

billboard Country Update

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BILLBOARD COUNTRY UPDATE

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What Matters Most: Queer Country Artists See Their Impact Increasing

When **Ty Herndon** wrapped his 10th and final Concert for Love and Acceptance on June 2, he delivered his first hit, the 1995 release “What Mattered Most,” then broke into an a cappella version of the classic hymn “How Great Thou Art.”

A gospel song isn’t necessarily expected at an event celebrating the LGBTQ community, but Herndon grew up singing church music in Alabama, and he had reason to be thankful. When he gave the first Love and Acceptance show in 2015, **Billy Gilman** was the only other gay artist on the bill. The rest of the lineup consisted of straight artists offering their support as allies.

For the 2025 edition, the onstage contingent was much larger, and there were even more queer country artists in the audience. Over the 10-year run of Herndon’s annual show, the volume of out-and-proud gay country artists has increased significantly, as has the ability for them to earn a living while telling their authentic story.

“I was a shell of a human,” says queer artist **Adam Mac**, recalling life before he had publicly come out. He attended the first Love and Acceptance concert as a fan, and he found both the show and Herndon to be inspirational.

“I was masking all of the best parts of me, and it wasn’t until

I came out that I really blossomed and really found myself and found my voice,” Mac says. “It wasn’t just [a change in] style, it was the songs I was writing. Everything kind of shifted for me once that happened.”

Herndon understands. He came out in November 2014 after consulting with **Chely Wright**, who in 2010 became the first

country hitmaker to publicly proclaim herself a lesbian.

“I called her one day,” Herndon remembers, “and I said, ‘You know, I’ve been through too much and I’ve worked too hard to get to where I’m at to be quiet anymore.’ I said, ‘But I want to do it through

music, and I want to do it through things that matter.’ And she says, ‘Well, that’s the only way to do it.’”

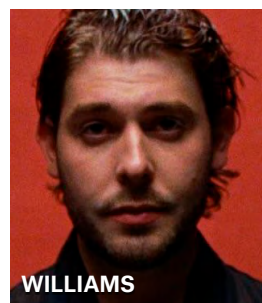
As Pride Month continues, country music is one of the areas where coming out may have some of the greatest significance in contemporary America. The genre’s fans skew conservative, but other artists have decided over the last decade that they — like Herndon — don’t want to be quiet anymore. That includes **Brooke Eden**, **Sam Williams**, **Chris Housman**, **Lily Rose**, **Kalie Shorr**, **Bryan Ruby**, **Julie Williams**, **The Kentucky Gentlemen** and **Brothers Osborne**’s **TJ Osborne**. And that’s just scratching the surface.



EDEN



HERNDON



WILLIAMS

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Coming out can be a difficult undertaking—gay people dread the potential loss of friends and family, grow anxious over possible job loss, and fear for their safety. Those concerns are heightened for queer artists, particularly because the public reveal is mostly irreversible.

“You can’t go back,” Housman says.

Sofar, the artists who’ve taken the risk generally feel they made the right move.

“I found a whole new demographic, a whole new audience of people that desperately needed to hear a country artist who was queer,” Eden says. “And it’s not only the queer people, but it’s the parents of the queer people and the family members and the best friends. It’s the allies.”

The process of coming out is often misunderstood. It’s not just a one-time action or something that occurs only within a short window of time. Even after gay people make the initial choice to be honest with others about their sexual orientation, they repeatedly make that decision throughout the rest of their lives. Each time they have a conversation with someone who doesn’t know, they have to evaluate whether it’s appropriate to clue the other person in: “Do I tell them?” “Is it safe?” “Will mentioning it sidetrack the conversation?” “Do I care that much about this person that it’s worth sharing?”

If they decide in that instance to stay hidden, they may later question whether they were dishonest for not sharing that information or feel guilty for not standing up on behalf of their community. It’s a lot to carry.

And those who don’t fit perceived stereotypes have to make those decisions on a regular basis since their outward appearance doesn’t offer many clues.

“It’s more of a coming-out-every-single-day kind of a thing,” Eden says, “because we could be hetero-presenting.”

Gays who are trying to pass as heterosexual have to stay vigilant about their demeanor and their conversation, forced to make quick decisions and adjustments in real time about details that others barely recognize. It’s compounded for closeted gay country artists because anything that might unmask them has consequences that can reverberate not just with one acquaintance, but an entire



Emmylou Harris was on hand when the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum screened the 1996 PBS documentary *Building the Wrecking Ball*, celebrating her *Wrecking Ball* album, on June 12. Joining her are producer Daniel Lanois (left) and engineer Malcolm Burn.

fan base. Osborne has said that prior to coming out, he was self-conscious about onstage movements that might be perceived as effeminate, and his concerns about that issue made him more reserved as a lead singer. The small words “he” and “she” could be large stumbling blocks in interviews.

“I was always telling very edited versions of my story and making sure that I was saying the correct pronouns, even though they were really the wrong pronouns,” Eden recalls. “I really did get stuck living in this double life.”

Runaway June’s Natalie Stovall, who attended the Concert for Love and Acceptance as an ally, has seen the results when a gay creative co-wrote in a scenario where they were not comfortable to come out to one or more people in the room.

“It felt like a confined space,” she says. “It just felt like they weren’t able to fully be who they were. And even within writing, it’s so weird when you have to write music a certain way and you can’t use the pronouns that you want to use to mean what you’re saying.”

The music business—particularly the *country* music business—has historically avoided gay artists or instructed them to remain in the closet. Shorr, for example, released “My Type,” a song that embraces her interest in women, on May 30, eight years after she wrote it. Her now-former management team discouraged her from performing it at that time.

“I was told if I wanted to release it, I should change the pronouns,” she remembers. “I was like, ‘That totally changes the meaning of the song.’ So I just sat on it, and now that I have a team that’s fully supportive of me being queer, I was like, ‘You know, it’s time we’re going to release it.’ And it feels great.”

While the volume of openly gay artists has increased in the country ranks, not all of them are officially out. Not everyone is ready to take the risk—some fear a large chunk of the country audience may reject them and prevent them from becoming a mainstream country act, while others may lack support in their professional team.



On June 13, Ty Myers (center) checked in with Music Choice director of country programming Jim Murphy (left) and RECORDS Nashville executive vp of promotion and commercial strategy Josh Easler at Music Choice’s Nashville offices.

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Tim McGraw (left) debuted a new song, “King Rodeo,” on The Big 615 on June 12, after recording the track during his May 31 concert in conjunction with the inaugural Music City Rodeo. He’s joined by The Big 615 host Storme Warren.

“If you’re at a place in your life where you have 10 [people seated] at the table and you don’t know [how they may react], you never want any of them to leave,” Herndon says. “I think that for artists that aren’t out, they’re really aware of who’s at their table.”

Alternately, some of the gay artists who are keeping their sexuality hidden from the public are simply drawing a line in their personal lives. It’s not much different from **George Strait** revealing little about his home life or **Chris Stapleton** declining to provide his children’s names to reporters.

“Part of it is a power move for them,” **Shelly Fairchild** says. “They’re like, ‘You don’t get to know this part of me. You don’t get to hurt it. You don’t get to attack it. It is precious. It is something that is not up for discussion.’ Just like if you have children — you don’t really see **Shania Twain**’s kid, you know? It’s because she’s like, ‘This is protected. You don’t get to be mean to my beautiful love of my life.’”

Herndon knows the negativity that comes with going public. During one meet-and-greet in the first year or two after he had come out, an angry fan stabbed the back of his hand with a pencil. Herndon still has a small scar that reminds him occasionally of that incident, though the country audience has proven itself to be far less hostile than country executives might have expected.

“I think [CMT/SiriusXM personality] **Cody Alan**’s coming out had such a great impact because he had such good existing relationships with artists on the charts like **Dierks [Bentley]** and **Carrie [Underwood]** and so many others who stepped forward immediately and supported him,” says Herndon’s manager, ZS Strategies president **Zeke Stokes**, formerly GLAAD vp of programs. “Every one of these folks who’s come out — it just gives others a little bit of a more of an open door.”

Attitudes among the general population have changed dramatically as well, making the decision to come out less traumatic than it was in previous genera-

tions. A CNN poll published June 1, the first day of Pride Month, found that 72% of respondents see diversity “enriching American culture.” Even the historically conservative country audience seems to reflect that viewpoint.

“I’ve seen some of the most conservative people you can imagine just come up to Ty and give him a hug and say, ‘Thank you for being you,’ or ‘I love your music, man. The rest doesn’t matter to me,’” Stokes notes. “Country has a conservative reputation, but I think perhaps we don’t give the fans as much credit as they deserve for being, first and foremost, good people.”

In fact, as country has become more popular, its fan base has become more diverse, allowing a number of gay artists to be out and make their living fully from music. It has been tough at radio — no openly gay artist has had a top 10 airplay hit *after* they have come out — but that hasn’t prevented them from making connections with fans through streaming. The landscape seems to be in an upward transition for queer country acts, even if it’s an uneasy period.

“There’s certainly times that I can’t help but wonder if my career would look a little bit different if I hadn’t come out,” Housman concedes. “But at the same time, I would eventually look back on that and see a lack of integrity and authenticity. And even the songs that I’m writing, if I wasn’t out, I’d be writing the same stuff that everybody else is writing. So I kind of see it as an opportunity.”

Complicating the situation, the current presidential administration has taken a number of steps that harm the LGBTQ community: banning transgender people from the military, erasing gay and transgender content from federal websites and removing protections against discrimination.

“It’s risky to be yourself,” Sam Williams says, “but, you know, it’s worthwhile.”

Thus, many of the country artists who have come out are able to make a living while also making a statement to a segment of the population that needs to hear it the most.

“World Pride was in Washington, D.C., this year, in front of the Capitol Building where the insurrection was,” says Eden, who notes that she performed there for 70,000 people. “To be in a place where so many things are happening right now, where so much backward progress is happening in a world where they’re trying to silence us again, trying to put us back in the closet again, in a world where trans youth and trans people in general are not safe, I think that it’s really important to be visible and to let people know that they’re not alone.”

Herndon’s Concert for Love and Acceptance is history for now, as he shifts some of his focus to other unannounced projects. But he also hopes that the next generation of gay country artists will carry the torch forward. In the meantime, that concert, and the decisions made by every country artist who has come out, have indeed made a difference over the last decade.

“We feel the impact of it every time Ty walks out the door,” Stokes says. “Invariably, someone will come up to him at a show and say, ‘You gave me the courage to come out,’ or ‘Your music gave me the courage to come out.’ Or a mother or father will say, ‘You know, seeing you come out helped me accept my son or daughter.’ The butterfly effect of it all is just immeasurable.” ●

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SEP - 27 LUBBOCK, TX °
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SEP - 29 MORRISON, CO #
OCT - 3 CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA #
OCT - 4 OCEAN CITY, MD %
OCT - 9 KNOXVILLE, TN °
OCT - 10 LOUISVILLE, KY °
OCT - 11 EVANSVILLE, IN °
OCT - 16 BRANDON, MS °
OCT - 17 BOSSIER CITY, LA °
OCT - 18 OKLAHOMA CITY, OK °
OCT - 24 CHARLESTON, SC °
OCT - 25 SIMPSONVILLE, SC %
OCT - 30 MISSOULA, MT #
OCT - 31 BILLINGS, MT #
NOV - 1 CASPER, WY #
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ON THE CHARTS JIM ASKER jim.asker@billboard.com

Tyler Hubbard's 'Park' Shifts Into Country Airplay Top 10

Tyler Hubbard posts his fourth top 10 as a soloist on *Billboard*'s Country Airplay chart as "Park" (Hubbard House/EMI Nashville) cruises a spot to No. 10 on the ranking dated June 28. During the June 13-19 tracking week, the single improved by 6% to 17.8 million audience impressions, according to Luminate.

The Snellville, Ga., native co-authored "Park" with Jesse Frasure, Ashley Gorley (who was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame on June 12) and Canaan Smith. The song is from Hubbard's sophomore solo LP, *Strong*, released in April.

"Park" follows Hubbard's "Back Then Right Now," which topped Country Airplay for one week in May 2024. Before that, his "Dancin' in the Country" hit No. 2 in May 2023, after "5 Foot 9" became his first chart-topper on his own for one week in November 2022. His first entry as a solo act, "Undivided," with Tim McGraw, reached No. 16 in May 2021.

The 38-year-old Hubbard has made 16 previous trips to No. 1, among 19 top 10s, on Country Airplay as one-half of duo Florida Georgia Line with Brian Kelley, who is also now working solo.

Hubbard is on tour this summer, with his next stop on June 20 in Pocatello, Idaho. The date also marks the release of Kelley's LP *Sunshine State of Mind Season Two, Chapter One*.

'WORST' STILL FIRST Riley Green's third Country Airplay No. 1, "Worst Way" (Nashville Harbor), reigns for a second week, up 1% to 28.6 million in reach. The song, which the singer-songwriter from Jacksonville, Ala., wrote solo, is his first to lead for multiple frames. He previously ruled for one week each as featured on Ella Langley's "you look like you love me," in December, and Thomas Rhett's "Half of Me," in November 2022. ●



MOST INCREASED AUDIENCE			
TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	GAIN (IN MILLIONS)	
BACKSEAT DRIVER Zone 4/RCA Nashville	Kane Brown	+3.666	
2 PAIR Zone 4/RCA Nashville	Kane Brown	+2.980	
JUST IN CASE Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	+2.112	
HANDS OF TIME BigEC/EMI Nashville	Eric Church	+1.392	
BOTTLE ROCKETS Triple Tigers	Scotty McCreery & Hootie & The Blowfish	+1.314	
BAR NONE MCA Nashville	Jordan Davis	+1.245	
FRIDAY NIGHT HEARTBREAKER Capitol Nashville/MCA Nashville	Jon Pardi	+1.229	
SOMEWHERE OVER LAREDO Broken Bow	Lainey Wilson	+1.201	
COUNTRY SONG CAME ON Capitol Nashville/MCA Nashville	Luke Bryan	+1.016	
PARK Hubbard House/EMI Nashville	Tyler Hubbard	+0.991	

MOST INCREASED PLAYS			
TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	GAIN	
BACKSEAT DRIVER Zone 4/RCA Nashville	Kane Brown	+1227	
2 PAIR Zone 4/RCA Nashville	Kane Brown	+906	
BOTTLE ROCKETS Triple Tigers	Scotty McCreery & Hootie & The Blowfish	+440	
SOMEWHERE OVER LAREDO Broken Bow	Lainey Wilson	+412	
FRIDAY NIGHT HEARTBREAKER Capitol Nashville/MCA Nashville	Jon Pardi	+390	
JUST IN CASE Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	+388	
GOOD TIMES & TAN LINES Leo33	Zach Top	+388	
SINGLE AGAIN The Core/Universal Music Canada/Mercury Nashville	Josh Ross	+353	
BACKUP PLAN Atlantic/Warner Music Nashville/WEA	Bailey Zimmerman & Luke Combs	+353	
3,2,1 Tucker Wetmore/Back Blocks/Mercury/Republic/EMI Nashville	Tucker Wetmore	+327	

RECURRENTS			
THIS WEEK	TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	TOTAL AUD. (IN MILLIONS)
1	WHISKEY DRINK Macon/Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	18.336
2	LIAR Bailee & Buddy/BMG/Republic/Stoney Creek	Jelly Roll	16.111
3	HIGH ROAD YellaBush/Columbia/RECORDS Nashville	Koe Wetzel & Jessie Murph	14.393
4	HOMETOWN HOME BMG/Galaxy Label Group	LOCASH	14.149
5	LOVE SOMEBODY Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	13.946
6	POUR ME A DRINK Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Post Malone Featuring Blake Shelton	12.961
7	A BAR SONG (TIPSY) American Dogwood/EMPIRE/Magnolia Music	Shaboozey	12.426
8	I HAD SOME HELP Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Post Malone Featuring Morgan Wallen	11.310
9	I AM NOT OKAY Bailee & Buddy/BMG/Republic/Stoney Creek	Jelly Roll	8.122
10	AM I OKAY? Megan Moroney/Columbia/Columbia Nashville	Megan Moroney	7.652



TEXAS REGIONAL RADIO REPORT

WEEK ENDING JUNE 19, 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	NOTHIN' BUT TEXAS (Bowen Sounds Thirty Tigers) ★★1 Week at 1★	Wade Bowen	1627	93	11	12	22	I DON'T APOLOGIZE (Independent)	James Lann	1210	2
2	3	18	HURRICANE (CDX)	Sandee June	1519	68	12	14	8	GOD MADE A COWBOY (Independent)	Aaron Loy	1135	149
3	5	10	RUBY ANN (Independent)	Turnpike Troubadours	1512	156	13	13	13	THE MOMENT (Independent)	Sundance Head	1087	82
4	4	22	WHAT I CAME TO DO (Independent)	Jesse Raub Jr.	1505	71	14	15	10	LAST COWBOY STANDING (Independent)	David Adam Byrnes	1048	91
5	6	15	BREAK ITSELF (Tommy Jackson/Thirty Tigers)	Randy Rogers Band	1379	82	15	1	17	GREEN IN COLORADO (Independent)	Casey Donahew	1035	-615
6	9	11	BEER DON'T CARE (Independent)	Tilluride	1355	63	16	18	17	I WASN'T BORN IN TEXAS (Independent)	Gary P. Nunn	977	51
7	8	24	AIN'T THAT LOVE (Independent)	Bri Bagwell & Timber Wilde	1339	43	17	22	7	IT AINT THE WHISKEY (Big Loud)	Jake Worthington	938	100
8	7	12	MY JOHN WAYNE (Independent)	Kylie Frey	1337	41	18	16	20	HOME FOR A HOTEL (Independent)	Ghosts of Hill County	933	-16
9	10	19	WHO'S HANGING THE MOON (Independent)	Josh Weathers	1331	49	19	19	21	HOLD YOU TO IT (Independent)	Joey Green & Payton Howie	911	14
10	11	10	FLAME (Get Joe)	Billie Jo Jones	1314	92	20	20	12	ARE YOU A REAL COWBOY (Independent)	Amanda Kate Ferris	909	48

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

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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	28	WORST WAY Nashville Harbor	Riley Green	28.646	+0.245	8455	-79	1
2	4	33	BACKSEAT DRIVER Zone 4/RCA Nashville	Kane Brown	25.972	+3.666	8123	1227	2
3	3	52	THIS HEART Combustion Masters/RCA Nashville	Corey Kent	24.126	+0.978	7255	254	3
4	2	20	I'M THE PROBLEM Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	23.549	-2.231	6084	-698	7
5	8	13	JUST IN CASE Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	21.622	+2.113	6495	388	4
6	7	25	WEREN'T FOR THE WIND SAWGOD/Columbia/Triple Tigers	Ella Langley	20.139	+0.380	6247	17	5
7	6	44	COUNTRY HOUSE MCA Nashville	Sam Hunt	19.908	+0.139	6208	62	6
8	9	32	FIX WHAT YOU DIDN'T BREAK RCA Nashville	Nate Smith	19.321	-0.136	5892	10	8
9	10	64	SINGLE AGAIN The Core/Universal Music Canada/Mercury Nashville	Josh Ross	19.102	+0.979	5830	353	9
10	11	41	PARK Hubbard House/EMI Nashville	Tyler Hubbard	17.832	+0.991	5441	203	10
11	14	31	COUNTRY SONG CAME ON Capitol Nashville/MCA Nashville	Luke Bryan	15.634	+1.016	4824	317	11
12	13	7	BACKUP PLAN Atlantic/Warner Music Nashville/WEA	Bailey Zimmerman & Luke Combs	15.476	+0.717	4727	353	12
13	15	18	AFTER ALL THE BARS ARE CLOSED Fifty-One/Forty-Nine/Valory	Thomas Rhett	15.470	+0.880	4677	245	13
14	16	21	GOOD NEWS American Dogwood/EMPIRE/Magnolia Music	Shaboozey	13.352	+0.901	3970	44	14
15	17	14	HAPPEN TO ME Triple Tigers	Russell Dickerson	12.486	+0.796	3763	126	15
16	18	41	FRIDAY NIGHT HEARTBREAKER Capitol Nashville/MCA Nashville	Jon Pardi	10.967	+1.229	3644	390	16
17	19	14	HANDS OF TIME BigEG/EMI Nashville	Eric Church	9.335	+1.392	3269	275	17
18	20	39	HEAVENS TO BETSY Big Machine	Jackson Dean	8.380	+0.522	2774	35	19
19	22	13	BAR NONE MCA Nashville	Jordan Davis	8.226	+1.245	2892	316	18
20	21	12	HEART OF STONE Bailee & Buddy/BMG/Republic/Stoney Creek	Jelly Roll	7.559	+0.351	2532	119	20
21	23	23	STRAIGHT LINE Hit Red/Capitol Nashville/MCA Nashville	Keith Urban	7.037	+0.915	2530	268	21
22	24	6	BOTTLE ROCKETS Triple Tigers	Scotty McCreery & Hootie & The Blowfish	7.000	+1.314	2375	440	22
23	25	40	WHAT KINDA MAN MCA Nashville	Parker McCollum	6.129	+0.553	2280	139	23
24	27	15	3,2,1 Tucker Wetmore/Back Blocks/Mercury/Republic/EMI Nashville	Tucker Wetmore	5.787	+0.943	2155	327	24
25	30	4	SOMEWHERE OVER LAREDO Broken Bow	Lainey Wilson	5.410	+1.201	2011	412	25
26	28	13	HOUSE AGAIN River House/Warner Music Nashville/WMN	Hudson Westbrook	4.925	+0.558	1743	206	28
27	29	18	SHE HATES ME Capitol Nashville/MCA Nashville	Dierks Bentley	4.359	+0.072	1852	3	27
28	26	20	I DARE YOU Big Machine	Rascal Flatts & Jonas Brothers	4.310	-0.552	1923	-75	26
29	32	24	COWGIRL Stoney Creek	Parmalee	3.292	+0.279	1270	97	31
30	34	9	IAIN'T COMING BACK Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen Featuring Post Malone	3.094	+0.339	962	70	40

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

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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	31	21	IT WON'T BE LONG RECORDS Nashville	George Birge	3.094	-0.025	1532	-29	29
32	NEW		2 PAIR Zone 4/RCA Nashville ★★ Hot Shot Debut/Breaker ★★	Kane Brown	2.980	+2.980	906	906	41
33	36	6	YOU HAD TO BETHERE Blue Chair/Megan Moroney/Columbia/Columbia Nashville	Megan Moroney & Kenny Chesney	2.889	+0.238	1185	125	34
34	33	10	FAVORITE COUNTRY SONG Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	HARDY	2.872	+0.095	1347	58	30
35	35	29	DARLIN' Warner Music Nashville/WAR	Chase Matthew	2.867	+0.129	1224	89	33
36	37	31	WOULD IF I COULD Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	ERNEST	2.558	-0.007	1229	11	32
37	38	21	INDIGO Lockeland Springs/Atlantic/Magnolia Music	Sam Barber Featuring Avery Anna	2.330	-0.068	1106	-20	36
38	46	2	GOOD TIMES & TAN LINES Leo33	Zach Top	2.259	+0.632	703	388	48
39	41	4	STAY COUNTRY OR DIE TRYIN' Ten Point/Wheelhouse	Blake Shelton	2.225	+0.127	887	45	42
40	39	28	GOLDEN CHILD Riser House	Meghan Patrick	2.220	+0.018	1158	-15	35
41	43	10	HARD FOUGHT HALLELUJAH Brandon Lake/Essential/Lyric Ridge	Brandon Lake X Jelly Roll	2.072	+0.157	717	43	47
42	42	26	TIME'S TICKING Valory	Justin Moore	2.035	+0.106	1049	-5	37
43	44	16	ENDS OF THE EARTH RECORDS/Columbia/RECORDS Nashville	Ty Myers	1.915	+0.043	668	28	49
44	45	19	BETTER ME FOR YOU (BROWN EYES) Fugitive Recordings/Magnolia Music	Max McNown	1.898	+0.145	1018	12	38
45	47	8	WHAT HE'LL NEVER HAVE Curb	Dylan Scott	1.663	+0.221	986	66	39
46	48	8	THE FALL CoJo/Warner Music Nashville/WMN	Cody Johnson	1.571	+0.202	636	79	51
47	50	15	WISH YOU WELL Music Soup/Interscope/MCA Nashville	Vincent Mason	1.402	+0.119	835	61	44
48	49	11	TIL THE LAST ONE DIES Boss Moves/Black River	Chris Young	1.400	+0.106	869	17	43
49	52	12	NOT AT THIS PARTY VERSION III/Warner/WMN	Dasha	1.335	+0.091	812	1	45
50	51	4	SAME MOON Riser House/Columbia Nashville	Mitchell Tenpenny	1.329	+0.082	585	-13	53
51	55	5	PAPER UMBRELLAS McGraw/Big Machine	Tim McGraw Featuring Parker McCollum	1.165	+0.152	809	19	46
52	57	12	IF I DIE BEFORE YOU Red Street	Chris Lane	1.020	+0.088	507	20	57
53	56	5	BURNED DOWN HEAVEN Big Machine	Chase McDaniel	1.017	+0.068	498	26	58
54	58	4	BAGGAGE Black River	Kelsea Ballerini	0.923	-0.003	481	-21	59
55	RE-ENTRY		DRINK WITH YOU Nashville Harbor ★★ Breaker ★★	Brett Young	0.900	+0.148	617	84	52
56	RE-ENTRY		ME & A BEER Harpeth 60	Chris Janson	0.891	+0.138	638	103	50
57	NEW		USE ME Leo33	Zach Top	0.846	+0.065	81	3	-
58	60	3	AMEN American Dogwood/EMPIRE/Magnolia Music	Shaboozey & Jelly Roll	0.832	+0.043	260	-26	-
59	54	14	CRY Curb	Lee Brice	0.822	-0.242	451	-64	-
60	NEW		WRONG HEARTS BMG/Galaxy Label Group	LOCASH	0.776	+0.118	508	47	56



Alana Springsteen visited with numerous broadcasters when she appeared June 12 in Gilford, N.H. From left: WPOR Portland, Maine, PD Jon Shannon; WSCY Laconia, N.H., personality Joyce Danas; Springsteen; WOKQ Portsmouth, N.H., brand manager/midday host Ginny Brophrey; and WMLL Manchester, N.H., brand manager Michael Czarnecki.



Songwriter Ashley Gorley ("I Am Not Okay," "World on Fire") joined the Songwriters Hall of Fame in New York on June 12. From left: Hall of Fame president/CEO Linda Moran, Gorley, Debbie Gibson, Nile Rodgers and Kristin Chenoweth.

GETTY IMAGES

2025 billboard GRAMMY® FIRST LOOK

On July 19, *Billboard* will publish a GRAMMY First Look special feature showcasing the artists, producers and other creative professionals whose music was released during the eligibility period of Aug. 31, 2024, to Aug. 30, 2025. The issue will look at the early contenders for the **68th Annual GRAMMY Awards®** in the categories of Record Of The Year, Song Of The Year, Album Of The Year and Best New Artist.

7/16: ONLINE ENTRY PROCESS OPENS

8/29: ONLINE ENTRY PROCESS CLOSES

Take advantage of this early opportunity during the eligibility period to showcase accomplished work to members of the music industry as they prepare to cast their entries for **Music's Biggest Night®**.

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ISSUE DATE 7/19

AD CLOSE 7/8

MATERIALS DUE 7/10



**GRAMMY
AWARDS®**

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

Keith Urban visited with WWF Long Island, N.Y., staff when he performed June 12 at the BankNH Pavilion in Gilford, N.H. With him are WWF music director Kelly Ford (left) and midday personality Alexa Neo.

HERNDON'S PUBLIC EVOLUTION

When **Ty Herndon** released a new version of his first hit, "What Mattered Most," in June, the **LeAnn Rimes** duet brought attention to a forthcoming album, *Thirty*, that celebrates three decades since his emergence in the national spotlight.

His entrée into country was turbulent. This month also marks three decades since an arrest for drug charges and indecent exposure that cast a shadow over his career. Despite the misstep, he was able to generate seven top 10 singles behind a smoky baritone and a taste for engaging melodies.

Herndon entered rehab at least three times and encountered other bad luck: He was robbed at gunpoint in Los Angeles and had his truck and wallet stolen in a later 2020 incident.

Herndon became the first male country hit-maker to come out publicly, in November 2014 (**Billy Gilman** followed suit the same day), and he says his earlier penchant for hiding his sexuality contributed significantly to his drug use.

"My closet was Carnegie Hall, baby," he says with a laugh. "It was a big old fucking closet."

He married twice in an effort to hide his inner turmoil, despite his mother's encouragement to come out. He was diagnosed more recently with bipolar depression, and addressing that has created better life balance. He is currently working on an autobiography with acclaimed author **David Ritz** (**Ray Charles**, **Willie Nelson**).

While researching the book, Herndon says he discovered that Epic actually suspected he was gay when the company gave him his first major-label recording deal.

"They knew from the day they came to Texas and signed me," he says. "Like, nobody has that many good-looking guys hanging out backstage. They thought, 'Well, maybe that's marketable.'"

Now that he has been out for over a decade, Herndon is playing 3,000-seat theaters again for the first time in years, having built a core audience that recognizes both his talent and the honesty he has developed.

"When we can be the most vulnerable with our fans," says **Lindsay Ell**, an ally who performed at Herndon's Concert for Love and Acceptance (which ended a 10-year run this year) on June 2, "that's what they connect to most."

'ROUND THE ROW

The Core Entertainment hired **Kate Bowling** as director of creative. She was previously a Warner Music Nashville multimedia designer ... Los Angeles-based publicist **Jenny Huynh** has parted ways with 2b Entertainment, where she worked with **Shania Twain** and **Little Big Town**. Reach her [here](#) ... **Hannah Ellis** signed a booking agreement with Kinkead Entertainment ... Multigenre artist-writer **Sydney Quiseng**, who came to prominence as the lead singer of **Echosmith**, signed a publishing contract with BMG ... The Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum opens a new exhibit, "Lainey Wilson: Tough as Nails," on July 18, featuring materials from her childhood and artifacts from her more recent time in the spotlight. The display will remain open until July 2026 ... **Dolly Parton** will receive an Oscar on Nov. 16, as she accepts the Jean Hersholt humanitarian award

during the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' Governors Awards at Ovation Hollywood ... Dr. **Don Cusic** will sign copies of the new biography *Chet Atkins: Mr. Guitar* at Nashville's RCA Studio B at 6:30 p.m. on June 20. The studio is nicknamed "The House That Chet Built," and the signing coincides with the 101st anniversary of Atkins' birth ... Attorney **John Mason** (**Reba McEntire**, **Olivia Newton-John**) signs copies of his book, *Crazy Lucky*, at Barnes & Noble in Brentwood, Tenn., at 2 p.m. on June 8 ... Songwriter **Sandy Knox** ("Does He Love You," "Why Haven't I Heard From You") will release her audiobook, *Weighting: My Life If It Were a Musical*, featuring a spoken narrative and a 21-song soundtrack, on June 24 ... **Dierks Bentley** introduces his second branded whiskey, ROW 94 Broken Branches Bourbon, in late June in partnership with Lofted Custom Spirits, which are distilled in Owensboro, Ky. It follows the September 2024 launch of ROW 94 Whiskey ... **SmithField** joined Nashville's Bongo Roasting Co. to create its own coffee blend, Coffee With Heart ... **Warren Zeiders** "Ride the Lightning" has been adapted as a soundtrack song for ABC/ESPN broadcasts of *Saturday Night Lacrosse* ... Country for a Cause, hosted by **T.G. Sheppard** and **Kelly Lang** on June 4, raised \$90,000 for Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt ... Nashville-based composer-photographer **Stacy Widelitz**, 69, died June 17 following a bout with pancreatic cancer. A prominent figure in Leadership Music, he co-wrote the *Dirty Dancing* hit "She's Like the Wind" and penned music for numerous TV movies ... Former Grand Ole Opry fiddler-guitarist **Joe Edwards**, 91, died June 7. He worked with **Martha Carson** and **Wilma Lee & Stony Cooper**, as well as spending roughly three decades in the Opry band ... Longtime record promoter **Mike Borchetta**, 84, died June 14 following a career that involved major talents in Nashville and Los Angeles. He served as Curb vp of promotion during the '80s and '90s, and spent time with Broken Bow, Capitol, RCA and Mercury. During his tenure in California, he helped promote **Glen Campbell** and **The Beach Boys**. In Nashville, he played an influential role in **Tim McGraw**'s original signing at Curb and also worked as Lofton Creek president, landing a No. 1 single with **Heartland**'s Father's Day classic, "I Loved Her First." Among his survivors are four music executives: sons **Scott Borchetta** and **Chris Borchetta**, and daughters **Adelle Borchetta** and **Angela Borchetta**. Services are pending.

RADIO & RECORDS®

Big Loud and Mercury Records hired New York-based **Wes Donehower** as senior vp of A&R for both labels. He most recently held the same position with Republic ... Triple Tigers established a second radio promotion team with the launch of Akando Music. Co-president **Kevin Herring** and Triple Tigers vp of promotion **Raffaella Braun** will oversee the squad, with senior director of national promotion **JC Coffey** heading the day-to-day operation. Coffey was previously Magnolia Music Group director of audience platforms. Reach Herring [here](#), Braun [here](#) and Coffey [here](#) ... Seacoast Radio closed on the purchase of **WIID** Rodanthe, N.C., and flipped the Outer Banks station from adult contemporary to country, RadioInsight.com reported ... **WSM-AM** Nashville night personality **Jeff Hoag** parted ways with the station, according to RadioInsight.com. ●



Tigirlily Gold spent time with Renda/Jacksonville, Fla., director of programming Brian Jordan when the duo performed June 14 at the Jacksonville Beach Country Fest. From left: the duo's Krista Slaubaugh, Jordan, the duo's Kendra Slaubaugh and RCA Nashville Southeast regional promotion manager Ali O'Connell.

billboard



2025

GLORIA ESTEFAN 50TH ANNIVERSARY

International superstar Gloria Estefan, *Billboard's* most successful Latin crossover artist ever, celebrates 50 groundbreaking years in music with her 30th album, "Raíces" (Roots). With 100+ million records sold, nine Grammy Awards, an Oscar nomination, and status as the first Cuban-American honored at The Kennedy Center, Estefan's illustrious career includes the Presidential Medal of Freedom (2015) and Gershwin Prize (2019) shared with husband Emilio.

Beyond music, her humanitarian foundation, Emmy-winning Red Table Talk: The Estefans, Broadway musical ON YOUR FEET!, films, and bestselling books have reshaped cultural landscapes.

Her first all-Spanish studio album in 18 years, Raíces blends traditional tropical rhythms with contemporary

production, honoring Latin music's heritage while pushing boundaries forward. As Latin sounds dominate global charts, Estefan's latest work powerfully reminds the world of her pioneering role in proving cultural authenticity and international appeal could brilliantly coexist.

Join *Billboard* in congratulating Gloria Estefan on her remarkable career over the past 50 years.

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ISSUE DATE 8/16 | AD CLOSE 8/05 | MATERIALS DUE 8/06

billboard Country Airplay Index

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

2 PAIR Not Listed (*K.Brown, G.Foust, L.Franzino, J.Free, A.Haas, J.A.Hackworth*) **32**

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.Overstreet, J.Reynolds*) **24**

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.Franzino, J.Free, J.K.Hindlin*) **13**

AMEN Poorchoice Music Publishing, BMI/Songs Into Poems, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/Seh Ennis Publishing Designee, BMI/Jordan Gray Publishing Designee, BMI/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Range Media Partners LLC, ASCAP/Essency Music Publishing, ASCAP/S2 Songs LLC, BMI/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Kevin Powers Publishing Designee, BMI/Baile's Ballads, BMI/BMG Platinum Songs US, BMI (*C.O.Chibweze, J.B.DeFord, S.C.Cook, J.H.Foote, S.W.ennis, J.Gray, K.J.Powers, N.Sastry*) **58**

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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.Beachard, J.Bell, J.S.Sherwood*) **12**

BAGGAGE Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Feel Your Way Through Publishing, ASCAP/Big Music Machine, BMI/Big Ass Pile Of Dimes Music, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Self Made Entertainment, BMI/The Piano Room, ASCAP/W.C.M. Music Corp., SESAC/Vandeezy Songs, SESAC/Songs Of Rhythm House Black, SESAC (*K.Ballerini, J.Dillon, K.Fairchild, L.Hinsley, A.Vanderhey*) **54**

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/Writersonthecon Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI (*B.J.Johnson, H.Phelps, L.Vaughan*) **19**

BETTER ME FOR YOU (BROWN EYES) Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Carver Music Publishing, BMI/Max McDown Music, BMI/Carver Music Publishing, ASCAP/Tunes Of King Pen, BMI/Ready Set Publishing, BMI (*M.McDown, J.Kenney, A.A.Suppella, J.K.Dabbs*) **44**

BOTTLE ROCKETS Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Dagum Music, BMI/Songs Of Spirit II Nashville, ASCAP/FluidTunes II, ASCAP/Beats By Baby Brent, ASCAP/Burley Bishop Music, ASCAP/Songs Of Spirit Nashville Three, SESAC/Songs Of Fluid II, SESAC/Hop On The Buss, SESAC/Spirit Nashville Two Crescendo, ASCAP/Fluid Tunes, ASCAP/Songs Of Spirit One Nashville, BMI/Tunes Of Fluid II, BMI/Heavy Lefty Music, BMI/Whoa, ASCAP/Monica's Reluctance To Lob, ASCAP/EMI April Music, Inc., ASCAP (*S.C.McCreary, B.Anderson, D.George, J.Busse, F.Rogers, M.Criswell, B.Hamrick, D.Rucker, M.Bryan, D.Felber, J.Sonefeld*) **22**

BURNED DOWN HEAVEN Nothing Like You Heard Sound, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Rudy Rocks The USA, BMI/Sony Timber Publishing, SESAC/Cuts Like A Nite Music, SESAC (*C.Daniel, J.M.Nite, L.Rimes*) **53**

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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 (*J.Lotter, R.Copperman, J.Sosome, S.L.Hunt*) **7**

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.Alley, R.Beaver, N.Medley*) **11**

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.Fanning, D.Newman, R.Jay, T.F.R.Horsley, M.Thomas, B.Knox, J.McSwain, S.Thomas*) **29**

CRY Songs Of Litmus Music Publishing Holdings, BMI/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Universal Music - Brentwood Benson Publishing, ASCAP/Capitol CMG Genesis, ASCAP/Spirit Nashville Two Crescendo, ASCAP (*D.Davidson, B.Hayslip, D.A.Garcia*) **59**

D

DARLIN' Hunter Huff Publishing Designee, BMI/Ciaran Wilkie Publishing Designee, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Verse 2, BMI/Droptime Music, BMI/Chase Matthew Music Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Bridge 1 Music, BMI/Kobalt Music Services Ltd., PRS (*Chase Matthew, A.Maxwell, H.Huff, C.Wilkie, Jake Angel*) **35**

DRINK WITH YOU Super Big Music, ASCAP/Calville Publishing, ASCAP/Concord Road, BMI/Rio Bravo Music, Inc., BMI/OH The Record, ASCAP/Sony Tunes, ASCAP/WC Music Corp., ASCAP (*B.Young, J.Frasure, L.Lucca, E.L.Weisband*) **55**

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THE FALL Sea Gayle Ale House Music, BMI/Bobby Pinson Publishing Designee, BMI/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Keep Choppin Publishing, BMI/Exit 183 Songs, BMI/Anthem Music Publishing II, ASCAP/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP (*B.Pinson, R.Fulcher, J.S.Stover*) **46**

FAVORITE COUNTRY SONG Deemer Camp Publishing, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Relative Red Music, BMI/Bigger Bendable Music, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Tape Room Music Round Two, BMI/FBRI Country Tunes, BMI/Myron Bailey Publishing, BMI/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Master Of My Domain Music, ASCAP/Poppy's Picks, ASCAP (*M.W.Hardy, T.Aband, B.Bailey, A.G.Gorley*) **34**

FIX WHAT YOU DIDN'T BREAK Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Corrent Music, ASCAP/Master Of My Domain Music, ASCAP/Poppy's Picks, ASCAP/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Rudy Rocks The USA, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/TDP Publishing, BMI/Hits From The Tape Room, BMI (*N.Smith, A.G.Gorley, T.Phillips, L.Rimes*) **8**

FRIDAY NIGHT HEARTBREAKER Concord Copyrights, BMI/Jomil 10 Music, BMI/Cascade Road Songs, ASCAP/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Tompkins Family Vacation, ASCAP/Big Music Machine, BMI/Big Ass Pile Of Dimes Music, BMI/I Finally Got Some Publishing, BMI/The Buffalo Catalogue, BMI (*J.Miller, C.Tompkins, J.Dillon, D.Ross, R.J.Hurd*) **16**

G

GOLDEN CHILD Anthem Entertainment B, SOCAN/Iron Songbird Publishing B, BMI/Jackoby Songs II, BMI/Anthem Music Publishing I, BMI/Sweet Baby Ruru Songs, BMI/World For Aaron Eschuis Concord Alto CCI, ASCAP (*M.Patrick, J.Hyde, A.Eshuis*) **40**

GOOD NEWS Kreshendo, ASCAP/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/S2 Songs LLC, BMI/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Range Media Partners LLC, ASCAP/Essency Music Publishing, ASCAP/Torrey Songs, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/BMG Rights Management (UK) Ltd., PRS/Paco Place Songs, BMI (*C.O.Chibweze, N.Sastry, S.C.Cook, J.Torrey, M.R.Pollack, ROMANS*) **14**

GOOD TIMES & TAN LINES Rio Bravo Music Inc., BMI/Zach Top Music, BMI/Major Bob Productions, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Don What I Do, BMI/Hits From The Tape Room, BMI/50 Egg Music, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI (*Z.Top, C.Chamberlain, W.McCubbin*) **38**

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HAPPEN TO ME Concord Copyrights, BMI/Big Hits N Gravy, BMI/Concord Tunes, SESAC/Card Tables Music, SESAC/Hand Your Hat Hits, SESAC/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Big Music Machine, BMI/Big Ass Pile Of Dimes Music, BMI/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Family Farm Songs, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI (*R.Dickerson, C.LaCorte, J.Dillon, C.McGill, R.Hazard*) **15**

HARD FOUGHT HALLELUJAH Brandon Lake Music, ASCAP/Music By Elevation Worship Publishing, BMI/Be Essential Songs, BMI/Benjamin Hastings Publishing Designee, ASCAP/Baile's Ballads, BMI (*B.M.Lake, S.Furtick, B.W.Hastings, C.J.Brown, J.B.DeFord*) **41**

HEART OF STONE Baile's Ballads, BMI/BMG Platinum Songs US, BMI/Round Hill Songs III, ASCAP/Foxwood Entertainment Group Music Division, ASCAP/Big Blue Nation Music, ASCAP/Rare Publishing Worldwide, BMI/Songs Of Back Block Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/God Made Most Played Most Paid Publishing, BMI/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP (*J.B.DeFord, Z.Crowell, B.Pendergrass, Shy Carter*) **20**

HEAVENS TO BETSY Little Louder Songs, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/Well That Was Awkward Music, BMI/Big Music Machine, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Songs Of Tuckaway Music, BMI/Daddy's Home Music, BMI/Songs Of Harpeth Valley, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI (*J.Dean, B.Davis, D.Williams*) **18**

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/Saxet HW Music, BMI (*H.Westbrook, N.A.Medley, D.Alley*) **26**

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/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Relative Music Group, BMI/Redneck Music, BMI (*M.C.Wallen, L.B.Bell, M.W.Hardy, A.R.Post, E.K.Smith, Charlie Handsome*) **30**

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

IF I DIE BEFORE YOU Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Weislow, ASCAP/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Young Man Publishing, BMI/Sony Timber Publishing, SESAC/M & M College Fund, SESAC (*E.L.Weisband, J.McNair, S.Mosley*) **52**

I'M THE PROBLEM Honey Hole Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Ern Dog Music, BMI/Big Loud Mountain LLC, BMI/Lamie McLaughlin Publishing Designee, BMI/Sony Songs LLC, BMI/Bo Jewell Club, BMI (*M.C.Wallen, G.W.Black, J.McLaughlin, E.K.Smith, Charlie Handsome*) **4**

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*) **37**

IT WON'T BE LONG Big Machine, ASCAP/Liz Rose Music, LLC, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Songs Of Wild Cat Well Music, BMI/Sony Countryside, BMI (*G.Birge, J.A.Fox, C.McGill, T.Anderson*) **31**

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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/Rare Publishing Worldwide, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Red Bandana Publishing, BMI/Sony Songs LLC, BMI/Ern Dog Music, BMI (*M.C.Wallen, A.J.Bak, J.Bryon, J.K.Hindlin, B.Pendergrass, J.P.Thompson, Charlie Handsome, E.K.Smith*) **5**

M

ME & A BEER Anthem Red Vinyl Music, BMI/Buckkilla Music, BMI/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Master Of My Domain Music, ASCAP/Poppy's Picks, ASCAP/TDP Publishing, BMI/Hits From The Tape Room, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Tape Room Hits, BMI/Firebird Country Tunes, BMI/Oakdale Market Publishing, BMI (*C.Janson, T.Phillips, A.G.Gorley, A.Sheridan*) **56**

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NOT AT THIS PARTY Ben There Wrote That Publishing, BMI/Artist 101 Publishing Group, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/Dashville Publishing House, BMI/Sony Songs LLC, BMI/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Master Of My Domain Music, ASCAP/Poppy's Picks, ASCAP/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Tape Room Hits, BMI (*A.D.Novotny, A.G.Gorley, B.J.Johnson*) **49**

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PAPER UMBRELLAS Spirit Nashville One Crescendo, BMI/Tunes Of Fluid, BMI/Rust And Chrome Music, BMI/Sony Countryside, BMI/DESTON SONG SLAYER, BMI/Marzia Music, BMI (*M.Criswell, D.Milligan*) **51**

PARK T Tree Music, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Songs For The Munch Music, BMI/Songs Of Influence, BMI/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Master Of My Domain Music, ASCAP/Poppy's Picks, ASCAP/Georgia Song Vibe, ASCAP/WC Music Corp., ASCAP (*T.R.Hubbard, J.Frasure, A.G.Gorley, C.Smith*) **10**

S

SAME MOON Sony Countryside, BMI/Riser Ten Music, BMI/Universal Music Corp., ASCAP/Pauitywood Music, ASCAP/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Chapter Blue, BMI/Songs Of R.D.Hoggin, BMI/Dawn Downbow Music, BMI (*M.Tenpening, P.Giovanni, D.Southerland, D.Wilson*) **50**

SHE HATES ME Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/DudeTunes, ASCAP/Master Of My Domain Music, ASCAP/Poppy's Picks, ASCAP/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Family Farm Songs, BMI/Music Of CTM Outlander Music LP BMI/Smackshot Music, BMI/Katie In Paris, BMI/Stereo Super sonic Music, ASCAP/Jordan Rocks Music, ASCAP (*D.Bentley, R.Copperman, A.G.Gorley, C.McGill, J.C.Allen, W.Scantini*) **27**

SINGLE AGAIN W.C.M. Music Corp., SESAC/Situation Songs, SESAC/Warner Geo Met Ric Music, GMR/Allen Hill Songs, GMR/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/The Core Publishing, LLC, BMI/Josh Ross Publishing Designee, BMI/Real Bad Songs, SESAC (*J.Ross, J.A.Fox, B.Rempel*) **9**

SOMEWHERE OVER LAREDO Sony Countryside, BMI/Story Farmer, BMI/Songs Of Wild Cat Well Music, BMI/Songs Of Riser House, BMI/Down Boogie Music, BMI/Concord Sounds, ASCAP/Tacklebox Publishing, ASCAP/EMI Feist Catalog, Inc., ASCAP (*L.Wilson, T.Anderson, D.Wilson, A.Albert, E.Y.Harburg, H.Arien*) **25**

STAY COUNTRY OR DIE TRYIN' Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Relative Red Music, BMI/Cowboy Cuts Music, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Writersonthecon Publishing, BMI/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Chimney Pot Songs, ASCAP/Songs Of Madfun, ASCAP/Tape Room Music Round Two, BMI/Myron Bailey Publishing, BMI/FBRI Country Tunes, BMI (*D.Parker, G.Barnam, S.Ellis, B.Bailey*) **39**

STRAIGHT LINE Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/MAROMA Music, BMI/Family Farm Songs, BMI/Thelwell Dogwood, 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*) **21**

T

THIS HEART Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Madfun Music, BMI/Ocnee River Bank Music, BMI/Bollingersey Shore, SESAC/T Vail 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*) **3**

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*) **48**

TIME'S TICKING Double Barrel Ace Music, BMI/Big Music Machine, BMI/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Wild Willy Music, ASCAP/Music Of The Corn, ASCAP/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Full Draw Publishing, BMI/Anthem Music Publishing II, ASCAP/Tunes From The Red White And Blue School, ASCAP (*J.Moore, W.L.Bundy, R.Montana, J.S.Stover*) **42**

U

USE ME Rio Bravo Music, Inc., BMI/Zach Top Music, BMI/Too Broke To Quit Music, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Out And Magazines Publishing, BMI (*Z.Top, C.Chamberlain, T.Nichols*) **57**

W

WEREN'T FOR THE WIND Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Bridge 1 Music, BMI/Songs Of Smack, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/Music Of CTM Outlander Music LP, BMI/Langley Publishing, BMI (*E.Langley, J.Taylor, J.Clawson*) **6**

WHAT HE'LL NEVER HAVE Curb Songs, ASCAP/Logan Robinson Publishing Designee, NS/Ricky Rowton Publishing Designee, NS/Robbie Galin Publishing Designee, NS (*D.Scott, L.Robinson, R.Rowton, R.Gatlin*) **45**

WHAT KINDA MAN Parkmark Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Abundantiam Publishing, BMI/Songs Of Harpeth Valley, BMI/VIRUCKENROLL MUSIC, BMI/Music Of CTM Outlander Music LP, BMI (*M.Collum, J.N.Spillman, N.Hemby*) **23**

WISH YOU WELL Big Music Machine, BMI/Works By Range Music Partners, BMI/Warbringer Publishing, BMI/Big Ass Pile Of Dimes Music, BMI/Songs Of Back Block Publishing, BMI/Rare Publishing Worldwide, BMI (*G.Warburton, J.Dillon, B.Pendergrass, C.LaCorte*) **47**

WORST WAY Warner-Tamela Publishing Corp., BMI/Back 40 Publishing International, BMI (*R.Green*) **1**

WOULD IF I COULD Sony Acuff Rose Music, BMI (*D.Dillon, S.Ewing*) **36**

WRONG HEARTS BMG Platinum Songs US, BMI/Websinger Publishing, BMI/Lovelegend Songs, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Red Bandana Publishing, BMI/Super Big Music, ASCAP/Drag Dog Music, ASCAP/Round Hill Songs II, ASCAP (*P.C.Brust, C.Lucas, M.Dragstrem, J.Thompson*) **60**

Y

YOU HAD TO BE THERE Sony Timber Publishing, SESAC/Georgiano Music, SESAC/Major 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*) **33**

billboard



R&B/HIP-HOP POWER ISSUE

R&B/hip-hop dominates every other genre, claiming one-quarter of all music consumption.

On Aug. 30, *Billboard* will publish its R&B/Hip-Hop Power Players list showcasing the producers, creatives, executives and publishers who have made R&B/hip-hop the hottest genre on earth.

Advertise and congratulate the people who are driving this industry and reach an influential audience of decision-makers in music and pop culture.

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REWINDING
THE
COUNTRY
CHARTS

50 Years Ago

Nothing Was Better Than Don Williams' 'Best'

In 1975, "The Gentle Giant" posted his second of 17 Hot Country Songs No. 1s

On June 21, 1975, **Don Williams'** "You're My Best Friend" hit No. 1 on *Billboard's* Hot Country Songs chart. The song marked his second of 17 leaders.

Williams produced the track, which **Wayland Holyfield** wrote. It was released from the artist's same-named LP, which became his third of 12 top 10s on Top Country Albums.

Long a staple at country radio,

Williams logged 56 Hot Country Songs entries between 1972 and 1992, including 45 top 10s. He last led with "Heartbeat in the Darkness" in 1986.

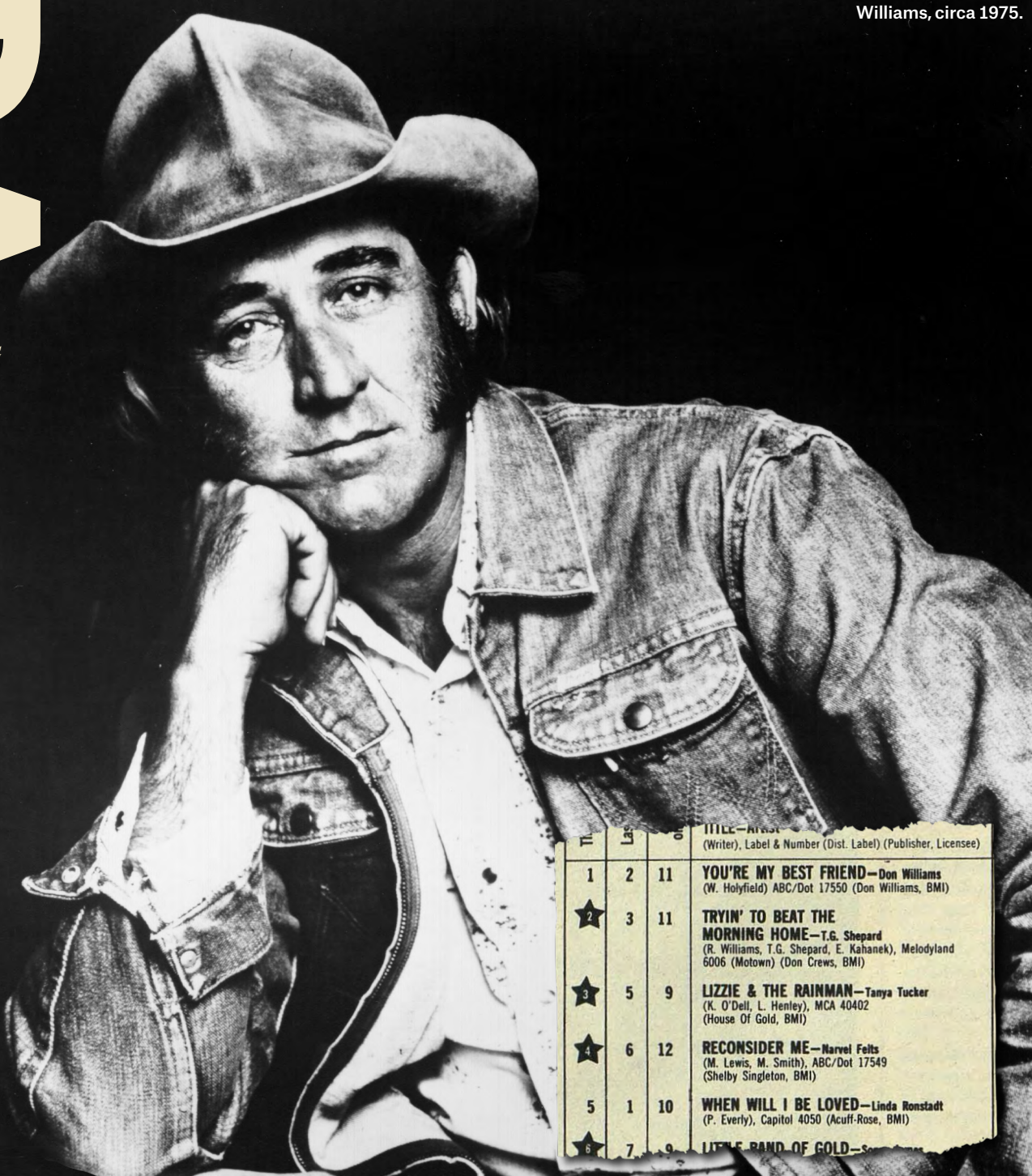
With his broad, 6-foot-1-inch frame and smooth baritone voice, Williams earned the nickname "The Gentle Giant." Born May 27, 1939, in Floydada, Texas, he was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2010. He died

after a short illness on Sept. 8, 2017, at age 78.

Williams' legend lives on: **Luke Combs'** "Does to Me" (featuring **Eric Church**), which led Country Airplay in May 2020, shouts out "daddy's Don Williams vinyl." Plus, like father, like son: In January 2021, Williams' son **Tim** released a six-song album, *Next to You*.

—JIM ASKER

Williams, circa 1975.



	Wk.	Las.	Wk.	Title—Artist (Writer), Label & Number (Dist. Label) (Publisher, Licensee)
	1	2	11	YOU'RE MY BEST FRIEND—Don Williams (W. Holyfield) ABC/Dot 17550 (Don Williams, BMI)
★	2	3	11	TRYIN' TO BEAT THE MORNING HOME—T.G. Shepard (R. Williams, T.G. Shepard, E. Kahanek), Melodyland 6006 (Motown) (Don Crews, BMI)
★	3	5	9	LIZZIE & THE RAINMAN—Tanya Tucker (K. O'Dell, L. Henley), MCA 40402 (House Of Gold, BMI)
★	4	6	12	RECONSIDER ME—Harvel Felts (M. Lewis, M. Smith), ABC/Dot 17549 (Shelby Singleton, BMI)
	5	1	10	WHEN WILL I BE LOVED—Linda Ronstadt (P. Everly), Capitol 4050 (Acuff-Rose, BMI)
★	6	7	9	LITTLE BAND OF GOLD—S...