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Miranda Lambert tops country award nominees

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Lambert is up for evening's most prestigious honour, entertainer of the year, with husband Blake Shelton.

The 30-year-old singer is also vying for her fifth consecutive female vocalist of the year trophy.

She also has nominations in major categories including album of the year, for Platinum, as well as song and single of the year for Automatic.

Only Alan Jackson previously had more nominations in a single year, with 10 nods in 2002.

"I woke up in NYC this morning to such great news!" Lambert told the Associated Press. "Not only am I so happy to be nominated, but I'm happy to celebrate my husband's and friends' nominations."

Lambert's nine nominations puts her definitively ahead of the rest of this year's contenders. Dierks Bentley earned five nominations and Eric Church and Keith Urban have four apiece.

Bentley's five nominations mark a career best for the singer, whose latest album marks the death of his father and birth of his son.

"It was totally unexpected," said Bentley. "Dude, I'm not the guy who gets nominated. I'm the guy who knows the guy who gets nominated."



American Idol judge Keith Urban is one of country's best-known stars

Urban, George Strait and Luke Bryan join Lambert in the high-profile entertainer of the year category.

"The criteria for entertainer is a mix of things, but I guess for me I've always considered it to be hopefully, primarily, about the kind of show that we put on and entertaining people at the live concerts," Urban told the Associated Press.

"I know it's about more than that, but for me it's really been about that, about putting on a tour," said Urban, a judge of TV talent show American Idol.

Urban and Bryan also go to head-to-head for album of the year with Fuse and Crash My Party respectively. Bentley's Riser and Church's The Outsiders complete the nominees.

Carrie Underwood and Brad Paisley will host the awards ceremony on 5 November in Nashville, Tennessee.