

CMA Awards – LIVE Blogging!

Many of you have read a live blog before; ie people posting comments while an awards show is airing on tv. But have you ever read a live blog that is being composed within the vicinity of 4 crazy kids? The following represents my best shot at attempting the previous description:

PRESHOW

7:30 pm – It's Nicole Kidman and Keith Urban on the red carpet. They're a cute coupl... wait a minute, they look weird together. Well, actually, just Nicole Kidman looks strange. Kinda like Janice from the Muppets meets the thin spaced-out version of Anna Nicole Smith. It's mean to be critical of people based on their appearances, but in this case, I suspect a nasty mistake in the plastic surgeon's office. Since she did it to herself (and spent thousand\$ to do so), no holds barred – I can joke all I want! And Nicole doesn't seem very comfortable with playing second fiddle (it's a country music awards show – appreciate the fiddle joke!) on the red carpet. I give this marriage 3 years, 4 tops.

7:35pm – Jack Ingram? Who IS that? If you read my previous blog post about the awards, then you know that I don't get to listen to that much radio lately, and I don't have the slightest idea who this is!

7:37 – Fans overwhelmingly choose Carrie Underwood to take Female Vocalist – both hubby and I agree. That reminds me, it will be a tight race in our household tonight – my husband and I only have 3 votes different from each other! And a reader / fellow blogger asked in a comment what the winner gets... we will have to choose our stakes before show time...

7:38 – So THAT'S the other half of Sugarland

7:38 – Julianne Hough from Dancing With The Stars? Didn't she just have her appendix out? She's hosting the pre-show with

Craig Morgan? Isn't THIS the pre-show?

7:45 – Awww – Alan Jackson has a cute family. One of his 3 girls is off at college this year though. What is with male country superstars having 3 girls? Alan Jackson, Garth Brooks, Tim McGraw all have 3 daughters each, to name a few...

7:46 – Every time I see her, Reba looks younger. Glad to see she can afford a better plastic surgeon than Nicole Kidman. Reba better watch out though – any more nose jobs and she'll end up with a nose (or lack thereof) like Michael Jackson's.

7:53 – Charlie Daniels – that's my guess when Kid Rock (my new favorite artist – kidding) says he's going to have a very special guest guitarist.

7:56 – Taylor Swift is growing up... after the things I've read about her since her breakup with the Jonas Brother, she might make a creepy adult.

7:58 – Ew, I can't stand Reese Witherspoon. What's she doing here? Oh, she grew up in NAsville and is promoting a movie.

7:59 – My husband leans over and says, "Reese Witherspoon? I can't stand her."

7:59 – Time to switch to the network for the real show!

2008 CMA AWARDS!

8:00 – We are off! Brad Paisley and Keith open the show with their much hyped collaboration. I like the blue glitter guitar. The song is nothing special. I dig the duel guitar solo at the end.

8:06 – Our hosts for the night – Brad Paisley and Carrie Underwood (from American Idol to HOSTING the CMAS? Whatever...) She looks like a Barbie.

8:07 – Brad makes a "boots to fill" joke involving Dolly Parton – he did say *boots*. Hahaha – that's the joke. Country music stars are creative song-writers... we never promised

anything about their comedy skills. But I liked the joke, because the country music awards show I saw live (it was an ACM awards show though) was hosted by Dolly Parton.

8:10 – What are Hollywood A-listers doing here to present the first award? Oh wait, Nicole Kidman is married to a country music superstar. So what is with the random Hugh Jackman appearance though?

8:11 – Strait wins the first award of the evening for Single of the Year. 0/1 are we since we both guessed Sugarland. But who was that man George Strait kissed before his acceptance speech?

8:17 – Is it Kellie Pickler or a bad Madonna impersonator who sound like Belinda Carlisle? I don't like it.

8:18 – My husband leans over and says, " This is like an American Idol performance." Ironic, because he relies on me for pop culture info and therefore did not know that this is Kellie Pickler who IS from American Idol! Glad to see she got herself out of the dress she said it took her hours to get into before she had a bathroom emergency.

8:20 – Alan Jackson – probably my favorite country artist of all time, ever since Garth Brooks sold out. Not sure what I think of his new song Good Time, though... It seems like a run-of-the-mill Alan Jackson song, which isn't a bad thing, just heard before. My husband feels badly for Kellie Pickler whose awfulness had to be followed by Alan Jackson's legendary stage presence.

8:23 – What the heck is with the college-age line dancers lining the aisles – that's stupid. Are they trying to make a new linedance? This one looks just like the electric slide with a little wiggle thrown in... dumb. Alan Jackson squints into the camera – he's getting old.

8:25 – the Cyruses, yuck. Saw Billy Ray live in 2002 when he

was still a has-been playing town festivals. He ignored the ~~legions~~ dozens of fans trying to slap him five on his way to the stage. At least my daughter is a big fan of Miley's – that makes this tolerable.

8:26 – Stay wins Song of the Year, and I'm 0/2, possibly my worst ever. Husband is up and I have only 2 more chances to catch up... mood turning sour... at least it's a good song.

8:32 – Miranda Lambert performs. I like her. And I like these simple performances of songwriter sings simple song with guitar – songs like these are building blocks of country music.

8:35 – Reese Witherspoon is *crying* about Miranda Lambert's performance? Really? Or is she acting? What is she doing here again?

8:36 – Oh good, Lady Antebellum. I was wondering who they are and what they sing. They sound just like a '90's band – I can't think of who right now! Any ideas, please comment – it'll come to me! Hubby says the lead singer looks like Lance Bass. At any rate, they're nothing to write home about. Can't see them having staying power – not country enough. 2/3 of the group too replaceable, remaining 1/3 not that noteworthy.

8:40 – getting a little greedy with the commercials – here's yet another.

8:43 – Martina McBride is introduced by Brad Paisley, who could use some acting lessons from his actress wife; his script-reading is terrible. Martina is one of my favorite singers

8:44 – and she's singing a VERY ordinary song. See my plea in a previous post – Martina and Alan Jackson NEED to seriously come out with some good stuff and soon!

8:48 – Rodney Atkins – HELP! This is the guy who sings about kids eating nuggets in the car and other mundane every day tasks... He is the kind of singer country music bashers use to make fun of the genre! AND HE'S OFF-KEY!

8:51 – Heidi who? Someone should pass her a cover-up in case her dress finishes falling down.

8:53 – PUT ME ON THE BOARD WITH MY FIRST CORRECT PICK FOR RASCAL FLATTS – VOCAL DUO! I really enjoy their music... please tell me they're performing later! I hear that Kid Rock will be performing "the song we've been singing 'All Summer Long'". I love that song, however upset I was to learn it was Kid Rock's music I was enjoying... Opening another window to download a sample of 'Werewolves in London'.

8:59 – Taylor Swift performs. I love the stage, the costumed dancers, the dancing... the song sucks though.

9:03 – Is Taylor Swift lip-syncing? Why are the dancers suddenly surrounding her, do they know she gets off sync in that part of the song? Unless... COSTUME CHANGE! I was SO right! Called it seconds before it happened! Bool-yah!

9:04 – My new favorite song – All Summer Long – is cool as a live performance. But where is the guest guitarist we were promised? Was it someone I didn't recognize? And Kid Rock probably smokes too many cigarettes, judging by his singing voice.

9:13 – Carrie Underwood has found herself a sarapi. Isn't that what that type of dress is called? I don't know how to spell it, can't find it on a search...

9:14 – I like George Strait's new song more than I've liked most of the other live performances. But why do country stars keep attempting to emulate Jimmy Buffett's laid back beach style? It's been done, and done very well, I might add! Let's stick to country – especially you George Strait!

9:17 – Jason Aldean – one of those newcomers I'm not quite familiar with. Ah, I see he's of the bad-a** variety style of country... I'm familiar with it. As a person who vents anger by performing 80's and 90's raps in the solitary confinement of my car, I appreciate the wailing guitars and the bad-a** attitudes that are breaking onto today's country music scene.

9:21 – Best New Artist – goes to Lady Antebellum. Darnit, I really thought we had a shot for this one. We picked Kellie Pickler, and she is a good friend of presenter Taylor Swift and everything! Dang nabbit – I didn't even like the sound of Lady Antebellum. Well, eat it up kids – you won't last in Nashville.

9:28 – God bless the late great Jerry Reid – I'm sorry and ashamed to say that I've never heard of him.

9:30 – an enjoyable performance of “Cowgirls Don't Cry” by Brooks and Dunn and Reba. And I like what these entities do together. We saw them perform in concert together twice – awesome both times. Too bad Reba's plastic surgery doesn't look as good as Nicole Kidman's under the stage lights. They seem to have opposite effects – Reba's new face looked great on the red carpet, Nicole's was horrifying. Reba's was nothing short of freaky on stage, whereas Nicole's looked almost humanesque. You could have convinced me that Brooks and Dunn had a Reba animontronic made for this performance. Anyway, enough about the obvious plastic surgery plaguing us tonight... I should save that sort of commentary for the Oscars since there's always plenty of fodder there...

9:35 – We both get another point since Sugarland wins Vocal Duo – BOOLYAH

9:40 – Darius Rucker – yes, he was in Hootie and the Blowfish and they were good. So what brings him to country music? I like him better as a blowfish. Wait a minute... when I heard this song he's performing on the radio, I always thought it

was Daryl Worley, who sings these types of songs. You mean to tell me the whole time that it was the work of a blowfish? A fish out of water, I would say – HA. He looks as out of place as he feels, and Alan Jackson squints up at the stage again – this time because he can't believe there was actually an African-American on stage at the Country Music Association's awards.

9:45 – Brad Paisley performs a mediocre tune

9:48 – LeeAnn Womack and Josh Turner show up to present the award for Album of the Year – one of the few categories where hubby and I differ. Good to see that Ms. Womack has tamed her bee-hive hairdo. YEE HAW!!!! I am back in the saddle with my George Strait pick; we are tied! Although it was announced that we both lost out on Video of the Year... shucks. I am not doing so well but still tied with hubby.

9:56 – A thought that crossed my mind as Brad Paisley introduced Keith Urban's live performance – is it just me, or is Brad Paisley doing a lot more hosting than ~~Barbie~~ Carrie Underwood? I wonder about the politics involved in the decision to let those two be the hosts...

9:58 – Keith Urban's performance, like so many before him, is mediocre at best. Thank goodness he's an awesome guitarist. And they still use his song, "Somebody Like You" in my favorite dinner show at Arabian Nights in Orlando Florida – that's what sold me on the show in the first place!

10:00 – Is it just me or are they giving everyone a standing ovation, as seen after Keith Urban's performance?

10:01 – A woman talks about her husband who was killed in battle. She gets a standing ovation. Sadly though, at the beginning of her speech, people didn't know who she was or what she was doing, so they kind of chuckled, thinking she was joking because they didn't know who she was. A silent moment to reflect upon loved one's lives lost and those who fight and

fought for our country...

10:08 – I missed the second half of Carrie Underwood's performance and whatever followed that because of a kid "emergency". But now I see Vince Gill hands an award to...

10:09 – Carrie Underwood. As predicted by both of us in this house. And conveniently, she was waiting in the stage wings after performing, seemingly in position to rush on stage to accept her award. Curious...

So far, my husband and I are tied at 5/8 – not bad. Our personal tie-breaker will come down to Musical Event of the Year – a category that I joked existed only to flaunt the compromising of the big-name record labels. We both guess Kenny Chesney. But my guess is his collaboration with George Strait, and hubby's guess is his Reba duet – Stay tuned to see the winner!

10:18 – Sugarland's performance has been wailing on my tv in the background while I typed some other stuff. Not very impressive. I'm beginning to wonder if it's me or if all the performances tonight have been somewhat lackluster. Not only that, but the songs being performed aren't that great to begin with.

10:20 – Just Got Started Lovin You is one of my favorite new songs! And James Otto is milking his big performance. Otto's range in the song reminds me of Josh Turner, but I don't give him credit for staying power. It's a good song, but he doesn't have the best stage presence.

10:29 – Whoa, my channel cut off Carrie Underwood. Anyone else's? Kenny Chesney is performing his Jimmy Buffett knock-off routine with the beach combing sh*t. Sorry for the language. I need to see a really GOOD musical performance. This sounds like a callypso version of an elementary school chorus concert.

10:32 – My husband leans over and says, "Does this guy have

eyes?" – referring to Kenny's accomplice. I don't think he likes the beachcomber crap any more than I do.

10:33 – Strangely, the intro to Trace Adkin's performance sounds like a Carrie Underwood single, "Jesus Take the Wheel". Subliminal marketing maybe. Conspiracy theories abound, the more tired I get...

10:37 – Another standing ovation? This time for Trace Atkins... ok, whatever.

10:37 – Reese Witherspoon – I can't stand her.

10:38 – Reese Witherspoon gushes, "I am SOOOO glad to be here!" My husband leans over and says, "I can't stand her."

10:39 – Brad Paisley wins Male Vocalist of the Year. We are now tied at 5/9 since we had Keith Urban.

10:41 – Ooh – more hints about the surprise person. Evidently, they are going to present the Entertainer of the Year award. This marketing ploy has intrigued me, although you know that the astonished faces reacting to the surprise guest they show in the commercials have nothing to do with who it is – this is a live show!

10:44 – Ooh – Lost premiere January 21. Wait, do I still watch that show? It's been so long, I forget.

10:48 – mediocre Eagles performance. What is with their new tidy look? What is with me and thinking all the performances are mediocre? Is it just me? Not in this instance – the Eagles in their suits suck – they look old and tired. Good music from a great group, they just need a smart manager – oh, big surprise, ANOTHER standing ovation. Is that just what you do nowadays, the stand'n'clap?

10:54 – The best selling female country recording artist of all time is Shania Twain? YUCK! Another standing ovation! And they haven't even given out the award yet!

10:56 – And now they have... Entertainer of the Year goes to Kenny Chesney, yuck! But at least we both got it right!

10:59 – “The votes in tonight’s award show were cast by the six thousand members of the Country Music Association”... kinda like our local theater group, the WCCT.

But what the heck? Seems we are missing a category detrimental to our outcome? Does anyone have the results for Musical Event of the Year?!? That was our tie-breaker, and evidently we missed it, so break the tie for us!

Ok – Krauss and Plant won for Vocal Event – neither of us had them chosen. So, it ended in a tie. Overall, an entertaining show, as always. I really could have used some more good musical performances, however... Good night!

And as a final footnote – I got my sample of ‘Werewolves in London’. The melody is obviously borrowed for ‘All Summer Long’, but I do like the new Kid Rock song much better. Who knew that plagiarizing two popular songs and then splicing them together would earn critical acclaim instead of a lawsuit?

Our Friend, The Doctor

With 4 kids, many of them small in years, we are at the doctor’s office lots. We are so lucky to be really happy with our pediatrician, especially since we see him often. Today was another such visit – time for our 2 year and 4 month check-ups for the little ones.

Disney (2 yrs. old) liked the fishies in the waiting room and the Dora sticker she got at the end but that’s about it. She didn’t want the doctor near her, she didn’t want to be

weighed, measured, nor have her heart listened to, and she didn't want to walk in front of the doctor like he asked. Best we could tell during all the kicking and screaming, she is 2 feet, 10 inches tall and weighs 25.5 lbs.

On the other hand, Disney's baby brother Christopher seemed to love the doctor's office. Then again, he smiles all the time, so it's hard to tell. He smiled when they measured his head – both times, since the nurse forgot the measurement from the first time (43 cm). He smiled when he was weighed (15 lbs. 6 oz.), and he smiled some more when his length was measured to be 25.5 inches. He's a really good baby – the doctor says he acts more like a 5 month old than a 4 month old because of the strength in his limbs and how he uses them.

Disney's a great kid also, but she is two years old. And "terrible two's" is not just one of those sayings; it's based on truth. Disney was the sweetest baby and toddler you could imagine... then she turned two. And she's still sweet, she just has a miniscule amount of patience and tolerance for things that don't go her way. She could be chatting happily about doggies one minute, and the next thing I know, she's melted onto the floor into a puddle of two.

But there must be something going on with the body chemistry of two-year-olds. Everyone knows they're like that, and it's not just an unearned bad reputation. If it weren't for the "terrible two's", I think I would want an even larger family – but it's the dreadfulness of the terrible two's that give me pause – only one more bout of terrible twos to battle, if we can survive Disney's, of course!

CMA TIME!

It's fall – time for the CMA Awards already! If you don't know that CMA is short for Country Music Association, then you have my permission to skip this blog post – it will only bore you anyway!

For other country music fans like me, this is one of our two biggest nights of the year – the Superbowl for country fans. I get really excited, and unlike other awards shows like the Oscars, I don't like to ~~tape~~ (I am a child of the '80's) record country music awards, and I especially don't like to miss anything – the live performances are some of the best parts! I always play along and try to choose the winners, but I don't think my picks are going to be that strong this year because I'm listening to country music radio less than ever – I enjoy talking to my kids in the car, or they're watching dvd's. At home I'm usually listening to Dora, the DoodleBops or Noggin. But the CMA Awards show will be a blast to watch, as always, and there are only two nights like this a year – cross your fingers for me that my kids decide to act like human beings tonight and let me watch the show. My picks for the winners, however uneducated they may be, are made obvious by my *comments in itallics*:

ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR

Kenny Chesney – ok, so he doesn't dominate this awards show like the ACMs, but I'm going with him anyway – just because he is not one of my favorite singers and I'm not expecting the show to go well for me

Brad Paisley

Sugarland

George Strait

Keith Urban

Top Female Vocalist

Alison Krauss

Miranda Lambert

Martina McBride

Taylor Swift

Carrie Underwood – *I called her from one of her first appearances in American Idol. I said – she's going to win Idol, but she has a voice for country. Now she's established herself as one of the best female country singers out there today.*

Top Male Vocalist

Kenny Chesney

Alan Jackson – *my favorite of those nominated, but what's he done lately?*

Brad Paisley

George Strait

Keith Urban – *my pick to win – tough call between Keith and Brad, but you gotta congratulate a guy for a successful stint in rehab*

Vocal Duo of the Year

Big & Rich

Brooks & Dunn

Montgomery Gentry

Sugarland – *their unique sound will win them many awards – just one question: who else is in Sugarland besides Jennifer Nettles?*

The Wreckers

Vocal Group of the Year

Eagles

Emerson Drive

Lady Antebellum

Little Big Town

Rascal Flatts – *tried and true, these guys have talent. So do Brooks and Dunn, but they haven't come out with anything lately*

New Artist Of The Year

Jason Aldean

Rodney Atkins

Lady Antebellum

James Otto

Kellie Pickler – *another American Idol reject*—crossover

Album Of The Year [Award to Artist(s)/Producer(s)/Record Company]

Carrie Underwood's Carnival Ride Produced by Mark Bright

Brooks & Dunn's Cowboy Town Produced by Tony Brown, Ronnie Dunn and Kix Brooks

Alan Jackson's Good Time Produced by Keith Stegall

Kenny Chesney's Just Who I Am: Poets & Pirates Produced by Buddy Cannon and Kenny Chesney

George Strait's Troubadour Produced by Tony Brown and George Strait – *gotta give him something*

Single Of The Year [Awarded to artist and producer]

"Don't Blink" Kenny Chesney Produced by Buddy Cannon & Kenny Chesney BNA Records

"Gunpowder & Lead" Miranda Lambert Produced by Frank Liddell & Mike Wrucke Columbia Nashville

"I Saw God Today" George Strait Produced by Tony Brown & George Strait MCA Nashville

"Stay" Sugarland Produced by Byron Gallimore, Kristian Bush and Jennifer NettlesMercury Nashville – *not really sure of the difference between single and song of the year, but Stay has to win one of these. I'm going with Single, I guess.*

"You're Gonna Miss This" Trace Adkins Produced by Frank Rogers Capitol Nashville

Song Of The Year [Awarded to songwriter and primary publisher]

"Good Time" Alan Jackson EMI-April Music/Tri-Angels Music

"I Saw God Today" Rodney Clawson/Monty Criswell/Wade Kirby Big Red Toe/Extremely Loud Music/Steel Wheels Music/Blind Mule Music – *like I said, I don't think Strait will walk away with nothing tonight – just hope I didn't reverse the single and song of the year!*

"Letter To Me" Brad Paisley EMI-April Music/New Sea Gayle Music

"Stay" Jennifer Nettles Jennifer Nettles Publishing

"You're Gonna Miss This" Lee Thomas Miller/Ashley Gorley EMI Blackwood Music/New Songs of Sea Gayle/Noah's Little Boat Music/Songs of Combustion Music

Musical Event Of The Year [Awarded to each Artist]

"Another Try" – Josh Turner featuring Trisha Yearwood MCA Nashville

"Every Other Weekend" – Reba McEntire and Kenny Chesney MCA Nashville

"Gone Gone Gone" – Robert Plant and Alison Krauss Rounder Records

"Life In A Northern Town" – Sugarland featuring Little Big Town and Jake Owen Mercury Nashville

"Shiftwork" – Kenny Chesney (duet with George Strait) BNA Records – *What does 'vocal event' mean anyway? By the looks of how they wrote the nominees, I guess 'vocal event' means 'when record labels lease their stars'. Chesney always wins big at awards shows, but I personally prefer Jimmy Buffet's beachcomber style over Kenny Chesney's knock-off version. I'm guessing the Country Music Association does not agree.*

Music Video Of The Year [Awarded to artist and director]

Don't Blink Kenny Chesney Directed by Shaun Silva

Good Time Alan Jackson Directed by Trey Fanjoy

Stay Sugarland Directed by Shaun Silva – *everyone knows by now that Jennifer Nettles cried real tears during the filming of this video, is it enough to win her the award? My vote is yes, but maybe it's just wishful thinking.*

Waitin' On a Woman Brad Paisley Directed by Jim Shea

You're Gonna Miss This Trace Adkins Directed by Peter Zavadil

Musician Of The Year

Jerry Douglas, Dobro – Drums

Paul Franklin – Steel Guitar

Dann Huff – Guitar – *will win. But then again, this is the blind lottery award for viewers. Like I know who any of these people are, so I just picked the name that jumped out at me, and Dan Huff it was.*

Brent Mason – Guitar

Mac McAnally – Guitar

For sure, a great time will be had by all. I might update my blog with winners as I watch tonight. And after reviewing my

reasons for my picks for tonight's awards, it needs to be said that it's been way too long since some classic artists (and my personal favorites) came out with anything noteworthy! Alan Jackson ~~Garth Brooks~~ and Martina McBride, you know who you are!

Vacation Diary – Chapter Five

Thursday, October 23, 2008 – Started off the day at Golden Corral for breakfast again, and then we stopped at a Wi-Fi place so my husband could download the Chicago Bears game from the previous Sunday because the internet was too slow in our condo to do anything. That's a good thing though, I wasn't able to check email all week and it was nice to take a break from bad news on cnn.com and the real world. We were lucky enough that it didn't rain during our trip to Florida until this day when we were already done with the parks. It really didn't rain much, just a little drizzle, and even though the day was overcast, we spent much of it at the two pools in our condo complex, followed by a nap while my husband juggled the kids, the Bears game, and his own nap. We then went to our favorite flea market place and let the girls spend their money that Grandma had given them. NOTE FOR NEXT YEAR – the souvenir shopping was kind of a mistake. Sammie (4 year old) wanted to be impulsive with her money, and we got tired of telling her to wait to spend it. Finally she was allowed to buy something, and then she saw other things she wanted after she was out of money. She also spent the rest of the trip whining and pitching fits about wanting the same souvenirs that her older sister Taylor had picked out. Disney's (2 year old) idea of "shopping" was running around and picking up things she wanted and playing with them, so overall, I would not recommend the souvenir shopping for kids this age; if we

go back within a year or two, we're going to skip this aspect of the trip. If they earn spending money for next time, maybe we'll pick out something for them with it!

Dinner that night was interesting. My husband has wanted to take me to a Japanese restaurant for awhile, so we decided to try a place called Kabuki. I was always under the impression that Japanese food would be like Chinese food, but I was wrong. We sat at a "cooking table", which is where the chef comes and does little tricks and stunts with the food and cooking utensils while he cooks right in front of you. At first, I was a little nervous about this because we were seated with a couple from a country called Luxembourg, and having strangers at our table was a little nerve-wracking because my kids can be wild at the dinner table at times. Everything was fine; the kids were really entertained by the chef's show. Better yet, they were mindlessly eating their food without thinking to complain about it or ask for something else. And the couple from Luxembourg took pictures and later emailed them to me – check it out:



Overall, I liked the Japanese food experience – taste and show – and I would recommend it to others if it's something you've never tried before. As you can see, our chef was not Japanese – the guy from Luxembourg predicted that and recommended we retry the experience with a Japanese chef.

Fast and Dirty