

CMA Close Up

2011 VOL. 11



**2010: THE YEAR
IN COUNTRY**
LITTLE BIG TOWN

Raising the Bar on Harmony

GEO-MARKETING

Engage Fans Where They Live

KATIE ARMIGER

Hits the Heights

**TRADITIONAL
INSTRUMENTS**

in Modern Country

GENERATIONS

TV Trendsetters

STUDIO TIPS

Pitch Correction and Click Tracks

MUSIC VIDEO

SUMMIT

JASON ALDEAN HIS KINDA COUNTRY



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CMA HONORS "MEMBERS OF THE MONTH"**A Broad Umbrella**

With more than 6,000 members from 43 nations around the world, ranging in age from teens to more than 90, CMA encompasses a wide span of individuals and corporations. They represent the myriad professions in the music industry, speak a variety of languages and occupy every tier of accomplishment, from celebrities featured frequently on magazine covers to artists and business people who work beyond the reach of the media spotlight.

A Single Focus

Diverse as their stories are, CMA members are united in their devotion to Country Music. Whether they perform, produce, cover, manage or work in some other capacity, whether they are lauded by millions or satisfy loyal audiences in a single market, CMA members share a passion for America's music.

A Promise Kept

CMA would not exist without the belief, support and talent of its members. CMA Awards, CMA Music Festival, Country Music Hall of Fame inductions, Keep the Music Playing, CMA Country Christmas, CMA Marketing Summit, the publication of this magazine and every other activity CMA undertakes are fundamentally all parts of the commitment made by its founders in 1958 to spread the word far and wide about this unique art form and its appeal. Through dedication to this task, CMA strives as well to empower its members, creatively and commercially.

A Commitment to Service

The Country Music community as a whole is known for its generosity, yet now and then one person might go beyond what's expected, perhaps an exceptional donation to some worthy cause, or a performance to help others in need or an accomplishment that's benefitted the industry. These acts might be undertaken by a superstar and covered by national media, or by artists who have yet to win fame or fortune but have brought honor to themselves and to Country Music through their local philanthropies. Others may deserve kudos for their longtime dedication to our format, perhaps by entering their 30th year on the road or playing free for patients at a hospital in their town.

A Chance to Shine

Whatever their distinction, CMA wants to recognize such achievements through a new initiative, "CMA Member of the Month." Each month, the editorial team at *CMA Close Up* will select one CMA member to honor with coverage on **CMAworld.com** as a way of recognizing those who bring honor or show exceptional dedication to the format. CMA will announce the names of the latest two monthly honorees as well in issues of *CMA Close Up*.

An Invitation

Here's where you can help extend CMA's thanks to these deserving people. In addition to our own research, CMA welcomes your suggestions. If you know of any CMA members who have reached significant milestones in their career, who perhaps performed some laudable act of giving or in some other way distinguished themselves, please let CMA know by sending an e-mail to **CloseUp@CMAworld.com**. And join CMA in celebrating those whose positive spirit exemplifies some of the best of Country Music.

CMA Close Up® welcomes your letters and feedback. 615.244.2340 | Fax: 615.242.4783
or e-mail CloseUp@CMAworld.com

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to correct your address information so you
don't miss any issues of *CMA Close Up*!

cma
COUNTRY MUSIC ASSOCIATION

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PLEASE RECYCLE
THIS MAGAZINE

2010 THE YEAR IN COUNTRY MUSIC

The landscape seems to change by the day, but the story of Country Music 2010 is more about the ground shifting rather than eroding. Challenges continue to vex major sectors of the music industry, though on balance the format has adapted better than some, in part because its appeal is deeply rooted and directly relevant. With album sales relative to 2009 plunging by double digits across the board except for hip-hop, Country was the only genre to experience a more modest, single-digit decline. Plus, with more than 57 million Country digital tracks purchased, indications are that Country is charting its way through the new landscape. Here are just a few highlights from the Year in Country Music 2010. For a more detailed view, visit CMAworld.com.

ALBUM SALES Country Music stood strong in Nielsen SoundScan's list of top selling, all genre albums, with Lady Antebellum and Taylor Swift holding second and third place behind Eminem. Swift did best Eminem as the top selling artist of the year, with Lady Antebellum coming in at third.

Top Country Albums

- LADY ANTEBELLUM *Need You Now*
- TAYLOR SWIFT *Fearless*
- TAYLOR SWIFT *Speak Now*
- CARRIE UNDERWOOD *Play On*
- ZAC BROWN BAND *The Foundation*
- LADY ANTEBELLUM *Lady Antebellum*
- MIRANDA LAMBERT *Revolution*



TOURING Even with Kenny Chesney taking the year off the road, fans flocked to hear the other top draws in Country Music. (Both lists cover North American shows between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 2010, according to *Pollstar*.)

Top Tours

Gross in Millions

- \$41.6 GEORGE STRAIT / REBA
- 40.7 BRAD PAISLEY
- 39.1 TIM MCGRAW
- 38.3 CARRIE UNDERWOOD
- 34.2 TAYLOR SWIFT

Attendance

- 879,558 BRAD PAISLEY
- 833,773 TIM MCGRAW
- 778,930 CARRIE UNDERWOOD
- 684,380 TOBY KEITH
- 632,186 BROOKS & DUNN



Brad Paisley's "H2O Tour." photo: Ben Amos

RADIO Country Music was the dominant music radio format in the United States, with 2,009 stations championing the format in 2010, according to *Inside Radio*.

Top 5 Country Songs

Billboard

- LEE BRICE "Love Like Crazy"
- LUKE BRYAN "Rain Is a Good Thing"
- JOSH TURNER "Why Don't We Just Dance"
- JOSH TURNER "All Over Me"
- CHRIS YOUNG "The Man I Want to Be"

Country AirCheck

- JOSH TURNER "Why Don't We Just Dance"
- JOE NICHOLS "Gimmie That Girl"
- LADY ANTEBELLUM "Need You Now"
- EASTON CORBIN "A Little More Country Than That"
- CHRIS YOUNG "The Man I Want to Be"

RIAA CERTIFICATIONS

	Gold	Platinum	Multi-Platinum
ALBUMS	17	7	7
SINGLES	35	14	4

Multi-Platinum Albums (million)

- 6 TAYLOR SWIFT *Fearless*
- 3 SUGARLAND *Enjoy the Ride*
- 3 LADY ANTEBELLUM *Need You Now*
- 3 TAYLOR SWIFT *Speak Now*
- 2 LADY ANTEBELLUM *Lady Antebellum*
- 2 ZAC BROWN BAND *The Foundation*

Multi-Platinum Singles

- 6 TAYLOR SWIFT "Love Story"
- 4 LADY ANTEBELLUM "Need You Now"
- 3 CARRIE UNDERWOOD "Before He Cheats"
- 2 ZAC BROWN BAND "Chicken Fried"



Mike Dungan, President/CEO, Capitol Records Nashville, presents Keith Urban with Platinum plaque for *Defying Gravity*, produced by Dann Huff. photo: Ed Rode



Miranda Lambert celebrates Platinum certification of *Revolution* with Sony Music Nashville Chairman/CEO Gary Overton. photo: Jordan Powell



Reba with JoAnna Garcia in "Better with You." photo: ABC/ABC Ansel/ABC

TELEVISION CMA was all over TV in 2010 with three ABC specials. "CMA Music Festival Country's Night to Rock," a three-hour showcase of the annual summer festival in Nashville, drew 6 million viewers. The 44th Annual CMA Awards was another huge ratings winner, with 16.5 million viewers. "CMA Country Christmas" debuted on Nov. 29, drawing 7.3 million viewers, which led the network to re-air the program Dec. 22.

Laura Bell Bundy and Carrie Underwood won laughs on "How I Met Your Mother." Reba appeared on "Better with You." The members of Rascal Flatts were investigated for murder on "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation." Keith Urban and others lent a helping hand to flood-ravaged Nashville neighbors on "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition." Faith Hill got fashionable as a guest judge on "Project Runway." And Taylor Swift scored her first network special, which aired on Thanksgiving.



Laura Bell Bundy with Cobie Smulders in "How I Met Your Mother." photo: Matt Kenney



Gwyneth Paltrow and Tim McGraw in "Country Strong." photo: courtesy of Sony Pictures



George Strait in "Pure Country 2: The Gift." photo: courtesy of Sony Pictures

MOVIES and SOUNDTRACKS Country Music made quite an impact on films in 2010, with many artists appearing on the big screen and the genre itself covered as the central subject. Country Music was heard in many films and on soundtracks, including the Golden Globe-nominated theme song "There's a Place for Us" from "Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader," written by Carrie Underwood, Dave Hoges and Hillary Lindsey.



Taylor Swift with Jennifer Garner in "Valentine's Day." photo: courtesy of New Line Cinema

SOLID GROUND BENEATH THE SAND

ADVERTISEMENTS, ENDORSEMENTS and BUSINESS VENTURES Country stars helped sell everything from cosmetics to electronics to apparel via television, print and online advertisements in 2010.

TRACE ADKINS	Goody's Headache Powders		
RODNEY ATKINS	Velveeta		
GLORIANA	Quaker Chewy Granola Bars		
ALAN JACKSON	Cracker Barrel, GE		
MIRANDA LAMBERT	Boutiques.com		
MARTINA MCBRIDE	Cheerios, SunnyD		
TIM MCGRAW	Gillette, Outback Steakhouse		
EDDIE MONTGOMERY	Eddie Montgomery's Steakhouse		
RASCAL FLATTS	Hershey's		
TAYLOR SWIFT	American Greetings, CoverGirl		
HANK WILLIAMS JR.	Popcorn Sutton's Tennessee White Whiskey		
GRETCHEN WILSON	Dollar General		



Zac Brown Band signs autographs for troops in Iraq. Photo: Erick Anderson

MILITARY SUPPORT

Country artists continued their support of the U.S. Armed Forces and its members by traveling overseas and performing concerts on military bases at home. Trace Adkins, Kix Brooks, Bob DiPiero, Randy Houser, Joey + Rory, Jamey Johnson, Toby Keith, Kellie Pickler and Zac Brown Band were among the many who joined USO tours. Sugarland performed in Kuwait as part of the USO sponsored "VH1 Divas: Salute the Troops." Mark Chesnutt, Aaron Tippin and Darryl Worley toured for the Stars for Stripes.



Nashville Mayor Karl Dean thanks Trisha Yearwood and Garth Brooks at Bridgestone Arena. Photo: Photographic Services, Metropolitan Government of Nashville

NASHVILLE FLOOD RELIEF Thousands of homes and businesses were damaged by the Nashville flood in early May, and Music City, including the many artists that call it home, rose up with a rapid response. CMA donated half the net proceeds from the CMA Music Festival to The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee for its recovery efforts. With half of the proceeds already earmarked to public schools for music education through Keep the Music Playing, the total donated to each charity was \$1.45 million.

Garth Brooks came out of retirement to play nine sold-out, full-band shows at Nashville's Bridgestone Arena and donated the \$5 million raised to The Community Foundation. Tim McGraw and Faith Hill did their part by hosting "Nashville Rising: A Benefit Concert for Flood Recovery," an all-star extravaganza that donated \$2.2 million to the Foundation. Another \$1.8 million was donated in a telethon hosted at the Ryman Auditorium with performances by Lady Antebellum, Brad Paisley, Keith Urban and more.

BOOKS and MAGAZINES The reading public had no trouble finding printed content about — and by — Country artists, from magazine covers to books.

Magazine Cover Appearances

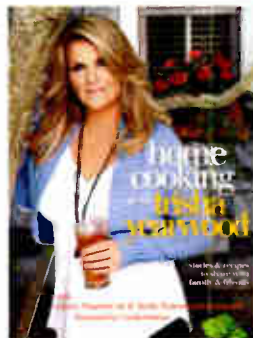
TRACE ADKINS	Luke McBain comic book
TAYLOR SWIFT	Allure, Elle, Entertainment Weekly, Glamour, InStyle, Marie Claire, People, Seventeen and more
CARRIE UNDERWOOD	Allure, Cosmopolitan, InStyle, People, SELF, Women's Health and more

Books by Country Artists

NEAL MCCOY	A New Mountain to Climb
TRISHA YEARWOOD	Home Cooking
CHELY WRIGHT	Like Me: Confessions of a Heartland Country Singer

Biographies

Baby Let's Play House: Elvis Presley and the Women Who Loved Him, by Alanna Nash
Carrie Underwood: A Biography, by Vernell Hackett | *Tammy Wynette: Tragic Country Queen*, by Jimmy McDonough



TRIBUTES and ACCOLADES

Outside of music awards shows, Country Artists received a multitude of awards and recognitions in 2010. CMA inducted Jimmy Dean, Ferlin Husky, Billy Sherrill and Don Williams into its Country Music Hall of Fame. Merle Haggard was among the honorees at "The Kennedy Center Honors." Blake Shelton was inducted as the newest member of the Grand Ole Opry. Trace Adkins received the DAR Medal of Honor. Clay Walker was honored with the Robert M. Berg Memorial Achievement Award, and Hank Williams was posthumously awarded a special citation from the Pulitzer Prize board. Tootsie's Orchid Lounge celebrated its 50th anniversary. *Coal Miner's Daughter: A Tribute to Loretta Lynn*, featured artists from Country, pop and rock performing the songs Lynn made famous throughout her 50-year career.



Merle Haggard, Jerry Herman, Bill T. Jones, Paul McCartney and Oprah Winfrey are feted at the Kennedy Center Honors by President Barack Obama. Photo: Ron Sachs

MILLIONS OF PEOPLE SING IN THE SHOWER. THERE'S NOTHING UNUSUAL ABOUT THAT. BUT FOR THE MEMBERS OF LITTLE BIG TOWN — KAREN FAIRCHILD, KIMBERLY SCHLAPMAN, PHILLIP SWEET AND JIMI WESTBROOK — SINGING IN THE SHOWER MIGHT LEAD TO A HIT SINGLE OR PERHAPS A COLLABORATION WITH THEIR FRIENDS IN SUGARLAND.

"The title 'Little White Church' was something that I had written down in my journal," Fairchild recalled. "I thought it might be a cool story song, but I didn't know what it was. A couple of weeks later, Kimberly and I were talking about songs we needed to write for a new album and moments we needed. One was a call-and-response moment because we're big fans of bluegrass. The next morning I woke up, got in the shower and all of a sudden the chorus came to me. I jumped out of the shower and sang the chorus into my phone."

She sang the now famous refrain: "Take me down, take me down, take me down to the little white church." And then she continued, "It's a girl laying down an ultimatum to her reluctant groom, saying, 'Get in or get out. I'm not taking care of you anymore.' I thought the band would be into it, so I took it to them later that day. Our producer, Wayne Kirkpatrick, was writing with us that day, and the five of us finished it that afternoon."

"Little White Church" became a landmark hit for Little Big Town and one of several triumphs the band enjoyed in 2010. In August, the band's fourth album, *The Reason Why*, debuted atop the *Billboard* Country Albums chart. Robust first-week sales, exceeding 40,000 units, were fueled by heavy airplay for "Little White Church," the lead single. And in December, the band earned its fourth Grammy nomination when "Little White Church" got a nod for Best Country Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocals.

They had been nominated for eight CMA Awards and three times before for Grammys, including one for a live rendition of "Life in a Northern Town," written by Gilbert Gabriel and Nick Laird-Clowes of The Dream Academy. Their performance of the tune with Jake Owen and Sugarland (Kristian Bush and Jennifer Nettles) on their 2008 album *A Place to Land* was nominated for CMA Musical Event of the Year in 2008.

So it wasn't surprising when they joined Sugarland's "The Incredible Machine Tour" from August through October. Fans at those concerts frequently were treated to demonstrations of astounding, layered harmony vocals as all the members of Little Big Town sang together, often doing Mumford & Sons' "Sigh No More" or Marc Cohn's "Walking in Memphis." The two acts rehearsed these songs at soundchecks or backstage. Once, at a tour stop in Charlottesville, Va., the six artists decided to move the rehearsal into Bush's dressing room shower.

"We started singing," Sweet recalled. "And Kristian said, 'I can't hear everybody, so I've got to get in the middle.' Then somebody suggested the shower and Kristian said, 'Let's go in there!' It sounded great."

As the band members laughed at this memory, Westbrook added, "That shower was like an echo chamber, so everybody rehearsed in there. We love being out on the road with Sugarland because whenever we can collaborate with them onstage, it's always a lot of fun."

Often praised for their seamless harmonies,

LITTLE BIG TOWN

RAISING THE HIGH BAR OF COUNTRY HARMONY

wanted to branch out and be inspired in any way possible."

One longtime supporter of the band is Kirkpatrick, who also produced the Platinum-selling *The Road to Here*, released in 2005, and *A Place to Land* (2007 on Equity Music Group, re-released with bonus tracks in 2008 on Capitol Records Nashville). He also joined all four members to compose their breakthrough hit, "Boondocks," co-wrote their Top 5 hit "Bring It on Home" with Greg Bieck and Tyler Hayes Bieck and collaborated with the group on six songs on the new album.

"We've been writing with Wayne for eight or nine years," said Schlapman. "He was a person who, in the very beginning, really understood us and what we were going for vocally and musically. Over the years, it's grown into a really successful musical collaboration. He's brilliant. We've learned so much from him. When we write songs, we don't always agree, but we work it out and try to figure out what's best for the song. Wayne's really been good for us."

The band members have also written with numerous leading Nashville songwriters, including Luke Laird, Hillary Lindsey, Ashley Monroe, Gordie Sampson, Leslie Satcher, Jonathan Singleton, Chris Stapleton and Jon Randall Stewart. "Writing a song can happen any number of ways for us," said Westbrook. "One of us may come in with a hook or maybe a little piece of melody that we begin with. Or it can just start with four or five of us sitting in a room, staring at each other and asking, 'What are we going to write today?' Some days, things come out. Other days, you're beating your head against the wall and you go to lunch."

All four use multiple tools to capture song ideas quickly, from smartphone apps to laptop software. "My phone is full of little eight-second ideas because I can't remember them if I don't sing them immediately," Schlapman said, with a chuckle.

"For a lot of us, ideas come in the spur of the moment or in the middle of the night or in the shower," Sweet added. "You're not always in a place where you can actually spend time to craft that idea. So we set up writing appointments and then bring two or three different ideas for songs to that appointment. That's the way it works for us."

Westbrook often writes alone and then brings the results to the band to craft into another Little Big Town gem. "I definitely prefer songs that hit you out of the blue," he explained. "Those are a lot more enjoyable to me, when you feel that inspiration instantly. My heart rate

"THERE'S A LOT OF
PUSH AND PULL
THAT GOES INTO
MAKING MUSIC, AND
WE BELIEVE THAT'S
WHAT MAKES IT
INTERESTING."

— Phillip Sweet of Little Big Town



PHILLIP SWEET, KAREN FAIRCHILD,
KIMBERLY SCHLAPMAN AND JIMI WESTBROOK

goes up and it's exciting. You just have to go with it because if you let go of it, you may not get it back."

Another highlight of 2010 was the CMA Songwriters Series concert at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., held in December as part of "Story Tellers and Story Keepers," CMA's ongoing partnership with the Library to extend its already imposing Country Music archive. Held in the Thomas Jefferson Building's Coolidge Auditorium, the show also featured Bob DiPiero, Brett James and Lori McKenna.

"We were honored to be asked to be a part of that," Fairchild said. "What a great way to end the year."

"People in Nashville are kind of spoiled by those songwriters-in-the-round shows because we get to see them so often," Schlapman observed. "But when people see it who have never seen it before, it's a big treat."

CMA was also instrumental in providing Little Big Town with a worldwide forum at the 2010 CMA Awards. Though they didn't win this year, the group delivered an unforgettable moment in the telecast. Prior to announcing that Miranda Lambert's *Revolution* had been named Album of the Year, Little Big Town paid tribute to the preceding year's winner, Taylor Swift's *Fearless*, by singing a segment of Swift's "You Belong with Me" in four-part, a cappella harmony.

"We got a ton of amazing feedback about those 30 seconds," Fairchild said. "We had lots of texts and e-mails. It was almost as if we had a full performance on the show."

They also appeared on "CMA Country Christmas," broadcast on ABC, singing a rousing version of "Go Tell It on the Mountain" and backing Sugarland on "Winter Wonderland." Previously, on the opening segment from "CMA Music Festival: Country's Night to Rock," Fairchild and Schlapman had joined Sarah Buxton on vocals behind Keith Urban's performance of "With a Little Help from My Friends," broadcast in September on ABC.

Fans followed these and other adventures via the "Little Big TV" Webisodes posted at LittleBigTown.com. Topics range from the serious, such as the breaking news of their Grammy nomination, to the mundane, such as a discussion of the hair-care products that Schlapman uses on her lustrous, curly mane.

This attention to performing, writing and servicing their fan base makes Little Big Town an ideal fit at Capitol Records Nashville. "If you look at our roster, we are obviously attracted to writer/artists, so individually and collectively this band fits Capitol perfectly," said Mike Dungan, President/CEO, Capitol and EMI Records Nashville.

Manager John Peets of Q Prime South affirms that point. "Little Big Town is a Country band, but their sound weaves together rock 'n' roll and Country in a beautiful way," he said of his clients. "It's a sound that appeals to fans of Country, rock 'n' roll and even bluegrass. Regardless of the genre, great music will move both art and the industry forward."

LittleBigTown.com

GEO-MARKETING

As Jason Aldean was getting ready to launch his fourth album, *My Kinda Party*, his management team wanted to catch fans' attention with something truly groundbreaking. So they joined with one of his sponsors, Wrangler, to create a campaign based on geo-marketing, a concept that was new in 2010 and is set to explode in 2011.

Geo-marketing is a way to connect with participating members of the public via location-based social networking services, which employ the technology to allow users to "check in" at various locations via a GPS-enabled smartphone and then choose to have their check-ins posted on their accounts on Twitter or Facebook or both. At first glance, these services might seem like just another fun phone app. But for marketers, they're becoming a valuable way to reach fans directly and immediately while incentivizing them to engage with their brand.

"It's a great tool for tours and ticket sales, when an album's being launched or if you've got a performance," said Amanda Cates, Director of Digital Marketing, Spalding Entertainment, which represents Aldean as well as Brooks & Dunn, Sara Evans, Terri Clark, Pat Green and Ashley Monroe. "It creates excitement about what you've got going on and allows us and our sponsor the opportunity to reward our fans for engaging with our brand. It's fun for them and shows them how much we appreciate them. It's all about that connection."

Fans who sign up for Aldean's "Check-in to the Party" campaign and register their phones on JasonAldean.com can check in at thousands of retail locations that carry Wrangler. Each visit allows them to accrue points good for prizes that include an iPad, a Wrangler wardrobe and a chance to meet Aldean on tour. Fans without a smartphone can also check in on Web sites including Aldean's site and Facebook page and Wrangler.com.

Aside from engaging fans, this campaign provides Aldean and Wrangler with valuable data on who Aldean's fans are and where they shop. In its first month, several thousand fans signed up and tens of thousands of check-ins were logged. "When you see people actually checking in, it gives us aggregate data and intelligence when you see where they're physically migrating," said Nashville-based digital marketing strategist Pinky Gonzales, whose company Carazel customized the promotion for Aldean. "It's a market that's ready for a solution. We're giving them a reason to do that for the very first time."

Location-based check-in services including Facebook Places, Foursquare and Gowalla are signing up users at exponential speed, creating opportunities for artists, entertainers, sports stars, politicians and anyone else with an active fan base to reach their followers where they actually live, shop and work.

Only about 1 percent of online adults were using such services in the fall of 2010, according to the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, with men twice as likely as women to use one to check in. But after moving from one mobile phone platform to six, Foursquare rocketed from 100,000 users when it launched in 2009 to more than 5 million in 2010. Gowalla is the smallest of these three services, with about 600,000 users as of November 2010, although in that same month the company announced a partnership with The Walt Disney Company that could boost its numbers.

"It's so early in this technology's lifespan that it's hard to predict who is going to be the big guy," Cates said. "A bunch launched and you don't know who's going to become the forerunner, so you might as well be

available for all of them right now until the consumers decide where they're going to spend more of their time."

The biggest factor in the growth of geo-marketing is the adoption of smartphones. With the Berlin-based mobile market research specialists at Research2Guidance projecting that the apps industry will explode into a \$15 billion phenomenon by 2013, smartphone sales grew by 96 percent between the third quarter of 2009 and 2010 to account for 19.3 percent of total mobile phone sales. By the end of 2011, GPS-enabled units are expected to reach 550 million worldwide.

The Symbian Foundation's operating system runs on more than a third of all smartphone sales globally, with Google's Android OS powering a quarter of the total, according to the technology research firm Gartner. Apple's iPhone has about a 16.6 percent market share.

"More and more people will be getting smartphones," Cates said. "Before you know it, 4G (broadband wireless) starts coming to rural areas. It's the easiest way to interact with people. It's in their pocket; they always carry it on them."

Many stores and businesses are already utilizing Foursquare and Facebook Places to provide discounts to potential customers. In November, Facebook Places launched its "Deals" platform, which allows local businesses to offer digital coupons to customers who check in at their location and reward frequent patrons. American Eagle, H&M, JCPenney and Macy's are among national retailers using Deals to give merchandise discounts. Other businesses are offering free services, upgrades or VIP privileges: Chipotle, for example, gives its Facebook customers two entrees for the price of one, and Gap rewarded the first 10,000 to check in with a free pair of jeans. Several Las Vegas casinos and clubs use the



Engaging Fans Where They Live

by JEANNIE A. NAUJECK

service to offer free buffets, nightclub admissions and room upgrades. Applications for the music industry center largely on events, such as concert stops, in-store performances and large fan gatherings.

For Aldean, the Wrangler partnership added additional possibilities by allowing fans to check in at brick-and-mortar retail locations where Wrangler products are sold. "With a brand partner, all of a sudden we have all these retail partners where people can check in for Jason, which adds to the whole experience," Cates noted. "You don't have to be at a Jason show. You can be in a Wrangler store or even go to Wrangler online and check in for Jason there and participate."

Artists in other genres are moving at full speed into geo-marketing. Pop singer James Blunt promoted his latest album, *Some Kind of Trouble*, by encouraging fans to check in to his launch event on Facebook Places. Those who did were rewarded with three unreleased tracks.

Meanwhile, any attendee who checks in at concerts by the alternative rock band Weezer receives a free music download and a discounted price of \$7.99 to purchase their new album, *Hurley*, while also being entered in a contest to win an all-expenses-paid trip to another show and to meet the group backstage.

Sports teams are also jumping onboard. The NBA's Golden State Warriors and the University of Nebraska Huskers are inviting their Facebook Places friends to exclusive events with players.

The University of California at Berkeley will let fans who check in on Places form the "human tunnel" through which the players run at a game opening.

And the San Francisco 49ers are giving the first 200 fans who check in a special \$49 deal on tickets.

Where prizes and slashed prices help draw fans into geo-marketing programs, the artists and companies benefit equally from the greatest appeal of social networking — socializing.

"The most significant thing about Places and music is that it's taking an activity — going to a concert — which is something that's already inherently social, and enhancing that experience,"

said Meredith Chin, Manager of Corporate Communications, Facebook. "Before, you could be in a massive stadium and not know that any of your other friends were there in the crowd. Now, once you've checked in, you can see your other friends who have also checked in and go meet up with them."

And when fans check in *en masse*, that adds up to a viral buzz. Most geo-marketing services are designed to work together, so when a user checks in at a concert on Foursquare or tweets their location on Twitter, the information is pushed to their Facebook page, essentially providing free advertising for the artist and sponsor. And savvy artists are realizing that they can use these services to create their own buzz.

"TECHNOLOGY IS ADVANCING SO FAST, YOU NEED TO BE THERE FIRST"

— Amanda Cates,
Director of Digital Marketing, Spalding Entertainment

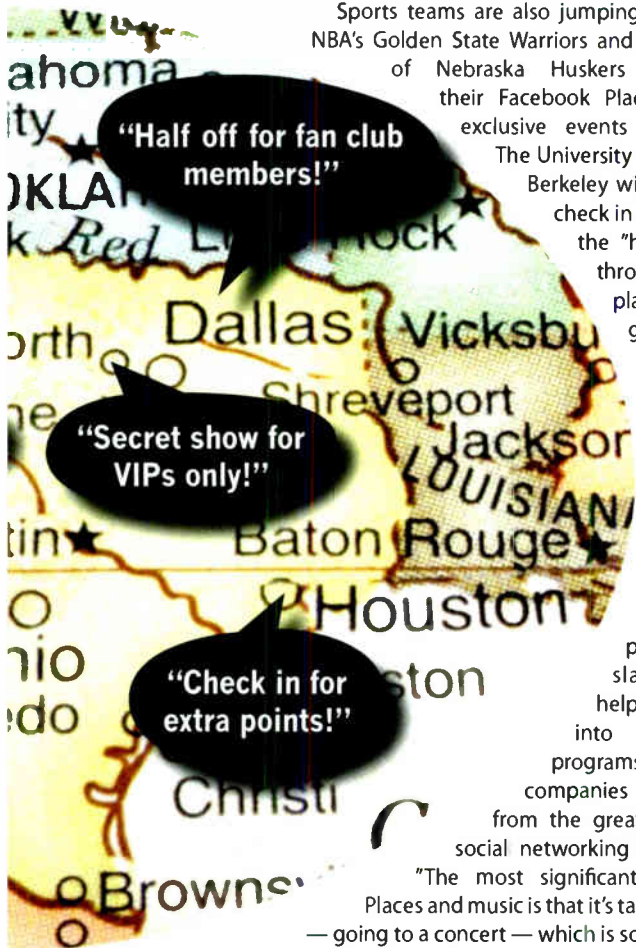
"The way people get their information is increasingly coming by smartphone, cell phone or some other mobile device," said Troy Coleman, a.k.a. Cowboy Troy, who uses Gowalla to check in at public places and Twitter to speak with fans. "It's very important for me to directly engage my fans. I believe they appreciate the direct communication. So if I'm easily accessible on my smartphone, then when I mention new music or anything else I'm doing, they'll be more inclined to at least check it out."

Gonzales predicts a big year for his business, which is negotiating deals with international businesses as well as entertainers. Carazel started a campaign in November to promote Kid Rock's latest album, *Born Free*. Like the Aldean venture, it encourages fans to check in at retail locations, this time for Kid Rock tour sponsors Jim Beam, Little Caesars, Radio Shack and 7-Eleven.

Gonzales expects to announce additional partnerships with artists in early 2011. "This is the year where they evangelize to fans that this is part of the entertainment experience," he said of artists' marketing teams.

For Cates, it's all about staying ahead of the curve, so when fans arrive at a new technology, they'll find artists already there. "This check-in thing is a relatively new technology," she said. "Not only are we able to explain it to our consumers, we're able to engage them and they're participating. Technology is advancing so fast, you need to be there first. You need to understand these technologies and how your consumer is going to interact with them."

Facebook.com/Places; Foursquare.com; Gowalla.com



TV HOSTS RALPH EMERY, EVAN FARMER AND STORME WARREN

by TIM GHIANNI

Ralph Emery stood outside CMA headquarters in Nashville moments after CMT's Evan Farmer and GAC's Storme Warren had driven into the distance.

"I really don't belong here," he said. "I'm too old for this sort of thing."

And then he laughed. For more than an hour, Emery, 77, had shared his wisdom with Farmer and Warren in a discussion of the state of Country Music on television. While his counterparts had plenty to offer, both concentrated intensely throughout this Generations discussion to absorb his insights.

A youthful radio veteran when he joined the staff at WSM-AM Nashville in 1957, Emery raised his profile through live interviews with Johnny Cash, Buddy Holly and other artists before transitioning to television. His many achievements, from hosting "Pop Goes the Country," "Nashville Now" and other national programs to documenting Country Music history as author of four books, were among the many reasons for his election in 2007 to CMA's Country Music Hall of Fame.

Warren, 40, hosts GAC's "Headline Country" and "The Music Row Happy Hour" each weekday on Sirius/XM Satellite Radio's The Highway. After serving as a cameraman and field producer for CNN's "Showbiz Today" in Los Angeles, he moved to Nashville in part to live in the city Emery celebrated on his TV shows as well as at the urging of his friend Charlie Daniels.

Born in Asmara, Ethiopia, the son of a U.S. Army flight medic and nurse, Farmer, 38, broke into the entertainment industry in New York City. He won national attention as a regular on "2GE+HER," a satirical MTV series that aired in 1998. He toured as a performer, acted in films and on TV and hosted TLC's "While You Were Out" before becoming host of CMT's "Top 20 Countdown" early in 2010.

More than other formats, Country Music still presents itself largely through videos on television. Why is that?

Farmer Country Music is about story. Rock music and pop music can go off into such abstraction, it really doesn't matter anymore. If you don't have a good story in a Country song, you aren't doing much in the way of Country.

But do you think there should be more variety, beyond videos, in programming?

Warren It does get redundant at times. I'm sure there's a brilliant, mathematical formula and research that has gone into this increasingly tight rotation of artists. Obviously, it's turning money around somehow, but to answer the question: Do we get sick of it? I would like to see a broader variety.

Does television influence the success of acts on Country radio and in selling records?

Warren It used to be a lot more. The demise of TNN (The Nashville Network) created such a gigantic vacuum and crater in the Country Music industry. We are just beginning to feel the ramifications of the loss of TNN. It really was the window into this town. Country's success did not increase after the loss of TNN; it made a major downward skid, and we're just now starting to come back out of it.

Emery People used to ask me, "Do you think TNN has helped Country Music?" I said, "Sure, you take two thermometers on a hot day, side by side, one being Country Music's success and the other being the success of TNN, and they matched each other."

Warren TNN had a bigger piece of the pie. Cable television was 10 to 15 channels of legitimate programming back then, and TNN had a huge lock on it. People like Ralph and Crook & Chase (Loranne Crook and Charlie Chase) were on the cover of *TV Guide* during that time. That's how big it was. Now the pie is too large and the pieces are too small. Everybody's attention is spread so thin.

Emery Entertainment is fragmented: computers, games and now you can sit down in your living room and watch 100 channels or more than that. What I envision today is too much, too many things for people to spend their time and money on.

Warren That doesn't mean that CMT or GAC have lost their value. The core audience still gravitates to those networks because they still feel a need for a home for their music, and they'll continue to do that.

"WE ARE JUST BEGINNING TO FEEL THE RAMIFICATIONS OF THE LOSS OF TNN."

— Storme Warren

How does Country television stay competitive, with all these other media and entertainment options?

Farmer We've got to keep up. At some point, the audience needs more than just seeing an interview with John Schneider (from "The Dukes of Hazzard") or whoever is going to be on CMT that day. They want a special little anecdote that I am going to send out to Facebook or Twitter that's going to give that sense of added value or access.

Warren Artists, and Evan and myself and whoever is in the public eye who has Facebook and Twitter, see a closer bond to their fans because it does tear down walls. Television glass is a wall. Suddenly with Facebook and Twitter, you can literally have a conversation with people along the way.

Who would you consider an ideal personality for an on-air interview?

Emery I really like characters. I really don't want to hear about your latest record. I want to hear about something you've done that made you embarrassed or made you or someone else laugh, like picking your nose in public. You get characters on, I'd give them more time than I would anyone else, because they entertain and hold the audience.

Warren Mark Chesnutt is a perfect example of a character. He's not going to sit there and talk about his new album. He'll talk about deer hunting from the back of his tour bus, having a gun outside the back of his tour bus parked at some festival and shooting all kinds of stuff.

“IF YOU DON'T HAVE A GOOD STORY IN A COUNTRY SONG, YOU AREN'T DOING MUCH IN THE WAY OF COUNTRY.” – *Evan Farmer*

Farmer Some people just don't have as much personality. They may write a brilliant song but they aren't good with television interviews. Some may not be good musicians but they entertain the heck out of you just by showing up once in a while. My job is to give the good interview; it helps if the artist knows he needs to do his job. You aren't doing yourself any favors if you come in unprepared, but I take pride in trying to needle somebody that's a tough case and try and make the interview more interesting. If I can do that, I feel like I've done a good job.

How do you prepare to successfully do your job?

Farmer Our job is to accommodate the person. We're not investigative journalists. When I started at CMT, where I knew I was going to be doing interviews every week, I spent four hours researching somebody I already knew about. I was looking for something beyond the facts. It's always finding that nugget. That's the greatest thing about the Internet: You can Google these folks. I was terrified to interview Alan Jackson, but someone passed me in the hall and said, "Get him to talk about cars." And I said, "Oh!" I like to find that thing that gets people excited.

“I REALLY DON'T WANT TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR LATEST RECORD. I WANT TO HEAR ABOUT SOMETHING YOU'VE DONE, THAT MADE YOU EMBARRASSED OR MADE YOU OR SOMEONE ELSE LAUGH.” – *Ralph Emery*

Emery When I first came to WSM and found that these artists were going to drop by and promote their records, I had not done a lot of interviews. So I was slightly overwhelmed the first time I met Johnny Cash. Now, I rarely ever criticized peoples' records on the air, but when Johnny Cash came back from Ireland and wrote "40 Shades of Green" and recorded that, and I didn't think it came up to his standards, I criticized him on the air because I had so much admiration for him and we had become friends. He was riding around Downtown Nashville at the time, and so he aimed that baby right for WSM, parked, took the elevator to the fifth floor, looked in the studio and threw his boot at me.

Warren I have a single favorite interview: Buck Owens. It was one



Evan Farmer, Storme Warren and Ralph Emery

I worked for years to get. I'd known him for years, but I had yet to sit across from him in an interview setting. I was out in Bakersfield (Calif., Owens' home), and I get a call: "You're going to get your interview. Get a camera. He's ready." He's an intimidating character too. Buck goes, "Boy, I hope you got some good questions." I said, "Why?" He said, "Because this is the last one of these things I'm ever going to do." He kept his word; he died not long after that. I would have prepared more if I knew it was going to be the final interview with Buck Owens. I knew I was going in the right direction when the conversation kept going. It was this beautiful, heartfelt, real moment with Buck. It was magical.

Emery I envy you because you are in the prime of your careers and you are having more fun than you ever had in your lives.

Farmer We are very lucky, all of us. I'm very thankful.

Warren I've heard other people say this too: I'm not in this for the quick haul. I'm in this for the Ralph Emery haul.

KEEPING IT REAL

by JOSEPH HUDAK

additional reporting by KEN TUCKER

Rascal Flatts, Taylor Swift, Shania Twain, Keith Urban — these are but four of many modern-day artists who have helped expand the boundaries of Country Music by enriching a pop sensibility with some well-placed instruments associated with more historical associations.

It's the presence of these instruments — banjo, fiddle, mandolin and pedal steel guitar among them — that ensures the finished product, even with strong pop leanings, stays firmly planted in our genre.

Exactly when those stringed icons of traditional Country Music are added, however, is a critical question. Often, they can be heard at the song's inception. But, as some of Nashville's top session players and producers will allow, they can also be added to the mix after the fact in a conscious effort to keep it Country.

Multi-instrumentalist and singer Chris Rodriguez, an in-demand session player who toured for five years as Urban's guitar and banjo player and is currently on the road with LeAnn Rimes, has witnessed that aftermarket approach firsthand.

"If there is an element that starts rocking and takes a song outside of Country, I notice that producers want to bring in one other element of traditional Country just to ground it," he said, noting that he takes

"THE BANJO HAS BECOME THE SEQUENCER OF COUNTRY MUSIC."

— Dann Huff, producer and musician

along his ganjo — a six-string banjo/guitar hybrid — to the studio for just such occasions. "It injects that traditional timbre into a modern Country/pop session."

As the producer of many of contemporary Country's most recognizable hits, Dann Huff has had hands-on experience with this practice. "Are there times when a song is barely hanging on by a thread as far as it being 'Country' and you kind of stick a flag on it with a steel guitar? Yeah, that happens," Huff confirmed. "I'd love to say it's never done or that I've never done it, but we all have. It's been done in Country Music since the days of Chet Atkins, when they had to compete with the sound of the day. The idea is that you're compelling people to listen to the music. It sounds like I'm trying to justify, but the truth is, it's the music business, and yes, we do use instruments to paint within the paint box of Country Music."

One of the primary colors in that paint box is the banjo. Consider Swift's self-written "Love Story" or many of Urban's recent radio staples, including "Better Life" and "Sweet Thing," written by Urban with Richard Marx and Monty Powell, respectively. Urban himself brought the banjo into the spotlight at the top of the 2010 CMA Awards, joining hosts Brad Paisley and Carrie Underwood to perform "Songs Like This," recorded by Underwood and written by Marty Dodson, Jerry Flowers and Tom Shapiro.

"Is it overused? Yes. But what isn't in any form of music?" said Huff, who has overseen all of Urban's albums since 2002. "The banjo has become the sequencer of Country Music. It has that throatiness and that percussive element, and you're able to have a rhythmic, almost programmed approach. It's not unlike a lot of the synth programming that they use in hip-hop."

"It's a way to add a percussive groove," Rodriguez agreed. "That's why the banjo has enjoyed a renaissance in modern Country. When you start adding that rhythmic element to a song, it starts percolating and is a way of getting both music and percussion in there all at the same

time."

That certainly was the instrument's role in Urban's "Somebody Like You," written with John Shanks. With its rock drums and soaring chorus, the song's structure is straight out of pop radio. But the presence of the ganjo, laying down the signature lick and driving it along, may be what ultimately defines the composition as Country. "The ganjo is how the song starts out, just that and a drum machine," Huff recalled. "And I believe when Keith wrote it, he wrote it on a banjo."

Urban may soon be adding another vintage instrument to his arsenal. Shortly before writing his recent single, "Put You in a Song," with Sarah Buxton and Jedd Hughes, he had purchased a bouzouki. "It's really the inspiration for the riff on that song," Huff noted. When reminded that the instrument, essentially a Greek mandolin, isn't technically in the Country family, the producer brushed that aside. "It's a cousin to the mandolin and it's certainly acceptable because it's organic. The

fiddle isn't a Country instrument. It was a violin until someone called it a fiddle!"


Whatever its preferred name, the fiddle is integral to the sonics of Country, whether in classics such as Charlie Daniels' "The Devil Went Down to Georgia" (written by Daniels, Tommy Crain, Joel "Taz" DiGregorio, Fred Edwards, Charlie Hayward and Jim Marshall) or in Zac Brown Band's "As She's Walking Away" (Brown and Wyatt Durrette) and other current fare.

"Real down-home Country fiddlin' — the people still ask for that," said Johnny Gimble. The Texas legend isn't just fiddlin' Dixie. He has rosined up the bow for some of Country Music's finest, from Bob Wills and Merle Haggard to Willie Nelson and George Strait, and released his most recent album, *Johnny Gimble: Celebrating with Friends*, on CMH Records in 2010, produced by Ray Benson.

The instrument's magic lies in its ability to instantly transform even a dance song into a Country tune — see Carrie Underwood's "Cowboy Casanova," written by Underwood, Mike Elizondo and Brett James, for instance. So just saw some strings and the song becomes Country?

Not necessarily. "A lot of times people throw fiddle and steel guitar in there to make sure it fits the format, like that's going to make any song Country," said producer Jay Joyce, whose recent albums include *Sweet Home Alabama: The Country Music Tribute to Lynyrd Skynyrd* on Universal Music / Hip-O Records. "It just doesn't."

Still, if used the right way, or even better with some innovation, it may be enough to garner play on Country radio. As an example, Huff cites what producer Mutt Lange did with the fiddle when



recording Shania Twain. "God bless him. He came into Country Music doing Shania's records with his thought process and imagination. He was like, 'Fiddles are great, but why not stack them?'" said Huff, recalling how Lange layered fiddle upon fiddle. "It's a very obvious thing, but it took somebody from the outside to say, 'Let's use this like this.'"

Those very fiddles, however, were stripped from the alternate version of Twain's 2002 hit "I'm Gonna Getcha Good," written by Twain and Lange, tailored for pop radio airplay. In fact, Mercury Nashville released an entire remix of Twain's album *Up* with the non-Country market in mind.

Not that there's anything unusual in this approach. Huff and Rascal Flatts tinkered with the band's power ballad, "What Hurts the Most," written by Steve Robson and Jeffrey Steele, for similar reasons. "We remixed it after pop stations started playing it," Huff explained. "They requested it. They said, 'Our listeners don't like steel guitars. Can you take that out?' Anything people in the pop market deem 'whiny,' we'd have taken

out. Banjo is a little foreign to the pop audience. But it's easy to replace with something else. It's funny, though, that the sound of an instrument would be off-putting to somebody."

For Rodriguez, where traditional instruments are in the mix also depends on the role they play in the arrangement. "I couldn't possibly think of a song like Keith's 'Somebody Like You' with the ganjo mixed back," he said. "That's the main theme of the record. Same with 'Who Wouldn't Want to Be Me' (by Monty Powell and Keith Urban). It's the main riff of the song and it has to be front and center."

Likewise for "Rain Is a Good Thing," recorded by Luke Bryan, who co-wrote the tune with Dallas Davidson. "The fiddle is essential to both verse and chorus, which is what Bryan intended," according to producer Jeff Stevens. "When I first saw Luke six years ago, his band had a fiddle in it, and it's pretty hard to get a fiddle player when you're out in No Man's Land," he said. "That was important to him and it was always important to me in my songs, my demos and things that I produce."

That is exactly what makes Country Music so varied and vital, said Rodriguez — the differing views and techniques of each artist, producer or player. "There's no one way to do it. That's the beauty of it," he mused. "There are a million approaches."

"Nashville now is not the Nashville of our grandfathers," Huff added. "There are writers from all around the world here on any given day, and there are writers from Nashville around the world on any given day. There have been massive hits in Country Music that have not even been written by Country writers. But they're the kind of songs that people want to hear."

THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL INSTRUMENTS IN MODERN COUNTRY

DOING DOUBLE DUTY

HOW THREE COUNTRY RADIO GIANTS

Kix Brooks was half of Brooks & Dunn, Country Music's most successful duo. He's also a songwriter and, with a role in the upcoming film "Thriftstore Cowboy," a movie star. And, oh yeah, he hosts a weekly syndicated Country radio show.

For decades, Charlie Chase has co-hosted a national television show, while, until recently, getting up at 2:00 in the morning to co-host "Tennessee Mornings" on Nashville's Fox affiliate, WZTV. Chase and Lorianne Crook have hosted successful radio and TV programs together for more than 28 years, including "Crook & Chase," currently airing weekly in national syndication as well as on RFD-TV. By the way, he also co-hosts a weekly syndicated Country radio show with Crook.

Then there's Lon Helton, who every single weekday — often every weekday hour — updates the Country Music and radio industry with his online and print publication *Country Aircheck*. And he too somehow finds the time to host a weekly syndicated Country radio show.

Meet three of the busiest people in the business, each of whom has successful nationwide radio countdown shows while holding down other full-time jobs.

"For me, it's really all about prioritizing," said Brooks, who hosts "American Country Countdown with Kix Brooks" for Citadel Media. "I just have to go, 'OK, for me, this part of the day is for this, and this is important.' Obviously, family is first. Beyond that, business is what's important."

To make the point clear, Brooks added, jokingly, "And some days, if you run over in an interview with Taylor Swift, trap shooting has to go."

Brooks works on his show four or five days a week, including weekends, while still maintaining songwriting appointments and running a winery, Arrington Vineyards, just outside of Nashville. On Thursday or Friday, a producer sends him an outline of where the charts might be, letters from listeners and artist news of the week. He sits down on the weekend — "usually with a football game on" — and goes through it all, adding his notes and sending it back by Sunday evening.

Monday is chart day, so Brooks records segments in the studio, a process that takes about two hours. He makes it a point to bypass his home studio to do this work at Citadel Media headquarters in Nashville. "I just think it's good to get away from the house and do business," he explained. "It's just too easy to get distracted if you've got work to do at home. You've got family and you've got people fixing the air conditioner, this and that. I like to go somewhere where all you have to think about working on is what you're working on."

As the only national countdown show host who also works full-time as an artist, Brooks faces a unique challenge when interviewing one of his peers on the air. "I had some things happen early on where I

asked some artists, 'What would you think of me saying this or that about you?'" he said. "And they looked at me like, 'Dude, you wouldn't do that, would you?' I had to take a step back and go, OK, I am a radio guy now but at the same time, I'm an artist."

On the other hand, if Blake Shelton was doing the show, I'd expect him to rag on me and that would not hurt my feelings. I like to think of myself as a fun guy. I don't tease artists who aren't friends of mine and wouldn't understand it, but the artists I'm friends with would wonder what was wrong with me if I wasn't having some fun with our friendship."

No one understands the complexities of juggling multiple careers better than Charlie Chase, who co-hosts "The Crook & Chase Countdown," distributed by Premiere Radio Networks. Indeed, before he and Lorianne Crook exploded onto the national scene, he had



already survived broadcasting in Nashville five days a week from 7 AM to 9:30 PM, for radio and television.

"From 1983 on, I had two full-time jobs. And on those long days, I was tired," he remembered, laughing. "But radio is the greatest foundation of my career because it afforded the ability to talk up a record, fill 30 or 45 seconds. Radio helps you develop the gift of gab. That certainly comes in handy in television. If anything, when you're in television, you have to be real. And radio trains you to be real."

It also requires being fully informed on issues of concern to listeners. "The industry requires that you prepare, that you soak up all the information you can," he said. "I read the paper front to back. I'm all over the Internet. If a new artist comes along, I read about them so that I'm ready for them when I get to meet them."

Inevitably, this carries over into his personal time, even when he's at lunch with his wife. "Karen and I will be talking about something, and

HANDLE DUAL CAREERS ON AND OFF THE AIR

I'll say, "Let's find out about that!" I'm Googling at lunch! I hate that, people sitting around Googling at lunch — and now I'm doing it."

How does Chase cope with the pressure that can come from fitting together two separate but equally demanding careers? The same way Brooks does — by playing golf. "It's an escape," he said. "We have a great group of guys who have played every Friday afternoon for the last 16 or 17 years. Once we get out there, all laughs and all jokes and trying to make some golf shots, you forget where everything is."

Even there, though, Chase will occasionally go online or do a little business. "Occasionally," he admitted. "But that's rare!"

As for Lon Helton, host of "CMT Country Countdown USA with Lon Helton" for Westwood One and Editor and Publisher of *Country Aircheck*, he keeps his life in order by thinking of his two jobs as one. "Everything I do centers around Country Music," he explained. "So everything I do during the week counts as show prep. For instance, we have a new artist come in to play for us once a week. We get to know them. So in most cases, I'm getting



**"EVERYTHING
I DO DURING
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COUNTS AS
SHOW PREP."**

— Lon Helton, Host, "CMT Country Countdown USA with Lon Helton" and Editor and Publisher, *Country Aircheck*

to know new artists way before they have their first single. And when they've had their second hit record, they're kind of like old friends coming in to chat."

Because Helton does his show with an artist as co-host, his work is complicated by having to find a few uninterrupted hours that work well for him as well as a busy celebrity. That has meant starting as early as 8 AM or as late as 9 PM; sometimes he's even had to go on the road with his guest to make it happen.

"Because we're so artist dependent, we're kind of at their mercy," he said. "I end up doing my day job in the evenings. And both my worlds have tons of deadlines, so that can get tricky."

Still, the payoff, for Helton and for his listeners, makes it worth the extra effort. "For the last 18 years, I've gotten to sit across from a Country star every week for an hour and a half and just chat," he said. "You go through one stretch where it's Carrie Underwood, followed by Kenny Chesney, followed by George Strait, followed by Alan Jackson. I don't think there's anybody who's had a song on the charts for the last 18 years that we haven't talked to. I hope I don't take that for granted."

CMA
AND
CRB
PRESENT NEW MEDIA
RESEARCH STUDY AT
CRS

CMA and Country Radio Broadcasters (CRB) have partnered to present a new research project at CRS-42, emphasizing new media usage in today's primary Country Music consumer demographic.

This comprehensive study surveys Country Music consumers and professionals in the Country Music industry, making it unique from previous research projects presented at the Country Radio Seminar (CRS). The study not only tracks actual new media engagement and usage by the Country Music fan, but also the perception of those trends by programmers, managers, artists and other executives in the industry.

"I think one of the most interesting things about this year's study is that it's going to poll people within our industry, not just fans and radio listeners," said Rusty Walker, President, Rusty Walker Programming Consultant, Inc. "It will be interesting to see how accurate we are in predicting the popularity of new media in the daily lives of our listeners. I'm betting there will be some surprises there."

Conducted by North Carolina-based media research firm Coleman Insights, the study dissects the awareness, interest in and usage of new media devices, social media, smartphone apps and radio station and artist Web sites in the Country Music consumer's daily life. It also polls participants on a variety of topics, including music consumption, interaction with and purchase of music via new media outlets, radio listening versus television and Internet usage and adoption trends of Netflix, Skype, standard texting and other services. The consumer data were gathered via online interviews with Country radio listeners between 18 and 54 years of age in January to ensure the most current findings were represented.

"How Country Music consumers integrated new media into their daily lives seems to be changing at a rapid pace," said Greg Fuson, CMA Marketing Research Director. "This research study is a great opportunity for us to truly gain insights on how today's consumer is using the new media to interact with music."

These findings will be presented to CRS attendees at 11 AM, Thursday, March 3, in the Nashville Convention Center. CRS-42 takes place March 2-4; register at CRB.org or (615) 327-4487. CMA is a proud sponsor of CRS-42.

HIS KINDA COUNTRY

No matter how talented you are and how much industry muscle you've got, it's never easy to reach the top in Country Music. But few young artists have faced odds so long and yet come so far as Jason Aldean. Born and raised near Macon, Ga., he absorbed the feel of red clay and dirt roads, mixed in an appreciation for rock, rap and other diverse influences and hammered it all together on regional gigs into a potent and personal sound. Three years after graduating from high school in 1995, he followed that timeless trail to Music City and began looking for opportunity.

He came close a few times, but several major record label deals fell through despite his persistent efforts. Then destiny beckoned from Broken Bow Records (BBR). The partnership ignited like a backwoods bonfire and shot both artist and label onto the fast track. Three of his four albums, *Jason Aldean, My Kinda Party* and *Wide Open*, were certified Platinum; a fourth, *Relentless*, has gone Gold. The most recent, *My Kinda Party*, burst from the gate in November, selling 193,000 units in its first week, going Platinum in only 11 weeks, with the title track, written by Brantley Gilbert, hitting No. 2 on *Billboard* and the corresponding video topping the charts on CMT and GAC. By year's end, Aldean was named the No. 1 Male Country Artist and the Top Independent Artist of the Year by *Billboard*.

There are many reasons why the combination worked, but the most important is Aldean's no-nonsense presentation. His vocals combine expressive nuance with a Southern-inflected conversational quality. His performances can rock the biggest arenas yet feel as if he's still working the honky-tonk circuit, singing to party-goers a foot from the stage or packed onto the dance floor.

Aldean understands and embraces his appeal. His No. 1 singles, including "She's Country" (written by Danny Myrick and Bridgette Tatum) and "Why" (Rodney Clawson, Vicky McGehee and John Rich), as well as "Big Green Tractor" (Jim Collins and David Lee Murphy), "Crazy Town" (Clawson and Brett Jones), "Hick Town" (McGehee, Rich and Big Kenny) and his other hits, draw from his personal history and, through his interpretation, speak directly to, as Aldean put it in a recent press release, "the kids who live in the sticks, drive pickup trucks, wear John Deere hats and like their Country on the rockin' side."

That impression resonates throughout *My Kinda Party* as well, from the raw but nostalgic imagery conjured on "Tattoos on This



JASON ALDEAN

Town" (Neil Thrasher, Wendell Mobley and Michael Dulaney) and in the panoramic rap of "Dirt Road Anthem" (Brantley Gilbert and Colt Ford), the spacious heartland hymn "Fly Over States" (Thrasher and Dulaney) and even amidst soaring strings in his duet with Kelly Clarkson, "Don't You Wanna Stay" (Jason Sellers, Paul Jenkins and Andy Gibson).

That demographic, though, is growing and changing with the times, a fact that didn't slip past Aldean and his team. Their promotions for *My Kinda Party* included autographed pre-release copies of the album sold exclusively at JasonAldean.com; his first-ever live video chat on his Web site, Facebook and Ustream; as well as opportunities on Facebook, Foursquare and Twitter for fans to "check in" at concerts and retail locations in hopes of winning an iPad loaded with the new album, digital gift certificates and a complete Wrangler wardrobe. (Details of this campaign are described on page 8.)

"I think there's a stereotype that all those kids are still out there using rotary phones," Aldean explained. "These guys go out, they spend money on their trucks, jacking them up and fixing them up. But they're as much up to date as anybody. Nowadays it's hard to find somebody that doesn't have a computer or an iPhone or some sort of Internet gadget. 'High-tech rednecks,' man — that's the whole deal."

They're also a big part of the consumer base targeted by BBR, Aldean's management at Spalding Entertainment and the distributors at RED. Their efforts are apparently paying off, according to Rick Shedd, Senior VP of Operations, BBR, who noted, "On our last album, the first week's percentage of full-album digital sales was 14 percent, which was kind of average at the time. This time, we felt that should be higher because of who Jason appeals to. With all the efforts that everyone put into it and the growth in that market in general, we boosted that up to 24 percent."

These figures impress even more, given the trimmed-down products in recent album charts. But on *My Kinda Party*, brimming with 15 tracks, Aldean stands up for the format. "I would hate to see it get away from artists making full-length albums," he stated. "Singles sales are huge; I get it. But the coolest thing, when I was starting to play music, was buying records and learning all those songs — even the B-sides. To me, six songs is not an album. It's something I did when I was playing clubs, just to get a few songs out there for people to hear,

which we sold for 10 bucks at our shows. If I go and buy an album that's got six songs on it, I feel like I've been ripped off. They can sell it to me for \$5 all day, but I still feel like I'm kind of getting cheated. So instead of giving people less songs for the same or a little bit less money, let's give them twice as much for less money. Give them 15 songs and charge what we would for a 10-song album. People will still go and buy an album if it's something they want. For us, it's about figuring out how to get them interested in doing that versus just buying the singles."

Aldean's plan is simple: Make the best music you can and present it as the kind of unified package that was essential to him as he was growing up. On *My Kinda Party*, as on his earlier albums, his first step was to go for a live feel by building the lineup of players on his touring rhythm section. Guitarist Kurt Allison, bassist Tully Kennedy and drummer Rich Redmond have been with Aldean since 2000, when his producer Michael Knox recruited them at SIR (Studio Instrument Rentals) Nashville to back different artists on showcase performances. They ended up playing about 40 such auditions before BBR signed him, after which they began their ongoing run as the bedrock of his band.

It also involves expanding Aldean's range a bit, while never losing his identity as an artist. "We've been working together for 12 years, and each album has brought him up a little bit," said Knox, who has produced all of Aldean's albums to date. "People might call it taking chances, but he's just gotten more comfortable to do more of his roots. That's where 'Dirt Road Anthem,' 'My Kinda Party' and even 'Don't You Wanna Stay' come into play. Jason's feeling more comfortable to pull these things off."

That last track was performed live by Aldean and Clarkson on the 2010 CMA Awards in November, with immediate results in sales. "We hadn't even gone to radio with it and it went Top 30," said Shedd. "We had 'My Kinda Party'

at No. 5 and 'Don't You Wanna Stay' at No. 28. It wasn't one coming up and the other coming down; it was two going up. Obviously, radio embraced 'Don't You Wanna Stay' because of that great performance on the CMAs."

Sales may have also gotten a boost from Aldean's commitment to keep ticket prices low for his "My Kinda Party Tour," which kicked off in January and features Eric Church and the JaneDear girls. The main incentive was to give back to those who have supported him, based again on what he remembers about living with tight budgets not so long ago. But there are practical reasons too, boiling down to building long-term fan loyalty and freeing up a little extra for souvenir purchases.

"When our first daughter was born, for us to go and do anything as a family, you had to be very conscious of that stuff," he recalled. "If we wanted to take her to the circus, it was a big expense. I'd rather make my concerts affordable to where a husband and wife can bring two or three kids and not worry about whether they'll make a house payment that month. To me, that's how you make fans long-term. You make it affordable for them to come."

"TO ME, SIX SONGS IS NOT AN ALBUM."

— Jason Aldean

You blow them away, whether it's by the show or the production or the opening act or all of it together. And hopefully they'll keep coming back."

Achieving success has also empowered Aldean to raise awareness for causes in which he believes, including the fight to find a cure for breast cancer. For five consecutive years he has designated one of his shows a "Concert for the Cure," with all proceeds donated to Susan G. Komen for the Cure. In 2010, the event took place in October at Roberts Stadium in Evansville, Ind., with additional donations accepted via a link on JasonAldean.com as well as Aldean teaming with TicketsForCharity.com to offer his fans special access to sold-out floor seats and other great locations, with ticket sales benefitting the cause.

The hard times he and his family weathered instilled a commitment in Aldean to share his good luck. "Now, when I sing or talk, people are more apt to listen than they might have been six years ago, when nobody knew who I was," he mused. "People want to listen. That can be a powerful thing, and it's our responsibility to use that in the right way."

JasonAldean.com

STREET SURVIVAL

Success Strategies for Country Music Venues

by MARK CRAWFORD

Finding a lively bar with Country talent in Nashville is about as easy as flagging a taxi in Manhattan. And thanks to tenacious entrepreneurs around the United States, fans far from Music City are finding it easier than ever to hear top talent and enjoy a true "Country club" experience.

It's not easy to break into markets not known as hotbeds for the genre. For those who do succeed, though, the critical step often involves consistent messaging to fans and booking talent with name recognition or some airplay at radio. One of the best ways to do this is to develop great relationships with local Country radio — not just for advertising, but also for bringing in new bands, organizing benefits and events and brainstorming about how to deliver more for the local Country consumer.

"Our business-building strategy starts with radio and ultimately ends there," said Ed Warm, co-owner of Joe's Bar, which opened in 1997 and has offered Country Music exclusively in Chicago since 2003. "We have an incredible relationship with one of the best Country radio stations in the nation, WUSN. They believe in us, and we've formed a partnership with them that is second to none and goes beyond just music. We team up as often as we can for charitable causes, concert series and other community events."

"Over the last five years, we have done lots of advertising with WYCD in Detroit," added Joe Hellebuyck, co-owner of Coyote Joe's, located 20 miles north of Motor City along the Clinton River and a Country haven since it reopened after repairing flood damage in 2004. "When a new band is on the road, premiering a new song and looking for places to play, they'll do interviews on WYCD and then perform at Coyote Joe's."

The trickiest part of booking talent is timing. Because of their size, typically from 1,200 to 2,000 in capacity, these venues can't afford to pay top national touring acts. Instead, they focus on new or developing talent from Nashville. "We try to predict when new artists will be peaking before they go national and bring them in then," said Scott Durland, owner of the Grizzly Rose, open since 1989 in Denver. "For example, we had Taylor Swift for two nights at \$10 per ticket. We also booked Lady Antebellum before they took off nationally."

But how do you forecast who will be hot and when? By staying in touch with Nashville's recording industry. "I've learned so much about our booking from the record labels," said Warm. "The record companies are so far ahead of the curve with getting the word out on their artists, and they rarely miss on their eye for talent. I listen to what they have to say."

Cowboys Dancehall provides live Country entertainment and dancing at two locations in Dallas and one in San Antonio. "The key to booking national entertainment is to bring in top Country stars at a price that maintains volume sales," said Danny Perez, Marketing Director, Cowboys Dancehall. "The expense incurred for

name entertainment is offset by the ticket price. The seating capacity of each venue allows Cowboys to book name entertainment at ticket prices that customers can afford. Each venue attempts to book at least one major act per month."

"Acts must be well known nationally and be at a price point that our customers can afford," Durland agreed. "Customers are very price-sensitive. You can't overpay for acts; at \$30 or higher, we would lose business."

The key, then, is to deliver what customers want, budget to bring in a good national act as least once a month and focus on performers who charge affordable rates because they're on the way up — or, as the Grizzly Rose often does, artists who don't dominate the charts as often anymore or tour as much but still have powerful name recognition and legions of longtime, devoted fans.

Local and regional bands can also be part of the formula. For example, each Cowboys location features house bands that play behind rising new singers who may not be able to travel with a full band on the road. "These house bands rotate between the venues, helping to maintain enthusiastic performances and high customer interest," said Perez.

These points are the meat of the business. The meal is complete when you add a robust Internet presence. Cowboys Dancehall and the Grizzly Rose are among many Country venues that invite customers to become members and form a community online that will carry over into meeting at the club.

The final ingredient is the premises itself. Coyote Joe's fans can count on DJs between live shows, nonstop videos on 36-inch big-screen TVs and a ladies night three times a week that includes free mechanical bull rides — all key parts of Hellebuyck's strategy to present a total package of music, entertainment and pricing.

This type of planning can offer real and potential fans a uniquely personal experience of the music while also broadening exposure for fresh talent and maintaining steady work for veteran performers. "We were told by a lot of 'experts' we couldn't do live Country Music in Chicago. We'd do this for six months or a year and then we'd be out," said Warm, whose club embraced the Country format in 2003. "Well, even during the recession, we've booked bands all the time, kept marketing and advertising budgets the same and fought to keep ticket prices down. We stayed consistent, and that's why we're still here: The industry and fans saw that we were committed to Country."

CowboysDancehall.com; CoyoteJoes.com; GrizzlyRose.com; JoesBar.com

"The key to booking national entertainment is to bring in top Country stars at a price that maintains volume sales."

— Danny Perez, Marketing Director, Cowboys Dancehall

Darius Rucker (l) and Eric Church (r) rock the house at Joe's Bar in Chicago.

HOW TO USE - AND WHEN TO AVOID **PITCH & TEMPO** **CORRECTION**

by TED DROZDOWSKI

"Technology in the studio can be a beautiful thing," said James Stroud, producer and CEO, Stroudavarious Records. "But when the tools of the modern studio are used wrong, they can become the 'Satan' of recording."

The tools Stroud refers to are quantization and pitch correction. Both are computer-based operations. Quantization locks all the rhythmic elements of a recording to a grid by generating click tracks through the headphones of session players that cut a song's basic tracks on rhythm guitar, bass and drums. Its use is typically more apparent to musicians than layman fans.

"Generally, you're going to use a click track when you want to record something driving, and quantizing isn't necessary if your session players can keep solid time — which they all can or they wouldn't be working in Nashville," said Stroud.

Even so, "some producers actually hire quantizing teams to come in after the session players are done to lock every single instrument, from drums to bass to acoustic guitars, to a grid," said studio drummer Eddie Bayers. "They think that's the only way to make a big hit, but it snuffs the life out of a recording. A real band plays and moves together around the beat ever so slightly. You can do that with or without a click, but quantizing steals that life right out of it."

"When the click first came into use, I wasn't into it," said bassist Dave Roe, who has toured and recorded with Chet Atkins, Johnny Cash, Dwight Yoakam and many other greats. "Now I prefer it. If your click track has the right sound, like a shaker or tambourine, it's just like another instrument in the band, so you play with it just like it's a musician and there's no problem. But it's important to have the right sound. If it sounds like a woodblock, with that *tock-tock-tock*, that's annoying."

"A side benefit of the widespread use of click tracks is that it's made session musicians much more aware of their meter — made us all better players," Roe added. "The downside is that I've been so trained by the click, even though I enjoy playing without a click too, that if I'm on a live gig and the drummer starts drifting on the beat by even a few milliseconds, I hear it and it bugs me."

The click is also a valuable part of computer-based editing. If the band is locked together on a song's beat, it's easier to delete, replace or move sections of that tune seamlessly with Digidesign Pro Tools or other digital recording software — a radical advance over the old days of doing that work with a razor blade and strips of audio tape.

Nonetheless, plenty of contemporary recordings are made without click tracks. "If you're recording a ballad or something that has some real emotional heat, like when we cut 'Courtesy of the Red, White and Blue

(The Angry American)' with Toby Keith, you want the pace to accelerate and back off so you really get some feeling into it," Stroud said. "We did that song without a click track, and typically that's also how I record ballads, where there has to be a lot of feeling. Generally, I like the drummer to play slightly behind the beat too, instead of right on it. If the drummer gets in front of the click track and is trying to slow down to get back in the pocket, it's a mess and you should start over."

Bayers deals with this by playing about 10 milliseconds behind the click to create a winning backbeat. "I also tend to lag behind the click by about five milliseconds just before going into a chorus to give it a buildup," he said. "That accents the chorus and really opens it up."

Pitch correction, sometimes called auto-tuning after the Auto-Tune sound processor made by the California-based company Antares Audio Technologies, is detectable as a metallic-sounding fix applied where a singer loses precise pitch. In extreme cases, it can color a song's entire vocal track, which Mark Wright, producer and President, Show Dog-Universal Music, considers a studio sin.

"Country Music is built on singers with character, and when you auto-tune somebody through a whole song, you're no longer hearing who that artist really is but a simulation," he said. "Everybody has dips and variations in their voice. That's what makes them human."

"While the technology that allows us to do that is fairly complex," he continued, "using it is simply a matter of pointing to the places on a graph where the singer, let's say, is out of tune, clicking on them with a mouse and then letting the software do its thing. The way to use it correctly is to do just that instead of sucking the soul out of an entire performance. My advice to novice producers

is to use auto-tune only when it's absolutely necessary."

Stroud, on the other hand, jokes that he wishes more producers would use pitch correction on every second of the vocals they record. "That way, even more great singers in this business would come to me," he said, chuckling. "Believe it or not, some artists actually ask me to produce their albums because they know I don't put everything through auto-tune."

"Using tools like pitch correction, click tracks and quantizing isn't brain surgery," he concluded. "You have to remember that in Country Music you're dealing with stories and feelings and real people. That's the way it's been since Day One. The less you do to get in the way of that, the better any record you make is going to be."

**"WHEN THE
CLICK FIRST
CAME INTO
USE, I WASN'T
INTO IT. NOW I
PREFER IT."**

— Dave Roe, bassist



LISTENING WITH THEIR EYES

Like the recording industry, the music video business has experienced massive changes in recent years. Even as budgets shrink, new technologies and delivery channels open up more creative, promotional and money-making opportunities.

In this special roundtable discussion, three leaders in the music video field address these and other issues that confront them and their colleagues.

As Executive Producer/Owner at Revolution Pictures, **RANDY BREWER** has overseen video projects for Lady Antebellum, Reba and many others, including numerous videos for Carrie Underwood and the 2010 CMA Awards nominated "Hillbilly Bone," featuring Blake Shelton and Trace Adkins and directed by Roman White.

With more than 200 major-label music videos to her credit for artists including Alan Jackson, Rascal Flatts, George Strait and Keith Urban, Big Feather Films Owner **TREY FANJOY** has won many of the top honors in her industry, including consecutive CMA Music Video of the Year Awards for Taylor Swift's "Love Story" (2009) and Miranda Lambert's "The House That Built Me" (2010).

And veteran photographer **DAVID McCLISTER**, represented by Ruckus Films, has made a strong imprint in video by directing Lady Antebellum's 2010 CMA Awards nominated "Need You Now," as well as projects for The Band Perry, Dierks Bentley, Jake Owen, LeAnn Rimes and others.

How have changes in technology over the past 10 years affected what you do?

FANJOY On a technical level, it's constantly changing and has been since the moment I stepped into this business. But in the past couple of years, I think more directors have been shooting in digital formats than on film.

McCLISTER This year, I've shot everything from 35mm to 16mm to Red to Canon 5D — basically, about every format that's out there.

How do you decide which format is right for any given project?

FANJOY I take everything into consideration, including the age of the artist — from a beauty standpoint, whether we're going to go HD or 35mm.

BREWER With the technology of HD comes a cleaner, crisper scene, versus film, which gives you a more organic feel. Both are excellent options. It just depends on what approach you want to take and what the budget will allow.

But haven't declines in the price of technology helped to offset budget cutbacks?

BREWER There are definitely things you can do cheaper because of the changes in technology, such as a performance video or a run-and-gun video. The myth is that you can do a \$175,000 video for \$50,000. Production still calls for certain key line items to make that kind of video and HD doesn't solve those expenses. The idea will always drive the cost if you want to tell a great epic story. It takes money to make those videos and make them right.

FANJOY Ultimately, equipment prices are such a small thing. Take a big video like "Love Story." To shoot it with a Canon 5D or film, that's not the issue. You've still got dancers and choreography and costumes and art direction and all these other things. There's this huge misconception that just because we're in that do-it-yourself music video mode and everybody's got video cameras, everybody can make a (quality) music video. I can give a camera to my mother or my cousin in Oklahoma, but it's not going to be the same video you'd get if I do it.

BREWER When you're making a record for Carrie Underwood, would you go, "Let's give it to that guy down at Belmont because we can get him for \$200?" You wouldn't do that. You're going to get the best guy if you really believe in your artist, and the people with strong experience usually cost more. When I think of some amazing videos like Roman's video for (Taylor Swift's) "You Belong with Me," "Nothin' Better to Do," which David did for LeAnn Rimes, or Trey's "Love Story," they tell a story through Country Music, and fans eat that stuff up. I'd love to put a concert video or a performance video made with no budget against these really well-done epic videos and measure the number of hits on YouTube. I'm not saying that labels should spend tons and tons of money for every new



"You're talking about an audience that has to feel like, 'I'm being entertained on my iPad.'"

— Randy Brewer

artist ...

FANJOY I am!

McCLISTER I am too (laughter)!

BREWER I'm saying, really, look at what pushes things. In the age of competing on the Internet against (network and other professional programming on) Hulu television, you're talking about an audience that has to feel like, "I'm being entertained on my iPad."

FANJOY I've been really successful in working with new artists, and I've never broken a new artist by making it look like Amateur Time. It's always been that the videos that took the artist to the next level had epic content. Taylor Swift's "Our Song": explosive color, great art direction, beautiful 35 mm in your face. Keith Urban's "Somebody Like You": beautiful crane shots of Malibu Canyon and the Native American medicine wheel. Those are the videos that break artists.

THE STATE OF THE ART OF MUSIC VIDEOS

by FETT

BREWER We just did a video for Lady Antebellum ("Hello World," directed by Roman White) that is so epic. Thanks to the songwriters, the content was so good and emotional. The video didn't really quite tell a literal story line, but Roman took it to a certain place. I have gotten more e-mails from people who were touched, who cried, who said, "This video changed the way I think." We couldn't have pulled off the storyline without the strong budget we had on that video.

FANJOY Outside the Country Music genre, would Lady Gaga be Lady Gaga without the incredible production value and those big art-directed, styled videos? I believe wholeheartedly in the ability of the format and the medium to make stars. And whether it's on CMT or YouTube, the content still needs to be stellar.

McCLISTER We're talking about songs or videos that are emotionally involved. They're like mini-films. The audience can watch them over and over again. It's not just a performance video where you can walk out of the room and listen to the song like it's on the radio.

BREWER The big question is, if that video tells a story and creates some emotion, will that person then send it to a friend who says, "Wow, that really touched me. I'm going to send it to my mom!?" And then all these

What other economic factors impact music video production today?

BREWER Musicians have their union. Songwriters have PROs. Everyone has their own protection in place but music video directors. People say, "Wow, that guy Roman White did a whole bunch of amazing music videos and they're selling for \$1.99," but unlike songwriters, Roman is never going to see a dime for any of those sales, even though 99 percent of them are his ideas, unless that changes. This is what we love to do, just like a songwriter loves to write songs. There is a sense I get from directors of how hard it is to keep being creative in a time when maybe they don't get recognized enough financially for their ideas, especially when videos are not just a promotional tool anymore.

How are directors paid for their work?

BREWER Directors get paid 10 percent. When they do a \$40,000 performance video, they make \$4,000. Two years ago, they might have done a little bigger video on film for \$80,000 and made \$8,000. Although they spent the same time and did the same amount of work, they're expected to create the same great video but they're being compensated for less than half today.

FANJOY The same pay structure has been in place for 25 years. It's percentages. Music videos were promotional tools for broadcast only until the technology changed. Now, they're *product*. Everybody else — the songwriter, the producer, the singer — gets a piece (of the \$1.99 video sale) except the music video writer and director.

BREWER We've had labels tell us that the video came out and the sales actually changed. "It was dying at radio, your video came out and now the single is back."

McCLISTER Or the video saved the album.

FANJOY I did the first video for a new artist on Sony Music Nashville, Joanna Smith. They didn't have a strong budget, so Joanna insisted that I take a point on the video. We've talked about

links start to be introduced to new people, to new consumers. That's the strength of a really well-done music video and how they help artists in our new music business model.

Has viral online culture created an aesthetic that you're ever asked to emulate?

BREWER There are certain things you can do in that style. We've had treatments where people have said, "I want to do a real YouTube kind of vibe," and that's fine. But ...

FANJOY It's not how you build an icon.

BREWER And I don't see networks, HBO or large media companies going there. Yes, they're investing virally, but they're not going to make tons of content with their stars looking like a home video because it diminishes them.

McCLISTER All that viral content just makes my stuff look better (laughter).

labels taking a risk. Well, if I come in at this point in the game with my 15 years of experience and I'm offering my services, I'm taking a chance on this artist too, so there should be some return for that. I think it's a great way for new artists who have smaller budgets to incentivize an experienced director to come to the table.

BREWER If we can survive through this time, there will be a gold rush for visual producers and directors, for people who create content. That content will rule along with good music. Everything is going visual. Young people watch more visual content on their smartphones and listen less to radio in their cars.

FANJOY It's a changing landscape and the industry needs to change with the technology. But I'm very optimistic. More and more outlets for videos are sprouting up everywhere. People listen with their eyes.

DavidMcClister.com; RevolutionPictures.com; TreyFanjoy.com



"Whether it's on CMT or YouTube, the content still needs to be stellar."
— Trey Fanjoy

Trey Fanjoy with Taylor Swift.

"All that viral content just makes my stuff look better."
— David McClister

David McClister speaks with Sons of Sylvia lead singer and fiddle player Ashley Clark during the video shoot for "I'll Know You."



Katie Armiger

HITS THE HEIGHTS

by LORIE HOLLABAUGH

Katie Armiger seems to be just about everywhere these days. The 19-year-old and her camp have employed some innovative ways to market her music and build on her growing fan base, and it's paid off: Her latest Cold River Records album, *Confessions of a Nice Girl*, was her first to make it onto the *Billboard* Heatseekers chart in October, debuting at No. 36.

The album is a pivotal point in the Texan's career. It includes collaborations between her and several notable co-writers, including Sarah Buxton and Rebecca Lynn Howard. In addition to tracks produced by Bonnie Baker, Blair Daly and New Voice Ent., rocker Charlie Sexton produced "I Will Be," which Armiger wrote with Lisa McCallum. Jason Aldean's band even got in on the production fun and played on one song, "Ain't So Sweet," written by Armiger and Daly.

"It's definitely different than the first two," Armiger said, referencing her 2007 self-titled debut and *Believe*, released in 2008. "I'm pretty eclectic, and this is a mix of tons of different feels of music. There's traditional Country, Country rock, Country pop and a little bit of everything on it. The way we went about it is, in the past, we thought of it as a formula. You have certain types of songs on there. Everybody always says you need a song about leaving home, a song about a breakup, a cycle of life song. But on this one, we just said, 'You know, we're going to put every single thing we love on there and hopefully everyone will love it as much as we do.' And I think that's why it's working so much — because we had so much fun."

Written by Armiger, Amanda Flynn and Bruce Wallace, the first single, "Best Song Ever," is a cleverly dark uptempo tune; from within its sugar-coated shell it jabs playfully at the notion of "happily ever after." The song received significant adds in its first week, being picked up by KILT / Houston; WIVK / Knoxville, Tenn.; KEEY / Minneapolis; KTEX / McAllen, Texas; WKMK / Monmouth, N.J.; KUPL / Portland, Ore.; KFRG / Riverside, Calif.; KNTY / Sacramento; KUBL / Salt Lake City; KAJA / San Antonio; and WFUS / Tampa, Fla.

Its impact was no doubt strengthened from the setup and marketing plan implemented by Armiger's manager Pete O'Heeron, and her publicist, Denise Carberry of Paul Freundlich Associates (PFA). From an album-naming contest sponsored by GAC to another on Armiger's Web site to win an iPod, her team found creative ways to engage and attract new fans. Acknowledging that it can be a challenge to take a young artist to radio, they worked with Armiger to bridge that gap between her and the programmers who hold the key to airplay.

"You really have to work to develop these relationships," said O'Heeron, who is also President of Cold River Records. "As we're making believers out of those big market stations, you have to create and build a story and you have to bring that story to them. I don't think you can just bring an artist and say, 'Hey, I have an artist with a song.' You have to have a big package. But there is a generational gap when you have a teenage female talking to a program director who may be in their 30s or 50s. They're trying to talk music. She's talking Lady Gaga and they're talking Duran Duran and Van Halen."

How does O'Heeron deal with that? "I force-feed her '70s and '80s music," he said, laughing. "The other day I gave her *Elton John — Greatest Hits*."

One up side to breaking a teen act, according to O'Heeron, is its ability to draw a younger demographic toward a product or brand. "We have really focused on our relationships with United Country Real Estate, Silpada Designs and Buckle Clothing the past few years and wanted to co-brand with them," he said. "We created separate splash pages within Katie's Web site for them so they could go out to their community and tell their customers and employees about Katie. She was wearing Buckle and Silpada jewelry on her album cover and at every press event as well."

Armiger's camp, along with Craig Bann, Senior VP of Promotion and Marketing, AristoMedia, was particularly proactive in reaching out to GAC, which has worked closely with Armiger since 2008, when it featured her in a six-part Web series, "Kapturing Katie." This time, the network invited fans to come up with a title for the new album; more than 1,300 of them sent in their suggestions. It also sponsored a sweepstakes and sent two winners to Armiger's album launch party on Sept. 29 in Nashville; the event was streamed live over several Web sites, including sites for Buckle Clothing and GAC. Additionally, a documentary, "d'Tour to Nashville," ran exclusively on **GACTV.com** in the spring, offering a behind-the-scenes look at Armiger's journey through the music business.

"It's almost become like a family over there to us at GAC," O'Heeron said. "Every single person over there has been so fantastic. They were believers early on. They were open to any ideas we had and that has been amazing to us."

Another media opportunity involved the teen magazine *Justine*. In 2010, Armiger partnered with them and the Girl Scouts of the USA in a "R.E.A.L. Girl" contest to honor Girl Scouts of outstanding character ("Remarkable, Energetic, Aspirational and Leader"). *Justine* also featured Armiger on its cover — no small feat for an artist so new to the spotlight.

"Any time you work with a national magazine on the cover, that's the hard part for them to get over because they're looking to sell magazines," O'Heeron said. "They'd much rather have a Hillary Duff or someone who is much more well known. But Denise just kept going back to them and saying, 'Look, you can help build a star, someone who will grow with you over the next few years. Or you can use an existing superstar — but that's not someone who will be at the grassroots level with your customers, which is where Katie will be.'"

"When you find something that fits, you've just got to do it as quickly as possible," he continued. "And you have to be creative with your tie-ins. Katie has a unique ability to not only go into that younger demographic, but also to pull a brand into a younger demographic. If you have a brand that's focusing on 25- and 30-year-olds, and you want to bring it into the tweens, you can engage with Katie and that will move your demographics lower. That only happens with a few artists who have a national platform: You'll have a Taylor (Swift), a Katie, a LeAnn Rimes, a Jessica Andrews. Katie's sales point will change over time as she gets older. We'll have to change our approach, but right now she can appeal to a young demographic or she can move a brand toward it."

With such a young fan base, marketing plans for *Confessions of a Nice Girl* focused significantly on social networks as well. In fact, "Leaving Home" caught fire virally. And when more than 20 high schools notified O'Heeron of the fact that they'd used it as their graduation song, that inspired another novel notion of how to reach out to her base.

"That whole thing happened kind of organically," Armiger said. "I wrote it with Sarah Buxton and Blair Daly two weeks before Christmas. I was giving it to my parents for Christmas, and the next thing I know Pete was calling and saying kids were using it as their

graduation song. So we decided to service it to high schools. I sat and packaged up tons of DVDs and letters to send to these high schools. We had to service it with sheet music too, so we got someone in New York to chart out a choral arrangement for choir directors. I was amazed at the response we got from that song."

Those packages, sent to all high schools that requested them via Facebook, YouTube and other channels, paid off: When Armiger attended the Future Farmers of America convention in October, she found that half the people in her autograph line had graduated to the sound of "Leaving Home," played live or from the enhanced CD/DVD, which featured video



"The best marketing plan is the one that works."

— Pete O'Heeron, President, Cold River Records

footage from her on tour set to "Leaving Home."

Leading up to the *Confessions of a Nice Girl* release, Armiger appeared on "The Early Show" on CBS. And, being in New York City, she amped up the buzz with one more twist, a performance atop the Empire State Building.

"Denise had previously worked with the marketing people at the Empire State Building, so she set this all up," O'Heeron explained. "She told us when we land in New York to come straight there because Katie's going to do something really cool. We had no idea at all what it was going to be. They had red ropes and press, and she walks in and they take her up to the top. It was this amazing postcard day overlooking Manhattan, and there were hundreds and hundreds of tourists on the observation deck. So she performed her single, and we're coming back to the elevator, and you look on

the wall and there were photos of every significant celebrity on the wall: Celine Dion, Cher, Michelle Pfeiffer. The marketing person from the Empire State Building said, 'Katie, where do you want to go? Pick your spot and you'll be forever immortalized at the Empire State Building.' Katie said, 'Next to Celine Dion?' And the marketing person said, 'Next time you come back, it'll be here.' That was pretty amazing."

For indie artists without the backing of a major record label team, unique marketing and media ideas like these are crucial. So is getting the most out of every opportunity, using every available angle and resource, including the smaller imprint's potential for being adaptable and quick on its feet when the need arises.

"The best marketing plan is the one that works," O'Heeron summarized. "Ten different things at 10 different times: If we have a CD release party, we want a live stream. We want press there. We want as many activities going on around that CD release party as we can. If that live stream happens to engage a certain population, then we run with that. You want to drive as many different elements to every event as you can. You just don't know what's going to catch fire. It's just like the songs: You don't know which songs are going to affect people. But we've looked at Katie as a national act from day one, and we approach it that way all the time."

KatieArmiger.com

dgliteracy.com

Dollar General's and Gretchen Wilson's Literacy Rocks Promotion expanded their battle against illiteracy.



LITERACY ROCKS! GRETCHEN WILSON

and Dollar General Stand Up for Education

With all that Gretchen Wilson has accomplished, why would this former high-school dropout bother to earn a GED? "I wanted to do it for myself but also for my daughter Grace," the CMA Awards winner and multi-Platinum artist explained. "I didn't want her to think, 'Look at everything my mom accomplished without having an education.' I wanted her to understand that an education is worth more than it ever has been."

Wilson's commitment grew to include the public at large after she finished her General Education Development studies. She even joined Bernadine Nelson, who had helped her get started on her GED, on a trip to Washington, D.C., where they lobbied Tennessee legislators to fund adult education in Tennessee. Wilson joined Dollar General Corporation, one of the best-known corporate advocates of adult literacy, in testifying before the Senate Subcommittee on Higher Education.

"Dollar General has a long legacy of supporting literacy. Our co-founder, J. L. Turner, was functionally illiterate when he started the company," said Denine Torr, Director of Community Initiatives, Dollar General. "We understand there are many circumstances that may prevent a person from learning to read or earning a high school diploma. Regardless of the circumstances, our goal is to make sure that everyone has an opportunity to realize their dreams."

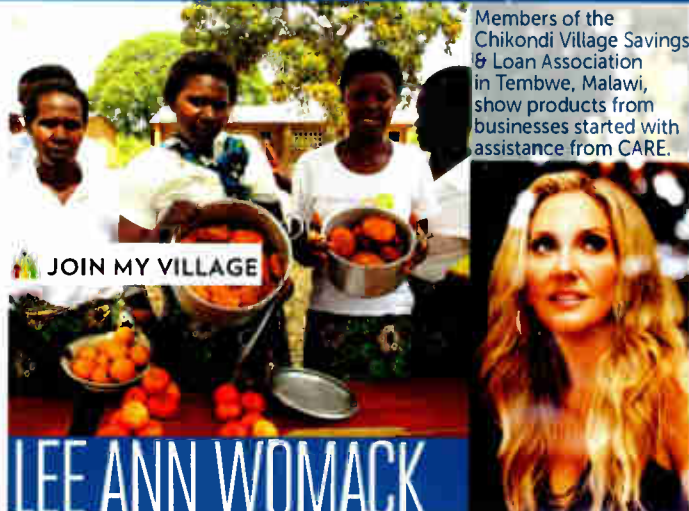
Both sides recognized the other as an ideal partner in pursuing their goal. "We all get to a point where we put our faces and names behind something," Wilson said. "Do we put it behind Reebok for the check, or do we put it behind something that means something and might make a difference? My fans, my friends and my family all shop at Dollar General, and working together we could reach a lot of people."

Wilson partnered with the Dollar General Literacy Foundation and the Advertising Council to launch a national public service advertising campaign to provide high school dropouts with access to information that could get them started on the road to a GED diploma. They issued television, radio, print, outdoor and online ads. To spread the message even further, Wilson screened the PSA at her concerts, and, in selected markets, joined with the Dollar General Literacy Foundation to give free concert tickets to nonprofit literacy providers and graduating GED students. Additionally, Dollar General partnered with Lysol and Airwick brands to feature Wilson in their "Literacy Rocks" promotion in more than 9,000 DG stores. The promotion raised \$250,000 for the Dollar General Literacy Foundation.

"That was our way of bringing them into the store and getting them excited," Wilson explained. "That's how we got them to see the banners about literacy, take literature home with them, drive them to the Web site and get them talking about it."

"Gretchen is very real, down-to-earth and approachable," said Torr. "You can tell somebody what they should do, or you can tell somebody what you've done and how they can do it too. Gretchen has been in their shoes, so you can feel the truth in her message."

GretchenWilson.com; DollarGeneral.com; YourGED.org



Takes Initiative in the Join My Village Campaign

The program couldn't be simpler: Go to JoinMyVillage.com, watch a short video and two major and generous corporations will donate funds to help poor women and children in Africa, up to \$900,000 by Dec. 31. "When something is that easy to help women halfway around the world, you should do it," reasoned Lee Ann Womack.

But the CMA Awards winner didn't stop there. Womack joined with General Mills and CARE, along with new partner Merck, to promote the Join My Village campaign by recording public service announcements and using social media to encourage fans to visit the Web site and click on the two-minute video. She is also carrying information about the project for fans on her tour with Reba and George Strait.

"Because this focuses on women and girls, that's what sucked me in," said Womack. "Change comes about when women are empowered. They're the ones who raise the children most of the time. I always thought it would take people helping people, more than anything. That's true of your neighbor next door or somebody on the other side of the world."

General Mills appreciated that Womack reached out to them. "We'd love to have more celebrities involved in JMV, as we recognize the great influencing and convening power celebrities have," said Ellen Goldberg Luger, VP, General Mills. "But we love the way our relationship with Lee Ann developed. We didn't go out and 'get' her in the way a lot of marketing campaigns or causes do. Instead, she heard about JMV and, because it made a connection to her, she raised her hand to help out."

In its first year, Join My Village provided 155 scholarships for girls to attend secondary school. It also built nine houses for female teachers, provided reference materials to 15 primary schools and taught 1,800 Africans, most of them women, how to save money. With photos, videos and stories JoinMyVillage.com brings to life the success of these programs in Malawi, one of the poorest countries in Africa, with only a 65 percent literacy rate for women.

"Join My Village really shows the power of online communities at their best," said Helene Gayle, President/CEO, CARE USA. "The 'click to commit' model is really fun and interesting and gives consumers a great opportunity to learn about ways they can help people in a village thousands of miles away lift themselves out of poverty."

General Mills and CARE also benefited from the access Womack gave them into the Country Music world. "While tapping into Country Music's loyal and large fan base is of obvious benefit to spreading the message and mission of Join My Village," Luger said, "the ease by which Country Music fans can make the difference they already want to make in the world is of tremendous benefit to them."

CARE.org; GeneralMills.com; JoinMyVillage.com; LeeAnnWomack.com; Merck.com

CMA INVITES FANS TO BATTLE COPD WITH A SONG

by BOB DOERSCHUK

Beginning at last year's CMA Music Festival and continuing at the CMA Awards, CMA has been partnering with Drive4COPD to spread the word about chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, which kills one person every four minutes through chronic bronchitis, emphysema or both. The commitment continues now through the Tune Up for COPD Songwriting Competition, designed to make more people aware of this deadly disease by mobilizing their musical creativity.

From February to April 15, Tune Up for COPD and its ambassadors, Billy Ray Cyrus and Patty Loveless, invite amateur songwriters to write a motivational song with a message that encourages listeners to stay healthy and take control of their lives and then cut it in a demo video to be posted, along with the lyrics, at Drive4COPD.com or TuneUpForCOPD.com. Fans will then vote for their favorites; their choice will be showcased online as the "fan favorite." At the same time, a panel of judges, including Cyrus and Loveless, will determine the winning entry, with the winner receiving an opportunity to perform the song at the Festival.

TUNE UP FOR COPD

SONGWRITING COMPETITION



Heavy snowfall had forced Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) to shut down another day in January. But that wasn't enough to keep Sara Evans and eight talented members of the Pearl-Cohn High School choir away from their practice room for a memorable meeting of voices, made possible in large part by CMA's Keep the Music Playing (KTMP) program, benefiting music education in public schools.

Evans had agreed to meet these juniors and seniors to offer advice in advance of their participation in the Keep the Music Playing All Stars Concert presented by SunTrust Bank, hosted by Luke Bryan and scheduled for Feb. 1 at Nashville's Schermerhorn Symphony Center. What she didn't expect was how the students would show their appreciation for her visit.

With the school's Music Director Llewellyn Peter leading and playing accompaniment at the Baldwin grand piano, they performed César Franck's "Panis Angelicus," singing the Latin text with delicacy, finesse and subtle dynamic shadings. This they followed with a robust gospel rendering of Ricky Dillard's "Oh How Precious," ignited by DeOndrea Foster's lead vocal. Her astonishing performance, buoyed by the choir's call-and-response backing, hypnotic swaying and occasional spontaneous shouts, left Evans in tears.

"I honestly didn't know what I was walking into exactly, and it turned out to be one of the highlights of my whole entire career," Evans said. "These kids were so amazing and they were such an inspiration to me. I wanted to come in and talk to them about pursuing music or not giving up on a dream, and when I came in and they started singing I was just kind of overwhelmed with emotion."

Their performance also testified to the opportunities made possible in part by CMA's donation of more than \$4.7 million to KTMP, including a \$1 million endowment to the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum's "Words & Music" program, which assists language arts and music teachers with classroom instruction in the basics of songwriting.

Standing afterwards next to the piano, Peter put it simply. "This instrument makes me feel better when I play," he insisted. "It propels me to teach the kids better. It propels me to be a better musician. It propels me to give my best to the students."

SARA EVANS CELEBRATES KEEP THE MUSIC PLAYING AT PEARL-COHN HIGH SCHOOL

by BOB DOERSCHUK

It is also just one of more than 4,000 musical instruments being used now in nearly 70 MNPS, provided through KTMP. Performances such as this have persuaded Evans and other artists and celebrities who perform for free each year at CMA Music Festival, which allows half the Festival's net profits be donated to support music education, that their contribution of time and talent has not gone unnoticed.

"When I perform this year, it's going to give me so much more joy," she reflected. "I'm going to go out there with a happy heart, knowing that somebody might benefit from it in this way."

Six groups were selected from MNPS 139 elementary, middle and high schools to perform at the Second KTMP All Stars Concert, hosted by CMA, the Nashville Alliance for Public Education (NAPE) and the Nashville Symphony. Performers include Croft Middle School Orchestra, Dupont Tyler Middle School Advanced Band, Jones Paideia Elementary Magnet School Super Stars, Martin Luther King Jr. Academic Magnet School Orchestra, Nashville School of the Arts Jazz Band, Pearl-Cohn Entertainment Magnet High School Choir and a special lobby performance by Mount View Elementary School Renaissance Performers.

"Music education in Nashville is important to us," said Bryan, who will emcee the KTMP All Stars Concert and perform with Nashville School of the Arts guitar student Sam Hunter. "Each one of us was inspired by someone who took an interest in our own desire to play music and who gave us their support. I'm looking forward to spending time with some of the students and seeing firsthand their passion for music. All it takes is opportunity — and the right tools — to help them reach their goals."

"We are very proud of KTMP's success, and this concert is the ultimate celebration of CMA's efforts to improve the quality of music education in Nashville," said Pam Garrett Tidwell, Executive Director, NAPE. "This concert will put on display the many musical talents of MNPS students and it is direct proof of how students can reach their potential when provided with the necessary resources."

Celebrating its 40th Anniversary in 2011, CMA Music Festival takes place June 9-12 in Downtown Nashville. Four-day tickets, based on the level of seating at LP Field for the Nightly Concerts, can be purchased at Ticketmaster.com; 1-800-745-3000; CMAfest.com; or 1-800-CMA-FEST. View Sara Evans' photo gallery at CMAWorld.com.



Scan Microsoft Tag using your mobile device to watch highlights of Sara Evans with members of the Pearl-Cohn High School Choir. Download Tag Reader at <http://GetTag.Mobi>.

Tags require Internet connection; data charges apply.



SONG YOU'D SECRETLY LOVE TO COVER "Watching the Wheels," by John Lennon." **DREAM DUET PARTNER** "Linda Ronstadt." **PET PEEVE** "Pet peeves." **FIRST GIG** "At a livestock auction. It went really bad. I forgot the words to most of the songs because I was so nervous." **TITLE OF YOUR AUTOBIOGRAPHY** "The Eternal Optimist."
TroyOlsen.com

TROY OLSEN

It's reassuring to know that there's still room for young artists whose music takes us to a specific time and place without sacrificing its appeal to the broad base of listeners.

Troy Olsen, for example. His self-titled and self-produced debut EP, with co-producers and co-writers Brett Beavers and Jim Beavers joining him on "Tumbleweed," has an epic regional feel reminiscent of Dwight Yoakam or Marty Robbins. Brushes stir a gentle but restless snare rhythm on the debut single, "Summer Thing," written by Olsen, Ben Hayslip and Jimmy Yearly, with lyrics that recall a seasonal idyll. There's a dose of Glen Campbell too, in the yearning of Olsen's vocal and chords that roll like freight down tracks on "Ghost Town Train," which Olsen penned with Marv Green.

The vistas conjured in Olsen's songs recall his early years in Duncan, a tiny Arizona town near the New Mexico border. He spent a lot of time there with his grandparents; though their home had no electricity, the music beckoned to Olsen through a battery-powered radio and images from The Nashville Network flickering through a TV hooked up to a cigarette lighter in a truck. Inspired, he got himself a guitar, taught himself to play, wrote songs modeled initially on the work of Yoakam and Steve Earle and began recording demos on his Walkman.

He started performing while in high school, picking up enough work to lead him to seek greener pastures in Nashville. Arriving in 2002, Olsen made the right connections, eventually co-writing Blake Shelton's "I'll Just Hold On" and "Ghost Town Train," which Tim McGraw recorded for *Southern Voice*.

The final, essential step came in late 2009, when Olsen showcased six original songs and walked home with a deal as the first artist signed to EMI Records Nashville. Judging from the evocative content and material packed onto *Troy Olsen*, his future is clearer even than the sky stretched wide over those mesas back home.

ROSEHILL

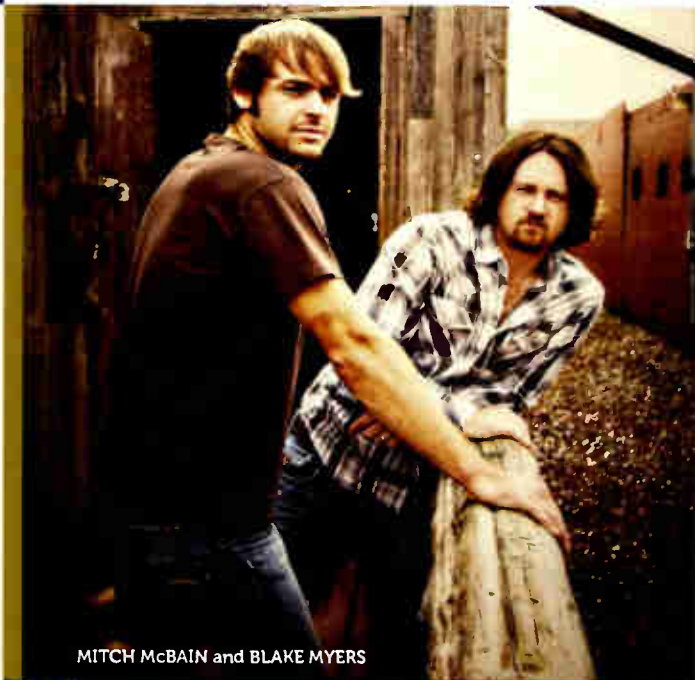
Rosehill's chiming guitars, sweet steel fills and wide-open duo vocals add up to a sonic panorama that suggests long roads leading far away. But there's also something homey in this sound, as inviting as a seat at a table filled with friends.

There are two good reasons why Rosehill creates this impression throughout their debut album, *White Lines and Stars*. The first has a lot to do with geography. It was in Cypress, just off the Northwest Freeway near Houston, that Mitch McBain and Blake Myers started a band back in 2003. The group, Texas High Life, spent five years working the club circuit throughout Texas, honing their alt-Country style and stage presentation.

More importantly, it provided a vehicle for McBain and Myers to develop their synchronicity as singers and writers. They'd been juggling THL gigs with college classes; on finishing their academic obligations, they hunkered down to a biweekly schedule of hatching new material. The more they wrote, the clearer it was that they were headed toward something centered more on their partnership.

That's the second reason *White Lines and Stars* is what it is. Produced by Radney Foster and Jay Clementi and released by Cypress Creek Records, these 11 tracks range from spacious to infectiously upbeat, yet all of them feature lyrics that speak directly to each listener's experience. The title cut and first single, which Myers wrote with Clementi and George Ducas, unfolds like a highway under prairie skies; references to Opry fiddles and preachers on the radio mingle in a stream of sensory images with the rhythm of a sleeping lover's breath. "It ain't the destination, babe, it's the ride," they sing, bringing us back to images we've dreamed before.

As co-writers on all but three of these tracks, McBain and Myers meet this standard of craftsmanship consistently. And they harmonize intuitively, sing solo parts expressively and, best of all, know how to turn a strong lyric into an even stronger listening experience. Already, the view from Rosehill is something to behold.



MITCH McBAIN and BLAKE MYERS

MUSICAL HERO McBAIN: "Ryan Adams." MYERS: "John Lennon." **FAVORITE FOOD ON THE ROAD BOTH:** "Whataburger hamburgers." **WORD YOU SAY OVER AND OVER AGAIN BOTH:** "Booyah." **SONG YOU SING IN THE SHOWER** McBAIN: "Anything and everything." MYERS: "Nothing." **SONG YOU WISH YOU'D WRITTEN** McBAIN: "The entire *Dark Side of the Moon* album, by Pink Floyd." MYERS: "Hallelujah," by Leonard Cohen."
Rosehill-Live.com

THE BAND PERRY

The Band Perry released its self-titled debut album in October, with Nathan Chapman and Paul Worley each producing five cuts and Matt Serletic piloting one. But they're not a new act by any means. They've been working together since Kimberly Perry, then 15, hired her brothers Reid and Neil, 10 and 8 respectively, as her roadies. Eventually the guys started opening for her at local venues around their hometown of Mobile, Ala.

More important, the Perry siblings sang, wrote and played music at home, working up a distinctive style that combined elements of pop, punchy rock and plenty of raw Country.

Inevitably, they pooled their talents. And after spending the summer of 2008 writing in Nashville for their first demo, the results compelled Big Machine Label Group President/CEO Scott Borchetta and Republic Nashville President Jimmy Harnen to sign them. Their investment paid off quickly, as *The Band Perry* debuted at No. 2 on the Country chart and No. 4 on the *Billboard* all-genre Top 200 with 52,000 copies sold — the highest album debut from any new Country music group since 2006.

From Kimberly's whimsical romance on "All Your Life," written by Brian Henningsen and Clara Henningsen, to the feathery but poignant unison and harmony vocals on her solo write "If I Die Young," their first No. 1 and Platinum-selling single, and the exhilarating call-and-answer riffs of the trio's co-write "Quittin' You," the album spotlights their singing. But their instrumental talents frame the vocals tastefully, with Neil's mandolin enhancing an atmosphere that's immediate yet grounded in tradition.

Strong writing completes the package. One or more Perry is credited on nine of the album's 11 tracks; between them, they can sting with wicked humor on "Miss You Being Gone," which all three penned with Brian, Clara and Aaron Henningsen, or playfully tease on their first single "Hip to My Heart," by the Perrys with Brett Beavers. *The Band Perry* flashes past like a merry-go-round that's ready to ride all night.



REID, KIMBERLY and NEIL PERRY

MUSICAL HEROES "The Rolling Stones and Loretta Lynn." **SONG YOU WISH YOU'D WRITTEN** "Let It Be," by The Beatles." **FAVORITE MODE OF TRANSPORTATION** "We heart bus life!" **FIRST GIG** "In our living room. Our grandmother Betty Lou loved it." **TITLE OF YOUR AUTOBIOGRAPHY** "We're The Band Perry and We Play Country Music." (ANSWERS GIVEN COLLECTIVELY BY THE BAND PERRY.)
TheBandPerry.com

WINFIELD'S LOCKET

Start with sibling synchronicity. Add plenty of talent, parceled out individually to both Brooke and Leslie Martin. For final sweetening, place them in Denham Springs, La., where they could grow up in a musically diverse milieu of old-school gospel, swampy blues, Southern rock, straight-ahead Country and whatever else wafted in their direction from nearby New Orleans.

What do you get? The answer lies in the self-titled debut of Winfield's Locket, the *nom de tune* embraced by the Martin sisters in the studio and onstage. Co-produced by the Martins, Jason Henke and Ilya Toshinskiy, formerly of the band Bering Strait, and released by This Side Up Records, these 12 tracks were all co-written by Leslie, with Brooke's credit on 11.

Their history as collaborators stretches back to when they were both around 4 years old, and you can hear it in their sure-handed craftsmanship. The diversity in their taste is evident too, from the deep-fried slide guitar on "Worth the Drive," written by Brooke, Leslie and Alan Bennett, to the urgent blend of prickly banjo and electric guitar power chords on their first single, "Save Yourself."

That track, written by both sisters and Paul Sikes, fits the pattern established throughout *Winfield's Locket* of alternating solo and harmonized vocals with equal ease in every setting. They draw unexpectedly from Celtic ballad tradition on "In a Letter," written by the Martins with their mother Barbara Martin, Henke and Jessica June Rose, saunter through the R&B feel and a cappella vocal hook of "Is This Ever Gonna End," written by Leslie and Barbara Martin and Tim Johnson, and push more assertively on the ones that slam harder. Where both elements coexist, as in the intimate verses and punchier triplet beats on the chorus of "No Place to Hide," penned by the team that gave us "In a Letter," they tie it all together with little apparent effort but plenty of soul.



BROOKE and LESLIE MARTIN

SONG YOU'D SECRETLY LOVE TO COVER BOTH: "Give Me Up Again," by Jonny Lang." **PHRASE YOU SAY OVER AND OVER** BROOKE: "Are you serious?" LESLIE: "Thank God." **ACTRESS TO PORTRAY YOU IN A BIOPIC** LESLIE: "Reese Witherspoon." **GREATEST PERFORMANCE** BROOKE: "Singing for my Aunt Billie in Paducah, Ky., just a few months before she went to meet Jesus." **SOMETHING WE'D NEVER GUESS ABOUT YOU** BROOKE: "I love to fish. To me, there's not a whole lot better than that." LESLIE: "I graduated from LSU with a degree in biological sciences."
WinfieldsLocket.com



LAURA and LYDIA ROGERS

THE SECRET SISTERS

It takes only a few hours to travel from Muscle Shoals to Nashville. But after being raised near the celebrated Alabama music center, sisters Laura and Lydia Rogers took a much longer journey when they recorded their self-titled debut album at Blackbird Studio in Music City.

Released by Beladroit/Universal Republic, produced by Dave Cobb and executive produced by T Bone Burnett, *The Secret Sisters* is a spiritual voyage into the heart of classic Country Music. The sisters wrote two of these tracks together; the rest are seasoned by history. And all sound as if they were recorded in some distant time, beamed from some faraway star and only now have found their way to our ears.

Much of this has to do with their approach in the studio. All 11 songs were cut in two weeks. Only vintage equipment was used. Even computers were banished. The result is an ethereal, pristine quality, as rare as it is beautiful.

None of that would matter without the Sisters' extraordinary gifts. Drawing from their upbringing in the Church of Christ's a cappella services, they harmonize intuitively and with a hint of fragility even on their playful, swaggering first single, "I've Got a Feeling," written by Charles La Verne and Wally Zober.

Good as this is, and as authentic as is their honky-tonk treatment of Buck Owens' "My Heart Skips a Beat," it's the slower tunes that best capture the Sisters' magic. Their dreamy waltz treatment of Hank Williams' "House of Gold" and haunted, vibrato-free vocals on Bill Monroe's "One I Love Is Gone" actually hark back to Country's Celtic antecedents. This music takes us to places we've never been or have too long neglected.

MUSICAL HERO LAURA: "My constant hero is Brandi Carlile, and my heroes of the moment are Hank Williams and Willie Nelson." LYDIA: "Our daddy, hands down." **PET PEEVE** LAURA: "Vocoders, or whatever it is everyone is using to alter the natural sound of their voices on recordings." LYDIA: "Being interrupted." **SONG YOU WISH YOU'D WRITTEN** LAURA: "The House That Built Me." LYDIA: "Wichita Lineman." **SONG YOU'D LOVE TO COVER** LYDIA: "You Send Me." Sam Cooke's version kills me."

SecretSistersBand.com

THE JANEDEAR GIRLS

Think "JaneDear girls" and what comes to mind are two gifted performers, Utah homegirl Susie Brown and Texas-born Danelle Leverett. Brown, the seventh of seven children, was an early achiever in music, having started on the violin at 4. By 10 she was able to win first place in her age group at the Utah State Fiddle Contest, while also sharpening her skills onstage with her family's band and in high school productions.

Leverett's first passion was sports. She excelled in multiple sports throughout her formative years until a pole vaulting injury in high school forced her to shift her energy towards playing guitar and writing songs. She blossomed to the point of winning a regional songwriting contest and signing an indie record label deal by the time she had finished her college studies.

Fate steered both to Nashville, where they soon crossed paths and began working together. Their synchronicity won John Rich's attention and assistance in connecting with their label, Warner Bros. Records. He also produced their self-titled debut, a bristling mix of Brown's fiddle, Leverett's high-energy guitar, perfectly executed harmonies and razor-sharp hooks. One or both JaneDear girls shares writing credit on each of its 11 tracks. The flirty, saucy and catchy first singles, "Wildflower" (written by Brown, Vicky McGehee and Jeremy Stover) and "Shotgun Girl" (Leverett and Deric Ruttan) typify the tear-it-up, party-down feel that helped earn them a berth on Jason Aldean's "My Kinda Party Tour."



SUSIE BROWN and DANELLE LEVERETT

SONG YOU'D LOVE TO COVER BROWN: "Hit Me with Your Best Shot" by Pat Benatar or "Kiss Me" by Sixpence None the Richer." **SONG YOU WISH YOU'D WRITTEN** LEVERETT: "I Still Have Faith in You" is one of many songs written by Tom Douglas that I love." **FAVORITE MODE OF TRANSPORTATION** BOTH: "Tour bus." **FAVORITE FOOD ON THE ROAD** BROWN: "I love to make fruit smoothies and eat BBQ potato chips and beans." LEVERETT: "Popcorn and green tea." **SOMETHING WE'D NEVER GUESS ABOUT YOU** BROWN: "I am a great aunt. I was homecoming queen in my senior year of high school. And my first kiss was a bet when I was 16 and I won 20 bucks." LEVERETT: "I do not have a TV, microwave, dishwasher or washer/dryer. My dog Dixie is my best friend. And I won MVP on my high-school track team competing in hurdles and pole vaulting."

TheJaneDearGirls.com

Debut Spotlight compiled by BOB DOERSCHUK

FEB. 1

Casey Abrams / *Oh You Kid* / Wampus
 The Bridge / *National Bohemian* /
 Woodberry/Thirty Tigers
 Hot Club of Cowtown / *What Makes
 Bob Holler* / Proper American
 Con Hunley / *Lost and Found* / IMMI
 the JaneDear girls / *the JaneDear
 girls* / Warner Bros./Reprise
 Joe Mullins & The Radio Ramblers /
Hymns from the Hills / Rebel
 James McMurtry / *Live in Aught Three
 and Childish Things* / Lightning Rod
 Nathan Moore / *Dear Puppeteer* /
 The Royal Potato Family
 Gurf Morlix / *Blaze Foley's 113th Wet
 Dream* / Rootball

FEB. 8

George Jones / *The Hits* (2-CD, Wal-
 Mart exclusive) / Bandit/Vanguard
 Mick Reed / *Goodnight Texas* /
 ClawTown
 Thompson Square / *Thompson
 Square* / Stoney Creek
 various artists / *The Music Inside: A
 Collaboration Dedicated to Waylon
 Jennings* / Scatter/Big Machine/The
 Valory Music Co.
 Steve Wariner / *Guitar Laboratory* /
 SelecTone

FEB. 15

Jeff Bates / *One Day Closer* (CD or
 DVD) / Black River Entertainment
 Jackie Bristow / *Freedom* / Aotearoa
 Hayes Carll / *KMAG YOYO* (vinyl) /
 Lost Highway
 Sarah Darling / *Angels & Devils* /
 Black River Entertainment
 Drive-By Truckers / *Go-Go Boots* /
 ATO
 Drive-By Truckers / *Southern Rock
 Opera* (vinyl) / Lost Highway
 Due West / *Forget the Miles* / Black
 River Entertainment
 Susan Gibson / *Wide Open Spaces* /
 ForTheRecords
 Cousin Harly / *It's a Sin* / Little Pig
 Paul Pigat / *Boxcar Campfire* /
 Little Pig
 Jessica Ridley / *Fit to Be Tied* / EMG/
 Universal
 Charlie Sizemore / *Heartache Looking
 for a Home* / Rounder
 Eddie Spaghetti / *Sundowner* /
 Bloodshot

FEB. 22

Johnny Cash / *From Memphis to
 Hollywood* / Columbia/Legacy
 Mike Scott / *Take Me Lord and
 Use Me* / Rural Rhythm

MARCH 1

Luke Bryan / *Spring Break 3...
 It's a Shore Thing* / Capitol Records
 Nashville
 Aaron Lewis / *Town Line* /
 Stroudavarious
 Buddy Miller / *The Majestic Silver
 Strings* (CD/DVD) / New West
 Wildwood Valley Boys / *Lost
 Highways and Treasured Memories* /
 Old Homestead
 Lucinda Williams / *Blessed* / Lost
 Highway

MARCH 8

Sara Evans / *Stronger* / RCA Nashville
 Sierra Hull / *Daybreak* / Rounder
 Ian Moore & the Lossy Coils /
El Sonido Nuevo / Spark & Shine
 Toby Keith / *10* (DVD) / Show
 Dog-Universal Music
 Kenny Rogers / *The Love of God* /
 Cracker Barrel Music

MARCH 15

Caitlin Rose / *Own Side Now* /
 Theory 8
 Steve Martin and The Steep Canyon
 Rangers / *Rare Bird Alert* / Rounder

MARCH 22

Maggie Bjorklund / *Coming Home* /
 Bloodshot
 Grasstowne / *Kickin' Up Dust* / Rural
 Rhythm
 Josh Kelley / *Georgia Clay* / MCA
 Nashville
 Shannon McNally / *Western Ballad* /
 Sacred Sumac
 The Roys / *Lonesome Whistle* / Rural
 Rhythm

MARCH 29

The Band of Heathens / *Top Hat
 Crown & the Clapmaster's Son* / BOH
 Rory Block / *Shake 'em on Down* /
 Stony Plain
 The Harters / *TBD* / BPG: Bigger
 Picture Group
 Ivan Julian / *The Naked Flame* /
 00:02:59
 Amy Space / *Land Like a Bird* / Thirty
 Tigers

APRIL 5

Craig Campbell / *Craig Campbell* /
 BPG: Bigger Picture Group
 Andy Friedman / *Laserbeams &
 Dreams* / City Salvage
 Anna Wilson / *Countryopolitan Duets* /
 Music World Music/Transfer

APRIL 12

Alison Krauss and Union Station /
Paper Airplane / Rounder
 Jason Isbell and The 400 Unit /
Here We Rest / Lightning Rod

APRIL 19

Steve Dawson / *Nightsnade* / Black
 Hen Music
 Brad Paisley / *This Is Country Music* /
 Arista Nashville
 Ralph Stanley / *A Mother's Prayer* /
 Rebel

APRIL 26

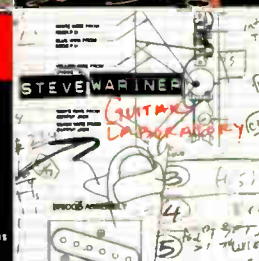
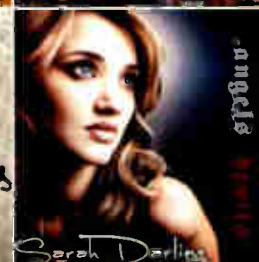
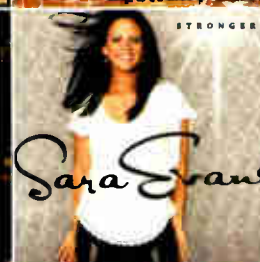
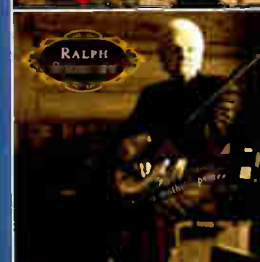
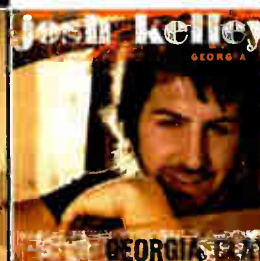
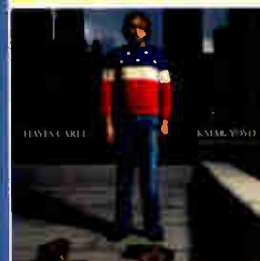
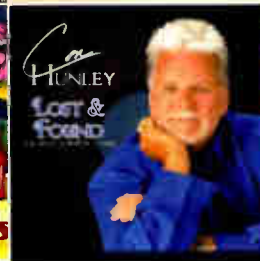
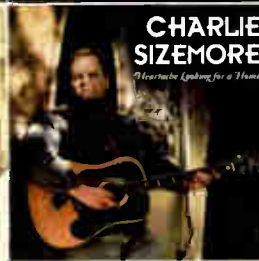
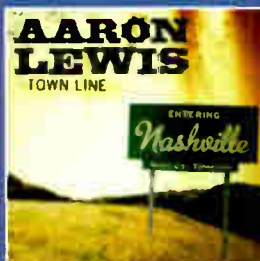
Steve Earle / *I'll Never Get Out of this
 World Alive* / New West
 Grayson Capps / *The Lost Cause*
Minstrels / Royal Potato Family

MAY 3

Colt Ford / *Close Friends and Bullets* /
 Average Joe's Entertainment
 Levon Helm / *Ramble at the Ryman*
 (CD or DVD) / Vanguard/Dirt Farmer
 Music

JUNE 21

Corey Smith / *The Broken Record* /
 Average Joe's Entertainment



New CD Releases compiled by ATHENA PATTERSON

PANCREATIC CANCER ACTION NETWORK INVITES NASHVILLE TO HELP FIND A CURE

by BOB DOERSCHUK

The music community in Nashville is known for its generosity. Country artists, like residents of the city in general, routinely devote their time and talent to causes that serve people in need. CMA is no exception to that rule, having donated \$2.9 million in 2010 to its ongoing Keep the Music Playing program to further music education in public schools and to The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee for flood relief, as well as supporting the DRIVE4COPD effort to combat Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease.

However, when music industry veteran Merlin Littlefield was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2008, he and his wife Eileen found that little had been achieved in finding ways to combat this particularly fast-acting killer.

The first sign that something was amiss was when Merlin began experiencing rapid weight loss. They consulted with an assortment of doctors, from an ear, nose and throat specialist to a chiropractor, before getting a CAT scan done.

"And there it was," recalled Eileen, referring to a mass of cancer cells on her husband's pancreas. "It was like someone hitting me over the head with a bat. I thought, 'This can't be happening because nothing gets Merlin Littlefield. He's bigger than life.'"

Acting on a recommendation from former CMA Executive Director Ed Benson, they contacted the Sarah Cannon Research Institute in Nashville and began treatment with Dr. Johanna Bendell, Director of GI Oncology Research. Because research into treatment hadn't advanced nearly as far as in other types of cancer, their only option was to become part of a clinical trial. Tragically, their efforts proved unsuccessful, as Littlefield, 65, passed away on Sept. 9, 2008.

Littlefield's death struck the many who knew him hard. During his 19 years at ASCAP, he had risen to the rank of Associate Director and brought numerous artists onto the organization's roster, including Lyle Lovett, Reba and George Strait. He made a difference in many people's lives, professionally and personally. His loss, though, was transformative for Eileen, who emerged from the experience with a new goal and a determination to achieve it.

"I'm going to steal a line from Lisa Niemi Swayze," she said, referring to the wife of actor Patrick Swayze, who succumbed to the same disease almost exactly a year after Littlefield. "She said, 'He's gone, but the fight is not over.' That's how I feel."

Eileen fights that battle in step with the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network, whose efforts she has actively joined. The disease has taken its



toll in Nashville, including Hank Cochran, Buddy Killen and members of the families of Terri Clark, Crystal Gayle, Loretta Lynn, Craig Morgan and Brad Paisley. Before succumbing in January, another beloved member of the community, Country Music Hall of Fame member Charlie Louvin, had battled the disease since July 2010 even while recording and releasing an emotional album of war songs, *The Battle Rages On*.

Yet there is much to be accomplished through the Network's campaigns to spread awareness and rally support for finding a cure. "There currently are no early detection methods and no truly effective treatments," said Pamela Acosta Marquardt, Pancreatic Cancer Action Network Founder and Director of Donor and Corporate Relations. "However, momentum is building in the scientific community. We are hopeful progress

will be made soon to extend the lives of patients."

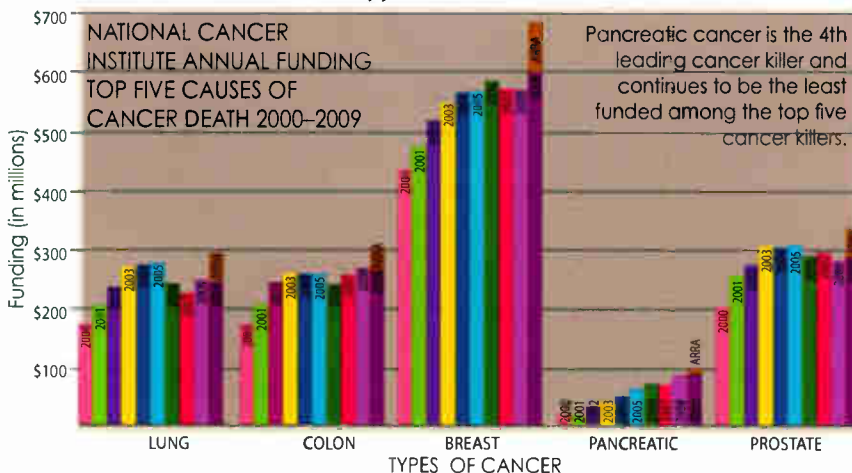
According to figures from the American Cancer Society, 94 percent of all pancreatic cancer patients die within five years of their diagnosis, most of those within three to six months. It is in fact the only one among the five most lethal cancers with a survival rate in single digits, a figure that has remained largely unchanged for the past 40 years. It is also by far the least funded among these five, lagging significantly behind breast, colon, lung and prostate cancers and accounting for just 2 percent of the National Cancer Institute's 2009 budget (\$89 million, as compared for example to almost \$600 million for breast cancer, according to NCI figures).

Volunteers from around the country drive most of the Network's efforts. The organization has two offices with paid staff members, in Manhattan Beach, Calif., and Washington, D.C. But hundreds of volunteers make up more than 70 affiliates throughout the United States. Their activities range from urging members of Congress to boost NCI research funding by passing The Pancreatic Cancer Research and Education Act to organizing local fundraising events and raising the visibility of the disease during National Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month in November.

The Network is building its volunteer presence in Nashville, and given the impact of pancreatic cancer as well as the volunteer spirit that defines the Music City community, Acosta Marquardt is confident that this local affiliate will soon see significant growth. "Eileen is a great example of what can happen here," she said. "She volunteers her time but works with us as if it were a full-time job. That's the kind of passion that drives us."

"I don't want other people to go through the horrendous pain that the patient goes through," Littlefield insisted. "I watched it every day with Merlin. I can't just let go and say, 'Well, he died of pancreatic cancer and I hope they find a cure someday.' We have to make people aware."

pancan.org





CMA Establishes SONGWRITER Category for Country Music Hall of Fame

by DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

A great song is the cornerstone of every memorable Country recording and performance, so it's only natural that CMA's Awards and Recognition Committee resolved in 2009 to honor the contributions of those who compose by creating a new Songwriter category for admission into CMA's Country Music Hall of Fame.

"This was a part of an overall restructuring of the Hall of Fame induction categories," said Lon Helton, Publisher/CEO, *Country Aircheck*, who chaired the Committee. "Basically, it started because we thought there was a better way to do what we were doing. So in an effort to make sure we recognized all facets of this business by deserving people who should be in the Hall of Fame, we created these other categories. First there was a Non-Performer category, and then we had one for Recording and/or Touring Musician and now we've added Songwriter to that list."

There are already numerous singer/songwriters in the Hall of Fame, including Vince Gill, Tom T. Hall, Kris Kristofferson, Dolly Parton, Mel Tillis and many others, going all the way back to Jimmie Rodgers. There are non-performing songwriters in the Hall too, though their selections often involved being nominated in the now defunct Open Category, as Harlan Howard was in 1997, or under the umbrella of Career Achieved National Prominence Prior to 1950, where Cindy Walker's name was put forth also in 1997.

"It's hard to compete against an artist if you are in the same category as an artist," Helton explained. "In our experience with musicians and non-performers, we realized that we should really honor the songwriters with their own category. There are some songwriters in the Hall of Fame who have been elected before, like Harlan Howard, but very few. This way, we can ensure that songwriters will be recognized."

"As a CMA Board member and activist for the rights of songwriters, I believe the move by CMA to include a Songwriter category for the Hall of Fame nominations is a wonderful addition to the great pioneers and leaders of our industry already included," said Steve Bogard, President, Nashville Songwriters Association International (NSAI). "Country Music fans are the greatest and most loyal in the world, and it's our responsibility to let them know about the great Country songwriters behind the scenes who have written so many of their favorite Country standards. Non-performing songwriters are a unique and precious asset to Country Music, both past and present, and deserve to be honored alongside their peers."

"Obviously, I am thrilled," said Country Music Hall of Fame member Bill Anderson. "Only by adding this category can some of the great musical creators of all time be properly honored."

"We all know that songwriters have always been behind the scenes, driving every kind of popular music from day one, whether it's Broadway music, pop and all that kind of stuff," said CMA Awards-winning songwriter Craig Wiseman. "Once again, Nashville is being great and acknowledging

writers, and that's why Nashville is a songwriter town. The industry honors and embraces the songwriters and this is just another example. I couldn't be more thrilled."

"Country Music songwriters are the architects of the stories and emotional journeys that paint our lives," said Rusty Gaston, Partner/GM, This Music Publishing. "Their timeless works of art have the power to make listeners laugh, cry and fall in love. This is a much anticipated and overdue award for the well-deserving recipients. Great move, CMA!"

Under the new criteria, the Non-Performer; Recording and/or Touring Musician; and Songwriter categories will rotate, with a candidate elected in each one every third year.

Candidates for the Songwriter category will be chosen by the Hall of Fame Nominating Committee assigned to come up with prospective inductees from the Modern Era. Composed of artists, executives, producers and other industry professionals, each serving a three-year term, the Committee submits from 10 to 20 names to the Panel of Electors, whose members cast the final vote on who is to be admitted to the Hall.

"Only by adding this category can some of the great musical creators of all time be properly honored."

— Bill Anderson

"It is important to note that while we make these categories for voting purposes, when you go into the Hall of Fame, you are not inducted under a certain category," Helton added. "You're not inducted as Modern Era or Non-Performer or whatever the category is. You are inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame, period! The categories are for voting purposes so that we can ensure that all the deserving people have a shot."

When the Songwriter category was submitted to the CMA Board of Directors, Helton recalled, it was "unanimously approved. I believe it was even applauded afterwards. There's no question among anybody about the contribution that some songwriters have always made to this format. Some people have chosen to make songwriting a career into itself and for whatever reason didn't become artists. This is a way to make sure that we honor those people. We now know that for sure, once every three years, a songwriter will be elected to the Country Music Hall of Fame."

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 consist of anonymous voters appointed by the CMA Board of Directors.

CMA Close Up

CMAworld.com | My.CMAworld.com



BIG TIME WITH LITTLE BIG TOWN on page **6**

cma events

FEBRUARY

TUESDAY, FEB. 1

Keep the Music Playing All Stars Concert | Schermerhorn Symphony Center | Nashville

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 9

CMA EDU Inaugural Meeting | Belmont University | Nashville | Students only

MONDAY, FEB. 14 – WEDNESDAY, FEB. 16

CMA Board of Directors Meetings | Los Angeles | Invitation only

TUESDAY, FEB. 15

CMA Songwriters Series | Bob DiPiero, Brett James, Victoria Shaw, Gretchen Wilson and Chris Young | Club Nokia | Los Angeles | 8 PM PST | Tickets: ClubNokia.com

MARCH

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2 – FRIDAY, MARCH 4

CRS-42 | Nashville Convention Center | Tickets: CRB.org | CMA is a proud sponsor.

THURSDAY, MARCH 3

CMA / CRB New Media Research Study Panel | CRS-42 | 11 AM | CRS registrants only

THURSDAY, MARCH 24

CMA Songwriters Series | Bob DiPiero, Rivers Rutherford, Ashton Shepherd and Chris Wallin | Joe's Pub | New York City | 6:30 and 9 PM ET | Tickets: JoesPub.com

TUESDAY, MARCH 29 – SATURDAY, APRIL 2

Tin Pan South | Nashville | Tickets: TinPanSouth.com | CMA is a proud sponsor.

MAY

TUESDAY, MAY 17

CMA receives Leadership Music Dale Franklin Award | Renaissance Hotel Nashville | Invitation only

JUNE

THURSDAY, JUNE 9 – SUNDAY, JUNE 12

CMA Music Festival | Downtown Nashville | Tickets: 1-800-CMA-FEST, CMAfest.com, Ticketmaster.com, 1-800-745-3000

