

**MARCONI  
FINALISTS**

**THE PD AS  
TALENT BUYER**



Dial Global's  
**KIRK  
STIRLAND**  
The Interview



# COUNTRY **AIRCHECK**

SEPTEMBER 2012

LOVE AND THEFT

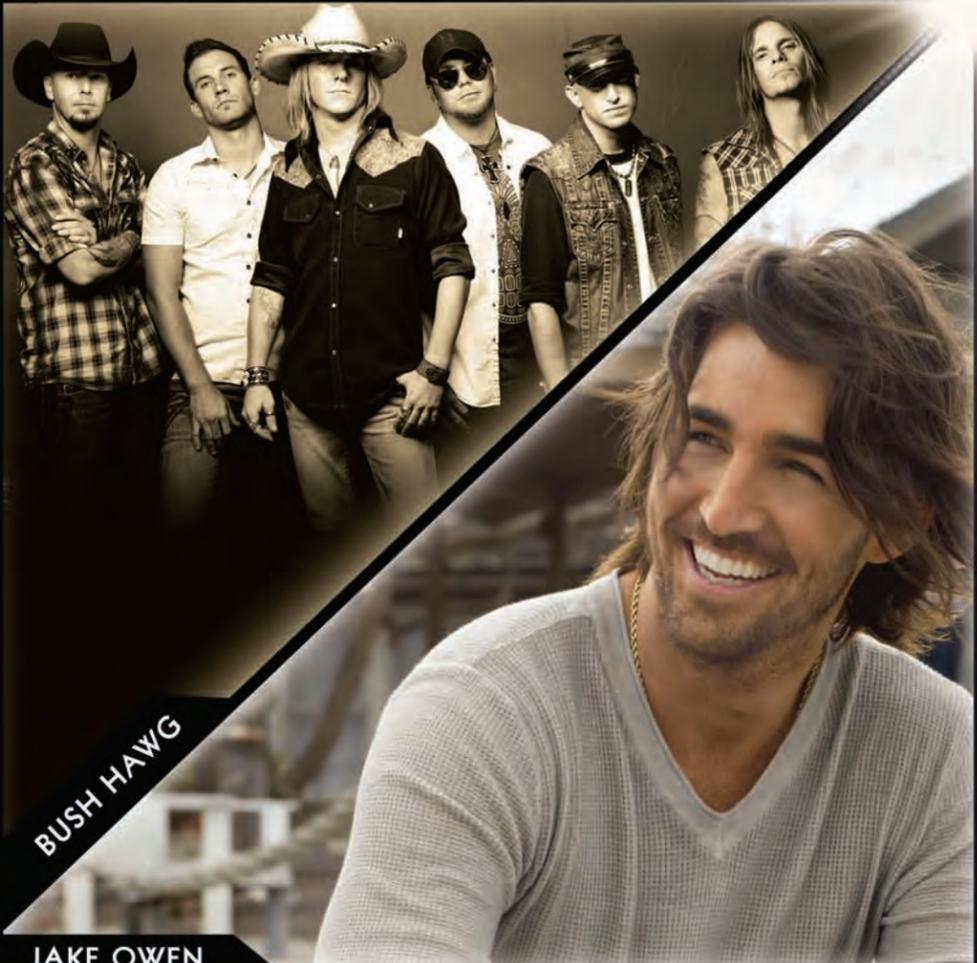


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# We Buy Gold ... & Platinum & Hits, Too

## When Programmers Double As Concert Promoters



**I**'ve now produced enough shows to the point where, if this radio thing doesn't work out, I could probably get a gig doing it for a living." That's Kevin Callahan, who allocates part of every week to planning the five or more yearly concerts that KSON/San Diego creates for its listeners. But in his spare time, he's programmed the station to a No. 1 market rank for much of the past year, so his day job (that radio thing) is pretty safe right now.

The same goes for WYCD/Detroit PD Tim Roberts, who oversees the station's massive, annual Downtown Hoedown. The three-day festival has attracted as many as 100,000 fans. Like Callahan, Roberts juggles day-to-day programming for No. 1-ranked 'YCD with numerous other station shows, too. "It's hard to estimate exactly what percentage of my time is spent on all these shows," says Roberts. "But they are a fabric of the music scene here in Detroit, so we devote the attention they deserve."

Callahan and Roberts are just two examples of numerous PDs who essentially double as talent buyers and promoters for hard-ticketed radio station shows. These events range in size from festival events for tens of thousands to more intimate acoustic shows. In many cases these events are built from scratch, meaning the radio station is responsible for the lineup and production. Playing the role of promoter also means assuming the financial risk, further increasing pressure to deliver a solid product onstage. In short, the task is not to be taken lightly.

"You have to work all year on it," says WBCT/Grand Rapids PD **Dave Taft**. He and OM Doug Montgomery put together the station's annual *B-93 Birthday Bash*, a two-day event attracting more than 80,000 fans. "If you wait until the last second expecting to find an artist, it's next to impossible, so start early." Roberts agrees



**Dave Taft**

and confirms that assembling 2013's lineup literally started the day after the 2012 *Hoedown's* final note was played. Similarly, WBCT's event took place in late June, and Taft and Montgomery have been busy working on next year ever since. Montgomery may already have a headliner secured for 2013. "Fortunately," Taft adds, "the event has a reputation for being something they want to be part of."

### Headline Headache

With a 27-year track record and annual attendance of nearly 25,000, WKIS/Miami's *Chili Cookoff* also has a stellar reputation. Nonetheless, finding a strong headliner to anchor the show is always challenging, according to PD **Ken Boesen**. "Getting that slot booked eats a hole in my stomach every year and keeps me awake at night because we need to sell as many tickets as a shed." So where does a PD-turned-



**Kevin Callahan**

talent buyer start acquiring acts for a multi-act, all-day show with NTR implications and ticket revenue riding on his or her success?

Well, that depends. "With the larger acts, you express interest with the label but you ultimately end up talking to their booking and management people," Taft says. For Callahan, it's rare to deal directly with management, so labels serve as an intermediary. "Ultimately, it gets there [to management] anyway," he says.

Boesen turns to all-of-the-above. "We start with whoever can best move the needle for us, be it a manager or booking agent," he says. "Labels are helpful with finding a good fit or helping to get a deal that works. But when you're dealing with a huge artist, it's completely out of the label's hands."

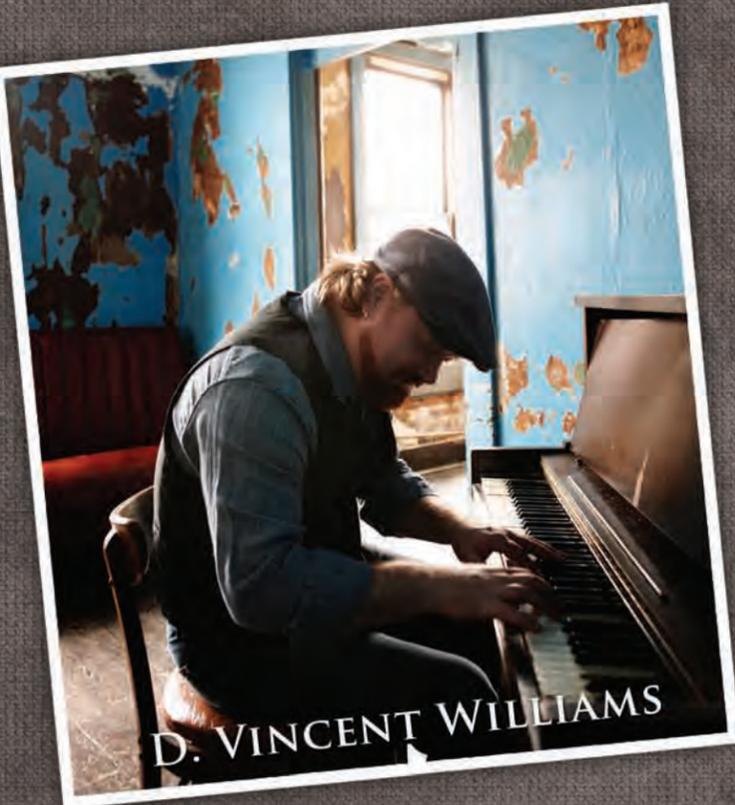
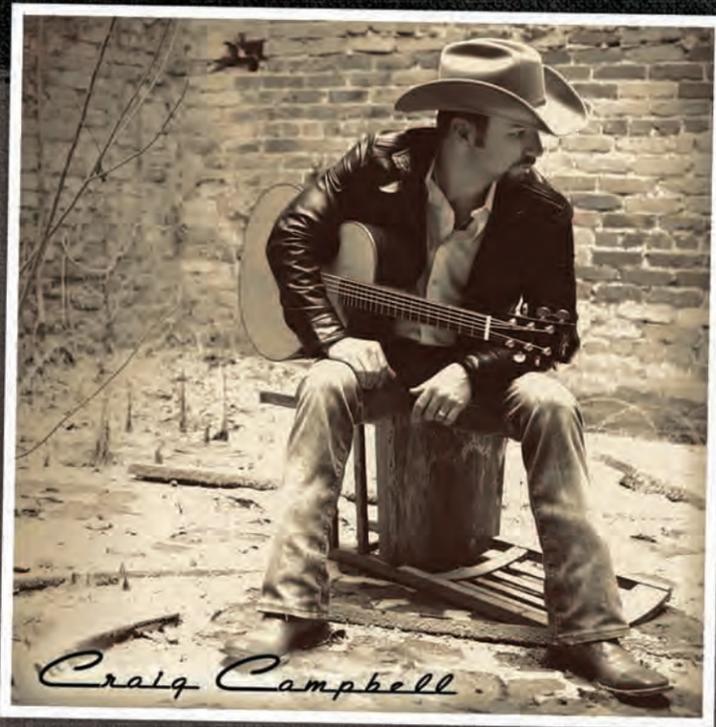
An alternative headliner solution has become more common in recent years – buying a date on an existing major tour, which might ultimately have come through the market anyway. For instance, Miranda Lambert headlined WXTU/Philadelphia's 28th annual *92.5 XTU Anniversary Show* in June, bringing along supporting acts Chris Young and Jerrod Niemann. Market Manager **Natalie Conner** says the station has teamed with Live Nation for the past several years to provide a high-profile headliner for its show. "It's done for ease of execution," Conner says, adding that it also helped PD Shelly Easton keep her focus on WXTU's on-air sound.



**Ken Boesen**

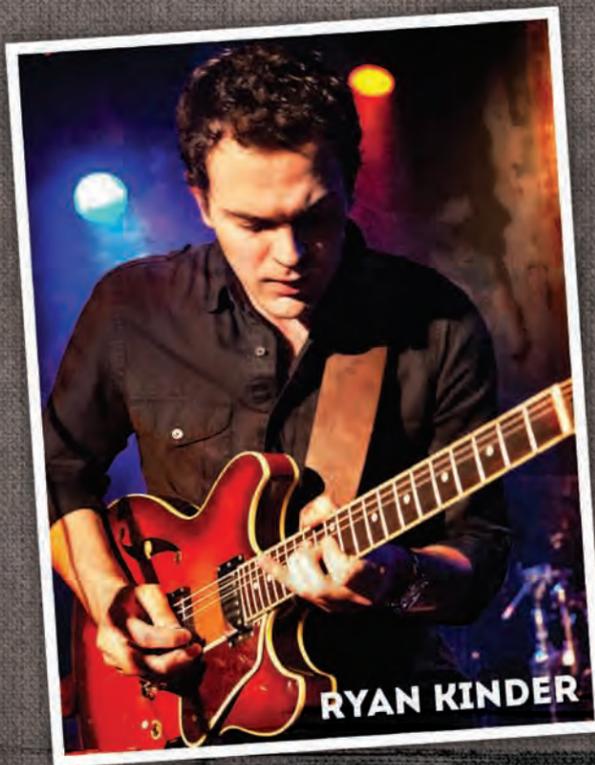
### Outsourcing Sourcing

"I don't know how to program a station," says Live Nation President/Country Touring **Brian O'Connell**. "Their skill set is not necessarily in producing live events. But you put the two together, and now you have experts in their fields working



● ● ● ●

# BIGGER PICTURE



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One of the hardest things about radio shows can be the routing," says Creative Artist Agency's **Brad Bissell**, noting that a proposed concert experience can look great on paper, but it doesn't mean anything unless you can get every artist to the same place at the same time.

"Sometimes ideal routing doesn't come into play," Bissell continues. "So the artists are in a position where they want to please radio and work with them, flying all over the country." He says, with radio being the top marketing tool for country music, "We're going to do everything we can to cooperate and make them happy."

Even so, routing can be an issue. "Huge," WKIS/Miami's **Ken Boesen** says, "because what routes to South Florida? Well, if you look at the shape of the Florida peninsula, the answer is, 'Nothing.'" He explains that when booking agents work on the *Cookoff*, "They have to book everybody around us."

Bissell says label regionals should do their homework, too. "Develop a great relationship with the booking agents, then look at the

calendar together to see where routing makes sense. That way, if at all possible, regionals can be efficient with promotional dollars and the artists can be efficient with their time."

Ignore routing, and an artist may end up doing a single show in an area of the country far from where they're working at the time. "It can take three days for just one performance," Bissell explains. "Two of those are for travel."

Logistics can be a significant obstacle. "If their next show after ours is in Honolulu, that won't work," WBCT/Grand Rapids' **Dave Taft** says. "But if an artist can jump from a Grand Rapids show to Cleveland or Chicago, it's an ideal situation. WKCQ/Saginaw, MI used to have a show the same day as ours. It's an easy drive, so we'd look at each other's lineup or book the show earlier."

"We all have the same goal, which is to break artists by working together," Bissell says. "We want to build long-term careers that include both radio airplay and touring." Keeping an eye on the other party's considerations, including routing, will help.

# The Route Stuff



## Programmers Double As Concert Promoters

together and making magic happen."

WXTU paid for "a significant part of the tour," says Conner. Additional supporting acts Edens Edge, Josh Thompson, Uncle Kracker and Laura Bell Bundy were booked by the station. The show was then branded as part of the station's five-show *Country Megaticket* for the Susquehanna Bank Center in Camden, NJ.

Lambert's tour was also the core of this year's WYCD *Hoedown*, a partnership made even more natural, thanks to Live Nation producing the show. But using an existing tour isn't a permanent arrangement for the *Hoedown*, according to Roberts. "There's no steadfast rule," he says. "Because the concert business keeps on changing, we roll with the flow. There are so many factors: who's available, who's already booked or who is on a package tour."

When it comes to working with programmers, O'Connell says it's an ongoing conversation. "In Philadelphia, it was a case of talking with Natalie [Conner] and Shelly [Easton] about what's coming, what they're wanting to do and working together. I worked with Tim Roberts in 2011 and 2012, and we talked a lot about what they were doing to improve the *Hoedown*."

Live Nation is also providing the headliner for KGO/Los Angeles' Sept. 29 *Go-Fest*. Station Manager **Michael Levine** did not want to share details of the arrangement, but says the show headlined by Jason Aldean is a win-win. Certainly, Live Nation has a substantial marketing partner for the show in Go Country. Likewise, the station gets to brand the show as its own and, because it sold out almost immediately, has a powerful promotional tool at its disposal. Elsewhere, Live Nation also put together WMZQ/Washington's station festival. "You might see a pattern here," O'Connell laughs.

As much as nabbing a big, existing tour makes life easier, challenges still exist. How does it all work? "You listen a lot," says O'Connell. "Radio shows have a lot of sponsorship elements that have to be incorporated. There can be a lot of pressure on the act to do things they maybe aren't doing at a typical tour stop. Radio has to understand that,

as well. Everybody is working toward the same goal."

## Betting Futures

Once the painstaking process of nailing down a closer is completed, Boesen says, "You build the show around them." For the *Chili Cookoff*, that means finding at least four supporting acts for the one-day event. WBCT's *Bash* has featured up to seven acts on each of its two days, while WYCD's *Hoedown* could rightfully be considered the granddaddy of 'em all, a three-day extravaganza that featured 50 acts at last June's version. But what's the right number of artists on a show, and is there such a thing as too many?



Tim Roberts

"We have a rough idea of what we want and what kind of day we have to fill," Taft says. "It depends on who's there. This year we had Dierks Bentley, who has a deep catalog of music and can play longer." KSON's *Countryfest* went four artists deep, which Callahan calls "a good, full day of music where each act plays between 30- and 75-minute sets." Taft has noticed shifts in his *Bash* audience as the day moves along. "Some people come out early and have to leave. Some have to work and come out for the last couple acts or just the headliner."

Like assembling a station's music log, the variety and texture of the lineup are also important variables. And when considering newer artists with only one or two releases under their belt, timing is everything. "You have to forecast the best you can," Boesen says. "Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose. We've had developing acts that worked out really well, like Justin Moore and Gloriana a couple years ago; we also had The Band Perry. Those acts became huge. Some haven't."

Roberts remembers a few situations where the first single on an act stalled out after they were scheduled to play the *Hoedown*, but it happened before the actual show. That's not the end of the world, he says. "When I booked them, it wasn't about the song being No. 1, it was more about what kind of performer they were and the music I'd heard."

With a two-day show featuring multiple acts each day, Taft says, "We're lucky our day is long enough so that if one act doesn't work, another one does." But he's also been lucky in other ways. "We had a

streak of several years when the week they played our show, they had the No. 1 song on the chart. That worked out perfectly for a few mid-level acts."

## We'll Do It Live

Putting together a lineup is part art, part science. "You have to pay attention to who is out there and see what artists you can get," Taft explains. "Don't expect to get the A-list superstars, because it's busy out there. Trying to track people down and to get them to do this is not an easy task."

"Talk to local clubs; talk to an arena nearby if there is one. Find out who's selling. The information about who people are going to see is all out there. Don't just listen to newer acts in your office. Play them in the car and for other people, too."

WBCT employed that kind of intelligence gathering when it booked Brantley Gilbert based on a club show he did in the market. "This was days before he signed with Valory," Taft says. "I was blown away and told Doug we had to get this guy. We put the wheels in motion 16 months in advance. We couldn't get him on the show that first year, but we booked him on the [sister station WMUS/Muskegon, MI] *Moosefest* and the *Bash* for the following year."

"You have to get out there and see things for yourself. The listeners will tell you, too, but look at anything and everything. There's a lot of new stuff that comes up during CRS week. We go down there to see who has a buzz and who is entertaining. Seeing them play at 3rd & Lindsley is a lot better indication than watching them in our conference room. We've had plenty of acts come through on a radio tour that are OK, but you see them live and say, 'Wow, I didn't get this.'"

Roberts agrees. "Seeing them perform was always key. If I believed they could do a tremendous live show that my market would like, that was the clincher. *Hoedown* was really built on the new, up-and-coming artists, so we try to find acts who are on the rise. We've had a pretty good batting average lately. I banked my poker chips early on Lady A, Jason Aldean, Luke Bryan, Eric Church and Zac Brown. I would say probably the biggest thing is to book the people you believe in. It's the synergy of all that which makes a great show happen."

Taft knows which labels to put his faith in when recommending artists. "I also know guys who are going to tell me anything and everything just to get their record on," he says. That's part of the mixed blessing a successful, long-



Brian O'Connell

tenured radio show brings. Labels, eager to put priority new artists in front of a potentially huge audience of Country PIs, often jockey aggressively for placement in the lineup.

"It's never, 'Do our show and get airplay,' says Taft. "That never does anybody any good because if we're not interested in the act, we're not putting you on the show." Historically, Roberts says he only books artists he feels have strong airplay potential.

"What I hope everybody recognizes is that the act is going to own the radio station for a minimum of 60 days," Boesen reminds us. "Zac Brown played last year and we were 'Zac Brown FM.' I won't do a show with anybody I can't support with airplay. Why would I do that? If we want to do something, we'll go to the label and say, 'Since we are in deep and invested in this act, we'd like to do something else to build it in the market.' But a lot of labels recognize the value of putting their artist in front of 20,000 people. The more big stars we have down here, the better we all do." **CAC**

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# Guglielmo's Fire

## Country's Marconi Finalists Light The Way

Each year, the **National Association of Broadcasters** recognizes excellence in broadcasting with its Marconi Awards, and Country is always well-represented. This year's finalists, a portion of which are profiled below, are industry leaders when it comes to ratings success, awards and community service. They are also a shining

reflection of the format as a whole.

Finalists **WUSN/Chicago's Lisa Dent & Ramblin' Ray** (Major Market Personality); **WIL/St. Louis' Cornbread** (Large Market Personality); **KKNU/Eugene, OR's Barrett, Fox & Berry, KUAD/Ft. Collins, CO's Brian Gary, Todd Harding and Susan Moore,**

**WYCT/Pensacola, FL's Brent Lane** (Medium Market Personality); **KCLR/Columbia, MO's Scott and Carissa** (Small Market Personality); **WYCT** (Medium Market Station); **KCLR** (Small Market Station); and Country Station of the Year nominees **KCLR** and **KUAD** all have been profiled in recent issues.

## Birds Of A Feather

**Large Market Personality: Dr. Don, WYCD/Detroit**

*WYCD/Detroit morning man Dr. Don Carpenter is a 20-year station vet and a first-time Marconi Personality of the Year nominee. He doesn't consider himself quite worthy of the honor, but the lifetime bird lover who owns several parrots rules the roost in Detroit as the city's No. 1 ranked morning show.*

This is the end-all, be-all of awards. When you start off in this business, you think how nice it would be to get a Marconi, but I don't consider myself in the same league as people like Paul Harvey and Dick Purtan. For me, it's like one of those unattainable goals.

This nomination is a first for me, and getting it makes me believe there's a serious flaw in the process somewhere. Actually, we just copied Dick Purtan's winning entry and changed the names. You could either come up with something on your own or go with what you know will win.

I heard about it from Tim Roberts, our PD. I think I was doing yard work or something when he emailed and said, "Congratulations, call me." Of course,



**Recovery Specialist: Dr. Don holds up a guitar belonging to Justin Moore, which had disappeared during a show last year. The good Dr. helped reunite Moore and his instrument.**

I called right away and he didn't answer.

Being a Mason, I help with all the charitable things they're involved with. The Shriners are an arm of the Masons and they operate the dyslexia school here in Detroit. Masons fund the Child ID program in the state. There's also a neo-natal intensive care unit in Ypsilanti where, for most of the last five years, I've hosted the hospital's fundraiser.

One of the things that's great about the show is that it's very conversational. It's like you sat down at the breakfast table with three or four of your best friends, who also happen to be cut-ups. We just try to have fun with it all.

I've never seen a Marconi Award because I always thought if I looked at one I'd be sad if I didn't get it. But we have a trophy case in the station lobby, so it would go there. Maybe I'll get one, too, and it will go in bed, right between my wife and me.

I'm not sure how we'd celebrate winning ... probably with EMTs and paddles because not one of us will believe it and you'll have to shock us back to life.



**He's A Pepper: A longtime bird enthusiast, Dr. Don is seen here with Pepper, his Amazon parrot who passed away recently after 30 years with Carpenter.**

## Conference Room Cake

**Small Market Personality of the Year**  
**John and Dave Hiatt, KCIN/Cedar City, UT**

*Brothers John and Dave Hiatt handle wake-ups for a community of 100,000 in Southwestern Utah and have been on the air together for more than eight years. Following a six-year run at Top 40 sister KXBN, they went Country two years ago at Cherry Creek Radio's KCIN.*

"I always thought it was the top accolade that you could get," says John. "It's surreal, really. Those are where the greats go to be recognized."



**C Section: The mountain-sized "D," which stands for "Utah's Dixie," in its restored glory just outside St. George, UT.**



**Brothers Trouble: John and Dave Hiatt (l-r).**

"[Marconi winners] are the ones who have made our business into what it is. Frankly, it's a bit overwhelming to be counted among them," adds Dave.

"People listen because we try to keep a sense of fun and curiosity about the show. We give human insight and talk about the things going on around us and in the world," says John. "That, and we're just way funnier and quicker on our feet than the other guys," he notes modestly.

"There's insanity involved and maybe some sympathy for us in knowing that we couldn't work elsewhere," Dave admits.

"We try to bring heart and true feelings to things," John explains. "There's a reality we seek for the show; we know what we are and don't pretend to be bigger than that, and our audience appreciates it."

"For example, there's a big 'D' on the side of a mountain just outside of town that's sort of a community landmark. We decided to 'kidnap' it and hold it for ransom in order to raise money for our annual Christmas charity for kids." Dave says.

"Now, this big 'D' is made out of whitewashed rock, so we weren't going to actually be able to move it," says John. "The mountain is sort of black, so we came up with the idea of covering it with black plastic as our way of 'kidnapping' it. We dragged a huge, I mean *huge* roll of plastic up there, only to find out that this 'D' was *way* bigger than it had looked from the ground."

"Our massive roll of plastic would only cover one part of the 'D,' so the best we could do was turn it in to a backwards 'C,'" Dave continues. "Then, of course, after a couple of weeks of threatening to kidnap the thing, the story had to become, 'If you don't pony up the money we need for these kids, you'll have to be a 'backwards C' town from now on.'"

"In the end, it worked out great. The whole community got involved, and we raised a record amount of money," John says. "That's what it's all about; it's how we best connect."

"We're not very good at celebrating, but I'm sure we'll do something if we win," Dave says. "Maybe some cake."

"Yeah, conference room cake!" agrees John. "Maybe a balloon."

# THE WARNER SOUND

WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE



## 'Perfect Storm' Of Music And Staff Helps WMN Right Its Course

By Phyllis Stark

Executives at Warner Music Nashville mark time in two increments: the last three years, and everything that came before that.

Three years ago this month, seasoned music executive and avid music fan John Esposito took the helm as the Nashville label's President and CEO and set about not only bringing in a few key staffers, but also elevating and empowering many existing staffers that he felt had the skills to get the job done under new leadership.

Since then, they've had multiple successes, including the rise of Blake Shelton from occasional hit maker to bona fide superstar. But never have the inroads they're making been more evident than on the recent airplay charts, where the label simultaneously notched four singles in the top 10 and five in the top 20. More remarkable is that several of those high-charting acts were brand new (Hunter Hayes, Jana Kramer, The Farm Inc.) or recent additions to the country music landscape (Gloriana).

Says Esposito, "I think what our label has done is proven to itself that it can deliver

results. And while we have a long way to go before I'll be satisfied, I am so thrilled that a team that had not felt success in a lot of years—those who were here when I arrived—are getting to have a sense of victory, both radio chart victory and actual financial performance victory."

Much of that was accomplished with the talent already in the building. "I feel like we identified the stars who were here and just empowered them more and brought in some fresh thinking and talent where I thought it was needed," Esposito says.

But talented staffers can do little without great music to work. Happily, they were given plenty of that, with more to come this fall in the form of new singles from superstar Faith Hill ("American Heart") and other stars on the roster, plus studio albums from Big & Rich and Dwight Yoakam and a Christmas album from Shelton.

"I can't overstate how happy I am with the quality of music that is coming out of our A&R department," says Esposito. "That, combined with the amazing people at WMN—who have been up for the challenge of showing that the 'little

engine that could' can actually get over that mountain—it's invigorating."

Other executives in the company are feeling that winning vibe not just in the building, but reflected back to them from country radio and Music Row as well. "It's one of those perfect storm scenarios," says Sr. VP Promotion Chris Stacey, who was hired by Esposito a little more than two years ago. "Espo and I came in here. It took us a minute to dial things in from a company and staffing perspective. We obviously made some changes to the staff. We also got the music right. When you get the right music, the right staff and the right belief out of your people, great things can be accomplished, and that's exactly what's going on at Warner Music Nashville today."

Like Esposito, Stacey gives plenty of credit to the A&R department. "Our A&R people are firing on all cylinders right now," he says. "They just keep bringing us music that is working."

Bob Reeves, VP WMN Promotion, sums up the label's progress in a single word: focus.

"Since Espo has entered the fray here, we have been allowed as a promotion staff

to actually focus on specific acts," he says. "We have long ramps to launches, and then an open field for us to actually find out what we have and focus on each individual artist."

"There was a time in this building where we didn't travel very much, we didn't cover shows and we didn't interact even with the rest of the Row like we do now," adds Reeves who says the label's promotion teams have now become "truly competitive" with their counterparts at other labels.

Esposito says others on the Row are noticing their accomplishments, and reaching out to members of his team with messages of support and congratulations. "Every time that happens, there's more oxygen and a little bit more of a smile," he says. "I swear we will never get arrogant about it. We will be humble, I promise you, forever. But there is something about that momentum that helps inspire confidence."

Chris Palmer, VP A.R. Promotion, credits two factors for the label's gains: "the right music and the right team. If you don't have the right people on board, the right music wouldn't get the chance it deserves. But even with the right

people on board," he says, if the music isn't right you can't "bluff your way" much higher than the 30s on the charts. "When you have the right music, though, and you have the right team to give it a chance to succeed, then great things can happen," says Palmer. "From where I sit, having the right people can make you look pretty smart."

Esposito is also quick to share credit with his team. "I know I play a role in motivating people," he says, "but our turnaround is more because I identify talented people and just let them do what they should do."

Reeves says the promotion staff can feel country radio programmers responding to the changes, along with his own staff. "Success breeds success, and it energizes everybody," he says. "We're like 'Let's go get to the next one. Let's go break something else. Give me more.'"

Palmer agrees. "When you have success, people want to be a part of that," he says. "It's a much different conversation when you're calling somebody going 'Hey, we've got this killer new Big & Rich single, and I want to discuss the opportunity for an album premiere.' Boom, the phone rings right back. That's a lot different

from when you're calling up saying 'Hey, I've got this brand new artist you haven't heard. I want to talk to you about putting it into rotation on your radio station.'"

Adds Reeves, "It is obvious that we are a force to be reckoned with at this point. We're no longer the sleeping giant in the big building down at the end of the Row. This place is energized and happening, and all these records in the top 20 do nothing but further that excitement and that energy. We're ready to rip."

Esposito, meanwhile, has one more important goal for the label.

"I want us to be known as the most artist friendly record label in the business," he says. "My heroes in this business are label heads like Mo, Jac and Ahmet who let artists be themselves."

Likewise at Warner Music Nashville, "We're going to let them be themselves," he says. "That, I think, is a huge part of why this label is starting to make hay! Our artists are having fun. When they can roam the hallways of our building freely—which they do—and feel like this is a family, it's extraordinary the results you get."

# FAITH HILL

NEW SINGLE  
"AMERICAN HEART"  
COMING SOON

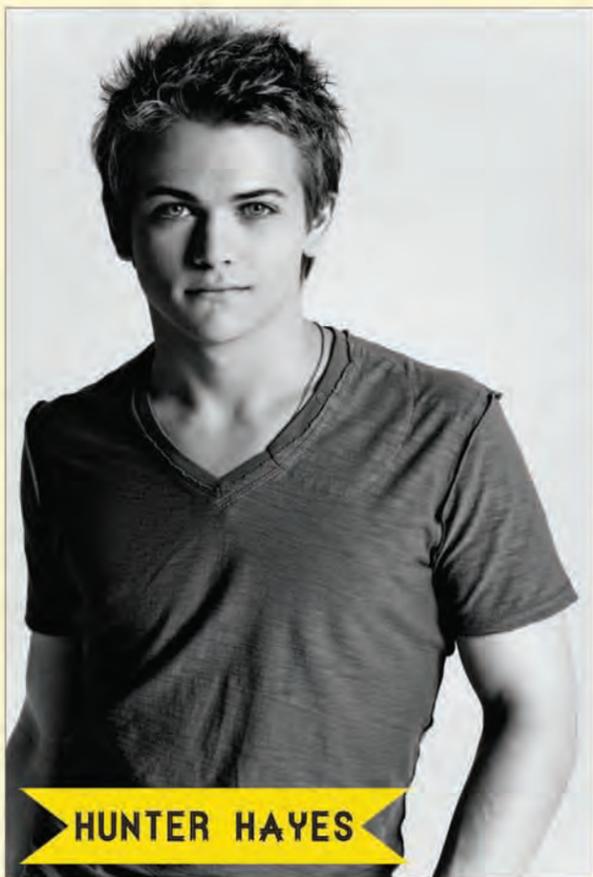
# GLORIANA

## “CAN'T SHAKE YOU”

FOR IMMEDIATE AIRPLAY.

FOLLOW UP TO SMASH SINGLE

“(KISSED YOU) GOOD NIGHT.”



HUNTER HAYES

## Hunter Hayes Is ‘Wanted’ At Country Radio

When a veteran record promoter like VP WMN Promotion Bob Reeves calls Hunter Hayes, “potentially the most talented artist I’ve ever worked with,” he’s not throwing the compliment around lightly.

He’s talking about an artist who, at just 21-years-old, has already amassed an impressive list of accomplishments including two hit singles and an Academy of Country Music Award nomination for Top New Artist. The Louisiana native played every instrument on his debut album, wrote all the songs, and co-produced the project with Dann Huff. He’s also sold over a million downloads to date, including sales of his platinum-certified current single, “Wanted.”

Radio quickly took notice of Hayes’ talents. Warner Music Nashville Sr. VP Promotion Chris Stacey says, “We went out to radio with him and knew instantly that we had something very, very special on our hands. Literally from the first radio visit we ever did, the word ‘superstar’ was being bandied about.” The only mission for Stacey and his team from that point on was to “go make it so.”

They’re already well on their way. After an impressive No. 12 peak for debut single “Storm Warning,” the follow-up, “Wanted,” has surpassed it and is on track to top the charts.

Reeves says “Wanted” is “researching as well with older men as it is with teenage girls. It’s spectacular to watch it bloom right in front of our eyes . . . We came with this huge, really adult sounding ballad, and all of a sudden the whole world recognizes his talent.”

One of Hayes’ strengths is his engagement with fans on social media. He has seen rapid growth, with a following in the hundreds of thousands, and has over 25 million views on YouTube.

Peter Strickland, Sr. VP Brand Management & Sales for Warner Music Nashville, says, “He really focused his efforts in that area. He’s very heavily involved in all his socials, and communicates with his fans on a regular basis, which translated to strong recognition at the early tour dates he had.”

Agrees Stacey, “He’s developed a staggering touring base for an artist who’s only on his second single . . . The kid knows how to connect the dots as well or better than any artist I’ve ever worked with.”

After opening tour dates for Taylor Swift and Rascal Flatts, as well as his own headlining club dates, Hayes is highly visible on the road this fall opening Carrie Underwood’s “Blown Away” tour.



JANA KRAMER

## Jana Kramer Makes Record Breaking Debut

What could inspire a group of jaded, veteran male record executives to put on tiny sundresses and ride around Music Row on vintage bicycles? Two words: Jana Kramer.

The occasion was the young star’s debut album release, and a handful of the label’s senior staffers, including president/CEO John Esposito, marked the occasion by re-creating the beautiful singer’s wholesome album cover pose. VP W.A.R. Promotion Chris Palmer admits it wasn’t an attractive sight.

“You’ve gotta see me in this dress,” he says. “It wasn’t my size. I looked like 10 pounds of peanuts in a five-pound bag. Sometimes you take one for the team.”

Kidding aside, Kramer is off to a seriously strong start to her music career. The artist was previously better known as an actress, having appeared as a regular in the television series’ “One Tree Hill,” “Friday Night Lights,” “Entourage” and “90210.” But her debut single, “Why Ya Wanna,” quickly soared into the Top 10 and continues to climb.

How quickly? Warner Music Nashville Sr. VP Promotion Chris Stacey lays out the stats. “Jana Kramer is the most successful debut female artist since Taylor Swift in 2006,” he says. “She broke the record for most adds out of the box ever, not only by a female, but any artist, with 55 first weeks adds. When we put her record inside the top five, she will be the highest charting debut female in the history of County Aircheck.”

Palmer says all of that adds up to “an historic launch.”

“From the second we embarked on her promo tour, we knew we had something special,” Stacey says. “We had add commitments from nine of the first 10 stations we visited,



something I’ve never seen happen in my 20-year career. She absolutely has one of the most magnetic personalities of any artist I’ve ever worked with. She has this amazing ability to connect with people, and we’re seeing that not only at radio, but now we’re getting a chance to see her do it with her fans in a profound way.”

On Aug. 23, Kramer was presented with a gold single plaque by label execs at their monthly summer concert series, Pickin’ on the Patio. The single is from her self-titled debut album, released in June, which debuted at No. 5 on the SoundScan Top Country Albums chart and reached the No. 1 slot on the iTunes Country Album chart.

She is currently on Brad Paisley’s “Virtual Reality Tour,” where she is performing through September. Her sophomore single, slated for fall, will be “Whiskey.”



FAITH HILL

## Faith Hill’s Heart Showing On New Single

Faith Hill, along with husband Tim McGraw, made a big media splash last month holding a press conference in Las Vegas to announce plans to perform a 40-show engagement at The Venetian, beginning in December. With Hill solidly back in the spotlight, it seems like a particularly opportune time for Warner Music Nashville to launch her anthemic new single, “American Heart,” at country radio this month.

Radio first got to hear the song when Hill world premiered it at a label-sponsored luncheon at Country Radio Seminar in February. Warner Music Nashville Sr. VP Promotion Chris Stacey calls that performance “a defining moment” for the singer.

“I was standing next to her backstage right before she walked on, and she was a bit nervous about playing in front of our friends in radio,” he says. “But she knows how important it is to be embraced by radio, and to watch her walk out onto that stage—knowing she was a little nervous—and absolutely crush her performance that wound up getting a full standing ovation from CRS attendees, was, for me, an absolute moment in time that I will never forget.”

VP W.A.R. Promotion Chris Palmer also recalls Hill’s memorable CRS performance. “We had some great radio programmers there that were backstage hanging out,” and after hearing “American Heart,” Palmer says, “a couple of them came right up and said ‘We’ll be there for ya.’”

Stacey says the new single is a great fit for country radio, calling it “a down the middle of the format, no-brainer type smash country record from one of the biggest superstars in the business.” He says it’s one of several cuts on her upcoming new album that he feels could be “big, fat smashes at the country format.”

Says Palmer, “I have the feeling radio wants to be in the Faith Hill business. They like her and want to play music from her. They just want the right record.”

The new single, Palmer says, is “a tempo country song with a great message, great lyrics and Faith singing the hell out of it.”

Meanwhile, Hill’s superstar statistics speak for themselves. She’s sold more than 30 million albums in her career, and is the only female artist to have landed three consecutive No. 1 album debuts on both the Billboard 200 and Top Country Albums charts. She’s earned five Grammy Awards, 12 Academy of Country Music Awards and three Country Music Association Awards, among numerous other accolades. At radio, meanwhile, she’s notched 13 No. 1 singles so far, and the WMN team is shooting for “American Heart” to increase that tally.



NEW SINGLE  
“BE GRATEFUL”  
FOR IMMEDIATE AIRPLAY



**BIG & RICH**

## Radio Asks, WMN Delivers With Big & Rich

There's a certain magic that happens when Big Kenny Alphin and John Rich combine their voices. And when they do so on an inspiring, uplifting, timely and socially conscious hit like "That's Why I Pray," the magic translates into the three-time Grammy-nominated duo's fastest rising single of their career.

The song is taken from the duo's new album, *Hillbilly Jedi*, in stores Sept. 18. Hit maker Dann Huff produced the project, adding a new dimension to the sound of the duo, which has sold 4.9 million albums and 4.6 million downloads, including the gold-certified "Lost In This Moment."

The choice of single, and the accelerated pace at which it was serviced to radio, was largely determined

by Clear Channel programmers, who first heard the song at their company summit in Nashville last winter.

"We didn't really have any plans in place to quickly turn the music around," says Warner Music Nashville Sr. VP Promotion Chris Stacey. "We were going to let them finish their writing and recording process first. But the feedback was so passionate and so loud from that group of programmers, who literally said to us 'Don't wait until tomorrow, go home and ship us that record tonight.' It was undeniable."

"We didn't quite ship it that night, but we definitely put the record on a fast track," Stacey says. "Any time you can sit in a room with 40 programmers and pretty much have a

consensus that 'there's your single' and quotes like 'That's a monster song' and 'That's a song of the year contender,' you just know."

With Huff at the helm, VP W.A.R. Promotion Chris Palmer thinks *Hillbilly Jedi* is packed with great potential singles.

"Dann is an amazing producer, and he makes hit records," Palmer says. "That's what Big & Rich needed. I think Dann pushed them vocally farther than they'd been pushed in a long time. The album is full of amazing material, including a song with Jon Bon Jovi and Richie Sambora that they recorded in New York."

## THREE PAIRS OF WISHES



9.18.12  
DWIGHTYOAKAM.COM



**THE FARM INC.**

## The Farm 'Grateful' For Top 20 Debut

Among Warner Music Nashville's many successes in breaking new acts with year was the top 20 debut of new trio The Farm Inc. On this one, however, they enlisted an outside partner who shares in the credit. While the band is signed to WMN's Elektra Records imprint, its singles are being worked to radio by veteran promotion executive Rob Dalton and his team at New Revolution, under the guidance of WMN Sr. VP Promotion Chris Stacey.

But the Nashville-based band, Stacey says, "is every bit as much in the family as anybody else."

Stacey says of the New Revolution team, "They handle the heavy lifting of The Farm Inc.'s promotion. We couldn't be more proud of the job that those guys did delivering a Top 20 debut single" with "Home Sweet Home."

Next up for the trio—made up of Nick Hoffman, Damien Horne and Krista Marie—is a new single Stacey says was "resoundingly" picked by radio as its choice to be the follow-up. "Be Grateful" is now at radio.

The touching power ballad is about taking a moment to smell the roses and being thankful for life's little pleasures.

Says Stacey, "We heard back from radio time and time again, 'There's your hit.' So obviously we're going to listen to radio when they tell us stuff like that."



**BLAKE SHELTON**

## Blake Shelton's Hit Streak Is Far From 'Over'

For John Esposito, Warner Music Nashville's President and CEO, the success Blake Shelton has been enjoying in recent years has been "a galvanizing moment" for the entire label staff.

Prior to the arrival of Esposito and the label's Sr. VP Promotion Chris Stacey, as well as the installation of Bob Reeves as VP WMN Promotion, Shelton had landed just five No. 1 records in eight years. But when his current single, "Over," reached No. 1 last month, it marked Shelton's seventh No. 1 in a row, and his 12th overall. He's also the reigning CMA Male Vocalist of the Year, an award he's now won two consecutive years.

"Here was a guy that we knew had all the talent in the world, on top of that charm and wit," says Esposito. "He needed a more focused effort from his label. He and his great management team partnered with us to uber-focus resulting in, among other things, seven No. 1 singles in less than two and a half years."

Now, the plan is just to keep the Shelton trend going. Says Stacey with a laugh, "He's never had anything but a No. 1 record since the day I got here, so I sure as hell don't want to break the streak now."

"Blake is one of those guys who's just consistently delivered hit after hit to country radio over the last couple of years and he's built a ton of equity," Stacey continues. "They know that when we bring them a Blake Shelton record, it's going to test, it's going to hit the top of the charts and it's going to perform in every measurable metric. That's exactly what 'Over' is doing."

"To be the fourth single off of an album and to run up the charts as fast as this has is staggering, and speaks to the level of star power that Blake has achieved through all of his hard work on 'The Voice,' and the awards shows and the touring," Stacey adds.

Reeves says the hit streak, coupled with his role on "The Voice," has elevated Shelton from "B+ artist to an A+ artist in the past couple of years." Stacey agrees, "He has gone from being a solid performer in the format, to the absolute pinnacle of superstar."

Next up for Shelton is a holiday album, *Cheers, it's Christmas.*, due Oct. 2.



**GLORIANA**

## Gloriana's Hard Work Pays Off

When Gloriana recently peaked at No. 2 with their single, "(Kissed You) Good Night," it was "the equivalent of winning a silver medal" in the Olympics, says Warner Music Nashville Sr. VP Promotion Chris Stacey. It's an apt analogy, since VP W.A.R. Promotion Chris Palmer says it felt like both the band and his own promotion team trained hard for the victory.

"There's real pride there," Palmer says of landing the hit, which has sold more than 750,000 downloads to date.

"I could not be more proud of our team, and the way we delivered this single," says Stacey. "This was a massive single for this band. It literally will change their lives and careers forever."

The group had some success with its first single, "Wild At Heart," and until now was never able to follow it up, explains Palmer. "I don't think they had anybody that wanted to fight for them like we do."

"They've never been more determined to be successful than they are right now," Palmer says. "They've never wanted to work harder than they do right now. We just took a negative, spun it into a positive and moved forward. Radio embraced those guys, got behind them, and we had a record that was one of the most played records of the year this year, over 95,000 spins and counting."

Stacey agrees about the work ethic exhibited on both sides. "They went out and worked their tails off at radio, and by 'they' I mean both our staff and our band over the 41 weeks of this single," he says.

"To watch this band go through the challenges that they went through this year, and persevere, and be in the position that they're in right now at the top of the charts is absolutely heartwarming," Stacey adds.

Palmer is just as excited about the rest of the music on the band's new album, *A Thousand Miles Left Behind*, and particularly the new single "Can't Shake You."

"We're in a wonderful position to make that band go to the next level," he says.



ALBUM IN STORES  
9.18.12

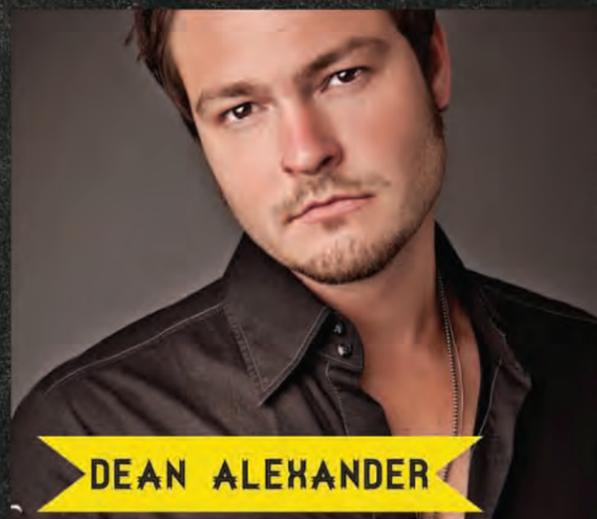
## GET TO KNOW CHARLIE, BRETT & DEAN



**CHARLIE WORSHAM**



**BRETT ELDREDGE**



**DEAN ALEXANDER**

⚡ **CHARLIE** ⚡

⚡ **BRETT** ⚡

⚡ **DEAN** ⚡

<b>HOMETOWN</b>	GRENADA, MS	PARIS, IL	PARKERSBURG, WV
<b>FIRST CONCERT YOU ATTENDED</b>	VINCE GILL	NELLY	CHEAP TRICK
<b>FAVORITE FOOD</b>	FISH & CHIPS FROM SUMMER SHACK	PEANUT BUTTER & OATMEAL WITH HONEY	COCONUT SHRIMP
<b>FAVORITE HOBBY</b>	INSTAGRAM	FISHING	GOLF
<b>WHAT ARE YOUR MUSICAL INFLUENCES?</b>	JIMMY MARTIN, B.B. KING, MARTY STUART, DARRELL SCOTT & AEROSMITH	FRANK SINATRA, RONNIE DUNN, VINCE GILL & JOHN MAYER	DWIGHT, CHRIS ISAAK, THE VENTURES, AUDIO SLAVE & THE CHILI PEPPERS
<b>HOW MANY TATTOOS DO YOU HAVE?</b>	1	0	3

**JIMMY FALLON**  
BLOW YOUR PANTS OFF  
IN STORES NOW



**BIG SMO**

One way the label diverges from the mainstream is by housing a comedy imprint, LoudMouth Entertainment, for which Esposito gives all the credit to WMN Sr. VP Brand Management & Sales Peter Strickland. The imprint will release a new project from Cledus T. Judd in October, and recently successfully launched TV star Jimmy Fallon's comedy/music album, *Blow Your Pants Off*, making a publicity splash by draping Music Row with 300 pairs of pants salvaged from Goodwill.

Esposito says of Fallon, "He's amazing to work with, just the right kind of guy to be in business with." The album has already topped the comedy charts, and Esposito says, "We think this is just going to be one of those records that keeps selling over a very long haul."

"Our goal with the comedy roster was to build a non-traditional roster of comedians that will spread across all genres, not just country," says Strickland. The LoudMouth roster also includes Larry the Cable Guy, Jeff Foxworthy, Henry Cho, Dan Cummins, Lisa Lampanelli, Katt Williams and others.

Coming Sept. 18 will be *3 Pears*, a new album from Dwight Yoakam, who has been welcomed back to the label where he had all of his hits in the '80s and '90s. Says Esposito, "I'm not just a fan of his music, but of the fact that he has been boundary breaking. Having somebody like Dwight associated with your label also gives you a coolness factor!"

Also recently signed to the label is rapper Big Smo, an act WMN Sr. VP Promotion Chris Stacey jokingly calls the "love child of Kid Rock and Run-DMC."

"It's amazing to me to hear the buzz that has emanated off of Smo's arrival on Music Row," says Stacey. "We are getting calls from the top writers in town, emerging hot new artists that want to be involved with what we're doing with Smo. I don't have any lofty aspirations that we're going to have huge country radio hits off a rapper, but it is fun to be involved with something that is so creatively different . . . Put that in the swinging for the fences department."

"Our belief here is that there is a movement going on that this young man is speaking to," Stacey adds. "He had over eight million hits on YouTube before he got his record deal. The kids are plugged into this type of music."

Adds Strickland, "His music appeals to the country lifestyle. We know there's a market out there, and that's why we pursued it."

In addition to its non-traditional releases, WMN keeps things fresh in the marketing area. Here are three examples of that, along with a charity initiative that originated in the label's promotion department.

- **Pickin' On The Patio:** Each summer month for the last three years, WMN has rolled out the red carpet for the rest of Music Row, hosting free concerts on its patio attended by hundreds of industry executives. Another initiative created by Strickland, the party is held on the fourth Thursday of every month from May through September, with WMN acts providing the entertainment and a variety of sponsors providing the food and drinks.

Says Esposito, "I think it's good for the Row, the community of music, to know that we at WMN are all crazy passionate about music."

- **No Shave November:** Last year, in an initiative launched by WMN regional promoter Lou Ramirez, the company raised nearly \$35,000 for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital by getting its male employees, country radio programmers and many other country music executives outside of the company to pledge not to shave for the month of November. The fun promotion ended with an informal awards ceremony where prizes were given out in a variety of beard-related categories.

- **Lyric Videos:** Esposito calls parent company Warner Music "leaders in lyric videos." In fact, they've had so much success with these videos—popular placeholders until a more traditional video can be shot—that the company now creates them for every release shipped to radio, and most typically get hundreds of thousands of YouTube views.

Says Esposito, "Like every other record label, we have a deal with YouTube, so we actually get compensation for it, which gets shared with the artist. So it has a lot of benefits."

"It's an example of the forward thinkingness of our digital marketing department," adds Esposito. "This is another bullet in their holster of strategy."

- **The Warner Sound:** Another online initiative is the music group's own popular YouTube channel, The Warner Sound. This year, during June's CMA Music Festival, the label created a brand extension for the channel by renting out downtown Nashville club aVenue, reaching out to artists' fan clubs via e-mail blasts and packing in shows for such artists as Jana Kramer, Gloriana, Hunter Hayes, Cledus T. Judd and Frankie Ballard, where the artists performed and the label sold merchandise.

Says Esposito, "We couldn't be more pleased with the results."

## WMN Balances Mainstream Music With Boundary Pushing Projects

For all the success Warner Music Nashville is having in the mainstream market, it's important to President/CEO John Esposito that they still sign worthy non-traditional projects, including a comedy album from Jimmy Fallon and a country rapper you'll soon be hearing a lot about named Big Smo. That non-traditional approach also extends to the company's marketing efforts, its events, and its charity endeavors.

Says Esposito of the label's "alternative" projects, "I want to take care of the core country business, but I never want to be accused of being cookie cutter or trying to only be in the business that is narrowcast to what is on the chart in country radio."

"Things like Big Smo invigorate me and keep me interested, as do things that are truly left of center," he adds. "I'm intrigued to find different flavors, and as long as we can deliver good results with whatever the so-called mainstream aspect of our business is, we can go push those boundaries."

**No Shave November**  
It's Growing • CountryCares.org

**BLAKE SHELTON**  
Cheers, it's Christmas.  
In Stores October 2nd

## Guglielmo's Fire

# Takin' It To the Streets

**Large Market Station: KSON/San Diego**

Lincoln Financial's KSON/San Diego has had a lot to celebrate in the past two years including No. 1 rankings, PPM numbers consistently in the six-share range and now a Marconi nomination. PD Kevin Callahan says winning would be big for a station that focuses on the little things.



**Homecoming: KSON attends the arrival of every Naval ship that returns to San Diego, a city that thousands of military personnel call home.**

stations don't, either because of personnel issues or just because they've stopped, such as giving tours to Cub Scouts or to someone who wins a CD and has always wanted to see a radio station.

We go into small towns and participate in their parades. We did one recently simply because they requested us to come and because we could. It wasn't even a hot ZIP. I don't know if it's PPM or what, but in recent years radio stations have left the streets. It's still a big deal for people to see their favorite station at a concert or small towns.

The Marconi is looked at, in many circles, as the most prestigious award you can win and would be a huge win for this team. It would be a good pat on the back and verification of the work we've done. We've actually had a lot of that, though, between PPM results, selling out shows for the national acts and the NTR stuff we're doing. It says we're on the right track and that the audience is here and active.

Some of our community outreach may sound surprising. We do simple things that many



**Life's A Beach: KSON morning teamers John (top row, center) and Tammy (front middle) join station street teamers and listeners for an impromptu tailgate party.**

We have this old ambulance as a station vehicle, and it draws attention. When it went to that parade, people surrounded it. Listeners don't get to see something like that in some places. I see stations that are doing small-town tours, and I think that's a big deal.

We're not fully staffed up, but I do feel blessed to have the people here that we do. We get a lot done with smoke and mirrors, and that's what radio is about. It isn't as if we have a full street team, but it doesn't mean you should give up. You can't always achieve the pinnacle, but to say instead you'll do nothing isn't acceptable. You make the most of it and go say hi to people.

I don't know what receiving a Marconi looks like; I've never won one. I know it will be a big deal. My guess is our GM will approve a celebration in the building. Then the KSON staff will go off together and talk about some of the things that got us there and feel good about it.

## 'Local Done Well' Wins

**Small Market Station: WKDZ/Cadiz, KY**



**The More I Pink: WKDZ's Bill Booth (c) with listeners during Pink Out 2011 in support of breast cancer research.**

also proof to our staff that doing the 'little things' right most of the time pays off. It takes a total team approach to get to this point, and it's good for us to see that.

We believe you have to find a way to make an emotional connection with your listeners. They're looking for companionship and a partner, and we provide that by championing the causes we think people care about. We recently spearheaded a drive to

Ham Broadcasting's WKDZ is no stranger to industry recognition. The station was named the Marconi Small Market Station of the Year in 2008 – the only Kentucky station to have won a Marconi – and boasts many local and national community service awards. PD Bill Booth says it's all about super-serving the community in everything it does.

This nomination is validation that we're being good stewards of the frequency, and it's a measure of our success. Salespeople can measure their success every day in dollars and cents, but it's harder to measure programming success. The recognition that comes with the nomination does that. It's

provide a vehicle to a local domestic violence shelter through Toyota's national 100 Vehicle Giveaway. The shelter was up against four or five other charities, and the one with the most Facebook votes would win – and they did. Now they're getting a new van to transport women and children who are leaving violent situations. That is cool.

The station does a big, yearly back-to-school drive with a non-profit called Helping Hands to provide clothes and supplies to local kids who otherwise wouldn't have a shot at those things. We were able to raise \$3,000 as part of a two-hour broadcast. It's incredible how generous people are and how much they like to be involved. Everything we do is so our listeners can have that opportunity.

We're just very much of the mantra that 'Local done well wins.' We're about community, fun and personality. For example, if I have a choice between somebody who's very funny, talented and relatable on the air who's in Kansas City and someone local who's not so polished but willing to learn, I prefer the latter. We've already lost the people who are obsessed about the music. They've got CD changers, Rhapsody and iPods. We avoid being a cookie-cutter station.

There are two types of management philosophies in radio today. One is, when times get challenging, to cut back and reel it in. Ours is different. We take the approach of investing in the product. If it's better than anyone else's, we'll have more listeners. Then we can do a better job for our clients. It's a monster to feed, but despite the recession, we've had a record year and have been able to do some very incredible things. It's very nice to be recognized for it.



**On The Basket Case: Fundraising items stack up at the very beginning of preparations for the Cadiz Rotary Auction.**



**mwb**  
miss willie brown  
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Top 5 "Retention Scores" in Houston

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- KILT/Houston | KMLE/Phoenix
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- WQBE/Charleston

On Tour This Fall With Jon Pardi & Frankie Ballard!



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## Guglielmo's Fire

# Running On All Cylinders

Country Station: WYCD/Detroit

CBS Radio's WYCD has been dominating Motor City Radio rankings for most of the past year. PD Tim Roberts explains why the Marconi means so much, discusses WYCD's charitable efforts and explains how the station make a strong connection to its community.

To me the Marconi is the crown jewel of awards you can win in radio. It's presented at the NAB, so broadcasters from every format are involved with it. The owners and operators from major and minor broadcast companies are in attendance, and it's named after the guy who invented radio. It symbolizes great, entertaining broadcasting, really standing for your city and being an integral part of the community. With two nominations (Also for Dr. Don's morning show), it's kind of mind-blowing.

We really stepped up our community involvement last year and did some amazing things. One that stood out was our 9/11 Anniversary lamp-lighting event at two giant locations, the Detroit River and Lake St. Claire. We had a military tribute and thousands of people launching floating lanterns that lit up the sky, creating a huge celestial display in honor of those who gave their lives. Participation from local police and fire organizations made for a great tribute event.

Our annual radiothon for St. Jude raised over a half-million dollars. We've been as high as a \$1 million in years past, but the economy, being what it is, affected our total. The people of the Detroit area have been very generous, though, allowing us



**Hello, Detroit!** The WYCD airstaff takes the stage at the station's annual Downtown Hoedown, with Dr. Don Morning Show team member Steve Grunwald on the mic.



**Honoring 9/11:** WYCD listeners launch floating lanterns during a 9/11 tribute last year that took place at two locations simultaneously.

to keep doing it every year. Coincidentally, St. Jude just named us their Radio Station of the Year.

Country's success here is a combination of our music and talent connecting with people. We're part of the community and we understand what people are going through. There's good old-fashioned, salt-of-the-earth, hard-working people in this market. Country music appeals to those people and helps them have a better day sometimes. It supports their

believe in God, family and the good old USA.

This is a tribute to the leadership of our GM Debbie Kenyon. She's been a huge advocate for the station and I owe her a ton of gratitude. She's every bit as passionate about WYCD. Even though she's now the Market Manager for the entire cluster, she still supports us 110%. I can't thank her enough.

## Focusing On The Big Things

Country Station: WIL/St. Louis

Hubbard's WIL put together a string of 12 months in 2011-2012, during which the station was never ranked lower than fourth and delivered four No. 1 finishes. PD Greg Mozingo says his station is built on personality, but has benefited from a unique time for Country music, too.

We're honored to be nominated. It's a prestigious award, and that's certainly not taking away anything from the CMAs or ACMs. The Marconi is different in that you're writing about your accomplishments and commitments in black-and-white rather than by sending an aircheck. We focused on the big things we do in the community and still left a lot of stuff on the cutting-room floor.

One of the most fascinating stories is our involvement in the Susan G. Komen Walk. When [morning personality] Cornbread arrived in 2004, he made a commitment to fight breast cancer and have one of the biggest teams in town. The first year, he had about 1,500 people, and that's pretty big. It's now grown to 7,500, making it one of the largest teams in the country; the St. Louis walk as a whole is one of the largest in the US.



**Team Breadhead:** A portion of the more than 7,000 team members rallied by WIL morning personality Cornbread for the city's annual Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer walk.

It's amazing. You can't go anywhere on that route without seeing a Team Breadhead t-shirt. This year, he topped \$1 million raised during his seven years here working with Komen. To me, that stands out and says we've done well to give back to the community and to help fight cancer.

Country music is just on fire right now. When I think about comparing this to the early 2000s, the Garth era or, to go further back, even to the *Urban Cowboy* boom, this has a different feel to it. Acts like Jason Aldean, Lady Antebellum, Blake Shelton and Zac Brown have come of age and raised the bar for the more established acts. If that's not enough, you have Eric Church, Luke Bryan, Thompson Square and others coming on, too. To me, this all started when John Rich was on *Celebrity Apprentice* and Lauren Alaina and Scotty McCreery were *Idol* finalists. And it continues now with Blake Shelton on *The Voice*.

It's no secret that we built this station on personalities, and they have really embraced this boom. Our airstaff has been able to engage the audience in a pretty profound way. It's also [MD] Danny Montana and his dedication to the music, but everybody has a part in this because it's a family effort here. At the end of last year, which was great in terms of ratings and revenue, we got together as a staff. If we win the Marconi, that's exactly what we'll do again.

It's a good time to be in the Country music business right now. We're excited and out there every day for the country fans, trying to make St. Louis a better place to live.

**Bo Knows Sam:** WIL afternoon personality Bo Matthews (r) discusses the challenges of throwing a skinny post into a two-deep zone with St. Louis Rams QB Sam Bradford.



## Caring About People

Country Station: WZZK/Birmingham

Cox Radio's WZZK consistently claims the Country ratings top slot, turning in an 8-share in the Spring book. Former PD Justin Case, current PD Paul Orr and Dir./Promotion Justin Ragland point to WZZK's very close relationship with its listeners and a local management structure that has been hyper-sensitive to the needs of the community for more than 30 years.



**Service Station:** WZZK staffers and community members come together to pack trucks with relief supplies.

"[Being nominated] really is a tribute to the unselfish nature of the staff," says Case, who until March had spent eight years with the station. "Each member had a passion for certain causes, and we supported their efforts whenever possible. If you look at the community calendar that Justin Ragland put together, it really is staggering how often the station and our personalities were out in the community each week. WZZK has always had a long history of community service, though. In fact, it won at least one AP News Award each of the last 25 years. It's just that 2011 was an exceptional year in terms of natural disasters and extraordinary campaign successes."

"The first thing that comes to mind is how the station stepped up following the April 2011 storms with supply drives and fundraisers," says Ragland. "People had lost their houses, clothes - you name it. We hit the ground the next day asking listeners to do what they could to help. I remember a particular gentleman who visited us at a local Walmart and lived in one of the hardest-hit areas. He thanked us for what we were doing and explained that although he'd lost the roof of his house and suffered heavy water damage, he wanted to help his neighbors who'd been hit even harder. He walked into the Walmart, came out with cases upon cases of water and then donated his time to help others. That was one of those tear-jerker moments that told me that we were doing the right thing for the community. It was a highlight for not only the station, but also of my career."

Case recalls the devastation. "The [Emergency Management Agency] took us through hard-hit areas," he says. "They drove us past a home where people had been killed, and there was nothing left except the front steps, where the family dog was curled up. The officer said he was dropping off food for it during his patrol. Everyone wanted to help."

"People didn't stop caring about radio, radio stopped caring about people," Orr adds. "If you're truly serving your audience, they come to depend on you, and that increases it and drives loyalty. I've worked for stations that were all about music quantity, for example. People aren't using the radio like that here, and it's a great thing to be a part of. Winning the Marconi would validate the hard work of our outstanding staff. I'm Baptist, but might dance just a little bit."

CAC

# BLACK RIVER

ENTERTAINMENT

IS KICKIN' IT INTO OVERDRIVE



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MORE TRUCKS THAN CARS



## DUE WEST

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Sarah Darling  
"home to me"

Sarah Darling  
"home to me"

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National College Tour  
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- |       |                                        |                     |
|-------|----------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 9/1   | Stone Mountain Park                    | Atlanta, GA         |
| 9/16  | York Fair                              | York, PA            |
| 9/17  | Edinboro State University              | Edinboro, PA        |
| 9/20  | Wild Wing Cafe                         | Knoxville, TN       |
| 9/21  | Wild Wing Cafe                         | Asheville, NC       |
| 9/22  | Longbranch Saloon                      | Raleigh, NC         |
| 9/27  | River Arts Center                      | Prairie Du Sac, WI  |
| 9/28  | Grand Theater                          | Wausau, WI          |
| 9/29  | Edgerton Performing Arts Center        | Edgerton, WI        |
| 10/1  | Upper Iowa University                  | Fayette, IA         |
| 10/3  | The Campanile Center For The Arts      | Minocqua, WI        |
| 10/4  | South Milwaukee Performing Arts Center | South Milwaukee, WI |
| 10/5  | Oconomowoc Arts Center                 | Oconomowoc, WI      |
| 10/6  | Lucille Tack Center For The Arts       | Spencer, WI         |
| 10/9  | Western Illinois University            | Macomb, IL          |
| 10/11 | Ball State University                  | Muncie, IN          |
| 10/12 | Toby Keith's Bar & Grill               | Cincinnati, OH      |
| 10/13 | Indiana University                     | New Albany, IN      |
| 10/14 | Jasper Community Arts                  | Jasper, IN          |
| 10/18 | Grand Ole Opry                         | Nashville, TN       |
| 10/19 | Michigan Tech University               | Houghton, MI        |
| 10/31 | Toby Keith's Bar & Grill               | Minneapolis, MN     |
| 11/2  | College of Lake City                   | Grayslake, IL       |
| 11/3  | Monroe Arts Center                     | Monroe, WI          |
| 11/4  | University Of Wisconsin-Platteville    | Platteville, WI     |
| 11/7  | Pearson Lakes Art Center               | Okoboji, IA         |
| 11/9  | McPherson Opera House                  | McPherson, KS       |
| 11/10 | Bowlus Fine Arts Center                | Iola, KS            |
| 11/13 | Missouri State University              | Springfield, MO     |
| 11/14 | McKendree University                   | Lebanon, IL         |
| 11/15 | Marie W Heider Center For The Arts     | West Salem, WI      |
| 11/17 | Moraine Valley Community College       | Palos Hills, IL     |
| 11/18 | Bradley University                     | Peoria, IL          |
| 11/20 | Oshkosh Opera House                    | Oshkosh, WI         |



**THE FASTEST RISING SINGLE OF HER CAREER "BETTER IN A BLACK DRESS"**



# 18 & Rife To Go

## Record Number Of Tours Roll In 2013

**L**ive Nation President/Country Touring Brian O’Connell was the first to raise the issue earlier this year: Country’s 2013 touring slate features an astounding 18 headliners. “I’m talking about big boys and big girls in 10,000-plus seaters,” O’Connell explains, noting that recent years have typically seen 8-10 such tours.

This virtual doubling of the genre’s top line says a lot about the health of the industry and the format, as well as its place in the nation’s appetite for entertainment. At the same time, it will likely require greater cooperation from competing artist camps and flexibility from the surrounding infrastructure – including radio. Country Aircheck spoke with several executives on touring’s frontlines for their thoughts on what it all means.



Brian O’Connell

### Kick Start My Art

First, some definition. O’Connell’s 18 are Jason Aldean, Luke Bryan, Kenny Chesney, Eric Church, Rascal Flatts, Toby Keith, Lady Antebellum, Miranda Lambert, Tim McGraw, Brad Paisley, Reba, Darius Rucker, Blake Shelton, George Strait, Taylor Swift, Carrie



John Huie

Underwood, Keith Urban and the Zac Brown Band. Most of those artists are deeply committed, with plans and dates already in the works. But some on that list aren’t locked in, O’Connell notes. “Lady A could decide not to go out. So could Reba and Eric Church. But I have to plan as if they’re all going.”

CAA’s John Huie thinks 18 is probably the right number.

“You do have Shania and Tim and Faith, but those are just in Vegas,” he says. “Dierks Bentley is doing winter on his own then doing summer with Miranda, and there are a lot of things like that. Eli Young Band are doing theaters in the spring, then will be out with Kenny in the summer.

CAA’s John Huie thinks 18 is probably the right number.

Brantley Gilbert will do the first of the year on his own and the second half in sheds with McGraw.”

The best part of this bumper crop is what it says for country overall. “This is good for the business,” says Spalding Entertainment’s Clarence Spalding, who manages two of the 18 – Aldean and Flatts. “There have been times where people who thought they were headliners were clogging the market and not doing well, but looking at this list, these are real guys who are going to do solid business.

“Luke is new, but Eric was out this year and will step it up next year,” Spalding continues. “Zac, Lady A, Miranda, Blake and Jason know they can do it. Kenny, Taylor, Strait and Toby have been doing it consistently year after year. I just don’t remember a time when there’s been this many. When we had Brooks & Dunn start headlining in 1994, you had Reba, Vince Gill, Strait, Clint Black, Travis Tritt, Randy Travis, Garth Brooks – we thought it was crowded then.”

Huie agrees. “I’ve never seen the kind of birthing of new headliners we’ve had the past two or three years,” he says. “How many years did we talk about the class of 1989? Now, all of a sudden, new artists’ speed to the top has been escalating. Lady A have blown through the roof with 65 arena show sellouts.

Zac Brown is selling out the Carrier Dome and sold out Madison Square Garden the day it went up. And that’s without a widely known support act.”

### Youth Gone Wild

Is the country genre growing headliners faster than in past eras? “Everybody’s trajectory is different,” explains Gary Borman, who manages Lady A and Urban. “It’s driven by hits and not all hits are alike. ‘Need You Now’ was not your average hit. It was more like having five hits. The reaction was exponential. And maybe because there are more

ways to reach the audience today we’re able to capitalize on the hits better than in the past. With the web and all the tools that brings, plus the power of Country radio – which is still supreme – we’re engaging a lot more people.

But Lady A’s trajectory was not inconsistent with the rest of their career,” he adds. “They weren’t suddenly headliners. They went from support act to theater act to secondary market arenas to major market arenas. We did not skip a step. The trajectory was deliberate, but not accelerated. It was built to last.”

Another factor in country’s continuing expansion may be the presence of a worldwide cross-genre superstar in Taylor Swift, who has already started playing stadiums. “That’s the big seat at the table that wasn’t there five years ago and we can’t undervalue that,” Borman says. “Maybe that’s some of the reason for all these headliners.”

To a certain extent, momentum begets momentum. Country is hot, and that in itself draws a crowd. “It feels young out there,” says Red Light’s Kerri Edwards, who manages Luke Bryan. “With the ability to reach people on all these different levels – social media and everything else, it definitely seems like the energy is there.”

Bryan is making the step to headliner in 2013, and his team feels more than prepared. “We were definitely aware of what was going on out there,” Edwards says. “The year before you had a lot of people on breaks and it was a much smaller group going out. But we have been really blessed with the opportunities we’ve had to support other artists. I had a few questions along the way last year, not that the tour with Jason wasn’t great, but that they couldn’t believe we were going out as support again. At the end of the day, I don’t regret that decision because Luke is in a much stronger place.

“We could have gone out and done arenas, and we did a trial run on the CMT Tour,” she continues. “But why not be on the hottest tour out there? Jason is on fire and it was a great fit personally for them, with the band and crews and everything else. It just felt right. We’ve always tried to make decisions going off our gut.”

Speaking of Aldean, many are wondering if this is

# 18 & Rife To Go

the year he progresses to stadiums. "We're looking at everything," Spalding says. "Football stadiums, baseball parks, tentative routing – other ideas to take him to a different spot. We feel he's ready. We've been very careful with him, as we've been with all our acts, to not get in over our heads and end up embarrassed."

"There are a lot of ingredients to this headline recipe," he adds. "There's touring, awards shows and you have to have the music. You have to have radio supporting you, especially if everybody is on top of each other."

## Welcome To The Juggle

Individually, all of these headliners have a compelling track record that supports their 2013 plans. Collectively, there are concerns. "Can we handle it?" asks Borman. "If not for the economy, yes. It's all about the ability of the consumer to afford it. The appetite is there, the support mechanisms are there in terms of marketing and promotion. The audience numbers and passion are there, but consumers are facing tough choices today about where to spend their meager leisure dollars."



Clarence Spalding

And nobody wants to make those choices more complicated. "The dilemma is making sure we don't beat up on each other," Spalding says. "The idea is to stay clear, but with 18 going out, that's going to be tough."

As good as the news is, there are issues. "Getting an on-sale date to yourself and not competing with other

country artists for advertising space at radio are some of them," Borman says. "How many presents can a station do in a month or a week? How do we all fit into the same space without stepping all over each other? That's the challenge. To some extent, we can't help it just by sheer numbers."

"And because of the economy, honestly, I would not recommend some of them try," he adds. "It might be safer to co-headline and play in front of a lot more people. That could springboard you into solo dates more quickly. The last thing you want to do is play to a half-house. It sets you back in the perception of the fans in the house, the loss of energy and in the perception of the industry. It's a big gumbo of issues."

Huie understands the routing dilemma. "That's always a worry. It's a credit to the country business that we do the best we can to avoid each other. You just do the best you can, and everyone is working hard to get it done."

## Dancing Days

With 18 tours hoping to play in, potentially, more than 100 markets over the course of a year, the challenge wouldn't seem to be all that daunting. But there's a lot to it. "There are so many things you have to worry about, not the least of which is when you start cutting the year into pieces," O'Connell explains. "The first couple weeks of January are pretty much a bust, and you can't find

anybody after mid-December. So now you're at 48 weeks. Holidays are tough unless you're playing a festival. The Fourth of July is not the greatest time to be competing with fireworks. It's on a Thursday next year so it'll be a long weekend and really chop things up."

"Memorial Day weekend, if you live north of the Mason Dixon line, is when you put your boat in the water. Labor Day you're getting everyone ready to go back to school. Then there's NASCAR, college football, NFL and you don't even try to compete with them. That's just stupid. Then you have Kenny and Taylor doing stadiums, which takes a lot of money out of a market. Aldean is selling every ticket in every building. So it all pushes you around and you have to put this giant jigsaw puzzle together."

"It's all about real estate," Spalding says. "Who's going to get there first? We all have to have a little patience, but we work pretty well together as a format. We do try to honor those on-sale dates, but there are days I'd like to get in the car, drive over to someone's office and beat the shit out of them. But you are sometimes forced into making decisions by three-day weekends where you need an overnight drive to get six or seven trucks moved. You draw a circle and it gets narrowed down."

Cooperation will be paramount. "I haven't worked in other genres, but country seems to be pretty good at working together," Edwards says. "We all want each other to win and most people are careful not to step on each other."

## Have You Ever Needed Someone So Bad

If any concern rivals the race for venues and routing, it's securing support acts. "We feel good about where we are, but everyone saw that," Edwards says. "All the managers and agents probably jumped into it a lot sooner than they ever have. It was crazy, chaotic and definitely the earliest I remember people going after support. And it's a little scary committing so far out."

Spalding runs the numbers: "You now have 18 second slots and 18 third slots open, so there's a shortage. It doesn't feel like there's a next wave, where two years ago there were plenty of those. But they've graduated and our freshman class hasn't yet. We've got some – Jake Owen, Eli Young Band, Hunter Hayes, Chris Young, The Band Perry, Brantley Gilbert, Thompson Square, Easton Corbin and a few more. I keep it all listed on boards in my office. The headliners are in red ink, the seconds are in green and the thirds are in blue."

"It's driving the price up on second acts," he says. "There are going to be acts out there making a boatload in the second position – more than they could make doing it on their own. That's nothing but competition."

Borman calls it "a very small middle class." In a crowded marketplace, having a hot support act can make a difference at the box office. "Some of these artists developing into headliners are jumping so fast it's leaving a vacuum. Keith went out a couple years ago with Taylor, Carrie and Sugarland, to name a few of our support acts. We mixed it up and gave the consumer great value for money." He worries some tours will spread themselves too thin.

As Edwards alluded, locking in support acts early

allows for less data on which to base what is often an educated gamble. "You try to bet on something early and hope come January or February they're hitting on all cylinders," Spalding explains. "In 18 years with Brooks & Dunn we sometimes hit on acts so hot we couldn't believe it ... and some so cold you didn't even know they were out there anymore. The first single dies, the album gets delayed – something happens. And you're going, 'What do we do now?' This year, we got lucky. We had Luke with Jason and Flatts have Little Big Town and Eli Young Band."



Gary Borman

## Round & Round

With more options, other competitive issues come into play. "For the most part everyone is being cognizant of pricing," Spalding says. "With my acts, I don't want anybody to say they couldn't afford to go to the show. They might not be able to sit in the first 10 rows, but there is a ticket price for you. With Flatts, we want to keep that fan base coming. And with Jason, it's a young fan base. So we're very careful we don't price them out of the show."

Radio also has its place in this effort. "It's nothing but opportunity," O'Connell says. "It's a great chance to be in front of their audience, and most successful stations embrace that. When I see a station focused on trying to outdo the other guy instead of taking care of the fans, I just tell them to do their thing."

"Radio is probably going to be bombarded," Huie points out. "I would encourage people not to get too locked into stuff when other opportunities are probably right around the corner."

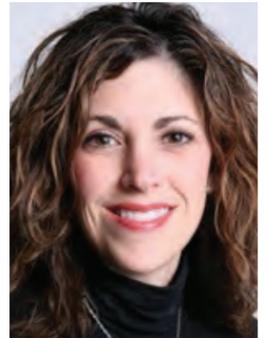
For the tours, working as far out in front as possible would also seem to be a priority. "I don't know that you're ever not thinking that," Edwards says. "I'm sure Clarence is doing the same thing with Jason, and his shows are on fire. It's probably not a good day when you step back from approaching what you do as if it were your first time out. None of us know what the next day's going to bring."

"If it's your first time to do it there's a little more risk, but Luke's also in a fortunate place with record sales," she continues.

"We've sold almost seven million singles from three releases off *Tailgates & Tanlines*. When I look at those numbers, it's almost shocking. There are so many different aspects like that – single sales, merch sales – and you just hope it's all pointing in the right direction."

"Everyone will win if we get the right mixture," O'Connell says. "A Toby fan and a Miranda fan aren't necessarily the same person. We have different lanes all in this one format and we should celebrate the incredible popularity of country music and the concert experience."

"All these people have worked hard to get there," Edwards sums. "It's a blessing." **CAC**



Kerri Edwards

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"GREAT COMBINATION OF MOOD AND MESSAGE! GARY'S BEST IN YEARS! 'EVERY STORM' IS A HIT AND WE ARE GONNA PLAY IT!"

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"'EVERY STORM RUNS OUT OF RAIN' BUT IT SOUNDS LIKE GARY ALLAN NEVER RUNS OUT OF HITS!"

- STONEY RICHARDS, APD/MD, WDSY PITTSBURGH

"HELLO GARY! W-O-W!"

- CHRISTI BROOKS, APD/MD, KKBQ HOUSTON

"MOODY AND SOULFUL WITH SOME REDEMPTION THROWN IN. 'EVERY STORM' IS CLASSIC GARY ALLAN"

- MATTY JEFF, PD, WPOR PORTLAND MAINE

"YEA! ONE OF THE GREAT STYLISTS OF OUR FORMAT IS BACK WITH A GREAT NEW SONG! CAN'T WAIT TO GET IT ON THE AIR"

- KERRY WOLFE, PD, WMIL MILWAUKEE

"IT'S NOT LIKE GARY ALLAN NEEDED TO REINVENT HIMSELF, BUT HE DID ON THIS SINGLE! THIS IS FREAKIN COOL. I DROPPED THE CD IN THE LAKE, IT WANTED TO BE HEARD SO BADLY THAT I STEPPED ON IT IN FOUR FEET OF WATER IN ORDER TO RETURN IT TO THE CD PLAYER IN THE BOAT. THAT'S HOW BAD ASS THIS SONG IS!"

- MIKE KENNEDY, OM, WILKS KANSAS CITY AND PD, KBEQ KANSAS CITY

"GARY ALLAN IS AN ARTIST THAT CONTINUOUSLY AMAZES ME WITH HOW TALENTED HE IS, HOW POWERFUL HIS MUSIC CAN BE, AND HOW OUR LISTENERS INSTANTLY CONNECT WITH HIS SONGS. 'EVERY STORM RUNS OUT OF RAIN' IS A HIT, AND WILL BE REFRESHING TO HEAR ON COUNTRY RADIO!"

- BROOKE MERIS, APD/MD, KILT HOUSTON

"THERE REALLY IS NO SUCH THING AS A QUIET STORM, AND GARY'S EVERY STORM WILL MAKE LOTS OF SWEET NOISE. GARY'S BACK!"

- BILL BLACK, PD, WKSJ MOBILE

GARY ALLAN

EVERY STORM

[ RUNS OUT OF RAIN ]

LIGHTNING STRIKES 9.17

**"KACEY MUSGRAVES IS EVERYTHING I'M EXCITED ABOUT IN A NEW ARTIST! SHE HAS CARVED OUT HER OWN SPECIAL PLACE IN OUR FORMAT. IT'S ONE THAT'S GONNA BE FUN TO EXPERIENCE WITH MY LISTENERS FOR A LONG TIME! GENUINE, REAL AND FULL OF CHARACTER, EVERY SONG IS A FRESH SLICE OF WHAT SHE IS."** – Travis Moon – PD, KAJA - San Antonio

**"BEG, THREATEN OR WHINE TO YOUR MERCURY REP AND GET THEM TO PLAY EVEN MORE OF THE PROJECT FOR YOU. LOOKS LIKE 'MERRY GO 'ROUND' WILL BE A RIDE THAT LASTS A LONG, LONG TIME."**

– Gregg Swedberg – PD, KEEY - Minneapolis

**"I'VE BEEN IMPRESSED WITH KACEY SINCE I SAW HER PERFORM AT THE RYMAN DURING CRS EARLIER THIS YEAR. NOW AFTER MEETING HER AND HEARING MORE OF HER MUSIC I AM EVEN MORE IMPRESSED. I CAN'T WAIT FOR THE US99'S AUDIENCE TO REACT TO HER MUSIC."**

– Jeff Kapugi – VP/Programming, WUSN - Chicago

**"MY FAITH IN COUNTRY MUSIC HAS BEEN RESTORED!  
I FREAKING LOVE THIS GIRL"** – Jack Shell – MD, WYCD - Detroit

**"KACEY HAS SUCH A FRESH AND IMPACTFUL SOUND THAT OUR FORMAT SO SORELY NEEDS. COUNTRY RADIO IS LUCKY TO HAVE HER..."**

– Johnny Chiang – OM, Cox Media - Houston, PD, KKIQ - Houston

**"REAL HONESTY IN HER WRITING AND HER STYLING. I WAS REALLY TAKEN IN WATCHING KACEY PERFORM"**

– Mike Kennedy – OM, Wilks - Kansas City, PD, KBEQ - Kansas City

**"KACEY MUSGRAVES IS GOING TO LIGHT COUNTRY RADIO ON FIRE! LISTENERS ARE GOING TO LOVE KACEY AND SHE'S EXACTLY WHAT WE NEED."** – Ken Boesen – OM, WKIS - Miami

**"ONE OF THOSE INCREDIBLE SONGS THAT DON'T COME ALONG OFTEN. #SONGOFTHEYEAR"**

– Paul Orr – PD, WZZK - Birmingham

# KACEY MUSGRAVES MERRY GO 'ROUND



# Thanks for a great first year!

Country Radio - Point of Grace - Word Entertainment  
Alison Krauss & Union Station - Rounder Records  
Borman Entertainment - Aaron Lewis - Skip Bishop  
Chelsea Bain- Teddi Bonadies - Big Ride Entertainment  
The Lost Trailers - HRT Entertainment - Tom English  
Vector Management - Blaster Records!  
Webster & Associates - Jason Cassidy - A-Blake  
Records - Marlee Scott - Jobe Entertain-  
ment - Rock Ridge Music - POC Media  
Pat O'Connor - Steve Luscombe  
Taytown Records - Hank Williams Jr.  
Bocephus Records - West End Stories  
Mitchell Stuart - HQ Creative  
Graceful Living - Krantz Media Group - Gary Krantz  
AdLarge Media - Joe Redmond - Derek Simon  
Tim Scott Productions - CAG Ventures - McVay Media  
Charlie Cook - Misti Fahr-Filipiak - Johnny Mitchell  
Promotions - Judy McDonough - National  
Underground - Bandago - Endless Edge - Chesapeake  
Business Center - Aaron Leigh - Mediabase  
Country Aircheck - Nielsen - Cory Batten

**instigator**  
**ENTERTAINMENT**

Gator Michaels - David Haley - Glenn Noblit

Mallory Opheim - Brooks Quigley - Luke Jensen

Dave Collins - Weslea Neas - Alli Ulvila



# POWER RANGERS



**O**ur largest in-tab in the Power 31's six years selected this roster of airplay influencers. While much of the panel remains the same with slight variations

(the top spot has been unchanged since 2009), the ranks also show considerable turnover. Several of the most recently deputized Rangers – over the last couple years – are

pictured above. Below and in the pages that follow, we've asked each executive about their mentors and the lessons that have stuck with them over the years.

## 1 Scott Borchetta Big Machine Label Group President/CEO

I've had the good fortune to work with many of the greatest record people of all time, from Mo Ostin, Bruce Hinton, Tony Brown, James Stroud, Doug Morris and Howard Stark to today's greats like Lucian Grainge, Monte Lipman and so many others. But when I think of a true 'mentor,' there's really only one – my dad.

It was always high-energy, living at 200 mph, never slowing down for anything. Phone call after phone call after showcase after baseball game after car race after horseshoe after dinner after whatever was next – a non-stop tapestry of experiences. Some were historic, some tragic, some genius, some foolish, but all life in bright colors. There wasn't a handbook for this. His generation invented the business. They were making it up as they went along. There wasn't anyone to call, there wasn't anyone who had experience. This had *never* been done before because there weren't record promoters before them. There wasn't rock 'n' roll before them. There wasn't Chuck Berry or Little Richard or Fats Domino before them. There hadn't been any Beatles or Beach Boys before them.

It was ground zero, and I had a front row seat – the advantage of watching the wins ... and the losses. I got to learn this all in real-time while they were cutting a pathway for a generation ... and I took the punches and have the scars to show for it. I got to experience the classiest people, as well as the crooks. It gave me an internal compass that is priceless. Thanks, Dad. I know you're enjoying every bit of this amazing ride that has happened with the label group as much as I am, and perhaps even more! Thank you and I love you. BTW, Harry has your promo CDs ready to pass out to all your friends.

## 2 Jaye Albright Albright & O'Malley Consulting Partner

In 1965-1966, I was Dir./Production and fill announcer for PD Bob Martin at WCUE/Akron. He, his wife Barbara and their kids kind of adopted me and made me part of their family. I was fresh out of Kent State and about to enlist in the Air Force. Among the many, many things Bob did that made a lasting mark on me was



With Jerry Lee Lewis (c) in 1981 and dad Mike (r).

inspiring me to write great radio copy. Bob gave me an idea for a local creamery, Sumner's Butter, based on a campaign Imperial Margarine was running at the time that said it tasted almost as good as the other spread. I took that idea and produced/voiced a campaign around the concept, "Why settle for something almost as good? Sumner's Butter is the other spread." He helped me package it up and enter it in RAB's competition for the best locally produced commercials. It won! I was named the creator of one of the best local spots of the year – my first national award of any kind – and I have Bob Martin to thank for that. I've been trying to pass kindness like that along to others ever since.



## 3 Clay Hunnicutt Clear Channel Media + Entertainment EVP/Programming

There are really three pivotal points/people in my career. One was starting as an unpaid intern at WUSY/Chattanooga, TN and meeting GM Sammy George. It was really like having another PD around. He was creative, encouraged winning and fun going hand-in-hand, and never settled for anything less than great from everyone. He also made me a PD when everyone else thought he was crazy. The second was when I met Marc Chase and he hired me to run WGAR/Cleveland. Marc really drove me to think outside of the Country format to find the best practices that I could apply to my station. I learned a ton from Marc about great programming and really stretching the boundaries creatively.

The third significant mentor and move was when I went to Nashville to run the Clear Channel cluster and connected with GM Tom Schurr. Tom is now President of Major Markets and continues to teach me how to be a great businessperson, not just a good programmer. Today's business is so much more than the music we play, and every day I keep learning from Tom how we can move faster, stronger and higher.





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## 4 Mike Dungan

Universal Music Group/Nashville Chairman/CEO

Tim DuBois and I became fast friends and colleagues when I met him at an Arista convention in 1989. I was doing marketing for the pop division, and he was the newly hired head of startup Arista/Nashville. After working with him from a distance for almost a year, he convinced me to move to Nashville and become part of his team. I knew immediately that I was in an environment that was unlike any other that I had experienced: Work hard, play hard and win. Do nothing unless you do it with the highest level of integrity. Remain gracious and grateful. Never shy from expressing your love for those who are worthy. And never be afraid to look a person in the eye and tell them that they are fucking up.

Tim built a company that became a family – a happy and motivated family. He loved the people around him. The staff was not “staff” – we were co-workers, and we were all in it together. The artists were embraced with love and respect, and they also were part of that family. The music was the focus. It was the center of gravity that brought us all together, and we took pride in never settling for less than the best.

Looking back, I know that everything I had accomplished prior to arriving in Nashville was merely setting the stage for the Olympic event that was Arista/Nashville. We were the shit, and it was all because of the man at the top. I am forever in his debt. To this day, I am overwhelmed by his magnificence. And I remain his biggest fan. My mentor, Tim DuBois.



enthusiastically and lovingly shared a tremendous amount of his experience with me, which has tremendously helped me on my own path. I am forever grateful.

## 8 Jeff Kapugi

CBS Radio VP/Country, WUSN/Chicago PD

The person who's had the greatest influence on my career is Marc Chase. Our working relationship started awkwardly in 1989 when he was PD and I was MD at WFLZ/Tampa. I was actually supposed to be fired as a part of its format change from Oldies to CHR. We've worked together in some capacity until about two years ago, most recently when he was President and I was COO at Tribune Interactive.

Marc always taught me to think outside the box. He allowed me to experience things outside my normal comfort zone, which only made me a better programmer and manager. The best thing he taught me was somewhat basic: Hire good people and let them do the job you hired them to do, and then trust but verify that they are doing it.



## 9 Steve Hodges

Capitol & EMI Nashville SVP/Promotion



Sam Cerami is the guy who took a chance on hiring a PD from Little Rock to be a regional at a major label in the mid '90s. I know he had to really work on convincing Jimmy Bowen and Bill Catino to hire a rookie regional from radio, so it proves that he was good at promotion. I knew I was at the right place. If they had hired someone else, who knows what I would be doing today.

The late Bob Grayson, then-PD at WFMB/Springfield, IL, took me under his wing and really gave me the confidence at building relationships by always saying, “Trust your gut about music and people.” He would share stories of how other reps were either great or not so great with their approach on doing business. It didn't hurt that he loved golf (probably more than I do) so, yes, many of his “lessons” were on the golf course!

## 5 Doug Montgomery

Clear Channel Premium Choice PD, CC/Grand Rapids OM

I was a newbie on my second full-time radio job when I arrived at WGTC/South Bend, IN in 1990. Scott Mahalick was the PD, and the consultant was the late Mike Chapman. Because I had interned the previous summer at WWWW/Detroit where my Selector experience was tearing log sheets off the dot-matrix printer and stapling them together, it wasn't a mistruth to say I had Selector “experience,” which led me to being made WGTC's MD.



I was very fortunate to have Mike Chapman as the consultant, as he taught me about music scheduling, and especially Selector, inside out. The fact that he took the time to show this kid how to (and why you might want to) run things like Selector audit trails helped me a great deal. There is a particular music scheduling trick that I use to this day (and teach the people I mentor) to make great music logs.

In addition to the technical skills he taught me for being a great MD and, later, PD, Chappy shared wisdom on how to work with the labels, managers and artists. Everything from the First Commandment of Programming: “You never get hurt by what you don't play” to good business practices with the labels: Call people back, tell the truth and remember that it's the position (person making music decisions) and not you (the person) that people are looking to friend. I would not be in the position I am today if it weren't for Mike spending time with me 20 years ago.

## 6 Gary Overton

Sony Music Nashville Chairman/CEO

Keith Stegall has been one of the strongest influences in my career. I worked for Keith in the mid-'80s when he was an artist on Epic, writing both country and pop hits, and just beginning his production career. I was his tour manager, songplugger and day-to-day manager. It was us against the world, and together we experienced just about everything the music business can throw at you. During this time I met many of my friends at radio like Coyote Calhoun, Doug Montgomery, Kerry Wolfe and Mike Kennedy. Classy guys ... music lovers ... great business leaders.



Overton, his wife Jan, Jackson and Stegall during the recording of *Here In The Real World*.

It was also around this time that Keith and I had the good fortune of befriending an aspiring singer named Alan Jackson. Keith taught me that without a great artist and a great song, there are no hits, no careers and no companies. I have admired Keith's unassuming quiet strength and his keen musical instincts for the 30-plus years we've been friends. My favorite saying of Keith's that I have used upon occasion is, “Don't mistake my kindness for weakness.”

## 7 John Esposito

Warner Music Nashville President

My admiration for Elektra Records founder Jac Holzman is without bounds. History shows him to be one of the greatest record men of all time and I was a huge fan before I even met him. Among his many extraordinary qualities, I especially love his sensitivity to the artist. He has always showed his devotion not only to the quality of an



Esposito, Peter Gabriel, Jac Holzman

entire body of work from an artist, but also to the quality of the recording. He truly has given artists a platform to shine while always having fun along the way. As an example, there are Jac's one-page artist contracts, which include a clause to “promise to treat each other lovingly.”

Jac encourages artists to make sure their vision is expressed in their music, without losing the keen sense of the power of a radio hit. He always knows just when to step in and tell an artist they could do better, and the artists who have worked with him speak appreciatively of his guidance. He's famous for signing many artists, including The Doors, Queen, Carly Simon, Harry Chapin, Bread and Judy Collins. While he was still at the helm of Elektra, his radio team brought these artists to the top of the charts.

Jac and I became fast friends about a decade ago. Hoping to one day run a record label, I constantly picked his brain on the subject; I still do! He has

## 10 Jan Jeffries

Cumulus SVP/Programming

My dad, although not a broadcaster, was my biggest influence. He had a great work ethic and integrity. Early on, my dad's brothers were broadcasters and friends of legendary *Grand Ole Opry* announcer T Tommy Cutrer. When I was 13, T Tommy influenced me to pursue a career in radio. Later, working for and with Bill Drake, Scott Shannon, Larry Lujack and John Landecker nurtured my on-air abilities.

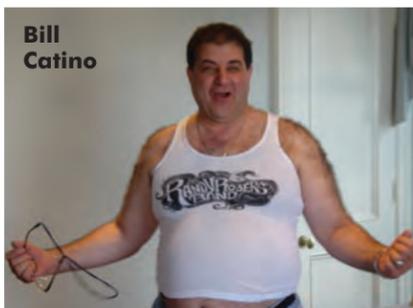
The primary influence and acceleration of my career came when I joined John Dickey at Stratford Research/Cumulus. I was first promoted to President of Dickey-owned Stratford, and then to SVP/Programming at Cumulus. Reporting to John, I quickly learned the art of developing winning strategies that combine equal importance of music and programming elements, resulting in a total radio experience for the listener.



## 11 Royce Risser

UMG/Nashville SVP/Promotion

Shelia Shipley Biddy hired me at MCA in 1992 when I was an intern and in graduate school. Great, great organizational skills. She was so proud of her team and her artists. She treated them as if they were her own children (including spankings on occasion!). Love her and credit her and Scott Borchetta for getting me excited about promotion. I worked for Scott on two different occasions for a total of about eight years. His determination to win and work ethic are unmatched.



Bill Catino

We work awesomely together while on the same team, and we have been fierce competitors. In both cases, I'm pushed to be a better promotion man. I saw him kick a hole in a wall once. I haven't done that yet, but I've been close.

David Haley has a heart of gold and taught me that the smallest stations and the rookie programmers will someday be reporters in big markets. He always had crazy ideas, but they worked! His only downfall, in my mind, was that he loved Ole Miss more than Vandy. Michael Powers is probably one of the most natural promotion men in this town. Can argue with anyone about anything and win. Michael also gave me my first VP stripes. I'll always be extremely grateful for that. One of the few people who makes me belly laugh.

Bill Catino is an absolute stud. Obviously, one of the greatest promotion men to hit this town. Bill was like a second father to me. One thing that really hit me while working for him was his love of his family and his ability to keep his priorities straight. I loved to hear him yell at people, too. Just not me. If he started to yell, I would find a way to get him laughing. That would end it. I think that frustrated him tremendously. Bruce Hinton, Tony Brown, Luke Lewis, Mike Dungan. I've worked for most of the greatest Nashville label heads ever. I'm a fortunate man.

## 12 Johnny Chiang

KKBQ/Houston PD

I've been very fortunate to have had many mentors. My first was KRTH/Los Angeles News Director Claudia Marshall. I was 18 and it was my first internship and introduction to the radio business. I had no clue what I was doing, but Claudia made sure she spent time with me every day so that I actually learned something. She praised me when I did well and kicked my ass when I didn't. Claudia's attention helped set the course of my career.



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## 13 Joel Raab **Joel Raab Associates** Country Programming Consultant



I met Ed Salamon at the Country Radio Seminar. He invited me to his radio station to listen to my aircheck, and that was a major turning point. Not only did he give me the best pointers I had ever received, but he became my consultant at my first programming job in Pittsburgh. He also introduced me to many greats in the industry who

**Steve Blatter, Raab, Lee Arnold, Kathy Mattea, Salamon**

also helped propel my career. Ed showed me how great discipline, ethics and show business savvy could coexist, making for great radio.

## 14 Mike Curb **Curb Records Chairman**



In 1963, when I was a freshman at California State University, I made a recording with my band and was lucky enough to play it for Mo Ostin, who was at that time the head of the newly merged Warner/Reprise labels. He mentored me through the entire process of completing the recording and all the other related things that a new artist has to do. He also recommended that I focus more on being a songwriter and producer. After I became *Billboard's* overall producer of the year in 1972, he arranged for Warner/Reprise to distribute the Curb record label, and Curb Records is still distributed by WEA 50 years after the first record of ours that Mo distributed. Ironically, earlier this year Mo sent me a letter in which he said, "Curb Records contributed a great deal to the growth of Warner Bros. by teaching us about the singles business, which helped make us a more balanced company." As much as I appreciate the quote, I think it's more important to realize that without Mo's mentoring, Curb Records would not be where it is today on our 50th anniversary.

## 15 Gregg Swedberg **Clear Channel/Minneapolis OM, KEYE PD**



There are so many people who have helped me along the way – some I've worked with, some I've competed against, and some who have been family and friends. I ultimately chose Lance "Tac" Hammer, who was at Top 40 WLOL/Minneapolis in the '80s. Tac took a giant leap of faith to give me my first major market programming job when he moved from PD to GM, and he was exceptionally patient and kind. I was definitely a little rough, and he would constantly remind me not to get too worked up; that if you stayed

around long enough, you would encounter every situation. He told me to always remember that the listener was the ultimate customer, and that if you did okay by them, you'd do okay by the ratings. He worked for decades here in Minneapolis, retiring in the late '80s and then passed away in the mid-'90s. He was pretty much universally admired and is a Minneapolis legend.

## 16 Jon Loba **Broken Bow & Stoney Creek SVP/Label Group**

It's so hard narrowing it down to even a few, but none of what I've accomplished, would have been possible without being given my first shot. Rick Baumgartner not only gave me my first real job in the industry – Coord./Promotion for Warner Bros. – but also my second as the Southeast Regional for Atlantic. Both times he went out on a limb. I had zero experience in the industry when he hired me for Promotion Coordinator. I was just some dorky kid out of college with a finance and econ degree. He apparently saw *something* and gave me a chance. A few years after that, when *nobody* was hiring rookies as regionals, he handed me the reins. There were several qualified candidates, but once again he took a flyer. This wonderful ride I'm on started with him, and I am so thankful!



## 17 Jimmy Harnen **Big Machine Label Group EVP, Republic Nashville President**



In 1997, Scott Borchetta hired me as his Northeast regional. His drive, pursuit of excellence, attention to detail and passion to "fight like apes" were exactly what I was looking for in a team and in continuing my education. In fact, the "fight like apes" phrase actually came from Scott in an email he sent to the promo staff when we were going for a No. 1 on a Randy Travis single.

Perhaps the most important single thing Scott taught me came from my frequent end-of-the-day trips to his office to call a duck a duck and bitch about what was wrong with the business. One day, after exuding much patience with my many visits, Scott respectfully looked me in the eye and said, "Jimmy, I know what's wrong ... I get it. The next time you come into my office, instead of telling me what's wrong, how about providing me with a solution to one of

those problems?" That stopped me dead in my tracks. From that day forward, I never walked into to anyone's office without being 110% positive and always attempting to find a solution to a problem. I learned that Scott, like all great leaders, did not hire me to make his life more difficult. He hired me to make it easier and to make the team work more efficiently.

## 18 Jeff Garrison **CBS Radio VP/Country Artist Relations, CBS Radio/Phoenix OM, KMLE PD**

Lee Randall taught me what a PD does to win. Everywhere Lee programmed, he won. I wanted to be around winners, and Lee was that for sure. He studied under Gordon McLendon and programmed some of the biggest Top 40 stations during the '70s including KTSA/San Antonio. He taught me music, marketing and research. Most of all, I am grateful for Lee's support, confidence and belief in a 25-year-old PD from Nacogdoches, TX.

**Randall, Hallam and Garrison**



Lee recommended me to Dene Hallam and was the consultant to KKHQ/Houston when we signed the station on in October, 1992. Dene's knowledge of music and desire for a quality product made me a better programmer. Plus, Dene taught me the Golden Rule – *show up!* We went to everything – concerts (every backstage), station events, you name it. I remember waiting until I am behind the Summit in Houston with Erv Woosley just to get a George Strait liner. We got it! A New Yorker and a Texan – we were a match, for sure, *pal!*

## 19 Chris Stacey **Warner Music Nashville SVP/Promotion**



I've had two great mentors in my career. One was Kevin Herring, who plucked me off a riverboat job in Paducah, KY and gave me a shot to prove myself in the record business. In the early stages, he taught me about being creative, tenacious and thinking outside the box when it comes to the art of promotion. Things he taught me 20 years ago are still with me today.

Another great mentor was Luke Lewis, who taught me to challenge the status quo. One of most defining moments was right before we released Shania. We paid some company to do a big research project, which came back saying it wouldn't be accepted by core Country listeners. The recommendation was, "Don't release it. It's too racy, too sexy for this format." I will never forget Luke looking Michael Powers and me in the eye, tearing the findings in half, throwing it in the trash can and saying, "Go get it played, boys." It went on to be biggest-selling country album of all time and biggest selling female album of all time. Trust your gut.

**Stacey (bottom, c) & Herring (standing, l) with Shania and the Mercury crew**

## 20 Jack Purcell **Big Machine VP/Promotion**

During my early years at Warner Bros./Nashville, our team was a family and the glue that held us together was the late Nick Hunter. He gave me and so many others career advice and life-changing opportunities. The first installment came when I was, at Nick's baiting, about to begin a career in record promotion. Unsure, I asked, "What do I do?" "Just listen," Nick said. "They'll tell you everything you need to know." He was right! You (radio) did!

Along the way, Nick made us better students of the industry and, more important, life. He'd kick your ass if you needed it. He'd let you stew while you replayed in your mind what you did or didn't do, and then would put you back together. He'd make us mad but, in the long run, we respected him for it. Most important, he'd let you know, in the most subtle way, when "you did good."

Seventeen years later, my time at Warner Bros. wrapped up and I was unsure what was next. Once again it was Nick who let me stew. As I began to doubt myself, Nick called to check in. In words that will make George, Bruce, Bill, Mox, Bubba, Bob, Denny, Susan, Janice, Martha, Ronna, Doug, Gene, Gregg, Neal and others smile, Nick said with a little snap of his fingers above his head, "I got an idea." He wanted to hire me at Audium. "Wow," I thought. I had been invited back in for a second chance. Once again I asked, "Nick, what should I do?" He replied, "Just be yourself."

With his few words came great advice. "Listen" (and learn). And "just be yourself." As the journey continues, I remain forever grateful to my first industry mentor and dearly missed friend, Nick Hunter.



**Purcell (bottom, r) and Hunter (standing, r) with Clint, Bernadette and team Warner Bros.**

## 21 Mike Moore **Entercom VP/Country, KWJJ/Portland PD**



My first big break as a Country PD for a major station came at New City (later Cox) WWKA/Orlando. Bill Hendrich, Rich Reis and Steve Holbrook taught me more in my time there than I had learned in my career to that point and more than I've learned since. It was like going to school. It was a wonderful group of people, an amazing city and a great company. Bill once said something that has always stuck with me: "As a manager of people, your job is to make sure that the folks on your team are performing at their optimum level. You can't hold everybody to the same standard, and some people may not be able to perform at the level needed to be on the team. You have to figure that out, too. But if you're doing what you're supposed to as a leader, you're getting everyone's best." It was truly a gift for me to be in that environment and to learn from those people.



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## 22 Shane Allen

Capitol VP/Promotion



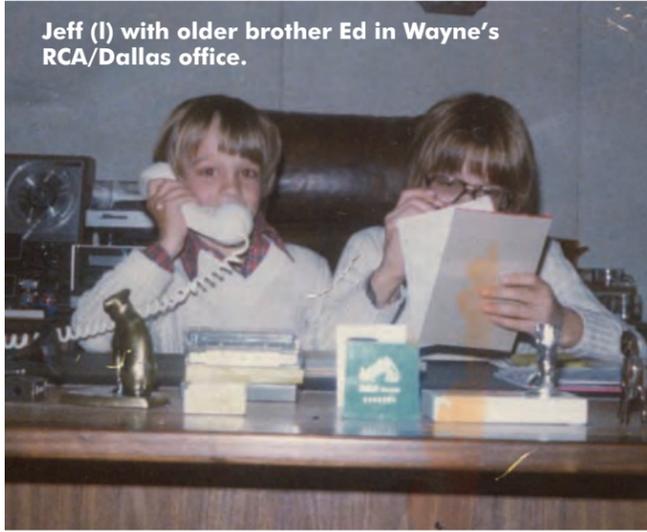
In 1998, I was 22 and working as the KSON/San Diego Coord./Promotions when David Haley hired me as the MCA Promotion Assistant. From my first day in Nashville to the lunch we had a couple of weeks ago, David has been the same genuine, thoughtful, honest, loyal, engaging and hilarious person. Good day or bad, he has consistently showed me that who you are and how you treat others is the key to any truly long term success in life. Other than the Midwest blue-collar work ethic instilled by my parents, nobody has had a bigger impact on my professional adult life than David Haley, a.k.a. "The Mule."

## 23 Jeff Solima

Principle: Bigger Picture Group, New Revolution, Hitsquad Promotions

Growing up, I watched what show business was: how to entertain, the importance of branding yourself, knowing when to be a diplomat and when to stand your ground ... and how to fall down drunk and throw up and still get in the office by 9. My stepfather Wayne Edwards was the best in the business.

He was mean, tough and fired me more times than I have had jobs, so I learned constant accountability, to never be complacent, and how to grovel.



Jeff (l) with older brother Ed in Wayne's RCA/Dallas office.

## 24 Carson James

Broken Bow & Stoney Creek SVP/Promotion



David Coppock, now Market Manager for Clear Channel Mobile/Pensacola, was President of Colonial Broadcasting where my radio career started. David was the greatest example of accessibility and management by walking around. He'd come into my office for 20 minutes every morning talking about the importance of product so we could keep rate integrity. John Hart was my first PD at WLWI/Montgomery, AL. I was the lowly 7pm-midnight guy with aspirations. He showed me that if you believe in someone, you show them everything you know; you don't hold back. I'm a numbers fanatic, and he showed me how to recruit, conduct and decipher callout, focus groups, auditoriums, perceptuals - he always had time to explain.

The late Phil Gernhart, longtime head of A&R at Curb was the hardest ass I ever worked for in my life. He's another who showed faith. I'd never been a regional and he hired me as a VP from my job with John Hart at Bullseye. Most people get into the record business because they're passionate, and that's part of it. But you better be smart about it. He thought *beyond* and instilled that in me.

And then there's my wife Kara, who encouraged and drove me. When you get married and are working seven to midnight at 17 for a year, you'd better have a lot of patience. She showed me, once again, to have faith in someone, to get behind them, no matter what.

## 25 Lesly Tyson

Arista VP/Promotion

One of the greatest influences in my career was Bobby Kraig, who hired me as a regional for Arista in 2004. I came over from the pop world, and as excited as I was to be back in country, I was a bit out of my element. I loved coming to the office early (Bobby was always here by 7:30) and sitting with Bobby before the day got crazy. It was an incredible learning experience. He really taught me about Country radio from the programming side and the record side. I also learned so much about our artists and their history at the label and before. I still get emails from him congratulating me on a record, or sending me encouraging words when he knows I am working a tough project. He is the epitome of a leader and one of the warmest and understanding people I have ever known. Working for Bobby, you just wanted to do an outstanding job every day to make him proud.



Tyson (top r) with Bobby and staff

## 26 Michael Powers

Bigger Picture Group Artist Ventures President



It would be really hard to name one particular mentor in my career because I have been blessed to work with so many great leaders. So I would just love to mention a few that have helped shape my life and career. To Luke Lewis, Keith Stegall, Erv Woolsey, the late Charlie Minor, Kevin Herring, Gary Veloric, Bill Schulte, Tim DuBois and Mutt Lange, "Thank you, gentlemen. You are treasures to this industry!"

## 27 Randy Chase

Cox Country Format Leader, KCYY/San Antonio PD



Around 1989 or 1990 I'd been in a radio a few years and moved my way up to Houma, LA. I met a guy named St. John from B97 (Top 40 WEZB/New Orleans) who took me under his wing, coached me, airchecked me and guided me into becoming a big market personality. One of the things he taught me I still use to this day. I brought him an aircheck and he heard me barely step on the intro to a record. "What are you doing?" he said. "You're stepping on these songs. You have to feel the music. If you're staring at a timer or practicing over and over, you're never going to be a major market air talent. I should be able to turn the radio on right now, to any station, and post the next song." I thought that was impossible, but he turned on the radio and did it right there. To this day, if I'm not paying attention or the phone is ringing during a break and I clip an intro, I think about St. John.

## 28 Keith Gale

RCA VP/Promotion

Dale Turner and Mike Wilson gave me the chance. They taught me to be a promotion person. Joe Galante and Butch Waugh kept me around, and taught me to be an executive. Now, Gary Overton is teaching me leadership, allowing me to be a leader while supporting and helping this new incarnation of RCA. And every day I am inspired by and learn from my staff: Josh Easler, Dan Nelson, Matt Galvin, Liz Sledge, Larry Santiago, David Berry and Parker Fowler.



Gale (to the right of Truman) with the RCA staff.

## 29 Tim Roberts

WYCD/Detroit PD



One of my earliest influences and mentors was a great programmer named Mark Tudor, who started WTQR/Winston Salem and later programmed WLK/Charlotte in the '80s (now WKKT). Mark took a chance, hired me as MD and night jock and taught me a ton in a short period of time. We had Mike Chapman as a consultant, and he taught me a ton, as well. From Mark (and indirectly from Mike), I learned a hundred nuances about Selector and on-air work; how to deal with record companies; read the charts; coach talent well; do killer, bigger-than-life promotions; and just about everything else you can learn in radio.

Our K97 GM Mike Buxser (now in West Virginia) was also a great leader and knew how to treat people the right way. Charlotte was extremely competitive radio in the '80s (as it is today). The morning battle was ridiculous between local shows like John Boy and Billy, Bill Dollar, Boozer, *Murphy in the Morning*, *Bob and Sheri*, as well as our morning with Billy Buck Blevins - they were all doing great radio. Those battles really made you elevate your game.

## 30 Meg Stevens

Clear Channel/Washington & Baltimore OM, WMZQ/Washington PD



## 31 Travis Moon

KAJA/San Antonio PD

I had a wonderful mentor in Roy Hyatte, my advisor at the University of Nebraska-Kearney, our station manager and broadcast instructor. He did radio in Indianapolis in the '60s, '70s and '80s and brought a genuine enthusiasm and intense faith about all the good *radio* does and can do.

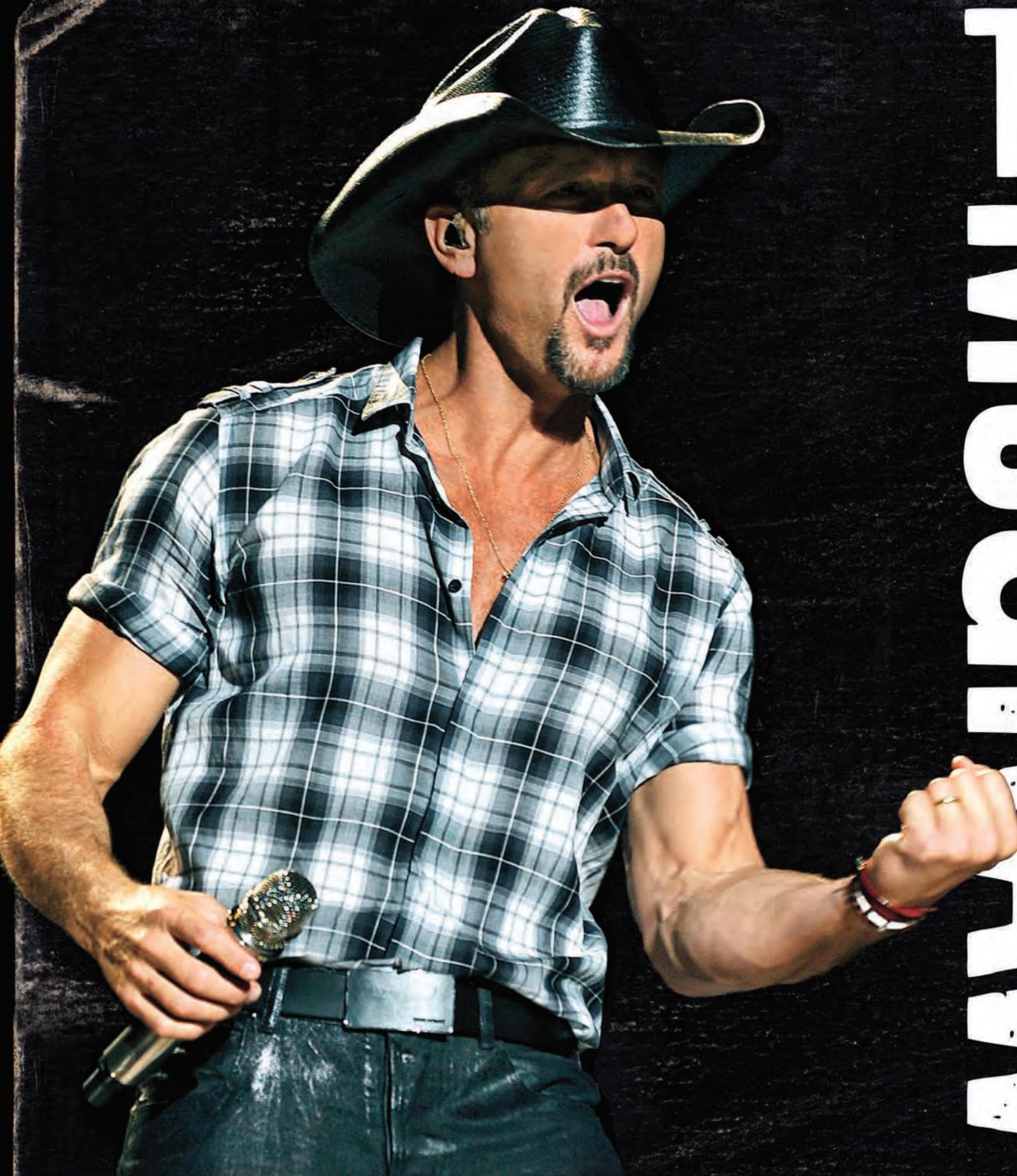
In a modest and sincere way, Roy had the ability to make you feel valuable. His enthusiasm for me as an individual wasn't blatant, but it was clear that he was rooting for me to achieve. He could be blunt and honest, and he gave me the ability to always see a big picture. He taught me to worry about the things that really matter. He taught me to question things. He taught me to not take myself too seriously and stay grounded.

His mentoring was such that even 12 years after his death, I imagine what he would say about certain events in my career and our industry. Roy was a *huge* country fan and talked many times about his days at WIRE-AM/Indianapolis. When KXKT/Omaha flipped to Country in October 1992 and I told him I was doing Country radio despite a background in Top 40, Rock and Alternative music, I could sense a sly smile on his face. I think he knew I'd probably relate better to the music and embrace the genuine listener passion. Roy was right.

CAC



Moon (far right) with other students and Hyatte (c).



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MCGRAW**

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**THE CURRENT HIT SINGLE FROM TIM MCGRAW'S  
BIG MACHINE RECORDS DEBUT ALBUM  
COMING FEBRUARY 2013**

**THANKS COUNTRY RADIO FOR THE  
HIGHEST-CHARTING DEBUT SOLO  
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Kristen Kelly

**Arista**

The title track from **Carrie Underwood**'s multi-week No. 1 album *Blown Away* is its second single. Admiral **Lesly Tyson** reports, "When this incredible album hit stores, we could instantly feel the overwhelming passion from consumers. From the signs we're seeing, this could be one of Carrie's biggest singles to date, both from an airplay and sales perspective. And that is pretty impressive after 15 No. 1s and more than 15 million albums sold." Meanwhile, Underwood's *CMA Awards* co-host **Brad Paisley** is at work on his 10th studio album. Look for the first single from it before the end of the year.

**Jerrod Niemann** launches his sophomore album *Free The Music* Oct. 2. The debut single "Shinin' On Me" is what Tyson calls "an infectious, feel-good song that is quintessential Jerrod. From the response from fans on the Brad Paisley, Miranda Lambert and Blake Shelton tours, Jerrod is well on his way to becoming a core artist."

The season will also see new music from **Kristen Kelly**. "Ex-Old Man" is a female anthem and lays the groundwork for Kristen's debut album. "One of the fast-rising new female stars in years," says Tyson. "Catch her on the Virtual Opry Stage on Brad Paisley's tour dates this fall." And **Kix Brooks** brings his debut solo album *New To This Town* to stores Sept. 11, along with a new single. "We are also thrilled to introduce The Henningsen's this fall," Tyson says. The promo tour kicks off this month.

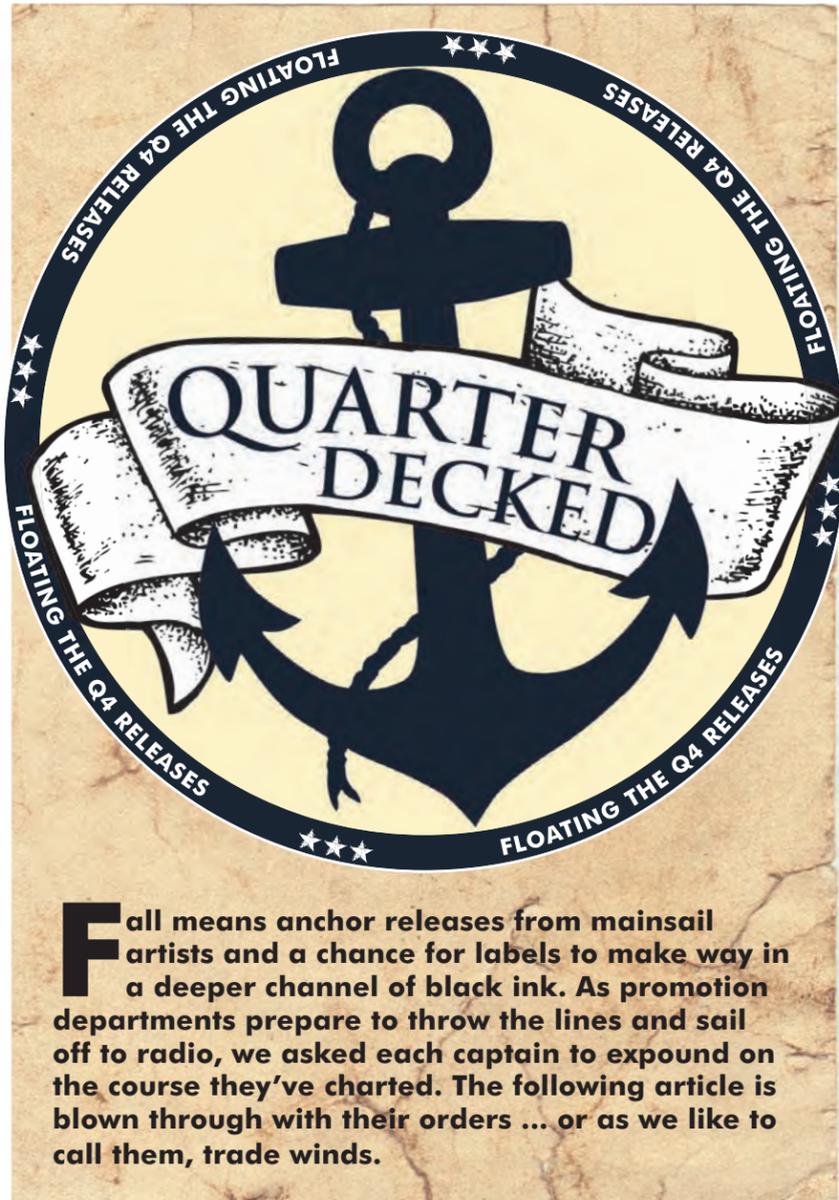
**Average Joes**

Two major priorities will be on radio's desks this fall, according to recently promoted Commodore Promo **Tony Morreale**. "We're going to continue to develop the current 'Back' story by **Colt Ford** with **Jake Owen**," he says. "Colt's *Declaration Of Independence* album is out and selling very well, and we obviously want to continue that trend into the holidays and beyond." Morreale is also stoked about veteran duo **Montgomery Gentry**. "We're going to have a jaw-dropping new single called 'I'll Keep The Kids' for everyone's programming pleasure!"

**Big Machine**

The biggest candle on the company's seventh birthday cake (Sept. 1) is **Taylor Swift**'s new album *Red*, which bows Oct. 22. The project is being propelled by the lead single "We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together." VP **John Zarlino** tells us, "Radio will be heavily involved in the album's launch, with multiple street-week promotions taking place nationwide."

Fueled by his current top 10 single "Truck Yeah" – the highest-debuting song of his career – **Tim McGraw** is putting finishing touches on his first Big Machine album, scheduled for a



**F**all means anchor releases from mainsail Artists and a chance for labels to make way in a deeper channel of black ink. As promotion departments prepare to throw the lines and sail off to radio, we asked each captain to expound on the course they've charted. The following article is blown through with their orders ... or as we like to call them, trade winds.

Q1 2013 release. He and wife Faith Hill will spend the bulk of Q4 in Las Vegas preparing for the December 7 premiere of their *Soul2Soul* engagement at the Venetian.

**Rascal Flatts**' current single "Come Wake Me Up" is complemented by what Zarlino calls "a much-buzzed-about music video" and "is delivering new sales and research stories every week." A *Changed* documentary on DVD is slated for late Q4, backed by a major marketing push at radio and retail. On tour with the Flatts through October is the label's 2012 new artist priority **Edens Edge**, who enjoyed a top 10 debut for their self-titled album. Singles "Too Good To Be True" and "Amen" have reached inside the top 30 and 20, respectively.

**Bigger Picture**

*Back In The Saddle* is the first new album from **Chris Cagle** in four years, and "Let There Be Cowgirls" is seeing action this autumn as the collection's second single. Fleet Admiral **Michael Powers** reports, "Chris has a ton of touring dates coming up and several radio events to do before the year is out. We will see you on the road and on the radio!"

Hit songwriter **D Vincent Williams** ("Just Got Started Lovin' You", "I'm Movin' On") has performed at more than 90 stations. Debut single "Down By The River" is what Powers calls "D's first hit record as a singer."

After **Craig Campbell** became the third-most-played new artist in **Country Aircheck** last year, he went into the studio with producer Keith Stegall to record his second album. The first single "Outta My Head" impacts Sept. 17. "This song is totally uptempo and, as the title suggests, has a massive radio hook that won't quit!"

Radio may remember **Chris Janson** from his BNA release "Till a Woman Comes Along" in 2010. Powers predicts, "You'll be surprised and thrilled to see the country rocking, energetic side of Chris when he visits radio on his upcoming fall promo tour."

**Black River**

Navigating Q4 starts with **Craig Morgan**'s new single "More Trucks Than Cars." Riverboat Captain **Greg McCarn** calls it "a feel-good description of hometowns across America where we say 'hell yeah and amen' and there truly are more trucks than cars."

"Emerging trio **Due West**'s current single 'Things You Can't Do In A Car' has taken hold of the airwaves as well as digital sales," McCarn says. "The track has been consistently outselling the singles surrounding it on the chart and has yet to dip below 1,000 downloads a week." They're in the studio with producer Garth Fundis; album in 2013.

**Sarah Darling** has been visiting radio in support of "Home To Me," also a Q4 priority. "Sirius/XM's The Highway has

been seeing amazing listener feedback since adding the single," McCarn reports. Darling is a regular Opry guest, will perform on *Fox & Friends* Sept. 22 and is working with Dann Huff on a 2013 album.

**Broken Bow**

All eyes and ears are on four artists, starting with **Jason Aldean**. "Take A Little Ride' is already testing," says SVP **Carson James**. Aldean's forthcoming release *Night Train* will be out Oct. 16. Pointing out that the album, like its predecessor, will offer 15 tracks, James says, "Jason and BBR like to provide value for the consumer."

By the time you read this, **Dustin Lynch**'s self-titled debut album will be on the streets. His first single "Cowboys And Angels" has gone gold, paving the way for a second single. And while **James Wesley** is busy in the studio this fall, BBR is also introducing **Kristy Lee Cook** with the song "Airborne Ranger Infantry," which she wrote based on poems composed by her father while at war. James says, "It's an unbelievably different perspective about how soldiers leave war, but how war never leaves them." The song is produced by New Voice Entertainment, which also produced Thompson Square.



Kristy Lee Cook

**Capitol**

The "Pontoon" navy steams into Q4 with the release of **Little Big Town**'s second project on Capitol, *Tornado*. The title track will be the label's first new single release during the quarter.

"Reigning ACM and CMA Group of the Year **Lady Antebellum** will enter the fall climbing the charts with 'Wanted You More,' the fourth single from their platinum *Own The Night* album," Veep **Shane Allen** says. "Plans are for it to peak just in time to give radio a holiday present with 'Holly Jolly Christmas,' from their new Christmas album, in stores Oct. 23."

Allen says that **Luke Bryan**, one of a handful of country artists to be certified platinum on three consecutive singles in the past year, "probably wouldn't want to 'Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye' if that weren't the name of his fourth single from the platinum *Tailgates & Tanlines*."

**Jon Pardi** will close down the world at Joe's Bar in Chicago on 12-21-12. Odds are he'll play his debut single "Missin' You Crazy." Pardi like a Mayan! Following up three consecutive chart-toppers from his current album *Home*, **Dierks Bentley** will "Tip It On Back" for the rest of the year.

"After nearly two million country albums sold and five No. 1 Country singles, **Darius Rucker** has made many 'True Believers,'" Allen says. The first single from his similarly titled third album is set for release soon after the new year. And finally, **Keith Urban** enters the fall with "For You" (from *Act Of Valor*) in peak position following three consecutive No. 1s from *Get Closer*. A new studio album and world tour will be coming in 2013.



Chris Janson



**Cold River**

The company is continuing to work **Katie Armiger's** single "Better In A Black Dress," the lead offering from a new album scheduled for early '13. She is in the middle of a nationwide college tour and coming off a prime-time TV performance on ABC's *Bachelor Pad*.

**Columbia**

"Q4 gears up with **Casey James** building on the success of his previous top 20 single 'Let's Don't Call It A Night' with the quickly chart-climbing, reactive 'Crying On A Suitcase.'" says VP **Norbert Nix**. "This Cool, TX native is a triple threat, coupling his distinctive vocals with strong songs and blistering guitar work."

After his two-week No. 1 "Come Over," **Kenny Chesney** will offer what Nix calls the "visceral" single "El Cerrito Place" from *Welcome To The Fishbowl*. Also swimming in radio's pool this summer was **Tyler Farr**, who visited more than 100 stations to promote his new single "Hello Goodbye." "Tyler has been honing his skills and preparing for this day since he started going on the road as a teenager with his stepfather, who played with George Jones," Nix says. Look for Farr's debut album next year.

**Curb**

"We're going for another No. 1 on **Lee Brice** with 'Hard To Love,' says Buccaneer **Adrian Michaels**. "We will also be working Rodney Atkins 'Just Wanna Rock N Roll' up the chart, and look for new music from **LeAnn Rimes**, **Rachel Holder** and a new band called **Sweet Water Rain**."

**EMI Nashville**

"We'll be offering no apologies for the success of 'Sorry On The Rocks' from **Kelleigh Bannen**," quips VP/Promotion **Kevin Herring**. "Kelleigh's anthem to the 2am drunk dial is picking up momentum and setting up nicely for the release of her debut album in early 2013."

Herring points out that **Alan Jackson** has had 35 No. 1 singles, 17 ACM Awards, 16 CMA Awards and a couple of Grammys. But, hey, who's counting? "Alan has another mainstream Country smash with his current single 'You Go

Your Way,' Herring says. "It's hard to argue with that track record of both writing and recording hit songs." "Creepin'" is probably an oxymoron as it relates to **Eric Church**, whose successful 2012 means his new single isn't likely to sneak up on anyone. Between the platinum *Chief*, a sold-out fall tour and consecutive No. 1 singles, Herring notes, "Eric is anything but Creepin'!"

And on the EMI Nashville foredeck is **Eric Paslay**. "Now that he's done celebrating the No. 1 songs he wrote in 2012 ('Barefoot Blue Jean Night,' 'Angel Eyes,' 'Even If It Breaks Your Heart'), it's time to put out one of his own," Herring says.

**Flying Island**

Every oar is in the water for the debut single from **Gwen Sebastian**, a former contestant on *The Voice* (and now Blake Shelton band vocalist). An EP featuring "Met Him In A Motel Room" is scheduled for release in late October. First mate **Shelia Shipley Biddy** says, "We are energized about the reactivity of this emotional song and expect to stay checked-in with radio on it through the fourth quarter and beyond."

Flying Island also continues to develop the career of **Levi Riggs** whose single "There's Still A Place For That" is building in the Activator markets,



Levi Riggs

according to Biddy. Also being released first to the Activator markets is "The One You Love" from **Flynnville Train**, who are known for their high-energy live performance and strong harmonies.

**InstiGator**

"**Aaron Lewis** has a hit with 'Endless Summer' and a Country album that is unbelievable," says InstiGator instigator **Gator Michaels**. "'The Road' is going to blow your mind!" Elsewhere, **Chelsea Bain** is performing her music and singing the National Anthem at NASCAR races through The Chase for the Championship and Michaels and crew will continue to work "What If I." **Jason Cassidy** also is hitting the road hard, touring across Texas and the west coast supporting his single "Ride of Your Life."

**Lofton Creek**

Look for a new single by **The Wheeler Sisters**, titled "This Is Gonna Get Ugly" and worked by **Mike Borchetta** and the LC team.

**MCA**

**Katie Dean**, UMG VP/RM (Radio Marketing, FYI), reports that **Gary Allan** is returning to the radio airwaves with "Every Storm (Runs Out Of Rain)," co-written with and featuring **Hillary Lindsey** of Lady Antebellum. The single impacts radio in September and is the first from his upcoming album *Set You Free*.

**Josh Turner** will follow his hit "Time Is Love" with the second single "Find Me A Baby" from his *Punching Bag* album. "One More Sad Song," the current single from the **Randy Rogers Band**, is the first offering from *Trouble*, an album they co-produced with Jay Joyce.

On the heels of his multi-week No. 1 "Somethin' 'Bout A Truck," **Kip Moore** hits the road with Eric Church this fall in support of his current hit "Beer Money." The label will also launch **Drake White** in Q4, with the first single (tbd) going for adds Jan. 14. VPP **Van Haze** says, "I'm excited for our friends at radio to hear music from Drake. He's a dynamic performer onstage, as well, and I can't wait for people to see it." Drake will open for labelmate David Nail this fall. And ... **George Strait** will be back on the road this autumn, with new music coming soon.

**Mercury**

Katie Dean (again!) reminds us, "Anyone who attended the UMG show at the Ryman at CRS remembers **Kacey Musgraves**, who earned a standing ovation for her performance of 'Merry Go 'Round,' which impacts radio in September. Originally from Texas, this prolific writer has already had cuts by Miranda Lambert and Martina McBride, and recently opened dates for Alison Krauss and Lady Antebellum."

**Easton Corbin** streets his sophomore album *All Over The Road* Sept. 18 with the title cut expected to be the second single, projected for release in Q4. **Lauren Alaina** will head out on a club tour in support of her current single "Eighteen Inches," while platinum hitmaker **Billy Currington** is in the studio, with a new single from a forthcoming album expected this fall.

**Jamey Johnson** will release *Livin' For a Song: A Tribute to Hank Cochran* in October. The 16-track collection features collaborations with **Alison Krauss**, **Ronnie Dunn**, **George Strait**, **Willie Nelson**, **Kris Kristofferson** and more. *American Idol* winner **Scotty McCreery** is putting the finishing touches on his first Christmas album, set for release in October.

**Momentum**

Founded by veteran artist **Jamie O'Neal** and executive **Jimmy Murphy**,



The Wheeler Sisters

the label launched this year with the single "Party 'Til The Cows Come Home" from flagship artist **Rachele Lynae**. O'Neal says both Lynae and the song drew strong reaction, with Lynae's Twitter followers growing from 1,000 to more than 30,000. "Rachele has gathered a devoted following of radio programmers, as well," O'Neal says. Rachele's seven-song EP is being offered free via Country radio websites; the full album is out Oct. 23. A new artist signing will be announced in Q1 of 2013.

**New Revolution**

"**The Lost Trailers**' 'American Beauty' is already showing signs of being a massive breakthrough song for them," says New Rev owner **Rob Dalton**. "People love this song! And it comes with a 'can't change the station' guarantee. Ask your regional for details."

The label will also soon ship **The Farm's** "Be Grateful" for All In/Elektra/Warner Music. Dalton predicts, "This second single will further put them in the category of 'Best New Artist' and show the world that this group is here to stay. Its message is timeless but particularly relevant now. This is an important piece of music."

**Nine North/Turnpike**

Kickin' off the quarter is Bakersfield's **Lucky Ned Pepper** (formerly the Smokin' Armadillos), who bring new sounds along with their new name, starting with "I Remember The Music." Stonehall/Nine North's **Phoenix Stone** got his first gig as a 16-year-old staff writer at Warner/Chappell in Music City, and will be pouring his own "100 Proof Moonshine." "Turn it on, turn it up, turn it loose and put your cups up!" says President **Larry Paregis**.

He also promises to "make your PPM ping" with It Is What It Is/Nine North's **Lisa Matassa**, who returns with a heartfelt-with-tempo "Somebody's Baby." "It's got a great, powerful hook and a huge Lisa vocal, too," he says. Namaste Music/Nine North's **Danielle Peck** is returning with "Impossible Dreams" – what the 9N team feels is the "most moving song of her young career."

**Quarterback**

"We've been excited watching **Mark Cooke's** growth over the past year, and September brings a new single to build on that growth," says Quarterback Deck Master **Chris Allums**. "**Brian Milson** is back in the studio recording some great music, and we can't wait to let programmers hear it. And we continue to work on building national exposure for the **Josh Abbott Band**, and expect to have the follow-up to their hit 'Touch' at radio soon."

**RCA**

The one new artist that RCA launched and will continue working on in 2012 will be **Joanna Smith** and her label debut called "We Can't Be Friends." Chief Strategist **Keith Gale**



Kacey Musgraves



**THE BAND PERRY**



**ELI YOUNG BAND**



**GREG BATES**



**FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE**



**JACKIE LEE**



**FIGHT LIKE APES**

*Republic*



says, "We will continue our 'Today's Country campaign across America' with her. We will also have the follow-up to **Love And Theft's** big hit 'Angel Eyes' in October, while continuing to work on music from the current projects from **Miranda Lambert, Sara Evans, Jake Owen and Chris Young.**"

### Republic Nashville

The **Band Perry** are in the studio working on their sophomore album with producer **Rick Rubin**, according to Ape-de-camp **Matthew Hargis**. Look for a first single to land at radio soon, followed by an album release in 2013. **Greg Bates** continues to climb the charts with his debut single "Did It For The Girl." He'll be out on tour with **Brantley Gilbert** through the end of the year.

The label's newest signing, **Florida Georgia Line**, are "Cruise"-ing up the airplay and sales charts with their debut single. They plan to hit the road with **Jake Owen** for the remainder of 2012 on the **CMT Tour**. And the **Eli Young Band** are following up consecutive No. 1 singles with "Say Goodnight" from their *Life At Best* release. In addition to wrapping up their year touring with **Rascal Flatts**, the guys will head into the studio to start work on a new album scheduled to street in 2013.

### Rodeowave

A Christmas single from **Phil Vassar's** album *Noel* is headed radio's way as the holidays approach. In addition to retail, the album is now available via all digital outlets. The release will support **Vassar's** Christmas tour. Meanwhile, another single from his forthcoming album *Don't Miss Your Life* will be released shortly, as well.

Brothers **Brad, Bryan and Curtis Rempel** make up sibling trio **High Valley**, and after 16 years of touring and opening for **Brad Paisley, Keith Urban and Reba** in their native Canada, the 20-something **CCMA** nominees are preparing to make their U.S. debut this fall. Partner/Promotion **Teddi Bonadies** says, "Their distinct harmonies and instrumentation will have you instantly singing along to their debut single 'Love You For A Long Time,' which will impact Sept. 10." They're currently on a radio tour; album in 2013.

A&M/Octone new country duo **Miss Willie Brown**, comprised of singer/songwriters **Kasey Buckley and Amanda Watkins**, continue their radio tour promoting their debut single "You're

All That Matters To Me" written by **Robert John "Mutt" Lange** and produced by **Nathan Chapman**. After first appearing on *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* as an unsigned act, **MWB** made an encore performance Sept. 5 and recently made their *Grand Ole Opry* debut.

### RPM Entertainment

SVP **April Rider** reports that **RPME** will continue its emphasis on **Maggie Rose** with "I Ain't Your Mama" and **Zac Brown Band's** "The Wind."

### Show Dog-Universal

VP/Promotion **Rick Moxley** says, "Our fourth quarter features the **Big Dog - Toby Keith's** current single 'I Like Girls Who Drink Beer.' His album is slated for release Nov. 13. We're also focused on **JT Hodges** with 'Sleepy Little Town.'" Hodges' album landed Aug. 21.

### Sidewalk

"We're continuing to work our new **Heidi Newfield** single 'Why'd You Have To Be So Good,'" reports VP/Promotion **Larry Hughes**. "And we have a new **Clay Walker** single called 'Jesse James' coming Sept. 17."

### Stoney Creek

"ACM Vocal Duo of the Year **Thompson Square** are leading the pack of nominees for **CMA Vocal Duo**," **Chris Loss** says from the promotion bridge. "Please remember to 'Square your vote' and vote T2!" Single "Glass" has sold more than 300,000 copies, according to **Loss**, and they're also slated for "the middle slot on a big tour" next year.



"Top 25-and-beyond airplay: Here we come with 'How Country Feels' from **Randy Houser**," **Loss** continues. "PPM loves tempo hits, and we have one here. Strong early research, sales are jumping week after week and daytime spins are fueling the growth."

"I don't know what the hell went on 'round here the first three quarters of '12,'" **Loss** says, "but we 'Musta Had A Good Time!' We're at 100k digital singles sold and growing for the rocket ship known as **Parmalee**. **Matt, Scott, Barry and Josh** will spend Q4 continuing to bond with Country radio all over the USA."

### Streamsound

The new label continues to work **Jaida Dreyer's** single "Confessions." Head of Promotion **Mike Wilson** says plans are to release **Dreyer's** debut album this fall, most likely in October. "Jaida's out working the road, doing shows and continuing to win radio over, one station at a time."



Austin Webb

"We are also gearing up to launch our second artist, **Austin Webb**, who is on his first radio tour. He's a singer/songwriter produced by **Byron Gallimore**." Look for his inaugural single in mid-to-late October.

### Tenacity

"We're coming off a great third quarter with a top 40 single on **Darryl Worley** and are breaking through with **Bill Gentry**," enthuses SVP/Promotion **Tim McFadden**. "Expect new music from both of them in Q4, plus a new act we are very excited about named **George Molton**. **John Dorris** invited us to see him at a club in Lexington - the same one where **John Michael Montgomery and Montgomery Gentry** got their start. It's time for another big act from there, and **George** blew us all away. Can't wait for everyone to hear and see him."

### Triple Crown

"Looking forward to the fall with **Lonestar** climbing the charts," says co-King **Doc Gonzales**. "Their new album drops in the fall - same band with **Richie McDonald** rejoining as they celebrate their 20th anniversary."

Also on the **Triple Crown** itinerary is **Rich O'Toole** with what **Gonzales** calls "in-your-face, party-all-night, uptempo music." **O'Toole's** self-penned EP will be out this fall. And finally, **Heartland** will be making a splash with an "emotion single that will make your phones ring off the hook ... again," **Gonzales** says.

### Valory Music Co.

"With a brand-new video out, the momentum continues to grow on **Justin Moore's** current single, 'Til My Last Day,'" says Commodore **George Briner**. **Moore** is currently gearing up for **Eric Church's Blood, Sweat and Beers** tour.

"The best new act in 2012 hands down is **Brantley Gilbert**," **Briner** asserts, pointing out "a slew of No. 1s including back-to-back No. 1 singles, the No. 1 most-played new artist, No. 1 online video plays (more than 22 million) and headlining his own tour this fall. **Brantley** has one of the biggest-selling and fastest-moving singles on the charts with 'Kick It In The Sticks.'" "The newest act on the roster is **Thomas Rhett**, who's following his successful debut "Something To Do With My Hands" with "Beer With Jesus." "The first time I heard it, I thought it had Song of the Year potential - one that will be played at Country radio for years and years," **Briner** says. "It's what country music is all about."

"The first time I heard it, I thought it had Song of the Year potential - one that will be played at Country radio for years and years," **Briner** says. "It's what country music is all about."

### Warner Atlantic Reprise

"What an exciting year for the W.A.R. promo team," VP/Promotion **Chris Palmer** says. "**Gloriana** gets their first No. 1; **Jana Kramer** sets the record for the highest-charting debut single from a female in **Country Aircheck** history; **Big & Rich** team up with **Dann Huff** and come roaring back with 'That's Why I Pray,' the fastest-rising single of their career from their first studio

album in five years; and we couldn't be more excited about the fantastic new music **Faith Hill** has delivered to us. We'll be bringing you her chart-topping single by the time you read this.

"We are extremely excited for radio to get to know **Charlie Worsham**. With a background of guitar/mandolin/banjo/bass session experience (**Eric Church, Dierks Bentley, Lynyrd Skynyrd**) and finely tuned songwriting chops (**Bentley, Gary Allan**), **Charlie's** hooky blend of old-school country, pop, rock, and bluegrass creates a fresh modern country sound." Introductions all around in Q4 and a single lands in January.

### Warner Music Nashville

"Merry Christmas, **Country Aircheck** readers," says VP/Promotion **Bob Reeves**. "What, too early? Not for **Team WMN**. We're celebrating **Blake Shelton's** first-ever holiday collection, titled *Cheers, It's Christmas*, available Oct. 2. It includes classic Christmas songs and features duets with many of **Blake's** longtime friends including **Michael Buble, Reba, Miranda Lambert, Kelly Clarkson** and one special duet that he co-wrote and performs with the first woman in his life, his mom, titled 'Time For Me To Come Home.' We're now calling the day following Thanksgiving **Blake Friday!**" A new studio project will land in early 2013.



Dean Alexander

After "wrapping" up the chart work on **Hunter Hayes's** platinum hit "Wanted" from his self-titled release, **WMN** will bring his follow-up, "Somebody's Heartbreak." **Hayes** will continue as the sole support act on **Carrie Underwood's Blown Away Tour** through winter. On the new artist front: "Expect a 'jingle' from your regional to set up a time for us to bring by **Dean Alexander**, our incredibly talented new artist, as we embark this month on his introductory radio tour," **Reeves** says.

"One last thing, and talk about early Christmas presents: Due to release schedules and timing, **Brett Eldredge's** next single will be worked by **Team WMN (Katie Bright, Mark Niederhauser, Lou Ramirez, Rick Young, Ann Williams, Kristen Williams - no relation - and yours truly)**. I know, I know - you're all confused about who works what over here at Warner Music. But the truth is that they're all hits, so go ahead and play 'em. Play 'em a lot! That would really make all our holiday wishes come true."

### Way Out West

"**Shawna Russell** continues to make great strides developing into one of the more successful small indie label female artists of 2012," says VP/Artist Development, Promotion & Marketing **Mike Severson**. "Initial plans are in the works for her third album to build on that trend toward the end of the year and into 2013. We will also have the debut album from Missouri-based band **LiveWire** landing in October, from which we're preparing a new single launch." **CAC**



High Valley

# VALORY PROUD



# COUNTRY

**JUSTIN MOORE**

“‘Til My Last Day’ is Justin's most contemporary COUNTRY single yet, and I loved it from the start...” -*Scott Donato, WGTY/York*

# CUTTING EDGE

**BRANTLEY  
GILBERT**



“Brantley Gilbert's sound and songwriting has changed country music as we know it. ‘Kick It In The Sticks’ IS the future of our format and the game changing CUTTING EDGE country anthem we've been waiting for! Get on board or get out of the way!” -*Phathead, WJVC/Nassau-Suffolk*



# POWERFUL

**THOMAS RHETT**

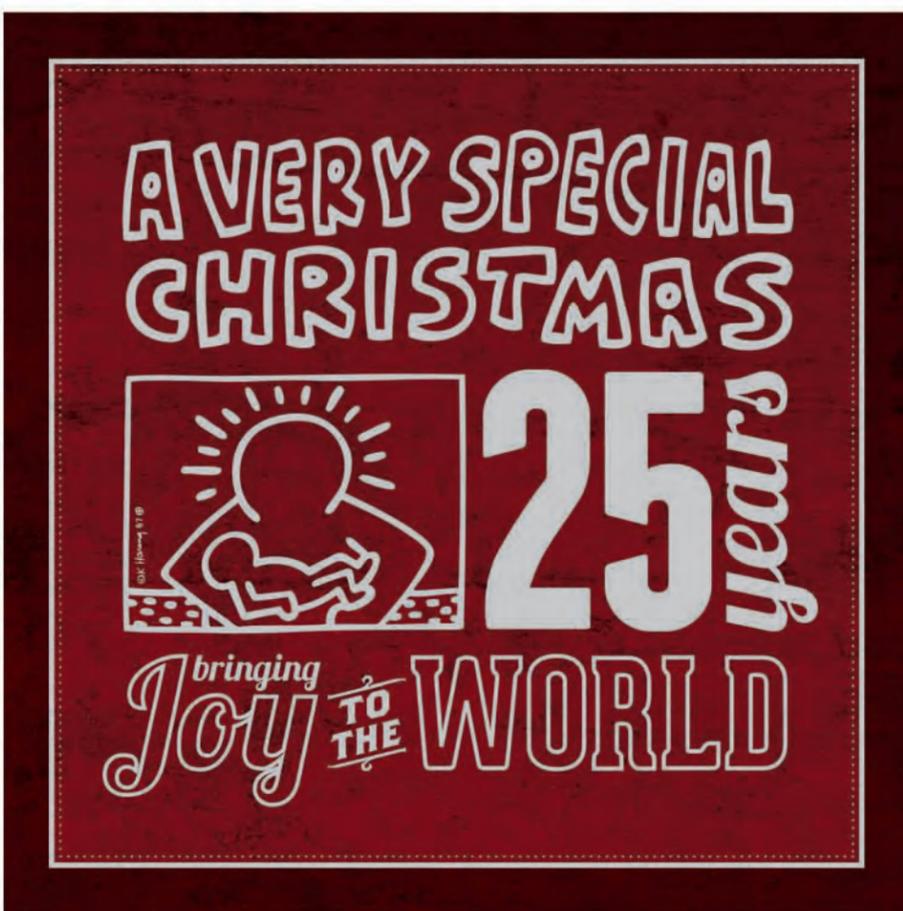
“From the first note, ‘Beer With Jesus’ made the hair on my arms stand up. This is a POWERFUL song that is amazingly written, one that we will be playing at country radio for years and years.” -*Jeff Kapugi, WUSN/Chicago*

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# Kirk Stirland

## Dialing Up Country

**L**ast year's merger with Westwood One cemented Dial Global's place as the largest independent radio network/syndication company and brought an exhaustive array of satellite formats, programs and services under one roof. Certainly not lost in that lineup is a substantial Country presence. President/Programming Kirk Stirland has been at the forefront of that integration and is charged with providing future direction for the company. And that's no small task when faced with competitors who are integrated with large station groups – Clear Channel/Premiere and Cumulus Media.

However, for Stirland, a nine-year company vet, network radio is a familiar place. Previously President of WOR Radio Network, he has prior stops at Unistar/Westwood One, ABC Radio Network and NBC-The Source. Country Aircheck asked him about merger integration, his Country platform and what he learned on a recent visit to Nashville. He also revealed that his story follows a pattern familiar to many – it all starts with a song. And a country song, to boot.

**Country Aircheck:** Dial Global has come through a series of acquisitions over the years – Waitt, Jones, and Westwood One 24/7 – leading up to the recent merger with the rest of Westwood One. Did those earlier assimilations make this process easier?

**KS:** Dial Global has grown a great deal through acquisition, and we have learned from every single one, so we were prepared for the complexity that our merger with Westwood One entailed. We were, and are, focused on keeping the qualities that have made us successful all the way along. That includes always

looking for ways to improve our relationships with our customers, be they advertisers, their agencies, our affiliates or our personalities and producers.

**Where is DG in that process of combining the products, cultures and procedures?**

The merger closed at the end of October 2011, and we are fully integrated now. We're focused now on operating the enterprise, and have begun looking out over the dash at new opportunities.

**Were there any particular complexities to the merger that jumped out at you?**

**Any pleasant surprises?**

This was an excellent fit. Westwood One had big brands like CBS, NBC, the NFL and NCAA Sports; Dial Global was strong in businesses like 24-hour formats and prep. Dial Global had a proven, trusted advertising sales system, and Westwood One had deep experience in event marketing. Put that all together, and you've got the right recipe for a successful media company.

**What is your view of the landscape for syndication? Where are the opportunities?**

**The challenges?**

It's the same formula that network radio has always followed: Do for stations what they can't do for themselves, efficiently, effectively – or at all – given their available resources. As a result of unique programming like NFL football, products with great ability to scale like our Radio Voodoo service, or things we can uniquely make, such as jingles and imaging from TM Studios, we have a good working model. We're a service to both our radio station customers and our sponsors. And now we can harness the power of all these in large-scale marketing opportunities that reach beyond traditional spot advertising.

**How can Dial Global best compete with syndication companies that are already connected with large station groups (Clear Channel, Cumulus)?**

No doubt, the most recent consolidation in our industry has changed radio. Even still, radio owners are looking for help making great radio stations. As an independent syndicator, we can work with everyone. No one is "off limits," and even our network competitors benefit from working with us. We can act as a syndication partner to all parties, large and small, leveraging our infrastructure and ability to monetize things nationally. We offer some really unique products built on brands that listeners love. As long as we continue to listen to our customers and offer those kinds of unique and compelling things, we'll continue to affiliate programming and services everywhere, even to those stations owned by large network radio owners, just as we do today.

**Dial Global has been in this assimilation mode for awhile. Where does it go next? Will there be more acquisitions? Does the focus turn to operating? What is the vision?**

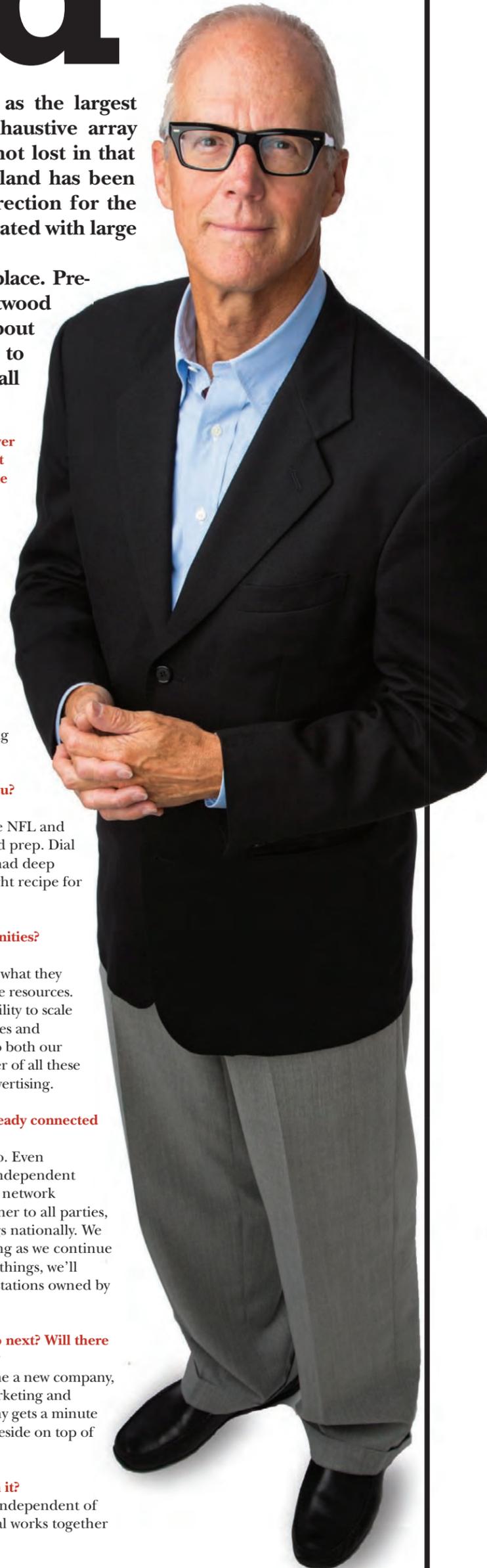
We are absolutely focused on operating our business. Not only did we become a new company, but the competitive landscape changed, too. And, of course, advertising, marketing and platforms are evolving at a historic pace. I don't think any successful company gets a minute to lay off the accelerator. Our eye is on complementary businesses that can reside on top of our substantial infrastructure, and that make us better.

**What is Dial Global's relationship with Triton and the equity firms that own it?**

We're now a separate entity from Triton Media, and the two are managed independent of each other. Both companies are backed by Oaktree Capital, and Dial Global works together with Triton on various initiatives, just as we do with other partners.

## THE INTERVIEW

“  
We are fully integrated now. We're focused on operating the enterprise, and have begun looking out over the dash at new opportunities.  
”



**With iHeartRadio, Pandora, Spotify and in-car WiFi in various levels of development, how is Dial Global preparing for a world that may be less reliant on terrestrial transmitters?**

We're in the audio entertainment business and want to be prepared for whichever way the business goes in getting that audio to the consumer. A lot of our business is in services to radio stations, giving them tools they need to make that great audio entertainment. But really, it could be anybody – radio station, webcaster, whomever. We feel we're poised for the future. We're excited about where the lines are crossing, not just in delivery methods, but also where technology and audio entertainment are going together. We have a lot of things we're working on, but none I can really talk about at this point.

## THE INTERVIEW

**The departure of Beau Phillips is a significant change in the programming structure. What is the vision for programming going forward?**

Beau is a legendary programmer, a savvy marketing mind, a true leader and one of my best friends. I'll miss him greatly day-to-day, but it's not like we don't hang out and talk about this crazy business. The good news here is that not only did he polish our programming, particularly that of our 24-hour formats, he attracted and assembled a remarkable programming team that will now take up his charge.

John Paul, certainly known to many for his Country chops, will now have an expanded role contributing to our formats as well as to the big list of Country shows, jingles and imaging services. Tim Maranville, another broadly respected programmer, has also taken on additional responsibilities in contemporary formats and shows. And David Felker and Chris Reeves each make huge contributions to our company's content. We'll let these talented programmers work across our entire landscape.

**Turning to Country, Dial Global has a significant platform in the format, as you mentioned. What exactly is its place within the company, and what will it be in the future?**

After News and Sports, Country is our biggest platform. We touch over 1,700 stations with a 24-hour format, a show, a prep service or a jingle/imaging package. Between our partnership with Viacom in the

we really wanted it to go beyond its sung-jingle base and agreed that we wanted the underpinning music to capture the great energy that is in Country music today. How do you do that? You go to Nashville, gather up master-class studio cats that have played on a list of country hits as long as your arm, and ask them to make music. Those sessions energized our whole jingle operation! And it comes through in the product. We're going to take that approach to other formats soon.

Another example of how being present and involved in Country pays off came about when we re-launched our *Country Gold* program. We wanted to turn up the star power on this four-hour specialty show, and we were thrilled to partner with Alabama frontman Randy Owen. When you hear great stories to go with the classic country music in *Country Gold*, it's coming with authenticity from a guy who was there. What an honor to work with Randy.

**What is your physical presence in Nashville?**

We have offices and studios on Music Row that house the production of many of our shows and our prep service bureau. We're there with Doc McGhee, and really like being able to hop upstairs and test ideas with Doc and his terrific Nashville team. We've actually created some great ideas in the hall up there! We also make sure our programming team, including Susan Stephens, our VP/GM of Shows, and John Paul, regularly visit to stay engaged with the artists, managers, record business execs and the rest of the country music community.

**How does and can Dial Global offer the country music community the ability to engage your audience? Music, promotions and beyond?**

The degree of engagement is almost limitless. There are plenty of obvious opportunities, like satellite radio tours, presence in our prep services, interviews on our weekend shows and taking over dayparts on our 24-hour formats that deliver hundreds of radio stations in one sitting. But given the reach of Country and the degree of celebrity in the format nowadays, why wouldn't it stretch to dropping in on our *NFL Monday Night Football* broadcasts, appearances at our *Backstage At The Grammys* or *Academy of Country Music Awards* broadcasts? We're now combining elements like these and more in really potent marketing packages for movie premieres, television launches and other high-profile opportunities.

**Your range of products and shows seems to be all-encompassing, but is there room for more? Have any plans for further Country offerings?**

the artist and our shows – and ultimately and always, the fan – can benefit.

**I heard some whispers last year in Las Vegas that the ACM Awards remotes may not be in DG's long-term plans. Can you speak to that?**

We're looking to see how we can benefit the company and radio with all our event involvement. We're excited about those events and the marketing opportunities they offer sponsors. We need to find the right ingredients to make those really valuable, to utilize the megaphone of radio to create a real win-win-win. We are committed to the Grammys and are analyzing other events.

**So the ACMs are not on the books yet?**

They're not on the books, but we're having those discussions.

**Are you a fan of country music? If so, what in particular resonates?**

I sure am. Back when the earth was still cooling, I actually had a song I wrote appear on the *Billboard* Country chart for about two weeks. No. 89 with an anchor versus a bullet, I think, and the \$3.90 royalty check ruined my amateur status forever. Living in New York with no local Country station, I have to work a little harder to stay up. I've got my favorite artists, but I can see only heartache and trouble if I start listing them here! I'll say, in the last year or so, it was real hard to get the Jamie Johnson CD out of my dashboard. I can listen to Brad Paisley or Keith Urban play guitar forever. I felt like a prepubescent fan of the Biebs when I got to meet Vince Gill recently. And modern bluegrassers like Chris Thile's Punch Brothers or Sierra Hull just kill it, if that's any indication of how I roll.

**What was the song you wrote? Who recorded it?**

It was "Midnight Cabaret" by a protégé of Merle Haggard named Wyvon Alexander. That was his first single from his first album. You'll catch me bragging, but the song actually won something at the American Songwriters Festival. Interestingly, the guy I was playing and singing with back then, Steve Witt, and I found each other on Facebook awhile back and we're co-writing again. We reconnected, had dinner, spent some time in my home studio, and now we're sending files back and forth, working on music.

**What got you personally interested in radio?**

There was this Quonset hut at Utah State University that housed KUSU-FM, and it was a lot more fun hanging out there than in organic chem. But before that, I was a huge fan of radio and growing up around San Francisco, I had two great sources: KFRC, for ultimate Top 40, and KSAN, live from the epicenter of counter-culture. I'll never forget hanging around the building at KSAN with some high school buds until some guy (I swear it was Ben Fong-Torres) invited us in for a tour. My eyes were as big as the LPs that were stacked to the ceiling in there. Those great announcers, whether it was Tom Donahue (KSAN) or Dr. Don Rose (KFRC), were my heroes.

It was always about the music for me, and music remains a passion. And that's why I think I'm a Country fan. It's all about the music. Add what we call around here "the magic" of a great storyteller and entertainer, and that's radio, keeping audiences listening on whatever device they choose to do it through.

**Professionally, what gives you the greatest satisfaction?**

I was driving out to see Steve Newberry at Commonwealth Broadcasting in Eastern Kentucky a few months ago, and was just sort of punching around. I stopped on this station – it was a Country station, in fact – because it just sounded great. The personality was brief but entertaining and was completely relating with the music. Said just enough, and the imaging was just right. You probably see this coming, but I discovered it was one of ours. Steve's Hot Country-affiliated station. It was a DG Local station, so it had some of that uniquely localized content that we can do, and it sounded great. I'm pretty certain I broke a few Kentucky driving laws, calling our programmers on my cellphone, but that was satisfaction. Making the highest-quality products possible – that's the ticket for me.

**What keeps you up at night?**

I sleep pretty well, whether at peace, or just plain jet-lagged. But when my eyes pop open, and the hamster climbs on the wheel in the morning, I start to try to guess what form audio entertainment is going to take in the future, both music and spoken word. This was pretty simple when it was radio and records. Now there are hundreds of sources, and the span of possibilities is immense. The challenge is finding where you and your company fit in there, and what value you bring. Oh ... and then bringing it. **CAC**



CMT Radio Network, our leading presence at night with *The Lia Show* and *The Big Time with Whitney Allen*, our syndication of both *Bob Kingsley's Country Top 40* and *Country Countdown USA*, our own *Country Kickers* prep, and the many large market Country stations that use Radio Voodoo to answer their phones, there simply isn't a bigger Country broadcaster than us. We're proud and respectful of that, and will continue to be good citizens in the Country format.

**You introduced a new jingle and imaging product for the Country format. Can you explain the concept and any other initiatives we can expect?**

Sure. 360Country is a reinvention of the traditional updating jingle package, designed to provide a station with everything it needs to uniquely image itself. But

Something that we do well, I think, is listen. We're always looking for the thing that we can do, that a station says, "Man, I'd love to do this, but just don't have the resources or time or wherewithal to do it myself." In many or even most cases, we do.

**You've been to Nashville in the last year to meet with labels. What did you learn? What did you tell them?**

Country is a format where the distance from the artist to the medium to the fan is tiny. When I go to country awards shows, I'm always blown away by how many artists thank radio, along with their moms and their faith and their fans, for their success.

So we tell the labels we know we have a hand in keeping country music alive and expanding – a responsibility, in fact. And we search for ways where




**ANDY GIBSON**

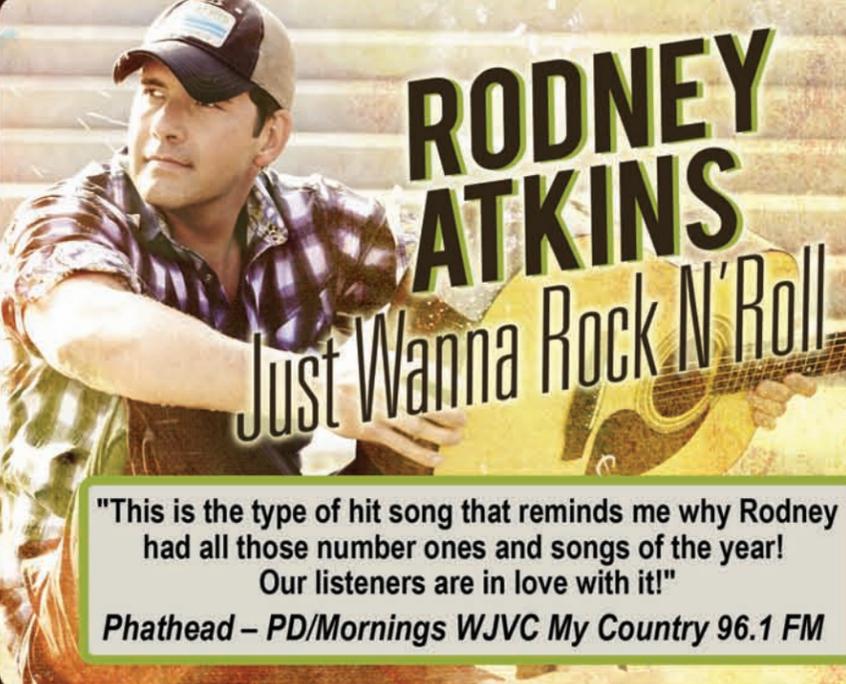
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