

billboard Country Update

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BILLBOARD COUNTRY UPDATE

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How A Pre-School Of Rock Program Affirms CMA's Investment In Music Teachers

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When the Country Music Association decided in 2006 to plow money from its annual CMA Fest into music education, the decision seemed like a logical pursuit for a music-driven organization.

It was, in fact, extending a tradition. Ten years prior, Hillsboro Elementary and Middle School in Leiper's Fork, Tenn., outside of Nashville, had instituted Kids on Stage, a program that gave students a chance to create music, produce mini-concerts and do all the backstage work required to put on a festival. The school was struggling, it had no fine arts program, and the Williamson County Board of Education went along with Kids on Stage when investor **Aubrey Preston** promised to raise the money to kick start the program.

"The school superintendent and the board were like, 'You know, what do we have to lose?'" Preston recalls.

More importantly, there was plenty to be gained. The school's test scores were roughly in the 15th percentile, Preston notes, but after just the first year, the students' academic performances soared. Kids on Stage arrived two years before School of Rock launched in Philadelphia; thus, Kids on Stage was pre-School of Rock. Several years later, it unwittingly passed the baton to the CMA.

The CMA celebrates music in schools when it honors 30 in-

structors on Oct. 7 with its 10th annual Music Teachers of Excellence at The Pinnacle in Nashville. The instructors represent 12 states, from Massachusetts to California, and one of its honorees has seen the growth of music education in Middle Tennessee firsthand. **Trevor Baxter**, 49, played drums as a student at Columbia Central High School, and he's now the head of the fine

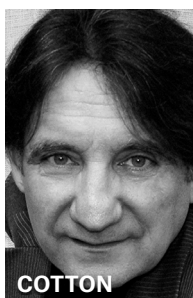
arts department at Centennial High in Franklin, Tenn. He's witnessed the "resounding" increase in attention on music education in the area.

"It's tremendous just to watch how much the arts have flourished in our county," Baxter says.

When Kids on Stage emerged 30 years ago, it was little more than an experiment. Williamson County was

growing, but the Hillsboro school's enrollment was declining. Parents who could afford it put their children in private schools, and those who could not had come to expect little from Hillsboro. The kids weren't motivated, and unmotivated kids don't do their homework. A few of the local adults — including some members of the music industry — locked onto music as a tonic for the situation.

"What we decided was that if we could put one or two rock 'n' roll bands together at school, that nothing would excite a school more than having their own rock 'n' roll band," says **Gene Cotton**, who snagged four top 40 singles on the Billboard Hot 100 in



COTTON



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the mid-1970s, including the **Kim Carnes** collaboration “You’re a Part of Me.”

Preston worked a deal to acquire dozens of Epiphone guitars — among other instruments — for the students, and they put together a festival they dubbed Hillstock. Music pros such as **Michael McDonald**, **Deana Carter**, **John Hiatt**, **The Chicks** and songwriter **Trey Bruce** (“How Your Love Makes Me Feel,” “Look Heart, No Hands”) helped with fundraisers and/or served as guest instructors. And the classes spanned an array of experiences, from a study of sound and lighting that was subtitled “So You Want to be a Roadie” to a songwriting class guided by Cotton.

“One of the things I did at the very beginning of the class is up on the board I drew this big circle and I put a dot in the middle of it and I asked the question, ‘What is that?’” Cotton remembers. “They gave answers like ‘Oh, it’s a record company,’ or ‘It’s a manager,’ or ‘It’s an artist.’ When it was all said and done, I would point out that the center of all this is the song. Without the song, there’s nothing.”

A few of the students — **Miley Cyrus**, **Kesha** and at least two members of **Paramore** — went on to become nationally known artists, though that wasn’t the point of the program. The goal was simply to get the kids who didn’t feel rewarded by school more excited about it, particularly those who didn’t have the always-popular spot on a football team or a natural A-grade talent for learning. “They don’t have anything when they go to school that gives them a good dopamine shot, and a pat on the back that says ‘good job,’” Preston notes. “Give them the spotlight, or a little applause, you might be surprised at how many kids you can get engaged.”

The artists appearing at the CMA’s Music Teachers of Excellence event — including **Kix Brooks**, **Keith Urban**, **Sierra Hull**, **Marcus King** and **Tucker Wetmore** — are accustomed to receiving applause for their efforts. Music teachers have to look elsewhere to feel rewarded.

“If you want confetti and these different things, then it can be a thankless job,” Baxter concedes. “But for me, it’s a very thankful job.”

He has a staff of 10 instructors who cover everything from vocal lessons to teaching music theory, and he’s watched his students grow over the years into professional touring musicians, band directors, orchestra members and music teachers. It’s through those results that he finds his rewards.

“If you’re doing your job, and you keep up with your kids and where they go,” he says, “you will get the results.”

They don’t have to be music-specific results, either. Playing in an ensemble — be it a rock band or a marching band — develops creativity, improvisation, cooperation with others, organization and planning skills, he says. All those tools can be applied to other pursuits.

That, CMA executives believe, is worth the investment. To date, the CMA Foundation has poured \$30 million into music education, the organization says, as it supports future generations of leaders.

“We’re teaching things that [apply] for anyone that’s going to go out and get a job or is going to work for a Fortune 500 company,” Baxter observes. “We’re teaching life skills.” ●



Kashus Culpepper performed Sept. 28 and took questions from New York City-based music journalist Erica Campbell (left) during the Grammy Museum’s “A New York Evening” series at National Sawdust in Brooklyn. With them: Museum senior VP of public programs & artist relations Lynne Sheridan.



Warren Zeiders performed Sept. 23 at The Exit/In in Nashville to celebrate the release of his album *No Brakes*. With him backstage: Warner Records Nashville Team WMN national director of radio Paige Elliott (left) and division chair/president Cris Lacy.



Kinsley signed a booking agreement with WME Nashville, announced on Sept. 29. She’s flanked by Morris Higham Management senior director Kyle Quigley (left) and WME Nashville agent Kanan Vitolo.

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Expert insight and commentary by
Tom Roland and Russ Penuell



Biggest Billboard Country Album Debut
OF THE WEEK!

**Riley
Green**

#1 That's Just Me

#1 COUNTRY ALBUM - PHYSICAL

#1 COUNTRY ALBUM - DIGITAL

#1 OVERALL DEBUT STREAMING ALBUM

#2 COUNTRY ALBUM - UK

#2 COUNTRY ALBUM - AUS

#4 DIGITAL ALBUM - AUS

Highest Career Album Debut!

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ON THE CHARTS RUSS PENUELL

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‘On’ And On: Chesney Extends No. 1 Record

Kenny Chesney scores his record-extending 34th No. 1 on *Billboard*’s Country Airplay chart as “Carry On” rises a spot on the list dated Oct. 10, up 3% to 30.4 million audience impressions Sept. 25-Oct. 1, according to Luminate.

Upon its debut in May, the song became the star’s 100th career entry on Country Airplay. In July, it became his record-breaking 62nd top 10, surpassing the sums of Tim McGraw and George Strait, dating to the chart’s January 1990 inception.

Chesney’s first single on Warner/Hey Now Records is also the first No. 1 on the survey for the latter label, which launched with Chesney as its flagship artist in March. It’s the lead single from his 21st studio album, *Silver Sands Marina*, released Sept. 25.

Moreover, Chesney surpassed Strait on the Oct. 3 Country Airplay chart for the most entries in the list’s history, as “Remember Me That Way” became Chesney’s 101st. It ranks at No. 41 in its second week (2.4 million).

“As a creative spirit, sending songs into the universe that hit people in the heart means everything to me,” Chesney tells *Billboard*. “That ‘Carry On,’ as my 100th [charted] single, has had so many big moments — the most top 10s, now continuing all the No. 1s — is humbling. But what really matters is that it’s connecting with people who hear their lives in my music. It’s an honor and privilege. Even more, it’s so much fun to see people’s faces when they’re singing that chorus: ‘If it feels good do it.’”

Adds Hey Now president and co-founder Kris Lamb, “When you get to launch a label with Kenny Chesney, whose music defines how people see the world, you know you want to deliver. Everything about this, and now having the No. 1 while *Silver Sands Marina* is finally in the hands of fans, represents everything we want Hey Now to be. It’s the power of positive energy, hard work from a hardworking and incredible team, great partnerships and, most importantly, songs that lift people up.”



ALLISTER ANN

MOST INCREASED AUDIENCE

TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	GAIN (IN MILLIONS)
RETHINK SOME THINGS Seven Ridges/Columbia Nashville/SMN	Luke Combs	+2.688
ALL MY EXES Mercury/Big Loud	Lauren Alaina Featuring Chase Matthew	+2.267
LOVING LIFE AGAIN SAWGOD/Columbia/Triple Tigers	Ella Langley	+2.201
KID MYSELF Night Train/Broken Bow	John Morgan	+2.141
JADED YellaBush/Columbia/RECORDS Nashville	Koe Wetzel & Ella Langley	+1.595
BEEN BY NOW Mercury/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	+1.563
GET TO DRINKIN’ Sony Music Nashville/SMN	Zach John King	+1.508
WATER AT A WEDDING Nashville Harbor	Greytan James	+1.453
HANDS UP Bailee & Buddy/BMG/Stoney Creek	Jelly Roll	+1.204
ANYTIME SOON Macon/Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	+1.175

MOST INCREASED PLAYS

TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	GAIN
RETHINK SOME THINGS Seven Ridges/Columbia Nashville/SMN	Luke Combs	+717
LOVING LIFE AGAIN SAWGOD/Columbia/Triple Tigers	Ella Langley	+591
SEARCHLIGHT Atlantic	Shinedown	+510
ALL MY EXES Mercury/Big Loud	Lauren Alaina Featuring Chase Matthew	+470
JADED YellaBush/Columbia/RECORDS Nashville	Koe Wetzel & Ella Langley	+466
HANDS UP Bailee & Buddy/BMG/Stoney Creek	Jelly Roll	+398
GET TO DRINKIN’ Sony Music Nashville/SMN	Zach John King	+371
CARRY ON Warner/HEY NOW	Kenny Chesney	+335
KID MYSELF Night Train/Broken Bow	John Morgan	+331
COUNTRY AND SHE KNOWS IT Row Crop/MCA Nashville	Luke Bryan	+329

RECURRENTS

THIS WEEK	TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	TOTAL AUD. (IN MILLIONS)
1	CHOOSIN’ TEXAS SAWGOD/Columbia/Triple Tigers	Ella Langley	18.797
2	HATE HOW YOU LOOK The Core/Universal Music Canada/Mercury Nashville	Josh Ross	17.407
3	CHEVY SILVERADO Atlantic/Warner Records Nashville/WRN	Bailey Zimmerman	17.007
4	DON’T TELL ON ME Macon/Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	16.902
5	DON’T WE Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	15.908
6	BE HER SAWGOD/Columbia/Triple Tigers	Ella Langley	12.811
7	I CAN’T LOVE YOU ANYMORE SAWGOD/Columbia/Big Loud/Triple Tigers	Ella Langley & Morgan Wallen	12.136
8	WOMAN Zone 4/RCA Nashville/SMN	Kane Brown	9.393
9	AFTER ALL THE BARS ARE CLOSED Fifty-One/Forty-Nine/Valory	Thomas Rhett	8.731
10	SLEEPLESS IN A HOTEL ROOM Seven Ridges/Columbia Nashville/SMN	Luke Combs	8.229



TEXAS REGIONAL RADIO REPORT

WEEK ENDING OCTOBER 1, 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	18	HIGHWAY ROBBERY (Leo33) ★★1 Week at 1★★	Jason Scott & The High Heat	1960	69	11	16	9	GOOD TIME (Independent)	William Clark Green	1288	130
2	3	14	FEELIN’ GOOD AGAIN (Bossier City/Thirty Tigers)	Turnpike Troubadours w/Sierra Hull	1855	100	12	12	17	CHEAT ON YOU (Independent)	Amanda Kate Ferris	1284	62
3	5	22	GUINEVERE (T3R Music Group)	Sundance Head	1795	139	13	14	15	HONEYSUCKLE (Big Loud Texas/Mercury Records)	Dylan Gossett	1234	36
4	4	25	I DON’T DRINK ANYMORE (Independent)	Timothy Howls	1714	-3	14	15	17	WHAT DO YOU PRAY FOR (Erskine Entertainment)	Sheila Marshall	1228	44
5	6	16	WOULDA BEEN IT (River House)	Tyce Delk	1666	26	15	17	6	GOOD OL’ GIRLS (Independent)	Sandee June	1227	109
6	7	22	THIRD ROW GEORGE STRAIT (Independent)	Frank Ray	1586	34	16	18	14	DAY DRINKIN’ (Independent)	AJ Vallejo	1151	59
7	9	9	DOWN FOR THE RIDE (Independent)	Tristan Roberson	1508	157	17	20	9	IT WON’T MATTER ANYWAY (Independent)	Case Hardin	1143	81
8	8	17	HOWDY MA’AM (T3R Music Group)	Caleb Sutton	1483	111	18	19	19	CITY COWGIRL (Independent)	Lani Butler	1088	-2
9	10	11	FAN OF YOU (Pretty Damn Tough)	Josh Abbott Band	1446	98	19	22	9	KNOW IT ALL (Independent)	Cody Jinks	982	58
10	11	21	AIN’T THAT A DRINK (Soundline Management)	Ronnie Bowen	1376	32	20	26	14	BRACE FOR IMPACT (Independent)	Ghosts of Hill County	924	55

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

billboardCountry 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	2	21	CARRY ON Warner/HEY NOW ★★ No. 1 (1 Week) ★★	Kenny Chesney	30.350	+0.934	8433	335	1
2	3	10	BEEN BY NOW Mercury/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	29.205	+1.563	7647	241	2
3	5	65	KID MYSELF Night Train/Broken Bow	John Morgan	27.937	+2.141	7285	331	3
4	6	13	LOVING LIFE AGAIN SAWGOD/Columbia/Triple Tigers	Ella Langley	26.160	+2.201	7051	591	4
5	1	24	BOSTON Sandlot/Atlantic/Atlantic Outpost	Stella Lefty	25.953	-3.538	6514	-964	5
6	4	27	BE BY YOU Seven Ridges/Columbia Nashville/SMN	Luke Combs	24.176	-3.381	5688	-1184	7
7	7	56	ALL MY EXES Mercury/Big Loud Lauren Alaina Featuring Chase Matthew	Lauren Alaina Featuring Chase Matthew	22.594	+2.267	6258	470	6
8	8	27	COUNTRY AND SHE KNOWS IT Row Crop/MCA Nashville	Luke Bryan	19.524	+0.949	5660	329	8
9	9	26	SAY SO Warner Records Nashville/WRN	Dan + Shay	19.317	+0.754	5439	173	9
10	10	32	GET TO DRINKIN' Sony Music Nashville/SMN	Zach John King	19.270	+1.508	5305	371	10
11	13	12	RETHINK SOMETHINGS Seven Ridges/Columbia Nashville/SMN ★★ Most Increased Audience ★★	Luke Combs	17.057	+2.688	4869	717	11
12	11	19	THINK AS YOU DRUNK Nashville Harbor	Riley Green	16.011	+0.389	4581	165	12
13	15	8	JADED YellaBush/Columbia/RECORDS Nashville	Koe Wetzel & Ella Langley	14.925	+1.595	3794	466	15
14	12	17	PHONE, KEYS, WALLET Broken Bow	Lainey Wilson & John Mayer	14.840	+0.453	4393	244	13
15	14	42	SOUTH OF SANITY Leo33	Zach Top	14.347	+0.458	3993	192	14
16	17	15	HANDS UP Bailee & Buddy/BMG/Stoney Creek	Jelly Roll	12.903	+1.204	3751	398	16
17	16	32	PAINTED YOU PRETTY River House/Warner Records Nashville/WAR	Hudson Westbrook	12.498	+0.781	3679	187	17
18	18	37	BOOTS OFF Capitol Nashville/MCA Nashville	Jon Pardi	10.554	+0.387	3152	7	19
19	20	41	WATER AT A WEDDING Nashville Harbor	Greylyan James	10.432	+1.453	3225	217	18
20	19	40	WORTH YOUR WILD Triple Tigers ★★ Airpower ★★	Russell Dickerson	9.816	+0.566	3027	138	20
21	22	24	MEDICINE Megan Moroney/Columbia/Columbia Nashville/SMN	Megan Moroney	9.503	+1.083	2912	239	21
22	23	8	ANYTIME SOON Macon/Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	8.249	+1.175	2498	227	23
23	24	34	LET HIM IN ANYWAY Ten Point/Wheelhouse	Blake Shelton	7.156	+0.256	2664	57	22
24	25	18	EMPTY WORDS Sony Music Nashville/SMN	Corey Kent	6.976	+0.423	2225	162	25
25	27	36	HOLDIN' IT DOWN Chase Matthew/Warner Records Nashville/WAR	Chase Matthew	6.028	-0.000	2239	-68	24
26	29	16	HORSEBACK CoJo/Warner Records Nashville/WRN	Cody Johnson	6.024	+0.659	2099	122	27
27	30	25	MOVE ON American Dogwood/EMPIRE/Magnolia Music	Kevin Powers & Shaboозey	5.509	+0.426	2126	175	26
28	31	32	KILLIN' ME MCA Nashville	Parker McCollum	4.537	-0.063	1651	113	29
29	32	8	COWGIRL American Dogwood/EMPIRE/Magnolia Music	Shaboозey	4.245	+0.475	1651	143	28
30	33	12	WHO TOLD YOU THAT Tucker Wetmore/Back Blocks/Mercury/Mercury Nashville	Tucker Wetmore	4.062	+0.355	1404	97	32

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.

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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	34	31	NEVER COMIN' BACK Lost Highway	Flatland Cavalry	3.694	+0.207	1523	61	30
32	41	5	BET ON THAT Enchmntmnt/Warner/WAR	Blake Whiten	3.674	+1.146	1350	215	34
33	35	23	WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG Goat Island Sound/Mercury Nashville	Jacob Hackworth	3.674	+0.243	1482	63	31
34	37	21	WANNABE Thrivin Here/Warner Records Nashville/WRN	Gavin Adcock	3.646	+0.489	1323	106	35
35	36	16	I DIDN'T COME HERE TO LEAVE Boss Moves/Black River/Akando	Chris Young	3.291	+0.131	1228	50	37
36	38	20	DRY SPELL Kacey Musgraves/Lost Highway	Kacey Musgraves	3.255	+0.102	1177	25	40
37	40	19	LAND Hubbard House/Mercury Nashville	Tyler Hubbard	2.980	+0.348	1228	62	36
38	42	28	IF I DON'T LEAVE I'M GONNA STAY Stoney Creek/Nashville Harbor	Carly Pearce & Riley Green	2.930	+0.442	1199	64	39
39	39	28	GOOD DAMN Wheelhouse	Brantley Gilbert	2.893	+0.115	1388	13	33
40	44	6	SOMETHING TO LOSE Sandlot/Atlantic/Lost Highway/Atlantic Outpost	Stella Lefty With Vincent Mason	2.716	+0.496	794	114	47
41	28	2	REMEMBER ME THAT WAY Warner/HEY NOW	Kenny Chesney	2.401	-3.198	792	-475	48
42	43	15	STRING BY Mack Geiger/RECORDS/Columbia/RECORDS Nashville	Mack Geiger	2.313	+0.037	648	15	53
43	46	15	GIRL DAD Warner Records Nashville/WAR	Cole Swindell	2.106	+0.177	1057	71	41
44	45	9	DAMNED IF I DO Music Soup/Interscope/Lost Highway	Vincent Mason	1.956	-0.031	623	-25	54
45	48	26	BACK IN THE BOTTLE Magnolia Music	Randy Houser	1.895	+0.232	1226	64	38
46	47	22	LOVE IS BLIND WEST TO THE REST/Triple Tigers	Ian Munsick	1.797	+0.075	1025	29	42
47	51	13	DEAR BIG CITY Curb	Dylan Scott	1.639	+0.253	1001	120	44
48	52	13	BABY BLUES Back Blocks/Mercury/Big Loud	Ashley Cooke	1.581	+0.225	961	96	45
49	26	2	FINDERS KEEPERS Row Crop/MCA Nashville	Luke Bryan & Luke Combs	1.553	-4.658	448	-916	59
50	53	3	TAKE ME BACK (LEAVE ME THERE) CoJo/Warner Records Nashville/WRN	Cody Johnson	1.489	+0.214	244	62	-
51	50	10	NOTHIN' BETTERTO DO Gatsby/MCA Nashville ★★ Breaker ★★	Carter Faith & Wyatt Flores	1.485	+0.080	733	28	49
52	49	20	BETTER THAT WAY Mercury/Big Loud	Charles Wesley Godwin & Luke Combs	1.473	+0.054	811	-13	46
53	56	5	SAY LA V Quartz Hill	Joe Nichols	1.220	+0.053	676	90	52
54	57	2	LAST THING YOU NEED Take-Two Interactive Software/Atlantic	Morgan Wallen	1.203	+0.057	191	7	-
55	55	11	DONE FOR Fugitive Recordings/Magnolia Music	Max McNown	1.140	-0.030	706	1	51
56	RE-ENTRY		SEARCHLIGHT Atlantic	Shinedown	1.064	+0.327	1007	510	43
57	58	4	HOWDY Big Machine	Cole Goodwin	1.016	-0.076	714	-2	50
58	59	4	TALKIN BOUT Galaxy Label Group	LOCASH	0.901	-0.040	607	-13	55
59	NEW		MESS MCA Nashville ★★ Hot Shot Debut ★★	Jordan Davis	0.844	+0.218	431	154	60
60	NEW		AIN'T MY PROBLEM Riser House	Mitchell Tenpenny	0.555	+0.186	238	108	-



Old Dominion performed Sept. 29 in the 14th annual Nightfall at the Hall concert at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum for the facility's Troubadour members. From left: Museum VP of development Ben Hall; Museum director of institutional giving Marie Bradshaw; Old Dominion members Trevor Rosen, Matthew Ramsey, Geoff Sprung and Brad Tursi; and Troubadour Advisory Council Leadership Team chair Zach Farnum.



Wyatt Flores (left) performed the title track from his album *Scared of Heights* with co-writer Blake Pendergrass ("Been by Now," "Ain't a Bad Life") as Pendergrass made his Grand Ole Opry debut on Sept. 29, a week after he won songwriter of the year at the Nashville Songwriter Awards.

ALANNA MCARDLE

AJ Kross

God Made a Small Town

*Some songs
take you home.*



***The New Single - Out Now
Listen Now***



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

Gavin Adcock celebrated the release of his album *The Day I Hang It Up* with a Sept. 30 event at The Exit/In in Nashville. From left: Warner Records Nashville (WRN) VP of radio accounts Tom Martens, Cumulus VP of country Travis Daily, Adcock and WRN executive VP of radio & commercial partnerships Kristen Williams.

LAMBERT ON THE INGREDIENTS IN 'CRISCO'

Texan **Miranda Lambert** is known for her fiery songs and heartbreak ballads, but when she wrote and recorded the duet "A Song to Sing" with **Chris Stapleton** last year, she was just aiming to create a song with the sultry, fun vibe and glittery style of the **Kenny Rogers** and **Dolly Parton** collaborations she loved.

"It's something I've never tried before, honestly," Lambert tells *Billboard*. "I've never explored that part of country, even though I love it."

"A Song to Sing" sparked Lambert's passion for songs that blend equal parts glitzy disco and classic country. Initially, Lambert thought she would create a shorter EP, but she and producer **Jesse Frasure** (**Thomas Rhett**, **Jelly Roll**) instead built a musical world inspired by the era of country-politan and Studio 54 with her album *Crisco*, released Oct. 2 through MCA.

Frasure established a theme by creating a playlist called "Miranda-politan," she says. It was filled with classics from the 1960s, '70s and '80s, including **Glen Campbell**'s "Southern Nights," **Ronnie Milsap**'s "Smoky Mountain Rain," the **Bee Gees**' "Too Much Heaven," and songs from Parton, **Patsy Cline**, **Elvis Presley** and **Louise Mandrell**.

Tracks on the new album like "Crisco" and "Two Things Can Be True" are soaked in many key elements of that 1960s-1970s country-politan sound: lush harmonies, piano, and layers of strings.

"I've never recorded with strings in my career, which is crazy," she says. "When I think about that, I'm like, 'What the heck was I waiting on?' I think it was serendipitous, because I met Jesse, and this is absolutely his wheelhouse."

Lambert's chief aim for *Crisco*'s listeners is to provide an inspiration for enjoyment.

"It's one of those records where you could put it on doing just about anything," she says. "My only goal is for people to feel like they want to do something fun — whether that's roller skating or taking a Sunday drive."

Go [here](#) for the full story.

By Jessica Nicholson

'ROUND THE ROW

• SESAC's Music Services division made two changes among its executive ranks, hiring senior director of business development **Nick LaPointe** and promoting **Jay Sudarma** to VP of marketing for both SESAC and the company's CCLI Group from CCLI director of marketing. LaPointe was previously FUGA AVS senior director of business development, where he connected publishers with Downtown Music's distribution wing.

• **Stella Lefty** parted ways with Disruptor Management. The move came after a recent publicity transition from Align to Nashville-based Sweet Talk PR.

• Back Blocks Music signed songwriter-producer **Will Bundy** ("Friends Like That," "Time's Ticking") to a publishing deal.

• Australia's **Tyla Rodrigues** agreed to a songwriting contract with Sony Music Publishing Nashville.

• Austin, Texas-based Dreamer Management added artist-writer **Jarrold Morris** to its roster.

• Willard & Pat Walker Charitable Foundation president/CEO **Johnny Mike Walker** was named a member of the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum's Circle Guard. The Arkansas-based Walker's previous efforts on behalf of the

institution include playing a role in the acquisition of the late **Cowboy Jack Clement**'s Gibson J-200 guitar and support during the pandemic.

• The Grand Ole Opry is launching Opry Encore, a series of post-show performances in the Circle Room at the Grand Ole Opry House. JPMorganChase will present the program in a new multi-year partnership the company initiated with the Opry.

• Nashville's Ryman Auditorium unveiled a Residency Wall of Fame on Sept. 30, highlighting acts that held multi-night concert stands. The wall recognizes **Amy Grant** and **Vince Gill**, **Jason Isbell** and the **400 Unit**, **Little Big Town**, **Old Dominion** and **Old Crow Medicine Show**.

• **Mac McAnally** and the late **Jimmy Buffett** will be honored by the Grammy Museum Mississippi's Crossroads of America award in Cleveland, Miss., on Oct. 22.

• The primary cast for the Broadway premiere of *Dolly: A True Original Musical* was unveiled Oct. 2. **Katie Rose Clarke**, **Carrie St. Louis** and 11-year-old **Norah Nunes** were tapped to portray **Dolly Parton** at different stages of her life. **John Behlmann** takes the role of **Carl Dean** and Tony award-winner **Gabriel Ebert** will serve as **Porter Wagoner**. Preview performances begin Dec. 7 at the St. James Theatre in New York City.

• Artist-writer **Chandler Walters** ("I Had Some Help") headlines when **Alan Jackson**'s AJ's Good Time Bar celebrates its 10th anniversary on Nashville's Lower Broadway on Oct. 5. The birthday bash also features **Carlisle Wright** and **Tom Baker**.

• **Lainey Wilson** and Australian artist **James Johnston** were named winners of the Country Music Association's international awards, along with iHeartRadio Canada/Pure Country Radio national music director **Dayna Bourgoine**, HYBE Global Label Services senior VP of international marketing and operations **Alex Hannaby**, BBC Radio 2 personality **Bob Harris** and AEG Presents U.K. promoter **Rachel Lloyd**.

• The Country Music Association's CMA Foundation announced grants of \$5,000 apiece to music education programs connected to **Lainey Wilson** and **Zach Top**. The beneficiaries include hands-on music non-profit Notes for Notes and Taylor's Camp, a program affiliated with the Wenatchee River Bluegrass Festival in Washington State.

• **Miranda Lambert**'s venue-launching Oct. 1 concert at new Nashville music hall The Truth will be available to stream via Amazon Music's *Songline Live* beginning Oct. 7.

• **Steve Earle** set Dec. 11 for his annual John Henry's Friends concert, a benefit for New York City's Keswell School, which specializes in education for students with autism through age 21. The show takes place at the Capitol Theatre in Port Chester, N.Y.

• **Pat Garrett**, an independent country artist who landed six titles on *Billboard*'s Hot Country Songs from 1977-1987, died during September. **WFMZ-TV** Allentown, Pa., reported. Garrett continued to perform in Pennsylvania after he stopped charting, and **Taylor Swift**'s parents were reportedly operating partially on Garrett's advice when they moved to Nashville to further their daughter's musical ambitions. ●



Zach Top received nine RIAA certifications for Gold, Platinum and Multi-Platinum titles, and an additional six certifications from Canada on Sept. 29 in Nashville. From left: Major Bob/Bob Doyle & Associates owner/president Bob Doyle, Major Bob president Mike Doyle, Top, Bob Doyle & Associates digital strategy director John Schmidt and Bob Doyle & Associates day-to-day manager Kyla Linchenat.

HUNTER HART

FOR YOUR **CMA AWARDS** CONSIDERATION



LUKE COMBS

ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR
MALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR
ALBUM OF THE YEAR *THE WAY I AM*

MEGAN MORONEY

FEMALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR
SONG OF THE YEAR "BEAUTIFUL THINGS"



BROOKS & DUNN

VOCAL DUO OF THE YEAR

EMILY ANN ROBERTS

NEW ARTIST OF THE YEAR



OLD DOMINION

VOCAL GROUP OF THE YEAR



SONY MUSIC | NASHVILLE

billboard Country Airplay Index

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

A

AIN'T MY PROBLEM Not Listed (Not Listed) **60**

ALL MY EXES lylas Music, BMI/Warner-Tamela 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 Alaina, J.A.Gutch, B.J.Johnson, W.Phillips) **7**

ANYTIME SOON Makena Cove Music, ASCAP/BMG Gold Songs, ASCAP/Triples Play Music, BMI/BMG Platinum Songs US, BMI/Irishsonmusic, BMI (K.M.Allison, J.Edwards, T.Kennedy, J.Morgan) **22**

B

BABY BLUES Not Listed (A.Cooke, J.Clawson, S.W.Ennis, J.A.Fox, K.Sturrock) **48**

BACK IN THE BOTTLE Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/I'm Your Huckleberry Music, BMI (R.Houser) **45**

BE BY YOU Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Songs Of Tuckaway Music, BMI/Songs By Porchlight, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Highway 75 Publishing, BMI/Duckman Publishing, BMI/Wildhawk Publishing, BMI (D.Alley, S.Banks, N.Waish) **6**

BEEN BY NOW Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Honey Hole Publishing, BMI/Long And Curly Entertainment, BMI/Big Loud Mountain LLC, BMI/John Byron Music, BMI/Rare Publishing Worldwide, BMI/Songs Of Back Block Publishing, BMI/TDP Publishing, BMI/Hits From The Tape Room, BMI/Sony Songs LLC, BMI (M.C.Wallen, R.H.Block, J.Byron, B.Pendergrass, T.Phillips, Charlie Handsome) **2**

BET ON THAT Blake Whiten Publishing Designee, BMI/Gold Room Special Music, BMI/Hipgnosis Beats, BMI/Hotsecks Songs, BMI/Songs On The Range, BMI/Where It Begins, BMI/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/London Margate Songs, BMI/Sony Songs LLC, BMI (B.Whiten, G.Avenill, Hoskins, J.M.Spargury) **52**

BETTER THAT WAY Charles Wesley Godwin Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Endurance Alligator Quatro, ASCAP/Scrambler Music, ASCAP/Music Garden Studios Publishing, BMI (C.W.Godwin, Scooter Caruso, A.Torrence) **52**

BOOTS OFF Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Hits From The Tape Room, BMI/50 Egg Music, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Crawford Mercer Music, GMR/Songs Of CN, GMR (J.Pardi, W.McCubbin, L.Laird) **18**

BOSTON 13117 Music, ASCAP/Kobalt Songs Music Publishing LLC, ASCAP/Grace Enger Publishing, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Publishing America, Inc., BMI/Joel 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) **5**

C

CARRY ON Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Big Blue Nation Music, ASCAP/Combustion Five, ASCAP/Damn Country Music Publishing, ASCAP/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP (R.C.McGill, M.Jenkins, J.L.Alexander) **1**

COUNTRY AND SHE KNOWS IT Concord Copyrights, BMI/Jomii 10 Music, BMI/Trailer Parker Twang Lab, BMI/Hometeam Publishing LLC, BMI/Kilometre Music Group B, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Super Big Music, ASCAP/M Drag Songs, ASCAP (J.L.Miller, P.Welling, M.Dragstrem) **8**

COWGIRL EMPIRE SF, ASCAP/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Works By Range Music Partners, BMI/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Essancy Music Publishing, ASCAP/BABAPUBLISH, ASCAP/Collins Chibueze Publishing Designee, ASCAP/Jared Lincoln Couter Pub Designee, BMI/Timothy Whitfield Kane Pub Designee, ASCAP/Pipeline Global Publishing, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI (C.O.Chibueze, S.C.Cook, A.A.Pauti, T.W.Kane, M.R.Stevens, N.Sastry, J.L.Cotter) **29**

D

DAMNED IF I DO Concord Copyrights, BMI/Songs To Hang Your Hat On, BMI/Mississippi Street Light Publishing, BMI/Goat Island Bay Music, BMI/Speakers Go Boom Songs, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/This Is Chromatic Music, BMI (V.Mason, J.A.Hackworth, L.Hungate) **44**

DEAR BIG CITY Anthem Music Publishing II, SESAC/Brooks Money Songs, SESAC/Anthem Music Publishing I, BMI/Single Life Songs, BMI/Pirate89 Publishing, BMI (M.Alderman, N.Kenyon, J.Paulin) **47**

DONE FOR Max McNow Music, BMI/Fugitive Songs Publishing, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Adam Yaron Music, BMI/Songs With A Pure Tone, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Music Of Big Family, BMI/In Honor Of Alice Publishing, BMI (M.McNow, A.Yaron, Mags Duval) **55**

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.Osborne) **36**

E

EMPTY WORDS Songs Of Combustion Five, BMI/Corey 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-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI (Corey Kent, A.Goodloe, M.Roy, J.Taylor, L.Vaughan) **24**

F

FINDERS KEEPERS Tape Room Music Round Two, BMI/FBRL Country Tunes, BMI/Myron Bailey Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Songs By The Bell, BMI/Worktape Tunes, BMI/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Chimney Pot Songs, ASCAP/Songs Of Madfun, ASCAP (B.Bailey, J.Bell, S.Ellis) **49**

G

GET TO DRINKIN' Warner-Tamela 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) **10**

GIRL DAD Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Colden Rainey Music, BMI/Michael Tyler Music, SESAC/MT Room, SESAC/Melodies Of CTM Outlander, SESAC/Young Guns Tunes, SESAC/Made A Huge Mistake Music, BMI/Dead Aim Music, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI (C.Swindell, M.Tyler, B.M.Stennis) **43**

GOOD DAMN Indiana Angel Music, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Don't Be A Gypsy, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Relative Music Group, BMI/Redneck Music, BMI/TDP Publishing, BMI/Hits From The Tape Room, BMI (B.Gilbert, B.Berryhill, M.W.Hardy, T.Phillips) **39**

H

HANDS UP Bailee's Ballads, BMI/BMG Platinum Songs US, BMI/Long And Curly Entertainment, BMI/Big Loud Mountain LLC, BMI/Better Bad Songs, SESAC/Situation Songs, SESAC/W.C.M. Music Corp., SESAC/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Deemer Camp Publishing, BMI/Songs Of Spirit Nashville One, BMI/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Philippians 4:7 Songs, BMI (J.B.DeFord, R.H.Block, J.A.Fox, M.W.Hardy, R.C.McGill) **16**

HOLDIN' IT DOWN Chase Matthew Music Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/The Big One, BMI/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Redd Up Publishing, BMI/Aaron Presley Beachum 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.Center) **25**

HORSEBACK Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Full Draw Publishing, BMI/Little Acre Music, BMI/Hits From The Tape Room, BMI/50 Egg Music, BMI/Endurance Alpha, ASCAP/Sounds Of Soperman Music Publishing, ASCAP (R.Montana, W.McCubbin, S.Sikes) **26**

HOWDY Justin Dukes Publishing Designee, NS/Davis Loose Publishing Designee, NS/Carson Peters Publishing Designee, NS/Ethan Phillips Publishing Designee, NS (J.Dukes, D.Loose, C.Peters, E.Phillips) **57**

I

I DIDN'T COME HERE TO LEAVE Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Sir Reginald The Fifth, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Songs Of Flint River, BMI/Kyle Fishman Music, BMI/Play It Again Entertainment, BMI (C.Young, D.Davidson, K.A.Fishman) **35**

IF I DON'T LEAVE I'M GONNA STAY Warner-Tamela 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) **38**

J

JADED Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Langley Publishing, BMI/Yellabush Music, BMI/Sony Songs LLC, BMI/Endurance Music Group, BMI/Em Dog Music, BMI/Big Loud Mountain LLC, BMI/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Demo Jail Music, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI (E.Langley, R.Wetzel, J.M.Schmidt, E.K.Smith) **13**

K

KID MYSELF Triple Play Music, BMI/BMG Platinum Songs US, BMI/T Tree Music, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Endurance Alpha, ASCAP/Total Schmidt Songs, ASCAP (J.Morgan, T.R.Hubbard, J.M.Schmidt) **3**

KILLIN' ME Parkermac Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Endless Tour Music, BMI/Songs Of Spirit Nashville One, BMI/Tunes Of Fluid II, BMI/Heavy Lefty Music, BMI (P.McCollum, R.Rogers, M.Criswell) **28**

L

LAND T Tree Music, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Relative Red Music, BMI/Bigger 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) **37**

LAST THING YOU NEED Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Philippians 4:7 Songs, BMI/Sony Songs LLC, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Honey Hole Publishing, BMI/John Byron Music, BMI/Big Loud Mountain LLC, BMI/Rare Publishing Worldwide, BMI/Songs Of Back Block Publishing, BMI (B.Pendergrass, R.C.McGill, J.Byron, M.C.Wallen, Charlie Handsome) **54**

LET HIM IN ANYWAY Deemer Camp Publishing, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Relative Red Music, BMI/Bigger Bendable Music, BMI/Best Damn Music, BMI (M.W.Hardy, Z.Aband, K.S.Clark, C.Wallace) **23**

LOVE IS BLIND Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Crabwaby Music, BMI/Little Louder Songs, BMI/Harolds Purple Heart Music, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/Abundantiam Publishing, BMI/Songs Of Harpeth Valley, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI (L.Musick, R.Tyndel, J.N.Spillman) **46**

LOVING LIFE AGAIN Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Langley Publishing, BMI/Em Dog Music, BMI/Big Loud Mountain LLC, BMI/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI (E.Langley, E.K.Smith, D.Dawson) **4**

M

MEDICINE Universal Tunes, SESAC/Georgiamo, SESAC/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Triples 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) **21**

MESS Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Universal Music Corp., ASCAP/Bent Prop Publishing, ASCAP/Rome Soundtrack, ASCAP/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/1508 Creative Nation Songs, BMI/Trash Man Songs, SOCAN (J.Davis, J.Davis, P.D.Giovanni, T.P.Wood) **59**

MOVE ON Sony Songs LLC, BMI/Cabrera Music, BMI/EMPIRE Strikes First, BMI/Nearis Publishing, SESAC/EMPIRE San Francisco, SESAC/Kreshendo, ASCAP/Songs Of 78, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Beat Stars Publishing, ASCAP/Torrey Songs, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI (T.W.Kane, K.J.Powells, C.O.Chibueze, S.Sanchez, D.R.Stevens, A.Cabrera, J.Torrey) **27**

N

NEVER COMIN' BACK ONE TOOTH PRODUCTIONS, BMI/Invoked Lamb Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Sony Lyric Music Publishing, GMR/CN Songs From 1508, GMR/Crawford Mercer Music, GMR (C.Cordero, L.Laird, A.Retiere) **31**

NOTHIN' BETTER TO DO Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Birds Of Biltmore Songs, BMI/Vincent Mason Publishing, BMI/Smackwood Music, GMR/Art of CTM Music Outlander LP, GMR/Warner Geo Met Ric Music, GMR/Big Music Machine, BMI/Samuel Tyler Johnson Publishing Designee, BMI (C.F.Jones, V.Mason, S.McAnally, J.J.Dillon, S.T.Johnson) **51**

P

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-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/FBRL Country Tunes, BMI (H.Westbrook, Lukas Scott, B.Bailey) **17**

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-Tamela 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.Pellarin, D.Wilson, T.Anderson, S.Oversstreet, T.E.P.Hull) **14**

R

REMEMBER ME THAT WAY Smackworld Music, GMR/Art of CTM Music Outlander LP, GMR/Warner Geo Met Ric Music, GMR/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Relative Red Music, BMI/Bigger Bendable Music, BMI/Deemer Camp Publishing, BMI/Songs Of Spirit Nashville One, BMI (S.McAnally, Z.Aband, M.W.Hardy) **41**

RETHINK SOME THINGS Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Show Me Your Titles LLC, BMI/Universal Music Corp., ASCAP/Bent Prop Publishing, ASCAP/Sony Countryside, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Racks And Plaques Publishing, BMI/Hit Songs Of 50 Egg Music, BMI (L.Combs, J.Davis, D.Isbell, R.Isbell) **11**

S

SAY LA V Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/DanielW25 Songs, BMI/N Chapel Songs, ASCAP/Endurance Music Group, ASCAP/TriplesSongs, ASCAP (B.D.Warren, J.D.Sellers, L.Miller) **53**

SAY SO Beats And Banjos, ASCAP/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Shay Mooney Music, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Eleventh Wave Music, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/Cinq Trax, ASCAP/Livridge Music, ASCAP/Cascade Road Songs, ASCAP (D.Smyers, S.Mooney, D.H.Hodges, J.Robbins) **9**

SEARCHLIGHT Driven By Music, BMI/Echo Bravo Music LLC, BMI/BMG Platinum Songs US, BMI/Know Your Writes, ASCAP/Sony Tunes LLC, ASCAP (B.Smith, D.R.Bassett, E.Bass) **56**

SOMETHING TO LOSE Reservoir 416, BMI/Songs Of One Riot Music, BMI/Copyright Control (J.Decious, G.Enger, S.Lefty, C.L.Dick) **40**

SOUTH OF SANITY Rio Bravo Music, Inc., BMI/Zach Top Music, BMI/Major Bob Productions, BMI/Too Broke To Quit Music, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Doit What I Do, BMI/Getysasome Music, BMI (Z.Top, C.Chamberlain, M.Nesler) **15**

STRING BY Mack Geiger Publishing Designee, APRA (M.Geiger) **42**

T

TAKE ME BACK (LEAVE ME THERE) Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Red White And Sony Blue Songs, BMI/Songs In The Key Of Eh, BMI/Big Music Machine, BMI/LuVegas Publishing, BMI/W.C.M. Music Corp., SESAC/King Pen Songs, SESAC/Smack Attack Music, SESAC/Sienna Dawn Songs, SESAC/Melodies Of CTM Outlander, SESAC (K.Archer, T.Cartwright, P.Good) **50**

TALKIN BOUT Edgehill Music Publishing LLC, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Anthem, BMI/Single Life Songs, BMI/Combuster Bluth, SESAC/LIKE BIG CUTS PUBLISHING, SESAC (P.C.Brust, C.Lucas, N.Kenyon, W.B.Bollinger) **58**

THINK AS YOU DRUNK Warner-Tamela 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) **12**

W

WANNABE Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Good Cock Tunes, BMI/Big Loud Mountain LLC, BMI/Bo Wallace Publishing, BMI/Murphy The Wolf Music, BMI/Mandy's Favorite Songs, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Jimmy Sad Publishing, BMI/Ernest Music Publishing Designee, BMI (G.Adock, J.R.Durrett, B.Clawson, E.K.Smith, M.C.Wallen) **34**

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.Dragstrem, R.C.McGill) **19**

WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG Speakers Go Boom Songs, BMI/Goat Island Bay Music, BMI/T Vill Music, BMI/Warner-Tamela 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) **33**

WHO TOLD YOU THAT Endurance Alpha, ASCAP/Total Schmidt Songs, ASCAP/Melodies Of CTM Outlander, SESAC/Peertunes, Ltd., SESAC/Rocky Creek James, ASCAP/Tape Room 2.0, ASCAP/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Master Of My Domain Music, ASCAP/Poggy's Picks, ASCAP (J.M.Schmidt, M.Tyler, H.Phillips, A.G.Sorley) **30**

WORTH YOUR WILD Concord Copyrights, BMI/Big Hits N Gravy, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Songs Of Home Team Music, BMI/Tunes Of TrailerParker, BMI/Track & Feels, SESAC/Tape Room Tunes, SESAC/W.C.M. Music Corp., SESAC (R.Dickerson, P.Welling, C.Brown) **20**



MESSINA TOURING

25TH ANNIVERSARY

**PLEASE JOIN BILLBOARD IN CELEBRATING
MESSINA TOURING ON 25 YEARS OF SUCCESS!**

Founded in 2002 by legendary promoter Louis Messina, Messina Touring has grown into one of the world's premier concert promotion companies. Built on an artist-first philosophy and a commitment to long-term partnerships, the company has spent more than two decades producing record-breaking tours and unforgettable live experiences for many of the biggest names in music, including Taylor Swift, George Strait, Ed Sheeran, Phoebe Bridgers, Kenny Chesney, Eric Church, Blake Shelton, Zac Brown Band, Old Dominion, The Lumineers and Ty Myers.

Under the leadership of President Mike Dugan and Nashville President Haley McCollister, Messina Touring continues to shape the future of live entertainment by empowering artists, strengthening fan connections and setting new standards across the touring industry.

BONUS DISTRIBUTION

Billboard Live Music Summit, 11/10/26
West Hollywood

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West Coast Aki Kaneko | moishekaneko@gmail.com

COUNTRY

10 Years Ago When The Country Music Association Engineered The Ultimate Group Effort

With 30 artists helping out, the CMA Awards' 50th anniversary wasn't just golden – it was 'Forever'

Awards shows are, by their nature, a competitive format, but when the Country Music Association reached a milestone with its 50th annual awards in 2016, the organization projected a spirit of unity with an intricate single that debuted at No. 1 on *Billboard's* Hot Country Songs chart dated Oct. 8, 2016.

"Forever Country" brought together 30 former CMA award-winners in a four-minute mash-up of three classic songs: John Denver's "Take Me Home, Country Roads," Willie Nelson's "On the Road Again" and Dolly Parton's "I Will Always

Love You." Billed as **Artists of Then, Now & Forever**, the individual acts recorded their parts separately, cutting their vocals with producer **Shane McAnally (Kacey Musgraves, Lady A)** in Nashville when it fit their schedules. Video director **Joseph Kahn** captured most of the visual content in front of a green screen over three days during the CMA Music Festival that June.

Brad Paisley and **Miranda Lambert** were the first two recorded, with the likes of **George Strait**, **Trisha Yearwood**, **Blake Shelton**, **Martina McBride** and **Carrie Underwood** adding their voices as

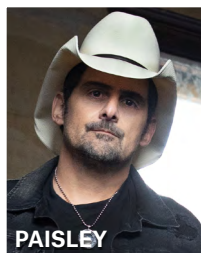
the project developed. **Randy Travis**, who was three years removed from a stroke, appears only in the video.

MCA released "Forever Country" on Sept. 16, 2016, and the video premiered four days later on ABC's *Dancing with the Stars* ahead of its two-week reign on the chart.

The following spring, the CMA clip earned the video of the year award from the rival Academy of Country Music.

ABC aired the 60th CMA Awards on Nov. 18 from Nashville's Bridgestone Arena.

—TOM ROLAND



PAISLEY



KEITH URBAN



TIM MCGRAW (left) and FAITH HILL



LITTLE BIG TOWN



LUKE BRYAN



LAMBERT



TRAVIS



SHELTON



STRAIT



MUSGRAVES



ERIC CHURCH



RONNIE MILSAP



CHARLEY PRIDE



DIERKS BENTLEY



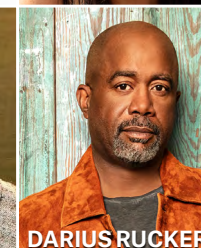
YEARWOOD



LADY A



DARIUS RUCKER



MCBRIDE



JASON ALDEAN



RASCAL FLATTS



NELSON



BROOKS & DUNN



ALABAMA



BRETT ELDREDGE



REBA MCENTIRE



ALAN JACKSON



VINCE GILL



UNDERWOOD



PARTON

WEEK	WEEK	PRODUCER (SONGWRITER)	IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL	POS.	CHART
HOT	SHOT				
1	1	FOREVER COUNTRY Artists of Then, Now & Forever S.MCANALLY (D.PARTON, L.DENVER, D.DENVER, D.DENVER, J.NELSON, S.MCANALLY, L.OSBORNE)	CMA/MCA NASHVILLE	1	1
2	2	SETTING THE WORLD ON FIRE Kenny Chesney Featuring Pink B.CANNON, K.CHESENEY (R.COPPERMAN, M.JENKINS, L.OSBORNE)	BLUE CHAIR/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE	2	9
3	3	H.O.L.Y. J.MOI (BUSBEE, N.CYPHER, J.W.LARSEN)	Florida Georgia Line BMG	1	22
4	4	DIFFERENT FOR GIRLS Dierks Bentley Featuring Elle King R.COPPERMAN (S.MCANALLY, J.T.HARDING)	CAPITOL NASHVILLE	3	17
5	5	IT DON'T HURT LIKE IT USED TO D.HUFF (B.CURRINGTON, C.BARLOWE, S.CARTER)	Billy Currington MERCURY	5	25
6	6	PETER PAN	Kelsea Ballerini		

PAISLEY: JIM SHEA. URBAN: JORDAN CURTIS HUGHES. MCGRAW: TYLER CONRAD. LITTLE BIG TOWN: BLAIR GETZ MEZIBOV. BRYAN: JIM WRIGHT. LAMBERT: ROBERT ASCROFT. TRAVIS: MARISA TAYLOR. STRAIT: JILL TRUNNELL. MUSGRAVES: KELLY CHRISTINE SUTTON. RUCKER: JIM WRIGHT. CHURCH: ANTHONY D'ANGIO. PRIDE: COURTESY 2911 MEDIA. BENTLEY: ROBBY KLEIN. YEARWOOD: RUSS HARRINGTON. LADY A: ALYSSE GAFKJEN: COURTESY CORNERSTONE BUILDING BRANDS. MCBRIDE: ROBBY KLEIN. ALDEAN: SPIKEY SMITH. RASCAL FLATTS: ROBBY KLEIN. NELSON: PAMELA SPRINGSTEEN. BROOKS & DUNN: MATTHEW BERINATO. ALABAMA: ALAN MESSER. JACKSON: DAVID MCCLISTER. GILL: JOHN SHEARER. UNDERWOOD: RANDEE ST. NICHOLAS. DOLLY PARTON: JIM WRIGHT.