

NASHVILLE

LIFESTYLES

THE MUSIC ISSUE

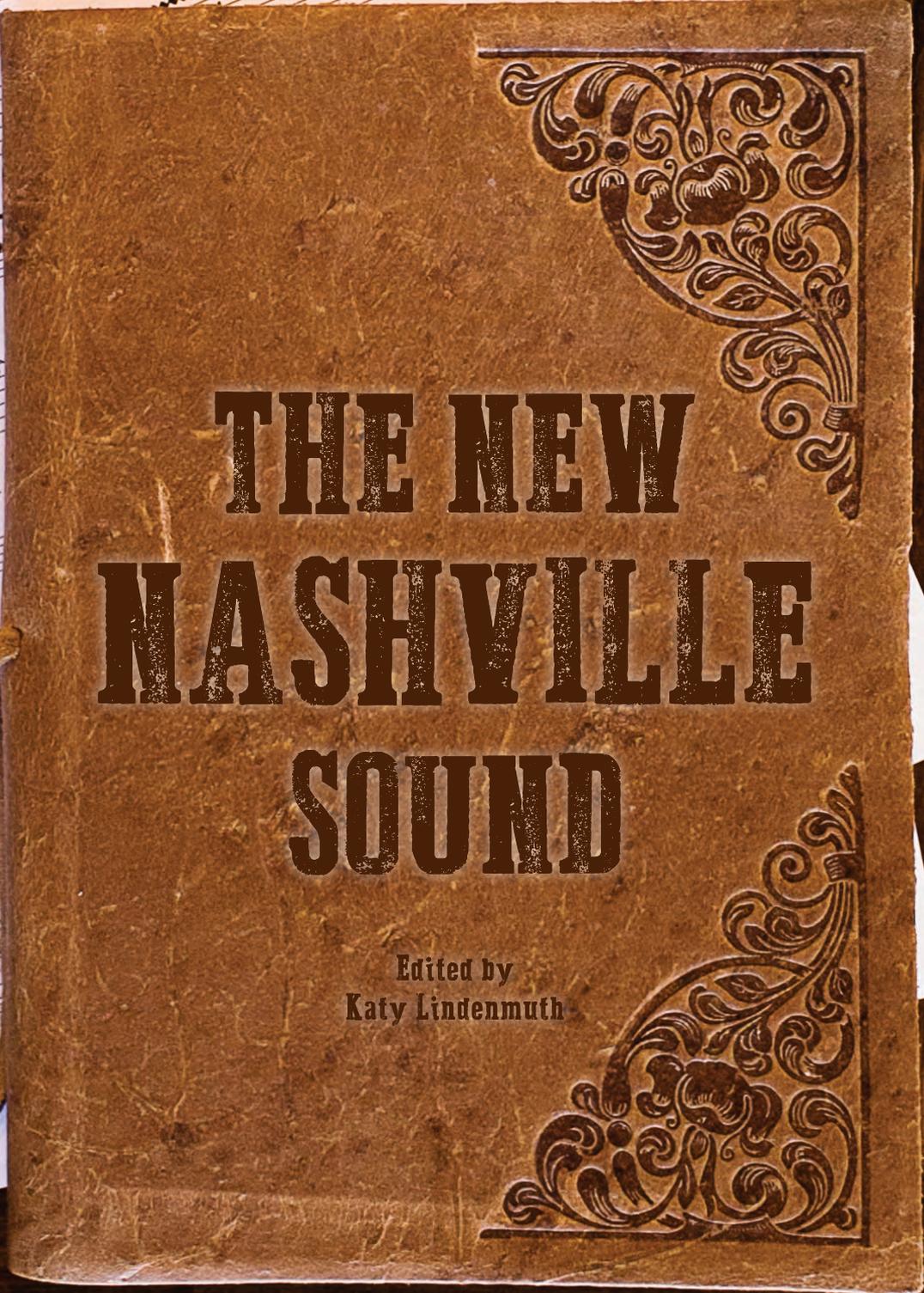
FEATURING
Carrie
+ 20 MORE
ARTISTS TO
WATCH

PLUS
NEW YEAR
WELLNESS
& WORKOUTS

GO INSIDE
A CELEBRITY
ROCKER'S
MANSION

TRAVEL
GRAND
CAYMAN
ISLAND





THE NEW NASHVILLE SOUND

Edited by
Katy Lindenmuth

Music City has opened its doors to much more than country—we now boast a canon of rock, Americana, hip-hop, and soul. But let's be real: Country music built this town, and those are the tunes we still hear drifting through the streets. We can't deny our allegiance to country music radio and the powerhouses who dominate it, including our cover girl Carrie Underwood. There's also a new class of rising stars, some of whom support the radio scene as the songwriters behind the hits while others create their very own independent play space. Meanwhile, this town provides a safe haven for music outlaws—the ones making soul-fueling tunes for the love of the craft. So how do we define the “new” Nashville sound? It's got a little bit of everything...including plenty of twang.

Somethin' Good *(About to Happen)*

AFTER A DECADE IN THE SPOTLIGHT, CARRIE UNDERWOOD LOOKS FORWARD TO THE BIG CHANGES THAT LIE AHEAD. BY KRISTIN LUNA



When you're a global sensation who launched onto the international music scene at warp speed thanks to a little reality singing competition called *American Idol*, then put out four platinum albums, won six Grammys, cohosted the CMA Awards seven times, and even starred as Maria von Trapp in a TV special of *The Sound of Music*, where do you go from there? If you're Carrie Underwood, the obvious next step is releasing a greatest hits collection. (Oh, and expanding your family—but we'll get to that later.)

"I definitely wanted to have new music out [in 2014] ... and it was like, 'Wow, has it really been 10 years since *American Idol*?'” Underwood, 31, recalls. “Once we started going through songs, past albums, and past hits, I thought, ‘Well, if we wait any longer, we’re going to end up on three discs!’ I didn’t want to cut anything out, so it was kind of now or never.”

The double-disc *Greatest Hits: Decade #1* dropped in December and features 20 familiar songs, one live performance (“How Great Thou Art” with Vince Gill), three writing session work tapes, and two new tracks. Lead single “Something in the Water” is closer to vintage Underwood—think earnest power ballads like “Jesus, Take the Wheel”—than 2012’s intense, drama-fueled “Blown Away” and “Two Black Cadillacs.” It’s also a little deeper and more personal than some of her previous offerings: “I love singing ‘Something in the Water’ and can definitely see it becoming one of my all-time favorites,” she says. (For the record, she adds, she never tires of singing older songs like “Jesus, Take the Wheel” and “So Small.”)

“I definitely wanted to have new music out [in 2014] ... and it was like, ‘Wow, has it really been 10 years since American Idol?’”

JEREMY COWART

And then there's that *other* special project she's been working on. The mom-to-be freely admits that her life will change dramatically when she and her husband, Predators center Mike Fisher, welcome their first child early this year. Underwood is famously private, but she did announce the upcoming family addition via Instagram. She also let her CMA Awards cohost Brad Paisley stealthily spill the beans on the baby's gender—it's a boy!—during the live broadcast in November.

"I wasn't really on board [with announcing it] for the longest time," she says. "But then I started thinking, I'm going to be doing some interview somewhere and I'm going to say 'him' or 'he' and screw it up—it's *going* to happen. So I'd rather be somewhat in control of that information than let it slip out some other way."

The new-mom lifestyle seems an apt fit for Underwood, who is a self-proclaimed homebody; when she's not on the road, she's often holed up with her dogs Ace and Penny in their Brentwood home or cheering on Fisher at a Preds game. As a vegan, the singer doesn't dine out a whole lot—though she recently enjoyed a meal with friends at Moto and is a fan of the healthy fare at Silly Goose and The Wild Cow—and makes a concerted effort to cook as much as possible. "I enjoy making food and eating it. Those are two things I really like, and I'm getting better at the 'making it' part," she adds.

While they have no immediate plans to relocate once the baby is born, Underwood and Fisher do own a large plot of land in Williamson County, where the Oklahoma-born country girl says they'll "spread out" someday. "We're both farm people," she explains. "We both like a lot of space, and my husband's very at home on a tractor. I cannot wait to be out there and have lots of animals and our own little farm."

Until then, Underwood will keep writing and recording. The first part of 2015 will understandably be lighter as far as work is concerned, but she plans to spend her downtime collecting songs and "forging ahead writing new stuff." She's also open to doing more duets—she's already collaborated with artists like Paisley, Gill, Michael W. Smith, and Randy Travis; last year, she teamed up with fellow superstar Miranda Lambert for the rebellious anthem "Somethin' Bad." "It just really has to work," she says. "Miranda and I knew that at some point we would sing a

song together—it was completely and totally inevitable. But if you try to start forcing things, then it ends up all wrong. It has to be the right time and the right song ... it really all has to come together." (This particular duet ultimately "came together" in its explosive *Thelma & Louise*-themed music video.)

After a decade's worth of those kinds of hits, Underwood stands at the forefront of today's country music. But she and Lambert are among the few female artists getting airplay—despite the abundance of talent, drive, and beauty in the pool. "I have no idea what the answer is, but I know I'm very lucky and very blessed that I'm one of the ones that gets played," she says, adding that she hopes Kacey Musgraves, fellow *Idol* alum Lauren Alaina, Sarah Darling, and newcomers Maddie & Tae all get their deserved time in the spotlight. "[Women on the radio] is definitely something that I would like to see more of—bring them on."

"Miranda and I knew that at some point we would sing a song together—it was completely and totally inevitable. But if you try to start forcing things, then it ends up all wrong. It has to be the right time and the right song ... it really all has to come together."



CARRIE THROUGH THE YEARS

In the ten years since she sang her way into the hearts of America on national television, this self-professed country girl from Oklahoma has racked up quite the array of achievements and accolades—from landing 18 number one hits to selling 64 million albums worldwide. Here are some of her career highlights...so far.

2005: Wins *American Idol*; first single debuts at number one on the Billboard Hot 100; releases first album, *Some Hearts*

2006: Opens for Brad Paisley's tour

2007: Wins two Grammy Awards; releases sophomore album, *Carnival Ride*

2008: Headlines her first tour; inducted into the Grand Ole Opry; hosts the CMA Awards for the first of seven times

2009: Releases third album, *Play On*; named Entertainer of the Year at the ACM Awards for the second consecutive year

2010: Sings the national anthem at the Super Bowl; marries Predators hockey player Mike Fisher

2011: Headlines the annual iHeartRadio Music Festival

2012: Records *CMT Crossroads* with Steven Tyler; releases fourth album, *Blown Away*

2013: Plays the lead role in the primetime TV broadcast of *The Sound of Music Live!*

2014: Releases the double-disc *Greatest Hits: Decade #1*

2015: Launches her fitness apparel line, CALIA by Carrie Underwood, with Dick's Sporting Goods.