



COWBOY CORNER

BY MICHAEL STOUT

The Kentucky State Fair Hotter Than Ever

The 107th Kentucky State Fair was hotter than ever, and I'm not talking about the temperatures, but rather the FANTASTIC country concert lineup. Hats off to our friends at Triangle Talent, who knocked it out of the park with all of the country shows they booked this year. Despite Hillary Scott's less-than-stellar live vocals on opening night, Charles Kelley's vocal brilliance carried Lady Antebellum which kicked the fair off in style along with the entertaining Lee Brice. Jason Aldean performed a tight, solid, rockin' show to a sold out crowd in Freedom Hall, bringing along the extremely talented Chris Young and hot newcomer duo Thompson Square. Aldean proved that he quite possibly has an Entertainer of the Year trophy looming in his future.

The Oak Ridge Boys, fresh off their recent Grand Ole Opry induction, made their highly anticipated annual appearance in the old Cardinal Stadium along with the award-winning bluegrass band The Grascals. Baritone traditionalist Joe Nichols was a crowd favorite as he urged fans to "Take It Off" (the title of his new single) when he performed a free show along with Phil Vassar, who stole the show with his high-energy opening set. Nicholasville, Kentucky's own John Michael Montgomery made the home-state crowd proud as he delivered his classic country hits, all while recording the show for an upcoming live CD. As always, Lorrie Morgan pleased the impressive crowd and even brought along her son, Jessie Keith Whitley, proving that she and the late Keith Whitley passed along their music genes to their youngest child. And I'm not sure if Triangle Talent could have predicted such a phenomenal state fair closer, or if they just struck gold, but Luke Bryan hit an absolute home run when he broke attendance records as the crowd was literally overflowing out of the old Cardinal Stadium. Murray, Kentucky native Candy Coburn did a fine job warming up the crowd for possibly the most electric performance ever given at the Kentucky State Fair!

Aldean, Paisley, Shelton & Swift Top List of CMA Nominees

When the nominations for the 45th Annual Country Music Association Awards were announced last month, Jason Aldean,

coveted Entertainer of the Year award, along with Keith Urban, and they'll all compete against Zac Brown Band for Album of the Year. This trio of fellas will compete for Male Vocalist of the Year along with Kenny Chesney and Urban, while Swift will compete against Sara Evans, Miranda Lambert, Martina McBride, and Carrie Underwood for Female Vocalist. In addition, Aldean's "Don't You Wanna Stay," along with Kelly Clarkson, will vie for Single and Musical Event of the Year. Paisley's "Old Alabama," featuring country supergroup Alabama, is in the running for Musical Event and Music Video of the Year. Shelton's "Honey Bee" will compete for Single and Music Video of the Year, and Swift's "Mean" will vie for Song and Music Video of the Year.

And the nominees are: *Entertainer of the Year*: Jason Aldean, Brad Paisley, Blake Shelton, Taylor Swift, and Keith Urban; *Female Vocalist of the Year*: Sara Evans, Miranda Lambert, Martina McBride, Taylor Swift, and Carrie Underwood; *Male Vocalist of the Year*: Jason Aldean, Kenny Chesney, Brad Paisley, Blake Shelton, and Keith Urban; *Vocal Duo of the Year*: The Civil Wars, Montgomery Gentry, Steel Magnolia, Sugarland, and Thompson Square; and *Vocal Group of the Year*: The Band Perry, Lady Antebellum, Little Big Town, Rascal Flatts, and Zac Brown Band.

New Artist of the Year: The Band Perry, Luke Bryan, Eric Church, Thompson Square, and Chris Young; *Album of the Year*: Jason Aldean's *My Kinda Party*, Brad Paisley's *This Is Country Music*, Blake Shelton's *All About Tonight*, Taylor Swift's *Speak Now*, and Zac Brown Band's *You Get What You Give*; *Single of the Year*: Jason Aldean & Kelly Clarkson's "Don't You Wanna Stay," The Band Perry's "If I Die Young," Sara Evans' "A Little Bit Stronger," Blake Shelton's "Honey Bee," and Zac Brown Band's "Colder Weather"; and *Music Video of the Year*: The Band Perry's "If I Die Young," Kenny Chesney & Grace Potter's "You and Tequila," Brad Paisley & Alabama's "Old Alabama," Blake Shelton's "Honey Bee," and Taylor Swift's "Mean."

Song of the Year (songwriter award): "Colder Weather," "Dirt Road Anthem," "If I Die Young," "Mean," and "You and Tequila"; *Musical Event of the Year*: Jason Aldean & Kelly Clarkson's "Don't You Wanna Stay," Kenny Chesney & Grace Potter's "You and Tequila," Loretta Lynn,

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