

55TH CMA AWARDS

PROGRAM GUIDE
NOVEMBER 10, 2021



LUKE BRYAN

HOSTS

COUNTRY MUSIC'S BIGGEST NIGHT™

About the Nominees | Country Music Hall of Fame 2021 Inductees | CMA Broadcast Awards Winners



55TH

**CMA
AWARDS**

ON SALE NOW

AVAILABLE AT BRIDGESTONE ARENA MERCH LOCATIONS
OR SHOP.CMAWORLD.COM



LIFESTYLE MERCH
AVAILABLE ONLINE!

GREETINGS FROM CMA BOARD LEADERSHIP

Dear Friends,

As we arrive here at “The 55th Annual CMA Awards,” I look back on my term as Chairperson as a time of incredible transformation. We have begun to re-learn almost everything. How to take better care of our CMA members, especially when it really counts. How to tour live music all over again, when even the most well-traveled places seem like a new frontier. And we are beginning to understand where a bold and passionate new generation of artists and industry professionals will take this amazing genre.

With an intense focus on our MICS (Music Industry Covid Support) initiative, we have directed \$3 million to the music industry professionals who needed it most. It was those same resilient men and women—our Country Music front line—who banded together to be the first to safely bring concerts back.



**MARY HILLIARD
HARRINGTON**

Chair,
CMA Board of Directors

Like the rest of the country, our genre found itself in the center of a difficult but long overdue conversation about diversity, equity and inclusion. As leaders within the industry, the CMA Board of Directors carry a responsibility in demonstrating a positive influence towards creating a more inclusive path forward for future generations, and we are incredibly proud to have established a significant framework towards strategies that will ensure forward momentum.

We gather for “The 55th Annual CMA Awards” once again at Bridgestone Arena to shine Country’s brightest spotlight on the work we love so much. Our broadcast partners at ABC have renewed their commitment to air our television shows into the future, and we induct four more deserving and groundbreaking artists into the Country Music Hall of Fame.

For tonight, I hope we can pause and be present together, to stand in appreciation for the strength and power of our uniquely American art form. This is Country Music in 2021. Enjoy the show!

Best,

Mary Hilliard Harrington
Chair, CMA Board of Directors

Dear CMA Community,

The show must go on.

For the entire music industry this past year, this old show-biz maxim was tested in an unprecedented way. COVID darkened spotlights in every stadium, arena, amphitheater, fair, festival and night club from coast-to-coast. Thousands of our friends, family and peers found themselves out of work almost instantly with no road map of how or when we would ever get “On the Road Again.”

But Country Music has always been a family of resilient doers and dreamers. I was grateful to have a front row seat as our community came together in inspiring ways. Through the visionary and diligent work of the CMA staff, Board of Directors and membership, CMA led support efforts that immediately and positively impacted our industry in this time of crisis.



JIM BEAVERS

President,
CMA Board of Directors

Thankfully, spotlights are starting to shine again. Our artists, bus drivers, musicians, caterers, sound engineers, lighting techs, tour managers, booking agents and other tour support personnel are back to work bringing what is so special and unique about Country Music to those who love it the most.

Tonight, “The 55th Annual CMA Awards” is back at Bridgestone Arena and live on ABC. I hope you appreciate the special significance of this night as we celebrate excellence within the genre and invite music fans around the globe to celebrate the unique art form that is Country Music.

Jim Beavers
President, CMA Board of Directors

CONTENTS

1	GREETINGS FROM CMA BOARD LEADERSHIP
3	INTRO FROM CMA CEO SARAH TRAHERN
4	HOST LUKE BRYAN
6	DR PEPPER “YOU DESERVE THIS” 2021 NOMINEES
8	ABOUT THE NOMINEES
32	ALBUM OF THE YEAR NOMINEES
33	SINGLE OF THE YEAR NOMINEES
34	MUSIC VIDEO OF THE YEAR NOMINEES
35	CMA FOUNDATION ARTIST AMBASSADORS
36	CMA FOUNDATION MUSIC TEACHERS OF EXCELLENCE
38	BROADCAST AWARDS WINNERS
40	BROADCAST AWARDS FINALISTS
42	2021 COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES
44	CMA AWARDS HISTORY IN PICTURES
48	CMA PLATINUM MEMBERS
50	CMA SILVER MEMBERS
52	IN MEMORIAM
54	CMA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
56	CREDITS

WELCOME TO THE 55TH ANNUAL CMA AWARDS

By CMA CEO Sarah Trahern



I've been looking forward to this night for a long time. The CMA Awards has always been "Country Music's Biggest Night," but *this* night seems bigger than all the others.

Tonight, we come back home. Yes, we are back in Bridgestone Arena, the Awards' home since 2006, after a detour last year to a smaller venue due to the pandemic. But we are also coming back home to what the CMA Awards was before 2020 upended the world

– exceptional live performances, show-stopping collaborations, lots of laughter, some tears and whole lot of heart. Oh, and best of all – a live audience to take it all in!

The past 20 months has been difficult for the world, and especially for the music community and our CMA members. I can't tell you how heartbreaking it was to hear from some of our members about their struggles, from not knowing how they are going to pay their rent, to worrying about their ability to feed their family, and the impact on their mental health. Through the struggle, however, I have also seen an incredible resilience in an industry coming together. Our industry united to help each other, with food drives, donations, programming and resources to build a bridge of light across the darkness. I am so proud of our Board and our staff for leaping into action to help fund and execute these initiatives to get help to the ones that needed it the most. I am blown away every day and excited beyond words to see our industry coming back to life.

If that's not a reason to celebrate tonight, I don't know what is! Tonight's 55th show is poised to be one of our biggest. The nominees and performers represent the best of Country Music, and what you will see on stage is indicative of the heights to which the genre is growing. It's a reflective time in Country Music and we as an organization are committed to doing the work that it takes to make it inclusive and welcoming to all.

While we are so excited to honor the amazing slate of CMA Awards nominees, I also want to recognize 30 very special people in the audience at Bridgestone Arena tonight – the CMA Foundation Music Teachers of Excellence. These inspiring music educators are some of the best in the country and have navigated the past two years like the superheroes they are – adapting and changing to give their students the best opportunity to learn through an unprecedented time. To these amazing educators – THANK YOU!

And thank *you* to those attending in person tonight and your contribution to keeping everyone safe and healthy in order to experience live music again. I promise you the extra safety precautions and requirements will be well worth it.

Welcome home, friends!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sarah Trahern".

Sarah Trahern
CMA Chief Executive Officer



Photos: Nick Zimmer/CMA

LUKE BRYAN

HOSTS

THE CMA AWARDS



Photo: Robby Klein / ABC

Two-time CMA Entertainer of the Year Luke Bryan has been prepping for this first-time CMA Awards hosting gig for the past few years. Bryan has been offering advice and mentoring young singers as one of three judges on ABC's "American Idol" since 2018.

"The CMA Awards is one of the biggest nights of the year for Country Music," said Bryan. "Being asked to host the CMA Awards was definitely something I put a lot of thought into before answering. The pressure that comes along with that can be overwhelming, but knowing I get to help honor and celebrate so many of my friends, I knew it was something I couldn't turn down. I mean, growing up in Georgia, I remember watching Vince Gill, Reba, Brooks & Dunn, Kenny Rogers, Barbara Mandrell, to name a few. They were so good. And then becoming a part of this amazing Country Music family and sitting on the front row while Brad Paisley, Carrie Underwood and Darius Rucker took the reins, all of these artists are heroes and friends, and I am honored to have my name included in this group. I'm looking forward to making it fun and memorable and using this platform to continue to make Country Music shine."

Bryan, a two-time CMA Entertainer of the Year, will make his CMA Awards hosting debut on this year's stage.

Since his debut, Bryan has garnered 27 No. 1 hits and has more RIAA certified digital singles than any other Country artist with 68.5 million, has 15.6 billion streams worldwide, and has sold nearly 13 million albums. His headline concert tours have played sold-out shows for 12 million fans inclusive of 36 stadium concerts, Farm Tours, Spring Break shows, and seven sold-out 'Crash My Playa' destination concert events. Bryan has won over 50 major music awards. Bryan is set to return as a celebrity judge for a fifth season, alongside Katy Perry and Lionel Richie, on "American Idol" in 2022. Airing now, fans can see Bryan's original five-part docuseries "Luke Bryan: My Dirt Road Diary," on IMDb TV, Amazon's premium free streaming service.

PERFORMANCE THAT STEALS THE SHOW.



Preproduction model shown.
Actual production model may vary. Available Spring 2022.

INTRODUCING THE NEW 2022 SILVERADO HIGH COUNTRY.

The spotlight's on you. With a standard 13.4-inch diagonal infotainment touch-screen, real wood trim, perforated leather seating surfaces and available Super Cruise™ hands-free driver assistance technology¹ for compatible roads, our most luxurious Silverado will give you something to sing about.

FIND NEW ROADS™

¹Available on High Country. Always pay attention while driving and when using Super Cruise. Do not use a hand-held device. Visit chevrolet.com/electric/super-cruise for compatible roads and full details.





YOU DESERVE THIS

2021 CMA AWARDS NOMINEES

OPEN UP AN ICE-COLD DR PEPPER, TAKE OUT A PEN, AND MAKE YOUR WINNING PICKS FROM THESE DESERVING NOMINEES!

ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR

- ☐ Eric Church
- ☐ Luke Combs
- ☐ Miranda Lambert
- ☐ Chris Stapleton
- ☐ Carrie Underwood

MALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR

- ☐ Dierks Bentley
- ☐ Eric Church
- ☐ Luke Combs
- ☐ Thomas Rhett
- ☐ Chris Stapleton

FEMALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR

- ☐ Gabby Barrett
- ☐ Miranda Lambert
- ☐ Ashley McBryde
- ☐ Maren Morris
- ☐ Carly Pearce

VOCAL DUO OF THE YEAR

- ☐ Brooks & Dunn
- ☐ Brothers Osborne
- ☐ Dan + Shay
- ☐ Florida Georgia Line
- ☐ Maddie & Tae

VOCAL GROUP OF THE YEAR

- ☐ Lady A
- ☐ Little Big Town
- ☐ Midland
- ☐ Old Dominion
- ☐ Zac Brown Band

NEW ARTIST OF THE YEAR

- ☐ Jimmie Allen
- ☐ Ingrid Andress
- ☐ Gabby Barrett
- ☐ Mickey Guyton
- ☐ HARDY

MUSICIAN OF THE YEAR

- ☐ Jenee Fleenor | FIDDLE
- ☐ Paul Franklin | STEEL GUITAR
- ☐ Aaron Sterling | DRUMS
- ☐ Ilya Toshinskiy | BANJO
- ☐ Derek Wells | GUITAR

SINGLE OF THE YEAR

AWARD GOES TO ARTIST(S), PRODUCER(S), AND MIX ENGINEER(S)

- ☐ "Famous Friends"
Chris Young (with Kane Brown)
Produced by Corey Crowder, Chris Young
Mixed by Sean Moffitt
- ☐ "The Good Ones"
Gabby Barrett
Produced by Ross Copperman, Zach Kale
Mixed by Buckley Miller
- ☐ "Hell Of A View"
Eric Church
Produced by Jay Joyce
Mixed by Jason Hall, Jay Joyce
- ☐ "One Night Standards"
Ashley McBryde
Produced by Jay Joyce
Mixed by Jason Hall, Jay Joyce
- ☐ "Starting Over"
Chris Stapleton
Produced by Dave Cobb, Chris Stapleton
Mixed by Vance Powell

SONG OF THE YEAR

AWARD GOES TO SONGWRITERS

- ☐ "Forever After All"
Luke Combs, Drew Parker, Robert Williford
- ☐ "The Good Ones"
Gabby Barrett, Zach Kale, Emily Landis, Jim McCormick
- ☐ "Hell Of A View"
Casey Beathard, Eric Church, Monty Criswell
- ☐ "One Night Standards"
Nicolette Hayford, Shane McAnally, Ashley McBryde
- ☐ "Starting Over"
Mike Henderson, Chris Stapleton

ALBUM OF THE YEAR

AWARD GOES TO ARTIST, PRODUCER(S) AND MIX ENGINEER(S)

- ☐ 29 Carly Pearce
Produced by Shane McAnally, Josh Osborne, Jimmy Robbins
Mixed by Ryan Gore
- ☐ *Dangerous: The Double Album*
Morgan Wallen
Produced by Dave Cohen, Matt Dragstrem, Jacob Durrett, Charlie Handsome, Joey Moi
Mixed by Joey Moi
- ☐ *Heart* Eric Church
Produced by Jay Joyce
Mixed by Jason Hall, Jay Joyce
- ☐ *Skeletons* Brothers Osborne
Produced by Jay Joyce
Mixed by Jason Hall, Jay Joyce
- ☐ *Starting Over* Chris Stapleton
Produced by Dave Cobb, Chris Stapleton
Mixed by Vance Powell

MUSICAL EVENT OF THE YEAR

AWARD GOES TO ARTIST(S) AND PRODUCER(S)

- ☐ "Buy Dirt"
Jordan Davis and Luke Bryan
Produced by Paul DiGiovanni
- ☐ "Chasing After You"
Ryan Hurd with Maren Morris
Produced by Aaron Eshuis, Teddy Reimer
- ☐ "Drunk (And I Don't Wanna Go Home)"
Elle King & Miranda Lambert
Produced by Martin Johnson, Brandon Paddock
- ☐ "Famous Friends"
Chris Young with Kane Brown
Produced by Corey Crowder, Chris Young
- ☐ "half of my hometown"
Kelsea Ballerini (featuring Kenny Chesney)
Produced by Kelsea Ballerini, Ross Copperman, Jimmy Robbins

MUSIC VIDEO OF THE YEAR

AWARD GOES TO ARTIST(S) AND DIRECTOR(S)

- ☐ "Chasing After You"
Ryan Hurd with Maren Morris
Directed by TK McKamy
- ☐ "Famous Friends"
Chris Young with Kane Brown
Directed by Peter Zavadil
- ☐ "Gone"
Dierks Bentley
Directed by Wes Edwards, Travis Nicholson, Ed Pryor, Running Bear, Sam Siske
- ☐ "half of my hometown"
Kelsea Ballerini (featuring Kenny Chesney)
Directed by Patrick Tracy
- ☐ "Younger Me"
Brothers Osborne
Directed by Reid Long



CMA AWARDS

HERE'S TO GREAT TASTE AND GREAT MUSIC

— ★ ★ ★ —
CONGRATS, CMA AWARDS NOMINEES



— OFFICIAL SOFT DRINK PARTNER OF THE —
COUNTRY MUSIC ASSOCIATION AWARDS



DR PEPPER is a registered trademark of Dr Pepper/Seven Up, Inc. ©2021 Dr Pepper/Seven Up, Inc. DP-867224

ABOUT THE NOMINEES



Photo: Shea Flynn

JIMMIE ALLEN

NEW ARTIST OF THE YEAR

Jimmie Allen launched 2021 by performing “Freedom Was A Highway” during “Dick Clark’s New Year’s Rockin’ Eve.” Now that the year has transitioned into fall, Allen’s collaborative recording of the song with Brad Paisley is a bonafide hit, and Allen is a repeat contender for CMA New Artist of the Year. The energy in “Freedom” is characteristic of Allen, who’s proven to be an ambitious soul. With just one album under his belt, he called on a load of fellow artists for a follow-up EP, 2020’s *Bettie James*, which this year became a full album, *Bettie James Gold Edition*, featuring hip-hop icons Nelly and Pitbull, Country acts Lindsay Ell and BRELAND, hitmakers Keith Urban and Darius Rucker, and Country Music Hall of Famers Charley Pride and The Oak Ridge Boys. In July, Allen published a children’s book, “My Voice Is a Trumpet”; he is also executive music producer of the Netflix series “Titletown High,” and competed this fall on ABC’s “Dancing with the Stars.”

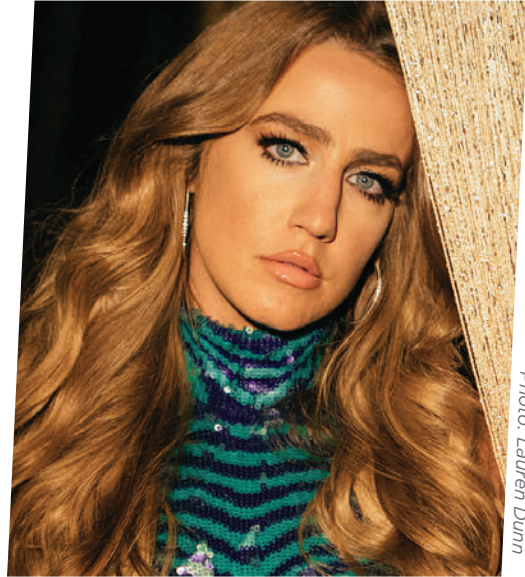


Photo: Lauren Dunn

INGRID ANDRESS

NEW ARTIST OF THE YEAR

It takes an enormous amount of strength to show your vulnerability, and that’s a key feature in the rise of Ingrid Andress, who makes her second straight appearance in the CMA New Artist of the Year field. Thus far, she’s made her biggest impact with “More Hearts Than Mine,” in which the protagonist confesses her fears about the crossroads moment when her beau meets the family. The mere fact of revealing it gives her more power in whatever outcome lies ahead. “More Hearts” earned a CMA Song of the Year nomination in 2020, plus an RIAA-certified double-Platinum single. Her follow-up single, “Lady Like,” secured a Gold single on Sept. 10. It’s the title track from a Top 10 album full of songs that expose some level of vulnerability, demonstrating her real power. Andress issued a Sam Hunt duet, “Wishful Drinking,” in August and spends this fall on tour with Dan + Shay.



Photo: Gus Black

GABBY BARRETT

FEMALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR
NEW ARTIST OF THE YEAR
SINGLE OF THE YEAR
SONG OF THE YEAR

Success, they say, happens when preparation meets opportunity, and Gabby Barrett is the poster child for that sentiment. Performing regularly in Pittsburgh before she competed on “American Idol” in 2018, she treated her Top 3 finish not as a crowning moment, but as the beginning of the next phase in her burgeoning career. Putting her nose to the creative grindstone, she wrote her first hit, “I Hope,” five months later, and penned her second, “The Good Ones,” four months after that. Both titles earned CMA Song of the Year nominations, the former in 2020 and the latter in 2021. “The Good Ones” also competes for Single, while Barrett repeats in the New Artist category and adds Female Vocalist to her nominations portfolio. Her third single, “Footprints On The Moon,” reinforces her roll-up-your-sleeves ethos.



Photo: Jim Wright

DIERKS BENTLEY

MALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR
MUSIC VIDEO OF THE YEAR

The CMA Award-nominated video for Dierks Bentley’s “Gone” finds the protagonist sacked out, buzzed and scraggy, in a rundown motel room, watching versions of his life pass him by on a TV screen. He changes the channels only to discover new scenes of himself as an actor playing a losing game: as a dragon slayer burnt by the monster’s flames, a sitcom star or a gunfighter shot down in the middle of the street. “Gone” is the fourth Wes Edwards-directed clip to earn Bentley a Music Video of the Year nomination (they won in 2014 for “Drunk on a Plane”), while Bentley also makes his ninth showing in the Male Vocalist category. The Phoenix-born singer is a former CMA intern and has racked up 29 total nominations — including three victories — since releasing his 2003 self-titled debut album.

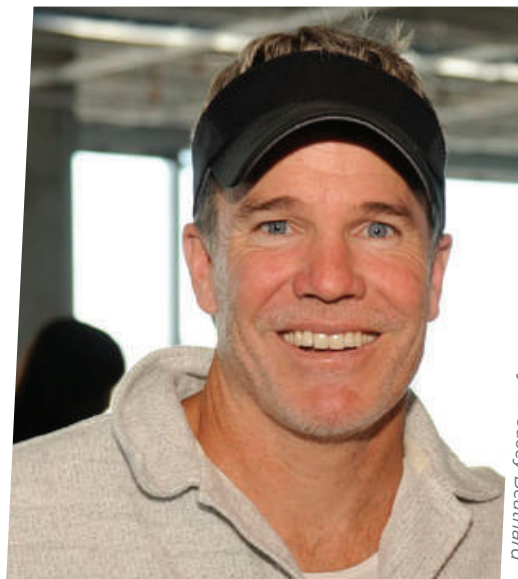
ABOUT THE NOMINEES



KELSEA BALLERINI

MUSICAL EVENT OF THE YEAR
MUSIC VIDEO OF THE YEAR

With “half of my hometown,” Kelsea Ballerini captures two sides of people’s collective experience with their birthplace: those who stay typically find enough pleasure to lead a life that’s widely considered “normal,” and those who leave — whether they love or hate the place — will always be informed by it. Ballerini’s “hometown” video, partly shot at her alma mater, Central High, informs the viewer about her experiences in Knoxville, TN. (And yes, the “Bobcats” referenced in the lyric really are the school’s team.) In one scene, a block-lettered sign touting a Kenny Chesney concert illustrates the example “hometown” boy Chesney set for the dreams she developed there. Directed by Patrick Tracy, the piece contrasts Ballerini’s life with what it might have looked like had she stayed. By landing Musical Event and Music Video of the Year nods, “hometown” brings Ballerini’s total career CMA Awards nominations to nine.



CASEY BEATHARD

SONG OF THE YEAR

Songwriting is a risky proposal — even the most successful composers can have a year or two of success, followed by a fallow period, then another hot streak. So it’s appropriate that Casey Beathard snags his second CMA Song of the Year nomination with “Hell Of A View,” an Eric Church hit about life on the edge. Beathard has had to wait six years since his previous ballot entry, Church’s “Like a Wrecking Ball,” though he’s one of Country’s most consistent songwriters. Beathard’s rung up more than two dozen Top 10 singles, including Kenny Chesney’s “Don’t Blink,” Justin Moore’s “Why We Drink,” Darius Rucker’s “Come Back Song,” and George Strait’s “How ‘Bout Them Cowgirls.” “Hell Of A View” emerged from Church’s one-month creative encampment in a North Carolina restaurant, and is one of eight songs Beathard co-wrote among the 18 tracks on two of Church’s albums *Heart* and *Soul*.



Photo: The Ow Youngs

BROOKS & DUNN

VOCAL DUO OF THE YEAR

September 7 marked 30 years since Brooks & Dunn earned their first No. 1 single with “Brand New Man.” In the interim, they’ve gone on to become one of the genre’s most iconic duos, racking up 20 chart-topping hits in *Billboard* — including “Boot Scootin’ Boogie,” “My Maria,” “Red Dirt Road” and “Only In America” — and winning 18 CMA Awards, tying the all-time list with Vince Gill. This year’s Vocal Duo nomination is their 22nd in the category, which they’ve won 14 times. It also marks their 53rd overall nomination, the sixth-best career tally. All of that contributed to their 2019 induction into the Country Music Hall of Fame. In 2015, they teamed with Reba McEntire for a “Together in Vegas” residency. The last of their recurring runs ends on December 15 at the Colosseum at Caesars Palace. Kix Brooks is also a finalist for CMA’s Broadcast Awards in the Weekly National Broadcast Personality category for *American Country Countdown*.



Photo: Natalie Osborne

BROTHERS OSBORNE

VOCAL DUO OF THE YEAR

ALBUM OF THE YEAR

MUSIC VIDEO OF THE YEAR

Brothers Osborne’s third CMA Music Video of the Year nomination is a subtly pointed one. “Younger Me,” a sensitive celebration of being different, was shot on the steps of the Tennessee State Capitol and released in June. Being different is essential for any musical act that intends to stand out, and the Osbornes have definitely created their own lane, with T.J.’s muscular vocals bringing identifiable grit to a core of Southern rock and honky-tonk enhanced by John’s fierce, sometimes winding guitar solos. “Younger Me” is one of the act’s three CMA Awards nominations in 2021; they make their seventh straight appearance among the finalists for Vocal Duo, which they’ve won three times, and they bid for Album of the Year with *Skeletons*, an adventurous project that doubles down on their rock influences.

ABOUT THE NOMINEES



KANE BROWN

SINGLE OF THE YEAR
MUSIC VIDEO OF THE YEAR
MUSICAL EVENT OF THE YEAR

Kane Brown joins famous friend Chris Young for his first three CMA Awards nominations. Young asked Brown to join his party song, “Famous Friends,” and even had Brown change a few lyrics to fit his own life, mentioning the first names of some pals in the Chattanooga area and changing Rutherford County to Hamilton County in the second chorus. Ultimately, the recording picked up CMA Single, Musical Event and Music Video of the Year nods, adding to Brown’s clear connection with both fans and his peers. To date, he’s been involved in 19 RIAA-certified titles and his recording partners have included Lauren Alaina, blackbear, H.E.R., Khalid, Swae Lee, John Legend, Marshmello and Thomas Rhett. Brown’s willingness to mine his emotional journey, both as a public figure and a private family man, helped him earn a spot on the Time 100 list of the most influential people.



LUKE BRYAN

MUSICAL EVENT OF THE YEAR

A two-time winner of CMA’s Entertainer of the Year, Bryan makes his third appearance among the finalists for Musical Event. He joined Jason Aldean and Eric Church for the 2013 entry “The Only Way I Know” and teamed up with Karen Fairchild on the 2016 nominee “Home Alone Tonight.” This year’s collaboration with Jordan Davis on “Buy Dirt” is an apt one, showing an appreciation for nature that Bryan also evinces through his annual Farm Tour, his 32 Bridge outdoorsman brand, and a penchant for raising animals at his Nashville-area home. September 1 marked 20 years since Bryan relocated to Tennessee, and next February represents the 15th anniversary of his Capitol Nashville debut. In the meantime, production work is underway for another musical event in which he plays a vital part: along with Katy Perry and Lionel Richie, Bryan returns in the spring as a judge on ABC’s “American Idol.”



Photo: Danny Clinch

KENNY CHESNEY

MUSICAL EVENT OF THE YEAR
MUSIC VIDEO OF THE YEAR

With two nods for his participation in Kelsea Ballerini's "half of my hometown," Kenny Chesney rises to ninth on the all-time CMA Awards list with 48 nominations. Both of this year's categories are familiar ones. He's been a finalist for Music Video of the Year six times (and won for the Grace Potter collaboration "You and Tequila") and earned 13 Musical Event nominations, with three of those entries — "Find Out Who Your Friends Are," "Feel Like a Rock Star" and "Everything's Gonna Be Alright" — coming up victorious. Chesney was a natural choice as Ballerini's "hometown" partner, since both acts are from Knoxville. Since arriving in Nashville three decades ago, he's done well and become an annual stadium headliner, beginning with a 2003 concert in — where else? — Knoxville. A year later, he won the first of nine CMA Awards trophies, including the first of four as Entertainer of the Year.



Photo: Joe Pugliese

ERIC CHURCH

ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR
MALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR
ALBUM OF THE YEAR
SINGLE OF THE YEAR
SONG OF THE YEAR

The reigning CMA Entertainer of the Year, Eric Church, found a unique way to create and roll out new music in 2021. Writing and recording a song a day at a steakhouse in North Carolina's Great Smoky Mountains, he compiled enough material during a month in early 2020 to fashion two albums — *Heart* and *Soul* — plus an EP. *Heart* has a chance to become Church's third Album of the Year winner, following *Chief* in 2012 and *Mr. Misunderstood* in 2016. "Hell Of A View," pulled from the *Soul* package, emerged as his fifth nomination in both the Single and Song categories. Church also makes his fifth appearance as an Entertainer finalist and his eighth in the Male Vocalist field, bringing his career total to 35 nominations. His five nominations tie Church with Chris Stapleton for the most in the 2021 Awards, and they match his personal best, previously achieved in 2012, 2015 and 2016.

ABOUT THE NOMINEES



Photo: Zack Massey

LUKE COMBS

ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR
MALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR
SONG OF THE YEAR

Luke Combs' menu of 2021 CMA Awards nominations is a familiar one as he lands among the Male Vocalist finalists for a fourth straight year, contends for Song a third consecutive time and repeats in Entertainer of the Year. The trio of nominations gives him 15 in his career — all amassed in five years — and he's won five times in his first 12 opportunities. Those victories include Male Vocalist each of the last two years and a Song of the Year win in 2019 for "Beautiful Crazy." This year's Song entry is "Forever After All," which spent nine weeks at No. 1 on *Billboard's* Hot Country Songs chart and reached No. 2 on the Hot 100. It emanates from the deluxe version of *What You See Is What You Get*, the reigning Album of the Year.



Photo: Laura Purtee

MONTY CRISWELL

SONG OF THE YEAR

"I paint with my old Gibson," a line in Eric Church's "Hell Of A View," suggests the singer is a songwriter and it certainly reflects on co-writer Monty Criswell, who has played piano since age 6 and guitar since age 10. Criswell was practically groomed to write songs — in addition to learning those instruments, he minored in English at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa — and he's done well in that endeavor, fashioning Trace Adkins' "Just Fishin'," Church's "Like Jesus Does," Scotty McCreery's "Five More Minutes," and George Strait's "I Saw God Today." The latter track propelled Criswell onto the CMA Awards ballot for the first time, earning a Song of the Year nomination in 2008. Criswell authored "Hell Of A View" as a staff writer with Spirit Music Group, and it competes for CMA Awards honors while another Criswell-penned single, the R&B-tinged "Country'd Look Good On You," introduces newcomer Frank Ray.



Photo: Williams and Hirakawa

DAN + SHAY

VOCAL DUO OF THE YEAR

When the pandemic hit last year, Dan + Shay had played just three shows on The (Arena) Tour before they were forced to shut it down. But with their penchant for in-studio experimentation and technological wizardry, Dan Smyers and Shay Mooney used the time well. The duo used Queen-like stacks of harmonies and a spare piano arrangement for the genre-bending “I Should Probably Go To Bed” and fashioned the inventive “Glad You Exist,” a piece of ear candy with deep harmonies, numerous production surprises and Mooney’s soaring lead. After relaunching the tour, they had two more hits for the set — a big “plus,” particularly since they sing those songs on a satellite stage shaped like the “+” in the center of their name. Dan + Shay earn their eighth consecutive nod in the Vocal Duo of the Year category, a trophy they’ve taken home the last two years. They have 15 total CMA Awards nominations to their credit.



Photo: Eric Robert Morley

JORDAN DAVIS

MUSICAL EVENT OF THE YEAR

Shreveport native Jordan Davis has a foot in two parcels of Country Music’s turf: He’s a believer in contemporary production but concurrently consumed with classically vivid lyrics, and he’s particularly influenced by the late John Prine. Davis’ first CMA nomination comes with “Buy Dirt,” a song that takes a big-picture look at life through the passing of wisdom from an experienced elder to a receptive member of a younger generation. The messages in “Buy Dirt” — including family ideals, spiritual sensitivity and climate prudence — are an ideal fit for Davis, who majored in environmental science prior to his full-time pursuit of a music career. Luke Bryan was the perfect partner on the song. Not only does he share the values that Davis inserted into “Buy Dirt,” but he was also generous in giving Davis his insights about career-building in Country Music, passing along wisdom from one musical generation to the next, mirroring the characters in “Buy Dirt.”

ABOUT THE NOMINEES



Photo: Katie Kauss

JENEE FLEENOR

MUSICIAN OF THE YEAR

CMA voters weren't just fiddlin' around when they nominated Jenee Fleenor for Musician of the Year in 2019. They made her the first woman to win the trophy that November, and she repeated in the category in 2020. She's also one of just three fiddlers to claim the prize, joining two-time winner Johnny Gimble and six-timer Mark O'Connor. A native of Springdale, AR, Fleenor stands out for her talent as an in-demand studio player, heard on recent tracks such as Sam Hunt's "Hard To Forget," Cody Johnson's "Dear Rodeo," Jon Pardi's "Ain't Always The Cowboy," and Blake Shelton's "Minimum Wage." Springdale is proud of her too, holding a three-day Jenee Fleenor Hometown Celebration this year that included a concert and featured her as the grand marshal of the Rodeo Parade.



Photo: John Shearer

FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE

VOCAL DUO OF THE YEAR

It's been a "Lil Bit" of a full-circle year for Florida Georgia Line. Back in the day, Tyler Hubbard and Brian Kelley earned their first hit with "Cruise," the 2013 CMA Single of the Year, then extended its impact by enlisting Nelly for a remix. This year, they appeared on Nelly's "Lil Bit," which zoomed to No. 3 on *Billboard's* Hot Country Songs chart and earned a Platinum single. They also snagged a CMA Vocal Duo of the Year nomination for the ninth time in a row, including three wins. Adding to their full-circle experience, they teamed with "Cruise" co-writer Chase Rice on his single "Drinkin' Beer. Talkin' God. Amen," which reached No. 1 on *Billboard's* Country Airplay chart. FGL spread the wealth this year, too, releasing their fifth full-length album, *Life Rolls On*, while Kelley issued his debut solo album, *Sunshine State of Mind*, and Hubbard joined Tim McGraw for the patriotic statement "Undivided."



Photo: Jim Wright

PAUL FRANKLIN

MUSICIAN OF THE YEAR

As of 2021, Paul Franklin has accrued 30 CMA Awards nominations — 29 of those for Musician of the Year. Despite being one of the most nominated artists, he has yet to take home the hardware. In fact, no steel guitarist has walked off with the Musician honor, even though the instrument is difficult to master. Franklin makes it sound easy, which is part of the reason he's such a regular presence on the nominations list and in Nashville recording sessions. He's played on hundreds of hits, including such recent titles as Kane Brown's "Homesick" and Thomas Rhett's "Country Again." Franklin backed three Country Music Hall of Fame members on 2021 projects: Alan Jackson, Loretta Lynn and Willie Nelson. As if the studio work isn't enough, Franklin has been a steady member of Western swing band The Time Jumpers since 2007.



Photo: Phylcia JL Munn

MICKEY GUYTON

NEW ARTIST OF THE YEAR

Mickey Guyton possesses a powerful voice and a unique perspective on Country Music, and her assertion in "Black Like Me" underscores the difference she's made in the genre, which has shown increasing sensitivity to the inequities faced by women and BIPOC. "Black Like Me" and "What Are You Gonna Tell Her?" — emotional songs that highlight deep societal failures — captured a prominent mood in the country and set Guyton up as an astute artist with a voice that matters. They're key tracks on her first EP, *Bridges*, released on Sept. 11, 2020. Her debut album, *Remember Her Name*, arrived on Sept. 24, 2021, and is titled after a song that exudes personal strength while honoring the memory of Breonna Taylor, who was tragically shot by Louisville police. As a finalist for CMA New Artist of the Year, Guyton garnered her first nomination this year.

ABOUT THE NOMINEES



Photo: Tanner Gallagher

HARDY

NEW ARTIST OF THE YEAR

Hailing from Philadelphia, MS — the same town as soon-to-be-inducted Country Music Hall of Famer Marty Stuart — HARDY is one of Country's most prolific current songwriters, responsible for such recent hit singles as Florida Georgia Line's "Simple," Jameson Rodgers' "Some Girls," Blake Shelton's "God's Country" and Cole Swindell's "Single Saturday Night." HARDY's ability to describe a Southern cliché with newly invented slang is unparalleled, and he's become a favorite of fellow acts, collaborating on charted titles with Lauren Alaina, Dierks Bentley, BRELAND, Devin Dawson, Brantley Gilbert, and Toby Keith. That list of musical partners expands exponentially with his two-volume album series, *Hixtape*. *Hixtape: Vol. 2*, released two years after *Hixtape: Vol. 1* packs 33 guests into 14 tracks. HARDY's CMA New Artist of the Year nomination is his first nod, coming behind his tongue-in-Skoal-packed-cheek "Redneckin'," certified Platinum by the RIAA, and two more certified singles with deep life observations, the Platinum "One Beer" and Gold "Give Heaven Some Hell."



Photo: Emma Golden

NICOLETTE HAYFORD

SONG OF THE YEAR

A fictitious, cheap hotel room key unlocked the CMA Awards ballot for songwriter Nicolette Hayford as "One Night Standards," a pulsing three-minute drama about a third-rate romance, brings the New Hampshire-born singer-songwriter her inaugural Song of the Year nomination. Hayford's creative collaboration with Ashley McBryde and Shane McAnally is hardly a one-nighter though, since she co-wrote two songs on McBryde's Warner Music Nashville debut, *Girl Goin' Nowhere*, including the first single, "A Little Dive Bar in Dahlonaga." Hayford's name was subsequently affixed in the parentheses to five songs on the follow-up album, *Never Will*. Not that McBryde is her only songwriting beneficiary; Hayford has likewise penned tracks for Chrissy Metz, Steve Moakler and Kylie Morgan. Meanwhile, a set of her songs is collected on Hayford's own *Pillbox Patti*, a 2020 EP awash in dark chords, gritty guitar tones and rough-edged vocals as her melancholy mini-tragedies lend additional authenticity to the hard-living storyline in "One Night Standards."



Photo: Alan Messer

MIKE HENDERSON

SONG OF THE YEAR

“Nobody wins afraid of losing.” Those words from “Starting Over” may prove predictive for Mike Henderson and co-writer Chris Stapleton as their CMA Song of the Year nomination creates the possibility that they’ll share a win for the second time in their careers. Three years ago, the duo walked off with the Song trophy for “Broken Halos,” Henderson’s only previous nomination. Music City knows Henderson in a variety of roles. He spent six years with the progressive bluegrass group The Steeldrivers, where he counted Stapleton among his bandmates. Henderson also formed a forward-thinking indie label, Dead Reckoning Records, in the 1990s with four fellow artists. Additionally, Henderson held down the Monday slot at Nashville’s historic Bluebird Café for more than two decades, showing off stellar guitar chops while leading his eponymous blues band. To date, Henderson has racked up seven tracks as a songwriter across three of Stapleton’s albums.



Photo: Nicki Fletcher

RYAN HURD

MUSICAL EVENT OF THE YEAR MUSIC VIDEO OF THE YEAR

Ryan Hurd has written a number of key titles for artists such as Luke Bryan (“Waves”), Lady A (“What If I Never Get Over You”) and Kane Brown (“Worldwide Beautiful”). Showing his versatility as both a songwriter and performer, Hurd garners his first CMA Awards nomination with a song that he did not compose. He flirted with “Chasing After You” for a number of years before finally finding the song’s best expression by teaming with Maren Morris for a duet. The couple’s relationship no doubt fuels the emotional power in the vocal performance, recorded at their Nashville-area home. That led to nods for Musical Event and Music Video of the Year. “Chasing After You” earned a Gold single in August, becoming Hurd’s second RIAA-certified title; his solo release “To a T” went Platinum in April. “Chasing After You” is included in the Michigan-bred RCA Nashville artist’s debut album, *Pelago*, an October 15 release.

ABOUT THE NOMINEES



Photo: Eric Anderson

ZACH KALE

SONG OF THE YEAR

In the summer of 2018, Zach Kale planned to leave Nashville. He was out of money, despondent about the music business and had a job offer in San Francisco. But on the plane back from California, the sight of the Nashville skyline inspired a deep spiritual feeling, and he decided to stay. Three months later, Kale co-wrote “I Hope” for Gabby Barrett, earning his first CMA Awards nomination when the track, which he co-produced, became a Single of the Year finalist. This year, Barrett’s “The Good Ones” yields both Song and Single of the Year credits for Kale, who’s benefitted from staying in Music City. Kale co-wrote and co-produced Barrett’s current “Footprints On The Moon” too, but she’s not his only creative outlet. He’s also worked with Lauren Alaina, Jimmie Allen, Parmalee and Keith Urban, in addition to developing pop-rock duo Ya’Boyz alongside ex-Patent Pending guitarist Joe Ragosta.



Photo: Corey Bost

ELLE KING

MUSICAL EVENT OF THE YEAR

Singer, songwriter and banjo player Elle King is becoming a familiar face in the CMA Musical Event category. She came up a winner five years ago for a duet with Dierks Bentley, “Different for Girls,” and was a finalist in 2020 on Miranda Lambert’s “Fooled Around and Fell in Love,” which combined six female voices in total. This year, King and Lambert return to the ballot with “Drunk (And I Don’t Wanna Go Home),” a raucous party song that was recorded with an appropriately riotous attitude. The two singers hunkered down around the same vocal mic with a couple of bottles of vodka in Jungle City, a studio in New York’s Chelsea neighborhood, and belted it out over a track that mixes rolling banjo and a tribal beat. The location is somehow appropriate, as King was a street busker in Manhattan during her teens, a prologue to her multi-genre recording career.



Photo: Alysse Gaffken

LADY A

VOCAL GROUP OF THE YEAR

In a mere seven tracks on the band's recent EP *What a Song Can Do*, Lady A addresses multiple complex issues — resilience, rumor, mortality and misplaced priorities — and still manages to wrap it all in a sense of optimism. Chalk some of that up to the group's makeup: smoky male co-lead Charles Kelley and crisp female co-lead Hillary Scott are tonal opposites who mesh with an uncanny compatibility, while harmony singer Dave Haywood adds a stealthy extra layer of strength. It's worked for 14 years in the limelight, with the band claiming a Vocal Group of the Year nomination every year it's been eligible. In all, Lady A has amassed 24 CMA Awards nods, and leans into this year's show with an anthemic, celebratory single, "Like a Lady." It follows their single "Champagne Night," which spent two weeks at No. 1 in January.



Photo: Ellen Von Unwerth

MIRANDA LAMBERT

ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR

FEMALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR

MUSICAL EVENT OF THE YEAR

The CMA Awards' most-awarded and most-nominated female is at it again, raising her career nominations total to 58 while hoping to pad the 14 pieces of hardware on her trophy shelf. She claims her 15th straight nomination in the Female Vocalist category, having already won a record seven times. It's the fifth time Lambert's appeared in the Entertainer section on the final CMA Awards ballot, while her Elle King collaboration "Drunk (And I Don't Wanna Go Home)" is the eighth title Lambert's placed in the Musical Event field. It's also the second time she's been joined by King in that arena — they provided two of the six voices in last year's nominee "Fooled Around And Fell In Love."

ABOUT THE NOMINEES



Photo: Livy Jeanne

EMILY LANDIS

SONG OF THE YEAR

Gabby Barrett wrote “The Good Ones” as a testament to fellow “American Idol” graduate Cade Foehner, who became her guitarist and is now her husband. But Barrett, who was a late addition to that 2019 songwriting appointment, wasn’t the only person in the room paying homage to her other half; Emily Landis was likewise writing about her fiancé, Johnny McGuire, formerly of Walker McGuire. “The Good Ones” was a multiweek No. 1 single in 2021, and it was a great launching pad for Landis, who earns her first CMA Awards nomination for the track. The St. Louis native moved to Nashville in 2012 to study songwriting at Belmont University — the same school that yielded Florida Georgia Line, Brad Paisley, Josh Turner and Lee Ann Womack. Landis graduated in 2016 and snagged her first publishing deal in 2019 with BMG Nashville. She’s also landed cuts with Kassi Ashton, Laci Kaye Booth and Eric Paslay.



Photo: Reid Long and Becky Fluke

LITTLE BIG TOWN

VOCAL GROUP OF THE YEAR

It’s no longer an official CMA Awards show unless Little Big Town is under consideration for Vocal Group of the Year; Karen Fairchild, Jimi Westbrook, Kimberly Schlapman and Phillip Sweet have occupied a place in the category each of the last 16 years. That includes six straight years in which they won, tying the Statler Brothers and Rascal Flatts for the longest group streaks. The nod brings their total career nominations to an even 30, but it’s not their only rewarding 2021 moment. In June, they picked up certifications from the RIAA for eight different singles on the same day, including double-Platinum honors for “Better Man” and “Boondocks,” plus a quadruple-Platinum award for “Pontoon.” In January, LBT was the only act to appear on two tracks (“Lonely Days” and “How Deep Is Your Love”) in the Barry Gibb package *Greenfields: The Gibb Brothers Songbook, Vol. 1*.



Photo: Joseph Llanes

MADDIE & TAE

VOCAL DUO OF THE YEAR

Maddie & Tae have honed their place on the Country scene since their 2014 introduction with “Girl in a Country Song,” for which they also took home the CMA Award for Music Video of the Year in 2015. Meshing their catchy snark with a refined sense of self-directed humor, the duo has effortlessly evolved from a ’90s-influenced tone to contemporary sonics. That growth is evident in their confident current single “Woman You Got” as well as their latest album, 2020’s *The Way It Feels*, which yielded the Platinum single “Die From A Broken Heart.” Even their holiday EP, *We Need Christmas*, is a testament to their growing ability to walk a line between light and reverent in a wholly unique way. For their efforts, Maddie & Tae have collected nine total CMA Awards nominations, including seven in a row for Vocal Duo of the Year.



Photo: Robby Klein

SHANE McANALLY

SONG OF THE YEAR

With “One Night Standards,” Shane McAnally sets a new standard for songwriters, becoming the first non-performing composer to land nine career CMA Song of the Year nominations. He’s done that in a scant eight years, beginning in 2013 when he tallied nominations for Miranda Lambert’s “Mama’s Broken Heart” and Kacey Musgraves’ “Merry Go ’Round.” McAnally also doubled up in the field in 2015 with Kenny Chesney’s “American Kids” and Sam Hunt’s “Take Your Time,” while his 2014 entry with Musgraves’ “Follow Your Arrow” made him a winner. The only person who’s outpaced McAnally is recording artist Alan Jackson, who’s notched 10 Song of the Year nominations. McAnally also landed a 2021 nomination for co-producing the Carly Pearce Album of the Year contender *29*, bringing his career total to 16. It’s the fourth time he’s earned a spot among the Album finalists, after working on Musgraves’ projects *Same Trailer Different Park* and *Pageant Material*, and the 2020 entry *Old Dominion*.

ABOUT THE NOMINEES



ASHLEY McBRYDE

FEMALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR
SINGLE OF THE YEAR
SONG OF THE YEAR

Winner of CMA New Artist of the Year in 2019, Ashley McBryde gathered a trio of nominations a year ago and matches that total in 2021. Her inclusion among the Female Vocalist finalists is the only repeat appearance. Last year's Musical Event and Album of the Year entries — the latter for *Never Will* — give way this year to Single and Song of the Year possibilities, both for the frank rawness of her Jay Joyce-produced "One Night Standards," culled from *Never Will* and certified Platinum by the RIAA in April. McBryde gave fans a different view of the album's songs with her May EP *Never Will: Live From a Distance*. Never doubt McBryde's popularity with her peers; during a three-night stand at Nashville's Ryman Auditorium in August, she teamed up for covers with Eric Church ("Midnight Rider"), Lainey Wilson ("When Will I Be Loved") and Terri Clark ("Poor, Poor Pitiful Me").



JIM McCORMICK

SONG OF THE YEAR

New Orleans' Algiers neighborhood is the home of the Jazz Walk of Fame, a course that celebrates 17 jazz masters, beginning with Louis Armstrong and ending with Manuel Manetta and Adams Family. But it was also the breeding ground for Country songwriter Jim McCormick, now enjoying his first CMA Awards nomination after co-writing Gabby Barrett's "The Good Ones." McCormick's story is deeply tied to New Orleans — raised just blocks from the Mississippi River, his first band played gigs at a rock club on Oak Street, and now he is a songwriting instructor at Loyola University — but his primary successes emerged from Nashville's Music Row, where he's published by Eclipse Music Group. He co-wrote Luke Bryan's second single, 2007's "We Rode in Trucks," which peaked in the 30s but was eventually certified Gold by the RIAA. McCormick has also accrued chart-topping titles with Jason Aldean's "Take A Little Ride" and Brantley Gilbert's "You Don't Know Her Like I Do."



Photo: Harper Smith

MIDLAND

VOCAL GROUP OF THE YEAR

Dripping Springs, TX, was the site of a 1972 outdoor festival that proved to be a precursor for Willie Nelson's 4th of July Picnics. It's also the place where Midland formed in 2016, drawing much of its inspiration from the steel-tipped sound of '70s Country and the subject matter—semis, cheatin', heartbreak and drinkin'—that dominated that decade. Lead vocalist Mark Wystrach, bass player Cameron Duddy and guitarist Jess Carson combine that influence with an Eagles/Poco/Flying Burrito Brothers harmonic sensibility that nimbly assists in making their retro core contemporary, too. Midland made good use of pandemic downtime, issuing a 12-track album, *The Sonic Ranch*, in March, and a five-track EP, *The Last Resort*, in July. This year's nomination for Vocal Group of the Year is the fourth consecutive time the band has landed in the category and the seventh time it's appeared on the ballot overall.



Photo: Harper Smith

MAREN MORRIS

FEMALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR MUSICAL EVENT OF THE YEAR MUSIC VIDEO OF THE YEAR

This year's CMA Awards ballot increases Maren Morris' nominations to two dozen, all earned since her first appearance on the list in 2016. She's been a Female Vocalist finalist each of those years, winning the trophy for the first time in 2020 and delivering a humble speech in the process that focused not on her, but on the Black women who continue to inspire her. Inspiration is also evident in her Musical Event and Music Video of the Year nominations with husband Ryan Hurd. Morris conceived the theme for the "Chasing After You" video, which has the couple operating on a revolving, circular stage that simulates a romantic chase scene. Thus far, Morris has six CMA trophies on her mantel, including a pair as both an artist and producer on the 2019 Album of the Year, *GIRL*.

ABOUT THE NOMINEES



OLD DOMINION

VOCAL GROUP OF THE YEAR

Old Dominion's latest RCA Nashville single, "I Was On a Boat That Day," is uncharacteristically loose and boozy, a carefree romp that captures a newly free man at the height of happiness. An upbeat attitude ought to feel familiar to the five-piece band these days. Featuring identifiable harmonies from Matthew Ramsey, Trevor Rosen and Brad Tursi, Old Dominion has walked off with Vocal Group of the Year at each of the last three CMA Awards shows and, with this year's nomination, has carved out a place among the category's finalists six straight times. "I Was On a Boat That Day" emanates from a prolific month of recording last fall that resulted in a 13-track album titled after three solutions for coping: *Time, Tequila & Therapy*. It's a nifty melting pot of island influence, yacht rock grooves, spiky Tex-Mex and even a slow jam, "Lonely Side of Town," that features a guest appearance by Gladys Knight.



DREW PARKER

SONG OF THE YEAR

When Luke Combs surprised Drew Parker with the news that he would make his Grand Ole Opry debut, he called it a "high-fiveable moment," something Parker has experienced repeatedly since 2020. He nabbed his first No. 1 as a co-writer of Jake Owen's "Homemade" in 2020, signed with Warner Music Nashville in early 2021, charted his first major-label single as an artist with "While You're Gone" and collected a multiweek No. 1 this summer as a co-writer of Combs' "Forever After All," one of three songs Parker contributed to Combs' album *What You See Ain't Always What You Get*. That song leads in turn to another high-fiveable moment: Parker's first CMA Awards nomination, which comes in the Song of the Year category. Parker had two additional high-fiveable events leading up to the Sept. 9 announcement of his nomination: he made his stadium debut in Boone, NC, opening for Combs on Sept. 4, and turned 30 on Sept. 8.



Photo: Allister Ann

CARLY PEARCE

FEMALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR
ALBUM OF THE YEAR

One benefit of art is its ability to distill difficult periods in life and move past the turmoil. Carly Pearce had a well-documented set of hard times at age 29, so she poured herself into a project with two producers, Shane McAnally and Josh Osborne. The results, aptly titled *29*, brought her nominations for Album and Female Vocalist of the Year. Both mark the first time Pearce has appeared in those categories. Also aiding her renewed attitude are her August 3 induction into the Grand Ole Opry and the September 2 celebration of Carly Pearce Day in her hometown, Taylor Mill, KY. Pearce has received seven nominations in the last three years and won Musical Event last year with a Lee Brice duet, aptly titled: "I Hope You're Happy Now."



Photo: John Shearer

THOMAS RHETT

MALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR

Thomas Rhett spent much of the 2010s making modern connection points between Country and R&B, putting a bright, pop spin on titles such as "Crash and Burn," "Craving You" and "Unforgettable." But real artists are always evolving, and Thomas Rhett has told his life story in his music, arriving at a creative place in 2020 where he name-checked classic titles in "What's Your Country Song" and teamed with honky-tonker Jon Pardi on "Beer Can't Fix," then settled comfortably into the genre's lifestyle with this year's "Country Again." The audible life changes in his output have not changed his industry-level significance, as he is recognized for a fifth straight time as a Male Vocalist of the Year finalist. In the process, he scores his 15th career nomination; his previous times on the ballot yielded two trips to the podium, for 2016's Single of the Year "Die A Happy Man" and the 2018 Music Video winner "Marry Me."

ABOUT THE NOMINEES



Photo: Becky Fluke

CHRIS STAPLETON

ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR
MALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR
ALBUM OF THE YEAR
SINGLE OF THE YEAR
SONG OF THE YEAR

A singer, songwriter, guitar player and producer, Chris Stapleton does it all with impressive ease. He's also found it easy to make the CMA Awards ballot, collecting 26 nods since 2015, including five this year, tying him with Eric Church as top nominees. (Stapleton also earns producer nods in both the Album and Single of the Year categories.) In fact, the two acts go head-to-head in all five categories. "Starting Over" is up for Single and Song of the Year, and it's the title track of Stapleton's Album contender. Two of Stapleton's three previous Album nominees — 2015's *Traveller* and 2017's *From A Room: Volume 1* — have taken that trophy, and the first four of his previous six Male Vocalist nominations resulted in victories, too. Stapleton is an elastic artist, veering from outlaw Country to soul-tinged celebrations and folkly ballads. Of late, he's contributed a fiery cover of "Nothing Else Matters" to *The Metallica Blacklist*.



Photo: Ford Fairchild

ILYA TOSHINSKIY

MUSICIAN OF THE YEAR

Making his third consecutive appearance on the CMA Awards ballot, Ilya Toshinskiy is officially recognized as a banjo player, though he's adept at every stringed instrument, including acoustic and electric guitar and mandolin. Born in Ozninsk, Russia — the site of the first nuclear power plant — Toshinskiy found his inspiration in music, specifically the high-speed playing of Country Music Hall of Famer Earl Scruggs. Toshinskiy found his way to America as a member of Bering Strait, a six-piece band that drew attention in the early 2000s before breaking up. He remained a key part of the Nashville session scene, earning a reputation for his skill as both a player and an innovative demo producer. Toshinskiy has contributed to well over 100 hits, including such recent works as Florida Georgia Line's "Long Live," Lady A's "What If I Never Get Over You," Tim McGraw's "I Called Mama," and Blake Shelton and Gwen Stefani's "Happy Anywhere."



Photo: Jeremy Cowart

CARRIE UNDERWOOD

ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR

November is the 15th anniversary of Carrie Underwood's first CMA Awards victory experience; she claimed Female Vocalist of the Year and the Horizon Award at the outset of one of the most impressive Country careers of the century. To date, she owns seven CMA Awards trophies. This year, she is nominated for a fourth time in the coveted Entertainer of the Year category. While COVID-19 limited Country tours in 2020 and 2021, Underwood used the downtime to fashion a pair of well-conceived concept albums. A Christmas project, *My Gift*, topped the *Billboard* Country Albums chart in October 2020, while a gospel package, *My Savior*, reached the summit in April 2021. Underwood also joined Loretta Lynn and Reba McEntire on the title track to Lynn's *Still Woman Enough*, performed on NBC's "Grand Ole Opry: 95 Years of Country Music" and teamed up with Dwight Yoakam in one of the highlights of ABC's special "CMA Summer Jam."



Photo: Phillip Macias

DEREK WELLS

MUSICIAN OF THE YEAR

They don't get much busier than Derek Wells. Born to a pair of working Nashville musicians, he is practically omnipresent in the credits of modern Country albums, whether he's fashioning arena-level electric guitar solos or developing ethereal sounds that subconsciously alter a recording's atmospheric mood. Originally introduced to Music Row as a road musician for Josh Turner, Wells is in the running for Musician of the Year a sixth straight time after becoming one of the first-call studio players of the last decade. He provided key sounds on a long list of recent hits, including Dierks Bentley's "Gone," Jordan Davis' "Almost Maybes," Dustin Lynch's "Mamma's House" and Justin Moore's "We Didn't Have Much." Wells has expanded his creative role significantly, with co-producing credits on works by HARDY, Maddie & Tae, Scotty McCreery and Hailey Whitters, plus a senior director role at Spirit Music, home to songwriters Eric Paslay, Derek George and Monty Criswell.

ABOUT THE NOMINEES



Photo: Kurt Ozan

ROBERT WILLIFORD

SONG OF THE YEAR

Two years ago, Robert Williford earned his first CMA Awards nomination — and subsequently his first CMA Award — as one of three songwriters on “Beautiful Crazy,” a ballad about the early days of Luke Combs’ relationship with Nicole Hocking. Similarly, Williford’s second nomination comes via a three-way co-write on “Forever After All,” penned just a few months after Combs’ engagement to Hocking and released in August 2020, the same month the couple wed. A native of Gastonia, NC, Williford met Combs in Nashville in 2014 and soon after became the guitarist in Combs’ band, bonding in part over their mutual admiration for fellow North Carolinian Eric Church. Williford’s use of love songs as a vehicle to CMA Awards recognition is a tad amusing, given that he’s nicknamed “Rowdy.” That said, “Forever After All” isn’t exactly a rainbows-and-butterflies composition, as it uses blue jeans, cold beer and Duracell batteries as metaphors for a long-lasting relationship.



Photo: Jeff Johnson

CHRIS YOUNG

SINGLE OF THE YEAR

MUSICAL EVENT OF THE YEAR

MUSIC VIDEO OF THE YEAR

When Chris Young and songwriter buddies Cary Barlowe and Corey Crowder penned “Famous Friends” during a concert stop in Estero, FL, the song literally paid homage to not-so-famous real people from Young’s own life. Once he dragged honest-to-goodness famous friend Kane Brown into the picture, he set up a hit record, plus a video that perfectly told the story, with Brown and Young mugging for the camera on a rooftop while their friends posed on makeshift red carpets. Barlowe’s furious guitar riff, recorded the day they wrote “Famous Friends,” set up the song’s energy, and Young and Brown meshed well as vocalists, leading to a No. 1 Country single, a RIAA Gold certification and three CMA Awards nominations, which doubles Young’s career total. The only nod that’s a repeat for him is Musical Event; he was also on the ballot five years ago with the Cassadee Pope collaboration “Think of You.”



Photo: Danny Clinch

ZAC BROWN BAND

VOCAL GROUP OF THE YEAR

When Zac Brown Band introduced itself as an Atlanta-based indie act in 2008 with “Chicken Fried,” it definitely played the outsider/underdog card in a format dominated by Nashville-centered major labels. But what might have appeared to be a major weakness is perhaps its greatest strength. The group’s communal-DIY approach has made it one of Country’s most reliable acts, now enjoying its 11th Vocal Group of the Year nomination. ZBB shines on arena stages, where its stark harmonies, grade-A musicianship, common-man lyrical themes and genre-busting style — built on Southern ground — make it a fiercely competitive outfit. The eight-man lineup is still a creative cauldron, evident on new album *The Comeback*, an Oct. 15 release. Fashioned around a unifying title track, it features old-school melodicism, muscular arrangements and determined messaging across 15 tracks. The release is supported by current single “Same Boat” and the Comeback Tour with a rotating cast of openers.

GET THE REWARDS YOU DESERVE



VISIT MY.DRPEPPER.COM
TO SIGN UP TODAY



OFFICIAL SOFT DRINK PARTNER OF THE
COUNTRY MUSIC ASSOCIATION AWARDS

DR PEPPER is a registered trademark of Dr Pepper/Seven Up, Inc. ©2021 Dr Pepper/Seven Up, Inc. DP-867474



ALBUM OF THE YEAR NOMINEES



29 CARLY PEARCE



Photo: Robby Klein

SHANE McANALLY
PRODUCER



Photo: Sara Rose

JOSH OSBORNE
PRODUCER



Photo: Luis Gonzalez

JIMMY ROBBINS
PRODUCER



Photo: Montgomery Lee Photography

RYAN GORE
MIX ENGINEER



DANGEROUS: THE DOUBLE ALBUM MORGAN WALLEN



Photo: Mike Pelishok

DAVE COHEN
PRODUCER



Photo: Chris Hornbuckle

MATT DRAGSTREM
PRODUCER



Photo: Chris Hornbuckle

JACOB DURRETT
PRODUCER



Photo: Ryan Kofreski

CHARLIE HANDSOME
PRODUCER



Photo: Delaney Royer

JOEY MOI
PRODUCER
MIX ENGINEER



HEART ERIC CHURCH



Photo: Mark Levine

JAY JOYCE
PRODUCER / MIX ENGINEER



Photo: Reid Long

JASON HALL
MIX ENGINEER



SKELETONS BROTHERS OSBORNE



Photo: Mark Levine

JAY JOYCE
PRODUCER / MIX ENGINEER



Photo: Reid Long

JASON HALL
MIX ENGINEER



STARTING OVER CHRIS STAPLETON



Photo: Becky Fluke

DAVE COBB
PRODUCER



Photo: Becky Fluke

CHRIS STAPLETON
PRODUCER



Courtesy of Vance Powell

VANCE POWELL
MIX ENGINEER

SINGLE OF THE YEAR NOMINEES



"FAMOUS FRIENDS" CHRIS YOUNG WITH KANE BROWN



Photo:
Nicola Hanger

COREY CROWDER
PRODUCER



Photo:
Jeff Johnson

CHRIS YOUNG
PRODUCER



Photo:
Ryan Vojtesak

SEAN MOFFITT
MIX ENGINEER



"THE GOOD ONES" GABBY BARRETT



Photo:
John Shearer

ROSS COPPERMAN
PRODUCER



Photo:
Jeremy Cowart

ZACH KALE
PRODUCER



BUCKLEY MILLER
MIX ENGINEER



"HELL OF A VIEW" ERIC CHURCH



Photo: Mark Levine

JAY JOYCE
PRODUCER / MIX ENGINEER



Photo: Reid Long

JASON HALL
MIX ENGINEER



"ONE NIGHT STANDARDS" ASHLEY McBRYDE



Photo: Mark Levine

JAY JOYCE
PRODUCER / MIX ENGINEER



Photo: Reid Long

JASON HALL
MIX ENGINEER



"STARTING OVER" CHRIS STAPLETON



Photo:
Becky Fluke

DAVE COBB
PRODUCER



Photo:
Becky Fluke

CHRIS STAPLETON
PRODUCER



Courtesy of
Vance Powell

VANCE POWELL
MIX ENGINEER

MUSIC VIDEO OF THE YEAR NOMINEES



“CHASING AFTER YOU” RYAN HURD WITH MAREN MORRIS



Photo:
Getty Images

TK MCKAMY
DIRECTOR



“FAMOUS FRIENDS” CHRIS YOUNG WITH KANE BROWN



Photo:
Courtesy Peter Zavadil

PETER ZAVADIL
DIRECTOR



“GONE” DIERKS BENTLEY



Photo Courtesy of
Wes Edwards

WES EDWARDS
DIRECTOR



Photo:
Heather Leroy

TRAVIS NICHOLSON
DIRECTOR



Photo: Courtesy
Ed Pryor

ED PRYOR
DIRECTOR

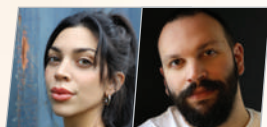


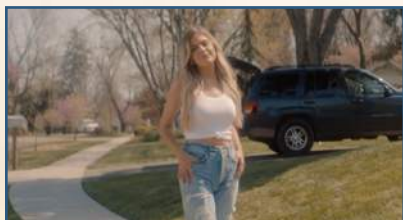
Photo Courtesy
of Running Bear

RUNNING BEAR
DIRECTOR



Photo:
Cody Duncum

SAM SISKE
DIRECTOR



“HALF OF MY HOMETOWN” KELSEA BALLERINI
(FEATURING KENNY CHESNEY)



Photo: Rob Morris

PATRICK TRACY
DIRECTOR



“YOUNGER ME” BROTHERS OSBORNE



Photo:
Stephanie Thorpe

REID LONG
DIRECTOR

Thank You

CMA FOUNDATION ARTIST AMBASSADORS!

Filmore

Maddie & Tae

Ashley McBryde

Russell Dickerson

Jimmie Allen

Lindsay Ell

Lauren Alaina

Charlie Worsham

Tenille Townes

Caityln Smith

The CMA Foundation launched its Artist Ambassador program in 2020 to engage the artist community in furthering advocacy efforts in support of music education nationwide. Artist Ambassadors believe in the value of music and use their platforms to share the impact having access to music at an early age gave them.

Learn more at CMAfoundation.org



CMA FOUNDATION



MUSIC TEACHERS OF EXCELLENCE

**CONGRATULATIONS
TO THESE INSPIRATIONAL
SUPERHEROES!**

LAUREN BAKER
KELSEY D. BURKETT
NESHAWN CALLOWAY
JACOB CAMPOS
EFRAIN CASILLAS
MICHAEL CHOATE
JOSE ANTONIO DIAZ
BENJAMIN EASLEY
SANDY ELLIOTT
ALICIA ENGRAM
KEITH HANCOCK
KATIE HARRAH
MICHAEL HOLLAND
ADRIAN MAGLIN
CHRIS MAUNU

THERESA MCKNIGHT
ANNA MARIA MILLER
ELENI MILLER
LINZIE MULLINS
JOANIE PADGETT
THOMAS PIERRE
SAMANTHA SHARP
NITA L. SMITH
MCKENNA STENSON
DANIELLE LEIGH TAYLOR
KAITLIN TILDEN
JOHNATHAN VEST
ALICE ASAKO WALLE
SUSAN WATERS
KAYLA WERLIN

SINCE 1876
BERINGER
TRADE MARK OF **BROS.** CALIFORNIA, USA.
SPIRIT BARREL AGED WINES

OFFICIAL
WINE OF

CMA
COUNTRY MUSIC ASSOCIATION



HATS OFF TO THOSE WITH SPIRIT



CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE
CMA AWARDS® NOMINEES.

ENJOY RESPONSIBLY. ©2021 BERINGER VINEYARDS, ST. HELENA, CA

BROADCAST AWARDS WINNERS PERSONALITY

WEEKLY NATIONAL



COUNTRY COUNTDOWN USA

Lon Helton
Westwood One

DAILY NATIONAL



CMT AFTER MIDNITE

Cody Alan
Premiere Networks

MAJOR MARKET



DOUBLE-L

Lois Lewis
KNIX | Phoenix, Ariz.

LARGE MARKET



RIDDER, SCOTT AND SHANNEN

"Ridder" Shaun Ridderbush, Scott Dolph, and Shannen Oesterreich
WMIL | Milwaukee-Racine, Wis.

MEDIUM MARKET



MO & STYCKMAN

"Mo" Melissa Wagner and "StyckMan" Greg Owens
WUSY | Chattanooga, Tenn.

SMALL MARKET



STEVE, BEN AND NIKKI

Steve Stroud, Ben Walker, and Nikki Thomas
WBQX | Johnson City-Kingsport-Bristol, Tenn.-Va.

BROADCAST AWARDS WINNERS STATION

MAJOR MARKET



KYGO
Denver-Boulder, Colo.

LARGE MARKET



WUBE
Cincinnati, Ohio

MEDIUM MARKET



KUZZ
Bakersfield, Calif.

SMALL MARKET



KCLR
Columbia, Mo.

BROADCAST AWARDS FINALISTS PERSONALITY

WEEKLY NATIONAL



American Country Countdown
Kix Brooks
Westwood One



Country Gold
Terri Clark
Westwood One



The Crook & Chase Countdown
Lorianne Crook and Charlie Chase
iHeartMedia



Honky Tonkin' with Tracy Lawrence
Tracy Lawrence and Patrick Thomas
Compass Media Networks

DAILY NATIONAL



The Big D and Bubba Show
Derek Haskins, Sean Powell, Patrick Thomas and Carsen Humphreville
Compass Media Networks



The Bobby Bones Show
Bobby Bones, Amy Brown, "Lunchbox" Dan Chappell, Eddie Garcia, "Morgan #2" Huelsman, "Raymundo" Ray Slater, "Scuba Steve" Stephen Spradlin, "Mike D" Rodriguez and "Utility Hillary" Borden
Premiere Networks



The Lia Show
Lia Knight
Westwood One



The Music Row Happy Hour
Buzz Brainard and Ania Hammar
Sirius XM Satellite Radio

MAJOR MARKET



Angie Ward
WUBL, Atlanta, GA



Hawkeye in the Morning with Hawkeye and Michelle
"Hawkeye" Mark Louis Rybczyk and Michelle Rodriguez
KSCS, Dallas-Ft. Worth, Texas



The Morning Bull: George, Mo & Cowboy Dave
George Lindsey, "Mo" Monica Lunsford, and "Cowboy Dave" Bayless
KILT, Houston, Texas



Tampa Bay's Morning Krewe with J.R., Launa and Kevin
"J.R." Jon Jaus, Launa Phillips, and Kevin Ebel
WQYK, Tampa Bay, Fla.

LARGE MARKET



Jesse Tack
WUBE, Cincinnati, Ohio



Jim, Deb & Kevin
Jim Denny, Deborah Honeycutt and Kevin Freeman
WFMS, Indianapolis, Ind.



Lexi & Banks
"Lexi" Elena Abatgis and "Banks" Jared Danielson
KUBL, Salt Lake City-Ogden-Provo, Utah



The Wayne D Show
"Wayne D" Danielson and Taylor Rosenberg
WSIX, Nashville, Tenn.

MEDIUM MARKET



Brent Michaels
KUZZ, Bakersfield, Calif.



Ellis and Bradley Show
Bill Ellis and Beth Bradley
WSSL, Greenville-Spartanburg, S.C.



Julie and DJ in the Morning
"Julie K" Kansy and "D.J. Thee Trucker" Dale Sellers
WPCV, Lakeland-Winter Haven, Fla.



Steve & Gina In The Morning
Steve Lundy and Gina Melton
KXKT, Omaha-Council Bluffs, Neb.-Iowa

SMALL MARKET



Barrett, Fox & Berry
Bill Barrett, Tim Fox and Tracy Berry
KKNU, Eugene-Springfield, Ore.



Dr. Shane and Tess in the Morning
Shane Collins and Tess Connell
WPAP, Panama City, Fla.



KTTS Morning Show with Nancy & Rick
Nancy Simpson and Rick Moore
KTTS, Springfield, Mo.



Liz & Scotty in the Morning
Liz Del Grosso and Scotty Cox
KCLR, Columbia, Mo.

BROADCAST AWARDS FINALISTS STATION

MAJOR MARKET



KNIX
Phoenix, Ariz.



KNUC
Seattle-Tacoma, Wash.



WNSH
New York City, N.Y.



WXTU
Philadelphia, Pa.



WYCD
Detroit, Mich.



WFMS
Indianapolis, Ind.



WMIL
Milwaukee-Racine, Wis.



WQDR
Raleigh-Durham, N.C.



WSIX
Nashville, Tenn.

MEDIUM MARKET



KATM
Modesto, Calif.



KXKT
Omaha-Council
Bluffs, Neb.-Iowa



WQMX
Akron, Ohio



WXCY
Wilmington, Del.



KTTS
Springfield, Mo.



WBYT
South Bend, Ind.



WXBQ
Johnson City-Kingsport-
Bristol, Tenn.-Va.



WXFL
Florence-Muscle Shoals, Ala.



WYCT
Pensacola, Fla.

SMALL MARKET

2021 COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

In August, CMA announced the class of 2021 Country Music Hall of Fame inductees – Eddie Bayers, Pete Drake, Ray Charles and The Judds. Bayers and Drake tied, and will both be inducted in the “Recording and/or Touring Musician” category, which is awarded every third year in rotation with the “Songwriter” and “Non-Performer” categories. Charles will be inducted in the “Veterans Era Artist” category and The Judds will be inducted in the “Modern Era Artist” category. The official induction will occur at the Medallion Ceremony hosted by the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum in 2022.



EDDIE BAYERS

PETE DRAKE

RAY CHARLES

THE JUDDS

EDDIE BAYERS MUSICIAN

Eddie Bayers has been a first-call drummer in Nashville for nearly 50 years, and an indispensable part of Country Music's foundation. Laying down the groove on some 300 Gold and Platinum records, he is the beat behind some of Country's most popular artists and leaves an enduring impact on the industry as a whole.

Born in 1949, in Patuxent River, MD, and having moved to Nashville in 1974, Bayers' early sessions included playing for Anne Murray, Mickey Gilley, Charlie Rich, and others, including Dolly Parton's *9 to 5 and Odd Jobs* album and The Judds' debut EP, *Wynonna & Naomi*. As was the case with The Judds, many of the artists who hired Bayers to play on their early albums returned to him again and again. He developed longstanding working relationships with artists like Ricky Skaggs, George Strait, Alan Jackson and Kenny Chesney, recording with them over a series of albums and hits.

Bayers has been a member of the Grand Ole Opry's House Band since 2003 and received a 2004 GRAMMY nomination as part of The Notorious Cherry Bombs, a reunited version of Rodney Crowell's former backing band, The Cherry Bombs. He is also a member of the Country Music Hall of Fame's Medallion All-Star Band, which backs performers at each year's ceremony honoring the newest class of Hall of Fame inductees.

He has been nominated by CMA for Musician of the Year 10 times and was named the Academy of Country Music's top drummer 14 times between 1991 and 2010, including an 11-year stretch where he won every year. *DRUM* magazine named him one of the Top 10 Session Drummers of All Time, and he is a member of *Modern Drummer* magazine's Honor Roll. The Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum honored him as one of its "Nashville Cats" in 2010. He was inducted into the Musicians Hall of Fame in 2019. Bayers is the first drummer to be inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame's Recording and/or Touring Musician category.

PETE DRAKE

MUSICIAN

Country Music as the world knows it wouldn't sound like Country Music without the pedal steel guitar. And the pedal steel wouldn't sound like pedal steel without Pete Drake.

Born in 1932, in Augusta, GA, Drake helped define the sound on some of Country Music's most enduring hits, among them Lynn Anderson's "Rose Garden," Tammy Wynette's "Stand by Your Man," Charlie Rich's "The Most Beautiful Girl" and George Jones' "He Stopped Loving Her Today."

Drake liked to say the pedal steel was the closest instrument to the human voice. So much so, that not only could he make it sing, but he could also make it talk. Literally. Drake used his "talk box" on records like Roger Miller's "Lock, Stock and Teardrops" and Jim Reeves' "I've Enjoyed as Much of This as I Can Stand."

The musician played on sessions for Elvis Presley's *How Great Thou Art* album and Bob Dylan's *John Wesley Harding*, as well as on Dylan's *Nashville Skyline* and *Self Portrait*. He also invited Ringo Starr to Nashville and, within a matter of days, was producing Starr's *Beaucoups of Blues* album, marking the first time a Beatle had recorded in the United States.

The Country sessions continued, with Drake playing on records by artists including Bobby Bare, Kris Kristofferson, The Oak Ridge Boys, Dolly Parton, Kenny Rogers and Ray Charles. During his lifetime, he played on 118 Gold and Platinum albums, but his impact was felt beyond the recording sessions on which he played.

He was inducted into the International Steel Guitar Hall of Fame in 1987. The following year, on July 29, he died at his Brentwood, TN, home due to complications from emphysema. He was posthumously inducted into the Musicians Hall of Fame in 2007 and the Georgia Music Hall of Fame in 2010. Drake is the first pedal steel player to be inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame's Recording and/or Touring Musician category.

RAY CHARLES

VETERANS ERA ARTIST

With one album, Willie Nelson has said that Ray Charles did more for Country Music than any single artist has ever done. Born in Albany, GA, in 1930, Charles studied Mozart, Chopin and Bach but listened to Art Tatum, Artie Shaw and Duke Ellington, and was sure to tune into the Grand Ole Opry to hear Roy Acuff, Grandpa Jones and Eddy Arnold.

He began his career with R&B and pop roots, but soon began to show his affinity for Country. He recorded an album of Country songs, *Modern Sounds in Country and Western Music* in 1962. His 12 selections for the album spanned three decades of Country. It became Charles' first album to top *Billboard*'s pop albums chart, spending 14 weeks at No. 1, an achievement it would take a Country album from Nashville 30 years to match. Soon after, he released another dozen songs, *Modern Sounds in Country and Western Music, Volume 2*.

The *Modern Sounds* albums' across-the-board success changed the way the world saw Nashville and the way Nashville saw the world. Charles showed the full magnitude of commercial potential Country Music had when racial and stylistic barriers between the music and the audience were stripped away.

Charles was nominated for two CMA Awards in 1985—the CMA Horizon Award and CMA Vocal Duo of the Year with Willie Nelson for their duet, "Seven Spanish Angels." In 1986, he was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and in 1987, he received a GRAMMY Lifetime Achievement Award. He won 17 GRAMMYS across 44 years, including Best Rhythm and Blues Recordings for "I Can't Stop Loving You," "Crying Time" and his version of Harlan Howard's "Busted." Eight of his GRAMMYS came posthumously. Charles died of liver cancer on June 10, 2004, shortly after completing an album of duets called *Genius Loves Company*.

During a recording career that spanned more than 50 years, Charles rarely conformed to anyone else's notions about Country Music—how it should sound, or how it could sell. His genius extended beyond Country Music, but it always included it. And when he performed Country and Western music, he didn't just create modern sounds. He created timeless ones.

THE JUDDS

MODERN ERA ARTIST

Country Music has a long history of family ties, and the genre has never had another family like this one. One of the most successful duos in Country Music history, The Judds are known not only for their disarming vocals and unique approach to harmonies but also for their way of combining folk, bluegrass and blues into a sound like nothing else at the time.

The mother-daughter duo – Naomi and Wynonna – hailing first from Ashland, KY, before moving to California, made their way onto the Country Music scene in 1983 with "Had a Dream (For the Heart)," a B-side for Elvis Presley seven years before. The record only cracked the Top 20, but the follow-up, "Mama He's Crazy," went straight to No. 1, immediately making The Judds Country Music's most successful mother-daughter act since Mother Maybelle Carter and the Carter Sisters.

The Judds won the Horizon Award at the 1984 CMA Awards ceremony where Naomi famously began her acceptance speech by exclaiming, "Slap the dog and spit in the fire!". They went on to win nine CMA Awards and seven from the Academy of Country Music, dominating both organizations' vocal duo categories through the 1980s. In 1986, they received their first of three CMA nominations for Entertainer of the Year, making the 22-year-old Wynonna the youngest person ever to be nominated for the honor, a distinction she held for more than 20 years.

Between 1984 and 1991, the duo released six studio albums and an EP, their stripped-back style helping revive the popularity of acoustic sounds in Country Music and opening up the genre for more traditional approaches. Together, The Judds have five GRAMMY Awards and 16 Gold, Platinum, and multi-Platinum albums and longform videos.

During 2018 and 2019, the two were the subjects of a Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum exhibit, which followed the duo from their beginnings in Eastern Kentucky to the peak of their careers. In her autobiography, Naomi wrote of her first visit to Music Row and the Country Music Hall of Fame, saying, "It was as if we'd entered the pearly gates and were riding down streets of gold," comparing the Hall to "a cathedral filled with holy relics." Now the two have found a permanent home in the cathedral.

CMA AWARDS HISTORY

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 55 YEARS OF COUNTRY MUSIC'S BIGGEST NIGHT™



Jeannie C. Riley, 1968



Glen Campbell, 1975



Willie Nelson, 1976



Charley Pride, 1980



Johnny Cash and Kris Kristofferson, 1983



Ray Charles, 1984



The Judds, 1984



George Strait, 1989

MUSIC CONNECTS THE WORLD. SO DO WE.

Just like the Country Music Association, we're passionate about bringing people together, creating meaningful moments and inspiring new heights. Tonight, we celebrate the music and the musicians who keep us connected to what matters most.

Official airline partner of the 2021 CMA Awards®.



KEEP CLIMBING





Patty Loveless, Mary Chapin Carpenter, Lorrie Morgan, Trisha Yearwood and Pam Tillis, 1994



Alan Jackson, 1995



Tim McGraw & Faith Hill, 1998



Shania Twain, 2002



Taylor Swift, 2009



Lionel Richie and Little Big Town, 2011



Kacey Musgraves, 2015

JTV, THE OPRY TRUST FUND AND THE CMA FOUNDATION ★ BAND TOGETHER TO BACK THE BEAT ★



Now through November 15, shop JTV and receive savings on beautiful jewelry when you donate to the “Back the Beat” campaign, supporting music education and assisting families and students across the country impacted by COVID-19. All donations go directly to the Opry Trust Fund and the CMA Foundation (CMAF)*.

*Please note, due to state charitable fundraising laws, all funds received from non-Tennessee residents in support of the Back the Beat campaign will be donated to the CMA Foundation.

You can also visit jtv.com/beat and click on the JTV Auctions link to bid on exciting items donated by the biggest names in country music. 100% of the auction proceeds go to the Opry Trust Fund and the CMA Foundation*.

Plus, purchase a commemorative guitar keychain available exclusively from JTV and we will donate 50% of the selling price of \$39.99 to the Opry Trust Fund and the CMA Foundation*. Go to jtv.com or call 800.619.3000 to order.

YOUR CHOICE

CMA003A Gold Tone

CMA003B Silver Tone

CMA003C Rose Tone

\$39.99



jtv
jewelry & love



CMAF
FOUNDATION



JTV.COM/BEAT ★ 800.619.3000 ★ #JTVJEWELRYLOVE ★



CMA PLATINUM MEMBERS





CMA SILVER MEMBERS

308 Productions
Advanced Business Consultants
ALSAC/St. Jude Hospital
Amerimonte Records
Anderson Benson
Anthem Entertainment
AristoMedia
Average Joes Entertainment Group
BelleFire Records
Big Fish Music
Black Sheep Label
Bradley Arant Boulton Cummings LLP
Celebrity Coaches
Chippewa Valley Music Festivals, Inc.
ClearBox Rights
CMS Nashville
Country4you
CTI
Deloitte & Touche
Diamond Entertainment Management Co.
DJ's Multimedia
Elicity Public Relations
Emanant Music Group, LLC
Ernst & Young, LLP
First Class Productions, LLC
First Insurance Partners, LLC
Francis & Lusk A Division of Halo Branded Solutions
GEN3 ENTERTAINMENT LLC
Global Songwriters Connection
Good Time Design
Gordon Law Group, PLC
Guidant Law
Hall, Booth, Smith, P.C.
Hard Rock Hotel and Casino Tulsa
Hoosier Park Racing & Casino
IMMI Records
Indiana Grand Racing & Casino
Ingram Entertainment Inc.

Island Dogs Bar
Jayson Promotions, Inc.
KAFF
KATM
KCLR
KCYY-FM / KKYX-AM
KEZS
KFGE
KFRG
KHPQ
KJUG
KKBQ
KKNV
KMKT
KMLE
KMOZ
KNEI
KNIX
KNUC
KORA
KQLA
KRTY
KSJQ
KSKS
KSON
KSWG
KTHK
KTNN
KTTS
KUBL
KUZZ-AM/KCWR-FM
KXKT
KYGO
KZKX
Lady Luck Songs
Mallory Records
Marathon Live
MV2 Entertainment
Myriad Productions
Nashville Area Chamber Of Commerce
Nashville Express Tours
Nashville TV
Neo Music
Oak Ridge Boys, Inc.

Old Pine Artist Services
On-Air Broadcasting, LLC
Palisades Hudson Financial Group LLC
Pancoast Benefits
Parenting Today's Teen Radio
PCB Entertainment, LLC
Peermusic
Pinnacle Bank
Premier Global Production Company
Premiere Networks
Production Technology Partners
Radio Advertising Bureau
Renfro Valley Entertainment Center
Rock Ridge Music
Roland
Salem Civic Center
Simmel Concerts Entertainment GmbH
Simba Entertainment, LLC
Simmons Bank Arena
Simply Grand Music, Inc.
Skaggs Family Records
SNG Music, LLP
Sound Royalties
Soundcheck
Space-Time, Inc.
Spirit Music Nashville
Starstruck Entertainment
Stoney's Rockin' Country
Tennessee Association of Broadcasters
The Chickasaw Nation
The Ryan Center/University of Rhode Island
Thompson Entertainment Group
Tri Star Sports and Entertainment Group
Twelve6 Entertainment LLC
Wales Business Management
WBYT
WCOW
WCXS

WDGG
WEPG
WFMS
WFRG
WFUS
WHKB
WHKO
Wixen Music Publishing, Inc.
WKCC
WKKG
WKLK
WKML
WKPE
WKRK-TV News 2
WKXA
WLHK
WLVS
WMDH
WMIL
WNNF
WNSH
WQDR
WQMX
WRHM
WSDQ
WSIX
WSM-AM
WSM-FM
WTQR
WUBE
WUBL
WUSY
WVHL
WVVR
WXBQ
WXFL
WXTU
WXXQ
WYCD
WYCT
WYOT
ZMax Racing Country



TODAY'S FEATURE:

SAVING MONEY

**GET A QUOTE TODAY AND SEE HOW
MUCH YOU COULD SAVE.**



GEICO[®]



GEICO.COM | 1-800-947-AUTO | LOCAL AGENT

Some discounts, coverages, payment plans and features are not available in all states, in all GEICO companies, or in all situations. GEICO is a registered service mark of Government Employees Insurance Company, Washington, D.C. 20076; a Berkshire Hathaway Inc. subsidiary. GEICO Gecko image © 1999-2021. © 2021 GEICO 21_714087157

IN MEMORIAM

REMEMBERING THOSE IN THE COUNTRY MUSIC COMMUNITY THAT
WE LOST THIS PAST YEAR AND CELEBRATING ALL THAT THEY
CONTRIBUTED TO THE MUSIC THAT WE LOVE.

Tim Akers
Richie Albright
Bryan Allen
Razzy Bailey
Tony Banks
George Beasley
Pam Belford
Pinto Bennett
Wes Bennett
Jim Bessman
Charlie Black
Dewayne Blackwell
Connie Bradley
Tom Brenner
Ed Bruce
Patsy Bruce
Spencer Burke
Johnny Bush
Jennifer Campbell
Chad Elliott Carroz
Nick Cash
Tommy Chayne
Bill "Taylor" Chimka
Jason "Rowdy" Cope
JT Corenflos
Dan Culhane
Ron Culver
Mary Mac Darnell
Rod Davis
David "Louie" DePew
Don Everly
Ben Ewing
Al Fagerli
Jim Feminio
Mark Ferguson
Randy "Baja" Fletcher
George Francis
"Commander Cody" George Frayne
Bryan Wayne Galentine
Tommy Garrett
Matthew Gillian
Ann Gillis
Courtney Granger

Earl "JT" Gray
Nanci Griffith
Tom T. Hall
Dwight "Hollywood" Harrison
Stu Haskell
Bob Hatter
Jeff Iler
Martin Kahan
Susan Keel
Jeff Kelly
Gene Kennedy
Hal Ketchum
Norman Kidd
Troy Klontz
Phil Leadbetter
Larry LeBlanc
Lisa Lee
Tom LeGarde
Hugh X. Lewis
Dave Logan
Don Maddox
Kenny Malone
Kirke Martin
Wendell Mayes, Jr.
Bob McKay
Jamie McKibbin
Paul Meacham
Joe Meador
Carol Miller
"Pistol Pete" Miller
Walter Miller
Bob Moore
Stan Moress
Misty Morgan
Norma Morris
Zach Morton
Dick Munro
Michael Neff
Harry "Bud" Nelson
Jamie O'Hara
K.T. Oslin
Billy Earl Owens
Chris Painter

Randy Parton
Dennis Payne
Ray Pennington
Marcus "Scony Don" Pierson
Jim Powers
Charley Pride
Jimmy Rabbitt
Ron "Snake" Reynolds
Tony Rice
Lou Robin
Billy Robinson
Randy Ross
Billy Joe Shaver
Kathy Smardak
Tom Starr
Doug Supernaw
Brian Tankersley
Bill Tanner
B.J. Thomas
Sue Thompson
Kim Tribble
Glenn Douglas Tubb
Tod Tucker
Ronnie Tutt
Pete Van Nort
Tommy Lee Walker
Jerry Jeff Walker
Jim Weatherly
Dale Weber
Tommy West
James White
Scott Whitehead
Larry Willoughby
Alvin Wren
Walter Yetnikoff
Rusty Young
Bill Young

**as of October 14, 2021*

*Crown Royal*TM

Live Generously and
Life Will Treat You Royally



PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY.

CROWN ROYAL Blended Canadian Whisky. 40% Alc/Vol. The Crown Royal Company, New York, NY.

2021 CMA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS



Chair of the Board
Mary Hilliard Harrington
Red Light Management / Wild Hearts, LLC



President
Jim Beavers
Big Yellow Dog Music



President Elect
Charlie Morgan
Apple Music



Secretary/Treasurer
Virginia Bunetta
G-Major Management

DIRECTORS

ADVERTISING/PUBLIC RELATIONS/MEDIA



Lon Helton
Country Aircheck



Ebbe McFarland
Essential Broadcast Media, LLC

AFFILIATED



Joe Galante
Galante Entertainment Organization



Steve Buchanan
SteadyBeat Media

ARTIST



Chris Young



Karen Fairchild

COMPOSER



Liz Rose
Liz Rose Music

ENTERTAINMENT SERVICES



David Crow
*Milom Horsnell Crow
Kelley Beckett Shehan PLC*



Kella Farris
Farris, Self & Moore, LLC

INTERNATIONAL



Natalie Waller
ABC Music



Anna-Sophie Mertens
Live Nation UK

MARKETING/DIGITAL



John Marks
John Marks Worldwide

MUSICIAN



Biff Watson
Biff-Bangs Productions, Inc.



Danny Rader

PERSONAL MANAGER



Clarence Spalding
Maverick



Marion Kraft
ShopKeeper Management

PUBLISHER/PERFORMING RIGHTS ORGANIZATION



Ben Vaughn
Warner/Chappell Music



Jody Williams
Jody Williams Songs

RADIO



Brian Philips
*Cumulus Media-Westwood
One Radio Networks*



Tim Roberts
Audacy / WYCD

RECORD COMPANY



Mike Dungan
Universal Music Group Nashville

RECORD COMPANY



John Esposito
Warner Music Nashville

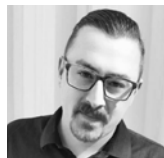


Jay Williams
WME

TALENT BUYER/PROMOTER



Stacy Vee
*Goldenvoice, Messina
Touring Group*



Allen Anders
AEG Presents

TOURING PERSONNEL



Terry Calonge
Richards & Southern, Inc.



Scott Scovill
*Moo TV, CenterStaging, Moo
Creative Media, The Steel Mill*

VENUE



Sally Williams
Live Nation Nashville



Ed Warm
Joe's Concerts

LIFETIME DIRECTORS



J. William Denny
Denny Properties



Ralph Peer
Peermusic

DIRECTORS AT LARGE



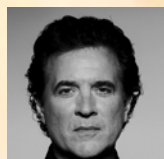
Jimmie Allen



Chris Baldizan
*MGM Resorts
International*



Steve Blatter
SiriusXM



Scott Borchetta
*Big Machine Label
Group*



Becky Brenner
*Albright & O'Malley
& Brenner*



Kix Brooks



Stephen Bryan
YouTube



Frank Bumstead
*Flood, Bumstead,
McCready & McCarthy, Inc.*



Tony Conway
*Conway Entertainment
Group*



Marc Dennis
*Creative Artists
Agency*



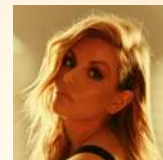
Bob DiPiero
Being Bob Music



Chris DuBois
Sea Gayle Music



Kerri Edwards
KP Entertainment



Lindsay Ell



Ted Ellis
Creator Co.



David Haskell
*Gateway Studios and
Production Services*



David Israelite
*National Music
Publishers' Association*



Brett James
*Cornman Music and
Management*



Kurt Johnson
Townsquare Media



Luke Laird
Creative Nation Music



Jonathan Levine
Wasserman Music



Jay Liepis
Apple, Inc.



Ashley McBryde



Deb McDermott
*McDermott Media Group/
Standard Media*



Brian O'Connell
Live Nation Nashville



Tyne Parrish
The GreenRoom



Rod Phillips
iHeartMedia



Ryan Redington
Amazon Music



Ken Robold
Sony Music Nashville



Bob Shennan
BBC



Bill Simmons
The AMG



Jennie Smythe
Girlilla Marketing



Jeff Stevens
Jeff Stevens Music



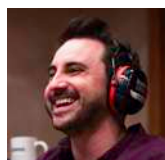
Troy Tomlinson
*Universal Music Publishing
Group Nashville*



Troy Vollhoffer
*Premier Global
Production Company*



Carla Wallace
Big Yellow Dog Music



Derek Wells



Dwight Wiles
Wiles + Taylor & Co., PC

EX-OFFICIO



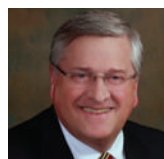
James Free
*The Smith-Free Group,
LLC*



Butch Spyridon
*Nashville Convention
& Visitors Corporation*



Kyle Young
*Country Music Hall of
Fame and Museum*



R. Horton Frank
*Watkins & McNeilly,
PLLC*

LEGAL COUNSEL

CMA CREDITS

CMA AWARDS PROGRAM BOOK

AMANDA ECKARD *Editorial Director*
KATIE ADAMS *Managing Editor*
PAMELA HOTHORN *Editor*
DREW NOBLE *Editor*
JULIE ANNE JACOBS *Editor*
ALISON SLAMON *Layout Design*
SHELBY ALBRECHT *Ad Design*
TOM ROLAND *Writer*
TOMMY ROGERS-LITHOGRAPHICS *Printer*

CMA AWARDS PRODUCTION

ROBERT DEATON *Executive Producer*
ALAN CARTER *Director*
BILL BRADSHAW *Supervising Producer*
JESSE BLEVINS *Producer*
DAVID WILD *Writer*
JILLIAN ELLIS *Co-Producer*
FLORIAN WIEDER *Production Designer*
JON KUSNER *Lighting Designer*
TOM DAVIS *Audio Producer*
TIM KUBIT *Technical Producer*
JOHN BRADLEY *Staging Supervisor*
SARA FOSTER *Co-Producer*
TRACI JONES *Co-Producer*
DANNY RADER *Musical Director*
STEVE GIBSON *Musical Director*
PETER MARGOLIS *Associate Director*
ROBIN ABRAMS *Associate Director*
PAM REPP *Associate Director*
JESSICA BASILE *Post Producer*
ALANA BILLINGSLEY *Art Director*
JEN SHUMAKER *Production Manager*
BRIANA TRIPP *Associate Producer*

FOR THE COUNTRY MUSIC ASSOCIATION

MARY HILLIARD HARRINGTON
CMA Board Chair
JIM BEAVERS *CMA Board President*

FOR THE ABC TELEVISION NETWORK

PETER RICE *Chairman of General Entertainment Content, The Walt Disney Company*
DANA WALDEN *Chairman of Entertainment, Walt Disney Television*
CRAIG ERWICH *President, Hulu Originals & ABC Entertainment*
SHANNON RYAN *President, Content Marketing | Hulu & General Entertainment*
DEBRA O'CONNELL *President, Networks*
CHUCK SAFTLER *Head of Business Operations for ABC, w/Freeform, FX Networks and Acquisitions*
RITA FERRO *President, Disney Advertising Sales*
ADAM MONACO *EVP, Disney Advertising Sales*
JERRY DANIELLO *SVP, Entertainment Brand Solutions*
DANIELLE CALNON *VP, Entertainment Brand Solutions*
JENNY BELCHER *Executive Director, Integrated Marketing*
DANA SOHN *Director, Entertainment Brand Solutions*
ROBERT MILLS *EVP, Unscripted and Alternative Entertainment, Walt Disney Television*
SCOTT IGOE *VP, Alternative Series & Specials*

WHITNEY HOLLAND *VP, Planning & Scheduling*
JILL GERSHMAN *SVP, Marketing Creative*
MELISSA KING *VP, Marketing Creative*
KENT RENSING *Creative Marketing Director*
ERIN WEIR *SVP, Marketing Strategy*
RYAN CASEY *VP, Marketing Strategy*
KATIE CARRUTH *Senior Manager, Marketing Strategy*

BEN BLATT *VP, Digital Strategy and Social Media*
LAUREN GOODMAN *Director, Digital Strategy and Social Media*
CORRINN LAVI *Manager, Digital Strategy and Social Media*
CHELSEA MCCLEARY *Specialist, Digital Strategy and Social Media*
NICK RAYMOND *Director, Digital Creative*
MAX GUNKO *Manager, Digital Creative*
NAOMI BULOCHNIKOV *SVP, Communications*
RICHARD HORMMANN *VP, Communications*
TRA-MI CALLAHAN *VP, Communications*
ASHLEY KLINE-SHAPIO *Executive Director, Communications*
BRIDGETTE MANEY *Publicity Director*
SARAH CASTELI *Publicist*
GENNIFER LONG *VP, Brand and Creative Management*
GRACE EWY *Executive Director, Brand and Creative Management*
LUCAS ARAGON *Executive Director, Design & On-Air Graphics*
CHRIS ABBEY *Art Director*

JOHN ROUSE *EVP, Affiliate Relations*
KATHLEEN VONDERAHE *VP, Affiliate Relations*

LAURA LOVAS *Executive Director, Strategic Partnerships*
ALEXIS TAYLOR *Director, Partnerships & Special Projects*

BARDIA BAKHTARI *Assistant Chief Counsel*
ANTHONY PESSINO *Assistant Chief Counsel*
NEIL BAREISH *Associate Principal Counsel*
JOSH BELKIND *Executive Director, Standards & Practices*
KEVIN SPICER *Senior Manager, Standards & Practices*

CMA STAFF LIAISON FOR BALLOTING

BRENDEN OLIVER *Senior Manager of Awards & Strategic Initiatives*

CMA AWARDS BALLOTING TABULATION

CONDUCTED BY DELOITTE
RICKY LIVINGSTON *Managing Director*
LAUREN BELCHER *Senior Manager*

CMA STAFF

Executive
SARAH TRAHERN *Chief Executive Officer*
MECHALLE MYERS *Executive Assistant to CEO*

Business Affairs

TODD HARTLEY *Senior Vice President of Legal & Business Affairs*

AARON HARTLEY *Director of Business Affairs*
MEREDITH GOUCHER *Manager of Business Affairs*

Communications

CATHARINE McNELLY *Senior Director of Communications*
KRISTA FARMER *Manager of Media Relations*
STEPHANIE SHANK *Manager of Production & Talent Relations*
JULIE ANNE JACOBS *Communications Coordinator*

Community Outreach

TIFFANY KERNS *Executive Director, CMA Foundation and Vice President, Community Outreach*
ANGELA STRADER *Manager of Board & Membership Services*
LINDSEY JONES *Project Manager of Community Outreach*
KATE KALTENBACH *Manager of Membership Engagement*
FALON KEITH *Grants Associate*

Finance & Administration

AMY SMARTT *Senior Vice President of Finance and Administration*
BEN BALCH *Director of Accounting and Financial Planning*
KEN SANDERSON *Director of Information Technology*
JUSTIN RANDALL *IT Project Manager*
LESLIE LONDON *Senior Staff Accountant*
BROOKE HUGHES *Accounts Payable Analyst*
TAYLOR TAPP *Systems and Applications Administrator*
MARYANN DICKS *Finance & Administration Manager*
SARAH AGANS *Operations Manager*
BLAKE BREITHAUP *Receptionist & Administrative Assistant*

Human Resources

MELISSA HEWETT *Vice President of Human Resources*
MILLY OLYKAN *Vice President of International Relations and Development*
BOBBI BOYCE *Director of International Relations*
KATHERINE WONG *International Relations Coordinator*

Live Events

CHRIS CRAWFORD *Senior Director of Live Events*
KRIS KENNEDY *Live Events Producer*
CHRIS HARRINGTON *Senior Manager of Live Events*
GREG PITMAN *Senior Manager of Production*
KATIE STOREY *Project Manager of Live Events*
TREV WOOTEN *Warehouse/Logistics Manager*
EMILY ARVANITIS *Live Events Coordinator*

Marketing

KELLY STRIEWSKI *Senior Vice President of Marketing & Strategic Partnerships*
CATHERINE FRIZZELL *Vice President of Marketing*

AMANDA ECKARD *Head of Creative & Content Development*

KAREN STUMP *Senior Director of Market Research*
MARY OVEREND *Director of Marketing and Consumer Engagement*
MICHELLE KIRK *Director of Integrated Marketing*
BOBBY DIRIENZO *Senior Manager of Digital Marketing*
PAMELA HOTHORN *Senior Manager of Creative Operations*
KATIE ADAMS *Creative Content Project Manager*
SHELBY ALBRECHT *Senior Graphic Designer*
SARA STILE *Marketing and Media Manager*
DEVIN SAMUEL *Social Marketing Coordinator*
ALEX SHARP *Executive Assistant, Marketing & Communications*
MADELINE MYERS *Marketing Coordinator*
DREW NOBLE *Creative Coordinator*
MADI STACE *Social Marketing Associate*

Strategic Initiatives

EMILY EVANS *Vice President of Strategic Initiatives*
BRENDEN OLIVER *Senior Manager of Awards & Strategic Initiatives*
MICHAEL FARRIS *Business Intelligence Lead*
MARC PARZIANELLO *CRM Coordinator*

Strategic Partnerships

MEGAN SYKES *Director of Sales Development and Strategy*
LARA HENLEY *Senior Manager of Strategic Partnerships*
KEVIN COFFEY *Senior Manager of Strategic Partnerships*

CMA Awards nominees and winners are determined by the more than 6,300 industry professional members of CMA, the first trade organization formed to promote an individual genre of music in 1958. The first "CMA Awards Banquet and Show" was held in 1967. The CMA Awards was broadcast on NBC in 1968 – making it the longest running annual music awards program on network television. The show aired on NBC through 1971, on CBS from 1972 through 2005 and on ABC since 2006.

"The 55th Annual CMA Awards" is a production of the Country Music Association.

© 2021 Country Music Association Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher. The Country Music Association Logo and the CMA Awards Logo are registered trademarks and may not be reproduced without written permission. CMA owns the registered trademarks, CMA Awards and "Country Music's Biggest Night."TM

Please see www.deloitte.com/us/about for a detailed description of the legal structure of Deloitte LLP and its subsidiaries.

CMA Awards Program Book is published by the Country Music Association
35 Music Square East, Suite 201
Nashville, TN 37203-4312
tel: (615)244-2840 | fax: (615)242-4783
CMAworld.com

THANK YOU!

*CMA would like to thank the following
for their support of “The 55th Annual CMA Awards”*

ABC Television Network

BBC

Bell Media

Bridgestone Arena

Center for Toxicology and Environmental Health, L.L.C.

CLEAR Health Pass App

DeWitt Stern Group

Deloitte

DirecTV

Election Services Corporation

Francis + Lusk: A Division of Halo Branded Solutions

HiFi Fusion

MicnE Productions

Multimedios Television

Nine

NRK

Pinnacle Bank

ReCOVer-Health, LLC

RTL

TNDV

**AND THANK YOU TO OUR 6,345 CMA MEMBERS
FOR YOUR CONTINUED ENGAGEMENT AND FOR HONORING
EXCELLENCE IN COUNTRY MUSIC!**



CMA Country Christmas

THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

abc

CMAchristmas.com