

billboard Country Update

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BILLBOARD COUNTRY UPDATE

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Melissa Etheridge Exemplifies Why CMA Fest Attracts Artists From Beyond Country



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In the middle of her first-ever appearance at the Country Music Association's CMA Fest, **Melissa Etheridge** mused that the experience was "like speed dating."

Her 30-minute June 5 set, she added a few days later, was just enough to give the audience a taste: "Do you like me? You want to see me again? Okay. Bye."

Pop and rock artists have played the country-centered festival for years. Acts who've graced its stages include **Joan Jett**, **Lenny Kravitz**, **Don McLean**, **The Beach Boys**, **Steven Tyler**, **Richie Sambora**, **Jason Mraz**, **Lynyrd Skynyrd**, **The Backstreet Boys** and **Pharell Williams**, and most of them found their way to the big stage at Nissan Stadium.

During the latest edition, June 4-7, yacht-rock prince **Michael McDonald** and rapper **Fetty Wap** landed on the main stage. Etheridge and rap's **Waka Flocka** played the Dr. Amp Stage on successive days, and they made additional stops on the CMA Closeup Stage. Etheridge had a public conversation with **Gretchen Wilson**, while **Waka Flocka** joined **The Nappy Roots** for "Country & Rap: The Black Southern Roots of American Music." Additionally, **Bon Jovi**'s Nashville bar, **JBJs**, presented more than two dozen rock and alternative acts, topped by **Cage the Elephant**, in the heart of the festival's footprint.

Etheridge was there to work, using the occasion to promote her new album — *Rise*, featuring a **Chris Stapleton** duet and production by **Shooter Jennings** (**Tanya Tucker**, **Charley**

Crockett) — and the 27-date *Raised on Radio Tour*, featuring co-headliner **Wynonna Judd**.

"When you're a legacy artist, it's not so easy to release a new album," she told Wilson on the *Closeup Stage*.

The 2026 country audience, Etheridge reasoned, includes some of her fan base, and her music is compatible enough with the genre that she would likely attract some new followers. She already has her own history with country — her first two bands, as a teenager in Kansas, were country groups; she teamed with **Dolly Parton** in a 2003 episode of *CMT Crossroads*; she penned a **Trisha Yearwood** single, "You Can Sleep While I Drive"; and she became friends with **Tammy Wynette** back in the day.

"My lifestyle and stuff was always sort of outside of the country music realm, but in the last decade or so, it's opened up," Etheridge says. "The country music world is a place now where people are still buying albums, they want to go on the whole journey, they want to go see the artist live. That excitement for

music is still there, and the kind of rock 'n' roll that I play, it's country now."

Country is extraordinarily wide in its current stylistic range, as demonstrated at CMA Fest. It still boasts artists with strong traditional roots — **Riley Green**'s "Worst Way" and "Change My Mind" brought old-school vibes to the stadium, while newcomer **Braxton Keith** injected agile and authentic western swing into his June 5 appearance at *Billboard Country Live*.



ETHERIDGE

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There are plenty of other sonics, too. **HARDY** packed thundering hard-rock chords into “God’s Country” and **Nirvana** guitar tones into “Truck Bed” at Nissan; **Stephen Wilson Jr.** used a buzzing guitar texture and from-the-gut intensity on “Gary” the same night; **Atlus** evinced 1980s and ‘90s power pop in his June 5 performance at the Good Molecules Reverb Stage; **Kameron Marlowe** utilized a meaty, soulful vocal resonance that’s mindful of **Paul Carrack** or **Bad Company**’s **Paul Rodgers**; and **Graham Barham** infused hip-hop influence into several songs in his June 4 set at the Chevy Vibes Stage.

While it might fold in those other influences, country has a reputation for a more tangible bond between artist and fan, and that’s evident from some of the other activities at CMA Fest. **Carly Pearce** brought her annual Carly’s Closet auction to the festival to raise money for the CMA Foundation; **Ty Myers**, **Tyler Braden**, **Randy Travis** and **Walker Hayes** were among the acts who signed autographs and posed for fan photos; and numerous performers met their most ardent followers at fan club events.

Hunter Hayes, as an example, hosted four intimate performances at the Vinyl Vault, inside Mel’s Diner, for about 50-70 people per show. He took requests, answered off-the-cuff questions and even had one fan — experiencing her 385th Hayes performance in 15 years — duet with him.

“CMA Fest is phenomenal,” he told one group of fans on June 6. “You could see anything and everything at any time, and I wanted a moment where I could just kind of be human with you.”

That kind of personal interaction, even if it is somewhat orchestrated, unites artists and fans, and while country has plenty of egos, it’s an experience that reminds the industry as a whole how much it depends on the interest of millions of ordinary people to keep it humming.

“It’s not normal to be famous,” **Clint Black** told the audience on June 5 in a Country Closeup Q&A with **Lorianne Crook** and **Charlie Chase**. “You guys are watching as **Ella [Langley]** or **Riley Green** are skyrocketing, and they’re there in a storm swirling around them, and they’re learning, and I think they’re handling it really well. But if you watch people rise to stardom and all of that stuff, pray for them, pray for them to be able to handle the weirdness.”

Changes are afoot for the festival, which is scheduled to take place again June 10-13, 2027. The nightly shows will likely be moving into a new stadium, and CMA will have a new CEO, as current leader **Sarah Trahern** preps for retirement. **Luke Bryan** closed out the final Nissan night, wrapping with his party number “Country Girl (Shake It for Me)” and sending a shoutout to Trahern from the stage.

The festival will be back, Trahern has indicated she will still attend as a fan, and Etheridge demonstrated why pop, rock and R&B acts would want to keep dipping their toes in the festival water.

She was impressed by the professionalism she witnessed as CMA handled the on-and-off logistics of staging hundreds of acts, and felt like she was playing to an audience that suits her music.

Etheridge was enthusiastic about returning “if,” she said, “they’ll have me. I think it’s a great experience.”



ERIKA GOLDRING / GETTY IMAGES

Songwriter-producer **Shane McAnally** (Old Dominion, **Kacey Musgraves**) participated in GLAAD’s Pride Month kickoff, **Pride & Progress**, at Soho House Nashville on June 5. From left: **Kaitlin Butts**, **Fancy Hagood**, **McAnally** and **Ty Herndon**.



EMMA KATE GOLDEN

Charlie Puth (left) welcomed surprise guest **Kenny Whitmire** June 9 for a collaborative performance of Whitmire’s “I Gave Her the Moon” during Puth’s concert at Nashville’s **Ascend Amphitheater**.



Skip Ewing (left) met up with **WYOT Rochelle, III.**, operations manager/PD **Kris Wexell** when he performed June 6 at the **Dixon Theatre**.

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Expert insight and commentary by Tom Roland and Russ Penuell



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On July 18, Billboard will publish a Grammy First Look special showcasing the artists, producers, songwriters and other creative professionals whose music was released during the eligibility period of **August 31, 2025, to August 28, 2026**.

The issue will look at the early contenders for the **69th Annual Grammy Awards®** in the categories of Record Of The Year, Song Of The Year, Album Of The Year and Best New Artist.

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ISSUE DATE: 7/18

AD CLOSE: 7/7

MATERIALS DUE: 7/9



GRAMMY
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billboard Country Airplay

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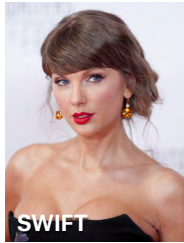
ON THE CHARTS GARY TRUST & MELINDA NEWMAN

Something 'Knew': Taylor Swift Returns To Country Airplay Top 10

Taylor Swift is "Red"-hot again on *Billboard's* Country Airplay chart.

Swift's new single, "I Knew It, I Knew You" (Pixar/Walt Disney/Republic/MCA Nashville) blasts in at No. 8 on the June 20-dated list with 19.4 million audience impressions in the week ending June 11, following its [June 5 release](#), according to Luminate.

The tender, harmonica-laden song about enduring friendship from *Toy Story 5* launches as Swift's 19th Country Airplay top 10 — and her first since "Red" reached No. 7 in December 2013, ahead of her pivot to pop with her 2014 album, *1989*. Among her top 10 haul, beginning with "Tim McGraw" in December 2006, she has notched seven No. 1s.



JOHN NACON

"I Knew It, I Knew You" makes history as the first song by a woman to debut in the Country Airplay top 10, dating to the chart's January 1990 start. Just one other title has begun in the tier: **Garth Brooks'** "More Than a Memory" premiered at No. 1 in September 2007. ("Stations broke with longstanding programming philosophies," *Billboard* noted that week, as Brooks was emerging from a several-year career hiatus.)

Swift — who was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame June 11 — adds her 40th Country Airplay entry and first since her **Chris Stapleton** collaboration "I Bet You Think About Me (Taylor's Version) (From the Vault)," which hit No. 23 in November 2021.

"I think Taylor is arguably the biggest music star in the world. It's a part of one of the biggest films of the summer. It fits sonically and in style to what else is on country radio. All three of those things make it the easiest programming decision of the year," says **Brent Michaels**, PD/on-air personality at **KRJK-FM** and **KUZZ-AM/FM** Bakersfield, Calif. "If Taylor is creating music that fits alongside the other biggest hitmakers in country, we're crazy to not go along for the ride. She moves the needle with every project."

"Writing this song felt like a musical departure and coming home at the same time," Swift shared June 1 on Instagram. "Creating something for *Jessie* was a new challenge and also felt like second nature all at once. And being a @toystory kid from the age of 5 til now ... is an adventure I plan to be on, to infinity and beyond." 🍷

MOST INCREASED AUDIENCE

TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	GAIN (IN MILLIONS)
I KNEW IT, I KNEW YOU Pixar/Walt Disney/Republic/MCA Nashville	Taylor Swift	+19.349
BE HER SAWGOD/Columbia/Triple Tigers	Ella Langley	+2.880
DON'T TELL ON ME Macon/Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	+2.818
DON'T WE Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	+2.272
BE BY YOU Seven Ridges/Columbia Nashville/SMN	Luke Combs	+1.915
CARRY ON Warner/HEY NOW	Kenny Chesney	+1.694
HATE HOW YOU LOOK The Core/Universal Music Canada/Mercury Nashville	Josh Ross	+1.478
THINK AS YOU DRUNK Nashville Harbor	Riley Green	+1.369
I CAN'T LOVE YOU ANYMORE SAWGOD/Columbia/Big Loud/Triple Tigers	Ella Langley & Morgan Wallen	+1.132
CHEVY SILVERADO Atlantic/Warner Records Nashville/WARN	Bailey Zimmerman	+0.947

MOST INCREASED PLAYS

TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	GAIN
I KNEW IT, I KNEW YOU Pixar/Walt Disney/Republic/MCA Nashville	Taylor Swift	+4301
BE HER SAWGOD/Columbia/Triple Tigers	Ella Langley	+712
DON'T TELL ON ME Macon/Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	+559
BE BY YOU Seven Ridges/Columbia Nashville/SMN	Luke Combs	+512
I CAN'T LOVE YOU ANYMORE SAWGOD/Columbia/Big Loud/Triple Tigers	Ella Langley & Morgan Wallen	+472
THINK AS YOU DRUNK Nashville Harbor	Riley Green	+452
DON'T WE Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	+443
CARRY ON Warner/HEY NOW	Kenny Chesney	+431
RIDE, RIDE, RIDE RECORDS/RECORDS Nashville	George Birge Featuring Luke Bryan	+387
HATE HOW YOU LOOK The Core/Universal Music Canada/Mercury Nashville	Josh Ross	+364

RECURRENTS

THIS WEEK	TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	TOTAL AUD. (IN MILLIONS)
1	TURN THIS TRUCK AROUND MCA Nashville	Jordan Davis	18.517
2	AMEN American Dogwood/EMPIRE/Magnolia Music	Shaboozey & Jelly Roll	15.032
3	BRUNETTE Tucker Wetmore/Back Blocks/Mercury/Republic/EMI Nashville/Mercury Nashville	Tucker Wetmore	13.352
4	I AIN'T COMING BACK Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen Featuring Post Malone	12.512
5	AFTER ALL THE BARS ARE CLOSED Fifty-One/Forty-Nine/Valory	Thomas Rhett	11.140
6	GOOD NEWS American Dogwood/EMPIRE/Magnolia Music	Shaboozey	9.903
7	DARLIN' Chase Matthew/Warner Records Nashville/WAR	Chase Matthew	9.187
8	THE FALL CoJo/Warner Records Nashville/WARN	Cody Johnson	8.447
9	HAPPEN TO ME Triple Tigers	Russell Dickerson	7.549
10	20 CIGARETTES Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	7.398



TEXAS REGIONAL RADIO REPORT

WEEK ENDING JUNE 11, 2026

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	22	LONG WAY HOME (Independent) ★★ 1 Week at 1 ★★	Matt Daniel	1929	113	11	14	11	HARD TO WRITE A LOVE SONG (Independent)	Mike Ryan	1384	105
2	3	14	I CAN'T GET OVER YOU (Independent)	Tristan Roberson	1678	63	12	12	18	DANCING WITH MY BABY TONIGHT (Independent)	Trevor Underwood	1369	-25
3	6	14	SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE (Independent)	Jamie Richards	1630	126	13	13	22	NEON NEVER LIES (Mirror Ball Records)	Caleb Young	1300	-78
4	4	19	GOING THROUGH (WHISKEY LIKE WATER) (Independent)	Tilluride	1615	21	14	15	22	BEAUTIFUL YOU (Prophets and Outlaws Music)	Prophets and Outlaws	1260	41
5	5	15	LIVE FREE (SEE ME RUNNING) (Independent)	Shane Smith & The Saints	1614	94	15	16	11	WHISKEY AFTER WOMEN (Write On)	Adysen Malek	1183	62
6	8	10	JUNE'S HONKY TONK MOON (CDX)	Sandee June	1531	84	16	19	5	RAIN (Bowen Sounds/Thirty Tigers)	Wade Bowen	1178	181
7	7	21	BLESSING AND A CURSE (RedPlay Media)	Guy Vincent	1482	14	17	17	7	DOWN BY THE RIVER (Independent)	Seth Candan	1106	77
8	9	11	STUBBORN AND REMAINS (Independent)	William Clark Green	1471	51	18	18	17	IF YOU KNOW YOU KNOW (Synopsis)	Derryl Perry	1083	81
9	11	11	REASONS TO CALL (Get Joe)	Billie Jo	1471	74	19	20	9	I DON'T DRINK ANYMORE (Independent)	Timothy Howls	1045	65
10	10	21	FOUND (Late August Records)	Cody Jinks	1445	31	20	21	9	FLOORBOARD FULL OF ROSES (Ranger Music Group)	David Lewis	1022	44

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 2026, Texas Regional Radio Report

billboard Country Airplay

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	17	BE HER SAWGOD/Columbia/Triple Tigers ★★ No. 1 (3 Weeks) ★★	Ella Langley	34.790	+2.880	8921	712	1
2	3	38	HATE HOW YOU LOOK The Core/Universal Music Canada/Mercury Nashville	Josh Ross	29.665	+1.478	7539	364	2
3	6	15	DON'T TELL ON ME Macon/Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	26.243	+2.818	7066	559	3
4	2	24	CHANGE MY MIND Nashville Harbor	Riley Green	25.128	-5.683	6814	-1551	4
5	7	15	DON'T WE Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	24.306	+2.271	6556	443	5
6	5	34	CHOOSIN' TEXAS SAWGOD/Columbia/Triple Tigers	Ella Langley	22.666	-1.399	4978	-270	10
7	8	22	SLEEPLESS IN A HOTEL ROOM Seven Ridges/Columbia Nashville/SMN	Luke Combs	21.124	-0.572	5268	-250	9
8	NEW		I KNEW IT, I KNEW YOU Pixar/Walt Disney/Republic/MCA Nashville ★★ Hot Shot Debut/Airpower/Breaker/Most Increased Audience ★★	Taylor Swift	19.398	+19.349	4317	4301	14
9	9	33	BEAUTIFUL THINGS Megan Moroney/Columbia/Columbia Nashville/SMN	Megan Moroney	19.306	-0.055	5658	53	6
10	10	7	I CAN'T LOVE YOU ANYMORE SAWGOD/Columbia/Big Loud/Triple Tigers	Ella Langley & Morgan Wallen	19.186	+1.132	5372	472	7
11	11	27	ROCKY MOUNTAIN LOW Combustion Masters/RCA Nashville/SMN	Corey Kent & Koe Wetzel	18.253	+0.630	5325	170	8
12	12	11	BE BY YOU Seven Ridges/Columbia Nashville/SMN	Luke Combs	18.131	+1.915	4680	512	11
13	13	13	WOMAN Zone 4/RCA Nashville/SMN	Kane Brown	16.068	+0.831	4613	221	12
14	14	35	CHEVY SILVERADO Atlantic/Warner Records Nashville/WRN	Bailey Zimmerman	15.487	+0.947	4562	138	13
15	15	19	RIDE, RIDE, RIDE RECORDS/RECORDS Nashville	George Birge Featuring Luke Bryan	12.699	+0.851	3820	387	15
16	16	49	KID MYSELF Night Train/Broken Bow	John Morgan	11.450	+0.719	3249	144	16
17	20	5	CARRY ON Warner/HEY NOW	Kenny Chesney	10.898	+1.694	3220	431	17
18	19	19	MCARTHUR Mercury/Big Loud HARDY, Eric Church, Morgan Wallen & Tim McGraw		9.737	+0.477	3055	144	18
19	17	11	COUNTRY AND SHE KNOWS IT Row Crop/MCA Nashville	Luke Bryan	9.375	-0.005	2941	31	19
20	18	26	SOUTH OF SANITY Leo33	Zach Top	9.194	-0.153	2664	-17	21
21	21	52	WRONG HEARTS BMG/Galaxy Label Group	LOCASH	8.989	-0.126	2785	-11	20
22	23	16	GET TO DRINKIN' Sony Music Nashville/SMN	Zach John King	8.486	+0.794	2607	160	22
23	24	40	ALL MY EXES Mercury/Big Loud	Lauren Alaina Featuring Chase Matthew	8.217	+0.826	2509	274	25
24	22	21	BOOTS OFF Capitol Nashville/MCA Nashville	Jon Pardi	7.876	+0.023	2607	38	23
25	25	10	SAY SO Warner Records Nashville/WAR	Dan + Shay	7.735	+0.638	2516	208	24
26	26	8	BOSTON Stella Lefty/Sandlot/Atlantic/Atlantic Outpost	Stella Lefty	7.640	+0.741	2218	287	26
27	27	48	EASY TO LOVE Broken Bow	Dustin Lynch	6.013	+0.397	2083	23	27
28	29	3	THINK AS YOU DRUNK Nashville Harbor	Riley Green	5.506	+1.369	1397	452	35
29	28	25	WATER AT A WEDDING Nashville Harbor	Greytan James	5.305	+0.418	1990	43	28
30	NEW		PHONE, KEYS, WALLET Broken Bow ★★ Breaker ★★	Lainey Wilson & John Mayer	4.847	-1.913	1334	-145	38

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 © 2026, 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. 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.

billboard Country Airplay

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	31	18	LET HIM IN ANYWAY Ten Point/Wheelhouse	Blake Shelton	4.176	+0.345	1608	58	30
32	32	24	WORTH YOUR WILD Triple Tigers	Russell Dickerson	3.990	+0.340	1455	154	33
33	30	16	PAINTED YOU PRETTY River House/Warner Records Nashville/WAR	Hudson Westbrook	3.965	+0.078	1437	-12	34
34	33	37	LONG LIVE COUNTRY Triple Tigers	Shane Profitt	3.870	+0.244	1576	60	31
35	35	15	WHAT IF WE DON'T Warner Music Nashville/WRN	Ashley McBryde	3.797	+0.346	1385	53	37
36	34	20	HOLDIN' IT DOWN Chase Matthew/Warner Records Nashville/WAR	Chase Matthew	3.672	+0.127	1625	43	29
37	36	20	GARY Mercury/Big Loud	Stephen Wilson Jr.	3.311	-0.039	1391	-62	36
38	37	34	FIREWORKS Curb	Kelsey Hart	3.198	-0.123	1531	-43	32
39	38	9	MOVE ON American Dogwood/EMPIRE/Magnolia Music	Kevin Powers & Shaboozey	2.810	-0.046	1180	1	39
40	39	8	MEDICINE Megan Moroney/Columbia/Columbia Nashville/SMN	Megan Moroney	2.671	-0.138	919	-61	44
41	40	16	KILLIN' ME MCA Nashville	Parker McCollum	2.616	-0.009	1135	-19	40
42	41	20	NEVER COMIN' BACK Lost Highway	Flatland Cavalry	2.572	-0.029	1047	-4	43
43	43	4	DRY SPELL Kacey Musgraves/Lost Highway	Kacey Musgraves	2.562	+0.384	721	129	51
44	42	21	MAKE A LIAR Blue Highway	Jackson Dean	2.555	-0.032	1080	-2	41
45	44	7	WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG Goat Island Sound/Mercury Nashville	Jacob Hackworth	1.855	+0.057	1054	1	42
46	47	3	LAND Hubbard House/Mercury Nashville	Tyler Hubbard	1.811	+0.345	748	119	49
47	48	5	WANNABE Thrivin Here/Warner Records Nashville/WRN	Gavin Adcock	1.571	+0.122	683	61	53
48	49	22	HIGHS & LOWS Quartz Hill	Matt Cooper	1.501	+0.128	767	34	48
49	46	19	WHEN A COWBOY PRAYS Brandon Lake/Essential/SMN	Brandon Lake X Cody Johnson	1.450	-0.142	685	-18	52
50	45	12	GOOD DAMN Wheelhouse	Brantley Gilbert	1.436	-0.230	851	-32	46
51	50	15	KEEPS ME SANE Tyler Nance/Santa Anna/Akando	Tyler Nance	1.267	+0.087	723	32	50
52	52	12	IF I DON'T LEAVE I'M GONNA STAY Blue Highway/Nashville Harbor	Carly Pearce & Riley Green	1.212	+0.057	629	7	54
53	53	10	BACK IN THE BOTTLE Magnolia Music	Randy Houser	1.136	-0.006	858	12	45
54	54	17	PSYCHOLOGICAL Nashville Harbor	The Band Perry	1.046	+0.052	808	6	47
55	55	6	LOVE IS BLIND WEST TO THE REST/Triple Tigers	Ian Munsick	0.873	+0.071	626	12	55
56	51	2	EMPTY WORDS Sony Music Nashville/SMN	Corey Kent	0.867	-0.289	174	-42	-
57	56	3	GOD KNEW BETTER Stoney Creek	Parmalee	0.811	+0.011	508	-10	56
58	58	4	STRING BY Mack Geiger/RECORDS/Columbia/RECORDS Nashville	Mack Geiger	0.783	+0.102	218	34	-
59	57	4	BETTER THAT WAY Mercury/Big Loud	Charles Wesley Godwin & Luke Combs	0.721	-0.005	474	42	57
60	60	2	HURTS LIKE YOU YellaBush/Columbia/RECORDS Nashville	Koe Wetzel	0.654	+0.181	352	115	59



Hunter Hayes greeted members of the *Billboard* team when he performed June 4 during the two-day *Billboard Country Live* at Nashville's Category 10. From left: *Billboard* co-chief content officers Jason Lipshutz and Leila Cobo, Hayes and *Billboard* CEO Mike Van.



Garth Brooks was hailed by the RIAA on June 3 as the artist of a lifetime, recognizing him as the first act to log 10 diamond albums. From left: RIAA senior VP of artist & industry relations Jackie Jones, RIAA chief policy officer Morna Willens, Brooks, RIAA president/COO Michele Ballantyne and RIAA chairman/CEO Mitch Glazier.

BEN KREBS

TOP MUSIC LAWYERS



Behind every artist, songwriter and music producer is a trusted group of advisers who provide guidance, advice and negotiate deals. *Billboard's* 10th annual Top Music Lawyers list will recognize the biggest names and most prominent legal minds in the world of music law. They are the deal-makers behind the major contracts and lawsuits in the music industry.

This feature will also include a round-up of premier law schools attended by the notable alumni on the Top Music Lawyers list.

Join us in congratulating the 2026 most powerful music lawyers. Advertise to present your law firm to *Billboard's* influential subscribers, which include A-list artists, artist managers, business managers and label, publishing and touring executives.

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

MADISON RENISING



Troy Cartwright (right) performed June 4 as part of Concord Music Publishing's Rooftop Roundup on the roof at Luke's 32 Bridge in Nashville. He was joined by fellow Concord writer Erin Kirby and Nashville artist Zachariah Smith.

OPRY LOSSES: CODY, WHITTAKER

Memorials are scheduled two days apart for a pair of Grand Ole Opry figures, announcer **Bill Cody** and former GM **Bob Whittaker**.

Cody, 67, was still active at the Opry and as a **WSM-AM** Nashville morning personality before he was hospitalized in recent weeks, in need of a double transplant. He died June 9 after three decades as a gregarious voice for the Opry.

A public service is scheduled for 2 p.m. June 15 at Nashville's Grand Ole Opry House. Visitation begins at 10 a.m.

Whittaker, 85, died June 5 at his home in Baxter, Tenn. During his tenure from 1993-1999 as the Opry's chief, the institution welcomed seven new members, including **Steve Wariner**, **Martina McBride** and **Diamond Rio**.

Whittaker's funeral takes place at 2 p.m. June 13 at First Baptist Church in Goodlettsville. Visitation begins at noon.

RADIO & RECORDS®

Kenny Chesney's HEY NOW announced three employees joined the business and commerce team. Senior VP **Danny Bess** returns to label operations from a stint as owner of DFB Consulting, manager of operations **Rachel Brown** segues from Aroluxe Marketing project manager, and HEY NOW VP of commerce & consumer products **Troy Scott** was most recently MCA senior director of e-commerce & retail ... BBR Music Group/BMG Nashville hired head of marketing **Cheyana Weekley**, who was most recently MCA director of brand partnerships. Reach her [here](#). The label also announced the signing of **Carly Pearce**, who was assigned to the Stoney Creek imprint ... Nashville trio **Highway Home** agreed to a recording deal with Warner Records, releasing their first track with the label, "No More Drinkin' Songs," on June 12. Consisting of **Stanton Langley**, **Eamon Owen** and **Conner Sweeny**, the trio is produced by **Ryan Gore** (**Jon Pardi**, **Warren Zeiders**) ... **Waylon Payne** joined the artist roster at Big Loud Texas. His first album for the label, *Wayward*, is due July 17 ... **Will Calder** started June 11 as Beasley/Tampa operations manager, a six-station cluster that includes country **WQYK**. He spent the previous three years as a PD for Audacy stations in Miami and Orlando ... **WMZQ** Washington, D.C., music director/personality **Corey Calhoun** announced his departure from the station on June 4, the eighth anniversary of his employment, via social media ... **Chad "Chumley" Kerch** was added to the existing morning team at **WQIK** Jacksonville, RadioInk.com reported. It represents the third iHeartMedia station to use his talents. He continues as PD/afternoon host for rock sister **WPLA** and as afternoon drive personality for rock **WJRR** Orlando ... **WSOC** Charlotte duo **Charlie** and **Debbie Nance** will move to mornings from afternoons on June 22, according to RadioInk.com. They replace the *Tanner in the Morning* crew, which concludes its run on June 19 ... **WIRK** West Palm Beach, Fla., renewed its contract with morning team **Tim Leary** and **Chelsea Eaton**, according to RadioInsight.com.

'ROUND THE ROW

Adams & Reese welcomed intellectual property attorney **Richard Busch** as special counsel. Busch is known for his work in high-profile copyright cases in which he represented the estates of **Marvin Gaye** and **Parliament-Funk-**

adelic member **Bernie Worrell**. Busch is accompanied in the move by fellow IP lawyers **Drew Davis** and **David Niemierzycki** ... TKO Artist Management promoted **Cassie Petty** to VP from GM ... Triple 8 Management boosted 10-year team member **Allison Bostrom** to senior VP of marketing from VP. Reach her [here](#) ... Girlilla Marketing made four staff moves. **Lindsey Feinstein** and **Conley Sweeney** were boosted to senior account director from director roles, while **Gigi Morrison** ascended to creative director. Stepping into her former creative coordinator post is recent Belmont University graduate **Esther Kuiperus** ... Concurrent with the duo's reboot, **Florida Georgia Line** tapped The Core Entertainment for management and selected CAA for booking. The act's **Tyler Hubbard** was already on The Core's roster as a solo artist ... Songwriter **Kyle Fishman** ("Thank God," "Small Town Boy") signed a publishing deal with ERN's Cadillac Music, affiliated with Big Loud Publishing ... Writer-producer **Christian Stalnecker** ("Thank God") inked with Curb | Word Music Publishing ... SMACKSongs added artist-writer **Emmy Moyon** to its publishing roster ... Artist-writer **Luke Stevens** agreed to a joint-venture publishing deal with Warner Chappell Nashville and Cornman Music ... East Tennessee native **Carson Peters** signed a songwriting agreement with Sony Music Publishing Nashville. The company also launched season two of its *Thank a Songwriter* podcast, hosted by division CEO **Rusty Gaston**. **The Warren Brothers** guested on the initial June 10 episode ... Explicit country artist **Wheeler Walker Jr.** announced his retirement June 8 while rolling out a 57-date concert run, PULLIN' OUT: The Farewell Tour, that concludes at Nashville's Ryman Auditorium on May 15, 2027 ... The former Watershed Studios, a Hermitage, Tenn., facility that claims **Dolly Parton** and **Miranda Lambert** as former clients, reopened as Blue Sky Studios. Co-founded by creative director **Eric Petrone** and producer-engineer **Myles Mancuso**, Blue Sky has hosted sessions with guitarist **Brent Mason**, drummer **Billy Thomas** and steel guitarist **Scotty Sanders** ... Multi-services firm 1916 Enterprises moved to 648 West Iris Drive in Nashville's Berry Hill ... **Tyler Ward's** Song House social media company partnered with HOME Nashville and data/distribution firm StrmMusic to create HOME Hits, mixing social content with music production and distribution ... **Alan Jackson** will open the Silverbelly Whiskey Distillery and an adjacent personal museum June 25 at 121 3rd Avenue South in Nashville, two days prior to his Nissan Stadium concert, Last Call: One More for the Road — The Finale. The Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum's CMA Theater will livestream the performance for free ... Performances by **Jason Aldean**, **Shaboozey**, **Tim McGraw** and **Ella Langley** are among the concert moments from last week's Country Music Association festival that will be featured in ABC's *CMA Fest Presented by SoFi* on June 15 ... The annual Farm Aid benefit is headed for Veterans United Home Loans Amphitheater in Virginia Beach, Va., on Sept. 26. **Turnpike Troubadours**, **Lukas Nelson** and **Sierra Farrell** are among the guests who will appear with board members, including **Willie Nelson**, **Neil Young** and **Margo Price** ... **Dolly Parton** officially launches a coffee brand — Cup of Ambition, named after a line in "9 to 5" — on June 24 when Dolly's Tennessean Travel Stop opens on Interstate 65 near Cornersville ... The Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum will co-publish **Cleve Francis'** autobiography, *Do My Heart Good: My Odyssey Through Country Music, Medicine, and History*, with the University of Illinois Press on Oct. 6. ●



JAREN COLLINS

HARDY welcomed **Miranda Lambert** among his guests when **Trend Presents: Off the Record with HARDY & Friends** raised more than \$400,000 for **The Hardy Fund** June 3 at **Marathon Music Works** in Nashville.

COLTRANE 100



Photo by Bob Thiele

John Coltrane remains one of the most transformative artists in the history of modern music. A saxophonist, composer, and bandleader of singular vision, he expanded the expressive possibilities of jazz while establishing music as a vehicle for spiritual inquiry and human connection. In 2026, the Coltrane Estate marks the 100th anniversary of the musician's birth with COLTRANE 100, an ambitious, year-long global celebration honoring an artist whose work permanently reshaped the language, ambition, and purpose of music.

COLTRANE 100 will unfold across recorded music, live performance, visual art, and institutional partnerships.

During a concentrated decade of unprecedented creative output, Coltrane released 25 albums as a leader, forging a legacy defined by fearless exploration and emotional depth.

10 of his albums, including live music releases, reached the Billboard 200 Charts. His work has influenced generations of musicians across jazz, rock, hip-hop, classical, and experimental music. Despite the near-mythic devotion his work inspires, Coltrane emphasized discipline, humility, and practice as the foundation of artistic excellence.

Please join Billboard as we celebrate COLTRANE 100.

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International Ryan O'Donnell | rodonnell@pmc.com

R&B/Hip-Hop/Los Angeles Aki Kaneko | moishekaneko@gmail.com

PICTURE THIS

CMA FEST

The Country Music Association estimated 100,000 visitors per day participated in the CMA Fest in Downtown Nashville June 4-7. It marked the last year the event's nightly concerts were to be staged at Nissan Stadium – a new stadium is expected to open next spring. Here are a few images from the celebration:



Tucker Wetmore surprised stadium ticket-holders June 4 by playing trumpet to launch into his current single, "Brunette."



Kashus Culpepper was on hand for CAA's Whiskey Jam takeover on June 3. From left: Whiskey Jam founder Ward Guenther, Culpepper, Noeline Hofmann and CAA Nashville agent Jacob Lapidus.



Stella Lefty greeted *Billboard* country, Christian & gospel charts & data analyst Russ Penuell when she performed June 4 at the Billboard Country Live event at Category 10.



Florida Georgia Line members Brian Kelley (left) and Tyler Hubbard performed seven songs at Spotify House on June 5.



Cody Johnson huddled with team members backstage prior to his June 5 performance at Nissan Stadium. From left: Durango Artists owner Howie Edelman, Warner Records Nashville VP of marketing Clark Tedesco, Johnson and Warner Records Nashville chair/president Cris Lacy.



Blake Shelton shared a laugh with CMA CEO Sarah Trahern backstage when he performed June 5 at Nissan Stadium.



Wyatt Flores performed June 6 during MCA Presents: Live from the Skydeck.



Jon Pardi gave a surprise performance June 2 during WME's two-day Losers Live showcase. From left: WME partner Joey Lee, Pardi, Red Light artist manager Gaines Sturdivant and C3 Presents president Charlie Walker.



Graham Barham took part in SiriusXM The Highway's *Music Row Happy Hour* June 7 at Chief's. With him: hosts Ania Hammar (left) and Macie Banks.

40

U N D E R

40

On August 1, *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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billboard Country Airplay Index

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

A

ALL MY EXES lylas Music, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/These Are Pulse Songs, BMI/PASSTHEAT PUBLISHING, BMI/Only Legends Music, BMI/Ben There Wrote That Publishing, BMI/Artist 101 Publishing Group, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Tape Room Hits, BMI/Hoops Don't Lie Publishing, BMI/Modern Arts Songs, BMI/Music By Work Of Art, BMI (Lauren Albina, J.A.Gutch, B.J.Johnson, W.Phillips) **23**

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BACK IN THE BOTTLE Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/It'm Your Huckleberry Music, BMI (R.Houser) **33**

BEAUTIFUL THINGS Sony Timber Publishing, SESAC/Georgiamo, SESAC/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Triple Rae Creative Inc, BMI/Big Music Machine, BMI/Big Ass Pile Of Dimes Music, BMI/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Where I Started Music Publishing, ASCAP (M.Moroney, C.R.Harrington, J.J.Dillon, J.L.Alexander) **9**

BE BY YOU Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Songs Of Tuckaway Music, ASCAP/By Porchlight, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Highway 75 Publishing, BMI/Duckman Publishing, BMI/Wildhawk Publishing, BMI (D. Alley, S.Banks, N.Waish) **12**

BE HER Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Sea Gayle Distillery Music, ASCAP/Endurance Music Group, BMI/Deer Camp Publishing, BMI/Songs Of Spirit Nashville One, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Langley Publishing, BMI/Ross & Rae Music, ASCAP/Relative Rights, ASCAP (E.Langley, S.Ahnquist, J.Schmidt, M.W.Hardy) **1**

BETTER THAT WAY Charles Wesley Godwin Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Endurance Alligator Quatro, ASCAP/Scrambler Music, ASCAP/Music Garden Studios Publishing, BMI (C.W.Godwin, Scooter Caruso, A.Torrence) **59**

BOOTS OFF Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Hits From The Tape Room, BMI/50 Egg Music, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Crawford Mercer Music, GMR/Songs Of CN, GMR (J.Pardi, W.McCubbin, L.Laird) **24**

BOSTON 13117 Music, ASCAP/Kobalt Songs Music Publishing LLC, ASCAP/Grace Enger Publishing, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/Joey Reeves Publishing, BMI/Sony Songs LLC, BMI/LMC Is The Place For Me Publishing, ASCAP/Secret Meadow Songs, ASCAP/Sony Allegro, ASCAP/Stella Lefty Music, ASCAP (G.Enger, J.K.Hindlin, J.Reeves, N.Kahan, S.Lefty) **26**

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CARRY ON Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Big Blue Nation Music, ASCAP/Combustion Five, ASCAP/Darin Country Music Publishing, ASCAP/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP (R.C.McGill, M.Jenkins, J.L.Alexander) **17**

CHANGE MY MIND Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Back 40 Publishing International, BMI/Duckman Publishing, BMI/Flatland Boy Music, BMI/Hit Songs Of 50 Egg Music, BMI/Full Draw Publishing, BMI (R.Green, Erik Dylan, R.Montana) **4**

CHEVY SILVERADO Little Louder Songs, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/Sony Songs LLC, BMI/Sparko Phone Music, BMI/Gavin J. Lucas Publishing, ASCAP/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Vacant Heart Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Bailey Zimmerman Publishing, BMI (T.Beathard, L.Juber, G.J.Lucas, H.Warren, B.Zimmerman) **14**

CHOOSIN' TEXAS Langley Publishing, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Luke Dick Publishing Designee, BMI/Pink Dog Publishing, BMI/Bada Bing Bada Boom Publishing, BMI/Bridge 1 Music, BMI/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI (E.Langley, C.L.Dick, M.Lambert, J.Taylor) **6**

COUNTRY AND SHE KNOWS IT Concord Copyrights, BMI/Jomil 10 Music, BMI/Trailer Parker Twang Lab, BMI/HomeTeam Publishing LLC, BMI/Kilometre Music Group B, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Super Big Music, ASCAP/M Drag Songs, ASCAP (J.L.Miller, P.Welling, M.Dragstrom) **19**

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DON'T TELL ON ME Makena Cove Music, ASCAP/BMG Gold Songs, ASCAP/Triple Play Music, BMI/BMG Platinum Songs US, BMI/IrisonnMusic, BMI/Kwsay Publishing, BMI/WritersontheCornPublishing, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI (K.M.Allison, T.Kennedy, J.Morgan, L.Vaughan) **3**

DON'T WE Honey Hole Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Big Loud Mountain LLC, BMI/Long And Curly Entertainment, BMI/John Byron Music, BMI/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Poppo's Picks, ASCAP/Master Of My Domain Music, ASCAP/Songs Of Back Block Publishing, BMI/Rarre Publishing Worldwide, BMI/Sony Songs LLC, BMI (M.C.Wallen, R.H.Black, J.Byron, A.G.Gorley, B.Pendergrass, Charlie Handsome) **5**

DRY SPELL Recordings Of Cosmic Intent, ASCAP/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Sony Lyric Music Publishing, GMR/CN Songs From 1508, GMR/Crawford Mercer Music, GMR/Smackworld Music, GMR/Art of CTM Music Outlander LP, GMR/Warner Geo Met Ric Music, GMR/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Songs For Indy And Owl, ASCAP (K.Musgraves, L.Laird, S.McAnally, J.Osbome) **43**

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EMPTY WORDS Songs Of Combustion Five, BMI/Cory Kent Music, BMI/Big Music Machine, BMI/Lighting Street Publishing, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Bridge 1 Music, BMI/Bada Bing Bada Boom Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI (Cory Kent, A.Goodloe, M.Poy, J.Taylor, L.Vaughan) **56**

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FIREWORKS Sea Gayle Ale House Music, BMI/Bobby Pinson Music, BMI/Good Boy Gravy, BMI/Sony Countryside, BMI/Eclipse One Music, BMI/Y'all Come Back Now, BMI/Taylor Goyette Entertainment, BMI (B.Baber, J.James, T.Goyette) **38**

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GET TO DRINKIN' Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Works By Kinda Country Songs, BMI/Speakers Go Boom Songs, BMI/Brody James Music, BMI/Akin For Jonas Music, BMI/8 Publishing, BMI/Big Loud Mountain LLC, BMI/ERN's Cadillac Music, BMI/Songs Of Combustion Five, BMI/Beats Building Fences, BMI/Universal Music Corp., ASCAP/Kyle Sturrock Music, ASCAP (Z.J.King, R.Akins, T.Archer, K.A.Fishman, K.Sturrock) **22**

GOD KNEW BETTER Concord Copyrights, BMI/Camp James Music, BMI/Reservoir 416, BMI/53 Creative, BMI/Concord Sounds, ASCAP/Tacklebox Publishing, ASCAP/8936 Music, BMI/Parmalee Music Publishing, BMI (A.Dean, D.Fanning, J.Collazo, A.Albert, M.Thomas, B.Knox, J.McSwain, S.Thomas) **57**

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HATE HOW YOU LOOK Songs Of Combustion Five, BMI/Me Gusta Music, BMI/Round Hill Verses Publishing, BMI (N.Sainato, C.McKenna, J.Farren, C.Yancey) **2**

HIGHS & LOWS Songs Of North Chapel Music, BMI/Endurance Music Group, BMI/318 Records Publishing, BMI (M.Cooper) **48**

HOLDIN' IT DOWN Chase Matthew Music Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/The Big One, BMI/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Redd Up Publishing, BMI/Aaron Presley Beachbum Publishing Designee, BMI/Evan Christian Mayo Publishing Designee, ASCAP/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI (Chase Matthew, E.Escue, A.Maxwell, Presley Aaron, E.C.Mayo, J.Centers) **36**

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I

I CAN'T LOVE YOU ANYMORE Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Bridge 1 Music, BMI/Songs Of Combustion Five, BMI/Me Gusta Music, BMI (E.Langley, A.Goodloe, J.Taylor) **10**

IF I DON'T LEAVE I'M GONNA STAY Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Black Jeans Music, BMI/Neon Cross Music, BMI/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Crazy Baby Songs, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Turtle Garden Publishing, BMI/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Mouth Feel Music Publishing, ASCAP (D.Dawson, S.W.Ennis, J.T.Minton, J.Reynolds) **52**

I KNEW IT, I KNEW YOU Wonderland Music Company, Inc., BMI/Pixar Music, BMI/Walt Disney Music Company, ASCAP/Pixar Talking Pictures, ASCAP (T.Swift, J.M.Antonoff) **8**

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KILLIN' ME Parkernac Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Endless Tour Music, BMI/Songs Of Spirit Nashville One, BMI/Tunes Of Fluid II, BMI/Heavy Lefty Music, BMI (P.M.Collum, R.Rogers, M.Criswell) **41**

L

LAND T Tree Music, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Relative Red Music, BMI/Biggie Bendable Music, BMI/Songs For Knox, BMI/HAYLO Music Works, ASCAP/1 Of 6, ASCAP/Endurance Music Group, ASCAP (T.R.Hubbard, Z.Aband, G.J.Egan, C.Smith) **46**

LET HIM IN ANYWAY Deemer Camp Publishing, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Relative Red Music, BMI/Biggie Bendable Music, BMI/Best Damn Music, BMI (M.W.Hardy, Z.Aband, K.S.Clark, C.Wallace) **31**

LONG LIVE COUNTRY Shane Proffitt Publishing Designee, BMI/Zippmusic, ASCAP/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Rudy Rocks The USA, BMI (S.Proffitt, M.J.Rogers, L.Rimes) **34**

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N

NEVER COMIN' BACK ONE TOOTH PRODUCTIONS, BMI/Invoked Lamb Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Sony Lyric Music Publishing, GMR/CN Songs From 1508, GMR/Crawford Mercer Music, GMR (C.Cordero, L.Laird, A.Retiere) **42**

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PAINTED YOU PRETTY Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Songs Of Tuckaway Music, BMI/Saxet HW Music, BMI/Tape Room Music Round Two, BMI/Myron Bailey Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/FBRL Country Tunes, BMI (R.Westbrook, Lukas Scott, B.Bailey) **33**

PHONE, KEYS, WALLET Sony Countryside, BMI/Story Farmer, BMI/Songs Of One Riot Music, BMI/Reservoir 416, BMI/Matchless Publishing LLC Pub Designee, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Songs Of Riser House, BMI/Dtown Boogie Music, BMI/Songs Of Wild Cat Well Music, BMI/Native Notes Music, BMI/Thomas Hull Publishing Designee, PRS/Universal Music Publishing Ltd. (UK), PRS (L.Wilson, J.Decious, D.Pellari, D.Wilson, T.Anderson, S.Overstreet, T.E.Phill) **30**

PSYCHOLOGICAL Smack Back Music, BMI/Concord Baritone CCI, BMI/Midtown Mistake Publishing, BMI/Concord Copyrights, BMI/Colton Venner Publishing, BMI (C.Park, G.Tyler, C.Venner) **54**

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SAY SO Beats And Banjos, ASCAP/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Shay Mooney Music, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Eleventh Wave Music, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/Cing Trax, ASCAP/Livridge Music, ASCAP/Cascade Road Songs, ASCAP (D.Smyers, S.Mooney, D.H.Hodges, J.Robbins) **25**

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STRING BY Mack Geiger Publishing Designee, APRA (M.Geiger) **58**

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THINK AS YOU DRUNK Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Back 40 Publishing International, BMI/Flatland Boy Music, BMI/Hit Songs Of 50 Egg Music, BMI/Duckman Publishing, BMI/Little Acre Music, BMI/Hits From The Tape Room, BMI/50 Egg Music, BMI/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Where I Started Music Publishing, ASCAP/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Florida Cracker Music, BMI (R.Green, J.L.Alexander, Erik Dylan, W.McCubbin, S.Emerick, T.Keith) **28**

W

WANNABE Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Good Cook Tunes, BMI/Big Loud Mountain LLC, BMI/Bo Wallace Publishing, BMI/Murphy The Wolf Music, BMI/Mandy's Favorite Songs, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Jimmy Sad Publishing, BMI/Ernest Music Publishing Designee, BMI (G.Adocek, J.R.Durrett, B.Clawson, E.K.Smith, M.C.Wallen) **47**

WATER AT A WEDDING Relative Red Music, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Super Big Music, ASCAP/M Drag Songs, ASCAP/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Philippians 4:7 Songs, BMI/Songs For Knox, BMI (G.J.Egan, M.Dragstrom, R.C.McGill) **19**

WHAT IF WE DON'T Beejo Fetch Publishing, BMI/Songs Of Song Factory, BMI/Merf Music Publishing LLC, BMI/Colton Sounds, BMI/Songs Of Merf Music LLC, BMI (A.McByde, T.J.Box, R.Clay) **35**

WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG Speakers Go Boom Songs, BMI/Goat Island Bay Music, BMI/T Villi Music, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Big Music Machine, BMI/Finally Got Some Publishing, BMI/Songs By 10K HRS Publishing, BMI/Goat Island Palms, LLC, BMI/Smells Like Good Music, ASCAP/Reservoir Media Music, ASCAP (J.A.Hackworth, D.Ross, J.Free, S.Jones) **45**

WHEN A COWBOY PRAYS Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Brandon Lake Music, ASCAP/All Essential Music, ASCAP/Prayin' Cowboy Publishing, SESAC/So Essential Tunes, SESAC/Songs By That Dog Will Hunt, BMI/Capitol CMG Paragon, BMI/Sugar Rain Music, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI (B.M.Lake, J.Sooter, H.Bentley, D.Southerland) **49**

WOMAN Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Songs Of Family Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/John Byron Music, BMI/Big Loud Mountain LLC, BMI/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Master Of My Domain Music, ASCAP/Poppo's Picks, ASCAP/Tape Room Hits, BMI/Copyright Control/TDP Publishing, BMI/Hits From The Tape Room, BMI (K.Brown, J.Bryan, A.G.Gorley, B.J.Johnson, T.Phillips) **13**

WORTH YOUR WILD Concord Copyrights, BMI/Big Hits N Gravy, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Songs Of Home Team Music, BMI/Tunes Of TrailerParker, BMI/Track & Feels Publishing Designee, SESAC/Tape Room Tunes, SESAC/W.C.M. Music Corp., SESAC (R.Dickerson, P.Welling, C.Brown) **32**

WRONG HEARTS BMG Platinum Songs US, BMI/Weslinger Publishing, BMI/Lovelegend Songs, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Red Bandana Publishing, BMI/Super Big Music, ASCAP/Drag Drag Music, ASCAP/Round Hill Songs II, ASCAP (P.C.Brust, C.Lucas, M.Dragstrom, J.Thompson) **21**

COUNTRY

REWINDING THE COUNTRY CHARTS

10 Years Ago When Dierks Bentley's 'Black' Eyed The Summit On Top Country Albums

The project took its title from a song conceived after his 10th wedding anniversary

In the wake of **Dierks Bentley's** diamond anniversary in 2015, he wrote a song inspired by his wife, **Cassidy**, branding it "Black" in recognition of her maiden name.

That song emerged as the title track of his eighth Capitol Nashville album, and on June 18, 2016, *Black* topped *Billboard's* Top Country Albums in its first chart week, becoming the sixth of Bentley's seven trips to the list's summit.

Produced by **Ross Copperman (Darius Rucker, Gabby Barrett)**, the project was shaped around the topics of love and sex,

exploring some of the dark feelings and inner fears that are, at times, tested by relationships. The first single, "Somewhere on a Beach," burned its way to No. 1 on Hot Country Songs for three weeks beginning on the April 30, 2016, list, ahead of the album's May 27 release. "Different for Girls," a collaboration with **Elle King**, rose to No. 3, while "Black" painted the list at No. 4.

King wasn't alone among the album's familiar contributors. Also on the *Black* list were **Maren Morris**, who showed up

on "I'll be the Moon"; and New Orleans' **Trombone Shorty**, who appeared on "Mardi Gras." *Black* earned a Gold album from the RIAA on Feb. 22, 2017, and was elevated to Platinum status on Oct. 28, 2022.

Bentley's inaugural run to No. 1 on Top Country Albums came with *Modern Day Drifter*, which led the chart dated May 28, 2005. His most recent return to the summit came with *The Mountain*, which peaked on the list dated June 23, 2018.

—TOM ROLAND



Bentley performs June 9, 2016, during the CMA Music Festival at Nashville's Nissan Stadium.

TOP COUNTRY ALBUMS™

LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	ARTIST	CERTIFICATION	IMPRINT/DISTRIBUTING LABEL	Title	WKS. ON CHART
	1	#1 DIERKS BENTLEY		CAPITOL NASHVILLE/UMGN	Black	1
1	2	BLAKE SHELTON		WARNER BROS./WMN	If I'm Honest	2
2	3	CHRIS STAPLETON ▲		MERCURY/UMGN	Traveller	57
3	4	KEITH URBAN		HIT RED/CAPITOL NASHVILLE/UMGN	Ripcord	4
5	5	COLE SWINDELL		WARNER BROS./WMN	You Should Be Here	4
6	6	JOEY + RORY		FARMHOUSE/GAITHER/CAPITOL CMG	Hymns	16
4	7	JENNIFER NETTLES		BIG MACHINE/BMLG	Playing With Fire	3
8	8	THOMAS RHETT		VALORY/BMLG	Tangled Up	36
9	9	SAM HUNT ▲		MCA NASHVILLE/UMGN	Montevallo	84
10	10	LUKE BRYAN ▲		CAPITOL NASHVILLE/UMGN	Kill The Lights	43
11	11	BLAKE SHELTON		WARNER BROS./WMN	Reloaded... 2011 Hits	1