

billboard Country Update

BILLBOARD.COM/NEWSLETTERS

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BILLBOARD COUNTRY UPDATE

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New GM Sally Williams Considers The Opry's Synergistic Future



When bluegrass act **Dailey & Vincent** was invited to join the Grand Ole Opry on Dec. 30 at Nashville's Ryman Auditorium, Opry vice president/GM **Pete Fisher** oversaw the process. **Sally Williams**, the GM at the time, had no idea that she would, in fact, see the induction through to its end.

Dailey & Vincent were officially installed March 11 at the Grand Ole Opry House in the first Saturday broadcast of the show after Williams received a promotion that includes a role as Opry GM. It was a fortuitous addition. Even before she ran the Ryman, she had booked the duo for numerous performances, so she had a lengthy history with the act.

"It's a lovely induction for my first," says Williams.

The moment hints at how her new responsibilities in a realigned Opry executive team are expected to be a boon to the company, which plans to offer more synergistic opportunities to work with a variety of Opry-owned properties. The Dailey & Vincent announcement came around the same time that the Ryman unveiled its lineup for its summer series Bluegrass Nights at the Ryman, which includes the duo. That cross-promotion hadn't been planned between Fisher and Williams, but it's symbolic for the future.

"It was a really good example of the goal of this department," she says.

"This department" is programming and artist relations, a

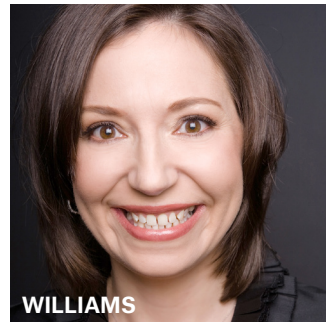
new division that Williams oversees as senior vp. It puts her in charge of the Opry's roster and weekly lineups, but also makes her responsible for concerts and events at the Ryman, the Opry House and three forthcoming venues: New York's Opry City Stage, opening this summer; Ole Red in Tishomingo, Okla., expected in the fall; and Ole Red in Nashville, due in 2018.

It creates a mini-circuit that provides artists multiple ways to latch on to an established brand that now has tentacles in the largest media market in the United States, in addition to Music City and a symbolic heartland locale.

"For new artists, that's going to be an amazing opportunity," says Williams. "With Opry City Stage in New York, the place is not huge — we're not going to be doing the same size concerts there that we do at the Ryman — but it's such an important place. And now with [WNSH's] presence there, it's a really important country music market, so that space will be an instrumental addition for

artists of all sizes as they begin to launch a record or celebrate a No. 1 or whatever may be happening in their world at the time."

The department came together after Fisher turned in his resignation in January, when the Los Angeles-based Academy of Country Music named him the new CEO. In her new role, Williams gives up the building operations function she had at the Ryman, but focuses more on creating opportunities for Opry Entertainment and for the artists who interact with the



WILLIAMS

WILLIAMS: HEATHER BRAND

GREG HUDIK WHOLE LOTTA CRAZY ABOUT YOU

From the album
Music's A Religion



Platinum Records Nashville



This song shows
Greg's love for all
music...
Southern Rock,
Country Rock,
Traditional Country...

A large portion of sales
from this album will
go to Gatlinburg/Pigeon
Forge fire victims who
lost everything.

company. That heightens an attitude that was already being voiced within Opry Entertainment.

“We had been looking more holistically at how we program and work with artists in a way that would help us create the best experience for the guests walking in through the front door, but also the guests walking in through the back door,” she says.

Partnering with **Blake Shelton** in the new Ole Red venues is one example of that effort. So is the **Little Big Town** residency at the Ryman, which Williams instituted in conjunction with the venue’s 125th anniversary. Part of their partnership involves band-affiliated merchandise that will be sold at multiple Opry retail locations and online. Other programmatic content is still being developed with LBT for later in the year.

Williams becomes Opry GM at a time when the brand has been revitalized. Since debuting on **WSM-AM** Nashville in 1925, the show has become the longest-running radio program in history. It has had its share of ups and downs, from boasting a plethora of the era’s biggest stars when it was a national radio show in the ‘40s and ‘50s to becoming a dated, nostalgic vehicle in the ‘70s and ‘80s, when the lineup was dominated by stars of yesteryear.

An effort was made beginning in the mid- to late ‘80s to freshen up the Opry roster, with **Garth Brooks**, **Alan Jackson** and **Vince Gill** among the key ‘90s additions. The new millennium has included such inductees as **Brad Paisley**, **Dierks Bentley**, **Carrie Underwood** and **Keith Urban**. Fisher encountered some significant bumps when he took over as GM in 1999 as some senior Opry members resented having their slots reduced to make way for newcomers. But the youth injection has updated the brand, and Williams is optimistic that those issues are behind the Opry.

“There’s nothing better than that generational connection being on the side of the stage when a new artist is meeting **Bill Anderson** for the first time or **Jeannie Seely** is loving on somebody that’s been playing on the Opry for a year and telling the stories of how it’s changed,” Williams says. “More than ever, we have an understanding and an appreciation — both Opry members and guest artists — of how important that is.”

The Opry has aired annually for five years from the Country Radio Seminar, and it was broadcast from Carnegie Hall in 2005. The Opry City Stage would seem to lend itself to more out-of-town installments, though Williams says that has not been discussed. She does hint, however, that the multiple venues could create the building blocks to reignite the Grand Ole Opry American Road Show. A 2004 package featuring Gill, **Patty Loveless**, the **Del McCoury Band** and **Rebecca Lynn Howard** harkened back to another era when artists such as **Roy Acuff**, **Minnie Pearl** and **Little Jimmy Dickens** performed out of town under the Opry banner.

Whatever roads the new Opry department travels, Williams expects it will affect not only the company but also its home city and country music in general.

“Genres don’t have homes, right?” she says. “One of the things that I have loved so much about Nashville and the Opry and country music is that we have a home and a community.”



Duo Walker McGuire visited KTEX McAllen, Texas, as the pair continued its radio-promotion tour. From left: KTEX PD JoJo Cerda, the duo’s Jordan Walker and Johnny McGuire, and KTEX music director James “Patches” Paczkowski.



Reba McEntire encountered her wax likeness during a March 4 sound check for her residency with Brooks & Dunn at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. The statue goes on permanent display April 14 when Madame Tussauds opens a Nashville location.



Easton Corbin (left) met up with Academy of Country Music CEO Pete Fisher during a visit to the ACM’s headquarters in Encino, Calif.

CORBIN: MICHEL BOURQUARD

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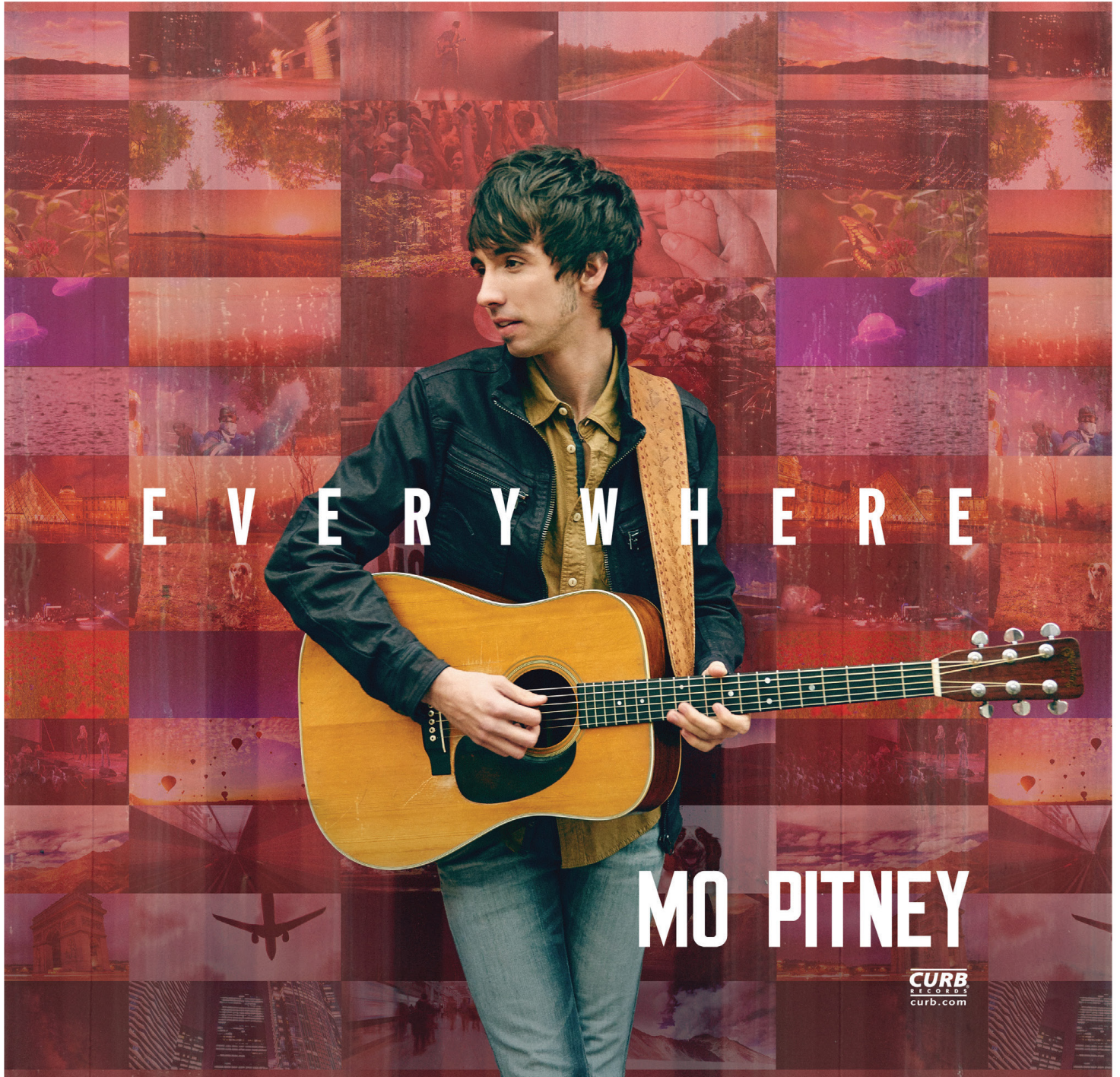
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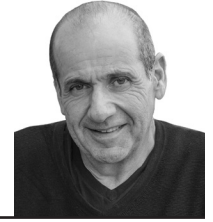
– Huffington Post



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

Pardi Kicks Up His 'Boots,' Again, Atop Country Airplay; Ballerini Earns Fourth Top 10



One of the more traditionally styled artists in the country genre, **Jon Pardi** scores his second No. 1 on *Billboard's* Country Airplay chart — both from his sophomore LP, *California Sunrise* — as “Dirt on My Boots” (Capitol Nashville) kicks 2-1 on the March 25 list, increasing 5 percent to 42.7 million audience impressions in the tracking week ending March 12, according to Nielsen Music.

The song, penned by **Rhett Akins**, **Jesse Frasure** and **Ashley Gorley**, is also Pardi's second straight Country Airplay leader with the word “boots” in its title. Lead *California Sunrise* single “Head Over Boots” became his first No. 1 on Aug. 27, 2016. “Head” took 46 weeks to reach the summit, becoming the third-longest trek to the top of the chart, dating to the launch of Country Airplay on Jan. 20, 1990. In comparison, “Dirt” tops the tally in its 25th frame.

“Being No. 1 is a fresh, new place for me, and I'm loving it,” Pardi tells *Billboard*. “I really appreciate country radio playing two pretty traditional-sounding songs back-to-back.”

Was there any hesitation in releasing a second single with “Boots” in the title? “Nah,” says Pardi. “‘Dirt on My Boots’ was pegged as the second single from *California Sunrise* from the get-go. We felt like it was just a fun song to go with. Plus, I had complete support from my label. They had no hesitation at all.”

As for Pardi's traditional bent, “a great song is a great song,” says Cumulus Nash director of programming **John Shomby**. “I don't really think it matters whether a song leans more pop or more traditional — as long as it's strong — and ‘Dirt’ is just a fun country song. If you've seen Pardi perform it live, you really get the sense as to why the audience loves it. It's fun and hooky, and it's easy to sing along to. It has all the ingredients for a hit.”

On Hot Country Songs, where **Sam Hunt's** “Body Like a Back Road” (MCA

Nashville) rules for a fifth week, “Dirt” lifts to a new peak (3-2). It also climbs 3-2 on Country Digital Song Sales (21,000 downloads sold, down 4 percent) and holds with a bullet at No. 3 on Country Streaming Songs (5.8 million U.S. streams, up 7 percent).

THE FOURTH TIME **Kelsea Ballerini** notches her fourth total and consecutive top 10 on the Country Airplay chart from debut full-length *The First Time*

as “Yeah Boy” (Black River) rolls 11-10, gaining by 5 percent to 24.5 million in audience.

“Boy” follows Ballerini's three prior top 10s on Country Airplay, all of them spending a week at No. 1: “Love Me Like You Mean it” (July 4, 2015), “Dibs” (March 5, 2016) and “Peter Pan” (Sept. 24, 2016).

Ballerini is the first solo female to bank at least four top 10s on Country Airplay from a first LP since **Taylor Swift** notched five between 2006 and 2008 from her self-titled debut: “Tim McGraw” (No. 6), “Teardrops on My Guitar” (No. 2), “Our Song” (No. 1, six weeks), “Picture to Burn” (No. 3) and “Should've Said No” (No. 1, two weeks). Meanwhile, Ballerini shares space in the top 10 of Country Airplay with Swift, as the latter wrote **Little Big Town's** “Better Man,” which dips 5-8 after two weeks atop the chart.

Among all artists, Ballerini is the first to generate at least four top 10s on Country Airplay from a debut LP since **Sam Hunt** notched five (including four No. 1s) between 2014 and 2016.

NOW YOU 'KNOW' **Brett Young** earns his second top 10 on Hot Country Songs as “In Case You Didn't Know” (Big Machine Label Group) surges 13-9. It bounds 28-20 on Country Airplay, where it gains by 27 percent with 11.3 million in audience. The track follows Young's debut hit, “Sleep Without You,” which rose to No. 3 last December. ●



PARDI

PARDI: RICK DIAMOND/GETTY IMAGES FOR CRS

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billboard Country Airplay

AIRPLAY
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THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WKS ON CHART	TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	AUDIENCE (IN MILLIONS)		PLAYS		
					THIS WEEK	+/-	THIS WEEK	+/-	RANK
1	2	25	DIRT ON MY BOOTS Capitol Nashville	Jon Pardi	42.684	+1.870	7893	208	2
2	3	47	THINK A LITTLE LESS Atlantic/WEA	Michael Ray	42.251	+1.814	7765	265	3
3	4	23	TODAY Arista Nashville	Brad Paisley	40.855	+1.879	7969	424	1
4	6	15	FAST Capitol Nashville	Luke Bryan	35.608	+4.097	6895	602	4
5	7	30	ROAD LESS TRAVELED 19/Interscope/Mercury	Lauren Alaina	33.057	+3.508	6269	490	5
6	1	40	SOBER SATURDAY NIGHT RCA Nashville	Chris Young Featuring Vince Gill	31.237	-10.855	5878	-2058	6
7	9	16	ANY OL' BARSTOOL Macon/Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	30.640	+3.083	5732	619	8
8	5	21	BETTER MAN Capitol Nashville	Little Big Town	29.880	-4.896	5338	-1112	9
9	8	29	KILL A WORD EMI Nashville	Eric Church Featuring Rhiannon Giddens	28.650	+0.076	5851	-3	7
10	11	23	YEAH BOY Black River	Kelsea Ballerini	24.515	+1.242	4458	89	12
11	14	6	BODY LIKE A BACK ROAD MCA Nashville	Sam Hunt	22.619	+2.366	4039	374	13
12	13	41	HOMETOWN GIRL MCA Nashville	Josh Turner	22.226	+1.990	4470	226	11
13	12	34	THE WEEKEND Valory	Brantley Gilbert	22.175	+1.157	4552	53	10
14	15	13	BAR AT THE END OF THE WORLD Blue Chair/Columbia Nashville	Kenny Chesney	19.692	+0.387	4039	62	14
15	19	21	HURRICANE River House/Columbia Nashville	Luke Combs	17.236	+2.046	3638	522	15
16	18	18	BLACK Capitol Nashville	Dierks Bentley	16.809	+1.001	3499	132	16
17	20	24	HOW NOTTO Warner Bros./WAR	Dan + Shay	14.503	+2.692	3166	334	17
18	23	34	IF I TOLD YOU Capitol Nashville	Darius Rucker	12.625	+1.765	3017	258	18
19	22	34	THERE'S A GIRL 19/Republic/Dot	Trent Harmon	11.617	+0.138	2946	128	19
20	28	14	IN CASE YOU DIDN'T KNOW BMLG	Brett Young	11.271	+2.394	2739	630	20
21	24	8	YOU LOOK GOOD Capitol Nashville	Lady Antebellum	11.075	+1.435	2379	246	22
22	25	10	YOURS IF YOU WANT IT Big Machine	Rascal Flatts	10.481	+0.901	2477	137	21
23	27	5	THE FIGHTER Hit Red/Capitol Nashville	Keith Urban Featuring Carrie Underwood	10.229	+1.807	2042	441	24
24	29	6	MY OLD MAN Southern Ground/Elektra/WAR	Zac Brown Band	8.359	+0.762	1943	266	25
25	31	9	GOD, YOUR MAMA, AND ME BMLG	Florida Georgia Line Featuring Backstreet Boys	7.731	+1.141	1564	212	28
26	30	17	WE SHOULD BE FRIENDS Vanner/RCA Nashville	Miranda Lambert	7.693	+0.159	2102	78	23
27	33	28	MY GIRL Curb	Dylan Scott	7.477	+1.602	1940	339	26
28	32	9	FLATLINER Warner Bros./WMN	Cole Swindell	7.366	+0.878	1519	77	29
29	34	20	SOMEBODY ELSE WILL Valory	Justin Moore	6.249	+0.739	1773	121	27
30	37	4	EVERY TIME I HEAR THAT SONG Warner Bros./WMN	Blake Shelton	5.888	+1.841	1333	400	31

BILLBOARD COUNTRY AIRPLAY PANEL – 151 STATIONS

Albany, N.Y.	WGNA	Detroit	WYCD	Memphis	WGKX	Rochester, N.Y.	WBEE
Albuquerque, N.M.	KBOI	El Paso, Texas	KHEY	Miami	WLFP	Sacramento, Calif.	KBEB
Allentown, Pa.	KRST	Ft. Myers, Fla.	WCKT	Milwaukee	WKIS	St. Louis	KNCI
Atlanta	WCTO	Ft. Wayne, Ind.	WWGR	Minneapolis	WMIL		KNTY
Augusta, Ga.	WKHX	Fresno, Calif.	WQHK	Mobile, Ala.	WKEY	Salt Lake City	KSD
Austin, Texas	WUBL	Gainesville, Fla.	KSKS	Monmouth/Ocean, N.J.	KMNB		WIL
Bakersfield, Calif.	WKXC	Grand Rapids, Mich.	WOGK	Monterey, Calif.	WKSJ		KEGA
Baltimore	KASC	Greensboro, N.C.	WBCT	Nashville	WKMI		KTOP
Baton Rouge, La.	KUZZ	Greenville, S.C.	WPAP		KTOM		KUBL
Birmingham, Ala.	WPOC	Harrisburg, Pa.	WTOR		WKDF	San Antonio, Texas	KAJA
Boise, Idaho	WYNK	Hartford, Conn.	WESS		WSX		KCYY
Boston	WDXB	Houston	WSSL		WSM-FM	San Diego	KSON
Buffalo, N.Y.	WZZK	Indianapolis	WRBT		WJVC	San Jose, Calif.	KRTY
Charleston, S.C.	KIZN	Jacksonville, Fla.	WYZZ		WRNS		KRSJ
Charlotte, N.C.	WBIW	Johnson City, Tenn.	KILT		WNOE	Santa Rosa, Calif.	KFGY
Chicago	WKLB	Kansas City	KKBO		WNSH	Sarasota, Fla.	WCTO
Chattanooga, Tenn.	WYRK	Knoxville, Tenn.	WDRM		WGH	Seattle	KKWF
Chicago	WCKN	Lafayette, La.	WFMS		WUSH	Shreveport, La.	KMPS
Chicago	WEZL	Lakeland, Fla.	WLHK		KJKE	Spokane, Wash.	KXKS
Cincinnati	WKKT	Las Vegas	WGNE		KTST	Springfield, Mass.	KXLY
Cleveland	WSOC	Lexington, Ky.	WQIK		KXKT	Springfield, Mo.	WRNX
Colorado Springs, Colo.	WUSY	Little Rock, Ark.	WXBO		WWKA	Stockton, Calif.	KTTG
Columbia, S.C.	WVGB	Los Angeles	KBEO		WXTU	Syracuse, N.Y.	KATM
Columbus, Ohio	WUSN	Louisville, Ky.	WDAF		KMLE	Tampa, Fla.	WBBS
Corpus Christi, Texas	WUBE	Madison, Wis.	KFKF		KNIX	Tucson, Ariz.	WFOK
Dallas	WGAR	McAllen, Texas	WCYO		WDSY	Tulsa, Okla.	WQYK
Denver	KATC		WIVK		WOGI		KIJM
Denver	WCOS		KMDL		WPGB		KTGX
Des Moines, Iowa	WCOS		WPCV		WPOR		KVOO
	KRYS		KCYE		WTTT		KJWG
	KPLX		KWNR		WUP	Visalia, Calif.	KJUG
	KSCS		WBUL		KWJJ	Washington, D.C.	WMZO
	KWOF		KSSN		WCTK	West Palm Beach, Fla.	WIRK
	KYGO		KKGO		WNCB	Wichita, Kan.	KFDI
			WAMZ		WQDR		KZSN
			WQNU		WKHK	Wilkes Barre, Pa.	WGGY
			WVQM		KFRG	Wilmington, Del.	WXCX
			KTEX		WSLC	York, Pa.	WGTY

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	NEW		NO SUCH THING AS A BROKEN HEART RCA Nashville ★★ Hot Shot Debut/Most Increased Audience/Most Added ★★	Old Dominion	5.678	+5.678	768	768	37
32	39	16	DO I MAKE YOU WANNA Mercury	Billy Currington	4.132	+0.588	1048	144	33
33	36	23	FOR HER Big Loud	Chris Lane	4.016	+0.177	1445	177	30
34	38	9	IT AIN'T MY FAULT EMI Nashville	Brothers Osborne	3.388	+0.099	1150	60	32
35	45	7	DRINKIN' PROBLEM Big Machine	Midland	3.355	+1.011	845	354	34
36	41	20	THE WAY IT TALK Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	2.713	+0.390	725	64	39
37	40	17	RING ON EVERY FINGER Reviver	LOCASH	2.643	+0.057	820	3	35
38	46	15	MISSING Warner Bros./WMN	William Michael Morgan	2.340	+0.115	650	63	43
39	49	7	A GIRL LIKE YOU Mercury	Easton Corbin	2.317	+0.166	695	77	40
40	43	12	MAKIN' ME LOOK GOOD AGAIN Dot/BMLG	Drake White	2.305	+0.290	681	63	42
41	44	3	SOMETHIN' I'M GOOD AT Atlantic/WMN	Brett Eldredge	2.272	+0.293	605	178	45
42	42	10	OUTTA STYLE BIG Label	Aaron Watson	2.193	+0.016	274	3	51
43	50	4	MORE GIRLS LIKE YOU MCA Nashville	Kip Moore	2.011	+0.395	688	138	41
44	47	12	MOMMA AND JESUS Big Machine	Tucker Beathard	1.949	+0.193	748	65	38
45	53	16	WITH YOU I AM CoJo	Cody Johnson	1.839	+0.077	173	5	-
46	51	10	WOKE UP IN NASHVILLE Arista Nashville	Seth Ennis	1.559	+0.188	798	50	36
47	NEW		CALIFORNIA BSR/New Revolution	Big & Rich	1.224	+0.825	436	336	46
48	57	4	WHAT IFS Zone 4/RCA Nashville	Kane Brown Featuring Lauren Alaina	1.182	+0.333	391	21	49
49	55	6	KISS ME Almost Country/Thirty Tigers	Casey Donahew	0.979	+0.060	183	-18	59
50	54	8	REBOUND Cold River/New Revolution	Drew Baldridge Featuring Emily Weisband	0.977	-0.017	607	12	44
51	59	5	JUST A PHASE Stoney Creek	Adam Craig	0.977	+0.261	401	79	48
52	56	7	GETTING OVER YOU Broken Bow	Jackie Lee	0.876	+0.015	419	24	47
53	58	2	GREATEST LOVE STORY Arista Nashville	LANCO	0.806	+0.089	249	95	52
54	NEW		SMALL TOWN BOY Broken Bow	Dustin Lynch	0.766	+0.345	192	85	56
55	60	4	CLOSE Warner Bros./WEA	Ryan Kinder	0.707	+0.056	339	20	50
56	NEW		BACK TO GOD Rockin' R/Nash Icon/Valory	Reba McEntire	0.564	+0.191	215	15	54
57	NEW		WATERED DOWN Wheelhouse	Trace Adkins	0.521	+0.244	103	31	-
58	NEW		SING ALONG Wheelhouse	Kristian Bush	0.517	+0.216	217	32	53
59	NEW		THEY CAN'T SEE Reviver	Michael Tyler	0.466	+0.048	184	19	58
60	NEW		YOU'LL ACCOMP'NY ME Warner Bros./WAR	Frankie Ballard	0.414	+0.115	173	38	-



46

SETH ENNIS
Woke Up in Nashville

The 23-year-old artist's first entry on Country Airplay (51-46) increases 14 percent to 1.6 million audience impressions. The official video for the ballad, which Ennis co-wrote, premiered March 9.

GOING FOR ADDS

3/20

CARLY PEARCE
Every Little Thing
Big Machine

CHRIS "OZ" FERRARA
No Mercy
Rock Ridge

DUSTIN LYNCH
Small Town Boy
Broken Bow

OLD DOMINION
No Such Thing As A Broken Heart
RCA Nashville

PARKER WILLINGHAM
You Get Me Every Time
Apple Row

RAILERS
11:59 (Central Standard Time)
Atlantic/WMN

RUDY PARRIS
Cowboy Cry
Warrior

STEPHANIE QUAYLE
Winnebago
Rebel Engine/Star Farm

3/27

A THOUSAND HORSES
Preachin' To The Choir
BMLG

JACOB DAVIS
What I Wanna Be
Black River

MAREN MORRIS
I Could Use A Love Song
Columbia Nashville

4/3

JAMES ROBERT WEBB
Six Strings & The Truth
Bison Creek

billboard Country Airplay

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MOST ADDED®			
TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	ADDS	
NO SUCH THING AS A BROKEN HEART RCA Nashville	Old Dominion	48	
DRINKIN' PROBLEM Big Machine	Midland	33	
IN CASE YOU DIDN'T KNOW BMLG	Brett Young	27	
THE FIGHTER Hit Red/Capitol Nashville	Keith Urban Feat. Carrie Underwood	26	
EVERY TIME I HEAR THAT SONG Warner Bros./WMN	Blake Shelton	26	
CALIFORNIA BSR/New Revolution	Big & Rich	20	
GOD, YOUR MAMA, AND ME BMLG Florida Georgia Line Feat. Backstreet Boys		16	
SOMETHIN' I'M GOOD AT Atlantic/WMN	Brett Eldredge	12	
MORE GIRLS LIKE YOU MCA Nashville	Kip Moore	11	
HURRICANE River House/Columbia Nashville	Luke Combs	10	

MOST INCREASED AUDIENCE			
TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	GAIN (IN MILLIONS)	
NO SUCH THING AS A BROKEN HEART RCA Nashville	Old Dominion	+5.678	
FAST Capitol Nashville	Luke Bryan	+4.097	
ROAD LESS TRAVELED 19/Interscope/Mercury	Lauren Alaina	+3.508	
ANY OL' BARSTOOL Macon/Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	+3.083	
HOW NOT TO Warner Bros./WAR	Dan + Shay	+2.692	
IN CASE YOU DIDN'T KNOW BMLG	Brett Young	+2.394	
BODY LIKE A BACK ROAD MCA Nashville	Sam Hunt	+2.365	
HURRICANE River House/Columbia Nashville	Luke Combs	+2.046	
HOMETOWN GIRL MCA Nashville	Josh Turner	+1.990	
TODAY Arista Nashville	Brad Paisley	+1.879	

MOST INCREASED PLAYS			
TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	GAIN	
NO SUCH THING AS A BROKEN HEART RCA Nashville	Old Dominion	+768	
IN CASE YOU DIDN'T KNOW BMLG	Brett Young	+630	
ANY OL' BARSTOOL Macon/Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	+619	
FAST Capitol Nashville	Luke Bryan	+602	
HURRICANE River House/Columbia Nashville	Luke Combs	+522	
ROAD LESS TRAVELED 19/Interscope/Mercury	Lauren Alaina	+490	
THE FIGHTER Hit Red/Capitol Nashville	Keith Urban Feat. Carrie Underwood	+441	
TODAY Arista Nashville	Brad Paisley	+424	
EVERY TIME I HEAR THAT SONG Warner Bros./WMN	Blake Shelton	+400	
BODY LIKE A BACK ROAD MCA Nashville	Sam Hunt	+374	

NEW AND ACTIVE				
TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	TOTAL AUDIENCE	TOTAL STATIONS	ADDS
ACT LIKE YOU DON'T Red Bow	Brooke Eden	0.409	16	3
TOUGH GUYS True To The Song/Faction/in2une Nashville	Caroline Jones	0.389	10	1
EVERY LITTLE THING Dot	Carly Pearce	0.376	4	0
WHEN I PRAY FOR YOU Atlantic/Warner Bros./WAR	Dan + Shay	0.354	5	4
EVERYWHERE Curb	Mo Pitney	0.333	17	1
PREACHIN' TO THE CHOIR BMLG	A Thousand Horses	0.237	3	3

RECURRENTS			
THIS WEEK	TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	TOTAL AUD. (IN MILLIONS)
1	A GUY WITH A GIRL Warner Bros./WMN	Blake Shelton	26.069
2	STAR OF THE SHOW Valory	Thomas Rhett	20.803
3	WANNA BETHAT SONG Atlantic/WMN	Brett Eldredge	19.931
4	SEEIN' RED Broken Bow	Dustin Lynch	19.223
5	MAY WE ALL BMLG Florida Georgia Line Feat. Tim McGraw		18.266
6	MAKE YOU MINE Atlantic/WEA	High Valley	14.966
7	IT DON'T HURT LIKE IT USED TO Mercury	Billy Currington	13.729
8	BLUE AIN'T YOUR COLOR Hit Red/Capitol Nashville	Keith Urban	13.559
9	DIRTY LAUNDRY 19/Arista Nashville	Carrie Underwood	13.435
10	SLEEP WITHOUT YOU BMLG	Brett Young	12.991

BILLBOARD COUNTRY BOXSCORE			
Gross Ticket Price(s)	Artist Venue/Date(s)	Attendance Capacity	Promoter(s)
\$1,233,087 \$89, \$25	ERIC CHURCH Palace of Auburn Hills (Mich.)/Feb. 25	18,940 sellout	MESSINA TOURING GROUP/AEG LIVE
\$1,036,893 \$89, \$25	ERIC CHURCH Quicken Loans Arena, Cleveland/Feb. 24	19,837 sellout	MESSINA TOURING GROUP/AEG LIVE
\$965,478 \$89, \$25	ERIC CHURCH Bankers Life Fieldhouse, Indianapolis/Feb. 23	15,339 sellout	MESSINA TOURING GROUP/AEG LIVE
\$895,270 \$82.50, \$42.50	BLAKE SHELTON The Forum, Inglewood, Calif./Feb. 17	12,687 13,013	MESSINA TOURING GROUP/AEG LIVE
\$769,381 \$68, \$32.50	BLAKE SHELTON Tacoma (Wash.) Dome/Feb. 25	14,155 15,218	MESSINA TOURING GROUP/AEG LIVE

Reported worldwide boxscore figures for Country artists. Boxscore figures should be submitted to Bob Allen by phone (615-891-1976), fax (615-891-2054) or email (bob.allen@billboard.com).



TEXAS REGIONAL RADIO REPORT

WEEK ENDING MARCH 5, 2017

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	TEQUILA EYES (Independent) ★★ 1 week at 1 ★★	Randy Rogers Band	1829	13	11	12	21	HARD LIVIN' ILLENE (Independent)	Randall King feat. Cleto Cordero	1183	28
2	1	15	OUTTA STYLE (BIG)	Aaron Watson	1717	-123	12	11	14	BRIDGE (Independent)	Mark McKinney	1183	20
3	4	16	13 YEARS (Independent)	Sundance Head	1707	82	13	14	8	STILL NOT OVER YOU (Independent)	Jerrett Zoch and The OSR Band	1147	74
4	3	18	LIVE IT WHILE YOU GOT IT (Pretty Damn Tough)	Josh Abbott Band	1701	10	14	16	18	I'M BREAKING IN (Independent)	Junior Gordon	1131	97
5	5	21	NEW HOMETOWN (Independent)	Mike Ryan	1638	58	15	13	28	SHADOW OF A BROKEN HEART (Red Dirt Legend)	Brandon Jenkins	1124	-1
6	6	15	HOMESICK CRAZY (Independent)	Matt Kimbrow	1530	66	16	17	27	SHOULD'VE BEEN MINE (Independent)	TJ Broscoff	919	-113
7	7	10	FOREVER TODAY (Independent)	Reckless Kelly	1418	39	17	19	22	RATHER HAVE YOU (Independent)	Adrian Johnston	897	67
8	8	21	JULY (Independent)	Dalton Domino	1297	-31	18	23	5	A LOT OF ROOM TO TALK (Independent)	Jake Worthington	860	64
9	10	16	RUNAWAY TRAIN (Independent)	Shane Smith & The Saints	1221	52	19	20	10	PEOPLE LIKE ME (Independent)	Dustin Sonnier	855	34
10	9	21	COME AS YOU ARE (Independent)	Turnpike Troubadours	1215	7	20	21	14	BEER PRESSURE (Independent)	Bri Bagwell	848	32

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 817-283-7984. Copyright 2017, Texas Regional Radio Report

NASHVILLE & NATIONAL TOM ROLAND



Kid Rock made a surprise appearance during Chris Janson's performance of "Buy Me Boat" at the WIRK West Palm Beach, Fla., Rib Roundup on March 4. From left: Exzact Entertainment concert promoter Zach McElroy, Kid Rock, Janson, WIRK PD Sammy Cruise and Warner Music Nashville WAR Southeast regional Tom Starr.

BIG MACHINE PROMO SHAKEUP

Big Machine Label Group (BMLG) appears to have put a period on its Dot label.

The company updated the Big Machine label's promotion department roster March 13. The new lineup includes five recent Dot executives, while an additional Dot employee was shifted to BMLG and three Dot acts — **Tucker Beathard**, **Carly Pearce** and **Drake White** — were reassigned to different imprints.

The move comes just days after Big Machine's senior vp/promotion **Jack Purcell** resigned to take a similar vp role at EM.Co, the management company for **Tim McGraw**.

Top Of The Morning, a BMLG prep service that publishes Monday mornings, provided an early tip to the label adjustment. The email blast heralded news and audio related to acts on Big Machine, Valory, BMLG and Nash Icon, but made no reference to Dot.

The new Big Machine promo department features five employees assigned jobs they handled for Dot just a week ago: vp/promotion **Kris Lamb**, West Coast director **Bill Lubitz**, Southwest director **James Marsh**, Southeast director **A. J. Calvin** and coordinator **Nicole Hunt**.

Four previous Big Machine promotion execs remain in place, with two now focused on different regions. **Brooke Diaz** moves to the Northeast from her prior West Coast role, and **Alex Valentine** is reassigned to the Southwest from the Midwest. **Jeff Davis** continues to oversee Southeast promotion, while **Erik Powell** remains national promotion director.

Michelle Kammerer, who was promoted to Dot national promotion director in January, retains the same title with the BMLG imprint. Dot GM **Chris Stacey** is unaccounted for in the release.

Ex-Dot artists Beathard and Pearce have both been formally added to the Big Machine roster, while White is now stationed at BMLG. The status of three other Dot acts — **Maddie & Tae**, **Aaron Lewis** and **Steven Tyler** — was not immediately clear.

The BMLG release was notably concise — four short sentences and a list of new job assignments — and the company did not respond immediately to several requests.

Dot presumably had a short shelf life in this latest incarnation. Maddie & Tae were the first signees announced to the reactivated imprint in June 2014. BMLG also went through a recent label makeover when Republic Nashville became the BMLG imprint. — *Additional reporting by Phyllis Stark*

MOVERS & SHAKERS

WMIL Milwaukee reshaped its morning team following the retirement of Country Radio Hall of Fame member **Karen Dalessandro**. **Shaun Ridder** was moved to mornings from afternoon drive, and iHeartMedia/Milwaukee personality/digital project manager **Shannen Oesterreich** was added permanently to the a.m. shift. They join existing morning host **Scott Dolphin**. **Tony "Radar" Hess** departed and is looking for his next opportunity. Reach him [here](#)... **Brian Cody** and **Chrissy Cavotta** joined the **WGNA** Albany, N.Y., morning show March 13 following a 10-year run at top 40 competitor **WFLY**.

Joining them in the move is producer **Jess Sims**. They replace **Sean McMaster**, who jumped crosstown to **AC WYJB**. McMaster's former **WGNA** co-host, **Bethany Linderman**, is in the market for a new position... **Neil Barry** joined United Stations as executive director of brand sponsorships. It's a return to radio for Barry, who was most recently a Livestream online media consultant. Among United Stations' country offerings are *The Road* and *Rick Jackson's Country Classics*. Reach Barry [here](#)... **Carletta Blake** joins **WNCB** Raleigh, N.C., as PD on March 27, InsideRadio.com reported. She slides over from a similar role at **WRNS** Greenville-New Bern-Jacksonville, N.C... Top 40 **WKSE** Buffalo, N.Y., hired **Greg Cypin** as music director/afternoon drive host, according to Talkers.com. The job takes him out of country, concluding a stint in afternoons at **KAWO** Boise, Idaho.

'ROUND THE ROW

Bluegrass duo **Dailey & Vincent** signed with **Keith Stegall's** label and production company Dreamlined Entertainment and will release new album *Patriots and Poets* March 31 on BFD/RED... **Trent Harmon** signed with **Rick Barker** for management. Barker, a former Big Machine regional promoter, founded Music Industry Blueprint and was social media mentor for *American Idol* when Harmon competed on the Fox program. Reach Barker [here](#)... Songwriter **Niko Moon** ("My Old Man," "Castaway") signed a publishing deal with Warner/Chappell Nashville... The Americana Music Association set its 25-member board of directors, including SESAC vp writer/publisher relations **Tim Fink**, aHa! Media founder **Amanda Hale** and Slate Creek president/creative director **Garth Fundis**. Vector Management GM **John Ingrassia** is AMA president. Go [here](#) for the full list of board members... **Little Big Town** will host on April 26 when the Country Music Association recognizes 31 instructors as Music Teachers of Excellence in



MOON

Nashville. Go [here](#) for a list of the honorees... Who Knew Nashville convenes its latest networking forum, Women Who Rock, March 30 at City Winery. Featured executives at the event include Hideout Pictures president **Carey Nelson Burch**, Nashville-Access co-founder **Holly Bell** and LyftVu co-founder **Laura Hutfless**. Go [here](#) for more... Bass vocalist **Hurshel Wiginton** died March 6, according to *The Tennessean*. He was a member of the background-vocal group **Nashville Edition**, which spent two decades performing on *Hee Haw*. Wiginton's voice can be heard on **Randy Travis'** "Hard Rock Bottom of Your Heart," **George Strait's** "Right or Wrong," **Elvis Presley's** "Moody Blue" and **Dottie West's** "Country Sunshine."



RCA Nashville artist **Ryan Hurd** (left) hung out with **WKLI** Albany, N.Y., PD **Jon Reilly** during a stop on his inaugural radio-promotion tour.

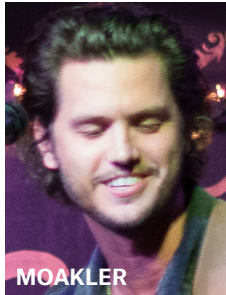


Granger Smith (right) visited **Barbara Bush Children's Hospital** in Portland, Maine, with **WTHT** PD **Chris Clare** on March 9 in support of the station's radiothon for kids.

NASHVILLE & NATIONAL TOM ROLAND

MUSIC NOTES

With St. Patrick's Day falling on Friday, four new and developing acts picked March 17 to release new albums or EPs, perhaps hinting to the universe that they'd appreciate a little more green to fall their way in the not-too-distant future. The four acts all occupy their own space. **Steve Moakler** (*Steel Town*, Creative Nation) has landed three songs on SiriusXM's The Highway, with "Wheels" showing an appreciable depth. Miami-born **Sammy Arriaga** (*Meet in the Middle*, Latium/RCA Nashville) mixes Spanish influence with heartland flavor — perfectly timed as industry research indicates a growing Latino audience is paying attention to the genre. **Michael Tyler** (*317*, Reviver) worked with producer **Michael Knox** (**Jason Aldean**, **Trace Adkins**), building pop-edged sonics around playful phrasing. And **The Swon Brothers**, who hit the Country Airplay top 15 with "Later On," are still a harmonic force with one song, "Dwight Trashed," that name-drops '90s stars and cleverly laments a 3 a.m. closing time as a "Randy Travis-ty." All worth a toast of green beer!



MOAKLER

More pop/country collaborations are in the immediate offing. **Florida Georgia Line** officially extends its association with "God, Your Mama, and Me" collaborators **Backstreet Boys** with a joint performance at the Academy of Country Music Awards on April 2 and three stadium dates this summer in Boston, Minneapolis and Chicago. **Brad Paisley** scored guest appearances by **Mick Jagger**, **Timbaland** and **John Fogerty** for his album *Love and War*, due April 21. And **Darius Rucker** shares the stage with **John Mellencamp** in the next installment of *CMT Crossroads*, premiering March 24.

The Last Songwriter, directed by **Mark Barger Elliott** (*Lost Boy Home*) and billed as a documentary about the shrinking prospects for composers, has its world premiere at the 48th annual Nashville Film Festival April 20-29. Songwriter **Marcus Hummon** ("Bless the Broken Road," "Born to Fly") scored the film, which includes appearances by **Garth Brooks**, **Jim Lauderdale**, **Jason Isbell** and **Emmylou Harris**.

Maren Morris has been inserting three unreleased songs — "Bummin' Cigarettes," "The Company You Keep" and "Space" — into set lists for her Hero Tour. Now, recorded versions of those tracks will make their way into the marketplace with the March 17 release of *Hero Deluxe*, augmenting an album that arrived in June 2016. She also has extended the run with her first seven dates in the United Kingdom and Ireland, beginning Nov. 12 in Dublin and closing Nov. 21 in Sheffield, England.

Top Headlines from billboard.com

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[Remembering Tommy Page: Seymour Stein pays tribute](#)

[U2's Joshua Tree turns 30: looking back on the most U2 of all U2 albums](#)

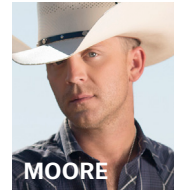
[Cher asks judge to dismiss lawsuit over typeface](#)

[Future, The Beatles, Simon & Garfunkel and more acts that replaced themselves at No. 1 on the Billboard 200](#)

ON THIS DATE IN COUNTRY MUSIC

March 13

- 2009 — **Justin Moore** sings "Small Town USA" in his Grand Ole Opry debut.
- 2008 — **Trace Adkins** survives the boardroom on the NBC series *The Celebrity Apprentice* as **Donald Trump** fires his teammate, **Stephen Baldwin**. In the episode, Adkins created a sandwich, the Cowboy Club, that Quiznos then offers in a national promotion.



MOORE

March 14

- 2012 — **Brantley Gilbert** sings "Country Must Be Country Wide" on the observation deck of the Empire State Building in New York.
- 1992 — **Garth Brooks** is the musical guest on NBC's *Saturday Night Live*, performing "Rodeo" and "The River" on the **John Goodman**-hosted edition from New York.

March 15

- 2007 — **Reba McEntire** and **Kelly Clarkson** record "Because of You" in Nashville.

March 16

- 2016 — **Mark Collie** and **Rascal Flatts'** **Jay DeMarcus** appear on ABC's *Nashville* as wedding guests when **Connie Britton** and **Charles Esten**'s characters get married. **Jim Lauderdale** sings "Together Again" for the on-screen couple's first dance.
- 2015 — Broken Bow releases the **Jason Aldean** single "Tonight Looks Good on You" to radio.

March 17

- 2014 — **Maddie & Tae** write "Girl in a Country Song" with songwriter-producer **Aaron Scherz** in Nashville.

March 18

- 2011 — **Kenny Chesney** takes batting practice with the Philadelphia Phillies during spring training in Clearwater, Fla. The team beats the Pittsburgh Pirates, 3-2.

March 19

- 2013 — Mercury releases the **Kacey Musgraves** album *Same Trailer Different Park*.
- 1977 — **Glen Campbell**'s "Southern Nights" rides to No. 1 on the *Billboard* country chart.

Source: [RolandNote.com](#), the Ultimate Country Music Database

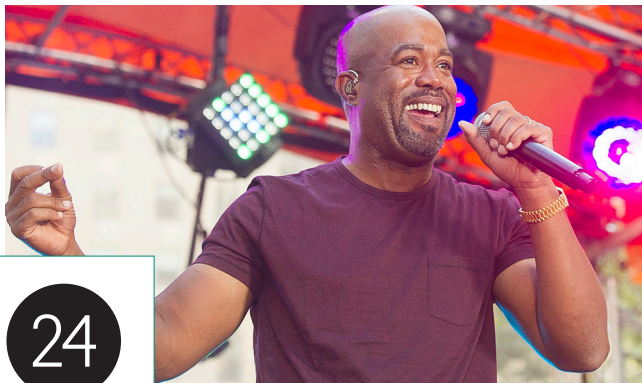


Josh Turner guested on the syndicated Big D & Bubba radio show as he promotes his new MCA album, *Deep South*, released March 10. From left: Derek "Big D" Haskins, Turner and Sean "Bubba" Powell.

billboard Hot Country Songs

SALES, AIRPLAY & STREAMING DATA COMPILED BY **nielsen MUSIC**

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TWO WEEKS AGO	WKS ON CHART	TITLE <small>PRODUCER (SONGWRITER)</small>	Artist <small>IMPRINT / PROMOTION LABEL</small>	CERTIFIED	PEAK POSITION
1	1	1	6	BODY LIKE A BACK ROAD <small>Z.CROWELL (S.HUNT,Z.CROWELL,J.OSBORNE,S.MCANALLY)</small>	Sam Hunt MCA NASHVILLE		1
2	3	3	25	DIRT ON MY BOOTS <small>B.BUTLER,J.PARDI (R.AKINS,J.FRASURE,A.GORLEY)</small>	Jon Pardi CAPITOL NASHVILLE	●	2
3	2	2	21	BETTER MAN <small>J.JOYCE (T.SWIFT)</small>	Little Big Town CAPITOL NASHVILLE		1
4	4	4	24	THINK A LITTLE LESS <small>S.HENDRICKS (J.M.NITE,THOMAS RHETT,BARY DEAN,J.ROBBINS)</small>	Michael Ray ATLANTIC/WEA		4
5	6	11	15	FAST <small>J.STEVENS,J.STEVENS (L.BRYAN,R.CLAWSON,L.LAIRD)</small>	Luke Bryan CAPITOL NASHVILLE		5
6	8	8	14	ANY OL' BARSTOOL <small>M.KNOX (J.THOMPSON,D.RUTTAN)</small>	Jason Aldean MACON/BROKEN BOW		6
7	9	13	28	HURRICANE <small>S.MOFFATT (L.COMBS,T.PHILLIPS,T.ARCHER)</small>	Luke Combs RIVER HOUSE/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE		7
8	7	7	23	TODAY <small>L.WOOTEN (B.PAISLEY,C.DUBOIS,A.GORLEY)</small>	Brad Paisley ARISTA NASHVILLE		7
9	13	16	27	IN CASE YOU DIDN'T KNOW <small>D.HUFF (B.YOUNG,T.REEVE,K.SCHILENGER,T.TOMLINSON)</small>	Brett Young BMLG		9
10	5	5	39	SOBER SATURDAY NIGHT <small>C.CROWDER,C.YOUNG (C.YOUNG,B.WARREN,B.WARREN)</small>	Chris Young Featuring Vince Gill RCA NASHVILLE		4
11	10	6	31	BLUE AIN'T YOUR COLOR <small>D.HUFF,K.URBAN (S.L.OLSEN,H.LINDSEY,C.LAGERBERG)</small>	Keith Urban HIT RED/CAPITOL NASHVILLE	■	1
12	12	15	28	ROAD LESS TRAVELED <small>BUSBEE (LAUREN ALAINA,J.FRASURE,M.TRAINOR)</small>	Lauren Alaina 19/INTERSCOPE/MERCURY		12
13	11	9	26	KILL A WORD <small>J.JOYCE (E.CHURCH,J.HYDE,L.DICK)</small>	Eric Church Featuring Rhiannon Giddens EMI NASHVILLE		9
14	17	14	12	THE FIGHTER <small>BUSBEE,K.URBAN (K.URBAN,BUSBEE)</small>	Keith Urban Featuring Carrie Underwood HIT RED/CAPITOL NASHVILLE		5
15	18	20	27	HOMETOWN GIRL <small>K.GREENBERG (M.BEESON,D.TASHIAN)</small>	Josh Turner MCA NASHVILLE		15
16	19	18	22	YEAH BOY <small>F.G.WHITEHEAD,J.MASSEY (K.BALLERINI,F.G.WHITEHEAD,K.TIMMER)</small>	Kelsea Ballerini BLACK RIVER		16
17	14	10	23	STAR OF THE SHOW <small>JOE LONDON,J.BUNETTA,THOMAS RHETT (THOMAS RHETT,R.AKINS,B.HAYSLIP)</small>	Thomas Rhett VALORY		4
18	15	12	23	A GUY WITH A GIRL <small>S.HENDRICKS (A.GORLEY,B.SIMPSON)</small>	Blake Shelton WARNER BROS./WMN		3
19	20	17	18	BLACK <small>R.COPPERMAN (D.BENTLEY,R.COPPERMAN,A.GORLEY)</small>	Dierks Bentley CAPITOL NASHVILLE		17
20	16	21	12	GOD, YOUR MAMA, AND ME <small>J.MOI (J.KEAR,H.LINDSEY,G.SAMPSON)</small>	Florida Georgia Line Featuring Backstreet Boys BMLG		16
21	22	22	9	BAR AT THE END OF THE WORLD <small>B.CANNON,K.CHESNEY (J.T.HARDING,A.MAYO,D.L.MURPHY)</small>	Kenny Chesney BLUE CHAIR/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE		21
22	26	24	22	HOW NOT TO <small>D.SMYERS,S.HENDRICKS (A.HAMBRICK,P.DIGIOVANNI,K.BARD)</small>	Dan + Shay WARNER BROS./WAR		22
23	23	28	8	YOU LOOK GOOD <small>BUSBEE (H.LINDSEY,R.HURD,BUSBEE)</small>	Lady Antebellum CAPITOL NASHVILLE		22
24	27	29	30	IF I TOLD YOU <small>R.COPPERMAN (R.COPPERMAN,J.M.NITE,S.MCANALLY)</small>	Darius Rucker CAPITOL NASHVILLE		24
25	21	27	6	MY OLD MAN <small>D.COBB (Z.BROWN,N.MOON,B.SIMONETTI)</small>	Zac Brown Band SOUTHERN GROUND/ELEKTRA/WAR		10



24

DARIUS RUCKER
If I Told You

In its 30th week on Hot Country Songs, the lead track from **Rucker's** upcoming fifth studio set rises 27-24. It boosts by 16 percent to 12.6 million in audience and enters the top 20 (23-18) on Country Airplay.



29

CHRIS LANE
For Her

The second single from **Lane's** freshman album, *Girl Problems*, follows the Country Airplay leader and Hot Country Songs No. 10 hit "Fix." "For Her" jumps 35-29 on Hot Country Songs, fueled by a 23 percent sales hike to 5,000 downloads, helped by a 69-cent sale tag in the iTunes Store.

billboard Hot Country Songs

SALES, AIRPLAY & STREAMING DATA COMPILED BY
nielsen MUSIC

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TWO WEEKS AGO	WKS ON CHART	TITLE PRODUCER (SONGWRITER)	Artist IMPRINT / PROMOTION LABEL	CERTIFIED	PEAK POSITION
26	28	30	31	MY GIRL M.ALDERMAN, J.E.NORMAN (D.SCOTT, J.KERR)	Dylan Scott CURB		26
27	32	34	9	YOURS IF YOU WANT IT J.DEMARCUS, G.LEVOX, J.D.ROONEY (A.DORFF, J.SINGLETON)	Rascal Flatts BIG MACHINE		27
28	31	32	28	THERE'S A GIRL J.ROBBINS (T.HARMON, J.ROBBINS, L.VELTZ)	Trent Harmon 19/REPUBLIC/DOT		28
29	35	35	16	FOR HER J.MOI (M.DRAGSTREM, K.ARCHER, S.BUXTON)	Chris Lane BIG LOUD		23
30	34	33	17	WE SHOULD BE FRIENDS FLIDDELL, G.WORF, E.MASSE (M.LAMBERT)	Miranda Lambert VANNER/RCA NASHVILLE		25
31	36	37	10	FLATLINER M.CARTER (C.SWINDELL, M.BRONLEEWE, J.BOYER)	Cole Swindell WARNER BROS./WMN		31
32	37	36	24	OUTSKIRTS OF HEAVEN M.J.CONES (C.CAMPBELL, D.TURNBULL)	Craig Campbell RED BOW		32
33	33	19	3	SMALL TOWN BOY Z.CROWELL (R.AKINS, B.HAYSLIP, K.FISHMAN)	Dustin Lynch BROKEN BOW		19
34	42	43	4	EVERY TIME I HEAR THAT SONG S.HENDRICKS (A.MAYO, C.LINDESEY, B.WARREN, B.WARREN)	Blake Shelton WARNER BROS./WMN		34
35	38	39	8	SOMEBODY ELSE WILL S.BORCHETTA, J.S.STOVER (K.ARCHER, A.HAMBRICK, T.OTTOH)	Justin Moore VALORY		35
36	40	42	14	WHAT IFS D.HUFF (K.BROWN, M.MCGINN, J.M.SCHMIDT)	Kane Brown Featuring Lauren Alaina ZONE 4/RCA NASHVILLE		36
37	39	41	7	IT AIN'T MY FAULT J.JOYCE (J.OSBORNE, T.J.OSBORNE, L.T.MILLER)	Brothers Osborne EMI NASHVILLE		37
38	50	-	2	GREATEST LOVE STORY J.JOYCE (B.LANCASTER)	LANCO ARISTA NASHVILLE		38
39	43	-	3	WHEN I PRAY FOR YOU S.HENDRICKS, D.SMYERS (S.MOONEY, D.SMYERS, J.EBACH, J.M.NITE)	Dan + Shay ATLANTIC/WARNER BROS./WAR		39
40	30	-	2	SOMETHIN' I'M GOOD AT R.COPPERMAN, B.ELDRIDGE (B.ELDRIDGE, T.DOUGLAS)	Brett Eldredge ATLANTIC/WMN		30
41	44	44	7	DO I MAKE YOU WANNA D.HUFF (A.GORLEY, Z.CROWELL, M.JENKINS, J.FLOWERS)	Billy Currington MERCURY		41
42	NEW	1		SANCTUARY *** Hot Shot Debut *** T.LAUER (J.ANDREWS, G.NICHOLSON, S.SISKAND)	Nashville Cast Featuring Charles Esten & Lennon & Maisy LIONS GATE/ABC STUDIOS/BIG MACHINE		42
43	RE-ENTRY	3		THE WAY I TALK J.MOI (J.L.ALEXANDER, B.HAYSLIP, C.MCGILL)	Morgan Wallen BIG LOUD		43
44	46	-	3	MORE GIRLS LIKE YOU K.MOORE, D.GARCIA (K.MOORE, S.L.OLSEN, J.MILLER, D.A.GARCIA)	Kip Moore MCA NASHVILLE		41
45	NEW	1		DRINKIN' PROBLEM S.MCANALLY, D.HUFF, J.OSBORNE (J.CARSON, C.DUDDY, M.WYSTRACH, S.MCANALLY, J.OSBORNE)	Midland BIG MACHINE		45
46	48	48	3	MAKIN' ME LOOK GOOD AGAIN R.COPPERMAN, J.S.STOVER (D.WHITE, M.CRISWELL, S.MINOR)	Drake White DOT/BMLG		46
47	41	38	11	LIPSTICK M.J.CONES (J.WAYNE, N.COOKE, H.MULHOLLAND, C.HOBBY, E.HOFFMAN, R.L.HOWARD)	Runaway June WHEELHOUSE		38
48	RE-ENTRY	2		WOKE UP IN NASHVILLE C.CROWDER (S.ENNIS, B.DALY, D.H.HODGES)	Seth Ennis ARISTA NASHVILLE		48
49	47	46	8	ROOTS NV (J.MULLINS, B.STENNIS, W.B.BOLLINGER)	Parmalee STONEY CREEK		45
50	RE-ENTRY	6		WITH YOU I AM T.W.WILLMON (D.C.LEE, C.D.JOHNSON, T.W.WILLMON)	Cody Johnson COJO		46

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

COUNTRY MARKET WATCH

A Weekly National Music Sales Report

YEAR-TO-DATE

Year-Over-Year Album Sales	
'16	4.3 million
'17	3.8 million
DIGITAL TRACKS SALES	
'16	17.6 million
'17	13.8 million

Weekly Unit Sales			
	ALBUMS	DIGITAL ALBUMS*	DIGITAL TRACKS
This Week	412,000	115,000	1,360,000
Last Week	503,000	153,000	1,419,000
Change	-18.1%	-24.8%	-4.2%
This Week Last Year	491,000	148,000	1,812,000
Change	-16.1%	-22.3%	-24.9%

Overall Unit Sales			
	2015	2017	CHANGE
Albums	4,322,000	3,787,000	-12.4%
Digital Tracks	17,618,000	13,750,000	-22.0%
Sales by Album Format			
	2015	2017	CHANGE
Physical	2,814,000	2,582,000	-8.2%
Digital	1,507,000	1,204,000	-20.1%

For week ending March 9, 2017. Figures are rounded. Compiled from a national sample of retail store and rack sales reports collected and provided by Nielsen Music.



*Digital album sales are also counted within album sales.

For inquiries about any Nielsen Music data, please contact Josh Bennett at 615-807-1338 or josh.bennett@nielsen.com

billboard TOP COUNTRY ALBUMS

SALES, DATA
COMPILED BY
nielsen
MUSIC

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	2 WEEKS AGO	WEEKS ON CHART	ARTIST IMPRINT & NUMBER / DISTRIBUTING LABEL	Title	WEEKS ON CHART	PEAK POS.
1	1	—	2	LITTLE BIG TOWN CAPITOL NASHVILLE 026223/UMGN	THE BREAKER	1	1
2	3	2	13	GARTH BROOKS PEARL 6001 TGEX	THE ULTIMATE COLLECTION	1	1
3	5	4	44	KEITH URBAN HIT RED/CAPITOL NASHVILLE 023591*/UMGN	RIPCORD	1	1
4	4	1	3	ALISON KRAUSS CAPITOL 025392*	WINDY CITY	1	1
5	6	7	97	CHRIS STAPLETON MERCURY 019405*/UMGN	TRAVELLER	2	1
6	7	3	6	BRANTLEY GILBERT VALORY B60300/BMLG	THE DEVIL DONT SLEEP	1	1
7	8	8	28	FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE BMLG 0300*	DIG YOUR ROOTS	1	1
8	9	6	5	REBA MCENTIRE ROCKIN' R/NASH ICON RM0400A/BMLG	SING IT NOW: SONGS OF FAITH & HOPE	1	1
9	10	10	76	THOMAS RHETT VALORY RT0200A/BMLG	TANGLED UP	2	2
10	2	—	2	AARON WATSON BIG LABEL 188769/THIRTY TIGERS	VAQUERO	2	2
11	11	12	108	SAM HUNT MCA NASHVILLE 021502/UMGN	MONTEVALLO	2	1
12	12	9	4	BRETT YOUNG BMLG B0100A*	BRETT YOUNG	2	2
13	13	14	83	LUKE BRYAN CAPITOL NASHVILLE 022813/UMGN	KILL THE LIGHTS	1	1
14	14	15	38	JON PARDI CAPITOL NASHVILLE 024744*/UMGN	CALIFORNIA SUNRISE	1	1
15	15	13	26	JASON ALDEAN MACON/BROKEN BOW 2227/BBMG	THEY DON'T KNOW	1	1
16	20	25	14	KANE BROWN ZONE 4/RCA NASHVILLE 530947/SMN	KANE BROWN	1	1
17	16	20	42	BLAKE SHELTON WARNER BROS. 555352/WMMN	IF I'M HONEST	1	1
18	22	22	72	BLAKE SHELTON WARNER BROS. 551788/WMMN	RELOADED: 20 #1 HITS	2	2
19	NEW	—	1	MOONSHINE BANDITS BACKROAD 297/AVERAGE JOES	BAPTIZED IN BOURBON	19	19
20	18	17	41	DIERKS BENTLEY CAPITOL NASHVILLE 024745*/UMGN	BLACK	1	1
21	17	11	40	MAREN MORRIS COLUMBIA NASHVILLE 516885*/SMN	HERO	1	1
22	19	21	71	ERIC CHURCH EMI NASHVILLE 024200*/UMGN	MR. MISUNDERSTOOD	2	2
23	23	16	95	KELSEA BALLERINI BLACK RIVER 2015	THE FIRST TIME	4	4
24	28	33	111	JOHNNY CASH COLUMBIA NASHVILLE/LEGACY/AMERICAN/ISLAND 005288/UME	THE LEGEND OF JOHNNY CASH	2	2
25	21	19	16	MIRANDA LAMBERT VANNER/RCA NASHVILLE 532305*/SMN	THE WEIGHT OF THESE WINGS	1	1

Top Country Albums ranks the most popular country albums of the week, as compiled by Nielsen Music, based on multi-metric consumption (blending traditional album sales, track equivalent albums, and streaming equivalent albums). Copyright 2017, Prometheus Global Media, LLC and Nielsen Music, Inc. All rights reserved.

billboard AMERICANA/
FOLK ALBUMS

SALES DATA
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THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	2 WEEKS AGO	WEEKS ON CHART	ARTIST IMPRINT & NUMBER / DISTRIBUTING LABEL	Title	WEEKS ON CHART	PEAK POS.
1	2	2	3	ALISON KRAUSS CAPITOL 025392*	WINDY CITY	1	1
2	3	3	43	CHRIS STAPLETON MERCURY NASHVILLE 019405*/UMGN	TRAVELLER	2	1
3	9	7	84	ED SHEERAN ELEKTRA 530433*/AG	+	2	1
4	6	4	48	THE LUMINEERS DUALTONE 1738*	CLEOPATRA	1	1
5	4	1	3	RYAN ADAMS PAX AM 025677*/BLUE NOTE	PRISONER	1	1
6	10	8	39	KALEO ELEKTRA/ATLANTIC 555202*/AG	A / B	3	3
7	1	—	2	JOHN MAYER COLUMBIA DIGITAL EX	THE SEARCH FOR EVERYTHING: WAVE TWO (EP)	1	1
8	11	9	89	HOZIER RUBYWORKS 309996*/COLUMBIA	HOZIER	1	1
9	12	10	99	THE LUMINEERS DUALTONE 1608*	THE LUMINEERS	1	1
10	13	12	7	SIMON & GARFUNKEL COLUMBIA 31350/LEGACY	SIMON AND GARFUNKEL'S GREATEST HITS	9	9

Americana/Folk Albums ranks the most popular Americana/folk albums of the week, as compiled by Nielsen Music, based on multi-metric consumption (blending traditional album sales, track equivalent albums, and streaming equivalent albums). Copyright 2017, Prometheus Global Media, LLC and Nielsen Music, Inc. All rights reserved.

billboard
COUNTRY
STREAMING SONGS


THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WKS ON CHART	TITLE ARTIST	WEEKS ON CHART	PEAK POS.
1	1	5	BODY LIKE A BACK ROAD SAM HUNT	1	1
2	2	76	DIE A HAPPY MAN THOMAS RHETT	2	2
3	3	14	DIRT ON MY BOOTS JON PARDI	3	3
4	4	45	H.O.L.Y. FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE	4	4
5	5	8	HURRICANE LUKE COMBS	5	5
6	8	7	IN CASE YOU DIDN'T KNOW BRETT YOUNG	6	6
7	6	25	BLUE AIN'T YOUR COLOR KEITH URBAN	7	7
8	7	19	BETTER MAN LITTLE BIG TOWN	8	8
9	9	71	TENNESSEE WHISKEY CHRIS STAPLETON	9	9
10	10	28	MAY WE ALL FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE FEAT. TIM MCGRAW	10	10
11	11	8	THE WEEKEND BRANTLEY GILBERT	11	11
12	13	5	ANY OL' BARSTOOL JASON ALDEAN	12	12
13	12	8	BLACK DIERKS BENTLEY	13	13
14	14	84	BREAK UP IN A SMALL TOWN SAM HUNT	14	14
15	17	32	MIDDLE OF A MEMORY COLE SWINDELL	15	15
16	15	2	GOD, YOUR MAMA, AND ME FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE FEAT. BACKSTREET BOYS	16	16
17	19	131	PLAY IT AGAIN LUKE BRYAN	17	17
18	18	24	WANNA BE THAT SONG BRETT ELDRIDGE	18	18
19	NEW	—	FAST LUKE BRYAN	19	19
20	20	42	MAKE YOU MISS ME SAM HUNT	20	20
21	21	115	TAKE YOUR TIME SAM HUNT	21	21
22	16	11	STAR OF THE SHOW THOMAS RHETT	22	22
23	RE-ENTRY	—	THE FIGHTER KEITH URBAN FEAT. CARRIE UNDERWOOD	23	23
24	23	119	BOTTOMS UP BRANTLEY GILBERT	24	24
25	RE-ENTRY	—	I'M COMIN' OVER CHRIS YOUNG	25	25

The week's top-streamed and top-selling paid download country songs, respectively, from sales reports collected and provided by Nielsen Music. Charts update weekly on Tuesdays at www.Billboard.Biz/charts. Copyright 2017, Prometheus Global Media, LLC and Nielsen Music, Inc. All rights reserved.

billboard
COUNTRY
DIGITAL SONG SALES

STREAMING & SALES
DATA COMPILED BY
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THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WKS ON CHART	TITLE ARTIST	WEEKS ON CHART	PEAK POS.
1	1	6	BODY LIKE A BACK ROAD SAM HUNT	1	1
2	3	24	DIRT ON MY BOOTS JON PARDI	2	2
3	2	21	BETTER MAN LITTLE BIG TOWN	3	3
4	4	10	THE FIGHTER KEITH URBAN FEAT. CARRIE UNDERWOOD	4	4
5	6	23	IN CASE YOU DIDN'T KNOW BRETT YOUNG	5	5
6	5	5	GOD, YOUR MAMA, AND ME FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE FEAT. BACKSTREET BOYS	6	6
7	10	15	HURRICANE LUKE COMBS	7	7
8	9	12	THINK A LITTLE LESS MICHAEL RAY	8	8
9	11	34	BLUE AIN'T YOUR COLOR KEITH URBAN	9	9
10	14	7	FAST LUKE BRYAN	10	10
11	16	8	ANY OL' BARSTOOL JASON ALDEAN	11	11
12	12	7	YOU LOOK GOOD LADY ANTEBELLUM	12	12
13	8	5	MY OLD MAN ZAC BROWN BAND	13	13
14	NEW	—	SANCTUARY NASHVILLE CAST FEAT. CHARLES ESTEN & LENNON & MAISY	14	14
15	17	3	HOMETOWN GIRL JOSH TURNER	15	15
16	RE-ENTRY	—	HURT JOHNNY CASH	16	16
17	18	24	THE WEEKEND BRANTLEY GILBERT	17	17
18	19	11	BLACK DIERKS BENTLEY	18	18
19	NEW	—	GREATEST LOVE STORY LANCO	19	19
20	13	3	SMALL TOWN BOY DUSTIN LYNCH	20	20
21	21	65	TENNESSEE WHISKEY CHRIS STAPLETON	21	21
22	23	23	STAR OF THE SHOW THOMAS RHETT	22	22
23	RE-ENTRY	—	WHEN I PRAY FOR YOU DAN + SHAY	23	23
24	22	33	MAY WE ALL FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE FEAT. TIM MCGRAW	24	24
25	RE-ENTRY	—	YEAH BOY KELSEA BALLERINI	25	25



10

LUKE BRYAN
Fast

After its official video arrived March 2, "Fast" motors into the Country Digital Song Sales top 10 (14-10), shifting 12,000 downloads (up 7 percent), and debuts at No. 19 on Country Streaming Songs, up 21 percent to 3.2 million U.S. clicks. On Hot Country Songs, the ballad hits the top five (6-5).

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

The Zac Brown Band Hits An Emotional Chord With 'My Old Man'

The lead vocals on the **Zac Brown Band's** "My Old Man" are imprecise. A handful of **Zac Brown's** words are clipped; he loses air at the end of some phrases; and he simply trails off mic when he repeats the hook at the end of the performance. They're the telltale signs of a singer who's choked up over the subject matter, and Brown embraces the emotion.

"That's real," he says. "Songs are powerful things — they really are, and music helped my life so much. I wouldn't be the man that I am without it. A song makes you feel something, and that should be kind of the rule."

Brown's feelings are genuine, because the story behind "My Old Man" — the band's fast-rising single — is genuine, too.

The opening line — "He was a giant" — sets up a circle-of-life reflection on fathers and sons, the singer recalling his dad's imposing status during his early years in the first verse and seeing his own son view him through the same lens by the end. It incorporates Brown's affection for his biological father, **Jim Brown**, and for another mentor: **Rodney Shelton**, a knife maker who died in 2015. Brown's nickname for Shelton was "Old Man," thus the song's title.

"I inherited a lot of incredible people in my life," says Brown. "Other dads took me in and were part of my journey, so I had a lot of things to say."

Brown took his time getting them out. "My Old Man" was written — with co-writers **Niko Moon** ("Homegrown," "Loving You Easy") and **Ben Simonetti**, his bandmates in pop/dance side project **Sir Rosevelt** — over several months in at least three different locations as they shaped his Elektra album *Welcome Home*, due May 12.

"My Old Man" started in the wee hours of the morning after a show as Brown's bus rolled down a highway to his next destination. They launched with that first line — "He was a giant" — and knocked out the first two verses. The first verse explored the kid's attempts to mimic his dad; the second detailed a clash as the teenage son becomes more defiant. Each verse ended on the hook "my old man."

"The parent-child relationship is a super-unique dynamic, but especially with a father and a son," says Moon. "We all thought it was something that was worth spending time on and talking about in a song."

They revisited the song in Key West, Fla., writing the next section, which Brown calls the chorus, though Moon and Simonetti think of it as a bridge. Either way, it brings a new melody, a sense of uplift and an appreciation for dad's calloused hands and dusty overalls.

"There was just something about those [images] that represented that era of man," says Simonetti. "You know, the hardworking guys that were around during the Great Depression and just after."

They finished it in the fall during a trip to Alaska, stationed in a remote spot that provided a spiritual atmosphere.

"We were sitting around a campfire on top of a mountain," recalls Moon. "We sat there for days, looking out at a huge bay, and to the right was the ocean and across this massive bay that was maybe five miles across was this stretch of snow-capped mountains. It was a really epic environment to be in."

It was there that they turned the tables for the last verse and chorus — or bridge, depending on your outlook. "Now I'm a giant," sings Brown, acknowledging that the once-small boy has become a father and is able to see how difficult the role was for his own. The song's original dad, like the real-life Shelton, is in heaven, presumably aware of the man the singer has become.

"The line 'I hope he's proud of who I am,'" adds Brown, "that's really the

icing on the cake."

There were tears through much of the process leading up to that emotional vocal performance. "There were so many times he would be playing through the song and start choking up, and it would make everyone else start choking up," recalls Simonetti. "This guy has made me cry 50 times in the past six months, and I haven't cried that much in 10 years."

Returning to Nashville, they recorded a demo of the song at Brown's Southern Ground Studios, where the singer delivered what would become the final, emotional vocal.

"That was one take, by the way," adds Simonetti.

Brown played the demo for his father in the car during a personal moment on Thanksgiving Day. Then Brown brought back the band to Southern Ground for the master tracking session after the first of the year with producer **Dave Cobb** (**Chris Stapleton**, *A Thousand Horses*), who took a minimalist approach in building the instruments around the vocal from the demo.

"It was such a brilliant song — if I threw in the kitchen sink, it would've messed it all up," says Cobb. "The whole idea of the record — and specifically that song — is just not to mess it up. You want to feel every lyric and every emotion he was feeling when he sang it, so everything else that's on the track is really just accompaniment. We wanted it to feel as if he picked up the guitar and played it personally for you."

They decided not to use drums or percussion — "His guitar part is so percussive," reasons Cobb — while the bass and **Clay Cook's** piano are almost undetectable when they sneak in during the second verse.

The group's signature harmonies — with **John Driskell Hopkins** singing bass, fiddler **Jimmy De Martini** in the middle and Cook on the high part — provide key intensity on the chorus. Or bridge.

"The parts that needed more crescendo, we added more voices and more parts to, to kind of make them more powerful, using the voices just like an orchestra," says Brown. "You build [them into] a song just as it starts to climax and make you feel something, then try to blend them in where they don't poke out."

They used De Martini's fiddle in tandem with a Mellotron to create a classical sort of solo section, and as the final, spiritual part arrived, the sound was combined with the bass and the low notes on the piano to create a dark, powerful texture.

"With the piano, that kind of ominous, left-hand thing adds weight," says Cobb. "It's not the fanciest [playing]. It just adds size to the track."

Brown had to think of baseball and other less emotional ideas to get through the song without crying when ZBB played it on national TV during the Super Bowl pregame show on Feb. 5, two days after Elektra released it to radio through PlayMPE. Thanks to strong digital sales, "My Old Man" jumped 49-10 in its second week on the multisource Hot Country Songs chart. It's now No. 25 on that list and at No. 24 on Country Airplay in its sixth week on the charts. And with Father's Day just a few months away, it's set up to become this year's version of **Dan Fogelberg's** "Leader of the Band," the song that Brown held as the ideal while creating "My Old Man."

"I tried to write dad songs before but never hit it on the head," says Brown. "I feel like we've finally written a song that can translate and make someone feel like that one made me feel. I'm glad my dad gets to hear this song."

If he lets himself, Jim Brown might even cry. ●



THE STARK REPORT PHYLLIS STARK phyllis.stark@billboard.com

Hey, Girl... Does Country Music Have An Identity Problem?



In their 2008 hit, **Brooks & Dunn** advised us to “Put A Girl In It.” Now, some country radio programmers are wishing that Music Row hadn’t been *quite* so responsive.

Current songs on *Billboard*’s Country Airplay chart include **Josh Turner**’s “Hometown Girl,” **Trent Harmon**’s “There’s a Girl,” **Dylan Scott**’s “My Girl,” **Easton Corbin**’s “A Girl Like You” and **Kip Moore**’s “More Girls Like You,” plus **Blake Shelton**’s recent hit “A Guy With a Girl,” which moves to recurrent. Turner’s newly released *Deep South* album includes the titles “Where the Girls Are” and “Hawaiian Girl.”

WGH-FM Virginia Beach, Va., PD **Mark McKay** says, “All the ‘girl’ songs have become a headache to schedule. I spend more time than I care to admit trying to separate them. Can someone please consult a thesaurus or something?”

But is all this sameness in titles indicative of a larger product problem? Some country programmers think so.

iHeartMedia director of Central Texas radio operations **Travis Moon** sparked an interesting debate on the topic in February when he posted a simple message on Facebook: “Anyone else done with warmed over, poor man’s top 40 music on country?” then later added, “I think our format has been hacked.” While some took this to mean that Moon was endorsing a move to more traditional sounds in country music (a tired and long-since played out debate), Moon explained that what he actually was advocating for was more of an “identity,” and noted that “our format has always worked best when embracing a variety of sounds, instrumentation and lyrical story lines.” While he’s a fan of the more genre-bending (and sometimes criticized) artists like **Florida Georgia Line** and **Sam Hunt**, Moon says the problem arises when labels service “poor man’s versions of these artists’ or CHR artists’ tunes,” which, he adds, “water down our formatic identity ... Our format deserves better ... We need to pare down on — or hold to a higher standard — the contrived, wannabe stuff.”

Among the PDs who agree with Moon is **KIIM** Tucson, Ariz., PD **Buzz Jackson**. “It’s true that we have lost a lot of our identity,” he tells *Billboard Country Update*. “I hear songs from time to time on my station and have to look at the radio to know for sure if I’m tuned to my station or the pop station in town ... Ultimately it’s about [balancing] the pop-sounding stuff with the other sounds in the library.”

KFKF Kansas City PD **Dale Carter** notes that the “true test” of “warmed over, poor man’s top 40” is when one of these songs “is driven to No. 1 and immediately falls by several thousand spins as the PDs who got it there drop it just as fast. The ultimate test is how much of this [music] will ever end up in a gold library. I suspect very little of it will.”

“We’ve had a product issue for over a year,” says Hall Communications vp programming **Bob Walker**. “After that huge up cycle, a lot of those new P1s who discovered country have found something else. Both current pop product and the explosion of ’80s classic CHR is siphoning them away. Those formats are upbeat, fun and familiar — the trifecta of a successful radio brand. People listen to improve

their mood, not hear specific songs. Six of the top 10 songs on the *Billboard* Country Airplay chart for the week of March 6 are ones those people would call ‘snoozers’ — [an] actual, verbatim [listener] comment.

“It’s during the down cycles that using your own database for feedback is dangerous,” adds Walker. “If you only talk to your own fans while the ‘pie’ keeps shrinking, eventually the station will implode. If you do look outside, you’ll be surprised at how many big chart hits can’t score enough passion to even make the filler category, never mind power recurrent ... The constant barrage of disposable, midtempo songs from artists without ‘teeth’ makes it difficult to compete with the fun formats.”

But not all country programmers think there’s a music problem, chief among them **SiriusXM** senior director of programming **J.R. Schumann**. “Country music is as strong now as it ever has been,” he says.

“The only people I see really complaining about the format are the people in the format. I work in the same business that they’re in, and we have sales stories and success story after success story with these songs that are supposedly ruining our format. On my playlist right now there are eight records downloading more than 10,000 [units] a week.

“Country music is strong. The audience is super passionate,” adds Schumann. “It’s one of the only formats where the audience still goes out and buys music, goes to concerts in huge numbers, is passionate about it, is passionate about radio and loves the connection with the artists. We work in the greatest format in this business, and the audience doesn’t seem to have a problem with [the music].”

McKay also is among those less concerned. “I’m not sure it’s a product problem, but maybe another evolution,” he says. “Seems like a lot of R&B/soul sound has made its way to country lately, and that’s not necessarily a bad thing, as long as you can find the ‘balance’ songs to keep from going too far left or right. More of an issue to me is the current ‘who is that?’ factor. [There are] so many new, unidentifiable artists that the audience can’t tell them apart.”

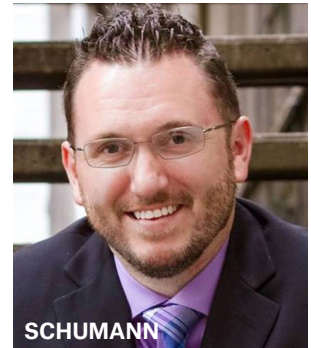
KRTY San Jose, Calif., GM **Nate Deaton** thinks it’s not so much the available product as it is the “safe” songs radio programmers are choosing that create the problem. “In a sense, yes, [country is] a watered down top 40 station, but

that is because so few people want to play songs that aren’t safe,” he says. “The music is as good as it has ever been, but you have to explore the artists and not dismiss them because they are new. The audience is not, and they are moving farther and farther away from our product because they are finding the artists on their own ... The thirst for music discovery is massive. If we don’t satisfy it, we are going to lose.”

While **Big Loud Records** president (and former longtime radio programmer) **Clay Hunicutt** concurs with Moon on the format’s identity problem, calling it a “legit argument,” he says radio plays — and labels service — what listeners have indicated they like. “Why do we hide our head in the sand from what the audience is telling us they want, buy and go to shows to see?” he asks. “Country is a blend of a lot of sounds. Embrace them.”



McKAY



SCHUMANN



WALKER



CARTER

billboard Country Indicator

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WKS ON CHART	TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	PLAYS		AUDIENCE (IN MILLIONS)
					THIS WEEK	+/-	THIS WEEK
1	2	23	TODAY Arista Nashville	Brad Paisley	4778	-18	7.485
2	1	26	DIRT ON MY BOOTS Capitol Nashville	Jon Pardi	4748	-179	7.698
3	3	32	THINK A LITTLE LESS Atlantic/WEA	Michael Ray	4735	+93	7.645
4	4	15	FAST Capitol Nashville	Luke Bryan	4638	+146	7.179
5	5	31	ROAD LESS TRAVELED 19/Interscope/Mercury	Lauren Alaina	4494	+154	6.966
6	7	29	KILL A WORD EMI Nashville	Eric Church Feat. Rhiannon Giddens	4069	-77	6.235
7	9	16	ANY OL' BARSTOOL Macor/Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	3995	+423	6.159
8	10	24	YEAH BOY Black River	Kelsea Ballerini	3392	+85	5.300
9	11	41	HOMETOWN GIRL MCA Nashville	Josh Turner	3320	+142	5.181
10	12	11	BAR AT THE END OF THE WORLD Blue Chair/Columbia Nashville	Kenny Chesney	3212	+111	4.736
11	13	32	THE WEEKEND Valory	Brantley Gilbert	3187	+100	4.913
12	14	19	BLACK Capitol Nashville	Dierks Bentley	2915	+58	4.326
13	15	6	BODY LIKE A BACK ROAD MCA Nashville	Sam Hunt	2710	+268	3.937
14	18	27	HURRICANE River House/Columbia Nashville	Luke Combs	2587	+386	3.792
15	17	8	YOU LOOK GOOD Capitol Nashville	Lady Antebellum	2446	+113	3.448
16	19	36	IF ITOLD YOU Capitol Nashville	Darius Rucker	2304	+108	3.411
17	25	24	HOW NOT TO Warner Bros./WAR	Dan + Shay	2060	+259	2.917
18	22	17	WE SHOULD BE FRIENDS Vanner/RCA Nashville	Miranda Lambert	2035	+10	2.911
19	24	10	YOURS IF YOU WANT IT Big Machine	Rascal Flatts	2001	+90	2.847
20	23	32	THERE'S A GIRL 19/Republic/Dot	Trent Hamon	1949	+33	2.662
21	26	5	THE FIGHTER Hit Red/Capitol Nashville	Keith Urban Feat. Carrie Underwood	1873	+246	2.713
22	29	10	IN CASE YOU DIDN'T KNOW BMLG	Brett Young	1699	+357	2.244
23	27	9	GOD, YOUR MAMA, AND ME BMLG	Florida Georgia Line Feat. Backstreet Boys	1629	+85	2.361
24	28	6	MY OLD MAN Southern Ground/Elektra/WAR	Zac Brown Band	1617	+222	2.657
25	32	5	EVERYTIME I HEAR THAT SONG Warner Bros./WMN	Blake Shelton	1387	+281	2.118
26	31	20	SOMEBODY ELSE WILL Valory	Justin Moore	1251	+108	1.477
27	34	9	IT AIN'T MY FAULT EMI Nashville	Brothers Osborne	1145	+67	1.267
28	33	9	FLATLINER Warner Bros./WMN	Cole Swindell	1091	+11	1.701
29	35	16	DO I MAKE YOU WANNA Mercury	Billy Currington	988	+81	1.150
30	36	17	OUTTA STYLE BIG Label	Aaron Watson	887	+1	1.089

BILLBOARD COUNTRY INDICATOR PANEL — 106 STATIONS

Abilene, Texas	KEAN	Fayetteville, N.C.	WKML	Lebanon, N.H.	WXXX	Santa Barbara, Calif.	KRAZ
Alexandria, La.	KRRV	Flagstaff, Ariz.	KAFF	Lincoln, Neb.	KFGE	Santa Maria, Calif.	KSNL
Amarillo, Texas	KGNC	Flint, Mich.	WFBE	Longview, Texas	KYKX	Sheboygan, Wis.	WBFM
Asheville, N.C.	WKSF	Florence, Ala.	WXFL	Lubbock, Texas	KLLL	Savannah, Ga.	WJCL
Atlantic City, N.J.	WPUR	Florence, S.C.	WEGX	Lufkin, Texas	KYKS		WUBB
Beaumont, Texas	KYKR	Ft. Collins, Colo.	KUAD	Mason City, Iowa	KIAI	Shreveport, La.	KXKS
Beckley, W. Va.	WJLS	Ft. Smith, Ark.	KTCS	Medford, Ore.	KRWQ	Sioux City, Iowa	KSUX
Biloxi, Miss.	WZKX	Frederick, Md.	WFRE	Meridian, Miss.	WOKK	South Bend, Ind.	WBVT
Bloomington, Ill.	WIBL	Fredericksburg, Va.	WFLS	Montgomery, Ala.	WLWI	Springfield, Ill.	WFMB
Bluefield, W. Va.	WHKX	Green Bay, Wis.	WNCY	Morgantown, W. Va.	WKKW	Springfield, Mo.	KTTS
Burlington, Vt.	WOKO	Hagerstown, Md.	WAYZ	Muskegon, Mich.	WMUS	Terre Haute, Ind.	WTHI
Cape Girardeau, Mo.	KEZS	Hot Springs, Ark.	KQUS	New London, Conn.	WCTY	Traverse City, Mich.	WTCM
Charleston, W. Va.	WKWS	Huntington, Ky.	WDGG	Odessa, Texas	KHKX	Tupelo, Miss.	WWZD
	WQBE	Huntington, W. Va.	WTCR	Palm Springs, Calif.	KPLM	Utica, N.Y.	WFRG
College Station, Texas	KAGG	Idaho Falls, Idaho	KTHK	Pensacola, Fla.	WXBM	Victor Valley, CA.	KATJ
Columbia, Mo.	KCLR	Jackson, Miss.	WMSI	Peoria, Ill.	WXCL	Waco, Texas	WACO
Columbus, Ga.	WKCN		WUSJ	Poughkeepsie, N.Y.	WRWD	Wausau, Wis.	WDEZ
	WSTH	Janesville, Wis.	WJVL	Rapid City, S.D.	KOUT	Wheeling, W. Va.	WOVK
Cookeville, Tenn.	WGSO	Jonesboro, Ark.	KDXY	Rockford, Ill.	WXXQ	Williamsport, Pa.	WILQ
Dothan, Ala.	WTVY	Joplin, Mo.	KIXQ	Rocky Mount, N.C.	WDWG	Yakima, Wash.	KXDD
Duluth, Minn.	KKCB	Kalamazoo, Mich.	WNWN	Saginaw, Mich.	WCEN	Youngstown, Ohio	WOXK
Eau Claire, Wis.	WAXX	Kalispell, Mont.	KDBR	St. Cloud, Minn.	KZPK		WWGJ
Elizabeth City, N.C.	WRSF	Kingmah, Ariz.	KFLG	Salina, Kan.	KYEZ	Westwood One	HOT COUNTRY
Erie, Pa.	WTWF	Lafayette, Ind.	WKOA	Salisbury, Md.	WKTT	Music Choice	MAINSTREAM COUNTRY
Eugene, Ore.	KKNU	Laredo, Texas	KRRG	San Angelo, Texas	KGKL	Sirius XM	TODAY'S COUNTRY
Evansville, Ind.	WKDQ	Lansing, Mich.	WITL	San Luis Obispo, Calif.	KKJG		THE HIGHWAY
Fargo, N.D.	KBVB	Laurel, Miss.	WBBN				

billboard Country Indicator

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WKS ON CHART	TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	PLAYS		AUDIENCE (IN MILLIONS)
					THIS WEEK	+/-	THIS WEEK
31	38	3	SOMETHIN' I'M GOOD AT Atlantic/WMN	Brett Eldredge	813	+260	1.181
32	37	25	FOR HER Big Loud	Chris Lane	811	+108	0.950
33	39	24	MY GIRL Curb	Dylan Scott	649	+127	0.679
34	41	16	RING ON EVERY FINGER Reviver	LoCash	500	+13	0.618
35	42	6	A GIRL LIKE YOU Mercury	Easton Corbin	449	+88	0.615
36	45	3	MORE GIRLS LIKE YOU MCA Nashville	Kip Moore	429	+100	0.527
37	50	2	DRINKIN' PROBLEM Big Machine	Midland	392	+154	0.374
38	43	16	METOO Keith Walker	Keith Walker	362	+8	0.347
39	44	13	REBOUND Cold River/New Revolution	Drew Baldridge Feat. Emily Weisband	359	+14	0.341
40	46	15	THE WAY ITALK Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	346	+28	0.330
41	53	7	MISSING Warner Bros./WMN	William Michael Morgan	295	+64	0.624
42	47	11	DRINKING WITH DOLLY Rebel Engine/Star Farm	Stephanie Quayle	277	+8	0.300
43	49	8	BOOM BOOM Rebel Engine	Lucas Hoge	251	+11	0.285
44	51	7	MAKIN' ME LOOK GOOD AGAIN Dot	Drake White	241	+4	0.329
45	52	5	STONED TO DEATH Purectt Pitch	James Dupre	236	+1	0.238
46	56	5	MOMMA AND JESUS Dot	Tucker Beathard	213	+30	0.224
47	57	5	WOKE UP IN NASHVILLE Arista Nashville	Seth Ennis	200	+20	0.174
48	55	8	TEQUILA EYES Randy Rogers Band/Tommy Jackson/Thirty Tigers	Randy Rogers Band	197	-20	0.146
49	NEW		CALIFORNIA B\$R/New Revolution	Big & Rich	184	+118	0.236
50	58	3	JUST ANOTHER DAY IN THE COUNTRY Sea Gayle	CJ Solar	182	+13	0.191
51	NEW		SMALL TOWN BOY Broken Bow	Dustin Lynch	161	+54	0.140
52	59	3	CANDYLAND Curb	Love And Theft	154	0	0.075
53	54	12	YOU'VE GOT THAT SOMETHIN' Terra Bella/DAX	Terra Bella	145	-73	0.134
54	NEW		NO SUCH THING AS A BROKEN HEART RCA Nashville	Old Dominion	139	+139	0.307
55	NEW		GREATEST LOVE STORY Arista Nashville	LANCO	137	+42	0.092
56	60	2	YOU'LL ACCOMP'NY ME Warner Bros./WAR	Frankie Ballard	136	+16	0.161
57	NEW		ALL THE BEER IN ALABAMA Amerimonte/Grassroots	Shane Owens	133	+15	0.147
58	NEW		BACK TO GOD Rockin' R/Nash Icon/Valory	Reba McEntire	119	+20	0.110
59	NEW		TOGETHER Contrast	Robby Johnson	94	+28	0.087
60	NEW		FIGURE IT OUT Reznam/Nine North	Sarah Dunn Band	89	+44	0.087

CHARTS LEGEND

RANKINGS

Country Airplay is ranked by total audience impressions for the week ending Sunday based on monitored airplay of 151 stations by Nielsen BDS. Audience totals on the chart are derived, in part, using certain Arbitron Inc. copyrighted Persons 12+ audience estimates (under license © 2017, Arbitron Inc.) Country Indicator is tabulated using reported playlists and Nielsen BDS-monitored airplay at 106 stations, ranked by total plays.

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%. Bullets are awarded on Country Indicator to titles gaining plays or remaining flat from the previous week.

TIES

On Country Airplay, if two songs are tied in total audience, the song with the larger increase in audience is placed first. On Country Indicator, if two songs are tied in total plays, the song with the larger increase in plays is placed first.

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. On Country Indicator, descending, non-bulleted titles below No. 10 are moved to recurrent after 20 weeks or if they post a third consecutive week of decline in plays after 10 weeks.

HOT SHOT DEBUT

Awarded to the highest-ranking new entry on Country Airplay and Country Indicator, respectively.

MOST ADDED

The total number of new adds officially reported to Billboard by each reporting station, or by an automatic-add threshold (seven plays for the first time in a chart tracking week, according to Nielsen BDS) for stations that do not report adds.

MOST INCREASED AUDIENCE/PLAYS

Most Increased Audience on Country Airplay and Most Increased Plays on Country Indicator list the songs with the greatest week-to-week increases in total audience or plays, respectively.

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.

CODA

REWINDING
THE
COUNTRY
CHARTS

42 Years Ago Fender's 'Falls' Rose To No. 1

In 1975, "Before the Next Teardrop Falls" became Freddy Fender's first chart-topper on Hot Country Songs

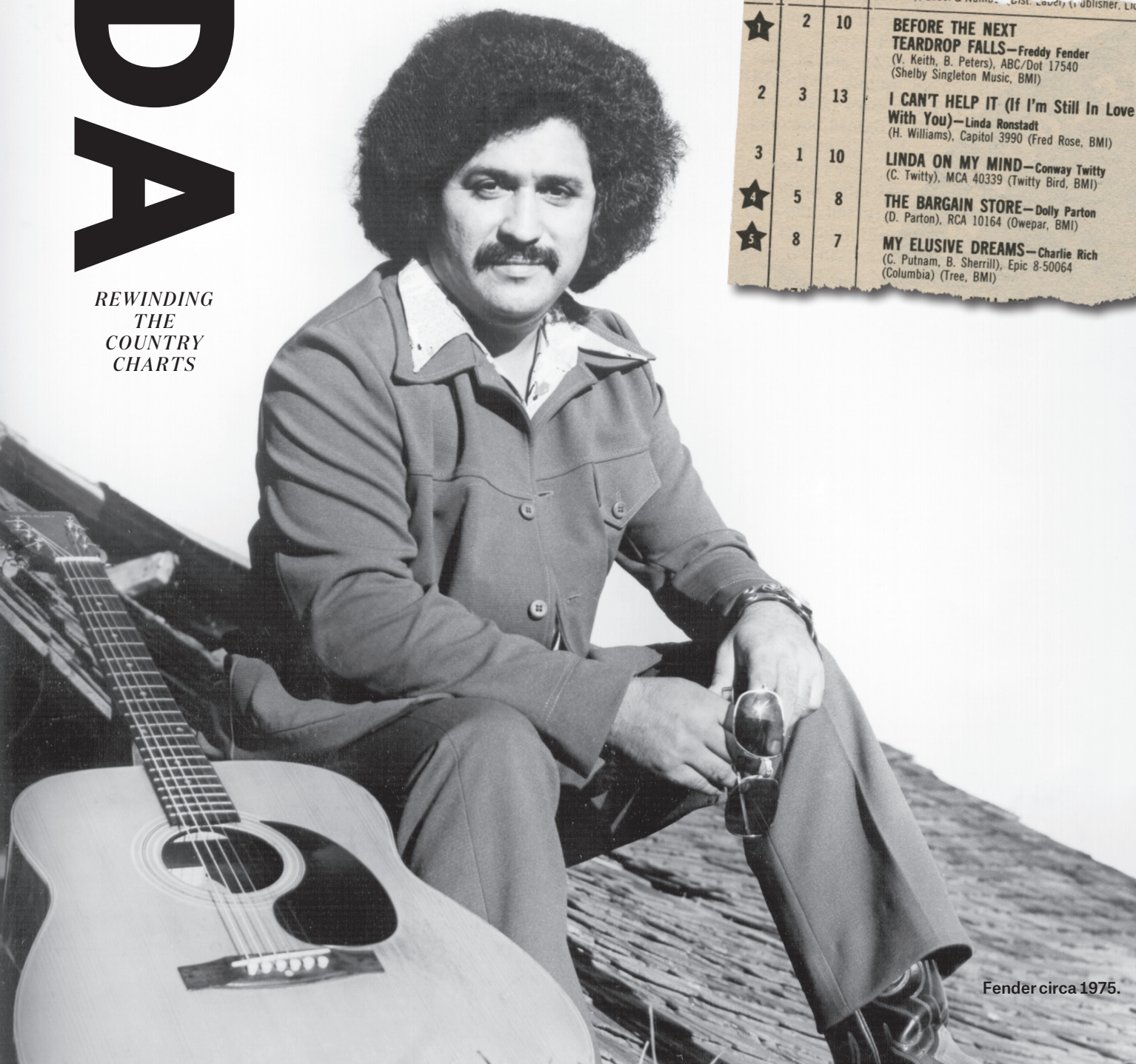
On March 15, 1975, **Freddy Fender's** debut hit on the Hot Country Songs chart, "Before the Next Teardrop Falls," climbed 2-1 for its first of two weeks on top. It also became Fender's lone Billboard Hot 100 No. 1 (May 31), as well as the Country Music Association's 1975 single of the year.

Fender was born **Baldemar Huerta** in San Benito, Texas, on June 4, 1937. At 16 he joined the U.S. Marines for a three-year stint and, following his discharge, performed in clubs and dance halls. His career was sidetracked in 1960 when he was arrested for possession of

marijuana, subsequently serving three years in a Louisiana prison.

Fender later lived in New Orleans, playing at French Quarter haunts. An introduction to producer/label owner **Huey Meaux** led to Fender's recording of "Falls," which Meaux produced.

Fender banked four No. 1s among his eight top 10s on Hot Country Songs, following "Falls" with chart-toppers "Wasted Days and Wasted Nights," "Secret Love" (both also in 1975) and "You'll Lose a Good Thing" (1976). He died Oct. 14, 2006, at his home in Corpus Christi, Texas, at age 69. —JIM ASKER



			(Writer), Label & Number	Artist	Cover	(Publisher, Licenses)
★	2	10		BEFORE THE NEXT TEARDROP FALLS —Freddy Fender		(V. Keith, B. Peters), ABC/Dot 17540 (Shelby Singleton Music, BMI)
	2	3	13	I CAN'T HELP IT (If I'm Still in Love With You) —Linda Ronstadt		(H. Williams), Capitol 3990 (Fred Rose, BMI)
	3	1	10	LINDA ON MY MIND —Conway Twitty		(C. Twitty), MCA 40339 (Twitty Bird, BMI)
★	4	5	8	THE BARGAIN STORE —Dolly Parton		(D. Parton), RCA 10164 (Owensboro, BMI)
★	5	8	7	MY ELUSIVE DREAMS —Charlie Rich		(C. Putnam, B. Sherrill), Epic 8-50064 (Columbia) (Tree, BMI)

Fender circa 1975.