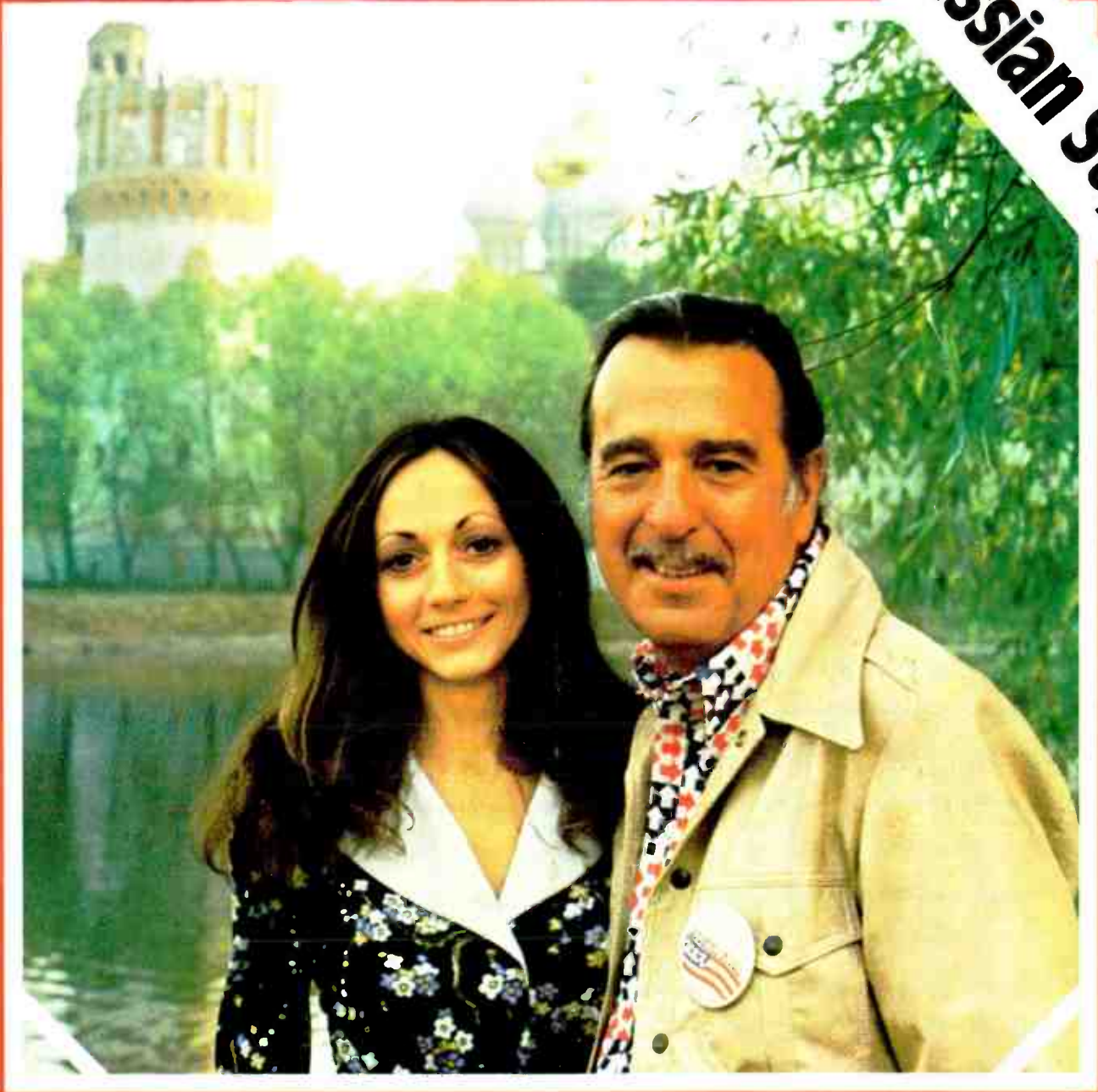


February 1975, 75¢

COUNTRY MUSIC

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Volume Three, Number Five, February 1975

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COVER PHOTO HUELL HOWSER

Letters

I want to say "thanks a million" for the wonderful write-up about me in your November issue. I have gotten mail from everywhere, letters and letters and *letters*, almost from every state... everyone saying they remember me well and they want me to return again. They all are so nice. Tell all hello for me.

GINNY WRIGHT
GRANITEVILLE, S.C.

I have just watched the Eighth Annual CMA Awards Show, and I have come to the conclusion that many others must share with me. And that conclusion is that this year's awards show was an even bigger farce than last year's. In other words, country music is getting better every year. But the CMA keeps getting worse.

ROY SYRING
MOSINEE, WISCONSIN

I've just read the story on Waylon Jennings. I'm a grandma and I'm a true Okie. I picked fruit in California and worked in shipyards in San Pedro when I was 15-years-old, so schooling I don't have. But I can read, and what takes people so dang long to catch on to good singing and good songs? I guess I've been a fan of Waylon's for 8 or 10 years. I remember a song called "The Choking Kind." And it took me all this time to get it. A week ago my son gave it to me for my birthday. I was more proud of that than the \$5 bottle of Asti Cinzano wine. Good songs and singers last forever.

I'm proud Waylon ain't changed his style. He is a good farmer. He doesn't let them steal the chickens out of the chicken house and pluck the feathers from the old hen. He has his eyes wide open. I read that fellar's letter, Ben Barnes, Orlando, Florida, and noticed he said Waylon looked like a pig (not policeman). I ain't never seen a policemen look like a pig (maybe wolves). Funny thing about people. All my Okie

life, I thought "My! Keeping up with the Jones' would be nice." Hell, the Jones' are keeping up with me. Pinto beans, \$1 pound!

Mr. Barnes reminds me of the landlords of California who had signs on the front lawns, "No Okie, No Dogs, No Soldiers," in 1941-45. We had some kin and kissing cousins and friends in that war. But we were Okies. We talked funny, dressed poorly, loved Bob Wills, Jack Guthrie, Jimmie Rodgers. We were made fun of course because we were different. Mr. Barnes, I don't know how old you are, but look in the eyes and hearts, not at the hair, beards, faded jeans.

JUANITA FAYE HICKS
OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA

The mail has been running 3-2 in opposition to Mr. Barnes' letter. Here are some more replies. —Ed.

Hooray! Finally somebody believes the same way I do! People like Waylon, Willie, Leon, Doug Kershaw, in my book are slobs.

Waylon *does* have a good sound, if you could see what he looked like. Willie Nelson should stick with writing songs from his head rather than singing through his nose. Russell, rock music drop out can't even sing country standards without rocking them up. Kershaw, the best of the four, sounds great, but looks like an aardvark. These people just aren't country, in the true sense of the word. What I'm wondering is, can country music keep its identity?

KENNY PUGH
AMANDA, OHIO

I couldn't help but notice a letter you received in your December issue from a Florida truck driver who obviously was not very pleased with the likes of Willie Nelson, Leon Russell, Doug Kershaw and—Waylon Jennings.

These people, and I would like to include Kristofferson and Mac Davis, make up one of the greatest

song writing forces I know of. Some people don't realize that the clean-cut men that wear the flashy suits and know three chords on a twelve hundred dollar Martin have their songs written by these great people and many more just like them. Thank goodness everyone in the country is able to speak his mind, dress the way he wants and be free. And I can't understand why anyone would cut down these people, thinking he is doing it to save country music, because these people *are* the people who helped make country music better for all.

GLENN DAVIS
AUSTIN, TEXAS

I myself don't like the way Waylon looks. I think if I met him face to face, I would probably burst out crying, and at the same time I would give him a bop. Why does anyone wear their hair long? Nine out of ten probably couldn't tell you. What I'm trying to say is we don't have the right to say who can wear long hair or who can't. Waylon is his own person. All I'm interested in is his singing. He could sing a nursery rhyme and make it sound good. I just pray Waylon's appearance doesn't keep him from reaching the top, because that is where he deserves to be.

MARILYN SUELFLOW
MEQUON, WISCONSIN

I'd like to "amen" John Gabree's December review of the new Tom T. Hall album. I am a Tom T. fan of several years and have most of his albums; but like your reviewer, I am puzzled by recent events.

In these days of distrust and dishonesty, of economic headaches and of "outlaws" and "crossovers" in country music we need the concise, well-tuned social commentaries Tom T. is famous for, to help us keep things in perspective.

BRUCE REYNOLDS
WARRENSBURG, MISSOURI

THE YEAR OF THE FOX

This was the year that Charlie Rich received the coveted "Entertainer of the Year" Award from the C.M.A.

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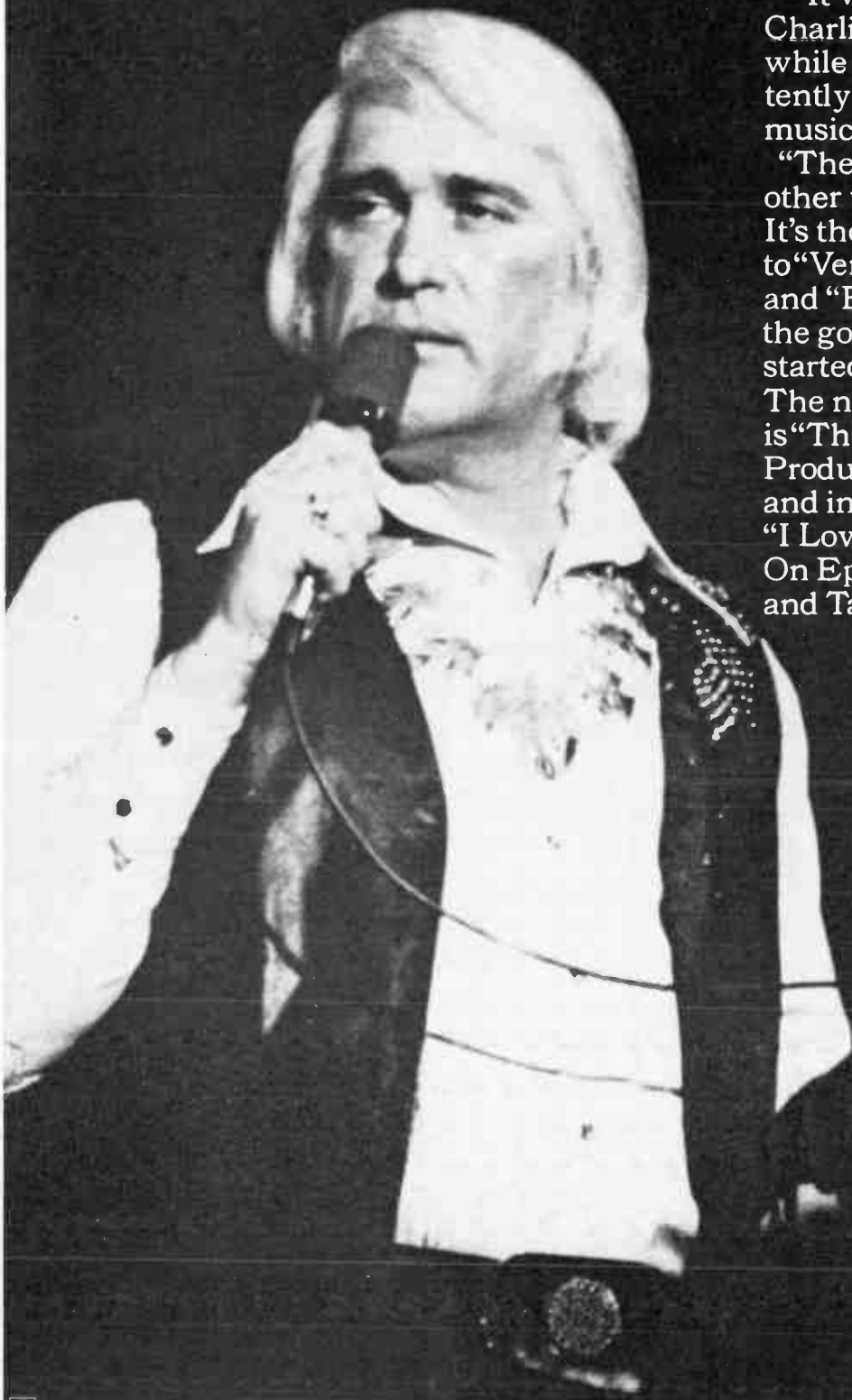
The new Charlie Rich album is "The Silver Fox."

Produced by Billy Sherrill and including the smash "I Love My Friend."

On Epic Records and Tapes

CHARLIE RICH THE SILVER FOX

including:
I Love My Friend/Pieces Of My Life
Your Place Is Here With Me/Break-Up
My Elusive Dreams



People on the Scene

by AUDREY WINTERS

George and Tammy host 'the grand tour' ...
Lester Flatt settles his libel suit ...
Tanya Tucker signs with MCA ...

A few days prior to Nashville's annual DJ Convention, **George Jones** and **Tammy Wynette** held an open house at their new \$500,000 mansion on Franklin Road outside of Nashville. The party honored **Ray Blanton**, now Democratic Governor-elect of Tennessee. The Jones' invited the entire music industry—and there were plenty of stars in town that week.

Guests took "the grand tour" of the sprawling mansion after being greeted at the door by country music's most famous husband-wife team, strolling through an endless succession of bathrooms (15) and bedrooms (11). The musical notes to Tammy's best-selling "Stand By Your Man" are outlined in gold on the windows. Well, music *did* build the house.

Among the guests seen swapping stories on the spacious patio were **Connie Smith**, **Mel Street**, **Dottie West**, **Jimmy C. Newman**, **Little Jimmy Dickens**, **The Hagers**, **Faron Young**, **Webb Pierce**, **Minnie Pearl**, **Jerry Reed** and his wife, **Priscilla Mitchell**, **Jan Howard**, **George Lindsey**, **Harold Morrison**, **Patsy Sledd**, **Merle Kilgore**, **Curley Putnam**, **Norro Wilson**, **Billy Sherrill** and many more.

Mel Street asked Tammy to introduce him to candidate Blanton "because when he gets to be governor I never will have the chance." **Faron Young** arrived first and left last. He cut his hand later that night and had to play the next day in the Pro-Celebrity Golf Tournament with a bandaged hand. **Connie Smith** wants to buy a home near George and Tammy because the church she attends is nearby.

No one would have suspected that Tammy and daughter Georgette had been hanging curtains all af-



PHOTO: HENRY HORENSTEIN

Lester Flatt has settled his claim against a national magazine which reported him dead.

ternoon in the trailer that will house the offices of Al-Tam Music, the Jones' publishing company.

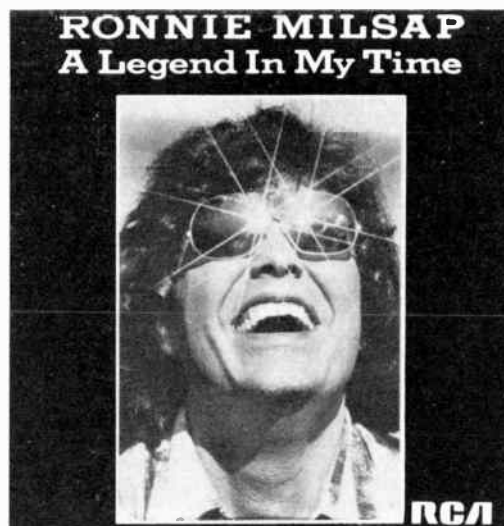
After the golf tournament a giant party in Printers Alley was held for the people who participated and their guests. Every club featured country entertainment. **Bob Luman** and his band entertained at the Captain's Table; **Charlie Louvin** and several acts were at the Western Club and **George Jones** and **Tammy Wynette** and their entire road show were outstanding at the Embers Club. Celebrities **Mac Davis**, **Flip Wilson**, rock star **Alice Cooper**, **Mickie Mantle**, **Johnny**

Bench, **Whitey Ford** and others were in the audience. Several stayed for the entire country music week.

Flip Wilson did a double take when **Mrs. Audrey Williams** introduced herself to him. He looked at her for a moment and then quickly reached over and kissed her on the cheek and said, "You've heard me sing your husband's songs."

Kris Kristofferson and wife **Rita Coolidge** were the only ones in blue jeans for the CMA Awards Show. They dressed formal for the BMI Awards later on in the week ... **Charlie Rich** was carefully guarded by his road manager. He didn't at-

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tend any of the functions except the Columbia Records Show... **Mary Reeves Davis**, widow of **Jim Reeves**, showed up at the SESAC shindig in an Afro wig. Husband **Terry Davis** wore one also. Mary described it as a "low economy-priced wig" and wore it for fun.

Merle Haggard worked the Capitol Records Show and sang and fiddled a dozen or so songs for the folks. They loved him... **Connie Cato** of "Super Skirt" fame wore a white pants suit with colored ribbons streaming from the sleeves. She didn't have a stitch on under the outfit... **Alice Cooper** wanted to meet **Tanya Tucker**... **Jerry Lee Lewis** spent a lot of time in town during the convention. He sang two nights at the Exit/In Club to a turn-away crowd. His cousin, **Mickey Gilley**, joined him on stage a couple of nights... **Rosine Pride** was disappointed that husband **Charley** had to leave the convention to fly to the Los Angeles-Oakland World Series game to sing. Rosine was escorted to all the functions by an RCA executive.

Lester Flatt settled his \$500,000 libel suit against *Esquire* magazine for an undisclosed sum in Nashville's Federal Court. Flatt filed the suit after the magazine had erroneously reported him dead. A retraction that was printed didn't satisfy Lester so he sued—and collected. But no one's saying how



Connie Cato: Bare facts.

much... **Kris Kristofferson** and wife **Rita** bought land in Mountain View, Arkansas, an isolated area in the Ozarks. **John Prine** and several other celebrities are also buying land there... **Stoney Edwards**,



Supertalent Charlie Rich becomes a gentleman farmer, publisher and merchant.

Capitol Recording artist, moved from California to San Antonio, Texas. "I can work all I want and never get out of Texas," he said.

Betty Sue Perry, songwriter for Sure Fire Music, died of a brain tumor last month. She wrote many of **Loretta Lynn's** earlier hits such as "Before I'm Over You," "The Home You're Tearing Down," "The Other Woman" and many of the Wilburn Brothers' hit songs. **Charlie Rich** bought a 350-acre farm near Clifton, Tenn. (*my hometown*) and stocked it with cattle. He opened a publishing company in Nashville, bought a three-story building in Memphis and is in the process of transforming it into an open market filled with a variety of leather goods and blue jean suits.

Johnny Rodriguez attended the 16th birthday party of **Tanya Tucker** in Little Rock, Ark. Her father opened an office in Little Rock to attend the business affairs of his two daughters, Tanya and **LaCosta**, Capitol Records' brightest new star... Tanya has left Columbia Records after a successful recording period of two years to join MCA Records. It was reported that she got \$2-million for the next five years, 18 per cent of the gross of her records and a movie contract. Not bad for a 16-year-old.

Dick Curless received the **Merv Griffin** Group Radio W-104 Connecticut Country Singer of the Year Award. It was the first of its kind. *COUNTRY MUSIC* Magazine publisher **Jack Killion** was on hand for the award dinner and so was Peer-Southern Music's **Roy Horton**. ■

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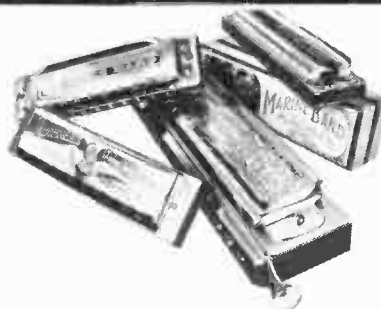
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Country View

Here is an opinion: There is a record called *Good Old Boys* written and performed by Randy Newman, a Los Angeles songwriter, which is the best record about the South that I have ever heard. It ain't country music, it's a record about people who listen to country music, who (if you can trust the Census Bureau) have all moved to Atlanta and Birmingham, happily exchanged a dirt floor for one with a carpet; and like you and I, drive on freeways and listen to country stations and dream of going back where they have never been.

I am writing about it in this magazine because there is a chance that the people who can feel and understand this record probably won't ever hear it—because Newman is an L.A. Jew, because he is a “cult” hero among the educated hip. Because the first song on the record is so true that it leaves nearly everybody nervous:

Last night I saw Lester Maddox
on TV
With some smart-ass New York
Jew
And the Jew laughed at Lester
Maddox
And the audience laughed at Lester
Maddox too
Well he may be a fool but he's our
fool
If they think they're better than
him they're wrong
So I went to the park and I took
some paper along
And that's where I wrote this
song
We're Rednecks, Rednecks,
We don't know our ass from a
hole in the ground
We're Rednecks, we're Rednecks
And we're keepin' the Niggers
down*

Now, even though the song goes on to point out that the North is just as prejudiced, only more hypocritical, a song like this is going to hurt a lot of people's pride. Because

it cuts both ways. Because it's true. But only those Southerners who can laugh at themselves, who know what it's like to be dirt poor and white and unable to talk back to the smarmy creep in the television, will understand how *sad* the song is.

Newman wrote the entire album to explain that first song. And when you listen to the album, you understand that Newman really loves the South—where he lived for only the first ten months of his life—where his Mama grew up. But he doesn't love the mythical ‘old’ South with its Rhett Butlers and Scarletts, or the mythical “country” South with its oaken buckets and house-broken blacks, or even the mythical “new” South with its glass buildings and Banlon executives—he loves the *real* South where most people live in cities, stand behind counters or work in factories, where people, more poor than not, dream little dreams of a magic past, of a chrome future, of a true-lovin' woman; where “good old boys” try to disguise the fact they are going nowhere by driving stock-cars around in circles and, contemptuous of self-pity, transform their frustration into prejudice.

The first side of this album is a little novel, the life story of a Birmingham steel-worker. It starts with “Rednecks,” and is followed by a song called “Birmingham,” a song describing his life and praising his home-town.

The second side of the record is about Louisiana, and is basically about being a cracker. It includes Huey Long's campaign song and a really great song sung in the character of Huey Long—to whom the record is dedicated. It's called “Kingfish” and it has a verse that goes:

Who took the Standard Oil men
and whipped their ass
Just like he promised he'd do?
Ain't no Standard Oil men gonna

run this state
Gonna be run by little folks like
you and me.**

When I heard this song, I knew immediately what had gone out of country music in recent years—and I knew what made me uneasy about Tom T. Hall doing *gasoline* commercials, about Dick Nixon and his yo-yo at the Grand Old Opry. That old distrust of institutions which is so much of what is good about the South, which used to be one of the good things about country music, is gone. Country music *is* an institution, and it is inventing other institutions to give itself awards for making profits. What about the little man? Hell, what about *any* individual man? Companies, committees, associations, governments—they aren't men, they don't feel lonely, get hungry, suffer guilt; ledgers don't worry and so neither does country music anymore—not much anyway. But Randy Newman does—he makes songs for people who have no songs.

My grandmother, who came from Georgia to Texas in a covered wagon, who loved God and hated preachers, paid her taxes and hated politicians, used to say that Adam and Eve were kicked out of the Garden of Eden not for sex, but because they had formed the first *organization*. I agree with her and I wish she was alive to hear this record; she would like it and not be afraid to laugh or cry with it. You might like this record, too. If you don't, that's okay. It's only the truth. It's only music.

DAVE HICKEY

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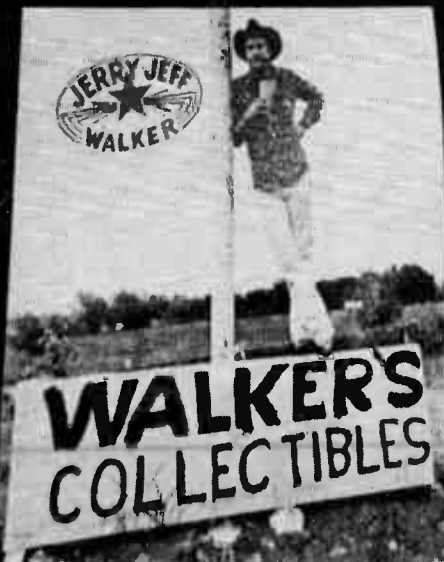
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Country News

When the word went out around Nashville that The Pointer Sisters would be appearing on The Grand Ole Opry, everybody wanted tickets.

The Pointer Sisters: Reality of a "Fairytale" by Marshall Fallwell

The first time I heard the song called "Fairytale," I had no idea that the Pointer Sisters were singing it. It's the song that goes: "Seems I've been lost in a dream/Pretending you were mine," etc. I knew and liked the Pointer Sisters from their gold album, "That's A-Plenty," on Blue Thumb Records, had seen them on tv, had listened to their hit, "Yes We Can," and had read Mr. Wasserman's very fine article on them in *Rolling Stone*. But did I think of the Pointer Sisters as a serious country act? Never!

Not because they're black. The reason for my initial shock upon learning that the Pointers were singing a country hit had more to do with their whole visual style, their concert *ambience*, the way they come across in person. Musically, the Sisters are anywhere they want to be. They like all music—as long as it's good. Coming from a solid gospel background, they are able to sing anything they want to.

Visually, they are a different story. Their image is wild, trendy, glittery, trashy-Forties, and extremely *now*, dahlings. When I heard that they were going to do a guest shot on the Opry, I *had* to be there. To give you an idea of how people in the business took this information, when the cast of *Hee Haw*, which was filming at the time in Nashville, learned of it, they all scrambled for phones to reserve backstage passes for the night the Pointers were scheduled. Like me, they wanted to be flies on the wall



The Sisters turn their gospel background, glitter style into country-gold sounds.

when those flashy ladies waltzed onstage beneath a huge painted canvas backdrop advertising Goo-Goo Clusters. It was going to be too good to miss.

So, here we are in the new Opry House. The auditorium is filled to capacity. Grant Turner introduces a brand new act in country music: "Let's give a fine welcome for... The Pointer Sisters." Then three gorgeous black girls sashay onstage, dressed to the nines in flowing, velvety, frilly old clothes, Thirties and Forties cast-offs they'd picked up in second-hand stores for next to nothing. "When we were growing up, we were too poor to have anything but old clothes, so if you got to do it, do it good," one said.

The Sisters sang two numbers, "Fairytale" and another country-oriented song. By the end of the first number, the audience—died-in-the-wool country fans—had stop-

ped staring and had begun to listen. A few heads turned to each other as if to say, "Hey, this is good;" then, there was some clapping; finally, came the cheering. All too soon, the Sisters were finished and the next act had to go on. Under different circumstances, I'm sure they would have gotten an encore.

After the show, the girls were shunted backstage through an unusually large number of visitors (flies on wall). They wanted to know if the audience liked them, Bonnie, out of breath, kept on saying, "Did they like us? Did they like us?"

While in Nashville, they and their producer/manager, David Rubinson, were busy recording their second country single, "Live Before You Die.

The manner in which "Fairytale" became a country hit is interesting. Sal Lacata, general manager of Blue Thumb Records, sent a copy of the Pointers' hit album, "That's A-

Plenty," to Larry Baunach, head of promotion of Dot Records.

Larry explains: "My staff, Jeanie Wallace and Jim Petrie, listened to the record and told me "Fairytale" was a country hit. So, when it was released as the "B" side of their next single, we sent out a flyer to a bunch of jocks, saying, 'Hey, how would you like to help us make a country hit out of the "B" side of a pop record?' They loved the idea. Jack Reno at WUBE in Cincinnati, Bobby Denton at WIVK in Knoxville, Al Risen and Moon Mullins at WINN in Louisville, and Mike Haynes at WKDA in Nashville were the first to go all out for the record. So far, it's gotten to the Top Twenty in the country charts . . . by the way, make sure you mention the staff and the jocks, if you can, because they are the ones who make hits. It's not just the artists."

It's also the audience—like the one I saw that night at the Opry, with that, and dedicated people like David Rubinson, Larry Baunach, his staff and good jocks, the Pointer Sisters need only provide the talent. And they've got it. ■

**Lester's New Sidekick:
"You Can't Call Him A
Kid Anymore . . ."**
by Kathleen Gallagher

Not many 15-year-old boys have ever owned a Gran Torino, a diamond ring, 20 pairs of custom-made cowboy boots, a closetful of fancy western shirts or an electric fiddle. But then, few 15-year-olds have had the chance to play in a top bluegrass band like Marty Stuart, Lester Flatt's mandolin player and chief sidekick, and get paid for it.

Marty already qualifies as a veteran. He has been picking with Flatt since age 13, and he's not just another talented sideman. His personality provides a twinkling counterpoint to the taciturn Flatt. Marty sparkplugs the Nashville Grass, Flatt's group. And although Lester will probably go on introducing Marty as "this little boy from Mississippi who just turned 15," right up until the day Marty turns 16, Flatt treats him like a man offstage.

"You can't call him a kid anymore," Flatt said recently during

an interview at his spacious lakeside home in Hendersonville, Tennessee, where Marty has been a star boarder for several months. "He's an old man, 15 years old. Marty is very far above the average talent, but the one thing that sold me on him was that he's a pro to begin with." Flatt recalled how his former mandolin player, Roland White, introduced him to the talented youth from Philadelphia, Mississippi at a bluegrass festival in Delaware. "A lot of times you hear a kid with talent, but you don't always find someone with a professional manner. Marty just had it naturally."



Marty Stuart: 15-year-old pro.

"It was just an overnight thing," Marty said of his arrangement with Flatt. "Lester heard me playing on the bus. He asked me if I reckoned we could work it out with my schooling to go on the road with him. So I joined him and played guitar until Roland left." Marty, who played in rock bands in Mississippi before he was a teen-ager, said he used to sit in school and dream about coming to Nashville to perform. Now he doesn't have to sit in a schoolroom at all, thanks to a series of high school correspondence courses he is taking.

"I do my studying on the bus, and they all help me. Lester is my teacher," Marty grinned.

"Well, I don't seem to be getting too far with him," joked Flatt, a smile cracking across his face.

Even though Marty's lifestyle is vastly different from most kids his age, it doesn't bother him, although he finds he has very little in common with other 15-year-olds. His clear voice, finely chiseled features, silky black hair and double-fringed eyelashes could make him a country Donny Osmond, but Marty says he has no intention of leaving the Nashville Grass.

"I think I'm working with the greatest, and you can't do any better," he said. "As far as going out on my own, I think I've got plenty of time to think about that. And besides, what do I want with a lot of 12-year-old girls hanging around me?"

When Marty is at home, he enjoys waterskiing on Old Hickory Lake, collecting old records and musical instruments, or jumping into a car with friends to get a hamburger or check out a few of Nashville's night spots.

"I'm staying in the background, watching people like Lester and Bill, the old pros, just picking up a few things that might be helpful to me in years to come," Marty said with a wisdom belying his age. "Right now, a million bucks couldn't budge me." ■

**The German Cowboy
Makes It in Nashville**
by Edwin Black

Freddy Quinn looks like the man from Marlboro Country: somewhat mussed brown hair, rough hewn cheeks and a squared jaw. His flower print shirt, leather boots and Levis mislead you to believe he might be a Nashvillian who'd driven to the studio in an El Camino pickup, but the soft leather jacket he carried over his shoulder bore a label from Hamburg. And a Lufthansa ticket in the side pocket told you he had flown in from Germany, where Freddy Quinn's name is synonymous with stardom, records, movies, fan clubs. Indeed, as Europe's combination Elvis Presley-cum-Tony Bennett, Freddy has sold

twelve gold records (on a continent where gold sales are rare), in the past two decades appeared in thirteen adventure films and enjoys "household word" status.

Part of that continental popularity is based on a country bit incorporated into Freddy's act. The crowds love it when he switches from his Deutsche routine to perfect Texas cowboy American, singing standards like "Your Cheatin' Heart" with the style of a lifelong country boy.

Actually, Freddy's country bit is hardly an affectation. His ran-away-to-the-circus bio includes several years of early childhood in Morgantown, West Virginia, where he cultivated a genuine American hillbilly accent and a love for good country music.

The background came in useful. One way of staying afloat in post-war Germany was entertaining U.S. troops with a wandering country band, playing the G.I. hangouts, moving on, losing sidemen, finding replacements, playing more clubs, moving on. Freddy kept the *country* tradition, even when he became the biggest pop singer in Germany. He recorded numerous singles and an album in Nashville, basically for European and Latin American distribution. But a persistent dream Freddy has savored for years has been to make country music for American consumption.

That dream is finally coming true for Freddy. His label, German Polydor, agreed to produce four single sides a few months ago. Peer-Southern in Nashville received the assignment, and put producer Brad McKuen in charge.

Once the specifics of the tunes were more or less settled, McKuen and the others got back to Freddy's image. Freddy was advised not to use the full power of his voice, which is controlled and coached to achieve everything from an earthy country sound to full operatic strength.

Freddy was nervous as he entered the recording studio. Facing him were some of country's top talents: Charlie McCoy on harmonica and percussion; Weldon Myrick on steel guitar; Jerry Shook and Chip Young on acoustic guitars. Plus a four-voice chorus, a rhythm section, strings and a piano. "I

(continued on page 18)



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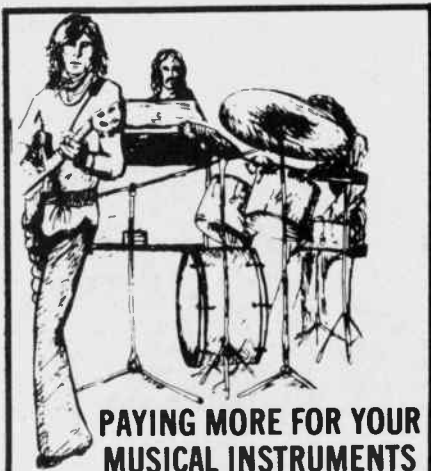
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wasn't sure if any of them would accept me," Freddy remembers. "I wasn't a Nashvillian, I was a foreigner even though I've been singing country since I was a child in West Virginia. And if these musicians would play the session on notes alone . . . I know how it is. Unless the sidemen are grooving with the artist, the song won't record right. There's got to be an understanding amongst everyone."

The first number, first take. The chart in McKuen's hands read "How Are Things In Your World." As the ensemble rolled out the notes, Freddy sang quietly but effectively into his mike, his voice almost inaudible just two feet away.

As the first take replayed, the control room became crowded. The musicians were as anxious as Freddy to hear. People were nodding to the music. Arranger Bill Walker noticed something out of place, though, and ordered the musicians to try it once more.

The group went back to the recording area. After a few false starts, the ensemble was beginning to groove, this time as though they'd been traveling together.

Freddy was so gleeful, he amused the studio with sudden fiery outbursts of mock Italian opera. From then on, it just got better. Every time the music was made, the sound was nearly perfect "Our Last Night Together" was put down on the first full take. A few minutes later, "Your Whispering" was executed with such good vibes that during the replay McKuen looked up at Walker and with jackpot eyes said, "This could definitely be a hit. More. It could be a crossover. It's that fine." Freddy pretended not to hear, but his face reflected an exciting dream materializing before him.

The entire session cooked so well that McKuen publicly apologized to the musicians for not running into overtime. Then Freddy ran up in front, waving his arms, stopping the break-up. "Everyone . . ." he called. "Everyone . . . I've got to tell you thanks from the bottom of my heart. You've been a great group. Better than great. Super. I'll never forget this session and how good you were to me and this music. Bless you." The group responded with broad appreciative smiles and returns of thanks. ■

**That Cajun Sound:
Koonass Fais-Dodo!**

by Nick Tosches

It was in the summer of 1952, when Hank Williams' "Jambalaya" hit the top of the country charts, that many people first heard of such things as pirogues, crawfish pie and fillet gumbo, and of such names as Thibodaux and Fontaineaux. Although almost a quarter of a century has passed since then and "Jambalaya" has been recorded by nearly 200 artists ranging in style from Jo Stafford to Fats Domino, the imagery in Hank's homage to Cajun life is probably no less mysterious to most people today than it was back in 1952. To sweep away some of that mystery it is necessary to peek back through the last couple of centuries to the beginnings of the Cajun culture.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, the French settlers who then occupied the Canadian province of Nova Scotia were forced to leave their homes on that peninsula when Great Britain gained control of Canada following the French and Indian War. Eventually, some of these refugees returned to Canada. Others, however, began to arrive in New Orleans in the hope of finding peace and freedom under the French flag, but fate dealt another blow: Louisiana had been transferred to Spain. Unwanted in or near New Orleans, they found themselves pushed back into the wilderness of southwest Louisiana.

It was in this setting that Cajun culture took root. (The word "Cajun," by the way, is simply a corruption of the word "Acadian"—Acadia being the old name for Nova Scotia.) With little contact with the outside world, the settlers continued to speak a form of seventeenth-century rural French, a tongue now known as the Cajun dialect (and not to be confused with Creole). The old French folk music they had originally brought with them now slowly began to mix with the black music that filtered through to them. Like mainstream country music, the dominant instrument in Cajun music until the post-World War II era was the fiddle.

The first Cajun recording artist was a man named Joseph C. Fal-



"The Jimmie Rodgers of Cajun Music:" Joseph C. Falcon and his first wife, Cleoma, in 1935.

con. Born in Rayne, Louisiana, in 1900, Falcon cut his first record, "Allons à Lafayette," for Columbia in 1928. His was a raw, primitive brand of Cajun music that can be heard on *Joseph Falcon and His Silver Bell String Band* (Arhoolie F-5005), recorded live in Scott, Louisiana, in 1963, two years before his death.

If Falcon was the Jimmie Rodgers of Cajun, then Iry LeJune was its Hank Williams, for LeJune was the man who ushered in the modern era of Cajun recording. Just as the steel guitar replaced the fiddle as the dominant instrument in mainstream country music after the last World War, so the accordion took the fiddle's place in importance in Cajun music during those same years.

LeJune's joyous accordion riffs and wailing vocals were first put on record in 1948 when, at the age of twenty, he cut "Love Bridge Waltz" for Opera Records in Texas. Following that debut, the Louisiana native hooked up with Eddie Shuler's Goldband Records in Lake Charles, where he produced a chain of extremely successful recordings before being cut down in an automobile accident in 1954.

Today Cajun music is bigger than ever, if still a somewhat regional phenomenon. The *fais-dodos*, or all-night dances, continue to attract crowds back in the Louisiana prairies, and jukeboxes along the bayou still serenade you with the latest local Cajun hits.

Companies like Swallow, Crazy Cajun, La Louisiane, Jin, Big D, Cajun Jamboree, and Goldband are the RCAs and Columbias of the Cajun sound, and from them you can get just about anything from Doug's brother Ed Kershaw doing

"Grandpa and Grandma Waltz" (Goldband) to Nonc Helaire's album of Cajun tales (only slightly censored), *For Koonasses Only* (Swallow), to an album of Cajun-flavored rock and rollers like *South Louisiana Jukebox Hits* (Jin).

For a sense of Cajun music's gradual development, from Joe Falcon's days on up to Iry LeJune's and beyond, one would do best to pick up on Old Timey's four-volume *Cajun Music*, Arhoolie's *Cajun Music of the 1950s*, and Folkways' *Cajun Songs From Louisiana*.

Cajun music is quite infectious. I know of more than a few people who started out on Doug Kershaw who now spend their free time rooting out old Eugene Thibodeaux and Louis Cormier records.

Cajun records may be ordered by mail from the following outfits, all of which will send free catalogs for the asking: Arhoolie—Old Timey Records, Post Office Box 9195, Berkeley, California 94709; Floyd's Record Shop, Post Office Drawer 10, Ville Platte, Louisiana 70586; Folkways Records, 701 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York 10036; Goldband Records, Post Office Box 1485, Lake Charles, Louisiana 70601; J&F Record Sales, 4501 Risinghill Road, Altadena, California 91001; and Records, Post Office Box 769, Crowley, Louisiana 70526.

The best book so far on Cajun life in general is Lauren C. Post's *Cajun Sketches*, published by the Louisiana State University Press in Baton Rouge. There is also a newspaper, *Cajun Music City News* (Route 2, Box 2074, Westlake, Louisiana 70669). While you're at it, don't forget to visit the Cajun Hall of Fame in Port Arthur, Texas. ■

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Watch This Face: Tom Jans

Ordinarily, Tom Jans' tattoo wouldn't be worth mentioning. Especially in Nashville, which is very much like a port town or a carnival—loud and brassy, almost as if the city itself were tattooed. All over Music Row, promoters, singers, writers—like homesick sailors—are hustling something. It is not a place for finesse or soft speech.

But the discrete rose on Tom Jans' left forearm came as a mild shock to me. Having seen him around for a year and a half, ever since Dobie Gray recorded his song, "Loving Arms," I grew to think of him as shy, withdrawn, maybe even a wallflower. He never seemed to go in much for hanging out at studios or bars, letting everybody know who he was, making the Nashville scene. I really didn't think he'd make it, because I still believed you had to do some serious getting around to have your songs cut.

Nevertheless, since "Loving Arms" was written in 1973, it has been cut more than fifty times. Dave Hickey, a mutual friend of Tom's and mine, thinks it is a "perfect" song. Tom's own version of the song, along with nine others, is on his recent album, "Tom Jans," on A & M Records (produced by Mentor Williams).

Tom looks too wholesome for a tattoo. Blond, blue-eyed, brown-skinned and athletic, he looks like he just hopped off a surfboard—everything we Southerners think a native Californian ought to be. And then, his education is impressive (not very many good song-writers have distinguished scholarly careers). Having become Phi Beta Kappa at the University of California at Davis, Tom turned down a graduate scholarship to Columbia University so that he could write songs full-time; as well as become a ne'er-do-well and a hippie. Or so it must surely have seemed.



"All you can do is write the truth and hope people like your stuff."

Soon after college, Tom joined Mimi Farina (Joan Baez' sister) to tour the U.S. and Europe with Cat Stevens. In 1971, Mimi and Tom did an album together called "Take Heart." Somewhere along the way, he met Kris Kristofferson, who was to be of help to Tom in many ways, not the least of which involved being able to cope with their similar academic backgrounds. Kris had been a Rhodes Scholar, and, like Tom, had given it up for song-writing. Both had been students of lit-

erature. And both, doubtless, had been made to feel like traitors for abandoning brilliant futures to take up a craft so far beyond the bounds of conventional good taste. For Jans, Kris was someone who had been able to pull it off.

And yet, neither of them ever left good taste behind. What is truly remarkable, though, is that they were able to ignore all those pompous attitudes towards literature and art, and be free enough to write simple songs about common men, their hopes and their fears, which is precisely what all good songs (and most good literature) are about.

And so, the rose tattoo. Tom Jans is a rebel of a sort because he's had to go against things he's been taught to believe are true. This time, he's right, and they're wrong.

Tom's career is just beginning to take off. Gary Stewart's hit, "Out Of Hand," is by Tom. Johnny Cash, Helen Reddy, Elvis Presley, David Allan Coe and Olivia Newton-John, among others, have cut Tom's songs. Like "Loving Arms," his best songs are narratives which deal with great insight into the human condition. "Margarita," "Green River" and "Hart's Island"—from the album—are exemplary. "Hart's Island" tells the story of Gino, an old boxer whose greatest fear is that he will wind up in a pauper's grave on Hart's Island, New York City's Potter's Field.

"This is the kind of song I really want to write," says Tom. "I think it's just as worthwhile to write a perfect country song as it is to write a perfect short story or whatever. When I found out Johnny Cash was going to cut 'Hart's Island,' it made me feel terrific. All you can do is write the truth and hope the people like your stuff. And that's just what I plan to do."

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Words and Music by
JIMMIE RODGERS and
RAYMOND HALL



On the nin - ty - nine - year day I've been here, ain't no fan - cy dream; If you
it's the days I got to stay; All the

You'd know just what I mean. (Yodel)
done shook their heads and gone a - way.

When the judge read me the verdict,
My good gal said to me

you could have knocked me down, Said, "Boy, you've got two six - es, But they're all in the same
the day I hit this camp: "You made your bed in sor - row, Now sleep in it like a man."

(Yodel) They
Nin - ty -

car - ried me to the jail - house, I fell down on my bed, I could n't
nine and nine - ty - nine makes a hun - dred and nine - ty - eight, That's more years,

sleep for cry - ing, I wished to God I was dead. (Yodel)
pret - ty ma - ma, than you can fig - ure up on a slate.

D.S. al Fine *Fine*



PRISONER 60339 Sings The Blues

by TOM MILLER

Jimmie Rodgers always needed new songs but he didn't have time enough to write them. Ray Hall had plenty of time. And his songs were true.

On a raw, chilly, East Texas weekday afternoon, the moisture in the air indicates rain—rain that will inevitably come like a monsoon, bringing floods and cold gray skies. Buildings, no matter how thick, seem defenseless against the onslaught of another winter. A couple of miles from the city of Huntsville sits a state prison, a collection of squat, ugly buildings that complement the chill and foreboding landscape, and inside the building known as the Wynn Unit, a silver-haired man sits inside a caged enclosure. The abundance of his hair hides the fact he is just short of 70 years old. His shirt carries his number—60339.

Number 60339 is prisoner Raymond Hall, who celebrated his 25th birthday—and nearly every one since—at the Texas State Prison at Huntsville. He sits inside this wire and pipe-walled room at a table divided in two by a wire mesh screen. He's on one side; I'm on the other with a cassette tape recorder. It's the first cassette recorder Hall has ever seen.

Hall doesn't have many visitors. I'm the first in about six years. The excitement of the visit prompts him to ramble on, talking almost non-stop about things that happened decades ago, in the 1920s and 1930s. Most of his recollections are clear and precise, convincingly accurate, but occasionally his facts contradict each other. He appears anxious to tell the truth.

Hall talks about the lonely years he's spent in Huntsville and the

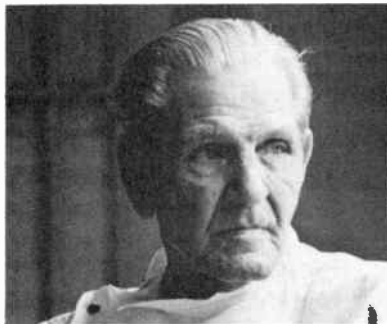
hundreds of songs and poems he's written. Most of his recollections are centered about a drifting, out-of-work railroader he met in an Oklahoma speakeasy sometime in the 1920s. The man's name was Jimmie Rodgers—the same Jimmie Rodgers who was to become “America's Blue Yodeler,” “The Singing Brake-man,” and “The Father of Country Music.”

“A friend of mine and I went down to this speakeasy on Reno Avenue in Oklahoma City, and there's this band playing, but the band went out to lunch,” Hall recalls without much prompting. “There's this man back there playing a guitar, so I met him and got to talkin' with him. This was back in 1924 or '25. Jimmie was a roaming drifter, and he was in there with a bunch of people who work the rails—you know, firemen, engineers. It was Prohibition time and you'd go up and tap on the speakeasy”—he knocks three times on the table, lightly—“and they'd let you in.”

Soon after meeting Rodgers, Hall was sent back to jail—he'd already served time at Stillwater, Oklahoma—after more trouble with the law and an escape attempt. This time Hall found himself in the Texas state prison system. Aside from a couple of brief paroles, he has been there ever since. While in prison, the singing roamer he met in Oklahoma City made it big; in fact he became a folksy, godlike figure respected by more people than any

“Too bad Jimmie died....”

According to the visitor's log at the Huntsville prison, Ray Hall did indeed receive a visitor named Jimmie Rodgers—on June 5, 1931. Rodgers' daughter, Mrs. Anita Rodgers Court, now 53, says she doesn't remember her or her mother accompanying Jimmie on that visit, but in a letter written after our interview, Hall specifically mentions



Ray Hall

that Jimmie “had left his Cadillac, his wife Carrie and 13-year-old daughter Anita at Houston...”

The purpose of the visit, Hall claims, was to make a deal with Hall for more songs, and to have Hall listen to a test pressing of the song, “Moonlight And Skies,” which Hall claims to have co-written.

“We played it on my Victrola in the prison ‘bull ring,’” Hall recalled, “in the visitor's quarters... the visit in person was because I had rejected and returned to him his fifty dollar check...”

Hall returned the check because he wanted a “suitable” contract regarding the rights to “Moonlight And Skies” and assurances that he would get money and credit for future contributions.

Hall also claims that Rodgers was about to intercede with authorities in Austin to secure his release from prison and had hired a lawyer to investigate Hall's claims of innocence. The so-called death bed letter, according to Hall, “was partly an apology for not being able to fulfill the promise of legal help.

“Too bad for me that Jimmie Rodgers died,” Hall said.

“Moonlight And Skies” carries a 1931 copyright, the year Rodgers is said to have visited Hall in prison. The song tells the story of two men who plan a robbery despite the protests of one's girlfriend. The robbery ends in violence. One man is shot, the other captured and sent to prison. The last lines of the song are spoken from a convict's point of view—a convict who stares out of the window of his cell “as the day slowly dies... dreaming of my moonlight and skies.”

The song is included in a collection of Rodgers' tunes published by Peer International, *The Legendary Jimmie Rodgers—Memorial Folio—Volume 2*. Included in the collection are three songs which carry Raymond Hall's name alongside that of Jimmie Rodgers: “Southern Cannon Ball,” “Ninety Nine Year Blues,” and “The Yodeling Ranger.” Volume 1 of that series includes another Hall-Rodgers tune, “Take Me Back Again.”

Hall claims that the housekeeper at Rodgers' Kerrville, Texas, estate, Mrs. Gladys Smith, sent him scraps of paper containing drafts of a letter Jimmie was writing to his wife and daughter, breaking the news that the doctors had told him he hadn't much time to live. Hall said these crumpled notes inspired a song he calls “Jimmie Rodgers' Last Love Letter.” It goes like this:

Dear Carrie/Forgive me for writing/But the doctor just told me today-ee/That shortly I'd probably be headed/Down that trail to that land far away/Down that trail to the heavenly roundhouse/Soon my sorrows will be over, he said/You'll be changing your green lights to red ones/Down that trail of my hopes that are dead... ■

Lyrics Copyright Raymond Hall 1973. All rights reserved.

other musician in the United States. All the while, Hall kept in touch. He would send Jimmie songs and letters. One time Hall wrote Rodgers proposing a Western song. “I wrote this, you know, and he says ‘Well, it's timely for a new prison song. I suggest you change it.’ I originally had a western-type, but they changed it to a prison tune.”

“You know, I can go back and tell you about Jimmie Rodgers and Will Rogers too—how they flew around here and entertained the people during the Depression in the souplines... in the state of Texas. You ever hear of ‘The Yodlin’ Rangers?’ Roy Rodgers sang... and Jimmie too. Ross Sterling, the governor at the time—and the state legislature, they called on Will Rogers, Jimmie Rodgers and a few other celebrities to help out during the Depression. It was during that tour he came here one time. He brought his wife and daughter Anita with him. We met over there.” He points to some distant point through the thick walls.

Hall's mind wanders a few generations, and settles on Gene Autry. “This man Clayton McMichen, he used to have a band over NBC. He had discovered Gene Autry at a Chicago theater, and Gene, he came down to see Jimmie and asked him, ‘Man, where you gettin’ them kind of songs like ‘The Gamblin’ Polka Dot Blues?’”

“Well, Jimmie, he told him, ‘I got a man in the penitentiary down there, all you gotta do is give him a title and he'll send you a complete song by return mail.’ ‘Cause I had a letter from Gene from one of those suburban motels. He sent me a handbill with his picture, his guitar, a big hat and a lariat rope...”

Gene Autry was among those who—says Hall—recorded some of his songs. Jimmie Davis is on the list, as is Hank Snow. The trouble with this lies not so much with Ray Hall's occasionally faulty memory, but with the names attached to the songs when they reached the copyright stage. It used to be common practice for a well-known singer to have unknown writers on a straight salary, writing songs which came out under the singer's name. Hall says his **royalty checks** came to eight dollars last year.

“I know Hank Snow sings one of my songs 'cause I have a letter from him... ‘Take Me Back Again,’ you

ever hear it? I ain't never got a nickel out of that song and it's got my name on it and everything . . ."

Hall says he sent numerous songs to Rodgers, many of which were rearranged, altered and then recorded. "I was contributing other songs to him for his consideration," Hall remembers. "So you know, at a proper time he would say I would be established and have my name, you know, on recordings and publishing." Hall indicates Rodgers wanted to enter into such an agreement. "The only publishing company I know anything about that's published anything of mine is Peer-Southern. Now, see, in the *Jimmie Rodgers Memorial Folio* and what they call the *Supreme Edition* and in the *Blue Yodel Series*. I wrote a bunch of stuff for the *Blue Yodel*. But he'd take a verse here and there and then . . ."

Rodgers, says Hall, once sent him a check for fifty dollars from Hollywood to the prison. "I sent the check right back," Hall said. "I told him I wouldn't sell him the song outright, but I'd be willing to work out a deal . . . Now the *Blue Yodel Series*, I guess I wrote 500 verses of different types, you know. He'd take one of the first one and call it 'Blue Yodel Number One,' 'Blue Yodel Number Two,' and so on."

Finally Raymond Hall, inmate #60339, recalls his favorite story, complete with embellishments and drama. "I have a death-bed letter, Hall says slowly, "a death-bed letter, written on Taft Hotel stationery. He stayed at the Taft Hotel when he went up there to New York for his last recording session. He took to hemorrhaging while he was there. So he's up there to make twenty-four songs. That's twelve records, and nine of 'em were mine. New ones."

"Nine of his last twenty-four songs were yours?"

He nods his head affirmatively. "That was the last recording session, you know, when he went to New York and died in the Taft Hotel."

"Do you have this death-bed letter?"

"I had a death-bed letter, but I don't know where it's at. When I was out for a spell I had to leave my stuff, what personal effects that I took away from here, and I don't know where it's at. My people, they don't know what it's all about. Any-

way, he was tellin' Mrs. Bedell—Mrs. Cora Bedell—and she was writing this letter on Taft Hotel stationery. She was telling this to me—what he said was that he was sorry, that he could not fulfill his part of the agreement, wouldn't be able to, with these songs I was sending him.

"Now, right after Jimmie died I began a composition of a few songs and I got in there about Jimmie's passing. I even mentioned about the nurse writing to me, and how she took that \$3,500 Martin guitar that Ernest Tubb's got now? Now Mrs. Bedell took his body to Meridian, Mississippi. I've got pictures of the graveyard, pictures of the statue, pictures of the locomotive that the railroad donated."

"Do you still have some of your Jimmie Rodgers stuff with you?"

"Yes, I've got pictures and stuff like that right there in my cell."

"Is it up on the wall?"

"No no. When I leave I'll carry it out with me. And I've got 150 new songs! All types, kinds, shades and hues. I'm slanting them more or less, you might say. Some are popu-

lar, some country, novelty you might say."

"What type of singers would be good for your material?"

"Well I'll tell you. I could name more than four or five right now. Merle Haggard's tops. He's the nearest thing to Jimmie Rodgers—that is, for range, inflection, diction and everything. And he also has that—well I don't know what you'd call it—he's been through a little mill himself, you know what I mean? Hank Snow'd be good, too . . ."

Ray Hall is still at Huntsville—according to prison officials, for life. Hall contends otherwise, but his offenses are now so far in the past that it's difficult to decipher even the facts, let alone his sentence. At night the radio near his cell can pick up two of the Southwest's bigger country stations, WBAP in Fort Worth and KIKK in Houston. During the day, Ray Hall writes to acquaintances—many of them Jimmie Rodgers historians—picks out new tunes in his head, and falls quietly into the everyday pattern of 20th Century prison life. ■

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32 Days That Shook The World

Opryland In Russia

by PATRICK CARR

Country music is no longer a Southern embarrassment—it's more like a national asset. Politicians know this.

The Opry isn't a Southern institution any more. As one part of mother Opryland, it's more like a branch of a national showbiz corporation.

The State Department likes Opryland, likes country music, and likes having it all to show off—especially if the incumbent President also likes country music, which is almost true of President Ford. Opryland likes that.

The Russians seem to like country music, too, and since the Russians and the State Department are talking to each other these days, the logical conclusion of all this is that on September 12th, 1974, a 31-member Opryland troupe arrived on Russian soil by the good financial graces of the State Department, the Russian equivalent of the State Department, the State of Tennessee and Opryland itself, and proceeded to tour the U.S.S.R. with great success and universal goodwill.

Country music has been to Russia before in the person of George Hamilton IV—"The Ambassador"—but his activities in the U.S.S.R. were confined to lecture sessions and occasional performances before relatively small audiences. The Opryland tour was the big time, a fully-fledged touring spectacular muscling through what's left of the Iron Curtain with the full blessing of just about everybody. This was Official. This was Cultural Exchange with a vengeance. A little mind-boggling, perhaps, but when you talk to the people who went on the tour and the people who put the whole affair together, you get the distinct impression that far from being a leap into the void, Opryland's Russian excursion was really quite the natural thing to do. Everybody's thinking International.

George Mabry, now Director of Entertainment at Opryland, recalls the genesis of the idea. "We dealt with the head of Goskoncert—the Soviet cultural agency. He came to Opryland to see our shows—the ones we have in the Park here—and he liked the vitality and the spirit and the youthfulness and the, sort of, ah, real youthful talent that we have here. 'That's what I want to show the Soviet people!' he said.

"Then he heard our country show here, and he said, 'That seems to be very close to the kind of music our

people would enjoy. I want you to send me a show of country music, using your young people.'"

Between consultations with the Cultural Affairs Division of the State Department, Mabry (then Musical Director of Opryland) worked up a show.

This show was something special, kind of like Country Music Goes To Broadway. "I think it's a little more sophisticated type of show than some people would consider country music," says Mr. Mabry. The show was a clean sweep through the history of country music, featuring the lead voices of Tennessee Ernie Ford and the relatively unknown Sandi Burnett backed up by a singin' and dancin' chorus recruited from the handsome young ranks of Opryland entertainers, and a core group of country pickers. The State Department requested Ernie Ford specifically, and accepted Sandi Burnett enthusiastically once they had seen her act. Ernie's song, "Sixteen Tons" (written by Merle Travis) is a big hit in the U.S.S.R. because it does a fine job of exposing savage working conditions in Capitalist mines.

"They recognized 'Sixteen Tons' as soon as the song started," says Sandi Burnett, who hadn't been any further north than Nashville before her Russian excursion. "But they didn't really know what country music was."

It didn't seem to matter, though. The five cities played—Moscow, Leningrad, Yerevan, Tblisi, and Baku, responded with gracious interest to the Opryland spectacular. Members of the cast would find themselves invited into homes and University dormitories after their shows, to share food and wine and music and good times. The Soviet Minister Of Culture (Madame Furtseva, who died only two days after the Opryland troupe left her country), "seemed to genuinely enjoy the show," according to a State Department memo. The memo continues: "During the final encores (Russian folksongs and dances), she enthusiastically applauded in rhythm along with the rest of the specially invited audience." "None of the songs were familiar to me," said Armenian Minister of Culture Parsamian, "but it was as if I had heard them before. They were straight to the heart." The Minister must have missed Voice of America's saturation

(Continued on page 32)



Tennessee Ernie Ford and Sandi Burnett do that Russian thang, Leningrad '74.

Opryland In Russia

The People



"The people don't seem to have much to do for themselves, but it didn't seem to bother them any. I mean, you hear a lot about how depressed people are over there, but they're not, really. I didn't see any sort of depression or hostility towards Americans. We were told before we went over there that we may end up defending ourselves, but the people were quite polite and warm, and anxious to hear *anything* about America. They were so *generous* . . . If you wanted the shirt off their back, they'd take it off and give it to you."

Sandi Burnett

"Leningrad and Moscow were spotless. It's seldom that you saw litter anywhere, and it seems there were always women with little brooms out sweeping the sidewalks and gutters . . . the parks are filled with old people taking care of small children while the parents work . . . there is no unemployment in this country, but it's hard to understand why so many people are on the streets during the day."

Huell Howser





“Some of the children belong to the Young Pioneers, which is the organization for young Communists under fourteen. They wear bright red kerchiefs around the neck and have a school uniform. They are intelligent and alert, and one senses that these young people are very intense, even though they can be seen playing games in the parks just like the other children.” **Huell Howser**

“They’re very different from us. For example, when they’re getting on a streetcar, they’ll always push and shove to get on. They push and shove all the way through their lives. There’s very little politeness among the public. They go to extremes — when they see each other they hug and kiss and all that, and then when they get in arguments they swear and cuss violently. You don’t see a whole lot of the in-between stuff. They were very polite to us, though — but still very forward. They’re a very aggressive people.” **Eddy Pruett**



broadcasting of country music into the U.S.S.R., a project begun as early as June of '74 in preparation for the tour. Still, it was those final song-and-dance routines, with black Gary Chapman bouncing around the stage like a red-blooded Tennessee Cossack, that brought the various Soviet houses down.

The reviews, as they say, were dynamite. *Zarya Vostoka* ("The Eastern Dawn," Tblisi's daily newspaper) reported that, "In the language of song, movement, dance and setting, the members of the company have told us all about the life of the American people—their joys, hopes and troubles . . . Country music, or folk music, is very popular in America, and is one of the important components of her culture. This is fully understandable, for it has developed from true folk traditions . . . This is the first time that Soviet audiences are seeing American folk songs and dances—music that brings together European harmonies and African rhythms."

Sandi Burnett remembers one Russian soldier rushing to give her a bouquet during one of her shows. She kissed him, and as the audience roared its approval, the soldier marched back to his seat. Later Sandi learned that a soldier had never been involved in such an incident before, "but everybody was getting flowers. The people would just run up and give them to you. It's a great custom. It makes you feel good—*real good*."

Yes, there was an awful lot of good feeling in the U.S.S.R. Like Ernie Ford said on a WSM (Nashville) television special put together by newsman Huell Howser (who went along on the trip), "One purpose that we wanted to get over on this whole trip was to be ambassadors and to do things when we weren't performing. And I tell you, I can't say enough about this group, because they could write a social register for the U.S.S.R."

* * * * *

"Did you know that a copy of the *Jesus Christ Superstar* album sells for about \$200 in Russia?" says Sandi Burnett. "Ain't that *wild*?" Yes, it's ridiculous. It's also an indication of how hungry Russian youth can get for Western pop music, a phenomenon which does not officially exist inside the Soviet Union, and it goes some way towards explaining why it was an Opryland tour—as opposed to a visit from Alice Cooper or Three Dog Night—that introduced many Russians to "live" Western music for the first time. The Russian powers-that-be do not want rock & roll in their country (even though they get it in relatively heavy doses from Voice of America, Radio Luxembourg, and an underground network of illegal Russian pop radio operations). A country show, carefully put together to meet all the requirements of the Russian powers, was much more seemly.

Make no mistake about it: this show was *very* carefully planned from the word go, with all involved parties in constant consultation. Before they left the United States, the Opryland performers were briefed by the State Department. They were to avoid low-cut dresses and "suggestive" on-stage body movements. They were to stay away from any material with religious or political overtones.

Eddy Pruett, a Tennessee native and member of the troupe, remembers that the State Department went a little bit overboard in their briefings. "They



made you feel like you were going to be huddled together in a group, constantly," he says. "They said that you shouldn't go off on your own. Maybe their briefing on the people was related to dealing with officials and the kind of people *they* deal with, but I was dealing with the public. The public is totally different. They're very warm people. We were also warned not to go into people's houses, because all kinds of things could happen." This advice went right out the window as soon as the Americans began to get snowed under with gifts and hospitality.

The Russian sponsors of the tour were cautious, too. Eddy Pruett recalls that in some areas, the public had not been officially informed that the Opryland troupe was on its way, this being an attempt to prevent the student population from attending the concerts and—perhaps—responding too boisterously for official decorum. The first nights in the various provinces were usually packed with Communist Party members and officials. The public would be let into the rest of the performances, and Oprylanders were constantly being asked for tickets.

It does seem that the spirit of America is loose in the Soviet Union, and that besides a growing tendency towards bluejeans, long hair and all the other trappings of Western youth, music is the main medium of Soviet-American communication, despite official obstacles in its path.

"The instruments they have there are of very poor quality," Sandi Burnett recalls, "but with what they had to use, they did *very* well. In Moscow, I was invited to come and see what these young people thought was 'new' music. A group of students—jazz musicians—was trying to sell a new kind of music to Russia, but the Government wasn't really accepting it, y'know? Now, they *thought* it was a new kind of music, but what it was, really, was acid rock. They called it 'jazz-rock,' and it was *unreal*. They gave a light show for us which was—oh—fantastic, really beautiful!—They played some Chicago and Blood, Sweat & Tears stuff first—note perfect, off the records—then they played their own music, this acid rock.

"You see, there's no way they can buy a book which



teaches them how to play the guitar. The Government won't allow it. In Russia, you go to school to learn music. In fact, a lot of the conductors and musicians who were invited to the shows couldn't believe that I didn't have a Doctorate or a degree in music and stage movement. They'd say, 'Where did you get your diploma?' and I'd say, 'I'm sorry, but I have never studied music.' Then they'd say, 'No, no, you don't understand. Where did you get your diploma?'"

"Y'know, they were pretty well-informed about the political situation in America, too," Sandi continued. "America is a pretty big subject over there. They'd ask about Nixon all the time—they really liked him, but of course they don't know that much about President Ford. A couple of the people I talked to had actually seen Nixon when he was over there, and they'd gone *wild*. They really wanted to know how he was—how was his health, how was he doing, all that. They knew what was going on."

For 32 days, the Opryland troupe swung through Russia and its satellite provinces, lighting fires for country music and, in return, seeing the people they were brought up to fear and hate. None of them was unaffected by the experience. Talking to them now, back in the States again with no definite promise of a return to the U.S.S.R., you get the impression that they are still coming out of shock.

"It's really heavy," says Eddy Pruett. "Even now, it still seems like a dream. I'm ashamed of myself because we were so busy, I didn't have time to really sit down and figure this whole thing out. I have to go back. I have to go back, just to see Leningrad again . . . Leningrad was so beautiful."

Then Eddy begins to speculate on why the Soviets liked the Opryland show so much. "They liked the music simply because they liked the music," he says, "but I was wondering if they weren't more impressed by the people in the show. You see, the people were kind of wild. They liked to have fun and party a whole lot—you know, the whole bit. So when they got on stage, they'd just be natural. They'd have fun with the stuff they did. And I was wondering if this—well, *freedom*—emanated out into the audiences. Maybe *that's* what made the tour such a success . . ." ■



What the Soviets saw: Debbie Allen and Sandi Burnett singing their hearts out (top left); Dick Fein and Debbie Allen demonstrate their bow-harp (top); the Opryland troupe takes time out for a snapshot (above).

WEBB

The Open House Man Reveals His Assets! Next Time You're In Nashville, Drop By.

by Scott Cohen

THE CAR

What make is this car?
It's a Bonneville Pontiac, 1962. Nudie the Rodeo Tailor decorated it up for me. He put in the hand-tooled leather and the guns and the silver dollars and stuff.

What's under the hood?
It's a stock engine.

What is the interior worth?
Well, the Pontiac people gave me the car, and I spent \$20,000 to fix it up, which would cost you \$40,000 today. Back then, these things weren't as expensive and costly. **So Nudie did the leather tool-work . . .**

Yeah, the hand-tooled leather upholstery, the bucket seats, the unborn calf leather under the trunk, and, see here, the back of this seat is lined with unborn calf leather, which we covered with a cellophane-type material, so we wouldn't mess up the thing and it wouldn't rub the hair off.

Are those guns real?
Yeah, they were real guns that had their firing pin taken out of 'em. See those pistols here and on the door handles? They took the triggers out and where the triggers were, they put punch buttons. You just punch the button to open the door. And on the sides of the fenders, we have silver rifles mounted. **Are those horseshoes on the gas and brake pedals?**
Yep, and those are saddle



bags where the glove compartment is.

Do you use this car as your everyday car?
No, I fly where I go, and they take it. I had a driver and a guard for the car, and they would meet me at special occasions. **What kind of car do you get around in?**

Cadillac limousine. I have a Cadillac regular car as well. I had *this* one made up as a show piece, something that creates talk. **Is Nudie your tailor?**

Yeah, he's made all my clothes, too. In fact, he made some uniforms that cost \$1,500 apiece. Of course, they were completely covered with rhinestones.

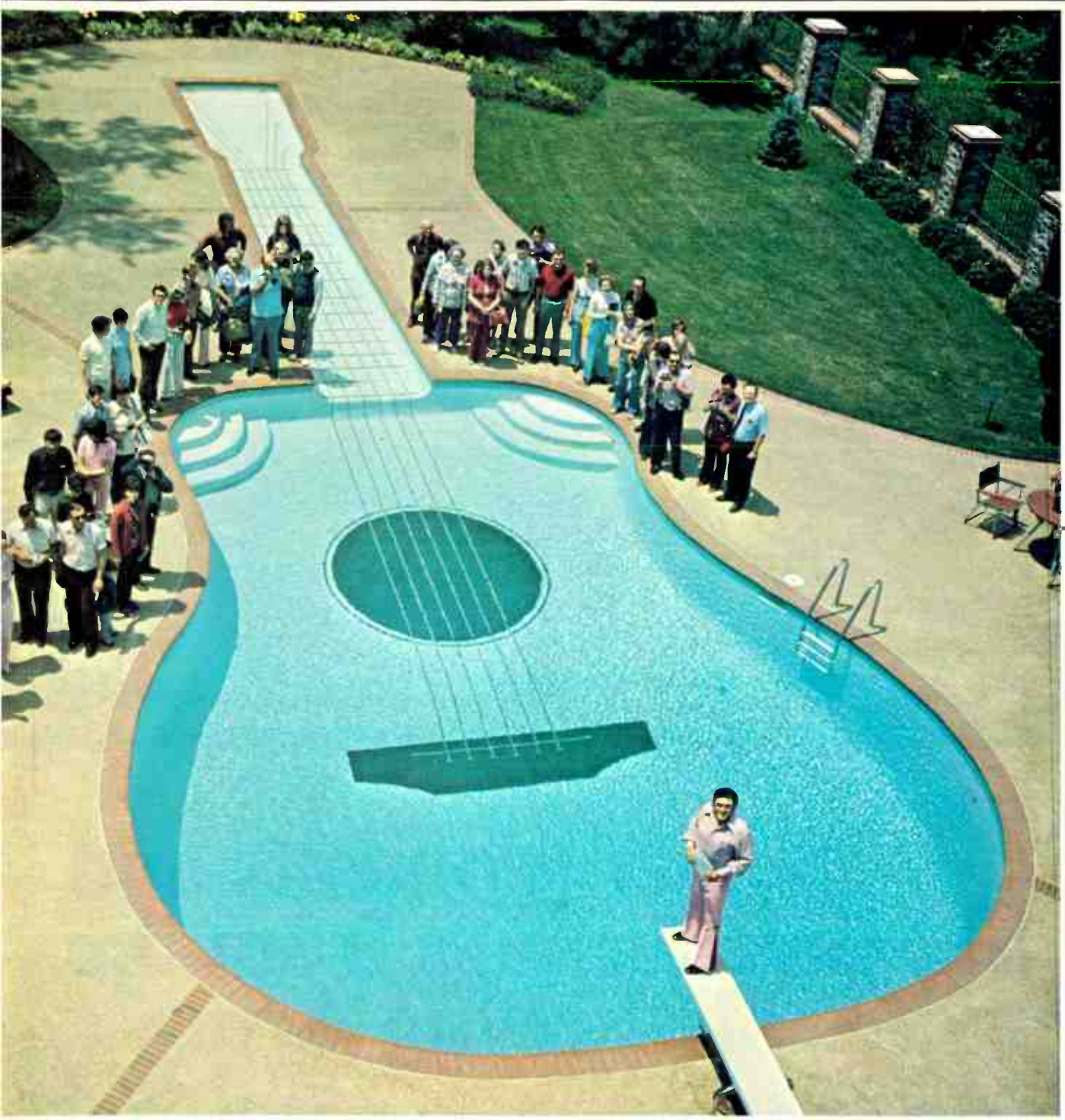
How much does a rhinestone suit weigh?

I was just fixin' to say, one weighs forty pounds. **It must be hard to hang on a hanger . . .**

It's so heavy, it will just bend it sometimes.

Do you still wear them?
I eventually quit wearing those type suits because in the wintertime, you'll freeze to death nearly. **You were one of the first people to dress in "glitter" clothes. Who inspired your style of dress?**

Well, I've seen a lot of that stuff on tv, but I never used anybody else's ideas but my own. I was always an original thinker. Or I tried to be.



THE POOL

How long have you had this pool?

Four years. I had the car four years before that, and I figured four years was long enough to have something new. I built a guitar-shaped swimming pool and there's about 3,000 people a week come by here to see it.

How long is it?

It's a hundred foot long.

The neck's forty and the body's sixty.

How deep is it?

Twelve feet deep at the deepest point, and maybe a couple feet deep at the shallowest.

How much does a pool like this cost?

The cost of building all this to fit with the home, the pool and all, was about \$50,000.

I don't see any life preservers.

Don't need none. If one of the neighbors' children

wants to swim, their Daddy has to be with 'em.

That's their life preserver.

Do you swim often?

No. I think I swum in it twice.

Do tourists bother you?

No. You see, they have guides on those things. We don't allow them to go all over the place. They come here to take pictures of the swimming pool, and a lot of times on a Thursday.

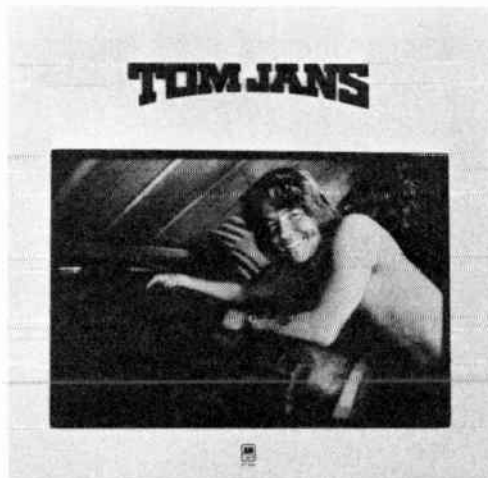
Friday or Saturday when I'm in town, I'll come out and say hello and autograph albums for 'em.



Tender moments and old-time feelings from the writer of “Loving Arms.”

“TOM JANS”

His first solo album on
A&M Records



Includes “MARGARITA”

THE MAN

What were you doing before you were a country music star?

Workin' in Sears and Roebuck as a soft-lines manager.

How did you graduate from Sears?

Well, while I was workin' at Sears I played music and did a radio show. Finally, I was doing an appearance on the Louisiana Hayride and someone from Decca heard me singin' and offered me a recording contract, so we made a song called "Wondering" and it hit big. Do you remember your first guitar?

Yeah, I remember the first guitar I ever got was when I was twelve years old, and I paid \$5.00 for it. Was it a Sears'?

No, it was a J.C. Penny's. You see, they didn't sell guitars there but they had in the back what seemed to me a hock shop, and they had a guitar, a Gibson, that somebody

probably hocked, and they sold it to me.

What kind are you using now?

I use the Grammar guitar. I used a Martin for many years but my manager got into the Grammar guitar business and gave me two guitars. In fact, three. You like golf, don't you?

What's your favorite iron?

I like a five iron real well, and I like a five wood.

Who's your favorite golfer?

The winner, I guess.

Lee Trevino I get a kick out of. Johnny Rodriguez got a lot of class.

Who do you socialize with?

Well, we don't have much time for socializin'.

We don't socialize an awful lot, but the Governor

was over here—when was it?—Monday, to play

tennis. See, the Governor

lives behind me on the hill over there, and he's

over, and sometimes the

singers get together, Faron Young, we're close

buddies.

How about being in the movies?

I've made about eight of 'em already and after seeing 'em, I decided to stick to singin'.

Do you ever forget the words to a song?

Yeah, but it doesn't embarrass me if I do it. I just laugh it off and go on. I won't sing a song unless I'm pretty sure of the words. If I'm a little in doubt about all the words to it, I'd say to the audience, "I might not know all the words, but if I forget the words, I'll just hum."

What do you fear most?

Well, it might sound a little stupid for a millionaire to say he fears insecurity, but I guess I do fear it. I fear it enough to try to protect myself from it ever happening to me.

How much do you think you're worth?

Before taxes? At least more than a million, I'd say. Me, Acuff, and Eddy Arnold are the top

three—off the top of my head.

How many awards have you won?

O Lord, I really don't know. I never stopped to count them all. In fact, I'm thankful to say I have my basement full of 'em, my walls full of 'em, and quite a few over at the office.

What would you like inscribed on your tombstone?

Let's not get that morbid.

Is that too morbid?

Well, I'll just let my wife put on there what she wants to. I never really thought about it. We own our own graveyard, but I don't plan to be buried there.

Do you consider yourself cultured, yes or no?

No.

Do you have class?

Oh, yes!

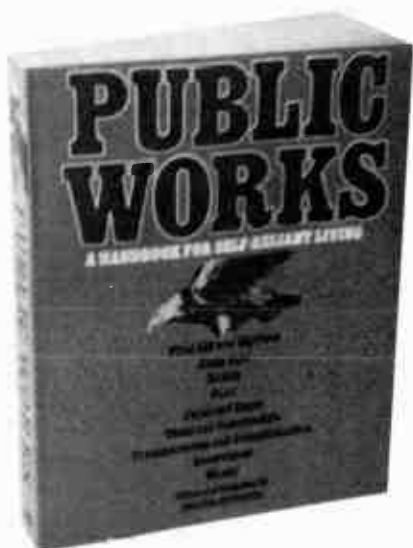
How many mailboxes have you had stolen?

That mailbox there cost me about \$3,000.

They've torn it up three or four times.

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MO25

Mr Manager

Jim Halsey,
Mogul of the Country Music Biz,
Usually Wins

by J.R. YOUNG

Thirty minutes outside Tulsa (ten by Interstate... twenty by Snapped Axle Way) is the Circle R Cattle Ranch, a 5,000-plus acre spread of green, flat earth presided over by the only hill within sight. The hill, in fact, is picture-postcard perfect ("Wish you were here!"), almost as perfect as the panoramic view from the balcony of the rustic modern house at the top of the hill, overlooking a crystal blue swimming pool, overlooking the rest of Oklahoma. It's a place where people dream of spending the rest of their life in their more reverent but irrelevant fantasies: four bedrooms, a paneled game room (complete with pool table, fancy juke box, bar, video tape set-up and other such niceties), kitchen, baths, dining room behind a wall of glass, overlooking the balcony, overlooking...

Nobody lives there, but the ranch has its function.

For the past three years, the house and the land have played host to the Jim Halsey Co., Inc. Ranch Party, and this last September was no different. Just bigger and better, and—out a-picking' and a-grinnin' on two makeshift stages, featuring Oklahoma and low gray clouds—a line-up of talent substantial enough to choke a Trojan horse. That is: Freddy Weller, Bob Luman, Red Steagall, Leroy Van Dyke, Gunilla Hutton (*Hee Haw's* Miss Godybody), Buck Trent, Diana Trask, Hank Thompson, and Roy Clark. For free. With enough good hot barbecue, Dr. Pepper, beans, and other picnic poop to fill everybody. And with the stars walking freely through the people

and enjoying each other's performances just like everybody else. Roy Clark's hands must have hurt for weeks, because if he wasn't signing autographs, he was shaking hands. Hank, too, and Diana, and the rest of the big names. It was just like a big happy family, and in a sense that's exactly what it was—Jim Halsey's family.

Jim Halsey owns the ranch. The stars are all managed by Jim Halsey. And the audience is the clientele of Jim Halsey, including the bookers and promoters of fairs, rodeos, concerts, television, and nightclubs and their families all invited to Jim's place at great expense. The party is Jim's way of

Jim Halsey owns the ranch. The stars are all managed by Jim Halsey. And the audience is the clientele of Jim Halsey...

saying "thanks," and also to show the buyers what's presently available in the Halsey stable of stars. There's also a table set up for buyers to sign on the dotted line.

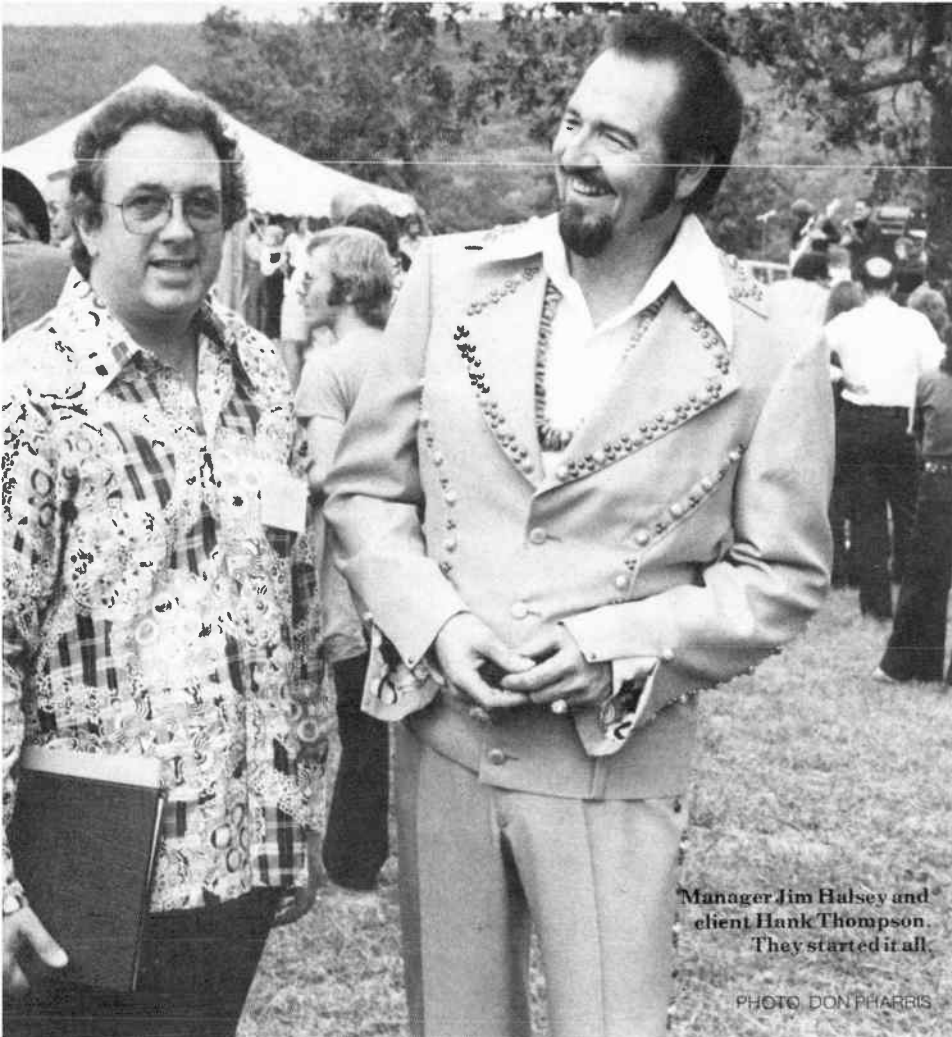
"It's a hell of a thing," one husky Midwest buyer said between bites of his barbecue beef sandwich while he eyeballed Gunilla Hutton's tanned and tremulous midriff. "And Jim Halsey is one hell of a guy. My family and I look forward to this get-together all year long. And we



weren't let down. Where else could you see a show like this? At these prices?"

For all I know, by the time he packed up his wife and kids and stole a final look at Gunilla at the end of the day, he had also sauntered over to the table underneath the tree and signed up half the Halsey stable for a series of fairs. Last year, according to who you talked to, Halsey signed anywhere from three-quarters of a million to a cool three million dollars' worth of contracts for the next year. The buyers saw, they liked, they bought. They had a great time, talked with Roy, got a few autographs, had another sandwich, and went home with contracts in their pockets. How's that for doing business? The party may have cost well over 30Gs, but the results in terms of not only money-suddenly-in-hand, but also good-will and personal relations... well, that's immeasurable. That's how Jim Halsey works.

That afternoon, dressed in his usual Levis and boots and denim jacket, his hands pushed deep in his pockets and a quiet trace of a smile on his cherubic face, Jim looked more like the Midwest fair buyer's



Manager Jim Halsey and client Hank Thompson. They started it all.

PHOTO DON PHARRIS

younger brother who came to Tulsa to have a good time and maybe see a few stars. Very loose, casual, and unobtrusive. Jim merely calls it *low profile... let the stars take the center stage... that's who the people want to see!* But still he was everywhere, constantly moving between the house and the stages and the food tent, constantly checking *details*, greeting old friends, making new ones. Jim Halsey is country music's most successful manager/booker/friend. Yes, and what's good for Jim Halsey is good for country music.

"My name is Jim Halsey, and I'd like to know how to promote a country band.' Those were the first words he ever said to me." Leo Zabelin, Halsey's Director of Publicity Exploitation, remembers the words very well. The year was 1950, and Leo was then working for *Variety* in the Chicago office when a very young-looking 19-year-old kid appeared in his office and asked that very question, and everyone's eyes lifted.

"It was unusual," Leo continues, "because not only did he look as if he were about twelve, but promoting country music was unheard of

then. Country promotion in 1950 meant maybe a cheap placard or a picture sent out to the guy putting on the show, but no promotion. No publicity. Not even by the record companies. They only promoted and publicized big pop stars like Perry Como or Jo Stafford. The only promotion in country was by the guy putting on the show, and in country music that meant not much. So when this kid appeared and asked about promoting a country band, well, that interested us very much."

The one thing that always struck Jim was that the man who made the money and drove the big car was the man who put on the show ...

What the guys at *Variety* shortly learned, however, was that Jim had been in the promotion business for over three years already, but was now ready for the big time.

Ambition is the one thing Jim has never been short on.

Jim Halsey was born in Independence, Missouri, in 1930, the son of a solid middle class family that owned a department store. They felt the pinch of the Depression, but never went without the necessities. School didn't interest Jim too much, but the saxophone did, and by the time he was in high school, he was in a group that played rhythm & blues. In the infrequent gigs the band played, however, the one thing that always struck Jim was that the man who made the money and drove the big car, was the man who put on the show, and not the band that played it. With his built-in business instinct, Jim decided that perhaps promoting was really where it was at.

Country music was the most accessible item in Independence, and although it wasn't exactly Jim's favorite taste, that's where he started. He was successful from the beginning, and within two years he had booked Leon McAuliffe's band, Bob Wills, Ernest Tubb, Hank Thompson, and many more. His most successful night was the time he brought Guy Lombardo to town and pocketed \$4800. That was a pretty heady figure for an eighteen-year-old, and it was all so easy that he figured he could do it every weekend ("I took some disastrous beatings!"), but the most consistent money-maker was country music, and especially Hank Thompson and his Brazos Valley Boys. They always packed the place.

Hank was obviously pleased, because when his manager, John Hitt (now senior vice president of the Halsey Co.), quit to take a position at MCA, Hank asked Jim to become his fulltime manager. That was the beginning of a relationship that lasts to this day. That was also the time that Jim went to visit the *Variety* offices.

"He had the intensity and desire to do something never done before," Leo Zabelin remembers, "and he did. He pioneered country promotion. He had real direction."

That direction included getting Hank on a major label (Capitol Records), spending more money on Hank's career by providing promoters with more photos, printed biographies, and other promotional materials (from Jim's days as a booker, he was always impressed

by acts with good promotional material, and, conversely, mimeographed sheets of biographical material... "which you just can't do anything with!"), and by getting to know almost every fulltime disk jockey in the country (about 300 then, whereas today there are over 1500 country stations.). Jim lived on the phone as the prototype manager. He also broadened the scope of country music by taking Hank places where the pedal steel had never been heard, like the big ballrooms on the shores of the Great Lakes which previously had been the exclusive property of the big bands. Hank, of course, was a smash sensation, and quickly became the most popular country band in the nation for 13 consecutive years. In that same year, Hank played in over 40 states, far more than he had ever played before. And that was only openers for Halsey. In 1952, when hi-fi and the long-playing album first broke on the market, Jim saw to it that Hank was the first country artist to record an LP. He also teamed Hank with a high school cutie named

Wanda Jackson and put them on the Mutual Radio Network, and then onto a local Tulsa television station with a live half hour show, another country first. Even when Halsey was drafted into the service, he continued to operate by spending hours on the phone each night (even during basic training),

**Enter a young Roy Clark.
As Jim says today,
"He had talent. More
talent than I'd
ever seen. I knew he was
gonna be a giant
right then..."**

spelling out the details of this and that to his wife, who then followed through on Jim's decisions. It was a one-man show for years as he continued to develop his two artists. Then, another prize.

In 1960, Jim booked Wanda into Lake Tahoe's Golden Nugget, and Wanda said she knew an incredible

guitar player in Washington D.C. She wanted him to play on her show. Enter young Roy Clark. The first time Halsey heard him, he was mightily impressed. As Jim says today, "He had talent. More talent than I'd ever seen. I knew he was gonna be a giant right then."

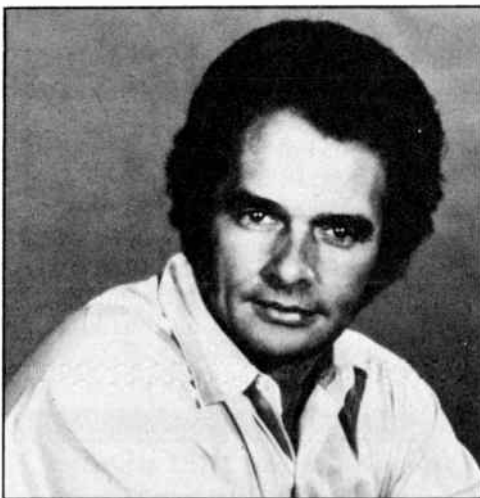
Jim and Roy hit it off right away, especially when Jim told the young guitar player/singer that he wanted to manage his career. Roy nodded, and said, "You tell me what to do, I'll do it." So Halsey did.

He had Roy put all his furniture in storage, buy a trailer, and hit the road. That year, Jim booked him 320 dates. It was non-stop travel. In one ten-day tour, Jim convinced a booking friend to add Roy, sound unheard, to a package tour. That tour featured Jim Reeves and Homer & Jethro plus five other acts, and although the promoter didn't really need another act, he added Roy anyway to open the show. Just a favor. Five shows later, Roy was closing the show, other than for Homer & Jethro. One by one, the other acts

(Continued on page 44)

ARTIST OF THE MONTH

- 1 Merle Haggard Presents His 30th Album (Newest Release)
- 2 Strangers
- 3 Swinging Doors
- 4 I'm A Lonely Fugitive
- 5 Branded Man
- 6 Sing Me Back Home
- 7 The Legend Of Bonnie & Clyde
- 8 The Best Of Merle Haggard
- 9 Mama Tried
- 10 Pride In What I Am
- 11 Same Train, A Different Time
- 12 Close-up
- 13 A Portrait Of Merle Haggard
- 14 Okie From Muskogee
- 15 The Fightin' Side Of Me
- 16 A Tribute To The Best Damn Fiddle Player In The World (or My Salute To Bob Wills)



Merle Haggard

- 17 Merle Haggard & The Strangers & Sing A Sad Song & High On A
- 18 Hilltop (2-record set)
- 19 Hag
- 20 Land Of Many Churches (2-record set LP \$12.98 TP \$13.98)
- 21 Someday We'll Look Back
- 22 Let Me Tell You About A Sad Song
- 23 The Best Of Merle Haggard
- 24 It's Not Love (But It's Not Bad)
- 25 Totally Instrumental With One Exception
- 26 I Love Dixie Blues
- 27 Merle Haggard's Christmas Present
- 28 If We Make It Through December
- 29 Just Between The Two Of Us
- 30 Introducing My Friends The Strangers

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MO25

Start your own Country Music

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Here is Part 1 of your favorite artists who have deservedly been elected to the COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME.

(Part 2 to come next month.)

ROY ACUFF

Born: September 15, 1903, Maynardsville, Tennessee

Married: w. Mildred Louise

Children: s, Roy Neal

"The king is what they call him, and though there are a couple pretenders to the throne, he hasn't yet been deposed or abdicated." *

Elected to the Country Music Hall Of Fame - 1962

ACUFF, ROY
Greatest Hits COL CS-1034

Lp - \$5.98

No tape



Pee Wee King



Eddy Arnold



Chet Atkins



Jim Reeves



Roy Acuff



Gene Autry



Jimmie Rodgers



The Carter Family

EDDY ARNOLD

Born: May 15, 1918, Henderson, Tennessee

Married: w. Sally Gayhart

Children: s. Dickie; d. JoAnn

"From 1948, when Billboard Magazine first began its top-ten listings, until 1963, he led all country performers with a total of fifty-three top-ten tunes..." *

Elected to the Country Music Hall Of Fame - 1966

ARNOLD, EDDY
All Time Favorites RCA LSP-1223(e)
Cattle Call RCA LSP-2578/P8S-1363
Pop Hits From The Country Side RCA LSP-2951
My World RCA LSP-3466/P8S-1088
The Best Of RCA LSP-3565/P8S-1185
The Best Of Eddie Arnold Vol. 1 2 RCA LSP-4320/P8S-1566
Welcome To My World RCA LSP-4570/P8S-1787
Loving Her Was Easier RCA LSP-4625/P8S-1853
Lonely People RCA LSP-4718/P8S-1955
Eddy Arnold Sings For Housewives and Other Lovers RCA LSP-4738/P8S-1994
The Best Of Eddy Arnold Vol. 3 RCA LSP-4844/P8S-2127
This Is Eddy Arnold RCA VPS-6032/P8S-5087
The World Of Eddy Arnold RCA APL1-0239/AP51-0239

Lp - \$6.98 8tk tape - \$7.98

CHET ATKINS

Born: June 20, 1924, Lutrell, Texas

Married: Leona Johnson

Children: d. Merle

"Atkins is one of the most versatile musicians in America. His guitar techniques are varied. He is a virtuoso classical, traditional, modern jazz, flamenco, pop, and, of course, country guitarist." *

Elected to the Country Music Hall Of Fame - 1973

ATKINS, CHET
Chet Atkins Plays Back Home Hymns RCA LSP-2601
Guitar Country RCA LSP-2783/P8S-1047
The Best Of RCA LSP-2887(e)/P8S-1562
Chet Atkins Picks On The Beatles RCA LSP-3531/P8S-1103
The Best Of Chet Atkins Vol. 2 RCA LSP-3558/P8S-2000

Lp - \$6.98 8tk tape - \$7.98

GENE AUTRY

Born: September 29, 1907, Tioga Springs, Texas

Married: w. Ina May Spivey

"It would be easy to say that Autry didn't have much of a voice, that most of his songs were silly, that he wore absurd clothes in his films, and that he had little impact on serious culture. But to a generation or more of Americans, Gene Autry is the cowboy." *

Elected to the Country Music Hall Of Fame - 1969

AUTRY, GENE
Country Music Hall Of Fame COL CS-1035

Lp - \$5.98

begged off appearing after Roy with the old "Gee, I'd-like-to-get-to-bed-earlier-so..." excuse. Roy simply blew them out, and his career began to take off. Halsey had gone to work.

The next big break was Roy's initial appearance on the *Tonight Show* when Jimmy Dean was sitting in for Johnny Carson. Jimmy wanted Roy on the show, and Halsey obliged him with an added smile. Halsey also sent out hundreds of telegrams to buyers all over the country telling them to "catch Roy on the *Tonight Show* tonight." From that one show, Halsey built Roy's career for the next year.

"Tv takes precedent over any other endeavor in the company." The speaker is Dick Howard, Halsey's vice president for tv, who works out of a spacious chrome-and-fern-infested office on Sunset Blvd., downtown Hollywood. His job consists of getting Halsey's people on tv. Nothing more, but nothing less, because tv, as the man says, is where it's at, and Dick Howard, handsome but nattily rumpled man he is, has placed more of Halsey's clients on tv than all other country agencies combined.

"Halsey has been aware that tv is the key since the very first day I met him," says Howard "and that was seven years ago. *Hee-Haw* was no dumb luck. Jim knew what it would mean for Roy. In one night of tv, you can reach more people than you can in working ten years coast to coast... plus new people. We have a cancellation clause in all our personal appearance contracts if a sudden tv offer comes up. To cancel a \$20,000 gig for Roy to get him on tv for scale is a pleasure for us.

"I'm not talking about strictly country shows, but of good tv of any format. For a country artist to appear on a non-country show is not only a plus for the artist, but also for country music. You see, country music is in an odd position, and a unique one. When a country artist goes on a non-country show, the artist not only represents himself, but he represents all of country music. Strange, right?"

Dick Howard has been in the tv game for seven years.—He started out as a talent buyer for the old rock and roll show, *Shindig*, and then moved on to two of the biggest talent agencies in the business,

CMA and IFA. It was at CMA that Dick first met Jim. Halsey wanted to get Roy and his other people on tv.

"Jim was really far-sighted about that," Howard continues, "but the big agencies had so many clients that Roy got lost in it all. Nobody on the East or West coast knew anything about Roy except that he was country, and the agency was really only interested in rock and roll and Las Vegas and that stuff. The tv departments of the big agencies have huge lists of clients that they have to hustle for, and since they're L.A. and New York-based, that's where the action is. Managers of clients have to be there to put pressure on the agents, and most country isn't based on the coast. So it's tough for the Nashville managers. And the Nashville agencies. They don't have the position or the contacts. And the big agencies, even if they do take on country acts,

"Now, I can get Roy Clark on the Tonight Show almost anytime I want. And Johnny Carson isn't a great country buff by any means..."

aren't that much interested in it. They'll talk about Tom T. Hall in the same breath with Bette Midler or Sammy Davis, Jr.

"Now, I can get Roy on the *Tonight Show* almost anytime I want. And Johnny Carson isn't a great country buff by any means. But Roy is special because we've proved to Johnny that he has pull. In fact, when Roy hosted the *Tonight Show*, we had other country agencies calling us asking if they could put their people on the show. We're in that position. We have access. We have the right people in the right jobs, and we have the right clients. It's all been put together very carefully. I can take a client, determine what I want to do, and go after it. It may take three months, but I do it. I don't have forty clients to book each week. I can take a Freddy Weller or a Diana Trask, and *concentrate*."

Meanwhile, back in Tulsa...

Today, Jim Halsey, Roy Clark

and Hank Thompson are all partners in the Jim Halsey Co., Inc. along with Mac Sanders, who handles the radio business, and Wayne Creasy, who specializes in land management. In the last four years, the Halsey Organization has expanded to include real estate holdings, including office buildings, duplexes, and apartments in Tulsa, the ownership of country music station KTOW (also in Tulsa), numerous music publishing businesses, and Singin' T Productions and Nerco Productions. They are the producers of the master recordings of Hank and Roy released through Dot Records.

That's the *business* of it all; it's really much more than that. One of the extra elements is that Halsey and crew still work out of Tulsa, one of the least expected entertainment centers this side of Hoboken. Jim tried L.A. for a year, but hated it ("We all got asthma"), and returned back to his original stomping grounds, where he works out of a small suite that looks more like a complex of dentists' offices than the usual steel-and-glass monoliths of the music business. He's maintained that sense of small time in a multi-million dollar franchise—and that kind of intimacy is fast becoming a lost art in big entertainment circles. Especially if you're going to get Big Business done. Bigness is usually geared to expediency, which is geared to a lack of personal contact. Halsey has turned that around.

"That's one thing I won't compromise," Halsey says, "and never will, because that is what I believe in. And I've believed in country music for a long time, long before anyone else did. Add that to the fact that I'm a salesman, and a good one because I believe in what I sell, and I think that's a good indication why we're where we are today."

We. Another key word, and spoken not in a business way, but in a way one talks about Wednesday night nickel-ante poker pals. The stakes may be infinitely higher, but the feel is there. Partners in business have come to mean partners in life... a way of doing things, a way of succeeding. Ask anyone in Tulsa about Halsey—or, for that matter, ask anybody in country music, East or West—and you'll always get the same reaction.

"Jim Halsey? He's a winner!" ■

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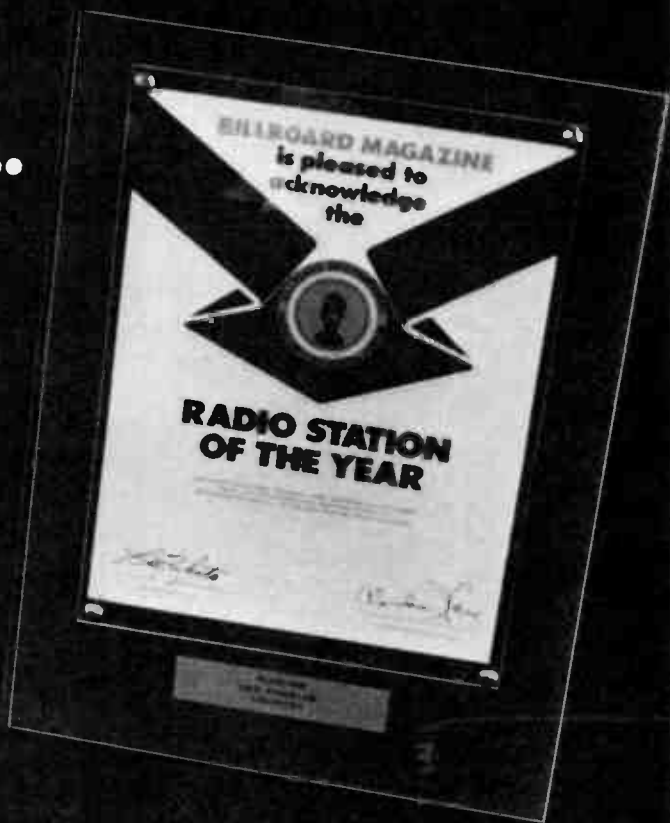
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Donna Fargo

Miss Donna Fargo
 ABC Dot DOSD-2002 6.98
 GRT 8150-2002 (tape) 7.98

Donna Fargo's first album since Dot Records merged with ABC proves that even a schoolteacher can break a few rules in the country book and still stand proudly at the head of her class.

She manages to mix gospel-flavored country with romantic country, thereby breaking the old rule that says you shouldn't do that. The album features two bright two-timing tunes, one concerning her man's messing around and one concerning her own wanderings, back to back with four songs that most definitely rely on some tenet of old time religion with several others that feature The Lord in at least a supporting role.

The second broken rule has to do with singer-songwriters avoiding anyone else's hits if they can help it. Departing from a tradition she's strictly maintained since the first album assured her of the public's ear, Donna gets

the urge to ramble as an interpreter of one song beyond country's normal boundaries, the Bee Gee's charming "Words," and she closes the album with Elvis' oldie, "Heartbreak Hotel." This venerable old barroom anthem manages to coexist with the patriotic air, "U.S. Of A." a Fargo-penned rouser that has given "The Star Spangled Banner" a run for its money on many radio stations.

Among the outstanding cuts on this album are "You Can't Be A Beacon (If Your Light Don't Shine)," "Only The Strong," "A Woman's Prayer," and "If You're Somewhere Listening," the latter a touching little prayer.

Miss Donna successfully breaks another rule: Stick to one lyrical style and never stray from it. While it seems doubly strange for the former head of a high school English department to freely mix blank verse with basic moon-June rhymes, that's what she revels in. This would seem to put a damper on sing-a-long desires, except on the

choruses, but instead of singing along I found myself listening more carefully.

She breaks these rules rather brilliantly. Her apparent inconsistencies don't bump or jerk, but rather provide a smooth musical ride throughout the album. No sense trying to second-guess her techniques, or her skill at songwriting: "The Happiest Girl In The Whole U.S.A." comes off smiling like Mona Lisa in bluejeans.

ROBERT ADELS

Waylon Jennings

Waylon The Ramblin' Man
 RCA APL1-0734 6.98
 APS1-0734 (tape) 7.98

"I'm A Ramblin' Man," the title tune, takes off like a rocket with the Jennings voice firm and muscular. "Rainy Day Woman," Waylon's own song, has a long rocking instrumental passage and by the time we are into "Midnight Rider" the Gregg Allman song, it sounds as if Waylon is once again desegregating, knocking down the barriers and about to earn himself the disapproval of the hard core country music buffs. It is certainly true that Waylon has embraced some of the rock sound in his last three or four albums, sufficient for some to wonder if the crossover from country to rock was going to be permanent and in crossing over was Waylon burning his bridges behind him?

I don't think so: Waylon is just doing what he feels comfortable at, whether it is churning out lyrics about Chicago, Cincinnati and points West (in "Ramblin' Man"), or singing "The Hunger," your basic sin and sex country song. Grafted to one of those familiar sounding country melodies, the latter is a song that would please

and appease Bill Monroe's most fervent and rigid followers. And to follow it with "I Can't Keep My Hands Off Of You," another song in the classic country-love song tradition, given the classic treatment, redresses the album's balance. Jennings sure has the ability to get into the emotion of a lyric. He can give a line like "looking at heaven and standing in hell" real meaning and depth.

I guess *Waylon The Ramblin' Man* shows where country music is at right now, able to digest a little of long-haired rock's boogie and still keep on the straight and narrow. Remember that Waylon



Jennings was among the first to point up a wider horizon and inject new wine into old bottles. Incidentally, Waylon must be a songwriter's friend. Lee Fry, the writer of "The Hunger" wandered in off the street in Nashville, Waylon heard his work and straightaway recorded him.

IAN DOVE

Richard Betts

Highway Call
 Capricorn CP-0123 6.98
 L80-0123 (tape) 7.98

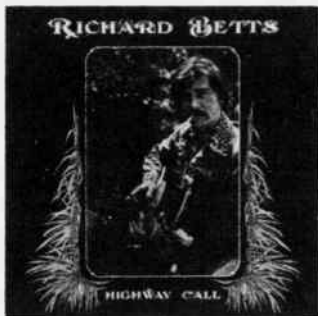
For those of you who don't know Richard Betts, he's half of the nearly legendary dual-lead, harmonic guitar combination of Dicky Betts and Duane Allman. His claim to fame comes through his association with the Georgia-

based Allman Brothers' rock band, which in certain circles is regarded as the best thing to come down the pike since Frye boots. *Highway Call* is Dicky Betts' solo album and suffice it to say it travels other roads than the rock and roll route he's been associated with—decidedly different roads. Betts' roots are pure, backwoods Georgia country. All of this is by way of saying that *Highway Call* isn't by some pop musician going country; it's by a country boy going back to where he came from.

The fact this is a solo album doesn't mean it's nothing but Betts' picking on himself. In fact, he is surrounded by some of the best musicians around town; Vassar Clements on fiddle; Chuck Leavall on piano; John Hughey on steel guitar. The combination makes for mighty fine listening. Whether he's playing Dobro or acoustic guitar or singing, Betts does what he does best—making

sound come alive with meaning, in ways that often border on brilliance.

The album is low-key for the most part. There's a mellowness to Betts, and I don't



mean sweetness. It's more of a respect for what he's doing. He loves his country music, and you can't help love what he does with it. Betts and Hughey on steel guitar get it off on a good highway number, "Long Time Gone." "Rain" is lyrical and moody, but never mournful. Leavall's piano sings on the title cut, "Highway Call," a song

which in less talented hands might be wistful reminiscing, here is country cream. Side two of the album is totally instrumental, done in the Bob Wills tradition. In "Hand-Picked" everyone gets their licks in. Playing off one another, with one another or alone, Betts, Clements and Hughey are in swinging sync. It's not like they got together to try and understand—it's like they've always understood. The sounds sparkle.

Get acquainted with Betts. If he's come home, all I can say is—Welcome!

ARLO FISCHER

he is an all-around entertainer.

Wilkins is a talent to be reckoned with. His vocals on this lp are a delight, perfectly conveying the mood—



Little David Wilkins

Little David Wilkins
MCA Records MCA-445 6.98
MCAT-445 (tape) 7.98

Little David Wilkins has been hovering around the edges of stardom for a long time. With this record he has finally made it. Known mainly as a songwriter up to now, he proves with this album that

joy, sadness—of the lyrics. For reference, his voice is somewhat like Conway Twitty's, though it is lighter and more securely on key. His piano flawlessly enhances his voice. The package is unbeatable.

But a lot of good performers still put out mediocre albums. They pick songs that
(continued on page 52)



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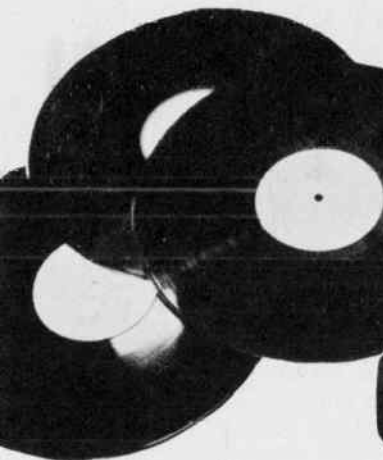
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are unsuitable or uninteresting, or they do tunes that sound too much alike or are too familiar from other people's versions. If they write, they are in danger of not recognizing when a song doesn't work. Wilkins avoids all these pitfalls, even though all but one of the compositions on the album come from his own pen. Take the first side: It opens with "Not Tonight," a sure-to-be-classic about marital distress; includes "To My One And Only" and "He Cries Like A Baby," either (or both) of which could easily become top 10 singles; "Butterbeans," an up-beat novelty about Southern cooking (written by Charlie Colvin); a spare, dramatic rendition of Warner McPherson's "My Love for You;" and closes with "Georgia Keeps Pulling On My Ring" which is an appealing lament despite its awkward hook line. The other side is just as good and includes at least one and arguably three potential chart toppers.

There are no credits on *Little David Wilkins*, which probably means that Wilkins produced himself. It's too bad, because everyone who had a hand on it should have the pleasure of the applause. A fine record, and one you should go out of your way not to miss.

JOHN GABREE

Red Steagall

Finer Things In Life
Capitol ST-11321 6.98
8XT-11321 (tape) 7.98

Red Steagall gets better and better. Already established as one of the country's best songwriters, Steagall has finally made an album that puts it all together for him as a performer.

This is bedrock country, no frills, no fancy arranging, nothing but beer-drinking music about real people and real situations. Red has always been a fine singer, but under producer Glenn Sutton's guiding hand he has come up with a performance that tops everything he's previously done. He must have known as he did it how good this album was going to

be.

The material is mostly terrific. Red's hit, "I Gave Up Good Mornin' Darling" is



here, one of the best songs about the aftermath of saying goodbye, followed immediately by "No Thanks, Boys," a happy song about a guy who is glad he has what he has. "God Only Knows (Who'll Take Her Home)" has all the ambivalence that most men feel toward a woman who follows her own ways. In "Tight Levis and Yellow Ribbons" Red confesses to some not very off-beat obsessions. "Life in Coleman County" is a song about a man not doing all that well in the big city. Another man expects to find that his wife has been cheating on him at "Jerry's Bar and Grill." And "The Real Thing" and "Someone Cares for You" are two of the most beautiful ballads Steagall has ever done.

All told, this is a very conservative album, and that's partly what gives it such impact. The stories Red tells are not much different from stories we've been told before, but that's 'cause they're true, and they aren't hurt for being told again. Cliches become cliches because they are about something so obviously real no one can miss them.

Similarly, the music is as down home as could be. Glenn Sutton is noted for his use of strings and choruses and other pop paraphernalia, but this time he is admirably restrained. The excellent sidemen (no credits, but it would be nice to know who the sweet fiddler is), the back-up voices, and the tight, simple arrangements suit Red's spare writing to a T.

JOHN GABREE

Floyd Cramer

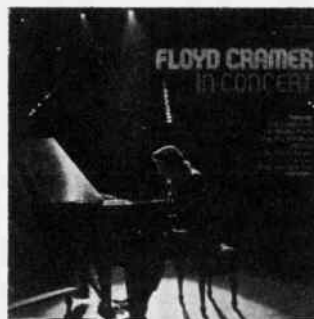
In Concert
RCA APL1-0661 6.98
APS1-0661 (tape) 7.98

Is Floyd Cramer country? Before you say no, you had better check all your country albums released over the past 20 years, because the chances are good that if they list the musicians, Cramer's name will be among them.

Cramer's distinctive bent-note piano style was heard on nearly all of the gold records Elvis Presley, Jim Reeves and Brenda Lee made in the 50's and 60's. His style was as much a part of creating the Nashville sound as that of Chet Atkins or Boots Randolph.

At last count, this new release by Cramer is his 39th album. It was produced by Chet Atkins in the cafeteria of Neelys Bend Junior High School in Nashville. The reason for the location is that one of Cramer's daughters was on the entertainment committee for the annual Ninth Grade Banquet, and she asked Dad to perform. The result is a remarkably good album, complete with a highly enthusiastic audience.

Cramer gives the kids a touch of today with songs like "The Entertainer," "The Way We Were" and "Let Me Be There;" a touch of the past with Cramer's big sellers "Last Date," "On The Rebound" and "Flip, Flop and Bop" and a large dose of country such as "San Antonio Rose," "Green Green



Grass of Home" and seven Hank Williams' songs arranged in a medley. An unusual, up-tempo rendition of the old Pete Drake talking guitar hit "Forever" is one

of the album's many highlights.

Country music today has a wide range from the very modern sounds to the old line mountain and western songs. Floyd Cramer is one of the few people in Nashville who can jump into either category with equal success. To my way of thinking, Cramer is a welcome addition to any field of music. He loves to play country music, because it is in his roots. And, for that, country music fans should be grateful.

DON RHODES

Hank Williams Jr.

Living Proof
MGM Records M3G 4971
6.98
8G4971 (tape) 7.98

Sons of famous fathers have problems, all the more compounded if junior decides to



get into senior's line of business. Hank Williams Jr. is indeed living proof of this, as the title suggests, but he has weathered all the maudlin publicity about being his father's son and soundalike. Some of the singing persona of his late father has been assimilated by Hank Jr. despite the fact that when Hank Sr. died, Hank Jr. was only three and could scarcely have remembered the country music giant. Hank Jr. may look out at us from the album cover, trendy seventies mustache, longish hair (and having lost some weight if I'm not mistaken) but the voice and delivery will remind you of the father. People tend to overreact to this side of Hank Williams Jr., forgetting perhaps the countless other singers in the country field, amateur and professional,

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Waylon Jennings "The Ramblin' Man" including: I'm A Ramblin' Man; Rainy Day Woman; Cloudy Days; Midnight Rider; Oklahoma Sunshine; The Hunger; I Can't Keep My Hands Off Of You; It'll Be Her; Memories Of You & I; Amanda
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who are making a career out of recycling Hank Sr.'s licks.

One side of this album is devoted to all Hank Jr.'s compositions and you could say that these are in the tradition of sad, lonesome, lost, hopeless, sentimental love songs that his father established his reputation with. Hank Jr.'s titles tell the story—"Before You Fell Out Of Love With Me," "Getting Over You," "Where She Left Off." This kind of song, well-written and well-performed by Hank Jr., is the staple of the Nashville Industry. The world, says Nashville, can always use another heart-pining love song.

Some more familiar songs are included on the other side: "Confused," "How Long Will You Keep Coming Back To Me" and Hank Sr.'s, "I Just Don't Don't Like This Kind Of Livin'" which, pedal steel and all, does mirror the kind of thing Hank Sr. used to surround himself with.

There is a generally sad mood in the album but Hank Jr. does offer living proof that he is his own man.

IAN DOVE

Barbara Mandrell

This Time I Almost Made It

Columbia KC 32959 5.98
KCA-32959 (tape) 6.98

Even more than usual, I guess, liking or not liking this record is a matter of taste. There's no escaping that it's a good, solid, professional job: There's no escaping, either, that it could have been alot better if the songs had been selected with more care. As it stands, the songs are too familiar and the arrangements are too perfect.

All of which is too bad. Barbara Mandrell is one of the best of the newer singers in Nashville. Live and in person she is dynamite. On record, she has a clear expressive voice that is capable

of doing almost any kind of song. She reminds me of Lynn Anderson in her effort-less versatility.

But it would be nice to have a songstress of Barbara Mandrell's stature offer her fans some country songs that haven't gotten the exposure



they deserve. We bet she could do a great job on country standards that were hits for another generation instead of reaching into pop music for her songs. There's plenty of new country writers that could also use the exposure.

The title tune is good. "Wisdom of a Fool" is a moment of inspiration. "You're All I Need To Get By" almost comes alive.

Maybe Barbara's fans want it that way. Like I said, I guess it's a matter of taste.

JOHN GABREE

"Back Down In Atlanta" is big city pining (in this case New York) for simpler, more loving times down South. "Street Singer" is journalism and street corner observation. "Sittin' Around The Campfire" is just that, a song about sittin' around the campfire. Acuff Jr. has a good traditional approach to country singing and picking and the production—the rest of the material is under the guidance of Don Gant—does not intrude. No sweeping, svelte backgrounds, just simple and minimum back up group and chorus.

What lifts the album out of the ordinary is Acuff's obvious affection for the music of John D. Loudermilk, who is represented here with four songs. The off-beat Mr. Loudermilk's "Lament Of The Cherokee Reservation Indian" is one of the early Indian protest songs, before Wounded Knee, for example, when a certain fashionability about it all crept in. It is still one of the best as Loudermilk's lyric sets out, stark and simple, the business of being a reservation Indian.



Roy Acuff Jr.
California Lady
Hickory Records H3G4514
6.98
H8G4514 (tape) 7.98

Country music people stick together, no doubt about it, and long-term musical-production associations abound in the field. Consider Wesley Rose, one of Nashville's revered publishing-producing names, and Roy Acuff. Their association goes back decades and now here comes Roy Acuff Jr. and the producer of five of the titles is . . . Wesley Rose. Roy is certainly in the Acuff tradition: six songs on the album were written by him and they contain straightforward country images that have been around in country music for a long long time.

"I Wish It Were Me" is a sad song of lost love but Loudermilk injects some sardonic humor that uplifts the song and its theme. Acuff Jr. sounds very much at home with his own work and with Loudermilk's. Why not? The broad tradition of country music has been in his home all his life.

IAN DOVE

The Lewis Family
High In Gospel Country
Canaan CAS-9753 6.98

The first number on this album is a happy tune called "Pick Me Up, Lord," which

MEL STREET'S FAVORITES

Mel Street hit the country music scene hot and heavy a couple of years ago with "Borrowed Angel" on Metro-media Records and it led to his current affiliation with GRT Records. Mel is a George Jones fan (what male singer isn't?) and you can detect George's influence on Mel's style. Mel also thinks Dolly Parton's lyrics and personality are tops. Here are some of Mel's favorite albums:

George Jones	In A Gospel Way	Epic
George Jones	Greatest Hits	Muscor
Tammy Wynette	Greatest Hits	Epic
Hank Williams	Greatest Hits	MGM
Merle Haggard	The Best of The Best of Merle	Capitol
Dolly Parton	The Best of Dolly Parton	RCA
Loretta Lynn	Greatest Hits: Volume 1	MCA
Jack Greene	Greatest Hits	Decca (MCA)
Elvis Presley	Aloha From Hawaii	RCA
Charley Pride	The Best of Charley Pride	RCA
Porter Wagoner	The Best of Porter Wagoner	RCA

Of his own work, Mel likes *Borrowed Angel* (Metro-media Country) and *The Town Where You Live* and *Two-Way Street*, both on GRT.

aptly describes what The Lewis Family is famous for doing... lifting the spirits of an audience through their songs and through the life that Little Roy Lewis puts into his banjo. Whether this Lincolnton, Georgia, family is performing old standards or new compositions, they



have a well-deserved reputation for quality.

For this release, the family enlisted the effort of Charlie McCoy on harmonica, Jesse McReynolds on the fiddle and mandolin, Josh Graves on dobro, Bob Moore on bass, Buddy Harmon on drums and Jerry Smith on the piano—coupled with the talents of Wallace Lewis on his Martin guitar and Little Roy Lewis on both guitar and banjo.

The selections performed give testimony to the fact that it's hard to classify The Lewis Family into any one

category. Sure, they have gospel roots—and they demonstrate it on the gospel standards like "I've Been A Waitin'" (with Pop Lewis singing lead); "Beyond the River" (the old Wally Fowler number with Little Roy excelling on lead singing backed up by his own acoustical guitar playing); and "Take Your Shoes Off Moses" (with Wallace singing lead).

But the family shows they're at home with country music ("The Baptism of Jesse Taylor" and "That Old Time Preacher Man"), or doing bluegrass-gospel numbers like Paul Craft's "I'm Working My Way" or Wallace Lewis' "That Old Ship."

One of the best songs on the album was written by country music songwriter/singer Jackey Ward ("Big Blue Diamond" and "Smokey Places"). The song, with Janis Lewis singing lead, is entitled "The Only Man-Made Things In Heaven Are The Scars On Jesus' Hands." It's a beautiful song that is sure to be copied by many other groups. The Lewis Family told me at one show when they did it, before several thousand fans, the audience stood up in a very emotional moment... as if "How Great Thou Art" were being sung.

High In Gospel Country,

all in all, shows The Lewis Family will have to go a long way in their next recording session to top this album.

DON RHODES

Red, White & Blue(grass)

Pickin' Up
GRC CA 10003 6.98
8T-G-10003 (tape) 7.98

It's difficult to get to really like a bluegrass group from its records alone. For if the idiom is one part instrumental and vocal virtuosity it is also one part showmanship—from clothing to grouping around a single microphone when singing the two,



three and four-part harmonies. Listening to "Pickin' Up," though, has made me a believer: Red, White & Blue(grass) have the technical expertise and—so rare on record—the presence that are the mark of the truly professional bluegrass band.

The material for this second album is drawn from the standard bluegrass repertoire as well as traditional and contemporary songbags. The group members themselves—Grant and Ginger Boatwright, Dale Whitcomb and Dave Sebolt—offer four of their own compositions.

The vocals, with Ginger Boatwright taking the lead in most cases, are not as tense or high-pitched as those of some of the more traditional bluegrass bands. But the smooth sound they achieve provide just the right spark for the similarly even instrumental core. In that latter department, incidentally, Red, White & Blue(grass) are assisted by fiddlers Vassar Clements and Byron Berline and percus-

sionists John Raines and Larry Cox.

The album opens with a pair of Bill Monroe tunes, "Voice From On High" and "It's Mighty Dark To Travel." A simple rendition of Bob Dylan's "Tomorrow Is A Long Time" captures the spirit of the lyrics perfectly. "Palmerdale Postal Service" is Grant Boatwright's tribute to Doc Watson, and the traditional "Fixin' To Die" gives Vassar a chance to cut loose on an old country blues.

The second side is similarly well-balanced, with equal attention given to pickin' and singin'. Even "Amazing Grace" and "Will The Circle Be Unbroken" sound fresh and spirited—and those are two songs which have been recorded aplenty in recent years.

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Top: Tammy and George, Below: Hank and Jeannie.



PHOTOS: MARSHALL FALLWELL

As a Mississippi farm girl, Tammy Wynette's idol was country music star George Jones. He was to her what Sinatra had been to millions of girls in the forties and what the Beatles became to millions more during the sixties.

There was nothing glamorous about life on a cotton farm, and it didn't get much better later in a Birmingham government housing project, but Tammy's dreams supplied the escape she sought. She often fantasized about being "discovered" and moving to Nashville to become a big singing star. Sometimes her daydreams included getting to meet George Jones, but that's as far as the vision went. The idea of *marrying* her idol was too bold even for a fantasy.

Jeannie Seely's fantasies never included marrying Hank Cochran, either. She was 22-years-old the first time she ever heard of him. Jeannie was living in Los Angeles, working by day as a secretary at Liberty Records, writing songs and looking for a place to sing them by night. No one showed any real interest in her music, and to make matters worse she was suffering

from a broken heart. The man she'd loved thought she ought to forget her career dreams, and when she couldn't, he told her to find herself a new guy. Just when she'd think she was getting over him, she'd see him in a restaurant or at a party and she'd crumble inside all over again.

One day she heard Patsy Cline singing a new song on the radio: "I fall to pieces each time I see you again; I fall to pieces, how can I be just a friend? You want me to act like we've never kissed. You want me to forget and pretend that we never met..."

By the time the song was over Jeannie was in tears. She felt the man who'd written those words had been eavesdropping on her life, and she was determined to meet him. Hank Cochran songs became her favorites after that, and she studied his work with the dedication of a student cramming for finals.

"His songs were so touching, and there was such feeling and sensitivity in his lyrics, that I thought he'd have to be the most romantic man in the world," Jeannie said recently while strolling leisurely to-

ward the pasture on her 220-acre farm near Nashville. She was dressed in her favorite off-stage style—levis, boots and a tank top—and enjoying her favorite off-the-road pastime—roaming free on her farm.

"Then he came to Hollywood to do a TV show, and I met him," she laughed, "and he sure didn't fit the image. In fact, for a while I didn't like him at all. He was the wildest man I'd ever met. I certainly hadn't run into anyone like Hank Cochran back on the farm in Pennsylvania. I hadn't even run into anyone like him in *Hollywood*, where *everyone* is supposed to be squirrely. I didn't know how to take him. He was drinking heavily then and well... he was crazy, that's all. But even when I didn't like him, I was fascinated by him.

"He took an interest in my career and he became the most encouraging friend I'd ever had. He'd call frequently from Nashville and we became telephone buddies. It was strictly friendship, no thoughts of romance on either side. When he split up with his wife, Shirley, I tried to persuade him to stay single. He'd been married all his life—since

TAMMY & GEORGE & HANK & JEANNIE

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"None of us ever know for sure why we love someone," Jeannie said.

he was 17—and I thought that was terrible. But he turned right around and married again and it only lasted a few months. Then he called and said he was thinking of going back to Shirley and I told him it would probably be the best thing. That's where his kids were and she was (and is) a jewel of a woman. Their only problem was she didn't understand the music business and wanted a more normal, routine life. He went back but it didn't work. Hank can't live by routine.

"Meanwhile, Hank had persuaded me to move to Nashville because he said I'd never get anywhere as long as I stayed in Los Angeles. Sure enough, he helped me get a recording contract, wrote my first big single 'Don't Touch Me' and I won a Grammy for it before he decided he was in love with me and wanted to get married. By that time I'd known him for six years and I *knew* my idol had feet of clay. But I also knew I was happy with him and miserable without him. I was almost 29, had never been married and wasn't eager to try it, but I didn't want to lose Hank. When I called home to tell them the news my cousin said, 'You can't marry him. He's your idol. You'll never know if it's him or his talent you love.' I thought a lot about that, but then I realized that none of us ever know for sure why we love someone, and what difference does it make anyway?

"But later there were times when I wondered if she hadn't been right. Hank had done more for my career than anyone, but after we married

he decided he wanted me to give it up and stay home with him and write. I'd come home off the road and we'd fight until I went back out again. We separated over it once and then finally a throat infection forced me to stay home for three months. I was like a caged animal. When Hank saw how much my singing meant to me, he finally understood and we started working things out. We said, 'Let's quit fighting the business and start using it to our advantage. Let's enjoy the good parts and learn to live through the bad and that's what

"We have a marriage some people would call weird and a lifestyle many wouldn't understand, but it works for us, and that's all that matters."

we've done. We have a marriage some people would call weird and a lifestyle many wouldn't understand, but it works for us, and that's all that matters."

Jeannie hated being on the road alone, so she teamed up with Jack Greene, whom she considers the best singer in country music, to form the Jack Greene-Jeannie Seely Show. Hank doesn't like being alone either, so when Jeannie's on the road he's either off on his boat with one of his buddies or at home on the farm surrounded by what Jeannie calls "our little family." Nashville

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calls it 'The Music Factory' because practically everybody except the dogs picks, sings, writes or does all three.

"Hank used to joke that he wouldn't dare hum in the shower unless it was an old standard, because someone around here would steal his tune," Jeannie laughed. "Sometimes I'll say something tender to him and he'll say, 'Where'd you get that line? Is that yours? Is that new or did you hear it somewhere?' Once I complained to him about saving all his romantic lines for his songs and not laying any of them on me and he said, 'If I tried to say those things to you it would either come out so hokey you'd laugh at it, or it would be so good I'd hear it the next week in a new song you'd written!' He loves to kid about it, but the truth is, we all collaborate and help one another, and he's the most generous of all with his time and ideas."

Jeannie explained that what has evolved is a sort of commune-like living arrangement where a group of people who love and respect one another have been able to find individual fulfillment while sharing

their lifestyle. The "family" members, who live on two farms a few miles apart, include Jeannie and Hank, Hank's cousin, singer-songwriter Cliff Cochran, Cliff's wife Barbara, who is also Jeannie's secretary and "right arm," Jack Greene, and Hank's middle son, 19-year-old J.R. Cochran who has just written

**"Sometimes I'll say
something tender to him
and he'll say,
'Where'd you get that
line? Is that yours?
Is that new or did you hear
it somewhere?'"**

his first hit song, "Slowly Slip Away" which Jeannie will record for her next album. Nearby are two close friends, Doug Douglas and Ruth Cook, who frequently travel with Hank on his boat trips to Florida while Jeannie and Jack are on the road. When time and schedules permit they all vacation together. This year for Christmas they gave

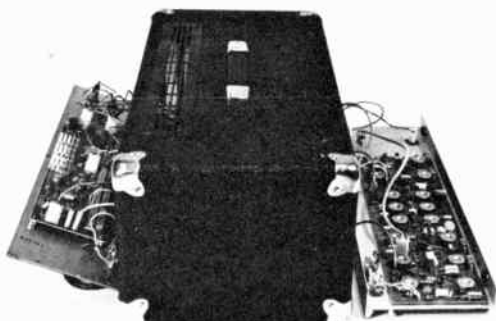
one another a Caribbean cruise.

"Hank is in Florida right now on his boat," Jeannie concluded, "and I probably won't see him for a couple months. It's definitely not a marriage that could work for everyone. During our rough times what saved us was the fact that we were friends for so long before we became man and wife. Having been my friend before he was my husband, Hank was able to understand that my not wanting to stay home with him wasn't a put-down. It didn't mean I loved him less. A few months ago he was named to the Nashville Songwriter's Association Hall of Fame and they held a banquet in his honor. All throughout the evening his songs were being played in the background—God, he's written so many hits—and I kept getting goose bumps hearing them. I've known Hank for eleven years now and the relationship hasn't always been easy. But one thing never changed. He's still my hero."

* * *

Tammy had moved to Nashville and cut her first single record, "Apartment # 9" before she met her hero, George Jones.

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Her producer at Columbia Records, Billy Sherrill, told her that George was in the studio recording the same song, and Tammy hurried downstairs to listen in on the session. She doesn't remember being officially introduced to George, but she knows she was relieved to learn he was putting the song into an album rather than releasing it as a single.

"I knew I couldn't handle *that* kind of competition my first time out." She smiled as she recalled that day in 1966 when she first saw her idol in person. She was sitting in the living room of the magnificent Spanish mansion she shares with George in Nashville as she was saying this, but the expression that crossed her face when she talked of him still resembled a love-struck fan describing her favorite star.

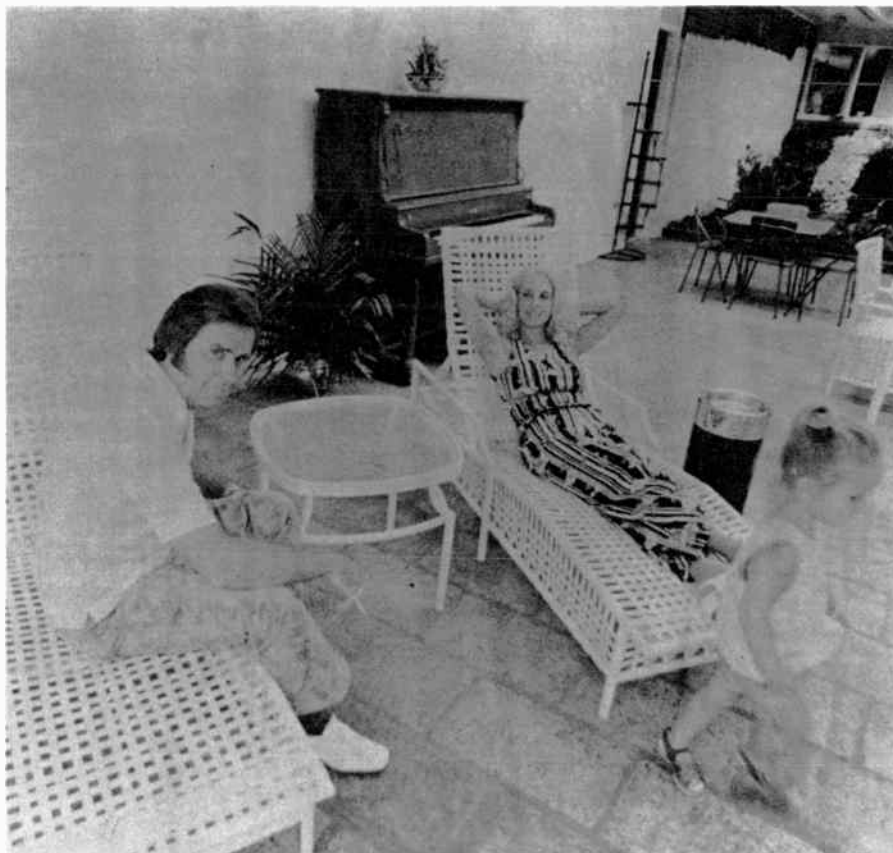
"I had a pretty strong image of him before we met because of his music and all I'd read about him. I expected him to be quiet and shy, a loner, and he turned out to be all those things. We had the same booker, so we started doing some dates together. George and his manager, Bill Starnes, often came out to our house—I was married at the time—to go over material and work on some songs we were writing.

"I had only lived in Nashville for a few months so I didn't know anyone. I came home from the road one night to find all three of my daughters sick with food poisoning and

"George started pushing furniture around the kitchen and telling my husband to lay off, and when my husband said 'Why should I?' George said, 'because, by God, I love her.'"

my husband nowhere around. The girls were only two, four and five and I called Bill to help me get them to the hospital where we ran between beds taking care of them. He picked George up later and brought him back to the hospital, and they stayed with me until the girls were asleep.

"The next afternoon I had taken my daughters home and my husband, who had been out drinking all



Tammy and George at home with daughter Georgette.

night, showed up at about the same time George came by to see how the girls were doing. I'd only been married eight months and I was fed up. We were arguing and he became very abusive verbally, calling me names, when George flew into a fury. It shocked me because he'd always been so quiet. George started pushing furniture around the kitchen and telling my husband to lay off, and when my husband said, 'Why should I?' George said, 'Because by God I love her!'

"I could have fainted. There had never been a hint from George that he felt that way about me. Then he put his arm around me and said, 'And she loves me too. Don't you Hon.' And I said, 'Yes, I do.' And I guess that's when it hit me that I really did love *him*, George Jones, the man, not just the star I'd idolized all those years. Bill was there too, so we packed up the girls that very minute and they took me to a hotel and I never went back. I got an annulment right away, and George and I were married a few months later."

Tammy says there's never been a moment when she wondered whether she'd made a mistake marrying a man she'd never even dated. But three years later, after the birth of

their daughter, Georgette, she faced some trying times with George.

"He had been on the road for 15 years before we married and that life has made a lot of men turn to drinking. George had done enough of it to seriously damage his liver, and his doctor told me that if he didn't cut it out completely he'd be

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Top Of The World	KC-32429	5 98	CA-32429 6 98
Smile For Me	KC-32941	5 98	CA-32941 6 98
CARTER FAMILY, THE			
The Best of the Carter Family	CS-9119	5 98	
Travelin' Minstrel Band	KC-31454	5 98	CA-31454 6 98
Mother Maybell Carter (2 records)	KG-32436	6 98	GA-32436 7 98
Mid The Green Fields of Virginia	LPM-2772	6 98	P8S-2003 7 95
CLINE, PATSY			
Greatest Hits	MCA 12	6 98	MCAT 6-4854 7 98
Patsy Cline Showcase	MCA 87	6 98	MCAT 87 7 98
Sentimentally Yours	MCA 90	6 98	MCAT 90 7 98
A Portrait of Patsy Cline	MCA 224	6 98	MCAT 224 7 98
FAIRCHILD, BARBARA			
A Sweeter Love	KC-31720	5 98	CA-31720 6 98
Standing In Your Line	KC-33058	5 98	CA-33058 6 98
FARGO, DONNA			
The Happiest Girl			
In The Whole U.S.A.	DOS 26000	5 98	26000M 6 95
My Second Album	DOS 26006	5 98	26006M 6 95
All About a Feeling	DOS 26019	5 98	26019M 6 95
JEAN, NORMA			
The Best of	LSP-4227	6 98	P8S-1514 7 95

JOHNSON, LOIS			
Send Me Some Lovin' Whole			
Lot Of Loving (with Hank Williams, Jr.)	MGM4857	6 98	
LEE, BRENDA			
The Brenda Lee Story			
Her Greatest Hits	MCA 2-4012	7 98	MCAT 2-4012 9 98
New Sunrise	MCA 373	6 98	MCAT 373 7 98
	MCA 433	6 98	
LYNN, LORETTA			
Fast City	MCA 272	6 98	MCAT 272 7 95
Greatest Hits	MCA 1	6 98	MCAT 1 7 95
Your Squaw is on The Warpath	MCA 126	6 98	MCAT 126 7 95
Woman of The World—To Make A Man	MCA 280	6 98	MCAT 280 7 95
Loretta Writes 'Em & Sings 'Em	MCA 133	6 98	MCAT 133 7 95
They Don't Make 'Em Like My Daddy	MCA 444	6 98	MCAT 444 7 98
MANDRELL, BARBARA			
The Midnight Oil	KC-32743	5 98	CA-32743 6 98
MURRAY, ANNE			
Snowbird	ST-579	6 98	8XT-579 7 98
Annie	ST-11024	6 98	8XT-11024 7 98
Danny's Song	ST-11172	6 98	8XT-11172 7 98
Anne Murray/Glen Campbell	SW-869	6 98	8XW-869 7 98
Love Song	ST-11216	6 98	8XT-11216 7 98
Country	ST-11324	6 98	8XT-11324 7 98
Take It Over In The Morning	ST-821	6 98	8XT-821 7 98
Anne Murray	ST-667	6 98	8XT-667 7 98
OSMOND, MARIE			
Paper Roses	SE-4910	6 98	M8G-4910 7 98
In My Little Corner Of The World	M3G-4944	6 98	M8H-4944 7 98
PARTON, DOLLY			
Just The Two of Us (With Porter Wagoner)	LSP-4037	6 98	P8S-1375 7 95
Always, Always (With Porter Wagoner)	LSP-4186	6 98	P8S-1481 7 95
The Best Of	LSP-4449	6 98	P8S-1645 7 95
Two Of A Kind (With Porter Wagoner)	LSP-4490	6 98	P8S-1696 7 95



BRENDA LEE/NOW



JEANNE PRUETT/JEANNE PRUETT



LYNN ANDERSON/SMILE FOR ME



BARBARA FAIRCHILD/
STANDING IN YOUR LINE



CONNIE SMITH/
THAT'S THE WAY LOVE GOES



LORETTA LYNN/
THEY DON'T MAKE 'EM LIKE MY DADDY



PHOTO: JOHN LEE

Tammy Wynette and her "idol" husband George Jones.

dead in a few years. But he wouldn't listen, so finally his attorney, who is also his best friend, said 'Tammy, you're going to have to do something drastic to wake him up. Why don't you file for divorce?' I knew I loved him too much to sit by and watch him slowly kill himself, but I was afraid he'd get so mad if I filed for divorce he'd go ahead and let me have one. So the attorney said, 'Don't worry. If he asks for the papers to sign I'll say they aren't made up yet, and we'll stall him.' It never came to that. George did stop drinking when he thought I was going to leave him over it, and to me that was as great a show of love as he could have given me.

"When we married, George was a bitter man. I spent the first couple

**"They have a saying
around Nashville—'If I had
the money George
Jones has been cheated
out of, I wouldn't
have to work a day the
rest of my life'
—and it's about true."**

of years of our marriage trying to help restore his faith in human beings. He was down on the world. He'd been hurt and cheated so many times he felt everybody was out to get him. They have a saying in Nashville—'If I had the money George Jones has been cheated out of, I wouldn't have to work a day the rest of my life'—and it's about true. So I worked extra hard to make him believe someone loved him just for being himself, not because he was George Jones, the star.

"Now he's surrounded by a family who loves him and he no longer feels people are out to take advantage of him. If George has a fault, it's being too easy-going, too good natured. Even the guys in our band tell him he lets them get away with too much. But on the other hand, it's one of his charms. He's so great with the kids. He corrects them, but it's done with love and he's never shown any partiality between his, mine and ours."

The family includes George's married daughter, Susan, his two sons Jeff, 19, and Brian, 14, who live in Texas with their mother, but visit Nashville often; Tammy's daughters Gwen, 13; Jackie, 12, and Tina, 9, and their four-year-old daughter, Georgette. Tammy's mother and step-father also live at the ten-bedroom house in the exclusive Franklin Road section of Nashville, and if George has a bigger fan than Tammy, it's her mother.

"I first heard George's music at home," Tammy said, "where my mother played his records all the time. I accuse her of thinking more of George than she does of me. When we were furniture-shopping for her apartment, before they moved in here, she found a sofa she liked and asked my opinion. I told her it was perfect, and she said, 'Well, I'd really rather talk to George about it. I think I'll wait and see what he says!'"

Tammy admits the convenience of having her folks living with her

is immeasurable because although she and George have limited their roadwork to long weekends, it's a great comfort when they're away to know there's family at home to care for the children.

Raising young ones while pursuing a career hasn't always been easy, but it pleases Tammy that she and George are actually able to be with theirs more than average working parents.

"Some people wonder why George and I don't get on one another's nerves because we work and live together," she said. "But George says he wouldn't have it any other way, and I agree. I love working with him. I still feel flattered to be on the same stage with him, and at home we have separate interests so we're not under one another's feet all day. He's outdoors most of the time because he loves yardwork and takes care of our nine acres by himself. At night we lead a quiet life when we're not working. I cook dinner and afterwards we fool around with the kids, watch television, and

do a lot of reading. George is very much the family man and of course I love that.

"I also love the fact that he has little ways of showing me affection that mean so much. He has a favorite saying and it's the last thing he says to me every night before we go to sleep—'Will you love me when I'm old?' When I got home from the hospital after having Georgette he'd had those words encribed on a plaque hanging over our bed.

"As a singer George is still my idol and he always will be. He's the only singer in country music who has never been imitated. His style and his phrasing are so unique they can't be copied. One of the top Nashville deejays told me that eight out of every ten country music stars he asks names George as their favorite singer, so I'm not alone. Connie Smith has 86 of his albums!

"But what's so nice is that my idol turned out to be even better as a man." ■

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Hi-Fi Corner

Let's Hear It For Frequency Equalizers

by MICHAEL MARCUS

Today's hi-fi is great. Records and tapes are constantly being improved. Components get better each year . . . except for one, the listening room. The big problem is that unless you live in a concert hall or a recording studio, your listening room was designed for something other than listening. And the things that make a room good for partying or pool-shooting are often quite bad for listening to music.

Heavy drapes keep the place warm and cozy, and overstuffed upholstered furniture can be real comfortable, but they soak up any sound that comes near. Lots of people and even furry pets in the room can do the same thing. Wide expanses of bare windows, glass covered pictures, big mirrors, polished hardwood floors, on the other hand, are sound reflectors.

Now, you can get a new kind of audio component called a *frequency equalizer*, that lets you make precise adjustments to your sound system to compensate for what's wrong with your room. An equalizer can best be thought of as a super tone control. It adjusts the frequency balance of the music like the bass and treble controls on your receiver, but it works in smaller and more sharply defined frequency ranges so it can be used against more specific problems, without upsetting the entire tonal balance of the music.

Equalizers are available from \$80 to more than ten times that amount, with anywhere from five to 24 frequency controls per channel. Some of them come with special test records and charts that you can use to calibrate your room so you know exactly what's wrong with them, and then you just follow the instructions and slide some levers to make the corrections.

These devices are nothing short

of amazing. A hundred-dollar equalizer can often improve your sound system more than \$500 worth of other equipment. Handled correctly they can turn some of the worst sounding rooms into sources of sonic pleasure.

What's more—they're fun. The potentials for sonic manipulation are as endless as your imagination. Want to make Johnny Cash sound like your mother? An equalizer can

with 12 controls per channel, level meters, and convenient switching for equalization while recording. Their FEW-4 (also \$200) has five controls for each of four channels for use in a quadrasonic sound system.

At \$500 there is the Soundcraftsmen RP212, with 10 controls per channel and accessory inputs, overload indicators, and switching and connection facilities to function as a



The BSR FEW-2 Frequency Equalizer. It would be hard to spend \$100 on anything more dramatic than this.

do it. Want to make your mother sound like your father? Touch the right controls and you can come pretty close. Coupled to a microphone and a tape deck, an equalizer is one of the greatest party games and babysitters ever invented.

The least expensive equalizer I know of comes from Radio Shack, and goes for about \$80. It's made by BSR, and essentially is the same as the BSR FEW-2, with five controls for each of two stereo channels. The BSR unit lists for \$100, but is often discounted to about the same price as the Radio Shack unit. Also available from BSR is the \$200 FEW-3,

complete pre-amplifier. For \$550 you can get the excellent SAE Mark XXVI equalizer with 11 frequency controls per channel, and if you did really well at Christmas, Altec-Lansing will sell you their Acousta-Voicette, with an incredible 24 controls per channel, for \$875.

If you think you'd like the features of an equalizer without the complexity, you might consider a receiver with expanded tone controls. Fisher, Pioneer, JVC, and Lafayette, for example, have models that go a bit beyond basic bass and treble. ■

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