

SHUFFLE



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INTERVIEW

AMERICAN country singer-songwriter Laura Bryna is celebrating the news that her dream of a chart-topping Christmas song has come true as she scores a top five hit in the States with her seasonal track, *Wishlist*.

The LA-based performer with family roots in Cork tells *Shuffle*: "It's also number one in the charts of the major stores here in America. It's crazy to be sitting there [in the charts] with Miley Cyrus and the Goo Goo Dolls."

Dressed in a Santa outfit as we chat over Zoom, Bryna laughs when asked if Mariah Carey is worried about losing her 'Queen of Christmas' crown? "Let me tell ya, Mariah C needs to move over because Laura B is comin'," she says with a giggle.

"Actually, her song All I Want For Christmas (Is You) was kind of an inspiration for us. I co-wrote *Wishlist* with [Grammy winner] Damon Sharpe and we wanted to create a Christmas classic that



was fun and something people could dance to. I think we're kind of achieved that."

Laura, who was born on Christmas Day, tells how the spirit of Christmas was instilled in her and her siblings by their parents.

"My parents always taught us to give back to those less fortunate in any way that we can," she says. "They would have us find a student in our class every year that didn't think that Santa would come, and we would leave gifts anonymously on the porch of their house. We would knock on the door and then we'd run. So Santa would have come when they thought, possibly, that Santa would not come that year."

Laura, who has enjoyed several Billboard Top 10 hits, says her only regret over the success of her Christmas song is that her beloved dad is not here to celebrate with her.

"Unfortunately, my father passed away a couple of years ago, but I know he's watching over me every day and I know he's here," she says. "He was

CHRISTMAS DREAM HIT FOR COUNTRY SONGWRITER

there when we were writing *Wishlist*. I was in Dallas airport writing notes and on the phone singing it back and forth to my co-writer. My dad got to see that whole process come together and now I know he's watching it and hearing it up in the heavens.

"I miss him terribly, but I know he's there always watching." Bryna, who grew up in a small town between Baltimore and Washington, is also a major supporter of the Make-A-Wish Foundation, which grants wishes to children with life threatening illnesses.

The performer made the connection with the charity when her then 13-year-old brother suffered a brain haemorrhage and was in a coma for more than six months.

"He had to learn how to walk and talk and eat and do all the other things that we take for granted," Laura reveals. "The Make A Wish Foundation came and said, 'We'd like to grant your wish.' But my brother said, 'I'm actually getting better, you need to give it to somebody who really needs it.' So I got involved and I co-wrote a song for them called *Make A Wish* and granted children's wishes. I've also been on the board of the Make A Wish Foundation."

Bryna has her own wish to build a country music following in Ireland and perform here in the future.

"I have been to Ireland several times and I actually have family there from Co Cork," she says before rattling off a list of her favourite Irish things such as a 99 ice cream cone, Butler's chocolates and the Cliffs of Moher.

"People always tell me I shouldn't kiss the Blarney Stone because I already have the gift of the gab," she laughs.

THE LOWDOWN: LAURA Bryna's Christmas single and video, *Wishlist*, are now available to stream, download and watch on all major platforms.

QUICK SHUFFLE

BILLY Ocean has been added to the lineup with Tom Jones and Nile Rodgers & CHIC for what promises to be one incredible night in St Anne's Park, Dublin, on Sunday, June 9, 2024. Tickets priced from €59.90 are on sale now from Ticketmaster.

FESTIVE FUN

Laura's song *Wishlist* is flying up the charts

QUICK SHUFFLE

HOT on the heels of his recent single 'ten' with Jozzy, and tender late-summer anthem 'adore u' with Obongjayar, British producer Fred Agala's highest charting UK single to date, 'leavemealone', sees him join forces with Baby Keem for the first time on a record.

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NEW SINGLE: All Folk'd Up, The Whistlin' Donkeys, Ruaile Buaile and The Tumbling Paddies

FOLK BANDS JOIN FORCES IT'S A CLASSIC FOR CHARITY

Do They Know It's Christmas? recorded for Concern

ALL Folk'd Up, The Whistlin' Donkeys, Ruaile Buaile and The Tumbling Paddies have come together as Folk Aid and recorded the classic hit, *Do They Know It's Christmas?* for the Concern charity.

It's coming up to 40 years since the massive selling charity song was first recorded and topped the charts to support aid for the famine in Africa.

Written by Bob Geldof and Midge Ure, the recording brought together many of the world's biggest stars to benefit the Band Aid charity.

Now four of the leading bands on the Irish folk circuit have come together under the name of Folk Aid to release the song — the first time an Irish trad version of the 1984

number one has been recorded. Decked out in Christmas attire, the multi-instrumentalists sang and played along with fiddles, whistles, accordion and banjos as they laid down the emotional track to help support the Concern charity from the streaming proceeds.

The song leads with vocals from Fergal McAloon (Whistlin' Donkeys), Gareth Maguire (The Tumbling Paddies), Shane Lynam (Ruaile Buaile) and Pauric Mohan (All Folk'd Up).

The charity single was the brainchild of All Folk'd Up lead singer Pauric Mohan during a session the bands had after a festival they were playing at this summer. "We all started talking about Christmas and

each band's plans for the festive season and one of the lads in the group started playing jingle bells on the whistle and suddenly everyone, like all good sessions, joined in," Pauric recalls.

"At that moment, one of the festival crew couldn't resist shouting, 'Do you know it's July, not Christmas?' Little did they know that comment would become the catalyst for recording this timeless classic."

Due to diary clashes, the folk supergroup are unable to get together to perform the song live before Christmas but marked the studio recording occasion by recording a music video.

Do they know it's Christmas? by Folk Aid is out now and available to stream and download.

'Mariah Carey needs to move over because Laura B is comin'!

NEW KILLERS COLLECTION IS A DIAMOND

THE Killers this week-end released their brand new career spanning collection, *Rebel Diamonds*, having announced a string of tour dates that include Ireland in 2024.

This is an album of highlights featuring 20 tracks, including the modern day classic *Mr Brightside*, *When You Were Young*, *All These Things That I've Done*, *Human*, *Read My Mind*, *The Man* and more, through to the band's most recently released, critically-acclaimed single, *Your Side of Town*, and one brand new anthem, *Spirit*.

The band have also announced that special guests Travis will perform across the tour. The *Rebel Diamonds* Tour will celebrate the band's 20 years of hits in a series of shows, including three nights at Dublin's 3Arena on June 12, 14 & 15.



KILLER TUNES: Brandon Flowers

TOP 10 SINGLES

1. FAIRYTALE OF NEW YORK POGUES
2. STICK SEASON NOAH KAHAN
3. LOVIN ON ME JACK HARLOW
4. PRADA CASSIO/RAVE/D-BLOCK EUROPE
5. LAST CHRISTMAS WHAM
6. ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS MARIAH CAREY
7. ROCKIN' AROUND THE XMAS TREE BRENDA LEE
8. GREEDY TATE MCRAE
9. MERRY CHRISTMAS ED SHEERAN & ELTON JOHN
10. JINGLE BELL ROCK BOBBY HELMS

TOP 10 ALBUMS

1. STICK SEASON NOAH KAHAN
2. THE BEST OF POGUES
3. 1989 (TAYLOR'S VERSION) TAYLOR SWIFT
4. CHRISTMAS MICHAEL BÙ
5. OUTS OLIVIA RODRIGO
6. RUM SOOPLY & THE LASH POGUES
7. FOLKLORE TAYLOR SWIFT
8. MIDNIGHTS TAYLOR SWIFT
9. 50 YEARS - DON'T STOP FLEETWOOD MAC
10. CURTAIN CALL - THE HITS EMINEM

TREND

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HOOK it up to my veins. I was VERY (note the intentional use of uppercase to hammer home my point) sceptical of the new Netflix series *Squid Game: The Challenge* when it was announced earlier this year. How could a real

version of the violent and murderous (yet highly addictive) drama work? Obviously, no one was going to die, so how would it be kept entertaining and how would the drama of the reality TV show keep us glued if we know they can't be killed? How wrong I was! Prov-

Squid Game: The Challenge has got me totally hooked

ing there doesn't need to be blood and guts... this show has far exceeded its promise. And my expectations. The two Irish lads in it certainly gave me an extra kick to get stuck into it but they hardly feature, to be honest, as a handful of the other 454 contestants take

centre stage. In a world where I'm A Celebrity, Love Island and Big Brother continues to churn out series after series of complete and utter mediocrity, having something unique like this is completely refreshing. I know Netflix is the only kind of behemoth that can

afford to do something like this. The prize money alone is \$4.5m before you factor in the set and cost of flying in 456 contestants. It must be one of the most costly reality TV shows of all time, and it works. If I had any suggestions for the makers, I would stray away from too many

annoying Yanks in the lineup. There is an abnormal ratio of eejits to normals, but I guess that comes with the territory of those willing and wanting to be part of such a cut-throat, back-stabbing, manipulative and complicated game show that has many plot twists as contestants.



Music Man title sums up my whole life

MY new album, *Music Man*, was released on Friday and the 11 tracks include the hit singles *Dance With Everybody* and *Dear Elizabeth*. The title track, *Music Man*, is also an original which I've written for the album and it totally sums me up. *Music* is a complete love, a total obsession, and has literally dictated the course of my

life. I am proud to be a 'music man' and think it's a really fitting title for this album. Overall, the album features new music that I've really enjoyed making and I hope that comes across as you listen. *Music Man* is available to buy in Tesco, Golden Discs, your local record shops and also to stream and download.