



Country artist Justin Moore performs at Ryman Auditorium on May 2, in Nashville, Tennessee. (AFP)

## Music

## Millsap rocks harder

## Nelson 'produces' another quiet gem

By Gregory Kate

Does a lifetime of smoking weed produce chronic bad breath by the time you're a few days short of 85?

Most of us will never know, but Willie Nelson suggests it does in one of the warm, quiet songs on his mortality-tinged "Last Man Standing" CD. Willie's been joking about death for a while now — better to keep it at bay, perhaps — and the wisdom he offers on this one is memorable: "Bad breath is better than no breath at all."

A more serious approach colors the title song, which opens this 11-song collection, co-written with longtime producer Buddy Cannon.

"I don't want to be the last man standing," he opens the CD, lamenting the loss of so many of his closest friends. Then there's a pause — considering the alternative, as the old chestnut goes — before adding, "Well, then maybe I do."

That sets the tone. For longtime fans, who have enjoyed Willie for decades, it forces a painful acknowledgement that the end may be near.

Later he muses on reincarnation, saying he might come back as a preacher or an eagle. And he expresses his desire to continue living this way: "Heaven is closed and hell's overcrowded so I think I'll stay where I am."

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Parker Millsap, "Other Arrangements" (Thirty Tigers)

Even as Parker Millsap rocks harder than ever on his fourth album, he continues to draw on his upbringing in the Pentecostal church.

Such tunes as "Singing to Me" and "Let a Little Light In" are love songs that double as spirituals suitable for Sunday. "When it's getting dark, when my flame won't spark," he sings, "it startles me blind when I see just how you shine." Coupled with Millsap's lyrical ambiguity is the strain of gospel music that helps to make his work so distinctive.

The young Oklahoman cranks up his guitar more on "Other Arrangements," but still makes smart use of dynamics, both from song to song and within each. His versatile dusty tenor provides variety as well — he sings tender pop on "She," and becomes a blues shouter with an aggressive falsetto on the title cut. On "Some People" he rocks with a Daltrey-esque stutter and delivers rat-a-tat rhymes like a rapper.

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Veteran rapper Lil Wayne has signed with Creative Artists Agency, according to a brief statement from the company. He continues to be represented by attorney Ron Sweeney.

The MC has been tied up in a years-long and often bitter legal battle with Cash Money Records, which is co-owned by his former mentor Birdman (Bryan Williams), although photos in the past few months that seem to indicate the pair are at least occasionally on good personal terms. Wayne's "Tha Carter V" album has been held up by the dispute for more than three years, although he has released mixtapes and made multiple live appearances and guest spots on other artists' songs in that time. He has also suffered a series of seizures that has caused cancellations of some concerts and a full-scale death scare in 2013, although he has claimed that they are due to epilepsy. "This isn't my first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh seizure. I've had a bunch of seizures, y'all just never hear about them," he said in 2013. (Agencies)



Tina Fey attends the 2018 Tony Awards Press Junket at InterContinental New York Times Square on May 2, in New York City. (AFP)



Jay-Z



Grande

## Variety

**BIRMINGHAM, Ala:** John "Jab" Starks, one of the drummers who gave funk singer James Brown his driving beat, has died in his native Alabama.

Starks died Tuesday in Mobile days after entering hospice care for a bone marrow disorder and cancer, longtime manager Kathie Williams said Wednesday. He was 79.

Starks played with Bobby "Blue" Bland for years before joining Brown. He and fellow drummer Clyde Stubblefield were the backbone of Brown's rhythm section in the late '60s and early '70s.

Rolling Stone magazine has ranked the Starks-Stubblefield combination among the greatest drummers of all time.

Starks was born in Jackson, located in rural southwest Alabama, north of Mobile. He grew up listening to blues and gospel music and began playing drums in his school band. (AP)

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**LOS ANGELES:** Jay-Z's Roc Nation is launching a television production division to be headed by Weinstein Co alum Patrick Reardon.

As Roc Nation's exec VP of scripted and unscripted television, Reardon will be responsible for building and running the TV department, focusing on developing and producing premium scripted and unscripted content. Reardon is a veteran producer and executive who had served as exec VP and co-head of Weinstein Co's TV department since 2015.

Roc Nation's recent TV and film projects include Spike TV's "Time: The Kalief Browder Story," which has earned a Peabody award this year, and the upcoming "Rest in Power: The Trayvon Martin Story," which just premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival.

"Roc Nation is such an influential and dynamic company. I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to work with them as they expand their brand into television," Reardon said. (RTRS)

## Music

## Festival offers more than music

## Aerosmith, Richie anchor Jazz Fest

**NEW ORLEANS, May 3, (Agencies):** The second weekend of the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival kicks off Thursday. The festival, now in its 49th year, features an array of artists from New Orleans and Louisiana as well as out-of-town performers such as Beck and Aerosmith.

Thursday is often known as locals' day since many of the tourists who come in from out of town haven't arrived yet. Locals that day who produce a valid Louisiana photo ID can buy tickets at the festival for \$50, compared to the regular \$80 price at the gate. Among the headliners Thursday, festivalgoers will have to decide between Lionel Richie, Lyle Lovett and the Blind Boys of Alabama. On Friday, the headliners include Beck, whose 2016 show was rained out, Sheryl Crow and LL Cool J. Saturday's big headliner is Aerosmith while Cage the Elephant closes down the Gentilly Stage and Anita Baker closes the Congo Square Stage. Jack White, the Steve Miller Band and New Orleans' native Trombone Shorty all perform on the festival's last day.

The music may be the headliner at the festival but the art and food should not be missed. The food highlights the rich Creole and Cajun culinary traditions found in southern Louisiana and the local seafood. There's generally a long line for the fried soft-shell crab po-boys, and if you're eating a cochon de lait po-boy, make sure to have napkins handy. If you're looking for a dessert there's sweet potato pie, sno-balls, white chocolate bread pudding and the bright orange mango freeze.

Three venues — the Congo Square African Marketplace, Contemporary Crafts and the Louisiana Marketplace — showcase arts and crafts by various artists. Festival producer Quint Davis says artists send in images of their work to get selected, and the offerings generally rotate each weekend: "There's a broad range ... from an African trader to a Louisiana alligator belt maker to a glass blower."

Usually, visitors have to come to the city on Fat Tuesday or another special occasion to see the Mardi Gras Indians or on a Sunday to see the city's social and pleasure clubs rolling through the streets. But both those groups take part in regular parades or concerts through the festival grounds as part of Jazz Fest.

## Offering

For years, the man known affectionately as "Mr. Okra" would drive slowly through the city's streets in his colorfully-painted truck, offering his wares of fruits and vegetables for sale on a loudspeaker. Residents would go out to buy pineapples, tomatoes, bananas and okra from the man who became a New Orleans institution. Arthur Robinson died in February but his daughter Sergio has taken over his truck. And like her father, she — and the truck

— are also making an appearance at Jazz Fest this weekend. Any-one looking to buy some fresh fruit and learn about a unique part of the city's history can swing by her truck which will be parked by the Jazz & Heritage Stage.

Renowned tap dancer Savion Glover closes down the Jazz Tent on Sunday. Festival producer Quint Davis said Glover will perform on a custom-made floor with special microphones built in to capture the sound of his tapping. "He's an instrument in the band, like the drums or something," Davis said. "His artistry and level of dancing is something we can't forget. Tap is an African-American art form that's always been a part of jazz. If you've never seen him perform, this is one to watch. The level at what he does is like no other." Glover won a Tony Award for his choreography in the musical "Bring in Da Noise, Bring in Da Funk" that he starred in and co-created.

Jupiter & Okwess from the Democratic Republic of the Congo has a flair for the offbeat — the drummer often performs with a Mexican wrestling mask over his head. Davis compared them to the theatrical, larger-than-life George Clinton and Parliament Funkadelic but emphasized their music "is at a very high level." They have two performances on Friday and two on Saturday. Blues guitarist Walter Trout is making his second appearance at the festival with a show Saturday. Trout will also be interviewed on the Allison Miner Music Heritage Stage on Saturday. And while New Orleans may be most known for its jazz, blues and funk, it does produce rock music as well. The Revivalists, whose single "Wish I Knew You" recently hit it big, plays the Gentilly Stage on Saturday.

## Also:

**NEW YORK:** Entertainment giant Live Nation said Wednesday it will acquire a controlling stake in the iconic Rock in Rio festival, the latest consolidation in the fast-growing world of live music.

The Los Angeles-based company said it will take a majority stake in Rock in Rio in 2019, although a representative for the festival in Brazil said that the arrangement would be a 50-50 split.

The festival's Brazilian founder, Roberto Medina, will maintain a key role in organizing the festival. Live Nation said.

"The partnership will generate a number of synergies that will enable the realization of even greater ambitions for Rock in Rio," Medina said in a statement.

Rock in Rio has its roots in the fall of Brazil's military dictatorship in 1985 when a total of nearly 1.4 million people came out for 10 days of music that included Queen, Rod Stewart, AC/DC and Yes.

With a seventh edition taking place last year, Rock in Rio has become South America's best-known music festival.

don said. (RTRS)

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**LOS ANGELES:** New Universal label 10:22 pm has announced its first signing: 24-year-old Califor-

nian DJ/producer and social media luminary Chantel Jeffries, who will drop her new single "Wait" — featuring Migos' Offset as well as Louisville rapper Vory — on

Friday. The single was produced and co-written by Jeffries, who will follow with her debut EP "Calculated Luck" later this year. 10:22 pm is helmed by Celine

## Poland's violinist Wilkomirska dies

**WARSAW, Poland, May 3, (AP):** The director of a residence for retired Polish artists says violin virtuoso Wanda Wilkomirska, a one-time darling of the communist authorities who became a dissident, has died at age 89.

Anna Solnicka-Heller, director of the home for veteran artists, said Wilkomirska died Tuesday. The daughter of violinist Alfred Wilkomirski, she played with two half-brothers as the Wilkomirski Trio before becoming a soloist with the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra.

Wilkomirska performed with conductors such as Leonard Bernstein and Zubin Mehta. Her repertoire was wide, but she specialized in Poland's contemporary music.

Joshua, who joined UMG in February after executive posts at Epic, Sony and Disney.

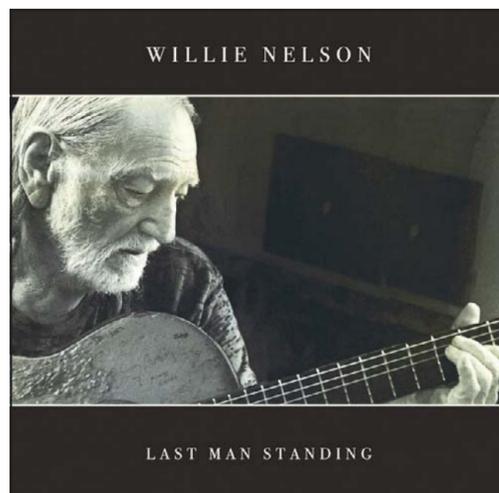
"I am beyond excited to join the Universal Family," said Jeffries. "Celine Joshua has believed in me from day one and I am so grateful she has opened up her home of 10:22 pm and has shared this entire experience with me." (RTRS)

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**LOS ANGELES:** Ariana Grande stopped by "The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon" Tuesday night to give the debut television performance of her new single "No Tears Left to Cry" and announce tracks from her upcoming fourth album titled "Sweetener."

Grande revealed the album title to the late-night talk show host and explained the meaning. "It's kind of about bringing light to a situation or to someone's life or somebody else who brings light to your life or sweetening the situation," Grande said. She added that she is working with producers Pharrell Williams, Max Martin, Ilya, and Savan Kotecha on the record, which is due out this summer.

The pop star wasn't done giving her fans details about her new music. She confirmed the new album will feature a song called "R.E.M." after tweeting lyrics from the track last week. (RTRS)



This cover image shows 'Last Man Standing' by Willie Nelson. (AP)