

billboard Country Update

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BILLBOARD COUNTRY UPDATE

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Country Songwriters Are Increasingly Road Dogs: The Ins And Outs Of Writing On Tour

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It's a decades-old conversation: When fans see a coach bus outside a concert venue, some of them are bound to wonder if the artist they're planning to see that night is in there and, if so, what are they doing?

Increasingly, there's a good bet that they're working with a couple of Nashville songwriters to create new material. **Thomas Rhett's** current collaboration with **Jordan Davis**, "Ain't a Bad Life"? Written somewhere in the Dakotas. **Jelly Roll's** "I Am Not Okay"? Penned while the bus was travelling on an interstate in the Carolinas. **Lainey Wilson's** "Somewhere Over Laredo"? Finished on her bus in Montana with co-writers **Dallas Wilson** and **Trannie Anderson** after an initial start by **Andy Albert**.

"We will write songs anywhere," Wilson says.

Artists co-write the majority of their own singles in modern country music. If songwriters want to get in on the action, the best way is to meet the artists in their natural habitat, and that means writing on the road.

"I would say 75% of my No. 1 songs have been written on the bus or on some sort of writing retreat," notes **Corey Crowder**, who co-authored the current **Nate Smith/Tyler Hubbard** single, "After Midnight," on Hubbard's

bus in 2023. "I've definitely had them where I wrote it in a writing room, but there's something about not being on Music Row. There's not really anything to do other than sit and write songs.

And there's something about watching somebody perform and then writing in that headspace."

Hubbard's duo, **Florida Georgia Line**, didn't necessarily invent the idea of writing on tour, but they gave it a good jolt during the 2010s. They scheduled writing into their day on numerous trips, sometimes conducting two simultaneous writing sessions — one in the front room, the other in the back — on the same bus. It meant one less business item they had to wedge into their time at home when they returned to Nashville after a weekend run.

"It certainly made life a bit easier when we compartmentalized and wrote songs while we were on tour, instead of trying to do it only in town — especially as I started growing a family and having kids and needing to spend time with the family while I was in town," Hubbard says. "It worked really well. And even now, it works great. You got a lot of time

to kill on the road, so we write songs and hang out."

Hanging out is an extra benefit. Typically, when publishers book co-writes for their composers in Nashville, the appoint-



Wilson and Anderson celebrate their Grammy nomination at a Recording Academy party Jan. 20 at the Loews Nashville Hotel.

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ment is focused on work. The writers may hit it off, but it also might be one of two or three writing sessions for the day. There's not much time for bonding once the song is finished.

Not so on the bus, where they go through some of the mundane details of daily living in a road environment, such as sleeping in a bunk bed, acclimating to a new backstage area or grabbing a beer after the concert. Interactions in those settings create more of a shared experience.

"I've slept 500 nights in those beds," says **Ashley Gorley**, whose road successes include "I Am Not Okay" and "You Should Be Here." "It's funny to think back about all those times, going out and trying to get to know artists."

It's not for everybody. Between soundcheck, meet and greets and scheduled meal times — not to mention unplanned hurdles or interviews to advance future tour dates — artists often encounter a lot of start-and-stop on the road. It's further complicated by the rigors of traveling. Touring can be physically exhausting, and artists need to be in top shape when they hit the stage.

"It can be very draining," says **Dan + Shay** vocalist **Shay Mooney**. "I don't know how people do it, honestly. Songwriters, if they're not performing that night, that's probably a different thing. But I think when you're the artist-writer, and you've got a show to put on that night, that takes precedent. It's tough to do."

One aspect that songwriters particularly appreciate is the change in scenery. Instead of a familiar writing room on Music Row, they get to see other parts of the country, different rooms and the vibe of an artist's fan base.

"There's something special about being able to play a show, see a reaction from an audience, take that energy, see what is connecting and try to channel that into a song," **George Birge** says.

But, as one veteran songwriter puts it, the trend toward going out on tour with the artists has made writing country songs even more of a "young man's game." As writers' personal lives evolve — they get married, have babies, get up early to take the kids to school — the late nights and drinking associated with road life becomes less attractive.

Artists are "ready to rock 'n' roll when they come off the stage," songwriter **Neil Thrasher** says, noting that writing on tour has always been uncomfortable. "I'm ready to write the next day at noon, and they're sleeping. So, I could never get anything going."

Ultimately, the inconvenience is highly rewarding if it yields a hit, and plenty have emerged from the bus in the last decade or so, including **Eric Church's** "Talladega," **Cole Swindell's** "Forever to Me," **Dustin Lynch's** "Hell of a Night," **Lady A's** "Bartender" and **Old Dominion's** "Song for Another Time."

In the end, going out for a weekend with an artist is a dance of compatibility. Hygiene, manners, personality traits, patience, respect for the band and crew and passion all matter.

"You get invited out on the road by an artist based on [if] they feel comfortable with you," says Anderson, who saw the road-finished "Somewhere Over Laredo" compete for a Grammy this year. "Do they want to give you a bunk and have you in their personal space? We're really thankful that Lainey doesn't mind us in her personal space." ●



Zach John King (center) welcomed KSCS Dallas personnel when he performed Feb. 7 at The Bomb Factory. He's flanked by KSCS assistant PD/music director Al Farb (left) and KSCS/KPLX PD Mike Preston.



Chris Cagle received a Pandora Billionaire plaque when he taped an interview for SiriusXM that airs Feb. 13 on the satcaster's Y2Country. From left: Johnstone Entertainment president/artist manager Cole Johnstone, SiriusXM country music programmer Trapper John Morris, Cagle and SiriusXM host Ashley Till.



Corey Kent (center) presented custom baseball bats to "This Heart" producer Chris Farren (left) and the song's four writers, including Michael Tyler, during a No. 1 party hosted by BMI on Feb. 10 at its Nashville office.

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billboard Country Airplay

AIRPLAY
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ON THE CHARTS **RUSS PENUELL** rpenuell@billboard.com

'How Far Does' Aldean's 'Goodbye Go'? To No. 1

Jason Aldean secures his 26th *Billboard* Country Airplay No. 1 as "How Far Does a Goodbye Go" (Macon/Broken Bow) rises to the summit on the chart dated Feb. 21, having drawn 31.2 million audience impressions Feb. 6-12 (up 13% week over week), according to Luminate.

Produced by Michael Knox and written by Kurt Allison, John Edwards, Tully Kennedy and John Morgan, the track becomes Aldean's first Country Airplay leader since "Trouble With a Heartbreak" ruled for three weeks in 2022. He ties Luke Bryan, Alan Jackson and George Strait for the fourth-most No. 1s (since the chart began in 1990), after only Kenny Chesney (33), Blake Shelton (30) and Tim McGraw (29). His new leader previews his 20-track LP *Songs About Us*, due April 24.

At 22 weeks, the single's rise is slightly slower than Aldean's typical 19-week climb to No. 1 since October 2012 (when Country Airplay split from the Hot Country Songs chart, which adopted a multimetric methodology). Still, it arrives well ahead of the overall 28-week average trip to No. 1 in that span. The run falls between his quickest ascent — 12 weeks for "Take a Little Ride" in 2012 — and his longest, 36 weeks for "Blame It on You" in 2021, and it succeeds Ella Langley's "Choosin' Texas" (SAWGOD/Columbia/Triple Tigers; 31.1 million, up 5%), which led in its 16th week.

NEW TOP 10s, NEW MUSIC Luke Combs earns his 25th Country Airplay top 10 as "Days Like These" (Seven Ridges/Columbia Nashville/SMN) climbs 11-9 (17.6 million, up 10%). Written by Combs, Brent Cobb and Aaron Raitiere, the song sets up his sixth studio album, *The Way I Am*, due March 20. Plus, Dylan Scott scores his eighth top 10 as "What He'll Never Have" (Curb) rises 12-10 (17 million, up 9%).

Debuting this week is The Band Perry's "Psychological" (Nashville Harbor) at No. 43 (1.7 million). The revamped act, now featuring Kimberly Perry and husband Johnny Costello, makes its first entry since 2016. Also, Blake Shelton's "Let Him In Anyway" bows at No. 56 (950,000). 🎧



SPIDEY SMITH

MOST INCREASED AUDIENCE

TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	GAIN (IN MILLIONS)
SLEEPLESS IN A HOTEL ROOM Seven Ridges/Columbia Nashville/SMN	Luke Combs	+3.883
HOW FAR DOES A GOODBYE GO Macon/Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	+3.536
20 CIGARETTES Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	+1.946
CHANGE MY MIND Nashville Harbor	Riley Green	+1.757
PSYCHOLOGICAL Nashville Harbor	The Band Perry	+1.748
THE FALL CoJo/Warner Records Nashville/WRN	Cody Johnson	+1.712
DAYS LIKE THESE Seven Ridges/Columbia Nashville/SMN	Luke Combs	+1.659
BETTER ME FOR YOU (BROWN EYES) Fugitive Recordings/Magnolia Music	Max McNown	+1.609
AMEN American Dogwood/EMPIRE/Stoney Creek/Magnolia Music	Shaboozey & Jelly Roll	+1.502
TURN THIS TRUCK AROUND MCA Nashville	Jordan Davis	+1.491

MOST INCREASED PLAYS

TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	GAIN
HOW FAR DOES A GOODBYE GO Macon/Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	+1065
SLEEPLESS IN A HOTEL ROOM Seven Ridges/Columbia Nashville/SMN	Luke Combs	+895
THE FALL CoJo/Warner Records Nashville/WRN	Cody Johnson	+661
CHANGE MY MIND Nashville Harbor	Riley Green	+564
DAYS LIKE THESE Seven Ridges/Columbia Nashville/SMN	Luke Combs	+494
PSYCHOLOGICAL Nashville Harbor	The Band Perry	+479
BRUNETTE Tucker Wetmore/Back Blocks/Mercury/Republic/EMI Nashville/Mercury Nashville	Tucker Wetmore	+462
20 CIGARETTES Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	+455
TURN THIS TRUCK AROUND MCA Nashville	Jordan Davis	+381
AIN'T A BAD LIFE Fifty-One/Forty-Nine/Valory	Thomas Rhett Featuring Jordan Davis	+337

RECURRENTS

THIS WEEK	TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	TOTAL AUD. (IN MILLIONS)
1	HOUSE AGAIN River House/Warner Records Nashville/WAR	Hudson Westbrook	17.622
2	DARLIN' Chase Matthew/Warner Records Nashville/WAR	Chase Matthew	17.612
3	AFTER ALL THE BARS ARE CLOSED Fifty-One/Forty-Nine/Valory	Thomas Rhett	16.474
4	COWGIRL Stoney Creek	Parmalee	14.416
5	I GOT BETTER Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	13.692
6	IT WON'T BE LONG RECORDS Nashville	George Birge	13.419
7	HAPPEN TO ME Triple Tigers	Russell Dickerson	11.813
8	JUST IN CASE Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	10.539
9	GOOD NEWS American Dogwood/EMPIRE/Magnolia Music	Shaboozey	10.113
10	HIGH ROAD YellaBush/Columbia/RECORDS Nashville	Koe Wetzel & Jessie Murph	9.822



TEXAS REGIONAL RADIO REPORT

WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 12, 2026

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WKS ON CHART	TITLE (Label)	ARTIST	TW SPINS	SPINS +/-	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WKS ON CHART	TITLE (Label)	ARTIST	TW SPINS	SPINS +/-
1	2	20	TURQUOISE AND SILVER (Get Joe) ★★1 Week at 1★★	Billie Jo Jones	1805	103	11	12	13	STEADY (Leo33)	Jenna Paulette	1353	55
2	5	7	FORT WORTH (Independent)	Kylie Frey feat. Randall King	1733	164	12	13	20	HONKY TONK HEART (Independent)	David Lewis feat. Randall King	1299	33
3	3	17	FLYIN' (Bowen Sounds/Thirty Tigers)	Wade Bowen	1659	-10	13	14	21	IS THIS THING WORKIN' (Tommy Jackson/Thirty Tigers)	Randy Rogers Band feat. Parker McCollum	1250	47
4	4	19	ROUGH SPOT (Independent)	Tristan Roberson	1613	7	14	16	18	RATHER BE ALONE (Broken Angel)	Love & Chaos	1232	100
5	7	16	SOUTHERN KING (CDX)	Sandee June	1593	55	15	17	23	.30-30 (Independent)	Deryl Dodd	1130	25
6	6	26	I WAS WRONG (Independent)	Mike Ryan	1574	10	16	19	5	LIFE STILL HAPPENS (Weathers Legacy Music/Sea Gayle Music)	Josh Weathers	1127	100
7	10	21	PRETTY WOMAN OF MINE (Independent)	Lee Thomas	1517	153	17	18	21	WHITE DRESS DIRECTION (Write On)	Adysen Malek	1099	12
8	8	21	WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE (Bill Grease Rec)	William Clark Green	1491	-11	18	20	24	HEARTBREAK QUEEN (Fame Records)	Kensie Coppin	965	-21
9	9	23	TEXAS STRONG (Independent)	Aaron Loy	1419	-48	19	22	21	PRETTY THING (Drift Ring/Smith Music)	Bart Crow Band	906	-14
10	11	28	THE OLDER I GET (MORE COUNTRY I'M GETTING TO BE) (Fool Hearted)	Jon Wolfe	1356	7	20	24	17	MOVING ON (Independent)	Trent Cowie	889	52

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 2026, Texas Regional Radio Report

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
1	2	22	HOW FAR DOES A GOODBYE GO Macon/Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	31.224	+3.536	8650	1065	1
2	1	17	CHOOSIN' TEXAS SAWGOD/Columbia/Triple Tigers	Ella Langley	31.127	+1.408	8172	323	2
3	3	19	20 CIGARETTES Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	29.261	+1.946	7898	455	3
4	4	32	AMEN American Dogwood/EMPIRE/Stoney Creek/Magnolia Music	Shaboozey & Jelly Roll	28.308	+1.502	7571	296	4
5	8	22	AIN'T A BAD LIFE Fifty-One/Forty-Nine/Valory	Thomas Rhett Featuring Jordan Davis	20.438	+0.396	5820	337	5
6	5	44	FAVORITE COUNTRY SONG Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	HARDY	19.419	-5.569	5145	-1481	7
7	9	60	TIME'S TICKING Valory	Justin Moore	19.389	+0.527	5337	170	6
8	10	53	BETTER ME FOR YOU (BROWN EYES) Fugitive Recordings/Magnolia Music	Max McNown	18.394	+1.609	5112	325	8
9	11	14	DAYS LIKE THESE Seven Ridges/Columbia Nashville/SMN	Luke Combs	17.637	+1.659	5062	494	9
10	12	42	WHAT HE'LL NEVER HAVE Curb	Dylan Scott	16.961	+1.383	4771	299	10
11	13	42	THE FALL CoJo/Warner Records Nashville/WRN	Cody Johnson	15.634	+1.712	4584	661	11
12	14	50	ENDS OF THE EARTH RECORDS/Columbia/RECORDS Nashville	Ty Myers	14.342	+0.712	3847	298	13
13	18	5	SLEEPLESS IN A HOTEL ROOM Seven Ridges/Columbia Nashville/SMN	Luke Combs	13.159	+3.883	3420	895	14
14	15	43	I AIN'T COMING BACK Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen Featuring Post Malone	12.590	+0.254	3370	110	16
15	16	54	I DARE YOU Big Machine	Rascal Flatts & Jonas Brothers	12.524	+0.652	3986	65	12
16	19	16	TURN THIS TRUCK AROUND MCA Nashville	Jordan Davis	10.706	+1.491	3399	381	15
17	21	37	ME & A BEER Harpeth 60	Chris Janson	9.599	+1.128	3040	215	17
18	24	7	CHANGE MY MIND Nashville Harbor	Riley Green	9.262	+1.757	3033	564	18
19	20	31	A SONG TO SING Vanner/Republic/Big Loud	Miranda Lambert & Chris Stapleton	9.116	+0.182	2943	120	19
20	23	9	BRUNETTE Tucker Wetmore/Back Blocks/Mercury/Republic/EMI Nashville/Mercury Nashville	Tucker Wetmore	8.957	+1.382	2660	462	21
21	22	49	WISH YOU WELL Music Soup/Interscope/MCA Nashville	Vincent Mason	8.081	-0.150	2731	-102	20
22	25	16	BEAUTIFUL THINGS Megan Moroney/Columbia/Columbia Nashville/SMN	Megan Moroney	7.283	+0.808	2488	243	22
23	26	27	MAKING GOOD TIME Three Up Three Down/Columbia Nashville/SMN	Old Dominion	6.998	+0.710	2307	141	24
24	27	10	ROCKY MOUNTAIN LOW Combustion Masters/RCA Nashville/SMN	Corey Kent & Koe Wetzel	6.195	+0.463	2282	234	25
25	31	18	CHEVY SILVERADO Atlantic/Warner Records Nashville/WRN	Bailey Zimmerman	5.801	+0.664	2051	70	27
26	29	45	TIL THE LAST ONE DIES Boss Moves/Black River	Chris Young	5.780	+0.218	2346	83	23
27	33	38	BAGGAGE Black River	Kelsea Ballerini	5.158	+0.502	2091	132	26
28	32	13	AFTER MIDNIGHT RCA Nashville/SMN	Nate Smith & Tyler Hubbard	5.005	-0.027	1532	2	30
29	35	9	SOUTH OF SANITY Leo33	Zach Top	4.895	+0.510	1407	179	31
30	34	35	WRONG HEARTS BMG/Galaxy Label Group	LOCASH	4.413	-0.090	1718	-18	28

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 © 2026, 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. Titles that decline in audience but increase in detections will also receive a bullet if the total audience erosion for the week does not exceed 3%.

RECURRENTS

On Country Airplay, descending titles below No. 10 in either audience or detections are moved to recurrent after 20 weeks, provided that they are not still gaining enough audience points to bullet or if they rank below No. 10 and post a third consecutive week of (non-bulleted) audience decline, regardless of total chart weeks. Plus, songs that ascend to a peak between Nos. 1 and 5 will remain on the chart for one additional week even if dropping below No. 10.

HOT SHOT DEBUT

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

MOST INCREASED AUDIENCE

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

AIRPOWER

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

BREAKER

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

billboard Country Airplay

AIRPLAY
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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	28	2	MCARTHUR Mercury/Big Loud	HARDY, Eric Church, Morgan Wallen & Tim McGraw	4.086	-1.625	1079	-119	36
32	36	29	NEVER CALL AGAIN Thrivin Here/Warner Records Nashville/WRN	Gavin Adcock	3.889	-0.106	1633	1	29
33	38	23	ALL MY EXES Mercury/Big Loud	Lauren Alaina Featuring Chase Matthew	3.275	+0.229	1302	90	34
34	37	32	KID MYSELF Night Train/Broken Bow	John Morgan	3.098	-0.098	1349	3	32
35	39	21	HATE HOW YOU LOOK The Core/Universal Music Canada/Mercury Nashville	Josh Ross	3.089	+0.082	1342	51	33
36	41	4	BOOTS OFF Capitol Nashville/MCA Nashville	Jon Pardi	2.604	+0.633	932	146	42
37	40	2	RIDE, RIDE, RIDE RECORDS/RECORDS Nashville	George Birge Featuring Luke Bryan	2.325	-0.065	750	154	47
38	42	20	LONG LIVE COUNTRY Triple Tigers	Shane Profitt	2.165	+0.226	1044	79	37
39	49	8	WATER AT A WEDDING Nashville Harbor	Greytan James	1.879	+0.310	789	60	43
40	47	17	FIREWORKS Curb	Kelsey Hart	1.838	+0.246	1134	103	35
41	44	31	EASY TO LOVE Broken Bow	Dustin Lynch	1.814	+0.065	1035	-27	38
42	43	39	BURNED DOWN HEAVEN Chase McDaniel/Big Machine	Chase McDaniel	1.802	+0.039	993	14	40
43	NEW		PSYCHOLOGICAL Nashville Harbor	★★ Hot Shot Debut ★★ The Band Perry	1.748	+1.748	479	479	55
44	50	4	MAKE A LIAR Big Machine	Jackson Dean	1.737	+0.306	747	100	48
45	48	13	STRAIGHT FOR THE HEART Alexandra Kay/Wheelhouse	Alexandra Kay	1.678	+0.088	1008	55	39
46	46	16	THE HELL YOU ARE Back Blocks/Mercury/Big Loud	Ashley Cooke	1.643	+0.006	786	6	44
47	52	3	NEVER COMIN' BACK Lost Highway	Flatland Cavalry	1.474	+0.187	465	106	57
48	51	22	HEAVEN PASSING THROUGH Bossier City/Thirty Tigers/Akando	Tumpike Troubadours	1.446	+0.033	482	3	54
49	54	14	KILLED THE MAN Curb	Lee Brice	1.378	+0.102	776	54	45
50	45	13	TRAVELIN' SOLDIER CoJo/Warner Records Nashville/WRN	Cody Johnson	1.341	-0.391	284	-41	-
51	58	3	HOLDIN' IT DOWN Chase Matthew/Warner Records Nashville/WAR	Chase Matthew	1.155	+0.317	774	148	46
52	53	12	DREAM COME TRUE Big Machine	Carly Pearce	1.127	-0.152	942	29	41
53	56	7	WORTH YOUR WILD Triple Tigers	Russell Dickerson	1.098	+0.039	737	61	49
54	55	10	DEVIL AIN'T DONE Stoney Creek	Atlas	1.055	-0.095	661	25	51
55	57	3	GARY Mercury/Big Loud	Stephen Wilson Jr.	1.024	+0.038	667	62	50
56	NEW		LET HIM IN ANYWAY Ten Point/Wheelhouse	Blake Shelton	0.950	+0.592	462	262	58
57	59	5	HIGHS & LOWS Quartz Hill	Matt Cooper	0.913	+0.123	645	48	52
58	RE-ENTRY		REBEL Patoka Sounds/Stoney Creek	Drew Baldrige	0.718	+0.029	565	-8	53
59	60	2	WHEN A COWBOY PRAYS Brandon Lake/Essential/SMN	Brandon Lake X Cody Johnson	0.651	-0.054	288	90	-
60	RE-ENTRY		KEEPS ME SANE Tyler Nance/Santa Anna	Tyler Nance	0.597	-0.019	420	11	59



Riley Green's Duckman Publishing signed Bobby Pinson ("The Fall," "Burning Man") to a songwriting deal in partnership with Lady Luck Publishing. Standing (from left): Lady Luck GM Cliff Audretch and Duckman managing partner Erik Dylan. Seated: Lady Luck founder Kim Penz, Pinson and Green.



Hudson Westbrook visited with WWQM Madison, Wis., staffers when he performed Feb. 6 at The Sylvee. From left: WWQM personality Cailynn Wright, Mid-West Family/Madison GM Randy Hawke, Westbrook, Warner Records Nashville W.A.R. South regional manager Connor Brook and WWQM music director Kristi Kelly.

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CHRIS HOLLO

The Jack Wharff Band made its Grand Ole Opry debut during the Feb. 10 edition of the WSM-AM Nashville show. From left: Opry host Charlie Mattos and band members Wharff and Evan Novoa.

EXECUTIVE MILESTONES ON MUSIC ROW

Significant milestones arrived this week for four current and former Nashville music executives, including changes at Big Machine and the Country Music Association (CMA).

Among the developments is the death of a former Mercury label head who played a role in the growth of Music Row; one of the decision-makers for whom the week was likely pivotal is unknown.

The threads include:

- Big Machine Label Group (BMLG) CEO/founder **Scott Borchetta** announced his departure from the company, owned by HYBE America, on Feb. 12. HYBE retains BMLG assets, including the Big Machine Music publishing wing and recording rights for its artists. A new label name and leadership will likely be revealed in coming days. Borchetta is expected to relaunch the Big Machine brand.

- Valory president **George Briner** announced his retirement after 18 years with BMLG and more than four decades in the business. Among his previous stops were Warner Bros., Curb, Giant and **KZLA** Los Angeles. Reach him [here](#).

- The CMA started accepting applications for its next CEO, following the January announcement of **Sarah Trahern**'s retirement at the end of 2026. Applicants are encouraged to email the Buffkin Baker search firm [here](#).

- Producer-label chief-guitarist **Jerry Kennedy**, 85, died on Feb. 11. A member of the Musicians Hall of Fame, he played on recordings by **Elvis Presley**, **George Jones**, **Tammy Wynette** and **Barbara Mandrell**, and he produced **The Statler Brothers**, **Reba McEntire**, **Jerry Lee Lewis** and **Roger Miller**, all of whom recorded for Mercury or Smash during his lengthy tenure with the labels. His survivors include songwriters **Gordon Kennedy**, **Bryan Kennedy** and **Shelby Kennedy**.

RADIO & RECORDS®

ONErpm appointed **Mike Easterlin** as managing director of its Nashville division. The veteran label executive was most recently a co-founder of the Severance label. Other new ONErpm staff includes director of A&R **Josh Tomlinson**, who was formerly BMI Nashville creative director; country marketing director **Lindsey Terry**, previously MCA Nashville director of marketing & artist development; and project manager **Chad Neville**, who transitioned into the role after working as River House Artists head of creative services ... BBR Music Group/BMG Nashville announced the signing of **Mary Kutter** on Feb. 13, the same day the company released her track "Bed of Roses" ... Artist-writer **Tyler Booth** signed a recording deal with **Jamey Johnson**'s Big Gassed label in partnership with Average Joes. Booth also tapped The Erv Woolsey Company for management ... **Trey Dolle** joined Cumulus/Cincinnati as VP/market manager with country **WNNF** among the on-air products he'll oversee. He was formerly Bally Sports/Fox Sports Ohio VP/general sales manager ... **Bill Stewart** segued to iHeartMedia/Tucson, Ariz., senior VP of programming from a similar role in Spokane, Wash., RadioInk.com reported. Brands now under his purview

include country **KHUD** ... **Dave Thomas** returned to **WSIG** Harrisonburg, Va., as brand manager/morning host, according to RadioInsight.com. Affiliated with **WSIG** during a previous run with the Saga cluster from 2014-2021, he was most recently Curtis Media/Boone, N.C., operations manager ... **WFRG** Utica, N.Y., morning talent **Dave Wheeler** left the Townsquare cluster after 16 years, RadioInsight.com reported. Wheeler was director of content for the local group since 2018 ... **Parker McCollum**, **Max McNown**, **Carter Faith** and **Zach John King** will play "Amazon Music Presents: Country Heat" on March 18 during Country Radio Seminar (CRS) in Nashville. This year's CRS app is now available for download.

'ROUND THE ROW

Kirby Mathews joined Back Blocks Music as VP of publishing. She was previously Riser House senior director of A&R/publishing ... **ERN**'s Cadillac Music welcomed three new executives: senior director of A&R **Dane Schmidt**, creative coordinator/executive assistant **Jordan Marcus** and A&R/executive assistant **Jude Warren**. Schmidt's most recent role came as co-founder of WeVolve Music; Marcus was formerly in Amazon live event production, and Warren is an ex-intern with King Pen Music and Republic Records ... Jonas Music Group hired **Amanda Hruska** as global head of administration. The last previous stop in her 15-year publishing history came as Lyric Capital Group VP of catalog administration ... Four employees received promotions at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. **Maggie Banker** was elevated to senior director of marketing from director, **Denise Alvis** rose to director of human resources from manager, **Nancy Cason** was boosted to associate director of guest experience from senior manager, and **Meredith Rife** stepped up to associate director of social media from senior manager ... The nonprofit Music Health Alliance hired VP of development **Lindsay Hayes**, who was most recently Collective Artist Management GM. Six other staff members earned new titles: **Britton Barnette** rose to senior advocate coordinator from coordinator, **Erin Lancaster** was boosted to director of group health from manager of advocacy & insurance, **Sophie Badgett** climbed to senior manager of advocacy & insurance/dental coordination from manager, **Steven Crowder** was elevated to director of advocacy & insurance/business management relations from manager; **Suzanne Berg** added director of artist management relations to her director of advocacy title, and **Zacquia McKinley** was upped to director of advocacy & insurance from manager ... PERK PR hired publicist **Natalie Blakley**, formerly an Ave East Marketing publicity manager ... Songwriter **Liz Rose** ("Girl Crush," "You Belong with Me") renewed her publishing agreement with Warner Chappell Nashville ... The Grammy Hall of Fame announced 14 new additions, including **The Rouse Brothers**' bluegrass classic "Orange Blossom Special" and **Lucinda Williams**' album *Car Wheels on a Gravel Road*. Go [here](#) for the full list ... SOURCE Nashville will add six new members to its Hall of Fame on Aug. 25: **Debbie Cheek Carroll**, MusiCares; **Paige Conners**, AFM Local 257; **Cris Lacy**, Warner Records Nashville; **Margie McGahey**, Country Music Association; **Sherry Oakley**, BMI; and **Carla Wallace**, Big Yellow Dog ... Author **Don Cusic** will give two lectures at historic RCA Studio B next month: a March 4 discussion of **Chet Atkins** and a March 24 conversation about **Elvis Presley** ... Moo TV founder **Scott Scovill** will be the Feb. 19 subject of the WHO KNEW virtual interview series "The Smartest People in the Room." Go [here](#) to sign up for free ... **Jamey Johnson** will headline the Nashville Ballet's 37th annual Ballet Ball on March 7 at the Schermerhorn Symphony Center ... Steel guitarist **Pete Finney**, 70, died Feb. 7. He worked with **Patty Loveless**, **Reba McEntire**, **Michael Nesmith** and **The Judds**, among others. ●



JAY TREVINO

Cody Johnson kicked off his **Cody Johnson Live 26 Tour** Feb. 6 in Birmingham.

billboard Country Airplay Index

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

20 CIGARETTES Concord Tunes, SESAC/Card Tables Music, SESAC/Hang Your Hat Hits, SESAC/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Family Farm Songs, BMI/Concord Copyrights, BMI/Jornil 10 Music, BMI/Rarre Publishing Worldwide, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Songs Of Back Block Publishing, BMI (C. LaCorte, R.C.McGill, J.L.Miller, B.Pendergrass) **3**

A

AFTER MIDNIGHT W.C.M. Music Corp., SESAC/Track & Feels Publishing Designee, SESAC/Tape Room Tunes, SESAC/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Vibez From Tree Vibez Music, ASCAP/Concord Alto CCI, ASCAP/Five Docks Down Music Publishing, ASCAP/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/T Tree Music, BMI (C. Brown, C.Crowder, T.R.Hubbard) **28**

AIN'T A BAD LIFE Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Be A Light Publishing, BMI/Big Loud Mountain LLC, BMI/John Byron Music, BMI/Rarre Publishing Worldwide, BMI/Songs Of Back Block Publishing, BMI/Sony Tunes LLC, ASCAP/Poppy's Picks, ASCAP/Master Of My Domain Music, ASCAP/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Big Loud Mountain Tunes, ASCAP/Mark Trussell Pub Designee, ASCAP (Thomas Rhett, J.Boyan, A.G.Gorley, B.Pendergrass, M.Tussell) **5**

ALL MY EYES Lylas Music, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/These Are Pulse Songs, BMI/PASSTHEBEAT PUBLISHING, BMI/Only Legends Music, BMI/Ben There Wrote That Publishing, BMI/Artist 101 Publishing Group, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Tape Room Hits, BMI/Hoops Don't Lie Publishing, BMI/Modern Arts Songs, BMI/Music By Work Of Art, BMI (Lauren Alaina, J.A.Gutch, B.C.Johnson, W.Philips) **33**

AMEN Poorchoice Music Publishing, BMI/Songs Into Poems, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/Crazy Baby Songs, 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/Sony Songs LLC, BMI/Sea Gayle Ale House Music, BMI (C.O.Chibweze, J.B.DeFord, S.C.Cook, J.H.Foote, S.W.ennis, J.Gray, K.J.Powers, N.Sastry) **4**

B

BAGGAGE Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Feel Your Way Through Publishing, ASCAP/Big Music Machine, BMI/Big Ass Pile Of Dimes Music, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane 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.J.Dillon, K.Fairchild, H.Lindsey, A.Vanderheyem) **27**

BEAUTIFUL THINGS Sony Timber Publishing, SESAC/Georgiamo, SESAC/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Triple Rae Creative Inc, BMI/Big Music Machine, BMI/Big Ass Pile Of Dimes Music, BMI/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Where I Started Music Publishing, ASCAP (M.Moroney, C.R.Harrington, J.J.Dillon, L.Alexander) **22**

BETTER ME FOR YOU (BROWN EYES) Songs From The Penalty Box, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Max McNowin Music, BMI/Carver Music Publishing, ASCAP/Tunes Of King Pen, BMI/Ready Set Publishing, BMI/Fugitive Songs Publishing, BMI (M.McNowin, J.Kenney, A.A.Suppessa, T.K.Dabbs) **8**

BOOTS OFF Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Hits From The Tape Room, BMI/50 Egg Music, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Crawford Mercer Music, GMR/Songs Of CN, GMR (J.Pardi, W.McCubbin, L.Laird) **36**

BRUNETTE Concord Tunes, SESAC/Hang Your Hat Hits, SESAC/Card Tables Music, SESAC/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Family Farm Songs, BMI/Concord Copyrights, BMI/Jornil 10 Music, BMI/Songs Of Back Block Publishing, BMI/Rarre Publishing Worldwide, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI (C. LaCorte, R.C.McGill, J.L.Miller, B.Pendergrass) **20**

BURNED DOWN HEAVEN Nothing Like You Heard Sound, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Rudy Rocks The USA, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, SESAC/Cuts Like A Nite Music, SESAC (C.McDaniel, J.M.Nite, L.Rimes) **42**

C

CHANGE MY MIND Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Back 40 Publishing International, BMI/Duckman Publishing, BMI/Flatland Boy Music, BMI/Hit Songs Of 50 Egg Music, BMI/Full Draw Publishing, BMI (R.Green, Erik Dylan, R.Montana) **18**

CHEVY SILVERADO Little Louder Songs, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/Sony Songs LLC, BMI/Spark Phone Music, BMI/Gavin J. Lucas Publishing, ASCAP/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Vacant Heart Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Bailey Zimmerman Publishing, BMI (T.Beathard, I.Juber, G.J.Lucas, H.Warren, B.Zimmerman) **25**

CHOOSIN' TEXAS Langley Publishing, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Luke Dick Publishing Designee, BMI/Pink Dog Publishing, BMI/Bada Bing Bada Boom Publishing, BMI/Bridge 1 Music, BMI (E.Langley, C.L.Dick, M.Lambert, J.Taylor) **2**

D

DAYS LIKE THESE Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Bootleg Lyrics, BMI/Tiltawhirl Music, BMI/Lucky Three Music Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/ONE TOOTH PRODUCTIONS, BMI/Super LCS Publishing, BMI (L.Combs, B.Cobb, A.Ratiere) **9**

DEVIL AIN'T DONE Atlas Music Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Songs Of Spirit II Nashville, ASCAP/SpiritVault Songs II, ASCAP/4Ever Songz, ASCAP/Big Music Machine, BMI/Works by Range Music Partners, BMI/Warbanger Publishing, BMI (S.Haywood, D.A.Garcia, G.Warburton) **54**

DREAM COME TRUE BMG Gold Songs, ASCAP/Redfeather Publishing, ASCAP/Razor And Tie Music Publishing, BMI/Tofer The Musical, BMI/Concord Copyrights, BMI/This Is Chromatic Music, BMI/Sony Tunes LLC, ASCAP/WeisOwl, ASCAP (C. Pearce, T.Brown, L.Hungate, E.L.Weisband) **52**

E

EASY TO LOVE Hit Train Music, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Ben There Wrote That Publishing, BMI/Artist 101 Publishing Group, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Tape Room Hits, BMI/HALLPASS, ASCAP/Turntable Music Pub, ASCAP/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Rocky Creek James, ASCAP/Tape Room LLC, Series 1, ASCAP/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/PINB Publishing, ASCAP (D.Lynch, B.J.Johnson, J.R.Hall, H.Phelps, Z.Crowell) **41**

ENDS OF THE EARTH Ty Myers Publishing Designee, BMI (T.Myers) **12**

F

THE FALL Sea Gayle Ale House Music, BMI/Bobby Pinson Music, BMI/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Keep Choppin Publishing, BMI/Exit 183 Songs, BMI/Anthem Music Publishing II, ASCAP/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI (B.Pinson, R.Fulcher, J.S.Stover) **11**

FAVORITE COUNTRY SONG Deemer Camp Publishing, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Relative Red Music, BMI/Biggie Bendable Music, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Tape Room Music Round Two, BMI/FBRL Country Tunes, BMI/Myron Bailey Publishing, BMI/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Master Of My Domain Music, ASCAP/Poppy's Picks, ASCAP/Corent Music, ASCAP/Nate Smith Music Publishing Company, ASCAP/W.C.M. Music Corp., SESAC/Track & Feels Publishing Designee, SESAC/Tape Room Tunes, SESAC/TDP Publishing, BMI/Hits From The Tape Room, BMI/Songs Of Spirit Nashville One, BMI (M.W.Hardy, Z.Aband, B.Bailey, C.Brown, A.G.Gorley, T.Philips, N.Smith) **6**

FIREWORKS Sea Gayle Ale House Music, BMI/Bobby Pinson Music, BMI/Good Boy Gray, BMI/Sony CountrySide, BMI/Eclipse One Music, BMI/Y'all Come Back Now, BMI/Taylor Goyette Entertainment, BMI (B.Baber, J.James, T.Goyette) **40**

G

GARY Poems On Junk Mail, SESAC/BMG Cicada, SESAC (S.L.Wilson Jr.) **55**

H

HATE HOW YOU LOOK Songs Of Combustion Five, BMI/Me Gusta Music, BMI/Round Hill Verses Publishing, BMI (N. Sainato, C.McKenna, J.Farren, C.Yancey) **35**

HEAVEN PASSING THROUGH Game Rooster Music, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI (E.Felker) **48**

THE HELL YOU ARE Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/12 Twelve Two Music, BMI/Big Loud Mountain LLC, BMI/The Blocks Are Back Music, BMI/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Crazy Baby Songs, BMI/W.C.M. Music Corp., SESAC/Better Bad Songs, SESAC/Philippians 4:7 Songs, BMI/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/WeisOwl, ASCAP (A.Cooke, S.W.ennis, J.A.Fox, R.C.McGill, E.L.Weisband) **46**

HIGHS & LOWS Songs Of North Chapel Music, BMI/Endurance Music Group, BMI/318 Records Publishing, BMI (M. Cooper) **57**

HOLDIN' IT DOWN Chase Matthew Music Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/The Big One, BMI/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Redd Up Publishing, BMI/Aaron Presley Beachum Publishing Designee, BMI/Evan Christian Mayo Publishing Designee, ASCAP/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI (Chase Matthew, E.Escue, A.Maxwell, Presley Aaron, E.C.Mayo, J.Center) **51**

HOW FAR DOES A GOODBYE GO Makena Cove Music, ASCAP/BMG Gold Songs, ASCAP/Triple Play Music, BMI/BMG Platinum Songs US, BMI/Irishsonic Music, BMI (K.M.Allison, J.Edwards, T.Kennedy, J.Morgan) **1**

I

I AIN'T COMING BACK Honey Hole Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Bell Ear Publishing, ASCAP/Deemer Camp Publishing, BMI/Universal Music Works, GMR/Posty Publishing, GMR/Errn 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) **14**

I DARE YOU Nick Jonas Publishing, BMI/PWZ Publishing House, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Shay Mooney Music, BMI/Seven Peaks Music, ASCAP/BSixteen Music, ASCAP (N.J.Jonas, Tommy English, S.Mooney, D.Whitmore, Jr.) **15**

K

KEEPS ME SANE Anthers Of Platinum Grammer, ASCAP/Sony Tunes LLC, ASCAP/Copyright Control (C.T.L.Nance, D.Napier, B.McCollough) **60**

KID MYSELF Triple Play Music, BMI/BMG Platinum Songs US, BMI/T Tree Music, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Endurance Alpha, ASCAP/Total Schmidt Songs, ASCAP (J. Morgan, T.R.Hubbard, J.M.Schmidt) **34**

KILLED THE MAN Sony Lakeview, SESAC/Riser House Tunes, SESAC/1 Barely Even Know Er Music, BMI/International Dog Music, BMI/Downtown DMP Songs, BMI/Big Music Machine, BMI/LuVegas Publishing, BMI/Sony CountrySide, BMI/Songs Of Riser House, BMI (M.D.Whitworth, J.D.Conrad, T.Cartwright, C.B.Baldwin) **49**

L

LET HIM IN ANYWAY Deemer Camp Publishing, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Relative Red Music, BMI/Biggie Bendable Music, BMI/Best Damn Music, BMI (M.W.Hardy, Z.Aband, K.S.Clark, C.Walace) **56**

LONG LIVE COUNTRY Shane Proffitt Publishing Designee, BMI/Matt Rogers Publishing Designee, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Rudy Rocks The USA, BMI (S.Proffitt, M.Rogers, L.Rimes) **38**

M

MAKE A LIAR Little Louder Songs, BMI/Emileon Songs, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Full Draw Publishing, BMI (J.Dean, C.L.Dick, R.Montana) **44**

MAKING GOOD TIME WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Bird And Bean Music, ASCAP/Trevor's Advocate Publishing, ASCAP/Twelve Dogwood, ASCAP/Universal Music Corp., ASCAP/Turs And Chorus, ASCAP/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Smackshot Music, BMI/Katie In Paris, BMI/Music Of CIM Outlander Music LP, BMI/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/South Of CT Publishing, BMI/Music Of Blackheart, BMI/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Sony Tunes LLC, ASCAP (M.T.Ramsey, T.J.Rosen, B.F.Tursi, R.Copperman, Ross Ellis) **23**

MCARTHUR Deemer Camp Publishing, BMI/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Relative Music Group Family, ASCAP/Head Coach Music, ASCAP/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Philippians 4:7 Songs, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Old Bandana, BMI (M.W.Hardy, R.C.McGill, J.Rodgers, J.Thompson) **31**

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-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Tape Room Hits, BMI/Firebird Country Tunes, BMI/Oakdale Market Publishing, BMI/Sony Songs LLC, BMI/Sony Tunes LLC, ASCAP (C.Janson, T.Philips, A.G.Gorley, A.Sheridan) **17**

N

NEVER CALL AGAIN Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Good Cock Tunes, BMI/World For Colton Venner, BMI/Concord Copyrights, BMI/Tea Farm Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Bridge 1 Music, BMI/Bada Bing Bada Boom Publishing, BMI (G.Adoock, J.Taylor, C.Venner, J.Rauton) **32**

NEVER COMIN' BACK ONE TOOTH PRODUCTIONS, BMI/Invoked Lamb Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Sony Lyric Music Publishing, GMR/CN Songs From 1508, GMR/Crawford Mercer Music, GMR (C.Cordero, L.Laird, A.Ratiere) **47**

P

PSYCHOLOGICAL Not Listed (Not Listed) **43**

R

REBEL Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Adam Sandler, ASCAP/Laguna Madre Music, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI (D.Baldrige, A.Sanders) **58**

RIDE, RIDE, RIDE Big Music Machine, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/T Tree Music, BMI (G.C.Birge, T.R.Hubbard, C.Brown, P.Welling) **37**

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LOW Songs Of Combustion Five, BMI/Corey Kent Music, BMI/Beats Building Fences, BMI/Big Music Machine, BMI/Lighting Street Publishing, BMI/Melodies Of CIM Outlander, SESAC/Michael Tyler Music, SESAC/MT ROOM, SESAC/Young Guns Tunes, SESAC (Corey Kent, T.Archer, A.Goodloe, M.Tyler) **24**

S

SLEEPLESS IN A HOTEL ROOM Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Bootleg Lyrics, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Sullivan S Guns Music, BMI/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Hits Of 50 Egg Music, ASCAP/Braven Baker Music, ASCAP (L.Combs, R.Montana, J.D.Singleton) **13**

A SONG TO SING Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Pink Dog Publishing, BMI/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/I Wrote These Songs, ASCAP/W.C.M. Music Corp., SESAC/NaynerPuddinPie Publishing, SESAC/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Songs For The Munch Music, BMI (M.Lambert, C.Stapleton, J.J.Frasure, J.Flenor) **19**

SOUTH OF SANITY Rio Bravo Music, Inc., BMI/Zach Top Music, BMI/Major Bob Productions, BMI/Too Koo To Quit Music, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Doan What I Do, BMI/Getyasome Music, BMI (Z.Top, C.Chamberlain, M.Nesler) **29**

STRAIGHT FOR THE HEART Cinq Trax, ASCAP/Livlyridge Music, ASCAP/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Cascade Road Songs, ASCAP/Karley Scott Collins Publishing Designee, ASCAP/Susan Perb Publishing, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Mod Junkie, BMI (J.Robbins, K.S.Collins, Sasha Alex Sloan) **45**

T

TIL THE LAST ONE DIES Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Sony Tree Publishing, ASCAP/Sony Timber Publishing, SESAC/M & M College Fund, SESAC/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/940 Songs, BMI (B.Hayslip, S.Mosley, J.Walker) **26**

TIME'S TICKING Double Barrel Ace Music, BMI/Big Music Machine, BMI/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Wild Willy Music, ASCAP/Music Of The Crown, ASCAP/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Full Draw Publishing, BMI/Anthem Music Publishing II, ASCAP/Tunes From The Red White And Blue School, ASCAP/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP (J.Moore, W.L.Bundy, R.Montana, J.S.Stover) **7**

TRAVELIN' SOLDIER Bruce Robinson Music, BMI/Tiltawhirl Music, BMI (B.Robison) **50**

TURN THIS TRUCK AROUND Anthem Music Publishing II, ASCAP/Jordan Davis Music, ASCAP/Neon Cross Music, BMI/Black Jeans Music, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/MV2 Music, BMI/Red Bandana Publishing, BMI/Sony CountrySide, BMI/Songs Of Riser House, BMI/Jake Mitchell Publishing Designee, BMI (J.Davis, D.Dawson, J.Mitchell, J.Thompson) **16**

W

WATER AT A WEDDING Relative Red Music, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Super Big Music, ASCAP/M Drag Songs, ASCAP/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Philippians 4:7 Songs, BMI/Songs For Knox, BMI (G.Egan, M.Dragstrem, R.C.McGill) **39**

WHAT HE'LL NEVER HAVE (Curb Songs), ASCAP/Logan Robinson Publishing Designee, NS/Ricky Rowton Publishing Designee, NS/Robbie Gatlin Publishing Designee, NS (D.Scott, L.Robinson, R.Rownton, R.Gatlin) **10**

WHEN A COWBOY PRAYS Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Brandon Lake Music, ASCAP/All Essential Music, ASCAP/Pravin Cowboy Publishing, SESAC/So Essential Tunes, SESAC/Songs By That Dog Will Hunt, BMI/Capitol CMG Paragon, BMI/Sugar Rain Music, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI (B.M.Lake, J.Sooter, H.Bentley, D.Southerland) **59**

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) **21**

WORTH YOUR WILD Concord Copyrights, BMI/Big Hits N Gravy, BMI/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Songs Of Home Team Music, BMI/Tunes Of TrailerParker, BMI/Track & Feels Publishing Designee, SESAC/Tape Room Tunes, SESAC/W.C.M. Music Corp., SESAC (R.Dickerson, P.Welling, C.Brown) **53**

WRONG HEARTS BMG Platinum Songs US, BMI/WebSlinger Publishing, BMI/Lovelegend Songs, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Red Bandana Publishing, BMI/Super Big Music, ASCAP/Drag Drag Music, ASCAP/Round Hill Songs II, ASCAP (P.C.Brust, C.Lucas, M.Dragstrem, J.Thompson) **30**

COUNTRY

60 Years Ago When Buck Owens' 'Welfare' Was Country's No. 1 Issue

Hardly a handout, The Buckaroos' single provided Owens' 10th chart-topper

After **Lyndon B. Johnson** was elected president in November 1964, he envisioned a Great Society in American culture that would correct racial injustices and mitigate poverty.

Two economic pieces of his agenda came together in the summer of 1965: the July creation of Medicare and Medicaid, and the August passage of a law that led to the Department of Housing

and Urban Development.

In the midst of those developments, **Buck Owens** and **Don Rich**, of his **Buckaroos**, put the finishing touches on "Waitin' in Your Welfare Line." Fellow artist **Nat Stuckey** twisted economic controversies into a two-line romantic hook — "I got the hungries for your love/ And I'm waitin' in your welfare line" — which Owens and Rich turned into a full

midtempo piece.

The Buckaroos recorded it on Aug. 24, 1965, and Capitol released it on Jan. 3, 1966. Owens performed it that month on ABC's *The Jimmy Dean Show*, and it began a seven-week run atop *Billboard's* Hot Country Songs on Feb. 19. "Welfare" earned Owens his 10th No. 1 single among 21 career leaders.

—TOM ROLAND

Buck Owens and his Buckaroos perform at Macy's department store on May 10, 1967, in New York City.

REWINDING
THE
COUNTRY
CHARTS

Billboard Award	Rank	Song	Chart Position
5	1	WAITIN' IN YOUR WELFARE LINE	5
		Buck Owens, Capitol 5566 (Central Songs, BMI)	
2	1	GIDDYUP GO	14
		Red Sovine, Starday 737 (Starday, BMI)	
3	4	SNOWFLAKE	7
		Jim Reeves, RCA Victor 8719 (Open Road-Rondo, BMI)	
4	3	TRUE LOVE'S A BLESSING	11
		Sonny James, Capitol 5536 (Marson, BMI)	
5	2	FLOWERS ON THE WALL	22
		Statler Brothers, Columbia 43315 (Southwind, BMI)	
6	12	SKID ROW JOE	9