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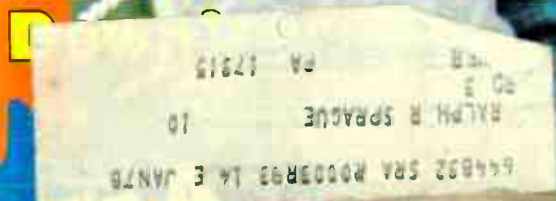
KENNY ROGERS

Lynn Anderson Vs. TV Snobs

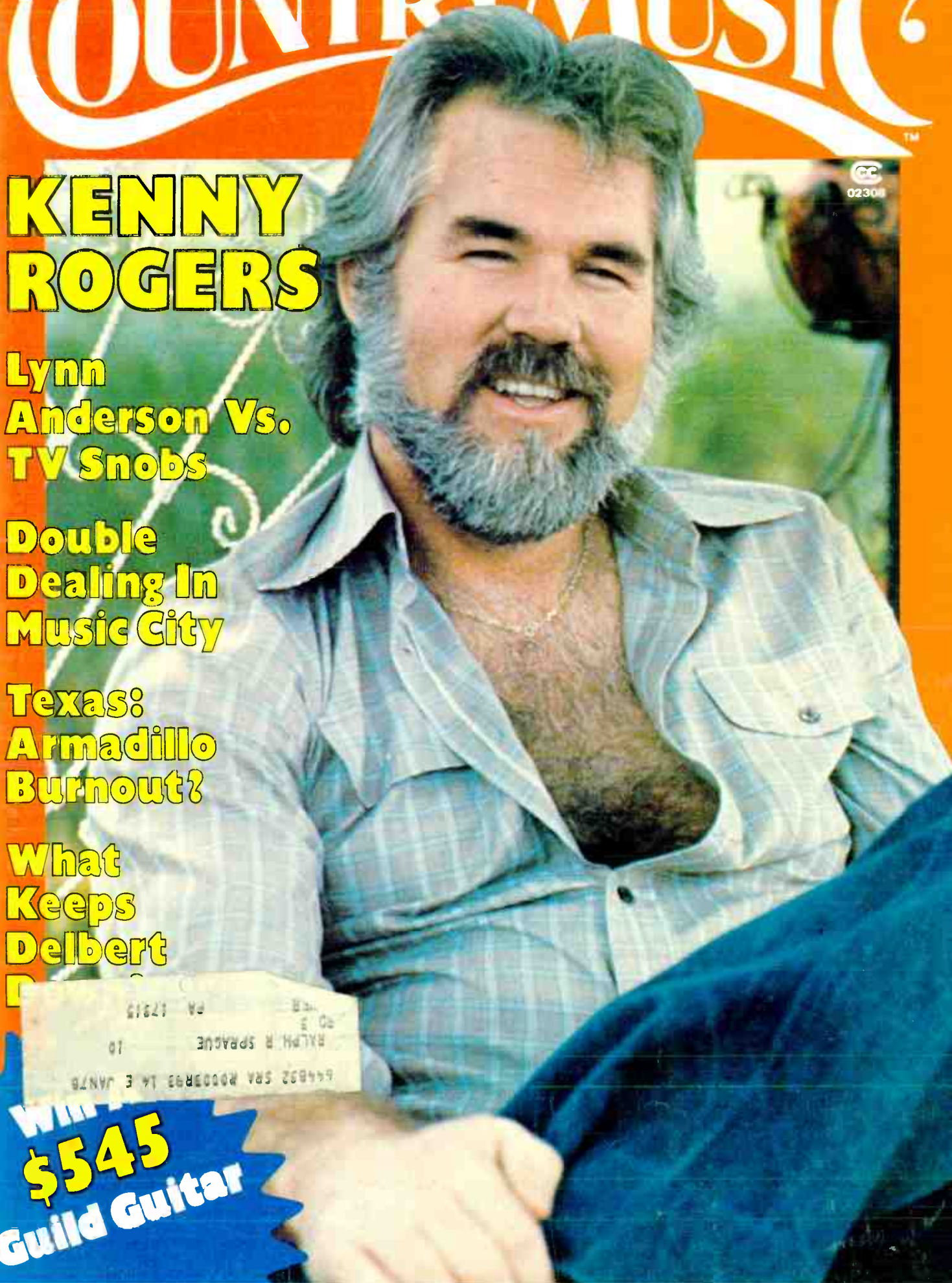
Double Dealing In Music City

Texas: Armadillo Burnout?

What Keeps Delbert

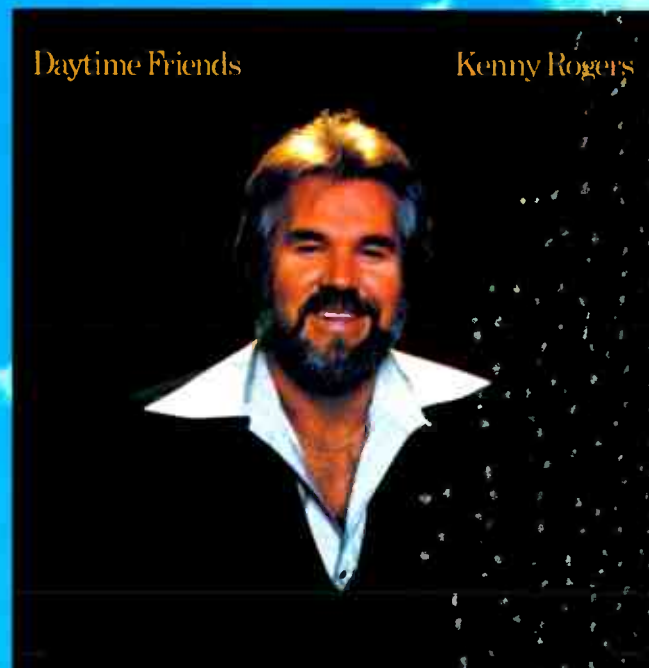
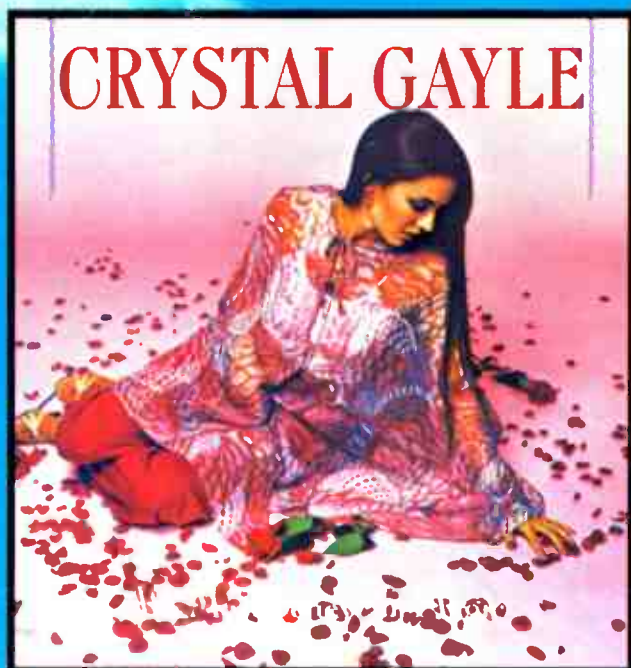


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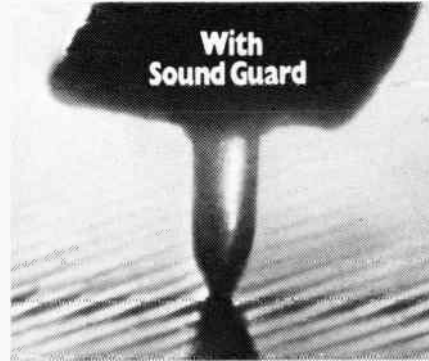
Kenny Rogers' "Lucille," was already a number one country song this year. Now Kenny's right back with an enormous follow-up hit, "Daytime Friends" and an album that's everything you'd expect from one of the country's greatest stars.

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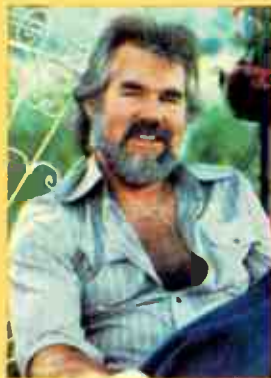
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COUNTRY MUSIC

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Volume Seven, Number One
October, 1977

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“I thought they’d laugh at me.”



“I go around with this group of people. They’re into equipment. Turntable snobs I call them. They still believe what they learned years ago... that a manual turntable is the way to go.

So I thought they’d laugh when I started looking at a “bee-eye-see” (actually Ramon did snicker when I told him).

For some reason my friends insist on the pain and inconvenience of changing records themselves every few minutes.

Not me. I’m into the music. And preserving my record collection.

So all I want is a turntable that’s perfectly quiet... trouble-free... handles one record like a manual turntable when I want... and more than one when the occasion arises.

My turntable snob friends? Slowly but surely they’re coming around.

I wonder why they’re still laughing at me?”



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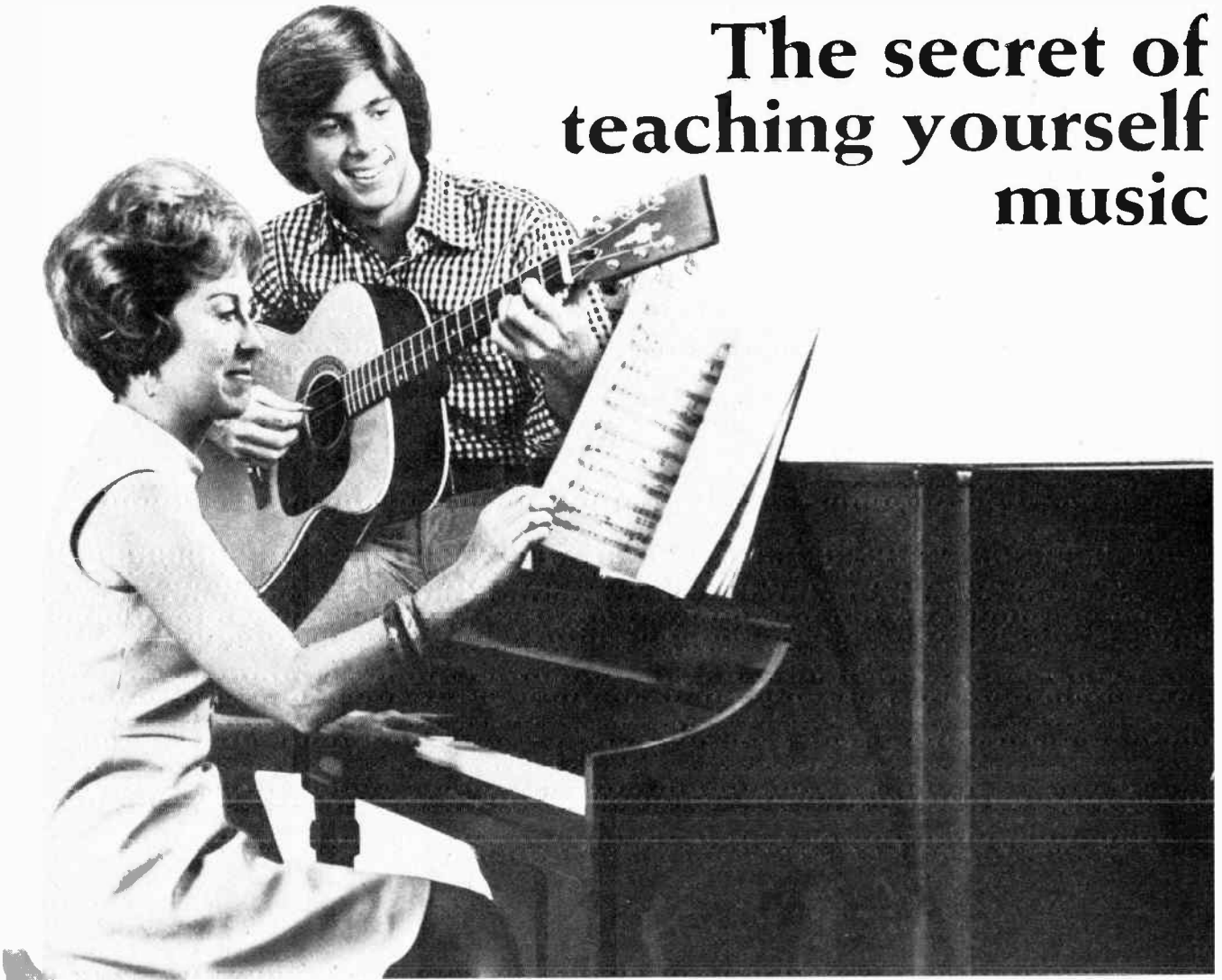
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The secret of teaching yourself music



It's just organized common sense, says this 79-year-old home study school. Their step-by-step word and picture instructions take the mystery out of learning to play the piano, the guitar, or the spinet organ.

It may seem odd at first—the idea of teaching yourself music. You might think you need a private teacher at \$4 to \$10 an hour to stand beside you and explain everything you should do—and tell you when you've made a mistake.

But surprising as it seems, you need no such thing. Thousands of people just like you have taught themselves to play with the U.S. School of Music courses. By mail. And you can too.

The secret lies in the step-by-step way our lessons teach you. Starting from scratch, they show you with simple words and pictures exactly what to do. You learn to play correctly—by note, from sheet music. Without gimmicks.

But how do you know you're doing it right? Easy. A lot of the tunes you'll practice first are simple songs you've heard before. And since you already know how they're supposed to sound, you can tell right away when you've "got them right."

By the time you go on to more advanced pieces, you'll be able to tell if your notes and timing are right, even without ever having heard the songs before. Sooner than you might think possible, you'll be able to play different kinds of music: ballads, old favorites, show tunes, or hymns.

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And, Cecelia Feeney of Vineland, N.J. reports: "It's like a dream come true. Knowing how to play the piano and read music has given me new self-confidence."

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Letters

Ouch!

This time I just had to let you know how disgusted I am with your constant put-downs on Elvis Presley. The write-up in your April issue was nothing less than sickening. I've never even heard of this Rich Kienzle guy, so who does he think he is to judge Elvis that way? The same goes for this Sissy Darby person in your July issue.

I love Elvis' country songs, he can sing anyway he wants to cause he has the voice to do it with. What's wrong with you? Are you trying to lose readers? Don't you know there are thousands of Elvis fans out here? Just for the record, I am not a teeny bopper, I have been an Elvis fan from the first. . . .

D.A.
AVA, MO.

Sorry, D.A. Ed.

Anyway, This E.T. Fan Likes Us . . .

The very nice letter from Carrie Bene, Bush, La., in your August issue reminded me that I hadn't taken time to let you know how very much I, too, enjoyed the terrific story on Ernest Tubb in your May issue. This was one of the best features I've seen on E.T. in a long time and I thoroughly enjoyed it. . . .

NORMA BARTHEL, PRES.
ERNEST TUBB FAN CLUB

Many thanks. Ed.

But This Ray Price Fan Doesn't

Who the _____ is this clown Bob An-

person who pans the new Ray Price album in the current CM? After your magazine showers accolades on all manner of not-talent Nashville pop/schlock performers, how can you run a review condemning Ray Price & The Cherokee Cowboys Reunited, as bland and the standard Nashville formula. This is not simply a matter of taste, gentlemen! Mr. Anderson's review reveals an ignorance of country music.

For the record, Price sings his _____

Tanya Tucker in the July 77 issue. It was fantastic. Tanya is the greatest and so is Country Music Magazine for printing such a great article . . . Hope to see more like it in the future.

MIM LESNAK
BROWNS MILLS, N.J.

I would like to congratulate you on the best article you've ever published. The article was by Mary Ellen Moore—"Tanya—

Ballad of a Teenage Queen." Tanya has been my favorite singer for years and will continue to be number one. . . .

PAULA DUNBAR
MANSET, MAINE

In the two years I have been a follower of Tanya Tucker's career, I have read all sorts of articles about her. I thought I had read the best one "Tanya—The Teenage Queen and the Family Affair" (by Richard Nusser) which appeared in the August '75 Country Music issue.

However, I had a change of opinion. As far as I am concerned, Mary Ellen Moore's "Tanya: Ballad of a Teenage Queen," July 77 issue is . . . gaining fast.

Mary's article was sensitive and showed a super

writing style. What I liked most of all was that it made me stop and think and realize how much we take entertainers for granted. I think we would do well to try to be a little more considerate towards those people we claim we love so much. . . .

CHRIS KUCALA
HASTINGS, MN.

Well said, Chris. Without realizing it, fans can make it pretty tough on a tired or hassled star sometimes. Ed.

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off on this album, and the fine honky-tonk band he's assembled is a far cry from the pop garbage he's been churning out these last ten years.

LEROY BIRNBAUM
NEW YORK, N.Y.

Cheers for Ms. Tucker & Ms. Moore

Just read Mary Ellen Moore's article on

NUMBER ONE FOR THE SUMMER



KENNY ROGERS
"Daytime Friends"



CRYSTAL GAYLE
"We Must Believe In Magic"



DOTTIE WEST
"When It's Just You And Me"



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A Little Flattery Never Hurts

Thank you so much for Country Music magazine. I think it is just great and read the whole thing the same day it comes in the mail. It was a gift from a cousin who also gets it and got tired of me bugging him with questions about our favorite country artists. . . .

DORIS RUNDLE
FAIRMONT, WEST VA.

We Like Gatlin’s Act, But . . .

After reading Mary Ellen Moore’s article on Larry Gatlin in your July issue, I was appalled to say the least.

I recently drove 100 miles to see him perform live. It was without a doubt, the best performance I have ever seen by *any* artist. He was warm, witty and very humble; and went out of his way to give recognition and praise to Rudi and Steve and to each and every member of his band. . . after his performance, he came out and sat in the audience while La Costa was performing. When his fans began to flock around him for autographs and pictures, he said, “I’d better go backstage. I don’t want to distract from La Costa’s performance.” That doesn’t sound like someone who would be rude to his own audience. . .

One less perfect performance does not make me think less of Larry Gatlin, only less of Ms. Moore for having nothing better to do than write such an article. . . .

BRENDA H. BAGWELL
FOUNTAIN INN, S.C.

I’ve heard that Ms. Moore caught Larry Gatlin on an evening during which he was relatively polite, compared to other nights of his New York gig. Others have reported similar antagonism to audiences at other gigs. So this is no new phenomenon, even if Larry is often polite. The sad thing is—as Ms. Moore pointed out—the power of Larry’s talent is enough to silence most audiences. People want to hear him—really hear him. Ed.

PPL Fan

I would like to comment on choosing the Eagles Hotel California as the album of the month. . . This group is basically a rock and roll band, not country. I also believe that if you give such reviews to “rock” groups, you should also review albums by Pure Prairie League. PPL is more country than the Eagles ever will be.

CHUCK WOODFIELD
FORT BRAGG, NORTH CAROLINA

Guess We Can’t Win ’Em All

I feel I must take exception to your two star rating of Tommy Overstreet’s album *Vintage ’77*.

The review is filled with mistaken

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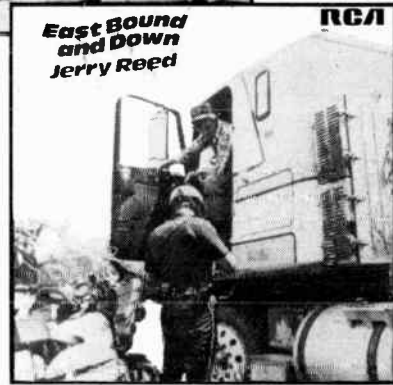
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ideas. The first being that "Overstreet is . . . not a writer." If you would do a little research, you will find that he is a very talented and prolific writer.

Also, at no time does he sound like any one of a couple dozen other Nashville singers.

It amazed me how much space you used being critical of the wine theme. It's almost as if you have a personal dislike of the subject and this album gave you the opening to expound on it.

None of the songs on the album are ordinary. *Don't Go City Girl On Me* went to #10 in the nation in just a little over a month. I don't call that ordinary.

If you had spent more time listening to the record inside, rather than being critical of the cover design, your record review might not have been the new low in the genre that it is.

LINDA ROLAND
DANVILLE, ILL.

I still like bourbon. Ed.

Likes George As Much As We Do

Thank you so much for the article on George Jones (Aug., 77). My question is "What took you so long, America?" I'm glad George is finally being recognized as one of the greatest. Thanks also for the beautiful centerfold of George in the Feb.

77 issue. It looks great over my record collection.

I also enjoyed the articles on Charley Pride and Jimmy Dean (Aug., 77). Keep them coming.

MRS. B.M. LAW
N. NORWICH, N.Y.

We shall. We shall. Ed.

Fan Needs New Hat

My hat is certainly off to you for the only magazine I read cover to cover and anxiously watch the mails for each month.

Missing an issue means a great deal to me since I can't seem to find a local newsstand that carries your publication.

The George Jones article in the August issue was tops as was May's coverage of Willie.

SUSAN SCOTT
SAN DIEGO, CA.

Gob Digs Jim

Just a note from a true country music fan (Texas) aboard the USS Thomas Edison (there are a lot of us here) to say how much I enjoy your magazine.

I was especially impressed with the interview with Jimmy Dean in the August issue. Your writer really captured the "down home" quality which, I believe, endears Jimmy to so many people. I've looked for an article on him for months.

Glad it finally came out. Keep up the good work.

RMS GARLAND P. TANKSLEY
FPO SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

Glad you like catching up on Jimmy Dean. Some industry people tried to tell us he's a has-been. We disagreed, of course, and are happy with fans' reaction to the piece. Ed.

Big Fan of Country Rock

I would like to commend Country Music for its outstanding March issue.

I'm very grateful for the articles on Charlie Daniels and the Marshall Tucker Band, as I have searched far and near for a magazine that covers favorites such as these. I found the reading most enjoyable.

As a native of central Illinois and an avid fan of Buckacre, I was also very pleased with your coverage of that group in your Country Scene column. Never have I found more reading enjoyment from a single magazine. I hope you will continue to include country rock groups in your magazine.

MARC KUHN
CANTON, ILLINOIS

We'll continue to feature country rock, or Southern rock, as it's often called. That music is exciting, to say the least. Marshall Tucker sold out two concerts in New York City a week ago and had the city kids in a frenzy surpassing the excitement of the vast majority of non-country rock performers. Ed.

Cleveland, Miss. Loves Charley Pride

I am a subscriber of Country Music and I enjoy it very much. It would seem that some of the C&W stars are making a rush to claim that they were born and raised in Texas. In spite of the fact that over the years they have been feted, publicized and have accepted the honors which their real home-towns have bestowed upon them. It has become ridiculous.

I hope that Charley Pride of Sledge, Miss. does not announce that he is a native of North Dallas. We are proud of Charley.

JAMES E. BOLEN
CLEVELAND, MISS.

We doubt that Charley will disown his home town. He's probably as proud of it as you are of him. Ed.

Due to our great volume of mail, we regret we can't answer all letters individually. We welcome your opinions, and will publish the most representative letters in this column. Let us hear from you.—Ed



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It's all in the hook, right? That little phrase you can't seem to get out of your head months after you've heard the record — *You picked a fine time to leave me, Lucille...*; *Wasting away again in Margaritaville...*; *Roll on, Big Mama...*; *I'm so lonesome I could cry...* and so on and so on. Any songwriter worth his royalty checks will tell you that it's all in the hook, and we at Country Music have decided that what country music needs these days is a good hook.

So in honor of National Country Music Month this month, Country Music is launching a major search to find *the* hook for country music — the ultimate slogan that describes country music's place in your hearts and lives.

We're keeping the rules simple — come up with a slogan (how long or how short is up to you) that exemplifies the way you feel about country music, jot the slogan down, and mail it to The Hook, Country Music Magazine, 475 Park Avenue S., N.Y., N.Y., 10016, no later than November 1, 1977.

Our crack board of editorial judges will then burn the midnight oil to find the very best country music slogan, which we'll then spread all over the place — on bumper stickers, posters, t-shirts, anyplace

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we can think of to spread the good word on country music.

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So put on your thinking caps, tune up your ball point pens, and get crackin' — who knows, once you get the hang of writing those catchy hooks, the sky may be the limit. Just try to think of the way Ol' Hank done it...

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Country Scene

RAMBLIN'



Hank's Guitar Laid To Rest After One Last Nashville Gig

The scene was backstage at Fan Fair where Moe Bandy, Jim Owen and Charly McClain took time out from the hustle and bustle to sing, *Your Cheatin' Heart*, as Moe strummed on Hank Williams' original guitar. Moe later performed his hits,

Cowboys Ain't Supposed To Cry and *Hank Williams You Wrote My Life* at the Fan Fair show in the Municipal Auditorium.

Hank's guitar was donated to The Country Music Foundation the following day for display.

Nightclub Fever Sweeps Nashville— Look Who Owns One

If George Jones ever stops singing, he can always try nightclub management. George opened a Possum Holler music club in Topeka, Kansas. That makes two. His first Possum Holler is in Nashville's Printer's Alley. Should we be on the lookout for a third?

And Jerry Reed just opened a supper club called Nashville Palace. This is part of the Nashville vacation/recreation complex, Music Valley. Cost was estimated at more than \$500,000. You might catch Reed performing if you drop in. His band is the house band and he plans on being there as much as possible.

You Got Your Ears On Billy?

Ronnie Milsap and Billy Carter had a chance to visit during a break between shows at the Movin' On 77 -- CB Jamboree and Trucker's Convention at the Pocono International Speedway in Long Pond, Pa. late in May. Billy Carter was on hand as the Good Will Ambassador of Movin' On 77. The event drew 10,000 people from all over the country. Also featured on the show were top talents, Tammy Wynette and Red Sovine.



Coal Miner's Daughter: From Butcher Holler To Hollywood

Loretta Lynn's best-selling book, *Coal Miner's Daughter*, will be a movie. Universal Pictures is doing it, and Loretta's manager, Dave Skepner, says a script can be expected in in about a month. One wonders who'll have the enviable role of Loretta (talk about your basic strong woman's role). Talk has centered around lithe, urbane Faye Dunaway, but, frankly, we just can't see it.



Edited
by
ROCHELLE
FRIEDMAN

NEWS

New faces. A new wife for Hank Jr. and a new time for Grant Turner.

Grant Moves Up His Bedtime



It was a little past midnight and nothing seemed out of the ordinary at the new Ernest Tubb Record Shop. But as ordinary as it seemed on the surface, it was a very special night at the Midnight Jamboree, especially for veteran WSM announcer Grant Turner.

For many of the people, including Tubb, had turned out to honor Grant on his last night as the host of this famous live radio show. Before the night was over, Turner, one of the all-time greats in the broadcasting field, would be made an honorary Texas Troubadour (and given the Troubadour belt buckle symbolic of this honor), offered a plaque commemorating his service to Tubb and country music fans everywhere, lauded by Justin, Ernest's successful singing son, and, finally, presented a \$1000 check by Charles E. Mosley, Tubb's business partner, as a token of their esteem.

Grant will retain his duties at the Grand Ole Opry, plus he's planning on producing and hosting two syndicated radio shows.

On his life after sixty-five, Grant remarks: "Nobody ever retires from the Opry. You just can't quit. And, there's plenty of other things to keep me busy. I guess I'm just pretty active."

—KYLE D. YOUNG



SPLAT! Johnny Russell connects with, of all things, a grapefruit at "Crash" Craddock's benefit softball game for autistic youth, held in Greensboro, N.C. Next time, John, bunt.

Still Hangin' In There, Jessi?

Jessi Colter debuted her new album, *Mirriam*, at Nashville's prestigious *Exit/In* June 21. Although the audience was star-studded (Tanya Tucker, Jeannie Sealey, Skeeter Davis), the show itself was for the journalists, and after Jessi's first set the tone of the press conference was established with the scintillating question "What will be your next release?"

It went down hill from there, the low point being when some "journalist" tried to pitch a gospel song to Jessi from the audience. Of course, a part of the



problem might have been that among the ground rules established was that the name of a certain extremely-popular-country-music-outlaw-singer-who-is-not-Willie-Nelson-but-to-whom-Ms.-Colter-is-married was not to be mentioned. It all ended, somehow rather fittingly, with the final question "Do you believe in flying saucers and if so have you ever seen one?"

If indeed the outlaws of today's country music are every bit as pompous and self-serving as the old Nashville stars ever were, at least you have to admit they are as talented in our time as the rhinestone set was in theirs. Despite her limitations as a vocalist, Jessi did two powerful sets that night and looked absolutely smashing as well, from her peasant blouse down to her soft blond leather boots with four inch (!) heels.

But as far as the much vaunted break with the Nashville Establishment, well, one recalls the old French proverb: The more things change the more they stay the same."

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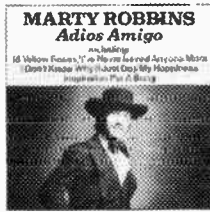
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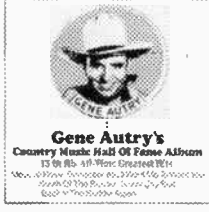


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Drifting Cowboys Drift Once Again



More than 5,000 fans paid tribute to the late Hank Williams in early June for the fourth annual Hank Williams Memorial Day in Georgiana, Ala.

The hit with the crowd was Jim Owen with Hank Sr.'s original back-up band, the Drifting Cowboys, who are touring once again. Steel player Don Helms, fiddle player Jerry Rivers, plus Hillous Butrum and Bob McNett did a number of Williams tunes, interspersed

with jokes and chatter about Hank's road shows. They even closed their portion of the show the same way as Hank, with the audience joining them in singing *I Saw The Light*.

It wasn't the first time Jim Owen (he does the one-man play, "Hank," based on Williams' life) and the Drifting Cowboys had been together. They joined forces recently in Nashville to cut an album for the Epic label, *A Song For Us All*.

The Hank Williams

Memorial Association hopes to accomplish more with these annual celebrations than just bringing together a bunch of Hank's fans. The group put up a permanent covered stage and restroom facilities this year and wants to fence the three-acre park next year. Taft Skipper, association president and Hank's first cousin, envisions a dance pavillion and country music shows held on a regular basis in the near future.

ELAINE HOBSON-MILLER



Our Hall Of Fame Nominee:

We're hoping Merle Travis makes it to the Country Music Hall of Fame this year. He's been nominated five times now, to no avail.

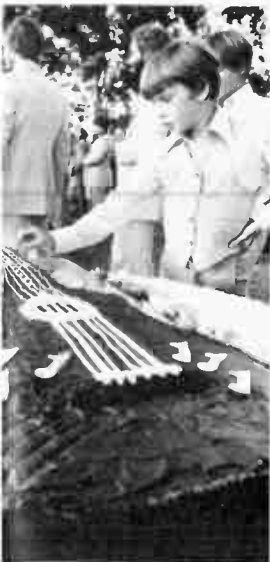
Merle's lively finger-style guitar picking (now called, in fact, Travis picking) inspired such other guitar greats as Chet Atkins and Doc Watson. He has written monster hits like *Sixteen Tons* and *Smoke Smoke Smoke That Cigaret*. He's written folk classics like *Dark As a Dungeon*, *I Am a Pilgrim* and *Nine Pound Hammer*. He's written and recorded great hits like *Sweet Temptation* and *Divorce Me C.O.D.* There's lots more we could say. But perhaps the most important point of all is that other greats regard this man as one of the all-time greats. Let's hope he makes the Hall of Fame.

ARTHUR J. MAHER

Look't Dem Teeth!



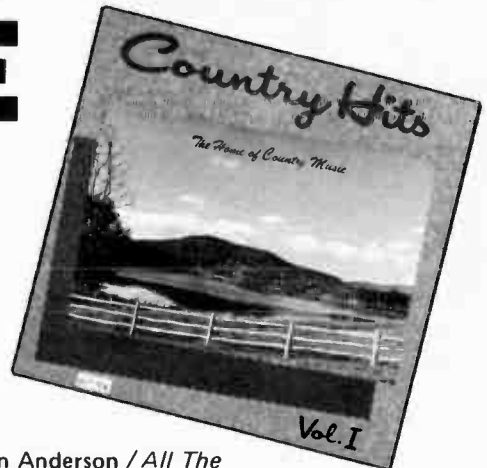
What happens when the Man-In-Black meets The Man? Well, for a starter there's a whole slew of teeth. Johnny Cash and June Carter, along with son John Carter Cash, paid a visit to the other Carter Family, Jimmy and Rosalynn, recently. Suffice to say there were smiles all around, y'all.



Hank Jr. Vows

Wedding bells rang again for Hank Williams, Jr., this June. The bride was Rebecca White of tiny Mer Rouge, La., where the ceremony was held. The modest setting was a far cry from the flash and glitter of Music City, with only Waylon Jennings, Jessi Colter and a tremendous guitar-shaped cake on hand from the music world.

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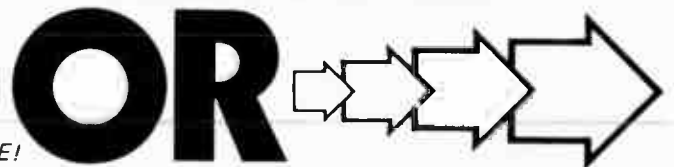


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WATCH THESE FACES:



Lawrence Hammond

"I mean I'm not Carlos Castaneda or anything," says Lawrence Hammond, brown eyes flashing beneath corn shuck yellow hair, "but I've had experiences out in the desert and I can see how he wrote those books and how Don Juan can think that way. Alone in the desert you can very definitely sense that there are some sort of critters out there you can't see."

Lawrence Hammond, 29, is the Berkeley, Calif. based singer, songwriter, guitar picker, fiddle player and leader of Lawrence Hammond and the Whiplash Band: a 100-proof country band that smoothly sidesteps the syrup of Nashville and the boogie of "redneck rock." A recent headlining gig at L.A.'s Palomino club and tour through the Lone Star State only reinforced what Hammond's local following have known for some time now: that Lawrence Hammond and the Whiplash Band are the best thing to come out of the San Francisco music scene since the Grateful Dead.

"You know in California you have to go east to get west," smiled Hammond, pouring himself a cup of strong black coffee. "Every so often I pack my jeep and dog and head out to the desert and sit and write.

"All the inspiration I need is there. I tend to see everything I want to write about through the lens of the desert. I try to imagine how the desert would express the idea if it could feel."

Minnie Pearl look out!

LESLIE AND MICHAEL GOLDBERG



The Dusty Chaps

The Dusty Chaps popularity has grown steadily in the eight years they have played the southwest. Beginning as a longhaired country band mixing its own tunes with those of Merle Haggard, Faron Young and others, the Chaps soon took on an identity of their own. In a city like Tucson where you can catch a mariachi band, swing into *Orange Blossom Special* and find a bluegrass band down the street playing *Rancho Grande*, the Chaps built their following on working-class college dropouts, drugstore cowboys and East Coast refugees. In 1975 the group released its own locally recorded album, *Honky Tonk Music*. The record gained considerable airplay and sales in the Southwest, and when one biweekly rock newsmagazine (you'd recognize its name in an instant) gushed over it in terms reserved for seasoned stars at their peak, Capitol Records' Bill Williams—the man charged with steering the recording careers of James Talley, Asleep at the Wheel, Linda Hargrove, Stoney Edwards and Marcia Ball—flew out to see the band. Williams was sold immediately.

The Chaps, who *Billboard* described as having a "crisp, original Texas sound," have never played the Lone Star State. In fact, in the Chaps repertoire of over a hundred original tunes, Texas is not mentioned once (which in itself is unique in country music today).

What makes the Dusty Chaps among the very best of today's hipster country bands is that the eight man group is not so much a band as an ensemble. Listening to one song you could be in a post-Dustbowl Western ballroom, in the next you'll hear tight uptempo country music, and in the next tune you're catching jazz from the dancehall across the street. What has pulled the Chaps towards a more jazzy sound is sax man Steve Solomon. The Mexican influence comes from accordion work by vocalist Peter Gierlach and keyboard wizard Red Davidson. Pat McAndrews provides a hard driving guitar sound, while Bill Emrie's fiddling often takes the spotlight in intricate solos. Ted Hockenbury's steel guitar work has earned well-deserved praise, and Leonard Lopez paces the entire ensemble on drums. TOM MILLER



Marcia Ball

The Lone Star State of Texas has given a lot to country music. It gave us Tex and Gene, and it gave us Bob and Milton and, of course, Waylon and Willie as well. It's most recent gift is a rail-thin six footer with cascading black hair named Marcia Ball, who is the most recent signee to Capitol Records.

Very much in the Texas revivalist mode—although the material she is recording is largely new—Marcia has displayed a talent for digging up a wide variety of splendid material from the rhythm and blues, rockabilly, western swing and cowboy genres, with her spectacular version of Patsy Montana's *I Wanna Be A Cowboy's Sweetheart* having become a sort of theme song.

A native of Vinton, La., Marcia came to Austin in 1970 after stays in Shreveport (where she joined a rock band and "stood up and screamed," which probably accounts for the husky quality of her voice), and homesteading in Canada.

Once in Austin she formed a country band which became a local legend, Freida and the Firedogs. "We were the first hippies in Austin to play country music, and *we played it straight*. It turned out that there was an audience far bigger than we expected who wanted to hear us do just that."

We suspect that this piano pounding Louisianan will be with us for some time.

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Country Scene



Sons of the Pioneers, c. 1940, Lloyd Perryman (far right).

After a spell of relative dryness, things seemed to be looking up for the Sons of the Pioneers. They've recently been discovered by a college audience and cut their first new album in years (on Granite Records).

But all this was brought to a temporary halt after Lloyd Perryman, the oldest of the original Pioneers, died on May 31, 1977, at the age of 61.

Perryman joined the Pioneers in 1936, then a 19 year-old guitarist with a glorious tenor voice. Although the wavy blond hair turned to grey and the voice deepened to baritone, Lloyd Perryman spent the next 41 years as a Pioneer, 28 of them as the group's leader - longer than any other member.

Born in 1917, Perryman saw the band through numerous personnel changes, beginning with the departure of Len Slye - who soon became known as Roy Rogers - in 1937. When the other two co-founders, Tim Spencer and Bob Nolan, left in 1949, it was Perryman who assumed leadership, ramrodding the band through thick and thin times, teaching each new member the intricate vocal arrangements and harmony parts.

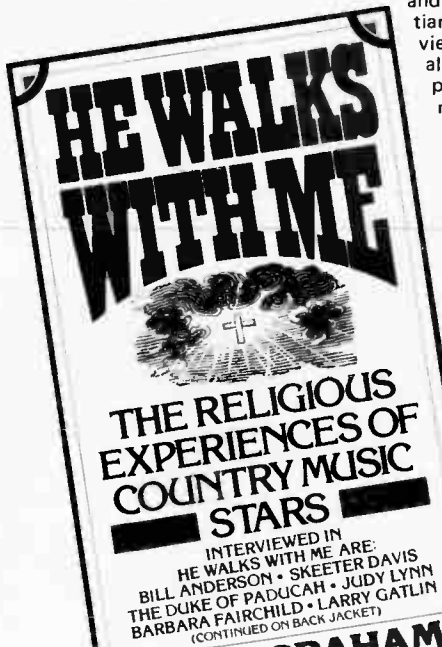
The Pioneer wagon will continue to roll, with 24 year veteran Dale Warren stepping into the trailbosses' role, but they've lost their wheel horse. The going will never again be as smooth.

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KENNY ROGERS' SECOND EDITION

As the more-or-less leader of the immensely popular First Edition, Kenny Rogers helped bring country music to the masses. It worked once, so why not twice?

BY BOB ALLEN

The limousine that is to take Kenny Rogers to his show at Memphis's Mid-South Coliseum is ten minutes late. He is standing in the front lobby of his motel, fidgeting ever so slightly. The woman at the desk hands him a piece of paper: "Kenny, could you please sign this?" she asks shyly.

"OK, who's it for?"

"It's for Cathy."

"Who's Cathy?"

"Me," she laughs with slight embarrassment.

"Oh! Why didn't you say so?" he laughs.

Another hostess comes by and asks, "How was your dinner, Kenny? Was everything OK?"

"It was fine," he assures her, "—Except room service forgot to put salt and pepper on my tray."

"Well, that's the busboy's fault. . . . Uh, Kenny," she asks shyly, "Could you please sign this for me? I wanted to keep the check you wrote, but they wouldn't let me."

Kenny dutifully obliges. Next, a heavy-set man in a toupee walks up and offers his hand. "Kenny Rogers? My name is Dudley from Memphis, Tennessee, and I just wanta tell you that I've enjoyed your records for years. Say, if you've got a minute, I sure wish you'd do me a favor and come say hello to some friends of mine." The man leads Kenny into the darkened motel lounge which is full of pie-eyed, early evening drinkers. The fat man introduces Kenny to his companions at the bar as if he were a long-lost friend.

"Hey Kenny, nice t'meet ya. How are ya, buddy?"

"Hey Kenny! . . . Ya in a hurry? . . . Sit down and have a drink. . . . How long ya

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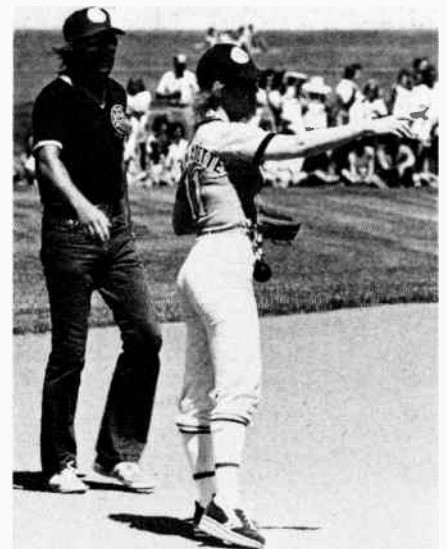
here for? . . . Where are ya playin'?"

Kenny smiles calmly, answers all their questions, shakes a round of hands and excuses himself to wait for his limousine. "It's amazing," observes a photographer who's been traveling with Kenny. "It happens every place we go."

The large camper bus that is to take Kenny to the show finally arrives. It is full of United Artists—his record company—representatives, and a couple of girls who have won a contest and have been flown up from Nashville for a "Weekend with Kenny Rogers." Kenny rides shotgun to his Nashville promotion man who is driving the bus. He turns occasionally to tell a story or a joke when the conversation seems to lag, but mostly he sits rigid, facing forward, his eyes on the road ahead and his mind obviously on the evening's show before him.

Tonight, Kenny is headlining a package show which includes Johnny Duncan, Jim Ed Brown and several other country artists. When Kenny finally takes the stage of the cavernous Mid-South Coli-

”
 It scares me—the
 idea of being old and
 broke and alone . . .
 ”

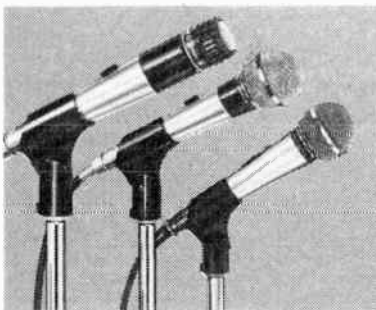


John Denver and television's Bernadette Peters are on Kenny's softball team in L.A.

seum, it is nearly 11 p.m. He is dressed in a tight-fitting blue-gray, three-piece leisure suit, and his generous crop of gray hair and salt and pepper beard belie his youthful demeanor and his relatively young age of 38. He moves his large frame agilely around the stage, singing in his distinctively raspy voice, and he immediately gets the slightly turgid audience on their feet by throwing at least \$20 worth of tambourines out into the crowd. (He usually gets them back at the end of the show, but tonight he doesn't.)



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Not far into his set, he pauses to ask his audience some questions. "OK, hold it a minute," he says half-jokingly, "I want to take a poll tonight: How many rock fans do we have here tonight? (fair amount of applause). . . . How many of you are into country music? (shattering applause). . . . How many want to hear some Polish marching tunes? (laughter). . . . OK then, we'll play some of them!"

Kenny teases his audience unmercifully: He pulls the rug out from under them when he abruptly stops the music in the midst of a spirited sing-along, and more than a few of those in the front row become the butt of his humorous one-liners. As he runs through his songs and routines, he exudes a self-confidence so

strong that, at times, it causes his performance to smack of contrivance. Kenny has indeed come a long way for someone who only recently began working as a solo artist; someone who used to hide behind his guitar and not say a word; someone, who by his own admission, only a year or so ago, was still tripping over microphone cords.

The show, like Kenny's band, hints of Las Vegas: It is well-paced, tightly polished and musically disciplined, with just enough spontaneity to keep everyone, including Kenny, on his toes. He runs through a fair sampling of the many hits from his First Edition years, all of his more recent country hits, as well as some new material. The band behind him lays

down consistent casino-rock. The flashy, subdued drum riffs are dominated by the tight synch of electric piano and guitar. The whole time, Kenny is working hard, bounding from one end of the stage to the other, sweating for that applause, which, at the end of the show, he gets. "I need it," he tells me later. "I defy any entertainer to tell me that he doesn't need that applause."



Kenny Rogers at home in California...



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Since Kenny Rogers was in high school in his hometown of Houston, Texas, he has been laboring under what is probably the ultimate barometer of a performer's success: how long and how loudly the audience puts their hands together at the end of the show. In his teens, he was already playing in a group called The Scholars, whose first single, *Crazy Feeling*, was a million-seller. In 1966, Kenny graduated to the New Christy Minstrels, and, after a year, he broke away, along with Mike Settle and Terry Williams, to form the First Edition.

The First Edition's career spanned roughly nine years, eight gold singles and four gold albums. As a group, the Edition made definite, but largely unsung contributions toward bringing country influences into the mainstream of contemporary rock and pop music. Relying on some of Nashville's best writers, like McL Falls (*Ruby*), Mickey Newbury (*Just Dropped In To See What Condition My Condition Was In*) and Alex Harvey (*Keuben James*).

(Continued on page 56)

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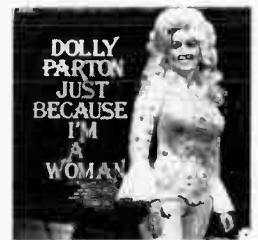
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by **BOB ALLEN**

Playboy Records' Eddie Kilroy could have been just one of the Music City good ol' boys. All he had to do was take that free Cadillac . . .

Nashville's Bad Boy

Eddie Kilroy is head of the country division of Playboy Records, one of the few—if not the only—comparatively tiny, outside labels (eight artists) to significantly penetrate the country music market. Locally, Kilroy has made a name for himself with his sometimes brutal outspokenness. As the gadfly of Nashville's music industry, he is openly critical of what he terms "behind the scenes" financial arrangements that often influence decisions that are generally assumed to be made on an artistic or creative basis.

Having come to Nashville as an outsider, and having gained a solid footing with Playboy Records while remaining an outsider—without catering to what he calls the "Nashville Establishment,"—Kilroy feels that he is in the rare position of having to pull few punches when he discusses some of the realities currently affecting the state of the industry.

After making an unsuccessful go of it as a recording artist under Texas producer, Huey Meaux ("I had 26 records, and never had a hit") Kilroy later came to Nashville as an independent producer and went through the obligatory "starvation period."

In 1974, as the story goes, Playboy was six months away from folding its unsuccessful country operation. About this time, Kil-

roy leased them a recording called *Room Full Of Roses*, by a then unknown Texas artist, Mickey Gilley, whom Kilroy had worked with since 1956. *Room Full Of Roses* went to number one in the country charts, as have five other of Gilley's eight single releases. Suddenly Playboy Records was in the running, and Kilroy eventually signed on as head of their Nashville operations. Since then, over 85% of the single releases by Playboy's eight country artists have made the charts, and Playboy recently signed a deal with CBS Records to distribute Playboy products.

Today Kilroy cuts a figure slightly different from your average Music Row producer. While the latest model Cadillac is *de rigueur* for most, Kilroy shows up promptly for work at nine a.m. (also unusual) in a pick-up truck, accompanied by Valentine, his English sheepdog. While most successful producers compare six-figure mansions, Kilroy is comfortably ensconced with his family in a \$51,000 home in nearby Brentwood. "A lot of people in this town resent the success I've had, and my freedom," he says. "I don't owe anybody but the bank."

The following interview took place over coffee and iced tea one Friday morning at Playboy Records' office on Division Street, a few blocks off Music Row.

Allen: You say you've always been an outsider here in Nashville. What were your early days as an independent producer like? You've said that even though you were hungry, you still had to drive a Cadillac. . . .

Kilroy: Oh, sure! Five years ago, you had to drive a Cadillac. At that point, I was dealing with the establishment here in town. I had to play their game to compete. I had to have a Cadillac, even though they cut my lights off the second month I had it. But it was really necessary that I have it, and that I dress up nice. Otherwise I wouldn't be on their level.

It's loosened up a little since those days, but they used to really put demands on people who weren't successful. You had to move in the same circles with those who really were successful. Maybe you were making no more than the guy at the service station, but in order to get anywhere, you had to present the appearance that you were making big money. It was really hard.

Allen: When you were first pitching new artists as an outside, independent

producer, what sort of response did you get?

Kilroy: None. It's very hard for an outside act to break into this town, no matter how good they are. None of the majors wanted Gilley. Also, in Gilley's case, *Roomful of Roses* wasn't cut in Nashville, so it wasn't any good. That's the kind of attitude that was prevalent a few years ago.

Allen: What sort of reaction did you get from the powers-that-be when you started hitting with Playboy?

Kilroy: Locally, we met a lot of resistance. Not so much at first, because they figured we were just another flash-in-the-pan, like most independent outside labels are. But the second year, when we started getting number one records, there was some resistance—and a lot of resentment.

Allen: Well, exactly how did you manage to overcome this, where the others have failed?

Kilroy: Simple: We came on very strong and were immediately accepted where it counted—at the radio stations. You see, most people involved with country music are very proud of it, and when someone

with a superhip image like Hugh Hefner starts releasing country records on his label—not middle-of-the-road stuff, but hard-core country—the radio people said 'Hey man, look at the bunny! Playboy's into country, man!' So we just sloughed off the resentment and the nonacceptance here in town through strong radio promotion: We had hit records.

Allen: In the past, you've spoken out about Nashville being a closed shop. You often refer to the Nashville "establishment. . . ."

Kilroy: Yeh, I think there still remain "X" number of pompous, insecure people who try to keep this town a closed shop. People who would rather not compete. They're like the old guard, and they've still got the home front very much under control, and they can manipulate it so they do keep "X" amount of power. And any threat to their power or lessening of it by a new force coming in from another area makes them a little nervous. It's total insecurity on their part.

Allen: Something that comes up in conversations quite often here in town—though

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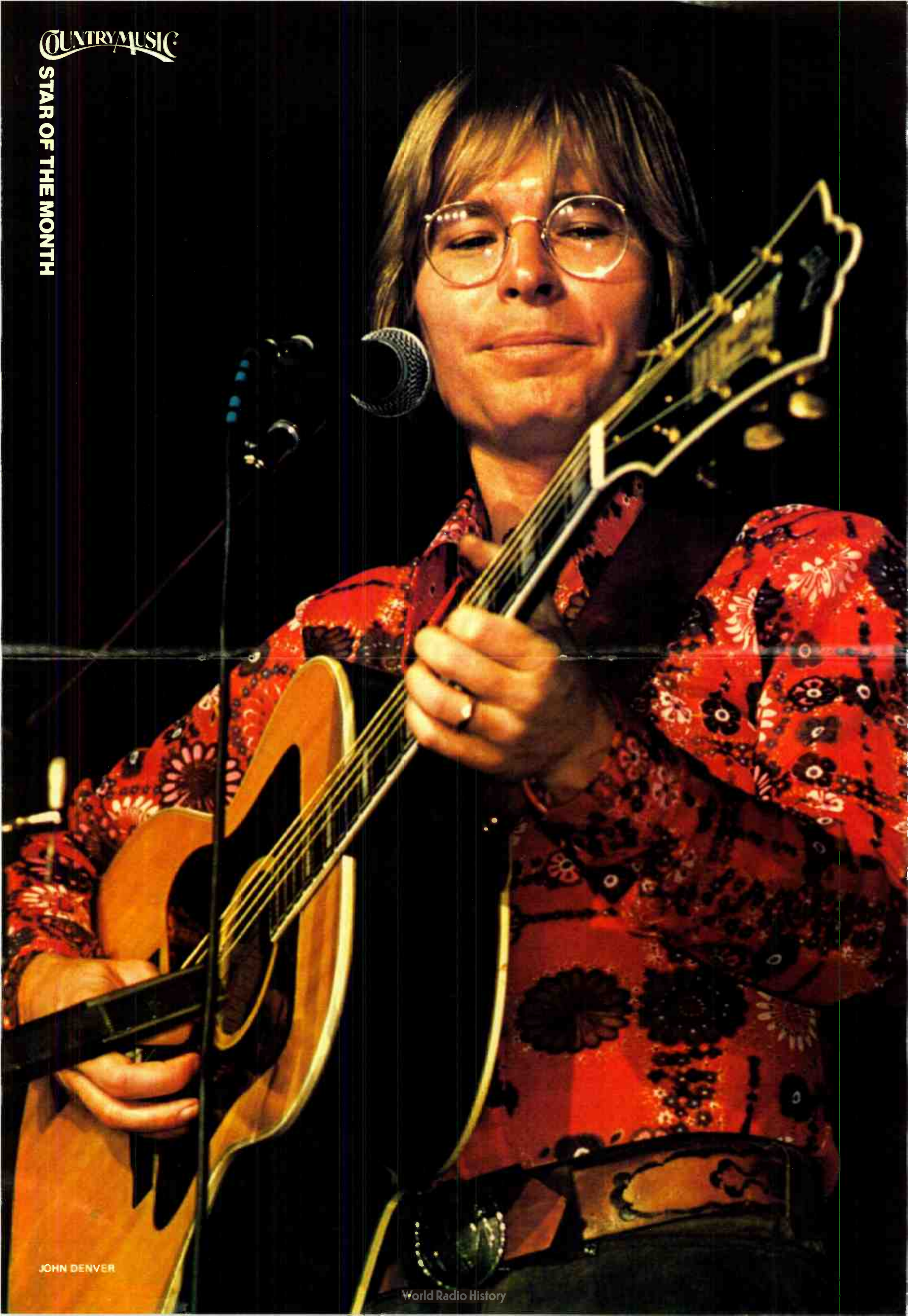
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COUNTRYMUSIC

STAR OF THE MONTH



JOHN DENVER



never in print—has to do with this closed shop theory. It is the alleged existence of illicit tie-ins, for instance, between publishing companies and producers. In other words, what you might call kick-backs: publishers inducing producers, by any number of means, to record songs from their publishing companies. Does this sort of thing really go on?

Kilroy: Oh sure! There are a half-dozen or so publishing companies in this town who will actively pursue getting a hot producer in their pocket. There are lots of ways to do it. They may do a favor for him like having a fence built around his house or giving him gifts. It may be an actual monetary thing. I think if I put the word out, I could have a Cadillac sitting out front when I came to work on Monday. I understand—although it would be very hard to document—that there are some publishing companies who have several producers drawing about 20 grand a year each as “advisors.”

Allen: On the other hand, Eddie, there seem to be a lot of successful producers who consistently use material on which they themselves hold the publishing. Why is that?

Kilroy: The whole thing revolves around greed. The producers aren't satisfied with the money they're making. They want it all. Often this means that an artist is not getting a first-class piece of material just because the producer wants to record a song that he has either the publishing or co-writers on.

Allen: I also understand that the bargaining of co-writers is extensive; that in order to get a song recorded which he has written, a writer will agree to give the producer—or whoever—half the credit for writing the song so he can share in the royalties.

Kilroy: Yeh. It's strange when I see a guy who is a writer—and I know he's a writer because he comes in and pitches songs to me; maybe I don't cut these songs because I don't think they're quite good enough. But then all of a sudden, the same songs get cut—the ones that I turned down. Only now they've got the producer's name as a co-writer. The bargaining of co-writers on songs seems to be extensive. Sometimes a producer will even pay a writer a flat fee, and, in exchange, all the writer's songs will be published through the producer's company, and the producer will get credit as co-writer on them, even though he may not have written a word.

Allen: It's often the trend for an artist to be hot for a few years, and then his records start dwindling in the charts. Do you think these restrictions on material that we've talked about are sometimes a factor in an artist's decline?

Kilroy: Yes. Definitely. The songs put 'em away. In many cases, the artist merely becomes a vehicle for their producer. You see, if a producer has the publishing rights on a song, he can make money if he goes to number 20. But in order for it to do the artist much good, he needs a top-

five, or a “oner.” There are artists out there who won Grammy Awards ten years ago and today, for all practical purposes, they're without a contract. In many cases, it was their producer's restrictions on material that helped put them away. That's why I refuse to start my own publishing company. I would say I'm one of the few major artists in town who doesn't have one. I ask all my artists, please don't start a publishing company.

Allen: It really sounds as if some producers have a nearly demonic control over their artists.

Kilroy: Some of them do. That's like the old school of thought, and a lot of these producers are into that and are very open about it. There's a producer right now who's got one of the hottest country-pop acts going. He's got a real heavy production deal with one of the major companies. He produces the artist in his own studio, and it probably costs about \$3,000 to do an album. He turns around and bills the company for 35 grand, which is what



it might cost if he did it in their studio. He holds the publishing and even has half-writers on many of the artist's songs. The artist pulls down ten grand a night for personal appearances, and this producer keeps him on a relatively small weekly salary. The guy's very open about it. He's shown me royalty checks for over \$900,000. He told me his artist came to him not long ago and said, 'Hey man, I wanta' change accountants!' He just told him, 'Hey, you don't need to change accountants; you've got the same accountant I got!'

I really can't understand that attitude. It's total greed. Total dollar worship. But yet it's really difficult for me to talk about it. I come on a little too self-righteous, because I like money too. I love nice things. But I'm not competing to be the wealthiest person in the business.

Allen: Let's talk about record companies for a minute. A lot of these major record labels have more than 50 artists on their country roster. They're forever dropping and signing artists. Can all these artists possibly be getting a fair shake?

Kilroy: No, they are definitely not. These

companies are playing the odds with them. They're scatter-shooting a bunch of releases every month, and hoping a few will stick. And the artists are being hurt. I had a conversation with a recording executive recently that illustrated the whole attitude in this town. He said to me, 'Eddie, you're not recording enough acts, that's what's wrong. You should sign up a lot of acts, record 'em all, and scatter-shoot 'em.' Well, nobody seems to pay any attention to the fact that while you're scatter-shooting, these artists are getting hurt. These artists have wives, children, and homes to pay on just like everybody else. If I came out every month and threw a bunch of records out there and hoped one or two of them would stick, I wouldn't really be working in my artists' behalf.

Allen: You also hear a lot of rumors around here about artists, especially new ones, who become more or less victims of executive power-plays within the companies...

Kilroy: It happens. Say if some guy in a company signs a couple of new acts, and they may be doing well, and then this executive who signed them gets pushed out of the company by somebody new. The guy who replaces him wants to show everybody a trick. So he may turn around and give the axe to these new acts, even though they are doing well.

Allen: Less than a year ago, in another interview, you spoke out about these same kinds of things, and you said, 'I don't know if they are breaking the law, but they are lacking in integrity and breaking moral law. This will be the downfall of this town.' That's a pretty heavy statement when, in fact, all these internal financial arrangements or whatever, have probably been going on as long as the music business has.

Kilroy: That's true. There's nothing new about this at all. I'm sure this sort of thing goes on in every industry. But still, when I listen to the music coming out of Nashville today, I can't help but feel it's having a stifling effect on it. Also, I see less recording activity going on here, compared to what I saw a few years ago.

Allen: So on the bottom line, you feel that all this behind-the-scenes sort of thing could actually hurt the growth of this town, dollars-and-cents wise?

Kilroy: Yes, it sure could, if it hasn't already. Let me give you an example how: Say Ahmet Ertegun, the head of Atlantic Records is having dinner with the head of another label, and this other guy says, 'I'm thinking of opening a Nashville operation.' Ahmet says to him, 'Oh no, don't do it! We lost 30 million dollars when we did it. We just couldn't compete with all those behind-the-scenes schemes and pay-offs. Don't do it!' So this guy changes his mind, and that's like 20 or 30 million dollars that could have been pumped into the industry here that won't be. Really, if this town doesn't loosen up, in the long run, it could really hurt itself. ■

STARSKY AND LYNN? ANDERSON AND HUTCH? WONDER WOMAN?

Thought Lynn Anderson was strictly Lawrence Welk, huh? Well, she never promised anyone a rose garden.

BY MARY ELLEN MOORE

The demented killer, his arm around the throat of the terrified country music singer, waves his gun threateningly at the unarmed cops. It looks like curtains for the plucky heroine.

But wait!

In a flash of flying bodies, speeding cars, fleeing bad guys and daring tackles, the heart-meltingly handsome (although dumb) heroes rescue the talented and beautiful (and smart-as-a-cookie) Sue Ann Grainger...

Cut.

Sue Ann Grainger?

Well, the beautiful blonde is actually Lynn Anderson, starring in an episode of *Starsky and Hutch* (the two white knights), and although Lynn might be sacrificing art for the sake of commercial television, there's one thing that she refuses to betray—country music.

A few months before the episode was taped, Lynn talked about her views of country music on television. Classy in her slinky cranberry pants suit, tucked into matching, stud-decorated boots and topped off with a suede cranberry riding hat, she entered the Nashville restaurant looking like the Ice Queen, an image she projects in photographs.

But as she plunged whole-heartedly into her plate of barbecued spareribs, licking her fingers daintily and darting her tongue out after some recalcitrant sauce, the image was immediately shattered—classy, yes; Ice Queen, no.

Lynn has spent a lot of time shattering people's preconceptions. She does it care-

fully, but refuses to be intimidated because she's *only* a woman, or *only* a country music singer. Because Lynn really is smart-as-a-cookie, and she's very much aware of the impact television has. She wants to use that impact to build up country music's image, not put it down.

When she was offered the role in *Starsky and Hutch*, she made her views clear.

"I think they're cashing in on the old bandwagon because they know country is hot," Lynn says. "They do want the character to be kind of an innocent, kind of a sweet lil' ol' thing who gets taken advantage of.

"The guys who actually do *Starsky and Hutch* (Paul Michael Glaser and David Soul) like country music very much. In fact, David Soul wants to sing a little bit. He likes country music enough so eventually during the season he's going to sing a little bit himself.

"I think what they want to do is just be comfortable with it. We've talked about the fact that I'm not about to let them put anything into my mouth that I wouldn't say about my music, or whatever, because I'm proud of it, and I don't want to represent it badly.

"I feel that it has been represented badly, especially in dramatic series or dramatic parts. It seems like they're always putting country music down in those kind of shows, and I'm not going to condone that kind of thing. They put the people down.

"This is what I don't agree with, the stereotype that the people in Hollywood

and New York seem to put on; not only the people who sing country music, but the people who listen to country music. And I don't think you can make those broad generalizations anymore. I don't think the audience for country music is *just* farmers, for example. We do have a lot of farm people, but we also have lawyers and doctors. You just can't put a stereotype on them, and you also can't say that one kind of listener is better than another kind of listener. A listener is a listener, a fan is a fan, and what difference does it make what he does for a living?

"It's another form of snobbery, I think, and I hope that we won't get into that kind of a thing."

Months later, when the *Starsky and Hutch* episode aired, it was evident that they didn't get into that kind of thing. In fact, many of Lynn's sentiments were echoed in the actors' dialogue.

"Like when Starsky entered the Saddle Bar Club at which Sue Ann was singing and started foot-stompin' to what he laughingly called 'hillbilly music.'"

"It's *country*, Starsky," hissed an embarrassed Hutch. "That's *country* music, not hillbilly."

The producers had obviously listened to Lynn—but then, she's had a lot of experience debunking country music stereotypes.

It all started with Lawrence Welk, several years ago.

"The first time I was on the Lawrence Welk Show," she recalls, laughing, "they

“...they didn't think that a country singer was able to converse intelligently...”

asked me to do *Cotton Fields* and they put me in a little gingham square dance dress with boots, and the second time it was something like *Cotton Fields* and I looked like Rose Maddox or Dale Evans. I had the western shirt and a western skirt and a vest and real, live cowboy boots and a hat. The third week he had me in a bustle and a pair of high-buttoned shoes and buttons and bows because that was out of his idea of a western movie—y'know, *Paleface* was a western movie.

“Then I went to him and said, ‘I quit.’ He said (and she mimics Welk) ‘Vv do you vant to quit from it?’ And I said this is not my idea of country music. Buttons and bows is not what's happening, man. And he said, ‘Vat do you teenk vud be a gud ting to do?’

“So they finally started letting me choose my own songs and dress myself and I started wearing normal clothes and singing normal songs and after that it was fine; it worked out very well.”

Lynn's taste in clothes carried over to the *Starsky and Hutch* program, too. Although the show opened with her in a white, western outfit, she proceeded to change frequently into halter tops and pantsuits and knee-high boots and stylish-

ly tucked in pants. Ribbon and gingham did not make an appearance.

Another thing that didn't make its appearance was the southern accent. California-bred Lynn does not have a drawl, but that hasn't stopped some producers. (In a recent episode of *Bionic Woman*, for example, starring Hoyt Axton as a country singer, the woman who played his wife, Tammy, faked a drawl so poorly it was enough to make you spit up your grits.)

“For a long time,” Lynn says, “when I first got started, I had to overcome a couple of stereotypes—not only what people are supposed to wear and are supposed to sound like. But people, the producers and so on, have generalized so much that they feel like anybody who sings country music is from the South, and they've already decided that they're smarter than the country person is, which is a total fallacy.

“So that was another thing I had to get over, being able to talk instead of just letting me stand on my little ‘X’ and sing a song and shut up and go home. I got to where I would tell them that I wouldn't be on their shows unless they let me sit down and talk like the rest of the white

folks. Because you could tell that there was that feeling there, that they didn't think that a country singer was able to converse intelligently with other human beings. It was really frustrating.

“I think that's gone away now. I think there are several people who have really gotten in there and worked at it. But it was just like an educational process; it was just a matter of those people not understanding—they just didn't know. And what you don't know is what you're afraid of most of the time. They didn't know what to expect from me or from Loretta or from Tammy.”

Although Lynn wasn't the first country singer on television, she became one of the most visible. But it wasn't easy.

“It was interesting to me,” she reflects. “In trying to break into television—because I really do enjoy doing that kind of thing—the effect that a record like *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* had on my acceptance to the television community. When I walked in, or when an agent called on my behalf to put me on a television show as a country artist, they were immediately not interested or immediately had excuses, or whatever. As soon as *Rose Garden* hit, I had an agent call and try to put me on this show, when *Rose Garden* was number one on the country charts, and they wouldn't put me on the show. Within two weeks, it was number one on the pop charts and they were calling me.

“Same record, same human being, same everything—but all of a sudden, because that record became a pop hit, I became respectable. And I resented that, but I never forgot it. It was just the fact that all of a sudden, if you take the word country away, then you're okay—and that's not fair.

“It's changing a lot now. People like Roy Clark who are capable of walking on that stage and doing a lot of music. People like Glen Campbell who are capable of walking on television and singing any kind of song you throw at him. Those people are removing that bad image and I really respect them.”

There's a lot of people around who respect Lynn just as much. Through her efforts to present country as multi-faceted, she's earned a reputation as a no-nonsense woman.

Not only does Lynn demand excellence of herself, she also insists upon it from her fellow performers. Just as the dumb hill-billy tag won't suit her, neither will the dumb woman tag.

She's equally at home in her husband's office as she is performing or winning horse championships or raising her daughter. She's so organized that she feels she could take on even more and still have time to devote to her family and fun.

While many country artists are striving
(Continued on page 60)

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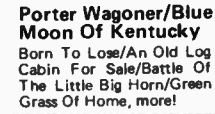
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Jim Reeves/Young And Country
Wagon Load Of Love/Spanish Violins/Did You Darling/Hillbilly Waltz/You're The Sweetest Thing, much more!



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Diamonds In The Sand/Born To Be Lucky/Dolly With The Dimpled Knees/The Boom Chic Polka, more!



Jim Reeves/The Country Side Of
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Waylon Jennings/Only Daddy Walk That Line
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R E V I S

TEXAS TEXAS TEXAS

BY NELSON ALLEN

Last year at this time, you'd have thought Texas was taking over the world—at least, the musical end of the world. Nashville was reeling from blow after blow from the burgeoning "Austin scene," with one Texas star after another pouring out of the Lone Star State like a pack of crazed armadillos. Willie and Waylon and Wanted: *The Outlaws* and *Good-Hearted Woman* had just taken every award at the CMA show except best female vocalist, and the loudest sound in Music City was the slapping of backs and a whole slew of "I told you so's" echoing up and down Music Row.

One year later, things are—and here we search for the word—*calmer*. Texas music—what has come to be known as the Texas *scene*—has in some ways changed a great deal in the last year; in others it has not changed at all. The major change is that several of the so-called "outlaws" have achieved national stardom, with all the trappings that achieving national star-

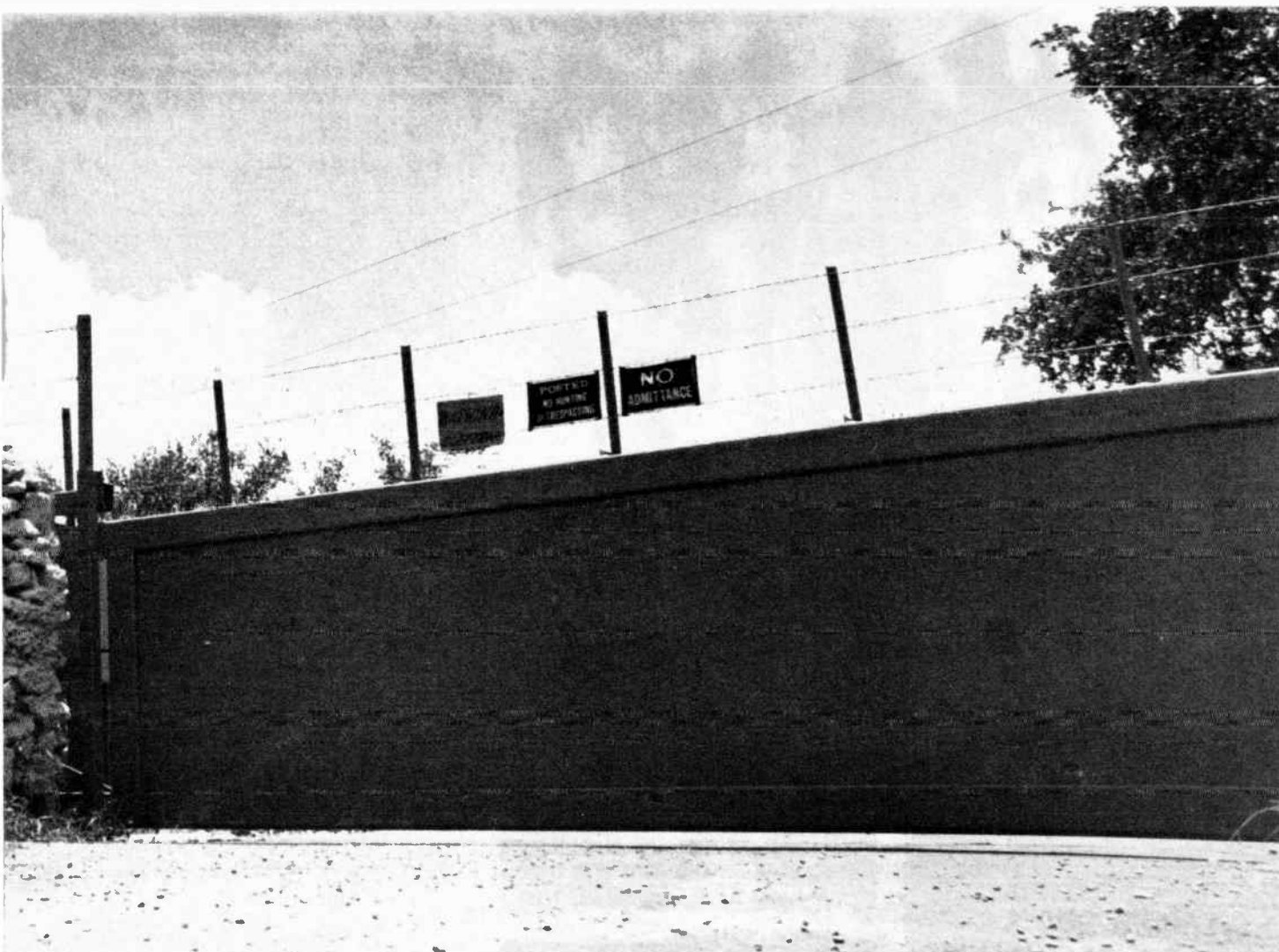
dom suggests. Waylon has a Lear jet. Willie has a fortress in Austin—a stone wall, complete with television monitors and barbed wire.

Now that the dust has settled, people are realizing that there was and is no such thing as a Texas music scene—rather, there is a rich and on-going Texas music heritage that encompasses everything from the blues of Blind Lemon Jefferson and Lightnin' Hopkins to the hard rock of Janis Joplin and Johnny Winter. And, of course, country music, from Bob Wills to Ernest Tubb to Willie Nelson.

If there's one common denominator in Texas music, it's that it is geared for live audiences (The Austin scene, for example, was not so much the performers as the audience). People in Texas, it seems, have always turned to music when nothing else seemed to work—and Texas never has had a reputation as a kind and undemanding state.

For some reason Texas has long pro-

duced all kinds of musicians who had to leave that state to achieve stardom, then returned to perform live. What's happened in recent years—what Willie Nelson means to Texas music—is that home-grown performers no longer have to take that long route to Nashville to become stars; that real live Texas musicians can become real live stars without leaving all that sagebrush and cactus (if you're from the right part of the state, that is). In any event, Willie Nelson returned to Texas to live and perform—and it was more than his simply saying he could live without Nashville—and he discovered that Texas audience, for the most part completely untapped by Nashville country music people—those young long-hairs who listened to rock with one ear and fiddle breaks with the other. There were already many so-called "progressive country" bands in Texas when Willie returned and became a star and focused attention on the whole scene. Whether or not he knew



S I L L I E D

TEXAS TEXAS TEXAS

what he was doing (and I suspect he partly did and partly didn't), it opened up a brand new world in country music.

So what's going on in Texas today? We took a look at that state's current musical heroes, and here's our admittedly subjective results:

Willie Nelson: What more can you say? Willie's trying to spend more time in Austin with family and friends after a grueling couple of years on the road. Fame has wrought changes, though, most notably a six-foot high, three-foot-thick stone wall topped with electrified barb wire that fronts the Nelson property in Austin. But Willie remains philosophical. If the fence keeps out one wierdo, he says, then it's done its job. The Texas Living Legend rocks on.

Waylon Jennings: Coming off two of the most spectacularly successful albums in the history of country music (*Wanted: The Outlaws* and *Ol' Waylon*), *Ol' Waylon* is probably the hottest thing in coun-

try music since the steel guitar. Still operating out of Nashville, Waylon is trying to put together a heavyweight booking/management/talent operation equal to those of the West Coast moguls—a definite plus for both Waylon and Music City. On the negative side, country music's premier redneck rocker is being wooed by the softer, Las Vegas country crooner crowd. Watch your step, Waylon.

Freddy Fender: El Beebop's career seems to be languishing, despite a flashy appearance in New York's Carnegie Hall recently. One of the problems could be overexposure, since Freddy is still working a killing road circuit. He's still the owner of one of the greatest voices in country music, though, and a real good Freddy Fender concert will make all the hairs on the back of your neck stand up, and you'll want to take Spanish lessons.

Doug Sahm: Doug has been everything from a fake English-rocker to a San Francisco hippie-rocker to a Texas redneck-

rocker, but his roots go deep in Texas, and that means a lot to him. Despite his ill-fated album for ABC, Doug has released material for friends on smaller labels that has enormous hit potential—most notably the rockabilly single *Henretta*. Doug is the only performer that runs the gamut of country from blues to rock and does it all equally well. Although critics claim Doug is his own worst enemy, no one will ever be able to count Doug Sahm out.

Jerry Jeff Walker: Jacky Jack, as he's known locally, has done well in recent years. His records sell and he can pick his own engagements. Long a part-time friend of Austin and Texas, he's fairly established and has truly developed a persona in the Austin country world. There are those who claim he doesn't write anymore, but who cares? Jacky Jack don't.

David Allan Coe: Coe saw the bandwagon going by and wanted on; he associated himself with the country music

Above: The entrance to Willie's farm today.



outlaws and Texas. He even moved to Dallas and cut *Willie, Waylon, and Me*. But Coe was plagued by biker fans and his own image-building and after a short move to Austin, abandoned his band and left for Nashville to buy a houseboat and go treasure hunting in the Caribbean. Truly talented, David will undoubtedly do well again—although not necessarily associated with Texas.

B.W. Stevenson: B.W. don't have a band anymore.

Ray Wylie Hubbard: *Wrote Up Against The Wall Redneck Mother*. Since then he's been hanging out in Dallas saying he wanted his new band to sound like the rock group, Kiss.

Rusty Wier: Rusty has never quite broken through. His performances and records have often been good, but uneven. He credits the Austin scene with giving him the opportunity to make records—his last one sold well and he has a new one out. Wier may turn out to be the late-bloomer of the Austin scene.

Steve Fromholz: Received acclaim and a cult following after his work on the *Fromholz* album, and a lot of people thought Fromholz had something to say. After two solo albums it appears that he doesn't, although his *I'd Have To Be Crazy* (recorded by Willie) may turn out to be a Texas classic.

Michael Murphey: Despite what he says, Murphey didn't invent the term "cosmic cowboy," although he was the first to put it in a song. Murphey made a lot of money and amassed a kind of pop following with his precious-sounding ballads. One of the first to feel threatened by the state's "cowboy" image and hype, he has moved to Colorado to become a slightly hipper version of John Denver.

Asleep At The Wheel: After a few frustrating years in California the Wheel moved to Texas and found a home. They can play for all kinds of audiences and are never disappointing. Their records sell but not as well as they should—there's no valid reason why they haven't had many top country hits other than the fact that in some ways they are the victims of a prejudice as strong as anything the "outlaws" had to face—Nashville's snobbish opinion that western swing is dead. Asleep At The Wheel continues to grow and produce great authentic music.

Willis Allan Ramsey: Is building a studio in Austin and letting his songs be recorded by people like The Captain and Tennille.

Townes Van Zandt: Perhaps the most influential songwriter (to other songwriters) to have come out of Texas in recent years. He's released seven or eight albums which are hard to find and near classics. Townes recently left Austin for Nashville where his new manager, Alan Lomax, is attempting to help him become something other than America's great undiscovered poet.

Kinky Friedman: Everyone took Kinky
(Continued on page 60)

Freddy Fender, El Beebop Kid, at home in Texas, complete with cheerleaders (above); sometime Cosmic Cowboy Michael Murphey (far left) and late starter Rusty Wier (left); Texas hope Joe Ely (below) from Lubbock.



Billy Joe Shaver (above) has been there and back, while Doug Sahm (left) has mastered every musical idiom for the last ten years. Below, Willie, Michael Murphey, Steve Fromholz and Leon Russell at one of Willie's endless picnics.



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Delbert at a recent showcase in Austin, where Capricorn Records' honchos heard, liked and eventually signed the labelless Delbert.



DELBERT McCLINTON

A Whole New Breed Of Honky Tonk Hero

by **PETER GURALNICK**

Honky tonkin', sings Delbert, *I guess I done me some*. That may be true, but along the way Delbert McClinton, with his Fort Worth rhythm and blues background, has pushed the limits of country music to new (and decidedly funkier) heights.

"I tried to quit playing once for about two months, when I was getting the most pressure from my family and my first wife. But I never could keep a job. I always quit or was fired. And the only thing I ever really cared about was the music. The basic feeling is still the same. The only difference is that now I want to make more of a mark musically—not just because it's fun but because I think it's worthwhile."

At 37 years old, Delbert McClinton retains a boyish quality at odds with the life he has led for the last 20 years. Small, wiry, with the scrubbed good looks, neatly parted hair and unassuming manner of the Texas boy next door, he is neither larger nor prettier than life. Even on stage, with a swirl of hard-driving, gut-bucket musical activity going on around him and a 7-piece band uniquely attuned to his striking amalgam of country and rhythm-and-blues, he remains the perfectly calm center of the storm. He is always just Delbert, and after 20 years in the business he has learned to take pretty much everything in stride. With an ABC album (*Victim of Life's Circumstances*) that was named by critics as the best album of 1975, and two subsequent records that were equally well regarded, he has seen something of the heights. Like most artists who have spent a couple of decades working up to overnight success, he has seen a good deal of the depths. And in talking to him you get the impression that for him there really isn't that much difference between the two.

The one constant has been the music, and that for Delbert McClinton "amounts to doing something for real and enjoying

it. Enjoying it whether there's two people there or 2000 people there." With his unpretentious stance, an easy-going vocal style and his ability to move comfortably among various funky styles and idioms, it's difficult sometimes to fully appreciate Delbert McClinton's gifts.

The music he plays is the music that has been the staple of the honky tonks and beer joints for the last thirty years, and yet what elevates it above the efforts of thousands of bar bands is precisely the confidence and focus of Delbert McClinton as a leader. That, plus the ability to convey his own unique rhythm, an oddly off-center vision of the world as filtered through his wry poetic consciousness.

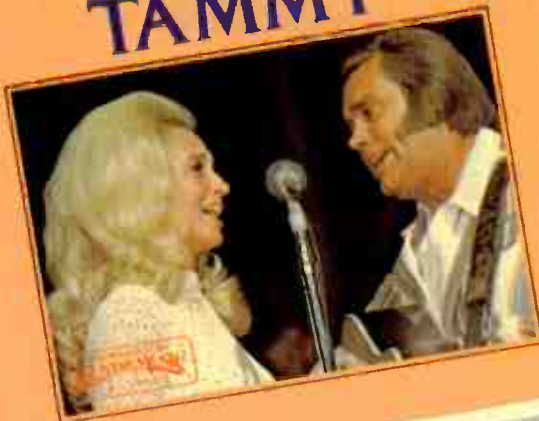
Delbert McClinton comes from a classic country background. Born in Lubbock, Texas, on Nov. 4, 1940, he started working the bars and joints around Fort Worth, where he grew up, at the age of 14. His band was called the Mellow Fellows; one of their lesser rivals was a high school group led by John Deutschendorf, a self-described "wimp" (according to McClinton) now known as John Denver. Delbert got his own group their first jobs by just "going in and telling them they needed us. We'd play anywhere, any time, free and otherwise." He got his education pretty much as his songs suggest, out on the Jacksboro and Mansfield Highways, playing the little joints that could squeeze in no more than 65 or 100 people, passing a kitty box to make some money.

The music he played then was the same odd mix of rockabilly, country and the blues, for Fort Worth-Dallas in those days occupied a kind of musical cross-

roads. Back in the '50's you could catch Ray Price, Ornette Coleman, King Curtis, Roger Miller, Bob Wills, T Bone Walker and Doc Severinsen, all comfortably co-existing within the same musical setting. C.L. Dupree (now Cornell Dupree of Stuff and Aretha's ace back-up band) was the reigning guitarist ("All the guitar players worth a shit had to go out to the White Sands to hear him play. He played phenomenal.") And the blues was king on radio station KNOK, where Delbert McClinton would later become the first white artist to have a featured hit with his version of Sonny Boy Williamson's *Wake Up Baby*. It was a unique musical ambience in which, as a Ray Price bandleader told writer Dave Hickey, "You could play hillbilly one night, swing the next, jazz the next, and, if you had enough coke, play the blues till dawn on every one of them. There wasn't any division, music was music, until the radio jocks and record guys got scared of rock 'n roll."

Delbert McClinton never got scared of rock 'n roll. The Mellow Fellows became the Straightjackets and continued to play the roadhouses, working as a kind of house band at Jack's Place, a white-owned blues club, where they backed artists like Bobby Bland, Jimmy Reed, Howlin' Wolf and Sonny Boy Williamson. That was where Delbert, who had confined himself to rhythm guitar and vocals up till then, learned to play harp, "just sitting on the edge of the bandstand and watching them sumbitches, it was exciting as hell," and the band even traveled as far out of the way as Lawton, Okla., to play behind Sonny Boy. They also played Blue Mondays at the Skyliner, an all-black club,

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where their music was received in the spirit in which it was offered, as well as the little joints out in the country with dirt floors, electricity coming by extension cords and chicken wire strung all around the bandstand to protect the musicians from flying bottles. It was a peculiar conglomeration of influences, but "there never was much black and white trouble around Fort Worth, at least not in comparison to the way it was other places," and the main standard for any band, black or white, was "a dance known as The Push. It was not like a dance, it was The Dance, done behind a real good strong shuffle beat. We included about 15 minutes of country songs for variety, I guess you might say, but we didn't do 'em in a hokey kind of a way. We always did 'em good. To tell you the truth, we just played the way we knew how to play, man. We never really thought about it that much."

There were records, too. From the late '50's on, Delbert was hooked up in one fashion or another with a local promoter named Major Bill Smith, who seemed to operate in the great carny tradition of Huey Meaux and Colonel Tom Parker. Delbert achieved a good deal of local celebrity and air play ("We was on top and we knew it and had all kind of special little privileges around town"), until a demo that he cut with Bruce Channel called *Hey Baby* went to number one on the national charts in 1962. McClinton was just sitting in on harp on the record, but when Channel toured England it was with "Harmonica Star Delbert McClinton," who, in Liverpool, gave harp instruction to an eager young opening act, the Beatles. *Hey Baby* proved to be kind of a fluke, and Delbert formed about half a dozen different groups, the best known of which was the Ron-Dels, whose one chart entry *If You Really Want Me To I'll Go* was written by Delbert and covered by Waylon Jennings on his second RCA album.

It's hard to describe the exact impact of *Victim of Life's Circumstances*, Delbert's first ABC album. "I took it as a good stroke. It was crazy the way it happened. We had a brand new baby, just bought a 23' travel trailer, and were fixing to get the hell out of there and at least try to do some good in Nashville. A friend of mine, Charles Stewart, was the branch manager for ABC Records in Fort Worth. He was one of the faithful dancers back in the old days. I hadn't seen him in years, and one day he just called out of the blue and asked me what I was doing. I told him not much, and he suggested we do something, and we went over and cut some demos at a little 4-track studio in Patego. Most of them songs was the songs that ended up on the album." It sounded, and still sounds, like the summation of Delbert McClinton's life in music. There are blues (*Troubled Women*), kickers (*Two More Bottles of Wine, Real Good Itch*), r&b (*Do*

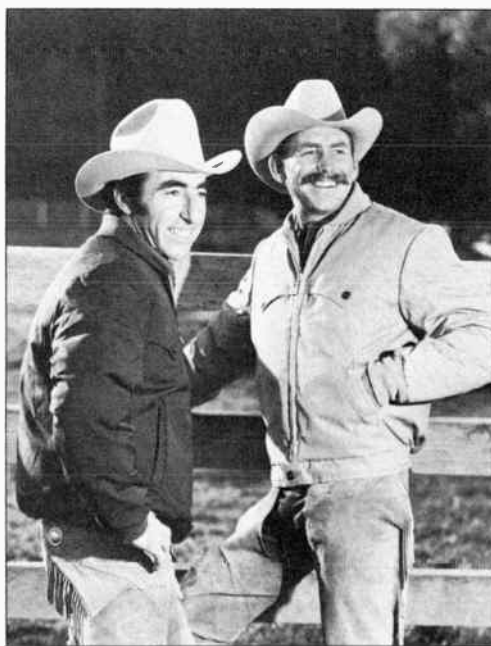
It), and careless evocations of classic rock 'n roll (*Solid Gold Plated Fool*), all put across with a kind of casual nonchalance, that is dependent neither on strident arrangements nor on vocal fireworks. All of the elements with which Delbert has come to be identified are present on the first album—a stabbing horn section, contemporary blues modulations, a thick solid musical texture, and the kind of soul-blasting r&b feel straight out of the honky tonks. More than anything, though, there is the presence and energy of Delbert McClinton himself. Each of the songs was written by Delbert, there is nothing forced or out of place about any of them, and every one possesses the easy assurance, loose vocal rhythms, and precise changes and crack instrumentation you might expect from a James Brown band.

The second album on the surface represents a considerable departure. Called *Genuine Cowhide*, it is not only as unforced as the first album but as fresh and individual as well. One of the things that makes it so successful must be the enterprise of an artist who can dip into the college of musical knowledge and come up with such surprising choices as the Midnighters' *It's Love Baby (24 Hours a Day)*, the Coasters' *One Kiss Led to Another*, or even Bo Diddley's little-known *Before You Accuse Me*. What makes the album more than just another well-intended tri-

bute, however, and in fact the best collection of this sort that I have ever heard, is McClinton's ability to tie all of its various strands into one listenable, danceable, *personal* package. It's music with an edge to it, fun to listen to but not easy listening, simply because it demands something, some kind of energy or commitment, which the best music has always asked of its audience.

The third album, *Love Rustler*, is a little disappointing after the pathbreaking efforts of the first two. Although it includes two fine new songs by Dennis Linde, and although it boasts the same kind of *uncomplicated involvement* as *Victim* and *Cowhide*, the presence of only one original composition, and the absence of any underlying theme, makes it less ambitious and somehow less satisfying. At the same time the band is if anything even more finely tuned, there are tempo changes and tricky modulations galore, and it seems evident that even if we did not need one more version of *Turn On Your Love Light*, however spirited, Delbert McClinton has really hit his stride both as confident interpreter and striking individual stylist.

It could be, as one record company executive points out, Delbert's time; he could be the next big thing, or then again it could be a few years off. No one doubts
(Continued on page 58)



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Once there, the likes of Charley Pride, Barbara Mandrell, Jerry Reed, Narvel Felts, O.B. McClinton, Tommy Overstreet, Jerry Clower, Brenda Lee, Nat Stuckey, Mary Lou Turner, Helen Cornelius, Jim Ed Brown, Tom T. Hall, Beverly Heckel and (better brace yourself for this one) Jerry Lee Lewis threw beer at one another, slithered along on plastic worms and kissed repeatedly (The World's Longest Kiss competition) while the cameras rolled for the *All-Star Anything Goes*.

We're not sure about the social significance of all these shenanigans, and we're not going to spoil the fun by telling you who won, but you might want to keep an eye on your television set this fall. After all, it sure beats *Hollywood Squares*.

RUSSELL SHAW



The Killer, Barbara Mandrell, Jerry Reed and Charley Pride ham it up for the camera (right), while Brother Billy gets a little facial alteration (far left, top). Charley and Jerry try the beer slide (far left, middle), and Charley gives Beverly some help in swinging (far left, lower). At left, Barbara and Jerry Lee pause for a bit of conversation.



Records

Mickey Gilley

First Class

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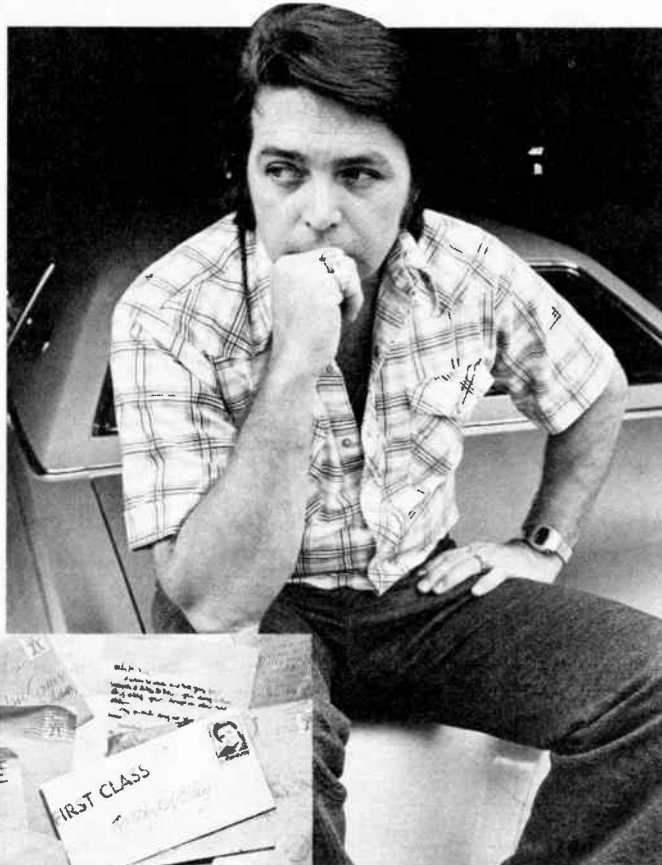
Star rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Mickey Gilley is surely the savior of Playboy Records. The story has oft been repeated of how his surprise string of number-one records (six out of eight single releases) proved him to be the leviathan that raised the floundering record label from the 11th hour throes of financial death.

There are at least a half-dozen cuts on *First Class* that demonstrate why Gilley is the immensely successful artist that he is today, taking songs by top Nashville writers like Rory Bourke, Foster and Rice, Mac Vickery and Wayne Kemp.

It's obvious that Gilley learned a lot of the tricks of the trade from first cousin Jerry Lee. He pounds the keyboard mercilessly, sprinkling songs with delightful teasing flourishes of high octave 16th and 32nd notes. With his subtle vocal talents, he slides smoothly down entire octaves at a single bound, and with his fine sense of phrasing, he can wring the sorrow, cheerfulness, and/or irony in a lyric right out. He sings the rockers like *#1 Rock 'N Roll C&W Boogie Blues Man* and the slow sad songs like *It's Just A Matter of Makin' Up My Mind* with equal believability.

On *Five Foot Two Eyes Of Blue* (*Has Anybody Seen My*



Girl), an old show tune, Gilley expands his repertoire and breaks into some new musical areas. The song features a full-blown Dixieland horn arrangement (with the help of some off-duty members of Danny Davis's Nashville Brass), and it comes off beautifully.

When all the elements are right, when Gilley is pounding his piano against the subtle interplay of steel and electric guitar; when he's taking his vocal roller coaster rides up and down the melody lines of solid songs like *Hang Together*, *Or Hang It Up*, *Honky Tonk Memories* or *Chains Of Love*, well, you just couldn't ask for more.

BOB ALLEN

Rex Allen, Jr.

Rex

Warner BS-3054 \$6.98

B8-3054 (tape) \$7.98

Star rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

This album could very well be the breakthrough record to establish Rex Allen, Jr. as an artist to be reckoned with for a long time to come. No one has ever questioned his ability, and he's had several tunes out that were strong enough to become hits. But for one reason

or another, he's never fulfilled the predictions of stardom. This could be the time that changes. Allen has always been on the MOR side of country, and since that's the direction radio seems to be going, he's chosen the right moment to come out with an album of especially fine songs.

The songs, produced by Larry Butler and Norro Wilson, are suited for Rex's style, and the tracks are perfectly understat-

ed to allow his vocal ability to be the focus of attention. There isn't a loser to be found here, with the best moments being Wayland Holyfield's *I'm Getting Good At Missing You*, *Love Me Once Before You Go*, and *Throw Out Your Loveline* are also superbly done. There's a hit that's ripe to be picked in Joe Allen's *Lying In My Arms*. It's a performance you won't be able to get out of your mind.

BOB ANDERSON

Willie Nelson

Before His Time

RCA APL1-2210 \$6.98

APS1-2210 (tape) \$7.95

Star rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Willie Nelson once said, "I was an artist on RCA, but there was no money being spent promotion-wise on Willie Nelson and it seemed like I was only cutting my albums there like dub sessions—they would release them to see if anybody else wanted to record the songs." But since Willie's rise to stardom, RCA has re-released a number of Willie's old recordings.

Before His Time is the latest with one difference: this is an album that never was. The selections are taken from not one but several previously released albums. If you own all of Willie's past albums, you've probably got most of this material. Only one song, *You Ought To Hear Me Cry*, wasn't previously released on other albums.



Despite the strings and voices (the album was re-mixed by Waylon Jennings and his drummer-sidekick Richie Albright) Willie never sang better and this record does contain some of his minor classics like *I'm a Memory*, *Stay Away From Lonely Places*, the bitter *One In A Row*, *It Should Be Easier Now*.

All the selections were written by Willie except two—*How Long Have You Been There?* and the well-known *I'd Trade All Of My Tomorrows (For Just One Yesterday)*.

NELSON ALLEN

How We Rate The Albums: 5 Stars...
Album of the Month 4 Stars...Excel-
lent 3 Stars...Very Good 2 Stars...
Fair 0 Stars...Poor

ALBUM OF THE MONTH

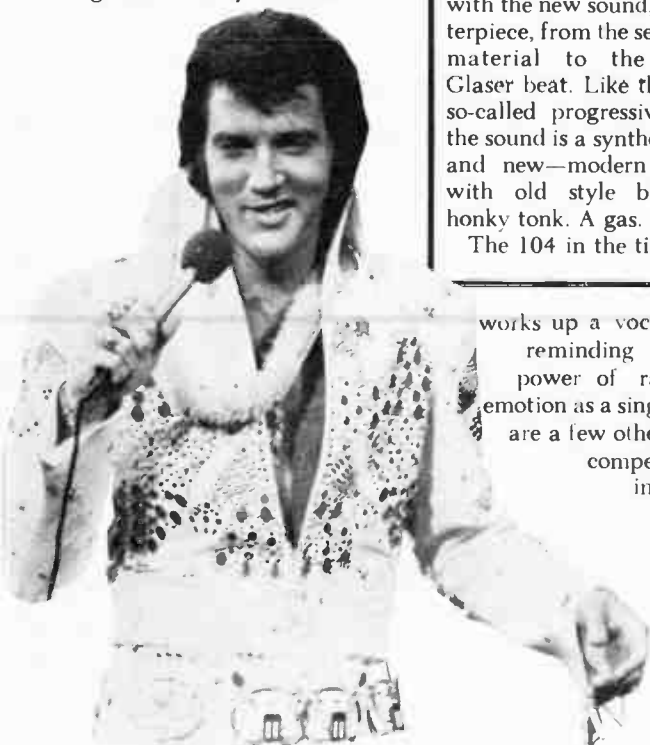
Elvis Presley

Moody Blue
RCA APL 1-2428 \$6.98
APSI-2428 (tape) \$7.98
Star rating: ★ ★

Old Elvis has seen better days. His slim physique and his virile public image both seem to have fallen victim to his fondness for banana splits. And now an endless string of comedians have earned belly laughs parodying his middle-aged, swivel-hipped, karate-chopping stage presence. Moody Blue is probably about his 792nd album release, containing his 4,156th and 4,157th hit singles. Really, it must be hard for him to get excited every time he goes in the studio any more.

All of the cuts on *Moody Blue* are adequately produced (Elvis is listed as executive producer on this outing) and sung, but sadly, they lack the fire that once made Elvis such a legendary figure.

There are brief, fleeting glimpses of the old Elvis. The live version of *Unchained Melody* begins almost acappella. With only a piano in the background to key him in, Elvis



Hank Snow

#104—Still Movin' On
APLI-2400 \$6.98
APSI-2400 \$7.98
Star Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Hank, when you said you were going progressive, I wanted to stand up and scream, "Don't! Don't do it! You'll lose your old fans like me, and you won't grab the young ones who dig Willie, Jerry Jeff & Co. because you won't have the right feel. You'll look like a fool and sound like a fool."

Well, the only fool was me. This new album, your first with the new sound, is a masterpiece, from the selection of material to the bouncy Glaser beat. Like the best of so-called progressive music, the sound is a synthesis of old and new—modern rhythms with old style blues and honky tonk. A gas.

The 104 in the title means

it's your 104th album. After fifty or so, a man might be forgiven if he went a bit stale. But here you are at number 104 and still fresh. That solo guitar of yours—that flat top acoustic that's been a trademark at least since the 'forties—is smoother now than it ever was, and you use it to good effect in this album—especially in the title cut, where you do a solo reminiscent of the one in the original *I'm Moving On*, only better executed. You've been practicing, you old dog you.

The material you included—some new, some old, some you'd recorded before. Willie himself would be proud. The title cut—new words by Shel Silverstein—captures the essence of your distinguished career without crossing that fine line separating the sentimental from the maudlin. A definite plus. Your new ver-

sion of *That Heart Belongs To Me*, is as good as your previous version and as good as Webb Pierce's original—but different. *Breakfast With The Blues* (another remake of one of your old songs) is a fine mix of heartache, lament and restraint. One of the best is the old blues standard, *Trouble In Mind* (You and Eddy Arnold did well with that one in the past). And so it goes. Not a clunker in the bunch.

For that compelling Glaser sound that'll cut through the din of the noisiest beer hall in Austin, you were backed up by as good a bunch of pickers as ever laid down a track or two—Donnie Favorite on piano, Mike Cole on bass, Don Eckley on mandolin (he also played piano and guitar), Rock Killough on harp and rhythm guitar, Kayton Roberts on steel guitar, Joe Harrow on dobro, Larrie Londin on drums, Buddy Spicher on fiddle and Billy Earl McClelland on electric lead guitar. Your producer was none other than Chuck Glaser, as any up-to-date fool should be able to tell from that sound. Hank, it just bounces along behind your voice, taking you from the good old days into the present, where you seem to be right at home. Congratulations.

ARTHUR J. MAHER

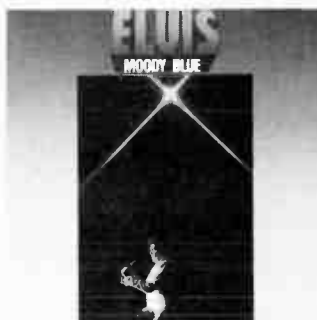
works up a vocal frenzy, reminding us of his power of range and emotion as a singer. There are a few other slightly compelling cuts including a

humorous live version of the fifties hit, *Little Darlin'*, and one good solid rocker, *Way*

Down. Also the title cut isn't half bad. But *She Thinks I Still Care* is typical "Elvis-the-Pelvis" vocal high jinks at its worst: over-wrought, sob-sighs, heavy-breathing calisthenics, and jowl-numbing vibrattos.

With every new Elvis release, we keep looking for more cuts like *Kentucky Rain* or *Suspicious Minds*, great songs that revitalized Elvis's career from another slump almost a decade ago. But sadly, there are none of them here.

BOB ALLEN



Lefty Frizzell

The ABC Collection
 ABC 30035 \$5.98
 ABC8T-30035 (tape) \$6.98
 Star rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Probably the single most important yet most underrated aspect of country music is the loyalty of its fans. Yet many of the middle-aged singers who enjoy the benefits of this loyalty reward it by valiantly struggling to approximate the purer, clearer singing of their youth.

One of the remarkable things about Lefty Frizzell was that, quite to the contrary, this set of songs recorded while he was in his mid-forties—shortly before his death in 1975—reveal a voice which had grown increasingly affecting, moving and subtle.

He was always one of our great singers, wringing pain and passion out of notes and words, and although his voice deepened and grew husky, he



refined its awesome ability.

The ABC Collection makes this clear with striking intensity, although it is not free of some of the faults which plagued Lefty's records all through the latter part of his career: a bit too much background vocals, a bit too low key an approach, and some undistinguished song material.

Still it is remarkable that Lefty, despite his legendary problems with the bottle, continued to grow and evolve as a singer. The ABC Collection is dramatic testimony to that, especially on cuts like *If She Just Helps Me Get Over You*, *Lucky Arms* and *I Love You A Thousand Ways*, which make you close your eyes and surrender to the rush of emotions that transcend any discussion of a singer's technical ability and touches on the realm of greatness.

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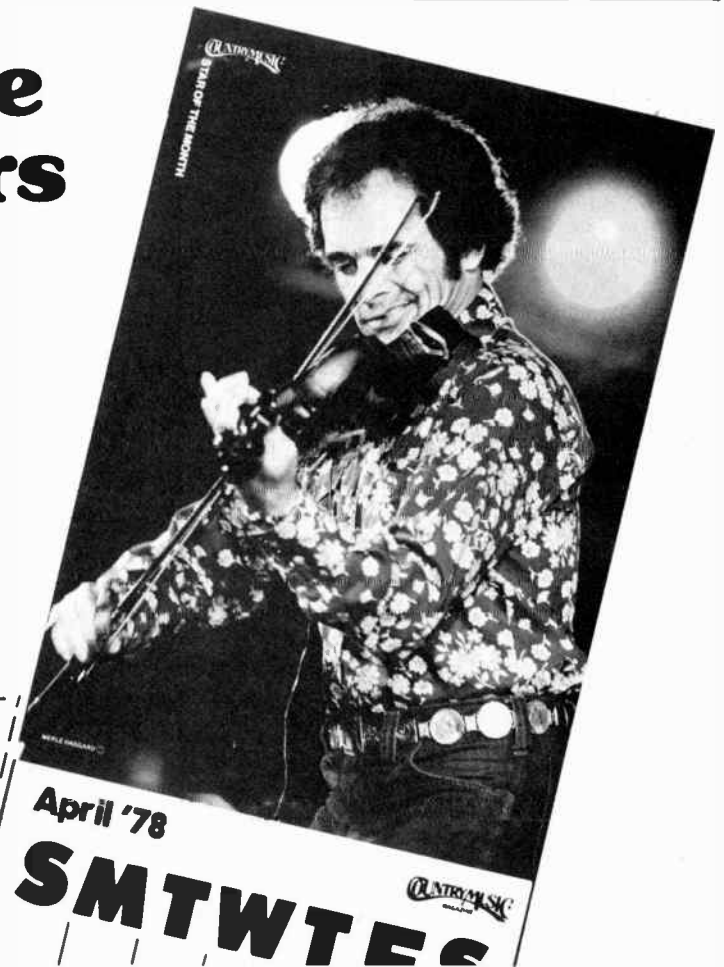
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Tom T. Hall

About Love
Mercury SRM-1-1139 \$6.98
MC8-1-1139 (tape) \$7.98
Star rating: ★ ★ ★

About the best thing you can say about love is that it's imperfect. No matter how hard you try to make a relationship work perfectly, it just doesn't really happen that way. This is the message Tom T. Hall gives us with *About Love*, a gentle and peaceful album that presents his feelings about how love is, no matter how we might wish it would be.

Five of the songs are written by Hall and five others as Tom T. spins his tales of love from many standpoints. Hall speaks of loneliness on *Happy Groundhog Day*, parting sadly on *Goodbye Cowgirl*, love in a pastoral setting in *A Whole Lot of Love*. When Hall includes songs by others, they continue the mood he's setting

as if he'd written them himself. *Lovin' Arms, It's All In The Game*, as well as *And I Love You So*, work here quite nicely. Even *The Way We Were* brings a viewpoint that Hall shapes to fit his own style.



Your Man Loves You, Honey best typifies the underlying feeling on the record. Hall is saying that though he often fails to do the right thing, he still loves the lady, so please don't try to change him. It's a

gem of a song written with the subtle emotional word painting Hall is noted for. Very few writers can take an idea and express it as eloquently and simply as Tom T. Hall can— even as complex a subject as the realities of love.

BOB ANDERSON



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Jessi Colter

Miriam ("Mama Named Me Mirriam. I'm Jessi For A Song")
 Capitol ST-11583 \$6.98
 8XT11583 (tape) \$7.98
 Star rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

We have here a gospel album, and a very personal one at that. All ten songs are written by Jessi, and each is a state-

great throbbing electric guitar work and Jessi does some very gutsy, gospel type singing. Compelling songs like *There Ain't No Rain*, and *Let It Go*, with spirited background vocals by Waylon, Roy Orbison and the



Greater Christ Temple Choir, also prove there's no reason that good gospel can't rock-out a little.

The most unusual cut is the finale, called *New Wine*, in which tension is built through Jessi's recitation of short, mantra-like lyric phrases against a wall of droning instrumentation, highlighted by a 14-string dulcimer.

BOB ALLEN

ment of faith: a hymn, a prayer or an invocation. Many are adorned with direct, almost child-like lyrics, rich in sincerity and rendered movingly through Jess's distinctly phrased and quavering vocals.

One of the strongest statements of faith is *Put Your Arms Around Me*, a semi-rocker on which Waylon provides some



Johnny Cash

The Rambler
 Columbia KC 34833 \$6.98
 KCT 34833 (tape) \$7.98
 Star rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Concept albums are generally risky undertakings, even when attempted by the most respectable artists. One is never quite sure that the story one is telling will strike the listener as believable, and, without that acceptance, the entire affair can be tossed away into the file marked "pretentious." It's hard not to be skeptical looking at

the cover of Johnny Cash's *The Rambler*—"written and directed by Johnny Cash." The list of tracks on the back cover shows eight songs interspersed with eight "dialogues," and Cash's self-penned liner notes take great pains to establish the credibility of the concept—the Rambler driving across the country, searching for life. Yet Cash pulls it off, and *The Rambler* is one of his best records in recent years.



The dialogues are surprisingly effective. Cash as the Rambler and Jack Routh as the Fisherman both turn in solid performances with their front-seat philosophising about women, cars, religion and life in general. The thoughts are succinct, the messages clear. A fine example is the character of the Cowgirl, whom the two men pick up hitch-hiking. When she sees a police car and gets edgy, the men ask her if she's stolen something. "Don't be funny!" she says. "I ain't never stole nothin' . . . I killed my old man. I had to, man. He treated me like dirt. I loved him."

As for the songs, which reflect both the adventures and the loneliness of life on the road, they are a fine batch indeed. The best of them are *Hit the Road and Go*, a simple Folsom Prison-ish sounding cruising song, *Lady*, a haunting ballad and *The Cowboy's Last Ride*, about the Cowgirl's killing her lover, with Cash singing from the woman's point of view. *The Rambler* is an interesting experiment for the Man-in-Black—and a successful one too. There's a little bit of the Rambler in everyone, and with this record Johnny Cash has touched that dark, hidden spot in all of us.

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MO107

by Hans Fantel

AUDIO

No More Ear Wrecks On The Highway

People who are used to quality sound in their homes now find it hard to put up with ordinary radios or tape players in their cars, pickups and vans. Their ears have gotten spoiled and they now realize that most standard, factory-installed car radios are puny, underpowered (barely two watts) and strictly low-fi. And even if those little dashboard screamers had more power, their rattly speakers couldn't take those extra watts anyway.

A while back, if you wanted something in your car or van to sound halfway like real music, you couldn't get it for either love or money. But even though highway

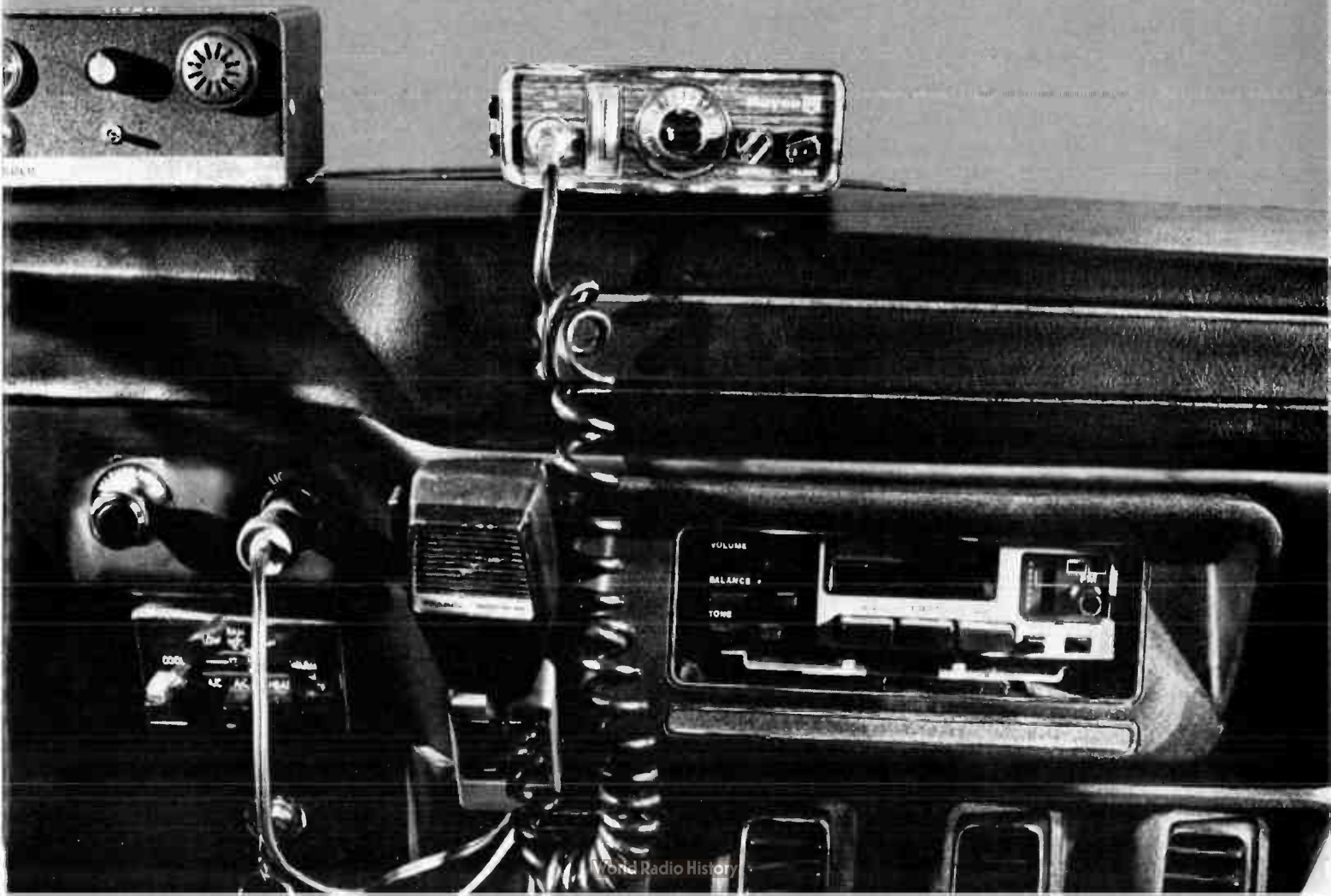
hi-fi is still young—barely two years old—there's already an ample choice of equipment.

Good sound in vehicles is now possible simply because the basic sound sources are improved. People are switching from mono AM car radios (which gave you lots of static but not much in the way of high frequencies) to better-sounding stereo-FM, and from wobbly-pitched 8-track cartridges to hi-fi cassettes, which are also a lot more compact and easier to handle.

If you already have a stereo system in your car and don't want to replace the whole rig, the fastest and cheapest way to

improve it is to install better speakers. The present ones are likely to be single-cone designs which can't possibly cover the whole frequency range. They swallow up the highs that spell out the particular character of a voice or instrument, so all the music sounds homogenized and pasty. That's especially bad in vehicles, where you need plenty of bright, clear highs to bring out musical detail against the engine noise and because the upholstery soaks up those uppermost frequencies.

Your present vehicle radio or tape player probably puts out lots more highs
(Continued on page 61)



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3) Johnny Cash—Any Old Wind That Blows: If I Had A Hammer/Oney/The Ballad Of Annie Palmer/Kentucky Straight/Too Little, Too Late/Country Trash/The Good Earth/Best Friend/The Loving Gift, and more!
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4) Johnny Cash/June Carter/ Statler Bros./Carter Family, & More—Christmas: Jingle Bells/Silent Night/King Of Love/That Christmasy Feeling/Merry Christmas Mary/ When You're Twenty-One/ Christmas With You, more!
Columbia KC-31754



5) Bob Dylan—Pat Garrett & Billy The Kid: Billy/Workin' For The Law/Billy 1/Bunkhouse Theme/River Theme/ Turkey Chase/Knockin' On Heaven's Door/Billy 4/Billy 7 and more!
Columbia KC-32460



6) Original Artists—Great Country Ballads: Marty Robbins: Big Iron/Lefty Frizzell: Mom & Dad's Waltz/Johnny Horton: Rock Island Line/ Tammy Wynette: I Don't Wanna Play House/George Morgan: Candy Kisses, more!
Columbia DS-518

7) George Jones—A Picture Of Me: Second Handed Flowers/That Singing Friend/ Of Mine/Tomorrow Never Comes/On The Back Row/ We Found A Match/Let There Be A Woman/Another Way To Say Goodbye, more!
Epic KE-31718

8) Tammy Wynette—Kids Say The Darndest Things: Bedtime Story/My Daddy Doll/Listen, Spot/I Don't Wanna Play House/Buy Me A Daddy/D-I-V-O-R-C-E/Don't Make Me Go To School/Too Many Daddies/Joey, more!
Epic KE-31937

9) Tammy Wynette—My Man: Til I Get It Right/Good Lovin'/Loving You Could Never Be Better/The Happiest Girl In The Whole U.S.A./ Things I Love To Do/Walk Softly On The Bridges/Gone With Another Man, more!
Epic KE-31717

10) G. Jones & T. Wynette— Let's Build A World Together: Help The People/Our Way Of Life/After The Fire Is Gone/ When I Stop Dreaming/Touching Shoulders/My Elusive Dreams/Your Shining Face/ Love Is All We Need, more!
Epic KE-32113

11) George & Tammy—We're Gonna Hold On: When True Love Steps In/Never Ending Song Of Love/Wouldn't I?/ Roll In My Sweet Baby's Arms/The Jet Set/That Man Of Mine/As Long As We Can/ Crawdad Song, much more!
Epic KE-32757

12) Original Artists—Country Gold: George Jones: Tender Years/Lynn Anderson: Stand By Your Man/Charlie Rich: Mohair Sam/Roger Miller: Chug-A-Lug/Jerry Lee Lewis: Drinkin' Wine Spo-Dee-O'Dee, much more!
Pickwick JS-6144

13) Johnny Paycheck—Somebody Loves Me: Spread It Around/I Take It On Home/ Loving An Angel Every Day/ Song Sung Blue/Life Can Be Beautiful/It Takes A Woman's Love/Kissing Yesterday Goodbye, much more!
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14) David Houston & Barbara Mandrell—A Perfect Match: We're Gonna Make It All The Way/I Love You, I Love You/Something To Brag About/Try A Little Harder/After Closing Time/ We Go Together, more!
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15) Tex Ritter—High Noon: High Noon/Bad Brahma Bull/Blood On The Saddle/ Barbara Allen/You Don't Know Me/The Wayward Wind/This Land Is Your Land/On The Lone Prairie/ Streets Of Laredo, more!
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16) Tommy Cash— The Best Of: Listen/You're Everything/ Six White Horses/Rise And Shine/I'm Gonna Write A Song/The Young New Mexican Puppeteer/That Certain One/I Owe The World To You/So This Is Love, more!
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DELBERT

(Continued from page 47)

the music, though. No one who has seen Delbert perform could fail to be captivated by the effortless ease with which he tosses off a repertoire which stretches back to Buster Brown and seems sometimes as if it could go on forever. There are blues standards, country originals, a Bruce Channel number, songs from the latest album. There is no particular sense of time, there are no clear musical divisions; Delbert neither considers the old music old-fashioned nor the new music progressive. It's all just good music, it's all real, "it's music that makes you want to move, it's a gut thing. I guess it's good therapy or whatever. Cause there ain't no way it can be anything but right."

Even in Nashville this kind of dedication makes them sit up and take notice. When Delbert played the Armadillo East recently, he held a celebrity-studded audience which included Jessi Colter and Billy Swan in thrall, not by invoking the Texas flag on the wall nor by the quality of the showmanship (mostly Delbert just stands with his hands cupped around the mike and eyes half-closed) but by the songs themselves. *Fanny Mae, Sneaking Around, Stormy Monday, Lovey Dovey*—this is the music the audience grew up with, but it is as if Nashville, in a rare unguarded moment, is for once acknowledging its funky roots. Lonnie Mack, who sits at a front table and cannot be coaxed to sit in, beams like a cheshire cat; from the rear a drunken bassplayer sends back the lines of the familiar song, wailing in response to Delbert's lead. As the night wears on, the band really hits its groove and people get up and start to dance. It's not the stuff of which myths are made. It's only intended to be a good time. In between sets the talk is mostly of Mexican food ("They figure," says Delbert disapprovingly of the band, "that bad Mex is better than no Mex") and old friends who have dropped out of the life for one reason or another. Some are salesmen, some are big successes. Delbert still gets together with them occasionally, and when he does it's the music they talk about. "It's bound to come up in conversation. They want to know who's playing with who, if I've seen so-and-so lately, so I give them a run-down." Billy Sanders, the rhythm player who owns a car lot in Fort Worth and has been with Delbert off and on since the Ron-Dels, tells stories of the old days and beams appreciatively at their new audience. With his thinning blond hair combed across his forehead and his jovial expression, he looks like a used car salesman; he is after 20 years a true believer. "Delbert hasn't hardly changed," he declares with conviction. "He's just about exactly the same."

One has little doubt that he is. Right now in fact Delbert McClinton may be at

an ideal point, poised on a precipice, feeling his way towards a new synthesis, a throwback in many ways to the kind of feeling which originally gave impetus to the music before the music became an industry. His art is not spectacular like James Brown's or Jerry Lee Lewis'; it expresses instead a rare and single-minded devotion to the music which has been his life. He is determinedly not a scene-maker, as he made clear in a recent interview with Mike Pellicchia, and the whole so-called "Austin scene" is of little interest to him. "Being in Texas," he said, "and living in what's going on here the last three years, boy I've had it. The scene, the longnecks and the cowboys and the junk music that's coming down. It's like the hippie cult before that and the surfin' cult before that. I think the music's serious. I don't think a lot of music's serious, and I don't think you can do nonserious music for very long. But then again maybe mine's so serious that nobody wants to hear it, cause I ain't no star."

Not yet anyway. □

KENNY

(Continued from page 26)

Tell It All, Brother and Rings). Kenny and the First Edition consistently scored high in the top-40 pop and rock radio market. For two years the First Edition also had their own highly successful television show, *Rollin'*, which was syndicated on 192 stations in the U.S. and Canada. Then came the doldrums: slackening record sales, along with creative dissension and stagnation within the group.

The First Edition endured, sans hit records, until early 1976, picking up their bread and butter from personal appearances. But Kenny, already in his late thirties, with three broken marriages behind him and surrounded by fellow musicians quite a few years his junior, felt the time was right for change. "When you reach a plateau like that in your career, where you can't go up," Kenny explains, "If you don't get out, you go down. The key factor in a career is knowing when to leave something behind. If you wait too long, you lose your leverage in the business."

After bailing out of the First Edition, Kenny headed for Nashville, looking for a new recording deal as a solo artist. He ran into producer Larry Butler, got a contract with United Artists and, as Kenny puts it, "we put our game plan together and it worked."

With United Artists, over the past year and a half, Kenny has had a consistent series of chart records, including *Love Lifted Me, Laura (What's He Got That I Ain't Got)* and *While The Feeling's Good*. But less than six months ago, while speaking to another journalist, he lamented the

fact that he had still not found *the* song.

Then along came *Lucille*, a song that had been turned down by at least one other major country artist, and which Kenny claims he found "in a stack with about a hundred other songs." The single, *Lucille*, and the follow-up album of the same name both reached the number one spot in the national country charts. The single also topped the British charts, entered the American pop charts and garnered an incredible amount of airplay everywhere.

"Radio programming baffles me," Kenny laughs. "I'll be listening to a station, and I'll hear Led Zeppelin, then Pink Floyd and then I'll hear *Lucille*. It stuns me. . . . But I love it."

Lucille has afforded Kenny a definite resurgence. He is now in increased demand for television appearances and has access to much larger personal appearance venues. Currently he is being handled by Jerry Weintraub, who manages John Denver, Frank Sinatra and a host of other entertainment heavyweights. He has made the pages of *People* magazine (probably the most contemporary sign of status in the evanescent world of celebritydom), where he was touted as "a personality to watch in 1977." Similarly, he made the *Los Angeles Times* when he was chosen, along with Robert Redford, Johnny Carson, Muhammad Ali and Walter Cronkite, as one of America's ten most exciting men by a group of single actresses and models known as the Hollywood Bachelorettes. His show in Memphis was one in a series of mostly sold-out performances on a brief Mid-South tour, to be followed by two week's worth of engagements in Las Vegas, then a lucrative series of appearances in Saudi Arabia, with a brief stop-over in London for some BBC television tapings. Amazingly, Kenny has also found the time to write a book tentatively titled, *So You Want To Start A Rock and Roll Band*, which will be published by Barnes and Noble later this year.

But as Kenny Rogers finds himself once again playing to larger and more varied audiences, he faces an identity crisis of sorts. It is a cross that many artists of lesser stature would be only too glad to bear: He has gained wide acceptance among both country and popular audiences. "People don't know whether I'm country or pop," he admits. "In the past, I was a pop artist who was appreciated by a country audience. Now it's the other way around: I'm making country records that have a pop following.

"That's why I take that little poll near the beginning of the show," he continues, "where I ask the audience whether they want to hear rock or country. Once I do that, I will alter the show considerably, depending on their response. I have two totally different shows I can do, because it's silly to beat your brains out at something that you know isn't going to work."

It is this strong instinct for professional

survival that runs through the thread of Kenny's narrative. He is unabashedly professional. "My manager is always warning me not to talk about music in terms of dollars or in terms of investments. He says people don't like that," Kenny says as he finishes his second glass of milk for the morning.

"I don't mean to make it sound like it's some kind of computer operation for me, because it's not. But," he emphasizes, "you do have to approach this very methodically, as you do with any other business."

What makes Kenny Rogers run? When he is speaking of his career, he is full of optimism and youthful enthusiasm and is at times beguilingly open. But he moves through life at a brisk, self-imposed pace, as if his mind is already set, like a homing device, on some invisible target in the distant future. He frequently employs terms like "strategy" and "game plan," and he describes himself as "a workhorse." When, at breakfast, he tells the story of a recording artist who sold more records than the First Edition, who is today working in a car wash on Ventura Parkway, he concludes with an affirmative, "And I refuse to end up that way!

"I know with all my heart, that I'm going to be very hot for the next three or four years," he says with conviction, "and while the work and the money's there, I'm

going to get it.

"You see," he adds, putting down his fork and gesturing for emphasis, "I still have the adrenalin of youth, and that's something you can't buy. If I let that slip away, I could end up on welfare. I admit it's an insecurity thing with me, but it scares me—the idea of being old and broke and alone. . . . And I'm not stupid enough to assume that there will always be people around to take care of me."

If you talk to Kenny long enough, he'll let you in on an interesting life-plan he's formulated, which is based on his five ages of man: the age of no responsibility (birth to 13), the age of education (13-23), the age of experimentation (23-33), the age of productivity (33-43) and the age of semi-retirement and careful investment (43-). This personal theory is the framework of Kenny Rogers's big "game plan," and it is carefully built around all the harsh realities and tenuousness of the business he is in.

"The public likes to see its idols fall," he says. "You have all the things that they don't have: cars, money, fame, recognition . . . and subconsciously they think, 'That's cool, but someday you're gonna pay for it.' But as far as I'm concerned, they can live their lives the way they want, and I'm gonna live my life the way I want. I'm going to have success, and I'm going to be happy."

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LYNN

(Continued from page 36)

to make the jump from county fairs to state fairs, Lynn's ambitions are a little bigger—network television looms. Her own variety show, perhaps?

"We're talking about that," she admits. "The main problem with a show like that is what they call the concept. Just to stand up there and sing song after song and have a guest sing another song and introduce another person—that gets old. We're trying to think now of an original idea.

"We do want to present country music on a network basis, and that kind of thing is in the works, and I think it will be done next season one way or another. I would say there will be a network country-oriented variety show on within the next year. I may be sadly mistaken, but I really feel like the people are ready for it."

Lynn cites Dolly Parton's syndicated show, Jerry Reed's new series, Roy Clark's success and adds that she's not the only one negotiating with the networks for a variety show. Again, her insistence on quality shows up.

"I think they (TV executives) want it presented correctly: I think they want it presented respectfully," she laughs. "As classy as the Dean Martin Show, or a Carol Burnett Show, or Sonny and Cher—as well done and as nicely put together as any of their other shows. Why just slough it off, and just because it's country stand you by a wagon wheel and put you in a cotton dress instead of making some beautiful clothes and making some gorgeous sets like they would do for somebody else?"

"I think they're finally coming around to the fact that the idea is saleable. And, of course, when it becomes marketable is when it becomes a reality. I really think it will happen within the next year. It might not be with me, but there are several people who are capable of doing that now."

Even if Lynn does not become the Cher of the country music set next year, after a short time with her, it becomes unthinkable that she won't eventually become country music's most mediavisible performer.

Meanwhile, she's been asked back for another episode of *Starsky and Hutch*, and we can just picture the next plot:

Action!

The demented killer, his arm around the throats of the two terrified cops, waves his gun threateningly at the unarmed country singer. It looks like curtains for the dashing duo.

But wait!

In a flash of flying blonde hair, steel guitars and championship horses, the talented and beautiful (not to mention smart-as-a-whip) heroine rescues the dim-witted (but not bad to look at) cops . . . and once again, the day is saved.

The spin-off potential is overwhelming. ■

TEXAS

(Continued from page 40)

seriously, which so unnerved him that he's spent the last few years in California, where he still is, trying to figure out if he really is Lenny Bruce reincarnated.

Delbert McClinton: The perfect antidote for those who have become disenchanted with glitter/metal rock with its immature lyrics and wailing walls of noise. When it comes to rhythm & blues, Delbert McClinton is 100-proof and 90 percent pure. He can sing a country song too. After releasing three critically acclaimed albums which did not sell, ABC dropped him.

* * *

Of the songwriters who followed in the wake of Kristofferson, four of the best are Texans:

Mickey Newbury: Made his bed in Nashville and rarely performs. He continues to release almost perfect concept albums, which are the only country albums (with the possible exception of some of Jim Reeves') in which the strings really seemed to belong.

Billy Joe Shaver: Billy Joe has spent as much time traveling back and forth between Texas and Nashville as anyone. By now his songs have been recorded by just about everyone in country music, and he's released two albums of his own which are, in my opinion, exceptional. He's presently working on his third and behaving mysteriously, as usual. Crazy and near genius, Billy Joe stands in his own place.

Guy Clark: I remember Guy Clark when he used to make guitars and sing occasionally in Houston some ten years ago. He's come a long way since, having written some great songs and releasing two albums. Guy returns to Texas to perform regularly.

Lee Clayton: Lee started out well, singing songs to Waylon Jennings and recording one album on his own. But then he took an extended vacation/retirement in the California desert (near the place where they burned up Gram Parsons). Lately he's moved back to Nashville, however, and we ought to start hearing from him again.

The Conjuntos: The *Tejano* brand of music from along the Tex-Mex border. There are many stars in chicano music but only two conjuntos have shown that they might have appeal to anglo audiences. Flaco Jimenez is the king of the Mexican accordion, but tends to be uncomfortable with other types of material, although his recent tour with Ry Cooder might have changed that. Steve Jordan, though he often plays country flavored conjuntos, is in reality a rock star waiting to happen. Why in the world record companies don't have people searching about the country for musicians like Steve Jordan is beyond me.

Alvin Crow & the Pleasant Valley Boys: A longtime Austin favorite, Alvin just released his first national album which is already on the charts. Alvin has a long career ahead of him, because Alvin Crow and the Pleasant Valley Boys make music you can believe in.

Marcia Ball: The undisputed queen of Austin country music, Marcia just signed a recording contract with Capitol.

Joe Ely: The great west Texas hope, Ely is a modern rockabilly. His first album for MCA knocked out everybody who heard it—unfortunately not that many heard it.

* * *

Many of the Texas people have difficulty receiving airplay and much of the blame lies with radio stations with rigid programming practices. Despite the revolution in country music, many country stations often refuse to out of either snobbery, fear or ignorance. A program director for a country station in Dallas/Fort Worth told me that he thought Joe Ely's record was the best thing he'd heard in years and in the same breath said that he couldn't play it. By the same token, but from the other side of the fence, hard rock and pop stations tend to avoid Austin records for the same reasons. The people signed on Willie Nelson's own Lone Star label all released albums which were forgotten almost upon release. (This is a particular shame in the case of Billy C. who wrote *Hands On The Wheel* for Willie.)



Ray Wylie Hubbard

Nevertheless, the Austin music scene is healthy and perhaps better than ever. There are more bands moving to town than ever before. Many are country or progressive country but many are blues, r&b and rock. There seem to be more bands coming from Michigan (called the Texas-Michigan connection) than anywhere else. Austin never needed southern California hippie/country bands singing about blue mountains and desert sunsets—save that for Colorado. Most agree that the music scene is healthy and that live music is still Austin's defining quality. And homegrown music is doing better than ever. In short, Texas is doing just fine. We're having a good time down here. A lot of the musical boundaries have been broken—and no one wants them set back up again. ■

AUDIO

(Continued from page 55)

than those original speakers reproduce. To bring them out, you can pick from a wide assortment of replacement speakers that are designed as 2-way systems. This means that—just like good home speakers—they have separate tweeters to maximize the upper range. This tweeter usually nestles in the hollow or the large woofer, so the whole assembly fits into a standard car-speaker cut-out. Some models even have a third speaker inside the woofer to project mid-range sound. Panasonic, Pioneer, Jensen, Sanyo, AFS/Kriket, Kraco and Radio Shack's Realistic are among the top brands for such speakers, with prices about \$20 to \$60 per pair.

These speakers come in various shapes and sizes, some round, some oval. The larger ones are usually oval, typically 6x9 inches, and naturally the larger speakers put out more bass. As for the treble, it goes right up to about 13,000 Hz on nearly all of them, and nearly to about 17,000 Hz on the better ones.

Mounting these speakers is easy. If the holes are already cut, all you have to do is fasten the speakers with mounting screws and connect the wires. Even if you have to cut a new hole, it's no problem. Cutting templates, mounting hardware, and clear instructions are furnished with all models. As for location, you have a choice between dashboard, side doors, rear deck or roof mountings. Mounting speakers in the rear deck, with their backs sticking down into the trunk, usually provides the best bass response because the trunk acts as a large baffle, giving extra strength to the low notes. For spectacular all-around sound, you can hook up four speakers—two on the rear deck and two up front.

If you don't want to cut holes in the panels of your car—or if you have a van or wagon with no rear deck—your best bet is surface-mount speakers, which come with their own enclosure baffles and need no cutout. The quality of the baffle affects the sound just as much as the speaker itself, and unless the baffle is properly padded and reinforced with sound absorbent material, such speakers are likely to sound skimpy and have false resonances. But you don't have to worry about that with the excellent surface-mount designs by Kriket, a division of Acoustic Fiber Sound Systems. Their baffles have a special acoustic lining to prevent improper resonance and give them a remarkably solid sound. Their top model, the Kriket 6079, is an oval 6x9-inch 2-way system selling for \$55, and an alternate version with a somewhat less elaborate tweeter, the Model 6069, carries a price tag of \$45. The face of these speakers is slightly angled, to throw the sound forward toward the driver when mounted in the rear—for example on the roof of a van. Installation can be completed in minutes

without cutting holes, yet the baffle is so designed that it can also be flush-mounted in a cutout if you wish. Additionally, Kriket's 6079 is designed to handle from 4 watts up to 30 watts per channel with no audible distortion of the sound. This means if you later upgrade your radio/stereo you won't need new speakers.

With such high-quality speakers giving you a foretaste of what's possible in car sound, you may also want to upgrade the rest of your system. For example, you can add power by installing a booster. This device connects between the output of the radio or tape deck and the speakers, adding extra amplification. An outstanding design of this kind is Panasonic's Sound Charger Model CJ-155Z, a compact box without controls that can be hidden away anywhere. It steps up the output to 15 watts per channel and costs \$35. Boosters are also available from Sanyo, Kraco, Pioneer and several other manufacturers.

Unfortunately, boosters can't improve the fidelity of the basic signal reaching them. Hum, distortion and so on will be amplified along with the music. So, if all-out fidelity is your goal, you had better start right up front with a high-quality radio and tape deck. Several excellent new designs have just come on the market, combining AM/FM-stereo with a good cassette player—all in compact in-dash units. Standouts in this group include J.I.L.'s Model 613 (\$160, with push-button tuning), Panasonic's CQ-6700 (\$155) with highly sensitive FM circuitry to increase the range of reception, Sanyo's FT-484 (\$129.95), and Motorola's TC786AX (\$200). Among under-dash units combining a high-quality cassette deck with a good FM-stereo receiver is Panasonic's CQ-1851, which sells for \$140. With an output of 10 watts per channel it delivers ample sound without need of a separate booster. Another fine under-dash model, though with less power, is Pioneer's KP-500 (\$160), which has an exceptionally good FM tuner. ■

PHOTO CREDITS

Pg. 13 Moe Bandy - Courtesy CBS; Milsap & Carter - Courtesy Brokaw Co., Pg. 14 Ernest Tubb - Mary Catherine Murphy; Jessi Colter - Courtesy Capitol; Pg. 15 Drifting Cowboys - Elaine Hobson Miller; Pg. 16 Carter & Cash - Courtesy UPI, Merle Travis - Art Maher; Hank Jr. - Michael Bane; Pg. 18 Lawrence Hammond - Michael Goldberg, Dusty Chaps - Courtesy Capitol; Pg. 19 Marcia Ball - Nicolas Russell, Pg. 22-24 Kenny Rogers - Courtesy U.A.; Pg. 28-30 Eddie Kilroy - J. Clark Thomas; Pg. 34 Lynn Anderson - L. Kamsler; Pg. 38 Willie's Farm - Nelson Allen; Pg. 40 - Freddy Fender - Charlyn Zlotnik, Michael Murphey - Courtesy CMF, Rusty Weir - Mike Fluitt, Joe Ely - Courtesy MCA, Doug Sahn - Mike Fluitt, Billy Joe Shaver - Nelson Allen, Willie/Murphey/Fromholz - John R. Van Beekum; Pg. 42 Delbert McClinton - M. Fluitt P. 48 Anything Goes - Tom Hill/Courtesy J. Walter Thompson; Pg. 50 Mickey Gilley - Geoff Winningham; Pg. 51 Hank Snow - Marshall Fallwell, Elvis Presley - Courtesy RCA; P. 52 Lefty Frizzell - Courtesy CMF; Pg. 53 Tom T. Hall - Alanna Nash; Pg. 54 Jessi Colter - Courtesy Capitol, Johnny Cash - Maddy Miller Pg. 55 Audio - Stephen Boyd, Pg. 62/63 - Chet Atkins - Craig Angle.

Pickers

THE GUITARS OF MR. GUITAR

by CHET ATKINS

It should come as no surprise that Chet Atkins has a rather large guitar collection, partly because he likes guitars, and also because he has recorded with a wide variety of guitars—electric, classical, flat-top, and more—using a far wider range of sound and style than is represented by the old Gretsch Country Gentleman with which he usually appears in photographs, concerts, and on television.

His collection is marked not by the rarity of the instruments, but by practicality mixed with inventiveness and willingness to experiment. Here, in his own words, is the low-down on what kind of guitars Mr. Guitar himself owns.

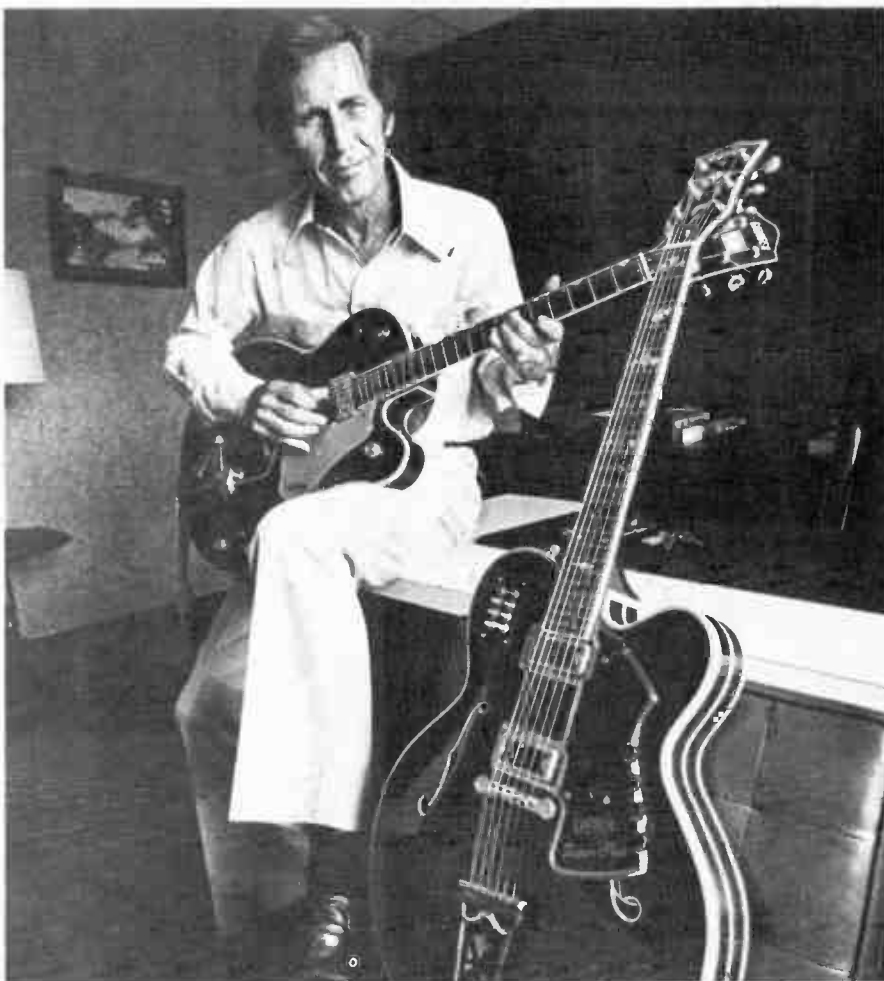
DOUGLAS B. GREEN

I actually don't know exactly how many guitars I own. I haven't counted lately; really I'm kind of ashamed to count them because I have so many. I have to keep them moving, because I don't have room in my house or my office for them. So I loan out guitars and give away guitars a lot. I hardly ever sell one. So I've probably got twenty, twenty-five maybe.

I've got three or four good classical guitars. The one I play most of the time was made by Haskell Haille up in Kentucky, and it's as good as any you could buy. He builds a shorter scale, and it's not as loud, maybe, as a Ramirez, but it plays easier. I play Mr. Haille's classic most of the time, but I've got a Manual Velasquez, and it's one of the greatest classical guitars I've ever seen. He is in Ponce, Puerto Rico, and is great, one of the greatest. I've got another classical built by Geronimo Fernandez I used to use quite a bit. It's a great guitar. And I've got one built by a guy named Ruck up in Madison, Wis., that's a very, very good classic.

When Lenny Breau (Canadian jazz guitarist) came to town I loaned him a classic that Jerry Reed had given to me, and he broke it; so I loaned him another just the other day.

In electric guitars, I've got eight or ten Gretsches. There's also a Fender that I never use—a Telecaster with a lever built on to the strap. Pull on the strap and you raise the second string up a tone. (Some



The Super Chet (forward) and the Country Gentleman are two of Chet's favorite Gretsches.

musicians use devices like that to get pedal steel effects.) And I used to have an old Gibson that I played years ago, but I gave it to Jethro Burns, of Homer and Jethro.

Around 1938 or '39, Les Paul had Gibson make him an L-10 arch top guitar. Later, he traded it to my brother, Jimmy Atkins, now deceased, who was with Les in the Les Paul trio. Jim gave it to me around 1942 or 1943, and I was crazy about that guitar, because Les Paul, one of my idols, had owned it. Later on, about 1945 in Cincinnati, I fell on it and busted the hell out of it, and I sent it to Gibson to be fixed. Well they promptly went on

strike and left it sitting by a radiator or something and it got wet—they must have had a flood in the factory or something. So my guitar got messed up pretty bad, and it's not what it once was. They did fix it back eventually, in about a year or so, and I've still got it, and when Les comes out to the house he always looks at it and reminisces.

When I first moved to Nashville in 1950 to go to the Opry with the Carter Sisters and Mother Maybelle, I'd saved up \$300 and had John D'Angelico of New York build me an archtop guitar. At the time, his was the best you could buy. I guess I'd ordered it when I was in Springfield, Mo.,

and must have received it around July or August. So it came—\$300 worth of guitar—which was a lot of money in those days. And I got out in the back yard and sawed a hole in it. My neighbors thought I was crazy! But I'd bought a pickup from Paul Bigsby, because at that time Grady Martin and Hank Garland were getting some good sounds out of those pickups. Later, I added a Gibson pickup. That was the guitar I used on a lot of my old records—my good old records—because it had a great sound.

Well, along there in the mid-1950s, when girls wore long skirts, I had my D'Angelico leaning up against the wall at WSM, and June Carter swished by with her long skirt and tipped it over and broke the head off. Along about that time I had made a deal with Gretsch where we were to design guitars together, so I sent the broken guitar up to John D'Angelico for a new neck and a new top. I still have it, but it's just an acoustic rhythm guitar now—I didn't cut a hole in it for pickups this time. Though I hardly ever use it, I'll always keep it for sentimental reasons.

That type of archtop rhythm guitar is not used much any more. It's mostly the flat top, ringing sound you hear.

Speaking of flat tops, I have a twelve string Martin. Waylon Jennings a few years ago gave me a real nice twelve-string, but it was stolen out of the studio. With the insurance money I got a new Martin twelve. I've also got a Martin. I guess a D-28, that Harlan Howard wrote a lot of his hits with. It's all patched up; I think he stepped on it with his cowboy boots once. But it's a good guitar, and I use it for rhythm, the modern rhythm sound sometimes, or let other people use it. And I have a Martin D-41, the one with pearl inlay on the front, that I loaned to Shel Silverstein. It's up in New England somewhere. He left it at somebody's house. I guess that's all the flat top steel strings I have.

By the way, that D-41 and the Haskell Haille classic were the ones I played on the album I did with Merle Travis a couple of years ago.

I've also got three Del Vecchios, short scale, like the Los Indios Trabajeros play, and I've got a full size Del Vecchio—same size as a Dobro and a similar sound. The Del Vecchios are guitars which look similar to a Dobro, with the big metal resonator in front, only you play them upright and not on your lap like a steel.

I'm having a rod put in the neck of one of them to see how it works out. I'm going to get a good case made, too—they are awfully fragile. With steel strings, and the resonator made of soft aluminum, you just touch the instrument and it will collapse. So you have to be very careful.

The guitar I've played much more than any, the one I'm still using, is a Gretsch



Chet and one of his numerous classical guitars and a whole slew of sturdy guitar cases.

Country Gentleman—a single cutaway that has a long scale that I like. It's easy to tune and plays in tune better than a short scale. So I've been using it for years and years.

I had a lot to do with the design of most Gretsch guitars ever since my association with that company began. The first one, the 6120, came about when their people and I agreed to come out with something different. After that came the Country Gentleman.



The Gretsch Super Axe, a rock 'n roll type guitar, was designed with Chet's advice.

But I had more to do with the Super Chet and the new Super Axe than I guess any of the other guitars, because the guy who helped design guitars for Gretsch, Clyde Edwards, asked me to make notes and things on improvements I'd like to see built into the Super Chet. So I went to Cincinnati and got with him. He contributed a lot, too, because he has a good eye for beauty.

And the same thing with the Super Axe. It's a rock guitar, a sustaining type of guitar. We were trying to come up with something different, and I don't like the

Les Paul type of guitar because their small bodies make them hard to play sitting down. So we made a solid body guitar that's bigger, that you can play in reasonable comfort. It's thinner than usual, but with a solid body. It's kind of a hybrid Super Chet; the lines are similar. And it contains some sophisticated electronics as well—phase shifters, compressor and sustain. I'd been wanting to incorporate that sort of electronics into a guitar for years, and I had an engineer downstairs (at RCA) do it for me—George Bennett. So Gretsch went into production with it. It's selling big, too—I understand they went into back order on it.

In the recording studio, I use the Country Gentleman. That's what I've used on my records for years. It has a different sound. And for sustaining things I like some of the solid guitars. But for the style I play the old one does it for me. And I've got to have a guitar that plays in tune! These solid guitars with an unwound third string, they won't stay in tune for four bars, so I'm in trouble when I try to play them!

For live performances, I take two guitars, a classic and an electric. But I'm going to start taking that Del Vecchio if I can get a case for it built so that the airlines won't tear it up. Of course they tear them all up, eventually, but I think I can get one of those metal cases with the foam rubber inside that will protect it.

One good thing about being an electronics buff: I can modify my electric guitars for exactly the sound I want—soup 'em up, I call it. On the Gretsches, for example, I don't like the condensers they use to knock off the highs, so I change those and I adjust the pickups; often I'll rewind one with more wire, or less, or whatever. And sometimes I change the pots (potentiometers)—the tone and volume controls. ■

Pickers

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by **ARTHUR J. MAHER**



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THREE BUDGET-PRICED AXES OFFERED BY SIGMA

One of the broadest selections of guitars and other stringed instruments is being broadened still further. The C.F. Martin organization is adding to its Sigma line of affordable, imported guitars.

Shown above, from left to right, the new additions are the CS-4 Classic, the GCS-4 Auditorium model, and the DR-9 Dreadnaught.

OLD NAME, NEW MANDOLIN



Washburn, an old, respected name in stringed instruments, is back on the market. Their newest offering is the Jethro Burns Florentine Mandolin with carved spruce top and fiddleback maple sides and back.

Jethro himself helped design it. Comes in two models—M4S (\$499) and M5S (\$669). Both have adjustable neck and bridge. The M5S is more richly decorated than the less expensive M4S, with more binding, plus abalone inlays in the fingerboard and head piece. Fretted Industries, 1234 Sherman Ave., Evanston, Ill., 60202.

The CS-4 is an easy-playing nylon-string model that makes an especially good choice for the rank beginner. Top is laminated spruce, back and sides are mahogany, bridge and fingerboard are rosewood. The instrument will retail for \$99.50 or so—but much less if you buy at a discount house.

The GCS-4 is the steel-string counterpart of the CS-4. Its action is made for easy playing, which is vital in a beginner's guitar—a hard action can nip a young musician's career in the bud. Top of this instrument is also laminated spruce. Top and sides are mahogany, bridge and fingerboard are rosewood. Price will be \$125.

The DR-9 represents a particularly good value at its list price of \$275, because it has a solid spruce top, which will improve with age. The sides and three-piece back are laminated rosewood, while fingerboard and bridge are solid rosewood. Fingerboard inlays are of snowflake pattern. Retail price is \$275.

Addition of the above models brings the Sigma line of guitars to 15 models. Other instruments in Martin's extensive line are, of course, the Martin guitars, Goya guitars, Vega guitars and banjos, the Levin guitar, Vega Fibes drums and accessories, plus Martin, Marquis, Goya and Darco strings and accessories.



SINGERS & SWEETHEARTS

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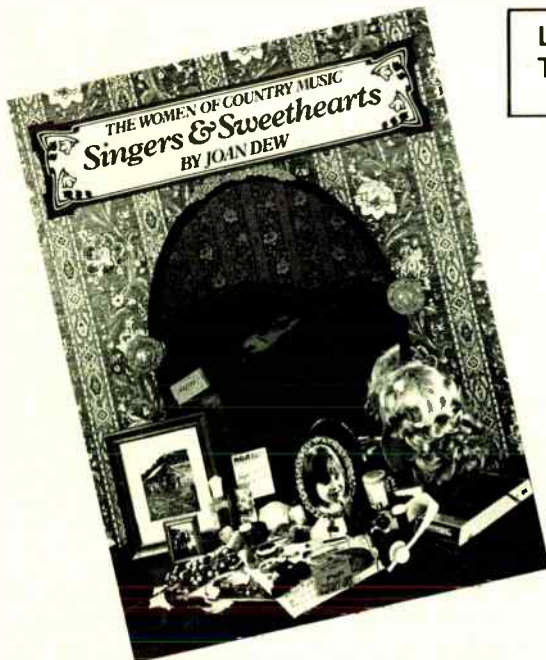
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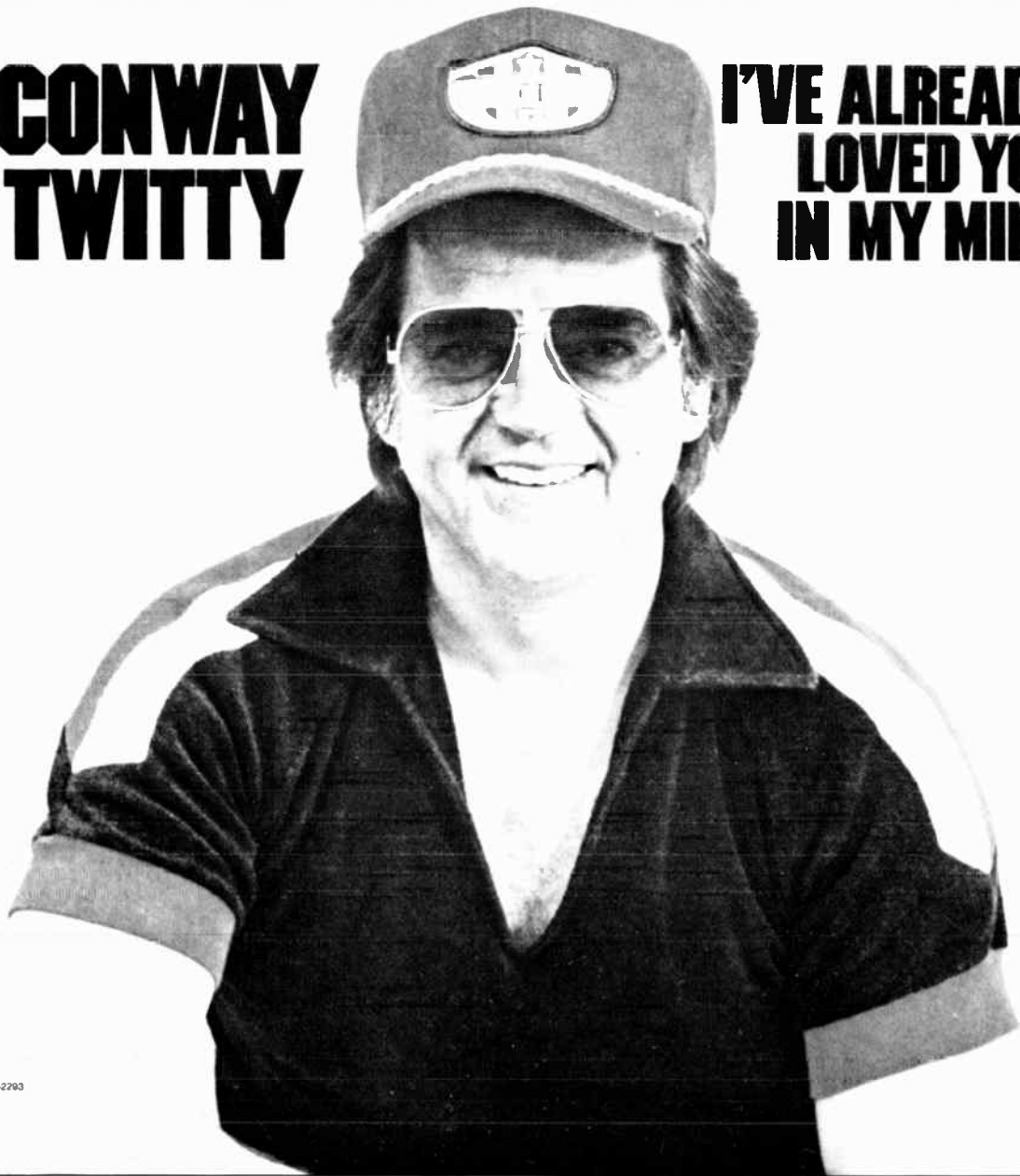
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