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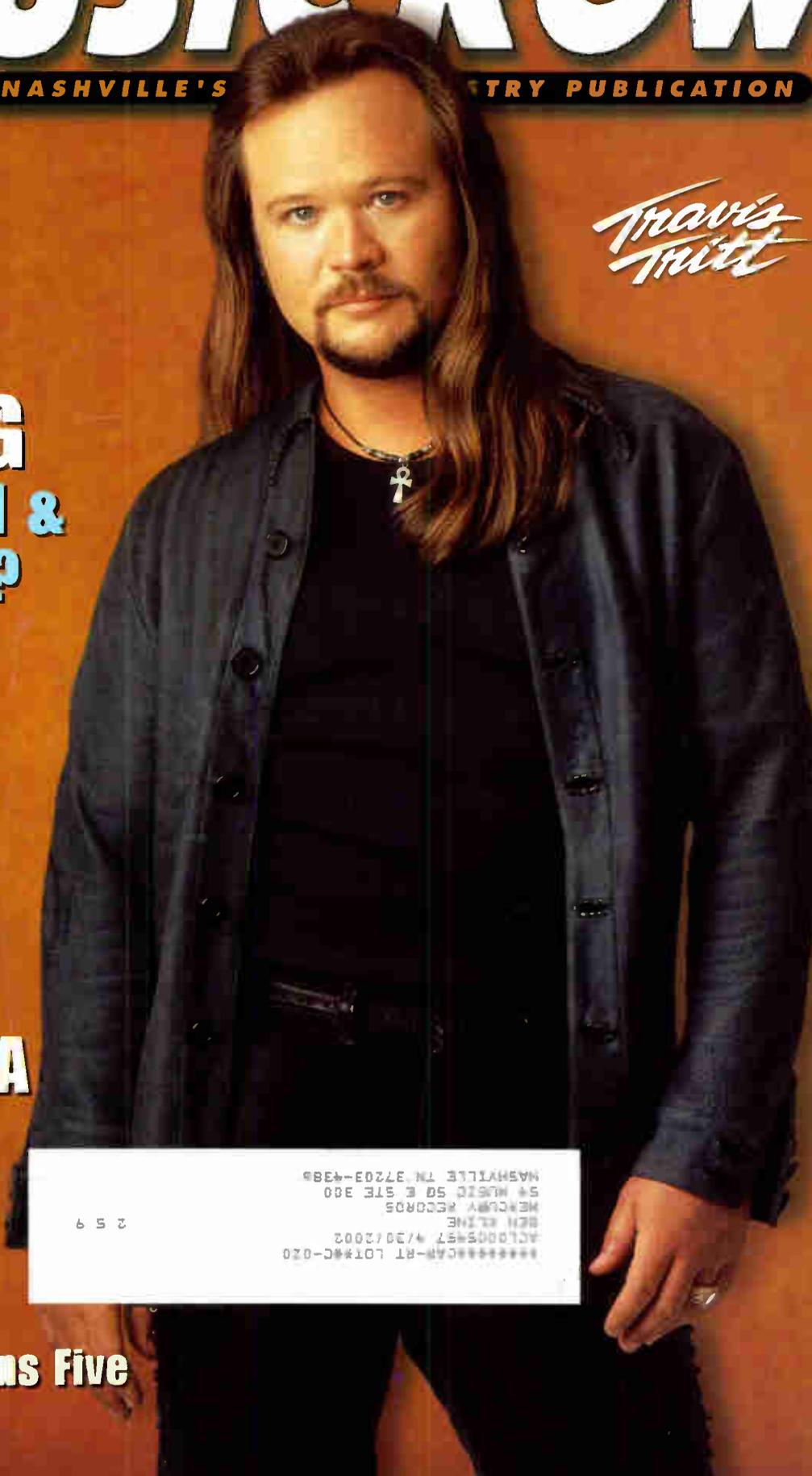
Travis Tritt

**INSIDE
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Overpriced &
Undersold?

**BRIDGING
THE GAP**
Home Studio
How-to

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One-on-One
with J.D. May

Plus:
Rocketown Turns Five
Hank Revealed



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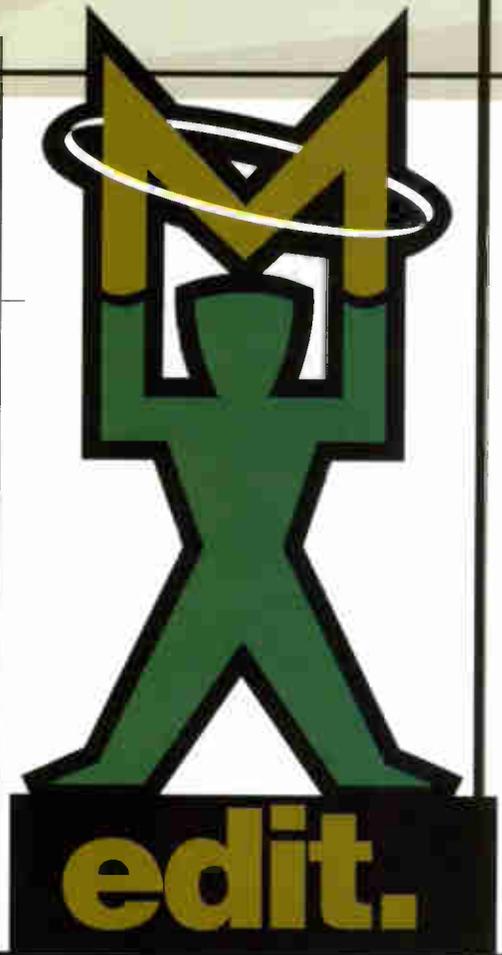
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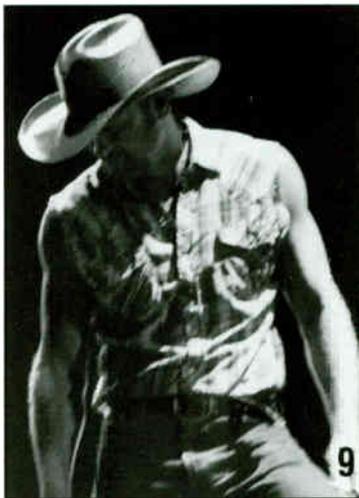
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On the Cover Travis Tritt

Label: Columbia
Current Single: "Love of a Woman"
Current Album: *Down The Road I Go*
Current Video: "Love of a Woman," which features his wife.
Current Producers: Travis Tritt, Billy Joe Walker Jr.
Hometown: Hiram, Ga.
Management: (Gary) Falcon/Goodman Management
Booking: Monterey Artists
Recent Hits: "Best of Intentions" and "Great Day To Be Alive"
Awards: Two Grammys, three CMAs
RIAA Certs To Date: Four double platinum, one multi-platinum, and three platinum albums
Special TV/Film Appearances: *Cowboy Way* ('95); *Touched By An Angel* ('99)
Birthdate: February 9
Interesting Facts: Performed at two Super Bowl half-time shows.
Outside Interests: Scuba diving and riding Harleys
Musical Influences: Waylon Jennings, Ray Charles, Allman Bros., George Jones

Down The Road I Go marks Travis Tritt's first album for Columbia Records and his first project since taking a self-imposed two-year recording hiatus. Tritt used the break to spend time with family and recharge his batteries as a singer, performer and songwriter. The current album showcases his writing on seven of the album's cuts, two of which are co-writes with Charlie Daniels. "He invited me over to his house in North Tennessee," Tritt says of Daniels. "We wrote together for two days and it was the most gratifying experience." The resulting songs were "If The Fall Don't Kill You" and "Southbound Train."

During his career, Tritt has scored 11 No. 1 singles and sold more than 17 million albums. His current single, "Love of a Woman," is already Top 30 and climbing.



MUSIC ROW
COUNTRY MUSIC PUBLICATIONS

David M. Ross
Publisher/Editor
ross@musicrow.com

♦♦
Susana Ross
Administrator
s.ross@musicrow.com

Chuck Aly
GM Operations
c.alymusicrow.com

♦♦
Eileen Shannon
Receptionist
eileen@musicrow.com

Richard D. McVey II
Managing Editor
mcevey@musicrow.com

♦♦
Robert K. Oermann
Single Reviews

Christie King
Art Director/Prod. Mgr.
christie@musicrow.com

♦♦
Tracy Jeter
Intern

John Hood
Senior Writer
hood@musicrow.com

♦♦
O'Neil Hagaman, Financial
Alan Mayor, Photography

Contributing Writers: Lisa Berg, Larry Wayne Clark, John Norris, David Smalls, Ron Young

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Consortium Forms; Squint Restructures; TBA Acquires

NEWS



Kraski

KRASKI UPPED AT SONY—Mike Kraski has been promoted to Executive VP/GM, Sony Music Nashville and will report directly to President/CEO Allen Butler. In addition to supervising the company's Sales, Marketing and Creative

Service Departments, Kraski will now assist with the day-to-day operation of the Nashville division. Kraski began his affiliation with Sony 26 years ago while attending Point Park College in Pittsburgh. Graduating cum laude with a journalism degree, he soon was promoted to Sales Representative and later moved to Nashville in 1987 as VP of Sales. Sony Nashville includes the Epic, Columbia, Lucky Dog and Monument labels and has recently had success breaking artists such as the Dixie Chicks, Montgomery Gentry and Billy Gilman.



Johnson

CCMA ON CMT—The 2001 Canadian Country Music Awards will broadcast live from Calgary on both CBC in Canada and CMT in the U.S. on Sept. 10. Celebrating its 25th Anniversary, the two-hour gala will feature multiple hosts and be produced by Balmur Corus Music. Arista's Carolyn Dawn Johnson is the early frontrunner receiving 10 award nominations including Album, Female Artist, Fan's Choice and Single for "Complicated." Other Canadian artists with multiple nominations include Terri Clark (6), Jason McCoy (5) and Lisa Brokoff (5).

CONSORTIUM FORMS—Bernard Porter, Mike Martinovich, Stan Moress and Al Schiltz



Porter

have joined forces to form The Consortium, an artist management collective. Each manager in the new group will maintain their existing clients, but future signings will be structured on a shared basis. The new organization is expected to set up offices later this fall.



Martinovich

SQUINT RESTRUCTURES—Squint Records will restructure to take advantage of resources at its parent company Word Records. Squint President Steve Taylor will continue to handle the label's A&R duties in conjunction with Word Records and Squint's day-to-day marketing activities will also fall under the Word domain. Squint artists include **Sixpence None The Richer, L.A. Symphony, PFR and Waterdeep.**



Moress



Schiltz

TBA ACQUIRES ALLIANCE—TBA Entertainment Corp. announced the acquisition of Atlanta-based Alliance Artists Ltd. for an undisclosed amount. **Charlie Brusco**, President of Alliance Artists, will join TBA as Executive VP. In this role, Brusco will continue to manage his long-time management clients **Styx, Survivor, Joe Stark Band** and others, and

will assume broader corporate responsibilities at TBA. All current Alliance Artists staff will become employees of TBA and work in TBA's Atlanta office.

XM RELEASE SCHEDULE—XM Satellite Radio announced plans for a Sept. 12 "soft rollout" of its services in San Diego and Dallas. XM said the service should be available nationwide by early November. The company also announced the subscription price of the service would be \$9.99 a month. XM will launch its service with a \$100 million advertising campaign with \$45 million concentrated in the fourth quarter of this year. The multi-faceted effort, anchored by television spots, will also include radio, magazine, newspaper, direct mail, outdoor and online marketing efforts. XM has been working for a year with TBWA/Chiat/Day, the agency renowned for its Apple and Sony Playstation launches.

IBMA WEEK ANNOUNCED—The worldwide bluegrass music community will gather in Louisville, Ky., Oct. 1-7 for The International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) World of Bluegrass Week. More than 20,000 people from all over the U.S. and a dozen foreign countries are expected to gather for the seven-day convention and festival. The event features the IBMA Trade Show (Oct. 1-4), the International Bluegrass Music Awards Show (Oct. 4) and Bluegrass Fan Fest (Oct. 5-7) which features more than 40 prominent bluegrass performers including **Ricky Skaggs, The Del McCoury Band, IIIrd Tyme Out, Rhonda Vincent and Larry Cordle & Lonesome Standard Time.** For more info visit www.ibma.org. **MR**

MUSICAL CHAIRS



Roads

Steven Roads has been named Chairman of the Board of Tappedinto.com. Roads founded the company in 1996 while practicing entertainment law in Nashville. He oversaw operations of the company as CEO until its acquisition earlier this year by Sasktel International out of Regina, Canada... Warner Bros. Nashville announced the appointment of **Chris Palmer** to GM/Senior VP of Marketing. Most recently, Palmer served as Sr. VP of Marketing Nashville at the label's office in Burbank, Calif... Sony Music Nashville announced the promotion of **Dale Libby** to Senior VP, Sales. Libby was formerly VP Sales... Emergent Music Marketing announced **Anne**

Weaver will join the company as VP of Promotion. Weaver has a 17-year career in the music industry that includes promotion positions at RCA, Arista, Mercury (VP Promotion) and Dreamcatcher



Palmer



Libby

(National Director of Promotion)... **Sherry Bond** has been named Executive Director of the Western Music Association (WMA)... Napster has named **Konrad Hilbers** as its new CEO. Hilbers, former Chief Administrative Officer of Bertelsmann's music division, takes the place of interim CEO **Hank Barry**... Playground Writer's Group has announced the addition of **Sam B. Lowe** as Director of Publishing. Lowe previously worked for BMI... **Tara Austin** has been promoted

to Executive Assistant at Warner/Chappell Music. She was formerly A&R Assistant for the company... **Vanessa Parker-Davis** has joined Capitol Records as Senior Director of Media and



Lowe



Parker-Davis

Public Relations. She previously worked at Atlantic Records and Arista Records... **Danielle Taylor** has been promoted to the position of Manager/Finance for Dreamcatcher Entertainment. Taylor was previously Office Administrator for the company... **B.C. Rogers III**, formerly of Barbara Orbison Productions, has joined the team at Rick Alter Management... **Suzanne Prokasy** has been named Senior VP at Barbara Orbison Productions and Still Working Music. **MR**

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

Fast becoming an industry cliché, the vote-seeking artist mailer is spreading. Traditionally, the glossy hype pieces have arrived in conjunction with the start of final balloting, but this CMA Awards season we've seen a deluge of materials during the nominating process.

DreamWorks' Wayne Halper attributes much of the expansion to story-building. "In this day and age, getting into the final five is as much a story as winning." He doesn't discount the notion that the phenomenon is tied to performances. "Unless you're one of the five, you have practically no hope of getting a performance. While a bad performance doesn't hurt significantly, a good one can kick start a big career move. Toby

Keith's 2000 ACM performance was a catalyst for an explosion in sales and recognition." And you can never have too many of those...

—Chuck Aly

HANK REVEALED

While Hiram Williams needs no introduction to readers of this publication, such was not the case with the literary community. It took Kira Florita and Colin Escott two years to find a publisher for their book concept, *Hank Williams: Snapshots From The Lost Highway*. "A lot of people in the book world don't know who Hank Williams is," Florita says. "Plus, there was the southern, country stigma to overcome." The authors' ultimate success looks to be a boon for more than Hank neophytes, however.

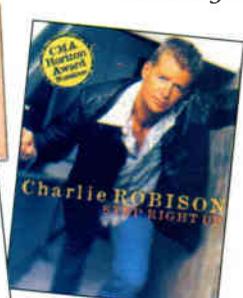
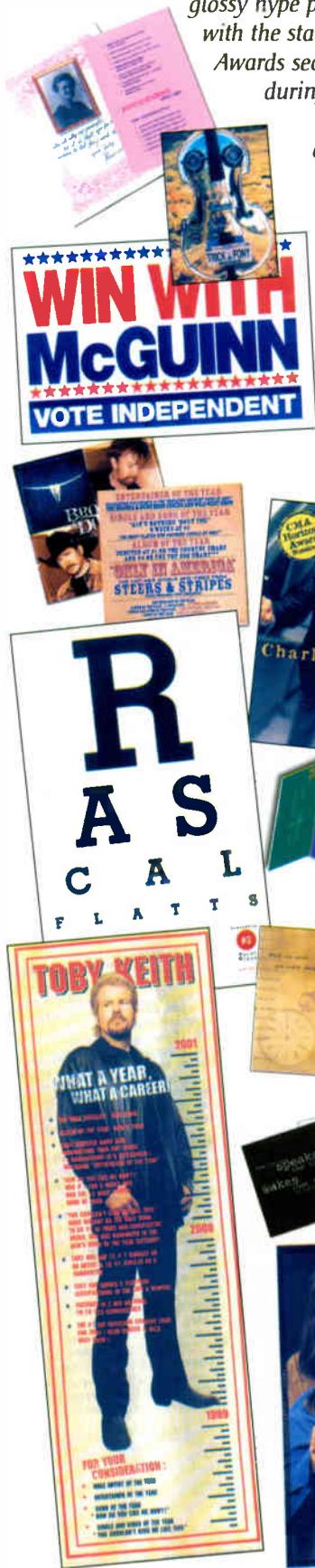
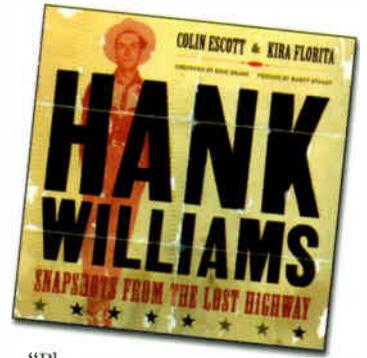
The genesis of the project came during the authors' work co-producing, with the CME, *The Complete Hank Williams* boxed set for Mercury. As they were completing the package, Florita and Escott realized how much unseen material they had amassed and would be unable to use. The project also opened some doors to Williams family collections that yielded even more discoveries. Thus, the book idea was born.

Hank Williams contains handwritten lyrics to 30 unpublished, unrecorded songs, including those to his last composition, "Then Came That Fateful Day," written on the scrap of paper that fell from his hand in the backseat of the car in which he died. Also included are more than 150 never-before-seen photographs, his birth certificate, private correspondence with family and business associates, and the telegram from Hank's mother to his sister Irene that reads, "Come at once. Hank is Dead." "We had trouble narrowing it down," Florita says of the wealth of information. "That was the hardest part."

Even for individuals as deeply knowledgeable about him as the authors, the experience was revelatory. For Florita, one of the most moving artifacts was a scrawled lyric. "'I Wish I Had A Dad' brought a tear to my eye and still does," she says. "It's not just the words themselves—though that would be enough—but the way they're written."

While this coffee table book is sure to appeal to the growing numbers of fans who have recently discovered Hank Williams' legacy, it aims to do much more. "No matter how familiar you are with Hank and his music," Florita says, "you'll feel like you know him better."

—Chuck Aly



The Buzz

AMA Conference Edition

We can't wait to see Robert Earl Keen running around in a Poobah hat throwing water balloons.

- R&R**—Na-na, na-na-na-na, hey hey hey...
- Clear Channel**—We like you. We really like you. And if you believe that...
- JamSync's Elvis Room**—Session includes a cape, fried PB&J sandwich & a hunka, hunka burning love.
- Urban Cowboy: The Musical**—Who did this? Who? And they call Chuck a big dufus.
- CCMA**—Is it just us, or are there an awful lot of Canadians up for awards this year?

Rockin' Into The Future



In 1996 Grammy-winning gospel artist Michael W. Smith and Reunion Records A&R executive Don Donahue decided to start an independent label. Rocketown Records was born out of the two men's desire to build a creative community that nurtured young talent.

"I've always wanted to invest in younger artists," says Smith. "If I can use my experience to benefit younger artists, I'm all for it. If there is one thing I do know it's the music business because I've been in it for 20 years."

Donahue says there are advantages to being associated with a large corporation, but that he was ready for a change. "It was turning more into money than it was artistry and ministry. Michael and I both had the desire to do something small and focused. He and Amy Grant both blossomed out of a small system. We made no bones about the fact that we were going to emulate the early days of Reunion."

Rocketown had an easier launch than most labels because of Smith's success and high visibility in the Christian marketplace. "We didn't have some of the normal challenges that an independent label faces because Michael's name carries a lot of good will in the community," says Donahue. "A lot of people want to do business with Michael, so we found a distribution deal fairly easily."

Finding the label's first act turned out to be a little more difficult. "When we launched the label we felt that it would be a youth oriented label, pretty progressive like most independent labels are," says Donahue. "We thought we'd be pushing the envelope musically. Instead we decided to make a record with Chris Rice. It was the exact opposite of what we thought we'd be doing. All of a sudden we sign a guy that sounds like James Taylor."

That turned out to be fortuitous. Donahue and Smith made Rice's first project, *Deep Enough To Dream*, on the cheap and conservatively hoped to sell 20,000 albums. To date the album has sold over 300,000 units and their flagship artist has gone on to sell over 750,000 discs for the label.

Donahue attributes the label's ongoing success to two things—finding great artists and being fiscally responsible. "What we've done well is to spend smart money proportionate to what we can sell. Our success is more about good financial management than anything else."

Having already survived longer than most start-up labels, Rocketown isn't about to rest on its laurels. "We're coming to a time when we need to make a significant step forward," says Donahue. "As much as I talk about making conservative financial moves, there's going to be a time when the right artist and the right market comes along to warrant a bigger push than we've ever done. That's not on the horizon right now, but some of the acts like Plus One and Stacie Orrico have geared up and done that and it has really worked for them. I can see us making a move like that when the time is right."

So, has the journey been satisfying? For Donahue the answer is yes. "My whole goal of getting in this was to improve the sound, the respectability and the reach of Christian music. Whatever genre you're in whether it's country, pop or Christian, the lines are drawn pretty firm. We've been able to push the lines out maybe 10 percent and I'm happy with that, but we're going to keep trying to stretch those lines."

—John Hood



Don Donahue



Michael W. Smith

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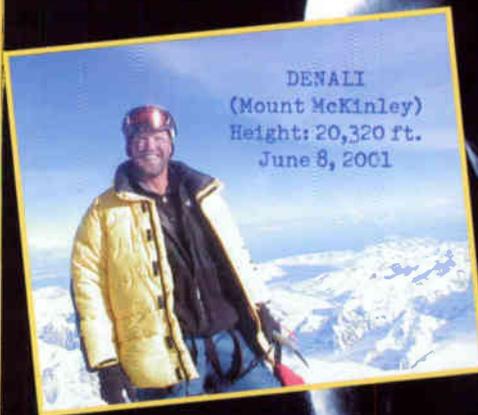
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www.weather.com

I'm terrified of storms, so I check for any severe weather on the horizon locally or in cities that I'm planning to visit.

www.eonline.com

I like to check out all the entertainment news.

www.ivillage.com

This site focuses on issues of importance to women. Also has top news and provides access to a variety of subjects, including books, career, fitness, food, pets, travel and music.

www.fluffychicken.com/mandy/kasey/main.html

Client Kasey Chambers' fan site.

www.countrymusic.asn.au

Portal to the entire Australian country industry. Extraordinarily well-done site.

www.drudgereport.com

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www.ifco.org/index.html

The Johnson gals and the venerable Tri-Son News make a graceful jump into cyberspace.

www.pbc-country-books.com/main.html

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NOISE *A look at Nashville's hottest music*
MAKERS



1. **"Angry All The Time"** McGraw's latest stampedes up the chart. Other singles scatter like bi-peds in Pamplona.
2. **"Austin"** Blake Shelton scores a multi-week No. 1 single. The album explodes with 34k units scanned.
3. **Declaration** Steven Curtis Chapman's latest gets an A from *MR*'s Larry Wayne Clark. "Some of Music Row's most laudable music has nothing to do with country." (See page 27.)
4. **Elizabeth Cook** Atlantic singer/songwriter has RKO raving, "This woman is the future of country music." (See page 17.)
5. **R&R** "They shook hands with the devil, and now the devil has handcuffed them." (musicrow.com)
6. **Soundtracks** *O Brother* and *Coyote Ugly* continue to dominate the sales charts.
7. **Jameson Clark** Oermann says of first single, "If this is a sample of what this boy is up to, BRING IT ON." (@MusicRow 81)

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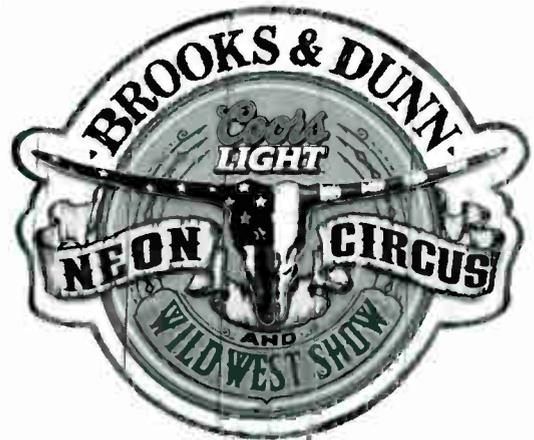
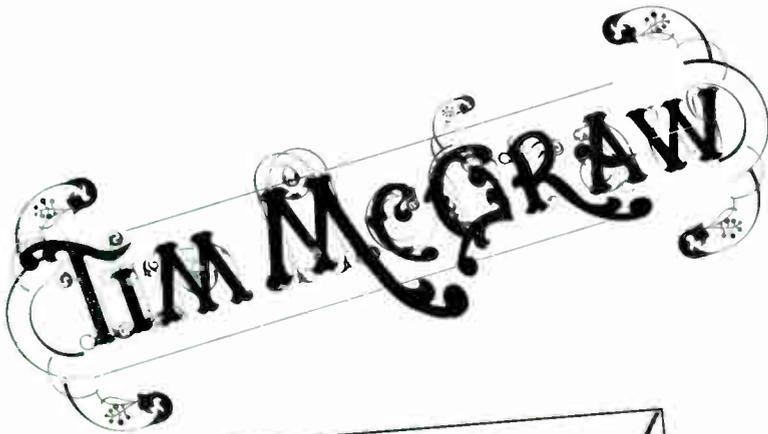
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Overpriced & Undersold?

by Richard McVey II



the downturn in the U.S. economy may be tightening consumers' grip on entertainment dollars. While headlines aren't screaming out the demise of the touring industry, there has been a 16% decline in total tickets sold among the Top 50 tours at mid-year 2001 compared to the previous year. According to figures compiled by *Pollstar*, total tickets sold have dropped from approximately 12.9 million to 10.8 million. Another interesting mid-year comparison reveals that average ticket prices have risen from \$44.80 to \$46.69. The two stats raise serious questions about whether the industry is overpricing tickets or overestimating its product

“They used to be \$3.50-\$4 and now it can be as high as \$10 over and above the cost of your ticket.”

“Last year a lot of acts—not so much country—were charging outlandish prices,” says Bob Allen of *Amusement Business* (AB). “This year, too. Ticket price is something everybody’s talking about.”

Some average ticket prices among non-country tours include \$76 for U2, \$100 for Elton John/Billy Joel, and \$62 for Eric Clapton, while country shows like Brooks & Dunn’s Neon Circus & Wild West Show charged an average of \$31, the George Strait Country Music Festival was \$33 and Tim McGraw came in at \$41. A prime seat, however, to the Girls’ Night Out Tour, according to AB boxscores, would have run \$115 for their July 15 show at L.A.’s Staples Center.

CAA’s Rod Essig says to also look at surcharges. “They used to be \$3.50-\$4 and now it can be as high as \$10 over and above the cost of your ticket. The artist tickets have stayed much the same. I don’t think we can go much higher than we are.”

To purchase a seat through Ticketmaster to Trisha Yearwood’s September 4 show in San Diego sees a \$56 ticket increase to \$65. The increase includes \$6.25 for a “convenience charge” and \$2.75 as a “handling charge.” To order tickets online at www.tickets.com, look to pay \$9.75 in additional fees for a \$49 ticket to see Yearwood in Kelseyville, Calif.

The rising cost of tickets is obviously hitting consumer’s wallets. Brian O’Connell, President of Clear Channel Entertainment Nashville, offers this scenario. “I’m going to see Joe Superstar and the tickets are \$40 each. My wife and I want to go. There’s \$80 in tickets, plus maybe \$25 for a babysitter. Throw in dinner and \$6 beers (at the venue), it turns into a couple hundred dollars. It adds up quick. If you’re booking a show you’ve got to take all those other things into consideration. Do a deal out on the lawn where kids get in for free.

“Be smart,” he adds. “Work with managers and agents. Make a deal that makes sense. If guarantees get too high, then ticket prices get too high. If that happens the consumer says, ‘Do I go to *Jurassic Park III* or Joe Superstar’s show?’ Well, one’s \$7.50 and one is \$50. That’s not much of a decision to make.”

With this in mind, country artists, agents and promoters are working harder than ever to bring fans to shows with more performers and festival-type hoopla. A prime example is this year’s surprise tour, the Brooks & Dunn Neon Circus & Wild West Show. Comprised of Brooks & Dunn, Toby Keith, Montgomery Gentry and Keith Urban, the tour topped both *Pollstar* and AB’s mid-year Top Country concerts, despite only notching two sell-outs in 28 shows. The tour was primarily the creation of the tour’s namesakes and manager Clarence Spalding.

“It’s not a new idea,” explains Spalding of TBA Entertainment Corporation. “It’s something we’ve wanted to do for four years. The cost of putting it on was a big issue. We’re carrying an entire bus of street performers. Then another full truck of midway stuff—mechanical bulls, a Honky-Tonk Hall of Fame hosted by an Elvis impersonator.

When you start carrying all of this, everybody has to get paid and that adds to the expense. This year, we decided to bite the bullet.” He says the final headcount for the tour was 123 people.

Playing amphitheaters primarily, the tour seems to be indicative of the type of multi-artist festival show that’s taking hold among tour organizers throughout the country market. With this type of undertaking comes a lot of trial and error. For the Neon Circus Tour, an all-day event, venue doors opened at 3 p.m. with the final performance ending around 10:45 p.m. Spalding admits they were taken off guard at their first performance. “In Birmingham, 3,000 people were lined up to get in,” he says. “That’s



Carolyn Dawn Johnson



Jamie O'Neal, Carolyn Dawn Johnson, Reba, Martina McBride & Sara Evans

your best dream and worst nightmare at the same time. You're saying, 'What are we going to do with all these people for three hours (until the music starts). We thought people would trickle in. So we changed some things around. Next year, as opposed to four on the main stage, there could be five or six.'

The tour appears to have hit its mark with venue capacity's hovering around 70%. The average gross at mid-year for the tour was \$296,667 with an average of 9,542 tickets sold, according to *Pollstar*.

If appearances are any indication, The George Strait Country Music Festival may be winding down as the 800-pound gorilla of country tours. Early on in the 16-city tour, organizers switched from stadium shows to four smaller-sized amphitheatres. "We did that for economics, where we didn't have to bring in the big stage," says Louis Messina, VP of Clear Channel Touring. "It was a cost savings thing and it was successful for everyone."

While the tour met with glowing reviews and included a stellar line-up—George Strait, Alan Jackson, Lonestar, Lee Ann Womack, Brad Paisley, Sara Evans, Asleep at the Wheel, BR5-49 and The Warren Brothers—tour figures were noticeably difficult to come by this year.

According to *Pollstar*'s figures, the tour saw the average tickets sold drop 44% from last year, selling 24,550 tickets per show. It is important to note, however, that these figures were not reported directly from the promoter. "We didn't want to report numbers this year," says Messina. "I haven't thought about facts and figures."

The tour was also noticeably absent from AB's mid-year top spots. "We've been begging the promoter, Clear Channel," says Allen. "They just said they don't have the go-ahead from Strait's people."

The one Strait concert that was reported to AB showed attendance of 21,206 with a total gross nearing \$1 million. And in a press release detailing the end of the tour, it's reported that the festival sold out Texas Stadium with "an estimated 46,500 fans" in attendance. A sure thing for Strait, Dallas is the only city to host the tour each of its four years.

According to the promoter's website (www.sfx.com), during the tour's first three years it grossed over \$90 million in ticket sales and played to over two million people in roughly 45 stadium dates with an average audience of 45,000. Previous year's line-ups have included Tim McGraw, Dixie Chicks, Martina McBride and Kenny Chesney.

And while the festival didn't reach previous heights, it was still among the Top 20 tours in *Pollstar*'s mid-year stats. To that end, Messina relates, "There is going to be a next year in some form or fashion."

Another well-publicized tour has been the Girls' Night Out Tour, featuring Reba McEntire, Martina McBride, Sara Evans, Jamie O'Neal and Carolyn Dawn Johnson. The tour, scheduled for major markets, spanned 25 dates in six weeks, ending to accommodate McEntire's WB sitcom schedule.

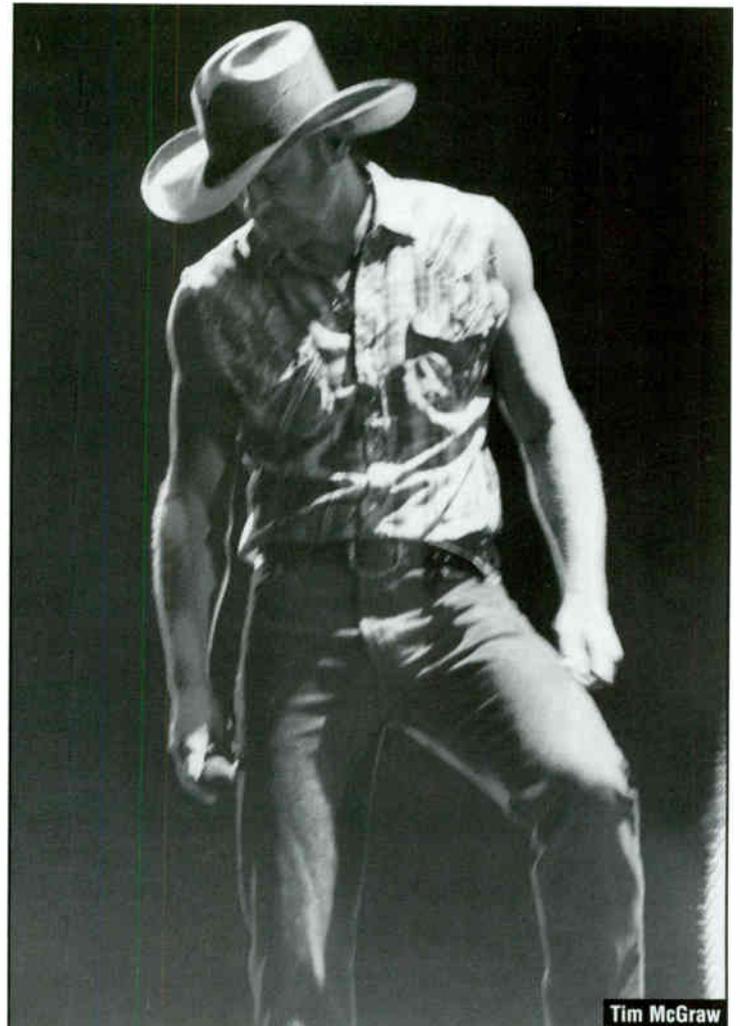
Tour agent Rod Essig says the concept grew out of a show in Louisville, Ky, last year that included Alecia Elliott, Trisha Yearwood, Martina McBride, and McEntire. From there, both McEntire and McBride committed early in 2001 to making the tour a reality. Markets were chosen based on the history of both acts, realizing in advance that secondary markets were out of the question.

"We basically had to have 10,000 seats or more," says Essig. "It wouldn't work financially with anything under that. There's eight trucks and it costs a lot of money to put the show on."

"It takes work and some finessing," he says of making the concert viable. "You're under a time constraint because it's a four-hour show, but everybody has curfews. Everybody has to realize that they don't have as much time because stage changeovers have to be calculated. Otherwise, you go over and cost people a lot more money."

With the added expense comes elevated ticket prices. "For five acts, we knew we could go from \$60-\$70 per ticket at the top end," says Essig. "When we're outside, we're doing lawn seats that are reasonable and cheap."

"The George Strait Country Music Festival may be winding down as the 800-pound gorilla of country tours."



“Everybody’s cut back to where if you miss them, you may not see them for two or three more years.”



Jamie O'Neal



Sara Evans



Alan Jackson

Photo: Alan Mayor

A look at AB boxscores reveal that the tour has seen attendance as high as 7,442, grossing \$489,828 and as low as 5,558, grossing \$191,612.

As the rest of the 2001 touring season plays out, many are pointing to the Tim McGraw/Kenny Chesney Tour as a box office bonanza. “Tim McGraw, Kenny Chesney, Mark Collie. That’s just an incredible package,” says Messina, whose company is handling a majority of the tour. “This is basically a sold-out tour. You’ve got two of the new superstars. I’m in Detroit now and he’s got two sold-out shows. Tim keeps taking that next step. The same for Kenny Chesney.”

The numbers back him up. Recent AB boxscores show the tour at 99% capacity in Bristow, Va., and Burgettstown, Pa., and sellouts in Las Vegas and Salt Lake City, Utah.

Essig relates that McGraw has done a superb job of not allowing himself to be overexposed. “We’ve watched that with McGraw. Tim doesn’t play more than 40 dates a year,” he says. “Everybody’s cut back to where if you miss them, you may not see them for two or three more years. If you miss the Dixie Chicks you won’t see them for another couple of years. The same with Faith Hill. I’d like to have the income every year, but I also don’t want to be 10 years down the line going, ‘How do we reinvent our artists?’”

Clear Channel’s O’Connell agrees. “With the Neon Circus, there’s four acts. Girls’ Night Out, there’s five. George Strait had about 12. There’s 21. You’re seeing everybody together, checking their egos at the door. Deliver something that’s going to compel people to buy a ticket. Five, six years ago there was a show every 30 days and you had to lay out \$25-\$50 for each show. People started to say, ‘I’m not doing that anymore.’”

Smaller tours in 2001 that use good economic sense appear to be faring well. Essig says that the Berry, Bogguss & Dean tour, which incorporates one bus and one band on the road, are a financial success. CAA is also using this recipe as part of the Billy Gilman/Jessica Andrews Tour. “It’s going phenomenally,” says Essig. “But we put it into fairs, parks and festivals. At their age we decided they shouldn’t be responsible to have to sell 3,000-5,000 tickets a night. So we’re going into a lot of pay one price places where you pay for the fair and see the show for nothing. We’re using only one band for two acts. We have a 13 and a 17-year-old. So we’re being very protective of that.”

As for the future of touring, many are pointing doggedly to new artists who are working their way up through the ranks and will hopefully lead to country’s touring resurgence.

“You’re seeing artists like Toby Keith, Lonestar, Jo Dee Messina build a fan base,” says O’Connell. “You’re seeing a whole new crop of artists working that have a Top 10 or No. 1 and they’re not trying to play amphitheatres. You’ve got a whole level of acts under the major acts that are about to break out. We have to perpetuate ourselves. We can’t put these artists out there and burn them up.”

Essig, whose booking roster is ripe with up-and-coming talent, offers a pragmatic and optimistic look at things. “We have to face that the economy is down,” he concludes. “You can expect that you’re going to be down X amount of tickets on a show compared overall to last year...But I think it’s just maintaining, which means maybe we’ve hit bottom. We’re developing a lot of new artists—Lonestar, Jo Dee Messina, Jessica Andrews, Jamie O’Neal. We’re getting a set of new artists that people haven’t seen. And I think all of us are going to keep getting more creative.” **MT**

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Managing "Audit Windows"

Tucked in the remote back pages of virtually all recording and publishing contracts is the section addressing the artist's or songwriter's right to question the accuracy of the royalty statements rendered under the contract. Under this provision, a CPA can be engaged to perform a royalty examination or "audit" of the royalty statements and the company records that support them. In general, the right to audit is well understood by most artists and writers, but what tends to be ignored is the "fine print," the portion of the provision which describes what is commonly referred to as the "audit window."

All audit provisions place time restrictions on the right to object to and audit the royalty statements. What this means to an artist or songwriter is that once a statement has been issued, they have a fixed time period, usually two or three years, in which to contest the accuracy of that particular statement. When this time period elapses the audit window closes and the artist or songwriter permanently loses the right to question that statement. Or, thought of another way, every time a statement is received, the audit window

closes on the statement that was issued two or three years ago.

Making the most of the audit rights granted in the contract requires knowledgeable decision-making, striking a balance between overuse (investing in an audit simply because the audit window is closing, regardless of whether the earnings amounts and contractual issues warrant the expense) and underuse (allowing the window to expire on periods for which an audit may be called for). Judicious management of the audit right requires a continual awareness of which statements are inside/outside of the window, paying attention to both the amounts reported and the contractual complexities that increase the possibility of reporting errors, for example:

- Escalations and other changes effected by earnings achievements
- New agreements, or new provisions arising from contract amendments
- Substantial activity from greatest hits, compilations or other "non-standard" products

Most writers and artists will require the assistance of their business manager or attorney

in keeping abreast of these audit management issues and making the audit-or-not decision. Often, however, the call will not be a clear one. At these times a third option can be considered, that of engaging a CPA with substantial experience in royalty matters to perform a "desk audit." Without formally exercising the contractual audit provision, the CPA performs a detailed review of royalty statements in light of the applicable contract and their experience with royalty issues. The desk audit will often disclose and resolve many statement errors, much more economically than by performing the full audit, and can also provide valuable evidence as to whether a full royalty examination, performed at the offices of the publisher or label, is warranted.

It's no secret that royalty errors, which tend to benefit the publisher or label at the expense of the songwriter or artist, are commonplace. Your best protection to insure that you are being paid properly is the audit right contained in your contract. Understanding and managing audit windows is the first step in making the most of this important protection. **MR**

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BRIDGING THE GAP

HOME STUDIO HOW-TO

By Randy Benjamin

Five years ago I wrote my first article for *Music Row*. It explored the idea of using a personal computer as the main component in a home recording studio. At the time, computers and software were just beginning to show promise of the power and sophistication needed to make this possible. In the last few years, there has been an explosion in the growth and popularity of computer-based home recording studios.

To give you an idea of how far we've come, my state-of-the-art computer in 1996 consisted of a 120 mhz 486 processor (remember them?), 16 megs of ram (can you believe it?), a 1 gig hard drive, and a 14-inch monitor. It was a steal at just under \$2,000. My present setup consists of an AMD processor running at 1,300 mhz, 512 megs of ram, a 40 gig 7,200-rpm hard drive, and a 19-inch monitor. The price tag...\$968.00.

No two home studios will be the same. Everyone will have different speakers, amplifiers, microphones, computers, etc. The most important thing to remember is as long as you use reasonably good equipment to start with, you can expect exceptional results. I'm not talking about \$400 sound cards and \$3,000 Neumann microphones. The key is to keep things simple, cost effective and within the means of most songwriters. A \$100 Sound Blaster card, \$150 Altec speakers, \$100-\$150 microphone, might be a good place to start on the recording end. These items can be purchased new or used. Check out some of the Internet auction sites such as eBay for deals. It's hard to go wrong buying quality components and, as with most things, the better the equipment, the better your demos will sound. But bottom line, you should be able to put together a great home studio for under \$1,500 including the recording equipment.

Tremendous advances have been made in software development. Five years ago there were only a couple of "recording studio" programs to choose from and they were very hard to find.

Today, you can go into just about any Best Buy or Circuit City and find professional recording software. These packages offer complete control over the entire recording and mixing process. Today's software allows you to manipulate vocals, acoustic and electronic (midi) instruments within the same program. And easily!

Many of the more expensive hardware items such as effects processors, reverb and echo units are now simulated in software. This can save you a bundle. Hardware is expensive, wears out, and breaks down. Software "effects" are usually included as part of the initial recording software. The Internet makes it possible to check for updates and bug fixes any time and at no additional cost. If you scan the news groups on the Net, you'll more than likely find a wealth of additional support, updates, and advice from others involved in creating music. Songwriting and music production are well represented on the Web. There's a group for users of "Cakewalk," for instance, where you can find anything

from program updates to downloadable midi files. There are also plenty of tips on using the software.

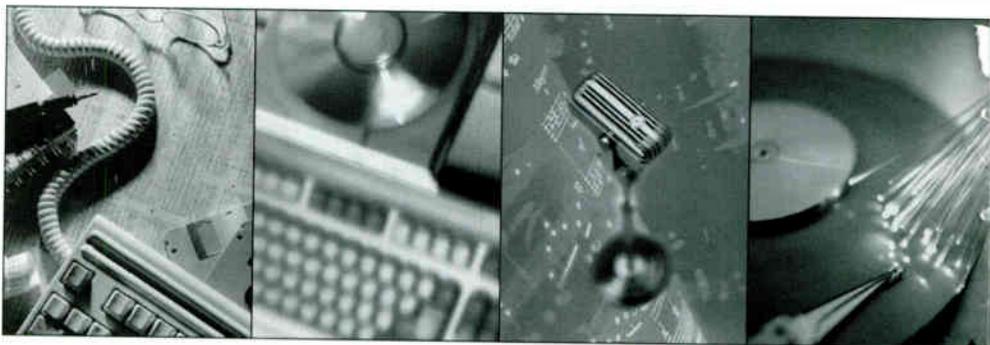
CHANGES

Things have changed, but things always change. What's the big deal? The big deal is that these changes have made it possible for me to produce great-sounding demos for about a third of what I'd normally expect to pay. Simply put, I can produce more songs, for less money.

Even with advancements in technology, the falling cost of computing power and the greater availability of professional recording software, there has always been one major hurdle keeping me from creating great sounding home demos: *I am not a keyboard player*. I used to produce demos complete with strings, horns, drums, bass, piano, rhythm and steel guitar, you name it and I had it in the mix. Unfortunately, every instrument had the feel of a "guitar" player. What do I know about playing the violin, drums, or harmonica? A novice playing a Stradivarius still sounds like a novice, Stradivarius or not.

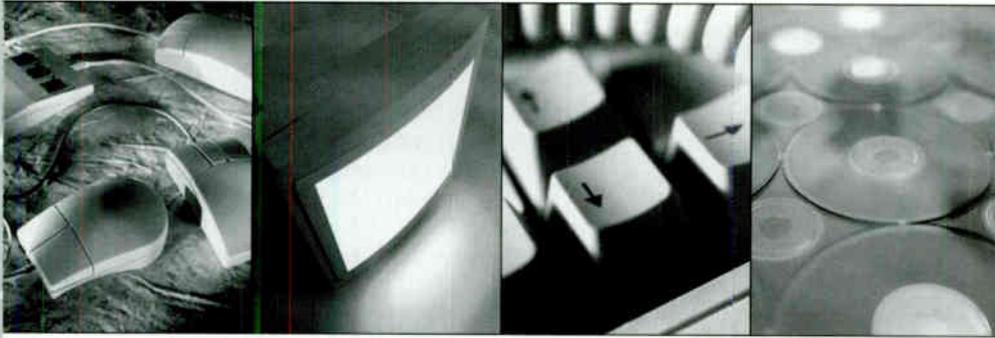
So, what do you do? You head to Nashville. If you really want a great sounding demo, you can't beat live musicians. Electronics may be able to capture the sound of an instrument, but it can't capture that spontaneous feel of a studio musician.

The key to making a great sounding, inexpensive demo is to record at a studio and then do the mixing, editing, sweetening, etc. on your home computer. Today's systems make this possible. Transporting your songs from the studio to your home computer is accomplished by the use of "wave" files. Your session will either be recorded in this format to begin with or transferred to wave files so you can download them into your home computer later. Since these are digital formats



no noise is introduced into the system. There's no need for Dolby or DBX processing.

I typically save hundreds of dollars in studio time as I mix, master, and tweak to my heart's content...at home. As a bonus, when I'm finished, I can make my own CDs for about 20 cents each. And CD is a great way to pitch.



CD and I'm out of there. My last demo session took about two hours for three songs. Like the musicians, the engineers in Nashville are first rate. Tell them what you need and they'll produce. In my last session, they were using a Mac. This wasn't a problem despite my Windows-based system. A wave file is a wave file. When I got home, it was easy to pick up exactly where I'd left off.

AT HOME

I'm using a recording program called "N-Track Studio" to mix and master. It's one of those \$39 wonders that you can only find on the Net.

(www.n-track.com) Had it cost \$400 it would still have been a bargain. I imported the wave files from CD into N-Track in about five minutes and had a great mix in a couple of hours. NO pressure, NO studio clock, NO interruptions, *all the time in the world*.

Next I had to get the vocals. I'm a pretty fair singer, but I don't sing enough to keep my voice in shape. What I'm trying to say is, I have my days. Unfortunately, those days may be weeks apart. It took me about 15 attempts before I got one I liked. I don't mean 15 attempts in one session, I mean 15 sessions of about 15 attempts each! But having *all the time in the world* provided me the luxury to do this. If I had been in the studio, I'd have either spent a fortune, or more likely, I'd have had to take what I got, even if it wasn't my best effort.

Another great thing about mixing at home is it allows me to put my demo on the shelf. Things always sound different after I've been away from them for a while. Later, if I hear something I don't like, all I have to do is fire up my computer and remix. That would be nearly impossible if I had to go back to Nashville and book the studio again. If you want to hear one of my demos, log onto <http://web-pages.charter.net/netguider/fdl.mp3> and you can download my last session. MP3 isn't as high quality as a wave file—it's compressed by a factor of 10 to one—but it will still give you an idea what this hybrid production sounds like.

All that really matters is the quality of the finished demo? Not true. It's just as important to get the best demo possible within a given budget. Sometimes that budget is barely enough to get the job done. If you already have a computer, you may only need a few additional items to be able to produce your own quality demos. Nashville is about a four-hour drive from my home in Indiana. Being able to record live musicians and mix at home has made all the difference in the world for me. I'm no longer tied to those "canned" sounds, yet I don't have to pay a fortune to get a quality demo either. Try it yourself. You'll be amazed how easy it really is. **MJR**

THE PROCESS

Here are the factors I consider before I book my session: Since I'm going to be doing virtually all of the mixing on my home computer, I look for a studio engineer that is both computer and studio savvy. That's not hard to find in Nashville. My main requirement is that they be able to transfer the session tracks to wave files. Just about all studios rely on computers these days so that's not much of a problem. I usually pick up a *Music Row* magazine or a *Nashville Scene* and look in the classified section to see which studios are running deals. Studios will often work with you on blocks of time, and most of them have special rates for songwriters.

Package deals including studio time, engineer and band can be a great value. My last session included, rhythm guitar, drums, steel guitar, piano, electric guitar and bass. As good as the Nashville players are, you can usually record the basic tracks for three songs in less than two hours. Studio musicians use a charting system that's efficient and extremely fast. It's amazing to hear a song spring to life from a few scribbles on a page.

One thing I'm adamant about during a session is that each instrument be recorded on its own track. I have hundreds of tracks available on my computer so I don't want to limit myself. If I'm recording a stereo piano, I record it on two tracks. I like to record the drums on at least six tracks, usually putting the snare, cymbals, high-hat, kick drum and toms on separate tracks. Many times, I'll mic an acoustic guitar on one track while recording it using its internal pickup on a separate track. Additional tracks give me the ability to do creative things later in the mix.

It may sound like I'm recording a master, but knowing beforehand that I'm only going to have a few hours of studio costs gives me this flexibility. Most of the work is done at home. And there, I have *all the time in the world*.

That's really what makes this work so well. All I really care about at the session is getting a good, tight, error-free recording. When I finish, I don't even rough mix it. I just have the engineer burn me a



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(Pictured L to R) David Ray, Val Allison,
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Handing Out the Kudos



Let's get the kudo business out of the way first. Sparrow Records is beyond question the Label of the Day. This outfit seems to be completely taking over the Christian field in terms of both quantity and overall quality. Somebody give that A&R staff a round of applause.

The DISCOVERY Award divides nicely into three. The male winner is bluegrass tenor Randy Kohrs. The group winner is the teen-pop Christian outfit Jump 5. And the female winner is the sublimely country singer-songwriter Elizabeth Cook.

My Disc of the Day? That would be the folk-blues platter by Eric Bibb, music that should be in every home in America.

A couple of noteworthy other items came across the desk this month. Who knew that there was a big-band swing outfit gigging regularly out in Donelson? Pennies From Heaven is the Andrews Sisters wanna-be female trio fronting this outfit. They're still pretty rough around the edges, but rigorous rehearsals, continued performing and time might change that. With the addition of the Time Changers at The Station Inn on Mondays, swing appears to be alive and well in Tune Town.

One disc that is not reviewed here is Earl Scruggs and Friends. I defy you to choose a single track to represent this extraordinary collection. Don Henley? Elton John? Dwight Yoakam? Melissa Etheridge? The only thing I can say for certain is that you or I could probably do as good as Billy Bob Thornton, but we're not famous movie people. Easiest adaptation to country? John Fogerty. Most surprising? Sting.

Anyway, if you wanna start somewhere, try Gary Scruggs and Travis Tritt backed by Earl on "True Love Never Dies" which is such a cool song in the first place.

Until next time...

AMERICANA

PIERCE PETTIS/State of Grace

Writer: Pierce Pettis; Producer: Gary West; Publisher: Piercepettison, ASCAP; Compass (track) (615-320-7672)

What seems at first glance a religious ode, is in fact a salute to Pierce's home state of Alabama. Not only that, it ripples with righteous roots instrumentation and grabs hold of your heart with a gripping vocal. Support this music.

TIM O'BRIEN/Two Journeys

Writer: none listed; Producer: none listed; Publisher: none listed; Howdy Skies (track) (www.howdyskies.com)

Minor-key and Celtic, yet in an utterly contemporary mode, featuring flute, fiddle and acoustic guitar strumming. Haunting and wonderfully imaginative.

MAMA SAID/Hellbound Train

Writer: traditional; Producer: Greg Hils; Publisher: public domain; Little King (track) (828-286-4728)

Vocal droning amid atmospheric, ghostly electronic wailing. But since it's about a hellbound train, that's what's cool about it. Check this out and get mesmerized.

JEFFREY HALFORD & THE HEALERS

Stone's Throw

Writer: Jeffrey Halford; Producer: Thom Canova/Jeffrey Halford; Publisher: double AA, ASCAP; Shoeless (track) (www.jeffreyhalford.com)

Thwacka, thwacka guitar whomping and minimalist percussion shove his piercing vocal and lyric up front. It's got the oddest quality that you can't turn your ear away from.

GRETCHEN PETERS/Independence Day

Writer: Gretchen Peters; Producer: Green Daniel; Publisher: Sony ATV/Purple Crayon, no performance rights listed; Valley Entertainment (track) (www.gretchenpeters.com)

Gretchen got back the masters to her Imprint (remember them?) CD of 1996. So here for yer listening delight are her original versions of "The Secret of Life" "On a Bus to St. Cloud" and more. The new bonus track is "Independence Day" and if you thought Martina's version raised goosebumps, you're in for more.

CHIP TAYLOR & LUCINDA WILLIAMS/The Ship

Writer: Chip Taylor; Producer: Chip Taylor; Publisher: Back Road, BMI; Train Wreck (track) (212-966-7443)

Songwriting legend Taylor has made some outstanding records in days past. He remains a true force of nature and if it takes Lucinda's collaboration to throw a spotlight on him, then so be it.

ERIC BIBB/Five Miles Above

Writer: Dave Bronze; Producer: Dave Bronze; Publisher: Bug, no performance rights listed; EarthBeat (track) (www.ericbibb.com)

A folk-blues voice to get lost in. This man needs nothing more than his silky-sad singing, but as it happens there's a chilling production working here, too, replete with stately percussion and a shimmering electric guitar. Eric's father was folk star Leon Bibb, and the bloodlines sure show.

CHRISTIAN

TONEX/Figure

Writer: A. Williams; Producer: T. Boy/5' 0; Publisher: T. Boy's Tip/T. Boy, ASCAP; Tommy Boy Gospel/MSS (track)

Devoid of melody and rhythm. Vocally pathetic. All the production values of a pile of soggy gray sweat socks.

PHILLIPS, CRAIG & DEAN

Come Now Is the Time to Worship

Writer: Brian Doerksen; Producer: Nathan Nockels; Publisher: Mercy Vinyard, ASCAP; Sparrow

Stirring, in a U2-ish kinda way.

JUMP 5/Spinnin' Around

Writer: none listed; Producer: Mark Hammond; Publisher: none listed; Sparrow

Bright, sunny, fun dance-pop, with lotsa electronic bleeps and wooshes. I didn't particularly get a religious message out of it, but who pays attention to lyrics at a rave?

STEVEN CURTIS CHAPMAN/Live Out Loud

Writer: Steven Curtis Chapman/Geoff Moore; Producer: Steven Curtis Chapman/Brown Bannister; Publisher: Sparrow/Peach Hill/Songs on the ForeFront, BMI/SESAC; Sparrow

It's got energy, but I wasn't bowled over by either the melody or his vocal.

AVALON/Wonder Why

Writer: Grant Cunningham/Matt Huesmann; Producer: Brown Bannister; Publisher: Imagine That/Meadowgreen/Matt Huesmann, ASCAP; Sparrow

The production is gigantic, but her bonfire voice is even more so. Sing on, sister.

COUNTRY

ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL

Ain't Nobody Here But Us Chickens

Writer: John Whitney/Alex Kramer; Producer: Ray Benson; Publisher: Bourne Co, ASCAP; Relentless (CDX) (615-252-4124)

Still a delight, 30 years down the pike. The song's a Louis Jordan 1947 goldie, and the band remains top flight. Perhaps the news is how much cooler and jazzier a singer Ray Benson gets with each season.

MERLE HAGGARD & ALBERT E. BRUMLEY JR. Old Rugged Shoes

Writer: Merle Haggard; Producer: Merle Haggard/Albert E. Brumley Jr.; Publisher: Merle Haggard, BMI; Relentless/Hag (CDX) (615-252-4124)

Heart tugging and world weary.

KEITH BRYANT/Drivers in Heaven

Writer: Scott Partridge/Ed Lassar/Blue Miller; Producer: Benny Quinn; Publisher: Sam's House of Music/Songs Sung Blue, BMI; BQ Racing (CDX)

That's right—it's all the dead NASCAR drivers lined up at the Pearly Gates. Can you stand it? I couldn't.

TOMMY GILHAM/NASCAR Disease

Writer: C. Victor/J. Victor; Producer: Randy Best/Steve Zito; Publisher: LDS III, BMI; Grayhorse (CDX) (615-327-3454)

Oh no! Another Dale Earnhart reference. And believe it or not, it sounds even worse than the one before. Duck and cover until this trend passes.

KRISTYN SMYTH/The Likes of You

Writer: Richard Fagan/Robb Royer/Roger Linn; Producer: Wes Laird/Lamar Morris; Publisher: OF/Robroy West, ASCAP/BMI; Barrister (CDX) (334-493-8511)

She's got promising vocal chops and there's cool guitar and piano work goin' on. Send more.

ELIZABETH COOK/Demon

Writer: Cook; Producer: Jeff Gordon; Publisher: Bro & Sis, no performance rights listed; Bro & Sis (track) (615-329-0706)

Why wait for her major-label debut (on Atlantic, last I checked) when you can enjoy her homemade stuff? Elizabeth sings exquisitely hillbilly, yet writes totally contemporary lyrics ("Demon, don't get in bed with me"). She's doing it the old-fashioned way by appearing on the Grand Ole Opry regularly, and doing it the new-fashioned way by collaborating musically with the likes of Tim Carroll and Jeff Gordon. This woman is the future of country music.

SCOTTY OWENS/I Was Wrong

Writer: Oliverius/Taylor; Producer: Mark Oliverius; Publisher: none listed; O.M.G. (track) (615-822-9050)

His best yet. Scotty's got a nice, edgy, compelling vocal vibe going on this moody number. Hurtin' country that's worth your spins.

RANDY KOHRS/Crack in My Armour

Writer: Judy Rodman/Billy Robbins; Producer: Randy Kohrs/Robert Jason; Publisher: Warner Chappell/Chaching, BMI/ASCAP; Junction (track) (615-860-8687)

His tenor is incredibly sweet. The moan of a Dobro, the chording of the piano and the sighing of a string quartet give it extra poignancy. In addition to this title tune, let him pluck on your heartstrings with Jim Lauderdale's "Anyway" later on the CD. Tender and touching. Most of the rest of the CD is more straightforward bluegrass, played with spit and polish.

HEATH EGGLETON/God Bless America Again

Writer: Bobby Bare/Boyce Hawkins; Producer: Gene Dumlup/Kenny Starr; Publisher: Sony ATV, BMI; Nashville Sound (615-746-4444)

Oh goody. A boy soprano...doing a patriotic song...with a recitation. Need I go on? The flip side is "The Star Spangled Banner" in case you're interested. This is my idea of audio agony. Come back, Billy Gilman—all is forgiven.

POP/ROCK

SHEA SEGER/Clutch

Writer: Shea Seger/Kenna; Producer: Martin Terefe; Publisher: Uncle Fred's Rocker/Gaia Artist/ Nervous People, BMI/ASCAP; RCA (track)

Signed by the Nashville outpost of The Firm, Seger has a very groovy thing going here. Multi-layered rhythm patterns create a dance trance while she wafts over it all with a breathy yet tense vocal style. I'm all ears.

BOBBY BARE JR./Sugar Mountain

Writer: none listed; Producer: none listed; Publisher: none listed; Back Porch (track) (www.backporchrecords.com)

This thrashes around, but not so ferociously that you couldn't also program it as an Americana track. "Drop the needle" anywhere on the new *I-10 Chronicles II* CD and you'll hear an embarrassment of Americana riches. In

addition to this, I was quite smitten with Chris Hillman and Herb Pedersen's duet on "Window Up Above." The assembled multitude also includes Raul Malo, Dave Alvin, Cousin Lovers, Garrison Starr, Steve Forbert and more.

VIGILANTES OF LOVE/S.O.S.

Writer: Bill Mallonee; Producer: Tom Lewis/ Bill Mallonee; Publisher: CyBrenJoJosh, BMI; Compass (track) (615-320-7672)

Jingle-jangle, folk-rock guitar work with some nice thump and a deliciously tuneful song. The "dry" vocal EQ gives it a nice edge, too. I remain a fan.

MONTY MONTGOMERY/Wishing Well

Writer: Monty Montgomery; Producer: Monty Montgomery/Carl Thiel; Publisher: Full Moonface, BMI; TMG (track) (www.montymontgomery.com)

Austin guitar wonder Montgomery must be seen to be believed. But his classy roots-rock style is in full expression on his newest CD. He's too cool for school.

HONORABLE MENTION

Shelley Laine/Ain't It Just Like Love/Palo Duro

Bryan Frasher/Drive On/Little Edison

The Kennedys/Life Is Large/Jiffyjam

Paul Hopkins/Under the Double Eagle/Bell Buckle

Clarence Gatemouth Brown/Going Back to Louisiana/ Blue Thumb

Regi Stone/In God's Eyes/In Sync

Pennies From Heaven/Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy/K-Tel

Sierra/I Exalt the One/Pamplin

Rafe Stefanini/Walking Water/County

Jason Upton/Faith /40

Tramaine Hawkins/Justified By Faith/Gospo Centric

Ron Stewart/Time Stands Still/Rounder Select

Michael Ballew/Rodeo Cool /Soul of the Heart

TROWWITHE LISA YOUNG

Senior Writer/Producer CMT News
2806 Opryland Dr. • Nashville, TN 37214
(615) 457-8437
LFYoung@Country.com



Lisa Young's decision to pursue journalism over a music career was an easy one. "I can't sing, can't play and this is my way to combine what I can do, which is write and tell a story, with my love for music," she says.

Young is currently writing and producing CMT News, which airs during CMT's *Most Wanted Live* and throughout the day as news briefs. When she first moved to Country.com in February of 2000, she worked strictly online. In May of this year she moved to the

new CMT News department, working in conjunction with Country.com.

Young completed her undergraduate work in English and print journalism at the University of Arkansas in 1991, and then earned her Masters in Broadcast Journalism at Northwestern University in 1993.

Prior to attending Northwestern, Young worked as a general assignment reporter and entertainment columnist for her hometown paper in Cabot, Arkansas. Then from 1993 to 1995, she

worked at an NBC affiliate in Texarkana as a reporter, writer and anchor. "I started as the night/weekend reporter working the graveyard shifts and chasing the murder suspects," she says. While in Texarkana, Young found her love of music leading her into work even on her days off to cover music news in the area. On one such day in 1994, at a Collin Raye street dedication, Young met a reporter for TNN. This chance encounter ultimately led to a job at TNN as an anchor from 1995 to 1999.

Over the years, Young has covered stories traveling with Scotty Moore, The Mavericks, BR549, Lee Ann Womack, Asleep At the Wheel, Sam Bush, Jo Dee Messina, and has covered seven Fan Fairs.

She is excited to see country music news back on television and says being part of the revamped news

operation is an exciting challenge. "We want to develop a news department where if something happens and an artist has something to talk about, we're the people they call to break the story," she says.

Young also works as an adjunct instructor, teaching a course on music industry public relations for the Curb Music Business Program at Belmont University. Her love of teaching may someday lead her to a position as a full-time professor.

When she isn't busy in the newsroom, Young spends most of her time enjoying Nashville's live music or going "junking" in antique shops. She collects everything from old postcards to old cameras. "It's the thrill of the hunt," she says of finding treasures amidst junk.

—Tracy Jeter

Bobby Karl...



The party trend of the month was tossing a picnic to lobby for a Horizon Award nomination.

"Vote Independent" proclaimed signs all up and down Music Row one afternoon (7/26), "Win With McGuinn." We were invited to a "Block (Voting) Party" to celebrate the success of Mark McGuinn on the VFR Records parking lot a.k.a. Harold Shedd's studio's corner at 18th and Roy Acuff Place.

Former politico Bill Boner presided. It was a very cute concept, made all the merrier by suds and chow, not to mention the instant-collectible cardboard campaign fans to beat the heat. Batting the breeze were Harlan & Melanie Howard, Pat Alger, Irene Kelly, Karen Staley, Sherrie Austin & Will Rambeaux, Paul Lucks, David Skepner, Steve Betts, Bob Paxman, Valerie de la Cruz, Charlie Monk, Bill Isaacs and my current fave pop/rock band Without Ruth.

In the twinkling of an eye, DreamWorks Records invited us to a bash on its lawn (8/2) to lobby for Darryl Worley. This was billed as "A Good Day to Run" on over to catch your 'Second Wind' for a summer shindig...rain or shine, 'cuz 'Hard Rain Don't Last'" —just to remind us of the boy's sterling disc performances. As if I could forget such sonic wonders.

Darryl sang, with a surprisingly good sound system, I might add. And considering that the temperature was in the gates-of-hell range, there was a surprisingly good turnout —Gary Overton, Sheri Warnke, Ted Hacker, Ron Huntsman, Ed Morris, Sean Brennen, Scott Borchetta, Wayne Halper and my BKWTR spies David Ross and John Hood checked out the brew, weenies, slaw and beans.

I needed to be two places at once that night because that was also the date (8/2) of the reception for Herb Alpert and Lani Hall at the Tennessee State Museum. Gracious Herb was being honored with the first museum retrospective of his work as a painter and sculptor. The soiree drew a classy crowd,

including David & Karen Conrad, Tony Brown, Luke Lewis, Kitty Moon & Pat Emery, Stan Mores, Paul Kennerley, Tom Adkinson, Will Jennings, Jonah Rabinowitz, Manuel, Will Byrd, Don Tolle, Mary Miller & James Rutherford, David Preston, Renee White, Wayne Shuler, David Ezell, Billy & Jill Block, Bob Crusin and Chase Rynd.

Hostess-with-the-mostest Lois Riggins Ezell welcomed such dignitaries as Marvin Runyon, Mayor Bill Purcell and Gov. Don Sundquist. After schmoozing at the exhibit, we gathered at the lovely, art-filled home of Susan & Luke Simons in Belle Meade for an evening "supper on the porch."

I have learned to master the art of gliding

Works The Room

through such outdoor activities without sweating too much. But I must confess that an un-air-conditioned Exit/In did me in at the Western Beat (7/17). Man, it was brutal in there. But it was all for a good cause, namely to cheer on my new country-rock faves Pinmonkey and my enduring fave Dean Miller. Also doing their duty were Mike Dungan, Rick Alter, Brad & Julie Daniels, Bill Friskics-Warren, Derek & Brenna Davenport-Leigh, Cliff Audretch and Jon Van Meter.

Also steaming was the Opry Plaza (7/15), which is a dandy place to hear superb evening music. Not only is it free, cold adult beverages are available. Again, this was for a worthy cause, namely to toast the fabulous



Raynard Miner was feted at a reception hosted by BMI and NSAI during which the songwriter was given BMI Million-Air certificates for his classics "Higher and Higher" (at five million performances) and "Rescue Me" (at two million). Pictured at the BMI Nashville offices are (l to r): Firststar's Joe Moscheo, NSAI's Bart Herbison, Miner and BMI's David Preston Photo: Beth Gwinn



Cyndi Thomson flew to L.A. recently to perform at a showcase for the media and music industry. More than 100 people arrived at The Gate to hear Thomson, who performed a 30-minute acoustic set that included her hit single, "What I Really Meant To Say." Thomson's debut album, *My World*, hit stores July 31. Pictured are (l-r): Fletcher Foster, Sr. VP/Marketing, Capitol Records Nashville; Thomson; Rob Light, CAA; and Roy Lott, Deputy President, EMI Recorded Music North America. Photo: Lester Cohen

Elizabeth Cook. Let the record show that other early believers include David Wykoff, John Lomax III, Fats Kaplan, Neil Spielberg, Robert & Holly George Warren, Pete Fisher, Pete Loesch and Peter Cooper.

Even the occasional weather squall doesn't seem to cool things off, does it? When the super Celtic pop band Ceili Rain showcased at Soundcheck (7/24), an electrical storm knocked out the power. The group didn't miss a beat. They picked up flashlights and acoustic instruments and were ready to rock. But the juice returned and the show went on as scheduled.

Turning to air-conditioned events, RCA hosted a listening luncheon for Tracy Byrd in its media room/chapel (7/24). Harry Warner, Bill Cody, Joe Carter, Allen Brown, Melissa Miggo, Renee Bell, Citadel's

Mike Hammond and songwriters Neil Thrasher, Billy Currington, Marla Cannon, Tony Martin, Larry Michael White, Michael Heeney and Lee Thomas Miller gathered to wish him well.

Despite our earlier sweat-box experience, we returned to The Exit/In for the Emerson Drive showcase (7/26). DreamWorks packed the joint with the likes of Ron Baird, Ralph Murphy, Summer Harmon, Jimbeau Hinson, Marcus Hummon, Lisa Ramsey and Brad Schmitt. The band's extensive roadwork was evident in its polished harmonies and onstage savvy.

Yet another Exit/In gig featured Jeff Carter in performance (7/24). Some of you might recall him as sister Deana's band-member. Proud papa and guitar great Fred Carter Jr. was in the house.

BMI had a cool-as-the-breeze reception honoring Raynard Miner (7/23). The blind r&b composer was being saluted for his "Higher and Higher" achieving five million-performance status and his "Rescue Me" topping the two-million-performance mark.

"This is a great opportunity to visit with someone who has meant so much to American culture," said Joe Moscheo.

"It's a really beautiful feeling to know that I've been recognized," said the R&B great. We coaxed him into sitting down at the piano, and he began to pound out the distinctive opening lines to one of his tunes—on perfect cue, we all burst into a robust rendition of "Rescue Me."

Bart Herbison, Mark Alan Barnett, Thomas Cain, Perry Howard, Ellen Wood, Mark Ford and the rest of the attendees shared smiles. As a nod to Nashville, Miner wore a cowboy hat for the occasion. By the way, he's also the man behind such soul classics as "Selfish One" (Jackie Ross), "There Is" (The Dells), "I'm Not My Brother's Keeper" (The Flaming Ember) and "We're Gonna Make It" (Little Milton).

Regardless of the weather, they don't come much cooler than that. **WR**

Tracy Byrd gave members of the media and radio community a peak at his new album, *Ten Rounds*, during a luncheon sponsored by RCA Records and BMI Publishing. Pictured at the event are (l-r): Mike Hammond, Country Format General, Citadel Communications; Byrd; Suzette Tucker, Mid-Atlantic Regional Promotion Manager, RCA Records; and Renee Bell, VP of A&R, RCA Label Group.



Bill Anderson hosted over 300 of his fans who journeyed to Nashville July 13-14 to help mark Anderson's 40th anniversary as a member of the Grand Ole Opry. Officially tagged as "Wild Weekend III," the celebration concluded at the Opry House, where management awarded Anderson with a commemorative replica of the Opry's vintage mike stand. Constructed of bronze and oak wood, the trophy features a base derived from pews at the Ryman and a sculpted microphone. Pictured are (l-r): Grand Ole Opry Group President Steve Buchanan; Anderson; and Opry GM Pete Fisher.

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Graduate Leadership Music 1997

An Ocean Way Party; Worley Busy at Money Pit

Ocean Way Nashville hosted the closing night party for the Nashville Independent Film Festival (NIFF) to celebrate the film "Down From The Mountain," which premiered at NIFF. The film featured interviews and the Ryman performance of the music of *O Brother Where Art Thou*. Much of the interview footage was shot at Ocean Way. Party attendees included T-Bone Burnett, actress Olympia Dukakis and NIFF Director Brian Gordon...Audio Productions has been home to several satellite tours for Montgomery Gentry, Trace Adkins and Perfect Stranger...Paul Worley is producer extraordinaire at The Money Pit. Worley has been at the studio working with Susan Ashton, Stewart & Winfield, Ty Herndon, JoAnna Janet, Dusty Drake and Little Big Town...Producer Keith Thomas and Engineer Bill Whittington have been busy at The Bennett House working on overdubs for vocalist Charlotte Church.



Jewel was recently at Ocean Way Nashville to record tracks for her forthcoming album on Atlantic. Producer Dann Huff and Engineer Jeff Balding have been working behind the board. Huff used the Neve 8078 console and recorded to Sony 3348 HR (24 bit) and ProTools. Pictured are (l-r): Balding, Jewel, and Huff.

Artist Producer Engineer Label Project

AUDIO PRODUCTIONS

KT Oslin	Ian Calaghan	Scott Goudeau	BNA	interview
Montgomery Gentry	Barry Freeman	"	Columbia	satellite tour
Phil Vassar	George Achaves	Travis Turk	Arista	CCUSA
Trace Adkins	Barry Freeman	Scott Goudeau	Capitol	satellite tour
Chris Cagle	George Achaves	Travis Turk	"	CCUSA
Perfect Stranger	Tim Riley	"	Curb	satellite tour
Rascal Flatts	George Achaves	"	Lyric Street	CCUSA

BENNETT HOUSE

Charlotte Church	Keith Thomas	Bill Whittington	Sony Classical	sweetening/od's
Amy Grant	"	"	A&M	voc's/od's
Valeria	"	"	Interscope	remix
Jim Cole	Ed Cash	David Streit	Impact	trax

BRUSH HILL

Matt Scutt	Bird/Scutt	Bird	—	album
Ed Stinson	Bird	"	—	demos
Bobby Gallup	—	"	Canyon Warbler Music	

Reese & Bradshaw	Reese/Bird	"	—	album
Ronnie Pittman	—	"	—	demos
Larry Merritt	Bird/Merritt	"	—	od's
Jane Scott	Bird	"	—	demos
Earnie Harkins	"	"	—	"
Cathrine Craig	Craig	"	—	album
Chris Sebree	Bird	"	—	demos

CASTLE RECORDING

Holiday	Brent Milligan	Wilson/Short	—	mix
Bullets of Orange	Quinlan	"	—	"
The Bakers	Frank Rogers	Brian Willis	Sony	od's
"	"	Niebank/Short	"	mix
Lowrey Lockard	Randy Boudreaux	Mike Janas	—	od's
Amber	"	"	—	"
Mark Shultz	Monroe Jones	Wilson/Short	Word	mix
Third Day	"	"	Essential	"
"	"	Jim Dineen	"	od's
Brad Cotter	Frank Rogers	Brian Willis	EMI Prod.	"
"	"	Barrow/Short	"	mix
Angie Paris	Brent Milligan	Shane Wilson	—	"

Artist Producer Engineer Label Project

CREATIVE RECORDING

Chris LeDoux	MacAnally/Schulman	Alan Schulman	Capitol	—
—	Steve Lake	Eric Paul	—	—
Patsy	—	"	—	—

DAN WILLIAMS MUSIC

—	Dan Williams	Dan Williams II	—	Steak-N-Shake
—	"	"	—	Winn Dixie
—	"	"	—	Color Tyme
—	"	"	—	Ford

DARK HORSE RECORDING

Anthony Skinner	Martin Woodlee	Martin Woodlee	Phelps	trax/mix
Ashley Went	Larry Brockway	Jonathon Brown	Master Prod.	trax
Doug Cassens	Kirk Whalum	Ed Simonton	—	od's
Integrity	Dave Williamson	Randy Poole	Integrity	trax
Tim Wilson	Tim Wilson	Steve Melton	Capitol	od's
Lilenias	Marty Parks	Brent King	Lilenias	mix

EAST IRIS

Lonestar	Dann Huff	Balding/Hackett/Park	RCA	remix
Toby Mac	Mooki/Mac	Marcelo	True Artist	od's
Miles Zuniga	David Z	Sang Park	David Z	trax
Daniel Gallagher	Clyde Brooks	Cotton/Wamer/Park	RCD Prod.	mix

ISLAND STUDIO

Melissa Saddler	Freddy Wall	Jeff Koval	T&B	demos
Island Bound Music	—	"	—	"
Troy Seals	—	Dan Kresco	DreamWorks	"

LOVE SHACK RECORDING

Skip	Juvenile	John "JP" Pegrarn	EMI/UTP	trax/od's/mix
Young Buck	"	"	"	"
Corey Cee	"	"	"	"
Wacko	"	"	"	"
Billy Cook	"	"	"	"
Vince Leggett	Lew Curatolo	Sean Neff	—	trax/od's

MONEY PIT

Susan Ashton	Worley/James	Poole/Hellerman	Capitol	od's
Stewart & Winfield	Paul Worley	"	developmental	trax/od's/mix

STUDIO REPORT

Writer's Notes

Kristyn Osborn



Hometown: Magna, Utah
Years In Nashville: 12
Publisher: Without Anna Music (owns publishing)
Hits/Cuts: Co-wrote all of SHeDAISY's debut album, *The Whole Shebang*. Several cuts on SHeDAISY's Christmas album, *Brand New Year*. Wrote/co-wrote everything for forthcoming album.
Favorite Song You Wrote: "First To Let Go" on forthcoming album.
Favorite Song You Didn't Write: "Case of You," (Joni Mitchell); "I Can't Make You Love Me" (Reid/Shamblin); "Angel In The House," (Jonatha Brooke)
On What Instrument Do You Write: Guitar
Influences: McCartney/Lennon, Dolly Parton, Sheryl Crow, Jonatha Brooke, Sting
Advice To Writers: Control your copyrights, if you can. Also, it's OK to write something nobody will ever record. Keep the creativity flowing and do what feels honest.
Issues Facing Songwriters Today: Copyright protection issues. People are trying to take the property of songwriters.

Best known as one third of the sisterly trio SHeDAISY, Kristyn Osborn is quick to dispel any myths about her focus. "In my mind, I'm a writer first and an artist second."

Her love of words began early and materialized as poetry, jingles and songs. Her parents helped nurture her talents, letting her take up the piano and taking her to see musicals. "I learned a lot about rhyming patterns and lyrics from that kind of music," she says of musicals.

She bought her first stereo with money she won from a song-writing contest. "I thought, 'Hey, I can get used to this.'" At age 17 she demoed her first song and looked toward music as a career. In 1989, Osborn moved to Nashville from her Magna, Utah home and later found work as a receptionist at Milsap Galbraith Music. While there, she wrote for the company on a song by song basis. Yet it was performing with sisters Cassidy and Kelsi that first caught the music industry's ear.

"We got a record deal right after we came to town," she recalls. "We recorded maybe three or four of my songs. We quickly learned how the politics of a record label work and lost our deal almost as soon as we got it. I spent the next 10 years being normal. All of us were still teenagers. I went to school at MTSU and worked stupid jobs so I could do what I loved to do."

One course at MTSU made a big impact on her. "I took a publishing class and realized the importance of controlling my copyrights and having the final say. It feels good to be one of the few people who can say I didn't have to succumb to the pressure because I needed a paycheck."

Hanging on to her publishing paid off big in 1999 as the sisters signed with Lyric Street Records. Each cut on their debut release, *The Whole Shebang*, was co-penned by Osborn. She says their sophomore outing, due out February 2002, will be comprised entirely of her penned or co-penned songs.

Is it hard getting outside cuts because people ask, "If it's so good, why don't you cut it?" I understand the mentality being an artist myself. I wish you could pitch songs without names attached. A lot of times people will ask who wrote it before they even listen to it. Did you ever consider doing anything else? I never thought I wouldn't write. Writing is too much of an outlet for me. It's the only place I find any peace. If you could have someone record your songs, who would it be? Kim Richey, Stevie Nicks or Dolly Parton. The biggest thrill would be to write with them and have them like it enough to record it. Anything you need to write? A Diet Coke, very sharp pencils, a synonym book, a dictionary, and a tape recorder to get down an idea no matter where I'm at. What are your goals? Personally, I'd like to maintain some element of normalcy and have a family. Professionally, I've been reading a bunch of scripts lately to custom write songs for films. I've focused so much on SHeDAISY that I haven't focused on writing for other people, which I'd like to do.

—Richard McVey II

Artist	Producer	Engineer	Label	Project
Ty Herndon	Worley/Watson	Poole/Hellerman	Sony	od's
JoAnna Janet	Paul Worley	Schleicher/Hellerman		
➔			DreamWorks	trax/od's
Dusty Drake	Worley/Crane/Schleicher	"	Warner Bros.	od's
➔			Sony	"
Little Big Town	Worley/Chancey	Hellerman/Hachler	Sony	"

SEVENTEEN GRAND

Matt King	Matt King	Dave Cline	—	mix
Dolly Parton	Steve Buckingham	Neal Cappelino	Spring Hill	trax/ mix
Alison Krauss	Alison Krauss	Jason Lehning	Rounder	trax/od's/mix
Andi James	Jeff Teague	Tutko/Clark	—	"
Alison Krauss	Alison Krauss	Gary Paczosa	Rounder	mix
Houston Robert	Houston Robert	Jake Niceley	Combustion Music	"
Charlie Daniels	Scott Rouse	Paczosa/Johnson	Brave Recordings	"

SOUND EMPORIUM

Alison Brown	Gary West	Tim Carter	Compass	trax
Rodney Clausen	Rodney Clausen	Logan/Jaskowiak	Extreme Writers Gr.	demos
Stephanie Jones	Paschall/Sinko	Dave Sinko	Casa Del Rio	trax
Gaither Homecoming				
➔	Jeff Silvey	Gardner/Hatley	Heartfelt Prod.	"
Jennifer Delgallo	Larry Butler	Billy Sherril	Larry Butler Prod.	"
Line 6	Dave Pomeroy	Lowery/Hall	Dave Pomeroy Prod.	"
Lisa Brokop	Lisa Brokop	Matt Andrews	Curb Music Pub.	demos
Kim P. Johnston	Kim P. Johnston	Andrews/Jaskowiak	Jody Williams Music	"

SOUND SHOP

Aaron Tippin	Bradley/Watson	Bradley/Capps	Lyric Street	Christmas mix
David Lee Murphy	Martin/Tassi	"	Sony	trax
Brad Martin	Billy Joe Walker	"	"	"
Kree	Wally Wilson	"	Lyric	mix
Demos	Jim Ed Norman	Tassi/Shapach	Warner Bros.	trax/od's
Joe Diffie	Cook/Wilson	Bradley/Capps	Sony	mix

STARSTRUCK STUDIOS

Kelly Price	Price/Duke/Campbell	Joe Pirrara	Island Def Jam	trax
Steven Lee Davis	Chait/Prestidge	Eric Prestidge	Ledler	"
Andy Griggs	David Malloy	Derek Bason	RCA	mix
Sunny Black	Po	Alvin Speights	Good Fella	"



Kenny Chesney was busy mixing his new album at Emerald's Mix Room when Bill Anderson came by for a visit. Pictured are (l-r, standing) Bill Anderson, Second Engineer Jason Piske, Producers Norro Wilson and Buddy Cannon, Mix Engineer Kevin Beamish and (seated) Kenny Chesney.

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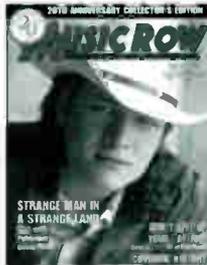
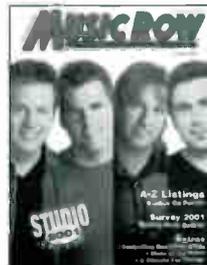
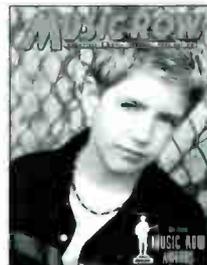
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Multi-format label rosters complete with names/photos/bios, plus address/phone/fax contacts for their managers, publicists, booking agencies, A&R executives gallery and more. (Sold for a full year).



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FRIDAY – NOVEMBER 2

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By invitation only, this exclusive party kicks off the Celebrity Tournaments.

MONDAY – NOVEMBER 5

Sprint Music Row Celebrity Golf Tournament

The Governors Club, Brentwood, TN

Tee-Off Times: 7:30 am and 1 pm

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MONDAY – NOVEMBER 5

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One-on-One with J.D. May

The Second Annual Americana Music Conference takes place this month in Nashville. With the event fast approaching, it seemed like an opportune time to sit down and talk with J.D. May, the Americana Music Association first Executive Director. May began his career in the music business at Sony Music Publishing. While there, he got to know songwriters Kieran Kane and Kevin Welch. Shortly after Kane and Welch launched Dead Reckoning Records they asked May to come aboard and help with the label. He spent six-and-a-half years at Dead Reckoning eventually handling the label's day-to-day operations where he was responsible for everything from sales and marketing to international distribution. Kane, Welch and the other artists on the label found themselves at the forefront of the burgeoning Americana format. As a result, May found himself immersed in the world of Americana. Because of his experience, his contacts and perhaps most importantly his passion for the format, May seems like a natural fit as the AMA's Executive Director.

"J.D. May became available and the board became convinced he was our guy," says Dennis Lord, AMA President. "Veteran of our industry, our genre; capable administrator; believer. We are grateful to have him. He is already making a difference."

Traci Thomas, owner of Grassroots Media and VP of the AMA, agrees. "J.D. has done an incredible job in a short amount of time. I think he is a vital part of the AMA's future."

Enough with the backslapping and handshaking, let's get down to business. Here's what May had to say about his background, his new job, and the future of Americana music.

Music Row: How long have you been involved with the AMA?

J.D. May: I've been involved from the very first meeting we had down in Austin in 1999 at SXSW. When we were beginning the Americana chart with Gavin, I was somewhat involved, and I've gone to all the Gavin Americana and Triple A Summits since the mid-90s. These are the people I've spent the last seven or so years with, and I know most of them pretty well. I've always tried to be a diplomatic and impartial supporter, not only of the projects I've been working, but of the Americana format in general.

MR: There have always been people who question the impact Americana will have on mainstream radio. How would you respond to those critics?

JDM: There's a great opportunity right now to provide listeners with an alternative to what they are getting. It's not necessarily the next big thing and we're not trying to make it into that, but if you look in the industry there are a lot of consumers that mainstream music is not reaching. We've done a lot of research that shows our audience is not being served. We want to organize and fill that void.

AMA CONFERENCE DETAILS

This year's AMA Conference takes place Sept. 14-15 at the downtown Hilton Suites Hotel. The Conference starts on Friday with an AMA Membership meeting, Keynote Address, Retail Summit presentation and a Town Hall Meeting. A kickoff party follows at BMI with a performance by Paul Thorn. Panel discussions on various aspects of the Americana format will continue on Saturday, highlighted by an afternoon performance by Delbert McClinton. Both nights will feature musical showcases at Exit/In and The End. Some of the artist's performing this year include Guy Clark, Kevin Gordon, Blue Highway, Duane Jarvis, Irene Kelley, The Domino Kings, Phil Lee, Delbert McClinton, Tift Merritt, Allison Moorer, Tim O'Brien, Lee Roy Parnell, Matthew Ryan, Billy Joe Shaver, Greg Trooper, and Drive-By Truckers. For more info visit www.americanmusic.org.

MR: What has been your biggest challenge since taking over as Executive Director?

JDM: There are so many great people and ideas, I simply don't have enough time in the day to be able to utilize all the resources that we have available. We're going to stay focused on our objectives—educating both the industry and consumers on what Americana is and let people know there is great music you don't get to hear on a regular basis through mainstream media. We're beginning to organize not only our own industry, but also seeking out businesses and partners outside of our niche that realize the importance of having more than just limited options than currently exist in mainstream formats. If we're able to partner with a lot of people and grow the industry, that's good for everybody.

MR: What types of partnerships are you looking to build?

JDM: We have a great network of supporters from radio, retail, print, record labels and artist managers. We have great representation in all those areas in our 700-plus members, but for us to continue to grow as an association and a format we have to create new partners in each of those areas. We have to reach out to new radio stations in new markets. This is about a continual education process. We're trying to put what we already do in front of the ears of more people.

MR: Could you talk a little bit about the AMA's new Radio Research Committee? What are its goals?

JDM: It will be studying successes of our current stations in commercial, non-commercial and Internet radio, as well as looking at the upcoming satellite radio formats. Then we'll establish a network of communication between our current supporters so they can learn from one another about what works at Americana radio. If we can establish lines of communication where people can talk about these successes, then all of our radio members will be able to benefit. There are also real opportunities for us to reach out to partner with stations that haven't wanted to support us in the past. People are now aware of the power of a great record like the O Brother soundtrack or with the success of people like Lucinda Williams, John Prine and Steve Earle. Then there's the whole Texas music phenomenon. Americana properly programmed can not only enhance what a station is already doing, but ultimately be successful on its own.

MR: The AMA has been establishing regional representatives—what are their responsibilities and how do you see them fitting into the AMA's future plans?

JDM: We have almost 40 volunteers in different regions who take information about our association and distribute it to clubs and pass it along to businesses. They help us have a larger presence in the community.

MR: How will this year's music conference differ from last year's?

JDM: For one thing, this year we had almost three-and-a-half months to organize the event. We only had about five weeks last

year. And even with that we had almost 400 people register for the event. We're going to offer more music, more panels and speakers, and an enthusiastic environment to talk about the future of our format. It looks like we'll have a bigger turnout this year. We're estimating that we'll have between 500 and 750 attendees. We're having two evening venues for music instead of one. I already see the need next year for four venues and an opening night concert at a place like the Ryman. Perhaps we'll add an additional day for the conference. We're going to grow it at a manageable pace, but if the demand we're seeing this year is any indication we'll have to make some changes to accommodate the interest.

MR: *If you had to give someone one reason why they should attend the conference what would it be?*

JDM: Right now people are questioning the validity and the passion in mainstream music. With all the consolidation, mergers and eliminations, is this really the music business or is it just business? If you want to be revitalized about the music come to the conference. Even the harshest critic of the music business is going to leave with a newfound respect for what these artists and companies are doing.

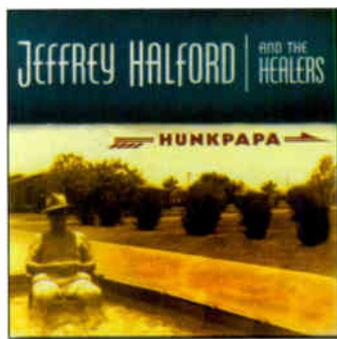
RECORD VIEWS



DUANE JARVIS Certified Miracle (Slewfoot)

Jarvis continues to be a favorite of mine, both on record and in performance, because of the way he tattoos rock 'n' roll all over his Southern-fried brand of Americana. It's got a good beat, you can dance to it. *Certified Miracle* crackles with an energy and vitality sorely missing from so much of the music that gets lumped into the Americana camp these days. Jarvis and his band Los Flacos (Danny

Kurtz, bass; Phil Lee, drums) swagger through a set of tunes that touch on country, blues, R&B, and Mexican-tinged soul. They crank things up with the barroom blister of "Forgive The Fool" and follow with the slow burn of "Love Sometimes." Jarvis co-wrote the latter with Joy Lynn White, who adds her usual angelic harmonies. He also puts his own spin on "Still I Long For Your Kiss," a song he co-wrote with Lucinda Williams, who put it on her *Car Wheels On A Gravel Road* album. It's a more stripped down approach that accentuates the song's yearning theme. It's just as good, maybe better than Williams' version. Keep on rockin' DJ, it's what you do best.

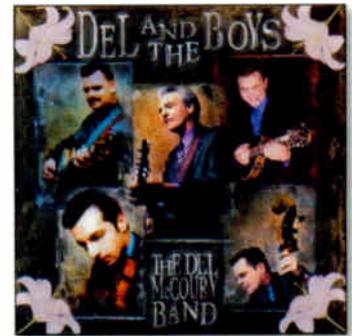


JEFFREY HALFORD & THE HEALERS Hunkpapa (Shoeless)

It's not often you find a songwriter with guitar chops this sharp. Halford's narrative poetic lyrics and slinky roots 'n' roll guitar playing make for a potent combination. He sets the tone early with some funky blues playing on the moody "Stone's Throw." He brings in noted Bay Area guitarist Chuck Prophet for some help on "Radio Flyer," an ode to the joys of childhood. Halford opens "Oh, Susanna" with a nifty instrumental snippet of Stephen Foster's classic before launching into his own melancholy lover's lament. Later he praises "Memphis" with a gospel rocker, backed up by Grammy-winning Gospel Hummingbirds. Can I get a witness? Oh yeah, the boy can rock. Halford and the Hummingbirds reprise the magic on the baseball epic "Satchel's Fastball." There's something special going on here.

THE DEL MCCOURY BAND Del And The Boys (Ceili Music)

McCoury has a voice touched by the hand of God; a high lonesome mountain wail that aches and moans with passionate conviction. His latest finds him in top form.



The album starts with a cover of Richard Thompson's "1952 Vincent Black Lightning." The song, with themes of young love and death, seems perfectly suited for a bluegrass reworking, but McCoury's version pales in comparison to Thompson's emotionally riveting original. After that, Del and the boys are off and running and they never look back. The chugging "All Aboard" is followed by the pure bluegrass tune "The Bluegrass Country." The name says it all. McCoury's crackerjack band displays its virtuosity on the lightning fast instrumental jam, "Goldbricken." He takes a wry look at sin and redemption in the grin-inducing "Recovering Pharisee." If there's a better working band in traditional bluegrass, I haven't heard them.

THE CLUB SEEN

Huntsman Publishing's Aaron Scherz made his debut at the Bluebird Café to a standing-room-only crowd. Nashville's next hit songwriter just knocked on the door. Is anybody listening? His "Leavin' The Leavin' Behind" is a chart-topper waiting to happen. Check it out...Carter Wood sung the lights out at Radio Café. She co-wrote George Strait's "Don't Make Me Come Over There And Love You," so she knows how to turn out a hit. She knows how to sing them as well. She's got charisma to spare, a unique and beautiful voice, and is making her mark as a writer. Excuse me, but could I get a record deal over here. Thanks...Rod Picott at Billy Block's Western Beat proved once again he's the best writer in Nashville that many have never heard. I'm going to keep preaching till somebody listens—he's our next great songwriter...The only thing hotter than the weather at Darryl Worley's picnic at DreamWorks was his music. I said it when the record came out and I'm saying it again, he's a star. Now give him that Horizon Award. Till next month, I'll see you in the clubs. **SLIK**

LETTERS (Letters have been edited for space)

CONTROLLING COST? GET REAL!

In regard to Mark Hendricks' story, "Controlling Recording Costs," I have to take issue at his suggestions for artists wanting to watch their costs.

Let's talk reality here. Most artists are assigned a producer who never let's out what he's spending to anyone (let alone the artist) but his own accountant and the label for whom he's working. I never had a producer offer to let me in on what he was paying out while doing my album. I just took my place at the catered food and never asked questions.

It's not the artist who needs to learn to control his or her recording budget, it's the producer. They are the culprits who overspend and waste money on self indulgent studio production. \$300,000 to record a country album? Give me a break! Most new artists are ignorant and blinded over the gloss and glamour of being on a major label to ever think about questioning his or her producer's spending habits. By the way, what "dollar in the pocket" is saved for the artist? Name me an artist other than the big ones who have ever had a "dollar in the pocket" from record sales.

I was on a very well known label for years with The Burritos and we never received one statement of accounting for the albums and singles we released. Hell, somebody bought them. Why not let us know how many?

The Bellamy Brothers were in court for years trying to get the very same label to give them proper accounting for their hits. It's public knowledge.

As far as "expecting professionalism," this is funny. Again, labels promote spending. It's the old "company store" syndrome. Tell me one new artist who told his producer that he or she "expected a professional responsible



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approach" from his production team. I found this suggestion very entertaining.

I could go on but this story is a little reality and a lot fantasy. Artists are a dime a dozen (in a record company's eyes) and a label isn't about to sit down and go over any of this stuff with them unless the artist's attorney demands it or the artist starts wielding a lot of clout.

The future of the business is indie labels owned and operated by the artist's themselves. If the artist is smart they will invest their money in a studio. Pro audio gear is now affordable and no longer do artists need to be fleeced by incredible studio costs. Build your own studio and make your own product. Hire your own press people, make your own license deals. Be in control of your destiny. The labels had their fun fleecing artists for years and it still goes on. But the writing on the wall tells of changes in the wind. Artists are smarter than they used to be. The days of Little Richard and Bo Diddley and other great acts who were robbed by labels are almost over. Take control of your career. Think like a label and you'll make more than just a "dollar in the pocket."

—John Beland,
Johnnybgood51@aol.com

STILL PLENTY OF GREAT SONGS OUT THERE

Dear Robert Oermann,

I was astonished at the mix of joy and rage I felt upon reading your review of Jon Michaels. While I was happy to see my friend written up so favorably, you also rekindled a hurt so long buried that I take it for granted now.

What I'm referring to is your mention that you've never seen Jon perform live. Well guess what, he's been out playing the songwriters shows in Nashville regularly for the last eight years. For free. I've seen him play many times and have always known that his talent would ultimately find a place here. But as any singer/songwriter can tell you, there is never an A&R person, artist, or publisher in the audience. Many hit songs are played in the clubs for years and years before they manage to break through the regular A&R channels. And here's a tip, there are still plenty of great songs available out there.

Yes, you might have to listen to a few clunkers, but why don't you come out and get to know the writers, watch them develop, encourage them, root for them...What a concept!

—Jerry Holland
Jerryandsone@aol.com

INDUSTRY CALENDAR

EVENTS

For updated listings: www.musicrow.com

September

- 5 ASCAP Presents Straight Talk, 10 a.m., 742-5000
- 5 ASCAP Writers Night at the Bluebird Cafe with Big Tractor Music, 6 p.m.
- 7 Canadian Country Music Week, Calgary, Alberta (Sept. 7-10)
- 10 The CCMA Awards, Calgary, Alberta
- 10 BMI Roundtable, 3-5 p.m., 401-2000
- 11 2nd Annual Latin Grammy Awards, American Airlines Arena, Miami, Fla., 8 p.m.
- 12 ASCAP Presents Straight Talk, 10 a.m., 742-5000
- 13 ASCAP Live at Opry Mills with Little Big Town, 7 p.m.
- 14 Americana Music Conference, Hilton Suites Hotel, Downtown Nashville (Sept. 14-15)
- 18 BMI Songwriter's Workshop with Jason Blume, BMI, 1-5 p.m., 401-2000
- 18 ASCAP Writer Series with Kenny Beard & Tim Owens, 7 p.m., 742-5000
- 19 Summer Arbitron Period Ends (began 6/28)
- 19 ASCAP Presents Straight Talk, 10 a.m., 742-5000
- 20 Fall Arbitron Period Begins (ends 12/12)
- 26 ASCAP Presents Straight Talk, 10 a.m., 742-5000
- 29 Farm Aid 2001, Verizon Wireless Music Center, Indianapolis, Ind.

October

- 1 Cystic Fibrosis Allstar Music Bash with Richard Marx & Friends, Opryland Hotel, 255-1167
- 2 ASCAP Presents IBMA Songwriter Showcase, Louisville, 4 p.m.
- 3 ASCAP Presents Straight Talk, 10 a.m., 742-5000
- 3 ASCAP Publisher Writers Night at the Bluebird Cafe, 6 p.m.
- 6 Jack Daniels' Bike To Jack And Back Charity Ride for Multiple Sclerosis, 269-9055 or www.msnashville.org (Oct. 6-7)
- 10 ASCAP Presents Straight Talk, 10 a.m., 742-5000
- 10 Nashville New Music Conference, Ramada Inn & Conference Center (Oct. 10-14)
- 11 ASCAP Live at Opry Mills with Swan Dive, 7 p.m.
- 17 ASCAP Presents Straight Talk, 10 a.m., 742-5000
- 24 ASCAP Presents Straight Talk, 10 a.m., 742-5000
- 31 ASCAP Presents Straight Talk, 10 a.m., 742-5000

November

- 3 ASCAP Country Awards, Opryland Hotel
- 5 T. J. Martell Sprint Golf Tournament, Governor's Club, Brentwood, TN, 256-2002
- 5 T. J. Martell Bowling Bash, Hermitage Lanes, 7 p.m., 256-2002

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I am interested in registering for the "Bike to Jack & Back". Please send me more information. *You must be at least 18 yrs. of age to participate.*

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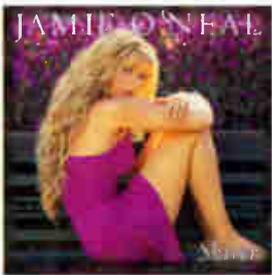
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