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## Country Music Sensation

By [Joan Tuppe](#)  
May 1st, 2010

Manager Marion Kraft was taken by surprise when she asked a 19-year-old Miranda Lambert what type of career she wanted.

"She said, 'I want a career like Dolly Parton's,'" Kraft, of Shopkeeper Management, recalls. "I want to perform the material I believe in."

That type of focus was unusual for an entertainer as young as Lambert, Kraft adds. "A lot of artists have no idea how to answer that. She told me exactly what she wanted, which I thought was impressive."

It's no wonder that Lambert, now 26, has carved out her own niche in country music. A three-time Grammy nominee, Lambert says she was shocked to be nominated for the prestigious award again this year. "I didn't realize anything was eligible for the Grammys," she says.

She was nominated for Best Female Country Performance for her self-penned song "Dead Flowers." She shared the nomination with Martina McBride, Carrie Underwood, Lee Ann Womack and Taylor Swift, who won for the song "White Horse."

"It was the first time I got nominated for a song," Lambert says with a hint of satisfaction in her voice.

Lambert released her third album, "Revolution," on Sept. 29, 2009. She wrote or co-wrote 12 of the album's 15 tracks. "I think I invested the most emotion on this," she says. "I stayed on form and focused on what I wanted to say and who I was."

She likens the album to an entire work of art. "There's not one song that puts it in a nutshell," she explains. "Every song was part of a story. Without one song it wouldn't be a complete picture of me."

The bubbly, vivacious singer captured the national spotlight in 2003 as a finalist in the first "Nashville Star" television competition. Since then, her popularity has continued to soar. She received the 2008 Academy of Country Music's Album of the Year Award for "Crazy Ex-Girlfriend" in addition to the AMC's 2007 Top New Female Vocalist Award and the 2005 ACM Cover Girl Fresh Face of Country Music Award.

A spitfire on stage, Lambert grew up in a small town in east Texas, adopting the state's don't-mess-with-Texas attitude. Her onstage bad-ass persona doesn't reflect the total picture, however. Offstage, Lambert has a sweet, girly side, which came through in her first ballad, "More Like Her." Lambert likes what the song conveys because it shows her more vulnerable side. "I think it's important to bring that element in," she says.

Lambert believes that at first some people were boxing her into a corner by thinking of her as "a tomboy, crazy girl with a shotgun." "I have so much more to say," she reflects. "I want people to hear what else I have to say and to see that softer side."

It's that softer side that fans see when the blond beauty walks the red carpet. This year, she wore a flowing blue gown to the Grammy Awards although she admits to a fondness for pink. "I do enjoy the red carpet," she says. "It's great

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because it's not every day. However, I still like jeans, T-shirts and boots."

Her penchant for songwriting was a natural progression. She remembers that she wrote her first song after her father, also a singer/songwriter, taught her a few guitar chords. The songwriting process gives her a sense of self-awareness and helps her find her way as an artist. "[My songs] are who I am," she says.

When she was in high school, Lambert realized there wasn't an outlet for singers. She wrote a letter to the school's administration advocating some type of music program. A program was approved. "I thought it was really important," she says. "It cultivates people's dreams."

Lambert was only 17 when she started her own band. Two years later, she was in Nashville, starting to build her career, slowly and methodically. "We had to get enough records sold so we could play in arenas and get her out on big tours," Kraft says, noting that those big tours included Keith Urban, George Strait and Brad Paisley. "Those are big stars. She looks at how they work the stage and the crowd and adjusts that [to her performance]."

When it comes to her career and the songs she sings, Lambert doesn't hand over control. "That's not an option," she says. "I know who I am and what I have to say and I don't feel like I could sing what I don't believe in."

It was that kind of attitude that probably raised eyebrows when she walked into a meeting early in her career with a major record label. "I told them this is who I am and what I do," she recalls. "If you don't like it, I can go back to playing bars."

She was out to set an example, she adds. "I didn't want to just sell out for success."

Kraft believes that Lambert has come into her own in the last two years. She's moved from a naive industry newbie who didn't understand there was "a lot of business and a little music" to the music industry to a savvy businesswoman. "There are about 25 people making a living because of Miranda," Kraft says. "She is running her own company."

Her musicians are on full-time salaries, an oddity in the world of music. "They don't get paid per show, so they know they have as secure a job as you can have in the music industry," Kraft says.

Lambert's friendly personality and humble nature endear her to everyone she works with. "Miranda is very inclusive," Kraft says. "She can put together a group of people that are a team; that work well together. They like one another and that comes from Miranda."

Kraft recalls that someone once used the standard Hollywood line "Have your people call my people" in a conversation with Lambert. "Miranda answered with 'We are our own people, we don't have people,'" Kraft says.

Family means a great deal to Lambert, both at work and at home. Her parents head up the merchandise portion of her business and her mother serves as the president of her fan club. Her 21-year-old brother, Luke, built her Web site and accompanied her to this year's Grammy Awards. "She wanted him to experience what that was like," Kraft says.

Over the years, Lambert has grown as an entertainer and a person. "She's really learned a lot of skills," Kraft says. If there's one thing that Kraft has learned during her association with the singer, it's that Lambert doesn't lie. "That's the one thing I know for sure about her. She had a good upbringing. She said her parents would be able to see that she was lying when she was a teen so she gave it up."

Kraft has also seen the warm, caring side of Lambert. At the end of the night after a big show, Kraft usually gets a text from Lambert thanking her. "She thinks of others a lot," Kraft says.

Lambert stays on the road most of the time. When she does get a break from touring, she settles into her farm in Oklahoma. Lambert, who grew up on a farm, is comfortable with a more simplistic lifestyle. Her farm includes a variety of animals – pot-bellied pigs, miniature horses, dogs, cats, goats and chickens. "I'm thinking about getting a llama or alpaca," she says. "People ask me why an alpaca. I tell them it's the same thing as a dog. There is no purpose; I just



like them.”

Her love for animals extends to her MuttNation Foundation, which helps abused and neglected animals across the country. “Miranda is known for picking up strays,” Kraft says, adding that the singer travels with two of her dogs: Delilah, from a shelter, and Delta Dawn, who had been abandoned. For the past two years, Lambert has hosted a Cause for the Paws concert as a fundraiser. “I want to build MuttNation nationwide,” she says.

Lambert’s farm is in close proximity to Blake Shelton’s home. The two have been a couple since they co-headlined a tour in 2008. “I’ve always thought that Blake is one of the greatest artists in country music and he brings such a dynamic presence to his performances,” Lambert says. “Anytime you play with a great artist it makes you strive to be even better.”

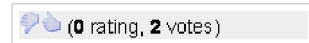
The two collaborated on a couple of songs on Lambert’s latest album. Her newest single, “The House That Built Me,” from that album was released in March. “We have different tastes in music,” Lambert says. “He put his creativity aside and came to my side on what I wanted to say and represent. We got to know each other better.”

Lambert admits that Shelton and her father are similar in some ways. Both love music, hunting and the outdoors. “Redneck,” she says, laughing. “I ended up with a guy like my dad.”

Lambert believes that friendship is an important component of a relationship. She and Shelton, she says, are “really good friends.” “That’s important, especially if you are apart as much as we are. We have a lot in common and that helps.”

Today, Lambert’s life has more balance than it did when she moved to Nashville seven years ago. This year, she will be headlining her own “Roadside Bars and Pink Guitars” tour. “It’s time to step out and get my own feet,” she says.

She’s also going to carve out some time at home. “For a while I didn’t have a lot outside of work,” she says. “Last summer I wasn’t home as much as I would like to be, but hopefully this year I’ll have a good balance. I love to be on the road, but I have to recharge.”



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## One Response to “Country Music Sensation”

Ronie:

May 1st, 2010 at 7:02 pm

Ran’s definitely a legend in the making!!! And so genuinely down to earth! That gal’s got her priorities in the right place!

1

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