

# CMA Close Up

2011 | VOLUME 10

CMA AWARDS ONLINE VOTING  
SECOND BALLOT  
AUG. 9 - AUG. 23  
FINAL BALLOT  
OCT. 14 - NOV. 1

## CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL

Spectacle and Celebration

## ALISON KRAUSS

Soars with *Paper Airplane*

## BILLBOARD

## COUNTRY MUSIC

## SUMMIT

New Horizons and Clear Goals

## CONNIE SMITH

Honoring Classic Country

## CONCERT

## STREAMING

Live and Online

## CHARLEY PRIDE

The Right *Choices*

## BABY BRANDS

Partnerships for New Artists

# RONNIE DUNN

THE NEXT CHAPTER

"CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL: COUNTRY'S NIGHT TO ROCK" SUNDAY AUG. 14 8/7C ABC



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**CMA CLOSE UP****Executive Editor**

WENDY PEARL

**Editor**

BOB DOERSCHUK

**Assistant Editor**

AMANDA ECKARD

**Design**

EVAMARIE OGLANDER

**Contributing Writers**

TED DROZDOWSKI | FETT | TIM GHIANNI

JOSEPH HUDAK | NANCY MORAN

DEBORAH EVANS PRICE | TOM ROLAND

**Proofreaders**

MELISSA COKER | PAULINA COMBOW

**Printing**

McQUIDDY CLASSIC PRINTING

**CMA STAFF****Executive**STEVE MOORE *Chief Executive Officer*JESSICA BROWN *Executive Assistant***Communications**WENDY PEARL *Vice President of Corporate Communications*SCOTT STEM *Director of Media Relations*BOB DOERSCHUK *CMA Close Up Editor*AMANDA ECKARD *Creative Services Manager*MARIA ECKHARDT *Manager of Media Relations*DAWN FISHER *Communications Coordinator***Events and Special Projects**BOBETTE DUDLEY *Senior Vice President*DIANE BEARDEN *Senior Manager of Meetings and Events*JAMIE DOWNING *Senior Manager of Special Projects*KRIS KENNEDY *Senior Manager of Events*KYLE QUIGLEY *Senior Manager of Event Programming and Special Projects***Finance and Administration**AMY SMARTT *Vice President of Finance and Administration*KEN SANDERSON *Senior Manager of Information Technology*AARON HARTLEY *Manager of Administrative Services*SHEREME SIEWNARINE *Manager of Financial Services*JODY PACE *Staff Accountant*VERONICA COSTILLA *Finance and Administration Coordinator*MELISSA MAYNARD *Administration Coordinator*MARCO CASTILLO *Operations Assistant*STEPHANIE HODGES *Receptionist***Membership and Balloting**BRANDI SIMMS *Senior Manager of Membership and Balloting*BETSY WALKER *Senior Coordinator of Member Relations and Services***Strategic Marketing**TAMMY DONHAM *Vice President of Marketing*CORY CHAPMAN *Director of Marketing*GREG FUSON *Marketing Research Director*BEN BENNETT *Senior Manager of Digital Strategy*CATHERINE BLACKWELL *Marketing Manager*MARTY FILOGAMO *Jr. Web Designer / Production Coordinator***Strategic Partnerships**SHERI WARNKE *Vice President of Strategic Partnerships*ANGELA MENDENHALL *Manager of Strategic Partnerships*LARA HENLEY *Senior Manager of Strategic Partnerships*SARAH McGRADY *Senior Coordinator of Strategic Partnerships***MINGLE AT THE FIRST-EVER CMA MEMBER MIX!**

Remember that e-mail message you received in February — the one inviting you to let us know what you would most like us to provide to you in terms of opportunities for professional development? We were grateful to receive plenty of suggestions in response but we were especially interested at the amount of consensus there was for one particular priority.

In fact, 67 percent of respondents said they were interested in professional development. We followed up with another query on what form that would take, and once again your choice was clear: A networking event was easily the most popular option.

We think that's a great idea too. CMA has always dedicated itself to serving members in a variety of ways, whether through the deep resources offered online at **My.CMAworld.com**, a comprehensive insurance option through CMA Sound Healthcare and even American Airlines discounts. But the idea of hosting a casual event that allows members to make professional connections inspired us to offer a new member event: The first CMA Member Mixer is confirmed for Sept. 29 in Nashville.

What's on the agenda? Other than some welcoming remarks from CMA CEO Steve Moore, that's pretty much up to you and everyone else attending. There will be food, drink and above all else a lot of talented CMA members to meet and get to know. We expect artists, publicists, managers, producers, songwriters — really, the whole spectrum of music industry professionals represented by our membership. Some CMA Board members will be on hand too. Feel free to bring your business card, make some pleasant and productive connections and have a great time too!

Where is it happening? Well, that's your decision too. We have asked members to choose between two venues in Music City; once we've tallied the vote, we'll e-mail that info your way as part of our official invitation. If you can make it, just reply and we'll look forward to seeing you there!

**CMA AWARDS E-MAIL SERVICE**

We've long offered another service to our members who have received one or more nominations for upcoming CMA Awards: a discounted rate for participation in a special e-mail service operated by Hi-Fi Fusion, the exclusive e-mailing house for the Awards. If you want to educate and encourage voting CMA members to support you in the next round of balloting, learn how at **CMAEmailService.com** — there's still time to spread the word for the second (Aug. 9-23) and final (Oct. 14-Nov. 1) ballots!

**CORRECTION**

Several details were incorrect in our Debut Spotlight profile of Brett Eldredge, published in our Vol. 9 issue. Eldredge in fact has been a Country Music enthusiast since childhood and his cousin's last name is also spelled Eldredge, contrary to what was written in the profile. *CMA Close Up* regrets the errors.

CMA Close Up® welcomes your letters and feedback. 615.244.2840 | Fax: 615.242.4783 or e-mail [CloseUp@CMAworld.com](mailto:CloseUp@CMAworld.com)

ADDRESS CHANGE? Visit [My.CMAworld.com](http://My.CMAworld.com) to correct your address information so you don't miss any issues of *CMA Close Up!*

**cma**  
COUNTRY MUSIC ASSOCIATION

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# CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL



## 40 Years of Excellence — and Still Getting Better

There were signs throughout the 2011 CMA Music Festival that this was an especially historic occasion. Huge gift-wrapped presents were piled up at the Family Zone where, on Thursday afternoon, a party began with Gigi's mini cupcakes given out to the first 500 celebrants — 40 of whom found notices on the bottom of their cupcake wrappers that entitled them to open the gifts and take home what was inside, with values from \$25 to \$500.

Later, at Fan Fair Hall, the legendary Dolly Parton marked her first visit to the Festival in more than 30 years by meeting and posing for pictures with a number of fans — that number happening to also be 40.

Coincidence? Not at all, for 2011 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CMA Music Festival — a legacy that speaks to the loyalty of their fans. That loyalty, which crosses generational lines and often endures for years, is the elixir that keeps this annual event young even as it has become a landmark on America's entertainment calendar.

It's even more than that to the Nashville community and especially to its children. Since 2006, through its Keep the Music Playing program, CMA has given half of its net Festival proceeds to the Metro Nashville Public Schools in partnership with the Nashville Alliance for Public Education; as of now, these donations have totaled \$4,774,521, raised in large part through the generosity of the artists who perform at the Festival, always free of charge. The donation from this year's Festival will be announced later in the year.

That figure is sure to escalate once the tally for 2011 is complete. Already this year's four-day spectacular, running June 9-12, has set a new record for money generated for the city by Festival visitors. In 2010, \$24 million in direct visitor spending fed into the local business community. This year, that number rose to approximately \$30 million.

Small wonder. By many measures, this was a Festival to remember:

- Daily attendance held steady at 65,000.
- A new record was set on Saturday at the Chevrolet Riverfront Park, which drew 25,000 fans throughout the day to the sloping lawn by the Cumberland River.
- More than 45 brands participated in the Festival, generating a combined activation and consumer engagements of more than 924,000, outstripping the 700,000 totals from 2010.
- Overall traffic on **CMAfest.com** was up by 6 percent. Downloads of the custom-schedule Festival apps were spectacularly higher, with more than 31,000 downloads for both iPhone and the new Android version as compared with 4,500 for the iPhone alone in 2010 — an increase of 566 percent. And the CMA MOB added about 9,000 new members to its mobile phone list over last year's numbers.
- Visitors came from all 50 states and from 26 countries, including Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bermuda, Brazil, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the U.K.
- Chevrolet joined the Festival performers in supporting Keep the Music playing by donating \$25 for every participant in its pre-Festival Industry Test Drive.

But there's more at play than numbers. You could see it in the determination of fans who spent the night camped on the sidewalk outside of the Nashville Convention Center, eager to meet their favorite stars inside at Fan Fair Hall. (These lovers of Country Music broke a record themselves, having formed that line at 11 AM/CT on Wednesday — the earliest the all-night wait had ever begun.) Others gathered each morning across the Cumberland River, at the ramp leading down into LP Field, to cheer the arrival of tour buses for the evening's acts as they rolled into the stadium.

The artists showed that same resolve to connect, whether it be Jason Michael Carroll hanging with his fans and talking for half an hour after Fan Fair Hall had closed, or Billy Ray Cyrus, who autographed at the CMA booth and then continued to sign for another half hour on his way to exit the building.

In the end, CMA Music Festival 2011 once again affirmed the lesson demonstrated in Nashville's Municipal Auditorium in 1972, where the long story began: Whether performed at LP Field before 49,000 enthusiasts or in the close proximity of Durango Acoustic Corner, it all comes down to the music.



Lady Antebellum



Sara Evans



Dierks Bentley



Sugarland



Shania Twain



Miranda Lambert



Taylor Swift



Josh Turner and Scotty McCreery



Nightly concerts at LP Field



Martina McBride and Lauren Alaina



Ashton Shepherd



Zac Brown Band with Randy Travis



Jason Aldean and Kelly Clarkson



Brad Paisley



Rascal Flatts



Little Big Town



Big & Rich with Gretchen Wilson



Artists, hosts and sponsors at Chevrolet Presents the CMA Global Artist Party at The Stage on Broadway (back row) CMA CEO Steve Moore, Marlee Scott, Chad Brownlee, Tommy Emmanuel, McAlister Kemp and Dean Brody (middle) Kaylee Bell, Claire McArthur and Paul Bain of Raintown, Dianna Corcoran and Luke Dickens (front) Chevrolet Agency Representative Darcie Law, emcees Jay O'Shea and Mark O'Shea and Chevrolet Agency Representative Camila Ferreira.



Artists and hosts at AristoMedia Global Showcase at The Second Fiddle (back row) Ryan Laird, Brad Rempel and Curtis Rempel of High Valley, Jason Hastie and Abbey Powell of Six West, co-emcee Mollie McClymont, Mike & Ashley and Musical Coordinator Mark Moffatt (middle) Brett Kissell, co-emcee Brooke McClymont, AristoMedia Group CEO Jeff Walker, Simon Johnson of Springfield, Steve & Heather (front) Craig Morrison, Curtis Rempel of High Valley, Mike Carr of Springfield and AristoMedia Group Director of Operations Matt Watkins.



CMAfest.com image shown on LP Field Jumbotron

### More Action Online at CMAfest.com

The official CMA Music Festival Web site registered significantly greater fan engagement over the previous year, especially in numbers of iPhone and Android Festival app downloads as well as by other metrics.



Keith Urban presents the 2011 CMA Global Country Artist Award to Tommy Emmanuel during the CMA Global Artist Party.

## Great Sounds and Surprises at LP Field

The four-night cavalcade of superstars began on Thursday night, June 7, with video announcements from an array of television personalities and artists, each wishing CMA Music Festival a happy 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. From that point, the action was live, as 43 artists took to the stage and rocked the stadium. Along with scheduled appearances, the lineup featured a number of surprises, including Trace Adkins sitting in with Blake Shelton; CMA Country Music Hall of Fame members Alabama joining Brad Paisley; Miranda Lambert welcoming Ashley Monroe and Angaleena Presley, her partners in Pistol Annies, to the stage; "American Idol" winner Scotty McCreery and runner-up Lauren Alaina, who guested with Josh Turner and Martina McBride, respectively; Jake Owen, coming out during Keith Urban's set to sing as Urban backed him on guitar; Rascal Flatts joining Little Big Town on the Doobie Brothers classic "Free Ride"; and megastar Shania Twain, who introduced Sugarland.

## Relive CMA Music Fest Aug. 14 on ABC

Don't miss "CMA Music Festival: Country's Night to Rock," the three-hour Festival special, which broadcasts Sunday, Aug. 14, beginning at 8 PM/ET on ABC. Robert Deaton is the Executive Producer and Gary Halvorson is the Director. The special, which features stadium concerts, intimate club performances and more, was shot in high definition and will be broadcast in 720 Progressive (720P), ABC's selected HDTV format, with 5.1 channel surround sound.



## Kick-Off Parade and Block Party Get Things Started

Co-Grand Marshals Bill Anderson and The Oak Ridge Boys led the way as the Kick-Off Parade wound past an estimated 16,000 cheering spectators lining the streets of Downtown Nashville. First-time participants included the Budweiser Clydesdales, a fleet of more than 100 Harley-Davidsons, the Metro Nashville Public Schools marching band featuring young musicians from five high schools, and the Rascal Flatts Big Machine Camaro. The procession led to the Chevrolet Riverfront Stage, where Carter's Chord sang the national anthem and live sets followed by Lee Brice, The Eli Young Band, Randy Houser, Uncle Kracker and Josh Thompson.



Co-Grand Marshal Bill Anderson



Indy 500 winner Dan Wheldon



Uncle Kracker



Randy Houser

## Fans Join the Fun at ABC's Summer Block Party

Everyone at CMA Music Festival was invited to the FamilyZone Stage for the ABC Summer Block Party, a two-day array of games based on ABC programs, live music, onstage interviews, activity booths, prizes and much more.



The Lunabelles



Visitors spin for prizes.

## Intimate and Worldwide Audiences Enjoy Durango Acoustic Corner

Durango Acoustic Corner offered a cool and comfortable space to hear new and established artists, whose performances and interviews were heard live by nearly 35,000 listeners over WSM-AM Nashville and half a million worldwide via the station's online stream. Forty-six solo or group acts entertained for nearly 20 hours in this popular venue within the Nashville Convention Center.



Wade Hayes

## Merchandise Sales Rival 2010 Totals

Merchandise sold at nearly the same dramatic numbers achieved at the 2010 Festival. The most popular items included the Carolina blue event T-shirt, the red Fan Fair T-shirt with the guitar logo and the red, white and blue Fan Fair mesh hat.

## CMA Music Fest Press Coverage Escalates

Media presence at CMA Music Festival topped the figures for the previous year, with more than 770 journalists, photographers and crew members, representing more than 210 domestic and international media outlets, on hand. For the first time Yahoo! Music and USA Today's College blog covered the Festival, with TV Guide Network returning after a five-year absence to report on all four days.

## City Skyline and the Cumberland River Bookend the Chevrolet Riverfront Stage

Urban energy and laid-back water-borne breezes set the mood at the Chevrolet Riverfront Stage, where 45 major acts played nearly 31 hours of music over four days. A near-record opening-day attendance greeted the first Thursday set, by Gary Allan.



Jake Owen



Darryl Worley



Billy Ray Cyrus



Sunny Sweeney



Mel Tillis



Gary Allan

## Fans and Stars Get Close at Fan Fair Hall

The CMA Music Festival tradition of bringing fans and artists together continued at Fan Fair Hall, where 337 artists and celebrities — well above the total for 2010 — signed autographs and posed for pictures. To honor the Festival's 40th anniversary, Dolly Parton met with 40 lucky fans in her first Fan Fair Hall appearance in more than 30 years. Chris Young made multiple appearances on several different days. Other visitors included Bill Anderson, Easton Corbin, Charlie Daniels, Lady Antebellum, Martina McBride, Justin Moore, Kellie Pickler, Montgomery Gentry, Craig Morgan, Rascal Flatts, Darius Rucker and Steel Magnolia.



Kellie Pickler



Darius Rucker



Dolly Parton



Chris Young

## Lay's Stage Heats Up Bridgestone Plaza

From sizzling new stars to a special set featuring icons of classic Country, 35 acts filled the corner of Fifth Avenue and Broadway with music for more than 26 hours over four days.



Steve Azar



Katie Armiger



Laura Bell Bundy

## The Fifth Annual Fan Social Rocks the Wildhorse

Created online four years ago by CMA Music Festival attendees as a place to meet and hang out, The Fan Social Presented by CMT has expanded to a full-blast explosion of live music, contests and Country Music lovers coming together. Staged this year at The Wildhorse Saloon, the event featured sets by The Harters, Kristin Chenoweth, The Civil Wars, Matt Mason, Thompson Square and Joe Nichols, along with drawings for fast passes to the LP Field photo line and a Taylor guitar autographed by each artist who performed at the Social.



Joe Nichols



Thompson Square



Kristin Chenoweth



## Chevrolet Helps Fans Ride Easy

About 2,000 Festival visitors made use of the "Catch a Chevy" program, helping fans reach their destinations comfortably and at no cost.

## Stars Speak Live through Premiere Radio Networks

CMA's official radio partner, Premiere Radio Networks, enabled more than 70 artists and celebrities to speak live to 13.5 million listeners via radio stations in 18 markets across the United States as well as station Internet sites. Two syndicated shows, "After MidNite with Blair Garner" and "Crook & Chase," also broadcast during three days of drive-time.



Lorianne Crook and Charlie Chase interview Marina McBride



Lady Antebellum with Stoney Richards of WDSY Pittsburgh



Scotty McCreery with Mike Wheless and Janie Carothers of WQDR Raleigh



Chip Crafton of Crafton Seasoning at Cracker Boy cooking demo



Chuck Wicks is interviewed by Blair Garner of "After MidNite with Blair Garner" on the Budweiser Stage

## Sports Zone Activities Inform and Entertain

This year, the Sports Zone doubled the action with two stages offering music, cooking demonstrations, CMA Songwriters Series sessions, CMA Celebrity Close Up interviews by "After Midnite" host Blair Garner, Bob Redfern's hunting and fishing clinic and more.

## Fort Nashboro Hosts Athletic Competitions

Onlookers gathered at Fort Nashboro, overlooking the Cumberland River, were treated to several sporting contests that featured celebrities as well as athletes. Lucas Hoge took first place and Ty Brown finished second in *Field & Stream's* Total Outdoorsman Challenge. The *Field & Stream* Total Outdoorsman Challenge Regional Qualifier pitted 38 pre-qualified sports enthusiasts against each other, with Jeff Haney of Fletcher, N.C., earning first place with 17 points; runners-up Ryan Straley of Olathe, Kan., and Joshua Shelton of Gallatin, Tenn., earned the right to join Fletcher to compete in the National Championship, held Sept. 8-'10 in Lampe, Mo. And the *Outdoor Life* Save-A-Stream Pro-Am ended with a victory by Ty Brown and Jennifer Wagner, a fan picked from the crowd, over Tyler Farr and his partner, Keith Burgess of Primos Hunting.



## City of Hope Plays Softball for Health

An official CMA Music Festival event in 2011, the City of Hope Celebrity Softball Challenge pitted two teams of Country stars against each other at Greer Stadium, with proceeds funding research into curing cancer, diabetes and other life-threatening diseases. Victory went to Team "After MidNite with Blair Garner," which defeated Team Grand Ole Opry by 9-5. GAC on-air personality Storme Warren and Nicole Schulz, a 19-year-old leukemia survivor, emceed the event.

## Power Zone Debuts at CMA Music Festival

From celebrities squaring off in car trivia contests, Traxxas remote-control car racing and a chance to get close to the Budweiser Clydesdales and hear plenty of live music, the new Power Zone proved itself a must-see Festival destination.



General Robert E. Lee from "The Dukes of Hazzard"



A Budweiser Clydesdale takes a break



MLB Bigfoot monster truck



Lee Roy of The Roys, Mark Wills and Trent Wilmon take aim in *Field & Stream* Total Outdoorsman Challenge



Craig Morgan at *Outdoor Life* Save-a-Stream Pro-Am.



## Family Zone Welcomes All Ages

The Family Zone provided an ideal site for parents and kids to come together and enjoy themselves. Highlights included the CMA Music Festival 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday Bash offering free cupcakes from Gigi's Cupcakes along with a gift-opening opportunity for fans, an insider panel discussion "Country Music 101" with Lynn Anderson and Mel Tillis, hosted by Don Cusic, Gloriana's Music Video Dance Contest, the Opry Guitar Auction, Random House Children's Books Celebrity Storytelling, the high-flying Ultimate Air Dogs, the White Castle Free Family Picnic and the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual YWCA Celebrity Auction hosted by Martina McBride, plus much more.



"Country Music 101" with Mel Tillis, Lynn Anderson and Don Cusic



Gloriana with Dance Contest winner Jordan Williams



A winner picks his prize at the CMA Music Festival 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday Bash.



Flying high with Ultimate Air Dogs



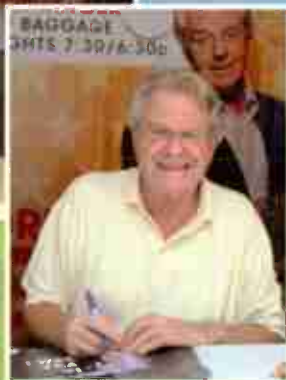
Marvel's Captain America Booth

## Mix-and-Match Amusements Fill the Gildan Fun Zone

The Gildan Fun Zone offered a unique range of opportunities to play games, win prizes, enjoy free product samples, and get autographs from notables including artists, NASCAR Sprint Cup Series driver AJ Allmendinger and Jerry Springer.



NASCAR Sprint Series Cup driver AJ Allmendinger



Jerry Springer



Cranberry cool-off at Ocean Spray booth

## Gildan Breaks World Record for Largest T-Shirt

The green grass of Nashville's Centennial Park turned blue on Saturday, June 11, as Gildan Activewear unrolled a gigantic T-shirt on the spacious lawn. Measuring 180.9 feet by 281.3 feet, nearly the size of a football field, the two-ton garment was certified by Guinness World Record as the world's largest T-shirt. Gildan transformed an equivalent amount of material into 12,000 human-sized tees for distribution to Metro Nashville Public School students via CMA's Keep the Music Playing initiative.



## Student Journalists and Photographers Cover Festival



The CMA Close Up Award of merit program entered its fifth year of giving student journalists and photographers opportunities to sharpen their skills by documenting Festival events daily on the [CMAfest.com](http://CMAfest.com) blog. Participants included Rebekah Pippin, Patricia Melton, Autumn Allison, Tara Knott, Bennett Farkas, Caitlin Selle, Hunter Patterson, Adam Wadding, Ann Richardson and Rebecca Hall.

CMA Music Festival is organized and produced by the Country Music Association. Premiere Radio Networks is the Official Radio Broadcaster. American Airlines is the Official Airline of the CMA Music Festival. Chevrolet is the Official Ride of Country Music. Gildan is the Official T-Shirt of CMA Music Festival. Lay's is the Official Snack of CMA Music Festival. CMA is a proud supporter of DRIVE4COPD. Fan Fair is a registered trademark of CMA. CMA Music Festival wrap-up written by Bob Doerschuk. photo edit by Amanda Eckard. CMA Music Festival photos: Tyler D. Knell, Amanda Eckard, Bennett Farkas, Jim Hagens, Rebecca Hall, Karen Hicks, Donn Jones, Patricia Melton, Theresa Montgomery, Stephanie Mullins, Ann Richardson, John Russell, Jamie Schramm, Caitlin Selle and Alexa Sullivant. City of Hope Softball Tournament photos: Richard Suter, Premiere Radio Network and AJ Allmendinger photos: Scott Hunt



Former University of Alabama Head Coach Gene Stallings, FUNL Music artist Amber Hayes, Kevin Turner and Ty Herndon pose at The Kevin Turner Foundation ALS fundraiser held June 18 in Brentwood, Tenn.

**TY HERNDON**

## Scores a TD for The Kevin Turner Foundation

For former NFL fullback Kevin Turner, that familiar line about it all beginning with a song has a special extra meaning.

In May 2010, the onetime New England Patriots and Philadelphia Eagles star was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), a progressive neurodegenerative disease that leads to paralysis and death within four to six years.

Not long after that, while visiting Prattville High School, his Alabama alma mater, he was introduced to Ty Herndon, who was there to perform at an ALS benefit. Herndon gave Turner a copy of his latest CD, *Journey On* and they went their separate ways.

Then, a few weeks later, Herndon had an idea. "Kevin had this light in his eyes," he recalled. "It was obvious that he had a higher purpose. The challenge had been put into his life for a reason, and I just knew it. I'd gone through my own challenges in life, and you take a platform not because you want to but because it's there and you need to do it."

"Ty called me up and said, 'Hey, I have a great idea.' Then he told me how he wanted to have me in a video for 'Journey On' (written by Herndon and Caleb Collins)," Turner said. "So I went back and listened to it, and the more I listened the more I liked it."

The video opens with Turner introducing himself and giving background on ALS as an instrumental plays in the background. After that, the soaring ballad lifts off over shots of Herndon singing and images of Turner playing with his two of his three children at Nashville's LP Field.

Herndon and his record label, FUNL Music, also helped establish The Kevin Turner Foundation, dedicated to seeking a cure for ALS. The ALS Therapy Alliance (ATA) recruited Herndon and Turner to serve as spokespersons for their 10<sup>th</sup> annual Researching a Cure campaign with CVS/pharmacy, asking customers to donate \$1 to support ATA's research. PSAs running in 7,200 CVS/pharmacy locations spread the word throughout June, with the Alliance also licensing "Journey On" to play on in-store radio. The total amount raised by this partnership will be announced at Fenway Park in Boston on Sept. 1.

"I can't tell you the amount of text messages, e-mails and Facebook posts I get, talking about the video and telling me stories of ALS with their loved ones," Turner said. "We wouldn't be a tenth of the way to where we are without the support we've gotten from Ty and the whole Country Music community."

"I personally have never looked at this as a business partnership," added Herndon. "I've been in recovery for some time now. That song was written from that place. And to see it jump over not only to Kevin but to so many people who can put their challenges and their victorious outcomes in this little song has blown me away beyond belief. There was a time I felt so alone, in my own struggles, but to find out that I wasn't alone at all, to know that Kevin feels that, that's the payoff right there, to know that this guy is kicking it out there, fighting for his life ... He's not alone."

[ALSTherapyAlliance.org](http://ALSTherapyAlliance.org), [KevinTurnerFoundation.org](http://KevinTurnerFoundation.org)



Little Big Town presents \$1,000 to Chicago's Little Kids Rock youth music program on behalf of Drive 4 the Music (l-r) Jimi Westbrook and Kimberly Schlapman of Little Big Town; Mercedes Roncone (in hat), Jon Voegelé, Regional Vice President, Agency, Country Financial; Karen Fairchild of Little Big Town; Mina Marroquin-Crow; Phillip Sweet of Little Big Town; Oscar Klonsky Gradel; and Jennifer Klonsky, Little Rock Kids Ambassador for Chicago.

**LITTLE BIG TOWN**

## Sings Out for Music Education with Country Financial

Those who dedicate themselves to a good cause often feel a yearning to do even more. That was the situation faced by Little Big Town partly as a result of their support for CMA's Keep the Music Playing initiative.

"We're big fans of what CMA is doing with Keep the Music Playing," said group member Karen Fairchild. "We loved watching how it so powerfully affected education in Nashville. So we thought, 'How can we do this on the road with local communities where we're going to do shows?'"

The answer was in their backyards — or, actually, at the venues on their itinerary. COUNTRY Financial was already a tour sponsor, and when they began talking about sowing some positive seeds on the road, they quickly hatched a campaign called "Drive for the Music."

Through the end of this year at selected Little Big Town headline concerts, COUNTRY Financial will set up an area where fans can play games, win prizes and get access to photo opportunities. At the same time, those who aren't in the area can log onto [Facebook.com/tripsandpicks](http://Facebook.com/tripsandpicks) to win tickets, backstage parties, MP3 downloads, view behind-the-scenes Webisodes and photos posted and updated by the band, and take part in discussions with other fans. Facebook fans who "like" the Trips and Picks page can also help kids enhance their music education as part of the "Drive 4 the Music" effort at select tour stops. COUNTRY Financial will make a donation to a youth music program for every fan "like" an organization receives in the "Drive 4 the Music" section on the Facebook page.

"Being associated with Country Music helps us get in touch with an audience that values what COUNTRY Financial offers and likes to do business with us," said Keith Brannan, VP, Strategic Marketing and Financial Security Planning, COUNTRY Financial. "And Drive 4 the Music is just one more way we're involving that audience in making our communities better."

The campaign began in Nashville, where COUNTRY Financial was able to fund 2,000 music lessons for students at the W.O. Smith Music School following the group's concert at Bridgestone Arena. Similar contributions have been donated in Chicago and Minneapolis, with upcoming dates including Seattle, Rockford, Ill., Huntsville, Ala., Birmingham, Kansas City, Madison, Wis. and Atlanta.

"COUNTRY Financial does the advance work to get us together with the right organization in each market, so we know that the money will be spent wisely," Fairchild said. "Their goal is to create a once-in-a-lifetime experience for a young Country Music fan to come backstage and have a personal, intimate time with the artist. They're giving them that and in return we hopefully get a lifetime fan out of it."

"Country Music is extremely popular with many of the people in communities we serve," Brannan added. "We're also family-oriented as a business, so we fit very well with Little Big Town. The way they tour with their families and children sends a message."

[Facebook.com/tripsandpicks](http://Facebook.com/tripsandpicks); [LittleBigTown.com](http://LittleBigTown.com)

# stars brighten the night as ABC airs "CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL: COUNTRY'S NIGHT TO ROCK"

by BOB DOERSCHUK

What will viewers see when they tune into "CMA Music Festival: Country's Night to Rock" on Sunday, Aug. 14? Plenty, as always: Electrifying performances by many of the brightest stars in Country Music, surprise appearances, up-close all-star nightclub jams and much, much more.

What they won't see is the work that goes on prior to and during the Festival, involving grand visions, attention to critical details and the inevitable unexpected events, all designed to make this special the hottest concert action on television.

"The very first thing I do, on Jan. 2, is start booking the Festival," said Executive Producer Robert Deaton. "This is an incredibly difficult proposition because we only have so many slots. It's also difficult to work with artist schedules and figure out what day they can do it."

Booking is ongoing through late April. During this time, Deaton pays attention to what's happening on the Country charts, always keeping an ear open for young acts that feel ready for the stadium show. At the same time, in late January, he begins a two-month process of working with set designers to make sure the shows explode visually as well as musically.

In late April or early May, work begins on the "board" — the outline for the actual television show. Deaton intentionally leaves two or three positions open to ensure that especially impressive performances can be added to the lineup.

"I'll give you an example," Deaton said. "We were going to include 'You Lie' by The Band Perry, which we did. But their set was so spectacular that we ended up using 'If I Die Young' as well. It was their first time at LP Field and they just completely nailed it, so this is a great coming-out party for them."

LP Field artists who will appear in this year's broadcast also include Trace Adkins, Jason Aldean with Kelly Clarkson, Dierks Bentley, Luke Bryan, Big & Rich with Gretchen Wilson, Sara Evans, Lady Antebellum, Miranda Lambert, Little Big Town, Martina McBride with "American Idol" runner-up Lauren Alaina, Brad Paisley with Alabama, Rascal Flatts, Reba, Darius Rucker, Blake Shelton, Sugarland, Taylor Swift, Josh Turner with "American Idol" winner Scotty McCreery, Keith Urban and Zac Brown Band with Alan Jackson. The special also includes club shows, interviews and a mini-documentary capturing McCreery and Alaina as they spend their first day at CMA Music Festival.

The number of collaborations onstage — Paisley with Alabama, for instance — distinguishes this year's show. "It just happened to work out that way," Deaton said. "And I think that's really positive; that's just added value for the fans."

Television audiences might notice a more technical difference as well, thanks to the first-time use of a Spidercam, a German-built camera suspended on two cables that allow simultaneous horizontal and vertical movement.

"It's basically the same cable cam they use in football games," Deaton noted. "Every year before, we had a Panavision Supertechno crane, which took up a huge footprint and cut out a couple hundred seats right beside the soundboard. This year, we felt the technology was good enough to apply the Spidercam for music. And it made a huge difference. It's incredibly dynamic. You can go from the top of one side of the stadium all the way down into the bowl, come up all the way across and then go all the way to the left side."

There will also be a significant increase in the area of integrating fans into the action. As introduced last year, the viewing audience will be invited to text-to-win, with the prize being a guitar autographed by artists from the show. Facebook will also become a platform for live interaction: At one point in the broadcast, Martina McBride will alert fans to visit [Facebook.com/CMA](https://www.facebook.com/CMA) for a chance to view bonus content and register to win \$5,000. During the Jason Aldean and Rascal Flatts segments, screen callouts will direct viewers to head to the same Facebook page for an extra performance by each act, recorded but not included in the network show.

"CMA Music Festival: Country's Night to Rock" will be promoted through multiple media channels, including ABC, CMT, Comedy Central, DIY, ESPN, GAC, Hallmark Movie Channel, MTV, Nick at Nite, TLC, TV Land, VH1 and more. Several nationally syndicated radio shows will air promos, contests and sweepstakes, with promotions also heard on local stations in 29 markets. Hyper-targeted online advertising across platforms including Facebook, Google, Twitter and YouTube will support tune-in. [ABC.com](https://www.abc.com), [Field & Stream](https://www.fieldandstream.com) and [Outdoor Life](https://www.outdoorlife.com), [People.com](https://www.people.com) and other online and mobile channels, including [CMAfest.com](https://www.cmafest.com) and CMA's social network sites, will carry tune-in information.

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



photos: Donn Jones and John Russell

by TOM ROLAND

When Alison Krauss & Union Station released *Paper Airplane* in April, six years and five months had transpired since the release of their previous Rounder Records studio album, *Lonely Runs Both Ways*. That's a longer stretch of time than a college career, longer than a presidential term and almost as long as the six-year-nine-month span between The Beatles' first album and Paul McCartney's announcement that the Fab Four was history.

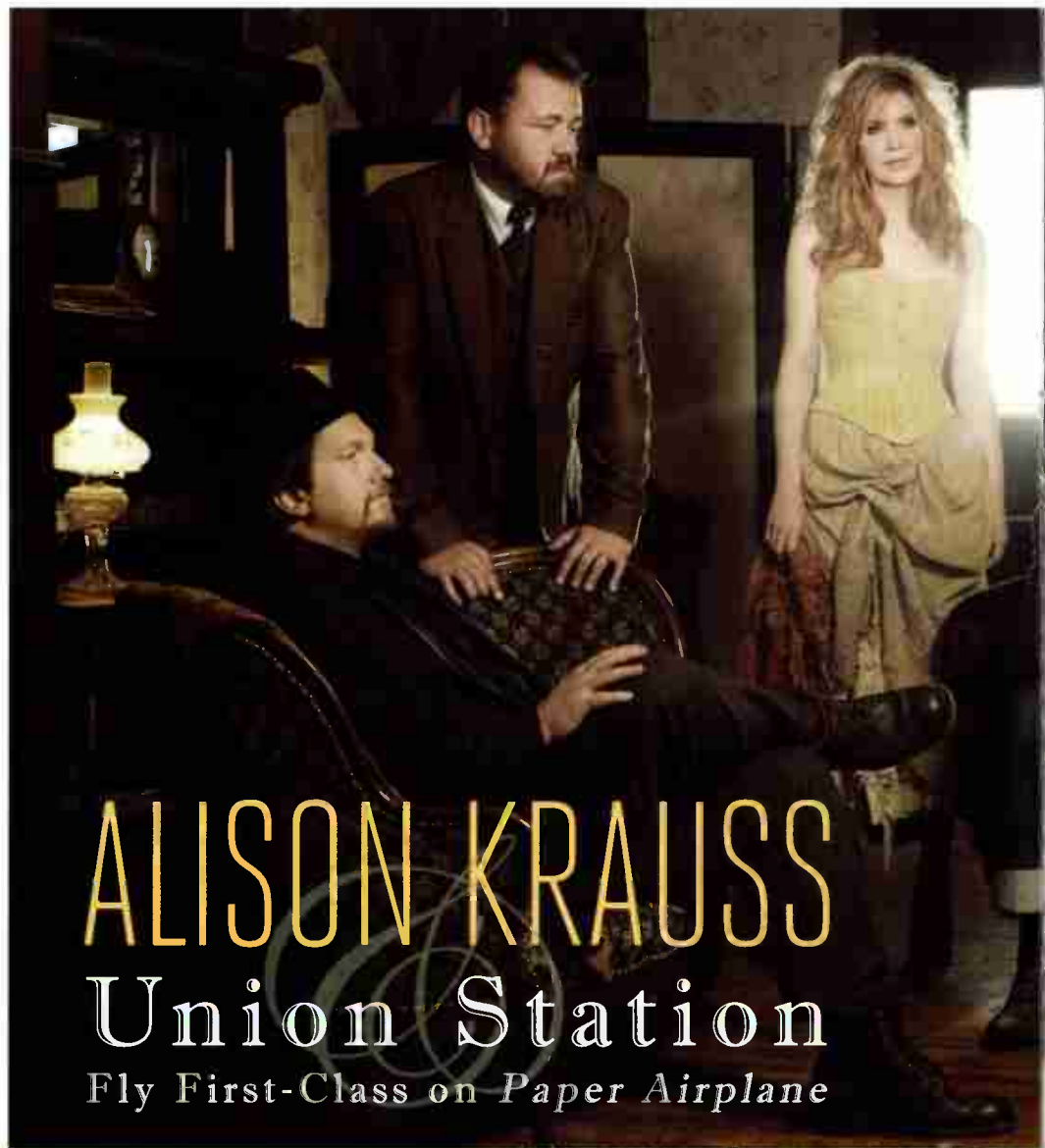
Considering how many phases The Beatles went through in that span, a lot can happen in six-plus years. And bluegrass music's Fab Five — bassist Barry Bales, banjo player Ron Block, Dobro legend Jerry Douglas, fiddle player and lead singer Krauss and guitarist Dan Tyminski — explored plenty of musical turf during their time apart.

Bales and Tyminski spent two years touring with The Dan Tyminski Band, an all-star conglomeration that included former Union Station mandolin player Adam Steffey. Block released a solo album and worked on a bevy of other projects, including both albums by new Rounder artist Sierra Hull. And the ever-industrious Douglas released *Glide*, an ambitious effort that drifted between bluegrass and jazz, in addition to working with Elvis Costello, Steve Martin, Johnny Mathis and John Oates, among other diverse acts.

You could also hear Block, Douglas and Tyminski in various combinations on the radio in the supporting grooves of Little Big Town's "Boondocks," Brad Paisley's "Ticks," Josh Turner's "Would You Go with Me" and Alan Jackson's "A Woman's Love," produced by Krauss.

The Jackson album, *Like Red on a Rose*, was just one of numerous non-Union Station departures for Krauss, who most notably pulled in CMA's 2008 Musical Event of the Year for "Gone Gone Gone (Done Moved On)." The track was a collaboration with Robert Plant and producer T Bone Burnett from *Raising Sand*, which netted the duo six Grammy Awards — including the 2008 all-genre Album of the Year — and led to a lengthy tour.

With all that activity behind them, Krauss and Union Station had something of a reunion when they began to record what would become *Paper Airplane*, but it wasn't easy. They all brought big expectations to the table, and the entire band produced the album, making for an interesting mix of viewpoints in the early going.



# ALISON KRAUSS

## Union Station

Fly First-Class on *Paper Airplane*

"It took a lot of adjusting to get back there," Krauss reflected. "It was so long since we'd done that kind of process together."

*Paper Airplane* was, she concedes, the most difficult project the band has created since she introduced the original lineup in her 1987 debut *Too Late to Cry*. When they first went into the studio with engineer/mixer Mike Shipley, Krauss, who picks the bulk of the material, was somewhat noncommittal about the results. She was battling recurrent migraine headaches and simply could not see through the pain to make any serious assessments about the direction they were following. In fact, she wasn't even sure whether the band was coalescing after nearly seven years of separation.

"It's hard to judge because I was feeling so bad," she said. "It's really hard to know how those first initial get-togethers would have gone if I had felt better. I know that we were excited to go in, we had some nice things, but it's hard to tell. I was in such a cloud."

The sessions ground to a halt while Krauss waited for the headaches to pass. During that recess, she also looked for new material. At one point, she phoned songwriter Robert Lee Castleman, who had previously penned "Restless," "The Lucky One" and other tunes recorded by Union Station. After they talked about the issues that were dogging her, he was able to find inspiration in her gray skies, matching her uncertainty to a melancholy melody he'd been toying with.

By that evening, he'd finished "Paper Airplane," the title track and first single for the album. Its lonely ethereal tone allowed Krauss to find the quiet, expressive core of her creative spirit. Once that centerpiece was established, some of the songs from the first round of sessions found their place as well.

"I think the album has a vulnerable quality to it," Tyminski observed. "I'll just credit it with the way Alison picks material. That's her thing. She loves to find songs, she loves the hunt and she loves when things work together."



Photo: Randee St. Nicholas  
 Jerry Douglas, Dan Tyminski, Alison Krauss, Barry Bales and Ron Block

*Paper Airplane* weaves a fragile quality through many of its tracks, including the Celtic-inflected “Lie Awake” (written by Krauss’ brother Viktor Krauss and Angel Snow), the plaintive “Sinking Stone” (Jeremy Lister), the haunting “Dimming of the Day” (Richard Thompson) and the closer, Jackson Browne’s “My Opening Farewell.”

Along this journey, Krauss sets an extraordinarily personal atmosphere, allowing the listener to feel connected with her. She’s long been able to achieve this effect, though she is stumped when asked how she does it.

“I like to sing without any reverb on my voice,” she said, after a pause for thought. “I know that they’re always asking how far I am from the microphone. Whoever is engineering, they’re always like, ‘How far are you away? Scoot in or scoot out.’ I don’t know. Maybe there’s more going on than I think.”

More likely, Krauss has simply reached a point where the art is second nature. The intimacy of her recordings reflects her ability to perform the songs in a manner that pulls the listener toward her.

“When you listen to her sing live, she does the same thing,” Tyminski noted. “She could sing ‘Mary Had a Little Lamb’ and you’d be crying about how white the fleece

was. It’s as much her performance as the type of songs she chooses. Of course, when you couple those two together, it can touch you very deeply.”

Not that her delicate qualities are *Paper Airplane’s* only asset. Tyminski, in particular, provides a sturdy, hard-edged counterpoint to Krauss. He takes the lead vocal on three tracks, two of which — a cover of Peter Rowan’s Depression-era saga “Dustbowl Children” and Sidney Cox’s seafaring tale “Bonita and Bill Butler” — balance her subtle femininity with a masculine resonance. Where her songs tend to look inward, Tyminski’s material, usually picked by Krauss, often has a more external, narrative character.

“I have a view of Dan; it’s not necessarily Dan’s view of Dan,” Krauss said, with a laugh. “I feel like no one can touch Dan where, I always say, he’s singing against the elements. Dan always tells me, ‘You like me as a soldier or a farmer.’ I want him to be a soldier or a farmer when I think of how strong and passionate his voice is, that’s what works. That story works best when there’s nothing you can do about something. It’s basically a big plea of ‘Why?’ Or they’re furious or passionate. Dan always rolls his eyes about it.”

Krauss can understand his reaction. While she’s the acknowledged leader of Union Station, she ceded that role in her work with Plant and Burnett on *Raising Sand*. She’d worked previously with Burnett on the soundtracks to “Cold Mountain” and the octuple-Platinum “O Brother, Where Art Thou?,” which included Tyminski singing lead on The Soggy Bottom Boys’ “I Am a Man of Constant Sorrow.” When recording *Raising Sand*, she let the producer take the lead in guiding her and Plant.

“That’s the longest I’ve worked with somebody making an album,” she said. “*Raising Sand* was completely T Bone’s taste. Robert and I put ours aside, which is what we wanted to do and the right thing to do, and went with T Bone. I had decided that when he says it’s good, it’s good. That’s what I said in my mind about my own vocals. This wasn’t about my personality. This record was about my personality in this environment.”

From her work with Burnett, Krauss did pick up a different insight in how to build a vocal performance. Previously, she had followed the prevalent routine of “comping” vocals, *i.e.* recording a bundle of takes and allowing the producer to graft the best lines and syllables from all of them into one all-star performance. After working with Burnett, though, she built each of *Paper Airplane’s* vocal tracks around the most emotive complete performance. She still did some overdubs to improve certain phrases, but the new approach made every song more cohesive at a soul level.

“It’s a pain to get there, whether or not you have a stuffy nose, your hair is parted on the wrong side, whatever it is,” she said. “But when you finally get in there, it’s pretty romantic to have that time with a piece of music that is true for you, a lyric that makes real sense. There’s something really romantic about it being forever when you’re in there singing it for real in the studio. For me, the meaning changes, the pictures change without me trying to make them change. It’s a pretty special time.”

Krauss’ willingness to be just one of the tools of Burnett’s vision on *Raising Sand* is mirrored in *Paper Airplane* by Union Station. Though exceptional players, none takes a lengthy solo. Instead, short instrumental sections provide sonic shading and spotlight the songs.

“That’s a key to any band’s success,” observed Tyminski. “You have at least some like-mindedness on that level. Everyone has to be aware that if you’re in a band, just the word itself signifies that there is a bigger picture than what any one contributor might offer. You absolutely have to be aware of what’s going on around you, and we’re all very conscious of trying to make everyone look good.”

“We’re very lucky that everybody is about the song,” Krauss added. “Everybody is committed to the tune itself. To have so many different personalities and tastes and ideas and be that committed to what needs to happen is pretty amazing.”

**AlisonKrauss.com**

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– Dan Tyminski  
 on  
 Alison Krauss

The *Billboard* Country Music Summit, presented in association with CMA, launched in 2010 as part of the activities leading up to CMA Music Festival. Taking advantage of the presence of so many music industry leaders in Nashville to attend the Festival, this two-day event provided a forum for these leaders to address issues of mutual concern face-to-face.

**A**t this year's Summit, which took place June 6 and 7 at the Renaissance Nashville Hotel, the mood seemed significantly upbeat as the focus shifted from problems of the past to the possibilities offered by business models, tools and opportunities that had never existed before.

In addition to receptions (one of which featured a performance by Kellie Pickler), roundtable discussions, reports on CMA research studies and artist Q&A sessions with Jason Aldean, Kenny Chesney and Carrie Underwood, this year's Summit centered around nine in-depth discussion panels on topics that included corporate sponsorship, international markets, management, publishing, radio, record labels, social commerce and online retail, songwriting and touring.

Four key themes permeated all of the panels and artist interviews: The fan is still the focal point of Country Music. Authenticity is the crucial attribute for artist success and the continued health of the genre. Social media and social commerce are at the heart of everything now. And partnerships continue to be integral to Country Music's growth and success.

"There's a community that's unique to Country. All parties — artists, radio, labels and listeners — are on an equal playing field. This is unheard of in pop."

— Skip Bishop, Senior VP, Promotion, Sony Music Nashville

**THE FAN** The unique, tight relationship between artists and fans has always been fundamental to Country Music culture and played a key role in distinguishing Country from other types of music. As Steve Blatter, Senior VP, Music Programming, Sirius XM Satellite Radio, expressed on the radio panel ("Country Radio Dead or Alive? Why and How Country Radio Thrives While Other Formats Fight for Their Lives"), "The passion levels among Country listeners are higher than any other format — and higher than ever."

Skip Bishop, Senior VP, Promotion, Sony Music Nashville, expanded on the phenomenon, describing working in Country radio as "another planet" compared to other formats. "There's a community that's unique to Country," he noted. "All parties — artists, radio, labels and listeners — are on an equal playing field. This is unheard of in pop."

As a result, "super-servicing" Country fans was a key theme across every panel. Brian O'Connell, President of Country Touring, Live Nation, put it succinctly on the touring panel ("Touring Saturation: Are We There Yet?"): "The easiest formula for failure? Ignore the fans. Ultimately, the fans vote." And on the social commerce panel ("Songs in the Stream: Social Commerce and the Future of Online Retail"), Patrick Faucher, Co-Founder, Nimbit, noted that regardless of changes in technology, platforms and the like, "one constant will remain: the value of the qualified relationship between artist and fan."

**AUTHENTICITY** So how did the Country Music industry manage to cultivate and maintain such "fan ferocity," as CMA CEO Steve Moore

## NEW HORIZONS and CLEARER GOALS

described it in his opening remarks? The key, for the music as well as the artists who perform it, is authenticity. Many panel discussions centered on phrases like "keeping it real," "being believable" and "making intimate, personal connections with fans."

On the record label panel ("Making and Selling Recorded Music: Telling Time or Building a Watch? The New Record Label Business Models Under a Microscope"), Tom Baldrice, President, Average Joes Entertainment, observed that in today's culture, the public wants authenticity "from their actors to their politicians to their sports heroes," and Country Music gives it to them.

Much discussion examined the propensity of Country performers to reach out to fans by participating in meet-and-greet events and staying after shows for hours to sign autographs, shake hands and connect with fans one-on-one. On "The Manager Roundtable," which served as the Summit's industry keynote, Bernie Cahill, Founder and Partner, ROAR, which manages Zac Brown Band, noted that "fan initiatives are expensive and can even be money losers but make total marketing sense for the long career." Andrew Mains, VP, Artist and Label Relations, Topspin Media, explained on the social commerce panel, "The content and message that the artist offers is what's of value. The more you can hone and refine it, the better." Fellow panelist Mike Doernberg, CEO, ReverbNation, added, "Most of all, the message must be genuine, no matter what form it takes."

**SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL COMMERCE** Fortunately for Country Music, an invaluable vehicle has emerged for both connecting with and conveying authenticity to fans: social media. By extension, social commerce (essentially, buying and selling influenced by others, similar to how Girl Scout Cookies are promoted by friends, families and co-workers) now offers an ideal method for capitalizing on the deep artist/fan relationships encouraged by social media interaction. Doernberg described the process as "socially-driven commerce," explaining that "it's all about using social media to expand your fan base and then reach your fans' friends."

More than any other topic on the agenda, social media and social commerce appear to have moved beyond the artist/fan relationship to affect every facet of the Country Music industry since the 2010 Summit, in terms of both their impact and how to take advantage of them. Although one panel was devoted exclusively to the topic of social commerce, participants spoke up about the importance of social media, social networking and social commerce on every panel.

On the record label panel, the animated and refreshingly direct Jay Frank, Senior VP, Music Strategy, CMT, stated, "Even though (social media) is only one piece of the puzzle, if you're not talking about it, you're nothing." Ali Harnell, Senior VP, AEG Live/The Messina Group, echoed the sentiment on the touring panel, observing that "social media is the big 'it factor' now." On the corporate partnerships panel ("Corporate America: They Really Like Us"), Laura Hutfless, Sponsorship Agent, Creative Artists Agency, added "the first thing potential corporate partners ask for is social media numbers." Nimbit's Faucher said, "social media has become a pivotal outlet for our industry and we're just getting started."

The same applies as much abroad as it does in the United States. As Rob Potts, CEO of Australia's Rob Potts Entertainment Edge, explained on the international touring panel ("Country Without Borders:

# The Second Annual Billboard Country Music Summit in Association with CMA

by **NANCY MORAN** and **FETT**

International Opportunities in Country Music”), social networking is “an integral part of everything we do. It’s a key tool in following up and capitalizing after the visit. Social media will come to dominate the whole process from a marketing and advertising point of view.” Explaining why social media is particularly important in foreign markets, Brad Turcotte, International Director of Marketing, Big Machine Label Group, stated that “in third-world markets, even when people don’t have a computer, they’re likely to have a cell phone” — and by extension, access to social media.

**PARTNERSHIPS** While one panel was devoted specifically to product-oriented partnerships between corporations and artists, it was clear that artists, labels, publishers, tour promoters, venues, radio and all other sectors of the music industry would more likely attain their goals by working together in partnerships. On the corporate front, there are more and bigger brand-to-artist relationships than ever, but panelists stressed that in order to work effectively, partnerships need to be truly collaborative and go far beyond simple endorsements or sponsorship deals.

Several such branding partnerships were highlighted, including those between Jason Aldean and Country Financial, Toby Keith and Ford Trucks, Lady Antebellum and Brita water filters and Zac Brown Band and Kingsford Charcoal. As Tom Gossin of the band Gloriana put it, artists can be a “living billboard” for a brand, connecting the brand to fans through social media and performances, adding that “we would not be where we are now as an act without partnerships.”

In every case, panelists stressed that it’s critical for the relationship to be a good, natural fit, both for the brand and the artist. As ROAR Entertainment’s Cahill stressed, “You have to pick your partners really carefully.”

One reason often cited for the increased importance of partnerships in the Country world is that, with ongoing changes in the industry, the lines between each component are blurring, creating a need for them to rely more heavily on each other to address the total picture. Gossin explained that his band Gloriana’s partnerships with the Milk Rocks! campaign in schools and Quaker Chewy Granola Bars were driven partly by the fact that marketing budgets at record labels are shrinking.

Echoing the sentiment, Doc McGhee, President, McGhee Entertainment, who manages Rodney Atkins and Darius Rucker among other artists, explained that labels can’t as easily “service” artists as they have in the past, the result being that firms like his have had to evolve from “artist management companies to entertainment companies, through many strategic partnerships with smaller companies who handle all aspects of an act’s career.” Similarly, Chris DuBois, Partner, Sea Gayle Music, said that “publishers are doing artist development now instead of or in addition to labels.”

But even today’s leaner, meaner and savvier labels have come to view the artists not simply as acts on their roster but as strategic business partners. As Average Joes Entertainment’s Baldrice put it, “We use a ‘much bigger picture’ model and get very deep into the business of each artist and developing a plan.”



“Country Without Borders” panelists Ron Kitchener, President, RGK Entertainment Group; Rob Potts, CEO, Rob Potts Entertainment Edge; Jeff Walker, President, The AristoMedia Group; Judy Seale, President/CEO, Judy Seale International; Joe Nichols; Brad Turcotte, International Director, Marketing, The Big Machine Label Group; and Tommy Emmanuel.



Wade Jensen, Senior Chart Manager, *Billboard*, interviews Carrie Underwood at her Superstar Q&A.



Ray Waddell, Executive Director of Content and Programming for Touring and Live Entertainment, *Billboard*, interviews Kenny Chesney at his Superstar Q&A.



Larry Fitzgerald, Founder/Owner, The Fitzgerald-Hartley Co.; Kellie Pickler; and Gary Overton, Chairman/CEO, Sony Music Nashville.



Keynote Artist Development Case Study: Jason Aldean, Sponsored by SunTrust Bank attendees Andrew Kintz, Managing Director, SunTrust Bank; Jason Aldean; and Ray Waddell.



“Corporate America: They Really Like Us” panelists Marcie Allen, President, MAC Presents; Stacey Portnoy, Regional Marketing Manager, Samsung; Tom Gossin of Gloriana; and Laura Hutfless, Sponsorship Agent, Creative Artists Agency.



Bill Werde, Editorial Director, *Billboard*; Lisa Ryan Howard, Publisher, *Billboard*; and CMA CEO Steve Moore.

photos: Beth Gwinn



by DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

With the release of his self-titled solo debut album, Ronnie Dunn just might be the best-known newcomer in Country Music history. For 20 years he was half of the phenomenally successful duo Brooks & Dunn, which won 19 CMA Awards and dominated the Country duo scene. Now the veteran singer/songwriter is starting over as a solo act, though he admits this transition hasn't exactly been easy.

**I** just panicked," he admitted. "I just pushed the panic button and took off running in circles and recorded 34 songs before it was all over. I finally had to bring it down to 11 and went back in and negotiated to get it up to 12. But I was all over the map."

At the same time, lots of well-meaning folks were offering advice. For example, in suggesting a way to establish an individual identity after his long partnership with Kix Brooks, "I had one guy at the label tell me, 'Whatever you do, don't say 'honky-tonk,'" Dunn said. "There were people in my own camp who said, 'Hey, you just left a really good paying job, dude. What was that about? Did you think about this before you said 'I'm going off on my own?'"

"I was certainly helped by a lot of good people, but I'd never felt so alone in my life," he remembered. "All of a sudden, everyone just went, 'OK, well, go do what you've got to do and I hope it works out for you.'"

In the process of defining himself as a solo artist, Dunn acknowledges that he began to overthink and overanalyze. He credits his wife Janine with helping him regain his focus by encouraging him to take some time alone and evaluate who he had become as an artist. "She said, 'You came home off your tour, you got 'COWBOY' tatted from your elbow to your wrist. Are

you off to be David Allan Coe? Or are you on a quest to become Willie? You need to figure that out and put it down on a record.'"

That process of making a solo statement proved very different from how Brooks & Dunn had worked together. "The song selection was different," Dunn pointed out. "I didn't have to keep in mind as I was picking songs that, 'Hey, there are two guys here, two guys onstage, two guys performing' and deal with that. This is much more personal and subjective; it gave an entirely different slant, obviously. I'd cut three or four demos sometimes and the players were great about working with me. They said, 'We'll do a demo first, and then if it makes the record, we'll come in and bump it up.' They were really, really good. I've got to hand it to them. It allowed me to find myself."

And what exactly did he find in the process of writing or co-writing nine of the album's 12 tracks, producing the sessions himself and working on his own? "A great epiphany: I found out that I'm totally confused and I'm good with that," he responded, with a laugh. "I'm consistently inconsistent. I'm all of the above. I'm OK. I'm a work in progress. That's my next tattoo somewhere."

He also found that, for all the freedom he enjoyed on this project, echoes



of Brooks & Dunn linger in the final results. "That's not going away," he said. "It's on this record. It's there. That's a part of my DNA that I can't wash off."

"Ronnie Dunn's voice is Ronnie Dunn's voice," said his manager Clarence Spalding, President, Spalding Entertainment. "You're not going to be able to hide that, whether he's the lead singer of Brooks & Dunn or whether he's moving forward in his solo career. From a song standpoint, there are some that are going to remind people of things Brooks & Dunn have done in the past. But there are others that Kix and Ronnie wouldn't have done, 'Bleed Red' (written by Andrew Dorff and Tommy Lee James) being one of them and 'Cost of Livin' (Phillip Coleman and Dunn). Ronnie worked really hard on this record and it shows."

"Clarence and I were committed to allowing Ronnie the freedom to craft a truly extraordinary album," added Gary Overton, Chairman and CEO, Sony Music Nashville. "And whether you trust your own ears, those of the fans or those of the critics who have raved about this record, Ronnie accomplished that goal. I would put this album up against the greatest records in Country Music."

Dunn's first solo performance was a promotional set in Las Vegas, but he considers his first "official" show to have been April 16 at the Belterra Casino Resort in Florence, Ind. "The show in Indiana was the real telltale thing because I'm thinking, 'You know what? They are either doing one of two things: They're coming in to watch it explode or they are here to get onboard,'" he recalled. "After the first two songs into it, they were dancing in the aisles and we were having a good time."

Dunn says that he invested more time in rehearsal with his new band than he'd ever done before. One question presented itself immediately: What should the balance be between new songs and Brooks & Dunn classics in the live show? "It's that same old quandary that a lot of people face: 'Hey, do I do Eagles songs too or do I do Creedence songs?'" he said, alluding to the situation faced by Don Henley of the Eagles and John Fogerty of Creedence Clearwater Revival when they stepped out solo.

In the end, Dunn decided to feature six or seven tracks from his solo disc, mingled with Brooks & Dunn hits. His set now includes "Let the Cowboy Rock" (Dunn and Dallas Davidson), "Singer in a Cowboy Band" (Dunn and Craig Wiseman) and "Your Kind of Love" (Maile Misajon and Jeremy Stover), along with the album's first single, "Bleed Red," and "Cost of Livin'."

"It's crazy," Dunn said, describing the response especially to "Cost of Livin'," the new album's second single. "People are standing up and throwing their fists in the air on that one. And during the Country Radio Seminar (CRS) we had 30 or 40 radio people in a Sony suite at the hotel, and they were going at it, wanting that record as soon as they heard it. They were like, 'We can't get it fast enough,' so it's going to be interesting to see how that does."

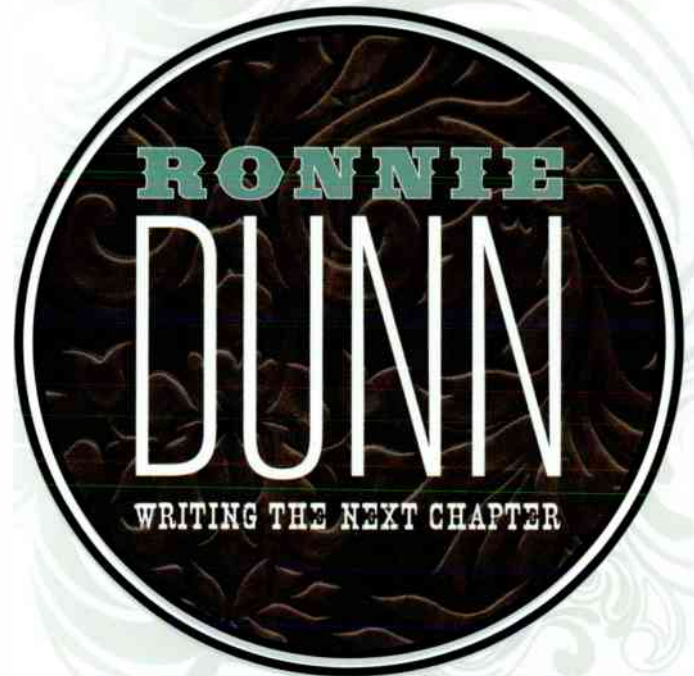
The poignant lyric paints a portrait of a proud man desperately seeking a job in this tough economic climate. "I had one guy tell me that I was too rich to do that," Dunn said. "I said, 'Let me send you the picture of me standing in front of that trailer house in New Mexico when my dad was working on the Navajo Dam.' I didn't grow up middle class. I grew up poor. That song hits home. I get it. I feel every note."

Dunn describes this time in his life as both "exciting and frightening," with initial indicators suggesting there's more reason for excitement than fright. On its release in June, *Ronnie Dunn* sold more than 45,000 copies and debuted at No. 1 on the Country charts and No. 5 on the *Billboard* Top 200. Still, as he plunges ahead as a solo act, he has renewed his appreciation for what new artists have to do as they lay groundwork for their debuts.

"The label took me around and we'd bring in around 30 or 40 people in each of the different regions," he said. "We started in San Francisco and invited representatives from iTunes and radio PDs and DJs out there. Then I went to Dallas for two days and met with Clear Channel. In Florida, we had a house on the beach and a listening party. And then I went to South Carolina. I made the rounds. It's been from the ground up. I remember doing this years and years ago and working it hard."

"We went out to radio with Ronnie Dunn as a new act," confirmed Spalding. "He visited radio and we held events for radio. We wanted them to touch and feel Ronnie Dunn. Being part of the duo, they knew who Ronnie was. But they didn't really know Ronnie, so we made sure program directors spent time with him and he got to talk about his record."

From a record label perspective, Overton remarks that while there are challenges in re-launching an established star, Dunn's passion goes a long way. "Ronnie still has the fire to make new great music," he noted. "So we consider his past successes a tremendous starting point for this next chapter in his career. I can't imagine what Country Music would be without Ronnie Dunn's voice."



On the road this summer, Dunn confronts a different scenario than he experienced with Brooks & Dunn. "There are some festivals that are booked that I heard we are going on at 4 in the afternoon," he said. "I'm used to headlining, but that's fine. We'll play at 4 and do what we have to do. It's time to back up and instead of having eight buses out there, I'm pushing to get just two — one little truck and horse trailer to pull our amps and stuff behind us. It's just a growing experience."

Will he miss having his old partner on the road? "Hell, no! And that's exactly how he would answer that question," Dunn said, with a laugh. "Do I miss him? We're still good friends. I hear from him every few weeks or so. Kix and I were able to work it smoothly as I think it can be done in a partnership, and I'm proud of that. I'll be forever proud of that. That is something that I can look back on and go, 'Man, what a feat for two ne'er-do-wells to accomplish!' And I'm happy that both of us can walk away in great shape and good spirits and tackle things that we like and look forward to doing."

Dunn's goals at this point are simple yet ambitious: "To keep moving forward in a business that is tremendously hard to do that in and derive satisfaction from the music I make — that's it," he said. "I didn't do this to get rich or make money. I didn't do it to become famous. I did it because I was a shy kid and it was about the only thing that I could do. I gravitated early on in life to something that I love and chose as a way of life. I don't think I could change that if I wanted to."

[RonnieDunn.com](http://RonnieDunn.com)

**"THERE WERE PEOPLE IN MY OWN CAMP WHO SAID, 'HEY, YOU JUST LEFT A REALLY GOOD PAYING JOB, DUDE. WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT?'"**

— Ronnie Dunn

# BABY BRANDS

## EVEN NEW ARTISTS CAN BENEFIT FROM CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

by JOSEPH HUDAK

Kenny Chesney's tropical brand of country and ice-cold Corona go together like, well, limes and beer, so the king of summer touring's partnership with the warm-weather brew is a natural fit. As Chesney himself once said, "Corona is the way I live my life."

But for other artists seeking endorsement deals — those without the name recognition of Chesney, Toby Keith (Ford) or Martina McBride (SunnyD) — finding the ideal sponsorship may take more time and effort. Nonetheless, those deals do exist, and many companies are ready and willing to partner up with a young, untested act. Why? It's inexpensive publicity with often very little risk — and today's up-and-coming unknown may become tomorrow's Taylor Swift.

"It's almost like 'American Idol.' We're looking for a look, a sound and somebody that we can cross-promote. And there's not a lot of risk, because you're not giving them a bunch of money," said Matt Schwitz, VP, Sales & Marketing, Miller International Inc., the parent company of Southern Thread, a brand that has clothing deals with a number of on-the-verge artists, including Kristen Kelly, Cory Morrow and the duo Rosehill. "We're always looking for up-and-coming endorsees and for people who have great cross-promotional ideas. Rosehill has a really nice Web site ([rosehill-live.com](http://rosehill-live.com)) and their look is good and their music is good. We like to take our up-and-comers and get them in our clothing and onstage. We help them and they help us."

That symbiotic relationship — you scratch our back, we'll

scratch yours — is the cornerstone of the deals. But according to Rosehill's manager Mike Kraski, who also represents Jimmy Wayne and Mark Wills, the artist should handle the bulk of the scratching. "You have to give more than the sponsor is looking for if you want the relationship to continue," he said. "That's certainly the first gospel I preach to my clients: Make sure you're giving them more than they're expecting. Then you can grow together and it is a fruitful relationship."

Tom Lord, VP, Marketing, Universal Music Group Nashville, agrees. He's currently overseeing a deal between Mrs. Sullivan's Pies and Ashton Shepherd, by no means an unknown act but an artist who still has some ways to go toward household recognition. "It's the artist that ultimately sells a deal. They have to like a product. They have to live the life. If you want somebody to work with Kraft Foods, you'd better hope that they make Kraft Macaroni & Cheese at their house.

"It's a great fit," Lord continued, focusing on Shepherd. "She is true Southern Country and Mrs. Sullivan's Pies are a true Southern cuisine, if you will. This year, on 600,000 pie packages, we have a sweepstakes where you can hear Ashton Shepherd's new single and win a trip to meet her. It's a way for us to get in a retail outlet, like Family Dollar, that we normally couldn't get into."

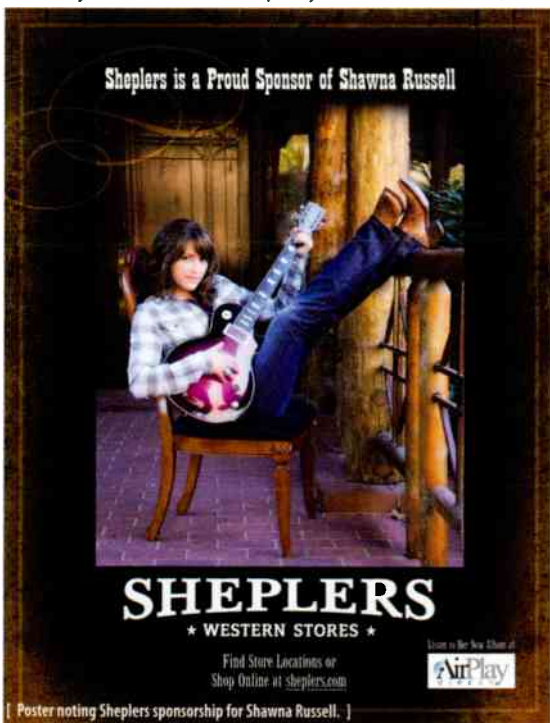
Such inventive deals are becoming integral to establishing artists in today's crowded climate. Clif Doyal, owner of the Clif Doyal Agency, searches constantly for out-of-the-box prospects that would benefit his client, Oklahoma's Shawna Russell. "In the changing dynamic of the music business, it's more important now than ever for artists to look at nontraditional ways to help not only strengthen their brand but to hitch their wagon to established brands," he said. "It all comes down to visibility."

As Russell's manager, publicist and co-owner of her independent label, Way Out West Records, Doyal has helped secure partnerships with companies including Mach Speed Technologies MP3 players, the Oklahoma City branch of the Sheplers Western wear retail chain and the digital music delivery service AirPlay Direct. Still, he stresses that the AirPlay Direct partnership and Russell's recent appearance on the cover of the company's digital magazine *The Direct Buzz* were all initiated by AirPlay Direct's CEO Robert Weingartz, an enthusiastic supporter of Russell's.

"Shawna inspires me to be a better CEO because I know there are artists out there like her that are really able to put it to the wall," Weingartz said, praising Russell's work ethic and her performance on the AirPlay Direct download charts. "For us, as a brand, when we look for those types of artists that we're going to put money into, you want someone who believes in what we're doing and who knows it works because she has built her ecosystem around ours. You want an advocate out there. And Shawna has a unique ability to attract other independent artists to the AirPlay Direct platform."

She is also able to attract shoppers to the Sheplers store in Oklahoma City. In a sponsorship deal that's especially common for younger artists, Russell stages in-store meet-and-greets with customers and, in turn, receives clothing for herself and her band.

"It is goods and services coming from their side and exposure for their brand coming from our side," Doyal explained. "We started the relationship with Sheplers by what I'd call more of a soft sponsorship. Shawna comes into the store, signs some CDs, and she and her band benefit from being able to walk out with great new stage clothes. We have been able to expand that relationship into other Sheplers markets, including their Arlington, Texas, store. Shawna plays Billy Bob's in Fort Worth, so that was a logical step."



Kevin Lofton, Manager of Sheplers' Oklahoma City location, helped spearhead a more official partnership with Russell and Doyal after seeing the artist and her band perform in his store. "They came in and put on a concert, which we thought would help our business," he recalled. "And it did. We really enjoyed it and the customers enjoyed it, so we decided to work out some type of deal. They'll come down once or twice a month and park the tour bus outside, which always brings people in. They don't always play, but just having a table up front where Shawna will sign autographs, meet customers and take pictures with them is really good for our business."

Plus, it doesn't hurt that Russell is also from the Sooner State. "Shawna comes from small-town Oklahoma and we have customers that come from all over the state to our store," Lofton added. "Anybody local we want to try to help out as much as we can."

The importance of that local connection can't be discounted. While the ultimate goal for artists and their management may be a big-money deal with a worldwide corporation, it's best to think locally before dreaming globally. Often, smaller companies such as Southern Thread are more apt to help new artists launch their careers.

Kraski lauds them for all they've done for Rosehill. "This is a great company that understands the whole process of working from the beginning with an act and growing together," he said. "I think those are the kinds of companies that really understand how sponsorships and endorsements should work. It's easy when you're a triple-Platinum act to get people to give you money or have an association with you. But when you grow in a natural way, like Southern Thread has done with a number of Texas-based artists and now with Rosehill, I think it's more visionary."

The flip side is that many of these smaller companies secretly desire to become known as tastemakers, according to UMG Nashville's Lord. "They can be seen as the brand that is cutting-edge," he pointed out. "They're going to work for the consumer in a way. If it's a brand they trust, that brand can position themselves as the helpful partner, to say, 'Hey, we introduce some of the hottest new Country artists.'"

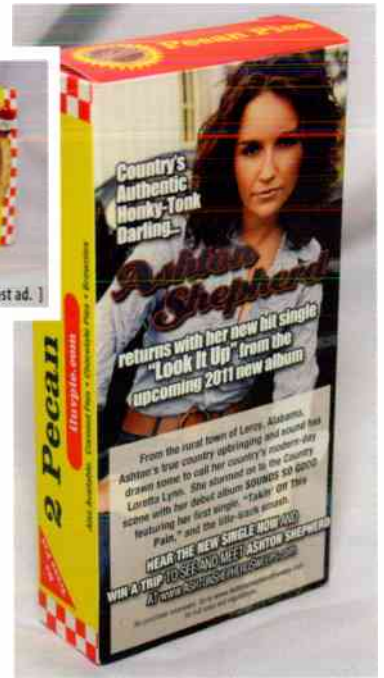
However, before any brand, business or company can champion a performer, they need to first know that they exist. For that, Lord said, "it's important that the artist be accessible. If we see one of our artists is going to be in Chicago or Dallas or wherever, we try to make that artist available to visit some agencies and play, shake some hands or invite those folks out to a show. At the end of the day, the brands really get behind something when they feel like it's their idea. They want to be the ones who go, 'Boy, that Ashton Shepherd is great. We'd like to be a part of her career.'"

While Shepherd has major-label support behind her, it's certainly not essential to securing a sponsorship. More important than that, Kraski says, is something that every artist, signed or unsigned, can afford: a little bit of hustle.

"Start by making a list of the products you like and the companies with whom you'd like to be associated," he advised. "Artists can certainly do that themselves. Then send an e-mail or pick up the phone. Don't be shy. The worst thing anyone can ever say to you is no. You have nothing to lose, and you're going to end up with some beneficial relationships as a result."



[ Mrs. Sullivan's Pies box with Ashton Shepherd contest ad. ]



**"WE'RE ALWAYS  
LOOKING FOR  
UP-AND-COMING  
ENDORSEES AND  
FOR PEOPLE WHO  
HAVE GREAT  
CROSS-PROMOTIONAL  
IDEAS."**

— Matt Schmitz, VP, Sales & Marketing,  
Miller International Inc.

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[ Rosehill's homepage with Southern Thread logo. ]

photos: Shepherd - Amanda Eckard-Rosehill - courtesy of Tenacity Records

# connie Smith

## HONORING the SOUND of CLASSIC COUNTRY

by TIM GHIANNI

*Long Line of Heartaches*, a steel-driven, purely traditional Country album, is Connie Smith's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday present to her decades of admirers. Her phrasing guides tales of heartbreak to lyrical climax, with her emphasis on words like "pain," "blue," "heartaches" and "cry" to creating a tapestry of sorrow and hope that should be as welcome today as it was in roadhouse jukeboxes 40 years ago.

"I'm excited about this," said the classic Country stylist as she relaxed in the Hendersonville, Tenn., home she shares with the record's producer, her best friend and husband, Marty Stuart.

"I am still her biggest fan," Stuart added. "She is one of the last voices of the most powerful era that ever happened in Country Music. She is of the Patsy Cline, Loretta, Tammy and Dolly lineage."

Stuart, who also produced her previous album, *Connie Smith* in 1998, admits that the pressure was on when he and his wife planned and executed the new album. "One of the things that helped me is that we lined up all of her records in one row — 53 of them," he said. "I wanted to make sure that this one fit into that lineage without breaking ranks."

"I think it falls right in line," agreed Smith, who was recently honored by the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum as its 2011 Artist-in-Residence.

Her story as an artist dates back to 1964, when her breakthrough single, "Once a Day" (written by Bill Anderson) spent eight weeks at No. 1, marking Smith as the first female Country artist whose debut charted at the top spot.

That was just the beginning. "Ain't Had No Lovin'" (Dallas Frazier), "I Never Once Stopped Loving You" (Anderson and Jan Howard), "If It Ain't Love (Let's Leave It Alone)" (Frazier), "Just One Time" (Don Gibson), "Run Away Little Tears" (Frazier), "The Hurtin's All Over" (Harlan Howard) and "Then and Only Then" (Anderson) are just a fistful of her hits.

The transition from her older work to this newest album was seamless for good reason. "My musical taste hasn't changed," she said. "What I look for in a song hasn't changed. I think there's a lot of good music to be made in this area and I'm proud to be making it."

Proud of sticking to her traditional aesthetic, Smith is also delighted to have found a record label that wanted her. "It's amazing that Sugar Hill even signed me," she said. "That was great. I remain tickled about that."

It's not so surprising to Gary Paczosa, VP, A&R, Sugar Hill Records. "I love Connie Smith," he stated. "I think she is one of the most underrated Country singers of all time. We are thrilled to have an artist of this caliber on Sugar Hill Records."

The label has already been a fitting home for Stuart, the onetime child prodigy with Lester Flatt's outfit who took some Country pop/rock detours before "coming home." "Traditional Country Music became the focus of my career," he insisted. "I fell back in love with Country Music."

Even so, producing *Long Line of Heartaches* wasn't an exercise in nostalgia. "It's not about reviving the past," he said. "It's about putting our arms around this music. My mission statement became to attempt to add another chapter to this music."

Creating that chapter was part of his motivation for coaxing his wife back into the studio for four days of traditional band-in-the-room recording in the summer of 2010. The bells and whistles of modern recording technique were available, but he and Smith opted for a production style focused on authenticity rather than sonic wizardry.

In pursuit of that authentic Connie Smith sound, there was just one studio he felt was right. "With Connie," he said, "I knew in her heart of hearts her home was Studio B. And I knew the room better after having recorded *Ghost Train — The Studio B Sessions* there. We'd been through the drill."

There was no hard sell needed to get Smith back into RCA Studio B, where Eddy Arnold, Chet Atkins, The Everly Brothers, Dolly Parton, Elvis Presley, Jim Reeves and many other giants of Country Music had recorded immortal sides. Smith was part of its history too, having cut "Once a Day" there in 1964.

The studio serves primarily as a tourist attraction these days. But even having fans push their noses against the glass to watch the *Long Line of Heartaches* sessions couldn't distract Smith and Stuart from their work.

"We had tours going by while we were recording," she said. "They were outside the windows. But honestly, while I'm recording, I'm too involved with what I'm doing and I don't pay much attention to anything else. I got too much into it and loving every minute of it. Studio B is special. There's a magical sound about it. It's just a great deal of joy to be back at Studio B to record. This is like coming home."

A part of that magic is especially accessible to artists familiar with the dimensions and sonic treats that are physically a part of the small room. "I know the studio," Smith explained. "I could control my voice by the sound of it hitting the wall. It has that terrific sound."

Of course, it's not just the studio that shapes a Connie Smith recording. She also brings the right songs before stepping up to the microphone. For the new album, she chose compositions by personal favorites, including Harlan Howard, Kostas and Johnny Russell. But the topper was that her longtime comrade Dallas Frazier, who left songwriting for the ministry 30 years ago, contributed a new song, "A Heart Like You."

"I didn't think we could get Dallas," Smith admitted. "For a long time, Dallas believed it was best for him not to write songs."

But eventually Frazier decided to pick up the pen again. The result, "A Heart Like You," co-written with Glenn Ashworth, is the 69<sup>th</sup> Frazier song that she has recorded. A selection from this catalog will be included in a Connie Smith boxed set, targeted for release later this year by Bear Family Records.

"Our ranges are similar," she said. "It is easy to learn his songs. And our hearts just match when it comes to songs. He's a very perceptive man."

Then there are the songs she has penned with her favorite writing partner. "I love writing with Marty," Smith said, who often appears with Stuart on "The Marty Stuart Show" on RFD-TV. "Marty is a great writer. He's so easy. If I throw out a line he doesn't like, he just tells me. 'Blue Heartaches,' on this record, we started writing 15 years ago, back when we were dating and writing songs. I had the idea to start it and we started writing it."

What began as a song written by two friends was finished by a loving married couple. Other examples of their collaboration, in addition to



"Blue Heartaches," on *Long Line of Heartaches* include the title cut, "I'm Not Blue," which they wrote with Kostas, "Pain of a Broken Heart" and "You and Me."

But "Mama's favorite," as Smith describes it, may well be "Take My Hand." Written by Diane Berry, it not only showcases her devotion and that of her husband to their Christian beliefs, it also features harmonies from their three daughters, Jeanne, Jodi and Julie. "You know for a mama, that's the proudest part of the record," she said, noting that only Jodi had ever sung in public before.

Her devotion to family partly explains the long gap in her discography up until now. "I've got five kids and seven grandkids," she pointed out. "I like being involved in their lives and in Marty's. I just felt like now was the time to record again. I'm going to be 70 and if I'm going to do it, I need to do it now. It was just time."

"She's in a great place," Stuart observed. "So much of her life has been spent trying to sort out the balance between family and career."

The element of time, as Stuart sees it, enhanced his ability to produce his wife's work beyond what he achieved with *Connie Smith* in 1996, a year before they married. "The straight answer is I know her a lot better now," he said. "I know her as a person. I know her heart more. I know we've lived through a lot of things together. I know her musical soul and depth."

From Smith's perspective, she has gotten to know the producer so much better now that "I get to go home with him when we're done recording," she said, with a laugh.

It wasn't until the package was done that Smith and Stuart took it to Sugar Hill. It was the only place they wanted to shop it but they also wanted to make sure they had the right product.

"This feels like a Connie Smith masterpiece," said Stuart.

"Anytime she sings is special. That's the way it is. Things happen out there in the air and the atmosphere when Connie aims her voice at certain things."

"I want to show people that traditional Country Music is alive and it's still possible to do Country Music," added Smith. "I don't have great aspirations for this record. I'm just glad it's available. There have been so many people who have been faithful to me for my whole career, I'm just glad to have something available for them to listen to."

[ConnieSmithMusic.com](http://ConnieSmithMusic.com)

"There's a lot of good music to be made in this area, and I'm proud to be making it." —Connie Smith

# Ride the Stream

HOW TO BOOST ARTIST IMPACT THROUGH LIVE CONCERTS ONLINE

by FETT

Lately it seems as if every few months there's a new technology offering artists opportunities to get closer to their fans — and vice versa. One that's catching on fast is streaming live concerts over the Internet in real time. The considerations are numerous, but so are the benefits. If you're interested in getting into this market, the steps toward success are not nearly as hard as they might seem.

When Sugarland decided to stream their New York show, they approached American Express to make the event part of its "Amex: Unstaged" concert series, jointly presented by Amex, YouTube and the music video and entertainment site VEVO. They were the first Country act to appear in the series, which had opened Aug. 5 with Arcade Fire and presented John Legend and The Roots the following month. But Sugarland delivered the largest audience to date in the series, thus giving Amex access to a very broad audience of potential new cardholders. At the same time, Amex could offer Sugarland access to its existing base of cardholders who might not yet have discovered the group or embraced the Country genre as a whole.

ZAC BROWN BAND AT RED ROCKS AMPHITHEATRE



**[ DEVELOP A CONCEPT AND PICK THE RIGHT SHOW ]** Just streaming any ordinary concert on the Internet won't give you nearly the impact you could make with a little extra planning. The two essential points are to make the stream part of a wider concept and to make sure the event itself is truly special.

Sugarland chose to stream their show at the Nokia Theatre on Times Square (now the Best Buy Theater) in New York City because the date fell on the night before the release of their album, *The Incredible Machine*; the event became an integral component of the album's promotional campaign. By contrast, Zac Brown Band chose to stream their live show at Red Rocks Amphitheatre, deep in the Rocky Mountains near Morrison, Colo., because of the venue's stunning beauty; its almost surreal scenery became a major feature of the concert's streamed footage. And Jo Dee Messina chose to tie one of her multiple streamed live events to a fundraiser for military veterans.

**[ TEAM UP WITH PARTNERS ]** Teaming up with partners — especially sponsors — is important for a variety of reasons. At a minimum, sponsors share the costs of adding streaming to a concert, including video cameras, extra computers and communications equipment and the staff to run them. Additionally, sponsors can help to greatly expand the potential audience for the event.

"The relationship with Amex was not really about the financial aspects but rather about the relationship and mutual brand support, or 'how can we help your brand and how can you help ours?,' like back in the old bartering days," said Sugarland's tour manager Gail Gellman, Owner, Gellman Management. "We gave each other a chance to reach new audiences that we wouldn't have had access to."

**[ ADDRESS THE LOGISTICS ]** There are quite a few special logistical considerations for streaming a live concert online. In addition to the on-site hardware and personnel, there's the whole Internet side, whose issues include satellite hookups over which to upload the event to the Web, multiple Web sites on which to host the event simultaneously, different audio mixes for the on-site vs. online audiences, two-way feeds to that fans can interact with the event by sending real-time song requests to the performers, methods to capture the streamed footage for subsequent permanent posting on YouTube and artist sites, and multi-camera shoots so fans can choose the view the show from any of five camera angles, as offered by Ustream's new Multiview technology, which was premiered at Zac Brown Band's Red Rocks Amphitheatre streamed show.

"There's a huge learning curve at the beginning as far as the speed of the Internet connection that you need to have," Messina admitted. "I tried to do a stream from the bus a couple of years ago while we were driving down the road and it would cut out a lot. I found out from the fans that the screen kept freezing. We came around to (the need for robust technology) with the super-fast Internet line, the camera, the lights, the board that allows you to hear the caller and the phone line that people can call in on for the broadcast. It took some learning and messing around with, but after that, it's pretty easy."

All of the effort pays off not just in creating a live connection with established and new fans but also in the quality of the final product. "The high-resolution HD video is so much better than bootlegged concert footage shot from the audience," said Gellman. "It provides premium, high-quality content — for free — to fans."

It can be just as big a boost for the artists. Zac Brown Band's Red Rocks show garnered nearly half a million live streams. Needless to say, that level of response was an enormous validation for the band and also resulted in increased attendance at live shows that followed, according to Jennie Smythe, CEO, Girlilla Marketing, which handles marketing and promotion for Zac Brown Band. And Whitney Pastorek, Digital Media

The event also gives fans all over the world a chance to hear songs from an upcoming album before its release. Jo Dee Messina notes that it's important to encourage fans to participate and be interactive during the show, such as with two-way feeds where they can ask questions and make song requests. "It gives folks a chance to be a part of it," she said. "And they also love the fact that it's free!"

[ **ARTISTS, BE READY!** ] Not only is presenting a streamed event different from an ordinary concert in technical and logistical terms, it also requires a different kind of performance from artists to make it work. "The biggest thing is whether the artist can pull it off," said Smythe. "The camera can really throw off certain artists. It's a truly live experience, even compared to shooting a DVD. There are no do-overs. Some artists would have to perform differently than they're used to, just as when doing a performance for TV. They have to remember to look into the camera and engage *everyone*, not just the live audience at the venue."

Or, as Messina put it, "You have to remember to acknowledge the fans in Webland."

[ **POST THE EVENT ON THE WEB** ] Assuming each of these concerns has been addressed, all energy and attention at this point can go into presenting the best show possible and exceeding viewer expectations. Having accomplished this goal, you can extend the impact by posting it online. It's important to post the footage on as many Internet sites as possible, to allow fans who attended the original show to see it again — and, very importantly, to post comments about it — and give people who missed the original show an opportunity to witness and comment as well. Sugarland's high-quality video footage is embedded on their home page ([SugarlandMusic.com](http://SugarlandMusic.com)) and their VEVO channel ([vevo.com/artist/sugarland](http://vevo.com/artist/sugarland)). Zac Brown Band featured their video on their homepage ([ZacBrownBand.com](http://ZacBrownBand.com)), their own Ustream channel ([Ustream.tv/ZacBrownBand](http://Ustream.tv/ZacBrownBand)) and [AOL.com](http://AOL.com).

*"You have to remember to acknowledge the fans in Webland."*

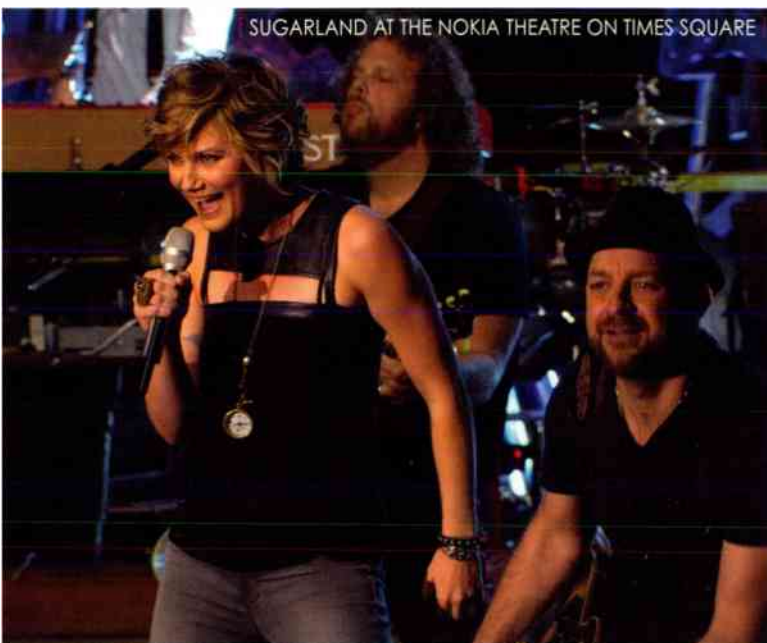
— Jo Dee Messina

[ **KEEP FANS ENGAGED** ] After the streamed event takes place and is posted on the Internet, there are follow-up opportunities for further fan engagement and promotion. True fans still want the feeling of excitement generated during the event to continue, and with a little imagination that can be arranged.

"One of my favorite things that came out of the Sugarland concert was taking a photo of the enormous crowd from onstage, posting it on Facebook and having hundreds of audience members find their face in the crowd and tag themselves in the photo," said Pastorek. "The whole thing was quite an awesome experience. It was truly an *event*."

[ **IT'S A WRAP** ] While the technical and logistical challenges can be considerable, presenting a live streamed event definitely has its immediate and ensuing benefits that make it worth the extra effort and incremental cost. For fans, it's an excellent way to achieve that ever-desired sense of immersion with their favorite artists and their music. For labels, it provides opportunities to expand the artist's brand into new territories and subsequently sell more music. For sponsors, it's a chance to reach new potential customers and offer existing customers something special. But for artists, the benefits are perhaps especially significant.

Messina puts it simply: "Holding special events like these gives artists the chance to keep in touch with fans between releases."



Director, Gellman Management, added that hits on Sugarland's Web site "rose dramatically" in the days after their Amex show.

"The success of the record (*The Incredible Machine*) was definitely fueled by the show," she concluded.

[ **PROMOTE THE EVENT** ] To make a live streamed event really pay off, as many people as possible need to know about it in advance. Beyond traditional promotion avenues, the best place to start is with the existing fan base on the artists' home pages and social media sites. Next are the Internet sites, such as [Ustream.tv](http://Ustream.tv) and [VEVO.com](http://VEVO.com), which host the events and have their own built-in audiences. Finally, there's cross-promotion and special offers to sponsors' existing customers.

"The Sugarland forum and Twitter pages were super-active prior to the event, which really helped to generate excitement about the show," noted Pastorek.

The key to promoting a streamed live event is to appeal to fans' desire to "be there" at the show, even if they're not able to be physically present. "Besides their songwriting, one of Sugarland's biggest strengths is their live shows," said Pastorek. "The streamed concert gave so many people who wouldn't otherwise have the opportunity to experience it."

According to some music business cynics, exposure is something that people die from. But the truth is that for new artists, exposure to an audience, not to mention airplay, publishing, management, production, co-writing and other aspects of the business, is an absolute lifeline.

Teddy Gentry, co-founder and bass player for the legendary group Alabama, is throwing that lifeline out to emerging artists with Teddy Gentry's Best New Nashville project.

The first product of this venture is a CD, also called *Teddy Gentry's Best New Nashville*, released May 16 in more than 600 Cracker Barrel restaurants across the U.S. (The parent company behind the project, Porter Gentry Productions, is owned by Teddy Gentry and Bernard Porter.) It comes on the heel of a live series at Nashville's showcase club 3<sup>rd</sup> & Lindsley, where the artists on the disc, each represented by a Gentry-produced song,

Others catch his ear with demos and press kits they send to him at [BestNewMusicGroup.com](http://BestNewMusicGroup.com).

For 3 Lanes Crossing, an Alabama-based sister trio, being in the program has "given us a platform to reach more people and build a bigger audience and go places we would never have been able to travel on our own," according to group member Jill Holt.

"We learned that regardless of how we've been performing a song, it's not necessarily set in stone when you get to the studio," added sister Rachel Robinson. "We had a different arrangement of 'A Good Place to Turn Around' when we got into the studio, but Teddy insisted we could



**"This project was inspired by my love for great music, for discovering great music, writing great music and producing great music."**

— Teddy Gentry

Teddy Gentry (third from R) with Best New Nashville participants.

perform with Gentry's band, Rockit City. The package has also spawned a tour underway into the fall of 2011.

"This project was inspired by my love for great music, for discovering great music, writing great music and producing great music," said Gentry. "Honestly, Best New Nashville is a way for me to continue my love for music and to share my desire to give new talent a fighting chance in a time when the industry is a very challenging place, especially for newcomers who don't know the ropes."

Partnering with Cracker Barrel is an important part of Gentry's strategy. "There was a story in *USA Today* listing the top five ways to break new music, and No. 3 was affiliating with Cracker Barrel," Gentry said. "The marketing arm of Cracker Barrel is strong. They give you a 30-day window at the front counter and even put little table tents for the CD on every table in each restaurant, so millions of people become aware of your CD. We even gave all 60,000 Cracker Barrel employees a free download so they could talk about the album — and that's quite a sales force."

"Cracker Barrel is pleased to work with Teddy Gentry on this special project to provide a showcase for some very talented artists from whom we might well be hearing more in the future," said Chris Ciavarrá, Senior VP, Marketing, Cracker Barrel. "These are artists who have worked hard and have honed their skills, and with this CD they are stepping up onto a larger stage."

Gentry found the performers on the album in a variety of ways. Two, Chip Davis and Dillon Dixon, are members of Rockit City. He also meets with several newcomers each week. Some are referred by associates.

do it better, and he was insightful enough to make us see the song in a different light. He's also a perfectionist, so he coached us to sing it over and over again until we had it absolutely right."

"Working with Teddy, I have learned mostly that you just have to be positive and keep plugging," said rocking firebrand Jimmy Stewart, whose "Every Mile I'm Missing You" is the compilation's opening track. "Sometimes what you're working on today might not fully materialize until a couple of years later or even many years later. I was trying to recover from being dropped (from a major label) when we started this. I felt like I wasn't working hard enough to get things going again for myself. Now, almost two years after Teddy and I started working together, it's encouraging to finally have music for sale in a store, especially Cracker Barrel."

"Best New Nashville is my launch platform," added Dixon. "After being in Nashville for 16 years trying to get something off the ground, the time has come. I've never been more confident or comfortable. I won't be a part of future Best New Nashville projects. That's not how Teddy set it up. This one will, however, put me on the map."

And that's Gentry's goal. "For the past seven years, I've been working with new and undiscovered and underappreciated artists, trying to give them a shot," he observed. "I love finding great songs and great artists. I hope to make this album with Cracker Barrel an annual event so we can continue to get exposure for folks who need to get recorded and keep new blood flowing through Country Music."

[BestNewNashville.com](http://BestNewNashville.com)



# CMA AWARDS TICKETS MEMBERSHIP EXCLUSIVE!

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Tickets for the 2011 CMA Awards are on sale exclusively to CMA members from Wednesday, Aug. 31 at 10 AM through Friday, Sept. 15 at 5 PM/CT. After this date, any remaining inventory will be released to general public for sale. To purchase tickets, contact Ticketmaster by logging onto [Ticketmaster.com](http://Ticketmaster.com), calling 1-800-745-3000 or in person at the Bridgestone Arena Box Office, 501 Broadway (corner of Fifth Avenue and Broadway in Nashville). CMA member ID required for purchase.

# 45<sup>TH</sup> CMA AWARDS



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Please send all requests for VIP and Floor seating to CMA directly at [Tickets@CMAworld.com](mailto:Tickets@CMAworld.com) or by calling 615-244-2840.



**SONG YOU'D LOVE TO COVER** "Guardian Angel" by Red Jumpsuit Apparatus. **DREAM DUET PARTNER** "King George Strait." **PHRASE YOU SAY OVER AND OVER AGAIN** "I'm down like four flat tires." **WHAT YOU'D BE IF NOT AN ARTIST** "Maybe a football coach. I honestly don't know. Plan B has always been 'Don't mess up Plan A!'" **TITLE OF YOUR AUTOBIOGRAPHY** "The Hicktionary."  
[DavidAdamByrnes.com](http://DavidAdamByrnes.com)

## DAVID ADAM BYRNES

David Adam Byrnes' background resonates in the twang he injects into just the right words of his raw and rocking first single, "Sweet Distraction" (written by Josh Thompson and Andi Zack), from his debut album *Premium Country* on Better Angels Music. It's just as clear in the follow-up, "She Only Wanted Flowers" (Byrnes, Jay Brunswick and Adam Fears), a meditation on failed romance, which he delivers with the ache of wounded wisdom.

Much of the atmosphere of *Premium Country* derives from Byrnes' upbringing in Sherwood, Ark. But a lot owes as well to his mastery of the Country songwriting craft. He began honing his skills in his teens after visiting Nashville, an experience that inspired him to woodshed his writing and performance back home until moving to Music City at 19.

Ten of these 14 songs are his co-writes, most of them balanced between old-school honky-tonk and its modern variations. Check out "Maybe She Won't Go" (Brunswick, Byrnes and Mark Houser), whose verses alternate bars of 3/4 and 4/4 so smoothly that your toes don't miss a single tap. He handles humor on "If You Didn't Have a Woman" (Byrnes, Brunswick, Morry Trent and Chelle Watson) with a sly edge. On the breakup lament "That's What I Tell Myself" (Byrnes, Brunswick and Houser) he conveys the rugged tenderness of vintage Country balladry. And "When I Get There" (Byrnes, Travis Mobley and Josh Newcom) could be an anthem for every young dream seeker who made it to Nashville with guitar in hand.

It's always good to go back to the well, to revisit the soul of the music we love. Thanks to *Premium Country*, we can make that trek with Byrnes as our guide.

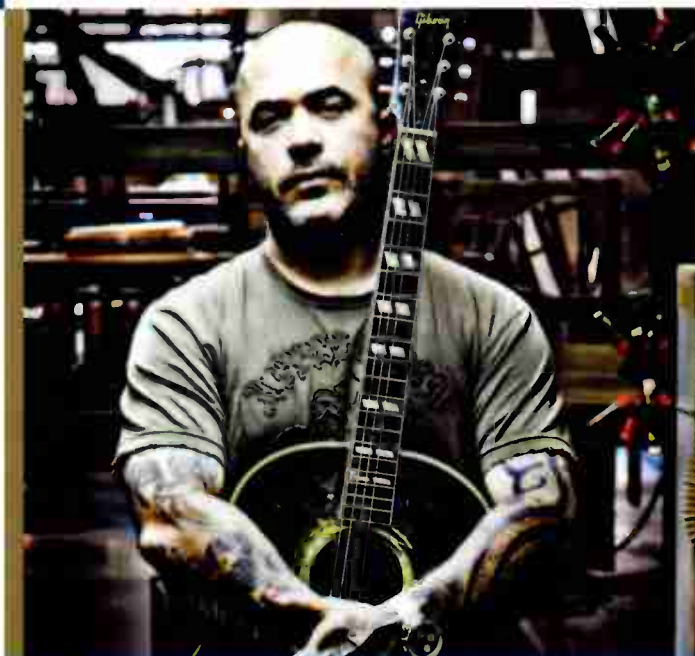
## AARON LEWIS

Not every newcomer can persuade Charlie Daniels, George Jones and Chris Young to join in on his debut single. Then again, Aaron Lewis isn't your typical newcomer. He'd already built a massive following as frontman for Staind when he came down to Nashville to explore a side to his music seldom exposed on the alt-metal circuit.

*Town Line*, produced by Lewis and James Stroud and released on R&J Records, brings that side to life. These five songs and two bonus tracks, all written solely by Lewis, combine sensitivity and introspection, poetic soul and fierce pride in his roots. Lewis is in fact a product of rural America, raised in Vermont and exposed by his grandfather to Merle Haggard, Hank Williams (Senior and Junior), fishing, hunting and communion with nature.

This background inspired his autobiographical first single, "Country Boy." His voice here is worn but tough; a Dobro and raw electric guitar cast haunted shadows, and his three stellar guests join the autobiographical narrative. "I grew up down an old dirt road in a town you wouldn't know" he begins — an exquisitely crafted line, spare, evocative and defiant. That mood sustains to the end, qualifying "Country Boy" as a genuine anthem for Country and the lifestyle it represents. Fans responded too, boosting sales to near Gold status and viewing the "Country Boy" video more than 7 million times by late June.

Lewis still lives in the Northeast, and true to the spirit of writing from what one knows first-hand, he offers "Massachusetts" to celebrate his state as a patriotic icon as well as an ideal place for his family — yet he does so with a spirit that's right at home with Music Row. It takes talent to paint pictures from disparate elements — the kind of talent heard on *Town Line*.



**YOUR MUSICAL HERO** "My father." **SONG YOU'D LOVE TO COVER** "Man, I think I've covered them all!" **PET PEEVE** "People who think they deserve something without earning it." **FAVORITE FOOD ON THE ROAD** "There's nothing better than a good steakhouse." **SOMETHING WE'D NEVER GUESS ABOUT YOU** "I'm a trained goldsmith. I can take a piece of wax, carve it up, cast it, turn it into metal, polish it, set stones in it and hand you a finished piece of jewelry."  
[AaronLewisMusic.com](http://AaronLewisMusic.com)



**BOOK ON YOUR NIGHTSTAND** "The Bible and a Frank Peretti book called *House*." **PET PEEVE** "Getting groceries and finding out you forgot one thing when you get back home." **SONG YOU WISH YOU'D WRITTEN** "Stop Loving You" by Toto." **TITLE OF YOUR AUTOBIOGRAPHY** "Read My Lips!" **SOMETHING WE'D NEVER GUESS ABOUT YOU** "I'm completely terrified of spiders and strange showers."

JessicaRidley.com

## JESSICA RIDLEY

Raised in Airdrie, a small town near Calgary, Alberta, Canada, Jessica Ridley was a performer from the start, putting on shows for family and friends at the age of 18 months. Don Somerville heard her sing at her church one day and persuaded her to sharpen her songwriting down in Nashville. She made the trek at 21 and has been getting ready for *Fit to Be Tied* from then up to the album's release in June on EMG Universal.

Produced by Somerville, Chris Omartian, Billy Simon and Michael Lee, her debut album takes about one second to rope the listener in. The opening track, "Fit to Be Tied," is out of the gate immediately with a bouncy groove anchored by a four-beat kick pattern. Over this, Ridley unfolds a half-sung, half-rapped tale of a bride's last-minute jitters just before walking down the aisle. Her tongue-tripping vocal on the verses, bookended by backbeat-driven choruses, skims playfully over the rhythm, teases a few laughs and even ends with the story's moral — a bow that makes this package complete.

Written by Ridley with producers Lee and Somerville, "Fit to Be Tied" is one of four songs on the album that she co-wrote. She also makes the rest of these 13 tracks her own. Bob Carlisle and Dennis Patton penned her first single, "Flaming Red," but its wistful first verse, rhythmic lyric at the top of the chorus and overall exultation, provide a perfect vehicle for Ridley. With minimal vibrato and underplayed phrasing, her voice relates a rainbow of expression and hits the high notes with neither effort nor effect. Whether letting the melody and plaintive narrative speak for themselves on "Cinderella Shoes" (Billy Simon) or pouring on the sass throughout "Hit and Run" (Bill Champlin, Somerville and Jim Windle), she brings the material to life in the light of her already distinctive style.

## RANDY MONTANA

Randy Montana was born into Music City royalty, but he charts his own course. His dad, Billy Montana, wrote hits for Garth Brooks, Sara Evans, Jo Dee Messina and others. Randy's path is different: At this stage of his young career, he's earning a reputation as a writer too but seems on course to make his main impact as an artist.

On his self-titled debut album for Mercury Nashville, produced by Jay Joyce, Montana wrote or co-wrote nine of its 11 tracks. He sings with a voice that's just a bit weathered and rugged and a flair for musical drama. On his first single, "Ain't Much Left of Lovin' You" (written by Montana and Joshua Ragsdale) he couples the pain of a lost love to a pounding beat and a soaring riff that invites the broken hearted to dance their memories away. Then he switches to an upbeat appreciation of love found on the second single, "1,000 Faces" (Montana and Tom Douglas), which proves equally compatible with his resonant, guitar-driven, exultant sound.

Born in Albany, N.Y., and raised in Nashville, Montana went to Trevecca Nazarene University on a soccer scholarship, transferred to Middle Tennessee State University, and then left to work odd jobs while polishing his writing. Signed to Sony/ATV Music Publishing in 2008, he funneled the spirits of Jackson Browne, Tom Petty and Bruce Springsteen through his family's Country DNA.

The results have stirred notice throughout the industry. CMA's Country Music Hall of Fame member Emmylou Harris was among the many who saw promise in Montana's music, so much so that she joined him on harmony for "Last Horse," which Montana wrote with his father and Rodney Clawson. The song must have attracted her attention as much as the voice; the lyric sets up a picture that's both cinematic and intimate, framed by a sweet, sad metaphor. This is mature writing by any measure, sung with tempered, tuneful passion.



**MUSICAL HERO** "Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers." **SONG YOU'D LOVE TO COVER** "Heartache," by Jamey Johnson — love that song!" **DREAM DUET PARTNER** "Emmylou Harris — so dreams really do come true!" **FAVORITE FOOD ON THE ROAD** "Sunflower seeds." **SOMETHING WE'D NEVER GUESS ABOUT YOU** "I'm a coffee snob."

RandyMontana.com

Debut Spotlight compiled by BOB DOERSCHUK

## PAT COLLINS

Long before becoming President and COO of SESAC, Pat Collins donated his time regularly to charities and worthy institutions. So after coming to Nashville, he was interested to hear what Kathy Hadfield, Executive VP and Regional HR Executive, Regents Bank, had to say when they met through Leadership Nashville.



Kathy told me about Monroe Harding and the volunteer work she does at the facility," Collins said. "I had no previous knowledge of Monroe Harding, but she explained that they minister to young people who are having a difficult time. I accepted an invitation to visit the facility and when I returned from a meeting that morning with several of the staff and volunteers, I thought, 'You know what? I'm not a very good food server or anything like that, but I can speak with people, be a sounding board, and perhaps identify options and/or offer suggestions to young people who aren't sure of the direction they should take at the moment. That's what led me to want to meet with young people from Monroe Harding.'"

Founded in 1893 as a Presbyterian orphanage, Monroe Harding offers a safe place for vulnerable children and youth. It also aims to empower these young people to succeed as they move forward in life.

Collins agreed to mentor one of the older kids at the facility, who had expressed interest in the music business. For several months, this young man has been attending college as a full time student while working at SESAC each week. At SESAC he works with members of the staff, sits in on meetings, and otherwise learns on the job what the industry entails.

Their relationship has also evolved to a more personal level. "We regularly schedule meetings where he'll come in, sit on the couch in my office and we'll talk about issues he's dealing with," Collins said. "What does he have to decide? What's motivating him? I'll say, 'Well, these are some options I see. These are things you may want to think about.' So our discussions are not singularly about music and the music business. Music may have been the hook, if you will, but our discussions have gone well beyond that. It's just about trying to be a friend."

Regardless of how long this young person continues his involvement at SESAC, Collins hopes to work with others who might also benefit from his availability. "Everybody needs somebody," he explained. "My guess is that every one of us can look back and point to a person or a group of people who made an extraordinary difference in our decision-making that affected our life — someone who gave us another perspective that perhaps opened up new avenues for us. I know who those people were in my life, so it's my way of giving back. It is something I enjoy, and it is my hope that I'm able to make a positive difference in a young person's life."

[MonroeHarding.org](http://MonroeHarding.org); [SESAC.com](http://SESAC.com)



Craig Wiseman and Seth England of Big Loud Shirt; Derek Crowover; Laura Heatherly, CEO, T. J. Martell Foundation (now CEO of Martell's New York office); and National Football League Commissioner Roger Goodell.

## DEREK CROWOVER

As founder and managing partner of his own firm in Nashville, Derek Crowover counts many of the Country Music industry's big guns and top artists among his clients.

But some of his most rewarding work began right after he moved to Nashville in 1994 and started volunteering his services to the T.J. Martell Foundation. "Tod Minnich (now Executive Director, The Honeywell Foundation) was, I think, an intern there at the time," Crowover remembered. "Tod got promoted and asked me to do some pro bono legal work for the Foundation in 1994 or '95. I personally like to commit to good projects — in college it was Big Brothers/Big Sisters — so I figured I could commit to this."

Working pro bono for the organization since then, Crowover concentrated initially on legal advice. "One of the first things I did was to draft rules for online auctions," he said. "When we did Country in the Rockies, we had to sell raffle tickets from Crested Butte, Colo., because we didn't have a raffle law in Tennessee back then. Nonprofits have lots of tax issues, especially when money is coming in and going out for various sales and products and people want a receipt for the deductible amount. But I'm also involved in recruiting a good Board of Directors or doing a new sponsorship deal."

He thinks outside the box too. After puzzling over new ways to raise funds for T.J. Martell while also benefiting artists, he came up with the idea for his annual End of the Road party. For six years, this September event has brought new and high-profile songwriters together to meet, perform and make co-writing appointments, all for a \$20 per person donation. It was at this event that Danny Myrick and Bridgette Tatum met, the results including their Jason Aldean blockbuster "She's Country."

Crowover serves now as President of T.J. Martell's Nashville office, which has earned its highest level of revenue in 15 years on his watch. His achievements and his motivation stem from real-life experiences, including relationships he's developed at the Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center, where the Martell Foundation has funded cancer research in the Frances Williams Preston Laboratories.

"I could connect the dots directly between my relationships at Vanderbilt and my dad being diagnosed very early with kidney disease and not having to be on dialysis," he said. "My father had a practitioner who was very aggressive and I think that may have saved his life. So there are some things I didn't know would come out of volunteering with Martell. You never know what's going to come out of providing new assets to the general public."

[dcablaw.com](http://dcablaw.com); [TJMartellFoundation.org](http://TJMartellFoundation.org)

Each CMA Member of the Month will be recognized in CMA Close Up and online at [CMAworld.com](http://CMAworld.com) for reaching significant career milestones, performing charitable acts and otherwise honorably representing Country Music through their deeds and words. To nominate any CMA member for this distinction, visit [CMAworld.com/News/CMA-Close-Up](http://CMAworld.com/News/CMA-Close-Up), e-mail [CloseUp@CMAworld.com](mailto:CloseUp@CMAworld.com), or send information to CMA Member of the Month, One Music Circle South, Nashville, TN 37203.

**AUG. 9**

**Luke Bryan** / *Tailgates & Tanlines* / Capitol Records Nashville  
**Riders in the Sky** / *The Land Beyond the Sun* / Riders Radio

**AUG. 16**

**Deborah Allen** / *Hear Me Now* / Delta Rock  
**Bottle Rockets** / *Not So Loud* / Bloodshot  
**Jeff Bridges** / *Jeff Bridges* / Blue Note/EMI Music Group  
**Eli Young Band** / *Life at Best* / Republic Nashville  
**Guy Clark** / *Songs and Stories* / Dualtone Music Group  
**Wagons** / *Rumble, Shake & Tumble* / Thirty Tigers

**AUG. 23**

**Blue Highway** / *Sounds of Home* / Rounder  
**Pistol Annies** / *Hell on Heels* / Columbia Nashville  
**Connie Smith** / *Long Line of Heartaches* / Sugar Hill  
**Sunny Sweeney** / *Concrete* / Republic Nashville  
**various artists** / *The Bill Monroe Centennial Celebration: A Classic Bluegrass Tribute* / Rounder  
**various artists** / *Let the Light Shine Down: A Gospel Tribute to Bill Monroe* / Rebel  
**various artists** / *The Best of Times Sara Hickman Tribute* / indie  
**various artists** / *With Body and Soul: A Bluegrass Tribute to Bill Monroe* / Rebel

**AUG. 29**

**Jake Owen** / *Barefoot Blue Jean Night* / RCA Nashville

**AUG. 30**

**Alana Amram & the Rough Gems** / *Snow Shadows: Songs of Vince Martin* / Kingswood  
**Dale Ann Bradley** / *Somewhere South of Crazy* / Compass  
**Glen Campbell** / *Ghost on the Canvas* / SurfDog  
**Jason Cassidy** / *My Redemption* / A-Blake  
**Tom Hambridge** / *Boom!* / Superstar Records  
**Robert Earl Keen** / *Ready for Confetti* / Lost Highway  
**Sonia Leigh** / *1978 December* / Southern Ground

**SEPT. 6**

**Slaid Cleaves** / *Sorrow & Smoke: Live at the Horseshoe Lounge* / Music Road

**Josh Gracin** / *Redemption* / Average Joes  
**George Strait** / *Here for a Good Time* / MCA Nashville  
**Tyrone Vaughan** / *Downtime* / indie

**SEPT. 13**

**Kristin Chenoweth** / *Some Lessons Learned* / Sony  
**Terri Clark** / *Roots and Wings* / Barefoot  
**The Dirt Drifters** / *This Is My Blood* / Warner Bros. Records  
**Brantley Gilbert** / *Halfway to Heaven Deluxe* / The Valory Music Co.  
**Steve Holy** / *Love Don't Run* / Curb  
**Lady Antebellum** / *Own the Night* / Capitol Records Nashville  
**Lydia Loveless** / *Indestructible Machine* / Bloodshot  
**Kenny Vaughan** / *V* / Sugar Hill  
**Hank Williams** / *The Legend Begins* / Time Life

**SEPT. 19**

**The Oak Ridge Boys** / *It's Only Natural* / Cracker Barrel

**SEPT. 20**

**The Jayhawks** / *Mockingbird Time* / Rounder  
**Kyle Park** / *Make or Break Me* / Kyle Parks Music

**SEPT. 27**

**Junior Sisk & Ramblers Choice** / *The Heart of a Song* / Rebel  
**Maria Muldaur** / *Steady Love* / Stony Plain Records  
**Lee Ann Rimes** / *Lady and Gentlemen* / Curb  
**Ricky Skaggs** / *A Skaggs Family Christmas Volume 2* / Skaggs Family Records

**OCT. 4**

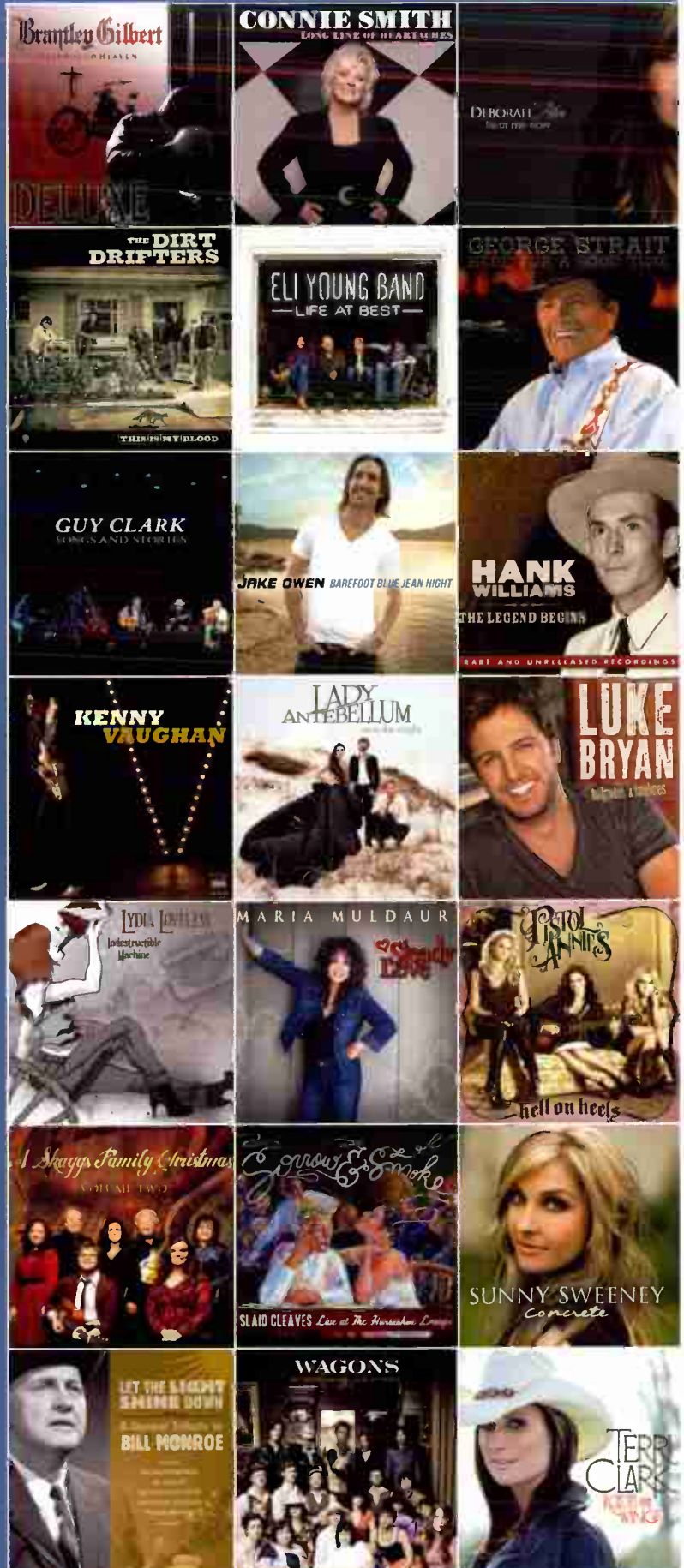
**Merle Haggard** / *Working in Tennessee* / Vanguard  
**Montgomery Gentry** / *TBA* / Average Joes

**OCT. 11**

**Joey + Rory** / *A Farmhouse Christmas* / Vanguard/Sugar Hill  
**Martina McBride** / *Eleven* / Republic Nashville

**OCT. 18**

**T Bone Burnett** / *Presents the Speaking Clock Review — Live from the Beacon Theatre* / Shout! Factory



New CD Releases compiled by BOB DOERSCHUK

by TOM ROLAND

When Charley Pride took the stage at the October 2010 All for the Hall benefit concert at Nashville's Bridgestone Arena, the reception was startling.

Stars with recent hits — Billy Currington, Alan Jackson, Miranda Lambert, Martina McBride, Keith Urban and others — dotted the lineup at this annual fundraising event for the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. Many of the 13,000 or so fans in the audience hadn't even started school yet when Pride hit No. 1 in 1983 with "Night Games" (written by Alan Mevis and Norro Wilson). It was easy to wonder if a large block of seats might be occupied by people who were unfamiliar with his work.

But then Pride launched into his signature song, "Kiss an Angel Good Mornin'" (Ben Peters) and a scant two minutes later the response was long and loud.

Assessing Pride's impact on younger listeners, his fellow Country Music Hall of Fame member Brenda Lee offered, "I think you respond to talent. I don't care if you know who he is."

The kids at the arena not only knew who Charley Pride was, they loved him. And they gave him another overwhelming reception when he followed with a cover of "Hello Darlin'," written and recorded by Conway Twitty. The feedback was so strong that Bob Heatherly, President/CEO of Pride's record label, Music City Records, later received several enthusiastic phone calls from some Music Row peeps who'd witnessed the emotional performance.

"When you get industry executives excited," he observed, "then you know you've done something right."

Pride has indeed done a lot, much of which is referenced in his 1994 autobiography, *Pride: The Charley Pride Story*. Beginning in 1966, he lobbed more than 65 singles onto the charts, with more than 50 reaching the Top 10. Thirty-six of them went all the way to No. 1, including the Hank Williams cover "Honky Tonk Blues," "Is Anybody Goin' to San Antone?" (David Kirby and Glenn Martin) and the sultry "You're So Good When You're Bad" (Ben Peters). Pride accrued seven Gold albums from 1970 through 1975, a time when the Platinum designation didn't exist, and picked up a million-selling single with "Kiss an Angel Good Mornin'." He also won the CMA Entertainer of the Year Award and two CMA Male Vocalist of the Year honors during that same period. To date, he's sold more than 70 million albums, including 31 Gold, four Platinum and one Quadruple Platinum.

In 2000, Pride joined the late Faron Young as the last two members inducted into CMA's Country Music Hall of Fame when the Museum was still housed at its original, barn-shaped structure at 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Demonbreun Street on Music Row.

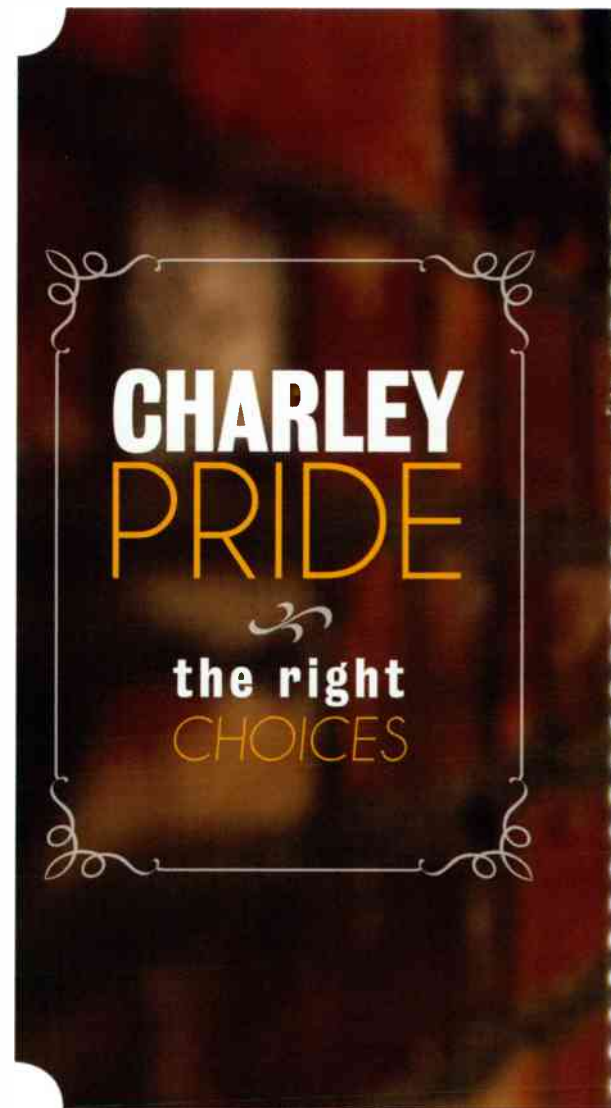
That distinction is symbolic. The Museum moved to its present location the following spring, and Pride is arguably one of the architects who helped Country Music move to larger venues as well, from clubs and theaters into arenas.

"He's absolutely part of the reason that the business expanded to what it is today," Lee said. "He was one of the first superstars that started working the big venues that Country artists had not regularly worked before."

Pride recognizes the importance of the role he has played — but pride goes only so far.

"My dad used to say, 'Your name is Pride but there's more to it than that,'" the singer recalled. "You don't want to have too much of that; you can overdo anything. I think everybody should have pride about themselves but it shouldn't be overused."

This conviction remains at the heart of Pride's material. He did, after all, make a name for himself singing "I'm Just Me" (Glenn Martin) and "All I Have to Offer You (Is Me)" (Dallas Frazier and Al Owens). It's also a central theme on his latest album, *Choices*. Its songs embrace old-school attitudes, from the family-values opener "America the Great"



(Edward Allen Gowens and Larry Mercey) to "The Bottom Line" (Drew Bourke, Art Craig and Justin Peters), whose lyric prioritizes commitment over finance. Two other songs employ fictitious newspaper names — "Hickory Hollow Times & County News" (Matt Lindsey and Herb McCullough) and "Guntersville Gazette" (Phillip Douglas, Ron Harbin and Richie McDonald) — in celebrating a slower-paced era. It's Pride singing about who he is to an audience that's holding on to that same identity.

"He wants to stay true to his fans, even though they may be getting older and may not be buying as much music," said Heatherly.

Yet they do still buy tickets and they respond as much as that youthful audience at the All for the Hall event did to "America the Great." Pride inserted that song into his live set even before he released the album, and listeners reacted immediately to the words, which invoke John F. Kennedy, Abraham Lincoln, prayer in schools and "In God We Trust."

"They start to rise up in the front," Pride said. "They just start clapping their hands, and then they stand up, and pretty soon it goes all the way back almost half a block to the bleachers. Goosebumps just started coming," he added as he recounted the scene at his shows. "It was something else."

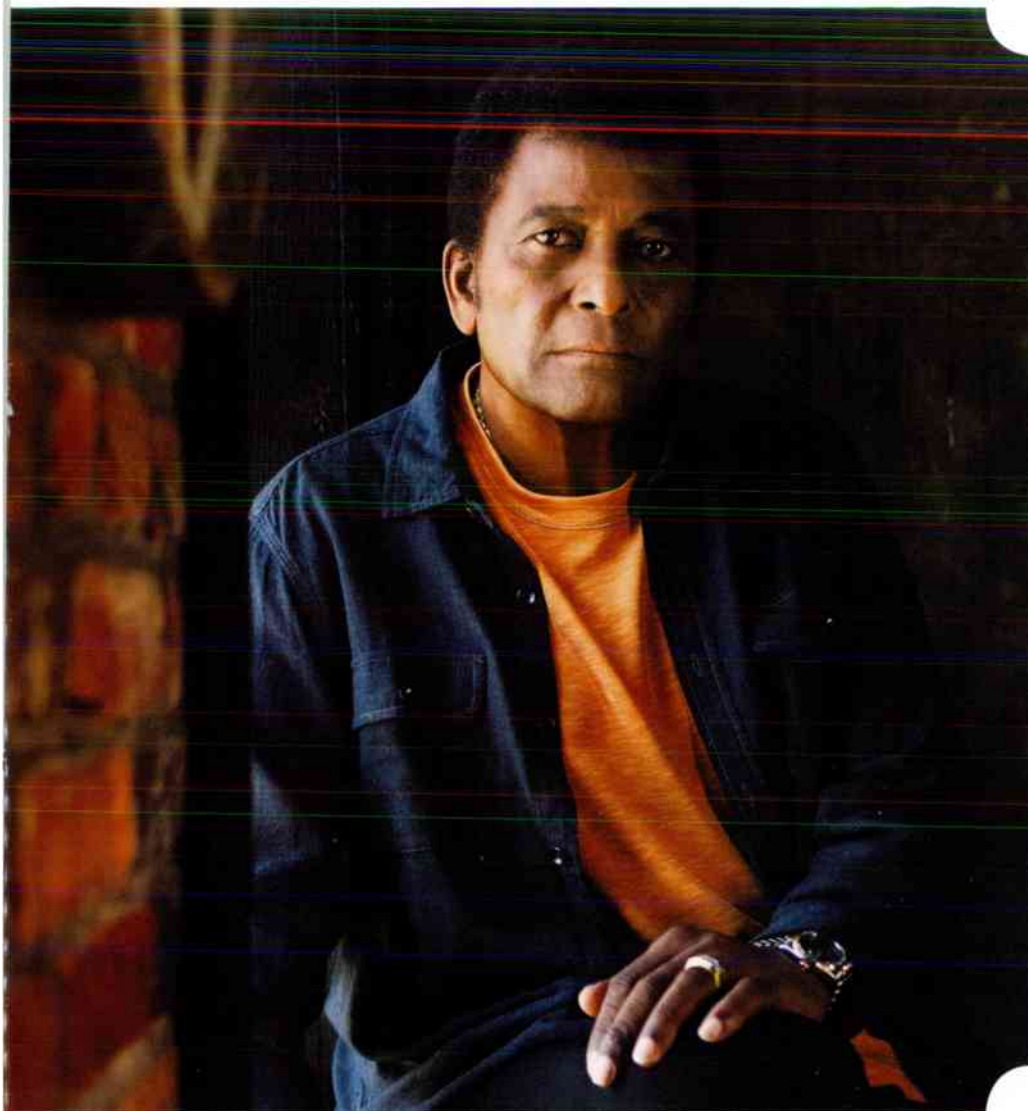


Photo: Ben De Rienzo

A native of Sledge, Miss., and one of eleven children, Pride confounded his friends and family by listening to the Grand Ole Opry rather than gospel and blues in his early years. In those days, however, a dream for a career in Country Music seemed unattainable.

"My dream was to play baseball and go to the major leagues," he said. "When I saw Jackie Robinson go to the major leagues, I said, 'Well, that's my way out of the cotton fields. I want to go to the major leagues and I want to make all the records.'"

Pride had the talent to do it too. He played for the Memphis Red Sox, and in 1956 he pitched for the Negro League when it assembled a group of its top players to play a major league all-star team that included future Hall of Famers Hank Aaron and Willie Mays. But while the majors include 30 teams today, that circle was more exclusive in Pride's youth.

"There wasn't but 16 teams in the major leagues then," he said. "You didn't go around hitting .212 — I call it the New York area code — with five runs batted in and getting \$1.5 million."

Pride had tryouts with a couple of major-league teams, including the Los Angeles Angels soon after they were founded by another Country Music Hall of Fame member, Gene Autry. But he didn't make the cut, and when he suffered a severe ankle injury at 23, that ended his chances.

"When Johnny Bench was in the Cincinnati Reds, he went in at 18 or 19 years old, and he's in the (Major League Baseball) Hall of Fame," Pride noted. "So back in those days, if you weren't in the majors by the time you were 25, that's about it; they just kind of marked you off. Of course, now we have 30 teams and if you can do anything at 45, they'll use you."

His teammates had always encouraged Pride to consider singing professionally, and as baseball faded, he refocused his sights on Country Music. It seemed like a long shot, though. Country had spun a series of African-American string bands in its early days, and DeFord Bailey had played harmonica on the Opry in the pre-TV era. But there had never been a successful black Country singer up to that point.

The odds were staggering. Civil rights leader Medgar Evers was assassinated in Pride's home state in 1963, just nine months before Pride signed his first management deal with Jack D. Johnson. The Civil

Rights Act was signed in July 1964, barely more than a year before he secured his first recording contract with RCA Records, run at the time by his fellow Country Music Hall of Fame member Chet Atkins.

Pride won over the industry and the public by applying his grainy tone to traditional Country songs with a sincere passion. In one key moment in Arizona, he had to fill in for Jimmy Durante when the vaudevillian had suffered an injury. The audience had never heard of Pride. It certainly hadn't come to hear Country Music. But Pride prevailed and the date instilled a huge amount of confidence.

"I got a standing ovation when I got through," he recalled. "I said, 'Now, wait a minute. If I can get in front of Jimmy Durante's audience and get a response like this, all I got to do is get in front of them.'"

Forty years have passed and Pride is still winning over audiences. And beyond his new fans and the film world, Pride has strengthened his links to baseball. For decades he's attended spring training annually with the Texas Rangers; in 2010 he took it a step further by joining with Hall of Fame pitcher Nolan Ryan and other investors to purchase the team. Just a few months after the deal was done, the Rangers made it into the World Series for the first time in the club's 50-year history.

For all that's going right for Pride, he still feels the need to prove himself with every concert and every trip to the recording studio. "I'm never a guy that's going to think everything is automatic," he said. "I don't take anything for granted. No matter how successful I've been, I still have a job to do."  
**CharleyPride.com**

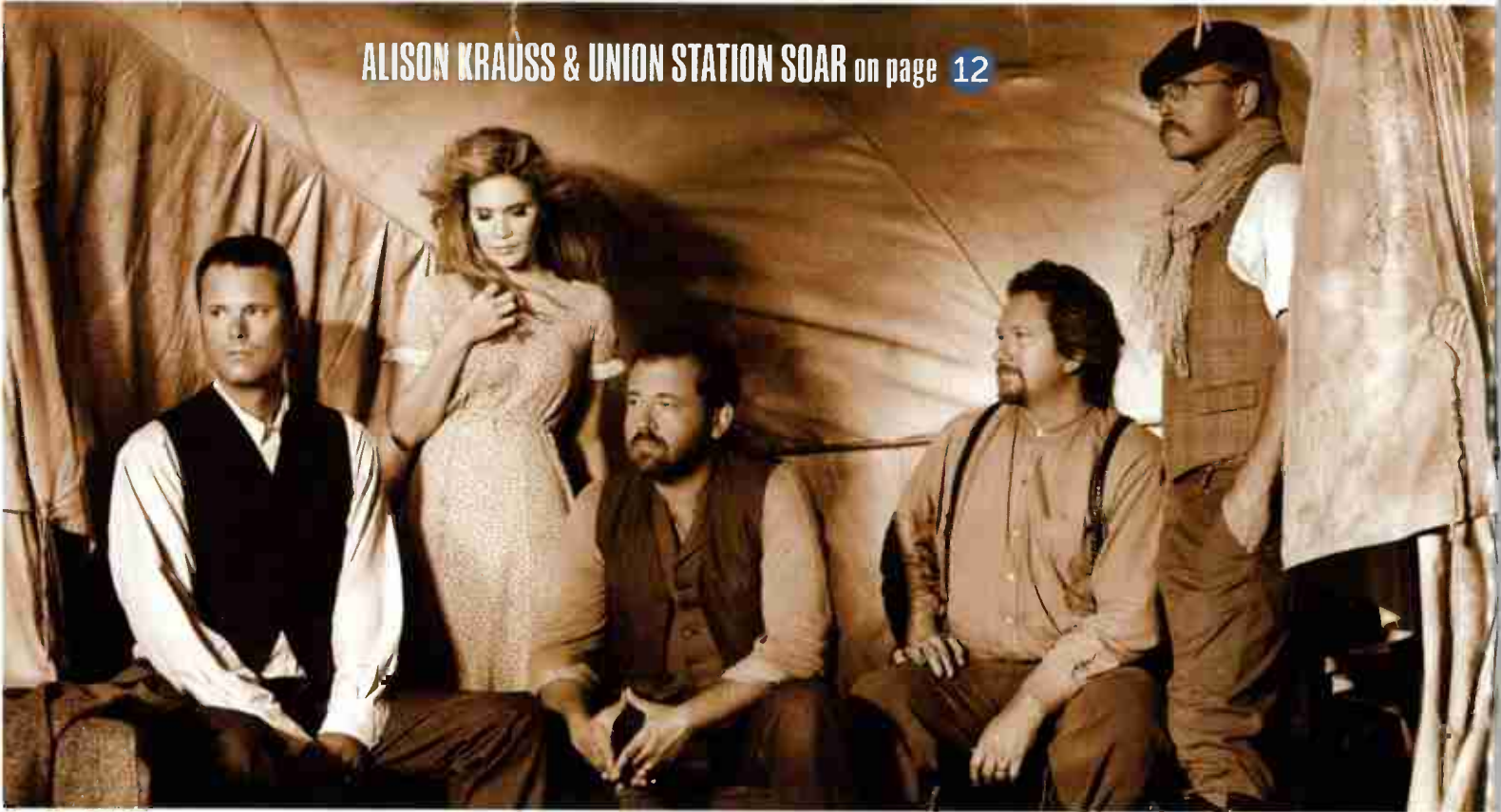
**"Everybody should have pride about themselves but it shouldn't be overused."** — Charley Pride

*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

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## cma events

### JULY

**SATURDAY, JULY 30**

2012 CMA Music Festival Tickets on sale nationwide | 10 AM/ET | Ticketmaster.com, 1-800-745-3000 or 1-800-CMA-FEST

### AUGUST

**SUNDAY, AUG. 7**

Mayor's First Day Festival | Bridgestone Arena | Nashville | 2-4 PM | Gildan and CMA give away free T-shirts to Metro Nashville Public School students.

**MONDAY, AUG. 8**

CMA membership renewal payment due at CMA to vote on second and final ballots.

**TUESDAY, AUG. 9**

Second ballot CMA Awards online notice e-mailed to eligible CMA voting members.

**SUNDAY, AUG. 14**

"CMA Music Festival: Country's Night to Rock" | 8-11 PM/ET | ABC

**TUESDAY, AUG. 23**

Second ballot CMA Awards online voting closes at 5 PM.

**THURSDAY, AUG. 25**

CMA Songwriters Series | Royale Nightclub | Boston | 8 PM/ET | Matraca Berg, Kenny Chesney, Bob DiPiero, Brett James, Wendell Mobley and Craig Wiseman | Ticketmaster.com or 1-800-745-3000

**WEDNESDAY, AUG. 31**

Tickets on sale to CMA members for "The 45<sup>th</sup> Annual CMA Awards" | 10 AM | Ticketmaster.com or 1-800-745-3000

### SEPTEMBER

**TUESDAY, SEPT. 20 – THURSDAY, SEPT. 22**

CMA Board of Directors Meetings | Nashville

**SATURDAY, SEPT. 24**

Tickets on sale to general public for "The 45<sup>th</sup> Annual CMA Awards" | 10 AM | Ticketmaster.com or 1-800-745-3000



\*All times central unless otherwise noted.