

10 TV SHOWS & MOVIES TO STREAM RIGHT NOW

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HONEY, THEY'RE BACK—AND THEY'RE FUNNIER, MORE TOPICAL, AND CRYER THAN EVER. A PREVIEW OF THE YEAR'S MOST ANTICIPATED REVIVAL. BY **Leah Green**

Back in the Old Co

Amid a larger shift in the musical landscape, bands find their way back to Music City. BY MADISON VAIN



Old Dominion's Brad Tarsi and Matthew Ramsey

⦿ In the first half of this decade, the slick, hip-hop-flavored “bro country” of artists like Florida Georgia Line and Luke Bryan had a death grip on country radio. But lately there’s been a swirl of new energy. Chris Stapleton broke out with two bluesy, soulful records, while superstar Miranda Lambert pursued a grittier sound and still rocked the charts with her 2016 double LP. Now bands—yes, bands!—are making their valiant return. Delta Rae’s Brittany Hölljes likens the shift to the recent farm-to-table mania: “Before, you’d go to the grocery store and everything was wrapped in plastic and you didn’t know anything about where it came from.... At some point, that starts to not feel good.” Here, seven bands keeping country real right now.

MIDLAND

The Austin-based trio broke out this year with their world-weary single “Drinkin’ Problem.” The ballad proved to be an unlikely winner at radio with its blend of Dwight Yoakam-style classic country and Laurel Canyon folk. (It’s currently Top 10 on the airplay chart.) “I don’t think I could have imagined what’s happening now,” says frontman Mark Wystrach. The band recently opened for Tim McGraw and Faith Hill on tour and is now prepping for the release of their debut LP, out Sept. 22. “It’s going to take people to a place they haven’t been in a really long time in country music,” Wystrach says of the album’s lush sound.



DELTA RAE

After spending nearly a decade trying to conquer the rock and pop charts, this six-piece finally landed in Nashville thanks to a new deal with the Big Machine Label Group (home of Taylor Swift and Thomas Rhett). “It was like, ‘We’re from the South, we sing Southern stories in four-part harmony, we just might be suited for country radio!’” singer Brittany Hölljes says. The group is currently touring in support of its EP, *A Long and Happy Life*, and its familial chemistry (both of Hölljes’ brothers are also in the band) and euphoric porch rock soar on stage. Says Hölljes, “With people that have played together forever, they know where to leave space and where to fill in—that’s where you get the real magic.”

OLD DOMINION

When this quintet’s flirty earworm “Break Up With Him” went No. 1 on the country airplay chart in 2015, it was an early sign that the genre was changing. Now, after touring with Kenny Chesney, their second album, *Happy Endings* (out Aug. 25), features weightier lyrics and even some arena-rock bombast. “I felt like we’d made a really good romantic comedy,” vocalist Matthew Ramsey says of their 2015 debut, *Meat and Candy*, “but in the movie world, that’s not what you really get [respect] for.” Says guitarist-keyboardist Trevor Rosen, “The name [of the new LP] was almost *Trying to Show Growth While Still Staying True to Our Brand*,” before adding, “It was about stretching what it means to be an Old Dominion song.”

OLD DOMINION: PAUL HARRIS/GETTY IMAGES; DELTA RAE: DAVID WICKLITZ

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THE CADILLAC THREE

The Southern-rock maestros have made their name penning hard-partying anthems about life in the South. "Early on, it was only a Cadillac [Three] song if it was a heavy riff and we were talking about fighting and drinking," says frontman Jaren Johnston. They broaden the scope on their new album, *Legacy* (out Aug. 25). The title track, inspired by Johnston's recent foray into fatherhood, is a shift toward more grown-up themes, while "American Slang" glistens with Kings of Leon-esque grandeur. "We want to be the biggest band in the world," Johnston says. "We could be that band without selling out."



THE LAST BANDOLEROS

This band's fusion of Tejano, country, rock, and pop found a fan in Sting, who tapped the group to play on his most recent LP and join his current tour. Not bad for a foursome who first met as solo artists and had no plans of joining forces—until their songwriting chemistry proved undeniable. "It was like, 'S---, this is a band,'" says Jerry Fuentes (vocals/guitar). Expect even more genre hopping on their debut LP, due later this year. "It will give you a broader perspective of our tastes," Derek James (vocals/guitar) says.

LANCO

In a scene straight out of a music biopic, this five-piece got its lucky break when frontman Brandon Lancaster was working the hot dog stand at a Nashville arena and spotted producer Jay Joyce (Eric Church, Little Big Town). "I shut down my register and approached him," the singer recalls. Joyce asked Lancaster to send over music, and he was so impressed by the band's feel-good tunes that he started working with them. The group's first two singles, "Long Live Tonight" and "Greatest Love Story," have both cracked country's Top 40, and a full-length is imminent. Lancaster hopes his confessional style connects: "When fans are singing these words back to me, they're singing the words out of my journal."



A THOUSAND HORSES

This quartet from South Carolina debuted with 2015's raucous *Southernality*, which celebrated blue-collar life and spawned the No. 1 country hit "Smoke." They've spent the past two years opening for Darius Rucker and Jason Aldean, and this summer they dropped the *Bridges* EP to tide fans over until their next album. Frontman Michael Hobby promises the set will be more upbeat. "On the first record, there were a lot of breakups, and now I'm married and happy," he says. "We've seen and done a lot in the last couple of years. That shows up in the music."



IN MEMORIAM 1936-2017

Glen Campbell

The Grammy-winning singer-songwriter, who conquered the pop and country charts with his profound sense of melody, died on Aug. 8 after a years-long battle with Alzheimer's. Revisit the essential songs to curate in his honor. BY JONATHAN BERNSTEIN

"GENTLE ON MY MIND" 1967

Hundreds of artists have covered John Hartford's wistful country standard, but Campbell's impassioned take—which brought him into the mainstream and opened the gates for a string of chart-topping hits—remains both exquisite and definitive.

"WICHITA LINEMAN" 1968

Songwriting legend Jimmy Webb penned this classic specifically for Campbell, who recorded it with the Wrecking Crew, a renowned group of session musicians he belonged to before making it big. It's widely considered to be the finest single of his 50-plus-year career.

"RHINESTONE COWBOY" 1975

"[It's] maybe the best song I've ever sung," Campbell

once said of his signature tune, a depiction of a road-hardened journeyman singer proudly carrying on to the next show. It was also the biggest hit of his career.

"SOUTHERN NIGHTS" 1977

His final No. 1 on both the country and pop charts, "Southern Nights" gave Campbell one more taste of massive stardom before he receded from the spotlight in the '80s.

"I'M NOT GONNA MISS YOU" 2014

Released a few years after his Alzheimer's diagnosis, this number is one of Campbell's final recordings and a devastating reflection on mortality. "I'm still here, but yet I'm gone," he croons in the opening line. The track won the Grammy for Best Country Song in 2015.