

# Country Music

Originally its full title ***Country and Western Music***.

The origin of this musical style is the **USA**.

Very "twangy" vocally and a bit hard for people in other countries to relate to its sound.

Sprang from variations on American folk music (including Hawaiian, Cajun, Creole – the latter two were of French descent coming from the east coast of Canada and settling in Louisiana), ballads, blues and church music.

*Developed in the southern and south-western states of the USA. It is further exemplified by the fact that the majority of artists performing this genre were born in the south eg Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Missouri, Florida, North & South Carolina, Tennessee, Arkansas.*



The "South" (as defined during the American Civil War) was Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Tennessee, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida and Texas. Although later it came to include Kentucky, West Virginia and Missouri.

Instruments used focused on acoustic guitars, banjos, harmonica, fiddle and pedal steel.

*Popularised in the 1920s, this style of music became huge in the USA.*

And then further popularised in film by the "Singing Cowboys" such as **Gene Autry**, **Roy Rogers & Tex Ritter**.



Gene Autry



Roy Rogers, wife Dale Evans  
and horse "Trigger"



Tex Ritter

Vernon Dalhart with his song "The Wreck of the Old 97" in 1924 was the first country song to sell a million copies. He also recorded "Home on the Range" in 1927. It was written in the early 1870s. It is currently the



Kansas State Song. These songs are the origin of "Western" in "Country and Western". "Home on the Range" is probably the oldest "cowboy" song.

### Some of the early successful country artists include (date of birth & state of birth in brackets)

- as you can see nearly all were born pre 1940 and none are still alive; those in blue were classified as "Singing Cowboys" with songs by Gene Autry like "Back in the Saddle Again" and "Deep in the Heart of Texas" and Roy Rogers "Don't Fence Me In".

**Born pre 1920:** Gene Autry (1907-1998, Texas), Tex Ritter (1905 - 1974, Texas), Roy Rogers (1911 - 1998, Ohio), Tex Williams (1917-1985, Illinois), Hank Snow (1914-1999, Nova Scotia-Canada)

**Born in the 1920's:** Jim Reeves (1923 - 1964, Texas), Hank Williams (1923 - 1953, Alabama), Marty Robbins (1925 - 1982, Arizona), Porter Wagoner (1927 - 2007, Missouri), Slim Whitman (1923 - 2013, Florida), Chet Atkins (1924 - 2001, Tennessee), Don Gibson (1928 - 2003, North Carolina), Buck Owens (1929 - 2006, Texas)



Hank Williams



Jim Reeves



Chet Atkins (+ Gretsch guitar)



Don Gibson

**Born in the 1930s:** Don Williams (1939 - 2017, Texas), Conway Twitty (1933 - 1993, Mississippi), George Jones (1931 - 2013, Texas), Jimmie Rodgers (1933 - 2021, Washington), Loretta Lynn (1932 - 2022, Kentucky), Mel Tillis (1932- 2017, Florida), Merle Haggard (1937 - 2016, California), Patsy Cline (1932 - 1963, Virginia), Sleepy La Beef (1935 - 2019, Arkansas), Tom T Hall (1936 - 2021, Kentucky).



George Jones



Patsy Cline



Loretta Lynn



Merle Haggard

### Born in 1940s:

Tammy Wynette (1942 - 1998) Mississippi)



Hit songs include: "Stand By Your Man" , "Your Good Girl's Gonna Go Bad" , "D-I-V-O-R-C-E" , "I Don't Wanna Play House"



**Anne Murray (1945 - ) Canada**

Anne Murray Hit Songs include: Snowbird(1970), Dannys Song(1970), You Needed Me (1978), Could I Have This Dance (1980)

### **Those who died younger then they should have**

Jim Reeves (1923 - 1964, Texas) 41 - plane crash

Hank Williams (1923 - 1953, Alabama) 29 - drugs & alcohol

Marty Robbins (1925 - 1982, Arizona) 57 after third heart attack (cardio vascular disease)

**Patsy Cline (1932 - 1963, Virginia) 31 - plane crash**

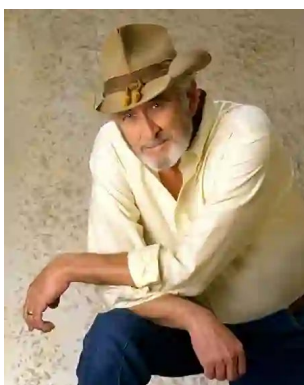
**Tammy Wynette (1942 - 1998, Mississippi) 46 - blood clot in lung (while sleeping)**

**Tex Ritter (1905 - 1974, Texas) 69 - heart attack (family history)**

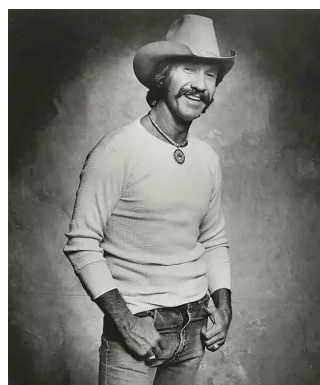
Tex Williams (1917-1985, Illinois) 68 - pancreatic cancer

Conway Twitty (1933 - 1993, Mississippi) 69 - abdominal aortic aneurysm

**The Classic early songs** came from **Tammy Wynette** (D-I-V -O-R-C-E, Stand By Your Man, Your Good Girl's Gonna Go Bad, I Don't Wanna Play House); **Patsy Cline** (Walking After Midnight, Crazy, I Fall To Pieces); **Hank Williams** ( Diddy Wah Diddy, Hey Good Lookin, Honky Tonkin, I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry, Jambalaya, Lovesick Blues, Your Cheatin Heart); **Marty Robbins** (Singin The Blues, A White Sportscoat, The Story of My Life, El Paso); **Don Gibson** (Oh Lonesome Me); **Jim Reeves** (He'll Have To Go); **Loretta Lynn** (You Ain't Woman Enough To Take My Man)



**Don Williams**



**Marty Robbins**


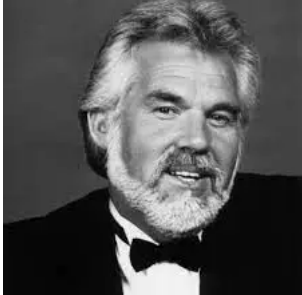
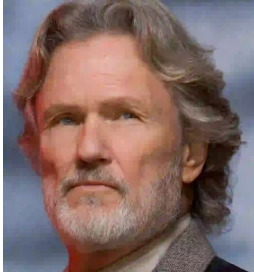





**Anne Murray**

### **Some of the legendary artists (significant success over their lifetime) include**

Johnny Cash (1932 - 2003, Arkansas), Kenny Rogers (1938 - 2020, Texas), Glenn Campbell (1937 - 2017, Arkansas), Waylon Jennings (1937 - 2002, Texas), Kris Kristopherson(1936 - , Texas), Willie Nelson(1933 - , Texas) & **Dolly Parton (1943 - , Tennessee)**. Only the last three are still alive. All were born in southern states.

## Songs written by the legends

<p>Johnny Cash</p> 	<p>Big River, Cry! Cry! Cry!, Dont Take Your Guns To Town, Folsom Prisom Blues, Get Rhythm, Hey Porter, I Walk the Line, The Man Comes Around, Man In Black, Ragged Old Flag</p> <p><b>Recorded over 1000 songs and over 60 albums</b></p> <p>Other big hits, not written by John, include "A Boy Named Sue", "Jackson", "Ghost Riders in the Sky", "Ring of Fire", "Rock Island Line", "Hurt", "Rusty Cage", "Sunday Morning Coming Down"</p>
<p>Kenny Rogers</p> 	<p><b>Wrote only a few songs, none were his smash hits.</b></p> <p>The hits include: Coward of the County, Dont Fall in Love with a Dreamer, The Gambler, Islands in the Stream, Lady, Lucille, Ruby DONT Take Your Love To Town, We've Got Tonite, You Decorated My Life</p>
<p>Kris Kristopherson</p> 	<p>Me and Bobby McGee, Sunday Morning Coming Down, Help Me Make It Through the Night, For the Good Times, I've Got To Have You</p>
<p>Glenn Campbell</p> 	<p>Glenn Campbell wrote very few songs and none were his major hits</p> <p>Hits included: By the Time I Get to Phoenix, Dreams of the Everyday Housewife, Galveston, Gentle on My Mind, Honey Com Back, Rhinestone Cowboy, Southern Nights, Wichita Lineman</p>
<p>Willie Nelson</p> 	<p>A prolific songwriter, some of his hits include: Band of Brothers, Crazy, Funny How Time Slips Away, On the Road Again Willie also had numerous hits with other peoples songs</p>
<p>Dolly Parton</p> 	<p>Another prolific songwriter: 9 to 5, Baby I'm Burnin', The Bargain Store, Coat of Many Colours, I Will Always Love You (covered by Whitney Houston), Jolene, Love is Like a Butterfly, My Tennessee Mountain Home, Two Doors Down,</p>



## The Contemporary Country Artists include

Alan Jackson, **Alison Krauss**, **Anne Murray**, **Asleep At The Wheel**, **Blue Rodeo**, Brad Paisley, Brooks and Dunn, **Carrie Underwood**, Chris Stapleton, **Crystal Gayle**, **Dixie Chicks**, Dwight Yoakam, Eric Church, **Faith Hill**, **Florida Georgia Line**, Garth Brooks, George Strait, Jason Aldean, **Kellie Pickler**, **Kelsea Ballerini**, Kenny Chesney, **Lady Antebellum**, **Leanne Rimes**, Lonestar, Luke Bryan, Luke Combs, Lyle Lovett, **Mary Chapin Carpenter**, **Miranda Lambert**, **Patty Griffin**, **Pistol Annies**, **Rascal Flatts**, **Reba McEntire**, Ricky Skaggs, **Shania Twain**, **Shelby Lynne**, Steve Earle, Steve Martin, **Tanya Tucker**, The Highwaymen, **The Judds**, Tim McGraw, Toby Keith, **Trisha Yearwood** & Vince Gill.



Contemporary country is not as twangy and folksy as some of the early country music with most of the female artists moving away from the old sound and singing more middle-of-the-road songs.





## Crossover Artists - West Coast Sound / Country Rock / Tex Mex / Southern Rock

America, Bruce Hornsby, Charlie Daniels Band, Commander Cody and his Lost Planet Airmen, Eagles, Emmylou Harris, Flying Burrito Brothers, Gram Parsons, J D Souther, Jackson Browne, Jesse Winchester, Linda Ronstadt, Loudon Wainwright III, Marshall Tucker Band, Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Rodney Crowell, The Bellamy Brothers, The Mavericks, Loggins and Messina, Crosby Stills Nash & Young, The Doobie Brothers, Nicolette Larson, Dan Fogelberg and earlier bands such as Poco, Buffalo Springfield, The Byrds



Linda Ronstadt



Eagles



Jackson Browne



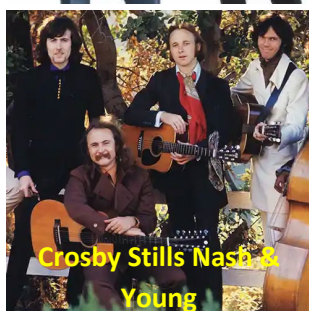
Emmylou Harris



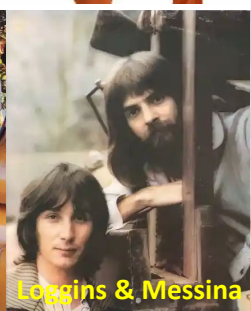
The Mavericks



America



Crosby Stills Nash & Young



Loggins & Messina



Nicolette Larson



Flying Burrito Brothers



The Doobie Brothers



Buffalo Springfield



The Byrds

This sound leaned more towards rock than country and became incredibly popular in the 70's.

Linda Ronstadt came from a band called the Stone Poneys who had a smash hit with "Different Drum". Linda became one of the biggest female stars of this period, releasing over 30 albums and 63 singles.

Eagles, Jackson Browne, America, Loggins and Messina & Nicolette Larson tended more towards the soft rock sound while The Doobie Brothers rocked it up a bit more.

Emmylou Harris and the Flying Burrito Brothers maintained a more traditional country sound.

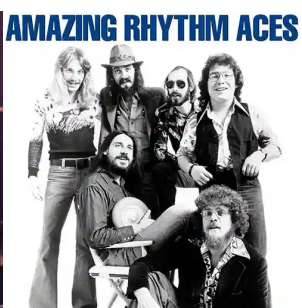
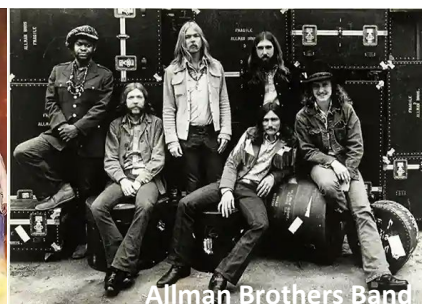
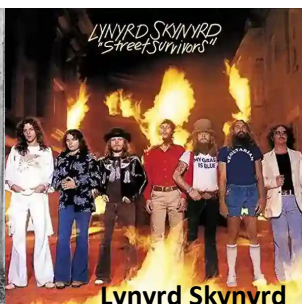
The Charlie Daniels Band popularised the "Southern Rock" sound (a fusion of country, rock, blues and Jazz). They featured the fiddle heavily in their music, having a world wide hit with "The Devil Went Down To



Georgia". Other bands to fall into this category include The Allman Brothers Band, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Marshall Tucker Band, Atlanta Rhythm Section, Amazing Rhythm Aces and ZZ Top.

Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young were one of the early super groups. Graham Nash came from the English band "The Hollies" who had had numerous number 1 hits. Stephen Stills came from Buffalo Springfield, David Crosby had success in The Byrds and Neil Young was already a successful solo artist (he had also previously been in Buffalo Springfield). Their sound fluctuated from soft acoustic numbers to tough electric numbers.

The Mavericks fit into a category referred to as Tex Mex.



## AUSTRALIA

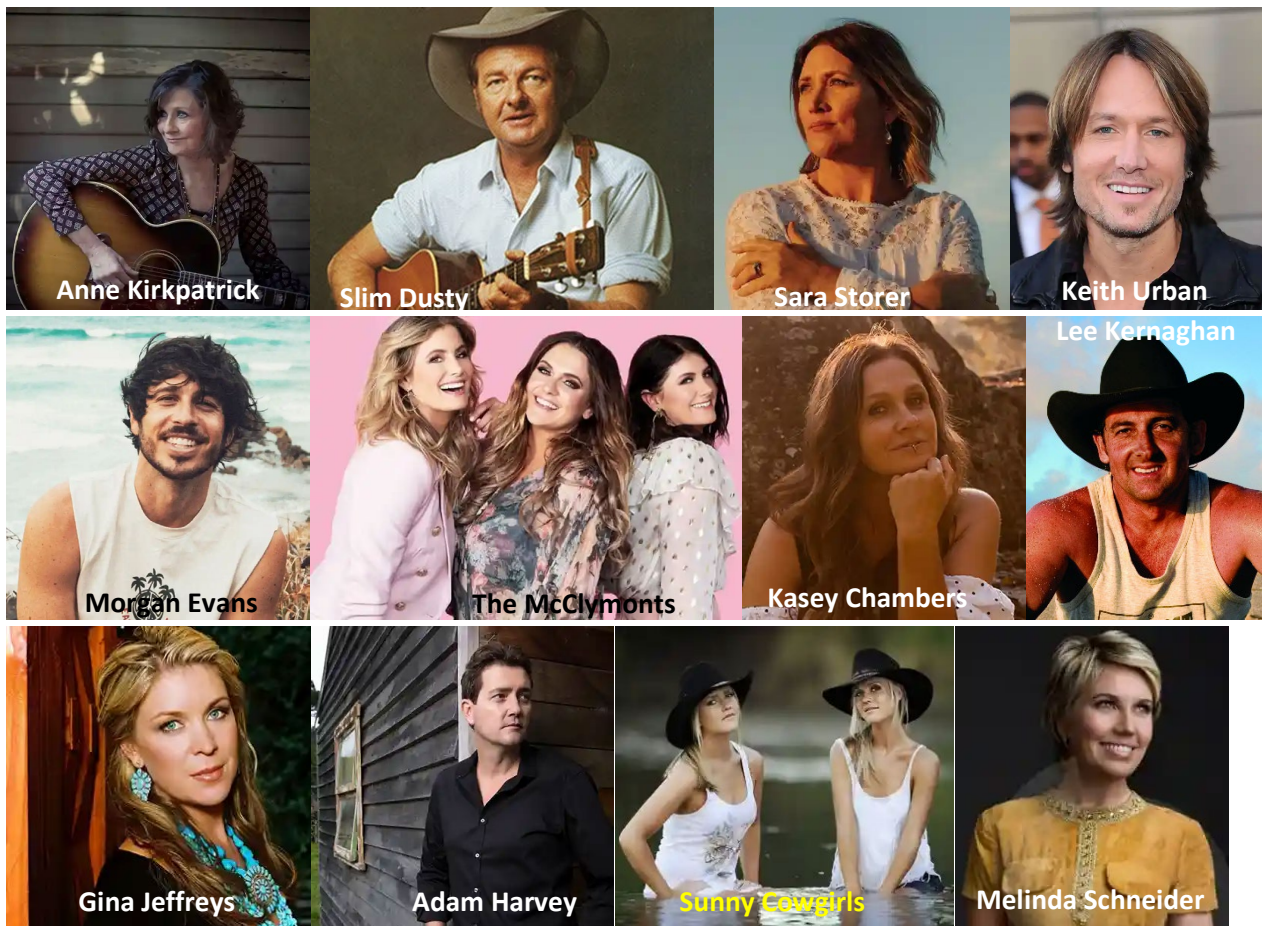
The next major country to embrace this genre was Australia - although its origins were the Australian Bush Ballad, with many artists focusing on those elements which defined Australia. Some of the areas of focus include the land, the country towns, the wildlife and the environment(drought, flood etc).

**John Williamson** with songs such as "Galleries of Pink Galahs", "Cootamundra Wattle", "True Blue" and "Raining on the Rock", **Sara Storer** with "The Land Cries Out", "Katherine", "Raining On The Plains", "Billabong" and "Back in the Territory", **Slim Dusty** "Pub With No Beer", "Lights on the Hill", "When the Rain Tumbles Down in July", "Indian Pacific" and "Three Rivers Hotel".

**Australia has a very healthy country music scene with numerous artists such as**

Adam Brand, Adam Harvey, [Anne Kirkpatrick](#), [Beccy Cole](#), [Catherine Britt](#), Graeme Connors, James Blundell, John Williamson, [Kasey Chambers](#), Keith Urban, [Melinda Schneider](#), [Morgan Evans](#), [Sara Storer](#), Slim Dusty, [The McClymonts](#), [The Sunny Cowgirls](#), Troy Casser Daly, [Felicity Urquhart](#), [Gina Jeffreys](#), Lee Kernaghan





## CANADA

Canada has some country music artists Shania Twain, Hank Snow and Anne Murray.

Although Shania progressed more into rock and Anne is more middle of the road songs.



## OTHER

No other countries have really embraced the sound - but a few acts exist in various countries.

**UK** have a few - Ward Thomas (Catherine & Lizzy Hampshire) and The Wandering Hearts are probably the best of them; others include The Shires, Wildwood Kin, Lisa McHugh.

**New Zealand** - young: Kaylee Bell, Miranda Easten, Jamie McDell  
 - older: Tex Morton, Suzanne Prentice, Patsy Riggir