



**O**n the way to being ranked in Country Aircheck's reader-voted Power 31, the folks who influence Airplay decisions and those who shape the Artists and Music fueling that airplay hit a few milestones. This year, we asked them to put together a playlist – a mixtape, if you will – of the music that marks pivotal moments in their personal and/or professional lives. After all, everyone's a programmer.

**AIRPLAY**

**ARTISTS/MUSIC**

**1 ROD PHILLIPS**  
iHeartMedia  
EVP/Country Programming Strategy



- **Tim McGraw/Telluride:** This lesser-known song might be the actual reason I turned into a true fan of country music. How was this not a hit?
- **Shania Twain/When You Kiss Me:** Our wedding song ... 'nuff said.
- **Trace Adkins/Just Fishin':** Instantly gives me all the feels of the love you can only have for a daughter. She is special, and so is this song.
- **Zac Brown Band/Homegrown:** Still my jam and feels like the soundtrack to my life right now living in Brentwood, TN.
- **Luke Bryan/Drink A Beer:** We had an iHeart event with Luke on my very first day on the job as Brand Manager. What a song!

**2 ROYCE RISSER**  
UMG/Nashville SVP/Promotion



- **Billy Joel/My Life:** My introduction to the music my older brothers and sisters loved. I was probably eight or nine and had several Joel albums memorized word for word.
- **John Travolta/Greased Lightning:** Listened to the *Grease* soundtrack on vinyl repeatedly for hours. Saw the movie 10 times in the theater. Olivia Newton-John was my first crush. Still kind of have one for Sandy.
- **Styx/Too Much Time On My Hands:** The first band I locked into of my own accord. Loved them, still do, and saw them in concert last year for the first time.
- **The Alarm/The Stand:** My favorite band in high school. As close to obsessed as I've ever been. Followed them for a three-day concert run in Southern California.
- **Vince Gill/I Still Believe In You:** I had just started answering phones at MCA when this came out. Honestly, it was the reason I locked into this job and decided to make it a career.
- **George Strait/Easy Come, Easy Go:** The song and album that pulled me in further and solidified my decision to stick it out in the music business.

**1 MIKE DUNGAN**  
UMG/Nashville Chairman/CEO



- **The Beatles/I Want To Hold Your Hand:** It changed everything, didn't it? It sure did for me.
- **Jimi Hendrix/Hey Joe:** Brooding. Cool. Dark. Dangerous. Life (and music) would never be the same.
- **Foster & Lloyd:** What kind of crazy hillbilly shit is this?!
- **Rodney Crowell/Above And Beyond:** Maybe I should move there.
- **Alan Jackson/Here In The Real World:** Perfection. I am home.
- **Al Green/Love God (And Everyone Else):** I watched a terrible movie called *Michael* on an airplane, but the soundtrack was good, and this end title monster was (and still is) the most uplifting thing I have ever heard. Hallelujah, I am going to be ok!

**2 SCOTT BORCHETTA**  
Big Machine Label Group President/CEO



- **Alice Cooper/18:** I left home at 18, and the adventure to figure out my life began.
- **Waylon Jennings/Are You Sure Hank Done It This Way?:** In 1981, I came to visit my dad in Nashville from SoCal, and Waylon and Willie had the first country music that made sense to me ... and made me want to know more. I never moved back to LA.
- **Lynyrd Skynyrd/Working For MCA:** My first "real" record company gig started January 16, 1991. Operation Desert Storm launched the next day. I went to MCA and started a war. We dominated. MCA had never been "Label of the Year," as Joe Galante's RCA were the ones to beat. We did just that from the first year I was there until the day I got fired in 1997.
- **The Rolling Stones/Shattered:** I was lucky. Within 48 hours of being fired from MCA, I had serious inquiries from DreamWorks, Disney/Lyric Street and Sony. I had over a year left on my MCA contract and wanted to spend every dollar they owed me. So between label meetings and ultimately choosing DreamWorks, I went racing, courtesy of those MCA paychecks.
- **Reba/Till You Love Me:** I met my wife Sandi while working at MCA. She was Reba's personal stylist and designer. When I would go out on Reba tour dates as part of the MCA team, Sandi and I would meet side stage just before this song and slow dance.
- **Velvet Revolver/Big Machine:** Loud, aggressive, a little bit crazy. Explains a lot.

# WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE | PHOTOSHOOT "WE"



CHRIS JANSON

1 → 1A



HIGH VALLEY

2 → 2A



ASHLEY MCBRYDE

3 → 3A



TROY CARTWRIGHT

7 → 7A



KENNY CHESNEY

8 → 8A



BEXAR

9 → 9A



WALKER COUNTY

13 → 13A



CHARLIE WORSHAM

14 → 14A



THE WILD FEATHERS

15 → 15A



TUCKER BEATHARD

19 → 19A



MICHAEL RAY

20 → 20A



INGRID ANDRESS

21 → 21A



THE LAST BANDOLEROS

25 → 25A



RANDALL KING

26 → 26A



DEE WHITE

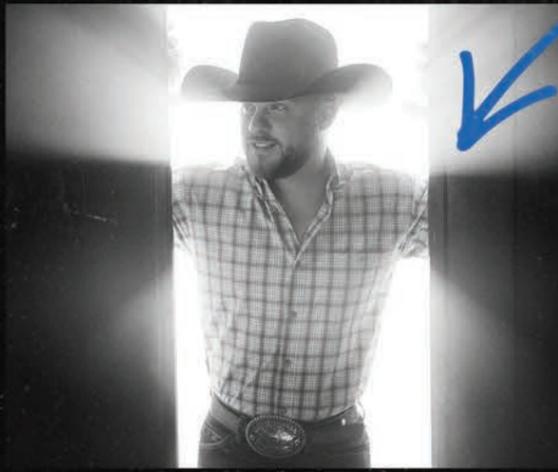
27 → 27A

ARE FAMILY"



DEVIN DAWSON

4 → 4A



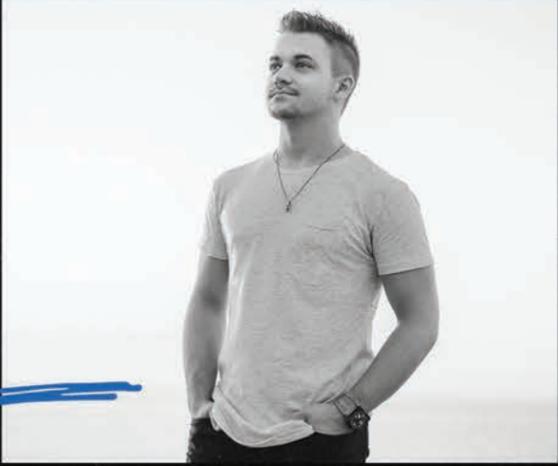
CODY JOHNSON

5 → 5A



BLAKE SHELTON

6 → 6A



HUNTER HAYES

10 → 10A



TEGAN MARIE

11 → 11A



COLE SWINDELL

12 → 12A



BRETT ELDREDGE

16 → 16A



TYLER BRADEN

17 → 17A



RYAN GRIFFIN

18 → 18A



CALE DODDS

22 → 22A



MORGAN EVANS

23 → 23A



DAN + SHAY

24 → 24A



TREA LANDON

28 → 28A



GABBY BARRETT

29 → 29A



RANDY TRAVIS

**AIRPLAY**

**3 KRISTEN WILLIAMS**  
Warner Music Nashville  
SVP/Radio & Streaming



- **Billy Joel/Uptown Girl:** I remember my mom playing Michael Jackson, Diana Ross and The Supremes and loving all of them, but Billy Joel – and this song specifically – was truly my introduction to music. It made me feel something and sparked my love of music forever.
- **BlackHawk/Goodbye Says It All:** In eighth grade I had a big crush on one of the junior high varsity basketball players. I was sitting behind him on the bleachers one afternoon and asked what he was listening to. Turns out it was BlackHawk, and thus my love of country music was born. I then found Little Texas, Garth Brooks, Faith Hill and more ... and never turned back.
- **Alan Jackson/Gone Country:** At 19, I packed my bags and moved from Baxter, MN to Nashville to study music business at Belmont University. It was 1999, and I loaded up my Alan Jackson, Tim McGraw and Kenny Chesney CDs and made the 1,000-mile, 15-hour journey south in my red Honda Civic. The decision to “go country” was life-changing in every way.
- **Blake Shelton/Some Beach:** This was my very first radio add (WUSN/Chicago) as the Midwest Regional for Warner Bros. I remember the rush of getting that commitment and being able to tell the team what I had accomplished. I've been working at Warner Music Nashville in this crazy business of record promotion for 16 years, and you never forget your first.

**4 TIM ROBERTS**  
Entercom Country Format Captain  
Entercom/Detroit VP/Music Programming, WYCD PD



- **George Strait/Amarillo By Morning:** First concert I booked after graduating was with KVOP/KATX, George Strait with special guest Younger Brothers at Wayland Baptist University Arena in Plainview, TX. Since we lived in West Texas, this song meant a lot. Show sold out 10,000 seats in 10 minutes.
- **Randy Travis/On The Other Hand:** I was fortunate to be in the Carolinas when Randy came out of nowhere and became the biggest artist in the format. We played this song at WKKT/Charlotte before he signed to Warner, then they re-released it.
- **Garth Brooks/Friends In Low Places:** Garth made his debut at the *Hoedown* here in 1989 and blew away fans this year by returning as a surprise guest 30 years to the day later. I also remember playing the song in my CD player and calling then-SVP/Promotion Bill Catino at Capitol to tell him it's the best country song I've ever heard and will be Song of the Year!
- **Kenny Chesney/All I Need To Know:** He played the whole album for me in a hotel room with my wife Lori (then my MD) and asked us what we thought of it all. “Fantastic!” we yelled ... ‘cause it was!
- **Taylor Swift/Tim McGraw:** We were the earliest major market believer, and a few years later when she headlined at the Palace, VP Jack Purcell took us to a small area at the back of the venue. Taylor came out and sang the song to me, Lori and our daughter Kelcie as a thank you. Very special, magical music moment.
- **Luke Bryan/All My Friends Say:** We had him play *Hoedown* when no one had ever heard of him, and we became friends. Had so many good times with him on the club scene – you never forget those.
- **Kid Rock/All Summer Long:** Not surprising, we were the first Country station to play it, and it summarizes everyone's childhood in Michigan in some way. We played it about 1,500 times before everyone else clued in. Loved when it showed up as the No. 1 gold song in Country a few years later. Ain't no party like a Detroit Party!

**5 STEVE HODGES**  
Sony/Nashville EVP/Promotion & Artist Development



- **Hank Williams, Jr:** Hank helped me discover country music and its powerful sonics and lyrics way back in 1980. It's now 2019, and I'm still in awe of the important lyrics and moving music I get to experience daily. I'm more than blessed and grateful for having a small part in many artists' first No. 1s and stadium tours. There's nothing more special in our world than three minutes of emotional magic that mark a time stamp moment in our life.

**6 CHARLIE COOK**  
Cumulus VP/Country  
Cumulus/Nashville OM, WSM-FM/Nashville PD



- **Bob Seger/East Side Story:** In high school we would find our way to the Hideout in East Detroit to see Seger, my first rock and roll hero. Admission was 50 cents. This was his first single ... on Hideout Records ... and a big Detroit hit.
- **Freddie Hart/Easy Loving:** This was the first, or close to first, country song I played on the radio, without knowing it was a country song. Heck, at that point I knew nothing about country music. (Royce Risser: do not say it.)
- **Steve Wariner/The Weekend:** I do not like boats and I do not remember her name, but the song has touched every guy at some point.
- **Years and years of country music:** It is so well written that I stop 10-20 times a year and marvel at the lyrics and how songs are built. Every week, I keep looking for the next special song.

**7 JOHN MARKS**  
Spotify Head of Country Music



- **Roy Orbison/Pretty Woman:** The song that made me want to be in the music business. I was just a kid, but hearing that drum intro with the guitar and Orbison's voice left a major impression.
- **Florida Georgia Line/Cruise:** The history-making song created a seismic shift in the country landscape.
- **Country Music - A Film by Ken Burns/Deluxe Soundtrack:** The documentary and music contained within are a dramatic reminder of the greatness of our history and future.

**ARTISTS/MUSIC**

**3 RANDY GOODMAN**  
Sony/Nashville Chairman/CEO



**4 JOHN ESPOSITO**  
Warner Music Nashville Chairman/CEO



- **Blake Shelton/Hillbilly Bone:** The day I met Scott Hendricks, he handed me this on a disc and said, “Welcome to Nashville, here's your first No. 1 record.” Not only was he right, but it was the beginning of building this wonderful label we call Warner Music Nashville into something much stronger.
- **Kenny Chesney/Get Along:** Kenny believing in us and leaving his home of 23 years because of his love of our musical sensibility and passion was the next milestone and an indication we really had arrived.
- **Jason Mraz/The Remedy (I Won't Worry):** As the new President of WEA, I fell in love with Jason's debut album. I went to a show and saw the audience singing every word, despite the fact that we had only sold 20,000 albums, and this was long before music was easily accessible on the Internet. I thought, *We have to throw some fuel on this fire.* So I started an “adopt the artist” program at WEA. I made sure everybody in the company knew we had to turn every rock over for this artist. Elektra's Greg Thompson was a very integral and important partner in this process, and I am so proud our commitment paid off. The song flew up the charts, propelling the album north of 1.5 million units.
- **Bruce Springsteen/Kitty's Back:** I realized the magic of Bruce the night in 1973 I heard *The Wild, the Innocent & the E-Street Shuffle* for the first time. This might be my favorite from the album.
- **Frank Sinatra/What Is This Thing Called Love:** Listen to everything from the Capitol years, and you'll understand. When he was in full command vocally, he owned the world. My desert island disc – and I truly mean that, if I only got one record to listen to for the rest of my life – is *In the Wee Small Hours.* Listen to this one and tell me you didn't get moved.

**5 CINDY MABE**  
UMG/Nashville President



**6 JON LOBA**  
BBR Music Group EVP



- **Garth Brooks/The River:** After graduating from college with a finance degree, I asked God to give me a sign on whether I should go to New York for finance (money) or Nashville for music (passion). This came on almost immediately. A couple weeks later, I packed my bags and headed south.
- **Alabama/Mountain Music:** When I was 10, we moved from Los Angeles to a huge farm in Michigan. While I enjoyed all that small town farm life provided, I was the hip/cool kid from Cali and refused to listen to country. I so wanted to see Rick Springfield at the Ionia Free Fair. My Mom refused, thinking he was too salacious (go figure) and instead bought tickets to a new country group I had never heard of. I gave in under threat of grounding and am so thankful she strong-armed me. That show and this song made me fall in love with country music.
- **Guns N' Roses/Sweet Child O' Mine:** I may or may not have “become a man” during this song, if you know what I mean.
- **Skid Row/Piece Of Me:** My Nana, who I was incredibly close to, slipped into a coma after suffering a diabetic episode (all that pasta is *NOT* good for your health) when I was in college. I flew out to LA to visit her in the hospital. My little sister Renee – a huge Skid Row fan – was out there as well. She got tickets to this video shoot at The Reseda Country Club and asked me to go. While we were waiting to get into the club, casting directors pulled me out of line to be a “thug” rioting over a police car in the opening scene (I think since deleted because my acting was so bad). That song and video always bring me back to that week and how special the quiet time in the hospital with Nana was, holding her hand for hours. She couldn't say a word, but I know she knew I was there and felt my love for her as much as I felt hers.

**7 JIMMY HARNEN**  
BMLG Records President/CEO



- **Toby Keith/How Do You Like Me Now?!** As the Northeast rep for DreamWorks, I played this song for every radio person in my region while passionately promoting the album's first single “When Love Fades,” which unfortunately received a lukewarm response from fans and radio. Toby and I were sitting at Pat's Cheese Steaks in Philadelphia after a show for WXTU when he asked if I thought we could get every station on the current single – or more – on this if we flipped to it as the single. Without really thinking about the impact of my answer, I confidently said, “Absolutely!” Toby called James Stroud and Scott Borchetta to update them on our conversation. You can imagine what Scott thought of my somewhat impetuous response. He called me later in the day and very respectfully and calmly said, “James, I assume you will accomplish this goal in your region on the first week?” I had no choice but to say, “Absolutely!” Thank the Lord, I ended up getting every one of my stations (except one) to play this week one, and it went on to be a five-week No. 1.
- **Trace Adkins/Honky Tonk Badonkadonk:** When his song “Arlington” fell off the chart after reaching top 15 because PDs of stations near military bases were getting calls that listeners didn't want to think about a loved one not coming home, this was the follow-up. The initial response was horrible. Comments varied from, “I'll play Elvis before I play this!” to “This is a joke, right?!” Naturally, I thought my career was over. If we missed on two songs in a row from Trace, I was confident Mike Dungan would show me the door. Praise God, again, it was No. 1 most added its first week and went on to sell millions of singles and albums. A big shout out to Fletcher Foster who came up with the idea of doing a dance mix of the song, which made the video hugely popular.
- **The Band Perry/If I Die Young:** I was probably the loudest voice in the room suggesting we go with “Hip To My Heart” as the first single. Questions about the subject matter made me very apprehensive. I was wrong. Scott, Kelly Rich and I came up with giving the song away free as iTunes' Single of the Week while still promoting “Hip To My Heart.” We ended up with 478,000 free downloads, creating so much excitement that fans were creating their own cover videos and posting them to Facebook. As the second single, it lost its bullet twice, but went on to No. 1, CMA Single and

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Source: Nielsen Audio, Nationwide, FA'18 vs. FA'17, Exact Times, AQH Q3 2019 vs Q3 2018 Affiliate List

**8 CARSON JAMES**  
BBR Music Group SVP/Promotion



- **The Beatles/She Loves You:** I remember sitting in our den in Oceanside, CA when I was six and seeing them on *The Ed Sullivan Show* for the first time. That's when the music bug hit me, and I've never looked back. I distinctly remember my mother saying, "Look how long their hair is!"
- **Queen/Killer Queen:** I was a high school senior when *Sheer Heart Attack* was released. The combo of incredible vocal melodies on top of Brian May's monstrous guitar riffs was inspiring.
- **Rush/2112:** Playing bass in a band, I was never more challenged than when I heard Geddy Lee play for the first time on this album.
- **George Jones/He Stopped Loving Her Today, Ricky Skaggs/Country Boy:** I had just come off the road playing with a rock band for the past 10 years. I had to have a job, so I got one at a local Country station in Greenville, AL. I was never a fan of the format until I heard these two songs. I've been a P1 ever since!

**9 KATIE DEAN**  
MCA SVP/Promotion



- **Heart/Barracuda:** Picture Christmas, 1985, Palatine, IL. Santa brought me a Sears Roebuck stereo with a dual cassette deck. My grandparents knew I liked Heart and gave me some of their older albums on cassette. The first thing to ever be blasted out of those speakers at max volume was the opening riff to this, thus cementing my continuing shero worship of the band.
- **Mary Chapin Carpenter/Goodbye Again:** I saw her on *Austin City Limits* when I was in high school and couldn't get to the mall record store fast enough to buy *State Of The Heart*. I credit this song and my dad wearing out Rosanne Cash's *King's Record Shop* album as my gateway drugs to the country format.
- **Josh Turner/Hometown Girl, Jordan Davis/Take It From Me:** I have been super fortunate to play a part in a lot of No. 1 singles during 14 years at UMG, but these two hard-fought battles really encapsulated the scrappy MCA promo family team dynamic I love so much. The group text threads were epic and hilarious, though maybe not suitable for print. In all seriousness, No. 1 runs can be draining on both radio and record people, but ringing the bell really does change people's lives, and it's so gratifying to be able to celebrate those successes with everyone who makes it happen.
- **Sugarland/Stay:** I totally stained my nephew's first birthday party during this No. 1 battle. We woke up about 80 points behind, and I was driving to North Carolina to see my family. My dad literally dog cussed me for working during the birthday party as we were closing the gap. By 11pm that night, my whole family was watching real time on the home computer as we started trading paint for No. 1. I was up until 3am, texting with Damon, waiting for the chart to close. We were all exhausted by the end of it but pulled out the win by 14 points.

**10 KURT JOHNSON**  
Townsquare SVP/Programming



- **Eli Young Band/Crazy Girl:** First song I added at Townsquare.
- **Frank Sinatra/New York, New York:** The staff did a Rockettes kick line to this at the first of our many No. 1 ratings parties in NYC.
- **All Justin Moore songs:** Because Briner's grinding me on those has brought us closer together.
- **Reo Speedwagon/Can't Fight This Feeling:** Was No. 1 when Terri and I got engaged. The most pivotal event in my career or life.

**11 BECKY BRENNER**  
Albright & O'Malley & Brenner Consulting Partner



- **Barbara Streisand as Fanny Brice/Rain On My Parade:** I was so fortunate that my parents loved music and dancing. My Mom also loved musicals, and *Funny Girl* was one of her favorites. At 10 years old I saw that movie and heard this. My rose colored glasses, eternal optimism and determination came from inspirational tunes like this one.
- **Trisha Yearwood/The Song Remembers When:** The first time I heard it, so many amazing memories rushed back into my head – happy and sad. It made me appreciate all of the music I listened to the first 35 years of my life. Encapsulates what music means, similar to David Nail/Phil Vassar's "Sound Of A Million Dreams."
- **Tim McGraw/Live Like You Were Dying:** So powerfully written and such an anthem for appreciating what you have and making the most of the life you were given. You hear it and can't help saying, "Hell yeah, I'm telling every special person in my life I love them, then getting that bucket list out and getting it done."
- **Artists of Then, Now and Forever/Forever Country:** I have heard this and seen the video 30+ times, and I still get tears in my eyes. I played, and loved, all three of these songs on the radio when they were new. This powerful montage showcases the depth and breadth of what our format contributes to people's lives. If it doesn't move you, you're not human.

**12 JEFF GARRISON**  
Cox Country Format Leader  
San Antonio Dir./Operations, KCYY PD



- **Jamey Johnson/In Color:** Came at a time when I had lost my Dad, and its story reflected his life. Also the first song I have ever called the label about to say it should be nominated for a Grammy.
- **Perfect Stranger/You Have The Right To Remain Silent:** Dene Hallam and I found the song on CDX. After Dene launched it on air, the band got a deal on Curb. Ironically, I had played golf with their drummer Andy Gin. We both grew up in Nacogdoches!
- **Brooks & Dunn/Believe:** A song my Dad and I loved. We played it at his funeral and it always reminds me of him and his faith.

**13 GATOR HARRISON**  
iHeartCountry Brand. Coord.  
iHeartMedia/Nashville SVP/Programming

- **Jesus Loves Me:** First song I ever learned and still my favorite to sing. #GodFirst

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- Song trophies and the band took home Best New Artist at the ACMs. To date, it is the fourth most downloaded song in the history of country music.
- **Florida Georgia Line/Cruise:** Unless you have been on the moon for the last seven years, there's no need to explain why this highlights a pivotal moment in my life and career. Aside from all of the record breaking stats and success, it's the friendships we all have built with Brian, Tyler and team FGL that have truly touched our lives.
- **Jimmy Harnen with Synch/Where Are You Now:** Three minutes and forty-two seconds that changed my path forever. I will never be able to thank my mom and dad enough for letting their crazy son skip graduate school to chase his dream. This song and the journey it took me on during its first release in 1986 – and then again in 1989 when it went to No. 3 AC and No. 10 on *Billboard's* Hot 100 – gave me a Harvard-like education in the music business. The song has also introduced me to so many amazing radio and music industry executives. And of all titles for a "one hit wonder" to have!

**8 SHANE MCANALLY**  
SmackSongs Owner, Monument Records Co-President



- **Glen Campbell/Southern Nights:** It's the first song I remember hearing. I was in my mom's Monte Carlo with red vinyl seats, it was hot, the windows were down and I just wanted to hear it over and over and over. I still feel that way about that song.
- **George Strait/Easy Come, Easy Go:** I was a teenager playing music in Texas and this sentiment really hit me. The idea that you would end a relationship and both know it was for the best. I have chased this song as a songwriter most of my career. It's so sad, but it's got this underlined "I don't give a damn-ness" that makes you wanna drink.
- **Goo Goo Dolls/Iris:** The first two lines of the chorus, "I don't want the world to see me, cause I don't think that they'd understand." I was 23 years old and so afraid of people finding out that I was gay. I know that's not what the song was written about, but it said everything I was feeling.
- **Eddy Arnold/You Don't Know Me:** This song has been recorded by almost every legend in music, and there's a reason for it: "To you I'm just a friend, that's all I've ever been ... but you don't know me." This made me want to write songs.

**9 SCOTT HENDRICKS**  
Warner Music Nashville EVP



- **Restless Heart/I'll Still Be Loving You:** One of the biggest songs of the '80s and one of the first to crossover.
- **Alan Jackson/Don't Rock The Jukebox:** Randy Travis and Alan brought our format back towards the center with songs like this.
- **Brooks & Dunn/Neon Moon:** I never grow tired of this melody. Classic for all time.
- **Faith Hill/Wild One:** I'm still looking for another song like this that speaks to every parent and their kids.
- **John Michael Montgomery/I Swear:** Maybe the biggest crossover song of the '90s.
- **Blake Shelton/God's Country:** Simply an amazing song that speaks to every person and will stand the test of time.

**10 KERRI EDWARDS**  
KP Entertainment Owner/President



- **Willie Nelson/Pretty Paper:** As a kid and even into adulthood I remember my Dad singing this as loud as he could trying to sound like Willie. Brings a smile to my face.
- **Dolly Parton/9 To 5:** Every girl across the country sang this at the top of their lungs pretending to be Dolly. Okay, maybe I still do, and throw in a little "Two Doors Down" and I'm done!
- **Tina Turner/What's Love Got To Do With It:** My first concert. I was in junior high.
- **Bon Jovi/You Give Love A Bad Name:** High school anthem; have seen them 14 times. Yep!
- **Brooks & Dunn/Rock My World Little Country Girl:** They invited all the females at the label to sing on this, so I was officially big-time to my parents.
- **Luke Bryan/Roller Coaster:** Co-written by clients Cole Swindell and Michael Carter, so three of my best friends on one body of work. I never get tired of hearing it.

**11 CLARENCE SPALDING**  
Maverick Management President



- **Tina Turner/Missing You:** Huge fan. Ike and Tina's *Workin' Together* was the first album I ever bought.
- **Al Green/Tired Of Being Alone:** Are you kidding? Al "Fucking" Green, 1975 – the year I graduated high school.
- **Willie Nelson/My Heroes Have Always Been Cowboys:** The start of my love of country.
- **Mike Reid/Call Home:** One of the first singer-songwriters I ever managed.

**12 DANN HUFF**  
Producer



- **Bill Withers/Grandma's Hands:** *Live At Carnegie Hall* was the first album I owned as a teenager that rarely left my turntable. Thankfully, I was exposed to this soulful record early in my musical life. It has affected every bit of music in my career.
- **Foreigner 4:** I heard this album at 21 when I began my career as a session player in Nashville. The songwriting and production (Mutt Lange) were as good as it gets in commercial rock music. The first power chord in "Juke Box Hero" changed my life. I owe Mutt a debt of gratitude for the education I received listening to everything he recorded and, 20 years later, for his advice to jump into production myself.
- **Randy Travis/On The Other Hand & The Judds/Mama He's Crazy:** I heard these two records in my late 20s while working as a session guitarist in LA. The great songwriting and the interpretation by the artists blew me away. Even though I grew up in Nashville, I was possessed by rock and pop music, which led me to move to the west coast. When I heard these two brilliant records, I simultaneously missed home and realized how much I had to learn in the musical landscape. A foreshadowing of my future.

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# STEPHANIE QUAYLE



IF I WAS A COWBOY / EP AVAILABLE 10.4

*featuring*

*Whatcha Drinkin 'Bout*

*ASK YOUR REVIVER or DA  
ABOUT REVIV*



*The Hotel Del Coronado*  
DECEMBER

# VMO RECORDS REGIONAL INTERFEST 2019!



REVIVER  
FEST 2019

- San Diego, California  
13, 14 & 15

**AIRPLAY**

- **Sugarhill Gang/Rappers Delight:** My go-to karaoke song and the song that my big brother Hawk played non-stop in his bedroom, which I wasn't allowed in. Did I mention that we shared that same bedroom that I wasn't allowed in?
- **Michael Jackson/Rock With You:** The first 45 and piece of music I bought with my own money. Shout out to the '70s hairy-chested medallion-wearing salesman at the Sound Shop in Cookeville, TN.
- **Garth Brooks/The Dance:** The song and show that made me fall in love with country music.
- **Lenny Kravitz/Are You Gonna Go My Way:** This song forced my hawt wife, Tennille, to fall in love with me. Seriously, who else has Lenny as "their song"?
- **Jack Johnson/Lullaby:** The song I sing to my girls, Roman & Ezra, every night at bedtime. Mainly because they prefer it over the bedtime song I personally wrote for them. #LiJJerks
- **Judah +The Lion/Let Go:** 'Cause Judah's my nephew, and ESPN is playing the crap out of this song all fall!



**14 JOHNNY CHIANG**  
Cox/Houston Dir./Ops, KKQB PD

- **Rascal Flatts/Mayberry, Sara Evans/Perfect, Keith Urban/Days Go By:** When I became interim PD of KKQB in 2004, I was petrified at having zero Country experience. Not just Country radio, but country music in general. Having grown up in Los Angeles, my musically formative years were dominated by the likes of Guns N' Roses and Van Halen. Country was nothing but sh\*\* kicking, backwards music. These were the first three songs I listened to when I walked into my new office. I remember thinking, if this is country music, I can love it and have fun!



**15 BOBBY YOUNG**  
Capitol VP/Promotion

- **The Beatles/I Want To Hold Your Hand & I Saw Her Standing There:** Hearing these was the first time I realized music could have impact on society. Then came the Stones, The Kinks, The Who, Zeppelin, etc. Such a great time of discovery.
- **Johnny Cash/Sunday Morning Coming Down:** Introduced me to Merle, George Jones, Waylon Jennings and Ronnie Milsap's music and all those great Kristofferson songs.
- **George Jones/He Stopped Loving Her Today:** Another discovery period, and old enough this time to do something about it by moving to Nashville.
- **Kentucky Headhunters/Walk Softly On This Heart Of Mine:** I was the National at Mercury, and this song proved to me that you could make a difference and enjoy what you do. Other label and radio professionals were telling me "you'll never get that band played on Country radio." *Pickin' On Nashville* went on to sell more than two million albums, the band was CMA Vocal Group of the year twice, ACM named it Album of the Year and it won a Grammy.
- **Billy Ray Cyrus/Achy Breaky Heart:** A great era working with everyone at Mercury including Eddie Mascolo, Paul Lucks, Harold Shedd, Steve Popovich, Luke Lewis, and other great artists including The Statlers, Kathy Mattea and Sammy Kershaw.
- **Taylor Swift/Tim McGraw:** Another landmark project I am thrilled to have been associated with while at Big Machine.
- **Chicago/Color My World:** That's exactly what Heather, my wife, did back in 2000! I'm a lucky man and thank God every day for this life and the gifts he has given me. I've definitely had my unequal fair-share of blessings.



**16 BOBBY BONES**  
The Bobby Bones Show Host  
iHeartCountry VP/Creative Dir.

- **Hootie & The Blowfish/Hold My Hand:** Darius Rucker was my first-ever interview when I was 17, which spawned a friendship 20 years later.
- **Garth Brooks/If Tomorrow Never Comes:** The first CD I ever bought was the album *Garth Brooks*.
- **Beastie Boys/No Sleep Till Brooklyn:** Mind blown. Skinny, dorky white guys rapping.
- **John Anderson/Swingin':** My grandma, who raised me, had this tape from a gas station and played it in her old Buick anytime we left the house.
- **John Mayer/Stop This Train:** The first song that ever spoke to/for me as a person. From my favorite album of all time.
- **Diamond Rio/Meet In The Middle:** My first concert in Hot Springs, AR, and the song I waited all show for them to play.



**17 NATE DEATON**  
Empire KRTY/San Jose GM

- **Garth Brooks/Much Too Young To Feel This Damn Old:** May be the first Country song I truly loved in my transition from metal. With 50 events a year, it's still so true.
- **Keith Urban/Who Wouldn't Wanna Be Me:** I have the greatest job in radio, and this song was from *Golden Road*, which changed the sound of the format.
- **Eric Church/Creepin':** Lead off *Chief*, which was also a changing of the sound.
- **Jon Pardi/Dirt On My Boots:** Can't have a successful station without boots on the ground, and this song told the world what we in Northern California already knew: Jon Pardi is a star.
- **Luke Bryan/Play It Again:** Perfect song title for a radio station guy and arguably the biggest song from a guy who has meant the world to me and the station since day one.
- **Thomas Rhett/Dream You Never Had:** No better way to describe the feelings anyone who does what we do has for their spouse or significant other. This is a new song, but so meaningful.
- **Jake Owen/Yee Haw:** Really? The perfect way to describe the amazing opportunities we are given by doing this thing we call a job.



**18 SHANE ALLEN**  
Columbia SVP/Promotion

- **Mel Tillis/Coca-Cola Cowboy:** I would walk around the house singing it as a little kid. When I was around seven, my parents and grandparents brought me along to a honkytonk named Vance's in Kenosha, WI to see Mel as my first concert. Grandpa knew someone in the road crew and was able to get Mel to dedicate this to me. Pretty sure that's when the seeds were planted for my love of the format.



continued next page

**ARTISTS/MUSIC**

- **Chris Whitley/Living With The Law:** I will never forget hearing this record at Sony/New York in 1991. We were mixing a record for a band I was in called Giant. I was humbled and baffled by the utter simplicity, depth, soul, and emotional intelligence of Chris' music. It made me feel as if I knew nothing and that I needed to start over.
- **Cam/Burning House:** Made me aware of how much I love music. When you work day and night making records, it is easy to become numb and forget why you do what you do. When I heard this on the radio, it made me want to become better at what I do.

**13 BRIAN O'CONNELL**  
Live Nation President/Country



**14 BEN VAUGHN**  
Warner/Chappell President

- **The Oak Ridge Boys/Elvira:** My earliest musical memory as a six-year-old in Kentucky. Lying on the floor and pushing that skip-back button on our 8-track stereo over and over again .... high technology!
- **George Strait/Love Without End, Amen:** In high school a family member gave me a cassette and told me to listen to this. I got hooked on the craftsmanship in the songs. This led me to want to take a job at our local Country station to be around music.
- **Alan Jackson/Chasin' That Neon Rainbow:** At 16 I got the weekend DJ gig on our local station and literally learned every vinyl record and CD in the place. Songwriters, producers, artists, publishers – you name it. That place was my own personal library. Being around so much music I loved pushed me to move to Nashville and try living that Music Row life.



**15 SETH ENGLAND**  
Big Loud Partner

- **Deep Purple/Smoke On The Water:** My dad was into classic rock, and it was these guitar riffs that made me want to pick up a guitar in the first place. In middle school, my parents signed me up with a local insurance salesman who gave guitar lessons in his basement at night. It was a very small town way of learning to play the guitar, but it was so inspiring. I would pick out the fun songs I wanted to learn and he would teach me, then tell me the details of what I just learned. I was hooked.
- **Brooks & Dunn/Neon Moon:** Still my favorite country song. I wasn't really into country music when I first heard it. I heard Ronnie sing it live for the first time, and I was changed forever. Not only is Ronnie my all-time favorite country voice, this song sets the bar.
- **Bren Joy/Henny In The Hamptons:** He's a young kid from Nashville who went to Belmont. In May I returned from a vacation and my A&R team was eager to play me the album he made in his friend Caleb's bedroom for \$2,500. It's groundbreaking and so rare that you hear stories like this. Very much a diamond in the rough. The musicianship and lyric writing are incredible, not to mention Bren's voice. I was reminded that anything is possible and to just follow inspiration.



**16 CORAN CAPSHAW**  
Red Light Management Founder

**17 KEN ROBOLD**  
Sony/Nashville EVP/COO

- **Shania Twain/Any Man Of Mine:** We released this single in 1995, the year after I moved to Nashville, and it launched Shania's career into superstardom.
- **George Strait/I Hate Everything:** The lone single from the 50 No. 1s project. It was the smash that George, and we, needed for that project, which far exceeded expectations.
- **O Brother Where Art Thou/I Am A Man Of Constant Sorrow:** We took a risk on an expensive soundtrack to a Coen Brothers movie starring George Clooney, and this song was the catalyst. It scanned more than seven million copies and stunned the Staples Center by winning the Grammy for Album Of The Year.
- **Maren Morris/My Church:** The first artist the new team signed at Sony in 2015. This was the impact song that launched her career and, I think, let people know that Sony was back in contention for the top talent in the business.
- **Kane Brown/Heaven:** One of our earliest signings and we had to prove to a lot of people that Kane was – and is – an authentic country artist. This was his second No. 1 and, I believe, proved his authenticity.
- **Luke Combs/Hurricane:** The first of now six consecutive No. 1s in an astounding start to a career.



**18 MIKE CURB**  
Curb Word Entertainment Chairman

**19 BRIAN WRIGHT**  
UMG/Nashville EVP/A&R

- **George Jones/He Stopped Loving Her Today:** My Dad taught me at a very early age this was the greatest country song ever. He is still right.
- **Lee Ann Womack/There's More Where That Came From:** I hope angels can sing half as good as LAW.
- **Jamey Johnson/In Color:** The song that changed my life. Jamey, Lee Thomas Miller and James Otto painted a masterpiece.
- **George Strait/Troubadour:** One of my favorite songs of all time. It has been my ringtone since the day it came out.
- **Peter Gabriel/In Your Eyes:** Only one person will know why.



**20 CRIS LACY**  
Warner Music Nashville EVP/A&R

- **Glen Campbell/Rhinestone Cowboy:** The first 45 my mom played for me at age three. She and I sang it together on road trips for years to come.
- **Dolly Parton/Coat Of Many Colors:** The first song I actually studied because of its exquisite storytelling – age nine.
- **Def Leppard/Pour Some Sugar On Me:** *Hysteria Tour* at 15. First time I felt the anticipation, the energy that comes from an

**AIRPLAY**

- **George Strait/Run:** One of the first singles I worked to the Gavin chart (only a few years after Royce Risser had been MCA's Gavin rep), and also one of my favorite all-time songs from The King. I remember betting David Haley (miss him very much) and Bill Macky about going from No. 5 to No. 1. When it happened, I realized how much I liked the rush of promotion adrenaline.
- **Joe Nichols/Brokenheartsville:** First single and No. 1 I worked as a regional. West Coast for Universal South. Bryan Switzer and Denise Roberts gave me that first shot.
- **Luke Bryan/All My Friends Say:** The first single I worked at Capitol after Mike Dungan, Jimmy Harnen and Steve Hodges brought me in. Add day ended up being a bit disappointing but, in true Luke fashion, he and his manager Kerri Edwards brought over tacos and a cooler full of beer to celebrate the launch of his radio career.
- **Jon Pardi/Up All Night:** The Capitol promo staff wanted it so bad for Jon, who never stopped working tirelessly no matter how frustrating some days were. This song had a number of very sweet victories during its life on the chart. It's when we knew that radio was being convinced of something we'd known for a while – that Jon is a star.
- **Luke Combs/Hurricane:** Some time around July 2016, Steve Hodges sent me an email with this attached and the subject line, "Listen to this!" The title and that simple sentence were the perfect intro to what was about to happen next.

**19 LESLIE FRAM**  
CMT SVP/Music Strategy & Talent



- **Jackson Browne/Late For The Sky:** One of the greatest songwriters ever! The first time I met him it was a definite *Saturday Night Live* moment that we've all had when we meet one of our musical heroes. I showed him photos of when I was a kid sitting on the front row of one of his concerts in Mobile, AL and said, "Remember when you played..." I literally embarrassed myself.
- **Bruce Springsteen/Jungleland:** Yes, I am one of those people who has seen Bruce 30+ times and will continue to see every tour. This song is particularly memorable because I did an entire college essay on it!
- **Joni Mitchell/A Case Of You:** *Blue* is one of my all-time favorite albums. Joni was at a Grammy event I attended last year and I was like, "I am in the same room as Joni Mitchell!" It's nice to be a fan.
- **The Eagles/I Can't Tell You Why:** When I was 20, their manager Irving Azoff offered me a seat on his plane to fly back home to Mobile from a concert. I didn't realize it was Irving, the band and me. I didn't say a word the whole time.
- **Elton John/Mona Lisa And Mad Matters:** When I worked in Atlanta at 99X, Elton invited me and my morning show co-host, Jimmy Baron, over to dinner at his penthouse. He gave us a tour of his home, including his color coordinated sock drawer!
- **Johnny Cash/Hurt:** This is when my love for country music started. My two worlds started to collide – I was working in alternative radio and really starting to appreciate and fall in love with all things Johnny Cash.

**20 MATTHEW HARGIS**  
BMLG Records SVP/Promotion



- **Florida Georgia Line/Cruise:** On the first day of the radio tour, we had a wonderful dinner with Jeff Kapugi and Marci Braun in Chicago, then piled into the band's 15-passenger van and headed to Milwaukee. Our visit with WMIL's Kerry Wolfe was the next morning, and when we arrived that night, I checked in and got three rooms for Brian Kelley, Tyler Hubbard and their four band guys. When I handed them the keys they said, "Wait. All six of us don't have to share a room?" They were truly taken back at getting their own beds. They'd been touring for years in that road-dog spirit of doing anything they could to make it work. That humble attitude remains today.
- **Eli Young Band/Crazy Girl:** The first single our team took to No. 1 after I joined what was then Republic Nashville. We hatched a plan to re-launch the band at radio and the guys visited more than 100 radio stations prior to the single going for adds. Even though EYB had an extremely successful touring business, they never skipped one step in the process.
- **Brett Young/Mercy:** We all know going four deep on a debut album these days is rare air. Not to mention we were following up three consecutive No. 1s. So there was quite a bit of self-induced pressure to close out the cycle batting 1,000. What made this song even more special was the live reaction it had been getting on tour well before it was a single. Anybody who works in this industry can attest, seeing fans truly connect with a song and an artist is pure magic.
- **Led Zeppelin/Stairway To Heaven:** As cheesy as this sounds, this was the first song I learned on guitar, and that started my lifelong obsession with music. I only applied to one college and knew I had to move to Nashville and be a part of this insanely fun business.
- **Pearl Jam/Ten:** Being a teenager and playing in garage bands when this album came out truly changed my life. We would have been shot after any gig had we not played at least three or four songs from this album during every set.

**21 GREGG SWEDBERG**  
iHeartCountry Brand Coord.  
Western Great Lakes RSVP  
KEYE/Minneapolis OM/PD



- **Thin Lizzy/The Boys Are Back In Town:** I started doing radio in college, and our town had a Dino's Bar & Grill. Made for a cool theme song.
- **The Clash/Train In Vain:** My first full-time job lasted six months playing an aggressive punk playlist on an AM station with a crappy signal. While it lasted, the music was extremely cool, though.
- **Prince/1999:** You have to understand that Prince didn't get played on Minneapolis radio. When I worked at Top 40 WLOL, we started playing him. Turned out to be a good idea. Station went from a four to a 10 share in one book.
- **Garth Brooks/The Thunder Rolls:** I hated the idea of programming Country, but after I joined K102, this song completely changed my mind. And that extra verse Garth does live ... goose bumps.
- **Brad Paisley/He Didn't Have To Be:** In the AM/FM days, a few of us would descend on Nashville and get to hear the hits early – Hall of Famers like Hallam, Roberts, Garrison, Daniels and Clossen. That jerk Paisley made me cry with this song, and he was supposed to just be the guitar player at a session for two other artists. I might have poked a hole through Mike Dungan's chest demanding it get put on Brad's album. A rare occasion when I was right.
- **Kip Moore/Faith When I Fall:** Kind of my attitude about life. Listen. It's on his first album.

**ARTISTS/MUSIC**

- arena full of rabid rock fans, and how that fervor is amplified by staging and lighting.
- **Tom Waits/(Looking For) The Heart Of Saturday Night:** Age 27. I originally heard Mary Chapin Carpenter sing this, so her version could be included here as well. I heard Tom perform this in a theater in Austin. He was so unbelievably present – a reminder that true artistry doesn't require a big stage, tons of lights, a big backing band. This was one of the most captivating shows I've ever attended.
- **In The Garden:** The hymn inspired by the Gospel of John. My grandfather first played this song for me years ago, and it has been a constant in my life since.



**21 RUSTY GASTON**  
Sony/ATV Publishing



- **Jesus Loves Me:** The first song I remember learning. I can still hear my grandmother singing it while I would play on her porch and she would shell peas for dinner.
- **George Strait/The Fireman:** I was born and raised in Texas. They revoke your citizenship if you don't publicly proclaim your undying love for The King.
- **Jimmy Buffet/Margaritaville:** I first saw him in concert when I was 18 and immediately became a ParrotHead. I'll never forget the parking lot full of tailgaters six hours before show time. The lifestyle he created through his music was infectious and still is today.
- **Guns N' Roses/Welcome To The Jungle:** The soundtrack to my teenage years.



**“ Never fails to make me smile. It's everything that makes Country radio such enjoyable listening. ”**

**RUSTY GASTON**

**22 CRAIG WISEMAN**  
Big Loud Owner/Managing Partner



- **Brooks & Dunn/Believe:** My first write with Ronnie Dunn started with me just dropping off a song and us talking. We started the idea. Six months later, we got back together and, after a few hours of nothing, went back to the thing we had started six months before (no notes, lyrics, recordings, etc.). I thought we had a five-minute song no one would ever cut. Then Ronnie Dunn did a Ronnie Dunn. Love the new duet with him and Kane, as well.
- **Blake Shelton/Hillbilly Bone:** Luke Laird and I wrote it, and I only sang the melody line once – Luke rapped the verses, and I sang the chorus. It was just two old songwriter friends having fun, but I loved it. I told Scott Hendricks to do it like that and he said the fans weren't ready ... not long after, "Dirt Road Anthem" came out. Scott and I still smile about that. It started Blake's run of 20-something No. 1s, and I had a few of those. I love and am honored to have been a small, small part of the "Blakephenom" we all live in.
- **Florida Georgia Line/Anything Goes:** This little band we found had a song called "Cruise," and it became apparent it was just as hard to get a cut on my own acts as it was to get a cut on other super hot acts. LOL! This song was the result of a year-and-a-half of trying to write something good enough to make the FGL grade. Very proud of the song and the boys, and I still get a little teary when I see 25,000 fans singing it at concerts.

**23 CLINT HIGHAM**  
Morris Higham President



- **Linda Ronstadt:** She reminds me of my growing up in California. The ultimate female badass. Anyone who can pivot from country to pop and doing records with the Nelson Riddle Orchestra to opera – and do it all equally well – is my hero.
- **Stevie Wonder/Songs In The Key Of Life:** A genius record from a musical genius. Enough said.
- **Barbara Mandrell:** She's the reason I chose to get into the country music business, so she has a permanent place on my playlists. She's often credited as a great entertainer, and rightfully so, but her rich alto voice was pure blue-eyed soul.

*continued next page*

**AIRPLAY**

**22 JOEL RAAB**  
Joel Raab Country Radio/Media Consulting



- **Johnny Cash/A Boy Named Sue:** I've always loved Country's great sense of humor.
- **David Allan Coe/You Never Even Called Me By My Name:** I courted my future wife long distance by sending her funny songs like this.
- **Brad Paisley/I'm Gonna Miss Her:** I couldn't stop laughing the first time I heard it.
- **Big & Rich/Save A Horse, Blake Shelton/Some Beach:** Loved the attitude.
- **The Notorious Cherry Bombs/It's Hard To Kiss The Lips At Night That Chew Your Ass Out All Day Long:** The fact that Vince Gill's dad gave him the title makes it even funnier.

**23 KRIS LAMB**  
Big Machine VP/Promotion



- **Garth Brooks/Thunder Rolls:** I was nine when this was released, and one of my most vivid memories is sitting in my parents' living room listening to *No Fences* after school. The spark that started it all.
- **311/Down:** I discovered rock in my early teenage years, and it was a game changer. Started playing the guitar, wearing JNCOs and Dr. Martins, and turned into a *punk!*
- **Tupac/Changes:** *Heavy* rotation in my black F-150 rollin' thru Scottsdale as a high school senior. I still love jamming to old school hip hop.
- **Rascal Flatts/While You Loved Me:** I've worked with Flatts for 15 years ... and that's intentional. This was on a sampler from their first radio tour while I was a DJ at KMLE/Phoenix. It completely changed my view of country music. My pivot from radio to records can largely be attributed to this song and the art they've created.
- **Eric Church/Before She Does:** *Sinners Like Me* may be the best modern country album. Period. I was never affiliated with the project, but I'm still jealous of those who were.
- **Drake White/Makin' Me Look Good Again:** I've never met a star who shines brighter than Drake. He's the real deal, and his music is the truth.

**24 CHRIS PALMER**  
Valory VP/Promotion



- **Steve Wariner/Baby I'm Yours:** When this song came out I was playing drums in a hair metal band. This made me say, "I think I like country music!" A few months later, I was doing overnights at Country WHWK/Binghamton, NY.
- **Lari White/Stepping Stone:** Ten years later, Lyric Street opened and hired me for Northeast. This was the label's first release and the first single I ever worked. We had 65 first week adds and would eventually peak the song inside the top 20.
- **Rascal Flatts/I'm Moving On:** We had released three top 10s from the debut album, the second album was recorded and "These Days" was cued up. That's when WSIX/Nashville's Gerry House played this out of the blue one morning. Then-PD Mike Moore called us. "Guys, the reaction to that one spin has been unbelievable! You need to release this." We had sold half a million copies of the album at that point. We released the song and scanned an additional million. The song peaked at No. 3 and changed their career. Mine, too.
- **Frankie Ballard/Helluva Life:** I was hired to head up the new WAR Team, launching with Frankie and working his first couple singles into the 20s. As he was recording new music for us, we lost our friend and teammate Lindsay Walleman. It was a very difficult time for the team. This became our first No. 1, but bittersweet for sure. Frankie would later dedicate the song to her at the *New Faces Show*. An amazing moment. #FTL #FTLSarcomaFund
- **Thomas Rhett/Life Changes:** My life changed at the end of 2017 with restructuring at Warner. I was fortunate to find a new home with the amazing folks at Valory, where this was the first TR single I was apart of from start to finish. With the amazing track record built by those who came before me, the song sailed to No. 1!

**ARTISTS/MUSIC**

- **Merle Haggard:** He's truly the poet of the common man. Growing up in a small farming town in central California, Merle was always a huge part of the fabric of my life. No one interprets a song like Merle Haggard.
- **Shane McAnally, Shane McAnally:** Curb Records, circa 1998. I was managing Shane back in those days. This album and Shane were ahead of their time. I couldn't be more proud to see Shane become the star he deserves to be. He continues to greatly impact so many lives with his brilliant art and craftsmanship.

**24 ALLISON JONES**  
BMLG SVP/A&R



- **The Carpenters/Close To You, Crystal Gayle/Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue, Olivia Newton-John/Hopelessly Devoted To You:** A three-way tie for my first favorite elementary school song, sung at the top of my lungs in my bedroom with Mr. Microphone. Those women inspired me to pursue music, learn guitar and piano and, thanks to Olivia, become a musical theater geek. I was in my hometown production of *Grease*. Thank God there were no videos back then!
- **Alabama/Mountain Music, Reba/Somebody Should Leave:** And everything else they did in the '80s started my love affair with country. I showed quarter horses, competed barrel racing and wanted to be a country artist, so obviously Reba was my idol. And still is!
- **U2/Pride (In The Name Of Love):** The first song and band that made me realize music could make a difference socially and politically on a global level. They started a movement. As a very naive 19-year-old attending summer school in London, I used all of my "emergency money" to take the train, ferry, another train and then a very expensive cab to Dublin in hopes of finding Bono at Killiney or Windmill Lane (their first recording studio). I guess that's what we now call a super fan.
- **John Anderson/Seminole Wind:** My first job after college was at the newly formed BNA Records, and this was the first No. 1 we celebrated with John (and is there anyone cooler?). There was a Seminole reservation and burial ground on my dad's hunting lease near Okeechobee, and he would take me to visit. The video was shot close to that property, and it's still one of my favorite videos and songs of all time.
- **Patty Griffin, Dixie Chicks/Fly:** Killed me the first time I heard it and still does. The perfect example of a timeless song with a classic melody and a brilliant yet simple lyric that rips your heart out.
- **Lori McKenna, Tim McGraw/Humble And Kind:** The first time I heard it, Lori performed it in the round at The Bluebird, and I ugly cried. It's musical perfection. It says everything I would want my son to hear and know, delivered in a way that only Lori could write. Tim was the perfect artist to record it, and it was beyond an honor to be associated with that record and its much-deserved awards and accolades with Lori.

**25 JASON OWEN**  
Sandbox Entertainment President/CEO  
Monument Records Co-President



- **Dan Seals & Marie Osmond/Meet Me In Montana:** Reminds me of growing up in Arkansas and taking road trips with my family. My sister Sarah would sing the Marie Osmond part, and I would sing Dan Seals.
- **The Judds/Rockin' With The Rhythm Of The Rain:** One of the first concerts I ever saw on their *Love Can Build A Bridge Tour* in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. I so vividly remember the production of that show, and their performance of this song was such a moment.
- **Shania Twain/Man! I Feel Like A Woman:** Self-explanatory.

**26 KELLY RICH**  
Amazon Sr. Mgr./Label Relations



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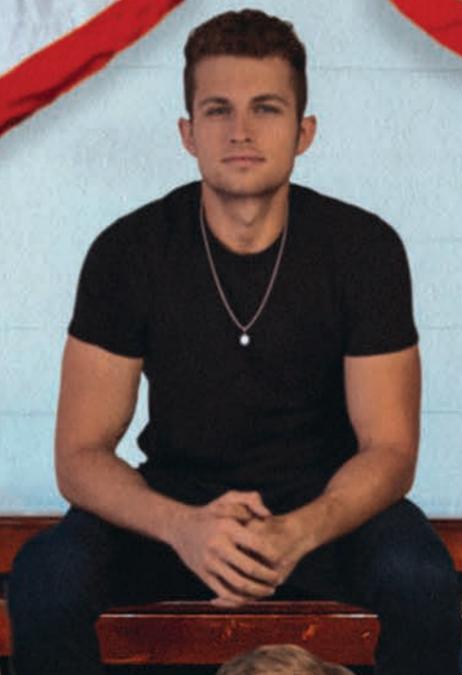
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produced by

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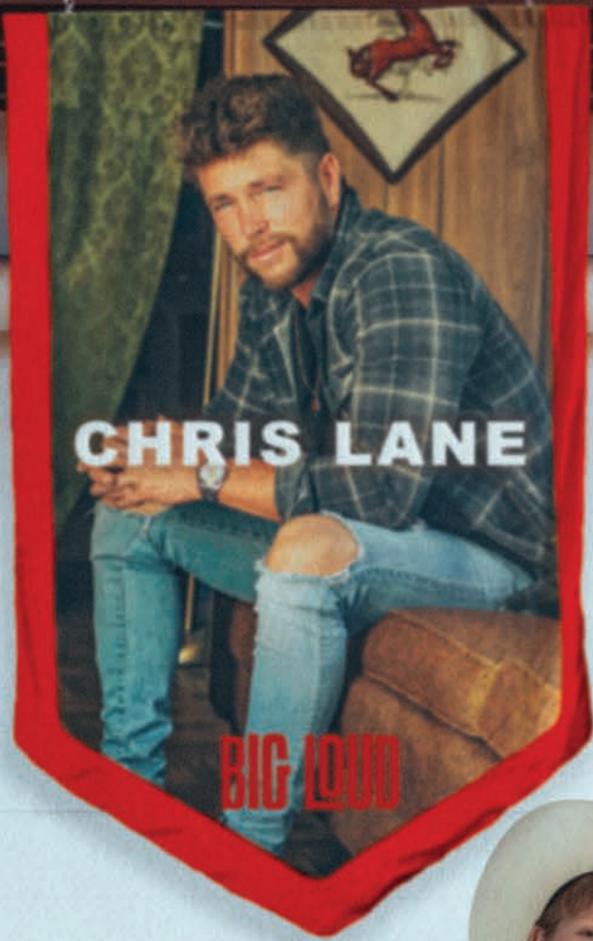
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**CLASS OF 2020**

L-R: MADISON KOZAK, SEAN STEMALY, ERNEST, LARRY FLEET



**CLASS OF 2019**

L-R: MACKENZIE PORTER, MASON RAMSEY, HARDY

**AIRPLAY**

**25 KENNY JAY**  
WUSN/Chicago PD



**26 TOM MARTENS**  
Warner Music Nashville VP/Radio & Streaming



- **Steve Winwood/Higher Love:** The first single I ever reported as an add to *The Gavin Report* in 1986.
- **Blackstreet/No Diggity:** The first single I worked as a new record rep after programming for 15 years.
- **No Doubt/Don't Speak:** My first No. 1 as a new Midwest Regional for Interscope.
- **Frankie Ballard/Helluva Life:** My first country No. 1 as the new Southeast for Warner Music Nashville's WAR Team.
- **Cole Swindell/Break Up In The End:** My first No. 1 single as the Warner Music Nashville VP.
- **Dan + Shay/Speechless:** No. 1 for four weeks!

**27 LEE ADAMS**  
Broken Bow VP/National Promotion



- **Willie Nelson/On The Road Again:** When I was 13 I saw Willie in *Honeysuckle Rose* and knew country music would be my career. I told my parents I wanted to be a country music DJ. My dad still hasn't recovered.
- **Garth Brooks/The Dance:** I remember Scott Donato and I ripping open the package, running to the production room, listening one time and immediately putting it on the air at WHYL/Carlisle, PA.
- **Rhett Akins/That Ain't My Truck:** The first song I worked after moving to the record side in 1995. It took us 25 weeks to get it to the top, which was unheard of back then.
- **Craig Morgan/Almost Home:** When I started at BBR in 2001, people told me it would ruin my career. Then we released this, our first top 10 single. We were on the map.
- **Jason Aldean/Hicktown:** Another huge game changer for BBR. It went top 10, despite the use of the phrase "butt crack," and the album went platinum, leading him to be named the ACM Top New Male Vocalist in 2006. He's the crown jewel of my career.
- **Jason Aldean/Crazy Town:** The writers hit the nail on the head with this one. Every time I hear it, I think, "Yep, that's us. Chasing and catching those neon dreams."

**28 MICHAEL LEVINE**  
KKGO/Los Angeles Station Manager/PD



**29 BEVERLEE BRANNIGAN**  
Summit VP/Programming  
Summit/Wichita President



- **Randy Travis/Forever And Ever, Amen:** He and the neo-traditional movement were so good for Country radio, and set things up for the boom years.
- **Garth Brooks/Calling Baton Rouge:** Speaking of the boom, my absolute favorite crank-it-up Garth song.
- **Brooks & Dunn/Brand New Man:** Smack into the best cold intro country song ever. Let's make it the *Reboot* version with Luke Combs.
- **Ingrid Andress/More Hearts Than Mine, Gabby Barrett/I Hope:** Finishing with two new women artists who have incredibly good songs right now. I keep hitting replay on both because the premises and writing are original and relatable.

**30 DAMON MOBERLY**  
Mercury VP/Promotion



- **The Beatles/Yesterday:** I would sit on the end of my mom's bed while she'd get ready for work so I could listen to WKED/Frankfort, KY on the small clock radio on her nightstand. This is the first song I remember falling in love with.
- **Billy Joel/New York State Of Mind:** My dad would come pick me up for the weekend, blaring the radio and singing at the top of his lungs all the way to the farm where he lived. I can remember him singing this and trying to pay attention so I could memorize the lyrics to sing along with him. I always thought my dad was the coolest and the fact that he could sing harmony with Billy Joel cemented my love for this one.
- **Sugarland/Stay:** Mercury's first No. 1 after we had made staff changes; my first as VP. I remember Katie Dean and I texting into the wee hours of the night (she was under the covers at her parents house trying not to wake everyone up, and I was locked in my small office starting at the computer and burning up the phone).
- **Soggy Bottom Boys, Dan Tyminski/Man Of Constant Sorrow:** Never a single at radio but we worked the song to morning shows for a couple of months around the release of the *O Brother Where Art Thou?* soundtrack. Won a Grammy for best album and sold 10 million copies. They don't all have to top the radio chart to be impactful. Still love to listen when it comes up on a random playlist.
- **Lauren Alaina/Road Less Traveled:** After working more than a handful of singles on Lauren and hearing and seeing the heartbreak when I had to call her to let her know one had not made it, we were finally able to help her celebrate a chart topper.

**31 JR SCHUMANN**  
SiriusXM Sr. Dir./Music Programming



- **Huey Lewis & The News/Hip To Be Square:** *Fore!* was the first cassette I ever bought.
- **Michael Jackson, Thriller:** My first vinyl album (and the only one I had for almost a year).
- **Hank Williams, Jr./The Conversation:** Prior to going to my first Hank Jr. show at 10, I bought the *Hank Live* album because I wanted to be sure I was prepared. Fell in love with this song, and have yet to attend a show where he's performed it.
- **The Beatles/Let It Be:** Hits me exactly where I needed it to, no matter the situation. Rarely will this song come on that it doesn't stop me in my tracks.
- **George Strait/Baby's Gotten Good At Goodbye:** I can't really explain it, but this is my all-time favorite George Strait song. It's no exaggeration to say I've listened to this hundreds of times, maybe more.
- **Carly Pearce/Every Little Thing:** The first song I've ever been a part of where adding it into rotation played a significant role in launching the artist's career.

**ARTISTS/MUSIC**

**27 GEORGE BRINER**  
Valory President



- **Louis Armstrong/What A Wonderful World:** This song has been a part of many chapters of my life. I have been hearing it since I was kid and Dad would be playing ol' Satchmo.
- **Kenny Loggins/Celebrate Me Home:** A song I shared and an album I turned many people onto back in the record store days.
- **Randy Travis/Forever and Ever, Amen:** The first country single I worked when I landed my first label gig at Warner Bros.
- **Tracy Lawrence/Find Out Who Your Friends Are:** Changed my life in so many ways, plus proved to me so many things I believe in. And, in a small way, got me to where I am today at Valory.
- **Justin Moore/Small Town USA:** First No. 1 song for Valory, but lost its bullet twice climbing the charts. Add to that me being a Wisconsin Cheesehead, Justin and I celebrated the song in Green Bay, WI the night it peaked.
- **Thomas Rhett/Remember You Young:** And today, a song I get to be associated with that resonates with me, and so many others.

**28 TROY TOMLINSON**  
Universal Music Publishing Group Nashville  
Chairman/CEO



- **Bob Seger/Night Moves:** It was 1976, the Bicentennial year. I was in the sixth grade, heard those lyrics and blushed.
- **Alabama/My Home's In Alabama:** I was a sophomore at Portland High School in 1980, and even though I was born and bred in Tennessee, I related to every word of Randy and Teddy's song. It was the first time I felt like someone knew what I was thinking and what I was feeling inside.
- **Hank Williams Jr./A Country Boy Can Survive:** My senior year, 1982, and I felt like I belonged.
- **Kenny Chesney/I Go Back:** It was 2005, and a decade had passed since I first signed Kenny to a publishing deal at Acuff-Rose. I stood and watched NFL stadiums filled with 50,000 fans singing every word and knew Kenny had simply told his story and they got it.
- **Taylor Swift/All Too Well:** One of her best from 2012.

**29 RYAN DOKKE**  
Curb SVP



- **Tim McGraw/Don't Take The Girl:** The whole *Not A Moment Too Soon* album was worn out in my bedroom in the mid '90s. I wanted to be Tim McGraw but could never get my hair to grow right.
- **Dire Straits/Walk Of Life:** This song instantly takes me to the summer of '88 playing Wiffle ball with my uncles and cousins in a baseball field near a campground my family stayed at. *Great memories!*
- **Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young/Our House:** The first song I played and back-announced on the radio. I was 17, doing my first air shift ... and terrified ... on "1320 KXRO with news, sports, and your latest look at the weather at the top and bottom of every hour."
- **Brad Paisley/Old Alabama:** My first No. 1 single on the record side of the business. Some of the most fun I've had in this business was working Brad Paisley songs and being on the road with his team!
- **Lee Brice/I Don't Dance:** My first No. 1 at Curb. I had known Lee since I was in Spokane, WA and he was playing "She Ain't Right." Finally working together and being a part of this song was a really cool full-circle moment.
- **Dylan Scott/My Girl:** One of my proudest accomplishments as head of promotion. Our *team* did an incredible job – start to No. 1. Felt like we were climbing Everest at times but incredibly gratifying to reach the summit!

**30 KOS WEAVER**  
BMG EVP



**31 BRITTANY SCHAFFER**  
Spotify/Nashville  
Head of Artist & Label Marketing



- **Tennessee Christmas:** I grew up loving Christmas music (I'm still somewhat obsessed), and this was the first solo I ever performed. I was in kindergarten and remember my mom sitting in the audience mouthing every word.
- **Shania Twain/Any Man Of Mine:** Shania was my childhood hero. I watched every TV special and bought every album. I was 10 when this was released and it became my go-to talent show song for years!
- **Miranda Lambert/Famous In A Small Town:** I discovered Miranda and "Kerosene" when I was a college intern in the promotions department at Sony/Nashville, and I was instantly hooked. She released *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend* as I was graduating from college and starting law school, and I found myself drawn to this song. For the next three years, I listened to it before literally every exam. It just had a way of calming me down and putting things in perspective.
- **Tracy Byrd/Keeper Of The Stars:** This was the song my husband played when he proposed to me under the starlit sky near his hometown in southern Indiana, and the song, naturally, became the first dance at our wedding.
- **I'll Fly Away:** I grew up singing this in church, and my first assignment as a summer law clerk with the late Bob Sullivan at Loeb & Loeb was helping with a legal issue around the song. I ended up working for Loeb & Loeb after law school and spent more than seven years working to finally find a resolution to that issue. I cannot separate my time as a lawyer from this song.
- **Devin Dawson/All On Me:** I met Devin when he was a Belmont student. It was so clear that he was one of the most talented, focused, and good-hearted artists I had ever met, and I am so proud to have worked with him until I came to Spotify. I will never forget the first time I heard this demo. I couldn't stop playing it and couldn't imagine the produced version could top it – it did! He's my most listened to artist on Spotify in 2017 and 2018! **CAC**