
HALL OF FAME
2026
TEXAS
SONGWRITERS
WEEKEND

TEXAS HERITAGE SONGWRITERS ASSOCIATION

The TEXAS HERITAGE SONGWRITERS ASSOCIATION is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to preserving, promoting, and celebrating the rich legacy of Texas songwriting and the culture it reflects. For generations, Texas songwriters have helped to shape American music; the poets and troubadours of the Lone Star State have created enduring work that is distinctly Texan yet universally resonant. Their influence runs deep and is embedded in American music, telling stories of truth, independence, and the lived experience that define the state's history and spirit, as well as its evolving identity.

The Association supports songwriters at every stage of their journey by honoring the traditions that built Texas music while fostering the voices who will carry this legacy forward. Through education, recognition, preservation of legacy, and the cultivation of a vibrant creative community, the Texas Heritage Songwriters Association champions songwriting as a vital and living expression of Texas identity.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Texas Heritage Songwriters Association, in the interest of Texas Cultural preservation, is to honor and celebrate Texas songwriters who have played an important role in defining and interpreting Texas' distinctive culture.

Terry Boothe

Founder, Texas Heritage Songwriters Foundation



PROGRAM SCHEDULE

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 20

7:00 PM

COCKTAIL RECEPTION

—

8:00 – 10:00 PM

DARRELL K ROYAL PICKIN' PARTY

BOB BULLOCK TEXAS STATE HISTORY MUSEUM

—

PERFORMANCES BY

KIX BROOKS · RANDY HOUSER · JAMEY JOHNSON

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 21

INDUCTING

DON COOK · KEITH GATTIS · MIRANDA LAMBERT · GEORGE STRAIT

DKR TEXAS MUSIC LEGEND AWARD

LISA & FREDDY FLETCHER, ARLYN STUDIOS

ACL LIVE AT THE MOODY THEATER

—

6:30 PM

DOORS OPEN

—

7:30 PM

AWARDS SHOW

—

PERFORMANCES BY

RONNIE DUNN

MASTER OF CEREMONIES & TXHSA HALL OF FAMER

BROOKS & DUNN · PARKER MCCOLLUM · NATALIE HEMBY · JACK INGRAM

JON RANDALL · MIRANDA LAMBERT · RANDY HOUSER · WAYLON PAYNE

DEAN DILLON · JAMEY JOHNSON · GEORGE STRAIT



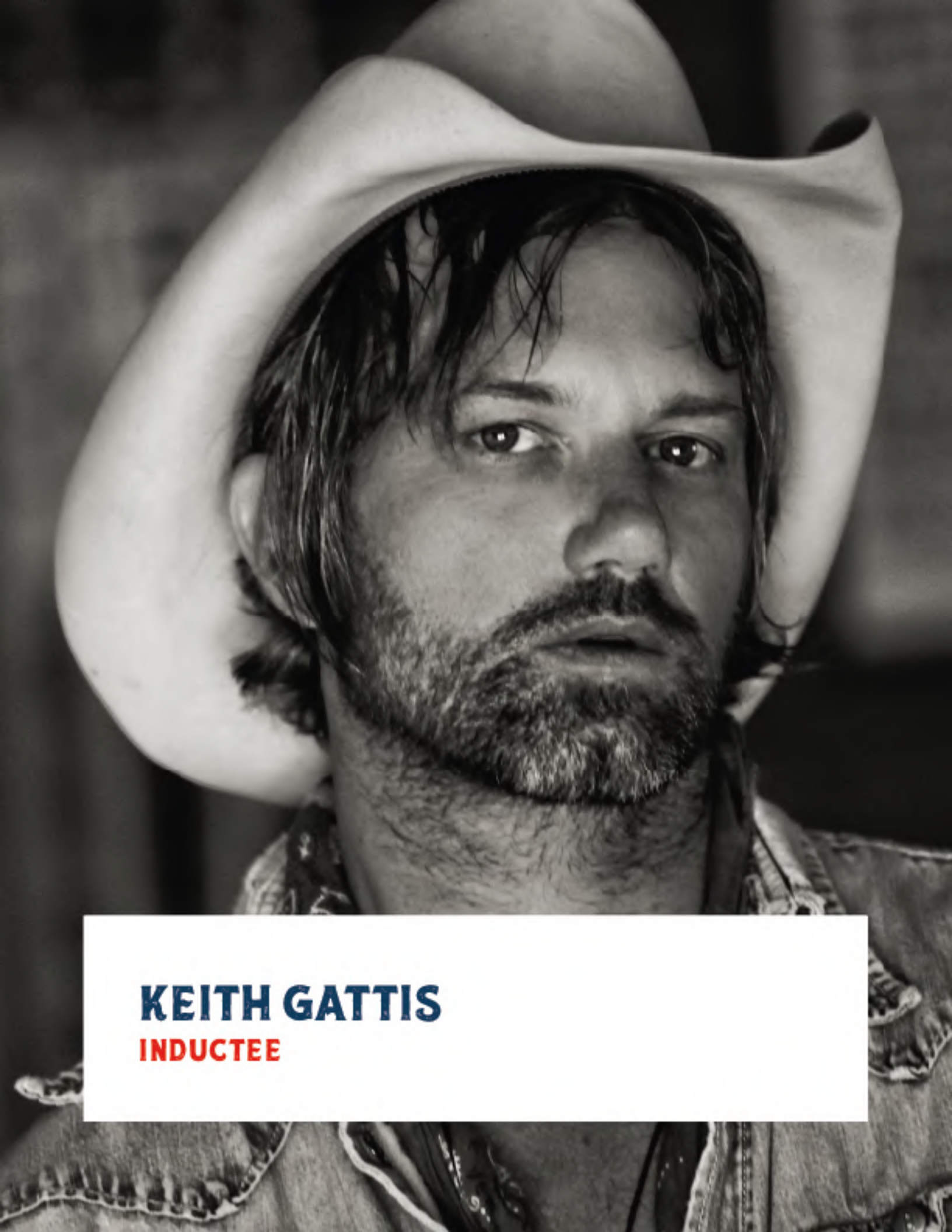
DON COOK

INDUCTEE

Don Kirby Cook is an American record producer and songwriter whose work is mainly in the field of country music. Artists who recorded Cook's material include Barbara Mandrell, John Conlee, Blake Shelton, Chris Young, Olivia Newton-John, The Oak Ridge Boys, Mark Collie, Michael Martin Murphey, Billy Gilman, Cher, Clay Walker, Highway 101, Wade Hayes, Conway Twitty, Alabama, New Grass Revival, Steve Wariner, Joe Diffie, Kenny Rogers, Brenda Lee, George Jones, Lonestar, Keith Whitley, Ricky Skaggs, Tammy Wynette, Kelly Clarkson, Tom Jones, Engelbert Humperdink, Paul Anka, Lari White, Deborah Allen, Loretta Lynn, Waylon Jennings, The Highwaymen, Tracy Lawrence, Vince Gill, Del McCoury Band, Ronnie Bowman, T. Graham Brown, Suzy Bogguss, Glen Campbell, Tanya Tucker, Lorrie Morgan, Mark Chesnutt, B.W. Stevenson, George Strait, and 23 songs by Brooks & Dunn. Cook's production work began in the early 1990s when he worked with Brooks & Dunn.

Don Cook began writing songs at age twelve and recorded his first demo at age fourteen. He played at various clubs and coffeehouses in Houston, Texas during his teenage years, and after graduating from the University of Texas, moved to Nashville, Tennessee through the suggestion of session guitar man Mark Casstevens. Through the assistance of Don Gant, he signed with Acuff-Rose Music.In the 1980s, Cook had several cuts that were released as singles, including "Lady Lay Down" by John Conlee, which was Cook's first Number One as a songwriter.Cook co-wrote "Brand New Man", the first single release by Brooks & Dunn, and was asked to produce for the duo as well.

At first, he was reluctant, but he was encouraged to keep producing after the commercial success of Brooks & Dunn's debut album. Over time, Cook produced most of Brooks & Dunn's material, including thirteen of their songs which went to Number One. Don also produced albums on Mark Collie, Conway Twitty, Wade Hayes, Joe Diffie, Alabama, N'Sync, Lonestar, Neil Diamond, Olivia Newton-John, James House, The Mavericks, and Tracy Lawrence. In 1994, Cook was named Chief Creative Officer and Senior Vice President of Sony/ATV Music Publishing. He retired from both positions in 2004, but has continued to write songs.



KEITH GATTIS

INDUCTEE

Keith Gattis left Texas to become a star. Instead, he became great.

Gattis is a favorite songwriter of legends and a patron saint of telecaster disciples. His voice—distinct, smooth, and sad—made believers out of cynics and mined classics out of shadows. "To me, Tom Petty was a country singer and Johnny Cash was a rock star," Gattis liked to say. The observation is signature Gattis: direct, contrarian, and perceptive. And while he revered and studied pillars of honky tonk and West Coast rock-and-roll, Gattis became a force by leaning wholly—stubbornly—into being nobody but himself. The roots of Gattis' earnest independence begin in Central Texas, where he grew up participating in Future Farmers of America (FFA) and riding bulls. In 1992, Gattis moved to Nashville from Texas with $800 in his pocket. His first steady gig? Touring as a guitarist with Johnny Paycheck.

RCA released his debut in 1996, but radio deemed him "too country." He'd go on to spend his life recording, but the limited amount of solo work he released–just two albums, –can be traced to a frustrating music business of industry machinations getting in art's way. By 2001, he headed west, drawn to Los Angeles' inclusive alt-country scene. Living at El Cerrito Place in Hollywood was a transformative experience for Gattis. There, he wrote and recorded what would become his critically acclaimed Big City Blues album. Later, Rolling Stone would call the standout track El Cerrito Place "a masterclass in conveying longing and regret." Gattis championed others, producing Waylon Payne's The Drifter and launching the Eastbound and Down residency that drew Dwight Yoakam—who hired him as bandleader and co-producer. Gattis' guitar playing became a trademark. Gattis reimagined what B-Bender Teles could do, and ultimately began making his own versions of the instrument including the B-Bender he built to play on Yoakam's celebrated 2005 album Blame the Vain.

Inspired and ready to tour playing his own songs, Gattis packed up and left LA for Austin after releasing Big City Blues that year. Nashville noticed. After signing a new deal with RCA, Gattis moved back to Music City—and recorded a new album that the label never released. Determined to maintain his hard-won voice, Gattis kept making music—and other artists kept returning to his well. Gattis' songs have been recorded by Kenny Chesney, George Strait, George Jones, Willie Nelson, Gary Allan, Koe Wetzel and many more. Restlessly creative, Gattis launched Pioneertown Recording Studio in East Nashville in 2012. He deepened his role as a trusted guide and collaborator of fellow independent thinkers, producing albums for Kendall Marvel, Wade Bowen, Randy Houser, Mickey and the Motorcars, and others. He also worked on his own unreleased High Desert Low, regarded by those who've heard it as a career peak. Plans are underway for its release.Gattis died in April 2023 in a tragic accident at his home, leaving behind a young family, devoted friends, and a catalog of songs that cement his legacy.

"I got lucky and had a little success," Gattis said. "It got me enough money to pay off my debts, get square with the tax man, and put a down payment on my house. There were a lot of good reasons to give up. It's butt kicking to say the least. I thought I was going to be a star, but I never really wanted that. I wanted a great career so I could play music for the rest of my life, and that's what I've ended up with. And if I need to blow off steam, I'll just go play the Family Wash."

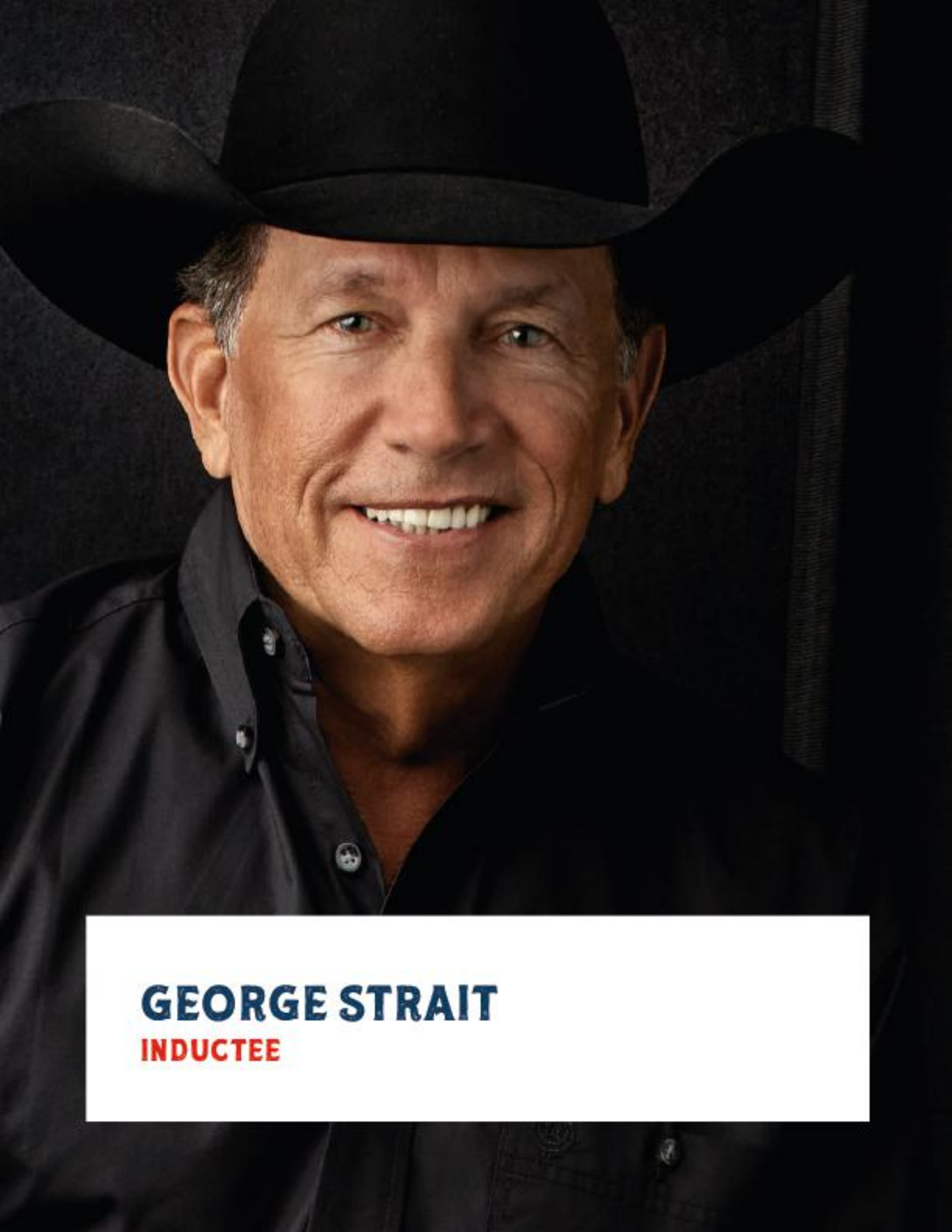


MIRANDA LAMBERT

INDUCTEE

Critically acclaimed groundbreaker/songwriter/superstar Miranda Lambert has defined her multi-faceted career as an artist, entertainer, entrepreneur, advocate and businesswoman with an unflinching quest for excellence, honesty, and conviction. Her 10th solo studio album, Postcards from Texas, available everywhere now via Republic Records, continued her unbroken streak of 10 consecutive Top 10s on the Top Country Albums chart. The most-awarded artist in Academy of Country Music history, including their top honor for Entertainer of the Year, she has also won three GRAMMYs and 14 Country Music Association Awards. A TIME100 honoree and perennial best-of-the-year list maker at the New York Times, TIME, Rolling Stone, Billboard, Stereogum, People and more, NPR has called her "the most riveting country star of her generation."

A multi-dimensional superstar, she's earned seven No. 1 solo albums, 10 No. 1 hit radio singles, more than 80 prestigious awards and countless RIAA certifications; conquered Las Vegas with her twice-extended Velvet Rodeo residency; blurred genres with Leon Bridges, the B-52s, Loretta Lynn, Enrique Iglesias, Sheryl Crow and Elle King; and delivered her LGBTQ+ inclusive anthem "Y'all Means All" for Netflix's "Queer Eye." She's taken those standards to become a New York Times bestselling author and the first female restaurateur on Lower Broadway with her Tex-Mex cantina Casa Rosa, while also expanding her creative reach with her Wanda June Home collection exclusive to Walmart and her Idyllwind clothing and boot line at Boot Barn. Her passion for rescue animals inspired the creation of her MuttNation Foundation, which has raised over $11 million since inception to promote adoption, support shelters across the country, advance spay & neuter and assist with the transport of animals during times of natural disaster.



GEORGE STRAIT

INDUCTEE

George Strait is the unambiguous "King of Country Music," having sold more than 105 million albums and counting while earning more than 60 major entertainment industry awards as well as countless nominations and becoming the only act in history to have a Top 10 hit every year for over three decades. Born in Poteet and raised in Pearsall, Strait is a rancher with properties in South Texas, a region he knows as intimately as the chords on his guitar.

The Texas troubadour released his 31st career studio album Cowboys And Dreamers last year, following 2019's best-selling Country album, Honky Tonk Time Machine, on MCA Nashville. The latter produced by Strait and Chuck Ainlay, the album quickly became Strait's record-extending 27th No. 1 Billboard Country album. The Country Music Hall of Fame member earned his 100th entry on the Billboard Country Airplay chart with his single "The Weight of the Badge" from the project. Having already set an indoor ticketed attendance record in 2014 at AT&T Stadium on his Cowboy Rides Away Tour, in June 2024 with 104,793 fans in attendance, he bested his own attendance record with over 110k fans in attendance at his "King at Kyle Field" show in College Station. Strait has proven himself as deft with a pen as he is commanding a stadium of thousands, co-writing some of his biggest hits such as fan favorites, "Here for a Good Time" and "Living for the Night," as well as the powerful, heartfelt ballad "I Believe" written in honor of the victims of the tragic Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting.

As generous as he is talented, Straits annual Vaqueros del Mar golf tournament and benefit concert, hosted at Tapatio Springs Hill Country Resort has raised over $17 million for the Feherty's Troops First Foundation. He and wife Norma established the Jenifer Strait Foundation to preserve the memory of their daughter and have raised millions for children's organizations. In addition every time Strait takes the stage he is joined by Retired Lt. General Leroy Sisco to present a new home to a wounded hero, delivering his 120th home presentation just last month in Chicago via Military Warriors Support Foundation's Homes 4 Wounded Heroes Program.

HALL OF FAME

2026 Recipients



2026 RECIPIENTS

DON COOK - CARRIZO SPRINGS
KEITH GATTIS - GEORGETOWN
MIRANDA LAMBERT - LINDALE
GEORGE STRAIT - PEARSALL

TEXAS HERITAGE SONGWRITERS

Hall of Fame Inductees

ABILENE
LEE ROY PARNELL

ABBOTT
WILLIE NELSON

AMARILLO
JOE ELY
JO SOUTHER

ARP
LARRY HENLEY

ATLANTA
SUSANNA CLARK

AUSTIN
SAMMY ALLRED
JERRY JEFF WALKER
W.C. CLARK

BANDERA
BRUCE ROBISON
CHARLIE ROBISON

BROWNFIELD
GARY P. NUNN

BROWNSVILLE
KRIS KRISTOFFERSON

CARRIZO SPRINGS
DON COOK

CENTERVILLE
LIGHTNIN' HOPKINS

CORSICANA
LEFTY FRIZZELL
BILLY JOE SHAVER

COLEMAN
RONNIE DUNN

DALLAS
LIZ ROSE
MICHAEL MARTIN MURPHEY
RAY WYLIE HUBBARD

DEL RIO
RADNEY FOSTER

FORT WORTH
ROGER MILLER
TOWNES VAN ZANDT

GEORGETOWN
KEITH GATTIS

GAINESVILLE
RED STEAGALL

GARLAND
GARY NICHOLSON

GRAPEVINE
BRUCE CHANNEL

GRUVER
RODNEY CLAWSON

HOUSTON
RODNEY CROWELL
CLINT BLACK
HAYDEN NICHOLAS
LYLE LOVETT
ROBERT EARL KEEN
K.T. OSLIN
MICKEY NEWBURY
BILLY F. GIBBONS
MARK JAMES

KILGORE
WILL JENNINGS

HUFFMAN
ALLEN SHAMBLIN

LINDALE
MIRANDA LAMBERT

LINDEN
T-BONE WALKER

LITTLEFIELD
WAYLON JENNINGS

LUBBOCK
MACK DAVIS
BUDDY HOLLY
DELBERT MCCLINTON

MART
CINDY WALKER

MC CAMEY
DAN SEALS

MEADOW
SONNY CURTIS

MONAHANS
GUY CLARK

NACOGDOCHES
JIM COLLINS

PARIS
LESLIE SATCHER

PEARSALL
GEORGE STRAIT

SAN ANTONIO
AARON BARKER
STEVE EARLE
CHRISTOPHER CROSS
ALEJANDRO ESCOVEDO

SEGUIN
NANCI GRIFFITH

SEMINOLE
FREDDY POWERS
LARRY GATLIN

SHERMAN
BUCK OWENS

VERNON
ROY ORBISON

WALDEN
BOB MCDILL

WHITNEY
WHITEY SHAFER

WICHITA FALLS
SONNY THROCKMORTON
DAVID LEE



L–R: KIX BROOKS, RANDY HOUSER, JAMEY JOHNSON

Friday February 20

VIP SPONSOR EVENT

—

DARRELL K ROYAL PICKIN' PARTY

PRESENTED BY BENNY BOYD AUTO GROUP

BOB BULLOCK TEXAS HISTORY MUSEUM

—

PERFORMANCES BY

KIX BROOKS · RANDY HOUSER · JAMEY JOHNSON

KIX BROOKS

Kix's love for music began in Shreveport, Louisiana, where he honed his craft playing gigs across the state. His journey eventually led him to Nashville, where he launched a successful songwriting career, penning hits for legendary acts like the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Highway 101, and John Conlee. In 1990, Kix joined forces with Ronnie Dunn to create Brooks & Dunn, the most successful duo in country music history. Together, they've sold over 30 million records, achieved 20 #1 hits, and earned more than 75 major industry awards. Their legacy was cemented in 2019 with induction into the prestigious Country Music Hall of Fame. Kix is a proud member of the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame and he spent 18 years as the host of the award-winning *American Country Countdown* radio show. Offstage, Kix raises Beefmaster cattle on his Tennessee farm and co-founded Arrington Vineyards, the region's premier winery. ★

RANDY HOUSER

With an inimitable voice The New York Times describes as "wholly different, thicker and more throbbing, a caldron bubbling over," Randy Houser has racked up over half a dozen hits and 1 billion streams. His How Country Feels album topped the charts with the title track, *"Runnin' Outta Moonlight"* and *"Goodnight Kiss"* (also his first No. 1 as a songwriter) and earned critical acclaim for his powerful delivery of the Top 5 smash and nominated CMA Song of the Year, *"Like A Cowboy."*

Houser has since added a fourth No. 1 to his catalogue with *"We Went"* from his 2016 album, Fired Up. Houser's sixth studio album Note To Self is available now via Magnolia Music Group and features 10 tracks all co-written by the Mississippi native, with his lead single and title track *"Note To Self"* marking his "powerful return" following 2019's critically-acclaimed album Magnolia. In their response to Houser's latest project, MusicRow boasted the Mississippi-native "remains one of country music's very finest vocalists." With multiple sold-out shows in 2023, including an at-capacity stop at Nashville's Ryman Auditorium, Houser wrapped 12 months of touring with Cody Johnson.

In late 2023, he landed on-screen roles in Martin Scorsese's acclaimed film *"Killers of the Flower Moon"* starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Robert De Niro, as well as Dennis Quaid's *"The Hill"*, an inspirational drama that hailed as the number one most streamed Netflix movie in February 2024. This April, Billboard-lauded "golden-voiced Mississippi native" Houser released his new single *"Country Back"*, a full throttle proclamation of all things country. ★

JAMEY JOHNSON

Award-winning singer/songwriter Jamey Johnson has served as country music's north star for nearly two decades, inspiring a generation of artists with his unforgettable albums that have built a bridge connecting traditional country with the music of today.

The 10-time GRAMMY nominee has been called "one of the greatest country singers of our time," by The Washington Post. As rock legend Don Henley says, Johnson is "the nearest thing" we have to late country icon George Jones. His music has garnered international acclaim and is embraced by fans of classic and contemporary country, as well as Americana and mainstream rock.

The Grand Ole Opry member is also widely regarded as one of the greatest country songwriters of his generation. He is one of only two people in the history of country music (along with Kris Kristofferson) to win two Song of the Year awards in the same year--for *"Give It Away"* and *"In Color"*--from the Academy of Country Music and the Country Music Association. ★

Saturday February 21

TEXAS HERITAGE SONGWRITERS ASSOCIATION

—

HALL OF FAME AWARDS SHOW

ACL LIVE AT THE MOODY THEATER

—

PRESENTED BY
HEATHER & CLAY HUDSON
WITH TRINITY SIGNATURE HOMES

RONNIE DUNN · MASTER OF CEREMONIES

—

PERFORMANCES BY

BROOKS & DUNN · PARKER MCCOLLUM · NATALIE HEMBY
RANDY HOUSER · WAYLON PAYNE · DEAN DILLON
JACK INGRAM · JON RANDALL · MIRANDA LAMBERT
JAMEY JOHNSON · GEORGE STRAIT
ASHLEY MONROE · MELONIE CANNON



JACK INGRAM

Born in The Woodlands, Texas, Jack Ingram has maintained a reputation for uncompromising, personally charged song craft and energetic, charismatic performances for over 20 years. Around the time Jack started writing songs and performing, he was studying psychology at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. "Music and psychology come from the same place," he says. "It's about studying why people tick. I write songs to figure out my world, why people act the way they do, why they make the decisions they do." Lucky for us, Ingram chose a career in music-and discovered an altogether different kind of therapy.

As a veteran of the Texas music scene, Jack is known as an exhilarating live performer. He's released six live albums, 10 studio albums, and most recently, a collaborative album, The Marfa Tapes, with Miranda Lambert and Jon Randall. Ingram's style, often compared to country music's Outlaw Movement artists like Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson, also draws inspiration from alternative country artists such as Robert Earl Keen and Lyle Lovett. His affinity for the musical explorations of these artists, coupled with his understanding of the human condition as drawn from his studies in psychology, contributed significantly to his songwriting craft. Jack has been honored by the Academy of Country Music with Awards for both Top New Male Artist and Song of the Year, and has landed GRAMMY and CMA nominations. Jack Ingram is also the new host of Texas Music Scene, the syndicated tv show featuring Texas-based artists in over 80 markets. In 2013, Jack teamed up with actor Matthew McConaughey and University of Texas at Austin football coach Mack Brown to create a fundraiser for their favorite children's charities, dubbed Mack, Jack & McConaughey. Jack is also a supporter of Texas Songwriter U (TxSU), an annual songwriting development program consisting of a songwriting competition, educational workshop and showcase event, along with Broadcast Music, Inc (BMI), and The Texas Heritage Songwriters' Association. ★



JON RANDALL

A Grammy, CMA, and ACM Award-winner, Jon Randall has seemingly done it all over his three-plus decades in the music business, working as a songwriter, guitarist, and critically acclaimed producer with some of the biggest names in country, bluegrass, and Americana. Born and raised in Dallas, Randall caught his first big break after moving to Nashville, where he was invited to join Emmylou Harris's Nash Ramblers band. In the years to come, he would go on to release a series of widely lauded solo records, produce for Dierks Bentley, Dwight Yoakam, Jack Ingram, Pat Green, and the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, among others, and write with and for the likes of Miranda Lambert, Maren Morris, Blake Shelton, Little Big Town, Guy Clark, Kenney Chesney, Reba McEntire, and countless more. He'd go on to earn a slew of award nominations, as well, and take home CMA Song of the Year honors in 2005 for "Whiskey Lullaby," recorded by Brad Paisley and Alison Krauss, and the ACM Song of the Year trophy in 2018 for "Tin Man," which he penned with Lambert and Ingram on one of their regular writing retreats to Marfa.

The three returned there in 2019 to record their bare-bones Marfa Tapes album, which landed the trio performances at the CMT and ACM Awards, as well as a Grammy Nomination for Country Album of the Year and an ACM Nomination for Album of the Year. Jon has continued to produce Grammy-nominated projects including Miranda Lambert's latest record Palomino as well as Dierks Bentley's High Note featuring Billy Strings. In 2023 Randall was nominated for the Academy of Country Music's Producer of the Year Award, and partnered with Big Loud and Miranda Lambert to launch their new record label, Big Loud Texas. ★



MIRANDA LAMBERT

Critically acclaimed groundbreaker/songwriter/superstar Miranda Lambert has defined her multi-faceted career as an artist, entertainer, entrepreneur, advocate and businesswoman with an unflinching quest for excellence, honesty, and conviction. Her 10th solo studio album, Postcards from Texas, available everywhere now via Republic Records, continued her unbroken streak of 10 consecutive Top 10s on the Top Country Albums chart. The most-awarded artist in Academy of Country Music history, including their top honor for Entertainer of the Year, she has also won three GRAMMYs and 14 Country Music Association Awards. A TIME100 honoree and perennial best-of-the-year list maker at the New York Times, TIME, Rolling Stone, Billboard, Stereogum, People and more, NPR has called her "the most riveting country star of her generation."

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PARKER MCCOLLUM

Singer/songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Parker McCollum has reached the ranks of a bona fide Country music superstar by connecting with fans and critics alike through his relatable and authentic sound. His most recent album, Never Enough (released on May 12, 2023 via MCA Nashville), is a statement collection of music that cemented his status as one of Country's strongest new voices. His massive Burn It Down Tour throughout 2024 saw McCollum performing at some of the most iconic venues around the nation and appearing at Country music's top music festivals. McCollum has been named an 'Artist to Watch' by Rolling Stone, Billboard, SiriusXM, CMT, RIAA, and more with American Songwriter noting, "The Texas native teeters on the edge of next-level superstardom." Music Row listed McCollum as their 2021 Breakout Artist of the Year and Apple also included him as one of their all-genre "Up Next Artists" Class of 2021. A dedicated road warrior, McCollum made his debut at the famed Grand Ole Opry in 2021 and has sold out major concert venues around the U.S. In March 2022, McCollum made his debut at RODEOHOUSTON to a sold-out crowd with over 73,000 tickets sold. In 2025, McCollum played his third consecutive sold out show at Houston's signature event. In 2022, McCollum earned his first ACM Award for New Male Artist of the Year, took home "Breakthrough Video of the Year" (a fully fan-voted honor) at the 2022 CMT Music Awards and scored two back-to-back CMA Awards nominations (2022 & 2023) for New Artist of the Year. He was nominated for a CMA Award for "Song of the Year" (2024) for his explosive Platinum hit "Burn It Down" - marking his third straight nomination. McCollum scored his second ACM Award for "Visual Media of the Year" for his music video for "Burn It Down." The hit single marks his fourth consecutive #1 - following his other chart toppers "Pretty Heart," "To Be Loved By You," and "Handle On You." McCollum's latest single, the foot-stomping, shoot-it-straight, "What Kinda Man," shows his return to the musical Texas roots that got him started. "What Kinda Man" and its official music video are available now. Recently, McCollum announced his self-titled fifth studio album, PARKER MCCOLLUM, available on June 27th. ★



WAYLON PAYNE

Waylon is pure country music royalty. His father, Jody Payne, was a longtime guitarist for Willie Nelson, his mother, Sammi Smith, was a country singer in her own right, and Payne's godfather - and namesake - is Waylon Jennings. In addition he counts legends Kris Kristofferson as mentors and family friends.

Waylon cut his teeth playing Nashville honky-tonks six nights a week in his teens and early twenties, and eventually Shelby Lynne took him under her wing as a guitarist in her band. For the next several years, Waylon bounced around Nashville and LA, playing music, writing songs, and putting out his first record - 2004's The Drifter. He also put down a scene stealing role as Jerry Lee Lewis in the Johnny Cash Biopic Walk the Line. But it was during this time that he also descended into the depths of addiction. In 2008, with the help of family and friends - including Willie and Bobbie Nelson - Payne began a years-long recovery.

Through sobriety and the search for redemption, Waylon found a renewed focus on the power of storytelling and playing country music. As he regained his footing, he penned hit songs for Miranda Lambert and Lee Ann Womack, among many others. In 2021, he put out the absolute stunner Blue Eyes, The Harlot, The Queer, The Pusher & Me to critical acclaim. In the last few years, he played The Ryman with old friend Shelby Lynne and toured as part of Willie Nelson's Outlaw Tour alongside such acts as Bob Dylan and Wilco.

2025 finds this one time teenage Baptist preacher as a man with nothing left to hide, singing heartfelt songs about fathers and sons, faith and addiction, and recovery and renewal with devastating clarity. His character rich storytelling shows a literary frankness akin to that of Jason Isbell within a voice that combines the mournful richness of Roy Orbison's with Willie's dusty drawl. ★



DEAN DILLON

Dean Dillon stands among the most influential songwriters in country music history. A member of the Country Music Hall of Fame, a BMI Icon, and an inductee of the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame, Dillon has written over 87 hits recorded by George Strait, forming one of the most legendary artist–songwriter partnerships of all time. Their collaborations include enduring classics such as "Unwound," "The Chair," "Nobody In His Right Mind Would've Left Her," "Ocean Front Property," and "Here for a Good Time."

A Tennessee native, Dillon began performing as a teenager and moved to Nashville at 17, quickly earning recognition for both his voice and his writing. After recording under several stage names and releasing albums for RCA, Capitol, and Atlantic, he ultimately devoted himself fully to songwriting—a choice that helped define the sound of modern country music.Beyond his unparalleled work with Strait, Dillon has penned major hits for George Jones, Vern Gosdin, Toby Keith, Pam Tillis, Kenny Chesney, and many others. His ability to blend traditional country storytelling with sharp, contemporary wordplay has made his catalog timeless, influential, and essential to generations of artists and fans. ★



NATALIE HEMBY

Since signing her first publishing deal at 19, Nashville's Natalie Hemby has become one of most successful and sought after songwriters in music, with countless hit songs recorded by artists such as Kacey Musgraves, Maren Morris, Sheryl Crow, Miranda Lambert, Lady Gaga, Yola, Dierks Bentley, Rag'n'Bone Man, Lady A, Kelly Clarkson, Little Big Town, Ed Sheeran, and Labrinth, to name a few.

Hemby has accumulated eight No. 1 Billboard singles during her career. Hemby's cuts include "White Liar", Automatic", and "Bluebird" by Miranda Lambert, "Pontoon" and "Tornado " by Little Big Town, "Downtown" by Lady A, "You Look Like I Need a Drink" by Justin Moore, and "Heartache Medication" by Jon Pardi.

On January 13, 2017, Hemby released her first studio album, "Puxico", named after the Missouri town where her grandfather lived, via the label GetWrucke Productions which she runs with her husband, music producer Mike Wrucke. On October 8, 2021, she released her second album, Pins and Needles, also produced by Mike Wrucke.

Hemby became a member of the group known as The Highwomen, along with Brandi Carlile, Maren Morris and Amanda Shires. They released their critically acclaimed self-titled album in 2019. As a result, Hemby earned a Country Song of the Year GRAMMY, following her first GRAMMY, win for Best Song Written for Visual Media for Lady Gaga's "I'll Never Love Again," from A Star Is Born, among five career nominations.

Hemby won an ACM Award for her song "Automatic" by Miranda Lambert, and has also been recognized by the CMA, CMT and NSAI Awards for her prodigious and versatile contributions to songwriting. ★



RANDY HOUSER

With an inimitable voice The New York Times describes as "wholly different, thicker and more throbbing, a caldron bubbling over," Randy Houser has racked up over half a dozen hits and 1 billion streams. His How Country Feels album topped the charts with the title track, *"Runnin' Outta Moonlight"* and *"Goodnight Kiss"* (also his first No. 1 as a songwriter) and earned critical acclaim for his powerful delivery of the Top 5 smash and nominated CMA Song of the Year, *"Like A Cowboy."*

Houser has since added a fourth No. 1 to his catalogue with *"We Went"* from his 2016 album, Fired Up. Houser's sixth studio album Note To Self is available now via Magnolia Music Group and features 10 tracks all co-written by the Mississippi native, with his lead single and title track *"Note To Self"* marking his "powerful return" following 2019's critically-acclaimed album Magnolia. In their response to Houser's latest project, MusicRow boasted the Mississippi-native "remains one of country music's very finest vocalists." With multiple sold-out shows in 2023, including an at-capacity stop at Nashville's Ryman Auditorium, Houser wrapped 12 months of touring with Cody Johnson.

In late 2023, he landed on-screen roles in Martin Scorsese's acclaimed film *"Killers of the Flower Moon"* starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Robert De Niro, as well as Dennis Quaid's *"The Hill"*, an inspirational drama that hailed as the number one most streamed Netflix movie in February 2024. This April, Billboard-lauded "golden-voiced Mississippi native" Houser released his new single *"Country Back"*, a full throttle proclamation of all things country. ★

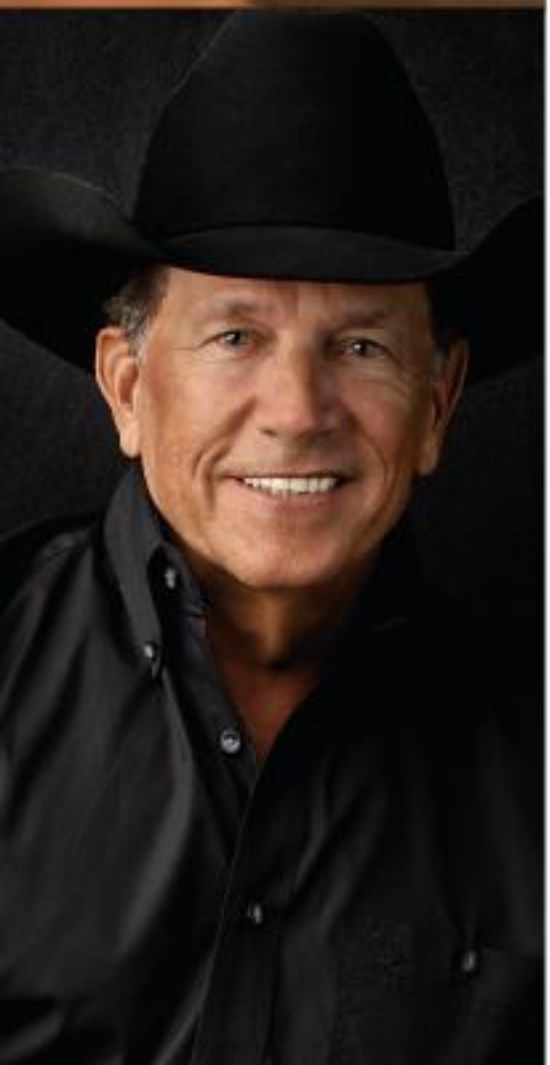


JAMEY JOHNSON

Award-winning singer/songwriter Jamey Johnson has served as country music's north star for nearly two decades, inspiring a generation of artists with his unforgettable albums that have built a bridge connecting traditional country with the music of today.

The 10-time GRAMMY nominee has been called "one of the greatest country singers of our time," by The Washington Post. As rock legend Don Henley says, Johnson is "the nearest thing" we have to late country icon George Jones. His music has garnered international acclaim and is embraced by fans of classic and contemporary country, as well as Americana and mainstream rock.

The Grand Ole Opry member is also widely regarded as one of the greatest country songwriters of his generation. He is one of only two people in the history of country music (along with Kris Kristofferson) to win two Song of the Year awards in the same year--for *"Give It Away"* and *"In Color"*--from the Academy of Country Music and the Country Music Association. ★



GEORGE STRAIT

George Strait is the unambiguous "King of Country Music," having sold more than 105 million albums and counting while earning more than 60 major entertainment industry awards as well as countless nominations and becoming the only act in history to have a Top 10 hit every year for over three decades. Born in Poteet and raised in Pearsall, Strait is a rancher with properties in South Texas, a region he knows as intimately as the chords on his guitar.

The Texas troubadour released his 31st career studio album Cowboys And Dreamers last year, following 2019's best-selling Country album, Honky Tonk Time Machine, on MCA Nashville. The latter produced by Strait and Chuck Ainlay, the album quickly became Strait's record-extending 27th No. 1 Billboard Country album. The Country Music Hall of Fame member earned his 100th entry on the Billboard Country Airplay chart with his single "The Weight of the Badge" from the project. Having already set an indoor ticketed attendance record in 2014 at AT&T Stadium on his Cowboy Rides Away Tour, in June 2024 with 104,793 fans in attendance, he bested his own attendance record with over 110k fans in attendance at his "King at Kyle Field" show in College Station. Strait has proven himself as deft with a pen as he is commanding a stadium of thousands, co-writing some of his biggest hits such as fan favorites, "Here for a Good Time" and "Living for the Night," as well as the powerful, heartfelt ballad "I Believe" written in honor of the victims of the tragic Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting.

As generous as he is talented, Straits annual Vaqueros del Mar golf tournament and benefit concert, hosted at Tapatio Springs Hill Country Resort has raised over $17 million for the Feherty's Troops First Foundation. He and wife Norma established the Jenifer Strait Foundation to preserve the memory of their daughter and have raised millions for children's organizations. In addition every time Strait takes the stage he is joined by Retired Lt. General Leroy Sisco to present a new home to a wounded hero, delivering his 120th home presentation just last month in Chicago via Military Warriors Support Foundation's Homes 4 Wounded Heroes Program. ★



BROOKS & DUNN

Once artists like Brooks & Dunn hit the Country Music Hall of Fame, folks don't expect much in the way of new ideas. But, thirty-plus years into their career, Kix Brooks and Ronnie Dunn long ago dialed in their generation-defining sound and style. The best-selling duo of all time, their yin-and-yang country-rock blend has earned them 20 Number Ones – plenty of material to fill stadium-rocking set lists. And with a Grammy-winning, course-of-history shifting catalog written mostly themselves, they could rest easy knowing without doubt they left a permanent mark on the American songbook.

But Kix Brooks and Ronnie Dunn have always been the restless type. REBOOT II is the sequel to their acclaimed 2019 album REBOOT and follows the same format of giving today's most engaging artists in and out of country music the near-impossible task of reimagining an iconic Brooks & Dunn song; except this time, the artists were given maximum creative freedom. With styles ranging from progressive country and classic bluegrass to heavy metal, orchestral pop, and beyond, the very fabric of songs most country fans know by heart was transformed. Whether it was '90s grunge, '70s style studio rock, or swampy soul, the duo encouraged each artist to throw out the playbook. REBOOT II's 18 tracks include reinterpreted hits such as "Neon Moon," "Boot Scootin' Boogie," and "Believe," resulting in a dynamic and eclectic collection that spans genres and generations. Brooks & Dunn continue to break records, tallying the longest-running country music residency in Las Vegas and criss-cross North America year after year on their sold-out tours. www.brooks-dunn.com. ★



MELONIE CANNON

Melonie Cannon was raised on the streets of old school Music Row in studios and on side stages from the Broadway bars to the Grand Ole Opry watching her father and his friends make music. She is songwriter/producer Buddy Cannon's daughter and spent her early days singing around the family's kitchen table, learning to sing harmonies with her dad and Vern Gosdin.

She spent her teen years doing demos for the top songwriters in Nashville, her first being at 13 years old for Dean Dillon and Hank Cochran. Her 20s brought forth another, bigger love for Melonie…she became a mama and started making bluegrass records and finding her own music circle outside of her traditional country music raising that she had always known. It turned into the music that best tells who Melonie is as an artist, human and mother. That self-made circle of bluegrass friends became family and are still the people she makes music with in her free time when she has it.

Somewhere in between all those moments, she started her journey singing background vocals on records for some of the biggest artists of our time, including Willie Nelson, Jamey Johnson and Kenny Chesney, to name a few.Today, she has been traveling and singing for a decade with Jamey Johnson on the road. She is living out her childhood dream of following in her daddy's footsteps, still hoping for the chance to sing one more song. There is always one more song. ★



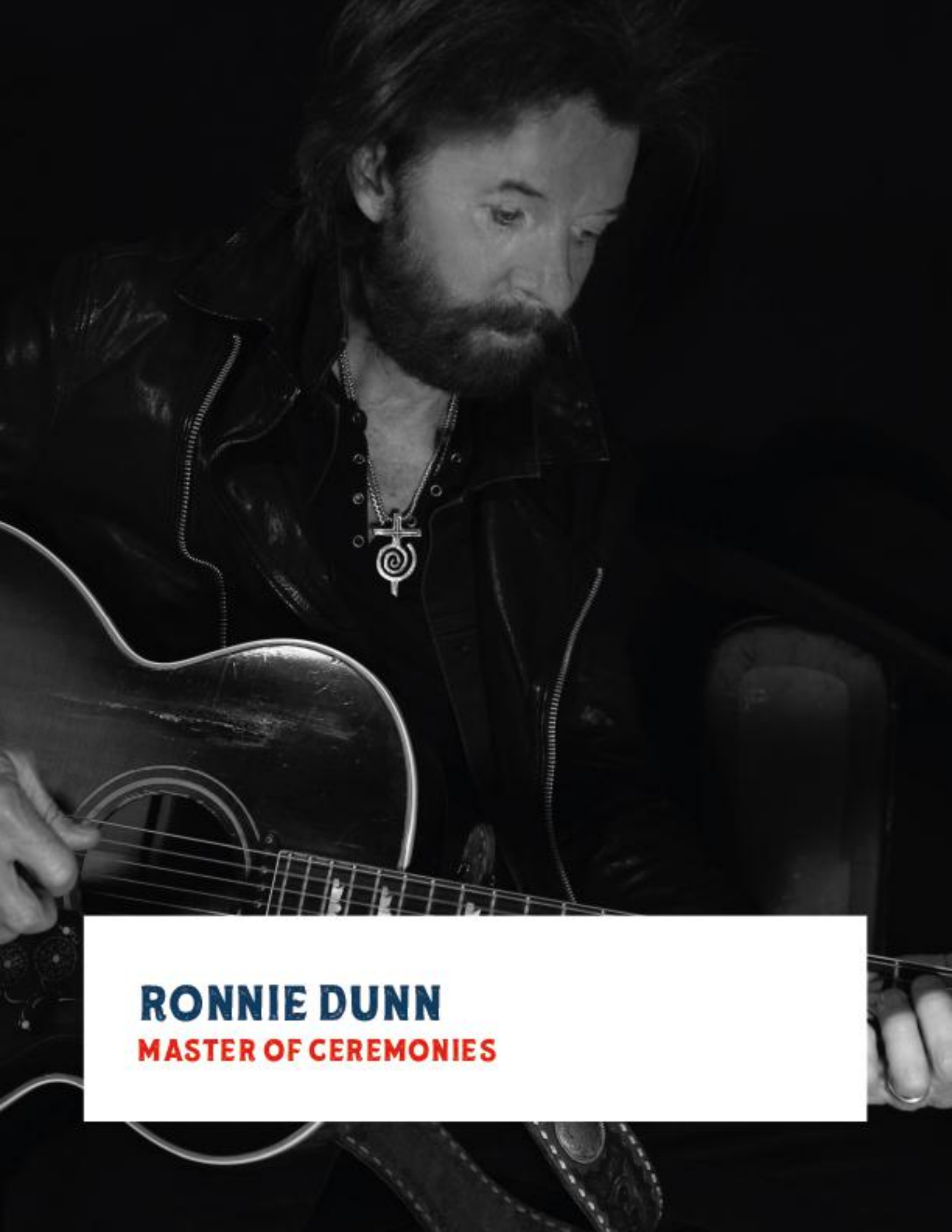


ASHLEY MONROE

Recorded in the wake of her transformative bout with cancer, Ashley Monroe's latest album, Tennessee Lightning, is a work of deep reflection, but more than that, it's a celebration of life and love and the enduring power of music to heal and make us whole. Monroe teamed up once again with GRAMMY winning producer/engineer Gena Johnson (John Prine, Jason Isbell) on the sprawling epic, weaving together strands of country, folk, blues, soul, and bedroom pop with the help of a host of friends including Marty Stuart, T Bone Burnett, and Brittney Spencer. The result is an album as eclectic and freewheeling as Monroe herself, a rich, multifaceted meditation on identity, purpose, and meaning from an artist who's learned to see herself—and the world around her—in a whole new light.

A Tennessee native, Monroe began her career behind the scenes, singing on sessions at Jack White's Third Man Studios and penning tunes for the likes of Guy Clark, Carrie Underwood, and Miranda Lambert. In 2011, she and Lambert teamed up with Angaleena Presley to form the Pistol Annies, which would go on to top the Country Album charts, crack the Top 5 on the Billboard 200, and earn a GRAMMY nomination for Best Country Album. Monroe's solo output was equally lauded, with NPR hailing her work as "subtle and breathtaking," and over the course of four studio albums, she would land her own GRAMMY nomination for Best Country Album in addition to performing on The Tonight Show, Conan, Late Night, and The View. ★

★



RONNIE DUNN

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

music legacy

Encompassing 31 Academy of Country Music Awards, 20 Country Music Association Awards (the most of any artist in CMA history), two GRAMMY Awards, and more than 30 million records sold, Ronnie Dunn has created a musical legacy as one half of Brooks & Dunn, Country music's most-awarded duo in history. The Country Music Hall of Famers' continue to criss-cross North America year after year on their sold-out tours; this spring, the duo will trek on their first-ever string of UK dates, headlining Europe's largest country music festival, C2C 2026, with stops in Belfast, Glasgow and London.

With an induction into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame and Country Music Hall of Fame, Dunn's songwriting and voice have helped define the soundtrack of country music for decades. In addition to Brooks & Dunn's discography, Dunn has released a handful of solo albums including 100 Proof Neon, Ronnie Dunn, Peace Love and Country Music, Tattooed Heart, and RE-DUNN, which was a personal passion-project of covers.

Dunn is also a dedicated photographer specializing in western imagery. In 2017, Dunn founded the Lensmen Project with an elite group of world-renowned photographers. Their works have appeared on numerous magazine covers around the world.

www.RonnieDunn.com

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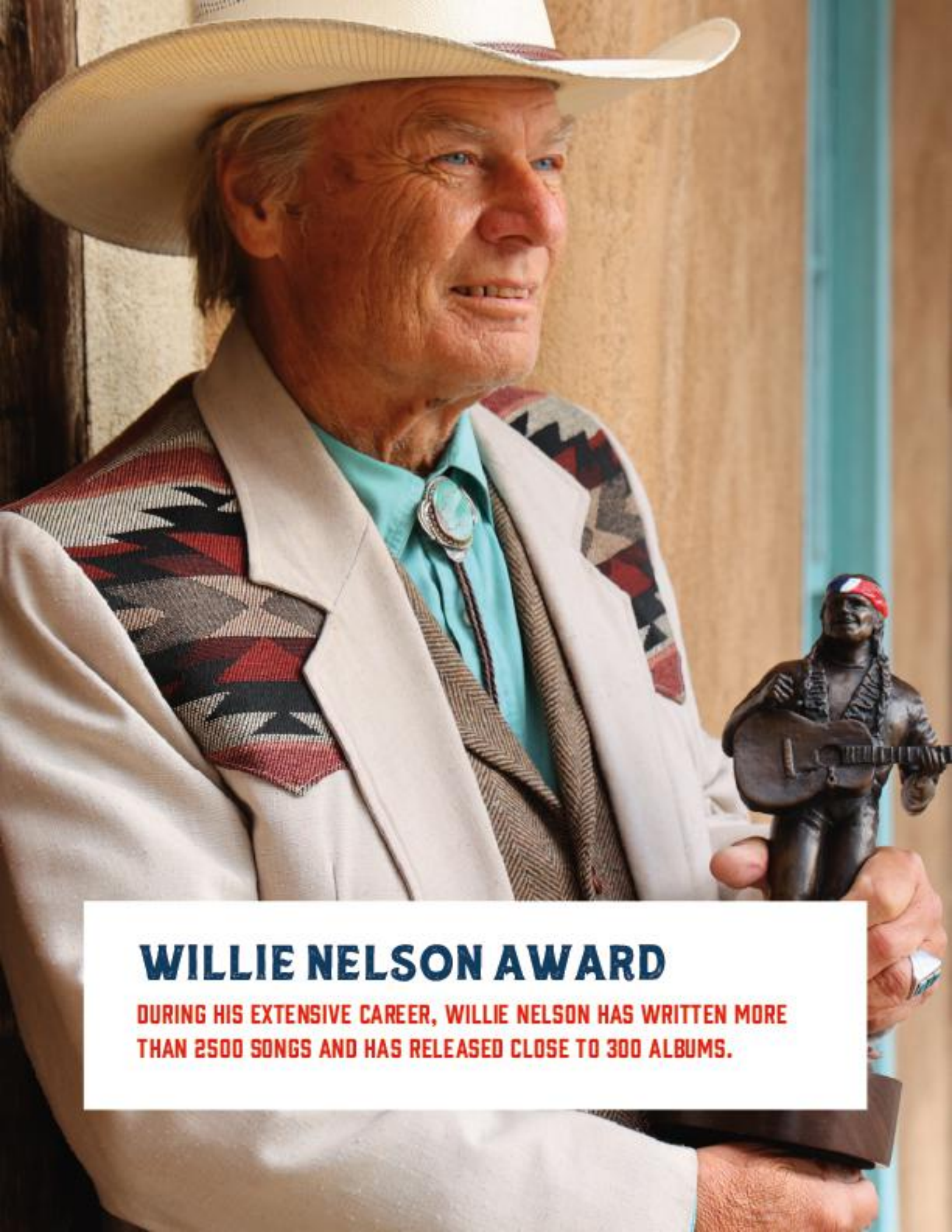


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WILLIE NELSON AWARD

DURING HIS EXTENSIVE CAREER, WILLIE NELSON HAS WRITTEN MORE THAN 2500 SONGS AND HAS RELEASED CLOSE TO 300 ALBUMS.

WILLIE NELSON is recognized worldwide as an American troubadour and icon, transcending musical genres, and has remained relevant over five decades through his music, acting and his philanthropy, including Farm Aid. He was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1973 and the Texas Heritage Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2009.

Willie is a revered songwriting legend today. The TXHSA is honoring his legacy by presenting a statuette in his likeness to each individual that has been and will be inducted into the Texas Heritage Songwriters Hall of Fame. This statuette, designed by Texas artist Gary Roller, will serve as the official Hall of Fame Award for each songwriter inducted by the Texas Heritage Songwriters Association.

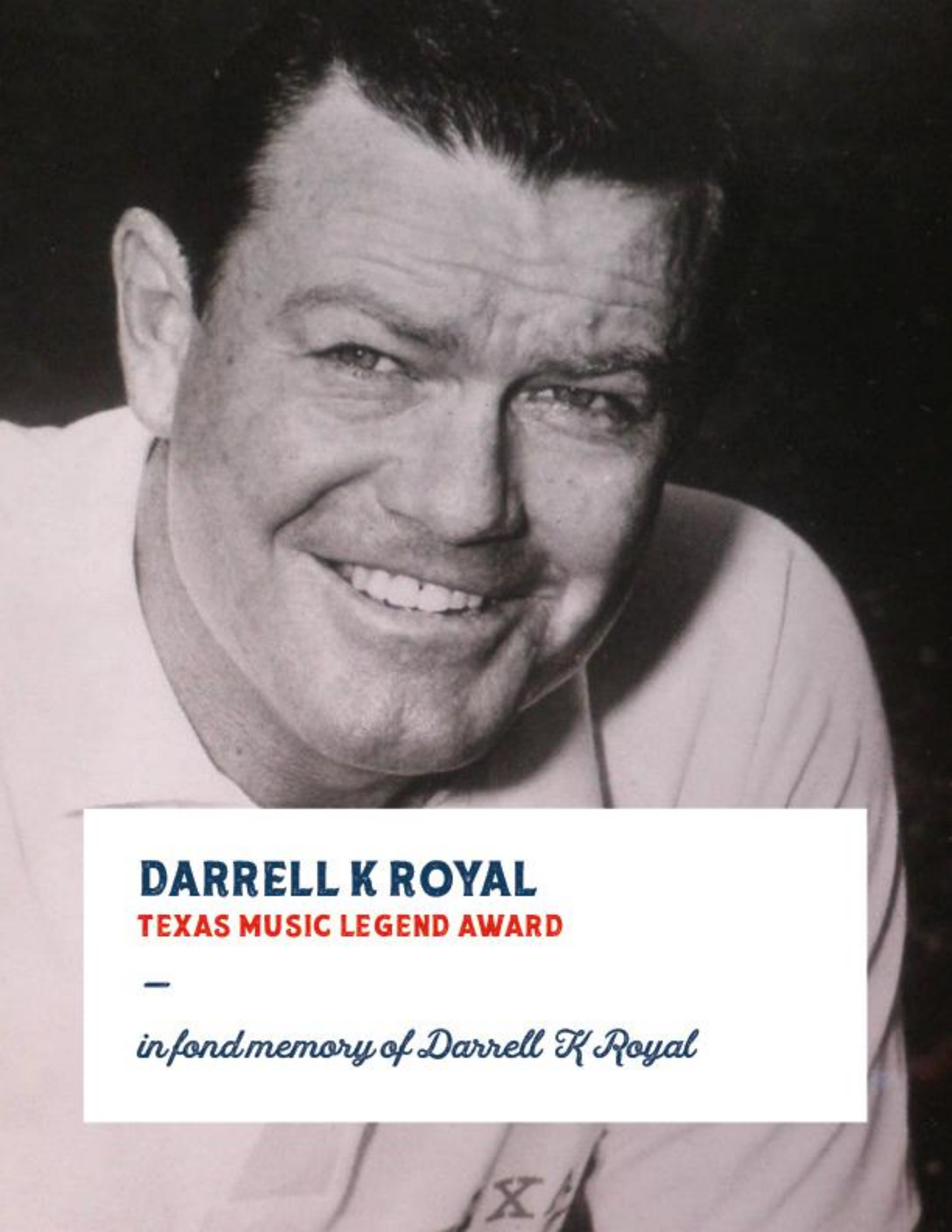
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GARY ROLLER

ARTIST/MUSICIAN

Gary Roller was a natural selection for sculpting our Willie Nelson award. He has that rare artistic talent for capturing both the detailed likeness and compelling spirit of his subjects. Roller also has a first-hand understanding of music and songwriters. A native of Amarillo, Texas, Roller moved to Austin and was an active part of the explosive Austin music community of the '70s, even performing on the first season of Austin City Limits. As a longtime member of Michael Martin Murphey's Rio Grande Band (performing "Wildfire" close to 5,000 times), Gary Roller has toured throughout Texas and the United States. He has also appeared on recordings, television, videos and motion pictures. Like musicians everywhere, Roller has drawn inspiration and example from Willie Nelson. He says of Willie: "There's not a musician out there that has not looked to Willie for example and strength to keep moving forward energetically with music. Willie is a musical presence – a living energy pool to draw from."

You can enjoy Gary Roller's art at *www.garyrollerstudio.com*



DARRELL K ROYAL

TEXAS MUSIC LEGEND AWARD

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in fond memory of Darrell K Royal

where it began

Each year, the Texas Heritage Songwriters Association not only recognizes songwriters as inductees, but also honors those who have provided recognition and support to songwriters by presenting them with our Darrell K Royal Texas Music Legend Award. Coach Royal, the original recipient, spent years supporting and honoring songwriters, and we're proud to carry the spirit of his efforts forward, in his name.

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LISA & FREDDY FLETCHER, ARLYN STUDIOS

2025 DARRELL K ROYAL

Texas Music Legend Award Recipient

ARLYN STUDIOS is Austin's premier recording facility located in the heart of the city, occupying a portion of the historic Austin Opera House. Originally opened in 1984 by musician and Grammy Award winning industry veteran Freddy Fletcher, Arlyn quickly emerged as Austin's foremost recording facility.

Over its 40 years in business, the studio has attracted such music legends as Sublime, Willie Nelson, Merle Haggard, Paul Simon and Ray Charles; in addition to contemporary favorites including Miranda Lambert, Gary Clark Jr, Drake, Charli XCX, Lorde, and many, many more. On off days, the studio serves as one of Austin's favorite event venues for key national and local bands — making every evening one to never forget.

Freddy Fletcher is the founder of Austin's premier recording studio, Arlyn Studios, as well as a producer and lifelong musician and great friend of storytellers and song. Having started his career at a young age as a touring drummer with the likes of Guy Clark and Billy Joe Shaver, Fletcher eventually retired from the road and built a recording studio, Arlyn Studios, next to the iconic Austin Opry House just off of Music Lane in 1984.

Fletcher's innate understanding of every facet the music industry led him into several ventures: He has produced six Grammy Award-nominated records such as Live Forever: A Tribute to Billy Joe Shaver; Poet: A Tribute to Townes Van Zandt; and Milk Cow Blues. In the mid-2000s he partnered in and built downtown Austin's ACL Live music venue, from which he also operated Stageside Productions where he produced live-streaming events for the likes of Bruce Springsteen, AT&T Music Series, and the Latin Music Awards. He served two terms on the Board of Governors of NARAS and today, as a resident of Bastrop, is committed to giving back to his local community of young artists. With all he has going on, Fred still has time to pick up the sticks. You can find him drumming with his great pal Bobby Earl Smith at Evangeline Cafe every month.

Lisa Fletcher is Partner and Manager of Arlyn Studios and a devout proponent of every creative she crosses paths with and believes in a deep passion for music and a fateful layover as a flight attendant brought her to Texas in the 80's, where she began working at Arlyn and helped make Austin's go-to recording studio the city's most coveted living room for musicians. Her hospitality and management are paramount to Arlyn's growth, making it one of the most sought-after event venues in addition to a recording space.

Lisa was also instrumental in the development of ACL Live, and has served as a manager for much of the city's burgeoning talent. She is a Grammy-nominated executive producer for Live Forever: A Tribute to Billy Joe Shaver. She served two terms on the board of governors of NARAS, and in 2021 was nominated for Austin Chronicle's the Music Industry Hall of Fame Award among an esteemed crop of industry legends. "If not for Lisa Fletcher, I'm not sure that Arlyn would've survived," says Freddy. It's a much agreed upon sentiment.Fletcher remains an avid supporter of Austin's music community, and can often be found at the shows of her (many) favorite bands around town.

★

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TEXAS SONGWRITER U

OUR PARNERSHIP IN EDUCATION

TEXAS SONGWRITER U (TXSU) IS A REGISTERED 501(C)(3) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO IDENTIFYING, DEVELOPING, AND PROMOTING EMERGING TEXAS SONGWRITER TALENT

Founded in 2014, the vision of Bill Schneider, TXHSU was created to support and elevate emerging Texas songwriters through a focused, nonprofit program. At the time, Schneider served on the Board of the Texas Heritage Songwriters Association [TXHSA] whose encouragement and early support helped bring the idea to life.

To realize this vision, Schneider invited country music artist, Jack Ingram, to serve as the program's lead mentor and host, bringing his experience and deep ties to the Texas music community. Under the leadership of executive director Michelle Johnson - former executive director and current board member of TXHSA - and program director, Jason Guest [TXHSA Advisory Board], TXSU has grown into one of the state's most respected annual songwriting development programs.

TXSU is supported by Mack, Jack & McConaughey [MJ&M], Broadcast Music, Inc. [BMI], The WoodNext Foundation, The Guy Clark Family Foundation and Big Hat Spirits, and maintains strategic songwriting partnerships with the Nashville Songwriters Association International [NSAI], TXHSA, and the Saxon Pub, and Gibson Guitars.

TXSU begins with a statewide songwriting competition that selects eight standout songwriters. Participants engage in workshops, co-writing sessions, networking opportunities, and showcases designed to develop their craft and connect them with Texas music industry leaders. One songwriter is named the annual TXSU Ambassador, receiving career-advancing opportunities including festival placements, studio time, a guitar, and performances at the MJ&M Pickin' Party and during Texas Songwriters Hall of Fame Weekend events.

Some of TXSU's notable ambassadors include Trannie Anderson, an award-winning songwriter with over 100 major-label cuts with artists like Morgan Wallen, Ella Langley, Dan + Shay, and Lainey Wilson, including 14 co-writes on Wilson's GRAMMY-winning Bell Bottom Country and Whirlwind, including #1 hits such as, "Heart Like A Truck" "Wildflowers and Wild Horses" and "Somewhere Over Laredo"; Leslie Powell, a Billboard-charting songwriter and artist, whose work spans pop, film, television and global campaigns for brands including Apple, Verizon, and Disney; and Daniel Ethridge, writer on the 2026 GRAMMY nominated album "Outrun" by the Steeldrivers, founding member of national touring act, Troubadour Blue, and staff writer at curb. I Word Publishing.

Over the years, TXSU has hosted an impressive roster of mentors, including Liz Rose, Lori McKenna, Jon Randall, Radney Foster, Chase Bryant, Shawn Camp, Jessie Jo Dillon, Gary Nicholson, Alex Palmer, Blu Sanders, Charlie Sexton, Brad Warren, and Brett Warren, each sharing their craft and insight to inspire the next generation of Texas Songwriters.

Today, Texas Songwriter U remains true to it's founding mission: to identify, develop and support the best adult songwriters in Texas - ensuring the art and craft of Texas Songwriting continues to thrive for generations to come.

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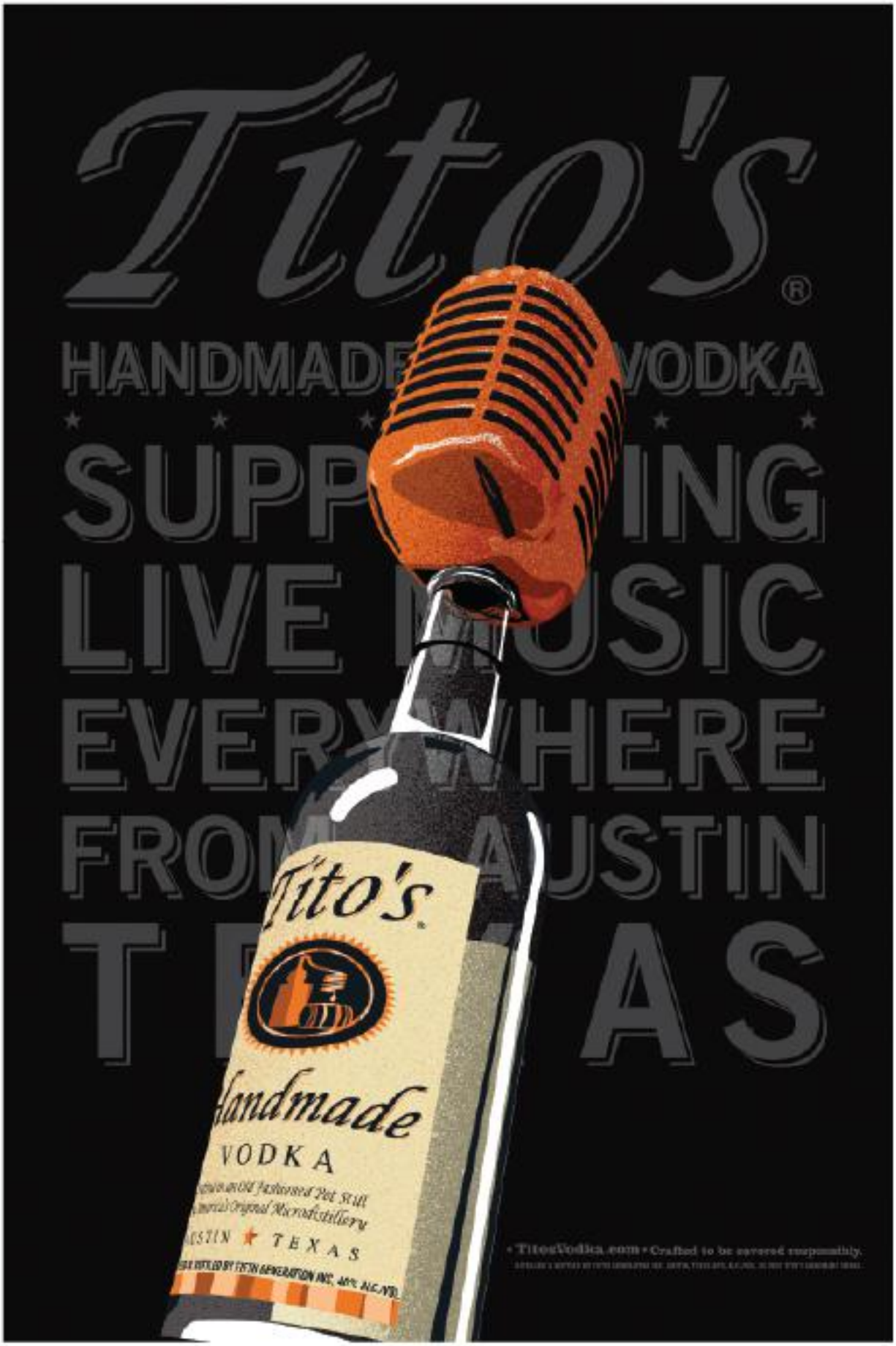
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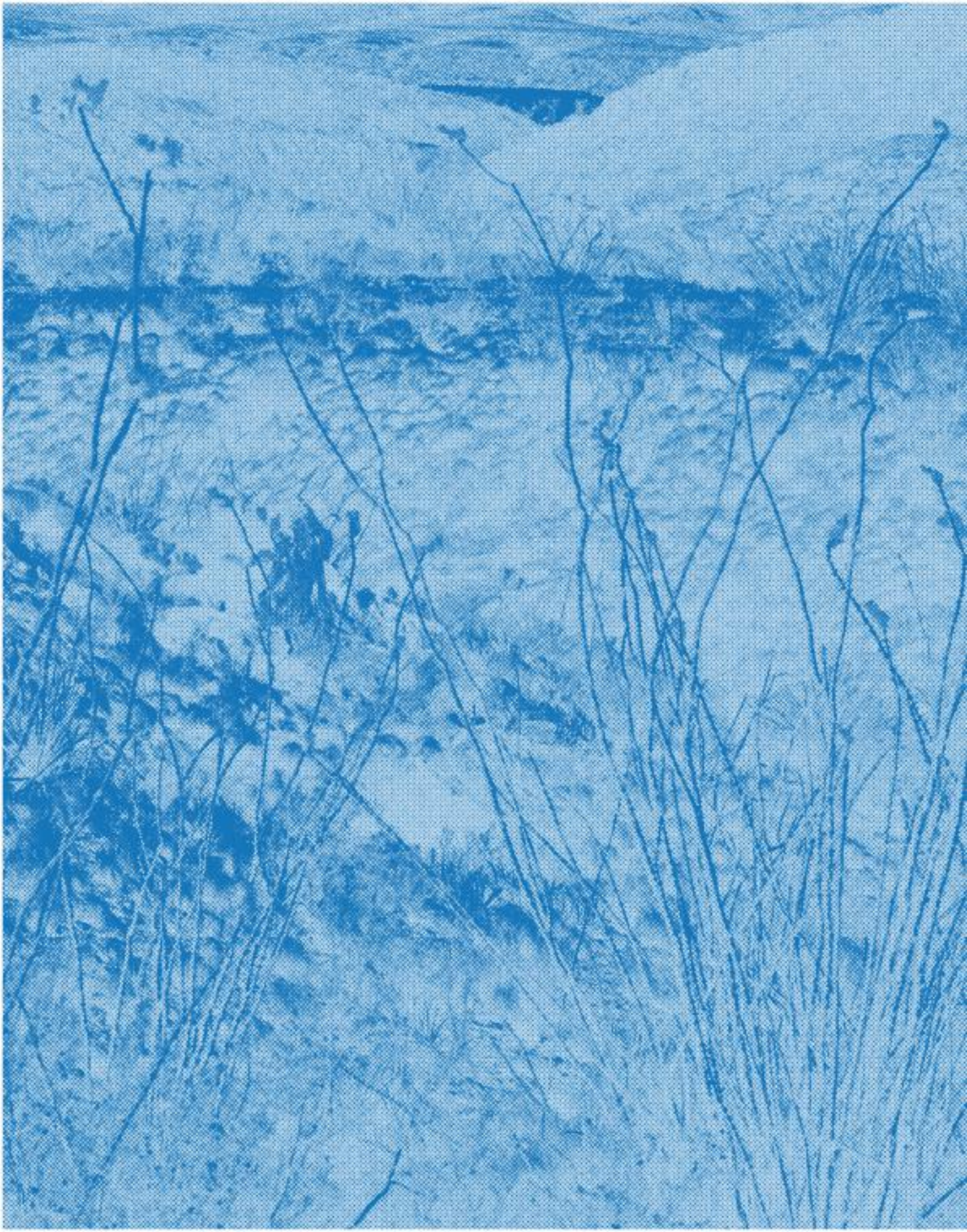




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