

## Nashville is Back

By Paula Tudor

A little over six months ago I told you about the cancellation of ABC's Nashville and the fan campaign to bring it back. As most of you are already undoubtedly aware, the campaign was a success, with Nashville finding a new home at CMT. Better than that the show is continuing to film in Music City. CMT will be airing a 2-hour premiere of Nashville on Jan. 5<sup>th</sup>. The first hour of that premiere aired in a sneak peek on December 15<sup>th</sup>, leaving the impression that CMT is where Nashville should have been all along.

As I mentioned in my article on Nashville's cancellation, I never really felt like ABC was fully committed to the show. Moreover I never really felt like the show fully captured the essence of Nashville, Tennessee. I am hoping this will change with CMT at the helm. The sneak peek episode certainly felt much more authentic than any of the episodes that aired in the four years that ABC was in charge of Nashville. The storytelling was captivating and organic, like the very best country songs. If CMT can use this first episode as a blueprint for the new Nashville, I predict huge ratings in the future. If, however, like ABC, they lose sight of their core audience and try to make the show something other than what it is or should be, Nashville will quickly be cancelled for a second time.

If you watched the series finale of Nashville on ABC, you already know that the show ended with a huge cliffhanger. Juliette was on her way to meet Avery and their daughter at the airport, when her plane suddenly went off the radar. While I do not want to give away details of the season 5 premiere, I will say that Juliette's fate presents significant repercussions, not only for her, but also for everyone around her. Nashville's first episode on CMT was largely focused on the emotional fallout of what happened to Juliette, setting the stage for the direction the characters will likely take in this new season. Another storyline that looks like it will play a significant part in the show is the relationship between sisters Maddie and Daphne Conrad, played by real-life sisters Lennon and Maisy Stella. The season 5 premiere continued to show the increasingly strained relationship between Maddie and Daphne, with Maddie somewhat harshly trying to find her own voice apart from her younger sister. As for Will Chase and Aubrey Peeples, who played Luke Wheeler and Layla Grant, respectively, their characters will not be returning for season 5.

CMT seems to be hoping that Nashville will open up a whole new type of original programming for the network. During Nashville's 1-hour sneak peek, CMT aired promos for their new original series Sun Records, starring Chad Michael Murray (Dawson's Creek, One Tree Hill), a show about the early days of rock 'n roll. In addition, according to Variety, CMT is working on, among other things, a show based on the movie Varsity Blues.

The 2-hour season 5 premiere of Nashville airs on CMT Thursday, January 5<sup>th</sup> at 9/8c pm. You can also watch the show online at [cmt.com](http://cmt.com) and through Hulu. Other networks are reportedly beginning to pick up reruns of the show as well.

Sun Records premieres on CMT Thursday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10/9c pm.

For more on CMT's scripted programming go to [cmt.com](http://cmt.com) and [variety.com](http://variety.com)

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