‘WE DANCE, WE SING, WE CRY’
KELLY CLARKSON
LEADS AN EMOTIONAL CELEBRATION AT THE BILLBOARD MUSIC AWARDS

Kelly proves she is *Billboard*’s golden girl by splendidly hosting the show for a third year. She wore eight different outfits during the evening, including these two by Balmain. Presenter Nicole Richie (second from right) is stunning in Christian Siriano.

It was a rousing evening of power and love – and physical distancing – as some of the biggest names in showbiz united at Hollywood’s Dolby Theatre for the 2020 Billboard Music Awards.

“We’re celebrating the power of music,” said host Kelly Clarkson, still breathless after what she called a “crazy fun” high-energy performance of Steve Winwood’s “Higher Love” with Pentatonix and Sheila E. during the show’s opening number. “Tonight is about the way music touches us all because it has connected us in so many ways,” said the recently separated 38-year-old mother of two.

“It doesn’t matter who you are. It moves us, sometimes literally. We dance, we sing, we cry – like I do often. It brings back those good memories and it also helps us make new ones. Music also connects us to each other.”

SHOW-STOPPING MOMENTS

Due to the global pandemic, this year’s show was without a live audience but that didn’t stop performers and presenters from giving it their all and, at times, speaking their minds.

Alicia Keys dazzled amid the stage’s red lights in a sparkly white bodysuit and new hairstyle as she belted out new hit “Love Looks Better,” with two masked dancers at her side. Alicia, 39. Before the broadcast, the mom of two took to Instagram to offer a sneak peek at her new look, featuring waist-length straight hair and sleek bangs. “New side of Alicia to introduce you to,” she teased. “Nice to meet you.”

In an emotional tribute, John Legend dedicated his song “Never Break” to wife Chrissy Teigen, 34. It was John’s first performance since the parents of two suffered a heartbreaking pregnancy loss in September. Later, the grieving star, 41, posted: “I wrote this song because I have faith that as long as we walk this earth, we will hold each other’s hands through every tear, through every up and down, through every test.”

In keeping with the show’s pandemic health guidelines, winner Post Malone, 25, performed from an industrial yard in an undisclosed location and later had his nine awards (a record for the night) pushed toward him on a cart by Kelly at the end of the show! Billie Eilish, who won three awards including Top Female Artist, donned a mask and used the moment to urge fans to stay safe and also to vote in the upcoming U.S. election.

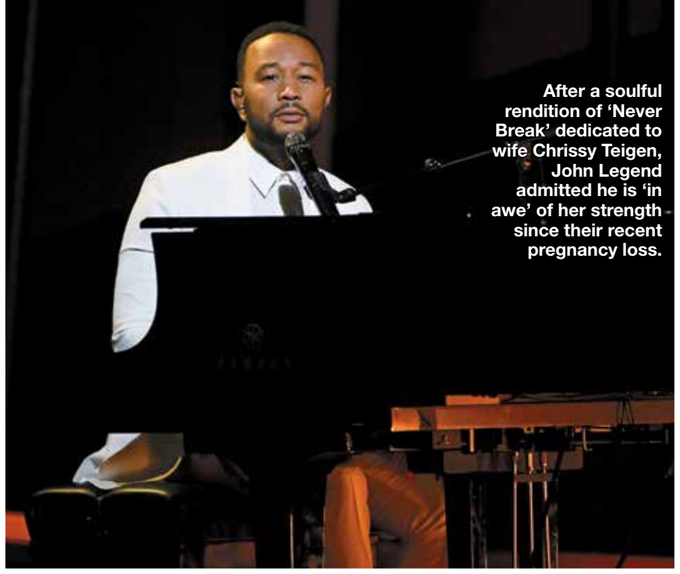
“Thank you to all the women who have come before me and paved my way, I love you,” said the 18-year-old megastar. “Please vote, please wear a mask, please wash your hands. Be safe. Take care.”

Lizzo, 32, was direct, too, accepting her Top Song Sales Artist award in a black, one-shoulder Christian Siriano “Vote” minidress and matching manicure. “Whether it’s through music, protest or your right to vote, use your power, use your voice and refuse to be suppressed,” said the “Cuz I Love You” singer:

And 28-year-old Demi Lovato – who recently broke off her engagement to actor Max Ehrich – went further still by singing her politically charged ballad “Commander in Chief” with lyrics aimed at President Donald Trump.

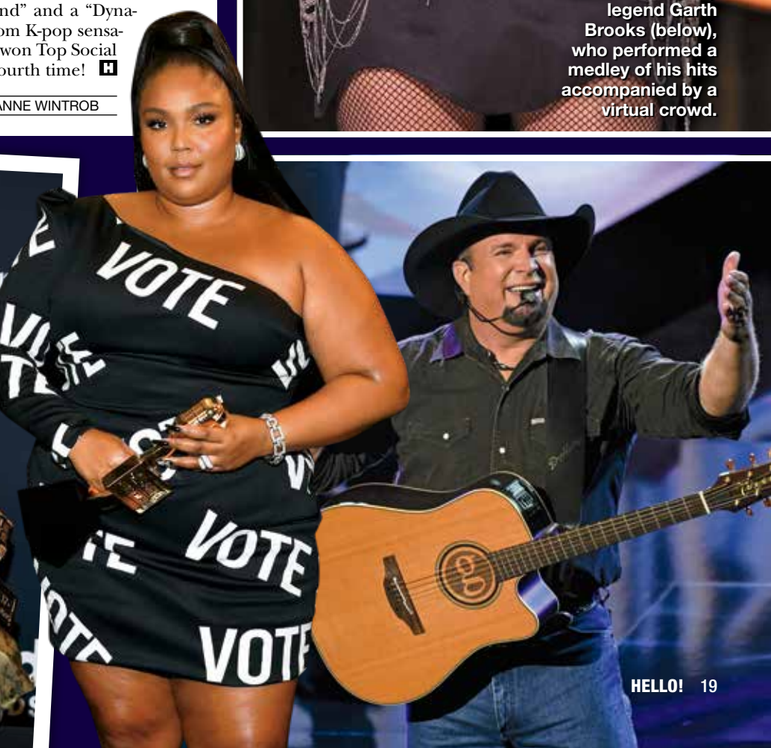
Other highlights included En Vogue’s fiery rendition of their 1992 classic “Free Your Mind” and a “Dynamite” romp from K-pop sensation BTS, who won Top Social Artist for the fourth time! H

REPORT: SUZANNE WINTROB



After a soulful rendition of ‘Never Break’ dedicated to wife Chrissy Teigen, John Legend admitted he is ‘in awe’ of her strength since their recent pregnancy loss.

Ever-stylish Cher presents the Icon Award to country legend Garth Brooks (below), who performed a medley of his hits accompanied by a virtual crowd.

Fashion comes in all forms when musicians rock the house! Alicia Keys goes for glitz while Billie Eilish (right) prefers a military hue and Lizzo (far right) makes a political statement. Top: Mysterious Sia is a showstopper in pink.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES; KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY IMAGES; AMY SUSSMAN/GETTY IMAGES; AMY SUSSMAN/GETTY IMAGES; KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES; KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY IMAGES; AMY SUSSMAN/GETTY IMAGES