

billboard Country Update

BILLBOARD COUNTRY UPDATE

Tom.Roland@billboard.com



Freddy Fender Bender: Lessons From A 50-Year-Old Country Crossover Boom Period

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Jelly Roll's 'Liar' Sets Personal Mark >page 4

Eight Stations Double Up In ACM Radio Awards >page 10

Country Coda: When Maren Morris' 'Bones' Broke No. 1 >page 19

When Island/Republic/MCA Nashville released **Chappell Roan**'s "The Giver" on March 12, the move extended a pop/country crossover trend that has seen the likes of **Shaboozey**, **Beyoncé** and **Post Malone** successfully hop genre fences.

As current as the development may be, it's also a case of history repeating. The release comes 50 years after **Freddy**

Fender's "Before the Next Teardrop Falls" reigned on the *Billboard* Hot Country Songs chart dated March 15. "Teardrop" went on to top the *Billboard* Hot 100 on May 31, 1975, in the midst of a crossover wave.

"That song just caught fire," says Country Music Hall of Fame member **Joe Galante**, who handled marketing for RCA Nashville at the time. "It sold, and that was one thing that made it difficult for people to walk away from, was the sales numbers. Even as a competitor, I was sitting there going, 'How the hell is this happening?' And you start looking at the numbers and you went, 'Well, that's how it's happening.'"

Fender's success was not an isolated example in 1975. From March 8 through June 7 that year, four different singles reached

the Hot 100 summit while simultaneously becoming country hits: Fender's "Teardrop," **Olivia Newton-John**'s "Have You Never Been Mellow," **B.J. Thomas**' "(Hey Won't You Play) Another Somebody Done Somebody Wrong Song" and **John Denver**'s "Thank God I'm a Country Boy."

When Fender was at No. 1, at least seven more titles on that

same country chart made significant inroads on the Hot 100 and/or the Easy Listening chart (a predecessor of adult contemporary), including **Jessi Colter**'s "I'm Not Lisa," **Elvis Presley**'s "My Boy" and **Charlie Rich**'s "My Elusive Dreams." Additionally, **Linda Ronstadt** peaked at No. 2 on country

with the **Hank Williams** song "I Can't Help It (If I'm Still in Love With You)," weeks ahead of the crossover follow-up "When Will I Be Loved."

Throughout the rest of 1975, the country crossover trend continued with Newton-John's "Please Mister Please," Fender's "Wasted Days and Wasted Nights," **Glen Campbell**'s "Rhinestone Cowboy," **The Eagles**' "Lyn' Eyes," **Tanya Tucker**'s "Lizzie and the Rainman" and **C.W. McCall**'s "Convoy."



DENVER



FENDER



RONSTADT

DENVER: RUSSEY GENERAL ENTERTAINMENT CONTENT VIA GETTY IMAGES; FENDER: MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES; RONSTADT: P. FLOYD/DAILY EXPRESS/GETTY IMAGES

ACADEMY OF COUNTRY MUSIC AWARDS

SECOND ROUND OF AWARDS VOTING

60 NOW OPEN

DEADLINE TO VOTE MARCH 17

Then, as now, plenty of fans and critics debated if some of those titles belonged on the country station.

“For me, the answer to ‘What is country?’ is: the records that the country audience, at that time, thinks belong on a country radio station,” says **Ed Salamon**, a Country Radio Hall of Fame member who became PD in 1975 of **WHN** New York.

Salamon programmed plenty of crossover music, sometimes incorporating songs that weren’t being promoted to the station, in an effort to appeal to a metro audience that didn’t have much history with the genre.

WHN became a major success story — just five years later, the Big Apple got a *second* country radio station — but its crossover mix yielded as much hostility from Nashville as praise. Part of that was directly related to the corporate source of some of the records on the playlist: Denver, Newton-John and The Eagles were all signed out of New York or Los Angeles.

“There was such a pushback about what I did that I didn’t fully comprehend it at that time,” Salamon reflects. “I was taking the space that the Nashville label thought should go to one of their records on a country radio station, and I was giving it to the pop division.”

Exactly one year after Fender topped the country chart, crossover material in 1976 had subsided. The number of crossover singles was the same, but none of them had the same level of impact.

“It’s the luck of the draw,” says Country Radio Hall of Fame member **Joel Raab**, a consultant and former programmer for **WHK** Cleveland.

Two of those 1976 crossovers, **Cledus Maggard’s** “The White Knight” and **Larry Groce’s** “Junk Food Junkie,” were novelty records, distinguishing them from the 1975 batch.

“We’d seen success in the crossover the year before,” recalls Country Radio Hall of Fame member

Barry Mardit, whose programming history included **WEPP** Pittsburgh and **WWWW** Detroit. “If those songs weren’t consistently coming, we were therefore looking for something else that would grab the ear, that would grab the attention of the listener, like a novelty song does.”

Crossover records would continue through the rest of the ’70s, with **Crystal Gayle**, **Dolly Parton**, **Ronnie Milsap**, **Kenny Rogers**, **Eddie Rabbitt** and a couple of **Waylon Jennings & Willie Nelson** duets benefiting. In most cases, those happened when one or more label executives were enthusiastic enough to take a risk. Record companies had to be judicious since radio stations relied heavily on local sales reports for research.

“You had to have product in stores in order for people to do sales checks,” Galante notes. “So it wasn’t as simple as just saying, ‘Oh, I think I’ll go do this.’ You’ve got to get the goods in stores, and if it didn’t move and they [were returned], you got a double whammy. And you’d spent the money. So you were careful about your shots, and you didn’t go willy-nilly trying to cross over a record.”

Similarly, artists often err when they purposely attempt to cross over. It’s an issue that country learned the hard way in the aftermath of the 1980 *Urban Cowboy* soundtrack.

“The *Urban Cowboy* sound was a moment,” Raab says. “It wasn’t a trend. It was just a bunch of really good hit songs that went with a movie — and those songs, by the way, were all pretty country: [Johnny Lee’s] ‘Looking for Love’ and [Mickey Gilley’s] ‘Stand by Me.’ These were just really good country records. And because the movie was so popular, [some artists] said, ‘Oh, you know, I’ll be more pop.’ And they made these really bad pop-sounding records in the early to mid-’80s.”

The 2025 version of crossover is a little different — streaming data has helped identify the songs that work across formats, influencing the trajectory for music by **Morgan Wallen**, **Ella Langley & Riley Green**, **Marshmello & Kane Brown**, **HARDY**, **Jelly Roll** and **Dasha**.

Artists are interacting more freely across genre, with pairings of **Kelsea Ballerini & Noah Kahan**, **Thomas Rhett & Teddy Swims** and Post Malone & Wallen all on the current Hot Country Songs chart. And, Galante points out, country acts are playing stadiums and arenas in major markets, unlike in the ’70s, when they were mostly in small theaters in midsize metros.

As a result, there’s less incentive for country artists to refashion their music in a play for pop success.

“Country is just so big in its own right,” Mardit says, “that they don’t need to do that.” ●



RAAB



Brooks & Dunn headlined March 7 in Bakersfield, Calif., and March 8 in Norco, Calif., for Activated Events’ Boots in the Park series. From left: Kix Brooks, Activated Events CEO Steve Thacher and Ronnie Dunn.



Songwriter Jessie Jo Dillon (“10,000 Hours,” “Am I Okay?”) received the Song Suffragettes yellow rose of inspiration award during the March 3 installment of the show at The Listening Room in Nashville. From left: event director Maddie Lenhart, Dillon and Suffragettes founder Todd Cassetty.



Fathom Entertainment featured three songwriters performing live from the Analog in Nashville to movie theaters across the country in *Music Night: Live From Nashville!* on March 11. From left: Matt Jenkins (“Buy Dirt”), Kelly Archer (“I’m Gonna Love You”) and Brett James (“Jesus, Take the Wheel”)



Writer-artist Dylan Davidson (center) was announced March 13 as the first artist signed to Off Road Records in partnership with Reservoir. With him are Off Road president David Fanning (left) and senior vp of marketing and promotion Jamie Graves.

NASHVILLE MUSIC NETWORK

SAM ALDRICH

FOR YOUR ACM CONSIDERATION

KANE BROWN

ENTERTAINER

OF THE YEAR

MALE ARTIST

OF THE YEAR

SINGLE

OF THE YEAR

"MILES ON IT" (FEAT. MARSHMELLO)

MUSIC EVENT

OF THE YEAR

"MILES ON IT" (FEAT. MARSHMELLO)

VISUAL MEDIA

OF THE YEAR

"MILES ON IT" (FEAT. MARSHMELLO)



RCA RECORDS

billboard Country Airplay

AIRPLAY
MONITORED BY
LUMINATE

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

Unbelievable! Jelly Roll's 'Liar' Leads Country Airplay For Career-Best Fifth Week

Jelly Roll's "Liar" (Bailee & Buddy/BMG/Republic/Stoney Creek) rules *Billboard's* Country Airplay chart for a fifth consecutive week, becoming his sole longest-leading hit.

The song tops the list dated March 22 with 31 million audience impressions (down 5%) March 7-13, according to Luminate. The Nashville native co-authored it with **Ashley Gorley**, **Ben Johnson** and **Taylor Phillips**. It was produced by **Zach Crowell**. The track is from his studio set *Beautifully Broken*, which arrived as his first No. 1 on both Top Country Albums and the all-genre *Billboard* 200 last October.

"This is truly incredible," Jelly Roll tells *Billboard*. "Y'all have changed my life. Ben, Ashley and Taylor, y'all are all incredible — thank you for writing this one with me. Five weeks? This is just unreal."

"Liar" breaks out of a tie with "Need a Favor," which led for four weeks starting in August 2023, for Jelly Roll's longest Country Airplay command. "I Am Not Okay" is next, having logged three frames on top beginning last November. All seven of his entries have hit No. 1, with four tallying multiple-week dominations; additionally, "Save Me," with **Lainey Wilson**, led for two frames in December 2023.

Meanwhile, Jelly Roll is tied with **Kane Brown** for the longest active run of Country Airplay No. 1s. Most recently for Brown, "Miles on It," with **Marshmello**, led for one week in November. Brown is looking to up his streak to eight, as his latest single, "Backseat Driver" (Zone 4/RCA Nashville), holds at its No. 18 high (10 million, up 1%).

Jelly Roll's run of Country Airplay No. 1s, which began with "Son of a Sinner," his introductory hit at the format, in January 2023, is the second-longest out-of-the-gate streak in the chart's 36-year history. The longest belongs to **Luke Combs**, who snapped off 14 from the start in 2017-22. ●



JELLY ROLL

ERIC RYAN ANDERSON

MOST INCREASED AUDIENCE

TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	GAIN (IN MILLIONS)
I'M GONNA LOVE YOU CoJo/Warner Music Nashville/Capitol Nashville/WMN	Cody Johnson & Carrie Underwood	+3.593
THIS TOWN'S BEEN TOO GOOD TO US Curb	Dylan Scott	+2.597
I'M THE PROBLEM Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	+1.786
WHISKEY DRINK Macon/Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	+1.596
SINGLE AGAIN The Core/Universal Music Canada/Mercury Nashville	Josh Ross	+1.526
HOMETOWN HOME BMG/Galaxy Label Group	LOCASH	+1.343
PARK Hubbard House/EMI Nashville	Tyler Hubbard	+1.271
WORST WAY Nashville Harbor	Riley Green	+1.154
FRIENDS LIKE THAT Night Train/Broken Bow	John Morgan Featuring Jason Aldean	+1.119
3,2,1 Tucker Wetmore/Back Blocks/Republic/EMI Nashville	Tucker Wetmore	+0.897

MOST INCREASED PLAYS

TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	GAIN
I'M GONNA LOVE YOU CoJo/Warner Music Nashville/Capitol Nashville/WMN	Cody Johnson & Carrie Underwood	+1240
THIS TOWN'S BEEN TOO GOOD TO US Curb	Dylan Scott	+684
WHISKEY DRINK Macon/Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	+534
I'M THE PROBLEM Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	+435
WORST WAY Nashville Harbor	Riley Green	+412
PARK Hubbard House/EMI Nashville	Tyler Hubbard	+366
3,2,1 Tucker Wetmore/Back Blocks/Republic/EMI Nashville	Tucker Wetmore	+333
HOMETOWN HOME BMG/Galaxy Label Group	LOCASH	+302
SINGLE AGAIN The Core/Universal Music Canada/Mercury Nashville	Josh Ross	+301
FOREVER TO ME Warner Music Nashville/WMN	Cole Swindell	+208

RECURRENTS

THIS WEEK	TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	TOTAL AUD. (IN MILLIONS)
1	A BAR SONG (TIPSY) American Dogwood/EMPIRE/Magnolia Music	Shaboozey	18.590
2	POUR ME A DRINK Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Post Malone Featuring Blake Shelton	16.736
3	I HAD SOME HELP Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Post Malone Featuring Morgan Wallen	14.845
4	BOYS BACK HOME PIA/Curb/Columbia Nashville	Dylan Marlowe & Dylan Scott	13.252
5	I AM NOT OKAY Bailee & Buddy/BMG/Republic/Stoney Creek	Jelly Roll	11.341
6	GUY FOR THAT Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Post Malone Featuring Luke Combs	9.640
7	MILES ON IT Joytime Collective/RCA Nashville	Marshmello & Kane Brown	9.537
8	AUSTIN VERSION III/Warner/WMN	Dasha	9.465
9	COWGIRLS Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen Featuring ERNEST	8.951
10	WORLD ON FIRE RCA Nashville	Nate Smith	8.849



TEXAS REGIONAL RADIO REPORT

WEEK ENDING MARCH 13, 2025

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WKS ON CHART	TITLE (Label)	ARTIST	TW SPINS	SPINS +/-	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WKS ON CHART	TITLE (Label)	ARTIST	TW SPINS	SPINS +/-
1	2	20	ARE YOU WITH ME (Independent) ★★1 Week at 1★★	Case Hardin	1744	30	11	13	9	SOMEWHERE IN TEXAS (Independent)	Tristan Roberson	1237	121
2	3	17	BORDERLINE CRAZY (Independent)	William Beckmann	1653	70	12	14	8	DRIVE (Independent)	Jason Boland & The Stragglers	1201	94
3	5	10	SHE GOES GOOD WITH TEQUILA (Independent)	Brian Mars	1543	140	13	18	6	DAMN BABY (Independent)	Bubba Westly	1122	177
4	6	25	HER WAY AIN'T THE HIGHWAY (Independent)	Jake Bush	1536	140	14	16	20	AUSTIN ANYMORE (Independent)	Brandi Behlen	1053	49
5	4	16	LUBBOCK (Independent)	Flatland Cavalry	1500	24	15	19	8	THE WORKING MAN (Independent)	Cody Jinks	1045	101
6	8	10	ABILENE (LuckySky Music)	Tori Martin	1392	82	16	1	18	WHOSE TEQUILA ARE YOU DRINKIN' (Get Joe)	Billie Jo Jones	983	-737
7	10	10	5 TO 9 (Independent)	Hudson Westbrook	1345	78	17	17	16	WHAT'S LEFT OF MY HEART (No Big Deal)	Reckless Kelly	982	15
8	9	20	GOOD AGAIN, AMEN (Independent)	Keller Cox	1310	11	18	11	24	STAINED YOUR CROWN (Independent)	Bart Crow Band	981	-187
9	12	9	WEST OF FT WORTH (Independent)	Grant Gilbert	1277	111	19	20	10	BUCKLE OR THE BRIDE (Independent)	Caleb Young	970	82
10	7	26	ONE MORE FOR THE RIDE (Independent)	Ryder Grimes	1249	-136	20	21	11	PUT IT IN REVERSE (Independent)	Ben McPeak	953	77

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 2025, Texas Regional Radio Report

BLAKE SHELTON

FOR RECREATIONAL USE ONLY

ALBUM AVAILABLE MAY 9TH

FEATURING THE HIT SINGLE
"TEXAS"

OVER 11 MILLION ALBUMS SOLD

29 CAREER #1 HITS

OVER 10 BILLION GLOBAL STREAMS

[CLICK TO PRE-ORDER/PRE-ADD/PRE-SAVE](#)



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	1	18	LIAR Bailee & Buddy/BMG/Republic/Stoney Creek	Jelly Roll	30.991	-1.551	8383	-794	1
2	5	41	HOMETOWN HOME BMG/Galaxy Label Group	LOCASH	25.435	+1.343	7440	302	3
3	6	24	I'M GONNA LOVE YOU CoJo/Warner Music Nashville/Capitol Nashville/WMN	Cody Johnson & Carrie Underwood	24.484	+3.593	7668	1240	2
4	2	21	LOVE SOMEBODY Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	23.737	-1.944	6188	-493	5
5	7	53	THIS TOWN'S BEEN TOO GOOD TO US Curb	Dylan Scott	22.273	+2.597	6403	684	4
6	4	35	HIGH ROAD YellaBush/Columbia/RECORDS Nashville	Koe Wetzel & Jessie Murph	21.611	-2.596	5518	-837	7
7	8	48	FOREVER TO ME Warner Music Nashville/WMN	Cole Swindell	19.501	+0.855	5554	208	6
8	3	34	I AIN'T SAYIN' MCA Nashville	Jordan Davis	18.467	-7.005	5409	-2122	9
9	9	22	I NEVER LIE Leo33	Zach Top	18.379	+0.355	5262	13	10
10	10	47	FRIENDS LIKE THAT Night Train/Broken Bow	John Morgan Featuring Jason Aldean	17.957	+1.119	5455	207	8
11	12	6	I'M THE PROBLEM Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	17.738	+1.786	5152	435	11
12	11	17	TEXAS Ten Point/Wheelhouse	Blake Shelton	16.241	+0.216	5030	-13	12
13	14	33	WHISKEY DRINK Macon/Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	14.282	+1.596	4349	534	13
14	13	39	HOLY SMOKES Elektra/Warner Music Nashville/WEA	Bailey Zimmerman	13.825	+0.278	4295	120	14
15	15	30	AM I OKAY? Megan Moroney/Columbia/Columbia Nashville	Megan Moroney	12.510	+0.277	4099	84	15
16	16	19	TOUGH PEOPLE Patoka Sounds/Lyric Ridge/Stoney Creek	Drew Baldridge	12.199	+0.237	3791	123	16
17	17	35	JUST TO SAY WE DID Blue Chair/Warner Music Nashville/WEA	Kenny Chesney	10.229	-0.045	3583	119	17
18	18	19	BACKSEAT DRIVER Zone 4/RCA Nashville	Kane Brown	9.968	+0.051	3261	-124	19
19	19	37	COMING HOME Three Up Three Down/Columbia Nashville	Old Dominion	9.671	+0.293	3303	-116	18
20	20	11	WEREN'T FOR THE WIND SAWGOD/Columbia/Triple Tigers	Ella Langley	8.657	+0.509	2740	171	21
21	23	50	SINGLE AGAIN The Core/Universal Music Canada/Mercury Nashville	Josh Ross	7.869	+1.526	2784	301	20
22	22	27	PARK Hubbard House/EMI Nashville	Tyler Hubbard	7.750	+1.271	2561	366	22
23	21	33	TRUCK ON FIRE Big Machine	Carly Pearce	7.265	+0.373	2491	107	23
24	24	14	WORST WAY Nashville Harbor	Riley Green	7.232	+1.154	2273	412	25
25	26	38	THIS HEART Combustion Masters/RCA Nashville	Corey Kent	5.748	+0.616	1897	186	28
26	25	38	COWBOYS CRYTOO Black River	Kelsea Ballerini & Noah Kahan	5.659	-0.075	2380	-33	24
27	28	50	LIFE WITH YOU Curb	Kelsey Hart	4.891	+0.101	2038	-42	26
28	27	40	FALL OF SUMMER Triple Tigers	Scotty McCreery	4.759	-0.043	1969	-1	27
29	29	30	COUNTRY HOUSE MCA Nashville	Sam Hunt	4.464	-0.036	1813	-4	29
30	31	18	FIX WHAT YOU DIDN'T BREAK RCA Nashville	Nate Smith	4.262	+0.341	1544	27	32

COUNTRY AIRPLAY CHART LEGEND

RANKINGS

Country Airplay is ranked by total audience impressions for the week ending Sunday based on monitored airplay by Mediabase of 145 stations by Luminate. Audience totals on the chart are derived, in part, using certain Nielsen Audio-copyrighted Persons 12+ audience estimates (under license © 2025, 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.

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	27	FRIDAY NIGHT HEARTBREAKER Capitol Nashville	Jon Pardi	4.234	+0.256	1677	-13	30
32	32	25	HEAVENSTO BETSY Big Machine	Jackson Dean	3.692	+0.182	1643	-80	31
33	34	17	COUNTRY SONG CAME ON Capitol Nashville	Luke Bryan	3.532	+0.286	1504	80	33
34	38	7	GOOD NEWS American Dogwood/EMPIRE/Magnolia Music	Shaboozey	3.484	+0.555	1315	127	37
35	35	26	WHAT KINDA MAN MCA Nashville	Parker McCollum	3.334	+0.134	1339	-16	36
36	36	40	EVERYTHING I NEED 19/Wheelhouse	Chayce Beckham	3.159	+0.093	1444	51	34
37	37	6	I DARE YOU Big Machine	Rascal Flatts & Jonas Brothers	3.155	+0.184	1344	9	35
38	40	4	SHE HATES ME Capitol Nashville	Dierks Bentley	2.961	+0.485	1078	105	39
39	39	4	AFTER ALL THE BARS ARE CLOSED Fifty-One/Forty-Nine/Valory	Thomas Rhett	2.887	+0.266	1082	42	38
40	33	9	STRAIGHT LINE Hit Red/Capitol Nashville	Keith Urban	2.440	-0.942	899	-62	42
41	41	20	RELAPSE 717/Warner/WEA	Warren Zeiders	1.985	+0.041	895	-4	43
42	44	7	IT WON'T BE LONG RECORDS Nashville	George Birge	1.879	+0.299	1001	79	40
43	43	17	WOULD I COULD Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	ERNEST	1.870	+0.234	952	58	41
44	45	9	10-90 Stancaster/Thirty Tigers/Big Machine	Muscadine Bloodline	1.565	+0.023	587	1	52
45	47	7	INDIGO Lockeland Springs/Atlantic/Magnolia Music	Sam Barber Featuring Avery Anna	1.369	+0.047	606	8	51
46	50	10	COWGIRL Stoney Creek	Parmalee	1.346	+0.175	759	42	47
47	46	17	BETTER THAN YOU Quartz Hill/Stone Country	Joe Nichols / Annie Bosko	1.330	-0.149	828	-25	45
48	49	12	TIME'S TICKING Valory	Justin Moore	1.250	-0.004	841	19	44
49	NEW	3,2,1	Tucker Wetmore/Back Blocks/Republic/EMI Nashville ★★ Hot Shot Debut ★★	Tucker Wetmore	1.176	+0.897	459	333	56
50	48	24	TRUCK STILL WORKS Loaded Goat/EMI Nashville	Brad Paisley	1.166	-0.106	615	-47	50
51	51	15	DARLIN' Warner Music Nashville/WAR	Chase Matthew	1.158	+0.049	626	1	48
52	52	14	GOLDEN CHILD Riser House	Meghan Patrick	1.098	+0.152	792	14	46
53	53	10	WOLVES CRY Average Joes	Bryan Martin	0.811	-0.124	507	6	54
54	55	4	ENDS OF THE EARTH RECORDS/Columbia/RECORDS Nashville	Ty Myers	0.739	+0.018	180	6	-
55	54	5	BETTER ME FOR YOU (BROWN EYES) Fugitive Recordings/Magnolia Music	Max McNown	0.725	-0.088	619	9	49
56	56	6	HUNG UP ON YOU Republic Nashville/Mercury Nashville	Bryce Leatherwood	0.704	+0.046	379	-24	-
57	NEW	HOUSE AGAIN	River House/Warner Music Nashville/WMN	Hudson Westbrook	0.664	+0.234	149	39	-
58	59	2	WISH YOU WELL Music Soup/Interscope/MCA Nashville	Vincent Mason	0.662	+0.024	463	52	55
59	NEW	CRY	Curb	Lee Brice	0.636	+0.155	309	118	-
60	57	16	I COULD BETHAT RAIN Warner Music Nashville/WMN	Randall King	0.623	-0.033	347	-101	-



Vincent Mason performed March 7 in the KKWF Seattle *New Country Night Out* series at Steel Creek. From left: Tampa Bay Buccaneers player Cade Otton, MCA Nashville director of Midwest promotion Donna Passuntino, Mason and Audacy regional vp of country/KKWF brand manager Drew Bland.



Kane Brown took part in the multi-artist Texas Independence Jam, presented by KSCS Dallas, on March 9 at Billy Bob's Texas in Fort Worth. From left: KSCS/KPLX PD Mike Preston, Brown, KSCS assistant PD/music director Al Farb, Cumulus/Dallas promotions director Jessica MacKenzie-Williams and Sony Music Nashville vp of radio marketing and promotion Mallory Michaels.

FOR YOUR ACM CONSIDERATION

LUKE COMBS

ONLY COUNTRY ARTIST WITH
3 DIAMOND SINGLES

OVER 2.5 MILLION TICKETS SOLD IN 2023 & 2024

ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR

MALE ARTIST OF THE YEAR

ALBUM OF THE YEAR
FATHERS & SONS

SINGLE OF THE YEAR
"AINT NO LOVE IN OKLAHOMA"

VISUAL MEDIA OF THE YEAR
"AINT NO LOVE IN OKLAHOMA"



“The Gen Z Country Queen We Need” - RollingStone



FOR YOUR ACM CONSIDERATION

MEGAN MORONEY

FEATURED ON

NPR's Tiny Desk

Rolling Stone's Future Of Music COVER

Billboard's 2025 Women In Music Rulebreaker

ALBUM
OF THE YEAR
AM I OKAY?
(I'LL BE FINE)

**FEMALE
ARTIST**
OF THE YEAR

SINGLE
OF THE YEAR
“AM I OKAY?”

SONG
OF THE YEAR
“NO CALLER ID”

**VISUAL
MEDIA**
OF THE YEAR
“AM I OKAY?”



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

Big Machine Label Group chairman/CEO Scott Borchetta (center) received the Bob Kingsley living legend award on March 10 at the Grand Ole Opry House. Celebrating with him (from left) are Crook & Chase co-host Lorianne Crook, BMLG executive vp of creative Sandi Spika Borchetta, Crook & Chase co-host Charlie Chase and Country Music Association CEO Sarah Trahern.

8X2 ON ACM RADIO AWARDS BALLOT

Eight stations received double nominations as the Academy of Country Music announced finalists for the ACM Radio Awards on March 10.

Outlets that were recognized in both the on-air personality and station of the year categories were **WUSN** Chicago (major market); **WSIX** Nashville and **WQDR** Raleigh, N.C. (large market); **WHKO** Dayton, Ohio; **WIVK** Knoxville, Tenn.; and **WUSY** Chattanooga, Tenn. (medium market); and **KCLR** Columbia, Mo.; and **WYCT** Pensacola, Fla. (small market).

The winners will be announced ahead of the 60th ACM Awards and celebrated during ACM Awards week.

The ACM Awards will be held May 8 at Ford Center at The Star in Frisco, Texas, and stream live on Prime Video. **Reba McEntire** will again host the show. This will mark the 18th time she has hosted or co-hosted the event, placing her just one show behind **Bob Hope** as the most frequent host of any major awards show. Hope hosted or co-hosted the Academy Awards 19 times between 1940 and 1978. McEntire first co-hosted the ACM Awards in 1986, alongside **Mac Davis** and **John Schneider**, and first served as solo host in 2002.

The awards return to Frisco for the third consecutive year. Ford Center at The Star opened in 2016 and serves as the practice facility for the Dallas Cowboys, as well as the home for many major sporting events throughout the year.

Go [here](#) for the full list of ACM Radio Awards finalists. —Paul Grein

RADIO & RECORDS®

Big Loud announced the signing of **Thelma & James** on March 14. The duo includes **MacKenzie Porter**, who was already on the roster as a solo artist, and her husband, **Jake Etheridge**. The move follows the January release of their collaboration “Happy Ever After You” ... Writer-producer **David Fanning (Parmalee, Avery Anna)** launched Off Road Records in partnership with Reservoir. Its first signee is **Dylan Davidson**, whose inaugural single in the deal, “Wine Night,” was issued March 14. Co-partner **Jamie Graves** serves as senior vp of marketing and promotion, segueing from Warner Music Nashville senior director of commercial partnerships ... **Craig Campbell**’s Grindstone Recordings enlisted Hodges Entertainment owner **Steve Hodges** for the promotion team behind new single “Missing You” ... **Sammy Arriaga**’s Dead Rose label partnered with Walk Off Entertainment, owned by 615 House founder **Chris Ruediger**. The first single in the arrangement, “Left My Heart in Texas,” was released March 14 ... SiriusXM reduced its staff size on March 10, with the bulk of the layoffs in the product and technology group. It marked the third straight year of staff reductions for the satcaster ... Audacy enacted a round of layoffs that likely affected over 250 employees, RadioInsight.com

reported. Among those who were let go: Audacy/Nashville country music digital content lead **Monica Rivera** and **KFRG** Riverside-San Bernardino, Calif., morning co-host **Guy David** ... **WGNE** Jacksonville, Fla., hired **Steve Sutton** to join the morning team, according to RadioInsight.com. He replaced **Eden Kendall**, who recently left the company, returning Sutton to a role he last occupied in 2022.

‘ROUND THE ROW

PR firm Sacks & Co. made two moves in its Nashville office, promoting **Catherine Snead** to senior director of publicity from director and hiring associate **Jessica Vandergriff**, a former 117 Entertainment publicist ... Spotify Nashville head of editorial **Rachel Whitney** has taken a sabbatical ... The Academy of Country Music is seeking a head of strategic partnerships/revenue. Send résumés and applications to the ACM [here](#) ... Concord Music Publishing signed artist-writer **Zachary Knowles** to the roster ... The Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame will induct **The Great Divide**, **Stoney LaRue**, **Jason Boland & The Stragglers** and **Cross Canadian Ragweed** on April 10 during a concert at Boone Pickens Stadium in Stillwater, Okla. ... **Cross Canadian Ragweed** will also receive a key to the city of Arlington, Texas, during the 15th annual Texas Regional Radio and Music Awards March 23-24. **Michael Martin Murphey** will similarly receive a key to the city plus a T3R living legend award ... The Nashville Songwriters Association International named **Josie Bisto**’s “Love Lies” the song category grand-prize winner in the 25th annual NSAI Song Contest. The track will be performed by co-writer **Meagan Allen** on March 27 during the Tin Pan South Songwriters Festival in Nashville ... The Unsigned Only Music Competition has rebranded as the Unsigned Only Music Awards. Among the judges in this year’s multigenre event are **LeAnn Rimes**, **Ruthie Foster** and **The Devil Makes Three** ... **Bobby Bare Jr.** will host an Americana salute to **Bobby Bare** on April 7 at Nashville’s Basement East that features **Steve Earle**, **Shawn Camp**, **Jamey Johnson** and **Emmylou Harris & Buddy Miller**. The concert is the first of four events in a weeklong celebration of Bare’s 90th birthday that folds in the Bluebird Cafe, the Grand Ole Opry House and the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum ... Next Century Spirits acquired **Kenny Chesney**’s Blue Chair Bay Rum. Chesney retains a stake in the brand ... **Jordan Davis** partnered with Wolverine Boots. The agreement includes plans for a custom collection arriving this fall ... **Darryl Worley**, **T. Graham Brown**, **John Berry** and **Jamie O’Neal** headline an Acoustic Evening for Autism, a benefit set for the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center’s autism program, on April 1 at the Nashville Palace ... **T.G. Sheppard** and **Kelly Lang** will host Country for a Cause on June 4 at Nashville’s 3rd & Lindsley on the eve of CMA Fest. The lineup includes **The Oak Ridge Boys**, **Mandy Barnett**, **Jimmy Fortune** and **Lacy J. Dalton**. ●



A Randy Travis biopic, *Forever and Ever, Amen*, was announced March 5 at the Grand Ole Opry, with Clay Walker tapped to portray Travis as an adult. From left: producer Eric Groth, Walker, Travis and Travis’ wife/spokesperson, Mary Travis.

JASON ALDEAN

FOR YOUR ACM CONSIDERATION

MALE ARTIST OF THE YEAR

MUSIC EVENT OF THE YEAR
JOHN MORGAN "FRIENDS LIKE THAT
(FEAT. JASON ALDEAN)"

ACM ARTIST OF THE DECADE

28 CAREER #1 HITS

OVER 20 BILLION GLOBAL STREAMS

OVER 20 MILLION ALBUMS SOLD



BMG



LAINÉY WILSON

FOR YOUR ACM CONSIDERATION

ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR

FEMALE ARTIST OF THE YEAR

ALBUM OF THE YEAR *WHIRLWIND*

SONG OF THE YEAR "4X4XU"

SINGLE OF THE YEAR "4X4XU"

VISUAL MEDIA OF THE YEAR "4X4XU"



JELLY ROLL

FOR YOUR
ACM CONSIDERATION

ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR

SNL 50 Season Premiere Musical Guest:

HISTORIC

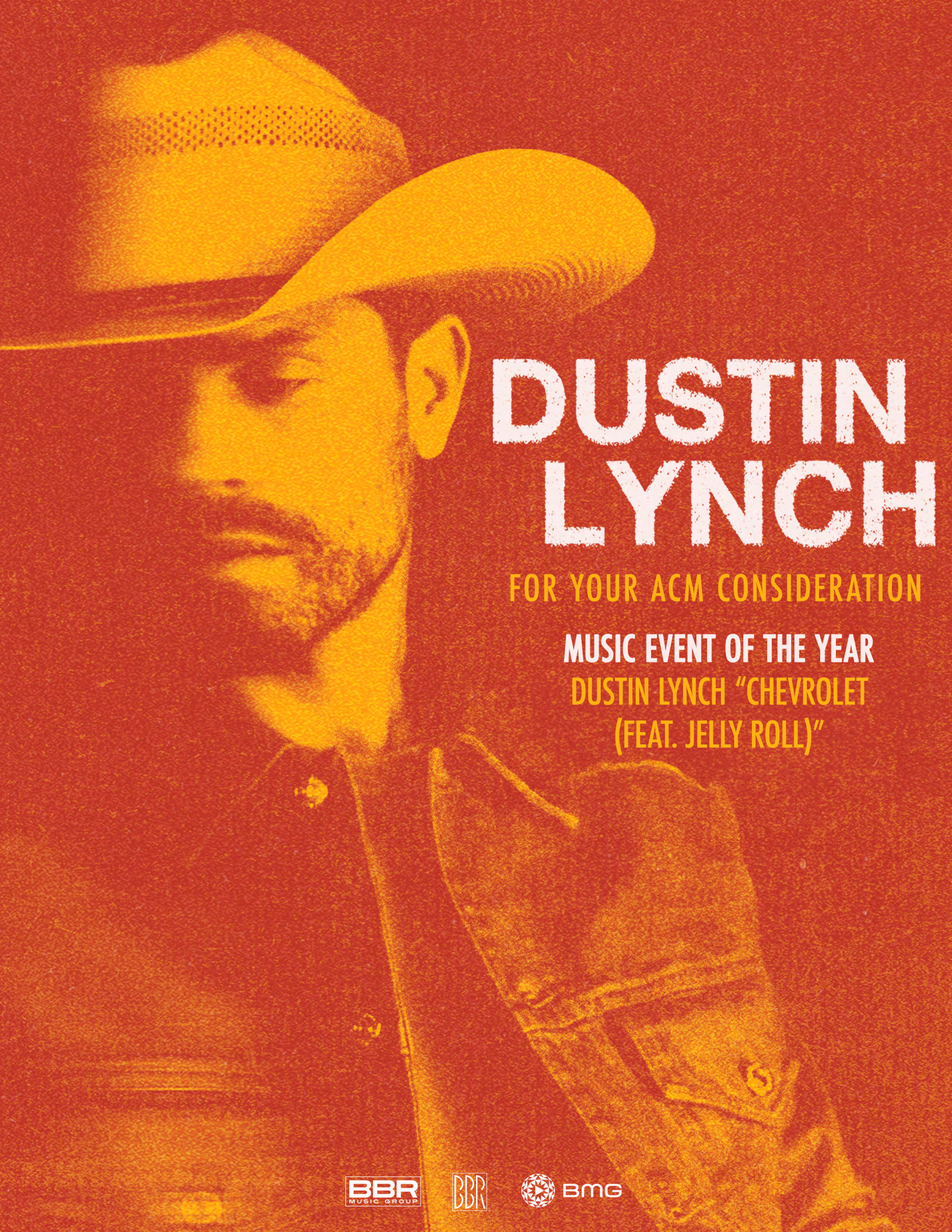
Album *Beautifully Broken* reached #1 on Billboard Top 200

MOMENTOUS

1 of 1 country artists to help +1M souls heal together in-concert:

UNMATCHED





DUSTIN LYNCH

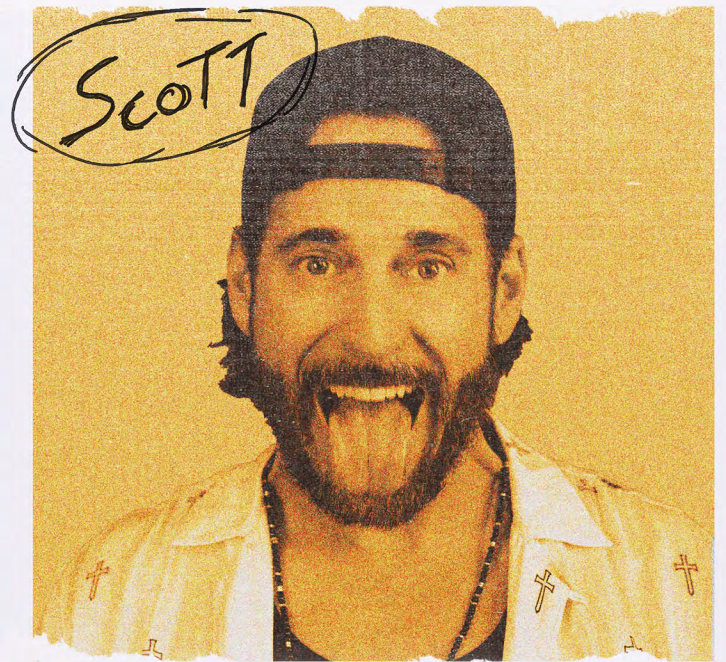
FOR YOUR ACM CONSIDERATION

MUSIC EVENT OF THE YEAR
DUSTIN LYNCH "CHEVROLET
(FEAT. JELLY ROLL)"



parmalee

FOR YOUR ACM CONSIDERATION



GROUP OF THE YEAR





BMG

FOR YOUR ACM CONSIDERATION

ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR

JELLY ROLL
LAINEY WILSON

ALBUM OF THE YEAR

JELLY ROLL *BEAUTIFULLY BROKEN*
LAINEY WILSON *WHIRLWIND*

MALE ARTIST OF THE YEAR

JASON ALDEAN
JELLY ROLL

SINGLE OF THE YEAR

LAINEY WILSON "4X4XU"
JELLY ROLL "I AM NOT OKAY"

FEMALE ARTIST OF THE YEAR

LAINEY WILSON

SONG OF THE YEAR

LAINEY WILSON "4X4XU"

GROUP OF THE YEAR

PARMALEE

MUSIC EVENT OF THE YEAR

DUSTIN LYNCH "CHEVROLET
(FEAT. JELLY ROLL)"

NEW MALE ARTIST OF THE YEAR

CHAYCE BECKHAM
DREW BALDRIDGE

JOHN MORGAN "FRIENDS LIKE THAT
(FEAT. JASON ALDEAN)"

VISUAL MEDIA OF THE YEAR

LAINEY WILSON "4X4XU"

FOR YOUR

→ ACM ←

CONSIDERATION



TUCKER WETMORE

NEW MALE ARTIST OF THE YEAR

SINGLE OF THE YEAR - "WINDUP MISSIN' YOU"



C

5 Years Ago No 'Bones' About It: Maren Morris Was No. 1

After a year-plus climb, crossover smash "The Bones" topped Hot Country Songs in March 2020

On March 14, 2020, **Maren Morris'** "The Bones" rose one spot to No. 1 on *Billboard's* Hot Country Songs chart, becoming her first leader on the list.

The song — which Morris co-wrote with **Laura Veltz** and **Jimmy Robbins**, and **Greg Kurstin** produced — reached the penthouse in its 53rd chart week, beginning a 19-week domination. It also led Country Airplay for two frames in February 2020, becoming her fourth leader, and ruled Adult Pop Airplay for one week that April and Adult Contemporary for one week that September.

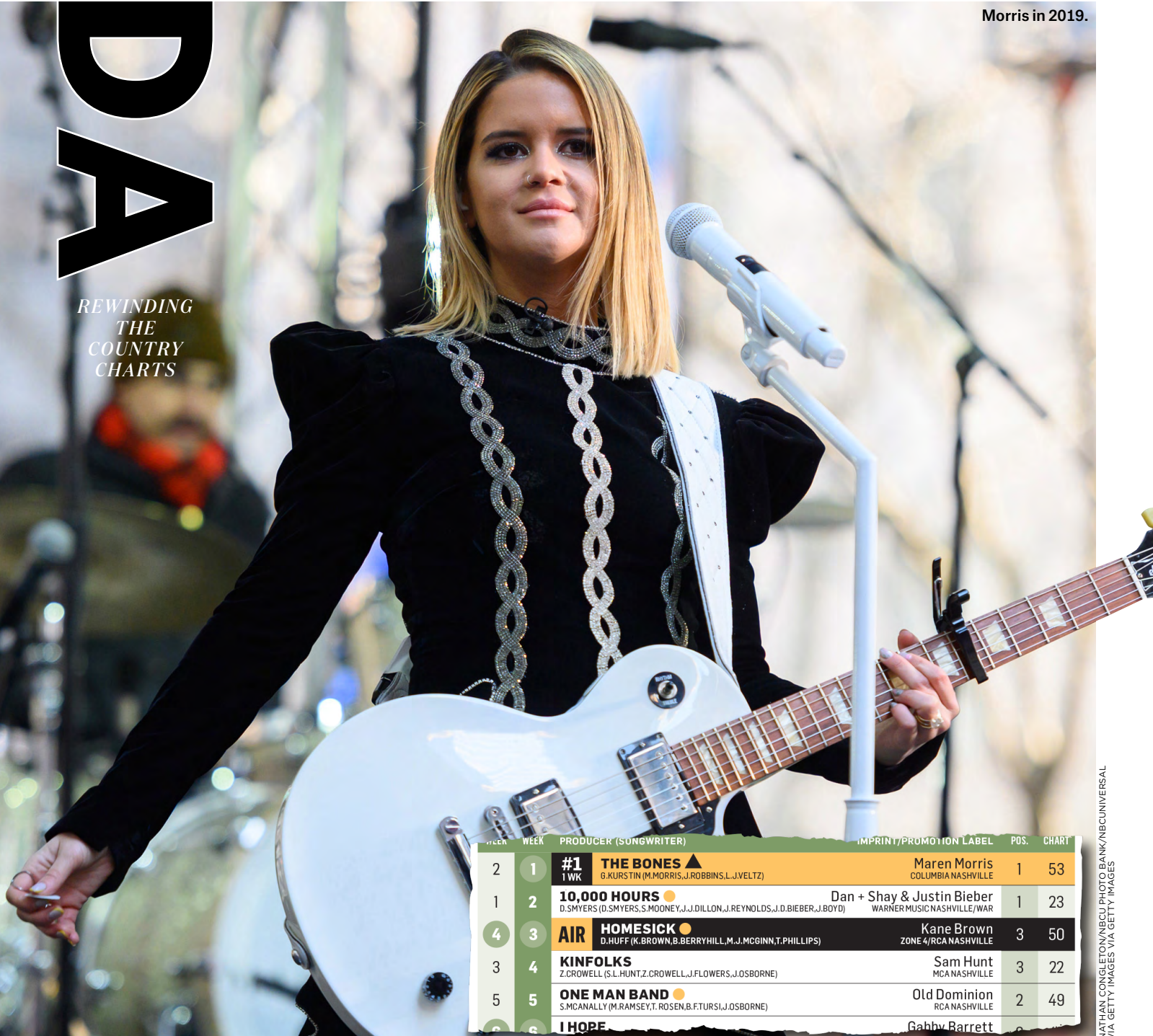
"The fans have spoken on this one," Morris told *Billboard* upon "The Bones" crowning Country Airplay. "It's a real, gritty love song. I couldn't be more proud that it's become one of the biggest songs of my career to date."

The Arlington, Texas, native sent her debut single, "My Church" (which pays homage to the Grand Ole Opry), to No. 5 on Hot Country Songs in March 2016; her first of nine top 10s. In August 2024, she segued to pop with the EP *Intermission*. Her next run of tour dates will begin July 12 in Quebec. —JIM ASKER

DA

REWINDING
THE
COUNTRY
CHARTS

Morris in 2019.



WEEK	PRODUCER (SONGWRITER)	IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL	POS.	CHART
2	#1 1 WK THE BONES ▲ G. KURSTIN (M. MORRIS, J. ROBBINS, L. J. VELTZ)	Maren Morris COLUMBIA NASHVILLE	1	53
1	10,000 HOURS ● D. SMYERS (D. SMYERS, S. MOONEY, J. J. DILLON, J. REYNOLDS, J. D. BIEBER, J. BOYD)	Dan + Shay & Justin Bieber WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE/WAR	1	23
4	AIR HOMESICK ● D. HUFF (K. BROWN, B. BERRYHILL, M. J. MCGINN, T. PHILLIPS)	Kane Brown ZONE 4/RCA NASHVILLE	3	50
3	KINFOLKS Z. CROWELL (S. L. HUNT, Z. CROWELL, J. FLOWERS, J. OSBORNE)	Sam Hunt MCA NASHVILLE	3	22
5	ONE MAN BAND ● S. MCANALLY (M. RAMSEY, T. ROSEN, B. F. TURS, J. OSBORNE)	Old Dominion RCA NASHVILLE	2	49
6	I HOPE	Gabby Barrett		

NATHAN CONGLETON/NBCU PHOTO BANK/NBCUNIVERSAL VIA GETTY IMAGES VIA GETTY IMAGES