

billboard Country Update

BILLBOARD.COM/NEWSLETTERS

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BILLBOARD COUNTRY UPDATE

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Words Matter: Country Artists Use Unusual Vocabulary To Set Songs Apart

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Zach Bryan's "Something in the Orange" has resided at No. 1 on Hot Country Songs for six weeks, joining Johnny Cash's version of "Orange Blossom Special" as the only top 10 country songs to employ the citrus color in their titles.

Meanwhile, Dustin Lynch rides at No. 49 in his third week on Country Airplay with "Stars Like Confetti," a song that, if it reaches the top 10, would become the first in that tier to reference a blast of party paper in its name.

The country genre has long used wordplay to tell its stories and hook its listeners, but increasingly, the wordplay is less about twisting meanings and more about applying words that one doesn't normally expect to hear in a three-minute song. Sometimes it's a reference as silly as the restaurant shoutouts — Applebee's, Frosty and Oreo shake — in Walker Hayes' "Fancy Like" or as weighty as the term "patriarchy," which appeared in Taylor Swift's "All Too Well (Taylor's Version)." Both songs topped Hot Country Songs in the last two years.

"The line was on a key chain," Swift's co-writer, Liz Rose, notes of "patriarchy." "That was very specific."

Capturing details from the writers' lives — as both "Fancy Like" and "All Too Well" did — is one of multiple reasons to throw an odd word or phrase into a lyric. Sometimes it happens

because it's dictated by geography: Alan Jackson created a light atmosphere when he rhymed "Chattahoochee," a river that was previously unknown to large swaths of Americans, with "hoochie koochie"; The Oak Ridge Boys brought a Pennsylvania tributary, the Monongahela, to the national spotlight with their 1988 release "Gonna Take a Lot of River." And in

other instances, the word fulfills a poetic function at the end of a line, as the phrase "happily delusional" does in Old Dominion's "Memory Lane."

"We had 'loving you as usual,' and you're just searching for a rhyme," the band's Trevor Rosen recalls. "The guy had to

throw ["delusional"] out there twice. It's a weird word. It's like, 'I wonder if you could say that?' And then it was like, 'Oh, wait, no, that's actually it.'"

Old Dominion has a history with oddball phrases — "drunk as a skunk eating lunch" appears in "I Was on a Boat That Day," and it titled a 2015 single "Snapback," a ball-cap term that wasn't necessarily known to everyone. But that happens in great part because the band is willing to chase down odd terms, where some other songwriters might balk.

"It depends on the room," says "Memory Lane" co-writer Jessie Jo Dillon. "People like the Old Dominion guys — I mean, nobody's scared to do something strange."



ROSEN



ANDRESS



LYNCH

ROSEN: DOVE SHORE; ANDRESS: OLIVIA BEE

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Lynch, on the other hand, experienced an internal debate about “Stars Like Confetti.” He had doubts regarding the song he was about to hear when he first saw the title, and even after the demo hooked him, he still had reservations for a time, fearful that the vocabulary might not suit him.

“I’ve been the one that has questions, if the word ‘confetti’ isn’t masculine enough to do,” Lynch admits. “The circle I have, obviously we scrutinize a lot. We’re very tough on ourselves and try to really pick apart everything we can about a song and make sure we’re looking at all the angles of a song. I kept coming back to, like, ‘Is it cool for a dude that lives to hunt and farm? Do I sing ‘confetti’?’ I had to do some soul searching and just make sure you’re like, ‘OK, am I going to be cool singing a song the rest of my life if it takes off?’”

Obviously, “Confetti” won out. Others have fared well over the long haul with terminology that seems uncommon in the conservative country world. **George Strait** calmly considered “transcendental meditation” in his breezy “All My Ex’s Live in Texas,” **Faith Hill** navigated “centrifugal motion,” “perpetual bliss” and “pivotal moment” in the chorus of “This Kiss,” and **Lori McKenna** shared a Grammy nomination with Swift this year for “I Bet You Think About Me,” a song that whips out “pedigree,” “upper-crust circles” and “organic shoes” in its narrative.

“We’re so used to listening to things in the background,” McKenna says, noting that unusual vocabulary “really can bring the listener right to ‘Wait, what was that?’ I don’t think it’s meant to be a trick, but I never stop an artist when a word works for them. My job is to stay away from changing their truth.”

Neal McCoy, who sang “no need to psychoanalyze” in the course of the 1994 single “Wink,” was perhaps ahead of his time with the therapist lingo. **Chris Young** couched the phrase “to hell with the closure” in a key chorus passage in “I’m Comin’ Over,” and **Ingrid Andress’** new “Feel Like This” explores “manipulation,” “toxic situations,” “security” and “stability.”

Andress offers those words unapologetically.

“That was sort of intentional,” she says. “I wanted to move the genre forward and to kind of keep up with the rest of society because in most places, I think people in my generation are comfortable talking about the fact that they go to a therapist, but I know that that’s not true for everywhere. I just want to start normalizing that in conversation.”

Although that kind of expression may not feel normal to every act.

“Those are words — like ‘manipulation’ — that only a girl like her can use,” says “Confetti” co-writer **Zach Crowell**. “I would encourage her to use that stuff. You don’t hear **Luke Bryan** saying those words. That’s good. It’s honest.”

That’s great confirmation, though Andress doesn’t seem to need it. Something in the orange says she’ll be populating her songs with intelligent phrases as long as she pursues her singer-songwriter role.

“At the end of the day, I’m just writing my story,” she says. “It will come out the way that it feels truest to me. If that’s something that has not been done before in the genre, then I view that as a win. Because I think my goal is to constantly discover new art forms and new ways of saying things. Whether people like it or not, I’m still going to be doing it anyway.”



Luke Combs celebrated at the Sony Music Group’s post-Grammy party on Feb. 5 after performing “Going, Going, Gone” during the CBS telecast. From left: Orville Peck, Harry Styles, Sony CEO Rob Stringer and Combs.



Madeline Edwards (center) guested on the Feb. 2 episode of Amazon Music’s *Country Heat Weekly*. With her: hosts Kelly Sutton (left) and Amber Anderson.



Drake White previewed new music for management firm Why&How during the company retreat Jan. 25-27 at the Virgin Hotel Nashville. From left: band member Devin Trout, White, Why&How artist manager Harrison Klein and band member Graham Mallany.

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Expert insight and commentary by Tom Roland and Jim Asker



CHASE RICE

I HATE COWBOYS & ALL DOGS GO TO HELL



MY DAD WAS ONE OF THOSE GOOD GUYS YOU READ ABOUT - TOUGH, HARD WORKING, ALWAYS HELPING OTHER PEOPLE OUT. I TRY TO LIVE MY LIFE IN A WAY THAT WOULD MAKE HIM PROUD. I HAVEN'T ALWAYS MEASURED UP TO THAT, BUT I GET CLOSER TO THAT MAN I WANT TO BE AND THE MAN HE'D BE PROUD OF EVERY SINGLE DAY. MAKING THIS ALBUM WAS A BIG STEP TOWARDS THAT MUSICALLY, TOO - NOT ONLY IS IT THE MOST TRUE TO MYSELF I'VE EVER BEEN, IT'S ALSO A SOUND HE'D ENJOY LISTENING TO. I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO HONOR HIM BY USING THIS PHOTO AS AN ALBUM COVER, AND I FINALLY FEEL LIKE I HAVE THE SONGS THAT DESERVE TO HAVE HIS PICTURE ON THEM.

I CAN'T WAIT FOR Y'ALL TO HEAR IT.

A handwritten signature of Chase Rice, consisting of stylized, cursive letters.

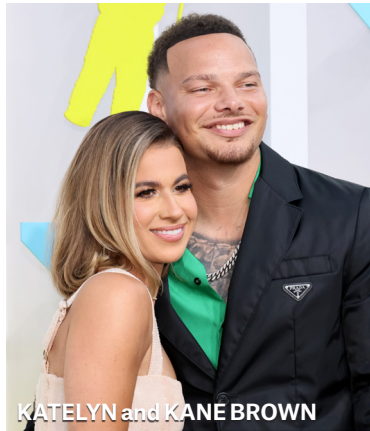
billboard Country Airplay

AIRPLAY MONITORED BY **LUMINATE**

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

Kane And Katelyn Brown Top Country Airplay With ‘Thank God’

Kane Brown’s “Thank God” (Zone 4/RCA Nashville), with Katelyn Brown, hits the penthouse on *Billboard*’s Country Airplay chart (dated Feb. 18). In the week ending Feb. 9, the song increased by 7% to 32.6 million in audience, according to Luminate.



DIA DIPASUPLI/GETTY IMAGES

KATELYN and KANE BROWN

“Thank God” is the first duet for the pair, who married in 2018. The husband and wife make their ninth and first trips to the Country Airplay peak, respectively. They’re only the second married couple to jointly top the chart with a duet, after **Tim McGraw** and **Faith Hill**’s “It’s Your Love” led for six weeks in 1997.

The **Dann Huff**-produced track — penned by **Christian Davis**, **Kyle Fishman**, **Jaxson Free**, **Josh Hoge** and **Jared Mullins** — is the third single, and Country Airplay leader, from Brown’s LP *Different Man*. “One Mississippi” ruled for one week in March 2022, and “Like I Love Country Music” led for one

week in August. Starting with his duet with **Chris Young**, “Famous Friends,” which led for one frame in July 2021, he has rolled up four No. 1s in a row.

The singer-songwriter from northwest Georgia banked his first such No. 1 in October 2017 with “What Ifs,” featuring **Lauren Alaina**.

On the streaming-, airplay- and sales-based Hot Country Songs survey dated Feb. 11, “Thank God” ranked at No. 3. Its Jan. 27-Feb. 2 airplay was bolstered by 10.8 million official U.S. streams and 3,000 downloads sold.

TOP 10 ‘PLACE-MENT **Bailey Zimmerman** scores his second Country Airplay top 10 in as many chart appearances as “Rock and a Hard Place” (Elektra/Warner Music Nashville/WEA) climbs 11-8 (21.1 million, up 12%). The song follows “Fall in Love,” which led for one week in December. ●

MOST INCREASED AUDIENCE			
TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	GAIN (IN MILLIONS)	
THOUGHT YOU SHOULD KNOW Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	+4.520	
ANGELS DON’T ALWAYS HAVE WINGS Valory	Thomas Rhett	+2.366	
ROCK AND A HARD PLACE Elektra/Warner Music Nashville/WEA	Bailey Zimmerman	+2.256	
THANK GOD Zone 4/RCA Nashville	Kane Brown With Katelyn Brown	+2.180	
GOING, GOING, GONE River House/Columbia Nashville	Luke Combs	+1.919	
HEART LIKE A TRUCK Broken Bow	Lainey Wilson	+1.780	
THAT’S WHAT TEQUILA DOES Macon/Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	+1.746	
WHAT HE DIDN’T DO Big Machine	Carly Pearce	+1.362	
BROWN EYES BABY Hit Red/Capitol Nashville	Keith Urban	+1.359	
GOLD Capitol Nashville	Dierks Bentley	+1.320	

MOST INCREASED PLAYS			
TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	GAIN	
THOUGHT YOU SHOULD KNOW Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	+785	
ROCK AND A HARD PLACE Elektra/Warner Music Nashville/WEA	Bailey Zimmerman	+488	
ANGELS DON’T ALWAYS HAVE WINGS Valory	Thomas Rhett	+475	
HEART LIKE A TRUCK Broken Bow	Lainey Wilson	+440	
GOING, GOING, GONE River House/Columbia Nashville	Luke Combs	+385	
THANK GOD Zone 4/RCA Nashville	Kane Brown With Katelyn Brown	+359	
THAT’S WHAT TEQUILA DOES Macon/Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	+319	
WILD AS HER Combustion Masters/RCA Nashville	Corey Kent	+303	
MEMORY LANE Arista Nashville	Old Dominion	+297	
WHAT HE DIDN’T DO Big Machine	Carly Pearce	+287	

RECURRENENTS			
THIS WEEK	TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	TOTAL AUD. (IN MILLIONS)
1	SHE HAD ME AT HEADS CAROLINA Warner Music Nashville/WMN	Cole Swindell	23.620
2	YOU PROOF Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	22.861
3	THE KIND OF LOVE WE MAKE River House/Columbia Nashville	Luke Combs	17.650
4	5 FOOT 9 Hubbard House/EMI Nashville	Tyler Hubbard	14.884
5	HALF OF ME Valory/BMLG	Thomas Rhett Featuring Riley Green	14.706
6	SON OF A SINNER Bailee & Buddy/BMG/Stoney Creek	Jelly Roll	13.256
7	DOWN HOME Stoney Creek	Jimmie Allen	12.973
8	TAKE MY NAME Stoney Creek	Parmalee	11.292
9	WASTED ON YOU Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	10.460
10	TRUTH ABOUT YOU Riser House/Columbia Nashville	Mitchell Tenpenny	9.921



TEXAS REGIONAL RADIO REPORT

WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 9, 2023

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	5	STARTS IN A BAR (Independent) ★★ 1 Week at 1 ★★	Casey Donahew	1868	4	11	9	5	JACKSON (Independent)	Kaitlin Butts	1353	-1
2	3	5	THREE PEOPLE (ME, JIM BEAM AND YOU) (Independent)	Sundance Head	1729	31	12	13	5	KEEP UP WITH A COWGIRL (Independent)	David Adam Byrnes	1307	36
3	5	5	LONELY GIRL (Independent)	Cody Canada & The Departed	1630	24	13	16	5	TRENCHES (Independent)	Bri Bagwell	1234	67
4	6	5	COWGIRL (Independent)	Jake Bush	1625	94	14	1	5	DIE RUNNIN’ (Independent)	Mike Ryan	1230	-669
5	4	5	BEERS WE AIN’T DRANK YET (Fool Hearted)	Jon Wolfe	1619	1	15	15	5	FRIDAY BEERS (Independent)	Drew Fish Band	1230	21
6	7	5	MOST BEAUTIFUL PLACE I’VE EVER BEEN (Independent)	Case Hardin	1583	60	16	18	5	COWBOY CONSTITUTION (Independent)	Curtis Grimes	1150	183
7	11	5	FAST CAR (Independent)	Randy Rogers Band	1446	134	17	20	5	LOCAL PARTICIPATIN’ HONKY TONK (Independent)	James Robert Webb	936	23
8	8	5	GOOD SIDE (Independent)	The Great Divide	1412	42	18	22	5	LOVING ALL NIGHT (Independent)	Jesse Raub Jr.	920	110
9	10	5	MOUNTAIN SONG (Independent)	Flatland Cavalry	1397	55	19	21	5	IT GOES ON (Independent)	Mark Powell	836	-33
10	12	5	DAMN THIS HEART OF MINE (Independent)	William Beckmann	1358	65	20	23	5	HEY THERE COWBOY (Independent)	Olivia Harms	828	18

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 2023, Texas Regional Radio Report

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	23	THANK GOD Zone 4/RCA Nashville	★★ No. 1 (1 Week) ★★ Kane Brown With Katelyn Brown	32.550	+2.180	7920	359	1
2	3	15	THOUGHT YOU SHOULD KNOW Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	★★ Most Increased Audience ★★ Morgan Wallen	32.218	+4.520	7909	785	2
3	1	35	WHISKEY ON YOU Arista Nashville	Nate Smith	27.689	-4.017	7062	-820	3
4	5	17	GOING, GOING, GONE River House/Columbia Nashville	Luke Combs	27.443	+1.919	6790	385	4
5	4	38	WHAT MY WORLD SPINS AROUND MCA Nashville	Jordan Davis	24.154	-2.758	5377	-979	9
6	7	39	HEART LIKE A TRUCK Broken Bow	Lainey Wilson	22.757	+1.780	6119	440	5
7	8	30	THAT'S WHAT TEQUILA DOES Macon/Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	21.683	+1.746	5856	319	6
8	11	18	ROCK AND A HARD PLACE Elektra/Warner Music Nashville/WEA	Bailey Zimmerman	21.123	+2.256	5476	488	8
9	10	34	WHAT HE DIDN'T DO Big Machine	Carly Pearce	20.511	+1.362	5606	287	7
10	9	25	WAIT IN THE TRUCK Broken Bow/Big Loud	HARDY Featuring Lainey Wilson	20.130	+0.879	5351	86	10
11	12	27	HANDLE ON YOU MCA Nashville	Parker McCollum	17.790	+0.482	4573	145	11
12	13	64	YOU DIDN'T BMLG	Brett Young	16.048	+0.227	4178	100	13
13	14	29	GOLD Capitol Nashville	Dierks Bentley	15.764	+1.320	4033	164	14
14	15	28	WILD AS HER Combustion Masters/RCA Nashville	Corey Kent	15.313	+1.203	4218	303	12
15	16	31	BROWN EYES BABY Hit Red/Capitol Nashville	Keith Urban	11.936	+1.359	3316	270	15
16	18	34	WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE MCA Nashville	Sam Hunt	11.141	+1.188	3212	249	16
17	17	36	HUMAN CoJo/Warner Music Nashville/WMN	Cody Johnson	10.583	+0.490	3178	34	17
18	19	26	NO BODY Warner Music Nashville/WMN	Blake Shelton	9.795	+0.683	2951	91	18
19	20	23	HOW IT OUGHTA BE Harpeth 60/BMLG	Shane Profitt	7.911	+0.595	2808	192	19
20	23	22	IT MATTERS TO HER Triple Tigers	★★ Airpower ★★ Scotty McCreery	7.850	+1.207	2643	204	20
21	22	30	YOU Warner Music Nashville/WAR	Dan + Shay	7.750	+0.932	2494	175	22
22	21	46	GOOD DAY FOR LIVING Quartz Hill	Joe Nichols	7.076	-0.230	2520	-37	21
23	24	11	DANCIN' IN THE COUNTRY Hubbard House/EMI Nashville	Tyler Hubbard	5.870	+0.527	1967	232	23
24	25	15	HATE MY HEART Capitol Nashville	Carrie Underwood	5.518	+0.468	1902	101	24
25	28	24	GIRL IN MINE Stoney Creek	Parmalee	5.040	+0.663	1779	89	27
26	31	6	MEMORY LANE Arista Nashville	Old Dominion	4.771	+0.877	1481	297	32
27	32	12	TENNESSEE ORANGE Megan Moroney/Columbia/Arista Nashville	Megan Moroney	4.721	+0.832	1453	147	33
28	27	32	SOMETHING IN THE ORANGE Belting Bronco/WAR	Zach Bryan	4.437	-0.231	1686	-33	28
29	30	46	NOT TO SELF Magnolia Music	Randy Houser	4.130	+0.046	1831	22	26
30	29	29	Y'ALL LIFE Monument	Walker Hayes	4.029	-0.207	1834	-62	25

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 © 2023, Nielsen Audio). The list of all Country Airplay chart reporters can be viewed in Luminate's online platform.

TIES

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

BULLETS

Awarded on Country Airplay to titles gaining audience or remaining flat from the previous week. A song will also receive a bullet if its percentage loss in audience does not exceed the percentage of monitored station downtime for the format. Titles that decline in audience but increase in detections will also receive a bullet if the total audience erosion for the week does not exceed 3%.

RECURRENTS

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

HOT SHOT DEBUT

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

MOST INCREASED AUDIENCE

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

AIRPOWER

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

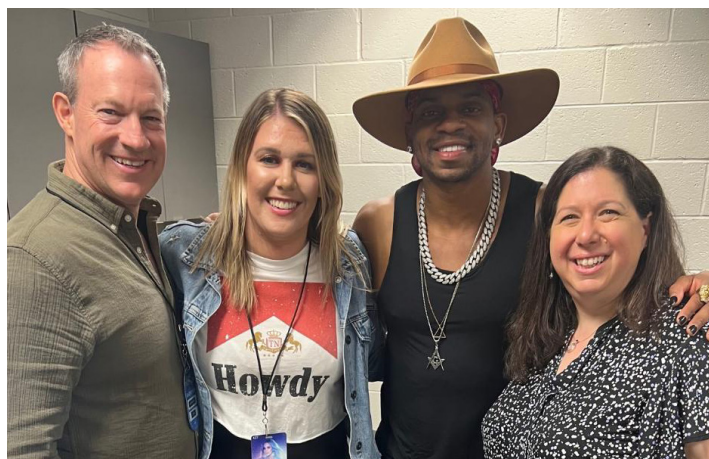
BREAKER

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

billboard Country Airplay

AIRPLAY
MONITORED BY
LUMINATE

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WKS ON CHART	TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	AUDIENCE (IN MILLIONS)		PLAYS		
					THIS WEEK	+/-	THIS WEEK	+/-	RANK
31	33	41	EVERYTHING SHE AIN'T Songs & Daughters/Pigasus/Big Loud	Hailey Whitters	3.930	+0.148	1609	90	30
32	51	2	ANGELS DON'T ALWAYS HAVE WINGS Valory ★★ Breaker ★★	Thomas Rhett	3.501	+2.366	812	475	40
33	34	54	SON OF A Riser House	Dillon Carmichael	3.472	+0.218	1617	-7	29
34	36	19	YOUR HEART OR MINE Capitol Nashville	Jon Pardi	3.326	+0.197	1191	40	34
35	35	30	DOING LIFE WITH ME EMI Nashville	Eric Church	3.326	+0.168	1513	39	31
36	26	2	DRINKABY Warner Music Nashville/WMN	Cole Swindell	3.092	-1.927	956	-204	38
37	38	14	YOU, ME, & WHISKEY Valory	Justin Moore & Priscilla Block	3.000	+0.380	1066	89	35
38	39	21	EXCUSES Combustion/Wheelhouse	Kolby Cooper	2.263	+0.083	1011	63	36
39	43	4	NEED A FAVOR Bailee & Buddy/BMG/Stoney Creek	Jelly Roll	2.059	+0.210	662	91	44
40	41	4	LOOKING FOR YOU RCA Nashville	Chris Young	2.058	+0.137	656	26	45
41	44	21	CAN'T HAVE MINE Curb	Dylan Scott	1.969	+0.120	983	28	37
42	40	10	WE GOT HISTORY Riser House/Columbia Nashville	Mitchell Tenpenny	1.968	-0.056	613	-26	46
43	42	19	SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING I'D DO Stoney Creek	Drake Milligan	1.794	-0.086	742	7	41
44	45	24	WORTH A SHOT RCA/Columbia Nashville	Elle King Featuring Dierks Bentley	1.757	-0.017	935	48	39
45	46	14	HEAVEN BY THEN Valory	Brantley Gilbert And Blake Shelton Featuring Vince Gill	1.667	+0.188	713	38	43
46	47	6	IF YOU GO DOWN (I'M GOING DOWN TOO) Black River	Kelsea Ballerini	1.485	+0.210	739	84	42
47	48	5	ONE THING AT A TIME Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	1.469	+0.254	362	40	57
48	49	13	IF HE WANTED TO HE WOULD EMI Nashville	Kylie Morgan	1.451	+0.258	602	52	47
49	52	3	STARS LIKE CONFETTI Broken Bow	Dustin Lynch	1.278	+0.215	495	114	52
50	50	6	UP THERE DOWN HERE Big Loud	Jake Owen	1.158	+0.003	477	6	54
51	57	4	GOD GAVE ME A GIRL Triple Tigers	Russell Dickerson	1.092	+0.210	573	81	49
52	54	2	FEARLESS (THE ECHO) Big Machine	Jackson Dean	1.004	-0.034	569	25	50
53	55	11	OKLAHOMA BREAKDOWN Show Dog Nashville	Toby Keith	0.933	+0.043	583	38	48
54	59	11	MIND ON YOU RECORDS Nashville	George Birge	0.874	+0.112	478	64	53
55	58	5	FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH Bad Realm/Atlantic	BRELAND	0.805	-0.027	396	2	56
56	53	16	OVER FOR YOU Warner Music Nashville/WEA	Morgan Evans	0.741	-0.300	341	-63	59
57	60	3	COUNTRY CAN Curb	Hannah Ellis	0.734	+0.009	506	38	51
58	NEW	23	19/BMG/Wheelhouse ★★ Hot Shot Debut ★★	Chayce Beckham	0.645	+0.159	406	68	55
59	RE-ENTRY		BURY ME IN GEORGIA Zone 4/RCA Nashville	Kane Brown	0.547	-0.011	92	-1	-
60	NEW		BOUT DAMNTIME Red Street	Neon Union	0.538	+0.024	345	24	58



Jimmie Allen checked in with North Carolina radio executives when he opened for Carrie Underwood on Feb. 8 at the Spectrum Center. From left: WSOC Charlotte operations manager John Reynolds, Stoney Creek director of Northeast promotion Lexi Willson, Allen and WQDR Raleigh assistant PD/music director Heather Davis.



Songwriter Geoff Warburton ("Best Thing Since Backroads," "There's No Holding Me Back") signed a joint publishing deal with Big Machine Music and Range Music. From left: BMM director of publishing Michelle Attardi, Warburton and BMM vp Alex Heddle and GM Mike Molinar.



Special Issue
ON SALE
FEB. 25, 2023

WOMEN IN MUSIC

On February 25th, *Billboard* will publish its highly anticipated Women in Music special issue, featuring top women in the music industry who are creating excitement and making their mark across labels, publishing and touring.

Coinciding with the issue, *Billboard's* Women in Music awards ceremony will be held March 1st. This event will bring together music's most prominent female artists and the industry's top female business executives to recognize and celebrate their achievements.

Take this opportunity to congratulate the most powerful and talented women in music and wish them continued success.

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ON SALE: 2/25 | **AD CLOSE** 2/14 | **MATERIALS DUE** 2/16

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NASHVILLE & NATIONAL TOM ROLAND



KAT VILLACORTA

Darius Rucker and Universal Music Group vp of media marketing Leigh Parr Malleus received golden ukuleles from Musicians On Call for their volunteer service during a Jan. 26 event at Nashville's Wildhorse Saloon.

ALABAMA REOPENS JUNE JAM

The June Jam is no longer toast.

Alabama is reviving a long-dormant music festival with the return of the Jam in Fort Payne, Ala., the town that spawned the influential group.

The event, which ran annually for 16 years beginning in 1982, is booked for June 3 at the Dekalb County VFW Fair Grounds. The announcement of the concert's resurrection, first reported by *The Fort Payne Times-Journal*, was made during a Feb. 7 Chamber of Commerce banquet, where a lifetime achievement award was presented to band members Randy Owen and Teddy Gentry, as well as to Lisa Cook, widow of guitarist Jeff Cook, who died Nov. 7.

A benefit concert that spread funds to local organizations, the Jam attracted 30,000 fans in its inaugural edition with The Oak Ridge Boys and Janie Fricke, and hit its peak attendance when 67,000 bought tickets to the 1991 installment featuring Garth Brooks, Clint Black, Alan Jackson and Vince Gill.

Located 165 miles south of Nashville, the Jam was often held on the Saturday after Fan Fair, which typically ended during that era on Fridays. This year, the Jam precedes Fan Fair, now known as CMA Fest, which is scheduled for June 8-11 in Nashville.

Acts that have participated in the June Jam over the years include Willie Nelson, Dolly Parton, Travis Tritt, Glen Campbell, Brooks & Dunn, Toby Keith and Diamond Rio.

RADIO & RECORDS®

Big Machine Records hired Jay Cruze as director of Southeast promotion and marketing. He was previously iHeart National Programming Group country PD. Reach Cruze [here](#) ... The duo Herrick signed a label deal with CDX and established a booking arrangement with the Joseph Henry Agency ... Singer-songwriter Cutter Elliott joined the artist roster at CDX ... Beasley/Philadelphia welcomed Rachel Pitts as digital PD for the cluster, including country WXTU. She transfers from a similar role at Beasley/Tampa (Fla.), which includes country WQYK ... WKDQ Evansville, Ind., morning personality Leslie Morgan closed a 15-year run in the role after her Feb. 10 airshift ... Beasley, Key Networks and Shawn Parr Productions will debut *Shawn Parr's Backstage Country* on Feb. 27 on a reported 70 stations, including WKLB Boston, KCYE Las Vegas and WKML Fayetteville, Ark. The four-hour weekday program mashes up *Shawn Parr's Across the Country* and the former United Stations show *Backstage Country* ... Cumulus launched a new series, *Your Music First*, on Feb. 6. The inaugural episode focused on Thomas Rhett's "Angels (Don't Always Have Wings)" ... Clyde Bass was installed as iHeartMedia/Texas-Arkansas area president, RadioInk.com reported. The position places him in charge of 48 stations in 10 markets, with 10 of them airing country, including KRYS Corpus Christ, Texas; KSSN Little Rock, Ark.; and KZSN Wichita, Kan. Bass was previously the Arkansas-area president ... Saga appointed Andrew Schulze its first director of e-commerce, according to RadioInk.com. He was

previously senior vp for the self-owned sales consultancy IncentRev ... Lainey Wilson will host a Bell Bottom Music Celebration on March 14 during Country Radio Seminar in Nashville, with over 20 guest artists, including Chase Rice, Blanco Brown and Craig Morgan. Cumulus' Elaina Smith, Audacy's Rob Stone and Holly Hutton, and WSIX Nashville personality Brooke Taylor will host the New Faces Show on March 15.

'ROUND THE ROW

Ocean Way Nashville named Joe Baldrige as its director of studio operations, filling a vacancy created by Pat McMakin's retirement in September. Baldrige shifts into the role after working as an instructor for Audio Engineering Technology ... WME promoted 19 executives, including five in the country music department: Henry Glascock rose to partner from agent, and Becca Christian, Caleb Fenn, Carter Green and Kanan Vitolo were all bumped to agent ... Bluewater Music boosted Rachel Boyle to director of licensing and administration from licensing assistant ... Songwriter Marv Green ("I Called Mama," "Amazed") signed a publishing deal with Red Door Music and Warner Chappell ... Liz Rose Music, Warner Chappell and Jimmie Allen inked a publishing deal with Cameron Bedell ("Down Home") ... Zach Bryan joined the songwriter roster at Warner Chappell ... Guy Clark's grandchildren, Dylan Clark and Ellie Clark Morell, formed Guy Clark LLC to oversee his estate ... The Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum named 20 members to the board of its Troubadour Advisory Council, including president Katie Cline Moore, of Cline Co., and three vice chairs: Zach Farnum, of 117 Entertainment; Nina Jenkins Fisher, of Jody Williams Songs; and Patrick Thomas, of Silverfish Media ... The Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum has two scholarly events of note booked. Author Peter Guralnick will lead a Feb. 18 discussion about the recently opened exhibit, "Dick Curless: Hard Traveling Man From Maine." Plus, museum historian/editor Patrick Huber will moderate a March 2 panel celebrating the 50th anniversary of its Bob Pinson Recorded Sound Collection, named for a donor who supplied 14,000 recordings to the archive, which now totals 250,000 recordings ... Arranger Cody Fry received Belmont University's curtain call award, recognizing his accomplishments in commercial music ... The Association of Independent Music Publishers moved the date of its 2023 AIMP Nashville Country Awards to April 5 at the Ryman Auditorium. The event was original scheduled for March 21 ... Over 1,000 songwriters will compete in Tennessee for an opportunity to perform at the Bluebird Café. Go [here](#) for more info ... Music tech firm Veva Collect snagged Martina McBride and Wendy Moten as judges for its songwriting challenge. Go [here](#) for more info ... HARDY, Lainey Wilson, Tanya Tucker and others will appear Feb. 19 in a tribute to the late Leslie Jordan at Nashville's Grand Ole Opry House ... Songwriter Pat Bunch died Jan. 30 in Cross Plains, Tenn. Her legacy includes Faith Hill's "Wild One," Ty Herndon's "Living in a Moment" and Restless Heart's "I'll Still Be Loving You." Post tributes [here](#) ... Pop songwriter Burt Bacharach died at his home in Los Angeles on Feb. 8. He earned country hits with Ronnie Milsap's "Any Day Now," Sonny James' "Only Love Can Break a Heart" and Marty Robbins' "The Story of My Life." ●



Tyler Hubbard visited with host Kelleigh Bannen during the Feb. 3 episode of Apple Music's *Today's Country Radio With Kelleigh Bannen*.



Carly Pearce (left) and Ashley McBryde celebrated their Grammy win on Feb. 5 when "Never Wanted To Be That Girl" won best country duo/group performance.

LEON BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES

billboard



SXSW 2023

This issue features cover stories on the stars headlining Billboard's stage at SXSW and a preview of other festival highlights.

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

Thomas Rhett Makes Space In His Life, And Career, For 'Angels'

The lives of country artists' spouses can be challenging — their partners spend days or weeks on the road, often chew up their home time with business meetings and songwriting appointments, and get interrupted periodically by strangers when the couple is out in public.

So it's telling that **Lauren Akins**, who celebrated her 10th anniversary with **Thomas Rhett** last October, sweetly defines herself by that relationship in the profile on her Twitter page: "Blessed to be married to my best friend."

Rhett clearly remains enamored of his wife, documenting their lives together through much of his material, including "Life Changes," "Look What God Gave Her" and "Star of the Show." Part of that appreciation is his recognition of the abnormal scenario she freely embraces.

"Anyone married to someone in the spotlight, it takes a very special human being," he says. "The amount of times I've been gone, the amount of times I've let work overtake my family life, the amount of times I've said yes to stuff that I probably should have said no to, and [she was] there with me the whole way."

His newest single — "Angels (Don't Always Have Wings)," which Valory released to country radio via PlayMPE on Jan. 23 — reflects both his gratitude for her and some degree of guilt for his job's infringements, though Rhett didn't necessarily intend to be the voice delivering that message.

"Angels" emerged from a co-writing appointment with **Teddy Swims**, a multigenre singer-songwriter who made Rhett a featured artist on his rhythmic 2021 track "Broke."

"Teddy Swims is like if **Chris Stapleton** started an R&B band," Rhett says. "That's what he sounds like — absolutely insane."

Rhett aimed to write something that Swims might not typically record: a "frickin' country ballad that the chorus is just at the tip top of his range," says Rhett. "Selfishly, I wanted to hear Teddy singing something like that."

The night before the session, Rhett read a book that raised the possibility of meeting an angel who presents in the physical world as a human being. From that idea, he drifted to the phrase "Angels (Don't Always Have Wings)" and decided the concept applied to his wife.

He introduced that idea during his Nashville writing date with Swims, **Josh Thompson** ("I'll Name the Dogs," "Ain't Always the Cowboy") and songwriter-producer **Julian Bunetta** ("Craving You," "Beer Can't Fix"). Everyone bought into it, with Rhett leading the charge.

"You have to stand around with, like, trash cans to pick up all the stuff leaking out of him," Bunetta says. "You can't pick it up fast enough. He's one of the most prolific writers I have ever been around."

They wrote "Angels" in a waltz time signature, placing the song's female subject on a pedestal while the singer, self-described as a "mess of a man," takes responsibility for his own failures and a "selfish heart." It is, agree Rhett and Bunetta, an exaggeration of Rhett's character, though Rhett expected Swims to sing it in the end anyway.

"It's not like every movie that **Robert De Niro** is in, he had to live," Bunetta reasons. "The greatest artists have always been able to interpret the song the way it needs to be interpreted. Whether or not they lived that is sort of beside the point."

They fashioned "Angels" with the music and lyrics working in tandem to wring maximum emotion out of the experience. It starts humbly and conversationally in its opening verses, rising in the chorus to a higher melodic plain. In the process, it uses a fairly small number of words, allowing the phrases — and the song's heart — to unfold slowly.

"The use of space in songs is good," Bunetta notes. "Sometimes space says what needs to be said."



The mix of sweet adulation and self-abasement proved dramatic, reaching the climactic, semi-spiritual line in the narrative just before the chorus' end: "I don't know why you were patient and wasted good savin' on me." The foursome felt a bridge was needed to complete it, and they wrestled with numerous ideas before Thompson asserted himself, using "wings" as both the last word in the chorus and the first word in the bridge.

"He is the least vocal songwriter that I write with, and by least vocal, I mean the person that is not just shouting out every melody and lyric that comes to his brain," Rhett says. "I think he kind of allows the write to happen. He just kind of tucks away in a corner with his laptop that's from 2001 because he's too old school to upgrade. We got stuck; he just spat out that bridge. And we were just like, 'That's what it was supposed to be the whole time.'"

Swims sang over a drum loop and acoustic guitar for the Bunetta-produced demo, but by the next morning, Rhett was already having second thoughts about who should sing it. He checked in with Swims periodically to gauge what was happening with "Angels," and after several months, got Swims' permission to keep it for himself. Rhett recorded it with producer **Dann Huff** (**Kane Brown**, **Brantley Gilbert**), who

honored the song's spacious needs.

Rhett, meanwhile, needed private space for his vocal. The chorus tested his falsetto in a way that he had never quite encountered before in the studio, and he wasn't certain he could capture the song's vulnerability in front of a producer and engineer. So he holed up in his home studio and sang 60 or 70 takes, which would later be compiled into one vocal.

"I really just wanted to lock myself in that emotion alone and see what would come out," he says. "The intricacies of my voice breaking up or the falsetto not being perfect — that's the realness of it."

After Rhett's album *Where We Started* arrived April 1, 2022, his manager, G Major Management founder **Virginia Davis**, saw particularly strong fan reaction to "Angels," and she encouraged Bunetta to explore a remix. He redid the bass and drums, and added a piano with a tremolo effect in the opening bars.

"I thought that the intro, if we're going to radio with this song, needed some ear candy to perk your ear up," says Bunetta.

"Angels" debuted at No. 51 on the Feb. 11 Country Airplay chart and moves to No. 32 in its second week. The song also continues to generate direct messages on social media as fans adopt a song Rhett wrote about his wife as their own.

"It was really cool," he says, "to watch something so personal resonate on such a large scale with people from different walks of life." ●

billboard Country Airplay Index

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

23 Chayce Beckham Publishing Designee, BMI (C. Beckham) **58**

A

ANGELS DON'T ALWAYS HAVE WINGS Warner-Jamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Be A Light Publishing, BMI/Music Of Big Family, BMI/Dragon Bunny Music, BMI/Teddy Swims LLC, BMI/Red Bandana Publishing, BMI/MV2 Music, BMI/Music Of MAM, BMI (Thomas Rhett, J.C. Bunetta, J.C. Dimsdale, J.Thompson) **32**

B

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C

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D

DANCIN' IN THE COUNTRY T Tree Music, BMI/Warner-Jamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/EMI Blackwood Music, Inc., BMI/Iris In The Sky With Diamonds, BMI/Sony Timber Publishing, SESAC/Cuts Like A Nite Music, SESAC/Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/MARMA Music, BMI (T.R.Hubbard, R.Copperman, J.M.Nite, K.Urbani) **23**

DOING LIFE WITH ME Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Longer And Louder Music, BMI/Seven Ring Circus Songs, BMI/Little Louder Songs, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/Jeffrey Steele Music, BMI (E.Church, C.Beathard, Jeffrey Steele) **35**

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E

EVERYTHING SHE AIN'T WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Pigasus, ASCAP/Cockeyed Hat Music, BMI/Harolds Purple Heart Music, BMI/Little Louder Songs, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI (H.Whitters, B.Simpson, R.Lynedel) **31**

EXCUSES Songs Of Combustion Five, ASCAP/Megusta Music, ASCAP/Hell Write Songs, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/940 Songs, BMI (K.Cooper, Brett Tyler, J.Walker) **38**

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G

GIRL IN MINE 33 Creative, BMI/Reservoir 416, BMI/Sony Country Side, BMI/M.Thomas Music, BMI/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Master Of My Domain Music, ASCAP/Poppy's Picks, ASCAP/Concord copyrights, BMI/These Are Pulse Songs, BMI/Creative Pulse Music, BMI/Track & Feels Publishing, SESAC/W.C.Music Corp., SESAC/Label Room Publishing, SESAC (D.Fanning, M.Thomas, A.G.Gorley, T.Wood, C.Brown) **25**

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GOLD EMI Blackwood Music Inc., BMI/Iris In The Sky With Diamonds, BMI/Emileon Songs, BMI/Little Louder Songs, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Caleb's College Fund, ASCAP/DudeTunes, ASCAP/R.Copperman, C.L.Dick, A.G.Gorley, D.Bentley) **13**

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H

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HATE MY HEART Carrie-Okie Music, BMI/Spirit Two Nashville, ASCAP/4TheKidz Music, ASCAP/Spirit Vault Songs, ASCAP/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Relative Music Group, BMI/Redneck Music, BMI/Concord Sounds, ASCAP/410 Music, ASCAP (C.Underwood, D.A.Garcia, M.W.Hardy, L.Lindsey) **24**

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HOW IT OUGHTA BE Anthem Music Publishing & BMI/Old Tom Music Publishing, BMI/Tennessee Backwoods Music, BMI/Fraser Made Music, BMI/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/KJM Music Publishing, ASCAP/Mitchell Garlow Music, ASCAP (S.Pront, D.Fraser, Mitch Oglesby) **19**

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I

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L

LOOKING FOR YOU Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Sic Regional The Fifth, BMI/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Monsters Hate Puppies Publishing, ASCAP/Young Man Publishing, BMI/WeisDwi, ASCAP (C.Young, C.Destelano, J.McNair, E.L.Weisano) **40**

M

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NEED A FAVOR Austin Nivarel Publishing, ASCAP/BMG Gold Songs, ASCAP/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Ron Ragosta Publishing Designee, BMI/Balee's Ballads, BMI/BMG Platinum Songs US, BMI (A.A.Nivarel, J.Ragosta, R.Ragosta, J.B.DeFord) **39**

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NOTE TO SELF EMI Blackwood Music Inc., BMI/Iris In The Sky With Diamonds, BMI/Little Britches Music, BMI/Little Louder Songs, BMI/Seven Ring Circus Songs, BMI/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/Sea Layle Tavern Houses Music, BMI/Songs Of Ole T. Paso, BMI (A.Houser, R.Copperman, C.Beathard, B.Pinson) **29**

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ROCK AND A HARD PLACE Songs In The Key Of Black, BMI/Civil Music, BMI/Vacant Heart Publishing, BMI/Warner-Jamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Speakers Go Boom Music, BMI/Goat Island Bay Music, BMI (H.Warren, J.Hackworth, J.Harvey) **8**

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THANK GOD Feels Like Friday Music, SESAC/Warner-Jamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Kyle Fishman Music, BMI/Play It Again Entertainment, BMI/Goat Island Palms, LLC, BMI/Sony Timber Publishing, SESAC/Chorus 2 Music, SESAC/Blunts And Bonfires Music, SESAC/Songs Of Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc., BMI/Bedded Muffins Music, BMI/Dead Air Music, BMI (C.D.Stalenecker, K.A.Fishman, J.Free, J.Hoge, J.Mullins) **1**

THAT'S WHAT TEQUILA DOES Triple Play Music, BMI/Warner-Jamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Songs Of Double Down Music, BMI/High Noon Yellow Stars Music, BMI/Makena Cove Music, ASCAP/BMG Gold Songs, ASCAP/Irishsonmusic, BMI/BMG Platinum Songs US, BMI/Zona Blue Music, BMI (J.Morgan, J.Edwards, T.Kennedy, K.M.Allison) **7**

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U

UP THERE DOWN HERE Warner-Jamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/EMPIRE CREATIVE MUSIC, BMI/WC Music Corp., BMI/Concord copyrights, BMI/These Are Pulse Songs, BMI/Creative Pulse Music, BMI (Z.Dyer, S.Overstreet, T.Wood) **50**

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WAIT IN THE TRUCK Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Relative Music Group, BMI/Redneck Music, BMI/Humerus Publishing Global, BMI/Round Hill Verses Publishing, BMI/Who Wants To Buy My Publishing, ASCAP/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Nontypical Music, ASCAP/Sony Accent, ASCAP/Pile Of Schmidt Songs, ASCAP/The Money Tree VibeZ, ASCAP (M.W.Hardy, H.Phelps, J.M.Schmidt, R.Blair) **10**

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WHAT MY WORLD SPINS AROUND Anthem Music Publishing, BMI/ASCAP/Jordan Davis Music, ASCAP/Matt Drag Music, ASCAP/Round Hill Songs BLS IV, ASCAP/Big Loud Proud Songs, ASCAP/Big Music Machine, BMI/The Buffalo Catalogue, BMI (J.Davis, M.Dragstrom, R.J.Hurd) **5**

WHISKEY ON YOU Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Greent Music, ASCAP/EMI Blackwood Music, Inc., BMI/Kaiga 1 Junes, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Droptime Music, BMI (N.Smith, L.Rimes, R.Sutton) **3**

WILD AS HER Combustion Music, BMI/Anthem Music Publishing T, BMI/Warner-Jamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Red Creative, BMI/Downtown DMP Songs, BMI/Big Loud Brett Songs, BMI/Round Hill Compositions, BMI/Sonotroceres Music, BMI (M.Wallen, Brett Tyler, K.Archer) **14**

WORTH A SHOT Tempo Investments-Smack Hits, GMR/Warner Geo Met Ric Music, GMR/EMI Blackwood Music, Inc., BMI/Iris In The Sky With Diamonds, BMI/Smackwood Music, ASCAP/BMG Gold Songs, ASCAP/Smackbone Music, ASCAP (S.McAnally, R.Copperman, J.Osborne) **44**

Y

Y'ALL LIFE Songs Of Smack, BMI/Spark In Your Pocket, BMI/Me Gusta Music, BMI/Smackworks Music, SESAC/Follow Me Where I Go, SESAC/Kobalt Music Publishing America, SESAC/Universal Music Corp., ASCAP/Universal Music - MGB Songs, ASCAP/D2 Pro Publishing, ASCAP/W.C.M. Music Corp., SESAC/King Pen Songs, SESAC (W.Hayes, P.Good, J.Jenkins, C.Faynes, J.Jeperson) **30**

YOU BMG Gold Songs, ASCAP/Beats And Banjos, ASCAP/Bucks 26, ASCAP/WC Music Corp., ASCAP/revmmusic, ASCAP/Lawdyrangers, ASCAP (D.Smiers, J.M.Barnes, J.Reynolds) **21**

YOU DIDN'T Super Big Music, ASCAP/Caliville Publishing, ASCAP/Round Hill Songs II, ASCAP/Caleb's College Fund, ASCAP/BRMS, ASCAP/Muse Magic, ASCAP/EMI Foray Music, SESAC/Sony Cross Keys Publishing, ASCAP/Master Of My Domain Music, ASCAP (B.Young, A.G.Gorley, J.M.Nite, J.Robbins) **12**

YOU, ME, & WHISKEY WC Music Corp., ASCAP/Where I Started Music Publishing, ASCAP/Warner-Jamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI/Don't Be A Gypsy, BMI/Sony Tree Publishing, BMI/Anthem Coal Mining Songs, BMI/Randolph County Music, BMI/Taylor Made By The Red White And Blue, BMI (J.L.Alexander, B.Berryhill, C.Taylor) **37**

YOUR HEART OR MINE Songs Of Universal, Inc., BMI/Honkytonkaholik Music Publishing, BMI/Universal Music, BMI/Phat Racon, SESAC/Universal Music Corp., ASCAP/Brumby Cooper Otis Music, ASCAP (B.Butter, J.Ebach, J.Pierce) **34**

CODD A

REWINDING
THE
COUNTRY
CHARTS

40 Years Ago Crystal Gayle Gained 'Control Again' Of No. 1

In 1983, the star achieved her 11th of 18 leaders on Hot Country Songs

On Feb. 12, 1983, **Crystal Gayle's** "Til I Gain Control Again" topped *Billboard's* Hot Country Songs chart, becoming her 11th of 18 leaders on the list. She boasts the fourth-most No. 1s among women in the survey's history, after only **Dolly Parton** (25), **Reba McEntire** (24) and **Tammy Wynette** (20).

The song was authored by **Rodney Crowell** and initially recorded by **Emmylou Harris** for her 1975 LP *Elite Hotel*. A diverse group of artists from **Willie Nelson** to **Van Morrison** has covered the track.

Gayle was born **Brenda Gail**

Webb, the youngest of 10 children. Her older sister, the legendary **Loretta Lynn**, inducted her into the Grand Ole Opry in January 2017, nearly 50 years after Gayle had made her singing debut on the famed Ryman Auditorium stage at age 16. Prior to her induction, Gayle was invited to join the Opry by **Carrie Underwood**; in November 2016, Underwood joined her for a performance of her 1977 crossover hit "Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue."

Now 72, Gayle still tours regularly, with gigs set for Feb. 10-11 in Laughlin, Nev. —JIM ASKER

Gayle onstage at the Rosemont Horizon in Rosemont, Ill., in 1983.



Rank	Label & Number	Title	Artist	Weeks at #1
2	13	'TIL I GAIN CONTROL AGAIN	Crystal Gayle (J. Bowen) R. Crowell; Jolly Cheeks, BMI; Elektra 7-69833	1
4	13	FAKING LOVE	T.G. Sheppard & Karen Brooks (B. Killen) B. Braddock, M. Berg; Tree, BMI; Warner/Carb 29854	
6	11	WHY BABY WHY	Charley Pride (N. Wilson) G. Jones, D. Edwards, Ft. Knox, BMI; RCA-13397	
7	14	STILL TAKING CHANCES	Michael Murphey (J.E. Norman) M. Murphey; Timberwolf, BMI; Liberty 1486	
5	1	INSIDE/CAROLINA DREAMS	Ronnie Milsap (R. Milsap, T. Collins) M. Reid; Lodge Hall, ASCAP; RCA 13362	
8	11	LAST THING I NEEDED FIRST THING		