

Country music

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Country music is a genre of [American popular music](#) that originated in the rural regions of the [Southern United States](#) in the 1920s.^[1] It takes its roots from the southeastern genre of [American folk music](#) and [Western music](#). [Blues modes](#) have been used extensively throughout its [recorded history](#).^[2] Country music often consists of ballads and dance tunes with generally simple forms and harmonies accompanied by mostly string instruments such as [banjos](#), electric and [acoustic guitars](#), [fiddles](#), and harmonicas.^{[3][4][5]}

The term *country music* gained popularity in the 1940s in preference to the earlier term [hillbilly music](#); it came to encompass [Western music](#), which evolved parallel to hillbilly music from similar roots, in the mid-20th century. The term *country music* is used today to describe many [styles](#) and subgenres. In 2009 country music was the most listened to rush hour radio genre during the evening commute, and second most popular in the morning commute in the United States.^[6]

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Early origins



Ryman Auditorium, the "Mother Church of Country Music"

Immigrants to the Southern [Appalachian Mountains](#) of North America brought the music and instruments of the Old World along with them for nearly 300 years. They brought some of their most important valuables with them, and to most of them this was an instrument: "Early Irish settlers enjoyed the fiddle because it could be played to sound sad and mournful or bright and bouncy."^[7] The Irish [fiddle](#), the German-derived [dulcimer](#), the Italian [mandolin](#), the Spanish guitar, and the West African [banjo](#)^[8] were the most common musical instruments.

According to historian [Bill Malone](#) in *Country Music U.S.A.*, country music was "introduced to the world as a southern phenomenon."^[9] In the South, folk music was a combination of cultural strains, combining musical traditions of a variety of ethnic groups in the region. For example, some instrumental pieces from Irish immigrants were the basis of folk songs and ballads that form what is now known as [old-time music](#), from which country music descended. It is commonly thought that [Scots Irish](#) folk music heavily influenced the development of old-time

music in the Southern Appalachians, where the earliest European settlers hailed principally from [Northern Ireland](#).

"Country music is the combination of African and European folk songs coming together and doing a little [waltz](#) right here in the American south. They came together at some [cotillion](#), and somebody snuck a black person into the room, and he danced with a white lady, and music was born."^[10]

Ketch Secor, [Old Crow Medicine Show](#)

Country music is often erroneously thought of as solely the creation of European Americans. However, a great deal of style—and of course, the banjo, a major instrument in most early American folk songs—came [from African Americans](#). One of the reasons country music was created by African Americans, as well as European Americans, is because blacks and whites in rural communities in the south often worked and played together, just as recollected by [DeFord Bailey](#)^[11] in the PBS documentary, *DeFord Bailey: A Legend Lost*.^[12] Influential black guitarist [Arnold Shultz](#), known as the primary source for thumb style, or Travis picking, played with white musicians in west-central Kentucky.^[13]

First generation (1920s)



[Vernon Dalhart](#)



[Jimmie Rodgers](#)

[Atlanta's music scene](#) played a major role in launching country's earliest recording artists in the early 1920s — many Appalachian people had come to the city to work in its cotton mills and brought their music with them. It would remain a major recording center for two decades and a major performance center for four decades, up to the first country music TV shows on local Atlanta stations in the 1950s.^[14]

Some record companies in Atlanta turned away early artists such as [Fiddlin' John Carson](#), while others realized that his music would fit perfectly with the lifestyle of the country's agricultural workers.^[15] The first commercial recordings of what was considered country music were "Arkansas Traveler" and "[Turkey in the Straw](#)" by fiddlers Henry Gilliland & [A.C. \(Eck\) Robertson](#) on June 30, 1922, for Victor Records and released in April 1923.^{[16][17]} [Columbia Records](#) began issuing records with "hillbilly" music (series 15000D "Old Familiar Tunes") as early as 1924.^[18]

A year later, on June 14, 1923, [Fiddlin' John Carson](#) recorded "[Little Log Cabin in the Lane](#)" for [Okeh Records](#).^[19] [Vernon Dalhart](#) was the first country singer to have a nationwide hit in May 1924 with "[Wreck of the Old 97](#)".^{[20][21]} The flip side of the record was "Lonesome Road Blues", which also became very popular.^[22] In April 1924, "Aunt" [Samantha Bumgarner](#) and Eva Davis became the first female musicians to record and release country songs.^[23]

Many "hillbilly" musicians, such as [Cliff Carlisle](#), recorded blues songs throughout the decade^[24] and into the 1930s. Other important early recording artists were [Riley Puckett](#), [Don Richardson](#), [Fiddlin' John Carson](#), [Uncle Dave Macon](#), [Al Hopkins](#), [Ernest V. Stoneman](#), [Charlie Poole and the North Carolina Ramblers](#) and The Skillet Lickers.^[25] The [steel guitar](#) entered country music as early as 1922, when Jimmie Tarlton met famed Hawaiian guitarist [Frank Ferera](#) on the West Coast.^[26]

[Jimmie Rodgers](#) and the [Carter Family](#) are widely considered to be important early country musicians. Their songs were first captured at a [historic recording session](#) in [Bristol, Tennessee](#), on August 1, 1927, where [Ralph Peer](#) was the talent scout and sound recordist.^{[27][28]} A scene in the movie [O Brother, Where Art Thou?](#) depicts a similar occurrence in the same timeframe.

Rodgers fused hillbilly country, gospel, jazz, blues, pop, cowboy, and folk, and many of his best songs were his compositions, including "Blue Yodel",^[29] which sold over a million records and established Rodgers as the premier singer of early country music.^{[30][31]}

Beginning in 1927, and for the next 17 years, the Carters recorded some 300 old-time ballads, traditional tunes, country songs and gospel hymns, all representative of America's southeastern folklore and heritage.^[32]

Second generation (1930s–1940s)

One effect of the [Great Depression](#) was to reduce the number of records that could be sold. Radio became a popular source of entertainment, and "barn dance" shows featuring country music were started all over the South, as far north as Chicago, and as far west as California.



 [Roy Acuff](#)

The most important was the [Grand Ole Opry](#), aired starting in 1925 by [WSM](#) in [Nashville](#) and continuing to the present day. Some of the early stars on the *Opry* were [Uncle Dave Macon](#), [Roy Acuff](#) and African American harmonica player [DeFord Bailey](#). WSM's 50,000-watt signal (in 1934) could often be heard across the country.^[33]

Many musicians performed and recorded songs in any number of styles. [Moon Mullican](#), for example, played [Western swing](#) but also recorded songs that can be called [rockabilly](#). Between 1947 and 1949, country crooner [Eddy Arnold](#) placed eight songs in the top 10.^[34]

Singing cowboys and Western swing

Main article: [Western music \(North America\)](#)

During the 1930s and 1940s, cowboy songs, or Western music, which had been recorded since the 1920s, were popularized by films made in Hollywood. Some of the popular [singing cowboys](#) from the era were [Gene Autry](#), the [Sons of the Pioneers](#), and [Roy Rogers](#).^[35] Country music and western music were frequently played together on the same radio stations, hence the term *country and western music*.

And it wasn't only cowboys; cowgirls contributed to the sound in various family groups. [Patsy Montana](#) opened the door for female artists with her history-making song "I Want To Be a Cowboy's Sweetheart". This would begin a movement toward opportunities for women to have successful solo careers.

[Bob Wills](#) was another country musician from the Lower [Great Plains](#) who had become very popular as the leader of a "hot string band," and who also appeared in [Hollywood westerns](#). His mix of country and [jazz](#), which started out as dance hall music, would become known as [Western](#)

[swing](#), [Spade Cooley](#) and [Tex Williams](#) also had very popular bands and appeared in films. At its height, Western swing rivaled the popularity of [big band](#) swing music.

Changing instrumentation

Drums were scorned by early country musicians as being "too loud" and "not pure", but by 1935 Western swing big band leader Bob Wills had added drums to the Texas Playboys. In the mid-1940s, the Grand Ole Opry did not want the Playboys' drummer to appear on stage. Although drums were commonly used by rockabilly groups by 1955, the less-conservative-than-the-Grand Ole Opry [Louisiana Hayride](#) kept its infrequently used drummer back stage as late as 1956. By the early 1960s, however, it was rare that a country band didn't have a drummer.^[36]

Bob Wills was one of the first country musicians known to have added an electric guitar to his band, in 1938.^[37] A decade later (1948) [Arthur Smith](#) achieved top 10 US country chart success with his MGM Records recording of "[Guitar Boogie](#)", which crossed over to the US pop chart, introducing many people to the potential of the electric guitar. For several decades Nashville session players preferred the warm tones of the [Gibson](#) and [Gretsch](#) archtop electrics, but a "hot" [Fender](#) style, utilizing guitars which became available beginning in the early 1950s, eventually prevailed as the signature guitar sound of country.^{[36][38]}

Hillbilly boogie

Country musicians began recording [boogie](#) in 1939, shortly after it had been played at [Carnegie Hall](#), when [Johnny Barfield](#) recorded "Boogie Woogie". The trickle of what was initially called hillbilly boogie, or okie boogie (later to be renamed country boogie), became a flood beginning in late 1945. One notable release from this period was [The Delmore Brothers'](#) "Freight Train Boogie", considered to be part of the combined evolution of country music and blues towards [rockabilly](#). In 1948, [Arthur "Guitar Boogie" Smith](#) achieved top ten US country chart success with his MGM Records recordings of "[Guitar Boogie](#)" and "Banjo Boogie", with the former crossing over to the US pop charts.^[39] Other country boogie artists included [Merrill Moore](#) and [Tennessee Ernie Ford](#). The hillbilly boogie period lasted into the 1950s and remains one of many subgenres of country into the 21st century.

Bluegrass, folk and gospel





[Red Foley](#)

By the end of [World War II](#), "mountaineer" string band music known as [bluegrass](#) had emerged when [Bill Monroe](#) joined with [Lester Flatt](#) and [Earl Scruggs](#), introduced by Roy Acuff at the Grand Ole Opry. [Gospel music](#), too, remained a popular component of country music. [Red Foley](#), the biggest country star following World War II, had one of the first million-selling gospel hits ("[Peace in the Valley](#)") and also sang boogie, blues and rockabilly.

In the post-war period, country music was called "folk" in the trades, and "hillbilly" within the industry.^[40] In 1944, [The Billboard](#) replaced the term "hillbilly" with "folk songs and blues," and switched to "country" or "country and Western" in 1949.^{[41][42]}

Honky Tonk



Hank Williams

Another type of stripped down and raw music with a variety of moods and a basic ensemble of guitar, bass, [dobro](#) or steel guitar (and later) drums became popular, especially among poor whites in Texas and [Oklahoma](#). It became known as [honky tonk](#) and had its roots in Western swing and the [ranchera](#) music of Mexico and the border states, particularly Texas, together with the blues of the American South. [Bob Wills](#) and His Texas Playboys personified this music which has been described as "a little bit of this, and a little bit of that, a little bit of black and a little bit of white...just loud enough to keep you from thinking too much and to go right on ordering the whiskey."^[43] East Texan [Al Dexter](#) had a hit with "Honky Tonk Blues", and seven years later "[Pistol Packin' Mama](#)".^[44] These "honky tonk" songs associated barrooms, were performed by the likes of [Ernest Tubb](#), [Kitty Wells](#) (the first major female country solo singer), [Ted Daffan](#), [Floyd Tillman](#), and the [Maddox Brothers and Rose](#), [Lefty Frizzell](#) and [Hank Williams](#), would later be called "traditional" country. Williams' influence in particular would prove to be enormous, inspiring many of the pioneers of rock and roll, such as [Elvis Presley](#) and [Jerry Lee Lewis](#), as well as [Chuck Berry](#) and [Ike Turner](#), while providing a framework for emerging honky tonk talents like [George Jones](#). [Webb Pierce](#) was the top-charting country artist of the 1950s, with 13 of his singles spending 113 weeks at number one. He charted 48 singles during the decade; 31 reached the top ten and 26 reached the top four.

Third generation (1950s–1960s)

See also: [1950s in music](#) and [1960s in music](#)

By the early 1950s a blend of Western swing, country boogie, and honky tonk was played by most country bands. Western music, influenced by the cowboy ballads and [Tejano music](#) rhythms of the [southwestern U.S.](#) and [northern Mexico](#), reached its peak in popularity in the late 1950s, most notably with the song "[El Paso](#)", first recorded by [Marty Robbins](#) in September 1959.

The country music scene largely kept the music of the [folk revival](#) and [folk rock](#) at a distance, despite the similarity in instrumentation and origins (see, for instance, [The Byrds](#)' negative reception during their appearance on the *Grand Ole Opry*). The main concern was politics: the folk revival was largely driven by progressive activists, a stark contrast to the culturally conservative audiences of country music. Only a handful of folk artists, such as [Burl Ives](#), [John Denver](#) and Canadian musician [Gordon Lightfoot](#), would cross over into country music after the folk revival died out.

During the mid-1950s a new style of country music became popular, eventually to be referred to as rockabilly.^[45]

Rockabilly

Main article: [Rockabilly](#)

Rockabilly was most popular with country fans in the 1950s, and 1956 could be called the year of [rockabilly](#) in country music. Rockabilly was a mixture of [rock-and-roll](#) and hillbilly music. During this period Elvis Presley converted over to country music. He played a huge role in the music industry during this time. The number two, three and four songs on *Billboard's* charts for that year were [Elvis Presley](#), "[Heartbreak Hotel](#)"; [Johnny Cash](#), "[I Walk the Line](#)"; and [Carl Perkins](#), "[Blue Suede Shoes](#)".^[46]



 [Johnny Cash](#)

Cash and Presley placed songs in the top 5 in 1958 with No. 3 "Guess Things Happen That Way/Come In, Stranger" by Cash, and No. 5 by Presley "Don't/I Beg of You."^[47] Presley acknowledged the influence of [rhythm and blues](#) artists and his style, saying "The colored folk been singin' and playin' it just the way I'm doin' it now, man for more years than I know." But he also said, "My stuff is just hopped-up country."^[43] Within a few years, many rockabilly musicians returned to a more mainstream style or had defined their own unique style.

Country music gained national television exposure through [Ozark Jubilee](#) on ABC-TV and radio from 1955–1960 from [Springfield, Missouri](#). The program showcased top stars including several rockabilly artists, some from the [Ozarks](#). As Webb Pierce put it in 1956, "Once upon a time, it was almost impossible to sell country music in a place like New York City. Nowadays, television takes us everywhere, and country music records and sheet music sell as well in large cities as anywhere else."^[48]

The late 1950s saw the emergence of the [Lubbock sound](#), but by the end of the decade, backlash as well as traditional artists such as [Ray Price](#), [Marty Robbins](#), and [Johnny Horton](#) began to shift the industry away from the rock n' roll influences of the mid-1950s.^[49]

The Nashville and countryopolitan sounds

Main article: [Nashville sound](#)

Beginning in the mid-1950s, and reaching its peak during the early 1960s, the Nashville sound turned country music into a multimillion-dollar industry centered in [Nashville, Tennessee](#). Under the direction of producers such as [Chet Atkins](#), [Paul Cohen](#), [Owen Bradley](#), and later [Billy Sherrill](#), the sound brought country music to a diverse audience and helped revive country as it emerged from a commercially fallow period.^[50]

This subgenre was notable for borrowing from 1950s pop stylings: a prominent and smooth vocal, backed by a string section and vocal chorus. Instrumental soloing was de-emphasized in favor of trademark "licks". Leading artists in this genre included [Patsy Cline](#), [Jim Reeves](#), [Skeeter Davis](#), [The Browns](#), and [Eddy Arnold](#). The "slip note" piano style of session musician [Floyd Cramer](#) was an important component of this style.

Nashville's pop song structure became more pronounced and it morphed into what was called [countryopolitan](#). Countryopolitan was aimed straight at mainstream markets, and it sold well throughout the later 1960s into the early 1970s (a rarity in an era where American popular music was being decimated by the [British Invasion](#)). Top artists included [Tammy Wynette](#), [Lynn Anderson](#), and [Charlie Rich](#), as well as such former "hard country" artists as [Ray Price](#) and [Marty Robbins](#).

Despite the appeal of the Nashville sound, many traditional country artists emerged during this period and dominated the genre: [Loretta Lynn](#), [Merle Haggard](#), [Buck Owens](#), [Porter Wagoner](#), and [Sonny James](#) among them.

Country soul - crossover

Main article: [Country soul](#)

In 1962, [Ray Charles](#) surprised the pop world by turning his attention to country and western music, topping the charts and rating number three for the year on *Billboard's* pop chart^[51] with the "[I Can't Stop Loving You](#)" single, and recording the landmark album [Modern Sounds in Country and Western Music](#).

The Bakersfield sound

Main article: [Bakersfield sound](#)

Another genre of country music grew out of hardcore honky tonk with elements of [Western swing](#) and originated 112 miles (180 km) north-northwest of Los Angeles in [Bakersfield, California](#). Influenced by one-time West Coast residents [Bob Wills](#) and [Lefty Frizzell](#), by 1966 it was known as the [Bakersfield sound](#). It relied on electric instruments and amplification, in particular the [Telecaster](#) electric guitar, more than other subgenres of country of the era, and can be described as having a sharp, hard, driving, no-frills, edgy flavor. Leading practitioners of this style were [Buck Owens](#), [Merle Haggard](#), [Tommy Collins](#), [Gary Allan](#), and [Wynn Stewart](#), each of whom had his own style.^{[52][53]}

Country rock

Main article: [Country rock](#)

The late 1960s in American music produced a unique blend as a result of traditionalist backlash within separate genres. In the aftermath of the [British Invasion](#), many desired a return to the "old values" of rock n' roll. At the same time there was a lack of enthusiasm in the country sector for Nashville-produced music. What resulted was a crossbred genre known as [country rock](#).

Early innovators in this new style of music in the 1960s and 1970s included [Bob Dylan](#), who was the first to revert to country music with his 1967 album [John Wesley Harding](#) (and even more so with that album's follow-up, [Nashville Skyline](#)), followed by folk rock band [The Byrds](#) (with [Gram Parsons](#) on [Sweetheart of the Rodeo](#)) and its spin-off [The Flying Burrito Brothers](#) (also featuring Gram Parsons), guitarist [Clarence White](#), [Michael Nesmith](#) ([The Monkees](#) and the [First National Band](#)), the [Grateful Dead](#), [Neil Young](#), [Commander Cody](#), [The Allman Brothers](#), [The Marshall Tucker Band](#), [Poco](#), [Buffalo Springfield](#), and [The Eagles](#), among many. [The Rolling Stones](#) also got into the act with songs like "[Honky Tonk Women](#)" and "[Dead Flowers](#)".

Described by [Allmusic](#) as the "father of country-rock",^[54] Gram Parsons' work in the early 1970s was acclaimed for its purity and for his appreciation for aspects of traditional country music.^[55] Though his career was cut tragically short by his 1973 death, his legacy was carried on by his protégé and duet partner [Emmylou Harris](#); Harris would release her debut solo in 1975, an amalgamation of country, rock and roll, folk, blues and pop.

Subsequent to the initial blending of the two polar opposite genres, other offspring soon resulted, including [Southern rock](#), [heartland rock](#) and in more recent years, [alternative country](#).

In the decades that followed, artists such as [Juice Newton](#), [Alabama](#), [Hank Williams, Jr.](#) (and, to an even greater extent, [Hank Williams III](#)), [Gary Allan](#), [Shania Twain](#), [Brooks & Dunn](#), [Faith Hill](#), [Garth Brooks](#), [Dwight Yoakam](#), [Steve Earle](#), [Dolly Parton](#), [Rosanne Cash](#) and [Linda Ronstadt](#) moved country further towards rock influence.

Decline of Western music and the cowboy ballad

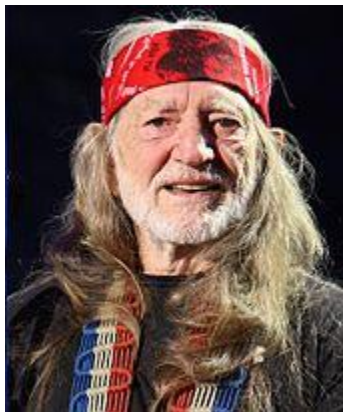
By the late 1960s, Western music, in particular the cowboy ballad, was in decline. Relegated to the "country and Western" genre by marketing agencies, popular Western recording stars released albums to only moderate success.^{[\[citation needed\]](#)} Rock-and-roll dominated music sales, and Hollywood recording studios dropped most of their Western artists.^{[\[citation needed\]](#)} The shift in country music production to Nashville also played a role, where the Nashville sound, country rock, and rockabilly music styles predominated over both "cowboy" artists and the more recent Bakersfield sound.^{[\[citation needed\]](#)} The latter was largely limited to [Buck Owens](#), [Merle Haggard](#), and a few other bands.^{[\[citation needed\]](#)} In the process, country and western music as a genre lost most of its southwestern, ranchera, and Tejano musical influences. However the cowboy ballad and honky-tonk music would be resurrected and reinterpreted in the 1970s with the growth in popularity of "outlaw country" music from Texas and Oklahoma.^{[\[citation needed\]](#)}

Fourth generation (1970s–1980s)

Outlaw country

Main article: [Outlaw country](#)

Derived from the traditional Western and honky tonk musical styles of the late 1950s and 1960s, including [Ray Price](#) (whose band, the "Cherokee Cowboys", included [Willie Nelson](#) and [Roger Miller](#)) and mixed with the anger of an alienated subculture of the nation during the period, outlaw country revolutionized the genre of country music.



 [Willie Nelson](#)

"After I left Nashville (the early 70s), I wanted to relax and play the music that I wanted to play, and just stay around Texas, maybe Oklahoma. Waylon and I had that outlaw image going, and when it caught on at colleges and we started selling records, we were O.K. The whole outlaw thing, it had nothing to do with the music, it was something that got written in an article, and the young people said, 'Well, that's pretty cool.' And started listening." (Willie Nelson)^[56]

The term *outlaw country* is traditionally associated with [Hank Williams, Jr.](#), [Willie Nelson](#), [Waylon Jennings](#), [David Allan Coe](#), [Whitey Morgan and the 78's](#), [John Prine](#), [Billy Joe Shaver](#), [Gary Stewart](#), [Townes Van Zandt](#), [Kris Kristofferson](#), [Michael Martin Murphey](#), and the later career renaissance of [Johnny Cash](#), with a few female vocalists such as [Jessi Colter](#) and [Sammi Smith](#). It was encapsulated in the 1976 album [Wanted! The Outlaws](#). A related subgenre is [Red Dirt](#).

Country pop

Main article: [Country pop](#)

Country pop or soft pop, with roots in the [countrypolitan](#) sound, folk music, and [soft rock](#), is a subgenre that first emerged in the 1970s. Although the term first referred to country music songs and artists that crossed over to top 40 radio, country pop acts are now more likely to cross over to [adult contemporary music](#). It started with pop music singers like [Glen Campbell](#), [Bobbie Gentry](#), [John Denver](#), [Olivia Newton-John](#), [Anne Murray](#), [Marie Osmond](#), [B. J. Thomas](#), [The Bellamy Brothers](#), and [Linda Ronstadt](#) having hits on the country charts.



[Lynn Anderson](#) in concert

Between 1972 and 1975, singer/guitarist John Denver released a series of hugely successful songs blending country and folk-rock musical styles ("[Rocky Mountain High](#)", "[Sunshine on My Shoulders](#)", "[Annie's Song](#)", "[Thank God I'm a Country Boy](#)", and "[I'm Sorry](#)"), and was named Country Music Entertainer of the Year in 1975. The year before, Olivia Newton-John, an Australian pop singer, won the "Best Female Country Vocal Performance" as well as the

Country Music Association's most coveted award for females, "Female Vocalist of the Year". In response George Jones, Tammy Wynette, and other traditional Nashville country artists dissatisfied with the new trend formed the short-lived [Association of Country Entertainers](#) in 1974.

During the mid-1970s, [Dolly Parton](#), a highly successful mainstream country artist since the late 1960s, mounted a high profile campaign to cross over to pop music, culminating in her 1977 hit "[Here You Come Again](#)", which topped the U.S. country singles chart, and also reached No. 3 on the pop singles charts. Parton's male counterpart, [Kenny Rogers](#), came from the opposite direction, aiming his music at the country charts, after a successful career in pop, rock and folk music, achieving success the same year with "[Lucille](#)", which topped the country charts and reached No. 5 on the U.S. pop singles charts. Parton and Rogers would both continue to have success on both country and pop charts simultaneously, well into the 1980s. Artists like [Crystal Gayle](#), [Ronnie Milsap](#) and [Barbara Mandrell](#) would also find success on the pop charts with their records.



 [Dolly Parton](#)

In 1975, author Paul Hemphill stated in the *Saturday Evening Post*, "Country music isn't really country anymore; it is a hybrid of nearly every form of popular music in America."^[57]

During the early 1980s, country artists continued to see their records perform well on the pop charts. [Willie Nelson](#) and [Juice Newton](#) each had two songs in the top 5 of the Billboard Hot 100 in the early eighties: Nelson charted "[Always on My Mind](#)" (No. 5, 1982) and "[To All the Girls I've Loved Before](#)" (No. 5, 1984), and Newton achieved success with "[Queen of Hearts](#)" (No. 2, 1981) and "[Angel of the Morning](#)" (No. 4, 1981). Four country songs topped the *Billboard* Hot 100 in the 1980s: "[Lady](#)" by [Kenny Rogers](#), from the late fall of 1980; "[9 to 5](#)" by [Dolly Parton](#), "[I Love a Rainy Night](#)" by [Eddie Rabbitt](#) (these two back-to-back at the top in early 1981); and "[Islands in the Stream](#)", a duet by Dolly Parton and Kenny Rogers in 1983, a pop-country crossover hit written by Barry, Robin, and Maurice Gibb of the [Bee Gees](#). Newton's "Queen of Hearts" almost reached No. 1, but was kept out of the spot by the pop ballad juggernaut "[Endless Love](#)" by [Diana Ross](#) and [Lionel Richie](#).^[58] Although there were few crossover hits in the latter

half of the 1980s, one song — [Roy Orbison's "You Got It"](#), from 1989 — made the top 10 of both the *Billboard* ["Hot Country Singles"](#) and Hot 100 charts.^{[59][60]}

The record-setting, multi-platinum group [Alabama](#) was named Artist of the Decade for the 1980s by the Academy of Country Music.

Neocountry

In 1980, a style of "neocountry disco music" was popularized by the film [Urban Cowboy](#),^[61] which also included more traditional songs such as "[The Devil Went Down to Georgia](#)" by the [Charlie Daniels Band](#).^[62] A related subgenre is [Texas country music](#).

Sales in record stores rocketed to \$250 million in 1981; by 1984, 900 radio stations began programming country or neocountry pop full-time. As with most sudden trends, however, by 1984 sales had dropped below 1979 figures.^[61]

Truck driving country

Main article: [Truck-driving country](#)

Truck driving country music is a genre of country music^[63] and is a fusion of [honky-tonk](#), [country rock](#) and the [Bakersfield sound](#).^[64] It has the [tempo](#) of country rock and the emotion of honky-tonk,^[64] and its lyrics focus on a [truck driver's](#) lifestyle.^[65] Truck driving country songs often deal with trucks and love.^[64] Well-known artists who sing truck driving country include [Dave Dudley](#), [Red Sovine](#), [Dick Curless](#), [Red Simpson](#), [Del Reeves](#), [The Willis Brothers](#) and [Jerry Reed](#), with [C. W. McCall](#) and [Cledus Maggard](#) (pseudonyms of Bill Fries and Jay Huguely, respectively) being more humorous entries in the subgenre.^[64] Dudley is known as the father of truck driving country.^{[65][66]}

Neotraditionalist movement

Main article: [Neotraditionalist country](#)

During the mid-1980s, a group of new artists began to emerge who rejected the more polished country-pop sound that had been prominent on radio and the charts, in favor of more, traditional, "back-to-basics" production. Led by [Randy Travis](#), whose 1986 debut album [Storms of Life](#) sold four million copies and was *Billboard's* year-end top country album of 1987, many of the artists during the latter half of the 1980s drew on traditional honky-tonk, bluegrass, folk and western swing. Artists who typified this sound included [Travis Tritt](#), [Alan Jackson](#), [Ricky Skaggs](#), [Patty Loveless](#), [Kathy Mattea](#), [George Strait](#) and [The Judds](#).

Fifth generation (1990s)



 [Garth Brooks](#)

Country music was aided by the [FCC](#)'s Docket 80-90, which led to a significant expansion of [FM radio](#) in the 1980s by adding numerous higher-fidelity FM signals to rural and suburban areas. At this point, country music was mainly heard on rural [AM radio](#) stations; the expansion of FM was particularly helpful to country music, which migrated to FM from the AM band as AM became overcome by [talk radio](#) (the country music stations that stayed on AM developed the [classic country](#) format for the AM audience). At the same time, [beautiful music](#) stations already in rural areas began abandoning the format (leading to its effective demise) to adopt country music as well. This wider availability of country music led to producers seeking to polish their product for a wider audience. Another force leading to changes in the country music industry was the changing sound of rock music, which was increasingly being influenced by the noisier, less melodic [alternative rock](#) scene. "New country" ended up absorbing rock influence from more electric musicians that were too melodic for modern rock but too electric for the classic country music sound. (A number of "[classic rock](#)" artists, especially [Southern rock](#) ones such as [Charlie Daniels](#) and [Lynyrd Skynyrd](#), are more closely associated with the modern country music scene than that of the modern rock scene.)

In the 1990s, country music became a worldwide phenomenon thanks to [Garth Brooks](#),^{[67][68][69]} who enjoyed one of the most successful careers in popular music history, breaking records for both sales and concert attendance throughout the decade. The [RIAA](#) has certified his recordings at a combined (128× [platinum](#)), denoting roughly 113 million U.S. shipments.^[70] Other artists that experienced success during this time included [Clint Black](#), [Sammy Kershaw](#), [Aaron Tippin](#), [Travis Tritt](#), [Alan Jackson](#) and the newly formed duo of [Brooks & Dunn](#); [George Strait](#), whose career began in the 1980s, also continued to have widespread success in this decade and beyond. [Toby Keith](#) began his career as a more pop-oriented country singer in the 1990s, evolving into an outlaw persona in the late 1990s with [Pull My Chain](#) and its follow-up, [Unleashed](#).

Female artists such as [Reba McEntire](#), [Patty Loveless](#), [Faith Hill](#), [Martina McBride](#), [Deana Carter](#), [LeAnn Rimes](#), [Mindy McCready](#), [Lorrie Morgan](#), [Shania Twain](#), and [Mary Chapin Carpenter](#) all released platinum-selling albums in the 1990s.

The [Dixie Chicks](#) became one of the most popular country bands in the 1990s and early 2000s. Their 1998 debut album [Wide Open Spaces](#) went on to become certified 12x platinum while their 1999 album [Fly](#) went on to become 10x platinum. After their third album, [Home](#), was released in 2003, the band made political news in part because of lead singer [Natalie Maines](#)'s comments disparaging then-President [George W. Bush](#) while the band was overseas (Maines stated that she and her bandmates were ashamed to be from the same state as Bush, who had just commenced the [Iraq War](#) a few days prior). The comments caused a rift between the band and the country music scene, and the band's fourth (and, to date, final) album, 2006's [Taking the Long Way](#), took a more rock-oriented direction; the album was commercially successful overall but largely ignored among country audiences. (The band is currently on hiatus as Maines pursues a solo career; in the meantime, the two other members are continuing with their side project, the [Court Yard Hounds](#).)

In the early-mid-1990s, country western music was influenced by the popularity of [line dancing](#). This influence was so great that [Chet Atkins](#) was quoted as saying, "The music has gotten pretty bad, I think. It's all that damn line dancing."^[71] By the end of the decade, however, at least one line dance choreographer complained that good country line dance music was no longer being released.

Sixth generation (2000s–present)

[Richard Marx](#) crossed over with his [Days in Avalon](#) album, which features five country songs and several singers and musicians. [Alison Krauss](#) sang background vocals to Marx's single "Straight from My Heart." Also, [Bon Jovi](#) had a hit single, "[Who Says You Can't Go Home](#)", with [Jennifer Nettles](#) of [Sugarland](#). [Kid Rock](#)'s collaboration with [Sheryl Crow](#), "[Picture](#)," was a major crossover hit in 2001 and began Kid Rock's transition from hard rock to a country-rock hybrid that would later produce another major crossover hit, 2008's "[All Summer Long](#)." [Darius Rucker](#), former frontman for the 1990s pop-rock band [Hootie & the Blowfish](#), began a country solo career in the late 2000s, one that to date has produced three albums and several hits on both the country charts and the Billboard Hot 100. Singer-songwriter [Unknown Hinson](#) became famous for his appearance in the [Charlotte](#) television show *Wild, Wild, South*, after which Hinson started his own band and toured in southern states. Other rock stars who featured a country song on their albums were [Don Henley](#) and [Poison](#).

In 2005, country singer [Carrie Underwood](#) rose to fame as the winner of the fourth season of [American Idol](#) and became a multi-platinum selling recording artist and multiple [Grammy Award](#) winner. With her first single, "[Inside Your Heaven](#)", Underwood became the only country artist to have a #1 hit on the [Billboard Hot 100 Songs](#) chart in the 2000-2009 decade. In 2007, Underwood won the [Grammy Award for Best New Artist](#) and became the first country artist in 10 years to win such award and the second of only three to ever win it. Underwood also made history by becoming the seventh woman to win Entertainer of the Year for the [Academy of Country Music Awards](#), and the first woman in history to win the award twice, as well as twice

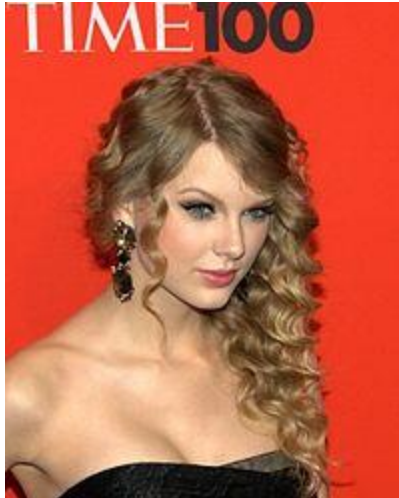
consecutively. Underwood's debut album [Some Hearts](#) was not only the fastest-selling debut album by any country artist in history, but was ranked by [Billboard.com](#) as the #1 Country Album of the 2000-2009 decade. In 2010, Underwood sang with [Brad Paisley](#) at the [Greenbrier Classic](#) PGA Tour event. After this, they became good friends and released their duet "[Remind Me](#)" in 2011.


Underwood was one of several country stars produced by a television series in the 2000s. In addition to Underwood, *American Idol* launched the careers of [Kellie Pickler](#), [Josh Gracin](#), [Bucky Covington](#), [Kristy Lee Cook](#), and [Danny Gokey](#) (as well as that of occasional country singer [Kelly Clarkson](#)) in the decade, and would continue to launch country careers in the 2010s. The series [Nashville Star](#), while not nearly as successful as *Idol*, did manage to bring [Miranda Lambert](#) and [Chris Young](#) to mainstream success, also launching the careers of lower-profile musicians such as [Buddy Jewell](#), [Sean Patrick McGraw](#), and Canadian musician [George Canyon](#). [Can You Duet?](#) produced the duos [Steel Magnolia](#) and [Joey + Rory](#).

Teen sitcoms also have had an impact on modern country music; in 2008, actress [Jennette McCurdy](#) (best known as the sidekick Sam on the teen sitcom *iCarly*) released her first single, "So Close", following that with the single "[Generation Love](#)" in 2011. Another teen sitcom star, [Miley Cyrus](#) (of *Hannah Montana*), also had a crossover hit in the late 2000s with "[The Climb](#)" and another with a duet with her father, [Billy Ray Cyrus](#), with "[Ready, Set, Don't Go](#)." [Jana Kramer](#), an actress in the teen drama *One Tree Hill*, released a country album in 2012 that has produced two hit singles as of 2013. Actress [Hayden Panettiere](#) began recording country songs as part of her role in the TV series *Nashville*; several have reached the lower ends of the top 40 of the country charts.

In 2010, the group [Lady Antebellum](#) won five Grammys, including the coveted [Song of the Year](#) and [Record of the Year](#) for "[Need You Now](#)".^[72]

A large number of duos and vocal groups have begun to emerge on the charts in the 2010s, many of which feature [close harmony](#) in the lead vocals. In addition to Lady Antebellum, groups such as [The Quebe Sisters Band](#), [Little Big Town](#), [The Band Perry](#), [Gloriana](#), [Thompson Square](#), [Eli Young Band](#) and the [Zac Brown Band](#) have emerged to occupy a large portion of the new country artists in the popular scene.



 Taylor Swift at the [Time 100](#)

One of the most commercially successful artists of the late 2000s and early 2010s has been singer-songwriter [Taylor Swift](#). Swift first became widely known in 2006 when her debut single, "[Tim McGraw](#)," was released when Swift was age 16 and has been prolific in releasing both pop and country singles since then. In 2006, Taylor released her first studio album, [Taylor Swift](#), which spent 275 weeks on Billboard 200, one of the longest runs of any album on that chart. In 2008, Taylor Swift released her second studio album, [Fearless](#), which made her the second-longest Number One charted on Billboard 200 and the second best-selling album (just behind [Adele's 21](#)) among this 5 year. At the 2010 Grammys, Taylor Swift was 20 and won Album of the Year for [Fearless](#), which made her the youngest artist to win this award. Swift had received seven Grammys already, which made her the most awarded country solo artist, although this includes her non-country songs as well. Buoyed by her [teen idol](#) status among girls and a change in the methodology of compiling the [Billboard](#) charts to favor pop-crossover songs, Swift's 2012 single "[We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together](#)" spent the most weeks at the top of Billboard's [Hot Country Songs](#) chart of any song in nearly five decades (although that benchmark would be surpassed almost immediately by [Florida Georgia Line's "Cruise"](#)).

The influence of [rock music](#) in country has become more overt during the late 2000s and early 2010s as artists like [Eric Church](#), [Jason Aldean](#), and [Brantley Gilbert](#) have had success; [Aaron Lewis](#), former frontman for the rock group [Staind](#), had a moderately successful entry into country music in 2011 and 2012. Also rising in the late 2000s and early 2010s was the insertion of [rap](#) and spoken-word elements into country songs; artists such as [Cowboy Troy](#) and [Colt Ford](#) have focused almost exclusively on [country rap](#) (also known as hick hop) while other, more mainstream artists (such as [Big & Rich](#) and Jason Aldean) have used it on occasion.

International

Canada

Main articles: [Canadian Country Music Association](#) and [Canadian Country Music Hall of Fame](#)

Outside of the United States, Canada has the largest country music fan and artist base, something that is to be expected given the two countries' proximity and cultural parallels. Mainstream country music is culturally ingrained in the [prairie provinces](#), Ontario, and in [Atlantic Canada](#).^[73] [Celtic traditional music](#) developed in Atlantic Canada in the form of Scottish, Acadian and Irish folk music popular amongst Irish, French and Scottish immigrants to Canada's Atlantic Provinces ([Newfoundland](#), Nova Scotia, [New Brunswick](#), and [Prince Edward Island](#)).^[73] Like the southern United States and [Appalachia](#), all four regions are of heavy [British Isles](#) stock and rural; as such, the development of traditional music in the Maritimes somewhat mirrored the development of country music in the US South and Appalachia. Country and Western music never really developed separately in Canada; however, after its introduction to Canada, following the spread of radio, it developed quite quickly out of the Atlantic Canadian traditional scene. While true Atlantic Canadian traditional music is very Celtic or "[sea shanty](#)" in nature, even today, the lines have often been blurred. Certain areas often are viewed as embracing one strain or the other more openly. For example, in Newfoundland the traditional music remains very unique and [Irish](#) in nature, whereas traditional musicians in other parts of the region may play both genres interchangeably.

[Don Messer's Jubilee](#) was a [Halifax, Nova Scotia](#)-based country/folk variety television show that was broadcast nationally from 1957 to 1969. In Canada it out-performed [The Ed Sullivan Show](#) broadcast from the United States and became the top-rated television show throughout much of the 1960s. *Don Messer's Jubilee* followed a consistent format throughout its years, beginning with a tune named "Goin' to the Barndance Tonight", followed by fiddle tunes by Messer, songs from some of his "Islanders" including singers [Marg Osburne](#) and [Charlie Chamberlain](#), the featured guest performance, and a closing hymn. It ended with "[Till We Meet Again](#)".

The guest performance slot gave national exposure to numerous Canadian folk musicians, including [Stompin' Tom Connors](#) and [Catherine McKinnon](#). Some Maritime country performers went on to further fame beyond Canada. [Hank Snow](#), [Wilf Carter](#) (also known as Montana Slim), and [Anne Murray](#) are the three most notable.

The cancellation of the show by the public broadcaster in 1969 caused a nationwide protest, including the raising of questions in the Parliament of Canada.

The Prairie provinces, due to their western cowboy and agrarian nature, are the true heartland of Canadian country music.^[73] While the Prairies never developed a traditional music culture anything like the Maritimes, the folk music of the Prairies often reflected the cultural origins of the settlers, who were a mix of [Scottish](#), [Ukrainian](#), [German](#) and others. For these reasons [polkas](#) and Western music were always popular in the region, and with the introduction of the radio, mainstream country music flourished. As the culture of the region is western and frontier in nature, the specific genre of country and western is more popular today in the Prairies than in any other part of the country. No other area of the country embraces all aspects of the culture, from two-step dancing, to the cowboy dress, to rodeos, to the music itself, like the Prairies do. The Atlantic Provinces, on the other hand, produce far more traditional musicians, but they are not usually specifically country in nature, usually bordering more on the folk or Celtic genres.^[73]

Many traditional country artists are present in eastern and western Canada. They make common use of fiddle and pedal steel guitar styles. Some notable Canadian country artists include [Shania Twain](#), [Anne Murray](#), [k.d. lang](#), [Gordon Lightfoot](#), [Buffy Sainte-Marie](#), [George Canyon](#), [Blue Rodeo](#), [Tommy Hunter](#), [Rita MacNeil](#), [Stompin' Tom Connors](#), [Stan Rogers](#), [Ronnie Prophet](#), [Carroll Baker](#), [The Rankin Family](#), [Ian Tyson](#), [Johnny Reid](#), [Paul Brandt](#), [Jason McCoy](#), [George Fox](#), [Carolyn Dawn Johnson](#), [Hank Snow](#), [Don Messer](#), [Wilf Carter](#), [Michelle Wright](#), [Terri Clark](#), [Prairie Oyster](#), [Family Brown](#), [Johnny Mooring](#), [Marg Osburne](#), [Doc Walker](#), [Emerson Drive](#), [The Wilkinsons](#), [Corb Lund and the Hurtin' Albertans](#), [Crystal Shawanda](#), [Dean Brody](#), [Shane Yellowbird](#), [Gord Bamford](#), [Chad Brownlee](#), [The Road Hammers](#), and [The Higgins](#).

Australia

Main article: [Australian country music](#)



[Olivia Newton-John](#) singing in Sydney in 2008

[Australian country music](#) has a long tradition. Influenced by American country music, it has developed a distinct style, shaped by British and Irish folk ballads and Australian [bush balladeers](#) like [Henry Lawson](#) and [Banjo Paterson](#). Country instruments, including the guitar, [banjo](#), [fiddle](#) and harmonica, create the distinctive sound of country music in Australia and accompany songs with strong storyline and memorable chorus.

Folk songs sung in Australia between the 1780s and 1920s, based around such themes as the struggle against government [tyranny](#), or the lives of [bushrangers](#), [swagmen](#), [drovers](#), [stockmen](#) and [shearers](#), continue to influence the genre. This strain of Australian country, with lyrics focusing on Australian subjects, is generally known as "bush music" or "[bush band](#) music". "[Waltzing Matilda](#)", often regarded as Australia's unofficial [national anthem](#), is a quintessential Australian country song, influenced more by British and Irish folk ballads than by American country and western music. The lyrics were composed by the poet Banjo Paterson in 1895. Other popular songs from this tradition include "[The Wild Colonial Boy](#)", "[Click Go the Shears](#)", "The Queensland Drover" and "The Dying Stockman". Later themes which endure to the present include the experiences of war, of droughts and flooding rains, of [Aboriginality](#) and of the railways and trucking routes which link Australia's vast distances.^{[74][75]}

Pioneers of a more Americanised popular country music in Australia included [Tex Morton](#) (known as "The Father of Australian Country Music") in the 1930s. Other early stars included

[Buddy Williams](#), [Shirley Thoms](#) and [Smoky Dawson](#). Buddy Williams (1918-1986) was the first Australian-born to record country music in Australia in the late 1930s and was the pioneer of a distinctly Australian style of country music called the bush ballad that others such as Slim Dusty would make popular in later years. During World War II, many of Buddy Williams recording sessions were done whilst on leave from the Army. At the end of the war, Williams would go on to operate some of the largest travelling tent rodeo shows Australia has ever seen.

In 1952, Dawson began a radio show and went on to national stardom as a singing cowboy of radio, TV and film. [Slim Dusty](#) (1927–2003) was known as the "King of Australian Country Music" and helped to popularise the Australian [bush ballad](#). His successful career spanned almost six decades, and his 1957 hit "[A Pub with No Beer](#)" was the biggest-selling record by an Australian to that time, and with over seven million record sales in Australia he is the most successful artist in Australian musical history.^[76] Dusty recorded and released his one-hundredth album in the year 2000 and was given the honour of singing "[Waltzing Matilda](#)" in the closing ceremony of the [Sydney 2000 Olympic Games](#). Dusty's wife [Joy McKean](#) penned several of his most popular songs.

[Chad Morgan](#), who began recording in the 1950s, has represented a [vaudeville](#) style of comic Australian country; [Frank Ifield](#) achieved considerable success in the early 1960s, especially in the UK Singles Charts, and [Reg Lindsay](#) was one of the first Australians to perform at Nashville's [Grand Ole Opry](#) in 1974.^[77] [Eric Bogle](#)'s 1972 folk lament to the [Gallipoli Campaign](#) "[And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda](#)" recalled the British and Irish origins of Australian folk-country. Singer-songwriter [Paul Kelly](#), whose music style straddles folk, rock, and country, is often described as the [poet laureate](#) of Australian music.^[78]



 [Keith Urban](#) in 2007

By the 1990s, country music had attained crossover success in the pop charts, with artists like [James Blundell](#) and [James Reyne](#) singing "[Way Out West](#)", and country star [Kasey Chambers](#) winning the [ARIA](#) for Best Female Artist in 2003. The crossover influence of Australian country is also evident in the music of successful contemporary bands [The Waifs](#) and the [John Butler Trio](#). [Nick Cave](#) has been heavily influenced by the country artist [Johnny Cash](#). In 2000, Cash, covered Cave's "[The Mercy Seat](#)" on the album *American III: Solitary Man*, seemingly repaying Cave for the compliment he paid by covering Cash's "The Singer" (originally "[The Folk Singer](#)") on his *Kicking Against the Pricks* album. Subsequently, Cave cut a duet with Cash on a version

of [Hank Williams' "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry"](#) for Cash's [American IV: The Man Comes Around](#) album (2002).^[79]

Popular contemporary performers of Australian country music include [John Williamson](#) (who wrote the iconic "[True Blue](#)"), [Lee Kernaghan](#) (whose hits include "Boys from the Bush" and "[The Outback Club](#)"), [Gina Jeffreys](#), [Forever Road](#) and [Sara Storer](#). In the United States, [Olivia Newton-John](#), [Sherrié Austin](#) and [Keith Urban](#) have attained great success.



📷
Ruby Hunter and [Archie Roach](#) at the 2009 [Tamworth Country Music Festival](#)

Country music has been a particularly popular form of musical expression among [Indigenous Australians](#). [Troy Cassar-Daley](#) is among Australia's successful contemporary indigenous performers, and [Kev Carmody](#) and [Archie Roach](#) employ a combination of folk-rock and country music to sing about Aboriginal rights issues.^[80]

The [Tamworth Country Music Festival](#) began in 1973 and now attracts up to 100,000 visitors annually. Held in [Tamworth, New South Wales](#) (country music capital of Australia), it celebrates the culture and heritage of Australian country music. During the festival the [CMAA](#) holds the [Country Music Awards of Australia](#) ceremony awarding the [Golden Guitar](#) trophies.

Other significant country music festivals include the Whittlesea Country Music Festival (near [Melbourne](#)) and Boyup Brook Country Music Festival (Western Australia) in February; the Bamera Country Music Festival in June (South Australia), the National Country Muster held in [Gympie](#) during August, the [Mildura Country Music Festival](#) for "independent" performers during October, and the [Canberra Country Music Festival](#) held in the national capital during November. Some festivals are quite unique in their location: Grabine State Park in [New South Wales](#) promotes Australian country through the Grabine Music Muster Festival; Marilyn's Country Music Festival is a unique event held in South Australia's [Smoky Bay](#) in September and is the only music festival in the world using an oyster barge as a stage.

Country HQ showcases new talent on the rise in the country music scene [down under](#). CMC (the [Country Music Channel](#)), a 24 hour music channel dedicated to non-stop country music, can be viewed on [pay TV](#) and features once a year the Golden Guitar Awards, CMAs and CCMAs alongside international shows such as *The Wilkinsons*, *The Road Hammers*, and *Country Music Across America*.

Other international country music

Tom Roland, from the [Country Music Association](#) International, explains country music's global popularity: "In this respect, at least, Country Music listeners around the globe have something in common with those in the United States. In Germany, for instance, Rohrbach identifies three general groups that gravitate to the genre: people intrigued with the American cowboy icon, middle-aged fans who seek an alternative to harder rock music and younger listeners drawn to the pop-influenced sound that underscores many current Country hits."^[81]

One of the first Americans to perform country music abroad was [George Hamilton IV](#). He was the first country musician to perform in the [Soviet Union](#); he also toured in Australia and the Middle East. He was deemed the "International Ambassador of Country Music" for his contributions to the [globalization](#) of country music.^[82] Johnny Cash, Emmylou Harris, Keith Urban, and Dwight Yoakam have also made numerous international tours.^[81]

The [Country Music Association](#) undertakes various initiatives to promote country music internationally.^[81]

In the United Kingdom, a country-derived genre known as [skiffle](#) peaked in the 1950s thanks to the efforts of [Lonnie Donegan](#); though the genre as a whole was very short-lived, most of the bands involved with the [British Invasion](#) began their careers as skiffle musicians.^[83] American country-western musician [Slim Whitman](#) was even more successful in the UK than he was in the United States during the same decade. With a handful of exceptions (such as the surprise success of [Faron Young](#)'s top-5 UK hit "[It's Four in the Morning](#)," which did far better in the UK than the U.S. upon its 1971 release), country music has not been well received in the UK; when American country artists such as [Garth Brooks](#), [Dwight Yoakam](#) and [Alan Jackson](#) started making transatlantic tours in the 1990s, they were treated largely with scorn by the British press. There is a signal exception to this general view of country music in the UK: in [Glasgow](#), [Scotland](#), with a large population with Irish and [Highland](#) ancestry, country music is popular enough to have created a demand for the city's own Grand Ole Opry club, which opened in 1974 and remains popular.^[84]

In South America, on the last weekend of September, the yearly San Pedro Country Music Festival^[85] takes place in the town of [San Pedro, Argentina](#). The festival features bands from different places of [Argentina](#), as well as international artists from [Brazil](#), [Uruguay](#), [Chile](#), [Peru](#) and the United States.

In [India](#), the [Anglo-Indian](#) community is well known for enjoying and performing country music. An annual concert festival called "Blazing Guitars"^[86] held in [Chennai](#) brings together Anglo-Indian musicians from all over the country (including some who have emigrated to places like Australia).

In Ireland [TG4](#) began a quest for Ireland's next country star called [Glór Tíre](#), translated as "Country Voice". It is now in its sixth season and is one of TG4's most watched TV shows. Over the past ten years country and gospel recording artist [James Kilbane](#) has reached multi-platinum success with his mix of [Christian](#) and traditional country influenced albums. James Kilbane like many other Irish artists are today working closer with Nashville. A recent success in the Irish arena has been [Crystal Swing](#).

In [Sweden](#), [Rednex](#) rose to stardom combining country music with [electro-pop](#) in the 1990s. In 1994, the group had a worldwide hit with their version of the traditional Southern tune "[Cotton-Eyed Joe](#)".

In [Poland](#) an international country music festival, known as [Piknik Country](#) (picnic country), has been organized in [Mragowo](#) in [Masuria](#) since 1983.

There are more and more country music artists in France. Some of the most important are [Liane Edwards](#), [Annabel](#), Rockie Mountains, Tahiana, and Lili West. French [rock and roll](#) superstar [Eddy Mitchell](#) is also very inspired by [Americana](#) and country music.

In [Iran](#), country music has appeared in recent years. According to [Melody Music Magazine](#), the pioneer of country music in Iran is the English-speaking country music band [Dream Rovers](#), whose founder, singer and songwriter is Erfan Rezayatbakhsh (elf).^[87] The band was formed in 2007 in [Tehran](#),^[88] and during this time they have been trying to introduce and popularize country music in Iran by releasing two studio albums^[89] and performing live at concerts, despite the difficulties that the Islamic regime in Iran makes for bands that are active in the western music field.^[90]