

ACM RADIO
WINNERS

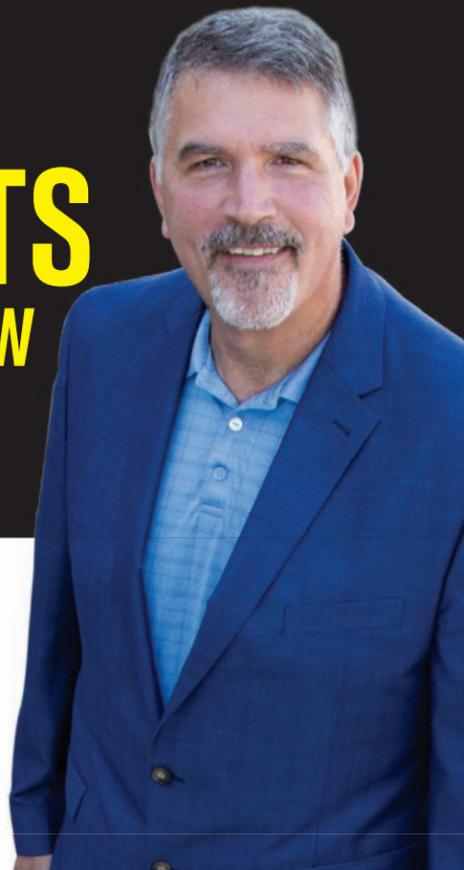


NEW MUSIC
PREVIEW

POWER
21
PANDEMIC
EDITION

TIM
ROBERTS
THE INTERVIEW

BIG
LOUD
TURNS **5!**



COUNTRY **AIRCHECK**

SEPTEMBER 2020

THE NEW SINGLE FROM 2X GRAMMY® AWARD WINNERS

DAN + SHAY



ELVIE SHANE

"MY BOY"



IMPACTING 9/21

"RIGHT NOW WE COULD ALL USE THE **POSITIVITY & ORIGINALITY** THAT ELVIE IS BRINGING WITH HIS MUSIC."

- STEVE STEWART, WWKA/ORLANDO

"ELVIE IS A **BREATH OF FRESH AIR!** HE IS **EVERYTHING WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR!** I WAS HANGING ON **EVERY WORD.**"

- CHRIS "FISH" SHATEK, KMNB/MINNEAPOLIS

"IN A SEA OF SOUND-ALIKE SINGERS, IT'S REFRESHING TO HAVE **A VOICE THAT'S LIKE NONE OTHER OUT THERE.** BETTER YET, ELVIE SHANE HAS **SONGS THAT CONNECT.** WE CAN USE MORE OF THAT COMBINATION ON COUNTRY RADIO."

- JIM MURPHY, MUSIC CHOICE

"ELVIE IS THE TYPE OF MUSICIAN THAT EVERY COUNTRY FAN DESIRES. WITH HIS **MAINSTREAM MELODIES AND OUTLAW ATTITUDE,** ELVIE APPEALS TO A MASSIVE PERCENTAGE OF COUNTRY LISTENERS. HIS MUSIC IS REMINISCENT OF FRANKIE BALLARD WITH AN ERIC CHURCH HEART WITHIN. COUNTRY IS SHIFTING AWAY FROM 'BRO COUNTRY' **AND IT'S TIME FOR ARTISTS LIKE ELVIE SHANE.**"

- TYLER DANIEL, WXCX/WILMINGTON

"BEEN A WHILE SINCE I HAVE BEEN **THIS EXCITED** BY A NEW ARTIST IN A LONG TIME. LOVE THE MUSIC AND HE IS GREAT IN A ZOOM CALL KIND OF WAY"

- JIM DORMAN, KZSN/WICHITA

"ELVIE SHANE **IS THE REAL DEAL!** GRIT, EMOTION, TALENT!"

- DEB TURPIN, KSOP/SALT LAKE CITY

"ELVIE SHANE MADE ME LAUGH AND CRY IN THE FIRST 10 MINUTES OF MEETING HIM. **SO MUCH PASSION IN HIS MUSIC!**"

- NEWMAN, WRBT/HARRISBURG

31 POWER

Asking a cross-section of industry leaders for input generally produces a range of responses as varied as their personalities. This year's reader-voted Power 31 – in Airplay and Artists & Music categories – generated anticipated humor, stoicism, self-effacement and insight. But in revealing what they've learned about the business, their teams and themselves, almost universally they share great optimism. In arguably the greatest business storm since the Great Depression, these industry professionals are seeing rays of light.

+ PANDEMIC EDITION +



AIRPLAY

1 **ROD PHILLIPS** iHeartMedia EVP/Country Programming Strategy

I've learned very quickly how radio remains resilient, relevant and vital, particularly in the face of adversity. Our teams moved quickly to remain on-air – from our studios or from a spare bedroom – to provide information, news, companionship and entertainment.

Our teams are filled with dedicated and talented folks. We have so many examples of talent, PDs, MDs, promotion directors and others who literally put the responsibility of being a broadcaster at the forefront of their day. Their response to a natural phenomenon like we've never experienced should be commended.

And I've learned that working from home can be a terrific fringe benefit, avoiding the commute and getting more face time with the family. But even that is an example of too much of a good thing. Getting out and in front of co-workers and actually being able to work from the radio stations seems like a treat now. The energy of what happens in the studios and working around so many talented people is truly invigorating.



Phillips (r) exploring the outdoors with his family.



2 **KRISTEN WILLIAMS** Warner Music Nashville SVP/Radio & Streaming

I can't sit still for long and have organized (and re-organized) every closet, cabinet and drawer in our house. I would rather clean a toilet than sit in on a video conference call. I really don't like to cook, and I hate dirty dishes. I'm addicted to coffee, Diet Coke and the nightly news. I'm a smart woman but a terrible teacher! When the clock strikes

midnight on New Year's Eve, I will never utter the words, "next year is bound to be better." It sounds trite, but I have truly learned to appreciate what I have and to enjoy the simpler things in life.

ARTISTS

1 **JOHN ESPOSITO** Warner Music Nashville Chairman/CEO

Just as artists, songwriters, musicians and producers are finding ways to make music in isolation, fans have proven an insatiable desire to consume and connect. We've gone from being a business devastated by technology (maybe even technology resistant) to one that invents and thrives on it. Nothing compares to personal collaboration and live performance – and we're looking forward to getting back to those – but I've learned we not only have the fighting spirit, but we also have the follow-through.

I've also learned that follow-through has to extend beyond the music. We must be unrelenting in our response to social inequality and racial injustice. I am proud of Warner Music Group's endorsement of the Black Lives Matter movement and our local response. We have been incredibly proactive in fighting anti-LGBTQ legislation and other discriminatory measures. Like many others, I've learned and will continue to learn more about what we can do to extend the same support to BIPOC communities. WMG and WMN have committed substantial financial and human resources towards that pursuit, and we will continue to do so for as long as it takes.

I already knew my team is innovative as hell, unflappable and fiercely committed to our artists, our company and each other, but I have seen that this year in extraordinary ways. They're fired up to lead the charge in effectively engaging new platforms. And, like the music business itself, I've learned they're endlessly resilient.

For myself, I've learned a little more about that work-life balance thing! This extra time with my family has been irreplaceable. I've also learned that I miss the hell out of going to see live music.





3 STEVE HODGES
Sony/Nashville
EVP/Promotion & Artist Development

Our business adapted, evolved, and is succeeding at exposing our equally adaptive and creative artists and their craft. Music is at the core of human culture, has healing qualities, survives and even shines in times of difficulty.

The Sony team is even more resilient, passionate and focused on the changing landscape of our format and business than I ever thought possible. Complacency was not allowed to set in. They thrive on being disruptive and being on the cutting edge

of doing things differently. Myself? I can cut my own hair – not a pro, by any means! I can play disc golf, but not nearly as well as a few in the industry. According to my family, I'm a cornhole legend (just means I'm old), so I'm glad they don't watch the cornhole pros on ESPN!

4 ROYCE RISSER
UMG/Nashville EVP/Promotion

People need music. It has been a source of comfort and escape for those who are struggling given our current world conditions. I love being part of a business that is really helping people cope with life. It may not be measurable, but it's for real.

We love each other. We miss being around each other in the office. And we are people who can quickly acclimate to the current environment ... some more easily than others. We all have challenges, but I love the adaptability of my crew.

I've learned I really do thrive being around people. In absence of that, I've learned to make a conscious decision to be positive each morning and do everything possible to enjoy this time. I also have learned that there were several things that needed to get done at my house. Didn't everyone?



5 TIM ROBERTS
Entercom Country Format Captain
Entercom/Detroit VP/Music
Programming, WYCD PD

This is probably the greatest time of innovation I've seen in radio a long, long time. Forced by the pandemic, of course, but it has revealed how people can really shine in radio. It has also taught us that radio is essential to many people, and we were able to disseminate a lot of information. (Ed. Note: Read Roberts' full response in *The Interview*, page 37.)



6 CHARLIE COOK
Cumulus VP/Country
Cumulus/Nashville OM, WSM-FM/Nashville PD

I've learned this is a business of people willing to step up and do their jobs when there was an enormous amount of pressure on them. We are a 24/7 business, and our business fought through this toughest of times.

Cumulus furloughed all of us for three rotating weeks over the last 17. I was shocked that every one of my team members said, "How can I help fill the holes while someone is out?" Radio is a business full of people who love their jobs and their colleagues.

As for me, that having a week off when you are not allowed to log-in to your e-mail or take a call from work is ... not all that bad.

7 CARSON JAMES
BBR Music Group SVP/Promotion

Being in a business that relies on face-to-face – especially in the promotion world – no one knew how each rep would react to the new environment and how effective they would be. Very early, I saw them react with a positive attitude and determination to make it work. Creativity and perseverance were the keys. We tell all of our people, refuse to lose – and they did just that. I could not be prouder or work with a greater group of professionals. Period!

8 KURT JOHNSON
Townsquare SVP/Programming



I'm reminded how vital Country radio is to its audience. At TSM, we saw 11% growth in audience share over last spring. During the shutdown, people turned to Country radio for community, for information and for their favorite songs.

I'm constantly impressed at how adaptable, strong and resilient our team is. [Dir./Country Programming] Doug Montgomery and our Country programmers didn't hesitate. They

acted individually and as a group to serve our listeners, Music Row partners and clients. I gained a whole new level of respect for this amazing group.

I have always counted my blessings, but I need to do it a lot more.

9 KATIE DEAN
MCA SVP/Promotion

Me, first week of quarantine mid-March: "I'll get back into yoga, and we will train the Great Dane puppies." (Smokey goes high and two seconds later, Idgie sweeps the leg and I wind up flat on my back wondering where it all went wrong.)

Several months later, with a plethora of self-improvement projects in various stages, I'm focusing on the positives. This time forced me to take a long look in the mirror and make some necessary changes. My marriage has never been stronger. I've learned how both fragile and strong *all* of us are and how important it is to have the support of others. Our MCA team has only grown closer as each of us has moments faltering under the weight of uncertainty, but it's been so inspiring how we rally and lift each other up, usually in the form of inappropriate humor. Everyone has faced myriad challenges, and the way I'm getting through it is by expressing gratitude for the blessings I have.



Dean works on her downward dog.

2 RANDY GOODMAN
Sony/Nashville Chairman/CEO

Across the industry, within my team and in myself, I've seen resilience, agility, creativity and innovation. For the Sony staff in particular, I feel overwhelming pride.



3 SCOTT BORCHETTA
Big Machine Label Group President/CEO

For as long as I've been in the business, entertainment has had a high degree of resiliency. There's been a lot of talk over the last few years as to the value and relevance of record companies, so it's a bit ironic that labels continue to be very stable businesses in the eye of the COVID-19 storm. For that, we are extremely grateful.



Holding a copy of Tim McGraw's freshly signed BMLG contract.

BMLG has been working remotely since March 12, yet we're putting out as much or more music than ever. I've learned at an even greater level how empowerment and trust are truly at the core of Big Machine. There's no way we could be this productive without every single executive getting the job done. Early concerns were, "If you can't see it being done, is it getting done?" And, "Will everyone continue to be responsible and true to the cause?" Both answers are a resounding, "Yes!" We're entrepreneurs at heart and still extremely driven by being the "machine that can."

4 MIKE DUNGAN
UMG/Nashville Chairman/CEO

In the past, I have accepted and usually been driven by some rather celebrated ADHD behavior, in both conversation and action. But in this shutdown, I have come to discover some dramatically OCD dominance in everything I do. In my work, with my house (!), in my garden and in telephone conversation. Weird. And I kind of miss the ADHD.



5 JON LOBA
BBR Music Group EVP

Plato was a very smart man ... necessity truly is the mother of invention. Jumping on Teams or Zoom calls was the easy part of reimagining the business. Beyond that, we are storytellers at heart and have to come up with creative ways to tell artists' stories to gatekeepers and new audiences. That has accelerated



evaluation and adoption of digital solutions. Look no further than the hologram signing of Track 45, augmented reality for Lindsay Ell's release week and a seven-HD-camera presentation to radio listeners and clients for Elvie Shane.

I'm blessed to be surrounded by an *amazing* group of professionals with servants' hearts. They take my crazy ideas and make them a reality. When we started on our elevated radio tour idea, every tech person said what we wanted didn't exist and would be exorbitantly expensive, but the team kept looking and found a solution. My biggest challenge is getting them all to take a break and breathe. We all struggle with drawing personal/professional lines in this environment.

I constantly wonder how I got anything done traveling 150-200 days a year. The reality is, I am even busier now. I would probably benefit from listening to Tolstoy: "The two most powerful warriors are patience and time." I struggle with both, because I want to do it all, and I want to do it all right now.

6 SHANE MCANALLY
SmackSongs CEO
Monument Records Co-President

I've realized our community is resilient and especially supportive when times get tough. There is a "we're all in this together" attitude up and down Music Row, and even competitors are reaching out to help and to find inventive ways to keep our rosters and teams inspired.

The biggest takeaway about our team is they love what they do. They're finding inventive ways to stay engaged and really putting in the effort to keep the wheels turning. You have to really want to get up every day and make a difference when it would be so much easier to tune it all out.

I always thought being home and sleeping late and not having a true schedule would be a dream job. It ain't. I need structure, and I need to be busy.



McAnally (l) and husband Michael Baum (r) teach their kids about personal protective equipment.

7 CINDY MABE
UMG/Nashville President

Music is needed more than ever to heal, console, cheer, escape and walk people through every mood they go through. This year has brought renewed interest and appetite for all kinds of music, and the artists have created new ways to stay connected with fans.



Mabe (second from left) thrives at the music education aspect of homeschooling.

There have been moments I really worried about the mental health of our team, artists, managers and their families. We can't walk across the hall to make sure people look you in the eyes and tell you they're okay. But we forge on and are better for each other. I've learned so much from this team about work ethic and heart. I'm really proud to work with and represent them.

Personally, I've learned teachers need to be paid more money. Cooking three meals a day while on Zoom is harder than it looks. Fish sticks are okay. Love your family.

Some days are better than others. People matter more than anything else. One foot in front of the other. Don't lose focus. And in the words of Kacey Musgraves, "It'll all be alright."

High Valley

NEW SINGLE

“CREW UP ON THAT”

IMPACTING MONDAY 9/21

285M+
GLOBAL
STREAMS

2X ACM
NOMINATED
NEW DUO OF THE YEAR

375K+
GLOBAL ALBUM
EQUIVALENTS

TWO RIAA GOLD CERTIFIED SINGLES
"MAKE YOU MINE" & "SHE'S WITH ME"

“THIS MAY BE THE MOST RHYTHMIC ACT IN COUNTRY MUSIC...”

TASTE OF
COUNTRY



NEW EP AVAILABLE NOW

CREW UP ON THAT

CREW UP ON THAT • YOUR MAMA • RIVER'S STILL RUNNING • NORTHERN STAR • ONE DAY YOU'LL GET IT • SHOW ME THE WAY

HIGHLIGHTED AS ONE OF “CMT'S 10 HOT TICKET SUMMER ALBUMS TO CHECK OUT”



INTRODUCING
SHY CARTER

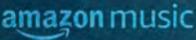


 Music
COUNTRY'S
NEW CROP

NAMED THE NEXT
"HIGHWAY FIND" BY

THE HIGHWAY


TODAY'S COUNTRY
COUNTRY FAITH


BREAKTHROUGH
COUNTRY


POP
COUNTRY

 Spotify
BREAKOUT COUNTRY
WILD COUNTRY


NEW COUNTRY
RADIO

"PROLIFIC SONGWRITER."

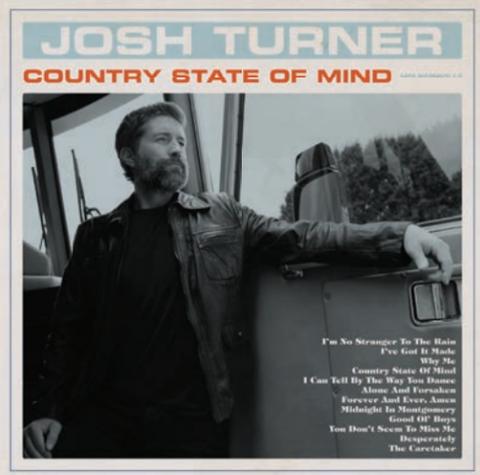

"SEASONED AND CHARISMATIC"


SONGS YOU KNOW BY SHY CARTER

"One Call Away" - Charlie Puth • "Heaven" - Kane Brown
"Stuck Like Glue" - Sugarland • "God Whispered Your Name" - Keith Urban
"It Don't Hurt Like It Used To" - Billy Currington • "Someday" - Rob Thomas



COMING SOON



JOSH TURNER

COUNTRY STATE OF MIND

FEATURING A 12-SONG
COLLECTION OF
COUNTRY CLASSICS

ALBUM AVAILABLE NOW

10 BECKY BRENNER
Albright & O'Malley & Brenner Consulting Partner

This is something I have always known but has proven even more true during the pandemic: Radio's unique relationship with listeners and the community makes it a powerful communication tool in times of crisis. Our multi-platform distribution channels make us accessible wherever people need us.

Radio talent are resilient, innovative, passionate and dedicated to getting the job done no matter what. So many new and creative ideas have been born during this.

And me: I need more hugs! I thrive on face-to-face (not on Zoom) communication and human interaction. Isolation and quarantine are not good for my soul.



Brenner (l) gathers with her husband (r) and children for a backyard brewfest.

11 JEFF GARRISON
Cox Country Format Leader
San Antonio Dir./Operations, KCYY PD

We all have to rethink what doing business looks like in the future. Creatively, I miss the personal interaction and vibe. It's tougher on Zoom and Teams. The good news is we will emerge from this, and I looking forward to shaking someone's hand or giving a big hug soon!

Our teams are just so resilient and can adapt even under the most trying times. I am so proud of our CMG team! Being remote has challenges, but radio pros are just scrappy.

Personally, working at home close to the kitchen is a problem – quarantine plus-15! I've also learned, now more than ever, how much people close to us matter.

12 NATE DEATON
Empire KRTY/San Jose GM

The best lesson is we are resilient and can overcome a great loss of revenue. Being locally owned and operated has its fair share of challenges, to start. Five years ago, we decided the way to survive was event-driven revenue, so between local retail and events, our spring and summer basically disappeared. But we are still in business and operating. I think/hope the worst is behind us.

This team is very productive from home. I am not sure we realized how much all the events we do was taking out of us. We have had a chance to recharge and come up with exciting ideas. I would also point out we lost our owner/mentor Bob Kieve Memorial Day weekend. He believed in being a community participant and resource, and we have all been charged to work harder to make sure his legacy is honored. We changed our legal ID to include "The Forever Home of Bob Kieve."

If I play golf four days a week, I can be pretty good again. Seriously, more than the rest of our staff, I have benefitted from not having three or four shows per week. I spent a lot of time preparing our Summer Songwriters Series that was completely washed out, but we have been able to do artist interviews every morning, and our Nashville label partners have been amazing. We have one station, and the recognition we receive is truly humbling. In the hustle and bustle, that can get lost, and I am glad to have some time to reflect on all that hard work paying off.



Chiang (c), wife Cheryl and their children show off the latest in fashionable face masks.

13 JOHNNY CHIANG
Cox/Houston Dir./Ops, KKBQ PD

I've learned nothing is guaranteed. Things can change in an instant, and you have to be ready to pivot. As for the team, we are resilient! When pushed to our limits and out of our comfort zones, we will rise to the challenge to not just survive

but thrive. And I love being at the station surrounded by my team. I've always known they inspire me and make me better. Quarantine has confirmed it.

14 BOBBY BONES
The Bobby Bones Show Host
Premiere Networks, iHeartCountry VP/Creative Dir.

Radio taught itself it didn't have to be as rigid. We had to learn quickly that we don't have to all

be in the same room at the same time doing things the way we've always done them. With my show, we split out with most of us working from home, and I realized I don't have to be in the building every day. The cast doesn't have to be there as long, because they can do a lot of it from home. It actually made a lot



Bones (l) and co-host Amy practice safe social distancing during the morning show.

of the content better once we figured everything out. For me, I didn't like doing the show from my bedroom. I just bought a new house, and there's a second spot on the property where we're building out a full studio, and iHeart is paying for it because – in the long run – radio companies are learning they're going to be able to save money. We've become more efficient.

8 SCOTT HENDRICKS
Warner Music Nashville EVP
A&R/Creative Advisor

I've been encouraged that people still need music in their lives, so many areas of the business haven't been as affected. Record companies continue to look for new artists and find new songs. My heart breaks for the musicians and support teams who rely on live music.

We have been very focused on mitigating the effects of the pandemic through social distancing. We are disciplined about finding new artists, even if we can't go see them live. Not only have we met more new artists, we've also spent more time seeing each other on Zoom. And we seem to have more time to listen to songs and can focus on discovering new acts without the distractions or the interruptions of the office.

I've learned to be flexible with my schedule. I love the freedom of waking up at 5am and working on my records when I am the most focused, then go mow my yard while listening to song pitches simultaneously. I seem to accomplish more in a day than before. My wife, however, prefers my old 9-5.



9 DANN HUFF
Producer

I've learned the importance of the physicality of the business. People need live music because they love the recorded music and want to experience it in a live setting. The industry is dependent on both facets.

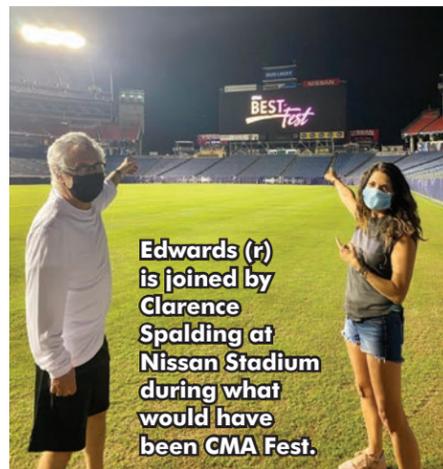
Nothing new, but I've always been utterly dependent on my team. Collaboration is definitely king. As for myself, I need people more than I ever realized. There is so much we take for granted in subtle in-person communication. I just love being in a room with other musicians.



10 KERRI EDWARDS
KP Entertainment Owner/President

Our industry and artists are resilient and have learned to adapt and feed our fans in a different way. I have been reminded once again what an incredible team I have. We have postponed, moved tours, moved again, released new music, released an album, filmed content, filmed more, built marketing plans and more without missing a beat. We have stayed connected and looked after each other on a personal level, too.

Personally, I've learned I can film a major network TV show all by myself from a farm with little internet. Ha! But not ha. In all seriousness, this industry means even more to me, and I care greatly about it and the people involved. I count my blessings I still get to help create and brand songs that can help people through good and bad. I also miss the shows. Ready to see that connection with fans again and get back out on the road!



Edwards (r) is joined by Clarence Spalding at Nissan Stadium during what would have been CMA Fest.

11 CRIS LACY
Warner Music
Nashville EVP/A&R

I'm keenly aware of the industry's fragility. Each day brings a new deficit, whether financially or emotionally, created by the inability to perform live music. It devastates companies and eliminates the positive feedback loop that is essential for artists' and fans' wellbeing. Too much has gone unsaid and unseen with respect to equality, inclusiveness and diversity within the business of music for too long.

You learn a lot about who you work for during times of crisis. Our global company has been incredibly proactive in risk assessment, putting people first



With the 1991 Ford F-150 she drove to Nashville almost 30 years ago and is now working on during quarantine.

and continuing to create a supportive environment for us to work and rest. As for my local team, they are warriors. Each is dealing with their own level of chaos and grief, and yet they bring their all every day for the good of our artists. They are wildly creative, incredibly strong and kind to each other.

Two things I've learned about myself: I'm woefully unaware of the struggles for people of color. Below the surface of what I think I know and understand, there is so much to absorb, digest, act on and make right. And we often say decisions we make in the music industry aren't life or death, but now some of them are. That forces all of us to be decisive and unwavering in our beliefs, despite societal pressures. The bottom line is no longer the bottom line anymore. I've learned that I have very little tolerance for actions to the contrary.

12 GEORGE BRINER
Valory President

Music has proven time and again to be important to people and helps all of us navigate through difficult times. This team is more driven and self-motivated than I previously assumed. Plus, they still have a sense of humor and love a good, strong cocktail. And I learned that once I retire, I have a good chance to apply for a Santa Claus mall gig (see photo).



15 SHANE ALLEN
Columbia SVP/Promotion

Change is clearly more of a constant than ever before, and you absolutely have to be open to new ways of doing things – not just different than last year or last month, but different than last week, yesterday or even a few hours ago.

The Columbia staff has done a fantastic job of adapting to change and being self-motivated.

Without the ability to travel, they've refreshed their approaches based on the needs of each week since we've been out of the office, and they're constantly coming up with new and creative ways to draw attention to our incredible artists and their music.

I've learned I need some sort of movement and change of scenery each day, so getting outside or taking a drive to make calls has become a constant.



Allen (l) spends time on the water with family.

16 BOBBY YOUNG
Capitol VP/Promotion

I've learned music is essential, and country fans will find a way to it – even during a pandemic – as they would anything that brings them joy. I already knew but have been reminded I'm blessed to work with rockstars! Everyone on the Capitol staff and the Universal staff has proven they can adapt to any situation. I'm proud of everyone on this team for not missing a beat and not wavering in their belief in our artists and their music.

For me, I've learned I need structure in my life to work out of my home. I feel guilty if I'm not working every minute of the day, because I now live in my office. I pray for our artists' singles regularly and believe God wants us to. I also thank God every day that I'm married to a very special person. Heather understands the business and also has no problem reminding me it's time to turn it off for a couple hours, take a shower occasionally and change my clothes.

17 GATOR HARRISON
iHeartCountry Brand. Coord.

iHeartMedia/Nashville SVP/Programming

I've learned our business is vital. Lifesaving. Needed. From breaking news, weather warnings and tornado recovery to credible information during a global pandemic, or simply playing a new song that encourages, affects and challenges you, radio is still that informed, caring friend who's there when you need one most.

I've learned our Big 98 family has incredible strength, resilience, creativity and heart. Strength and resilience in working from makeshift home studios. Creativity to entertain daily and virtually with The Big 98 Under Cover Artist Performances, Virtual Guitar-B-Que with Brad Paisley, Jake Owen Homemade Prom, Teacher's Aid and more. No excuses, instead viewing this moment as an opportunity to connect with Nashville on a deeper level.

What I've learned most about myself is that I needed someone to hit pause for me. My heart breaks for the lives lost and affected by COVID-19 – physically, mentally, emotionally and economically. But it's been a wonderful reminder for me to slow down and put greater investment and emphasis on the things that really matter in my life. Working from home has given me more time with God, my family and friends. Slowing down in this moment has actually made

me healthier spiritually, mentally and physically, and made me even more productive and creative.

18 TOM MARTENS
VP/Radio & Streaming

Radio is seeking comfort in both food and music in 2020. We have a pretty resilient bunch here at Warner. While our productivity hasn't really suffered, everyone is eager to get back on the road. For me, *Tiger King* seemed like a good idea at the time. And I grow a pretty awesome quarantine beard!



19 GREGG SWEDBERG
iHeartCountry Brand Coord.

Minneapolis SVP/Programming, KEEY/Minneapolis PD

It's been eye-opening how radio is still so important in people's eyes and lives. Between COVID-19 and the unrest in Minneapolis, our listeners have been seeking information, entertainment and companionship. It's also been great to be part of the iHeartCountry team, who have been so generous about sharing ideas and information. It's a phenomenal group of top-shelf people, who along with our National Programming team, are continuing to evolve Country radio. My local staff has been so hard-working, so involved with our community.

And I need to be around people. I actually enjoy Zoom and Teams calls. Now that I'm back in the office a few days a week, I am happy to take meetings, even if they're socially distanced. I'm from Minnesota; I think we invented social distancing.

20 JOHN MARKS
Spotify Head of Country Music

- Things I've re-learned:
1. "What, me worry?" –Alfred E. Neuman, *Mad* magazine
 2. "My glass is always half full." –Optimist's credo
 3. "Every day is once in a lifetime." –Mac McAnally/Drake White

21 LESLIE FRAM
CMT SVP/Music Strategy & Talent

This pandemic not only shut down touring, but production for TV originals. We've had to reimagine creative for producing specials. CMT has produced two music specials since the pandemic – Artists Of The Year honoring heroes around the country and CMT Giants Kenny Rogers. We're in the middle of producing the *CMT Music Awards*, which airs Oct. 14. Fortunately, we have

13 CRAIG WISEMAN
Big Loud Owner/Managing Partner

I learned how much the business is in my DNA. This has really made me appreciate how much I love everything about Nashville – driving down the Row every day and my building full of staff, all of them friends, and the feel of them busy in their offices as I'm busy in mine. I love co-writers sitting across from me, going to shows with the Big Loud gang and having them drag me to the damn Red Door afterward for "just one more." This whole three-ring circus is a damn blessing, and I will never take it for granted. God bless Music Row.

I've learned amazing and hard-working is not an address, it's a personality type. The Big Louders have risen to the changes and challenges and never lowered their goals or expectations. I was always proud of them; now I'm kind of in awe.

I've learned to be more appreciative. I had a couple of No. 1s during lockdown, and a special one was "Chasin' You." All Big Loud. Morgan Wallen, Jamie Moore and I wrote it, Joey Moi produced with those stellar musicians and Morgan did *so* great performing it. Then our amazing promotion and marketing team joined in ... all of them focused and driven. You realize how many other world-class talents it takes beyond the obvious creators to reach No. 1. My appreciation goes back all the way to my first chart-topper in 1994 and all the work that when into all of them since. The music industry at its finest. I'm very blessed to have a front row seat.

The coolest thing about COVID-19? Definitely the hair. I call mine "The Amadeus."



14 MIKE CURB
Curb Word Entertainment Owner/Chairman

I've learned that we have to work twice as hard, because our goal during COVID-19 is for all of our 150 people to stay with the company and to make sure



we continue to have major hit records with our key artists. We've done that this year with For King & Country ("Together") and Lee Brice's hit with Carly Pearce as well as "One Of Them Girls." We also took Lee's No. 1 "Rumor" and spread it over to Pop AC with a significantly long run. We've also had a No. 1 record with Big Daddy Weave, and we're building current singles by Dylan Scott, Mo Pitney, Filmora, Tim Dugger, Jackson Michelson, Francesca

Battistelli, We Are Messengers, Natalie Grant, Sidewalk Prophets, Love & The Outcome, Wyn Starks, Jay-Way and Steven Malcolm & Shaggy.

15 BEN VAUGHN
Warner/Chappell President/CEO

I've learned how fortunate we all are to all be in the community of Nashville – you can tell the bonds of relationship are strong because of how jarring it is to be physically separated from colleagues and the longing to get back to the community aspect of our jobs.

For my team, flexibility is the key as people learn and evolve their skills to meet whatever problem needs to be solved (virtually) that day.

And I have really enjoyed remembering how and then teaching my 10-year-old son how to make paper ninja throwing stars.



16 CLARENCE SPALDING
Maverick Management President

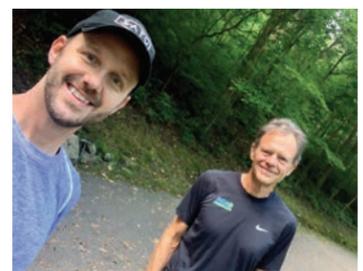
While we all knew the business was heavily dependent on touring, we didn't realize you could make literally pennies on Zoom shows. My team has ability – without touring – to expand the brands of our artists. Also, on the Zoom calls, they look like they are living the good life. And I hate working in an office by myself. Fucking hate it.

Spalding enjoys time away from travel to spend with his grandchildren.



17 RUSTY GASTON
Sony/ATV Music Publishing CEO

My top three lessons: Great songs can survive anything. You can't squash creativity. Fans gravitate toward country music in times of uncertainty, because it's good for the soul. This team is exceptional, resilient and adaptable. They will go to any length to help songwriters and get their art into the right hands. For me, maintaining a strong faith in God, songwriters and the power of music is more important than ever.



Gaston (l) enjoys a socially distanced hike with Tom Douglas.

18 SETH ENGLAND
Big Loud Partner/CEO

So many things I didn't see coming. The first few weeks of COVID-19, our staff kind of stared at each other with a "What do we do now?" look. That might be a way of saying we were being a bit lazy on so many other artists discovery drivers, because our genre tours so much more. Silver lining: we engaged and learned how to break artists without live performance. What I am most excited about is not letting go of all these new tactics when touring comes back. It makes me think we can break artists so much faster than before, and in many cases before they even hit the road.

The Big Loud team is resilient with incredible, mentally tough executives. I am so proud of how we have hired. We have an amazing, collaborative culture paired with an executive team that cannot stand losing. There have



TEDD & ROBB

HEAVEN ON DIRT

ADD NOW



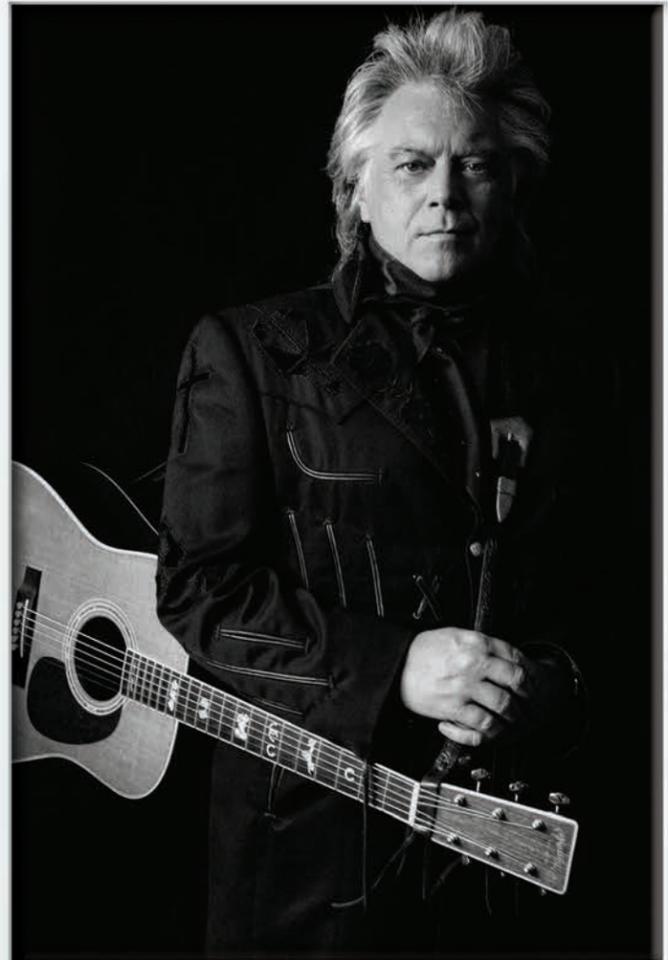
CAITLYN SMITH

SUPERNOVA

AVAILABLE EVERYWHERE NOW

Congratulations

***to the 2020 Country Music
Hall of Fame inductees***



***Dean
Dillon***

***Marty
Stuart***

***Hank
Williams Jr.***

SHOW DOG 2020

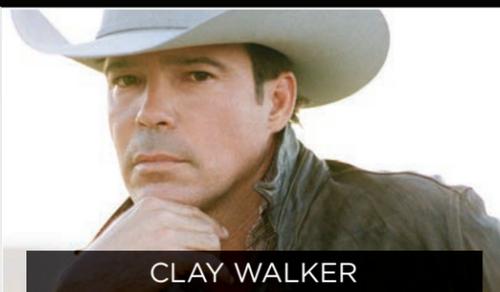
Zooming In on the Year-End Hits



TOBY KEITH



WATERLOO REVIVAL



CLAY WALKER



KRYSTAL KEITH



KRYSTAL KEITH



CLAY WALKER



WATERLOO REVIVAL



TOBY KEITH

SURVIVING 2020
THROUGH GREAT MUSIC!





Fram (c) gathers with CMT staffers pre-quarantine.

great producers like Margaret Comeaux, who leads our production team, and John Hamlin and the best talent in the nation to work with. We've learned that the CMT Team works as a family; everyone steps in to help each other out. And I've learned I can embrace change as life changes. It's important to be kind to ourselves and take a moment to breath, reflect and be grateful for what we have.

22 KRIS LAMB
Big Machine SVP/Promotion & Digital

Outside of the data analytics, the big philosophical takeaway has been the affirmation that every problem has a solution. Regardless of how challenging the conditions may be, there is a path to the desired destination. You have to be open to new ideas and strategies, open to being wrong and remain persistent at all costs.

Watching not only our core promo team, but the entire label group, evolve and adapt in this challenging environment while executing at an even higher level than pre-COVID is beyond inspiring. Life priorities shift, and I've watched my colleagues balance family and personal struggles with the grace I can only hope to one day obtain. We are truly an incredible Big Machine bonded by passion and determination.

I've also learned how to (better) take care of myself. I've learned the importance of investing in personal and professional relationships, physical and mental health, and pausing every once in a while to respect and appreciate the beauty in life. Winston Churchill said, "Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts."



Blythe (l) gets an assist from daughter Frankie during a music call.

23 STACY BLYTHE
Big Loud VP/Promotion

I already knew how blessed we are in this business, but COVID-19 has driven that lesson home. We've taken care of our own through highs and lows, and those who are sources of positive energy will keep us afloat. The cool thing is we have all taken turns lifting each other up as we navigate times of gratitude and uncertainty.

The Big Loud team has always been resilient, and I've watched them move forward with so much creativity and fresh thinking. The work from home situation has

definitely upped the level of empathy for those working in the field. We have implemented some communication practices I would love to see carried over, as our team feels more in sync than ever. We love a good Zoom game night.

Two things I've learned about myself: I do, in fact, like gin ... and a few months at home with my family is really good for my soul.

24 LEE ADAMS
Broken Bow VP/Promotion

BMG has made it clear our safety and well-being come first, allowing us to focus on our jobs and redefine how we do business. The team's resiliency is inspiring, and creativity has been key. The financial toll on our radio partners and artists is heartbreaking, but the optimism our artists show encourages us to work that much harder. While I seem to be a natural with social distancing, I miss my BBRMG family, radio friends and seeing our artists bring the music to life.



25 LAUREN THOMAS
Sony/Nashville VP/National Promotion



Change is consistent, so adaptability is crucial. Innovation has been top-of-mind for the Sony crew. From live shows to live streams, providing station winners "dinner and a show," working multiple songs on the chart from the same artist with limited ramp-up, audio/video content driving increased traffic to our prep site, setting up a virtual promo tour with new technology – this team has shown real creativity and flexibility. Outside the importance of a mute button on video calls, I've learned how to do simple, silly stuff like French-braid my hair as a 35-year-old woman. And I am strangely proud of it.

been some tough weeks, no doubt – for me as well. Those weeks, Austen, Patch, Stacy and Candice stepped up. Vice versa when they were having a down week. I feel covered by my team, and I hope they feel the same in return from me.

Personally, I'm a mover. I like having many fun and exciting tasks in front of me and *love* employee interaction. My girlfriend will tell you, the first few weeks of quarantine I was possibly a different person – completely off my game and worried a lot. I just woke up one day and decided this containment wasn't going to prevent me from "moving" and filling those gaps of employee engagement in new ways. I'm not sure she'll ever think I am totally normal, but I hear I'm back to my old self.

19 ALLISON JONES
BMLG SVP/A&R



In the most challenging time ever to break a new artist, those who've experienced success have been the most creative and relentless in trying to build a fan base and audience. Avenue Beat is one, blowing up on TikTok overnight, but that was after months of recording, creating new content, doing live virtual performances and responding to every fan comment and message on every platform. Super stars and established artists have been able to cut through the noise a bit easier, primarily because core fans want musical comfort food.

We've had more artists recording and releasing more and better music than ever, and my badass team has not missed a beat or a deadline. I already knew, but quarantine has proved how fearless and dedicated they are to our artists and label. They're my

family, and I miss seeing them every day!

I'm a social butterfly and need people. I desperately miss traveling, live music, summer tours, entertaining, going worry-free to restaurants and bars and, believe it or not, I miss in-person meetings. I'm not a big fan of Zoom and having to look at myself all day. That made me really miss my dermatologist and hair stylist – my first two visits when things opened!

20 KEN ROBOLD
Sony/Nashville EVP/COO

21 JIMMY HARNEN
BMLG Records President/CEO

Having the experience of working remotely as a regional at the start of my career, the transition was not a big stretch. We are having a lot of video meetings, which have been, surprisingly, highly effective. That said, not having all of our tent pole events earlier in the year – ACM Awards, CMA Music Fest and the CMT Music Awards – has taken away our superchargers. The biggest impact, obviously, has been touring. Our imprint was looking forward to several big tours with our artists this year, all of which were postponed. On a personal level, working from home has given me more time to spend with my family, although I'm pretty certain my wife won't be too sad when we return to the office.



Harnen (r) and wife Lynn mask up for safe travels.

22 ASHLEY GORLEY
Songwriter/Tape Room Music Founder

I've learned my team doesn't need to come to an office to get work done. They stay motivated regardless of circumstances, because their love of music guides them. They care about our writers' well beings, not just their talents. And, they are willing to listen to me ramble and brainstorm at any hour of the day!

As to the business, our community is resilient, creative and determined. Throughout quarantine, I have seen writers and artists step up, work harder and write better than ever. Artist development never ends, and it's been cool to see artists in all stages of their careers push themselves to the next level creatively and deliver the best music to their fans.



23 BRIAN WRIGHT
UMG/Nashville EVP/A&R

What I've learned about my team is I need them *way* more than they need me. They have been absolutely amazing!

24 CORAN CAPSHAW
Red Light Management Founder/CEO

I'm really proud of how our team has come together and been creative about releasing and marketing music. We're particularly proud as a company that in the first 33 weeks of the year, our artists have had 16 No. 1 Country singles for a combined 19 weeks at the top.



Rich (r) and son Connor make the most of a long summer together.

25 KELLY RICH
Amazon Sr. Mgr./Label Relations

In terms of the business, I've learned how creative we can be and how necessary it is to be able to adapt and move quickly. Switching events from in-person to virtual and hosting livestreams across channels to out-of-home campaigns, we are continuing to go big with our support of artists. With the Amazon team, I've learned the increasing importance of communication and how we are there for one another when it's needed the most. For myself, I've learned how much I enjoy spending more time with my husband and kids.



RUSSELL
DICKERSON



*Love you like
i used to*

FOLLOW-UP TO 3

#1 SINGLES

**1 BILLION ARTIST
STREAMS**

**NEW ALBUM
COMING SOON**



SCOTTY MCCREERY

You Time

THE FOLLOW-UP TO 3 #1 SINGLES

**COMING
SOON**



CAM

CLASSIC

THE NEW SINGLE

**FROM THE UPCOMING ALBUM
"THE OTHERSIDE"**

AVAILABLE OCTOBER 30TH

26 MATTHEW HARGIS
BMLG Records
SVP/Promotion

This year has been a great reminder of how universal, unifying and healing music is, and how lucky we are to be a part of something people seek out in these times. Our team and company are the best – adaptable, resilient and possessed with great intuition on how to meet the needs of our artists, clients, customers and consumers. Not having the opportunity to see our artists and their music connect with fans



on a weekly basis in a concert setting is something I never took for granted, but the anticipation of that first show is what fuels me every day.



Hargis uses spin counts to supplement homeschool math classes for his daughters.

27 JOHN FOX
Entercom
WNSH/New York PD

The chart moves even slower during a pandemic, and staff meetings should be scheduled in listen-only mode and after 2pm.

28 MARCI BRAUN
Entercom WUSN
Chicago APD/MD

My team is phenomenal. They're always asking what they can do to help. They're working more and doing it with a smile. At least, I think there's a smile. Since I can't see them every day, I'm not so sure, but hope springs eternal. I've learned I like wearing a t-shirt and running shorts all day, every day. Not to go running in, just to wear because they're super comfortable. I don't miss putting on makeup or doing my hair. I also enjoy the commute from my bed to the desk. Better than taking the El downtown every day!



29 ASHLEY SIDOTI
Valory VP/Promotion & Digital

Watching live entertainment come to a halt has been heartbreaking. Labels are fortunate fans are still consuming music, and I have enjoyed the added challenge of finding new ways to expose artists and music. People will always want music and the comfort that it brings. For that, I am thankful.



Nothing is getting easier in our world, but I applaud my team because they show up every day eager to win. When one of us has a rough moment or a rough day, we pick each other up. I'm very proud of our sense of family that has only strengthened in this time.

Working from home has made it harder to shut down and be present; I need better balance. I'm not making huge strides, but we have started some new routines as a family that I am really enjoying. Life is not perfect at the moment, working full-time from home with a toddler. It takes teamwork and a lot of grace.

30 KEVIN CALLAHAN
Entercom San Diego/
Riverside OM/Brand Management

Radio has continued relevance in the lives of people and in the community – information, escape and, frankly, they were looking to us to provide hope in uncertain times. We proved to be innovative in the face of the unknown and showed the ability to create quality content from every room in the house and the backyard.



Collaboration has made the KSON and KFRG teams a stronger unit. Talent and collective brain power have overcome challenges and created ideas to engage the audience. We've learned from and comforted one another and even created a mantra. If you hear one of us say "PTFO," it essentially means "Rub some dirt on it and press on. Be resilient, we have your back!"

I have learned how much I miss face-to-face conversations with people. Video conferences are poor replacements, though I feel blessed to have those tools as it would be even worse without them. I've also learned having the refrigerator close to my workspace is a real problem. Luckily, I am also learning new ways to solve problems.



31 SHARI ROTH
Warner/WEA Dir./
National Radio & Streaming
Promotion

The country music business is continuing to do what it does best: entertaining and inspiring our loyal listeners. Since I was a regional until July, I have a unique perspective of my team. They have not missed a beat! We have always closely collaborated and supported each other when trying to get airplay, but the current climate has made us even more creative. All I am doing right now is learning. Zoom has been the main way to connect programmers and artists, and even though these have been incredibly successful, I have really missed

traveling. Until that is possible, I am so grateful to be working with a fabulous team and our amazing artists to bring great music to the masses. Please stay safe and strong!

26 CLINT HIGHAM
Morris Higham President

We may not all be in the same boat, but we are all in the same ocean. Patience, patience, patience – something I've never been good at. As a personal manager, a large portion of our income is driven by live shows and, of course, that's been flattened. It's also forced radio playlists to become much more conservative, so breaking new acts has become much more challenging. And creative people are having to create mostly online, which just isn't the same as the human connection.

I've been team-driven for a long time, and they have really stepped up. We have not laid off any employees nor cut any wages ... they're truly my family. I go to bed every night thinking about them and how to keep our culture the best it can be. Meanwhile, artists are feeling very caged, as they're unable to feel the connection and energy they're used to.

I'm learning I can't control everything. Trusting in my faith has been my saving grace, as I've definitely had my share of dark days. But I'm doing my best to lean on the blessings and all of the great years in the past, knowing we will all be back again. Some people may not realize the "suits" on the other side of the microphone also feed off that energy exchange between fans and artists. We're all missing that.

27 BRITTANY SCHAFFER
Spotify Head/Nashville Artist & Label Services

This has highlighted the continuing growth and popularity of streaming among the country audience, who can connect wherever they choose – phones, computers, smart speakers and TVs. My hope is listening habits created this year will continue once the pandemic is over.



Schaffer shows off her favorite addition to 2020, her daughter Scarlett.

The incredible passion that my team has for the Nashville music community has really shown through. I've been amazed watching their energy and creativity in support of artists continuing to connect with fans on-platform and in social campaigns, or helping raise money for the Music Health Alliance and MusiCares COVID Relief Funds.

I've learned I love and miss in-person interactions and live shows but appreciate finding a little more balance and time with my family and for myself. Having more balance has actually reinvigorated my love of music and made me more creative and efficient, so I hope I'll be able to carry some of that balance with me into the future.

28 JASON OWEN
Sandbox Entertainment President/CEO
Monument Records Co-President

We all should have invested in Zoom stock. I have the best team in the business. They have stepped up to a level that has far exceeded my greatest expectations. And, I drink too much.

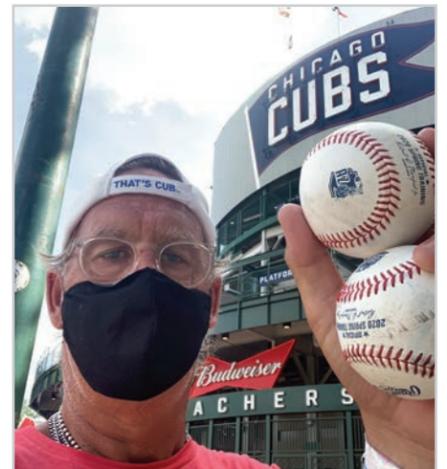


29 JIM CATINO
Sony/Nashville
EVP/A&R

We have an extremely innovative group here at Sony. It's amazing to see the trust that's been built as we work remotely. We lean into uncharted territory each day and haven't missed a beat while growing closer as a team – not only from the challenges of the pandemic but all the civil unrest. Our proudest moment as a company was the day Randy Goodman helped put together during Blackout Tuesday. We had eye-opening virtual discussions with amazing community leaders, artists and influencers – a day I will never forget. Patience and staying focused are what will get us through.

30 BRIAN O'CONNELL
Live Nation
President/Country

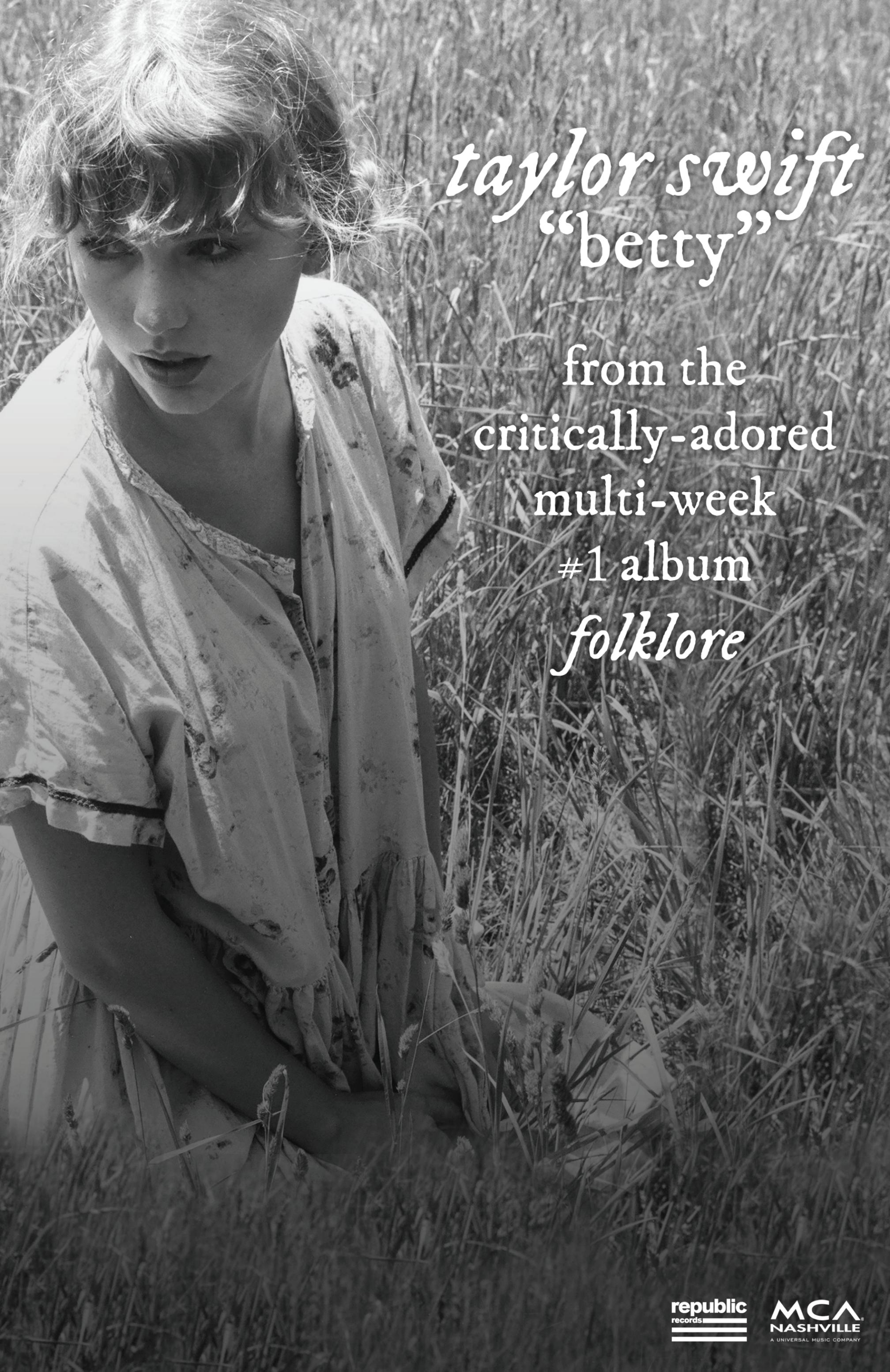
As an industry, we are extremely resilient. We have seen the leaders really lead, and we will all come back from this stronger, more grateful and more creative than ever. I have missed seeing my team in person. And I've gained some self-discipline in setting goals, hitting them, then raising the bar. Cutting out the noise. All things that have a tendency to slack when you are running 100mph every day. I've been really digging into what got me here, and that was my love of music. I have been listening a lot and understanding it's my passion for the art that makes me who I am.



31 GEORGE COURI
Triple 8 Management
Partner

People in the business are much happier to see my face without having to be physically near my face. My team works just as well, if not better, in their pajamas. And, at this point, I've learned all the things that can be learned about me. Frankly, I'm quite sick of myself.

CAC



taylor swift
“betty”

from the
critically-adored
multi-week
#1 album
folklore

republic
records

MCA
NASHVILLE
A UNIVERSAL MUSIC COMPANY



HERE'S TO BEING
BIG & LOUD

BIG LOUD

RECORDS

4.5 BILLION ON-DEMAND STREAMS (US)

7 #1 US RADIO SINGLES

16 TOTAL RIAA CERTIFICATIONS

FOR 5 YEARS...AND
MANY MORE TO COME

LEGENDARY.



CONGRATULATIONS

Marty Stuart, Dean Dillon and Hank Williams, Jr.

on your induction into the

COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME

YOUR FRIENDS AT



Just Won Moment

ACM
Winners
Reflect

Celebrations aren't what they were a year ago, but industry recognition never goes on lockdown. Often, those honors are accumulations of small victories over the course of weeks and months that add up to a banner year.

Country Aircheck asked the 2020 Academy of Country Music Radio Award winners to focus on one bit, interview, promotion, act of service or team success that stood out during the 2019 calendar year for which they were honored.



Notorious C.A.T. NAS Pensacola MWR's Kerry Shanaghan, The Cat and the station's Candy Cullerton and Brent Lane (l-r) with more than 20,000 Navy, Marines and Airmen at Tour For The Troops.

Serve A Purpose

SMALL MARKET STATION

WYCT/Pensacola, FL

PD Brent Lane revised the station's submission package following his team's real-time coverage of the Dec. 6 terrorist attack at Naval Air Station Pensacola.

We were the only live and local music-based morning show on, and we covered it top-to-bottom, from the first calls at 6:45am from people as far away as two counties over wondering why there were so many officers and cop cars on the way to the base until around noon.

At first, it's "There's been a shooting on the base," but you don't know what's happening. We found out an hour in the Escambia County Sheriff's SWAT team ended up getting the guy, or eliminating the threat, as it was quoted. They were going building to building to figure out what was going on, and we didn't know if there was more than one. There was speculation there were five, at one point. We stuck with it all morning and were fortunate enough to have people we could talk to on-base – like my former morning show co-host who is now there as Dir./USO Board – without breaking any rules. Our commitment to the Navy is high ... we're a Navy town. We were able to follow from not knowing what was happening to it being a confirmed terrorist attack.

It was one of the instances that highlight why community radio is so important ... locally owned, locally operated radio. We had most of our tape done, and our submission package was finished leading up to that. We redid the entire beginning of the tape. When putting that together, whether we won or not, I was incredibly proud of our team. That's what our submission represented: fantastic, relevant community radio.

Your Presents Is Requested

LARGE MARKET PERSONALITY

Big Dave, Chelsie, Statt and Ashley, The Big Dave Show
WUBE/Cincinnati

For Big Dave, the season of giving has no expiration date, as he explains.

During our annual 10,000 Toys For Girls & Boys last November and December, we were able to collect more than 12,000 toys for the Marine Corps' Toys For Tots drive. B105 has been involved with the organization for many, many years, but as a show, we began working with Toys For Tots in 2014. Our Big Dave Show Toy Troopers collect toys from their co-workers at local businesses, and we drive around the greater Cincinnati area ourselves to pick them up. It's a lot of work, but it's very rewarding.

This year, we had an online order option that shipped the toys directly to Toys For Tots, and we also teamed with Cincy Shirts to sell "Ain't No Laws When You're Playing Claus" ugly Christmas shirts! We also kicked off the drive with another year of our Coney's For Toys tour at various Skyline Chili locations. We hosted a Jolly Hour at Braxton Brewing with live music from our own Toria and the Egg Noggins, which includes WUBE traffic reporter Toria, Dir./Promotions Ron James and part-timer Craig Sullivan. This year, we were also able to raise money via Venmo donations, and those funds were given to the Marines and used to purchase more specific toys and needs for the families that required assistance.

This cause is very important to Chelsie, Statt, Ashley and me because three out of the four of us have children, and we can't imagine how heartbreaking it is to not be able to provide for them at Christmastime. Because of the pandemic, we're anticipating an even greater need this coming Christmas and are planning now for ways we can ramp up the efforts.



Toy Story: The Big Dave Show joins listeners at a Cincinnati-area business to collect Toys For Tots donations.



Celebration Station: WUBE's Jesse Tack, Statt and Ashley; Big Machine's Carly Pearce; and WUBE's Big Dave, Chelsie, Matt Cooper and Ryan Jacobs (l-r) during the WUBE 50th Anniversary summer concert celebration.

He's Country: WUBE's Grover Collins (l) and Broken Bow's Jason Aldean during the station's summer concert celebration.



Celebration Station

LARGE MARKET STATION

WUBE/Cincinnati

As WUBE/Cincinnati marked a golden milestone, the staff pulled together a celebration fit for a Queen City. PD Grover Collins has the details.

The 50th anniversary celebration of WUBE was the pinnacle of promotion for us during the past year. It was a wonderful six months of remembering the past and appreciating just how far WUBE has come on-air and what we have collectively done for the community in those five decades. We capped the anniversary with our official birthday party at the Jason Aldean show – remember concerts?! Carly Pearce, Kane Brown and Aldean all thanked us for being with them since the beginning of their respective careers. That night is something no one on the staff will ever forget.

We also teamed with a local staple of the Tri-State area, Grater's ice cream, and had our own flavor created: B105 Honeycomb! Everyone pitched in during the six-month celebration and the planning process beforehand. It was all hands on deck, and even our sister stations came up with ideas and helped with execution. It was a memorable summer that reminded us and our listeners that WUBE is the star and bigger than any one person that's ever worked here. It was also a reminder that if we treat her as such, she'll take care of us in return. We really do look at the station as a living entity, as weird as that may sound.

Listener Up
NATIONAL PERSONALITY

The Bobby Bones Show

The iHeartCountry and Premiere Networks morning show keeps proving the power of radio's audience to host **Bobby Bones**.

Because of the radio show and being in the Country format, I had the opportunity last year to do *Running Wild with Bear Grylls*. It's an international show, and they bring on people way more cool and famous than me. I was excited to be invited to Norway and took iHeart's Rod Phillips with me. I didn't know how ratings would be for it in America, because I was depending on a Nat Geo audience I hadn't been introduced to yet. So, I strategically challenged my audience and played some fun games with them to try boosting ratings. We were up against shows with Channing Tatum, Rob Riggle – people who are known. But once the episode aired, it was the highest rated of the entire season.

That was completely about my radio audience dialing in and watching the show live. It got us talking to Nat Geo, and I started taping my own show with them last week. In that way, the power of radio's audience helped me with another venture, but we also do that in charitable ways. I think we set another record for St. Jude last year with \$1.3 million raised in two days. Those are the kinds of things that are most fulfilling. Moving audiences in responsible ways – radio still doesn't get the credit it deserves for being able to do that.



Rock On: Grylls (l) and Bones in Norway.



Building A History: KILT's Cowboy Dave, George Lindsey, Monica Lunsford, Sarah Frazier and Chris Huff (l-r) help rebuild homes left sitting damaged three years after Hurricane Harvey ravaged the listening area.

Building A Brand
MAJOR MARKET STATION

KILT/Houston

The KILT/Houston staff, led by PD Chris Huff, prides itself on stepping up after others have stepped back.

Like so many stations, being an active member of our community is an essential part of what we do and who we are; however, one of the things that stands out to me from the past year is the continued efforts of our "Rebuild Houston" campaign. It has been three years since the devastating floods of Hurricane Harvey, yet there are still hundreds of people dealing with its repercussions.

Last fall, our entire cluster organized to help rebuild homes that had yet to be restored to their pre-Harvey condition. Supporting relief efforts in the immediate aftermath of a disaster are imperative, yet oftentimes, once the initial need has passed, the ongoing needs can be overlooked. I am proud to work for a team that recognizes how community involvement doesn't stop once the television cameras go away.

Fun To The Hills
MAJOR MARKET PERSONALITY

Rob Stone & Holly Hutton
WYCD/Detroit

For this afternoon duo, the award brings to mind heavy moments and heavy metal.

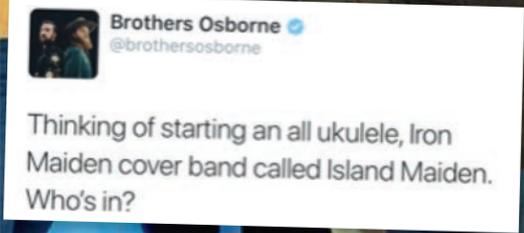
HH: When I think about 2019, I think about probably my favorite moment in radio, which was in our ACM submission. Shortly before a visit by Brothers Osborne, we'd seen a tweet from them joking about starting an all-ukulele Iron Maiden cover band called Island Maiden. I called Rob and said, "My husband just drunk-bought a ukulele! We have two! We can make this happen!" We weren't sure they were going to go for it, but the second they walked in they went right for the ukuleles and started fiddling with them. I assumed they would sing, but they were like, "No, Rob should sing and we'll do backup." It was so fun.

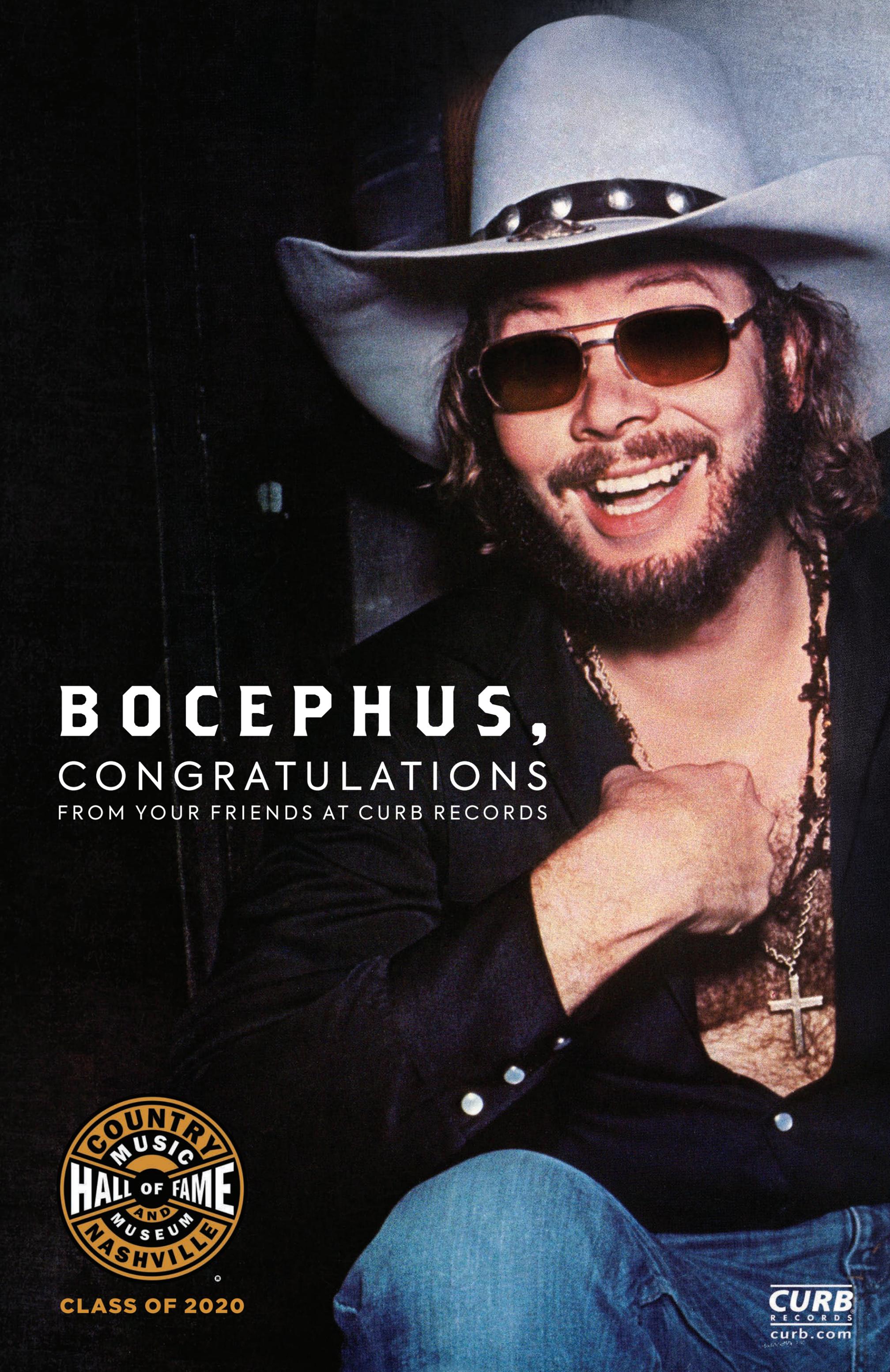
RS: Even though it was a joke, I can now say I sang with Brothers Osborne. We sang the chorus of "Run To The Hills" and now forever have that bond. They were at the Lions' Thanksgiving Day game that year and you like to think people remember you, but there's also the default, "Nice seeing you again that people do." They saw me and were like, "Hey, Rob! What's up, ukulele?"

In terms of big moments, our St. Jude Radiothon always comes to mind, but it became a bigger deal for me in 2019 because my wife and I had our first child. On the air, we're fun and goofy, and it's one of the hardest things every year to hear those stories and really dig deep to bare all those feelings. Now that I have a child, it went even deeper. We ended raising \$620,000 and we're really proud of that.



String-A-Long: The Brothers sport axes (hatchets?) and PD Tim Roberts (second from right) joins the ensemble.





BOCEPHUS,
CONGRATULATIONS
FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT CURB RECORDS



CLASS OF 2020

CURB
RECORDS
curb.com



Lady, VA: Steve Waters (second from l) and Jessica Cash (second from r) with Lady A.

Performance With Potential

SMALL MARKET PERSONALITY

Steve Waters & Jessica Cash
WFLS/Fredericksburg, VA

An interview with Lady A embodies the spirit of 2019 for the Steve & Jessica morning show.

SW: We were talking music and having a good time, but it just so happened to be Dave Haywood's birthday. Now, Jessica loves to sing, even though she's not a good singer. I apologize, but she's not.

JC: I had many lessons, but they didn't really work out for me.

SW: From time to time, near or around someone's birthday, we've had her sing "Happy Birthday," but this time we got an out-of-tune piano, too. We said, "Hey, Dave, before we go, Jess would like to sing for you." She sings and ... it really wasn't good. I jump in and say, "Okay, now give her your critique, and don't hold back. Go all *American Idol* on her." Dave responds with a spot-on perfect Luke Bryan-voiced critique. We're thinking it's just a short joke, but Dave, Charles and Hillary kept it alive, and the interview became more about Jess than it was about them.

JC: I think I knew what was coming, and I took it in stride. I didn't know I would become the subject of the whole chat ... but he did say I had potential!

SW: He did! "A little pitchy in the bridge, but I think you have potential." She celebrated that all year long as a running gag that popped up in other bits and conversations. "But I have potential!" The takeaway for us was that we went in with a design, but it all changed. That unpredictability summed up our entire 2019 – things we thought would happen ended up 10-times better. It was a magical year.

A Rare Medium, Well Done

MEDIUM MARKET PERSONALITY

Clay Moden, Val Townsend and Rob Banks,
Clay & Company
WYRK/Buffalo, NY

Host Clay Moden shares how – and more importantly – why he, Val Townsend and Rob Banks keep it local in an increasingly-connected world.

My guess is if you listened to us from another part of the country, you'd have a hard time understanding what we're talking about. Like our meat raffle. To raise money for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, we put together what up here in Buffalo we call a meat raffle. We brought 250 people in, they spun the wheel and won chicken, fish, steaks and even hot dogs. We made a whole boatload of money ... just under \$20,000 from raffling alone.

This is a perfect example of who we are and what our station and show are all about. A fire at a local horse farm burned down the barn, and the owners didn't have insurance. The next morning, Rob, Val and I broadcasted live from the farm. It was grassroots – we literally put out an empty water trough and said, "Any money can help this family right now." People came by with \$50, \$10, whatever they could give. Some people wrote big checks.

We try to make it *all* about the Buffalo area listener. Maybe it's not the wave of the future, but that's how I learned. That's who I am. We grew up here, and to be on a radio station in your hometown, there's nothing better than that.



Good WYRK: Clay Moden, Val Townsend and Rob Banks (l-r).

Like A Good Neigh-bor: Townsend and Banks broadcast live from a local horse barn that burned down to raise money for the owners.



Performance Heart: Station staffers, artists and industry folks at Heart Strings for Hope.

Pull On Heart Strings

MEDIUM MARKET STATION

WUSY/Chattanooga

SVP/Programming Justin Cole attributes the station's success to one thing: people.

This radio station is founded on the community, and it always has been. Being on the air is one thing, but it's more than that with my team. They're ingrained in the community. They believe in what we're doing, and they believe in their community.

We held our 10th annual *Heart Strings for Hope* for St. Jude last March with Luke Combs, John Pardi, Morgan Wallen, Randy Houser and Kelly Lovelace. The interesting part is, that show sells out before we announce the artists. We support

the community and St. Jude, St. Jude supports the community, and in turn, the community supports St. Jude and the station.

Anytime there's a natural disaster – whether it be the tornado here and in Nashville or a hurricane in the Carolinas or Florida – we'll go and broadcast for the day somewhere to collect supplies, money, etc. as part of our ongoing *Operation Good Neighbor*. We're also involved in *Tony O'Rear Bowl For Life* (named for a late St. Jude patient), the *Backpack Give Back* and *Dare to Dance* for the Chattanooga Kidney Foundation, to name a few. More recently, because of the pandemic, we offered *Small Business Free Commercial Friday*.

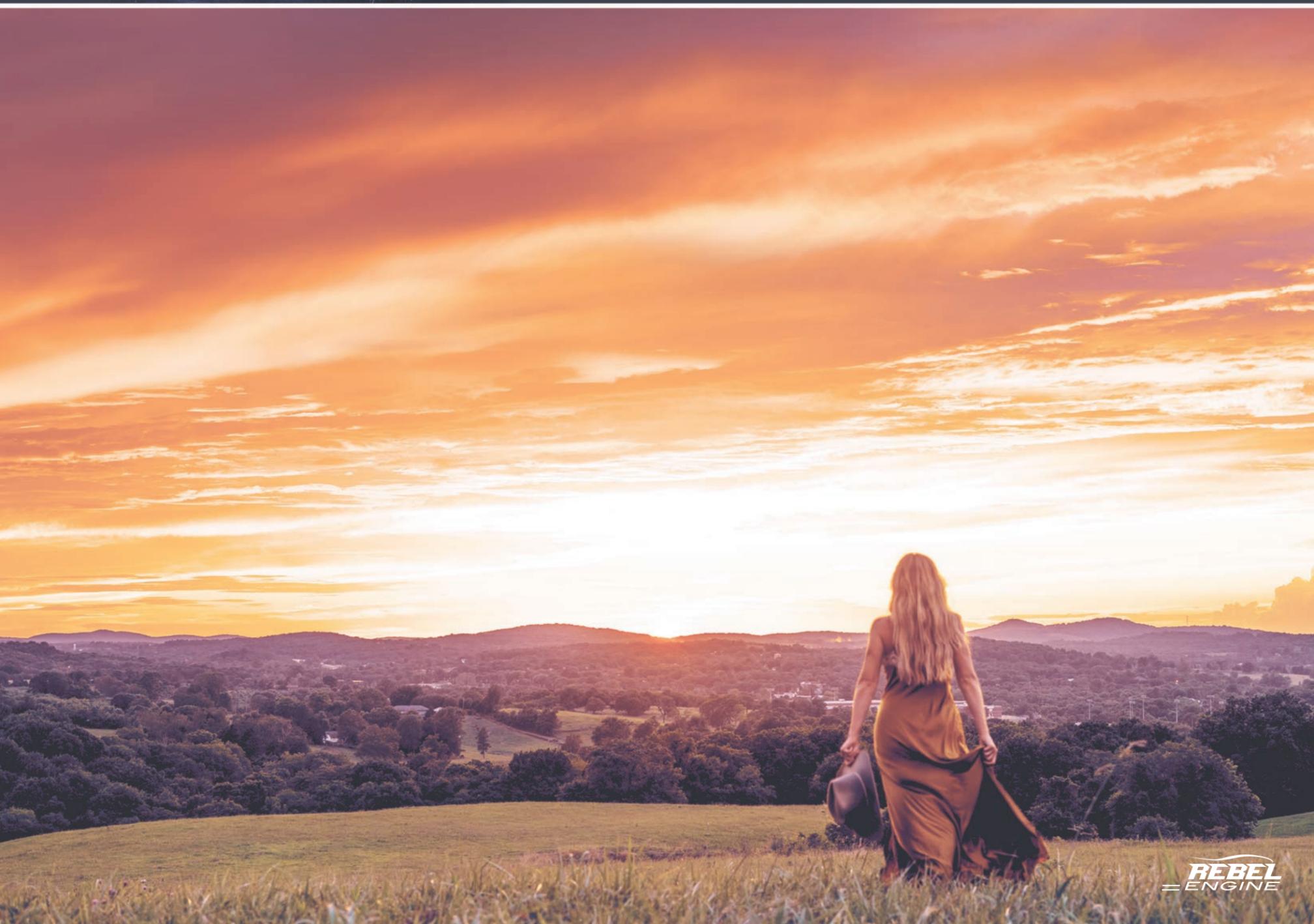
It's not just community events, though. It's my team being involved in their churches. They're involved in local organizations. Listeners know these folks. They're truly a part of the community. If I had to narrow our success down to one thing, it'd be the people.

CAC

STEPHANIE QUAYLE

THIS IS WHAT WE'RE DRINKIN 'BOUT

- **60 Million** Audience Impressions and growing - "Whatcha Drinkin 'Bout"
- Over **100 Million** Audience Impressions - Last 3 Singles
- National Daytime Television Debut - NBC's **The Kelly Clarkson Show**
- Over **1 Million Views** - "Whatcha Drinkin 'Bout" Official Music Video
- Featured on "**The ACM Weekly**" - Alongside Gabby Barrett and Runaway June
- **Harley-Davidson Partnership** - From Horses To Horsepower Video Project
- Teamed up with **Winnebago** to launch the On The Road Again campaign
- Launched series **Hay Y'All** - 50 Episodes in Season One
- Over **150 Virtual Appearances** with American Songwriter, Ryan Seacrest Foundation, MusiCares, Lucchese, KOA, Wrangler and more





Selector2GO. Zetta2GO. Aquira2GO.

INTEGRATED ACCESS FROM ANYWHERE

DIRECT ACCESS AND CONTROL FROM WHATEVER DEVICE YOU HAVE,
NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE

The power of the world's most advanced scheduler, GSelector, is harnessed in its go-anywhere version, Selector2GO. And our award-winning playout system is no longer confined to the studio, thanks to its companion, Zetta2GO. When it comes to planning and scheduling your advertisements, Aquira2GO lets you take all the smarts of Aquira on the road too.

- ✓ Aquira2GO, Selector2GO and Zetta2GO are available for immediate deployment
- ✓ Aquira2GO allows users to add new proposals, approve contracts, attach audio

Looking for a remote backup solution? Zetta offers a wide array of Disaster Recovery configurations, ranging from transmitter site backup systems to cloud based storage and playout. With these integrated Zetta DR features, a station's content is automatically backed up and ready at a moment's notice for playback.

- ✓ Multiple users can simultaneously access their data and make real time changes
- ✓ Schedule logs, control the station and add new audio and voice tracking

GEORGE
S
STRAIT

CONGRATULATIONS DEAN!!

UNWOUND SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY. I CAN'T THINK
OF A MORE DESERVING PERSON THAN YOU TO BE
INDUCTED INTO THE COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME!

YOU'VE CHANGED A LOT OF LIVES, INCLUDING MINE.

I LOVE YOU LIKE A BROTHER.

-G



NEW MUSIC COMING SOON!

CONGRATULATIONS

LUCAS HOGE

HOGE DOMINATES LIVESTREAMING
TOP 12 ON **POULSTAR** CHART

5/18 - #12	7/20 - #6
6/15 - #8	7/27 - #12
6/22 - #8	8/3 - #9
7/13 - #12	8/10 - #10

'HOGE WILD' AIRING IN US & CANADA

SEASON 1 ON **SPORTSMAN**
CHANNEL

SEASON 2 PICKED UP THROUGH 2021

Hunt, Fish, Dive & Perform across the Globe!



Quarantine AND CHILL

Labels Q Us In On What To Expect

MUSIC PREVIEW

19th & Grand

Tenille Arts continues her chart momentum with “Somebody Like That,” with the label touting good research stories from radio partners. The single comes from her debut album, *Love, Heartbreak, & Everything In Between*. **Zac Brown Band**’s “The Man Who Loves You The Most” also remains a priority. “The father/daughter anthem brings a familiar superstar voice to a heartfelt song that’s sure to resonate with listeners,” notes VP/Promo **Jim Malito**.

Arista

The Arista team is excited about the introduction of **Robert Counts** and his debut single, “What Do I Know.” Counts was the first-ever Sony/Nashville artist to participate in a virtual promo tour, which was well-received according to VP/Promo **Josh Easler**, who adds “If you have not yet seen it, please let us know. We will get it to you ASAP.” Speaking of crazy times, the enthusiastic response to **Brad Paisley**’s “No I In Beer” is matched only by the number of Zooms he’s crashed. **Matt Stell** comes off his debut No. 1, “Prayed For You,” with “Everywhere But On.” Easler reports Stell has recorded new music this year and to “look for more music from [him] this fall.”

Average Joes

The label welcomed **Josh Mirenda** and **Jeremy McComb** to its roster with plans to release singles this fall. Also on tap is the introduction of **Camo Brian** and **Shelby Kay**, who will have debut singles in the fourth quarter, as well. “We’ve been active during quarantine, signing and developing new artists and creating great music that we’re proud to showcase in the fourth quarter,” notes Sr. Dir./Business Development & Marketing **Nathan Thompson**. He adds to expect the first single from **Eddie Montgomery**’s debut solo project in early fall, and a follow-up to **Sam Grow**’s “Song About You” is on the way.

Big Label

The team will release “Silverado Saturday Night,” a new **Aaron Watson** single, in the fall. What Big Label promo chief **Tony Morreale** calls “an up-tempo country romp” was co-written by Watson, Monty Criswell and Phil O’Donnell. It’s the second new song released in the lead up to a full-length 2021 album.

Big Loud

Hardy’s debut solo album, *A Rock*, was released Sept. 4, and with “One Beer” accumulating more than 136 million streams to date and climbing up the chart, a follow-up radio single is anticipated before the end of the year. Coming off of his third No. 1, “Chasin’ You,” **Morgan Wallen** has been releasing new music throughout the year with even more expected. VP/Promo **Stacy Blythe** teases a “new project full of surprises” from newly signed **Hailey Whitters** and confirms **MacKenzie Porter**’s “These Days” is a “huge priority” for the label as she notches her third straight No. 1 in Canada (breaking Shania Twain’s record in the process). Blythe wraps, “In just five years, we’ve built a rock star roster that continuously one-ups itself.”

Big Machine

“The Machine is running hot,” warns SVP/Promotion & Digital **Kris Lamb**, citing **Tim McGraw**’s first solo studio album in five years, *Here On Earth*, and first new music since returning to the label (revealed at CRS), “I Called Mama.” Coming off the biggest chart



Arista’s Robert Counts

debut of their career with “How They Remember You,” **Rascal Flatts**’ new EP is currently available, and they’ll release *Twenty Years Of Rascal Flatts: The Greatest Hits* in October. **Carly Pearce**, having just peaked her platinum single “I Hope You’re Happy Now” at No. 1, is currently in the studio with Shane McAnally and set to release new music this fall. As **Midland**’s “Cheatin’ Songs” continues its upward trajectory, the trio’s 17-track live album, *Live From The Palomino*, comes out Oct. 30. **Ray Wylie Hubbard** released his debut project with the label, *Co-Starring*, featuring artists including Ronnie Dunn, Pam Tillis, Ringo Starr, Joe Walsh, The Cadillac Three and Ashley McBryde; and one of the newest additions to the roster, **Noah Schnacky**, recently put out his self-titled debut EP featuring seven tracks, including “Meet The Man” and “Comeback.”



Broken Bow’s Lainey Wilson

Black River

Touting a “very exciting fourth quarter ahead,” SVP/Promotion **Mike Wilson** references **Kelsea Ballerini**’s momentum with “Hole In The Bottle,” plus a new project scheduled for this fall that will “surprise many in the best possible way.” New act **Pryor & Lee**’s debut single, “Yallsome,” is well on its way to becoming a party anthem after **Pryor Baird** and **Kaleb Lee** first met in 2018 when they were forced to be roommates on season 14 of NBC’s *The Voice*. On their becoming a duo, Wilson says “Their chemistry is obvious, and their energy is powerful. These guys really bring it.”

BMLG Records

Hot on the heels of **Florida Georgia Line**’s 17th No. 1, “I Love My Country,” the duo releases “Long Live” from their forthcoming project, impacting everywhere now. **Lady A**’s “Champagne Night” solidifies its chart and playlist takeover, while **Brett Young**’s new single “Lady” — a love letter to his daughter, Presley, about his wife, Taylor — is cranking up and “over-indexing in all key metrics across the board,” boasts SVP/Promo **Matthew Hargis**. **Danielle Bradbery**’s latest offering, “Never Have I Ever,” is advancing toward streaming and airplay domination, and ACM New Male Artist of the Year **Riley Green** just released EP *If It Wasn’t For Trucks*. The title track will impact Country radio playlists Oct. 12.

Broken Bow

Jason Aldean continues to release songs “taking him to the next level,” says VP/Promo **Lee Adams** in reference to 9’s “Got What I Got” chart ascension. **Dustin Lynch**’s “Momma’s House” is on track to be his ninth hit, which VP/Promo **Shelley Hargis Gaines** attributes to his “consistency in delivering records that react big with the audience with the research to prove it.” **Chase Rice** continues to release new music with *The Album Part III*, showcasing his songwriting abilities. **Tyler Farr**’s new release, “Soundtrack To A Small Town Sundown,” is already getting attention at radio, following a strong kick off by SiriusXM, while **Lainey Wilson**’s vocals and writing shine in “Things A Man Oughta Know.”

Capitol

Just last month, **Luke Bryan**'s *Born Here Live Here Die Here* was released on the heels of his multi-week No. 1, "One Margarita," and a new single announcement is already in the works. Speaking of new singles, expect one from **Keith Urban** later this month in addition to his new album, *The Speed Of Now, Part 1*, out Sept. 18. Christmas comes early with **Carrie Underwood**'s first-ever holiday album, *My Gift*, featuring traditional favorites and several originals Sept. 25. August was a busy month for the label's **Jon Pardi**, whose eight-track cover project, *Rancho Fiesta Sessions*, dropped while his current single and second release from *Heartache Medication*, "Ain't Always The Cowboy," continued to gain momentum. "Wine, Beer, Whiskey," **Little Big Town**'s current single, has VP **Bobby Young** noting it is posting impressive track sales and streams. Released in early August, **Darius Rucker**'s "Beers And Sunshine" is amassing airplay and consumption growth, Young notes. Also released in August was **Mickey Guyton**'s "Heaven Down Here," a timely song about healing and moving forward co-penned by Guyton alongside Gordie Sampson, Josh Kear and Hillary Lindsey. **Caylee Hammack** remains busy with the release of "Just Friends," her second single from her debut album, *If It Wasn't For You*, impacting radio Sept. 21.

Columbia

The imprint's storyline of breaking new acts – **Maren Morris**, **Luke Combs**, **Mitchell Tenpenny**, **Tenille Townes** – is now aimed at **Jameson Rodgers**, whose debut single, "Some Girls," can be found at the top of the charts alongside friend and former tour mate, Combs, who is adding to his hit catalog with "Lovin' On You." Combs' year has been filled with several career accolades, including being the first artist to have their first two studio albums spend 25 weeks or more at No. 1 on Billboard Top Country Albums chart. Morris has had a historic run with "The Bones," finding multi-genre peaks and praise. Her current single, "To Hell & Back," "is a positive message from an instantly recognizable voice, and few artists have had a brighter spotlight than Maren has in the past couple of years" says SVP **Shane Allen**. Tenpenny's newly released single "Broken Up" is currently climbing the charts, while Townes recently released her debut album *The Lemonade Stand*. The team is also excited to share someone new with a voice they're excited about, so be on the lookout for tunes from **Kameron Marlowe** soon.

Curb

"For the sake of all of us, I hope we never see a year like this ever again," begins VP/Promo **RJ Meacham**. "And in spite of endlessly-challenging circumstances, I could not be prouder of my promo team, all of my other Curb teammates and our artists, on behalf of all of our accomplishments." Meacham promises to ride their wave of summer success into and through Q4, remaining "laser-focused" on **Lee Brice**'s "One of Them Girls," **Dylan Scott**'s "Nobody," **Mo Pitney**'s "Ain't Bad For A Good Ol' Boy" and a new single coming soon from **Filmore**. Addressing his "friends in radio land," Meacham emphasizes, "We stand by and with you as you continue to make the most of these crazy times."

EMI Nashville

Jon Langston delivered his first Top 30 single in 2020. He's writing and recording every day, reports VP/Promo **Jimmy Rector**, who adds, "We look forward to bringing you more new music from this talented, energetic performer and artist."

The Chief delivered "Stick That In Your Country Song," which Rector cites as one of the first times his show energy has been captured in a recording. "Our format

is the people's music, and **Eric Church** is the people's artist," proclaims Rector. Lead single "All Night" from **Brothers Osborne**'s new album *Skeletons* (out Oct. 9) is one of the duo's fastest rising singles to date. The multiple CMA/ACM Duo Of The Year winners earn Rector's praise as "the future of our format." *This Is Us* actress **Chrissy Metz** has returned to her first love – music – with debut single "Talking To God." The promo team views its solid lyrics, vocal delivery and name known to almost all as a sure bet. **Gary Allan**'s "Waste of a Whiskey Drink" is just getting started, and Rector urges radio to keep their eyes open for **Kylie Morgan**, who several in radio had an opportunity to meet in-person, witnessing the talent and energy, before the pandemic. He points out, "We have something special about to take flight here."

Forge Entertainment

Lucas Hoge has new music with a new producer coming in Q4. The two have been collaborating over the summer, and CEO **Laura Lynn** assures "the new music is what Lucas has been striving for." In addition to creating in the studio, Hoge's pre-pandemic filmed television series, *Hoge Wild*, is airing Monday nights at 6pm CT on Sportsman Channel. The show features him crisscrossing the globe — hunting, fishing, scuba diving and performing — and original music throughout each episode. The show will also air on Sportsman Canada in Q1 and Q2 of 2021, and season two is being filmed now. The flagship artist was recently ranked in the Top 10 and 20 by Pollstar's Weekly Livestream Chart for multiple weeks with his *Sunday Sessions*. "Lucas keeps doing what he does best with partnerships as they continue to grow for him and his TV show with Salt Life, GoPro, Kroger, Smirnoff, GSM Outdoors, Walkers and others to be announced," touts Lynn.

Foundry

The scoop from Pres. **Cole Johnstone** is **Shenandoah** will release their first album with all new original music in more than 20 years this fall ... the Buddy Cannon-produced *Every Road*. The project will feature collaborations with artists including Luke Bryan, Blake Shelton, Dierks Bentley, Brad Paisley, Zac Brown Band, Lady A, Carly Pearce, Cody Johnson and Ashley McBryde. Label mate **Austin Merrill** has been in the studio and is set to release his debut single, "All In," to Country radio in Q4.

GrassRoots

Martina McBride returns to Country radio with the "relatable and powerful" single "Girls Like Me" from NBC's songwriting competition series, *Songland*. Also on Managing Partner **Nancy Tunick**'s list is **Shane Owens**, who continues to bring traditional country music to the modern world with his latest offering, "Everybody Dies;" and country piano virtuoso **Eric Burgett** brings his personal wedding song to radio with new single "Sometimes Late At Night." Nashville-based duo **Calamity Jane** send a message of perseverance laced with harmony and fiddle in their latest single, "The Mountain." "Music is so important at this time to connect and uplift, and we are so excited about the music that we are releasing," Tunick says. "Each single brings the country listener a unique and distinctive voice and message."

In2une/AWAL

Canaan Smith will continue his single "Colder than You" "as long as it takes," resolves VP/Promo **Jamice Jennings**, who also hopes to have a new single from **RaeLynn** coming to Country radio in Q4 or Q1. Records' **Chris Bandi** will solidify on with his current single, "Man Enough Now." Also on Jennings' list is a new **John King** single in Q4, if not in 2021.



RCA's Niko Moon

MCA

Following the peak of "Hard to Forget" at No. 1, the next **Sam Hunt** single, "Breaking Up Was Easy In The 90s," impacts in the fall. **Kip Moore** continues his chart climb with "She's Mine," and new artist **Parker McCollum** has cracked the Top 20 with his debut MCA release, "Pretty Heart." The lead single from **Jordan Davis**' self-titled EP, "Almost Maybes," is impacting radio now with consumption stories on pace with his first three chart-topping, RIAA certified singles. Finally, the MCA team is thrilled to be working "Betty" by **Taylor Swift** to Country radio.

MCC|Curb

One of two flagship artists for the new imprint, **Jackson Michelson**, had two songs on the chart this year: "Stay Over" and "One Day," a track about the importance of time and family. His digital numbers are up to 13.1 million on-demand streaming, according to the label. **Tim Dugger** has a new single, "You're Gonna Love Me," that is as "true and raw as country can get," if you ask Label Head **Craig Powers**. You might have seen Dugger's name and picture on the #98 Curb NASCAR racing truck this year, too. **American Young** — led by singer/songwriter/producer/TV and social media star **Jon Stone** and **Kristy Osmunson** — is on deck with music, adding to the new and traditional country expected from the all-new MCC|Curb Records in 2021.

Mercury

Travis Denning topped the chart with his No. 1 "After A Few" in the summer of 2020 and follows that up with tempo on "Where That Beer's Been." **Lauren Alaina** dropped six brand new songs Sept. 4 on EP *Getting Over Him* as her current single of the same name continues to climb the charts. **Maddie and Tae** rang the bell in August with their second No. 1 single, "Die From A Broken Heart," and are coming back in the fourth quarter with a fresh new cut from their recent studio release, *The Way It Feels*.

Monument

VP/Promo **Drew Bland** says 2020 "didn't slow down our efforts to invest in our belief in radio with the addition of our in-house promotion team." It also didn't slow down their two current singles at radio: **Walker Hayes**' "Trash My Heart" is "proof that audiences are loving the fun energy boost the song gives listeners," and **Teddy Robb**'s "Heaven On Dirt" is "solidifying" his country and midwestern sound. Bland affirms Robb is "the artist to stake your claim now for a strong 2021 payoff." Co-President **Shane McAnally** teases, "Keep your ears open for fresh new music from **Brandon Ratcliff**, **Alex Hall** and exciting collaborations from one of Nashville's strongest country songwriters and voices, **Caitlyn Smith**."

RCA

RCA will finish 2020 with a busy single release schedule, including plans to continue breaking **Niko Moon**. His debut EP is out now, featuring music it's "impossible not to listen to" (as SVP **Dennis Reese** tells it) without having a "Good Time." In 2019, **Ryan Hurd**'s "To A T" was played more than 2,000 times at a number of stations, and his new song, "Every Other Memory," has been getting strong out of the box support from many major markets. Both Moon and Hurd are big Q4 growth priorities for the imprint. **Miranda Lambert** follows up No. 1 "Bluebird" with "Settling Down," impacting Sept. 21. New and upcoming singles to mark in your calendar: **Old Dominion**'s "Never Be Sorry" (Aug. 31), **Kane Brown**'s "Worship You" (Nov. 2) and **Chris Young** featuring Brown on "Famous Friends" (Dec. 14).

Rebel Engine

Stephanie Quayle's single, "Whatcha Drinkin' Bout," passes the independent artist's previous chart peak positions while building more markets than ever before.



EMI Nashville's
Chrissy Metz

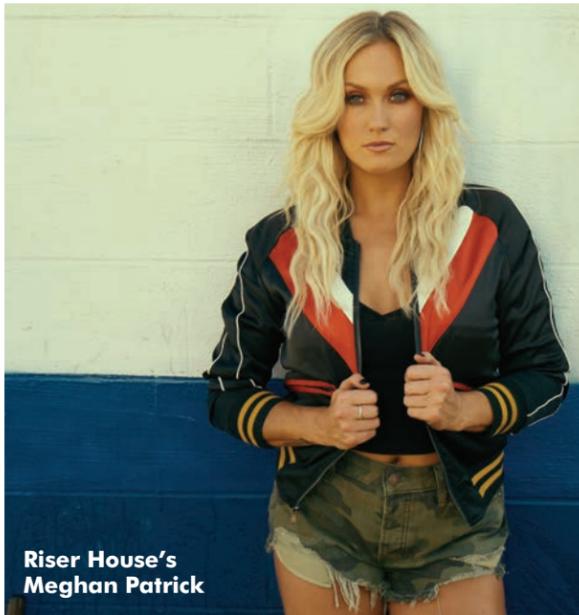
"These unprecedented times have brought out creativity and innovation from Stephanie and our team to increase exposure and growth," says VP **Carli McLaughlin Kane**. Complementing the growth at radio, Quayle is in the studio recording new music, and readies for the launch of season two of her quarantine-inspired *Hay Y'all* series from her barn ... bringing heart, humor and country music each episode.

Riser House

The newly revamped and reinvented Riser House promo team will continue to support Columbia on **Mitchell Tenpenny's** "Broken Up." Also coming this fall, Team RH will launch the US debut single from **Meghan Patrick**, "My First Car (Was a Pickup Truck)," while **Dillon Carmichael** polishes his next batch of tunes with producers Jon Pardi and Dann Huff. "There's so much exciting and compelling music coming from these Riser House artists," says SVP/Promotion **Bob Reeves**. "The new gang here can't wait to hit the streets!"

Show Dog

With their streaming numbers growing, the team will continue developing the new **Waterloo Revival** single "Something You Ain't Ever Had." *Digital Journal* notes, "The Austin natives are back stronger than ever with their infectious new single. What Country radio stations need is 'Something You Ain't Ever Had' in heavy rotation on their airwaves. It garners an A rating." The label is excited to introduce music from the newest addition to their roster, **Clay Walker**. His new single "Need A Bar Sometimes" was co-written by Walker and co-produced by Michael Knox. Despite his *When Country Comes to Town* Tour being postponed until 2021, Songwriters Hall of Famer **Toby Keith** is always in the mix. VP/Promo **Rick Moxley** advises to stay tuned, "With the reset button clicked, expect some top-shelf hits in the future."



Riser House's Meghan Patrick

Stoney Creek

The roster is creatively in a sweet spot, and all the metrics are showing that it translates to hit songs, submits VP/Innovation, Radio & Streaming **Adrian Michaels**. **Parmalee** have paired with **Blanco Brown** for "Just the Way," resulting in 62+ million streams and hitting No. 1 on SiriusXM's The Highway ... and they're just getting started with radio. The first single from **Jimmie Allen's** *Bettie James* collaboration project "This is Us" is getting "unbelievable reaction and metrics," reports Michaels, as Allen's fastest consuming single to date. **Lindsay Ell** explores the seven stages of grief on her sophomore album *Heart Theory*, and single "Ready To Love" has Michaels predicting a breakthrough hit. And, finally, team Stoney Creek is looking forward to introducing **Track45** to the world beginning this fall.

Triple Tigers

Russell Dickerson's debut single from his sophomore project, "Love You Like I Used To," is "zooming" up the chart thanks to the biggest add week in his career, coincidentally while he and wife Kailey are expecting their No. 1 son this month. The Triple Tigers debut single from **Cam** is off and running, with SVP Promo **Kevin Herring** hailing it as, "Zesty, deliriously fun and effervescent." "Classic" will be a priority for the rest of 2020 and beyond. After three consecutive No. 1 singles, the wait for the first single from **Scotty McCreery's** new album is almost over. "You Time" ships wide this month impacting in early October.

Valory

The evolution of the revolution continues at Valory. This year, **Thomas Rhett** celebrated his third No. 1 from *Center Point Road* and shared a personal message with single "Be A Light." He continues building his hit catalog and is currently in the studio working on more new music. **Justin Moore** will follow No. 1 "Why We Drink" with new music coming soon. His first live album, *Justin Moore Live At The Ryman*, is slated to be released this month. **Brantley Gilbert** continues the chart march with current single "Hard Days," and **Eli Young Band** are busy in the

studio working on new music to be shared soon. **Tyler Rich's** debut album, *Two Thousand Miles*, is slated for an early September release, featuring his song "Feels Like Home." "We look forward to closing out this year by introducing you to **Heath Sanders** and his incredible music," closes VP/Promo & Marketing **Chris Palmer**.

WAR

Only three shows into their U.S. arena tour, **Dan + Shay** found themselves at home instead of playing packed venues all over America due to the global pandemic. One of the positives of quarantine is that it created an opportunity for creativity, from which came "I Should Probably Go To Bed." VP Radio & Streaming **Tom Martens** says, "It's one of the most dynamic bodies of work to come from this pair and has been incredibly well-received by their fans and radio stations alike." Fresh off another No. 1, **Chris Janson** has become one of the most consistent and reliable voices in Country radio. The third radio single from *Real Friends* – quitting time anthem "Waitin' On 5" – is poised to become another hit at radio. "**Gabby Barrett's** history-shattering debut album has firmly positioned her as a trailblazer for women in country music and for all new artists in the format," says SVP Radio **Kristen Williams**. Her *Goldmine* album set the record for the most first-week streams for a debut album in country music history, including the most-streamed country song of 2020. Barrett's second single, "The Good Ones," continues its ascension on the chart. **Shy Carter** is stepping into the spotlight after spending most of his time behind the scenes writing and producing hits for some of music's biggest artists (including Charlie Puth, Meghan Trainor and Keith Urban). The label touts "Good Love" as a soul-lifting radio debut as an artist. "His talent and versatility are unmatched, and we're excited to watch him showcase his songwriting and producing success as an artist," says WAR National Director **Michael Chase**.

WEA

Kenny Chesney kicked the summer off with his ninth career *Billboard* 200 No. 1, led by its title track and Chesney's 30th chart-topping single, "Here And Now." His new single "Happy Does" hit radio in July and is climbing the charts. In 2019, **Ingrid Andress'** "More Hearts Than Mine" was the only debut from a solo female to crack the Top 20 at Country radio, a feat she followed this year by taking it to No. 1. Now, she is tackling the charts with "The Stranger," the second single from her recently released album *Lady Like*. "It has been an absolute blast working with **A Thousand Horses**," says newly-appointed WEA National Director **Shari Roth**. "They're a talented band that has accrued an organic fanbase with their earnest talent and honest songs. Our team is excited to help get their music heard the way it deserves to be." The group's "A Song To Remember" was released in August. **High Valley** mined experiences from their childhood in rural Canada as well as current roles as husbands and fathers in Nashville to create the *Grew Up On That* EP. The title track, which earned more than 10 million streams prior to terrestrial airplay, will impact Country radio Sept. 21.

Wheelhouse

Fresh off their recent No. 1, **LoCash's** it's-been-too-long-since-we-hung-out single "Beers To Catch Up On" is particularly poignant now. The third release from **Chris Lucas** and **Preston Brust's** album *Brothers* is "one of a half-dozen hits on this project," says VP **Ken Tucker** of the song penned by Rhett Akins, Jeremy Stover and Paul DiGiovanni. Not only do **Runaway June** have a comfort food chart-climber in "We Were Rich," the trio of **Naomi Cooke**, **Jennifer Wayne** and **Natalie Stovall** will release a Christmas EP in October. The holiday set will include both traditional songs and new classics. *Country Thing*



WMN's Shy Carter

Vol. 1 from **Granger Smith** is due Sept. 25. The EP, which includes "That's Why I Love Dirt Roads," will be followed by a second EP in November. Elsewhere, Tucker proclaims radio programmers are falling in love with down-to-earth Kentucky native **Elvie Shane**, whose true-to-life single "My Boy" and southern rock-leaning tunes were recently exposed via a virtual radio tour. Thomas and Rhett Akins



Valory's Heath Sanders

protégé **Sykmore** will release an EP (date TBD) to follow her Michael Knox-produced collection *California King*. Meanwhile, *Billboard's* Top New Country Artist of 2019 **Blanco Brown** is riding high via collaborations with Diplo and Parmalee. He'll unleash an as-yet-untitled collection in October with a follow-up due in early 2021.

WMN

Girl goin' somewhere **Ashley McBryde** is reveling in the current success of "One Night Standards," the highest charted single of her career. Dir./National Director **Anna Cage** shares, "This single has cemented Ashley within an elite group of artists who have managed to shatter glass ceilings in both the critically acclaimed and commercially viable worlds. Everybody is rooting for Ashley to win." **Blake Shelton's** current single "Happy Anywhere" is the follow-up to his multi-week, platinum-certified No. 1 "Nobody But You." The "upbeat song of contentment" (*Rolling Stone*) offers an optimistic perspective on these difficult times, and it is on track to be his 28th career chart-topper as well as Gwen Stefani's second consecutive Country radio No. 1. After nearly a year away from Country radio following the success of his eighth career chart-topper "Love Someone," **Brett Eldredge** returns with a new perspective in the nostalgic, piano-driven "Gabrielle" from *Sunday Drive*. **Cole Swindell** is comfortably in his element with the release of fan-demanded "Single Saturday Night," the quirky music video for which was one of the first in the format to be filmed during quarantine. The new single follows nine chart-toppers. **Cody Johnson** offers Country radio a compelling reflection in "Dear Rodeo" in which he bids farewell to his lifelong passion in pursuit of a new one. **CAC**

House *in* Development

Eyes & Ears Lead Big Loud's First Five Years

“We just deliver the message; the A&R department deserves the praise,” says Big Loud Records VP/Promotion Stacy Blythe who, though understating her department's role, makes a salient point about a successful first five years (see sidebar). Born out of the publishing company of accomplished songwriter Craig Wiseman, the label is indeed rooted in a creative-first mindset. But as partners Seth England and Joey Moi – and 2017 addition VP/A&R Patch Culbertson – tell it, they've had to learn a few things, too.

“I remember my first trips to Nashville, originally as a songwriter,” says Moi, who had produced multi-platinum albums for Nickelback by then. “When I met these guys, I realized how like-minded we were. We had the same dreams but knew we would be able to occupy completely different corners of the room, with the ability to work as one unit very effectively.”

“Each of us did something a little different,” says England, who started at Big Loud Publishing in 2008. “From the day Joey, Craig and I started partnering on stuff, we did production deals – which is record deal-like. We developed things. Joey was developing rock acts then would partner with record labels. We all think the music we make is as good as the last one, therefore any lack of success is credited to the record label that messed it up.”

“At that point, you're hands-free,” Moi says. “You watch it go, hope another record and recording budget comes back around and lands in your lap. As you get older and keep doing that, you inch forward wanting to hold onto it more and more. We just kept doing that as a group and wound up in this dream scenario.”



Grand Scene: Seth England, Morgan Wallen, Hardy and Chris Lane (l-r) at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

Adding recording and marketing to their already wildly successful artist development work – Florida Georgia Line, for instance – meant adding staff ... and risk. “It was a little scary to start, but you get the first No. 1, then the next one,” Moi says. “You sign the next artist, hire the next employee and it keeps growing. Before long, it's a snowball, and you're running after it to keep up.”

Today, Big Loud employs more than 40, though the core executive group has changed with the departures of former label president Clay Hunnicutt and partner Kevin “Chief” Zaruk. “Some days it seems we're catching up with growth, others it's trying to get ahead of where we think we'll be in six months,” England says, noting the importance of structure along with that growth. “We found

BIG LOUD RECORDS

it crucial to have some protocols and systems in place. Not restrictive, as in every act has to do it the same, but making sure the village is all speaking the same language, looking through the same filters, making decisions together and all buying into the order of artist development then, ultimately, radio promotion and marketing.”

WAY I TALK

Perhaps no surprise in a song-driven town, but the philosophy driving Big Loud is anchored there. “There's not just one simple mantra,” England says. “A big song can launch an unknown name. A small song can kill a big name. It really does come back down to that. Drake can put out a turd, and you'll see it. People would like to believe huge artists are bulletproof, and it seems like that when they're in their hot zone, but that's just not true. Historically, everyone's arc starts to come down, and there's no one reason, but my opinion is the songs soften up a bit.”

Meanwhile, the addition of Culbertson evolved – or maybe added to – the creative approach. “I was at Republic and knew the partners because of the Florida Georgia Line deal,” Culbertson says. “How they prioritize the song was a very different mentality in terms of artist development where oftentimes you're signing stuff that has momentum. I completely understand that methodology, but being particular about the song – putting your best look forward – was unique. It's kind of that mini-Motown, where some of the best writers in the format, if not multiple formats, and fantastic voices are together in a pretty brilliant system. Expertise, all those sets of ears, marketing genius, Joey on the production side – having all that in-house is invaluable.”

Experience also played a role in that evolution. “We've had hiccups, like any company,” England says. “We missed on a single and had some tough conversations. I remember the three of us sitting in Patch's office trying to figure out how to never let that happen again.”

“We have to make music with gut and ears, but then react with our eyes,” he continues. “By contrast, a lot of

labels will load up with add dates and plans before they know the first thing about their record. Patch has been a great balancing influence in this area. Joey and I can get so sure of our gut in the studio that we extend it to the team – run, run, run! I like that, but getting focused means reacting to data and having protocols in place to tell us when the right time to go is.”

Culbertson adds, “Musical development runs in parallel with audience development. When you're just starting out with an artist, the rooms they play get bigger, and gauging success changes. We've dropped larger projects and studied how audiences react to each song individually and had a couple of surprises even against our own gut instinct. That's part of the game.”

FIXATED

Putting together the roster involved calculations that exceed the song, however. “When I first met Joey, I was in that Nashville publisher mindset of experiencing the ability of a song to lift up a pretty average artist,” England admits. “But the song-only train is short-lived. His wisdom to Craig and I was to slow down and find real special artists. He had that experience – certainly Chad Kroeger has one of most amazing, cool voices.”

Moi's insistence on seeing certain traits became ingrained in company thinking. “Voice doesn't have to have a big, powerful range, but it's got to be something identifiable,” England says. “Also, best case scenario, they could be drawn as a cartoon character. Tim McGraw and that classic hat – you can see just a silhouette and know who it is.”

“We listen to hundreds of artists before we align,” Moi says. “We look for that signature voice. Hopefully they've can contribute to their songwriting and their own creative development. Are they passionate about entertaining on stage? When it all comes together, you pair them with great songwriters, it moves in the right direction and feels good. We can usually get there. The song does most of the heavy lifting. That's true. You can put an average singer on a great song, and you're off to the races. But when you get that trifecta – powerful voice, cartoon character persona, ability to create – and tie it onto a great song, you've got a tidal wave.”

The losses are generally tacked to too much gut, not enough eyes. “There's a silver lining in each one, though,” Moi says. “We learned to not make that decision again. That's how I learned to be a stickler for a voice. I had invested months of my life and time into somebody who just didn't meet all the requirements and I didn't know that at the time. You take the ‘L’ and move on to the next one, building that frame of reference.”

I WAS JACKED

Fortunately, and by design, there have been many more notches in the win column, and this anniversary has afforded time for reflection. “The scoreboard moments



Seth England



Joey Moi



Beer Me: Celebrating Hardy's "One Beer" are (top, l-r) Ali Matkosky, Tyler Waugh, Devin Dawson, Hardy, manager Tracker Johnson, Seth England, Dave Kirth, Sarah Headley; and (bottom) Stacy Blythe, Brittani Koster, Lauren Alaina, Nikki Wood and John D'Amico.

No Less Than Crazy

Led by VP Stacy Blythe and National Ali Matkosky, the growing Big Loud promotion team isn't likely to let silly things like convention get in the way.

"I remember being on the road with FGL in Raleigh," says Blythe, who was at then-Republic Nashville. "Seth called and said, 'We're thinking about opening a record label. It's kind of crazy, but I'm going to send you a couple of songs and want your opinion.' He sent four Chris Lane songs. I got through 'Fix' and was like, 'Woah, this is not going to be easy at Country radio.' Then I got to 'For Her' and knew I had to be part of this."

Told the label was fully funded for five years, Blythe made the leap. "We had five years to make something

happen," she says. "Having worked with Seth, Chief, Craig and Joey on FGL, I knew they thought differently, everything they did was with integrity, and I just loved being around them. We were fast friends."

Joining two years ago, Matkosky had the benefit of seeing the already-formed label ... and its unusual approach.

"Coming from a different format, I didn't know all the ins and outs of how all the label promotion teams do business," she says. "My husband, however, is a publisher, and Hardy is one of his writers. I'd had one

meeting with Stacy before the No. 1 push for Morgan Wallen's 'Up Down,' so I started really monitoring that battle. He was getting real team feedback from Hardy – a co-writer – and talking about how impressed he was by the creative promotion tactics. We were up until midnight watching the chart close; they won by 72 points. I remember thinking, 'Holy cow, I have to be part of that!'"

Fueling that victory, at least in part, involved

getting Morgan Wallen on a countdown show with its attendant additional airplay. "You can't host Lon Helton's *Country Countdown USA* unless you've had a No. 1, so Morgan wasn't able to host the week of that push," Matkosky explains. "But Florida Georgia Line had, of course, and they are featured on the song."

Blythe takes over: "I called Lon and asked if Morgan could host *with* FGL. He said no one had ever asked that question before, but, 'Yeah, I guess technically he can.' Brian Kelley was in Florida, and we couldn't get him up here, so I said, 'Give

me a mic; I'm going.'" Matkosky: "Stacy flew down to Florida with a microphone to record the FGL guys for the countdown, allowing

Morgan to also host with Lon. Most people would have said, 'Well, our artist can't host. That's it.' Not her."

"That's the Big Loud way," Blythe says. "There's no option to do less than crazy. Yes, it's going to take a lot of extra time and energy, and of course I'm going to

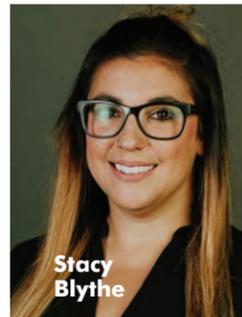


Glasses Always Greener: Celebrating "Whiskey Glasses" are (l-r) writers Ben Burgess and Morgan Wallen, producer Joey Moi and writer Kevin Kadish.

like No. 1 parties are great, but if it ended right now, those aren't the memories I'd hold onto," England says. "My favorite memories are getting a text from Joey or Craig saying, 'What are you doing? Come hear this. I remember walking into Craig's writing room after a text like that and he says, 'Get a cigar and fuckin' check this out!' It was 'Boys Round Here.' Joey brought me down to the studio to hear Chris Lane's 'I Don't Know About You.' Same thing."

Culbertson focuses on the live performance payoff. "What I love about the A&R process is once you start putting out music with an artist, you see those rooms build," he says. "There was a climactic moment this past winter with Morgan onstage at Bridgestone opening for Luke Combs. The way he was commanding that arena audience, knowing the development from 200 people at Stagecoach to that ... a surreal, out-of-body moment for me."

Collective energy is high on Moi's list. "Seth gets a lot of credit for this, but I find it almost magical the assembly of people we've brought together," he says. "Even before the record company on the publishing side, it's really been neat to watch this little family come together. We're over the 40 mark and everyone occupies their own space. I get excited every day to hang out in that office, and I miss that dearly right now. "The building is like a bio-feedback device too," he continues. "I get to turn a song in and then walk around



ROSTER

Ashland Craft
Chris Lane
Ernest
Hailey Whitters

Hardy
Jake Owen
Larry Fleet
Mackenzie Porter

Madison Kozak
Mason Ramsey
Morgan Wallen
Sean Stemaly

**No
 Less
 Than
 Crazy**

do it. We don't take a lot for granted, and we were going against Blake Shelton. That's the situation when you're breaking new artists against established artists. You have to get creative."

That kind of determination goes back to the team's launch. "When we went for adds on Chris Lane's 'Fix,' our first single, we took a risk with a very different sounding record," Blythe says. "We had 73 first week stations, which was a **Country Aircheck** record at that point, and the payoff of a lot of blood, sweat and tears. All of us, including label president at the time Clay Hunnicutt, were in a van for 20 weeks setting this up.

"I remember staying in some pretty shitty hotels,

including an Extended Stay America in Philadelphia where Chris Lane pulled the covers back and it was just infested," she says. "He was like, 'Are we past this yet? Can we please stay anywhere else?' It's funny looking back on what we did to get by, knowing that five years of funding came from a few guys and their personal cash."

Like the creative side of the company, Big Loud promotion has learned a few things. Morgan Wallen's debut single, "The Way I Talk," was one of the teachers. "It ended up being a top 30, but we stepped back and said, 'What are we missing here?'" Blythe says. "We just started paying attention to what the fans were running to. It's not a big, secret formula. It was going to a show and watching which song had the most phones in the air."

Armed with music they believed in and trusting audience reaction – ears and eyes – the messaging is simple. "We have a brilliant

A&R department," Blythe says. "I recently told someone, 'Hey, we just deliver the message. It's A&R that deserves the praise.' The promo team just spreads the good work. I tell them, 'I just want to go to bed feeling good about what we do every day, so let's just go out there, deliver the hits and be good to people. If you do that, they'll be good back. If you're honest, they'll be honest back. And have fun.'"

"We're a people-first company, and the Big Loud partners protect that culture. We look out for our own, and I'm not just saying it because it's my

current place of employment. Really, I've never worked in a better environment, and I think that matters as much as the music. We all are happy to be here and want to work as hard as the next person so we can celebrate another win. I don't think it's a secret, Big Loud likes to party. And man, we celebrate every win like it's our first."



Ali Matkosky

to see how people are responding. Next thing you know, there's a big marketing meeting going on and people are drawing things on a wall. You can just sort of see it happen when you've got one."

As for the next five years, Big Loud has big, big plans (sorry), and that song's story is also revealing. "We just finished a Chris Lane marketing meeting where he told us he was going to propose," England says. "I went into the studio, and Joey was at the control board and was talking to [Big Loud writer/artist] Ernest about what just happened. I said, 'Damn, we need a "Die A Happy Man" for Chris right now.' And Ern goes, 'I think I just wrote it,' and plays part of 'Big, Big Plans' off his phone. I'll never forget



Getting Along Famously: Craig Wiseman (r) with Mason Ramsey.

just sitting there looking at him going, 'Hold on, don't finish that, we need to get Chris with you.' How can that happen? If we didn't have that creative part of our building, those fun little moments wouldn't."

Sorting that creative energy into a promotion and marketing plan might be the trick. "Sean Stemaly and Larry Fleet have absolute smashes, which is a good problem," England says. "Our radio promotion team is figuring out how to scale and grow, which is intimidating in one sense, because we do have primarily unheard-of artists. On the other hand, they know they're going to battle with something different. Next year, the name of the game will be adding a few more names to the roster of artists while maintaining what we've built in the last five. In many ways, we're just getting started."

CAC

Volume 15, Issue 2, September 2020



914 18th Avenue, South
 Nashville, TN 37212
 615-320-1450

Publisher/CEO
Lon Helton
 lon@countryaircheck.com

VP/GM
Chuck Aly
 chuck@countryaircheck.com

VP/Sales & Marketing
April Johnson
 april@countryaircheck.com

Radio Editor
Monta Vaden
 monta@countryaircheck.com

Associate Editor
Caitlin DeForest
 caitlin@countryaircheck.com

Manager/Graphics & Administration
Kelley Hampton
 kelley@countryaircheck.com
 Coordinator/Graphics & Circulation
Shelby Farrer
 shelby@countryaircheck.com

Art Direction
Jerry Holthouse
 jerry@countryaircheck.com

JOEL RAAAB
 COUNTRY RADIO/ MEDIA CONSULTING

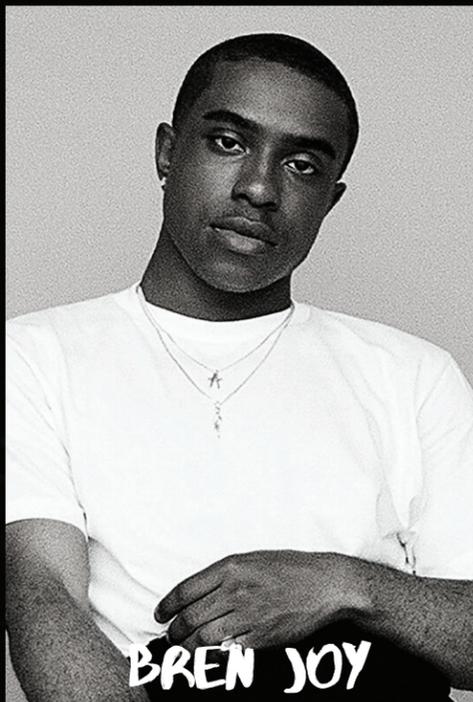
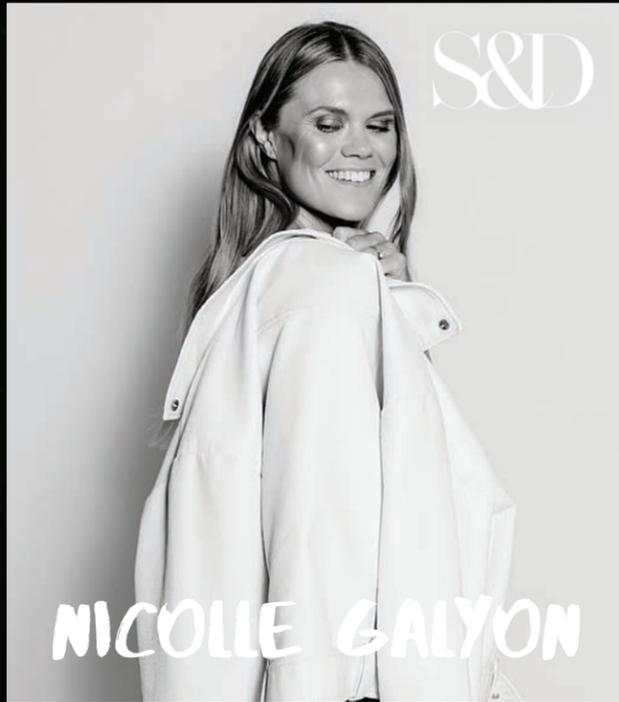
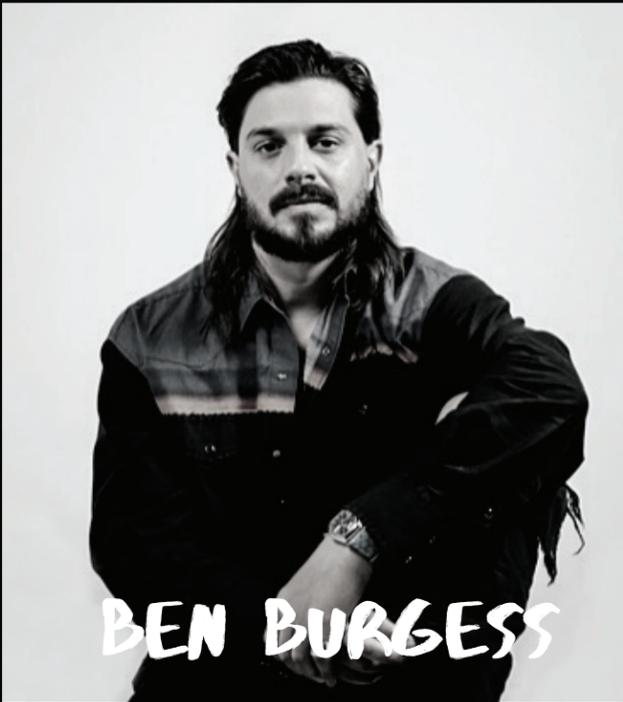


"I can't imagine programming without Joel Raab on my team. He is a valuable resource and knows the format better than anyone!"

**–Tee Gentry, Operations Manager,
 BEASLEY/AUGUSTA, GA (WKXC "KICKS 99")**

BIG LOUD...

WE DIG YOUR EARS.



HOPE THE NEXT 5 YEARS ARE
EVEN **BIGGER AND LOUDER.**



TENILLE
ARTS

SOMEBODY
LIKE THAT



Zac
Browner
Band

THE MAN WHO
LOVES YOU
THE MOST



Jim Malito
VP Promotion

Suzanne Durham
Regional Promotion
Midwest

Rick Young
Regional Promotion
West Coast

19TH
& GRAND
RECORDS

Dave Collins
National Director

Will Robinson
Regional Promotion
East Coast

Kellie Longworth
Regional Promotion
Southwest

Tim Roberts

Pillar Of Positivity

Tim Roberts, WYCD/Detroit PD, has been deeply embedded in the format for decades, but he's never had a year like this. As Entercom/Detroit VP/Music Programming and the company's Country Format Captain (since January 2019), he keeps a full schedule – and that's before tending to his participation on boards for the Academy of Country Music, Country Music Association and Country Radio Broadcasters. Despite the workload and arguably the most tumultuous span in a lifetime, Roberts isn't just upbeat – he's unabashedly optimistic about Country radio and country music. [Ed. Note: This interview was conducted prior to Entercom's Country format restructuring.]

CA: Doom and gloom scenario. The pandemic continues through the end of next year, ratings and revenue are at current or lower levels, radio continues contracting, becoming less live and local and more susceptible to competition from digital services. Is radio more vulnerable than ever?

TR: I'm not sure I'm even qualified to answer that question, because I'm not the CEO of the company. What I will say is this is the greatest time of innovation I've seen, and our level of creativity is going to be the determining factor. The best content providers are always going to come out ahead. It's been that way going back to the great radio Orson Welles was making in the 1940s – via a network, by the way. Audio professionals who are super creative are going to have a strong future. Meanwhile, we are seeing advertisers coming back to radio ... seeing the value. We've demonstrated over and over again during this crisis how important we are to our communities; that doesn't change. So, I'm bullish about the future of radio, specifically Entercom.

What have the bright spots been over the last six months?

Getting to know my people better. I've just been able to touch base with so many, from a Format Captain perspective in multiple markets, as well as my own people. I'm really proud of how all our Country stations stepped up and how the personnel did here in Detroit.

What's been the toughest part?

The human factor. Anybody who's furloughed or laid off. It's always tough. And seeing some people get sick. We've had people in the company die from the pandemic. People are affected by this pandemic in so many ways.

What's surprised you?

We started #PlayOnThePorch in Detroit, inspired by something we saw going on in Italy where people went out on their balconies and shouted. We decided to make it a sing-along and had all our stations promoting a song every day – “Don't Stop Believing,” or whatever it was. At 6pm, everyone was encouraged to go outside and sing along. A little Facebook group got started about it – organically, not us – and it ended up getting millions of views and shares.

That's just one thing that surprised

us, but it's reflective of a connection with listeners that's been remarkable. Likewise, the willingness of artists in our format to connect with the audience via radio, Radio.com and our other digital channels as the conduit has been amazing on a level nobody could have predicted. This has also raised everyone's technical capability – not only radio, but the audience.

How has your day-to-day changed?

GoToMeetings and Zooms have consumed a lot of time. It would almost be weird now to be sitting in a big room with a bunch of people. You'd be like, “Whoa, you're sitting near me.” We're so used to social distancing now, and that would just seem bizarre.

The quantity of email communication is way up. I've learned and become adept at more software and technology. Everyone has had to deepen their own practical education, and it has likely improved their craft. This was almost like being at bootcamp; like it or not, you're going to be in shape when you come out of this.

What's a typical day like for you?

It varies, but I have six or seven set meetings per day, like the music meeting for my local market here in Detroit. There are set meetings with different program directors every week and coaching meetings with morning shows locally and abroad. And, I obviously pay attention to projects as needed. I spend an immense amount of time talking to labels about everything you could possibly imagine. There's not enough time in the day to get to all of that part, because there's just so much music. Nashville is thriving on the music side, so listening to it all is maybe my biggest challenge and a little overwhelming sometimes. I laugh a little bit when people ask me for five minutes. I wish I could, but I literally don't have five minutes in what is typically a 12-hour day.

And, by the way, hats off to Nashville, because a lot of music is really good now. The quality of the format is excellent overall, and the new artists are really good. It used to be so easy to separate weaker artists from good ones. It's a lot harder now, and that's a blessing. Our format is healthy, as we're seeing in summer PPM numbers.

To this year's Power 31 theme, what have you learned about the business, your team and yourself?

This is probably the greatest time of innovation I've seen in radio a long, long time. Forced by the pandemic, of course, but it has revealed how people can really shine in radio. It's also taught us that radio is essential to many people, and we were able to disseminate a lot of information. Fortunately, Entercom is a leader in news and information in America, and we were able to partner with our news brands and deliver critical information when the pandemic first hit.

The collaboration and technical innovation we were forced into was unprecedented, and it happened very fast. In what seemed like three days, we were all working and broadcasting from our houses.

And yourself?

I've learned I only have one phone line. It's made me multitask and actually connect better with my managers across the country. Circumstances forced an increase in connectivity, so I've been working closer with my people rather than farther away. This has also taught me something about what's important. Certain things in a workday wasted time, and you don't do those anymore, because you're not around as many people. Casual conversation goes away, and it allows for hyper-focus on work.



THE INTERVIEW

How do you interact with Entercom's other Country stations as format captain?

It's a collaborative environment in which we work together on all of our initiatives. We have a great event initiative team and the Radio.com team that I work with

THE INTERVIEW

all the time. For instance, we recently did a Rascal Flatts farewell tour live event, so I've been working with all the brand managers and Radio.com on that. We've had world premieres – Darius Rucker and Blake Shelton not too long ago. On those bigger projects, you're working with a lot of people, so it's a combination of collaborative environment and local dedication – the magic recipe.

Do you program music by consensus? Are local PDs trying things out and bringing results back to the group?

I wouldn't want to give away any company secrets, but we talk about music all the time. When we're doing world premieres, we want to make sure that it's a record that we believe in formatically. Ultimately, I'm the gatekeeper as Format Captain, but we try to pick songs that we think are right for our audiences.

To your point about the best content, how are radio, Country radio and Entercom doing with talent development?

I think we're doing great. We have developed a number of personalities in the last three years, with plenty of new people coming in. Being mediocre is not cutting it anymore; the audience is demanding that of us. If we're not doing anything special, of course they're not going to listen, right? It may have been a bit different before the internet and streaming – they didn't have any choice. They still had to put up with you, even if you were bad. They don't have to anymore, so we have to be better.

I get auditions from people all the time and am consistently and pleasantly surprised. We have certainly given a lot of opportunities in morning drive, and I can think of a lot of shows that are ACM and CMA award level. We've received a lot of nominations in those areas and will, I think, continue to. We believe in talent and giving them the tools to win. There was one time about 20 years ago when I wasn't seeing as many young people [coming into radio], and it lasted for about three years before a good, new cycle started again.

Are we perhaps seeing less of that market-to-market rise through ranks with more national shows and fewer places for young personalities to develop?

You're getting it from different places. I've gotten people from comedy, and I'm getting a lot from television. Varied backgrounds – you name it. You don't have to come up the traditional path of Eau Claire to Rockford to Milwaukee and finally Chicago. And by the way, I do hear people in small markets that I think are really good. It's not just major markets.

As a board member for both the ACM and CMA with two big tentpole awards events coming up this month and in November, how do you think response and planning are going?

I'm very bullish about both events; they both have put in a lot of time and effort on excellent plans. We saw from the [network] specials ACM and CMA did, and the CMA *Staycation*, great success with the television viewing audience. Country consumption levels – in our case, Radio.com – saw massive year-to-year growth. The consumption is there. People want to see their artists and, thank goodness, ACM and CMA are going to bring them exactly that. I could be wrong, but I don't think we'll see much decrease and, if anything, growth. The live experience is gone – I can't buy a ticket to go see Keith Urban – so this is it.

You're also on the CRB board, and while there's no way to know what February looks like, the argument could be made there's never been greater need for a Country Radio Seminar collective IQ moment for this business. And yet that event may have to be very different.

If there's a vaccine, it would all happen, and there's probably no drama. I've been involved with CRS for a long time. We've fought through really dark times where people were questioning if we were going to keep doing it, so I think we will find a way to connect. Will it be as wonderful as it is when we're all together? Might not be possible. We like that human contact, camaraderie and the solidarity we find at CRS. We all love country music, and it brings us together each year in a way that can't be duplicated. We will do the best we can under the circumstances. I'm confident in [Exec. Dir.] RJ Curtis and the rest of the board to making that happen. CRB has already done some very compelling digital seminars, and I think we'll see another level of that if we can't be at CRS in person. And there's also the option it gets moved later in the year.

There's a tendency to talk about Country radio, country music or the audience as if they are monolithic, but we know there is wide variety in each. That said, has there been a guiding principle you've articulated to your stations and personalities in responding to the pandemic, economic pressures, social upheaval around George Floyd's death and other concerns? What's the balance between escape, entertainment and acknowledging very difficult times for many?

You have to figure it out locally in your market based on what is going on. The experience listeners were having in Minneapolis was far different than the experience



they were having in Chattanooga, Houston, Seattle, Riverside and Portland. There definitely wasn't one plan, and I don't think there should have been. Generally, I think you could assume people came to music to escape, but at the same time, you can't be oblivious to the world and your market. I'm really proud of how all our stations reacted and supported their communities. I think we have had a big role in keeping people's spirits up in different ways, including messaging and letting the audience know we were there to uplift and help them in a time of crisis.

How are we doing addressing ongoing issues of diversity in country music and Country radio?

I actually think we're making some progress. This is being discussed and worked on by both the ACM and CMA. At one point this year, there were four females in the top seven records, and we've had multiple No. 1s by female artists. Would I love to see more Black artists or Hispanic artists? Absolutely. That would be great for the format, and I've personally encouraged label people [in that direction], but I don't run those companies. The awareness level is well above where it was, problems have been identified and I do think people are working hard to change it.

Will that happen in a day? No, only because of the process it takes to discover artists, develop them to the level of recording them, then putting their product out. The best songs win, and a growing number of female artists, Jimmie Allen, Kane Brown, Darius Rucker and others are proving that every day. The door is open, it's just going to take a little time to involve even more artists who love the music and love the format. I believe it is going to happen. The tide is turning, but it can't happen fast enough.

“There's great hope for people who are in this industry. If you're creative, there are still so many avenues for that. Be adaptable, be creative, keep smiling and work hard.”

You spoke earlier about how well you think Nashville is doing creatively. What's the state of the relationship between country music and Country radio in terms of business dynamics?

Interestingly, it's probably a little stronger than it was. Without the live touring aspect, we all had to go, “Okay, now what?” When you're not talking about concerts anymore, you have to be collaborative and creative. We started with the living room couch concert and evolved into a bunch of other things. We're always trying to think of new ways to connect, and I've talked to more label people than I did to that end. The chart always moves a little slower than they'd like, but it's just the way that the world is right now.

Are there any aspects of the business you'd like to see improved? If I give you a magic wand, what do you wave it over?

The negative press this industry does to itself. There are certain people who write negative columns every day. There's a lot of bashing going on [when] the secret is this industry is reaching so many people – more than television. Radio is absolutely the most effective medium for connecting, from an advertiser's perspective. I wish we'd stop beating ourselves up. Meanwhile, I'm seeing and hearing about wonderful things people are doing in their communities – helping people, raising money, getting a bike for a kid who had his stolen. So many great things go on every day and rarely get attention. This is a great medium and is worthy of being regarded that way. The other thing I'd say is having advertisers appreciate an overall 12-plus audience – the total audience radio is reaching every day, besides specific demos, which obviously they look at.

There's great hope for people who are in this industry. If you're creative, which is why probably 99% of us got in the radio business, there are still so many avenues for that. They may not look exactly the same as they once did. Job descriptions have changed. But my advice to people is be adaptable, be creative, keep smiling and work hard. You can make good things happen not only yourself and your career, but for your community and the communities that we serve throughout America.

CAC

LEE
BRICE
ONE
OF
THEM
GIRLS

KEITH URBAN THE SPEED OF NOW

Part 1



AVAILABLE 9/18

FEATURING "GOD WHISPERED YOUR NAME" AND "WE WERE"