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LOVE AND THEFT

on the cover

(L-R): Eric Gunderson,
Stephen Barker Liles

Love and Theft may be celebrating the release of their second studio album, but to the ACM-nominated country duo, the self-titled release might as well be their first.

And in a way, it is. Love and Theft is Stephen Barker Liles and Eric Gunderson's first album since joining RCA Nashville, the home to many of their musical inspirations. "We feel like people will be hearing us for the first time," says Eric. Stephen agrees and credits the label's storied history with helping to reenergize the band. "The history of RCA Records is incredible. Just knowing that we are on the same label as some of our biggest influences, like Elvis Presley, is an awesome feeling."

That excitement is palpable throughout the 11 songs that comprise the album, a fluid mix of country melodies and sing-along choruses, all driven by Eric's earthy voice and Stephen's high-altitude tenor. The guys share lead vocals, harmonize like a church choir and bolster their songs with their own guitar playing. "We sound like brothers when we sing," says Eric. "Stephen and I have always been on the same page as far as the vision for the band, and we feel like we have made the record we've always wanted to make."

Produced by Josh Leo (Alabama, Nitty Gritty Dirty Band), *Love and Theft* is a nod to the duo's varied influences. The rollicking first single "Angel Eyes"—which scored the twosome their first CMT Music Awards nomination for Duo Video of the Year—brings to mind Elvis Presley's "(You're the) Devil in Disguise." The pair is equally enthusiastic about "Runnin' Out of Air," a tune they describe as "Maroon 5 meets the Eagles."

Stephen and Eric's experiences growing up in the Bible Belt help inform the new album, especially on the wild-child single "Angel Eyes," which Eric co-wrote with Eric Paslay and Jeff Coplan. "Preacher's kids seem to have the most rebellious side and get in trouble more," Eric admits with a laugh. "That was kind of the inspiration for that. We wrote it from a personal place."

With a renewed emphasis on organic sounds, their second album has brought Love and Theft closer to what it set out to be: a band that writes, records and performs honest, soulful country music.

"This record represents the way we sound live," says Stephen, before—like the musical brothers they are—Eric completes the thought. "It shows a more mature, evolved Love and Theft but the core is still the same," he says. "Our sound will always be driven by harmonies."

ARTIST NAME: Love and Theft

LABEL: RCA Nashville

CURRENT ALBUM: *Love and Theft*

CURRENT SINGLE: "Runnin' Out of Air"

CURRENT VIDEO: "Runnin' Out of Air"

CURRENT PRODUCER: Josh Leo (Alabama, Nitty Gritty Dirty Band)

HOMETOWN: Eric: Matthews, N.C.; Stephen: Palm Harbor, Fla.

MANAGEMENT: Vector Management

BOOKING: CAA

RECENT HITS: Gold-Certified, No. 1 hit "Angel Eyes," and current single, "Runnin' Out of Air."

AWARDS: The duo has been ACM, ACA, CMA and CMT-nominated

RIAA CERTS TO DATE: Gold-Certified, No. 1 hit "Angel Eyes"

SPECIAL TV/FILM APPEARANCES: *CBS Morning Show*

BIRTHDAYS: Stephen: January 24th; Eric: December 21st

INTERESTING FACTS:

Eric: I have a strange fear of turtles and one of my thumbs is a lot shorter than the other

Stephen: I love all forms of art

OUTSIDE INTERESTS:

Eric: Hunting, fishing, running, and road biking.

Stephen: Hunting, fishing, being on or near the water. I love watching football and pretty much all sports. Having birthday parties and traveling.

MUSICAL INFLUENCES:

Eric: The Eagles, Jackson Brown, Beatles, Alabama

Stephen: Johnny Cash, Elvis, The Eagles, Nirvana, George Strait

FAVORITE RECORD(S):

Eric: *Hotel California*

Stephen: Tyler Farr - "Redneck Crazy," Randy Houser -

"Runnin' Out of Moonlight," Family Force 5 - "Wobble,"

Thomas Rhett - "Front Porch Junkies," Lee Brice - "I Drive Your

Truck," Guy Clark - "The Guitar," Florida Georgia Line - "Tell

Me How You Like It"

E
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 HILLAR
 JIMMY RITL
 LUCIE SILVAS
 IDE TINA PAROL
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 DASHER HILLARY LINDSEY **ANGELO BEN STENNIS BRANDON HOOD BUSBEE** JIM LAUDERDALE JIM MCCORMICK
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 TOMMY LEE JAMES **EMERSON HART GORDIE SAMPSON HAILEY STEELE HANNAH DASHER BRANDON**
 CAITLYN SMITH **HILLARY LINDSEY JAMIE MOORE JARON BOYER JEFF HYDE** CHRIS WALLIN CH
 OWN **JEFF STEVENS JIM LAUDERDALE JIM MCCORMICK JIMMY RITCHEY GORDIE SAM**
 IDERDALE **JOHN PAUL WHITE JONATHAN SINGLETON JORDYN MALLORY JEFF ST**
 ORMICK **KEVIN GRIFFIN KYLIE SACKLEY LUCIE SILVAS LUKE DICK** JONATHAN
 HOOD **MATHIAS WOLLO RODNEY CROWELL SHELLEY SKIDMORE CHRIS**
STEELE TEBEY OTTOH TERRY MCBRIDE TINA PAROL TOMMY LEE
 ANGELO **TOMMY LEE JAMES TONY LANE WILL HOGE** CHRIS LI
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PHOTO: S WADE HUNT

Charlie Cook, in his weekly column on musicrow.com, recently opined, "Country radio would be better served by making February the first month of the year," highlighting the large amount of activity that occurs in the second month of the year in our industry. There is no better example to argue this point than Country Radio Seminar. As this conference brings the Country music industry and Country radio together to feast on new and seasoned talent, *MusicRow's* CountryBreakout Awards arrive for its 11th year to celebrate those that have garnered the highest spins on the *MusicRow* Chart.

While the *MusicRow* Chart gives secondary radio a voice, this issue also shows why it comes first in many artists' marketing strategies, often leading to tremendously successful outcomes. After all, many of us on the Row first fell in love with country radio while growing up in secondary markets.

With Nashville's national spotlight shining brighter than ever, this issue features an exclusive interview with Cumulus CEO Lew Dickey revealing details behind the newly launched Nash brand which targets the country lifestyle and listening audience. While the launch includes New York's first country station in 17 years, this is only the beginning for the Nash brand in its multimedia entertainment platform. *MusicRow* will be following its growth every step of the way.

Also in this issue, Nashville industry exec Bryan Frasher shares how a background in radio proves invaluable as a manager, particularly when helping select singles or nurturing an artist's relationship with radio. Elsewhere are interviews with two successful songwriters who have recently reached chart-topping status, Jaren Johnston and Jim McCormick. Johnston, who is also lead singer of The Cadillac Black, scored his first No. 1 with Keith Urban's "You Gonna Fly," and McCormick reached his first top position with Brantley Gilbert's "You Don't Know Her Like I Do."

As CRS brings the industry together once again, it gives us a great opportunity to learn from each other, celebrate our passion for music and salute our important role of sharing that music with the world.



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Country For Life

by Jessica Nicholson

Cumulus unveils its multimedia entertainment platform

NASH
FM 94.7

Changing Country Perceptions

While listenership for previous country radio stations in New York (WHN in the 1960s and 1970s, WKHK and WYNY) has been strong, a major obstacle for sustaining a country station in the tri-state area has historically been an inability to attract attention from media buyers and advertisers. This has been in part due to an outdated image that media buyers have held of the country-listening audience—an image that portrays listeners as less educated and earning less income. Dickey says, “There are over 80 million country music fans in the United States and only a fraction of them would fit the stereotypical profile that advertisers may think about.”

Statistics recently released from the Country Music Association confirm Dickey’s position. According to survey results from 2011, 42 percent of American adults—equal to approximately

It is a mainstream brand that is targeting the *country lifestyle*. It’s *fun, cool, hip and sexy*. That’s the way we want people to think about it.

The airwaves of New York City were filled with the strains of Randy Houser’s “How Country Feels” on Jan. 21 as the tri-state area (which includes New York, New Jersey and Connecticut) welcomed its first country station in 17 years. Cumulus Media, the second-largest radio operator in the United States, flipped the switch on 94.7 (WNSH), introducing Nash FM. Following Houser’s tune were a string of appropriate songs, including Alan Jackson’s “Gone Country” (with the line “I’m a country girl myself, grew up on Long Island”). The last country music signal to reach New York City was WYNY, which aired popular country music until 1996, before switching to WKTU. The WYNY call letters were later picked up by a suburban station that played country music until 2002.

For days prior to Nash FM’s introduction to the airwaves, 94.7 borrowed the familiar New York City alternative rock call letters RXP, airing a mix of rock, pop, alt-rock, smooth jazz and other musical genres. “It’s all part of the fun to keep people guessing,” says Cumulus CEO Lew Dickey. “By grabbing the RXP call letters, which we were amazed were available because they have a lot of equity in them, that was a nice fake right when everybody thought they had it all figured out.”

As for RXP, Dickey says, “Who’s to say we won’t ultimately use the RXP call letters for something else in New York? Good news is, we’ve got them and we’ll see if they ever come back to life in New York or not.”

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96 million people—are country music fans. Forty percent of country radio listeners, or nearly 38.5 million, reside in the top 25 Designated Market Areas (which includes New York City). The average household income for country listeners is \$74,214. Country music listeners hold 40 percent of all professional/managerial jobs.

Add to this the fact that country music has steadily boasted sellout country concerts in the New York City market—without the benefit of radio airplay. Jason Aldean sold out Madison Square Garden in minutes in January 2013, as Taylor Swift did in 2011. Kenny Chesney sold out the same venue in 2006. Other acts to perform there in recent years include Zac Brown Band, Tim McGraw and Carrie Underwood, so it would seem the timing is

right for a radio station to return to the Big Apple. Sony Music Nashville Chairman & CEO Gary Overton agrees. “We at Sony Music, along with everyone in the Country music business, are very excited and supportive of Cumulus launching a full-time Country radio station in New York City. Having Cumulus’ Nash FM in New York City will help drive record sales and increased media attention for our artists.”

“We at Sony Music, along with everyone in the Country music business, are **very excited** and supportive of Cumulus launching a **full-time Country radio** station in New York City”

— Gary Overton, Sony Music Nashville

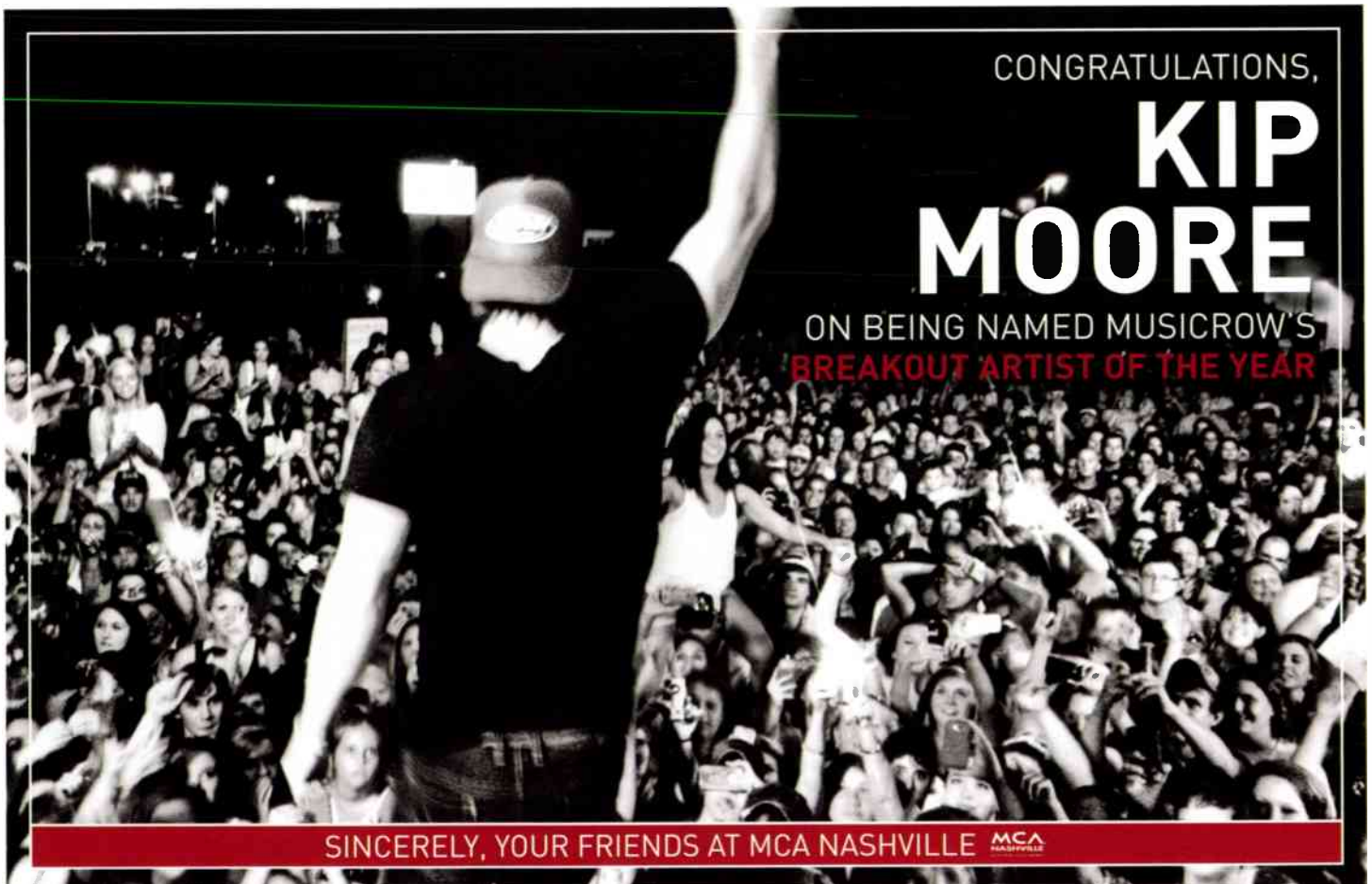
According to Dickey, the venture should be mutually beneficial for advertisers and media buyers. “I’m getting terrific feedback from Wall Street and Madison Avenue,” says Dickey. “Just in conversations with our marketing manager in New York, the advertising community has responded very positively. They have

embraced this and we feel it will be a tremendous commercial success for our company and for country music. This should help Nashville sell a lot of music in the tri-state area as well as put country music and the country lifestyle on a much higher profile with Madison Avenue as a result. I think it will shape the format in a more deserving way and will change the perception and make the format more accessible to more people.”

For Dickey and the team at Cumulus, the idea of a country station in the Big Apple is something they have been

watching closely for years.

“This is something we’ve had in the works for quite some time,” says Dickey. “Our research showed there was a large unserved segment of the population [in New York City] that were big fans of country music and the country lifestyle and didn’t have a radio station. We knew for some time this has been building. There is demand for product and a station. It’s an interesting cat and mouse



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game because you have to bide your time to wait for the appropriate opportunity to find a signal because there are very few of them available in New York City, and you hope somebody else doesn't take your idea in the meantime." The stations that flipped formats prior to the 94.7 station did not include country—one flipped to all news and two to sports. "It just sort of intensified the need for a good country radio station to be launched for the people of New York," says Dickey.

Plans are underway for bringing on-air talent to Nash FM. "Now that it's out there, we've had unbelievable reaction to this opportunity. We have people coming from east coast to west coast and everywhere in between that want to be part of this now. We hope to have the best talent in the country for our radio station in New York."

"Nash FM Is Its Coming Out Party"

94.7 FM is a flagship station for the rebranding of Cumulus' 83 country music stations (including seven Nashville stations). It is also the genesis of the company's burgeoning multimedia entertainment Nash brand, consisting of radio, print, Internet and ultimately television, all centered on the country music-centric lifestyle. "What people will come to realize is that this is a national platform that we are launching with the station," says Dickey. "Nash FM is its coming out party and it will be built out over the next few years. It should be a very large, transcended brand that provides a terrific opportunity for advertisers to target

Cumulus CEO Lew Dickey



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this lucrative consumer segment that is the country audience and country music fans. It is a mainstream brand that is targeting the country lifestyle. It's fun, cool, hip and sexy. That's the way we want people to think about it."

Beyond Nash FM, immediate plans for Cumulus' Nash brand will include the high-quality glossy *Nash Magazine*. The monthly publication's first issue is slated for Sept. 1. The publisher, Modern Luxury, currently operates 55 titles across the country, including city magazines for Manhattan, Dallas, San Francisco and Houston, along with additional titles including *Brides Dallas*, *Front Desk Chicago*, *Brides Houston*, and *Men's Book Atlanta*. In all, the publications target over 6 million affluent readers. "We understand how to put together a high-quality publication and this will really do the artists and the Nashville community proud," says Dickey. Compared to other consumer-focused, country music and lifestyle magazines, he says *Nash Magazine* will stand out. "Think magazines such as *InStyle*. It will be a little different genre."

"The essence of the brand really captures the country lifestyle. Our tagline for NASH is 'Country For Life.' And there's a lot to be read into that. It's attitudinal and it transcends the stereotypes of blue jeans and cowboy boots. It's really a brand that speaks to a lifestyle." Dickey would not comment on plans to branch into television, though several trademarks have been filed with the United States Patent and Trademark Office--"Nash Network," "Nash Magazine," "NASHTV," "NashFM," "Nash Awards," "Nash On-Line," and "Nash Channel"—all with the same tagline, "Country For Life." The applicant for each is the Consolidated IP Company LLC, which is located at the same Atlanta address as Cumulus Media's offices.

"It's a win-win for our company and Nashville, for all things country and the country music community because of the exposure it is going to get through this platform," says Dickey. "It took the strength of the platform that Cumulus has through the acquisition of Citadel, along with our existing assets, to put us into a position to do this. This is a number one strategic position within our company and we are very focused. This is something that will be exciting to watch and is an exciting time for country."

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JANA KRAMER
WRITER: CATT GRAVITT

"CRUISE"

FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE
WRITER: JESSE RICE

"FOR YOU"

KEITH URBAN
WRITER: MONTY POWELL

"DANCIN' AWAY WITH MY HEART"

LADY ANTEBELLUM
WRITER: HILLARY SCOTT

"IF I DIDN'T HAVE YOU"

THOMPSON SQUARE
WRITER: KEIFER THOMPSON

"WHISKEY"

JANA KRAMER ★ WRITER: CATT GRAVITT

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Why Secondary Radio Comes FIRST

by Jessica Nicholson



Luke Bryan's 2012 "Farm Tour" attracted 100,000 fans during its eight-city run in October, more than doubling the attendance of prior year's run. Proceeds from the tour go to scholarships for students from each of the farming communities.

The United States has approximately 1700 radio stations that program country music. Add to this that in many areas of the country, a larger percentage of country music fans are in radio markets that are outside the Top 100 markets, according to radio promoter Jerry Duncan, president of Jerry Duncan Promotions. That is a positive indication as to why artists, whether signed to independent or major labels, are beginning to court secondary radio and secondary markets more aggressively.

"Especially after 2006, you started seeing a lot of stations consolidate and playlists became more and more centralized and conservative," says Rick Kelly, VP of Marco Promotions, a radio promotions company that focuses on secondary radio. "It became more and more difficult for new music to break through," says Kelly. Independent artists began catering smaller markets, "where there is the appearance of greater programming autonomy."

Sometimes targeting secondary radio as a new artist can have a tremendously successful outcome, as in the case of Florida Georgia Line's recent hit single, "Cruise." As independent artists, the duo (comprised of Brian Kelley and Tyler Hubbard) already had an infectious single thanks to proven record producer Joey Moi (who previously worked with Nickelback and Daughtry) and the support of Craig Wiseman's publishing and management outfits Big Loud Mountain and Big Loud Shirt. The band possesses a charming onstage charisma and had a great slot on 2012's *Country Throwdown Tour*, something their radio promotions teams took advantage of. In addition to the daily work of promoting "Cruise"

to secondary radio, Kelly's and Duncan's teams scheduled a radio tour to coincide with the dates of the *Country Throwdown Tour*.

"Last year's *Country Throwdown Tour* was a great opportunity for the band to meet executives in smaller markets, solidifying their commitment to secondary radio and to promote their single 'Cruise,'" says Kelly. "We could just zip them into radio stations that were along their route. Whether they were in Indiana or Illinois, we could hit a bunch of stations that were *MusicRow* stations, non-reporting stations or Indicator stations that were along the way." As a result of focusing on secondary markets early on in the promotion of the single, "a lot of stations felt like they were really in on the ground floor," says Kelly.

Going heavy on artist visits to radio certainly endeared the duo to secondary stations around the country, further opening the door to airplay, but Duncan cautions it is not a strategy that works for every independent artist. "It's the personal one-on-one thing. Some artists, like Florida Georgia Line, are charming. There are others who are not outgoing and are better onstage than they are shaking hands. It needs to be someone who has the personality to go along with it."

The hard work paid off handsomely for the duo, with "Cruise" sailing up the charts and garnering the attention of several labels. The duo ultimately signed with Republic Nashville. "We sold a lot of records before we got airplay in major markets and I'm sure they took notice," says Duncan. "We sold 100,000 records before they even started taking it to major market radio. Plus, stations were saying, 'This is one of the hottest records we've got,' there was just buzz out there. That sort of thing started building a fire."

It is a great model to get legitimate artists into the pipeline...it may be a harbinger of real change.

Once signed with Republic Nashville, the label's promotion team began pursuing top market radio as well, culminating with "Cruise" becoming a No. 1 hit. "The Florida Georgia Line thing was something of a perfect storm, a truly sort of ground-shaking record," says Kelly.

It is not only newcomers who are targeting smaller markets. Luke Bryan, who gets heavy airplay in major and secondary markets, has not forgotten the fans in rural areas. Bryan launched his annual *Farm Tour* in 2009, taking his action-packed show primarily to farm communities outside of the top-tier touring markets. The shows have been such a success that he continued the *Farm Tour* in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

When artists perform in smaller markets, Kelly says the benefits can be plentiful. "I think for the artist, it gets far enough out to where they don't burn a market. They can still come back and play the big show. More people get the opportunity to see them and more radio gets the opportunity to be involved with a major show and have a major act come close to their area." In contrast, in many larger markets, each city already has two or three monitored

radio stations. "The ability for small and medium market radio to get truly involved in those areas sometimes can become limited. That's the reality of it," says Kelly.

Brantley Gilbert's 2012 *Hell on Wheels* tour included several non-major markets including Boise, Idaho; Missoula, Mont.; and Lafayette, Ind. Justin Moore will kick off his *Outlaw Like Me* tour in 2013, focusing on markets including Pikeville, Ky., Brookings, S.D. and Kearney, Neb. "If you look at some of the places he's gone, it's places that are not in the Top 100 markets. He has gone in and done a touring model of bringing a big event to a smaller place," says Kelly. "Those smaller markets, they've all got little civic centers and they've all got theaters and some place where they can sell out a 2,000, 3,000, 4,000-seater, which is a huge win for everybody involved.

"I think that for too long there was a tendency to ignore smaller markets just because labels thought it was cheaper to go to the top 90 stations or top 100 markets and let everybody else follow along and ignore the potential of that huge swath of the population that is living in the smaller towns and listening to the radio stations in those smaller towns."

Of course there are viable artists who have long and healthy careers without heavily courting top markets. "There are two acts that we worked with last year on independent labels that had tremendous sales," says Duncan. "Colt Ford on Average Joes and Alison Krauss on Rounder, who has been doing it for years. At one point last year, two of the top three albums on the album sales chart were Colt Ford and Alison Krauss—independent artists that we were promoting to secondary radio."

Kelly hopes that the model of success attained by Florida Georgia Line, an act that already had considerable radio success



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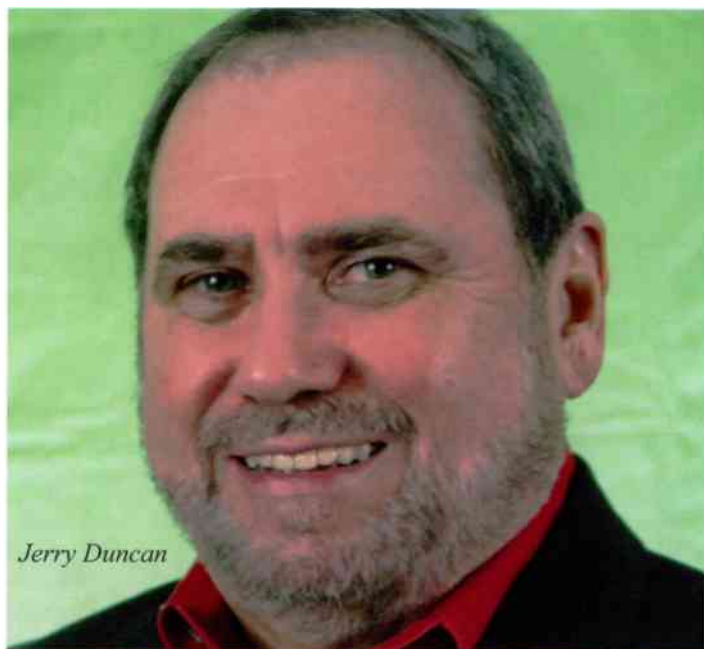
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and a strong fan base prior to being signed by a label, is a path more labels latch onto. "I feel like it's a great model to get legitimate artists into the pipeline. If you have someone who can create a following and who has really proven that they are a working act and are selling records, then it's not something that a label has to invest a million dollars in before they see if the artist has any real appeal," he says, though he states that it could be difficult to duplicate the kind of success model found in FGL. "Has anybody started to blow up to that level? Not yet, but I have seen a lot of interest in that model. It's a matter of finding artists who bring as much into a project as those guys did. I think a lot of people will look to this model, but I think it is too early to see if any of those plans have come to fruition. But it may be a harbinger of real change. I think that is definitely starting to happen from everything I see--labels are making decisions based on what kind of earning potential a band brings to the table, rather than someone making a great demo and shopping it around."

Both promoters agree that secondary radio is a key avenue for reaching all of an artist's fan base. "I think it is great and long overdue that we pay attention to those secondary markets," says Duncan. "The percentage of country music fans is larger in smaller markets than in larger markets, so that makes it the best territory to build a solid fan base."

"The smart artists are really reaching out and want to be involved [with smaller markets]," says Kelly. "When you hear your local on-air personality say, 'Oh we got to hang out with Florida Georgia Line,' or 'We just did an interview with Justin Moore and we're going to play it,' that artist becomes part of the community. It keeps our artists in touch with their fan base, which has traditionally been the beauty of this format."



Jerry Duncan



Rick Kelly

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JACK PRIDE, JERRY DUNCAN, LISA SMOOT, ANN CHRISMAN



Bryan Frasher

Brings Radio Background To Management Role

by Sarah Skates



Photo: Eric Parker

Longtime radio promotion executive Bryan Frasher switched career gears in 2012 when he took on management duties for rising star Casey James. It was a busy year for the 19 Recordings/Columbia Nashville artist and his team. James scored hit singles “Crying On A Suitcase” and “Let’s Don’t Call It A Night,” and released his self-titled debut album in March, which landed at No. 2 on the *Billboard* Country Album Chart.

Frasher has been an integral part of James’ career since he signed with Sony Music Nashville, where Frasher previously worked as a radio promotion executive. In early 2012, Frasher exited the label and launched his own Gunslinger Entertainment with James as the flagship client. By September, Frasher and James joined Coran Capshaw’s powerhouse Red Light Management Company where Frasher continues to represent James and also works as part of Tim McGraw’s management team. “Casey and I worked closely from the moment he was signed to 19/BNA, which is now 19/Columbia,” recalls Frasher. “I had lobbied for him to be on the label. As a manager, I am involved in many more aspects of his career than I was as the head of promotion for the label. We have also become better friends—you have to be very honest as you work through everything to achieve the best results.”

Frasher says his background in radio has proved “invaluable” in his new capacity. “While the world we work in is constantly changing, and there is something new happening every day, radio is still the main driver of the Country Music business,” he assures. “Having a thorough understanding of radio, labels, and how they interact for the maximum effect on an artist’s career is extremely useful knowledge.”

When it comes to selecting singles and setting up radio tours,

Frasher’s time in the promotion world is particularly helpful. “I like to work with [Casey’s current radio promoters] as much as possible. I have a lot of experience in that area so it makes sense that I could take a more active role,” he continues. “I think I can provide some helpful insight [when it comes to picking singles]. Even though some songs hit you and you know they can be big, you never truly know what the listeners will respond to. On the flip side, I feel I can help guide someone away from something that would be too tough a battle, too costly, or difficult for radio to play. Maybe more importantly, I can give someone a realistic understanding of what is happening along *(continued on page 38)*

“Not a day goes by that I don’t interact with someone at radio regarding a show, a song or some other creative idea.”



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Eleven years since its debut, *MusicRow's* CountryBreakout Chart continues to provide a gateway for country music artists to reach the secondary market. The chart is uniquely positioned in the radio marketplace to provide airplay measurement to this vital segment of our country. Our industry appreciates the value of the secondary market as an important vehicle for both new and established acts. For talented independent artists, it offers a unique opportunity to be presented to radio listeners and if successful, gain significant airplay and visibility. The *MusicRow* Chart is also a conduit for engagement between radio personnel, booking agents, label executives, artists and others who build lasting relationships that are crucial in our industry.

Once again this year, we are proud to present *MusicRow's* CountryBreakout Awards to the artists and labels, both established and emerging, for their success at radio during the preceding year. These awards are based on the number of spins reported from January to December 2012 by the members of the *MusicRow*

Chart panel. The award categories are Male Artist of the Year, Female Artist of the Year, Group/Duo of the Year, Breakout Artist of the Year, Label of the Year, Independent Artist of the Year, and Reporter of the Year.

Male, Female, and Group/Duo Artist of the Year honors go to the artists who had the highest total spins from all singles in 2012. Label of the Year is awarded to the imprint, not label group, with the most overall spins. Breakout Artist of the Year is awarded to the new artist whose first single or album was released in the measurement period and picked up the greatest number of overall spins. Independent Artist of the Year is presented to the independent artist with the most total spins, after taking into consideration eligibility factors including label size, distribution model and promotion staff. The CountryBreakout Reporter of the Year award is an editorial decision and is given to a radio panelist who exemplifies the spirit of the chart.

And now the winners...

SPINS

Dierks Bentley
Male Artist of the Year

← 127,652

100,934 →

Miranda Lambert
Female Artist of the Year

Zac Brown Band
Group/Duo of the Year

← 118,356

93,869 →

Kip Moore
Breakout Artist
of the Year

Taylor Made
Independent Artist
of the Year

← 35,409

597,897 →

Capitol Records
Label of the Year

MALE ARTIST OF THE YEAR

DIERKS BENTLEY

by Sarah Skates

Dierks Bentley racked up back-to-back chart-toppers in 2012 with “Home,” “5-1-5-0” and “Tip It On Back.” The string of No. 1 hits tallied 127,652 spins on *MusicRow’s* CountryBreakout chart, earning him Male Artist of the Year honors.

“I’m just over the top about this award, it’s the coolest news I’ve heard in a long time,” he said during a recent phone call from Pennsylvania, where he and Miranda Lambert are on the recently launched *Locked & Reloaded Tour*. “Country radio is what it’s been all about for me from day one—going on radio tour and hitting 90-100 stations in a three or four month period, three stations a day, getting to know folks. I’ve always told my promotion staff, ‘it’s not just about the call letters or the station, it’s about friendship and people.’ I’m lucky to have a lot of friends in country radio and great fans who request songs.”

Capitol SVP, Promotion Steve Hodges pointed out the significance of a string of No. 1s. “Anytime you have three consecutive No. 1s, you realize that Dierks’ music is readily accepted by programmers across the country, small market to large market,” he says. “All three were different-type records, but they all resonated with fans. Dierks has always been about creating the best music, but he also has a great knack for writing songs that work well for radio.”

Hodges also saluted Diane Richey Promotions, which works secondary radio markets for Capitol. “Her team has been the right hand promotion arm for us at secondary, and it is a vital part of everything we do,” he explained. “They’ve done a great job representing our music and are really passionate.”

Bentley wasn’t sure if radio would be receptive to some of his recent singles, particularly “Home.” He said, “I think it’s a little different than other stuff out there on the radio. The guys at Capitol worked really hard to get the song off on the right track. Actually, I gave everyone iPads for the No. 1 before ‘Home’ and they took those iPads out on the road and played the video for the song before they went for adds.”

“‘Home’ is about our country, the ups and downs, good and bad, all our differences, but at the end of the day, it’s about all that we have in common,” he continued. “We’re all Americans, we all call this place home and hopefully this song inspires people. Sometimes you feel like singing ‘Home’ and sometimes you just wanna ‘Tip It On Back’ and set your mind free and let loose. That speaks to the power of a live show, you go to a concert and you can reset the gears and put everything in perspective.”

As he sings in “Tip It On Back,” Bentley brought the “sweet release of a Friday night” to fans across the US, Canada and Australia on last year’s *Country & Cold Cans Tour*—notching the one millionth mile on his faithful tour bus “Goldie” along the way. “Looking out there at the crowd and seeing someone sing your song back to you, that’s the coolest thing and it’s all because of radio,” he summed. “At the end of the day, it comes down to Capitol and Steve Hodges and the promotion staff working so hard, and having great friends at country radio.”

The lead single from his next studio album could arrive this spring.





FEMALE ARTIST OF THE YEAR

MIRANDA LAMBERT

by Jessica Nicholson

While Miranda Lambert's nostalgic ballad "The House That Built Me" took the proud Texan's career to the next level in 2011, the success of succeeding singles "Fastest Girl In Town" and "Over You" solidified her tough-yet-vulnerable image and reign over the *MusicRow* chart in 2012. Lambert's singles last year tallied 100,934 spins, more than any other female on *MusicRow*'s CountryBreakout chart, earning her the *MusicRow* CountryBreakout Award for Female Artist of the Year. Lambert's song "Fastest Girl in Town" topped the chart for the week of Sept. 13, 2012.

"We thank the *MusicRow* panel of stations," says RG Jones, Sony Music Nashville Director Promotion/Strategy & Analysis. "We can't do it without radio. The synergy that goes on with the radio and record folks, we have to have that. We wouldn't have this kind of success without radio."

Lambert is no stranger to earning accolades from *MusicRow*. In 2010, "The House That Built Me" earned a nod for Song of the Year at the *MusicRow* Awards. Five years earlier, she won the New Artist of the Year title from *MusicRow*.

Her latest album, *Four The Record*, became her fourth project to debut at the summit of the country album chart—a feat no other country performer has accomplished. The album, which bowed in late 2011, has been certified Gold by the RIAA for over 500,000 copies shipped. She tested the country industry's boundaries by teaming with fellow singer-songwriters Ashley Monroe and Angaleena Presley to form Pistol Annies, releasing their debut album, *Hell on Heels*.

In 2012, Lambert walked away with her third consecutive CMA trophy for Female Vocalist of the Year, as well as Song of the Year for the ballad she co-wrote with husband Blake Shelton, "Over You." The Academy of Country Music honored her with Female Vocalist of the Year and Album of the Year (*Four The Record*) accolades.

A down-to-earth and transparent personality, Lambert has doggedly held true to her roots and country fans have taken notice. "Her personality and her lifestyle, radio has embraced it," says Jones. "She speaks from the heart. People can relate because she's done a tremendous job of picking songs." In January 2013, Lambert kicked off her sixth headlining tour, the *Locked and Reloaded Tour* (with co-headliner Dierks Bentley), and released her latest single, "Mama's Broken Heart."

GROUP/DUO OF THE YEAR

ZAC BROWN BAND

by Jessica Nicholson

This Georgia group first attracted the country industry's attention with its debut song "Chicken Fried." In 2012, the band kept lobbying the charts with a succession of radio-friendly hits including "No Hurry," "The Wind" and "Goodbye In Her Eyes."

Zac Brown Band earned 118,356 spins in 2012, more than any other duo or group on *MusicRow's* CountryBreakout chart, securing the honor for Group/Duo of the Year. ZBB's "Goodbye In Her Eyes" topped the *MusicRow* charts for the week of Dec. 13, 2012. "There's a common genuine quality," Zac Brown Band's Clay Cook says of the band's latest songs to resonate with radio listeners. "Zac wrote a good bit of all three of the songs and the band spent a lot of time making it sound like the band. It's one of those things where we don't really try too hard, we just do what we do. And luckily other people tend to like it."

The band doesn't take success for granted and Cook says he and the other members keep in mind who they are working for. "We really thank the fans who buy the records and the tickets and call in to request the songs. They basically give us our job. It's strange because most people are working for a CEO, and our CEO is a few million people."

"Radio is the driving force and we appreciate all the support and we never take it for granted," says Zac Brown Band's radio promoter Chuck Swaney, who credits the band's unique style for much of its radio success. "They are all talented musicians and great singers and songwriters, and several of the guys are into producing other projects. They have an abundance of ingenuity, yet they maintain their integrity. They are a band that stands out and are almost in their own lane out there. The public has accepted them and their sound, and it has grown into a successful brand."

In 2012, that success meant a string of high-profile awards, nominations and performance slots. Zac Brown Band was nominated for Vocal Group of the Year and Musical Event of the Year (for "As She's Walking Away" with Alan Jackson) at the CMA Awards. The band made *Pollstar's* year-end Top 50 Worldwide Tours list, ranking No. 42 and grossing \$31.3 million. They turned in a rendition of "Where The River Runs" (their contribution to the movie soundtrack *Footloose*) at the 2012 Grammy Awards, and performed a duet with Brad Paisley at the ACM Awards.

From creative instrumentals to super-serving fans through combining food, music and fun with the Southern Ground Music & Food festivals, Zac Brown Band clearly does things its own way. "It's easier to sell a sex object and we're just not that," Cook says with a laugh. "But people seem to do alright drinking beer to our music."



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“I still can’t believe everything that’s happened, to be honest,” said Kip Moore, who has garnered a string of accolades since the release of his debut album *Up All Night* in April 2012. The project went on to become last year’s best-selling country debut.

2012 was a year of firsts for the artist who scored his first No. 1 as a singer, first No. 1 as a songwriter and first platinum-selling track—all from his first single, “Somethin’ ‘Bout A Truck.”

The MCA Nashville artist also earned his first *MusicRow* CountryBreakout Award for Breakout Artist of the Year. Moore charted more airplay than any other new act in 2012: 93,869 spins to be exact. “I was ecstatic when I found out about the award,” he said during a recent phone call before heading back out on tour.

Moore has been burning up the road with a streak of sold-out dates that include moving almost 2,500 tickets in 20 minutes for a show at Boston’s House of Blues. Following a fall run with Eric Church, he’s headlining his own shows in between spring dates with Brantley Gilbert, and summer stops with Toby Keith.

Though Moore finds plenty of inspiration on the road for his songs, he didn’t have to look further than his own experiences to conjure the relatable hits “Somethin’ ‘Bout A Truck” and “Beer Money.” “I write what’s me and what I want to write, because I’ve got to stay true to that,” he explained. “I feel like if I’m true, then it’s going to pan out in a good way. For listeners, I think those first two songs captured the town they’re living in. I know that’s how my town was. In small town America, the main thing I’ve learned as I’ve been touring so hard is that wherever you go, whether it’s the northeast or out west, everywhere, there are rabid fans in those small towns and a lot of them don’t have outlets. They don’t have things to go do, so you’ve got to make your own fun. I keep the fans in mind even more now that I’ve been touring and seeing the crowds.”

MCA Records VP of Promotion Van Haze believes “...Truck” was a radio standout for a lot of reasons, even though it was slightly left-of-center for a debut single. He recalled, “We were a little nervous at first because it’s not your traditional down-the-middle chorus/hook, but it just caught on. It’s so easy to sing and so catchy. ‘...Truck’ was so different, and because of that I think it was one of those songs that surprised listeners a little bit.”

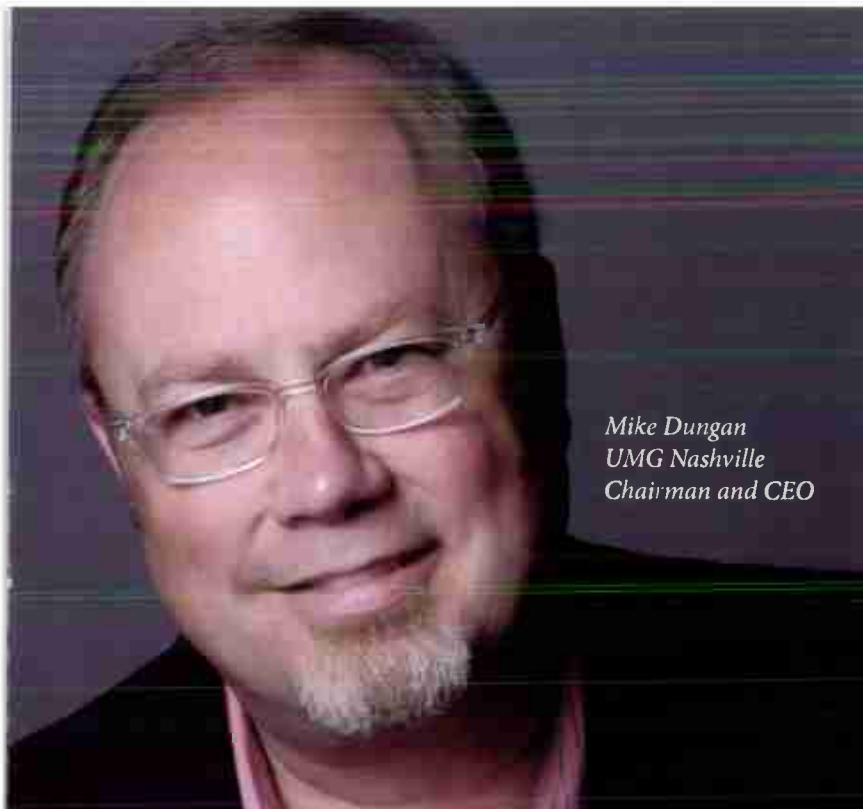
Haze summed, “The support from radio for Kip has been absolutely fantastic, top to bottom, so I want to thank country radio for embracing him and putting him in the forefront.”



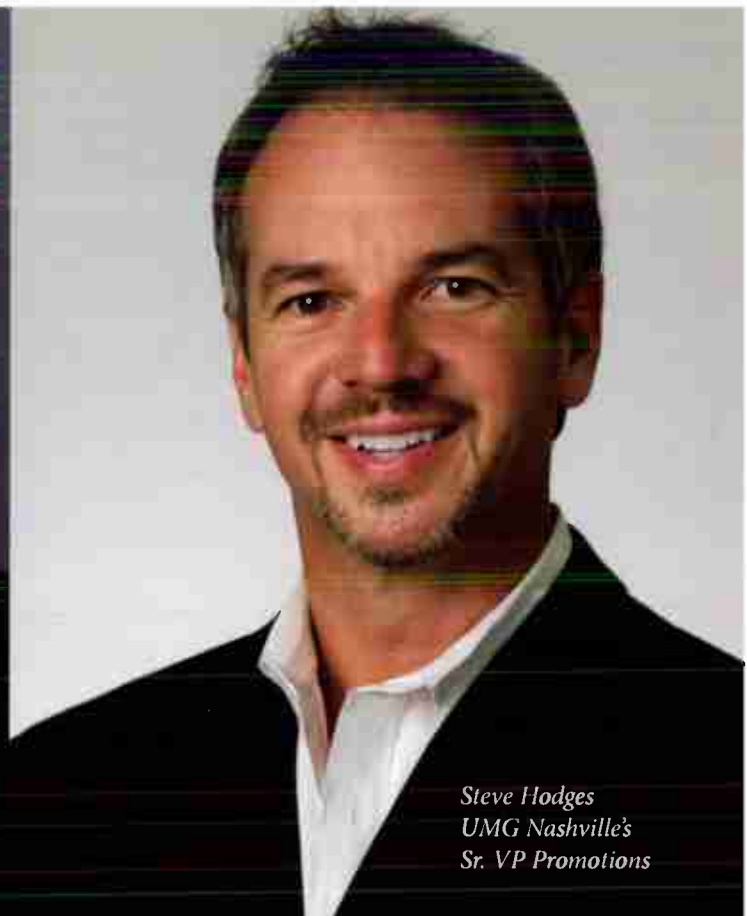
BREAKOUT ARTIST OF THE YEAR

KIP MOORE

by Sarah Skates



Mike Dungan
UMG Nashville
Chairman and CEO



Steve Hodges
UMG Nashville's
Sr. VP Promotions

LABEL OF THE YEAR



by Sarah Skates

Capitol Nashville's stellar roster isn't the only factor that propelled it to win CountryBreakout Label of the Year for the eighth consecutive time. UMG Nashville Chairman and CEO Mike Dungan knows maintaining this kind of track record requires a perfect storm of teamwork. "Beyond pride, this is a testament to the artists, the staff, and the music that binds us," he enthused. "Thank you, *MusicRow*. We know that we are blessed."

To achieve this feat, Capitol Records Nashville accumulated more spins on the *MusicRow* chart than any other label during the 2012 calendar year. Of the 32 songs that reached No. 1 on the chart last year, 11 were from Capitol Nashville artists. Contributing to that tally were *MusicRow* Male Artist of the Year Dierks Bentley ("Home," "5-1-5-0," "Tip It On Back"), Luke Bryan ("I Don't Want This Night To End," "Drunk On You," "Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye"), Keith Urban ("You Gonna Fly," "For You"), Little Big Town ("Pontoon"), and Lady Antebellum ("Dancin' Away With My Heart," "Wanted You More").

UMG Nashville's Sr. VP Promotion Steve Hodges credits the talented artists and the team behind them. "It's very exciting and we never take anything like this for granted," he said. "Kudos to Mike Dungan for putting together such a great roster of artists. And I've got to hand it to my staff, they're very passionate about every artist, every single, every album—and it shows. They do a great job juggling and they have great relationships at radio, just like Diane Richey does, so that's proof that a lot of hard work, paying attention to detail, and representing the music pays off."

Capitol has long tapped Richey's company to handle promotion duties for secondary radio markets. "Her team has been the right-hand promotion arm for us at secondary," continued Hodges, "and it is a vital part of everything we do. They've done a great job. They do exactly what we ask of our staff at Capitol—be passionate and represent the artist to the best of your ability."

"Eight years in a row is a real testament," he summed. "At Capitol we've been blessed with a lot of great people in marketing, promotion, and back office support staff. It's really a team effort. If it wasn't for the entire staff none of this would be possible."

Maintaining momentum, the Capitol crew started 2013 with a big bang. It boosted Lady Antebellum to a career-high radio debut with the release of "Downtown," the lead single from the trio's upcoming album.



INDEPENDENT ARTIST OF THE YEAR

TAYLOR MADE

by Sherod Robertson



Taylor Made, comprised of siblings Wendy Williams, Greg Duckworth and Brian Duckworth, hail from Taylor County, W. Va. and earn *MusicRow's* Independent Breakout Artist Of The Year award. The trio has been performing together since childhood, blending their three-part harmonies in church and at old-fashioned "back porch" music sessions. The group originally performed as I-79 on the Colgate Country Showdown and caught the attention of Little General Stores owner Greg Darby, who signed them to his West Virginia-based Little General Records under the new name Taylor Made.

The siblings commented, "What an honor it is to win such a prestigious award. There are so many wonderful people that have helped us get to this point in our career: Greg Darby and Little General Records, our producer/manager Dan Mitchell, Elise Anderson with Nashville Music Media, Jason Mitchell with Nocturnal Music Group, our radio promotions team of Tom McBee & Associates and Regina Raleigh & Associates, family, friends and fans. And, of course, *MusicRow* and its panel of reporting stations, many of which have played our music from the beginning. The support has been overwhelming and we're eternally grateful."

In 2011 the group released "Good Love" from its EP of same name, which reached No. 28 on the *MusicRow* CountryBreakout Chart. Their next single released in May 2012 became a Top 20 hit when "Things You Don't Grow Out Of" peaked at No. 19. Taylor Made's titles garnered 35,409 spins in 2012 giving them the distinction of *MusicRow's* Independent Artist Of The Year. The band's current single, "That's What Life Is," is currently on the chart and climbing.

REPORTER OF THE YEAR

PAUL CILIBERTO

by Sherod Robertson

Being proactive means initiating change rather than reacting to it, and this is exactly how *MusicRow's* CountryBreakout Reporter of the Year Paul Ciliberto approaches discovering new music.

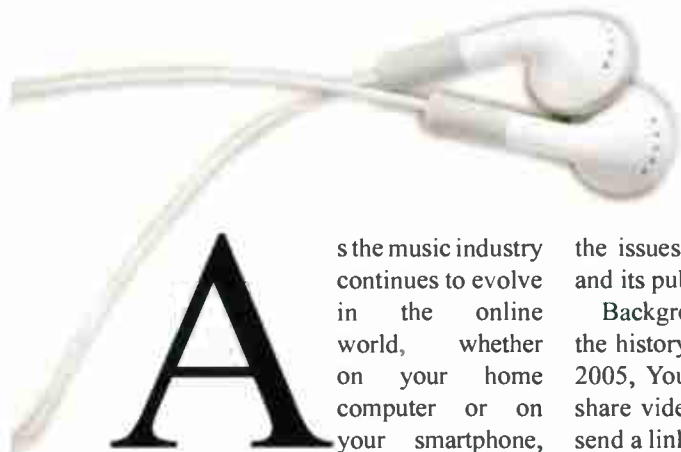
Originally from Duryea, Pa., Ciliberto first caught the radio bug at age 15. "When I was in high school, I stopped by the radio station in town and was blown away by what I saw. I immediately decided that's what I wanted to do," recalls Ciliberto. He went home and told his aunt he wanted to be a disc jockey. Ciliberto was surprised with her response. "Without any humor and as serious as could be, she said, 'that's impossible, you're too fat, you'll break the horses back.'" Ciliberto's first job in the industry was a board operator covering sports, traffic reports and everything else at WARM in the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre area. He then moved to an oldies station in the same market, followed by an AC station, ultimately leaving radio when he was hired as a marketing director for a cruise agency. This developed into Ciliberto owning his own cruise agency; however, the radio bug remained with him.

Ciliberto returned to radio in 2005, landing at Bold Gold Media Group's WDNB/Thunder 102 in Liberty, N.Y., where his passionate philosophy is very clear. He says, "When we were putting Thunder 102 on the air, I really dived in and became a student of Country Music and was blown away by the industry itself." He currently serves as NY Market Manager and GM. The station is very active in discovering new artists and embraces social media to engage listeners and obtain important feedback. "I don't want to be a station that just reports," says Ciliberto. "I want to be as proactive as we can. This is why we utilize our app to promote new artists. I think it's really important."

Thunder 102's app, RadioBOLD, has proven to be a very useful social media tool to connect with listeners. "Despite the fact that we are in a small market, a lot of our residents are listeners who drive from the area, hop on a train and work in New York City. Through our app and our website, they will be listening in the city. They can comment on our website and on our Facebook page. They can even comment through the app as well. We have lots of different ways we get feedback," explains Ciliberto. He adds, "As much as we can, we have interviews with artists and try to invite as many artists into the studio as possible. We take a lot from the reaction of our listeners."

Ciliberto's philosophy pairs perfectly with the vision behind *MusicRow's* CountryBreakout chart. From his inclusion of independent artists into the station's rotation, to his passionate desire to engage with new artists and their music, it's easy to see why Paul Ciliberto was chosen as 2013's *MusicRow* Reporter of the Year. "I am honored and thrilled!" says Ciliberto. "When we made a commitment to try to be as proactive as possible, we became friends with a lot of the artists. To me, this honor is another part of being part of the industry, not just being a radio station that simply plays the music. Thank you."

HOW PUBLISHERS ARE PAID FOR MUSIC USED BY



As the music industry continues to evolve in the online world, whether on your home computer or on your smartphone, we thought it might be helpful to answer a question we're hearing on a more frequent basis from independent publishers: "Is YouTube paying to use my music?" Several representatives of YouTube recently came to Nashville to discuss this very topic and

the issues faced by the music community and its publishing partners.

Background: First, let's briefly discuss the history of YouTube. Founded in spring 2005, YouTube was created as a way to share videos online. For instance, I could send a link to my family across the country of a child's first steps, or I could sing one of my favorite songs into the camera, and in a matter of minutes, make it available to the world. Needless to say, YouTube was a big hit.

While this was fascinating to watch unfold, this popularity also created a big problem for YouTube since it crossed a line with intellectual property owners. For videos that synchronize moving pictures with music, permission from the music rights owners (publishers and record labels) is required. Many music rights owners justifiably felt that they should be compensated for the use of their intellectual property.

Fast forward to 2011 when YouTube struck a deal with National Music Publishers Association (NMPA) and its subsidiary Harry Fox Agency (HFA) that enabled YouTube to license musical

What is metadata and how can it help me?

Let's start by defining Metadata. Metadata is simply the data about data. For a publisher, this is the information about a song, i.e. the songwriter(s), authorship splits, PRO affiliation(s), co-publisher(s), etc. After a song is cut, the artist's record label contacts the publisher(s) for label copy, and hopefully, a license request. This is the watershed event with regard to metadata. In exchange for the publishing information above, the label responds with vital release information necessary for licensing and registration: Who is the artist? What is the name of the album? What is the release date? What is the catalog number? What is the ISRC number? What is length of the cut (minutes: seconds)? This is your metadata, and it is the foundation of how your songs are identified in the digital age. And identification is the key component to compensation in the digital age.

Eric T. Schabacker



compositions that HFA represents on behalf of its affiliated publishers. In that same year, YouTube through its parent company Google, purchased the clearinghouse Rightsflow to help them solve their most basic problem: how to identify and clear the rights of the intellectual property owners.

Here is the process YouTube has developed for music publishers. Copyright owners upload audio of their songs to YouTube's database. The uploaded audio is then scanned to see if it matches the audio from one of the 3 million titles currently in YouTube's database. Once the publisher's song is identified, they are presented with three options: block it (i.e. deny the use), grant the use but don't allow the video to stream with any of YouTube's ads, or "start making money from it."

What happens if you select "start making money from it"? By choosing this option, the publisher grants a license to use its copyrights in videos created on YouTube and grants YouTube the right to advertise around the streaming of the video. YouTube calls this AdSense for Video or ASV. It allows YouTube to place ads either before videos associated with your copyrights (traditional ads) and/or banner ads during the stream of the video which uses your copyrights. It can be a tough call for the publisher, but if the publisher chooses to grant this permission, here are the agreed upon rates (based on public sources of information):

CURRENT RATES

15% of YouTube's Net Ad Revenues (defined as gross revenues less 10 percent for operating expenses) for User created Videos that employ the existing Commercial Recordings (e.g. Tim McGraw, Alan Jackson, Reba McEntire, etc.).

OR

50% of Net Ad Revenues for user created Cover Videos, which can be reduced to as low as 35 percent if Google enters into a revenue sharing arrangement with the User providing the Cover Video.

Under both scenarios, ad revenue is first split on a composition basis within any given video before determining the prorated share due.

YouTube has seen a 25 percent increase in traffic since January 2012 to nearly 4 billion views a day, so the urgency to lay stake to the revenue generated by these views is pressing.

Publishers can license these rights through HFA or directly with YouTube, providing that publishers meet a performance threshold determined at YouTube's discretion. HFA currently charges a 7.5 percent admin fee on these royalties, but Harry Fox has negotiated an audit right with YouTube. Publishers generally don't have an audit right in direct licenses.

What are the benefits of licensing directly with YouTube rather than through HFA? Licensing directly provides access to YouTube's Content Management System (CMS), which allows copyright holders the ability to directly identify their audio or upload audio, provide necessary metadata, review claims, access reports and enable your content to be used in ASV as well as some very interesting analytics.

These analytics include: demographics (gender, age groups); retention (an average of how much of the video was watched: all of it, half, one-third, etc.); location (where people are watching - YouTube mainpage, mobile, embed from third party site, official channel, etc.); what users are watching (a recap of the Top 10 of your most viewed copyrights); and finally, the publisher's estimated earnings.

In summary, hopefully this provides a publisher with a basic understanding of the terms and royalty structures of licensing its music to YouTube, as well as, some of the tools potentially available to you. Good luck in the brave new world.



Thanks to USA & European radio for playing

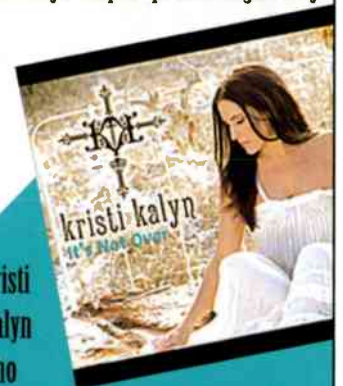
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to Darlene Austin who wrote and co-wrote 11 original songs featured in the new musical comedy theatre production, "Hillbilly HotSpot" premiering in May!



to Kristi Kalyn who was recently inducted into the CMA of Texas Hall of Fame. Her CD "It's Not Over" includes two songs from the Vine Creek Music catalog!



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darleneaustin.com

FREE HILLBILLY HOTSPOT RINGTONE

With the passing of each year, Country radio broadcasters log a new week's worth of memories during the Country Radio Seminar in Nashville. We were curious to hear some favorite memories from top industry executives and Country artists about the annual event. We have compiled these stories and hope that the 2013 event will provide even more special experiences.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY FROM THE COUNTRY RADIO SEMINAR?



Dierks Bentley

"I remember playing New Faces, but at the time I thought I wasn't that new. The first year I did 318 days on the road, so I didn't feel new. But looking back on it, we were so green it's unbelievable. It's nerve racking looking out at that crowd at New Faces because it's a Super Bowl type of gig where if you mess up, you're messing up in front of a lot of people. I also remember my first time doing liners the old-school way; in a big room where everyone would come by with a tape machine. These are the guys that decide what songs get played on country radio, so it was exciting to be around, and it still is."

Clay Cook (*Zac Brown Band*)

"I remember a show where it was us and Lady Antebellum and Kellie Pickler in 2009. We had already had 'Chicken Fried' out and Lady A had their first album out—but everybody was kind of on their upswing. It was an interesting vibe because I feel like everybody at that showcase kind of knew we were all on our upswing. It was weird, it was like everybody knew but us, and both bands had big things ahead of them. And that moment happened to be at CRS. We were all on the same stage on the same night."



Miranda Lambert

"I still remember how overwhelming my first CRS was. Meeting so many new people with big personalities, it felt a little like being home in Texas. Specifically, I remember being on the Sony boat and I was sitting upstairs with Ashley Monroe and Ronnie Dunn. Ashley was new to the label too. Anyway, the three of us started writing a song together and wrote the lyrics in Sharpie on a white table cloth. We never finished the song but it had something to do with tequila. You know what 'they say,' write about what you know."

RG Jones (*Sony Music Nashville, Director Promotion/ Strategy & Analysis*)

"There are so many fantastic performances to see at CRS. Many of them have been on our own boat show at the Seminar, from guest appearances from Ronnie Milsap to having ZZ Top on the boat. I'm involved in country and have been for over 16 years, but I grew up as a bit of a rocker and ZZ Top was one of my all-time favorite rock bands. That was a highlight to walk onto that boat early on and see them doing a soundcheck, and to be six feet away from these icons. It was the same when Ronnie Milsap was on the boat a few years ago. It was an amazing performance. We've been blessed to see some tremendous performances and talent on that boat from our own roster and some special guests over the years."



Chuck Swaney (*Southern Ground Artists, VP Radio Promotion*)

"After so many years in pop, my first day I started [working] in country [radio promotion] was the first day of CRS almost eight years ago. I remember seeing all the country programmers and the labels and the relationships all intermingled. It seemed like a family affair where different labels would sit down at the same table. That's something I wasn't used to in pop. It was very competitive, things like, 'Don't meet with that guy, he works for so-and-so'. To see everyone come together and share their ideas and time, it was an eye-opening experience. It was amazing to see and I felt like this is where I should be at that moment. It felt very comfortable."



Kip Moore

"It's a rare thing for me to get nervous when I'm playing music. I get excited energy, but not nervous. But it was a nerve-racking experience to play Universal's big CRS show at the Ryman last year. I'm still new to the game, so the stakes were high for me, where they might not be as high for somebody who is more established. I couldn't help but think about all the years I've been going after this, and how I've got one acoustic song to play in front of the radio people on that prestigious Ryman stage, where all the legends have played. I told my manager when I was done, 'I don't even know if I sang the right song or the right lyrics, I have no recollection of what just happened.'"

Gary Overton (Sony Music Nashville, Chairman and CEO)

"My first memory of CRS is that I was an intern at a publicity company and assigned to escort Brenda Lee around to all the suites at the newly-opened Opryland Hotel. This place was so massive, and the way they numbered their wings, floors and rooms made no sense at all. We, like many other artists and their reps, wandered around the hotel for hours simply knocking on doors to see if it might be a CRS suite. Needless to say, a lot of hotel guests got a surprise visit from Brenda Lee (and others) that night!"



Tree Paine (Warner Music Nashville, VP Publicity)

"When I was working at the Academy of Country Music, Bob Romeo had the (brilliant, I might add) idea to change the Super Faces show to the Music City Jam. The ACM had always been the "Party of the Year" so we wanted that to cross over to this event. When I arrived 30 minutes before doors were to open I realized that the convention center had all the tables up against the stage - just how the room is set for New Faces. This would go against everything we were trying to do. We wanted a party where you could get up and dance in front of the stage, not a traditional seated dinner event. I went around pulling all the tables 20 feet from the stage in my three inch heels begging everyone to hold the doors. I'm incredibly glad we didn't have iPhones and Twitter back then!"

Tom Baldrica (Show Dog-Universal, Vice President Promotion and Radio Marketing)

"I was the emcee of the Sony General Jackson show the night Peter Frampton was our special guest. I will never forget when Frampton stood toe to toe with Brad Paisley and traded guitar licks on "Do You Feel Like We Do"! It was an extraordinary game of "can you top this" with two virtuoso guitarists giving it everything they had. Peter was joined onstage by Carrie Underwood, Martina McBride and Miranda Lambert to sing "Baby, I Love Your Way." When that once in a lifetime performance was complete, I caught Frampton mouthing "WOW" to his band leader! The look on his face said it all! A priceless musical moment."



Sherod Robertson (MusicRow Publisher)

"One of my favorite CRS memories happened back in the '90s when I worked at Arista Records in finance. I snuck into the Mercury Records CRS party and pretended I was in radio so I could meet Shania Twain. While waiting in line to meet her, I was sweating bullets fearing someone would ask me what radio station I worked at and discover I was committing the industry sin of gherming. No one asked and I got a great picture out of it, which I still have today (and a story to go with it)."

Van Haze (MCA Records, VP of Promotion)

"I remember how excited and fascinated I was the first time I went to CRS. I was blown away by how much there was to learn, and I was overwhelmed and amazed by how many people were there from so many different parts of the industry."



JAREN JOHNSTON

by sarah skates

WRITER'S NOTES



It's like working two full-time jobs," explains Jaren Johnston, who is balancing his successful songwriting career while maintaining a packed schedule as singer/guitarist for rising band The Cadillac Three. Given his widely varying musical styles and influences, it's almost like he's balancing two personalities as well. But his take-it-all-in-stride attitude makes for a seamless transition between Music Row songwriter by day and wild, whiskey-chugging frontman by night.

Last year Johnston scored his first No. 1 as co-writer of Keith Urban's "You Gonna Fly." Penned with Preston Brust and Chris Lucas, the song earned them nominations for *MusicRow* Breakthrough Songwriter. With revered tunesmith Tom Douglas, Johnston wrote "Sing 'Em Good My Friend," a standout track on Kenny Chesney's latest album. Johnston has also co-written songs recorded by artists as varied as Dierks Bentley, Sara Evans, Casey James, Three Days Grace, Lynyrd Skynyrd and Meatloaf, and produced tracks for Bentley.

In 2013, Johnston has even more cuts, and likely hits, on the agenda as an artist and a songwriter. As this issue goes to print, The Cadillac Three signed with Big Machine Records and announced plans to release new music. Johnston and Jenn Schott penned the title track to his new labelmate Tim McGraw's album *Two Lanes of Freedom*. Johnston has a second song on the project, as well as new cuts by Urban, Tyler Bryant, Jake Owen, Thomas Rhett and Frankie Ballard.

Relationships Johnston formed as a songwriter have resulted in The Cadillac Three bringing its brand of "country fuzz" to opening slots on tour with Bentley, Eric Church, ZZ Top, Lynyrd Skynyrd and Eli Young Band.

The Cadillac Three is comprised of Johnston and fellow Nashville natives Kelby Ray and Neil Mason, who have been banging out tunes together for a decade. When describing their

latest incarnation, Johnston cites the unique sound conjured up when his howling country vocals meet Mason's pounding drums and Ray's lap steel run through a bass amp.

"It is completely different than [our prior band] American Bang," says Johnston. "It's actually closer to Bang Bang Bang, when we started in 2004. What we do, topically and lyrically, you could hear it on country radio. We are trying to do something a little different, but still in the vein of what Eric [Church] or Brantley [Gilbert] are doing on country radio. My voice is very Ronnie Van Zant meets Chris Robinson, but I'm southern as hell."

While he cites Skynyrd and Metallica as major influences, Johnston also picked up plenty of country vibes while hanging around the Grand Ole Opry in the late '80s and early '90s. His father was a drummer on the venerable show, where Johnston watched early-career appearances by Garth Brooks, Faith Hill and Clint Black. His father also exposed him to the music of classic country stars Don Williams, Mel McDaniel and Keith Whitley.

Those wide-ranging influences have helped Johnston walk the country/rock songwriting line for years. Meanwhile, his experiences as an artist have yielded valuable career lessons that led to his current success.

"It wasn't that American Bang didn't work, it worked really well, but we got lost in that whole world of record labels moving like a dinosaur," explains Johnston of a previous stint on a major label. "That was tough. Plus we signed out of L.A. instead of Nashville and that was probably a huge mistake."

Since The Cadillac Three (previously known as The Cadillac Black) gained plenty of traction on its own, members thought long and hard about getting locked into another record contract. However, they also recognized the significant benefits a label can bring to the table. "We built something that's already going," sums Johnston. "You get the ball rolling and then it's tough to kick the

door down. But, at some point, you have to be realistic and say, 'I don't think that we will be able to kick the door down by ourselves.'"

The band's self-titled album, released under The Cadillac Black moniker, is a DIY labor of love. The band members produced the record and own the masters. They designed their own merch and handled most of their own social media sites. As the band grew it added publicity, booking and management team members.

All the work is paying off as The Cadillac Three's profile continues to climb. The band had a recent cameo performance on popular ABC TV series *Nashville*, and has had music placed in shows or ads for CW's *Vampire Diaries* and *Hart of Dixie*, CBS' *CSI Miami*, FOX's *House*, and on MTV and VH1.

The Cadillac Three played over 150 dates last year. Experience taught the band a smarter way to approach touring. "With American Bang, we never followed up, so this time we've been really smart, playing the same markets three times in six months, until we were

selling out," explains Johnston. "So that's the mentality and we've seen that grow."

The Cadillac Three's country fuzz sound is creating a steady buzz, which Country Radio Seminar attendees can hear for themselves Thursday, Feb. 28 when the band opens for Eli Young Band at Nashville honky-tonk The Stage.

Hometown: Nashville

Hits: Keith Urban's "You Gonna Fly"

co-written with Preston Brant and Chris Lucas

Cuts: Tim McGraw, Kenny Chesney, Darius Bentley, Jake Owen, Casey James

Publisher: Sony/ATV

Management: Ambiance Artists

Publicity: Sweet Talk Publicity

Agent: Jay Williams, WME

Influences: Lynyrd Skynyrd, Metallica, '90s country

Interesting Fact: Engaged to ASCAP's Eryn Mustoe

Label: Big Machine Records



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It Ought to Be a Sin

*I look forward to meeting you all at
CRS 2013 in Nashville!*

Bill Wence
promotions



Summer Schappell

Jim McCormick

Writer's Notes

by Sarah Skates



Jim McCormick says language is his songwriting secret weapon, and last year it helped deliver his first No. 1, the lyrically-driven heartbreak song “You Don’t Know Her Like I Do,” co-written with and performed by Brantley Gilbert. “One of the proudest moments of my career was getting onstage at BMI with Brantley and seeing the hundreds of friends who came out to celebrate, and reading off my very long list of thank-yous,” recalls McCormick of the song’s No. 1 party.

Soon after, he was cheering again, this time as co-writer of Jason Aldean’s No. 1 “Take A Little Ride,” penned with Dylan Altman and Rodney Clawson. The track’s power guitar grooves show McCormick’s hard rock influences. “I love that song because I grew up with, and still love, heavy hitting rock like Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath and AC/DC,” he says. “I love that we were able to take some of that energy and put it into a song that came out on country radio by such a great artist.”

McCormick’s background helps him bring a mix of wide-ranging musical and literary influences to the writers’ room. Growing up in New Orleans, he embraced the local sounds of Dr. John and The Neville Brothers. He found inspiration in writers Rick Bragg, Roland Flint and Jack Gilbert; and childhood musical *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. His love of lyrics attracted him to revered tunesmiths Leonard Cohen and Paul Simon. “Literature has given me exposure to how language can be used,” he explains. “Today I’m a lyricist first and foremost; language is my tool.”

He initially decided to pursue a writing career and enjoy music as a hobby. While earning an English degree from Georgetown University in Washington D.C., McCormick played in a punk band. He then returned to New Orleans, reunited with his former rock band, and spent several years working in journalism and academia, including receiving a masters degree and teaching at the University of New Orleans.

“I didn’t feel like I was where I was supposed to be and music kept calling,” he remembers. “My close friend Kris Bergsnes

invited me to check out Nashville. That was it. It lit me up and I started to fall in love with the idea of being a part of this town—being a songwriter, having this career. I could see that if I applied myself, that maybe I had something to offer.”

He made the move to Music City. “It was an extraordinary time. Although I had given up the security of a full-time job, I was happier than I had been in years, and I knew I was on the right journey. The people who loved me were terrified because I was out on a limb, but I surrounded myself with good people up here. Luke Bryan and I were some of each other’s first co-writers. I also met Randy Houser and Karyn Rochelle very early on. I was fortunate to meet some really wonderful people who are still part of my life.”

During his early years in Nashville, McCormick says reading *MusicRow’s* Writers Notes column was a “balm to the struggle.” It was inspiring to learn about others’ discouragement, perseverance and ultimate triumph.

Today his story gives hope to younger writers. “They say it’s a ten-year town and about nine years ago Jimmy Metts and James Stroud signed me to my first deal. I had a few major label cuts prior to that which helped me gain some traction. We had two good years together and got about 12 major label cuts.”

Next McCormick landed at Warner/Chappell after meeting the company’s BJ Hill on a flight to the Key West Songwriter’s Festival. It was a pivotal time period because he penned “You Don’t Know Her Like I Do,” and met then Warner/Chappell Sr. VP/GM Dale Bobo, who would become one of his biggest advocates.

Today McCormick is signed to BMG and Bobo is his manager. “Dale is an integral part of this journey,” states McCormick. “A writer needs somebody who organically and genuinely gets what they do, who not only loves their work but understands their process and personality. I’m so lucky to have Dale as that partner. His reputation and abilities speak for themselves. I also have an extraordinary publisher, so there’s a whole lot of synergy and horsepower, for which I’m very grateful. I try to live up to it every

day and write the very best song that I can and meet them at the same level of commitment and quality.”

That’s not hard to achieve for a writer as passionate as McCormick, and he expects the same from his cowriters. “The greatest gift in my life is my love for writing,” he explains. “I still wake up in the morning and want to go write. I like to write with anybody who hits the ball back—hard. I think the quality of what you are working on and your passion for it determines whether or not you are enjoying the day. I don’t have standing writing appointments. It keeps me on my toes to know that I may not be writing with that person again anytime soon and to make that day with them count.”

For McCormick, co-writers who can help him reach a place of authenticity are key to the creative process. “If I’m being honest and authentic, it seems that listeners connect with the material, whether they are publishers, producers, artists or their audience. I focus on the song and listen to what it wants to say. In writing, sometimes the most difficult thing is getting to that point of stillness where you can hear that direction and listen to your subconscious; turning off that part of us which is deliberate and editorial and getting an authentic sampling. It’s hard sometimes when somebody else is in the room. But that’s where great co-writers come in, who also understand that pursuit of the finished piece and we all get there in our own weird way.”

And on the long list of thank-yous he mentioned, family comes first. “Thank God for my beautiful, understanding wife, two sons, and my parents,” he sums. “My mom made me feel like I could do anything I wanted to, and my dad taught me self-discipline and the importance of character. It goes back to that, no matter what career I had—but I sure do like this one.”

Hometown: New Orleans

Hits: Jason Aldean’s “Take A Little Ride,” co-written with Dylan Allman and Rodney Clawson; “You Don’t Know Her Like I Do,” co-written with and performed by Brantley Gilbert

Cuts: Luke Bryan, Craig Campbell, Joanna Smith, Trace Adkins, Tim McGraw, Trisha Yearwood, Ronnie Milsap, Smash Mouth

Publisher: BMG Rights Management

Management: Dale Bobo Music Direction

Influences: early Lynyrd Skynyrd and ZZ Top, classic rock, Jackson Browne, Willis Alan Ramsey, Lyle Lovett, John Prine, Paul Simon, Jesse Winchester, Allen Toussaint

Favorite song I wrote: “You Didn’t Have A Good Time,” recorded by Randy Travis, co-written with Kris Bergsnes, Jason Matthews

Song I wish I’d written: “Long Time” by Pat McLaughlin

Interesting fact: The list of song ideas on his laptop is about 400 pages long.

www.jimmccormicksongs.com

CRAZY B'S

2012 was a GREAT year for us!

 Drew Alexander (Curb)	28 ASCAP, BMI & SESAC Awards	ASCAP Song of the Year "Honey Bee"
Arthur Buenahora (Ole)	ACA Song of the Year "Springsteen"	SESAC Song of the Year "A Woman Like You"
 Rusty Gaston (This Music)	ACM Song of the Year "Crazy Girl"	ASCAP Writer of the Year "Ben Hayslip"
Juli Griffith (Magic Mustang)		
Liz Morin (Showbiz-Ro)		
Carla Wallace (Big Yellow Dog)		






And 2013 is starting off well.

Grammy Country Song of the Year
 "Blown Away"

WE HAVE THE HITS!!!!!!



Pictured (L-R): Bryan Frasher with Casey James and Sony Music Nashville Chairman and CEO Gary Overton at the 2012 CMA Music Festival.

(continued from page 18)
the path.”

Frasher’s nine-year career in radio promotion began in 2003 and includes time at Warner Bros., Arista and BNA. He had transitioned to the label world following road gigs with Tanya Tucker, Lee Roy Parnell and Chely Wright. After graduating from Marshall University with a classical music degree, Frasher worked as a tour manager, guitar player, harmony singer and bandleader. “I know what it’s like to be the crew guy, the band member, the artist, the bus driver, the cartage guy and more because I made a living doing all those things at various times before,” he explains. “The frame of reference gives me an understanding and an empathetic point of view of the road. I have been to most of the places these guys are working, done those same gigs, and I know many of the players, promoters and buyers involved. The relationships are very helpful.”

As a manager, Frasher coordinates all aspects of James’ career, so clear communication between team members is key. “When I was in promotion, I tried my best to keep managers informed and involved in what we were doing at the label, although it is hard because you tend to move very fast. I try to do the same on the management side, but we move fast there too,” he adds. “It takes a village to grow a career and to keep an artist evolving, so a good relationship between the label and management goes a long way. The same can be said for the relationship with radio. Not a day goes by that I don’t interact with someone at radio regarding a

show, a song or some other creative idea. All parties should strive for great communication. You want to do your best not to surprise anyone, but sometimes it happens and you have to work through it.”

Several factors influenced Frasher’s decision to quit working at the label. “I wanted to have more control and flexibility in my work so that I could see my family more,” he shares. “I needed a change in my life and a renewed sense of purpose, and I felt like I was growing complacent and wanted to challenge myself. Management has proven to be much more challenging than I anticipated, but I am loving it.”

Frasher’s involvement with Compassion International revived his sense of purpose in other ways. In 2010 he and his wife traveled to Guatemala with the organization. “To say that it was a profound experience, is a gross understatement,” he says. “Compassion International is a wonderful organization and I saw first-hand how great the work they do is. It is one of the few charitable organizations where you can actually go and touch what your money has built and have conversations with people whose lives and families you have permanently changed for the better. I encourage everyone to look into it and check it out for themselves.”





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