

billboard Country Update

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BILLBOARD COUNTRY UPDATE

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Artist Managers Max Out Opportunities At CMA Fest

Hundreds of country artists, from superstars to new aspirants, will spend June 5-8 saying thanks to their fan base and working to build new audiences when an expected 90,000 daily visitors attend CMA Fest in Nashville.

But for most of those artists, there'll be one or more people at their side who are likewise invested in making the most of the annual event. Managers benefit when their artists expand their fan bases and increase consumption, driving up ticket prices and boosting merchandise sales.

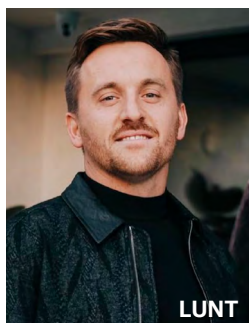
Thus, those managers are focused on maxing out the connection their acts make with consumers during CMA Fest, but they have other interests during the festival, too: evaluating the market, networking with industry contacts and checking out other artists they might want to sign.

"I can go around town and see 20 things in a day instead of having to take 20 days to see 20 things," says Play It Again Music GM **Cade Price**, who manages **Dylan Marlowe**, **Faith Hopkins** and **Slater Nalley**. "It's not like we're trying to go sign anything and everything, but it's CMA Fest. I think we do ourselves a disfavor if we don't go out there and see. You just never know who you're going to stumble onto."

Fans have a good idea of the artists they may see. Nightly concerts at Nissan Stadium are one of the primary attractions for CMA Fest, an annual event since 1972 that has generated a summer network TV special for more than 20 years. **Keith Urban**, **Cody Johnson**, **Rascal Flatts**, **Jason Aldean**, **Scotty McCreery**, **Luke Bryan** and **Blake Shelton** are among the nearly 30 artists slated for the stadium main stage this year.

But while the football field garners the most attention, some of the most important work of CMA Fest occurs during the day at nine smaller festival stages, plus a bundle of unofficial adjunct performance spots. Those platforms help new and developing artists, in particular, showcase their talents to consumers in their target audience who may not otherwise be fully aware of them. This year's participants on those building stages include **Bryce Leatherwood**, **Charlie Worsham**, **Cooper Alan**, **Crowe Boys**, **Hudson Westbrook**, **Madeline Edwards** and **Tyler Braden**.

It's a massive opportunity for fans to experience artists they don't know well and, in turn, a prime chance for artist managers to get a big-picture assessment of country's most avid fans.



LUNT



PRICE



MUSACCHIO

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"It's always kind of fun to observe the people that come in and get a good idea of what the country fan base looks like at that point in time," says Champ Management founder **Matt Musacchio**, who counts **Vincent Mason**, **Jessie James Decker**, **Dawson Anderson**, **Abbie Callahan** and **Sons of Habit** as clients. "You see how the fan base differs from artist to artist and stage to stage, depending on who's playing."

Unlike their artists, most managers are able to blend in with the crowd, and it provides them a great opportunity to move across the Downtown Nashville footprint. Much of their day is spent shepherding their acts through their schedules, and they're bound to encounter other executives and musicians they already know backstage. But most have some breakaway moments when they can check out other performances and new amenities, where they're likely to run across industry contacts.

"For me personally, it was massive," says Los Angeles-based Type A Management founder **Alex Lunt**, who attended his first CMA Fest in 2024 with **Dasha**. "It was an amazing opportunity to really just tap in with the entire country community because you have everybody. You even have all the coastal label execs there. They're all going to come to CMA Fest."

The scouting gives a better sense of the opportunities, too. That's particularly valuable as their artists return year after year and their goals change. Lunt's first experience a year ago, when Dasha's single "Austin" was breaking out, was an overload.

"Last year, we were just kind of like a fire hose to the mouth and saying yes to everything," he notes.

Dasha played two songs on the spotlight stage at the stadium, the first time she had performed for an audience of 50,000. But she also packed some of the smaller adjunct events in Nashville bars. For this year, they focused more on branding, creating a line-dance experience at the Whiskey Bent Saloon.

"She'll have her *Coyote Ugly* moment, perform on the bar and do a couple numbers," Lunt notes. "We just wanted to give her her statement, and we're calling it 'Dashville' because her whole tour is basically called 'Welcome to Dashville.'"

For managers with years of CMA Fest history, every iteration brings new perspective on the format and their clients.

"It's fun to see the artist's career grow incrementally with what they're doing at CMA Fest every year," Musacchio says. "It's always, I think, a good gauge of how the last year has been and where things are going, and kind of where the artist sits in the grand scheme of things."

It's also a great motivator for manager and artist. The large turnout from the country audience invariably reminds participants how many consumers are willing to invest in the genre. But it also offers a physical reminder of how many artists are competing for those listeners. Hopefully, both the manager and the artist find motivation in that part of the experience.

"It makes you think about how much new music is being released each week," Price says. "That's allowing us to see that and gets our minds going: 'What do we need to be doing to stand out in the crowd?'"



Emmylou Harris and producer Daniel Lanois (right) were honored during the May 16 Grammy Hall of Fame Gala at the Beverly Hilton as her album *Wrecking Ball* entered the Grammy Hall. Also pictured is Grammy Museum president Michael Sticka.



Alison Krauss (left), shown with Dolly Parton, performed May 19 at a party for the opening of the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum exhibit "Dolly Parton: Journey of a Seeker."



Jon Pardi performed May 21 as the Recording Academy's Nashville Chapter held its annual Block Party. He was accompanied by Nashville Chapter senior executive director Alicia Warwick.

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

Ross Scores First Top 10 ‘Single’ On Country Airplay; Wallen’s ‘Problem’ Persists At No. 1

Singer-songwriter **Josh Ross**, 30, from Waterdown, Ontario, achieves his first top 10 on *Billboard*’s Country Airplay chart as his first entry, “Single Again” (The Core/Universal Music Canada/Mercury Nashville), pushes 11-10 on the list dated May 31. The song increased by 10% to 16.6 million impressions May 16-22, according to Luminate. It’s from Ross’ eight-song set *Complicated* that arrived in March 2024. It hit No. 2 on the Canada Country chart last October, becoming the fifth of his six career-opening top 10s.



JACK OWENS

Ross co-authored “Single Again” with **Joe Fox** and **Brad Rempel**, and **Matt Geroux** produced it. (Fellow Canadian Rempel is a member of the group **High Valley**, which has notched 20 top 10s on Canada Country in 2012-24.)

Notably, “Single Again” reaches the Country Airplay top 10 in its 60th week on the chart, wrapping the third-longest trip to the tier since the survey launched in January 1990. In April 2023, **Brett Young**’s “You Didn’t” reached its No. 10 high in 70 weeks, while **Chase Matthew**’s “Love You Again” hit No. 10 in 62 frames (before peaking at No. 9).


NICE ‘PROBLEM’ TO HAVE **Morgan Wallen**’s “I’m the Problem” (Mercury/Republic/Big Loud) tops Country Airplay for a sixth total and consecutive week (31.7 million, down 1%). It became the third No. 1 from his album of the same name ahead of its May 16 release, following “Love Somebody” (three weeks in February) and “Lies Lies Lies” (one week, November). His latest single being promoted to country radio, “Just in Case,” rises 15-13 (14.8 million, up 8%).

“I’m the Problem” is the third of Wallen’s 17 Country Airplay No. 1s to reign for six frames or more, after “You Proof,” which shares the record for the most time on top (10 weeks, 2022-23), and “Last Night” (eight weeks, 2023). Five total cuts from *I’m the Problem* are scaling Country Airplay, with the title track and “Just in Case” followed in the top 40 by “I Ain’t Coming Back,” with **Post Malone** (43-32; 2.9 million, up 48%). ●

MOST INCREASED AUDIENCE			
TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	GAIN (IN MILLIONS)	
BACKUP PLAN Atlantic/Warner Music Nashville/WEA	Bailey Zimmerman & Luke Combs	+2.816	
WORST WAY Nashville Harbor	Riley Green	+2.503	
AFTER ALL THE BARS ARE CLOSED Fifty-One/Forty-Nine/Valory	Thomas Rhett	+2.147	
WHISKEY DRINK Macon/Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	+1.650	
WEREN'T FOR THE WIND SAWGOD/Columbia/Triple Tigers	Ella Langley	+1.579	
THIS HEART Combustion Masters/RCA Nashville	Corey Kent	+1.523	
PARK Hubbard House/EMI Nashville	Tyler Hubbard	+1.502	
JUST IN CASE Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	+1.449	
SINGLE AGAIN The Core/Universal Music Canada/Mercury Nashville	Josh Ross	+1.441	
COUNTRY SONG CAME ON Capitol Nashville/MCA Nashville	Luke Bryan	+1.181	

MOST INCREASED PLAYS			
TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	GAIN	
WORST WAY Nashville Harbor	Riley Green	+704	
BACKUP PLAN Atlantic/Warner Music Nashville/WEA	Bailey Zimmerman & Luke Combs	+687	
WEREN'T FOR THE WIND SAWGOD/Columbia/Triple Tigers	Ella Langley	+589	
AFTER ALL THE BARS ARE CLOSED Fifty-One/Forty-Nine/Valory	Thomas Rhett	+567	
FIX WHAT YOU DIDN'T BREAK RCA Nashville	Nate Smith	+516	
SINGLE AGAIN The Core/Universal Music Canada/Mercury Nashville	Josh Ross	+465	
HAPPEN TO ME Triple Tigers	Russell Dickerson	+459	
JUST IN CASE Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	+425	
AM I OKAY? Megan Moroney/Columbia/Columbia Nashville	Megan Moroney	+395	
WHISKEY DRINK Macon/Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	+374	

RECURRENTS			
THIS WEEK	TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	TOTAL AUD. (IN MILLIONS)
1	LIAR Bailee & Buddy/BMG/Republic/Stoney Creek	Jelly Roll	17.900
2	LOVE SOMEBODY Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	15.539
3	HIGH ROAD YellaBush/Columbia/RECORDS Nashville	Koe Wetzel & Jessie Murph	14.892
4	POUR ME A DRINK Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Post Malone Featuring Blake Shelton	14.467
5	A BAR SONG (TIPSY) American Dogwood/EMPIRE/Magnolia Music	Shaboozey	13.158
6	I HAD SOME HELP Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Post Malone Featuring Morgan Wallen	11.894
7	I NEVER LIE Leo33	Zach Top	11.127
8	FRIENDS LIKE THAT Night Train/Broken Bow	John Morgan Featuring Jason Aldean	10.237
9	THIS TOWN'S BEEN TOO GOOD TO US Curb	Dylan Scott	9.670
10	I AM NOT OKAY Bailee & Buddy/BMG/Republic/Stoney Creek	Jelly Roll	8.714



TEXAS REGIONAL RADIO REPORT

WEEK ENDING MAY 22, 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	16	DAMN BABY (Independent) ★★ 1 Week at 1 ★★	Bubba Westly	1773	89	11	11	11	BREAK ITSELF (Tommy Jackson/Thirty Tigers)	Randy Rogers Band	1255	0
2	3	18	DRIVE (Independent)	Jason Boland & The Stragglers	1579	-8	12	13	20	AIN'T THAT LOVE (Independent)	Bri Bagwell & Timber Wilde	1231	22
3	4	30	AUSTIN ANYMORE (Independent)	Brandi Behlen	1531	20	13	14	18	I DON'T APOLOGIZE (Independent)	James Lann	1228	47
4	5	15	ROLLIN' ON (Flying C)	Brooke Graham	1522	13	14	15	18	WHAT I CAME TO DO (Independent)	Jesse Raub Jr.	1210	60
5	7	13	GREEN IN COLORADO (Independent)	Casey Donahew	1507	106	15	17	6	RUBY ANN (Independent)	Turnpike Troubadours	1171	119
6	8	12	NOTHIN' BUT TEXAS (Bowen Sounds/Thirty Tigers)	Wade Bowen	1465	65	16	18	8	MY JOHN WAYNE (Independent)	Kylie Frey	1142	111
7	6	21	PUT IT IN REVERSE (Independent)	Ben McPeak	1448	30	17	16	15	WHO'S HANGING THE MOON (Independent)	Josh Weathers	1074	14
8	10	14	HURRICANE (CDX)	Sandee June	1307	39	18	1	19	WEST OFT WORTH (Independent)	Grant Gilbert	1068	-865
9	12	18	THE WORKING MAN (Independent)	Cody Jinks	1303	80	19	21	7	BEER DON'T CARE (Independent)	Tilluride	996	123
10	9	20	BUCKLE OR THE BRIDE (Independent)	Caleb Young	1289	14	20	20	16	HOME FOR A HOTEL (Independent)	Ghosts of Hill County	915	16

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

billboardCountry Airplay

AIRPLAY
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THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WKS ON CHART	TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	AUDIENCE (IN MILLIONS)		PLAYS		
					THIS WEEK	+/-	THIS WEEK	+/-	RANK
1	1	16	I'M THE PROBLEM Mercury/Republic/Big Loud ★★ No. 1 (6 Weeks) ★★	Morgan Wallen	31.716	-0.274	9115	105	1
2	2	43	WHISKEY DRINK Macon/Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	28.100	+1.650	8131	374	2
3	5	24	WORST WAY Nashville Harbor	Riley Green	21.504	+2.503	6632	704	3
4	6	40	AM I OKAY? Megan Moroney/Columbia/Columbia Nashville	Megan Moroney	19.924	+1.133	6388	395	4
5	8	48	THIS HEART Combustion Masters/RCA Nashville	Corey Kent	19.569	+1.523	5728	353	7
6	7	29	BACKSEAT DRIVER Zone 4/RCA Nashville	Kane Brown	19.323	+0.948	6352	343	5
7	3	51	HOMETOWN HOME BMG/Galaxy Label Group	LOCASH	18.599	-1.230	5159	-178	10
8	9	21	WEREN'T FOR THE WIND SAWGOD/Columbia/Triple Tigers	Ella Langley	18.115	+1.579	5862	589	6
9	10	40	COUNTRY HOUSE MCA Nashville	Sam Hunt	17.388	+1.086	5247	356	8
10	11	60	SINGLE AGAIN The Core/Universal Music Canada/Mercury Nashville	Josh Ross	16.580	+1.441	5196	465	9
11	12	28	FIX WHAT YOU DIDN'T BREAK RCA Nashville	Nate Smith	16.148	+1.150	4965	516	11
12	13	37	PARK Hubbard House/EMI Nashville	Tyler Hubbard	15.060	+1.502	4793	344	12
13	15	9	JUST IN CASE Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	14.819	+1.449	4351	425	14
14	14	29	TOUGH PEOPLE Patoka Sounds/Lyric Ridge/Stoney Creek	Drew Baldridge	13.015	-0.389	4555	28	13
15	17	14	AFTER ALL THE BARS ARE CLOSED Fifty-One/Forty-Nine/Valory	Thomas Rhett	11.657	+2.147	3772	567	15
16	16	27	COUNTRY SONG CAME ON Capitol Nashville/MCA Nashville	Luke Bryan	11.337	+1.181	3699	264	16
17	22	3	BACKUP PLAN Atlantic/Warner Music Nashville/WEA ★★ Airpower/Most Increased Audience ★★	Bailey Zimmerman & Luke Combs	9.696	+2.816	2905	687	20
18	18	17	GOOD NEWS American Dogwood/EMPIRE/Magnolia Music	Shaboozey	9.624	+1.027	3401	334	17
19	20	37	FRIDAY NIGHT HEARTBREAKER Capitol Nashville/MCA Nashville	Jon Pardi	9.135	+0.696	3173	196	18
20	21	10	HAPPEN TO ME Triple Tigers	Russell Dickerson	8.289	+1.154	2612	459	21
21	19	43	TRUCK ON FIRE Big Machine	Carly Pearce	8.264	-0.213	3012	45	19
22	24	35	HEAVENS TO BETSY Big Machine	Jackson Dean	6.756	+0.335	2469	72	22
23	25	10	HANDS OF TIME BigEC/EMI Nashville	Eric Church	5.990	+0.393	2415	180	23
24	26	36	WHAT KINDA MAN MCA Nashville	Parker McCollum	5.383	+0.175	2021	-13	25
25	28	8	HEART OF STONE Bailee & Buddy/BMG/Republic/Stoney Creek	Jelly Roll	5.192	+0.432	1859	88	26
26	27	9	BAR NONE MCA Nashville	Jordan Davis	5.129	+0.293	2083	136	24
27	29	19	STRAIGHT LINE Hit Red/Capitol Nashville/MCA Nashville	Keith Urban	4.842	+0.144	1822	70	27
28	31	16	I DARE YOU Big Machine	Rascal Flatts & Jonas Brothers	4.028	+0.004	1821	61	28
29	33	9	HOUSE AGAIN River House/Warner Music Nashville/WMN	Hudson Westbrook	3.395	-0.024	1134	99	34
30	32	11	3,2,1 Tucker Wetmore/Back Blocks/Mercury/Republic/EMI Nashville	Tucker Wetmore	3.310	-0.128	1330	50	30

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.

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billboard Country Airplay

 AIRPLAY
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THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WKS ON CHART	TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	AUDIENCE (IN MILLIONS)		PLAYS		
					THIS WEEK	+/-	THIS WEEK	+/-	RANK
31	34	14	SHE HATES ME Capitol Nashville/MCA Nashville	Dierks Bentley	3.306	-0.089	1547	66	29
32	43	5	I AIN'T COMING BACK Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen & Post Malone	2.994	+0.948	940	261	42
33	35	30	RELAPSE 717/Warner/WEA	Warren Zeiders	2.692	+0.040	1142	-11	33
34	38	20	COWGIRL Stoney Creek	Parmalee	2.646	+0.263	1093	16	36
35	30	2	BOTTLE ROCKETS Triple Tigers ★★ Breaker ★★	Scotty McCreery & Hootie & The Blowfish	2.359	-2.248	710	-388	49
36	36	11	RUN Vanner/Republic/Big Loud	Miranda Lambert	2.345	-0.260	1089	43	37
37	37	17	IT WON'T BE LONG RECORDS Nashville	George Birge	2.338	-0.069	1296	37	31
38	39	27	WOULD IF I COULD Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	ERNEST	2.329	+0.029	1121	28	35
39	23	2	YOU HAD TO BETHERE Blue Chair/Megan Moroney/Columbia/Columbia Nashville	Megan Moroney & Kenny Chesney	2.243	-4.523	820	-996	44
40	42	25	DARLIN' Warner Music Nashville/WAR	Chase Matthew	2.228	+0.078	1013	-13	40
41	41	17	INDIGO Lockeland Springs/Atlantic/Magnolia Music	Sam Barber Featuring Avery Anna	2.176	-0.019	1022	21	39
42	40	6	FAVORITE COUNTRY SONG Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	HARDY	2.076	-0.152	1031	-21	38
43	45	24	GOLDEN CHILD Riser House	Meghan Patrick	1.961	+0.173	1151	58	32
44	44	22	TIME'S TICKING Valory	Justin Moore	1.698	-0.102	956	-52	41
45	50	6	HARD FOUGHT HALLELUJAH Brandon Lake/Essential/Lyric Ridge	Brandon Lake X Jelly Roll	1.648	+0.391	531	106	55
46	48	15	BETTER ME FOR YOU (BROWN EYES) Fugitive Recordings/Magnolia Music	Max McNown	1.519	+0.160	870	58	43
47	47	12	ENDS OF THE EARTH RECORDS/Columbia/RECORDS Nashville	Ty Myers	1.490	-0.058	572	43	52
48	46	27	BETTER THAN YOU Quartz Hill/Stone Country	Joe Nichols / Annie Bosko	1.459	-0.153	797	-27	45
49	49	4	THE FALL CoJo/Warner Music Nashville/WMN	Cody Johnson	1.435	+0.126	454	12	60
50	52	10	CRY Curb	Lee Brice	1.228	+0.012	475	-40	57
51	51	7	TIL THE LAST ONE DIES Boss Moves/Black River	Chris Young	1.116	-0.126	737	-22	47
52	53	8	NOT AT THIS PARTY VERSION III/Warner/WMN	Dasha	1.063	-0.015	714	25	48
53	54	11	WISH YOU WELL Music Soup/Interscope/MCA Nashville	Vincent Mason	0.917	-0.123	598	-3	51
54	56	8	IF I DIE BEFORE YOU Red Street	Chris Lane	0.910	-0.031	489	-27	56
55	NEW		WHAT I WANT Mercury/Republic/Big Loud ★★ Hot Shot Debut ★★	Morgan Wallen Featuring Tate McRae	0.897	+0.887	186	182	-
56	58	11	FOREVER FROM HERE Monument/Sony Music Nashville	Tigirlily Gold	0.882	+0.029	770	12	46
57	55	4	WHAT HE'LL NEVER HAVE Curb	Dylan Scott	0.846	-0.115	609	20	50
58	NEW		SUPERMAN Mercury/Republic/Big Loud ★★ Breaker ★★	Morgan Wallen	0.846	+0.558	210	140	-
59	RE-ENTRY		PAPER UMBRELLAS McGraw/Big Machine ★★ Breaker ★★	Tim McGraw Featuring Parker McCollum	0.838	+0.115	555	59	53
60	NEW		BURNED DOWN HEAVEN Big Machine	Chase McDaniel	0.794	+0.128	409	27	-



Luke Bryan received a Buck Owens signature guitar from KUZZ Bakersfield, Calif., when his annual Farm Tour visited Shafter, Calif., on May 17. From left: KUZZ morning co-host Ness Herandez, Bryan and KUZZ music director Kenn McCloud and PD Brent Michaels.



Carly Pearce received a pair of RIAA-certified plaques, including a double-platinum one for the single "What He Didn't Do," when she performed May 16 at Nashville's Ryman Auditorium. From left: Big Machine Label Group COO Mike Rittberg and executive vp of A&R Allison Jones, Pearce and BMLG chairman/CEO Scott Borchetta.

NICK RAU

MORGAN WALLEN I'M THE PROBLEM



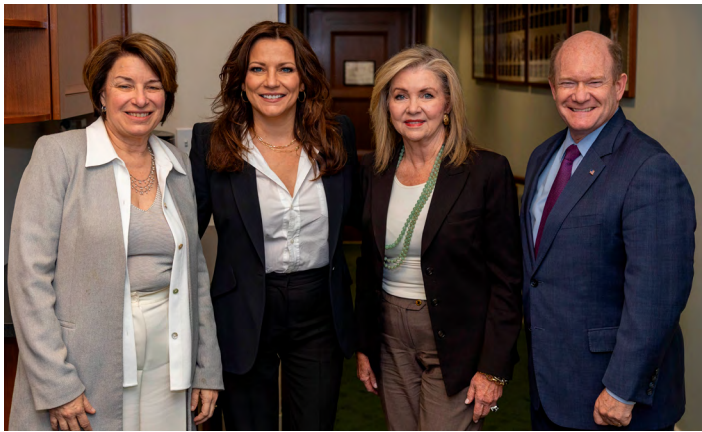
Thank You, Country Radio,
for an amazing 6 weeks at #1

I'm The Problem

BIG LOUND  REPUBLIC

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TASOS KATOPODIS



McBride (second from left), who testified May 21 before a Senate subcommittee in Washington, D.C. in support of the No Fakes Act, is shown with (from left) Sens. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.) and Chris Coons (D-Del.).

MCBRIDE FIGHTS FAKES

Martina McBride testified before a Senate subcommittee on May 21 to support the No Fakes Act, which would provide protections for a person's voice and likeness and guard against digital deepfakes.

McBride outlined a tragic example of a fan who was abused by someone posing as the "Independence Day" singer. The fan sold her house and transferred the money to the imposter.

In tandem with McBride's visit to Capitol Hill alongside RIAA chairman/CEO **Mitch Glazier**, nearly 400 creators lent their support to the No Fakes Act with the release of a signed endorsement. Among the signees: **Josh Turner**, **Jordan Davis**, **Darius Rucker**, **Parker McCollum**, **Jon Pardi**, **Rosanne Cash** and **Kelsea Ballerini**.

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

RADIO & RECORDS®

Warner Music Nashville hired **Paige Elliott** as Team WEA national director and bumped **Kayla Burnett** to Team WMN radio manager from coordinator. Elliott was most recently a Columbia Nashville regional director. Reach Elliott [here](#) and Burnett [here](#) ... Big Loud Records promoted **Tyler Waugh** to senior vp of radio promotion from vp ... BBR Music Group elevated two members of its content and creative team: **Allan Geiger** rose to senior director from director, and **Haley Wirthele** stepped up to manager from coordinator ... Newly established Zoellner Media Group agreed to purchase the four-station Cox Media/Tulsa (Okla.) cluster, including country **KWEN** ... Cumulus/Atlanta vp/market manager **Melissa Forrest** parted ways with the company, RadioInsight.com reported. Among the four affected stations is country **WKHX** ... **KNCI** Sacramento, Calif., morning co-host **Tom Mailey** is retiring, according to RadioInsight.com ... The Country Radio Seminar Agenda Committee will be headed once more by chair **Shelley Hargis** (BMG/BBR Music Group) and co-vice chair **Krista Hayes-Pruitt** (BMG/BBR Music Group), with newcomer **Kevin Callahan** (Pamal Broadcasting) joining as co-vice chair. Seventeen of the 21 committee members are new, including **Tanner Davenport** (White Boy MGMT/Black Opry), **Brooks O'Brian** (Cumulus/Indianapolis) and **Scott Roddy** (Audacy). **Brittani Johnson** (The Core) was tapped to head the Digital Music Summit agenda team ... The Country Radio Seminar's CRS360 May webinar, "A Face for Radio? ... A Difference for Your Listeners," has been posted [here](#) ... **Ted "Randall" Klimkowski**, 73, died May 11 in Lebanon, Tenn. The Detroit native moved to Tennessee in 1979, working as an on-air personality and/or engineer for a series of stations, including **WSM-AM&FM** Nashville, where he served as an announcer for the Grand Ole Opry. Go [here](#) for his complete obit.

'ROUND THE ROW

Jennifer Hall joined peer music Nashville as senior creative director, segueing from a parallel position at Porchlight Music. Additionally, peer promoted **Matt Michaels** to vp of creative from senior creative director and boosted **Cameron Stutts** to senior creative coordinator from coordinator ... Sheltered Music formed

a creative partnership with Crystal Pony Publishing and songwriter **Roger Springer** ("It's a Little Too Late," "Thank God for Believers"). Their first signee is artist-writer **Will Banister** ... Big Machine Music signed artist-writer **Will Linley** to a publishing deal ... *American Idol* finalist **Slater Nalley** tabbed Play It Again Music for management ... Massive tour rehearsal complex Gateway Studios & Production Services opened on a 32-acre site in Chesterfield, Mo. An expansion is expected this fall ... **Alan Jackson** is planning to stage his final concert in Nashville during 2026. His last road show was May 17 in Milwaukee ... **Kacey Musgraves** will receive the National Music Publishers' Association songwriter icon award during a June 11 meeting in New York. **Rhett Akins** will be recognized with the non-performing songwriter icon award ... A memorial honoring late guitarist **Jimmy Capps** (**George Jones**, **Kenny Rogers**) is being dedicated at 3 p.m. on June 1 in Nashville's Spring Hill Cemetery ... **Joseph M. Thompson's** *Cold War Country: How Nashville's Music Row and the Pentagon Created the Sound of American Patriotism* (University of North Carolina Press) will receive the Belmont Book Award for the year's best book on country music on May 30 during the International Country Music Conference at Belmont University. Go [here](#) for more info ... **Luke Combs**, **Carly Pearce**, **Marty Stuart**, **Ashley McBryde** and **Darius Rucker** are set to appear when the Grand Ole Opry airs from London's Royal Albert Hall for the first time on Sept. 26, in conjunction with the show's 100th anniversary. The Opry also plans a rodeo-themed May 27 show with **Vince Gill**, **Moe Bandy** and others, in conjunction with the inaugural Music City Rodeo. In other Opry news, **Lauren Watkins** will make her debut on June 20, and **Carly Pearce** unveiled a **Dolly Parton**-themed Opry mic stand during a May 16 concert at Nashville's Ryman Auditorium. Days later, Parton announced an expansion of her Conagra frozen-foods line with the introduction of four Southern foods, including chicken and dumplings and chicken-fried steak ... **Dylan Scott** was presented the keys to a new Ford F-250 SuperDuty King Ranch truck as he was named a national ambassador for the brand during a May 21 album-release party for *Easy Does It* ... **Kid Rock** scheduled a grand opening for The Detroit Cowboy club on June 3 at 501 11th Ave. N. in Nashville ... Purple Heart recipient **Scotty Hasting** will participate in PBS' National Memorial Day Concert on May 25 and in the National Memorial Day Parade in Washington, D.C., on May 26 ... Fitness at Fest returns to CMA Fest with early-morning workouts June 6-7 at the Good Molecules Reverb Stage outside Nashville's Bridgestone Arena ... **Tracy Lawrence** raised \$200,000 for Middle Tennessee homeless organizations with his Mission: Possible Celebrity Golf Tournament on May 19 ... **The Oak Ridge Boys**, **T. Graham Brown**, **Mark Wills** and **Chapel Hart** will take part in the 11th annual Country For a Cause on June 4 at Nashville's 3rd & Lindsley, benefiting Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital ... **Craig Campbell**, **Michael Ray** and **Bradley Gaskin** are among the performers slated for a Kenny Campbell Foundation benefit on July 24 at Ryman Auditorium ... Songwriter **Tony Haselden**, 79, died May 16 in Thibodaux, La., following a lengthy illness, *The Baton Rouge Advertiser* reported. Haselden was a member of Louisiana's late-'70s pop band **LeRoux** before moving to Nashville during the 1980s. During a two-decade stay in Music City, he authored **Keith Whitley's** "It Ain't Nothin'," **George Strait's** "You Know Me Better Than That" and **Collin Raye's** "That's My Story." ●



Drew Baldridge (center) sang "Tough People" when he made his national TV debut on May 13 on ABC's *Live With Kelly & Mark*, featuring hosts **Mark Consuelos** and **Kelly Ripa**.

billboard

INDIE POWER PLAYERS

2025

INDIE POWER PLAYERS

On June 7, *Billboard* will publish its annual Indie Power Players list. This special feature in advance of Indie Week (June 9-13) and the 15th annual Libera Awards will profile leading executives at top independent record labels, music publishers and distribution companies. Positioning themselves as the driving force behind the success of the independent music industry, these executives contribute to both the indie sector and the world of music at large.

Take this opportunity to advertise and congratulate this year's 2025 Indie Power Players.

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International Ryan O'Donnell | rodonnell@pmc.com

ISSUE DATE 6/7 | AD CLOSE 5/27 | MATERIALS DUE 5/29

billboard Country Airplay Index

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

3,2,1 Concord Copyrights, BMI/Jomil 10 Music, BMI/Native Notes Music, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/SugarPlum Songs, ASCAP/WC Music Corp., ASCAP (J.Miller, S.Oberstreet, J.Reynolds) **30**

A

AFTER ALL THE BARS ARE CLOSED

Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Be A Light Publishing, BMI/Big Loud Mountain LLC, BMI/John Byron Music, BMI/Goat Island Bay Music, BMI/Songs By 10K HRS Publishing, BMI/1317 Music, ASCAP/Kobalt Songs Music Publishing LLC, ASCAP/Dragon Bunny Music, BMI/Sony Songs LLC, BMI (Thomas Rhett, J.C.Bunetta, J.Byron, J.Free, J.K.Hindlin) **15**

AM I OKAY? Sony Timber Publishing, SESAC/Georgiamo Music, SESAC/Concord Global Music, GMR/Songs Of CN, GMR/Crawford Mercer Music, SESAC/Big Music Machine, BMI/Big Ass Pile Of Dimes Music, BMI (M.Moroney, L.Laird, J.Dillon) **4**

B

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BACKUP PLAN Little Louder Songs, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/Worktape Tunes, BMI/Songs By The Bell, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI (T.Beatard, J.Bell, J.S.Sherwood) **17**

BAR NONE Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Tape Room Hits, BMI/Artist 101 Publishing Group, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/Tape Room LLC, Series 1, ASCAP/Hunter Phelps Pub Designee, ASCAP/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Kwasy Publishing, BMI/WritersthecornPublishing, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI (B.J.Johnson, H.Phelps, L.Vaughan) **26**

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COUNTRY HOUSE Twelve6 Red Oak Songs, BMI/Still Between The Pines, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/EMI Blackwood Music Inc., BMI/Katie In The Sky With Diamonds, BMI/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Songs For Indy And Owl, ASCAP/Works Of CMT Outlander, GMR (M.Lotten, R.Copperman, J.Osbome, S.L.Hunt) **9**

COUNTRY SONG CAME ON Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Songs Of Tuckaway Music, BMI/Songs Of Smack, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Party Of 3 Songs, ASCAP/Southern Kid Music, ASCAP (D.Ailey, R.Beaver, N.A.Medley) **16**

COWGIRL Tileyard Music Publishing Ltd., PRS/Sentric Music Ltd., PRS/Reservoir 416, BMI/33 Creative, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/NewMania Music North, SOCAN/VaughnCo Music Publishing Inc., PRS/Cooking Vinyl Publishing Ltd., PRS/Thomas Frank Ridley Horsley Publishing Designee, PRS/8936 Music, BMI/Parmalee Music Publishing, BMI (J.D.Lewis, D.Fairing, P.D.Norman, R.Jay, T.F.R.Horsley, M.Thomas, B.Knox, J.McSwain, S.Thomas) **34**

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F

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HOUSE AGAIN Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Songs Of Tuckaway Music, BMI/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Party Of 3 Songs, ASCAP/Southern Kid Music, ASCAP/Hudson Westbrook Publishing Designee, BMI (H.Westbrook, N.A.Medley, D.Ailey) **29**

I

I AIN'T COMING BACK Honey Hole Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Bell Ear Publishing, ASCAP/Deemer Camp Publishing, BMI/Universal Music Works, GMR/Posty Publishing, GMR/Ern Dog Music, BMI/Big Loud Mountain LLC, BMI/Sony Songs LLC, BMI (M.C.Wallen, J.B.Bell, M.W.Hardy, A.R.Post, E.K.Smith, Charlie Handsome) **52**

I DARE YOU Nick Jonas Publishing, BMI/PWZ Publishing House, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Shay Mooney Music, BMI/Seven Peaks Music, ASCAP/85teen Music, ASCAP (N.J.Jonas, Tommy English, S.Mooney, D.Whitmore, Jr.) **28**

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INDIGO Sam Barber Music Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Sparky Sky Songs, BMI/To A T Creative, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Tape Room Hits, BMI/Firebird Country Tunes, BMI/Oakdale Market Publishing, BMI (S.R.Barber, A.Anna, A.Sheridan) **41**

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J

JUST IN CASE Honey Hole Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Electric Feel Music, BMI/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Orange Music Publishing, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/John Byron Music, BMI/Big Loud Mountain LLC, BMI/1317 Music, ASCAP/Songs Of Back Block Publishing, BMI/Rarre Publishing Worldwide, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Red Bandana Publishing, BMI/Sony Songs LLC, BMI/Ern Dog Music, BMI (M.C.Wallen, A.W.Bak, J.Byron, J.K.Hindlin, B.Pendergrass, J.P.Thompson, Charlie Handsome, E.K.Smith) **13**

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P

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R

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STRAIGHT LINE Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/MAROMA Music, BMI/Family Farm Songs, BMI/12w66 Woodwood, ASCAP/JFlow Records & Tapes, ASCAP/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Sir Greg Wells Songs, ASCAP/Kobalt Songs Music Publishing LLC, ASCAP (K.Urban, C.McGill, J.Flowers, G.Wells) **27**

SUPERMAN Honey Hole Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/John Byron Music, BMI/Big Loud Mountain LLC, BMI/Range Music, BMI/J Maddocks Publishing, ASCAP/Songs Of Back Block Publishing, BMI/Rarre Publishing Worldwide, BMI/Sony Songs LLC, BMI (M.C.Wallen, J.Byron, J.Maddocks, B.Pendergrass, Charlie Handsome) **58**

T

THIS HEART Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Madfun Music, BMI/Oconee River Bank Music, BMI/Bollingersey Shore, SESAC/T Villi Music, BMI/Speakers Go Boom Songs, BMI/Goat Island Bay Music, BMI/Peertunes, Ltd., SESAC/Titanium Music, SESAC/Melodies Of CTM Outlander, SESAC (T.Archer, W.B.Bollinger, J.A.Hackworth, M.Tyler) **5**

TIL THE LAST ONE DIES Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Songs By Slip, ASCAP/Sony Timber Publishing, SESAC/M & M College Fund, SESAC/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/940 Songs, BMI (B.Hayslip, S.Mosley, J.Walker) **51**

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WISH YOU WELL Big Music Machine, BMI/Works by Range Music Partners, BMI/Warbanger Publishing, BMI/Big Ass Pile Of Dimes Music, BMI/Songs Of Back Block Publishing, BMI/Rarre Publishing Worldwide, BMI (G.Warburton, J.J.Dillon, B.Pendergrass, C.LaCorte) **53**

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YOU HAD TO BE THERE Sony Timber Publishing, SESAC/Georgiamo Music, SESAC/Robb Bob Music, Inc., ASCAP/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Speakers Go Boom Songs, BMI/Redneck Resume Music, BMI/Tack Mack Tunes, BMI (M.Moroney, B.Williams, M.Carpenter, M.E.Carpenter) **39**

billboard



NINJA TUNE 35TH ANNIVERSARY

Formed in 1990 by electronic music duo Coldcut (Matt Black and Jonathan More), Ninja Tune has established itself as one of the world's leading independent record labels. Now in its 35th year and still 100% independent, Ninja Tune is a bona fide global music institution, synonymous with diverse, uncompromising releases and visionary artists committed to pushing the boundaries of music.

Please join us in marking this monumental milestone and celebrating a true independent music success story.

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ISSUE DATE 6/7 | AD CLOSE 5/27 | MATERIALS DUE 5/29

COUNTRY

10 Years Ago

Keith Urban And Eric Church Raised A No. 1

In 2015, the country superstars added their 18th and sixth Country Airplay leaders, respectively

On May 23, 2015, **Keith Urban**’s “Raise ’Em Up,” featuring **Eric Church**, lifted to No. 1 on *Billboard*’s Country Airplay chart.

Tom Douglas, Jaren Johnston and **Jeffrey Steele** co-wrote the hit, while Urban and **Nathan Chapman** co-produced it. It was released as the final single from Urban’s LP *Fuse*, his fourth of seven Top Country Albums No. 1s. The

song became his 18th of 21 Country Airplay No. 1s and Church’s sixth of 11 leaders.

Urban, 57, earned the Country Music Association’s entertainer of the year trophy in 2005 and 2018. Church, 48, won the award in 2020. Last September, Urban’s latest LP, *High*, arrived at No. 10 on Top Country Albums, becoming his 11th top 10. Lead single “Straight Line”

ranks at No. 27 on the May 31-dated Country Airplay chart (4.8 million in audience, up 3%, according to Luminate). Church’s current hit, “Hands of Time,” climbs 25-23 on Country Airplay (6 million, up 7%). It’s from *Evangeline Vs. the Machine*, which opened at No. 5 on Top Country Albums earlier in May, likewise marking Church’s 11th top 10.

—JIM ASKER

DATA

Church (left) and Urban onstage at the 2015 Academy of Country Music Awards in Arlington, Texas.

REWINDING
THE
COUNTRY
CHARTS

COUNTRY AIRPLAY™					
LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	TITLE IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL	Artist	WKS. ON CHART	
2	1	#1 1WK RAISE 'EM UP Keith Urban Feat. Eric Church HIT RED/CAPITOL NASHVILLE		17	
3	2	A GUY WALKS INTO A BAR COLUMBIA NASHVILLE	Tyler Farr	41	
4	3	DON'T IT MERCURY	Billy Currington	29	
5	4	SMOKE REPUBLIC NASHVILLE	A Thousand Horses	18	
6	5	SIPPIN' ON FIRE FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE		15	

billboard

2025

PRIDE ISSUE

On June 21, *Billboard* will publish its seventh annual Pride Issue, honoring culturally moving and influential people who have contributed to the community's history and its current landscape. Year-round, *Billboard* covers LGBTQIA+ issues across our editorial channels, including Billboard Pride. Building on this platform, *Billboard* will dedicate the month of June to celebrate love, acceptance, diversity and what it means to be queer in music.

All month long, *Billboard* will be the go-to destination for music- and entertainment-related Pride content. Leveraging our iconic voice within music and culture, *Billboard* will curate a mix of engaging video and social content featuring thought-provoking panels, heartfelt performances and glam tutorials — all in the spirit of building a community for consumers and influencers in celebration of Pride.

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ISSUE DATE 6/21 | AD CLOSE 6/10 | MATERIALS DUE 6/12