

Hall Of Fame Songwriter Don Schlitz Passes At 73

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Don Schlitz

Don Schlitz, the architect behind many of country music's most enduring songs, passed away on April 16 at a Nashville hospital after a sudden illness. He was 73.

As a writer of such country standards as "The Gambler," "On the Other Hand," "Forever and Ever, Amen," "He Thinks He'll Keep Her," "The Greatest" and "When You Say Nothing At All," Schlitz was a member of the Nashville Songwriter Hall of Fame, Songwriters Hall of Fame and the Country Music Hall of Fame.

Born and raised in Durham, North Carolina, Schlitz briefly attended Duke University before moving to Nashville at age 20. Arriving with \$80 in his pocket, he set to Music Row, and his talent was recognized and fostered early on by greats, including Bob McDill and Bobby Bare.

Schlitz became one of the first performers at the now-iconic Bluebird Café in Nashville. He and friends Thom Schuyler, J. Fred Knobloch and Paul Overstreet originated the Café's songwriter-in-the-round format in 1985. On Tuesday nights, Schlitz held court at the venue with his "Don For A Dollar" show, charging a cover of \$1 each night.

Schlitz's first-ever cut was Kenny Rogers' "The Gambler," setting an incredible standard he would meet for the rest of his career. The then-23-year-old songwriter celebrated a massive crossover hit that traveled far and wide, winning a Grammy for Best Country Song in 1978, and the Country Music Association's Song of the Year in 1979.

Following his first big hit, Schlitz continued to have stunning success. His 50 top 10 singles have played major roles in the careers of Rogers, Randy Travis, The Judds, The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Tanya Tucker, Mary Chapin Carpenter, Keith Whitley, Alison Krauss and many others.

Schlitz notched 25 No. 1s in his career. He was the ASCAP Country Songwriter of the Year from 1988 to 1991, and won three CMA Song of the Year Awards, two ACM Song of the Year awards and two Grammys across his five decades in music.

Schlitz was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Association Hall of Fame in 1993, and he went into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in New York in 2012. In 2017, Schlitz was [inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame](#), joining only five other songwriters in the Hall at that time, including Bobby Braddock, Hank Cochran, Harlan Howard and Boudleaux and Felice Bryant.

In 2022, he became the only non-artist songwriter [inducted as a member](#) of the Grand Ole Opry in the show's 100-year history. He commonly performed over the last few years, joking with the audience that they may not know who he was, but they knew his songs.

Don Schlitz is survived by his wife, Stacey; his daughter Cory Dixon and her husband Matt Dixon; his son Pete Schlitz and his wife Christian Webb Schlitz; his grandchildren Roman, Gia, Isla, and Lilah; his brother Brad Schlitz; and his sister Kathy Hinkley.

A Celebration of Life will be held on April 25 at 2:30 p.m. CT in the CMA Theater at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum (224 Rep. John Lewis Way South). A reception will follow the service. **MR**

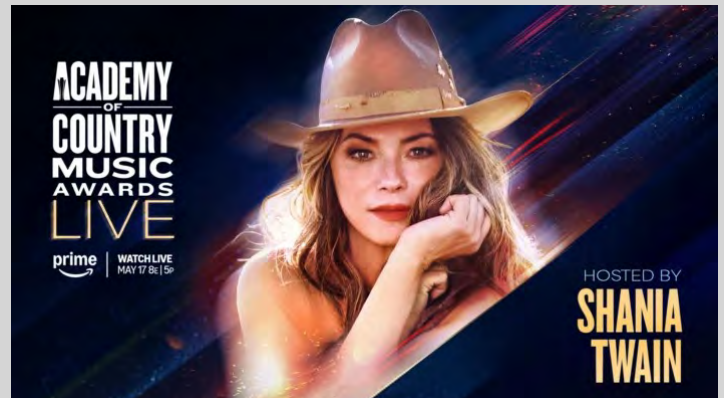
Shania Twain Tapped As 61st ACM Awards Host

Shania Twain is set to host the [61st ACM Awards](#), taking place May 17 at MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas. This will be Twain's first time hosting the ACM Awards.

Twain is crowned the top-selling female country-pop artist of all time, and is celebrated around the world for her songwriting, artistry and performances. She is a three-time ACM award winner, as well as a five-time GRAMMY winner. To date, Twain has sold 100 million albums globally.

The 61st ACM Awards will stream live on May 17 on Prime Video at 7 p.m. CT. The broadcast will also be available on the Amazon Music channel on Twitch, as well as in the Amazon Music app. Throughout the night, performances will be held from Cody Johnson, Kacey Musgraves, Lainey Wilson, Little Big Town, Miranda Lambert, and Riley Green, with more to be announced.

ACM will also host a variety of events leading up to the award show, including Whiskey Jam Welcome Party on May 14, "ACM Lifting Lives Country on the Green: Riley Green & Friends" on May 15, and "ACM Next Wave: Country's Beach Bash" on May 16. **MR**



COUNTRYBREAKOUT RADIO CHART

CHART ACTION

NO. 1 SONG



Ella Langley has found herself at the top of the *MusicRow* CountryBreakout Radio Chart once again this week, with "Be Her."

Langley co-wrote the song with **Jordan Schmidt, Smith Ahnquist** and **HARDY**. It appears on her sophomore album *Dandelion*, which recently debuted at No. 1 on the *Billboard* 200, marking the largest week for a country album by a woman in two years and the biggest week of 2026 for any female artist.

"Be Her" currently sits at No. 10 on the *Billboard* Country Airplay chart and No. 8 Mediabase chart.



Each songwriter and artist earning No. 1 credit on the *MusicRow* Chart receives a *MusicRow* Challenge Coin. Click [here](#) to view a full list of recipients.

New On The Chart—Debuting This Week

song/artist/label—Chart Position

- God Knew Better/Parmalee/Stoney Creek Records - 70
- Whiskey After Women/Adysen Malek/Write On Records - 73
- Exes In Texas/Porter Martin/Lovable Losers Music - 75
- Move On/Kevin Powers & Shaboozey/American Dogwood/EMPIRE - 76

Greatest Spin Increase

song/artist/label—Spin Increase

- Be Her/Ella Langley/SAWGOD Records/Columbia/Triple Tigers - 239
- Don't We/Morgan Wallen/Big Loud/Mercury/Republic - 235
- Ride Ride Ride/George Birge feat. Luke Bryan/RECORDS Nashville - 207
- Country And She Knows It/Luke Bryan/Capitol Nashville - 191
- Kid Myself/John Morgan/Broken Bow Records - 164

Most Added

song/artist/label—No. of Adds

- Say So/Dan + Shay/Warner Records Nashville - 8
- Country And She Knows It/Luke Bryan/Capitol Nashville - 7
- Son of Jolene/Belles with Dolly Parton/East Music Row Records - 7
- Exes In Texas/Porter Martin/Lovable Losers Music - 6

On Deck—Soon To Be Charting

song/artist/label—No. of Spins

- Born To Roam/Addis Luv/Angel Eyes Music LLP - 122
- Wouldn't Want Me Either/Erica Nicole/Kent Wells Productions - 120
- Daylight Saves/Calder Allen/Calder Allen Music, LLC - 108
- Nothing On You/Jet Jurgensmeyer/Simba Entertainment, LLC - 101
- Country Raised Her/Greg Pratt/PGMG Nashville - 101

MusicRow CountryBreakout Chart Reporting Stations

WHMA Anniston, AL	WIFE Connersville, IN	WKVS Lenoir, NC	KRWQ Medford, OR	WGLR Platteville, WI
WXFL Florence, AL	WYGB Franklin, IN	KZZY Devils Lake, ND	WNWN Battle Creek, MI	WQPC Prairie du Chien, WI
KDXY Jonesboro, AR	KAIR Atchison, KS	KYCK Thompson, ND	WVNW Lewistown, PA	WJMQ Shawano, WI
KWCK Searcy, AR	WKDZ Cadiz, KY	KRVN Lexington, NE	WCFT Selinsgrove, PA	WCOW Sparta, WI
WCTY Norwich, CT	WULF Elizabethtown, KY	KFGE Lincoln, NE	WVPO Stroudsburg, PA	WDGG Huntington, WV
WPPL Blue Ridge, GA	WSIP Paintsville, KY	WMLL Manchester, NH	KZZI Spearfish, SD	
WUBB Savannah, GA	KRRV Alexandria, LA	KQBA Santa Fe, NM	WUCZ Carthage, TN	
KXIA Marshalltown, IA	KQKI Morgan City, LA	WDNB Monticello, NY	WLLX Lawrenceburg, TN	
KTHK Idaho Falls, ID	KJLO Monroe, LA	WPIG Olean, NY	KFTX Corpus Christi, TX	
WOOZ Cartersville, IL	WKPE Hyannis, MA	WCJW Warsaw, NY	KYKX Longview, TX	
WALS Peru, IL	WTCM Traverse City, MI	KITX Hugo, OK	KLLL Lubbock, TX	
WAAG Galesburg, IL	KZPK St. Cloud, MN	KPNC Ponca City, OK	KXOX Sweetwater, TX	
WYOT Rochelle, IL	KFAV Warrenton, MO	KWEY Weatherford, OK	WAKG Danville, VA	
WRTB Rockford, IL	WBBN Laurel, MS	KWOX Woodward, OK	WAXX Altoona, WI	
WFMB Springfield, IL	WFAY Fayetteville, NC	KRKT Albany, OR	WJVL Janesville, WI	

COUNTRYBREAKOUT RADIO CHART

Weeks On Chart	Last Week	This Week	Song / Artist / Label	Spins / Reports	% Spin Power	Spins +/-
8	4	1	Be Her / Ella Langley / SAWGOD Records/Columbia/Triple Tigers	2131/64	13	239
16	1	2	Change My Mind / Riley Green / Nashville Harbor Records	2103/60	-1	-19
15	2	3	Brunette / Tucker Wetmore / Back Blocks/EMI Nashville	2028/58	3	58
13	3	4	Sleepless in a Hotel Room / Luke Combs / Columbia Nashville	1842/44	-6	-126
18	7	5	South Of Sanity / Zach Top / Leo33	1829/67	7	122
12	6	6	McArthur / HARDY feat. Eric Church, Morgan Wallen, Tim McGraw / Big Loud/Mercury/Republic	1801/65	1	25
50	5	7	The Fall / Cody Johnson / CoJo Music/Warner Music Nashville	1742/45	-2	-37
23	8	8	Beautiful Things / Megan Moroney / Columbia Nashville/Columbia Records	1733/57	5	88
22	9	9	Days Like These / Luke Combs / Columbia Nashville	1623/46	1	15
29	13	10	Hate How You Look / Josh Ross / Core Entertainment/Mercury Nashville	1619/59	8	121
17	11	11	Rocky Mountain Low / Corey Kent feat. Koe Wetzel / RCA Records Nashville	1607/60	5	77
26	10	12	Chevy Silverado / Bailey Zimmerman / Atlantic Records/Warner Music Nashville	1586/59	1	23
49	12	13	Me & A Beer / Chris Janson / Harpeth 60 Records	1532/51	1	9
8	15	14	Don't Tell On Me / Jason Aldean / BBR Music Group/BMG Nashville	1467/57	12	152
38	14	15	Fireworks / Kelsey Hart / Curb Records	1460/60	3	37
8	20	16	Don't We / Morgan Wallen / Big Loud/Mercury/Republic	1378/59	21	235
11	19	17	Ride Ride Ride / George Birge feat. Luke Bryan / RECORDS Nashville	1354/59	18	207
35	17	18	All My Exes / Lauren Alaina feat. Chase Matthew / Big Loud Records	1320/59	3	36
23	16	19	Killed The Man / Lee Brice / Curb Records	1286/56	0	-6
32	18	20	Wish You Well / Vincent Mason / MCA Nashville/Music Soup/Interscope Records	1153/44	-1	-8
28	22	21	the hell you are / Ashley Cooke / Big Loud Records	1086/52	3	29
16	23	22	Boots Off / Jon Pardi / MCA	1021/53	7	68
5	27	23	Woman / Kane Brown / RCA Nashville	988/45	15	126
20	21	24	After Midnight / Nate Smith feat. Tyler Hubbard / Sony Music Nashville	984/48	-14	-159
41	24	25	Wrong Hearts / LOCASH / Galaxy Label Group	948/43	2	22
20	25	26	The Church On Cumberland Road / Shenandoah & Nickelback / 8-Track Entertainment	918/44	4	33
4	32	27	Country And She Knows It / Luke Bryan / Capitol Nashville	892/48	27	191
19	28	28	Gary / Stephen Wilson Jr. / Big Loud/Mercury/Republic	845/47	2	17
50	26	29	I Ain't Coming Back / Morgan Wallen feat. Post Malone / Big Loud/Mercury/Republic	828/27	-6	-55
19	30	30	Steady / Jenna Paulette / Leo33	827/38	7	53
16	29	31	Too Much Lonesome / Eric Lee Beddingfield / Marshals Of The Revolution	818/41	5	41
25	34	32	Kid Myself / John Morgan / Broken Bow Records	801/42	26	164
14	31	33	Make A Liar / Jackson Dean / Blue Highway	740/45	1	8
13	33	34	Let Him In Anyway / Blake Shelton / Wheelhouse Records	697/39	4	30
10	37	35	Found / Cody Jinks / Late August Records	583/42	14	72
6	35	36	If I Don't Leave I'm Gonna Stay / Carly Pearce feat. Riley Green / Blue Highway Records	578/40	1	4
18	36	37	Rise / Laura Bryna & Common Tribe / LTD Entertainment	565/29	2	13
3	46	38	Say So / Dan + Shay / Warner Records Nashville	545/39	42	161
34	40	39	Long Live Country / Shane Profitt / Triple Tigers	517/29	6	27

2026 **MUSICROW**
WOMEN OF MUSIC
 ROW ISSUE



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Weeks On Chart	Last Week	This Week	Song / Artist / Label	Spins / Reports	% Spin Power	Spins +/-
9	41	40	Painted You Pretty / Hudson Westbrook / River House Artists/Warner Records Nashville	508/32	8	36
9	42	41	What If We Don't / Ashley McBryde / Warner Records Nashville	486/33	3	16
9	44	42	Water At A Wedding / Greylan James / Nashville Harbor	482/34	12	52
8	43	43	If Daddy Says No / Harper Grace / Curb Records	475/39	9	40
7	45	44	American Sky / Aaron Tippin / 8-Track Entertainment	445/35	14	55
45	49	45	Easy To Love / Dustin Lynch / Broken Bow Records	407/27	17	58
11	48	46	Holdin' It Down / Chase Matthew / Warner Records Nashville	371/25	5	18
19	50	47	Worth Your Wild / Russell Dickerson / Triple Tigers	368/26	6	20
9	52	48	Killin' Me / Parker McCollum / MCA Nashville	367/27	9	29
17	47	49	Too Good, Too Bad / Jason Scott & The High Heat / Leo33	348/23	-4	-14
9	53	50	Psychological / The Band Perry / Nashville Harbor Records & Entertainment	344/29	7	21
26	38	51	Pontiac (So Tell Me Momma) / Aaron Watson / AduB Records	337/20	-34	-172
4	58	52	Good Time Gone / Lexie Stevenson / Lexquisite Music	280/24	26	58
5	54	53	Where Ya Been Girl / Chris Chitsey / Clientel/Sony/Orchard	260/21	6	14
5	60	54	Get To Drinkin' / Zach John King / Sony Music Nashville	259/20	30	59
12	55	55	So Afraid of Losing You Again / Danielia Cotton / CDX Records	256/15	5	12
15	57	56	Too Close For Closure / Brett Westgrove / Brett Westgrove Music	240/18	4	9
4	56	57	Good Damn / Brantley Gilbert / BBR Music Group/BMG/Wheelhouse Records	233/21	0	0
10	59	58	Straight For The Heart / Alexandra Kay / Wheelhouse Records	226/18	9	19
7	61	59	Back In The Bottle / Randy Houser / Magnolia Music Group	221/17	12	24
6	62	60	Warning You Whiskey / Brit Taylor / RidgeTone Records/Thirty Tigers	208/18	6	12
5	66	61	Tell Me That There Ain't A God / Jon Brennan / CDX Records	207/18	29	46
5	63	62	Ghost of You / Chuck Thomas / CDX Records	195/13	9	16
3	64	63	Never Comin' Back / Flatland Cavalry / Lost Highway	191/15	10	17
4	68	64	This Beer's Broken / Ken Domash / Thunder Mountain Records	188/17	24	36
9	65	65	I Can See Clearly Now / Vince Hatfield / Blue Moon Records	175/8	2	4
3	67	66	Cowboy Love Me / Lucie Tiger / 2120 Music	174/15	12	18
3	70	67	Some Bridges / Jo Dee Messina / Dreambound Records	170/10	20	28
2	76	68	Something That I Need / Carson Beyer / Lucky Money Entertainment	166/18	29	37
2	69	69	Bird In A Cage / Caryn Dixon / Caryn Dixon Music	164/12	10	15
1	82	70	God Knew Better / Parmalee / Stoney Creek Records	161/11	48	52
17	39	71	Tijuana Tonya / Roland Whitt / Get Joe Records	158/6	-68	-341
7	71	72	Country Country / Amy Sheppard / Empire of Song	152/13	8	11
1	94	73	Whiskey After Women / Adysen Malek / Write On Records	139/12	67	56
3	74	74	Travelin' Soldier / Cody Johnson / CoJo Music/Warner Music Nashville	139/7	7	9
1	102	75	Exes In Texas / Porter Martin / Lovable Losers Music	137/11	127	80
1	81	76	Move On / Kevin Powers & Shaboozey / American Dogwood/EMPIRE	136/9	24	26
2	80	77	Since God Knows When / Michael Raven / Deadly Melody	136/11	20	23
2	78	78	One For The Road / Preston Cooper / Blue Highway Records	136/11	17	20
4	75	79	Long Time Coming / The Haygoods / Legends and Legacy Records LLC	131/9	1	1
3	72	80	Mending Fences / Andrew Farriss / Rockingham Holdings	128/12	-4	-6

No. 1 Song
Greatest Spin Increase
Highest Debut

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Miranda Lambert Inks With MCA



Pictured (L-R): Stephanie Wright (EVP/Head of A&R, MCA), Mike Harris (President & CEO, MCA), Miranda Lambert, Katie McCartney (EVP/General Manager, MCA), Rob Femia (COO/EVP Business & Legal Affairs, MCA), Damon Moberly (SVP Promotion, MCA)

Miranda Lambert has signed with MCA.

Across her career, Lambert has amassed seven No. 1 solo albums, 10 No. 1 radio singles, more than 80 awards and many RIAA certifications. Lambert is a *TIME*100 honoree and perennial best-of-the-year list maker at the *New York Times*, *TIME*, *Rolling Stone*, *Billboard*, *Stereogum*, *People* and more. The most-awarded artist in Academy of Country Music history, she is among the **most-nominated** at this year's ceremony, with eight nods recognizing her contributions as an artist, songwriter and producer.

"Miranda is a generational artist whose influence and artistry continue to shape modern music," says **Mike Harris**, MCA President & CEO. "We are honored to work alongside her as she enters this next chapter and we look forward to building something truly special together."

"Throughout my life and career, I have found that the common thread in every chapter is finding the right people—songwriters, musicians, collaborators, and team members—to match the moment," adds Lambert. "I am honored to join a roster and a team with such a rich history of championing artistry. I look forward to sharing this new music with the world under their banner."

Lambert continues in her role as Founder of Big Loud Texas, where she remains actively involved in her business partnership and ongoing artist development efforts across the label and its publishing company. **MR**

Jessi Alexander Inks With Warner Chappell Music & Perfect Game Creative



Pictured (L-R): Austen Adams (WCM), Jessi Alexander, Jessi Vaughn Stevenson (Perfect Game Creative) and Phil May (WCM)

Grammy-nominated hitmaker **Jessi Alexander** has signed a worldwide publishing deal with Warner Chappell Music Nashville and Perfect Game Creative. This deal marks Alexander as the flagship signing for **Perfect Game Creative**, launched by industry veteran **Jessi Vaughn Stevenson** last year.

A Tennessee native, Alexander has penned 10 No. 1 hits throughout her career, including Luke Combs' "Ain't No Love In Oklahoma" and Morgan Wallen's "Don't Think Jesus." Additional cuts include Megan Moroney's "No Caller ID," Dustin Lynch & Jelly Roll's "Chevrolet," Blake Shelton's "Mine Would Be You" and "Drink On It," Scotty McCreery's "In Between," Lee Brice's "I Drive Your Truck," Cole Swindell & Lainey Wilson's "Never Say Never," and Justin Moore & Priscilla Block's "You, Me, and Whiskey."

Alexander is also behind the global hit "The Climb" performed by Miley Cyrus, which earned an MTV Movie Award for Best Song from a Movie.

Her recent awards include *MusicRow's* Female Songwriter of the Year for two consecutive years (2023 and 2024) and NMPA Gold & Platinum Gala Top Female Songwriter (2024). She also notched a GRAMMY nomination in 2025 for Best Song Written for Visual Media with "Ain't No Love In Oklahoma" and a Songwriter of the Year nomination at the 60th ACM Awards. **MR**

Mtheory Management Services & Artist Marketing Firm Promotes Two



Ed Rivadavia, Kaitlyn Moore

mtheory, the management services and artist marketing & strategy firm, has promoted **Ed Rivadavia** to EVP of Marketing & Operations and **Kaitlyn Moore** to General Manager.

Formerly SVP of Marketing & Digital, Rivadavia was born in São Paulo, Brazil, and has nearly 30 years of experience in the transition to digital business models: from Napster to A.I. He earned his masters from Columbia Chicago and began his career as an intern at Polygram Group Distribution and radio promotion regional for A&M Records. Rivadavia implemented innovative marketing and digital strategies at New York labels including Wind-up Entertainment, Palm Pictures, Roadrunner Records, and RCA Records.

Moore was formerly Senior VP of Marketing at mtheory. A seasoned marketing professional who has overseen the development and execution of comprehensive marketing strategies for artists such as Tyler Childers, Kacey Musgraves,

Jelly Roll and Alison Krauss, she has been instrumental in managing tour and album marketing, optimizing digital accounts, and collaborating with partners across labels, agencies, and management teams to maximize artist exposure and engagement. Prior to her tenure at mtheory, Moore served as the eCommerce Marketing Manager at Maverick, where she managed digital and merchandise strategies for artists like Brooks & Dunn and Rascal Flatts. **MR**

Michael Bryan Launches Southern Drift

Michael Bryan, former Global Head of Country Music for Apple Music, has launched Southern Drift, a Nashville-Based management and media company.

The company's initial ventures include management for **Charlie Worsham**, a two-time ACM and CMA award winner, and the chart-topping podcast *God's Country*, hosted by hit songwriters **Reid** and **Dan Isbell**.

Taryn Anderson has been tapped as Chief Operating Officer/General Manager. She has previously served as CFO/COO of Sandbox Entertainment and Account Executive at FBMM, Inc.

Jordon Isbell joins as Vice President, Marketing and Executive Producer of the *God's Country* Podcast. She joins from her role as Senior Marketing Director at Virgin Music Group, where she oversaw the Nashville roster, following her time as Founder of 270 Media & Co.



Jordon Isbell, Michael Bryan & Taryn Anderson. Photo: Lance Wilson / RUN CLUB

"I've spent my career watching how music moves, and it's never been more fluid," Bryan says. "Artists aren't staying in one lane, and fans aren't either. What pushed me to start Southern Drift was seeing the gap between how artists are building today and how the industry is still structured. We built Southern Drift to move with it, not control it." **MR**

Gator Harrison Joins K-LOVE



Gator Harrison

Gator Harrison has joined K-LOVE, Inc. as Chief Media Officer on the Ministry Leadership Team. He will officially begin the role on May 11, and will helm the K-LOVE and Air1 radio networks, live events and partnerships.

Harrison brings 40 years of radio experience to the role. He most recently served as Senior Vice President of Programming for a decade at iHeartMedia. While at iHeart, he led broadcast, streaming, digital, social media and live events. Other roles throughout his career include program director, operations director and on-air personality.

He holds industry awards and recognition from both ACM and CMA. Outside of radio, he established Believers in 2015, a ministry serving and discipling professionals in the music industry.

"I dedicated my life to Jesus in 1995 and prayed that He would allow me to do what I love, where I love, all for His glory," says Harrison. "Through years of growth and preparation, He has faithfully answered that prayer. I am deeply grateful to iHeartMedia for their support and investment in my journey, and I am honored to join the K-LOVE and Air1 family.

"I'm humbled by this next chapter and thankful that God qualifies the unqualified," he continues. "I look forward to continuing my life's work of inspiring others to draw closer to Jesus."

"We are thrilled to welcome such an outstanding industry expert to our team," adds **Tom Stultz**, K-LOVE Chief Executive Officer. "His blend of expertise, coupled with the industry connections and ministry work he so loves, will enhance our mission and further position K-LOVE to inspire people to move closer to Jesus." **MR**

Jody Williams Songs Elevates Tenasie Courtright, Adds Jonah Gordon



Tenasie Courtright & Jonah Gordon. Photo: Gina Di Maio

Jody Williams Songs has elevated **Tenasie Courtright** to Director, Creative & A&R.

Formerly serving as Creative Director at the company, Courtright took on added duties by performing hands-on A&R for JWS writer-artists Emily Ann Roberts, Ashley McBryde, Harper O'Neill and Peyton Porter.

"When we discovered Tenasie's natural abilities for A&R we encouraged her in this area and were extremely pleased with the results," shares **Nina Fisher**, VP/GM of JWS. "She is a key member of our creative team, and we are lucky to have her."

Additionally, Jonah Gordon has joined Jody Williams Songs as Manager, Sync & A&R.

Gordon comes to JWS from the sync department of Big Yellow Dog Music, which was [recently acquired](#) by Sony Music Publishing.

"Jonah is the right person at the right time to ramp up our sync business and enhance creative services for our writers," Fisher adds. "He brings a skill set to our company that will help us to evolve and broaden the reach of our songs."

Capitol Christian Music Group Signs Jonathan Gamble & Jordan Sapp



Pictured (L-R): Garrett Davis (sr. vice president A&R), Jonathan Gamble (writer), Katie Barolak (sr. director, creative publishing), Terry Padilla (sr. director, creative publishing), Jordan Sapp (writer), and David Gutekunst (executive vice president, publishing)

Hit songwriter **Jonathan Gamble** and Dove Award winning-producer and songwriter **Jordan Sapp** have extended their publishing deals with Capitol Christian Music Group.

Hailing from Alabama and now in Music City, Gamble has amassed No. 1 hits with Jamie MacDonald (“Desperate”), Leanna Crawford (“Still Waters (Psalm 23)”), and Seph Schlueter (“Counting My Blessings”). His additional cuts also include Lauren Daigle, Danny Gokey, Jesus Culture, Tauren Wells, Josiah Queen, Ben Fuller and MaRynn Taylor.

Sapp started his career in Los Angeles where he worked with Pitbull, Austin Mahone, Jason Derulo, Nicki Minaj, and Jennifer Lopez as part of RedOne’s production team. Since moving to Nashville, he has garnered 16 No. 1 radio singles, multiple Dove Awards, and more than 2.4 billion streams through Christian and pop music.

MR

Benny G Makes Grand Ole Opry Debut

Benny G made his Grand Ole Opry debut on Saturday (April 18).

“When I was six years old, I wrote an essay about how music is magic. Music has been the north star in my life ever since I was a kid and picked up the guitar for the first time,” he shared with the audience. “Being asked by Mr. **Vince Gill**, who’s one of my heroes, to play the Grand Ole Opry and now standing here is the most full-circle moment of my life.”

In addition to his own set, he joined Gill to perform “Whenever You Come Around.”

He released his new EP, *When You Know You Know*, on Friday (April 17). Following support runs with Jack Wharff Band, Congress The Band, Songs of Legion, and more, he will join Ty Myers for all dates on his upcoming **THE LEGAL TOUR**, as well as select dates with Billy Currington, festivals, and the Whiskey Jam Bootleggers Tailgate Party ahead of Luke Combs’ stadium dates. **MR**



Benny G. Photo: Mitch Wallis

My Music Row Story: BBR Music Group/BMG Nashville's Peter Strickland



Peter Strickland

Peter Strickland oversees the financial and daily operations of BBR Music Group/BMG Nashville, streamlines distribution channels and physical-product sales as well as spearheads the label's comedy initiatives.

Throughout his tenure, he has served several executive-level roles at Warner Music Nashville such as VP of Sales, VP of Sales & Marketing, Sr. VP of Brand Management & Sales, Executive Vice President/General Manager and Chief Marketing Officer.

In addition to the roles at WMN, he also created two successful comedy imprints and executive produced Jimmy Fallon's 2013 Grammy Award-winning comedy album, *Blow Your Pants Off*, before opening his management company, Marathon Talent, in 2018.

MusicRow: Where did you grow up?

I grew up in a town called Shrewsbury, Massachusetts.

What were you into as a kid?

As a kid, I always wanted to buy music. I had a paper route, and with whatever money I had, I would go out to the record store and just buy music. By the time I was around 12 years old, I already had a pretty decent record collection. As I got older, I found myself turning my friends on to songs, so I was an early record promoter.

When I was 17, the whole club scene was going on in New England and across the country. The drinking age was 18 at that time, so I was trying to figure out how I could get into the club scene. I just took a handful of records and went up to the doorman and said, "Hey, I'm bringing these up to the DJ." He said, "Go right ahead," so every week I'd go up to the DJ in that nightclub and say, "You've got to check this out. Have you heard this song?"

Eventually, the club owner came up to me and said, "Hey, do you know how to spin those things?" I didn't, but I told him I did. He said, "Can you come spin on Thursday nights?" So that was kind of my entry into what I guess was part of the business. Eventually, I took over all those nights and then started my own DJ business doing parties.

Wow! How did you get further along into the business?

At one point, I was spending a lot of money buying music, so I needed to find something to do during the day. I applied to work at a record store called Strawberry Records, which is no longer around, but they were a chain of stores that dominated the New England area. Even though I had a lot of experience in a nightclub, the manager thought I should actually work in the warehouse. I said, "Okay, as long as I can still get my discount on music purchases."

I got more than a discount. What ended up happening is they put me in a buying role for the whole chain of stores for R&B and dance singles. So I'd have all the distributors coming in and pitching to me. Eventually, I got hired out of there to work for WEA distribution in Boston.

Tell me about that.

That was my intro to the real music industry. I elevated quite quickly through the ranks there. I came in as a junior salesperson and won Sales Rep of the Year by my second year. In my fourth year, I got promoted to sales manager position, leap frogging a number of people who had been there for a long time, so that was a challenge—learning to manage people.

Eventually, the role became a little stagnant for me because it was all about pick, pack and ship. There was nothing creative about it. I heard through the grapevine through distribution that Warner Bros. Records in Nashville was looking for a salesperson. I knew a number of the people down here because part of my job in New England was to promote country music.

I applied for that job. I really wanted to move here and get into a label to absorb everything that happens there. How do they make the decision to sign an artist? How do they make decisions about songs? How does radio work?



Photo: Courtesy of Strickland

I got the job, and I spent a good portion of my first decade here just learning everything I could about the industry at a record label level. During that time, the digital revolution happened, and it started to have a serious effect on Music Row. Half of the labels on Music Row went away overnight. Warner Bros. absorbed Giant, Elektra, and Atlantic, so there was a big cleansing that took place during that time.

A key part of a shift in my career was when **Blake Shelton** was one of the artists we took on from Giant. When he came over, there was really no one in marketing. I raised my hand to help with sales and marketing on Blake, and that unveiled a talent I didn't know I had.

Tell me more about that.

As time went on, other artists started getting added to my marketing responsibilities, like **Faith Hill**, **Dwight Yoakam** and **Big & Rich**. Eventually, it was **Hunter Hayes**, **Brett Eldredge** and **Jana Kramer** etc. It was one of the most rewarding time periods of my career because all of a sudden I was doing all the stuff that I really enjoyed. I moved from VP of Sales to SVP, then EVP of Marketing, and eventually CMO at Warner.

I started the comedy division there and brought **Jeff Foxworthy** back. That led to the whole Blue Collar Comedy Tour coming to Warner Bros. in Nashville. I ended up signing a number of comedians including Larry the Cable Guy, that record ended up debuting higher than the **Red Hot Chili Peppers** the same week.

Later on, **Jimmy Fallon** called my office mentioning he had just taken over the late-night show and wanted to do a comedy record. He had gotten my name from people in the industry, so we ended up doing it together. It won a Grammy and was certainly one of the biggest highlights of my career.

What was next for you?

When I left Warner, I wasn't sure what I was going to do from that point. I took about six months off and decided to start a management company, Marathon Talent. The excitement of that led to me signing artists rather rapidly. I signed some incredibly talented artists, but I felt I was moving too fast, trying to prove that I could build something in a short period of time, which we all know doesn't happen overnight.

Just as things started to uptick, COVID hit, and it really put a huge damper on the management company. At the time, I



Photo: Courtesy of Strickland

felt like the industry was abandoning me as well. That wasn't the case, but it felt like it. I was at a pivotal point, asking, "What's next?" My wife was very supportive, so I stayed at it. I struggled, struggled, struggled, and then **Jon Loba** called and said he wanted me to manage a comedian who was an employee of his who wanted to quit what he was doing to become a comedian.

I said I would help him out and help build that for him. In the meantime, I started consulting for BMG under the radar and was helping out in marketing while they had a couple of people out, and one on maternity leave. Soon, Jon brought me on full-time as GM. I didn't think I'd ever want to go back into the corporate space, but being able to see what I was getting into through consulting with BMG allowed me to make a better decision about whether that was what I wanted to do.

What have you enjoyed about being back in the label system?

I've enjoyed being able to work with a different group of people after spending so many years at one company. A lot of things don't change. We're all challenged with the same things we've faced for years, but getting to know and work with more people has been very rewarding. I never put myself on a pedestal, but hearing people say they enjoy working with me and learning from me is, at the end of the day, the most rewarding part of what I do. Sharing my experiences and knowledge to help someone else grow and better themselves in the business is incredibly fulfilling.

Do you have any mentors?

There have been so many people who have positively affected my career it's hard to single out one. When I first moved here, I came down for an interview with **Jim Ed Norman**, who was the CEO of Warner Bros. Nashville at the time. **Neal Spielberg** actually ended up hiring me. Jim Ed, Neal and I met and talked about the job. I asked how the interview was going, and he said, "Oh, you've got the job. I just wanted to get to know you." He is such a warm and kind human being. He cared a lot about how my family would feel about moving here.

What's one of the coolest moments you've had in your career?

Winning the Grammy Award for the Jimmy Fallon album. That's something I never dreamed would happen, and it was never a goal. **MR**

DISCLAIMER Single Reviews: Carly Pearce Is 'Delightfully Snarky & Sassy'



Carly Pearce. Photo: Luke Rogers

Ballads dominate this edition of DISCLAIMER, but a few of the country stars are making toe-tapping sounds as well.

Our balladeers include Riley Green, Reba McEntire and Braxton Keith. Willie & Shooter are emoting so mellow that they're nodding off.

For tempo tunes, turn to Shaboozey, Vincent Mason and the team of Ella Langley & Morgan Wallen. Not to mention feisty Carly Pearce, who wins the Disc of the Day award.

Returning to ballad mode, we welcome Steven McClintock as our DISCOVERY Award winner this week.

[Click here to read Robert K. Oermann's full single reviews.](#) **MR**

MORE TOP STORIES

[Amanda Shires, John Paul White, Sam Palladio Among Musicians Corner Spring Lineup](#)

[Belmont University Hosts 25th Best Of The Best Showcase](#)

[Black River Entertainment Partners With Akando Music For Radio Promotion](#)

[BMI's Rooftop On The Row Launches 8th Season With Zach John King & Aniston Pate](#)

[Breakaway Names Megan Wise Vice President, Brand Partnerships](#)

[Cody Johnson Unveils New Album Due In June](#)

[Country Music Hall Of Fame & Museum Celebrates 'Clint Black: The Hard Way On Purpose'](#)

[Dan + Shay's New Single 'Say So' Igniting The Conversation Around Mental Health Awareness](#)

[Dylan Scott Nabs Seventh No. 1](#)

[Hop On A Cure Passes \\$5 Million In ALS Research Grants](#)

[Now Open: Applications For MusicRow's 2026 Artist Roster Company Directory](#)

[Riley Green Kicks Off 'Cowboy As It Gets Tour' With Sold-Out Stop At Bridgestone Arena](#)

[Russell Dickerson & Crew Celebrate No. 1 Hit 'Happen To Me'](#)

[Scotty McCreery & Hootie & The Blowfish Celebrate 'Bottle Rockets'](#)

[Shaboozey Unveils New Album Due In July](#)

[Society Of Leaders In Development Hosts 29th Annual Crawfish Boil](#)

['Songs For Squeeks' To Take Place At The Listening Room](#)

TOP SONGWRITER CHART

This Week	Last Week	Songwriter's Name	Song(s)	Artist
1	1	Randy Montana	Change My Mind Make A Liar Sleepless In A Hotel Room Time's Ticking	Riley Green Jackson Dean Luke Combs Justin Moore & Dierks Bentley
2	4	Blake Pendergrass	20 Cigarettes Ain't A Bad Life Brunette Don't We I Got Better Wish You Well	Morgan Wallen Thomas Rhett & Jordan Davis Tucker Wetmore Morgan Wallen Morgan Wallen Vincent Mason
3	3	Ella Langley	Be Her Choosin' Texas Dandelion girl you're taking home Loving Life Again	Ella Langley Ella Langley Ella Langley Ella Langley Ella Langley
4	5	Luke Combs	Days Like These Rethink Some Things Sleepless In A Hotel Room	Luke Combs Luke Combs Luke Combs
5	6	Chase McGill	20 Cigarettes Brunette I Got Better McArthur the hell you are Water At A Wedding	Morgan Wallen Tucker Wetmore Morgan Wallen HARDY, Eric Church, Morgan Wallen & Tim McGraw Ashley Cooke Greylan James
6	7	Michael Hardy	Be Her I Ain't Comin' Back I Got Better Let Him In Anyway McArthur	Ella Langley Morgan Wallen (feat. Post Malone) Morgan Wallen Blake Shelton HARDY, Eric Church, Morgan Wallen & Tim McGraw
7	9	Zachary Lane Bryan	Plastic Cigarette Say Why	Zach Bryan Zach Bryan
8	8	Jeremy Stover	The Fall Time's Ticking	Cody Johnson Justin Moore & Dierks Bentley
9	11	Ashley Gorley	Ain't A Bad Life Don't We Me & A Beer Woman	Thomas Rhett & Jordan Davis Morgan Wallen Chris Janson Kane Brown
10	14	Joybeth Taylor	Choosin' Texas Dandelion Empty Words girl you're taking home	Ella Langley Ella Langley Corey Kent Ella Langley
11	12	Chris LaCorte	20 Cigarettes Brunette Wish You Well	Morgan Wallen Tucker Wetmore Vincent Mason
12	13	Josh Thompson	McArthur Turn This Truck Around Wrong Hearts	HARDY, Eric Church, Morgan Wallen & Tim McGraw Jordan Davis LOCASH
13	10	Josh Miller	20 Cigarettes Brunette Country And She Knows It	Morgan Wallen Tucker Wetmore Luke Bryan
14	18	John Byron	Ain't A Bad Life Don't We Woman	Thomas Rhett & Jordan Davis Morgan Wallen Kane Brown
15	19	Devin Dawson	If I Don't Leave I'm Gonna Stay Loving Life Again Turn This Truck Around	Carly Pearce & Riley Green Ella Langley Jordan Davis

This Week	Last Week	Songwriter's Name	Song(s)	Artist
16	16	Ernest Keith Smith	I Ain't Comin' Back I Got Better Loving Life Again	Morgan Wallen (feat. Post Malone) Morgan Wallen Ella Langley
17	15	Jonathan Singleton	Sleepless In A Hotel Room	Luke Combs
18	28	Ryan Vojtesak	Don't We I Ain't Comin' Back I Got Better	Morgan Wallen Morgan Wallen (feat. Post Malone) Morgan Wallen
19	29	Morgan Wallen	Don't We I Ain't Comin' Back I Got Better	Morgan Wallen Morgan Wallen (feat. Post Malone) Morgan Wallen
20	17	Aaron Raitiere	Days Like These Never Comin' Back	Luke Combs Flatland Cavalry
21	26	Jordan M. Schmidt	Be Her Kid Myself	Ella Langley John Morgan
22	20	Ray Fulcher	The Fall	Cody Johnson
23	21	Bobby Pinson	The Fall	Cody Johnson
24	30	Bruce Robison	Travelin' Soldier	Cody Johnson
25	23	Erik Dylan	Change My Mind	Riley Green
26	24	Brent Cobb	Days Like These	Luke Combs
27	25	Riley Green	Change My Mind	Riley Green
28	33	Austin Goodloe	Dandelion Empty Words Rocky Mountain Low	Ella Langley Corey Kent Corey Kent (feat. Koe Wetzel)
29	27	Luke Dick	Choosin' Texas Make A Liar	Ella Langley Jackson Dean
30	31	Jessie Jo Dillon	Beautiful Things Wish You Well	Megan Moroney Vincent Mason
31	22	Megan Moroney	Beautiful Things Wedding Dress Wish I Didn't	Megan Moroney Megan Moroney Megan Moroney
32	32	Miranda Lambert	Choosin' Texas	Ella Langley
33	35	Tyler Hubbard	After Midnight Kid Myself Ride, Ride, Ride	Nate Smith (feat. Tyler Hubbard) John Morgan George Birge (feat. Luke Bryan)
34	36	Smith Ahnquist	Be Her	Ella Langley
35	39	Luke Laird	Boots Off Dry Spell Never Comin' Back The Jesus I Know Now Wish I Didn't	Jon Pardi Kacey Musgraves Flatland Cavalry Brandon Lake & Lainey Wilson Megan Moroney
36	41	Robbie Gatlin	What He'll Never Have	Dylan Scott
37	42	Ricky Rowton	What He'll Never Have	Dylan Scott
38	43	Logan Robinson	What He'll Never Have	Dylan Scott
39	44	Dylan Scott	What He'll Never Have	Dylan Scott
40	45	Thomas Archer	Get To Drinkin' Rocky Mountain Low	Zach John King Corey Kent (feat. Koe Wetzel)
41	50	John Morgan	Don't Tell On Me Kid Myself	Jason Aldean John Morgan
42	2	Ty Myers	Message To You	Ty Myers
43	46	Taylor Phillips	Me & A Beer Woman	Chris Janson Kane Brown
44	48	Jordan Davis	Turn This Truck Around	Jordan Davis
45	49	Jake Mitchell	Turn This Truck Around	Jordan Davis
46	59	Corey Kent	Empty Words Rocky Mountain Low	Corey Kent Corey Kent (feat. Koe Wetzel)
47	37	Will Bundy	Time's Ticking	Justin Moore & Dierks Bentley
48	38	Justin Moore	Time's Ticking	Justin Moore & Dierks Bentley

This Week	Last Week	Songwriter's Name	Song(s)	Artist
49	34	Matt Dragstrem	Country And She Knows It Water At A Wedding Wrong Hearts	Luke Bryan Greytan James LOCASH
50	47	Jessi Alexander	Beautiful Things	Megan Moroney
51	51	Connie Harrington	Beautiful Things	Megan Moroney
52	57	Mark Trussell	Ain't A Bad Life	Thomas Rhett & Jordan Davis
53	58	Thomas Rhett	Ain't A Bad Life	Thomas Rhett & Jordan Davis
54	53	Casey Brown	After Midnight Ride, Ride, Ride Worth Your Wild	Nate Smith (feat. Tyler Hubbard) George Birge (feat. Luke Bryan) Russell Dickerson
55	54	Dan Alley	Be By You	Luke Combs
56	55	Sam Banks	Be By You	Luke Combs
57	56	Nick Walsh	Be By You	Luke Combs
58	52	Jameson Rodgers	McArthur	HARDY, Eric Church, Morgan Wallen & Tim McGraw
59	75	Lydia Vaughan	Don't Tell On Me Empty Words	Jason Aldean Corey Kent
60	64	Michael Tyler	Rocky Mountain Low	Corey Kent (feat. Koe Wetzel)

Newly Added Job Listings

Ten Ten Music Group: Music Publishing Coordinator

Ten Ten Music Group is seeking a self-motivated, detail-oriented Part-Time Publishing Coordinator with at least one year of publishing experience, with potential to grow into a full-time role. This position focuses on publishing administration and requires strong organizational skills. Responsibilities include managing composition registrations and audits with PROs and mechanical societies, tracking and cleaning song metadata, and organizing music in DISCO with accurate tagging. The role also supports A&R by coordinating writer calendars, identifying new artists, songwriters, and producers, pitching catalog songs for sync opportunities, and identifying emerging industry trends. Candidates should be adaptable, proficient in Microsoft Office, Google Workspace, Outlook, and DISCO, and take ownership of tasks while improving processes.

Contact: joe@tntenmusic.com

All job listings are free-to-list and will be posted for 60 days. Listings are accepted and published at the discretion of MusicRow. To submit a listing, use the [MusicRow Listings Submission Form](#).

CALENDAR

Single/Track Releases And Radio Add Dates

April 24

Morgan Wallen & Ella Langley/I Can't Love You Anymore
Hudson Westbrook/Backwards/River House Artists/Warner Records Nashville
Dylan Scott/Slow Down Ol' Son/Curb Records
Carly Pearce/You Can Have Him/Blue Highway Records
Waylon Wyatt/Dead Man Walking/Music Soup/Darkroom Records
Braxton Keith/Don't No More/Warner Records Nashville
Ingrid Andress/Tattoos/Warner Records Nashville
Timmy McKeever/Wrong With Me/Big Loud Records
Myles Morgan/Batting 1.000
Cody Lohden/Drinks Can Drink/DeVile Records
Bryan Ruby/Room To Breathe
Emma Smalley/Heading West/Santa Anna Nashville
DearLee Keim/Dealing With Demons/Santa Anna Nashville

April 27

The Red Clay Strays/Demons In Your Choir/RCA Records
STELLA LEFTY/Boston/Atlantic Outpost
Kip Moore/Levee
Tim & The Glory Boys/If I Go Missin'/Buckaroo Records
Jacob Kackworth/What Took You So Long/MCA
Lakelin Lemmings/Get Around Boy/QHMG/Quartz Hill Records
Danny Kensy/Mama's Recipe/YEP Records
Celeste Marie Wilson/Jesus, Tequila, & Whiskey/Little Dipper Records

Album/EP Releases

April 24

Noah Kahan/*The Great Divide*/Mercury Records
Jason Aldean/*Songs About Us*/BBR Music Group/BMG
Jackson Dean/*Magnolia Sage*/Blue Highway Records
Elijah Scott/*In A Bar Somewhere*/Santa Anna Nashville
Ringo Starr/*Long Long Road*/UMe
2 Lane Summer/*Flawless*/QHMG/Quartz Hill Records
Spencer Bandy/*Ends With Us*/Santa Anna Nashville
Krislyn Arthurs/*Honky Tonk PhD*

May 1

Kacey Musgraves/*Middle Of Nowhere*/Lost Highway
ERNEST/*Deep Blue*/Big Loud Records
Tauren Wells/*Breathe On It*
Austin Snell/*Colors*/River House Artists/Warner Records Nashville
Southall/*Kinfolk*
Emily Nenni/*Movin' Shoes*/New West Records
Rita Wilson/*Sound of a Woman*
Ashley Anne/*Generational Heartbreak*
Alex Hall/*Turn This Love Around*/Yeehall Records/Blue Harbor Music

CALENDAR

Industry Events

April 24-26

Stagecoach Festival

May 17

61st Annual ACM Awards

Upcoming Nashville Concerts

April 23

Hunter Hayes/The Evergreen Tour/Brooklyn Bowl

Robyn Hitchcock/Live and Electric/The Basement East

Lee Fields & The Expressions/EXIT/IN

Gatlin/The Blue Room

Fantastic Cat/Cannery Hall (Row One Stage)

April 24

The Maine/I Love You But... I Chose The Maine/Marathon Music Works

Driveways/The Basement East

Kid Congo Powers & The Pink Monkey Birds/The Blue Room

Jack The Underdog/Cannery Hall (Row One Stage)

April 25

Hayley Williams/Ryman Auditorium

Microwave/"Much Love" 10 Year Anniversary Tour/Brooklyn Bowl

Electric Feels/Cannery Hall (Mainstage)

In Color/The Basement East

Gorilla Zoe/EXIT/IN

Howie Day/City Winery

Ritt Momney/The Blue Room

Various Artists/Nashville miniFEST/Cannery Hall (Row One Stage)

April 26

Crowder/The Pinnacle

Snarky Puppy/Ryman Auditorium

The Gray Havens/Cannery Hall (Row One Stage)

April 27

Hayley Williams/Ryman Auditorium

Two Feet/The Next Steps Tour/Marathon Music Works

Tripping Daisy/The Basement East

Virginia Man x Sun Child/Cannery Hall (Row One Stage)

April 28

Hayley Williams/Ryman Auditorium

Chameleons/Arctic Moon Tour/The Basement East

Armand Hammer/The Blue Room