AOB’s Dynamite Pre-Seminar

The fuse was lit on CRS 2017 early Wednesday at the 23rd annual Albright & O’Malley & Brenner Pre-CRS Seminar at the Music City Center. The three-hour gathering included the “Road Map Research” report, a discussion of the “Three Mics” every station should pay attention to, a conversation about Spotify and streaming, a surprise Q&A with BMLG President/CEO Scott Borchetta, a performance from BMLG’s Ryan Follese, some brand new Nielsen information on competition and a lively round table with three morning show producers.

AOB’s Michael O’Malley kicked it off with a presentation of the research conducted by client stations in the US and Canada. Positive trends in station satisfaction, country music in general and new artists were highlighted. Satisfaction with the music percentages increased to 77% from 73% last year. Dissatisfaction numbers check in with song repetition at 56%, too many spots at 28%, music mix 26% and “deejay talks too much about things I don’t care about” at 24%. New artists mentioned favorably were Chris Stapleton, Sam Hunt and Jon Pardi.

Use of station’s socials showed flat performances from Facebook and Twitter. Instagram was up 12.21% and Snapchat increased 10.21%. Facebook Live video saw a first year surge. While Snapchat saw an increase, fans were disappointed in how the stations engaged them there.

Mic Check: Futuri CEO Daniel Anstandig addressed mobile and podcasting. He started his discussion with the question “What if radio and TV were invented after the internet?” and went on to explain that stations should be using all three mics: on-air, digital and social.

He stressed that a station that doesn’t have a mobile app is like one without a transmitter. And your mobile app must be more than a logo, “songs playing now,” and a request line number. Every on-air mention for a station app should be with a call to action. Examples include “listen online,” “control the songs we play,” “win a prize” and “see us live.” Anstandig also advised using mobile to capture a first occasion. Station apps with alarm functions allow listeners to wake to the station’s streaming audio. Research shows the strategy results in an additional 2.5 days of listening each month.
YOUR NEW FACE OF COUNTRY MUSIC

WILLIAM MICHAEL MORGAN

NEW SINGLE “MISSING” AVAILABLE NOW

CRS 2017
New Face of Country Music – 2017

amazon
Best Country Songs of 2016

npr
2016’s Top 100 Songs – All Genre

Rolling Stone

MusicRow
2017 Next Big Thing Artist

The New York Times
The Playlist: 21 Songs from 2016 That Nearly Got Away

billboard
12 Best Country Singles of 2016

iTunes
Best of 2016 Country Albums & Best of 2016 Country Tracks

WATCH WILLIAM PERFORM FRIDAY AT THE CRS NEW FACES SHOW
On podcasting, Anstandig noted all talk breaks can be converted to podcasts. They don’t all have to be three-to-five minutes. Some can be 30 seconds and just as compelling. An unedited version of an in-studio or phone interview can be used as a podcast.

**Marks The Spotify:** After a career in terrestrial radio and a stint at SiriusXM, Spotify Head of Global Country Programming John Marks gave the audience his insight on all three. When asked what he’d do in a hypothetical return to terrestrial radio, he replied, “Probably get fired in 10 minutes.” A big adjustment for him at Spotify was finding most playlists are about 50 songs, as opposed to libraries with hundreds of tunes at satellite and terrestrial stations. He also enjoys the opportunity to see new artists who haven’t been exposed through other media “blow up” on Spotify. “You can usually see after two weeks if a song connects,” he said. Walker Maguire (15.7 millions streams to date), Luke Combs (30.2 million plays) and Russell Dickerson (27 million) were among those cited. His suggestion to a room of programmers was to stop “warehousing new music in overnights. Find three or four things you love and play the shit out of them.”

**Hostin’ The Machine:** That sentiment was shared by surprise guest Borchetta. “If you have dynamite, blow it up,” he urged. He went on to agree that unless you are one of 10 or 12 key artists, every day is a “fist fight” for airplay. When asked about GMR and its impact right now he stressed that labels should want radio to be able to broadcast digitally because it is good for both. He shared a story from a retailer he visited that proclaimed “music is in the back of the store, dying with books.” He asked the audience who had Amazon Prime, and expressed that the future there was a bright one.

After a performance from BMLG’s Follese, AOB’s O’Malley shared research Nielsen provided yesterday. When they switch away, Country listeners in most demos gravitate toward Top 40 and Hot AC. How stations “manage the big tent” led O’Malley to suggest, “Think assimilation not isolation.”

The day’s last segment put three morning show producers on the hot seat. Asked where he goes for show prep, Silverfish Media/Big D & Bubba’s Patrick Thomas emphatically said Facebook trending. He uses websites and newspaper sites to get more details, but he starts on the “right side of that Facebook page.” Ty, Kelly & Chuck’s Glenn Johnson prefers Twitter because he can hone in on specific markets, not just a national viewpoint. “CMT on Twitter has a great list,” he offered. On a local level, AOB’s Dan Vanlandingham likes local TV and news sites. He also suggests local Twitter feeds for police, fire and community pages.

Turning to talent management, Johnson advised “learn to read the room.” Delivering criticism is tough and is all about timing. Thomas thinks producers may need to try multiple tactics to find the right way.
Let The Games Begin

After remarks from CRS Exec. Dir. Bill Mayne and a beautiful performance of the national anthem by Trisha Yearwood, CRS 2017 Opening Ceremonies turned to Nashville Mayor Megan Barry, who thanked attendees for what they do to support Music City. “I appreciate everything you all are doing here ... and what you continue to do when you go home at the end of CRS,” she said before telling the story of Metro police officer Eric Murmaw, who recently died in the line of duty. She explained the outreach from Vince Gill, Jamey Johnson and Billy Ray Cyrus, who performed at the memorial service. “When there are celebrations and when there are tragedies, country music is there.”

CRS Board VP RJ Curtis introduced the Country Radio Hall of Fame segment, noting nominations for the 2018 class are now open (countryradioseminar.org) and that this year’s event will be held June 21 in Nashville. He brought out Capitol’s Lady Antebellum to recognize the seven members of the 2017 class: Westwood One’s Tim Closson, Beasley/Tampa’s Charlie Ochs and Buck Owens Productions’ Mel Owens (Radio category), and Local Radio Networks’ Joe Wade Formicola, WYCD/Detroit’s Linda Lee, WRNS/Greenville, NC’s Jim Mantel, and KUAD/Ft. Collins, CO’s Good Morning Guys – Brian Gary, Todd Harding and Susan Moore (On-Air). Closson and Owens were in the room and stood to be recognized.

Mayne returned to present the Tom Rivers Humanitarian Award to Greater Media’s Peter Smyth. Saying he was humbled and honored, Smyth focused his remarks on Rivers. “[He] left us way too young, at age 38,” Smyth said. “He served magnificently at ‘QYK in Tampa and ‘USN in Chicago, but it was consistent commitment to public affairs that distinguished him among his peers.” Smyth concluded sharing some advice he received: “You’ll be judged on what you gave. Tom Rivers gave greatly. I hope today, sitting in this room, the next Tom Rivers is among us.”

Last year’s Artist Humanitarian honoree Keith Urban introduced 2017 recipient Zac Brown, sharing his early impressions of Brown’s devotion to family and service. “With your help we’ve been able to touch millions of lives with music and use this unique platform and the gifts we’ve been given to help make a difference,” he said. Brown brought his band up for an emotional explanation of what they’ve meant to him. “We’ve been blessed enough to have the rise we’ve had, but I couldn’t have done it without these guys behind me. Most importantly I want to give credit to my wife Miss Shelly Brown, who has been my anchor.” – Chuck Aly

Hamilton Gets Tough

Olympic Gold Medalist, sports commentator and cancer survivor Scott Hamilton delivered yesterday’s CRS keynote, conducted Q&A style by CRS President Charlie Morgan. Hamilton recounted with humor his first cancer diagnosis as a young child and rise from humble beginnings to gold medal stardom, entrepreneurship and philanthropy. “They only open the door this much,” Hamilton counseled on his victories, positioning his hands just inches apart. “They’re only a launching pad for what’s next. You don’t want to be the football player who throws the game-winning touchdown and is stuck in that moment for the rest of your life.”

In a message easily relatable to those in broadcast radio, Hamilton stressed the importance of focusing only on what you can control. “The company could get bought tomorrow and you could be out of a job, passed over for a promotion, whatever,” he offered. “That’s fine. When you focus on being the best you can be, that energy is contagious and great things happen.”

After Morgan had thanked the crowd for coming and most had risen from their seats to leave, Hamilton rose from his own
chair and walked to the edge of the stage. “I just want to say one last thing if I can,” he said. Hamilton explained that his brain tumor, a cancer he’d battled twice before, returned late last year. “Look at me,” he instructed. “Do I look scared?” Through muffled laughs Hamilton answered with a rhetorical “no.” “I got tough,” he explained, noting that the cancer had unexpectedly shrunk since. “And that’s what I want to say. Whatever your problem — whether it’s emotional, something with your job, physical, whatever — get tough. Get tough and get through it. Because on the other side there’s something great.”

—Russ Penuell

Broken, Don’t Fix It

A big room with a Music City view, hors d’oeuvres, an open bar and more than two dozen artists comprised BBRMG Live, a showcase of new and legacy acts across the Broken Bow, Red Bow, Stoney Creek and Wheelhouse imprints. Emcee duties were shared by an assortment of Country radio pros including iHeartMedia’s Rod Phillips, Beasley’s Justin Chase, KMEL/Phoenix’s B-Dub, WQDR/Raleigh’s Lisa McKay and former CBS Radio VP/Country Jeff Kapugi. “I’m fun-employed,” the former WUSN/Chicago PD quipped before introducing Red Bow’s Chase Bryant. Singer-songwriter Radney Foster, on the Magic Mustang publishing roster, even worked the room.

The libations had been flowing for an hour or more when Red Bow’s Craig Campbell took the stage with just his guitar, a marked departure from the full-band performances of Jordan Rager, Granger Smith, Brooke Eden and others. “I thought I’d play this song the way I think you need to hear it,” he said before delivering “Outskirts Of Heaven” to cheers. Stoney Creek’s Randy Houser rattled the walls with his performance of “Back To God,” as did Wheelhouse’s Trace Adkins with “Watered Down.”

Jason Aldean took the stage last, perched on stools with his band. They captivated the crowd with “A Little More Summertime” and “Any Ol’ Barstool.”

—Russ Penuell

Grand Ole Omni

Wednesday night’s Grand Ole Opry at CRS presented by Live Nation was jam-packed, with WSM-AM/Nashville’s Bill Cody keeping the evening moving between acts. Zac Brown Band opened with “Homegrown.” They followed that with the thoughtful “Day That I Die.” Their newest single “My Old Man” was their opportunity to promote the new album Back Home Again out May 12. “Chicken Fried,” finished their set.

You’ve Got The Look: The Valory promotion staff helps Justin Moore celebrate the No. 1 ascension of his “You Look Like I Need A Drink.” Pictured (l-r, back) are the label’s Ashley Sidoti, Don Gosselin, George Briner, Brad Howell, Adam Burnes, Brooke Nixon and Amy Staley; (l-r, front) are Valory’s Lauren Simon, songwriters Natalie Hemby, Matt Dragstrem and Rodney Clawson, Moore and BMLG’s Scott Borchetta.

Big Loud’s Chris Lane delivered the uptempo “Fix” and heartfelt “For Her.” In her 33rd Opry appearance, Kentucky native Carly Pearce sang “Careless” and debut single “Every Little Thing.”

The acoustic theme continued as Chris Janson told the story of falling in love and marrying his wife Kelly prior to performing “Holdin’ Her.” Label group mate Michael Ray sang two including “Kiss You In The Morning.” The crowd got to their feet for LoCash and “I Love This Life.”

The newest member of the Opry, Crystal Gayle played three songs including “Don’t It Make My Brown Eyes Blue.” Arista’s Cam let the crowd know she has been locked up working on new music and blazed through “Mayday” and “Half Broke Heart.” Trace Adkins closed saying “I can’t believe they still let me make records,” sealing the night with “Ladies Love Country Boys.” —Paul Williams

CAC
A Look Ahead

Thursday, 2/23

8am
Programming Mentoring Breakfast
Sponsored by Sun Broadcast Group
Bruce Logan (facilitator), Shelly Easton, Tim Richards, Tim Roberts, Kenny Joy, Rod Phillips, Kix Layton, Mike Brophy, Jeff Garrison, Andrew Bland, Mike Preston, Charlie Cook, John Shoemby, Mac Daniels, Nikki Thomas, DJ Stout, Mike Moore, Jeff Kapugi
Omni, Level 3, Cumberland 5-6

8am
Sales Mentoring Breakfast
Katie Reid, Sarah Frazier, Melissa Kent, Lee Adams, Judy Lakin
Omni, Level 3, Cumberland 3-4

9am
CRS Research Presentation: The Mobilization of Country Radio
Presented by Edison Media
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom, D-G

10am
Inside Studio G with Garth Brooks
Sponsored by Pearl Records
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom D-G

11:30am
Team UMG at the Ryman
Ryman Auditorium

2:30pm
CMA Breakout Session #1: The Power of the Country Music Radio Consumer
Omni, Level 3, Cumberland 3-4

2:30pm
Women Empowering Women
Beverlee Brannigan, Carol Hughes, Erica Farber, Linda Wei, Beth Curley, Brooke Williams, RJ Curtis
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom A-C

2:30pm
Victory in the Hallways: Creating a Positive Work Culture
Gregg Lindahl (moderator), Sean Shannon, Josh Easter, Dave Paulus, Rick Jackson
Omni, Level 3, Cumberland 1-2

2:30pm
Speeding Towards Tomorrow: Radio in a Driverless World
Bob Richards (moderator), Jason Bailey, Stevens Radley, Chris Andrews
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom D-G

3:30pm
More Than Words: Presenting Ideas That Inspire Bold Action
John Ellett, Jerry James
Omni, Level 3, Cumberland 3-4

3:30pm
You Are More Valuable Than You Think: Finding Your Full Potential
Becky Brenner (moderator), Graham Bunn, Carole Bowen, Clay Hunnicutt, Jeff Roper
Omni, Level 3, Cumberland 5-6

3:30pm
Capturing the Millennial Ear: Rethinking Our Traditional Medium for the Next Generation
Bob Richards (moderator), Leigh Jacobs, Carolyn Gilbert
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom A-C

3:30pm
Moving the Listeners and the Numbers That Count
Sponsored by Nielsen Music
RJ Curtis (moderator), Torie Nugent, Mike Moore, Tom Lord, Matt Bailey
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom D-G

3:30pm
How Are You Protecting Your Core Revenues? Local and National
Gregg Lindahl (moderator), Paul Weyland, John Henley
Omni, Level 3, Cumberland 3-4

4pm
Eric Church’s Virtual Reality Tour Experience
UMG Library Lounge

4pm
On-Air Talent Mentoring Happy Hour
Lon Helton, Kelly Ford, Danny Dwyer, Skip Mahaffey, Big Sue, Kim Leslie
Westwood One Lounge

5pm
Cold River Records “Beer, Biscuits and Basketball with Drew Baldridge”
Performance by Drew Baldridge
Omni, Level 1, Kitchen Notes

5pm
SSM + Nashville Country Club Presents Alexandra Demetree
Omni, Level 2, Music Row 1

5:30pm
Country Music Hall of Fame Reception/Tour
Kent Blazy, Tony Arata
Hall of Fame Rotunda

6pm
Rebel Engine Happy Hour
Lucas Hoge, Stephanie Quayle
Omni, Level 2, Top of Escalators

7pm
Bob Kingsley’s Acoustic Alley
Sponsored by Bob Kingsley Country Top 40 and First Tennessee Bank
First Drink Sponsored by ASCAP
Shane McAnally, Josh Osborne, JT Harding, Laura Veltz, Luke Laird, Ashley Gorley, Brett James, Rhett Akins, Busbee, Jon Nite, Cole Taylor
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom A-C
9pm
SSM Showcase + Beer
Troy Anderson, Jay Seene, Logan Robinson, Molly Adele Brown, Amanda Jones
Omni, Level 2, Music Row 1

10pm
One Whisky Away Party
Olivia Lane
Omni, Big Spark Suite

12am
Denny Strickland Breakfast
Baja Sexto

Friday, 2/24

7:30am
Women Mentoring Breakfast
Sponsored by NuVoodoo Media Services
Carolyn Gilbert, Jinny Laderer, Beverlee Brannigan, Lisa Smoot, Sunny Leigh, Lisa Ballance, Melissa Kent, Whitney Allen, Shelly Easton, Katie Bright, Sarah Frazier, Charlie Dean, Katie Dean, Lisa Wall, Erica Farber, Alison Bonaguro, Becky Brenner, Ginny Rogers
Omni, Level 3, Cumberland 5-6

8am
Digital & Tech Breakfast
Malika Quemerais, Michael Shoup, Gloria Stitt
Omni, Level 3, Cumberland 3-4

9am
Daily Featured Speaker: Ryan Redington/Amazon
Sponsored by Momentum Label Group
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom D-G

10am
Objects Are Larger Than They Appear: Small Markets That Do Big Things
Tom Baldrica (moderator), RG Jones, Jesse Garcia, Erica Ogle, JJ Holiday, Stephanie Theisen
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom A-C

10am
Dicing the Data
Bob Richards (moderator), John Zarling, Jeff Green, Tim Richards
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom D-G

10am
Cultivating the Farm Team: Sources of New Talent
Becky Brenner (moderator), Liz Rozengard, Tony Banks, Ben Downs, Dan Vallie
Omni, Level 3, Cumberland 5-6

10am
CMA Breakout Session #2: And the CMA Broadcast Award Goes to...
Omni, Level 3, Cumberland 3-4

11am
Promotions Start to Finish: Part You
Sponsored by vCreative
Tom Baldrica (moderator), Fritz Moser, Sunny Leigh, B Dub, John Trapane
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom A-C

11am
Lace Up Your Boots & Get in the Trenches with Social Media Platforms
Becky Brenner (moderator), Malika Quemerais, Granger Smith, Gloria Stitt
Omni, Level 3, Cumberland 1-6

11:45am
Acoustic Stage Performance Featuring Kaylee Rutland
Omni, Level 2, Broadway Ballroom Lobby

12pm
Lunch & Performance
Sponsored by BMLG
A Thousand Horses, Trent Harmon, Delta Rae, Midland, Carly Pearce, Maddie & Tae
Omni, Level 2, Broadway Ballroom

2pm
Cashing in on Live Events: Live!
Tom Baldrica (moderator), Dave Anthony, Paige Nienaber, Michael Jordan, Dhruv Prasad
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom A-C

2pm
Coaching the Coaches: Top Talent Tell How to Motivate Them Best
Kirk Herbstreit, Robin Meade, Ace & TJ
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom D-G

3pm
Artist Interview with Toby Keith: My Way
Sponsored by BMI
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom D-G

5:15pm
New Faces Cocktail Reception
Sponsored by Big Spark Music Group
Omni, Level 2, Grandview Terrace

6:30pm
New Faces of Country Music Dinner and Performance
Sponsored by ACM and St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital
CRS/Country Aircheck Awards Presentations
William Michael Morgan, Maren Morris, Jon Pardi, Granger Smith, Drake White
Omni, Level 2, Broadway Ballroom

Feb 23 • One Whiskey Away Party
Big Spark Music Suite • 10pm