

billboard Country Update

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Hot Country Songs
>page 3

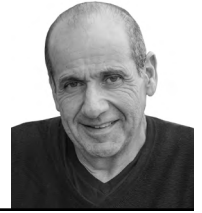
Makin' Tracks:
Max McNown 'Eyes'
'Better' Status
>page 6

Top Country Albums
>page 8

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

ON THE CHARTS

Jim.Asker@billboard.com



Running Up A Big Tab: 'Bar Song' No. 1 For 30th Week

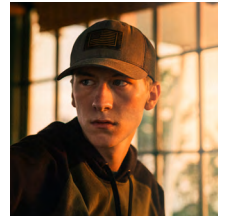
1 **SHABOOZEY**
"A Bar Song (Topsy)"
The smash logs a 30th week atop the streaming-, airplay- and sales-based Hot Country

Songs chart, the third-longest command dating to 1958 when it became the genre's singular survey. It trails **Bebe Rexha** and **Florida Georgia Line's** "Meant To Be" (50 weeks; 2016-17) and **Sam Hunt's** "Body Like a Back Road" (34; 2017).



9 **SAM BARBER**
Restless Mind
Released Nov. 1, 2024, the set lifts 12-9 on Top Country Albums, up 7% to 15,000

equivalent album units. It's **Barber's** first top 10; his *Million Eyes* reached No. 40 in 2023. *Restless* includes the **Avery Anna**-featuring "Indigo," which became each act's first Hot Country Songs top 10 in December.



10 **JELLY ROLL**
"Liar"
The **Jelly Roll** co-write becomes his sixth Hot Country Songs top 10 (11-10), with 6.9 million

streams (up 7%) and 1,000 sold. On Country Airplay, "Liar" holds at its No. 13 high with an 8% gain to 15.7 million in reach. The song is from *Beautifully Broken*, which arrived as his first Top Country Albums No. 1 in October.



Billy Strings Leads Revamped Bluegrass Albums Chart

As of this week, Bluegrass Albums is one of six genre-focused *Billboard* album charts that transition from a traditional sales-only formula to one based on consumption (album sales, track-equivalent albums and streaming-equivalent albums). The lists' depths also expand, with Bluegrass Albums increasing from 10 to 15 positions. **Billy Strings' Highway Prayers** leads the chart (see page 8) with 1,400 units.

SHABOOZEY: JASON KEMPIN/GETTY IMAGES. BARBER: COLTON KRAMER. JELLY ROLL: TERRY WYATT/GETTY IMAGES.

SUBSCRIBE TO

billboard COUNTRY UPDATE

SIGN UP FOR FREE DELIVERY
EVERY MONDAY AND FRIDAY

The country music industry's must-have source for news, charts, analysis and features

EXCLUSIVE CHARTS including Hot Country Songs, Country Airplay, Top Country Albums, Country Streaming Songs, Country Songwriters, Country Producers and more!

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

Expert insight and commentary by Tom Roland and Jim Asker



ACADEMY
OF
COUNTRY
MUSIC
AWARDS

SUBMISSIONS
NOW OPEN

SUBMIT BY
JANUARY 17

billboard Hot Country Songs

AIRPLAY, STREAMING & SALES DATA COMPILED BY

LUMINATE

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TWO WEEKS AGO	WKS ON CHART	TITLE PRODUCER (SONGWRITER)	Artist IMPRINT / PROMOTION LABEL	COUNTRY AIRPLAY RANK	PEAK POSITION
1	1	1	39	A BAR SONG (TIPSY) S. COOK, N. SASTRY (C. O. CHIBUEZE, S. C. COOK, N. SASTRY, J. JONES, J. A. KENT, M. A. WILLIAMS)	Shaboozey AMERICAN DOGWOOD/EMPIRE/MAGNOLIA MUSIC	5	1
2	5	-	2	SMILE J. MOI, CHARLIE HANDSOME (M. C. WALLEN, R. H. BLOCK, J. BYRON, E. K. SMITH, CHARLIE HANDSOME, L. WITKIEWITZ)	Morgan Wallen MERCURY/REPUBLIC/BIG LOUD	40	2
3	2	2	36	I HAD SOME HELP L. BELL, CHARLIE HANDSOME, HOSKINS (A. R. POST, M. C. WALLEN, L. B. BELL, CHARLIE HANDSOME, E. K. SMITH, J. J. HOSKINS, C. P. WALTERS, A. G. GORLEY)	Post Malone Featuring Morgan Wallen MERCURY/REPUBLIC/BIG LOUD	RC	1
4	3	3	12	LOVE SOMEBODY J. MOI, CHARLIE HANDSOME (M. C. WALLEN, J. BYRON, A. G. GORLEY, J. K. HINDLIN, E. LOELV, CHARLIE HANDSOME, N. J. GALE, M. SORBARA, S. C. FRANK, S. F. R. MASTROIANNI, Y. GRUZMAN)	Morgan Wallen MERCURY/REPUBLIC/BIG LOUD	3	1
5	4	4	31	HIGH ROAD G. SIMON (R. WETZEL, A. R. ALLEN, G. SIMON, C. KARPINEN, J. MURPH, L. J. VELTZ, J. SERRATO)	Koe Wetzel & Jessie Murph YELLABUSH/COLUMBIA/RECORDS NASHVILLE	1	4
6	7	6	41	WIND UP MISSIN' YOU C. LACORTE (T. ARCHER, T. P. WETMORE, C. LACORTE)	Tucker Wetmore BACK BLOCKS/EMI NASHVILLE	4	6
7	6	5	31	I AM NOT OKAY Z. CROWELL (J. B. DEFORD, T. PHILLIPS, A. G. GORLEY, C. BROWN)	Jelly Roll BAILEE & BUDDY/BMG/REPUBLIC/STONEY CREEK	7	3
8	8	7	27	LIES LIES LIES J. MOI (J. J. DILLON, J. MILLER, D. ROSS, C. TOMPKINS)	Morgan Wallen MERCURY/REPUBLIC/BIG LOUD	RC	3
9	9	10	29	POUR ME A DRINK L. BELL, CHARLIE HANDSOME (A. R. POST, L. B. BELL, CHARLIE HANDSOME, J. BYRON, R. H. BLOCK, J. DOZZI)	Post Malone Featuring Blake Shelton MERCURY/REPUBLIC/BIG LOUD	6	3
10	11	11	18	LIAR Z. CROWELL (J. B. DEFORD, B. J. JOHNSON, A. G. GORLEY, T. PHILLIPS)	Jelly Roll BAILEE & BUDDY/BMG/REPUBLIC/STONEY CREEK	13	10
11	10	8	21	I NEVER LIE C. CHAMBERLAIN (Z. TOP, C. CHAMBERLAIN, T. NICHOLS)	Zach Top LE033	22	8
12	12	12	15	I'M GONNA LOVE YOU T. W. WILLMON (C. STEVENS, K. ARCHER, T. DENNING)	Cody Johnson & Carrie Underwood COJO/WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE/CAPITOL NASHVILLE/WMN	16	11
13	13	13	18	4X4XU J. JOYCE (L. WILSON, J. DECIOUS, A. RAITIERE)	Lainey Wilson BROKEN BOW	12	13
14	15	9	5	INDIGO J. BECKER (S. R. BARBER, A. ANNA, A. SHERIDAN)	Sam Barber Featuring Avery Anna LOCKELAND SPRINGS/ATLANTIC	-	8
15	14	14	8	GOOD NEWS S. COOK, N. SASTRY (C. O. CHIBUEZE, N. SASTRY, S. C. COOK, J. TORREY, M. R. POLLACK, ROMANS)	Shaboozey AMERICAN DOGWOOD/EMPIRE/MAGNOLIA MUSIC	-	14
16	16	15	60	THINK I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU C. STAPLETON, D. COBB (C. STAPLETON)	Chris Stapleton SOUND/MERCURY NASHVILLE	15	12
17	17	16	24	GUY FOR THAT L. BELL, CHARLIE HANDSOME, HOSKINS (A. R. POST, L. B. BELL, CHARLIE HANDSOME, L. COMBS, J. MCNAIR, E. K. SMITH, J. J. HOSKINS)	Post Malone Featuring Luke Combs MERCURY/REPUBLIC/BIG LOUD	11	7
18	19	17	16	I AIN'T SAYIN' P. DIGIOVANNI (T. P. WOOD, S. MOAKLER, M. L. HOLMAN, E. REID)	Jordan Davis MCA NASHVILLE	10	17
19	18	19	26	AM I OKAY? K. BUSH (M. MORONEY, L. LAIRD, J. J. DILLON)	Megan Moroney MEGAN MORONEY/COLUMBIA/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE	24	18
20	20	18	46	BOYS BACK HOME J. A. FOX (D. MARLOWE, S. ENNIS, J. A. FOX)	Dylan Marlowe & Dylan Scott PIA/CURB/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE	2	18
21	21	25	12	ENDS OF THE EARTH B. HOOD (T. MYERS)	Ty Myers RECORDS/COLUMBIA/RECORDS NASHVILLE	-	21
22	22	24	46	HOLY SMOKES A. R. SHAWN (A. R. SHAWN, B. ZIMMERMAN, B. M. STENNIS, L. HUNGATE, M. TYLER)	Bailey Zimmerman ELEKTRA/WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE/WEA	23	13
23	23	23	9	HIGH ROAD Z. L. BRYAN (Z. L. BRYAN)	Zach Bryan BELTING BRONCO/WARNER/WAR	-	6
24	27	28	12	BIGGER HOUSES D. SMYERS, S. HENDRICKS (A. ALBERT, D. SMYERS, J. T. MINTON, J. REYNOLDS)	Dan + Shay WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE/WAR	8	24
25	26	26	9	WEREN'T FOR THE WIND W. BUNDY (E. LANGLEY, J. TAYLOR, J. CLAWSON)	Ella Langley SAWGOD/COLUMBIA/TRIPLE TIGERS	54	25

COUNTRY SONGWRITERS™

1	#1 3 WKS	CHARLIE HANDSOME
2		ASHLEY GORLEY
3		MORGAN WALLEN
4		JOHN BYRON
5		ERNEST
6		CHRIS STAPLETON
7		TAYLOR PHILLIPS
8		ROCKY BLOCK
TIE 9		SEAN COOK
TIE 9		SHABOOZEY



WALLEN

CAMERON BAIRD

COUNTRY PRODUCERS™

1	#1 17 WKS	CHARLIE HANDSOME
2		JOEY MOI
3		ZACH CROWELL
4		SEAN COOK
5		NEVIN SASTRY
6		LOUIS BELL
7		GABE SIMON
8		CHRIS LACORTE
9		DANN HUFF
10		CARSON CHAMBERLAIN

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

billboard Hot Country Songs

AIRPLAY, STREAMING & SALES DATA COMPILED BY

LUMINATE

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TWO WEEKS AGO	WKS ON CHART	TITLE <small>PRODUCER (SONGWRITER)</small>	Artist <small>IMPRINT / PROMOTION LABEL</small>	COUNTRY AIRPLAY RANK	PEAK POSITION
26	24	21	14	COWBOY SONGS L.GUZMAN,M.MCGINN (G.BIRGE,M.TYLER,M.MCGINN,L.GUZMAN)	George Birge RECORDS NASHVILLE	9	18
27	28	33	19	FIX WHAT YOU DIDN'T BREAK L.RIMES (N.SMITH,A.G.GORLEY,T.PHILLIPS,L.RIMES)	Nate Smith RCA NASHVILLE	45	24
28	31	31	12	DON'T MIND IF I DO D.HUFF (R.GREEN)	Riley Green Featuring Ella Langley NASHVILLE HARBOR	-	25
29	35	37	8	SOMETHIN' 'BOUT A WOMAN D.HUFF,J.BUNETTA (THOMAS RHETT,J.C.BUNETTA,I.FRANZINO,A.HAAS,J.H.RYAN)	Thomas Rhett Featuring Teddy Swims FIFTY-ONE/FORTY-NINE/VALORY	-	26
30	32	34	7	TEXAS S.HENDRICKS (J.CLAWSON,K.STURROCK,J.DORR,L.GUZMAN)	Blake Shelton TEN POINT/WHEELHOUSE	19	29
31	29	30	34	THIS TOWN'S BEEN TOO GOOD TO US J.DURRETT,CHARLIE HANDSOME (D.SCOTT,A.G.GORLEY,CHARLIE HANDSOME,J.BYRON,T.PHILLIPS)	Dylan Scott CURB	17	29
32	30	29	10	HOUSE AGAIN R.YOUNGMANS,LUKAS SCOTT (H.WESTBROOK,N.A.MEDLEY,D.ALLEY)	Hudson Westbrook RIVER HOUSE	-	29
33	34	35	30	RELAPSE M.ELIZONDO (W.ZEIDERS,B.PENDERGRASS)	Warren Zeiders 717/WARNER/WEA	47	30
34	33	32	39	DEVIL YOU KNOW S.MARTINEZ (G.BARHAM,Z.DYER,J.HALL,S.MARTINEZ)	Tyler Braden WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE/WMN	52	25
35	36	36	11	DAMN GOOD DAY TO LEAVE D.HUFF (R.GREEN,ERIK DYLAN,J.D.SINGLETON,N.WALSH)	Riley Green NASHVILLE HARBOR	14	35
36	37	41	21	JUST LIKE JOHNNY REDFERRIN,M.WILSHIRE,J.SAGHI (J.B.REDFERRIN,M.WILSHIRE)	Redferrin ROUND HERE/WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE/WMN	-	28
37	41	50	26	COWBOYS CRY TOO A.VANDERHEYM,K.BALLERINI (K.BALLERINI,A.VANDERHEYM,N.KAHAN)	Kelsea Ballerini & Noah Kahan BLACK RIVER	29	16
38	40	49	4	FOREVER TO ME J.M.SCHMIDT,G.JAMES (C.SWINDELL,G.JAMES,R.H.BLOCK)	Cole Swindell WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE/WMN	20	38
39	38	47	7	BACKSEAT DRIVER D.HUFF (J.DAVIS,J.WALKER)	Kane Brown ZONE 4/RCA NASHVILLE	32	38
40	44	46	4	FRIENDS LIKE THAT J.ALDEAN,K.ALLISON,T.KENNEDY (J.MORGAN,B.ANDERSON,W.L.BUNDY,L.VAUGHAN)	John Morgan Featuring Jason Aldean NIGHT TRAIN/BROKEN BOW	21	40
41	39	40	17	A LOT MORE FREE S.FEE (M.MCNOWN,J.REEVES,S.FEE)	Max McNow FUGITIVE RECORDINGS/THE ORCHARD	-	29
42	43	44	21	LOSERS L.BELL,CHARLIE HANDSOME (A.R.POST,L.B.BELL,CHARLIE HANDSOME,A.G.GORLEY,E.K.SMITH,J.S.REEVES,C.PWALTERS)	Post Malone Featuring Jelly Roll MERCURY/REPUBLIC/BIG LOUD	-	12
43	49	-	9	DARLIN' A.MAXWELL,J.ANGEL (A.MAXWELL,CHASE MATTHEW,H.HUFF,C.WILKIE)	Chase Matthew WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE/WAR	55	42
44	42	38	18	PORCH LIGHT NOT LISTED (NOT LISTED)	Josh Meloy JOSH MELOY	-	38
45	45	-	2	SINGLE AGAIN M.GEROUX (J.ROSS,J.A.FOX,B.REMPEL)	Josh Ross THE CORE/UNIVERSAL MUSIC CANADA/MERCURY NASHVILLE	34	45
46	48	-	6	NEON MOON J.MOI (R.G.DUNN)	Brooks & Dunn With Morgan Wallen B&D2/SONY MUSIC NASHVILLE	-	24
47	50	-	2	HOMETOWN HOME J.RICE (C.LUCAS,P.C.BRUST,A.ALBERT,Z.ABEND)	LOCASH BMG/GALAXY LABEL GROUP	18	47
48	RE-ENTRY	2	2	BAGGAGE A.VANDERHEYM,K.BALLERINI (K.BALLERINI,J.J.DILLON,K.FAIRCHILD,H.LINDSEY,A.VANDERHEYM)	Kelsea Ballerini BLACK RIVER	-	46
49	46	42	7	LAST OF MY KIND S.COOK,M.STEVENS (C.O.CHIBUEZE,S.C.COOK,M.R.STEVENS,P.CAUTHEN,D.COHEN)	Shaboozey Featuring Paul Cauten AMERICAN DOGWOOD/EMPIRE	-	42
50	NEW	1	1	USE ME C.CHAMBERLAIN (Z.TOP,C.CHAMBERLAIN,T.NICHOLS)	Zach Top LEO33	-	50

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

COUNTRY MARKET WATCH

A Weekly National Music Sales Report

WEEKLY UNIT COUNT				YEAR-TO-DATE			YEAR-OVER-YEAR	
	ALBUM CONSUMPTION	AUDIO ON-DEMAND	VIDEO ON-DEMAND	2024	2025	CHANGE		
This Week	1,628,000	1,994,343,000	109,521,000				ALBUM CONSUMPTION	
Last Week	1,649,000	1,962,216,000	114,128,000	Album Consumption	1,552,000	1,628,000	4.9%	'24 1.55 million
Change	-1.3%	1.6%	-4.0%	Audio On-Demand	1,857,874,000	1,994,343,000	7.3%	'25 1.63 million
This Week Last Year	1,545,000	1,849,767,000	117,213,000	Video On-Demand	117,640,000	109,521,000	-6.9%	TOTAL ON-DEMAND STREAMS
Change	5.4%	7.8%	-6.6%					'24 1.98 billion
								'25 2.10 billion

All data measures U.S. activity as of the week ending January 9, 2025. All units counts are rounded to the nearest thousand. Album consumption units — also known as albums plus TEA plus SEA — consists of album sales; track-equivalent album (TEA) sales whereby 10 tracks equal one consumption unit; and stream equivalent albums (SEA) whereby 1,250 paid and/or 3,750 ad-supported audio on-demand streams (OAD) equal one consumption unit.

For inquiries about any Luminate, please contact Howard Lin at hlin@luminatedata.com

LUMINATE

JANUARY 25, 2025

billboard

POWER 100

CELEBRATING THE POWER PLAYERS IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

The 2025 **BILLBOARD POWER 100** will celebrate the executives who are creating excitement and making a difference in the global music industry. Featured will be those who have had the greatest impact in recorded music, live entertainment, touring, publishing and other industry verticals within the past year.

Take this opportunity to congratulate the 2025 Billboard Power 100 honorees. Your ad will reach an influential and affluent audience of decision-makers in the global music industry.

CONTACT

East Coast/Midwest: Joe Maimone | joe.maimone@billboard.com

Southeast: Lee Ann Photoglo | laphotoglo@gmail.com

Latin: Marcia Olival | marciaolival29@gmail.com

Touring & West Coast: Cynthia Mellow | cmellow615@gmail.com

International: Ryan O'Donnell | rodonnell@pmc.com

ISSUE DATE 1/25 | AD CLOSE 1/14 | MATERIALS DUE 1/16

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

'Better' Be Prepared For Max McNown's First Radio Single, '(Brown Eyes)'



When new artist **Max McNown** flies into his falsetto voice in the middle of his first radio release, "Better Me for You (Brown Eyes)," he conveys a sense of strength through vulnerability, as if he's been doing it for years.

But sounds, like looks, can be deceiving. McNown had never written a song that mined that part of his register before, and it forced him to woodshed when it connected quickly with his fan base.

"'Better Me for You' is probably the greatest problem child of any of my songs I've ever written," McNown says. "I mean, it was written so early in my career. I had never taken vocal lessons before — I still have only taken a couple — but when it was written, I couldn't even sing that song all the way through without messing up."

Not that that mattered in the song's creation. McNown rode with it as the melody gravitated naturally in that falsetto direction when he wrote "Better Me for You" with **Ava Suppelsa**, **Trent Dabbs** and producer-writer **Jamie Kenney** last May. McNown's willingness to take on the discomfort moved the song forward.

"That was the moment that got me really excited," Dabbs remembers.

"Better Me for You" was personal for McNown when they crafted it. He was living in Oregon at the time and had started a long-distance relationship that was still fairly new. His co-writers asked him about his life to get the creative juices flowing at the start of the appointment, and as he spoke of his girlfriend in glowing, almost reverent, tones, they launched into a bright midtempo groove on acoustic guitars. McNown pulled out a short phrase with a descending melody — "I didn't know you'd have brown eyes" — that he had already written about her. It became the opening line of the chorus; it also ends up being the only physical description of the woman that appears in the entire song. The rest of the text frames her as strong, spiritually grounded and "deeper than a coal mine."

"He's not a superficial guy," Kenney notes. "He's a deep soul, and he's a kind, caring and thoughtful person. So I think we always end up writing those kind of songs. And I think it's not an accident that we don't end up leaning on trite euphemisms."

McNown noted that his girlfriend had inspired him to become a better person, an idea that morphed into the payoff line at the end of the chorus: "I gotta find a better me for you." Knowing where they were headed, the writers turned their attention to the opening verse, the first-person singer remembering a period dominated by alcohol and romantic conquests.

"If you need to be a better person for someone, what does that look like previously, before them?" Suppelsa asks rhetorically. "Those verses [are] painting the darker side of before this girl. You need to have that chorus there to make that change."

The second verse would begin with an abstract thought about "dipping toes in the water," a reflection, McNown says, of a period when he worked at a coffee shop, dodging any sort of commitments.

"[It's] basically not being willing to give things my full heart," he notes. "That's symbolic in the relationship department, that's symbolic in the career department, that's symbolic in life in so many aspects. For a while, especially when you feel like you may have been wounded, you're afraid to jump back in again."

To round out the piece, they built a bridge that, like the chorus, starts with a descending melody. The differences are subtle enough that the first few listens, it doesn't sound like a departure from the rest of the song.

"It's a sneaky bridge, for sure," Suppelsa says.

McNown inserted a reference to the long-distance relationship — his co-

writers feared it was new information that didn't quite fit the text, but he insisted it fit *him*, and they deferred to his judgment. Within five lines, the bridge incorporates a hymnal, pledges undying devotion and solidifies a spiritual quality to the relationship that had been seeded earlier.

"It feels like one of those songs where, if he was playing at the Ryman [Auditorium] and he walked to the front of the stage and played the song, I would be sold," Dabbs says. "I think that's what you always look for in an artist. It's kind of like, 'All right, I get you. I get what you're about.'"

When the song was finished, McNown remained at Kenney's studio in Nashville's Berry Hill neighborhood to work through a rough demo. They stacked acoustic guitars and makeshift percussion to create a "blurry picture," McNown says, "of what we wanted the song to sound like." He added a scratch vocal with fragile falsetto, then returned to Oregon while the production evolved in Kenney's hands back in Music City.

Kenney played some additional parts, then enlisted **Todd Lombardo** to overdub banjo and rubber-bridge acoustic guitar, **Aaron Sterling** for the core drums and guitarist **Jedd Hughes** to add electric guitars. Kenney tucked both Dobro and a slide-guitar sample into the background, then worked to find a balance between the acoustics and electrics. It doesn't sound as tough as he expected.

"I would go back and forth," Kenney says. "I feel like the sweet spot was so minute. You think 'power' when you get to the chorus. You want to go, 'Let's punch them in the face with electrics.' But I felt like it got less cool when I pushed those electrics."

As Kenney worked on it, McNown moved to Nashville and resided in a room at the studio for six months, making it convenient to redo vocals. He ended up recutting them three times before he was entirely happy with the results.

"The third time we recorded it," McNown says, "I had already toured for 40, 50 shows, and I had built my vocal capabilities and my confidence, and I also knew the song like the back of my hand, and so I came back in and we got it right."

"Ironically enough," Kenney counters, "we ended up using pretty much the original because it had a bit of a freshness to it."

Kenney enhanced the falsetto parts in the chorus with different instruments — a mandolin in the first chorus, electric guitar in the second — trailing the vocal and creating a dreamy mood.

"Anytime you have a melody like that that's really hooky and singable, the more you can pile on and just accentuate it, the better," Kenney says.

McNown introduced the song on TikTok, beginning with short performances that keyed on the opening line in the chorus. As the song grew, he inserted "Brown Eyes" into the title in parentheses.

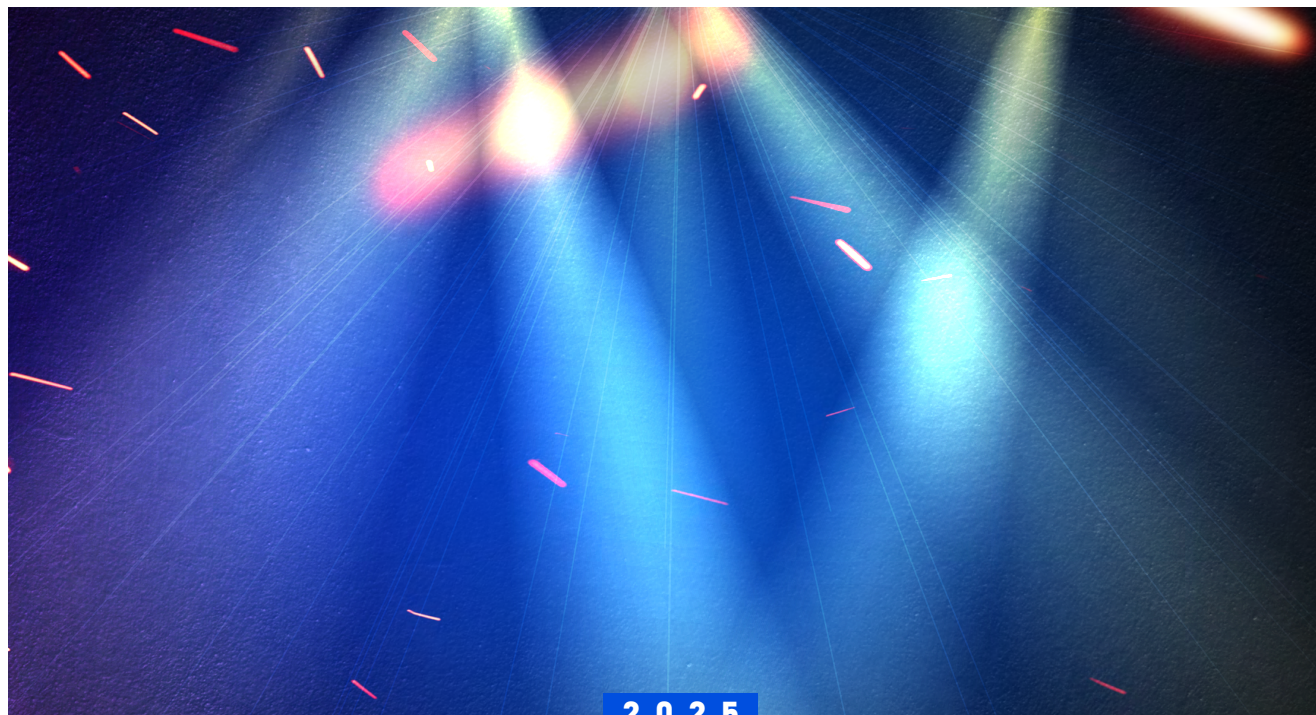
"When you look at it on TikTok, I think people are looking for 'Brown Eyes,'" Suppelsa says. "If that hadn't been put in there in parentheses, it definitely would have been a harder search for people."

Fugitive Recordings — in tandem with Magnolia Music Group's promotion department, coming off its work on **Shaboozey's** "A Bar Song (Topsy)" — released "Better Me for You (Brown Eyes)" to country radio via PlayMPE on Dec. 16.

"It's going to be heard by so many different people that have never heard of me," McNown acknowledges. "So we need a song that is wide-reaching enough and catchy enough to kind of hook people in and make them fans within two minutes. You have to have a gripping hook and a gripping song, and 'Better Me for You' just felt like it fit the criteria." ●



billboard



2025

SPORTS & MUSIC ISSUE

Billboard will publish its second Sports & Music issue on Feb. 8, 2025.

This annual issue will examine and highlight the intersection of the sports and music worlds and feature a list of the most influential Power Players who lead both industries as determined by *Billboard* staff.

To be a part of this timely coverage and reach the burgeoning sports and music sector, we hope you will consider an ad in this special issue. Space is available at all budget levels.

CONTACTS

East Coast/Midwest: Joe Maimone | joe.maimone@billboard.com

Southeast: Lee Ann Photoglo | laphotoglo@gmail.com

Latin: Marcia Olival | marcialival29@gmail.com

Touring & West Coast: Cynthia Mellow | cmellow615@gmail.com

International: Ryan O'Donnell | rodonnell@pmc.com

ISSUE DATE 2/8 | AD CLOSE 1/28 | MATERIALS DUE 1/30

billboard TOP COUNTRY ALBUMS

Table with columns: THIS WEEK, LAST WEEK, 2 WEEKS AGO, WEEKS ON CHART, ARTIST, TITLE, CERT., PEAK POS. Lists top 25 country albums including Morgan Wallen, Post Malone, and Zach Bryan.

Top Country Albums ranks the most popular country albums of the week, as compiled by Luminate, based on multi-metric consumption...

billboard COUNTRY STREAMING SONGS

Table with columns: THIS WEEK, LAST WEEK, WEEKS ON CHART, TITLE, ARTIST. Lists top 25 streaming country songs including Morgan Wallen, Luke Combs, and Zach Bryan.

The week's top-streamed and top-selling paid download country songs, respectively, from sales reports collected and provided by Luminate.

billboard COUNTRY DIGITAL SONG SALES

Table with columns: THIS WEEK, LAST WEEK, WEEKS ON CHART, TITLE, ARTIST. Lists top 25 digital country song sales including Morgan Wallen, Luke Combs, and Zach Bryan.



DANA TRIPPE

billboard AMERICANA/FOLK ALBUMS

Table with columns: THIS WEEK, LAST WEEK, 2 WEEKS AGO, WEEKS ON CHART, ARTIST, TITLE, CERT., PEAK POS. Lists top 10 Americana/Folk albums including Noah Kahan, Zach Bryan, and Chris Stapleton.

Americana/Folk Albums ranks the most popular Americana/Folk albums of the week, as compiled by Luminate, based on multi-metric consumption...

billboard BLUEGRASS ALBUMS

Table with columns: THIS WEEK, LAST WEEK, 2 WEEKS AGO, WEEKS ON CHART, ARTIST, TITLE, CERT., PEAK POS. Lists top 10 bluegrass albums including Billy Strings, The SteelDrivers, and Chris Stapleton.

Bluegrass Albums ranks the most popular bluegrass albums of the week, as compiled by Luminate, based on multi-metric consumption...

STREAMING & SALES DATA COMPILED BY LUMINATE

STREAMING & SALES DATA COMPILED BY LUMINATE



WOMEN IN MUSIC

On March 22, *Billboard* will publish its highly anticipated Women in Music special issue, featuring top women in the music business who are creating excitement and making their mark across labels and in publishing and touring.

Coinciding with this issue will be the Women in Music awards ceremony on March 29. The event will bring together music's most prominent women artists and the industry's top women business executives to recognize and celebrate their achievements.

Take this opportunity to congratulate the most powerful and talented women in music and wish them continued success.

CONTACT

East Coast: Joe Maimone | joe.maimone@billboard.com

Southeast: Lee Ann Photoglo | laphotoglo@gmail.com

Latin: Marcia Olival | marciaolival29@gmail.com

Touring & West Coast: Cynthia Mellow | cmellow615@gmail.com

International: Ryan O'Donnell | rodonnell@pmc.com

ON SALE 3/22 | **AD CLOSE** 3/11 | **MATERIALS DUE** 3/13

billboard

