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MEDIA RELEASE

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Top Alberta Country Music Artists Perform Concert During Host City Kick-off for Juno Awards Weekend

Calgary, AB - A star-studded country music event will honour the success of Alberta artists and celebrate the province's rich music traditions when country music artists George Canyon, Carolyn Dawn Johnson, Gord Bamford, Aaron Lines, Tracy Millar, and Trevor Panczak perform on **Thursday, April 3, 2008 at the Southern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium**. This event, titled the *Alberta Country Music Salute*, is part of the *Calgary. Music Lives Here* host city celebrations for the 2008 JUNO Awards™, which will take place in Calgary, April 3 – 6, 2008.

"Alberta artists really rose to the top in this year's JUNO Award nominations, especially in the country music category," said Terry Rock, President & CEO of Calgary Arts Development and Co-chair of the Calgary Host Committee for the 2008 JUNO Awards™. "We're really pleased to present this special performance of Alberta's country music icons and rising stars to celebrate the arrival of the 2008 JUNO Awards™ and the continued strength of our country music industry."

George Canyon and Carolyn Dawn Johnson are both JUNO Award Winners and both Gord Bamford and Aaron Lines are nominated for 2008 JUNO Awards™ for Country Recording of the Year.

Tickets for the Alberta Country Music Salute go on sale TODAY. Tickets can be purchased for \$42 (GST included) plus service charges at all Ticketmaster outlets, by calling 777-0000, or purchase online at Ticketmaster.ca. All proceeds from this event will go to support the Calgary Host Committee's Music Lives Here Legacy Initiative.

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EVENT INFORMATION

Alberta Country Music Salute: Honouring success and celebrating tradition with Alberta country music stars George Canyon, Carolyn Dawn Johnson, Gord Bamford, Aaron Lines, Tracy Millar, and Trevor Panczak.
Thursday, April 3, 2008 at 7:30 p.m., Southern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium

SPONSORS

The Alberta Country Music Salute is proudly presented by COUNTRY 105FM, with generous support from the GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA, the ALBERTA FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS, and ALBERTA MUSIC.

Lead sponsors for the Calgary Host Committee for the 2008 JUNO Awards™ and the *Calgary. Music Lives Here* Initiative are CALGARY ARTS DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM CALGARY, THE CITY OF CALGARY, the GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA, and DEVON CANADA.

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ARTIST BACKGROUNDER: Alberta Country Music Salute

Honouring success and celebrating tradition with Alberta Country Music Stars George Canyon, Carolyn Dawn Johnson, Gord Bamford, Aaron Lines, Tracy Millar, and Trevor Panczak

**Thursday, April 3, 2008 at the Southern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium at 7:30 p.m.
TICKETS \$42 + service charges, available at Ticketmaster**

George Canyon



Since May of 2004, George Canyon has been making a splash on the country music scene with a number of awards, releases and chart-toppers. Having been thrust into the spotlight by the USA Network/CMT Canada television show Nashville Star, Canyon's major label debut, *One Good Friend* shot to #1 on the Canadian Country charts its first week out. He followed that up with the top 5 singles, "I'll Never Do Better Than You," "My Name," "Who Would You Be" and "One Good Friend." With the release of his second major label album, *Somebody Wrote Love*, on July 4th, 2006 through Universal Canada, Canyon continued to re-establish his hold on country fans. In 2005, Canyon won the Juno Award for Country Recording of the Year for *One Good Friend*, which started off an amazing run of awards for the artist. He went on to win a second Juno in 2007 for *Somebody Wrote Love* in the same category. He brought home three other CCMA's that year and won an additional two in 2006. As 2007 closed, Canyon thought it was time to pay tribute to the biggest influences in his career with an album of his favourite songs from some of his iconic idols. The first single, a raucous rendition of Johnny Cash's "Ring of Fire," and it is one of several classics that Canyon has paid homage to with the project.

Carolyn Dawn Johnson



Arriving in Nashville in 1995, Carolyn Dawn Johnson developed her skill and reputation as a songwriter while working odd jobs to pay the bills. A publishing deal led to cuts by artists including Jo Dee Messina, Patty Loveless, Kathy Mattea and more. Her first No. 1 as a writer came in 1999 with Chely Wright's "Single White Female." The milestones came quickly. She was named Music Row magazine's Breakthrough Songwriter of the Year in 2000. Her first album, *Room With A View*, bowed in 2001 and launched her first hits as an artist including "Georgia," "I Don't Want You To Go" and the top 5 smash "Complicated." Critical acclaim and the approval of her peers poured in, and Johnson was honored as the Academy of Country Music's Top New Female Vocalist in 2002. The American Music Awards hailed her as Favorite New Country Artist the following year. In 2006, she released her third album, *Love And Negotiation*. She wrote or co-wrote all 12 songs, produced eight of them and co-produced the other four with legendary musician and producer Dann Huff.

Gord Bamford



The year 2008 is shaping up to be a big one for Lacombe, Alberta's Gord Bamford. In January Gord released his second single from his *Honkytonks And Heartaches* album and the song "Stayed 'Til Two" rocketed into the top ten after only four weeks of release. The song, penned by Gord and co-producer Byron Hill tells the familiar story of the guy who went for "one" and time just slipped away. It was in early February that Gord also received his first Juno nomination, with the aforementioned album being nominated for "Country Recording Of The Year".

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Gord Bamford

Since the release of the album in September 2007, Gord has quickly established himself as one of the "young guns" of country music. The first single "Blame It On That Red Dress" was released to radio in early August and by mid-October was firmly entrenched in the Top Ten in Canada, as well as being the highest charted single by a Canadian artist at that point. The video for "Blame It On That Red Dress" was filmed on the beach in Tofino, B.C. and in early November reached the Number One spot on CMT's Chevy Top Twenty. In October, Gord was featured in the cover story of *Country Music News*, and the publisher Larry Delaney, says of the new album, "...just watch what this one should deliver. It's the stuff that "Album Of The Year" are made of!!" True enough, the album was selected as Country Music News' Canadian Album Of The Year.

Aaron Lines



Moments That Matter, the latest CD from acclaimed country music artist Aaron Lines, has garnered him a Juno nomination for "Country Recording Of The Year". The album is all about family. It makes sense considering the sole reason he moved back to Canada from Nashville a year ago was to be closer to his family. "I just really felt like I needed to be closer to them. I grew up in a really close family and I felt like I was missing out on a lot of the important things in life not being around them very much. I learned quickly that success was no substitute for time spent with my loved ones". That sentiment is evident in the title track of the new CD

which Aaron co-wrote with a friend.... the chorus screams "there's a big pot of gold at the top of the ladder, but you can't buy back moments that matter". This kind of heartfelt lyric is what fans have come to expect from Aaron over the years through songs like "Waitin' on the Wonderful" (the most played song on Canadian country radio 2005), "The Lights of my Hometown" (the most played song on Canadian country radio 2006), "Living Out Loud", "You Can't Hide Beautiful" (top 3 song in the U.S, #1 video in the U.S), "20 years late"...and the list goes on.

Tracy Millar



Since arriving on the country music scene as a CCMA showcase artist in 2003, Tracy Millar has made great strides in the business due to her sensational vocal ability and unsurpassed work ethic. Early recognition of her traditional style has made it obvious to fans and industry personnel that her road is indeed a "country road". Growing up in Hines Creek, Alberta, musical influences such as Charley Pride and Ricky Skaggs helped develop Tracy's love for traditional country music. Many have enjoyed her repertoire as she stays true to her classic country roots. *I'm Not That Girl Anymore* (Fall 2007) is Tracy's second album release and showcases her growth as a songwriter and as an artist. Its traditional country and bluegrass

styling indicate that Canada undoubtedly has a new and captivating voice that simply must be heard.

Trevor Panczak



Often referred to as Southern Alberta's Gentle Giant of Country Music, Trevor Panczak has been writing, singing and performing since he was 14 years old. Back then he was performing alongside his late father Johnny Panczak. Now, with over one thousand performances under his belt, the 27-year old UFA employee is busy with the release of his new CD titled *Roll On*. Raised on a farm near Magrath, Alberta, Canada, Trevor recently accomplished a Canadian first by advancing to the National final of the 26th annual Colgate Country Music Showdown in Nashville Tennessee. Despite a brilliant performance at the

Ryman Auditorium Panczak fell just short of the \$100,000 prize, placing 2nd to Nash Street by a 3-2 vote. Trevor has also excelled in other competitions, winning the Country Vocal Spotlight at the C.F.R. in Edmonton (2000) and the Calgary Stampede Youth Talent Showdown (1999).