

Kenny Chesney Honors "Never Wanted Nothing More" Writers

ASCAP, BMI Parties Celebrate Chris Stapleton, Ronnie Bowman

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Ronnie Bowman (left), Kenny Chesney and Chris Stapleton at No. 1 party for "Never Wanted Nothing More" on Dec. 19, 2007
Photo Credit: Marilu White

There was good cheer aplenty Wednesday (Dec. 19) as denizens of Nashville's Music Row abandoned their offices to revel at two separate parties in honor of Chris Stapleton and Ronnie Bowman, writers of the Kenny Chesney hit "Never Wanted Nothing More." Ratcheting up the excitement was the fact that Chesney showed up for both

blowouts -- sporting one arm in a sling.

Festivities kicked off midafternoon at the offices of ASCAP, Stapleton's performance rights organization and then moved a couple of hours later to the BMI building, where Bowman holds membership.

Putting the song into context, ASCAP's Mike Sistad informed partygoers that "Never Wanted Nothing More" was the first collaboration between Stapleton and Bowman, that it had been the fastest rising single of Chesney's career and that it had held the No. 1 spot on *Billboard's* country charts for five straight weeks.

Sistad also pointed out that Stapleton is a performer in his own right and currently a member of the band the SteelDrivers which will have its first album out on Rounder Records on Jan. 15.

Chesney was wearing his left arm in a sling when he came forward to join Sistad and the two songwriters in the spotlight. Friends of Chesney later explained that he was recovering from elective surgery for a "minor" shoulder ailment.

Chesney thanked Clay Bradley from Sony/BMG's artist and repertoire department for bringing him the song. "I felt this song spoke to a lot of people in a lot of different ways," he said. "I love songs like that."

When it came his turn to speak, Stapleton praised Chesney for his way with music. "He can take a good song," the songwriter explained, "and make it do great things."

Observing that Chesney's shoulder operation was keeping him from his usual winter retreat to tropical isles, ASCAP's senior vice president, Connie Bradley, presented him with a yard sign that read: "Welcome to Kenny's Paradise/What Happens Here Stays Here."

Later, at the BMI soiree, Jody Williams, BMI's vice president of writer-publisher relations, summarized Bowman's achievements to the crowd. He said the singer-songwriter grew up in Virginia performing with a family gospel group. Subsequently, he joined the bluegrass bands Lost & Found and the Lonesome River Band before moving on to be a solo performer. Along the way, Williams added, Bowman had won a handful of major awards from the International Bluegrass Music Association.

In 2002, Williams continued, Bowman signed as a songwriter with Sony/ATV. Co-writing with Don Cook -- who had traced him down after hearing him sing on a public radio show -- Bowman penned his first hit, "It's Getting Better All the Time," a No. 1 single for Brooks & Dunn.

After the introduction, Williams beckoned Bowman forward and presented him a guitar for the success of "Never Wanted Nothing More." Williams also acknowledged Chesney's producer, Buddy Cannon. He joked that Cannon was so environmentally sensitive that he has quit accepting the traditional BMI No. 1 cups and instead simply tapes the titles of new No. 1's to his original cup.

When Ed Salamon, executive director of Country Radio Broadcasters, presented Bowman a certificate for the radio airplay "Never Wanted Nothing More" had generated, he quoted Chesney's cogent assessment of the work: "Only in a country music song can you get laid and saved in three minutes."

"It was a lot about my history," Chesney said of the song. "It was bluegrass. It was Southern rock. It was a lot of things."

The crowd of supporters, which included Bobby Bare and Del McCoury, greeted Bowman like a rock star when it came his turn to speak. He began his remarks by acknowledging his late sister, whom he said had been a victim of domestic violence. "She's with me now," he said.

Bowman mused that the song might not have happened at all. He and Stapleton were originally scheduled to write together at 10 in the morning, he recalled, but circumstances caused them to move the appointment to 3 in the afternoon. "We could have decided to drink beer," he said. "But we decided to drink beer and write."

[View photos from "Never Wanted Nothing More" No. 1 parties.](#)

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