

# 'Nashville': Hype for ABC show is justified

October 9, 2012 by VERNE GAY / [verne.gay@newsday.com](mailto:verne.gay@newsday.com)



## THE SHOW "Nashville"

**WHEN|WHERE** Wednesday night at 10 on ABC/7

**WHAT IT'S ABOUT** Country music star Rayna Jaymes ([Connie Britton](#)) would still get the records to fly out of the store, except, well ... people don't really buy "records" anymore, and what's a "record store" anyway? New technology, new generations and new styles -- best described as "crossover" -- have started to edge past her. The harsh, new reality is exemplified by the latest sharpshooter in Nashville, one Juliette Barnes ([Hayden Panettiere](#)). To salvage Rayna's flagging career -- and their investment -- her label wants a joint tour. The bad news -- Rayna would open for Barnes. Meanwhile, Rayna's weak-

kneed spouse, Teddy ([Eric Close](#)), who has long lived in her shadow, is enlisted by Rayna's estranged father, Lamar Wyatt ([Powers Boothe](#)), to run for mayor. Why does megalomaniac Lamar want Teddy? Rayna's wondering the same thing.

**MY SAY** Viewers don't arrive at the beginning of Jaymes' story so much as at the end, or certainly well past the midpoint. She already has a sprawling back story full of heartache and joy, self-discovery and triumph. She's not the coal miner's daughter but the daughter of the guy (figuratively speaking) who owns the coal mine, and he's got some story, too. The first and second acts of her life are over, and the third one's just beginning. With [Britton](#) starring as the slightly world-weary star with regrets, a bad marriage, a faithless record company and a feckless father, it promises to be the most interesting of the three. Meanwhile, the bona fides of the principals behind "Nashville" give it heft and authenticity. Producer [Callie Khouri](#) ("Thelma & Louise") has fashioned almost a Thelma-versus-Louise tale that unfolds in an industry town where big money trumps art - in Nashville, not [Hollywood](#), for a change. Legendary figures like T-Bone Burnett and longtime [Linda Ronstadt](#) collaborator JD Souther (cast here as the aging and ageless patriarch of the Nashville scene) give shape and scope to the music, which is all original and all quite good. The torch song that closes tonight -- sung by stars Clare Bowen and Sam Palladio and written by [John Paul White](#) of the Civil Wars -- is even better than that.

**BOTTOM LINE** The hype is justified. "Nashville's" terrific.

**GRADE A**

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