

MUSIC ROW

INDUSTRY PUBLICATION

BUILDING BLOCKS

Addressing Row Real Estate

PERCEPTION vs. REALITY

Tallying Sales & Certs

Chely Wright

ACM NOMINATIONS

COLLIN RAYE

THE MAN,
THE MAGIC,
THE VOICE...

MAKING A
DIFFERENCE IN
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ACADEMY OF COUNTRY
MUSIC AWARDS
TOP MALE VOCALIST

IT'S TIME.....



“If the king loves music, there is little wrong in the land.”

– Mencius

Chinese Philosopher



(as long as the writers get paid)



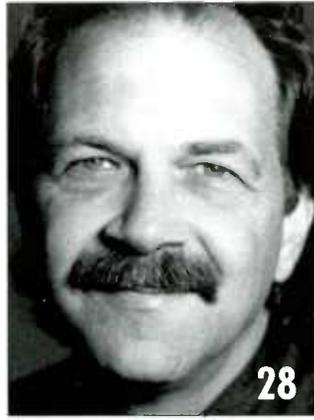
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MARCH 23, 1999 • VOLUME 19 • NUMBER 5

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ON THE COVER: CHELY WRIGHT



Label: MCA

Current Single: "Single White Female"

Current Album: *Single White Female*

Current Video: "Single White Female"

Current Producers: Tony Brown, Buddy Cannon, Norro Wilson

Management: Clarence Spaulding, Titley/Spaulding

Booking: CAA

Hits: "Shut Up And Drive"

Awards: 1995 ACM New Female Vocalist

Birthdate: October 25

Birthplace: Kansas City, MO

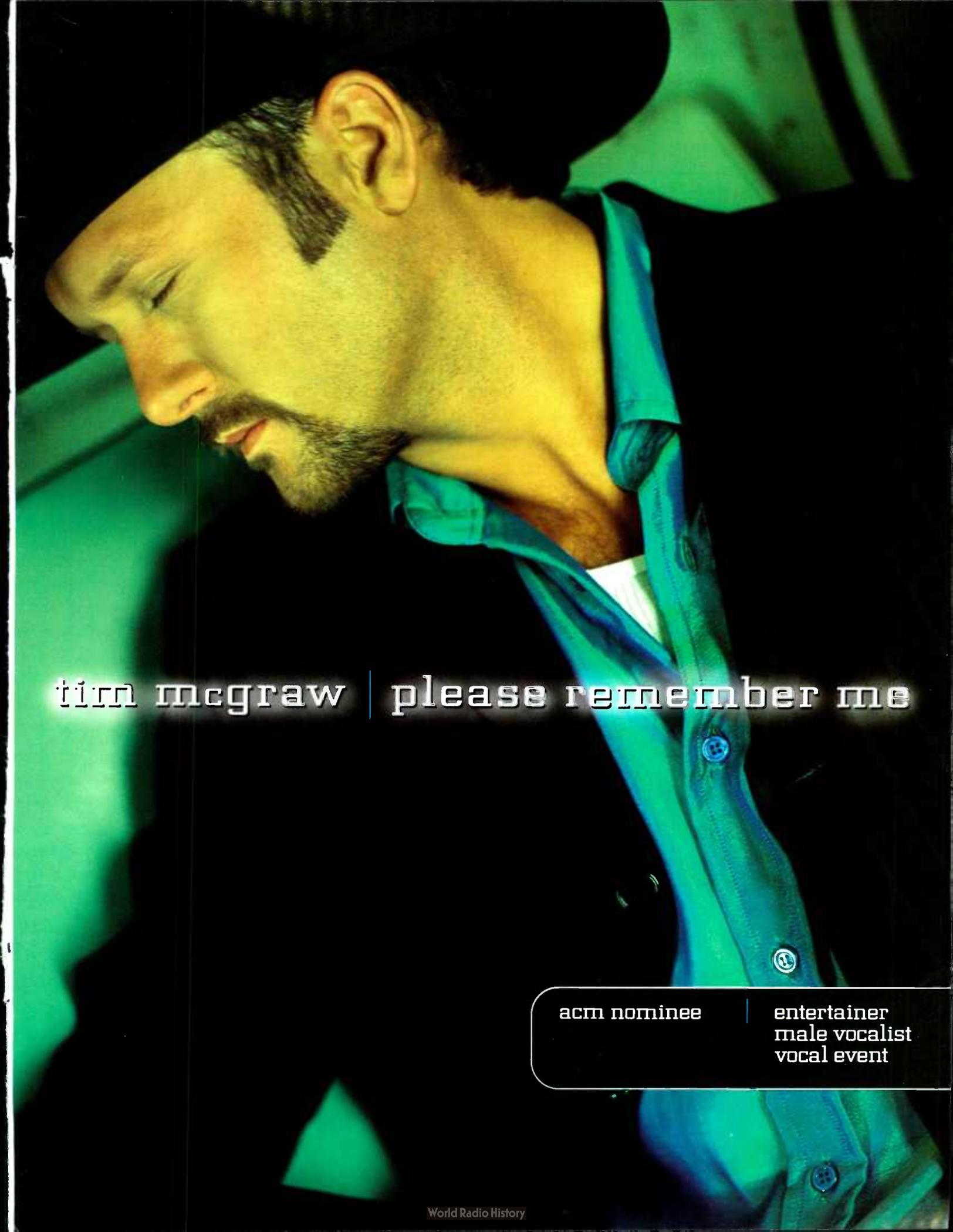
Outside Interests: Golf, Reading, Painting

Interesting Facts: Posed as Minnie Pearl for the Minnie Pearl/Roy Acuff sculpture in the Ryman lobby.

Musical Influences: Dolly Parton, Connie Smith, The Grand Ole Opry, all classic country

Chely Wright describes her upcoming album *Single White Female* as "the most honest record I've ever made." The collection's title track features harmony vocals by Trisha Yearwood. Elsewhere on the album, due May 18, are contributions by Patty Loveless, Alison Krauss and Vince Gill.

Signed to MCA on the strength of her 1996 single "The Love That We Lost," Wright scored her first top10 hit with 1997's "Shut Up and Drive." She was the Academy of Country Music's Top New Female awardee of 1995 and is the only female artist chosen for the 1999 Crown Royal Tour.



tim mcgraw | please remember me

acm nominee

entertainer
male vocalist
vocal event



Possum Improves; Higdon To Run Universal Publishing

NEWS

GEORGE JONES IMPROVING—

George Jones was seriously injured in an automobile accident on March 7 and at press time, had been upgraded to stable but critical condition. Jones continues to make "significant improvements," according to his physician, Dr. Virginia Eddy of Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Jones was driving home in his Lexus and talking on his cell phone to his stepdaughter when he crashed into a bridge at about 1:30pm Saturday. It took emergency workers about two hours to free him from the car. Jones was then airlifted to Vanderbilt. His liver was cut deeply and his right lung was punctured. Jones has been working on his upcoming Asylum Records release.



George Jones

POLYGRAM/MCA PUBLISHING MERGE, NAMES MANAGEMENT—Pat

Higdon has been named Senior VP/GM of the newly merged MCA and PolyGram/Nashville publishing companies—to be named Universal Music Publishing—ending months of speculation. MCA Music Nashville President Jody Williams exits, as does VP/Creative Services Stephanie Cox. Steve Day will remain through the transition until April 1. Higdon is owner of Patrick Joseph Music, and it is expected his publishing catalogs will be purchased by the new entity. At press time, a location for the



Pat Higdon

combined offices is still undetermined.

David Renzer, Universal Music Publishing Worldwide President, announced on March 4 the global and regional management team and structure of the newly combined organization. "We have kept the best elements of both entities in terms of creativity, structure and administration," said Renzer. "In fact, the worldwide mix of former MCA and PolyGram senior management will be around 50/50." Michael J. Sammis is Chief Financial Officer of the combined organization. Sammis held the same position at MCA. Based in Los Angeles, Sammis will report directly to Renzer. Crispin Evans is Senior VP of International Business & Legal Affairs. Evans had been Director of Legal & Business Affairs for PolyGram. He will report directly to Renzer and be based at Universal Music International's headquarters in London. Debbie Williams is Director of International Communications and Marketing. She was International Repertoire Manager for PolyGram, and also is based in London. Scott James is Senior VP of Music for Motion Pictures, Television and New Technologies worldwide, based in LA. He held the same position at MCA and will report directly to Renzer. The North American headquarters will continue to be in LA with offices in New York and Nashville reporting to David Renzer.



David Renzer



Michael J. Sammis

GAVIN, R&R ALIGN WITH MEDIA-BASE

Both Gavin and R&R have contracted with Mediabase 24/7 to utilize the company's research to publish charts based solely on monitored airplay. R&R will convert 11 format charts to monitored-only status, effective with the June 11 issue. Only R&R's NAC/Smooth Jazz chart will remain a reported format after the conversion occurs. Gavin, which will begin monitored-chart publication June 1, has not detailed which of its charts will be converted to monitored only. Both publications stress they will continue to take weekly airplay information from non-monitored stations in small and medium markets and will present that data in their various print, fax and electronic publications. Mediabase 24/7 monitors over 800 radio stations in 125 rated markets, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Subscribers can track daily airplay activity. Mediabase's parent company is Premiere Radio Networks, a subsidiary of Jacor Communications.

ARTIST'S WAY WORKSHOP

The CMA is sponsoring a special workshop March 30-31 featuring Mark Bryan, co-author of the bestseller *The Artist's Way*. Cost is \$135 for CMA members, \$165 for non-members. 615-244-2840.

STARWOOD CHANGES NAME

Financial giant First American Corp. has finalized a deal with Starwood Amphitheater for naming rights. The 14-year old venue will now be known as the First American Music Center. The deal also gives First American naming rights to the Broadway Series at TPAC and stage sponsorship at Nashville's River Stages festival. The amphitheatre is owned by SFX Entertainment, which also sponsors the Broadway Series and is co-producer of the three-day downtown festival.

[Continued on page 26]

MUSICAL CHAIRS

Rick Baumgartner has joined Atlantic Nashville as VP National Promotion...Van Fletcher has been named Executive VP and



Van Fletcher



Maria Mason



Rick Baumgartner

General Manager of Virgin Nashville. Fletcher was most recently Sr. VP of Sales and Branch Distribution for PolyGram Group Distribution in New York...Teresa Blair has been named Director of Creative Services and Production for DreamWorks Nashville...Sony/ATV Tree has promoted Maria Mason to Royalty Manager and Lee Swartz to Manager of Tape Catalog...Marc Driskill has been appointed Director of Business Affairs at ASCAP.

Hayes Street Music has moved into the Giant Records building at 1514 South St., Ste. 100, 37212. 615-327-1991, fax 301-1991.

Cal IV Entertainment has appointed Gabriel

Briggs Director of Creative Services; Bennie Boling joins as Professional Manager; Allison Howland joins the creative services team...Raleigh Squires has exited Tyneville Music. He will re-open his indie songplugging company, Hit Men, and will add internet music consulting as a service.



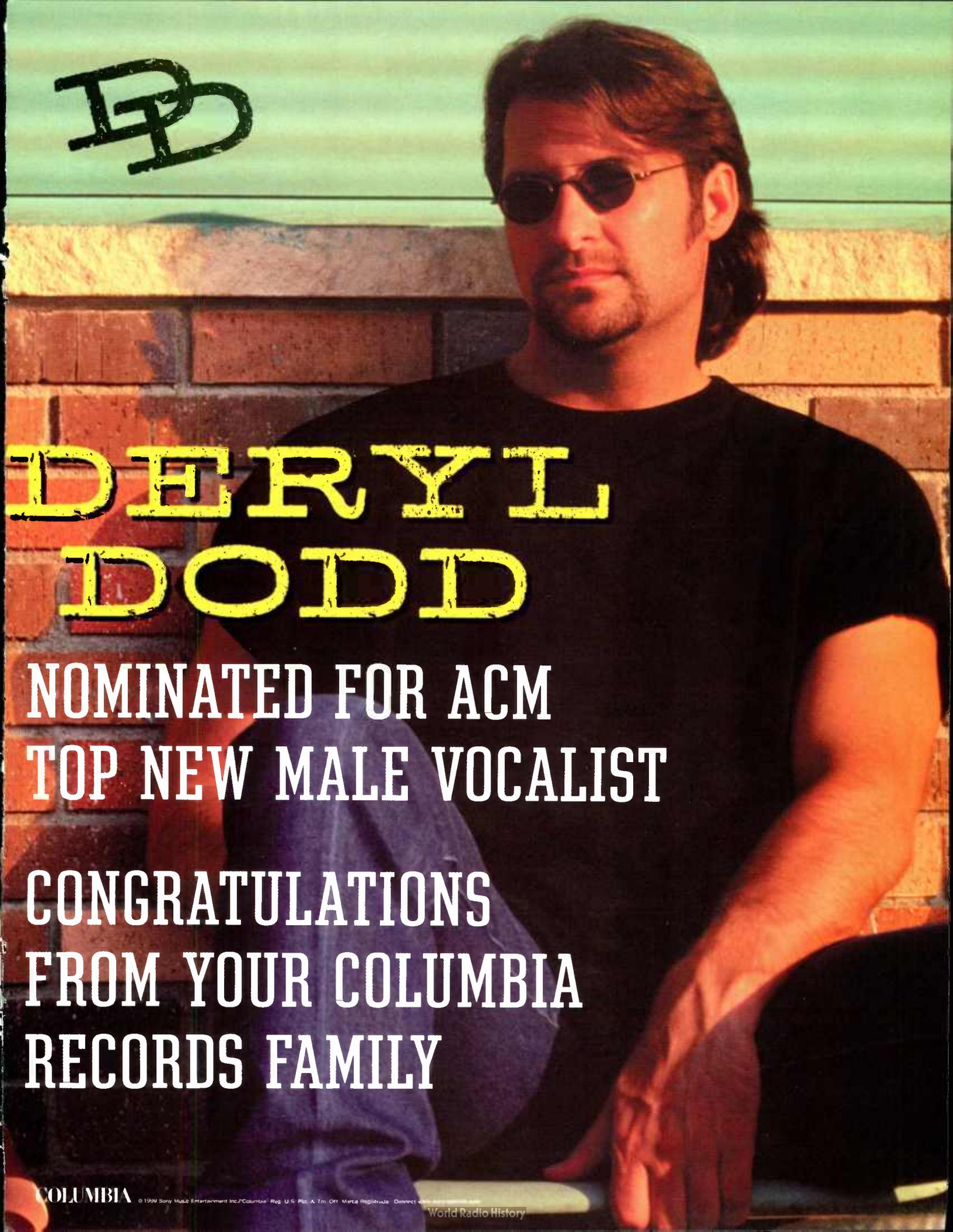
Gabriel Briggs



Bennie Boling



Allison Howland



FD

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TOP NEW MALE VOCALIST

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World Radio History



COUNTRY IN THE ROCKIES



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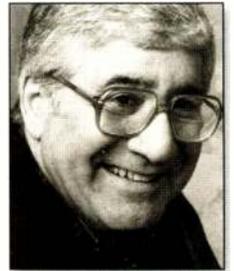
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FUN(D)RAISING—Country in the Rockies 5 convened last month in Crested Butte, Colorado for another extended weekend of festivities to benefit the Frances Preston Laboratories, a division of the T.J. Martell Foundation, at the Vanderbilt Cancer Center. Attendance jumped to more than 228 this year, pushing the total raised to almost \$500,000. Pictured: #1—Henry Paul, Kathy Mattea, Mark Collie and Dave Robbins help raise more than \$19,000 during celebrity bartending hour in Downtown Crested Butte. #2—John Berry and wife Robin do the mush push. #3—Preston and Mindy McCready mug; and #4—Tony Brown, Anastasia Pruitt and Berry say CIR "Five" is their favorite.

Songwriter Mike Anthony Passes

In the February 8 issue of *Music Row* we profiled lyricist Mike Anthony in our Writer's Notes section. Two days before the issue date, Anthony suffered a heart attack and massive stroke. He passed March 9. In that time, there was an outpouring of prayer and support for Anthony and wife Lois from their friends on the Row.



"I've always admired the sheer innocence of the love he brought to his work," says Joe Collins. "The kid who hitch-hiked from a farm in Canastota to Syracuse in order to hear live music never lost his child-like enthusiasm. He managed all the slings and arrows, the disappointments and near misses (37 years between No. 1 hits) without a trace of cynicism. Long live the kid in us all."

"Mike always arrived at his writing sessions prepared to the max, with multiples of well developed ideas, a mighty sense of humor, beautiful lyrics and a willingness to blow it all off and be a bud should his co-writer be in need of a shoulder or a kind word of advice," says Jim Rushing.

"If there were a patron saint for songwriters it would be Mike Anthony," says Richard Fagan. "I went to see Mike [in the hospital] and knew he recognized me but he could only nod or hold my hand. Feeling uneasy, I decided to tell him a joke. When I hit the punchline he smiled broadly from one side of his mouth. The joke wasn't that great and he probably only laughed to make me feel good, but that's just the kinda guy he was."

"I've known Mike and his wife Lois for quite a while," says Tom Oteri. "I love and respect Mike as a great lyricist, but most of all as a devoted husband. His wife, who does domestic work to compensate for the lean times songwriters go through, also deserves our love, support and admiration. Both of them are in our prayers."

—Chuck Aly

The Buzz

Spring Training Edition

New artist launches are counting down as we start the long, slow climb to the fourth quarter promised land.



Grammys—Can country score the big four next year? Will the Chicks flip us off in a trade ad? Where was *Soy Bomb*?



George Jones—Get well soon. (We can't wait to hear the new tunes, either.)



Album Royalties—Ain't what they used to be. Even Platinum x 5 Chicks can't afford dresses that don't need safety pins to hold together.



Monica Lewinsky—Okay, enough already. Are her 15 minutes up yet? Unless, of course, she can sing...



Shania's Black Grammy Outfit—Makes us want to buy a '76 Cordoba and hang those little dingle balls from the ceiling.

41st ANNUAL GRAMMY AWARDS WINNERS

Shania Twain, Dixie Chicks and Mercury's Hank Williams box set each won two awards during the 41st Grammy Awards, held February 24 at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles. Though country failed to snag one of the four general categories—album, record, song or new artist—Nashville brought home plenty of gold for the trophy case:

Male Country Vocal Performance

"If You Ever Have Forever In Mind"/Vince Gill

Female Country Vocal Performance

"You're Still The One"/Shania Twain

Country Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocal

"There's Your Trouble"/Dixie Chicks

Country Collaboration With Vocals

"Same Old Train"/Clint Black, Joe Diffie, Merle Haggard, Emmylou Harris, Alison Krauss, Patty Loveless, Earl Scruggs, Ricky Skaggs, Marty Stuart, Pam Tillis, Randy Travis, Travis Tritt and Dwight Yoakam

Country Instrumental Performance

"A Soldier's Joy"/Randy Scruggs, Vince Gill

Country Song

"You're Still The One"/Robert John "Mutt" Lange & Shania Twain

Country Album

Wide Open Spaces/Dixie Chicks/Monument

Bluegrass Album

Bluegrass Rules!/Ricky Skaggs and Kentucky Thunder/Skoggs Family Records

Rock Gospel Album

You Are There/Ashley Cleveland/Codence/204

Pop/Contemporary Gospel Album

This is My Song/Deniece Williams/Harmony

Southern, Country or Bluegrass Gospel Album

The Apostle/various artists/Rising Tide

Contemporary Soul Gospel Album

The Nu Nation Project/Kirk Franklin/Gospo Centric

Mexican-American Music Performance

Los Super Seven/Los Super Seven/RCA

Contemporary Folk Album

Car Wheels On A Gravel Road/Lucinda Williams/Mercury

Instrumental Composition

"Almost 12"/Belo Fleck, Future Man, Victor Lemonte Wooten

Boxed Recording Package

The Complete Hank Williams/Mercury Nashville

Historical Album

The Complete Hank Williams/Mercury Nashville

Lifetime Achievement Award

Johnny Cash

ACM's Queen Of The Hill

Faith Hill received six nominations for the 34th annual Academy of Country Music Awards, scheduled for Wednesday, May 5 from the Universal Amphitheatre in Los Angeles and broadcast by CBS-TV. Garth Brooks, Brooks & Dunn and Steve Wariner each received four nods.

Entertainer—Garth Brooks, Brooks & Dunn, Tim McGraw, George Strait, Shania Twain

Top Male Vocalist—Garth Brooks, Vince Gill, Tim McGraw, Collin Raye, George Strait

Top New Male Vocalist—Deryl Dodd, David Kersh, Mark Wills

Top Female Vocalist—Faith Hill, Martina McBride, Jo Dee Messina, Shania Twain, Trisha Yearwood

Top New Female Vocalist—Sherrié Austin, Jo Dee Messina, Allison Moorer

Top Vocal Duet or Group—Alabama, Brooks & Dunn, Dixie Chicks, Sawyer Brown, The Wilkinsons

Top New Vocal Duet or Group—Dixie Chicks, The Warren Brothers, The Wilkinsons

Top Vocal Event—"Burnin' The Roadhouse Down," Steve Wariner, Garth Brooks, producer Steve Wariner; "If You See Him/If You See Her," Brooks & Dunn, Reba McEntire, producers Tony Brown, Tim DuBois; "Just To Hear You Say That You Love Me," Faith Hill, Tim McGraw, producers Dann Huff, Faith Hill; "No Place That Far," Sara Evans, Vince Gill, producers Norro Wilson, Buddy Cannon; "Same Old Train," Clint Black, Joe Diffie, Merle Haggard, Emmylou Harris, Alison Krauss, Patty Loveless, Earl Scruggs, Ricky Skaggs, Marty Stuart, Pam Tillis, Randy Travis, Travis Tritt, Dwight Yoakam, producer Marty Stuart

Album—*Double Live*, Garth Brooks, producer Allen Reynolds, Capitol Nashville; *Faith*, Faith Hill, producers Dann Huff, Byron Gallimore, Faith Hill, Warner Bros.; *I'm Alright*, Jo Dee Messina, producers Byron Gallimore, Tim McGraw, Curb; *One Step At A Time*, George Strait, producers Tony Brown, George Strait, MCA; *Wide Open Spaces*, Dixie Chicks, producers Paul Worley, Blake Chancey, Monument

Single—"A Broken Wing," Martina McBride, producers Martina McBride, Paul Worley, RCA; "Holes In The Floor Of Heaven," Steve Wariner, producer Steve Wariner, Capitol Nashville; "This Kiss," Faith Hill, producers Byron Gallimore, Faith Hill, Warner Bros.; "26 Cents," The Wilkinsons, producers Tony Haselden, Russ Zavitson, Giant; "You're Still The One," Shania Twain, producer Robert John "Mutt" Lange, Mercury

Song—"A Broken Wing," Martina McBride, writers James House, Sam Hogin, Phil Barnhart; "Don't Laugh At Me," Mark Wills, writers Allen Shamblin, Steve Seskin; "Holes In The Floor Of Heaven," Steve Wariner, writers Steve Wariner, Billy Kersh; "Husbands And Wives," Brooks & Dunn, writer Roger Miller; "This Kiss," Faith Hill, writers Robin Lerner, Annie Roboff, Beth Nielsen Chapman

Video—"Drive Me Wild," Sawyer Brown, producer Mark Kalbfeld, director Michael Salomon; "Getcha Some," Toby Keith, producer Kimberly Lansing, director Michael Salomon; "Holes In The Floor Of Heaven," Steve Wariner, producer David Pritchard, director Michael Salomon; "I'll Go On Loving You," Alan Jackson, producer Susan Bowman, Tamara Brooks, director Steven Goldmann; "This Kiss," Faith Hill, producer Susan Bowman, director Steven Goldmann



Faith Hill



Garth Brooks



Tim McGraw



George Strait



Shania Twain



Collin Raye



Bobby Karl...

Works The Room

Music Row became a moveable feast as the fabulons migrated to L.A. for the Grammys.

The party began on the outward-bound flight (2/22). We gabbed in the ticket line, gabbed at the baggage check, gabbed with our boarding passes and gabbed in our seats. Then they told us the plane was no good and we had to get off. So we kept on gabbing. Take my advice—when you're stranded in an airport, get stranded with music magpies. We amuse each other so easily.

Ken Levitan, John Hiatt, Kathy Whitley, Gary Harrison, Kyle Young, Billy Kirsh, Jim Zumwalt, Steve Earle, Kirt Webster, Keith Stegall and Fletcher Foster yakked to while away the hours. Newly svelte **Joe Diffie**, who has evidently broken up with **Liz Allison**, was en route to Malibu to shoot his new video. **Kirk Whalum** has formed a new band called Staff and was headed to play the pre-Grammy gospel celebration show. **Dan Hill**, of "Sometimes When We Touch" fame, added a Canadian dash to the proceedings.

Tracy Nelson, Randy Scruggs, Ashley Cleveland, Beth Nielsen Chapman and Trisha Yearwood were doing their Bluebird Grammy thing at The Troubadour when we touched down in L.A. (2/22). The Recording Academy events were already in full swing, with a tribute to **Woody Guthrie** at the Skirball Cultural Center, a classical luncheon honoring **Zubin Mehta** at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, an Entertainment Law Initiative reception with **Clive Davis** at the Four Seasons and a MusiCares gala at the Century Plaza for **Stevie Wonder**. Grammy Week has turned into a veritable blizzard of rooms to work.

The next day (2/23) was the nominees party at the snazzy California Science Center. This event has evolved into one of the nicest of Grammy Week. It begins with an auditorium presentation of the Trustees Awards, Lifetime Achievement Awards and Technical Grammy.

Then, nominees pick up their medallions, do photos, get their tickets, listen to the **Grammy All American High School Jazz Ensemble** and eat, drink and make merry on the three levels of the museum.

Trustee honors went to three composing teams, **Kenny Gamble & Leon Huff, Jerry Leiber & Mike Stoller** (who was off on vacation) and the late **Alan Jay Lerner & Frederick Loewe**. Lifetime Achievement recipients were the late **Otis Redding** and **Sam Cooke**, an ailing and absent **Mel Torme**, a well but unaccountably absent **Smokey Robinson** and our own **Johnny Cash**.

"What a wonderful group of people," said **June Carter Cash** accepting for Johnny. "You made me cry, all of you, before I even got up here. Johnny's been off the road for the last year and a half. He's feeling good and he sends you his love." She told me that he's walking a mile a day in Jamaica, doing battle with his nervous-system disease.

Kinda wacky widow **Barbara Cooke** accepted for Sam; kinda wonderful wife and former Miracles member **Claudette Robinson** accepted for Smokey. Widow **Zelda Redding**, sons **The Reddings** and manager **Phil Walden** accepted for Otis. The technical award went to the late **George Neumann**, whose microphones have benefited so many for so long. **Professor Doctor Mark Sennheiser** accepted. Wouldn't you love to have a title like "Professor Doctor?"

"Our academy has such a big tent that can hold so many different forms of expression," said NARAS president **Mike Greene**. "And we have a helluva good time, most of the time." No foolin'! The party was a blast with mingling by **Steve Wariner, Sam Bush, Lee Ann Womack, Victor Wooten, Eddie Lambert, Joe Tarsia, Tracy Gershon, Joanne Gardner, Simon Renshaw, Debbie Carroll, Bob Merlis, Jay Orr, John Breem, Maureen O'Connor** and **Mary Wilson** of The Supremes.

No visit to the West Coast is complete without a sidetrip (2/24) to Bakersfield to see the great **Buck Owens**, gracious **Jim Shaw** and on-the-mend **Billy Mize**. That's a schmooze I wouldn't miss for the world.

Back in L.A., Grammy night was a blur of parties. After the show (featuring fashion victims **The Dixie Chicks** and **Shania Twain**, plus classy **Vince Gill**), we headed for the glorious old Biltmore Hotel (2/24). The historic jewel in downtown's crown glowed in the splendor of multiple party lights. The rhythm-happy **Professor Einstein & Spadilla** entertained at the Fifth Street red-carpeted entrance. **The Kadima String Quartet** held forth in the Lobby. The Crystal Ballroom hosted **The Barkays**. The Grand Avenue Bar featured **Tom Scott & The L.A. Express**. The gaily

decorated Biltmore Bowl sizzled with the Latin sounds of **Poncho Sanchez, Tito Puente, Celia Cruz, Arturo Sandoval, David Sanchez** and **Marlena Shaw**.

And the most packed venue, the Gold Room, featured our boys **BR5-49**. My how things have changed—10 years ago, you couldn't pay people to go in the country room at the post-Grammy Biltmore bash. I worked ALL the rooms with my date **Will Byrd**, who was suitably impressed with the various cuisines, musical styles and decorations on hand. Gliding through, we spotted **George Lucas** and **Jimmy Smits**, as well as such faves as **Patti Page, Roger Sovine, Paul Corbin, Marcia Ball, Barry Coburn, Garth Fundis, John Huie, Mike Kraski, Wayne Halper** and **John Guess**.

Of the many label post-Grammy parties, we chose the BMG bash at the lavish Hollywood Palladium (2/24). Good call. The first thing we encountered there was **Hugh Hefner** with a gaggle of blonde **Playboy Bunnies**. He was not in pajamas.

Sherri Austin, Joe Ely, Steve & Ree Guyer Buchanan, Renee Bell, Dan Goodman, Brian & Marion Williams, Michael W. Smith, Clive Davis and **Carlos Santana** were working the room. Make that "rocking the room." And double that at The House of Blues, where **Lucinda Williams** was celebrating her Grammy with a stompin' show (2/24).

We staggered to an afternoon flight at LAX the next day (2/25). Guess what? Another schmooze. The homeward-bound plane carried **Bela Fleck, Will Rambeaux, Scott Stem, David Conrad, Luke Lewis, Paul Worley, Monty Hitchcock, Ashley Cleveland & Kenny Greenberg, Karen Byrd, Neil Spielberg** and more. The other passengers doubtless wondered how so many people could be so instantly friendly.

Back on terra firma, we headed for good ol' ASCAP (3/1) for a record-release reception in honor of *The Mountain*, the landmark collaboration between **Steve Earle** and **The Del McCoury Band**. Genial **Dan Keen** presided over a crowd that included **Hazel Smith, Ronnie McCoury, Chris Dickinson, Paul Kingsbury, Charlene Blevins, Jack Emerson, Jack Clement, Gene Wooten, Rick Alter, Steve Betts, Chris Skinker** and visiting Memphian **Sid Selvidge**.

And just to make sure I was really back at home, I did a two-day pub crawl that took in **Thom Schuyler, Fred Knobloch** and **Gary Nicholson** at Douglas Corner (2/26); **Josh Rouse, Vic Chesnutt** and **lambchop** at the Exit/In (2/26); all-gal rockers **Ultra Baby Fat** at The End (2/26); **Dave Olney** at Radio Cafe (2/27) and **Jonell Mosser** at 3rd & Lindsley (2/27). I feel better now. ☆

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1998 Sales & Certs

PERCEPTION OR REALITY?

by Chuck Aly

If the mood on Music Row were a direct reflection of country sales, you would think the genre had moved all of three units last year. Layoffs, mergers and closings have conspired to hang a dark cloud over the industry, and conventional wisdom insists that more is on the way. Imagine, then, the collective despair we'd be experiencing if country sales actually had declined in 1998.

1998 RIAA Tally By Label Units Certified In Millions

Label	1998 Awards (current/total)*	1997 Awards (current /total)**
CAPITOL NASHVILLE	14.5/25.5	8.5/21.5
MERCURY	6.5/10	1.5/5
MCA	4.5/9.5	8/19.5
MCA	(4/9)	(7.5/19)
DECCA	(.5/.5)	(.5/.5)
CURB	4/10	12/13
RLG	4/8	1.5/3
BNA	(1/1)	(.5/.5)
RCA	(3/7)	(1/2.5)
SONY MUSIC NASHVILLE	4/4.5	2/7
MONUMENT	(3/3)	—
EPIC	(1/1.5)	(1/4.5)
COLUMBIA	—	(1/2.5)
ARISTA	3.5/6	2/4
CAPITOL	2/2	—
WARNER/REPRISE	1.5/5	1.5/7.5
WARNER BROS.	(1/4.5)	(1/6)
REPRISE	(.5/.5)	(.5/1.5)
550 MUSIC	1/1	—
ASYLUM	.5/5	1/1
DREAMWORKS	.5/5	—
GIANT	.5/5	.5/5
ATLANTIC	0/1	1.5/2.5
HEARTLAND MUSIC	0/5	—
UNISON	0/1	—
TOTAL	47/85.5	40.5/85

*Current albums were released in '97 or '98 **Current albums were released in '96 or '97

That's right. The year that saw "belt-tightening" ensconced in music executive vocabularies also enjoyed sales *growth*, albeit at a lethargic 2.4 percent. SoundScan 1998 country unit sales rose to 72.3 million from 70.7 million the previous year. Digging a little deeper into those numbers, however, illuminates the motives behind ongoing overhead reduction. If you subtract from 1998's SoundScan total two soundtracks that weren't on Nashville labels (*Touched By An Angel* and *Hope Floats*) and Garth Brooks's 1998 releases (*Double Live* and *The Limited Series*), country sales plummeted to 64.2 million units. That total is well below the 66.9 million albums sold in 1996, which was the only year this decade that did not see a new album from Brooks. So aside from our favorite baseball player, it is obvious that country's sales base is shrinking.

Lucky for Capitol Nashville, however, we definitely do not discount Brooks's sales when assessing the top labels. As in years past, SoundScan rankings are remarkably similar to RIAA certifications and in both cases, Capitol Nashville comes out on top. Both rankings show Mercury in the second slot, followed by MCA and last year's top label, Curb.

Scans vs. Shipments

RIAA gold (500,000) and platinum (1,000,000) certifications are based on album shipments by record labels to wholesale and retail accounts—not actual sales—and include record clubs which are ignored by SoundScan. SoundScan tabulates actual retail purchases or "scans" and extrapolates that data to represent each individual unit transferred to a consumer's hands.

Another significant difference is how multiple disc or tape sets are handled. When a label releases a multiple unit set, for instance Brooks's *Double Live* two CD package, RIAA tallies each package as two units. SoundScan, however, records the sale of that package as a single unit. This discrepancy, combined with the disparity between shipments and sales, explains how *Double Live* can be RIAA certified for 12 million units while scanning less than four million units.

Current vs. Catalog

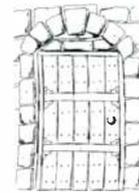
In our certifications listing (page 14), Total Units Shipped are computed according to the following: a gold certification equals half a million units; the first platinum award adds another half million units; and each additional platinum level adds another million units. To get a clearer picture of the activity of the current year's product versus total volume, we filtered out as "catalog" all certified albums which were originally released prior to 1997. These catalog certifications can be misleading because

although an award total is reached in the current year, a large share of the shipments contributing to that award were likely tallied in previous years.

Despite this aspect of our methodology, it is important to recognize that catalog does play an important fiscal role in safeguarding label health by adding some measure of income stability to a cyclical business.

Stability, however, is a double-edged sword. If sales are falling, bedrock under your feet is most desirable. The danger, of course, is stagnation. Country's sales performance in 1998 surely has many in Music City hoping for some upward instability as 1999 unfolds. ☛

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Top 100 SoundScan Country Albums By Label Group

	1998	1997
Capitol Nashville	10,035,762	7,134,276
Mercury	7,112,028	3,239,603
MCA/Decca	6,034,528	6,953,761
Curb Group	5,662,769	10,878,132
Sony Music Nashville*	4,372,116	2,264,754
Arista	3,733,240	3,778,768
RLG**	2,703,070	3,107,138
Warner/Reprise	2,702,592	1,475,768
Capitol	2,077,222	—
Atlantic	784,285	1,558,152
Giant	770,438	417,211
550	507,493	—
DreamWorks	420,291	—
Asylum	390,052	1,392,740
Sony	139,558	—
Razor & Tie	128,139	161,368
Total Top 100 Units Sold	47,573,613	43,239,481

Total SoundScan country sales: 1998—72.3 million; 1997—70.7 million; 1996—66.88 million; 1995—76 million; 1994—75.97 million.

*Sony 98/97: Monument—2,304,762/0; Epic—1,590,715/1,613,085; Columbia—476,639/651,669

**RLG 98/97: RCA—2,192,627/2,130,086; BNA—510,443/977,052

1998 RIAA GOLD & PLATINUM CERTIFICATIONS

LABEL: (Total Certs, Current Certs, in millions) Artist, Title, (Year of Release) Certifications

550 MUSIC (1; 1)

SOUNDTRACK, *TOUCHED BY AN ANGEL*, (98) G, P

ARISTA (6; 3.5)

BROOKS & DUNN, *GREATEST HITS*, (97) P2

BROOKS & DUNN, *IF YOU SEE HER*, (98) G, P

JACKSON, ALAN, *HONKY TONK CHRISTMAS*, (93) P

JACKSON, ALAN, *GREATEST HITS COLLECTION*, (95) P4

JACKSON, ALAN, *EVERYTHING I LOVE*, (96) P2

JACKSON, ALAN, *HIGH MILEAGE*, (98) G, P

TILLIS, PAM, *GREATEST HITS*, (97) G

ASYLUM (.5; .5)

McCANN, LILA, *LILA*, (97) G

ATLANTIC (1; 0)

CONFEDERATE RAILROAD, *CONFEDERATE*

RAILROAD, (92) P2

BNA (1; 1)

CHESNEY, KENNY, *I WILL STAND*, (97) G

McCREADY, MINDY, *IF I DON'T STAY THE NIGHT*, (97) G

CAPITOL (2; 2)

SOUNDTRACK, *HOPE FLOATS*, (98) G, P, P2

CAPITOL NASHVILLE (25.5; 14.5)

ADKINS, TRACE, *BIG TIME*, (97) G

BROOKS, GARTH, *GARTH BROOKS*, (89) P9

BROOKS, GARTH, *NO FENCES*, (90) P14, P16

BROOKS, GARTH, *ROPIN' THE WIND*, (91) P13, P14

BROOKS, GARTH, *THE CHASE*, (92) P8

BROOKS, GARTH, *IN PIECES*, (93) P8

BROOKS, GARTH, *THE HITS*, (94) P10

BROOKS, GARTH, *FRESH HORSES*, (95) P6

BROOKS, GARTH, *SEVENS*, (97) P6

BROOKS, GARTH, *DOUBLE LIVE*, (98) G, P, P12

CARTER, DEANA, *EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE ALRIGHT*, (98) G

CARTER, DEANA, *DID I SHAVE MY LEGS FOR THIS?*, (96) P4

WARINER, STEVE, *BURNIN' THE ROADHOUSE DOWN*, (98) G

CURB (10; 4)

BELLAMY BROTHERS, *GREATEST HITS VOLUME 1*, (85) G, P

JUDD, WYNNONNA, *THE OTHER SIDE*, (97) G

LOVETT, LYLE, *THE ROAD TO ENSENADA*, (96) G

McGRAW, TIM, *EVERYWHERE*, (97) P3

MESSINA, JO DEE, *I'M ALRIGHT*, (98) G

RIMES, LEANN, *YOU LIGHT UP MY LIFE*, (97) P4

RIMES, LEANN, *SITTIN' ON TOP OF THE WORLD*, (98) G, P

WILLIAMS, HANK, JR., *WHISKEY BENT & HELL BOUND*, (79) P

WILLIAMS, HANK, JR., *HABITS OLD & NEW*, (80) G

WILLIAMS, HANK, JR., *GREATEST HITS*, (82) P4

WILLIAMS, HANK, JR., *MAJOR MOVES*, (84) P

WILLIAMS, HANK, JR., *HANK LIVE*, (87) P

WILLIAMS, HANK, JR., *AMERICA*

(THE WAY I SEE IT), (90) G

WILLIAMS, HANK, JR., *PURE HANK*, (91) G

WILLIAMS, HANK, JR., *MAVERICK*, (92) G

DECCA (.5; .5)

WOMACK, LEE ANN, *LEE ANN WOMACK*, (97) G

DREAMWORKS (.5; .5)

SOUNDTRACK, *THE PRINCE OF EGYPT NASHVILLE*, (98) G

EPIC (1.5; 1)

LOVELESS, PATTY, *THE TROUBLE WITH THE TRUTH*, (96) P

LOVELESS, PATTY, *LONG STRETCH OF LONESOME*, (97) G

RAYE, COLLIN, *DIRECT HITS*, (97) P

GIANT (.5; .5)

WALKER, CLAY, *RUMOUR HAS IT*, (97) P

HEARTLAND MUSIC (.5; 0)

MURRAY, ANNE, *THE VERY BEST OF ANNE MURRAY*, (90) G

MCA (9; 4)

CLINE, PATSY, *GREATEST HITS*, (73) P8

CLINE, PATSY, *THE PATSY CLINE COLLECTION*, (91) P

GILL, VINCE, *SOUVENIRS*, (95) P2

GILL, VINCE, *THE KEY*, (98) G

McENTIRE, REBA, *GREATEST HITS VOLUME II*, (93) P5

McENTIRE, REBA, *IF YOU SEE HIM*, (98) G, P

STRAIT, GEORGE, *LEAD ON*, (94) P2

STRAIT, GEORGE, *CARRYIN' YOUR LOVE WITH ME*, (97) P3

STRAIT, GEORGE, *ONE STEP AT A TIME*, (98) G, P

STUART, MARTY, *THE MARTY PARTY HIT PACK*, (95) G

YEARWOOD, TRISHA, *WHERE YOUR ROAD LEADS*, (98) G

MERCURY (10; 6.5)

KEITH, TOBY, *DREAM WALKIN'*, (97) G

KERSHAW, SAMMY, *LABOR OF LOVE*, (97) G

TWAIN, SHANIA, *THE WOMAN IN ME*, (95) P11

TWAIN, SHANIA, *COME ON OVER*, (97) P3, P4, P5, P6, P7

WILLIAMS, HANK, *HANK WILLIAMS' GREATEST HITS*, (61) P

WILLIAMS, HANK, *VERY BEST OF HANK WILLIAMS*, (63) G, P

WILLIAMS, HANK, *40 GREATEST HITS*, (78) G, P

WILLS, MARK, *WISH YOU WERE HERE*, (98) G

MONUMENT (3; 3)

DIXIE CHICKS, *WIDE OPEN SPACES*, (98) G, P, P2, P3

RCA (7; 3)

ALABAMA, *MOUNTAIN MUSIC*, (82) P5

ALABAMA, *ROLL ON*, (84) P4

ALABAMA, *GREATEST HITS VOLUME III*, (94) P2

ALABAMA, *DANCIN' ON THE BOULEVARD*, (97) G

ALABAMA, *FOR THE RECORD*, (98) G, P, P2

GILL, VINCE, *I NEVER KNEW LONELY*, (92) G

McBRIDE, MARTINA, *WILD ANGELS*, (95) P

McBRIDE, MARTINA, *EVOLUTION*, (97) P

REPRISE (.5; .5)

PETERSON, MICHAEL, *MICHAEL PETERSON*, (97) G

UNISON (1; 0)

VARIOUS, *A COUNTRY CHRISTMAS WITH THE STARS OF NASHVILLE*, (93) G

VARIOUS, *A COUNTRY CHRISTMAS WITH THE STARS OF BRANSON*, (93) G

WARNER BROS. (4.5; 1)

DUNN, HOLLY, *MILESTONES*, (91) G

FOXWORTHY, JEFF, *GAMES REDNECKS PLAY*, (95) P3

FOXWORTHY, JEFF, *CRANK IT UP—THE MUSIC ALBUM*, (96) P

HILL, FAITH, *IT MATTERS TO ME*, (95) P3

HILL, FAITH, *FAITH*, (98) G, P

TRITT, TRAVIS, *THE RESTLESS KIND*, (96) P

SINGLES

CURB

MESSINA, JO DEE, "I'M ALRIGHT/BYE, BYE," (98) G

RIMES, LEANN, "BLUE," (96) G

RIMES, LEANN, "HOW DO I LIVE," (97) P3

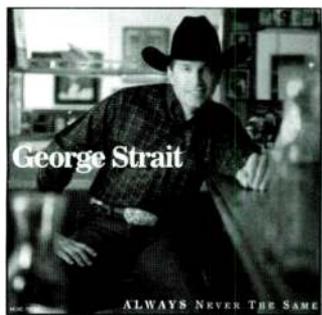
RIMES, LEANN, "LOOKING THROUGH YOUR EYES/ COMMITMENT," (98) G

MERCURY

TWAIN, SHANIA, "YOU'RE STILL THE ONE," (98) G, P

WARNER BROS.

HILL, FAITH, "THIS KISS," (98) G, P



GEORGE STRAIT
Always Never The Same

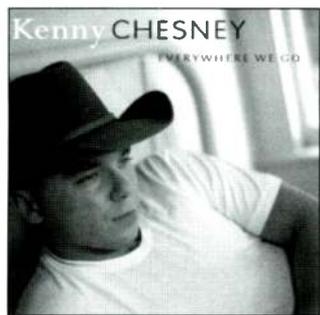
(MCA-70050) Producers:

Tony Brown, George Strait

Prime Cuts: "What Do You Say To That," "Meanwhile," "That's The Truth," "Peace Of Mind"

Critique: In this time of uncertainty, it seems we don't know what the next hot thing is going to sound like or when our favorite country artist is going to jump on the pop writer-of-the-moment bandwagon-to-hell in pursuit of crossover. Thank goodness we can count on George Strait to make a quality *country* record. *Always Never The Same* as title at first seems antithetical to Strait's route to phenomenal success—he's a beacon of artistic consistency. But like the turn-of-phrase title, Strait manages consistency without doing the same old song over and over. He somehow has always been able to stretch his artistic wings while being true to the genre and his plu-perfect musical vision. And he's *still* doing it on this, his 24th MCA album. Trend-sniffers should also note that each of those two dozen albums is at least gold; all but two reaching platinum or multi-platinum. Though hard to explain, it's something akin to the understated style of Jackie Onassis or the timeless allure of Waterford—classic style and depth of quality never go out of fashion. From the opening cut of the bittersweet "Meanwhile," we are reminded that he's a master interpreter of subtle emotional coloring. Likewise with "That's The Truth," where the depth and breadth of that marvelous voice expands from its lower register to soaring angst. He's stone country on "4 Minus 3," goes dreamy and romantic in "What Do You Say To That," and gets footloose on the string-laden wanderer's epic "Peace Of Mind." Simply, he's George, he's great, he's always never the same.

—Charlene Blevins



KENNY CHESNEY
Everywhere We Go

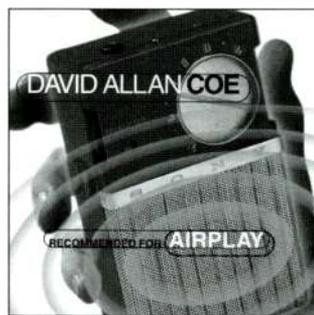
(BNA 67655) Producers:

Buddy Cannon, Norro Wilson

Prime Cuts: "Baptism," "I Might Get Over You," "You Had Me From Hello"

Critique: On this, his fifth album, Kenny Chesney has matured into a better singer with a deeper voice, yet a still readily identifiable sound. And as the second Chesney album by the production team of Wilson and Cannon, this is his best-sounding yet. So one would hope that having fielded material from the Music Row A-List writers that another emotion-packed substantive song such as the 1998 hit "That's Why I'm Here" might surface. But lightning doesn't strike twice. That's too bad, too, because while there's quite a nice variety, with material ranging from exuberant bits of pop fluff like the lead single "How Forever Feels" to anti-cheating tunes like "A Woman Knows" to the soul-cleansing, gospel-tinged "Baptism," there's too many mediocre songs for this one to be the breakaway album of Chesney's career. For every warmly warbled "You Had Me From Hello," co-written with Skip Ewing, there's a stupefying novelty like "She Thinks My Tractor Is Sexy" to gum up the works. And though the pairing of the great Randy Travis with Chesney on Mickey Cates' "Baptism" may have looked good on paper, it is not a true duet and a bit like shining a flashlight behind the sun. The song "What I Need To Do" starts out great, with an edgy, lonely feeling at its core. But this is the fairy tale world of country music where nearly every song has a happy outcome. Perhaps the writers, as well as Chesney, should've explored the darker blue highways in order to deliver a more potent album.

—Ron Young



DAVID ALLAN COE
Recommended For Airplay

(Lucky Dog) Producers: Ray

Kennedy, David Allan Coe

Prime Cuts: "Sweet Rebecca," "We Can Talk," "Drink My Wife Away"

Critique: David Allan Coe has always fancied himself one of country music's original outlaws. Certainly his long hair, tattoos and earrings were unusual for Nashville in the late 1960s where he wandered fresh out of jail. Now 58, Coe hasn't been seen much for years except in the biker bars and working class honky-tonks where the hard-core faithful continue to flock. *Recommended For Airplay* is his first major label album of new songs in nine years and encompasses bits of the entire southern musical idiom from country to blues and Dixie-fried rock. The best song is "Sweet Rebecca," a sentimental ode to his fifth wife whom he married last summer. But marriage has not made him soft—the rest of the album covers more familiar Coe territory. "Drink My Wife Away" is a reasonably clever tale of boozing and a broken marriage, while "Drink Canada Dry" drops several brand names in a celebration of his favorite participation sport. "A Harley Some Day" uses the desire to own the title bike as a metaphor for reaching for your dreams. The electric guitars crunch heaviest in "We'll Have To Pay," while Coe immerses himself in the blues in "We Can Talk" and more tepidly in "Let Me Be The One You Turn To." The most curious number is "Song For The Year 2000" which talks about transvestites, silicone implants and Michael Jackson's changing skin tone to drive home its refrain that "it takes all kinds of people to make the world go 'round." It's good to see Coe back with a solid effort.

—Douglas Fulmer

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Asylum Can And Diffie Did

Asylum Records just might be the Little Engine That Could. The label's roster is full of "baby acts," but if the two that are in this pile of platters are any indication, the label's future looks bright, indeed. Both the Mark Nesler and Monte Warden singles have all the earmarks of hit records—they're marvelously executed, with just the right mix of radio-friendly elements and audio innovations. Give that company a **Label of the Day** award.

We've all been hearing that women are in the creative driver's seat in music these days. You couldn't prove it tonight. In addition to Nesler and Warden, the contenders for **Disc of the Day** were all teeming with testosterone—Michael Peterson, Deryl Dodd, Earl Gaines, Ian Tyson, The Great Divide, Randy Travis and my winner, **Joe Diffie**.

It wasn't a great night for **DISCOVERY Award** contenders. Which is a bad sign. In an admittedly tepid field, my ears perked up to newcomers in the genres of Christian (Chasing Furies), Americana (the Big Bad Johns) and country (Julie Reeves). But it was the bluegrass field that tugged hardest at my heart. Check out sweet-singing **Jeanette Williams**. Her CD, co-produced by Union Station member Dan Tyminski, will brighten your day.

So far this year, all in all, I'm pretty dang bored, musically. Send me something exciting. I'm confident that there's a ton of good music left in this town yet. So bring it on.

COUNTRY

MICHAEL PETERSON "Somethin' 'Bout A Sunday"

Writer: Craig Wiseman/Tim Nichols; Producer: Robert Ellis Orrall/Josh Leo; Publisher: Almo/Daddy Rabbit/EMI-Blackwood/Ty Land, ASCAP/BMI; Reprise 9667.

Meditative, bluesy and oh-so relaxing. What a fabulous groove this thing has.

MARK NESLER "Baby Ain't Rocking Me Right"

Writer: Mark Nesler/Tony Martin; Producer: Jerry Crutchfield/Kyle Lehning; Publisher: Glitterfish/MCA/Hamstein Cumberland/Baby Mae, BMI; Asylum CDX.

Nifty guitar work, butt-twitchin' rhythm, a hearty lead vocal and a hooky little melody. Those are the ingredients of ear candy, folks, and it sure tastes good.

LESLIE AVRIL "Cowboy In My Bed"

Writer: Avril/MacAinish; Producer: Greg MacAinish; Publisher: Control/Mushroom, no performance rights listed; Australia Council

All the delicacy and finesse of a linebacker in a Tough Man contest.

JIM WITTER "All My Life"

Writer: Jim Witter/Steve Wariner; Producer: Chuck Howard; Publisher: Curb Songs/Baby Squared/Sony ATV/Steve Wariner, ASCAP/SOCAN/BMI; Curb CDX.

One of those bland, faceless, paint-by-

numbers Music Row love songs. An instant tune out.

JOE DIFFIE "A Night To Remember"

Writer: Max T. Barnes/T.W. Hale; Producer: Don Cook [and Lonnie Wilson]; Publisher: Curb/Kinetic Diamond II/Rob 'n Riley/Songs of Peer/Grammy, ASCAP; Epic 41907.

Wow. Inspiring delivery, killer chorus, perfect production. If this isn't a No. 1 record, there is no justice left in this industry.

JEFF DUGAN "Don't Tell Her"

Writer: Marc Beeson/Rick Bowles/Tom Johnston; Producer: Kevin Beamish; Publisher: EMI-April/K-Town/Maypop/Windecora, ASCAP/BMI; Vesscass CDX.

An awful mix. Since when do we compress and muffle the vocals in favor of the snare?

MONTE WARDEN "Someday"

Writer: Monte Warden/Mike Noble; Producer: Joe Thomas; Publisher: Warner-Tamerlane/Under the Bridge, BMI; Asylum CDX.

It kinda sounds like '60s folk-rock. Jingle-jangle guitars, echoey California harmonies and a certain Buffalo Springfield/Byrds/Beau Brummels vibe. Totally charming.

NEAL MCCOY "I Was"

Writer: Charlie Black/Phil Vassar; Producer: Kyle Lehning; Publisher: EMI-Blackwood/Flybridge/EMI-April/Phil Vassar, BMI/ASCAP; Atlantic CDX.

He sings it with verve, but is this really the best material that an act this big can find? Despite all the energy in the performance, this thing just plods.

L.J. DAYLEE "Dancing With Elvis"

Writer: R. Harbin/S. Worthington; Producer: Rob Hewes; Publisher: Kim Williams/Sony ATV/Jib-Bonk/EMI-April, ASCAP; Cactus (780-449-3784).

Is there such a thing as anti soul? She makes Tapioca seem spicy.

BILLY RAY CYRUS "I Give My Heart To You"

Writer: Walt Aldridge/Bob DiPiero; Producer: John Kelton/Keith Stegall; Publisher: Rick Hall/Water-town/Little Big Town/American Made, ASCAP/BMI; Mercury CDX.

Little vignettes of blue-collar life bubble out of the lyrics. And a whole lot of tenderness in the hook. Produced with class and sung with understated brilliance.

RANDY TRAVIS "Stranger In My Mirror"

Writer: Skip Ewing/Kim Williams; Producer: James Stroud/Byron Gallimore/Randy Travis; Publisher: Acuff-Rose/Sony-ATV/Kim Williams, BMI/ASCAP; DreamWorks CDX.

Lightly swinging, with a smile from one end to the other. A terrific little record in every way.

THE GREAT DIVIDE "San Isabella"

Writer: none listed; Producer: none listed;

Publisher: none listed; Atlantic (track)

Passion in every hillbilly drawled note. Love the ensemble playing with the high steel notes and the Mexicali guitar figures. These guys sound like my kind of act.

DERYL DODD "Good Idea Tomorrow"

Writer: Deryl Dodd; Producer: Chip Young/Blake Chancey; Publisher: BMG Songs, ASCAP; Columbia 41919.

Rootsy country honesty, with just the right amount of mule kick in the backbeat. Cool lyrics; cool performance; way cool guy.

JULIE REEVES "It's About Time"

Writer: Mark D. Sanders/Ed Hill; Producer: Scott Hendricks/Trey Bruce; Publisher: MCA/Soda Creek/Careers-BMG/Music Hill, ASCAP/BMI; Virgin 7087-6-13685.

Different. March-time accompaniment, semi-spoken vocal and offbeat lyrical approach. Send more, I'm intrigued.

CHRISTIAN

UNCLE ARVIS P. NUTT

"You Can't Get To Heaven On The Internet"

Writer: Fran Hall; Producer: none listed; Publisher: Hardy Station, BMI; Circuit Rider 15 (601-226-7299)

Utterly bizarre. A toothless geezer who sounds like a fugitive from *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* raps about the Bible and the internet. A synth track bobbles along like a drunken Eskimo. A vocal chorus drives home the point in wacky, pseudo serious harmony. It's fairly dreadful, but how can you not listen to a song with a title like this?

CHASING FURIES "Enchanted"

Writer: Sarah Meeker/Joshua Meeker; Producer: Monroe Jones/Brent Milligan; Publisher: Birdwing, ASCAP; Sparrow 1699 (track) (www.chasingfuries.com)

Her soprano swoops are underscored with ocean waves of rhythm and majestic, shimmering guitar work. Packed with audio thrills from top to bottom. Love, love, love this record.

AVALON "In A Different Light"

Writer: none listed; Producer: Brown Bannister; Publisher: none listed; Sparrow (track)

Generic dance-pop, like a Madonna record 10 years ago.

POP/ROCK

ANDY TUBMAN "Joshua"

Writer: none listed; Producer: Chris Parker/Gary Burnett; Publisher: none listed; PokeyHo (track)

Nashville popster Andy Tubman played last month's Extravaganza festival to rave reviews. This wounded-puppy tune puts him easily in league with Jewel and her ilk. Watch for Warner/Chappell to land the boy a major-label deal in short order.

RAYON CITY QUARTET "Wires And Numbers"

Writer: Cease/Garland/Greene/Perkins; Producer: Justin Niebank; Publisher: none listed; Rayon City Quartet (track)

Earlier this year I raved about this combo's track on the *Nashpop* compilation and declared them a DISCOVERY. Boy am I glad I did. In response I got a phone call and a full CD of their delightfully tuneful pop/rock recordings. The Rayon City Quartet CD is rapidly becoming a turntable fave at my house. Somebody give these guys a pile of money.

RHYTHM & BLUES**FRANK FROST & SAM CARR "Jelly Roll King"**

Writer: Frost; Producer: Fred James; Publisher: Knox, no performance rights listed; HMG/Hightone 1006 (track).

Roadhouse r&b, complete with raunchy harmonica, flailing drumkit and gritty electric guitar. Produced by Music City bluesman Fred James.

EARL GAINES "Everything's Gonna Be Alright"

Writer: Benton; Producer: Fred James; Publisher: ARC, BMI; Black Top 1150 (track)

This elder statesman of Nashville r&b still exhales soul with every breath. Producer Fred James took Earl into the studio in Music City a couple of years ago and reignited a performer who has been silent for far too long. Here he's punctuated the living legend's pipes with the Third Coast Horns and doo-wop backup vocals by himself, wife Mary-Ann Brandon and Mello Mel Owens. This is classic blues stuff, as good

and greasy as it gets. Support this man. Buy his record.

AMERICANA**STEPHEN BRUTON "Nothing But The Truth"**

Writer: T.S. Bruton; Producer: Stephen Barber; Publisher: Brutunes/Warner-Tamerlane, BMI; New West 6005 (track)

The gifted Bruton tries on a conversational blues style over a simple bass riff and drum. Spare and fascinating.

IAN TYSON "Lost Herd"

Writer: Tyson; Producer: Danny Greenspoon; Publisher: Slick Fork, SOCAN; Vanguard 79533-2 (track)

I know you're going to find this hard to believe, but a lightly jazzy sax solo, a soft cello and gentle piano notes bring tremendous atmosphere to this cowboy song. Mesmerizing and how.

EDDI READER "Kiteflyer's Hill"

Writer: Nevin; Producer: Eddi Reader/Boo Hewardine; Publisher: none listed; Compass 74265 (track)

It's pretty, but she's essentially a boring folkie wimp.

BOO HEWERDINE "Thanksgiving"

Writer: Hewardine; Producer: John Wood; Publisher: Chrysalis, no performance rights listed; Compass 74267 (track)

And here's her male counterpart.

BIG BAD JOHNS "Too Drunk To Miss You"

Writer: Detroit Dick; Producer: James

Mastro; Publisher: none listed; Feralette 98012 (track)

The bass rumbles like a subway. The singer bawls like a walrus in heat. The band roars like a trailer-park tornado. These guys kick serious butt. Programmers' alert: The f-word is mentioned in this tune.

CHRIS SMITHER "Drive You Home Again"

Writer: Chris Smither; Producer: Turner Stephen Bruton; Publisher: Homunculus, ASCAP; Hightone 8098 (track) (www.hightone.com)

There's something so dark and brooding here. It's like a wrecked car you can't help staring at on the side of the road. His poet voice is surrounded by a weave of harmonica, guitar and percussion that is spellbinding.

LUCY KAPLANSKY "A Child's Hands"

Writer: Lucy Kaplansky/Richard Litvin; Producer: Ben Wittman; Publisher: Lucyricky, ASCAP; Red House 126 (track) (www.redhouserecords.com)

Stop meandering and get to the point.

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Bob Bullock started out as a musician, but caught the bug for the technical side of recording early on. Growing up in the Long Beach area of Southern California, he and his teen-aged bandmates got it in their heads that they ought to make a demo. "One of the guys' brothers drove us to Hollywood. We just got the phone directory and went to a couple places," Bullock recalls. At random, they walked into the famous Sunset Sound, where the crew was setting up a session for the Moody Blues. After they'd had a good chuckle at this band of 15-year-old greenhorns, the engineers gave them a tour. "They had just gotten their first 8-track Ampex

recorder, and we had never seen anything like this," Bullock says. "The boards still had the big knobs, but it all seemed bigger-than-life to us." And bingo: career decision.

Formal training programs for engineers weren't common then, so Bullock hunted down apprenticeships. "I started going to Hollywood trying to get somebody to take me under their wing at the studios." He did just that, working his way up the ladder with a wide range of LA's producers and engineers. Humberto Gatica was famous for his pop music. Roy Haley was producing Blood, Sweat & Tears and Simon and Garfunkle records. Roger Nichols was Steely Dan's engineer. The late Barney

Perkins, Bullock recalls, "was the R&B engineer. I worked under him with everybody from Aretha Franklin to the Temptations to the Four Tops." The diversity was intentional. "It was a conscious effort to get as broad a training as I could," he says.

Bullock came to Nashville in the early 1980s at the invitation of Warner/Elektra chief Jimmy Bowen. Working independently since then, Bullock has contributed to the recording or production of over 50 gold or platinum records with artists that include Shania Twain, Reba McEntire, George Strait, Tanya Tucker, Patty Loveless, Billy Dean, John Anderson, and Suzy Bogguss. More recently, Bullock has added publishing and artist development to his arsenal of skills and interests. Through New West Productions, Bullock helps artists develop their voices and crafts demos for major labels. New West Music Publishing scored its first single, Sammy Kershaw's "Fit To Be Tied Down" in 1996, a year after its formation.

In the studio, Bullock focuses on atmosphere. "The most important

thing as a producer and an engineer is being able to keep harmony in the creative environment. It's a very passionate thing we do, making records. It's a real important thing not to lose your head." In many ways, the same approach applies to artist development. "It can be a cold environment for a singer out there," he says. "It requires some communications skills to be able to draw the best out of the artist."

Despite his musically diverse background, Bullock says the rather tight strictures on artists' sound set by country radio these days is more of a challenge than an obstacle. The goal, he says, is to help the artist reach his or her audience, and that there are any number of ways to make each singer or group sound unique. "Anything I can do to help a singer along with his or her vocals, which hopefully is their identity, or anything I can do conceptually mixing their record that helps give them their niche, respecting those parameters, is important."

—Craig Havighurst



Americana Supporters Respond

We've been looking at issues surrounding the Americana format, and some of its supporters have expressed dismay at the perceived negative tone of our two previous articles. So before you start thinking I'm out to cast a pall over the music, let me clear up a couple of things.



Jon Grimson

I'm a big supporter of both AAA and Americana, and have been since I first heard WNCW-FM in Spindale, NC nearly a decade ago. In those formative years, I sat on WNCW's advisory council and watched—helped, I like to think—as it grew from community college-station status to having five translators in three markets that reach more than three million potential listeners. I love this music, and I'm of the mind that the way to make things work is to identify problems and get a dialog going that might help solve them.

One of those problems we've identified is that most Americana stations, unlike AAA, do not reach major markets. That tide may be turning. KGLL in Ft. Collins, CO, which reaches into the Denver ADI, has begun to "work in" some Americana titles to its playlist in order to differentiate the station in a market that has five country signals. KGLL still plays plenty of mainstream, but has added Old Dogs, Cigar Store Indians, Trio, Rosie Flores and Dale Watson, among others. According to PD Michael Stone, "For the last 18 months this station has called itself 'cutting edge,' but was so mainstream and not really out in front musically. I got here in September, and now we're trying to be who we say we are."

KGLL's move to Americana is "only one of 30 or 40 strong possibilities" of stations in sizable markets considering the same move, says Jon Grimson, an independent promoter and one of the format's original architects. In fact, Gavin's new Americana editor, Jessie Scott, tells us she recently got an interesting call from the folks at Cumulus Broadcasting asking about the "hot" titles in the format. A call from that mega-group is likely more than mere curiosity. "I think it's just a matter of time," says Scott, "until someone gets it rolling."

Scott aims to help that, and has jumped into her new job with both barrels loaded. She's just contacted 2,300 non-reporting country stations. "I've gotten incredible response. For instance, there's a station in Atlanta that covers 90% of the ADI; they're oldies and traditional country, and they are playing BR5-49 and Steve Earle. We're uncovering stations like that and are growing our panel. We are not standing still."

Always on the move himself, Grimson

believes the major labels could be a big help to the format if they were so inclined. "We're trying to make a new format work. If Luke Lewis and Allen Butler [for instance] would be on a panel at CRS and say, 'We want this to be a format, we believe in the music, we're going to make records this way,' radio groups might be more inclined to listen. He continues, "A radio group owner has no reason, without advice from his consultants—who have no reason to want to see this happen—to program this music."

Another problem stems from the format being album based. "It's album based in terms of accrued spins," says Grimson. "There is a non-commercial and a commercial component to this format. The part that is almost 99% commercial country, they're picking songs and spinning them."

But Grimson challenges the singles-only mindset. "How many times have we heard that the 'wrong single' has been released on an artist? Then radio finally gets service on the album and realizes there are some great songs on it. I know the world loves singles, but I'd rather have a national campaign of everybody playing the same artist than have a percentage of people not playing that artist at all. Are we trying to sell albums or singles? We ought to be trying to develop artists careers."

Scott says Gavin is addressing the track vs. album issue head on. "There will, in the future, be a track chart to accompany the album chart," says Scott. "But isn't it a sad testament that we can't have a country album chart without it being attacked?"

And it's here where we get into philosophical differences. The aforementioned WNCW's PD Mark Keefe, who garnered nominations from Gavin for both PD and station of the year in both AAA and Americana formats—winning both in the latter—reminds us that Americana is an *alternative* format. "Alternative formats, at first at least, are not singles driven." Further, Keefe believes that a singles format doesn't serve the artist. "We showcase the artist," he says. "Playing just one song from an album simply doesn't represent the breadth of the artist. And besides," he admonishes, "I don't think our listeners are that single minded."

Single minded or album based, Grimson sees the format, when done properly, working. He and partner Shannon McCombs have launched a syndicated show, *This Week In Americana*, which is now on 60+ stations.

"I'm proving that it's commercially viable.

When it's programmed properly, when the host is professional, when you have access to the very best artists in the business as guests—we're proving that it works. Stations are now coming to us saying, "That song is great! Where can we get some of that?"

The issue that Americana doesn't sell is a per-market issue, according to Keefe. Whether it's the quality or quantity of his listener base, Keefe says "When we add an artist, you can see the sales spikes."

The sales issue is multi-faceted. Lucinda Williams spent years ambling along in the Americana and AAA formats, building a fan base and critical praise until Mercury New York finally figured out what to do with her. Or did the music just break through, as some believe, and Mercury put their money where the music was? The long-awaited *Trio II* sold nearly 80,000 units in its first three weeks. Steve Earle's new bluegrass disc sold more than

10,000 units its first week.

Both these albums got only Americana airplay. These products, certainly, are from the stars of the format. All have a considerable fan base, have generated lots of print and Trio and Williams have landed on key television shows. So while we can't rightfully attribute these sales numbers to Americana

radio, these artists are certainly indicative of the quality the genre offers, and show how the public, given the chance, embraces them.

Finally, Grimson reminds us the format is new—four years behind its bigger and more successful brother, AAA.

"We're not there yet. I know that. I've never hyped Americana to be more than it is. It's not big enough yet, we don't have enough success stories yet, but we must continue to cultivate it. I didn't know what was going to happen in the world of Americana when it started out. All I knew was, it's the music I love and want to be involved with. It can reach a larger audience and I'm going to do everything I can to make it happen."

The one thing that everyone does agree on, including the format's detractors, is that Americana fans—and artists, and promoters and critics—are passionate about the music. And passion does generate sales.

"...these artists show how the public, given the chance, embraces them."

RECORDVIEWS

Chris Smither/*Drive You Home Again*



(Hightone)—It's time for rejoicing in acoustic blues-land. Chris Smither reaffirms, once again, his place as a bastion of creativity and



“...make sure you're not knee-deep in supply if there's no demand.”

I more-or-less remember, must have been in about seventh grade, some mention of a rule about “supply and demand.” Near as I can recall it went something like this: If you've got demand, you definitely want to have supply so you can make a lot of money and have lots of cool stuff and take frequent, lavish vacations. You don't want to have too much supply, though. In fact, having not *quite* enough is better, so you can raise the price to an unreasonable point, thereby enabling vacations to, say, Spain as opposed to, say, Nebraska. And whatever you do, make sure you're not sitting there knee-deep in supply if there's no demand. This will preclude even a weekend trip to Omaha, as you will be standing around in front of your overstuffed warehouse, flat broke, trying to swap bits of supply for food. Back in seventh grade, this was all presented in an example involving pencils, but we were told it applies to just about everything.

Supply has become a bit of a problem in the music business. Digital technology being what it is, you can pretty much cut an album with gear purchased at a Circuit City after-Christmas sale, and pretty much everyone has. (A bartender handed me his newly-“released” CD a couple nights ago.) You've also got great little independent companies churning out records, which is a bit of an inconvenience for anyone trying to keep a large, record-selling, vacation-taking company afloat. People are cutting all kinds of music, the indies because they can and the majors because they don't want to miss the next big thing. It's great for those of us who like variety. The latest chunk of supply to hit

my disc machine includes:

Standing On The Shoulders Of Giants, from **Bill Lloyd** (Koch). Lloyd continues to prove that pop doesn't have to be a dirty word. Late-'60s/early-'70s melodies carry his crafty lyrics over some of the coolest guitar jangle in recent memory (note to whippersnappers: See, you can end phrases with ascending lines! It doesn't always have to be gloomy and suicidal! Just a thought). “Box Of Snakes” is my top pick. Lloyd & **Pat Buchanan** fill the track with hip guitars. Lloyd's vocals are clear and conversational throughout, a refreshing break from the whining/shouting that pervades most current pop. Other good 'uns: “Sweet Virginia,” “This Is The Way.” Yes, Bill, this is the way.

Sugar Town, new from **The Iguanas**, is also well worth a spin. (It's on Koch, too. Hmm...) Love the horns, love the spooky, “twist-party-meets-Secret-Agent-Man” chord progressions. (Sounds boss, man.) **Rod Hodges** and **René Coman** write with a perfect blend of sarcasm and sentiment. I especially like “Dear Walter,” “You Killed My Buzz” and “Love Terrifies Me.” Never have seen these guys live, but I'll bet they're a blast.

Stephen Bruton's been slinging sixstring for top artists for more than twenty years (hey, Stephen, was that you playing the red Strat with Kristofferson at Red Rocks back in '76?), and put out his own first indie offering in the mid-'90s. His latest, *Nothing But The Truth* (New West) shows a veteran's preference for groove over flash, leaving plenty of space for his simple but thoughtful, half-spoken poetry (imagine John Prine

going for some high notes. That's Bruton's singing). He knows greasy, though. Dial up “That's Love” and be healed. *When your gal ain't just a dish, she's a whole set of china, That's Love.*

Final thought: It might be time to mention **Without Ruth** again. The last time I brought them up, they had only a tape demo to send out. Now there's a self-produced CD (call **John Reynolds**, 615-385-2781). Still my favorite unsigned Nashville band. As vocalist, acoustic guitarist & principal writer, Reynolds is frighteningly diverse. Still, there's a sound here, a method to the band's often-theatrical madness. This is no wimpy singer/songwriter deal, though—the guys play their butts off. Two kinds of people who absolutely need to check this out; those putting music together for movie soundtracks and locals or visitors willing to scour the alt newspapers for the most interesting live show on any given weekend in Tunetown.

So there's your supply. Hopefully, some of the above will soon be enjoying a few idyllic days on a beach somewhere. Okay, maybe a cornfield. Me, I'll be staying in town until I can unload my pencil collection. ❖

[Perimeter continued from previous page]

musical connectivity. *Drive You Home Again* is all we know and love of Smither and more. His familiar acoustic slide and plywood percussion is pumped up here with a notable array of musicians that include Jon Blondel on trombone, and the eclectic Stephen Bruton on electric guitar. This one's a joy.

Michael Hedges/Torched (Windham Hill)—



This posthumous release is, quite simply, extraordinary. Hedges died in a late 1997 automobile accident and left behind this set, arranged in the sequence we're given, as a sketch of the album he intended to call *Torched*. Executive Producer Hilleary Burgess and the label's Larry Hamby chose to present the material herein just as

Hedges left them, with one exception. Hedges had sent “Spring Buds” to his pals David Crosby and Graham Nash for possible inclusion on their next CSN album, and had also asked them to sing harmonies for his own recording of the song. Nearly a year after Hedges' death, Crosby and Nash met at Jackson Browne's studio in Santa Monica to grant that wish. It's breathtaking. And while I deign to make such musings, this beautiful collection—typical from this gifted artist—is so spiritual in nature, both lyrically and musically, one can't help wonder if Hedges was mindful this would be his final gift to us. It helps when you know, too, that “torched” was a noun of Hedges' own invention used to describe a state of heightened physical/spiritual awareness to which he aspired; a state of being “on fire” with an all-consuming creative life energy. That noted, this stunning record is aptly named. *

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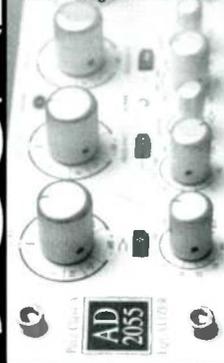
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Vintage Sounds Wed Digital Storage

To discover what people are eating, it is logical to ask a busy supermarket manager. So, *Music Row* decided to apply the same concept and ask local pro audio equipment rental managers about trends regarding Nashville's studio business.

Underground Sound Manager Mike Simmons sees an interesting blend of the old and the new being utilized to create today's sonics, and a relatively healthy studio environment. "I'm seeing a move towards the high-end digital recording realm being melded with the use of the old vintage gear," says Simmons. "Tube mics, Neve EQ preamps and similar vintage gear is being used to get the sounds, but then to store them, engineers are using high tech toys like 24-bit recording, 48 track recorders and/or hard disk recorders. The drop in activity due to the cut in country rosters and the labels' current hesitation to create and market new acts has hurt us some, but not as much as some of the other areas of the industry. While country has been consolidating, there has been a steady influx of new rock acts coming from both coasts, plus the contemporary Christian market, which is a big part of our customer base (20%), has remained healthy."

Dreamhire Manager Barry Sanders is also experiencing stable demand plus a slam dunk digital drive. "Anything and everything digital has just gone nuts," he asserts. "We're seeing a lot of activity from the most basic A-DATS to the models that run on the higher bit rate, XT-20s. ProTools systems and components are also in demand. We have so many Nashville engineers carrying their own ProTools system rigs and quite often they need an extra hard drive or 24-bit interface, so we are renting out bits and pieces as well as full systems, which are staying extremely busy. As far as I can tell, the overall studio climate in Nashville is pretty healthy. Everyone I'm talking to is as busy as they can be which is good for all of us."

Studio Instrument Rentals (SIR) Assistant Manager Dave Mehring notes that his company feels the pulse of the recording studios through its cartage and rehearsal business. "I see a lot of L.A. and N.Y. bands coming to Nashville because of the quality of the studios here in town," Mehring says. "Also on the budget side—the studios are less expensive. Nashville is a good starting place for touring bands because it is almost the geographic center of the country."

PROJECT STUDIOS

As home recording gear has gone up in quality (and down in cost), an increasing number of artists, engineers and producers have opted to set up mini-facilities and work on parts of each project in a lower-cost, private environment. This trend impacts studio and equipment rental outfits in different ways.

"It has probably *increased* our business," says Sanders. "Lots of the project studios are very well equipped, however, they are often set up for specific functions. When they have projects needing items they don't have in their arsenal they readily rent them. Because it is a project studio, it may also be a smaller space which doesn't have room for extensive outboard and/or mic selections. Therefore they usually need to supplement their inventory a little more often than some of the major commercial rooms. We also do lots of tape machine rentals to project studios where they have tapes coming in on one format and have to transfer them to another."

"These home studios need our service just as much as the bigger studios, maybe even more than some of the bigger studios," Simmons agrees. "Artists are looking at their budgets more closely and they know it is a lot cheaper to do overdubs at their home studio or their producer/engineer's home studio instead of at a big one."

SOUND vs. CONVENIENCE

When DVD Audio launches later this year, it will offer consumers the highest sonic quality ever available. At the same time, consumers seem quite excited about inferior, but digitally downloadable formats such as MP3.

"It is probably a cliché, but my perspective has always been that great music, great songs and a great artist are the main things," says Simmons. "MP3 and all the new digital opportunities give the consumer more ways to download or acquire their music, but I don't see it hurting the studio market."

"To me what is exciting about MP3 is the ability to download it through the net and then load it onto CD recorders or a Diamond Rio," offers Sanders. "The audio community is looking at the high end, but the consumer is saying, 'We want convenience—it sounds good enough for me.' I'd like to see the best of both worlds—great quality plus convenience."

TOMORROW'S (re)WINDING ROAD

Sanders reflects, "Our equipment is updating faster than ever. For example, it's not just box X, but box X with certain software updates. There is also the pressure to stay on the bleeding edge of technology. At the last AES (Audio Engineers Society) meeting the talk was all 96k/24-bit audio and people were scratching their heads. 5.1 Surround mixing is also spinning around and everyone is trying to figure out what the labels are going to want to pay for. As a rental company, our goal continues to be to determine and provide what our clients are needing to supplement their inventory."

"I'm always an optimist," says Simmons. "I think we're through the roughest time. Since the first of this year I've been feeling an upswing." ♦

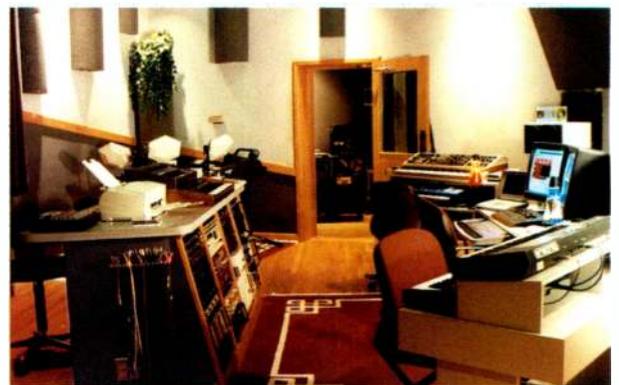
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[continued from page 6]

BUSINESS NEWS

Shelia Shipley Biddy, former GM for the recently shuttered Decca Records, has announced the formation of Shipley Biddy Entertainment, a full-service artist management and consulting company. In addition to artist management, Shipley Biddy will offer consultant services on album projects to include soundtrack coordination...



Shelia Shipley Biddy

IBM, Intel, Matsushita Electric and Toshiba have jointly announced the development of a content protection framework for Digital Versatile Disk (DVD)-Audio. The public release of this copy protection framework is the last major step enabling DVD-Audio to be commercially introduced into the marketplace this year...

Liquid Audio and Texas Instruments have announced the development of a reference design for a new generation of portable audio products. TI will deliver a hardware design using a digital signal processor which licensees can use to build compatible new portable music devices. Manufacturers adopting the reference design will be able to develop and distribute next-generation portable audio devices beginning in the third quarter of 1999...

The 3rd Annual Curb Music Business Program student leadership day will be held Friday, April 9, 1-7pm at Belmont...

NARM has launched an interactive Job Bank on their web site <www.narm.com/programs/careers.htm>...

The Annual Tin Pan South Songwriters Golf Classic is scheduled for April 12 at the Hermitage Golf Course. This year, only an afternoon round is scheduled, so the field is limited to the first 144 players to register. Deadline is March 29. 615-256-3354...

The Songwriters Guild and Foundation will present Building A Songwriting Career '99, July 23-25 at the Union Station Hotel in Nashville.

Music industry professionals will participate in sessions such as Co-Writing, Legal Issues, and Roundtable Discussions. Hit songwriters and publishers will conduct workshops including Song Critiques, Lyric Writing and Royalties. 615-329-1782...

Nashville writer/publicist **Dick McVey** has launched Nashville Hotline, a weekly radio show featuring news and artist conversations from Nashville...

Gibson Guitars held its annual guitar slinger awards February 23 in L.A. **Steve Wariner** and **Randy Scruggs** tied for Best Country Male Guitarists, **Deana Carter** won Best Female Country Guitarist and **Steve Earle** took Best Acoustic Male Guitarist honors...

IFCO has launched its Center Stage Talent Search with performances at Nashville's Castle Door on March 20, April 17 and May 8...

BelcourtYes!, a non-profit volunteer organization dedicated to exploring multi-purpose arts and entertainment uses for Nashville's vacant Belcourt Theater, is now holding organizational meetings. 615-373-8857...

Berklee College of Music in Boston held its annual Spring Break symposium in Nashville in mid-March. **Kathy Mattea**, Berklee alumnae **Gillian Welch** and **Kami Lyle**, and **Tony Brown** were among those who met with the 100 Berklee students for informal discussions and panels. Songwriters **Beth Neilsen Chapman**, **Annie Roboff**, **Mike Reid** and **Alan Shamblin** hosted clinics, and studio tours were given at The Sound Kitchen, Ocean Way and the Sugar Shack...

LABEL NEWS

Reports of the demise of Bang II Records are greatly exaggerated, according to President/CEO **Brian Jackson**, who says that Bang II is currently in final negotiations with a major label in a deal brokered by attorney **Joel Katz**. Jackson declined details except to say that Bang II would give up some interest in publishing catalogs for funding, distribution and marketing and sales support...



SRO FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION—Firefall bandleader Jock Bartley hosted a benefit concert for Suicide Prevention at Nashville's Caffé Milano last month to benefit The Oasis Center, the Jason Foundation and the Crisis Intervention Hotline. Pictured L-R: Performers David Pack, Wynonna, American Association of Suicidology Exec. Dir. Dr. Alan Berman, Bartley, Victoria Shaw and Michael McDonald. Photo: Alan Mayor

SIGNINGS

RECORDING

Mullins-Black • Atlantic
Mike Younger • Beyond (BMG)
Nancy Moore • Pinecastle

PUBLISHING

Rick Bowles (re-signed) • Starstruck
Dakotah Wade • Wooley Swamp Music
Wally Wilson • DreamWorks Music Publishing
John Jarrard, Vince Melamed, Stephany Delray, Michael Joyce, Jon Davis, Daylon Wear, Chuck Melugin • High Seas/Gershon Music Group
Jeff Hanna • Bluewater Music

BOOKING

Al Del Greco • ACTS

MANAGEMENT

Mike Younger • Chris Keaton/Bill Aucoin

TOP OF THE CHRISTIAN CHARTS

CHRISTIAN HIT RADIO

"Believe" • Newsboys • Star Song

INSPIRATIONAL

"You Are Still Holy" • Kim Hill • Star Song

ADULT CONTEMPORARY

"The Power Of A Moment" • Chris Rice • Rocketown

ROCK

"Superstar" • All Star United • Reunion

GOSPEL SALES

Nu Nation Project • Kirk Franklin • Gospo Centric

CHRISTIAN SALES

Wow 1999 • Various • Sparrow

GENERAL MARKET ALBUM SALES

Nu Nation Project • Kirk Franklin • Gospo Centric

Source: CCM Update 2/15/99. Reprinted by permission.

UPCOMING ALBUM RELEASES

ASYLUM

Lilo McCann—*Something In The Air*—Mar. 23

Jon Randall—*Cold Coffee Morning*—Apr. 27

COLUMBIA

Ricochet—*What A Ride*—July 20

DREAMWORKS

Jessica Andrews—*Heart Shaped World*—Mar. 23

Nitty Gritty Dirt Band—*Bang, Bang, Bang*—April 20

EPIC

Sons Of The Desert—*Sons Of The Desert*—May 4

LUCKY DOG

David Allan Coe—*Recommended For Airplay*—Mar. 30

Jack Ingram—*Hey, You*—May 4

VIRGIN

Julie Reeves—*It's About Time*—Apr. 20

WARNER BROS.

James Prosser—*Life Goes On*—Apr. 27

Sixteen-year-old Step One Records has been purchased by **Howard Fogle Jr.** of Edisto Island, S.C. **Ken Woods** will head the label as President. **Leslie Elliott** has been promoted to Office Manager and **Ray and Lynn Pennington** have exited the label...

Dacia D. Burns, wife of Giant Records Executive VP John Burns, passed away March 3. In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to Vanderbilt Cancer Fund, Vanderbilt University Gift Records, 201 Alumni Hall, 2101 West End Ave., Nash. TN 37240.

PUBLISHING NEWS

Headspace, Inc., an interactive audio company, has entered into a strategic joint venture with Zomba Enterprises, Inc., the music publishing arm of the Zomba Group of Companies. The venture joins Headspace's Beatnik technology and Zomba's music production library catalogs. Web site designers, creative directors, and entertainment professionals can now access an extensive range of production music libraries, make selections and license the music and sound via the internet. Additionally, Zomba has become an equity investor in Headspace through its venture capital division in Europe...

ARTIST NEWS

Amy Grant has filed for divorce from **Gary Chapman**, her husband of 16 years. A statement from Grant's record label, Myrrh, cited "irreconcilable differences..."

Dixie Chicks have signed as spokespersons with Candie's, Inc. The trio will be featured in "an irreverent series of print ads..."

Several Music City artists scored honors in the Fantastic Sam's Most Fantastic Hair Styles of Grammy Night—**Vince Gill** won Most Fantastic Do/Male; Dixie Chicks won Best Artsie Hair, and **Shania Twain** won Best Upbeat Style...

Michael Peterson recently helped out New York City's Y-107 St. Jude Radiothon by offering a free living room concert for a pledge of \$10,000. Within minutes, Peterson had two gigs...

Congressman **Bob Clement** has recommended **Kitty Wells** for a 1999 Kennedy Center Honor. Wells, who turns 80 this year, was the

first female country artist to chart a No. 1 song—"It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels..."

Hank Williams Jr. kicked off his first show in 18 months with record-setting attendance at the Houston Livestock Show in the Astrodome last month. Attendance was 56,757, breaking the first-Friday record set by Alan Jackson and LeAnn Rimes in 1997...

Ronna Reeves has parted ways with Big Fish Entertainment for artist management, but continues her association with Big Fish's publishing division Hookline East...

CMT has re-upped as sponsor of **Vince Gill's** concert tour this year. The 1999 tour, which will visit more than 70 cities through December, has enlisted **Sherrie Austin, Deana Carter** and **Jo Dee Messina** as openers on select shows...

Garth Brooks has announced he will record a prequel album to the film *The Lamb*. The film centers on a pop/rock artist named Chris Gaines, and is scheduled for a summer 2000 release. The prequel album will feature the music of Chris Gaines, as performed by Brooks. The Gaines music is classic pop/rock, but Brooks says he is not leaving country music behind, he is simply creating a character on the record. The prequel record is scheduled for release this summer...

R&R's Country Radio Readers Poll has named **Tim McGraw's** *Everywhere* Best Album in 1999. *Everywhere* won the same honor in 1998, and this award marks the first time the same album has maintained the status for two consecutive years...



Michael Peterson

Opry star **Bashful Brother Oswald** suffered an injury in a fall at his home on February 26. He was treated at Baptist Hospital and is improving...



SUNDANCE MUSIC CLUB—The Warren Brothers recently performed at the Sundance Film Festival Music Studio in Utah, and did a little star-gazing of their own. Pictured L-R: Brad Warren, Sheryl Crow, Brett Warren.

Kenny Chesney has been chosen as CMT's April Showcase Artist...

Lee Ann Womack will be the voice of Becky Thatcher in the new animated movie, *Tom Sawyer*, for MGM...

BENEFIT NEWS

The Sara Lee Classic, The Bell South Senior classic and The Vinny Pro-Celebrity Invitational have joined to offer the Triple Crown Golf Package to benefit junior golf. The Sara Lee Classic is scheduled at the Hermitage May 14-16; the Bell South Senior, June 11-13 at Springhouse and The Vinny, August 2-3 at the Golf Club of Tennessee. 615-790-7755...

The Bobby Ross Veteran Songwriter Show is set for March 24 at Douglas Corner, 9pm...

The Bellamy Brothers have licensed their 1976 hit "Let Your Love Flow" to Pier 1 Imports for use in their television commercials, and will donate part of the fees to charities including St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, The Chimp Farm and the Hardy Benevolent Trust Fund...

The Annual HoriPro Entertainment Invitational Golf Tournament is scheduled for May 10-11 at Henry Horton State Park in Chapel Hill, TN. Proceeds will benefit the Don Gant Memorial Scholarship Fund at Belmont University. 615-329-0890...

Alabama guitarist **Jeff Cook** and his wife, **Lisa**, will co-host Senator **Fred Thompson's** annual Celebrity Shoot at the Nashville Gun Club April 17. A preview party, scheduled for April 16,

ADMIT ONE	ARTIST	\$GROSS	TIX SOLD	%FULL	VENUE	CITY/ST	DATE	
	Alan Jackson, Sara Evans, Chad Brock, Clint Daniels, Danni Leigh, Andy Griggs	\$325,295	12,715	73	Palace	Auburn Hills, MI	2/13	
	Alan Jackson, Sara Evans, Chad Brock, Clint Daniels, Danni Leigh, Andy Griggs	\$173,901	7,650	64	Kiel Center	St. Louis, MO	2/12	
	Diamond Rio, Billy Dean	\$55,316	2,204	65	Star Plaza Theatre	Merrillville, IN	2/12	
	Bill Gaither & Friends Homecoming	\$603,806	40,503	82*	Ft. Worth Convention Center	Ft. Worth, TX	2/5, 6	
	Alan Jackson, Sara Evans, Chad Brock, Clint Daniels, Danni Leigh, Andy Griggs	\$161,945	8,650	55	Kiel Center	St. Louis, MO	2/12	
	The Wilkinsons	\$8,905	929	63	Wildhorse Saloon	Nashville, TN	2/5	
	source: amusement business							
	*Four shows							

will be hosted by **Gary Chapman**. Both events benefit Sugarbugs, a nonprofit support group for children with diabetes...

TV/FILM NEWS

The Collective's **Thom Oliphant** won Video Director of the Year from CMT International in both their Pacific Rim and Latin America Awards. Pacific Rim Awards tapped **Alan Jackson's** "I'll Go On Loving You" as top video and Jackson as Male Video Artist; **Shania Twain** took Female Video Artist; **Brooks & Dunn** won Duo/Group; **Faith Hill & Tim McGraw's** "Just To Hear You Say That You Love Me" won Video Event and **Dixie Chicks** were chosen as Rising Video Star. CMT Latin America awarded Shania Twain with Female Video Artist and No. 1 Video for "You're Still The One;" **Garth Brooks** won Male Video Artist, Brooks & Dunn took Group/Duo and **Reba McEntire/B&D's** "If You See Him/Her" won Video Event of the Year...



Thom Oliphant

Picture Vision has entered into an agreement with CMT to produce a series of 10 live concerts, *CMT All Access*. The recent *Girls Night Out* featuring **Martina McBride**, **Lorrie Morgan**, **Sara Evans** and **Mindy McCready** is the second in the series, with more shows to feature **Travis Tritt**, **Michael Peterson**, **Neal McCoy**, **Jo Dee Messina** and **Charlie Pride**...

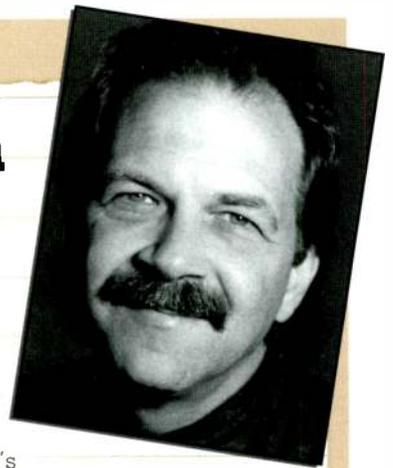
A new television drama series to be set in and around Nashville is scheduled to shoot the feature-length pilot this fall. *Deadline* is about a disgraced journalist who, after being framed following his investigation into corruption in Washington, inherits his family's small community newspaper in a small town just outside of Nashville. The series will feature a contemporary country music soundtrack and plans to regularly showcase country artists. The series creator is UK-based Jon Johanson. <soundadvice69@hotmail.com>...

TNN's Century of Country documentary series will take a look at country's early years during April. The weekly shows will include *A Night At the Opry* on April 7, *Bluegrass and Western Swing* on April 14, *Singing Cowboys* on April 21 and *Honky Tonk Nights* on April 28...

A weekly show from Nashville's Bluebird Cafe is reportedly being developed for a slot in

Writer's Notes

J. Fred Knobloch



BIRTHPLACE: Jackson, MS

YEARS IN NASHVILLE: 17

PUBLISHER: J. Fred Knobloch Music

HITS/CUTS/CHART ACTION: "Meanwhile," George Strait; "Back In Your Arms Again," Lorrie Morgan; "Used To Blue," Sawyer Brown

FAVORITE SONG YOU WROTE: "Three

Verses," recorded by Confederate Railroad

FAVORITE SONG YOU DIDN'T WRITE: Sinatra's

"Angel Eyes," co-written by Matt Dennis and Jimmy Adair

ON WHAT INSTRUMENT DO YOU WRITE? Guitar, piano and head

INFLUENCES: Everything, from great music (any genre) to great co-writers to good gumbo.

ADVICE TO WRITERS: Write what you know and feel. You don't like everything so don't expect anyone else to. Garth has sold 100,000,000 records—that means almost 6 billion people don't have one, so keep things in perspective. Keep intros, turnarounds and solos to a minimum on your demos. And most importantly, do as I say, not as I do.

LITTLE KNOWN BIOGRAPHICAL FACT: That's enough about me. Let me tell you about my kids.

ISSUES FACING SONGWRITERS TODAY: *Editor's Note: For those of you who know Fred, you know that to ask him about issues can set off a firestorm of astute observations and opinions. And even if you don't agree with him, you'll enjoy it. See Final Word, page 30.*

a new Turner Broadcasting System regional cable TV channel geared for viewers in the southeastern US. The channel will run shows and films from the Turner library, professional sports and country music-related specials...

White Star Home Video has released *Roy Orbison: The Anthology*. The video, broadcast nationally by PBS during March, features performances by Orbison and interviews with such rock luminaries as Bono and Robert Plant. 800-458-5887...

CHRISTIAN NEWS

With the ashes of the recently defunct labels Warner Alliance and Warner Gospel still warm, Warner's Atlantic Group has established the Atlantic Records Christian Division, to be headed by former Warner Resound VP/GM **Barry Landis**. Former Warner Gospel VP **Demetrus Alexander Stewart** has been tapped as VP Gospel Artists & Product Development. The new division will encompass the previous Warner Christian music catalogs, several Warner artists, and product from other Warner Group labels, in addition to new artists...



Barry Landis

Musicforce.com has acquired hiphop-zone.com, urbancross.com and gateseven.com, as well as created gospelforce.com, in an effort to expand into the gospel marketplace...

Sonic Fuel Music Sales, the alternative music marketing division of EMI CMG's Chordant Distribution, has signed an exclusive agreement to distribute Grapetree Music Group recordings to retail in the US and Canada. Grapetree Music Group, which includes Grapetree Records, Phat Boy Recordings and GT Latin, is a provider of Christian rap, hip-hop and urban music. The agreement also includes a new R&B imprint, Diamond Cut, to be released through ForeFront...

Kirk Franklin's "Lean On Me" was named Outstanding Song at the 30th NAACP Image Awards in February...

Provident Music Distribution has finalized long-term distribution agreements with New Haven Records and Cadence Communications. Both groups were formerly serviced by WEA Christian Distribution...

West Coast praise and worship label Marantha Music has left Word Distribution to sign an agreement with Portland, Oregon-based Pamplin Distribution, effective April 1. ♣

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Unforgettable McGraw & Diffie; Shania Stumbles

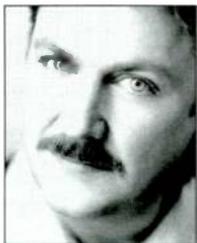
We've got a powerful new batch of singles, not the least of which is the first offering from **Tim McGraw's** next album. "Please Remember Me" boasts a stratospheric 8.89 and double the comments of its closest competitor. A sampling: "Number one requested song the day we first played it,"



Tim McGraw

marvels **Brian Jennings** at KZKX. "Anyone surprised?" Nope. Just ask **John Paul** at WYRK: "Can this guy do anything wrong?" **Bill Reed** at KXXY says, "Tim's on quite a roll. Will this be his fourth greatest hits CD in a row? He has his work cut out to try and top *Everywhere*." **Scott Bryant** at KRRV says, "Home run! Touch 'em all and tip your cap. Way to go Mark...I mean Tim." **Boomer Kingston** at KGEE says, "He's almost to the point that he could sing the phone book and it would sound good." **Kerry Wolfe** at WMIL wonders, "How does he find these great songs?" WWYZ's **John Saville** knows: "This should have been a No. 1 song when Rodney Crowell released it. Now it will be." **Jon Anthony** at WMZQ says, "I don't know which is better—Tim's vocal performance or the production. Smash!"

"A Night To Remember" looks to be a single **Joe Diffie** will remember for quite some time. To wit, **J.D. Cannon** at WFMS calls it, "The best Diffie in a long, long time." **Wolfe** says, "He's recording great material. This is what he does best." **KEEY's Gregg Swedberg** says, "Joe D. makes a career kick save and gives us his best record in at least five years. Maybe his best yet, period."



Joe Diffie

Reba's "One Honest Heart" will soon be flying up the singles charts if its 7.97 SPI score is any indication. "Now this is a Reba song," cheers **Mike Kennedy** at KBEQ. "If I could spell hallaluya I would, but I can't so I'll just gush with excitement over Reba—finally!" **WHKN's Rick Pittman** calls it, "One of the best uptempo songs Reba has done in a



Reba McEntire

THE SONG POWER INDEX

predicting new single success

MONDAY • MARCH 8, 1999 • #120				
SPI THIS WEEK	SPI LAST WEEK	ARTIST/TITLE/LABEL (# of reports)	ADD FACTOR	PASSION
8.89	•	TIM MCGRAW/Please Remember Me/Curb (36)	4.53	4.36
8.49	8.47	JOE DIFFIE/A Night To Remember/Epic (39)	4.21	4.28
7.97	•	REBA McENTIRE/One Honest Heart/MCA (37)	4.11	3.86
7.52	•	DIAMOND RIO/I Know How The River Feels/Arista (27)	3.78	3.74
7.38	7.19	MICHAEL PETERSON/Something 'Bout.../Reprise (37)	3.70	3.68
7.14	•	JOHN MICHAEL MONTGOMERY/Hello L.O.V.E./Atlantic (14)	3.64	3.50
6.63	6.74	DERYL DODD/Good Idea Tomorrow/Columbia (40)	3.33	3.30
6.56	•	SHANIA TWAIN/Man, I Feel Like A Woman/Mercury (38)	3.53	3.03
6.13	6.32	JULIE REEVES/It's About Time/Virgin (40)	3.23	2.90
5.08	5.27	CONFEDERATE RAILROAD/Cowboy Cadillac/Atlantic (37)	2.51	2.57
4.95	•	JON RANDALL/Cold Coffee Morning/Asylum (38)	2.42	2.53
4.77	4.88	GREAT DIVIDE/San Isabella/Atlantic (35)	2.40	2.37
3.61	3.92	BELLAMY BROTHERS/Some Broken Hearts/Platinum (31)	1.74	1.87
3.19	3.32	BEVERLY ELLIS/A Diamond Won't Cut It/Delta Disc (32)	1.56	1.63

SPI = Add Factor + Passion. Songs ranked by SPI points. Ties ranked according to highest Add Factor Average.

long time." **KZSN's Dan Holiday** says, "The quality of Reba's music is not what it used to be, but this song is better than 'Wrong Night.'" **D.C. Cavender** at WBYB says, "This is Reba at her best. Period. Add it!"

Combine a strong SPI number with ebullient comments from our reporters and you get excellent hit potential for **Diamond Rio's** "I Know How The River Feels." **Mare Carmody** at WGH calls it, "Flat out gorgeous." **George Wolf** at WHOK says, "These guys are so good. Wow. What a great country song." **Kennedy** adds, "I wish Ty Herndon had released this from his last album, but what the heck—Diamond Rio nails it and added a mandolin! Killer song." **Saville** says, "It's about time this became a single." **Cavender** sums, "Great instrumentation. Great vocals. Great tune. It doesn't get any better than this."

Shania Twain's customary solid SPI showing takes a bit of a hit on "Man! I Feel Like A Woman." Wondering why? You've come to the right place. Many love the tune. **Cavender** says, "This is a song listeners have continually requested. Glad to see Nashville comply.



Shania Twain

It's pure Shania." **Wolf** says, "Man, I love this song. You can argue about whether or not it's country, but this is what the audience expects from Shania, and they want to hear it." There are detractors, however.

"I saw the Grammy performance," says **Ted Turner** at WUSW. "If I were in a strip club that would impress me. But, where's the country?" **Bill Hagy** at WXBQ inquires, "Are they going to release every cut on the CD to all formats?" **Dave Steele** at WBYT says, "Despite her public complaints about being a rich superstar, who can argue she's got something the people want? Sounds like 'I Feel Like A Woman' is another hit...and another reason for Shania to complain." **Holiday** says, "I'm very open to trying new things—it's what keeps country music exciting. This song may be pushing the envelope farther than any of Shania's previous singles. Ultimately, we're going to have to let the audience decide if this is what they want."

Swedberg cautions radio not to turn its back on the superstar. "I can hear the naysayers now saying this isn't 'country,' but Shania is, and will be country, until country radio gives her up. I know my audience expects Shania on my station and I will not let them down. Besides, this song smokes!" ♣



WRITERS EMBRACING THE BEAST

by J. Fred Knobloch [continued from *Writer's Notes*, page 28]

The single most important issue that will always face songwriters is just and timely compensation for their works. A bureau of standards and practices should be convened with representatives from all affected parties to monitor accounting statements from the various labels and publishers to better inform writers of what information is on the statements and what that information means. Are you sure you're getting full statutory rate? If not, then why? Is this a crazy idea? If so, then why?

The proliferation of music in new markets (read: the internet) means great things for us, but only if songwriters are allowed to take their rightful place at the negotiating table with all other parties involved: PROs, the RIAA, Internet Service Providers (ISPs), broadcasters, licensing and collection agencies, computer and digital audio hardware/software manufacturers and all others, foreign and domestic, who have a financial interest in the exploitation of intellectual property.

Songwriters should not find any solace in the Copyright Term Extension to Life+70 years. The writers of today paid for 20 more years of "Mickey Mouse" with our restaurant money. The Fairness In Music Licensing bill that passed last year set a dangerous legislative precedent. I do believe in the Free Market—I just don't think I ought to bring songs to market and give them to you for free.

As writers, we must step up to the plate and be aware of the issues, know our facts, stake our position and be ready and willing to compromise. Because of the current nature of technological change, we must be fluid in our thinking. The old truths are still true today—a great song is still a great song. But getting compensated for that great song may become a tiresome exercise of multiple formats and slips through the cracks, with royalties being held in escrow for long periods of time while the courts pass judgment on issues that will likely fall, rightly or wrongly, to the side that has the most money or the better ability to wait out the situation. No one has to tell me how that will shake out for someone who makes 7.1 cents a copy (divided by two if you co-wrote and co-published it).

The old truths are still true but the old ways of doing business are about to undergo sweeping changes in the near term. Think of what a studio was like, or even what your TV was like 15 years ago. I bet you couldn't tell me what year you got your first fax. Hell! MIDI is almost thirty years old!

The past 20 years have been mercurial, but nothing to compare with what is going to be possible soon. And rather than being apprehensive about it, songwriters should welcome the opportunities and embrace the beast about the neck and shoulders and give that ugly som'bitch a big ol' hug and a kiss.

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INDUSTRY EVENTS CALENDAR

MARCH

- 24—**30th Annual Dove Awards Show**, Nashville Arena, Nashville, TN 615-780-3312
 25-28—**LMNOP: The Music Conference in New Orleans** www.offbeat.com/lmnop or 504-592-9800
 30—**Artist Imaging**; NARAS Professional Education Seminar, 3-5pm, Nashville, TN 615-327-0852

APRIL

- 12—**Journey of Hope—Benefit for Reconciliation** featuring Steve Earle, Jackson Browne, Indigo Girls; Ryman Auditorium, Nashville, TN 615-255-9600
 13-17—**Tin Pan South**, Various Venues, Nashville, TN 615-256-3354
 18-21—**Gospel Music 1999**, Nashville Convention Center, Nashville, TN 615-780-3312
 22-24—**University of North Alabama's George Lindsay TV & Film Festival**, UNA, 205-765-4225
 27—**Media's Role in Music**; NARAS Professional Education Seminar, Nashville, TN 615-327-0852
 29-May 2—**Crossroads '99**, Memphis, TN

MAY

- 5—**ACM Awards**, Universal Amphitheatre, Universal City, CA
 18—**Buying & Selling Music Catalogs**, NARAS Professional Education Seminar, 3-5pm, Nashville, TN 615-327-0852
 19-22—**EAT'M Music Conference**, Las Vegas, NV
 20-21—**AFIM**, Atlanta, GA

JUNE

- 10-12—**NXNE Music & Industry Conference**, Toronto, ON 512-467-7979

JULY

- 23-25—**The Songwriters Guild and Foundation's Building A Songwriting Career '99**, Union Station Hotel, Nashville, TN 615-329-1782

SEPTEMBER

- 22—**33rd Annual CMA Awards**, Nashville, TN

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