

FEATURES



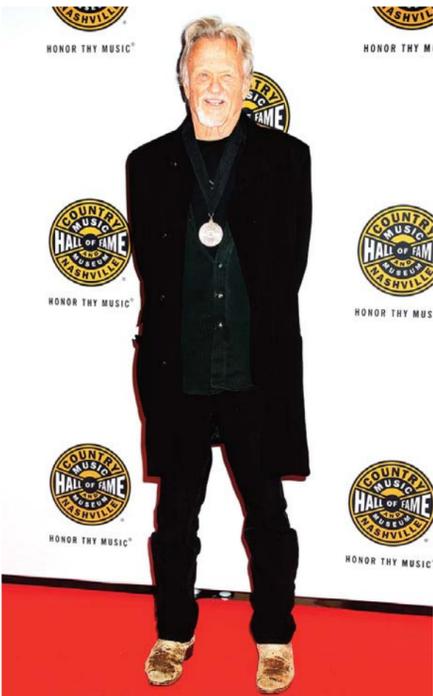
Third from left, Mary Travis and artist Randy Travis, seated, with family on the red carpet of the Country Music Hall of Fame Medallion Ceremony at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum on Sunday, in Nashville, Tenn. — AP photos



From left, artists Charlie Daniels, Duane Allen, Charley Pride, Joe Bonsall, Randy Travis, William Lee Golden, and Richard Sterban sing 'Will the Circle Be Unbroken?' at the close of the Country Music Hall of Fame Medallion Ceremony.



Artist Garth Brooks performs on stage.



Artist Kris Kristofferson on the red carpet of the Country Music Hall of Fame Medallion Ceremony.

Randy Travis stuns crowd, sings at Hall of Fame induction

Country singer Randy Travis found his distinctive voice three years after a life-threatening stroke and sang "Amazing Grace" during his induction Sunday into the Country Music Hall of Fame. The Grammy-winning baritone singer battled back from the stroke in 2013 to sing again during the medallion ceremony in Nashville, Tennessee. He was inducted along with fiddler Charlie Daniels and record producer Fred Foster. Fellow artists including Kris Kristofferson, Dolly Parton, Alan Jackson, Brad Paisley, Garth Brooks and more honored the three inductees with musical tributes.

But it was Travis' singing that brought a stunned silence and tears to the crowd after years of rehabilitation and therapy to regain his voice. Mary Davis-Travis, his wife, spoke about the numerous procedures and surgeries to save his life and a six-month stay in the hospital after a viral infection caused his stroke. "Randy stared death in the face, but death blinked," Davis-Travis said. "Today God's proof of a miracle stands before you."

The 57-year-old singer was honored for being the first country artist whose debut album "Storms of Life" went platinum in its first year and he ushered in a wave of neo-traditional singers like Alan Jackson, Clint Black and Brooks in the 1990s. Jackson, who performed "On the Other Hand," talked about going out on tour with Travis in the early '90s and compared him to Elvis. "When he sang, the women were screaming and fainting and it was crazy," Jackson said. "I loved it. Someone singing real country music and having that effect and selling all those records, it just made me so happy."

Daniels, the fiddler player behind the hit song "The Devil Went Down to Georgia," was honored for his multi-genre style blending Southern rock, bluegrass, gospel and country music. "A plaque on this wall is not just another award or accolade," Daniels said. "It's a page in a history book. An unending history book." Jamey Johnson performed his song, "Long Haired Country Boy," while Trace Adkins performed "The Devil Went Down to Georgia," with fiddler Andrea Zonn. Foster ran the influential Monument Records, which helped launch the

careers of Roy Orbison and Willie Nelson as well as Parton and Kristofferson. Kristofferson sang his iconic song "Me and Bobby McGee," which Foster helped co-write and produce, while Parton sang "Dumb Blonde," from her debut album produced by Foster.

She praised Foster for giving her a shot and still being a gentleman when Porter Wagoner stole her away to be on his television show. Vince Gill presented Foster with the medallion

and noted Foster was a lover of great songs and a champion of unique singers. "But everyone of us needs a champion," Gill said. "And you look like a man like Fred Foster and there's a man that has been a champion for all these years." The 85-year-old producer is still currently working and most recently produced a tribute album to Ray Price by Nelson. — AP



Far right, artist Dolly Parton sings to artist and Country Music Hall of Fame inductee Fred Foster, bottom left, at the Country Music Hall of Fame Medallion Ceremony.



From left, artist Garth Brooks, artist Randy Travis and Mary Travis sing 'Amazing Grace' at the Country Music Hall of Fame Medallion Ceremony.



From left, artist and Country Music Hall of Fame inductee Fred Foster is inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame by artist Vince Gill and Country Music Hall of Fame Director Kyle Young at the Country Music Hall of Fame Medallion Ceremony.

PHIL COLLINS ANNOUNCES EUROPEAN COMEBACK TOUR

Veteran British singer Phil Collins announced yesterday he is coming out of retirement with a comeback tour next summer, despite battling with injury and alcoholism. The former "Genesis" frontman will play five nights in London followed by two dates each in Paris and Cologne, as part of his European tour in June, titled "Not Dead Yet, Live." The 65-year-old, whose hits include "In the Air Tonight" and "Another Day In Paradise," has spoken openly about his struggle with alcoholism since his last tour almost 10 years ago.

"I stopped work because I wanted to be a dad at home. As bad luck would have it, as soon as I retired, my family split up," he told a press conference at London's Royal Albert Hall, where the tour will kick off. "I didn't have anything to go home to really. That's when I started drinking." The drummer and singer, who was one of the most popular British artists in the 1980s, last released an album in 2002, supported by his "First Final Farewell Tour." But he said "I've changed my mind" about retirement. "I'm living with my young kids and they want me to go out on the road, to do some new things and there's no reason why not."

Nerve damaged sustained through years of drumming means it is unlikely Collins will get back behind the drum kit next June. "I

play with my fingers a lot of the time... a lot of it comes from dexterity with fingers and that's the thing that's clammed up over the last few years," he said. His 15-year-old son Nicholas, who also plays drums, will be performing with him, he added. Collins, who is promoting a new book, also titled "Not Dead Yet", has sold more than 100 million albums during his solo career and 150 million with Genesis. In recent years he has worked on projects including writing songs for the musical "Tarzan" — AFP



Phil Collins

Toni Braxton back on tour following lupus hospitalization

Toni Braxton says she has been released from a Cleveland hospital after being admitted for complications with her battle against lupus for the second time in a month. The hospitalization forced her scheduled Saturday show in Cleveland to be cancelled. In announcing the hospitalization, a message on the singer's Twitter account said, "Lupus needs to be constantly monitored and this minor setback should not affect the rest of her tour."

Braxton announced that she was out of the hospital Sunday. She thanked her fans for their "well wishes and understanding." Braxton was released from a hospital in Los Angeles two weeks ago after spending several days being treated for the autoimmune disease. — AP



In this file photo, Toni Braxton poses in the press room at the BET Awards in Los Angeles. — AP