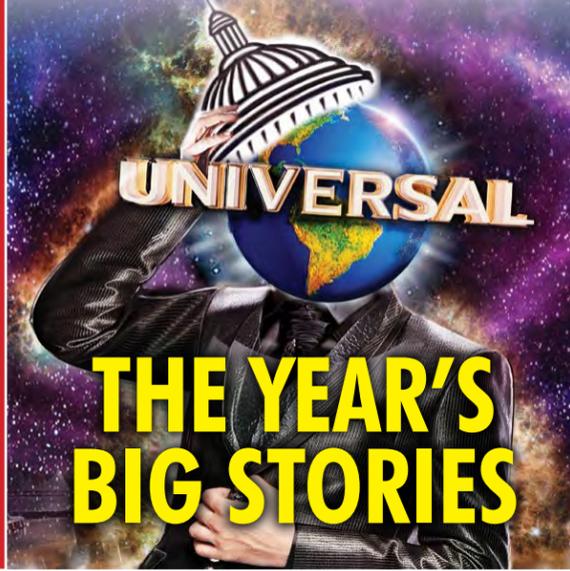


**THE TOP
100**

Top 15s, Top Performers
& Label Of The Year



ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR

**BLAKE
SHELTON**

THE INTERVIEW



**COUNTRY
AIRCHECK**

DECEMBER 2012

Dierks Bentley * Luke Bryan * Lady Antebellum
* Little Big Town * Jon Pardi * Darius Rucker
* Keith Urban * Dierks Bentley
Lady Antebellum * Little
Darius Rucker * Keith Urban
* Luke Bryan * Lady Antebellum
* Jon Pardi * Darius Rucker

1...2...3



#1 LABEL OF THE YEAR

FOURTH YEAR IN A ROW!

2009 * 2010 * 2011 * 2012

THANK YOU COUNTRY RADIO!

Town * Jon Pardi * Darius Rucker * Keith Urban



ASHLEY MONROE



Big & Rich



BLAKE SHELTON



FAITH HILL



BRETT ELDRIDGE

THANK YOU, COUNTRY RADIO,
FOR AN UNPRECEDENTED YEAR



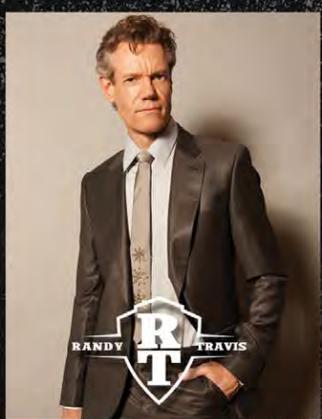
WARNER MUSIC
NASHVILLE



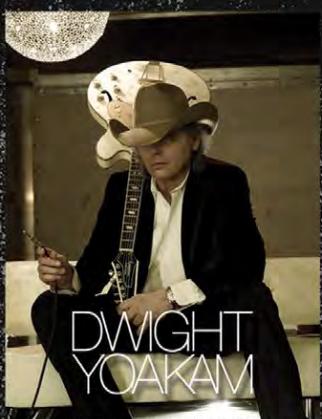
Cledus T. Judd



BIG SMO



RANDY TRAVIS



DWIGHT YOAKAM

2012 HIGHLIGHTS

CHART SHARE INCREASED 50%

BLAKE SHELTON EARNS 7TH CONSECUTIVE
#1 SINGLE

HUNTER HAYES HAS ONE OF THE
BEST SELLING SINGLES OF 2012

JANA KRAMER IS THE HIGHEST CHARTING
DEBUT FEMALE IN AIRCHECK HISTORY

BROKE THROUGH 4 NEW ARTISTS

4 SINGLES IN THE TOP 10 CONCURRENTLY
FOR THE FIRST TIME IN WMN HISTORY

3 MULTI-WEEK #1 RECORDS
INCLUDING HUNTER HAYES

2ND HIGHEST CHARTING SINGLE FOR BIG & RICH

3 PLATINUM CERTIFICATIONS

7 GOLD CERTIFICATIONS

AWARDS

CMA

BLAKE SHELTON
ENTERTAINER, MALE VOCALIST
AND SONG OF THE YEAR

HUNTER HAYES
NEW ARTIST OF THE YEAR

ACM

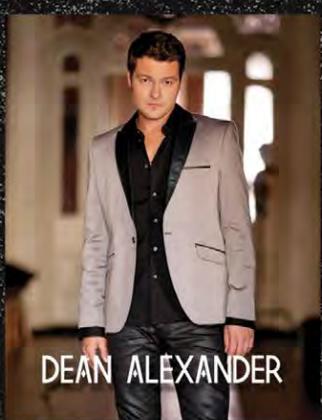
BLAKE SHELTON
MALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR

ACA

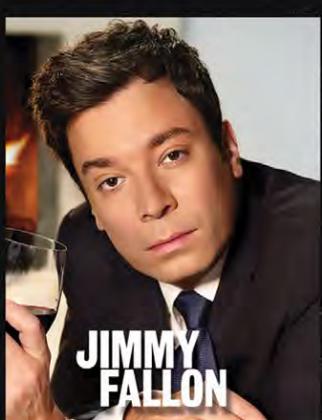
18 NOMINATIONS!



JOSH ABBOTT
BAND



DEAN ALEXANDER



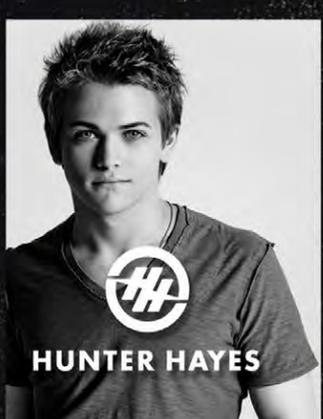
JIMMY FALLON



CHARLIE WORSHAM



JANA KRAMER



HUNTER HAYES



GLORIANA



FRANKIE BALLARD



THE FARM
INC.

The Year's Top Stories



The TU

Citigroup's late 2011 auction of perpetually troubled **EMI Group** to **Universal Music Group** probably sent visions of 40% market share dancing in investors' heads. Unfortunately for them, it also stoked a few European Commission nightmares and led to a merger agreement that included sell-offs of significant portions of EMI's international business.

In Nashville, the merger was preceded by the move of **Capitol & EMI Nashville** President/CEO

Mike Dungan to **UMG/Nashville** as Chairman/CEO, replacing the long tenured **Luke Lewis**. Months of "when/if" approval speculation ensued until October, when the consummated deal brought the two houses together, if not literally.

Surprising to many, the combined companies retained four imprints – **Capitol**, **EMI Nashville**, **MCA** and **Mercury** – and the departure of roughly a dozen staffers was a shallower cut than was per-

haps expected. (Though certainly deep enough for those who left.)

Had the two companies been combined this year, **UMGN** would have enjoyed 28.33% of Country airplay – more than 8.5 points ahead of the next biggest label group. Could we see a day when one in every three records spun at Country radio is from one company? The notion isn't as far-fetched as it used to be.

Performance Royalty

Countless organizations and lobbyists have trudged up Capitol Hill at the behest of labels, artists and radio hoping to resolve (or not) the hotly debated performance royalty issue. But counting on Congress to break that logjam is about like, uh, counting on Congress to break a logjam.

Instead, the first discernible movement on the issue originated in Nashville as the **Big Machine Label Group** (excluding Republic

Nashville) and **Clear Channel Media + Entertainment** reached a deal in which the label group and its artists receive a share of the radio group's terrestrial revenues in exchange for reduced digital royalty rates. The trade-off amounts to a Clear Channel bet that online listening will become a much greater part of its platform and revenue growth.

"This is a big step, but we think this investment is an opportunity worth taking to align our interests in all of our revenue streams and grow digital listening to its full potential with record labels and their artists as our partners," Clear Channel CEO **Bob Pittman** said at the time.

Both companies went on to forge similar deals elsewhere. **BMLG** partnered with **Entercom**, while **Clear Channel** secured similar deals with **Glassnote Entertainment**, home to **Mumford & Sons**, and classical label **Naxos**.

"We did it with eyes wide open, knowing it would cost more in the short term," CC EVP **Wendy Goldberg** told **Country Aircheck**. "But when you take bold steps, you have to be willing to make the effort and investment."



Scott Borchetta

Bob Pittman

Independent Variables

As Universal was consolidating market share and pursuing cost efficiencies, a more centralized major label paradigm continued to be offset by growth from other corners. Certainly in Nashville, **Big Machine Label Group** and its three imprints carried all the weight of a major and, not to be outdone, **Broken Bow Music Group** launched a third label. In partnership with Sony-owned **Red Distribution**, **Red Bow** brings another full promotion team into the Country airplay chase.

Also adding an imprint was **Curb**, which launched the secondary-focused **Sidewalk** with its own promo staff. **Zac Brown Band** did their best **Toby Keith**, bringing promotion under their own umbrella as

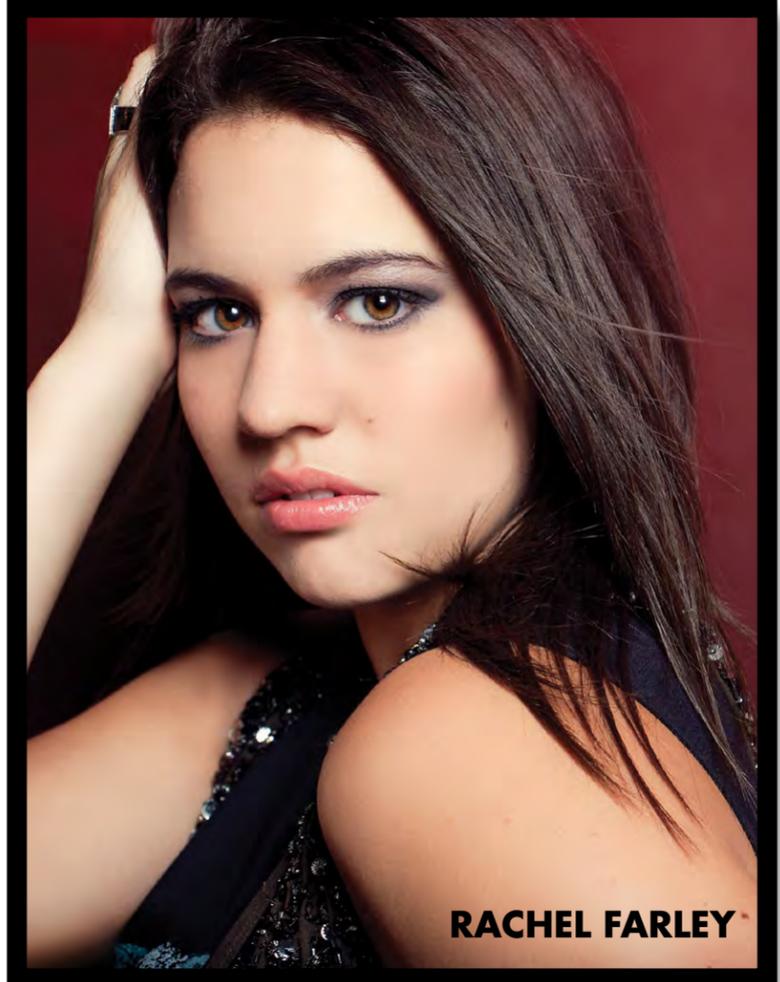
Southern Ground. **RPM Entertainment**, which helped **ZBB** through its transition, also staffed-up, while **Blaster** brought the **InstiGator** indie team fully in-house. Perhaps the most traditional ground-up label formation was that of **Streamsound**, headed by producer **Byron Gallimore**. Thankfully, for the genre and format, the continuing diversity of companies making and marketing country is reflected in the successful diversity of the music itself.



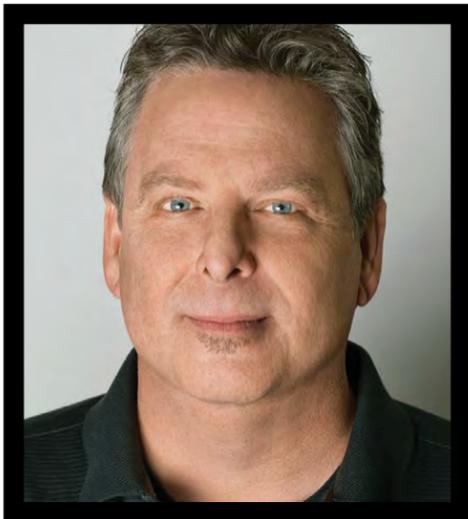
FOR THE LOVE OF MUSIC



JOE NICHOLS



RACHEL FARLEY



Carson James
Sr. VP Promotion Broken Bow Music Group
Carson@brokenbowrecords.com



Renee' Leymon
VP Promotion
Renee@redbowrecords.com



Shelley Hargis
National Director of Promotion
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Hilary Hoover
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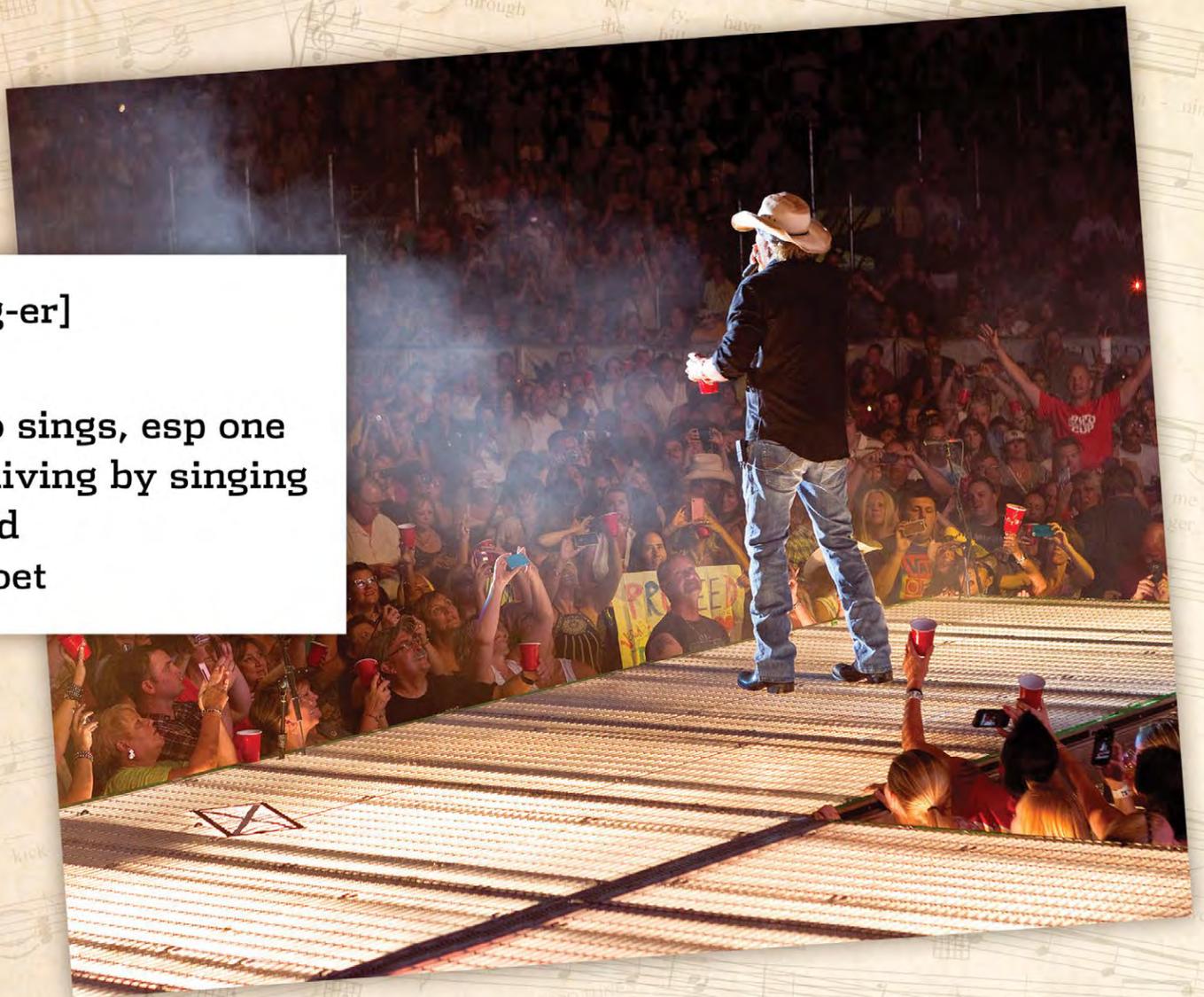
Kendra Whitehead
West Coast Director of Promotion
Kendra@redbowrecords.com



Bethany Dean
Promotion Coordinator
Bethany@redbowrecords.com



TOBY KEITH



sing·er¹ [sing-er]

— *noun*

1. a person who sings, esp one who earns a living by singing
2. a singing bird
3. a word for poet

- Over 37 million albums sold
- 30 # 1 hits as a singer
- Billboard & ACA Artist of the Decade
- 12 consecutive headlining tours, entertaining over 1 million fans per tour
- The Ford Truck Man for 12 years
- 15 Toby Keith's I Love This Bar & Grill Restaurants

And now his next big hit, "Hope On The

THE DEFINITION OF SINGER-SONGWRITER

song·writ·er [sawng-rah-y-ter, song-]
— noun

a person who writes the words
or music, or both, for popular songs.

- Toby has written 24 #1 hits (8 as the solo writer)
- Billboard & NSAI Songwriter of the Decade
- 3 time BMI Songwriter of the Year
- 2 time NSAI Songwriter of the Year
- "Should've Been A Cowboy" was the most performed song of the 90's at country radio
- 55 separate BMI Million-Air Awards & 13 BMI standard songs

"Rocks," written by Toby Keith





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The Year's Top Stories

A Red Letter Day

Lifting the playbook for Taylor Swift's record-setting *Red* album launch is fairly simple. First, secure an uncommonly gifted and hard-working international superstar. Then, go nuts. In all seriousness, the first task isn't quite so easy, and the second wasn't quite so random. But with a million-debating foundation in Swift's last album *Speak Now*, the **Big Machine** and **13 Management** teams were well-poised to execute a history-making game plan.

Radio and radio listeners were, of course, critical components. A month before the Oct. 22 release, Swift began a series of four consecutive weekly *Good Morning America*



appearances to preview a song from the album, culminating in a live performance Oct. 23. There and at other media stops – *Late Show With David Letterman* and the *Ellen DeGeneres Show* among them – radio contest winners were in the audience.

A sweeping radio campaign was anchored by Clear Channel's Artist Integration program, with four formats blasting debut single "We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together" for 24 hours. Release day featured an on-demand iHeartRadio Album Release Party hosted by Ryan Seacrest. A "24-hour Dream Life" contest to join Swift on tour aired on the group's Top 40 stations, with a similar experience expected to be offered through Country stations.

Multiple groups and nations were represented at a two-day radio remote in Nashville, as Big Machine brought in 72 stations from locales as diverse as Norfolk and New Zealand. Exclusives and tie-ins with Target, Walgreens and Papa John's helped spread the word and the multi-tiered effort paid off in 1.2 million first-week sales (Nielsen SoundScan). The number was the highest one-week figure in a decade (2002's *The Eminem Show*) and made her the first female artist to crest the mark twice. Simply stunning.

Channel Cats

Music City's influence on mainstream television reached new levels in 2012 as the major networks echoed earlier eras in which country stars were television personalities, as well. But where *Barbara Mandrell And The Mandrell Sisters* (1980-1982), *The Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour* (1969-1972) and *The Johnny Cash Show* (1969-1971) followed the variety format, modern fare offers much more, well, variety.

Particularly at ABC-TV, home to the *CMA Awards*, the additions of *Nashville* and *Malibu Country* – a 60-minute drama and sitcom, respectively – have given country, or the idea of it, more time in prime time. At NBC-TV, **Blake Shelton**-led *The Voice* has championed a ratings resurgence.

Not to be outdone, FOX-TV enlisted **Keith Urban** to revitalize the *American Idol* judges panel. Other offerings included performance competition shows featuring **Jennifer Nettles** and **John Rich**. All this reality may just beg the question, how real can country get? "I'm a *Real Housewives* fan, so I'm thinking it's time for a *Nashville Housewives* show," says Little Big Town's **Karen Fairchild**. "Maybe Tim and Faith?"



But We Play Them On TV: Nashville's **Connie Britton**, **Hayden Panettiere** and **Kimberly Williams-Paisley** at November's CMA's.

In Memoriam

Put simply, our industry lost giants this year. Country Radio Hall-of-Famer **Rusty Walker**, promotion great **Jack Lameier** and entertainment icon **Dick Clark** may be gone, but their legacies endure.

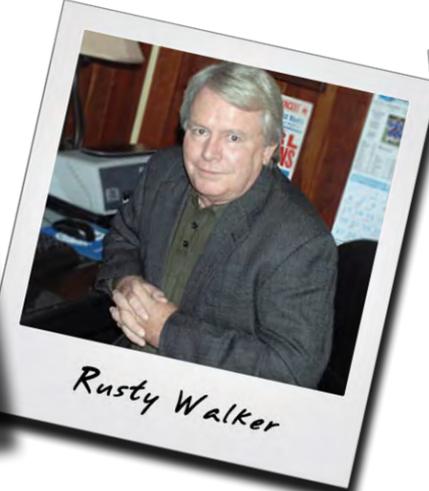
"Music is the soundtrack to your life," said the man who, for millions, was its deejay. Just as *American Bandstand* and *Dick Clark's Rockin' New Year's Eve* came to embody American culture, the *Academy of Country Music Awards* Clark helped create did immeasurable good in communicating that Country music was as much America's music as any other.

If Nashville's record community ever felt like a real family, it was quite possibly the work of Lameier. For 40 years, he shaped the industry as a music promoter, ACM luminary and friend. The list of artists whose careers he shepherded is only surpassed by the collection of industry professionals he nurtured. Turns out "Jack's Place" wasn't just a chart-night watering hole ... it was a corner in our hearts.

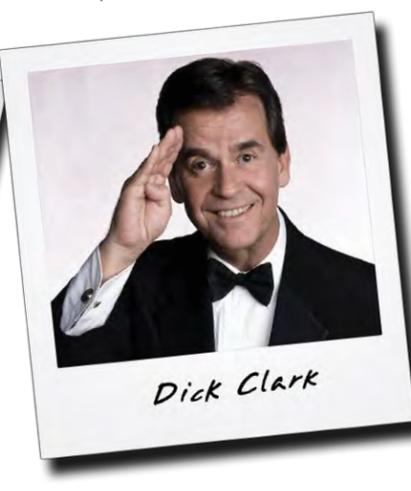
Similarly, Walker's influence will continue to be felt through the people he mentored as stories of spectacular station launches, his unapologetic passion for radio and his consistent guidance carry his memory forward. As much as any other single person, Rusty shaped modern Country radio. Like the others he joins in posterity, Rusty was an embodiment of something truly grand. They, and those listed below, are all missed. **CAC**



Jack Lameier



Rusty Walker



Dick Clark

Bill Bailey
Rick Blackburn
Jefferey Bonds
Evan Bridwell
Larry Butler
Ken "KC" Carlile
Susanna Clark
Charlie Collins
Craig Cornett

Jan Crutchfield
Blake Dalton
Dane Daniel
James Delmonico
Al DeLory
David Dzedzic
Dusty Edwards
John Garabo
Tad Griffin

Tony "Hammer" Hamilton
Donna Hilley
Ray Houser
Greg Jessen
Tim Johnson
Homer Joy
Gina Lacky
Charlie Lamb

Al Brady Law
"Miss Rita" Lee
Al Leighton
Charlene Lewis
George Lindsay
Jim London
David McKee
Dan McKinnon
Bob Michaels

Danny Morrison
Cois "Pee Wee" Moultrie
Chris Neal
Geoff Neuhoff
Barbara Orbison
Richard Quillen
Tom "Cat" Reeder
Jayne Rogovin

Austin Ryggs
Earl Scruggs
Dale Sommers
"The Reverend" Joe South
Dan "Bee" Spears
Brian Strobel
Arthel Lane
"Doc" Watson
Patti Wheeler

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CMA WEEK

Party In Slow Motion

Time stopped for Little Big Town and other winners at the 46th Annual CMA Awards last month in Nashville. On the ensuing pages, Country Aircheck offers its annual stop-motion photo journal and asks this year's Broadcast winners about their experience. Ready, set ... freeze-frame!



Honey-Do Kiss: The first husband-and-wife Duo of the Year, Shawna & Keifer Thompson (left), share a moment onstage.

Special K-Pop: Hosts Brad Paisley and Carrie Underwood (above) rock it "Gingham Style."

Over Joyed: Miranda Lambert and Blake Shelton (right) accept Song of the Year for "Over You."



CMA WEEK

Would Somehow Form A Family: The newly merged **UMG/Nashville bunch** (above) mingles at the after-party. Pictured (l-r) are **Scotty McCreery, Cnaan Smith, Walker Hayes, Jimi Westbrook, Kristian Bush, Eric Paslay, Keith Urban, Phillip Sweet, Dierks Bentley, Karen Fairchild, John Pardi, UMG Distribution's Jim Urie, Darius Rucker, Kimberly Schlapman, Eric Church, Lauren Alaina, Kelleigh Bannen, UMG's Mike Dungan, Dave Haywood, Hillary Scott, Kacey Musgraves, Charles Kelley, Josh Turner, Luke Bryan, Randy Montana, John Osborne (Brothers Osborne), Drake White, Mallary Hope, TJ Osborne (Brothers Osborne) and David Nail.**



Complete Pass: Reba hands Blake Shelton the Entertainer of the Year trophy.

WKLB/Boston Major Market Station

"I went through absolute disbelief for about 48 hours," PD **Mike Brophrey** says. "This is something somebody else wins. But I knew in my heart our submission was good and our ratings – especially over the past couple years – were great. Being nominated made sense, but to get the nod? I was dumbfounded; it's more exciting and gratifying than I ever expected it to be."

"We feel very proud for the team. Most of us have been with WKLB a long time."

Greater Media Chairman Peter Smythe was in Paris at the time, but he called our house he was so excited.

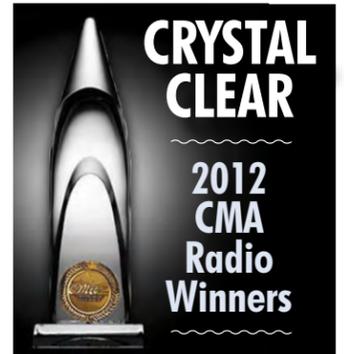
"Facebook activity during the awards show was nuts. We posted a couple of pictures from the pre-show; then some people posted the screen shots of me with the award on TV. We had more than 900 likes almost immediately."

"When you listen to this format you can't be bored from title to title. It's just stellar. I've always said if I could just get people to try us, I've got you converted. Boston moves an enormous amount of concert tickets and downloads, and WKLB delivers great TSL. That's reality; it's not just a good PPM panel."



Mike Brophrey

"This justifies everything we've been doing for 20 years. At the same time, I really feel the listeners in our corner. They were so supportive and excited that their radio station was legitimized. And our company has stuck with this format for two decades; to bring this home to Greater Media was really neat."



Paris, Tennessee: Taylor Swift's performance.



WUBE/Cincinnati Large Market Station

"This award could never have been accomplished without the work of so many people," says PD **Grover Collins**. "I have a staff that is so professional; they've been doing this a long time. They all know great radio and I'm honored to work with them. Promotions always make sure our clients are happy and served well; our jocks take tremendous care in preparing breaks and trying different ways to be compelling and entertaining. And I thank Nashville for providing a great collection of music – it's the best it's ever been."

"Including our wins in 1998 and 2009, this is our third CMA station award. I've been a part of winning before, when [morning host] Chris Carr won Personality in 2011. It's a natural high and you start to have flashes of everything you did as a station that culminated in the presentation submitted to the CMA."

"I found out during a meeting. I got a message from Chris, who had just gotten the call from Brad Paisley. That's when you go into that tunnel vision. We screamed and ran down the hall. We high-fived. We hugged."

"My wife and I drove to Nashville Halloween day, went to the Hard Rock Broken Bow party and hung out with Randy Houser. Then we checked out the Tim McGraw show. It was really cool to watch my wife. She does middays on our Top 40 sister station and this is not anything she's used to. She was a complete and utter fan and had the time of her life."



Grover Collins

WIVK/Knoxville Medium Market Station

"It would be easy to say that because the station won awards in the past, the staff was a little jaded on this one, but the reality was they were more excited this time because of what they've gone through this past year," says PD **Bob Raleigh**. "Some folks suggested that the station wasn't what it once was and proving them wrong brought an extra sense of satisfaction."

"I'm most proud of this award because of the incredible team I'm blessed with. These guys are the most dedicated, most passionate and most professional I've ever been blessed to be around. I'm really just grateful they let me hang out with them! I'm not just trying to be humble or cliché, I truly mean that. I didn't win this award, they did."

"Everyone here is involved in at least one or two charities and entrenched in the community. That really sets the station apart. I'm not taking away anything from Country, but we could probably play polka and still do extremely well. It's as much about what goes on between the songs as it is anything else."

"Right after they flashed me on screen, I did receive a lot of emails and text messages – even some from people I hadn't heard from in a while. I joked that I was hoping they'd offer me a TV series, but it didn't work out."



Bob Raleigh

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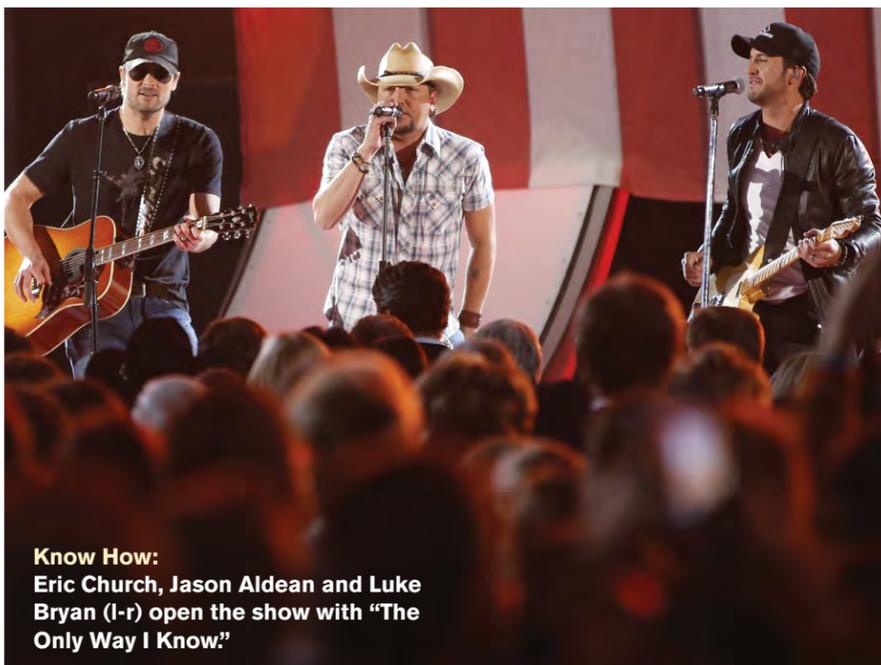
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Curtain Call: The Sony/Nashville thron celebrates after the awards. Pictured are (l-r, top) Casey James, Kix Brooks, Jerrod Niemann, Tyler Farr, Bush Hawg (Shaun Ames, Alex Wilshire, Craig Hand, Ben Helton, Russ Caldwell), Chris Young, Bush Hawg's Jim Phipps, Sony/Nashville's Angie Magill, RCA's Keith Gale, Sony/Nashville's Caryl Healey, Columbia's Norbert Nix, and Love And Theft's Eric Gunderson and Stephen Barker Lyles; (bottom, l-r) Sony/Nashville's Mike Tyson, Arista's Lesly Tyson, Joanna Smith, Kelly Clarkson, Kenny Chesney, Miranda Lambert, Sony/Nashville's Gary Overton, Angie Johnson, The Henningsens (Aaron, Clara and Brian), Kristen Kelly, and Sony/Nashville's Paul Barnabee, Lisa Ramsey-Perkins and Jim Catino.



Know How: Eric Church, Jason Aldean and Luke Bryan (l-r) open the show with "The Only Way I Know."

Medal Workers: Songwriter of the Year Catt Gravitt and Song of the Year writer Jon Stone ("A Woman Like You") are cheered at SESAC's annual awards gathering. Pictured (l-r) are SESAC's Tim Fink, Gravitt, Stone and SESAC's Pat Collins and Trevor Gale.



Two For Team: CMA Duo of the Year Thompson Square and team revel following their big win. Pictured are (l-r, bottom) BBR Management's Shawn Pennington, Stoney Creek's Abi Durham, Keifer Thompson, Magic Mustang writer Westin Davis; (l-r, top) BBR's Jen Joe, Stoney Creek's Heather Proper and Samantha Borenstein, Shanna Thompson, New Voice's Tully Kennedy and David Fanning; (rear) Stoney Creek's Chris Loss.

WUSY/Chattanooga Small Market Station

"We didn't get the call that we'd won until late in the day and we were all a wreck," says PD Gator Harrison. "Nothing had been announced; no other nominated stations were Facebooking their win, but it was 5 o'clock, so what the crap? That's when Dex & Mo got the call from Brad Paisley, who told us we'd won not only Station of the Year, but that Dex & Mo had won Personalities of the Year. We pulled everyone we could into the studio to play it back for our listeners and the 'congratulations' calls began to pour in. Eric Church joined us for a celebratory dinner and we got to watch him record his live album right here in Chattanooga that night. It was unforgettable.



"The CMAs were the same way. Note to self: don't sit behind Big Kenny and his hat! The most beautiful view at the CMA Awards was sitting right beside me, though, with my wife Tennille, daughter Roman and mom Sondra. All three women in my life were able to be there and share it with me.

"The WUSY family continually gives of itself to spread the gospel of country and community. It's got nothing to do with national recognition, but belief in the power of radio to impact people positively. These guys are my family and I'm blessed to wear the station shield with them."

Donna Valentine, Mike Mussman K102 Wakeup Crew, KEEY/Minneapolis Major Market Personalities

DV: When Lee Brice announced the names of all CMA Radio finalists, he completely butchered our names. Sure enough, during CMA week we drop into Loser's on Music Row and who do we run into? Lee, of course. He felt really bad and decided he needed to buy us some shots.



MM: Four apology shots later, he still couldn't pronounce our names!

DV: And I still have the headache.

MM: We've been nominated before and the station has won, but this was a first for us. We got a heads up that winners would be called at 8am. By 8:45, Donna and I are vowing to never enter again. But a few minutes later Brad Paisley called. Right away there's elation, then we get brought right back down when my Dad asked what the award was for; he had no idea.

DV: It was an exciting whirlwind trip. I got home, looked at the award, got choked up and all I could think was, "What just happened?" Muss' mom wasn't here to see this.

My dad isn't here and I know he was concerned about me when I moved away in my early twenties.

MM: I ended up taking my trophy home and put it on a table where some knick-knacks already are. My daughter says its perfect for holding her scrunchies. I asked my wife if we could put it in the bedroom, but she said, "You didn't win the award there."

Randy Carroll, Jamie Martin KJ & Friends, KAJA/San Antonio Large Market Personalities

RC: I've been at KJ 29 years. Until the last few years we were never really encouraged to submit an entry. I credit PD Travis Moon for pushing us. I guess I haven't really focused on what my peers thought about me. It's ultimately about what San Antonio listeners like and care about.

JM: While in Nashville, we got to experience the Tim McGraw showcase on Halloween night and, boy, that was a night to remember. Everybody is used to seeing Tim perform in stadiums and there he is on this little stage five feet away. We saw Faith Hill standing backstage dressed down with her hair in a ponytail; it was a great party all around.

RC: If you're a fan – and that's what we are – it's awesome. After we did the show Friday (11/2) we went to breakfast at Nashville deli and Reba and Narvel came in after doing Good Morning America. Can you imagine how freaked out any normal country fan would be if she just walked in like that?

JM: My CMA trophy is on top of a buffet in the kitchen; I had to put it up really high so my little boys (5 and 6 years old) won't knock it down.

RC: Mine is in my truck right now – only because I hosted Great Day SA on channel 5 today and took it to show on television. It's not glued to the dash or swinging from the rear view mirror. Yet.





If you could compare life to a day at the amusement park, I feel that my first guitar was a ticket to get in, and I've been in line to ride the big roller coaster ever since. Now, being on this radio tour, it feels like the bar just locked and the ride is about to take off. Thank you for this opportunity!

Charlie

“One of the most talented artists I have seen at a radio tour stop in my entire career.”

– Shelly Easton, **WXTU Philadelphia**

“Not all artist visits are created equal. I told everyone in the room after Charlie played that they probably should remember today’s date, because they got to see a star before everyone else did. Bring listeners in, bring the office in, if corporate’s in town, bring them in. This kid’s a star.”

– Gregg Swedberg, **KEEY Minneapolis**

“Charlie Worsham brings the complete package to country radio, mind-blowing instrumentation, heartfelt songwriting and a uniquely pure country sound.”

– Tim Roberts, **WYCD Detroit**

“Wow! Charlie’s going to have a long career in Country music & I’m excited to get in on the ground floor.”

– Kerry Wolfe, **WMIL Milwaukee**

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CMA WEEK

Going Our Way? The Warner Music Nashville crew hitches a ride to Partytown following the CMA Awards.



Gotta Hand It To Him: Willie Nelson is honored with the CMA Lifetime Achievement Award, which is now named in his honor. Pictured (l-r) are Nelson, Faith Hill, Tim McGraw and Keith Urban.

Partners In Rhyme: SiriusXM receives ASCAP's Partners In Music honor during the PRO's annual CMA week gathering. Pictured (l-r) are Lady A's Charles Kelley, ASCAP's Vincent Candilora, Sirius XM's Charlie Monk and John Marks, and Lady A's Dave Haywood.



Roger Todd, Melissa Moran, Tom O'Brien
The 97 Country Breakfast Club, WPCV/Lakeland, FL
Medium Market Personalities

MM: We actually thought it was a big joke when Brad called, because we know what a big prankster he is. But, of course, it was super exciting.

RT: And getting to see the Tim McGraw show that week was fabulous, too. He accidentally spit on Melissa, she was so close.

MM: He did not!

RT: And she hasn't washed her face since we got back. We were that close! Now we're sending all three awards out with Tom every morning and charging a quarter a touch.

TO: It's cost me about \$5,000 so far!

RT: Tom just can't keep his hands off 'em.

TO: People connect with country artists and with us, I think, because we're real people living real life with them.

RT: We just have fun and try to make a difference. Times are tough with jobs, people being downsized, and trying to raise a family. If we can just put a smile on their face every morning and help people in the community, it's a win-win for everybody. To get an award for it? You can't beat that.



Roger Todd, Melissa Moran and Tom O'Brien



Bill Poindexter and Melissa Turner

Bill Poindexter, Melissa Turner
Dex & Mo, WUSY/Chattanooga
Small Market Personalities

BP: Seriously, when I was a kid, I'd sit in the bathtub and talk into the bar of soap like it was a microphone! My dream when I started in country music 40 years ago was to one day just see a show at the Grand Ole Opry, so this has just been incredible.

MT: And this award is the listeners' award as much as it ours, and we let them know it. Our Facebook page was insane the night of the awards show and I must've answered hundreds of people congratulating us.

BP: It means a lot because when we started on the air together, this was really Mo's first full-time on-air job. I've taken great pride in her achievements in the last five years and she's become as good as anyone I've ever seen.

MT: I can't say as a child that I always wanted to be on the radio, but my family would tell you that I don't mind talking a lot and being in the spotlight. One of the reasons Dex and I work is that we're able to play off our differences; the fact that I'm younger and he's an old guy.

BP: Oh, with this old guy thing!

MT: It just works!

BP: People like "Big" John Anthony, David Earl Hughes, Clay Hunnicutt, Sammy George, John Hart and Greg Mozingo set a standard for this station in the community years ago. I'd love to take credit, but this goes back a long way.

Lon Helton
Country Countdown USA, Dial Global
National Personality

"This has been quite a year for talent booker **Jo Pincek Hunt**, producer/writer **George Achaves** and me, with National Personality awards from both the ACM and the CMA as we celebrate our 20th anniversary," Helton says. "It's especially rewarding because the three of us have been together from the beginning."

"There is nothing quite like going through CMA week as a broadcast award winner. The sense of pride is overwhelming, but my favorite part is still the 45-minute photo session with all the broadcast winners just before the TV show. Many folks are meeting for the first time and instantly sharing a very special bond. It's made even more special by having family members there to share in the thrill."

"Jo, George and I are grateful and deeply humbled to have been honored six times with this award. My sincerest thanks to all the programmers who have put CCUSA on their airwaves, and to all of the artists who have carved so much precious time out of their schedules to give me a hand countin' down the hits. Thank you all." **CAC**



Lon Helton



Iconography: Tom T. Hall is honored as BMI's Icon during the organization's annual Country Awards. Pictured (l-r) are BMI's Jody Williams, publisher Tom Collins, Hall, and BMI's Del Bryant and Clay Bradley.

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— TOBY TUCKER
PROGRAM DIRECTOR, WDZQ

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THE LANDSCAPE

OF NIGHTTIME RADIO.

— SKIP CLARK
PROGRAM DIRECTOR, WOLF 105.1

“CODY WAS THE MISSING PIECE
FOR OUR WEEKDAY LINEUP.”

— ERIC KAUFFMAN
GENERAL MANAGER, KKYT

“CODY'S UNIQUE STYLE AND
UNEQUALLED ACCESS TO COUNTRY
MUSIC'S STARS IS EXACTLY
WHAT OUR LISTENERS WANT.”

— STEVE ALBERTSON
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LABEL OF THE YEAR



mess with Paige. You and Adam should have a huge altercation right in front of her.' "The night of the show, we're in the meet-and-greet room with the tour manager, Adam, the band and a few other people when someone goes, 'Paige Alert!' After she walked in, Adam comes up to me with his hand out and I'm like, 'What the hell are you doing here? I don't want you taking pictures! I can't believe



you're still employed!' Paige turned five shades of red. "She says, 'He's just kidding' and tries to calm Adam down, who's like, 'I don't have to take this stuff from you!' I'm yelling at him ... he's threatening to call security. And Charles [Kelley] is trying so hard not to laugh - we'd told the band about the prank at dinner the night before. Finally, Adam goes, 'I've had it. Either get this guy out of here or find somebody else to take pictures!' Paige is trying desperately to bring him back going, 'He's just messing with you.' And he goes, 'No, we're messing with you, and you can thank Shane Allen!' The band was howling, but I think Paige got Shane back later by telling him she was pregnant with John Pardi's baby."

Those chants of "four more years!" coming from the Capitol have nothing to do with politics as the label celebrates its fourth consecutive chart share victory. With 14.5% of all Country airplay in 2012, according to Mediabase, Capitol Nashville has orchestrated another textbook campaign. All great success, however, comes with great scrutiny. So as Country Aircheck turned to radio for their thoughts on the Capitol cabinet, we also found a few skeletons in their closets. Spin it!

Sr. VP Steve Hodges

"The best thing about the Capitol bunch, from [Chairman] Mike Dungan on down, is it's always been about whoever has the best idea and then working together," says Clear Channel EVP/Programming **Clay Hunnicutt**. "Steve has always been fair and a great partner. He always really supports their established artists, of course, but where I've seen the most passion is when they're trying to break new artists."



"He's always done a great job of introducing them, even before they have music, in some cases. Whether it's playing cornhole with Luke Bryan in Steve's backyard, playing golf with Eric Church or having cheeseburgers with Kelleigh Bannen, he represents them well. "He's also got a bit of a nickname. We were members of the same golf club for years and played a lot of rounds of golf together. He used to have a temper issue and we called him 'Hodgie' because he's broken four or five clubs on the course out of frustration."

VP Shane Allen

"Shane has always been the consummate professional, but he can let loose and have fun at the same time," says KSON/San Diego APD/MD **Brooks O'Brian**. "And he totally fights for his artists - it's not just a job for him. He's one of those with whom you can agree to disagree,



but he'll continue to provide information and research trying to bring you around. Most important, he understands the importance of the relationship between radio, records and artists. He's always looking for that win-win. "And then there's the fun side of Shane, which takes me to CRS a few years back at about 1am. I'm with a friend walking down the hill to the Hilton Suites. We're exhausted, done and ready to call it a night. And here comes Shane marching up the hill with a line of people behind him. Single file. He stops us and is like, 'Oh, no. You're not going anywhere. You're getting on the Shane Train.' Sure enough, we fell in line and ended up at the Bridge Bar and another venue after that. It's all kind of fuzzy. But I do remember cursing his name the next morning in whatever panel I was at."

Southeast regional Bobby Young

"Bobby is incredibly passionate about music," says WSKJ/Mobile PD **Bill Black**. "Reason being-as we have discussed

many times-is he keeps having more children. His motivation to keep Capitol as the most successful label is mainly about having to work until he's 97 just to keep them in diapers. The guy is a baby-making machine. He's got grown kids and some little ones - I think he's up to 37 kids at this point. So he's got that extra commitment, otherwise he won't be able to send them to college ... or reform school.

"Bobby has been my rep through a couple of labels and I've known him a good 10 years or so. A lot of Capitol's success has to do with their ability to find talent and really persevere. They don't have a lot of overnight successes at that label, when you look at Luke Bryan, Eric Church and others. That team stuck it out for six or seven years or more on several of those artists before they finally had that big connect. And they continue to do that year-in and year-out."



Southwest regional John Trapane

"A couple of years ago [KFDI/Wichita MD] **Carol Hughes** and I were working with John on an Eric Church promotion," says Journal VP/Programming **Beverlee Brannigan**. "Carol was on the air and I was eating lunch at a Subway. We were texting back and forth, and I texted her a question about the promotion, referencing John Trapane. The auto-correct function on my phone turned Trapane into 'Propane.' Say no more, since that day John has always been Propane to us!"

"He's even that way in my phone," Hughes adds. "That's all I call him! One thing I particularly love about Propane is that he is as into the music as I am. My favorite conversations with him are when we get time to just talk about music - all music. He's great to work with and has become a great friend, too."

West Coast regional Paige Elliot

"Before she was even at the label, we did a Lady A show and the band's videographer/photographer Adam Boatman lost the pictures from the meet-and-greet," says KRTY/San Jose GM **Nate Deaton**. "So a week before their next show in town, Shane Allen calls and says, 'Let's

Midwest regional Brent Jones

"He's a good guy, but I mess with him a lot," says WBCT/Grand Rapids PD **Dave Taft**. "He once sent an email asking if I wanted some 'win it before you can buy it' copies. I told him the email came through all scrambled like it was coded and asked him to resend. This went on for about three emails before he finally called and left a message asking the same thing. I called him back and told him his message was all garbled and he should have his IT person look into it. There must be something wrong with his phone lines. He was getting upset because he couldn't figure out why I couldn't see or hear his messages. It took a bit before he caught on.



"There's also the time Shane Allen and I made Brent sing Taylor Swift's 'Fifteen' at a Grand Rapids karaoke bar to get a song played. The kicker was I had five weeks to add it! There's video of that somewhere. He's not a very good singer."

Northeast regional Diane Lockner

"Capitol has always had some of the best regionals in the business ... and ones that can take a joke," says Townsquare/Northern Colorado OM **George King**. "Back in the mid 2000s, I was new at WMZQ/Washington and was to meet my new rep Diane at a Nissan Pavilion show. Since we hadn't met, she had no idea what I looked like. She was running late and called to say she would meet me backstage. I was standing there with a couple of other regionals when a car came flying through the backstage parking area. One of them said, 'There's Diane.'

"My twisted mind went into action. I ran up the car, acted like I was working for the venue and proceeded to tell



her she couldn't park there and had to move. She was already late, in a panic and started arguing with me, demanding to park and showing her all access pass.

But I politely insisted none of that mattered and she had to leave the area immediately. In a huff, she started to get back in her car incredibly frustrated and mad ... until I introduced myself. I think she still holds a grudge, but she has always been one of the best reps I've worked with." **CAC**

2012 TOP 10 LABELS

- 1 **Capitol** 14.50%
- 2 **RCA** 10.30%
- 3 **Republic Nashville** 7.20%
- 4 **MCA** 6.90%
- 5 **Big Machine** 6.80%
- 6 **Broken Bow** 5.60%
- 7 **Curb** 5.40%
- 8 **Arista** 5.00%
- 9 **WMN** 4.90%
- 10 **Valory** 4.80%

2012 TOP 5 GROUPS

- Sony Music Nashville** 19.70%
- Capitol/EMI Nashville** 18.83%
- Big Machine Label Group** 18.81%
- Universal Music Group** 9.50%
- Warner Music Nashville** 9.30%

TOP 100 OF 2012



1	ERIC CHURCH	Springsteen	EMI Nashville	51	LUKE BRYAN	Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye	Capitol
2	BRANTLEY GILBERT	You Don't Know Her Like I Do	Valory	52	DAVID NAIL	Let It Rain	MCA
3	JOSH TURNER	Time Is Love	MCA	53	JUSTIN MOORE	'Til My Last Day	Valory
4	KIP MOORE	Somethin' 'Bout A Truck	MCA	54	LADY ANTEBELLUM	We Owned The Night	Capitol
5	ELI YOUNG BAND	Even If It Breaks Your Heart	Republic Nashville	55	THOMPSON SQUARE	Glass	Stoney Creek
6	LUKE BRYAN	Drunk On You	Capitol	56	MARTINA MCBRIDE	I'm Gonna Love You Through It	Republic Nashville
7	GLORIANA	(Kissed You) Good Night	Emblem/W.A.R.	57	GREG BATES	Did It For The Girl	Republic Nashville
8	JANA KRAMER	Why Ya Wanna	Elektra Nashville/W.A.R.	58	JERROD NIEMANN	Shinin' On Me	Sea Gayle/Arista
9	LEE BRICE	A Woman Like You	Curb	59	BRANTLEY GILBERT	Country Must Be Country...	Valory
10	RASCAL FLATTS	Banjo	Big Machine	60	THOMAS RHETT	Something To Do With...	Valory
11	BLAKE SHELTON	Drink On It	Warner Bros./WMN	61	BIG & RICH	That's Why I Pray	Warner Bros./W.A.R.
12	JASON ALDEAN	Fly Over States	Broken Bow	62	ELI YOUNG BAND	Crazy Girl	Republic Nashville
13	LOVE AND THEFT	Angel Eyes	RCA	63	THE FARM	Home Sweet Home	All In/Elektra/New Revolution
14	DUSTIN LYNCH	Cowboys And Angels	Broken Bow	64	TOBY KEITH	Red Solo Cup	Show Dog-Universal
15	JAKE OWEN	Alone With You	RCA	65	ZAC BROWN BAND	The Wind	Atlantic/So. Ground
16	TIM MCGRAW	Better Than I Used To Be	Curb	66	KIP MOORE	Beer Money	MCA
17	MIRANDA LAMBERT	Over You	RCA	67	ERIC CHURCH	Creepin'	EMI Nashville
18	ZAC BROWN BAND	No Hurry	So. Ground/Atlantic/BPG	68	TAYLOR SWIFT	Sparks Fly	Big Machine
19	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	Good Girl	19/Arista	69	MIRANDA LAMBERT	Baggage Claim	RCA
20	LADY ANTEBELLUM	Dancin' Away With My Heart	Capitol	70	FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE	Cruise	Republic Nashville
21	KEITH URBAN	You Gonna Fly	Capitol	71	RANDY HOUSER	How Country Feels	Stoney Creek
22	KENNY CHESNEY	Come Over	Blue Chair/Columbia	72	KENNY CHESNEY/T. MCGRAW	Feel Like A Rock Star	Blue Chair/Columbia
23	CHRIS YOUNG	You	RCA	73	TOBY KEITH	I Like Girls That Drink Beer	Show Dog-Universal
24	LUKE BRYAN	I Don't Want This Night To End	Capitol	74	CHRIS YOUNG	Neon	RCA
25	HUNTER HAYES	Wanted	Atlantic/WMN	75	LADY ANTEBELLUM	Wanted You More	Capitol
26	EASTON CORBIN	Lovin' You Is Fun	Mercury	76	CASEY JAMES	Crying On A Suitcase	19/Columbia
27	DIERKS BENTLEY	5-1-5-0	Capitol	77	HUNTER HAYES	Storm Warning	Atlantic/WMN
28	TAYLOR SWIFT	Ours	Big Machine	78	SCOTTY MCCREERY	The Trouble With Girls	19/Interscope/Mercury
29	DIERKS BENTLEY	Home	Capitol	79	ANDY GIBSON	Wanna Make You Love Me	Curb
30	BLAKE SHELTON	Over	Warner Bros./WMN	80	CASEY JAMES	Let's Don't Call It A Night	19/Columbia
31	ERIC CHURCH	Drink In My Hand	EMI Nashville	81	ALAN JACKSON	So You Don't Have To Love...	ACR/EMI Nashville
32	THE BAND PERRY	Postcard From Paris	Republic Nashville	82	JON PARDI	Missin' You Crazy	Capitol
33	KENNY CHESNEY	Reality	BNA	83	RODNEY ATKINS	He's Mine	Curb
34	GEORGE STRAIT	Love's Gonna Make It Alright	MCA	84	RASCAL FLATTS	Easy	Big Machine
35	KEITH URBAN	For You	Relativity/Capitol	85	KELLY CLARKSON	Mr. Know It All	19/RCA
36	MONTGOMERY GENTRY	Where I Come From	Average Joes	86	KRISTEN KELLY	Ex-Old Man	Arista
37	LITTLEBIGTOWN	Pontoon	Capitol	87	EDENS EDGE	Too Good To Be True	Big Machine
38	THE BAND PERRY	All Your Life	Republic Nashville	88	KENNY CHESNEY	El Cerrito Place	Blue Chair/Columbia
39	ZAC BROWN BAND	Keep Me In Mind	So. Ground/Atlantic/BPG	89	JUSTIN MOORE	Bait A Hook	Valory
40	LEE BRICE	Hard To Love	Curb	90	JOSH THOMPSON	Comin' Around	RCA
41	TOBY KEITH	Beers Ago	Show Dog-Universal	91	TAYLOR SWIFT	We Are Never Ever Getting...	Big Machine
42	JASON ALDEAN	Take A Little Ride	Broken Bow	92	BRAD PAISLEY	Southern Comfort Zone	Arista
43	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	Blown Away	19/Arista	93	DARIUS RUCKER	True Believers	Capitol
44	MIRANDA LAMBERT	Fastest Girl In Town	RCA	94	BRAD PAISLEY	Camouflage	Arista
45	JASON ALDEAN	Tattoos On This Town	Broken Bow	95	PHIL VASSAR	Don't Miss Your Life	Rodeowave
46	RASCAL FLATTS	Come Wake Me Up	Big Machine	96	ZAC BROWN BAND	Goodbye In Her Eyes	Atlantic/So. Ground
47	JAKE OWEN	The One That Got Away	RCA	97	DIERKS BENTLEY	Tip It On Back	Capitol
48	CHRIS CAGLE	Got My Country On	Bigger Picture	98	THOMPSON SQUARE	I Got You	Stoney Creek
49	CRAIG MORGAN	This Ole Boy	Black River	99	KIX BROOKS F/JOE WALSH	New To This Town	Arista
50	TIM MCGRAW	Truck Yeah	Big Machine	100	RONNIE DUNN	Let The Cowboy Rock	Arista

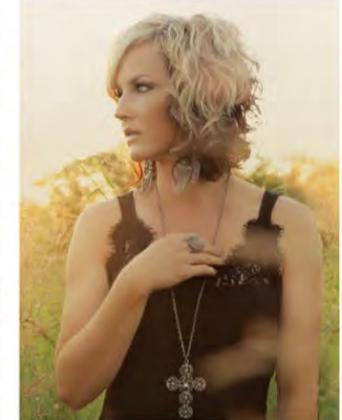


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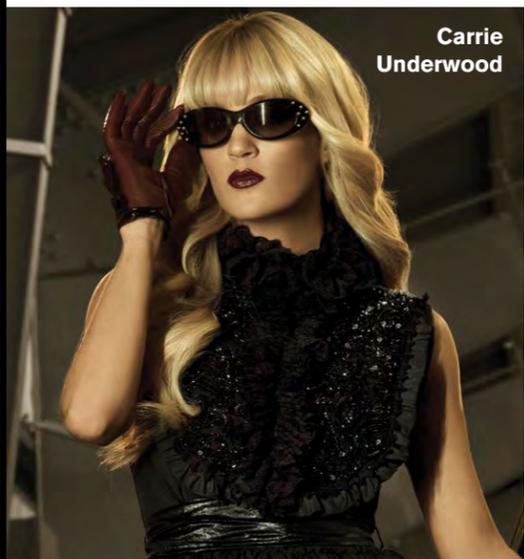
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TOP 15^s OF 2012



	Artist	Title	Label	Peak Position (wks. at No.1)	Peak Date	Wks. on Chart	2012 Rank
A	JASON ALDEAN	Tattoos On This Town	Broken Bow	1 (1)	11/28/11	8	45
	JASON ALDEAN	Fly Over States	Broken Bow	1 (1)	5/14/12	17	12
	JASON ALDEAN	Take A Little Ride	Broken Bow	1 (2)	10/8/12	14	42
B	THE BAND PERRY	All Your Life	Republic Nashville	1 (1)	2/13/12	15	38
	THE BAND PERRY	Postcard From Paris	Republic Nashville	5	8/6/12	24	32
	GREG BATES	Did It For The Girl	Republic Nashville	10	11/12/12	29	57
	DIERKS BENTLEY	Home	Capitol	1 (1)	3/12/12	19	29
	DIERKS BENTLEY	5-1-5-0	Capitol	1 (1)	7/23/12	18	27
	BIG & RICH	That's Why I Pray	Warner Bros./W.A.R.	15	9/4/12	18	61
	LEE BRICE	A Woman Like You	Curb	1 (1)	4/9/12	23	9
	LEE BRICE	Hard To Love	Curb	1 (1)	10/29/12	26	40
	LUKE BRYAN	I Don't Want This Night To End	Capitol	1 (2)	1/30/12	13	24
C	LUKE BRYAN	Drunk On You	Capitol	1 (2)	7/2/12	21	6
	LUKE BRYAN	Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye	Capitol	1 (2)	11/12/12	15	51
	CHRIS CAGLE	Got My Country On	Bigger Picture	12	5/21/12	28	48
	KENNY CHESNEY	Reality	BNA	1 (1)	3/5/12	18	33
	KENNY CHESNEY	Come Over	Blue Chair/Columbia	1 (2)	8/6/12	14	22
	KENNY CHESNEY	El Cerrito Place	Blue Chair/Columbia	14	11/12/12	9	88
	KENNY CHESNEY & TIM MCGRAW	Feel Like A Rock Star	Blue Chair/Columbia	10	5/14/12	8	72
	ERIC CHURCH	Drink In My Hand	EMI Nashville	1 (1)	1/17/12	11	31
	ERIC CHURCH	Springsteen	EMI Nashville	1 (2)	6/18/12	21	1
E	ERIC CHURCH	Creepin'	EMI Nashville	11	11/12/12	18	67
	EASTON CORBIN	Lovin' You Is Fun	Mercury	4	10/29/12	37	26
	ELI YOUNG BAND	Crazy Girl	Republic Nashville	2	11/21/11	2	62
F	ELI YOUNG BAND	Even If It Breaks Your Heart	Republic Nashville	1 (1)	7/16/12	28	5
	FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE	Cruise	Republic Nashville	5	11/12/12	14	70
	BRANTLEY GILBERT	Country Must Be Country Wide	Valory	1 (1)	11/21/11	3	59
G	BRANTLEY GILBERT	You Don't Know Her Like I Do	Valory	1 (1)	7/9/12	33	2
	GLORIANA	(Kissed You) Good Night	Emblem/W.A.R.	2	8/13/12	41	7
	HUNTER HAYES	Storm Warning	Atlantic/WMN	12	2/6/12	14	77
H	HUNTER HAYES	Wanted	Atlantic/WMN	1 (2)	9/24/12	30	25
	RANDY HOUSER	How Country Feels	Stoney Creek	15	11/12/12	24	71
	TOBY KEITH	Red Solo Cup	Show Dog-Universal	8	2/6/12	14	64
K	TOBY KEITH	Beers Ago	Show Dog-Universal	6	7/23/12	19	41
	JANA KRAMER	Why Ya Wanna	Elektra Nashville/W.A.R.	3	10/1/12	40	8
	LADY ANTEBELLUM	We Owned The Night	Capitol	1 (1)	12/5/11	7	54
L	LADY ANTEBELLUM	Dancin' Away With My Heart	Capitol	2	4/30/12	22	20
	MIRANDA LAMBERT	Baggage Claim	RCA	2	11/28/11	4	69
	MIRANDA LAMBERT	Over You	RCA	1 (1)	5/7/12	21	17
	MIRANDA LAMBERT	Fastest Girl In Town	RCA	3	11/12/12	23	44
	LITTLE BIG TOWN	Pontoon	Capitol	1 (2)	9/10/12	19	37
	LOVE AND THEFT	Angel Eyes	RCA	1 (1)	8/13/12	40	13
	DUSTIN LYNCH	Cowboys And Angels	Broken Bow	2	10/15/12	40	14
	MARTINA MCBRIDE	I'm Gonna Love You Through It	Republic Nashville	4	2/27/12	17	56
	M	SCOTTY MCCREERY	The Trouble With Girls	19/Interscope/Mercury	15	3/5/12	18
TIM MCGRAW		Better Than I Used To Be	Curb	5	6/18/12	28	16
TIM MCGRAW		Truck Yeah	Big Machine	10	10/15/12	17	50
MONTGOMERY GENTRY		Where I Come From	Average Joes	8	4/2/12	21	36
JUSTIN MOORE		Bait A Hook	Valory	15	1/30/12	13	89
JUSTIN MOORE		'Til My Last Day	Valory	9	11/12/12	33	53
KIP MOORE		Somethin' 'Bout A Truck	MCA	1 (2)	5/29/12	30	4
KIP MOORE		Beer Money	MCA	7	11/12/12	19	66
CRAIG MORGAN		This Ole Boy	Black River	13	5/21/12	29	49
N	DAVID NAIL	Let It Rain	MCA	1 (1)	1/9/12	10	52
	JERROD NIEMANN	One More Drinkin' Song	Sea Gayle/Arista	15	11/21/11	2	--
O	JAKE OWEN	Alone With You	RCA	1 (1)	4/2/12	22	15
	JAKE OWEN	The One That Got Away	RCA	2	11/12/12	25	47
P	BRAD PAISLEY	Camouflage	Arista	14	1/30/12	13	94
	BRAD PAISLEY	Southern Comfort Zone	Arista	13	11/12/12	8	92
R	RASCAL FLATTS	Banjo	Big Machine	1 (1)	4/30/12	18	10
	RASCAL FLATTS	Come Wake Me Up	Big Machine	6	11/12/12	25	46
	RASCAL FLATTS	Easy	Big Machine	4	12/12/11	8	84
	THOMAS RHETT	Something To Do With My Hands	Valory	15	7/9/12	26	60
S	BLAKE SHELTON	Drink On It	Warner Bros./WMN	1 (2)	4/23/12	19	11
	BLAKE SHELTON	Over	Warner Bros./WMN	1 (2)	8/27/12	18	30
	GEORGE STRAIT	Love's Gonna Make It Alright	MCA	1 (1)	3/19/12	20	34
	TAYLOR SWIFT	Sparks Fly	Big Machine	4	11/21/11	2	68
	TAYLOR SWIFT	Ours	Big Machine	1 (1)	3/26/12	19	28
T	THOMPSON SQUARE	Glass	Stoney Creek	15	8/6/12	28	55
	THOMPSON SQUARE	I Got You	Stoney Creek	6	12/5/12	7	98
	JOSH TURNER	Time Is Love	MCA	2	9/17/12	38	3
U	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	Good Girl	19/Arista	1 (1)	6/4/12	17	19
	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	Blown Away	19/Arista	1 (2)	10/22/12	18	43
	KEITH URBAN	You Gonna Fly	Capitol	1 (2)	2/27/12	17	21
	KEITH URBAN	For You	Relativity/Capitol	6	9/10/12	23	35
Y	CHRIS YOUNG	You	RCA	1 (1)	2/6/12	14	23
Z	ZAC BROWN BAND	Keep Me In Mind	Atlantic/Southern Ground/Bigger Picture	1 (2)	12/12/11	9	39
	ZAC BROWN BAND	No Hurry	Atlantic/Southern Ground/Bigger Picture	2	6/4/12	20	18
	ZAC BROWN BAND	The Wind	Atlantic/Southern Ground/Bigger Picture	10	9/4/12	15	65
	ZAC BROWN BAND	Goodbye In Her Eyes	Atlantic/Southern Ground	12	11/12/12	7	96



FEBRUARY 2013

BIG MACHINE

#1 BILL

BIG MACHINE LABEL

Billboard Top Country
Country Songs **TAYLOR SWIFT** #1
RASCAL FLATTS #1
#9 Country Aircheck
Artist of 2012 **THE TOWN**
Heart **FLORIDA GEORGINA BAKER**
#1 Billboard Top
Label of 2012
Artist #1 Billboard
MCGRAW #7
Country Song
Duo/Group
New Artist
Top Country
REPUBLIC
WANER
of 2012
JUST
Aircheck
Aircheck
Aircheck
2012
Billboard
of
#5
Song
#1 Billboard
VALCOURT
Billboard
Aircheck
Artist of 2012
PERRY #5
LINE #10
Albums Label #1
Hot Country Song
Digital Song - WANER
Male Artist of 2012 **ED**
Country Label #1 Billboard
Country Aircheck Label of 2012
Country Digital Songs Artist #1 Billboard
Duo/Group of 2012 **TIM MCGRAW** #7
2012 #2 Billboard Hot Country Songs - You Don't Know
Country Aircheck Duo/Group of 2012 **ELI YOUNG BAND** #4
Country Aircheck New Artist of 2012 **GREG BATES** #7 Country Aircheck

Country Album
Billboard Ho
Country D
k



THIS IS HOW WE

LABEL GROUP

BOARD TOP COUNTRY LABEL

s Label #2 Billboard Top Country Imprint **BIG MACHINE** #5 Country Aircheck Label of 2012 #2
t Country Songs **REPUBLIC NASHVILLE** #3 Country Aircheck Label of 2012 #3 Billboard Hot
Digital Song - WANEGBT #1 Billboard Top Country Album - Red #1 Billboard Top Country Artist
Male Artist of 2012 **EDENS EDGE** #9 Country Aircheck New Artist of 2012 **BRANTLEY GILBERT**
er Like I Do **JUSTIN MOORE** Certified Gold Album **THOMAS RHETT** #5 Country Aircheck New
Country Aircheck Duo/Group #1 Billboard Hot Country Songs - Even If It Breaks Your
Aircheck New Artist of 2012 **VALORY** #10 Country Aircheck
Aircheck Label of 2012 #3 Billboard Top Country Digital Songs
ard Top Country Artist of 2012 **TIM**
2012 #1 Billboard Hot



ROLL!

*Photo credit: Luis Benitez

Luke, Miranda, ZBB and Kip Top 2012 Airplay



Miranda Lambert



COUNTRY RADIO'S TOP 2012 PERFORMERS

TOP 15



TIMERS

The seven artists who scored Top 15 hits in 2012 for the first time did so with a vengeance – not only did they have hits, they were huge hits. In fact, four of our newcomers posted tunes in the year's Top 25. Kip Moore's "Somethin' Bout A Truck" is No. 4, Jana Kramer's "Why Ya Wanna" hit No. 8, Dustin Lynch's "Cowboys and Angels" lands at No. 14 and Hunter Hayes' "Wanted" is the No. 25 most-heard song of the year.

These seven acts accounted for nine songs among the 80 that reached the Top 15 in 2012. Hayes and Moore each had a pair of Top 15s and each notched two-week No. 1s. Lynch took his debut single to No. 2 and Kramer hit No. 3, no small feat in this era when women are finding Country airplay difficult to come by. Greg Bates is still cookin' with his debut single, "Did It For The Girl." And Florida Georgia Line's "Cruise" was sitting pretty at No. 1 as this issue went to press. Rounding out the Class of 2012 is Thomas Rhett, who debuted this year with "Something To Do With My Hands" and currently finds his second single ensconced in the Top 20.

GREG BATES
(Republic Nashville)

FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE
(Republic Nashville)

HUNTER HAYES
(Atlantic/WMN)

JANA KRAMER
(Elektra Nashville/W.A.R.)

DUSTIN LYNCH
(Broken Bow)

KIP MOORE
(MCA)

THOMAS RHETT
(Valory)

Luke Bryan dances his way to the top of Country radio's 2012 airplay ball with three chart-topping hits that stayed at No. 1 for six weeks. *Tailgates And Tanlines*, nominated as CMA's Album of the Year, yielded "I Don't Want This Night To End," "Drunk On You" and "Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye," each of which spent two weeks at the top of the charts. "Drunk On You" is 2012's No. 6 song, while "Night" ranks No. 24. The format's top Male MVP as well, Luke waltzed his way to the top spots from his position as last year's No. 9 MVP and No. 7 Male.

Miranda Lambert is this year's Female MVP, moving to the top spot after coming in second to Taylor Swift last year. Lambert also had a trio of hits, including "Over You," the CMA's Song of the Year and a two-week No. 1 hit written by Lambert and husband Blake Shelton. Her current hit "Fastest Girl In Town" presently resides at No. 3 on the chart while "Baggage Claim," a carry over from 2011, hit No. 2 during the 2012 chart year (11/13/11-11/10/12) and contributed to her overall airplay stats. The reigning CMA Female Vocalist of the Year is also the only woman to grace this year's Overall MVP list, placing sixth.

The Duo/Group MVP for the second consecutive year is the **Zac Brown Band**, who also placed as the year's No. 4 Overall MVP. The guys had four songs on the chart this year, including "Keep Me In Mind," which was released in 2011 but spent two weeks at No. 1 in the early part of the 2012 chart year. "No Hurry" hit No. 2 last June while "The Wind" was a Top 10 hit. "Goodbye In Her Eyes" is currently in the Top 10.

Kip Moore parks his pick-up squarely in the top slot as 2012's New Artist MVP on the strength of "Somethin' Bout A Truck." That song spent two weeks at No. 1 last spring and is also the No. 4 song of 2012.

The total number of songs charting during the year continues its decline, as a total of 175 songs charted in 2012, down from 196 in 2011 and 2010. And that was off from 204 in '09. In 2008, 194 tunes hit the Top 50, while 190 did it in '07.

Forty-six different artists accounted for 80 Top 15 songs this year, up from 39 acts and 78 songs last year. That compares to 79 in 2010, 84 in '09, 86 in '08 and 77 in '07.

There were 36 No. 1s from 25 different acts; in 2011 there were 37 chart-toppers from 25 artists. Luke Bryan led the way with six weeks at No.1, while his Buck Commander buddy **Jason Aldean**, and the CMA Entertainer of the Year **Blake Shelton**, each chipped-in four weeks at the top. **Carrie Underwood**, **Kenny Chesney** and **Eric Church** all spent three weeks at No. 1 in 2012.

Men continue to dominate the Country airwaves, although they slipped one percent to 65% of the 2012 airplay. Solo women singers once again accounted for only 13% of Country spins, while Duos/Groups edged up one percent over last year with 22% of all airplay. In 2010 it was 67%, 16% and 17%, respectively.



Luke Bryan

OVERALL

1. LUKE BRYAN (Capitol)
2. ERIC CHURCH (EMI Nashville)
3. JASON ALDEAN (Broken Bow)
4. ZAC BROWN BAND (Atlantic/Southern Ground)
5. KENNY CHESNEY (Blue Chair/Columbia)
6. MIRANDA LAMBERT (RCA)
7. RASCAL FLATTS (Big Machine)
8. DIERKS BENTLEY (Capitol)
9. BLAKE SHELTON (Warner Bros./WMN)
10. TIM MCGRAW (Big Machine)

MALE

1. LUKE BRYAN (Capitol)
2. ERIC CHURCH (EMI Nashville)
3. JASON ALDEAN (Broken Bow)
4. KENNY CHESNEY (Blue Chair/Columbia)
5. DIERKS BENTLEY (Capitol)
6. BLAKE SHELTON (Warner Bros./WMN)
7. TIM MCGRAW (Big Machine)
8. LEE BRICE (Curb)
9. BRANTLEY GILBERT (Valory)
10. KEITH URBAN (Capitol)

FEMALE

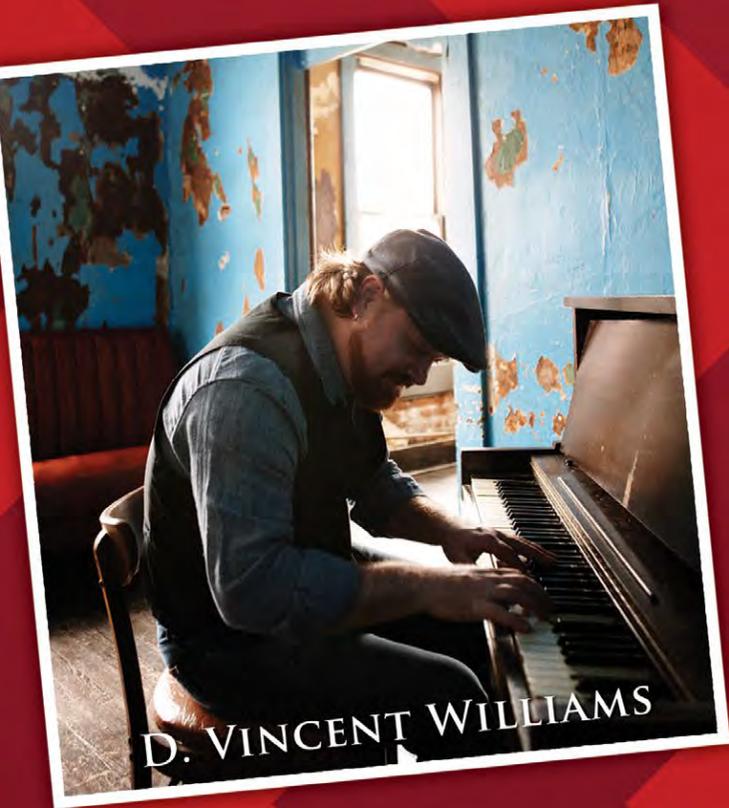
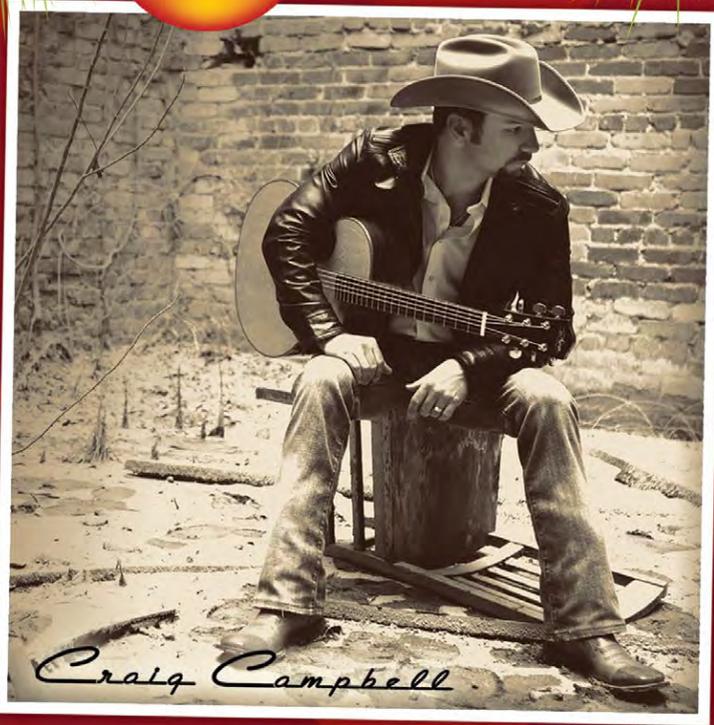
1. MIRANDA LAMBERT (RCA)
2. CARRIE UNDERWOOD (19/Arista)
3. TAYLOR SWIFT (Big Machine)
4. JANA KRAMER (Elektra Nashville/W.A.R.)
5. MARTINA MCBRIDE (Republic Nashville)
6. KELLY CLARKSON (19/RCA/Columbia)
7. KRISTEN KELLY (Arista)
8. LAUREN ALAINA (19/Interscope/Mercury)
9. MAGGIE ROSE (RPME)
10. SARA EVANS (RCA)

DUO/GROUP

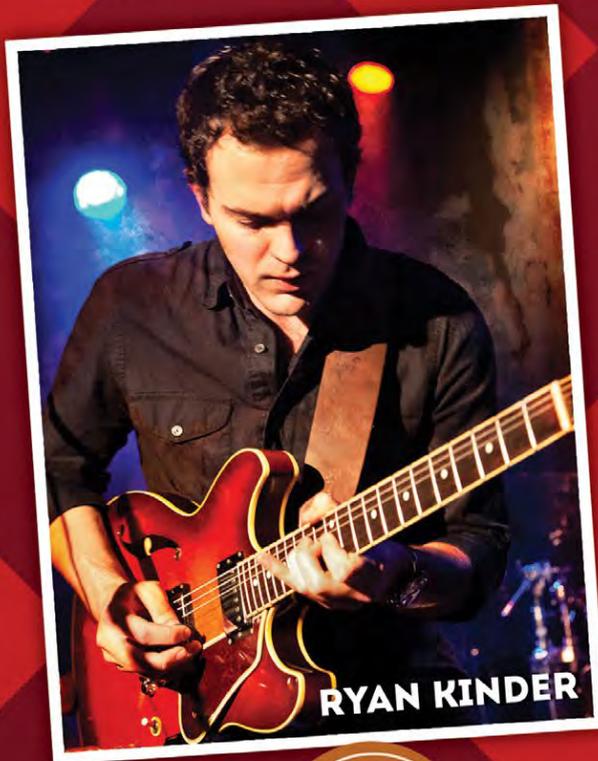
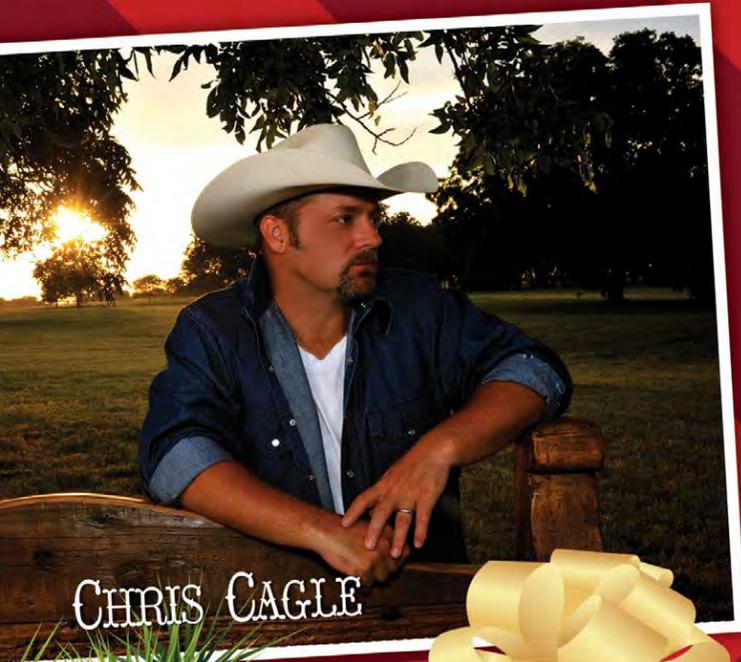
1. ZAC BROWN BAND (Atlantic/Southern Ground)
2. RASCAL FLATTS (Big Machine)
3. LADY ANTEBELLUM (Capitol)
4. ELI YOUNG BAND (Republic Nashville)
5. THE BAND PERRY (Republic Nashville)
6. GLORIANA (Emblem/W.A.R.)
7. LOVE AND THEFT (RCA)
8. LITTLE BIG TOWN (Capitol)
9. MONTGOMERY GENTRY (Average Joes)
10. THOMPSON SQUARE (Stoney Creek)

NEW ARTISTS

1. KIP MOORE (MCA)
2. HUNTER HAYES (Atlantic/WMN)
3. JANA KRAMER (Elektra Nashville/W.A.R.)
4. DUSTIN LYNCH (Broken Bow)
5. THOMAS RHETT (Valory)
6. CASEY JAMES (19/Columbia)
7. GREG BATES (Republic Nashville)
8. THE FARM (WMN)
9. EDENS EDGE (Big Machine)
10. FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE (Republic Nashville)



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PICTURE**



Happy Holidays From Everyone At Bigger Picture!



*Zac
Brown
Band*

THANK YOU COUNTRY RADIO FOR ANOTHER GREAT YEAR!

- №1 ALBUM TOP 200 MULTIPLE WEEKS "UNCAGED"
- №1 iTUNES TOP COUNTRY ALBUMS MULTIPLE WEEKS "UNCAGED"
- №1 COUNTRY AIRCHECK DUO/GROUP OF 2012
- №4 COUNTRY AIRCHECK OVERALL ARTISTS OF 2012
- FOUR TOP 10 SINGLES IN 2012
- OVER 1.3 MILLION ALBUMS SOLD IN 2012
- OVER 3.6 MILLION TRACKS DOWNLOADED IN 2012
- PERFORMED FOR OVER 1 MILLION FANS IN 2012

*Southern
GROUND
ARTISTS*

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JANUARY 28, 2013

- ★ HEADLINING HOUSE OF BLUES' 2013 "ONES TO WATCH" TOUR
- ★ #1 iTUNES TOP COUNTRY ALBUMS
- ★ "FOUR OUT OF FOUR STARS." -COUNTRY WEEKLY

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"BLACKBERRY SMOKE IS THE REAL DEAL!" -DIERKS BENTLEY

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*Southern
GROUND
ARTISTS* CAA

Q1

GENEROUS QUARTER

Labels are ready to show off their designs on radio airplay with a quarter's worth of stylish artists guaranteed to improve listener and programmer lifestyles alike. They've spent months preparing sleek recordings and sharp promo campaigns that work for all occasions. Below, Country Aircheck fashionably follows what's trending.

A-Blake

Recently expanded into Nashville with the hire of VP/Promotion & Acquisitions **David Newmark**, A-Blake will focus initially on **Jason Cassidy** and his single "Blame It On Waylon." Look for it early in 2013.

Arista

The Henningsens, **Brad Paisley**, **Carrie Underwood**, **Jerrod Niemann** and **Kristen Kelly** are sure to keep the A-team busy. VP/Promotion **Lesly Tyson** says, "There is already a very exciting buzz on The Henningsens. Not only are they prolific writers, they are absolutely captivating performers." Debut single "American Beautiful" impacts Dec. 17.

"Brad's 'Southern Comfort Zone' has exploded at radio – another home-run and the first single from his highly anticipated April 2013 release. Carrie spent more weeks at No. 1 than any other female in the format in 2012 and she'll follow-up 'Blown Away' with 'Two Black Cadillacs,'

which is already racing up the charts.

"Jerrod will continue to *Free the Music* in the new year with the moving power ballad 'Only God Could Love You More.' He spent almost all of 2012 on the road with Brad, Miranda and Blake, and headlining the Jagermeister tour; be sure to catch him in 2013."

Finally, Kelly will deliver "He Loves To Make Me Cry" and will tour with The Band Perry and Rascal Flatts next year.

Average Joes

A focus on music from **Colt Ford's** album *Declaration Of Independence*, **Montgomery Gentry's** single "I'll Keep The Kids," **JB and The Moonshine Band** and the John Rich-produced project from **Gabe Garcia** will open a busy year for AJE.

"JB and The Moonshine Band are a great band out of Texas, and Gabe Garcia has a modern-day 'Strait ahead' country sound," says VP Marketing & Promotions **Tony Morreale**. "We'll also continue to build the fan base of 19-year-old Virginian **JJ Lawhorn** and



introduce the **LACs** to new fans and radio friends."

Big Machine

"Big Machine rolls into the New Year with a record-breaking **Taylor Swift**

album," exclaims VP/Promotion & Media Strategy **John Zarling**. "[She'll] be kicking off the New Year from what is truly the center of the media world, Times Square, on ABC's *Rockin' New Year's Eve*. With 'Begin Again' rocketing up the charts, the song will run through Q1; she kicks off her much-anticipated *Red Tour* March 13.

"Tim McGraw's label debut *Two Lanes Of Freedom* will be released Feb. 5 featuring lead single 'Truck Yeah' and his current hit 'One Of Those Nights.' Radio will have the chance to fully engage through flyaways, album giveaways, special programming and more.

"Fresh from a Hollywood Walk of Fame induction and being honored for selling seven-million concert tickets, **Rascal Flatts** ride into 2013 with the new single and title track to their No. 1 album *Changed* and the second leg of their *Changed Tour* with opening act The Band Perry. Their current single will remain a priority throughout Q1, with promotional support coinciding with their new DVD release, *Rascal Flatts Changed: All Access & Uncovered*.

"Big Machine's soundtrack for ABC's hit drama *Nashville* will also remain a



Generous Quarter

priority for Q1 and beyond. **Hayden Panettiere's** character **Juliette Barnes** voices the project's official lead single 'Telescope.' Opportunities for radio to engage with the actors will include interviews, promotions, in-market visits and digital content.

"Our commitment to developing new artists continues with the January rollout of **Edens Edge's** "Swinging Door" from their top 10 self-titled debut. They'll be on the road promoting the single in Q1."

Bigger Picture

"**Chris Cagle** will continue to climb the chart with his latest hit, 'Let There Be Cowgirls' from his *Back in the Saddle* album," says BPG Artist Joint Ventures President **Michael Powers**. "He's planning a big year of touring and radio visits

"**Craig Campbell's** second album will be out in March. It is yet to be titled, but will obviously showcase his latest up-tempo hit 'Outta My Head.'

"Bigger Picture will also finish up newcomer **Chris Janson's** radio tour with the first single in January called 'Better I Don't.' He's tearing it up on radio visits and live shows right now with his unique guitar and harmonica acoustic set."

Black River

"First of all, a huge thank you to Country radio for our Top 15 on **Craig Morgan's** 'This Ole Boy' earlier this year," says VP/National Promotion **Bill Macky**.

"Come first quarter, we will continue to move 'More Trucks Than Cars' up the charts, and Craig will have some great news about a first-quarter tour.

"**Sarah Darling's** 'Home To Me' will be moving up the charts next year and will also have a feature role on one of network TV's most popular reality shows in February.

"**Kellie Pickler** heads into the studio in the first quarter to record her debut release for Black River. And we will also be hosting the Friday lunch at CRS, and promise to have some amazing new music and performances at that show. Don't miss it!"

Blaster

VP/Promotions **Gator Michaels** says, "Blaster is taking off in 2013! **Aaron Lewis** has made the best album of the year and the single 'Forever' will take us through the first quarter. In January we'll be introducing **Jared Ashley**, an amazing singer/songwriter who's played hundreds of dates over the last few years."



Lindsey Ell

Broken Bow

BBMG SVP/Promotion **Carson James** says, "**Jason Aldean** will still be rocking after the holidays and we've got many choices for singles to come in the first quarter. There are so many to be drawn to.



Sweetwater Rain

"**Dustin Lynch** will be going strong with 'She Cranks My Tractor,' the second single off his No. 1 debut album. This is in-your-face, up-tempo; he'll also be on the Keith Urban tour.

"A brand new **James Wesley** single will go for adds Jan. 21. 'Waking Up The Rooster' is a really fun, tongue-in-cheek party song that we're excited about. He's an official spokesperson for Farm Boy Apparel, too.

"And I can't go without mentioning **Kristy Lee Cook**. 'Airborne Ranger Infantry' is timeless and social media has blown up over it. We may have caught a little brush fire with Veteran's Day. It's a great record that touches people and always gets a reaction."

Capitol

"Capitol will start the new year with highly anticipated new music from AMA winners **Lady Antebellum**," says SVPP **Steve Hodges**. "Expect the first single from their fourth Capitol album in early 2013.

"On Jan. 22, **Darius Rucker** releases his third Capitol album *True Believers*. That will be followed by his 2013 headlining tour of the same name. By February, we'll be celebrating **Jon Pardi's** second single, following up his 2012 hit, 'Missin' You Crazy.' And on the heels of his hit 'Tip It On Back,' early 2013 will also bring us new music from **Dierks Bentley**. Ditto for **Keith Urban!** Of course, Keith will be busy judging *American Idol* in 2013, but you can look for a new album in the summer.

"We'll deliver a second single from Darius; should happen just after CRS. Also in March, look for AMA winner **Luke Bryan's** *Spring Break 5* project, just as it's time for people to head to the beach. Don't forget that his fourth studio album will come later in the year, too. We'll finish Q1 with CMA Group Of The Year **Little Big Town** and their third single from the *Tornado* album."

Cold River

"We saw a record year in terms of CD and ticket sales," says Pres. **Pete O'Heeron**. "With a growing national fan base, **Katie Armiger** has garnered big fan-voted acknowledgements from 'Hottest Bachelorette' and 'Most Beautiful' to a No. 1 video and primetime TV appearance on ABC-TV's *The Bachelor Pad*." New album *Fall In To Me* lands Q1. "Katie poured her heart into this two-year project, writing or co-writing all of the songs. You can find her on tour and coming to your market."

Columbia

Veep **Norbert Nix** says, "Our first quarter will be focused on our commitment to breaking current new artist singles by **Casey James** and

Tyler Farr, as well as continuing hits from superstars **Kenny Chesney** and **Kelly Clarkson**."

Curb

"We'll be working the new single from **Lee Brice** 'I Drive Your Truck' and will continue with **Rodney Atkins** 'Just Wanna Rock N Roll,'" says VPP **Adrian Michaels**. "**Sweetwater Rain** will be entering the charts on their debut single 'Starshine,' and the lead single from **LeAnn Rimes**' new CD *Spitfire* will be 'What Have I Done.' We also have quite a few very special projects that are in the studio right now that I am very excited about."

EMI Nashville

"After 'Creepin'" hits the top of the charts, we'll follow-up with the next single from **Eric Church's** CMA Album of the Year *Chief*," says new promo honcho **Jimmy Rector**. "**Kelleigh Bannen's** 'Sorry on the Rocks' continues to climb and will take us into the spring. Her infectious energy is hard to ignore and so is her music.

"Also moving through the charts is the **Uncle Kracker** 'tempo feel-good' 'Nobody's Sad On A Saturday Night.' His roots are showing and they are country.

"And toward the end of Q1, we're planning to release **Alan Jackson's** 35th

summer schedule and being named one of *Country Weekly's* Top 10 Most Beautiful Women, **Gwen Sebastian** gave us a sunny year on the Island," says Dir./National Promotion **Shelia Shipley Biddy**. "She's currently wrapping production on her new album, which will include the powerful single 'Met Him In A Motel Room.'

"The Island is partnering with Wrinkled Records to promote its **BJ Thomas** release *The Living Room Sessions*. The new year will mark his 50th year in the music business, and this new album will feature some amazing collaborations—Richard Marx, Lyle Lovett, Keb Mo, Vince Gill, Steve Tyrell and Sara Niemetz.

"First-quarter also sees the launch of our Classic Country Media Services program. The platform allows legendary artists to expose new projects or music releases by providing audio sound-bites, news, and new music to Classic Country stations and programmers nationwide."

InstiGator

David Haley's InstiGator group will continue its work helping Way Out West launch *LiveWire* and their single "Lies." The cut is from their *Livin'* album.

MCA



Drake White

No. 1 'Dixie Highway.' It's an up-tempo fun duet with the Zac Brown Band and a timeless combination that has already proven itself."

Flying Island

"With national television exposure on NBC-TV's *The Voice*, touring with Blake Shelton, debuting at the *Grand Ole Opry*, performing in front of 70,000 fans at LP Field during CMA Music Fest, a tour-filled

UMGN VP/Radio Marketing **Katie Dean** describes newcomer **Drake White** as "an Alabama native who wrote all the songs on his debut album. He spent the fall on tour with David Nail and is so energetic on stage, he actually chipped a tooth while performing.

"**Gary Allan** has his biggest hit in years with 'Every Storm (Runs Out of Rain),' which is expected to peak around the release of his album *Set You Free* in March. **Kip Moore** will have

LEE BRICE

I DRIVE YOUR TRUCK

FOLLOW-UP TO HIS
2 WEEK #1 **"HARD TO LOVE"**

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TODAY**
A GANNETT COMPANY

"I Drive Your Truck" was handpicked
as their track to download on Brice's
current **HARD 2 LOVE** album.

People

"I Drive Your Truck" puts a fresh spin
on a three-hankie ballad."

The New York Times

"an electric, overpowering song...
Mr. Brice sang it vigorously."

PLATINUM Certification – "Love Like Crazy"
PLATINUM Certification – "A Woman Like You"

CMA Nominee New Artist of the Year 2012

Billboard

Song of the Year 2011 "CRAZY GIRL"
Song of the Year 2010 "LOVE LIKE CRAZY"

**ACADEMY
of COUNTRY MUSIC**

Song of the Year 2012 "CRAZY GIRL"

SESAAC

Song of the Year 2012 "A WOMAN LIKE YOU"

Nominated for 3 ACA's
Breakthrough Artist of the Year
Breakthrough Single of the Year and
Song of the Year for "A Woman Like You"

AND NOW, HIS MOST POWERFUL SONG TO DATE!

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Generous Quarter

a third single from his album *Up All Night* following the peak of his current hit 'Beer Money.' And **George Strait** is back in the studio working on his 28th album. The lead single is 'Give It All We Got Tonight' and the MCA staff is committed to getting 'King' George his 60th No. 1 single before he turns 61 in the spring.

Josh Turner's follow-up to the top 5 most-played single of the year 'Time Is Love' is the more up-tempo 'Find Me A Baby.' The **Randy Rogers Band** will release their album *Trouble* Feb. 12. The debut single 'One More Sad Song' was the group's highest charting effort to date and the second single 'Fuzzy' is an up-tempo visual right out of the movie *The Hangover*. And finally, **David Nail** is also in the studio. New music expected in the spring."

Mercury

Oh, look. It's Katie again. "**Kacey Musgraves** will release her debut in late Q1 as 'Merry Go 'Round' continues to climb the charts," Dean says. "She'll also be hitting the road with Little Big Town and Kenny Chesney in 2013. **Billy Currington** is working on his next album, with the first single expected at radio after the first of the year. And **Easton Corbin** will follow his top 5 hit 'Lovin' You Is Fun' with the title cut from his latest release *All Over The Road*." Look a January impact date.

Momentum

With promotions headed by The Talent Associates, Momentum will deliver new music from flagship artist **Rachele Lynae**. "Her single 'Party Til The Cows Come Home' held position on playlists longer than almost any other independent release in 2012," says TTA CEO **John Ettinger**. "The new album will include more tempo fun, with a nod to Lynae's ability for big vocals, strong melodies and a 'get out on the floor' mentality. Look for the second single, pre-CRS, in February."

Nine North/Turnpike

"First, a very happy, healthy holiday season to you and yours from the Nine North/Turnpike Music artists & team," says Pres. **Larry Pareigis**.

"We're working with Crush Management Nashville's **John Grady** to bring an absolute smash to Country radio: 'Bruises,' from multi-platinum selling band Train singer-songwriter and Pistol Annie **Ashley Monroe**. Airplay has already begun with an official January add date, but with a song this good who's going to wait?"

"And we're working with Stonehall Entertainment to carry **Phoenix Stone's** '100 Proof Moonshine' into the new year. So, cups up! Phoenix also kicked some serious [butt] at a recent CMA-week luncheon at Sharla McCoy's *Live From Music Row*.

"New Sun Records' **Crystal Shawanda** was there, too, and reminded everyone why country music needs her back. She's still such a focused, powerful voice, and you can hear it in her hook-laden new single 'Chains.' Here's my promise: Add all the above now and you won't hear from any of us until January!"

Ocala Records

Promotion vet **Mike Borchetta** is touting a new single from **Kelly Parkes**, now on the Ocala label. Parkes fifth single "Good As Me" joins Ocala's first release, the **Wheeler Sisters'** "This Is Gonna Get Ugly." "Kelly is appearing weekly at Tootsies in Nashville," Borchetta says. "Many of the greats have started on that stage." Parkes will also be in Las Vegas for the National Finals Rodeo in December.

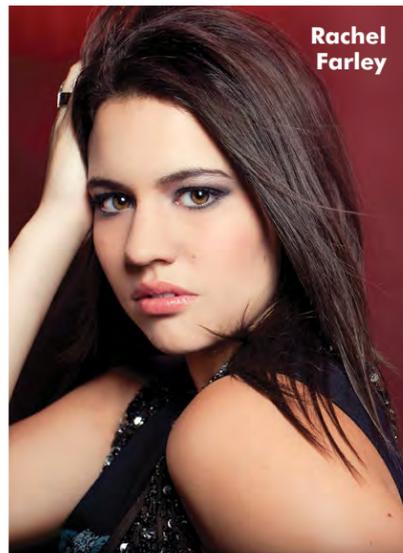
RCA

"We will continue into the first quarter with our current singles from **Joanna Smith, Chris Young,** and **Love And Theft**, and launch follow-ups from **Miranda Lambert** and **Jake Owen**," says VP/National Promotion **Keith Gale**. There'll also be new music from the **Pistol Annies**. "Plus, at CRS, we'll begin setting up our exciting new band **Bush Hawg**. They're produced by Michael Knox and currently working hard out on the road building a fan base. This was a big year for RCA, and we plan to improve upon it in 2013!"



Red Bow

The new Broken Bow Music Group label is aiming for a fast start. "**Rachel Farley's** self-written debut single 'Ain't Easy' will come first," says BBMG SVP/Promotion **Carson James**. "She's an amazing 17-year-old who writes like she's 30 and sings like she's been doing it forever. I really believe she is unique; unlike any other female artist out there. We'll be setting her up through January with an add date sometime in February.



"We're in the song selection process with **Joe Nichols** and should have something shortly," he continues. "The interesting thing with Joe is nobody realizes that he's really sold a bunch of records. He's in excellent shape and is singing better than ever."

Republic Nashville

Newly promoted veep **Matthew Hargis** breaks it down: "**The Band Perry's** debut single 'Better Dig Two' from their highly anticipated sophomore release has already cracked the top 15 and continues as the fastest rising single of the trio's career." The album is scheduled for April and TBP will tour in late winter and spring with Rascal Flatts.

"Hot new country duo **Florida Georgia Line** have a lot to celebrate this holiday season," Hargis continues. "Their debut single 'Cruise' hit No. 1 the same week their debut album *Here's To The Good Times* was released (12/4). FGL are gearing up to hit the road with Luke Bryan on his first headlining tour throughout 2013. Additionally, don't miss them on the CRS New Faces Of Country Music show.

"Nashville native and country newcomer **Greg Bates** has already cracked the top 10 and continues to climb with his debut smash 'Did It For The Girl,'" Hargis says. "Fresh off the 2012 Brantley Gilbert tour, look for Greg's debut album in the spring.

"**Eli Young Band** have had an amazing 2012 on the road with Rascal Flatts, scoring their second No. 1 with 'Even If It Breaks Your Heart.' And now their brand new 'Say Goodnight' has already reached top 30 and continues to climb," Hargis concludes. "In addition to prepping for their 2013 stadium tour with Kenny Chesney, the



EYB is currently in the studio working on a brand new album for a summer 2013 release."

Rodeowave

"We will release a new **Phil Vassar** single in early 2013," reports GM **Teddi Bonadies**. "It'll be from the forthcoming *Don't Miss Your Life* album. We'll also continue with the 'Band of Brothers,' Brad, Bryan and Curtis Rempel, the sibling trio **High Valley**. They recently released their debut single and video for 'Love You For A Long Time' and will keep meeting radio nationally.

"And **Miss Willie Brown** are in the studio working on the follow-up single to 'You're All That Matters To Me.' It will be coming in early 2013, ahead of their A&M/Octone album that will be released in the spring."

RPME

"RPME's flagship artist, known affectionately as **Maggie Rose**, is connecting with fans across the country," says SVP **April Rider**. "Her James Stroud-produced and Judson Spence-written debut single 'I Ain't Your Mama' is doing great, and her debut album will drop in early spring."

Show Dog-Universal

"SDU will ring in 2013 with **Toby Keith's** 'Hope On The Rocks' climbing



the charts," asserts VP/Promotion & Radio Marketing **Tom Baldrice**. "In the words of the man himself, 'If I were invited to perform at the Bluebird Café with the best songwriters in Nashville, and asked to play the top three songs I'd ever written, "Hope On The Rocks" would be one of them.' That's a powerful statement coming from the *Billboard* Songwriter of the Decade, NSAI Songwriter of the Decade and three-time BMI Songwriter of the Year!"

"In mid January, SDU will introduce **Joel Crouse** to radio. He's a 20-year-old singer-songwriter, born and raised in Massachusetts, who spent 2012 opening shows for Darius Rucker, Rodney Atkins and Sara Evans. His debut single, also coming in mid-January, is a co-write with current BMI Songwriter of the Year Luke Laird ('Pontoon,' 'Drink In My Hand,' 'A Little Bit Stronger') and producer Jamie Houston. It's an up-tempo smash called 'If You Want Some.' And trust me, Country radio listeners will want some ... and more ... of Joel Crouse. It's gonna be ... epic!"

Sidewalk

"We will be working on the launch of our first new artist here at Sidewalk, **Dylan Scott**," says promotion head **Larry Hughes**. "He's from Louisiana, and his dad played guitar for Freddy Fender and Freddy Hart. Jim Ed Norman will produce, and we are close to determining his first single."

Southern Ground

"Coming up, of course we've got the **Zac Brown Band's** 'Goodbye In Her Eyes' as it continues to climb the charts," says the label's **Mara Sidweber**. "And in January we'll be launching the first single from **Blackberry Smoke's** SGA debut *The Whippoorwill*. 'Pretty Little Lie' will ship the first week of January and go for adds on Jan. 28."

Stoney Creek

"A brand new album from **Randy Houser** is coming Jan. 21 and I've heard most of the songs on it," says group Senior Senór **Carson James**. "It's a totally different Randy and I'm amazed at how melodic the songs are. We're still powering up 'How Country Feels' and we've got plenty to follow it up with. The new **Thompson Square** made an immediate impact in sales and airplay. Look for the the new album late in Q1. There's a **Parmalee** song called 'Carolina' that we'll be releasing, too. It shows how melodic and incredibly tight their harmonies are. We also signed a girl out of Canada, **Lindsey Ell**. She's working with New Voice (Thompson Square) and is in the studio now."

Streamsound

"We're releasing our second artist **Austin Webb** with the debut single 'It's All Good' as we start 2013," says promotion head **Mike Wilson**. "And in mid-January, we'll ship the new **Jaida Dreyer** single 'Half Broke Horses' along with her first album.

"I'm also happy to report that we'll be back on the road with a new artist, **Dakota Bradley**, in January. It's worth noting that his project is being produced by both Byron Gallimore and Tim McGraw. The first single will impact April 1."

Tenacity

"We are very excited to welcome **Lonestar** and 4-Star Records into the Tenacity Records family," says SVP/Promotion **Tim McFadden**. "We'll have a new single in January and an album in the spring. This is their 20th anniversary, and in that time they've received nearly 5,000,000 spins. We can't wait for everyone to hear all of this great new music. They are already touring hard and expect them to be in your market in 2013. We are also pumped about the new **Bill Gentry** single 'Hell And Half Of Georgia.' Bill has been

BLACK RIVER

ENTERTAINMENT

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BLACK RIVER RECORDS:

SOUND STAGE & RONNIE'S PLACE:

BLACK RIVER PUBLISHING:

CRAIG MORGAN

"THIS OLE BOY" - TOP 15 RECORD

"THIS OLE BOY" - HIGHEST
ALBUM CHART DEBUT IN CAREER

RELEASED NEW SINGLE
"MORE TRUCKS THAN CARS"

SARAH DARLING

RELEASED NEW SINGLE
"HOME TO ME"

KELLIE PICKLER

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MIRANDA LAMBERT

EASTON CORBIN

KELLY CLARKSON

PETER FRAMPTON

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PISTOL ANNIES

LIONEL RICHIE

KENNY CHESNEY

"COME OVER" - #1

KACEY MUSGRAVES

"MERRY GO ROUND"

CHRIS YOUNG

"NEON"

LOVE & THEFT

"RUNNING OUT OF AIR"

LOST TRAILERS

"AMERICAN BEAUTY"

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AARON LEWIS

A LOVE SONG
YOU WILL PLAY...

FOREVER

The new single from the
critically-acclaimed album,
THE ROAD

"Aaron's voice is so pure and powerful. Don't let the fact that he's a rock superstar fool you. He's a country boy through and through. Our format is lucky to have him."
~ Johnny Chiang,
KKBQ

"Aaron Lewis proves that good ol' boys don't have to be raised on Skoal and corn liquor... Grade: A"
~ THE CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER

"The Road is just getting smoother for the country music version of Aaron."
~ COUNTRY WEEKLY

"The Road is one of the best and most cohesive country releases of the year."
~ THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE



Generous Quarter

touring hard and this is the single that everyone has been asking for."

The Talent Associates

Lead associate **John Ettinger** leads off with **Emerson Drive**. "They had huge success with the song 'She's My Kind Of Crazy' on the Canadian charts late last year. When SiriusXM decided to start playing this good-feeling, up-tempo romp, we felt we should get serious about the band's first U.S. release in over a year. The song has had brisk sales with iTunes and other digital platforms due mainly to the satellite radio play, and their new studio album *Roll* is already available on iTunes in the U.S.

"A new single from Kansas native **Matt Gary** will hit radio early in 2013 as well. Fresh off his fall tour with MCA's David Nail, Matt has grown so much on the stage and in the studio. We'll have a single and at least an EP full of the new stuff by spring."

Triple Crown

"We're looking forward to 2013 with new artists and music," says promotion head **Doc Gonzales**. "We'll be following-up the smash hit 'I Loved Her First' with **Heartland**'s new single 'The Sound a Dream Makes.' And a new artist with a true traditional sound, **Tim Culpepper**, will be out visiting radio in early January with 'Pourin' Whiskey On Pain.' Finally, the super-charged all-female group **Mustang Sally** will debut with 'Real Woman.' It's really a full-throttle live show you won't want to miss."

Valory

VP/Promotion **George Briner** and his team promise to "continue raising the 'Evolution of the Revolution' banner to new heights" in 2013. "Coming off two gold albums and his most recent monster hit 'Til My Last Day,' **Justin Moore** is gearing up for the studio with a pickup truck full of hit songs. His debut single from his third album will be on radio's desk in the first quarter, and he'll be kicking off a headlining tour in February.

"As **Brantley Gilbert** celebrates the second most-played song of 2012 with 'You Don't Know Her Like I Do' and enjoys his current rising single 'More Than Miles,' he's also heading into the studio. Look for his first album in more than two-and-a-half years to hit your desk in 2013. He'll

also be kicking off a headlining tour with Kip Moore in February, and will soon announce his participation in a major summer concert tour.

"A year ago, very few knew the name or the music of **Thomas Rhett**. That changed and 2013 will be an even bigger year. 'Beer With Jesus' is doing great and he'll head into the new year on the Jason Aldean tour, which will continue through 2013. And on March 5, he'll release his debut, self-titled album.

"And in January, Valory will also roll out **RaeLynn**, who's most known for her role on Team Blake on NBC-TV's *The Voice*. She's currently in the studio with super-producer Dann Huff, and will start showcasing her music and magnetic personality to radio after the first of the year. Expect a first single in Q1."



RaeLynn

WMN

Senior Veep **Chris Stacey** launches the Warner dynamic duo's entries by noting the group's record-setting year. "We *doubled* our chart share year-over-year with the continued dominance of **Blake Shelton**, break-through singles from **Jana Kramer**, **Hunter Hayes**, **The Farm** and **Gloriana** along with a huge showing at this year's CMA awards," he says. "Based on our initial set-up for our forthcoming artists, Warner Music Nashville will continue to shine in 2013.

"CMA New Artist of the Year **Hunter Hayes**' third single 'Somebody's Heartbreak' is his fastest-rising to date and appears to be the perfect follow-up to the multiple-week No. 1 smash 'Wanted,'" Stacey says. "We're looking to start off the new year at the top of the charts again!"

"I don't remember the last time we were handed a single that I thought from the opening note, 'Man, this thing will be a research monster,' but that's exactly what went through my head with **Brett Eldredge**'s 'Don't Ya.' Play it and check your research - you'll see.

"We've spent the bulk of fall and winter introducing you to **Dean Alexander**, a soulful crooner with a unique California-country style influenced by Chris Isaak and Dwight Yoakam." Look for a mid-February impact on his debut "Moments."

"Oh yeah, there's one more guy I should mention," Stacey continues. "How could I forget your reigning CMA Entertainer of the Year and ACM and CMA Male Vocalist? **Blake Shelton** has been off in Hollywood engaged in his little side gig as a champion talent coach on NBC-TV's *The Voice*, but he took time in July to record his first-ever holiday album *Cheers, It's Christmas*. His NBC-TV *Blake's Not So Family Christmas Special* aired Dec. 3. And during days off from *The Voice*, he's been in the studio with Scott Hendricks working on his follow-up to his Grammy-nominated *Red River Blue*. We couldn't be more excited to bring you exciting *all-new* music from Blake early in Q1!"

W.A.R.

Chapter two of the Warner tome has **Chris Palmer** and the W.A.R. mongers pushing for "an even bigger and better 2013. Team W.A.R. is looking to follow-up a record breaking 2012 with an even bigger and better 2013!"

It starts with **Faith Hill**'s "American Heart." Palmer says, "Its powerful and patriotic message is striking a chord with Country P1s. She's also delivered a magnificent album produced by Byron Gallimore. Faith worked closely with our staff and has engaged us all during the recording and marketing discussions. There are multiple singles Country radio will love.

"**Big & Rich** have roared back with an incredibly raucous and entertaining new studio album, *Hillbilly Jedi*," Palmer continues. "It's already producing one of the highest-charting singles of their career, 'That's Why I Pray.' Q1 will begin with the up-tempo single 'Party Like Cowboyz!', which delivers another classic Big & Rich rockin' country hit.

"**Gloriana** reached a career milestone with their highest-charting single to date and one of the top 5 most played singles of 2012, '(Kissed You) Good Night.' We believe we have what could be an even bigger single with 'Can't Shake You.' They'll be opening for some of the biggest names in the format and headlining in 2013.

"**Jana Kramer** set records for both the most adds out-of-the-box for a debut artist and the highest-charting debut single from a female in the history of **Country Aircheck**," Palmer name-drops (wisely). "We are off and running with her amazing follow-up 'Whiskey.' Jana looks to have another busy year as she continues to visit radio and has some exciting touring news that will be announced soon.

"**Charlie Worsham** is just finishing his radio tour to rave reviews and the add commitments to back it up. First single 'Could It Be' goes for adds Jan. 14. I thank my lucky stars that [label prez] John Esposito and VP/A&R Cris Lacy brought this young man into my life.

"And **Frankie Ballard** is currently in the studio recording new hit music, and I love the few things I've heard. He's coming into his own, developing a very unique sound and will have new music near the end of the quarter."

Way Out West

As noted earlier, Way Out West's **LiveWire**, their single "Lies" and album *Livin'* are being worked in conjunction with InstiGator. WOW's **Mike Severson** also touts new music from **Shawna Russell** expected in early 2013. The single is "Run" and Severson expects it to "push Shawna to the next level." **CAC**



Introducing...

RACHEL FARLEY



"Rachel is seasoned way beyond her years, she is a great singer/songwriter with great stage presence. I think she is a star and that's why I wanted her on my tour."
-JASON ALDEAN

"Rachel Farley is not only my little sister, she is a damn rock star. I've personally watched this girl's talent grow from the most amazing early teen singer, all the way up to a still young, but even more thoroughly talented, and blessed young lady. Her voice is non-negotiably insane, powerful and God-given. Her incredible writing displays her calling for song creation. She keeps true to herself, and writes from experience... leaving you wondering how such a young writer can paint so many pictures with words and amazing melodies. To say her performance... no matter full band or acoustic, is relentless, passionate, and entertaining is an understatement. This young lady is not just another girl with a guitar and some boy-hatin' break-up songs...she's a god-blessed force of nature, worthy of any stage, studio, or writing session you can put her in. Long story short... My little sister is a badass."
-BRANTLEY GILBERT

A photograph of Austin Webb, a man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a blue t-shirt. He is leaning over a motorcycle, looking directly at the camera. His left arm is heavily tattooed. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with green trees and a blue sky.

AUSTIN WEBB

“IT’S ALL GOOD”

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NOW!**

HAPPY FROM
HOLIDAYS



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**WE ARE SO EXCITED ABOUT OUR
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Laida Dreyer

NEW SINGLE COMING IN JANUARY



Blake Shelton

The Business Of
Having A Ball
... Or Three

Arguably the breakout star of the breakout show that's leading NBC-TV's breakout resurgence, Blake Shelton is charting new ground for country artists. Serving as a primetime television personality while leading a music career that's riding seven consecutive No. 1 singles is an unexplored challenge. In fact, just finding time for this interview required navigating tapings of *The Voice* Season 4, shooting live shows for *The Voice* Season 3, work on his NBC Christmas special and recording his next album. Ultimately, the discussion was squeezed into downtime during an appearance on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*. Apparently, Shelton's balancing skills are superb, if last month's CMA Entertainer of the Year honor is any indication. Here, he speaks at length about the business of Blake, Inc.

Country Aircheck: What's your role in your business? Are you the CEO? COO? Just the talent? How involved are you?

Blake Shelton: When it comes to the actual nuts and bolts of things, I try to stay in the loop, but really

THE INTERVIEW

“
I'm not going to spend a minute of my time reading through contracts because that just sucks out the good part of what I do. I take the luxury and time to just have fun with it.
”

try to wait to the last minute to get involved. Anytime there's a contract or offer, if it's something management knows I have no time to do or it's not worth my time, I don't ever hear about that. But the bigger things like whether or not we're going to tour or do a television show, those things they leave up to me. It's my life and those are the things I have to live with, and I have to decide what I can be best at, too.

How deliberate was your move into television over the last few years?

It wasn't planned out. Ironically enough, over the years of being a Nashville country artist, I always had people tell me, 'Hey, you should be on TV. You need to be a comedian or something like that.' But it was never something I pursued or talked about with management or even my agents. When *The Voice* just kind of fell into my lap, I don't know if I'm one of those people who believes in meant-to-be or not, but it sure seemed like that's what it was, because it does feel natural for me to do this.

And thank God for having someone like Narvel [Blackstock, his manager] who has a lot of background in television. Without his input on this, I could have had a good career either way, but because of having him I've had a great career now. Knowing which television opportunities are important and which ones aren't makes a difference. Even different from Reba's television career, I'm kind of in uncharted territory for a country artist. Every decision is something we all have to sit down and think about for a long time.

How important was Twitter in developing or offering a platform for Blake the personality?

Way more important than people I'm associated with even want to acknowledge. I was told many times, "You've got to get off Twitter. You're saying things that are just ... you're destroying your career ... what's wrong with you ... you sound crazy." Really? Because I'm just having fun. I'm not saying anything on Twitter that y'all don't hear me saying in the office when we're in here bullshitting.

I finally got to the point where I just decided, man, if I can't be this guy on Twitter then what has happened to country music or entertainment,





THE INTERVIEW

even? If it's about songs, then okay. But if it's about artists and people getting to know them, like I thought country music was supposed to be about, then I'm going to get on here and talk about the fact that I just went deer hunting. Or that I'm drunk. Or make jokes. I want to have a personality. The last thing I want to do is not offend somebody.

How do you matter if you don't stand for something? You're not contributing anything if you're afraid all the time that you're going to offend someone. For every person I offend for saying I deer hunt, I gain another person's respect. And I'm trying to gain respect, not just be middle-of-the-road.

We can go as far back as your CRS New Faces video and some of the subsequent clips you've done in terms of this evolution or realization over the years that there was a quality – can I call it smart-ass, for lack of a better term? Does that at some point become a strategy to pursue that aspect of your career?

I just think I can't help it. And it's an asset more than it is a liability. I want people to remember me. If I was still trying to break in as an artist in this business, that's what I would be trying to figure out a way to do. For me, being

middle America and those types of values. I'm a country artist first and just happen to be on television doing it.

How many scenarios did you plan for in terms of, if it's not a hit, if it just goes a season or two and that's it, or if it ends up being as big as it's been?

We never really thought about it blowing up huge. Our thoughts were, "What if we start this show – it kind of sounds ridiculous anyway with these chairs and hitting buttons – and it's a flop?" We decided it's still worth it because it's television. Especially being a country artist, we just don't get that many opportunities. If two-million people watch and they cancel it, that's two-million people who probably never heard of me anyway. It's no different than being on an episode of a talk show.

It's not like I moved to L.A. to try to be an actor. That wasn't my goal, so anything that happens along these lines just falls out of the sky. It's crazy not to jump at these opportunities. I didn't spend a bunch of time trying to get there, and if I fail as a television personality, well fine. First, I'm a country singer. So I don't care. Now that it's taken off big, I'm seeing opportunities that wouldn't have been here for me. You realize, I've got this relationship with NBC and I've got a Christmas album coming up. I know

careers as music did because, I think, they were just going with the flow and not being afraid. That's the worst thing you can do in this business. If you're brave enough to make that move to Nashville, why would you want to be a chicken-shit now and not swing for the fence or stand for something? For the life of me, I'll never understand how you can be an artist but not want people to understand who you are as a person. Actually, let me just say that I actually hope they never do. I'd like to be the only one.

What are the logistics now? How do you balance recording, taping, live shows, touring?

We're at the mercy of NBC when we look long-term. And I feel sorry for them trying to put together four different artists' schedules to get us all together at one time for a TV show. We just have to look at possible scenarios. People think I don't tour at all, which isn't true. We toured arenas from January to April. And this summer I hit every festival and fair that would have me. We played a lot of shows this year. The most important thing is that nothing overlaps. That's where I can't take it, and I learned that the hard way.

The very first season of *The Voice* just kind of happened how it happened, and none of us were prepared. I had already signed-on and was happy to be on tour with Brad Paisley that summer. Next thing I know I'm finishing up a live episode of *The Voice* and hauling ass to get on a jet to get to a concert somewhere, sometimes that night. And it's like, okay, this isn't making sense. Not only is it not fun, but this is where people get into real bad habits. I can understand now how that happens to some people. We decided we were going to have to do these in separate segments, even if it means we miss a couple weeks here and there because we're not totally sure about schedules. It's still worth it not to have them overlap.

So is there a lot of push and pull with the network, the label, your agents?

Absolutely. And rightfully so. We get a lot of pressure from Warner Bros. to get out there and tour, and they're right to expect that. So I try to do as much of it as I can. But they also understand the value of this television show and how it's, basically, changed the amount of records I sell. It all works together, but you have to manage it.

Does the scrutiny that comes with the TV gig give the network more influence in your decision process? Does it ever temper you on Twitter?

They really don't, and I don't know that I could do this with any other network. NBC really wants me to just be Blake. For some reason, when they signed on with me, they signed on with *me*. And I'm grateful. It's worked out for both of us. I've never heard a peep out of them about my Twitter account, because even if I say something controversial it goes back to that saying that there's no such thing as bad publicity. It's just my mouth. I'm not trying to hurt anybody. They let us get away with a lot, and

“ More than anything, I worry about losing my spot in country music because that is easily the most important thing in the world to me when it comes to my career. ”

a smart-ass, or quick witted – I read that about myself, but I'm not sure I'm that quick – if those are things I can do naturally that are valuable, why wouldn't I use them?

So it's not calculated, it's more a reflex than anything else. The fact that I'm not afraid to be myself is just out there now that we have Twitter and I'm on TV. I'm not going to take shit from anybody and I'm going to give it right back to them. And I expect them to do the same to me. We're adults and we're having fun. I'm having a ball and don't take myself seriously at all. And I'm not afraid to express that.

What are the decisions you made as you looked at getting deeper involved with television, whether it was co hosting the ACMs, doing NBC's Clash Of The Choirs or getting into The Voice? What are the things you worried about?

More than anything, I worry about losing my spot in country music because that is easily the most important thing in the world to me when it comes to my career. And when it comes to my personal life, even. God-dang-it, country music is my heart. That's always the thing that has been in the back of my mind. Am I spending too much time with television? But the CMAs this year shook me up a little bit with the Entertainer award.

What we envisioned early-on with this was that I would still be a country artist but be seen by a lot more people. Instead of doing 12-month tours I'd doing six-month tours, but be in people's living rooms two nights a week every week or more. When Entertainer happened it was like, "Oh, my gosh, we shouldn't be afraid to keep going down this road!" Just because nobody else is doing it this way doesn't mean it's wrong. That's what we're figuring out, more than anything.

My career is kind of an oddity, but I think deep down people know I'm an expression of the country lifestyle,

I've got their attention a little bit, maybe they'll take a meeting and talk about doing a special on TV. That's how that stuff happens.

Now that you're deep in it, what didn't you know back then that you wish you'd anticipated?

The biggest surprise to me, in representing myself in a way that's true to who I am, is when corporations want to be involved with me. Whether it's JCPenney, Samsung or other cool things I've gotten to do with corporate America. I don't have any business doing that. But through the show and a connection I've made with the audience out there, I've been lucky enough to have them come to me and ask me to introduce their new telephone product, or be the voice of a charity project through JCPenney. Me? Really?

You told us for our CRS issue that you thought Glen Campbell was the template in terms of balancing TV with being a current country artist. How do you think you're measuring up?

I don't know. It's definitely a different day and time. It would be like comparing a NASCAR driver from 30-years ago with someone from today. It's a different game altogether. The heart is the same. I know Glen could do all kinds of things and loved doing it. I don't know that I can do all kinds of things, but I'm loving everything I'm getting to do right now. What's important to me is what it shows to people who are tuning into *The Voice* or watching the Christmas special. I want them to say, "That that guy is absolutely having the time of his life." If nothing else, I want that to come across.

I think that came across with Glen, Dean Martin and people like that who were singers, artists and just personalities. Personality carried them as far in their

they probably think the show wouldn't be as interesting if they tried to tamp us down.

How does being CEO of a TV career differ from when you were just CEO of a country singer's career?

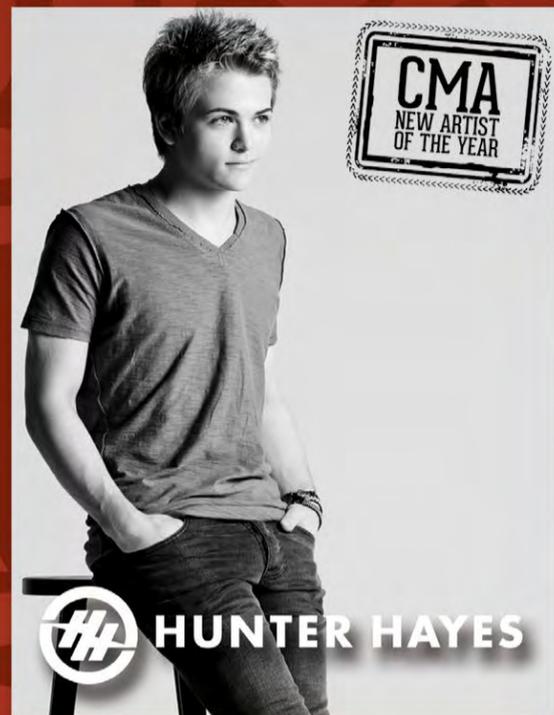
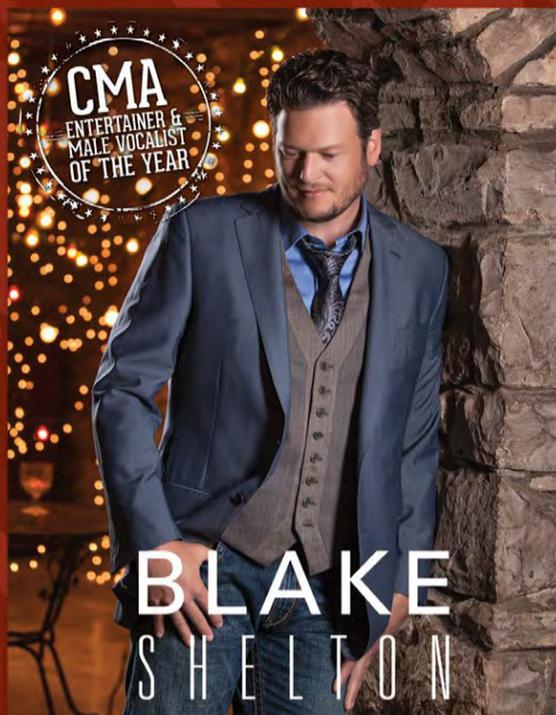
It doesn't, really. All that really changes is simple things like getting out of the house and going somewhere. My profile is just way up there. As a CEO, I just get out there and do my job. I count on having good, smart people around me making good decisions that put me in the right situations. And they have faith in me to let me go for a couple hours, whether it's onstage or in front of a camera, that I'm going to be the guy who gets us the next gig down the road. That's my job. I'm supposed to be good at connecting with people. I'm not going to spend a minute more of my time reading through contracts because that just sucks out the good part of what I do. Now that I'm at this level, I take the luxury and time to just have fun with it. Because I'm doing that, it's feeding the fire even more. It allows me to just be me.

Do you see yourself as an inside advocate for country music with the network? For instance, getting NBC to go for the Christmas special?

Sure I do. In fact, if I have one responsibility, it's to show the world that, yeah, we're country and we sound like it, but we're smart people. Nothing frustrates me more than the stereotype attached to country artists. I listened to a guy interviewing Kenny Rogers on NPR and got so pissed off because he kept referring to him as a "country and western artist." I wanted to go, "Man, you're the one who doesn't belong on the radio if you're not any better at your job than that. You need to do your homework."

We represent ourselves pretty well. We're up to speed on what's going on in the world. We can be on TV, have

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fun and not take ourselves too seriously. We're not going to be a pain in the ass to the network. We're going to show up on time and work. This is what we do and we're good at it. When the next guy comes along, I want the network to go, "I worked with Blake Shelton and he was always on

THE INTERVIEW

time, he wasn't a diva, he didn't throw fits. He just did his job and got out of the way." That's the legacy I'd like to leave behind because I want to see a lot more country artists get the shot. I'm tickled to death to see Keith Urban on *American Idol*. Maybe, just maybe, they saw the success of *The Voice* with a country artist and think they can piece that together, too. Maybe I had something to do with it, maybe not. But either way, it's exciting that it's happening.

You're working on an album now. How has that process been going?

My part is done, so now we're all sitting around staring at [producer/label exec] Scott Hendricks waiting for him to get his part done. Now that Tree [Paine, his publicist] is out of the room, I'll tell you that we'll have a single sometime in January. The album will come a couple three months after that. I don't know if they have an exact date. I'm pumped about it because I thought *Red River Blue* was a good as I could do, and I honestly think we beat it. And I don't know how.

One thing that has happened – and it happened during *Red River Blue*, as well – is a benefit of being busy. Not having as much time on the road to listen to songs over and over again, and completely overthink them – which I've been guilty of in the past – has helped. I'd think, "Well,



“ I want the network to go, 'I worked with Blake Shelton and he was always on time, he wasn't a diva, he didn't throw fits. He just did his job and got out of the way.' That's the legacy I'd like to leave behind because I want to see a lot more country artists get the shot. ”

I don't know if I should sing this song about my grandpa because he's dead." That's kind of dumb to think like that, but if I've got enough time, I damn sure will. So with the last album and now this one, if I love a song in the first two or three times, I just cut that damn thing.

That's how we ended up cutting "Honeybee." That's not brain surgery, it's just a fun, feel-good song. Same thing with "God Gave Me You." Even though it hit me like it did the first time I heard it, it would have been real easy for me to question whether it made sense to do a Contemporary Christian song. People might say I'm a sellout. So not having the time I used to have to overthink some of these songs has actually worked out.

How important is touring when you can get in millions of living rooms every night and, conversely, do you worry it goes someone less incentive to see your show?

I do worry about that, and I did. But one of the things that makes me not worry so much is seeing Adam [Levine] put together this new tour for Maroon 5 and the

whole thing sold out in, like, a day. So being in people's living rooms isn't hurting. And it's not like those people who watch the show are really getting to experience our music. Someone might sit at home wishing Adam would sing "This Love" or one of their other hits, but that's not what the show is about. People still have to come out to a show to experience what we do in terms of music.

It's always tough for actors or people with success in another area to add a country career because they're doing it part-time versus so many who are working overtime. Being pulled in the other direction, coming from country into a television career, are there competitive issues that you worry about, or does being country's face on television compensate for that?

Oh, it definitely does. You know, getting the chance to introduce a new song on national television is a pretty big deal. The network will come and ask if we want to play "Honeybee" on the show, and we've gotten to do that with "Over" and some others, too. You know, there were

a lot of times I didn't have the chance to play a song on national TV – like on an awards show performance, which I couldn't get for a long time.

Plus, I'm on national television just being myself. I didn't come out here to try to get a job as a character in a sitcom. We're on this show being who we are as musical people, so when people watch, they're seeing us do what we do. There isn't that disconnect between who we are on the show and who we are in our other careers.

You mentioned backstage at the CMAs your willingness to try things, even if you don't know if they'll work. And you cited the "Six Pak" projects. What did that experience teach you?

I don't know that it actually taught us anything other than that if you do something new, you'll get a hell of a lot of publicity for it. From that standpoint alone it was probably worth it. But I actually think it goes back to the song, me and Trace [Adkins] doing "Hillbilly Bone." If you'd put those two Six Paks together and had "Bone" as the first single, it probably would have accomplished the same thing.

In your acceptance speech for Entertainer, you referenced some of the other nominees, a couple of whom are selling out stadiums. Do you feel you're, in some way, re-writing the criteria for that award?

I guess I already have, and I'm sure some people aren't really happy about it. I'm sure there were several people after that was announced who were not exactly pleased. But there are a lot of different ways to reach people. And I guess we'll find out next year whether people agree with this new definition. Is being Entertainer something that should focus on being out there on the road all year, or should we take all these other ways of reaching people into consideration? So at next year's show I guess we'll see what people think about all that.

I know for me, it sure feels different than it ever did before. You realize how much something like *The Voice* puts you out there in ways nothing else really can. Like, walking into a supermarket and seeing a tabloid with my picture on it. And Miranda's picture on it. And a headline that says we're pregnant. And I know that's not true and I'm like, "Where are they getting this stuff?" I'm realizing that I'm now in this world where they do that kind of stuff to people, which is really kind of exciting because now I'm thinking about how we can use this to say something crazy and have some fun with it. Like, why can't they say I have three balls?

And on that note ... now that you're in that world, having that platform of *The Voice* and forging this new path, where do you go next?

Not having really calculated getting here, I think you just stay the course and see where it takes you. Whatever it ends up being, I think TV is going to be in my future for a while anyway. And it's working for me. Man, this is the first time that things have really been clicking consistently for me. I've been lucky all along, but this is the first time that things have really been clicking. I didn't plan on it happening like this and neither did anyone else in my camp. We knew where we wanted to get and were lucky enough to make the right decisions along the way to get us here. But a lot of it just fell in my lap, too, to be honest. **CAC**

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