

**ARISTA**  
NASHVILLE

**LABEL OF THE YEAR**

Joe Galante & Skip Bishop:  
"We Believe"  
The Top 10 Labels

**PAGE 6**

**TOP  
6  
OF  
'06**

Mergers,  
payola,  
LA - oh my!  
The top  
news of the  
year with  
added  
perspective  
from  
industry  
leaders.

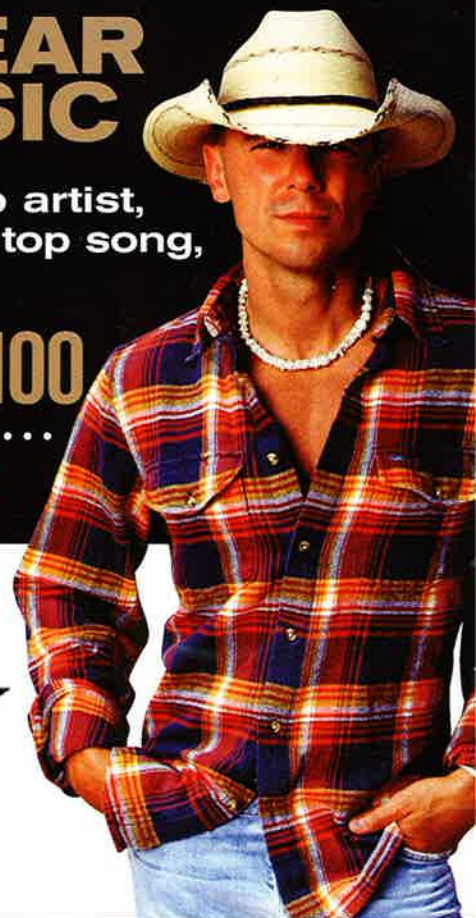
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**THE YEAR  
IN MUSIC**

Kenny's the top artist,  
Flatts' have the top song,  
and inside ...

**THE TOP 100**

**PAGE 9**



 **COUNTRY**  
**AIRCHECK**

DECEMBER 2006

**THE BIGGEST HITS OF 2006**

THE WORLD  
SUMMERTIME  
DON'T FORGET TO REMEMBER ME  
SHE'S EVERYTHING  
NOBODY GONNA TELL ME WHAT TO DO  
WHO YOU'D BE TODAY  
THE DOLLAR  
BEFORE HE CHEATS  
LIVING IN FAST FORWARD  
KEROSENE  
NEW STRINGS  
WHEN I GET WHERE I'M GOING  
CHEATIN'  
MOUNTAINS  
JESUS, TAKE THE WHEEL  
BELIEVE  
LAST DAY OF MY LIFE  
LIKE RED ON A ROSE  
POLITICALLY UNCORRECT  
BUILDING BRIDGES  
EVERY TIME I HEAR YOUR NAME  
FEELS JUST LIKE IT SHOULD  
ON AGAIN TONIGHT  
SHE DON'T TELL ME TO  
YOU SAVE ME  
YEE HAW  
CALIFORNIA GIRLS  
I DON'T FEEL LIKE LOVING YOU TODAY  
SOME PEOPLE CHANGE  
I DON'T KNOW WHAT SHE SAID

**ARTISTS, COUNTRY RADIO, AND SONGWRITERS...  
"THERE'S TRUTH IN THE WORDS WRITTEN IN RED"**



# TOP THE SIX OF '06

## The year's six biggest news makers

### 1 DEJA VU ALL OVER AGAIN Mergers, Acquisitions & Spinoffs: 2006 or 1996?

World's largest private equity firms funded blockbuster deals that shook the very foundations of the broadcast world.

The largest, announced just a few weeks ago, stars a group led by Thomas H. Lee Partners and Bain Capital Partners which won an auction to take **Clear Channel** private. The deal totaled \$26.7 billion and is expected to take nine months to close.

Those two capital companies joined with Blackstone Group and **Cumulus** to purchase **Susquehanna** for \$1.2 billion, which closed in May. In a more complicated transaction, **Disney** agreed in February to sell assets including 22 stations to **Citadel** for \$2.7 billion in deal that would give Disney shareholders a majority stake in the new company. That deal should close in May '07. An April merger saw **Jefferson-Pilot** become **Lincoln Financial Media**. In May, **CBS Radio** announced its intentions to sell 39 stations it owns in 10 markets.

Among the major Country stations with new owners are: KPLX/Dallas and WFMS/Indianapolis, Cumulus; WYGY & WUBE/Cincinnati and WMC-AM/Memphis, Entercom; KYGO/Denver and KSON/San Diego, Lincoln Financial; WYRK/Buffalo, Regent; WHOK/Columbus and KBEQ & KFKF/Kansas City, Wilks; KSKS/Fresno, Peak. And the Disney/Citadel deal will send ABC Country outlets WKHX & WYAY/Atlanta and KCSC & KTYS/Dallas to Citadel.

Major transactions this year also portend an active 2007, as Clear Channel has announced plans to sell 448 radio stations outside of the Top 100 markets, as well as its entire television division. About 90 CC Country stations are expected to be sold.

And, Citadel has also said it plans to divest about \$150 million worth of its smaller market stations.

Wall Street shook the radio industry again this year, a full decade after the buying frenzy began with the passage of the Telecom Act of 1996. Some of the

**W**hen they write the history of the country radio and record industries – if anyone actually did that – the chapter on 2006 will likely focus on changes that affected the very underpinnings of the business. Intense legal scrutiny influenced the daily interaction of labels and stations, another massive consolidation of the record business occurred as independents experienced unprecedented success and radio underwent the most dramatic ownership upheaval since the post-Telecom heyday. And that's just for starters. Here's a look back at six of the year's biggest stories, with some added perspective from industry leaders.



### 2 SPITZER'S HOLE-Y CRUSADE Settlements Create Bureaucracy, Confusion

New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer's campaign to curb pay for play practices between radio and record companies shook the business with the July 2005 Sony settlement. Warner Music followed in November of that year, and 2006 saw settlements with Universal, EMI and CBS Radio.

While the agreements did set compliance parameters, the AG's limited jurisdiction, combined with continuing silence from the FCC, left plenty of gray area. If nothing else, the settlements have raised more than \$32 million for New York State music education and appreciation programs.

Here's what some industry executives had to say about how Spitzer's campaign has affected them:

*"The paperwork is mind boggling. Record companies now have compliance officers. Most of the biggest [radio] chains do too, and it's all based on the Spitzer/Sony agreement. [Spitzer] created a success prevention department. The good news is a hit will stand out no matter what."*

—Curb senior VP/Promotion Carson James

*"Labels are a little gun shy to do things that are considered legal that would really help their artists, mainly out of fear it could be construed as something else."*

—WFUS Tampa, Fla., PD Travis Daily

*"There have been a few labels which have used the consent decrees as an excuse not to provide tour support and win-it-before-you-can-buy-its, [but] the fact is that we still have no problem getting both major and emerging indie labels involved to promote once someone presents a creative plan that works as a win-win."*

—Radio consultant Jaye Albright

While the corporate merger of Sony Music and BMG actually happened in 2005, its impact wasn't widely felt on Music Row until April of this year when the combined company finally turned its eyes to Nashville. By the time the dust settled, Sony Music Nashville and RCA Label Group (RLG) had been joined into a single entity called Sony BMG Nashville. Former RLG chairman Joe Galante was in charge, Sony Music Nashville president John Grady and about 20 other employees were out and the venerable Epic country

### 3 GETTING NIPPERED Sony Music Nashville Merges With RCA Label Group

imprint was no more. Epic's newly installed VP/National Promotion Tom Moran was among the casualties.

On the artist side, the roster cuts included Jessi Alexander, Jace Everett, Susan Haynes, Jamey Johnson, Brice Long and Jon Randall.

While many of the moves were painful to watch, the assimilated company appeared to gain both strength and momentum from its streamlining and remained the dominant player on Music Row.

## FROM THE PUBLISHER

Welcome to Country Aircheck's first printed issue!

This company was formed just a few short months ago because we think you deserve a trade publication that is informed and passionate about country radio and the country music industry. Years of experience have given us strong beliefs about what information is important to the country community and how that information should be presented. You'll find that

philosophy reflected in this issue.

Starting on this page, we offer a comprehensive overview of 2006, from the year's top news stories, to a complete analysis of the year in music utilizing our Mediabase-powered charts, to more personal remembrances as we move through the issue. We close with a preview of the new music coming in the first quarter of 2007. After all, when we



Lon Helton

all get back from the holidays we're just eight weeks away from CRS-38.

If you're reading this and are not receiving our daily e-mail and weekly Music Edition, I encourage you to visit [www.countryaircheck.com](http://www.countryaircheck.com) and sign up. For those of you who are already in our loop, I hope you find

this issue meets the high standards we strive for with all of our publications. As always, we welcome your feedback and deeply appreciate your support.

We're glad you're with us.

Sincerely,

Lon Helton  
lon@countryaircheck.com

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COUNTRY  
**AIRCHECK**



THE TOP SIX OF '06

**4** DUMPING  
No. 2  
**KZLA's Demise  
Shakes Country**

The country industry suffered a body blow in August when Emmis flipped 26-year-old country outlet KZLA to "Movin' 93.9." The loss was especially devastating to an industry already suffering from the lack of country outlets in New York and San Francisco.

Equally damaging was the slim prospect of a major operator adopting the format on one of its FMs. There was a glimmer of hope last September when Clear Channel regional execs spoke to a group of ACM board members, seeking their support for a new FM country outlet. But an L.A. FM country option – Clear Channel or otherwise – has yet to materialize.

Country did return to the L.A. airwaves – on AM – when Mt. Wilson Broadcasting flipped XSUR/Tijuana and added simulcast KKGO late in '06.

*"There was no immediate affect, as most shows had played or were on sale at the time of the [KZLA] format switch. Plans for 2007 have absolutely not been affected by the radio situation. The market is too good to pass up. We just have to be more creative in marketing our shows."*

**-Live Nation Executive Director Brian O'Connell**

*"There isn't a void for country in L.A. if you have satellite radio. The real void is for a local kind of country radio that activates and perpetuates the country marketplace. My concern is that the two AMs will be just enough of a deterrent to discourage anyone from [flipping] a big signal FM to country."*

**-The Gary Group Chairman Dick Gary**

*"Country is still alive and well in Los Angeles and [fans] will look for non-traditional ways to listen to country. The biggest loss of KZLA flipping formats was losing our many friends who worked there. I truly miss not visiting with these people as much as we did when the station was on the air."*

**-ACM Exec. Director Bob Romeo**



**Heartland**

Lofton Creek's out-of-left-field No. 1 hit with **Heartland's** "I Loved Her First" may be the most tangible proof, but 2006 was a good year for Nashville independent labels in general.

Show Dog and Big Machine, which launched as sister labels in 2005, may have publicly in split in 2006, but that didn't stop either label from having a very successful year. That's particularly true of Big Machine, which scored with **Jack Ingram**, **Taylor Swift** and **Danielle Peck**.

Many new labels launched or ramped up in Nashville this year, including Montage Music, Category 5 Records, Rust

**5** INDIE  
APPRECIATION  
**Independent Labels  
Make A Strong Showing**

Records and **Tim McGraw's** StyleSonic Records.

Another good sign for indies is that many former major label artists found new homes in the independent ranks

this year, including **Mark Wills** (Equity), **Travis Tritt** (Category 5), **Sammy Kershaw** (Category 5), **Darryl Worley** (903 Music), **Ty Herndon** (Titan Pyramid), **Billy Ray Cyrus** (New Door) and **Carolyn Dawn Johnson** (Equity). Also, **Tracy Byrd** (Blind Mule), **Tracy Lawrence** (Rocky Comfort Records) and **Aaron Tippin** (Nippit) were among the artists going the DIY route by starting their own labels, all of which bodes well for a plethora of new music to choose from in 2007.

**6** CHART  
APPRECIATION  
**VNU's R&R Purchase Alters  
Trade Biz . . . Or Does It?**

A *Hollywood Reporter* story on the morning of July 6, 2006 (not that the date is seared in our memories or anything) brought the merger and acquisition gremlins to the doorstep of venerable trades *Billboard* and *R&R*. Expected synergies, layoffs on both sides and industry confusion grabbed headlines, but the subtext was the expiration of *R&R's* deal with Mediabase, allowing the 33-year-old trade's venture capitalist owner to unload the pub to the only logical suitor. And that move only made sense if VNU could insert its Nielsen BDS-based charts into the successful, radio-focused trade, as it soon did. Four months later, the acquisition's tangible impact on the chart and trade dynamic is still up for debate.

*"What we tried to impress upon our staff is that the old Billboard chart is now called R&R and the old R&R chart is now called Mediabase or Country Aircheck. The overall methodologies haven't changed, just the names associated with them."*

**-Broken Bow Records VP/Promotion Jon Loba**



*"I'm not sure VNU's purchase of R&R makes that much difference. Alternative voices and opinions are available all over the Internet on blogs and Web sites as communication rapidly changes. As far as I'm concerned, the more voices the merrier."*

**-Radio consultant Joel Raab**

*"Charts are a good tool, but I don't take them at face value. If Lonestar is at No. 10, it doesn't mean they're No. 10 in Providence. To me, a chart is more of a confirmation that we're right on, or a flag that we need to take another look at something. The merger hasn't changed that."*

**-WCTK/Providence, PD Steve Giuttari**

**SEVEN FOR '07**

**1. Sale Of The Century**

Clear Channel is selling 450 stations, and an industry-wide re-distribution of radio properties doesn't seem farfetched. Groups might be selling sticks on the Home Shopping Network before it's all said and done.

**2. Spitzerola Rolls On**

The Entercom lawsuit is still on the books. Could more settlements be in the offing? And will the FCC ever weigh in?

**3. And Then There Were Two**

Universal buys Warner and Sony BMG buys EMI. Okay, we're kidding. Sort of. Hey, we kinda like the sound of SBMGEMI.

**4. Fortress ABC**

Citadel's purchase of ABC Radio will close, barring something unforeseen. And the alphabet net's assimilation will likely have significant fallout.

**5. Hooray For Hollywood**

Country will be back in Los Angeles . . . and on FM. Just watch the labels and artists fall all over themselves to help prop country back up in market No. 2.

**6. Look For The Newbie Label**

Capitol Nashville and Warner Bros. are both expected to launch new imprints, and who knows where the next "I Loved Her First" surprise will come from.

**7. Country Aircheck Takes Pulitzer**

Okay, now we're really kidding. We'll just be happy if we get to publish a year-end issue in '07.

**THE IDOL EFFECT**



Television has created a new reality when it comes to finding country artists and developing careers. *American Idol* and, to a lesser extent, *Nashville Star*, have offered nationally televised platforms from which have sprung some fairly remarkable success stories. None more so than quadruple-platinum

CMA female vocalist and Horizon Award winner **Carrie Underwood**, who took the *AI* title in May of '05. **Kellie Pickler** finished sixth in '06, yet scored a No. 1 album debut in October. Even **Sara Evans'** run on ABC's *Dancing with the Stars* seemed to be a positive vehicle for exposure until, well, reality set in.

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# LABEL OF THE YEAR

## Arista returns to the top: "We Believe"

**T**he numbers speak for themselves. Arista has 11 of the Top 100 songs of the year, three of the top 10, five of the top 20 and nine of the top 50. Market share is a doubt-destroying 14.8%. And then there are the individual success stories – like CMA and ACM Song of the Year "Believe" by Brooks & Dunn, another No. 1 for Phil Vassar, a gold record on Keith Anderson, Brad Paisley's Album of the Year, Alan Jackson's record breaking Precious Memories, mercurial newcomer Jason Michael Carroll and, oh yeah, the quadruple platinum supernova named Carrie Underwood.

But charts, awards and other milestones don't tell the whole story. Because this may look like a simple return to the top for the label that led Mediabase-powered chart share from 2001 through 2004 (bumped out by Capitol in '05). The truth, however, is that the Arista promotion staff, which opened the year under new management, had a number of questions to answer about itself. And after a whirlwind year with its share of struggle, this group seems to have come through, if anything, even stronger.

Arista's biggest question mark, to put it bluntly, was VP/Promotion Skip Bishop, who joined the label in October of 2005. "We had a new VP, a new National, we went from six regionals to five and we had a lot of new music at one time," says Sony BMG Chairman Joe Galante of the challenges Arista faced.

There's also the not so small matter of the Sony merger with BMG, which included the integration of Sony/Nashville into the RCA Label Group. "There's no doubt in my mind Skip's team performed way beyond because there were a lot of things Butch and Joe were occupied with," Galante says, referencing his No. 2, Exec. VP Butch Waugh.

"It's like jumping in a car that's already

rolling," Bishop says. "It takes a minute to find the gear shift. These guys didn't know what I was about, and I needed to learn them. I found out very quickly it is an amazing team of strategists."

The Arista staff eventually shaped up with Bryan Frasher as Director/National Promotion, Jeri Detweiler Cooper in the Southeast, David Friedman working Northeast, Lori Hartigan in the West, Lesly Somerville handling Mid-South, Alex Valentine doing Southwest and Alicia Butler serving as Coordinator. They weren't afforded a lot of time to get comfortable with their new captain.

"To give Skip credit, he was following Bobby [Kraig]," Galante says. "That was not an easy thing to do both from an emotional standpoint for the staff, and also for the roster. We talk about the promotion guys, but you kind of forget about the artists and he didn't know anybody. All of a sudden he's got their careers in his hands. He did an amazing job in both areas. What he's done in the last year normally takes a lot longer."

Bishop, recommended for the job by Waugh, immersed himself in the music. "I don't think I've listened to another format since Butch first called me and planted the seed," he says. "From that day I started listen-

ing to all the artists' catalog, researching their stats and got to know them that way."

Next, he had to develop the personal relationships with the artists. "I called them up and told them I had zero credibility, but I like to learn," he says. "I found out it is an extremely accepting format and an extremely accepting group of people."

As for the staff, the cohesion was formed with the struggle involved in promoting "Believe," which Galante terms "a slugfest."

"That made us gel as a team," Bishop says. "Every day we came in and that was the first thing we talked about. There would be a new leak in the bucket we had to fix and a new hill to take. We rolled up our sleeves and got to know each other through that record. It was a long haul."

"People will write histories at some point in the future and tell us it was a No. 1 record, and it wasn't," Galante says. "It wasn't an easy record. It never researched and we went through a lot of crap, but the power of that record at the consumer level was incredible. We sold 700,000 albums on that single...[and it] is still driving that album."

The disappointments include Jackson's "Like Red On A Rose," which also struggled at radio but has out-



Joe Galante



**P**ropelling Arista to its lofty heights were 17 charted records, 11 of which are in the Top 100. Arista notched 11 Top 15 hits and six No. 1s that occupied the top spot for 14 weeks. Leading the way was Carrie Underwood, who posted three hits that spent an incredible 10 weeks at No.1 and Brad Paisley, whose pair of chart-toppers were on top a total of three weeks.

Capitol, last year's top imprint, follows-up an 11.5% chart share in 2005 with this year's 10.6%. Sr. VP Jimmy Harnen and his crew posted 16 charted records, nine Top 15 hits, 11 in the Top 100 and three No. 1s – all by Dierks Bentley.

MCA moved from fourth last year to third in 2006 on the strength of 15 charted tunes, 10 Top 15s and four smashes that spent nine weeks at No. 1.

performed itself sales-wise, according to Galante. "This is the beginning of the life of this record," Bishop says. "It will not follow the typical path."

But the tussles were vastly overshadowed by the triumphs: Like seeing Paisley "raise his game," in Galante's words, to join the genre's top entertainers, and watching Underwood transcend her Idol status to become a bona fide superstar.

For Bishop, 2006 was encapsulated in an Arista-only meeting recently held in a local bed and breakfast. "We looked at everything that happened this year," he explains. "The great things, the things that didn't work so great, the heartbreaks, the joyous moments. It was very intense."

"Afterward we had dinner, just us," he continues. "And we dressed for dinner. We sat in the dining room of this house and told stories about who our heroes are, our biggest disappointments in life, what we like best about our jobs. It was one of the most moving family moments I've ever experienced in an employment situation. I came out of there knowing this team loves music, and I think we came out tighter, meaner, happier and more focused. We came out like, 'Okay show me the door to '07 because we're going to do it again.'" CAC

**PICTURE IN PICTURE:** The Arista promotion staff (l-r) includes Alicia Butler, Skip Bishop, Lesly Somerville, Bryan Frasher, Jeri Detweiler Cooper and David Friedman. In absentia: Alex Valentine and Lori Hartigan.

## 2006 TOP TEN LABELS

- 1 **ARISTA** NASHVILLE 14.8%
- 2 **Capitol** RECORDED MUSIC 10.6%
- 3 **MCA** NASHVILLE 9.1%
- 4 **BNA** BNA RECORDS LABEL 7.9%
- 5 **LYRIC STREET** RECORDS 7.5%
- 6 **CURB** RECORDS curb.com 7.4%
- 7 **Mercury** RECORDS 7.3%
- 8 **WB** 6.5%
- 9 **COLUMBIA** NASHVILLE 3.9%
- 10 **SHOW DOG** NASHVILLE 3.8%



# TOP 100 OF 2006 MEDIABASE

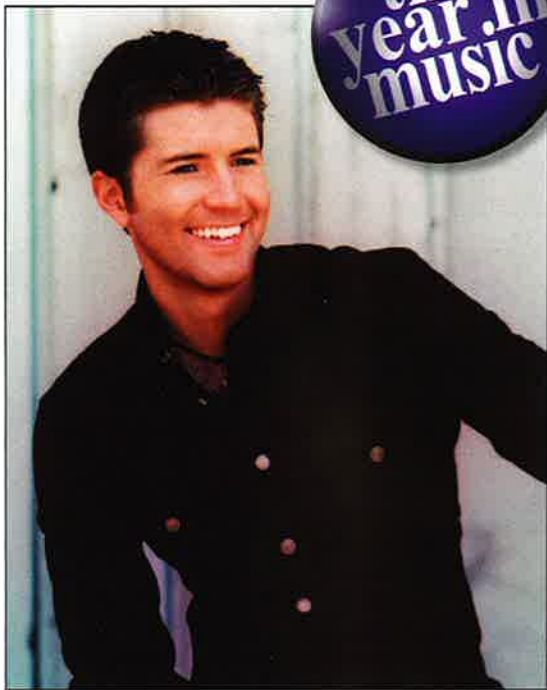


the year in music

- |    |   |     |  |
|----|---|-----|--|
| 1  | <b>RASCAL FLATTS</b> <i>What Hurts The Most</i> (Lyric Street)                  | 51  | <b>BILLY CURRINGTON</b> <i>Why, Why, Why</i> (Mercury)                   |
| 2  | <b>JOSH TURNER</b> <i>Your Man</i> (MCA)  | 52  | <b>KEITH URBAN</b> <i>Once In A Lifetime</i> (Capitol)                   |
| 3  | <b>RODNEY ATKINS</b> <i>If You're Going Through Hell</i> (Curb)                 | 53  | <b>FAITH HILL</b> <i>Sunshine &amp; Summertime</i> (Warner Bros.)        |
| 4  | <b>CARRIE UNDERWOOD</b> <i>Jesus, Take The Wheel</i> (Arista)                   | 54  | <b>GARTH BROOKS</b> <i>Good Ride Cowboy</i> (Pearl/Lyric Street)         |
| 5  | <b>BON JOVI w/ J. NETTLES</b> <i>Who Says You Can't Go Home</i> (Mercury/IDJMG) | 55  | <b>RASCAL FLATTS</b> <i>My Wish</i> (Lyric Street)                       |
| 6  | <b>BRAD PAISLEY</b> <i>When I Get Where I'm Going</i> (Arista)                  | 56  | <b>JAMEY JOHNSON</b> <i>The Dollar</i> (BNA)                             |
| 7  | <b>BRAD PAISLEY</b> <i>The World</i> (Arista)                                   | 57  | <b>PAT GREEN</b> <i>Feels Just Like It Should</i> (BNA)                  |
| 8  | <b>BILLY CURRINGTON</b> <i>Must Be Doin' Somethin' Right</i> (Mercury)          | 58  | <b>MIRANDA LAMBERT</b> <i>Kerosene</i> (Epic)                            |
| 9  | <b>KEITH URBAN</b> <i>Tonight I Wanna Cry</i> (Capitol)                         | 59  | <b>JAKE OWEN</b> <i>Yee Haw</i> (RCA)                                    |
| 10 | <b>JASON ALDEAN</b> <i>Why</i> (BBR)  | 60  | <b>DANIELLE PECK</b> <i>Findin' A Good Man</i> (Big Machine)             |
| 11 | <b>KENNY CHESNEY</b> <i>Summertime</i> (BNA)                                    | 61  | <b>ERIC CHURCH</b> <i>How 'Bout You</i> (Capitol)                        |
| 12 | <b>PHIL VASSAR</b> <i>Last Day Of My Life</i> (Arista)                          | 62  | <b>TIM MCGRAW</b> <i>My Little Girl</i> (Curb)                           |
| 13 | <b>LEANN RIMES</b> <i>Something's Gotta Give</i> (Curb/Asylum)                  | 63  | <b>GEORGE STRAIT</b> <i>Seashores Of Old Mexico</i> (MCA)                |
| 14 | <b>KENNY CHESNEY</b> <i>Living In Fast Forward</i> (BNA)                        | 64  | <b>MONTGOMERY GENTRY</b> <i>Some People Change</i> (Columbia)            |
| 15 | <b>GEORGE STRAIT</b> <i>She Let Herself Go</i> (MCA)                            | 65  | <b>KENNY ROGERS</b> <i>I Can't Unlove You</i> (Capitol)                  |
| 16 | <b>JACK INGRAM</b> <i>Wherever You Are</i> (Big Machine)                        | 66  | <b>LONESTAR</b> <i>Mountains</i> (BNA)                                   |
| 17 | <b>WRECKERS</b> <i>Leave The Pieces</i> (Warner Bros.)                          | 67  | <b>JACK INGRAM</b> <i>Love You</i> (Big Machine)                         |
| 18 | <b>TRACE ADKINS</b> <i>Honky Tonk Badonkadonk</i> (Capitol)                     | 68  | <b>VAN ZANT</b> <i>Nobody Gonna Tell Me What To Do</i> (Columbia)        |
| 19 | <b>BLAKE SHELTON</b> <i>Nobody But Me</i> (Warner Bros.)                        | 69  | <b>TAYLOR SWIFT</b> <i>Tim McGraw</i> (Big Machine)                      |
| 20 | <b>KEITH ANDERSON</b> <i>Every Time I Hear Your Name</i> (Arista)               | 70  | <b>ALAN JACKSON</b> <i>Like Red On A Rose</i> (Arista)                   |
| 21 | <b>MONTGOMERY GENTRY</b> <i>She Don't Tell Me To</i> (Columbia)                 | 71  | <b>JOSH GRACIN</b> <i>Favorite State Of Mind</i> (Lyric Street)          |
| 22 | <b>DIERKS BENTLEY</b> <i>Settle For A Slowdown</i> (Capitol)                    | 72  | <b>BIG &amp; RICH</b> <i>8th Of November</i> (Warner Bros.)              |
| 23 | <b>LITTLE BIG TOWN</b> <i>Bring It On Home</i> (Equity)                         | 73  | <b>BLAINE LARSEN</b> <i>I Don't Know What She Said</i> (Giantslayer/BNA) |
| 24 | <b>STEVE HOLY</b> <i>Brand New Girlfriend</i> (Curb)                            | 74  | <b>TRENT TOMLINSON</b> <i>Drunker Than Me</i> (Lyric Street)             |
| 25 | <b>CARRIE UNDERWOOD</b> <i>Don't Forget To Remember Me</i> (Arista)             | 75  | <b>CHRIS CAGLE</b> <i>Miss Me Baby</i> (Capitol)                         |
| 26 | <b>TOBY KEITH</b> <i>Get Drunk And Be Somebody</i> (Show Dog)                   | 76  | <b>JASON ALDEAN</b> <i>Amarillo Sky</i> (BBR)                            |
| 27 | <b>BROOKS &amp; DUNN</b> <i>Believe</i> (Arista)                                | 77  | <b>EMERSON DRIVE</b> <i>A Good Man</i> (Midas)                           |
| 28 | <b>JOSH TURNER</b> <i>Would You Go With Me</i> (MCA)                            | 78  | <b>TOBY KEITH</b> <i>Big Blue Note</i> (Show Dog/DreamWorks)             |
| 29 | <b>TOBY KEITH</b> <i>A Little Too Late</i> (Show Dog)                           | 79  | <b>SUGARLAND</b> <i>Down In Mississippi (Up To...)</i> (Mercury)         |
| 30 | <b>GARY ALLAN</b> <i>Life Ain't Always Beautiful</i> (MCA)                      | 80  | <b>TOBY KEITH</b> <i>Crash Here Tonight</i> (Show Dog)                   |
| 31 | <b>TIM MCGRAW</b> <i>When The Stars Go Blue</i> (Curb)                          | 81  | <b>RASCAL FLATTS</b> <i>Life Is A Highway</i> (Walt Disney)              |
| 32 | <b>JOE NICHOLS</b> <i>Size Matters (Someday)</i> (Universal South)              | 82  | <b>TRACE ADKINS</b> <i>Swing</i> (Capitol)                               |
| 33 | <b>GEORGE STRAIT</b> <i>Give It Away</i> (MCA)                                  | 83  | <b>BRAD PAISLEY</b> <i>She's Everything</i> (Arista)                     |
| 34 | <b>DIERKS BENTLEY</b> <i>Come A Little Closer</i> (Capitol)                     | 84  | <b>GARY ALLAN</b> <i>Best I Ever Had</i> (MCA)                           |
| 35 | <b>LITTLE BIG TOWN</b> <i>Boondocks</i> (Equity)                                | 85  | <b>TRENT WILLMON</b> <i>On Again Tonight</i> (Columbia)                  |
| 36 | <b>BROOKS &amp; DUNN</b> <i>Building Bridges</i> (Arista)                       | 86  | <b>SHEDAISY</b> <i>I'm Taking The Wheel</i> (Lyric Street)               |
| 37 | <b>JOE NICHOLS</b> <i>Tequila Makes Her Clothes ...</i> (Universal South)       | 87  | <b>TRENT TOMLINSON</b> <i>One Wing In The Fire</i> (Lyric Street)        |
| 38 | <b>RASCAL FLATTS</b> <i>Me And My Gang</i> (Lyric Street)                       | 88  | <b>CRAIG MORGAN</b> <i>Little Bit Of Life</i> (BBR)                      |
| 39 | <b>FAITH HILL</b> <i>Like We Never Loved At All</i> (Warner Bros./Curb)         | 89  | <b>GEORGE STRAIT</b> <i>It Just Comes Natural</i> (MCA)                  |
| 40 | <b>HEARTLAND</b> <i>I Loved Her First</i> (Lofton Creek)                        | 90  | <b>GRETCHEN WILSON</b> <i>I Don't Feel Like Loving You...</i> (Epic)     |
| 41 | <b>DIERKS BENTLEY</b> <i>Every Mile A Memory</i> (Capitol)                      | 91  | <b>CAROLINA RAIN</b> <i>Get Outta My Way</i> (Equity)                    |
| 42 | <b>CARRIE UNDERWOOD</b> <i>Before He Cheats</i> (Arista)                        | 92  | <b>MIRANDA LAMBERT</b> <i>New Strings</i> (Columbia)                     |
| 43 | <b>SUGARLAND</b> <i>Just Might (Make Me Believe)</i> (Mercury)                  | 93  | <b>GRETCHEN WILSON</b> <i>Politically Uncorrect</i> (Epic)               |
| 44 | <b>SARA EVANS</b> <i>Cheatin'</i> (RCA)   | 94  | <b>ROCKIE LYNNE</b> <i>Lipstick</i> (Universal South)                    |
| 45 | <b>KENNY CHESNEY</b> <i>You Save Me</i> (BNA)                                   | 95  | <b>RODNEY ATKINS</b> <i>Watching You</i> (Curb)                          |
| 46 | <b>TIM MCGRAW</b> <i>My Old Friend</i> (Curb)                                   | 96  | <b>GRETCHEN WILSON</b> <i>California Girls</i> (Columbia)                |
| 47 | <b>FAITH HILL</b> <i>The Lucky One</i> (Warner Bros.)                           | 97  | <b>ERIC CHURCH</b> <i>Two Pink Lines</i> (Capitol)                       |
| 48 | <b>SUGARLAND</b> <i>Want To</i> (Mercury)                                       | 98  | <b>MEGAN MULLINS</b> <i>Ain't What It Used To Be</i> (BBR)               |
| 49 | <b>KENNY CHESNEY</b> <i>Who You'd Be Today</i> (BNA)                            | 99  | <b>BIG &amp; RICH</b> <i>Comin' To Your City</i> (Warner Bros.)          |
| 50 | <b>CRAIG MORGAN</b> <i>I Got You</i> (BBR)                                      | 100 | <b>JOE NICHOLS</b> <i>I'll Wait For You</i> (Universal South)            |



# TOP 15<sup>S</sup> OF 2006



	Artist	Title	Label	Peak Position (Wks. At No. 1)	Peak Date	Wks. on Chart	2006 Position
A	TRACE ADKINS	Honky Tonk Badonkadonk	(Capitol)	2	1/30/06	11	18
	JASON ALDEAN	Why	(BBR)	1 (1)	5/15/06	26	10
	JASON ALDEAN	Amarillo Sky	(BBR)	12	11/27/06	21	76
	GARY ALLAN	Best I Ever Had	(MCA)	10	12/05/05	2	84
	GARY ALLAN	Life Ain't Always Beautiful	(MCA)	5	8/07/06	31	30
	KEITH ANDERSON	Every Time I Hear Your Name	(Arista)	6	6/19/06	32	20
	RODNEY ATKINS	If You're Going Through Hell	(Curb)	1 (3)	8/21/06	34	3
RODNEY ATKINS	Watching You	(Curb)	11	11/27/06	10	95	
B	DIERKS BENTLEY	Come A Little Closer	(Capitol)	1 (1)	12/12/05	7	34
	DIERKS BENTLEY	Settle For A Slowdown	(Capitol)	1 (2)	5/30/06	22	22
	DIERKS BENTLEY	Every Mile A Memory	(Capitol)	1 (1)	10/23/06	19	41
	BIG & RICH	8th Of November	(Warner Bros.)	15	8/28/06	16	72
	BON JOVI w/ J. NETTLES	Who Says You Can't Go Home	(Mercury/IDJMG)	1(2)	5/02/06	24	5
	GARTH BROOKS	Good Ride Cowboy	(Pearl/Lyric Street)	1 (1)	12/19/05	7	54
	BROOKS & DUNN	Believe	(Arista)	6	4/17/06	22	27
BROOKS & DUNN	Building Bridges	(Arista)	4	10/02/06	21	36	
C	CHRIS CAGLE	Miss Me Baby	(Capitol)	13	1/09/06	9	75
	KENNY CHESNEY	Who You'd Be Today	(BNA)	3	12/05/05	5	45
	KENNY CHESNEY	Living In Fast Forward	(BNA)	1 (1)	3/13/06	18	14
	KENNY CHESNEY	Summertime	(BNA)	1 (3)	7/05/06	17	11
	KENNY CHESNEY	You Save Me	(BNA)	3	11/27/06	16	45
	ERIC CHURCH	How 'Bout You	(Capitol)	12	7/17/06	25	61
	BILLY CURRINGTON	Must Be Doin' Somethin' Right	(Mercury)	3	1/18/06	9	8
BILLY CURRINGTON	Why, Why, Why	(Mercury)	11	8/28/06	29	51	
E	EMERSON DRIVE	A Good Man	(Midas)	16	11/11/06	32	77
	SARA EVANS	Cheatin'	(RCA)	9	3/27/06	18	44
G	PAT GREEN	Feels Just Like It Should	(BNA)	9	8/28/06	21	57
H	HEARTLAND	I Loved Her First	(Lofton Creek)	1(1)	10/16/06	18	40
	FAITH HILL	Like We Never Loved At All	(Warner Bros./Curb)	4	2/06/06	12	39
	FAITH HILL	The Lucky One	(Warner Bros.)	5	4/24/06	14	47
	FAITH HILL	Sunshine & Summertime	(Warner Bros.)	7	9/11/06	15	53
	STEVE HOLY	Brand New Girlfriend	(Curb)	1 (1)	9/11/06	33	24
I	JACK INGRAM	Wherever You Are	(Big Machine)	1 (1)	5/08/06	25	16
	JACK INGRAM	Love You	(Big Machine)	10	11/13/06	25	67
J	ALAN JACKSON	Like Red On A Rose	(Arista)	12	10/09/06	15	70
	JAMEY JOHNSON	The Dollar	(BNA)	12	3/13/06	16	56
K	TOBY KEITH	Big Blue Note	(Show Dog/DreamWorks)	5	12/12/05	5	78
	TOBY KEITH	Get Drunk And Be Somebody	(Show Dog)	3	4/17/06	19	26
	TOBY KEITH	A Little Too Late	(Show Dog)	1 (1)	7/31/06	18	29
	TOBY KEITH	Crash Here Tonight	(Show Dog)	13	10/23/06	14	80
L	MIRANDA LAMBERT	Kerosene	(Epic)	12	2/06/06	14	58
	LITTLE BIG TOWN	Boondocks	(Equity)	9	1/09/06	9	35
	LITTLE BIG TOWN	Bring It On Home	(Equity)	4	8/21/06	32	23
	LONESTAR	Mountains	(BNA)	10	11/27/06	23	66
M	TIM MCGRAW	My Old Friend	(Curb)	5	2/13/06	13	46
	TIM MCGRAW	When The Stars Go Blue	(Curb)	3	6/12/06	19	31
	TIM MCGRAW	My Little Girl	(Curb)	5	11/27/06	16	62
	MONTGOMERY GENTRY	She Don't Tell Me To	(Columbia)	5	3/20/06	19	21
	MONTGOMERY GENTRY	Some People Change	(Columbia)	6	11/27/06	20	64
	CRAIG MORGAN	I Got You	(BBR)	12	6/05/06	29	50
CRAIG MORGAN	Little Bit Of Life	(BBR)	13	11/27/06	16	88	
N	JOE NICHOLS	Tequila Makes Her Clothes Fall Off	(Universal South)	1 (1)	12/05/05	5	37
	JOE NICHOLS	Size Matters	(Universal South)	7	6/05/06	23	32
O	JAKE OWEN	Yee Haw	(RCA)	14	8/21/06	25	59
P	BRAD PAISLEY	When I Get Where I'm Going	(Arista)	1 (1)	2/21/06	14	6
	BRAD PAISLEY	The World	(Arista)	1 (2)	7/17/06	20	7
	BRAD PAISLEY	She's Everything	(Arista)	6	11/27/06	13	83
	DANIELLE PECK	Findin' A Good Man	(Big Machine)	11	9/25/06	28	60
R	RASCAL FLATTS	What Hurts The Most	(Lyric Street)	1(5)	4/17/06	19	1
	RASCAL FLATTS	Me And My Gang	(Lyric Street)	4	8/07/06	19	38
	RASCAL FLATTS	My Wish	(Lyric Street)	1 (1)	11/27/06	15	55
	LEANN RIMES	Something's Gotta Give	(Curb/Asylum)	1 (1)	6/05/06	27	13
	KENNY ROGERS	I Can't Unlove You	(Capitol)	14	6/26/06	27	65
S	BLAKE SHELTON	Nobody But Me	(Warner Bros.)	4	3/27/06	20	19
	GEORGE STRAIT	She Let Herself Go	(MCA)	1 (1)	1/09/06	9	15
	GEORGE STRAIT	Seashores Of Old Mexico	(MCA)	11	5/30/06	17	63
	GEORGE STRAIT	Give It Away	(MCA)	1 (2)	9/25/06	16	33
	GEORGE STRAIT	It Just Comes Natural	(MCA)	8	11/27/06	9	89
	SUGARLAND	Just Might (Make Me Believe)	(Mercury)	7	2/21/06	14	43
	SUGARLAND	Want To	(Mercury)	3	11/27/06	18	48
TAYLOR SWIFT	Tim McGraw	(Big Machine)	9	11/27/06	22	69	
T	TRENT TOMLINSON	Drunker Than Me	(Lyric Street)	14	3/13/06	18	76
	TRENT TOMLINSON	One Wing In The Fire	(Lyric Street)	14	11/27/06	22	87
	JOSH TURNER	Your Man	(MCA)	1 (2)	3/06/06	16	2
	JOSH TURNER	Would You Go With Me	(MCA)	1 (2)	10/09/06	26	28
U	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	Jesus, Take The Wheel	(Arista)	1 (5)	2/13/06	13	4
	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	Don't Forget To Remember Me	(Arista)	1 (1)	7/24/06	22	25
	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	Before He Cheats	(Arista)	1 (4)	11/20/06	9	42
	KEITH URBAN	Tonight I Wanna Cry	(Capitol)	2	4/03/06	20	9
	KEITH URBAN	Once In A Lifetime	(Capitol)	5	11/07/06	14	52
V	VAN ZANT	Nobody Gonna Tell Me What To Do	(Columbia)	15	3/13/06	17	68
	PHIL VASSAR	Last Day Of My Life	(Arista)	1 (1)	6/19/06	22	12
W	WRECKERS	Leave The Pieces	(Warner Bros.)	1 (2)	9/05/06	24	17
	WRECKERS	My, Oh My	(Warner Bros.)	15	11/27/06	11	-



# KENNY, CARRIE, THE FLATTS & JACK LEAD 2006 PACK

**K**enny Chesney is once again king of Country radio and is the format's Most Heard artist and Top Male Performer of 2006. Following closely behind are Rascal Flatts, Carrie Underwood and Brad Paisley, signaling that the changing of country's guard is almost complete. In fact, the only bastion of the old guard in this year's Top 10 Country Performers is George Strait, who had one of his strongest years with four top 15 hits, including a pair of No. 1s.

Underwood soared from nowhere a year ago to this year's Top Female Performer, Rascal Flatts repeats as the Top Duo/Group and Jack Ingram leads the list of New Artists scoring top 15 hits for the first time in 2006.

This year's Top 10 Performers lists are also populated by a number of recent additions to the national country scene. Scaling the heights of the Top 10 Males are Josh Turner, Billy Currington and Joe Nichols. In addition to Underwood, who tops the ladies list, Miranda Lambert, Danielle Peck and Taylor Swift are among the Top Female Performers for the first time. Newcomers are also heavily entwined on the Top Duo/Groups list, with the Wreckers and Heartland making the Top 10 for the first time and Little Big Town, Big & Rich and Van Zant making the list for the second year.

Nineteen different artists notched No. 1 hits in 2006. Leading the pack with an amazing 10 weeks on top of the charts was Underwood, who posted three chart-toppers. Next came Rascal Flatts with two No. 1s that occupied the peak for six weeks. Racking up four weeks worth of No. 1s each were Chesney and Turner, both of whom had a pair of No. 1 singles, and Dierks Bentley, who had three singles hit the pinnacle.

The year's biggest Cinderella story belongs to Lofton Creek's Heartland, which had a monster hit with "I Loved Her First." The story of a band that had toiled in clubs for more than a decade hitting a great lick with a super song is what keeps artists coming to Music City with guitars strapped to their backs. **CAC**



## Country Radio's Top 2006 Performers

### OVERALL

1. **Kenny Chesney** (BNA)
2. **Rascal Flatts** (Lyric Street)
3. **Carrie Underwood** (Arista)
4. **Brad Paisley** (Arista)
5. **George Strait** (MCA)
6. **Toby Keith** (Show Dog)
7. **Dierks Bentley** (Capitol)
8. **Josh Turner** (MCA)
9. **Sugarland** (Mercury)
10. **Tim McGraw** (Curb)

### MALE

1. **Kenny Chesney** (BNA)
2. **Brad Paisley** (Arista)
3. **George Strait** (MCA)
4. **Toby Keith** (Show Dog)
5. **Dierks Bentley** (Capitol)
6. **Josh Turner** (MCA)
7. **Tim McGraw** (Curb)
8. **Billy Currington** (Mercury)
9. **Keith Urban** (Capitol)
10. **Joe Nichols** (Universal South)

### FEMALE

1. **Carrie Underwood** (Arista)
2. **Faith Hill** (Warner Bros.)
3. **LeAnn Rimes** (Curb/Asylum)
4. **Sara Evans** (RCA)
5. **Miranda Lambert** (Columbia)
6. **Danielle Peck** (Big Machine)
7. **Gretchen Wilson** (Columbia)
8. **Taylor Swift** (Big Machine)
9. **Jo Dee Messina** (Curb)
10. **Lee Ann Womack** (Mercury)

### DUO/GROUP

1. **Rascal Flatts** (Lyric Street)
2. **Sugarland** (Mercury)
3. **Little Big Town** (Equity)
4. **Brooks & Dunn** (Arista)
5. **Montgomery Gentry** (Columbia)
6. **Wreckers** (Warner Bros.)
7. **Heartland** (Lofton Creek)
8. **Big & Rich** (Warner Bros.)
9. **Lonestar** (BNA)
10. **Van Zant** (Columbia)

### NEW ARTISTS

1. **Jack Ingram** (Big Machine)
2. **Wreckers** (Warner Bros.)
3. **Heartland** (Lofton Creek)
4. **Miranda Lambert** (Columbia)
5. **Eric Church** (Capitol)
6. **Danielle Peck** (Big Machine)
7. **Trent Tomlinson** (Lyric Street)
8. **Jake Owen** (RCA)
9. **Jamey Johnson** (BNA)
10. **Taylor Swift** (Big Machine)

### TOP 15 1<sup>st</sup> TIMERS

These artists had top 15 hits for the first time in 2006. Heartland, Jack Ingram and the Wreckers all notched No. 1 hits, with the latter's "Leave The Pieces" staying at No. 1 for two weeks.

- Eric Church** (Capitol)
- Heartland** (Lofton Creek)
- Jack Ingram** (2) (Big Machine)
- Jamey Johnson** (BNA)
- Miranda Lambert** (Columbia)
- Jake Owen** (RCA)
- Danielle Peck** (Big Machine)
- Taylor Swift** (Big Machine)
- Trent Tomlinson** (2) (Lyric Street)
- Wreckers** (2) (Warner Bros.)





# MY FAVORITE MEMORY

## Industry Execs Share The Best And Worst Of 2006

**A**nyone who was bored following the developments in the country music industry this year clearly wasn't paying attention. It was a year of significant changes, upheaval and disappointments as well as some shining successes for the country format and the emergence of several bright new stars. Country Aircheck caught up with 15 key industry executives and asked them to share their favorite memories of 2006. From the loss of KZLA to some interesting cross-genre pairings, their answers cover the spectrum of the year that was in country music.

### BOB ROMEO, ACM

"ACM had numerous memorable moments from **Big & Rich** performing '8th of November' with the purple-heart veterans, **Brooks & Dunn** performance of 'Believe,' to



**Carrie Underwood** winning her first nationally-televised country music award for Top New Female Vocalist. Even with such powerful and emotional moments, the one that really stuck out for me was when **Barbara Mandrell** announced that the Entertainer of the Year was once again **Kenny Chesney**.

"I happened to be backstage when they

made the announcement and caught Kenny as he was walking off the stage. He said to me, 'Bob, the ACM Awards was the first award show to give me a shot and put me on national TV, they were also the place I won my very first award back in 1997 for Top New Male Vocalist. And now I am holding the Entertainer award for the second time. To win it once is big but to win it twice is awesome. Thank you. You guys have been here with me every step of the way.'

"Wow. I was speechless. I love the picture our photographer captured backstage because it was right after our discussion and Kenny is still holding the card that Barbara had just read his name from."

### ADRIAN MICHAELS, CURB/ASYLUM

"Both [Curb Senior VP] **Carson James** and I got the news about KZLA at 1 p.m. while we were at a layover in Minneapolis on our way to have a 4 p.m. meeting with [OM] **R.J. Curtis**. We were going in to do dinner with R.J. right before the Tim and Faith show that night in L.A. [and were going] to play him the new **Clay Walker** single as well as other new songs. R.J. was going to help me pitch an idea for the CRB board to Tim that night.

"Later that day we were in L.A. with the No. 1 tour in the nation and our singles in our

hand, but no station to present them to. We were there in person the day they turned the lights out in L.A.

"Also, Clay Walker has a duet with **Freddy Fender** on his upcoming record to be released this January. The duet is 'When the Last Teardrop Falls.' I was on a bus ride from San Antonio to Nashville with [KAJA/San Antonio PD] **Clayton Allen** and the morning show from KAJA on their way to the CMAs. Freddy had passed away about a week or two before that. **Randy Carroll** had heard that Clay recorded the song with Freddy and asked me if I had the single and if I could play it. Being from South Texas they were fond of Freddy. After [hearing] Freddy's part singing on the song, there wasn't a dry eye on the bus. Four grown men on a road trip crying to a Freddy Fender song."

### SKIP BISHOP, ARISTA

"We were having a very successful set-up for **Jason Michael Carroll's** original first single, 'Looking At You,' but something remarkable and unexpected happened when we ran down to WUSY/Chattanooga to visit **Bill Poindexter** and **Big Al** on the air. They played the single on the air and then asked Jason to perform another song live. He decided to go with 'Alyssa Lies,' which is the first time it had ever been performed on radio.

"Once he did, Dex and Al were speechless and immediately every phone line in the control room lit up. It looked to be 30 incoming lines. We were dumfounded. They started taking calls, which ranged from people in tears to people saying, 'That song is my life.'

"We said goodbye and within 30 minutes they were calling us back saying, 'They're still calling.' I've never in my long career seen such an immediate reaction. We were all just stunned. This is a record company fantasy, a promotion guy's dream.

"As we were driving home, the night jock called and said 'Every call I'm getting is for Alyssa.' I had left them with rough versions that I had no intention of them airing,

but they did and it created absolute bedlam. "In all my corporate wisdom I called [OM] **Kris Van Dyke** and **Dex** the next day and said 'We need to put a cap on this 'cause we're working another single.' Within three days the exact same thing happened in Detroit . . . We eventually decided to change singles."

### PETE FISHER, GRAND OLE OPRY

"This was an interesting year for Opry debuts. We had a very eclectic mix of artists from **Big & Rich**, **Cowboy Troy**, the **Wreckers** and **Kellie Pickler** to the more traditional **Eric Church** and **Chris Young** to others known nationally for their work in other genres including **Michael McDonald** and **Elvis Costello**.

"One of the most memorable debuts was



when **Vince Gill** was joined by jazz vocalist **Diana Krall** for an absolutely magical performance of 'Faint of Heart,' which they recorded together on Vince's new four-CD set. Diana was in town recording with Vince at the same time her husband, **Elvis Costello**, was making his Opry debut alongside **Emmylou**





## THE YEAR IN MEMORIES

**Harris.** That moment not only reflected the magic and spontaneity of the Opry, but also made one of [this] generation's most renowned jazz vocalists absolutely glow with enthusiasm after her performance.

"The Opry's newly-introduced Signature Show Series seems to put all the pieces in place for those unique 'Opry Moments' we love. Most vivid are **Carrie Underwood** earning a well-deserved standing ovation for her performance of Tammy Wynette's 'Stand By Your Man' during our 'Women of Country' Signature Show and **Travis Tritt** tearing the house down with 'Georgia On My Mind' during our Ray Charles Tribute Signature Show, which also featured Michael McDonald, **Martina McBride**, Vince Gill and **Ronnie Milsap**, among others."

### BLAIR GARNER, AFTER MIDNITE

"I was so happy the week of the KZLA format flip because [OM] **R.J. Curtis** had asked me if I'd fill in for **Peter Tilden** doing the morning show. I didn't even need caffeine that week I was so amped up.

"Every day after doing the show I'd go into R.J.'s office and talk about the show and refine the game plan. That Thursday morning I walked by R.J.'s office and I could tell he didn't really have time. So I left and was looking forward to coming back the next day.

"I drove over to the Premiere studios. It took me 12 minutes, and as I came in, one of our senior VPs, **Trevor Oliver**, asked if I'd heard about KZLA. He pulled me into his office and they were playing a rap song. I looked at the dial and it said 93.9. I'm a world-class prankster and thought he'd rigged someone in engineering to play a prank on me. 'Then I hear 'You're listening to the new Movin' 93.9.' My heart just sank. I felt angry for the staff at KZLA. There are ways you can handle things, and I don't believe that was handled a good way. The listeners felt such a sense of betrayal.

"But the way that R.J. conducted himself and continued to be the team leader even though he knew it was no more, that's the definition of a class act."

### ED HARDY, GAC

"There are quite a few meaningful events that leap to mind for me. At the GAC taping of the **Alan Jackson** *Precious Memories* special at the Ryman, it was very touching to watch the expressions and responses of his mother and aunt in the front row, since the album was a present to his mom, then to see the album go platinum mainly due to the GAC special.

"As the year waned, we taped our special *Songs of the Year* event that brought such

incredible country talent to perform some of the greatest songs of the past in our beautiful new Schermerhorn [Symphony Center] building.

"Of course, [another favorite memory is] the **Barbara Mandrell** special and the opportunity to stand and visit with her backstage at the tribute to her on the *GAC Opry Live*."

### KEVIN HERRING, LYRIC STREET

"Our biggest moment of the year is not really behind the scenes, but a lot went into the No. 1 debut of **Rascal Flatts**' *Me and My Gang*: the radio jet tour, the fourth straight ACM and CMA vocal group wins and the sell-out arena tour. Their 721,747 first week units is the biggest debut all-genre this year, and the album looks to be the biggest selling single artist CD of 2006, second overall behind the multi-artist *High School Musical*."

### CLAY HUNNICUTT, CLEAR CHANNEL

"My favorite was when **Keith Urban** stopped by unannounced at WSIX to play his



new single, 'Once in a Lifetime,' for the first time on the radio on the **Gerry House** show. He stayed about an hour and was absolutely fantastic."

### CHARLIE MONK, MONK FAMILY MUSIC

"Being a music publisher, the neatest, best, nicest, thing for me in '06 was having the honor to induct my friend **Jim Weatherly** into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame. Not only did he write 'Midnight Train To Georgia,' 'You're the Best Thing (That Ever Happened To Me),' 'Neither One Of Us (Wants To Be the First To Say Goodbye)' all by himself, but he co-wrote 'Someone Else's Star' and 'A Lady Like You.' That night I said he was boring because he didn't smoke, drink, chew or chase women, but I also said he was the most honorable man I know.

"Now don't ever say I haven't said something nice about somebody."



**GENERAL CONSENSUS**  
Pictured backstage at CRS-37 are (l-r) Neal McCoy, Bob Kingsley, General Tommy Franks, Ed Salamon, and Darryl Worley.

### BRIAN PHILIPS, CMT

"We'd spent about four years trying to hook up with **Bon Jovi** for a *CMT Crossroads*. The timing never worked out. Jon handed us a rough of 'Who Says You Can't Go Home' last year. We all heard the song as an obvious hit, but knew the right duet partner would put it over the top. [UMG Nashville chairman] **Luke Lewis** brilliantly connected the dots with **Sugarland**.

"After a smash *Crossroads*, Bon Jovi had a No. 1 country song in 2006 and even won a CMT Music Award for the crossover hit, making it a significant moment across genres."

### ROYCE RISSER, MCA

"**George Strait** being inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame. I don't think there has ever been a person inducted that is still delivering hits to Country radio."

### ED SALAMON, CRB

"General **Tommy Franks**' keynote address at CRS-37 provided inspiration in leadership, character and the value of democracy that I will never forget. His examples of dealing with the real world challenges in Iraq and Afghanistan have corollaries in how we can succeed in our format. Although most of CRS is about 'growth through sharing' with the best and brightest from our own industry, we can learn a lot from those outside our business as well. Sometimes it's the nontraditional speakers at CRS that provide the most relevant and lasting input."

### BRUCE SHINDLER, UMG

"**Vince Gill** putting out a four CD set of 43 stylistically diverse original songs was a phe-

nomenal achievement. In all my years of promoting artists I have never seen one do this, and do it so well. It gave me faith that our format still has artists that think outside the box and are willing to push the envelope no matter what the consequences. A great moment for our industry!"

### SCOTT SIMAN, RPM MANAGEMENT/RPM MUSIC

"**Tony Bennett** joining **Tim McGraw** at Madison Square Garden during *Soul 2 Soul II*. They sang the Hank Williams' song 'Cold Cold Heart,' which is on Tony's duets project. A tour this big always has many moments, but that was a special one. When Tony came up on the center lift to a sold-out, in the round, standing ovation, it gave you the chill bumps. It was the connection of the generations through that moment. You had, arguably, the most influential country writer/artist ever in Hank Sr.'s words and music, Tony Bennett, an American icon who made the song a worldwide hit, and the quintessential modern country superstar Tim McGraw. It just doesn't get any better than that.

"The other moment that stands out is **Tim and Faith** returning to New Orleans and being the first major concert since Katrina. The crowd was amazing. We were able to bring in major media in the person of [CNN's] **Anderson Cooper** to continue to highlight the needs, and donate the proceeds to the artists' 'Neighbor's Keeper Foundation' to do good works in Mississippi and Louisiana. We did a special luncheon with **Emeril [Lagasse]** earlier that day to raise more funds and we had fun showing him backstage catering prior to the show." CAC

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CPI Records Dallas, TX



# HERE'S A QUARTER

feedback on this cut from stations that have spent some time with this album."

The label plans to build momentum for Wills with the single "Take it All Out On Me," from a late spring album release. A radio tour is now underway for newcomer Bryna. Her first single is "I Don't Have a Thing To Wear," which is set for a Jan. 29 impact date. CDJ's next single is "Good Day," set to ship to radio in February.

## LOFTON CREEK

Mike Borchetta's crew will follow their recent chart-topping success with a new Heartland single called "Built To Last," impacting in January. In February, the label brings Doug Stone's "Tell It Like It Is" to radio.

## LYRIC STREET

The house of mouse plans to continue its artist development of Sarah Buxton,



Sarah Buxton

and will remain focused on Josh Gracin's "I Keep Coming Back." Both acts are looking toward Q1 album releases.

Veep Dale Turner says a fourth single from *Me & My Gang* will kick off Rascal Flatts' new year, by which time the album will have passed three million scans, making it "the best selling album of 2006," Turner says.

A third single is expected from Trent Tomlinson, who Turner says is "the best

selling debut solo country artist of '06 to date." And finally, "Lyric Street will be introducing a new brand to radio in the first quarter," Turner says, "but don't be surprised if this new artist isn't already a known entity to everyone."

## ALBUM RELEASES:

- Sarah Buxton, *Sarah Buxton*, TBA
- Josh Gracin, TBA, March

## MCA

According to veep Royce Risser, the MCA bunch will roll George Strait's current single into early January, which means you can expect a new single from Strait at the end of the month, or possibly early February.

Also due in February is another single from Vince Gill, although the title is still TBD. MCA has one album release planned.

## ALBUM RELEASE:

- Gary Allan, TBA, February

## MERCURY

January brings "Settlin'," Sugarland's second single from the duo's recently released second album. VP John Ettinger calls the single "a straight ahead tempo record - the kind of Sugarland music people fell in love with."

A radio tour of key markets is planned for Billy Currington in February in advance of new music from his upcoming third album. And, Ettinger says, "Keep an eye [out] for a new band named *Halfway To Hazzard*. We expect this raucous duo will be knocking people on their butts by CRS in Nashville." Tim McGraw and Byron Gallimore are producing the band.

Gary Nichols will continue to be a Mercury priority, Lee Ann Womack will have a new single from her forthcoming new album and a second single from the Randy Rogers Band will have a Jan. 22 impact date.

## MIDAS

Rob Dalton and the gang are hoping for another Emerson Drive hit in '07 to go with "A Good Man." The group's next single, probably out sometime in Q1, will be "Moments" from the current album.

## QUARTERBACK

Denny Mosesman is calling the plays, and Lucy Angel is in the game.

He calls the group, "A trio of strong, bold, sassy women with a distinctive musical attitude that's 10 feet tall, [with] harmonies that sound like they are related (they are) [and] songs that burn up the radio." Al Anderson wrote or co-wrote much of the project. The lead single "How Long?" was written by Anderson and Jeffrey Steele and is already at radio.

Also in the starting rotation: Ty Herndon. "Remember this guy's electric live performances and top 10 radio hits? Well, he's back and it's worth listening to," says Mosesman. "It's his first album in five years and his maturity - both in terms of voice and music - is evident. Who says you can't bottle lightning twice?" Single "Right About Now" is at radio.

## ALBUM RELEASES INCLUDE:

- Ty Herndon, *Right About Now*, Jan. 9
- Lucy Angel, *A Girl's Gotta Do What A Girl's Gotta Do*, mid-January

## RCA

Nipper promises to keep Martina McBride's "Anyways" front and center as



Chris Young

'07 dawns, as well as Jimmy Buffett's "Everybody's On the Phone," Chris Young's "You're Gonna Love Me" and Catherine Britt's "What I Did Last Night."

## RUST

No rest for Rust or promo domo Rick Baumgartner as the recently released "He Believed" from Aaron Tippin will be a Q1 priority. Looking forward, Feb. 19 is the impact date for Rust's debut single from BlackHawk, titled "Brighter."

Before December's out, programmers can expect a copy of PovertyNeck Hillbillies' "One Night In New Orleans" on their desks. A complete re-working of the album track by producers Bob



PovertyNeck Hillbillies

Corbin and Jason Deere, the song will be added to future pressings of the album and has a Jan. 22 impact date.

Baumgartner also hints at a very special project to be associated with the Hillbillies tune that involves band sponsor 84 Lumber and Habitat for Humanity, and will include a nationwide radio promotion. Need a hint? Check the song title again.

## SHOW DOG

Performing puppy promotion poobah Tony Morreale doesn't have a lot of specifics when it comes to releases, but there's little doubt that new music - and lots of it - is on the way. "We've got a lot of artists in the studio," he says. "Toby Keith, Rushlow Harris, new trio Carter's Chord, new group Flynnville Train and Lindsey Haun are all working on new albums. A new single from Toby's next album will probably hit in the first quarter, and we could have music from all of them."

Morreale won't reveal details on the top dog's new project, but he did give up that Randy Scruggs is involved as a band-leader in the studio. So could Scruggs and Toby be co-producing the record, much as they did the "Broken Bridges" soundtrack and Toby's planned 2007 Christmas album? We'll see. The two are definitely working with Haun on her album debut. But before the floodgates open on Show Dog's '07 releases, the label remains focused on carrying Rushlow Harris' "Bagpipes Cryin'" into the new year.

## UNIVERSAL SOUTH

The new year will likely bring a new single from a new album by Joe Nichols, as well as the next single from Katrina Elam. Also, Rockie Lynne's "More" remains a priority for Q1. CAC

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