

# Chris Nelson Wins American Songwriter First Place, Announces January 30 Release

*Back-to-back American Songwriter wins, artist cuts, and a powerful new release position Chris Nelson as a rising force in modern country songwriting.*

NASHVILLE, TN, UNITED STATES, January 8, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Momentum has a sound, and right now it sounds like [Chris Nelson](#).

The Nashville-based songwriter has been awarded First Place in [American Songwriter](#) Magazine's Session One 2026 Lyric Contest for his song "Heaven Ain't The First Place," while also earning an Honorable Mention for a separate entry, "How Far I Go." The rare dual recognition places Nelson among a select group of songwriters delivering award-winning work across multiple songs in a single contest cycle.



Chris Nelson Nashville Songwriter

The first-place winning song, "Heaven Ain't The First Place," will be officially released on January 30, 2026, bringing a nationally recognized lyric from the page to listeners for the first time.

The win marks Nelson's second consecutive first-place victory from American Songwriter, following his 2025 Heart Toppers Lyric Contest win for "How Forever Sounds." Back-to-back top honors from one of the industry's most respected songwriting institutions underscore a level of consistency and craft rarely achieved.

Beyond awards, Nelson's songwriting continues to translate into real-world releases. His song "Let It Ring" was recorded and released by Nashville country artist Megan Knight, signaling growing confidence from artists and industry professionals alike.

In addition to his released work, Nelson maintains a curated [catalog](#) of artist-ready songs available for recording artists, producers, and publishers through his website. The catalog reflects his focus on writing songs built to be cut — emotionally grounded, structurally strong, and ready for the studio.

Judges praised “Heaven Ain’t The First Place” for its vivid imagery, emotional restraint, and lived-in honesty. The song explores grief, memory, and the conversations that continue long after loss — themes that have become hallmarks of Nelson’s writing.

A U.S. Army veteran turned Nashville songwriter, Nelson brings an uncommon depth to his work. His songs don’t chase trends; they chase connection — pairing hard-earned perspective with melodies and lyrics designed to resonate beyond the page.

With multiple national songwriting wins, artist cuts, an active catalog available for artists, and a major release scheduled for January 30, Chris Nelson is no longer emerging — he is establishing himself as an artist and songwriter with staying power.

More information, catalog access, and song samples are available at: □

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Chris Nelson

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