

CMA | Lose Up

OCTOBER | NOVEMBER 2011



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Makes the
Right Moves

**CMA PRIME
PROSPECT STUDY**

HANK WILLIAMS JR.
The View from
Gulf Shore Road

CMA SPONSORSHIPS

TANYA TUCKER
Takes On the Boys

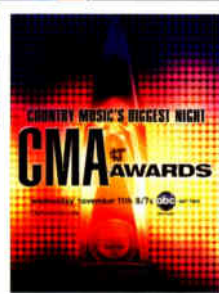
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INSITE**

**SMART PHONE
APPS**
Artists Connect

**MEDIA
COACHING**
Lessons in
Being Real

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AND
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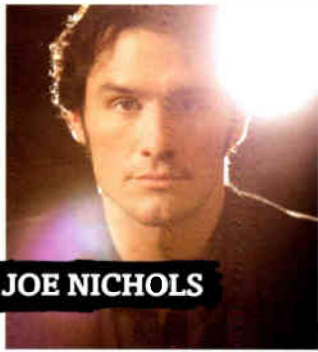
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CMA CLOSE UP

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After more than 50 years dedicated to building the business of Country Music, the CMA Board and staff take pride in the progress that's been made. Country Music has truly become America's music, and while much of this owes to the talent and dedication of our members, the real secret to its success lies in the music itself.



That's the key to our strategy to enhance the impact of our two core events, the CMA Music Festival and CMA Awards, by widening the consumer base through more localized channels. Our CMA Songwriters Series offers a great example of how we've introduced the music directly to targeted audiences. When we launched the Series in 2005, the idea was to celebrate the first Awards ceremony staged in New York City by importing some of the greatest writing talent from Music Row. But equally important, it aimed to build a foothold there for Country Music, a goal that we achieved through ongoing performances at Joe's Pub.

Now we've extended the CMA Songwriters Series into two vital new markets with a pair of shows, each hosted by Bob DiPiero. On Sept. 15 it made its West Coast debut at the House of Blues in Los Angeles, with a panel that included Chris Lindsey, Aimee Mayo and Kellie Pickler. And on Oct. 2 the Series premieres in Chicago, with Dean Dillon, Scotty Emerick and Lee Ann Womack at Joe's Bar.

We scheduled these shows carefully. The Los Angeles event coincided with The L.A. Office RoadShow, an annual convention where leaders in television, film, music, gaming and advertising explore partnership and marketing opportunities. By inviting hundreds of these delegates to our event, we ensured that they experienced the power of Country Music firsthand. And by holding our Joe's Bar show on the night before the Chicago Country Music Festival opens in Grant Park, we will use the visibility of that event to stage a pre-show reception for major agencies and brands that are open to learning about what our genre has to offer.

The lesson? Whether through the ABC broadcasts of our two flagship events or the intimacy of exposure in carefully targeted markets, Country Music ultimately speaks for itself. It's our pleasure to make sure that everyone, from new fans to influential executives, hears its message.

Tammy Genovese

CMA Chief Executive Officer

CMA Close Up® welcomes your letters and feedback.

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CMA Awards nominations announcement at CMT's Nashville studio. Hank Adam Locklin, CMA Senior Manager of Membership and Industry Relations; John Hamlin, CMT Senior VP of Production and Development; CMT hosts Cody Alan and Alecia Davis; Randy Houser; Laurissa Ryan, CMT Senior Director of Talent Relations; and Jay Frank, CMT Senior VP of Music Strategy. Photo: John Kuster



THE 43RD ANNUAL CMA AWARDS

BRAD PAISLEY LEADS FINALISTS WITH SEVEN NOMINATIONS

KEITH URBAN EARNS FIVE NOMINATIONS

JAMEY JOHNSON, GEORGE STRAIT, TAYLOR SWIFT AND ZAC BROWN TIE WITH FOUR NOMINATIONS EACH

NEARLY EVERY CATEGORY INCLUDES FIRST-TIME NOMINEES



Darius Rucker and Lee Ann Womack on ABC's "Good Morning America." Photo: Mike Acute/ABC



CMT hosts Cody Alan and Alecia Davis with Randy Houser on CMT's "Insider Special Edition: 2009 CMA Awards Nominations." Photo: John Kuster



CMA hosts a breakfast at the Marriott Marquis Times Square in New York City to view the CMA Awards nominees announcement. (above) Dan Bowen, CMA VP of Marketing Strategies and Communications; Chuck Wicks, CMA CEO Tammy Genovese; Lee Ann Womack; CMA Board President Steve Moore, Senior VP, AEG Live!; Julie Talbott, Executive VP of Affiliate Marketing, Premiere Radio Networks; and incoming CMA Board President Steve Buchanan, Senior VP, Media and Entertainment, Gaylord Entertainment. (left) CMA CEO Tammy Genovese; Lee Ann Womack; and Geri Wang, Senior VP of Primetime Sales for the ABC Television Network. Photo: David J. Phillip/ABC



In the early hours of Sept. 9, an unlikely combination of professional focus and eager anticipation, intensified by the hushed volumes of conversation and the countdown of the clock, set the mood at Studio 330, inside the Downtown Nashville headquarters of CMT. At 9 AM, on-air personalities Cody Alan and Alecia Davis and special guest Randy Houser would go live with "Insider Special Edition: 2009 CMA Awards Nominations." But as the crew checked lighting and sound, the excitement next door, in the Green Room, was somewhat less restrained. Members of the media and other guests crowded onto a couch, several chairs and a few crates as another live broadcast, from ABC's "Good Morning America," lit the television screen.

Over the next several minutes, viewers watched as ABC News correspondent Robin Roberts joined Darius Rucker and Lee Ann Womack in the New York studios. Their chemistry was relaxed as they bantered back and forth, the conversation flowing easily from the strong bonds between artists and fans to shoes Womack chose to wear for her appearance.

But listeners in Nashville, and around the United States and beyond, paid special attention as Rucker and Womack revealed the names of the nominees in five CMA Awards categories. Almost simultaneously, the information flashed onto phone screens or was forwarded in quick viral messages.

All of this set the stage for Alan, Davis and Houser to announce the nominees in the remaining seven categories. Houser, who was surprised that morning with news of his own two nominations, took his place on the stage and joked with his colleagues as the seconds ticked down.

"I'll just start making it up," he said, playfully riffling through the cards that listed each group of finalists. "I'll just start nominating my friends."

Of course, all three stuck to the script as the show began. And between interludes that included pre-recorded interviews by CMT's Katie Cook with CMA Awards co-hosts Brad Paisley and Carrie Underwood, they revealed a list of names that included longtime favorites as well as some first-timers.

"It is great for the format and speaks to the strength of our music and talent of our artists that there are so many new faces on the list of nominees this year," said CMA CEO Tammy Genovese. "With more than a quarter of the nominees making their debuts, representing a variety of major and independent record labels, there will be a heightened level of excitement and anticipation for the CMA Awards in November."

In the final tally, Brad Paisley topped the list of finalists with seven nominations for Entertainer; Male Vocalist; Album for *American Saturday Night*, produced by Frank Rogers and Chris DuBois; Single and Song for "Then" (for writing the song, DuBois and Ashley Gorley shared this nomination with Paisley); Musical Event and Music Video for "Start a Band" with Keith Urban, directed by Jim Shea.

Urban shared those Musical Event and Music Video nominations with Paisley for "Start a Band" as two of five that he received, along with Entertainer, Male Vocalist and Album for *Defying Gravity*. He is eligible to win a second trophy in the Album category for producing *Defying Gravity* with Dann Huff, who is also a nominee for Musician of the Year.

Jamey Johnson, George Strait, Taylor Swift and Zac Brown, frontman for the Zac Brown Band, each received four nominations.



Darius Rucker, ABC News Anchor Robin Roberts and Lee Ann Womack on ABC's "Good Morning America."



Randy Houser on CMT's "Insider Special Edition: 2009 CMA Awards Nominations."

COUNTRY MUSIC'S BIGGEST NIGHT

George Strait is in the running for Entertainer; Male Vocalist; Music Video for "Troubadour," directed by Trey Fanjoy; and Musical Event with Lee Ann Womack for "Everything But Quits" — a category both won for "Good News, Bad News" in 2005. Strait now has 79 career CMA Awards nominations, which ties him with Alan Jackson for the most nominations to date. He also leads the trophy count with 22.

Taylor Swift's four nominations include her first for Entertainer — the first time since Faith Hill's nomination in 2000 that a solo female artist has been proposed for this honor. (Shania Twain was the last to win it, in 1999). Swift, who won the Horizon Award in 2007, is also in the running for Female Vocalist category in which she was nominated for the first time in 2008, and Music Video for "Love Story," with Trey Fanjoy directing. In another first for the 19-year-old artist, she is nominated for Album for *Fearless*, for which she may also receive a second trophy for producing with Nathan Chapman.

Jamey Johnson's list of nominations includes New Artist; Single and Song for "In Color," which he co-wrote with Lee Thomas Miller and James Otto; and Album for *That Lonesome Song*, produced by The Kent Hardly Playboys. These are Johnson's first artist nominations, but as a songwriter he won Song of the Year in 2007 for George Strait's "Give It Away," which he co-wrote with Bill Anderson and Buddy Cannon.

Zac Brown claims his first CMA Awards nominations, three of them with his self-named group and one for penning their hit "Chicken Fried." The Zac Brown Band received nominations for New Artist, Vocal Group and Single for "Chicken Fried," which Keith Stegall produced. Brown picked up the additional nomination for Song for writing "Chicken Fried" with Wyatt Durrette.

Kenny Chesney's victories as Entertainer in 2004, 2006, 2007 and 2008 tie him with Garth Brooks for the most wins in that category. He is nominated for this distinction again, as well as for Male Vocalist and Musical Event, the latter with Mac McAnally for "Down the Road." McAnally is also contending for Musician of the Year along with Eddie Bayers, Paul Franklin and Brent Mason.

Darius Rucker wasn't just handing out good news on "Good Morning America," he was receiving it as well. Celebrated initially as lead vocalist and songwriter for the pop group Hootie & The Blowfish, Rucker is recognized as a solo Country artist with his first CMA Awards nominations, for Male Vocalist and New Artist. His Awards debut came in 2008 as a performer.

After winning Female Vocalist in 2006, 2007 and 2008, Carrie Underwood returns with two nominations. She's up for Female Vocalist and Musical Event, for "I Told You So," featuring Randy Travis. For writing that song, Travis picked up a nomination for Song of the Year. His original version was nominated for Single and Song in 1988.

A victory in the Female Vocalist category would tie Underwood for most

wins in that category with Martina McBride (1999, 2002–2004) and Reba McEntire (1984–1987). McBride and McEntire are each nominated for Female Vocalist, along with Miranda Lambert.

McEntire is nominated as well for Musical Event for her performance on "Cowgirls Don't Cry" with Brooks & Dunn. This brings her career total for nominations to 48 — the highest achieved to date by any female artist in the 43-year history of the Awards.

Brooks & Dunn have been presented with 19 trophies throughout their career, and in 2009 in addition to sharing the Musical Event nomination with McEntire they are nominated for a record 14th time for Vocal Duo.

Last year's Vocal Duo winner, Sugarland, is nominated for that title again, along with Album for *Love on the Inside*. Kristian Bush and Jennifer Nettles may also each win a trophy for producing that album with Byron Gallimore.

Other contenders in the Vocal Duo listing are Big & Rich, Joey + Rory in their first Awards nomination and Montgomery Gentry.

Until 2008, it was a long dry spell for the Eagles between their nominations for Vocal Group; they were among the finalists in 1976 and 1977 before earning nominations in 2008 and again in 2009. The Zac Brown Band is the new addition to the category along with returning nominees Lady Antebellum, Little Big Town and Rascal Flatts, who have swept the Vocal Group category the past six years. Reigning New Artist of the Year Lady Antebellum also received a second nomination for Single for "I Run to You," produced by Victoria Shaw and Paul Worley.

Artists debuting in the New Artist category include Randy Houser, Jamey Johnson, Jake Owen, Darius Rucker and the Zac Brown Band. (Artists can be nominated in this category only twice.)

Houser also earned a Music Video nomination for "Boots On," which was directed by Eric Welch. Rounding out that category is Billy Currington's "People Are Crazy," directed by The Brads. That song also picked up nominations for Single and Song, for writers Bobby Braddock and Troy Jones. Currington, who has two nominations, can receive an additional trophy for producing Single with Carson Chamberlain. His last CMA Awards nomination was in 2005, for Musical Event with Shania Twain for "Party for Two."

Making their debut in the Musical Event category are The Raconteurs with Ricky Skaggs and Ashley Monroe, for "Old Enough." Raconteurs frontman Jack White, of The White Stripes and The Dead Weather, is no stranger to the format, having produced Loretta Lynn's critically acclaimed album *Van Lear Rose*. In 1999, Skaggs received his last nomination in this category for "Same Old Train," which included a veritable Who's Who of Country stars

CMA Awards nominees and winners are determined by the more than 6,000 industry professional members of CMA. The first CMA Awards

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Banquet and Show" was held in 1967. The following year, NBC aired its first broadcast of the CMA Awards. The event has broadcast every year since then, making it the longest-running annual music awards program on network television. NBC aired it through 1971 and CBS from 1972 through 2005 before the broadcast premiered on ABC in 2006.

Winners of "The 43rd Annual CMA Awards" will be determined in a final round of online voting by eligible CMA members up to 5 PM/CT on Nov. 3. CMA Awards balloting is officiated by the international accounting firm of Deloitte & Touche LLP.

Nominees may inform CMA voting members through mail and e-mail services. Information is available at CMAemailservice.com.

CMA Individual Sterling and Organizational members may purchase

Awards tickets at My.CMAworld.com. CMA Individual Regular members and the public may purchase tickets through Ticketmaster.com, 1-800-745-3000 or the Sommet Center at 501 Broadway in Nashville.

"The 43rd Annual CMA Awards" will broadcast live from the Sommet Center, Wednesday, Nov. 11 (8-11 PM/ET) on ABC. Reigning CMA Male and Female Vocalist of the Year Brad Paisley and Carrie Underwood return for a second year to host "County Music's Biggest Night."

Visit CMAawards.com for information on Awards nominees and past winners, highlights, games, merchandise and Radio Player, offering music playable as a stream or on demand for specific titles. Join the CMA Mob, sign up for CMA Exclusive and visit CMA's Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, YouTube and other networks.

REACTIONS FROM SOME OF THE CMA AWARDS NOMINEES

"It is an honor to be recognized by the CMA membership. I am an avid supporter as well as a member for all that CMA does for us to support and promote the genre and for many that are in need, with how CMA gives to charity from CMA Music Festival proceeds."

Eddie Bayers *Musician of the Year*

"This nomination makes me ever mindful of my blessings and humbly grateful to all who voted for our song."

Bobby Braddock *Song of the Year*

"So much of what we do to make an album is in a windowless 2 AM environment. To be so lucky as to have that work nominated and brought to light is beyond humbling and words can't describe how I felt when the nominations came out. To be nominated as co-producer with such an extraordinary artist/entertainer/singer/songwriter as Taylor is just one of the coolest things red-headed bald guys can say they've done — unless of course you're Ron Howard. He's pretty cool too."

Nathan Paul Chapman *Album of the Year*

"The more you do this, the more those nominations mean. You realize what it takes to receive an honor like this, especially from your peers who make it happen and know the work and commitment it takes. You've got to be humbled knowing what you do is recognized. ... Moments like this force you to slow down and think about everything that goes into a nomination like this — all the pieces, the team who helps you pull stuff like this off and especially the faces of the fans when you're on a gator in the parking lot or flying over them on that swing we used for entrances this year. Obviously, I want to win Entertainer. But looking at all of this, thinking about everything we've seen and done, in some ways I've already won because of the memories we made."

Kenny Chesney *Entertainer, Male Vocalist and Musical Event of the Year*

"Watching the CMA Awards as a kid, I always said, 'One day, I'm going to be on there.' So this is a huge thing. Finally, I feel like somebody actually listened. That's all you could ever ask for."

Randy Houser *New Artist and Music Video of the Year*

"I spend more of my time producing records than playing, so I'm aware of the high level of musicianship in this town because of the guys I hire. To be nominated amongst them is a high honor. I appreciate being in that category."

Dann Huff *Album and Musician of the Year*

"Wahoo! We're dancing a jig on our kitchen floor! Today is Joey's birthday — and what a birthday surprise. Thanks to everyone!"

Rory Feek of Joey + Rory *Vocal Duo of the Year*

"Being halfway around the world and hearing that we got two CMA nominations is totally surreal. We're so far from home, but we're also really connected to Nashville because there are so many fans over here who absolutely love Country Music. Being in the 'Group of the Year' category is just unbelievable because we feel like we're only getting started. We still have so much to write about and say and do as artists. We honestly will never get used to seeing our name in the same category as the Eagles or Rascal Flatts."

Charles Kelley of Lady Antebellum

"We work so hard at songwriting and trying to find subjects and sounds that resonate with people, so getting our first No. 1 hit and now a CMA nomination for 'I Run to You' totally blows my mind. It definitely helps us validate quitting our old day jobs to start a band."

Chris Stapleton of Lady Antebellum *Vocal Group and Single of the Year*

"Each time I've been nominated, it's very validating but also very surreal to see my name listed next to legends like Reba. I mean, Reba McEntire ... There is no higher in Country Music."

Miranda Lambert *Female Vocalist of the Year*

"It's really cool to be included among all these other great artists and we're incredibly grateful to have our music recognized by our peers."

Jimi Westbrook of Little Big Town *Vocal Group of the Year*

"I'm a guy that is hard to surprise, at a point in life that makes surprise even less likely. Yet here I sit with a CMA Awards nomination for singing a song with a real good friend, surprised as all git out. And when you wake up in the morning with music in your head (and hands and heart), it is truly a blessing to be recognized for making music. Thanks to CMA for validating my license to pick. I'm honored."

Mac McAnally *Musical Event and Musician of the Year*

"I'd like to thank my wife Julie, my daughter Zoe and everyone in CMA who voted for me ... Wait ... Oh, I'm just being nominated! Sorry ... It's still an honor."

Brent Mason *Musician of the Year*

"When we originally wrote 'In Color,' I knew it was special and for it to be acknowledged by our peers and the CMA is extremely rewarding. Jamey Johnson's performance of the song is amazing. He deserves every accolade he has received."

James Otto *Song of the Year*

"Everything with this record has been wild, and this really caps the year we've had with these two honors."

Darius Rucker *Male Vocalist and New Artist of the Year*

"It's an honor to be considered. Congrats to Zac and the band for a stellar year of Love, Peace and Chicken Grease."

Keith Stegall *Single of the Year*

"This is our first nomination in the category for Album of the Year," said Kristian Bush. Jennifer Nettles continued, "And we are thrilled. Writing is a joy for us and we loved putting our songs together for this album. Besides, what's more satisfying than being honored for a collection of your scars, dreams and total dysfunction?"

Sugarland *Vocal Duo and Album of the Year*

"I am jumping up and down surrounded by dogs and my mom and screaming like it's Christmas morning. I'll never forget this."

Taylor Swift *Entertainer, Female Vocalist, Album and Music Video of the Year*

"I am thrilled that a new generation of young Country fans have had the opportunity to hear 'I Told You So' and are enjoying it once again. The song means so much to me, and to be able to collaborate with Carrie Underwood was pure joy."

Randy Travis *Musical Event and Song of the Year*

"I am always so honored to receive award nominations, but this year I am even more thrilled to share a nomination with Randy Travis. Collaborating with him on 'I Told You So' was a dream come true, and I am especially happy for him to be nominated for Song of the Year as the sole writer of this beautiful song."

Carrie Underwood *Female Vocalist and Musical Event of the Year*

"This is absolutely awe inspiring. I've never loved playing music as much as I have this year. The response to the new album has been divine and, given the crazy times we're in, the celebratory atmosphere and positive energy night after night on this particular tour has been nothing short of a miracle — and we're not even done yet!"

Keith Urban *Entertainer, Male Vocalist, Album, Music Video and Musical Event of the Year*

2009 CMA AWARDS NOMINEES

THE 43RD ANNUAL CMA AWARDS

ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR

KENNY CHESNEY
BRAD PAISLEY
GEORGE STRAIT
TAYLOR SWIFT
KEITH URBAN

FEMALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR

MIRANDA LAMBERT
MARTINA McBRIDE
REBA McENTIRE
TAYLOR SWIFT
CARRIE UNDERWOOD

MALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR

KENNY CHESNEY
BRAD PAISLEY
DARIUS RUCKER
GEORGE STRAIT
KEITH URBAN

VOCAL GROUP OF THE YEAR

EAGLES
LADY ANTEBELLUM
LITTLE BIG TOWN
RASCAL FLATTS
ZAC BROWN BAND

VOCAL DUO OF THE YEAR

BIG & RICH
BROOKS & DUNN
JOEY + RORY
MONTGOMERY GENTRY
SUGARLAND

SONG OF THE YEAR

Award goes to songwriter

"Chicken Fried"
ZAC BROWN
WYATT DURRETTE

"I Told You So"
RANDY TRAVIS

"In Color"
JAMEY JOHNSON
LEE THOMAS MILLER
JAMES OTTO

"People are Crazy"
BOBBY BRADDOCK
TROY JONES

"Then"
BRAD PAISLEY | CHRIS DuBOIS
ASHLEY GORLEY

NEW ARTIST OF THE YEAR

RANDY HOUSER
JAMEY JOHNSON
JAKE OWEN
DARIUS RUCKER
ZAC BROWN BAND

ALBUM OF THE YEAR

Award goes to artist and producer

American Saturday Night
BRAD PAISLEY
Produced by Frank Rogers and
Chris DuBois
Arista Nashville

Defying Gravity
KEITH URBAN
Produced by Dann Huff and
Keith Urban
Capitol Records Nashville

Fearless
TAYLOR SWIFT
Produced by Nathan Chapman
and Taylor Swift
Big Machine Records

Love on the Inside
SUGARLAND
Produced by Byron Gallimore,
Kristian Bush and Jennifer Nettles
Mercury Nashville

That Lonesome Song
JAMEY JOHNSON
Produced by The Kent Hardly
Playboys
Mercury Nashville

MUSICIAN OF THE YEAR

EDDIE BAYERS | Drums
PAUL FRANKLIN | Steel Guitar
DANN HUFF | Guitar
BRENT MASON | Guitar
MAC McANALLY | Guitar

SINGLE OF THE YEAR

Award goes to artist and producer

"Chicken Fried"
ZAC BROWN BAND
Produced by Keith Stegall
Atlantic Records

"I Run to You"
LADY ANTEBELLUM
Produced by Victoria Shaw
and Paul Worley
Capitol Records Nashville

"In Color"
JAMEY JOHNSON
Produced by The Kent Hardly
Playboys
Mercury Nashville

"People are Crazy"
BILLY CURRINGTON
Produced by Carson Chamberlain
and Billy Currington
Mercury Nashville

"Then"
BRAD PAISLEY
Produced by Frank Rogers and
Chris DuBois
Arista Nashville

MUSIC VIDEO OF THE YEAR

Award goes to artist and director

"Boots On"
RANDY HOUSER
Directed by Eric Welch

"Love Story"
TAYLOR SWIFT
Directed by Trey Fanjoy

"People Are Crazy"
BILLY CURRINGTON
Directed by The Brads

"Start a Band"
BRAD PAISLEY
(duet with KEITH URBAN)
Directed by Jim Shea

"Troubadour"
GEORGE STRAIT
Directed by Trey Fanjoy



Darius Rucker participates in the ABC affiliates satellite tour at Media 3 studios in New York City. photo: Stuart Ramson

MUSICAL EVENT OF THE YEAR

Award goes to each artist

"Cowgirls Don't Cry"
BROOKS & DUNN
featuring REBA McENTIRE
Arista Nashville

"Down the Road"
KENNY CHESNEY
(with MAC McANALLY)
Blue Chair Records, LLC and
BNA Records

"Everything but Quits"
LEE ANN WOMACK
(duet with GEORGE STRAIT)
MCA Nashville

"I Told You So"
CARRIE UNDERWOOD
featuring RANDY TRAVIS
19 Recordings / Arista Nashville

"Old Enough"
THE RACONTEURS featuring
RICKY SKAGGS and
ASHLEY MONROE
Third Man Records / Warner Bros.
Records

"Start a Band"
BRAD PAISLEY
(duet with KEITH URBAN)
Arista Nashville

CHUCK WICKS ANNOUNCES CMA BROADCAST AWARDS FINALISTS

Final nominees for the nation's top Country radio stations and broadcast personalities were delivered to Country radio on Sept. 9, when Chuck Wicks revealed the CMA Broadcast Personality and CMA Radio Station of the Year finalists live from Premiere Radio Networks' New York City studios.

A tough race to call this year is who will claim bragging rights for the CMA National Broadcast Personality of the Year. Nominee Bob Kingsley has won the trophy two times, in 2001, which was the inaugural year for the Award, and 2003. Lia Knight was nominated in 2003 and won in both 2005 and 2007. Nominated for the first time in 2008, Kix Brooks, of Brooks & Dunn, host of "American Country Countdown," is nominated again in 2009 and if he wins it would be the first time that a Country artist would claim a CMA Broadcast Awards trophy.

Five finalists are selected for CMA Broadcast Personality and CMA Radio Station of the Year in four categories defined by market size based on population as ranked by Arbitron (Major, Large, Medium and Small market).

Entries for CMA Broadcast Personality of the Year are judged on aircheck, ratings, community involvement and biographical



Chuck Wicks and Rosemary Young, Senior Producer/Country Programming, Premiere Radio Networks, host the exclusive live radio broadcast of the CMA Awards nominees announcement.

information. Candidates for CMA Radio Station of the Year are judged on airchecks, ratings history, community involvement and format leadership.

Three finalists are selected for CMA National Broadcast Personality all of whom must be syndicated, short-form, hub voice-tracking and satellite personalities heard in at least three markets with a minimum of 40 shows per year.

CMA members who are full-time, on-air personalities and CMA member radio stations in the United States and Canada were eligible to enter. Entries are judged by a panel of distinguished broadcast professionals, representing all market sizes and regions.

Winners are determined by an aggregate score of the first round and a decision by a different panel of judges for the second round. The international accounting firm of Deloitte & Touche, LLP tabulates scoring by the judges.

CMA Broadcast Award winners are not eligible to enter in consecutive years, therefore, those who received trophies in 2008 were not eligible in 2009. Winners will be notified in mid-October and acknowledged on "The 43rd Annual CMA Awards."

CMA BROADCAST PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

NATIONAL

"American Country Countdown"
(Kix Brooks) – Citadel Media

"Bob Kingsley's Country Top 40"
(Bob Kingsley)
– KCCS Productions, Inc.

"The Lia Show" (Lia Knight)
– Dial Global

MAJOR MARKET

"The All New Dr. Don Morning Show with Doc, Grunwald, Rachael and Jason"
(Don Carpenter, Steve Grunwald, Rachael Hunter, Jason "The 300 Pound Cowboy" Raithel)
– WYCD/Detroit, Mich.

"Cliff and Company: Cliff, Morgan, Tanner and Tori"
(Cliff Dumas, Morgan Thomas, Bill Tanner, Tori Peck)
– KSON/San Diego, Calif.

"The Cornbread Morning Show featuring Cornbread, Pat James, Producer Annie, Father Harry and Captain Mac"
("Cornbread" Jeff Law, Pat James, Annie Henson, Harry Schroeder, Mac "Captain Mac" Douglas)
– WIL/St. Louis, Mo.

"The Laurie DeYoung Morning Show" (Laurie DeYoung)
– WPOC/Baltimore, Md.

"Paul Schadt and Sarah in the Morning" (Paul Schadt, Sarah Waters) – WKKT/Charlotte, N.C.

LARGE MARKET

"Bucky & Bob: The Talk of Austin" (Bucky Godbolt, Bob Cole) – KVET/Austin, Texas

"Chris Carr & Company"
(Chris Carr, Jeffrey "Maverick" Bolen, Jason Statt)
– WUBE/Cincinnati, Ohio

"Jeff Roper in the Morning"
(Jeff Roper, Angie Ward, Adam "Flash" Dellinger)
– WTQR/Greensboro/Winston-Salem/High Point, N.C.

"Jim Denny and Friends"
(Jim Denny, Deborah Honeycutt, Kevin Freeman)
– WFMS/Indianapolis, Ind.

"Karen, Scott and Radar... The Moo Crew" (Karen Dalessandro, Scott Dolphin, Tony "Radar" Hess)
– WMIL/Milwaukee-Racine, Wis.

MEDIUM MARKET

"The 97 Country Breakfast Club with Roger, Tom and Melissa"
(Roger Todd, Tom O'Brien, Melissa Moran) – WPCV/Lakeland, Fla.

"Brian and Kellie Morning Show" (Brian Pierce, Kellie Michaels) – KFDI/Wichita, Kan.

"The Kat 103 Morning Show with Steve Lundy, Gina and Craig" (Steve Lundy, Gina Melton, Craig Allen) – KXKT/Omaha, Neb.

"Tom & Becky in the Morning"
(Tom Owens, Becky Palmer)
– WBBS/Syracuse, N.Y.

"WIVK at Night with Jack Ryan"
(Jack Ryan)
– WIVK/Knoxville, Tenn.

SMALL MARKET

"Barrett, Fox & Berry"
(Bill Barrett, Tim Fox, Tracy Berry)
– KKNU/Eugene, Ore.

"Bearman and Ken in the Morning" (Benny "Bearman" Martin, Ken Hicks)
– WUSY/Chattanooga, Tenn.

"Gator & The StyckMan" (Gator Harrison, Greg "StyckMan" Owens)
– WGSQ/Cookeville, Tenn.

"Mee in the Morning"
(Kevin Mee, Brenda Mee)
– KIZN/Boise, Idaho

"Middays with Philip Gibbons"
(Philip Gibbons)
– WGSQ/Cookeville, Tenn.

CMA RADIO STATION OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

MAJOR MARKET

KMPS Seattle/Tacoma, Wash.
KYGO Denver/Boulder, Colo.
WPOC Baltimore, Md.
WUSN Chicago, Ill.
WYCD Detroit, Mich.

LARGE MARKET

KAJA San Antonio, Texas
KASE Austin, Texas
WQDR Raleigh, N.C.
WTQR Greensboro/Winston-Salem/High Point, N.C.
WUBE Cincinnati, Ohio

MEDIUM MARKET

KSSN Little Rock, Ark.
KUZZ Bakersfield, Calif.
KXKT Omaha, Neb.
WBBS Syracuse, N.Y.
WGNA Albany/Schenectady/Troy, N.Y.

SMALL MARKET

WAXX Eau Claire, Wis.
WBKR Owensboro, Ky.
WKSF Asheville, N.C.
WUSY Chattanooga, Tenn.
WYCD Pensacola, Fla.

REACTIONS FROM SOME OF THE CMA BROADCAST AWARDS FINALISTS

"When I was first approached about hosting 'American Country Countdown' it was a head-scratcher! I'm sure it left the longstanding ACC affiliates wondering, 'Is this guy serious?' It definitely left me wondering, 'Can I be worthy of such an important job? A year or so later I was in L.A. with Ronnie Dunn, receiving our star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and looking at Gene Autry's star. I found out later that he's the only recipient ever to receive three stars, for music, radio and the movies. I realize I'm not Gene Autry, and my movie career is not exactly on fire, but it certainly inspired me to make his memory proud, as well as the memories of Eddy Arnold, Carl Smith and other Country singers who got their start in radio. I couldn't be more excited about how far we've come and how many exciting new ideas we have on the table! My entire production team is laughing, crying, serious-thinking and I've gone from being a nervous wreck to truly looking forward to getting into the ACC studio to record the show each week. This CMA nomination is a very important acknowledgment of our hard work. It means the world to me and I thank everyone who is a part of this success, including each of our great affiliates. All the fans who listen each week know they can count on 'American Country Countdown' to bring them behind-the-scenes stories, the best songs and the biggest stars in Country Music — and one grateful Country singer having the time of his life!"

Kix Brooks | "American Country Countdown"

"It's hard to describe the feeling that comes with being nominated. It's a lot of things: gratitude, affection for the industry, pride in the team that puts the show together. It never gets old. I've never lost the thrill that goes with counting them down and sharing the stories behind the songs. That moment behind the microphone ties it all together for me — the artists, the fans, the music. I get to be right there in the midst of all that positive energy, doing what I love. To be nominated, to have earned the trust and appreciation of my friends in Country Music, means the world to me."

Bob Kingsley | "Bob Kingsley's Country Top 40"

"KAJA feels very fortunate to have been nominated. It made our day here in San Antonio. We all feel very proud of our accomplishments over the past 12 months, so this huge honor caps off an incredible year. Thanks to all at CMA!"

George King | KAJA

"We're so touched to be honored by the Carpet Manufacturers Association. I hope the prize is shag."

Tracy Berry | KKNLU

"I freaked out immediately when I got the news. I danced with my wife, our little girl and our dog. I phoned all the team members and shared the news. They were absolutely thrilled. Being recognized by CMA is a career peak for anybody. It's an incredible accomplishment. Our thanks to you and our listeners, who make this possible. I'm excited at the success of this radio station and this great team."

Cliff Dumas | KSON

"To hear that we had been nominated was very exciting news. It's always an honor to be recognized by your peers and to be alongside the other outstanding stations. None of this would be possible without our listeners and the great team we have at KSSN."

Chad Heritage | KSSN

"We're proud to be honored as one of the country's better Country stations. We won in 1998 and 2002 and I'd love to see us front and center again."

Evan Bridwell | KUZZ

"We've worked really hard to give back to our community. With the help of our wonderful listeners, we've been able to raise more than \$1 million for 40 charitable causes and events in the Omaha area. The children and charities mean the world to us. We surely don't do it for the Awards. However, recognition from CMA is a true honor. Thank you so much."

Erik Johnson | KXKT

"It is pretty incredible to think that there are close to 2,000 Country radio stations in the United States and we are honored and blessed to be one of the Top 5 in our categories. We accept these nominations on behalf of the entire Central New York community. It is a total culmination of listener participation, the contributions of time and effort they put into charity work and the support they give to Country Music."

Tom Owens and Becky Palmer | WBBS

"Jim, Kevin and I are humbled by the nomination and feel fortunate to be among such great talent. We are extremely excited by the recognition of our peers in the radio industry. We are fans of Country Music and couldn't be more grateful to work among Hoosiers in our home state."

Deborah Honeycutt | WFMS

"This nomination validates all of the hard work my staff and I conduct each year. This honor is also representative of the very tight and honored relationships WGNA has with Country Music, its performers and the people who market it to the masses. It is most of all a true honor because my peers, fellow broadcasters and programmers were the ones who voted. To be one of five stations nominated nationally is a blessing — but I would be remiss if I didn't say, 'We want to win this one for Albany, N.Y.!'"

Tom "Jake" Jacobsen | WGNA

"This is my first CMA nomination and I feel honored and blessed to be recognized by my peers. And it's terrific that my co-workers, Gator and The StycMan, hosts of the morning show, are up for the same Award. Country Music is my life. I've been in the industry for 35 years, and I've spent all of them in radio on The Country Giant, 94.7. It's a blessing and an honor."

Philip Gibbons | WGSQ

"CMA Awards is the World Series, the Super Bowl, of Country Music. and to be nominated is an honor that most don't get to taste. I feel privileged because we are the only format that makes a big deal about who we are and that's what makes me the proudest. The CMAs is Country pride."

Cornbread | WIL

"As a lifetime CMA member, it's a privilege every year to vote for Country Music's best entertainers. Now to be nominees with some of our industry's most entertaining broadcasters is truly an honor."

Pat James | WIL

"To be nominated feels like something in the middle of my Tennessee Volunteers winning a football game and that thrill you get when you go upside down on the Mystery Mine at Dollywood. This is the fifth year in a row 'WIVK at Night' has been included on this prestigious list. And while a trophy would look mighty nice on the mantel above my fireplace, the certificate on the wall next to the mantel looks pretty good too. Thanks, CMA!"

Jack Ryan | WIVK

"All of us at 99.9 Kiss Country are sincerely grateful and honored to be nominated. It's great for the entire team to be recognized for its hard work and commitment to serving our audience and community with the best possible product. Congratulations to all the nominees and best of luck."

Jeff Davis | WKSF

"We were blessed to win this incredible Award in 2001 and have been nominated in previous years, but it never gets old. The CMA Award is the greatest honor a Country broadcaster can receive. We're humbled and excited and can't wait to celebrate the nomination with everyone in Nashville this November."

Karen Dalessandro | WMIL

"How exciting is this? Did you hear the shout of excitement all the way in Nashville? To be nominated two years in a row is an honor above words. The 97 Country Breakfast Club feels blessed to be able to wake up central Florida every morning and share the best music in the world with them — Country Music. We are very humbled and honored."

Roger Todd | WPCV

"We were very excited to learn of our nominations. To be recognized by your peers is a tremendous honor. The amount of emphasis placed on community events is what makes us most proud."

Meg Stevens | WPOC

"I was on vacation at Disney World, having breakfast with my kids and Snow White, when my PD John Roberts called to let me know both the station and my morning show had been nominated. So we celebrated with all the Disney characters! I'm very proud of the station and the work all our staff does. It's a great feeling to know others are listening to your work and think what you do between the songs is worthy of a CMA Award."

Jeff Roper | WTQR

"We are having one of those coveted 'pinch ourselves' moments. But we know it's certainly not anything that we're doing to deserve the nomination; it's all about the listeners and the support they've shown us over the past 25 years that keeps our water running and our lights on. Everything else is icing on the cake and something we certainly don't want to take for granted."

Brian Stewart | WUSY

"We are absolutely ecstatic about the Broadcaster nomination; Dr. Don, Rachael Grunwald and Jason were jumping up and down. And then the Radio Station announcement came and we were insanely happy. To get two nominations in one day was just unbelievable; it's one of the biggest thrills of my broadcasting career. So we're on cloud nine and looking forward to the show and hopefully to taking away some hardware."

Tim Roberts | WPCV

BRAD PAISLEY and CARRIE UNDERWOOD RETURN AS CMA AWARDS HOSTS



You know, some of the all-time greats — some of the great men of Country — have hosted this show, so I've got some massive, and I mean huge, boots to fill. And also, I believe Dolly hosted the show once, so good luck."

With those words and a wide-eyed glance at his co-host, which was returned with a deadpan stare straight out of a classic TV sitcom, Brad Paisley and Carrie Underwood kicked off last year's CMA Awards and set the tone for the three hours that followed. Their show-opening banter and monologue made it clear to anyone inside Nashville's Sommet Center — and to the millions of Country Music fans watching on television — that "Country Music's Biggest Night" had been placed in the hands of two people who were going to handle their duties with a perfect balance of revelry and reverence.

"It was definitely on our minds," Underwood said. "Everybody's there for a common goal: to celebrate a wonderful year in music with each other. You don't want to be the reason that people think, 'That was just an "OK" show.'" Looking back on the evening, Paisley echoed those thoughts: "This is a night when Country Music should have lots of class."

That goal remained on their minds all night long, even as she won a third Female Vocalist of the Year Award and he repeated as Male Vocalist. But they felt confident they'd achieve it following those opening moments.

by MAURICE MINER

"Nobody knows until you walk out what that's going to be like, because that's not what we do for a living," Paisley explained. But then people responded to their jokes — the pair saw long-time host Vince Gill laugh and bury his face in his hands at their exchange — and they stepped backstage to find that they'd already earned the approval of another veteran award show host.

"Right after the monologue, Hugh Jackman and Nicole Kidman were waiting backstage (as presenters) and I heard that he said to someone, 'They're doing really good,' which was really cool to hear," Paisley recalled. Having won rave reviews for hosting the Tony Awards in recent years, Jackman would go on to host the Oscars — high praise indeed.

At the end of the night, Paisley and Underwood had one question on their minds: Was there a chance they'd get asked back? "We both left there feeling like we were starting to get the hang of it and hoping we would get this chance again," Paisley remembered. "Right away, we were both talking about that."

So when the call came this year, they were ready. "You think of all the people that have hosted it in the past," Underwood said. "And for them to ask, we must be doing something right."

What makes these two the perfect hosts for this year's 43rd annual celebration? Beyond the success they enjoyed in their hosts debut last year, the reasons are many: Both remain at the top of their respective

games, continuing to score hits, top the sales charts, sell out arenas on tour — and through it all they provide the world with two consistent examples of what Country Music in the new millennium is all about.

Each thinks the other is worthy of the role too. "She is exactly what she wants this show to be. It's classy the minute she walks out," Paisley said.

"He's fun, he's smart, he's quick and he knows how to do all that without offending anybody. And, like me, he respects the CMA Awards so much that he wants to do a good job," Underwood offered.

That appreciation for "Country Music's Biggest Night" — and everything it represents — is deep-rooted in both of these entertainers. Paisley remembers watching the show as a youth in his native West Virginia; Underwood did the same growing up in Oklahoma. Both dreamed of one day being part of the show. And each counts the CMA Awards they've earned among the highest honors of their career.

"It means a lot. It means that you've made history in a way that very few people in Country Music have," Paisley said. And Underwood added, "In the back of the program book, they list all of the winners from the past. You get to see every Female Vocalist, Male Vocalist, Entertainer of the Year — everything. It's amazing to see your name there with so many incredible artists. That's something that can never be taken away from you."

Paisley has won 11 CMA Awards since the start of his career a decade ago. Underwood has earned five since arriving on the scene a few years back. Both began their winning ways with the Horizon Award (now the New Artist of the Year Award), and both artists walk into this year's event with multiple nominations.

Paisley leads the pack; his seven nominations are more than any other artist earned this year. A pair (Single and Song) are for his hit song, "Then," from his nominated album, *American Saturday Night*, produced by Frank Rogers and Chris DuBois; two more (Musical Event and Music Video directed by Jim Shea) are for "Start a Band," the duet with Keith Urban that kicked off last year's CMA Awards. He could also take home a third Male Vocalist trophy or become a first-time Entertainer of the Year. Paisley's 48 nominations place him in some impressive company — only Brooks & Dunn (49), Vince Gill (51), Alan Jackson (79), Reba McEntire (48) and George Strait (79) have earned as many or more nods in the 43-year history of the CMA Awards.

Underwood, who releases her third album, *Play On*, a week before this year's CMA Awards, is in select company too. She is one of just five women to be named Female Vocalist three times; a fourth win this year would place her alongside Reba McEntire and Martina McBride in the record books. Underwood is also nominated in the Musical Event category with Randy Travis for their remake of "I Told You So," a hit for Travis 20 years ago that also earned him a Song of the Year nod this year.

Though they'll be onstage Nov. 11 as hosts, nominees and performers, both hosts know that for three hours their role is to be the "face" of Country Music for millions of music lovers coast-to-coast and around the world. Each is proud to be entrusted with that opportunity. "We want to do our best to show people what we (the Country Music community) are all about," Underwood said. "It's about contributing and giving back. We love this town. And we love this music," Paisley added.

That same thinking is a big part of what made their hosting debut a success. Though they made some jokes to start, and though a quick change following his show-opening performance left Paisley tucking in his shirt and found Underwood reaching over to straighten his tie, he offered these words on their behalf just minutes into last year's show:

"Before we go any further, Carrie and I just want to take a moment to say that we both grew up watching the CMAs each and every year, so to be here together actually hosting this show has got to be the honor of a lifetime. We really want to do this show justice and take you all along on this exciting ride tonight."

Underwood replied with a resolute "Absolutely," and the evening unfolded. This year, on Nov. 11, nominees will become winners, performances will bring people to their feet and magical memories like those we all recall from CMA Awards broadcasts of the past will be created. Paisley and Underwood will be part of all that — and they'll do their best to showcase those nominees, winners, performances and memories-in-the-making for all of us to see and enjoy.

"IT'S ABOUT CONTRIBUTING AND GIVING BACK. WE LOVE THIS TOWN. AND WE LOVE THIS MUSIC."

— Brad Paisley

"WE WANT TO DO OUR BEST TO SHOW PEOPLE WHAT WE (THE COUNTRY MUSIC COMMUNITY) ARE ALL ABOUT."

— Carrie Underwood



THE 43RD ANNUAL CMA AWARDS

Awards host photo: Bob D'Amico/ABC, 2008 CMA Awards photo: John Russell

CMA AND ABC TRIUMPH WITH "CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL: COUNTRY'S NIGHT TO ROCK"



by BOB DOERSCHUK

Consistently a strong performer, the ABC television special "CMA Music Festival: Country's Night to Rock," featuring **Trace Adkins, Jason Aldean, Dierks Bentley, Brooks & Dunn, Kenny Chesney, Julianne Hough, Jamey Johnson, The Judds, Kid Rock, Lady Antebellum, Miranda Lambert, Martina McBride, Reba McEntire, Jake Owen, Brad Paisley, Kellie Pickler, John Rich, Darius Rucker, Sugarland, Taylor Swift** and **Zac Brown Band**, dominated ratings and reaffirmed the durability and vitality of Country Music.

Expanded from two to three hours in prime time, the show aired 8-11 PM/ET on Monday, Aug. 31. With more time at his disposal, Executive Producer Robert Deaton was able to go deeper in coverage, offering more music from featured artists onstage at LP Field in Nashville and in a jam-packed club gig. The camera probed beyond the music too, with behind-the-scenes coverage, a thoughtful commentary from McEntire on her history with the Festival, a playful Q&A session involving Swift and some of her fans and a walking tour of Downtown Nashville led by Pickler, who discovers a flavor named in her honor at a local ice cream parlor.

The public was ready for this more encompassing approach. Based on findings by Nielsen Media Research, the special catapulted ABC ahead of its competition in the nightly ratings. With 7.4 million total viewers, the special topped CBS (7 million) by 6 percent, NBC (5.6 million) by 32 percent and Fox (4 million) by 85 percent. The broad demographic attracted by Country Music also helped ABC finish first for the night among Women ages 18-49 and 25-54 and Teens 12-17.

But the numbers go beyond just this one night. In Total Viewers as well as Adults 18-49, the special delivered the biggest Monday night audience to the network since the final episode of "The Bachelorette" on July 27, making it ABC's second-biggest performer on that night of the summer. Going back further, it drew 2.5 million more viewers than the 2008 broadcast, along with a 43 percent increase in Adults 18-49. It was the show's biggest audience in four years.

Much of this owes to comprehensive efforts to spread the word all the way up to broadcast night. TV tune-in promotion began Aug. 3, during ABC's "Sugarland: Live on the Inside," the duo's first network special. In the weeks that followed, spots ran on CMT, GAC, Outdoor, SOAPnet, TV Land, TV Guide Channel, Macrovision IPG, Comcast iGuide and DIY Network. Ads were broadcast on a variety of network radio programs and on Classic Rock and AC as well as Country formats. Radio promotions fanned interest, including a "Watch & Win Entertainment Package" that offered a 32-inch flat-panel HD TV, GPS system and two four-day tickets to the Festival among its prizes.

A print ad campaign focused on industry and fan-targeted publications, including *Country Aircheck*, *Country Weekly*, *Field & Stream*, *Outdoor Life* and *People Country*, in addition to trailers in movie theaters throughout the United States, a display at Nashville International Airport, an in-network spot for Best Buy, end caps at Wal-Mart and much more.

Online interest was kindled through placements that included ads on **TheBoot.com**, banners and ads on **YouTube.com** that guided visitors to a custom channel built on the site by ABC and responses to searches for information on Country Music, artists, tours and other related topics on Google, Yahoo! and other portals.

Artists helped spread word of the broadcast too. Among those who added their voices were Lambert in an interview with the *New York Daily News*, Pickler in *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, Paisley for syndication via Tribune Media Service and Rucker in *TV Guide* and Gannett News Service. Going to radio, Rucker discussed the show on Premiere Radio Networks' "After Mid-Nite with Blair Garner" and "Big D & Bubba," as did Aldean, Sugarland's Kristian Bush, Rich and Wynonna. Bush and Wynonna also spoke on "Foxworthy Countdown," while Bush, Lady Antebellum, McEntire and Rucker talked up the special on "Country Today Radio Prep;" Rich did the same on "The Glenn Beck Program." TV appearances promoting the show

were made by Swift and Hough on "Entertainment Tonight." ABC promoted on "Good Morning America" with actor Cameron Mathison and via in-hotel programming during the Television Critics Association Summer Press Tour in Pasadena, Calif.

CMA began its campaign at the Festival itself, where fans lined up to be photographed in the Fan Fair Exhibit Hall on a mockup of the LP Field stage. Later they would access their photos from **CMAfest.com**; each download and every copy shared with friends was branded with a TV tune-in reminder. The site also featured a national mobile sweepstakes to win tickets to the Festival, a widget to post on Facebook and MySpace pages and more.

Festival content was prominent on the **ABC.com** home page, where visitors could watch the Webisode series "Around Town with Luke Bryan" and "Nashville Nights with Jake Owen," along with "I'm with Wy," on which a fan documents Wynonna's Festival experiences. These series showed as well on **YouTube.com** and **Hulu.com**.

CMA engaged fans with the debut of its "Tweet 'n' Greet," a Twitter feed through which artists posted accounts of their adventures during the ABC show. By the evening's last tweet, more than 24,000 followers had been added to the artists' Twitter accounts, with an estimated Twitter audience of 1,433,917. Tweets highlights included:

Bentley: "Great! My one night away from 'American Saturday Night Tour' with Paisley and I'm having to watch him sing that song."

Lady Antebellum: "Howdy and welcome to the tweetin' party."

McBride: "This Taylor song makes me cry. Delaney is almost 15 and just started high school this year. Wow."

McEntire: "God created the sleeveless shirt for Kenny Chesney!"

Pickler: "Kenny was my first concert. I was 16. I painted 'Honk if U Love Kenny Chesney' on the back windshield of my Honda."

Zac Brown Band: "Kix Brooks is tearing up that harmonica. Looking forward to seeing Brad Paisley."

To assist ABC affiliates as well as radio, TV and online partners spread news of the broadcast, CMA provided graphics, audio, video and other digital assets online. These included a widget showing text messages from the "CMA Mob" community of mobile phone users and a "Web slice" posted on June 3; when accessed via Internet Explorer 8, it could be installed on the search engine tool bar, where it would turn bold to herald updated Festival news. In its first week, 27,000 visitors had downloaded this widget, which was rebranded with tune-in information after the Festival.

The work that went into the ABC broadcast, creative and promotional, reverberates beyond the next-day ratings. Typically, sales to the upcoming Festival surge after the network show; this year, however, the post-broadcast spike was seven times greater than in 2008. Artists featured in the special enjoyed surges in album sales too; the biggest gainers over sales during the week previous to the show, according to SoundScan's data for singles sales, included Aldean's "She's Country" (up by 39 percent), Owen's "Eight Second Ride" (38 percent), Sugarland's "Joey" (44 percent) and Johnson's "In Color" (163 percent).

"We are thrilled with the performance of the CMA Music Festival this year," said Mark Bracco, VP of Alternative Series and Specials, ABC Entertainment. "We expanded to three hours successfully and saw the highest ratings for our special in four years. We look forward to the same success with the CMA Awards in November."

Directed by Gary Halvorson, "CMA Music Festival: Country's Night to Rock" was filmed in high definition and broadcast in 720 Progressive (720P), ABC's selected HDTV format, with 5.1 channel surround sound.

CMA SIGNS SALES, BRANDING and MARKETING PARTNERSHIP with MS&L

by BOB DOERSCHUK

Following a competitive review, CMA has named MS&L, one of the world's leading communications firms, its exclusive sales, marketing and branding partner.

MS&L will work with CMA primarily on entertainment marketing, branding and sponsor partnerships with an eye towards expanding the relationship into assistance with research, digital communications and program content creation and execution.

The sponsorship sales and branding effort will be designed to support Country Music and CMA's constituents, including artists, management companies, record labels and Country-based networks and media.

"Following a period of research, discovery and competitive selection, CMA decided that MS&L's communications, entertainment and branding expertise will help us achieve our marketing goals, including expanding our fan base, identifying and securing strong business partners and elevating our brand," said CMA CEO Tammy Genovese.

MS&L will be charged with developing and marketing sponsorship packages around premier CMA properties, including the CMA Awards and CMA Music Festival. In addition, MS&L will work with CMA to develop new CMA equities to offer more opportunities for brands and companies to partner with Country Music.

Fallon Worldwide and 49 percent-owned Bartle Bogle Hegarty; media agencies with two worldwide networks ZenithOptimedia and Starcom MediaVest Group; and marketing services, including digital and interactive communications through Digitas, relationship and direct marketing, public and media relations, corporate and financial communications, multicultural communications and event communications.

Though CMA helped pioneer the practice of bringing sponsors into the Country Music realm, MS&L promises to take these already successful efforts to greater levels of benefit and to expand into potentially fruitful areas yet to be tapped.

"Any sponsorship or marketing effort that we present on behalf of CMA is going to be customized and built from the ground up, from its foundation to the top," said MacKenzie. "We match that up with a brand new eye on the great assets of CMA and the needs of the brand."

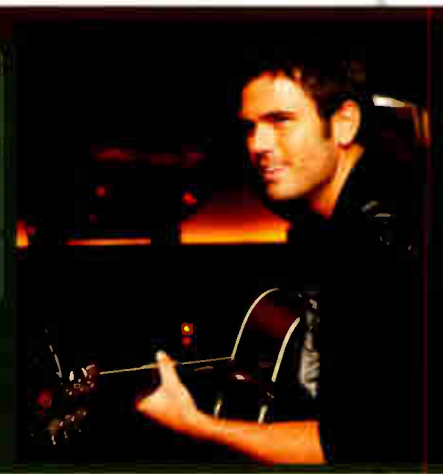
According to MacKenzie, whose professional history includes work with Country Music while on staff at Warner/TBA, an entertainment, marketing and event production company, and SFX, which is now Live Nation, this partnership is well timed, given the emergent position of Country Music within contemporary culture and society.

"If the past decade was about opulence, bling and how much you have,



Bruce MacKenzie, Senior VP of Entertainment and Marketing, MS&L; Sheri Warnke, VP of Strategic Partnerships, MS&L; Chuck Wicks; CMA CEO Tammy Genovese; CMA Board President Steve Moore, Senior VP, AEG Live!; and Dan Bowen, CMA VP of Marketing Strategies and Communications.

Chuck Wicks performs at a press conference announcing the MS&L partnership with CMA, at the Koi Lounge in New York City's Chinatown Brasserie.



"Our goal is to work with CMA to support and grow this vital and vibrant art form," said Bruce MacKenzie, MS&L Senior VP of Entertainment Marketing and head of MS&L's entertainment marketing, branding and sponsorship sales group. "We are excited and proud to be a partner in this new chapter in CMA's history and to help take the organization to new levels."

Founded in 1938, MS&L is a leading global communications firm and part of MS&L Worldwide, a network of communications brands and consultancies with 54 offices in 28 countries throughout North America, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia, as well as an extensive affiliate network. The agency specializes in using research, insights and technology to create and execute powerful communications strategies that are critical to success. Through a unique combination of advice, advocacy and action, MS&L delivers measurable business results for many of the world's largest companies and most successful brands, including Allergan, Best Buy, Eli Lilly, General Motors, Heineken, The Home Depot, Hoffmann-La Roche, Philips, Nestlé and Procter & Gamble.

MS&L Worldwide is a member of the Publicis Groupe, the world's fourth largest communications group, and a global leader in digital and online advertising, media consulting and healthcare communications. With some 45,000 professionals in 104 countries, the Groupe's activities cover advertising through three global advertising networks: Leo Burnett, Publicis, Saatchi & Saatchi, as well as through its two multi-hub networks

the next decade is going to be more about emotional connections — less materialism, more care for your neighbor," he said. "That really resonates with Country Music as a genre, which in our mind is more authentic as a marketing place for a brand to interact with consumers than any other form of entertainment at this time. The correlation of Country Music to what is going on in the world makes it potentially much more critical to marketing success than maybe at any other time in history."

MS&L has also hired Sheri Warnke as VP of Strategic Partnerships, assigned specifically to help spearhead its CMA efforts. Based in Nashville, Warnke has served on the CMA Board of Directors as well as on Boards for Gilda's Club, Leadership Music and the T.J. Martell Foundation, and has maintained memberships in CMA, NARAS, the National Advertising Federation and other organizations. Prior to her most recent position as Regional Sales Manager at Playboy Enterprises, she spent more than 15 years in high-level consumer magazine publishing roles, which included four years as VP and Group Publisher of *Country Music* and *Country Weekly* magazines.

"I am so excited for this opportunity," said Warnke, who maintains her office at CMA. "There is no better way to reach mainstream consumers than to align with the country's No.1 music format. No other music genre offers a more passionate fan base, and I'm looking forward to showcasing these equities and building new partnerships for CMA."

the long journey from rose avenue to gulf shore road

by VERNELL HACKETT

Hank Williams Jr. was already a veteran entertainer by the age of 30. He not only learned from masters including Johnny Cash and Earl Scruggs, he also carried on the music legacy left by his famous father.

He never forgot the lessons he learned, among them to be true to yourself and don't forget to have a good time along the way.

That helps explain the mixture of Country fun and self-awareness, plus a few doses of political opinion, that constitute his latest Curb Records album, *127 Rose Avenue*. Its first single, for example, "Red, White & Pink-Slip Blues," written by Mark Stephen Jones and Bud Tower, was released with somewhat playful timing on April 15, a dreaded day for many Americans. "We have the highest unemployment today that we've ever had," Williams explained. "I'm very proud of the song and video: Here's this guy in [Williams' late manager] Merle Kilgore's '59 Cadillac, telling all his problems to his Labrador. The fans love it!"

Running with this economic theme, Williams' label organized a contest timed to the single's release, offering the singer's own stimulus package as the prize. "We called it the Bosphorus Bailout," said

Jeff Tuerff, VP of Marketing, Curb Records. "We launched the single on April 15 and created a Web site that featured the premiere of the single. Radio received it the same day, and they helped drive traffic to the site. We also did consumer polls on what fans thought about the song and what Hank means to them. We got thousands of comments, many of them saying that Hank needs to run for president!" (Response was so strong that a poll was added to the home page with

"it gets so old when you hear 'I've got this smash for you' and the lyrics are 'I'm from the south. I drink whiskey.'"

— Hank Williams Jr.

visitors invited to click Yes or No to the question, "Should Hank Jr. run for president?" The overwhelming consensus was "Yes.")

During its first week online, BocephusBailout.com received 10,000 visitors, according to Tuerff. Once onboard, they could access a Hank Jr. Player, which featured a catalog of the artist's older songs, as well as the "Red, White & Pink-Slip Blues" video. "The song ranked in the Top 10 streams on CMT," Tuerff said. "We also had great visibility on iTunes. His performance on 'Fox & Friends' resulted in a lot of play on YouTube, and all that led into the launch of the music video a few weeks later, which resulted in another round of great response from the consumers."

The promotion ran for six weeks, with more than 25,000 people signing up for the contest, with prizes including \$1,000 cash, an additional \$1,500 for travel and accommodations to a Williams concert location, premium seats and a backstage meet-and-greet at the show, a "collector's tin" featuring three Williams CDs, a limited-edition "Monday Night Football" guitar and an autographed copy of "Red, White & Pink-Slip Blues."

Beyond that emotionally intense single, *127 Rose Avenue* offers a variety of material, from the fun-filled Country rap of "Farm Song," written by Rick J. Arnold and Williams, which features pedal steel guitar virtuoso Robert Randolph, to the thought-provoking James Carson Chamberlain, Phil Barnhart and Michael White composition, "Sounds Like Justice." Though written by John Scott Sherrill and Don Poythress, "Mighty Oak Trees" is a highly personal tribute to those who mentored Williams. And the title track, written by Bud McGuire, Kim Williams and Ray Hood, conjures a few other spirits as well through a lyric that documents a visit to Hank Williams' Boyhood Home & Museum, formerly the home where Hank Williams Sr. grew up in Georgiana, Ala.

"I just couldn't believe it when I first heard '127 Rose Avenue,'" said Williams. "I said, 'Holy wow, what a song! What a lyric!' And then I found out the real story, that the guy went down there and went through the museum and had this experience, and that's why he wrote the song. I said, 'Well, that's it. I'm recording it.' You know, the folks at Curb wanted to name the album 'Red, White & Pink Slip-Blues,' but I told them, 'No, the title of the album should be *127 Rose Avenue*.'"

Co-producing with Doug Johnson, Williams began working on the album in the spring of 2008. They took their time — "We'd cut a couple things, then wait a couple months and cut a few more," the singer/songwriter said — but responded quickly when inspiration struck, such as when the idea came to add marimbas and horns to "Gulf Shore Road," which Williams wrote about his home.

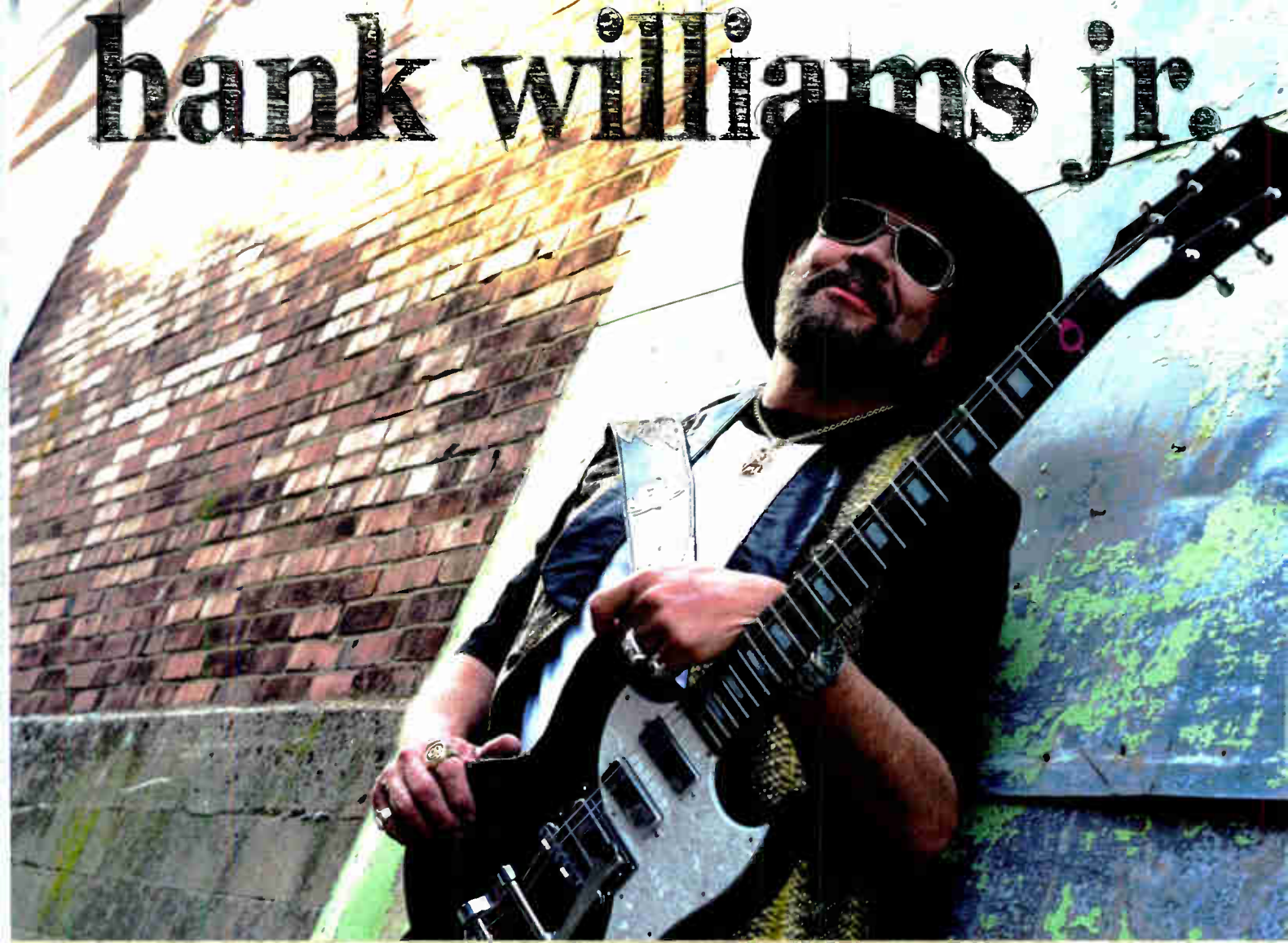
"I really love that song," he reflected. "That's where I'm at in my life right now. I go down there and it's hard to come back to West Tennessee from that little part of Florida. That song took 10 minutes to put it down. It's not a fantasy. There really is a Gulf Shore Road, and the pelicans do fly right over your head at Pelican Bay. I had that lying around in my guitar case for a while, and Doug said, 'How can you let this lie here?' But it wasn't the right place and right time to record it before now."

One surprise on *127 Rose Avenue* is another Williams composition, "All the Roads," which features bluegrass greats The Grascals. "That's just me. You know, people don't realize it, but Little Rockin' Randall used to step on his Boswell's Harley Davidson at 2131 Elm Hill Pike and ride over to Earl Scruggs' house for his banjo lessons," said Williams, referring to himself with a handle based on his middle name Randall under which he once occasionally performed and noting his address in Nashville at the time. "And then he'd go over to Johnny's [Cash] and talk Civil War. I better know how to play banjo; I had some of the greatest teachers in the world with Earl and Sonny Osborne."

With the high standards set through his birthright and his own work as an artist, Williams finds it hard to find fresh songs from contemporary writers, most of whom seem to want to pitch material similar to what he's already recorded. "I have to tell you," he said, "it gets so old when you hear 'I've got this smash for you' and the lyrics are 'I'm from the South. I drink whiskey.' If I've heard one of those I've heard a thousand, and you talk about redundant: That horse has been whipped to death. I don't want to hurt their feelings, but that ain't 'Whiskey Bent and Hell Bound.' You can't wait to write one after you've heard 75 songs like that."

Every now and then, though, a new song does jump out from the pack. For Williams, "Forged by Fire," by Ronald W. Hellard and Daryl

hank williams jr.



Burgess, was one of those. "I listened to a lot of songs and I love that one," he said. "I've had phone calls from Iraq already, so that one is wonderful."

Williams also includes his dad's "Long Gone Lonesome Blues," though in a different arrangement than folks might expect to hear. "Doug told me to do it like I do it onstage, and when we were finished he said, 'You're giving us a history lesson of Lightnin' Hopkins teaching you,'" said Williams, referring to the late Texas blues legend. "That was the last song we did, on the last evening. It took two takes and we were done."

Like all writers, Williams especially appreciates those songs that write themselves in 10 minutes or so, and "Last Driftin' Cowboy" was one of those. This tribute to steel guitar legend Don Helms, a member of his father's band the Drifting Cowboys (the intro is Helms playing "Honky Tonk Blues") came to Williams nearly instantly and intact.

"I do a mile and a quarter every morning with my Labs," he said, referring to his retrievers Dakota and Ellie May Clampett. "And 'Driftin' Cowboy' came right out of the sky. It was something very ... well, I guess you can say I had an experience. I had the words and

melody, and when I got back from that run I sat down at Daddy's desk and it was done. It usually doesn't work like that, but that song was done in a matter of an hour and a half."

As rewarding as it was to work on *127 Rose Avenue*, Williams and his family especially enjoyed the news that "Family Tradition: The Williams Family Legacy," their exhibit at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, has been extended through Dec. 31, 2011. "It's the biggest thing they've ever had," he said. "I just found more things to take over to them. I found another original Hank Sr. special-order 1946 Martin, so it's been very exciting."

As Tuerff sees it, the popularity of the exhibit, like that of Williams, can be explained by the breadth of its appeal. "He's an icon," he said. "His music is passed down from generation to generation. The album is a fantastic body of work, and we are in Phase 2 for launching singles into multiple formats. We plan to release singles that target military, Country and bluegrass radio because what he delivers on each album presents unique opportunities for us to not only hit his existing fan base but to keep growing it too."

HankJr.com



CMA HELPS BRING MUSIC AND HISTORY TOGETHER FOR NASHVILLE STUDENTS

WHITE HOUSE MUSIC SERIES

by **BOB DOERSCHUK**

On Friday, July 3, Lynn Adelman, Assistant Director of the W. O. Smith Nashville Community Music School, informed Jonah Rabinowitz, the school's Executive Director, that he'd better take the call she was about to transfer to his phone.

The woman on the line, a member of the White House staff, informed him that President Barack Obama and the First Lady would host the second stage of its ongoing music series which celebrates the arts and demonstrates the importance of arts education. The event would focus on Country Music and the W. O. Smith School was invited to bring a group of students to attend an afternoon educational workshop in the State Dining Room with Alison Krauss and Brad Paisley that would precede the evening show in the East Room.

"My first response was, 'This is unbelievable, this is fantastic, but can you guys help us at all with expenses?'" Rabinowitz recalled. "Their response was, 'No, but the invitation is open to you and we need to know in a couple of days whether you'll accept it.'"

Clearly, Rabinowitz couldn't say no. So to address the question of funding travel and accommodations, he called a member of the school's Advisory Board, Steve Buchanan, Senior VP, Media and Entertainment, Gaylord Entertainment.

As President-Elect of the CMA Board of Directors, Buchanan knew what to do. "Given our Keep the Music Playing initiative," he said, referring to CMA's program to help fund music education in Metro Nashville Public Schools, "it seemed to me that this was an opportunity for CMA to have a tremendous impact on these kids' lives."

"This is a one-time opportunity that is a natural fit for our campaign of supporting music education for public school students and providing musical experiences that they otherwise would not be able to enjoy,"

agreed CMA CEO Tammy Genovese. "These outstanding young musicians are the future of the music industry, and what a meaningful lesson they'll learn about the power of following your dreams and believing that anything is possible."

CMA underwrote all travel costs involved in busing 40 W. O. Smith music students and four chaperones from Nashville to Washington, D.C., and back. (A fifth chaperone, Colleen Dowd, VP, HCA, and a member of the W. O. Smith School Board of Directors, was already in Washington on business.) A gala sendoff was arranged at the school on the evening of Sunday, July 19; the bus arrived the next morning, after which the students visited museums that lined the National Mall before checking into the Gaylord National Hotel & Convention Center, where rooms had been deeply discounted on their behalf. Cracker Barrel Old Country Store provided gold cards that were redeemed for two free meals during the trip.

The next day began with visits to the office of U.S. Rep. Jim Cooper (D-Nashville) and the gallery at the House of Representatives while it was in session. Then, following lunch in the House cafeteria, they made the nearly two-mile trek to the White House on foot. "We did that on purpose," Rabinowitz said. "It was important to get a feel for the pulse of the city."

On arrival, they were escorted into the State Dining Room. Shortly after that, Krauss and Paisley took their seats on stools before a portrait of President Abraham Lincoln. Following an introduction by Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, each played two acoustic songs, Paisley working solo and Krauss playing fiddle with backup from Union Station guitarist Dan Tyminski. They were then interviewed by Jay Orr, VP of Museum Programs, Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, and took



Alison Krauss and Union Station

Ed Hardy, President, GAC; Jonah Rabinowitz, Executive Director, the W. O. Smith School; and Steve Buchanan, Senior VP, Media and Entertainment, Gaylord Entertainment.



Brad Paisley signs autographs for students in the White House State Dining Room.



Brad Paisley performs before President Barack Obama, the First Lady Michelle Obama and guests in the White House East Room.



(above) Students at the W. O. Smith School prepare to board bus for Washington, D.C.

Alison Krauss and Brad Paisley



Charley Pride

questions from among the 120 students attending from W. O. Smith and other invited schools.

That evening, with WSM/Nashville broadcast personality and Grand Ole Opry announcer Eddie Stubbs emceeding, Krauss and Paisley performed with their bands, and Country Music Hall of Fame member Charley Pride sang, before President Obama, his family

and invited guests, including Genovese and CMA Senior VP Bobette Dudley. The show was streamed live on WhiteHouse.gov/Live and recorded, along with other highlights of the day, to air on GAC. Hosted by Storme Warren, "Country at the White House" premiered on Aug. 15 and will repeat 8 PM/ET Sunday, Nov. 8. Stubbs also reported on the event through a radio special, "Mr. Stubbs Goes to Washington," broadcast over WSM-AM Nashville. Episodes from this program, along with photos, Webisodes and blogs by Stubbs, Paisley and Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen, are available at WSMonline.com.

"We at GAC are huge believers in the work of W.O. Smith," said Ed Hardy, GAC President, and VP of the W.O. Smith School Board. "Producing a one-hour special on GAC highlighting the Country Music events at the White House, including the W.O. Smith students' trip to the event, will help spread the word about this vital community asset and the benefits of arts education."

In a CNN.com blog (also posted on WSMonline.com), Paisley recounted the experience of closing his set with "Welcome to the Future," whose story of overcoming racial intolerance bore a special relevance to the evening. After tipping his hat to President Obama, Paisley wrote, "I came off and just

started bawling because it was so emotional for me to sing those words. He came to me and said, 'If I could sing like you,' which was really cool. And then he sort of looked me in the eye and he said, 'Wonderful, wonderful words.' And I said, 'Thank you, sir. I meant them.'"

As for the W.O. Smith students, they enjoyed a reflective afternoon of their own, culminating in a visit to the Lincoln Memorial, after which they boarded their bus for a night in Manassas, Va., before completing the trip back home. Like Paisley, Patricia Dinning, going into her senior year at the Nashville School of the Arts, found her Washington visit illuminating as well as relevant to her dreams of pursuing a history major in college.

"I was inspired and amazed," she said. "And it really amplified my feelings toward history, because music has history in itself, and that history goes into America's history. It all connects and helps to inspire how we all approach the future."

Founded in 1984, the W.O. Smith Nashville Community Music School was created for the purpose of making quality music instruction available to talented, interested, deserving children from low income families at the nominal fee of 50 cents a lesson. Instruction is provided by a 160-member volunteer faculty of area musicians from many elements of the Nashville music scene including studio musicians, symphony players, college professors, public school teachers, church musicians, private teachers and university students, who each donate up to four hours a week teaching their students.

The school serves more than 600 students, ages 6 to 18, representing academic schools from across Metro Davidson County and Middle Tennessee. It offers introductory classes for pre-instrumentalists, individual and group lessons in all band and orchestra instruments, piano, guitar and voice. A nonprofit educational institution, the W. O. Smith Music School also provides computer assisted instruction in music fundamentals and theory, classes in composition, music technology and recording.

"The continuing generosity of CMA for our city's children is allowing W.O. Smith Music School students to be a part of this important experience, one that we know will last a lifetime," Rabinowitz said. "As always, CMA provides important leadership in the music education of children in Metro Nashville Schools. We are grateful to CMA as well as GAC, Gaylord and Cracker Barrel for their support of our students."



(above) W. O. Smith students prepare for trip to Washington, D.C.

W. O. Smith student Jordan Woodson Reid meets the press prior to departure for Washington, D.C.



CMA Board President-Elect Steve Buchanan, Senior VP, Media and Entertainment, Gaylord Entertainment; CMA Board Member Joe Galante, Chairman, Sony Music Nashville; Charley Pride; CMA Board Member Ed Hardy, President, GAC; CMA CEO Tammy Genovese; Brad Paisley; and ex-officio CMA Board Member Jim Free, President and CEO, The Smith-Free Group.

photos: Ben Lind, Karen Hicks, Sarah Tragent, Official White House photo by Sammis



by TOM ROLAND

It's been seven years since Joe Nichols released his first album, *Man with a Memory*, so fans and music executives alike might feel confident that they have a pretty good handle on this artist and what he represents.

But with the release of his sixth album *Old Things New*, Nichols challenges all the old ideas about who he is, mostly by challenging himself in ways he's never done before. After putting a self-defeating relationship with alcohol behind him, the 2003 CMA Horizon Award winner found that his engagement with his music had changed dramatically. As documented on this new album, his voice grew more confident, his performances more connective. He undertook his first tour of Australia in February, his first appearances for U.S. troops in Iraq in June, and he has agreed to star for the first time on Broadway with a theatrical version of the George Strait musical "Pure Country," expected to open in early 2010.

"I'm just more open to doing that stuff now than I ever have been," Nichols said during a sunny afternoon chat at Universal Records South. Touring Australia, for example, "would have scared the hell out of me before. I'd probably be like, 'I don't want to go down there and mess with Australia. My God, what do we have in common with them?' That's the kind of stupid stuff I'd probably say."

Old Things New definitely represents a major step in this artist's evolution. It is, in some ways, like balancing modernity with an obvious respect for Country's back story: The title track, written by Bill Anderson, Paul Overstreet and Buddy Cannon and featuring Vince Gill, vividly evokes the experience of listening to music in 1952; "This Bed's Too Big," by Gary Burr and Victoria Shaw, borrows from Western swing balladry; and "Man, Woman," by Shawn Camp and Marv Green, has a sound reminiscent of Country in the '70s, with a sad lyric encased within a buoyant melody.

Nichols delivers it all with conviction, his vocals veering between

the refined masculinity of Merle Haggard and the raw emotionalism of Keith Whitley. In the process, the Arkansas native stakes out territory that belongs solely to him within the landscape of modern Country, though he remains a bit uneasy about that claim.

"It's hard to listen to myself and say, 'Yeah, I own that and that's me,'" he admitted. "When I hear myself, I say, 'Did I sing that like Merle Haggard? Did I sing that the way I would do it imitating him? Or did I do that trying to imitate Keith Whitley? Or, just a random thought, is that really me?'"

"And here's another thing," Nichols mused. "There's stuff on this album that doesn't sound like any of the three of us. But it still comes out of me naturally. There are lots of moments like that, where I go, 'Wow, that's pretty cool. I didn't know I could do that.' It's really strange with this album. It's unlike anything I've been through, in large part because I'm in a different place mentally."

That fact is made exceedingly clear in the album's final song, "An Old Friend of Mine," by Rick Tiger and Brock Stalvey, in which the protagonist takes what he envisions as his last drink. This one strikes especially close to home, as Nichols went to rehab in October 2007, weeks after the release of his *Real Things* album, and began the process of reordering his life.

He has since done a major makeover. Nichols is now lean and muscular. He's much more in touch with the spiritual part of his being. And he's moved to Texas, which allows his wife Heather to be closer to her family and also provides some constructive space between his home life and his career.

"He just felt more consistent," said Mark Wright, President, Universal

NICHOLS

MAKES ALL THE RIGHT MOVES WITH OLD THINGS NEW

Records South, who shared production credits on *Old Things New* with Brent Rowan. "He was just able to get into more of a groove. Joe Nichols is back and he's better than ever."

These positive changes in Nichols' life are reflected in some alterations he undertook on the album itself. Originally the opening track was supposed to be "Cheaper than a Shrink." Composed by Anderson, Cannon and Jamey Johnson, this raucous honky-tonk number laughingly holds up alcohol as an ideal replacement for therapy. Lyrically, however, it raised too many questions about the authenticity of the more sober and reflective final track. For that very reason, Nichols decided to change the sequencing and remove "Cheaper than a Shrink" from its leadoff position.

"I don't want the message to be that I'm not serious about the guy that sings the last song on the album," he insisted. "I think 'Cheaper than a Shrink' is hilarious. It's funny to me. It's a great-feeling song. I don't think there's any harm in saying it's a funny way to look at this situation. I have been that guy."

Still, Nichols emphasizes, "that guy" lives now only in his past. Instead, he noted, "I can sing about having eight kids. I haven't got eight kids, but I can sing about it. And I can be believable too."

Just as much as in his music, believability is critical in his decision to take on the lead role of "Pure Country." Not only has Nichols never acted before, he has never even felt any strong desire to try. But when Bruce Phillips, an attorney friend who had been working on contracts for the Broadway production, met Nichols by chance at a Nashville grocery store and suggested that he could have a shot at the part, Nichols rolled the dice and read for it. Despite never having been coached on acting, he figured he could at least bring that much to the production, given that the character

"I haven't got eight kids, but I can sing about it. And I can be believable too." —Joe Nichols

is a Country singer. Director Pete Masterson listened to him along with several actors based in New York who read for the part one morning, but Nichols' performance made a strong enough impression for him to offer the artist the role over lunch that same day.

"He has kind of a bad-boy thing about him that you like — you like him anyway," Masterson said. "I think that's neat. And that's what we would be trying to explore with him in the production."

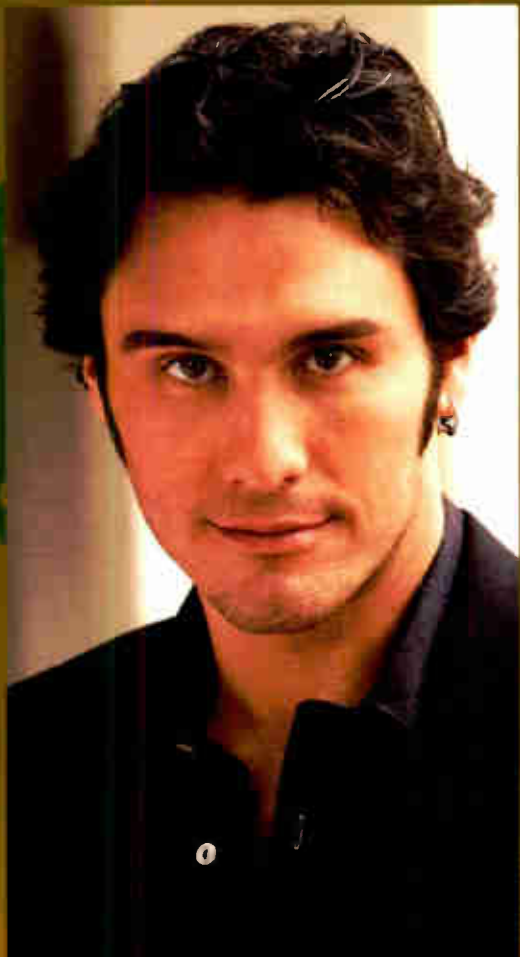
Numerous complications ensue for any production that aims to open on Broadway, particularly because of the unpredictability of schedules for plays and the theaters that present them. "Pure Country," whose cast also features two-time CMA Awards winner Lorrie Morgan, could start later than planned, it could open and close immediately or it could open and run for years. If it does get off the ground, the schedule would involve eight performances per week with no specific end date. Even a successful launch, then, may pose problems for Nichols' attempts to pursue his primary goals as a recording artist and touring performer.

"A lot of these things are potential dangers," he conceded. "They create risk and they make everybody kind of nervous. But I'm a firm believer that this is there for a reason."

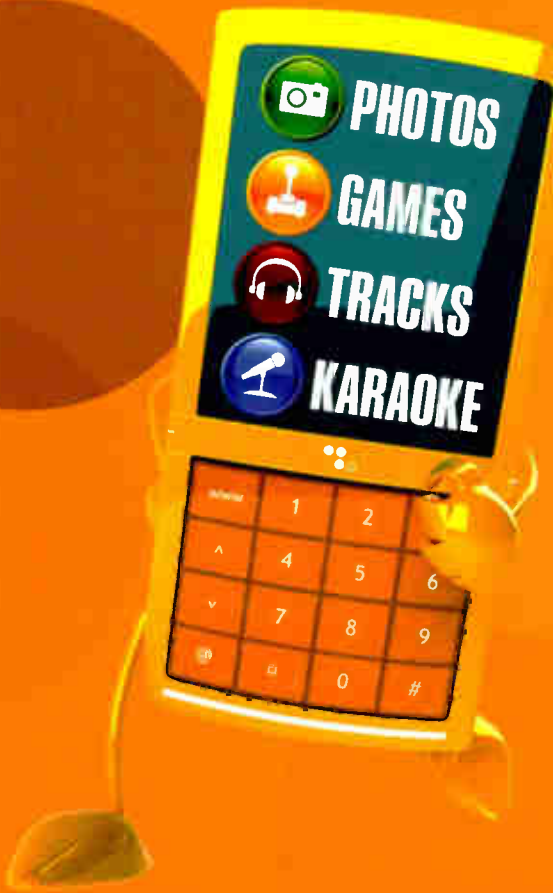
The old Nichols probably would not have pursued something as foreign to his experience as "Pure Country." But with old things made new, he is open to and ready for the challenge.

"I'll try anything," he insisted. "As long as it's healthy, as long as it grows, I'm open to hearing what the possibilities are."

JoeNichols.com



GET SMART



by FETT

With all the changes underway throughout the music industry, every “win/win” proposition is good news — and luckily one such opportunity is taking shape through new technologies that offer genuine, tangible benefits to fans, software developers, hardware manufacturers, artists, record labels and music publishers.

Perhaps the most exciting area in the new technology market is “smart phone” applications (or, simply, “apps”), spearheaded by the introduction of the Apple iPhone in June 2007 and followed by the iPod Touch and the second-generation iPhone 3G.

While Apple is not the leader in the smart phone market overall, it is the dominant player in the apps market — particularly music-oriented apps, thanks in large part to the integration of the iPhone with Apple’s Web-based iPhone App Store and iTunes music service as well as the iTunes desktop application that runs on both Mac and Windows. But their smart-phone competitors are not standing still. BlackBerry, LG Electronics, Nokia, Palm and Samsung, among others, offer Web-based apps stores and devices that compete directly with the iPhone, and many of the iPhone’s most popular apps are available on those platforms as well.

WHAT’S DIFFERENT?

Cell phone-based technologies and applications have been around for years, so why are smart phone devices different? While the iPhone, when introduced, had all the usual functions of cell phones at the time (calling, texting, music downloads and more), its entirely touch-based user interface was a true innovation. Suddenly, every activity on the device could — *had to* — be performed with the swipe of a finger. This simple interface also meant that iPhone apps were simple to build. With the help of an Apple-supplied Software Development Kit and

the centralized iPhone App Store on Apple.com, iPhone apps were much easier and faster for software developers to produce and release to the marketplace. It also meant that many more developers — even individuals — could participate in the iPhone apps space.

WHERE’S THE MUSIC?

By mid April 2009, the Apple iPhone App Store boasted more than 25,000 instantly downloadable apps for myriad facets of life and more than a billion downloads since the iPhone’s introduction. Among those 25,000 apps, about 1,400 were categorized under the “Music” heading. Many of these are now mainstays in the smart phone realm.

These include Pandora Media’s Pandora Radio (a “personalized radio” app, integrated with the Pandora Web service, that streams music in real time to your custom radio “station” on your smart phone, based on your musical tastes), Clear Channel’s iheartradio, Last.fm Ltd.’s Last.fm Radio and Weather Underground’s WunderRadio. Shazam allows you to instantly identify music being played on any source simply by holding your smart phone in the air; you can then watch related music videos on YouTube, get additional information including song lyrics and reviews, purchase the songs directly from iTunes and share the music with your smart-phone-outfitted friends. Concert Vault provides “access to the world’s largest collection of live concert recordings,” and JamBase offers access to a database of tens of thousands of upcoming music events by date, genre, artist and local proximity. And aside from Concert Vault, which downloads for \$5.99, all of these apps are entirely *free*.

In addition to these offerings for general music fans, there are apps for genre-specific radio stations and programs. These include radio stations and programs (such as WAMU’s “Bluegrass Country” show, \$1.99), videos (GoTV Networks’ True Country mobile Country Music videos, 99 cents), news (Crossgate AC’s Country Music News Headlines) and more.

WHERE’S THE MONEY?

Along with facilitating instant distribution and direct marketing to a prequalified customer base of millions, smart phone apps offer direct and indirect income stream opportunities for the music industry. Fee-based apps, even those for just 99 cents, can add up to a significant revenue stream when multiplied by the tens of millions of potential customers on the Apple App Store alone. And even free apps can generate income from follow-through sales of concert tickets, music, videos, merchandise, promotions and more.

For example, Tapulous, based in Palo Alto, Calif., has developed the wildly popular interactive iPhone music game Tap Tap Revenge and tailored it to artist-specific versions that include Tap Tap Coldplay (\$4.99), Nine Inch Nails Revenge (\$4.99) and Christmas with Weezer (\$1.99). Tapulous, Apple, the artists and their labels each get a cut of the sales. Different songs are posted at tapulous.com each week for gamers to play back as they tap along to their own accompanying beats. Thus far rock artists have dominated the playlist, but according to Tim O’Brien, Head of Business Development at Tapulous, signs are good that Country will make its presence felt as well.

“We’ve already featured tracks by Lady Antebellum and Keith Urban,” he said. “And especially when we put Keith’s ‘Sweet Thing’ up, he did really

New Apps for Smart Phones Expand Artist and Record Label Opportunities

well — about a quarter million to half a million downloads per week, which is right on target for what our feature tracks of the week have gotten.”

O’Brien confirmed that Tap Tap Revenge 3, made available in late July, included four more tracks from Lady Antebellum and Urban.

Other benefits are available to artists through smart phone apps. The free DMB Setlist provides set lists to fans from every show performed by The Dave Matthews Band. Spilt Milk (\$1.99) offers fans a chance to enjoy Fightstar’s music in the form of a song-based game. “American Idol” artist David Cook provides a simulated cigarette lighter that fans can hold up in the air during shows when he performs his hit “Light On” (\$1.99). And The Rentals’ free Songs About Time is an iPhone tie-in to the group’s yearlong, multimedia odyssey of the same name.

Several major labels have already jumped into the smart phone app space with multiple artist-specific offerings. Sony Music Entertainment and Universal Music Group lead the way in sheer numbers of apps, but Polydor and Warner Bros. are represented as well. Interscope and SRC/Universal are enlisting the help of EpicTilt and other software development firms that already understand the smart phone app space. Jacobs Media, iLike and other Web services also offer inexpensive, template-based smart phone app development for artists.

The iLike Challenge App, which launched in August, tests how quickly music fans can listen to, and correctly identify, songs from artists. The app is also a valuable discovery tool because it allows users to visit the iTunes Store to purchase the songs they listen to as they compete in the challenge.

WHAT ABOUT US?

Three genres — Country, bluegrass and gospel/Christian — are conspicuously under-represented among artist-specific apps. A search of the iPhone App Store reveals relatively few artists in these categories. But there are signs that change is underway, as a number of Country artists have found their places on this bandwagon in recent months.

Due West’s app allows fans to watch videos, browse photos, read blogs and news, sample music, and more (\$1.99); Lady Antebellum’s app offers similar features (\$1.99); Emerson Drive’s free app contains live performances, episodes of E-Drive TV, photos, blog messages, games and more; The Oak Ridge Boys’ free app connects users to videos and YouTube clips, new music previews, ticket purchase and a venue locator with restaurant and hotel info and more; Rascal Flatts’ free Unstoppable app includes sample tracks from the band’s entire catalog, access to all videos, tour updates integrated into Google Maps and more; Darius Rucker’s free app includes exclusive video content, tour information, song clips, in-depth song descriptions, Twitter feeds and more; Tanya Tucker’s free app offers blog posts, news bulletins, music samples, photos, videos, a photo puzzle and more; and Keith Urban has partnered with mobile service Zannel to produce a Keith Urban VIP Pass, offering video, picture and text updates (\$1.99).

Other genres remain much more amply represented through apps for acts as varied as Death Cab for Cutie, Diddy, The Fray, Heart, Lady Gaga and Pink. For savvy Country artists, this translates into an enormous untapped opportunity. In such uncharted space, any Country artist with a smart phone app will stand out from the crowd.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

While smart phone apps may be today’s fastest growing and most talked about technology, a number of other related technologies also hold promise for the music industry. Based in Cupertino, Calif., AirKast has developed TuneKast, an app that allows radio stations to stream audio, video and interactive graphical advertisements to mobile devices and allows them to be targeted according to the listeners’ geographic locations. According to AirKast literature, the app enables broadcasters to “distribute live programming and podcasts and create interactive storage and sharing features for listeners while selling measurable advertising.” TuneKast is available for iPhone, iPod Touch and BlackBerry, with development underway for use with Google Android and Palm Pre.

Satellite radio giant Sirius XM makes its service available for iPhone and iPod Touch, with a dual purpose: to provide existing customers with an alternative listening method to their satellite radio devices, and to attract new customers without requiring them to purchase satellite radio hardware. And MySpace offers a free service, supported by paid advertising, whereby users can view MySpace members’ videos on a wide range of smart phones.

WHAT’S NEXT?

Each of these new technologies offers growing opportunities for the music industry to better serve and retain fans — and attract new customers — while also growing revenues. While not a panacea, smart phone apps and similar technologies can be a significant component in music distribution, marketing and revenue models. Essentially in their infancy, these technologies show enormous potential. The best news? This is only the beginning of the game; there’s plenty of room and reason for new players to join in.

SMART PHONE APPS OFFER DIRECT AND INDIRECT INCOME STREAM OPPORTUNITIES FOR ARTISTS, RECORD LABELS AND MUSIC PUBLISHERS.



ASCAP President

PAUL WILLIAMS

Stands Up For Songwriters

by RANDY RUDDER

With his youthful exuberance and passion for his industry and craft, it's hard to believe that Paul Williams isn't a newcomer to the songwriting world. He has been a pillar in that community for decades, stretching back to the hits he wrote for artists including the Carpenters ("Rainy Days and Mondays," "We've Only Just Begun"), Three Dog Night ("Old Fashioned Love Song") and Helen Reddy ("You and Me Against the World"), not to mention compositions for film ("Evergreen," from "A Star is Born") and classic television theme songs ("Love Boat").

At 68, Williams has embarked on a new phase of his career, having been elected in April to succeed Marilyn Bergman as President and Chairman of the Board of ASCAP.

"I have worked closely with Paul during his eight years as a member of the ASCAP Board of Directors and particularly since he assumed the post of Vice Chairman," said Bergman, who continues to serve as a member of the ASCAP Board. "He is an outstanding choice to lead the vital work that ASCAP conducts on behalf of all of us who create music."

His responsibilities include exploring new markets and areas of technology to help writers and publishers fully exploit their catalogues, applying new technologies to track and monitor usage so that writer compensations can be made more accurate and fair, using his ability to perform in the public spotlight, cultivated onstage as an entertainer and in "Battle for the Planet of the Apes," "Smokey and the Bandit" and other films and serving as the organization's spokesperson.

"Part of my gig is essentially not to forget that this is about the songwriters and the individual artists and finding a way for us to keep up with the technology," Williams explained. "I love new media and I love new technology. My wife says I'm addicted to it. She's always telling me, 'Paulie, step away from the iPhone and talk to me!'"

Having been on both sides of the fence as an artist and an administrator, this winner of Academy, Grammy and Golden Globe Awards and Songwriters Hall of Fame member understands the personal satisfaction that comes from writing as well as the fact that it goes only so far toward paying the mortgage. "As a writer, the first payment you get is mental health," Williams said. "It's free therapy. I mean, you get dumped by

somebody and you sit down at the piano and you put some of those feelings down on paper. That's very rewarding.

"The second payment is fair compensation," he continued. "And the third payment is what I call heart payment. Someone comes up to you and says, 'We got married to "We've Only Just Begun,"' or 'My mom was a single mom and "You and Me Against the World" was a really important song to her and she used to play it and she'd cry,' or 'My daughter learned to play piano to "The Rainbow Connection."' That's heart payment to a songwriter. So the first and third kinds of payments are great, but you need the one in the middle to survive."

Writers as well as their performing rights organizations bear responsibility for communicating the importance of that second payment. "Part of my message as President of ASCAP is to remind the public we write from the center of our chest, writing what we feel, and people are falling in love to it and dancing to it and teaching their kids to play piano to it," Williams said. "But we're also small businesspeople. The songwriters that I represent deserve to be well compensated for that."

As an example of what ASCAP can contribute, Williams cited Donny the Downloader, the animated character that the organization developed to teach young people about moral and legal issues related to illegal file sharing.

"I used to think we had an Ethics 101 problem," he said. "But what we have is an education problem. People are not bad. People are basically good. They know that they can't walk into a store and steal a CD. They know that's wrong. But they've been taught that taking music off the Internet is OK. Donny the Downloader is this little kid on a skateboard. It's also an educational device aimed at elementary-aged kids. And we do need to do a little more with the older kids — something similar with high school and college kids too."

Williams believes that as long as young people think of record labels and music publishers as huge corporate conglomerates that don't need the money, the likelihood of illegal downloading increases. "We need to get this concept of these behemoths fighting over a piece of cheese out of people's minds," he insisted. "There are a number of ways that we can do this. For sure, legislatively: We need to hit the halls of Congress and make sure they understand that as technology changes, we need to keep the laws abreast of it."



ASCAP President and Chairman Paul Williams and former ASCAP President and Chairman Marilyn Bergman at 2009 ASCAP Pop Music Awards.



Paul Williams makes debut address as President and Chairman of ASCAP at ASCAP's "I Create Music" Expo.

Public relations is an essential complement to legal action, Williams added. "For me, that little 'c' in the copyright circle also stands for 'collaborative' and 'communicative,'" he said. "I have a chance to maybe do some healing in my new position. We've had to do some work in the courts; when people get a license and then refuse to pay, we have to take them to court. But I want my message to be a little friendlier. I want it to be, 'We're not looking to seek and destroy; we're looking to seek and develop relationships.' There are incredible new avenues for generating revenue for writers. It's up to us to discover those new avenues. We're on the ball constantly, stepping forward to license ringtones and greeting cards. When you open a card and it's got a couple of bars from 'I Won't Last a Day Without You,' that's pretty exciting for the songwriter. But you can't buy potatoes with just the excitement of hearing your song in a card. You also have to be compensated for it."

Based in Los Angeles, Williams plans to travel often to Nashville, not just to exercise his responsibilities as President but also because the city holds personal meaning to him as a songwriter. Recalling a visit in the '90s for Tin Pan South, he said, "I basically thought I was done with writing. I had gotten involved in the recovery community. And, I swear to God, there is something in the water there. I hit town, and the level of comfort I felt there was incredible. I felt respected and I felt safe, and all of a sudden I wanted to write songs again. One of the first guys I wanted to write with was Jcn Vezner. We sat down and wrote 'You're Gone,' which two years later was a hit for Diamond Rio.

"What happened to me in Nashville was I fell in love with music again," Williams elaborated. "I don't think I would be the President of ASCAP, I wouldn't even be on the Board at ASCAP for the past eight years, if it hadn't been for the time I spent in Nashville. So I want to spend a lot more time in Nashville."

"That little 'c' in the copyright circle also stands for 'collaborative' and 'communicative.'"

— Paul Williams,
President and Chairman, ASCAP

In assessing the art of Country songwriting, Williams admires in particular its openness to lyrical depth. "What I'd been trying to do for a lot of years was not be myself," he said. "I was trying to be clever instead of being honest. In a Country song, honesty is so much more important than being clever. There's an amazing growth of creativity in Nashville. I want to be a part of that. Every genre of music is just exploding out of Nashville. And I want to get the young writers, the edgy writers, onboard and let them know that ASCAP is a great home for them."

On the subject of new writers, Williams noted, "The music business has become so fragmented. And one of the changes, I fear, for new writers is that they may not have the chance to get the kinds of hands-on experience that I got when I wandered into A&M

Records in 1967. What I got there was a publisher named Chuck Kaye, a co-writer named Roger Nichols and Herb Alpert's record company, that all offered this amazing expertise that helped guide my career and the great choices that a publisher made on behalf of my songs. I think that's going to be missing from a lot of careers today."

It is clear that Williams has a heart for new writers. "Right now, there's some young writer working at a keyboard with a headset on because the baby is sleeping in the next room and the spouse may have a day job so the writer can do this. And this person has an amazing gift and a chest full of pain and heartache and dreams. I want to help them get their music to the world."

This empathy is more than professional. "I've had more 17-hour days since April than I've had in my whole life," Williams said. "But I am a songwriter first. I'll always be a songwriter. I'm not a songwriter because I make a good living at it, even though I do. I'm a songwriter because it's part of how I know I'm alive."

PaulWilliamsConnection.org; ASCAP.com

photos: Lester Cohen

LEARNING TO BE REAL

secrets of nashville's
media coaches

by TOM ROLAND

Late in 2008, *Rolling Stone* ran a piece on Willie Nelson that featured a picture of the singer on his bus, lighting up a doobie while seated at a table bearing a tray full of marijuana seeds.

Problem? For Nelson, not at all. Given his well-documented history, celebrated not only by the singer's own words in *Willie: An Autobiography* and marijuana leaves artwork on the cover of his *Countryman* album but also in Toby Keith's "Weed with Willie," any denial of this part of his life would be counterproductive.

The issue isn't really the specific image. It's whether the image portrays the artist accurately and, beyond that, whether the public gets the message. And the key to facilitating this can come down to media training.

"I truly don't try to clean these people up," said media coach Jeri Lynn Burgdorf, who established her Media Images company in the early '80s. "I don't try to unmake them and remake them, because that is a disastrous thing to do. A lot of times, people who don't know me, when they send me an act, they'll say, 'Now, don't change this person into something pretty.' They don't know the kind of work that I do, because I would never do that. What I do is give them confidence about being who they are."

An artist's personality is his or her best conduit to the public. Reba McEntire gets high marks for her deep drawl and aw-shucks demeanor because they're both real. Dolly Parton is bubbly, flirtatious and fun. And Trace Adkins got a boost last year through NBC-TV's "The Celebrity Apprentice," on which non-Country viewers were introduced to a guy who is decisive and honest.

Three different personalities with two things in common: One, they reflect who each artist actually is. And two, for that reason, they are fundamental reasons for each artist's success.

"Given our very short attention span as a nation, you get about 90 seconds on the air before people flip the channel," said Kip Kirby, who worked as a media coach from the mid 1990s to 2001.

To make best use of those moments, a media coach will begin with research through reading the client's bios and press clips, meeting with management and publicists and listening to the artist's music. For Laura Huie, an independent TV producer who established Huie Media, her media training practice in 2006, the next step is to ask the artist to fill out a questionnaire.

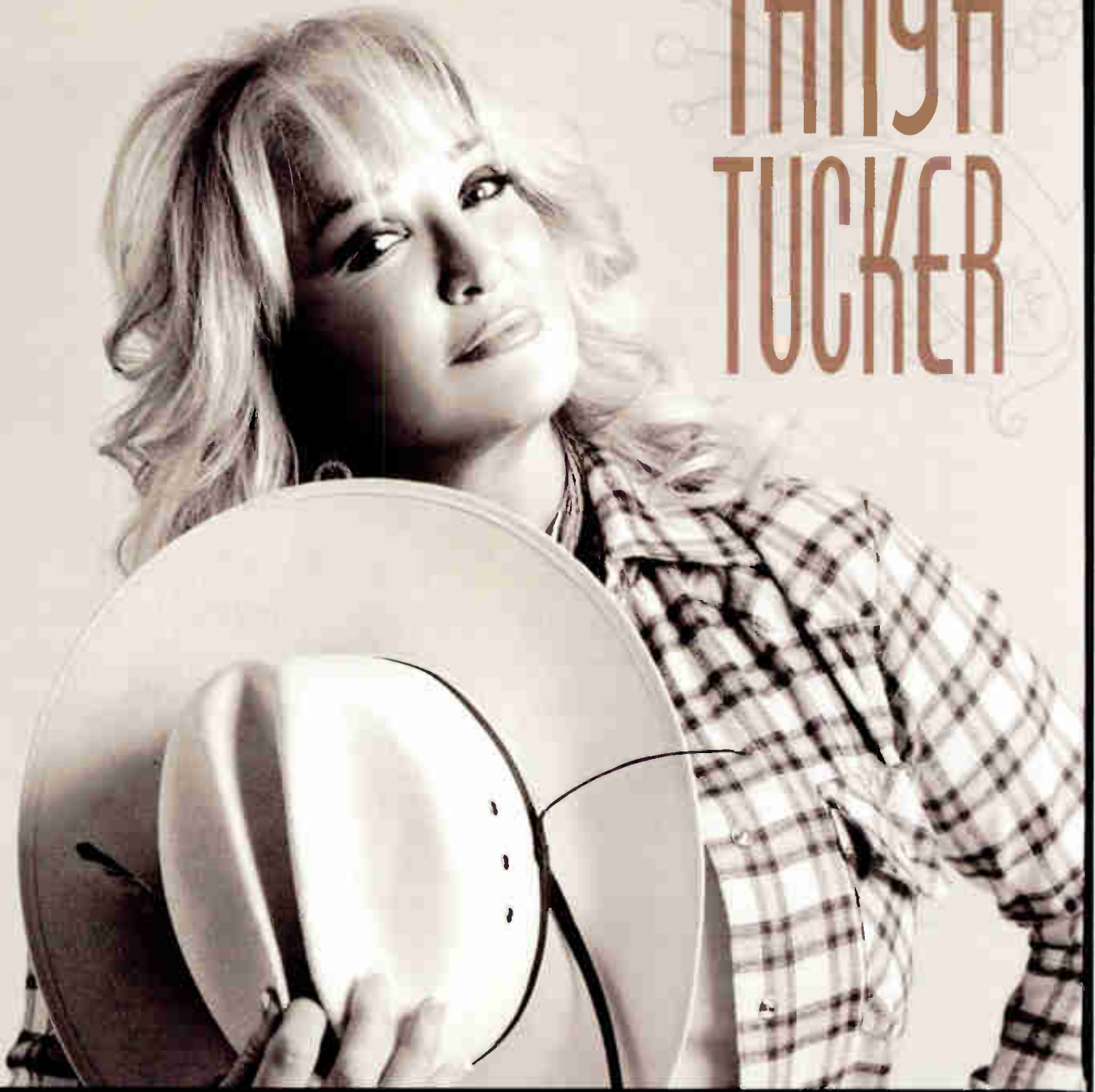
"That gives me a bit of an idea of who they are and where they come from," she explained. "There's a lot of 'getting to know you' in that first session and building a rapport. I want them to be able to trust me and feel comfortable with me, so I don't rush into anything, even if it takes a few hours to go

MEDIA COACH
LAURA HUIE'S
FIVE
ESSENTIAL
STEPS FOR
ARTISTS
TO FOLLOW
DURING
INTERVIEWS:

1. You can't control what an interviewer asks. You can control your answers. Stay calm, even during tough questions.

2. Prepare. Anticipate the questions you will be asked.

TANYA TUCKER



by KIP KIRBY

TANYA TUCKER DOESN'T INTIMIDATE EASILY. SINCE UNLEASHING "DELTA DAWN" AT 13, SHE HAS STARED DOWN PLENTY OF CHALLENGES. STILL, WHEN OFFERED THE OPPORTUNITY TO RECORD AN ALBUM OF VAULT-ENSHRINED COUNTRY CLASSICS, THIS TWO-TIME CMA AWARDS WINNER HESITATED.

The problem wasn't the material; she'd been singing these songs since she was a kid growing up in Arizona. Nor was it the fact that each song was identified closely with a male Country legend; Tucker has always had sufficient swagger and sass to deliver any song she took on with the braggadocio needed to make it totally hers, if not to erase comparisons to the original completely.

No, there were other reasons why she didn't jump quickly into recording *My Turn*. For one thing, she hadn't released a new studio album since Capitol Records Nashville issued *Tanya* in 2002. For another, she was still recovering from the death of her father and longtime manager, Beau Tucker, in 2006. And, frankly, Tucker didn't know if audiences still cared about hearing her sing. So when Time Life came knocking at her door, she didn't say yes immediately.

"I didn't know what I was supposed to do," she explained. "I was depressed — probably major

takes on the boys with my turn

depressed, actually, I'd lost my dad. I felt like I didn't know who I was. I didn't know if I really mattered anymore."

Fortunately, the executives at Saguaro Road Records, Time Life's fledgling imprint, weren't in a hurry. Since they were the ones who had come up with the album concept, they were willing to wait as long as it took for Tucker to come onboard.

"One of the fun things we get to do is sit around and decide who we would like to record with and who we would ideally want to put them with," said Mike Jason, Senior VP of Audio & Video Retail, Time Life and Saguaro Road Records. "And two names we came up with were Tanya Tucker and Pete Anderson. We thought, 'Wow, Tanya doing classic Country songs, Pete adding that edgy, guitar-driven aspect to it.' It took us six months to a year to catch up with both of them, get them on the phone to talk about songs and start the groundwork. But once it came together, it was fantastic."

Anderson and Tucker clicked from the start. They spent hours sifting happily through their favorite Country standards, discussing arrangements and choosing keys. It was Anderson's idea to recruit guest vocalists and musicians that included Flaco Jimenez, Jim Lauderdale, Jo-El Sonnier, Rhonda Vincent and her brother Darrin from Dailey and Vincent and members of The Grascals. But it wasn't easy to narrow their choices down to the dozen tracks that ultimately made the album.

Initially, Anderson had about 20 songs and Tucker had 15 to consider. His proposals included Ray Price's "Crazy Arms" and Buck Owens' "Love's Gonna Live Here," while she contributed several tunes that were among her father's favorites, including Charley Pride's "Is Anybody Going to San Antone?," Hank Williams' "Lovesick Blues," Merle Haggard's "Ramblin' Fever" and Eddy Arnold's "You Don't Know Me."

"There were a couple of songs I wasn't keen on in the beginning, like 'Big, Big Love,'" Tucker said. "It's a Wynn Stewart song. I love Wynn Stewart but he died young so I didn't get a chance to hear a lot of his music growing up. If you mention Wynn Stewart to me, I think of 'It's Such a Pretty World Today.' That was the song I wanted to do, but Pete was pretty adamant about doing 'Big, Big Love.' I honestly didn't know if I could pull it off, if I could sing it the way it needed to be sung, but he convinced me to try it." Good thing too, since Tucker now counts "Big, Big Love" among her favorites from the album.

My Turn became a labor of love for Tucker in an unexpected way. "It ended up being a tribute of sorts to my dad, a gift, because I don't think I'd have fallen in love with Country Music if it weren't for him," she said. "He introduced me to this music when I was a little girl. My dad would spend his last dollar on something to help me practice my songs. He was always trying to get me to put more feeling into the songs. He'd say, 'Sing it like Hank Williams would sing it!'"

He also gave her some sobering advice. "He said I had two strikes against me when I started my career. He said, 'You're young — and you're a girl. So now you're going to have to sing those songs with twice as much feeling as any guy,'" Tucker remembered, with a laugh. "Well, it turned out that's nothing unusual for me; that's what I've always done. Most of the songs I've recorded were written by men. I've always liked singing songs with a male attitude."

Did she feel any trepidation about reinterpreting some of Country Music's most beloved chestnuts? Tucker laughed broadly. "You know, I never even thought about it. If I had, I probably wouldn't have done it. No matter what you do, you just can't do it like the originals, though we tried to stay pretty close to the way they were done originally. Of course, no matter what I do, it's still going to sound like Tanya Tucker because I don't really know any other way to sound."

That's fine with Anderson. "The biggest thing about this album is the way Tanya makes every song her own. She wasn't intimidated at all by the fact that these are some of the biggest Country classics ever recorded or that they were made famous by men. Tanya takes over anything she sings. Let me tell you, I've worked with some of the greatest singers in the business," said the producer, whose credits include Rosie Flores, k.d. lang, Michelle Shocked, Lucinda Williams and Dwight Yoakam. "And she's as good as it gets. The whole concept for this album kind of evolved into 'Tanya takes on the boys.'"

"We're seeing a tremendous amount of online activity regarding Tanya," said Jason. "She's one of these artists who resonates well with every age group and demographic, so we're finding our kind of marketing works really well for her. We did an iPhone application that allows people to track her tour dates, buy merchandise, link to the CD and do streaming and downloading. We'll make sure that every time she's anywhere in a market, our viral and online marketing efforts will let people know how they can buy tickets and CDs, and we'll coordinate with a key Country station in the area through its Web site."

Although Saguaro Road has released "Love's Gonna Live Here" as the album's first single and plans to follow with more, radio airplay isn't a determining factor in its strategy for *My Turn*. "Because we don't put out that many albums, we can afford to take our time and work each project," said Jason. "We may well work this album for 18 months to two years. Tanya's been fantastic about doing this."

That feeling is mutual. "I've been so damned impatient my whole career," said Tucker. "I've either been too late or too early, or ahead of my time or way behind it. What I really want now is to just be right on time. I'm really excited. This project feels like my stepping stone back into Country Music. Putting out this album of classic songs kind of lays the groundwork and introduces me to a whole new audience. It's just amazing that people still want to hear about me after so many years."

**"I'VE
ALWAYS
LIKED
SINGING
SONGS
WITH A
MALE
ATTITUDE."**

— Tanya Tucker



CMA Prime Prospect Study Measures Impact of Economy on Country Fan Engagement

by BOB DOERSCHUK

With the initial summary of findings that stemmed from its Country Music Consumer Segmentation Study, CMA cast new light into the interests and resources of the genre's most potentially rewarding fan base, identified as Prime Prospects. That presentation began a process that continues as this research, mandated by CMA's mission to serve the music industry, deepens and expands.

The latest information gathered by the Leo Burnett Company and The Right Brain Consumer Consulting builds on data previously summarized in *CMA Close Up* (April/May, June/July, Aug./Sept.) and made available to CMA members at My.CMAworld.com. In June, a survey was undertaken by telephone and online of 712 fans of Country Music, 18-54, grouped in four categories that represent the most promising demographics for current and potential growth: CountryPhiles (passionate fans of Country Music), MusicPhiles (dedicated fans of Country as well as other genres), Today's Traditional (prospective CountryPhiles who haven't yet monetized their commitment significantly) and Pop Country (prospective MusicPhiles whose Country tastes lean toward the pop side). A PowerPoint presentation of the Prime Prospect Study is also posted at My.CMAworld.com.

A key purpose of this new round of research was to gauge the impact of the current economy on the behavior of fans in each category. Results indicate that the core Country Music fan segments are less likely to monetize their support for the genre than they would have been a year ago; in effect, many have migrated from the CountryPhile and MusicPhile groups into the less responsive categories that fall under the heading of Low-Funding Fans. At the same time, the size of the Country fan base has stayed the same or grown slightly since 2008.

The challenge of keeping these fans engaged even in uncertain times guided the formulation of a series of questions posed in the June survey. These questions, followed by multiple-choice answers, yielded important insights into the lives of today's Country fan:

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE STATE OF THE NATION'S ECONOMY THESE DAYS?

Slightly more than half the polled fans chose "not so good" but predicted that better times lay ahead and 33 percent chose "poor." More detailed information emerged as these answers were broken down according by the category of the respondents. For example, fans of Pop Country assessed the nation's economic prospects less severely than those in other categories, while CountryPhiles without home Internet access were by far more negative.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE STATE OF YOUR OWN PERSONAL FINANCES THESE DAYS?

Nine out of 10 Prime Prospects regard today's economic conditions as negative, while 32 percent chose "fair" and 15 percent chose "poor." As for the more engaged CountryPhile segment, those quizzed by phone were the predominant demographic in both the smaller "excellent" and "poor" categories. About six percent seem to be holding their own while 25 percent struggle with more difficult financial challenges.

VERSUS 12 MONTHS AGO, HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR HOUSEHOLD FINANCIAL SITUATION?

Only 16 percent chose the "better" option, with 44 percent opting for "same" and 40 percent for "worse." CountryPhiles were the dominant

demographic among those who described their status as "better" than in 2008.

LOOKING AHEAD 12 MONTHS, HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR HOUSEHOLD FINANCIAL SITUATION?

Respondents overall were hopeful about their prospects, choosing "better" or "same" in far greater numbers than "worse." Once again, CountryPhiles polled by phone constituted the most optimistic demographic.

IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS, HAVE YOU BEEN SPENDING ABOUT AS MUCH AS YOU DID BEFORE, SPENDING MORE OR CUTTING BACK?

Respondents as a whole admitted to cutting back on their spending over the previous year, but here too the CountryPhiles emerged as the most potentially responsive group; though they cut down on their expenses, they did so less extensively than other Prime Prospect segments.

IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS, HAVE YOU BEEN SPENDING ABOUT AS MUCH AS YOU DID BEFORE ON ENTERTAINMENT, SPENDING MORE OR CUTTING BACK?

The patterns identified by the previous question are mirrored in answers to this query too: Overall spending on entertainment fell, with two out of three fans admitting to spending less in a wide variety of categories, including music and ticket purchases, than they had been spending a year earlier. But there were fewer declines among CountryPhiles than other Prime Prospects, particularly among those queried online rather than by phone.

For deeper insight into these trends, researchers asked respondents to break their spending patterns down into 28 specific areas. Not surprisingly, the results document significant reductions particularly in discretionary areas such as luxury items, travel, dining out and electronics, while expenditures stayed steady on cell phones, gas, Internet access and other areas considered essential — including some entertainment channels such as cable TV and satellite radio. Though overall spending is down, the impact on the Country Music industry is mixed. Like other consumers of music in general and Country Music specifically, CountryPhiles do trend downward, though less precipitously.

Similarly, when queried about certain leisure activities, respondents indicated that they were pursuing or intended to pursue those that were free as much or more than they had in the previous year while cutting down on going to or renting movies, subscribing to magazines and other pleasures that come with a price tag. Those free activities included no-cost downloads of Country Music, a fact that leads to another area of exploration in the CMA study.

The 2008 CMA BrandProspect Segmentation Study determined that home Internet use varied widely throughout the entire Prime Prospect sample, but that it skewed low among CountryPhiles. Still, nine out of 10 Country fans go online at various times and locations, mostly via high-speed access, and within the CountryPhile segment that number

Economic downturns have had a stronger impact on

and Explores Future Growth Opportunities

is four out of five. Equally important, the Core Fans — those most likely to monetize their interest in the genre — are the most inclined within the Country Music fan base to access information online. And within that group, CountryPhiles with regular online access lead the pack in frequency of Internet use, especially in visits to Country-devoted destinations.

The nature of these online excursions was examined as well. About two out of five Prime Prospects that are able to get online will search for Country Music-related content each month; one in five do so weekly. More than nine in 10 of all Prime Prospects do access the Internet somewhere and sometimes. Videos and online radio or music samples are the most popular weekly destinations, and Country news, song lyrics and product purchases lead the list for monthly visits by Prime Prospects as a whole. Within that group, CountryPhiles index highly on using the Internet to feel more connected to their favorite artists and music as well as using online resources to enhance their expertise as Country Music aficionados, whether through checking out lyrics, catching up on concert details or purchasing downloads and merchandise. Beyond satisfying the needs of the fans who seek them out, YouTube, iTunes and radio station sites in particular also influenced their subsequent tastes and behavior.

Informed by the data gathered to support these findings, the CMA Consumer Research Committee came up with 10 concepts whose developments bear the best potential for generating revenue and/or building a support community in the Country Music realm. These include:

1. **A Frequent Buyer Rewards Program**
2. **Online Country Music Information Hub**
3. **Direct CD Purchasing**
4. **Occasion-Specific Album Compilations**
5. **Simplified Music Downloading**
6. **“Go Deep into the Album” Radio Sampling Programs**
7. **“Crossroads” and “All-in-One” Concert Touring Packages**
8. **Country Concert All-in-One Combination Packages**
9. **Concert Bus Packages**
10. **Country Music Fan Online Social Network Sites**

Investigation of these concepts, and in particular their mutual and interrelating influences, yielded the data that fuel the conclusions made available to CMA members in detail at My.CMAworld.com. Broadly speaking, though, two especially promising business-building opportunities involve offering financial or value-added credit for consumer loyalty and support as well as providing “inside information” about and exposure to Country Music and artists. Going deep into the album for radio playlists and implementing a “frequent buyer” plan appear to promise the greatest overall positive impact across revenue and engagement dimensions among all Prime Prospects.

The broad conclusions, however, are as important as the details in this latest round of research, as are the responses recommended by the researchers:

1. Economic downturns have had a stronger impact on Country Music Core Fans than the population at large, with the result that some have joined the “Low-Funding Fan” group whose members are less likely to spend on Country Music products. **Implication:** Offer consumers

effective value-added products and services to keep them engaged through hard times.

2. Different segments of the Prime Prospect Country Fans behave and respond in distinctive ways. **Implication:** Music industry interests must be clear about which segment will be most responsive to their marketing and tailor their campaigns accordingly.

3. Most Country fans go online occasionally, though not always at home. **Implication:** YouTube, iTunes and radio station sites can serve as mass-marketing networks especially for CountryPhiles and MusicPhiles.

4. “Going Deep” into album tracks is a promising strategy for Country radio. **Implication:** When stations are reluctant to make the plunge, consider other ways of implementing this approach, including online.

5. “Crossroads” tours, mixing Country and rock headliners, and “All-in-One” package tours offer value-added appeal and other pluses. **Implication:** This approach will become more important for all involved parties.

6. A “Country Music Hub” can serve as a “Mall of America” for the entire Country Music fan base. **Implication:** To maintain and strengthen relations with consumers, different forms of this incentive can be tailored to different Prime Prospect segments.

7. “Frequent Buyer” programs can turn traditional commerce, based on product purchase, into a two-way system of rewards. **Implication:** How about launching a “Country Credit Card” with a points program?

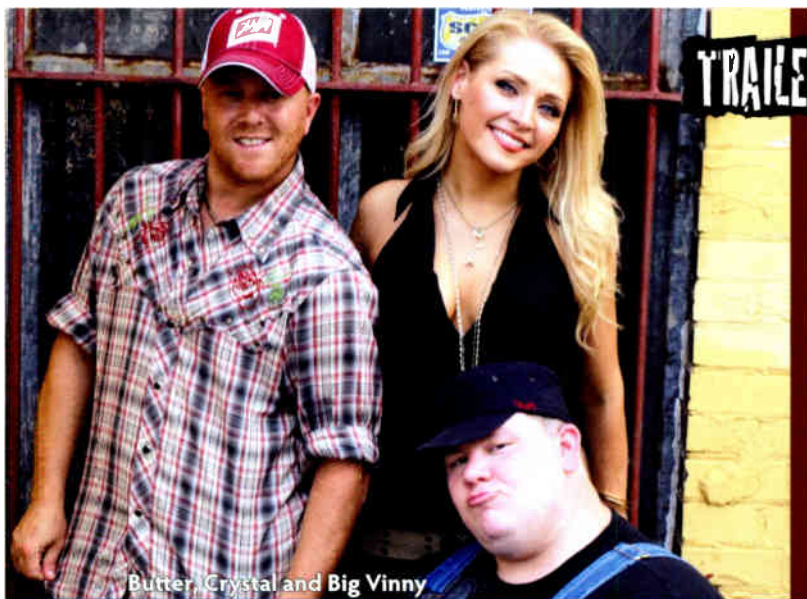
8. There’s no shortage of ideas for generating revenue in changing and challenging times. **Implication:** Album compilations can be created for CountryPhiles, Pop Country fans and other groups; young fans can be invited to assemble in bus packages to concerts; simple downloads can stimulate novice fans to purchase more easily and frequently online ... the possibilities are as open as the imaginations of the CMA membership.

An in-depth portrait of CountryPhiles and MusicPhiles as well as information on CMA Country Music Consumer Segmentation Study, CMA BrandProspect Segmentation Algorithm and CMA Prime Prospect Study are available on the CMA members-only Web site, My.CMAworld.com.

For more information on

- CMA’s consumer research study or future agendas, contact CMA (615) 263-3696 or Research@CMAworld.com
- use or integration of the Excel-based segmentation algorithm into a new or existing customer survey for information collection, contact Elizabeth Knapp (312) 220-4225 or Elizabeth.Knapp@LeoBurnett.com
- database overlay approach to typing an existing customer database, contact Carol Foley (312) 220-4205 or Carol.Foley@LeoBurnett.com
- focus group or CMA’s consumer research study, contact Jana O’Brien (708) 383-5794 or JanaOBrien1@gmail.com

Country Music Core Fans than the population at large.



TRAILER CHOIR

Butter, Crystal and Big Vinny

Q&A

ACTOR TO PORTRAY YOU IN A BIOPIC BUTTER: "Mark Wahlberg." CRYSTAL: "Julia Stiles or Hayden Panettiere (because I get that I look like her a lot)." VINNY: "John Goodman." **WHAT YOU'D BE IF NOT AN ARTIST** BUTTER: "Standup comedian." CRYSTAL: "A makeup artist — I'd be an artist of some form, doing something creative." VINNY: "Sonic General Manager." **SONG YOU WISH YOU'D WRITTEN** BUTTER: "'Life's a Dance.'" CRYSTAL: "'The Dance.'" VINNY: "'Whiskey Lullaby.'" **WORD OR PHRASE YOU SAY OVER AND OVER AGAIN** TRAILER CHOIR: "'Holla!'"
TrailerChoir.com

Even if they never sang a note, Trailer Choir would turn heads just by walking out onstage. There's Butter, the front man with the smooth delivery and sharp comic timing; Crystal, whose smile and soulful singing can light up any venue; and Big Vinny, whose determination to entertain would win over any crowd even if he didn't happen to be a 400-pounder with a killer pop-worm dance move.

Not surprisingly, Trailer Choir broke in as a party act at clubs and frat houses throughout the Southeast. Gradually, they began road-testing originals between the hits they covered. By the time they'd landed their first gig in Nashville, they decided to present only their own material, just to see what happened.

What happened was an invitation from Toby Keith to showcase and sign with his record label, Show Dog Nashville, and then to join his "Big Dog Daddy Tour." He even added their song "Off the Hillbilly Hook" to the soundtrack for his film "Beer for My Horses."

Several producers are involved in the group's debut album, *Off the Hillbilly Hook*, with Keith at the console on some tracks, Butter and Mills Logan on others. But whether rollicking through "Rockin' the Beer Gut," lazing through a summer idyll on "Rollin' Through the Sunshine" or riding the catchy chorus on the title cut, their sound is already as unique as their look.



VERONICA BALLESTRINI

Q&A

MUSICAL HERO "Keith Urban." **BOOKS ON YOUR NIGHTSTAND** "*The Bible* and *Gossip Girl*." **MOMENT YOU WISH YOU COULD RELIVE** "All-star softball game in Syracuse, N.Y., summer 2006." **PET PEEVE** "When you smile at someone and they don't smile back." **PHRASE YOU SAY OVER AND OVER** "It's OK. Everything happens for a reason."
VeronicaBallestrini.net

The widening appeal of Country Music is exemplified in the music of Veronica Ballestrini. Born in Waterford, Conn., this young artist, still in her teens, exemplifies the interplay between traditional and modern musical values, not to mention the willingness to speak directly to her peers, that Taylor Swift pioneered and others have embraced.

The candor of this approach is implied by the title of her TimBob Records debut album, *What I'm All About*. Whether on the two songs she wrote on her own, her four co-writes or the rest of these 11 tracks, Ballestrini communicates both innocence and a willingness to drink deep from the wells of life. On her first single, "Amazing," which she wrote with her producer Cliff Downs, she spins a tale that begins with being stood up and ends with a confession of helpless infatuation — and yet makes it sound like there's joy even in heartbreak, or any experience for that matter.

In the five short years between her first efforts to play guitar and her gutsy move to Nashville at 18, Ballestrini has achieved a sound original enough to draw more than 12 million page views on her MySpace page. It mixes Carole King's streetwise romanticism ("Don't Say," another co-write with Downs), acoustic folk arrangement ("Destiny," which she penned on her own), echoes of late-period Beatles ballad texture ("Bullet Life," by Gary Burr and Trey Bruce) and bits of Swift in the rhythm of her lyrics and occasional banjo-meets-backbeat grooves ("Small Town Girl"). That one is a cover, by Tommy Lee Snyder and Dennis Banka, but when Ballestrini affirms on the chorus that "it's a great big world, waitin' on a small town girl," the message clearly comes straight from her heart.



NATHAN LEE JACKSON

Q&A

MUSICAL HERO "Garth Brooks. *Ropin' the Wind* was one of the first albums I owned, and 'The River' was the first solo I sang in church."
SONG YOU'D LOVE TO COVER "'Two Sparrows in a Hurricane' by Tanya Tucker. I loved that song as a kid and it applies to my life now more than ever."
CD IN YOUR STEREO "Nichole Nordeman's *Wide Eyes*."
FAVORITE FOOD ON THE ROAD "Free food!"
DREAM DUET PARTNER "My wife Stephanie ... however, if Stephanie was at home, sick with the flu, and LeAnn Rimes just happened to want to sing a duet with me on the CMAs, I guess, through my tears, I would enjoy that thoroughly."
NathanLeeJackson.com

Nathan Lee Jackson nourished his talent with a regimen of piano lessons, church choirs, talent contests and opening slots at shows around Winchester, Ky. Moving to Nashville after high school graduation, he followed the well-trod path into the music business, though with two unusual advantages. The first was one of his roommates, Billy Strange's former wife, who happily introduced the young newcomer to her industry friends.

The second was Jackson's artistry. His expressive vocals and the dramatic poetry of his lyrics resonated on a recording he'd made of his ballad, "Powerful," which caught the ear of Jeff Glixman. With deep roots in classic rock, the producer related to this intensity and, with Zak Rizvi co-producing, helmed *Complicated Hearts*, Jackson's StarCity Recording Company debut, with Jackson's wife Stephanie among the participants.

On 14 tracks, including 12 co-writes and the self-penned "Powerful," this album weaves a complex tapestry of influences and unusual arrangements, from two a cappella tracks to the jazzy ballad "Kentucky Breeze," written by Jackson and Jesse Lingo, and the tightly harmonized fiddles and screaming lead of "Sittin' by the River," written by Jackson and Jim Femino. There's Country in the steel guitar on the new single, "Desperate Man," by Jackson and Bud Tower. But here too there's edginess in the power guitar driving home a story of finding God at a moment of final reckoning. Throughout *Complicated Hearts*, Jackson swings for the fences and connects every time.

Produced by J. R. Rodriguez and Phil O'Donnell, *Arrivals & Departures*, Darren Kozelsky's debut on Major Seventh Entertainment, conveys a restless, rough-edged energy. Backed by the band he's fronted in clubs all along the Lone Star circuit, Kozelsky sounds right at home with steel-sweetened ballads as well as rowdy showstoppers, delivering these 14 songs (and one extended version of "When I Get There") with urgent but good-spirited intensity.

He discovered Country Music as a child while working at his dad's car shop in Ballinger, Texas. Their radio pumped a stream of Merle Haggard, George Jones, Willie Nelson, George Strait and a singer who is honored on Kozelsky's single, "Seven Years Gosdins Ago." Written by Liz Hengber and Arlos Smith, this waltz-time lament profiles a casualty of romance who would be doing just fine if only that jukebox would stop playing heartbreak songs. Kozelsky tells this story perfectly, with a sensitivity to its pathos and humor that applies equally well to the next track, "When I Get There" by Monty Criswell and Wade Kirby, when he belts the climactic line, "I want to go where the beer is cheap," with completely believable conviction.

Finding material this suitable was more important to Kozelsky than packing the album with original songs for their own sake. "I'm not going to put a song on the record simply because I wrote it," he said. "I'm not going to force something. If it's something that I relate to then I'm totally comfortable cutting it."

Kozelsky did join with Seth Borsellino and Chris Claridy to write the title track, on which lessons of life unfold along images of trains rolling toward horizons as distant as the edges of Texas itself. This superb writing hopefully forecasts what's to come from this gifted artist.

Debut Spotlight compiled by BOB DOERSCHUK



DARREN KOZELSKY

Q&A

MUSICAL HERO "George Strait." **WORD YOU SAY OVER AND OVER AGAIN** "Dude."
FAVORITE FOOD ON THE ROAD "Mexican."
FIRST GIG "A wedding reception in San Angelo, Texas. We had a blast even though we played horribly, but at the time we thought we sounded great."
SOMETHING WE'D NEVER GUESS ABOUT YOU "I am so thankful that I have both of my feet. At the age of 5, my right foot was cut up really bad by a lawn mower. After numerous surgeries and many answered prayers, I was blessed to live my life with both feet on the ground."
DarrenKozelsky.com

LARRY KNECHTEL, multi-instrumentalist, 69, died Aug. 20 in Yakima, Wash., of an apparent heart attack. After a stint as a member of guitarist Duane Eddy's band, Knechtel established himself as a session player in Los Angeles and eventually became a fixture in the legendary "Wrecking Crew" rhythm section. His arrangement and piano performance on Simon & Garfunkel's "Bridge over Troubled Water" earned him a Grammy Award in 1970. Beginning in 1988, Knechtel spent seven years based in Nashville, where he recorded several solo albums as well as sessions for Chet Atkins, Conway Twitty, Jim Lauderdale, Roy Orbison, Hank Williams Jr. and other artists. His later association with the Dixie Chicks included work on their album *Taking the Long Way* and subsequent live performances.

FRED LAWRENCE, talent agent, 68, died Aug. 7 in Burbank, Calif., of cardiac arrest. During a career that included service in the Miami and Los Angeles offices of Creative Management Agency and subsequently as West Coast VP for APA's Personal Appearances Department, head of Fred Lawrence Associates and head of the Adult Contemporary Music Division at ICM, Lawrence represented a long list of clients, including Country Music Hall of Fame members The Everly Brothers.

WARREN "GATES" NICHOLS, multi-instrumentalist, 65, died Aug. 13 in Austell, Ga., of cancer. After gigging with local bands in Long Island, N.Y., and Atlanta, Ga., Nichols accepted an invitation to join Confederate Railroad as the band's steel guitarist. The group backed up David Allan Coe and Johnny Paycheck before embarking on a career distinguished by several No. 1 hits and two CMA Awards nominations for Vocal Group of the Year. Nichols left Confederate Railroad late in 2008 to work as a substitute teacher and perform with the praise band based at West Ridge Church in Dallas, Ga.

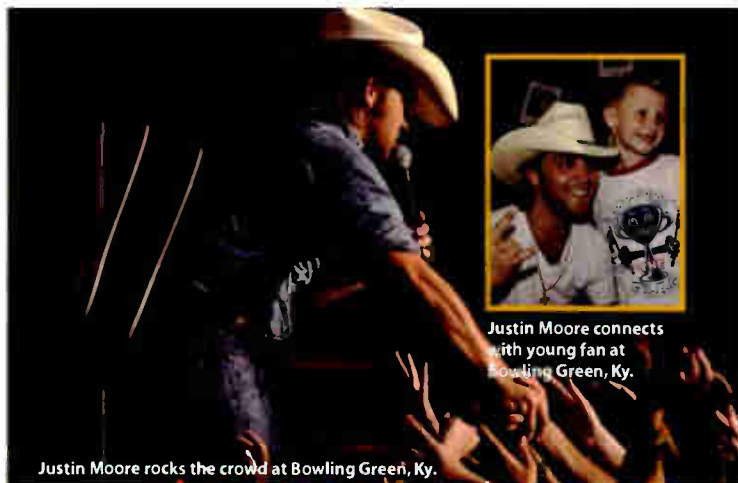
LES PAUL, guitarist, instrument designer and recording innovator, 94, died Aug. 13 in White Plains, N.Y., of complications from pneumonia. Born Lester William Polfus in Waukesha, Wis., he left high school at 17 to play guitar professionally, alternating Country gigs under the name Rhubarb Red and jazz dates as Les Paul. He experimented with electric guitar design as early as 1929 and invented the prototype for the modern solidbody electric guitar in 1941. Gibson Guitars began its ongoing production of the Les Paul line in 1952; Kix Brooks, Kenny Chesney, Faith Hill, Miranda Lambert, Keith Urban and Dwight Yoakam are among the many Country artists who made it their instrument of choice. Paul was equally inventive with recording equipment, having pioneered the practice of overdubbing in recordings made with his wife, vocalist Mary Ford. Celebrated by guitarists in every style of music, Paul kept his Country connections alive on two album collaborations with Country Music Hall of Fame member Chet Atkins, one of which, *Chester and Lester*, won a Grammy Award for Best Country Instrumental Performance in 1976.

BILLY LEE RILEY, rockabilly pioneer and Sun Records studio musician, 75, died Aug. 2 in Jonesboro, Ark., from colon cancer. The son of Arkansas sharecroppers, Riley served in the U. S. Army before joining a Country band based in Memphis, where Cowboy Jack Clement produced his first recordings. Riley's hit singles included "Flying Saucers Rock 'n' Roll" and "Red Hot," both of which featured Jerry Lee Lewis on backup piano. Riley also played multiple instruments, including guitar, bass, drums and harmonica, on Lewis' classics "Breathless" and "Great Balls of Fire." After doing session work in Los Angeles during the '60s, he toured occasionally, especially in Europe. His last album, *Hillbilly Rockin' Man*, was released in 2003.

MIKE SEEGER, fiddle-instrumentalist, singer and scholar of American rural music, 75, died Aug. 7 in Lexington, Va., from cancer. Born in New York City and raised in Chevy Chase, Md., Seeger began playing at barn dances with his sister Peggy at 18. Within two years, he was also recording performances by traditional musicians. He was an original member of the New Lost City Ramblers, who came together in 1958 on a mission to celebrate authentic folk tunes as well as offer original and often topical material. His honors include the Rex Foundation's Ralph J. Gleason Lifetime Achievement Award and the Heritage Award at the Uncle Dave Macon Days Festival in 2004.

BOB WILLIS, singer and songwriter, 75, died July 10 in Louisville, Ky. Willis was 12 when he began writing songs in the Country style, but after devoting himself to the ministry at 26 he switched to a blend of secular and Christian focus that earned him the unofficial title of "Mr. Country-Gospel." His songs have been recorded by Carl and Pearl Butler, Country Music Hall of Fame member Jimmie Davis and Jody Miller, among many other artists.

In Memoriam compiled by **BOB DOERSCHUK**



Justin Moore connects with young fan at Bowling Green, Ky.

Justin Moore rocks the crowd at Bowling Green, Ky.

ENGAGING

The mechanics of writing, planning, recording and marketing music have been in place for years. Recently, though, another component has come into the picture and is rapidly making itself an indispensable part of the representation, particularly in the realm of Country Music.

That component is the fan base. Record labels have increasingly been looking toward fans for input into everything from song selection to album cover art.

Reasons for fans' ascension into the creative process are many and complex, but John Gusty, Digital Strategist with the Black River Music Group (BRMG), dates it to one milestone moment. "The traditional drivers have always been radio and retail," said Gusty, who developed his insights into this phenomenon as VP, Marketing and Artist Relations, at his previous company, echo. "But when iTunes took over from Wal-Mart as the No. 1 retailer in the country, that was a monumental moment because iTunes sells just digital product, and because things can be transported digitally between you and me, without a radio station or a retailer in the middle, fans became absolutely in control."

A significant change, to be sure, but as Gusty and others in the vanguard of the industry see it, it promises exciting challenges and a potential payoff that's unique to Country. The key lies in the relationship between the artist and the fan, which is arguably more intimate and enduring than in any other genre. "In pop and rock music, you're only as good as your last single," said Shay Boone, who is also a Digital Strategist at BRMG and former Street Marketing Manager at echo. "But a Country Music fan is a fan for life."

This insight underscores Gusty's and Boone's work at echo with Jeff Bates, which continues at BRMG. Established since his RCA Records Nashville debut in 2003 as a gifted artist with a strong traditional bent, he reinforced that impression in 2008 with his first BRMG album, *Jeff Bates*. One track in particular, "Riverbank," proved an ideal vehicle for getting fans involved. With its references to fishing as a symbol of lost innocence, this song, written by Bates, Robert Arthur and Kirk Roth, resonated strongly with fans when released as a single in August 2008.

"We got so many letters that we decided to ask Jeff's street team to send in photos of themselves fishing with their family members," said Boone. "We got hundreds of them. People sent in videos too. We had already filmed a video of Jeff for this song, but when we decided to incorporate some of those photos as an extra touch, that was a great way to tie in the traditional with the new."

Before premiering the video on JeffBates.net and YouTube in October 2008, BRMG sent an e-mail to fans, alerting them to look for themselves in its photo and video montage. "That caught their

CONSUMERS GET INVOLVED WITH JEFF BATES' VIDEO AND JUSTIN MOORE'S TRACK SELECTION



Jeff Bates with stills sent by fans for his "Riverbank" video.



Sunset image in background sent by fan for use in Jeff Bates' "Riverbank" video.

THE EMPOWERED FAN

by BOB DOERSCHUK and PHYLLIS STARK

attention right away," Boone said. "The fans were thrilled. And that video has had more than 33,000 views on YouTube as of August 2009."

Fan input was integral to The Valory Music Co.'s promotion for new artist Justin Moore, whose self-titled album dropped in August 2009. In a 10-week campaign titled "So You Want to Be a Record Label Executive," fans were encouraged to review two new songs from Moore each week for 10 weeks and vote on their favorites. The Top 10 vote getters made the cut as album tracks.

Fans could listen via a widget placed on social networking sites including Digital Rodeo, Facebook, iLike and MySpace, as well as the label's site. Radio stations that were early adopters of Moore's first single also participated via their sites. Listeners could then post the widget on their own social networking pages, which got more voters involved while virally expanding awareness of Moore.

"Fans like to take ownership," said Kelly Rich, VP of Sales, Marketing and Interactive, The Valory Music Co. "If they feel they are part of the process from the beginning, the long term connection with the artist can be stronger."

A commitment to abide by the final tally can be challenging for labels, but Moore and the executives at Valory insisted that the voting results either validated their own preferences or yielded pleasant surprises. For instance, the strong response to "Small Town USA," written by Moore, Brian Maher and Jeremy Stover, confirmed the label's inclination to release it as the second single. On the other hand, "Hank It," by the same trio of writers, was considered questionable because of its perceived skew toward male listeners and that it might be too aggressive or too tongue in cheek. But the song drew a strong response, with the unexpected twist that it appealed more strongly to women, and wound up as the album's closing track.

"The participation was even more than we expected," said Jon Loba, VP of Promotion and Artist Development, The Valory Music Co. "It was truly a case of letting the consumers have a voice."

BRMG and Valory are certainly not alone in stepping up efforts to solicit fan involvement. Last year, Big Machine Records invited the first 10,000 Taylor Swift fans who pre-ordered her *Fearless* album to submit photos of themselves, which then became part of a mosaic picture poster that was included in the packaging and made available on her Web site.

Lyric Street Records, meanwhile, teamed up with the People's Choice Awards to summon Rascal Flatts fans to submit original cover designs for the group's *Unstoppable* album. The top four submissions chosen by the band and the label were made available for fan voting via the People's Choice Web site.

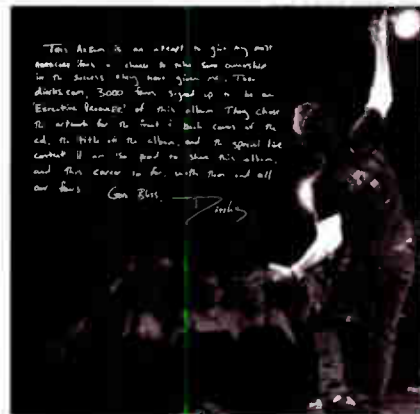
And Capitol Records Nashville encouraged Dierks Bentley fans to log onto his Web site to help determine what content should be included

on his first greatest hits collection. The first 3,000 fans who participated in the promotion were listed as executive producers in the album's liner notes.

"You're always trying to get closer in when you're a fan and there may not be opportunities to do it," added Moore. "But any time we can include the fans more, it's our job to do that. Any time they feel like they had a part in something, they're going to want to buy that album and listen to that album more."

EXECUTIVE PRODUCED BY

JeffBates.net
MooreJustinMusic.com



Album artwork includes thanks from Dierks Bentley and list of fans as "executive producers" in notes for *Greatest Hits / Every Mile a Memory 2003-2008*.

"A COUNTRY MUSIC FAN IS A FAN FOR LIFE."

— Shay Boone, Digital Strategist, Black River Music Group

Cover artwork for Rascal Flatts' *Unstoppable*, designed by Chris Kubik and chosen from thousands of fan-submitted designs.





presents **DENNY'S ROCKSTAR MENU**
NEW MENU ITEMS CREATED BY ROCK'S BIGGEST STARS



RASCAL FLATTS GOOD CHARLOTTE GYM CLASS HEROES SUM 41



DENNY'S Diners Dig Into Rascal Flatts' Unstoppable Breakfast

by BOB DOERSCHUK

top: Front cover of the Denny's Rockstar Menu.
above: Jay DeMarcus, Gary LeVox and Joe Don
Rooney show off their Unstoppable Breakfast.

Country Music fans are always hungry for a great show. But after exiting their favorite live venue, many of them feel a different craving — to share the experience over after-hours eats.

That's where Denny's enters the picture. With approximately 1,550 outlets in every state but Wyoming, the restaurant chain is as much a part of the landscape as mountains in Colorado. And since the griddle is hot and the lights are on 24/7 at nearly all of its locations, Denny's is an ideal destination for late-nighters.

That's why the company decided to target the 18-24 demographic with its Denny's All-Nighter campaign, one cornerstone of which became the Rockstar Menu presented by Dr Pepper, a selection of meals created by artists and served exclusively from 10 PM to 5 AM. True to its name, the program featured rock bands initially — Good Charlotte, Gym Class Heroes and Sum 41. But in June, Rascal Flatts became the first Country superstars to add their culinary creations to the list.

Dubbed the Unstoppable Breakfast to tie in with the title of their latest album, this down-home *pièce de résistance* serves up a biscuit topped with country-fried steak, eggs made to order, American cheese, country gravy and three bacon strips, with hash browns on the side.

The band was eager to sink their teeth into the project. Flying into Denver a day ahead of their concert there, Gary LeVox, Jay DeMarcus and Joe Don Rooney joined Andy Dismore, Denny's designated "Rockstar Chef," at a local Denny's to personally prepare and premiere their recipe. A film crew captured the event, which was featured in a commercial that would air not only on CMT and GAC but also on late-night network programming, to the tune of their single "Summer Nights."

"We wanted to convey to fans that this really happened," explained Michael Polydoroff, Director of New Products Marketing, Denny's. "They went into the kitchen, put on their chef coats, which we'd stitched their names into, and had fun, so you could see the authenticity and credibility of the dish."

Though Denny's doesn't pay Rockstar Menu participants, it added value to the deal by providing coupons for distribution at Rascal Flatts shows and e-mailing them to the group's fan database, each of which allowed a free Unstoppable Breakfast with purchase of any other Rockstar menu item.

"Rascal Flatts as a brand has celebrated many firsts," said Heather Conley, Director of Marketing, Lyric Street and Carolwood Records. "A Country artist had never been associated with the Rockstar menu, and the promotion served as a vehicle to reach their core audience and beyond."

Still hungry? Look for Jewel's Texas-inspired quesadilla among the Rockstar selections beginning in October.

Dennys.com, RascalFlatts.com

OVERSTOCK.COM

Gets Real with Joey + Rory



above: Joey + Rory's tour bus with an Overstock.com wrap. Joey + Rory film the "If Not For You" commercial for Overstock.com.

by BOB DOERSCHUK

When Rory Feek, one-half of the husband-and-wife duo Joey + Rory, asked **Overstock.com** Creative Director Alan Bunton if his reason for inviting them to serve as spokespersons for his company was that they'd won top honors on CMT's "Can You Duet" talent search in 2008, the answer he got was a surprise.

"He said, 'I don't really care if you're famous or not,'" Rory recalled. "What matters to me is that you're a married couple in love, chasing a dream, living in the country with a little bit of land and a garden and some animals. All across America, in every little town, deep inside, we all have those same dreams, no matter where you're from. To me, you represent that America."

Rory and his wife Joey Martin know that America well. The farmhouse, the cozy country restaurant — Marcy Jo's Mealhouse — that Joey runs with her sister-in-law Marcy and stocks with homemade bread in tiny Pottsville, Tenn., and the barn before which the husband and wife share a private moment, all depicted on their Web site, are theirs in real life. That, even more than the talent displayed on their Sugar Hill/Vanguard Records debut, *The Life of a Song*, was what persuaded Bunton to reach out to them.

Timing was important too. The company was in the process of adapting "At Home with the O" as the slogan for its new advertising campaign when Bunton caught the duo on "Can You Duet." Within days he was at their farm, getting to know them, explaining the mission of **Overstock.com** to serve as "an outlet mall to the consumer via the Internet" and working out their arrangement directly with Rory.

They began by shooting a series of commercials. One titled "Love Song" captures a typical day, with Rory phoning his wife from the porch of their house to sing part of a song he'd just written for her; smiling, she orders a gift guitar for him via **Overstock.com** while listening to his performance. On "If Not for You," targeted to the Christmas season, we see the restaurant glistening with holiday decorations and filled with friends, to whom they hand out gifts ordered from the online retailer.

This partnership manifests in other ways too. These have included an **Overstock.com** wrap on their 1955 tour bus as well as a page at **Overstock.com** on which viewers can play the commercials, read about and leave messages for the duo and order CDs.

"We do the right thing for our customers and our employees, simply because it's the right thing to do," said Stormy Simon, Senior VP of Marketing & Customer Care, **Overstock.com**. "And Joey + Rory live the right way, not because anybody is watching but because it's the right thing to do. People know the difference between real and not real, and these two wonderful people are the real deal."

JoeyandRory.com, Overstock.com

CMA SONGWRITERS SERIES THRIVES COAST TO COAST



CMA SONGWRITERS SERIES PARTICIPANTS GREET KKGO GO COUNTRY 105 RADIO EXECUTIVES AT THE HOUSE OF BLUES. Bob DiPiero; Tonya Campos, PD; Charlie Cook, Senior Manager of Country Programming; Saul Levine, Owner and GM; Kellie Pickler; Paul Freeman, Afternoon Drive Announcer; Kane Biscaya, General Sales Manager; Dan Bowen, VP of Marketing Strategies and Communications, CMA; and Chris Lindsey. Foreground: Aimee Mayo; and Michael Levine, Marketing Director. photo: Adam Larkey



Chuck Wicks, Bob DiPiero, Marv Green and Ashley Gorley onstage at Joe's Pub.
photo: Stuart Ramson

Chris Lindsey, Aimee Mayo, Kellie Pickler and Bob DiPiero at the House of Blues on Sept. 15.
photo: Adam Larkey



Bob DiPiero, Kellie Pickler, guitarist Josh Henson, Aimee Mayo and Chris Lindsey at the House of Blues.
photo: Adam Larkey



Bob DiPiero, Marv Green, Chuck Wicks and Ashley Gorley at Joe's Pub on Sept. 9. photo: Stuart Ramson



Keith Follese, Billy Currington, Bob DiPiero and Jason Sellers at Joe's Pub on July 30.
photo: Denise Carberry

by BOB DOERSCHUK

Still going strong after five years as a recurring event at Joe's Pub in New York City, the CMA Songwriters Series expanded to the West Coast in September with its first Los Angeles show, at the House of Blues. As usual, the show featured a panel of top Music City songwriters, whom are celebrated within the industry and others also embraced as recording artists. But no matter who is in the lineup, each CMA Songwriters Series show serves the purpose of taking listeners into the creative process behind the craft of writing great songs.

On July 30 the action was at Joe's Pub, with Bob DiPiero playing his frequent role as host. With a long list of hits to his credit (George Strait's "Blue Clear Sky," Faith Hill's "Take Me as I Am"), DiPiero kept the standards of music and discussion high with guests Billy Currington ("I Got a Feelin'"), Keith Follese (Martina McBride's "I Love You," Tim McGraw's "Something Like That") and Jason Sellers (Montgomery Gentry's "Some People Change," Reba McEntire's "Strange").

Joe's Pub welcomed the CMA Songwriters Series again Sept. 9. DiPiero emceed a panel that included Ashley Gorley (Carrie Underwood's "All American Girl," Trace Adkins' "You're Gonna Miss This"), Marv Green (Lonestar's "Amazed," George Strait's "It Just Comes Natural") and Chuck Wicks ("All I Ever Wanted," "Stealing Cinderella").

The House of Blues event on Sept. 15, hosted by DiPiero and sponsored by Artwerk Music, featured Chris Lindsey ("Lets Make Love" by Faith Hill and Tim McGraw, Aimee Mayo ("This One's for the Girls" by Martina McBride) and Kellie Pickler, who with Lindsey and Mayo, co-wrote "Small Town Girl" and "Red High Heels."

The CMA Songwriters Series makes its Chicago debut Oct. 2 at Joe's Bar, with DiPiero presiding and a lineup of Dean Dillon (Kenny Chesney's "A Lot of Things Different," George Strait's "She Let Herself Go"), Scotty Emerick (Toby Keith's "Good as I Once Was," "I Love This Bar") and Lee Ann Womack ("Everything But Quits," "Twenty Years and Two Husbands Ago").

The Series comes back to Joe's Pub in New York on Nov. 5 with Jessi Alexander (Trisha Yearwood's "Baby Don't You Let Go," Little Big Town's "Loney Enough"), Jon Randall (Gary Allan's "She's So California," "Whiskey Lullaby," by Brad Paisley with Alison Krauss) and Mark Sanders (Jo Dee Messina's "Heads Carolina, Tails California," Lee Ann Womack's "I Hope You Dance").

The CMA Songwriters Series at Joe's Pub is sponsored by American Airlines, ASCAP, BMI and GAC. American Airlines is the official airline.

CMASongwritersSeries.com.



CMA Songwriters Series at House of Blues sponsored by:



INTERNATIONAL
EVENTS CALENDAR

OCT. 3

COUNTRY NIGHT GRINDELWALD

Grindelwald, Switzerland country-grindelwald.ch

OCT. 18

COUNTRY GOLD FESTIVAL

Kumamoto, Japan countrygold.net

NOV. 7 – 8

COUNTRY MUSIC MESSE NÜRNBERG

Nürnberg, Germany countrymusicmesse.de**Events and dates are subject to change.*Visit CMAworld.com>International>Touring for more information.*cma* SOUND HEALTHCARE**New Benefits Added**

CMA Sound Healthcare now offers significant improvements in insurance coverage. These include access to prescription medications at a reduced price or even FREE for qualifying members, opportunities to consult with a holistic practitioner for a nominal fee and more. For more on these and other details involving CMA Sound Healthcare visit My.CMAworld.com or e-mail Info@SoundHealthcare.org.

**Country Music Community Honors BILLY DEATON**

Friends of Billy Deaton gathered Sept. 16 in Nashville to celebrate the music industry veteran's 74th birthday. With a career that stretches back to a stint as a DJ on Armed Forces Radio Network in the early '50s, Deaton distinguished himself as a recording artist and served as an artist manager for Faron Young before launching the Billy Deaton Talent Agency, whose clients have included Jim Ed Brown, Donna Fargo, Freddy Fender, Stonewall Jackson, Wanda Jackson, Bobby and Sonny Osborne, Jeannie Seely and Porter Wagoner, among many others.



CMA Senior Manager of Membership and Industry Relations Hank Adam Locklin and CMA Music Festival Executive Producer Tony Conway, President and CEO of Buddy Lee Attractions, present Billy Deaton with a certificate of recognition as one of

Country Music's most beloved pioneers and supporters.

photos: Karen Hicks

CMA INDUSTRY
InSite**Demystifies Record Labels and Entertainment Law**

by BOB DOERSCHUK and SCOTT STEM

The music industry can seem like a labyrinth. Destinations are clear, but the paths toward them are prone to run head-on, double back and, too often, terminate in dead ends.

CMA Industry InSite offers a roadmap through this tangled terrain. Developed by CMA's Artist Relations Committee under the leadership of its Chairman, Kix Brooks of Brooks & Dunn, and Vice Chairman Jay DeMarcus of Rascal Flatts, as part of CMA's ongoing strategic mission to serve as an industry resource, this project makes complex issues easier to understand through 11-minute Webisodes. Each of these covers one aspect of the business and is posted on the third Monday of every month at the CMA members-only Web site My.CMAworld.com.

Episode 3 went online in July. "The Record Label Machine" follows the approach of the two previous installments, on Publishing and Artist Management, by mixing reflections from leaders in the field into a clear presentation enhanced by graphics, commentary and a bit of humor.

The topic is addressed generally at first, as the participants explain what makes labels vital. Their emphasis is on business, with CMA Board President Randy Goodman, President, Lyric Street and Carolwood Records, describing himself and his counterparts as "music venture capitalists." As a specific example, he noted how Lyric Street built "a small company called Rascal Flatts into a global brand."

Acknowledging that this terminology may puzzle up-and-coming artists, narrator Alex Kendig introduced a floor plan of a hypothetical record label office. One by one, the different departments are highlighted, beginning with A&R and continuing through Publicity/Media, Radio Promotion, Digital Service Providers and Marketing/Sales.

One key contribution of each label is its ability to coordinate and, equally important, finance the activities of these departments. Mike Dungan, President and CEO, Capitol Records Nashville, estimated that it costs about \$1 million to launch a new artist. Joe Galante, Chairman, Sony Music Nashville, broke that into physical production, advertising and other components and added, "You see these dollar signs rolling by."

This explains why labels hesitate to take risks with artists that seem unlikely to generate a return on their investment. But artists are advised to approach label deals with caution too. For example, Fletcher Foster, Senior VP and GM, Universal Records South, suggested that male artists might consider signing with labels whose talent rosters are dominated by women.

The focus stays on business as the impact of digital distribution and the advent of the "360 deal" are examined. Though negotiations between artists and prospective labels can be tough, the bottom line remains that these two players are as vital to each other as they ever have been. "If you want big success," Dungan summed up, "you need the machine that goes behind it."

Taking that step can start with Episode 4, "The Music Rule of Law." Posted in August, it emphasizes the importance of legal representation. After an amusing intro, complete with stern music punctuated by gavel-like beats, the lesson begins with intellectual property, whose chief divisions as far as music is concerned are copyrights and trademarks. Their relevance is made clear by Duff Berschback, VP, Business Affairs, Sony/ATV Music Publishing, who observed, "The most valuable thing a band owns is its name."

Whether the focus is stage names or songs, ownership is critical in a business built around intellectual property. It is therefore important to find an attorney who is not only knowledgeable in these areas but specifically in their application to music, especially in digital distribution and other areas of increasing importance. "To be effective, you have to know how to be a lawyer but you also have to know the entertainment business," said Rusty Jones, Attorney, Harris, Martin, Jones, Shrum, Bradford & Wommack P.A.

"The legal issues aren't necessarily new," said Berschback, while discussing the impact of digital downloading and social networks. "It's just new circumstances that test and stretch the old legal issue."

Billing depends on a number of circumstances, including whether an attorney is retained for a single assignment such as contract negotiation or for ongoing relationships; the Webisode explores typical terms for various options. And Tyler Middleton of Baker & Kelly PLLC (B&K) cautioned that long-term arrangements in particular should include the right of the client to audit an attorney's charges. "It's not a malicious thing or a sneaky thing," she said. "It's simply about administrative and human error."

CMA Industry InSite is produced by the digital marketing firm Hi-Fi Fusion. Upcoming installments will address digital downloading, performance rights organizations, radio, royalties, social networking, touring and other topics. CMA members are invited to submit questions to the experts appearing in each episode, with replies posted when received.

SEPT. 15

Band of Heathens / *One Foot in the Ether* / BOH
The Gatlin Brothers / *Pilgrimage* / Curb
Girls Guns and Glory / *Inverted Valentine* / Lonesome Day
Nathan Lee Jackson / *Complicated Hearts* / StarCity
Claire Lynch / *Whatcha Gonna Do* / Rounder
John Arthur Martinez / *Purgatory Road* / Apache Ranch
Cody McCarver / *Cody McCarver* / E1 Entertainment
Tom Russell / *Blood and Candle Smoke* / Shout! Factory
Ricky Skaggs / *Salvo (Songs My Dad Loved)* / Skaggs Family
Aaron Watson / *Deep in the Heart of Texas: Aaron Watson Live* / Unrest Music

SEPT. 22

Guy Clark / *Somedays the Song Writes You* / Dualtone
Larry the Cable Guy / *Tailgate Party* / Warner Bros.
Mark Stuart and the Bastard Sons / *Bend in the Road* / Texacali
Monroe Crossing / *Heartache and Stone* / MC
Nitty Gritty Dirt Band / *Speed of Life* / NG/DB/Sugar Hill
Adam Steffey / *One More for the Road* / Sugar Hill

SEPT. 29

Veronica Ballestrini / *What I'm All About* / TimBob
Bellamy Brothers / *The Antnology, Vol. 1* / Bellamy Brothers
Big & Rich / *Greatest Hits* / Warner Bros.
Blackberry Smoke / *Little Piece of Dixie* / BamaJam
Johnny Burke / *The Long Haul EP* / JB
Jeremy Crady / *Smoke Wagon Serenade* / Flying M
Robert Earl Keen / *The Rose Hotel* / Lost Highway
Kris Kristofferson / *Closer to the Bone* / New West
Miranda Lambert / *Revolution* / Columbia Nashville
Patty Loveless / *Mountain Soul II* / Saguro Road
Corb Lund / *Losin' Lately Gambler* / New West
Lynyrd Skynyrd / *God & Guns* / Loud & Proud/Roadrunner
Sammy Sadler / *Heart Shaped Like Texas* / E1 Entertainment
Chris Smither / *Time Stands Still* / Signature Sounds
Bryan White / *Dustowl Dreams* / (digital)
OCT. 6
Blue Collar Comedy / *The Best of Blue Collar* / Warner Bros
Elliott Brood / *Mourtain Meadows* / Six Shooter
Luke Bryan / *Doin' My Thing* / Capitol Nashville
Rodney Carrington / *Make it Christmas* / Capitol Nashville
Exene Cervenka / *Somewhere Gone* / Bloodshot
Terri Clark / *The Long Way Home* / Capitol/EMI Music
Bill Engvall / *Aged & Confused* / Warner Bros.

Grasstowne / *The Other Side of Towne* / Pinecastle
Toby Keith / *American Ride* / Show Dog
Maria Muldaur / *Maria Muldaur and Her Garden of Joy* / Stony Plain
Steep Canyon Rangers / *Deep in the Shade* / Rebel
Rascal Flatts / *Greatest Hits Vol. 1 (Ltd. Edition)* / Lyric Street
Sugarland / *Gold and Green* / Mercury Nashville

OCT. 13

Thad Cockrell / *To Be Loved* / (digital)
John Cowan / *Comiort and Joy* / E1 Entertainment
Charlie Daniels / *Joy to the World: A Bluegrass Christmas with Charlie Daniels and Friends* / Blue Hat Records/E1 Entertainment
Lee Greenwood / *Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas* / Country Crossing
Greg Hanna / *Greg Hanna* / Pheromone
Brandon Jenkins / *Brother of Dirt* / E1 Entertainment
Richie McDonald / *If Everyday Could Be Christmas* / Stroudavarious
James McMurtry / *Live in Europe* / Lightning Rod
Stroudavarious Orchestra / *Sounds of the Season* / Stroudavarious

OCT. 20

Bomshel / *Fight Like a Girl* / Curb
Sam Bush / *Circles Around Me* / Sugar Hill
Dailey & Vincent / *Singing from the Heart* / Rounder
Tim McGraw / *Southern Voice* / Curb
Jon Reep / *Metro Jethro* / Warner Bros.
various artists / *Things About Comin' My Way* / Black Hen Music

OCT. 27

Big Kenny / *The Quiet Times of a Rock and Roll Farm Boy* / Bigger Picture
Caroline Herring / *Golden Apples of the Sun* / Signature Sounds
Lorrie Morgan / *A Moment in Time* / Country Crossing
Joe Nichols / *Old Things New* / Universal Records South
Dolly Parton / *Dolly (Box Set)* / RCA/Legacy
Rosie Flores and the Pine Valley Cosmonauts / *Girl of the Century* / Bloodshot
Taylor Swift / *Fearless (Platinum Edition)* / Big Machine

NOV. 3

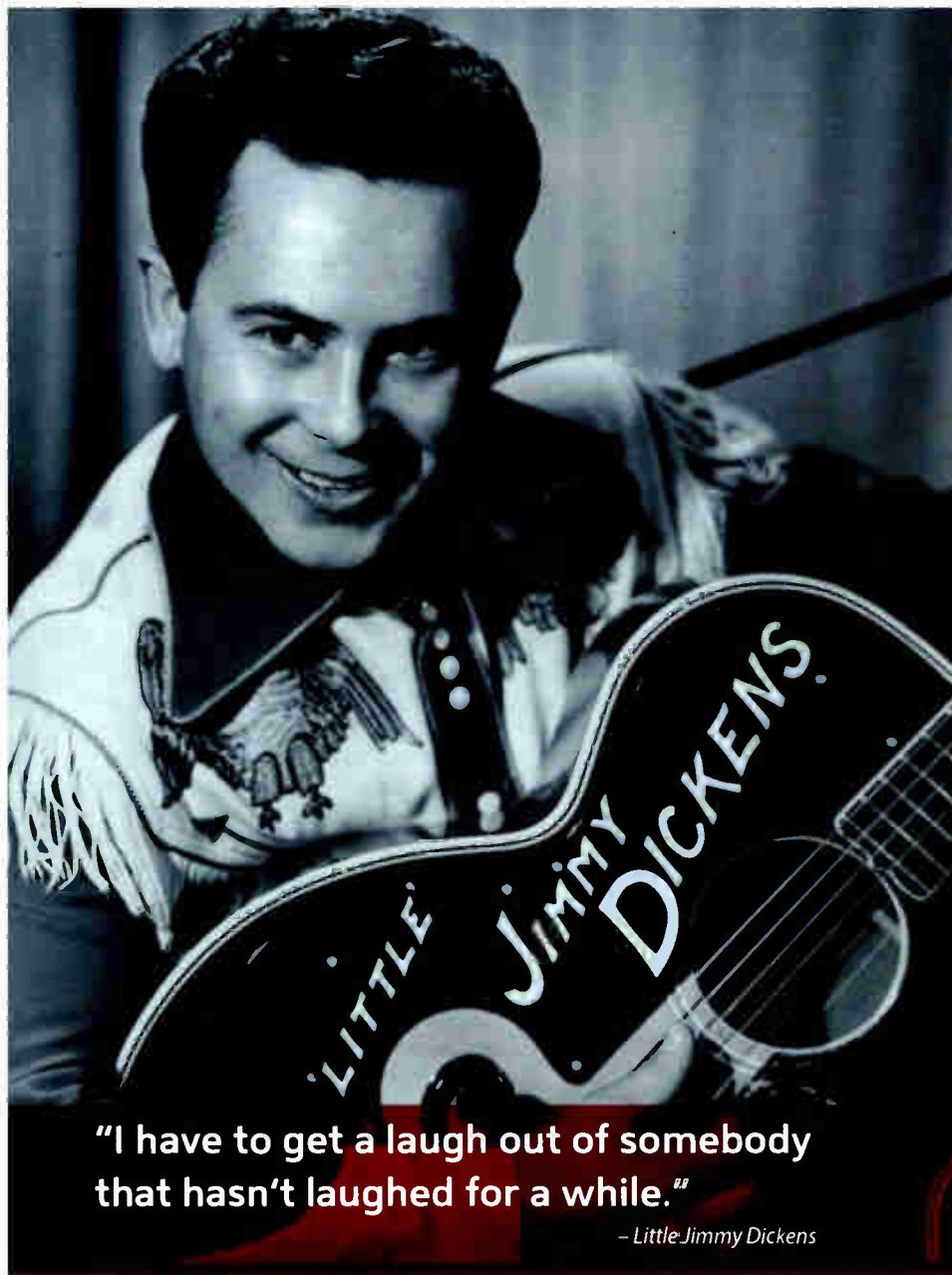
Grayson Capps / *Live at the Paradiso* / Hyena
Billy Crockett / *Wishing Sky* / Blue Rock Artists
The Dixie Bee-Liners / *Susanville* / Pinecastle
Herrick / *New Dance* / (digital)
Madison Violet / *No Fool for Trying* / True North
Carrie Underwood / *Play On* / 19 Recordings/Arista Nashville

NOV. 10

Michelle Branch / *Everything Comes and Goes* / Reprise/Warner Bros.
Steve Wariner / *c.g.p. My Tribute to Chet Atkins* / SelecTone/Allegro Media Group



New CD Releases compiled by ATHENA PATTERSON



"I have to get a laugh out of somebody that hasn't laughed for a while."

— Little Jimmy Dickens

At 88 years young, Little Jimmy Dickens is the Grand Ole Opry's most senior member and a beloved ambassador for the Country Music institution. He also finds time to sneak off now and then to his friend Brad Paisley's pond for a little fishing.

"I'm at a point in my life where I can fish when I want to, thanks to the fans out there who have been so kind to Little Jimmy Dickens down through the years," he said, seated in his dressing room backstage at the Grand Ole Opry House. "I'm at peace. I love what I do onstage. I *have* to be in front of people. I don't know why that is, but I have to be in front of people and I have to get a laugh out of somebody that hasn't laughed for a while. That's what I have in mind when I go on that stage. Let's have fun. I suppose that about sums it up for me because the happiest time in my life is when I'm out there trying to entertain those people."

A native of Bolt, W.Va., the oldest of 13 kids, Dickens credits his high school dramatics teacher, Ella Davis Lang, who died recently at 101, with encouraging his ambition. "What a dear lady she was," he said. "She taught me so much. She'd say, 'You don't play to the audience down in front, you work the back row! I've always kept that right here in my mind. When you go on the stage to work, you work to the back row in the audience. And then, if it works for them, you pretty well have it covered.'"

He began performing on local radio stations in the late 1930s. "The Bailes Brothers came into WJLS in Beckley, W.Va., and then there was another live band there with Mel Steele," he remembered. "They

all just had to take a liking to me because I wouldn't go away. I'd go up there and get their dirty shirts and dirty underwear and take it down to my grandma's house. She'd do it all up and I'd bring it back to them. I was really trying to get them to let me sing a song. It did work, and they took me under their arm."

His affable personality, comedic timing and ear for a good song soon propelled Dickens beyond Beckley. "I was working at WLW in Cincinnati in 1945, doing early morning programs five days a week, and Mr. Acuff came to the Music Hall in Cincinnati," Dickens said, recalling his first meeting with future Country Music Hall of Fame member Roy Acuff. "I went to his concert, and like any other little guy trying to get acquainted with people like that, I was waiting in the alley and got acquainted with the musicians, and they took me backstage and introduced me to Mr. Acuff. He asked what I did, and I told him I did the early morning program on WLW. He said, 'Would you like to do a song on my show today?' I said, 'Oh, my, Mr. Acuff! I don't know whether I could take that or not.' And he said, 'Well, let's try.' When he introduced me, the audience all knew me from the early morning programs that I was doing. And when I sang a song, it worked."

Three years later, Dickens was working at WKNX/Saginaw, Mich., when Acuff came to town. "The snow was over my head and waist deep to most people," the 4-foot-11-inch entertainer quipped. "Mr. Acuff said, 'What are you doing in this cold country?' I said, 'Well, I'm just trying to make a living.' And he said, 'Well, we have to get you out of this.'"

True to his word, Acuff helped Dickens get established in Nashville, first by getting him onto the "Prince Albert Show," the segment of the Grand Ole Opry broadcast over NBC and hosted by future Country Music Hall of Fame member Red Foley. "I got another invitation to come back for another appearance on that show, and Mr. Acuff called me and said, 'I think you might as well bring your belongings because I think we can figure out a way to keep you down here.' I came back and did that, and I lived at Mr. Acuff's house for almost a year. He was working all that time to get me on as a regular at the Grand Ole Opry because he would present me about every other week on his show as a guest," said Dickens, referring to a show that Acuff broadcast at that time from his home. "It finally came to the decision to keep me here, and Mr. Acuff taught me the dos and don'ts. He was such a great man. He really went out of his way to help me. Had it not been for him, I wouldn't be here."

Acuff also provided an introduction to Columbia Records executive and future Country Music Hall of Fame member Arthur Satherley. Signed

Little Jimmy Dickens

A LITTLE GOES A LONG WAY

to Columbia, Dickens launched his recording career in the late '40s and early '50s with singles that included "Take an Old Cold Tater (And Wait)," which prompted future Country Music Hall of Fame member Hank Williams to nickname him Tater. Though more serious fare would follow, Dickens has been best known for his novelty tunes, including his 1965 No. 1 hit "May the Bird of Paradise Fly Up Your Nose," which also peaked at No. 15 on the pop charts.

"My first record was 'Take an Old Cold Tater (And Wait),' and you don't follow that with some sweet ballad," said Dickens. "I had to follow that with 'A-Sleeping at the Foot of the Bed,' '(I'm a Plain Old) Country Boy,' 'Out Behind the Barn' and things like that. I did a novelty song and then I always put a ballad on the backside, but to disc jockeys the ballad was not the Jimmy Dickens they knew."

Dickens left the Opry in 1957 to tour with the Philip Morris Country Music Show, travel the world and perform on "The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson" and other major television shows. "Wherever I went, I still talked about the Grand Ole Opry," said Dickens, who rejoined the program in 1975. "I spread it around the world. I took it to Vietnam. I took it to Germany, to England, to Europe and the Far East and Southeast Asia. I never felt for one moment that I was away from the Grand Ole Opry because I was spreading the good news of Nashville, Tennessee, and the Grand Ole Opry."

Asked to cite his proudest accomplishments, Dickens named

his induction into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1983 and his performances for the military. "I'll always treasure my three trips to Vietnam, entertaining the troops under all kinds of conditions, a lot of times with no amplifiers or PA systems," he said. "I'd just get up and walk up and down through tables 30 feet long and tell my funnies. That's when you find out whether you're funny or not. But you could do no wrong to those old boys in the service, because they knew you came 5,000 miles just to be there. I made 13 trips, all over Europe, wherever there was an American Army base, Navy base, Marines, Air Force — wherever there was a base, I played. Those 13 trips to Europe entertaining troops and three trips to Vietnam are the treasured years of my life that I'll never forget."

Over decades as a fixture on the Opry stage, Dickens has become a friend to many young artists, including Paisley, in whose videos he has made guest appearances while also playing a comic role as one of the Kung Pao Buckaroos on Paisley's album *5th Gear*. "He's just my hero in life in many ways," Paisley explained. "This is a man who looks at life with the clearest and most optimistic eyes. This is a guy who at 88 years old can find humor in everything."

Dickens has battled health issues in recent years, but Paisley counts himself among many who have been amazed as his resiliency. "I remember when he ended up in the hospital, getting the call from a friend saying, 'If he actually regains consciousness after this, it will be something,'" Paisley said. "And the next morning he was telling jokes. I couldn't believe the recovery he's made. He has never looked better. This is a guy that lives life to the fullest."

That means, among other things, surprising your friends on occasion, as Dickens did not long ago during a visit with his sisters in West Virginia. After learning that Paisley was playing nearby at the state fair, "I went back to my hotel," Dickens recalled. "I went down to the front desk and I said to the lady, 'If you have a lampshade missing out of my room, I did not steal it. I'm here to declare that I will bring it back. I'm going to wear this lampshade on my head tonight with Brad Paisley.' She said, 'You go ahead!'"

Paisley, of course, was delighted. "He didn't know I was within a thousand miles," Dickens said, laughing. "His daddy helped me hide from him. They stood me in the wings behind the curtain. When it came to that line about the lampshade on the head [in the song 'Alcohol'], I walked onto the stage with that lampshade on my head and the crowd went wild and he like to have died. I love him dearly. He's a close friend. You know who your friends are; it don't take you long to learn that."

Though he relishes his role as elder statesman, Dickens doesn't give advice to young artists. "Times change and the music changes," he explained. "I've lived a long time and have seen so many changes, but I treasure my friendship with the new artists that come along today. When we have new people at the Grand Ole Opry, I make it a point to go by their dressing rooms and welcome them and tell them that we're glad to have them here.

"I love what I do," he summed up. "I'm happiest when I'm out there in front of folks. I don't have too many worries about anything."

CMA created the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1961 to recognize individuals for their outstanding contributions to the format with Country Music's highest honor. Inductees are chosen by CMA's Hall of Fame Panels of Electors, which consists of anonymous voters appointed by the CMA Board of Directors.



Little Jimmy Dickens performs at a celebration of his 60th anniversary as a member of the Grand Ole Opry in November 2008.

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CMA CEO TAMMY GENOVESE AND CMA BOARD MEMBER DAVID ROSS, PUBLISHER, MUSIC ROW PUBLICATIONS INC., PRESENT FINDINGS OF CMA CONSUMER RESEARCH STUDY TO MEMBERS AT SOURCE LUNCHEON IN NASHVILLE. Karen Conrad, SOURCE Executive Committee member; former CMA Executive Director Jo Walker-Meador; SOURCE President Judy Harris; David Ross; and Tammy Genovese.

photo: Judi Turner



WARNER BROS. RECORDS ARTIST JESSICA HARP VISITS CMA TO PERFORM SONGS FOR THE STAFF, INCLUDING HER SINGLE "BOY LIKE ME," FROM HER FORTHCOMING DEBUT SOLO ALBUM, A WOMAN NEEDS. Chris Lacy, Senior Director of A&R, Warner Bros. Records; Stuart Dill, President, Sanctuary Artist Management; Scott Hendricks, Senior VP of A&R, Warner Bros. Records; Tammy Genovese, CMA CEO; Jessica Harp; Bill Bennett, former Executive VP, Warner Bros. Records; Kelli Cashiola, VP of Marketing, Warner Bros. Records; and Peter Strickland, Senior VP of Sales/Marketing, Warner Bros. Records. photo: Amanda Eckard



STYLESONIC / PICNIC HILL RECORDS DUO HALF WAY TO HAZARD VISITS WITH MEMBERS OF THE CMA STAFF AND GUESTS AFTER PERFORMING SONGS FROM THEIR NEW ALBUM. (back row) Cory Chapman, CMA Senior Marketing Manager; Kathy Armistead, VP of Tour and Brand Sponsorship, William Morris Endeavor Entertainment; Chris Washko, Manager, Fundamental Management; Rick Shipp, Co-COO, William Morris Endeavor Entertainment; Betsy Walker, CMA Senior Coordinator of Membership and Industry Relations; Matt Clayton, CMA guest; Ryan Bitzer, VP, Business Development, Sparkart; (front row) Katie Nelson, CMA Events and Projects Coordinator; Shereme Siewnarine, CMA Manager of Financial Services; Catherine Blackwell, CMA Senior Marketing Coordinator; Sarah McGrady, CMA Senior Coordinator of Partner Programs; Brandi Simms, CMA Senior Manager of Executive Programs; Chad Warrix of Halfway to Hazard; Tammy Genovese, CMA CEO; David Tolliver of Halfway to Hazard; Denise Hammock, CMA guest; and Melissa Maynard, CMA Administration Coordinator. photo: Athena Pitterson



BIGGER THAN ME RECORDS GROUP DUE WEST STOPS BY CMA TO PLAY SOME SONGS FOR THE STAFF FROM THEIR UPCOMING DEBUT ALBUM, INCLUDING FIRST SINGLE "I GET THAT ALL THE TIME." Nancy Tunick, Managing Partner, GrassRoots Promotion; Larry Pareigis, President, Nine North Records; Tim Gates and Brad Hull of Due West; Tammy Genovese, CMA CEO; Matt Lopez of Due West; and Hank Adam Locklin, CMA Senior Manager of Membership and Industry Relations. photo: Amanda Eckard



2009 cma events

OCTOBER

FRIDAY, OCT. 2

CMA Songwriters Series | Joe's Bar | Chicago | 8:30 PM | Dean Dillon, Bob DiPiero, Scotty Emerick and Lee Ann Womack | Tickets: JoesBar.com

SATURDAY, OCT. 3

CMA Songwriters Series | Chicago Country Music Festival | Chicago | 4 PM | Dean Dillon, Bob DiPiero, Scotty Emerick and Lee Ann Womack | FREE admission

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 7 - THURSDAY, OCT. 8

CMA Board of Directors Meetings | Nashville

FRIDAY, OCT. 16

Eligible CMA voting members receive e-mail notice for the final CMA Awards ballot.

TUESDAY, OCT. 20

CMA Board Election of Directors | Grand Ole Opry House | Nashville

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 21

CMA Board Election of Directors at Large | ASCAP | Nashville

NOVEMBER

TUESDAY, NOV. 3

Final CMA Awards ballot online voting closes at 5 PM/CT.

THURSDAY, NOV. 5

CMA Songwriters Series | Joe's Pub | New York | 6:30 and 9:30 PM | Jessi Alexander, Bob DiPiero, Jon Randall and Mark Sanders | Tickets: JoesPub.com

TUESDAY, NOV. 10 AND WEDNESDAY, NOV. 11

CMA Marketing Summit | Invitation only

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 11

"The 43rd Annual CMA Awards," Country Music's Biggest Night, hosted by Brad Paisley and Carrie Underwood | 7-10 PM/CT | Sommet Center | Nashville | Live on ABC-TV | Tickets on sale now at Sommet Center box office, Ticketmaster.com or 1-800-745-3000

