

CRS Edition • 8th Annual CountryBreakout™ Airplay Awards

February/March 2010

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Roundtable**

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Dean &
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*James
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(*I Run to You*)

Liz Rose

Best Country Song
(*White Horse*, Taylor Swift)

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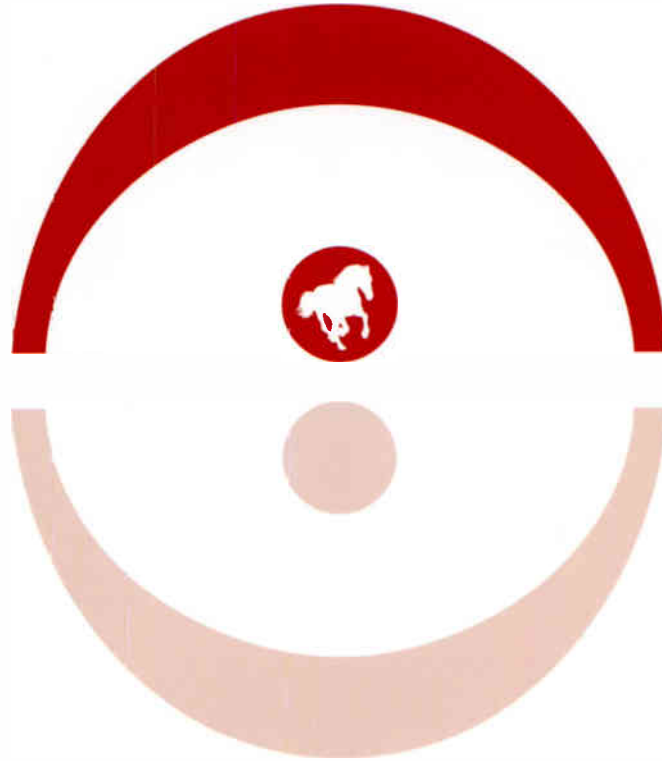
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~TABLE OF CONTENTS~

February/March 2010

Volume 30 • No. 1

Features

- 9 **MusicRow's 8th Annual CountryBreakout™ Airplay Awards**
- 15 **Promotion Roundtable with Bishop, Dean and Pareigis: Refining Today's Airplay Mission**
- 22 **DIY Airplay: Pro Tips From Programmer VIPs**

Departments

- 26 **Row File**—Christy Walker-Watkins
- 28 **Writer's Notes**—Lee Brice
- 30 **Financial**—Artist Royalties From Gold Albums

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~ON THE COVER~

James Otto

Label: Warner Music Nashville

Hometown: Benton City, WA

Birthday: July 29, 1973

Producers: Paul Worley and James Otto

Interesting Fact: I'm 6'5" tall and have a 3 lb Chihuahua...opposites attract.

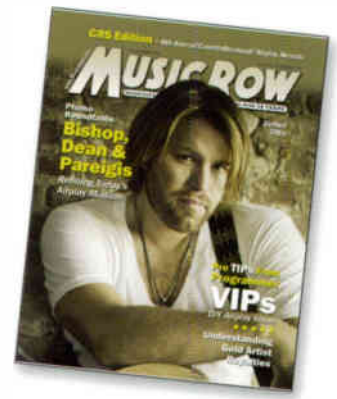
Outside Interests: Vintage cars and trucks—I'm a major gearhead. I've got a 1960 Cadillac and a 1970 K5 Blazer.

Musical Influences: Ronnie Milsap, Ray Charles, Willie Nelson, Hank Jr., Al Green, Bob Seger. Country soul and rock 'n' roll baby!

Favorite Records: *Modern Sounds in Country & Western Music* by Ray Charles, *Red Headed Stranger* by Willie Nelson, *Whiskey Bent & Hell Bound* by Hank Jr., Al Green's *Greatest Hits*, and *Trouble* by Ray LaMontagne.

Just two years after the release of his debut album, country music sensation **James Otto** is back with "Groovy Little Summer Song," the lead single from his forthcoming sophomore album, *James Otto*. The track was co-written by Otto, **Al Anderson** and **Carson Chamberlain**, and co-produced by Otto and Grammy award-winning record producer and session guitarist **Paul Worley**. "This record is definitely a country soul album," Otto says, referring to the sound that has come to full fruition on *James Otto*. "It's something that's always been inside me, because those are my two major influences. I've always heard that country soul sound when I listened to people like **Conway Twitty** and **Ronnie Milsap** and certain things by **Kenny Rogers**. But I also loved and grew up listening to a lot of Memphis R&B and soul music."

Otto's debut release, *Sunset Man*, for which he co-wrote nine of the eleven songs, debuted at No. 3 on the *Billboard* Top 200 album chart. Its first single, "Just Got Started Lovin' You," was the year's most played single at country radio and made it to No. 1 on *Billboard's* Hot Country Songs. It helped earn Otto nominations for Grammy Best Male Country Vocal Performance, ACM Top New Male Vocalist and CMA New Artist of the Year. He also earned Song of the Year awards from the ACM, CMA and *MusicRow* magazine for co-writing the **Jamey Johnson** hit "In Color" with Johnson and **Lee Thomas Miller**. The song also earned a Grammy nomination for Best Country Song.



People COUNTRY SPECIAL

The editors of PEOPLE® magazine take fans behind the music and inside the lives of the hottest country stars.



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TOBY KEITH

2009 Music Row Artist of the Year



Five Consecutive # 1's

- She Never Cried In Front of Me
- God Love Her
- Lost You Anyway
- American Ride
- Cryin' For Me

Billboard Artist of the Decade
NSAI Songwriter of the Decade

Thanks Country Radio & Music Row



MusicRow's 8th Annual Airplay Awards



COUNTRY**BREAKOUT**
Airplay Award

by Jon Freeman

As the decade ends, a class of fresh new faces has graduated. Some of country's new superstar torchbearers like Taylor Swift, Carrie Underwood, Brad Paisley and Sugarland have all ascended to dazzling heights of stardom, and promising new talent has appeared with the recent success of Lady Antebellum, Darius Rucker, Zac Brown Band and more. Broken Bow opened up Stoney Creek Records and looked to expand its marketshare. Artist services promotion and marketing outfits like Bigger Picture and Nine North proliferated. Toby Keith's Show Dog Nashville joined forces with Universal Records South and signed Trace Adkins. Through it all, *MusicRow's* CountryBreakout™ Chart gave voice to small market radio and, by extension, an often under-represented part of this country's population.

Methodology

The CountryBreakout™ Awards are determined entirely by actual spins reported January-December 2009 by members of *MusicRow's* CountryBreakout™ radio panel. Spin Awards are given to the Artist, Label,

and Breakout Artist. In a departure from years past, we have elected to stop using the Large, Mid-size and Small label sub-divisions. Perhaps it was telling that last year we had no clear Mid-Size Breakout Artist winner. A few months later, sadly, many of the mid-size companies were gone. For this year we felt it appropriate to present awards to the highest overall achievers in our three categories. We also created the Independent Artist of the Year Award, presented to the indie label artist who earns the most spins without a full in-house promotion staff.

Winners Overview

Capitol Records Nashville extends its winning streak for Label of the Year to five consecutive years, taking more than a 100 percent lead over the runner up. Six Capitol artists picked up over 100,000 spins apiece: Eric Church, Trace Adkins, Lady Antebellum, Darius Rucker, Keith Urban and Dierks Bentley. Additionally, Luke Bryan pitched in nearly 80,000. Arista Nashville was next in line, followed by Warner Bros., Big Machine and BNA.

Toby Keith picks up his first-ever Artist of the Year Award, edging out Dierks Bentley, Taylor Swift, Keith Urban and Darius Rucker. Last year's Artist of the Year winners Rascal Flatts and Breakout Artist of the Year Lady Antebellum are next, followed by another frequent winner, Jason Aldean.

The Breakout Artist of the Year Award goes to Lyric Street's **Love and Theft**, who picked up over 80,000 spins in 2009. They're trailed by Justin Moore, Gloriana, Burns & Poe, and Dean Brody. A handful of new artists who experienced mainstream breakthroughs in 2009 were ruled ineligible for this award for having debut singles that peaked before January 2009, but they still deserve a shout out. On that list are Zac Brown Band, Darius Rucker, Randy Houser, David Nail and Sarah Buxton.

In our newly created Independent Artist of the Year category, **Cody McCarver** maintains his position as a leader among independent artists working the CountryBreakout™ Chart. His almost 50,000 spins put him well ahead of the competition. Other indies with a strong showing include the Bellamy Brothers, Katie Armiger, and Burns & Poe.

Artist of the Year	Spins	Breakout Artist of the Year	Spins	Label of the Year	Spins
Toby Keith	149,312	Love and Theft	80,880	Capitol Nashville	863,232
Dierks Bentley	145,395	Justin Moore	79,778	Arista Nashville	394,967
Taylor Swift	145,093	Gloriana.....	78,739	Warner Music	295,292
Keith Urban.....	143,315	Burns & Poe	32,109	Big Machine	285,001
Darius Rucker.....	139,000	Dean Brody	29,350	BNA	282,717
Rascal Flatts	127,768	Independent Artist of the Year	Spins	Universal Records South ..	269,865
Lady Antebellum	126,960	Cody McCarver	49,385	Curb.....	244,057
Jason Aldean	122,062	Bellamy Brothers.....	39,715	MCA.....	242,909
Trace Adkins	114,276	Katie Armiger.....	37,720	Lyric Street	242,839
Kenny Chesney.....	114,258	Burns & Poe	32,109		
		Daryle Singletary.....	27,358		

Label of the Year

Capitol Records Nashville

For the fifth straight year, **Capitol Records Nashville** trounces

the competition to become *MusicRow's* Label of the Year. Artists calling Capitol home earned 863,232

spins in 2009, affording the label a wide margin of victory. "It's a fantastic honor to be recognized by *MusicRow* as Label of The Year," says Capitol SVP Promotion

Steve Hodges. "Kudos to everyone who represents our music to the wonderful *MusicRow* panel!" Four artists collected over 125,000 spins apiece for Capitol: **Dierks Bentley**, **Keith Urban**, **Darius Rucker** and **Lady Antebellum**. The fun started early in the year, as Dierks Bentley's "Feel That Fire" stayed at No. 1 on the CountryBreakout™ Chart for three weeks. All the other artists in that list followed suit with No. 1s of their own: Darius Rucker's "It Won't Be Like This For Long" and "Alright"; Keith Urban's "Sweet Thing," "Kiss A Girl" and "Only You Can Love Me This Way"; Dierks Bentley's "Sideways" and "I Wanna Make You Close Your Eyes"; and Lady Antebellum's "I Run To You" and "Need You Now." **Eric Church** and **Trace Adkins** each contributed over 100,000 spins, buoyed by hits like "Love Your Love The Most," "Hell On The Heart," "Marry For Money," and "All I Ask For Anymore." **Luke Bryan** added almost 80,000 with the success of "Do I." 2009 was another great year for Capitol, and they don't appear to be slowing down in 2010. In the first couple months of 2010 Rucker's "History In The Making" has already had a four week run at No. 1, and Lady Antebellum's sophomore album *Need You Now* was released to massive first-week sales.



Artist of the Year

Toby Keith *Show Dog - Universal Music*

MusicRow's Artist of the Year goes to **Toby Keith** for earning more airplay than any other artist on the CountryBreakout™ Chart in



2009. "I want to thank *MusicRow* for this award," says Keith. "Radio has been great to me and I always appreciate how supportive they have been." Indeed Keith has earned many loyal supporters in radio, as his 149,312 spin total in 2009 certainly attests. But this is his first CountryBreakout™ Artist of the Year award; not surprising considering all of his 2009 singles ascended to No. 1, including "God Love Her" and "Lost You Anyway" from his 2008 album *That Don't Make Me A Bad Guy* as well as "American Ride," the title song to his 2009 album. Current single "Cryin' For Me (Wayman's Song)," also on *American Ride*, just hit No. 1 on the CountryBreakout™ Chart as of this writing. In late 2009, the superstar entrepreneur's Show Dog Nashville joined forces with Universal Records South to become Show Dog - Universal Music. The new partnership made waves when Keith, along with label President **Mark Wright**, revealed that **Trace Adkins** would be joining the roster. Just prior to the merger, Keith embarked on his first-ever European tour, selling out a nine show run that spanned six countries. His massive business empire includes restaurants, a clothing line and feature films in addition to the label. To honor his remarkable climb over the last decade, *Billboard* named him its No. 1 Country Artist of the Decade and No. 1 Country Songwriter of the Decade.



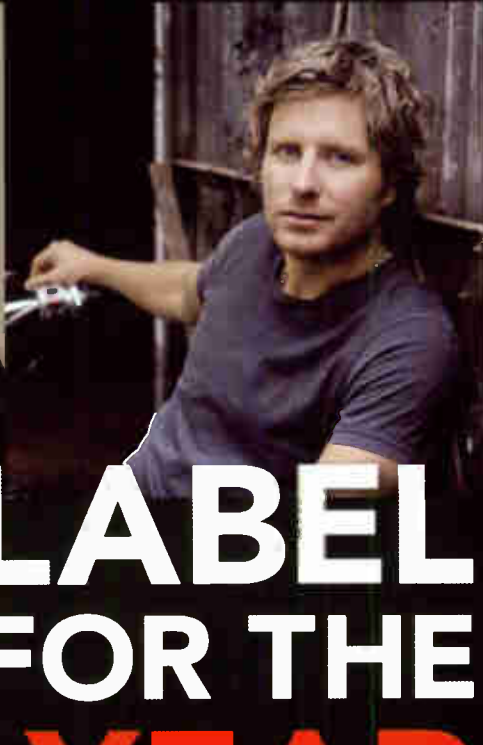
Breakout Artist of the Year

Love and Theft

Lyric Street Records

"We are thrilled to be named *MusicRow's* Breakout Artist of the Year," say the members of **Love and Theft**. "This is the first award Love and Theft has ever received which makes it even that more special. There are so many talented new artists that have come out over the last year and so many amazing artists have won it in the past so to be recognized for this is truly an honor." Among the new talents of the last year, the pristine three part harmonies of **Stephen Barker Liles**, **Brian Bandas** and **Eric Gunderson** stood out in the best way. The group was originally signed to Carolwood Records (and has since transitioned to its parent Lyric Street), and its debut single "Runaway" racked up 80,880 spins on the CountryBreakout™ Chart in 2009—the most for any debut artist. "Runaway" spent an astounding 35 weeks on the chart and eventually peaked at No. 2.

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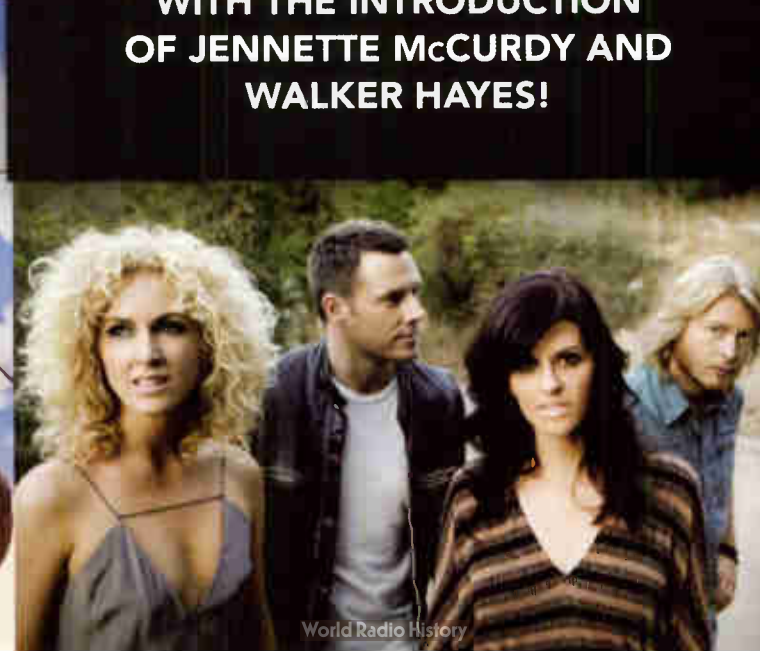


IN 2009 CAPITOL EARNED MORE THAN 860,000 SPINS ON THE MUSIC ROW CHART



2009 WAS AN AMAZING YEAR!

HERE'S TO AN EVEN BETTER 2010 WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF JENNETTE McCURDY AND WALKER HAYES!



Love and Theft's story is one of three talented young singer/songwriters whose paths converged in Music City and sparked something magical. Liles grew up in Palm Harbor, Florida; Gunderson hails from Charlotte, North Carolina; and Bandas was born to a musical family in Austin, Texas. The three met shortly after their arrival in town, quickly becoming friends and collaborators. After a showcase for Lyric Street executives, the trio was signed and went to work on its debut album *World Wide Open* with producers **Robert Ells Orrall** and **Jeff Coplan**. The milestones since its release have included hosting the CMA Awards pre-telecast, and playing the Grand Ole Opry, and TV appearances on *The Today Show* and *Late Night With Jimmy Fallon*. Love and Theft's follow-up single "Dancing In Circles" is currently climbing the charts. "We're thrilled for Love and Theft and excited for them to be recognized with this award," says Lyric Street VP Promotion **Kevin Herring**. "Country radio's early response to the band has been nothing short of tremendous and we're excited about their future."

outlets. "The combined efforts of PLC Records and E1 Music have given us the chance to deliver more great music and videos," continues McCarver. "I share this award with all the hard-working crew in the Cody McCarver camp, the friends, fans and, of course, **Regina Raleigh, Chuck Rhodes**, radio and *MusicRow* magazine. I appreciate you! Here's to turnin' up the heat in 2010."

CountryBreakout Reporter of the Year

Steve Ferguson

Music Director/Morning Drive Host
WTHO/Thomson, GA

It is inspiring and hopeful to see an individual still loving his profession after 25 years, and WTHO/Thomson, Georgia's **Steve Ferguson**—*MusicRow's* CountryBreakout™ Reporter of the Year—exemplifies that type of individual. Ferguson displays his love for radio and music in the form of large playlists open to artists of all stripes, and a commitment to consistent reporting. "I am fortunate to have free choice of the music played on WTHO and I keep a large playlist," explains Ferguson. "I listen to every record that comes across my desk. The artists and promoters have heard me say over and over, 'I only play good music!' Every record must earn its position on our playlist." Prior to his journey in radio, Ferguson was a musician who played bass, drums and sang. He even made trips to Nashville to record and release singles, but went undiscovered. He continues to make music today and has played with, engineered, or produced numerous local acts. Ferguson's radio career began at WMTZ in Martinez, Georgia, in 1985. He secured a part-time Sunday afternoon shift with the station and fell in love with it. In five years, he had worked his way up to Program Director and hosting the morning drive. When the station flipped to oldies in 1989, Ferguson segued to Music Director and afternoons at 101.7 "Better Country" WTHO in Thomson. 20 years later, he's still there and going strong as Music Director and morning drive host. "I am honored to accept this award," says Ferguson. "It is truly a highlight in my career to be recognized for a job that I love and respect. Thank you very much!" ♦



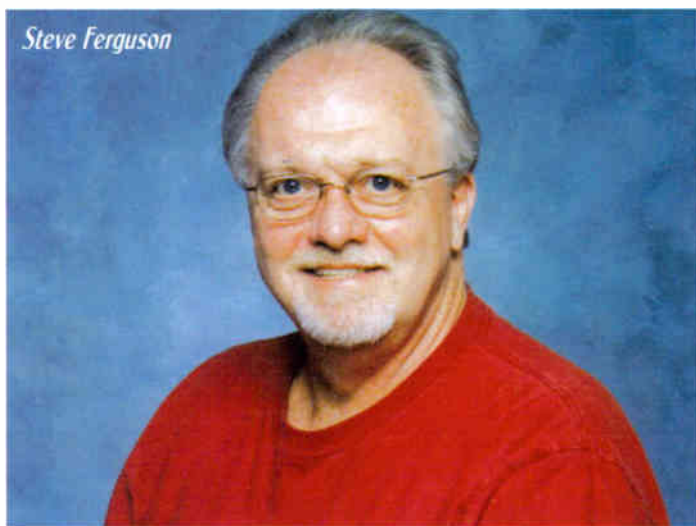
Cody McCarver

Independent Artist of the Year

Cody McCarver

PLC Records/E1 Music

"Wow! What can I say, 2009 was another great year for us," says *MusicRow's* Independent Artist of the Year **Cody McCarver**. "A huge thank you to all my friends at country radio." McCarver continues to raise the bar for independent artists on the CountryBreakout™ Chart. Two years ago the Dunlap, Tennessee, native earned *MusicRow's* Breakthrough Award for small label artists. Last year, he won the Artist of the Year award in the same category. This year he does it again, in our newly revamped category of Independent Artist of the Year. He amassed 49,385 spins in 2009, propelled by the success of his songs "Look What You've Done" and "White Trash With Money," which reached No. 18 and No. 25, respectively. McCarver's self-titled album, featuring additional top 40 hits "Through God's Eyes" and "Tonight's The Night," reached a wider audience thanks to a partnership with E1 Music (formerly Koch) that placed it in new retail



Steve Ferguson



Love & Theft Thanks
Country Radio For This Honor

Musicrow's
**Breakout Artist
of the Year**

Top 5 Debut Single
"Runaway"



2010 Tours with Jason Aldean,
Tim McGraw & Lady Antebellum

Follow up hit
"Dancing In Circles"



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Vocal Duo

Promotion Roundtable:

Bishop, Dean and Pareigis Weigh In On

Refining Today's Airplay Mission

by Sarah Skates and David M. Ross



The rules of radio promotion are changing in step with the morphing music industry. While marketers wrangle new technology to their advantage, the economic downturn has put up roadblocks in the form of shrinking promotion teams, radio station consolidation, and a pinch on consumers' wallets...

Skip Bishop



Skip Bishop's radio career began in the early '80s, before founding his own promotion company in 1997. Along the way he has worked in New York, Los Angeles and Nashville, and handled promotion for rock, CCR and country. He joined current home Sony Music Nashville in 2005 and survived the Sony BMG merger. In July 2009, Bishop was named Vice President, Promotion, overseeing the Arista, BNA, Columbia Nashville, and RCA Nashville rosters.

Katie Dean



Katie Dean has been at UMG Nashville for five years where she serves as Vice President/Radio Marketing. In her role she handles dissemination of chart and research data, develops web and audio content for station use, and works with national networks, syndicated outlets, and satellite radio. She has been in the music business since 1994, with stops at AristoMedia, Country Music Association, Mediabase, and Lyric Street.

Larry Pareigis



Larry Pareigis established Nine North Records in July 2007 following an 11-year tenure at Sony Nashville. He describes the company as "Nashville's first virtual label," offering promotion, marketing and social networking services to artist clients which include Tracy Lawrence, Joey+Rory and more. In January 2010, Nine North expanded to include Turnpike Music, focusing on secondary promotion.

Today people make a choice between a loaf of bread and a single," says Sony Music promo boss **Skip Bishop**.

Radio promotion is a game that has long required an aggressive spirit, but as 2010 dawns, marketing savvy, knowledge and agility are becoming increasingly important parts of the strategy. Nine North's **Larry Pareigis** is, "convinced that 2010 will see Darwinism at work in its purest form."

But with all the changes, the objective hasn't wavered. "We are here to create momentum and build a story for the artists," explains UMG's **Katie Dean**.

Bishop, Pareigis and Dean offer plenty of insight in the following roundtable discussion which took place in January at *MusicRow* headquarters. The conversation covered top line concerns about promo teams, talking to programmers, artist access, research methods, illegal downloading, the year ahead and more.

MR: How difficult is the airplay mission today?

Bishop: Oddly it's becoming more efficient, because there are fewer people who can make moves. Every day it seems someone else is losing their ability to program the radio stations; for reasons that range from syndication clusters to top-down programming. We all have to adjust our strategies accordingly. The more savvy promotion departments find ways to exploit that changing environment.

Dean: We have fewer starter stations, but, you still have to get your hit through the pipeline, and that happens by getting people to believe. **David Nail** is a great example. We had our largest add week during week 20. It took a lot of grinding and pushing uphill, but once we created that week of momentum, it became a whole new ball game. **Jamey Johnson's** "In Color," was another 37 or 39-week record by the time it was done. It eventually peaked at No. 7 and won CMA and ACM Song of the Year. But it was a long, hard grind.

Pareigis: Sometimes it's taking 20 weeks to even find out what you've got. We try to engage with clients who have the wherewithal to fight the long fight. Because if they don't it ain't gonna happen.

Bishop: Sometimes you can tell there is activity after eight weeks, but sometimes it takes as long as forty weeks. Some of the **Jake Owen** records, took forever to peak. And **Chris Young** is a perfect example. His record showed great signs early on, but didn't light up until late in the project.

Pareigis: The list of experienced promoters is shrinking to the last of the Jedi Knights, those who are really able to do it. We're all grateful to



(L-R): Larry Pareigis, Katie Dean and Skip Bishop

be vertical, in an era where a lot of people are horizontal. But we owe it to coming up with new ways to attack the job. What Katie and Skip do, is very important. What we do in terms of trying to give access to artists in an otherwise fairly closed system is important. And new media has become a very critical part of that strategy for all of us.

MR: How many relationships are needed to move a record up the charts?

Bishop: There are fewer decision makers, and wells to go to. But it's really about having a more efficient strike force with the drive and determination. If there is a silver lining, it's that the cream rises to the top and the best promotion people with the best relationships and the most passion are the ones who are able to make a difference.

Pareigis: The **Joey & Rory** single we worked was a Top 25 with only half of the panel playing it. That, for us, was as good as a No. 1.

Bishop: It's interesting to look at that particular record, because it's indicative of what's going on out there. Here's a record that half the panel was playing, and said was a hit for them. And then fifty percent of their peers were saying, "I'm not gonna touch it." It shows that certain people are impenetrable to anything. It shows you've got to also leverage the unbelievably far reach of new media and have a savvy marketing department.

Pareigis: Artists need to be just as committed to the fight as promo and marketing people, or they'll get flushed. Not long ago a good relationship meant an add. Now it could mean just a call or e-mail back.

Bishop: Relationships are important, but it's really about having the skill and the right music. I've seen people walk into this world from other formats and get shown the door because they didn't have the relationships. But some people

can come in and build a relationship, because they've got the right music, an understanding of the stations and are able to connect those dots.

MR: What is the best size and configuration of a promotion team?

Pareigis: Some people have as little as three and some have as many as five regionals, with a national and a VP. Personally, I've always preferred to trade away the national and the VP to have another body on the street. I think they do more work, because the VPs and nationals have to spend a lot of time in meetings instead of making calls.

Bishop: It's not really about the configuration, it's about the people. It could be three, it could be eight, it could be two. It depends on who you have. At Sony we have five regionals, one national and one VP.

Dean: We have five regionals per label, plus a VP at each label and one Sr. VP. I'm the floater that works with both labels.

Pareigis: I've got three dedicated Nine North regionals and two more regionals for Turnpike Music. We have two new media staff plus a national VP and myself.

MR: Have team configurations changed much because of the industry environment?

Bishop: No one's looking to add three or four bodies. The marketplace doesn't dictate that luxury.

Pareigis: Like Skip said, the efficiencies you address are sometimes forced upon you. Theoretically, if you're talking to fewer people, you don't need as many bodies. But the trick is that the local stations still need to feel loved, even though there may be a decision about a record being made elsewhere.

MR: Are there any new tools in the radio promotion toolbox?

Dean: A few years ago we launched an audio archive site where we post soundbytes. We create and post open-ended interviews, radio specials, content features and make those elements available to stations and syndicators. For "In Color" we created an online viral coloring book for station websites. While coloring, the song was playing in the background and people emailed screen shots of how they had colored the picture. Other game examples include a "Red Light" game with **David Nail**, and an **Ashton Shepherd** "Pickin' Shed" puzzle. Sometimes a single takes off so quickly you are playing catch-up to create the tools that go with it, but they help create awareness, and brand the artist for both programmers and consumers.

MR: Connect the dots one step further. How do these online initiatives drive airplay?

Dean: Every radio station would tell you that a huge directive is driving web traffic. So providing them with games and interactive tools their listeners will enjoy, helps us both. With the proper agreements you can also offer streaming music for station web sites. Plugging into programs like Clear Channel's "Stripped" and "New" is also a great turn-key opportunity.

Bishop: Online marketing is an initiative across the board. It's an important part of listeners' lifestyles. They are spending so much time online, for recreation and information, that if you're not traveling deep down that path, you're missing a tremendous opportunity. The consumer is living there.

MR: Can you see online marketing moving the needle?

Bishop: I think so, but we're all still trying to figure out the measurement. If we weren't pushing all these buttons, we would feel the needle not moving. All you have to do is look around at a grocery store, mall, or school, and see how people are walking down the street texting. Just the issue of people driving and texting is indicative of the awesome reach of web-based promotion and marketing.

Pareigs: It reminds me of the old story of the guy who's told he has to cut his advertising budget in half. He responds, "I would, but I don't know which half is working." We're trying to build awareness for artists. Whatever tools you can use to support that bigger fight for airplay makes the job easier for your guys on the street.

MR: Let's talk about social networking.

Bishop: We're all sensing a move away from Twitter. Six or eight months ago Twitter became insanity, to the point where it was so commonplace that it wasn't cool to the people who created the wave. Part of being savvy is trying to find out what is popular among the people who are four steps ahead of the masses.

MR: What is that now?

Pareigs: A lot of people seem to be gravitating toward a site called FourSquare.com. It's a very strange site, where you basically log in and tell people where you are at any given moment. What's interesting in the conversation about social networks—and Skip makes a good point—is that by the time you know about it, the wave may have passed. But sometimes we confuse the early adopter wave with the larger wave of people that follow. I don't want to degrade social networks and make them seem as if they're the modern CB radio of our culture, but in a way, there's an element of that. Everybody today wants a voice. It's overwhelming monitoring all of those voices out there. There's a lot of value in social networking for artists. With Twitter,

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we tell our artists to do five or six Tweets that are about their life, and then make the sixth or seventh Tweet about business. If you talk about business all the time it gets tiring. And it amazes me that even in this day and age, some people utilize these tools so poorly. Tweets have to be written in the artist's voice, not in the third person.

Dean: Part of the challenge has been artist education. New artist, **Mallary Hope**, is very savvy at social networking. When she's walking out of a radio station, she is uploading the video of when she was there. But it can be a challenge to get some artists to understand how technology is beneficial. Frankly, Larry's right, fans want to feel that connection with artists. They want to know about the artist's lifestyle, and feel like they have a personal understanding of the artists. They want to create a relationship.

Pareigis: One person who benefitted ridiculously from his profile on Twitter is **Blake Shelton**. The guy works that particular format really well and has become a bigger star because of it. The music's been good too, but he knows how to work that medium. It's almost like he decided to own that particular thing to help people get to know him.

MR: What influences programmer decisions most?

Bishop: I think the holy grail is artist access. Programmers who are really in touch know that connecting their listeners to new artists works. It benefits us all when breaking these new kids through. Plus newer artists are far more available than the established artists. Having an artist who connects with the programmer and causes the programmer to realize the artist will connect with their listeners, is the trifecta. Programmers say, "Hey I really think that **Kellie Pickler** is a huge star. Can she be involved with our event? We want that magic to be face-to-face with our listeners, so they can feel that personality." It's all about making that personal connection.

MR: What information or research do you arm yourself with when talking to programmers?

Bishop: Radio is hanging on to research. They can't afford callout research so now they're trading callout research. And they're living on the national services—and thank goodness those exist—but that research is antiquated in so many ways. In a world that is changing as we sit here, they're still using the same methodology, standard callout research that I was using in radio when my hair was brown in the early '80s. Now there are things like cell phones and the Internet. Until they find a way to catch up, it's going to effect radio's success.

Dean: It's a little cliché, but truly, the passion's in the pocketbook. If consumers are willing to spend the money, then that tells volumes.

Bishop: The crowning moment of absurdity is

when a single is selling like crazy, with downloads through the roof, and the physical units begin to move, but the callout is in the tubes and it kills the record. In today's environment—especially in our demo and psychographic and economic climate—if mom is pulling over at Best Buy and pulling that hard-earned twenty out of her wallet to go purchase the physical disc, that is so much more powerful than calling someone during dinner and asking them, "Are you tired of this record?" It also shows the non-symbiotic relationship between radio and our business in so many ways.

MR: What information does radio want to know about a record?

Pareigls: It's not one size fits all. You literally have to change the strategy to fit the act. Emphasize what is working and downplay what isn't. It's tailored by the single and also by the person you're talking to. Every programmer is different, you have to speak to them in their language.

Bishop: It's really about the benefits of this particular track and artist. Singles are like children, some of them can do one thing really well and some of them can do something else. If you have a single that is doing great in a particular area, you try to expound on that.

MR: If you don't see a record moving the sales needle, are you going to stay on it?

Bishop: There are situations where you will stay on it in the name of artist development. If you're developing an artist, and the single is being embraced by radio you stay with it because you have committed to have a long life with this artist. Sometimes it's a painful call.

MR: So you're going to spend the money for the promotion, which is a considerable investment, knowing that you aren't going to get it back at the cash register?

Bishop: Overall in today's environment, you usually have to pull the single. You can't afford to hang on to those records once the whistle's been blown. But if you are going to hurt the artist by pulling the song, you have to carefully consider that too. If you have something coming right behind it to help regain that trust with radio, then you have to move on.

MR: Do decisions about keeping or dropping a single happen more often at the mid and developing artist level? With a superstar would you stick with the record regardless?

Pareigls: There are only seven or eight true superstars in the format at any given time, so that decision is pretty easy. For the other 99% of the artists, the decision is a bit more ambiguous. We don't hang onto things if they aren't working. There's no point. If it is not going to move the needle, you move on. Part of the underlying ethic of this job is to get some-

thing played enough to find out. Until you do that, you haven't done your job yet.

Dean: The trick is how long it takes to find that out. You can be 20 weeks in and still not be entirely sure. We look at digital single sales as an indicator. We can see, especially with a newer act, if something is moving the needle. And then we feel like that is probably a good indicator of what's to come. The artist development component is also important. I remember working at Lyric Street with **Rascal Flatts**. The strategy was to roll out three tempo songs in a row to get them established. Then we came with "I'm Moving On," which sold half a million units on its own. So there was the element that you kind of had to build up the credibility to be able to come with that kind of song.

It's about that personal connection from the listener to the artist through the portal of radio.

Pareigls: The sad thing though is that if you tried to repeat that template today you wouldn't be getting to "I'm Moving On" until the third year.

Dean: It's still about commitment though. When I came to town in the mid '90s it took 14 weeks for a record to get to No. 1. Now, unless you are a superstar act, that is tough to do.

Bishop: You cannot go away from artist development, even though it is an expensive commitment and a much more streamlined, creative, efficient system. Today you have to find new ways to make it work with the funds you're given, and create that excitement outside of just the spin on the radio. That is why I go back to online marketing, because at least the Internet is free. Having really savvy, creative people that can see that opportunity is the greatest asset a company can have now.

MR: How many records can a team work at a time?

Bishop: It depends on the team. I'm a fan of a heavy load. If you have six or seven balls in the air at the same time, you make decisions faster, and are more on your toes. But it is a personal thing, an opinion. I've seen some staffs in this town that can grind out two or three key developing acts better than they can handle seven or eight mid-level or superstars. Eight records is a bit top-heavy, six is good.

Dean: It also depends on the mix of what songs you have to work. You can have a superstar act which doesn't require the time and energy that a new act would. We generally carry about six singles at a time, on each roster.

MR: What issues do you see affecting the promotion world this year?

Pareigls: I'll try to be a glass half-full guy. I hope the re-entry of a person like **Larry Wilson** into broadcasting is a harbinger of other players like him to come. Larry ran Citadel Broadcasting for years, and turned it into a gem of a company. [editor's note: Wilson founded and ran Citadel, which owned 205 stations before its sale for \$2 billion in 2001.] He was always actively involved in new music and artists. He was also on the CMA board. By the way, none of the blame can be levied on local guys. But those at the top are driven by Wall Street and stockholders who want a return. Wilson's new company, Alpha, is privately held. If other guys of his caliber return to broadcasting, it will help balance some of the craziness going on out there.

Bishop: Even in the shadow of consolidation, radio is starting to realize the absolute necessity of branding and adopting new artists, which makes me excited. PPM research is showing the validity of the excitement surrounding new artists. If we don't embrace these emerging acts, we will all be out of work, because it is the future. In a post-**Elliot Spitzer** environment, and economic downturn, people are looking to embrace the creativity in new music.

Pareigls: Radio guys are so damn busy that the more turnkey you can make it for them the



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Dean: I'm really excited knowing that we are leaving behind the outdated methodologies of things like callout, and moving into new ways of doing things. There are several new acts that may be on the verge of popping, and that is great for our format. I feel like people are receptive to new ideas. Lean and mean, creative and aggressive, will rule the day.

Pareigls: I'm bullish on 2010. We've been telling people for years that new music is a good thing, and now this PPM methodology is proving it. It shows listeners will give it a chance and love on it. If I were in radio today, I'd be so addicted to that deal, watching that meter move every second of every day.

Bishop: The big picture shows the tremendous success of digital music. People buy music digitally—and sadly trade and steal it—because they love this stuff. We can see the hunger for new music when we look at the downloads on the BigChampagne chart. It's not the catalog, it's the new stuff. Even A&R departments are finding new ways to look for music through Internet trading and downloading. Illegal downloading became a problem because fans are so hungry for new music. Now we have to wrap our arms around the problem and teach the world that stealing is a bad thing.

Pareigls: I don't know if illegal downloading drives me as crazy as it does some people, because a majority of the acts I'm working with are new and they are using free downloads as a tool to spread the word. So it is hard to say I can't stand it for my established acts. It is something of a mixed message.

Bishop: If we could get our arms around 20% of the music that is being stolen, we wouldn't be having problems. If you look at the numbers and the tremendous gap between SoundScan and BigChampagne, the gulf is massive. We continue to stick our heads in the sand about allowing stealing of our art. It is what feeds this town, that intersection of art and commerce, and somehow we allowed it to be part of the culture that people think they can just take it. And that is wrong. Somehow we have to start finding a way to move the pendulum in the other direction.

Pareigls: Skip is right. Country is fortunate because so much of the sales are physical. When **Taylor Swift's** fans have kids and if we haven't addressed this by then, we will be really screwed. Maybe its not 99¢ but its not free, either. ♦

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World Radio History

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DIY Airplay

Pro TIPS From Programmer VIPs

Edited by David M. Ross

AIRPLAY. Programmers have it, artists and labels want it, promoters go out and get it. MusicRow polled CountryBreakout™ chart reporters about what they need to feel comfortable adding a record. Is a reputable promoter a requirement? What about label size? Chart positions? We also wanted feedback on logistical issues such as email or phone calls? CD or downloads? What about artist visits to the station? Do press kits impress? The following snapshot responses may surprise you. They are not all alike. But one unifying thread does connect them all—a love for the music. Thanks to all the reporters who participated in this poll...

DAVE TYLER

PD/MD, WTRS Gainesville/Ocala, FL

I like when a new artist has an entire project so when the single is released I can also hear the whole album to determine if this is something we can get on board with longterm. We actively look for artists that our listeners are going to fall in love with and want to hear for years. If you want to get my attention and have us take your artist seriously, then you need to involve someone whose opinion I trust, too. **Diane Richey** is one of my favorites because of her integrity. She takes artists she believes in and although I don't always play every one she comes to me with I certainly listen because they already passed her test. Major labels know what is selling "commercially" and usually have more invested (time, money and material) but today's terrific Indie labels give us every reason to listen to them, too. If we didn't listen to the Lofton Creeks and Broken Bows early on we wouldn't have **Craig Morgan, Jason Aldean** and

countless others. Sometimes I don't "get it" right away on a song because of personal preference, but if we start getting requests for it and it is moving up the charts that reminds me I don't know everything. At the same time, if we hear a project we really believe in, my Operations Manager, **Shane Finch** has empowered me with the freedom to support the act and their singles.

With regard to presentation materials, if you don't care enough to get my attention and stand out among the thousands of others that want airplay then why should I? I can go on Myspace and hear great talents that haven't been signed. I love the PlayMPE format and being able to find all the songs I want to play, burning them to a CD and loading them at once. On the other hand I do like to have a hard copy CD on file too. I love our automation, but we are one lightning strike from playing CDs. With downsizing we all wear so many different hats (I do the morning show and Music Director). I have my call times, but also realize

that many times I'm in meetings, at remotes, in production etc. Unfortunately, I just can't always be available, but I check my messages and do call backs. Having an email gives me some added time to get back at my leisure too.

There are few things I enjoy more than connecting with an artist in person. Hearing them talk about their dreams, then sitting down and listening to them sing with just an acoustic guitar. I had this chance many years ago with **Kenny Chesney** right before he went huge. He probably doesn't know my name anymore, but I got to share a moment with him and hear his passion. When I got back to the station I couldn't wait to play his music. In our market there is only one monitored station and they strong arm artists and labels pretty hard. We had a situation like this with a new band that we supported from the moment we met them at CRS. We came home and started spinning them. They came to town and visited the monitored station (that had not played them until the week

before). We were into the artist for more than 170 spins and they went to the station that had given them 7 spins. That hurt, but we always try to take the high road. My temper said, "Drop 'em and teach them a lesson," but that is not how we do things here at WTRS. We support them with even more fervor than before and went early on their second single. It is unfortunate that these things happen and put the artists in a tough spot.

GARY MURDOCK

PD, WKBQ Covington, TN

An artist must have vocal ability, a distinctive style, and a reputable promoter if they want to get anywhere. Financial backing and distribution are also important. The ability to sell music on the internet lessens the value of a large label somewhat but label size remains important unless the song is so compelling, it's undeniable. I'm an early adopter. Chart position often just means financial backing is there. Crappy songs make top 40 often before the research proves it's crap. With respect to presentation materials, the only thing that impresses me is a good video that can get on the video outlet channels. Printed press kits, etc. are a waste. I digitally download about 80% of the music, but still like a hard copy or CDX. I like to be contacted via email when there is something different to say. Artist visits are important because it gives me

the opportunity to see if they can sing live. A social networking audience is also a plus, it proves the artist has been out working and performing.

AMANDA HARDY

MD, KYYK/KNET Palestine, TX

Maybe one out of five artists trying to revitalize a career gets it right and delivers a great sound. Usually they sound upbeat, but old school which doesn't fit us at all. We play Top 50 Nashville as our format. I love getting press kits, but hate when artists send really awesome stuff, but sound amateur. You do notice the elaborate stuff more than the burned disc with their name written in sharpie. I prefer to get music in hard copy (CD) and take music calls on Wednesday—all day. We do appreciate getting promotional support because we love giving stuff away to our listeners.



LEE RICHEY

PD/MD, WCJW Warsaw, NY

More than anything it boils down to talent when it comes to adding a new artist and the song, a REALLY good song that I want my listeners to hear. I've added songs that no one has promoted to me. Promoter reputation is a factor. Certain promoters will only work with decent artists, while others will

handle just about anything. I look forward to chatting with many of them, but expect that they will call in my designated times. I wear many hats, and outside of those call times, I'm usually in a different frame of mind. I also like them to send me an email ahead of time with their list, so I can refer to it during the phone call. I always listen with great anticipation to an older artist trying to make a comeback. WCJW plays older artists alongside the new, so if I can offer my listeners something new, by artists they already love, I'll do it. (Unless the song's a real turkey.)

If I love a song, I may be the very first to adopt it, but if I've held off, decent chart movement might convince me to give it another listen. No amount of flashy promo items can change the fact that it's about the music first. I always cringe at how much money a new artist must be spending to send out these items, on top of the cost to promote the single. When I get a CD, it's an instant connection with the artist—their product, picture sleeve and if I put it in the pile on my desk, I am more likely to be reminded to listen to it by seeing it. I'm not a big fan of MP3 files being sent to me out of the blue, but here's a tip. Make sure you name the file with the full name of the artist and song. I've got a folder with files sent to me, that may just have the song's title, or part of it, and no artist, and I don't have a clue who they are.

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Geographically our station is off the beaten path, so we get very few visits. I wish we had more. It can establish a bond. I've had artists who didn't impress me with their first single, but hearing them sing live, really hooked me and caused me to add them. As far as contests, or give-aways, they won't help get a song added, but if we are already playing them and people like them, contests and give-aways can benefit us both.

DORIS DAY

MD, KIX 101.1 Marshalltown, IA

I am an early adopter. If the artist and the song fits our format I'll give them a shot and let our listeners decide. Either CDs or Play MPE work best for me and I enjoy getting calls from promoters once every other week. Here at Kix 101.1 we have a feature called the New Tune@2 and that is where new music is tested on the toughest critics of all—our listeners!

SHANE CONNOR

Operations Manager, Thomas Media Radio Group
WFKX-WHHM-WJAK-WWYN-WZDQ Jackson, TN

Label size is not really an issue. Listeners don't know the difference. Indie promoters should not criticize major label artists just because they are majors and conversely. There is room for both. If I notice a new artist I haven't spent much time with nearing the Top 50, I'll make it a point to revisit. With regard to presentation, song production quality and labeling is most important. A quality one sheet bio is good too. I'm happy getting music via PlayMPE. I program four stations, so it's hard to catch calls. Responding to email is often easier. Twice per month is efficient. Artist visits have changed my mind in the past. A live performance is the best indicator of star quality and talent.

SHELLY MARX

MD, WWBE Sellingsgrove, PA

In most cases I'm an early adopter, but I'll wait if I'm unsure. With MySpace and Facebook it's no longer so important to send elaborate press kits. I'm happy downloading music, but prefer that it is from a link to a site rather than MP3 files clogging up my email. I love artist visits—can't get enough of them. It shows the listener the artist cares about the fans.

JIM QUINTON

MD, WPPL Blue Ridge, GA

Adding an artist or song is about fitting my listeners' taste. I was sure our folks would connect with **Justin Moore** so I went out of the box with his first single and sure enough the phone lines lit up like crazy. It helps to have some kind of story to help introduce them to my listeners. And if you can't afford to hire a promoter who works quality over quantity, then the artist is better off with no one. But a

reputable promoter can most definitely get me to listen to something a little quicker than if it just showed up at the station and on my desk. When I first got into the business the majors had lots of people working the song, lots of exposure for the artists. Now it's more about the quality of the song than label size. Being sandwiched in between Atlanta and Chattanooga I have several major stations that I compete with and in Mountain Country I have a rep for being on the new music first. I have no consultant

"The first thing that would influence me to add an artist is if the voice is as unique as the song, or vice versa."

telling me I have to test something, so I jump early if it's something that I know will work. If I'm unsure, once it hits the chart I'll pay attention and possibly rethink my position. Artists would be MUCH better served hiring an honest promoter who will talk with me about the song and what impact the track is having than sending me a press kit or a music video that more than likely I won't watch.

With respect to logistics, it's great to get the MP3 so I can air it right then if I wish, but I also like to have a CD since we're still using discs on air as opposed to computer files. I also prefer to get the entire album, if there is one. Phone is still the best way to get me, but with more and more people calling, by all means email me, too. Sometimes I can send email responses while I'm on the phone with another promoter/artist. Once a week is great too, gives me an update on how your songs are doing and I can fill you in on what's going on with them at my station. Oh, and adding social network friends doesn't impress me at all unless that audience is in my listening area.



SUSIE MARTIN

MD, WATZ-WRGZ Alpena, Michigan

The first thing that would influence me to add an artist is if the voice is as unique as the song, or vice versa. I don't want my listeners changing the station, so the music must grab them fast. There are promoters I trust. If they ask for a listen or a test on a song, it means more than someone coming out of nowhere. The size of the label has no factor

whatsoever in the decision. I believe breakout artists have a better chance at a newer or smaller label because they get more attention. Specific chart position is probably my final factor in adding a song. If the song tests well, I want to get it on the air and give it a chance as soon as possible. If I absolutely do not like a song, I will ask others on the staff to give it a listen. This station is not my personal jukebox, other tastes have to be considered. Good music and a good video, to me, is all that is necessary to break an artist. But for an artist on the verge of breaking social networking is also a must. **Gloriana** proved that, by posting on Facebook and Twitter daily. **Cody McCarver** is another example of an artist keeping up with his fans through social networking. Fans feel involved in their careers and take it personally. Note: (I will miss you all very much at CRS this year—certainly shooting for next year!)



JASON DRAKE

PD/MD, KAIR Atchison, KS

I carry 57 currents, listen to every song sent via CD, CDX, MP3 plus review PlayMPE and New Music Server daily. To stay prepared I make notes on each song/artist and begin a list of Possible, On Deck, Stretch and Pass. Often it is before a promoter has called. I have played local or regional artists as an extra, but to be placed in the 57 currents a song will need to have promotion behind it. Music will always be the first and foremost part of my week. The size of the artist's label is not a major factor and does not mean "instant add" at KAIR. Building relationships with the artist and songs through the promoter has a lot of merit, but is achieved over time and not just with weekly phone contact as many promoters feel is imperative. There is no way a Music Director or PD is able to take all the calls and still handle the daily duties of the station. Communication through emails and networking can be essential in continued development and building trust with artist, promotion and station. I do not read artist ads (print) in the trades, nor do I care if or what other stations are playing it. If it fits for our sound and has solid promotion its gonna play. I love to take a chance on a new artist and hit the air out of the box. The one mp3 sent by one promoter for one artist is going to get lost. I love artist radio tours, but in reality, if there is no way I will play the artist then it is a waste of their time and money. The promoter should convey that to the artist. We have had our share of bizarre visits that left us asking "why?" The social networking now available to the artist is huge. All I need to say is **Zac Brown Band**. I love the challenge every week to dive into the new music, labels, artists and carve out the best 57 songs I can play.



MIKE THOMAS

PD/MD, KFAV Warrenton, MO

Song quality and production influences me the most. As I said when I won the 2006 MusicRow Reporter of the Year award, "If it's good play it and let the listener decide." A reputable promoter helps but isn't essential. After 20 plus years, I've come to know who really cares about the artist(s) they are working and who is in it for a paycheck. I've played a number of "promoterless" artists that have done well on the local level. If you are a true "breaker" station that plays new artists first, then you can't be a chart numbers watcher. I prefer to be a leader when it comes to early adds. CD presentation should look classy, if only to catch the MD's eye in a stack of CDs. But in the end, I listen with my ears, not my eyes. If an artist takes the time from their busy schedule to visit with me and my listeners, it usually translates to more popularity with the listeners and thus more airplay.

PAUL SULLIVAN

PD/MD, WOKA Douglas, GA

The relationship between a reputable promoter and MD/PD will, if nothing else, get the song heard in a timely manner. I usually use my own opinion for early adds, but for songs I don't particularly love, I use a No. 40 chart position to prove me wrong and then I add the single. I don't normally look at bios, press kits, etc. until after I have listened to the song and decided if I like it. A lot of money is wasted on CD single pressing and mailing. However, it is nice to get a complete project CD when it comes out. With today's multi-tasking and busy schedules, I find email more convenient, but my time could be used more efficiently taking calls every other week. Smaller markets probably appreciate visits more although it has swayed my decision to play a single in the past. If the artist can get creative with promotional stuff, stations can put together a promotion. But I am much more interested in local promotions not National. I want a listener from my station to win.

JR RUNYON

PD, Crain Media Group

KCNY, KWCK, KHTE, KOLL, KKSP, KEAZ, KSMD

An artist can't get added here unless the song is right. I prefer hearing a song before I even look at a picture or read a bio. Remember our listeners are hearing the station, not looking or reading about the song. Lots of beautiful people with great backgrounds cannot handle the singing part. Unfortunately, they won't succeed no matter how they look or where they come from. Unless the artist is planning on seeing every PD/MD themselves they need a reputable promoter. Integrity is everything with me. **Joe Nichols** says "size matters," but label size is a mixed bag. If the roster is too large a

new artist can get lost in the shuffle, but a small label may not have the needed resources to help the artist grow. So it still goes back to the song, not the size of the label. I have a tremendous respect for the "older artists." If they are being true to who they are as an artist, it's great for them to get out there and show us they still have it. By the same token if they are trying to be what they are not, they can sully their established reputation. That said **Brett Favre** didn't do too bad this past season.

"More than anything it boils down to talent when it comes to adding a new artist, and the song...a REALLY good song that I want my listeners to hear."

Can't say I've never taken chart position into consideration. Most promoters probably consider me an early adopter, but that's not my focus. My thought is, "If I believe I have a hit in my hands, that's when I begin looking to find space to add it." Getting a CD is nice because I listen a lot while driving between facilities. But digital is also great, I can load it on my iPod and "listen blind."

ARNIE ANDREWS

MD, WCOW La Crosse, WI

Before you go to bat make sure you have one of those grabs-you-by-the-shirt-collar songs, with strong lyrics. Great promoters not only plug the songs, but build relationships that earn the respect and trust of radio. That process makes a difference to me. Some promoters go through the motions and others are able, over time, to prove this is a passion for them. I respect an artist that pounds the pavement. A visit has pushed me off the fence a time or two, but they need to have a strong song. A visit doesn't equal an automatic add.

JASON BLEVINS

MD, WBRF Galax, VA

I'd like to say it's still *all* about the song, but it's not that way anymore. I like to see an artist that has a good promotional push behind it and I also look at all of the charts to see what kind of national attention that artist is getting. We don't want to be spending a lot of time playing a record that isn't going to make it and take spins away from other songs that are doing well. An established artist usually doesn't have

to wait for an add. I like to receive singles for radio through digital download, but still want the hard copy for full length CDs. I also like the pictures and liner notes. You don't have much to show when you have a digital song.

CHAD ALLEN

PD, KYEZ Salina, KS

I don't have any hard and fast rules. If I believe in something I'll go early. It comes down to the song. Vocals, production all take a backseat to the song. Does it move me? If it's someone I'm already playing an artist visit is certainly a bonus, but I've never added something solely based on an artist visit. Social networks are a great way to build a following. Twenty years ago artists sold tapes out of their trunks. Now it's Facebook and Myspace.



STEVE SHETTLER

MD, KBOE Oskaloosa, Iowa

A reputable promoter definitely helps. If it's a new artist, I tend to wait until they reach the top 50. If it's a superstar, I'll add them out of the box. It's nice to see money spent on press kits, bio, music videos, but unless they back it up with a great song, don't bother. I still prefer CDs, but will download if I don't get one. I prefer to be called on my call day at my call times. If you can't get me then, send me an email. I don't like getting calls during my air shift.



COLBY ERICSON

MD, KVWF Wichita, KS

I never look at an artist's appearance first. If an artist has a solid sound and a good song they'll get noticed with air play. A reputable promoter really helps. We've seen some good artists get the shaft because their promoter didn't believe in them. We would never have picked up the **Zac Brown Band** when "Chicken Fried" came out if label size was an important factor. It seems that some of the bigger labels like to only focus on the bigger names. They live by the 80-20 rule with artists, and that's also true with the smaller stations. Their attitude is "We don't need to call on you, you're not big enough," or "We've already got a station in that market, we don't need you." Guess what, our listeners like your artists too. I love getting emails and it's great to get the personal feel from a phone call every once in a while. I actually look forward to the weekly conversations with our Reps and appreciate how hard they work. Artist visits are a must. You can't see the artist's personality on a record. Come meet us. It will help get you in our rotation. I have a great small staff around me. The people I work with are our demographic and I use them as a sounding board. ♦



Christy Walker-Watkins

by: Jon Freeman

Sr. Publicist

Aristo P.R./AristoMedia

POB 22765, Nashville, TN 37202

(615) 269-7071

Email: christy@aristomedia.com

At 24, Christy Walker-Watkins might be one of the youngest senior publicists in Nashville, but she's hardly new to the game. Her field training started after her senior year at Brentwood High School in 2003, when she came to work part-time as the receptionist for her father's company AristoMedia. It was there she spent her hours outside of school, even as she began her college journey at Belmont University to study marketing. Eventually she worked her way into her current role as the company's Senior Publicist.

It almost goes without saying, but Walker-Watkins grew up in one of Nashville's most

recognizable music families. Her grandfather, Bill Walker, was the executive producer of the CMA Awards and Johnny Cash's television show for years, as well as co-founder of Con Brio Records with her father, Jeff. Her mother Terri was an artist on Con Brio (Terri Hollowell). Other family at AristoMedia include Walker-Watkins' brother Jon and her husband Matt Watkins.

She was constantly surrounded by music and it was an interest for her from an early age. "When I was younger, my brother was a drummer," she recalls. "I wanted to be a musician, and with his help, I started learning the drums. As I got older I got involved with the school band and went on to do marching band. There were no females on the drum line and I wanted to be on it. I tried out but didn't make it because, I seemed to think, it was male-dominated. Luckily one of the guys on the line dropped out two weeks after tryouts so they brought me in and told me, 'Okay, we're giving you this opportunity,' and I accepted. They put me on the heaviest

drum in the line and I knew where they were going, they wanted me to be psyched out and say 'I can't do this anymore,' well that's just not my personality. I'll do anything even if I'm crying. I did it, stuck it out and became the section leader of the bass line for the next three years. So at that moment I knew I loved being a leader. That's when I knew I wanted to be in music."

Initially Walker-Watkins' aspirations were to become a professional musician. But in college, she opted for the practical path of studying business and getting work experience, figuring that she could support herself better that way. "I'd been advised by people, 'You can always be a musician as long as you practice but you have to know the business end of things if you want to succeed,'" she explains, "so I went on, did the marketing thing and continued to get music business experience by working at AristoMedia."

After more than three years in her current role, Walker-Watkins' responsibilities include writing and scheduling press



Introducing Cory Walker

Cory Walker is a 16-year-old country artist with vocal abilities far beyond his age. His new self-titled album was recorded in Nashville with some of the town's finest session musicians and Eric Paul producing. Charlie McCoy was band director.

www.CoryWalkerMusic.com

Contact: Dewey Walker (Mgr.) nationalgrease@aol.com
2708 Charlie Taylor Rd. • Plant City, Florida 33565
Cell: (813) 758-2552 • Office: (813) 752-9535

releases and soliciting media coverage for AristoMedia's clients as well as for the company itself, which includes AristoWorks (New Media), Marco Promotion (radio promotion), Marco Club Connection (club promotion), and AristoVision (Christian). Current and recent publicity clients include Country Radio Seminar, Charlie Daniels, best-selling author Andy Andrews (*The Traveler's Gift*, *The Noticer*), Cirque Du Soleil's *Saltimbanco*, the Bellamy Brothers and more.

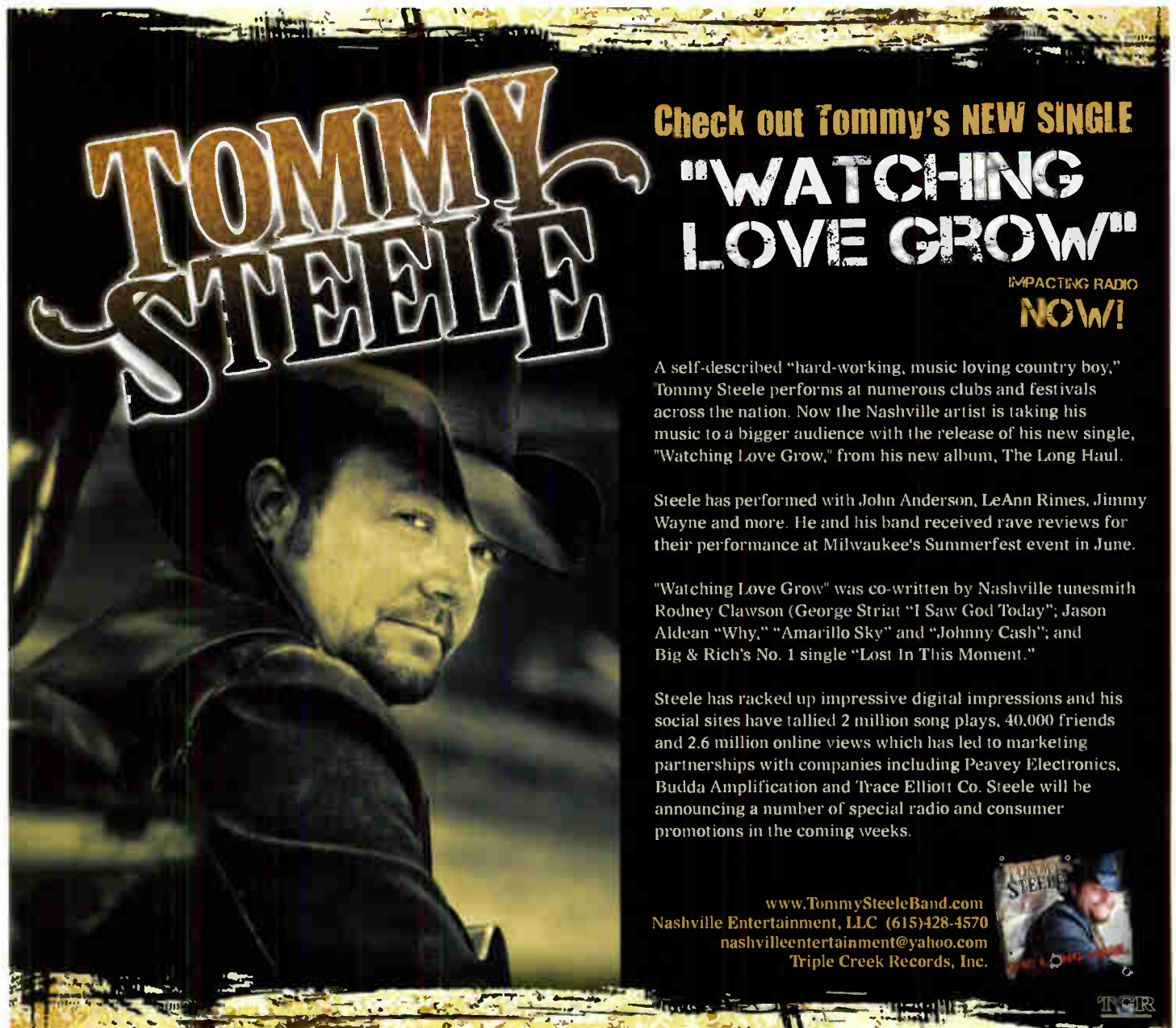
Having the multiple divisions under one roof can be advantageous when it comes to promoting and publicizing a project. "If I have an artist touring, I can go to my video department, radio department, and club department to find out whether they have

any possible opportunities within that market," says Walker-Watkins. "The goal is to take advantage of every opportunity there is at that one stop."

One of the most exciting new projects for Walker-Watkins and her compatriots at AristoMedia is called Downcast. The digital service integrates broadcast quality video (and audio) content with a distribution network encompassing radio, television, national and regional video programs, newspapers, trade publications, celebrity and entertainment shows, wire services, closed-circuit partners, global outlets and online destinations. The service launched in July 2009 as a strategic alliance with Travis Television, and the clients so far have included George Strait, Brad

Paisley and Sugarland. As a result of working with Downcast, Walker-Watkins has taught herself Photoshop for designing the service's e-blasts and researching the book industry to build contacts for Andy Andrews-related material.

Ultimately, the close-knit family environment of AristoMedia has proved enriching for her professional growth. "We all get along very well," she says. "My father has been very good about letting me figure things out myself. He's there when I need him and I can go to him and ask him something, but for the most part he loves to let me learn on my own. He'll give me a project to do and I'll do it. He must be pretty happy with what I'm doing [smiles], because I'm still here!" ♦



TOMMY STEELE

Check out Tommy's NEW SINGLE
"WATCHING LOVE GROW"
 IMPACTING RADIO
NOW!

A self-described "hard-working, music loving country boy," Tommy Steele performs at numerous clubs and festivals across the nation. Now the Nashville artist is taking his music to a bigger audience with the release of his new single, "Watching Love Grow," from his new album, *The Long Haul*.

Steele has performed with John Anderson, LeAnn Rimes, Jimmy Wayne and more. He and his band received rave reviews for their performance at Milwaukee's Summerfest event in June.

"Watching Love Grow" was co-written by Nashville tunesmith Rodney Clawson (George Strait "I Saw God Today"; Jason Aldean "Why," "Amarillo Sky" and "Johnny Cash"; and Big & Rich's No. 1 single "Lost In This Moment."

Steele has racked up impressive digital impressions and his social sites have tallied 2 million song plays, 40,000 friends and 2.6 million online views which has led to marketing partnerships with companies including Peavey Electronics, Budda Amplification and Trace Elliott Co. Steele will be announcing a number of special radio and consumer promotions in the coming weeks.

www.TommySteeleBand.com
 Nashville Entertainment, LLC (615)428-4570
nashvilleentertainment@yahoo.com
 Triple Creek Records, Inc.



TGR

Lee Brice

by: Larry Wayne Clark

Quick Facts

Birthplace: Sumpter, South Carolina

Years In Nashville: 9

Publisher: Curb Publishing

Hits/Cuts/Chart Action: "More Than a Memory," Garth Brooks; "Happy Endings," "Upper Middle Class White Trash," Lee Brice

Favorite Song You Wrote: "Picture Of Me"

Favorite Song You Didn't Write: "Someone Somewhere Tonight" by Walt Wilkins and Davis Raines

On What Instrument Do You Write: Mostly guitar

Influences: My family, the Southern Gospel quartets, Garth Brooks

Advice To Writers: It's not necessarily how talented you are as a writer. It's more about how hard you're willing to work to refine your talent, and about the people you meet. Nashville's a small town. It's not about coming to town and dropping a song off on a doorstep.

Little Known Biographical Fact: When I was working at a summer camp I saw a guy solve a Rubik's cube in two minutes and said, "I have to be able to do that!" For about three weeks I just walked around with a Rubik's cube until I could do it in two minutes flat, no matter what you did to the cube. I even did it in front of 300 people at the camp talent show in a minute and forty-five seconds!

Issues Facing Songwriters Today: It's getting harder and harder to get a song cut when the artist isn't a writer on it. It's easy for artists to get in a room with a writer or two and be a part of a song. Even artists who aren't great writers want to be a part of the song, to make it more them.

First musical thing I can remember," says Lee Brice, "I was two or three years old and I just couldn't stay away from my grandmother's piano. Every time I was at the house, instead of being out in the yard playing I wanted to sit at that piano. I'm not a great piano player but that was my first instrument."

Lee grew up engulfed by the gospel music that both his parents loved. "When my mother was a kid, she and her sisters made a gospel trio album. And Daddy has been in a gospel quartet over the last 10 years. Singing in church was a huge musical part of my life.

"Daddy also enjoyed vocal groups like the Oak Ridge Boys, the Beach Boys and Alabama. But probably my first personal influence when I was a kid was **Garth Brooks**. When I picked up the guitar and started writing songs at age 10, he was just coming out, and I wanted to write songs like Garth Brooks. He had presence in his voice.

"When I got to high school and college I started figuring out about Guns N' Roses, Pearl Jam, Dave Matthews and Aerosmith. I had to kinda catch up to everybody else!"

Lee quickly made up for lost time and began to turn heads as a singer-songwriter. "When I was in the 10th grade I performed a song that I wrote in the talent show, and the place just erupted. I won the contest, and then won it every year after that. That was the first time I went, 'Wow, this is what I wanna do!'"

But it wasn't *all* he wanted to do. "It was music and football, my whole life. If I wasn't practicing football I was at home on the staircase writing songs. I didn't do a lot of partying in high school." Lee played ball through middle school, high school and for two years at Clemson University, until an injury cut his sports career short. "When I hurt myself I stayed there a couple more years, but I was like, 'My football dreams are done, so let's go visit Nashville!' That's what I did on spring break in 2000."

Lee's sole Nashville contact was a family friend who worked as a secretary for **Alan Jackson's** manager. She invited him to stay with her, which proved fortunate: "Her roommate happened to be **Reba**

McEntire's niece, **Autumn McEntire**, who's a writer here in town. Autumn heard me playing and said, "You gotta meet my publisher."

That publisher was Lisa Hensley, now **Lisa Hensley-Johnson**. She met with Lee for a couple of hours and was impressed enough to introduce him to her then fiancée, songwriter-producer **Doug Johnson**. "That was where it all started, in one day," Lee remembers. "When I played Doug some songs he stopped me and said, 'Lee, listen, I know you're in civil engineering but if you don't love that like I can see you love this, then you need to be here. Your daddy ain't gonna want to hear that, but I can see something special in you. You're born to be here and I'll stand beside you.' He heard me as an artist. But he thought that I should be writing for a couple of years to make sure I knew exactly who I was."

Lee stayed in Nashville that summer and wrote with Johnson. "Within a year and a half I'd moved here permanently and signed a deal. Then I just continued writing nonstop for years. I think Doug's process was pretty on point and it's starting to pay off."

Lee's first cut was on rock band, Sister Hazel. Then **Jason Aldean** recorded "Not Every Man Lives." But lately things have been gathering critical mass: "We've got the first track on this new **Tim McGraw** record, **Kenny Chesney** cuts and a **Blake Shelton** cut. Probably **Bomshels'** next single and maybe **Eli Young's** next single. It's just starting to pop here in the last six months."

With four singles of his own under his belt, Lee is focused mainly on being an artist. Still, a career highlight was having his boyhood idol, Garth Brooks, record "More Than A Memory," (co-written with **Kyle Jacobs** and **Billy Montana**) which debuted at No. 1. "Garth has been a writer on all but a couple of his hits so having that happen to me was like being struck by lightning ten times!"

In 2010, Brice's career as a Curb Records artist is gearing up. His single "Love Like Crazy," written by Johnson and **Tim James**, was released in January. His debut album, *Picture Of Me*, will follow later this year. ♦

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Artist Royalties From Gold Albums

by: Craig Owens, CPA O'Neil Hagaman, PLLC



With the changing landscape associated with the music industry, many labels and artists have adjusted their goals on album sales. With the growth of digital downloads of singles and the digital streaming of music, achieving a "gold" status LP is considered a major accomplishment.

Unfortunately for many artists, a successful gold album represents little more than a break-even point in royalty earnings.

Let's review a few pertinent provisions from the artist's contract (which we'll assume is typical for an unproven talent) and then calculate royalty earnings at gold sales levels.

1. The basic royalty rate of 13% is an "all in" rate, meaning the producer's royalty is included. The producer will receive a 3% rate, making the "net" artist royalty rate 10%.

2. The net rate will be applied to the album's suggested retail price. For our example, we will assume that all sales for CDs and digital downloads have a retail price of \$13.98 and \$9.99, respectively. Retail prices for CDs are adjusted downward for the so-called "container charge" of 25% to determine the royalty base price. (Some labels are now using wholesale price with no container charge as the royalty base price. Both methods should yield similar royalties to the artist.)

3. Gold certifications are based on total units shipped to stores and distributors. Further, the artist will be paid royalties on only 80 CD albums for every 100 shipped by the record label. The units on which no royalties are paid are known as free goods. (At some labels, free goods are not used to reduce the royalty bearing units; rather, the price is adjusted to reflect free goods shipped. Like above, both these methods should yield similar royalty amounts to the artist.)

With these guidelines established, let's take a look at the numbers. We'll do this in three steps; first, we need to convert the 13% basic royalty rate to the amount paid per album, sometimes called the "penny rate":

	CD	Digital
Retail List Price	\$13.98	\$9.99
Less: Container charge (25%)	<u>(3.50)</u>	—
Royalty base	\$10.48	\$9.99
Basic royalty rate	13%	13%
Less: Producer's royalty rate	-3%	-3%
Net royalty rate	<u>10%</u>	<u>10%</u>
Penny Rate	\$1.048	\$0.999

Second, we need to determine how many of the albums shipped and downloaded by customers will actually have royalties paid on them and then calculate the resulting royalty earnings (for this example, we have assumed that 10% of the LP units were distributed as digital downloads):

	CD	Digital
Total Units Shipped	450,000	50,000
Less Free Goods (20%)	<u>(90,000)</u>	0
Royalty Bearing Units	360,000	50,000
Penny rate	\$1.048	\$0.999
Royalty Earnings	\$377,280	\$49,950
Total Royalty Earnings		\$427,230

Finally, the record company is allowed to deduct several amounts from these earnings before the final royalty is determined. Significant deductions are:

- Recording costs (musicians, engineers, studio time) of \$175,000
- Video production costs, assuming 2 videos costing \$85,000 each (these costs are generally allocated 50% to the artist's audio royalty account and 50% to the video royalty account)
- Independent promotion of \$100,000 (usually 50% of the amount is charged to the artist)
- Advances for tour support and artist living expenses while recording the album, totaling \$75,000
- Keep in mind that these calculations are for one album in isolation, and the earnings can be reduced by unrecouped costs from other albums.

Total Royalty Earnings	\$427,230
Less: Recording Costs	(175,000)
Less: Video Costs (50% of \$170,000)	(85,000)
Less: Independent Promotion (50% of \$100,000)	(50,000)
Less: Artist and Tour Support	(75,000)
Net Royalty Earnings	\$42,230

One item is not in our calculations; the record labels in newer deals usually require that a portion of the artist's tour and merchandise revenues be handed over to the label. In this example, we will assume this artist's tour was not profitable, and no payment was required by the artist to the record company.

As you can see from the example above, this artist could choose from a variety of careers that could result in better take-home pay. While this example is sobering, as the artist's career continues to grow, hopefully he or she can enjoy other sources of income (e.g. tour, merchandise and endorsements) and not depend exclusively on album sales. ♦

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