# bilboard Country Update

BILLBOARD.COM/NEWSLETTERS

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BILLBOARD COUNTRY UPDATE

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## Drone Shows Are New Country Festival 'Overhead'; Will They Skyrocket In 2024?



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Luke Combs'
'Fast Car'
Maintains
Momentum
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Country's Top Billboard Music Awards Nominees >page 8

Country Coda: Shania Twain, 'Home' Owner >page 12 When the Coastal Country Jam relaunched Sept. 16 at Marina Green Park in Long Beach, Calif., after a four-year absence, head-liner **Blake Shelton** looked up before he took the stage and saw his name sparkling like a floating marquee in the sky.

Gwen Stefani and her kids cheered the moment, says Activated Events founder and event producer Steve Thacher, but they weren't just seeing Shelton's name in lights. They may have seen the future of country festivals. The Coastal Country Jam is one of at least four country gatherings that employed drone shows for the first time in 2023.

"We're always looking for new, fun, wow factors to incorporate into our event," Thacher says. "We thought this would be one of them."

The drone show is a still-developing technology that had its biggest audience during the global broadcast of the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony in 2022, when 1,800 drones were used to

create a complex series of images suspended over the stadium. The technology has been utilized in a number of different events since then, including a coronation concert for the United Kingdom's King Charles Ill in May and a New Year's Eve celebration that Keith Urban witnessed in Australia.

"It's surreal what they can do and how many of them can be synchronized or coordinated to do insane things," says Urban. "It's really amazing, like a modern version of skywriting." Activated Events debuted the drone show at the Coastal Jam after the company worked with several municipalities that were replacing fireworks displays with the new technology. Drones appeared before the headliner both nights during Coastal, present-

ing a series of images (an American flag, a whale, a surfer and the Queen Mary tourist attraction) before employing a "Next Up" announcement, leading into Shelton's name on the first night and **Tim McGraw**'s on the second. The company presented a different version of the show during its Boots in the Park festival in Tempe, Ariz., Sept. 22-23, with Shelton, **Sam Hunt** and **Brooks & Dunn**.

Similarly, Southern Entertainment held a drone show one night each at two different East Coast festivals: the Carolina Country Music Fest in Myrtle Beach, S.C., on June 9 and the Barefoot Country Music Festival in Wildwood, N.J., on June 18. They employed their own images — including a patriotic red,

white and blue eagle — ahead of the direct-support act, with several visuals that hinted at income-generating possibilities.

At the Carolina event, organizers used the drones to announce one of the 2024 headliners, **Morgan Wallen**. They also created an in-air QR code for sponsor Selfie. Live, a **Lee Brice**-affiliated company that enables consumers to get celebrity autographs on their own digital photos. Six thousand of the 35,000 ticket holders downloaded the QR code, a number that impressed Southern



ence during the global broadcast of the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony in Carolina Country Music Festival on June 9. N.J., on June 18. They employed their

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The Coastal Country Jam lassoed a drone-show cowboy on Sept. 16.

Entertainment co-founder **Bob Durkin**. The QR code holds other possibilities, including guiding fans to the festival website to buy tickets for the next year's show.

Additionally, the Carolina drone show included two giant beer bottles with Coors emblazoned on their virtual labels. The display was not monetized in 2023, though it's easy to see how it could evolve into a source of advertising revenue.

"It was sort of an added value for our sponsor," Durkin says. "They got to see their brand portrayed in a different way, and the greatest part was [Molson Coors chairman] **Pete** 

Coors was at the Carolina Country Music Fest. He said, 'I've seen it all, but I haven't seen that.'"

Drone shows, which Durkin says can range from \$25,000 to \$100,000, require significant advance work. Both Activated Events and Southern Entertainment booked outside drone production companies roughly nine months ahead of their festivals, allowing time to design the presentation and program each drone. Promoters also have to navigate local regulations, which can vary widely. Drones pose security risks, as well as potential safety problems — imagine a flying object losing its charge and falling out of the sky on top of an unsuspecting patron. That complication is one reason that some promoters are reticent to get involved in the drone business. But three of the four country festivals were held in beach communities, allowing the light display to take place over the water and away from pedestrians.

There's also a fair amount of give-and-take between the promoter and the drone companies. The concert promoters suggested messages and images they would like to see during the show, and once the production company came back with an initial presentation, the two sides tweaked the lineup and sequence and were able to time out the event. At Activated Events, DJ Luwiss Luxx built a playlist to go with the light show once the display was scheduled out.

The overall mix of sights and sounds won over a captive audience as it marked time between acts, and led to a positive social-media response.

"In every email or text message that I got, it was 'Oh, my god, that drone show was epic,' "Thacher says. "I had random people reach out on Linked In, literally saying, 'Hey, I never do this, but I just have to tell you, not only was the experience great, but that drone show was absolutely amazing.' "

Both Thacher and Durkin plan to do it again next year, and they may get more bang for their programming buck since continued advancements will likely make it possible to incorporate more material in the same time frame.

"I know there's a few country festivals in 2024 you will definitely see use it," Durkin predicts. "It's not a great big industry, so we all kind of know each other. And they're all like, 'Holy cow.' You know, everybody's trying to one-up one another." •



Garth Brooks (left) officially inducted Jon Pardi (center) into the Grand Ole Opry on Oct. 24. They are shown with Opry executive producer Dan Rogers.



Academy of Country Music CEO Damon Whiteside hosted an Oct. 24 panel for marketing organization Club CMO with Mickey Guyton (center) and mtheory CEO Cameo Carlson in Nashville.



Chayce Beckham (center) was surprised with an RIAA-certified platinum plaque for his single "23" when he performed it on Oct. 18 during his Grand Ole Opry debut. He's flanked by Wheelhouse vp of promotion Ken Tucker and KP Entertainment president Kerri Edwards.

## TOTAL

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## **TOP BUSINESS MANAGERS**

On November 18th, Billboard will showcase the most in demand business managers whose financial expertise ensure their music industry clients invest (and spend) their money wisely.

Making money in the music industry is hard enough for artists and executives which is why they turn to an elite few to help with financial profit and investment.

As a result of the rise of branding deals and streaming services, the task of managing artist income has become more complicated than ever making the role of music business managers invaluable.

Advertise in this issue and reach an elite group of influencers who guide their clients' financial fortunes and know a thing or two about how to invest their own money.

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# billboard Country Airplay

AIRPLAY MONITORED BY

ON THE CHARTS JIM ASKER jim.asker@billboard.com

#### Not So 'Fast': Why Radio Is Hanging On To Hits By Luke Combs, Morgan Wallen & More

**Luke Combs**' "Fast Car" (River House/Columbia Nashville) rebounds from No. 6 to No. 5 on *Billboard*'s Country Airplay chart dated Nov. 4. The song drew 23.4 million audience impressions Oct. 20-26, according to Luminate.

The update of **Tracy Chapman**'s classic story song, which hit No. 6 on the all-genre Billboard Hot 100 in 1988, became Combs' 16th Country Airplay No. 1 in July and ruled for five weeks. It also crossed over, leading the all-format Radio Songs chart for four frames and Adult Pop Airplay for two, while reaching the top 10 on Adult Contemporary and Pop Airplay.

"Fast Car" adds a 19th week in the Country Airplay top five, the fourth-longest run ever in the region. It follows only **Cole Swindell**'s "She Had Me at Heads Carolina" (24 weeks, starting in September 2022) and **Morgan Wallen**'s "You Proof" (22, beginning in October 2022) and "Last Night" (20, starting in May).



Night" (20, starting in May).

Looking at the 10 longest-lasting top five hits, all but one, Sam Hunt's 2017 smash "Body Like a Back Road," have charted since 2020.

What's keeping certain hits from quickly shifting into reverse on Country Airplay? As noted in July, <u>key factors</u> include both a sustained run of perceived strong product and programmers paying attention to what's streaming well.

Meanwhile, "in the case of 'Fast Car,' we're seeing very little burn," consultant **Joel Raab** tells *Billboard*. "Part of the art of programming is to know when to move on, even when a song continues to test well. It may sound like a cliché, but when program directors tire of a song, that's the time to play it more."

"Familiarity breeds comfort," says **Charlie Cook**, Cumulus Media vp of country. "Okay, that's a mash-up of the saying, but that's the case with today's country music. I know that some acts and labels are eager to move on, but I doubt that Wallen, Combs and the writers of these longtime radio hits feel the same." •

#### **MOST INCREASED AUDIENCE**

TITLE Imprint/Label Artist	GAIN (IN MIILIONS)
WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE River House/Columbia Nashville Luke Combs	+2.113
SAVE ME Bailee & Buddy/Broken Bow/BMG/Stoney Creek Jelly Roll With Lainey Wilson	+1.994
GOD GAVE ME A GIRL Triple Tigers Russell Dickerson	+1.899
EVERYTHING I LOVE Mercury/Republic/Big Loud Morgan Wallen	+1.311
CAN'T HAVE MINE Curb Dylan Scott	+1.148
SAVE METHETROUBLE Warner Music Nashville/WAR Dan + Shay	+1.010
WORLD ON FIRE Arista Nashville/RCA Nashville Nate Smith	+0.931
DIFFERENT 'ROUND HERE BMLG Riley Green Featuring Luke Combs	+0.815
WE GOT HISTORY Riser House/Columbia Nashville Mitchell Tenpenny	+0.784
CREEK WILL RISE Valory Conner Smith	+0.754

#### MOST INCREASED PLAYS

TITLE Imprint/Label Artist	GAIN					
SAVE ME Bailee & Buddy/Broken Bow/BMG/Stoney Creek Jelly Roll With Lainey Wilson	+555					
WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE River House/Columbia Nashville Luke Combs	+527					
GOD GAVE ME A GIRL Triple Tigers Russell Dickerson	+443					
CAN'T HAVE MINE Curb Dylan Scott	+418					
EVERYTHING I LOVE Mercury/Republic/Big Loud Morgan Wallen	+230					
DIFFERENT 'ROUND HERE BMLG Riley Green Featuring Luke Combs	+215					
SAVE METHETROUBLE Warner Music Nashville/WAR Dan + Shay	+191					
I CAN FEEL IT Zone 4/RCA Nashville Kane Brown	+163					
WORLD ON FIRE Arista Nashville/RCA Nashville Nate Smith	+160					
MAMAW'S HOUSE Valory Thomas Rhett Featuring Morgan Wallen	+152					

#### **RECURRENTS**

THIS WEEK	TITLE Imprint/Label Artist	TOTAL AUD. (IN MILLIONS)
1	NEED A FAVOR Bailee & Buddy/Broken Bow/BMG/Stoney Creek Jelly Roll	21.300
2	LAST NIGHT Mercury/Republic/Big Loud Morgan Wallen	19.062
3	DANCIN' IN THE COUNTRY Hubbard House/EMI Nashville Tyler Hubbard	17.204
4	ROCK AND A HARD PLACE Elektra/Warner Music Nashville/WEA Bailey Zimmerman	15.415
5	NEXT THING YOU KNOW MCA Nashville Jordan Davis	14.123
6	SHE HAD ME AT HEADS CAROLINA Warner Music Nashville/WMN Cole Swindell	12.553
7	RELIGIOUSLY Elektra/Warner Music Nashville/WEA Bailey Zimmerman	11.064
8	LOVE YOU ANYWAY River House/Columbia Nashville Luke Combs	8.566
9	GIRL IN MINE Stoney Creek Parmalee	7.917
10	WHAT MY WORLD SPINS AROUND MCA Nashville Jordan Davis	7.710



### TEXAS REGIONAL RADIO REPORT

WEEK ENDING OCTOBER 26, 2023

THIS WEEK		WKS ON Chart		TW Spins	SPINS +/-	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WKS ON Chart	TITLE (Label) ARTIS	T TW SPINS	SPINS +/-
0	2	18	KNOW THAT BY NOW (Tommy Jackson Thirty Tigers) ★★1 Week at 1★★ Randy Rogers Band	1863	126	11	1	22	HERE WITH YOU (Independent) James La	n 1235	-798
2	3	19	GO GET HER (Independent) Matt Castillo	1633	55	<b>®</b>	12	10	BEEN THERE (Independent) Case Hard	n 1192	83
3	4	12	CHIPPING MILL (Independent) Turnpike Troubadours	1516	-51	13	14	12	SITTIN' ON A PORCH (Independent) Jesse Raub	r. 1190	143
4	5	21	IN MY BOOTS (Independent) Ryder Grimes	1466	6	1	15	9	IF I WAS YOUR COWBOY (Independent) David Adam Byrn	s 1150	112
6	8	10	HOW THE HURTIN' GOES (Independent) Curtis Grimes	1458	164	<b>1</b>	18	10	HELL OF A STORM (Independent) Cory Morro	w 1129	112
6	9	19	GENTLEMEN START YOUR WEEKENDS (Independent) James Robert Webb	1377	86	16	16	12	SONGS OF THE FAMILY (Little Red Truck) Deryl Do	d 1028	-3
7	6	32	PEDAL STEEL (Independent) Amanda Kate Ferris	1373	-52	17	19	19	CLOSE THE BETS (Independent) Kyle Nix & The 3	s 971	-1
8	7	19	KIDDIE POOL (Cielo Azul Ent) Olivia Harms	1364	-32	13	20	14	ORANGE (Independent) Payton How	<b>e</b> 956	33
9	10	18	BARS AND CHURCHES (Independent) Sundance Head	1250	23	19	17	18	LOSER (Independent) Mike Ry:	n 954	-74
10	11	25	STRAIGHT SHOT (Independent) Jordan Rainer	1239	129	20	23	14	NOTHINS CHANGED (Independent) Bart Crow Bar	d 939	46

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 2023, Texas Regional Radio Report

# billboard Country Airplay

AIRPLAY MONITORED BY

		WKS		AUDIENCE (I	N MULIONE)		PLAYS	
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	ON CHART	TITLE Imprint/Label Artist	THIS WEEK	+/-	THIS WEEK	+/-	RANK
0	1	25	THINKIN' BOUT ME Mercury/Republic/Big Loud ★★ No. 1 (2 Weeks) ★★ Morgan Wallen	33.003	+0.529	8147	34	1
2	2	23	TRYTHAT IN A SMALLTOWN Macon/Broken Bow Jason Aldean	30.928	-0.888	7886	-315	2
3	4	41	GOD GAVE ME A GIRL Triple Tigers Russell Dickerson	27.538	+1.899	7135	443	3
4	5	40	STARS LIKE CONFETTI Broken Bow Dustin Lynch	25.271	+0.680	6324	-100	4
5	6	28	FAST CAR River House/Columbia Nashville Luke Combs	23.420	-0.219	5199	15	9
6	7	58	CAN'T HAVE MINE Curb Dylan Scott	22.280	+1.148	6169	418	5
7	3	23	WATERMELON MOONSHINE Broken Bow Lainey Wilson	21.881	-5.184	5409	-1548	7
8	10	22	SAVE ME Bailee & Buddy/Broken Bow/BMG/Stoney Creek Jelly Roll With Lainey Wilson	20.142	+1.994	5141	555	10
9	9	19	EVERYTHING I LOVE Mercury/Republic/Big Loud Morgan Wallen	20.136	+1.311	5226	230	8
1	8	33	STANDING ROOM ONLY McGraw/Big Machine Tim McGraw	20.092	+0.254	5502	-68	6
11	11	25	BUT I GOT A BEER IN MY HAND Row Crop/Capitol Nashville Luke Bryan	17.048	-0.462	4636	-47	11
12	13	15	SAVE METHETROUBLE Warner Music Nashville/WAR Dan + Shay	15.715	+1.010	4311	191	12
13	12	48	MIND ON YOU RECORDS Nashville George Birge	15.043	+0.232	4180	13	13
14	14	36	ALL I NEED IS YOU BMLG Chris Janson	13.040	+0.272	3753	100	14
15	15	20	WORLD ON FIRE Arista Nashville/RCA Nashville Nate Smith	12.419	+0.931	3407	160	17
16	16	14	WHITE HORSE Sound/Mercury Nashville Chris Stapleton	12.195	+0.747	3432	94	16
Ð	17	47	WE GOT HISTORY Riser House/Columbia Nashville Mitchell Tenpenny	12.133	+0.784	3458	116	15
18	19	25	DIFFERENT 'ROUND HERE BMLG Riley Green Featuring Luke Combs	11.339	+0.815	3212	215	19
19	18	43	IFYOU GO DOWN (I'M GOIN' DOWNTOO) Black River Kelsea Ballerini	10.990	+0.372	3396	53	18
20	20	38	23 19/BMG/Wheelhouse Chayce Beckham	9.079	+0.142	2859	2	21
<b>3</b>	21	29	CREEK WILL RISE Valory Conner Smith	8.905	+0.754	3044	144	20
22	23	16	PRETTY LITTLE POISON 717/Warner/WEA Warren Zeiders	7.499	+0.713	2388	71	23
23	22	33	LIGHT ON INTHE KITCHEN Warner Music Nashville/WMN Ashley McBryde	7.216	-0.206	2638	-118	22
24	24	11	THE PAINTER CoJo/Warner Music Nashville/WMN Cody Johnson	6.447	+0.460	1906	74	26
25	26	6	I CAN FEEL IT Zone 4/RCA Nashville Kane Brown	6.091	+0.437	1774	163	28
26	25	29	NOBODY'S NOBODY EMI Nashville Brothers Osborne	5.852	+0.119	2255	109	24
2	27	24	TRUCK BED Big Loud HARDY	5.734	+0.125	2055	36	25
28	29	39	FEARLESS (THE ECHO) Big Machine Jackson Dean	5.147	+0.147	1822	7	27
29	41	3	WHERETHE WILDTHINGS ARE River House/Columbia Nashville ** Most Increased Audience/Breaker ** Luke Combs	5.003	+2.113	1109	527	38
30	30	10	TUCSONTOO LATE MCA Nashville Jordan Davis	4.824	+0.165	1277	71	35

#### **COUNTRY AIRPLAY CHART LEGEND**

#### **RANKINGS**

Country Airplay is ranked by total audience impressions for the week ending Sunday based on monitored airplay by Mediabase of 145 stations by Luminate. Audience totals on the chart are derived, in part, using certain Nielsen Audio-copyrighted Persons 12+ audience estimates (under license © 2023, Nielsen Audio). The list of all Country Airplay chart reporters can be viewed in Luminate's online platform.

#### TIES

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

#### **BULLETS**

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

#### **RECURRENTS**

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

#### **HOT SHOT DEBUT**

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

#### **MOST INCREASED AUDIENCE**

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

#### **AIRPOWER**

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

#### **BREAKER**

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

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# billboard Country Airplay

AIRPLAY MONITORED BY

THIS	LAST	WKS ON		AUDIENCE (IN MILLIONS)			PLAYS	
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	CHART	TITLE Imprint/Label Artist	THIS WEEK	+/-	THIS WEEK	+/-	RANK
<u> </u>	32	21	BURN IT DOWN MCA Nashville Parker McCollum	4.767	+0.544	1591	58	31
32	31	22	SEE YOU NEXT SUMMER Nashville South/Big Machine Brian Kelley	4.440	+0.134	1728	-29	29
33	34	4	MAMAW'S HOUSE Valory Thomas Rhett Featuring Morgan Wallen	4.047	+0.380	1012	152	40
34	35	20	GLORY DAYS Warner Music Nashville/WAR Gabby Barrett	3.962	+0.306	1626	136	30
35	33	8	I REMEMBER EVERYTHING Interscope/Belting Bronco/Warner/MCA Nashville/WAR Zach Bryan Featuring Kacey Musgraves	3.921	-0.115	1204	-20	36
36	36	10	CAB IN A SOLO Triple Tigers Scotty McCreery	3.561	+0.026	1507	29	32
37	37	19	WE DON'T FIGHT ANYMORE Big Machine Carly Pearce Featuring Chris Stapleton	3.384	+0.221	1339	80	33
38	39	21	OUT OFTHATTRUCK Capitol Nashville Carrie Underwood	3.158	+0.160	1329	61	34
39	38	12	I'M NOT PRETTY Megan Moroney/Columbia/Arista Nashville Megan Moroney	2.985	-0.022	1131	30	37
40	40	7	BACK THEN RIGHT NOW Hubbard House/EMI Nashville Tyler Hubbard	2.984	+0.040	1084	38	39
49	42	14	OUTSKIRTS MCA Nashville Sam Hunt	2.465	+0.135	917	54	41
42	43	22	LOVE YOU AGAIN Chase Matthew/Warner Music Nashville/WMN Chase Matthew	2.195	+0.105	798	-3	44
43	44	30	DRIVE YOU OUT OF MY MIND Interscope/MCA Nashville Kassi Ashton	2.002	+0.158	821	-10	43
44	46	7	YOUNG LOVE & SATURDAY NIGHTS RCA Nashville Chris Young	1.998	+0.322	566	56	47
45	28	2	COWBOYS AND PLOWBOYS Capitol Nashville Jon Pardi & Luke Bryan	1.837	-3.332	484	-617	51
46	48	13	SOMETHING'S GONNA KILL ME Combustion Masters/RCA Nashville Corey Kent	1.683	+0.158	685	29	46
47	47	16	DRINKIN' PROBLEMS Riser House Dillon Carmichael	1.650	+0.110	821	38	42
48	49	4	WHERE IT ENDS Elektra/Warner Music Nashville/WEA Bailey Zimmerman	1.462	+0.027	411	22	54
49	52	6	SPIRITS AND DEMONS Warner Music Nashville/WEA Michael Ray Featuring Meghan Patrick	1.423	+0.386	721	112	45
50	51	5	CAN'T BREAK UP NOW Columbia Nashville Old Dominion & Megan Moroney	1.340	+0.169	534	48	48
51	50	4	WE RIDE Average Joes Bryan Martin	1.172	-0.052	494	8	50
52	53	5	IN YOUR LOVE Hickman Holler/RCA Tyler Childers	1.028	+0.025	390	15	57
53	54	31	MARRYTHAT GIRL Stone Country Easton Corbin	0.982	-0.017	531	10	49
54	57	10	DANCE WITH YOU BMLG Brett Young	0.845	-0.031	445	-13	53
55	56	8	WINE COUNTRY Curb Hannah Ellis	0.811	-0.072	453	-40	52
56	59	8	GOOD WITH ME RCA/Monument Walker Hayes	0.612	-0.032	264	6	-
<b>5</b>	NE	EW	SHE'S SOMEBODY'S DAUGHTER (REIMAGINED) Patoka Sounds/Lyric Ridge ** Hot Shot Debut ** Drew Baldridge	0.605	+0.107	407	54	55
58	NE	EW	THICC AS THIEVES Big Loud Lauren Alaina	0.588	+0.037	276	6	-
59	58	4	BROKENHEARTED Brown Sellers Brown/Quartz Hill Joe Nichols	0.560	-0.095	356	-26	58
60	60	2	I'M IN LOVE Songs & Daughters/Pigasus/Big Loud Hailey Whitters	0.529	-0.051	305	33	59



Brooke Eden and Harper Grace performed during a Song Suffragettes show on Oct. 21 in London. From left: Simeon Hammond Dallas, Eden, Suffragettes founder Todd Cassetty, Catherine McGrath and Grace.



Riley Green (right) launched a two-part *Cowboy Code* series with rodeo pro Tyson Durfey on Oct. 23 in partnership with Polaris, an off-road vehicle brand.



## billboard

THE NO. 1s ISSUE

# YEAR IN MUSIC

ISSUEDATE 12/9 | AD CLOSE 11/28 MATERIALS DUE 11/30

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Included will be year-end charts, interviews, and analysis on the year's top artists, titles and labels as well as the year's top producers, songwriters and publishers.

The year-end Boxscore rankings will shine a light on the most successful tours as well as the top venues and promoters.

This highly-anticipated year in music—the No.1s, serves as a compilation of must-have information. It is referenced year-round by everyone in the music and touring industry as their de facto resource for *billboard* historical data and information.

Advertise in this signature collector's edition and position your company, artist or breakthrough achievement to the power players in the industry. This issue provides the ideal showcase to run a brand or congratulatory message to acknowledge success over the past year.

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



Dylan Scott (left) and Jason Crabb won a Dove Award from the Gospel Music Association for "Good Morning Mercy" on Oct. 20 in Nashville.

#### **BILLBOARD MUSIC AWARD NOMINATIONS**

Three country artists finished in double figures when nominees for the Billboard Music Awards (BBMAs) were announced Oct. 26.

Morgan Wallen snagged 17 nominations, Zach Bryan was a 14-time finalist, and Luke Combs appeared on the ballot 10 times. Additionally, Taylor Swift—who received three country nominations, but is primarily a pop artist in 2023—led the field with 20.

Country's showing underscores its ability to transcend genres during 2023. Wallen and Combs appeared in at least one Hot 100 category, while **Jelly Roll**, Bryan and **HARDY** all showed up in at least one rock category.

Double-digit honorees Wallen, Bryan and Combs far outpaced the rest of the country field. The genre's other artists who picked up more than one nomination were Jelly Roll, who nabbed four; **Bailey Zimmerman**, who claimed three; and **Jason Aldean**, who made the list twice.

The BBMAs will be presented Nov. 19. Go here for a full list of nominees.

#### RADIO & RECORDS®

Sara Benz joined Big Machine Records as project manager. She was previously Universal Music Group Los Angeles senior A&R coordinator. Reach her here ... Universal Music Group Nashville and Republic signed Bryce **Leatherwood** to a recording contract, with his first single, "The Finger," released Oct. 27 ... The Castellows – sisters Ellie, Powell and Lily – reached a deal with Warner Music Nashville ... Big Loud added Maggie Rose to the artist roster ... Hunter Metts agreed to a recording contract with Position Music. His first single for the label, "Thread," will arrive in December ... Deborah Allen signed with Legacy Records to rerelease expanded versions of her 1980s RCA albums Let Me Be the First and Telepathy ... Garth Brooks will relaunch The Garth Channel on streaming platform TuneIn this fall, airing from his Nashville club, Friends in Low Places Bar & Honky Tonk, which opens in November ... Audacy promoted Ryan Lange to Midwest Region vp of client success and strategy, a sales position that includes oversight of the Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Madison, Milwaukee and Minneapolis markets. He was most recently director of digital sales and strategy. Country stations in the region include WUSN Chicago, WYCD Detroit and KMNB Minneapolis-St. Paul ... Audacy/Austin hired Manimala "Momo" Vemireddy as regional promotions director, RadioInk.com reported. The post includes work with the chain's Dallas, Houston and New Orleans brands. The lone country station in  $her territory is \textbf{KILT} \ Houston. \ She \ arrives \ from \ Waterloo \ Media/Austin, where$ she held airshifts at alternative KROX and adult alternative KGSR-HD2... Kent Jones will retire as Stephens Media Group/Spokane, Wash., operations manager at the end of the year, according to RadioInsight.com. The cluster's properties include country KDRK ... Micki Morgret started Oct. 23 as midday host of WIBM-AM Jackson, Mich., RadioInsight.com reported. The role comes along with a co-hosting opportunity on top 40 sister WKHM. Morgret was previously on air at classic rock WBEL Beloit, Wis. ... Country Radio Broadcasters is introducing the Futuri Digital Pioneer Scholarship Program. It presents a free trip to the Country Radio Seminar to a student who demonstrates promise for radio's digital future. Applications will be accepted online through Nov. 10.

#### **'ROUND THE ROW**

WHY&HOW promoted three vice presidents to new positions. Halie Hampton Mosley rose to COO from vp of roster operations, Eddie Kloesel was bumped to executive vp from vp of touring and sponsorships, and Chris Koegen climbed to GM/head of global strategy from vp of artist development ... Business management firm Luma Business Services hired business manager Mallori Kirchenschlager, formerly an FBMM senior account manager. Reach her here ... Singer-songwriter Fancy Hagood signed with talent agency UTA ... Clayton Mullen enlisted CAA for concert booking and What's Good Projects for management ... Texas country artist Jake Bush inked a management deal with FOUR17 ... Songwriter Casey Brown ("Girlin Mine," "Blue Tacoma") signed a joint publishing deal with Warner Chappell Nashville and Tape Room Music ... Singer-songwriter **ROTUNDO** established a publishing contract with Curb | Word ... Deluge Music extended its publishing deal with singersongwriter Johnny Gates ... Darius Rucker was surprised with the Country Music Association's humanitarian award during an Oct. 23 appearance on The Kelly Clarkson Show ... The Country Music Association revealed 10 performers for the 57th annual CMA Awards on Nov. 8 on ABC: co-host Luke Bryan, Lainey Wilson, Chris Stapleton, Jelly Roll, K. Michelle, Carly Pearce, Little Big Town, Old Dominion, Megan Moroney and Tanya Tucker ... Ashley Gorley ("Rumor," "Last Night") was named top male songwriter of the year at the National Music Publishers' Association's Gold & Platinum Gala on Oct. 25 in Nashville after accruing 26 RIAA certifications in a 12-month period. Hillary Lindsey ("Girl Crush," "Burn It Down") took top female songwriter with 10 certifications ... The International Bluegrass Music Association will hold its World of Bluegrass conference Sept. 23-28, 2024, in Raleigh, N.C.... Tanya Tucker and Patti LaBelle will be recognized in CMT Smashing Glass: A Celebration of the Groundbreaking Women of Music, premiering Nov. 15 ... Carrie **Underwood** is featured in a new commercial for Allegiant Travel's rewards program, which premiered during Amazon Prime's Nov. 26 airing of the NFL's Thursday Night Football ... Frank Ray was named ambassador for the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund ... Shenandoah, Phil Vassar, Chapel Hart, HunterGirl and Mikayla Lane will perform in this year's Christmas 4 Kids benefit on Nov. 20 at Nashville's Ryman Auditorium ... Chrissy Metz and Dustin Lynch will co-host the America Salutes You "Concert for Gratitude" on Dec. 15 at Nashville's Belmont University. The lineup includes Clint Black, Lisa Hartman Black, Lily Pearl Black, Jo Dee Messina, Craig Morgan, Lee Greenwood, Walker Hayes, Lecrae and Chasing DaVinci, and will air as a TV special in January 2024 ... Julien's Auctions will sell signed memorabilia in the annual Lyrics for a Cause, a fundraiser for Music Health Alliance, on Nov. 14 at Nashville's Hard Rock Café. Up for bids are lyrics autographed by Chris Stapleton, Garth Brooks, Eric Church and George Strait.



Country-rock contributors Bernie Leadon (Eagles, The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band) and Chris Hillman (The Byrds, The Desert Rose Band) interviewed with Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum writer/editor Michael McCall on Oct. 14 in conjunction with the Nashville museum's exhibit "Western Edge: The Roots and Reverberations of Los Angeles Country-Rock." From left: Leadon, McCall and Hillman.

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2023

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This special issue will highlight the artists, producers and other creative professionals whose work is in contention this year, including for Record Of The Year; Album Of The Year; Song Of The Year; Producer Of The Year, Non-Classical; Songwriter Of The Year, Non-Classical and Best New Artist.

Take this opportunity to remind the industry of the accomplished work that was released between Oct. 1, 2022 - Sept. 15, 2023, as the members of the Recording Academy® prepare to cast their ballots.

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GRAMMY AWARDS®

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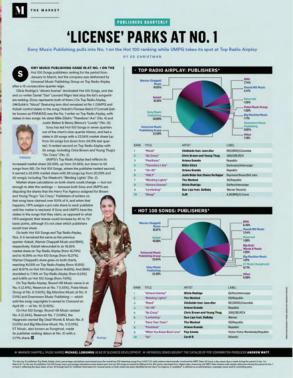
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## 25 Years Ago Shania Twain Was At 'Home' At No. 1

In 1998, the superstar rolled up her seventh chart-topper on Hot Country Songs On Oct. 31, 1998, **Shania Twain**'s "Honey, I'm Home" hit No. 1 on *Billboard*'s Hot Country Songs chart, becoming the most recent of her seven leaders.

Twain co-authored the single with her former husband, Robert John "Mutt" Lange, who also produced it. The song became the third of three Hot Country Songs No. 1s from Twain's LP Come On Over. The set debuted at the Top Country Albums summit and proceeded to dominate for a then-record 50 weeks. Dating to the chart's 1964 inception, the album is tied

with Luke Combs' This One's for You as the second-longest-leading title, after Morgan Wallen's Dangerous: The Double Album (97 weeks).

Twain, from Windsor, Ontario, has scored five Top Country Albums No. 1s. In February, her latest collection, *Queen of Me*, opened at its No. 2 high, becoming her seventh top 10 set.

Now 58, Twain was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame in August 2022. She is currently on the fall leg of her *Queen of Me* tour, with the next stop set for Oct. 28 in Louisville, Ky. —JIM ASKER

