

billboard Country Update

BILLBOARD.COM/NEWSLETTERS

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Click Here For
Friday's *Billboard*
Country Update
And Country
Airplay Chart

ON THE CHARTS

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'Texas' On Top For 40th Week, Makes More History

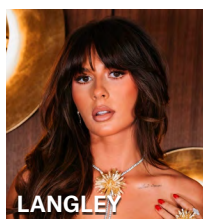
1

ELLA LANGLEY

"Choosin' Texas"

The hit claims a 40th week at No. 1 on Hot Country Songs. It concurrently leads the Billboard

Hot 100 for a 22nd week — tying **Mariah Carey's** perennial "All I Want for Christmas Is You" for the most time on top over the chart's 68-year history. **Langley's** smash is one of only three songs to rule the country list for at least 40 weeks.



LANGLEY

10

CODY JOHNSON

"Take Me Back (Leave Me There)"

The single becomes his sixth Hot Country Songs top 10, up three spots to No. 10, with

7.5 million U.S. streams (up 19%) Sept. 4-10, per Luminate. **Johnson** last reached the region with his cover of **The Chicks'** "Travelin' Soldier" (No. 2 last November). Plus, he has four CMA Awards nods, including entertainer of the year.



JOHNSON

36

KANE BROWN Feat. SHANIA TWAIN

"Boots"

The male answer to **Twain's** breakthrough 1995 classic "Whose Bed Have Your Boots

Been Under" debuts at No. 36 on Hot Country Songs with 2.5 million first-week streams and 1,000 sold. The collaboration becomes **Brown's** 47th chart entry and **Twain's** 35th. It's expected to be on his fifth studio album, set for next spring.



BROWN

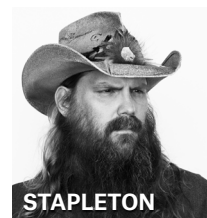
45

MUMFORD & SONS & CHRIS STAPLETON

"Here"

Mumford & Sons score their first Hot Country Songs

hit and **Chris Stapleton**, his 33rd, as "Here" debuts at No. 45 (2.2 million streams). The track opens the band's sixth studio album, *Prizefighter*, released in February. In July, the song topped *Billboard's* Adult Alternative Airplay chart for two weeks.



STAPLETON

LANGLEY: CAYLEE ROBILLARD. JOHNSON: CHRIS DOUGLAS. STAPLETON: DAVID MCCLISTER.

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Bi-weekly content including Makin' Tracks, On the Charts, a roundup of executive moves, and timely analysis of the latest country news and trends.

Expert insight and commentary by
Tom Roland and Russ Penuell



COLE GOODWIN
Howdy

#56 HOT SHOT DEBUT/BREAKER



NEW NATIONAL CALLOUT:

#1 PERSONS 18-49 #3 WOMEN 18-49 #9 PERSONS 13+ #10 PERSONS 25-54

THE BUZZ IS REAL!



billboard

Hot Country Songs

AIRPLAY, STREAMING & SALES DATA
COMPILED BY
LUMINATE

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TWO WEEKS AGO	WKS ON CHART	TITLE PRODUCER (SONGWRITER)	Artist IMPRINT / PROMOTION LABEL	COUNTRY AIRPLAY RANK	PEAK POSITION
1	1	1	47	CHOOISIN' TEXAS E.LANGLEY,B.WEST,M.LAMBERT (E.LANGLEY,C.L.DICK,M.LAMBERT,J.TAYLOR)	Ella Langley SAWGOD/COLUMBIA/TRIPLE TIGERS	RC	1
2	2	2	23	BOSTON J.REEVES (G.Enger,J.K.Hindlin,J.Reeves,N.Kahan,S.Lefty)	Stella Lefty SANDLOT/ATLANTIC/ATLANTIC OUTPOST	2	2
3	3	3	14	I KNEW IT, I KNEW YOU J.M.ANTONOFF,T.SWIFT (T.SWIFT,J.M.ANTONOFF)	Taylor Swift PIXAR/WALT DISNEY/REPUBLIC/MCA NASHVILLE	5	1
4	4	4	7	BEEIN BY NOW J.MOI,CHARLIE HANDSOME,M.HASTINGS,H.COMPTON (M.C.WALLEN,R.H.BLOCK,J.BYRON,B.PENDERGRASS,T.PHILLIPS,CHARLIE HANDSOME)	Morgan Wallen MERCURY/BIG LOUD	4	2
5	5	6	30	BE HER E.LANGLEY,B.WEST,M.LAMBERT (E.LANGLEY,S.AHNQUIST,J.M.SCHMIDT,M.W.HARDY)	Ella Langley SAWGOD/COLUMBIA/TRIPLE TIGERS	RC	2
6	6	5	20	I CAN'T LOVE YOU ANYMORE B.WEST,A.GOODLOE,E.LANGLEY (E.LANGLEY,A.GOODLOE,J.TAYLOR)	Ella Langley & Morgan Wallen SAWGOD/COLUMBIA/BIG LOUD/TRIPLE TIGERS	RC	3
7	7	9	30	BE BY YOU CHIP MATTHEWS,J.D.SINGLETON,L.COMBS (D.ALLEY,S.BANKS,N.WALSH)	Luke Combs SEVEN RIDGES/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE/SMN	1	2
8	10	10	5	JADED G.SIMON,J.M.SCHMIDT (E.LANGLEY,R.WETZEL,J.M.SCHMIDT,E.K.SMITH)	Koe Wetzel & Ella Langley YELLABUSH/COLUMBIA/RECORDS NASHVILLE	19	8
9	11	13	25	LOVING LIFE AGAIN E.LANGLEY,B.WEST,M.LAMBERT,D.DAWSON (E.LANGLEY,E.K.SMITH,D.DAWSON)	Ella Langley SAWGOD/COLUMBIA/TRIPLE TIGERS	8	5
10	13	19	8	TAKE ME BACK (LEAVE ME THERE) T.W.WILLMON (K.ARCHER,T.CARTWRIGHT,P.GOOD)	Cody Johnson COJO/WARNER RECORDS NASHVILLE/WRN	-	10
11	8	8	17	9 TO 5 G.PERRY (D.PARTON)	Dolly Parton RCA/LEGACY	RC	1
12	17	18	25	RETHINK SOME THINGS CHIP MATTHEWS,J.D.SINGLETON,L.COMBS (L.COMBS,J.DAVIS,D.ISBELL,R.ISBELL)	Luke Combs SEVEN RIDGES/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE/SMN	17	11
13	14	17	14	COWGIRL S.COOK,N.SASTRY (C.O.CHIBUEZE,S.C.COOK,A.A.PAUTI,T.W.KANE,M.R.STEVENS,N.SASTRY,J.L.COTTER)	Shaboozey AMERICAN DOGWOOD/EMPIRE/MAGNOLIA MUSIC	34	11
14	9	7	22	JOLENE B.FERGUSON (D.PARTON)	Dolly Parton RCA VICTOR/RCA/LEGACY	RC	1
15	16	15	17	SOMETHING TO LOSE J.REEVES (J.DECIOUS,G.Enger,S.Lefty,C.L.DICK)	Stella Lefty Featuring Vincent Mason SANDLOT/ATLANTIC/ATLANTIC OUTPOST	47	11
16	18	20	14	PHONE, KEYS, WALLET KID HARPOON (L.WILSON,J.DECIOUS,D.PELLARIN,D.WILSON,T.ANDERSON,S.OVERSTREET,T.E.P.HULL)	Lainey Wilson & John Mayer BROKEN BOW	15	14
17	21	24	17	CARRY ON B.CANNON,K.CHESNEY (R.C.MCGILL,M.JENKINS,J.L.ALEXANDER)	Kenny Chesney WARNER/HEY NOW	3	17
18	20	22	19	MEXICO HONEY K.MUSGRAVES,D.TASHIAN,I.FITCHUK,L.LAIRD (K.MUSGRAVES,S.JONES,L.LAIRD)	Kacey Musgraves KACEY MUSGRAVES/LOST HIGHWAY	-	11
19	22	26	15	THINK AS YOU DRUNK D.HUFF (R.GREEN,J.L.ALEXANDER,ERIK DYLAN,W.MCCUBBIN,S.EMERICK,T.KEITH)	Riley Green NASHVILLE HARBOR	13	19
20	24	25	11	ANOTHER DRINK MARSHMELLO,A.VANDERHEYM,EARWULF (MARSHMELLO,A.VANDERHEYM,T.ERIKSEN,J.J.DILLON,K.BALLERINI,CASTLE)	Marshmello & Kelsea Ballerini JOYTIME COLLECTIVE/MERCURY/BIG LOUD	-	20
21	26	28	27	EMPTY WORDS A.GOODLOE (COREY KENT,A.GOODLOE,M.ROY,J.TAYLOR,L.VAUGHAN)	Corey Kent SONY MUSIC NASHVILLE/SMN	28	21
22	25	27	32	MCARTHUR J.JOYCE (M.W.HARDY,R.C.MCGILL,J.RODGERS,J.THOMPSON)	HARDY, Eric Church, Morgan Wallen & Tim McGraw MERCURY/BIG LOUD	21	6
23	33	31	14	STRING BY J.ADLAM (M.GEIGER)	Mack Geiger MACK GEIGER/RECORDS/COLUMBIA/RECORDS NASHVILLE	43	23
24	28	33	14	KID MYSELF B.ANDERSON,J.MORGAN (J.MORGAN,T.R.HUBBARD,J.M.SCHMIDT)	John Morgan NIGHT TRAIN/BROKEN BOW	6	24
25	19	16	26	WOMAN D.HUFF (K.BROWN,J.BYRON,A.G.GORLEY,B.J.JOHNSON,T.PHILLIPS)	Kane Brown ZONE 4/RCA NASHVILLE/SMN	RC	14

COUNTRY SONGWRITERS™		
1	#1 26 WKS	ELLA LANGLEY
2		JOYBETH TAYLOR
3		DOLLY PARTON
4		LUKE DICK
TIE	5	JACK ANTONOFF
TIE	5	TAYLOR SWIFT
	7	JORDAN SCHMIDT
	8	MIRANDA LAMBERT
	9	AUSTIN GOODLOE
	10	MACK GEIGER



COUNTRY PRODUCERS™		
1	#1 5 WKS	JOE REEVES
2		ELLA LANGLEY
3		BEN WEST
4		MIRANDA LAMBERT
5		DANN HUFF
6		AUSTIN GOODLOE
7		TRENT WILLMON
TIE	8	JACK ANTONOFF
TIE	8	TAYLOR SWIFT
	10	GREGG PERRY

The weekly Country Songwriters and Country Producers charts are based on total points accrued by a songwriter and producer, respectively, for each attributed song that appears on the Hot Country Songs chart. As with Billboard's yearly recaps, multiple writers or producers split points for each song equally (and the dividing of points will lead to occasional ties on rankings).

billboard

Hot Country Songs

AIRPLAY, STREAMING
& SALES DATA
COMPILED BY
LUMINATE

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TWO WEEKS AGO	WKS ON CHART	TITLE PRODUCER (SONGWRITER)	Artist IMPRINT / PROMOTION LABEL	COUNTRY AIRPLAY RANK	PEAK POSITION
26	27	29	56	SOUTH OF SANITY C.CHAMBERLAIN (Z.TOP,C.CHAMBERLAIN,M.NESLER)	Zach Top LE033	14	25
27	29	34	14	ALL MY EXES J.MOI,J.DURRETT (LAUREN ALAINA,J.A.GUTCH,B.J.JOHNSON,W.PHILLIPS)	Lauren Alaina Featuring Chase Matthew MERCURY/BIG LOUD	9	27
28	30	35	48	PAINTED YOU PRETTY LUKAS SCOTT (H.WESTBROOK,LUKAS SCOTT,B.BAILEY)	Hudson Westbrook RIVER HOUSE/WARNER RECORDS NASHVILLE/WAR	18	28
29	32	38	18	COUNTRY AND SHE KNOWS IT J.STEVENS (J.L.MILLER,P.WELLING,M.DRAGSTREM)	Luke Bryan ROW CROP/MCA NASHVILLE	10	29
30	31	36	11	HANDS UP CHARLIE HANDSOME,B.JOHNSON (J.B.DEFORD,R.H.BLOCK,J.A.FOX,M.W.HARDY,R.C.MCGILL)	Jelly Roll BAILEE & BUDDY/BMG/STONEY CREEK	16	28
31	36	37	11	BET ON THAT A.R.SHAWN (B.WHITEN,G.AVERILL,HOSKINS,J.M.SPARGUR)	Blake Whiten ENCHNTMNT/WARNER/WAR	51	31
32	34	32	19	NO NEED FOR LEAVIN' A.GOODLOE (KMARLOWE,J.DECIOUS,A.GOODLOE)	Kameron Marlowe COLUMBIA NASHVILLE/SMN	-	27
33	35	40	25	GET TO DRINKIN' R.WILSON,Z.J.KING (Z.J.KING,R.AKINS,T.ARCHER,K.A.FISHMAN,K.STURROCK)	Zach John King SONY MUSIC NASHVILLE/SMN	11	30
34	37	39	20	KINGDOM OF FEAR J.RILEY (C.SHAPIRO,CAMERN WHITECOMB,J.RILEY,N.W.SIPE)	Cameron Whitcomb ATLANTIC/ATLANTIC OUTPOST	-	24
35	39	45	18	SAY SO D.SMYERS,S.HENDRICKS (D.SMYERS,S.MOONEY,D.H.HODGES,J.ROBBINS)	Dan + Shay WARNER RECORDS NASHVILLE/WRN	12	31
36	NEW		1	BOOTS D.HUFF (A.VANDERHEYM,S.W.ENNIS,J.HOGE,S.TWAIN,R.J.LANGE) ★★ Hot Shot Debut ★★	Kane Brown Featuring Shania Twain ZONE 4/RCA NASHVILLE/SMN	-	36
37	40	49	20	MEDICINE K.BUSH (M.MORONEY,C.R.HARRINGTON,J.J.DILLON,J.L.ALEXANDER)	Megan Moroney MEGAN MORONEY/COLUMBIA/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE/SMN	24	11
38	41	47	7	WHAT YOU WANT J.GEAR,V.MASON,B.TRUITT (V.MASON,J.RAUTON)	Vincent Mason MUSIC SOUP/INTERSCOPE/LOST HIGHWAY	-	38
39	45	-	12	KILLIN' ME FLIDDELLE,E.MASSE (P.MCCOLLUM,R.ROGERS,M.CRISWELL)	Parker McCollum MCA NASHVILLE	31	30
40	46	-	8	WHO TOLD YOU THAT C.LACORTE,T.WETMORE (J.M.SCHMIDT,M.TYLER,H.PHELPS,A.G.GORLEY)	Tucker Wetmore TUCKER WETMORE/BACK BLOCKS/MERCURY/MERCURY NASHVILLE	33	25
41	42	42	4	POURING J.ADLAM (M.GEIGER)	Mack Geiger MACK GEIGER/RECORDS/RECORDS NASHVILLE	-	41
42	50	-	2	THAT'S JUST ME D.HUFF,R.GREEN (R.GREEN)	Riley Green NASHVILLE HARBOR	-	42
43	44	46	18	I WANT YOU T.W.WILLMON (T.DOUGLAS,T.LANE,M.J.ROGERS)	Cody Johnson COJO/WARNER RECORDS NASHVILLE/WRN	-	21
44	48	-	2	HOW TO NOT Z.J.KING,R.WILSON (Z.J.KING,K.A.FISHMAN,R.MONTANA,SASHA ALEX SLOAN)	Zach John King SONY MUSIC NASHVILLE/SMN	-	44
45	NEW		1	HERE A.DESSNER,MUMFORD & SONS (M.O.J.MUMFORD,E.J.M.DWANE,B.W.D.LOVETT,A.DESSNER,J.D.BELLION)	Mumford & Sons & Chris Stapleton GENTLEMEN OF THE ROAD/GLASSNOTE/MERCURY NASHVILLE	-	45
46	RE-ENTRY		6	WISH I DIDN'T KNOW NOW J.M.SCHMIDT,E.LANGLEY (T.KEITH)	Ella Langley SAWGOD/COLUMBIA	-	46
47	49	-	12	HURTS LIKE YOU G.SIMON (R.WETZEL,A.G.GORLEY,G.SIMON,CARRIE K,S.JONES)	Koe Wetzel YELLABUSH/COLUMBIA/RECORDS NASHVILLE	-	29
48	NEW		1	BOOTS OFF J.JOYCE (J.PARDI,W.MCCUBBIN,L.LAIRD)	Jon Pardi CAPITOL NASHVILLE/MCA NASHVILLE	20	48
49	NEW		1	WATER AT A WEDDING J.P.MASSEY,GREYLAN JAMES (G.J.EGAN,M.DRAGSTREM,R.C.MCGILL)	Greytan James NASHVILLE HARBOR	22	49
50	NEW		1	MESS NOT LISTED (NOT LISTED)	Jordan Davis MCA NASHVILLE	-	50

The week's most popular country songs, ranked by radio airplay audience impressions as measured by Luminate, sales data as compiled by Luminate and streaming activity data from online music sources tracked by Luminate. Descending titles below No. 25 are moved to recurrent after 20 weeks.

COUNTRY MARKET WATCH

A Weekly National Music Sales Report

WEEKLY UNIT COUNT				YEAR-TO-DATE			YEAR-OVER-YEAR	
	ALBUM CONSUMPTION	AUDIO ON-DEMAND	VIDEO ON-DEMAND		2025	2026	CHANGE	
This Week	2,513,000	2,459,835,000	106,162,000	Album Consumption	73,334,000	91,270,000	24.5%	'25 73.33 million
Last Week	2,652,000	2,533,216,000	111,754,000	Audio On-Demand	88,526,542,000	89,784,792,000	1.4%	'26 91.27 million
Change	-5.2%	-2.9%	-5.0%	Video On-Demand	4,346,270,000	4,002,550,000	-7.9%	TOTAL ON-DEMAND STREAMS
This Week Last Year	1,916,000	2,339,353,000	109,117,000					'25 92.87 billion
Change	31.1%	5.2%	-2.7%					'26 93.79 billion

All data measures U.S. activity as of the week ending September 10, 2026. All units counts are rounded to the nearest thousand. At the beginning of 2026, the formula for album consumption units (album sales + track-equivalent albums [TEA] + stream-equivalent albums [SEA]) was updated. Under the revised methodology, one SEA unit is now defined as 1,000 paid subscription streams or 2,500 ad-supported on-demand audio streams. As a result, year-over-year comparisons of album consumption units are not directly equivalent. The updated formula requires approximately 20% fewer paid subscription streams or 33.3% fewer ad-supported streams to generate one album consumption unit compared to the prior methodology.

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Producer Of The Year, Non-Classical and more.

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GRAMMY
AWARDS®

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

Parker McCollum welcomed Nebraska radio to his concert at the CHI Health Center in Omaha on Sept. 10, a date that was rescheduled from Aug. 1 as his wife delivered their second child. From left: MCA director of promotion Katie Bright, McCollum, Connoisseur/Lincoln, Neb.-Topeka, Kan., operations manager Rob Kelley and KXKT Omaha PD/music director Hoss Michaels.

DOLLY PARTON'S HIGH-FLYING HONOR

When the Nashville airport is eventually named after **Dolly Parton**, the moment will mark another instance in which the late Country Music Hall of Fame member is in rare company.

According to a 2020 study by the travel site Netflights.com, some 352 airports across the globe have been named after individuals, but only 16 — a mere 4.5% — are named after women.

Two of those 16 are located in the United States: the Amelia Earhart Memorial Airport in Atchison, Kan.; and the Bill and Hillary Clinton National Airport in Little Rock, Ark.

The Metropolitan Nashville Airport Authority voted unanimously on Sept. 11 to rename the transportation hub after Parton, who died on Aug. 25. The official name and a timeline for the honor have yet to be determined.

BROOKS, GREEN, TOP HEADLINE STAGECOACH



CITIZEN KANE WAYNE

Riley Green, Zach Top and Garth Brooks will spearhead the annual Stagecoach country music festival when it returns to Indio, Calif., on April 23-25, 2027, helping to bring country music fans three days of genre-spanning music in the desert.

Others in the lineup at the Empire Polo Club include artists across country, rock, pop, Latin and reggae, such as **HARDY**, Turnpike Troubadours, Charley Crockett, Jo Dee Messina, Kaitlin Butts, Willie Nelson, Kelly Clarkson, Brothers Osborne, Shaboozey, Dasha, Stella Lefty, Stephen Wilson Jr, Journey, Pitbull, Carín León, Matchbox Twenty and Cameron Whitcomb.

Additionally, **Florida Georgia Line** will deliver a special late-night set, marking the reunited duo's first officially announced performance since teasing their reunion earlier this year. The Late Night on Mustang Stage will also feature performances from **Sean Paul** and **Flo Rida**. **Diplo**'s HonkyTonk will return, as will **Guy Fieri**'s Stagecoach Smokehouse.

"The last time we played Stagecoach was back in 2018, and a whole lot of life has happened since then," Florida Georgia Line said in a statement. "There's something really special about getting to come back to the desert together, step on that stage again, and share these songs and memories with the fans who have been with us through it all. We couldn't think of a better place to do it."

Tickets for the 2027 Stagecoach festival will go on sale on Friday, Sept. 18, at 11 a.m. PT on the festival's website.

By Jessica Nicholson

RADIO & RECORDS®

• Indie label Melody Place announced the additions of head of promotion & commercial partnerships **Bob Reeves** and head of marketing **Liz Kiley**. Reeves, a 25-year radio promotion veteran, formed management company Excelsior Music in 2024. Kiley, who was previously Universal Music Group Nashville VP of programming and global streaming marketing, joined Melody Place more than 40 months ago. The label's roster includes **Sara Evans** and **Katharine McPhee**; the firm also released the album *Dan Seals & Friends: The Last Duet* on Aug. 28.

• **George Birge** signed a recording deal with Black River, announced on Sept. 9.

• Nashville-based roots artist **Olivia Wolf** agreed to a recording contract with Soundly/Thirty Tigers. Her sophomore album — *Snake of Diamonds*, produced by **Sean McConnell** — is set for release on Jan. 22, 2027.

• Connoisseur Media promoted **Ileana Matzorkis** to regional production director from Bay Area duties. Stations she works with include country **KBAY**.

• South Dakota-based Riverfront Broadcasting purchased four dormant stations in Newton and Grinnell, Iowa, and plans to return them to live broadcast, *The Newton News* reported. That includes country combo **KCOB-AM/FM** Newton, expected to be on-air again in October.

• River Radio/Illinois promoted **Clark Lance** to GM from general sales manager, RadioInk.com reported. Stations under his guidance include country outlets **KEZS** Cape Girardeau, Mo., and **WOOZ** Harrisburg, Ill.

• **WHKO** Dayton, Ohio, hired **Thomas "TJ" Johnson** as its night host, according to RadioInsight.com. He previously handled weekends at top 40 **WBLI** Patchogue, N.Y.

• "**Uncle Mike**" **Hansen** joined Neversink Media/AK22 Digital Media as community relations director, RadioInsight.com reported. He'll also work the midday shift at country **WDLC** Port Jervis, N.Y.

• **KKWF** Seattle hosts its 14th annual Hometown Holiday concert on Dec. 3 at the ShoWare Center with **Gavin Adcock**, **Chase Matthew**, **Rodney Atkins**, **Wyatt Flores**, **Vincent Mason** and **Flatland Cavalry**. 🍷



Ben Gallaher opened for the rock band Giant, whose original frontman, **Dann Huff**, rejoined the band for performances Aug. 28-29 at Nashville's 3rd & Lindsley. From left: Giant's **David Huff**, **Gallaher**, **Dann Huff** and Giant's **Mike Brignardello**.

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60TH CMA AWARDS

2026

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF THE CMA AWARDS

Please join *Billboard* as we celebrate 60 years of “Country Music’s Biggest Night.” For six decades, the CMA Awards have recognized the artists and industry professionals whose creativity and dedication continue to define country music. This special editorial feature honors the unforgettable performances, iconic moments, and lasting legacy of one of music’s most celebrated awards shows.

Founded in 1958, the Country Music Association became the first trade organization established to promote a single genre of music. Less than a decade later, the inaugural CMA Awards Banquet and Show was held in 1967, launching what would become country music’s highest peer-voted honor. First televised in 1968 and now the longest-running annual music awards program on network television, the CMA Awards have continued to recognize excellence across every facet of the industry.

Voted on by more than 7,000 CMA members, the awards celebrate the artists, musicians, songwriters, producers, broadcasters, touring professionals, executives, and countless behind-the-scenes contributors who shape the genre year after year. More than an annual awards show, the CMA Awards have become a reflection of country music’s evolution, honoring both its rich traditions and its next generation of stars.

As the industry celebrates this diamond anniversary, *Billboard* will look back at six decades of unforgettable performances, groundbreaking achievements, and the people who transformed the CMA Awards into the biggest night in country music. Join us in commemorating the legacy of an institution that has celebrated the very best of country music for 60 years.

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ISSUE DATE 10/10 | AD CLOSE 9/29 | MATERIALS DUE 10/1

STREAMING & SALES
DATA COMPILED BY
LUMINATE

billboardTOP COUNTRY ALBUMS

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	2 WEEKS AGO	WEEKS ON CHART	ARTIST IMPRINT & NUMBER / DISTRIBUTING LABEL	TITLE	CERT.	PEAK POS.
1	1	1	22	ELLA LANGLEY SAWGOD 843811*/COLUMBIA	DANDELION	■	1
2	2	2	69	MORGAN WALLEN BIG LOUD/MERCURY 1000170961*/REPUBLIC	I'M THE PROBLEM	4	1
3	5	5	184	MORGAN WALLEN BIG LOUD/MERCURY 037570*/REPUBLIC	ONE THING AT A TIME	9	1
4	6	4	3	STELLA LEFTY SANDLOT/ATLANTIC OUTPOST/ATLANTIC 075678579547*/AG	LONG WAY HOME		4
5	7	6	296	MORGAN WALLEN BIG LOUD 033180*/REPUBLIC	DANGEROUS: THE DOUBLE ALBUM	9	1
6	41	42	33	DOLLY PARTON RCA 997802*/LEGACY	DIAMONDS & RHINESTONES: THE GREATEST HITS COLLECTION		4
7	9	8	48	JASON ALDEAN MACON/BROKEN BOW/BMG 964205183*/BBMG	30 NUMBER ONE HITS		4
8	8	7	110	ELLA LANGLEY SAWGOD DIGITAL EX/COLUMBIA	HUNGOVER	■	5
9	10	9	25	LUKE COMBS SEVEN RIDGES/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE 841767*/SMN	THE WAY I AM		1
10	11	10	98	RILEY GREEN NASHVILLE HARBOR 843930116935/BIG MACHINE	DON'T MIND IF I DO	●	6
11	12	11	404	TOBY KEITH SHOW DOG-UNIVERSAL 010334/UME	35 BIGGEST HITS	■	1
12	13	16	502	GEORGE STRAIT MCA NASHVILLE 000459/MCA (25.98)	50 NUMBER ONES	7	1
13	15	14	225	ZACH BRYAN BELTING BRONCO 86979*/WARNER	AMERICAN HEARTBREAK	3	1
14	14	13	484	LUKE COMBS RIVER HOUSE/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE 538883*/SMN	THIS ONE'S FOR YOU	8	1
15	17	18	119	SHABOOZEY AMERICAN DOGWOOD 1023*/EMPIRE	WHERE I'VE BEEN, ISN'T WHERE I'M GOING	■	2
16	18	19	159	ZACH BRYAN BELTING BRONCO 725898*/WARNER	ZACH BRYAN	■	1
17	19	17	108	POST MALONE MERCURY 602465958249*/REPUBLIC	F-1 TRILLION	■	1
18	16	12	29	MEGAN MORONEY MEGAN MORONEY/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE 841410*/COLUMBIA/SMN	CLOUD 9	●	1
19	20	20	432	MORGAN WALLEN BIG LOUD 783*	IF I KNOW ME	4	1
20	21	22	593	CHRIS STAPLETON MERCURY NASHVILLE 019405*/MCA	TRAVELLER	7	1
21	23	24	504	BROOKS & DUNN ARISTA NASHVILLE 18852/LEGACY (18.98/12.98)	THE GREATEST HITS COLLECTION	4	2
22	22	23	19	KACEY MUSGRAVES KACEY MUSGRAVES/LOST HIGHWAY 602488275446*/INTERSCOPE CAPITOL	MIDDLE OF NOWHERE		2
23	28	29	11	CODY JOHNSON COJO/WARNER RECORDS NASHVILLE 093624826583*/WRN	BANKS OF THE TRINITY		8
24	24	26	304	CHRIS STAPLETON MERCURY NASHVILLE 032689*/MCA	STARTING OVER	3	1
25	27	21	8	KOE WETZEL YELLABUSH 846148* WS EX/COLUMBIA	THE NIGHT CHAMPION		12

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STREAMING & SALES
DATA COMPILED BY
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billboardAMERICANA/
FOLK ALBUMS

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	2 WEEKS AGO	WEEKS ON CHART	ARTIST IMPRINT & NUMBER / DISTRIBUTING LABEL	TITLE	CERT.	PEAK POS.
1	1	1	20	NOAH KAHAN MERCURY 199957317412*/REPUBLIC	THE GREAT DIVIDE	■	1
2	2	3	170	NOAH KAHAN MERCURY 036702*/REPUBLIC	STICK SEASON	4	1
3	4	2	4	PHOEBE BRIDGERS DEAD OCEANS 400*	LOST WEEKEND		1
4	5	4	225	ZACH BRYAN BELTING BRONCO 86979*/WARNER	AMERICAN HEARTBREAK	3	1
5	6	6	119	SHABOOZEY AMERICAN DOGWOOD 1023*/EMPIRE	WHERE I'VE BEEN, ISN'T WHERE I'M GOING	■	1
6	7	7	159	ZACH BRYAN BELTING BRONCO 725898*/WARNER	ZACH BRYAN	■	1
7	9	9	539	CHRIS STAPLETON MERCURY NASHVILLE 019405*/MCA	TRAVELLER	7	1
8	10	10	19	KACEY MUSGRAVES KACEY MUSGRAVES/LOST HIGHWAY 602488275446*/INTERSCOPE CAPITOL	MIDDLE OF NOWHERE		2
9	11	11	304	CHRIS STAPLETON MERCURY NASHVILLE 032689*/MCA	STARTING OVER	3	1
10	13	8	12	KOE WETZEL YELLABUSH 846148* WS EX/COLUMBIA	THE NIGHT CHAMPION		5

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billboardBLUEGRASS ALBUMS

STREAMING & SALES
DATA COMPILED BY
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THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	2 WEEKS AGO	WEEKS ON CHART	ARTIST IMPRINT & NUMBER / DISTRIBUTING LABEL	TITLE	CERT.	PEAK POS.
1	1	—	2	BILLY STRINGS REPRISE 729555*/WARNER	SO MUCH FOR GOODBYES		1
2	RE-ENTRY		32	NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND CAPITOL/CAPITOL NASHVILLE 34451/UME	CERTIFIED HITS: NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND		1
3	4	4	156	THE STEELDRIVERS ROUNDER/CRAFT 610598*/CONCORD	THE STEELDRIVERS		1
4	5	5	110	SOUNDTRACK LOST HIGHWAY/MERCURY 170069*/UME	O BROTHER, WHERE ART THOU?	8	1
5	9	8	137	THE STEELDRIVERS ROUNDER/CRAFT 610624*/CONCORD	RECKLESS		2
6	10	7	102	BILLY STRINGS REPRISE 726466*/WARNER	HIGHWAY PRAYERS		1
7	8	6	165	BILLY STRINGS ROUNDER 610063*/CONCORD	HOME		1
8	3	—	2	MOUNTAIN GRASS UNIT DUALTONE /MNRK	APPALACHIAN SMOKE		3
9	13	10	165	STURGILL SIMPSON HIGH TOP MOUNTAIN 58784*/THIRTY TIGERS	CUTTIN' GRASS, VOL. 1: THE BUTCHER SHOPPE SESSIONS		1
10	RE-ENTRY		78	ALISON KRAUSS ROUNDER/CRAFT 610555*/CONCORD	A HUNDRED MILES OR MORE: A COLLECTION	●	1

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MAKIN' TRACKS TOM ROLAND tom.roland@billboard.com

Avery Anna Mines A Surprising Part Of Her Heart And Soul For 'Blood'



Avery Anna knows she's developed a brand, referring to herself as the "piano-ballad sad girl."

But when she won the Academy of Country Music's new female artist of the year award this spring, she turned her back on that position, instead donning tight, black leather while leading her band through a scorching, metal-edged kiss-off, "Blood Runs Thicker." "Blood" was, at that time, only about five months old, and she knew even as she created it that it would surprise fans and music executives who thought they understood her "sad girl" persona.

"I wasn't trying to sound cool," she says. "I wasn't trying to sound like anything. I just literally wrote it out of pure rage."

"Blood Runs Thicker" didn't necessarily come out of left field. Avery regularly covered **Ozzy Osbourne's** "No More Tears" during her 2025 concerts, and as a result, more guys were filling seats at her shows.

"[We] kind of saw this new audience that she was starting to build," says her manager, songwriter-producer **David Fanning** ("Tennessee Orange," "Take My Name"). "A lot of her audience has been predominantly female, which is great. We were like, 'What are some things that would bring a little more of the male side to things as well?'"

Exploring that hard-rock side of her persona seemed like it might help, and Anna built "Blood" with Fanning and co-writer **Andy Sheridan** ("Gonna Love You," "Indigo") on Dec. 15, 2025, in a third-floor office at Sony Music Publishing Nashville that's typically reserved for **Ashley Gorley** ("Who Told You That," "Woman").

Anna had mostly written alone at her home for months, but for this particular song, she wanted the assistance of Fanning and Sheridan as she pulled it all together. She was moved by a Biblically inspired passage, "The blood of the covenant is thicker than the water of the womb," that suggests the relationships we choose are stronger than those into which we are born. She knew what she had in mind for "Blood," and she collected a bundle of images that illustrated the attitude on a Pinterest wall that she opened during the writing session: a truck speeding along a dirt road; rock guitars; an axe; and the fierce, protective *Yellowstone* character Beth Dutton.

To get into the right musical frame of mind, Sheridan invented a dark electric guitar riff full of distortion and power that likely rang through the Sony Publishing hallway.

"We might have had some angry neighbors," Sheridan allows. "If you were at Sony that day, I'm sorry. It was probably pretty loud."

Regardless of what happened outside the writing room, Anna and her co-writers were highly energized as she worked through an emotional challenge.

"I was jumping, I was pacing the room, I was belting the parts," she remembers. "I was so excited about it because I'm not really one to actually talk about my feelings as much, but I do write about them. That's how I process, and I hadn't talked about this specific situation."

That said, she prefers that the actual specifics of the story go unspoken. "I love to leave this song up for interpretation for people," Anna explains, "just because I think it's more powerful when you're looking inward."

Literally, Anna remembers addressing the second verse first, diving into

anger and abandonment as they whittled down a huge volume of ideas and phrases that she'd written out prior to the session.

"When she says she came in with pages of stuff, it's like she has literal books of — I don't want to call it her diary — but it's like she's writing her life, in the way that she feels, out on paper," Sheridan says. "Which is great for us, because when it comes time to write a song, if she wants to write about something specific, she's got it all."

They didn't necessarily finish out the second verse before jumping into other parts of the song.

"I'm very ADHD when it comes to writing," she explains.

They intentionally employed key words with harsh meanings and/or consonants — "toxic talker," "cringe," "betrayal," "goes out screaming" — and as loud as the instrumental foundation was, the guitar riff and power chords allowed the vitriol in those words, and her voice, to come through.

"It really gave me space to just dig in and find the rasp in my voice," she says. "We made melodies that I can really dig into and sing, and say it with my full chest."

Anna sang "Blood" on a simple SM7 microphone over crunchy sonics for the demo, and that vocal provided the guide for the musicians when Fanning produced the master version with Anna weighing in with him in the control room. **Sam Hunter** played the key riff one time on Dobro to kick it off, and **Jonny Fung** added enough steel guitar to keep some country influence in the middle of the ever-evolving head-banging.

"The intro riff is different than the instrumental riff, and then the outro riff's different," Fanning notes. "If you listen to them, everything's kind of got a different place."

Anna can be exacting in her vocal sessions, though when she cut the final part for "Blood," she let the emotion lead the way.

"I genuinely just sang from the depths of my soul," she says. "We honestly didn't do as many takes as I usually do in other songs. ... I just really felt it that day. The emotion was there."

Ultimately, Anna and Fanning wanted to make "Blood" her first single for country radio, and Warner Records Nashville (WRN) agreed, though its hard-rock sound is an unconventional way to launch a new artist on that platform. Before they issued it, Fanning shipped the song to fiddler **Jenee Fleenor**, who added fiery sonics to an alternate mix.

"It kind of lands in an area that might be scary for some people," Fanning concedes, "but for us, it's like if you're not making things that are trying to push boundaries or push into different things, I think that's just kind of boring. So might as well try."

WRN released it to broadcasters via PlayMPE on July 27, and it's earned play in its early weeks at **KUPL** Portland, Ore., **WKIS** Miami, **WGAR** Cleveland and **KKWF** Seattle, among others. It's worked, thus far, in beefing up the male component of her fan base without damaging the core female support.

"I will always be the piano-ballad sad girl at heart," she maintains, "but there's a lot of different styles in my heart, and it's fun to explore those and execute them." ●



ANNA

billboard Hot Country Songs Index

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

9 TO 5 Velvet Apple Music, BMI/Fox Fanfare Music Inc., BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI (D.Parton) **11**

A

ALL MY EXES Lylas Music, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/These Are Pulse Songs, BMI/PASSTHEBEAT PUBLISHING, BMI/Only Legned 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 Alaina, J.A.Gutch, B.J.Johnson, W.Phillips) **27**

ANOTHER DRINK Marshmello Music, BMI/Universal Tunes, SESAC/Police Bunny Songs, SESAC/Artist 101 Publishing Group, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/Big Music Machine, BMI/Big Ass Pile Of Dimes Music, BMI/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Feel Your Way Through Publishing, ASCAP/Iamcastle Music Publishing, BMI/Chumba Music, BMI/Sony Songs LLC, BMI (Marshmello, AVanderheyem, T.Eriksen, J.J.Dillon, K.Ballerini, CASTLE) **20**

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