

Warner Music Nashville Promotes Five, Names Danny Bess CFO



Danny Bess. Photo: Eric Brown

Warner Music Nashville announced the promotion of five employees across the Finance, Radio & Streaming and Publicity departments on Jan. 13.

After more than two years with the company, VP Finance **Danny Bess** has been promoted to CFO. He will continue reporting to EVP / GM **Ben Kline**. **Brad Walker** has also been promoted from Director to Sr. Director, Finance.

Bess transitioned over to Warner Music Nashville after nearly 25 years at Universal Music Group, concluding his tenure as VP Finance of its Nashville division. A Vanderbilt University graduate with an M.B.A. from Tulane, Bess began his career at Sony BMG in 1989. Walker, an alumnus of Western Kentucky University, started in financial services before entering the music industry at Sony/ATV. He has now been at WMN for 14 years.

"Danny is one of the most respected label finance people in this industry," Kline said. "His experience in and knowledge of our evolving business is critical to our success, and I'm thrilled that he will assume this new role. Both Danny and I are incredibly proud to recognize the dedication we've seen in Brad Walker. Brad's understanding of and adaptation to the

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THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES

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And much more...

CONGRATULATIONS

Lady A

"CHAMPAGNE NIGHT"
from NBC's SONGLAND

#1 ACROSS THE BOARD:

MEDIABASE
3 WEEKS

billboard
2 WEEKS

MUSIC ROW
1 WEEK

MEDIABASE
CANADA
1 WEEK

billboard
CANADA
1 WEEK

iTunes
1 WEEK



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RECORDS

changing marketplace is part of what makes him such a valuable member of the finance team.”

Jenni Tay has been upped from Manager to Director, Streaming under VP Streaming **Tim Foisset**. Tay began her streaming career between San Francisco and Los Angeles before settling in Nashville in 2018. She has worked on launch projects in the indie space for companies like Ingrooves and The Orchard as well as major labels such as Universal Music Group.

“Jenni is a vital, accomplished part of our streaming team,” Foisset said. “She is a true partner to those she works with in this industry: enthusiastic and innovative, supportive and nurturing, capable and decisive. Her relationships yield measurable, impressive results for our artists and we are a stronger label for it. We’re eager to see her role and influence grow.”

Mary Catherine Rebrovick and **Victoria Chaitoff** rise in the Publicity department, led by SVP **Wes Vause**, to Sr. Director and Director respectively. Rebrovick joined the WMN team as an assistant upon graduating from Middle Tennessee State University in 2012, as did Chaitoff in 2015 after earning her degree in English from the College of William and Mary.

“Mary Catherine and Victoria both started their work careers with WMN, and since day one they’ve worked tirelessly to help our artists make their dreams come true. They have become respected leaders in the publicity field and beyond, and I could not be prouder to work alongside them!” Vause said. **MR**



Aaron Tannenbaum Joins WME As Partner



Music agent **Aaron Tannenbaum** has joined WME as a Partner, based in its Nashville office.

Prior to joining WME, Tannenbaum was at CAA since 2010. He was previously an agent at Paradigm. Tannenbaum has been

recognized throughout the music business for his accomplishments, being named to *Billboard's* Rising Stars List, Country Power Players List, and *HITS'* Next Wave Agents list.

“Aaron has earned a reputation in our business as an agent who has a strong ability to identify talent and takes the long-view in building an artist’s career, making him a great fit for us,” said **Scott Clayton**, WME’s Co-Head of Music.

“As our Nashville office continues to grow, Aaron represents a significant addition to our team and we look forward to bringing his creativity and strategic approach to our colleagues and clients,” said **Jay Williams**, Co-Head of WME’s Nashville office. **MR**

Greg Thompson Appointed President And Partner Of Big Loud Management



Big Loud Management announced the appointment of executive heavyweight **Greg Thompson** to President and Partner, effective immediately.

"I've worked closely with Big Loud in the past, and have been able to see what an incredible organization they have built," says Thompson. "I want to thank **Seth [England]**, **Joey [Moi]**, and **Craig [Wiseman]**, for this amazing opportunity to join the family. I'm thrilled to lead a group of world-class managers and have the privilege to be on the same team as some of the greatest artists in the world."

Coming from Maverick Management/Live Nation in Beverly Hills, California, Thompson served as President of the top-tier management conglomerate. Hands-on in helping synergize managers and superstar talent like U2, Madonna, Doja Cat, Brandy, and more, he led the charge in expanding their sought-after all-genre roster. Prior, Thompson held a long bicoastal tenure with Capitol Music Group/EMI, playing a critical role in developing artists Katy Perry, Sam Smith, and Coldplay. With over 25 years of high-level music executive experience, his early career stints include Island Def Jam, Elektra Records, and Chrysalis Records.

"It's hard to imagine how things could get better at Big Loud right now, but adding Greg [Thompson] to our company is exactly that. He is a leader, mentor, and first-class executive. We are very thankful to him for coming on board when he could have chosen just about anywhere. He will be key in overseeing all of our managers and assisting with each of their respective artists, not to mention being a key resource for us partners as well," says Big Loud Partners (Seth England, Joey Moi, and Craig Wiseman)

Expanding Big Loud's footprint to Los Angeles, California, Thompson will continue managing clients Philmon Lee and Ananya Birla, while further elevating the leading Nashville, Tennessee-based independent management firm. **MR**

Joel Katz Resigns From Greenberg Traurig



Attorney and founding chairman of the Greenberg Traurig's entertainment and media practice, **Joel Katz**, notified Greenberg Traurig of his resignation from the firm on Dec. 31, 2020, *MusicRow* confirmed.

A top entertainment attorney frequently listed in *Billboard's* Power 100 list, *Billboard's* Country Power Players List, and *MusicRow's* InCharge, Katz has represented legendary entertainers from an array of genres, including artists, producers, record companies, concert promoters, and business leaders. His client list has included Jimmy Buffett, Jamie Foxx, Steve Harvey, Faith Hill, Julio Iglesias, Alan Jackson, Estate of Michael Jackson, Kris Kristofferson, Little Big Town, Ludacris, Tim McGraw, L.A. Reid, George Strait, James Taylor, Justin Timberlake, TLC, and others.

In a statement provided to *MusicRow*, Greenberg Traurig Executive Chairman, **Richard A. Rosenbaum**, said: "Joel Katz has, by mutual understanding, resigned from the firm as of December 31, 2020. Our global entertainment practice remains strong, diverse and among the largest, most dynamic and highest rated in the world, led by Chair **Bobby Rosenblum** in Atlanta, assisted by Vice Chairs **Barbara Meili** in New York and **Dan Black** in Los Angeles, as well as Jay Cooper, the founder of our Los Angeles Entertainment Practice, leading music industry lawyers **Jess Rosen** in Atlanta and **Paul Schindler** in New York, and many others. We thank Mr. Katz for his contributions over the years and have no further comment at this time." **MR**

COUNTRYBREAKOUT RADIO CHART

CHART ACTION

New On The Chart — Debuting This Week

song/artist/label—Chart Position

Undivided/Tim McGraw and Tyler Hubbard/Big Machine Records — 61

Tequila Little Time/Jon Pardi/Capitol — 64

My Boy/Elvie Shane/Wheelhouse Records — 76

Give Heaven Some Hell/HARDY/Big Loud Records — 78

More With Less/Frank Vieira/Frank Vieira Music — 79

Kickstart/Owen Howell/Kojax Entertainment — 80

Greatest Spin Increase

song/artist/label—Spin Increase

Undivided/Tim McGraw and Tyler Hubbard/Big Machine Records — 273

What's Your Country Song/Thomas Rhett/Valory — 192

Famous Friends/Chris Young & Kane Brown/RCA Nashville — 184

The Good Ones/Gabby Barrett/Warner Music Nashville — 150

Just The Way/Parmalee x Blanco Brown/Stoney Creek Records — 136

Tequila Little Time/Jon Pardi/Capitol — 134

Most Added

song/artist/label—No. of Adds

Undivided/Tim McGraw and Tyler Hubbard/Big Machine Records — 25

Famous Friends/Chris Young & Kane Brown/RCA Nashville — 10

Tequila Little Time/Jon Pardi/Capitol — 10

You Time/Scotty McCreery/Triple Tigers Records — 9

Right Place Now/Hudson Valley/Hudson Valley — 8

No Body, No Crime/Taylor Swift Ft Haim/MCA Nashville — 7

On Deck—Soon To Be Charting

song/artist/label—No. of Spins

New To Neon/Andrew Hopson/Tower Road Records — 151

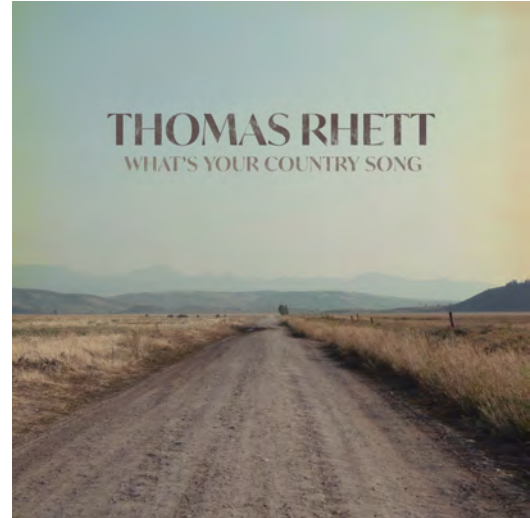
Can't Stop/Chloe Collins/Collins House Music — 149

Pushing Up Daisies/Lana Gail/Gail Force Entertainment — 147

I Do Thing/Kylie Frey/Deep Frey'd Music Group — 144

Colorblind/Tony Stampley — 138

NO. 1 SONG



“What’s Your Country Song” by **Thomas Rhett** reigns at No. 1 on this week’s CountryBreakout Radio Chart. Rhett penned the single with **Rhett Akins, Jesse Frasure, Ashley Gorley** and **Parker Welling**.

At the 55th annual *Academy of Country Music Awards* Rhett tied with Carrie Underwood for the coveted Entertainer of the Year award. He also took home a win for Video of the Year for “Remember You Young.”

Rhett is [set to headline](#) “Bob Kingsley’s Acoustic Alley,” on Wednesday, Feb. 17 during CRS 2021: The Virtual Experience.

Most recently, Rhett debuted his new tequila brand, [Dos Primos](#), in collaboration with his cousin Jeff Worn and Third-generation Master Distiller Rodolfo González.



Each songwriter and artist earning No. 1 credit on the **MusicRow Chart** receives a **MusicRow Challenge Coin**. [Click here](#) to view a full list of recipients.

MusicRow CountryBreakout Chart Reporting Stations

WHMA Anniston, AL
WXFL Florence, AL
KHBZ Harrison, AR
KQUS Hot Springs, AR
KDXY Jonesboro, AR
KWCK Searcy, AR
KRAZ Santa Barbara, CA
WPAP Panama City, FL
WUBB Savannah, GA
KXIA Marshalltown, IA
KIAI Mason City, IA
KBOE Oskaloosa, IA
KTHK Idaho Falls, ID
WOOZ Carterville, IL

WAAG Galesburg, IL
WMCI Mattoon, IL
WYOT Rochelle, IL
WRTB Rockford, IL
WCCI Savanna, IL
WIFE Connersville, IN
KAIR Atchison, KS
WKDZ Cadiz, KY
WBKR Owensboro, KY
WDHR Pikeville, KY
KRRV Alexandria, LA
WUUU Covington, LA
WKPE Hyannis, MA
WVMD Cumberland, MD

WTCM Traverse City, MI
KYSM Mankato, MN
KZPK St. Cloud, MN
KWWR Mexico, MO
KFAV Warrenton, MO
WQNZ Natchez, MS
KZZY Devils Lake, ND
KRVN Lexington, NE
Jersey Shore Country
KQBA Santa Fe, NM
WDNB Monticello, NY
WOLF Syracuse, NY
WCJW Warsaw, NY
WFRY Watertown, NY

KHHW Altus, OK
KITX Hugo, OK
KWEY Weatherford, OK
KWOX Woodward, OK
KRKT Albany, OR
WNBT Mansfield, PA
WCFT Selinsgrove, PA
WFGE State College, PA
WMIR Myrtle Beach, SC
KIQK Rapid City, SD
WUCZ Carthage, TN
WCKN Dickson, TN
WLLX Lawrenceburg, TN
KAYD Beaumont, TX

KFTX Corpus Christi, TX
KYKX Longview, TX
KMRK Odessa, TX
KYYK Palestine, TX
KXOX Sweetwater, TX
WAKG Danville, VA
WAXX Altoona, WI
WJVL Janesville, WI
WGLR Platteville, WI
WQPC Prairie du Chien, WI
WCOW Sparta, WI
WTNJ Beckley, WV
WDGG Huntington, WV

COUNTRYBREAKOUT RADIO CHART

Weeks On Chart	Last Week	This Week	Song / Artist / Label	Spins / Reports	% Spin Power	Spins +/-
8	2	1	What's Your Country Song / Thomas Rhett / Valory	2014/67	11	192
13	4	2	Better Together / Luke Combs / Columbia	1798/47	5	80
18	5	3	7 Summers / Morgan Wallen / Big Loud Records	1781/63	4	68
35	6	4	Lady / Brett Young / BMLG	1717/63	6	93
10	7	5	Gone / Dierks Bentley / Capitol	1624/67	7	104
9	10	6	Hell Of A View / Eric Church / EMI	1563/67	9	125
46	8	7	Nobody / Dylan Scott / Curb	1536/56	3	47
17	9	8	Settling Down / Miranda Lambert / Vanner Records/RCA Records	1466/61	2	27
36	12	9	Made For You / Jake Owen / Big Loud Records	1452/59	5	74
14	13	10	One Too Many / Keith Urban & P!nk / Capitol	1439/58	6	84
22	11	11	I Should Probably Go To Bed / Dan + Shay / Warner Music Nashville	1352/39	-2	-30
31	1	12	Almost Maybes / Jordan Davis / MCA Nashville	1322/47	-28	-514
14	14	13	Next Girl / Carly Pearce / Big Machine	1283/59	8	98
19	15	14	Good Time / Niko Moon / RCA Nashville	1146/38	6	68
27	17	15	The Good Ones / Gabby Barrett / Warner Music Nashville	1117/49	16	150
12	16	16	Breaking Up Was Easy In The 90's / Sam Hunt / MCA Nashville	1055/49	7	66
19	20	17	Good Time Waitin' To Happen / James Robert Webb / Bison Creek Records	1013/46	10	93
52	19	18	Somebody Like That / Tenille Arts / 19th & Grand	997/42	6	60
11	23	19	We Didn't Have Much / Justin Moore / Valory	945/56	12	103
30	18	20	Hard Days / Brantley Gilbert / Valory	942/43	-1	-10
48	21	21	Momma's House / Dustin Lynch / Broken Bow	925/37	1	6
29	22	22	Wine, Beer, Whiskey / Little Big Town / Capitol	887/41	3	25
8	26	23	Blame It On You / Jason Aldean / Broken Bow	852/48	16	117
27	24	24	Grew Up On That / High Valley / Warner Music Nashville	802/39	1	9
9	25	25	Memory I Don't Mess With / Lee Brice / Curb	794/50	5	39
10	27	26	Heaven On Dirt / Teddy Robb / Monument	773/54	18	120
11	32	27	Just The Way / Parmalee x Blanco Brown / Stoney Creek Records	729/30	23	136
19	29	28	Wash My Truck / Bobby Wills / MDM Recordings	695/36	10	61
12	28	29	If It Wasn't For Trucks / Riley Green / BMLG	666/39	3	17
12	30	30	Where I Find God / Larry Fleet / Big Loud Records	633/36	3	19
13	31	31	Everybody Dies But Not Everybody Lives / Shane Owens / Amerimonte Records	619/39	3	18
15	35	32	Sometimes Late At Night / Eric Burgett / Bow To Stern Records	583/40	8	43
14	34	33	Waste Of A Whiskey Drink / Gary Allan / EMI	570/33	1	3
18	33	34	Waitin' On 5 / Chris Janson / Warner Music Nashville	568/31	-3	-15
2	47	35	Famous Friends / Chris Young & Kane Brown / RCA Nashville	546/37	51	184
4	39	36	Drinkin' Beer. Talkin' God. Amen. / Chase Rice feat. Florida Georgia Line / Broken Bow/Dack Janiels	540/36	23	102
6	46	37	Ain't Gonna Be Today / Ward Davis / Ward Davis Music/Thirty Tigers	484/39	26	101
10	40	38	Just About Over You / Priscilla Block / Mercury Nashville	477/35	10	44
14	38	39	The Mountain / Calamity Jane / Mountain Records	476/30	6	27
12	42	40	Comin' Home / The Desert City Ramblers / Crane Kick Records	458/27	8	32





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Weeks On Chart	Last Week	This Week	Song / Artist / Label	Spins / Reports	% Spin Power	Spins +/-
14	45	41	Sometimes Always Never / Brandon Ratcliff / Monument	435/32	8	33
13	44	42	Bad Guy / Casey Donahew / Almost Country Records	432/26	4	17
22	41	43	We Were Rich / Runaway June / Wheelhouse Records	425/26	-1	-6
9	52	44	You Time / Scotty McCreery / Triple Tigers Records	421/31	38	115
7	48	45	Anybody Else / Mira Goto / ArtistMax/Copperline	395/25	18	60
5	51	46	Cold Beer Calling My Name / Jameson Rodgers feat. Luke Combs / River House Artists/ Columbia Nashville	387/28	26	79
20	59	47	Single Saturday Night / Cole Swindell / Warner Music Nashville	335/23	19	53
16	50	48	Dear Rodeo / Cody Johnson / CoJo Music/Warner Bros.	329/18	1	2
7	58	49	Meghan / Brecken Miles / Rhyme Partners	325/23	14	41
7	60	50	Worship You / Kane Brown / RCA Nashville	324/21	15	43
16	49	51	Never Be Sorry / Old Dominion / RCA Nashville	321/18	-4	-12
7	56	52	God Save The World / Jeff Carson / MC1 Nashville	309/20	7	19
4	62	53	Extra / Kylie Trout / Kylie Trout Music	308/25	18	48
6	57	54	Heartland / Hailey Whitters / Big Loud Records/S&D	305/22	6	16
9	61	55	Calling All The Angels / Brooke Lee / Brooke Lee Music	298/17	7	19
13	55	56	I Can Tell By The Way You Dance / Josh Turner / MCA Nashville	296/20	1	4
4	64	57	Whiskey And Rain / Michael Ray / Warner Music Nashville	291/21	18	45
5	65	58	River Bent / Caleb Kelley / River Bend Entertainment	285/20	16	40
8	68	59	Ghost Town Nation / Travis Tritt / Big Noise	283/17	23	53
9	66	60	Same Ole / Chris Kroeze /	274/19	13	32
1	0	61	Undivided / Tim McGraw and Tyler Hubbard / Big Machine Records	273/25	0	273
5	63	62	Just Like You / Paige King Johnson / PCG Artist Development	269/24	8	20
9	67	63	Your Love Won't Let Me Cheat / RT Johnson / CCB Nashville	265/16	13	31
1	99	64	Tequila Little Time / Jon Pardi / Capitol	243/22	123	134
9	69	65	Martha Devine / Ashley McBryde / Atlantic Records/WMN/WAR	234/16	10	22
2	72	66	Love Like Crazy / TJ Ashley / Music Train Records	218/15	15	28
10	73	67	Beers To Catch Up On / LOCASH / Wheelhouse Records	217/13	15	29
6	76	68	Won't Forget / Rusty Gear / Chickahominy Marsh Records	210/15	15	28
2	71	69	You're Gonna Love Me / Tim Dugger / Curb	210/17	6	11
2	74	70	Just Friends / Caylee Hammack / Capitol	209/16	12	22
5	70	71	Radio Back / Danny Kensy / Rad Records	208/14	0	-1
2	80	72	Chain Breaker / Zach Williams / Provident Label Group	203/20	19	33
2	77	73	Invent A T-Shirt / Jenny Tolman / Old Sol Records	196/15	11	20
2	78	74	What Would Dolly Do? / Tori Martin / Lucky Sky Music	195/15	13	22
2	79	75	Freedom And Wings / Heather Smith /	192/11	11	19
1	84	76	My Boy / Elvie Shane / Wheelhouse Records	188/18	38	52
3	75	77	Time Changes / Stephanie Nash /	185/14	1	1
1	94	78	Give Heaven Some Hell / HARDY / Big Loud Records	176/15	44	54
1	81	79	More With Less / Frank Vieira / Frank Vieira Music	160/8	13	19
1	89	80	Kickstart / Owen Howell / Kojax Entertainment	158/14	20	26

No. 1 Song
Greatest Spin Increase
Highest Debut

2021 TOURING ISSUE

PLUS: NEXT BIG THING ARTISTS & N.B.T. INDUSTRY DIRECTORY



Quartz Hill Records Signs Ben Gallaher



Pictured (L-R, top row): Quartz Hill Records' Paul Brown and April Rider; Warner Chappell Music's Ben Vaughn, BSB Management's Shawn Pennington. Pictured (L-R, bottom row): Quartz Hill Records' Jason Sellers, Ben Gallaher, Benny Brown.

Quartz Hill Records, the newly-formed joint partnership with global music distribution company The Orchard, announced the signing of **Ben Gallaher** to its label roster.

Gallaher has earned a fast-growing fanbase due to his commanding guitar prowess and energetic live shows while opening for the likes of Lynyrd Skynyrd, Hank Williams Jr., Blake Shelton, 3 Doors Down, Lee Brice, and has toured the Pennsylvania State Prisons for ten years on his annual, headlining Prison Tour.

Gallaher was introduced to Quartz Hill Records' **Benny Brown** by Brown's longtime friend **Ben Vaughn**, President & CEO of Warner Chappell Music Nashville, and Gallaher's publisher. After meeting with Brown and Quartz Hill managing partners **Paul Brown** and **Jason Sellers**, they knew the label had found its next rising star.

Gallaher is signed to Warner Chappell Music Nashville and is an ASCAP writer. He is booked by WME and managed by BSB Management.

[Read more about Gallaher here.](#)

Sam Carter Signs With Spirit Music Nashville And 2 Mix Music



Pictured (L-R): Frank Rogers, CEO, Spirit Music Nashville; Katie Flynn, Creative Director, Spirit Music Nashville; Mike Fiorentino, Director A&R, Spirit Music Nashville; Sam Carter; Kara Jackson, Creative Director, Spirit Music Nashville; Derek Wells, Senior Director A&R, Spirit Music Nashville/President 2MixMusic.

Sam Carter has signed a worldwide publishing deal with Spirit Music Nashville and 2 Mix Music, Spirit's joint venture with producer **Derek Wells**.

A 25-year-old singer-songwriter from Dallas, Georgia, Carter spent the last few years playing shows around the Southeast and honing his craft as a songwriter.

"I couldn't be more excited about starting the new year off with a talent like Sam Carter!" said Wells, Sr. Director A&R, Spirit Music Nashville/President, 2 Mix Music. "He's a gifted, natural singer who knows what he wants to say as a writer and an artist. Our whole building is fired up to be a part of his team and we look forward to all of the successes that we see on the horizon for him."

[Read more about Carter here.](#)

John Loar Leads Charge To Bring Sports Entertainment District to Music City

Businessman **John Loar** moved to Nashville to be closer to his daughter. Now he finds himself leading the charge to bring a Major League Baseball team and sports entertainment district to Music City.

His background is in real estate operations and acquisitions. In the late '90s, Loar led the effort for the Seattle Seahawks acquisition and near-relocation to Los Angeles. He also supported former pitcher and Diamondbacks GM, Dave Stewart, on the acquisition of the Miami Marlins.

It's clear that Loar sees Nashville's potential future as part of Major League Baseball as a full circle investment in Music City's entertainment capacity. He's interested in creating a sports, family entertainment district—like that of Atlanta, Georgia's The Battery Atlanta, and Ballpark Village in St. Louis, Missouri—not just a baseball field.

Loar founded Music City Baseball, LLC, an organization primarily of Tennessee business, sports, music, and community leaders that is committed to bringing a MLB franchise to the City of Nashville, without government funding. With a focus on securing MLB approval of an expansion franchise in Nashville, the leadership team is also open to the possibility of relocation and rebranding of an existing franchise.

Understanding the fabric of Music City and its business climate, Music City Baseball has already engaged with the music industry, securing Music Advisory Board Members to involve them in the plan for bringing MLB to Nashville and the concept of a new entertainment district. Entertainment icons **Luke Combs, Kane Brown, Darius Rucker** and **Justin Timberlake** have joined the Board thus far.



"The importance of the music industry to Music City Baseball's objectives, extends to why Nashville is an important market," Loar tells *MusicRow*. "It's the opportunity to just connect the two of those going forward. Nashville is Music City, it's the hottest market in the country. This ballpark is truly not a ballpark, it would be an entertainment venue for world-class entertainment, where you can imagine residencies like in Las Vegas. It would be air conditioned and covered, so they could use it year round. So it's not about baseball, it's more about that opportunity to create a world-class [entertainment complex], for convention use, for corporate use, etc.

"Baseball is the reason why I'm the catalyst behind it, but what we're building here is a world-class entertainment venue. Baseball plays for 22% of the time, 81 games, but what it creates is an opportunity to have a venue within a venue. By design with our partners ASM Global, coordinating with our music industry advisors, [the Nashville music industry can have] an important role in being part of this process. They can be included in the design of how the facility operates, how it's designed and how it functions," Loar says.

In an effort to build a Major League franchise on equity and celebrate diversity, Music City Baseball wants to name the team Nashville Stars, in honor of several Negro League baseball teams that played games in Nashville in the 1940s. They established a partnership with the

Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, which includes a net sharing of revenues from the sale of merchandise bearing the name “Nashville Stars,” and cooperation between marketing and social media efforts.

“It gives Major League Baseball the opportunity to take its place in history and be proactive instead of reactive in the conversations that continue to go on diversity and inclusion,” Loar says.

Music City Baseball was positioned to submit a proposal to Major League Baseball to establish a team in Nashville, but that step has been delayed a year due to business effects from the COVID-19 pandemic. Until then, Loar is focused on site selection for the proposed entertainment district.

“We hope it’s in Davidson County, but it will possibly be in Williamson County or Rutherford County. We’ve got eight sites that we’re considering,” Loar says. “We hope it’s part of the East bank, potentially the Tennessee State University site. A downtown ballpark gives us the opportunity to build, with our partner ASM Global, a

world-class entertainment venue. The walkability, bringing the Cumberland River alive, and just being part of a downtown park is the objective.”

In 2021, it’s important for Music City Baseball to show their partner (ASM Global) that the Nashville market can be a revenue contributor, the reasons why, and to find a site for the ballpark.

“We think we can privately finance a ballpark here, as it’s really not a ballpark. It’s an entertainment venue. The baseball team becomes a tenant,” Loar says. “It’s driven by the music industry in residencies, and in conventions. It supports the growth of Nashville, the airport growth, the expansion internationally, and the hotel industry and the restaurant industries that continue to grow, even with COVID. People come to Nashville just because it’s Music City, so when the Red Sox, the Phillies, the Giants, or whoever see the Stars on the schedule, they’re going to come here for a three-game series, and be a part of the town and the market area.” **MR**

MORE TOP STORIES

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[IBMA’s 2020 Bluegrass Music Awards To Air On Circle TV](#)

[MusicRow’s LB Cantrell Promoted To Director Of Content](#)

Sony Music Nashville Promotes Olivia Laster to Director, Marketing



Sony Music Nashville Senior Vice President of Marketing, **Jennifer Way**, announced on Jan. 8 the appointment of **Olivia Laster** to Director, Marketing, Sony Music Nashville. Reporting directly to Way, Laster begins her new role immediately.

As Director of Marketing, Laster will oversee the strategy, development, and execution of targeted marketing campaigns and consumption growth for her portion of the Sony Music Nashville roster of artists.

“Olivia’s marketing skills have been an incredible asset to our team for years. She’s always gone above and beyond to bridge the gap between our marketing and promotion teams—consistently finding innovative ways to use her marketing mind to create unique opportunities for our artists and their music. This is a natural transition for Olivia and I can’t wait to watch her evolve in her new role,” says Way.

Prior to accepting this position, Laster held the title Associate Director, Promotion and Artist Development at Sony Music Nashville. Within this role, she strategically integrated national and local radio initiatives into marketing, brand partnerships, digital, and media campaigns for the entire SMN roster. Experiences varied from launching the first tour-diary podcast series with iHeartMedia for Old Dominion’s self-titled album release to ideating and implementing artist virtual events across various national radio chain’s digital and terrestrial multi-genre platforms to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic industry shift. **MR**

Visionary Media Group Signs Clayton Anderson [Exclusive]



Pictured (L-R): Tracy Percival, Anastasia Brown, Clayton Anderson, J.R. Hensley. Photo: Evan De Stefano

Country music artist, **Clayton Anderson**, has signed with the multi-dimensional entertainment and music company Visionary Media Group. VMG is set to expand upon his unique touring concept, provide assistance with the release of his children’s book, and help finish the screenplay he’s writing.

Anderson has racked up over 240K monthly listeners on Spotify and over 10 million streams on the platform alone. Earlier last year, he teamed up with Bud Light for the Bud Light Dive Bar Tour: Home Edition alongside Jake Owen, Dierks Bentley, OneRepublic, and more, which allowed him to keep sharing music, virtually, with his fans during the pandemic.

“I’m beyond grateful and excited for the opportunity to be joining **Anastasia Brown**, **Tracy Percival** and the entire VMG family! I was so close to giving up my dream when COVID hit, but this partnership is such a blessing,” Anderson said. “Our ideals and passion for music are parallel and I honestly can’t convey how very thankful I am. I’m so fired up!”

Raised in southern Indiana, Anderson has built a loyal following with his blend of Midwestern rock and independent country. While enrolled at Indiana University, he wrote his first song in the school’s library and began playing fraternity parties around town, earning an audience long before graduation. He’s gone on to open for many artists, including Kenny Chesney, Blake Shelton, Jimmy Buffett, and Carly Pearce. He has also performed alongside Zac Brown Band at the Indy 500, with 40,000 people in attendance. **MR**

Toby Keith, Ricky Skaggs Receive National Medal of Arts



Toby Keith and **Ricky Skaggs** were among a handful of recipients who were honored with a National Medal of Arts by **President Trump** on Jan. 13.

According to a statement from the Whitehouse, Keith was honored “for making extraordinary contributions to American music. Rising from humble beginnings in the oil fields of Oklahoma, Toby Keith has become one of the preeminent songwriters of his generation.”

Skaggs was honored “for his contributions to the American music industry. A virtuoso of the mandolin and fiddle, Ricky Skaggs creates and produces bluegrass music that preserves the musical legacy of the most talented artists of his generation,” according to the Whitehouse statement.

According to Skaggs publicist, Skaggs was originally slated to receive the award in early 2020, but the presentation was delayed due to COVID-19.

Photojournalist **Nick Ut**, art historian **Earl “Rusty” Powell III**, and opera singer and actress **Mary Costa** also received National Medal of Arts.

Trump also awarded American public official **Kay Coles James**, lawyer and politician **O. James Lighthizer**, and The National World War II Museum with National Humanities Medal yesterday (Jan. 13).

The National Medal of Arts is the highest award given to artists and arts patrons by the U.S. Government. The National Humanities Medal honors individuals or groups whose work has deepened the Nation’s understanding of the humanities and broadened our citizens’ engagement with history, literature, languages, philosophy, and other humanities subjects. **MR**

Garth Brooks To Be Honored At 43rd Annual Kennedy Center Honors In May



Garth Brooks is one of the honorees at the upcoming 43rd annual Kennedy Center Honors celebration, set to take place in May in Washington D.C. He’ll be joined by fellow recipients choreographer-actress-dancer **Debbie Allen**, singer-songwriter **Joan Baez**, violinist Midori, and beloved actor **Dick Van Dyke** at the renowned celebration of the arts.

“Like any award, the names that are already on it makes the award that award. And to think of the names that have been presented this in the past—and the names that will be there that night—is extremely humbling,” said Brooks. “President John F. Kennedy was a childhood hero of mine, and he has continued to be through every stage of my life. He knew that a nation is defined by its culture and a culture is defined by its arts. I have watched many of my heroes sit in that booth during their ceremony, I have even had the joyous honor of singing for some of them on their special night. The hope is to have contributed to humanity like my heroes have, to inspire us to be the most we can be as individuals, global citizens, and a part of human history. But most of all, to simply laugh, cry, love, and dream through music...I have been blessed to do just that as a fan and as an artist.”

Garth is no stranger to the Kennedy Center Honors—he’s performed as part of salutes to former honorees Loretta Lynn (2003), George Jones (2008), Billy Joel (2013) and, most recently, James Taylor (2016). **MR**

DISCLAIMER Single Reviews: Rhonda Vincent, Sister Sadie, Carolina Blue, The Grascals



The International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) airs its 2020 awards show on Circle TV on Monday (Jan. 18).

What better time to catch up with some of its winners, as well as other current hit makers in the genre?

The essential-listening tracks here belong to IBMA Entertainer of the Year winners **Sister Sadie**, as well as **Donna Ulisse**, **Carolina Blue**, **Jerry Salley** and our Disc of the Day winner, **Rhonda Vincent**.

The IBMA's New Artist honorees **Mile Twelve**, also own this week's DisCOVERY Award.

The award show is a pip, with performances by Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver, Brooke Aldridge, Taj Mahal, the Del McCoury Band and dozens more. Garth Brooks, Vince Gill and Ronnie McCoury induct New Grass Revival, The Johnson Mountain Boys and The Station Inn's J.T. Gray into the Bluegrass Hall of Fame.

[Read Robert K. Oermann's reviews of Sister Sadie, Rhonda Vincent, Mile Twelve, The Grascals, and more, here.](#)

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Off The Record: Show Me The Receipts!

Call me a skeptic. I own it.

But I'm not the negative, 'talk to the hand,' and 'don't-believe-anything-I-read' variety. I'm referring to a well-thought-out and strategically positioned view of how I discern information. And let's face it, there's a lot of information out there to discern.

I started my professional career in Dallas at Arthur Andersen & Co., which at the time, was one of the most well-respected international accounting firms in the world, leading the industry in over \$9 billion in annual revenue. The prestigious firm belonged to an exclusive club of top accounting firms known as the Big 8.

Arthur Andersen's training was beyond reproach. The firm had a large educational center in St. Charles, Illinois near Chicago where I often traveled for training during my 4-year public accounting career. These training sessions would last from a couple of days to a full week or more. With dorms, classrooms, a dining hall and a bar, it was a full fledged university solely for the company's employees. Sometimes it felt like I was spending more time in those training classes than actually working on audit engagements. I didn't realize it at the time, but that training was an invaluable experience, a 'boot camp' of sorts, that I would carry with me throughout my entire career.

I left the firm many years before its name became synonymous with Enron and was plastered across 'breaking news' headlines. Arthur Andersen was the financial accounting auditor of Enron and in 2001 when the energy giant was found to have reported billions in revenue through accounting fraud, the Arthur Andersen empire came crumbling down. The accounting firm was convicted of obstruction of justice for shredding documents related to its audit of Enron. And although the firm is no longer around, I'm grateful for the experience early in my career and most importantly, all of the training.

I moved to Music City in 1990 bringing those skills with me and 30 years later, I'm still using them in ways I never expected. One of those valuable lessons I was taught in auditing is developing a healthy level of skepticism. And in 2021, this skill has become more valuable than ever to navigate the vast amounts of information I receive both personally and professionally.

So what exactly does having a healthy level of skepticism mean?

First, I'll tell you what it doesn't mean.



Sherod Robertson, the accountant, circa 2005.

It doesn't mean that you automatically do not believe the information you receive. It's not a knee-jerk reaction that refutes any information you encounter. It's not a filter that dictates that whatever someone says, there must be something wrong with it. And it's not assuming that the data is incorrect. In fact, it's not assuming anything at all.

A healthy level of skepticism is a subtle acknowledgement that not all information should be automatically accepted as factually correct and complete if it doesn't meet some basic criteria of reasonableness and logic. In other words, a moment of discernment is taken to judge the information based on factors such as context, its source, reasonableness, completeness, etc.

Back in my auditing days, if I were reviewing a company's financial records and found an excessive amount of costs in a particular line item compared to prior year expenses, my healthy level of skepticism would suggest I look for additional documentation supporting the large increase in expenses. In other words, I would want to talk to someone at the company and ask them to "show me the receipts."

[Read more of this week's Off The Record here.](#)

Off The Record is a new weekly column in 2021 from MusicRow Owner and Publisher, Sherod Robertson. After 10 years heading the publication, he shares some of the nuggets of wisdom he's acquired throughout the years that have helped him in his journey. The views and opinions expressed here are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of MusicRow Magazine nor its team members.

CALENDAR

Singles

January 15

Cort Carpenter/Small Towners/Triple C Records/XXIII Music

January 19

Jon Pardi/Tequila Little Time/Capitol

January 22

Zoe Clark/Last One Standing

January 25

Shy Carter/Good Love/Warner/WAR

HARDY/Give Heaven Some Hell/Big Loud

Andrew Jannakos/Gone Too Soon/RCA

Parker McCollum/To Be Loved By You/MCA Nashville

Dwain Messer/It Goes So Fast/N Crowd Music

Patrick Gibson/The American Prayer/Nine North

Angie Lynn Carter feat. Lee Roy Parnell/Looking For A Reason/Emanant Music

Albums

January 15

Devin Dawson/*The Pink Slip EP*/Warner Music Nashville/Atlantic

Jake Hoot/*Love Out Of Time*

January 22

Willie Jones/*Right Now*/The Penthouse/Empire Nashville

Moon Taxi/*Silver Dream*/BMG

January 27

Logan Mize/*Still That Kid*/Big Yellow Dog Music

Industry Events

February 17-19

Country Radio Seminar

February 17

MusicRow's CountryBreakout Awards (Virtual)