

billboard Country Update

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BILLBOARD COUNTRY UPDATE

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Sister Sadie's New Bluegrass Song Embodies Country Women's Advances Across Generations



Fiddler **Deanie Richardson** was about to go onstage for a sound check at the Grand Ole Opry in 2023 when she got word that her father had died.

He had abused Richardson verbally, physically and — during her teens — sexually. She had longed for his passing for years, but now that the moment had come, she experienced a complicated mix of emotions. She was sad to have never had the kind of supportive dad that she deserved. But she simultaneously sensed something new and hopeful.

"It felt like all the chains [were broken]," says Richardson, a founding member of all-female bluegrass group **Sister Sadie**.

"I felt like a prisoner to him my whole life. But that moment, I felt free, and for the first time in my life, I got onstage and I felt like I was playing for me."

Her father had been abused by his father, and when he got Richardson's mother pregnant at age 16, he resented the marriage and the child. He dealt with his anger in the same way he had learned from his father, doling out severe levels of abuse to the family.

After his death, Richardson, **Erin Enderlin** and Sister Sadie lead singer **Dhani Flowers** co-wrote "Let the Circle Be Broken," bending the title of "Will the Circle Be Unbroken," a country standard that has been shared through multiple generations. They wrote it in a way that was "less about what I experienced and more about how I chose to stop it," Richardson says. "It can die right here."

Sister Sadie released the song on April 4. It captures Richardson taking control over her life and demanding to tell her story, which she believes can help other females in similar situations. But it also parallels the way that women in country have evolved creatively.

"I think Deanie's story can be a powerful metaphor for what is happening with women in country music," says Middle Tennessee State University College of Media and Entertainment dean **Beverly Keel**, a co-founder of Change the Conversation, a Nashville organization that supports women in the music business. "They are reclaiming the narrative and sharing things

from their perspective."

Murder Ballads: Illustrated Lyrics & Lore (April 29, Andrews McMeel/Simon & Schuster), authored by **Katy Horan**, documents some of the most horrific male aggression toward women. It compiles the histories of numerous early folk and country songs about stabbings and drownings, including songs in which men kill women, usually to hide an out-of-wedlock pregnancy. The perpetrators prioritize their reputations in the community over the life of their girlfriends, who would have been viewed more like an accessory than an equal partner in that era.

"These songs were used to force women to control their behavior," Horan notes, "but they never hold men accountable."

Caroline Jones' first BMLG release — "No Tellin'," due April 18 — finds her mining an abusive relationship from her



JONES



RICHARDSON



DASHA

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youth, demonstrating how bringing oppression out of the shadows can deflate its power.

"The shame and the manipulation around secrets is the way that people are able to stay in abusive situations," Jones notes. "The song is about the freedom of telling the truth, because as long as something is a secret, there's no oxygen around it, and the only story that you know is the one that you've been told. Once you tell the story to other people, you can get a different truth from people that truly love you."

Richardson carried the secret that inspired "Let the Circle Be Broken" for years as she became a prominent Nashville musician. She toured with the likes of **Patty Loveless**, **Bob Seger** and **Vince Gill**, and regularly plays fiddle during the Country Music Hall of Fame inductions as a member of the Medallion All-Star Band. Sister Sadie became the first all-female ensemble to win the International Bluegrass Musicians Association's entertainer of the year award. Richardson, after first playing the Opry at age 13, became a regular member of the show's band. Her father inevitably haunted those performances.

"I knew every night he was listening, and I knew I was going to get the same reaction on the way home from the Opry," she recalls. "I would call him and I would just ask if he had been listening, hoping to get some sort of encouragement, hoping that one day he's going to say, 'Wow, you really killed it tonight.' But it was always some sort of little jab, you know — it was always 'not good enough' or 'never going to measure up.' But I was always trying, at least before he died, to get that one moment where he said, 'Wow, you're really fucking good.'"

Abuse, she would discover, has affected a number of people that she knows, but was allowed to flourish in silence.

Hiding the violence, as they did in her house, mirrors the way society treated it until the late 1800s, when laws were first enacted in some states that made domestic assault a crime. Though discussed rarely in everyday conversations, the subject found its way into murder ballads such as "Ommie Wise," "Delia's Gone" or "Knoxville Girl," covered by **The Louvin Brothers** in 1956.

"They're so damn chipper when they're singing that song," Horan says. "It's so weird."

The women in the murder ballads were almost uniformly desirable, and they were pitied in their deaths, but also blamed for them. By killing them, the murderers were able to gain full control since the dead women could no longer act of their own accord.

"The dead white woman is almost like this image of perfection," Horan says. "She has no agency. She cannot transgress any rules. She is perfect in her stillness."

The threat of violence is one of the methods that abusers use to control others. Richardson witnessed that in her father.

"He controlled how I wore my hair, the clothes I wore, who I talked to at school every single day," she remembers. "As a teenager, my stomach was just in knots knowing at 3:30 he was going to walk through that door and I was going to have to endure all these questions: 'Who'd you talk to today?' 'Who'd you sit with at lunch?' 'Did you talk to any boys?' There was anxiety every single day, just living with him."

She knew the penalties if she didn't please him.

"He would crush my fingers if I didn't play the way he wanted me to play," she says. "He was just very, very abusive on all fronts."

Several generations of women have retaliated against that kind of abuse,

though progress is typically gradual. That was particularly true in country music. **Kitty Wells** was the first female to earn a No. 1 single in 1952 with "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels," an "answer song" to **Hank Thompson's** "The Wild Side of Life," which blamed a man's heart-break on female philandering.

Women were, for years, widely referred to condescendingly in country as "girl singers." **Loretta Lynn**, **Dolly Parton**, **Faith Hill**, **Shania Twain**, **Martina McBride**, **The Chicks** and **Carrie Underwood** were among those whose music supported females claiming their independence, in some cases taking revenge for domestic violence.

During the bro-country era in the last decade, women were often reduced to sexual objects, and their voices were mostly silenced as airplay waned for many females. Those who broke through — particularly Underwood, **Miranda Lambert** and **Kacey Musgraves** — embraced empowerment themes.

By building on the strength of the women who preceded them, country females in 2025 continue to push the boundaries. A trio of current songs — **Ella Langley's** "you look like you love me" (a collaboration with **Riley Green**), **Dasha's** "Not at This Party" and **Chappell Roan's** "The Giver" — feature women in frank discussions about their most private moments. Instead of repressing their personalities, as they would have likely been forced to do in previous generations, they are operating in control of their own stories and their relationships.

"They're owning all the aspects of their life: their needs, their desires, their hurts, their pains, their dreams, and they're not ashamed by any of it," Keel says. "Shame and blame have been so strong in so many women's lives."

These songs would have likely been poorly received in previous eras. But instead of being shunned, Langley is the Academy of Country Music's top nominee and Roan earned a No. 1 single on Hot Country Songs. Dasha, an ACM nominee for new female vocalist of the year, is insistent that women should fight for their full expression.

"No one else is going to do it," Dasha says.

The current generation of country women is addressing difficult topics more readily than ever, pushing the envelope in their frankness about relationships, but also increasingly pulling the curtain back on the family secrets.

"A lot of these things are being addressed as never before, so I think it makes for a much more open conversation," Jones says. "And I feel very lucky to be living in a time when that's possible, because we're going to help a lot of people."

Women may need to fight to maintain that possibility. Recent national developments — from the Supreme Court's rulings on abortion to the dismissal of several women in leadership roles — have reduced the gender's autonomy and influence.

"We've got the federal government erasing the history, experiences and accomplishments of women on their websites and in their language," Keel says. "Female military leaders are getting fired, so we need to hear about the entire female experience."

Richardson personifies country females' creative development. After hiding the misery of her family's abuse for most of her life, she has publicly shared her story in "Let the Circle Be Broken," conquering her father's domination each time Sister Sadie plays it.

"When we do this song every night, it's coming out of my fiddle, which is so ironic and so therapeutic because the fiddle was a thing that he tried to control," she says. "And now I'm up there playing this song about him, and every night we do this improv thing at the end of it where I just play as long as I want to play. Some nights I just cry and play. And some nights I play for five minutes. It just depends on what I need."

Just as Richardson has claimed the freedom to tell her story in recent years, the women of country have fought for the same privilege.

"We've gone from women being impregnated and killed, and everything blamed on them, to women singing about, 'Hey, I'm going to rock your world tonight,'" Richardson says. "That feels very empowering to me." ●



Russell Dickerson interviewed with **Y'all Access** host Kelly Sutton for an edition of the **Compass Media** show that will air April 12-13.



Keith Urban (left) spent time with WKIS Miami personality Dina Bonanni and assistant PD/music director Tim "TC" Conlon when he headlined the Tortuga Music Festival in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., on April 5.

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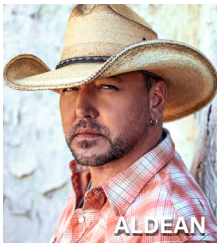
Jason Aldean, Megan Moroney Add Country Airplay Top 10s; LOCASH Leads Again

Jason Aldean rings up his milestone 40th top 10 on *Billboard*'s Country Airplay chart as he hoists "Whiskey Drink" (Macon/Broken Bow) three spots to No. 8 on the list dated April 19. The song rose by 8% to 18.6 million audience impressions April 4-10, according to Luminate.

The single, which Kurt Allison, Jonathan Edwards, Tully Kennedy and John Morgan co-wrote, is from Aldean's LP *Highway Desperado*. In November 2023, the set arrived as his 12th top 10 on Top Country Albums.

Aldean has the eighth-most top 10s on the chart since it launched in 1990. Kenny Chesney, Tim McGraw and George Strait are tied for first, with 61 each.

Aldean also scores simultaneous Country Airplay top 10s for the first time. He is featured on Morgan's "Friends Like That," which pushes 5-4 for a new best (24.3 million, up 10%). His run of top 10s began in 2005 when "Hicktown" reached No. 10 that October. "Why" followed, becoming his first of 25 No. 1s in May 2006.



BRIAN HIGBEE

MORONEY IS A-'OKAY' Megan Moroney earns her second Country Airplay top 10 as "Am I Okay?" (Megan Moroney/Columbia/Columbia Nashville) hops 13-10 (16.5 million, up 9%). The Savannah, Ga., native wrote the song with Jessie Jo Dillon and Luke Laird, and Kristian Bush produced it. The single is from Moroney's same-named LP, which entered Top Country Albums at its No. 3 peak last July, marking her second top 10. Her *Lucky* hit No. 10 in May 2023. Moroney notched her first top 10 with her rookie single, "Tennessee Orange" (No. 4, June 2023).

MAKING THEMSELVES AT 'HOME' LOCASH, the duo of Preston Brust and Chris Lucas, tops Country Airplay for a career-high second week with "Hometown Home" (BMG/Galaxy Label Group) (29.9 million, down 1%). The act previously led with "I Know Somebody" for one week in October 2016. ●

MOST INCREASED AUDIENCE			
TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	GAIN (IN MILLIONS)	
JUST IN CASE Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	+2.965	
I'M THE PROBLEM Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	+2.940	
FRIENDS LIKE THAT Night Train/Broken Bow	John Morgan Featuring Jason Aldean	+2.185	
DRINK WITH YOU Nashville Harbor	Brett Young	+2.133	
PARK Hubbard House/EMI Nashville	Tyler Hubbard	+1.577	
WORST WAY Nashville Harbor	Riley Green	+1.402	
AM I OKAY? Megan Moroney/Columbia/Columbia Nashville	Megan Moroney	+1.383	
WHISKEY DRINK Macon/Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	+1.381	
THIS HEART Combustion Masters/RCA Nashville	Corey Kent	+1.308	
COUNTRY HOUSE MCA Nashville	Sam Hunt	+1.225	

MOST INCREASED PLAYS			
TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	GAIN	
JUST IN CASE Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	+876	
I'M THE PROBLEM Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	+788	
FRIENDS LIKE THAT Night Train/Broken Bow	John Morgan Featuring Jason Aldean	+685	
DRINK WITH YOU Nashville Harbor	Brett Young	+563	
BAR NONE MCA Nashville	Jordan Davis	+503	
PARK Hubbard House/EMI Nashville	Tyler Hubbard	+493	
THIS HEART Combustion Masters/RCA Nashville	Corey Kent	+490	
WHISKEY DRINK Macon/Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	+458	
HEART OF STONE Bailee & Buddy/BMG/Republic/Stoney Creek	Jelly Roll	+386	
GOOD NEWS American Dogwood/EMPIRE/Magnolia Music	Shaboozey	+358	

RECURRENTS			
THIS WEEK	TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	TOTAL AUD. (IN MILLIONS)
1	HIGH ROAD YellaBush/Columbia/RECORDS Nashville	Koe Wetzel & Jessie Murph	19.771
2	THIS TOWN'S BEEN TOO GOOD TO US Curb	Dylan Scott	17.683
3	A BAR SONG (TIPSY) American Dogwood/EMPIRE/Magnolia Music	Shaboozey	15.916
4	POUR ME A DRINK Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Post Malone Featuring Blake Shelton	15.181
5	I HAD SOME HELP Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Post Malone Featuring Morgan Wallen	14.309
6	I AIN'T SAYIN' MCA Nashville	Jordan Davis	10.672
7	I AM NOT OKAY Bailee & Buddy/BMG/Republic/Stoney Creek	Jelly Roll	10.353
8	BOYS BACK HOME PIA/Curb/Columbia Nashville	Dylan Marlowe & Dylan Scott	9.586
9	MILES ON IT Joytime Collective/RCA Nashville	Marshmello & Kane Brown	8.648
10	COWGIRLS Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen Featuring ERNEST	8.628



TEXAS REGIONAL RADIO REPORT

WEEK ENDING APRIL 10, 2025

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WKS ON CHART	TITLE (Label)	ARTIST	TW SPINS	SPINS +/-	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WKS ON CHART	TITLE (Label)	ARTIST	TW SPINS	SPINS +/-
1	2	29	HER WAY AIN'T THE HIGHWAY (Independent) ★★ 1 Week at 1 ★★	Jake Bush	1722	66	11	12	9	ROLLIN' ON (Flying C)	Brooke Graham	1162	42
2	3	14	ABILENE (LuckySky Music)	Tori Martin	1621	112	12	14	14	BUCKLE OR THE BRIDE (Independent)	Caleb Young	1153	54
3	4	14	5 TO 9 (Independent)	Hudson Westbrook	1568	74	13	13	15	PUT IT IN REVERSE (Independent)	Ben McPeak	1134	19
4	5	20	LUBBOCK (Independent)	Flatland Cavalry	1562	75	14	15	12	THE WORKING MAN (Independent)	Cody Jinks	1093	-1
5	6	13	WEST OF FT WORTH (Independent)	Grant Gilbert	1522	73	15	21	6	NOTHIN' BUT TEXAS (Bowen Sounds/Thirty Tigers)	Wade Bowen	1055	186
6	7	13	SOMEWHERE IN TEXAS (Independent)	Tristan Roberson	1422	19	16	17	14	AIN'T THAT LOVE (Independent)	Bri Bagwell & Timber Wilde	1039	28
7	9	10	DAMN BABY (Independent)	Bubba Westly	1353	25	17	18	12	WHAT I CAME TO DO (Independent)	Jesse Raub Jr.	1009	1
8	10	12	DRIVE (Independent)	Jason Boland & The Stragglers	1340	32	18	20	8	HURRICANE (CDX)	Sandee June	962	77
9	8	24	GOOD AGAIN, AMEN (Independent)	Keller Cox	1302	-34	19	22	7	GREEN IN COLORADO (Independent)	Casey Donahew	942	109
10	11	24	AUSTIN ANYMORE (Independent)	Brandi Behlen	1201	54	20	1	14	SHE GOES GOOD WITH TEQUILA (Independent)	Brian Mars	942	-771

Texas Regional Radio Report Top 100 is compiled from weekly online playlist reports from 86 radio stations located in Texas and surrounding states, including reports from specialty shows, internet and satellite radio outlets. Songs are ranked by total plays. For tracking, complete chart methodology and more information, visit www.texasregionalradio.com, or contact Dave Smith at 972-252-8777. Copyright 2025, Texas Regional Radio Report

billboardCountry Airplay

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THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WKS ON CHART	TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	AUDIENCE (IN MILLIONS)		PLAYS		
					THIS WEEK	+/-	THIS WEEK	+/-	RANK
1	1	45	HOMETOWN HOME BMG/Galaxy Label Group	LOCASH	29.852	-0.290	8687	2	1
2	4	10	I'M THE PROBLEM Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	27.011	+2.940	7744	788	2
3	2	22	LIAR Bailee & Buddy/BMG/Republic/Stoney Creek	Jelly Roll	24.907	-0.418	6577	-101	4
4	5	51	FRIENDS LIKE THAT Night Train/Broken Bow	John Morgan Featuring Jason Aldean	24.272	+2.185	7359	685	3
5	7	52	FOREVER TO ME Warner Music Nashville/WMN	Cole Swindell	21.857	+0.154	6402	128	5
6	6	25	LOVE SOMEBODY Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	20.720	-1.151	5450	-195	9
7	9	26	I NEVER LIE Leo33	Zach Top	20.495	+0.232	6112	275	6
8	11	37	WHISKEY DRINK Macon/Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	18.643	+1.381	5553	458	8
9	10	21	TEXAS Ten Point/Wheelhouse	Blake Shelton	17.955	+0.241	5619	82	7
10	13	34	AM I OKAY? Megan Moroney/Columbia/Columbia Nashville	Megan Moroney	16.478	+1.383	5142	305	10
11	12	43	HOLY SMOKES Elektra/Warner Music Nashville/WEA	Bailey Zimmerman	15.570	+0.045	4941	7	11
12	15	23	BACKSEAT DRIVER Zone 4/RCA Nashville	Kane Brown	13.159	+0.838	4213	346	13
13	14	23	TOUGH PEOPLE Patoka Sounds/Lyric Ridge/Stoney Creek	Drew Baldridge	12.952	+0.287	4231	252	12
14	17	15	WEREN'T FOR THE WIND SAWGOD/Columbia/Triple Tigers	Ella Langley	11.508	+0.994	3680	209	14
15	19	18	WORST WAY Nashville Harbor	Riley Green	11.199	+1.402	3426	325	17
16	18	41	COMING HOME Three Up Three Down/Columbia Nashville	Old Dominion	10.634	+0.295	3651	-45	15
17	22	31	PARK Hubbard House/EMI Nashville	Tyler Hubbard	10.378	+1.578	3259	493	19
18	20	54	SINGLE AGAIN The Core/Universal Music Canada/Mercury Nashville	Josh Ross	10.206	+0.623	3542	253	16
19	21	42	THIS HEART Combustion Masters/RCA Nashville	Corey Kent	10.116	+1.308	3232	490	20
20	23	34	COUNTRY HOUSE MCA Nashville	Sam Hunt	9.811	+1.225	2906	200	21
21	16	39	JUST TO SAY WE DID Blue Chair/Warner Music Nashville/WEA	Kenny Chesney	9.743	-1.438	3368	-553	18
22	24	37	TRUCK ON FIRE Big Machine	Carly Pearce	7.956	+0.242	2894	147	22
23	25	22	FIX WHAT YOU DIDN'T BREAK RCA Nashville	Nate Smith	7.031	+1.006	2339	235	23
24	27	31	FRIDAY NIGHT HEARTBREAKER Capitol Nashville	Jon Pardi	5.372	+0.341	2124	102	24
25	28	11	GOOD NEWS American Dogwood/EMPIRE/Magnolia Music	Shaboozey	5.300	+0.913	1956	358	26
26	31	8	AFTER ALL THE BARS ARE CLOSED Fifty-One/Forty-Nine/Valory	Thomas Rhett	4.892	+0.730	1898	307	27
27	26	54	LIFE WITH YOU Curb	Kelsey Hart	4.757	-0.330	1872	-135	28
28	30	29	HEAVENS TO BETSY Big Machine	Jackson Dean	4.746	+0.513	1958	157	25
29	29	21	COUNTRY SONG CAME ON Capitol Nashville	Luke Bryan	4.500	+0.221	1829	95	29
30	51	3	JUST IN CASE Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	4.314	+2.965	1208	876	35

COUNTRY AIRPLAY CHART LEGEND

RANKINGS

Country Airplay is ranked by total audience impressions for the week ending Sunday based on monitored airplay by Mediabase of 145 stations by Luminate. Audience totals on the chart are derived, in part, using certain Nielsen Audio-copyrighted Persons 12+ audience estimates (under license © 2025, Nielsen Audio). The list of all Country Airplay chart reporters can be viewed in Luminate's online platform.

TIES

On Country Airplay, if two songs are tied in audience, the song with the larger increase in audience is placed first.

BULLETS

Awarded on Country Airplay to titles gaining audience or remaining flat from the previous week. A song will also receive a bullet if its percentage loss in audience does not exceed the percentage of monitored station downtime for the format. Titles that decline in audience but increase in detections will also receive a bullet if the total audience erosion for the week does not exceed 3%.

RECURRENTS

On Country Airplay, descending titles below No. 10 in either audience or detections are moved to recurrent after 20 weeks, provided that they are not still gaining enough audience points to bullet or if they rank below No. 10 and post a third consecutive week of (non-bulleted) audience decline, regardless of total chart weeks. Plus, songs that ascend to a peak between Nos. 1 and 5 will remain on the chart for one additional week even if dropping below No. 10.

HOT SHOT DEBUT

Awarded to the highest-ranking new entry on Country Airplay.

MOST INCREASED AUDIENCE

Most Increased Audience on Country Airplay lists the songs with the greatest week-to-week increases in total audience.

AIRPOWER

Awarded on Country Airplay to titles ranking inside top 20 in plays and audience rankings for the first time, with increases in both plays and audience.

BREAKER

Awarded on Country Airplay to titles achieving airplay (at least one detection) at 60% of reporting stations for the first time.

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 AIRPLAY
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THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WKS ON CHART	TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	AUDIENCE (IN MILLIONS)		PLAYS		
					THIS WEEK	+/-	THIS WEEK	+/-	RANK
31	33	4	HANDS OF TIME BigEC/EMI Nashville	Eric Church	4.118	+0.440	1552	235	32
32	32	30	WHAT KINDA MAN MCA Nashville	Parker McCollum	3.915	+0.163	1654	135	30
33	34	10	I DARE YOU Big Machine	Rascal Flatts & Jonas Brothers	3.836	+0.175	1639	123	31
34	36	13	STRAIGHT LINE Hit Red/Capitol Nashville	Keith Urban	3.331	+0.349	1311	133	33
35	37	4	HAPPEN TO ME Triple Tigers	Russell Dickerson	3.277	+0.301	1137	98	36
36	35	8	SHE HATES ME Capitol Nashville	Dierks Bentley	3.202	+0.191	1238	22	34
37	44	3	BAR NONE MCA Nashville	Jordan Davis	2.990	+1.210	1100	503	37
38	38	5	RUN Vanner/Republic/Big Loud	Miranda Lambert	2.809	+0.097	892	41	45
39	42	5	3,2,1 Tucker Wetmore/Back Blocks/Republic/EMI Nashville	Tucker Wetmore	2.509	+0.414	1004	123	41
40	39	24	RELAPSE 717/Warner/WEA	Warren Zeiders	2.285	-0.076	1022	6	40
41	NEW		DRINK WITH YOU Nashville Harbor ★★ Hot Shot Debut ★★	Brett Young	2.133	+2.133	563	563	55
42	53	2	HEART OF STONE Bailee & Buddy/BMG/Republic/Stoney Creek ★★ Breaker ★★	Jelly Roll	2.086	+1.003	848	386	48
43	41	21	WOULD IF I COULD Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	ERNEST	2.072	-0.037	1037	14	39
44	47	14	COWGIRL Stoney Creek	Parmalee	1.961	+0.441	925	96	43
45	43	11	IT WON'T BE LONG RECORDS Nashville	George Birge	1.941	+0.009	1085	22	38
46	45	11	INDIGO Lockeland Springs/Atlantic/Magnolia Music	Sam Barber Featuring Avery Anna	1.757	-0.001	787	22	49
47	46	19	DARLIN' Warner Music Nashville/WAR	Chase Matthew	1.634	+0.067	879	97	46
48	49	21	BETTER THAN YOU Quartz Hill/Stone Country	Joe Nichols / Annie Bosko	1.583	+0.166	909	49	44
49	48	16	TIME'S TICKING Valory	Justin Moore	1.482	+0.040	935	15	42
50	50	18	GOLDEN CHILD Riser House	Meghan Patrick	1.326	-0.035	861	-28	47
51	54	3	HOUSE AGAIN River House/Warner Music Nashville/WMN	Hudson Westbrook	1.119	+0.048	458	17	59
52	59	2	NOT AT THIS PARTY VERSION III/Warner/WMN	Dasha	1.081	+0.281	658	108	52
53	56	14	WOLVES CRY Average Joes	Bryan Martin	0.917	+0.008	483	3	57
54	55	4	CRY Curb	Lee Brice	0.907	-0.084	441	28	60
55	52	13	10-90 Stancaster/Thirty Tigers/Big Machine	Muscadine Bloodline	0.898	-0.187	625	6	54
56	57	5	WISH YOU WELL Music Soup/Interscope/MCA Nashville	Vincent Mason	0.844	-0.032	632	12	53
57	58	5	FOREVER FROM HERE Monument/Sony Music Nashville	Tigirlily Gold	0.833	+0.029	776	8	50
58	60	9	BETTER ME FOR YOU (BROWN EYES) Fugitive Recordings/Magnolia Music	Max McNown	0.819	+0.110	701	52	51
59	RE-ENTRY		IF I DIE BEFORE YOU Red Street	Chris Lane	0.799	+0.183	522	35	56
60	RE-ENTRY		ENDS OF THE EARTH RECORDS/Columbia/RECORDS Nashville	Ty Myers	0.742	+0.123	209	-8	-



Jordan Davis (center) posed with fellow guests Michelle Williams and John Oliver when he appeared March 31 on Bravo's *Watch What Happens Live With Andy Cohen*.



Dylan Marlowe welcomed two WWKA Orlando, Fla., staffers when performed at the House of Blues on April 3. From left: Cox Music Group/Orlando director of operations Steve Stewart, Marlowe, WWKA music director Melissa Quinones and RCA Nashville Southeast regional promotion manager Ali O'Connell.

billboard



2025

COUNTRY POWER PLAYERS

Billboard's 12th annual Country Power Players issue will profile the people who have driven another solid year for country music in sales, streaming and publishing. This special feature will highlight those who have had the greatest impact in the genre, including recorded music, live entertainment and publishing, in the past year.

Advertise in *Billboard's* Country Power Players issue to congratulate this year's honorees while reaching key decision-makers who are driving the music business.

BONUS DISTRIBUTION

Billboard Country Power Players Cocktail Party & Awards on June 4, TBD in Nashville

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International Ryan O'Donnell | rodonnell@pmc.com

ISSUE DATE 5/31 | AD CLOSE 5/20 | MATERIALS DUE 5/22

NASHVILLE & NATIONAL TOM ROLAND tom.roland@billboard.com

LOCASH, featuring Chris Lucas (left) and Preston Brust, talked with ABC host Linsey Davis during the April 8 edition of *ABC News Live*.

'PAINTER' PREVAILS AT IAMP EVENT

The Association of Independent Music Publishers celebrated the work, successes and creativity of Nashville's independent music publishers and songwriters on April 8 during the AIMP Nashville Country Awards held at Marathon Music Works.

The evening awarded winners in eight categories.

Hosted by media personality **Storme Warren**, the event saw many of Nashville's songwriting and publishing elites gather to fete top songs, songwriters, artists and publishers. Rising artist-writer of the year and artist of the year nominees and winners, both past and present, paid homage to various tunes that have previously won the song of the year category.

HARDY performed the **Little Big Town**-recorded "Girl Crush," **Jordan Davis** sang **Keith Urban**'s "Blue Ain't Your Color," **Hailey Whitters** offered a rendition of **Midland**'s "Drinkin' Problem," and **Carly Pearce** performed **Kacey Musgraves**' "Rainbow." **Lee Brice** performed the **Maren Morris** hit "The Bones," **Jackson Dean** covered Brice's "One of Them Girls," and **Old Dominion** sang **Morgan Wallen**'s "Sand in My Boots." **Ashley McBryde** sang **Chris Stapleton**'s "You Should Probably Leave," and **Hannah Ellis** teamed with **Nick Wayne** for a version of Davis' hit "Next Thing You Know."

The evening also included a heartfelt video tribute to late Warner Chappell Music Nashville president/CEO **Ben Vaughn**, who died in January.

The evening's winners were:

- **Jon Decious**, rising songwriter of the year
- **Zach Top**, rising artist-writer of the year
- Davis, artist-writer of the year
- **Courtney Allen**, Concord Music Publishing, song champion of the year
- "Hell Is a Dance Floor," writers: **Vincent Mason**, **Chase McDaniel**; publisher pick of the year
- "The Painter," writers: **Benjy Davis**, **Kat Higgins**, **Ryan Larkins**; song of the year
- **Jessie Jo Dillon**, songwriter of the year
- Big Machine Music, independent music publisher of the year

—Jessica Nicholson

RADIO & RECORDS®

New West signed **The Wildmans** to a recording contract. The first music released under the agreement by the act, siblings **Aila** and **Elisha Wildman**, is the album *Longtime Friends*, due July 11 ... **Graham Bunn** started April 10 at **WKKT** Charlotte, N.C., filling the morning spot that opened up with the retirement of **Paul Schadt**, RadioInk.com reported. Bunn was formerly an on-air personality with **KKGO** Los Angeles ... **WKDZ** Cadiz, Ky., appointed **Josh Claussen** as morning co-host, according to RadioInk.com. He fills the post previously occupied by **Cindy Allen-Lax**, who recently retired. Claussen has been the PD for classic hits **WEKT** Elkton, Ky., since January 2024. Edge Media Group owns both stations ... **KBEQ** Kansas City music director **Kyle Matthews** has added morning co-host to his job description, RadioInsight.com reported. The move coincides with two additional personnel changes. Former personality **Joe "Tater" Cavanagh**, who moved to Tennessee in 2024, will contribute a "Nashville Insider" feature, and part-time promotions team member **Marissa Leggio** takes over middays.

'ROUND THE ROW

Big Machine Music hired senior manager **Preston Berger**, who spent the past three years as Black River Publishing creative manager. Reach him in his new role [here](#) ... The Neal Agency added Nashville-based **Michelle Bower** as president of strategic partnerships. She was previously associate senior vp at LaForce, a New York-based marketing firm. Reach her [here](#) ... **Megan Wise** joined Anotherland Agency as vp of new business. She arrives from the Country Music Association, where she was senior director of brand partnerships. Reach her [here](#) ... Metro Nashville tapped the Opry Entertainment Group to operate the city's 6,800-seat Ascend Amphitheater for the next decade ... **LANCO** signed with UTA for representation ... **Bradley Gaskin** tapped The Kirby Organization for concert booking ... WME added artist-writer **Naomi Johnson** to its roster ... Songwriter **Dan Wilson** ("Make You Mine," "Silverado Blue") re-signed with Black River Publishing ... The Nashville Songwriters Association International elected four new board members: **Deric Ruttan**, **Lydia Vaughn**, **Dan Wilson** and **Jimmy Yeary** ... The National Recording Registry announced 25 new titles on April 9, including three country recordings: **Charley Pride**'s "Kiss an Angel Good Mornin'," **Freddy Fender**'s "Before the Next Teardrop Falls" and **Roy Rogers** and **Dale Evans**' "Happy Trails." Also among the new additions is **Tracy Chapman**'s self-titled debut album, which spawned the original version of **Luke Combs**' "Fast Car" ... Nashville observed Bobby Bare Day on April 7 in conjunction with the singer's 90th birthday ... The Tennessee Songwriters Association International presented **Bill Anderson** a lifetime achievement award during an event at Nashville event space Harken Hall ... **Marty Stuart**'s Congress of Country Music will unveil two murals honoring **Linda Ronstadt** and **Loretta Lynn** in Philadelphia, Miss., on April 12 ... The Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum opens a new exhibit, "Dolly Parton: Journey of a Seeker," on May 20. The display will remain in place through September 2026 with her handwritten first draft of lyrics to "Jolene," her Kennedy Center Honors medallion and a cowgirl outfit she wore in 9 to 5 among its artifacts ... *Austin City Limits* will wrap its 50th-anniversary celebration with a May 3 installment, *Austin City Limits Hall of Fame Honors Garth Brooks* ... **Ashley McBryde** will receive an honorary doctorate in music from her alma mater, Arkansas State University, on May 10 in Jonesboro, Ark. ... **Montgomery Gentry**'s **Eddie Montgomery** was named a brand ambassador for Southern Kentucky Distillery in Burkesville, Ky. ... **Riley Green**, **HARDY**, **Tyler Hubbard** and **Justin Moore** are among participants in the annual Rock 'N Jock Celebrity Softball Game, a benefit for Folds of Honor, scheduled for June 2 at First Horizon Park in Nashville. **Lee Greenwood** will perform "God Bless the U.S.A." during the 7th-inning stretch ... Songwriter **Larry Bastian**, 90, died April 6, *The Porterville Recorder (Calif.)* reported. His hit list included the **Garth Brooks** titles "Rodeo" and "Unanswered Prayers," plus **Conway Twitty**'s "Saturday Night Special." He also earned recordings by **George Jones**, **Merle Haggard** and **Reba McEntire**. Despite his success in Nashville, Bastian remained a California resident throughout his life. ●



Kane Brown visited with New England radio programmers backstage when he performed April 5 in Providence, R.I. From left: Sony Music Nashville director of radio marketing and promotion Dan Nelson, WKLB Boston PD Dawn Santolucito, Brown and WCTK Providence PD Kevin Palana.



7th Annual
Songwriter's Night

Benefiting Gilda's Club Middle Tennessee

Chris Young | Chris DeStefano

April 26, 2025 | 6:00 - 8:00 PM

The Reserve at Fat Bottom Brewing

Free of charge to everyone, Gilda's Club Middle Tennessee uplifts and strengthens people impacted by cancer by providing support, fostering compassionate communities, and breaking down barriers to care.

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billboard Country Airplay Index

TITLE Publishing-Licensing Org.
(Songwriter) **Chart Position**

10-90 Azalea Bloom Publishing, BMI/Summit Drive Publishing, BMI/Kendell Marvel Publishing Designee, SESAC (G.S.Stanton, C.Muncaster, K.Marvel) **55**

3,2,1 Concord Copyrights, BMI/Jomil 10 Music, BMI/Native Notes Music, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/SugarPlum Songs, ASCAP/WC Music Corp., ASCAP (J.Miller, S.Oberstreet, J.Reynolds) **39**

A

AFTER ALL THE BARS ARE CLOSED

Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Be A Light Publishing, BMI/Big Loud Mountain LLC, BMI/John Bryan Music, BMI/Goat Island Bay Music, BMI/Songs By 10K HRS Publishing, BMI/1317 Music, ASCAP/Kobalt Songs Music Publishing LLC, ASCAP/Dragon Bunny Music, BMI/Sony Songs LLC, BMI (Thomas Rhett, J.C.Bunetta, J.Byron, J.Free, J.K.Hindlin) **26**

AM I OKAY? Sony Timber Publishing, SESAC/Georgiano Music, SESAC/Concord Global Music, GMR/Songs Of CN, GMR/Crawford Mercer Music, SESAC/Big Music Machine, BMI/Big Ass Pile Of Dimes Music, BMI (M.Moroney, L.Laird, J.Dillon) **10**

B

BACKSEAT DRIVER Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Songs Of Black River Music, ASCAP/Me Gusta Music, BMI/Songs Of Combustion Five, BMI/Seeker From The Speaker Music, BMI/On Cor Music, BMI (J.Davis, J.Walker) **12**

BAR NONE Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Tape Room Hits, BMI/Artist 101 Publishing Group, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/Tape Room LLC, Series 1, ASCAP/Hunter Phelps Pub Designee, ASCAP/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Kway Publishing, BMI/Writersonthehorn Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI (B.J.Johnson, H.Phelps, L.Vaughan) **37**

BETTER ME FOR YOU (BROWN EYES) From The Penalty Box, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Max McNow Music, BMI/Carver Music Publishing, ASCAP/Tunes Of King Pen, BMI/Ready Set Publishing, BMI (M.McNow, J.Kenny, T.K.Dabbs) **58**

BETTER THAN YOU Universal Music Corp., ASCAP/Brumby Cooper Otis Music, ASCAP/Spirit Nashville Two Crescendo, ASCAP/Pickin' Padre Music, ASCAP/Fluid Tunes, ASCAP (D.Range, J.Pierce) **48**

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COMING HOME WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Bird And Bean Music, ASCAP/Twelve6 Dogwood, ASCAP/Trevor's Advocate Publishing, ASCAP/Tiny Handstand, ASCAP/Sharkules Music, ASCAP/More MeGusta Music, ASCAP/Universal Music Corp., ASCAP/Turs And Chorus, ASCAP/Warner Geo Met Ric Music, GMR/Art of CTM Music Outlander LP, GMR/Smackworld Music, GMR (M.Ramsey, T.Rosen, W.Sellers, G.Sprung, B.T.Furst, S.McAnally) **16**

COUNTRY HOUSE Twelve6 Red Oak Songs, BMI/Still Between The Pines, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/EMI Blackwood Music Inc., BMI/Katie In The Sky With Diamonds, BMI/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Songs For Indy And Owl, ASCAP/Works Of CMT Outlander, GMR (M.Lotten, R.Copperman, J.Osbome, S.L.Hunt) **20**

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COWGIRL Tileyard Music Publishing Ltd., PRS/Sentric Music Ltd., PRS/Reservoir 416, BMI/33 Creative, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/NewManiac Music North, SOCAN/VaughnCo Music Publishing Inc., PRS/Cooking Vinyl Publishing Ltd., PRS/Thomas Frank Ridley Horsley Publishing Designee, PRS/8936 Music, BMI/Parmalee Publishing Publishing, BMI (J.D.Lewis, D.Fanning, P.D.Newman, R.Jay, T.F.R.Horsley, M.Thomas, B.Knox, J.McSwain, S.Thomas) **44**

CRY Songs of Litmus Music Publishing Holdings, BMI/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Universal Music - Brentwood Benson Publishing, ASCAP/Capitol CMG Genesis, ASCAP/Spirit Nashville Two Crescendo, ASCAP (D.Davidson, B.Hayslip, D.A.Garcia) **54**

D

DARLIN' Hunter Huff Publishing Designee, BMI/Ciaran Wilkie Publishing Designee, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Verse 2, BMI/Droptime Music, BMI/Chase Matthew Music Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Bridge 1 Music, BMI/Kobalt Music Services Ltd., PRS (Chase Matthew, A.Maxwell, H.Huff, C.Wilkie, Jake Angel) **47**

DRINK WITH YOU Super Big Music, ASCAP/Caliville Publishing, ASCAP/Concord Road, BMI/Rio Bravo Music Inc., BMI/Off The Record, ASCAP/Sony Tunes, ASCAP/WC Music Corp., ASCAP (B.Young, J.Frasure, T.Lucca, E.L.Weisband) **41**

E

ENDS OF THE EARTH Ty Myers Publishing Designee, BMI (T.Myers) **60**

F

FIX WHAT YOU DIDN'T BREAK Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Creent Music, ASCAP/Master Of My Domain Music, ASCAP/Poppy's Picks, ASCAP/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Rudy Rocks The USA, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/TDP Publishing, BMI/Hits From The Tape Room, BMI (N.Smith, A.G.Gorley, T.Phillips, L.Rimes) **23**

FOREVER FROM HERE Smack Back Music, BMI/Sleighbells Ring Publishing, BMI/Lily Lyrics Publishing, BMI/Me Gusta Music, BMI/Songs Of CTM Publishing, BMI/Smack Attack Music, SESAC/Melodies Of CTM Outlander, SESAC/Nash And Stella Songs, SESAC/Me Gusta Music, SESAC/W.C.M. Music Corp., SESAC/King Pen Songs, SESAC/Art of CTM Music Outlander LP, GMR/Warner Geo Met Ric Music, GMR/Smackworld Music, GMR (K.J.Slaubaugh, K.J.Slaubaugh, S.McAnally, P.C.Good) **57**

FOREVER TO ME Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Colden Rainey Music, BMI/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Hold On Can I Get A Number 1 Music, BMI/Long And Curly Entertainment, BMI/Big Loud Mountain LLC, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI (C.Swindell, G.James, R.H.Block) **5**

FRIDAY NIGHT HEARTBREAKER Concord Copyrights, BMI/Jomil 10 Music, BMI/Cascade Road Songs, ASCAP/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Tompkins Family Vacation, ASCAP/Big Music Machine, BMI/Big Ass Pile Of Dimes Music, BMI/Finally Got Some Publishing, BMI/The Buffalo Catalogue, BMI (J.Miller, C.Tompkins, J.J.Dillon, D.Ross, R.J.Huro) **24**

FRIENDS LIKE THAT Triple Play Music, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Songs For Margo, ASCAP/Sea Gayle Pub House Publishing, ASCAP/Music Of The Corn, ASCAP/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Writersonthehorn Publishing, BMI/Wild Willy Music, ASCAP/Kway Publishing, BMI (J.Morgan, B.Anderson, W.L.Bundy, L.Vaughan) **4**

G

GOLDEN CHILD Anthem Entertainment B, SOCAN/Iron Songbird Publishing B, BMI/Jackoby Songs II, BMI/Anthem Music Publishing I, BMI/Sweet Baby RuRu Songs, BMI/World For Aaron Eshuis Concord All CCI, ASCAP (M.Patrick, J.Hyde, A.Eshuis) **50**

GOOD NEWS WC Music Corp., ASCAP/S2 Songs LLC, BMI/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/George Media Partners LLC, ASCAP/Essency Music Publishing, ASCAP/Torrey Songs, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/BMG Rights Management (UK) Ltd., PRS/Paco Place Songs, BMI (C.O.Chibueze, N.Sastry, S.C.Cook, J.Torrey, M.R.Pollack, R.OMANS) **25**

H

HANDS OF TIME Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Longer And Louder Music, BMI/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Endurance Sierra Charlie, ASCAP/More Magic Carusoe Music, ASCAP (E.Church, Scooter Carusoe) **31**

HAPPEN TO ME Concord Copyrights, BMI/Big Hits N Gravy, BMI/Concord Tunes, SESAC/Gard Tables Music, SESAC/Hand Your Hat Hits, SESAC/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Big Music Machine, BMI/Big Ass Pile Of Dimes Music, BMI/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Family Farm Songs, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI (R.Dickerson, C.LaCorte, J.Dillon, C.McGill, R.Hazard) **35**

HEART OF STONE Bailee's Ballads, BMI/BMG Platinum Songs US, BMI/Round Hill Songs III, ASCAP/Foxwood Entertainment Group Music Division, ASCAP/Big Blue Nation Music, ASCAP/Rarre Publishing Worldwide, BMI/Songs Of Back Block Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/God Made Most Played Most Paid Publishing, BMI (J.B.DeFord, Z.Crowell, B.Pendergrass, Shy Carter) **42**

HEAVENS TO BETSY Little Louder Songs, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/Well That Was Awkward Music, BMI/Big Music Machine, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Songs Of Tuckaway Music, BMI/Daddy's Home Music, BMI/Songs Of Harpeth Valley, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI (J.Dean, B.Davis, D.Williams) **28**

HOLY SMOKES Bailey Zimmerman Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/1 Fart Creations, BMI/Concord Copyrights, BMI/This Is Chromatic Music, BMI/MT ROOM, SESAC/Melodies Of CTM Outlander, SESAC/Dead Aim Music, BMI/Lil Sebastian Music, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI (A.R.Shawn, B.Zimmerman, B.M.Stennis, L.Hungate, M.Tyler) **11**

HOMETOWN HOME BMG Platinum Songs US, BMI/Weslingier Publishing, BMI/Lovelegend Songs, BMI/Concord Boulevard, ASCAP/Concord Sounds, ASCAP/Relative Red Music, BMI/Biggie Bendable Music, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI (C.Lucas, P.C.Brust, A.Albert, Z.Aband) **1**

HOUSE AGAIN Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Songs Of Tuckaway Music, BMI/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Party Of 3 Songs, ASCAP/Southeast Kid Music, ASCAP/Hudson Westbrook Publishing Designee, BMI (H.Westbrook, N.A.Medley, D.Alley) **51**

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I DARE YOU Nick Jonas Publishing, BMI/PWZ Publishing House, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Shay Mooney Music, BMI/Seven Peaks Music, ASCAP/8Sixteen Music, ASCAP (N.J.Jonas, Tommy English, S.Mooney, D.Whitmore, J.) **33**

IF I DIE BEFORE YOU Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/WeisDwi, ASCAP/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Young Man Publishing, BMI/Sony Timber Publishing, SESAC/M & M College Fund, SESAC (E.L.Weisband, J.McNair, S.Mosley) **59**

I'M THE PROBLEM Honey Hole Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Em Dog Music, BMI/Big Loud Mountain LLC, BMI/Jamie McLaughlin Publishing Designee, BMI/Sony Songs LLC, BMI/Bo Jewell Club, BMI (M.C.Wallen, G.W.Block, J.McLaughlin, E.K.Smith, Charlie Handsome) **2**

INDIGO Sam Barber Music Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Sparky Sky Songs, BMI/To A T Creative, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Tape Room Hits, BMI/Firebird Country Tunes, BMI/Oakdale Market Publishing, BMI (S.R.Barber, A.Arna, A.Sheridan) **46**

I NEVER LIE Rio Bravo Music, Inc., BMI/Zach Top Music, BMI/Too Broke To Quit Music, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Music And Magazines Publishing, BMI (Z.Top, C.Chamberlain, T.Nichols) **7**

IT WON'T BE LONG Big Machine, ASCAP/Liz Rose Music, LLC, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Songs Of Wild Cat Well Music, BMI/Sony Countryside, BMI (G.Birge, J.A.Fox, C.McGill, T.Anderson) **45**

J

JUST IN CASE Not Listed (M.C.Wallen, A.W.Bak, J.Byron, J.K.Hindlin, B.Pendergrass, J.P.Thompson, Charlie Handsome, E.K.Smith) **30**

JUST TO SAY WE DID Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Basura Music, BMI/Old Desperados, LLC, ASCAP/N2D Publishing Company, Inc., ASCAP/Carol Vincent And Associates, LLC, ASCAP/SongsOf, ASCAP/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Super Big Music, ASCAP/M Drag Songs, ASCAP (K.Chesney, D.L.Murphy, Brett James, M.Dragstrem) **21**

L

LIAR Bailee's Ballads, BMI/BMG Platinum Songs US, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Tape Room Hits, BMI/Ben There Wrote That Publishing, BMI/Artist 101 Publishing Group, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Master Of My Domain Music, ASCAP/Poppy's Picks, ASCAP/TDP Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Hits From The Tape Room, BMI (J.B.DeFord, B.J.Johnson, A.G.Gorley, T.Phillips) **3**

LIFE WITH YOU Mike Curb Music, BMI/Hits From The Hart, BMI/Curb Songs, ASCAP/Indecso Publishing, LLC, ASCAP/Smackville Music, ASCAP/Kobalt Songs Music Publishing LLC, ASCAP/CTM Outlander Music Publishing, ASCAP/Concord Boulevard, ASCAP (K.Hart, K.Schienger, S.Stepakoff) **27**

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N

NOT AT THIS PARTY Ben There Wrote That Publishing, BMI/Artist 101 Publishing Group, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/Dashville Publishing House, BMI/Sony Songs LLC, BMI/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Master Of My Domain Music, ASCAP/Poppy's Picks, ASCAP/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Tape Room Hits, BMI (A.D.Novotny, A.G.Gorley, B.J.Johnson) **52**

P

PARK T Tree Music, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Songs For The Munch Music, BMI/Songs Of Influence, BMI/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Master Of My Domain Music, ASCAP/Poppy's Picks, ASCAP/Georgia Song Vibe, ASCAP/WC Music Corp., ASCAP (T.R.Hubbard, J.Frasure, A.G.Gorley, C.Smith) **17**

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RELAPSE Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/PA Cowboy Music, BMI/Rarre Publishing Worldwide, BMI/Songs Of Back Block Publishing, BMI (W.Zeiders, B.Pendergrass) **40**

RUN Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Pink Dog Publishing, BMI (M.Lamberg) **38**

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SHE HATES ME Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Dudetunes, ASCAP/Master Of My Domain Music, ASCAP/Poppy's Picks, ASCAP/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Family Farm Songs, BMI/Music Of CTM Outlander Music LP, BMI/Smackshot Music, BMI/Katie In Paris, BMI/Stereo Supersonic Music, ASCAP/Jordan Rocks Music, ASCAP (D.Bentley, R.Copperman, A.G.Gorley, C.McGill, J.C.Allen, W.Scantlin) **36**

SINGLE AGAIN W.C.M. Music Corp., SESAC/Situation Songs, SESAC/Warner Geo Met Ric Music, GMR/Allen Hill Songs, GMR/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/The Core Publishing, LLC, BMI/Josh Ross Publishing Designee, BMI/Real Bad Songs, SESAC (J.Ross, J.A.Fox, B.Rempel) **18**

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T

TEXAS Songs Of Smack, BMI/CTM Publishing, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/Universal Music Corp., ASCAP/Kyle Sturrock Music, ASCAP/Smackworks Music, SESAC/Melodies Of CTM Outlander, SESAC/Kobalt Group Publishing, SESAC (J.Clawson, K.Sturrock, J.Dorr, L.Guzman) **9**

THIS HEART Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Madfun Music, BMI/Ocone River Bank Music, BMI/Bollingersey Shore, SESAC/7 Vill Music, BMI/Speakers Go Boom Songs, BMI/Goat Island Bay Music, BMI/Peertunes, Ltd., SESAC/Titanium Music, SESAC/Melodies Of CTM Outlander, SESAC (T.Archer, W.B.Bollinger, J.A.Hackworth, M.Tyler) **19**

TIME'S TICKING Double Barrel Ace Music, BMI/Big Music Machine, BMI/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Wild Willy Music, ASCAP/Music Of The Corn, ASCAP/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Full Draw Publishing, BMI/Anthem Music Publishing II, ASCAP/Tunes From The Red White And Blue School, ASCAP (J.Moore, W.L.Bundy, R.Montana, J.S.Stover) **49**

TOUGH PEOPLE Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/940 Songs, BMI/Round Hill Lyrics, BMI/Bumpin Does Music, BMI/Bootleg Lyrics, BMI/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI (D.Baldrige, J.Walker, A.Sanders, L.Combs) **13**

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W

WEREN'T FOR THE WIND Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Bridge 1 Music, BMI/Songs Of Smack, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/Music Of CTM Outlander Music LP, BMI/Langley Publishing, BMI (E.Langley, J.Taylor, J.Clawson) **14**

WHAT KINDA MAN Parkermac Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Abundantiam Publishing, BMI/Songs Of Harpeth Valley, BMI/VRUCKENROLLMUSIC, BMI/Music Of CTM Outlander Music LP, BMI (P.McCollum, J.N.Spillman, N.Hemby) **32**

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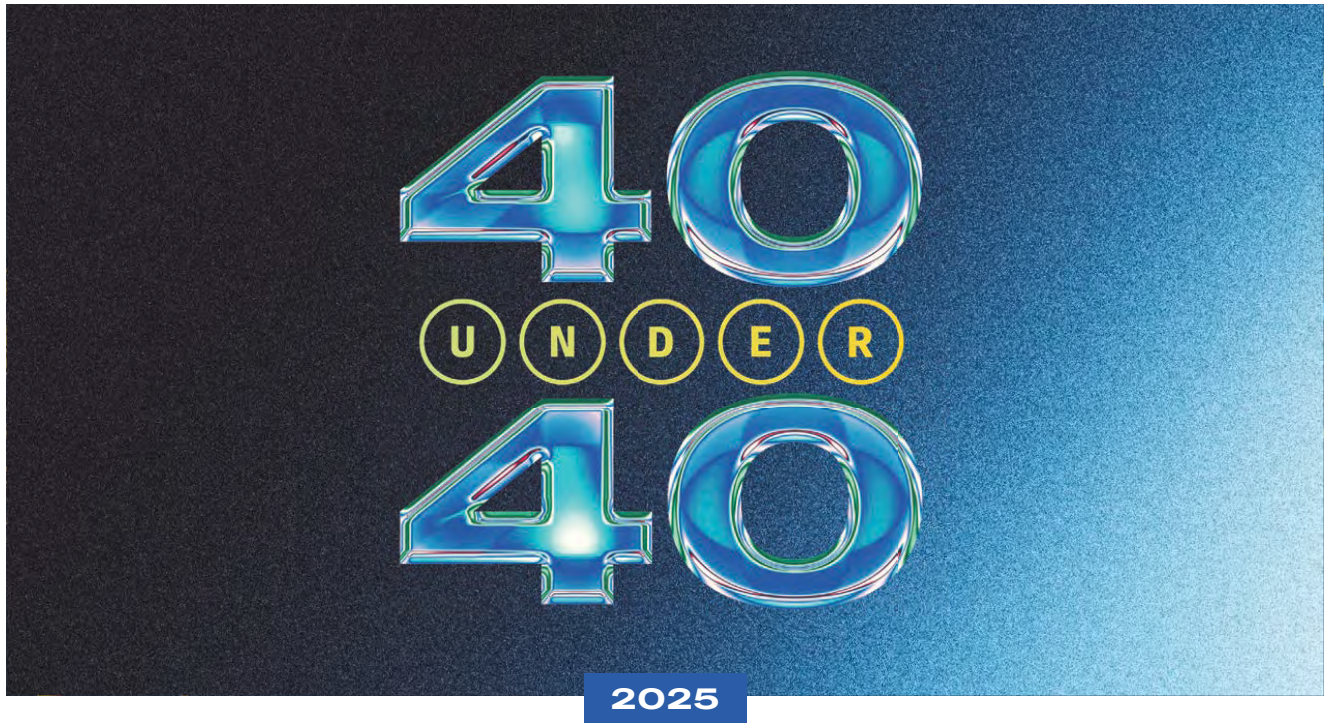
WISH YOU WELL Big Music Machine, BMI/Works by Range Music Partners, BMI/Warbranger Publishing, BMI/Big Ass Pile Of Dimes Music, BMI/Songs Of Back Block Publishing, BMI/Rarre Publishing Worldwide, BMI (G.Warburton, J.J.Dillon, B.Pendergrass, C.LaCorte) **56**

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billboard



40 UNDER 40

On May 17, *Billboard* will publish its annual 40 Under 40 Issue, celebrating the next generation of leaders in the music industry. This issue will profile 40 power players who are making their mark in the business.

These progressive young leaders' innovation and creativity will continue to create excitement in the music industry.

Advertise in this issue to reach the music business' most influential and affluent, from the young disrupters to the seasoned veterans who paved the way.

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REWINDING
THE
COUNTRY
CHARTS

45 Years Ago Charley Pride Sang The ‘Blues’

In 1980, his version of Hank Williams’ classic became his 23rd Hot Country Songs No. 1

On *Billboard*’s April 12, 1980-dated Hot Country Songs chart, **Charley Pride**’s “Honky Tonk Blues” rose to No. 1. It became the 23rd of his 29 leaders.

Hank Williams, who wrote and recorded the original, made it a hit in 1952. Pride’s rendition was released from his LP *There’s a Little Bit of Hank in Me*, on which he covered 10 Williams classics. The set was the

last of his 12 Top Country Albums leaders. Born in Sledge, Miss., Pride was the proud owner of a Silvertone guitar, procured from a *Sears* catalog, by age 14. His first exposure to country music came as a child when his dad would tune to the Grand Ole Opry on **WSM-AM** Nashville. Pride’s other passion was baseball; in the ’50s, he played in the Negro Leagues and on profes-

sional minor league teams before sustaining a career-ending injury.

Pride was the first Black singer to break through in country music when he signed with RCA Records in 1966; he was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2000. He died at age 86 on Dec. 12, 2020, due to complications from COVID-19.

—JIM ASKER

Pride at the 1980 Country Festival in Rotterdam, Netherlands.



(Writer), Label & Number, Date, Label, (Publisher, Licensee)			
★	2	9	HONKY TONK BLUES —Charley Pride (H. Williams), RCA 11912 (Fred Rose, BMI)
★	3	10	IT'S LIKE WE NEVER SAID GOODBYE —Crystal Gayle (R. Greenaway, G. Stephens), Columbia 1-11198 (Cookaway/Dejamas, ASCAP)
	3	1	SUGAR DADDY —Bellamy Brothers (D. Bellamy), Warner/Curb 49160 (Famous/Bellamy Brothers, ASCAP)
★	4	6	A LESSON IN LEAVIN' —Dottie West (R. Goodrum/B. Maher), United Artist 1339 (Chappell/Sailmaker/Welbeck/Blue Quill, ASCAP)
	5	5	WOMEN I'VE NEVER HAD —Hank Williams Jr. (H. Williams Jr.), Elektra/Curb 46593 (Bocephus, BMI)
★	6	8	TWO STORY HOUSE —