

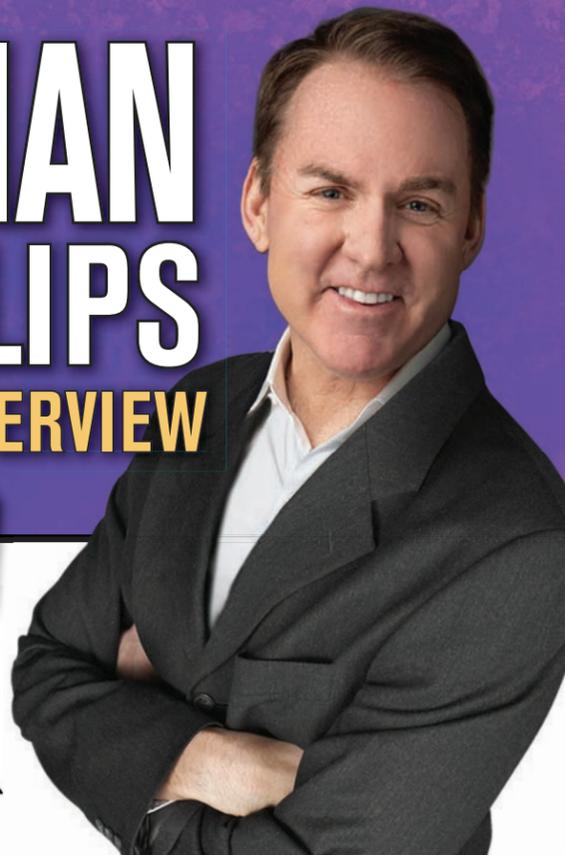
**THE RISE
OF THE
CORPORATE
MANDATE**

*Myths,
Theories &
Revelations*
THE CLASS OF



**BRIAN
PHILIPS**
THE INTERVIEW

**LABEL
CONTACTS
INSIDE!**



COUNTRY
AIRCHECK

FEBRUARY 2020

KEITH URBAN

New music from
Keith Urban
Add Date: 3/2

KEITH URBAN.NET

CONGRATULATIONS
RUNAWAY JUNE

CRS NEW FACES CLASS OF 2020



BLUE ROSES

THE *CRITICALLY-ACCLAIMED* DEBUT ALBUM
AVAILABLE EVERYWHERE NOW





COUNTRY'S BIG BANG

30 Years of Myths, Theories and Revelations

The Big Bang Theory – the scientific term, not the hit television show – centers on a period of time during which a rapid expansion of stars created the universe as it is known today. Last year, Ken Burns traced the larger history of country music back to its roots in his *Country Music* docuseries for PBS, but most artists, radio and industry professionals in 2020 could better trace the underpinnings of their current careers to a set of stars that came into view in 1989. Known collectively as “The Class of ‘89,” this group of artists has been tracked, interviewed, cataloged and chronicled for more than 30 years, but what may not be as evident to the casual observer is how their careers influenced and were influenced by forces around them. Together, The Class of ‘89 and the rapid expansion of country music created the universe in which today’s artists and industry professionals orbit.

But, how do you define The Class of ‘89? In keeping with a scientific baseline, The Class of ‘89 will heretofore be known as the seven artists who charted their first Top 15 single in 1989, as cited by *R&R* in December of that same year: **Clint Black**, **Suzu Bogguss**, **Garth Brooks**, **Mary Chapin Carpenter**, **Lionel Cartwright**, **Lorrie Morgan** and **Travis Tritt**. While numerous listings and publications have included **Alan Jackson** in this class, for purely scientific reasons, he is not included herein, as he did not crack the Top 15 until his second single dropped in 1990 – despite being the flagship artist signed upon **Arista Nashville**’s launch in 1989. But, more on that later.

Picture it: Nashville, 1988. Just two years earlier, **Randy Travis** had burst onto the scene, opening the door for a more traditional sound amid the pop-leaning tendencies of the then-current country landscape. **The Judds**, **George Strait**, **Reba McEntire**, **Ricky Van Shelton** and **Keith Whitley** were experiencing success on the charts, but so too were **Anne Murray**, **Ronnie Milsap**, **Eddie Rabbitt**, **Crystal Gayle**, **Don Williams**, **Rosanne Cash** and **Restless Heart**. “The sound at the time was pretty soft,” explains **KVET/Austin APD/on-air personality Bob Pickett**. “There wasn’t really a definable sound outside of what Randy [Travis] brought to the table. The majority of stations didn’t have a lot of personality, because we weren’t really sure what the personality of the format was at that time.” In a few years’ time, all that would change.

Put Yourself In My Shoes

“It was January, and we thought we knew what we were taking to radio. I was out on radio tour

meeting people and playing ‘Straight From The Factory,’ which is what [then-RCA label head] **Joe [Galante]** wanted to go with as our first single out of the gate,” explains Black. “I was sitting in [then-KZLA/Los Angeles PD] **Bob Guerra**’s office playing him the music, and he thought it was pretty good. I loved ‘Straight From The Factory,’ but I did have



I Feel Lucky: Mary Chapin Carpenter (l) and Suzu Bogguss prepare for their role as presenters during the CMA Awards in the early ‘90s.

concerns that the Western Swing feel wouldn’t play everywhere, and I could see that might be the case as I was talking to Bob. At that point, I figured I might as well take a risk, and I pulled out ‘A Better Man’ and played it for him. Bob looked at me and said, ‘That’s different, that’s good and I’d play that out of the box.’

I walked out of there and called Joe and told him we had to change the single. I guess that’s where it all started.” And start, it did. The next month, RCA took “A Better Man” to Country radio with early support from 23 reporting stations; on May 19, “A Better Man” became Black’s first No. 1. “From there, we just had our head down running full steam ahead,” says Black.

In 1989, RCA had been the label of the decade, and Black wasn’t the only act making waves for the imprint. Morgan, who had previously released six singles with modest success, also released a single in February of that year. “Dear Me” became Morgan’s highest-charting single to-date when it reached No. 10 in July. The success came on the heels of personal tragedy, however, as her husband – and labelmate – **Keith Whitley** died May 9 at the age of 34. “It was a year of both highs and incredible lows for me, and of course, the personal things overlapped with the professional,” remembers Morgan. “Keith changed everything – certainly for country music, but on a deeper level, for my children and me. Losing him was an earthquake in my life.” That earthquake caused waves that washed over the country community as a whole. “Thinking about the ‘what ifs’ could go on for years,” says Galante. The loss of his voice opened a gaping hole that no one could fill, but it allowed many the opportunities to try. Realizing the impact Keith made in such a short time with the power of his voice gave hope to these young artists, like Clint, who came in on his heels and helped push everything forward.”

Just one day prior to Whitley’s untimely passing, a press conference was held announcing the launch of Arista Nashville with industry vet **Tim DuBois** serving as VP/GM. Two months later, DuBois unveiled the label’s first five signees, anchored by their own “hat act,” Jackson, and including **Asleep at the Wheel**, **Lee Roy Parnell**, **Pam Tillis** and **Michelle Wright**. Jackson’s first single, “Blue Blooded Woman,” failed to make the desired initial impact at Country radio. “I write and sing about things that are just a part of life, whether it’s hurtin’ songs, cheatin’ songs, drinkin’ songs, lovin’ songs – to me, those things are all part of country music,” says Jackson. “I never thought I’d have a career that lasts more than five years. I couldn’t really see much further than that. When I came here, I wanted to carry on the tradition of real, hard-core country music, and I knew even when things started happening that I wanted to stay that way.” With his second effort, 1990’s “Here In The Real World,” Jackson would find his way into regular rotation on Country airwaves and solidify his place there for many years to come.

While RCA built its roster, **Capitol** sought the opportunity to raise the profile of its artists. Black was off to a running start – on his way to becoming the first

COUNTRY'S BIG BANG

artist to hit No. 1 with each of his first five singles – while Brooks was slower to the line. His debut offering, “Much Too Young (To Feel This Damn Old)” earned a modest start with nine reporting stations coming to the table upon its March 6 release; the single would eventually peak at No. 10 in July. “If I recall correctly – and I do, because I kept the evidence – Garth was just a nice guy in the hallway at CRS in 1989,” says CRB Exec. Dir. **RJ Curtis**, who was serving as **KNIX/Phoenix PD** in 1989. “‘Much Too Young’ was just getting set up, and he hadn’t been around on a complete radio tour yet, so Garth ... not his team, but Garth himself ... stood in the hallways at Opryland Hotel and handed out these pin-back buttons to everyone who would stop and give him the time of day. I wish I knew how many people stopped and took those buttons. I took two. I also wish I knew how many folks didn’t.”

By June, **MCA’s Lionel Cartwright** was releasing his third single to radio. “Give Me His Last Chance” ended its run in September, hitting No. 3 and adding Cartwright to the list of artists cracking the Top 15. “To be among those artists didn’t register then,” says Cartwright. “We were all living and working in the same stratosphere, but we didn’t see each other often. Everyone was on his or her own individual path, and everyone was working hard. Success came in different measures at different times for everyone, but to be able to look back at those years and know that I was part of one of the biggest booms in the history of country music is surreal.”

It was August before **Warner Bros.** unleashed their contribution in the form of a gritty, soulful, mullet-sporting **Travis Tritt**. Unlike Black and Brooks, Tritt was unwilling to be labeled a “hat act,” and the combination of his unique vocal delivery and working-class lyrics sent his first single, “Country Club,” into the Top 15 before Thanksgiving. Carpenter, who released “Never Had It So Good” on **Columbia** as her sixth single in June, also peaked the same week, cracking the Top 10 for the first time in her career. “What made this group of artists unique was that they

honestly occupied completely different lanes,” says then-**WSIX/Nashville** morning personality **Gerry House**. “I sincerely mean it when I say that each of these guys and gals brought their own take to the music, had their own personalities and offered something different than everything else we had going at the time. With Travis, you knew that you were going to get a little bit of attitude, a little bit of that Southern Rock lean mixed with some blues and it was going to be country. With Mary Chapin [Carpenter], you knew she was smarter than you – you just knew that. Her lyrics were smart, and her delivery was smart



Straight From The Factory: Clint Black (r) visits KVET/Austin’s Bob Pickett.

and her brand was something like that of the girl next door who was probably also the school valedictorian.”

Brooks’ labelmate, Bogguss, had been with Capitol for a couple of years at that point, but her first five singles had failed to make a significant impact on the charts. “Radio tour seemed like it went on for years,” says Bogguss. “The label never gave up on me, and neither did radio. I’m not sure artists now get that many chances, but I’m thankful I did.” When her sixth single, “Cross My Broken Heart,” was released in June, it garnered enough traction to crack the Top 15 when it peaked in September. Her greatest successes were yet to come, though. “When my contemporaries started experiencing success, it felt like everything shifted at

radio. There were more slots for airplay, and everything was moving quicker. By the time I released *Aces* in 1991, I felt like I had a strong base of support at radio and the complete backing of my label.”

The Dance

More slots for airplay? Everything moving quicker? Maybe. But, not at first. “We weren’t moving quickly on music,” notes Pickett. “Everything was still heavily gold-based, and I don’t know that anyone was anxious to give up playing **Merle Haggard** and **Earl Thomas Conley** in favor of these young guys coming in, but there came a point when the music was undeniable.” What also became undeniable was the younger audience being drawn to the music and the format as a whole. Country radio benefitted from the identity crisis happening within other formats between 1989 and 1994, namely the rise of the Rap/Hip-Hop influence in CHR/Top 40 music and the transition from the “hair metal” and “glam rock” bands gracing Rock radio to the influx of “grunge” coming out of the Pacific Northwest. “My all-time favorite band is Def Leppard, and I love my hair bands of the ‘80s, so when Nirvana and Pearl Jam came on the scene, I felt displaced on Rock radio,” says **Silverfish Media** Dir./Programming **Jessica “Carsen” Humphreville**. “Then, in 1990, I saw this guy swinging from ropes and lighting shit on fire, and they told me that was country music. I was sold, and I’ve never looked back. The Class of ‘89, and Garth in particular, brought me to this format, and everything that followed has kept me here.”

What followed was an expansion that shifted perspectives for many in the industry. “Country music found its identity, and it was up to Country radio to catch up,” bemuses Curtis. “That’s when you started to hear more talk of switching up playlists and imaging, and suddenly it wasn’t so uncommon to hear a jock do more than just intro or back-sell a song. Personality started to take hold.” House agrees. “I remember when I left Nashville and went to L.A. to do radio in the mid-‘80s. At the time, doing Country radio in Los Angeles was like being a jock on a Classical station in Nashville – nobody cared. ‘What’s with the jokes and the characters?’ was not an unusual question for me to answer. Once the ‘90s hit, though, what I was doing didn’t seem so crazy. I mean, I still seemed crazy – it’s me – but what I was doing, and what I had been doing for years, made sense and fit with the direction everything else was going.”

By *CRS 1990*, The Class of ‘89 was armed with radio hits and album sales. Five of the seven were named to that year’s *CRS New Faces of Country Music Show* – Black and Brooks being the exceptions. “There was a feeling of absolute camaraderie that night backstage,” says Bogguss. “My dog had died earlier that day, and I wasn’t particularly feeling up to performing, but I knew that it was important, and it was an honor to be named to the *New Faces Show*. When I arrived, everyone backstage was so supportive, and while we were all nervous, we also all felt such a sense of pride in what we had already accomplished and a confidence in what we were doing.” While Brooks was not named to the year’s *New Faces* lineup, and Jackson did not qualify, they performed during the same *CRS* luncheon, where Jackson kicked off the show with “Here In The Real World” and Brooks went next with the debut of the soon-to-be-smash, “Friends In Low Places.” Curtis notes, “I’d like to take a moment and remind the world that someone had to follow that performance. And, unfortunately, that someone was a group named **Billy Hill**, who were making their way up the charts at the time with a song called, ‘Too Much Month At The End Of The Money.’ I’d also like to point out that Billy Hill was never heard from again.” That last part is mostly untrue, as some of you may be familiar with former Billy Hill members **Bob DiPiero**, **Dennis Robbins** and **John Scott Sherrill**, all of whom went on to great songwriting success collaboratively and individually.

The slow burn had begun, but Galante explains it wasn’t a white-hot flame just yet. “When I left Nashville and went to work in New York, no one was paying any attention to what had been going on in our city and our format,” he says. “In Nashville, we knew we were selling records. We knew we were having an impact, and we knew the music was connecting. My sales staff was working in overdrive, and units were moving. The sales charts didn’t always reflect what we knew we were doing, though.” The reason was equal parts simple and complex. Until 1991, sales charts were culled from reports given by retail stores, often over the phone. *Billboard* Top 200 and Country Albums charts were tabulated by asking whichever Chad or Jennifer answering the phone at the local Camelot retail location how many albums the store sold that week and of which artists. In a pre-computerized era, human error and bias ruled, and exact sales totals were often difficult to verify. Enter, our Lord and savior, **Soundscan**. May 25, 1991, the *Billboard* 200 and Country album charts officially switch from retail, one-stop and rack sales reports to

The Power Gold Power Shift

From 1990 to 1992, seismic shifts in music affected multiple facets of programming, including the Power Gold category, which saw only four songs – and five total artists – making both the ‘90 and ‘92 lists, bringing the total artist attrition rate to approximately 77%. Clint Black logged five songs in the 1992 Power Gold list with Garth Brooks at four and fellow Class of ‘89 alum Lorrie Morgan with one; Alan Jackson, technically a Class of ‘90 member though signed in ‘89, held on to two spots allowing those four artists to comprise 40% of the 1992 Power Gold list.

1990:

Randy Travis – “Forever And Ever, Amen”
 Dan Seals – “Bop”
 The Judds – “Why Not Me”
 The Judds – “Grandpa (Tell Me ‘Bout The Good Old Days)”
 Kathy Mattea – “Eighteen Wheels And A Dozen Roses”
 Kenny Rogers & Dolly Parton – “Islands In The Stream”
 The Forester Sisters – “I Fell In Love Again Last Night”
 Alabama – “Lady Down On Love”
 Roseanne Cash – “Seven Year Ache”
 Alabama – “Mountain Music”
 The Judds – “Mama He’s Crazy”
 Eddie Rabbitt – “Drivin’ My Life Away”
 Alabama – “When We Make Love”
 Ronnie Milsap – “Lost In The Fifties”
 Ronnie Milsap – “Any Day Now”
 Ronnie Milsap – “I Wouldn’t Have Missed It For The World”
 Restless Heart – “Why Does It Have To Be (Wrong Or Right)”
 Anne Murray – “Could I Have This Dance”
 Alabama – “If You’re Gonna Play In Texas”
 Randy Travis – “On The Other Hand”
 Don Williams – “I Believe In You”
 Randy Travis – “Deeper Than The Holler”
 Highway 101 – “The Bed You Made For Me”
 Eddie Rabbitt & Crystal Gayle – “You And I”
 Juice Newton – “The Sweetest Thing”
 Alabama – “Tennessee River”
 Mel McDaniel – “Louisiana Saturday Night”
 The Gatlin Brothers – “All The Gold In California”
 Willie Nelson – “Always On My Mind”
 Holly Dunn – “Daddy’s Hands”

1992:

Garth Brooks – “Friends In Low Places”
 Clint Black – “Killin’ Time”
 Clint Black – “A Better Man”
 Garth Brooks – “The Dance”
 Randy Travis – “Forever And Ever, Amen”
 The Judds – “Why Not Me”
 Garth Brooks – “If Tomorrow Never Comes”
 Alan Jackson – “Chasin’ That Neon Rainbow”
 Vince Gill – “When I Call Your Name”
 Garth Brooks – “Unanswered Prayers”
 George Strait – “I’ve Come To Expect It From You”
 Dan Seals – “Bop”
 Shenandoah – “The Church On Cumberland Road”
 George Strait – “Love Without End, Amen”
 Clint Black – “Nobody’s Home”
 Kathy Mattea – “Eighteen Wheels And A Dozen Roses”
 Randy Travis – “Deeper Than The Holler”
 Paul Overstreet – “Daddy’s Come Around”
 Clint Black – “Loving Blind”
 Shenandoah – “Next To You, Next To Me”
 Lorrie Morgan – “Five Minutes”
 K.T. Oslin – “Come Next Monday”
 Oak Ridge Boys – “No Matter How High”
 Alan Jackson – “I’d Love You All Over Again”
 Paul Overstreet – “Seein’ My Father In Me”
 Mark Chesnutt – “Brother Jukebox”
 Shenandoah – “Two Dozen Roses”
 Clint Black – “Walkin’ Away”
 Alabama – “Song Of The South”
 The Judds – “I Know Where I’m Going”



“Somehow he makes 70,000 people feel like they’re sitting in the front row.”

Steve Geofferries, **KNIX Phoenix**

“Garth’s record-setting Eugene show helped drive the Bull to our biggest ratings of the year.”

MoJoe Roberts, **KUPL Portland**

“Wanna see an increase in meter activity? Play 3 hours straight of Garth songs after a concert.”

JoJo Turnbeaugh, **KWBL Denver**

GARTH ALWAYS PUTTING COUNTRY RADIO **FIRST**
COMING TO A DIVE BAR OR STADIUM NEAR YOU!

“The DIVE BAR tour created a level of excitement for our station that we’d never seen before.”

Steve Stewart, **WWKA Orlando**

“You can ask any of our listeners, no one moves the needle like Garth Brooks does.”

Brent Michaels, **KUZZ Bakersfield**

“We had the highest number of new app downloads in the station’s history!”

Nancy Wilson, **WHKO Dayton**

KILLIN' TIMELINE

February 1989: RCA releases Clint Black's "A Better Man" and Lorrie Morgan's "Dear Me," which go on to hit No. 1 and No. 10, respectively



March 1-4, 1989: CRS 1989 draws an attendance of approximately 1,100; Capitol's Garth Brooks greets attendees in the hallways of Opryland Hotel while passing out pin-back buttons announcing his upcoming debut single; Alabama's Randy Owen addresses the crowd at CRS championing St. Jude Children's

Research Hospital, and the *Country Cares* initiative launches soon thereafter

March 6, 1989: Capitol releases Garth Brooks' debut single, "Much Too Young (To Feel This Damn Old)," which later peaks at No. 10

May 8, 1989: Arista Nashville launches with a press conference announcing VP/GM Tim DuBois

May 9, 1989: RCA's Keith Whitley passes away at age 34 after releasing two albums and a dozen singles



June 1989: Capitol releases

Suzy Bogguss' sixth career single, "Cross My Broken Heart," which is her first to crack the Top 15. MCA launches



Lionel Cartwright's third career single, "Give Me His Last Chance," which ends its run at No. 3

August 1989: Warner Bros. releases Travis Tritt's first single, "Country Club," which goes on to peak at No. 13

September 1989: Columbia releases Mary Chapin Carpenter's sixth



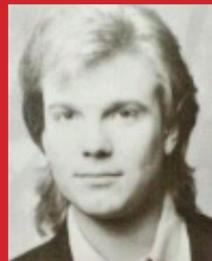
career single, "Never Had It So Good," which tops out at No. 8

October 1989: Alan Jackson's first single, "Blue Blooded Woman," goes for adds; it would peak at No. 44 on Dec. 2, 1989

Feb. 28-March 3, 1990: CRS 1990 draws approximately 1,400 attendees with a theme "Road Map for the 90s." A special luncheon features Alan Jackson, who played "Here In The Real World;" Garth Brooks, who debuted

"Friends In Low Places" to attendees; and Billy Hill, who followed Brooks with a song called "Too Much Month at the End of the Money"

March 3, 1990: *The CRS New Faces*



of *Country Music Show* features Daniele Alexander, Suzy Bogguss, Jann Browne, Mary Chapin Carpenter, Lionel Cartwright, The Kentucky Headhunters, The Lonesome Strangers, Lorrie Morgan, Travis Tritt and Wild Rose

August 31, 1990: Clint Black becomes the first artist to have his first five singles all hit No. 1 when "Nothing's News" hits the top

May 25, 1991: The Billboard 200 and Country album charts officially switch from retail, one-stop and rack sales reports to Soundscan point-of-sale data

September 28, 1991: Garth Brooks' third studio album, *Ropin' The Wind*, debuts at No. 1 on both the Country and Top 200 album charts



becoming the first country artist to do so

January 27, 1992: KYNG/Dallas flips to Country from AC KRSR becoming the first-ever "Young Country" branded station



January 1992-December 1993: Stations nationwide begin flipping formats, bringing on a wave of "Young Country," "New Country," "Wild Country" and other monikers with a handful of markets – including Boston, Kansas City, Minneapolis and Pittsburgh – seeing two stations flip to Country.

Source: R&R archives via AmericanRadioHistory.com

COUNTRY'S BIG BANG

point-of-sale data, which fairly and accurately reported exact sales figures nationwide.

"The results were shockingly positive in favor of country artists," says **KILT/Houston PD Chris Huff**, who began his radio career at **KPLX/Dallas** in 1991. "On the last sample-based chart May 18, 1991, Garth's 'No Fences' was No. 16 with a bullet, hot off five wins at the recent *ACM Awards*. On the first Soundscan-based chart the following week, it moved to No. 4 while his debut self-titled album moved from No. 40 to No. 22. Likewise, Clint's second, and then-current, album, 'Put Yourself In My Shoes,' jumped from No. 50 to No. 38."

The advent of Soundscan and the growing star-power of The Class of '89 were combining to create waves large enough to wash over the globe. "Album sales were good at that time, more country artists were playing arena shows, sponsors became a game-changer and radio was playing both traditionalists and newcomers while several country acts had crossover hits," explains Morgan. "Dolly [Parton] brought even more attention to country by brilliantly expanding into television and movies. Country was just huge." Riding the wave created by The Class of '89 and the addition of Jackson, artists including **Brooks & Dunn**, **Trisha Yearwood**, **Shenandoah**, **Joe Diffie** and **Pam Tillis** were breaking through. "I can't honestly say the country boom of the '90s wouldn't have happened without The Class of '89, but I can say with some degree of confidence that it wouldn't have made radio move as quickly without the push from those core artists," says Curtis. "By the time I went back to KZLA for my second stint as PD, the industry was buzzing with the fact that we had some changes to make."

In a classic case of metrics proving the music, album sales and ticket sales continued to skyrocket for country artists as Country radio tried to figure out what to make of it all. In 1991, the number of artists earning their first Top 15 rose to an all-time high of 19, and each member of The Class of '89 produced a Top 15 hit in 1991 and 1992. Only Bogguss missed Top 15 in 1990. Simultaneously, a cultural shift began, as line dancing caught fire, televised concert specials began popping up and country artists continued to make guest appearances on television and in movies. Fan clubs and merchandise sales reached a fever pitch. "Nashville had always been an interesting destination, and Opryland theme park was still considered a family attraction for summer vacations," notes House. "But, suddenly, tourists were coming to town to learn to line dance and try to get on television at the Wild Horse. At one time or another, I think every artist had their own gift shop or mini-museum in town. The Nashville Network was on cable television, and we were all the rage." It was time for radio to capitalize on the expanded audience, national exposure and global marketplace country artists were creating.

Country Club

January 27, 1992, AC KRSR/Dallas flipped to Country as **KYNG** and launched the first "Young Country" branded station. "It was about attitude, delivery and image," says Huff. "Dallas went from having three CHR stations in 1988 to having three Country stations in 1992. Once the 'Young Country'

stations started sweeping the nation, the old-line Country stations couldn't drop the old stuff fast enough. It was like whiplash; you didn't want to be caught playing some old George Jones record when the station across the street was playing Clint, Garth, Reba or Brooks & Dunn."

From 1992 through 1994, the surge of stations flipping into the format and rebranding continued, with **WYCD/Detroit**, **KYCY/San Francisco** and **KYCW/Seattle** leading the "Young Country" troop. A handful of markets, including Boston, Kansas City, Minneapolis and Pittsburgh saw two stations flip to Country, including notable moves by **KNCI/Sacramento**; **KKCJ/Kansas City**; **WBCT/Grand Rapids, MI**; **KATM/Modesto, CA**; **KKBQ/Houston**; **WCFB/Orlando**; **KJJO/Minneapolis** and **WYGY/Cincinnati** in 1992 alone.

"Once the 'Young Country' brand took off, it was a tidal wave," says Pickett. "More jock chatter, more personality, edgier imaging and attitude." But, it wasn't just the delivery that was changing. With the addition of "Young Country," "New Country" and "Wild Country" stations came a push to flip the amount of gold titles being held in libraries. "At KPLX in 1992, we had a gold catalog of around 800 titles," notes Huff. "By 1994, we were current-based with 60 or 70 currents in the library, and we were only playing one or two gold titles per hour." As that programming philosophy took hold the seismic shifts were evident in *R&R's* year-end



I'm Gonna Be Somebody: Travis Tritt (l) and KPLX/Dallas' Chris Huff backstage before a show.

Power Gold reporting. From 1990 to 1992, the move to embrace newer artists and their music led to only four songs – and five total artists – making both the 1990 and 1992 lists, bringing the total artist attrition rate to approximately 77% (see sidebar). "The biggest difference wasn't just that there was an exciting bunch of new artists, but that they practically wiped the format's slate clean in a matter of a few short years," Huff states.

A new golden age was written upon those newly cleaned slates, and throughout much of the '90s, country music and Country radio continued to experience quantifiable growth. "Ultimately, it does come down to the music – it all starts with a song," Morgan declares. "Good music lasts. Things are always changing, but it's gratifying to have been part of that window of time when our music was so wide and deep." Beyond the music, The Class of '89 have created lasting brands, long before doing so was a requirement for music industry success. "I don't think we thought about it at the time – in fact, I'm certain we didn't – but creating a brand was real," says House.

"Before the internet and social media and everyone sticking their phone in their face all day, you had to know who an artist was when you heard them. Maybe it was something in their voice, or a style of production or something in the way they wrote or delivered a lyric. But, you had to know, and you had to connect to them. This group did that, on their own terms, and you can tell still."

The Class of '89 is still making music and touring on various scales. Brooks now holds the record for best-selling solo artist of all time and continues to pack arenas and stadiums, while Black only recently surrendered his singles throne to **Luke Combs**, who has taken his first seven singles to No. 1. Black also spent 2019 on the road celebrating the 30th anniversary of his debut album while releasing new music incorporating some of today's hitmakers on a song entitled "This Old House" – an ode to The Grand Ole Opry House. "It feels like nothing short of remarkable, all that I've accomplished, everything I've seen and done in 30 years," says Black. "I didn't always feel like a member of the community back then, but looking at the legacy now – wow! There's no doubt what we did out there changed things."

Morgan is still making new music and often tours with Tillis. Bogguss has also remained close to fellow female artists from the era. "It's not uncommon for me to get together with **Terri Clark**, **Matraca Berg**, **Kathy Mattea** and some of the other girls to have lunch or to sit around and pick," she explains. "There's a sorority of sorts among us all, and I hope there always will be. I hope that other artists coming up right now have that same sense of community with their peers; it's irreplaceable and invaluable." Cartwright went on to compose themes for television series, has launched a podcast and became a worship pastor at a Nashville-area church. Carpenter tours regularly as well, uniting with folk artist Shawn Colvin this coming summer for a national tour. Tritt also continues to draw crowds and has embraced the resurgence of '90s country and the accompanying nostalgia by joining **Dierks Bentley's Hot Country Knights** for a single at radio now, "Pick Her Up."

The renewed interest in '90s country music has reflected in ratings for stations now considered Classic Country. Additionally, the influence on current artists, including the aforementioned Combs, has not gone unnoticed by both programmers and the artists themselves. "It was last year at the *Country Cares For St. Jude Seminar* when **Michael Ray** came up to me and told me how much he appreciated my music," recalls Black. "Seeing younger artists embrace the work we did and cite it as an influence or an inspiration has been eye-opening." Today's arena headliners frequently take the stage donning vintage tees emblazoned with the faces of those in The Class of '89, and college students who weren't born when the songs charted still raise a red solo cup to tunes from the era. A quick check of Country radio playlists shows many titles made famous by The Class of '89 are still testing in gold libraries. Programmers, radio personalities and industry executives enjoying career longevity and continued success today often draw straight lines to The Class of '89, and the genre as a whole would be hard-pressed to find a portion of itself that doesn't directly link back to that era and all it has affected in the past 30 years. And to think, it all started with a big bang.

CAC



COUNTRY'S WINNING COMBO

DAY & NIGHT

premiere
NETWORKS

For more information, contact
Affiliates@PremiereNetworks.com



AFTER MIDNITE 
WITH CODY ALAN

MCGRAW HERE ON EARTH TOUR

WITH SPECIAL GUESTS:

MIDLAND & INGRID ANDRESS

7/10/20 SYRACUSE, NY	7/31/20 BURGETTSTOWN, PA	8/27/20 SALT LAKE CITY, UT
7/11/20 HARTFORD, CT	8/01/20 HOLMDEL, NJ	8/28/20 BOISE, ID
7/12/20 WILKES-BARRE, PA	8/06/20 AUSTIN, TX	8/29/20 PORTLAND, OR
7/16/20 RALEIGH, NC	8/07/20 HOUSTON, TX	9/04/20 LOS ANGELES, CA
7/17/20 CHARLOTTE, NC	8/08/20 DALLAS, TX	9/12/20 PHILADELPHIA, PA
7/18/20 BRISTOW, VA	8/13/20 ALBUQUERQUE, NM	9/17/20 TUSCALOOSA, AL
7/23/20 CINCINNATI, OH	8/14/20 PHOENIX, AZ	9/18/20 ATLANTA, GA
7/24/20 CUYAHOGA FALLS, OH	8/15/20 SAN DIEGO, CA	9/24/20 ST. LOUIS, MO
7/25/20 TORONTO, ON	8/21/20 MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA	9/25/20 INDIANAPOLIS, IN
7/30/20 CANANDAIGUA, NY	8/22/20 SACRAMENTO, CA	9/26/20 CHICAGO, IL

#HEREONEARTH TIMMCGRAW.COM

SEPTEMBER 4TH
SOFI STADIUM
Los Angeles

SEPTEMBER 12TH
CITIZENS PARK
Philadelphia

9.4 9.12 2020

TIM
MCGRAW
AND
LUKE
COMBS



2020 CRS/Country Aircheck Awards

1 MAJOR MARKET STATION

KEEY/Minneapolis
KSON/San Diego
KYGO/Denver
WKLB/Boston
WUBL/Atlanta

2 LARGE MARKET STATION

KBEQ/Kansas City
KWNR/Las Vegas
WDSY/Pittsburgh
WMIL/Milwaukee
WWKA/Orlando

3 MEDIUM MARKET STATION

KUZZ/Bakersfield
WBCT/Grand Rapids
WCKN/Charleston
WSSL/Greenville, SC
WWQM/Madison

4 SMALL MARKET STATION

KRYS/Corpus Christi, TX
WBYT/South Bend, IN
WKSF/Asheville, NC
WKSJ/Mobile, AL
WYCT/Pensacola

5 PLATINUM LABEL

Big Loud
Broken Bow
Capitol
Columbia
Valory

6 GOLD LABEL

Arista
Black River
EMI Nashville
MCA
Triple Tigers

7 MAJOR MARKET OM/PD

Kevin Callahan, KSON/San Diego,
KFRG/Riverside
Steve Geofferles, KNIX/Phoenix
Tim Roberts, WYCD/Detroit
Meg Stevens, WUBL/Atlanta
Gregg Swedberg, KEEY/Minneapolis

8 LARGE MARKET OM/PD

Carletta Blake, WGAR/Cleveland
Bruce Logan, WIRK/West Palm Beach
Travis Moon, KUBL/Salt Lake City
Todd Nixon, KBEQ/Kansas City
Kerry Wolfe, WMIL/Milwaukee

9 MEDIUM MARKET OM/PD

Justin Cole, WUSY/Chattanooga
Katie Kruz, WMAD/Madison
Crystal Legends, WRNS/Greenville, NC
Brent Michaels, KUZZ/Bakersfield
Hoss Michaels, KXKT/Omaha

10 SMALL MARKET OM/PD (tie)

Dave Ashcraft, KKIX/Fayetteville, AR
Pepper Daniels, KKJG/San Luis
Obispo, CA
Frank Edwards, KRYS/Corpus Christi, TX
Brent Lane, WYCT/Pensacola, FL
Ashley Main, KRWQ/Medford, OR
Nikki Thomas, WXBQ/Johnson City, TN

11 MAJOR MARKET MD

Marci Braun, WUSN/Chicago
Christi Brooks, KKBO/Houston
Holly Hutton, WYCD/Detroit
Greg Raneiri, KSON/San Diego
Robin "Heather Froglear" Ward,
KFRG/Riverside

12 LARGE MARKET MD

Heather Davis, WQDR/Raleigh
Ryan McKiddy, WSIX/Nashville
Quinn, WMIL/Milwaukee
Ashley Stegbauer, WWKA/Orlando
Wookie, WDSY/Pittsburgh

13 MEDIUM MARKET MD

Marty Brooks, WLFM/Memphis
Tim Cotter, KXLY/Spokane
Kay Manley, WGKX/Memphis
Jon Shannon, WPOR/Portland, ME
Chelsey Steinhauer, WMAD/Madison

14 SMALL MARKET MD

Carol Hughes, KFDI/Wichita, KS
Charli McKenzie, WNCY/Appleton, WI
Chris O'Kelley, WKXC/Augusta, GA
Rachel Rodes, WSLC/Roanoke, VA
Jessica Tyler, WOKQ/Portsmouth, NH

15 SVP-VP/NATIONAL PROMOTION

Katie Dean, MCA
Shelley Hargis Gaines, Broken Bow
Kris Lamb, Big Machine
Royce Risser, UMG/Nashville
Kristen Williams, WMN

16 DIRECTOR/NATIONAL PROMOTION

Raffaella Braun, Triple Tigers
Anna Cage, WMN
Michelle Kammerer, BMLG Records
Erik Powell, Big Machine
Lauren Thomas, Sony

17 MAJOR MARKET MM/GM

Joe Bell, WXTU/Philadelphia
Lisa Decker, KUPL/Portland
Sarah Frazier, KILT/Houston
Debbie Kenyon, WYCD/Detroit
Jeff Tyler, KEEY/Minneapolis

18 LARGE MARKET MM/GM

Glynn Alan, KWNR/Las Vegas
Dave Alpert, WDAF/Kansas City
Nate Deaton, KRTY/San Jose
Dan Endom, WSIX/Nashville
Elizabeth Hamma, WIRK/West Palm Beach

19 MEDIUM MARKET MM/GM

Morgan Bohannon, WGKX/Memphis
Tony Denton, WRNS/Greenville, NC
Nichole Hartman, WUSY/Chattanooga
Mel Owens, KUZZ/Bakersfield
Ray Quinn, WDXB/Birmingham

20 SMALL MARKET MM/GM

Jeanne Smith, WLLR/Quad Cities, IL
Janelle Moffett, KTTS/Springfield, MO
Mary Hoxeng, WYCT/Pensacola, FL
Stephanie Michel, WBYT/South Bend, IN
Aaron Wilborn, WUBB/Savannah, GA

21 MAJOR MARKET

PERSONALITY/SHOW
B-Dub & Chelsea, KWBL/Denver
John & Tammy, KSON/San Diego
Lisa Dent, WEBG/Chicago
Double-L, KNIX/Phoenix
Rob & Holly, WYCD/Detroit

22 LARGE MARKET

PERSONALITY/SHOW
Big D, KWNR/Las Vegas
Codie Allen, WDAF/Kansas City
Stoney Richards, WDSY/Pittsburgh
Tim Leary & Chelsea Taylor,
WIRK/West Palm Beach
Tyler Reese, WKDF/Nashville

23 MEDIUM MARKET

PERSONALITY/SHOW
Aaron Michael, WSSL/Greenville
Brent Michaels, KUZZ/Bakersfield
Cowboy Kyle, WUSY/Chattanooga
Mo & Styckman, WUSY/Chattanooga
Nancy & Newman, WRBT/Harrisburg

24 SMALL MARKET

PERSONALITY/SHOW
Brent & Candy, WYCT/Pensacola, FL
Carol Hughes, KFDI/Wichita, KS
Eddie Foxx, WKSF/Asheville, NC
Phillip Gibbons, WGSQ/Cookeville, TN
Shotgun & Charli, WNCY/Appleton, WI

25 NATIONAL/SYNDICATED

PERSONALITY/SHOW
Big D & Bubba
Bobby Bones Show
Country Countdown USA, Lon Helton
Bob Kingsley's Country Top 40
Nash Nights Live with Elaina

26 REGIONAL

PROMOTION
Brooke Diaz, Big Machine
Lou Ramirez, WMN
Shari Roth, WEA
Tom Starr, WAR
Tyler Waugh, Big Loud

27 INDEPENDENT PROMOTION

TEAM OR EXECUTIVE
In2une
New Revolution
Nine North
Richey Promotions
Jody Van Alin

28 NEW FACE OF

COUNTRY MUSIC
Chuck "DZL" Thompson, WKKT/Charlotte
Rich Bailey, WIVK/Knoxville
Joey Tack, KNCL/Sacramento
Joey Brooks, WWYZ/Hartford
Dena Fletcher, KVOO/Tulsa

WE ARE ALL COUNTRY



TO OUR PROGRAMMERS, THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR LINE-UP OF COUNTRY PROGRAMMING @ COMPASSMEDIANETWORKS.COM. FOR AFFILIATE INFO, CALL (914) 600-5099

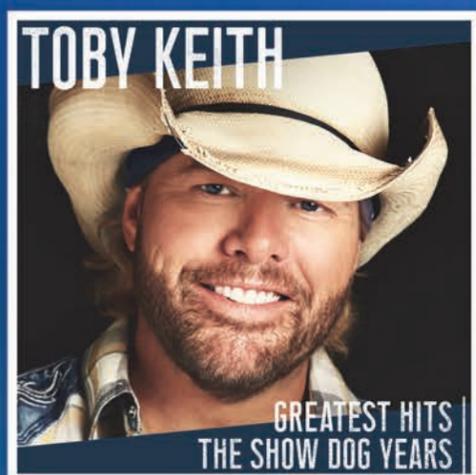
2020

SHOW DOG NASHVILLE

XV

CELEBRATING 15 YEARS OF COUNTRY MUSIC!

- **12 #1 SINGLES**
- **28 TOP 5 SINGLES**
- **22 MILLION UNITS SOLD BY ARTISTS INCLUDING TOBY KEITH, TRACE ADKINS, JOE NICHOLS & RANDY HOUSER**
- **HALL OF FAME SONGWRITER, TOBY KEITH, HAS OVER 95 MILLION BMI PERFORMANCES ON COMMERCIAL RADIO STATIONS WORLDWIDE**
- **TOBY'S EXTENSIVE HIT CATALOG HAS NOW SURPASSED 10 BILLION STREAMS, ONE OF THE TOP PLAYED ARTISTS OF THE CENTURY AND TOP 10 FOR THE LAST DECADE!**



TOBY KEITH



KRYSTAL KEITH



WATERLOO REVIVAL



welcome to crs 2020



new music on **omni channel 5**

homecoming queen?

over **80 million** domestic on-demand streams
certified gold

new album, **kelsea**, available **march 20**

thank you country radio
for **5 #1 singles** and over **2 billion** streams

BLACK RIVER
RECORDS

MUSIC DECISION SURVEY

Corporate Mandate On The Rise



Intangibles like artist stature and gut feeling continue to rule, while the rise of local research saw mixed returns – but it is the fast-growing influence of the corporate mandate that jumps out of data collected during the fourth annual **Country Aircheck/Stone Door Media Lab Music Decision Survey**. Conducted between late November and mid-December 2019, the study drew responses from more than 70 participating PDs/MDs representing a cross-section of ownership groups and stand-alone stations that report to Country Aircheck/Mediabase. [Ed. Note: The data do not take into account how iHeartMedia's January 2020 programming cuts may have affected decision making.]

In prior years, the notion of a corporate mandate had not been cited as authoritatively as one would expect. From surveys in both 2017 and 2018, only an average of 64% of programmers whose companies have mandates acknowledged their significance on new adds. But in this new report, more than 74% of respondents who have mandates said they were “very likely” to shape their decisions on new adds, far more than any other factor. That figure is up sharply from 56% in 2018. Moreover, nearly 81% who have mandates said they were “very or somewhat likely” to influence new adds – a record high – and 63% said they were “very or somewhat likely” to influence spin increases, too, up from 55% a year ago.

The strength of the executive directive in 2019 cast a wide shadow over last year's focus on local issues. While they remained valuable, local streaming data, email/online music test polls and input from station staff/local listener groups all declined in influence, though local sales remained vital.

The power of the mandate regarding new adds is even stronger among respondents from Country radio's four largest station groups (by revenue). While they represented 55% of total respondents, 79% of stations reporting mandates came from the largest

groups. About 86% of them said they were “very likely” to make adds based on a corporate mandate. Among other respondents, only 31% have mandates, and just 30% of those were “very likely” to make adds based on them.

The mandate is not entirely iron-clad, however, as 44% of PDs/MDs among the largest groups said they strongly agreed they still have complete individual control over their music decisions compared with 57% of all respondents. And 83% of total respondents strongly or at least somewhat agreed they are the sole decision makers (see separate Sentiment Survey story).

AYE, AYE, CAPTAIN

In what form does this corporate influence present itself? The survey found a steadily increasing level of influence from Format Captains and Corporate PDs, cited by nearly 58% of survey participants as “very likely” or “somewhat likely,” to shape decisions on new adds. And nearly a quarter of PDs/MDs said these leaders were “very likely” to be a factor. Both responses were the highest percentages over the three years this question has been asked.

However, centralized oversight apparently does not extend from station consultants, whose influence on new adds decreased from 28%-16% and from 28%-19% on spin increases; both are their lowest to date. Among the factors with the highest percentages of being “very unlikely” influences on adds and spin increases, consultants again ranked No. 1 on both, with 42% and 43%, respectively, saying consultants are “very unlikely” to shape those music decisions. These findings may illustrate how corporate mandates, Format Captains and Corporate PDs appear to be gradually displacing consultants regarding new music matters.

TOP FACTORS INFLUENCING NEW ADDS

“Very likely” (VL) or “somewhat likely” influence

2016	2017	2018	2019		ADDS 2016	ADDS 2017	ADDS 2018	ADDS 2019	VL Pct.
1	2	1	1	Artist stature/reputation	95.9%	90.2%	94.9%	88.7%	32.4%
2	1	2	2	Gut feeling	90.5%	96.7%	88.8%	87.3%	39.0%
...	...	5	3	Local sales	...	...	81.0%	81.2%	33.3%
...	8	11	4	^Corporate mandate	...	68.6%	60.6%	80.9%	74.5%
6	7	3	5	^Local callout	68.5%	69.6%	86.0%	80.9%	66.0%
3	3	4	6	Playlist fit (tempo, sound, etc.)	75.4%	88.0%	82.5%	77.1%	50.0%
...	...	13	7	†Upcoming/recent concert	...	...	58.2%	70.0%	8.6%
4	9	6	8	Artist free show for station	71.7%	68.5%	75.0%	67.1%	38.6%
...	5	7	9	Local streaming data	...	76.1%	72.2%	65.2%	24.6%
...	...	8	10	Email/online music test poll	...	...	70.5%	61.2%	22.5%
8	11	16	11	‡Artist/label relationship	63.8%	60.9%	54.8%	60.6%	5.6%
...	...	10	12	Input from staff/listener group	...	...	62.0%	60.6%	9.9%
5	4	9	13	Prior single's success/lack of	70.7%	80.4%	63.3%	60.0%	10.0%
9	10	12	14	Nat'l airplay growth/position	51.4%	64.7%	60.3%	58.6%	10.0%
...	20	14	15	^Format Captain/Corporate PD	...	34.2%	55.6%	57.5%	23.4%
11	16	15	16	^National callout	48.0%	39.1%	55.2%	47.2%	13.2%
...	...	...	17	Consumption per spin	...	...	...	44.9%	8.7%
10	12	22	18	Specific non-local radio airplay	49.3%	48.9%	31.7%	40.0%	7.1%
...	...	17	19	National sales	...	...	38.5%	36.2%	2.9%
...	13	19	20	National streaming data	...	43.5%	34.6%	30.4%	0.0%
...	...	23	21	Airplay (or not) at competitor	...	...	30.4%	28.6%	2.9%
7	7	31	22	Word-of-mouth from PDs	64.0%	69.6%	26.3%	28.2%	1.4%
19	23	21	23	Streaming data: Spotify	31.1%	27.2%	32.1%	26.8%	2.8%
20	26	35	24	Streaming data: YouTube	20.3%	20.7%	19.5%	26.8%	2.8%
13	17	20	25	*Persuasion of reg./nat'l rep	37.0%	38.1%	33.3%	23.9%	0.0%
21	18	25	26	Most Added data/rank	20.0%	37.0%	29.1%	22.9%	1.4%
16t	14	30	27	Shazam data	32.0%	42.4%	26.7%	22.4%	4.5%
14	15	32	28	Listener requests	34.1%	40.2%	22.2%	21.7%	1.5%
15	22	18	29	Recent/upcoming artist visit	33.8%	29.3%	35.0%	20.0%	1.4%
12	19	24	30	Label reputation	37.9%	34.8%	30.0%	19.7%	1.4%
22	25	28	31	Streaming data: Apple	19.5%	21.7%	28.2%	19.7%	1.4%
16t	27	29	32	Social media data	32.0%	20.7%	26.9%	18.3%	4.2%
24	28	34	33	Streaming data: Pandora	13.6%	14.1%	19.5%	17.1%	1.4%
...	24	27	34	^Consultant input	...	23.5%	28.4%	16.3%	7.0%
23	29	33	35	Concert tix/meet-and-greets	17.6%	14.1%	21.3%	15.7%	0.0%
18	21	26	36	Mscore data	31.6%	29.7%	28.9%	13.0%	2.9%
...	...	36	37	Pandora “Thumbs Up” data	...	...	17.9%	9.9%	2.8%

Green = 6% or more positive change

Red = 6% or more negative change

Black = less than 6% positive or negative change

^ = where relevant to station or where station has access to it * = combined average (previously listed individually as local/regional and national)

† = combined average (previously listed individually as upcoming and recent) ‡ = combined average (previously listed individually as artist and label)

TOP FACTORS INFLUENCING SPIN INCREASES

"Very likely" (VL) or "somewhat likely" influence

2016	2017	2018	2019		SPINS 2016	SPINS 2017	SPINS 2018	SPINS 2019	VL Pct.
1	1	1	1	^Local callout	90.8%	87.0%	96.5%	95.8%	79.2%
...	...	5	2	Email/online music test poll	...	...	71.7%	79.6%	36.7%
...	...	2	3	Local sales	...	...	84.6%	78.3%	31.9%
3	3	4	4	Playlist fit (tempo, sound, etc.)	78.7%	81.5%	74.7%	65.7%	24.3%
5	6	6	5	Artist free show for station	61.3%	63.0%	70.0%	64.3%	22.9%
...	8	10	6	^Corporate mandate	...	58.5%	55.4%	63.0%	50.0%
...	5	3	7	Local streaming data	...	68.5%	77.2%	62.3%	23.2%
7	9	11	8	Nat'l airplay growth/position	54.4%	56.1%	53.6%	60.0%	8.6%
...	...	...	9	Consumption per spin	...	...	...	59.4%	11.6%
...	...	12	10	†Upcoming/recent concert	...	...	52.5%	58.0%	4.4%
2	2	9	11t	Gut feeling	79.7%	82.6%	60.0%	54.9%	15.5%
4	4	8	11t	Artist stature/reputation	74.7%	69.6%	60.0%	54.9%	11.3%
...	16	13	13	^Format Captain/Corporate PD	...	38.0%	51.4%	52.2%	21.7%
8	12	7	14	^National callout	53.3%	42.4%	60.3%	47.2%	13.2%
...	...	14	15	Input from staff/listener groups	...	...	46.8%	44.3%	11.4%
10	11	16	16	‡Artist/label relationship	46.4%	47.3%	36.9%	36.6%	2.8%
...	...	15	17	National sales	...	...	40.3%	34.8%	2.9%
12	13	19	18	Specific non-local radio airplay	44.0%	40.2%	30.4%	34.3%	8.6%
9	7	21	19	Prior single's success/lack of	50.0%	63.0%	29.1%	31.4%	5.7%
...	17	18	20	National streaming data	...	37.0%	32.9%	27.5%	0.0%
13	15	17	21	Mscore data	30.7%	38.7%	35.6%	24.6%	5.8%
...	...	23	22	Airplay (or not) at competitor	...	...	26.6%	24.6%	2.9%
11	14	26	23	Listener requests	44.4%	39.1%	24.4%	23.2%	1.5%
16	22	20	24	Streaming data: Spotify	27.0%	25.0%	29.5%	22.5%	4.2%
6	10	24	25	Word-of-mouth from PDs	54.7%	54.3%	25.0%	22.5%	2.8%
15	18	25	26	Shazam data	27.4%	35.9%	24.4%	22.1%	4.4%
...	21	22	27	^Consultant input	...	25.9%	28.4%	19.1%	7.1%
21	24t	36	28	Streaming data: YouTube	17.6%	18.5%	11.7%	18.6%	2.9%
19	24t	27	29	Recent/upcoming artist visit	20.6%	18.5%	22.5%	15.7%	0.0%
22	24t	28	30	Streaming data: Apple	16.7%	18.5%	21.8%	15.5%	2.8%
14	19t	31	31	*Persuasion of reg./nat'l rep	29.1%	30.4%	18.2%	14.3%	0.0%
23	28t	33	32	Streaming data: Pandora	12.2%	15.2%	14.1%	14.1%	1.4%
20	28t	30	33	Concert tix/meet-and-greets	18.9%	15.2%	18.8%	13.0%	0.0%
17	27	29	34	Social media data	25.3%	17.4%	19.5%	12.7%	4.2%
18	19t	34	35	Label reputation	24.0%	30.4%	13.8%	11.4%	0.0%
...	...	35	36	Pandora "Thumbs Up" data	...	...	13.0%	8.6%	2.9%
24	23	32	37	Most Added data/rank	9.3%	21.7%	17.9%	8.6%	1.4%

TOP 10 "VERY LIKELY" FACTORS ON NEW ADDS

"Very likely" as influence

2017	2018	2019		2016	2017	2018	2019
2	2	1	^Corporate mandate	...	58.8%	56.1%	74.5%
1	1	2	^Local callout	55.3%	58.9%	73.7%	66.0%
4	3	3	Playlist fit (tempo, sound, etc.)	38.7%	45.7%	48.8%	50.0%
3	8	4	Gut feeling	50.0%	47.8%	32.5%	39.0%
8	4	5	Artist free show for station	25.7%	20.9%	42.5%	38.6%
...	7	6	Local sales	...	...	34.2%	33.3%
5	5	7	Artist stature/reputation	37.8%	41.3%	38.0%	32.4%
6	10	8	Local streaming data	...	29.7%	27.9%	24.6%
10	11	9	^Format captain/corporate PD	...	10.1%	19.4%	23.4%
...	6	10	Email/online music test poll	...	...	34.4%	22.5%

TOP 10 "VERY LIKELY" FACTORS ON SPIN INCREASES

"Very likely" as influence

2017	2018	2019		2016	2017	2018	2019
1	1	1	^Local callout	80.3%	79.8%	91.2%	79.2%
2	2	2	^Corporate mandate	...	49.1%	44.6%	50.0%
...	3	3	Email/online music test poll	...	...	35.0%	36.7%
...	5	4	Local sales	...	...	28.2%	31.9%
3	4	5	Playlist fit (tempo, sound, etc.)	30.7%	42.4%	30.4%	24.3%
5	6	6	Local streaming data	...	29.4%	26.6%	23.2%
7	7	7	Artist free show for station	22.7%	25.0%	26.3%	22.9%
13	9	8	^Format Captain/Corporate PD	...	8.9%	17.1%	21.7%
4	14	9	Gut feeling	...	35.9%	8.8%	15.5%
10	8	10	^National callout	10.7%	13.0%	19.0%	13.2%

Green = 6% or more positive change

Red = 6% or more negative change

Black = less than 6% positive or negative change

^ = where relevant to station or where station has access to it * = combined average (previously listed individually as local/regional and national)

† = combined average (previously listed individually as upcoming and recent) ‡ = combined average (previously listed individually as artist and label)

BIG MACHINE

L A B E L G R O U P

THE INDEPENDENT RECORD COMPANY OF THE DECADE



**THE ONLY RECORD LABEL IN THE WORLD
to have one artist sell more than
1 MILLION UNITS FIRST WEEK IN THE U.S.
FOUR CONSECUTIVE TIMES**

- 2010 Taylor Swift *Speak Now* 1.047 Million
- 2012 Taylor Swift *RED* 1.208 Million
- 2014 Taylor Swift *1989* 1.287 Million
- 2017 Taylor Swift *Reputation* 1.216 Million

BMLG EARNED **102 #1** AIRPLAY SINGLES

Across Billboard & Mediabase in Country, Pop, Active Rock, Classic Rock, Hot AC & AC, AAA

#1 SINGLES BY

A Thousand Horses

Badflower

Brantley Gilbert

Brett Young

Carly Pearce

Cassadee Pope

Cheap Trick

Eli Young Band

Florida Georgia Line

Justin Moore

Maddie & Tae

Midland

Rascal Flatts

Reba McEntire

Riley Green

Taylor Swift

The Band Perry

The Mavericks

Thomas Rhett

Tim McGraw

Zac Brown Band

66 BILLION AUDIO STREAMS

308 MILLION DIGITAL SINGLES

156 MILLION ALBUMS

23 BILLION VIDEO STREAMS



**EARLY
BELIEVERS**

STEPHANIE QUAYLE

KATM
KCCY
KHGE
KJKE
KNUC
KPLM
KRTY
KSOP
KTEX
KTOM
KUPL
KWBL
KXLY
KZSN
WAMZ
WCOL
WCTQ
WDAF
W1HC
WGH
WGNE
WJVC
WKLB
WNOE
WOGI
WPAW
WPOR
WSOC
WTHT
WTQR



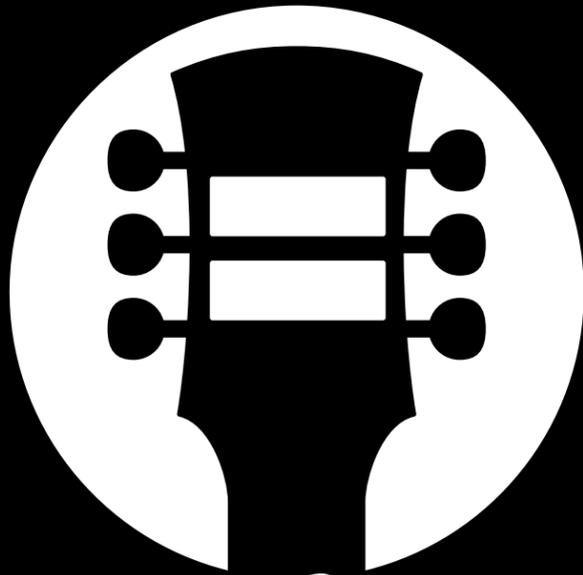
WHATCHA DRINKIN 'BOU *IMPACTING NOW*

RANKS **TOP 10** IN CURRENT FEMALE AIRPLAY IN LAST TWO YEARS

OVER **18.5 MILLION** AUDIENCE IMPRESSIONS WITH CURRENT SINGLE

OVER **45 MILLION** AUDIENCE IMPRESSIONS WITH LAST THREE SINGLES

**REBEL
ENGINE**



Equal Play



**JOIN US IN THE
EQUAL PLAY
REVOLUTION**



RADIO LIVE
WITH **CODY ALAN**

**WE'RE PLAYING 50% WOMEN.
50% MEN. 100% COUNTRY.
WEEKNIGHTS 7PM-MIDNIGHT**

premiere
NETWORKS

For Affiliate Relations, contact Jenny Shields: 615.664.2420

SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

For the first time, the **Country Aircheck/Stone Door Media Lab** survey asked PDs and MDs perceptual questions about their employment, music matters, new technologies and chart methodology.

Programming Issues

I have complete personal authority over the music I add or the spins I assign.

Strongly agree	57.1%
Somewhat agree	25.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	7.1%
Somewhat disagree	7.1%
Strongly disagree	2.9%

Respondents who have corporate mandates were considerably less likely to agree strongly (43%) than were total respondents (57%). About 87% of those working for the largest radio groups were very likely to add new music based on corporate mandates, compared to 71% of PDs/MDs of all stations that have mandates.

I have no problem playing singles by pop or hip-hop artists with country artists as their duet or "featuring" partners.

Strongly agree	20.0%
Somewhat agree	20.0%
Neither agree nor disagree	17.1%
Somewhat disagree	24.3%
Strongly disagree	18.6%

Although nearly equally divided on this issue, PDs/MDs are perhaps more open-minded than one might expect.

I will play a single I know is not a hit to help achieve the label/artist goal or to maintain that relationship.

Strongly agree	0.0%
Somewhat agree	28.6%
Neither agree nor disagree	21.4%
Somewhat disagree	34.3%
Strongly disagree	15.7%

Of those who generally agree with this statement, 75% are positively influenced by their artist/label relationship. Among the 61% of respondents who said they are "very or somewhat likely" to be influenced by their artist/label relationships, their degree of support was a bit higher (35%) on singles not believed to have hit potential.

I envision increasing the ratio of gold and recurrent singles on my station in 2020.

Strongly agree	10.0%
Somewhat agree	30.0%
Neither agree nor disagree	44.3%
Somewhat disagree	7.1%
Strongly disagree	8.6%

The responses don't overtly indicate concern about the quality of new music, but achieving spins on new music is likely to be more competitive this year.

I believe an album track getting millions of spins will be a hit for my audience but am inclined to wait until the official push begins before adding it.

Strongly agree	10.0%
Somewhat agree	18.6%
Neither agree nor disagree	31.4%
Somewhat disagree	24.3%
Strongly disagree	15.7%

PDs/MDs are clearly not all entirely in lock step with label timing, but nearly 30% are fairly collaborative.

I know some artists don't generate a lot of streams and therefore discount that factor.

Strongly agree	5.7%
Somewhat agree	21.4%
Neither agree nor disagree	40.0%
Somewhat disagree	27.1%
Strongly disagree	5.7%

An even split within the margin of error. To illustrate the large streaming differences among certain Country artists, Country singles reaching No. 1 in 2019 varied widely from 1.8 million to 12.4 million streams per week. And Country airplay singles ranking at No. 50 in 2019 ranged from 18,600 streams per week to 4.9 million ... just two weeks apart! Age matters, as from mid-2015 to November 2019, established No. 1 artists between 26-30 years old generated an average 2,410 streams per spin in their second chart week, compared to just 668 for artists aged 36 or older.

In the past year, I have added or increased spins by a female artist in response to criticism of Country radio.

Strongly agree	4.3%
Somewhat agree	8.6%
Neither agree nor disagree	14.3%
Somewhat disagree	21.4%
Strongly disagree	51.4%

Fewer than one in eight PDs/MDs responded affirmatively, making this the most lopsided of all 18 questions in the survey. Country programmers definitively did not see the need to adjust playlists in response to negative media reports on this subject.

Chart Issues

I believe an "add" should require a set number of spins per week.

Strongly agree	51.4%
Somewhat agree	15.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	5.7%
Somewhat disagree	11.4%
Strongly disagree	15.7%

A higher proportion of PDs/MDs strongly agree with this statement than on most other issues asked. Of the two-thirds who generally agree, 79% strongly/somewhat agree the chart should be weighted in all dayparts. And 55% strongly/somewhat agree the chart should include only daytime spins. Billboard's methodology, powered by BDS, gives an auto-add to singles receiving seven or more spins per week, regardless of daypart. At Mediabase, stations have discretion to declare an add at any spin level.

A national airplay chart should be weighted by audience in all dayparts.

Strongly agree	35.7%
Somewhat agree	30.0%
Neither agree nor disagree	18.6%
Somewhat disagree	10.0%
Strongly disagree	5.7%

Nearly two-thirds of respondents agree with this qualification, with "agree strongly" outweighing "disagree strongly" by a margin of more than 6:1. Of the 66% who generally agree, 78% strongly/somewhat agree an add should require a set number of spins per week. And 48% strongly/somewhat agree the chart should include only daytime spins. Mediabase weights reporter spins by overall station AQHP, but not by daypart. Billboard weights reporter spins by AQHP hour-by-hour in all dayparts.

A national airplay chart should only include daytime spins.

Strongly agree	21.4%
Somewhat agree	24.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	14.3%
Somewhat disagree	24.3%
Strongly disagree	15.7%

Country radio audiences in overnight hours average only 17% of daytime average quarter-hour persons, so it's not surprising that close to half of survey respondents support this position. But we can see this debate is far from conclusive one way or the other. Of the 46% who generally agree, 69% strongly/somewhat agree the chart should be weighted in all dayparts. And 81% strongly/somewhat agree an add should require a set number of spins per week. The Mediabase chart and Billboard chart (powered by BDS) both count spins from all dayparts.

Technology Issues

I have a good understanding of the differences between global streams, on-demand streams and programmed streams.

Strongly agree	38.6%
Somewhat agree	37.1%
Neither agree nor disagree	10.0%
Somewhat disagree	11.4%
Strongly disagree	2.9%

These response figures indicate label personnel have made a good start at educating programmers on the nuances of streaming performance metrics. However, there's still work to be done to create common benchmarks, as six in 10 PDs/MDs surveyed don't yet strongly agree. Perhaps this is one reason why only 45% said they are "very or somewhat likely" to be influenced by consumption-per-spin data for making new adds and just 59% were positively influenced for spin increases.

MAY THE FORCES BE WITH YOU

- 1. An upcoming or recent concert:** Aside from the corporate mandate, this was the largest-gaining factor (whether a free show or not), noted by 70% as "very likely or somewhat likely" to influence new adds (up from 58% in 2018) and by 58% for spin increases. Not only does a local concert bring the artist "home" to a station's audience, the data gleaned from an upcoming or recent show (in terms of ticket sales and audience engagement) can provide valuable local insights to shape programming decisions.
But investment in traditional road trips to station conference rooms may be offering diminishing returns, as the artist visit declined in positive influence on new adds from 35% in 2018 to a new low of 20%. In fact, the proportion of survey respondents who said a visit was "very unlikely" to motivate an add soared from 5% to 21% – a bigger leap than any other "unlikely."
- 2. Artist/label relationships:** Unquestionably more intertwined than in any other format, Country radio's close ties to the artists and labels rebounded in influence in 2019, up from about 55% to nearly 61%. It was the only significant "intangible" factor to increase year-to-year.
- 3. Consumption per spin:** Asked about this increasingly promoted statistic for the first time, almost 45% of PDs/MDs surveyed regard consumption-per-spin data as "very likely" or "somewhat likely" to be influential on adds, while a solid majority – nearly 60% – favor it for spin increases. Consumption-related statistics immediately moved ahead in ranking compared to national streaming data. And new research shows that early consumption-per-spin is correlated to chart outcomes. More on that predictive characteristic will be presented at the February 20 CRS panel, "Do Metrics Prove the Music?"
- 4. Specific non-local radio airplay:** Keeping tabs on a particular station or two (or more) around the country is meaningful for many PDs, as this factor saw a resurgence in positive influence on new adds from 32% to 40%, well above the margin of error. Interest in programming activity taking place out of town ranked considerably higher than what was happening across the street, which dipped below 30% as a positive add factor.
- 5. YouTube streaming data:** YouTube's combination of music and visual elements, or perhaps the sheer ease of using the service, gained more attention from programmers in 2019. It was the only streaming service to rise notably in influence on both new adds and spin increases, compared to Spotify, Apple and Pandora.

THE SAM ALEX SHOW



THE SAM ALEX SHOW

Your Backstage Pass To Nashville!

All Dayparts • “Tracks Only” Option

Contact: Rich O'Brien @ Sun Broadcast Group
212.380.9338 | robrien@sunbgi.com



I am worried that streaming services are increasing their "share of ear" at my station's expense.

Strongly agree	17.1%
Somewhat agree	45.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	17.1%
Somewhat disagree	14.3%
Strongly disagree	5.7%

Even excluding monster streaming pop crossovers (Dan + Shay w/Justin Bieber, Blanco Brown), the average top 10 single at Country radio in 2019 earned 4.7 million streams per week, up 15% from 2018. With a solid majority showing concern about streaming, it's not surprising that an even higher percentage are reporting the importance of building station "skills" for smart speakers to compete with digital music providers. Among the 17% who agree strongly that they worry about streaming, 67% strongly agree smart speakers should be a priority (see more below).

Building station "skills" for smart speakers is a priority at our station.

Strongly agree	54.3%
Somewhat agree	25.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	11.4%
Somewhat disagree	2.9%
Strongly disagree	5.7%

Introduced in 2014, the leading virtual assistant, Amazon's Alexa, is now in more than 100 million devices, supporting iHeartRadio, Pandora, Spotify Premium, Amazon Music, Apple Music, Google Play and others. Of all radio listening hours in January 2019, smart speakers' share more than doubled to 19% in one year. Good to see survey respondents agree their stations are taking steps to capitalize on the "new home radio."

Podcasts are playing an increasingly important part of our station's brand and offerings.

Strongly agree	15.7%
Somewhat agree	27.1%
Neither agree nor disagree	27.1%
Somewhat disagree	18.6%
Strongly disagree	11.4%

There are more than 800,000 regular podcasts, and music is the most-listened-to podcast genre among those interested in podcasts, according to Nielsen. Once music licensing becomes easier to obtain, the proliferation of and interest in podcasts will certainly grow. Until then, this hurdle could be a big reason why fewer than half of respondents agreed with this statement. The fact that the average PD/MD is already busy with 3.6 jobs at their station/cluster may be another (see below).

Job-Related Issues

I would be comfortable investing in radio stocks.

Strongly agree	7.1%
Somewhat agree	14.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	30.0%
Somewhat disagree	25.7%
Strongly disagree	22.9%

While about half of U.S. adults own shares of stock directly or indirectly, only one in five PDs/MDs surveyed

agree that radio stocks are a good financial fit for them. This is a remarkably telling figure, especially when one considers how much programmers know about their own business. For the record, from Jan. 8, 2019 to Jan. 8, 2020, the average stock price of the six leading publicly traded radio companies grew just 1.4% to \$13.62. Meanwhile, the stocks of six of radio's streaming and satellite competitors (Liberty Media, which holds stakes in iHeart and Sirius XM [which owns Pandora], Spotify, Apple, Alphabet and Amazon) skyrocketed by an average of 35% to \$635.

I worry about being downsized out of my job or having additional work assigned to me.

Strongly agree	22.9%
Somewhat agree	21.4%
Neither agree nor disagree	21.4%
Somewhat disagree	12.9%
Strongly disagree	21.4%

Combine advances in automation, the modest growth of radio stocks, radio's stagnant share of advertising, the number of roles PDs/MDs hold and their already-lengthy workweek (see below), and it's no wonder nearly half of survey respondents say they are concerned about their workload, if not their job itself.

I am reasonably compensated for the work I do.

Strongly agree	20.0%
Somewhat agree	42.9%
Neither agree nor disagree	14.3%
Somewhat disagree	15.7%
Strongly disagree	7.1%

The good news for radio's senior management executives is that a solid majority of PD/MDs surveyed feel generally positive about their salary and benefits, despite carrying a heavy workload and worries among many of them about their job security and/or being burdened with further duties (see both above and below).

Q: "How many daytime spins do you give a new single before you regard it to be familiar enough to test in callout research?"

A: The average was 161. A third of survey respondents give 200 or more daytime spins, and nearly two-thirds give at least 150. By comparison, Nielsen AQHP/turnover data on Country reporting stations indicate familiarity on new music is reached, on average, at about 88 daytime spins.

200 or more	33.9%
Between 150-199	30.7%
Between 100-149	17.7%
Between 51-99	4.8%
0 to 50	12.9%
Average.....	161

Q: How many dayparts do you program locally, compared to using syndicated or network shows?

A: The average is 4.2 dayparts, or approximately 84% of the day. (Five or more is considered to be "all dayparts.")

All dayparts (100%)	51.5%
4 to 4.9 (80-99%)	23.5%
3 to 3.9 (60-79%)	22.1%
Fewer than 3 (<60%)	2.9%

Q: How many hours a week do you work at your station and at events?

A: Radio PDs/MDs work very hard, as survey respondents averaged 54.6 hours, nearly 59% more than the American average of 34.4 hours, as measured by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (May 2019). Fewer than 20% work less than 50 hours per week.

70 hours or more	12.7%
60-69 hours	33.8%
50-59 hours	33.8%
40-49 hours	14.1%
Fewer than 40 hours	5.6%
Average	54.6 hours per week

I feel pressure to find acts to play station shows to generate additional revenue.

Strongly agree	30.0%
Somewhat agree	25.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	21.4%
Somewhat disagree	7.1%
Strongly disagree	15.7%

About 39% of respondents said a free show was "very likely" to influence a new add. But among those who strongly agreed they feel pressure to get a free show, that "very likely" influence soars to 62%. This indicates how real that pressure can be. And considering that radio's share of advertising revenue has been growing only incrementally, one can see why a majority agree with this statement. It's telling that among PD/MD survey respondents, a free station show ranked among the most "very likely" influences for both new adds and spin increases.

Q: How many jobs do you personally handle each day (as PD, MD, air personality, voice-tracker, station manager, corporate PD, etc.)?

A: One reason Country programmers surveyed work so many hours (see above) is because they handle an average of 3.6 jobs each day. More than 88% work at least three jobs, and more than half manage four or more roles. Only 4.3% of respondents hold just one job.

Number of jobs:	
5 or more	15.9%
4	36.2%
3	36.2%
1-2	11.7%

ABOUT THE SURVEYS: Conducted in November-December 2019, the fourth annual Country Aircheck/Stone Door Media Lab's Music Decision Survey and first Sentiment Survey generated 71 participants from CA/Mediabase-reporting stations representing 26 different group or station owners. The margin of error was 5.6% with an 80% confidence level. The sample closely matched the overall reporter field in PPM/diary proportions, as well as in geographic distribution. CAC

Based in Monterey, California, Jeff Green is Managing Partner of the Stone Door Media Lab, which provides research and analytics on radio-related ratings, consumer data and digital media consumption. SDML conducts market analyses, industry white papers and related business intelligence. Reach Jeff at jeff@stonedoormedialab.com; 615-406-4567.

25 YEARS

X JEWEL BOX
PLATINUM

Thank you to all the artists, management, and labels that bring the music to life. Your talents are what made it possible to turn an artistic dream into a reality. with love, Deb and the Platinum family

H HUBBARD RADIO

Our Greatest Country "Adds"

2011



St. Louis



Cincinnati



Cincinnati

2015



Alexandria, MN



Brainerd, MN



Bemidji, MN



Wadena, MN

2018



Seattle

2019



West Palm Beach

2020





MORGAN EVANS

**"A SAVVY PERFORMER WITH
STRONG SONGWRITING CHOPS."** *RollingStone*

415 MILLION GLOBAL
ON DEMAND STREAMS

RIAA CERTIFIED GOLD #1 DEBUT
U.S. SINGLE "KISS SOMEBODY"

2019 WORLD TOUR IN 8 COUNTRIES
WITH 24 HEADLINE SHOWS
SOLD OUT ON 3 CONTINENTS

BILLBOARD, BOBBY BONES, CMT,
PANDORA, & ROLLING STONE
ARTIST TO WATCH



YOUR CRS NEW FACES OF COUNTRY MUSIC 2020

Ingrid Andress

THE ONLY SOLO FEMALE DEBUT TO
CRACK THE TOP 20 ON BILLBOARD'S
COUNTRY AIRPLAY CHART IN 2019

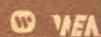
DEBUT SINGLE
"MORE HEARTS THAN MINE"
TOP 15 AND CLIMBING

125 MILLION GLOBAL STREAMS TO DATE

((SiriusXM)) HIGHWAY FIND

CUMULUS' NEW NOW ARTIST

iHeart COUNTRY'S ON THE VERGE ARTIST



*You & me ...
Ain't it good to be alive?
Ain't no better place
Ain't no better time*

KENNY CHESNEY

HERE AND NOW

"Get Along," "You & Tequila"
"American Kids," "Til Its Gone"
"Save It For A Rainy Day," "Noise"
"I Go Back," "Come Over"
"Spread The Love," "Wild Child"
...and so many more songs that defined your life

*Everybody's waiting,
but
they're waiting on what?
Better get to living
cause it's all we got*

Here's to the next round.

*In a world gone wild,
Music is the one thing that gets you through*

Arriving Feb 21
IMPACTING IMMEDIATELY

WAVE

WE CONGRATULATE OUR CLIENTS

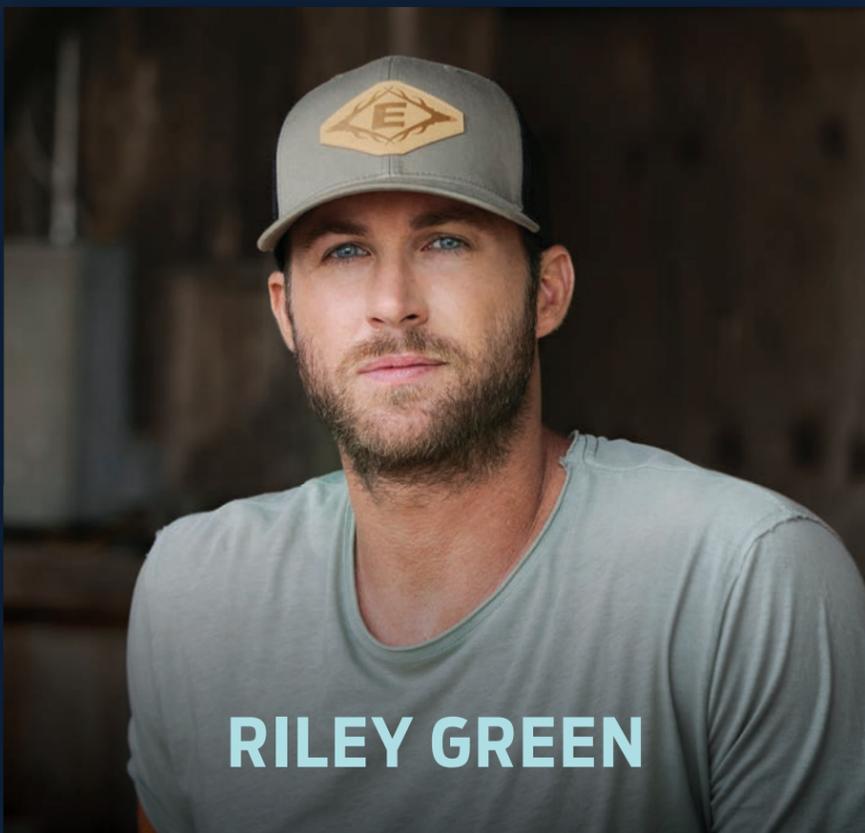


INGRID ADDRESS



MORGAN EVANS

2020 **NEW FACES** OF COUNTRY MUSIC



RILEY GREEN

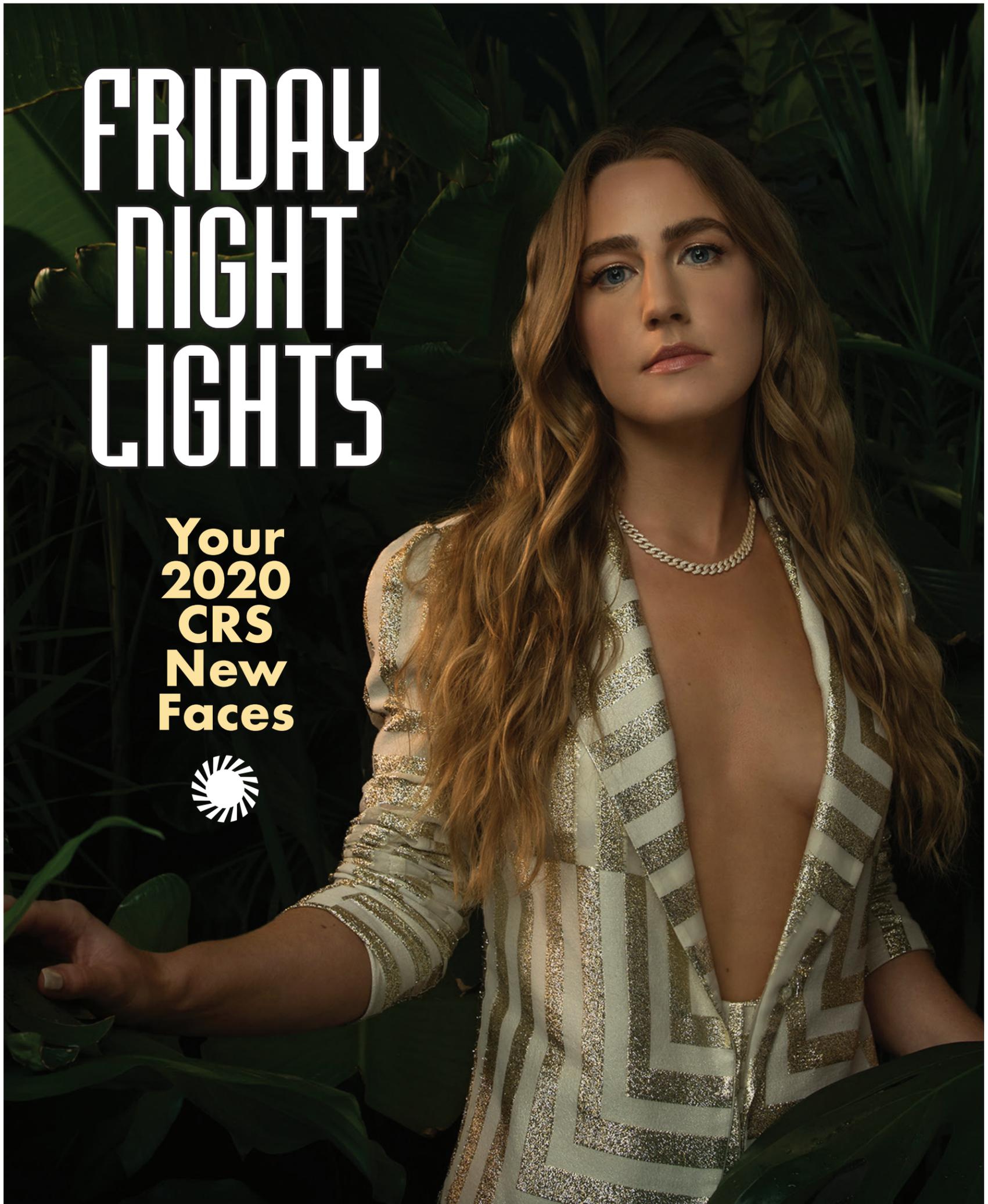


MITCHELL TENPENNY

AND PROUDLY SALUTE ALL THE RISING STARS
AT COUNTRY RADIO

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS

Your
2020
CRS
New
Faces



Ingrid Andress

Warner/WEA's **INGRID ANDRESS** landed inside the top 10 most-heard female artists in **Country Aircheck's** 2019 year-end issue following the release of her lead single, "More Hearts Than Mine," from debut album *Lady Like*, due March 27. She kicked off the decade performing with Keith Urban in Las Vegas and will be featured on upcoming Tim McGraw and Dan + Shay dates.

There are a few other songs I've released already that were contenders to be my debut single. But, at the end of the day, I told my team I would look back and regret not giving "More Hearts Than Mine" a chance, even though it's not your typical radio debut song. It's validating to see how it's doing.

I was truly surprised I was chosen for the *New Faces* show, because all the other people have been around for longer than I have. I'm like the *new new*. It's usually people who have had songs on the radio for a while. I felt a little out of place, but I'm friends with Mitchell Tenpenny, so I texted him right away and was like, "Woohoo, we did it!"

Last year was my first CRS experience, because I had just signed with Warner. I hadn't heard of it, and then Warner was like, "Oh yeah, we're going to take you around just so you can see what it's all about."

CRS is a fascinating part of the music industry that I — as a songwriter — was never really aware of. It was really interesting meeting all of the people who play such a huge role in Country radio, which is a staple of country music. And, obviously, there's lots of partying happening. The funniest part is everybody was having so much fun that none of them remembered meeting me. So, whenever I went on radio tour and met them, they were like, "Oh, hi, nice to meet you." You know, I've actually met you.

If someone walked a day in my heels, they'd probably be surprised how challenging it can be gathering song ideas on the road. It's difficult to do, but it's vital to keeping your sanity as an artist. I constantly have a notebook or my phone and am writing down ideas. They might not even be song titles ... just ideas for songs.

When it comes to style, I've always loved trying new looks, but I came from a really conservative family where I wasn't allowed to wear a lot of things. Now

that I'm an adult, I'm like, "Oh my gosh, I get to try all these things, and I love all of it." It's really more of me doing what I would've wanted to do when I was younger.

Karen Fairchild said to always go with your gut, because the further along you get, the more cooks there are in the kitchen and the more opinions you're going to have to listen to. First and foremost as an artist, your job is to keep your goal and vision, because you're the one the art is coming from. Always keep that in mind, and no matter what everybody else is doing, just go with what you think is good for you.

In Nashville, there are a lot of cool, new speakeasies. I love having a conversation when I'm drinking, so Broadway's not really my thing, because you're just yelling. Food-wise, Rosepepper is a vibe, if you want a good margarita. All of my money is given to Rosepepper every month. But, if you want to get crazy, then obviously go to Broadway and drink your face off and kiss a cowboy.

In 2020, Country radio can expect my first album and a new single that we are still trying to decide on. It's actually a good problem to have, because there are so many songs that could potentially be it.

CRS New Faces

Morgan Evans

Warner/WEA's **MORGAN EVANS** recently released single "Diamonds" as the first new music since his 2018 U.S. debut *Things That We Drink To*. The album produced a 25-week No. 1 in Australia, "Day Drunk," and his gold-certified No. 1 American debut single "Kiss Somebody."

The New Faces news came out at the end of my world tour — we were between New Zealand and Canada (or something like that) — and at a point of complete jet lag. I didn't know I was a contender for a spot on there, and when I saw the tweet I was like, "Oh, what is that?" Then I actually saw it was from CRS' Twitter.

I still had to call my manager, Nick, and ask, "Dude, what's going on here?" He's like, "Oh yeah, how cool is this?" We had the celebratory call after the fact. I'm very aware of what it is and what it means to be on that show. I'm completely stoked and honored to be chosen to be part of it this year.

At your first CRS, there's no reason for people to want to talk to you, really, other than the fact that the people you work with are trying to introduce you. The memories from walking through the lobby of the Omni and having your radio rep or someone from the label team pulling you over, "Hey this is X radio programmer from X station. You guys should meet blah blah blah blah blah." And you can see they're completely hungover and on their way to something, and you're completely hungover on your way to something else. There's an exchange that feels weird at the time, but the next time you meet that person it's like, "Hey, how funny was that?" It's these bizarre memories that stick around and start relationships.

I got a lot of "Hey, these programmers couldn't see this specific showcase that night because there were a million other things going on. Garth Brooks was probably playing somewhere. But, hey, they're going to have breakfast at 9am, and we can set you up in the corner with a speaker and your loop pedal. How do you feel about that?" To me, that's what CRS was, and I look back on it very fondly, as bizarre as it was at the time.

There's a lot in the lead up to a radio tour about maximizing your time and how to get the best results. There's some merit to that, but that clouds the fact that you're meeting other humans who love music.



Everything else comes after that. My favorite thing about CRS now, even just a couple of years later, is being able to walk up to the same people and say, "Hey, I'm hung over. You're hungover. Have a good CRS, great to see you again."

The secret's out. For this next chapter of music, we recorded with a full band for the first time. I grew up playing with a band. As much fun as I've had over the last few years playing solo and introducing myself as a singer/songwriter in that way, I'm really looking forward to sharing those experiences on stage with other people. And it is so early in the process that we

don't even have a band yet...the auditions are next week. The CRS *New Faces* show will be the first show with the band.

I realized at the end of last year that I'd been on the road pretty much nonstop for two and a half years and I'd written maybe 15-16 songs; the year before, I wrote 180. It came to the point of, "Well, do we go with another single from the album we have out?" "What's the song going to be?" And then I wrote "Diamonds," and it changed to, "We don't need a full album recorded to put out the first single from the next project. This is it. Let's go."

Riley Green

BMLGR's **RILEY GREEN** is currently at Country radio with his top 15 and climbing single, "I Wish Grandpas Never Died." He spent much of 2019 on the road with his *Get That Man A Beer Tour* and opening for Brad Paisley and Jon Pardi, and he's rolling into 2020 on Jason Aldean's *We Back Tour*.

I got a call from Jimmy Harnen at Big Machine about *New Faces*. It was pretty cool, because when they were

trying to sign me, he took me to *New Faces* and was taking me around to radio folks and introducing me. I got to see how big of a deal it was early on. It was a little bit crazy, especially first coming in, because I had not been to Nashville. I was still living in Alabama.

One thing I really enjoyed about radio tour was getting to play not only my first single and current singles, but brand new songs for people — acoustic — just the way I wrote them. I played a lot of shows like that for several years, so to be able to sit down and play a song completely broken down for somebody

who has maybe never heard of me before and get a reaction, that is how I always judge my songs.

The most surprising part of radio tour is the travel. I don't think I'd been on a plane in my entire life, then I sign a record deal and fly a couple of times a week now. Being on a bus three days and on a plane the other two, I rarely get to my house, and when I do it's just to do laundry and repack a bag.

I was a big Jamey Johnson fan when I was in college. We were playing golf in Nashville — I think Jimmy and Matthew Hargis were there — and Jamey was there talking about songwriting. He still writes a lot of songs by himself. That was kind of what led me to write "I Wish Grandpas Never Died" on my own as opposed to setting up a co-write.

"I Wish Grandpas Never Died" is about my two granddaddies — how they were a big influence on me growing up and values they taught me as a kid. I wrote the idea down when I was flying back from Las Vegas to go to my granddaddy's funeral. I didn't think it was even going to make my record; my album was done, and we had another single going to radio. I don't think I ever really judged a song of mine and said, "Okay, this is a hit," when I wrote it, and I certainly didn't about this song. But getting to play it live and see fans reacting to it the way they have and having a little bit of a life of its own, even before we recorded it, was a pretty crazy thing.

I am a big fan of John Pardi's last album. He does a good job of straddling that line of very easy to listen to on the radio and also very different. That's one thing I think is cool with guys like him and Eric Church who are writing stuff that's different. It doesn't sound like anything else.

Things are going pretty well for me, but if I could trade places with another artist, it'd be Brad [Paisley]. He's got about four buses going out; meanwhile, I'm jammed on the bus with my whole band. And he gets to play a handful of shows a week as opposed to flying all over and doing every little thing. It'd be nice to get to the point where I can start playing some of those big stages like he does in arenas.

Radio can expect some more country music from me in 2020. I've been writing quite a bit, and we're going to go in the studio, (I think) in February. As long as people want to hear it, we're going to keep putting music out.



THANK YOU!

Our country radio family is such an important part of our journey. From the first station to play us to the ones still rocking with us today and every single one in between, we say "THANK YOU!" We are looking forward to celebrating everything we have accomplished together throughout the past 20 years of being on country radio. Cheers!!



RASCAL FLATTS



CRS New Faces

Runaway June

Naomi Cooke, Hannah Mulholland and Jennifer Wayne of Wheelhouse's **RUNAWAY JUNE** became the highest charting female trio in sixteen years with "Buy My Own Drinks" breaking into the top five in 2019. After spending time on Carrie Underwood's *Cry Pretty Tour 360*, the group's new single, "Head Over Heels," continues its upward trajectory.

HM: Our label reached out to let us all know we'd been selected, and we all jumped up and down! We've seen so many of our friends be spotlighted at this event throughout the years, so it's a huge honor to finally grace that stage!

JW: I was honestly in shock. It's such a huge honor. It took me a second to catch my breath, and I was so thankful in that moment for every single person who took a chance on us and believed in us.

HM: This year will be our fifth year attending CRS. I think Runaway June has a CRS curse, because one of the three of us is always sick that week. We've had fevers, flu, you name it!

JW: One CRS, I was working for Mike McVay at a booth, and I had just adopted my dog, Blue. Mike let me bring him to the booth, and Blue was the highlight of CRS that year! Everyone wanted to stop by to see the cute dog.

HM: There are many ups and downs in the music biz. Things change every day. The journey of every radio single is the perfect example of that. It's so exciting to watch them climb, and so sad once that song's journey is over.

JW: My favorite part of radio tour is making all of the friendships! Some of my best friends in the world, who have been there for me through ups and downs for the last 10 years, are radio programmers.

NC: Pros outweigh the cons of being in a group. You have two other people to help share the workload and



share a hard day or a good day with. Because at the end of the day, no matter what, two other people have had the exact same day.

JW: We are truly sisters. Every win we celebrate, and every struggle we lift each other up. The con is there are three women and eight people on a bus sharing a bathroom.

HM: The CMAs are such a special event, so to be invited in any capacity is huge. Then to be honored by Little Big Town as a new face in country music? Forget about it.

JW: And looking at all of our peers, being up there with them, all of us supporting each other was so special.

NC: It meant that we were being welcomed into the country family on a high level and being recognized by our heroes, Little Big Town, and the CMAs themselves, who have been such a huge supporter for us.

JW: We aren't stopping, baby! Look out, 2020!

Mitchell Tenpenny

Riser House/Columbia's **MITCHELL TENPENNY** hit No. 1 with the double platinum-certified "Drunk Me" from his debut album *Telling All My Secrets* at the end of 2018. He's taking his new single, "Anything She Says," featuring Seaforth, into 2020 while extending the tour by the same name.

My team called me early in the morning to tell me about New Faces, and I woke right up and was so excited. It's something that I've attended three times, and I wanted to be up there, but definitely was not expecting it. I didn't even know it was up-and-running time or that people were voting for it yet. My team knows to just keep me unaware of everything, so it's always new and fresh when I hear things.

I've gone to CRS for about five years. My favorite part is meeting artists, especially at the very beginning when I didn't have the chance to travel or tour a lot. You're walking in as a naive, brand new artist who knows nothing and you see all these superstars — the people you look up to. I remember walking up to the elevator and seeing Garth and being blown away. Then seeing Tim McGraw, then Sam Hunt. It's weird how there's all these superstars in this one little building.

I lost my father to cancer a few years ago. When we got the opportunity to start our own foundation, we decided to start something called the Tenpenny Fund. At the very beginning, you don't have a lot of ways of getting your foundation out there. We started asking around and having meetings, and Sarah Cannon Research Institute was the first that got our concept. It

was a true blessing when they wanted to partner and help us get our vision out.

When you hear you have cancer, there are a million amazing doctors and all these incredible drugs. But the other half of it is, are you mentally prepared to battle this? There's not a lot of access to 24-hour phone centers to help you through something like that. I know, personally, my dad didn't have it. Even my aunt, who's going through it now, has struggled. It was something that was very heavy on my heart, and they saw that vision and instantly wanted to be a part of it. We were so grateful and blessed to have Sarah Cannon to lean on for those connections. They've helped us build this bigger than we ever thought it could be and helped us build a room at Hope Lodge. We're just so grateful for it.

Getting to travel is the best part of radio tour. Before any of this happened, before we got a record deal, I went to Kentucky and Florida. That was about it. And my brother came on the road, which is awesome. He plays bass with me. Anytime we're in a city with a sports team, we like to go to the stadium or the arena and see the whole area, see how their lifestyle is around there. Take a picture vibe. It's been neat to see other cultures and other cities and how they do their things.

You don't exist without the people who listen to your music. I don't like the word "fans." We're in this together. This is a team. When I go on Instagram after every show, I try to comment and at least say thank you for coming. But I'm looking at every aspect of these messages and seeing...what was their favorite song? Where did they say they had the best moment? How many videos did we have for certain songs? That's what we need to home into on our set, because we want to give them the best experience possible. I know when I find an artist I love, I do the same thing. When I tag a song, I know what I'm feeling. I'm listening, and that's what we want to build our entire career around — listening to exactly what people want.

"Anything She Says" was recently released. We have the new music video out with it, and that's what we're going to be touring on. The tour went really well, so we extended into the new year. It's been crazy to see the reaction at shows. That single was picked solely based on the fans and streaming numbers. Before we went to Country radio, we were like, "Okay, we have data from people who are listening to you. This is the song that was being put in front of our face. That's why we went with it, and here we go." **CAC**





SOUNDS LIKE NASHVILLE

Your source for country music news
and everything that matters in Music City.

SOUNDSLIKENASHVILLE.COM

**CONGRATS
TO THE 2020
NEW FACES
OF COUNTRY MUSIC**



Ingrid Andress



Morgan Evans



Mitchell Tenpenny

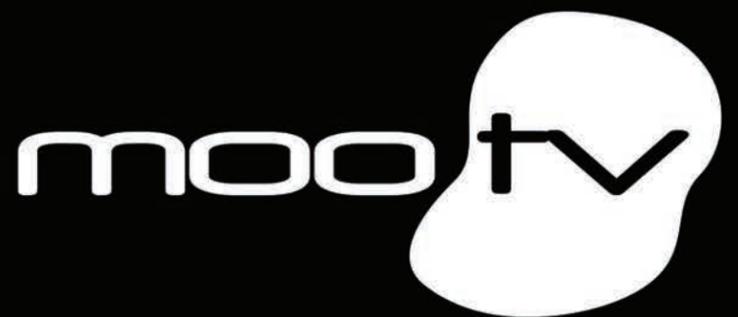


Riley Green



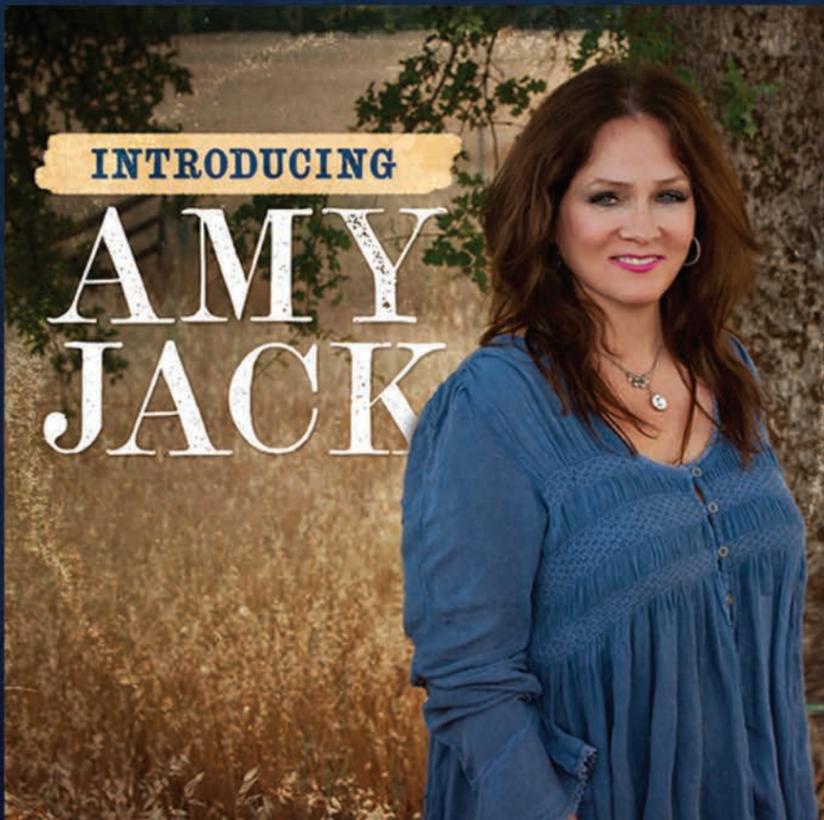
Runaway June

WE ARE PROUD TO SUPPORT MOO TV CLIENTS MORGAN EVANS, MITCHELL TENPENNY AND RILEY GREEN ON TOUR.



NASHVILLE ✪ TENNESSEE

LED | TOURING VIDEO | PROJECTION | MOOTV.COM



AVAILABLE NOW

PRODUCED BY
MERLE HAGGARD

CRS 2020.



RJ MEACHAM
VP, PROMOTION



MIKE ROGERS
NATIONAL DIR., PROMOTION



LORI HARTIGAN
DIRECTOR, PROMOTION



BROOKE MERIS
DIRECTOR, PROMOTION



ALLYSON GELNETT
DIRECTOR, PROMOTION



SAMANTHA DEPREZ
DIRECTOR, PROMOTION



MADDI BAYER
COORDINATOR, PROMOTION



LET'S DO THIS.

RUSSELL
DICKERSON

*love you like
i used to*

IMPACTING MARCH 2



SCOTTY McCREERY

In Between

40 MILLION STREAMS

**ON TOUR WITH
CHRIS YOUNG THIS SUMMER**

*GONE
WEST*

WHAT COULD'VE BEEN

18 MILLION STREAMS

**MORE THAN 7 MILLION
VIDEO VIEWS**



**TRIPLE
TIGERS**

RECORDS

LABEL

PROMOTION

CONTACTS

ABBREVIATION KEY:

A Assistant	EA Exec. Asst.	RC Radio Consultant
AD Artist Development	EC East Coast	RD Regional Director
AE Artist Engagement	LC Label Consultant	RI Radio Initiatives
AIP Activator & Indicator Promotion	LR Label Resources	RM Radio Marketing
AP Audio Production	M Marketing	RP Regional Promotion
AR A&R	MAS Marketing & Artist Strategy	RS Radio & Streaming
B Business	MG Manager	RSGS Radio Syndication & Group Strategy
BO Booking	MP Managing Partner	RT Radio Tour
CD Client Development	MR Music Row Promotion	S Secondary
CO Coordinator	MW Midwest	SC Senior Coord.
CS Chart Strategy	ND National Director	SD Senior Dir.
CSI Content Strategy & Innovation	NE Northeast	SND Sr. National Dir.
CT Central	O Owner	SE Southeast
D Director	OC Original Content	SM Social Media
DG Digital	P President	SR Streaming
DI Digital Initiatives	PD Production	ST Specialist
DM Digital Marketing	PR Promotion	SW Southwest
DMS Digital Media Strategist	PRM Promotion & Marketing	SY Radio Syndication
DS Digital Streaming	PRS Promotion Strategy	TX Texas
DSM Digital Sales & Marketing	PTM Project Manager	WC West Coast
	R Regional	



Ashley Sisters, DA Cole, Nick Brennan, Raise, Sarah Dunn Band, TJ Harris

P	Larry Pareigis	615-332-5511	larry@ninenorthmail.com
EVP/GM	Kevin Mason	615-974-1999	kevin@edgehillmusic.com
D/PRM/WC	Greg Stevens	214-287-6606	greg@ninenorthmail.com
D/PRM	Angel Jennings	864-423-0803	angel@edgehillmusic.com



Bubba Sparox, Carter Winter, Colt Ford, Cypress Spring, Devin Burris, Eddie Montgomery, DJ Cannon Banyon, Lenny Cooper, Maggie Baugh, Sam Grow, Sarah Ross, Tommy Chayne

CEO	Shannon Houchins	615-733-9983	shannon@averagejoesent.com
D/DSM	Nathan Thompson	615-733-9983	nathan@averagejoesent.com



EVP	Jon Loba	615-610-2104	jonloba@bbmusicgroup.com
SVP/PR	Carson James	615-610-2108	carson@bbmusicgroup.com
VP/M	JoJamie Hahr	615-610-2126	jojamie@bbmusicgroup.com
VP/RSGS	Renee Laymon	615-610-2118	renee@bbmusicgroup.com
VP/AR	Sara Knabe	615-610-2095	sara.knabe@bbmusicgroup.com
PR&C&SY	Matthew Holmberg	615-425-9030	matthew@bbmusicgroup.com
EA (Jon Loba)	Sarah Powers	615-432-0211	sarah@bbmusicgroup.com



Jason Aldean, Dustin Lynch, Chase Rice, Craig Morgan, Tyler Farr, Everette, Lainey Wilson

VP/PR	Lee Adams	615-500-2961	ladams@brokenbowrecords.com
VP/PR	Shelley Hargis Gaines	615-610-2112	shelley@brokenbowrecords.com
RP/SW	Dawn Ferris	214-924-1020	dawn@brokenbowrecords.com
RP/WC	Layna Bunt	615-473-9010	layna@brokenbowrecords.com
RP/SE	Scotty O'Brien	615-610-2124	scotty@brokenbowrecords.com
CO	Ashley Wojcinski	615-610-2134	ashley@bbmusicgroup.com



Randy Houser, Lindsay Ell, Jimmie Allen, Parmalee, King Calaway

VP/PR	Byron Kennedy	916-798-1025	byron@stoneycreekrecords.com
ND, MW	Stan Marczewski	615-610-2122	stan@stoneycreekrecords.com
RP/WC	Matt Vieira	916-844-7821	matv@stoneycreekrecords.com
RP/NE	Lexi Willson	707-410-6617	lexi@stoneycreekrecords.com
RP/SE	Mary Forest Findley	615-525-7683	maryforest@stoneycreekrecords.com
CO	Ashley Wojcinski	615-610-2134	ashley@bbmusicgroup.com



Zac Brown Band, Granger Smith, Runaway June, LoCash, Blanco Brown, Johnny McGuire, Sykamore

VP/PR	Ken Tucker	615-584-7100	ken.tucker@wheelhousebbmg.com
ND	Jennifer Shaffer	904-386-5050	jennifer@wheelhousebbmg.com
RP/NE	Brittany Pellegrino	248-420-1125	brittanyp@wheelhousebbmg.com
RP/WC	Kendra Whitehead	408-316-2534	kendra@wheelhousebbmg.com
RP/MW/SE	Cait Gordon	319-750-3296	caityn@wheelhousebbmg.com
CO	Ashley Wojcinski	615-610-2134	ashley@bbmusicgroup.com



Eric Chesser, Johnny Rogers

GM	JD Chesser	800-227-7765	bigbigentertainment@gmail.com
PR	Russ Ruhnke	800-227-7766	bigbigentertainment@gmail.com
RP/MW	Clay Hennenan	800-227-7767	bigbigentertainment@gmail.com
RP/WC	Jamae Stephens	800-227-7768	bigbigentertainment@gmail.com
RP/NE	Luis Rivera	800-227-7769	bigbigentertainment@gmail.com



Aaron Watson

EVP/PR	Tony Morreale	615-260-6853	tony@biglabel.net
RP/LC	Greg McCarn	615-243-1276	greg@biglabel.net
D/PF/AIP	JR Hughes	931-581-3390	JR@biglabel.net
CO	Callie Waterman	714-262-9075	callie@biglabel.net
TX/PR	Tami Millspough	214-697-8954	texasrecordchick@gmail.com



Chris Lane, Jake Owen, Morgan Wallen, Hardy, MacKenzie Porter, Ernest, Mason Ramsey, Sean Stemaly, Larry Fleet, Madison Kozak

VP/PR	Stacy Blythe	615-887-9860	stacy@bigloud.com
ND	Ali Matkasky	615-300-9656	ali@bigloud.com
RP/WC	Dave Kirth	916-903-7865	dave@bigloud.com
RP/SE	Tyler Waugh	615-870-2040	tyler@bigloud.com
RP/NE	Nikki Wood	901-378-2346	nikki@bigloud.com
RP/MW	John D'Amico	412-862-6539	john@bigloud.com
RP/SW	Brittani Koster	308-293-4242	brittani@bigloud.com
CO	Sarah Headley	704-475-2194	sarah@bigloud.com
CO/DR	Giuliana "G" Mignone	781-853-9925	g@bigloud.com



Rascal Flatts, Midland, Carly Pearce, Sugarland, The Cadillac Three, Payton Smith, Noah Schnacky, Lauren Jenkins, Dan Smalley

GM	Clay Hunnicutt	615-651-8714	clay.hunnicutt@bmlg.net
VP/PR	Kris Lamb	615-846-7750	kris.lamb@bmlg.net
ND/PR	Erik Powell	615-324-7774	erik.powell@bmlg.net
RP/NE	Brooke Diaz	615-324-6074	brooke.diaz@bmlg.net
RP/SW	Tracy Wilkinson	828-244-2827	tracy.wilkinson@bmlg.net
RP/MW	JC Coffey	615-846-7749	jc.coffey@bmlg.net
RP/WC	Bill Lubitz	615-846-7752	bill.lubitz@bmlg.net
RP/SE	Jeff Davis	615-324-7776	jeff.davis@bmlg.net
CO	Samantha Kane	615-651-8722	samantha.kane@bmlg.net



Florida Georgia Line, Lady Antebellum, Brett Young, Riley Green, Danielle Bradbery

P/CEO	Jimmy Harnen	615-324-7790	jimmy.harnen@bmlg.net
SVP/PR	Matthew Hargis	615-324-7902	matthew.hargis@bmlg.net
Sr. ND/PR	Michelle Kammerer	615-846-7751	michelle.kammerer@bmlg.net
RP/NE	Andrew Thoen	571-247-1851	andrew.thoen@bmlg.net
RP/SE	Liz Santana	772-473-8116	liz.santana@bmlg.net
RP/SW	Andi Brooks	815-621-1155	andi.brooks@bmlg.net
RP/WC	Stella Prado	818-854-0283	stella.prado@bmlg.net
CO	Cherylynn Nader	615-345-4528	cherylynn.nader@bmlg.net
EA	Madeline Farr	615-846-7714	madeline.farr@bmlg.net



Brantley Gilbert, Eli Young Band, Aaron Lewis, Justin Moore, Thomas Rhett, Tyler Rich, Avenue Beat, Heath Sanders, Abbey Cone

P	George Briner	615-324-7782	george.briner@valorymail.com
VP/PR/DG	Ashley Sidoti	615-574-7827	ashley.sidoti@valorymail.com
VP/PR	Chris Palmer	615-846-7715	chris.palmer@valorymail.com
RP/MW	Adam Burnes	615-324-7901	adam.burnes@valorymail.com
RP/WC	Amy Staley	615-513-6009	amy.staley@valorymail.com
RP/SW	Christy DiNapoli	615-651-8720	christy.dinapoli@valorymail.com
RP/SE	Brooke Nixon	615-651-8709	brooke.nixon@valorymail.com
RP/NE	Don Gosselin	615-846-7676	don.gosselin@valorymail.com
CO	Athena Puharic	615-846-7679	athena.puharic@valorymail.com



Kelsea Ballerini, Abby Anderson, MaRynn Taylor, Pryor & Lee

EVP	Rick Froio	615-780-3070	rfroio@blackriverent.com
SVP/PR	Mike Wilson	615-557-8884	mwilson@blackriverent.com
SND	Bill Macky	615-202-8135	bmacky@blackriverent.com
RP/WC	Dave Dame	714-366-7606	dame@blackriverent.com
RP/NE	Jane O'Malia	412-480-4871	jomaliam@blackriverent.com
RP/MW	Joe Carroll	615-779-8382	jcarroll@blackriverent.com
RP/SE	Theresa Ford	615-504-4865	tford@blackriverent.com
MG/PR	Bailey White	623-693-3656	bwhite@blackriverent.com



Davison Brothers, Cody Webb

MP	Rusty Harmon	615-739-1520	rusty@copperlinemusicgroup.com
AR	Dwayne Brown	615-617-7747	dwayne@copperlinemusicgroup.com
B/MG/D	Lori Harmon	615-739-7320	lori@copperlinemusicgroup.com
Head/PR	Seth Necessary	615-642-1854	seth@copperlinemusicgroup.com



crescendo music projects

P	Pamela Newman	615-356-0535	pamelajillnewman@aol.com
---	---------------	--------------	--------------------------



Rodney Atkins, Lee Brice, Tim Dugger, Filmore, Jackson Michelson, Mo Pitney, Dylan Scott, American Young, Ruthie Collins

VP/PR	RJ Meacham	615-715-2764	rmeacham@curb.com
ND/PR	Mike Rogers	615-406-4132	mrogers@curb.com
RP/MW	Samantha DePrez	260-715-1226	sdeppez@curb.com
RP/SW	Brooke Meris	713-598-9355	bmeris@curb.com
RP/WC	Lori Hartigan	760-929-1019	lhartigan@curb.com
RP/NE	Allyson Gelneth	484-888-1181	agelneth@curb.com
CO	Maddi Bayer	615-410-8210	mbayer@curb.com



Lucas Hoge

P	Laura Lynn	818-429-3655	laura@forgeentgroup.com
---	------------	--------------	-------------------------



Shenandoah, Austin Merrill, Caeland Garner

P	Cole Johnstone	301-787-4751	Cole@foundry-records.com
VP/M/PR	April Rider	615-714-1749	April@foundry-records.com



Major label and leading independent artists

O/MP/CSO	Nancy Tunick	615-403-6121	nancy@grassrootspromotion.com
O/AIP/SR/PR	Teresa Johnston	615-456-0187	teresa@grassrootspromotion.com
VP/PR	Renee McClure	615-646-3912	renee@grassrootspromotion.com
VP/M	Jim Alderdice	615-268-9876	jim@grassrootspromotion.com
VP/AD	Mandy West	615-226-3355	mandy@grassrootspromotion.com
MG/MR	RJ Jordan	615-335-0718	rj@grassrootspromotion.com
MG/B/AP	Scott Whitehead	615-429-7476	scott@grassrootspromotion.com
MG/MR	Rebekah Clements	615-415-7210	rebekah@grapevinepromotion.com
SM&SR/M	John Griffin	615-500-3676	John@grassrootspromotion.com
PR/MG/A	Shannon Hall	615-557-863	Shannon@grassrootspromotion.com
MG/RT	Jamie Fierberg	413-221-9155	Jamie@grassrootspromotion.com
MG/PR/Radio	Ashlee Wall	615-436-4989	ashlee@grassrootspromotion.com
AIP	Chris Taylor	615-448-8039	chris@grassrootspromotion.com



Canaan Smith, Raelynn, John King, Chris Bandi

P	Dale Connore	212-991-5110	dale@in2unemusic.com
GM	Cat Collins	770-682-0318	cat@in2unemusic.com
VP	Jamice Jennings	615-243-6779	jamice@in2unemusic.com
MG	Nathan Cruise	615-496-6356	nathan@in2unemusic.com
MG/R	Stefani Waters	562-334-7330	stefani.waters@in2unemusic.com



Timo Somers, Darin Jones, Cory Michael

P/PR	Dan Hagar	615-430-2560	dhpromoman@gmail.com
SVP/AR	Brad McFarland	615-944-8700	brad.mach3@gmail.com



O	Jeff Solima	615-294-4787	jeff.solima@newrevolution.us.com
RD	Joe Schuld	913-579-9385	joeschuld88@gmail.com
RD	Joe Putnam	615-491-7688	joeputnam@me.com
RD	Jon Conlin	818-399-1885	jon.conlon@newrevolution.us.com



Garth Brooks, Trisha Yearwood

GM	Lesly Simon	—	leslysimon@pearlrecordsinc.com
SVP/PR/MAS	Mandy McCormack	—	mandymccormack@pearlrecordsinc.com
VP	Andy Elliott	615-585-4101	andyelliott@pearlrecordsinc.com
PR/ND	Glenn Noblit	214-282-6092	glennnoblit@pearlrecordsinc.com
D/PR	Hilary Hoover	317-695-9971	hilaryhoover@pearlrecordsinc.com
D/PR	Chris Waters	615-300-1590	chriswaters@pearlrecordsinc.com



Mark Leach, Anita Cochran, Farewell Angelina

P	Chris Allums	615-300-5321	allums@quarterbackrecords.com
---	--------------	--------------	-------------------------------



Gretchen Wilson, Jessie G

--	Bob Mitchell	615-720-7467	bobmitchell@redneckrecords.com
----	--------------	--------------	--------------------------------



CEO	David Ross	—	david@revivermusic.com
P	Gator Michaels	615-400-6957	gator@revivermusic.com
VP/Marketing	Paul Williams	615-715-	

LABEL

PROMOTION CONTACTS

RISERHOUSE

Dillon Carmichael, Meghan Patrick, Logan Ashley, Jordan Rager, Mitchell Tenpenny (JV w/Columbia)

ND	Maurisa Pasick	615-428-9708	maurisa@riserhouse.com
RP/NE	Lisa Mastrrianni	415-902-9400	lisa@riserhouse.com
RP/MW/TX	Sally Allgeier	260-466-2253	sally@riserhouse.com
RP/SE	Mark McKay	757-754-4960	mark@riserhouse.com
RP/WC	Tara Shayne	818-573-7134	tara@riserhouse.com
CO	Shannon Edge	615-339-5853	shannon@riserhouse.com



Toby Keith, Krystal Keith, Waterloo Revival

VP/PR	Rick Moxley	615-324-7766	rick.moxley@showdogmail.com
RP	Greg Sax	214-676-7833	greg.sax@showdogmail.com
RP/SE	Blake Nixon	615-498-0988	blake.nixon@showdogmail.com
RP/NE	Denise Roberts	818-679-5479	denise.roberts@showdogmail.com
RP/WC	Ron Bradley	702-334-1898	ron.bradley@showdogmail.com
A	Laurie Gore	615-423-7266	gorelaurie@gmail.com



SONY MUSIC

EVP/PR/AD	Steve Hodges	615-301-4420	steve.hodges@sonymusic.com
ND	Lauren Thomas	615-301-4421	lauren.thomas@sonymusic.com
Assoc. D/PR/AD	Olivia Laster	615-301-4375	olivia.laster@sonymusic.com
PD/C	Adam Davis	615-301-4448	Adam.Davis@sonymusic.com



Brad Paisley, Brooks & Dunn, Lanco, Matt Stell, The Sisterhood Band, Adam Doleac, Walker Hayes (w/Monument), Teddy Robb (w/Monument)

VP/PR	Josh Easler	615-301-4368	josh.easler@sonymusic.com
RP/SE	Ali O'Connell	615-301-4425	ali.oconnell@sonymusic.com
RP/SW	Rusty Sherrill	615-301-4461	rusty.sherrill@sonymusic.com
RP/NE	David Berry	214-695-9777	david.berry@sonymusic.com
RP/MW	Luke Jensen	615-301-4362	luke.jensen@sonymusic.com
RP/WC	Lisa Owen	310-614-2325	lisa.owen@sonymusic.com
D/PR&AD	Ryan Sanders	615-301-4423	ryan.sanders@sonymusic.com



Mitchell Tenpenny, Luke Combs, Maren Morris, Tenille Townes, Jameson Rodgers

SVP/PR	Shane Allen	615-301-4311	shane.allen@sonymusic.com
RP/WC	Paige Elliott	703-346-5233	paige.elliott@sonymusic.com
RP/NE	Lyndsay Church	615-301-4458	lyndsay.church@sonymusic.com
RP/SW	Mark Janese	214-763-7816	mark.janese@sonymusic.com
RP/MW	Lauren Longbine	620-341-0573	lauren.longbine@sonymusic.com
RP/SE	Mark Gray	704-906-4970	mark.gray@sonymusic.com
ST	Christy Garbinski	615-301-4426	christy.garbinski@sonymusic.com



Chris Young, Dolly Parton, Kane Brown, Miranda Lambert, Old Dominion, Ryan Hurd, Rachel Wammack, Pistol Annies, Seaforth

SVP	Dennis Reese	615-301-4357	dennis.reese@sonymusic.com
D/PR	Dan Nelson	603-626-9898	dan.nelson@sonymusic.com
D/PR	Elizabeth Sledge	615-481-7300	liz.sledge@sonymusic.com
D/PR	Larry Santiago	818-290-3104	larry.santiago@sonymusic.com
D/PR	Mallory Michaels	615-815-5478	mallory.michaels@sonymusic.com
ST	Nicole Walden	615-301-4417	nicole.walden@sonymusic.com
MG/N/PR	Sami Shea	615-301-4409	sami.shea@sonymusic.com



Ashley Barron, Dylan Gerard, Wes Hayden, Alexandra Demetree, Branch & Dean, Andy Griggs

CEO/AR	Dean Scallan	615-254-2053	dean@ssmnashville.com
P	Patti Olsen-Garafala	615-254-2053	patti@ssmnashville.com
D/M/BO	Jordan Smith	615-254-2053	info@ssmnashville.com
ND	Lindsey Reinert	615-254-2053	admin@ssmnashville.com
SM/SR	Jayne Hamblin	615-254-2053	Info@ssmnashville.com



P	Michael Powers	615-438-6372	mpowers@starfarmnashville.com
EVP/GM	Matt Corbin	615-330-2863	mcorbin@starfarmnashville.com
RP	Doc Gonzales	615-678-2522	docg316@gmail.com



Russell Dickerson, Gone West, Scotty McCreery

GM	Norbert Nix	615-429-6672	norbert@tripleligers.com
SVP/PR	Kevin Herring	615-308-1103	kevin@tripleligers.com
NP/PR	Raffaella Braun	973-930-9118	raffaella@tripleligers.com
RP/WC	Annie Brooks	360-903-1348	annie@tripleligers.com
RP/NE	Diane Lockner	443-253-9194	diane@tripleligers.com
RP/SE	Parker Fowler	256-630-1821	parker@tripleligers.com
RP/SW	Juliana Vaughn	615-545-4164	juliana@tripleligers.com
M/VPD	Laura Hostelley	216-952-2495	laura@tripleligers.com
CO	Hope Garrison	207-776-0031	hope@tripleligers.com



UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP NASHVILLE

EVP/PR	Royce Risser	615-524-7588	royce.risser@umusic.com
VP/PR	David Friedman	615-524-7539	david.friedman@umusic.com
D/RM	Donna Hughes	615-524-7584	donna.hughes@umusic.com
VP/PR/RM	Chris Schuler	615-524-7517	chris.schuler@umusic.com
D/PR/AE	Chris Fabiani	615-524-7571	chris.fabiani@umusic.com
A/PR	Kaileen Mangan	615-524-7566	kaileen.mangan@umusic.com



Adam Hambrick, Carrie Underwood, Caylee Hammack, Darius Rucker, Dierks Bentley, Jon Pardi, Keith Urban, Little Big Town, Luke Bryan, Mickey Guyton

VP/PR	Bobby Young	615-524-7555	bobby.young@umusic.com
RP/NE	Annie Sandor	954-529-3380	annie.sandor@umusic.com
RP/MW	Brent Jones	615-524-7528	brent.jones@umusic.com
RP/SE	Ashley Laws	615-524-7592	ashley.laws@umusic.com
RP/WC	Megan Youngblood	310-926-8114	megan.youngblood@umusic.com
RP/SW	Mara Sidweber	469-231-6302	mara.sidweber@umusic.com
CO	Katelyn Lester	615-524-7541	katelyn.lester@umusic.com



Eric Church, Alan Jackson, Brandon Lay, Jon Langston, Brothers Osborne, Gary Allan, Kylie Morgan

VP/PR	Jimmy Rector	615-524-7562	jimmy.rector@umusic.com
RP/SE	Trudie Daniell	770-253-1784	trudie.daniell@umusic.com
RP/WC	Connor Brock	479-366-7306	connor.brock@umusic.com
RP/SW	John Trapane	281-323-4053	john.trapane@umusic.com
RP/NE	Mike Krinik	615-524-7590	mike.krinik@umusic.com
RP/MW	Jackie Stevens	626-676-6344	jackie.stevens@umusic.com
CO	Briarman Whitfield	615-524-7688	briarman.whitfield@umusic.com



Vince Gill, Kip Moore, George Strait, Josh Turner, Sam Hunt, Jordan Davis, Kassi Ashton, Kacey Musgraves, Parker McCollum

SVP/PR	Katie Dean	615-524-7553	katie.dean@umusic.com
RP/NE	Michelle Tyrrell	810-794-7193	michelle.tyrrell@umusic.com
RP/MW	Donna Passuntino	847-531-6164	donna.passuntino@umusic.com
RP/SE	Briana Galluccio	781-572-9658	briana.galluccio@umusic.com
RP/WC	Anna Johnson	615-983-0610	anna.johnson@umusic.com
RP/SW	Miranda McDonald	615-524-7537	miranda.mcdonald@umusic.com
CO	Kaileen Mangan	615-524-7566	kaileen.mangan@umusic.com



Lauren Alaina, Billy Currington, Maddie & Tae, Chris Stapleton, Shania Twain, Travis Denning

VP/PR	Damon Moberly	615-524-7520	damon.moberly@umusic.com
RP/WC	Sally Green	615-524-7770	sally.green@umusic.com
RP/SE	Jack Christopher	615-524-7720	jack.christopher@umusic.com
RP/SW	Jill Brunett	615-351-8273	jill.brunett@umusic.com
RP/MW	Nick Kaper	513-207-3280	nick.kaper@umusic.com
RP/NE	Summer Harlow	931-638-3954	summer.harlow@umusic.com
CO	Jeannie Sullivan	615-524-7514	jeannie.sullivan@umusic.com



Jessica Meuse, Rudy Parris

P	Jimmy Ervin	615-258-5558 x 707	jim.ervin@warriorrecords.com
VP/P	Jordan Zucker	770-833-3994	jordan.zucker@warriorrecords.com
D/P	Tim Smith	928-848-9271	tim.smith@warriorrecords.com



WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE

SVP/RS	Kristen Williams	615-214-1563	kristen.williams@wmg.com
VP/RS	Tom Martens	615-214-1417	tom.martens@wmg.com
VP/RS/M	Chad Schultz	615-214-1423	chad.schultz@wmg.com
VP/SR	Tim Foisset	615-726-7861	tim.foisset@wmg.com
MG/SR	Jenni Tay	615-214-1507	jenni.tay@wmg.com
MG/SR	Erin Duvall	615-214-1457	erin.duvall@wmg.com
MG/Catalog	Brette Moseley	615-214-1442	brette.moseley@wmg.com
CO/SR	Morgan Quaintance	615-214-1473	morgan.quaintance@wmg.com
R	Kimmie Trosdahl	615-598-0175	kimberly.trosdahl@wmg.com



Ashley McBryde, Chris Janson, Dan + Shay, Gabby Barrett, Shy Carter, Tegan Marie, Troy Cartwright, Tucker Beathard

ND/RS	James Marsh	713-927-6302	james.marsh@wmg.com
MG/R/RS	Heather Propper	602-317-0551	heather.propper@wmg.com
MG/R/RS	Tom Starr	818-519-7190	tom.starr@wmg.com
MG/R/RS	Ray Vaughn	214-683-7298	ray.vaughn@wmg.com
MG/R/RS	Jenna Johnson	626-484-3382	Jenna.Johnson@wmg.com
CO/RS	Taylor Aretz	615-214-1458	taylor.aretz@wmg.com



A Thousand Horses, Devin Dawson, High Valley, Ingrid Andress, Kenny Chesney, Michael Ray, Morgan Evans, Ryan Griffin, Tyler Braden

ND/RS	Adrian Michaels	615-477-0545	adrian.michaels@wmg.com
MG/R/RS	Shari Roth	312-590-3229	shari.roth@wmg.com
MG/R/RS	Diane Monk	310-663-4151	diane.monk@wmg.com
MG/R/RS	Stephanie Hagerty	610-883-0533	stephanie.holzer@wmg.com
MG/R/RS	Ray Mariner	770-298-7365	ray.mariner@wmg.com
CO/RS	Kate Myers	615-214-1479	kate.myers@wmg.com



Bexar, Blake Shelton, Brett Eldredge, Cale Dodds, Cody Johnson, Cole Swindell, The Highwomen, Trea Landon

ND	Anna Cage	615-214-1422	anna.cage@wmg.com
MG/R/RS	Bridget Herrmann	412-498-1796	bridget.herrmann@wmg.com
MG/R/RS	Lou Ramirez	210-240-4001	lou.ramirez@wmg.com
MG/R/RS	Mark Niederhauser	214-914-6550	markn@wmg.com
MG/R/RS	Justin Newell	304-580-1133	justin.newell@wmg.com
CO/RS	Kati Salverson	615-214-1430	kati.salverson@wmg.com

ABBREVIATION KEY

A	Assistant	MR	Music Row Promotion
AD	Artist Development	MW	Midwest
AE	Artist Engagement	N	National
AIP	Activator & Indicator Promotion	ND	National Director
AP	Audio Production	NE	Northeast
AR	A&R	O	Owner
B	Business	OC	Original Content
BO	Booking	P	President
C	Content	PD	Production
CD	Client Development	PR	Promotion
CO	Coordinator	PRM	Promotion & Mktg.
CS	Chart Strategy	PRS	Promotion Strategy
CSI	Content Strategy & Innovation	PTM	Project Manager
CSO	Content Strategy Officer	R	Regional
CT	Central	RC	Radio Consultant
D	Director	RD	Regional Director
DG	Digital	RI	Radio Initiatives
DI	Digital Initiatives	RM	Radio Marketing
DM	Digital Marketing	RP	Regional Promotion
DMS	Digital Media Strategist	RS	Radio & Streaming
DS	Digital Streaming	RSGS	Radio Syndication & Group Strategy
DSM	Digital Sales & Marketing	RT	Radio Tour
EA	Exec. Asst.	S	Secondary
EC	East Coast	SC	Senior Coord.
LC	Label Consultant	SD	Senior Director
LR	Label Resources	SND	Senior National Dir.
M	Marketing	SE	Southeast
MAS	Marketing & Artist Strategy	SM	Social Media
MG	Manager	SR	Streaming
MP	Managing Partner	ST	Specialist
		SW	Southwest
		SY	Radio Syndication
		TX	Texas
		WC	West Coast

Welcome to CRS 2020

THE SATURDAY NIGHT PARTY CONNECTION!



A LIVE and Interactive 5 Hours of Today's Hot Country

For affiliation information contact:
affiliaterelations@superadio.com or 212 643-3871



MEDIABASE[®]

WE
KNOW
MUSIC

Spins, Streams & Scores

For more information about any and all of these services,
please contact Robin Rhodes ROBIN@MEDIABASE.COM

MEDIABASE.COM

©2020 MEDIABASE. All Rights Reserved. All marks and logos are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective companies.

ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL AND REACTIVE SINGLES OF 2020

Leslie Fram
Sr. VP CMT Music Strategies says

"Simply a SMASH! 'Front Seat' is a VERY VERY BIG HIT! CMT is proud to support Rayne Johnson on all platforms!"

David Corey/ Beasley Communications
Country Brand Manager
"'Front seat' is turning into exactly what we thought it would. A huge reactionary song that has now translated into top 12 call out in both Boston and Philadelphia. This is our secret weapon song."

Jack Daniel WSOC Charlotte, PD
"Unbelievably POWERFUL and REACTIVE! Rayne is truly connecting with the audience."

IN THE TOP 25 MARKETS, 24 REPORTERS HAVE ADDED "FRONT SEAT"

WNSH (FULL TIME PLAY!)-WUSN-KPLX-KILT-WKHX-WXTU ("SMASH")-WKIS-KKWF-MUSIC CHOICE-WKLB ("REACTIVE AND POWERFUL")-KNUG-WYCD-KMLE-KMNB-WESTWOOD ONE MC AND HC-KSON-WQYK (AROUND THE CLOCK PLAY)-KYGO (ALL DAYPARTS)-WJVC (BIG SHAZAMS)-KWJJ-KUPL-WSOC ("POWERFUL AND REACTING") WIL-KFRG AND A TOTAL OF 70 REPORTERS!



RAYNE JOHNSON "FRONT SEAT"

CLIMB IN, ITS TIME TO GO!



Brian Philips

For Radio, Against The Grain

After 20 years in radio at storied stations including KPLX (The Wolf)/Dallas and Alternative WNNX (99X)/Atlanta, Brian Philips moved to CMT in 2001. Overseeing the network's undeniable growth and success, he rose to President in 2009, departing in 2017. While working on new television projects, he had a conversation that led him back to his roots. Named Cumulus EVP/Content & Audience last May, he is the lead creative executive for one of radio's top groups. To hear him tell it, the return has been eye-opening, familiar and a lot of fun.

CA: When it seems like things are going the wrong way for radio, why come back?

BP: The operative phrase there is, "it *seems* like everything's going the wrong way for radio." In fact, that was not the case at Cumulus when I first talked with them in November [2018]. I met with [predecessor] Mike McVay, of all people. I already had a path picked out, developing premium television with some pretty high profile partners. But you know how charismatic Mike is. We talked about what each of us was doing and, in that first discussion, he painted a very different picture of Cumulus than the one that had become popular in the years proceeding [CEO] Mary Berner's arrival. Mike talked to me about their stations and his work, and I found it familiar, engaging and exciting.

But no illusions about the state of the business overall?

Eyes wide open. I knew everything could change, because nothing stays the same. In the period I was away from radio, television's golden age of cable came and went. We live in a media landscape that's forever changing, and Cumulus had some great opportunities – great stories building. I never got over this familiarity – knowing a lot of people and having a sense, even if you're gone for a while, of the 30,000 foot view of radio.

Everyone told me not to go to CMT in 2001 because distribution was going in the wrong direction. Why should MTV have a country music channel? And that was the best decision of my life. Going to Texas to do Country at the Wolf [KPLX/Dallas] was, arguably, as good a decision. Or going to Atlanta to do [Alternative WNNX]. In every case, I showed I'm a bit of a contrarian. When I hear, "Why would anyone ever ...?" that just fixes my resolve. Foolhardy or not, I tend to embrace those challenges. A lot of us do that because the rewards are great when you go against the tide. That's the story of my career.

THE INTERVIEW

Now that you've been in the chair for a while, how is the reality differing from what you expected?

First, I'm still brand new – just entering my sixth month – I'm still learning, and I've got great advisors around me. What I've found is that I'm astounded at how hard everyone is working. The level at which they're working, both in Cumulus' executive leadership team and all the way down to the local markets, is impressive. I'm amazed at how much everybody is doing, how much is expected of them and how much they're held accountable for. The expectations are great for everyone involved. I'm also amazed at how many people are still in radio, doing good work and helping me.

When you do something for the first 20 years of your career and come back to it later, some things are familiar. My basic intuition, my sense of how a good radio station sounds and my inner compass of what kind of creativity drives success still apply. I don't believe the human condition has changed enough to alter the way those things work on your audience.

What kinds of changes have you initiated?

Perhaps the most important thing I learned in my years at CMT and MTV networks is programming development. That's not a category anybody discusses in radio. It's not a line item. In television, there's an elaborate process by which things are developed. Some would say, "What does radio development correlate to in television development? Reality television?" No, it's more like a combination of sitcoms and scripted, like radio as I remember it. That may be less true now.

There's always been that [idea about] morning shows of putting a couple people in a room and seeing if they connect chemically. Revisit it in nine or 18 months and see what we have. We'll tweak it and maybe add a person or phase someone out. The actual development of entertainment – whether it's movies, music A&R or television development – has a tremendous amount of a protocol and structure that helps you get to a slick and marketable final creative product.

So we're having early, encouraging success with looking at morning shows as sitcoms and casting them, rather than hiring a random selection of characters from broadcasting past to sit in a room and see if chemistry results. My television development training and background are probably an asset because I look at things differently. It opens up creative business possibilities, not just for morning shows, but for all radio stations.

Are there any nuts and bolts changes that have stood out?

Well, we're buried under data. At a time when we're constructing and reconstructing some very big Country stations, we have all of the data in the world available. By its third week, I imagine we have as much background on a single as the CIA has on a third world country where there's about to be a revolution. We have all there is to know about streaming and every possible metric or measurement by which it can perform. Which sounds rational, and in most businesses it is. Unfortunately, we're in *show business*. That's the only thing.

All that data gets put into the centrifuge and out comes a list of songs or a 35-minute block of Country radio. For all of the new tools,





Cowboy Boogie: BBRMG/BMG's Blanco Brown visits Cumulus HQ in Atlanta. Pictured (l-r) are the label's Jon Loba, Cumulus' Greg Frey, Brown, Philips and Cumulus' John Dimick, the label's Ken Tucker and Carson James and Cumulus' John Kilgo.

tactics and knowledge we seem to have unearthed over the last 20 years, it's likely the song still supersedes everything. A better collection of songs would make me not fatigued at 35 or 40 minutes of listening to a Country radio station.

You're alluding to the format's ratings decline?

It's not just me, obviously, but a lot of people we all know are arriving at the idea that something's gone wrong with the recipe. And we're going to have to make some sweeping changes to keep the format vital in the future and bring new people in. We're going to have to give up some old practices that were sacred to us and stop doing things we do reflexively but don't

know why. We are all buried under information. We're clearly doing the best job, scientifically, of repeating composite music hours based on all we know. But, to the uninitiated listener, why aren't the stations better? So there's that.

It's a historic, national Country radio problem that we get into these troughs of sound-alike music. I recognize the gender balance problem is part of it. Restoring Country to its proper perspective where the story is told from both male and female points of view is an obvious issue to be addressed. But it's not the only one.

What are the others?

I talk to [CMT's] Leslie Fram as much now as when we worked together every day, and I tell her it would be fantastic if that problem were solved. I would hope *that*, in and of itself, would remind people that sonically country music isn't all the same. It would be a huge step up, but country at its best is comprised of three or four different movements ranging from a Texas movement to crossover pop. Think of all the crazy ways things combined in earlier eras of country greatness when we dominated ratings – almost impossible combinations of characters, as in 1989, who could show up at any given time from all over the map and create a scene that saves the world.

We all have memories of the first time we heard a song or artist – those genre changing moments – and we always get back around to that. In the meantime, if I'm being honest, I still believe that 80% of the time, a music station with a problem has a music problem. We can use sitcom development skills to create a morning show that works. We can create a new era of imaging and dynamic positioning that people perhaps haven't heard before – instill some new energy in these stations. But that 80% ... there's something wrong in the machine. I don't know that we can circumvent that with show business.

So there's a music problem. What can radio do?

There's a music problem, and we're on it. Cumulus has an army of people, as do the other companies, who are working desperately like it's the Manhattan Project to try to figure out how to fix this. It may reconcile itself, but we're looking hard, too. We're looking hard in Georgia, and we're looking hard in Texas where we have Cumulus' biggest Country interests. We're going to pump a huge amount of energy and effort into those stations which, historically, have been big enough that – when they get it right – have a good impact on the larger business.

Stop hoping; start looking. The songs that will be our future won't necessarily be mailed to us by major labels in Nashville. You have to go looking, and our guys are doing that. I walk up and down the hallways in our Atlanta offices and hear people scanning. I know it's going on in Texas very heavily right now, and I do it myself. That's part of the gig. If you get the long ball, it could be the most important thing you'll ever do in the game.

The last time you did this interview, you said of your radio past, "I was always looking for reasons to include things. I thought that improved our chances of being

bigger, as opposed to establishing a filter that excluded or pushed things aside. I just think you lessen the odds that lightning will strike." Does that still hold true?

That will always be true. That's our cultural premise. To be special, the element of surprise has to be produced. They don't all work, but that's what development is. The model in TV is you develop 10 new things. Three will die a terrible death and never be spoken of again. Two will go through 14 weeks of sitting on the bubble of having a future or being canceled. Two will be solid, modest, good performers that feel like they have a future. One will rank high enough to become a returning hit. And one will go through the roof and define the channel for the next five years. You don't have to be right with every choice you make; that's the nature of show business.

Not every show that opens on Broadway is going to run for 10 years. Not every morning show is going to connect, much to our chagrin. I don't know how we got out of the business of taking chances, because to me that was the most fun part. It was the chance to introduce people to something they hadn't heard before and change their day with it.

When you read some of the negative headlines about radio, do you see them as an indictment of radio as an entertainment platform or as commentary on the capital markets and reverberations of the '96 Telecom Act?

Cumulus is not in the same lane as some of the companies who are experiencing difficulties. We reduced our debt greatly this year, and we're operating successfully. But there's some inevitability. I saw a commercial for a Sonata that parks itself without the benefit of help from the driver. Everything in our world is a little terrifying, much as the industrial revolution was terrifying for people who were keeping stables of horses. AI and the pace of change are such that changes that would have taken 10 years to come to fruition in radio a decade ago are suddenly possible. Someone can take six months, go into the laboratory and figure it out.

I've read all the social posts and, of course, we all have empathy for people who have been experts at plying their trade on the radio for a long time. All of us on the

programming team at Cumulus are trying to find things for people who are very much deserving of a chance at gainful employment and a platform for making great radio that entertains people. But it was somewhat naive to imagine that the pre-deregulation model would go on forever. This attitude that we're the only industry this ever happened to has a little bit of self absorption to it. Speak to someone like my dad, who was a lifelong newspaper person. My older brother Peter edited magazines for the last half of the 20th century. I don't know what you say about progress.

I see these long advice columns about how to get yourself back in order for another job on the radio.

Well, that's a thought. But millennials are very comfortable with the notion they're going to have to change careers every couple of years for the rest of their lives. It's a mindset. Again, it is terrible because it affects people we know, but there is an aspect of self absorption.

Can radio work as a mainly national business?

There's nothing more national than cable, and when I got here my first thought was, okay, how do I nationalize? What's the most efficient way to generate great programming everybody in America would like? Then I realized we're curating a bunch of fantastic local brands at Cumulus. I can't foretell the future, but I can tell you right now, the thing that gets me excited – and plenty of others who are working on these projects with me – is developing highly local, market-centric stations that couldn't possibly be mistaken for one you'd hear anywhere else. That's particularly true in Atlanta and Dallas, and it's going to be true in a couple of other places where we're working on things. It's just great fun.

It goes back to my basic, pre-television premise about great radio, whether it was in Minneapolis at the time of Prince, or when Texas music exploded, or

THE INTERVIEW

“From executive leadership all the way down to the local markets ... I'm amazed at how much everybody is doing, how much is expected of them and how much they're held accountable for.”

WELCOME COUNTRY RADIO!

CAROLINE
JONES

NEW SINGLE

All of the Boys



THE INTERVIEW

when alternative slowly intersected with the mainstream when I was in Atlanta. Each of those stations was designed to make the local audience feel great and excited about where they live. One could argue it's easy to do that in Dallas and Atlanta, but harder in other towns. Every city isn't flush with the same kinds of action, activity, excitement and sexiness. But wherever you live in America, people wake up in the morning and want to be a part of a community. My priorities for that right now happen to be in those two high-profile markets where we're under construction. But it can be done anywhere.

What's the programming philosophy behind that?

I'm sure people are mortified by it because they're all working so hard, but I brought back a fairly old school notion of what a program director does. The job involves a handful of things I just can't live without. There were many [such PDs] already in the company, and we're trying to attract new ones. First and foremost, you have to know how to creatively reflect the best of the place you live whether you're doing Classic Rock, Country or Top 40. You also have to be good with a morning show.

With all due respect to the excellent morning show coaches who make huge differences in the markets where they work, including some of our stations – and Mike McVay is about the best morning show coach who's ever lived – I always thought as a PD, my primary job was to manage the morning show. It was the first thing I did every morning and the last thing I thought about every night. That was the gig – picking people out and managing them into a good place.

And it's creating a promotional profile with or without money. For all the complaining that there's no money for the things we used to budget for, radio always had a show business aspect to it that wasn't overly dependent on huge infusions of cash. It was a scrappy promotional business.

Those are things we look for in PDs. Then, I assume you'll be able to create good architecture for these broadcasts hours. PDs have to get their swagger back and realize they control the product – at least in our company – with a lot of help and support from our corporate programming team. It's no small thing to be the person who controls the creative output of a radio station, whatever the market. Those of us who are or have been PDs know that special feeling. It's what brought us to it. Maybe some of that swagger has been missing or was replaced in some companies by corporate bureaucracy. But once again, I have to go against the grain on that.

“ We all have empathy for people who are very much deserving of a chance at gainful employment ... but it was somewhat naive to imagine that the pre-deregulation model would go on forever. ”

And that's being well-received?

I am speaking, again, with very little experience. I still haven't been here that long, and I'm working on a few stations. But I'm astounded at the talent and dedication. These market managers are all-stars. They're great to work with. So, I'm in a good place, and Cumulus is in a good place. I'm particularly gratified because I was told I'd be given the latitude and money to make things happen. Everything I expressed as important in my initial conversations: big market studies, research, OMTs, focus groups for morning shows, marketing for new stations, the ability to upgrade – essentially my whole bag of tricks – every promise has been kept by Cumulus.

Some of our larger stations I happen to be working on now are ultimately going



Captain Phillips: St. Jude welcomes Phillips on his first day on the job and recognizes Mike McVay for the millions he helped raise during his tenure at the company. Pictured (l-r) are St. Jude's Glenn Keese, Phillips, McVay and St. Jude's Anna Hensgens.

to be good blueprints for the smaller ones. Part of me thought this was going to be a breeze because I had done it before and because I'd been through the mill of national television, but I was in for a rude awakening. I am highly dependent on a bunch of people who are way smarter than I am in the ways of radio, as I was in TV. That's what's coming together at Cumulus, and so far so good.

What gets you excited about getting out of bed in the morning and getting to work in radio?

I'm astonished at how hard radio people work at so many different things. Everybody's like a Navy SEAL in this business. That would not be the first image of radio people conjured up by anyone who clearly remembers the '80s and '90s. It was a different time. Today, people are bearing down hard to fix and maintain the power of a medium that we love. And here's why you should do it – not to be a mercenary or to see how much torture you can take:

When I was a child – and I do mean a child of 15 or 16 – I did mornings, but I couldn't picture the audience. Now, I'm around a lot of other human beings every day rather than living in a broadcast booth. I look around at 11 rows of cars headed into Buckhead during morning drive. In the old days, I would have thought about them en masse. “Look at all those listeners.” I wouldn't have thought of their individual conditions. But everybody listening to your station has a need, something going on, an issue at work or at home: health, family or money. Everybody's got something on their mind that's way bigger than your radio station.

But we still have the power to add something worthwhile to people's existence and to bring them some humanity that reminds them we're all in the same boat. We have the chance to brighten the outlook of someone who's distracted by their problems. A little bit of that got forgotten or isn't talked about enough as the core reason for being.

Why is Country special? Because a country song can strike you as, “That happened to me.” Everybody can relate to Ingrid Andress being afraid to take her boyfriend home lest everything fall apart. There's human experience in every country song.

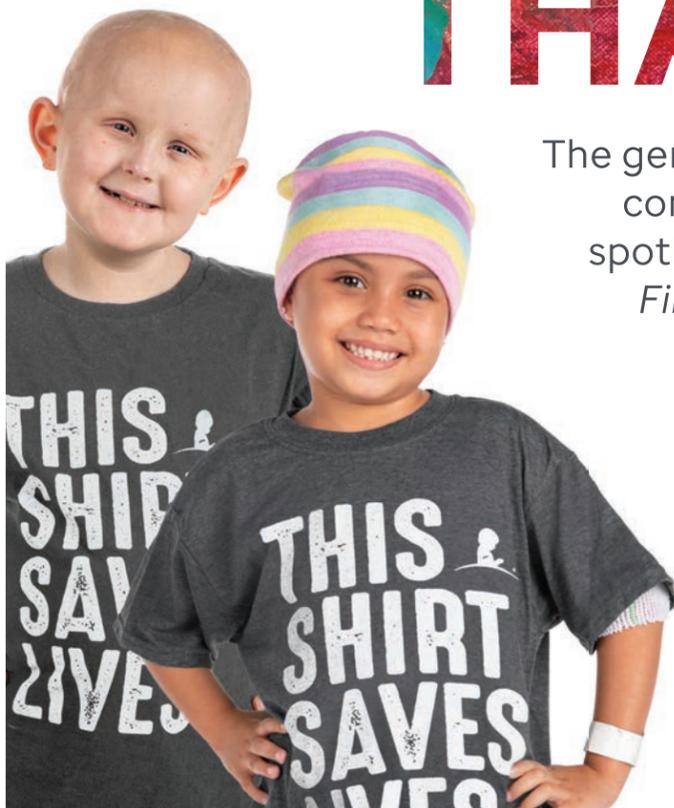
All of us in radio are dealing with circumstances different from what we remember. Even if we're remembering them in a more idealized way, it's tough. But this thing we do is still basically noble. It entertains and serves people and communities. It has purpose. How could that not be something you wake up and want to work for?

I still romanticize the idea that a morning show can have one-to-one communication with a person who's troubled or conflicted by their own boxed-in isolation as they drive down the road. It can make them feel better. A country song can do the same thing. If you're working consciously toward that, then you're providing a valuable service in today's society. And no one can question that. **CAC**

THANK YOU

St. Jude patients
Ian, Mia and Quincy

The generous spirit of the Country Music community continues to shine a spotlight on the mission of St. Jude:
Finding cures. Saving children.®




**St. Jude Children's
Research Hospital**
Finding cures. Saving children.
ALSAC • DANNY THOMAS, FOUNDER

THE MOST IMPACTFUL COUNTDOWN IN COUNTRY MUSIC.
HEARD ON OVER 300 RADIO STATIONS.



Carrying The Tradition Forward.

“Acoustic Alley was Bob’s favorite event at CRS. I am excited to see the tradition continue with Fitz as its host. **See you Thursday night at CRS!**”

— Nan Kingsley, President/CEO, KCCS Productions, Inc.

Affiliate Now!

Email Shawn Studer at shawn@ct40.com | 817-238-3049

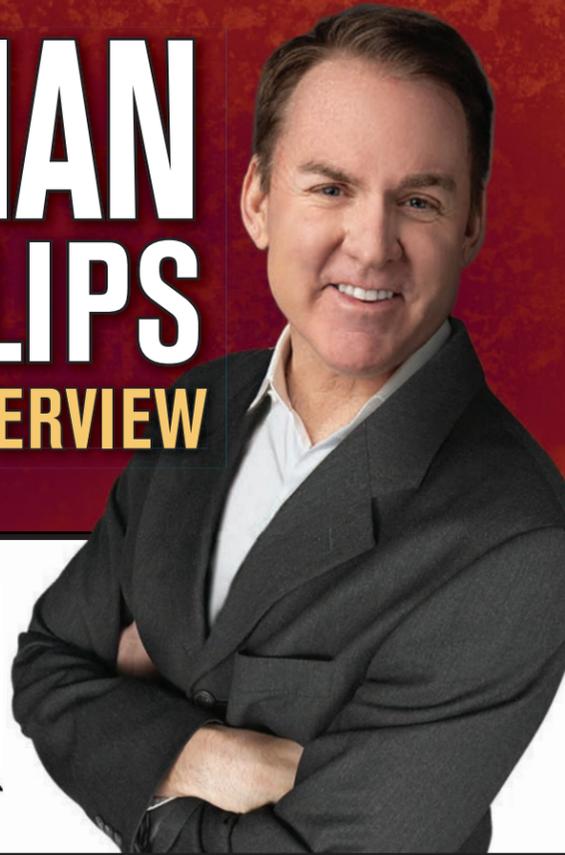
SKYVIEW
NETWORKS

**THE RISE
OF THE
CORPORATE
MANDATE**

*Myths,
Theories &
Revelations*
THE CLASS OF



**BRIAN
PHILIPS**
THE INTERVIEW



COUNTRY
AIRCHECK

FEBRUARY 2020



UPPING THE ANTE

BRANDON LAY
FOR MY MONEY