Lot Of Love In The Room


Nashville Mayor Megan Barry welcomed Country radio attendees by noting, “We have 82 people who move to Nashville every day. They come here because they love the music. Since 1925 when WSM-AM began airing that show that became known as the Grand Ole Opry, country music has been a central part of Nashville and our identity.

The emotional poles of the opening session centered on Australia, believe it or not. First, a dedication was made to the late Jeff Walker, founder of AristoMedia and longtime CRB Board Treasurer. “We are eternally grateful for your decades of dedication and passion,” read a plaque dated Feb. 8, 2016. His widow Terri Walker spoke for the family saying, “He loved you all as well as the CRB. Thank you so much.” Board President Charlie Morgan added, “He was our conscience, advocate and friend. We miss him and are most grateful for 35 years of service to the organization.”

Housekeeping included introduction of this year’s Rusty Walker Scholarship winners and posting the date of the Country Radio Hall of Fame dinner – June 22 at the Omni. Luke Bryan introduced the incoming class, fumbling his lines at one point and earning laughs saying, “I had a Super Bowl party at my house last night. The remnants of that may be present.” Turning serious, he pointed to radio as the “backbone and cornerstone” of country artists’
Brandy Clark
GIRL NEXT DOOR

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careers. “We can’t thank you guys enough,” Bryan said. “The city of Nashville loves you all so much. Thank you for being here.”

**Keith Urban,** whose work with St. Jude, All For The Hall, Mr. Holland’s Opus and more framed the presentation. Calling it “a really beautiful honor,” Urban revealed his answer to the question of “what country music is” centers on its sense of community. “When I was nine, my family joined a country music club,” he said. “A year later our house burned down. We were all okay, but we lost all our belongings. Without hesitation, our country music club put on a fundraiser for us. The Red Cross stepped in. Goodwill stepped in.

So it was apparent to me from the age of nine that this is what it’s about. People fall on hard times and need help, and I’m grateful my wife and I have been able to bring a spotlight to causes that can hopefully benefit from that.” He closed expressing his desire to “share this with all the volunteers who give of the most valuable thing we have – time.”

And if the emotional bookends of the gathering weren’t enough, there was one final surprise: magician **Justin Flom,** who performed his “Card Hit Wonder” live.

**A Little Good News**

The takeaways from **Albright & O’Malley & Brenner**’s 22nd Annual Pre-CRS Seminar yesterday (2/8) add up to good news for radio in general and for Country radio specifically.

AOB’s **Mike O’Malley** and **Becky Brenner** presented “Roadmap 2016,” the consulting group’s annual look at the usage of and listener satisfaction with Country radio. Their survey of 9,677 listeners, mostly Country P1s, ages 18-54 in more than 63 markets in the U.S. and Canada, revealed more than 70% are satisfied with their local Country radio stations because they play the best music, make them feel good and have fun DJs who seem like friends.

While current hits from superstars like Luke Bryan remain the top favorites, AOB suggest overcoming complaints about the mix by researching songs, listening to the station’s mix from the target audience’s viewpoint and managing the music “fringes,” as in songs that don’t support the core sound of the radio station.

AOB found when listeners go elsewhere for music, they go to a different format. Their second choice is music they own, and third is pure play options like Pandora and Spotify. Figuring out the “hot buttons,” the things about your station the listeners love, and doing more of that, will keep them. They also say to focus on both horizontal and vertical teasing that results in more daily and weekly listening occasions, and marketing on multiple platforms.

Don’t forget to maximize mobile availability and social media usage, say AOB. They advise developing an interactive station app with an alarm clock and game integration, and having an interactive text strategy. Then get social and customize content to match listener expectations for each platform.

**Nielsen Entertainment VP/Radio Stephanie Friedman** calls on-demand streaming “the most important metric we have today.” Using the examples of Cam and Chris Stapleton, Friedman showed how their streaming activity surged long before radio airplay did, and then she pointed to Kane Brown, who hasn’t had airplay yet, but has been getting a million streams a week even before recently being signed to Sony/Nashville. Friedman says streaming data can also be used to tighten up recurrent and gold categories.

Hit songwriter **Don Schlitz** entertained the seminar crowd with his “The Gambler,” “When You Say Nothing At All,” “Forever And Ever, Amen” and the never-recorded “God I Hate Lawyers” before his wife, SchlitzLaw attorney **Stacy Schlitz,** spoke to the licensing coverage required for radio stations that stream on the web. She demonstrated how BMI, ASCAP, SESAC and SoundExchange license each work to provide royalties for songwriters, publishers, artists and labels, and which licenses are required for various types of web activity.

DMR Interactive President/COO **Andrew Curran** spoke to the importance of super-serving P1s as they act as amplifiers for your station’s message. He suggests cross-referencing your text and email clubs to identify those fans, then develop a strategy to get them sharing your brand.

**Coleman Insights President/COO Warren Kurtzman** and RCS & Media Monitors President/CEO **Philippe Generali** co-presented their findings on “Switching vs. Turning.” They found almost two thirds of all PPM listening occasions are the type in which a listener turns the radio on to one station (turn-on), and then turns the radio off (turn-off), as opposed to switching from...
one station to another. That number is even higher when looking at just Country P1s – 78.4% turn on and off. The average listening occasion that starts with a turn-on lasts five to six minutes longer than that which starts with a switch. Younger demos are more likely to switch, with the 55+ demo the least likely.

Attendees were also treated to a performance by Republic Nashville’s new artist Brett Young.

CRS 2016 Keynote Discussion
CRS Board President Charlie Morgan moderated “The New Views from the Top: Featuring Four of the Industry’s Top Tier Executives.” Warner Music Nashville President/CEO John Esposito, Sony/Nashville Chairman/CEO Randy Goodman, iHeartMedia/iHeartCountry SVP Rod Phillips and Cox EVP/Radio Bill Hendrich discussed, among other topics, the importance of actionable data for both radio and labels and the challenges labels face with artist development.

Hendrich got things started by singing radio’s praises. “Radio is a highly profitable business when you manage it right,” he asserted. “Within five blocks of this building there are insurance companies, banks and all kinds of other businesses that just don’t have the fun every day we have. We are in a great business.”

Minus some challenges. “We don’t get enough credit for what we do,” Phillips granted. “To have 92% of Americans still tuning into radio weekly is absolutely incredible. But when you see that only 75% of people 18-34 are tuning into TV, that’s a storm cloud that says we need to do all we can to stay relevant, interesting, entertaining and compelling.”

Phillips pointed to an increasing desire for authenticity, especially with radio talent. “It used to be all about having a ‘radio’ voice that sounded like everybody else,” he said. “Not anymore. Listeners can see right through the B.S. and they don’t like it.”

For labels, artist development continues to be a big priority and is evolving. “Artists now are out developing their brand before we ever get involved,” Goodman noted, pointing to his recent social media find, Kane Brown. “I went to see him in Knoxville and the fire marshal was there turning people away at the door. No airplay; all social-driven.”

“We’re tapping into assets other than just [radio] spins,” Esposito added. “We’re getting far more data-driven, which leads to compelling stories that we can bring [radio] as a reason to invest in us.”

The bottom lines are changing for labels, too. “Certainly the new frontier for us is streaming and trying to get our arms around what it means,” Esposito continued. “More than 50% of our business is coming from streaming, something that effectively didn’t exist five years ago.”

Country Home
CRS attendees were treated to a Grand Ole Opry performance at the Omni Hotel featuring Trace Adkins, Ashley Campbell, Easton Corbin, Maddie & Tae, Nashville’s Chris Carmack, David Nail, Tracy Lawrence, Chris Janson and Martina McBride. Adkins was honored with a brass plaque bearing his name that will hang backstage at the Opry House. “Being a member of the Grand Ole Opry takes the top five spots in my career,” Adkins said. Nail played a song called “Fighter,” written when he and his wife were struggling to conceive. “When you look at this song now with two humans that look like you, it sounds different,” said Nail, who has newborn twins at home. Newcomer Janson burst onstage and gave an exuberant performance, leading to a standing ovation. Twenty-year Opry member Martina McBride closed the show with a new song, “Reckless.”
The Day Ahead

7:30am
CRS Artist Breakfast
Jerry Duncan, Jack Pride, Sam Cerami (hosts), Brian Collins, Chris Lane, Jake Worthington, Ryan Broshears, Sam Austin. Omni, Level 1, Kitchen Notes

8am
Programming Mentoring Breakfast
Tom Hanrahan, Shelly Easton, Jeff Kapugi, Tommy Chuck, Kerry Wolfe, Bob Raleigh, Travis Daily, Tim Richards, Steve Geofferyes, Tim Roberts, Nikki Thomas, Kix Layton, Mike Brophy, Tonya Campos, Brian Michael, Jeff Garrison, Tee Gentry, Mike Preston, DJ Stout, JR Schumann, Bruce Logan
Omni, Level 3, Cumberland 5 & 6

9am
Daily Featured Speaker: Noah Galloway
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom D-G

10am
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom D-G

11:30am
UMG Lunch and Performance
Ryman Auditorium

2pm
Beyond the News Feed: Using Social Media For More Than “Listen Now”
Dan Halyburton (moderator), Elaina Smith
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom D-G

2pm
While You Were Out: To the Beach and Back
Gregg Lindahl (moderator), Jim Askar, Chuck Geiger, Tom Baldrica, Charlie Cook,
Loren MacLeash
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom A-C

2pm
Big Market Sound in Any Size Town Part I: Imaging Secrets Revealed Sponsored by Benzton
Bob Richards (moderator), Rich Witt, Cowboy Kyle, Jason Garte, Jeff Berlin
Omni, Level 3, Cumberland 1&2

3pm
Radio as The Insurgent: What if “They” Were Here First?
Gregg Lindahl (moderator), John Owens, Nate Deaton, Rod Phillips, Leigh Jacobs, Lesly Simon
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom D-G

3pm
Women In the Industry: Breaking Barriers and Balance
Beverlee Brannigan (moderator), Jules Riley, Julie Talbott, Sarah Frazier, Kerri Edwards, Kristen Williams
Omni, Level 2

4pm
Beyond the News Feed: Using Social Media For More Than “Listen Now”
Dan Halyburton (moderator), Elaina Smith
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom D-G

4pm
Revenues on the Horizon: Local Advertisers Talk Radio
Dan Halyburton (moderator), Jeff Smiley, Nick Jacobson
Omni, Level 2

4pm
Big Market Sound in Any Size Town Part II: Get Prepped Sponsored by Benztown
RJ Curtis (moderator), Big D & Bubba, Jeff Andrews, Steve Harmon
Omni, Level 2, Cumberland 1&2

5pm
Country Music Hall of Fame Reception and Gallery Tours – 5-7pm
Country Music Hall of Fame Rotunda

5pm
Stallions Entertainment Showcase - 5-8pm
Omni, Level 1, Barlines

6pm
Nashville Access Superkick Showcase
Omni, Level 3, Music Row Room 3

5:45pm
Republic Nashville Happy Hour
Brett Young & Dan Huff, Cassadee Pope
The Palm, 140 5th Ave. S.

7pm
Bob Kingsley’s Acoustic Alley
Rhett Akins, Rodney Clawson, Ross Copperman, Andrew Dorff, Josh Kear, Shane McAnally, Heather Morgan, Tim Nichols, Josh Osborne, Jonathan Singleton, Jimmy Yeary.
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom

7pm
SSM Evolution Beer Garden + Performances
Omni, Level 2, Music Row Room 1

7pm
Mix Lounge
Omni, Level 2, Music Row Room 2

8pm
Smith & Wesley Performance
Omni, Level 1, Barlines

9:30pm
Thirty Tigers
Love and Theft, Josh Abbott Band, Wheeler Walker Jr., The Willis Clan
The Stage, 412 Broadway

10pm
Olivia Lane House Party
Ryman Auditorium

10pm
Olivia Lane, Big Spark Music Suite
Omni Suite 1014

10pm
Reviver Records After Hours Party
Omni, Level 4, Electric Room