



Grand Ole Opry Live to Launch August 18 On CMT: Country Music Television

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NASHVILLE, Tenn., Jul 12, 2001 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- "Grand Ole Opry Live," the televised segment of the world-famous WSM Grand Ole Opry radio show, will launch on CMT: Country Music Television on Saturday, August 18, at 8-9 p.m. (Eastern).

"This is an exciting event for all of country music. Country is the only musical style with an internationally recognized home, and that home is the Grand Ole Opry. Now, the Opry will be part of the leading proponent of country music on television--CMT," said Carl Kornmeyer, president of the Music, Media & Entertainment Group of Gaylord Entertainment Company, which owns the Opry.

On CMT, "Grand Ole Opry Live" will expand from 30 minutes to 60 minutes and will air three times each weekend instead of the current two times. CMT's original telecast each Saturday at 8-9 p.m. (Eastern) will be live from the 4,400-seat Grand Ole Opry House in Nashville (repeats at 11 p.m.-midnight on Saturday and at 11 a.m.-noon on Sunday). The program now is on TNN: The National Network. Both CMT and TNN are owned and operated by MTV Networks, a unit of Viacom International Inc.

"CMT is devoted to keeping our viewers completely connected to country music, and it's a great honor for the network to be home to the most revered and respected brand in country music in the world," said Paul Hastaba, Senior Vice President and General Manager, CMT. "The Opry is a vibrant and exciting showcase for the legends of our genre as well as for contemporary stars and up-and-coming talent that so respects the tradition and history of the Opry. The addition of 'Grand Ole Opry Live' to CMT's weekly programming line-up brings us full-circle in delivering everything about our genre to our viewers nationwide."

Both CMT and the Opry see many positive effects in the move to the music-focused network.

"This will attract new viewers to CMT while exposing the Opry's legends to CMT's younger demographic mix. It also allows rising artists on the Opry another avenue to attract new fans. The Opry represents the depth and breadth of country music, and our joining with an industry leader such as CMT benefits everyone," Kornmeyer continued.

The 60-minute format will combine performances from the Opry stage with behind-the-scenes segments that highlight the special atmosphere of the 75-year-old show. The Opry is the longest-running live radio show in the world and is the most recognized brand in country music.

"We are delighted about the expansion to a 60-minute show," said Steve Buchanan, president of the Grand Ole Opry Group. "This allows us to showcase not only the dynamic entertainment on the Opry stage but also behind-the-scenes activities, all of which make the Opry a special place."

The Opry's fluid format makes every show different. Approximately 70 country music stars make up the Opry cast, and each show features a large number of member acts and special guests. The result is a diverse show with a wide variety of musical styles.

"The Opry is about relationships between artists, fans, and the great legacy of the show itself. We are very pleased with the new relationship with CMT and the opportunity that provides us to work with a partner that shares our passion for the music and the magic of the Opry," Buchanan said.

CMT, a 24-hour country music network, carries original programming, specials, and live concerts and events, as well as a mix of videos by established country music artists and new cutting-edge acts, including world premiere exclusive videos. Founded March 6, 1983, the network, owned and operated by MTV Networks, reaches more than 48.3 million households in the United States.

MTV Networks, a unit of Viacom International Inc. (NYSE: VIA, VIA.B), owns and operates the following television programming services -- MTV: MUSIC TELEVISION, MTV2, VH1, NICKELODEON/NICK at NITE, TV LAND, TNN, CMT and the THE DIGITAL SUITE FROM MTV NETWORKS, a package of nine digital services, all of which are trademarks of MTV Networks.

Gaylord Entertainment is a diversified entertainment company headquartered in Nashville, Tenn., and its stock is traded on the New York Stock Exchange (symbol: GET). Its businesses operate in two groups: Hospitality & Attractions, and Music, Media & Entertainment. Among its businesses are the Opryland Hotels, the Grand Ole Opry Group, Acuff-Rose Music Publishing, Word Entertainment and WSM/WWTN Radio.

CONTACT: Gaylord Entertainment, Nashville
Media Contacts:
Tom Adkinson, 615/316-6302
tadkinson@gaylordentertainment.com
or
CMT
Jama Bowen, 615/457-8581
jlbowen@country.com
or
Investor Contact:
J. Russell Worsham, 615/316-6564
rworsham@gaylordentertainment.com

