. We also did a great live event with Eric Church. The content is then used on the radio. It's a way to highlight what is happening in Nashville on a national program.

**What new opportunities are on the horizon for you, Nashville, NPR, or World Cafe?**

There are always opportunities to do special content, like during Americana Fest. This past year we did a Margo Price program where she and I worked together to get artists who were important to her to share her story. That program, which was a collaboration with the Country Music Hall of Fame, was then turned into a radio program and broadcast.

We have also been able to do some Facebook Live events, like the Americana Alphabet with great artists like, The Lumineers, Bobby Rush, Dawes, Lori McKenna, Shovels & Rope, Lydia Loveless Billy Bragg and Joe Henry. Those were co-hosted

with Jewly Hight and we came up with the idea. Because NPR is devoted to bringing the best experience technology-wise to audiences, as well as music-wise, we want to have a high quality sound and visual. We are currently re-thinking that particular series because we want to do more of that once we secure that high quality.

World Cafe is working on digital content in connection with NPR Music that will be appearing on the website, and I'm always out there writing and doing stuff on the air.

I've also just written a book that will be published in the late summer about American popular music and sexuality and eroticism titled *Good Booty: Love and Sex, Black and White, Body and Soul in American Music*. It sounds like a salacious subject, but really it's about how music defines how we love and is created from that love. To be a hippie about it, that's what I'm all about.

Mostly, I'm interested in those stories that might be overlooked or the meanings that might be just under the surface. Music has defined my life in a lot of ways even though I'm not a musician. I like to help people understand how music contributes in defining their own identity and keeps us connected to each other. MR

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More announcements in the coming weeks...

# BILL MILLER

## Preserving Country Music's Legacy

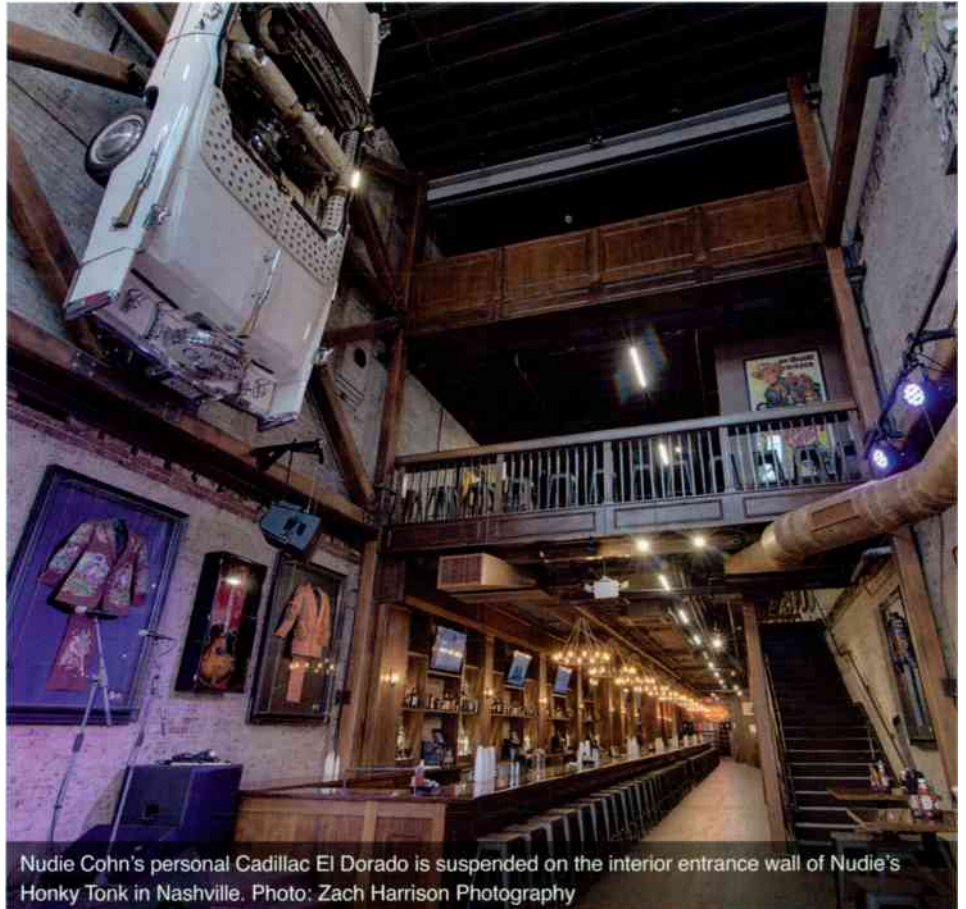
By Jessica Nicholson

From 1969 through 1971, Johnny Cash appeared in homes across the nation as host of *The Johnny Cash Show*, where he would address the viewing audience from the stage of the Ryman Auditorium with his welcoming remarks, "Hello, I'm Johnny Cash, coming to you from Nashville, Tennessee, Music City U.S.A." But by 2012, Johnny Cash Museum founder Bill Miller says Nashville had few attractions to reel in Cash fans.

"The town which Cash branded was devoid of Johnny Cash," Miller says. "House of Cash, his office of 40 years and former museum site, was made into office condos. The Country Music Hall of Fame had one suit and a guitar. I got tired of telling people to just go to the gravesite."

In the 1980s, inspired by a visit to New York City's Hard Rock Café, Miller had launched what would become one of the largest dealers of autographs and historical memorabilia in the world. His company, Odyssey Group, sold an original Frankenstein poster for a record-setting \$198,000. Miller's lifelong collection captured items including a letter from George Washington, and Madonna's stage-worn bustier—as well as a vast array of Johnny Cash memorabilia Miller had been accumulating since the age of nine, when he met Cash backstage during a concert. Miller and Cash would form a decades-long friendship.

In 2003, The Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, located in Yorba Linda, California, used artifacts from Miller's collection to open the first non-Nixon related exhibit in the museum's history, in honor of Cash's 70th birthday. The exhibit ran for six months.



Nudie Cohn's personal Cadillac El Dorado is suspended on the interior entrance wall of Nudie's Honky Tonk in Nashville. Photo: Zach Harrison Photography



Pictured (L-R): Owners Bill and Shannon Miller with Jamie Nudie. Photo: Courtney PLA Media



Johnny Cash photos and attire displayed at the Johnny Cash Museum in Nashville. Photo: Courtesy The Johnny Cash Museum



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The Johnny Cash Museum displays the blue jumpsuit Johnny Cash wore at San Quentin State Prison in 1969. Photo: Courtesy The Johnny Cash Museum

of the museum. The museum also includes the handwritten manuscript to the last song Cash wrote just days before his death.

Miller says the curation process is a tedious art, balancing a desire to present a comprehensive, enlightening look into the life of an artist, with the prudence to protect the wishes of the artists themselves.

“There are a lot of really cool visual pieces that are not included because we didn’t want anything gratuitous in the storyline. Then there were things that were too personal. There’s a five-page handwritten letter to Tammy Wynette when she was in rehab. There is correspondence between him and [Reverend] Billy Graham. When I was going through items, as crazy as this sounds, but knowing him as I did, I would have a conversation with him and say, ‘John, how do you feel about this?’ I still run it like he is still here and could walk in the door any minute.”

## EXPANDING A LEGACY

Miller’s goal to preserve, protect and promote the works and stories of Cash and others led to the 2016 opening of Nudie’s Honky Tonk, themed after tailor Nudie Cohn, known for dressing country music stars in glittering rhinestone suits that would come to be known as Nudie Suits. Cohn costumed many rock artists as well, designing Elvis Presley’s iconic gold lamé jumpsuit, as well as Gram Parsons’ suit from The Flying Burrito Brothers’ album *The Gilded Palace of Sin*, which included a large cross, marijuana leaves and pills.

The three-story building, located at 409 Broadway in Nashville, is decorated with an array of Nudie’s signature suits, though the most eye-catching element is likely Cohn’s \$400,000 personal “Nudiemobile,” the 1975 Cadillac El Dorado that is suspended above the live music stage.

“We’ve got more than \$150,000 in structural steel just for that car. There is a steel frame that extends the entire wall and goes into the basement, which is anchored with more steel. I joke with people that if there were ever an earthquake in Nashville, all that would be standing in Nashville would be this crazy Cadillac.”

*Continued on page 46.*

“I warned them it wasn’t cataloged,” Miller says. “Items were in my office, my warehouse, under beds. It was the first time I ever saw anyone put on white cotton gloves to start handling the stuff.”

Ten years later, Miller would honor Cash with his own full-fledged Johnny Cash Museum. Miller and his wife Shannon spent six months photographing and categorizing each item that would be carried in the exhibition.

The Johnny Cash Museum opened its doors at 119 3rd Ave. S. in downtown Nashville in 2013, detailing Cash’s journey from rural Arkansas, chronicling his multi-layered career, as Cash added roles as singer, songwriter, entertainer, author, poet, actor, and television host.

The museum follows his career resurgence after teaming with producer Rick Rubin for the American Recordings series that ran from 1994 until Cash’s death in 2003 at the age of 71.

Among the Nashville museum’s unique displays are some of Cash’s childhood toys (marbles), a photo signed by The Highwaymen members (Cash, Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings and Kris Kristofferson), a check to Cash for \$15,186 in royalty payments from Sun Record Company in 1957, scripts from *The Johnny Cash Show*, and numerous furniture pieces from Cash’s Hendersonville, Tennessee home he shared with wife June Carter Cash. After the home was destroyed by fire in 2007, Miller had a section of the home’s exterior wall reassembled as part



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Each year, the *MusicRow* CountryBreakout Awards honors the artists and songwriters who have made the biggest impact on secondary-market radio stations that make up the *MusicRow* reporting panel. These stations commit their playlists and airtime to supporting major label and independent artists alike.

For the 2017 *MusicRow* CountryBreakout Awards, artists Eric Church, Florida Georgia Line, Maren Morris, Carrie Underwood, and Aaron Watson are being honored for their achievements at country radio in 2016.

Awards for Male, Female, and Group/Duo of the Year are presented to artists who garnered the most spins in 2016 on stations that are part of *MusicRow's* CountryBreakout chart. Breakout Artist of the Year is awarded to the new artist whose first single or album was released in 2016 and picked up the greatest number of overall spins on the CountryBreakout chart. Independent Artist of the Year is also based on number of spins on the chart, as well as factors including label size, distribution model, and promotion staff.

The Capitol Nashville imprint garnered the most overall spins this year, earning *MusicRow's* Label of the Year honor for the 13th time (and 12th consecutive time).

Ross Copperman has been named *MusicRow's* Songwriter of the Year, for earning the most No. 1 singles this year on *MusicRow's* CountryBreakout chart. Meanwhile, this year's *MusicRow* Reporter of the Year is Greg Almond of WGCC in Bowling Green, Kentucky. The CountryBreakout Reporter of the Year award is an editorial decision and is presented to a radio panelist who exemplifies the spirit of the CountryBreakout chart.

Each winner is highlighted in the pages ahead.



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# MALE

## ARTIST OF THE YEAR

### ERIC CHURCH

By Eric T. Parker

A record year for Eric Church, indeed. The EMI Records Nashville artist took two titles to No. 1 in 2016, “Record Year” and “Kill A Word,” to earn *MusicRow*’s Male Artist of the Year.

Church garnered 105,610 spins from *MusicRow* panel stations in 2016, making him the most-played male artist for a second year. Church—and his EMI VP of Promotion Jimmy Rector—expressed gratitude for the feat.

“As an artist who takes extreme effort and pride in every step of the creative process—be it songwriting, recording, all the way through show conceptualization and execution—it is an honor to receive this award,” said Church. “I thank you.”

“It is awesome for Eric to be recognized once again as *MusicRow*’s Male Artist of the year,” said Rector. “When you combine a great artist with passionate radio stations, it’s amazing what can be accomplished.”

Church collaborated with fellow songwriters Luke Dick and Jeff Hyde on “Kill A Word,” which featured Andrea Davidson and Rhiannon Giddens, while Hyde also co-wrote “Record Year.” Both tracks were released on Church’s surprise album *Mr. Misunderstood*, which was released to 80,000 fans and select industry members prior to a surprise drop at the 2015 CMA Awards. During the subsequent year’s 50th annual event, the EMI Records Nashville project came full circle to win the CMA’s coveted title for Album of the Year.

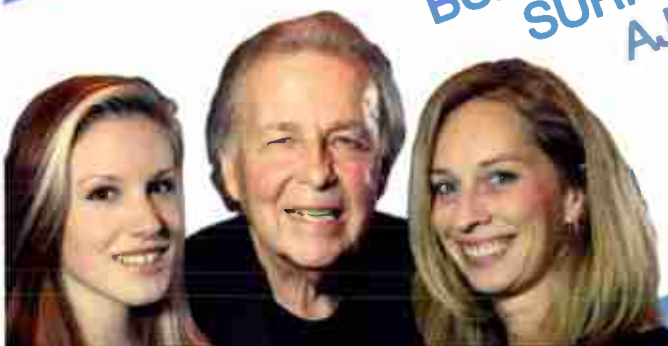
Since then, Church re-pressed the titles among a seven-track live album, *Mr. Misunderstood On the Rocks Live & (Mostly) Unplugged*, recorded during a two-night stand at Colorado’s Red Rocks Amphitheater. The country music maverick recently began his 60+ city Holdin’ My Own Tour, aptly titled for an outing that will feature no opening acts. Church set a precedent during his opening weekend, reportedly playing for three hours, covering a nearly 40-song set list. The evenings are sure to include those No. 1 songs “Record Year” and “Kill A Word.”

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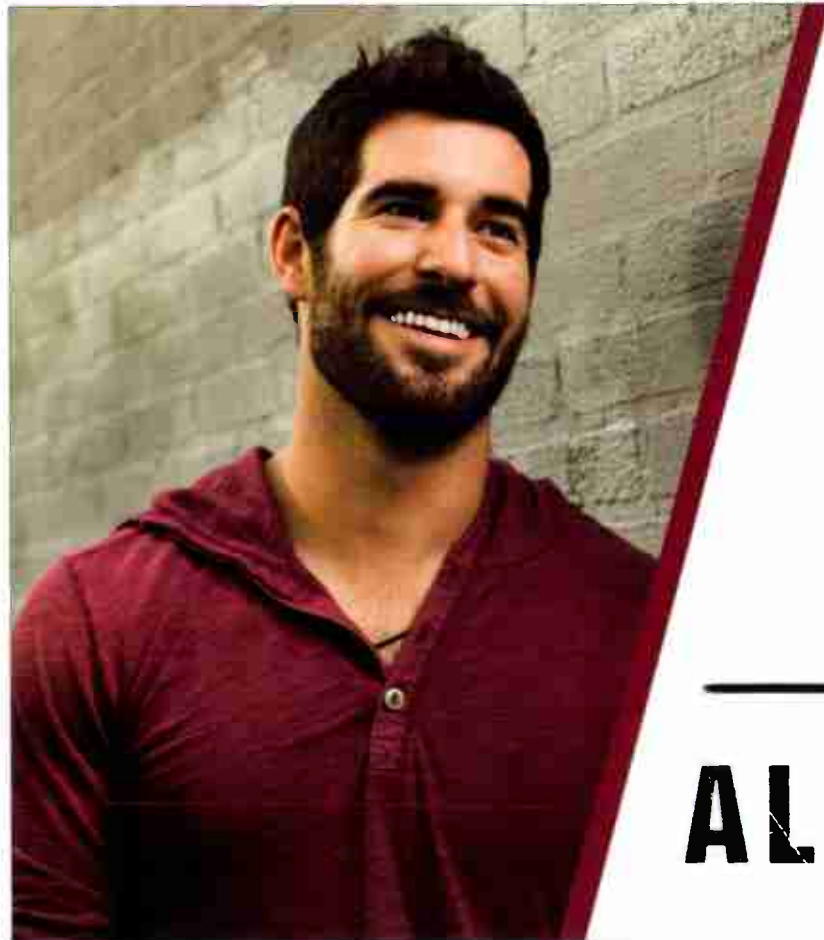


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# FEMALE

## ARTIST OF THE YEAR

### CARRIE UNDERWOOD

By Jessica Nicholson

With her singles including “Church Bells” and “Dirty Laundry” cleaning up atop the *MusicRow* CountryBreakout chart for females in the past year—to the tune of 103,804 spins from *MusicRow* panel stations—is Arista Nashville artist Carrie Underwood. The vocal powerhouse had the biggest year for any female country artist in 2016, earning Underwood *MusicRow*’s 2017 Female Artist of the Year honor.

“We are incredibly grateful for the support that country radio has shown to Carrie!” Arista Nashville’s Vice President, Promotion Josh Easler said. “We celebrated four No. 1 singles from the *Storyteller* album which is a true testament to country radio’s ongoing and unwavering commitment to Carrie’s music. For that, we are extremely thankful.”

In addition to hearing Underwood’s music on radio airwaves, fans had plenty of chances to see Underwood perform the songs live, as her massive headlining The Storyteller Tour—Stories In The Round played to more than 1 million fans during the trek’s 92 shows in 2016.

In addition to co-hosting the CMA Awards with Brad Paisley for the ninth consecutive year, Underwood and Paisley were honored with the CMA Chairman’s Award. Underwood picked up her fourth Female Vocalist of the Year honor at the 2016 CMA Awards in November.

Earlier in the year, Underwood headlined the ACM’s Women of Country Night during ACM’s Party For A Cause Festival, and accepted the ACM Lifting Lives Gary Haber Award, named after her longtime business manager and recognizing her commitment in serving others. The multi-faceted entertainer also released her fourth installment of the *Sunday Night Football* theme song, collaboratively rewriting the lyrics to her hit with Miranda Lambert, “Somethin’ Bad,” to fit the sports theme. She also traveled overseas to perform in Glasgow, London, and Dublin, as well as Stockholm, Sweden, and Oslo, Norway as part of C2C: Country 2 Country. In December 2016, she headed to Australia for a string of tour dates with Keith Urban.





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# GROUP/DUO OF THE YEAR

## FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE

By Eric T. Parker

Three No. 1 songs on the *MusicRow* CountryBreakout chart in the past year have afforded BMLG Records' powerhouse duo, Florida Georgia Line, the award for Group Duo of the Year for the third consecutive year.

Holding the title for overall most spins on the *MusicRow* chart for 2016, "Confession," "May We All" and "H.O.L.Y." collectively earned the duo 105,793 reps with the *MusicRow* panel.

Although success seemed to happen overnight, it was just 2012 when Tyler Hubbard and Brian Kelley first visited *MusicRow* while promoting "Cruise" to *MusicRow* stations around the country.

"*MusicRow* Magazine and their reporting stations were some of the first supporters and believers in FGL," shared Kelley. "Our very first radio visits were to these markets and they were instrumental in helping us meet new fans and getting our music heard. The good vibes just continued to flow from there!"

Hubbard added, "We are so grateful for these early opportunities and know that we would not be where we are today without the support of these stations. We will always visit these markets and

stay in touch with the stations because it means so much to us. We are digging our roots on our tour this year and can't wait to see all of you at a show!"

The duo's third No. 1 studio album, *Dig Your Roots*, which featured songwriting credits from the duo on over half the project, delivered new tunes "Confession" and "H.O.L.Y." Somehow Kelley and Hubbard made it out of the studio and around North America on a wildly successful Dig Your Roots Tour, which rang in at over \$31 million according to *Billboard*, placing them in the top 10 country tours for the year.

"2016 was another pinnacle year for FGL and BMLG Records," said Matthew Hargis, VP Promotion, BMLG Records. "We would like to thank all of our friends at the *MusicRow* stations and our partners at Diane Richey Promotion for making FGL the most played group duo on the CountryBreakout Chart for the third year in a row!"

There is no stopping this Nashville success story. Having extended their Dig Your Roots Tour into 2017, the duo already drew 40,000+ for opening weekend—setting them on track to play for over one million fans for their third year in a row.



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# BREAKOUT

## ARTIST OF THE YEAR

### MAREN MORRIS

By Jessica Nicholson

Columbia Nashville artist Maren Morris had a whirlwind year in 2016, swiftly achieving hero status in the eyes of other newcomer artists who harbor dreams of a successful recording career.

Last year, Morris' songs racked up 96,155 spins on secondary radio stations belonging to the *MusicRow* CountryBreakout panel, more than any other new artist, earning her the 2017 Breakout Artist of the Year honor.

The win is just one of many accolades over the past year that have led Morris to become one of country music's most sterling new talents. Her first major label project, *Hero*, debuted at the top of the *Billboard* country albums chart in June, making her the first artist from the Columbia Nashville imprint to open at No. 1 with a debut album in the Soundscan era.

Morris garnered five nominations at the 2016 CMA Awards, and took home the New Artist of the Year honor. Her debut single, "My Church," which Morris co-wrote with her producer busbee, topped the *MusicRow* CountryBreakout chart, and was certified Platinum by the RIAA. After opening for Keith Urban's Ripcord Tour last year, this year Morris launches her first headlining trek, dubbed the Hero Tour, after her debut album. She will also join Sam Hunt's 15 In A 30 Tour in 2017.

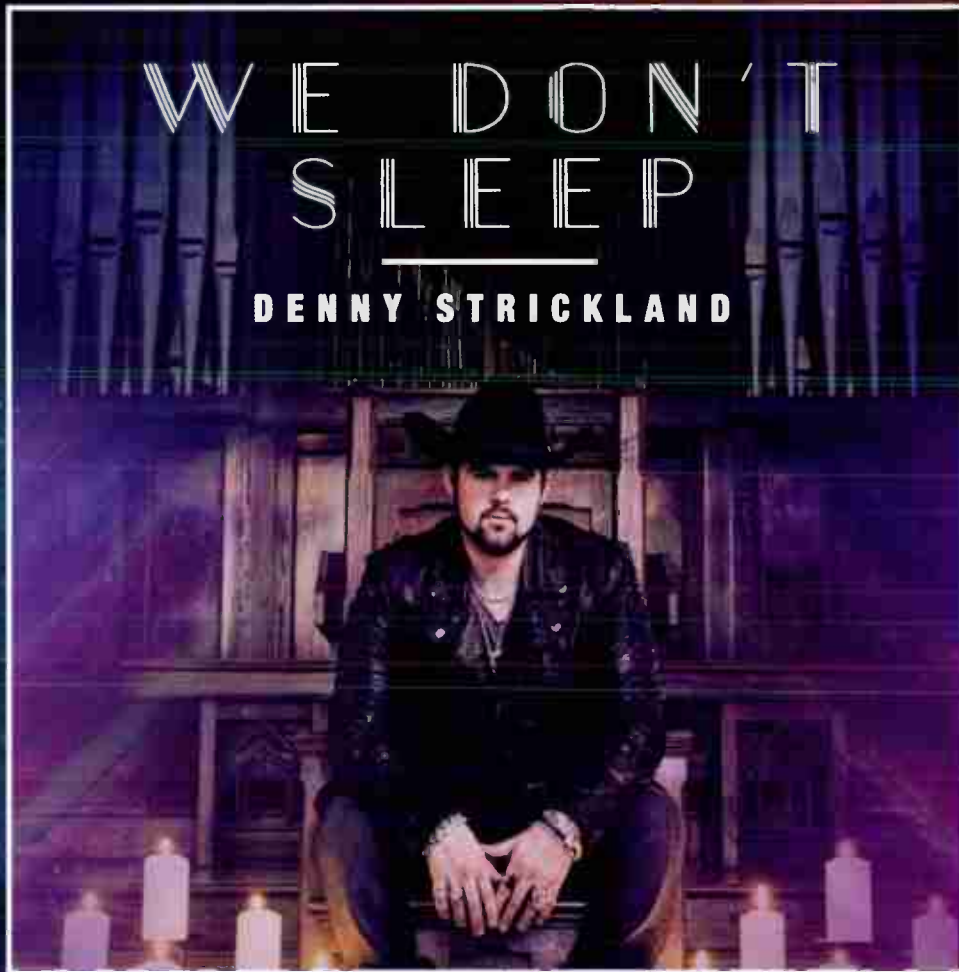
Columbia Nashville Sr. VP of Promotion Shane Allen expressed gratitude for the role every *MusicRow* chart reporter played in Morris' success over the past year.

"It's an incredible honor for Maren to be selected as the Breakout Artist of the Year by the *MusicRow* panel of stations who have been instrumental in launching her career from coast to coast through significant airplay on 'My Church' and '80s Mercedes,'" Allen said. "Thank you, *MusicRow*!"

Accolades for Morris have continued in 2017 as she won Best Country Solo Performance for "My Church" during the televised portion of the 59th Annual Grammy Awards.



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"With this new single, Denny Strickland proves that he's ready to take it to the next level. He presents a whole new side of his country personality that is still distinctly Denny Strickland. Well written, well produced and well sung. This one deserves some airplay."

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# INDEPENDENT

## ARTIST OF THE YEAR

### AARON WATSON

By Jessica Nicholson

Aaron Watson's vocal and songwriting talents, along with his rugged individualist spirit and devotion to traditional country music, have made him a mainstay of the Texas music scene for nearly two decades. While much of the music industry has seen the trend of bro-country overtake the airwaves in past years, Watson's authentic brand remains soaked in themes of family devotion, Chevy trucks, music-filled Saturday nights, and lasting love.

The hard-charging Watson made history in 2015 when his album *The Underdog* debuted atop the *Pillboard* Country Albums chart. On Feb. 24, he will release the follow-up with Big Label Records/Thirty Tigers *Vaquero*, which marks his 13th album. The project features his current single, "Outta Style," penned solely by Watson.

In 2016, his songs such as "Getaway Truck" and "Bluebonnets" garnered 43,723 spins on the *MusicRow* CountryBreakout Chart panel stations, and have helped Watson earn another accolade: *MusicRow*'s 2017 Independent Artist of the Year.

"Wow, what a great honor to have the most radio play last year from *MusicRow* stations," Watson said. "I often tell people

there's so many great country radio stations around the country and your support of my music couldn't speak any louder to that. 'Bluebonnets' is such a special song to me and you allowed me to share that with the world, while 'Getaway Truck' was that fun song that makes everyone dance and is a blast to play live. And now seeing your support of 'Outta Style' that is starting the new era of *Vaquero*, I'm just truly humbled. I'm going to keep working my tail off to bring all of you great music and be on the road in your markets and THANK YOU from the bottom of my heart for supporting my family. I say it all the time, music isn't an industry, it's the family business."

Watson will hit the road throughout 2017 in support of the album. The trek will include stops in West Hollywood and New York, as well as staple Texas venue Billy Bob's, and several festivals including the San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo, Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, Country Thunder, Country Stampede, and Country On The River.



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# REPORTER OF THE YEAR

## GREG ALMOND

By Troy Stephenson and Jessica Nicholson

WGGC's Greg Almond says his love for music and for people drives what he does as Program Director for the Bowling Green, Kentucky, secondary market radio station.

"I don't know anyone who gets into radio initially that doesn't have a passion for music," Almond said. "But beyond that my passion is customer service. And that's what this is, right? Large-scale customer service. We can dress it up and call ourselves disc jockeys or on-air personalities, but we offer a product. Where we separate ourselves from the pack is through our brand identity, our talent to entertain and our impact on the community."

Almond's commitment to his audience and community, along with his dedication to the *MusicRow* panel, are factors that contributed to *MusicRow* selecting Almond as its 2017 CountryBreakout Reporter of the Year.

"I feel like this honor is a combination of the work I have put towards my goals and the respect from my peers," Almond said. "That is what makes this all very cool. To have people that I formed professional and personal relationships with want to honor me is what makes me most proud."

Almond has been with WGGC since 2011. His previous career stops include time at WLNK and WBT in Charlotte, North Carolina, as well as WUHU in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

While serving as program director, Almond also handles the afternoon drive, just one of a myriad of duties he takes on. He curates music, helps create engaging on-air content and coach on-air talent, and assists with social media, sales, and promotions. "I think that just comes with the territory, particularly in a more complex radio world. I've always considered myself to be a pretty well-rounded person with a diverse skill set and this industry fits that very well. I'm looking forward to learning something new tomorrow and the next day.

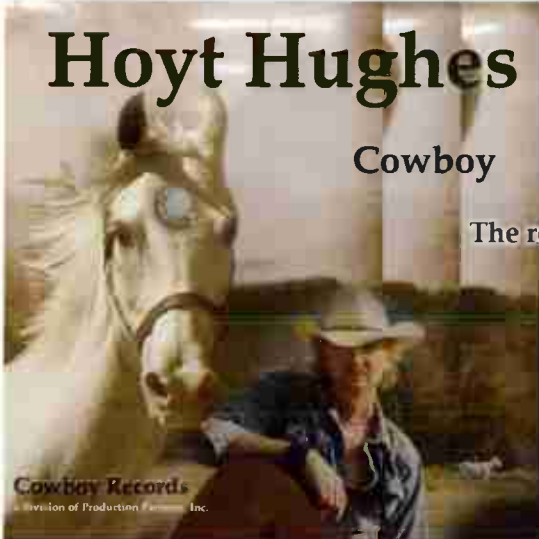
"Ultimately, I enjoy giving people something that they can enjoy," Almond said. "Just as a comedian wants a laugh, I want to play songs that trigger an emotion. If I get someone to say 'Oh my God I love that song!' multiple times a day then I have succeeded."



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# SONGWRITER OF THE YEAR

## ROSS COPPERMAN

By Eric T. Parker

Rezonant Music Publishing songwriter Ross Copperman played a major part in crafting the sound of country radio before this year, but 2017 solidifies those achievements. The songwriter notched more No. 1 tracks on the *MusicRow* CountryBreakout chart than any other songwriter during 2016, earning the title of Songwriter of the Year at the 2017 CountryBreakout Awards.

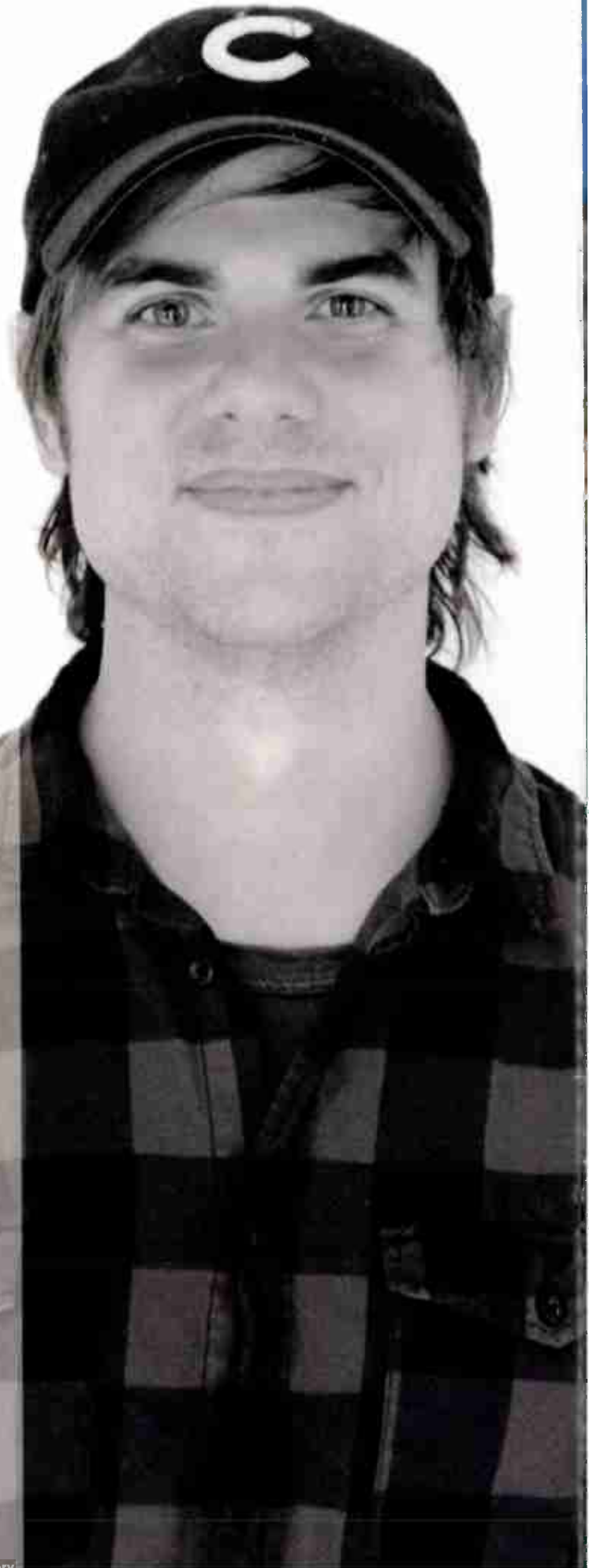
Copperman's infectious grooves and lyrics extend to six No. 1 titles, including Kenny Chesney and P!nk's "Setting The World On Fire," Chesney's "Noise," Jake Owen's "American Country Love Song," Keith Urban's "Break On Me," Florida Georgia Line's "Confession," and LOCASH's "I Know Somebody."

"WOW! This is such a huge honor," responded Copperman. "I am so thankful for country radio, the recording artists, my publisher and all of my co-writers."

Copperman's co-writers in the past year include many previous *MusicRow* CountryBreakout Songwriter of the Year winners. Rodney Clawson, *MusicRow*'s inaugural Songwriter of the Year honoree, was a collaborator on "Confession," while all three of 2016's Songwriter of the Year recipients—Shane McAnally, Josh Osborne and Ashley Gorley—contributed to "Noise," "Setting The World On Fire," and "American Country Love Song," respectively.

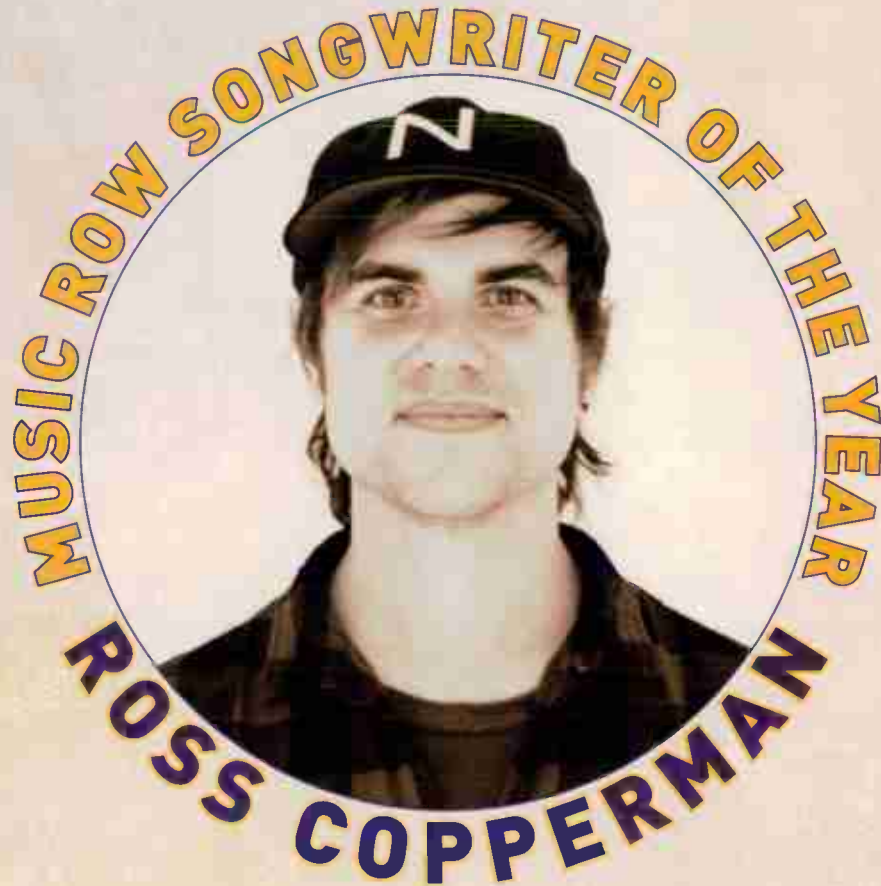
"I feel like, as songwriters, we try to tap into raw human emotion on a daily basis," remarked Copperman of his process. "Every now and then the music, melody, and lyric all line up together, and that's when I feel like a song resonates with listeners."

Copperman himself has not only announced a recent alignment with Keith Urban and A&R veteran Joe Fisher for their publishing venture called BOOM, but in late 2016 the BMI songwriter signed with the recently formed Rezonant Music Publishing for his own deal. Songwriters announced at the beginning of 2017 to write for Copperman's BOOM venture include hopefuls Jordan Minton, Cali Rodi and Logan Turner. The musical whiz is also helping craft the style and sound of master recordings as a producer, having already worked with Jake Owen, Dierks Bentley and Darius Rucker, among others.



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Florida Georgia Line

**Break On Me**  
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# LABEL OF THE YEAR



## CAPITOL RECORDS NASHVILLE



A UNIVERSAL MUSIC COMPANY

By Sherod Robertson

The Capitol Records Nashville promotion team powered through 2016 with force, earning a total of nine No. 1 songs at the top of the *MusicRow* CountryBreakout chart. Along with these songs and other singles from their impressive roster of artists, the UMG Nashville imprint captured 431,224 spins on the chart, more than any other label imprint, ensuring they keep their trophy another year as *MusicRow's* Label of the Year for the 13th time (12th consecutive).

Keith Urban wasn't guilty of "Wasted Time" last year and Luke Bryan was very much on the "Move" in 2016, with each superstar earning three No. 1 songs on *MusicRow's* radio chart. In addition, Urban took "Break On Me" and "Blue Ain't Your Color" to the top of the charts. Labelmate Luke Bryan garnered the top spot with "Huntin', Fishin' and Lovin' Every Day" and "Home Alone Tonight" feat. Capitol Records Nashville labelmate Little Big Town's Karen Fairchild, adding to his chart-topper, "Move."

In addition to Urban and Bryan, Dierks Bentley had a career-escalating year with two No. 1 songs, "Somewhere On A Beach," and the inspiring anthem, "Different For Girls" feat. Elle King. Meanwhile country crooner Jon Pardi jumped to the top of the stack in 2016 with his No. 1 tune, "Head Over Boots."

"While airplay is strictly a promotion-centered task; ultimately, this honor is a reflection of the collective team effort of everyone at UMG," said Royce Risser, Sr. VP of Promotion for UMG Nashville. "We are all mindful of the fact that we get to work

with the greatest artists in country music and really are honored to receive this award again." With Bobby Young serving as VP of Promotion for Capitol Records Nashville, Risser added, "Specifically, congrats to Bobby Young and his promo killers at Capitol Nashville. And as a whole, congratulations to everyone at UMG Nashville for all the hard work they do year round. Thank you *MusicRow!*"

"So proud of this promotion staff and our amazing artists," Young said. "I love being in the trenches daily with this #1 team, fighting for our unequal fair share of airplay for the Capitol Nashville roster. Paige Elliott (West Coast), Mara Sidweber (Southwest), Annie Sandor (Northeast), Brent Jones (Midwest), and our newest members of the team, Ashley Laws (Southeast) and Sarah Beth Watson (Coordinator), make up the best promotion staff in the business. Wow, 13 years, 12 consecutive, is a lot to live up to, but with such incredible artists and music this is the team that can deliver the hits every time! Royce Risser's (SVP, Promotion/UMG) and David Friedman's (VP, Promo UMG) hands-on proactive styles are proving to be the perfect dynamic to maximize opportunities. I'd be remiss if I didn't mention how thankful we are to have Donna Hughes (Director, Radio Marketing/UMG) and Chris Schuler (Director, Promotion and Radio Marketing/UMG) working on our behalf as well. It truly takes a village and everyone working together, along with all the top notch folks in all of the UMG departments, brings maximum exposure at radio and in the marketplace for our artists!"

# FACEBOOK:

## Mission Control, We Have A Problem



By Sam Powers, O'Neil Hagaman, PLLC

By now you've already heard the story about the genesis of Facebook, but if you haven't, here's a very brief history. In a Harvard University dorm room in 2004, Mark Zuckerberg and several classmates started [www.thefacebook.com](http://www.thefacebook.com). It was by "invitation only" until 2006, when it became open to anyone over 13 years old with a valid e-mail address. By 2012, the number of Facebook users reached 1 billion. Facebook's most recent quarterly accounting to investors, for the 3rd quarter of 2016, boasts 1.79 billion Facebook users worldwide.

Let's take a look at some of the statistics associated with the 1.79 billion Facebook users here in the US:

- 👍 4 of every 5 US adults with internet access use Facebook
- 👍 2 of every 3 US adults are considered "Daily Access Users"
- 👍 "Daily Access Users" spend on average 50 minutes per day on Facebook
- 👍 Facebook revenue for the year 2015 was \$17.9 billion
- 👍 Facebook revenue for the 3Q-16 was over \$7 billion dollars
- 👍 More than 50% of the \$7 billion in 3Q-16 revenue was generated in US & Canada
- 👍 100 million hours of video per day are watched on Facebook
- 👍 500 million viewers watch video on Facebook per day

When Facebook started, still-pictures were the predominant media shared. In 2016, people still share their still-pictures, but they are also sharing news and entertainment articles as well as links to videos, lots of videos with lots of music. While the method that Facebook uses to track the views and/or "viewing hours" is still evolving, they charge for advertising based on either CPM (cost per 1,000 impressions) or CPC (cost per link click).

Facebook, like YouTube, uses complex algorithms to help advertisers make the most of their ad purchases. Unlike YouTube,

Facebook does not have an agreement with ASCAP, BMI, SESAC or GMR and does not have any blanket agreements with the music publishing community to compensate songwriters and publishers for use of their music.

Facebook continues to emphasize video as the statistics show above and they have built their business model using the rights of music creators; however, Facebook places the responsibility on its users to clear all copyrights before posting any content that might be subject to copyright protection. I've been clearing music for both publishers and record labels all of my adult life, and when I explain this to friends and even industry colleagues, it's as if I'm speaking a foreign language. In other words, very little licensing is taking place with the rights holders. Let's take a look at what other digital platforms paid out last year:

- 👍 \$1.83 billion – Spotify payments to rights holders in 2015 (2016 should be higher)
- 👍 \$740 million – YouTube payments to rights holders in 2015 (2016 should be higher)
- 👎 \$0 – Facebook payments to rights holders from inception

In light of these facts, there have been many recent reports that Facebook is developing a content ID system, similar to that of YouTube, and actively hiring a team to lead their global music operation. In order to rebuild the music business structure, fairness dictates that Facebook responsibly pay music rights holders.

It's undeniable that Facebook has both enhanced many people's lives and capitalized on these connections in a major way. In closing, I want to share Facebook's mission statement with you and leave you with a thought:

Facebook's mission is "to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected." Isn't it time that the music creators are included in the mission also? We think so. *MR*



The Johnny Cash Museum's Founder's Suite, a loft filled with rare Johnny Cash memorabilia and antique furnishings. Photo: Courtesy The Johnny Cash Museum



Patsy Cline. Photo: Courtesy PLA Media

Continued from page 26.

## MAKING OF A STAR

Miller and his team are working on a new exhibit honoring Patsy Cline, to be housed above the Johnny Cash Museum. Cline released only three studio albums before she died in a plane crash on March 5, 1963 at the age of 30.

"With Patsy, you are dealing with someone who has been gone for 54 years," says Miller, who worked closely with Cline's family, including daughter Julie. "Unlike Cash, very few if any people who come through these doors have ever seen her perform in person. Even Julie has very little memories of her mother because she was three when Patsy passed away. Johnny Cash's career had nearly 50 years. Patsy's had barely six."

Initially, curating pieces for the museum was a challenge. "She was making maybe \$1,000 per night, traveling by car and dealing with a husband and two children. There were no tour buses, no Lear jets," Miller says. "It was not by any means the life of a star."

When Cline's widower, Charlie Dick, died in November 2015, it was discovered that he had reserved a trove of items, including the original handwritten lead sheet to "Walkin' After Midnight." Around 1962, the couple purchased Cline's dream home, a two-level, three-bedroom ranch home in Goodlettsville, Tennessee. Dick also preserved CorningWare bakeware, Loretta Lynn and Wilburn Brothers album covers that were thumbtacked to the

wall, and a still-working refrigerator the couple purchased in 1953 ("It's going to be moved here and plugged in the whole time," says Miller).

Miller is determined to handle the story of Cline's death with care. "We'll show the headlines from one of the newspapers. The family has the watch she was wearing in the crash. I'm struggling with that...it may be [included], it may not. To me, it's a sensitive thing and I approach it with a lot of caution."

During the curation process, Miller discovered a connection to his recently-opened Nudie's Honky Tonk. Shortly before her death, Cline contacted Nudie Cohn to create dresses based on Cline's own hand-crafted designs. "This was a big step, because her mother made nearly all of her clothing, or she would buy things off the rack and embellish them. He had responded, agreeing to make the dresses, but two weeks later, she was dead."

Miller had Nudie's Rodeo Tailors create the dresses from Cline's sketches, which will eventually stand as the last thing guests will see when visiting the museum. "After 53 years, these dress designs have come to life."

Though Miller says a few "big names and legends" have approached him about working on new projects, he says the bar has been set high for new projects. "We have to settle on personalities that we feel will be around in the history books for a long time. When you start boiling that down, no matter how big the superstar is today, that could all change next week."

Though Miller says he has collected enough Cash memorabilia to fill two museums, he isn't giving up his lifelong passion for collecting anytime soon. "I still buy Cash stuff, even though I have way more than I could ever use." **MR**



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