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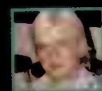
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Good evening and thank you for joining us at the *44th Annual Academy of Country Music Awards*. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to welcome you to Las Vegas and Country Music's Party of the Year™, where we are thrilled to honor the very best and brightest talents in the country community and celebrate the music we all love. It's been an incredible and innovative year at the Academy and tonight will be another brilliant culmination of the work that's been going on all year round.

One development I'm especially pleased to announce is the launch of the Academy's newly rebranded charitable arm, ACM Lifting Lives™. While this philanthropy (formerly known as the Academy of Country Music Charitable Fund) is a longstanding part of the Academy, it has taken on a new life under the Lifting Lives name and a clear focus on improving lives through music. Tonight, Trace Adkins and the West Point Glee Club will be dedicating their special performance to Wounded Warrior Project, an extraordinary organization that was chosen by Lifting Lives for support. Thanks to Trace and everyone involved in continuing the Academy's charitable work, as well as the organizations that strive every day to lift people up with music.

The Academy continues to develop in the digital world – with fan voting for Entertainer of the Year being such a success last year, we have also engaged fans in selecting our Top New Artist winner this year and have made great strides promoting the Academy's presence through other media online, on screen and on stage. Tomorrow night, the Academy will tape its first-ever Artist of the Decade television special, *George Strait – ACM Artist of the Decade All Star Concert*, which will air May 27th on CBS. And this is just the beginning! I look forward to another year of making history and finding new initiatives that bring the best of country music to increasingly wider audiences.

I want to thank Bob Romeo and his dedicated staff for putting on a great show every year and would like to recognize David Young for his 20 years of service to the Academy. Although we will miss him, I wish David all the best as he retires from here and heads for new horizons. Additional thanks to our amazing volunteers and to Mark Prows and his staff for their continued hospitality at the MGM Grand Garden Arena. And, of course, much appreciation goes to our sponsors and Lifting Lives donors for their continued financial support.

In my last year as Chairman, I'd like to acknowledge the incredibly talented and diverse members of our Board of Directors. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to work with everyone and I know the Academy will be in good hands next year as President John Grady takes the reins. Good luck, John!

Here's to another record-breaking year at the *44th Annual Academy of Country Music Awards* – enjoy the show!

Sincerely,  
Rod Essig  
Chairman





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A MESSAGE FROM

## THE PRESIDENT OF THE ACADEMY OF COUNTRY MUSIC®

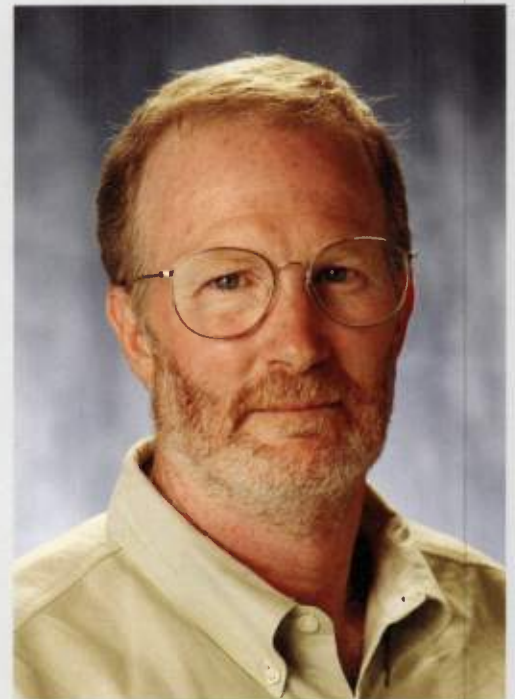
Since its founding in 1964, the Academy of Country Music has existed to promote country music and its makers, as well as bridge the gap between the professional industry and the loyal audience that keeps it alive. That mission continues today as we strive to adapt ourselves to the ever-changing world of entertainment and embrace new styles and technologies while still remaining true to the great traditions of country music. The Academy has always been proud of its reputation as a progressive organization and the synergy of our inventive board of directors, staff, members and partners culminates tonight at the *44th Annual Academy of Country Music Awards*.

The Academy's mission is three-fold: we exist to enhance the careers of both established and upcoming country artists, to advance the music industry as a whole and to uplift our communities with the powerful music in which we believe. By honoring the achievements of artists and offering them national exposure on television at the *Academy of Country Music Awards*, we acknowledge the success of the brightest stars and foster the rise of new ones. The show also promotes the country music industry on a national scale and encourages the growth and expansion of the country format. And finally, our charitable fund ACM Lifting Lives™ takes our message and resources out into our communities and helps people, causes and organizations in need. This is where we truly see the healing power of music.

Our chairman, Rod Essig, has done a spectacular job steering this great organization and I am proud to continue his good work next year. Many thanks to our entire Board of Directors, to Executive Director Bob Romeo and his staff, to Orly Adelson and everyone at Dick Clark Productions and to Jack Sussman and his team at CBS for always moving forward and reinventing what is truly Country Music's Party of the Year™. Let's keep the party going in 2009 and beyond!

Thanks for joining us during the Week Vegas Goes Country® and welcome to the *44th Annual Academy of Country Music Awards*. Have a great night, enjoy yourselves and please make plans to join us again next year. We are sure to have some surprises for you...

Sincerely,  
John Grady  
President





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Musician of the Year  
Nominees:

Eddie Bayers \* Bruce Bouton \* Tom Bukovac \* Chad Cromwell \* Jelly Roll Johnson \* Paul Leim \* Steve Nathan  
Limmie Lee Shas \* Lee Snixey \* Ilya Toshinsky \* Lonnie Wilson \* Glenn Worf



A MESSAGE FROM

## THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ACADEMY OF COUNTRY MUSIC

Welcome to the *44th Annual Academy of Country Music Awards*! It's hard to believe we're already here again after such a momentous show last May. With an earlier show date this year, the Academy staff and I have been hard at work with our partners at Dick Clark Productions and our CBS affiliates to create an even more spectacular awards show and put a whole new spin on the *Week Vegas Goes Country®* for artists and fans to enjoy.

The week leading up to the awards show has been more exciting than ever, with several fun-filled new events and freshly designed traditions. During ACM Weekend on Fremont Street Experience, we took our annual New Artists' Show to Fremont Street, showcasing country music's brightest rising stars and Top New Artist nominees along with our all-new "Divas Downtown" event featuring some of the hottest female acts in country music. The annual Chairman's Ride (formerly the Charity Motorcycle Ride) and the Celebrity Golf Classic took place on Saturday, April 4th and raised significant funds for the Academy's re-branded charitable arm, *Lifting Lives™*. And of course, we'll round out the week with yet another smashing All-Star Jam after the awards show tonight – you never know who will show up on stage, so get your ticket out and be sure to stop by!

After the success we had with inviting our fans to participate in voting for Entertainer of the Year last year, the Academy also gave fans the power to vote for this year's Top New Artist award. Fans helped choose this year's Top New Male Vocalist, Top New Female Vocalist and Top New Vocal Duo or Group, who will compete tonight in the brand-new, fan-voted award category, Top New Artist. The Academy cherishes country music fans and welcomes their increased involvement this year, and is happy to offer even more exposure to new artists through its partnership with GAC.

Following the *44th Annual Academy of Country Music Awards*, the Academy will tape its first-ever ACM Artist of the Decade television special on Monday, April 6th honoring this year's recipient George Strait. I hope you will join us as some of the greatest stars in country music pay tribute to the "King of Country" at *George Strait – ACM Artist of the Decade All Star Concert*. Proceeds from this show will also go toward *Lifting Lives™*, which the Academy is proud to re-introduce as it celebrates the power of music with *George Strait – ACM Artist of the Decade* and the *44th Annual Academy of Country Music Awards*.

I would like to give special thanks to Trace Adkins and the West Point Glee Club for participating in the launch of our *Lifting Lives* program with a special performance during the awards show that I know you'll love no matter where you're sitting. Many thanks as well to all of the artists and other professionals who have given their time and talent to make Country Music's Party of the Year™ and the *Week Vegas Goes Country®* the best country music has to offer – thanks to Jason Aldean and LeAnn Rimes for headlining our Fremont Street concerts, Montgomery Gentry and Toby Keith for heading up the Chairman's Ride, Rascal Flatts for hosting the Celebrity Golf Classic – and of course, to Reba McEntire, for being the glue that holds our great show together.

During a time in which a lot of folks could use a good boost, here's to *Lifting Lives* and the healing power of music. I hope you are both uplifted and entertained at the *44th Annual Academy of Country Music Awards* – thanks for coming and enjoy the show!

Sincerely,  
Bob Romeo  
Executive Director







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## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF ACM LIFTING LIVES

**R**emember it! The 11 months between the Academy of Country Music's incredible 2008 awards show and this year's similar effort mark the time that the Academy of Country Music's charitable efforts came of age. For those folks who have labored so hard to build our charities, it is another year that brought smiles and celebration.

For starters, we have re-branded the Academy of Country Music Charitable Fund. We are now ACM Lifting Lives™. Lifting Lives now stands as one of the three pillars of the Academy. The Academy of Country Music is improving lives through music for its fans, the industry and the community. The ACM Awards show is a premiere television property for fans and both new and established artists. Through the show, the Academy re-invests in the community to support programs that improve lives through the power of music.

Tonight, you'll see how this is done. Trace Adkins and the West Point Glee Club pay emotional tribute to and urge your support for American veterans. This is what Lifting Lives is all about! We are bringing together the country music industry, artists, and fans in order to create a better environment for people to help themselves; to lift lives.

Lifting Lives also now brings under its auspices the Home Depot Humanitarian Award, the Academy's quiet work for the Make-A-Wish Foundation, the Diane Holcomb Emergency Relief Fund for people in the country music community who face an immediate need for help, and many other giving projects undertaken by the ACM. And this year was no different for our grant program in that Lifting Lives made grants to a number of organizations who provide music therapy and music education, except that we tripled the total grant dollars distributed! In doing so, we reached out and gave to organizations spanning the country.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this year the Academy of Country Music made an extraordinary recurring financial commitment to Lifting Lives. We owe a big thank you from the bottom of our hearts to the Academy's Board of Directors, which understands that Lifting Lives is at the heart of the Academy. We are grateful.

We also owe a huge debt of gratitude to every person who purchases a ticket to the awards show and its surrounding events. It is you who are ultimately making the dream of Lifting Lives come true. We honor you and pledge to be good stewards of your trust.

I am on the home stretch of my term as Chairman of the Board of Lifting Lives. This will be my last year. So, let me say thank you to each of you who have helped champion the forging and development of Lifting Lives. From the ACM Strategic Planning Committee, to the Academy of Country Music's Board of Directors, the Academy staff, and the Lifting Lives staff and board, I am humbled and appreciative. Thanks for letting me stand on your shoulders and participate in making a dream come true.

Now, all together everybody, let's build something remarkable.

Sincerely,  
Dennis Lord  
Chairman







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A MESSAGE FROM

# THE PRODUCERS OF THE ACADEMY OF COUNTRY MUSIC® AWARDS



dick clark productions

Forty-four years of the *Academy of Country Music Awards* is an accomplishment and a true testament to the power of the show. As a nation, we have experienced great times and challenging times and, through it all, country music has prevailed; telling stories that make us think, laugh and sometimes shed a tear or two. You'll see it all here tonight in our spectacular performances.

LeAnn Rimes will be honored this evening with the ACM/The Home Depot Humanitarian Award. We are also fortunate to be able to hear a powerful performance by Trace Adkins and The West Point Glee Club of his song "Til the Last Shot's Fired." dick clark productions and the Academy of Country Music will donate all profits of this downloadable performance to the Wounded Warrior Project via the Academy's charitable arm, Lifting Lives™. The Wounded Warrior Project helps those injured in the line of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan.

On Monday night, an all-star concert will honor George Strait as the ACM Artist of the Decade for his astonishing musical accomplishments and contributions. This historic weekend could not happen without the tireless efforts of our partners at the Academy of Country Music, the entire team at dick clark productions, the great city of Las Vegas, our friends at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino and our broadcast partners at CBS. You are in for some amazing moments tonight. Thanks to everyone for being here and have a great show!

*Sincerely,*

Orly Adelson

President/Executive Producer

R.A. Clark

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Barry Adelman

Producer





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# Meet the Host

44th Academy of Country Music Awards

## Reba McEntire

**Ed Sullivan, Johnny Carson, Dick Clark, Bob Barker, Oprah... Reba McEntire. Great hosts have always been the glue of great shows and tonight country music's red-headed Renaissance woman takes the reins of the *Academy of Country Music Awards* for an unprecedented 11th time.**

While some might tire after so many years of performing the integral role of host, Reba graces the stage every time with renewed wit, energy and of course – a spectacular new wardrobe.

"The biggest challenge of being the host of the ACM Awards is finding the right outfits for the special night!" McEntire says. "The next biggest challenge is saying the right thing about each artist I include in my monologue. I work with some great writers to make sure the script is as current and fresh as we can make it."

She is undisputedly a pro at every project she tackles, from hosting the awards show to screen acting, stage acting, designing her multiple REBA brand products and turning out the tunes that have made her an icon in the country music industry. This year, the Academy of Country Music's most-awarded female vocalist has returned to the recording studio after an almost six-year hiatus and is gearing up for the release of her debut album on The Valory Music Co. label, which she joined late last year. Reba's much-anticipated music project will be the 25th studio album of her expansive career.

In addition to her hosting duties, Reba is also a nominee tonight. "Cowgirls Don't Cry," her duet with friends Brooks & Dunn, will compete for Vocal Event of the Year. The singer herself was one of the "three red-heads" that inspired Ronnie Dunn and Terry McBride to write the poignant song.

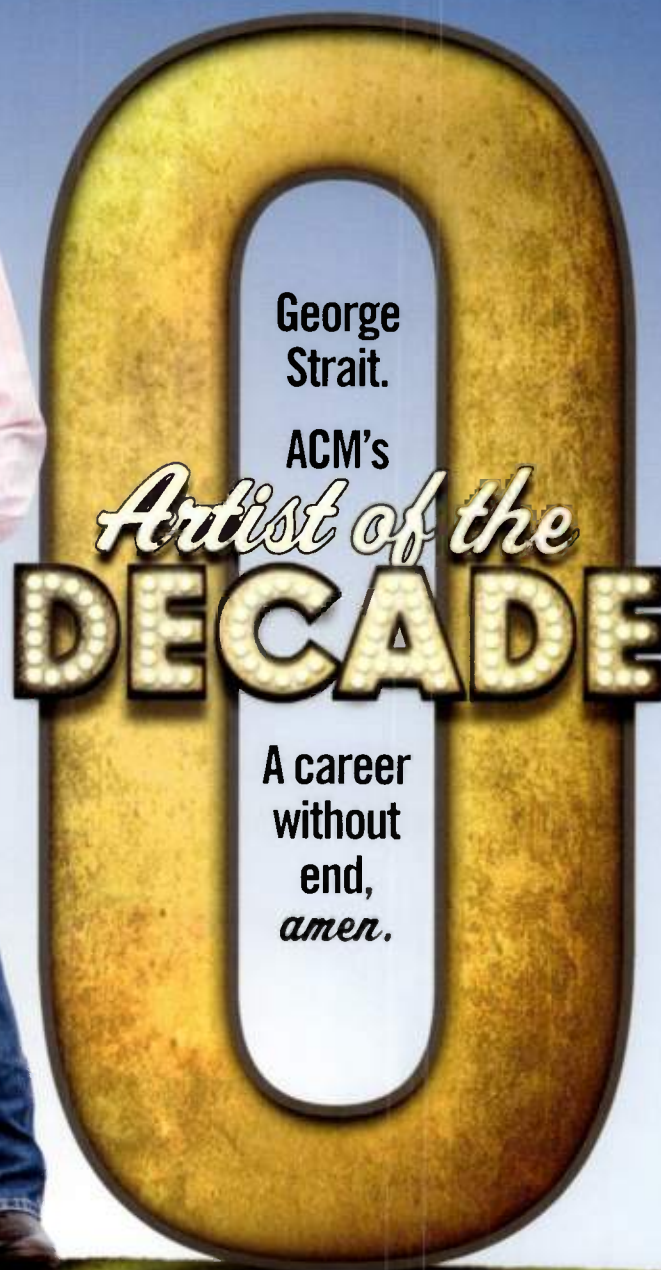
"They of course both have red-headed daughters, so they said I was the third red head that inspired them to write it," Reba said. "I just love Brooks & Dunn. I like their personalities. They're totally different as night and day. So are their wives. I get along with all four of them. We've toured for years together and then we've hung out together. It's just like family. When I go back to Nashville I want to see them 'cause I miss them a lot. And so being out here in L.A. as much as we are I miss my musical family, and Brooks & Dunn and their families and organization is a big part of that musical family for me."

Reba is a 12-time ACM Award winner, including Entertainer of the Year and seven wins for Top Female Vocalist. She was named the ACM/The Home Depot Humanitarian Award winner in 2001.



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We proudly congratulate *George Strait*  
and all the nominees at the  
2009 Academy of Country Music Awards.



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Country music star Trace Adkins and the West Point Glee Club are teaming up tonight to help unveil the Academy of Country Music's newly re-branded charitable fund, ACM Lifting Lives™, in a special performance of Adkins' song "Til the Last Shot's Fired" during the 44th Annual Academy of Country Music Awards ceremony. Dedicated to the servicemen and women seated in the front rows of the arena, the song will be available to fans at iTunes and all profits from downloads will benefit the Wounded Warrior Project (WWP), an organization that provides extensive support to troops who have been wounded in combat and has been selected this year by Lifting Lives.

A long-time supporter of the U.S. military, Adkins traveled to Iraq and Afghanistan last year where he and his band performed for more than 10,000 United States military personnel in partnership with the USO. "Til the Last Shot's Fired," from Adkins' current album *X*, delves into the topics of military history and personal sacrifice and features the West Point Glee Club on the song.

Lifting Lives is the newly-re-branded but longstanding charitable arm of the Academy of Country Music, which works to improve lives through music. The philanthropy was previously referred to as the Academy of Country Music Charitable Fund (ACMCF). The Academy would like to thank the individuals and organizations whose generosity made this special moment possible.

To learn more about the Wounded Warrior Project and how you can help, visit [www.woundedwarriorproject.org](http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org).





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Gale Johansen  
Donna and Larry Lapow  
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Dawn Nepp  
Kevin P. O' Keefe, Esq.  
William R. Pang

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## February 11, 2009 Country Music Hall of Fame – Nashville

It was a 6:45 a.m. call time at the Country Music Hall of Fame's Ford Theater, but you couldn't tell it was the break of dawn from the four ladies reading nominees for the 44<sup>th</sup> Academy of Country Music Awards. Julianne Hough, Kellie Pickler, LeAnn Rimes and Jessica Simpson were all glammed out and ready when the CBS Early Show beamed the nominations press conference live across the country.

When the names were read, both Hough and Rimes were rewarded for getting up early. Hough received her first ACM nomination for Top New Female Vocalist and Rimes was named this year's ACM/The Home Depot Humanitarian Award winner.

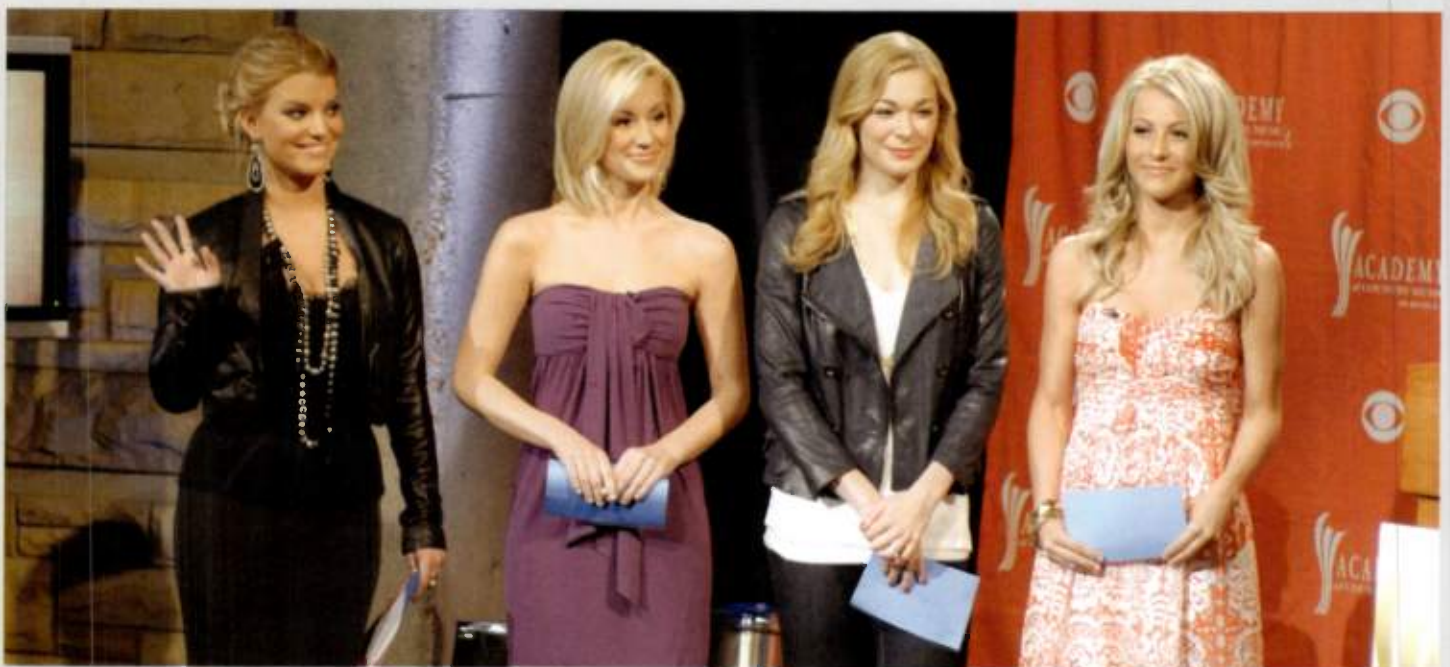
"I was shocked! Most people don't get things past me before I walk onto live television," Rimes said shortly after hearing the news. "It never crossed my mind that I'd be recognized for my humanitarian work."

For the 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Academy of Country Music Awards, Brad Paisley and George Strait are the top nominees, each receiving a total of six nods for their work in the 2008 calendar year. Paisley's name appears in multiple categories, including Album of the Year, Single Record of the Year, Song of the Year and Video of the Year for his No. 1 hit "Waitin' On A Woman" and Vocal Event of the Year for his

collaboration with Keith Urban on "Start A Band." Also receiving his fifth ACM nomination for Top Male Vocalist, Paisley will be vying for his third consecutive win in that category and returning for the second time as a nominee for the prestigious Entertainer of the Year award.

With an impressive 80 ACM nominations now under his belt, George Strait returns this year with six nods in five categories: Album of the Year (*Troubadour*) Song of the Year (for "I Saw God Today"), Video of the Year (for "Troubadour"), Top Male Vocalist and Entertainer of the Year. Strait has won 19 ACM awards to date, including five Top Male Vocalist trophies and the 1989 Entertainer of the Year award. He will also be honored as the Academy's Artist of the Decade in a television special that will air later this year on CBS.

Also receiving multiple nods include Heidi Newfield and Jamey Johnson with five each, reigning Entertainer of the Year Kenny Chesney, reigning Top Female Vocalist Carrie Underwood and reigning Top New Female Vocalist Taylor Swift with four each, and Keith Urban with three. Other artists receiving multiple nominations this year include Trace Adkins, Brooks & Dunn, Miranda Lambert, Little Big Town, Montgomery Gentry, The Lost Trailers, James Otto, Jake Owen and Sugarland.



Simpson, Pickler, Rimes and Hough announce the 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Academy of Country Music Awards nominees.



# Nominations

44th Academy of Country Music Awards





# Nominees

## ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR

Kenny Chesney  
Brad Paisley  
George Strait  
Carrie Underwood  
Keith Urban

## TOP MALE VOCALIST

Kenny Chesney  
Toby Keith  
Brad Paisley  
George Strait  
Keith Urban

## TOP FEMALE VOCALIST

Miranda Lambert  
Heidi Newfield  
Taylor Swift  
Carrie Underwood  
Lee Ann Womack

## TOP VOCAL GROUP

Lady Antebellum  
Little Big Town  
Randy Rogers Band  
Rascal Flatts  
The Lost Trailers

## TOP VOCAL DUO

Big & Rich  
Brooks & Dunn  
Joey + Rory  
Montgomery Gentry  
Sugarland

## TOP NEW MALE VOCALIST

Jamey Johnson  
James Otto  
Jake Owen \*\*\*winner

## TOP NEW FEMALE VOCALIST

Sarah Buxton  
Julianne Hough \*\*\*winner  
Ashton Shepherd

## TOP NEW VOCAL DUO OR GROUP

Eli Young Band  
The Lost Trailers  
Zac Brown Band \*\*\*winner

## TOP NEW ARTIST

Julianne Hough  
Jake Owen  
Zac Brown Band

**ALBUM OF THE YEAR** [Award to  
Composer(s)/Publisher(s)/Artist(s)]

**BACK WHEN I KNEW IT ALL**  
Montgomery Gentry (Columbia)  
Produced by: Blake Chancey

## CARNIVAL RIDE

Carrie Underwood (19/Arista Nashville)  
Produced by: Mark Bright

## FEARLESS

Taylor Swift (Big Machine)  
Produced by: Scott Borchetta, Nathan Chapman, Taylor Swift

## THAT LONESOME SONG

Jamey Johnson (Mercury)  
Produced by: The Kent Hardly Playboys

## TROUBADOUR

George Strait (MCA)  
Produced by: Tony Brown and George Strait

**SINGLE RECORD OF THE YEAR** [Award to  
Artist(s)/Producer(s)/Record Company]

## "GUNPOWDER & LEAD"

Miranda Lambert, Produced by Frank Liddell and Mike Wrucke  
Columbia

## "IN COLOR"

Jamey Johnson, Produced by The Kent Hardly Playboys  
Mercury

## "JOHNNY AND JUNE"

Heidi Newfield, Produced by Tony Brown  
Asylum-Curb

## "WAITIN' ON A WOMAN"

Brad Paisley, Produced by Frank Rogers  
Arista Nashville

## "YOU'RE GONNA MISS THIS"

Trace Adkins, Produced by Frank Rogers  
Capitol Nashville

**SONG OF THE YEAR** [Award to  
Composer(s)/Publisher(s)/Artist(s)]

## "I SAW GOD TODAY"

George Strait  
Composers: Rodney Clawson, Monty Criswell,  
Wade Kirby  
Publishers: Big Red Toe Music (BMI), Blind Mule Music (BMI),  
Extremely Loud Music (BMI), Steel Wheels Music (BMI)

## "IN COLOR"

Jamey Johnson  
Composers: Jamey Johnson, Lee Thomas Miller,  
James Otto  
Publishers: Big Gassed Hitties (BMI), Eldorotto Music  
Publishing (BMI), EMI Blackwood Music, Inc. (BMI), Lucky  
Thumb Music (BMI), New Songs of Sea Gayle (BMI), Noah's  
Little Boat Music (BMI)

## "JOHNNY AND JUNE"

Heidi Newfield  
Composers: Deanna Bryant, Heidi Newfield,  
Stephony Smith  
Publishers: Amylase Music (ASCAP), Big Hit Makers Music  
(BMI), Rainy Graham Publishing LLC (BMI), Souljet Music  
(BMI), Tell Texas Tune III (ASCAP)

## "WAITIN' ON A WOMAN"

Brad Paisley  
Composers: Don Sampson, Wynn Varble  
Publishers: Emma and Maddie Music (ASCAP), Sea Gayle  
Music LLC (ASCAP), Warner-Tamerlane Publishing  
Corp. (BMI)

## "YOU'RE GONNA MISS THIS"

Trace Adkins  
Composers: Ashley Gorley and Lee Thomas Miller  
Publishers: Music of Windswept (ASCAP), Noah's Little Boat  
Music (BMI), Songs of Combustion (ASCAP), Songs of Sea  
Gayle (BMI)

**VIDEO OF THE YEAR** [Award to  
Producer(s)/Director(s)/Artist(s)]

## "JOHNNY AND JUNE"

Heidi Newfield  
Producer: Karen Martin  
Director: Eric Welch

## "JUST A DREAM"

Carrie Underwood  
Producer: Randy Brewer  
Director: Roman White

## "LOVE STORY"

Taylor Swift  
Producer: Trent Hardville  
Director: Trey Fanjoy

## "TROUBADOUR"

George Strait  
Producer: Dominic Cancilla  
Director: Trey Fanjoy

## "WAITIN' ON A WOMAN"

Brad Paisley  
Producer: Mark Kalbfeld, Jim Shea  
Director: Jim Shea, Peter Tilden

**VOCAL EVENT OF THE YEAR** [Award to  
Artist(s)/Producer(s)/Record Company]

## "ANOTHER TRY"

Josh Turner Featuring Trisha Yearwood  
Produced by: Frank Rogers  
MCA Nashville

## "COWGIRLS DON'T CRY"

Brooks & Dunn Featuring Reba McEntire  
Produced by: Kix Brooks, Tony Brown, Ronnie Dunn  
Arista Nashville

## "DOWN THE ROAD"

Kenny Chesney With Mac McAnally  
Produced by: Buddy Cannon, Kenny Chesney  
Blue Chair/BNA

## "LIFE IN A NORTHERN TOWN"

Sugarland Featuring Little Big Town & Jake Owen  
Produced by: Not listed  
Mercury



## "START A BAND"

Brad Paisley Duet With Keith Urban  
Produced by: Frank Rogers  
Arista Nashville

## Industry Awards

### VENUE OF THE YEAR

DTE Energy Music Theatre – Clarkston, MI  
Meadowbrook US Cellular Pavilion – Gilford, NH  
The Ryman Auditorium – Nashville, TN\*\*\*winner  
Time Warner Cable Music Pavilion at Walnut Creek – Raleigh, NC  
Verizon Wireless Virginia Beach Amphitheatre – Virginia Beach, VA

### NIGHTCLUB OF THE YEAR

Buck Owens' Crystal Palace – Bakersfield, CA  
Coyote Joe's – Charlotte, NC  
Joe's Bar – Chicago, IL\*\*\*winner  
The Grizzly Rose – Denver, CO  
Wild Bill's – Duluth, GA

### CASINO OF THE YEAR

Casino Rama – Orillia, Ontario  
Chumash Casino – Santa Ynez, CA  
Mystic Lake – Minneapolis, MN  
The Peppermill Resorts at Wendover – West Wendover, NV  
Turning Stone Casino – Verona, NY\*\*\*winner

### DON ROMEO TALENT BUYER OF THE YEAR

Todd Boltin – Variety Attractions  
Gary Osier – Gary Osier Presents  
Fran Romeo – Romeo Entertainment\*\*\*winner  
David Snowden – Triangle Talent  
Suzanne Wilson – Wilson Events

### PROMOTER OF THE YEAR

Ben Farrell – Varnell Enterprises  
Darin Lashinsky – Outback Concerts  
Louis Messina – The Messina Group\*\*\*winner  
Steve Moore – AEGLive  
Gary Weinberger – Red Mountain Entertainment

## MBI Awards

### PRODUCER OF THE YEAR

Tony Brown\*\*\*winner  
Buddy Cannon  
Nathan Chapman  
Dann Huff  
Frank Rogers

### AUDIO ENGINEER OF THE YEAR

Chuck Ainlay\*\*\*winner  
Greg Droman  
John Kelton  
Mills Logan  
Steve Marcantonio

### TOP BASS PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Mike Brignardello  
Dave Hungate  
Larry Paxton  
Jimmie Lee Sloas

Glenn Worf\*\*\*winner

### TOP PERCUSSIONIST/DRUMMER OF THE YEAR

Eddie Bayers  
Chad Cromwell  
Paul Leim  
Greg Morrow\*\*\*winner  
Lonnie Wilson

### TOP GUITARIST OF THE YEAR

Tom Bukovac\*\*\*winner  
J.T. Corenflos  
Kenny Greenberg  
Brett Mason  
Bryan Sutton

### TOP FIDDLE PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Larry Franklin  
Rob Hajacos  
Aubrey Haynie\*\*\*winner  
Joe Spivey  
Jonathan Yudkin

### TOP PIANO/KEYBOARD PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Tony Harrell  
John Hobbs  
John Jarvis  
Gordon Mote\*\*\*winner  
Steve Nathan

### TOP SPECIALTY INSTRUMENT(S) PLAYER

Eric Darken\*\*\*winner  
Rob Ickes  
Jelly Roll Johnson\*\*\*winner  
Randy Kohrs  
Ilya Toshinsky

### TOP STEEL GUITAR PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Bruce Bouton  
Dan Dugmore\*\*\*winner  
Steve Hinson  
Mike Johnson  
Russ Pahl

## RADIO AWARDS

### NATIONAL ON-AIR PERSONALITY

Blair Garner – After MidNite with Blair Garner  
Crook & Chase – Crook & Chase Countdown  
Danny Wright – Danny Wright All Night  
Lon Helton – Country Countdown USA\*\*\*winner

### ON-AIR PERSONALITY – MAJOR MARKET

KEEY (Minneapolis, MN) – Donna Valentine, Muss and Fish  
KSCS (Dallas, TX) – Dorsey Gang\*\*\*winner  
KSON (San Diego, CA) – Cliff & Company: Cliff, Morgan, Tanner and Tori  
KYGO (Denver, CO) – Kelly Ford & Mudflap McGrew with Ed Greene  
WIL (St. Louis, MO) – The Cornbread Show featuring Cornbread, Pat James, Producer Annie, Captain Mac Douglas & Father Harry Shroeder

### ON-AIR PERSONALITY – LARGE MARKET

WFMS (Indianapolis, IN) – JD Cannon\*\*\*winner  
WFMS (Indianapolis, IN) – Jim Denny, Deborah Honeycutt & Kevin Freeman  
WMIL (Milwaukee, WI) – Karen, Scott & Radar – The Moo Crew  
WTQR (Greensboro, NC) – Jeff Roper & Angie Ward  
WUBE (Cincinnati, OH) – Chris Carr & Amanda Orlando

### ON-AIR PERSONALITY – MEDIUM MARKET

WBBS (Syracuse, NY) – Tom and Becky B104.7 Morning Show  
WBCT (Grand Rapids, MI) – The Electric Barnyard with Broadway (and Crawl)  
KFDD (Wichita, KS) – Brian Pierce & Kellie Michaels  
WIVK (Knoxville, TN) – Gunner  
WTVK (Knoxville, TN) – Andy Ritchie, Alison West, Jimmy Holt\*\*\*winner

### ON-AIR PERSONALITY – SMALL MARKET

KUAD (Ft. Collins, CO) – Brian Gary and Todd Harding (The Good Morning Guys)  
WCTY (Norwich, CT) – Jimmy Lane and Shelly Martinez  
WFYR (Peoria, IL) – Rick Stephenson & Lisa Franks  
WOKQ (Dover, NH) – Mark & Danielle  
WYCT (Pensacola, FL) – Brent Lane and Dana Cervantes\*\*\*winner

### RADIO STATION – MAJOR MARKET

KMPS (Seattle, WA) Today's Country  
KYGO (Denver, CO) Denver's #1 For New Country  
WKLB (Boston, MA) Country 102.5  
WQYK (Tampa, FL) Tampa Bay's Country Station  
WSOC (Charlotte, NC) Charlotte's #1 Country\*\*\*winner

### RADIO STATION – LARGE MARKET

WFMS (Indianapolis, IN) The Country Station  
WMIL (Milwaukee, WI) Continuous Country Favorites of Yesterday and Today  
WQDR (Raleigh, NC) Today's Best Country  
WSIX (Nashville, TN) The Big 98 WSIX\*\*\*winner  
WUBE (Cincinnati, OH) Cincinnati's Country!

### RADIO STATION – MEDIUM MARKET

KFDD (Wichita, KS) Today's KFDD  
KUZZ (Bakersfield, CA) Bakersfield's Best Country  
WGNA (Albany, NY) Country 107.7  
WIVK (Knoxville, TN) Today's Best Music and the All-Time Country Legends\*\*\*winner  
WYRK (Buffalo, NY) Today's Country & Your All Time Favorites

### RADIO STATION – SMALL MARKET

WFYR (Peoria, IL) River Country  
WKXC (Augusta, GA) Number One for New Country and More Variety  
WXCL (Peoria, IL) Number One for New Country  
WXXQ (Rockford, IL) Rockford's Country  
WYCT (Pensacola, FL) Cat Country\*\*\*winner

## Nominated for Entertainer of the Year, Top Male Vocalist, Vocal Event of the Year

### WHAT WOULD YOU SAY WAS YOUR CAREER HIGHLIGHT OVER THE PAST YEAR?

KENNY: I think that it's a moment that you really can't define when you're on the stage with your band. Everything is magic and you know that you're connecting with a lot of people and there's this moment where you feel like it's almost like an out of body experience really. There were a couple of moments this year like that with me and the guys, and it was really a great feeling because it hadn't always been that way for us.

### BEING ON THE ROAD AND BEING ON STAGE—THAT SEEMS TO BE YOUR FAVORITE PLACE.

KENNY: Yeah, isn't that weird that the place where you feel most comfortable is in front of 20,000 people? That's the first time I've ever really thought about it, but it's true. I think that's where I feel most comfortable—when I'm in that moment and in the zone and I feel like that I have really made a difference in somebody's night.

### WHEN YOU'RE ON THE ROAD AND IT'S A SHOW DAY, WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE MOMENT OF THE DAY?

KENNY: My favorite moment of the whole day is when we leave the "vibe room." The vibe room is a place where me and the band and everybody get together with some radio people, family and friends and kind of wash away the day. It's a moment where we remember why we came. And we turn up a lot of music and we kind of get in our own little head space where we need to be. When I leave that room and walk to the stage, that anticipation kind of builds all day from the moment you wake up because in the back of your mind you know that moment is going to come when it's just you and there's nothing between you and the crowd but a song. That's it.



Photo credit: Glen Rose

### YOU'RE STILL BEING NOMINATED FOR YOUR WORK 10 YEARS AFTER YOU WON YOUR FIRST ACM AWARD. WHAT DOES BEING NOMINATED FOR ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR SAY TO YOU ABOUT THE MUSIC YOU'RE MAKING?

KENNY: Wow, has it been that long? Well, obviously it lets you know that you're doing something right. You're definitely not a one-year or one-hit wonder. That's good. That's the thing that I work the hardest on—entertaining. It's the thing that I spend all my time on, even my off time I'm always on the phone. I'm always thinking, "How are we going to make it not necessarily different, but more real?" That's what the nomination means to me is that all that stuff means something, and the people that we actually make our music for really get it and love it. That's all you can ask for as a singer and a songwriter and an artist and somebody that really loves what they do. It's the ultimate honor.

### YOU'RE ALSO NOMINATED FOR VOCAL EVENT FOR "DOWN THE ROAD" WITH MAC MCANALLY. THIS ISN'T THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE RECORDED HIS MUSIC. WHY DO YOU FEEL A KINSHIP TO HIM?

KENNY: Mac and I grew up very similar. Mac is from Alabama, and I grew up in East Tennessee. I know what that means in the lyric when it says "Mama wants to know if you're washed in the blood or just in the water." I grew up in a Baptist church. That song has been around a long time. I'm not the first guy to ever cut that song, but I think we cut it right. It was a gamble I felt like to release that song as a single production-wise. It was just me and Mac and a couple of guitars. The fact that that song was a number one record the way that it was just goes to show you that a great song and a great lyric will always be a very attractive thing. I learned a lot from that song. I've recorded a lot of records where there was this huge production and sometimes that can get lost. "Down the Road" was just a blessing really.

### WHAT CAN FANS EXPECT WITH YOUR NEW ALBUM THIS YEAR?

KENNY: Well, they can expect that we are going to hit the stage pretty hard. We've been in rehearsals now for about three weeks, and we've got like two or three new songs we've never played live that they're obviously going to hear. They're going to hear some older songs this year—songs that people maybe thought we forgot about. Maybe we did! But we're going to bring a couple of those back this year. We're thinking about doing maybe an acoustic set somewhere in the middle, only because "Down the Road" was such a good record for us. We don't know how we're going to work that in just yet, but I think that the fans are going to have fun this summer. If they're going to feed off of us at all, we know they are!



Pictured: The restyled Heritage Softail Classic.

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**Congratulations to all the ACM Award nominees.**

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## Nominated for Entertainer of the Year, Top Male Vocalist, Single of the Year, Song of the Year, Video of the Year and Vocal Event of the Year

**YOU'RE ONE OF THE TOP NOMINEES THIS YEAR WITH SIX NOMS. HOW DO YOU PROCESS BEING HONORED IN THAT WAY?**

BRAD: Anybody who does this for a living wants to be nominated for certain awards. Don't let them kid you! I really think that's true. If you're like me you grow up and you dream of walking up on that stage and accepting something. I'm always just happy to be in any category that they'll put me in, but to be in that many is always a little trippy. I'm just honored that it feels like people are recognizing something about what I'm doing, which is a great feeling because we work really hard.

**WHAT WAS THE CAREER HIGHLIGHT FOR YOU IN 2008?**

BRAD: I think the highlight for me would be just looking out and seeing these places [we've played] packed. I'm blown away by that. A lot of nights I will go out there with a couple of the guys in my band and sit in the stands while they pack up our junk. We just sit in the stands and have something to drink and watch them do it. It's just incredible in these times to look out and see a place that full of people, because you watch the news and they like to scare the daylight out of you. Every day something has gone wrong with the stock market and the housing crisis and the banks and car companies and people are losing jobs, and you hear all of this horrible stuff. Then, you look out and see a full arena and it's just packed. To look out and be able to entertain that many people on one given night, take them away from what's going on in their lives is really the thrill of a lifetime.

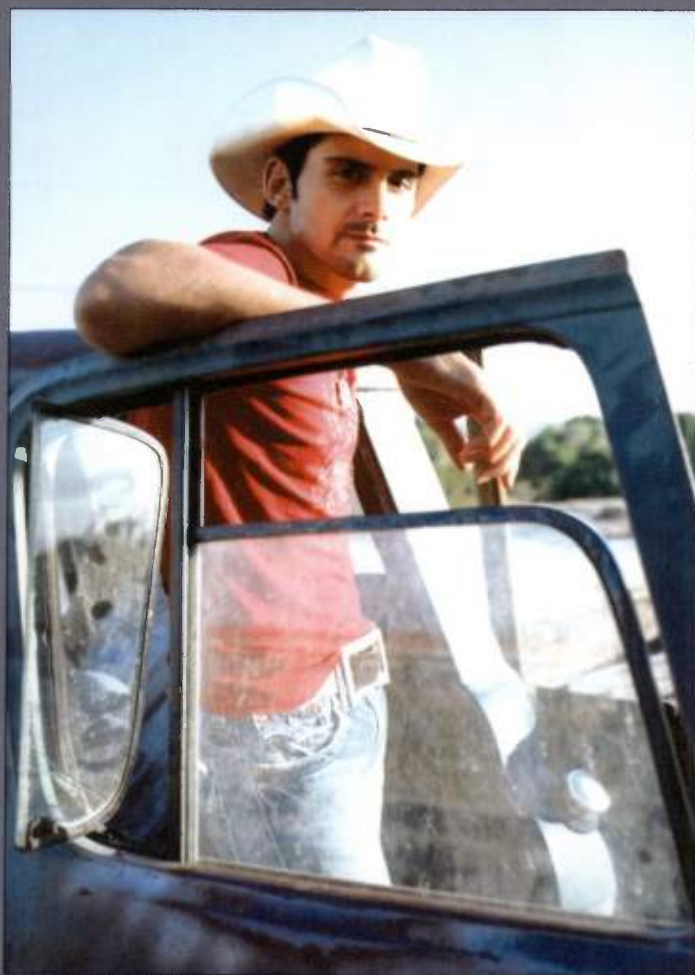


Photo credit: David McClister

**WHEN IT'S A SHOW DAY, WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE MOMENT OF THE WHOLE DAY?**

BRAD: Everything about the day of a concert is really wonderful in my opinion. There's this moment at the beginning of the show that we did last year where I pop up at the end of a ramp. There's a video of me that sings the first few lines of "Mud on the Tires," and then the band kicks in and I'm standing way down on the ramp. Everyone is looking at the video thinking that's me until I appear back there. I always look forward to that moment, because there's people that I can see in front row. I'm standing there right in front of them in the dark, and they are looking around me as I'm standing there going "I wish this guy could move so I could see Brad." That's always a thrill for me.

**"WAITIN' ON A WOMAN" IS NOMINATED FOR SINGLE, SONG AND VIDEO OF THE YEAR. HOW DOES THAT SONG RANK AS FAR AS CAREER SONGS FOR YOU?**

For me it ranks way up there in the top three to five songs I've ever recorded—as far as something that really impacted me and really speaks to me as a person. First of all the song is what everybody in this town would love to write on any given day. That wonderful twist of that situation where a man waits in a mall basically holding the purse—which you see in every mall in every city in the United States—and then waits for her in the afterlife. To take that and be able to have Andy Griffith play that role of the wise older man that tells you really the way to look at life, that was a very poetic thing to me. It couldn't have gone more storybook.

**YOU HAVE A NOMINATION FOR VOCAL EVENT WITH KEITH URBAN FOR "START A BAND." THAT VIDEO LOOKED LIKE YOU GUYS WERE HAVING SO MUCH FUN.**

BRAD: We really were. Videos usually aren't fun, but in this case we basically

just set up all this gear and played the thing and acted like idiots most of the day and did everything that we never thought we would ever do as far as goofing around—pulling the chord out of the guitar, twisting tuners while he's playing a solo. We really fed off one another in that one.





**BRAD PAISLEY**  
**AMERICAN SATURDAY NIGHT TOUR 2009**

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AND GOOD LUCK TONIGHT!**

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Nominated for Entertainer of the Year, Top Male Vocalist, Album of the Year, Song of the Year and Video of the Year

**IT'S SO AMAZING THAT YOU WON YOUR FIRST ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR AWARD IN 1990 (FOR 1989) AND YOU'RE STILL BEING NOMINATED IN THAT CATEGORY TODAY.**

GEORGE: In 1990? Wow, that's been a while ago! It feels great to think that I'm still relevant in that respect; that they're still voting for me as Entertainer of the Year. I mean I don't do that many dates anymore, but the dates that I do seem to be big. So if I was to win that, I'll sure take it. I don't know if I really deserve it, though.

**YOU ARE TIED AS THE TOP NOMINEE WITH SIX NOMINATIONS IN FIVE DIFFERENT CATEGORIES. WHICH CATEGORIES MEAN THE MOST TO YOU?**

GEORGE: It's nice to have a nomination in all these categories, and it's hard to say one of them is more important than the other. Of course, everybody wants to win Entertainer of the Year. I mean I can't lie to you! It would be wonderful to win the Entertainer of the Year award. I don't actually think that's gonna happen, but I would love to see *Troubadour* win as Album of the Year because I think it's one of my best efforts ever, and I think the songs are so great. The title cut, "Troubadour," is one of my favorite songs I've ever cut. So if I had to just pick one, and other than Entertainer, it would be that.

**THE TITLE CUT TO THE TROUBADOUR ALBUM SEEMS LIKE A VERY PERSONAL SONG. HOW ACCURATELY WOULD YOU SAY THAT REFLECTS YOUR LIFE RIGHT NOW?**

GEORGE: Well it was almost like it was written for me. I don't know that it was, but that's kind of the way I came to town. And I know that's the way I'm going to go out. So it pretty much says it all about me.

**WHAT WOULD YOU SAY WAS YOUR CAREER HIGHLIGHT LAST YEAR?**

GEORGE: I think cutting the album that I cut, doing *Troubadour*, because when I finished that



record I just knew we had something special—at least I thought we did. It's the second record I've made outside of Nashville, and that seems to be working for me. Not that I don't like cutting in Nashville, because I've cut what I think are some great records there and probably some day will again go back and cut there. But I'd say the highlight of the year was probably finishing that record.

**WHEN YOU'RE OUT ON THE ROAD AND IT'S A SHOW DATE FOR YOU. WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE MOMENT OF THE DAY?**

GEORGE: Well, most days are kind of slow. You don't really do a lot. You're just kind of waiting around for the show to come. My favorite time is walking on the stage, and then, I guess, walking off. Those are the two favorites.

**WALKING OFF?**

GEORGE: Well yeah, I mean because you're so pumped. You know you've given it your best shot. You got it all inside you and hopefully you got it all out!

**AND YOU KNOW YOU GET TO DO IT AGAIN.**

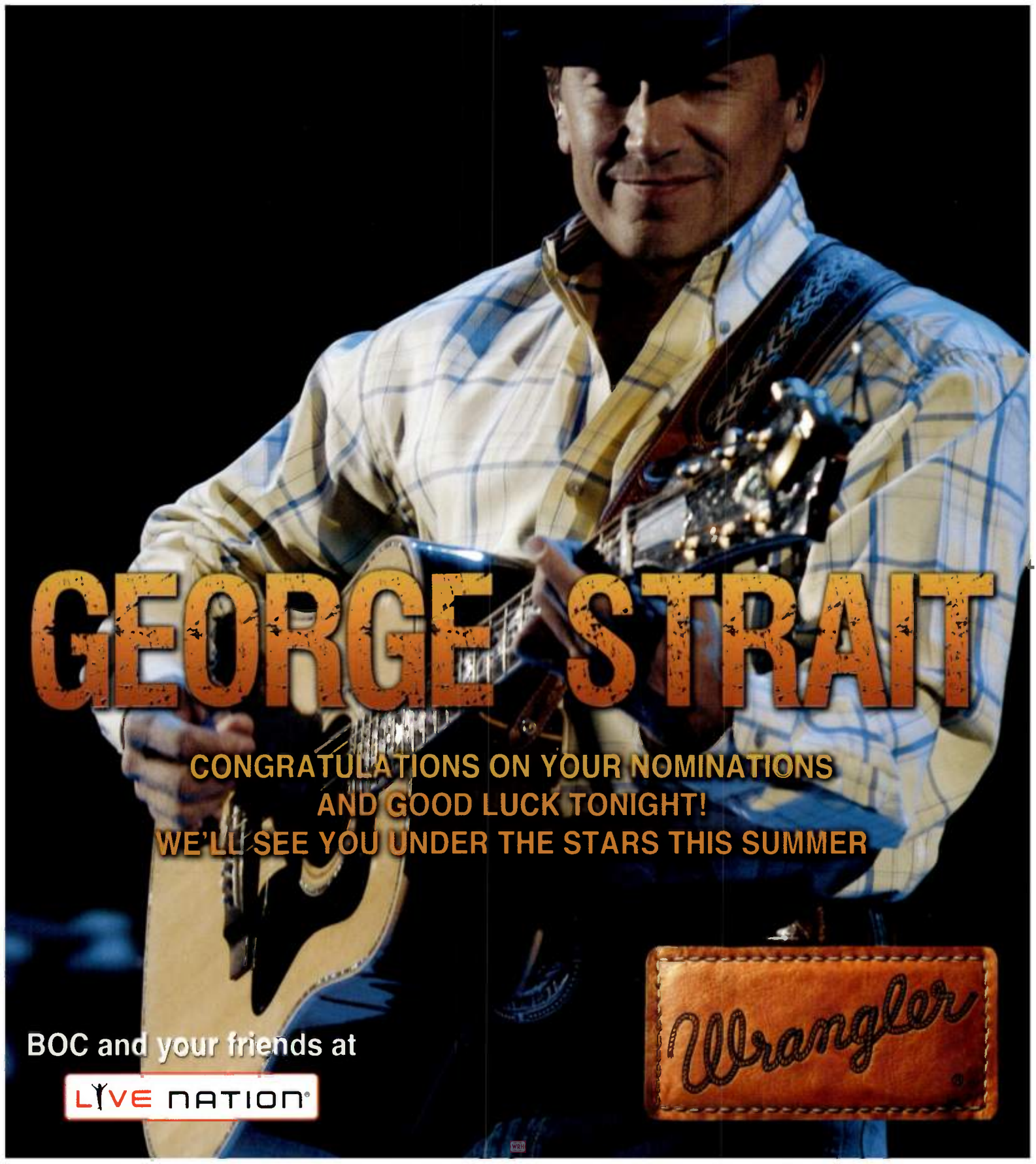
GEORGE: Yes, you know you get to do it again, but I think that you're almost just as pumped walking off stage as you are walking on. I know that sounds weird, but it's just people are clapping and going crazy, and it's just a good feeling.

**ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR IS A FAN VOTED AWARD. AND WE'VE ALL HAD MOMENTS WHEN WE WERE FANS OF SOMETHING. BEFORE YOU WERE DOING THIS PROFESSIONALLY, DO YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING OR ANYONE THAT YOU WERE A BIG FAN OF?**

GEORGE: I've always been crazy about Merle Haggard, and he's been a big influence on my career from early on. When I would pick a song, I'm going [to myself] "Do you think Merle would do that? I don't know if he would do it." When I was in the Army in Hawaii, I was just kind of cutting my teeth

on playing in the bars and stuff. Merle Haggard had come to the Schofield barracks where I was stationed and was playing Conroy Bowl there. And I don't know how many people Conroy Bowl seated or even if it's still there. I'm assuming that it is. But the Hag came and did a show there. I had a gig at the NCO Club, which wasn't very far from there. We'd take a break, and I'd run over to Conroy Bowl to see Hag. So, I'm walking over there for the first time and I'm walking by this limo, and the window is down and I look in, I think I see Merle in there. I'm going "I just saw Merle Haggard!" I was such a huge fan of his, and that was the first time I ever saw him.



A photograph of George Strait, a country music artist, wearing a cowboy hat and a plaid shirt, playing an acoustic guitar. The background is dark, and the lighting is focused on him.

# GEORGE STRAIT

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR NOMINATIONS  
AND GOOD LUCK TONIGHT!  
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## Nominated for Entertainer of the Year, Top Female Vocalist, Album of the Year and Video of the Year

**YOU ARE THE FIRST WOMAN NOMINATED IN THE ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR CATEGORY IN ALMOST 10 YEARS. HOW DID YOU REACT WHEN YOU FOUND OUT YOU WERE NOMINATED FOR ENTERTAINER?**

CARRIE: I don't remember where we were at but we were flying home that day, so I woke up really early to get all my stuff together and my manager called me and said "Congratulations." And I said "For what?" And she said "Entertainer of the Year." And I said, "Shut up!" I started crying. I was like "All right I've got to go. I've got to call my mom." It took me a while to actually let it sink in. I had to call a bunch of people first and share the good news.

**LOOKING BACK ON 2008, WHAT WAS THE BEST PART OF YOUR YEAR PROFESSIONALLY?**

CARRIE: Professionally my high point I think was being on a solo tour headlining for the first time. There were a whole lot of dates and people showed up and people had fun, and it was amazing. I learned a lot. I think if you looked at a show from the beginning of last year until the end of last year a lot happened and a lot changed, and I'm so blessed that I got to do that.

**WHEN YOU'RE ON TOUR AND IT'S A SHOW DAY, WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MOMENT OF THE WEEKEND?**

CARRIE: During the tour we had a lift that would lift me up the back of the stage and onto the stage. There's lights and music and stuff going on, but that moment—no matter what was happening, no matter if I was scrambling to get myself put together, if something had happened or if it had been a hectic day—all of that just went away because I would come up the lift and everybody would scream. That moment it was just kind of like, "There's nothing that could go wrong right

now." Of course, the lift could have stopped working. There was lots of stuff that could have gone wrong, but it felt like nothing could go wrong. It made me very happy, and I just had the biggest most stupid smile on my face that I could possibly have.

**WHEN YOU WERE GROWING UP WHAT'S THE CRAZIEST THING YOU EVER DID AS A FAN?**

CARRIE: I don't really think I did too many crazy things as a fan. I bought albums. I went to concerts. I was a member of a couple of fan clubs. I was a member of Bryan White's fan club, and he's the person that I've seen in concert before all this, before I was in the business. When I was younger he was the person I saw

in concert the most. I think I saw him three times. That was a lot for me. Saved my allowance!

**WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE WAY TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOUR FANS?**

CARRIE: I have a fan club site and I often go on. People will get on the message board and ask questions, stuff that they're curious about, and I go on whenever I can. As long as the questions are appropriate I'll answer anything. I'd say my fan club site is a really important tool for me to hang out with everybody. I love the polls too. They'll tell me their favorite songs and stuff like that. So it's also important for me to go and visit that and see what people are liking or disliking or wanting more of.

**NOW THAT YOU'RE OFF THE ROAD, ARE YOU WORKING ON NEW MUSIC? WRITING?**

CARRIE: Yes, I'm doing a lot of writing, and I'm going through a lot of stuff people have written for me. It's kind of a blank page right now. We have a lot of good stuff coming, but it's a long road ahead of us I think. I just want this album to be really special. This is number three, and—of course I

want every one to be special—but I think this one it's going to have a lot more heart. I'm still trying to figure out exactly who I am through all of this, and hopefully I can do that and express that more on this album.

**FOR THE ACM AWARDS, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO FOR YOUR DRESS?**

CARRIE: If anybody has followed any award show shenanigans of mine, they know I like to change clothes. So, I'll have something for the carpet, probably something to sit in the audience in and something obviously to perform in. It could be up to five outfits in one award show. That's how I roll. The guys don't have to worry about that!



Photo credit: Andrew Eccles



## Nominated for Entertainer of the Year, Top Male Vocalist and Vocal Event of the Year

**WHAT WAS THE BEST THING THAT HAPPENED TO YOU PROFESSIONALLY IN 2009?**

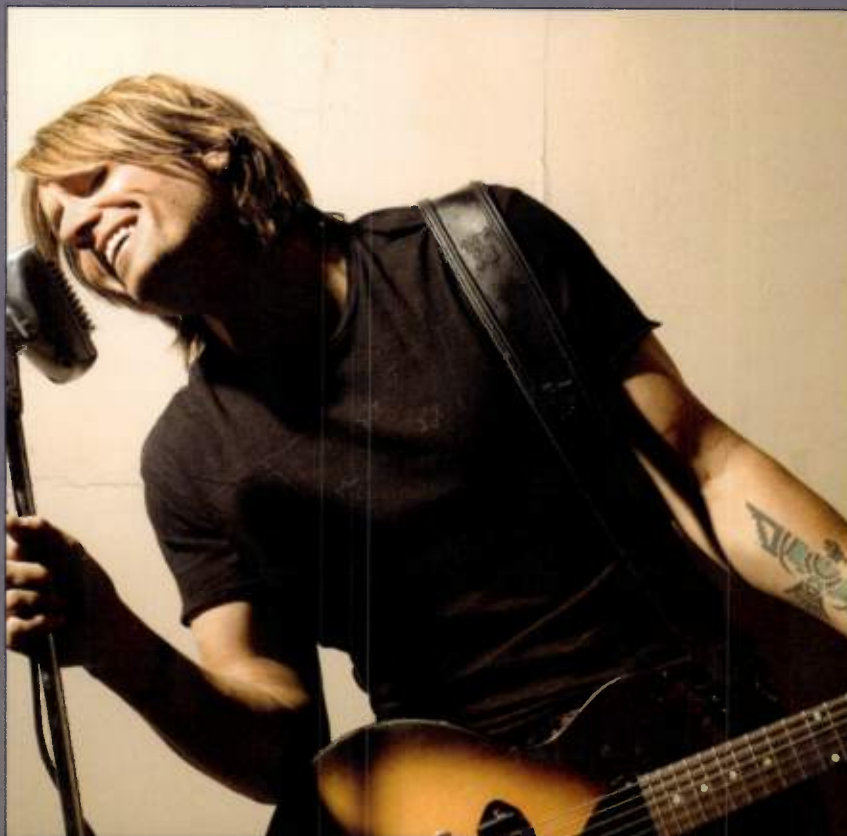
KEITH: I think having another No. 1 has been pretty amazing. That's been a great happening for me, and having the hit ["Start a Band"] with Brad Paisley as well because it was so unexpected. I got a call from Brad about doing the song with him and it was fun to record the song. It was a blast making the video 'cause really the song is just an extended jam session with some lyric in the middle really.

**WHEN YOU'RE ON THE ROAD AND IT'S A SHOW DAY, WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE MOMENT OF THE DAY?**

KEITH: Going on stage the first time is always a phenomenal feeling, because we're out there to just play. All day long I'm just counting down the moments until I can get out and play. To get that guitar and get out in front of a microphone and the lights go up and you hear the band kick in, it's just mind blowingly exhilarating! And when you see it in the faces of everybody else, too, it's beautiful.

**AS YOU GEAR UP FOR A NEW TOUR THIS YEAR, DOES KNOWING THAT YOU'RE BEING HELD UP AS ONE OF THE TOP FIVE ENTERTAINERS IN OUR BUSINESS INSPIRE YOU MORE?**

KEITH: Yes, but so does seeing other people out there playing shows—like Kenny and Sugarland. I've seen them live. I think especially now in country there's so much new blood and hunger and passion and fire to entertain when people go out there on stage. So, there's real individuality out there, which I think is great.



**ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR IS A FAN VOTED AWARD, AND WE'VE ALL BEEN FANS AT SOME POINT IN OUR LIVES. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IS THE CRAZIEST THING YOU'VE EVER DONE AS A FAN?**

KEITH: I had about five Ricky Scaggs albums when I was probably about 15 or 16. *Highways and Heartaches* had just come out about that time I think, so I was playing that one repeatedly. Albert Lee played guitar on one of the records and another guy called Ray Flack was playing guitar on the record. So, I was learning all these solos from Ray Flack and was just like so into this country pickin'. Then I was also playing part time in this band that played all this heavy metal. I was in the band for about a week. They had asked me to join, so I joined this band and I'm playing these like totally heavy metal songs and every time a solo came around I'd bust out these Ricky Scaggs solos. I got fired. It's the only thing I've ever been fired from.

**YOUR SINGLE "SWEET THING" IS SO JOYOUS. TELL ME ABOUT THE INSPIRATION FOR THAT SONG AND WHERE ALL THAT HAPPINESS IS COMING FROM.**

KEITH: It's coming from just being in a place of gratitude in my life. To have my family, my own family, it's a great grounding and a great sense of belonging and purpose. Having a little girl recently just sort of really made that go even deeper. So for me it's a combination of the family life and being really grateful for where I am in my career, too. All I ever wanted to do was play and sing and tour and make records. So to be doing it at this level at this time in my life with family and everything it's so balanced. It's just something I didn't think I

would ever... I thought I may not even see it in my life. I mean I'm deeply, deeply grateful.

**IS THAT FEELING PREVALENT ON ALL THE CUTS OF THE NEW ALBUM, *DEFYING GRAVITY*?**

KEITH: Yeah, it's a very uplifting record. I don't set out to write any kind of specific record or I don't write in terms of themes or anything. It's like a photograph. You take a photograph and that's where you are in life, for better or worse. It's just where it is. And as we went on making this record it just seemed that everything was up. It's very clear and just had an energy and an essence about it that I hadn't really heard in my records quite to this extent, hence the title because it's a very uplifting record.



## TRACE ADKINS

### NOMINATED FOR SINGLE RECORD OF THE YEAR, SONG OF THE YEAR

With a strong, melodic voice housed in an imposing 6'6" frame, Trace Adkins is pretty hard to ignore. He caught the eyes and ears of the country music community in 1996 and has steadily gained momentum ever since, releasing favored hits such as "(This Ain't) No Thinkin' Thing," "Every Light in the House is On," "Honky Tonk Badonkadonk," "Ladies Love Country Boys" and the ACM-nominated chart-topper "You're Gonna Miss This." Adkins possesses an impressive baritone range that few artists can emulate, appealing to a wide range of fans with his bold, cheeky, drinkin' songs and tender, introspective ballads. With eight studio albums and two hits compilations to his credit, Adkins has become a multi-platinum selling artist and charted 20 *Billboard* singles. The Louisiana boy has also gained considerable recognition on the television screen, appearing on shows such as *Hollywood Squares* and qualifying as a finalist on Donald Trump's hit series *The Celebrity Apprentice* among a cast that included Stephen Baldwin, Marilu Henner, Lennox Lewis, Piers Morgan and Gene Simmons. Adkins' performance on the show not only brought him more exposure as an artist, but also gave Adkins the opportunity to raise funds and awareness for the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network (FAAN), a cause that hits close to home for Adkins. With his commanding voice and stage presence, larger-than-life personality, steely determination and proven ability to compete in multiple medias, Adkins is a true "American Man" who's not to be missed.

### NOMINATED FOR TOP VOCAL DUO

Nearly a decade has passed since the powerful duo of Big & Rich first performed together and completely redrew the once-established boundaries of country music. Since then, "Big Kenny" Alphin and John Rich have been perfecting their unique sound that combines traditional country, hip-hop, rock and even the occasional rap. They have given fans anything and everything from rowdy crowd-pleasers like the smash hit *Save A Horse, Ride A Cowboy* to romantic wedding ballads such as the duo's first No. 1 song, "Lost In This Moment." Big & Rich has recorded three studio albums, two of which have achieved No. 1 status. Their most recent project *Between Raising Hell and Amazing Grace* is perhaps their most mature collection of songs to date that explores a full range of human actions and emotions from rolling in the dirt to walking the line. In addition to creating memorable music, both Alphin and Rich are individually known for their producing and songwriting talents including their work with fellow country superstars Faith Hill, Martina McBride, Tim McGraw and Gretchen Wilson (who is also a member of their Nashville-based consortium, MuzikMafia). Both artists have also taken their talents to the screen, Alphin having produced several film and media projects in conjunction with his humanitarian work in Darfur and Rich continuing to produce the successful reality series *Gone Country*, among making other TV appearances. After finishing their third album, the duo went on a brief hiatus and Rich released his solo album *Son of a Preacher Man* featuring the hit single "Shuttin' Detroit Down."

## BIG & RICH







From a big name in selling country music,  
to the big names in making it.

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# Nominees

## 44th Academy of Country Music Awards Nominees

### BROOKS & DUNN



### NOMINATED FOR TOP VOCAL DUO, VOCAL EVENT OF THE YEAR

"Class act" is a term that perfectly describes country super-duo Brooks & Dunn. They are a household name when it comes to country music and downright royalty in the class of country duos. With 26 wins to their credit, Brooks & Dunn is the most awarded duo in Academy history and has earned the Top Vocal Duo title 14 times, maintaining its hold on the award for the past eight consecutive years. Brooks & Dunn is also the top-selling country duo of all time, having released an impressive 13 albums in their long career together including their current Top 5 record *Cowboy Town*, which produced hits such as "Proud of the House We Built" and the Grammy-nominated "God Must Be Busy" as well as their current ACM-nominated smash "Cowgirls Don't Cry," which features Reba McEntire. Expanding their writing skills to the world of print, Brooks & Dunn also co-authored *The Adventures of Slim & Howdy: A Novel*, published in May 2008. The huge, sell-out success of their first-ever Australian tour last year prompted this dynamic duo to shine up their boots and kick off a second tour Down Under in May 2009, this time bringing along special guest Dierks Bentley to join in on the special B&D brand of a rockin' good time.

### NOMINATED FOR TOP NEW FEMALE VOCALIST

Singer/songwriter Sarah Buxton has landed her second consecutive ACM nomination as a contender for country's Top New Female Vocalist award. Buxton has always had a flair for music and songwriting, even from a young age. After attempting dance lessons and sports to little avail, Buxton found her calling after her parents signed her up for piano lessons and never looked back. With one of the most arresting voices on country radio today, Buxton has given country music fans such Top 30 hits as "Innocence" and "That Kind of Day" from her digital EP *Almost My Record*. She also co-wrote Keith Urban's Top 10 hit "Stupid Boy" and has performed as a backup singer for country acts like Cowboy Troy, Kenny Rogers, Keith Urban and most recently Dierks Bentley on his hit single "Sweet & Wild." Buxton's current single "Space" is steadily climbing the charts and taking over the airwaves. Her multifaceted personality shines through with confidence on each of her singles, allowing fans to connect with Buxton on a deeper, more personal level with every true-to-life song this talented musician produces.

### SARAH BUXTON







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efforts in helping and healing children.*

*The sharing matters to many!*



## 44th Academy of Country Music Awards Nominees

### ELI YOUNG BAND

#### NOMINATED FOR TOP NEW VOCAL DUO OR GROUP

There is something to be said about mixing country music with a little rock n' roll. The members of the Eli Young Band – Mike Eli, Jon Jones, Chris Thompson and James Young – have that combination down to a science that has brought them their first ACM nomination this year. Each of the four members possesses a unique element that, when combined, produces a perfect blend of exuberance and maturity that leaves country music fans wanting more. The Texas-born group has traveled a long road on its way to success, but has always maintained an undying passion for music and an optimistic attitude. After signing with Universal Republic and Universal Records South, the group released its Top 5 album *Jet Black and Jealous*, featuring eight of 12 songs that were also written by Eli and Young. Each of their songs boasts the reminder to listeners that even though it might be raining today, the sun will eventually shine through. Proving to be both a successful and an enigmatic composition of music, *Jet Black and Jealous* has gone on to produce two Top 40 singles including "When It Rains" and "Always the Love Songs." This group's refreshing enthusiasm and singular sound has only just begun to reveal itself, keeping the country audience on edge as to what's next for the Eli Young Band.

#### NOMINATED FOR TOP NEW FEMALE VOCALIST, TOP NEW ARTIST

Triple-threat singer, actress and dancer Julianne Hough has the country music community spinning – and not just around the dance floor. She is already known to millions as the two-time professional dance champion on ABC's top-rated TV reality competition *Dancing with the Stars*. Having conquered the dance floor, Julianne is taking that same drive, determination and talent and channeling it toward the country music airwaves. Entering the country music scene in 2007 with her single "Will You Dance With Me?" that was released to benefit Kansas tornado victims, this young artist now proves that she is a force to be reckoned with. After signing with Mercury Nashville, Hough brought a feisty, warm and infectious voice to her self-titled debut album, which released at No. 1 on the *Billboard* country charts in May 2008. The album has yielded such popular songs as the catchy "That Song in My Head" and current single "My Hallelujah Song." Now that she has traded in her pair of high-heels for a pair of cowgirl boots, Hough shows no signs of slowing down as she gears up for her summer tour with the "King of Country" himself, George Strait. She earned her first ACM nod this year, winning the industry and fan-voted Top New Female Vocalist award which makes her eligible tonight to win the ACM Top New Artist trophy.

### JULIANNE HOUGH





# Nominees

## 44th Academy of Country Music Awards Nominees

### JOEY + RORY



### NOMINATED FOR TOP VOCAL DUO

Never has there been a pair quite like Rory and Joey Feek, the husband and wife duo that has been dubbed as Joey + Rory. The two possess a natural ability to communicate their own life experiences into expertly produced songs that travel through the highs and lows of small town life. Deeply rooted in a classic country sound, Joey + Rory are a rare breed of entertainers that continue to lead the lives that are at the heart of the music they make. Before the pair finished third on CMT's *Can You Duet* in 2008, Rory worked as a songwriter whose tunes have been recorded by artists such as Blake Shelton, Clay Walker and Jimmy Wayne, and Joey had released a solo album in 2005 entitled *Strong Enough to Cry*. The combination of their talents – Joey's distinguished vocals and Rory's complimentary songwriting and guitar licks – amounts to a perfect blend of beautiful harmonies and authentic country music in their debut album *The Life of a Song*. The album's first single, "Cheater, Cheater," became a Top 30 hit and drew thousands of listeners into the intimate musical journey that Joey + Rory so lovingly and honestly shares.

### NOMINATED FOR ALBUM OF THE YEAR, SINGLE RECORD OF THE YEAR, SONG OF THE YEAR, TOP NEW MALE VOCALIST

*That Lonesome Song* is the title of Jamey Johnson's highly acclaimed first album since his debut single "The Dollar" hit radio waves in 2006. Although nominated for Top New Male Vocalist, Johnson is hardly a newcomer to the country music scene. He has penned hit singles for many top artists, including Trace Adkins ("Honky Tonk Badonkadonk," "Ladies Love Country Boys"), Joe Nichols ("Another Side of You") and George Strait ("Give It Away"), the latter earning Johnson an ACM Song of the Year award in 2006. His current ACM-nominated album showcases Johnson's talents beyond the writers' room, bringing his raw, piercing style to mainstream radio. With the huge success of his Top 10 hit "In Color" and latest single "High Cost of Living," Johnson proves that his own voice is one worth hearing. *That Lonesome Song* is an extraordinary collection of lyrical compositions and original sounds that tell Johnson's real, emotional stories and resonate with a bare-bones intimacy that flawlessly juggles tough feelings, dark humor and self-reflection. It is this enduring compilation that has rightfully earned Johnson five ACM nominations this year and three Grammy nods including Best Country Album, Best Country Song ("In Color"), and Best Male Country Vocal Performance.

### JAMEY JOHNSON





## 2009 Academy of Country Music Awards Nominees

### TOBY KEITH

#### NOMINATED FOR TOP MALE VOCALIST

For a guy who started his career singing "Should've Been a Cowboy," country music superstar Toby Keith hasn't done too badly as a musician, entertainer and business entrepreneur. In fact, he's become a veritable multimedia mogul with 14 studio albums and more than 31 million records sold, his own Show Dog Nashville record label, multiple film and television projects and even a restaurant chain. Keith also acted as producer for the second consecutive time of his latest No. 1 release, *That Don't Make Me A Bad Guy*, on which Keith also wrote or co-wrote all 11 tracks. The album has yielded several hits in the past year, including the chart-topping heartbreaker "She Never Cried In Front Of Me" and No. 1 smash "God Love Her." No stranger to being the top dog, Keith has taken 18 songs to the No. 1 spot and won numerous awards for his songwriting, producing and vocal skills. Keith has won a total of eight ACM Awards, including two Top Male Vocalist and two coveted Entertainer of the Year awards. *Beer For My Horses*, a film comedy scripted by and starring Keith and comedian Rodney Carrington, also earned the Academy's Tex Ritter Award this year for bringing the country music community to the cinema screen and further proving Keith's superstar appeal across multiple media formats.

#### NOMINATED FOR TOP VOCAL GROUP

Affectionately known to fans and now the music industry as "Lady A," last year's ACM Top New Vocal Duo or Group Lady Antebellum has skyrocketed to stardom in a whirlwind two years as a band. Dave Haywood, Charles Kelley and Hillary Scott make up the newest golden group of Nashville, whose self-titled debut album hit No. 1 on the charts last year and broke records as the highest-selling digital album by a country band in history. Hits such as the Top Five debut single "Love Don't Live Here," the fun and flirty "Lookin' For A Good Time" and vocal runaround "I Run To You" have not only caught the ears of listeners across the country, but also highlight both the individual talents and combined chemistry which the members of Lady Antebellum have to offer. Haywood's easy instrumentals and soft background vocals provide the perfect scenery behind the harmonic blend of Kelley's husky tenor and Scott's sultry alto, their mostly self-written songs ringing with relatable truths about everything from leaving home to love. Scoring two Grammy nominations for Best New Artist and Best Country Duo or Group and their second ACM nomination this year, Lady A is definitely lookin' good in 2009 as they gear up to perform with country superstar Kenny Chesney and friends on his *Sun City Carnival* tour this summer.

### LADY ANTEBELLUM







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# TOBY KEITH

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## 44th Academy of Country Music Awards Nominees

### MIRANDA LAMBERT



### NOMINATED FOR TOP FEMALE VOCALIST, SINGLE RECORD OF THE YEAR

Country's standout rocker Miranda Lambert blew the music industry, audience – and even herself – away last year with her ACM award-winning sophomore album, *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*. Upon scoring the Album of the Year trophy in an especially competitive field, Lambert said: "I'm freaking out right now! I'm new still and I've never even had a Top 10 hit." But the dynamic singer/songwriter's humble statement no longer rings true in 2009 as her explosive Top 10 hit "Gunpowder & Lead" (from *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*) vies for the ACM's Single Record of the Year. Also being recognized in the heavily weighted Top Female Vocalist category, Lambert exhibits a rare concoction of raw artistry and smokin' star power that have gained well-deserved acclaim during her relatively new career. She has nabbed two ACM awards and earned a total of nine ACM nominations, as well as two Grammy nods for Best Female Country Vocal Performance and several additional industry accolades. An already mature writer and performer with two No. 1 albums and multiple hit singles under her belt, Miranda Lambert keeps her guns blazing in 2009 as she heats up to tour with superstar Kenny Chesney and release her much-anticipated third studio album in the fall.

### NOMINATED FOR TOP VOCAL GROUP, VOCAL EVENT OF THE YEAR

Since making its way onto the mainstream music map in 2005, Little Big Town has been a perennial force in the top ranks of country vocal groups. The talented quartet exudes an irresistible warmth and charm that is audible in their music and tangible in their live performances, their love for one another as apparent as their expert musicianship. Having banded together more than a decade ago, the members of Little Big Town have mastered the art of harmonizing – each vocalist taking the lead here and there, all four complementing one another perfectly in every song. The group's platinum-selling album *The Road To Here*, which earned a Grammy nod for Best Country Album in 2006, showcased Little Big Town's earthy, bluegrass-infused sound and produced hits such as the boot-stomper "Boondocks" (also Grammy-nominated) and sensual "Bring It On Home." Their third studio album and current release, *A Place To Land*, brings out a slightly edgier, rock-tinged side of Little Big Town that harkens back to the early Eagles, Fleetwood Mac and other classic rockers which blends seamlessly with the band's down-home roots and exhibits a heightened level of confidence and versatility. With seven ACM nominations, three Grammy nods and the 2006 ACM Top New Vocal Duo or Group award to their credit, Little Big Town has definitely found its nesting place in country music and is readier than ever to launch its first headlining tour in 2009.

### LITTLE BIG TOWN







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## THE LOST TRAILERS

### NOMINATED FOR TOP VOCAL GROUP, TOP NEW VOCAL DUO OR GROUP

The Lost Trailers blazed onto the country music scene in 2001 when they opened for the legendary artist Willie Nelson at a Fourth of July picnic. Since then, the good-natured group has been on quite the ride performing at hundreds of honkytonks, concert halls and packed stadiums opening for the likes of country sensations Dierks Bentley, Kenny Chesney, Sugarland and Carrie Underwood. Learning from their peers, The Lost Trailers poured all of their experiences into their music with increasing creative tenacity and maturity. The wiley bunch, comprised of Ryder Lee, Manny Medina, Andrew Nielson, Stokes Nielson and Jeff Potter, are continually winning over fans with their irresistible boot-stompin' verses and friendly banter. The title track off of the group's fifth album, *Holler Back*, became a Top 10 country hit and its current single "How 'Bout You Don't" is climbing the charts. The album continues not to disappoint as it captures the fun energy and excitement of The Lost Trailers balanced with several wrenching ballads that truly come from the heart. While the road to the Academy of Country Music Awards may have been a bumpy one so far, The Lost Trailers are moving full speed ahead with two ACM nominations this year.



### NOMINATED FOR VOCAL EVENT OF THE YEAR

A veritable Jack-of-All-Trades, veteran singer/songwriter Mac McAnally is also a producer, session player, publisher, band member and studio owner whose name is known well in the country music community. More than 30 national recording artists have recorded songs by McAnally including Garth Brooks, Jimmy Buffett, Kenny Chesney, Ricky Skaggs and George Strait. His guitar and backup work is also widely sought and is featured on the works of Alabama, Mary Chapin Carpenter, Amy Grant, Nanci Griffith, Patty Loveless, Reba McEntire, Roy Orbison, Dolly Parton, Linda Ronstadt, Hank Williams Jr. and Travis Tritt. While McAnally has built his reputation largely in the areas of songwriting and session playing, the multi-talented artist and true-to-life storyteller has recorded 10 studio albums of his own including *Nothing But The Truth*, *Simple Life* and *Live & Learn*, all of which incorporate the influences of rock, jazz, country and gospel while ticking to McAnally's good ole' Southern roots. He was the first artist signed by David Geffen of the famed Geffen Records and has appeared on all major record labels since. McAnally, who is currently producing projects for Little Feat and performing with Jimmy Buffett and his Coral Reefer Band, also received an ACM nomination this year for his

## MAC McANALLY





## REBA McENTIRE



### NOMINATED FOR VOCAL EVENT OF THE YEAR

She's come a long way since she was discovered singing the national anthem at the National Finals Rodeo in 1974, but Reba McEntire is still the tried and true cowgirl she's always been. Undisputedly a pro at every project she tackles, McEntire is known for keeping several irons in the fire at once, from screen and stage acting to designing her REBA brand products to hosting the *Academy of Country Music Awards* and turning out the tunes that have made her an icon in the country music industry. This year, the Academy's most-awarded female vocalist has returned to the recording studio after an almost six-year hiatus and is gearing up for the release of her debut album on The Valory Music Co. label, which she joined late last year. McEntire's much-anticipated music project will be the 25th studio album of her expansive career. She has won 12 ACM awards including the ACM/The Home Depot® Humanitarian Award. One of the few women in the Academy's history to earn the coveted Entertainer of the Year title, McEntire is truly in a league of her own as an artist and performer and returns to her rodeo roots this year with her collaboration on the hit single "Cowgirls Don't Cry" with Brooks & Dunn.

### NOMINATED FOR TOP VOCAL DUO, ALBUM OF THE YEAR

With two No. 1 singles and a third song climbing the charts, it certainly seems that country's favorite rabble-rousing duo Montgomery Gentry has acquired the wizened know-how they sing about in their ACM-nominated album *Back When I Knew It All*. The boot-stompin', beer-drinkin' pair has been nominated for the Academy's Top Vocal Duo award every year since 2000, having acquired a total of 12 ACM nominations and captured the Top New Vocal Duo or Group title in 1999. Known for playing with a more rock-influenced twang and producing lyrics that simply "tell it like it is," Montgomery Gentry delves into the everyday lives of everyday people with smart, truthful insights and music that appeals to a broad audience. On their new album, Montgomery Gentry shows a deeper level of maturity and artistry, kicking it into high gear with up-tempo rockers such as "Back When I Knew It All" and laying it on back with the almost lullaby-like chart-topper "Roll With Me." The two hit singles off of *Back When I Knew It All* also brought Montgomery Gentry its first streak of back-to-back No. 1 songs, the duo having had five chart-toppers to date and six studio albums as a platinum-selling pair.

## MONTGOMERY GENTRY





## HEIDI NEWFIELD

**NOMINATED FOR TOP FEMALE VOCALIST,  
SINGLE RECORD OF THE YEAR, SONG OF THE YEAR,  
VIDEO OF THE YEAR**

Newly solo artist Heidi Newfield, who formerly fronted the ACM award-winning group Trick Pony, swept the field this year with an impressive five nominations. In addition to earning a spot in the Top Female Vocalist category, Newfield also garnered nominations for Single Record of the Year, Song of the Year (as both an artist and composer) and Video of the Year for her highly acclaimed hit, "Johnny And June." The epic song, which heralds the storybook love of ultimate country power couple Johnny Cash and June Carter, is just one of many songs on Newfield's debut solo record *What Am I Waiting For* that shows a shining new side of an already established artist. When Newfield departed from Trick Pony in 2006, she hung up the honky-tonk rockers for which she had become famous to explore new depths as an artist, songwriter and woman. The resulting record grabbed the ears of the industry and audiences alike. *What Am I Waiting For* is an intricate, dynamic compilation of yearning ballads such as "Johnny And June" to boot stompers like the Pony throwback "Can't Let Go" that has Newfield fans waiting for what's next as this feisty blonde with a big voice continues to soar solo.

## **NOMINATED FOR TOP NEW MALE VOCALIST, SONG OF THE YEAR**

James Otto has recently been hailed as the "Biggest Voice in Country Music" – and considering the incredible year he's had, it would be hard to refute that claim. His second album *Sunset Man* was released in April 2008, putting the country soul man on a non-stop ride ever since. Singing carefully selected songs that range from matters of the heart to promises of a brighter future, Otto exhibits depth not only as an outstanding singer but also as a maturing songwriter. He co-wrote nine of the 11 tracks on *Sunset Man*, including the No. 1 sensation "Just Got Started Lovin' You" which garnered a Grammy nomination for Best Male Country Vocal Performance and became the overall No. 1 country single of 2008. *Sunset Man* has also produced the Top 40 singles "For You" and "These Are the Good Ole Days." Otto also received both a Grammy nod and an ACM nomination for co-writing Jamey Johnson's hit "In Color." Far from setting, James Otto's star is shining brighter than ever as he carries on strong in 2009.

## JAMES OTTO





## 44th Academy of Country Music Awards Nominees

### JAKE OWEN



### NOMINATED FOR TOP NEW MALE VOCALIST, TOP NEW ARTIST, VOCAL EVENT OF THE YEAR

Very few newcomers to country music have a resume quite like that of the ACM's newly crowned Top New Male Vocalist Jake Owen. His debut album *Startin' with Me*, on which he co-wrote all 11 songs, produced three Top 20 hits including his infectious first single "Yee Haw," the self-reflective "Startin' With Me" and the seductive crooner "Something About a Woman." With several hits already under his belt, Owen released his sophomore effort *Easy Does It* earlier this year, already receiving critical acclaim for the record and transitioning from an upstart artist to a bona-fide star. While some new artists might let such quick success go to their heads, Owen maintains a quiet confidence and irresistible charm that makes it all look as easy as his latest album title implies. Owen's current single "Don't Think I Can't Love You" is climbing the country charts and further highlights the rich, smooth vocals and classic country style that Owen maintains in his music. Having toured with some of country's hottest artists including Kenny Chesney, Brooks & Dunn, Alan Jackson, Little Big Town, Brad Paisley, Sugarland and Carrie Underwood, Owen is making his own mark in the music industry and doing it in style, earning his second consecutive ACM nomination and first win in the Top New Male Vocalist category this year and moving on to compete for the title of overall Top New Artist.

### NOMINATED FOR TOP VOCAL GROUP

Although they've been stirring up crowds and hitting up honky-tonks for many years, the wildly popular Randy Rogers Band is relatively new to the Nashville music scene. They caught the attention of the mainstream country crowd when their fortuitously titled album *Just A Matter Of Time* surpassed all others in the genre and debuted as the most downloaded country album on iTunes in 2006. With gritty, Texas-style tunes and no-frills lyrics that show insight into a variety of very human characters, the Randy Rogers Band has long appealed to college-age listeners yearning for a more raw brand of music. *Rolling Stone* magazine named the five-piece band one of its "Top 10 Must-See Artists" for the summer of 2007, ranking the Randy Rogers Band with the likes of global sensations U2 and the Rolling Stones. Recognizing both the band's accessibility and unique craftsmanship, many A-list country artists have sought out the Randy Rogers Band as an opening act on tour, including Gary Allan, Dierks Bentley, the Eagles and even the legendary Willie Nelson. With the release of their current self-titled album on Mercury Records, the Randy Rogers Band shows no signs of slowing down as they move into the mainstream and their efforts have been rewarded with the band's first-ever ACM nomination.

### RANDY ROGERS BAND





## RASCAL FLATTS

### NOMINATED FOR TOP VOCAL GROUP

Performing repeatedly sold-out shows at some of the world's biggest stages, continuing to scan millions of records and releasing their highly anticipated sixth studio album this year, Rascal Flatts has proved beyond doubt that they are *Unstoppable*. The multi-platinum super-group's members Jay DeMarcus, Gary LeVox and Joe Don Rooney have scaled to unbelievable heights in the nine years since they first burst onto the country music scene in 2000 and have rightly earned their place in the crème-de-la-crème of the entertainment and music world. The top-selling artist of all genres in 2006, Rascal Flatts has also become one of the most consistently awarded musical acts - they tied with legendary country group Alabama in 2007 for having the most consecutive wins in the Academy's Top Vocal Group category, as well as sweeping up multiple Grammys, American Music Awards and People's Choice Awards. Through each one of the group's projects, the Flatts maintain their signature sound of soaring harmonies, clean, technical instrumentals and lyrics that are guaranteed to fit any mood and make anyone sing along or "bob that head." Fiercely loyal fans remain at the core of the trio's career, even helping Rascal Flatts choose the cover artwork of their most recent album through a People's Choice contest online. With their intensely emotional current single "Here Comes Goodbye" fast climbing the charts and *Unstoppable* only days away from release, the Flatts won't be saying "sayonara" to the country music community anytime soon.



### NOMINATED FOR TOP NEW FEMALE VOCALIST

## ASHTON SHEPHERD

"Sounds So Good" is the perfect anthem for the feisty, fun and vibrant voice which country fans everywhere have fallen in love with - that of first-time ACM nominee Ashton Shepherd. This Alabama native was born to write and sing, putting pencil to paper at the young age of 6 and winning her first country showdown at the age of 8, where she belted out songs by the great Patsy Cline. With the unerring drive and determination of a true country girl, Shepherd chased her dreams to Nashville and landed a record deal. The result was Shepherd's attention-grabbing debut album *Sounds So Good*, which produced two top 20 hits including the album's title track and boot-in-your-ass debut single "Takin' Off This Pain." Shepherd writes in a style that is both dynamic and direct, transitioning effortlessly between tender, bottom-of-the-bottle ballads to fiery, up-in-arms anthems. Displaying a wide range of real-life topics, Shepherd's truthful and endearing tunes are easily relatable and artistically mature, sure to solidify Shepherd as a fixture in country music and continue to please fans as she tours with Little Big Town this summer.





## SUGARLAND



### NOMINATED FOR TOP VOCAL DUO, VOCAL EVENT OF THE YEAR

Spreading the love just comes naturally to Sugarland's Jennifer Nettles and Kristian Bush. The duo positively radiates with passion in every aspect of their art, whether they're on stage, at the recording studio or in the writers' room. Their aptly named third album *Love On The Inside* is an exquisitely crafted and deliciously complex body of work that overflows with love from the inside out, inviting listeners into a truly moving musical odyssey from feel-good, falling-in-love tunes like the No. 1 hit "All I Want To Do" to laugh-it-off uppers such as the current Top 20 single "It Happens" to stripped-down soul-piercers (a la the duo's highly acclaimed "Stay") like "Keep You." While Nettles' voice is undisputedly one of the most recognizable and vibrant in the business, Bush's subtler vocals shine through more prominently than in previous records on several tracks of *Love On The Inside*, further showcasing the duo's palpable synergy. Sugarland has garnered three ACM awards as a duo since their first win in 2005 for Top New Vocal Duo or Group; Bush also won an ACM award as a producer of "Stay" in 2007 and Nettles took home trophies for producing and writing the critically acclaimed song that same year. "Stay," from Sugarland's double-platinum *Enjoy The Ride*, was the first ACM Song of the Year to be written singlehandedly by a woman since Donna Fargo penned "The Happiest Girl in the Whole U.S.A." in 1972 and also earned two Grammy awards earlier this year.

### NOMINATED FOR TOP FEMALE VOCALIST, ALBUM OF THE YEAR, VIDEO OF THE YEAR

Nineteen-year-old Taylor Swift is a bona-fide multimedia sensation who has brought country music back to younger audiences and successfully maneuvered between music genres with both of her No. 1 studio albums in 2008. As an icon, Swift has been everywhere from *Rolling Stone* to *CSI* and has become a household name in the little more than two years since her debut on Big Machine Records. Swift scorched the charts and made history in a variety of ways during the past year, becoming *Billboard's* Best-Selling Artist of 2008 and the Best-Selling Country Artist of 2008 with more than six million records and more than nine million digital downloads sold between her two studio albums, *Taylor Swift* and the ACM-nominated *Fearless*. The latter, which spent four weeks at No. 1 on the *Billboard* Top 200 and 8 weeks at No. 1 on *Billboard* Top Country Albums chart, also took the cake as the biggest-selling debut for a female artist in any genre in 2008 and placed Swift fourth overall behind the debuts of pop and rock heavyweights Lil Wayne, Coldplay and AC/DC respectively. Swift's chart-topping "Love Story" swept both pop and country listeners off their feet, becoming the most-downloaded song in history earlier this year with more than two million digital tracks sold and establishing country's teen queen as a successful crossover smash. Crowned as the Academy's Top New Female Vocalist last year, Swift has received eight ACM nominations in the short span of three years, gaining her first nod as a producer this year on *Fearless*.

## TAYLOR SWIFT





# Nominees

## 2009 Academy of Country Music Awards Nominees

### JOSH TURNER



#### NOMINATED FOR VOCAL EVENT OF THE YEAR

Small town living and big story telling are at the heart of Josh Turner's rich, signature sound. Since debuting on the country music scene with his performance at the legendary Grand Ole Opry in 2001, Turner has gone on to refine his traditional musical style that appeals to modern country audiences. With the release of his latest album *Everything is Fine*, Turner reveals an intimate, engaging body of work that includes the Top 20 title track as well as Turner's sizzling hit "Firecracker" and ACM-nominated duet with Trisha Yearwood, "Another Try." Turner has charted nine singles in his career, two being the No. 1 songs "Your Man" and "Would You Go With Me" from his double-platinum, chart-topping sophomore album *Your Man*. The hit record was one of only four country albums to reach double-platinum status in 2006 and also earned two Grammy nods. Heralded as one of the brightest beacons of traditional country music and known for consistently bringing audiences to their feet with his Cash-like bass voice, Turner's career is setting off sparklers left and right.

#### NOMINATED FOR TOP FEMALE VOCALIST

Equipped with one of those powerful voices that can be as seductively sweet as it is hauntingly soulful, Lee Ann Womack has been a fixture in the ranks of country's finest female vocalists since her 1997 self-titled debut album and first single "Never Again, Again" took radio waves by storm with its blend of traditional country sounds and modern pop elements. Her No. 1 smash hit "I Hope You Dance" solidified Womack's appeal to multiple genres, topping both pop and country charts in 2000 and earning the gamut of awards including ACM, ASCAP, BMI and Grammy awards. After adopting a more pop-influenced sound on her next album, Womack returned to traditional country with her 2005 release *There's More Where That Came From* and stunned listeners once again with her latest project, *Call Me Crazy*. The album, which charted in the Top 5, showcases Womack's artistic integrity and captures the vocalist's audible vulnerability and capacity to elicit deep emotion and understanding from the lyrics of songs like the album's current heartbreaking single "Last Call," for which she received a Grammy nod for Best Female Country Vocal Performance earlier this year. Womack has also taken home five ACM awards to date.

### LEE ANN WOMACK





## 44th Academy of Country Music Awards Nominees

### TRISHA YEARWOOD



#### NOMINATED FOR VOCAL EVENT OF THE YEAR

Three-time Grammy winner and two-time ACM award winner Trisha Yearwood has earned another nomination this year for her collaboration with Josh Turner on Turner's introspective, emotional ballad "Another Try." Yearwood complements Turner's vocals seamlessly as they deliver the heartbreaking reminder of the consequences people face when emotions go unshared and treasured relationships dissolve without a fight. Yearwood's esteemed career in country music has been a lifelong goal of the talented songstress' – when many children wanted toys for Christmas, all Yearwood wanted was a tape recorder so that she could hear her own voice. Fortunately for country music, Yearwood maintained an unwavering drive that took her from playing with that simple tape recorder to recording in major studios. Since entering the music scene in 1991 with her hit debut single "She's In Love With The Boy," Yearwood has gone on to chart 38 singles on *Billboard* Hot Country and sell six multi-platinum albums. This Georgia peach's talent, dreams and determination have taken her from local honky-tonks to some of the world's most prestigious venues and she is one of the most recognizable female figures in country music. Her most recent project and Big Machine Records debut *Heaven, Heartache and the Power of Love* featured some of the singer's most intimate vocal performances to date, including her Grammy-nominated single "This Is Me You're Talking To," which is fittingly similar to Turner and Yearwood's breathtaking duet.

#### NOMINATED FOR TOP NEW VOCAL DUO OR GROUP, TOP NEW ARTIST

Armed with musicianship, songs with deep southern roots and high-energy performances, the Zac Brown Band began its career by building word-of-mouth buzz, playing 200 dates a year and independently selling more than 30,000 CDs. The six-man band has been performing together for five years, finally signing with Atlantic Records in November 2008. Their first national album, *The Foundation*, debuted at No. 3 on the Top Country Chart and No. 17 on the *Billboard* Top 200. Their first single "Chicken Fried" became a smashing No. 1 hit, also debuting as the second-most downloaded country single on iTunes and distinguishing the Zac Brown Band as the first country band to reach No. 1 with a debut single since Heartland accomplished the feat in 2006. Having landed opening slots for superstar acts like Little Big Town, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Willie Nelson, Sugarland, Travis Tritt and ZZ Top, the Zac Brown Band continues to build its widespread appeal on a well built – and undeniably talented – foundation, coming on strong as the winner of this year's industry and fan-voted Top New Vocal Duo or Group award and a contender for the Top New Artist title.

### ZAC BROWN BAND





# ACADEMY OF COUNTRY MUSIC / THE HOME DEPOT *Humanitarian Award*

*2009 Recipient LeAnn Rimes*

The Academy of Country Music/The Home Depot Humanitarian Award recognizes country artists who serve others with a generous spirit and help build the dreams of those in need. This year's recipient is multi-platinum artist LeAnn Rimes, who was chosen for her good works by a blue-ribbon committee of executives from the country music industry as well as local and national philanthropic leaders.

Rimes was surprised with the news during a live broadcast of the *Academy of Country Music Awards* nominees press conference on the *CBS Early Show*. Shortly after, Rimes said she was shocked but humbled by the honor.

"It never crossed my mind that I'd be recognized for my humanitarian work," Rimes said. "I've been doing a lot of different things with different organizations for a long time. It's part of what I do, not just as a celebrity, but as a human being. I guess it's the way I was raised."

Rimes has made giving back a priority in her career and has been particularly devoted to children's causes. She previously served as the International Spokesperson for Children's Miracle Network, which secures top-flight medical care for sick kids, and has generously supported Camp C.O.P.E., a service that teaches the children of wounded veterans to deal with their parents' altered lives.

In 2007, Rimes partnered with Kellogg to draw attention to disabled veterans when she was featured on patriotic cereal boxes. She recorded the song "I Want You With Me" for this project and donated all proceeds from the song to the cause.

Rimes also financed construction of the LeAnn Rimes Adventure Gym at the Vanderbilt Children's Hospital in Nashville by contributing royalties from her 2000 hit single, "I Need You." Additionally, she is an ardent supporter of the Nashville Humane Association and continues to speak out on the need to treat animals compassionately. Rimes has previously been honored with the International Entertainment Buyers Association Humanitarian Award and *Redbook* magazine's "Strength and Spirit Award" for her distinguished record of charitable achievements.

"Philanthropy and giving back are core values at The Home Depot and something we share with the country music community," said Frank Bifulco, senior vice president and chief marketing officer at The Home Depot. "We're honored to recognize LeAnn for her long-standing dedication to helping those in need and raising awareness for the causes she supports."

As the recipient of the Humanitarian Award, Rimes will receive a beautiful crystal trophy designed by Tiffany & Co. during the live CBS telecast. She will also be honored with a playground donated by The Home Depot and the company's national nonprofit partner KaBOOM!, which envisions a great place to play within walking distance of every child in America. The playground will be built by The Home Depot volunteers and community members in the city of Rimes' choice.

Past recipients of the Humanitarian Award include Vince Gill, Lonestar, Martina McBride, Neal McCoy, Reba McEntire, Brooks & Dunn and Rascal Flatts.





## 2008 Recipients Rascal Flatts



Country music's hottest trio Rascal Flatts teamed up with volunteers from The Home Depot, the Academy of Country Music and KaBOOM! on Oct. 15, 2008, to build a playground at Princeton Alternative Elementary School in Birmingham, Ala. The location was chosen by Rascal Flatts members Jay DeMarcus, Gary LeVox and Joe Don Rooney, who received the ACM/The Home Depot Humanitarian Award in 2008 for their ongoing community service and charitable donations to organizations like the American Red Cross, Make-A-Wish Foundation and Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt. Trading microphones for mulch and merry-go-rounds, the guys and their gang spent the day in Birmingham swinging hammers, laying gravel and building slides for the playground that will be a safe, new space for kids in the community to enjoy.



From top left clockwise:  
Jay DeMarcus puts the finishing flourishes on a swing set before it is raised.

Kids from the Birmingham community "raise the roof" of their brand new KaBOOM! playground.

Lead singer Gary LeVox swaps his mic for a socket wrench to tighten up the screws on some playground equipment.

Joe Don Rooney shares some cafeteria cuisine with his building buddies.

Rascal Flatts unveils the newly completed KaBOOM! playspace.



**You can do it. We can help.™**





## 44th Academy of Country Music Awards

Congratulations to this year's Academy of Country Music Radio Awards winners! Little Big Town's Kimberly Schlapman, who is also an Academy of Country Music board member, called each winner on the air to share the good news. Winners are selected by a panel of blue ribbon judges, approved by the ACM Board of Directors, with consideration given to ratings, community service, industry involvement, entertainment and professionalism. The four country radio stations and five on-air personalities/teams below truly represent the best in our business. Tonight, the on-air personality winners will be featured as the voices of bumpers leading into commercials during the live ACM Awards broadcast.

### Radio Stations



**Major Market Winner**  
WSOC - Charlotte, NC



**Large Market Winner**  
WSIX - Nashville, TN



**Medium Market Winner**  
WIVK - Knoxville, TN



**Small Market Winner**  
WYCT - Pensacola, FL

### On-Air Personalities



**National Winner**  
Lon Helton - CMT's  
Country Countdown USA



**Major Market Winner**  
Dorsey Gang - KSCS (Dallas, TX)



**Large Market Winner**  
JD Cannon - WFMS  
(Indianapolis, IN)



**Medium Market Winner**  
Andy Ritchie, Alison West,  
Jimmy Holt - WIVK (Knoxville, TN)



**Small Market Winner**  
Brent Lane and Dana Cervantes -  
WYCT (Pensacola, FL)



## George Strait

With a record-breaking career that spans nearly 25 years, George Strait has more than earned his distinction as the "King of Country Music." On April 6, 2009, the Academy of Country Music will name Strait as the Artist of the Decade. He joins only four other artists who have received this honor: Marty Robbins, Loretta Lynn, Alabama and Garth Brooks.

A cowboy singer who walks the walk and talks the talk, Strait has endeared himself to country music fans everywhere as the real deal. His knack for picking great songs has helped him amass 56 No. 1 hits and countless other beloved classics, among them "Amarillo By Morning," "The Chair," "I Cross My Heart," "I Saw God Today" and the 2006 ACM Song of the Year "Give It Away."

With the Artist of the Decade award, Strait has now won 20 Academy of Country Music awards including Entertainer of the Year for 1989. He also holds the record for the most No. 1 hits on the *Billboard* Hot Country Songs chart. He has sold more than 68 million records, garnering him 32 different platinum or multi-platinum albums resulting in the most RIAA platinum certifications in country music and the third in all genres, behind The Beatles and Elvis Presley. Strait's current album, *Troubadour*, is certified gold, and his career only continues to grow. Tonight, he is nominated for six ACM Awards in five categories, tying him with Brad Paisley as this year's top ACM nominee.

For the first time ever, the ACM Artist of the Decade trophy will be awarded during its own, unique televised event. *George Strait – ACM Artist of the Decade* will feature an all-star musical tribute. Produced by Dick Clark Productions, the special will be taped at the MGM Grand Garden Arena on Monday, April 6th, 2009, and will air May 27th on CBS.



Photo credit: Terry Calonge



*The Academy of Country Music Special Awards are voted on by the ACM Board of Directors and are not necessarily awarded every year, but instead are given out in years when there are clear and deserving candidates. The Special Awards winners, along with winners for Industry and MBI (Musician/Bandleader/Instrumentalist) awards will be celebrated at ACM Honors, a private event set for September in Nashville.*

*The Cliffie Stone Pioneer Award is presented to an outstanding pioneer of country music. Past recipients have included Hank Williams, Johnny Cash, Roger Miller, Willie Nelson, Loretta Lynn, Dolly Parton and Conway Twitty. The Jim Reeves International Award is presented to an individual (not necessarily a performing artist) for outstanding contributions to the acceptance of country music throughout the world. Past winners have included Jo Walker-Meador, Garth Brooks, Louise Scruggs, Charlie Nagatani, Buck Owens and Dick Clark.*

*The Poet's Award goes to a songwriter or songwriters for outstanding musical and/or lyrical contributions throughout their careers in the field of country music. Special consideration is given to a song or song's impact on the culture of country music. Past recipients include Bill Anderson and Fred Rose.*

*The Tex Ritter Award is given to a movie released in the preceding calendar year that features or utilizes country music. Past winners have included *Coal Miner's Daughter*, *O Brother Where Art Thou* and *Walk the Line*.*

*The Mae Boren Axton Award is given in recognition of years of dedication and service by an outstanding individual to the Academy of Country Music. Past recipients have included Gene Weed and Jack Lameier.*

*The Crystal Milestone Award is given to an artist or industry leader to commemorate a specific, remarkable achievement. Past recipients have included Garth Brooks and Gayle Holcomb. To learn more about the awards criteria or our illustrious list of past recipients, please visit [acmcountry.com](http://acmcountry.com).*



## JIM REEVES INTERNATIONAL AWARD

*Dolly Parton*

Speak the words "Dolly Parton" to just about anyone anywhere in the world and you are likely to get a big smile in return. Through unique talent and sheer determination, the little girl from the mountains of East Tennessee has become a global superstar. As an internationally renowned singer, actor, songwriter and philanthropist, Parton has contributed countless treasures to the world of entertainment, penning classic songs such as "Jolene," "Coat of Many Colors," and her massive hit "I Will Always Love You." With 1977's crossover hit "Here You Come Again," she successfully blurred the line between country and pop music, bringing a whole new worldwide audience to country music. "I'm not leaving country, I'm just taking it with me," she said of her crossover success. Indeed, after conquering the United States with her music and roles in hit films like *9 to 5*, she took country music with her to Europe in 2007, playing to packed houses in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, England, Scotland and Ireland. She returned to Europe once again in 2008 to promote her latest album, *Backwoods Barbie*, performing 17 stadium and arena shows. Her sold-out shows in Glasgow and London were filmed for a future DVD release. After 40 years as an entertainer, Parton is still shoring up the foundation of country music and sharing it around the world.



## CRYSTAL MILESTONE AWARD

# Jennifer Nettles

As the lead vocalist of country super-duo Sugarland, Jennifer Nettles has already won much acclaim as both an industry and a fan favorite who challenges musical traditions as much as she also upholds them. In 2008, Nettles reached new heights of her own by sweeping the “triple crown”—ACM Award, CMA Award and Grammy Award—for country songwriting with Sugarland’s hit “Stay,” which Nettles wrote and performed with the kind of raw, piercing power that only the most gifted artists achieve. The song brought to light her depth as a writer and as a woman, for which Nettles carries the torch by making her indelible stamp in a traditionally male-dominated field. She is the first woman to solo-write the Academy’s Song of the Year since 1972, when Donna Fargo penned “The Happiest Girl in the Whole U.S.A.”



## CRYSTAL MILESTONE AWARD

# Taylor Swift

Nineteen-year-old Taylor Swift is a bona-fide multimedia sensation who has brought country music back to younger audiences and successfully maneuvered between music genres with both of her No. 1 studio albums in 2008. As an icon, Swift has been everywhere from *Rolling Stone* to MTV and has become a household name in the little more than two years since her debut on Big Machine Records. She scorched the charts and made history in 2008, being named *Billboard*’s Best-Selling Artist of all genres. In the digital realm, Swift sold more than nine million digital downloads in 2008, and she surpassed six million in sales for her first two studio albums. With “Our Song,” Swift became the youngest female country artist to write and perform a No. 1 country single. Her latest album, *Fearless*, garnered the biggest-selling debut week for a female artist in any genre in 2008.



## CLIFFIE STONE PIONEER AWARD

# Jerry Reed

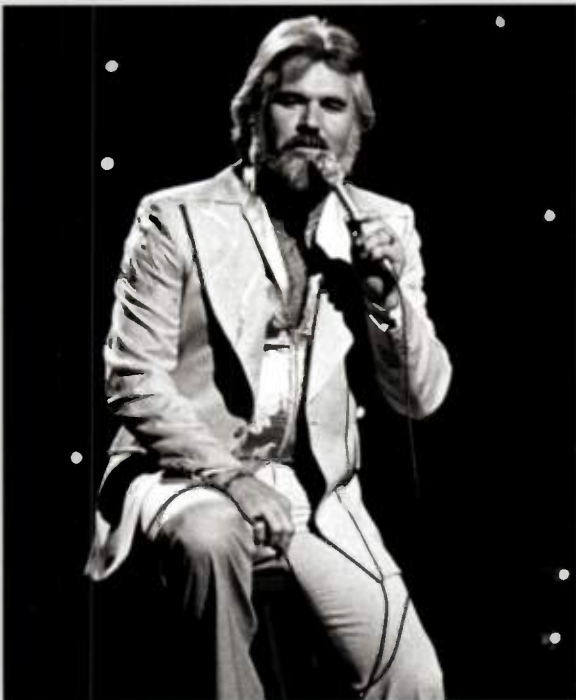
All-around actor, singer, songwriter and "Guitar Man" Jerry Reed left a rich inheritance of laughter and entertainment to the country music family. Reed scored his first single, "If the Good Lord's Willing and the Creeks Don't Rise," when he was only 18 years old, gaining more recognition in 1958 when rock-n'-roller Gene Vincent covered Reed's "Crazy Legs." He also penned Brenda Lee's hit "That's All You Got to Do" and found success of his own with "Goodnight Irene," "If I Don't Live Up to It" and his first charting single "Guitar Man," which was later covered by Elvis Presley. Reed's first Top 20 hit was a tribute to Presley entitled "Tupelo Mississippi Flash." Throughout the 1970s, Reed made regular appearances on the *Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour*. His unique picking style –eventually dubbed "The Claw"– paired with his charm and humor made him a favorite with audiences. He released his biggest hit "When You're Hot, You're Hot" in 1971, followed by a string of Top 40 hits and his second No. 1 in 1973, "Lord, Mr. Ford." Reed branched off from recording in the mid-'70s to pursue a career in acting, appearing in several films alongside close friend and fellow film star Burt Reynolds. His most popular role was as Reynolds' sidekick "The Snowman" in their *Smokey and the Bandit* series during the late '70s. Reed continued to record and release songs into the '80s, scoring more hits with "She Got the Goldmine (I Got the Shaft)," "The Bird" and "I'm a Slave," shifting his primary focus to touring through the '90s. His special blend of talent and ingenuousness resonated with many generations throughout his expansive career whether he was on screen, at home or simply picking on guitar strings.



## CLIFFIE STONE PIONEER AWARD

# Kenny Rogers

With tender, raspy vocals and songs that transport listeners to another world, Kenny Rogers has become a veritable icon of country music. For more than five decades, Rogers has captured fans' hearts in rock, pop, soul and country with songs that have distinguished him as one of the best crossover artists in history. The Texas native got his start as a member of First Edition, releasing hits like "Reuben James" and "Ruby, Don't Take Your Love to Town." Rogers became a superstar in his own right in 1976 with the release of "Lucille" and a string of other classics including "The Gambler," "We've Got Tonight," "Through the Years" and "Lady," which became his first No. 1 pop hit. He brought country music to a wider audience through his visibility in other genres, also earning fame for duets such as "Islands in the Stream," a colossal crossover hit for both Rogers and Dolly Parton. Rogers remained a celebrity throughout the 1980s and 90s with appearances on television specials, films and even fast-food restaurants. An artist in every aspect, Rogers has recorded 65 albums, charted more than 70 hit singles across multiple genres and released two photography books. He has nine ACM awards to his credit (among countless other awards), including Entertainer of the Year in 1978 and the Career Achievement Award. Having sold more than 120 million records during his illustrious career, Rogers is one of the Top 10 best-selling artists of all time. His new project is scheduled for release in 2009, featuring another duet with fellow music legend Dolly Parton.

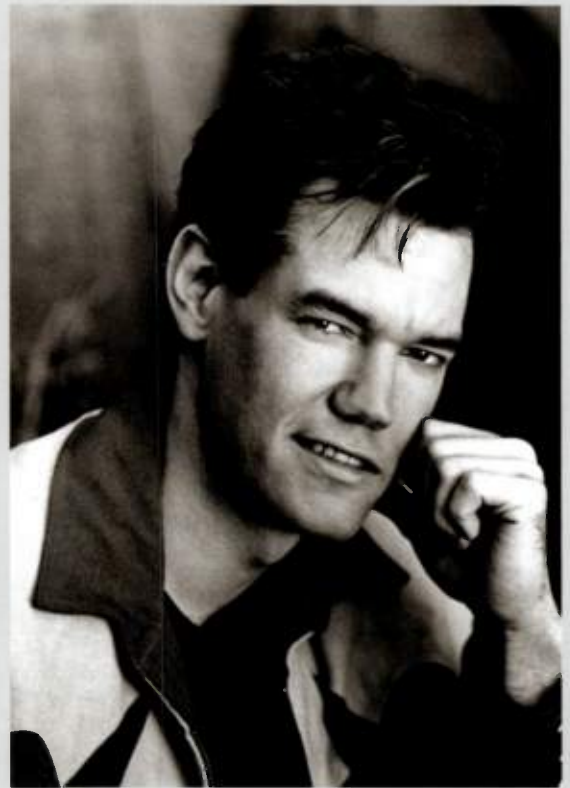




## CLIFFIE STONE PIONEER AWARD

# Randy Travis

Classic country crooner Randy Travis is one of the biggest hit makers of the late 1980s and early 90s, earning a string of seven No. 1 songs that have become foundational to other artists. Travis began his music career playing guitar with his brother at the age of 8 and was discovered by Lib Hatcher at a talent contest in Charlotte, North Carolina, when he was a teenager. Convinced that Travis would one day be a star, Hatcher moved to Nashville with the young singer and ran the famed Nashville Palace where Travis worked as a cook and entertainer. Warner Brothers eventually offered Travis a record deal and released his debut album *Storms of Life* in 1986. The album sold more than three million copies and earned Travis his first three ACM awards, including Album of the Year, Single Record of the Year and Song of the Year for his hit first single, "On the Other Hand." Dominating the radio with his recognizable baritone voice and classic hits like "Diggin' Up Bones," "No Place Like Home" and "Forever and Ever Amen," Travis was again awarded ACM Song of the Year in 2003 for "Three Wooden Crosses," a surprise hit from his gospel album *Rise and Shine*. He has sold more than 25 million records, scored 22 No. 1 hits to date and reaped numerous accolades including six Grammy awards and nine ACM titles. A celebrity on TV and film screens as well, Travis has his own star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and is considered a pivotal figure in the history of country music. His highly anticipated current project, *I Told You So: The Ultimate Hits of Randy Travis*, was released this spring.



## CLIFFIE STONE PIONEER AWARD

# Hank Williams Jr.



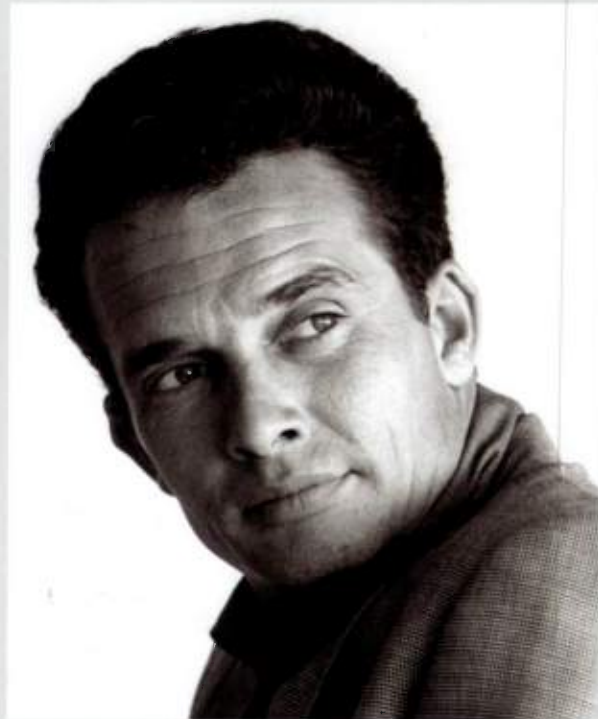
Hank Williams Jr. could have easily been lost in his famous father's shadow, but his own grit and innate musical gift gave him the tools he needed to forge his own path. After making his Grand Ole Opry debut at age 11 and singing his dad's classic songs to continue the family legacy, Hank Jr. found his unique voice writing anthems for the common man, including the now classic "Whiskey Bent and Hell Bound," "All My Rowdy Friends (Have Settled Down)" and "A Country Boy Can Survive." His talent for turning the sentiments and struggles of everyday life into musical poetry that mixed country, blues and southern rock has made him a legend in his own time. Not content to just write about the wild life, Hank Jr. has done his fair share of hell-raising, documenting his "unique position" in the autobiographical "Family Tradition." Having tackled his own demons, Williams continues to make his mark today. "Are You Ready for Some Football," the theme for *ABC Monday Night Football*, earned him the distinction of being the first country artist to win an Emmy Award. Williams was also named the Academy of Country Music's Entertainer of the Year three times, and his music videos for "All My Rowdy Friends are Comin' Over Tonight," "Young Country" and "There's a Tear in My Beer" all won for ACM Video of the Year. His latest album, 2006's hit collection *That's How They Do It in Dixie*, has been certified gold. With 10 No. 1 singles and six platinum albums to his credit, "Bocephus" continues to create new music and to inspire a new generation of musical outlaws including Gretchen Wilson, Tim McGraw and Kid Rock.



## POET'S AWARD

# Merle Haggard

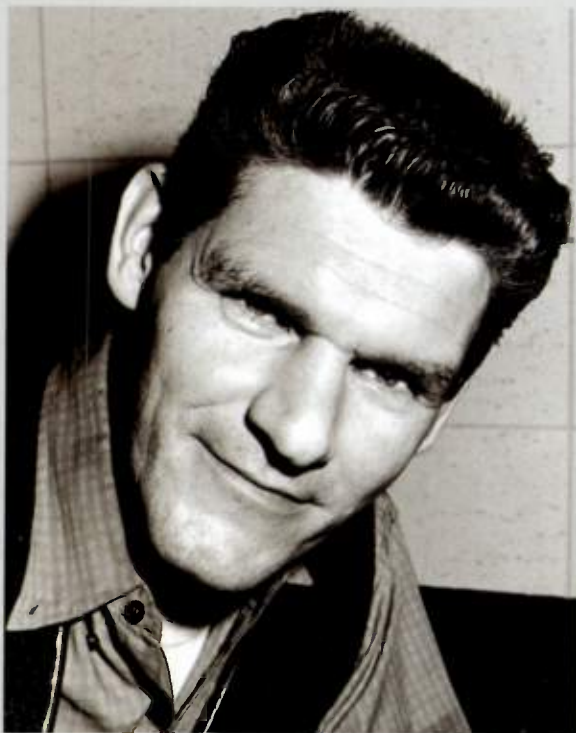
A native Californian and true pioneer of the "Bakersfield Sound," Merle Haggard began his enduring music career in 1962 when he joined Las Vegas entertainer Wynn Stewart's band as a bassist. He scored his first Top 20 hit in 1964 with a cover of Stewart's "Sing A Sad Song," putting his own pen to paper in 1966 to produce his first major hit "Swinging Doors" and following up with his first No. 1 single, "The Fugitive," in 1967. Haggard's earnest lyrics and grittier musical style hailed from a lifetime of hard living, appealing to the working class crowd and eventually gaining "Hag" a reputation as the "poet of the common man." Unafraid of confronting difficult topics in his music from prison life to politics, Haggard gained popularity in 1969 with songs like "Working Man Blues" and the controversial rebel anthem "Okie from Muskogee." He dominated the charts throughout the 1970s and 80s with several hits, 40 of which achieved No. 1 status including "That's The Way Love Goes," "Hungry Eyes," "Today, I Started Loving You Again" and the commonly quoted "Mama Tried." Inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1977 and the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1994, Haggard has received numerous accolades throughout his distinguished career, among them 11 ACM Awards (including Entertainer of the Year in 1970), two Grammy awards (as well as the Grammy Hall of Fame Award), two BMI awards, NSAI's Songwriter of the Year and *Music City News* Songwriter of the Year.



## POET'S AWARD

# Harlan Howard

More than 4,000 songs have come from the pen of legendary scribe Harlan Howard, who has been dubbed as both the "Irving Berlin" and "Dean of Country Music." Howard is responsible for an entire catalog of country classics including "I Fall To Pieces," "I've Got A Tiger By The Tail," "Somebody Should Leave" and "Why Not Me." Beginning to write music at age 12, Howard honed his craft until his career finally took flight during the late 1950s when a few songs such as Charlie Walker's rendition of "Pick Me Up On Your Way Down" and Ray Price's "Heartaches by the Number" both hit No. 2 on the country charts. Pop icon Guy Mitchell covered the latter song in 1961, taking it to the top in that genre and reaffirming Howard's decision to move from Los Angeles to Nashville to work as a full-time songwriter the previous year. Initially writing for Pamper Music – also the songwriting home of Willie Nelson and Hank Cochran – Howard scored an unprecedented 15 compositions in the Top 40 during 1961 and penned 100 Top 10 hits throughout his songwriting career. He was above all a lyrical man, particular in matching his songs to the right singers who have included Ray Charles, Patsy Cline, Waylon Jennings, George Jones, Patty Loveless, Joe Simon, Conway Twitty and Kitty Wells. Among many accolades, Howard received two ACM awards including the elite Pioneer Award in 2006 and was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1973 as well as the Country Music Hall of Fame and the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1997. He died at the age of 74 on March 3, 2002, in Music City, his legacy continuously carried through his songs that are still recorded by many artists today.





## TEX RITTER AWARD

# Beer For My Horses

Rough ridin', beer drinkin' and trouble chasin' are only a few aspects of the uproarious film comedy *Beer For My Horses*. Country music superstar Toby Keith and comedian Rodney Carrington star in this action-packed movie filled with excitement, adventure and revenge. Based on the hit duet by Toby Keith and Willie Nelson, the film features Keith playing the role of Joe Bill "Rack" Racklin, a rogue Oklahoma deputy sheriff whose girlfriend packs up and drives out of his life. As fate would have it, Rack's old flame Annie (Claire Forlani, *CSI: NY*) turns up again at the same time, back from the big city. But their reunion is interrupted when Annie is kidnapped by a ruthless drug lord demanding the release of his recently arrested brother. Operating against the sheriff's orders and racing against time, Rack hits the road with fellow deputy and best friend Lonnie (Carrington) for a raucous trip across state lines to rescue the love of his life. This thrill-fest includes appearances by famed actors Barry Corbin, Greg Serano and Tom Skerritt as well as music legends David Allan Coe, Willie Nelson and Ted Nugent. Such an eclectic group of actors playing absurdly eccentric characters makes this classic road comedy scripted by Keith and Carrington an over-the-top crowd pleaser, also featuring music by some of country's biggest and baddest artists. The film was produced by Keith and Donald Zuckerman and directed by Michael Salomon.



Keith and Forlani film a scene on the set.

## MAE BOREN AXTON AWARD

# David Young

In his 20 years with the Academy of Country Music, there isn't a job that David Young hasn't tackled with enthusiasm. From receptionist to executive assistant to senior director of operations, Young has been a constant thread in the growth of the Academy. Through the years his responsibilities have included credentials, membership, hotel reservations, ground transportation, on-location catering and ACM in-house production for the New Artists Show and the All-Star Jam. Young has also been charged with overseeing logistics for ACM events, computer technology, coordinating volunteers and interns, and working as one of the liaisons with Dick Clark Productions. Prior to joining the Academy of Country Music, Young worked for a large defense company. Upon joining the Academy as receptionist, his work ethic and desire to excel quickly paid off when he was promoted to executive assistant for the former executive director of the Academy, Fran Boyd, who retired in 2002. Young previously managed the annual Celebrity Golf Classic and the New Artists Show. Though the list of areas that Young touched is long, the list of people he has touched with his smile and quick laugh during his 20-year tenure is much longer. David's contributions have helped set up the Academy for a long and bright future. He is retiring from his ACM post this year to move closer to family in Indiana.





# The Week Vegas Goes Country®

## Star-studded events lead up to **COUNTRY MUSIC'S PARTY OF THE YEAR!**

There's just *one* week when the likes of George Strait, Kenny Chesney, Reba McEntire and a slew of big ol' country stars all converge on Sin City. It's the week of the Academy of Country Music Awards, which has been rightfully dubbed "The Week Vegas Goes Country®."

Before the ACM Awards show, country music fans found plenty of stars and plenty of action with several Academy-branded events. Kicking off the fun this year was ACM Weekend on Fremont Street Experience, which featured the New Artist winners, Divas Downtown and special guests! On Friday, April 3rd, Top New Female Vocalist Julianne Hough and Top New Male Vocalist Jake Owen joined headliner Jason Aldean and opening act Matt Stillwell on the Fremont Street stage. On Saturday, April 4th, Top New Vocal Duo/Group winners Zac Brown Band jammed on a bill that included up-and-comers Gloriana and "Divas Downtown" Kellie Pickler and LeAnn Rimes. The Academy's Fremont Street shows have become the biggest event of the year for the Fremont Street Experience, now surpassing even the New Year's Eve celebration. ACM Weekend on Fremont Street Experience was sponsored by Dr. Pepper and Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority.

Earlier on Saturday, multi-platinum trio Rascal Flatts took a beat to hit the links as hosts of the 6th Annual Academy of Country Music Celebrity Golf Classic. Held at beautiful TPC Las Vegas, the event catered exclusively to a sold-out group of 120 golfers. Money raised from the event goes to ACM Lifting Lives®, the charitable arm of the Academy that supports organizations that are improving lives through music. The 2009 tournament is sponsored by the Cox Family Foundation and co-sponsored by Sound Image, Live Nation and Jennison & Rende. Participating sponsors included Fitzgerald Hartley, Richards & Southern, William Morris Agency, CAA, McGhee Entertainment, First Community Bank, The Woodlands, PING, ALDILA, Dr. Pepper and Coors. Contributing sponsors included Palace of Auburn Hills, C3 Presents, Ghost Entertainment, KnocTi Harbor, Wilson Events, Bu-La Productions, Turning Stone Casino, Agency for the Performing Arts, Signature Entertainment, Meadowbrook, Goldenvoice, Neaderlander Concerts, Blue Hat and Houston Rodeo.

Also on Saturday, the newly named ACM Chairman's Ride powered by Harley Davidson rolled down the road with artists Eddie Montgomery, Troy Gentry and Toby Keith. Formerly called the ACM Charity Motorcycle Ride, the invitation-only event, hosted by ACM Chairman and motorcycle enthusiast Rod Essig, took artists and industry VIPs on a scenic cruise through the Nevada desert and along snow-capped mountains. Harley Davidson sponsored the event, which raised money for ACM Lifting Lives.

Tonight—AFTER the 44th Academy of Country Music Awards—the famous All-Star Jam will live up to its motto: One night, one stage...ALL Stars! This free-wheeling concert is the place where stars can let their hair down and the fans can have fun watching them do it! You'll see newly minted ACM winners celebrating their victories with their friends and biggest fans.

And this year, right here in the MGM Grand Garden Arena we've got another historic night of music for you to enjoy. On Monday, April 6, the Academy will honor country legend George Strait as the Artist of the Decade. This all-star musical tribute will feature appearances by Faith Hill, Toby Keith, Tim McGraw, Sugarland, Taylor Swift, Keith Urban and many more! Ticket proceeds will benefit the Academy's Lifting Lives. It's a great night of music for an even greater cause.

Enjoy the pictures here from last year's Vegas events, and for this year's exciting photos visit [www.acmcountry.com](http://www.acmcountry.com).





Clockwise from Top Left:  
Taylor Swift rocks the New Artists Show;  
Gary LeVox, Kix Brooks and Joe Don Rooney  
at the Celebrity Golf Classic; Troy Gentry,  
Eddie Montgomery, Ira Dean, Hollywood  
Yates, James Otto and Keith Anderson hop off  
their Harleys for a quick shot; Jennifer Nettles  
entertains the Fremont Street crowd; Kenny  
Chesney commands the stage at the  
All-Star Jam



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**JOHN GRADY**  
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RADIO



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RECORD COMPANY



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Capitol Nashville



**TREE PAINE**  
Warner Bros. Records

RECORD COMPANY



**BUTCH WAUGH**  
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TALENT  
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**SUZANNE WILSON**  
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TV/MOTION PICTURE



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**SCOTT BORCHETTA**  
Big Machine Records/The Valory  
Music Co.

DIRECTOR AT LARGE



**COYOTE CALHOUN**  
WAMZ



**CHARLIE COOK**  
KKGO-FM-Go Country/  
McVay Media



**BENSON CURB**  
Curb Records

DIRECTOR AT LARGE



**STEVE DAHL**  
PARADIGM



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Dottore-DuBois Management

DIRECTOR AT LARGE



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Grand Ole Opry



**FLETCHER FOSTER**  
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## DIRECTOR AT LARGE



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**MARK MONTGOMERY**



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Regent Communications

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## DIRECTOR AT LARGE

## DIRECTOR AT LARGE



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**DOUG NICHOLS**  
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## DIRECTOR AT LARGE



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# 44th Academy of Country Music Awards

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**LISA LEE**  
*Sr. Director, Creative Development*



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*Intern*



**CLAIRE LEONARD**  
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# Academy History

In 1964, performers Eddie Miller and Tommy Wiggins teamed up with club owners Mickey and Chris Christensen to establish the Country and Western Music Academy. Their vision was to promote country music in the western 13 states with the support of artists based on the West Coast such as Johnny Bond, Glen Campbell, Merle Haggard, Roger Miller, Buck Owens, Wynn Stewart, Jimmy Wakely and Tex Williams. In 1965, a board of directors was formed to govern the Academy and Dick Shofield became the organization's first chairman.

The Academy hosted its first country music awards show in 1966 honoring the industry's accomplishments during the previous year. It was the first country music awards program held by a major organization, propelling country music into the public spotlight for the first time. Winners that year included Kay Adams, Merle Haggard, Bonnie Owens and Buck Owens. The Academy's signature "hat" trophy was created in 1968, the same year Fran Boyd was hired as the Academy's first paid employee.

During the early 1970s, the organization changed its name to the Academy of Country and Western Music and finally to the Academy of Country Music (ACM) to avoid confusion about whether the organization was a music school. The Academy also expanded its efforts to broaden the horizons of the country music industry, sponsoring the "Country Music Caravan" in Los Angeles and beginning its history of charitable endeavors with a "Concern for Prisoners of War" benefit concert (also held in Los Angeles).

The awards show hit the airwaves in 1972, broadcast for the first time in national syndication on the ABC network. Gene Weed took over producing and directing the show in 1974 and in 1979 the Academy joined forces with Dick Clark Productions to produce the show. Dick Clark and Al Schwartz served as producers while Weed continued to direct. Under their guidance, the show also moved to the NBC network and finally to CBS, where it remains today.

The Academy put a foot in Nashville with the start of another of its longstanding traditions in 1988: a partnership with Country Radio Broadcasters yielding the ACM-sponsored Super Faces show at the annual Country Radio Seminar (CRS) in Music City. The Super Faces showcase has opened CRS with country's biggest acts—including Hank Williams, Jr., Garth Brooks, Brooks & Dunn, Dolly Parton and Alan Jackson. In 2005, the event was redefined as the Music City Jam when the famous MuzikMafia (Big & Rich, Cowboy Troy and Gretchen Wilson) took the stage. Toby Keith, Brad Paisley, Tim McGraw and Keith Urban are also among the list of country music heavyweights who have headlined the Music City Jam.

In 1995, Fran Boyd (the Academy's first paid employee) became executive director after her husband, Bill Boyd, passed away. Boyd had steered the Academy since 1980 and held many key positions before taking on the role of executive director that was later bequeathed to his wife. After 34 years of service to the Academy, Fran Boyd retired in 2002 and handed the reins over to Bob Romeo, who currently holds the executive director position. The Academy's staff expanded under Romeo's direction in 2007 with the creation of new departments including Creative Development, Membership & Events and Publicity & Marketing.

The new millennium ushered in a whole new era for the Academy. In 2003, the awards show left Los Angeles for the first time in history and settled into Las Vegas at the Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino Events Center. The show is now held at the MGM Grand Garden Arena. The Academy also adopted a sleeker, modern version of the "hat" trophy that year, and in 2004 the organization implemented online awards voting for its professional members,

becoming the first televised awards show to do so. Creating an associate membership program in 2004 also expanded the Academy's efforts to broaden the appeal of country music and make it more accessible. Fans had the ability to vote online for the ACM Video of the Year and in 2008 they were also invited to vote for the Academy's coveted Entertainer of the Year award (after the professional membership had selected the nominees in that category). Associate membership has since grown to more than 100,000 and more than half a million people participated in the first-ever Entertainer of the Year fan vote. Fan voting was expanded to include a new category, Top New Artist, in 2009.

Not only did the Academy move its awards show to Las Vegas in 2004, but it also took over the town for the entire Week Vegas Goes Country®. For days prior to the annual *Academy of Country Music Awards*, the Academy sponsors several events – both ticketed and open-to-the-public – geared toward showcasing the best acts country music has to offer. In addition to the ACM Celebrity Golf Classic (est. 1983), the Academy also sponsors the ACM Chairman's Ride (formerly the ACM Charity Motorcycle Ride; est. 2004), Fremont Street Experience (est. 2006), New Artists' Show (est. 2004) and All-Star Jam. Various other events have also been included intermittently in the Week Vegas Goes Country, such as a Songwriters-in-the-Round showcase (est. 2006) and an industry "Beach Party" and live charity auction (est. 2004) when the awards show was held at Mandalay Bay.

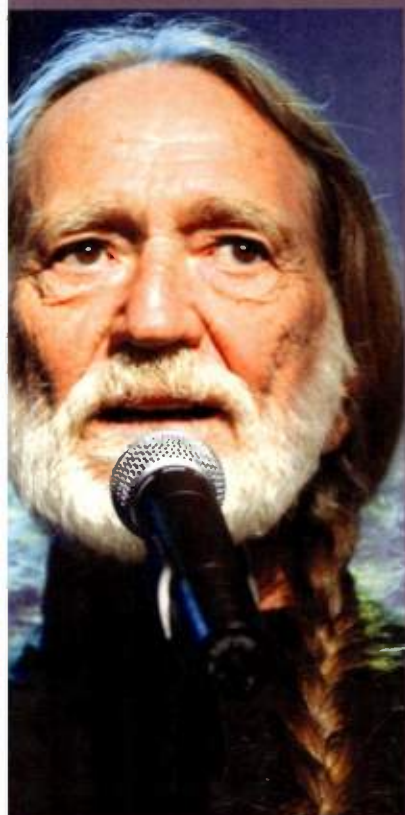
While the Academy strives to foster high-quality entertainment through its events, many Academy events also serve a dual purpose as fundraisers for the Academy's charitable endeavors. The Academy of Country Music Charitable Fund was formed in 2004 to manage monies raised by the Academy for various charitable causes connected with the music industry, as designated each year by a separate governing board. In 2008, the Academy allocated more than \$1 million to charity. In 2009, the charitable arm of the Academy was rebranded as Lifting Lives™, which continues to support worthwhile charitable groups that are improving lives through music.

2008 was a banner year for the Academy – having fully partnered with Dick Clark Productions as producers of the awards show, the Academy took a more aggressive approach to promoting the 43rd *Academy of Country Music Awards* and the Week Vegas Goes Country. The 43rd *Academy of Country Music Awards* was broadcast live from the MGM Grand Garden Arena in high-definition for the first time and ratings skyrocketed with an increase of 26%. Arena seats were entirely sold out, as were the New Artists' Show and the All-Star Jam. The Fremont Street Experience concerts, headlined by Randy Owen and Sugarland, reeled in more than 58,000 fans and was the largest event in Fremont Street history. The Academy also introduced its new annual ACM Honors event in Nashville later that year, hosted by Martina McBride and honoring the recipients of the Academy's special awards including the Jim Reeves International Award, the Musician/Bandleader/Instrumentalist awards, Pioneer Award and Poet's Award.

With its fruitful production partnership and several new initiatives in place, the Academy continues to move forward in 2009 and has already achieved additional milestones. Following the 44th *Academy of Country Music Awards* will be a second show honoring the Academy's Artist of the Decade, George Strait. The Artist of the Decade television special will air later in the year and will be the Academy's second television special (the first being its 40th *Anniversary Celebration* in 2005). As country music continues to reach an increasingly wider audience, the Academy of Country Music also continues its mission to promote and support the industry.



## 44th Academy of Country Music® Awards



Clockwise from top left: REBA MCENTIRE (2008);  
GEORGE STRAIT AND DICK CLARK (1991);  
MERLE HAGGARD; CARRIE UNDERWOOD (2006);  
WILLIE NELSON (2002)



# Past Winners

## ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR

|      |               |      |                   |      |               |      |               |
|------|---------------|------|-------------------|------|---------------|------|---------------|
| 1970 | Merle Haggard | 1980 | Barbara Mandrell  | 1990 | Garth Brooks  | 2000 | Dixie Chicks  |
| 1971 | Freddie Hart  | 1981 | Alabama           | 1991 | Garth Brooks  | 2001 | Brooks & Dunn |
| 1972 | Roy Clark     | 1982 | Alabama           | 1992 | Garth Brooks  | 2002 | Toby Keith    |
| 1973 | Roy Clark     | 1983 | Alabama           | 1993 | Garth Brooks  | 2003 | Toby Keith    |
| 1974 | Mac Davis     | 1984 | Alabama           | 1994 | Reba McEntire | 2004 | Kenny Chesney |
| 1975 | Loretta Lynn  | 1985 | Alabama           | 1995 | Brooks & Dunn | 2005 | Kenny Chesney |
| 1976 | Mickey Gilley | 1986 | Hank Williams Jr. | 1996 | Brooks & Dunn | 2006 | Kenny Chesney |
| 1977 | Dolly Parton  | 1987 | Hank Williams Jr. | 1997 | Garth Brooks  | 2007 | Kenny Chesney |
| 1978 | Kenny Rogers  | 1988 | Hank Williams Jr. | 1998 | Garth Brooks  |      |               |
| 1979 | Willie Nelson | 1989 | George Strait     | 1999 | Shania Twain  |      |               |

## TOP FEMALE VOCALIST

|      |               |      |                  |      |                       |      |                  |
|------|---------------|------|------------------|------|-----------------------|------|------------------|
| 1965 | Bonnie Owens  | 1976 | Crystal Gayle    | 1987 | Reba McEntire         | 1998 | Faith Hill       |
| 1966 | Bonnie Guitar | 1977 | Crystal Gayle    | 1988 | K.T. Oslin            | 1999 | Faith Hill       |
| 1967 | Lynn Anderson | 1978 | Barbara Mandrell | 1989 | Kathy Mattea          | 2000 | Faith Hill       |
| 1968 | Cathie Taylor | 1979 | Crystal Gayle    | 1990 | Reba McEntire         | 2001 | Martina McBride  |
| 1969 | Tammy Wynette | 1980 | Dolly Parton     | 1991 | Reba McEntire         | 2002 | Martina McBride  |
| 1970 | Lynn Anderson | 1981 | Barbara Mandrell | 1992 | Mary-Chapin Carpenter | 2003 | Martina McBride  |
| 1971 | Loretta Lynn  | 1982 | Sylvia           | 1993 | Wynonna               | 2004 | Gretchen Wilson  |
| 1972 | Donna Fargo   | 1983 | Janie Fricke     | 1994 | Reba McEntire         | 2005 | Sara Evans       |
| 1973 | Loretta Lynn  | 1984 | Reba McEntire    | 1995 | Patty Loveless        | 2006 | Carrie Underwood |
| 1974 | Loretta Lynn  | 1985 | Reba McEntire    | 1996 | Patty Loveless        | 2007 | Carrie Underwood |
| 1975 | Loretta Lynn  | 1986 | Reba McEntire    | 1997 | Trisha Yearwood       |      |                  |

## TOP MALE VOCALIST

|      |               |      |               |      |               |      |               |
|------|---------------|------|---------------|------|---------------|------|---------------|
| 1965 | Buck Owens    | 1976 | Mickey Gilley | 1987 | Randy Travis  | 1998 | Tim McGraw    |
| 1966 | Merle Haggard | 1977 | Kenny Rogers  | 1988 | George Strait | 1999 | Tim McGraw    |
| 1967 | Glen Campbell | 1978 | Kenny Rogers  | 1989 | Clint Black   | 2000 | Toby Keith    |
| 1968 | Glen Campbell | 1979 | Larry Gatlin  | 1990 | Garth Brooks  | 2001 | Alan Jackson  |
| 1969 | Merle Haggard | 1980 | George Jones  | 1991 | Garth Brooks  | 2002 | Kenny Chesney |
| 1970 | Merle Haggard | 1981 | Merle Haggard | 1992 | Vince Gill    | 2003 | Toby Keith    |
| 1971 | Freddie Hart  | 1982 | Ronnie Milsap | 1993 | Vince Gill    | 2004 | Keith Urban   |
| 1972 | Merle Haggard | 1983 | Lee Greenwood | 1994 | Alan Jackson  | 2005 | Keith Urban   |
| 1973 | Charlie Rich  | 1984 | George Strait | 1995 | Alan Jackson  | 2006 | Brad Paisley  |
| 1974 | Merle Haggard | 1985 | George Strait | 1996 | George Strait | 2007 | Brad Paisley  |
| 1975 | Conway Twitty | 1986 | Randy Travis  | 1997 | George Strait |      |               |

## TOP VOCAL DUO (formerly Top Vocal Duet from 1980-1996)

|      |                              |      |               |      |                 |      |               |
|------|------------------------------|------|---------------|------|-----------------|------|---------------|
| 1980 | Moe Bandy & Joe Stampley     | 1987 | The Judds     | 1994 | Brooks & Dunn   | 2003 | Brooks & Dunn |
| 1981 | David Frizzell & Shelly West | 1988 | The Judds     | 1995 | Brooks & Dunn   | 2004 | Brooks & Dunn |
| 1982 | David Frizzell & Shelly West | 1989 | The Judds     | 1996 | Brooks & Dunn   | 2005 | Brooks & Dunn |
| 1983 | Dolly Parton & Kenny Rogers  | 1990 | The Judds     | 1997 | Brooks & Dunn** | 2006 | Brooks & Dunn |
| 1984 | The Judds                    | 1991 | Brooks & Dunn | 2000 | Brooks & Dunn   | 2007 | Brooks & Dunn |
| 1985 | The Judds                    | 1992 | Brooks & Dunn | 2001 | Brooks & Dunn   |      |               |
| 1986 | The Judds                    | 1993 | Brooks & Dunn | 2002 | Brooks & Dunn   |      |               |

\*\* in this year the award was presented as Top Vocal Duo/Group

## TOP VOCAL GROUP

|      |                              |      |                          |      |                |      |               |
|------|------------------------------|------|--------------------------|------|----------------|------|---------------|
| 1966 | Bonnie Owens & Merle Haggard | 1977 | Statler Brothers         | 1988 | Highway 101    | 2000 | Dixie Chicks  |
| 1967 | Sons of the Pioneers         | 1978 | Oak Ridge Boys           | 1989 | Restless Heart | 2001 | Lonestar      |
| 1968 | Johnny & Jonie Mosby         | 1979 | Moe Bandy & Joe Stampley | 1990 | Shenandoah     | 2002 | Rascal Flatts |
| 1969 | Kimberleys                   | 1980 | Alabama                  | 1991 | Diamond Rio    | 2003 | Rascal Flatts |
| 1970 | Kimberleys                   | 1981 | Alabama                  | 1992 | Diamond Rio    | 2004 | Rascal Flatts |
| 1971 | Conway Twitty & Loretta Lynn | 1982 | Alabama                  | 1993 | Little Texas   | 2005 | Rascal Flatts |
| 1972 | Statler Brothers             | 1983 | Alabama                  | 1994 | The Mavericks  | 2006 | Rascal Flatts |
| 1973 | Brush Arbor**                | 1984 | Alabama                  | 1995 | The Mavericks  | 2007 | Rascal Flatts |
| 1974 | Conway Twitty & Loretta Lynn | 1985 | Alabama                  | 1996 | Sawyer Brown   |      |               |
| 1975 | Conway Twitty & Loretta Lynn | 1986 | Forester Sisters         | 1998 | Dixie Chicks** |      |               |
| 1976 | Conway Twitty & Loretta Lynn | 1987 | Highway 101              | 1999 | Dixie Chicks** |      |               |

\*\* in this year the award was presented as Top Vocal Duo/Group



## 44th Academy of Country Music Awards

### TOP NEW ARTIST

|      |                 |
|------|-----------------|
| 2003 | Dierks Bentley  |
| 2004 | Gretchen Wilson |

### TOP NEW VOCAL DUO OR GROUP

|      |                            |      |               |      |                   |      |                 |
|------|----------------------------|------|---------------|------|-------------------|------|-----------------|
| 1989 | Kentucky Headhunters       | 1994 | The Mavericks | 1999 | Montgomery Gentry | 2006 | Little Big Town |
| 1990 | Pirates of the Mississippi | 1995 | Lonestar      | 2000 | Rascal Flatts     | 2007 | Lady Antebellum |
| 1991 | Brooks & Dunn              | 1996 | Ricochet      | 2001 | Trick Pony        | 2008 | Zac Brown Band  |
| 1992 | Confederate Railroad       | 1997 | The Kinleys   | 2002 | Emerson Drive     |      |                 |
| 1993 | Gibson Miller Band         | 1998 | Dixie Chicks  | 2005 | Sugarland         |      |                 |

### TOP NEW FEMALE VOCALIST

|      |                  |      |                       |      |                 |      |                      |
|------|------------------|------|-----------------------|------|-----------------|------|----------------------|
| 1977 | Debby Boone      | 1985 | Judy Rodman           | 1993 | Faith Hill      | 2001 | Carolyn Dawn Johnson |
| 1978 | Christy Lane     | 1986 | Holly Dunn            | 1994 | Chely Wright    | 2002 | Kellie Coffey        |
| 1979 | Lacy J. Dalton   | 1987 | K.T. Oslin            | 1995 | Shania Twain    | 2005 | Carrie Underwood     |
| 1980 | Terri Gibbs      | 1988 | Suzy Bogguss          | 1996 | LeAnn Rimes     | 2006 | Miranda Lambert      |
| 1981 | Juice Newton     | 1989 | Mary-Chapin Carpenter | 1997 | Lee Ann Womack  | 2007 | Taylor Swift         |
| 1982 | Karen Brooks     | 1990 | Shelby Lynne          | 1998 | Jo Dee Messina  | 2008 | Julianne Hough       |
| 1983 | Gus Hardin       | 1991 | Trisha Yearwood       | 1999 | Jessica Andrews |      |                      |
| 1984 | Nicolette Larson | 1992 | Michelle Wright       | 2000 | Jamie O'Neal    |      |                      |

### TOP NEW MALE VOCALIST

|      |                 |      |                   |      |                         |      |               |
|------|-----------------|------|-------------------|------|-------------------------|------|---------------|
| 1977 | Eddie Rabbitt   | 1985 | Randy Travis      | 1993 | John Michael Montgomery | 2001 | Phil Vassar   |
| 1978 | John Conlee     | 1986 | Dwight Yoakam     | 1994 | Tim McGraw              | 2002 | Joe Nichols   |
| 1979 | R.C. Bannon     | 1987 | Ricky Van Shelton | 1995 | Bryan White             | 2005 | Jason Aldean  |
| 1980 | Johnny Lee      | 1988 | Rodney Crowell    | 1996 | Trace Adkins            | 2006 | Rodney Atkins |
| 1981 | Ricky Skaggs    | 1989 | Clint Black       | 1997 | Kenny Chesney           | 2007 | Jack Ingram   |
| 1982 | Michael Murphey | 1990 | Alan Jackson      | 1998 | Mark Wills              | 2008 | Jake Owen     |
| 1983 | Jim Glaser      | 1991 | Billy Dean        | 1999 | Brad Paisley            |      |               |
| 1984 | Vince Gill      | 1992 | Tracy Lawrence    | 2000 | Keith Urban             |      |               |

### ARTIST OF THE DECADE

|       |                                                                    |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1960s | Marty Robbins (presented 1969)                                     |
| 1970s | Loretta Lynn (presented 1979)                                      |
| 1980s | Alabama (presented 1989)                                           |
| 1990s | Garth Brooks (presented 1999)                                      |
| 2000s | George Strait (announced October 2008, to be presented April 2009) |

### ACM/THE HOME DEPOT HUMANITARIAN AWARD

|      |                 |
|------|-----------------|
| 2001 | Reba McEntire   |
| 2002 | Lonestar        |
| 2003 | Martina McBride |
| 2004 | Neal McCoy      |
| 2005 | Vince Gill      |
| 2006 | Brooks & Dunn   |
| 2007 | Rascal Flatts   |
| 2008 | LeAnn Rimes     |

### SINGLE RECORD OF THE YEAR (currently awarded to Artist, Producer, & Record Company)

|      |                                                                         |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1967 | "Gentle On My Mind" GLEN CAMPBELL; Al Delroy (A & R); Capitol Records   |
| 1968 | "Little Green Apples" ROGER MILLER; Smash                               |
| 1969 | "Okie From Muskogee" MERLE HAGGARD; Capitol Records                     |
| 1970 | "For the Good Time" RAY PRICE; Columbia Records                         |
| 1971 | "Easy Lovin'" FREDDIE HART; Capitol Records                             |
| 1972 | "Happiest Girl/USA" DONNA FARGO (birth name: Yvonne Vaughn Silver); Dot |
| 1973 | "Behind Closed Doors" CHARLIE RICH; Epic Records                        |
| 1974 | "Country Bumpkin" CAL SMITH; MCA Records                                |
| 1975 | "Rhinestone Cowboy" GLEN CAMPBELL; Capitol Records                      |
| 1976 | "Bring It On Home" MICKEY GILLEY; Playboy Records                       |
| 1977 | "Lucille" KENNY ROGERS; United Artists                                  |
| 1978 | "Tulsa Time" DON WILLIAMS; ABC Records                                  |



# Past Winners

|      |                                                                                                                                       |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1979 | "All The Gold in California" <b>LARRY GATLIN &amp; GATLIN BROS.</b> ; Columbia Records                                                |
| 1980 | "He Stopped Loving Her Today" <b>GEORGE JONES</b> ; Epic Records; Produced by Billy Sherrill                                          |
| 1981 | "Elvira" <b>OAK RIDGE BOYS</b> ; MCA Records; Produced by Ron Chancey                                                                 |
| 1982 | "Always On My Mind" <b>WILLIE NELSON</b> ; Columbia Records; Produced by Chips Moman                                                  |
| 1983 | "Islands In The Stream" <b>DOLLY PARTON &amp; KENNY ROGERS</b> ; RCA Records; Produced by Barry Gibb & Karl Richardson                |
| 1984 | "To All The Girls I've Loved Before" <b>JULIO IGLESIAS &amp; WILLIE NELSON</b> ; Columbia Records; Produced by Richard Perry          |
| 1985 | "Highwayman" <b>JOHNNY CASH, KRIS KRISTOFFERSON, WAYLON JENNINGS, &amp; WILLIE NELSON</b> ; Columbia Records; Produced by Chips Moman |
| 1986 | "On The Other Hand" <b>RANDY TRAVIS</b> ; Warner Brothers Records; Produced by Keith Stegall & Kyle Lehning                           |
| 1987 | "Forever And Ever Amen" <b>RANDY TRAVIS</b> ; Warner Brothers Records; Produced by Kyle Lehning                                       |
| 1988 | "Eighteen Wheels And A Dozen Roses" <b>KATHY MATTEA</b> ; Mercury Records; Produced by Allen Reynolds                                 |
| 1989 | "Better Man" <b>CLINT BLACK</b> ; RCA Records; Produced by James Stroud & Mark Wright                                                 |
| 1990 | "Friends In Low Places" <b>GARTH BROOKS</b> ; Capitol Records; Produced by Allen Reynolds                                             |
| 1991 | "Don't Rock the Jukebox" <b>ALAN JACKSON</b> ; Arista Records Nashville; Produced by Keith Stegall & Scott Hendricks                  |
| 1992 | "Boot Scootin' Boogie" <b>BROOKS &amp; DUNN</b> ; Arista Records Nashville; Produced by Don Cook & Scott Hendricks                    |
| 1993 | "Chattahoochee" <b>ALAN JACKSON</b> ; Arista Records Nashville; Produced by Keith Stegall                                             |
| 1994 | "I Swear" <b>JOHN MICHAEL MONTGOMERY</b> ; Atlantic Records; Produced by Scott Hendricks                                              |
| 1995 | "Check Yes Or No" <b>GEORGE STRAIT</b> ; MCA Records; Produced by George Strait & Tony Brown                                          |
| 1996 | "Blue" <b>LEANN RIMES</b> ; Curb Records; Produced by Wilbur C. Rimes                                                                 |
| 1997 | "It's Your Love" <b>TIM MCGRAW &amp; FAITH HILL</b> ; Curb Records; Produced by Byron Gallimore, James Stroud, & Tim McGraw           |
| 1998 | "This Kiss" <b>FAITH HILL</b> ; Warner Brothers Records; Produced by Byrson Gallimore & Faith Hill                                    |
| 1999 | "Amazed" <b>LONESTAR</b> ; BNA Records; Produced by Dann Huff                                                                         |
| 2000 | "I Hope You Dance" <b>LEE ANN WOMACK &amp; SONS OF THE DESERT</b> ; MCA Records; Produced by Mark Wright                              |
| 2001 | "Where Were You (When the World Stopped Turning)" <b>ALAN JACKSON</b> ; Arista Records Nashville; Produced by Keith Stegall           |
| 2002 | "The Good Stuff" <b>KENNY CHESNEY</b> ; BNA Records; Produced by Buddy Cannon, Kenny Chesney, & Norro Wilson                          |
| 2003 | "It's Five O'Clock Somewhere" <b>ALAN JACKSON &amp; JIMMY BUFFET</b> ; Arista Records Nashville; Produced by Keith Stegall            |
| 2004 | "Live Like You Were Dying" <b>TIM MCGRAW</b> ; Curb Records; Produced by Byron Gallimore, Darran Smith, & Tim McGraw                  |
| 2005 | "Jesus Take the Wheel" <b>CARRIE UNDERWOOD</b> ; Arista; Produced by Mark Bright                                                      |
| 2006 | "Give It Away" <b>GEORGE STRAIT</b> ; MCA Nashville; Produced by George Strait & Tony Brown                                           |
| 2007 | "Stay" <b>SUGARLAND</b> ; Mercury Records; Produced by Byron Gallimore, Kristian Bush, & Jennifer Nettles                             |

## SONG OF THE YEAR (currently awarded to Artist, Songwriter, & Publisher)

|      |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1966 | "Apartment #9" <b>TAMMY WYNETTE</b> ; Written by Bobby Austin, Fuzzy Owen, & Johnny Paycheck                                                                                                         |
| 1967 | "It's Such A Pretty World Today" <b>WYNN STEWART</b> ; Written by Dale Noe; Published by Freeway Music                                                                                               |
| 1968 | "Wichita Lineman" <b>GLEN CAMPBELL</b> ; Composed by Jim Webb                                                                                                                                        |
| 1969 | "Okie From Muskogee" <b>MERLE HAGGARD</b> ; Published by Sony/ATV Tree; Composed by Roy Burris & Merle Haggard                                                                                       |
| 1970 | "For the Good Times" <b>RAY PRICE</b>                                                                                                                                                                |
| 1971 | "Easy Lovin'" <b>FREDDIE HART</b> ; Composed by Freddie Hart                                                                                                                                         |
| 1972 | "Happiest Girl/USA" <b>DONNA FARGO</b> (birth name: Yvonne Vaughn Silver); Published by Embassy Music Corp & EMI Algee Music Corp                                                                    |
| 1973 | "Behind Closed Doors" <b>CHARLIE RICH</b> ; Composed by Kenny O'Dell                                                                                                                                 |
| 1974 | "Country Bumpkin" <b>CAL SMITH</b> ; Published by Sony/ATV Tree; Composed by Don Choate                                                                                                              |
| 1975 | "Rhinestone Cowboy" <b>GLEN CAMPBELL</b> ; Published by WB Music Corp; Composed by Larry Weiss                                                                                                       |
| 1976 | "Don't the Girls Get Prettier at Closing Time" <b>MICKEY GILLEY</b> ; Published Sixteen Stars Music; Composed by Baker Knight                                                                        |
| 1977 | "Lucille" <b>KENNY ROGERS</b> ; Published by Andite Invasion, Missed Memories Music, & Sony/ATV Songs LLC; Composed by Roger Dale Bowling & Hal Bynum                                                |
| 1978 | "You Needed Me" <b>ANNE MURRAY</b> ; Published by Chappell & Co, Inc. & Ironside Music; Composed by Charles R. Goodrum                                                                               |
| 1979 | "It's A Cheatin' Situation" <b>MOE BANDY</b> ; Composed by Carly Putnam & James Throckmorton                                                                                                         |
| 1980 | "He Stopped Loving Her Today" <b>GEORGE JONES</b> ; Published by Tree Publishing; Composed by Bobby Braddock & Carly Putnam                                                                          |
| 1981 | "You're The Reason God Made Oklahoma" <b>DAVID FRIZZELL &amp; SHELLEY WEST</b> ;<br>Published by Cibie Music Companies, Senor, Peso Music, & Wallet Music; Composed by Larry Collins & Sandy Pinkard |
| 1982 | "Are The Good Times Really Over" <b>MERLE HAGGARD</b> ; Published by Shade Tree Music; Composed by Merle Haggard                                                                                     |
| 1983 | "The Wind Beneath My Wings" <b>GARY MORRIS</b> ; Published by Warner House of Music & WB Gold Music; Composed by Jeff Silbar & Larry Henley                                                          |
| 1984 | "Why Not Me" <b>THE JUDDS</b> ; Published by Blue Quill Music, Cross Keys Music, Tree Publishing, & Welbeck Music;<br>Composed by Brent Maher, Harlan Howard, & Sonny Throckmorton                   |
| 1985 | "Lost in the Fifties (In The Still Of The Night)" <b>RONNIE MILSAP</b> ; Published by Llee Music, Lodge Hall, Two Sons Music, & WB Music Corp.;<br>Composed by Fred Parris, Mike Reid, & Troy Seals  |
| 1986 | "On The Other Hand" <b>RANDY TRAVIS</b> ; Published by Don Schlitz Music, MCA Music Publishing, Scarlet Moon Music, & Writers Group Music;<br>Composed by Don Schlitz & Paul Overstreet              |
| 1987 | "Forever And Ever Amen" <b>RANDY TRAVIS</b> ; Published by Don Schlitz Music, MCA Music Publishing, Scarlet Moon Music,<br>& Writers Group Music; Composed by Don Schlitz                            |
| 1988 | "Eighteen Wheels And A Dozen Roses" <b>KATHY MATTEA</b> ; Published by Believeus Or Not Music, Screen GEMS-EMI Music,<br>& Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp.; Composed by Gene Nelson & Paul Nelson  |



## 44th Academy of Country Music Awards

- 1989 **"Where've You Been"** KATHY MATTEA; Published by Cross Keys Music (ASCAP) & Wrensong (ASCAP); Composed by Don Henry & Jon Vezner
- 1990 **"The Dance"** GARTH BROOKS; Published by Morganactive Music & Pookie Bear Music; Composed by Tony Arata
- 1991 **"Somewhere in My Broken Heart"** BILLY DEAN; Published by EMI April Music Inc., EMI Blackwood Music Inc., & Lion-Hearted Music (ASCAP/BMI); Composed by Billy Dean & Richard Leigh
- 1992 **"I Still Believe in You"** VINCE GILL; Published by Benefit Music & Inspector Barlow Music (ASCAP/BMI); Composed by John Jarvis & Vince Gill
- 1993 **"I Love The Way You Love Me"** JOHN MICHAEL MONTGOMERY; Published by BMG Songs Inc. & Taste Auction (ASCAP/BMI); Composed by Chuck Cannon & Victoria Shaw
- 1994 **"I Swear"** JOHN MICHAEL MONTGOMERY; Published by Morganactive Music & Rick Hall Music (ASCAP); Composed by Frank J. Myers & Gary Baker
- 1995 **"The Keeper Of The Stars"** TRACY BYRD; Published by Murrah Music Corp., New Haven Music, Pal Time Music Inc. (BMI), Sixteen Stars Music; & Songs of Poly Gram Int'l; Composed by Danny Mayo, Dickey Lee, & Karen Staley
- 1996 **"Blue"** LEANN RIMES; Published by Fory Knox Music (BMI) & Trio Music; Composed by Bill Mack
- 1997 **"It's Your Love"** FAITH HILL & TIM MCGRAW; Published by EMI Blackwood Music Inc. (BMI); Composed by Stephony Smith
- 1998 **"Holes In The Floor Of Heaven"** STEVE WARINER; Published by Hamstein Cumberland, KidJulie (BMI), & Steve Wariner; Composed by Billy Kirsch & Steve Wariner
- 1999 **"Amazed"** LONESTAR; Published by Careers-BMG Music Publishing Inc., Golden Wheat Music, Silverkiss Music, Songs of Nashville DreamWorks (BMI), & Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp.; Composed by Aimee Mayo, Chris Lindsey, & Marv Green
- 2000 **"I Hope You Dance"** LEE ANN WOMACK & SONS OF THE DESERT; Published by Choice is Tragic Music, Ensign Music Corp. (BMI), MCA Music Publishing, & Soda Creek Songs (ASCAP); Composed by Mark D. Sanders & Tia Sillers
- 2001 **"Where Were You (When the World Stopped Turning)"** ALAN JACKSON; Published by EMI April Music Inc. & Tri-Angels Music (ASCAP); Composed by Alan Jackson
- 2002 **"I'm Movin' On"** RASCAL FLATTS; Published by Las Wagas, Murrah Music Corp. (BMI), Songs of Megalex, & WB Music Corp. (ASCAP); Composed by D. Vincent Williams & Phillip White
- 2003 **"Three Wooden Crosses"** RANDY TRAVIS; Published by Kim Williams Music (ASCAP), Mike Curb Music (BMI), Sony/ATV Tunes (ASCAP), & Sweet Radical Music (BMI); Composed by Douglas Johnson & Kim Williams
- 2004 **"Live Like You Were Dying"** TIM MCGRAW; Published by Big Loud Shirt (ASCAP) & ICG/Warner (BMI); Composed by Craig Wiseman & Tim Nichols
- 2005 **"Believe"** BROOKS & DUNN; Published by Big Loud Shirt Industries (ASCAP), Showbilly Music (BMI), & Sony / ATV Tree Publishing Co. (BMI); Composed by Craig Wiseman (ASCAP) & Ronnie Dunn (BMI)
- 2006 **"Give It Away"** GEORGE STRAIT; Written by Bill Anderson, Buddy Cannon, & Jamey Johnson; Published by 2006 Sony/ATV Tree Publishing, Mr. Bubba Music Inc., EMI Blackwood Music Inc. (BMI), & Run Slow Music
- 2007 **"Stay"** SUGARLAND; Written by Jennifer Nettles; Published by Jennifer Nettles Publishing (ASCAP)

### VIDEO OF THE YEAR (formerly ACM/Launch Video of the Year from 2003-2004)

- 1984 **"All My Rowdy Friends Are Comin' Over Tonight"** HANK WILLIAMS JR.; Directed by John Goodhugh
- 1986 **"Whoever's In New England"** REBA MCENTIRE; Directed by Jeff Schock & Jon Small; Produced by Jon Small
- 1987 **"80's Ladies"** K.T. OSLIN; Directed by Jack Cole; Produced by Marc Ball
- 1988 **"Young Country"** HANK WILLIAMS JR.; Directed by Bill Fishman & Preacher Ewing; Produced by Brent Bowman
- 1989 **"There's A Tear In My Beer"** HANK WILLIAMS JR.; Directed by Ethan Russell; Produced by Joanne Gardner
- 1990 **"The Dance"** GARTH BROOKS; Directed by Garth Brooks & John Lloyd Miller; Produced by Marc Ball
- 1991 **"Is There Life Out There?"** REBA MCENTIRE; Directed by Jack Cole; Produced by Robin Beresford
- 1992 **"Two Sparrows in a Hurricane"** TANYA TUCKER; Directed by Joanne Gardner; Produced by Brent Hedgcock
- 1993 **"We Shall Be Free"** GARTH BROOKS; Directed by Garth Brooks & Tim Miller; Produced by Tim Miller
- 1994 **"The Red Strokes"** GARTH BROOKS; Directed by Jon Small; Produced by Jon Small & Steven Carter
- 1995 **"The Car"** JEFF CARSON; Directed by Michael Salomon; Produced by Maureen Ryan
- 1996 **"I Think About You"** COLLIN RAYE; Directed by Steven Goldmann; Produced by Susan Bowman
- 1997 **"It's Your Love"** FAITH HILL & TIM MCGRAW; Directed by Sherman Halsey; Produced by Sherman Halsey
- 1998 **"This Kiss"** FAITH HILL; Directed by Steven Goldmann; Produced by Susan Bowman
- 1999 **"Breathe"** FAITH HILL; Directed by Lili Hill; Produced by Anastasia Simone
- 2000 **"Goodbye Earl"** DIXIE CHICKS; Directed by Evan Bernard; Produced by Keeley Gould
- 2001 **"Only in America"** BROOKS & DUNN; Directed by Michael Merriman; Produced by Stephanie Reeves
- 2002 **"Drive (For Daddy Gene)"** ALAN JACKSON; Directed by Steven Goldman; Produced by Robin Rucker
- 2003 **"Beer For My Horses"** TOBY KEITH & WILLIE NELSON; Directed by Michael Salomon; Produced by Mark Kalbfeld
- 2004 **"Whiskey Lullaby"** ALISON KRAUSS & BRAD PAISLEY; Directed by Rick Schroder; Produced by Don Lepore
- 2005 **"When I Get Where I'm Going"** BRAD PAISLEY & DOLLY PARTON; Directed by Jim Shea; Produced by Mark Kalbfeld & Peter Tilden
- 2006 **"Before He Cheats"** CARRIE UNDERWOOD; Directed by Roman White; Produced by Randy Brewer
- 2007 **"Online"** BRAD PAISLEY; Directed by Jason Alexander; Produced by Mark Kalbfeld & Peter Tilden

### VOCAL EVENT OF THE YEAR

- 1997 **"It's Your Love"** FAITH HILL & TIM MCGRAW
- 1998 **"Just To Hear You Say That You Love Me"** FAITH HILL & TIM MCGRAW; Produced by Dann Huff & Faith Hill
- 1999 **"When I Said I Do"** CLINT BLACK & LISA HARTMAN BLACK; Produced by Clint Black



# Past Winners

- 2000 "I Hope You Dance" **LEE ANN WOMACK & SONS OF THE DESERT**; MCA Records;  
Produced by Mark Wright
- 2001 "I Am a Man of Constant Sorrow" **SOGGY BOTTOM BOYS**; Produced by T-Bone Burnett
- 2002 "Mendocino County Line" **LEE ANN WOMACK & WILLIE NELSON**;  
Produced by Matthew Serletic
- 2003 "It's Five O'Clock Somewhere" **ALAN JACKSON & JIMMY BUFFET**; Arista Records Nashville;  
Produced by Keith Stegall
- 2004 "Whiskey Lullaby" **ALISON KRAUSS & BRAD PAISLEY**; Arista Nashville;  
Produced by Frank Rogers
- 2005 "When I Get Where I'm Going" **BRAD PAISLEY & DOLLY PARTON**; Arista;  
Produced by Chris DuBois & Frank Rogers
- 2006 "Building Bridges" **BROOKS & DUNN, SHERYL CROW, & VINCE GILL**; Arista Nashville;  
Produced by Kix Brooks, Ronnie Dunn, & Tony Brown
- 2007 "Find Out Who Your Friends Are" **TIM MCGRAW, KENNY CHESNEY, & TRACY LAWRENCE**;  
Rocky Comfort/CO5; Produced by Tracy Lawrence & Julian King

## ALBUM OF THE YEAR (currently awarded to Artist, Producer & Record Company)

- 1967 **Gentle On My Mind**; **GLEN CAMPBELL**; Al Delroy (A & R); Capitol Records
- 1968 **Glen Campbell & Bobbie Gentry**; **BOBBIE GENTRY**; Capitol Records
- 1969 **Okie From Muskogee**; **MERLE HAGGARD**; Capitol Records
- 1970 **For the Good Times**; **RAY PRICE**; Columbia Records
- 1971 **Easy Lovin'**; **FREDDIE HART**; Capitol Records
- 1972 **Happiest Girl/USA**; **DONNA FARGO** (birth name: Yvonne Vaughn Silver); Dot
- 1973 **Behind Closed Doors**; **CHARLIE RICH**; Epic Records
- 1974 **Back Home Again**; **JOHN DENVER**; RCA Records
- 1975 **Feelings**; **CONWAY TWITTY, LORETTA LYNN**; MCA Records
- 1976 **Gilley's Smoking**; **MICKEY GILLEY**; Playboy
- 1977 **Kenny Rogers**; **KENNY ROGERS**; United Artists Records
- 1978 **Ya'll Come Back Saloon**; **OAK RIDGE BOYS**; ABC/Dot
- 1979 **Straight Ahead**; **LARRY GATLIN**; Columbia Records
- 1980 **Urban Cowboy**; **FULL MOON**; Asylum
- 1981 **Feel's So Right**; **ALABAMA**; RCA Records; Produced by Harold Shedd & Larry McBride
- 1982 **Always on My Mind**; **WILLIE NELSON**; Columbia Records; Produced by Chips Moman
- 1983 **The Closer You Get**; **ALABAMA**; RCA Records; Produced by Harold Shedd
- 1984 **Roll On**; **ALABAMA**; RCA Records; Produced by Harold Shedd
- 1985 **Does Ft. Worth Ever Cross Your Mind**; **GEORGE STRAIT**; RCA Records;  
Produced by Jimmy Bowen
- 1986 **Storms of Life**; **RANDY TRAVIS**; Warner Bros. Records; Produced by Kyle Lehning
- 1987 **Trio**; **DOLLY PARTON, EMMYLOU HARRIS, LINDA RONSTADT**; Warner Bros. Records;  
Produced by George Massenburg
- 1988 **This Woman**; **K.T. OSLIN**; RCA Records; Produced by Harold Shedd
- 1989 **Killin' Time**; **CLINT BLACK**; RCA Records; Produced by James Stroud & Mark Wright
- 1990 **No Fences**; **GARTH BROOKS**; Capitol Records; Produced by Allen Reynolds
- 1991 **Don't Rock the Jukebox**; **ALAN JACKSON**; Arista Records Nashville;  
Produced by Keith Stegall & Scott Hendricks
- 1992 **Brand New Man**; **BROOKS & DUNN**; Arista Records Nashville,  
Produced by Scott Hendricks & Don Cook
- 1993 **A Lot About Livin'**; **ALAN JACKSON**; Arista Records Nashville; Produced by Keith Stegall
- 1994 **Not A Moment Too Soon**; **TIM MCGRAW**; Curb Records;  
Produced by James Stroud & Byron Gallimore
- 1995 **The Woman In Me**; **SHANIA TWAIN**; Mercury Records; Produced by Robert John Lange
- 1996 **Blue Clear Sky**; **GEORGE STRAIT**; MCA Records; Produced by George Strait & Tony Brown
- 1997 **Carrying Your Love With Me**; **GEORGE STRAIT**; MCA Records;  
Produced by George Strait & Tony Brown
- 1998 **Wide Open Spaces**; **DIXIE CHICKS**; Monument Records;  
Produced by Blake Chancey & Paul Worley
- 1999 **Fly**; **DIXIE CHICKS**; Monument Records; Produced by Blake Chancey & Paul Worley
- 2000 **How Do You Like Me Now?**; **TOBY KEITH**; Mercury Records;  
Produced by Toby Keith & James Stroud

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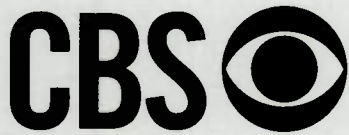
|      |                                                                                                                                  |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2001 | <b>O Brother, Where Art Thou?</b> ; <b>SOUNDTRACK - O BROTHER, WHERE ART THOU?</b> ; Mercury Records; Produced by T-Bone Burnett |
| 2002 | <b>Drive</b> ; <b>ALAN JACKSON</b> ; Arista Records Nashville; Produced by Keith Stegall                                         |
| 2003 | <b>Shock 'N Y'all</b> ; <b>TOBY KEITH</b> ; DreamWorks Records; Produced by James Stroud & Toby Keith                            |
| 2004 | <b>Be Here</b> ; <b>KEITH URBAN</b> ; Capitol Records Nashville; Produced by Dann Huff & Keith Urban                             |
| 2005 | <b>Time Well Wasted</b> ; <b>BRAD PAISLEY</b> ; Arista Records Nashville; Produced by Chris DuBois & Frank Rogers                |
| 2006 | <b>Some Hearts</b> ; <b>CARRIE UNDERWOOD</b> ; 19 Recordings Limited/Arista Records; Produced by Dann Huff & Mark Bright         |
| 2007 | <b>Crazy Ex Girlfriend</b> ; <b>MIRANDA LAMBERT</b> ; Columbia Nashville; Produced by Frank Liddell & Mike Wrucke                |

\*PLEASE NOTE—ACM Awards recognize excellence for work in the preceding calendar year; for example, an award handed out on the show in 2008 would be listed as a 2007 award.

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Phil Gonzales  
Andrea Ballas  
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Ron Scalera  
Garen Van deBeek  
Paul Friedman  
Chris Cranner  
Terry De Wolfe

Kathy Culleton  
Karen McLaughlin  
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Rudi Simpson  
Lesli Lawrence  
Mark Detchemendy  
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Michael Burns  
Michael Burry  
Tara Cox  
"Papa Joe" Diterlizzi  
Terry Driscoll  
Adam Fertig  
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Teresa Fry  
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Stephanie Heller  
Frank Huff  
Maggie Jackson  
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### ART DIRECTION AND DESIGN

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Montage Communications  
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### PROGRAM BOOK COVER DESIGN

Richards & Southern, Brian Patterson

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### PHOTO CREDITS\*

Getty Images  
CBS/Monty Briton  
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### PUBLISHER

Academy of Country Music  
5500 Balboa Ave, Suite 200  
Encino, California 91316  
(818) 788-8000  
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\*Additional photos provided courtesy of artists' management and record labels.

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