

# billboard Country Update

BILLBOARD.COM/NEWSLETTERS

MARCH 29, 2024 | PAGE 1 OF 11

BILLBOARD COUNTRY UPDATE

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## Take Me To Church: How Old Sanctuaries Influence Nashville's Music Landscape

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When fans play **Dierks Bentley's** "American Girl" video online, they may find themselves a tad confused by a pipe organ.

Why the hell, one might ask, are a bunch of country musicians covering **Tom Petty** in a church?

But it's actually a daily occurrence in Music City. As denominations across America consider the meaning of Good Friday and Easter during the weekend of March 29, Nashville's music infrastructure has drummers, producers, marketers and label executives working on their secular product in old churches that have been resurrected for a different purpose.

"I'm one who would never advocate for tearing down an old building if we could figure out a way to salvage it and make it useful in today's age," says Ryman Auditorium director of concerts **Chrissy Hall**. "If its use as a church isn't necessarily what it's needed for anymore, I think that's a wonderful thing. It's a great use of history."

The Ryman is the most prominent example of a former place of worship becoming a modern Nashville music structure. Nicknamed the "Mother Church of Country Music," it opened in 1892 as the Union Gospel Tabernacle, but it was adapted as a significant meeting place in short order. It earned particular notice as the home of the Grand Ole Opry from 1943-1974.

It was the place where **Johnny Cash, Patsy Cline, Loretta**

**Lynn and Hank Williams** all made their Opry debuts. It stands as a sort of "temple-ate" for other conversions from church to music-related structure. Clementine Hall—the place where Bentley shot his "American Girl" video—is an event space renovated from a Methodist church by Dragon Park. The company also turned an

old Baptist sanctuary into Ruby, a hall that has housed music events for **Don Henley, Jordan Davis** and **Dan Tyminski**.

At least two working studios—Ocean Way, owned by Belmont University; and Neon Cross, owned by producer **Jay Joyce (Eric Church, Ashley McBryde)**—are repurposed houses of worship. Marketing company Ave East and management firm Q Prime South are also in buildings once reserved for sermons.

"It is like Hogwarts meets a medieval church," Marb Mktg CEO **Faith Dillman** says of the Q Prime locale. "I love working from there."

Marb only recently moved into its new office, aptly located on Chapel Avenue. Dillman adapted the original Hobson Methodist Episcopal Church covenant as a

company pledge to be a positive force in the community, "to listen to and learn from each other, treating each other with respect and dignity." Marb also keeps a handwritten set of "Humble and Kind" lyrics, signed by songwriter **Lori McKenna**, above the fireplace. Dillman has cultivated an atmosphere that values maturity and spirituality, qualities that come in handy because they work



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for such disparate clients as **Dolly Parton** and even **Megadeth**. Marb even attempts to maintain a positive atmosphere when the structure itself breaks down.

“You don’t move into a 150-year-old building and think, ‘This thing is going to run without problems,’” Dillman says. “[It’s even] down to little things like we’re having to have custom window treatments made. All of our windows are arched, and they’re not standard sizes. Those were things that I didn’t consider actually when I moved in that I needed to.”

The quirks of a converted church can give repurposed buildings some unique qualities. The inside of the old steeple has become an artful appendage in the Q Prime office. The wooden pews in the Ryman are much less amenable to concertgoers’ backsides than the old-time preacher man’s words were for the congregation’s insides. And the stained glass in the main room at Ocean Way sets an inspiring atmosphere.

“We have good light from the streetlights and everything, so it’s already pre-determined to have an other-worldly experience, whether it’s day or night, just from the windows,” says Ocean Way director of studio operations **Joe Baldrige**.

Joyce named his recording room the Neon Cross Studio, paying homage to a blue-lit symbol at the crown of the former Baptist church’s roof. Inside, he originally placed the sound board at the front of the auditorium. After a couple of years, he had the console moved to the center of the room.

“It felt a little weird with me talking to the band from the altar,” Joyce says.

Not every old church appointment is completely appreciated at first. When Dragon Park owners **Dan and Brenda Cook** bought Clementine Hall from the Methodist Church in 2017, they had every intention of getting rid of the pipe organ. When word got out that they planned to remove it, churches from as far away as Germany and Australia inquired about purchasing it. Ultimately, producer **T Bone Burnett** and **Widespread Panic**’s **JoJo Herman** convinced the Cooks to keep it.

“We thought the organ could be a detriment for a couple reasons,” Dan notes. “One, it quite frankly just takes up space. It might be considered too churchy, I guess, to some elements, and we want to appeal to the broadest number of potential clients like any business. And then, of course, it was the idea of if you keep it, you got to kind of restore it and maintain it. There’s a commitment element to it.”

The organ practically announces Clementine’s previous incarnation, though its current usage is often distinctly different from its original purpose. The building has hosted a Big Loud party for **Mason Ramsey**; a Universal Music Group Nashville showcase, *Rhythm, Rebels, Revival*; and a **Brantley Gilbert** TV appearance. Despite those activities, the most popular reason to rent Clementine is to exchange vows. It dictates some of the property’s rules.

“We don’t do shots here,” Dan says. “And it’s not because of the church history, because we certainly allow alcohol. It’s just I don’t think that that’s a classy thing to do at a wedding.”

Despite their spiritual histories, the venues don’t generally place any restrictions on the creative work that occurs on the premises. Ocean Way’s past client list includes **5 Seconds of Summer**, **Alice Cooper** and **Evanescence**, acts that are more raucous than religious. Policies are focused on preserving the facilities, not on regulating creativity.

“We do have a policy that if you’re out of hand and don’t respond to suggestions that you can lose your time,” says Baldrige. “But that’s not based upon anything other than poor behavior — like if **Phil Spector** was shooting a gun into the ceiling, it would probably be, ‘You’re not coming back.’ Common sense.”

It’s appropriate that churches play a role in the physical landscape of the country music business, given the gospel influence on the genre. Artists tend to receive early musical training at church, and acts such as **The Carter Family**, **The Statler Brothers**, **The Gatlins** and **Connie Smith** picked up pieces of their sound from Christian music.

For Good Friday and Easter weekend, it will be business as usual for the companies occupying the former Nashville churches. That includes the Ryman, which had an **A. J. Croce** concert planned for March 29. Going to a show or recording a new song might be the most appropriate way to observe the holiday, given music’s ability to connect with the individual’s heart.

“It doesn’t matter your religious affiliation,” Hall says. “Music can be very moving in whatever way you need it to be, whether that’s spiritual and bringing you closer to God, or whether you’re having a bad day and it brightens your mood, or it expresses the sorrow that you’re feeling over love or loss. Music is such a powerful emotional tool.”

“In my opinion, music is God’s language,” Joyce agrees. “I mean, when you think about it, everything is vibration. So us musicians and people who make music are to me more like high priests than some **Billy Graham** guy. Like, we’re actually using God’s word — I mean, the music, the sound. It’s 100% spiritual.”



DERREK KUPISH

**Tanya Tucker** (right) announced plans on March 27 to open a pop-up bar, **Tanya Tucker’s Tequila Cantina**, on May 2 on the second floor of **Icon Entertainment Group** facility **Nudie’s Honky Tonk** in Nashville. The temporary venue’s closing date is undecided. With her: IEG co-founders **Shannon Miller** and **Bill Miller**.



Average Joes artist **Bryan Martin** (left) met up with **KSON San Diego** assistant brand manager/music director **Greg Raneiri** when he played the station’s **CountryFest** on March 23.



NICK RAO

**Sheryl Crow** (center) celebrated with **Big Machine Label Group** chairman/CEO **Scott Borchetta** and **BMLG** executive vp of creative **Sandi Spika Borchetta** when Crow played a March 23 concert at the **Franklin Theatre** in Middle Tennessee ahead of her new album, *Evolution*, released March 29.



JEFF JOHNSON

**Miranda Lambert** (left) visited with **Hearts Alive Village** executive director and founder **Christy Stevens** on March 23 in Las Vegas in conjunction with a Christmas donation from Lambert’s **MuttNation Foundation**. With them are canine beneficiaries **Rue** and **Delilah**.



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CHAYCE BECKHAM

23

IS #1



CHAYCE BECKHAM



BAD FOR ME

FROM THE FORTHCOMING ALBUM

BAD FOR ME

OUT APRIL 5TH



# billboard Country Airplay

AIRPLAY MONITORED BY **LUMINATE**

ON THE CHARTS **JIM ASKER** [jim.asker@billboard.com](mailto:jim.asker@billboard.com)

## Chayce Beckham's '23' Is No. 1 On Country Airplay Chart

Chayce Beckham's "23" (19/BMG/Wheelhouse) flies from No. 6 to No. 1 in its 60th week on *Billboard's* Country Airplay chart (dated April 6), becoming his first leader on the list. The single gained by 22% to 28.2 million audience impressions March 22-28, according to Luminata. It completes the longest trip to the top, and makes the biggest leap to No. 1, this year.

"23" is Beckham's second entry on the chart. His **Lindsay Ell** duet, "Can't Do Without Me," hit No. 46 in June 2022.

The 27-year-old Beckham, from Apple Valley, Calif., was crowned the winner of ABC's *American Idol* in 2021 and performed "23" — which he solely penned — live during that season. He had written "23" a year before and became the first hopeful to win the competition performing an original song.

Meanwhile, "23" is the first Country Airplay No. 1 written by a single person since **Luke Combs'** cover of **Tracy Chapman's** self-authored "Fast Car" ruled for five weeks beginning last July. The only other No. 1s written by one person in the last 10 years: **Garth Brooks'** "Ask Me How I Know" (written by **Mitch Rossell**; 2017), **LANCO's** "Greatest Love Story" (frontman **Brandon Lancaster**; 2017), **Little Big Town's** "Better Man" (**Taylor Swift**; 2017) and **Tim McGraw's** "Humble and Kind" (**Lori McKenna**; 2016). Of the 327 leaders in that span, only six — or 2% — have been solo-written.

Meanwhile, prior to "23," the last Country Airplay No. 1 solely written by the soloist who also recorded it? Swift's "Ours," on the chart dated March 31, 2012.

'SOLO' HIT 2011 *American Idol* winner **Scotty McCreery** posts his ninth Country Airplay top 10 as "Cab in a Solo" (Triple Tigers) rides 11-10 (19.1 million, up 5%). The song introduces his LP *Rise & Fall*, due May 10. 🎯



BECKHAM

CHRISTOPHER POLK FOR VARIETY

### MOST INCREASED AUDIENCE

| TITLE Imprint/Label                                 | Artist           | GAIN (IN MILLIONS) |
|---|------------------|--------------------|
| TIE UP Home Grown/Warner Music Nashville/WAR        | Zac Brown Band   | +7.321             |
| 23 19/BMG/Wheelhouse                                | Chayce Beckham   | +4.992             |
| OUTSKIRTS MCA Nashville                             | Sam Hunt         | +3.092             |
| WHERE IT ENDS Elektra/Warner Music Nashville/WEA    | Bailey Zimmerman | +1.370             |
| TAKE HER HOME Blue Chair/Warner Music Nashville/WEA | Kenny Chesney    | +1.267             |
| BACK THEN RIGHT NOW Hubbard House/EMI Nashville     | Tyler Hubbard    | +1.182             |
| DIRT CHEAP CoJo/Warner Music Nashville/WMN          | Cody Johnson     | +0.984             |
| BULLETPROOF RCA Nashville                           | Nate Smith       | +0.982             |
| LET YOUR BOYS BE COUNTRY Macon/Broken Bow           | Jason Aldean     | +0.934             |
| CAB IN A SOLO Triple Tigers                         | Scotty McCreery  | +0.835             |

### MOST INCREASED PLAYS

| TITLE Imprint/Label  | Artist           | GAIN  |
|--|------------------|-------|
| 23 19/BMG/Wheelhouse                                       | Chayce Beckham   | +1631 |
| TIE UP Home Grown/Warner Music Nashville/WAR               | Zac Brown Band   | +1616 |
| OUTSKIRTS MCA Nashville                                    | Sam Hunt         | +967  |
| BACK THEN RIGHT NOW Hubbard House/EMI Nashville            | Tyler Hubbard    | +404  |
| WHERE IT ENDS Elektra/Warner Music Nashville/WEA           | Bailey Zimmerman | +335  |
| BULLETPROOF RCA Nashville                                  | Nate Smith       | +318  |
| HALFWAY TO HELL Bailee & Buddy/Broken Bow/BMG/Stoney Creek | Jelly Roll       | +310  |
| YOUR PLACE Back Blocks/Big Loud                            | Ashley Cooke     | +303  |
| LET YOUR BOYS BE COUNTRY Macon/Broken Bow                  | Jason Aldean     | +271  |
| DIRT CHEAP CoJo/Warner Music Nashville/WMN                 | Cody Johnson     | +246  |

### RECURRENTS

| THIS WEEK | TITLE Imprint/Label                                       | Artist                               | TOTAL AUD. (IN MILLIONS) |
|-----------|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1         | MAMAW'S HOUSE Valory Thomas Rhett Featuring Morgan Wallen | Thomas Rhett Featuring Morgan Wallen | 19.450                   |
| 2         | FAST CAR River House/Columbia Nashville                   | Luke Combs                           | 17.195                   |
| 3         | SAVE ME Bailee & Buddy/Broken Bow/BMG/Stoney Creek        | Jelly Roll With Lainey Wilson        | 16.220                   |
| 4         | THINKIN' BOUT ME Mercury/Republic/Big Loud                | Morgan Wallen                        | 15.779                   |
| 5         | LAST NIGHT Mercury/Republic/Big Loud                      | Morgan Wallen                        | 15.352                   |
| 6         | I CAN FEEL IT Zone 4/RCA Nashville                        | Kane Brown                           | 12.248                   |
| 7         | THE PAINTER CoJo/Warner Music Nashville/WMN               | Cody Johnson                         | 11.701                   |
| 8         | DANCIN' IN THE COUNTRY Hubbard House/EMI Nashville        | Tyler Hubbard                        | 10.293                   |
| 9         | NEED A FAVOR Bailee & Buddy/Broken Bow/BMG/Stoney Creek   | Jelly Roll                           | 9.995                    |
| 10        | SHE HAD ME AT HEADS CAROLINA Warner Music Nashville/WMN   | Cole Swindell                        | 9.017                    |



ERNEST hosted his inaugural ERNvitational Golf Tournament on March 25, raising money for Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee. From left: Second Harvest chief development and marketing officer Ally Parsons, ERNEST, SPB Hospitality vp of marketing Kristen Hohl and Tivoli Brewing chief marketing officer Vic Wise.



BRELAND (right) raised more than \$140,000 for at-risk youth with a March 26 benefit, BRELAND & Friends, at Nashville's Ryman Auditorium. Among at least a dozen guests were Dalton Dover (left) and Josh Groban.

JASON KEMPIN/GETTY IMAGES

# billboard Country Airplay

AIRPLAY  
MONITORED BY  
**LUMINATE**

| THIS WEEK | LAST WEEK | WKS ON CHART | TITLE Imprint/Label  | Artist                                 | AUDIENCE (IN MILLIONS) |        | PLAYS     |       |      |
|-----------|-----------|--------------|--|--|------------------------|--------|-----------|-------|------|
|           |           |              |  |  | THIS WEEK              | +/-    | THIS WEEK | +/-   | RANK |
| 1         | 6         | 60           | 23 19/BMG/Wheelhouse                                       | Chayce Beckham                         | 28.151                 | +4.992 | 7782      | 1631  | 1    |
| 2         | 1         | 46           | TRUCK BED Big Loud   | HARDY                                  | 27.181                 | -3.867 | 6819      | -1293 | 3    |
| 3         | 2         | 22           | MAN MADE A BAR Mercury/Republic/Big Loud                   | Morgan Wallen Featuring Eric Church    | 26.554                 | +0.146 | 6916      | 148   | 2    |
| 4         | 3         | 42           | WORLD ON FIRE RCA Nashville                                | Nate Smith                             | 24.750                 | -1.578 | 5596      | -439  | 6    |
| 5         | 8         | 36           | OUTSKIRTS MCA Nashville                                    | Sam Hunt                               | 24.730                 | +3.092 | 6549      | 967   | 4    |
| 6         | 7         | 43           | BURN IT DOWN MCA Nashville                                 | Parker McCollum                        | 23.522                 | +0.412 | 6318      | 131   | 5    |
| 7         | 5         | 38           | PRETTY LITTLE POISON 717/Warner/WEA                        | Warren Zeiders                         | 23.115                 | -1.887 | 5459      | -320  | 7    |
| 8         | 10        | 29           | BACK THEN RIGHT NOW Hubbard House/EMI Nashville            | Tyler Hubbard                          | 19.935                 | +1.182 | 5315      | 404   | 8    |
| 9         | 9         | 32           | TUCSON TOO LATE MCA Nashville                              | Jordan Davis                           | 19.302                 | +0.429 | 5125      | 69    | 10   |
| 10        | 11        | 32           | CAB IN A SOLO Triple Tigers                                | Scotty McCreery                        | 19.106                 | +0.835 | 5094      | 213   | 11   |
| 11        | 12        | 20           | WILDFLOWERS AND WILD HORSES Broken Bow                     | Lainey Wilson                          | 17.487                 | +0.268 | 5170      | 206   | 9    |
| 12        | 13        | 20           | TAKE HER HOME Blue Chair/Warner Music Nashville/WEA        | Kenny Chesney                          | 16.824                 | +1.267 | 4547      | 228   | 13   |
| 13        | 14        | 26           | WHERE IT ENDS Elektra/Warner Music Nashville/WEA           | Bailey Zimmerman                       | 16.384                 | +1.370 | 4608      | 335   | 12   |
| 14        | 15        | 61           | FEARLESS (THE ECHO) Big Machine                            | Jackson Dean                           | 13.825                 | +0.826 | 3939      | 196   | 14   |
| 15        | 16        | 11           | HALFWAY TO HELL Bailee & Buddy/Broken Bow/BMG/Stoney Creek | Jelly Roll                             | 13.553                 | +0.801 | 3604      | 310   | 16   |
| 16        | 17        | 15           | YOUR PLACE Back Blocks/Big Loud                            | Ashley Cooke                           | 12.973                 | +0.577 | 3802      | 303   | 15   |
| 17        | 18        | 41           | WE DON'T FIGHT ANYMORE Big Machine                         | Carly Pearce Featuring Chris Stapleton | 11.938                 | +0.120 | 3482      | -57   | 17   |
| 18        | 19        | 18           | LET YOUR BOYS BE COUNTRY Macon/Broken Bow                  | Jason Aldean                           | 9.923                  | +0.934 | 2822      | 271   | 18   |
| 19        | 21        | 34           | I'M NOT PRETTY Megan Moroney/Columbia/Arista Nashville     | Megan Moroney                          | 9.051                  | +0.770 | 2693      | 141   | 20   |
| 20        | 20        | 43           | OUT OF THAT TRUCK Capitol Nashville                        | Carrie Underwood                       | 8.814                  | -0.035 | 2707      | 80    | 19   |
| 21        | 22        | 26           | WE RIDE Average Joes                                       | Bryan Martin                           | 8.676                  | +0.422 | 2498      | 92    | 22   |
| 22        | 24        | 29           | YOUNG LOVE & SATURDAY NIGHTS RCA Nashville                 | Chris Young                            | 7.648                  | +0.505 | 2286      | 188   | 23   |
| 23        | 23        | 27           | CAN'T BREAK UP NOW Columbia Nashville                      | Old Dominion & Megan Moroney           | 7.529                  | +0.217 | 2559      | -29   | 21   |
| 24        | NEW       |              | TIE UP Home Grown/Warner Music Nashville/WAR               | Zac Brown Band                         | 7.325                  | +7.321 | 1618      | 1616  | 26   |
| 25        | 25        | 44           | LOVE YOU AGAIN Chase Matthew/Warner Music Nashville/WMN    | Chase Matthew                          | 6.502                  | -0.153 | 2214      | -49   | 24   |
| 26        | 26        | 7            | BULLETPROOF RCA Nashville                                  | Nate Smith                             | 5.699                  | +0.982 | 1745      | 318   | 25   |
| 27        | 28        | 24           | COWBOYS AND PLOWBOYS Capitol Nashville                     | Jon Pardi & Luke Bryan                 | 4.054                  | +0.331 | 1576      | 146   | 28   |
| 28        | 36        | 11           | DIRT CHEAP CoJo/Warner Music Nashville/WMN                 | Cody Johnson                           | 3.996                  | +0.984 | 1022      | 246   | 40   |
| 29        | 27        | 16           | CHEVROLET Broken Bow                                       | Dustin Lynch Featuring Jelly Roll      | 3.826                  | +0.096 | 1435      | 138   | 31   |
| 30        | 29        | 21           | RODEO MAN Pearl/Big Machine                                | Garth Brooks & Ronnie Dunn             | 3.746                  | +0.207 | 1583      | -40   | 27   |

## 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 © 2024, 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-bulletheaded) audience decline, regardless of total chart weeks. Plus, songs that ascend to a peak between Nos. 1 and 5 will remain on the chart for one additional week even if dropping below No. 10.

### HOT SHOT DEBUT

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

### MOST INCREASED AUDIENCE

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

### AIRPOWER

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

### BREAKER

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



# billboard Country Airplay

AIRPLAY  
MONITORED BY  
**LUMINATE**

| THIS WEEK | LAST WEEK | WKS ON CHART | TITLE Imprint/Label  | Artist                      | AUDIENCE (IN MILLIONS) |        | PLAYS     |     |      |
|-----------|-----------|--------------|--|-----------------------------|------------------------|--------|-----------|-----|------|
|           |           |              |  |                             | THIS WEEK              | +/-    | THIS WEEK | +/- | RANK |
| 31        | 30        | 4            | MESSED UP AS ME Hit Red/Capitol Nashville                        | Keith Urban                 | 3.608                  | +0.164 | 1128      | 54  | 36   |
| 32        | 34        | 20           | THIS IS MY DIRT Valory   | Justin Moore                | 3.570                  | +0.352 | 1411      | 63  | 33   |
| 33        | 32        | 10           | ONE BAD HABIT McGraw/Big Machine                                 | Tim McGraw                  | 3.529                  | +0.310 | 1433      | 137 | 32   |
| 34        | 31        | 32           | DANCE WITH YOU Nashville Harbor                                  | Brett Young                 | 3.444                  | +0.065 | 1393      | 52  | 35   |
| 35        | 33        | 7            | TEXAS HOLD 'EM Parkwood/Columbia/Columbia Nashville              | Beyonce                     | 3.388                  | +0.170 | 1470      | 205 | 30   |
| 36        | 38        | 38           | DRINKIN' PROBLEMS Riser House                                    | Dillon Carmichael           | 3.340                  | +0.567 | 1533      | 56  | 29   |
| 37        | 35        | 21           | GONNA LOVE YOU Stoney Creek                                      | Parmalee                    | 3.280                  | +0.193 | 1396      | 51  | 34   |
| 38        | 37        | 12           | SOUNDS LIKE THE RADIO Leo33                                      | Zach Top                    | 2.997                  | +0.198 | 1057      | 77  | 39   |
| 39        | 39        | 8            | BIGGER HOUSES Warner Music Nashville/WAR                         | Dan + Shay                  | 2.804                  | +0.085 | 1071      | 5   | 38   |
| 40        | 41        | 22           | SHE'S SOMEBODY'S DAUGHTER (REIMAGINED) Patoka Sounds/Lyric Ridge | Drew Baldridge              | 2.697                  | +0.325 | 1106      | 40  | 37   |
| 41        | 40        | 5            | AMERICAN GIRL Tom Petty Legacy/Capitol Nashville/Valory          | Dierks Bentley              | 2.550                  | -0.066 | 817       | 1   | 43   |
| 42        | 44        | 4            | COWBOY SONGS RECORDS Nashville                                   | George Birge                | 2.077                  | +0.344 | 773       | 90  | 44   |
| 43        | 42        | 22           | FIND ANOTHER BAR Voyager/Red Street                              | Chris Lane                  | 1.817                  | +0.074 | 960       | 45  | 41   |
| 44        | 43        | 12           | BOYS BACK HOME PIA/Curb/Columbia Nashville                       | Dylan Marlowe & Dylan Scott | 1.777                  | +0.038 | 729       | 11  | 45   |
| 45        | 45        | 27           | IN YOUR LOVE Hickman Holler/RCA                                  | Tyler Childers              | 1.729                  | +0.008 | 918       | 38  | 42   |
| 46        | 50        | 3            | WHATCHA SEE IS WHATCHA GET Nashville Harbor                      | Chris Janson                | 1.653                  | +0.441 | 701       | 87  | 47   |
| 47        | 47        | 24           | I'M IN LOVE Songs & Daughters/Pigasus/Big Loud                   | Hailey Whitters             | 1.473                  | +0.079 | 636       | 40  | 50   |
| 48        | 46        | 6            | IT HINK I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU Sound/Mercury Nashville             | Chris Stapleton             | 1.411                  | +0.007 | 549       | 32  | 52   |
| 49        | 48        | 26           | BROKENHEARTED Brown Sellers Brown/Quartz Hill                    | Joe Nichols                 | 1.394                  | +0.073 | 624       | 0   | 51   |
| 50        | 57        | 2            | DAMN GOOD DAY TO LEAVE Nashville Harbor                          | Riley Green                 | 1.353                  | +0.558 | 519       | 230 | 54   |
| 51        | 52        | 11           | BREAKIN' IN BOOTS RECORDS/Columbia/RECORDS Nashville             | Matt Stell                  | 1.302                  | +0.347 | 654       | 34  | 48   |
| 52        | 49        | 18           | LOVE YOU BACK Nashville Harbor                                   | Lady A                      | 1.205                  | -0.014 | 719       | -1  | 46   |
| 53        | NEW       |              | CALLED CRAZY Interscope/MCA Nashville                            | Kassi Ashton                | 1.203                  | +0.792 | 236       | 102 | -    |
| 54        | NEW       |              | AUSTIN VERSION III/Warner  | Dasha                       | 1.012                  | +0.650 | 293       | 195 | -    |
| 55        | 55        | 3            | THIS TOWN'S BEEN TOO GOOD TO US Curb                             | Dylan Scott                 | 1.005                  | +0.127 | 488       | 30  | 55   |
| 56        | 51        | 8            | ITRIED A RING ON Monument  | Tigritily Gold              | 0.919                  | -0.044 | 639       | 112 | 49   |
| 57        | 53        | 5            | LAST RODEO 1021/RCA Nashville                                    | Restless Road               | 0.881                  | -0.054 | 423       | -16 | 56   |
| 58        | 56        | 4            | SPIN YOU AROUND (1/24) Honeyhole/Mercury/Republic/Big Loud       | Morgan Wallen               | 0.855                  | -0.010 | 227       | 21  | -    |
| 59        | 54        | 15           | AIN'T ABOUT YOU 19/Wheelhouse                                    | HunterGirl                  | 0.730                  | -0.175 | 535       | -58 | 53   |
| 60        | 60        | 2            | SINGLE AGAIN The Core/Universal Music Canada/Mercury Nashville   | Josh Ross                   | 0.665                  | +0.046 | 352       | 56  | 60   |



Dawson Edwards signed a songwriting deal with Dream 3 Publishing and Kobalt after landing cuts by Justin Moore and Kameron Marlowe, among others. From left: Kobalt senior director of creative Kevin Lane, Dream 3 co-founder Emily Olson, Edwards and Dream 3 co-founders Greg Hill and Laurel Kittleson-Cobb.



Artist-writer Chris Canterbury (left) celebrated with Park Ave West Songs founder KT Mack as he signed a publishing deal ahead of his inclusion in the forthcoming documentary *Ten Year Town*.

BROOKE STEVENS

A bearded man with long hair, wearing a black baseball cap with a yellow patch, a black leather jacket, and a black t-shirt with a white strap across his chest that says "FETTERMAN". He is singing into a silver microphone on a stage with blue lighting. The background is dark with some stage lights.

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ISAAC MASON

Bailey Zimmerman received six plaques for RIAA certifications on March 22 in New York, where he headlined at Hammerstein Ballroom. From left: 300 Entertainment chairman/CEO Kevin Liles, Elektra executive vp/head of A&R Jake Fain, Zimmerman and Elektra president Gregg Nadel.

## BOWEN SNAGS THREE T3R TROPHIES

Wade Bowen has good reason to be lovin' the T3R Texas Awards.

Bowen swiped three trophies during the 14th annual ceremony on March 25 at Texas Live! in Arlington. He was named male vocalist of the year at the event — produced by the *Texas Regional Radio Report*, which tracks airplay for red-dirt music — and his recording “Lovin’ Not Leavin’” rode off with both the single and song of the year honors.

Three artists were double winners, paced by Aaron Watson, who collected entertainer of the year and shared the vocal duo crown with Jenna Paulette, based on their cover of Rosanne Cash’s “Seven Year Ache.”

Bri Bagwell won female vocalist for the ninth time and claimed the video of the year prize for “Trenches.” The Randy Rogers Band likewise took two, picking up band of the year and pocketing the album trophy for its *Homecoming* project.

Ryder Grimes earned new male vocalist, Amanda Kate Ferris scored new female, and Lukas Nelson & Promise of the Real roped new duo/group/band.

Two Texas veterans received keys to the city from Arlington Mayor Jim Ross: Pat Green’s key came in conjunction with the humanitarian of the year award, and Keith Fowler’s coincided with his receipt of the inaugural icon of the year.

KOKE Austin personality Eric Raines hosted the ceremony; he and his station were each victorious in the radio portion of the night’s honors.

The T3R Texas Awards were held under difficult circumstances. Founder Dave Smith collapsed from cardiac arrest during the New Faces Show on March 24. He was hospitalized and continues to recover. As a result, the *Texas Regional Radio Report*, which is regularly included in the Friday edition of the *Billboard Country Update*, isn’t publishing the week of March 29.

## RADIO & RECORDS®

Rounder announced March 28 that label veteran Stephanie Hudacek will take over as president of the company, which is affiliated with the Concord Label Group. Hudacek has served as Soundly Music president since 2017 ... Warner signed newcomer Dasha, whose first charted single, “Austin,” is at No. 15 on Hot Country Songs ... Universal Music Group Nashville partnered with Cirque du Soleil to create *Songblazers — A Journey Into Country Music*, featuring a new Sam Williams song, “Carnival Heart.” The production, written and directed by Amy Tinkham, will run July 2-28 at Nashville’s Tennessee Performing Arts Center, followed by engagements in Birmingham, Ala.; New Orleans; St. Louis; and four Texas markets: Sugar Land, Austin, San Antonio and Dallas ... Michael Brody was named Midwest

Communications/Nashville vp/market manager, expanding his parallel role in Knoxville, Tenn. He oversees seven stations total, including classic country signals WNFN Nashville and WDKW Knoxville ... Kerri Leach was promoted to Fiorini/Southwest Florida market manager from regional PD, RadioInk.com reported. She handles a pair of stations, including classic country WCXS Arcadia ... Binnie Media promoted Faith Francis to COO from executive vp of sales and Heath Cole to vp of programming and operations from vp of programming, according to RadioInk.com. The chain controls Northeastern country signals WTHT Portland, Maine; WBYA Belfast, Maine; WNHW Concord, N.H.; and WXLH Hanover, N.H. ... WGH Norfolk, Va., morning personality Cash Warren departed the station after five years, RadioInsight.com reported ... Lotus Communications/Reno, Nev., flipped classic hits KWEE to classic country KXZZ on March 25, according to RadioInsight.com ... Country Radio Broadcasters is accepting applications for the Country Radio Seminar 2025 agenda committee [here](#) through April 12.

## 'ROUND THE ROW

Writer-artist Drew Parker signed a joint-venture publishing contract with Relative Music Group and Sony Music Publishing ... Riser House Publishing extended its deal with songwriter Michael Whitworth (“Dead Man Walking,” “You Don’t Deserve a Country Song”) ... The new Nashville division of management company The Familie has rebranded its inaugural signee. Singer-songwriter Evanthis Theodorou will move forward as Evie. The company’s Music City wing, announced in January, is headed by Royce Risser ... PLA Media added writer-artist Mattie Taylor to its PR roster ... The Nashville chapter of the Association of Independent Music Publishers added six members to its Young Professionals Committee: Courtney Kruckeberg, Endurance Music Group; Autumn Ledgin, Back Blocks Music; Jacee Badeaux, Big Yellow Dog; JD Groover, Sea Gayle; Sam Sarno, SMACKSongs; and Sam Shelton, Goat Island Sound ... Willie Nelson will hold his Fourth of July Picnic in the Philadelphia suburbs for the first time, with Bob Dylan, Robert Plant & Alison Krauss, Maren Morris, Mavis Staples and Celisse in the lineup at Freedom Mortgage Pavilion in Camden, N.J. ... Little Big Town and Sugarland will perform in tandem on the CMT Music Awards, airing April 7 on CBS from the Moody Center in Austin. The two acts previously collaborated with Jake Owen in 2008 on a cover of the ’80s pop hit “Life in a Northern Town.” CMT will also inaugurate the June Carter Cash humanitarian award during the broadcast; Trisha Yearwood is the recipient ... The Ryman Auditorium is continuing its multiyear relationship with PNC Bank, presenting 30 weeks of free programming at the venue’s outdoor plaza. The 2024 series started March 26 with a performance by former Ryman employee Kiran Gupta. ●



JASON KEMPIN GETTY IMAGES

SiriusXM hosted a performance by The Black Crowes during a March 27 grand-opening party at the company’s new Nashville studios at 333 Commerce St., a Nashville landmark widely known as the “Bat Building.” From left: SiriusXM hosts Buzz Brainard, Macie Banks, Cody Alan and Ania Hammar.



# billboard

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2024

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# I N T E R N A T I O N A L P O W E R P L A Y E R S

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On April 27th, *Billboard* will publish its annual International Power Players list. This issue will profile the leaders in the global music industry including the label executives, live entertainment execs, managers, talent agents and lawyers, and recognize their achievements. Advertise and congratulate this year's International Power Players to

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ISSUE DATE 4/27 | AD CLOSE 4/16 | MATERIALS DUE 4/18

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TITLE Publishing-Licensing Org.  
(Songwriter) Chart Position

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Wildhawk Publishing, BMI/Spirit Nashville Two  
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Music, GMR/Tempo Investments, GMR/Smackstreet  
Music, GMR/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/  
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Wants To Buy My Publishing, ASCAP/Nontypical Music,  
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**YOUR PLACE** Twelve Two Music, BMI/Big Loud  
Mountain LLC, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp.,  
BMI/First Cut Is The Deepest Inc, BMI/Speakers Go Boom  
Songs, BMI/Big Loud Mountain Tunes, ASCAP/WC Music  
Corp., ASCAP (A.Cooke, J.T.Minton, M.Trussell) 16



# C

35 Years Ago

## George Strait's 'Goodbye' Got To No. 1

In 1989, the superstar earned the 16th of his record 44 Hot Country Songs leaders

On April 1, 1989, **George Strait's** "Baby's Gotten Good at Goodbye" ascended to No. 1 on *Billboard's* Hot Country Songs chart. Siblings **Tony** and **Troy Martin** co-wrote the track, which Strait co-produced with **Jimmy Bowen**.

The song became the 16th of Strait's record 44 chart-toppers. He first led with "Fool Hearted Memory" in 1982 and most recently reigned with "River

of Love" in 2009. Strait also boasts an unprecedented 86 top 10s over the chart's 65-year history, from "Unwound" in 1981 through "Give It All We Got Tonight" in 2013.

The Poteet, Texas, native, who is 71, was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2006. He's set to resume stadium shows with **Chris Stapleton** and special guest **Little Big Town** beginning

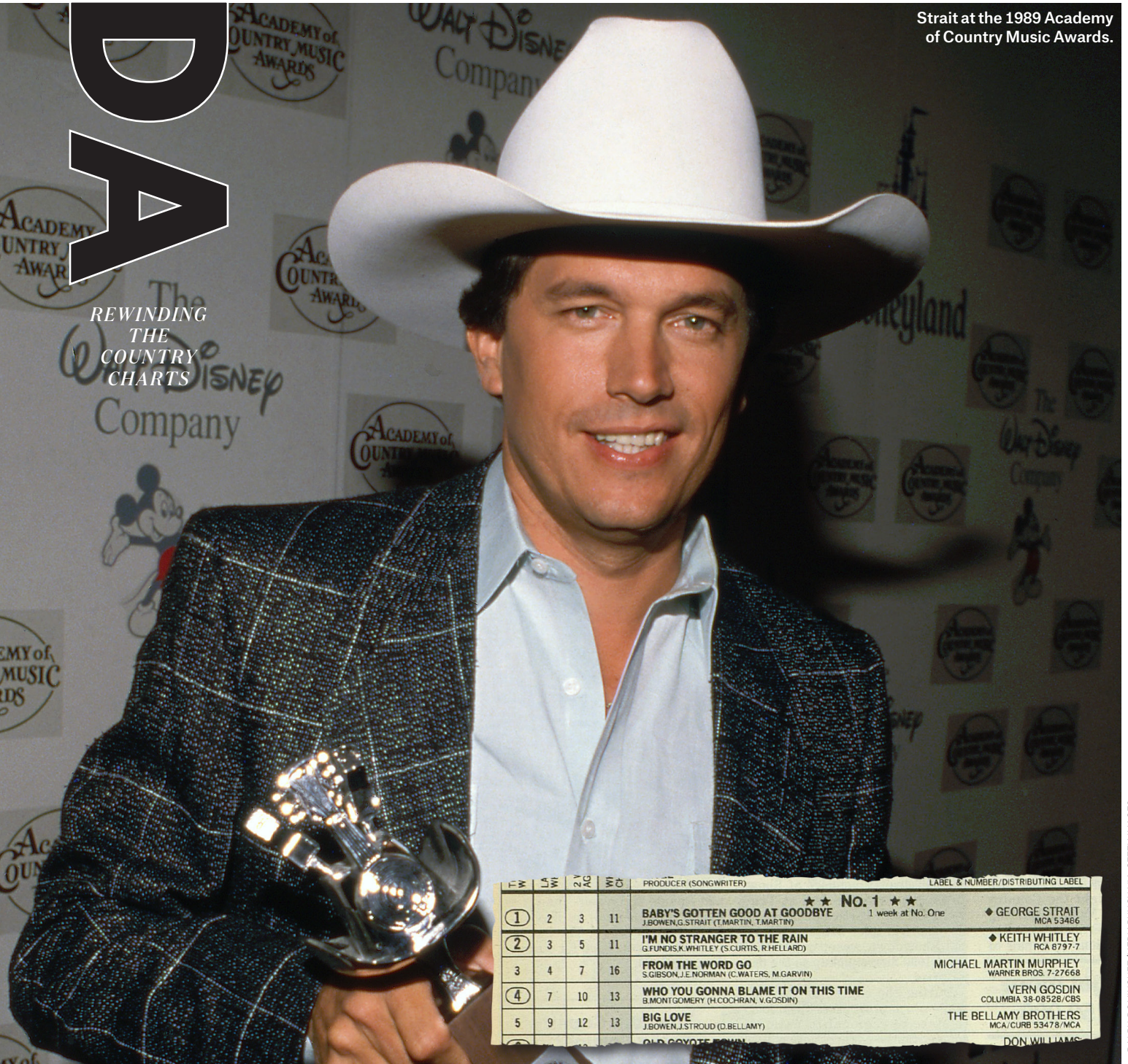
May 4 in Indianapolis, with nine dates currently scheduled. The acts toured together in 2023.

On March 20, Strait's longtime manager, **Eugene "Erv" Woolsey**, died at age 80. "We will miss him so very much and will never forget all the time we had together," Strait shared in a statement. "Won't ever be the same without him."  
—JIM ASKER

# D

Strait at the 1989 Academy of Country Music Awards.

REWINDING THE COUNTRY CHARTS



| TW | SW | 2Y AG | WKS | PRODUCER (SONGWRITER)  | ★ ★ No. 1 ★ ★     | LABEL & NUMBER/DISTRIBUTING LABEL              |
|----|----|-------|-----|--|-------------------|--|
| ①  | 2  | 3     | 11  | BABY'S GOTTEN GOOD AT GOODBYE<br>J. BOWEN, G. STRAIT (T. MARTIN, T. MARTIN)  | 1 week at No. One | ◆ GEORGE STRAIT<br>MCA 53466                   |
| ②  | 3  | 5     | 11  | I'M NO STRANGER TO THE RAIN<br>G. FUNDIS, K. WHITLEY (S. CURTIS, R. HELLARD) |                   | ◆ KEITH WHITLEY<br>RCA 8797-7                  |
| ③  | 4  | 7     | 16  | FROM THE WORD GO<br>S. GIBSON, J. E. NORMAN (C. WATERS, M. GARVIN)           |                   | MICHAEL MARTIN MURPHEY<br>WARNER BROS. 7-27668 |
| ④  | 7  | 10    | 13  | WHO YOU GONNA BLAME IT ON THIS TIME<br>B. MONTGOMERY (H. COCHRAN, V. GOSDIN) |                   | VERN GOSDIN<br>COLUMBIA 38-08528/CBS           |
| ⑤  | 9  | 12    | 13  | BIG LOVE<br>J. BOWEN, J. STROUD (D. BELLAMY)                                 |                   | THE BELLAMY BROTHERS<br>MCA/CURB 53478/MCA     |
| ⑥  | 13 | 13    | 13  | OLD SMOKE<br>J. BOWEN, J. STROUD (D. BELLAMY)                                |                   | DON WILLIAMS<br>MCA/CURB 53478/MCA             |