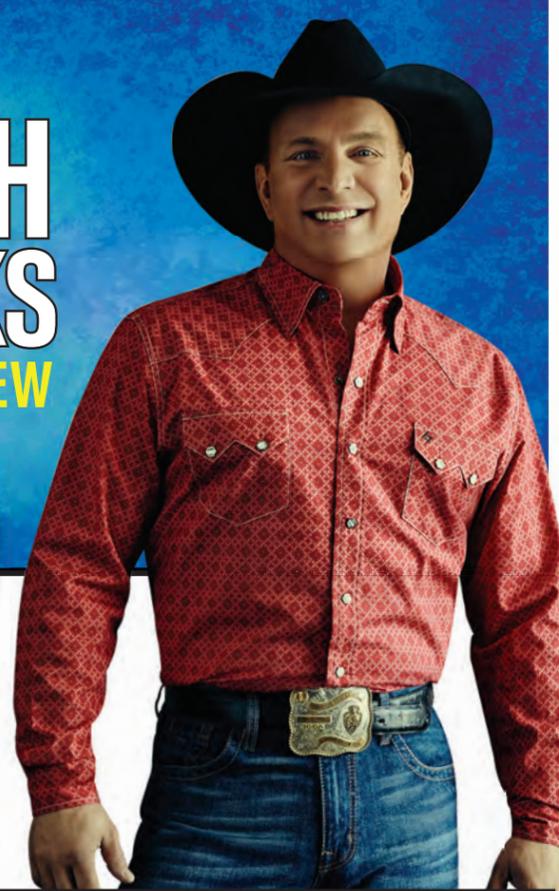


TOP STORIES
2017

THE
YEAR
in
MUSIC

GARTH
BROOKS
THE INTERVIEW

CMA WEEK
PICTURES!



COUNTRY
AIRCHECK

DECEMBER 2017



9 reasons we're #1 and 10 reasons we're thankful.
THANK YOU Country Radio!



JON LOBA



CARSON JAMES



RICK SHEDD



JOJAMIE HAHR



RENEE LEYMON



LEE ADAMS



SHELLEY GAINES



TEDDI BONADIES



BYRON KENNEDY



CHRIS LOSS



JIM MALITO



HEATHER PROPPER



JENNIFER SHAFFER



NEDA TOBIN



LAYNA BUNT



DAWN FERRIS



STAN MARCZEWSKI



MATT VIEIRA



KENDRA WHITEHEAD



SCOTTY O'BRIEN



CAITLYN GORDON



KIMMIE TROSDAHL



BRITTANY PITTMAN



ALLYSON GELNETT



JEFF DAVIS



JAMES WESLEY



LEXI WILLSON



ANDREA KNIPP

HAPPY

Holidays

FROM THE BBR
MUSIC GROUP FAMILY



JASON ALDEAN



DUSTIN LYNCH



KID ROCK



GRANGER SMITH



CHASE RICE



RANDY HOUSER



JOE NICHOLS



TRACE ADKINS



CHASE BRYANT



LINDSAY ELL



PARMALEE



RUNAWAY JUNE



CRAIG CAMPBELL



WALKER MCGUIRE



ADAM CRAIG



BROOKE EDEN



KRISTIAN BUSH



JIMMIE ALLEN



RESTLESS ROAD



BMG

BBR
MUSIC GROUP



THE BEST OF TIMES

For thousands if not millions, the last 12 months brought storms, hardships, property loss and worse. Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria ravaged huge areas. Wildfires devastated parts of Tennessee and California. Tornadoes across the South and Midwest, flooding in central California, Missouri, Arkansas and Illinois and other tragedies were no less affecting to people in those areas. And then there was Las Vegas.

For everyone who works in and around the country business, the attack on the *Route 91 Harvest* festival was a gut-punch. But there's another way to look at that tragedy – or any of them because, in the midst of darkness, the better angels of human nature shine brightest. Country artists, industry professionals, radio staff and, most significantly, the fans who make the whole thing go, have proven this to be true in unprecedented fashion this year. "People were helping random strangers and putting their own lives at risk during the shooting," one observer says. "That's where it started."

Fundraisers have aided in medical expenses and funeral costs. Social media support groups have become sources of information and healing. Planned and impromptu gatherings have offered solace and camaraderie. As the hub of community, Country radio has been instrumental in facilitating those connections, even as listeners took their own initiative. Artists and the music industry have poured in with hospital visits, benefits raising tens of millions, tributes (see page 9) and other efforts at exceptional levels. The need remains great.

"Emotions still run high," says KCYE/Las Vegas PD **Shawn Stevens**. "The pain is evident and fears remain, but the fans that were at *Route 91* are survivors who are truly, forever bonded."

"I've seen friendships develop," says **Amie Mangola** from KKGO/Los Angeles, whose Go Girls group lost two members in Las Vegas. "Strangers getting together, hugging and crying. A lot of people have gotten *Route 91* tattoos, including [KKGO midday personality] David Bugenske."

Broken Bow's **Layna Bunt** was onstage. "The amount of support I got from radio, friends in the industry, even people who aren't friends, was overwhelming," she says. "Cards, notes, letters, flowers – it felt really good even though I was still traumatized. Hearing from so many people was helpful and really therapeutic."

"There's a *Route 91* survivors' page on Facebook I check in on," she continues. "You see people posting pictures of someone they were sitting near they want to make sure is okay. We're all members of this club nobody wants to be in, but you feel so good knowing people do care and they are moving forward."

Repeatedly, life is embraced. "We took a call about two weeks after the event from a listener who was there with her fiancé," says KFRG/Riverside's **Scott Ward**. "He had covered her up during the shooting and carried her out, though neither was injured. They're a young couple, kind of strapped and hadn't been planning a quick wedding, but now they didn't want to wait. So they asked us to put the word out to anyone who might have leftovers from a wedding – candles, stuff that might be thrown out that they could repurpose. We mentioned it one time and by the next day they had enough to cover three weddings. Beyond stuff that was donated, we were hearing from hairdressers, nail salons, caterers who wanted to help. You just saw the goodness in people."

Deeply involved in counseling attendees, Onsite's **Miles Adcox** hosted a trauma discussion for Nashville-based survivors and will speak at CRS 2018. "We're doing it differently and better, maybe, than I've ever seen it done," he says. "The number of people reaching out – the number of people who were there and are willing to get support – is higher compared to other mass tragedies. With Sandy Hook, maybe we've learned what it looks like to have a community that never really processed it and years later mental health issues are through the roof, divorce is through the roof, the community is still kind of sitting in the trauma of an unthinkable event."

"It's not that Vegas won't have some of that too, it's just that the music industry – it's almost like they've messed with the wrong people this time," adds Adcox. "People are coming together in a way that is pretty unlike anything I've ever seen. I just don't want it to stop."

In the community of country music, that doesn't seem likely. "This has shown me that we really want the same things," Mangola says. "Security, friendship, love ... and country music. We're not going to stop loving country music, loving each other and going to shows. We might be scared, but we are country strong."

THE YEAR'S TOP STORIES

THESE ARE OUR PEOPLE: FALLEN AT THE ROUTE 91 HARVEST FESTIVAL

Hannah Ahlers
Heather Alvarado
Dorene Anderson
Carrie Barnette
Jack Beaton
Steve Berger
Candice Bowers
Denise Salmon Burditus
Sandy Casey
Andrea Castilla
Denise Cohen
Austin Davis
Thomas Day Jr.
Christiana Duarte

Stacey Etcheber
Brian Fraser
Keri Galvan
Dana Gardner
Angela Gomez
Rocio Guillen
Charleston Hartfield
Chris Hazencomb
Jennifer Irvine
Nicol Kimura
Jessica Klymchuk
Carly Kreibaum
Rhonda LeRocque
Victor Link



Jordan McIlldoon
Kelsey Meadows

Calla Medig
Sonny Melton
Pati Mestas
Austin Meyer
Adrian Murfitt
Rachael Parker
Jennifer Parks
Carrie Parsons
Lisa Patterson
John Phippen
Melissa Ramirez
Jordyn Rivera
Quinton Robbins
Cameron Robinson

Tara Roe Smith
Lisa Romero-Muniz
Christopher Roybal
Brett Schwanbeck
Bailey Schweitzer
Laura Shipp
Erick Silva
Susan Smith
Brennan Stewart
Derrick Taylor
Neysa Tonks
Michelle Vo
Kurt Von Tillow
Bill Wolfe Jr.



Entercom's Big Bite

THE YEAR'S TOP STORIES

The honeymoon is on as **Entercom's** acquisition of **CBS Radio** gives the radio business much-needed energy and, on a local level, redraws the radio landscape. Following the deal's Nov. 17 closing, CEO **David Field** (pictured) is

leading a charge with advertisers, touting radio's strength.

In the Country format, the latest is a succession of moves that had heritage **KMPS/Seattle** landing on Soft AC, while the company's **KKWF** anchors Country in the market. **KSON/San Diego** moved to more favorable frequency as simulcast **KSOQ** was spun off. Also departing the Entercom fold were **WGGI/Wilkes-Barre, PA**, a **WGGY** simulcast, and **KNCI/Sacramento**, now with Bonneville. The company brought in **WUSY/Chattanooga**, formerly with iHeartMedia.

All in, the company now boasts 19 Country stations under the direction of 14-year **KWJJ/Portland** veteran and Dir./Country Programming **Mike Moore**. More broadly, the company reduced advertising inventory by 5%, prohibited cash infusion advertising deals, eliminated advertising with spot resellers and introduced a new Audience Analytics tool.

Now the nation's No. 2 radio company behind iHeart, Entercom is "committed to a major investment in our future," Field said in a welcome video to employees. "We offer great integrated marketing solutions to our customers, delivering the power of local connection on a national scale, with coverage of close to 90% of population in the top 50 markets."

All The Market Can Bear

After struggling under enormous debt burdens for years, two of radio's biggest companies are beginning to falter. **Cumulus** filed a voluntary Chapter 11 bankruptcy Nov. 30 after a planned default. "The debt overhang left by previous years of underperformance remains a significant financial challenge that we must overcome for our operational turnaround to proceed," said Pres./CEO **Mary Berner**.



Mary Berner

"We have ample cash to support our operations and service our advertisers, vendors and affiliates during this period, and we look forward to becoming an even stronger partner to all of them." If approved, the move would reduce the company's debt load by \$1 billion.

At the top of the radio industry, **iHeartMedia** continues to trade - and reject - proposals with holders of much of its \$20+ billion in debt. Interest payments have overwhelmed revenue as the company continues to post quarterly losses. More than \$324 million is due next year and \$8.4 billion is due in 2019. While doubt is at an all-time high regarding iHeart's ability to continue as a "going concern," its 850 radio stations are overwhelmingly cash-positive businesses that should remain so regardless of the corporate structure under which they operate.

Movers & Mergers

The Nashville record business looked like a very interesting Music City-themed chess game in 2017. After nearly 12 years with Sony/Nashville, 19/Arista's **Carrie Underwood** signed with **UMG/Nashville's Capitol**. The switch reunited her with **UMGN Pres. Cindy Mabe**, who helped launch her Sony debut *Some Hearts*. "When I decided to take my position with Capitol Records in 2007, personally one of the hardest people for me to leave behind was Carrie Underwood," Mabe said.

Arista filled the vacancy with Country's royal couple, **Tim McGraw** and **Faith Hill**, whose first duets album, *The Rest Of Our Life*, debuted at No. 1. Following five albums with **RCA**, **Jake Owen** signed with **Big Loud**, while **Zac Brown** left **BMLG's** now-defunct **Dot** after a one-album deal to sign with **Elektra/WAR**.

At the corporate level, **BBR Music Group** was acquired by **BMG** in January. "BMG respects our heritage, but this is also about the future," said **BBRMG EVP Jon Loba**. "Being part of the **BMG** family will afford our artists, songwriters and staff incredible new opportunities. Beginning today, for the first time we are plugged into a proven global platform committed to delivering for artists and songwriters." Whose move is next?

In Memoriam

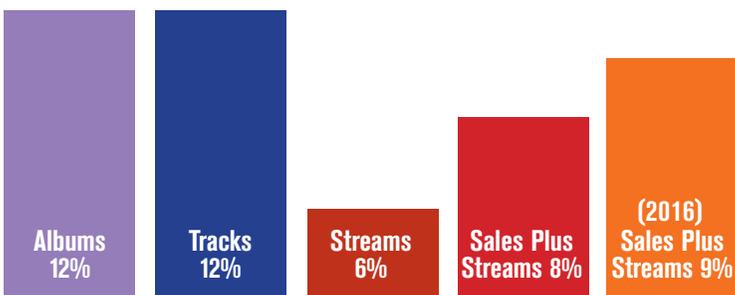
- Tommy Allsup
- Orville Almon, Jr.
- Art Astor
- Bill Bailey
- Kenny Beard
- Tammy Brown
- Glen Campbell
- Rick Cardarelli
- Jason Christopher
- Chris Conner
- Steve Dahl
- Andrew Dorff
- Stan Edwards
- Terry Elam
- Jan Elliott
- Rob Ellis
- Kitty Moon Emery
- Joe Wade Formicola
- Dex Gage
- Matt Ganssle
- Lori Denise Garcia-Marsella
- Troy Gentry
- Bob Heatherly
- Freddie James
- Michael Johnson
- Warren "Rhubarb" Jones
- Ric Larson
- Linda Lee
- Sam Lovullo
- Joe McCool
- Reggie Joseph "Mac" McLaughlin
- Tim Menowsky
- Cougar Michaels
- Billy Mize
- Moon Mullins
- David Nelson
- Lowell Nunnally
- Tommy Page
- Rob Potts
- Randy Schell
- Mark Selby
- Rosie Siman
- Kelley Sallee Snead
- Howard Stark
- Ken Stilts
- Gordie Tapp
- Alisa Tate
- Mel Tillis
- Billy Joe Walker, Jr.
- Jo Walker-Meador
- Don Warden
- Chris Wheat
- Dave Wheeler
- Don Williams
- Norro Wilson
- Bob Wootton

BY THE NUMBERS

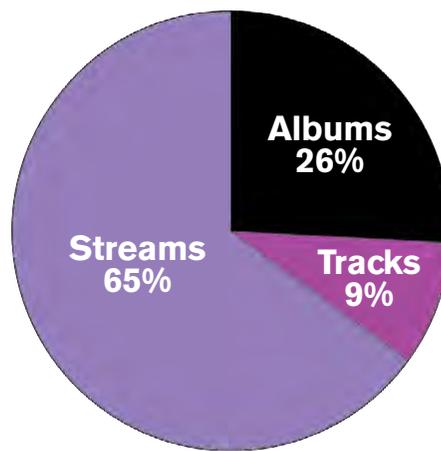
Aggregate PPM Shares



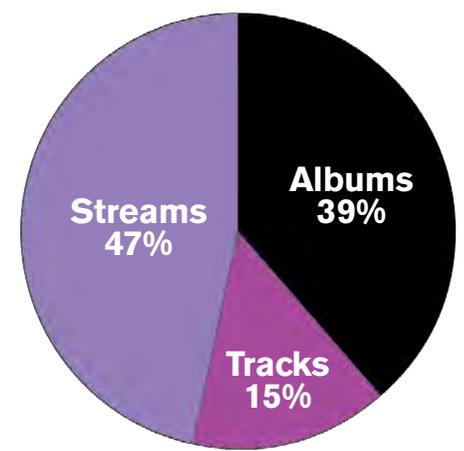
Country's Share of Recorded Music



All Music Consumption by Format

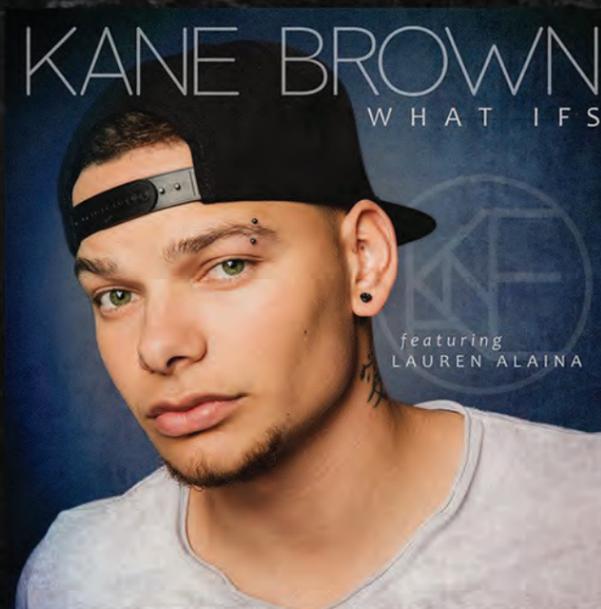
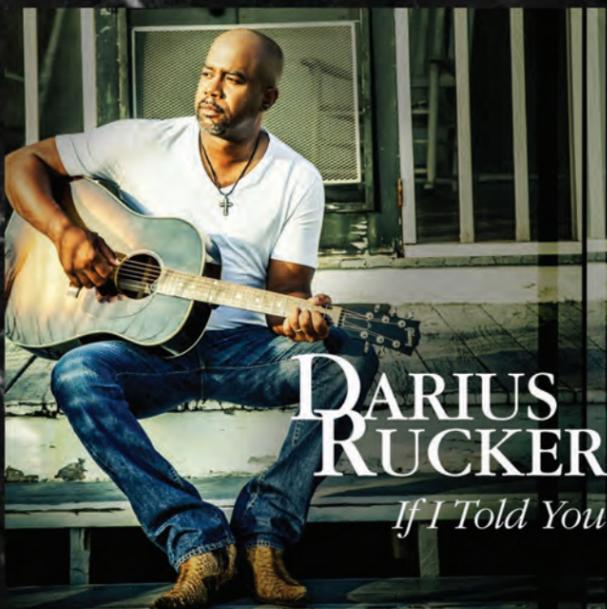
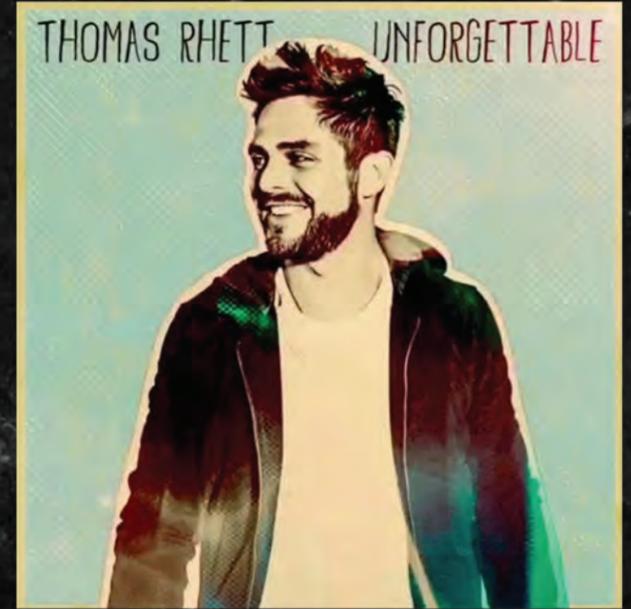
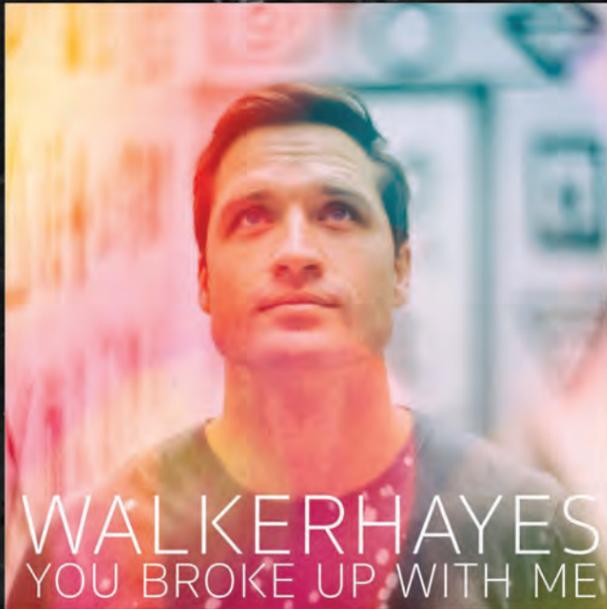
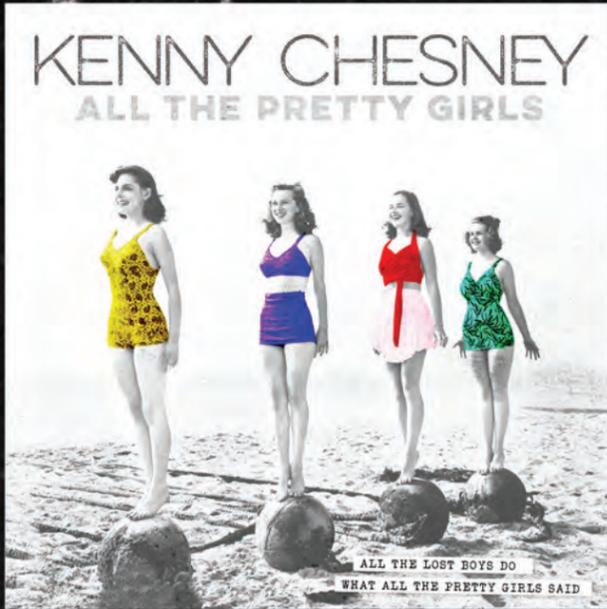


Country Consumption by Format



SMACKSONGS

congratulates our writers on
the top songs in the Top 100 of 2017



Shane McAnally • Josh Osborne • Matthew Ramsey • Trevor Rosen
Walker Hayes • Matt McGinn • Pete Good • Aaron Eshuis

with new music in 2018 from

Renee Blair • Kylie Morgan • Josh Jenkins • Ryan Beaver



THE
**BOBBY
 BONES**
 SHOW

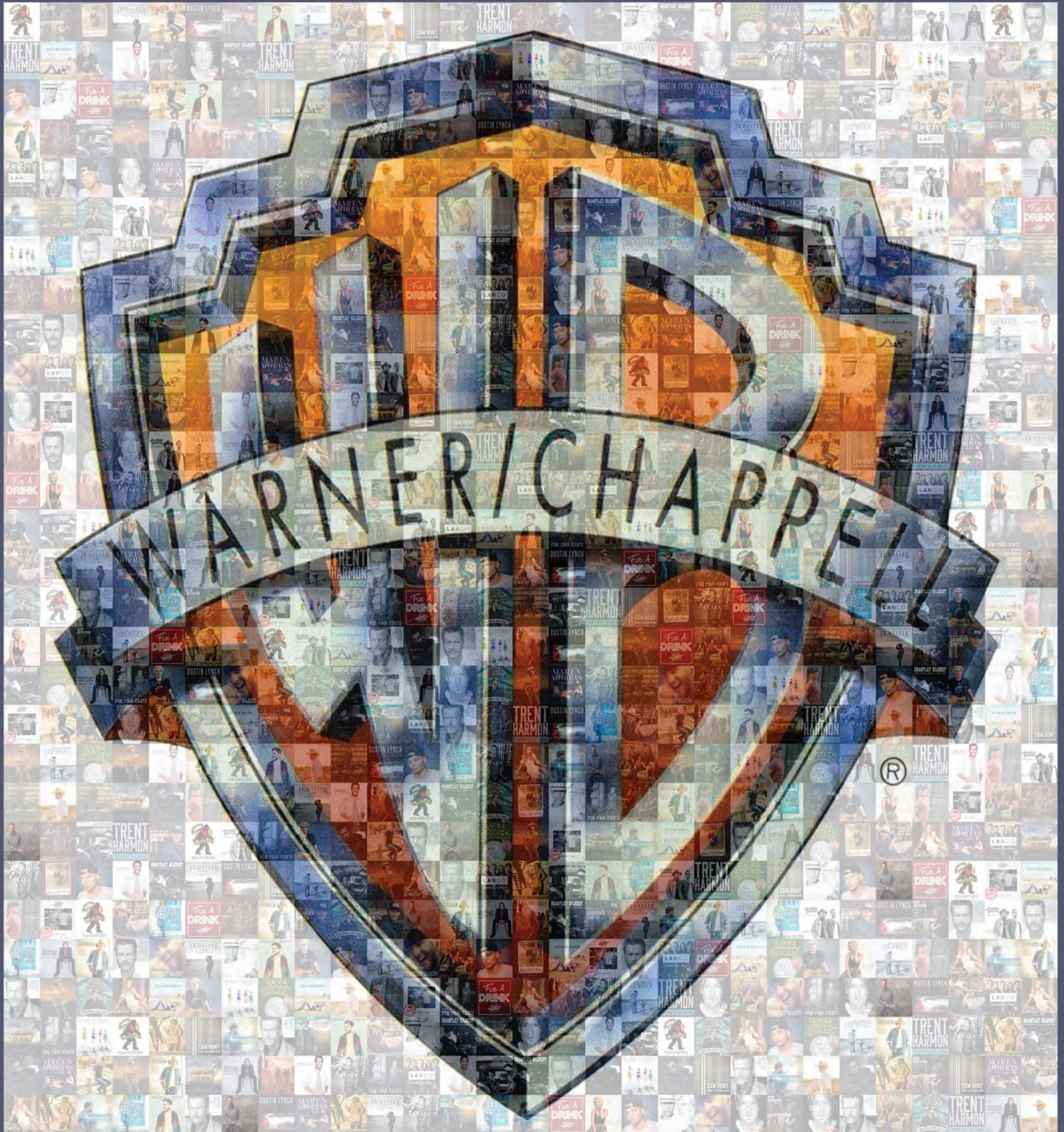
CMT
AFTER MIDNITE
 WITH CODY ALAN

OWN **MORNINGS.**
 OWN **NIGHTS.**
 OWN **COUNTRY.**

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Affiliates@premierenetworks.com

THANK YOU
to the **ARTISTS, TEAMS, and**
SONGWRITERS



for giving life to the top 100
songs of 2017!



.HAPPY.
HOLIDAYS

HOW SWEET THE SOUND



Bright Shining As The Sun: Darius Rucker, Keith Urban, Lady Antebellum and Eric Church open the awards with "Amazing Grace" and "Hold My Hand."



Little more than five weeks after the darkest day in country music history, the industry turned out for an awards week shaded by tragedy. Onstage at the 51st CMA Awards, the aim was to "mourn, celebrate the good things and lift one another up," as co-host Brad Paisley put it. The show, and the week, did just that. Country music weathered its biggest storm with an amazing amount of grace.



Our Town: Rascal Flatts, Dierks Bentley and Eddie Montgomery honor the late Troy Gentry.



Softly And Tenderly: Carrie Underwood sings as the show pays tribute to victims of the Las Vegas shooting during the In Memoriam segment.

THANK YOU COUNTRY RADIO!

2017 Broadcast Award Winners

WYCT/Pensacola, FL.
SMALL MARKET STATION

"I'll tell you what, there's nothing like sitting in those floor seats soaking it all in," says PD/morning show host **Brent Lane**. Participating in the remotes was an eye-opener as well. "It's unreal," he says. "This was the first time we've done the broadcast and it was like we had 40 or 50 best friends stop by and visit. And they all have unaided Pensacola stories. Midland told us how they landed at the airport and went to McGuire's Irish Pub. Ryan Hurd loves the sushi at Dharma Blue. And so many have played the Flora-Bama for the songwriters festival. Brett Eldredge talking about how five years ago he snuck out back before his show at the Fish House and used a pocket fisherman to try to catch a few. Thomas Rhett had just played in town."

"Standing on the stage holding the trophy, I thought about our community back home and our team. There are 35 people that worked hard to get that award. Then Garth won Entertainer of the Year and I get a text to come to the party to celebrate. He walks up and punches me in the chest and asks where my co-host is. She had gone to get some sleep. Then, being front row for the Sugarland reunion at FGL House was amazing.

"We waited until Wednesday to pick our trophy up. We didn't want to drop it, lose it or have it disappear from our hotel room. And we wanted our first photo of it to be onstage the night of the show. If we can find the right case for it, we'd like to do a town tour with it."



Cat Country Christmas Party

WIVK/Knoxville
MEDIUM MARKET STATION



Mac, Thomas, Gunner, Dave Jeffries, Jessica Snoeyenbos

"I love being so close to Nashville," says PD **Nikki Thomas**. "We were able to drive over the week before for the nominees dinner at the Parthenon. "This is such a huge honor, and we have a lobby full of these trophies. There are 12 station awards and that doesn't count our personalities who have won. WIVK has such a long history of community service and it is so great to now be doing radio in my hometown. I grew up listening while my Mamaw made biscuits and gravy for breakfast. I have family living in Knox County and Blount County.

"Our staff works so hard. It's a blessing that we don't take lightly. The radiothon that we did for wildfire relief this year was so special. To see our listeners raise over \$300,000 was amazing.

"As for the show, it was a great chance to unify the country. Carrie Underwood's performance was so beautiful. It was cool to see Governor Haslam at the after-party - he's from East Tennessee too."



I Can't Drive 55: Publisher of the Year Warner/Chappell's Ben Vaughn, Songwriter of the Year Ashley Gorley, Song of the Year songwriters Dave Kuncio and Josh Mirenda ("Somewhere On A Beach") and Warner Chappell's Jon Platt (l-r) at the 55th annual ASCAP Country Music Awards.



The Life Of The (After) Party: Warner Music Nashville's artists and staff at their post-CMA party. Pictured (back row, l-r) are Monique Benjamin, William Michael Morgan, Megan Joyce, High Valley's Curtis Rempel and Brad Rempel, Matt Signore, Morgan Evans and Ben Kline; (third row) Cale Dodds, Tim Foisset, Frankie Ballard, Cole Swindell, John Esposito, Brett Eldredge, Chris Janson and Walker County's Sophie Dawn and Ivy Dene; (second row) Shane Tarleton, Dan + Shay's Dan Smyers and Shay Mooney, Scott Hendricks, Michael Ray, Devin Dawson, Ryan Kinder, Ashley McBryde and Cris Lacy; (front row) Tegan Marie, Kristen Williams, RaeLynn, Hunter Hayes, Bailey Bryan, Wes Vause and Randy Travis.



Color Rush: Sony Entertainment CEO Rob Stringer, P!nk, Miranda Lambert and Sony/Nashville's Randy Goodman at the company's post-awards bash.



Make You Hurt: Celebrating the SESAC Song of the Year "It Don't Hurt Like It Used To" are (l-r) Major Bob/Castle Bound's Chandler Thurston, Spirit Music's Daniel Hill and Freeman Wizer, Billy Currington, songwriter Cary Barlowe, SESAC's Shannan Hatch, Major Bob's Tina Crawford and Bob Doyle and Spirit's Billy Lynn.

WQDR/Raleigh
LARGE MARKET STATION

"It was a whirlwind," says three-time (2011, 2014 and 2017) station winning PD Lisa McKay. "My morning show was there for the broadcast starting Sunday but I flew in Wednesday and back out Thursday. Our middayer (Sean Cash),



Cash, Janie Carothers, Nichols, Mike Wheless, McKay, Cruise

night host (Cruise) and promotion director (Mimi Nichols) were also there. Getting all eight of us to the show was like herding cats.

"I'm not a girly girl, but we ended up getting our hair and makeup done. It was great, I didn't have to think about it the rest of the night. And the folks from

CMA, Brandi (Simms) and Brenden (Oliver) are so helpful and nice. I love that radio is so relevant to the success of our format and with our listeners. We are so grateful to them. We did walk holes in our feet going to the parties afterward and took 700 pictures.

"One of the things I always love is taking the trophy on the plane and having to get it out of the box at security – but this time we had TSA-pre and didn't get to show it off. We all flew back together and I was a little concerned that our whole staff was on the plane. There were even a couple artists who live in North Carolina with us."

WIL/St. Louis
MAJOR MARKET STATION

When warned that folks may not like hearing that going to his very first CMA Awards also included picking up a Station of the Year trophy, PD Scott Roddy laughed, "I'll take the hate."

"We flew in Tuesday and got to see the town. Driving down Music Row seeing all the studios and labels, I was singing 'Chasin' That Neon Rainbow' in my head. And when Alan Jackson did it on the show, I just laughed to myself. I remember playing it as a current on 45 at WCBK/Martinsville, IN. And it was cue-burned like a mother."

"It was great to experience the trip with (APD/MD) Danny Montana. Everyone knows him. We'd be walking down the street and folks would stop to say hello. When we got to take the picture onstage, they had just fogged the room and it blew me away. I reverted to being that kid in Southern Indiana."

"It was great to see one of my mentors Charlie Morgan (Roddy's former market manager in Indianapolis and CMA board member). He and I spent an hour catching up with Fritz Moser (WLHK/Indianapolis PD)."

"I'm still riding the awards week high. Our team worked so hard to win this award against some strong, iconic brands. And at the show I sat next to Sam Moore and talked his ear off. Once I saw the call letters on the screen, that's when it sunk in."



A "congrats" party gathering.

Don Evans, DeAnn Stephens
Officer Don & DeAnn, WBUL/Lexington, KY
SMALL MARKET PERSONALITY

DE: It was cooler than I imagined, and I've been able to do some cool things. I can't sing, I can't write, I can't dance. I kind of feel like I cheated the system to win this.



Evans, Garth Brooks, Stephens

DS: We were so excited to come to Nashville and they really rolled out the red carpet. Not only the CMA, but the artists were so sincere. They were happy for us. Artists who came for interviews but had never won the award wanted to pick up the trophy and check it out. When we were onstage with the other winners, I said, "Look, we're the smallest people here." Spending the week, seeing everyone and the togetherness was amazing. We were just being our goofy selves.

DE: The award is so coveted. Even Garth Brooks picked it up and said, "This is a big deal. I remember winning my first one. No one can take this away from you."

DS: One, I can't believe it. And two, the support from our local listeners and the industry is fantastic.

DE: Being a cop, I am usually pretty understated, but I may have smiled a bit more that week.

DS: I thank my parents, husband and Jesus.

DE: I thank her.

Natalie Cash, Matt Bradley
Cash & Bradley, KWEN/Tulsa, OK
MEDIUM MARKET PERSONALITY

MB: It was a blur. What an insane crazy time. I just counted it up ... we interviewed 80 artists in three days.

NC: Spending time with Luke Bryan, Dustin Lynch, Brett Eldredge...

MB: And Natalie asked Brett about who he is dating.

NC: We kept bumping into Kid Rock. We ended up seeing him at Losers. I was a definite winner that night.

MB: When they called our names, walking out onstage was an out-of-body experience.

NC: We took our moms to the show.

MB: They asked if we were sitting near anyone and I looked around and didn't see stars, then the show started and they were all onstage. We sat near the small stage where Eric Church and Carrie Underwood sang. It was weird to see them just walk out and have people wanting to say hi and shake hands. They were like, "I have to go on TV now."

NC: Our first Uber was a Tesla. He even let it self-drive for a bit.

MB: The parties we remember were a blast. I'm sure the ones we don't remember were fun, too.

NC: We want to thank our listeners. And Keith Urban.

MB: And the folks from Cox Radio for the environment we get to work in. And to our families. Doing mornings is a huge sacrifice for them too.





NEW MUSIC COMING 2018

JILLIAN JACQUELINE
REASONS
GOING FOR ADDS 1/22



UP DOWN

MORGAN WALLEN
FEATURING FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE

FIRST WEEK STATIONS
80
#1 MOST ADDED

CHRIS LANE
FEATURING
TORI KELLY

TAKE BACK HOME GIRL



CONVERT NOW!

BIG LOUD



Party Rock: Kid Rock (r) with BBR Music Group's Jon Loba (l) and KKGO/Los Angeles' Graham Bunn at the label's eighth annual pre-CMA party.



Winner's Circle: BMI's Mike O'Neill, Publisher of the Year Sony/ATV's Troy Tomlinson, Songwriter of the Year Ross Copperman, Rezonant's Tim Wiperman, 2017 BMI Icon Bob DiPiero and BMI's Jody Williams at the 65th annual BMI Country Awards.



Welcome To The Machine: Big Machine Label Group staff and artists gather after the CMA Awards. Pictured (back, l-r) are Brett Young, Drake White, Midland's Cameron Duddy, Mark Wystrach and Jess Carson, Trent Harmon and Lauren Jenkins; (front, l-r) are Andrew Kautz, Carly Pearce, Scott Borchetta, Sandi Spika Borchetta, Danielle Bradbery and Jimmy Harnen.



Capitol Hill: Celebrants at the UMG/Nashville party are (l-r) Cindy Mabe, Darius Rucker, Mike Dungan, Carrie Underwood, Keith Urban and UMG CFO/EVP Boyd Muir.

Amanda Valentine, Jesse Tack
Amanda and Jesse, WUBE/Cincinnati
LARGE MARKET PERSONALITY

JT: We drove down in the station truck and Facebook-Lived the whole way.
AV: We had trucker hats to hand out and our inflatable T-Rex. We stopped at Dinosaur World in Cave City, KY and walked through it with the T-Rex because that's what you do when you drive to Nashville to pick up your CMA Award.

JT: We had a lot of people tell us that's why we won.
AV: We went to the Broken Bow pre-party and saw Kid Rock there. We've never been to an awards show or parties like that with free drinks.

JT: We were in the roped-off area that was for him and we were told politely to leave.

AV: Jesse may have had too much to drink and barfed the next day.

JT: Then we got invited to the Garth party after the show.

AV: And they had sushi. We went to town, we were so hungry. And the next day, Jesse had steak and eggs for breakfast for the first time at The Southern. We drove home and recorded a podcast on the way.

JT: We just uploaded it raw, no editing, all 20 minutes of talking about the trip, our experience in Nashville, just everything that happened.

AV: I want to thank Jesse for being an awesome co-host and putting up with my crazy. Also, (PD) Grover Collins, (OM) Patti Marshall and Hubbard.

JT: Yes, they trust us and let us do our thing. I want to thank Amanda. She's the first co-host I have ever gotten to work with. She makes me a better personality and better at what I do. And I want to thank my first PD, Jim O'Hara, who taught me the basics of radio in 1999 at WLLR/Davenport, IA. He even announced our win on the air and I got a bunch of texts from Iowa.



Mike Chase, Amy Faust
Mike & Amy, KWJF/Portland, OR
MAJOR MARKET PERSONALITY

MC: We flew in late Tuesday night and I got to visit with my cousin Wednesday while Amy got her nails and hair done.

AF: We did the whole deal – spray tan, hair and makeup, but then had to walk to the store to get some duct tape because the hem of my dress came apart. There I am in TV makeup in the middle of Walgreens.

MC: We lost a friend's son right before the awards and we wanted to honor him somehow.

AF: Ryan Grimaldi was a firefighter and paramedic. His dad Mike is the nicest guy. He worked here for years.

MC: We told all our listeners about it and shared that we would put our hands over our hearts on the TV broadcast when we got our moment. The producer asked us not to, but after we told him the story he said go ahead.

MC: We had great seats. It was so awesome to sit with the other radio winners. Every time a station was on the screen we all went bonkers.

AF: But there was some drama. The guy in front of me was wearing a hat and he wouldn't take it off when I asked. I eventually traded seats so I could see.



MC: At one of the parties I went up to Jon Pardi and called him a liar. The "I can only get so fancy" line in his song – are you kidding? His jacket had rhinestones and sparkles. It was the fanciest one in the room.

AF: And then we posed for a quick picture with Darius Rucker and someone jostled

us ... and a glass of red wine spilled on the dress I borrowed from a friend.

MC: It was Brothers Osborne that bumped into us. It was definitely an "It Ain't My Fault" moment.

AF: We shipped the awards home and they arrived intact. I put mine on the back of the toilet at my house. My husband is now calling me his trophy wife.

MC: Mine is here in the office on the shelf. We really want to thank the listeners and our Format Captain Mike Moore.

Bobby Bones, Amy Brown, "Lunchbox" Dan Chappell, Eddie Garcia

The Bobby Bones Show, Premiere
NATIONAL PERSONALITY

"We avoid the parties," says Bones. "We had to do the show the next morning and I was getting ready to fly to L.A. and was really sick. Plus, we're jaded and fortunate that we get to see the artists all the time since we're here in Nashville."

"We really didn't expect to win. It was a surprise. I'm so happy for the whole team because it's a real group effort. There may have been four on-stage, but there are eight of us with Ray (Slater), the two Morgans (Massengill and Huelsman) and Pitts (Andrew Pittsenbarger), our sound engineer. He puts all the audio together."

"We're so lucky our bosses let us do our thing. They let us try stuff and sometimes we get in trouble. Being the only radio guy on the show, we really try to let everyone live their lives. Then we talk about it on the radio." **CAC**



Garcia, Chappell, Bones, Brown

ascap SONGWRITERS TOP THE CHARTS IN 2017

ASHLEY GORLEY

ASCAP COUNTRY SONGWRITER OF THE YEAR
BILLBOARD HOT COUNTRY SONGWRITER OF THE YEAR

BODY LIKE A BACK ROAD

RECORDED BY SAM HUNT
COUNTRY AIRCHECK #1 SONG OF 2017
BILLBOARD COUNTRY AIRPLAY/HOT COUNTRY #1 SONG OF 2017
ASCAP SONGWRITERS: ZACH CROWELL, SAM HUNT, JOSH OSBORNE

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR ASCAP COUNTRY MUSIC AWARDS WINNERS

TOP ASCAP COUNTRY SONGS OF 2017

“AMERICAN COUNTRY LOVE SONG” by Jake Owen
WRITERS: ASHLEY GORLEY, JAREN JOHNSTON
PUBLISHERS: WARNER/CHAPPELL MUSIC PUBLISHING,
SONY/ATV MUSIC PUBLISHING, COMBUSTION MUSIC, TAPE ROOM MUSIC

“ANY OL’ BARSTOOL” by Jason Aldean
WRITER: DERIC RUTTAN
PUBLISHERS: THIS MUSIC, DOC AND MAGGIE MUSIC,
WARNER/CHAPPELL MUSIC PUBLISHING

“BLUE AIN’T YOUR COLOR” by Keith Urban
WRITERS: HILLARY LINDSEY, CLINT LAGERBERG, STEVEN LEE OLSEN
PUBLISHERS: CORNMAN MUSIC, SEA GAYLE MUSIC, REZONATE MUSIC,
WARNER/CHAPPELL MUSIC PUBLISHING, BMG GOLD SONGS,
SPIRIT MUSIC NASHVILLE

“CAME HERE TO FORGET” by Blake Shelton
WRITERS: DERIC RUTTAN, CRAIG WISEMAN
PUBLISHERS: THIS MUSIC, BIG LOUD SONGS, ROUND HILL SONGS,
WARNER/CHAPPELL MUSIC PUBLISHING, RED TOE ROCKER,
DOC AND MAGGIE MUSIC

“CHURCH BELLS” by Carrie Underwood
WRITERS: ZACH CROWELL, BRETT JAMES, HILLARY LINDSEY
PUBLISHERS: WARNER/CHAPPELL MUSIC PUBLISHING,
COMBUSTION MUSIC, BMG GOLD SONGS, REZONATE MUSIC,
TAPE ROOM MUSIC, SONGS OF BRETT, ATLAS MUSIC PUBLISHING

“CONFESSION” by Florida Georgia Line
WRITER: MATT JENKINS
PUBLISHERS: ATLAS MUSIC PUBLISHING, TAPE ROOM MUSIC,
COMBUSTION MUSIC, WARNER/CHAPPELL MUSIC PUBLISHING

“DIFFERENT FOR GIRLS” by Dierks Bentley ft. Elle King
WRITER: JT HARDING
PUBLISHERS: SONGS OF SMP, MIGHTY SEVEN, HEAVY METAL DISCO

“DIRT ON MY BOOTS” by Jon Pardi
WRITER: ASHLEY GORLEY
PUBLISHERS: COMBUSTION MUSIC, TAPE ROOM MUSIC,
WARNER/CHAPPELL MUSIC PUBLISHING

“DIRTY LAUNDRY” by Carrie Underwood
WRITERS: ZACH CROWELL, ASHLEY GORLEY, HILLARY LINDSEY
PUBLISHERS: ATLAS MUSIC PUBLISHING, BMG GOLD SONGS,
COMBUSTION MUSIC, REZONATE MUSIC, TAPE ROOM MUSIC,
WARNER/CHAPPELL MUSIC PUBLISHING

“FIX” by Chris Lane
WRITER: ABE STOKLASA
PUBLISHER: BIG YELLOW DOG MUSIC

“FROM THE GROUND UP” by Dan + Shay
WRITERS: CHRIS DESTEFANO, DANIEL SMYERS
PUBLISHERS: BEATS AND BANJOS, CDS WORDS & MUSIC,
SONY/ATV MUSIC PUBLISHING, WARNER/CHAPPELL MUSIC PUBLISHING

“A GUY WITH A GIRL” by Blake Shelton
WRITER: ASHLEY GORLEY
PUBLISHERS: COMBUSTION MUSIC,
WARNER/CHAPPELL MUSIC PUBLISHING, TAPE ROOM MUSIC

“HEARTBEAT” by Carrie Underwood
WRITERS: ZACH CROWELL, ASHLEY GORLEY
PUBLISHERS: ATLAS MUSIC PUBLISHING, COMBUSTION MUSIC,
TAPE ROOM MUSIC, WARNER/CHAPPELL MUSIC PUBLISHING

“H.O.L.Y.” by Florida Georgia Line
WRITER: WILLIAM LARSEN
PUBLISHERS: IDAP MUSIC, BMG GOLD SONGS

“HOMETOWN GIRL” by Josh Turner
WRITER: MARC BEESON
PUBLISHERS: DOWNTOWN DLJ SONGS, SON OF RON SONGS

“HOW I’LL ALWAYS BE” by Tim McGraw
WRITER: JEREMY STOVER
PUBLISHERS: OLE RED CAPE SONGS, REAL BIG RED TUNES

“HOW NOT TO” by Dan + Shay
WRITERS: KEVIN BARD, ADAM HAMBRICK, PAUL DIGIOVANNI
PUBLISHERS: RED LIKE THE SUNSET MUSIC, OLE RED CAPE SONGS,
SONY/ATV MUSIC PUBLISHING, UNIVERSAL MUSIC CORPORATION,
KEVIN BARD MUSIC, PAULYWOOD MUSIC

“HUNTIN’, FISHIN’ AND LOVIN’ EVERY DAY”
by Luke Bryan
WRITER: BEN HAYSLIP
PUBLISHERS: WARNER/CHAPPELL MUSIC PUBLISHING,
THIS MUSIC, TAR-CAM-KNOX MUSIC

“IF I TOLD YOU” by Darius Rucker
WRITER: JON NITE
PUBLISHER: SONY/ATV MUSIC PUBLISHING

“IF THE BOOT FITS” by Granger Smith
WRITERS: ANDY ALBERT, JORDAN SCHMIDT
PUBLISHERS: MAJOR BOB MUSIC, DOWNTOWN DLJ SONGS,
WE-VOLVE MUSIC, FRESHY MUSIC (A DIVISION OF TREE VIBEZ MUSIC)

“I KNOW SOMEBODY” by LoCash
WRITER: JEREMY STOVER
PUBLISHERS: OLE SONGS OF COUNTRYWOOD,
SONY/ATV MUSIC PUBLISHING

“I MET A GIRL” by William Michael Morgan
WRITERS: SAM HUNT, TREVOR ROSEN
PUBLISHERS: SMACKSONGS, UNIVERSAL MUSIC CORPORATION,
OLD GRINGO MUSIC, REHITS MUSIC

“IT DON’T HURT LIKE IT USED TO” by Billy Currington
WRITER: BILLY CURRINGTON
PUBLISHER: COCONUT HUT PUBLISHING

TOP FIVE SONG
“LIGHTS COME ON” by Jason Aldean
WRITERS: JORDAN SCHMIDT, JIMMY ROBBINS
PUBLISHERS: MAJOR BOB MUSIC, ROUND HILL SONGS, WE-VOLVE MUSIC,
FRESHY MUSIC (A DIVISION OF TREE VIBEZ MUSIC), EXTRAORDINARY ALIEN,
JAMMY RABBINS MUSIC

“A LITTLE MORE SUMMERTIME” by Jason Aldean
WRITER: JERRY FLOWERS
PUBLISHERS: ATLAS MUSIC PUBLISHING, COMBUSTION MUSIC,
TAPE ROOM MUSIC, WARNER/CHAPPELL MUSIC PUBLISHING

“MAKE YOU MISS ME” by Sam Hunt
WRITERS: SAM HUNT, JOSH OSBORNE, MATTHEW RAMSEY
PUBLISHERS: MUSIC OF RPM, SONGS OF BLACK RIVER, SONIC GEO MUSIC,
SPIRIT MUSIC NASHVILLE, OLD GRINGO MUSIC, SAM HUNT PUBLISHING,
UNIVERSAL MUSIC CORPORATION

TOP FIVE SONG
“MAY WE ALL” by Florida Georgia Line
WRITER: JAMIE MOORE
PUBLISHERS: BMG GOLD SONGS, TEAM DESTINY, JMZL MUSIC

“MIDDLE OF A MEMORY” by Cole Swindell
WRITERS: ZACH CROWELL, ASHLEY GORLEY
PUBLISHERS: WARNER/CHAPPELL MUSIC PUBLISHING,
ATLAS MUSIC PUBLISHING, COMBUSTION MUSIC, TAPE ROOM MUSIC

“MIND READER” by Dustin Lynch
WRITER: BEN HAYSLIP
PUBLISHERS: THIS MUSIC, WARNER/CHAPPELL MUSIC PUBLISHING

“MOVE” by Luke Bryan
WRITERS: MICHAEL CARTER, JAY CLEMENTI
PUBLISHERS: SONY/ATV MUSIC PUBLISHING, 243 MUSIC

“PETER PAN” by Kelsea Ballerini
WRITERS: KELSEA BALLERINI, FOREST GLEN WHITEHEAD
PUBLISHERS: SONGS OF BLACK RIVER, KNB MUSIC

“ROAD LESS TRAVELED” by Lauren Alaina
WRITER: MEGHAN TRAINOR
PUBLISHERS: BIG YELLOW DOG MUSIC, MTRAIN MUSIC

“ROCK ON” by Tucker Beathard
WRITER: MARLA CANNON-GOODMAN
PUBLISHERS: MY MY MY MUSIC, SCRAMBLER MUSIC

“SEEIN’ RED” by Dustin Lynch
WRITERS: KURT ALLISON, JASON SEVER
PUBLISHERS: BMG/THIS IS MAGIC MUSTANG MUSIC, MAKENA COVE MUSIC,
WARNER/CHAPPELL MUSIC PUBLISHING, LITTLE CHAMPION MUSIC, LEIGHALU

“SETTING THE WORLD ON FIRE” by Kenny Chesney ft. PINK
WRITERS: MATT JENKINS, JOSH OSBORNE
PUBLISHERS: WARNER/CHAPPELL MUSIC PUBLISHING,
TAPE ROOM MUSIC, ATLAS MUSIC PUBLISHING, COMBUSTION MUSIC,
SMACKSONGS, JENKALENK TUNES, ANDERSON FORK IN THE ROAD MUSIC

“SLEEP WITHOUT YOU” by Brett Young
WRITER: BRETT YOUNG
PUBLISHERS: BIG MACHINE MUSIC, CALIVILLE PUBLISHING

TOP FIVE SONG
“SNAPBACK” by Old Dominion
WRITERS: MATTHEW RAMSEY, TREVOR ROSEN, BRAD TURSI
PUBLISHERS: SMACKSONGS, SONGS OF BIG DEAL, REHITS MUSIC,
WOODEN SHIPS, UNFAIR ENTERTAINMENT, CARROT SEED SONGS

“SONG FOR ANOTHER TIME” by Old Dominion
WRITERS: MATT JENKINS, MATTHEW RAMSEY, TREVOR ROSEN, BRAD TURSI
PUBLISHERS: WARNER/CHAPPELL MUSIC PUBLISHING,
ATLAS MUSIC PUBLISHING, COMBUSTION MUSIC, REHITS MUSIC,
SMACKSONGS, SONGS OF BIG DEAL, TAPE ROOM MUSIC, WOODEN SHIPS,
JENKALENK TUNES, UNFAIR ENTERTAINMENT, CARROT SEED SONGS

“STAR OF THE SHOW” by Thomas Rhett
WRITER: BEN HAYSLIP
PUBLISHERS: THIS MUSIC, WARNER/CHAPPELL MUSIC PUBLISHING

“T-SHIRT” by Thomas Rhett
WRITER: ASHLEY GORLEY
PUBLISHERS: ATLAS MUSIC PUBLISHING, COMBUSTION MUSIC,
WARNER/CHAPPELL MUSIC PUBLISHING

“THINK A LITTLE LESS” by Michael Ray
WRITERS: JON NITE, JIMMY ROBBINS
PUBLISHERS: EXTRAORDINARY ALIEN, SONY/ATV MUSIC PUBLISHING,
ROUND HILL SONGS

“THINK OF YOU” by Chris Young ft. Cassadee Pope
WRITER: COREY CROWDER
PUBLISHERS: LIZ ROSE MUSIC, WARNER/CHAPPELL MUSIC PUBLISHING

“TODAY” by Brad Paisley
WRITERS: CHRIS DUBOIS, ASHLEY GORLEY, BRAD PAISLEY
PUBLISHERS: BMG GOLD SONGS, SEA GAYLE MUSIC, SPIRIT MUSIC NASHVILLE,
TAPE ROOM MUSIC, WARNER/CHAPPELL MUSIC PUBLISHING

TOP FIVE SONG
“WANNA BE THAT SONG” by Brett Eldredge
WRITER: SCOOTER CARUSOE
PUBLISHERS: SCRAMBLER MUSIC, ABBOTTS CREEK MUSIC

“WASTED TIME” by Keith Urban
WRITER: GREG WELLS
PUBLISHERS: FIREHOUSE CAT MUSIC, BMG GOLD SONGS

“THE WEEKEND” by Brantley Gilbert
WRITER: ANDREW DEROBERTS
PUBLISHERS: BMG GOLD SONGS, LANERCOST PUBLISHING

“YEAH BOY” by Kelsea Ballerini
WRITERS: KELSEA BALLERINI, FOREST GLEN WHITEHEAD
PUBLISHERS: SONGS OF BLACK RIVER, KNB MUSIC

“YOU LOOK LIKE I NEED A DRINK” by Justin Moore
WRITER: MATT DRAGSTREM
PUBLISHERS: ROUND HILL SONGS, BIG LOUD SONGS

“YOU SHOULD BE HERE” by COLE SWINDELL
WRITER: ASHLEY GORLEY
PUBLISHERS: COMBUSTION MUSIC, TAPE ROOM MUSIC,
WARNER/CHAPPELL MUSIC PUBLISHING



SONGWRITER-ARTIST OF THE YEAR
MATTHEW RAMSEY



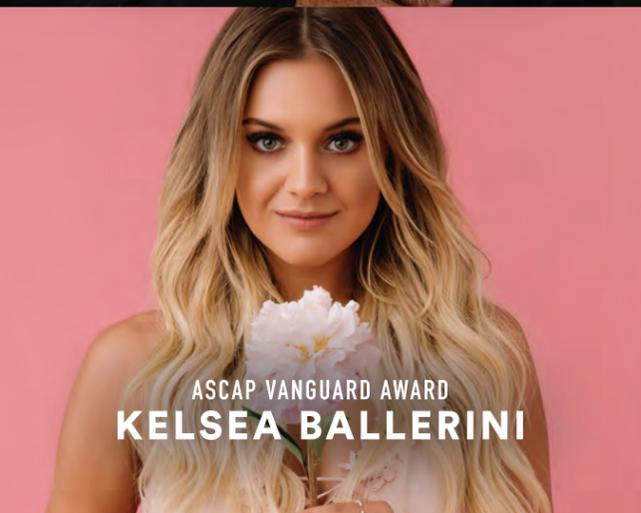
SONG OF THE YEAR
SOMEWHERE ON A BEACH
RECORDED BY DIERKS BENTLEY
WRITERS: DAVE KUNCIO & JOSH MIRENDA
PUBLISHERS: CORNMAN MUSIC, DAVID RYAN PUBLISHING,
THE REAL BRAIN PUBLISHING, WARNER/CHAPPELL



PUBLISHER OF THE YEAR
**WARNER/CHAPPELL
MUSIC PUBLISHING**



ASCAP FOUNDERS AWARD
RODNEY CROWELL



ASCAP VANGUARD AWARD
KELSEA BALLERINI

LEE BRICE

boy

TOP 30 & CLIMBING

OVER 250,000 SONGS →
HALFWAY TO GOLD CERTIFICATION

DYLAN SCOTT

TOP 40 & CLIMBING

TOP 100 MOST PLAYED
SONG OF THE YEAR:
#7 "MY GIRL"

#2 MOST PLAYED NEW ARTIST IN 2017



jackson michelson **ROLLIN'**

"...ONE OF COUNTRY'S FUTURE ROOKIES OF THE YEAR..."
TASTE OF COUNTRY

JERROD NIEMANN *I GOT THIS*

"...PROVES [HE] ISN'T AFRAID TO TAKE
CHANCES, BOTH IN THE STUDIO AND
WITH HIS OWN VOICE..." *THE BOOT*



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LAUREN ALAINA
LUKE COMBS
MIDLAND
CARLY PEARCE
MICHAEL RAY

2018 CRS New Faces



The Capitol promotion staff and associated UMG/Nashville team are celebrating a ninth consecutive Label of the Year title with typically dominant chart share (right). Country Aircheck asked them for the best advice they've gotten ... or given.

LABEL OF THE YEAR

2017 Top 10 Labels

1. Capitol	14.8%
2. WMN	8.8%
3. Big Machine	7.2%
4. BMLG Records	7.0%
5. Valory	6.8%
6. RCA	6.7%
7. Broken Bow	6.3%
8. Columbia	6.2%
9. MCA	5.3%
10. Arista	4.7%

DAVID FRIEDMAN
UMGN VP

Arista VP/Promotion Bobby Kraig's cell phone had an antiquated, 10-character screen that displayed one word: "Questions." He said it was his reminder to always ask questions of radio. You learn not by talking, but by constantly inquiring, attempting to understand the needs of programmers, their goals, and the things they are going through on both the local and corporate level. That helps you create opportunities, and your programmers appreciate your desire to understand their world. Another simple one: Be yourself! Why else would you decide to dance in a pineapple costume or walk around CRS with a badge 10 sizes too big?



With wife Amy Paige

DONNA HUGHES
UMGN Dir./Radio Marketing

I actually did a few "interviews" while studying broadcasting at Middle Tennessee State University. I had notes after notes, reading from cards as I focused on the questions. Before my next interview, I was told to listen to the subject and the questions would just come. And they *did!* That was the beginning of a much varied and beautiful journey of interviewing that continues today. Another key is to know who you're talking to when chatting with a specific artist. What may work for one may not work for another. So do a little research, even if you just go online for five minutes. Also: Not everything on the internet is correct or true.



With great nephew Logan



BRENT JONES
Midwest

My first boss, Bill Catino, told me, "If you take care of the music, the music will take care of you." I believe he got that from Jimmy Bowen, but I've never met Bowen. My grandmother Bammy

told me something I've carried around since grade school. "You can never get above the company you keep." I've thought about that often when choosing whom to hang out with and trust.

ASHLEY LAWS
Southeast

The five Ps: Proper Preparation Prevents Poor Performance. Great advice for covering a show or just getting through the workday. Now, this is something I could always be more mindful of, but I love a good acronym and it has stuck in my mind ever since I heard it.



Second from left with Schuler, Jones, former Coord. Sarah Beth Watson and Risser.



A good day with mom.

JASON MCCOLL
Coordinator

"Bloom where you are planted." When I started as the UMG mailroom temp, I was constantly thinking about getting out, but that advice helped me focus. I was washing dishes and organizing CD closets at that time, but I made it a point to do these as well as I possibly could. Also, when I was a child dreading school, my mother always told me "make it a good day." Life is a whole lot easier when you realize it's up to you if you are happy or not.

ROYCE RISSER
UMGN SVP

"Never let what you do define who you are." What we do for our livelihood has a very sneaky way of becoming how we identify ourselves. It's so easy to get into conversations with people outside of our industry who find us interesting because of our line of work. When you say you work alongside country artists, it is almost always an immediate "Wow!" I can meet pretty much anyone, and know the country radio station in their market. It's a very easy entry point into conversations. However, using it without caution can become dangerous. What happens when the job is over? Kind of scary, right? It's a tough balance, but how great would it be to live and interact with people without having to reveal what you do, how much money you make, or who you know? It's not entirely possible, but working toward that is healthy.



With Keith Urban while in radio (left) and now.

ANNIE SANDOR
Northeast

"Go where the love is." That was in 2004 from Justin Case (then-Hartford, now in Wichita) and I have passed it on time and again. If you are surrounded by people who believe in you and support you, you will grow and flourish. I am!

The best promo advice is be real. It's easy to get caught up in this crazy business, but if you are straight with your teammates and partners, great things can happen. We have to have some hard conversations with our partners at times, but if you are both coming from a good place, those tough talks can grow your partnership.

CHRIS SCHULER

UMGN Mgr./Radio Marketing & Syndication
I always hated biology but, ironically, it left me with one of my biggest life takeaways. Written on the chalkboard on the first day of 10th grade was, "Adapt, migrate or die." If presented with any sort of problem, you either adapt to it, get away from it or let it kill you. Still holds true in the music business.



Contemplating whether to adapt, migrate or

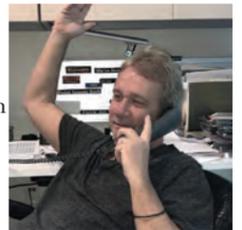
MARA SIDWEBER
Southwest

When I left KPLX/Dallas in 2004 for my first record gig, Smokey Rivers sent me an email I have kept and read regularly. He said, "The music you work will come and go, but what will always be there is the respect you build with the people you deal with. Build great relationships and take even better care of them. They're the only thing you'll take wherever you go."



BOBBY YOUNG
VP

Gene Kennedy (Door Knob Records) told me the last thing to do before getting off a call was to reconfirm they were going to report my artist's song as an add to the trades. That was back in 1979. I was 12. Gene Hughes and Bruce Hinton (MCA) advised me to give a reason why someone should play your artist's record - sales info, airplay stories, listener requests, etc, rather than just ask for the add, help or a favor. Bob Saporiti and Nick Hunter (Warner Bros.) were both quick to point out that the record business isn't a party, and building long-term, mutually respectful and beneficial relationships at radio and within the industry is crucial. Frank Leffell (Mercury) was quick to point out that if I ever turned in three-tenths of a mile for business mileage on an expense report again, he would fire me. Eddie Mascolo (RCA/Mercury) always had great advice, some I'm hesitant to repeat. Paul Lucks (Polygram/Mercury) advised me we were promoting the Statler Brothers, not Bon Jovi. That was the last time my hair graced the middle of my back and shoulders. The most important advice I was ever given was when I was five or six. My grandfather said, "If you have nothing good to say about someone, don't say anything." I've tried to live by this and also instill it in my kids, all five of them. Just like me, they will probably remember it and not always act accordingly ... then learn the hard way that they wish they had.



MEGAN YOUNGBLOOD
West Coast

Best advice I've gotten and still give: "Figure out what you love and find a way to make a living around it." For me, it had to be something involving music so that turned out well!

CAC



With Young and Urban.

UMPG NASHVILLE IS LIGHTING UP MUSIC ROW

**Congratulations to our songwriters
on a great year.**



**UNIVERSAL MUSIC
PUBLISHING GROUP
NASHVILLE**



THE YEAR IN MUSIC



TOP 100

OF 2017

MEDIABASE

1	SAM HUNT	Body Like A Back Road	MCA	51	COLE SWINDELL	Middle Of A Memory	Warner Bros./WMN
2	JON PARDI	Dirt On My Boots	Capitol	52	GARTH BROOKS	Ask Me How I Know	Pearl
3	BLAKE SHELTON	A Guy With A Girl	Warner Bros./WMN	53	MAREN MORRIS	I Could Use A Love Song	Columbia
4	LUKE COMBS	Hurricane	River House/Columbia	54	TIM MCGRAW	How I'll Always Be	Big Machine
5	BRETT YOUNG	In Case You Didn't Know	BMLG	55	LOCASH	Ring On Every Finger	Reviver
6	FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE & T. MCGRAW	May We All	BMLG	56	LUKE COMBS	When It Rains It Pours	River House/Columbia
7	DYLAN SCOTT	My Girl	Curb	57	CHRIS JANSON	Fix A Drink	Warner Bros./WAR
8	JOSH TURNER	Hometown Girl	MCA	58	JASON ALDEAN	A Little More Summertime	Broken Bow
9	BRETT ELDRIDGE	Wanna Be That Song	Atlantic/WMN	59	MAREN MORRIS	80s Mercedes	Columbia
10	MICHAEL RAY	Think A Little Less	Atlantic/WEA	60	LANCO	Greatest Love Story	Arista
11	LITTLE BIG TOWN	Better Man	Capitol	61	THOMAS RHETT	Unforgettable	Valory
12	DUSTIN LYNCH	Seein' Red	Broken Bow	62	ERIC CHURCH	Round Here Buzz	EMI Nashville
13	LAUREN ALAINA	Road Less Traveled	19/Interscope/Mercury	63	KENNY CHESNEY	Bar At The End Of The ...	Blue Chair/Columbia
14	BILLY CURRINGTON	Do I Make You Wanna	Mercury	64	ZAC BROWN BAND	My Old Man	SouthernGrnd/Elektra/WAR
15	DAN + SHAY	How Not To	Warner Bros./WAR	65	EASTON CORBIN	A Girl Like You	Mercury
16	DARIUS RUCKER	If I Told You	Capitol	66	TRENT HARMON	There's A Girl	Dot/Big Machine
17	LUKE BRYAN	Fast	Capitol	67	HIGH VALLEY	Make You Mine	Atlantic/WEA
18	JUSTIN MOORE	Somebody Else Will	Valory	68	GARTH BROOKS	Baby, Let's Lay Down ...	Pearl
19	JASON ALDEAN	Any Ol' Barstool	Broken Bow	69	AARON WATSON	Outta Style	BIG
20	DUSTIN LYNCH	Small Town Boy	Broken Bow	70	BIG & RICH	California	B&R/New Revolution
21	KEITH URBAN	Blue Ain't Your Color	Capitol	71	CHRIS YOUNG	Losing Sleep	RCA
22	THOMAS RHETT f/MAREN MORRIS	Craving You	Valory	72	LUKE BRYAN	Light It Up	Capitol
23	LADY ANTEBELLUM	You Look Good	Capitol	73	RUSSELL DICKERSON	Yours	Triple Tigers
24	DIERKS BENTLEY	Black	Capitol	74	CHRIS STAPLETON	Parachute	Mercury
25	OLD DOMINION	No Such Thing As A ...	RCA	75	CHRIS JANSON	Holdin' Her	Warner Bros./WAR
26	THOMAS RHETT	Star Of The Show	Valory	76	BRETT ELDRIDGE	Somethin' I'm Good At	Atlantic/WMN
27	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	Dirty Laundry	19/Arista	77	BRAD PAISLEY	Last Time For Everything	Arista
28	KELSEA BALLERINI	Yeah Boy	Black River	78	RAELYNN	Love Triangle	Warner Bros./WMN
29	BRANTLEY GILBERT	The Weekend	Valory	79	CRAIG CAMPBELL	Outskirts Of Heaven	Red Bow
30	COLE SWINDELL	Flatliner	Warner Bros./WMN	80	MIRANDA LAMBERT	Tin Man	RCA
31	MIDLAND	Drinkin' Problem	Big Machine	81	FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE	Smooth	BMLG
32	CHRIS YOUNG f/VINCE GILL	Sober Saturday Night	RCA	82	BRETT YOUNG	Like I Loved You	BMLG
33	RASCAL FLATTS	Yours If You Want It	Big Machine	83	BLAKE SHELTON	I'll Name The Dogs	Warner Bros./WMN
34	BRAD PAISLEY	Today	Arista	84	TIM MCGRAW & FAITH HILL	Speak To A Girl	Arista
35	BLAKE SHELTON	Every Time I Hear That ...	Warner Bros./WMN	85	MORGAN WALLEN	The Way I Talk	Big Loud
36	FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE	God, Your Mama, And Me	BMLG	86	MIRANDA LAMBERT	We Should Be Friends	RCA
37	KEITH URBAN f/C. UNDERWOOD	The Fighter	Capitol	87	WALKER HAYES	You Broke Up With Me	Monument/Arista
38	KIP MOORE	More Girls Like You	MCA	88	DEVIN DAWSON	All On Me	Atlantic/WEA
39	OLD DOMINION	Song For Another Time	RCA	89	DRAKE WHITE	Makin' Me Look Good ...	BMLG
40	BRETT YOUNG	Sleep Without You	BMLG	90	RUNAWAY JUNE	Lipstick	Wheelhouse
41	KANE BROWN f/LAUREN ALAINA	What Ifs	RCA	91	HIGH VALLEY	She's With Me	Atlantic/WEA
42	CARLY PEARCE	Every Little Thing	Big Machine	92	KELSEA BALLERINI	Legends	Black River
43	BROTHERS OSBORNE	It Ain't My Fault	EMI Nashville	93	ADAM CRAIG	Just A Phase	Stoney Creek
44	ERIC CHURCH f/R. GIDDENS	Kill A Word	EMI Nashville	94	GRANGER SMITH	Happens Like That	Wheelhouse
45	JASON ALDEAN	They Don't Know	Broken Bow	95	WILLIAM MICHAEL MORGAN	Missing	Warner Bros./WMN
46	JON PARDI	Heartache On The Dance ...	Capitol	96	JAKE OWEN	Good Company	RCA
47	LUKE BRYAN	Move	Capitol	97	LEE BRICE	Boy	Curb
48	GRANGER SMITH	If The Boot Fits	Wheelhouse	98	BRANTLEY GILBERT	The Ones That Like Me	Valory
49	KENNY CHESNEY	All The Pretty Girls	Blue Chair/Columbia	99	SCOTTY MCCREERY	Five More Minutes	Triple Tigers
50	CHRIS LANE	For Her	Big Loud	100	SETH ENNIS	Woke Up In Nashville	Arista



BRETT YOUNG



MIDLAND

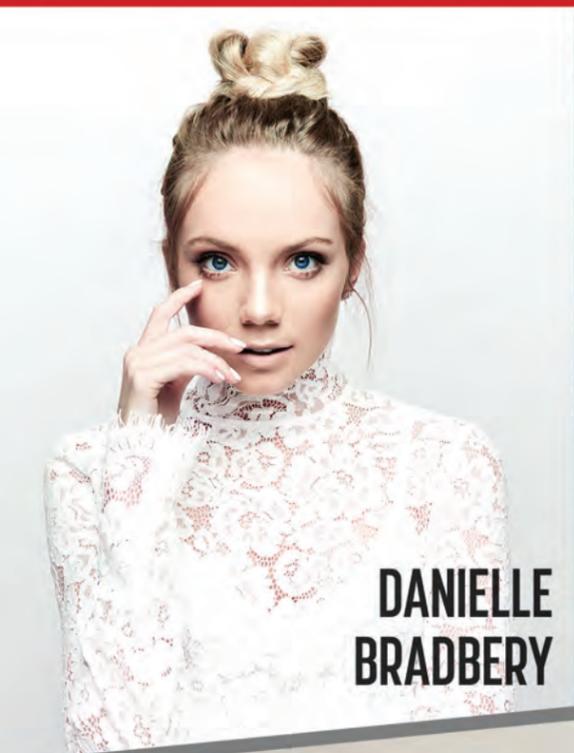


CARLY PEARCE



RYAN FOLLESE

BREAKING NEW ARTISTS...



DANIELLE BRADBERRY



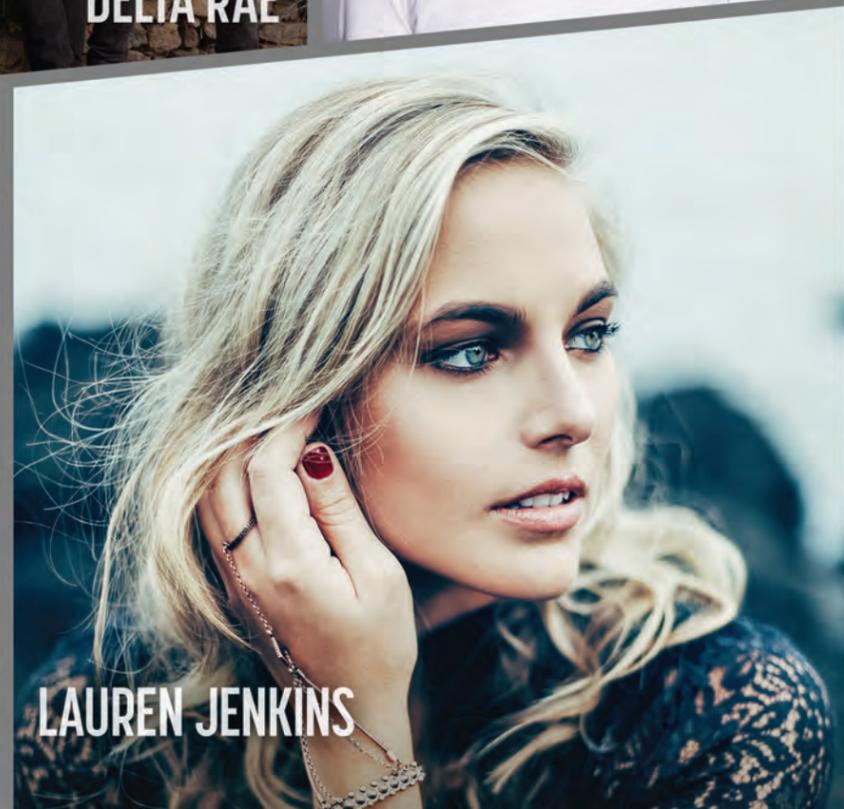
DELTA RAE



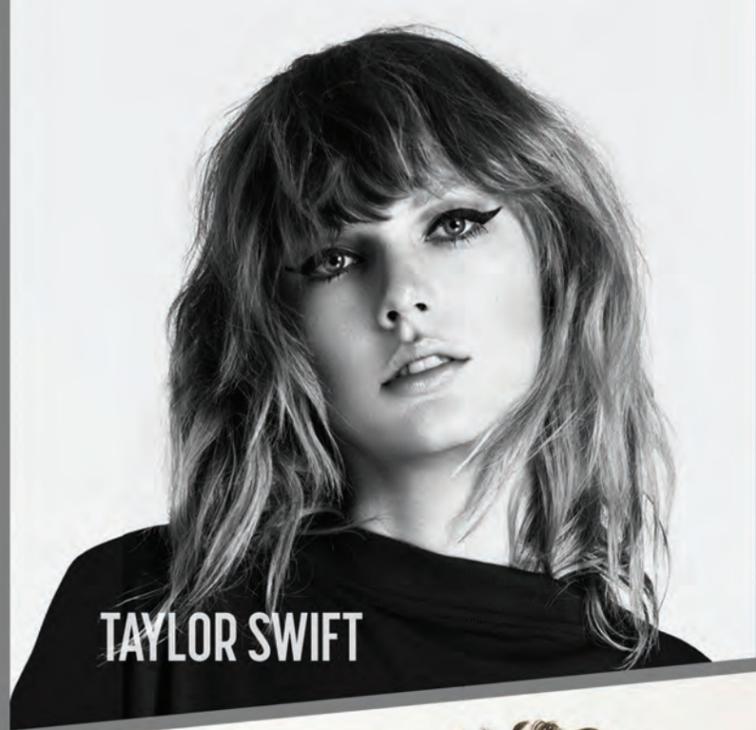
DRAKE WHITE



JOSH PHILLIPS



LAUREN JENKINS



TAYLOR SWIFT



FLORIDA
GEORGIA
LINE



THOMAS RHETT



REBA MCENTIRE

...AND ELEVATING CAREERS



RASCAL FLATTS



BRANTLEY GILBERT



JUSTIN MOORE



Sony/ATV congratulates our songwriters who had songs in Country Aircheck's Top 100 most played list for 2017

A GIRL LIKE YOU (Rhett Akins)
A LITTLE MORE SUMMERTIME (Tony Martin)
BETTER MAN (Taylor Swift)
BLACK (Ross Copperman)
BOY (Jon Nite)
DIRT ON MY BOOTS (Rhett Akins)
EVERY TIME I HEAR THAT SONG (Brad Warren/Brett Warren)
FAST (Luke Bryan)
FIVE MORE MINUTES (Monty Criswell)
FLATLINER (Cole Swindell)
HEARTACHE ON THE DANCE FLOOR (Jon Pardi)
HOW NOT TO (Kevin Bard)
IF I TOLD YOU (Ross Copperman/Jon Nite)
IF THE BOOT FITS (Mitchell Tenpenny)
JUST A PHASE (Adam Craig/Jim Beavers/Lindsay Rimes)
KILL A WORD (Eric Church)
LIGHT IT UP (Luke Bryan)
LOSING SLEEP (Chris Young/Chris DeStefano/Josh Hoge)
MAKE YOU MINE (Brad Rempel)
MAKIN' ME LOOK GOOD AGAIN (Drake White/Monty Criswell/Shane Minor)
MIDDLE OF A MEMORY (Cole Swindell)
MISSING (Rhett Akins)
MOVE (Luke Bryan/Michael Carter/Jay Clementi)
PARACHUTE (Jim Beavers)
RING ON EVERY FINGER (Thomas Rhett)
ROUND HERE BUZZ (Eric Church)
SHE'S WITH ME (Brad Rempel)
SMALL TOWN BOY (Rhett Akins)
SOBER SATURDAY NIGHT (Chris Young/Brad Warren/Brett Warren)
SOMETHIN' I'M GOOD AT (Brett Eldredge/Tom Douglas)
STAR OF THE SHOW (Thomas Rhett/Rhett Akins)
THINK A LITTLE LESS (Jon Nite/Thomas Rhett)
TIN MAN (Miranda Lambert/Jack Ingram)
UNFORGETTABLE (Thomas Rhett)
WANNA BE THAT SONG (Brett Eldredge/Ross Copperman)
WE SHOULD BE FRIENDS (Miranda Lambert)

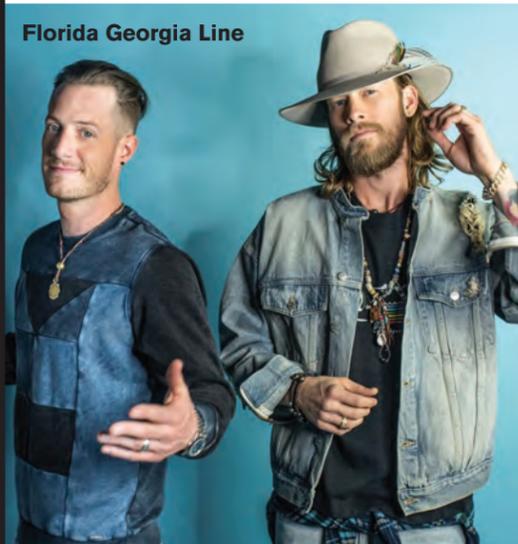
**We are extremely grateful for every promotion team
that championed these hit songs.**

Thank you: Atlantic, BMLG, Broken Bow, Capitol Nashville, Curb, EMI Nashville,
MCA, Mercury Nashville, RCA, Reviver, Stoney Creek, Triple Tigers, Valory, W.A.R.,
Warner Bros., WEA, Wheelhouse, WMN

TOP 15^s of 2017



Thomas Rhett



Florida Georgia Line



Luke Combs



Dylan Scott

	Artist	Title	Label	Peak Position (wks. at No.1)	Peak Date	Wks. on Chart	2017 Rank
A	LAUREN ALAINA	Road Less Traveled	19/Interscope/Mercury	1	4/10/17	21	13
	JASON ALDEAN	A Little More Summertime	Broken Bow	1	11/21/16	3	58
	JASON ALDEAN	Any Ol' Barstool	Broken Bow	1	4/17/17	19	19
	JASON ALDEAN	They Don't Know	Broken Bow	2	10/9/17	24	45
B	KELSEA BALLERINI	Yeah Boy	Black River	3	5/8/17	26	28
	DIERKS BENTLEY	Black	Capitol	1	5/30/17	28	24
	GARTH BROOKS	Baby, Let's Lay Down And Dance	Pearl	13	3/6/17	16	68
	GARTH BROOKS	Ask Me How I Know	Pearl	6	11/13/17	33	52
	BROTHERS OSBORNE	It Ain't My Fault	EMI Nashville	9	10/9/17	39	43
	KANE BROWN f/LAUREN ALAINA	What Ifs	RCA	1	10/16/17	31	41
	LUKE BRYAN	Move	Capitol	9	11/21/16	1	47
LUKE BRYAN	Fast	Capitol	1	4/3/17	17	17	
LUKE BRYAN	Light It Up	Capitol	7	11/13/17	12	72	
C	KENNY CHESNEY	Bar At The End Of The World	Blue Chair/Columbia	9	5/1/17	20	63
	KENNY CHESNEY	All The Pretty Girls	Blue Chair/Columbia	1 (2)	10/9/17	20	49
	ERIC CHURCH f/R. GIDDENS	Kill A Word	EMI Nashville	6	3/20/17	19	44
	ERIC CHURCH	Round Here Buzz	EMI Nashville	10	11/6/17	30	62
	LUKE COMBS	Hurricane	River House/Columbia	1 (2)	5/22/17	25	4
	LUKE COMBS	When It Rains It Pours	River House/Columbia	1	10/30/17	21	56
	EASTON CORBIN	A Girl Like You	Mercury	15	11/13/17	38	65
	BILLY CURRINGTON	Do I Make You Wanna	Mercury	1	8/7/17	35	14
D	DAN + SHAY	How Not To	Warner Bros./WAR	1	6/19/17	31	15
	RUSSELL DICKERSON	Yours	Triple Tigers	13	11/13/17	23	73
E	BRETT ELDRIDGE	Wanna Be That Song	Atlantic/WMN	1	12/19/16	6	9
F	FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE & T. MCGRAW	May We All	BMLG	1	12/5/16	5	6
	FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE	God, Your Mama, And Me	BMLG	1	6/26/17	25	36
	FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE	Smooth	BMLG	13	11/6/17	13	81
G	BRANTLEY GILBERT	The Weekend	Valory	6	5/15/17	26	29
H	SAM HUNT	Body Like A Back Road	MCA	1 (2)	5/8/17	16	1
J	CHRIS JANSON	Fix A Drink	Warner Bros./WAR	3	11/13/17	24	57
L	LADY ANTEBELLUM	You Look Good	Capitol	4	8/28/17	34	23
	LANCO	Greatest Love Story	Arista	4	11/13/17	27	60
	CHRIS LANE	For Her	Big Loud	9	9/5/17	42	50
	LITTLE BIG TOWN	Better Man	Capitol	1 (2)	2/27/17	15	11
	LOCASH	Ring On Every Finger	Reviver	15	10/16/17	46	55
	DUSTIN LYNCH	Seein' Red	Broken Bow	1	2/13/17	13	12
DUSTIN LYNCH	Small Town Boy	Broken Bow	1 (2)	9/18/17	28	20	
M	TIM MCGRAW	How I'll Always Be	Big Machine	5	1/9/17	6	54
	MIDLAND	Drinkin' Problem	Big Machine	1	8/28/17	28	31
	KIP MOORE	More Girls Like You	MCA	1	10/23/17	35	38
	JUSTIN MOORE	Somebody Else Will	Valory	1	8/21/17	40	18
	MAREN MORRIS	80s Mercedes	Columbia	9	1/23/17	12	59
MAREN MORRIS	I Could Use A Love Song	Columbia	8	11/6/17	33	53	
O	OLD DOMINION	Song For Another Time	RCA	1	12/12/16	5	39
	OLD DOMINION	No Such Thing As A Broken Heart	RCA	1	9/5/17	28	25
P	BRAD PAISLEY	Today	Arista	1	3/13/17	17	34
	JON PARDI	Dirt On My Boots	Capitol	1	3/27/17	19	2
	JON PARDI	Heartache On The Dance Floor	Capitol	1	9/25/17	23	46
	CARLY PEARCE	Every Little Thing	Big Machine	1	11/13/17	32	42
R	RASCAL FLATTS	Yours If You Want It	Big Machine	1	7/24/17	31	33
	MICHAEL RAY	Think A Little Less	Atlantic/WEA	1	3/20/17	18	10
	THOMAS RHETT	Star Of The Show	Valory	1	2/6/17	12	26
	THOMAS RHETT f/MAREN MORRIS	Craving You	Valory	1	7/10/17	17	22
	THOMAS RHETT	Unforgettable	Valory	1	11/6/17	16	61
	DARIUS RUCKER	If I Told You	Capitol	1	6/12/17	30	16
S	DYLAN SCOTT	My Girl	Curb	1	7/17/17	35	7
	BLAKE SHELTON	A Guy With A Girl	Warner Bros./WMN	1 (2)	1/30/17	11	3
	BLAKE SHELTON	Every Time I Hear That Song	Warner Bros./WMN	1	7/3/17	21	35
	BLAKE SHELTON	I'll Name The Dogs	Warner Bros./WMN	8	11/13/17	10	83
	GRANGER SMITH	If The Boot Fits	Wheelhouse	5	2/6/17	12	48
	COLE SWINDELL	Middle Of A Memory	Warner Bros./WMN	5	11/21/16	2	51
	COLE SWINDELL	Flatliner	Warner Bros./WMN	1	8/14/17	32	30
T	JOSH TURNER	Hometown Girl	MCA	1	4/24/17	23	8
U	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	Dirty Laundry	19/Arista	1	1/17/17	9	27
	KEITH URBAN f/CARRIE UNDERWOOD	The Fighter	Capitol	1	7/31/17	26	37
	KEITH URBAN	Blue Ain't Your Color	Capitol	1	1/9/17	8	21
Y	BRETT YOUNG	Sleep Without You	BMLG	1	11/28/16	4	40
	BRETT YOUNG	In Case You Didn't Know	BMLG	1	6/5/17	23	5
	BRETT YOUNG	Like I Loved You	BMLG	10	11/13/17	16	82
	CHRIS YOUNG f/VINCE GILL	Sober Saturday Night	RCA	1	3/6/17	16	32
	CHRIS YOUNG	Losing Sleep	RCA	12	11/13/17	23	71
Z	ZAC BROWN BAND	My Old Man	Southern Ground/Elektra/WAR	15	7/10/17	25	64

Yours,



RUSSELL  DICKERSON

**THANK YOU COUNTRY RADIO
FOR A GREAT FIRST YEAR**

SCOTTY MCCREERY



FIVE MORE MINUTES



BLAKE, MAREN, FGL, LUKE COMBS LEAD 2017 AIRPLAY

Can life get much better for **Blake Shelton**? He anchors one of TV's top shows, headlines concert dates, has a No. 1 album, and is now the 2017 Country radio airplay leader. Shelton's 2017 airplay totals propel him to both the top Overall Performer and Top Male spots, driven by a pair of songs – "A Guy With A Girl" and "Every Time I Hear That Song" – that spent three weeks at No. 1. A third single – "I'll Name The Dogs" – was in the Top 5 as 2017 came to a close. Adding to Shelton's totals were four cuts from his new album

Texoma Shore that charted the week of its release, though he would have topped airplay even without the points generated by those cuts.

Florida Georgia Line's trio of 2017 hits extend Tyler Hubbard and Brian Kelley's dominance in the Duo/Group Performer category to five years. They're also the only non-solo male artist to make this year's Top 10 Overall airplay performers. The

THE YEAR IN MUSIC

meteoric rise of **Maren Morris** continued in 2017. Airplay from "80s Mercedes" and "I Could Use A Love Song" vaulted her to the most-heard female artist of the year. Adding to her Country radio presence this year was a featured performance on the No. 1 single "Craving You" with Thomas Rhett. (Airplay points for that song are not included in Morris' totals.)

This year's Top New Artist title goes to **Luke Combs**. His debut single "Hurricane" spent two weeks at No. 1 in May. He suffered no "sophomore slump" with "When It Rains It Pours," which also went No. 1. Combs' accomplishments came amidst a banner year for new artists, which we define as an artist who has never before had a single reach the Top 15 in the Mediabase/Country Aircheck chart. An amazing five new artists – Lauren Alaina, Dylan Scott, Midland, Kane Brown (with Alaina) and Carly Pearce had No. 1 songs.

By The Numbers: The format churned through 44 chart-toppers by 33 different artists. Twenty-four men posted 33 No. 1s covering 38 weeks; three women accounted for three No. 1s over three weeks, and six duos/groups posted eight songs that spent nine weeks at No. 1. Only six artists – Kenny Chesney, Luke Combs, Sam Hunt, Little Big Town, Dustin Lynch and Blake Shelton – managed multiple-week No. 1s – all sat on top for two weeks. Despite widespread industry efforts to promote and support female artists in this format, only five women posted a total of six Top 15 songs this year. They were Lauren Alaina, Kelsea Ballerini, Maren Morris (2), Carly Pearce and Carrie Underwood. Last year saw seven women place 12 songs in the Top 15.

As always, all of the airplay information within these pages comes from our partners at **Mediabase 24/7**. All of these stats are based on singles that spent at least one week in the Top 50 during the 2017 chart year, which ran Nov. 13, 2016-Nov. 11, 2017.



Blake Shelton



Maren Morris

Country Radio's Top 2017 Performers

OVERALL

1	BLAKE SHELTON	Warner Bros./WMN
2	THOMAS RHETT	Valory
3	BRETT YOUNG	BMLGR
4	JASON ALDEAN	Broken Bow
5	FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE	BMLGR
6	JON PARDI	Capitol
7	TIM MCGRAW	Arista
8	DUSTIN LYNCH	Broken Bow
9	LUKE BRYAN	Capitol
10	LUKE COMBS	River House/Columbia

MALE

1	BLAKE SHELTON	Warner Bros./WMN
2	THOMAS RHETT	Valory
3	BRETT YOUNG	BMLGR
4	JASON ALDEAN	Broken Bow
5	JON PARDI	Capitol
6	TIM MCGRAW	Arista
7	DUSTIN LYNCH	Broken Bow
8	LUKE BRYAN	Capitol
9	LUKE COMBS	River House/Columbia
10	KEITH URBAN	Capitol

FEMALE

1	MAREN MORRIS	Columbia
2	KELSEA BALLERINI	Black River
3	LAUREN ALAINA	19/Interscope/Mercury
4	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	Capitol
5	CARLY PEARCE	Big Machine
6	MIRANDA LAMBERT	RCA
7	RAELYNN	Warner Bros./WMN
8	FAITH HILL	Arista
9	BROOKE EDEN	Red Bow
10	LINDSAY ELL	Stoney Creek

DUO/GROUP

1	FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE	BMLGR
2	OLD DOMINION	RCA
3	LITTLE BIG TOWN	Capitol
4	DAN + SHAY	Warner Bros./WAR
5	LADY ANTEBELLUM	Capitol
6	MIDLAND	Big Machine
7	RASCAL FLATTS	Big Machine
8	BROTHERS OSBORNE	EMI Nashville
9	HIGH VALLEY	Atlantic/WEA
10	LOCASH	Reviver

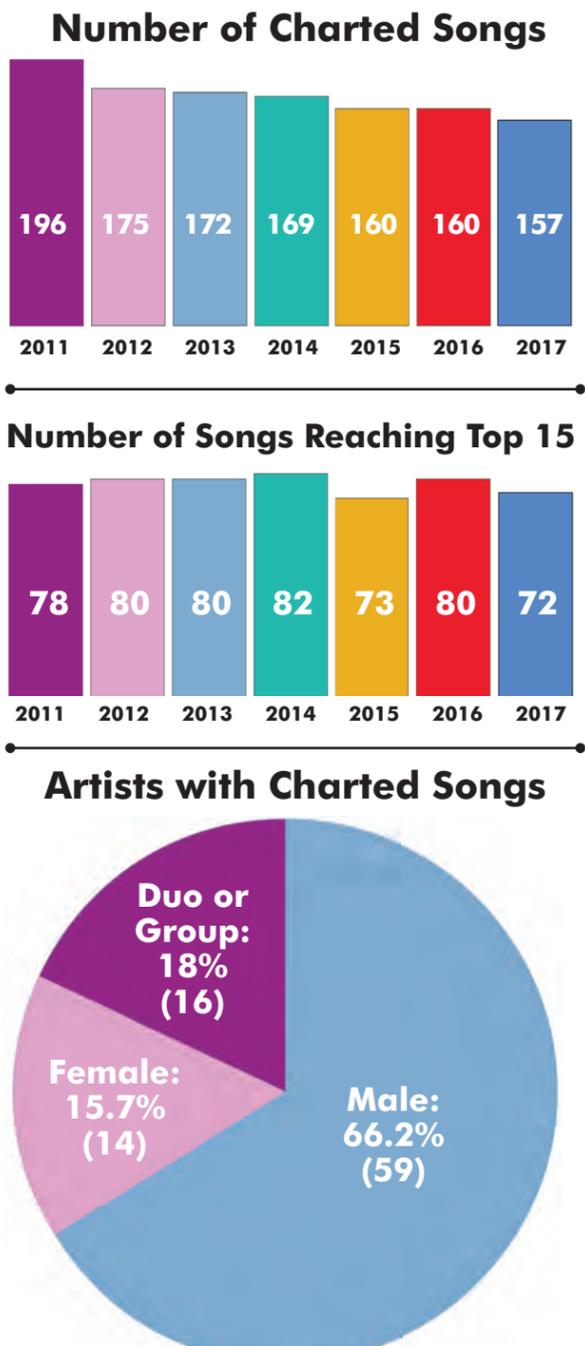
NEW ARTISTS

1	LUKE COMBS	River House/Columbia
2	DYLAN SCOTT	Curb
3	LAUREN ALAINA	19/Interscope/Mercury
4	MIDLAND	Big Machine
5	KANE BROWN	RCA
6	CARLY PEARCE	Big Machine
7	HIGH VALLEY	Atlantic/WEA
8	LANCO	Arista
9	AARON WATSON	Big Label
10	RUSSELL DICKERSON	Triple Tigers

TOP 15 FIRST TIMERS

Eight artists charted a Top 15 single for the first time during the 2017 chart year, down from nine in 2016. Five enjoyed No. 1s – Alaina's "Road Less Traveled," Scott's "My Girl," Midland's "Drinkin' Problem," Brown's (with Alaina) "What Ifs" and Pearce's "Every Little Thing."

- LAUREN ALAINA** (19/Interscope/Mercury)
- KANE BROWN** (RCA)
- LUKE COMBS** (River House/Columbia)
- RUSSELL DICKERSON** (Triple Tigers)
- LANCO** (Arista)
- MIDLAND** (Big Machine)
- CARLY PEARCE** (Big Machine)
- DYLAN SCOTT** (Curb)

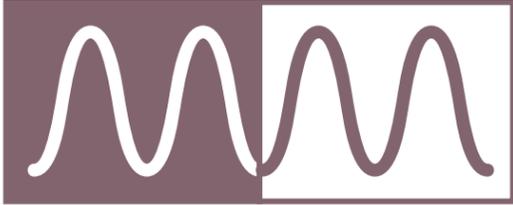


FROM ALL OF US

THANKS AGAIN

for another great year!

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great songs

“Fix A Drink” Chris Janson

“A Little More Summertime” Jason Aldean

“Holdin’ Her” Chris Janson

“How I’ll Always Be” Tim McGraw

“How Not To” Dan + Shay

“Like I Loved You” Brett Young

“Outskirts Of Heaven” Craig Campbell

“Somebody Else Will” Justin Moore

ole is proud to have 8 songs on the Country Aircheck Top 100.
Congratulations to the ole Nashville Team and Songwriters on
a successful 2017!

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HAPPY

Holidays

FROM

MAKE WAKE ARTISTS
AND RIVER HOUSE ARTISTS



THANK YOU FOR A GREAT YEAR.
CHEERS TO 2018!

FIRST

Winter is coming ... and so are these new singles, albums and tours. Here's what to expect in the first quarter.

QUENCHERS

Arista

VP/Promotion **Josh Easler** reports the label will kick off 2018 with **LanCo**'s new single "Born To Love You" in early January, followed Jan. 19 by their debut album *Hallelujah Nights*. Airplay continues for **Tim McGraw** and **Faith Hill**'s "The Rest Of Our Life" from their album of the same name, **Walker Hayes**' "You Broke Up with Me" from his recently released album *Boom.*, and **Brad Paisley**'s "Heaven South" from *Love & War*. "We're excited about new music from **Cam**," says Easler, "as the first single from her upcoming project is out now. We hope you love 'Diane' as much as we do."

Average Joes

Sarah Ross' empowering new single "Doin' Just Fine" will be released to radio Jan. 22. Written by Ross, David Fanning and Curt Gibbs, it's the first single from her *Nervous Breakdown* EP, scheduled for release in 2018. **Montgomery Gentry**'s *Here's To You* comes out Feb. 2. This 12-track collection marks the duo's eighth studio album. "The first single, 'Better Me,' continues to resonate with listeners with its powerful message," says Sr. Dir./Business Development & Marketing **Nathan Thompson**. Rising new band **Cypress Spring** will release a new single in Q1 and **Charlie Farley** will drop his third studio album. Look for a new EP from Average Joes' management and label services client, platinum-selling band **Sister Hazel**, Feb. 9.

BigBig

CEO **Jim Chesser** reports **Eric Chesser**'s debut *Yes* will be out Jan. 5. The EP has six self-penned songs, was produced by Larry Beaird and mixed by F. Reid Shippen, Kevin Beamish and Peter Coleman.

Big Loud

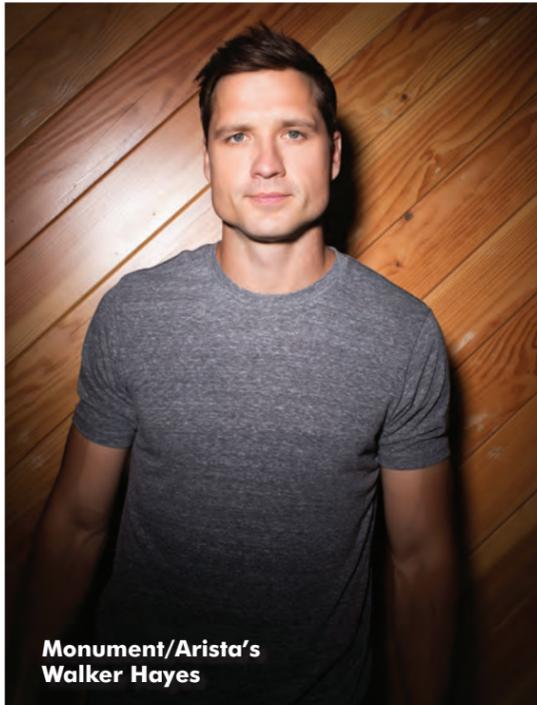
The label's Pres. **Clay Hunnicutt** says **Jillian Jacqueline**'s single "Reasons" impacts Jan. 22, ahead of her debut album, due in 2018. Look for her on the road with Thomas Rhett in 2018. **Morgan Wallen** is also working on his debut project for next year, which includes current single "Up Down" (featuring Florida Georgia Line). Wallen will round out 2017 opening for Granger Smith, and launches his first headlining tour in '18.



Black River's
Abby Anderson

Big Machine

VP/Promotion **Kris Lamb** says **Taylor Swift**'s "New Year's Day" is "the opportunity to reclaim a stake in music's biggest brand and superstar artist. And keeping with the ladies of Big Machine Records ... let's talk about **Carly Pearce**!" Pearce, whose "Every Little Thing" made her only the third female debut to reach No. 1 in 12 years, enters 2018 with her second single "Hide The Wine." She'll join Blake Shelton on his 2018 *Country Music Freaks* Tour. **Midland** jump into the Top 20 with "Make A Little," the follow-up to their gold, Grammy-nominated No. 1 "Drinkin' Problem." "These guys have quickly become one of the most buzzed-about bands in our format by ushering in a style of music that is traditional yet uniquely fresh and youthful," says Lamb. The trio are on the road



Monument/Arista's
Walker Hayes

in '18 with Little Big Town and Thomas Rhett, plus headlining clubs and venues across the country.

Rascal Flatts move into 2018 with the *Back To Us Tour*, named for their current single and album. "Expect a major announcement from your Big Machine Records family on yet another superstar artist added to our incredible roster in the weeks to come," adds Lamb.

Black River

"A banner year for Black River Entertainment," predicts SVP/Radio Promotion **Mike Wilson**, who promises more new music from **Kelsea Ballerini**'s *Unapologetically*, plus an intro to one of CMT's "Next Women of Country," singer/songwriter **Abby Anderson**, and new music from **Jacob Davis** in 2018. "All three of them will be performing live on our *CRS* show Feb. 5 at the Bell Tower," says Wilson. "Thanks, Country radio, for another great year!"

BMLG Records

Brett Young's third single "Like I Loved You," the follow-up to two consecutive No. 1s, continues to climb while Young preps for his 2018 headlining *Callville Tour*, as well as supporting the Thomas Rhett tour throughout the spring and fall. **Florida Georgia Line**'s latest release is "Meant To Be," a collaboration with Bebe Rexha. SVP/Promotion **Matthew Hargis** reports the duo are hard at work in the studio prepping for a new single and album due in early 2018. **Danielle Bradbery** continues with her debut album *I Don't Believe We've Met*, which features single "Sway."

Broken Bow

"**Jason Aldean** will have an early first quarter single from his soon-to-be-released eighth studio album," says VP Natl. Promo **Lee Adams**. **Dustin Lynch** continues his climb with the follow-up to five No. 1s in a row, "I'd Be Jealous Too." And **Chase Rice** is back with his first album in three years, the recently released *Lambs and Lions* and its current single "Three Chords & The Truth."

Capitol

As **Luke Bryan** prepares to judge *American Idol* next year, look for the follow-up single to the No. 1 "Light It Up" in January from his just-released album *What Makes You Country*. **Keith Urban**'s "Female" continues its climb, with more new music coming soon. **Darius Rucker**'s second single from *When Was The Last Time* is called "For The First Time." "It will be a strong

airplay song in the first quarter as it attacks the chart and adds another hit to his arsenal," says VP/Promo **Bobby Young**. He adds, "Watch for an exciting tour announcement in the first quarter."

Little Big Town continue with "When Someone Stops Loving You," while **Lady Antebellum** will forge through 2018 with the title cut from their Grammy-nominated No. 1 album *Heart Break*. After three No. 1s from the gold *California Sunrise*, CMA New Artist of the Year **Jon Pardi** welcomes 2018 with current single "She Ain't In It." "You will find him on two major tours in 2018," says Young. Meanwhile, **Dierks Bentley**'s been recording his ninth studio album and promises new music in January.

Finally ... "Words can't describe how thrilled everyone at Universal is to have the award-winning **Carrie Underwood** joining the Capitol Nashville family!" says Young. "She's absolutely the perfect addition to this superstar roster. We can't wait to get some new Carrie Underwood music on the radio and partner with her on the next chapter of her ultra-successful career!"

Cold River

Music is on the way from newly-signed **Uncle Si & The Sicotics** in the form of their self-titled debut EP. *Duck Dynasty*'s Uncle Si Robertson formed the trio with daughter-in-law Marsha Robertson and songwriter Bridgette Tatum (Jason Aldean's "She's Country"). "They're making a tasty gumbo of country music, hip-hop beats, rock 'n' roll, and Southern gospel," says SVP/Radio Promo & Artist Dev. **John Ettinger**. Also in the new year, **Drew Baldridge** will reveal follow-ups to his fastest-moving single ever, "Guns & Roses."



Cold River's
Uncle Si &
The Sicotics

Columbia

The new year begins with the peak run of **Maren Morris**' "I Could Use A Love Song" and the launch of **Luke Combs**' third single, "One Number Away." SVPP **Shane Allen** says later in Q1, Morris' fourth single from *Hero* will be shipped to Country radio, and **Levon** will put their harmonies on display with the launch of a second single. "Also, stay tuned for an exciting surprise or two," Allen adds.

FIRST QUENCHERS

Crescendo

"Faren Rachels is a ball of musical fire from Sparta, Georgia," says Pres. **Pam Newman**. Rachels' self-titled five-song debut EP was released in November on River House Artists just before she joined Luke Combs' *Don't Tempt Me With A Good Time Tour*. Listen for her in early 2018.

Curb

Q1 finds **Dylan Scott** continuing with "Hooked" and **Lee Brice** with "Boy." "Lee hasn't landed outside the Top 10 in his last seven singles," says SVP/Promo **Ryan Dokke**. "This one shouldn't either! A real hit." **Jackson Michelson** builds his momentum with "Rollin'," while **Jerrod Niemann's** "I Got This" impacts Dec. 11. "Fun tempo record for the winter? We got this!" says Dokke. Also look for new music coming soon from **Rodney Atkins**, **Ruthie Collins** and **Love And Theft**.

EMI Nashville

"We plan to start the New Year with a bang or a buzz," says VP/Promo **Jimmy Rector**. **Eric Church's** "Round Here Buzz" stays through the holidays, as the run continues on Church's *Mr. Misunderstood*. Currently meeting the folks at radio, watch for **Brandon Lay** next year on Kenny Chesney's *Trip Around The Sun* stadium dates as well as on the road with Old Dominion. Lay's current single is the autobiographical "Speakers, Bleachers and Preachers," and his debut album is due next year.

Reigning two-time CMA/current ACM Duo of the Year and Grammy-nominated **Brothers Osborne** launch 2018 with their new single "Shoot Me Straight." "They are quickly establishing themselves as superstars in our format," says Rector. Also watch for new music from **Eric Paslay** and **Gary Allan** in '18, and more from Country Music Hall of Famer **Alan Jackson**, whose current single is "The Older I Get."

In2une/West End

VP/Promo/Mgt. **Jamice Jennings** reports **Fiona Culley's** second single will kick off the New Year, along with **Ashla Taylor's** radio and big-screen debut. Taylor will play the lead in the film *The Price Of Fame*, a Shania Twain biopic. "Another first quarter single release is **Smithfield**, whose new single is 'Hey Whiskey,'" says Jennings. "We are super excited about this duo and can't wait for radio to meet them!"

LLE

Pres./CEO **Laura Lynn** says Q1 finds **Lucas Hoge** working his single "Power Of Garth" from his *Dirty South* album. Hoge will continue touring and working with partners Cabela's, Wrangler, Hero Outdoor Products and Gamble Family Vineyards.

MCA

Jordan Davis's debut "Singles You Up" continues to climb, while **Kip Moore's** "Last Shot," the follow-up to his recent No. 1 "More Girls Like You," is impacting radio now. **Sam Hunt** is working on new music with a single expected in Q1. "We will also be introducing the newest member of the MCA/Nashville family, **Kassi Ashton**," says VP/Promo **Katie Dean**.



MCA's Kassi Ashton

Mercury

The new year brings a new album from **Easton Corbin**, produced by Ashley Gorley, on the heels of his current single "A Girl Like You." **Chris Stapleton** will continue to enjoy the success of *From A Room: Volume 2* and its sister release, *From A Room: Volume 1*, which holds



Crescendo's Faren Rachels

the still-climbing "Broken Halos." **Billy Currington's** "Wake Me Up" climbs as he puts the finishing touches on a brand new studio album due next summer. **Lauren Alaina** will be "Doin' Fine" as she joins two superstar tours.

"The country audience will continue to fall in love with one of the coolest album releases of '17 when they listen to **Tyminski's** *Southern Gothic*," says VPP **Damon Moberly**. Expect new music from **Kacey Musgraves** as she sets out on tour in February with Little Big Town before joining select summer dates with Harry Styles. The Mercury promotion team will also be introducing singer/songwriter and Georgia native **Travis Denning**.

Nine North

"We'll be working with a terrific young singer from Midland, TX named **Abi** with a powerful song called 'A Day Without,'" says Pres. **Larry Pareigis**. "Her



In2une/West End's Smithfield

Christmas song 'Put A Bow On It' is out now. How many times can you play 'Silent Night,' anyway, right?" The **Sarah Dunn Band** will be making their return in Q1 with the title cut of *Unbridle Me*. "As you read this issue, 'Looking Like That,' the debut single from **Raleigh Keegan**, will be in your digital stack via Play MPE – and it's bad-ass," adds Pareigis.

Pearl

Reigning CMA Entertainer of the Year **Garth Brooks** wrapped the North American leg of his *World Tour* in 2017, playing to more than six million paid ticket holders, and topped the chart with "Ask Me How I Know." He also released *The Anthology Part 1: The First Five Years*. In 2018 Brooks will become the first artist to open and close the *Houston Rodeo* and will also headline *Stagecoach*. "Look for exciting new music from Garth in early 2018!" says VP/Promo **Andy Elliott**.

RCA

Carrying their current singles into the new year are **Chris Young** ("Losing Sleep"), **Old Dominion** ("Written In The Sand"), **Miranda Lambert** ("Tin Man") and **Kane Brown** ("Heaven"). Young and OD will release new singles in February and late March, respectively. "We are very excited about finishing **Ryan Hurd's** debut album," says SVP/Promo **Dennis Reese**. "His first single 'Love in a Bar' was a great introduction to his sound and writing style."

Rebel Engine

Stephanie Quayle's third single "Selfish," from her album *Love The Way You See Me*, continues into the new year. Q1 finds Quayle on a radio tour as well as back in her Winnebago for the *Quayle For A Cause Tour: Presented by KOA*. Label VP **Carli McLaughlin** says, "We are seeing Quayle's female perspective on this sexy song react with both female and male demographics."

Red Bow

"We will be rolling into 2018 actively pursuing our current singles on **Chase Bryant** ('Hell If I Know') and **Joe Nichols** ('Never Gets Old')," says VP/Promo **Shelley Hargis Gaines**. Find Bryant on Brad Paisley's *Weekend Warrior Tour*. Look for a new single from **Kid Rock** (from his *Sweet Southern Sugar* album), who's also launching the *Greatest Show On Earth Tour* Jan. 19 in Nashville. In late Q1, listen for a new single from **Craig Campbell**, and music from new band **Restless Road**.

Red Star

"We're proud of the success we have had with **Denny Strickland's** first single "We Don't Sleep" from his debut album *California Dreamin'*," says GM **Neal Krings**. "We hope to reach even further as we explore the next single!"

Reviver

The label enters the new year riding high on the **David Lee Murphy/Kenny Chesney** single "Everything's Gonna Be Alright," from Murphy's album *No Zip Code*, due late Q1 or early Q2. **Michael Tyler** recently followed up "They Can't See" with new single "Hey Mama" from his *317* album. "This is the one that breaks this kid nationally, no question," says SVP/Promo **Bob Reeves**. "2018 will be the year of Michael Tyler!" Last season's *The Voice* champ **Sundance Head** will reveal his single in Q1,

while **LoCash** will ring in the new year with "Don't Get Better Than That," the debut single from their second Reviver album, impacting Jan. 29.

Show Dog

Krystal Keith is back with new music, as well as **Waterloo Revival**. The label also welcomes newly signed singer/songwriter **Lance Carpenter**, according to VP/Promo **Rick Moxley**.

Stoney Creek

"We are excited about the start of 2018 and the buzz around Music Row on the much-anticipated release of **Randy Houser's** new project," says VP/Promo **Byron Kennedy**. **Parmalee's** single "Sunday Morning" continues to rise, along with **Lindsay Ell's** "Criminal" from her No. 1 debut album *The Project*, produced by Kristian Bush. "The new year will also bring a new face to Country radio," says Kennedy, "with a radio tour and launch of the act everyone's talking about, **Jimmy Allen**."

Triple Tigers

"Two priorities are filling up our plate for Q1 – **Russell Dickerson** and **Scotty McCreery**," says SVP/Promo **Kevin Herring**. Dickerson's "Yours" continues in January, followed by a new single soon after. "As for Scotty, 'Five More Minutes' is rocking!" says Herring. "When we hit critical mass in early spring, we will drop the album. We are all

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NEW RELEASE

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"YES"

**IMPACTING
NOW!**

Whether you're asking her out for the first time or asking her to be yours for a lifetime, **YES** is the perfect song for that special moment!

FIRST QUENCHERS

about focus at TTR and we are proud to have two future superstars to focus on for now.”

TTA

First quarter 2018 will bring the first sounds from a brand new **Tebey** project. “This stuff is big,” says SVP/Operations **Ryan Barnstead**. “Think Harry Styles meets Justin Moore. He’s completely found his own lane.” Southern California-based, Radio Disney Country-darlings **Honey County** will roll out “Los Angeles,” while Georgia-based road warriors **Lauren Ashley and The Trainwreckers** release “One Fine Day.” “And British Columbia native **Ryan Evans** snuck into a Nashville studio in late 2017 to put his take on a song sure to turn heads at radio and along Music Row,” adds Barnstead.

Valory

Delta Rae closed out the year with four-song EP *The Blackbird Sessions*, featuring a version of their current single “No Peace In Quiet.” GM **George Briner** reports the label will also be introducing the latest addition to its roster, **Tyler Rich**. Rich has been on the road opening for Dustin Lynch and Justin Moore, and is currently in the studio.

WAR

Chris Janson, fresh off his second No. 1 single, has followed up with “Drunk Girl.” Look for him on the *Reasons To Drink Tour* with label mate Cole Swindell in February. “**Ashley McBryde** has quickly become the talk of the format,” says National Dir./Radio & Streaming **Tom Martens**. “It’s been a while since I have met an artist who’s lyrically so believable.” McBryde, whose current single is “Little Dive Bar In Dahlonega,” will hit the road in February with Luke Combs on his *Don’t Tempt Me With A Good Time Tour*.



TTA's
Lauren
Ashley

Warner Bros./WMN's
Cale Dodds



Dan + Shay are currently working on their third studio release with a targeted January impact date. **Zac Brown**’s side project **Sir Rosevelt** will release its self-titled debut Dec. 15, as the trio (Brown, **Ben Simonette** and **Niko Moon**) continue to gain steam with the release of the album’s lead single “Something ‘Bout You.”

WEA

Q1 starts with the Jan. 19 release of **Devin Dawson**’s debut album *Dark Horse*, which contains current single “All On Me.” Continuing their worldwide touring trek, **High Valley** kick off the new year with their single “She’s With Me” approaching the Top 20. After two No. 1, gold-certified singles on his debut album, **Michael Ray** offers his new single “Get To You.” Look for Ray’s second album in the spring and find him touring with Old Dominion. **Morgan Evans**’ debut American single is “Kiss Somebody.” “Morgan is a bright light for this format,” says SVP/Radio & Streaming **Kristen Williams**, “with incredible songs, musicianship, vocals and personality. He has everything it takes to be country music’s next breakout star.”

Wheelhouse

VP/National Promotion **Teddi Bonadies** reports that after the run of **Granger Smith**’s current single “Happens Like That” (from his new album *When The Good Guys Win*), look for the second single from that project late first quarter. **Runaway June**’s new “Wild West” is a tribute to member Jennifer Wayne’s late grandfather, actor John Wayne. The group are currently in the studio with producer Dann Huff, with a 2018 debut album release planned. Duo **Walker McGuire**’s second single “Lost” impacts radio Jan. 15 and their debut EP will be released in Q1. **Trace**

Adkins hits the road in the first quarter as a guest of Blake Shelton on his *Country Music Freaks Tour*.

WMN

People magazine’s “Sexiest Man Alive” **Blake Shelton** wrapped 2017 with a No. 1 album (*Texoma Shore*) and chart-topping single (“I’ll Name The Dogs”). New music comes in early ‘18, and Shelton hits the road in February with label mate **Brett Eldredge**, as well as Carly Pearce and Trace Adkins. Eldredge continues with his No. 1-debuting self-titled album and current single “The Long Way.” **Cole Swindell** follows seven consecutive No. 1s with “Stay Downtown.” His sold-out headlining club tour features label mate Morgan Evans and runs through January. Look for Cole to headline arenas in ‘18 on his *Reason To Drink Tour*, with Janson and Lauren Alaina. New artist **Cale Dodds** starts a nationwide radio tour in January. “Cale is already a seasoned songwriter with music we can all relate to,” says WMN National Director **Katie Bright**. “His effortless charming personality is just icing on the cake. We can’t wait for radio to fall in love with him!”

CAC



Valory's
Delta Rae



THANK YOU FOR AN AMAZING 2017
...AND I CAN'T WAIT FOR 2018!!
- AARON WATSON -

Happy Holidays
from

SHOW DOG NASHVILLE



#1 COMEDY CD FOR 11 WEEKS
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OVER 11 MILLION STREAMS



Introducing new music by
KRYSTAL KEITH & LANCE CARPENTER

FEATURING THE NEW DUET "ANYONE ELSE"

2018

THE YEAR OF THE *SHOW DOG*!





CONGRATULATIONS

GARTH

on a

HISTORY-MAKING YEAR!

#1 COUNTRY SONG

Ask Me How I Know

#1 COUNTRY ALBUM

Anthology | Part 1 | The First Five Years

#1 BEST-SELLING NONFICTION BOOK

Anthology | Part 1 | The First Five Years

#1 NORTH AMERICAN TOUR

*Garth Brooks World Tour Featuring Trisha Yearwood
(over 6.4 Million Tickets sold)*

2017 CMA ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR

(6X winner)

WE'VE ONLY JUST BEGUN!

Love, your Pearl Records Family

GARTH BROOKS

Needs No Introduction

Returning to the airplay pinnacle for the first time in more than a decade earlier this month, Garth Brooks has it all. The top album, the top tour and the top single with “Ask Me How I Know”—not to mention consecutive CMA Entertainer of the Year honors, bringing his career total to six. He’s not just the best-selling solo artist of all time, he’s also one of the sharpest business people in the history of entertainment.

CA: Welcome back to No. 1.

GB: Thank you. This is more than cool. It’s like Entertainer of the Year. People ask if it ever gets old, but the older you get, the more rare it gets, so it actually becomes even cooler.

Who’s happier about a No. 1, the artist or the guy that owns a record label?

I’m happier for [the promotion staff] more than anything

THE INTERVIEW

because you’ve got six souls out there, that this record is their life. One of those souls started this whole journey by saying, “This song is my life.” And man, when I heard him say that, all of a sudden this song became more than something you were pushing with numbers behind it. And that’s kind of how they’ve taken it.

You’re looking at a band of people who have been in this industry for a while. They all took this song personally — that this was going to be our way of showing that the music still matters, music’s still the forefront. That’s how they sold this for so many weeks now. It’s just, “Listen to the song and listen to how the people are reacting to it.” And that’s a breath of fresh air for me.

Was there ever a question in your mind if music does matter, but also whether your music would matter again?

Let’s answer the first one first. Music’s always going to matter. It’s just who is in control of that music that’s going to paint the picture of how valuable music is. You can’t put a price tag on something that changes your life, and that’s what music does. Where we’re heading in the business is toward building a catalog to lease to streaming, and it’s probably the worst thing we can do to music. So you say your prayers at night that something’s going to happen, that someone is going to see the true heartbeat of music, and treat it more like a soul than a piece of product. That’s down the line.

For our stuff, we were at CRS last year talking in front of some people, and I don’t know where it came from, but there was just a simple statement of, “Look, I don’t think Garth Brooks music has changed at all.” My suggestion to [radio] was if you’ll just have faith and play it, watch what happens. “Ask Me How I Know” would be the next single and it couldn’t have been better timing. I can’t thank radio enough for making the leap to play stuff from a guy who’s been a round for a while. I cannot thank them enough because they’ve not only changed my life, they’ve changed the songwriter Mitch Rossell’s life. They’ve changed the future of this record label, actually.

Why start Pearl? Why not continue the way you had before with projects worked by Big Machine, Sony or someone else?

The Pearl Records label was created in the early ‘90s when we took over ownership of our masters with Capitol. It was a place to house the masters, [which were then] leased to Capitol Records, like they were leased to Big Machine, like they were leased to Sony. What we found out recently on the comeback tour is the things that are driving [record companies] right now are moneys from streaming services like YouTube and Spotify, and digital downloading from Apple. Well, guess what three things we don’t do? That was it.

Sony came into the picture with good intention, but I think they had their hands cuffed. They were in the middle of an upheaval themselves trying to figure out who was running the company. Sweet people, not the greatest timing in the world. So we decided to step out on our own [with] radio promotion. What you found was there are a lot of people who love music and radio promotion, but didn’t like the current system. You give them the reins to chase music for music’s sake and you watch them all get a lot younger right in front of your eyes. It was a beautiful thing. Now this team is exactly that — a team, a family. And they’re running full-steam right now.

How involved with them are you?

I’m involved with them as people. I’ve instructed them that if anybody makes you feel like less of a human being, you tell me. Me and you will go right to them. Life’s too short for that. Do I tell them how to work a record? No, because I wouldn’t know. Do they send me numbers? Used to. When I didn’t respond anymore, they just stopped. I don’t like getting involved with that because I don’t want to make decisions for that reason. You just hope the music you’ve created is strong enough to get through the red tape. Knowing how to work that red tape? That’s what these guys do.

As an artist, you’ve probably done more for your relationship with radio now than you ever did as a younger artist. Again, it’s the relationships. We had a showdown with Cumulus where someone was hell-bent and determined to show me how to do my business. And it was just, “Hey, I love you guys to death, but the world’s big enough. You stay in your corner, we’ll stay in ours.” They were locked out of the tour for more than a year. Today, that relationship is beautiful because we finally looked and realized we need each other. That’s how we do business. The promotion staff has the ability at any time with anyone who isn’t treating them or the music with respect to say, “Thank you. The world’s big enough. You go your way, we’ll go ours.”

You’ve changed your stance on the idea of streaming and digital, but there are some things you haven’t changed on, like the three you mentioned earlier.

Right now, YouTube’s good for whoever the up-loader is. If that’s the record label that owns the masters, then that’s their call. Who’s getting beat to death are the songwriters. So to partake in anything where the songwriter’s not guaranteed something upfront, where they don’t have the call to take the deal or not, I just don’t know how you get into it. But I understand that record labels that are publicly held have to create that annual income. I understand why they’re doing it, but if I’m a record label and not publicly held, then I don’t know why we would.

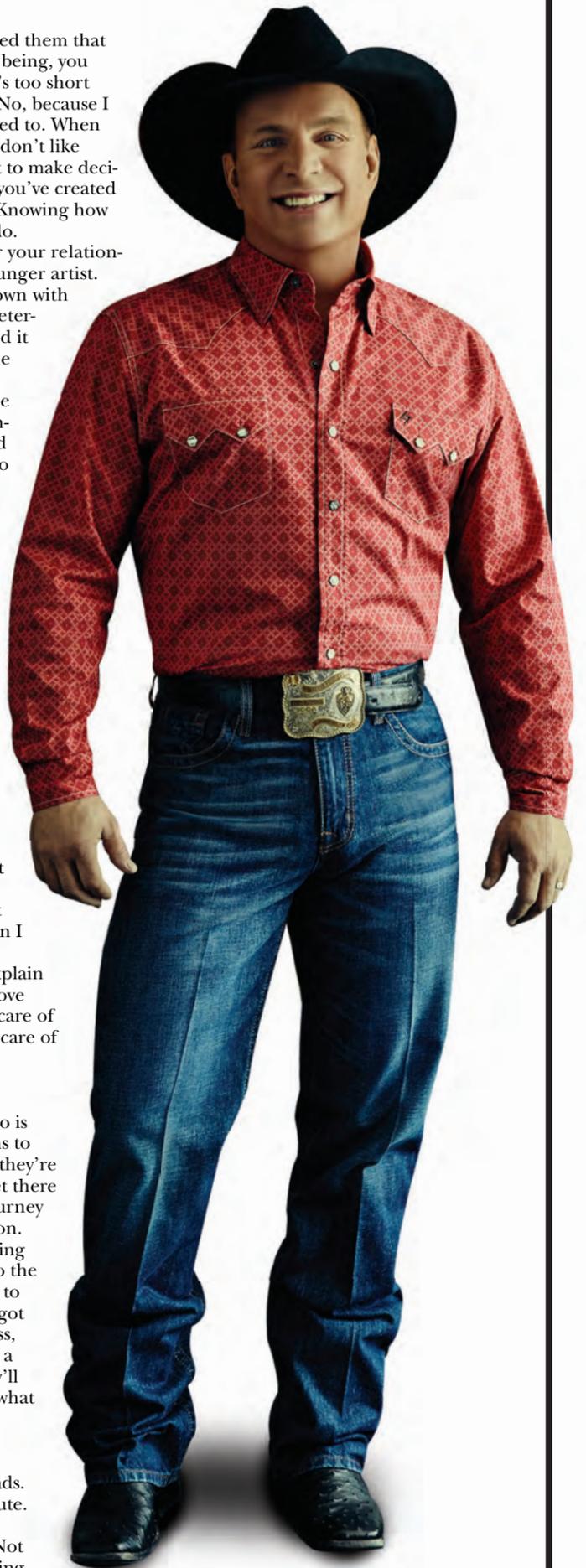
So what you do is sit down with YouTube, explain your situation and hope they’ll go, “Okay, we love music enough to try to figure out how to take care of your unique situation.” Which hopefully takes care of the songwriters.

Have you had that conversation?

In the middle of it right now. All you have to do is find one person within the structure that seems to have empathy with the songwriters. As long as they’re honestly trying to figure it out, whether you get there or not isn’t as important as the fact that the journey has started. All it is at this point is a conversation. You get to say anything you want, dream anything you want, but in that process, they’re getting to the point of realizing if music is going to continue to be good or even better than good, then we’ve got to start at the source. If that message gets across, then hopefully everything will start to swing in a direction that’s favorable for songwriters. They’ll move back to this town and get back to doing what they do.

And those other two elements you mentioned?

We partnered with Amazon on digital downloads. They came out of the blue at the very last minute. Amazon guarantees you’re going to move so many units so these songwriters can get paid. Not on streaming, but actual units that you’re moving



REVIVER ENTERT

THANKS FOR A



BOTTOM ROW: ELLEN MUNDY, SUZANNE DURHAM, BEN BIERI, SALLY ALLGEIER,
HAYLEY COWOSKI

2ND ROW: DENISE ROBERTS, DAVE COLLINS, KELLY ZIEGENFUSS, RICK HUGHES

3RD ROW: ROGER FREGOSO, WILL ROBINSON, CLAY HENDERSON

TOP ROW: GATOR MICHAELS, DAVID ROSS, BOB REEVES

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JOHN CARTER CASH - THE CARTER FAMILY
JOHNNY CASH - IRLENE MANDRELL

— physical and digital. They've been a great partner that way, and the songwriters who are with us, you would have to ask them.

There is no Pearl project that doesn't have the songwriter's blessing before it goes out. They're offered guarantees and rates, and they look at the numbers versus what they would be selling, and they'll take the deal or go, "I'll sit this deal out. Let me know if there's another one coming up." It's always a songwriter's call when you talk about any kind of reduced rate versus guarantee.

Now we're in a place where people rent music, in effect. What are your thoughts on streaming?

We have our catalog, like Universal and Sony have theirs. Not near the size, but Garth Brooks as an artist is going to be fine. Where I can't sleep at night is what

THE INTERVIEW

are new artists doing? I don't know how they're making a living because with the 360 deals, the

labels are also in on ticket sales, which is why concert [prices] have doubled in the last decade. I was asking [a newer artist] this question at the CMAs. "How are you making a living?" They said if it wasn't for their sponsors Well, that's crazy. How long can that last? We need to make sure we still have a format that builds artists, not just catalogs. Otherwise you're going to have a bunch of one-hit artists that nobody knows.

Where is Pearl going as a label? Are you going to sign artists? If you did, what would you do to help that artist make a living?

Whether Pearl Records becomes a full-blown record label with other artists on it, would mean having a number of conversations about how we build artists. As far

as the overhead on a record label, we're kind of there whether we have other artists or not. With that paid, the thought is we'll step right into the label. The problem is you're not going to become what you're fighting against. You have to address these artists with some kind of long-term involvement, and one of the ways to do that is future shares in their own masters. You become partners with them after a time. The main thing, though, is figuring out how streaming money gets to the songwriters more than it is now. If that happens, then you will see music flourish again.

And yet it seems like music is consumed more now than ever.

Let's don't confuse consumption with absorption, okay? My girls can go through 30 songs in five minutes because they want to hear 10 seconds then pop it to the next one. What are they absorbing? This is where I'm going to sound like the old guy. Back in the day there was an investment made in the artist. There was a time taken. There was a new record coming out, you'd get your buddies, you'd sit around and listen to it. It's a little different now.

The movies do the big movie theaters. And then they go to the streaming services, right? How sweet would it be if [music] could live on terrestrial radio for four, six, eight weeks before it ever goes to streaming? So everything's back to terrestrial radio. Everything's back to discovery. The problem with discovery for me on streaming is there is none. Let's say you never liked artist X. Now, when their song you've never heard comes on you can immediately click "next." What did you just do?

What used to happen is you'd say, "I don't like this guy at all, but he's got this one song." That's what gave music a chance. It's what gave artists a chance to build catalogs to win fans. That is disappearing for us. The [major labels] are making better money than they ever have because there's no manufacturing, no shipping, no returns. I can see how this might be the best time for them ever, but when it's the best time for a record label and not the best time for creators, something's screwed up and it will not last.

The other industry that changed a lot during your time away was radio. You've now been all over the country. What's your sense of radio? What changes have you noticed?

For me it's conglomeration — just how many stations are owned by the same people. The greatest tool that music ever used was competition. If one station was doing this, the station across town had to figure out how to do it better. They go back and forth. The second they're owned by the same person, the competition goes away, there's maybe a little bit more mandating. There's a little bit more power in radio going, "It's our way or the highway." When you get into that, communication seems to get tougher and the whole machine doesn't run as fluid.

The thing you keep counting on, because you see them in every city, are these souls that spin the records. Those people who are hard-headed, buck the system and they continue to do it. I don't care how old we get as a human race, there will always be people who buck the system for the love of the music. In my head right now I'm seeing 12 faces across this nation who I know are going to play that record because they like it, no matter what else is going on. Those are the people you love seeing and hugging because they're the ones who got you to whatever level you're at. Those are sweet relationships.

During your time off the road you must have spent a lot of time thinking about what things might look like when you started back up. How has the reality measured up?

When I left this business, Walmart was the king. They had 68% of overall music sales and 84% of country music. Then here comes a thing called an iPod. I had to find out how in the hell this happened, so I found a guy named Eddy Cue [from Apple] and went for a walk with him. We've done three of those. As nice of a man as he is, his vision of the future doesn't match what I would love to see. You didn't think it could get any worse, but it did. You have to develop an NFLPA to go with the NFL. The [creators] have to have the ability to turn the music off if music's being taken down the wrong path.

What about you specifically? Did you see selling six million tickets and winning Entertainer of the Year two more times? No.1 album, tour, single?

Oh, hell no. The vision was, what am I going to do when my kids are gone? Miss Yearwood's having great success in the cooking world. Maybe I'll be Martha Stewart's husband — sit by the pool with other husbands and take her credit card when she goes to work. My mom had a serious problem with empty nest syndrome. Alcohol became her answer, and two of the greatest fights I ever saw that woman

win were with alcohol and cancer. And it made her a hero to me.

My wife could see it coming in me with the children leaving. And it was her that said, "Would you ever think about touring again?" I said, "I would, but would the people? Would the industry?" So it was one of those things you were scared to death nobody would show up, then you were scared to death when they did because they showed up in great numbers and with great attitudes. But to think that that was the plan, no.

You've set a high bar with your focus on your fans and their experience at your shows. From prices to ticket availability, you've pushed the envelope in many ways. How has your approach with this tour met the challenges of the secondary market? Have you solved the problem?

The answer's easy. Create more supply than there is demand. In the '90s, Kelly [Brooks] and Ben Farrell were in charge of the tour and their whole thing for my sake was sellouts only. If you had enough for another show, but about half a show, you wanted to preserve that sellout, which was very sweet. This tour, no. If we get four and a half shows and we're playing to 6,000 people in an 18,000 seat venue, I don't care. Let's just make sure everybody gets a ticket that wants one. And if it was a city where not everybody got a ticket that wanted one, it was because we simply ran out of days.

Did the business side of that ever push the artist side of it too far?

No, not at all. Tickets used to be what an artist had for themselves, but since nobody's selling records anymore the record label wants their piece. We don't have a record label that takes a piece of it. The great thing now is the deals buildings are making are extraordinary since they understand they don't need to be built for 12 games a year, but to stay busy 365 days. So they're only going to take 10% of merch. They're going to let you have 100% of the ticket. They're not even going to charge you rental

because now that you're in for five nights, their food and beverage is going to make over that. For us, there's only one slice. The problem for a new artist is when the check comes it's cut up in so many ways.

You're clearly competitive and with so much of what you do, you defy convention. Sometimes on the business side, that gets your competitors grumbling. Do you ever wonder if you went too far or pushed too hard?

Let's just take Capitol Records and Jimmy Bowen. We took our masters and when it was happening I told Bowen, "They're going to put [that financial hit] all on you. Come to me and we'll go to Los Angeles together and figure out how to split this. Don't let Capitol/Nashville [take the brunt]." Well, he didn't take me up on that, the onus came on him and it got ugly for Capitol. There are things like that, where I wish things would have been different.

How did the Route 91 shooting hit you and, from a business standpoint, does it change the way you think about concerts, particularly outdoors?

No. First of all, we're treading on light ground here. You don't want a lot of time spent on this because you don't need to give bad hearts bad ideas. But it's one of those things that hopefully is never ever going to happen again in our existence. Still doesn't make sense and those are the scariest things.

We talk about artist influences quite a bit, but as an exceptional marketer and business person, who are the people you've looked up to from that side of things?

You already know those people. Reba McEntire runs her ship. That's an extraordinary human being right there. I got to tour with Kenny Rogers. He runs his ship. The Judds, not Wynonna as much as Naomi, runs the ship. But the big secret in marketing is, as a customer, how do you want to be treated? That's it.

When you're working onstage, the only customer you're thinking about is the one second row from the back up top. Because if you take care of him, everybody in between him and you is taken care of. The first three concerts I ever went to, that's where I sat.

If you're going to put out a package at Christmas, if I'm getting it, what do I want to see in it? What gives me a piece of that artist — James Taylor or George Strait? I just love those guys and, as much as it's hard for me to comprehend and say, there are people who feel that way about Garth Brooks. What do you give them?

And there are two sides to every gift — receiving and giving. If my mom is a Garth Brooks fan and I'm not, I see this package she's going to love. It's heavy, so it's going to wrap cool. And it doesn't break my bank account. The truth about marketing: What do I want to see? Quality. Great package. Doesn't break my wallet. Pretty simple.

Who are the executives who influenced you on the business side?

[Longtime manager] Bob Doyle is first and foremost. He's the one who put everything on the line to go into business with me. I watched him as a publisher and as a businessman.

As artists, we all have these pipe dreams. Well, how do you get that done? I don't know. Kerry O'Neil knows. How do you go to a record label, three years into your deal, when you're already 86% of Nashville's bottom line and 60-some percent of EMI Worldwide, and tell them you want your masters back? Kerry O'Neil figured that out.

My book is also filled with the gentlemen of Music Row. [Capitol's] Jim Fogle-song began it. You watched how he treated people in the business. Jimmy Bowen came in and told me what Christmas meant to all of us in retail and music, and you got to watch the master. Probably the greatest record label guy this town's ever seen. Then you got to see Pat Quigley come in totally from the left with marketing and you just took your notes.

Same thing when I took my wife for her birthday present to see Bruno Mars. I took a lot of notes that night. Hang around people you admire who are successful, take what works for you and leave what doesn't. But you're always taking notes.

With all the broader business concerns we've discussed, are you still optimistic about the future of country music and this business?

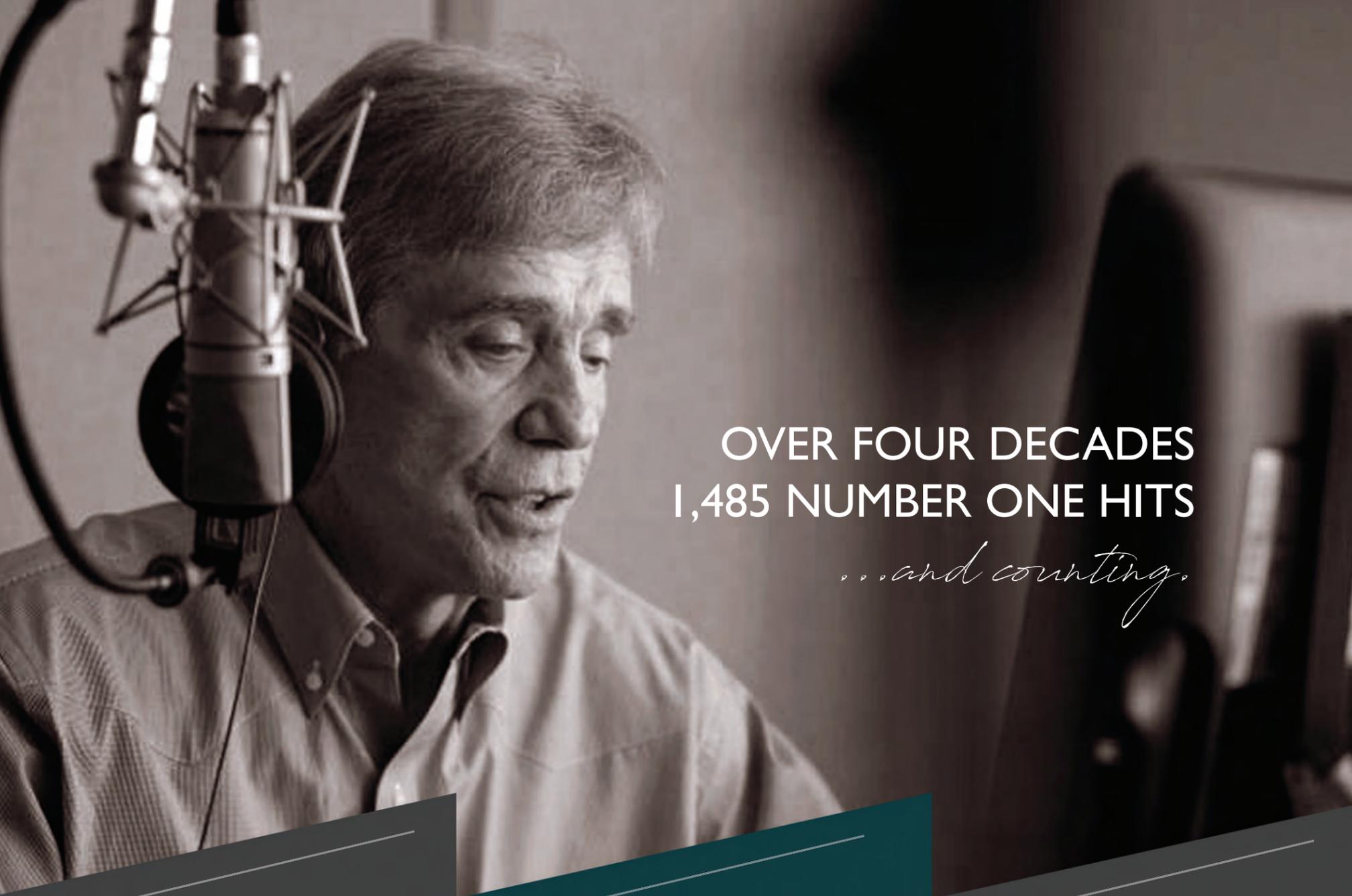
Yeah. I don't know who gets credited with this saying, but the one thing that always saves country music is country music. For a long time we thought there would be another Randy Travis type showing up, and I do think it will take someone with that heart and soul in the technology space to turn it around now. Someone who knows what buttons to push and loves music with a desire to see the ship get righted again. Because right now, the only people making money in this business are the labels. That money has to be distributed out to the artists, songwriters, publishers — everywhere. I'll bet you any amount of Taco Bell you want, we'll look back in 15 years and realize that's exactly what we needed.

CAC



Their Oyster: Andy Elliott, Lesly Simon, Chris Waters, Glenn Noblit, Mandy McCormack and Hilary Hoover with Brooks (kneeling).

“ How sweet would it be if music could live on terrestrial radio for four, six, eight weeks before it ever goes to streaming? ”



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