

Curb Records Ups RJ Meacham to SVP, Promotion



Curb Records announced the promotion of **RJ Meacham** to SVP, Promotion. Meacham will continue to oversee promotion efforts for the Curb Records roster, which includes Lee Brice, Dylan Scott, Rodney Atkins, Filmore, Mo Pitney, and Hannah Ellis.

“RJ has done a phenomenal job as Vice President of Country Promotion and we are very excited that he has chosen to continue with our company as Senior Vice President of Country Promotion. Over the years, RJ has done an excellent job motivating our great promotion team,” says **Mike Curb**, Chairman of Curb Records.

Meacham began his career at Monument/Sony, moving to Curb/Asylum and then Sony’s BNA and Columbia Records before re-joining Curb Records in 2016 as Senior Director, Country Promotion. He was elevated to VP, Promotion in 2018.

“As our industry evolves, I’m excited to continue working alongside my amazing teammates at Curb to find new and innovative ways to raise the bar for our amazing roster and their music. Many thanks to Mike Curb for believing in me and for this incredible opportunity,” says Meacham. **MR**

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THIS WEEK’S HEADLINES

Curb Records Ups RJ Meacham to SVP, Promotion

BBR Music Group Signs Madeline Merlo

Little Big Town Extends Publishing Deal With Warner Chappell

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DOJ Ends Consent Decree Review Without Action

DISCLAIMER Singles Reviews

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BBR Music Group Signs Madeline Merlo

BBR Music Group has announced the signing of **Madeline Merlo** to its roster of artists.

The singer-songwriter and Vancouver native appeared on NBC's songwriter series *Songland*, where she won with **Lady A** selecting Merlo's co-penned "Champagne Night." The trio recorded and released the tune digitally and, due to its initial success, became the first *Songland* winner to become a single—which then went on to become a three-week No. 1 single. Merlo also appears in the music video.

Merlo's music bridges the pop-country gap, with quirky melodies and confident lyrics. The multi-talent who kickstarted her career at 16 doing demo work, went on to win CCMA's Rising Star Award in 2015, before releasing her debut album in 2016. Since moving to Nashville in 2017, Merlo has garnered three Top 10 singles on Canadian Country radio, performed with her childhood idol, Shania Twain at the CCMA Awards, and hit the road with greats like Keith Urban and Willie Nelson, in addition to focusing on her songwriting.

"Madeline immediately drew us in with her stellar melodies and powerhouse vocals but it was the witty, confident vulnerability in her writing that made her an artist we had to



have on our roster," said **Sara Knabe**, VP A&R BBR Music Group. "We're so excited for 2021 and beyond!"

"Getting the chance to be on BBR Music Group's impressive roster is a dream come true," said Merlo. "They are incredibly kind and hard-working individuals, and I am thrilled to be working with them. They see my vision and respect the artistry we have built. I know this next step will be the most exciting yet in my career."

She is managed by **Ron Kitchener** at RGK Entertainment and is signed with Deluge Music for publishing. **MR**

Little Big Town Extends Global Publishing Deal With Warner Chappell Music Nashville



Little Big Town has extended its global publishing deal with Warner Chappell Music Nashville.

Members Karen Fairchild, Kimberly Schlapman, Phillip Sweet, and Jimi Westbrook have topped the charts numerous times with singles like "Pontoon," "Girl Crush," and "Better Man," and scored Top 10 hits like "Boondocks," "Bring It On Home," "Little White Church," "Tornado," and "Day Drinking." Their ninth studio album, *Nightfall*, debuted at No. 1 on Billboard's Top Country Albums chart and delivered last year's Grammy-nominated "The Daughters," and their current single, "Wine, Beer, Whiskey," has racked up 75.3 million streams since its debut and is currently enjoying 3.3 million streams weekly.

Aside from writing much of their own material, Little Big Town also has credits on hits from Thomas Rhett, Carly Pearce, and others. The group is nominated for Best Country Album (*Nightfall*) and Best Country Duo/Group Performance ("Sugar Coat") at the upcoming 63rd Annual Grammy Awards. **MR**

COUNTRYBREAKOUT RADIO CHART

CHART ACTION

New On The Chart — Debuting This Week

song/artist/label—Chart Position

Minimum Wage/Blake Shelton/Warner Music Nashville — 49
No Body, No Crime/Taylor Swift feat. Haim/MCA Nashville — 77
I Do Thing/Kylie Frey/Deep Frey'd Music Group — 78
Right Place Now/Hudson Valley/Hudson Valley — 79

Greatest Spin Increase

song/artist/label—Spin Increase

Undivided/Tim McGraw and Tyler Hubbard/Big Machine Records — 337
Minimum Wage/Blake Shelton/Warner Music Nashville — 328
7 Summers/Morgan Wallen/Big Loud Records — 156
Famous Friends/Chris Young & Kane Brown/RCA Nashville — 131
Tequila Little Time/Jon Pardi/Capitol — 127
Hell Of A View/Eric Church/EMI — 123
Just The Way/Parmalee x Blanco Brown/Stoney Creek Records — 113

Most Added

song/artist/label—No. of Adds

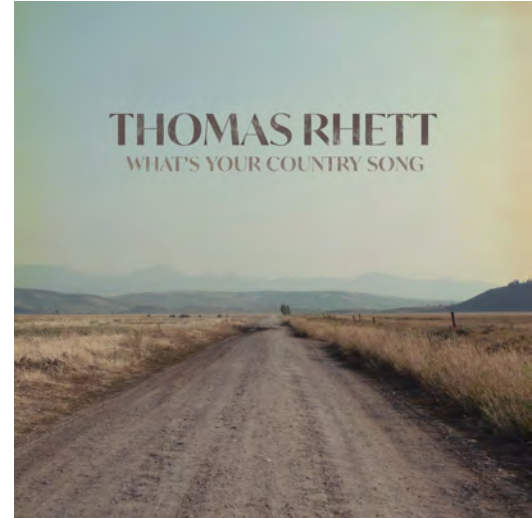
Minimum Wage/Blake Shelton/Warner Music Nashville — 31
Undivided/Tim McGraw and Tyler Hubbard/Big Machine Records — 22
Tequila Little Time/Jon Pardi/Capitol — 8
No Body, No Crime/Taylor Swift feat. Haim/MCA Nashville — 5
Ain't Gonna Be Today/Ward Davis/Ward Davis Music/Thirty Tigers — 5

On Deck—Soon To Be Charting

song/artist/label—No. of Spins

Pushing Up Daisies/Lana Gail/Gail Force Entertainment — 156
New To Neon/Andrew Hopson/Tower Road Records — 154
Can't Stop/Chloe Collins/Collins House Music — 150
Head Over Wheels/Joe Hanson — 144
Shallow/Garth Brooks and Trisha Yearwood/Pearl Records — 142

NO. 1 SONG



“What’s Your Country Song” by **Thomas Rhett** remains at No. 1 on the *MusicRow* CountryBreakout Radio Chart gaining 51 spins this week. 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	WAAG Galesburg, IL	WTCM Traverse City, MI	KWHW Altus, OK	KFTX Corpus Christi, TX
WXFL Florence, AL	WMCI Mattoon, IL	KYSM Mankato, MN	KITX Hugo, OK	KYKX Longview, TX
KHBZ Harrison, AR	WYOT Rochelle, IL	KZPK St. Cloud, MN	KWEY Weatherford, OK	KMRK Odessa, TX
KQUS Hot Springs, AR	WRTB Rockford, IL	KWWR Mexico, MO	KWOX Woodward, OK	KYYK Palestine, TX
KDXY Jonesboro, AR	WCCI Savanna, IL	KFAV Warrenton, MO	KRKT Albany, OR	KXOX Sweetwater, TX
KWCK Searcy, AR	WIFE Connersville, IN	WQNZ Natchez, MS	WNBT Mansfield, PA	WAKG Danville, VA
KRAZ Santa Barbara, CA	KAIR Atchison, KS	KZZY Devils Lake, ND	WCFT Selinsgrove, PA	WAXX Altoona, WI
WPAP Panama City, FL	WKDZ Cadiz, KY	KRVN Lexington, NE	WFGE State College, PA	WJVL Janesville, WI
WUBB Savannah, GA	WBKR Owensboro, KY	Jersey Shore Country	WMIR Myrtle Beach, SC	WGLR Platteville, WI
KXIA Marshalltown, IA	WDHR Pikeville, KY	KQBA Santa Fe, NM	KIQK Rapid City, SD	WQPC Prairie du Chien, WI
KIAI Mason City, IA	KRRV Alexandria, LA	WDNB Monticello, NY	WUCZ Carthage, TN	WCOW Sparta, WI
KBOE Oskaloosa, IA	WUUU Covington, LA	WOLF Syracuse, NY	WCKN Dickson, TN	WTNJ Beckley, WV
KTHK Idaho Falls, ID	WKPE Hyannis, MA	WCJW Warsaw, NY	WLLX Lawrenceburg, TN	WDGG Huntington, WV
WOOZ Cartersville, IL	WVMD Cumberland, MD	WFRY Watertown, NY	KAYD Beaumont, TX	

COUNTRYBREAKOUT RADIO CHART

Weeks On Chart	Last Week	This Week	Song / Artist / Label	Spins / Reports	% Spin Power	Spins +/-
9	1	1	What's Your Country Song / Thomas Rhett / Valory	2065/64	3	51
19	3	2	7 Summers / Morgan Wallen / Big Loud Records	1937/68	9	156
36	4	3	Lady / Brett Young / BMLG	1770/64	3	53
10	6	4	Hell Of A View / Eric Church / EMI	1686/67	8	123
14	2	5	Better Together / Luke Combs / Columbia	1686/44	-6	-112
11	5	6	Gone / Dierks Bentley / Capitol	1670/68	3	46
47	7	7	Nobody / Dylan Scott / Curb	1539/54	0	3
18	8	8	Settling Down / Miranda Lambert / Vanner Records/RCA Records	1493/60	2	27
37	9	9	Made For You / Jake Owen / Big Loud Records	1488/61	2	36
15	10	10	One Too Many / Keith Urban & P!nk / Capitol	1472/57	2	33
15	13	11	Next Girl / Carly Pearce / Big Machine	1317/60	3	34
20	14	12	Good Time / Niko Moon / RCA Nashville	1220/40	6	74
28	15	13	The Good Ones / Gabby Barrett / Warner Music Nashville	1189/49	6	72
13	16	14	Breaking Up Was Easy In The 90's / Sam Hunt / MCA Nashville	1106/49	5	51
53	18	15	Somebody Like That / Tenille Arts / 19th & Grand	999/42	0	2
31	20	16	Hard Days / Brantley Gilbert / Valory	993/45	5	51
12	19	17	We Didn't Have Much / Justin Moore / Valory	988/57	5	43
49	21	18	Momma's House / Dustin Lynch / Broken Bow	934/38	1	9
9	23	19	Blame It On You / Jason Aldean / Broken Bow	931/50	9	79
30	22	20	Wine, Beer, Whiskey / Little Big Town / Capitol	903/41	2	16
12	27	21	Just The Way / Parmalee x Blanco Brown / Stoney Creek Records	842/32	16	113
10	25	22	Memory I Don't Mess With / Lee Brice / Curb	837/51	5	43
11	26	23	Heaven On Dirt / Teddy Robb / Monument	813/53	5	40
28	24	24	Grew Up On That / High Valley / Warner Music Nashville	808/39	1	6
20	28	25	Wash My Truck / Bobby Wills / MDM Recordings	739/36	6	44
13	29	26	If It Wasn't For Trucks / Riley Green / BMLG	717/41	8	51
13	30	27	Where I Find God / Larry Fleet / Big Loud Records	685/38	8	52
14	31	28	Everybody Dies But Not Everybody Lives / Shane Owens / Amerimonte Records	684/41	11	65
3	35	29	Famous Friends / Chris Young & Kane Brown / RCA Nashville	677/41	24	131
15	33	30	Waste Of A Whiskey Drink / Gary Allan / EMI	614/35	8	44
2	61	31	Undivided / Tim McGraw and Tyler Hubbard / Big Machine Records	610/47	123	337
16	32	32	Sometimes Late At Night / Eric Burgett / Bow To Stern Records	591/41	1	8
5	36	33	Drinkin' Beer. Talkin' God. Amen. / Chase Rice feat. Florida Georgia Line / Broken Bow/Dack Janiels	581/38	8	41
7	37	34	Ain't Gonna Be Today / Ward Davis / Ward Davis Music/Thirty Tigers	549/44	13	65
19	34	35	Waitin' On 5 / Chris Janson / Warner Music Nashville	525/28	-8	-43
11	38	36	Just About Over You / Priscilla Block / Mercury Nashville	523/36	10	46
15	41	37	Sometimes Always Never / Brandon Ratcliff / Monument	498/35	14	63
13	40	38	Comin' Home / The Desert City Ramblers / Crane Kick Records	486/28	6	28
15	39	39	The Mountain / Calamity Jane / Mountain Records	485/31	2	9
14	42	40	Bad Guy / Casey Donahew / Almost Country Records	463/26	7	31



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Weeks On Chart	Last Week	This Week	Song / Artist / Label	Spins / Reports	% Spin Power	Spins +/-
23	43	41	We Were Rich / Runaway June / Wheelhouse Records	454/27	7	29
10	44	42	You Time / Scotty McCreery / Triple Tigers Records	427/32	1	6
8	45	43	Anybody Else / Mira Goto / ArtistMax/Copperline	423/26	7	28
6	46	44	Cold Beer Calling My Name / Jameson Rodgers feat. Luke Combs / River House Artists/ Columbia Nashville	413/28	7	26
2	64	45	Tequila Little Time / Jon Pardi / Capitol	370/30	52	127
8	49	46	Meghan / Brecken Miles / Rhyme Partners	358/25	10	33
21	47	47	Single Saturday Night / Cole Swindell / Warner Music Nashville	341/24	2	6
10	55	48	Calling All The Angels / Brooke Lee / Brooke Lee Music	333/17	12	35
1	0	49	Minimum Wage / Blake Shelton / Warner Music Nashville	328/31	0	328
7	54	50	Heartland / Hailey Whitters / Big Loud Records/S&D	325/22	7	20
8	52	51	God Save The World / Jeff Carson / MC1 Nashville	325/20	5	16
5	53	52	Extra / Kylie Trout / Kylie Trout Music	321/25	4	13
5	57	53	Whiskey And Rain / Michael Ray / Warner Music Nashville	313/21	8	22
8	50	54	Worship You / Kane Brown / RCA Nashville	305/20	-6	-19
14	56	55	I Can Tell By The Way You Dance / Josh Turner / MCA Nashville	303/21	2	7
9	59	56	Ghost Town Nation / Travis Tritt / Big Noise	294/17	4	11
6	62	57	Just Like You / Paige King Johnson / PCG Artist Development	288/26	7	19
10	60	58	Same Ole / Chris Kroeze /	287/19	5	13
17	48	59	Dear Rodeo / Cody Johnson / CoJo Music/Warner Bros.	285/14	-13	-44
6	58	60	River Bent / Caleb Kelley / River Bend Entertainment	279/20	-2	-6
17	51	61	Never Be Sorry / Old Dominion / RCA Nashville	259/16	-19	-62
3	72	62	Chain Breaker / Zach Williams / Provident Label Group	245/22	21	42
3	70	63	Just Friends / Caylee Hammack / Capitol	242/18	16	33
20	17	64	Good Time Waitin' To Happen / James Robert Webb / Bison Creek Records	230/13	-77	-783
10	65	65	Martha Devine / Ashley McBryde / Atlantic Records/WMN/WAR	229/16	-2	-5
6	71	66	Radio Back / Danny Kensy / Rad Records	227/14	9	19
3	66	67	Love Like Crazy / TJ Ashley / Music Train Records	226/16	4	8
3	74	68	What Would Dolly Do? / Tori Martin / LuckySky Music	221/17	13	26
2	76	69	My Boy / Elvie Shane / Wheelhouse Records	218/20	16	30
3	69	70	You're Gonna Love Me / Tim Dugger / Curb	216/17	3	6
2	78	71	Give Heaven Some Hell / HARDY / Big Loud Records	211/18	20	35
3	73	72	Invent A T-Shirt / Jenny Tolman / Old Sol Records	203/15	4	7
3	75	73	Freedom And Wings / Heather Smith /	202/11	5	10
4	77	74	Time Changes / Stephanie Nash /	190/15	3	5
11	67	75	Beers To Catch Up On / LOCASH / Wheelhouse Records	189/12	-13	-28
2	80	76	Kickstart / Owen Howell / Kojax Entertainment	183/15	16	25
1	110	77	No Body, No Crime / Taylor Swift feat. Haim / MCA Nashville	177/13	108	92
1	84	78	I Do Thing / Kylie Frey / Deep Frey'd Music Group	165/13	15	21
1	91	79	Right Place Now / Hudson Valley / Hudson Valley	163/16	35	42
2	79	80	More With Less / Frank Vieira / Frank Vieira Music	160/8	0	0

No. 1 Song
Greatest Spin Increase
Highest Debut

2021 TOURING ISSUE

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



Lathan Warlick Signs With RECORDS Nashville/Columbia Records



RECORDS Nashville, the Music City division of Barry Weiss' RECORDS, a joint venture with Sony Music Entertainment, has announced the signing of breakthrough artist **Lathan Warlick** in partnership with Columbia Records.

"When I ran across Lathan Warlick on social media I was instantly drawn to his talent and positive message," says **Ash Bowers**, President, RECORDS Nashville. "Not only have I become a fan of his artistry, I am also inspired by who he is as a person. I am so excited to share both with the rest of the world."

Lathan first gained attention through social media by creating videos of himself on his iPhone in his truck, adding his own rap verses to popular songs like "Holy" by Justin Bieber, "The Box" by Roddy Ricch, "Memories" by Maroon 5, "Hello" by Adele, and "You Say" by Lauren Daigle. His videos caught the attention of country singer Granger Smith, who asked Warlick to add a rap verse to his song, creating a powerful remix of "That's What I Love About Dirt Roads."

"I know that stepping out on faith and taking the leap with RECORDS/Columbia will be an amazing journey for sure," says Lathan. "I'm still amazed at how God allowed me to find my purpose. Now it's time for me to just walk in it. I'm super pumped about being part of this team!"

Lathan's latest song, "Over Yonder" featuring Matt Stell, powerfully blends hip-hop patriotism with a call for unity. As teased on social media, Lathan is gearing up for a big year, having recently collaborated with Tyler Hubbard of Florida Georgia Line, Dustin Lynch, RaeLynn, and more. **MR**

Lydia Vaughan Signs With Cornman Music, Warner Chappell Nashville



Lydia Vaughan has signed a worldwide publishing agreement with Cornman Music and Warner Chappell Nashville.

Hailing from St. Louis, Missouri, Vaughan spent six years touring in an alternative rock band before moving to Nashville in 2015 to pursue her songwriting. She has already landed sync placements on MTV's *Teen Mom*, CW's *Batwoman*, and Netflix's *Dash & Lily*.

"We are beyond thrilled to officially welcome Lydia into the Cornman family," said Cornman Music's **Brett James**. "Her talent is beyond description and she is as amazing a person as she is a songwriter."

"Words cannot describe how excited we are that Lydia is joining the Cornman family," adds Cornman Music's **Nate Lowery**. "Her talent, work ethic and passion for music and songwriting is truly inspiring." **MR**

Eric Church To Release Three-Album Project: *Heart & Soul*

Speaking directly to fans in a video message delivered to them, reigning CMA Entertainer of the Year **Eric Church** revealed that he will release three albums in April.

"I have three albums coming out in April. They came out of my 28 days in the mountains of North Carolina, where the songs were recorded and written. The collection is entitled *Heart & Soul*," Church said. The titles of the three albums individually are named *Heart*, *&*, and *Soul*.

In keeping with his longtime commitment to put fans first, Church created the middle album, *&*, specifically for Church's fan club—the Church Choir—and will make it available exclusively to those fans and only as a vinyl record on Tuesday, April 20. The other two albums, *Heart* and *Soul*, will be available everywhere on Friday, April 16 and Friday, April 23, respectively. Pre-orders for all three albums begin next Friday, Jan. 29.

Pushing the limits of his artistry, Church dedicated himself to a month-long creative process that resulted in this 24-song collection, which features an elite list of songwriters who joined the secluded marathon writing and recording sessions.



Eric Church. Photo: Reid Long

Longtime producer **Jay Joyce** and backing vocalist **Joanna Cotten**, as well as his touring band, played alongside some of Nashville's most talented studio musicians on the albums.

"It's been a long 10 months. With the power of music and love for each other, we will get through this, we will gather again soon. I cannot wait to play this music for you live," Church said as he concluded his video message.

[View the track list for the projects here.](#)

Carrie Underwood Sets Release Date for Gospel Project, *My Savior*



Carrie Underwood has revealed the cover art for *My Savior*, the upcoming companion gospel album to her recent Christmas album, *My Gift*. The album of gospel hymns will be released on CD and digitally March 26 just prior to the Easter holiday, and on vinyl April 30.

She co-produced the new project with longtime collaborator **David Garcia**, with whom she also co-produced her 2018 album *Cry Pretty*. With his early roots in Christian music, over the past decade Garcia has achieved chart-topping success across multiple genres with over 20 No. 1's to his credit.

"It's been such a blessing to make music like this, inspirational music that is near and dear to my heart," says Underwood. "These two albums have been on my musical bucket list since the beginning of my career and were planned long before the events of the past year, but somehow it feels like the perfect time to share these beloved songs with the world." **MR**

Curb I Word Music Publishing Extends Publishing Deal with Billy Montana



Pictured (L-R, top row): Curb I Word's Colt Murski; BMI's Mason Hunter; Curb I Word's Christy Robinson; (L-R, middle row): Billy Montana; Curb I Word's Ciara Shortridge; BMI's Jeff Syracuse; (L-R, bottom row): Curb I Word's Mike Curb; BMI's David Preston

Curb I Word Music Publishing has extended its worldwide co-publishing deal with **Billy Montana**. The singer-songwriter was originally signed to the publishing company in 2000, and the extension continues his relationship with the Curb I Word Music Publishing team, which includes **Colt Murski**, **Ciara Shortridge**, and **Christy Robinson**, into its 21st year.

"Billy Montana has been a very important part of our creative team at Curb for this entire century. He has had major No. 1's with Garth Brooks, Jo Dee Messina, Tim McGraw, Sara Evans, and Lee Brice. He currently has a major single with Lee Brice, and we are proud to have him as part of our team," says Curb I Word Music Publishing Chairman, **Mike Curb**.

Following the recent extension, Montana and Mike Curb were honored with BMI Million-Air certificates, presented by BMI's **David Preston**, for Sara Evans' No. 1 single, "Suds In The Bucket," (4 million airplays) and Lee Brice's No. 1 single, "Hard To Love," (2 million airplays) over a Zoom gathering last week. Based on an average length of three minutes, six million collective plays are the equivalent of 300,000 hours or 34.2 years of continuous airplay.

"We are thrilled to celebrate the accomplishments of Billy Montana and his long standing relationship with BMI and Curb I Word Music Publishing. Billy continues to write hit songs that stand the test of time, as evident by the Million-Air awards we presented him today. We are excited for his re-signing with Curb and look forward to many more hits," says BMI's **Mason Hunter**. "Mike Curb has been a BMI writer for 58 years and he continues to support our industry with his business acumen, vision, and philanthropy. BMI is honored to be associated with Billy and Mike and wish both many more years of success."

"I'm really thankful to continue to be a part of the Curb I Word and BMI families. For many, and I DO mean many, years, I've always been provided with great creative opportunities and environments, and the support from everyone has never wavered. I'm looking forward to making the best music I can, and having fun doing it!" says Montana. **MR**

MORE TOP STORIES

[Luke Combs Extends Streak At Radio With Tenth Chart-Topper "Better Together"](#)

[The Steel Woods Founder Jason 'Rowdy' Cope Passes Away](#)

[CMA's Sarah Trahern, Rascal Flatts To Receive CRB Honors at CRS 2021: The Virtual Experience](#)

[Black River Entertainment Restructures Marketing Department](#)

[Dan + Shay Score Eighth Chart-Topper With "I Should Probably Go To Bed"](#)

[Ian Munsick Readies Major Label Debut 'Coyote Cry' For February](#)

[Weekly Register: Morgan Wallen Commands Charts With Newest Release](#)

[Singer-Songwriter Randy Parton, Brother of Dolly, Passes](#)

Dark Horse Devin Dawson Brings Out His Lighter Side With *The Pink Slip*



Devin Dawson. Photo: Tyler Conrad

It's been three years since Warner Music Nashville/Atlantic Records' **Devin Dawson** released his moody and unique debut album, *Dark Horse*, which spawned his breakout hit "All on Me," and other fan-favorites like "Asking For A Friend" and "Secondhand Hurt."

But the 'Dark Horse' is back, and with *The Pink Slip*. Dawson released *The Pink Slip* EP on Jan. 15, comprised of six new, and noticeably lighter, songs.

In an interview with *MusicRow*, Dawson talked about the changes in him as a creative and as a person, that led him to make *The Pink Slip*.

MusicRow: The imaging for this is really different than *Dark Horse*. The music is more optimistic, and obviously the cover is pink. What do you think has changed in you since you've made *Dark Horse*?

I think my fans know to expect the unexpected from me. I always want to do something out of the box and unexpected. Posting a pink album cover was probably the last thing that anyone expected from me. But more so than that, not just to be flashy or unexpected, it's more so about serving the music, serving the song and doing what's right for these songs. Like you said, I have grown a lot since the man I was when I wrote *Dark Horse*. I keep saying this, but I have had a little success and I've seen the world, I've fallen in love and gotten married. So many great things have happened and I'm genuinely happy.

This EP is really just an example of me trying to make sense of that and still stay true to my songwriting. I'll always be a 'dark horse' and I'll always love to play the character of that vulnerable, visceral,

introspective guy, but I think my job when I'm putting out an album is to just talk about what I've gone through in the last couple of years. And there's been a lot of great shit that happened, so if this album seems a little bit hopeful and a little bit brighter, that's why.

I imagine you've written more than six songs in the past three years. How did you put this selection together for the EP?

Honestly, it just happened by chance. These are the first ones that we went in to record and we had a plan to do a lot more. Obviously COVID changed that, and then it's trying to figure out to pivot. I've worked with **Jay Joyce** since *Dark Horse*, just an absolutely incredible producer, but he's been smoking for like 35 years and he has diabetes and all that. So it wasn't necessarily something that we could just get into the studio like normal. As much as we would have loved to go back and tweak things and record more, maybe do a whole album and try to make things right or whatever, these are the first songs that we recorded and, to me, the priority was just to put out music. It had been so long and I'd be damned if I was going to let a

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										MT CLK	TOTAL FEES
EXPIRATION OR 12 MONTHS 1 1 DDPSEP V8 DD '99 SLVRD										Chevy Pickup	
LAST NAME SHOWN FIRST DAWSON, DEVIN										1. Range Rover 2. I Got a Truck 3. Not On My Watch 4. Whatever Forever Is 5. He Loved Her 6. Who's Gonna Hold Ya Produced by Jay Joyce	
THE PINK SLIP EP											
CALIFORNIA *LEGAL OWNER OR LIEN HOLDER OF RECORD WITH DEPARTMENT DEPOSIT IN A SAFE PLACE DO NOT CARRY IN VEHICLE TA 339191											

quarantine that's going to last however long, stop me from putting out new music.

You wrote with Ben Rector on “Range Rover.” Had you worked with him before?

“Range Rover” was like maybe the third or fourth song that we wrote. I’ve been a huge fan of him since college, when I first discovered him. I had seen some things he’s done recently and just really connected with it. I’ve had a couple accolades and some things happen publishing-, songwriting-, and artist-wise where I actually had a chance to be like, ‘I want to write with him.’ So I chased him down a little bit and was like, ‘Dude, I really think that we’d do something cool together.’ We both have the same things that make us happy when it comes to songwriting. We want to do something that’s never been done before and never been heard before, but do it in a way that everyone can relate to. That’s really hard, to reinvent the wheel every day, but I think when you get aligned with certain people, to go there and to write those songs, you need to be completely open and ready to fall on your face if it’s not good. So we got in a room and we started writing. We just hit it off.

The idea [for “Range Rover”] came out of conversation in the room when we were starting up. One of my other co-writers on that song, **Mark Trussell** was talking about him having a Top 20 finally and being able to get paid. He was like, ‘I have to get my wife a car.’ I said, ‘What does she want?’ He said, ‘I think she wants a Range Rover.’ She’s not the stereotypical, trophy wife kind of a girl looking for the Range Rover. She’s a very sweet, wholesome, amazing woman—not that every single person that drives a Range Rover is like that, but there’s that stereotypical thing. We were like, ‘Is there a song there? Can we write that? How do we do that?’ We were really obsessed with the challenge of conquering that idea in the right way. And we did it, it’s just so crazy and fun and different and cheeky and heavy and choppy. It checked all my boxes, and I’m really proud of it, so I’m glad that we wrangled that one.

Which one of these songs are you most excited to play with a full band? I’m sure you’re missing playing live.

“Not On My Watch.” It’s got this certain energy to it. There’s two words that come to mind when I think of this EP: it’s inspirational and it’s helpful. It’s like the dis-track to the devil on your shoulder, that’s what I keep calling it. I also don’t play guitar live when I sing



Pictured (L-R): Devin Dawson, Ben Rector, Leah Sykes Durrett

that song, so it’s fun to just get around with no guitar, to walk around and just have that swag that song carries. That one’s just going to be a moment live, and I’m really excited for it. **MR**

Department of Justice Ends ASCAP/BMI Consent Decree Review Without Action

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Anti-Trust Division head **Makan Delrahim** addressed on Jan. 15 the DOJ's review of the ASCAP and BMI Consent Decrees, in a webinar sponsored by Vanderbilt Law School. The DOJ has ended its ASCAP and BMI consent decree review without taking action.

Delrahim said compulsory licenses “are not the answer” and that any future changes Congress may consider should allow songwriters the ability to negotiate in the free market. Delrahim—who submitted his resignation letter on Jan. 13, effective on Jan. 19.—also suggested the DOJ consider reviewing ASCAP and BMI Consent Decrees every five years. He applauded ASCAP and BMI for launching their new SONGVIEW database which will allow music users/licensees to more easily find song ownership data.

The consent decrees were put in place to prevent anticompetitive behaviors and determine sensible licensing rates. The ASCAP consent decree was modified in 2001 and the BMI consent decree was modified in 1994. The decrees require ASCAP and BMI to issue licenses covering all works in their repertory upon request from music users. If the parties are unable to agree on an appropriate price for a license, the decrees provide for a “rate court” proceeding in front of a U.S. district judge. Neither decree contains a termination date.

Many publishers, songwriters and other music industry members have criticized the longstanding decrees, stating that they limit the ability of songwriters and publishers to obtain their own licensing agreements that could result in higher revenues in a free marketplace.

[Read how the music industry is responding to the issue here.](#)

Jody Williams Songs And Warner Chappell Music Sign Peytan Porter



Pictured (L-R): Spencer Nohe, Warner Chappell Music Nashville A&R Director; Nina Jenkins, Jody Williams Songs Creative Director; Peytan Porter; Jody Williams, Jody Williams Songs Founder; Ben Vaughn, Warner Chappell Music Nashville President/CEO. Photo: Nathan Zucker

Dawsonville, GA native **Peytan Porter** has signed her first publishing deal with Jody Williams Songs, in partnership with Warner Chappell Music.

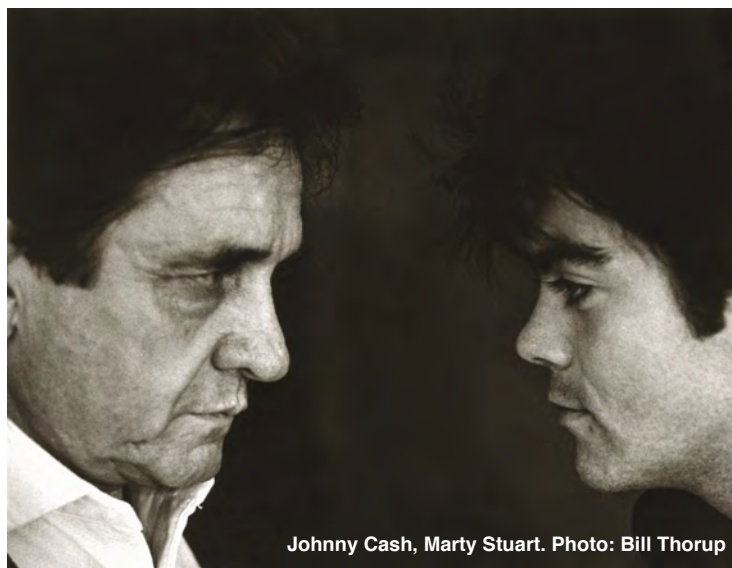
The singer-songwriter moved to Nashville to attend Lipscomb University in 2016. Seeking out collaborators in co-writers outside the organized writing rooms of Music Row, Porter found further encouragement in fellow up-and-coming writers and began honing her style, particularly stories that paint pictures beyond her hometown's 8.2 square mile radius.

“Peytan's writing is so emotive and sophisticated structurally. The first time she performed for us in the office I was moved to tears, asking her to repeat a second verse just to take it in a bit longer. It's exciting to have this opportunity to help someone with her natural talent realize her goals as a songwriter and artist,” says JWS founder **Jody Williams**. “She definitely has the gift!”

“So, as you can imagine, the opportunity to now work with Jody Williams Songs and the Warner Chappell family feels like a long-awaited exhale,” Porter says. “I knew from our first conversations that Jody and Nina are truly song-first people, and I feel fortunate to get to create in a space that advocates for excellent songwriting as it's not just what I do, it's who I am. I've always just written myself through things: my childhood, my first heartbreak, to this last year we've all survived. I'm glad I get to keep doing that and am honored to join a roster of writers and artists that I so greatly admire!”

MR

DISCLAIMER Single Reviews: Marty Stuart, Blake Shelton, Tiera, Caitlyn Smith, Old Dominion



Johnny Cash, Marty Stuart. Photo: Bill Thorup

We have a historic Disclaimer column today—for the first time, five of our spotlight sounds are by African-American country up-and-comer's.

Mind you, not all of them have a deep understanding of what “country” is, exactly. But if you're into hick-hop fusion styles, we have you covered.

Of these five, two of them have authentic approaches, **Aaron Vance** and our DisCOVERY Award winner, **Charley Crockett**.

Scattered among these folks are a bevy of country heavyweights. **Old Dominion**, **Maren Morris**, **Willie Nelson**, **FGL** and **Kip Moore** are all on hand.

The Disc of the Day prize is shared by two extraordinary rocking tracks. New Country Music Hall of Fame honoree **Marty Stuart** rides high with “I’ve Been Around” and future Hall of Famer **Blake Shelton** is right there with him singing “Minimum Wage.”

[Read Robert K. Oermann's reviews of Marty Stuart, Blake Shelton, Tiera, Caitlyn Smith, Old Dominion, Charley Crockett, and more, here.](#)

MORE TOP STORIES

[Hailey Whitters Announces Deluxe Album ‘Living The Dream’](#)

[A&R Executive Larry Willoughby Dies](#)

[Eric Church To Sing National Anthem At Super Bowl LV](#)

[Country Entertainer Hugh X. Lewis Dies At Age 90](#)

[Red Street Records And Red Street Publishing Adds To Roster](#)

[2020 Country Radio Hall of Fame Honorees To Be Inducted During CRS 2021](#)

[Scott Borchetta Announces Big Machine Racing Team](#)

[SOURCE Nashville 2021 Board Members Announced](#)

[Organizers Cancel C2C: Country to Country 2021 Festival](#)

[ASCAP Kicks Off 2021 Master Class Virtually](#)

[A2IM Launches Accelerator to Amplify Black Businesses in the Independent Music Community](#)

[BMI Foundation Scholarship Deadline Extended](#)

[Brad Paisley And Blake Shelton To Co-Host Opry Anniversary Special](#)

[PCG Artist Development Announces New Austin Division](#)

On The Row: Chase Martin Combines Her Wit With Artistry

Chase Martin is a singer-songwriter from Charleston, South Carolina. She graduated from high school early with a 5.0 GPA, and she scored a perfect score (a 36) on the ACT. She was offered a scholarship from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, but that's not what brought her to Music City.

The impressive 22-year old moved to Nashville at 17 to chase her dream of artistry, after catching the bug at a school talent show. Her parents supported her dream, with her mom traveling back and forth from Tennessee to South Carolina while the teenager hunted down bar gigs and songwriter rounds to play in.

"I was in the fourth grade. There was a talent show at my elementary school, and I signed up for it," Chase told *MusicRow* on a recent virtual visit. "I came home from school that day and said 'Hey mom, I signed up for the talent show at school!' She was like, 'Oh okay, what's your talent?'"

Chase wanted to sing and play guitar, even though she didn't know how to play the guitar. After finding a Yamaha guitar in their attic, Chase took a few lessons at a guitar shop in her neighborhood.

"I learned 'Our Song' by Taylor Swift and I played it two weeks later in our talent show. I was so nervous getting up on stage, I cried to my mom," Chase said. "Once I went up there they literally had to fishhook me off the stage because I didn't want to get off... I was hooked."

Chase then went to an art school, where she was in



Chase Martin. Photo: Jason Myers

the band and learned to play the piccolo.

After a few years of grinding through as many gigs as she could play, and building an Instagram following, Chase met RECORDS Nashville / Wide Open Music's **Ash Bowers**, who helped her get integrated into Nashville's music business.

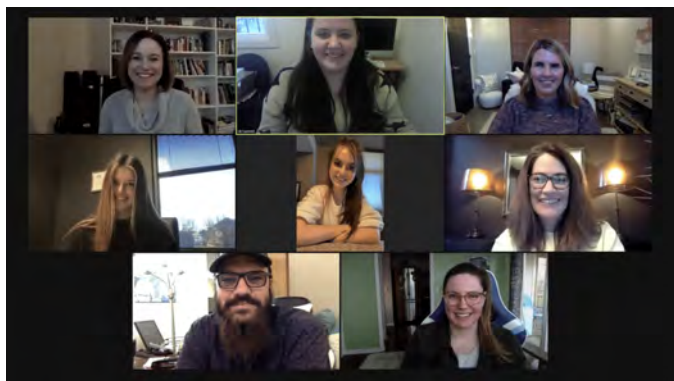
"About two and a half years ago, I met Ash [Bowers] and **Brendan [Rich]** at Wide Open. They have been the greatest thing to happen to me since I moved to town, they've really taken me under their wing. They ended up signing me and they got me my first record deal and publishing deal. So 2020 was a pretty good year for me," Chase joked. "They've been a dream to work with."

Now, five years later, Chase has a record deal with RECORDS Nashville and a publishing deal with Endurance Music Group. She also has her first single out, a song called "Levi Denim," written by **Matt Stell**, **Allison Veltz-Cruz**, and **Abby Anderson**.

"The first time I heard ['Levi Denim'] I was like, 'Man, this sounds like something I would have written, something I should have written!' I was shocked that I didn't think of it," Chase said. "As soon as I heard it, I was like, 'I have to cut this song. It's so me.'"

"Levi Denim" is the first single that RECORDS Nashville has released, after the Music City office was launched by RECORDS head **Barry Weiss** in a joint venture with Sony Music in fall of 2020.

In 2021, the determined Chase Martin is laser-focused on writing, cultivating her social media following, and building off the momentum she's worked hard for. **MR**



Pictured (L-R, top row): Monarch Publicity's Heather Conley; MusicRow's LB Cantrell, Haley Crow; (L-R, middle row): Wide Open Music's Lauren Hamrick; Chase Martin; Monarch Publicity's Cindy Hunt; (L-R, bottom row): MusicRow's Sherod Robertson, Alex Parry

TOP SONGWRITER CHART

This Week	Last Week	Songwriter's Name	Song(s)	Artist
1	–	Josh Osborne	7 Summers Beers And Sunshine Breaking Up Was Easy In The 90's Happy Anywhere How They Remember You Never Be Sorry Next Girl	Morgan Wallen Darius Rucker Sam Hunt Blake Shelton and Gwen Stefani Rascal Flatts Old Dominion Carly Pearce
2	–	Ross Copperman	Beers And Sunshine Happy Anywhere Lady We Were Rich	Darius Rucker Blake Shelton and Gwen Stefani Brett Young Runaway June
3	–	Randy Montana	Better Together Pretty Heart We Didn't Have Much	Luke Combs Parker McCollum Justin Moore
4	–	Morgan Wallen	7 Summers Livin' The Dream More Than My Hometown Somebody's Problem Still Goin Down	Morgan Wallen Morgan Wallen Morgan Wallen Morgan Wallen Morgan Wallen
5	–	Jesse Frasure	Almost Maybes Hole In The Bottle What's Your Country Song	Jordan Davis Kelsea Ballerini Thomas Rhett
6	–	Luke Combs	Better Together Forever After All	Luke Combs Luke Combs
7	–	Shane McAnally	7 Summers Champagne Night Never Be Sorry Next Girl	Morgan Wallen Lady Antebellum Old Dominion Carly Pearce
8	–	Ernest Keith Smith	Big, Big Plans Breaking Up Was Easy In The 90's More Than My Hometown Somebody's Problem	Chris Lane Sam Hunt Morgan Wallen Morgan Wallen
9	–	Mike Henderson	Starting Over	Chris Stapleton
10	–	Chris Stapleton	Starting Over	Chris Stapleton
11	–	Ashley Gorley	Hole In The Bottle Single Saturday Night We Were Rich What's Your Country Song	Kelsea Ballerini Cole Swindell Runaway June Thomas Rhett
12	–	Jon Nite	I Hope Lady	Gabby Barrett Brett Young
13	–	Hillary Lindsey	Almost Maybes Hole In The Bottle	Jordan Davis Kelsea Ballerini
14	–	Dan Isbell	Better Together	Luke Combs
15	–	Gabby Barrett	I Hope The Good Ones	Gabby Barrett Gabby Barrett
16	–	Zachary Kale	I Hope The Good Ones	Gabby Barrett Gabby Barrett
17	–	Parker Welling	Love You Like I Used To What's Your Country Song	Russell Dickerson Thomas Rhett
18	–	Niko Moon	Gone Good Time	Dierks Bentley Niko Moon
19	–	Matt Jenkins	Happy Anywhere	Blake Shelton and Gwen Stefani
20	–	Michael Hardy	Livin' The Dream More Than My Hometown Single Saturday Night Still Goin Down What Do I Know	Morgan Wallen Morgan Wallen Cole Swindell Morgan Wallen Robert Counts

This Week	Last Week	Songwriter's Name	Song(s)	Artist
21	–	Jacob Durrett	Big, Big Plans Livin' The Dream Somebody's Problem	Chris Lane Morgan Wallen Morgan Wallen
22	–	Ryan Vojtesak	More Than My Hometown Still Goin Down Worship You	Morgan Wallen Morgan Wallen Kane Brown
23	–	Brock Berryhill	Happy Does Hard Days	Kenny Chesney Brantley Gilbert
24	–	Kyle Fishman	Down To One	Luke Bryan
25	–	Justin Ebach	Down To One	Luke Bryan
26	–	Dallas Davidson	Down To One	Luke Bryan
27	–	Rodney Clawson	Momma's House Somebody's Problem	Dustin Lynch Morgan Wallen
28	–	Kevin Bard	Just The Way	Parmalee x Blanco Brown
29	–	N.W. Sipe	Just The Way	Parmalee x Blanco Brown
30	–	Matt Thomas	Just The Way	Parmalee x Blanco Brown
31	–	Jason Evigan	I Should Probably Go To Bed	Dan + Shay
32	–	Sean Douglas	I Should Probably Go To Bed	Dan + Shay
33	–	Dan Smyers	I Should Probably Go To Bed	Dan + Shay
34	–	Shay Mooney	I Should Probably Go To Bed	Dan + Shay
35	–	Taylor Swift	No Body, No Crime	Taylor Swift (featuring Haim)
36	–	Andrew DeRoberts	All Night Champagne Night	Brothers Osborne Lady Antebellum
37	–	Parker McCollum	Pretty Heart	Parker McCollum
38	–	Corey Crowder	Drinkin' Beer. Talkin' God. Amen Famous Friends Long Live	Chase Rice feat. Florida Georgia Line Chris Young + Kane Brown Florida Georgia Line
39	–	Greylan James	Happy Does	Kenny Chesney
40	–	Brad Clawson	Happy Does	Kenny Chesney
41	–	Jamie Paulin	Happy Does	Kenny Chesney
42	–	John Thomas Harding	Beers And Sunshine	Darius Rucker
43	–	Darius Rucker	Beers And Sunshine	Darius Rucker
44	–	Brett Young	Lady	Brett Young
45	–	Tyler Hubbard	Lil Bit Long Live	Nelly & Florida Georgia Line Florida Georgia Line
46	–	Allison Margaret Cruz	Somebody Like That	Tenille Arts
47	–	Tenille Arts	Somebody Like That	Tenille Arts
48	–	Alex Kline	Somebody Like That	Tenille Arts
49	–	Jordan Davis	Almost Maybes	Jordan Davis
50	–	Monty Criswell	Hell Of A View	Eric Church
51	–	Eric Church	Hell Of A View	Eric Church
52	–	C. Beathard	Hell Of A View	Eric Church
53	–	Nicolle Galyon	Gone We Were Rich	Dierks Bentley Runaway June
54	–	Allen Shamblin	How They Remember You	Rascal Flatts
55	–	M. Beeson	How They Remember You	Rascal Flatts
56	–	Steph Jones	Hole In The Bottle	Kelsea Ballerini
57	–	Kelsea Ballerini	Hole In The Bottle	Kelsea Ballerini
58	–	Josh Murty	Good Time	Niko Moon
59	–	Anna Moon	Good Time	Niko Moon
60	–	Jordan Minton	Good Time	Niko Moon

CALENDAR

Singles

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

Frankie Justin/*Quittin You*/SMG-Nashville

February 1

Jimmie Allen & Brad Paisley/*Freedom Was A Highway*/Stoney Creek Records

Eric Lee/*Same Dirt Road*/Blue Hill Records

Albums

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

February 5

Aaron Lee Tasjan/*Tasjan! Tasjan! Tasjan!*/New West Records

Industry Events

February 17-19

Country Radio Seminar

February 17

MusicRow's CountryBreakout Awards (Virtual)