

TAXI ROAD RALLY 2026

Grand Ballroom Schedule

*Subject to very minor changes

Thursday, November 5th

3:00pm – 'til close: Road Rally Registration – Near the Los Angeles Ballroom on the hotel's first floor. You need to have a photo ID to get your Road Rally badge!

3:00pm – 'til close: One-to-One Mentor Registration – Los Angeles Ballroom Foyer – After you register for the Rally, proceed to One-to-One Mentor Registration in the Ballroom Foyer. Refer to the Mentor Bios list in the Rally Program to make your selection. Members only, please. One Mentor per member. First-come, first-served basis. Must already be registered and have your Rally badge with you.

6:00pm – 8:30pm: Dinner – Eat at the hotel's *Daily Grill* (the food is really good) with all the new friends you've made during Road Rally Registration!

8:30pm – 11:30pm: Jam Room and Open Mic – The Jam Room is in the Bel Air Ballroom (2nd floor—backline provided) and the Open Mic is in the Mezzanine Theater (top of escalator). Tickets will be given out in the Open Mic room, and performers will be drawn at random. Members *and* guests are welcome to jam *and* perform!

Friday, November 6th

8:00am – All Day: Registration – Continues at the Rally Registration desk near the hotel's Los Angeles Ballroom on the first floor.

9:00am – 9:05am: Opening Remarks – Los Angeles Ballroom (Lobby Level, 1st Floor).
– Legendary Record Producer **Michael Lloyd**.

9:05am – 9:15am: Welcome to the Road Rally – TAXI Founder and CEO Michael Laskow welcomes attendees to the 30th Road Rally. Michael will draw a ticket stub (between 9:05am and 10:45am) and one lucky person will win \$500 cash to help pay for their travel expenses. You need to be in the ballroom and have your ticket stub with you to win!

9:15am – 10:45am: Keynote Session – Writing to the Brief – Los Angeles Ballroom (Lobby Level, 1st Floor) – The number one reason TAXI members' submissions aren't forwarded is that their music doesn't fit what the brief asked for. In this keynote session, successful TAXI members **Jim Thacker**, **John Pearson**, and **Greg Carrozza** will read and analyze a TAXI listing, then write and produce a song that responds to it—live onstage! You'll see exactly how successful TAXI members interpret a listing and make creative decisions that dramatically improve their odds of earning forwards, signing music library deals, and ultimately landing more placements.

10:00am – 12:00pm: One-to-One Mentor Sessions – Located in the Wilshire and Ventura rooms. (Mezzanine Level / 2nd Floor)

11:15am – 12:15pm: Want a Major Label Record Deal or Artist Cut? — Los Angeles Ballroom (Lobby Level, 1st Floor) — “You don't need a record label to get your music ‘out there’ anymore.” How's that working out for you? Most indie artists fail to get significant traction on platforms like Spotify because they lack the time, marketing expertise, and budget needed to break through. Independent songwriters rarely get cuts with signed artists because they don't have the network or industry connections they need. Join **Kelly Sayer** (Senior Director of A&R, Atlantic Records) as she reveals what major labels and signed artists are looking for—and what you can do to improve your chances of getting signed or landing a major-artist cut. Q&A if time allows.

Friday (continued), November 6th

11:15am – 12:15pm: Driver's Ed Classes – See class grid and descriptions for more info.

12:45pm – 2:45pm: Eat & Greet Luncheon #1 – Bel Air Ballroom (2nd Floor) – You need to have purchased your Eat & Greet ticket in advance, and have your Rally badge with the Eat & Greet Luncheon credential on it to attend. Bring USB Drives, or postcards/business cards with QR codes of your music if you'd like to give some out!

3:00pm – 4:00pm: Everything We Did Wrong Before We Started Succeeding – Los Angeles Ballroom (Lobby Level, 1st Floor) – Frustrated that you're not as successful as you thought you'd be by now? So were **Matt Vander Boegh** and **James Kocian** when they first joined TAXI. They made many of the same mistakes you might be making now. What did they do to change course and become successful? In this candid and highly motivational session, Matt and James will reveal the mistakes that held them back, the changes that moved them forward, and what you can do to reach your own goals more quickly.

3:00pm – 4:00pm: Driver's Ed Classes – See class grid and descriptions for more info.

4:15pm – 5:45pm: Film & TV Song Pitch and Feedback Panel – Los Angeles Ballroom (Lobby Level, 1st Floor) – Songs (from TAXI members *only*) will be played for Music Licensing Executives: **Stephanie Reid** (Vice President, Black Toast Music), **Elyse Schiller** (Executive Music Producer, Head of Creative Sync Licensing, GSM Music Group), **Rinat Arinos** (Founder/CEO, Pink Shark Music), and **Belinda Robles** (Music Supervisor, Senior Music Director for 19 years, Megatrax Production Music). *Songs only!* The panelists will give live feedback and can request copies of music played for them. Music played during this panel will be chosen randomly from a playlist generated from a panel-specific TAXI Listing (#S261021RR) that ran prior to the Rally. Submissions *not* played during the panel will be screened on a yes/no basis after the Rally, and Forwards will be sent to all the panelists. If your song is randomly selected and you're not in the ballroom, we'll move on to the next person's song.

6:00pm – 7:00pm: Hang Out and Ask Us Anything! – Los Angeles Ballroom (Lobby Level, 1st Floor) – Bring a sandwich, bring a pizza, bring a drink and snacks, and join us for an informal hang out and Q&A in the Los Angeles Ballroom after the panels are done for the day. **Michael Laskow** will be joined by **Rob Chiarelli** (multi-platinum mixer/producer and six-time Grammy winner) and **Michael Lloyd** (legendary multi-platinum record producer and music supervisor) who have earned more than two hundred gold and platinum records between them. If you've loved them on TAXI TV, you'll love them even more live, in-person, and answering your questions about virtually all aspects of the music industry. This was such a hit at the 2025 Rally that we're doing it again!

8:30pm – 11:30pm: Jam Room and Open Mic – The Jam Room is in the Bel Air Ballroom (2nd floor—backline provided) and the Open Mic is in the Mezzanine Theater (top of escalator). Tickets will be given out in the Open Mic room, and performers will be drawn at random. Members *and* guests are welcome to jam *and* perform!

Saturday, November 7th

9:15am – 10:30am: Instrumental Pitch and Feedback Panel – Los Angeles Ballroom (Lobby Level, 1st Floor) – Panelists **Steve Barden** (CEO, Reel Note Music), **Chuck Henry** (CEO, 10 West Music), **James Thacker** (Owner, Kazan Music Group), **Noel Webb** (Founder/CEO Spider Cues), and **Simon Prentice** (Founder/CEO, 7StyleMusic) will listen, give feedback, and possibly request some of the music they hear! Music played during this panel will be chosen randomly from a playlist generated from a panel-specific TAXI Listing (#S261021CT) that ran prior to the Rally. *Instrumentals only*. Instrumentals *not* played during the panel will be screened on a yes/no basis after the Rally, and Forwards will be sent to all the panelists. If your instrumental is randomly selected and you're not in the ballroom, we'll move on to the next person's track.

Saturday (continued), November 7th

9:15am – 10:30am: Driver's Ed Classes – See class grid and descriptions for more info.

10:45am – 11:45am: Train Your Brain to Write Contemporary Singer/Songwriter Songs with Robin Frederick – Los Angeles Ballroom (Lobby Level, 1st Floor) – Do TAXI's screeners say your Singer/Songwriter songs are well-written, but "dated-sounding"? You've already got the skills, but your brain is filled with decades of melodic, lyrical, and rhythmic influences that unconsciously shape every new song you write. In this Master Class, Robin will compare classic and contemporary hits, and show you how to retrain your brain, so writing contemporary Singer/Songwriter songs becomes second nature. Robin will also critique some songs drawn from a playlist created from a pre-Rally TAXI Listing (#S261018RF), and she will *personally* listen to *all* submissions and choose several songs to play during the session. One randomly selected TAXI member who submitted will win a **free one-hour consultation** with Robin (you must be present to win).

12:15pm – 2:15pm: Eat & Greet Luncheon #2 – Bel Air Ballroom (2nd Floor) – You need to have purchased your Eat & Greet ticket in advance, and have your Rally badge with the Eat & Greet Luncheon credential on it to attend. Bring USB Drives, or postcards/business cards with QR codes of your music if you'd like to give some out!

2:30pm – 3:45pm: Beyond Braams: Breaking into Trailers and TV Promos – Los Angeles Ballroom (Lobby Level, 1st Floor) – Are all movie trailers powered by big, bombastic orchestral hybrids with braams, risers, drops, and taiko drums? What differentiates trailer music from the music used in TV promos and video game trailers? And what does it take to break into this exciting—and potentially lucrative—market? Join music supervisor **Megan Barbour** (Director of Music: Trailers and Promos at Space Cowboy Music) as she reveals what trailer houses and promo producers are looking for, why certain tracks get chosen, and how you can make your music more competitive. Megan will also play examples of successful trailers and TV promos and break down why the music works.

2:30pm – 3:30pm: Driver's Ed Classes – See class grid and descriptions for more info.

2:30pm – 4:30pm: One-to-One Mentor Sessions – Located in the Wilshire and Ventura rooms. (Mezzanine Level / 2nd Floor)

4:00pm – 5:00pm: AI – The Scary Elephant in the Room – Los Angeles Ballroom (Lobby Level, 1st Floor) – AI-generated music sounds far better than it did just a year ago—and it's improving by the month. Should you be worried? Why are many music licensing companies, TV networks, and film studios unwilling to license it? Where is the line between using AI as a production tool and using it as a co-writer? Why are the PROs relying on an "honor system" and allowing AI-related registrations while much of the sync industry still ain't buying it? How widely are professional songwriters using AI, and how do record labels feel about it? There are plenty of questions, but very few definitive answers. Where is all of this headed—and what will the music industry look like when the dust settles? Join **Michael Eames** (President and Co-Founder, PEN Music), **Rob Chiarelli** (Six-Time Grammy-Winning Mixer/Producer), and **Don Tomlinson** (Entertainment attorney) for a candid, wide-ranging discussion about the rapidly evolving role of AI in the music industry. Q&A if time allows.

5:15pm – 6:30pm: Before They Were Hits – Los Angeles Ballroom (Lobby Level, 1st Floor) – Veteran Music Row Publishers **Steve Bloch** and **Bobby Rymer** have original demos of some big Country hits, and we're going to play them, followed by the versions you've heard on the radio! **Michael Laskow** will once again play the "best piano/vocal demo" he's heard in his entire career, followed by the version that was a radio hit. This will be a casual hang out and tons of fun! Feel free to bring your favorite beverage and food/snacks, so you can kick back and enjoy this informal session that the audience *loves* every time we do it!

6:30pm – 8:30pm: Dinner Break – You should have *tons* of new friends to dine with! Try the Thai restaurant next to the hotel. Our attendees love it!

Saturday (continued), November 7th

8:30pm – 11:30pm: Jam Room and Open Mic – The Jam Room is in the Bel Air Ballroom (2nd floor—backline provided) and the Open Mic is in the Mezzanine Theater (top of escalator). Tickets will be given out in the Open Mic room, and performers will be drawn at random. Members *and* guests are welcome to jam *and* perform!

Sunday, November 8th

9:30am – 10:45am: Boosting Your Placement Potential — Los Angeles Ballroom (Lobby Level, 1st Floor) — Which genres generate the most placements? How many music libraries should your music be in? What makes a track more usable—and more likely to be chosen by an editor or music supervisor? How many songs or instrumentals do you need in various catalogs before you start seeing real results, and how long does it take to reach critical mass? Get the answers to these questions and many more from **Keith LuBrant** (100,000+ placements), **Marco Iannello** (whose placements are increasing rapidly), **Biagio Messina** (TV Producer, Editor, and Composer), and **Randon Purcell** (Staff Composer). You'll leave with practical strategies you can use to build a more licensable catalog and dramatically increase your placement potential. Q&A included.

11:00am – 12:00pm: Building a Business From Your Art—That Pays! – Los Angeles Ballroom (Lobby Level, 1st Floor) – Creating great music has always been the starting point. But in today's music business, great music alone isn't enough. If it feels like the industry is one giant lottery, this session is for you. Join **Rob Chiarelli** (six-time Grammy-winning mixer/producer), **Ron Harris** (multi-platinum producer and A&R executive) and **Aaron Overton** (V.P. of Streetlamp Records) as they break down the creative, marketing, and business moves that can tilt the odds in your favor—and turn your art into a business that actually pays you. From writing, producing, and mixing to distribution, curated playlists, streaming, royalties, publishing, and money collection, this session will cut through the noise and show you where the opportunities are and how to make the most of them. Q&A included.

11:00am – 12:00pm: Driver's Ed Classes – See class grid and descriptions for more info.

12:00pm – 2:00pm: Lunch – No *Eat & Greet Luncheon* today. Enjoy the *Daily Grill*, which we anticipate could be *very* busy. You can also try the Thai restaurant next to the hotel, Subway, or Taco Bell. Plan accordingly.

1:30pm – 3:00pm: Song Listening and Feedback Session – Theater (Mezzanine Level, 2nd Floor, near the top of the escalator) – Note: This session is NOT for Film & TV music feedback. This session is for feedback on songs from artists and songwriters looking for record deals and artist cuts only!

Craig Pilo, Host, DJ, and Jazz,

James Kocian, Top 40 Pop, Christian/Gospel, and Country

Ty Knox, Hip-Hop, Top 40 Pop, and R&B

Steve Bloch, Country

Chris Long, Rock and Singer/Songwriter

Bobby Rymer, Country and other genres

VERY IMPORTANT: You will be given ONE numbered ticket as you enter the Mezzanine Theatre before the session begins. A duplicate ticket will be placed in a box labeled with the genre option you specify. PLEASE know what genre your song is BEFORE you come to the session. Sorry, but latecomers will NOT be able to get a ticket out of fairness to the people who arrived on time. To choose songs for the panel, we'll randomly pull tickets from each of the genre boxes (in rotation) and call the ticket number out for you to bring up your phone, pad, or laptop, and a printed lyric sheet. PLEASE have your song cued up ready to be played so you don't spend time searching for it! Only TAXI members with a valid Road Rally 2025 badge can submit for this session!

Sunday (continued) , November 8th

2:15pm – 3:30pm: Finding Your Silver Bullet— Los Angeles Ballroom (Lobby Level, 1st Floor)
Every musician would love to discover the “silver bullet” that could take their career to the promised land. **Brand X Music** Co-Owner and Head of Creative **Tom Gire** played weddings and clubs and performed aboard Princess Cruises’ “Love Boat” before meeting his business partner, John Sponsler, and changing the trajectory of his career. They ultimately worked on blockbuster projects including *Pirates of the Caribbean 2, 3, and 4*; *National Treasure: Book of Secrets*; *Transformers 2 and 3*; *Despicable Me*; *Rango*; *Inspector Gadget*; *Spy Kids 1 and 2*; *Memoirs of a Geisha*; *Munich*; *Sunday Night Football*; and many more. In this session, Tom promises to tell some inspiring and insightful stories—including one about working with John Williams—and reveal *exactly* what his silver bullet was, and how to find yours!

3:45pm – 5:00pm: You’re in the A&R Hot Seat! – Los Angeles Ballroom (Lobby Level, 1st Floor) – TAXI TV viewers *love* our A&R Hot Seat episodes, where they decide whether they would forward or return a song or instrumental—and then find out what TAXI’s screener decided. This year, we’re bringing the A&R Hot Seat to the ballroom with a new twist! We’ll randomly choose audience members to come onstage and serve on our A&R panel along with **Joe Brandt** (Music Supervisor) and **Craig Pilo** (TAXI’s Head Screener). Will the votes match? Will they agree with TAXI’s screener who made the original decision to forward or return the submission—or will they hear things differently? If it doesn’t create too much pandemonium, we’ll bring up a few different groups of randomly selected audience members to sit on the panel. You’ll sharpen your A&R instincts, discover why other people hear the same music differently, and have a ton of fun doing it!

3:45pm – 5:00pm: Driver’s Ed Classes – See class grid and descriptions for more info.

5:15pm – 6:30pm: The One More Chance Pitch Panel – Los Angeles Ballroom (Lobby Level, 1st Floor) – This panel of experts from varied backgrounds will listen to randomly selected songs during this Rally-ending Pitch Panel. Film, TV, Song, *and* Artist pitches are all fair game during this panel with: **Michael Lloyd** (Multi-Platinum Producer, Music Supervisor), **Rob Chiarelli** (6-time Grammy-Winning Mixer, Engineer/Producer), **Ron Harris** (Label A&R, Multi-Platinum Producer), **Stephanie Reid** (Film/TV Music Licensing Executive), and **Geoff Siegel** (CEO, Fundamental Music). Music played during this panel will be chosen randomly from a playlist generated from panel-specific TAXI Listings (#S261021LB), (#S261021WQ), (#S261021KZ) that ran prior to the Rally. We’ll call your name if your music is randomly chosen. If you’re not in the ballroom, we’ll need to move on to the next person’s track or song. And don’t miss the acoustic guitar prize donated by Michael Lloyd! You’ve got to be in the ballroom to win.