

COUNTRY MUSIC

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NEWS (Continued from 24)

JUSTICE RECORDS WILL RELEASE *West Texas Heaven*, the debut album of Austin, TX based singer/songwriter **Kimmie Rhodes**, on April 23. The record features vocal duets with **Willie Nelson**, **Waylon Jennings** and **Townes Van Zandt**.

GARTH BROOKS CONTINUES TO BREAK records as his fans snatch up tickets to see him perform during his world tour. Brooks sold out four shows (May 2-5) at Kansas City's Kemper Arena, with fans buying over 63,000 tickets. This broke the venue's existing ticket sales record (set by Neil Diamond) in December 1982.

CMT AND CABLE PLUS, the largest cable TV operator in the Czech Republic, have reached an agreement to launch CMT to 100,000 Cable Plus subscribers throughout the Czech Republic and Slovak Republic.

ARISTOMEDIA HAS COMPILED a comprehensive annual report on the *Status of Country Video*. The updated guide offers information on the types of video outlets available to country artists and labels and can be ordered by calling (615) 269-7071.

TNN WILL BROADCAST A SPECIAL on country radio April 16 at 8 p.m. (EST). *Faith Hill And Little Texas: Turn Your Radio On*, a 60-minute program, will look at the relationship between country entertainers and radio. The show was taped at the **Country Radio Seminar** and at a **Grand Ole Opry** concert exclusively for radio decision-makers.

BERNARD PORTER HAS OPENED two new Nashville-based companies—**Big Fish Entertainment** and **Big Fish Management**. Porter is a former partner with **Williams, Bell & Associates**.

ROCK THE SMOKIES, the free 10-hour southern rock/country music festival, announced that over 280,000 requests for free tickets have been generated from all over the country. Additional free ticket requests must be made before May 10; after this date, Ticketmaster will offer tickets for \$25.00. The Skool Music- and Texaco-sponsored event is being called the "Country Woodstock" because of the **Forks of the River** farm venue in Newport TN. Scheduled entertainers include **Marty Stuart**, **Travis Tritt**, **Hank Jr.**, **Charlie Daniels Band**, **Marshall Tucker** and **.38 Special**.

WORD RECORDS PROMOTED GRANT HUBBARD to the position of director of national promotions. Grant previously held the position of manager of national promotions.

JAMES BROWN, THE GODFATHER OF SOUL, recently showed up unannounced at a **Diamond Rio** concert in Augusta, GA. Brown endorsed his favorite Diamond Rio song, "It's All In Your Head," by saying, "That song is *happening*."

THE NINTH ANNUAL MUSIC ROW Ladies Golf Tournament is scheduled for Monday, June 3 at Old Natchez Trace. The tournament, sponsored by **ASCAP**, **Capitol Records** and **TNN** will raise money for **United Cerebral Palsy of Middle Tennessee**.

JULIE BALLWEG WAS PROMOTED to sr. director of A&R administration for **MCA Records/Nashville**. Ballweg will continue to be responsible for all A&R administration for both **MCA** and **Decca Records**.

IMPRINT RECORDS ANNOUNCED THE SIGNING of three-time Canadian Country Male Vocalist **Charlie Major**. The label will release Major's album, **Lucky Man**, later this year.

CHARLIE COLVIN, OWNER AND CEO of **Bethany Records**, announced an agreement with the **Landmark Group**, a division of **Homeland Entertainment**, for the distribution of **Bethany Records**.

AMERICAN ACOUSTIC COUNTRY, the first weekly hour-long show that features contemporary bluegrass and acoustic country bands to be available on CD, is nearing the 200 station clearances its recent participation in the **Country Radio Seminar** in Nashville. Hosted by **Tom Riggs**, the show's recent guests have included **Alison Krauss**, **Vince Gill**, **Ricky Skaggs**, **Bill Monroe**, and **Marty Raybon** of **Shenandoah**.

STEVE FRET WAS APPOINTED to the position of CEO for **Music Entertainment Group (MEG)** and its subsidiaries. Fret will oversee all of the company's recording and publishing interests.

THE 30TH ANNUAL CMA AWARDS will be telecast Wed., October 2, on the CBS TV Network from the **Grand Ole Opry House** in Nashville. The CMA Awards will be followed by **SRO**, CMA's entertainment expo, Oct. 3-5.

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