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**CMA Entertainer  
Of The Year**

## **RONNIE MILSAP**

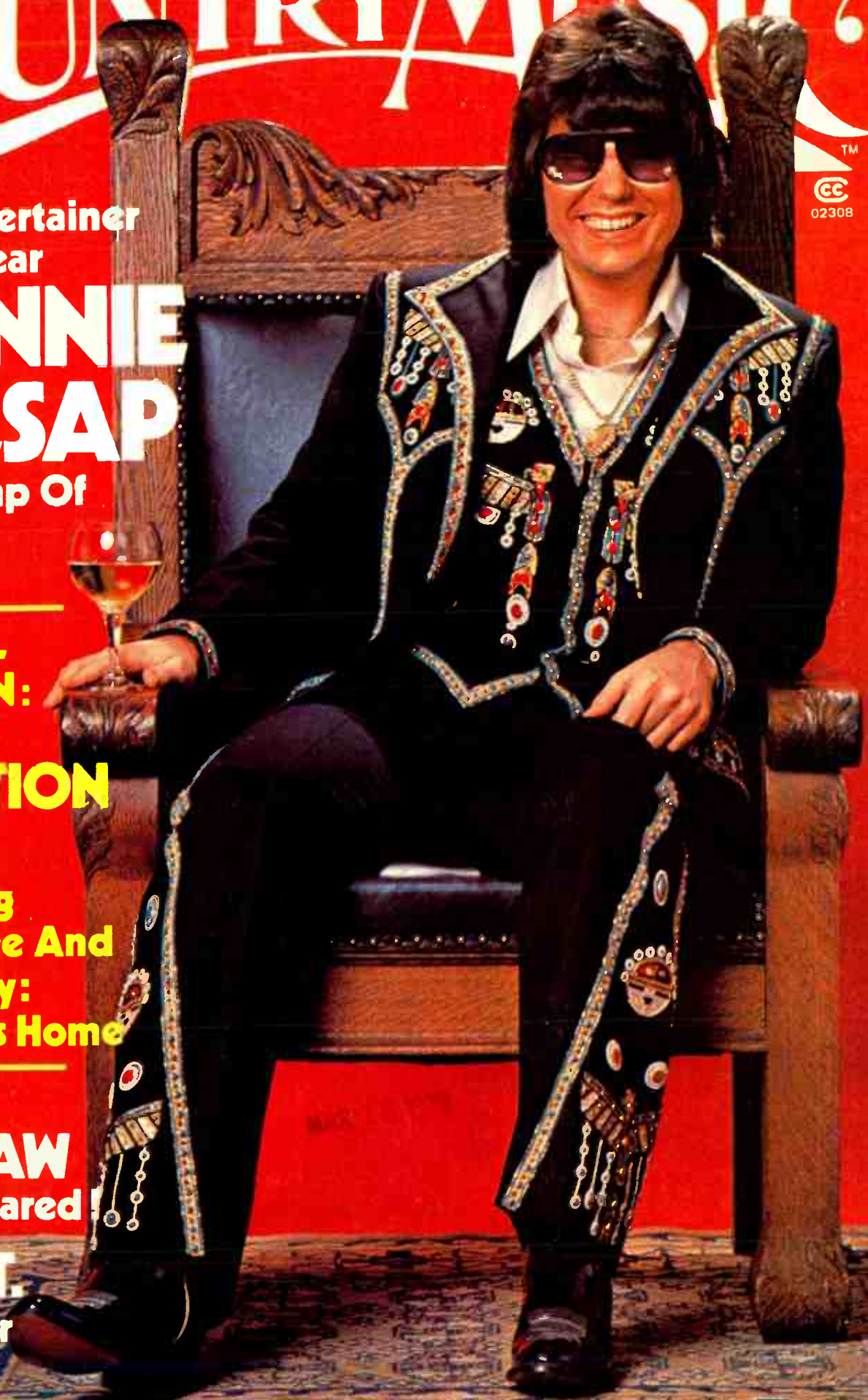
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—*Los Angeles Times*

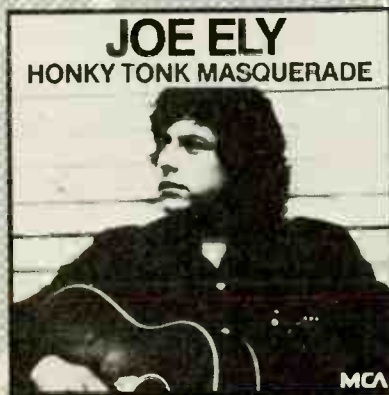
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—*The Dallas Times Herald*

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Volume Six, Number Seven  
 April, 1978

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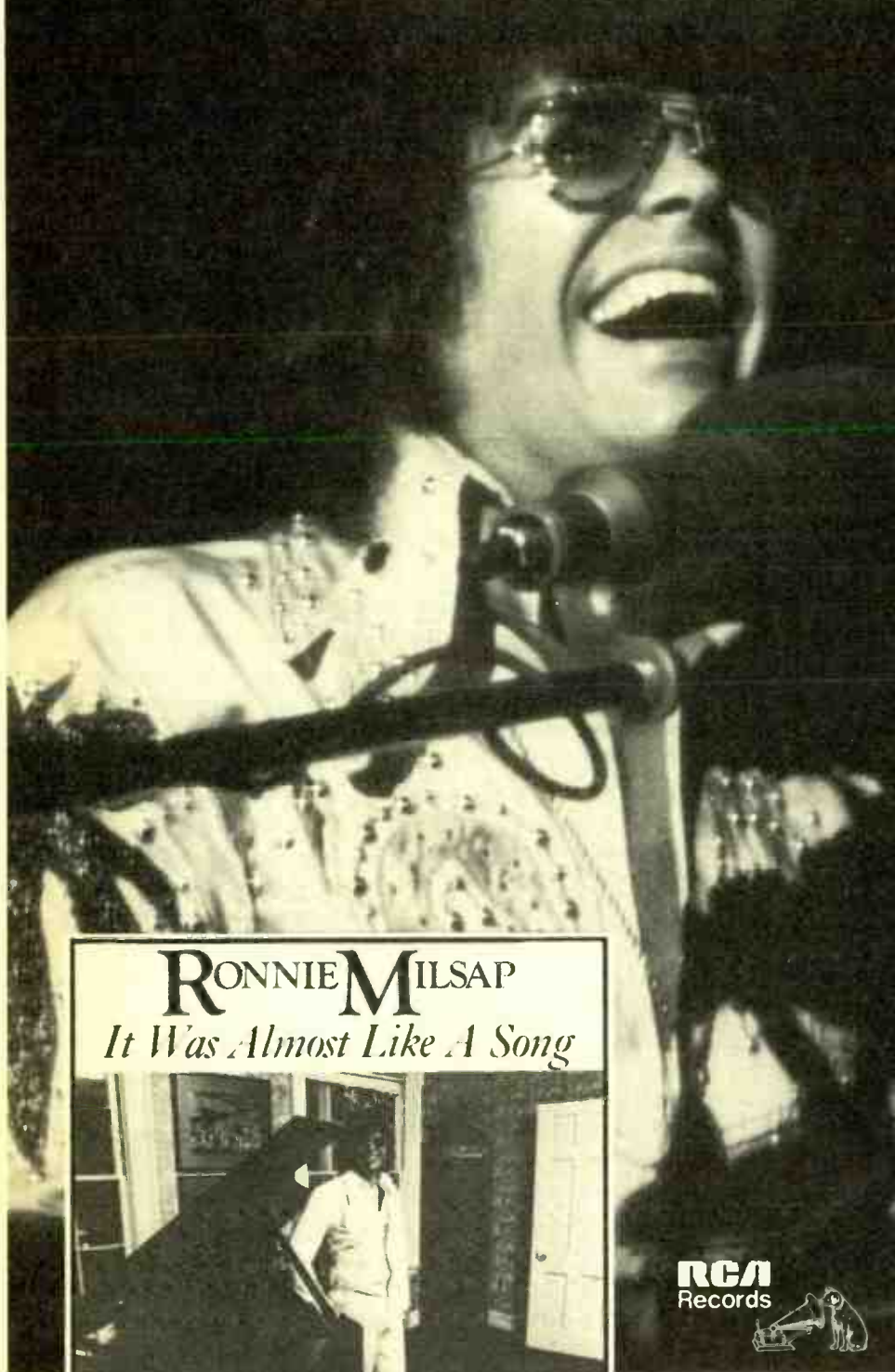
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# Editor's Note

Sometimes, when things are going along quite well, thank you, and everything seems right with the world, it's easy to forget Murphy's Law. The semi-mythical Murphy, if you'll remember, observed that a piece of buttered bread, when dropped, would always fall butter-side down. After a careful study of the way things *really* worked, Murphy (or one of his trusted disciples) came up with the following maxim: If something can go wrong, it will, and at the most inopportune time, or, more succinctly, the perversity of the universe tends toward a maximum.

Consider, then, the photography session for this issue's Ronnie Milsap cover. The logistics alone were pretty tight—Ronnie was on the road and would only be in Nashville for one afternoon. Time in the studio had to be held to a minimum, and there was little (read: no) room for error. The session was to be photographer Clark Thomas' first cover session, and he was understandably nervous. It was also to be the inaugural photo session for our new Nashville office, who, up until this point, had suspected that cover photographs were the result of magic.

After several days of combing Music City, Clark reluctantly admitted that the chair we wanted for the session didn't exist. Enter Jim Chapman, assistant publisher and head of our Nashville office. He hopped in his station wagon, raced to Rivergate Mall and filched the Santa Claus chair, which, with much huffing and puffing, he eventually carried to Clark's third floor walk-up studio.

Great chair, except it was snow-white and looked suspiciously like a Santa-chair. Besides, in all the huffing and puffing, the chair maliciously broke itself. Solution—off to the hardware store, back with bailing wire and spraypaint—quick drying spraypaint, since the session is a scant few hours away.

Unfortunately, as *Country Music* staffer Debby Dunn pointed out, a spraypainted Santa chair looked exactly like, well, a spraypainted Santa chair, so the chair search was on again. This time, a new chair was located at the Methodist church—the chair the pastor sat in during services, as a matter of fact—and a quick series of phone calls got permission (we hope) to *briefly* borrow the chair. Briefly, because services began at 6 p.m., and the photo session was scheduled for 3 p.m. Once again Chapman was off, this time hauling a 40-ton or so chair across town, up the steps and into the studio, just in time to receive a phone call from Ronnie Milsap's manager. Ronnie's bus, it seems, was stuck in the glaciers south of Nashville. All Ronnie's performing clothes were either in the bus or at the cleaners. Perhaps something could be arranged a la *Cosmopolitan* centerfolds.

About that time Joyce Milsap, Ronnie's absolutely together wife, took control, herded the whole entourage (which by this time more resembled a horde) to the Alamo Clothing on South Broadway, where Ronnie was outfitted with a new suit, boots and various et ceteras for the session. The price tag? A cool \$3,000.

Back to the studio, where the meter was running on the chair, and after managing to break only one light, the session was underway.

The results, as you can see, were smashing. And everybody lived happily ever after—the chair made it back to church, Ronnie made it to Tahoe, Chapman made it to bed where his back could heal and Clark, the photographer, made out his bill. And Murphy, of course, was proved right again.

*Michael Bane*

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# "We've gone through a lot of other amps."

Shining a little light on one of country's hottest stars.  
A Nashville chat with Ronnie Milsap.

**With your extensive training and background in a variety of musical fields, how did you settle on country music?**

I've been singing as long as I can remember, but I guess my career really didn't start until I moved to Nashville about four years ago. A bunch of new people came into country music around the time I came to town, and folks who didn't usually like country music started liking some of these newer artists. I'm very excited because country is the brand of music I grew up on... my "roots", in a way.

**But some of your material has crossed over from "country" to the Top 40 charts.**

Yes, my latest record is a Top 40 hit... so not only folks who love "country" listen to my music. It almost seems like country is coming to a point like it is in England, where the lines aren't distinct.

**While you're talking about the "country" sound, what about the "Ronnie Milsap" sound?**

I love all kinds of music... classical, jazz, blues and rock 'n roll, and the newer country artists are using a lot more of these types of sound in their material. Combined with the electronic technology, this broader-based sound in country music also adds to its



popularity and allows country musicians to reach for a new audience.

As far as my sound goes, I'm basically a keyboard artist... mostly grand piano, electric piano and synthesizer. On the album we just finished, and in our concert program material, there are a lot of new sounds we get when we play them up through the amplifiers.

**What amplifiers are you using?**

With my keyboards, I'm using the new Kustom III Lead "S" with SRO speakers.

**Why Kustom?**

First of all, particularly when you're on the road, you gotta have something that's going to work. And we found the Kustom equipment very reliable. We've gone through a lot of other amps, and we haven't found anything as reliable... anything else that

gets the sound we want. It's clean... really clean.

**Anything in particular that impresses you?**

Well, a steel guitar is probably the most difficult instrument to get an amplifier to match because there's so much output from the instrument that you get distortion. For years people have been using very small amps and micking them at very low levels. But now, with these new Kustom amplifiers, our steel player doesn't have to play tremendously loud, and if he needs more level, he has it.

**What about the other Kustom PA, sound reinforcement and monitor equipment you're using?**

Well... performing is such a high energy experience but we've found this equipment works. We've seen sound companies on the road with

all kinds of boards and equipment, and these \* outshine anything we've seen. The sound is really good.



\* Ronnie's band uses two additional Kustom III Lead S amps with SRO speakers; a Kustom III bass head with the Kustom IV B 2-15 SRO cabinet; and a complete Kustom sound reinforcement system which includes an XX SRM 24-channel stereo mixer, four VIII Slaves, two MF-1212 bass cabinets, two MF-1010 high frequency horns, and two complete Kustom III monitor systems.

When sound is everything...

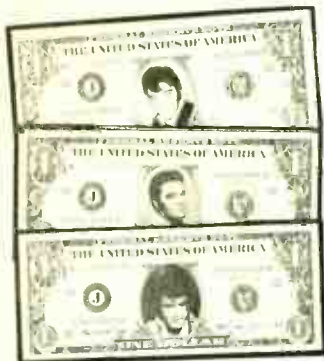


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# Letters

## Dolly Fans Speak Out

I have just finished reading my February issue of Country Music Magazine and was extremely upset to see Dolly Parton's *Here You Come Again* album given a 2 star rating. Mr. Patoski should have his head examined. Literally half the review had absolutely nothing to do with the album. After the also uncomplimentary review of *New Harvest... First Gathering*, I decided to give you one more chance. *Here You Come Again* was it. You once claimed to be all for Dolly. If you are, then why do you print such negative reviews.

I respect Country Music Magazine as the nation's best country music publication, but am somewhat confused. Dolly Parton is the most talented artist in the music industry today and just because she wants to expand her horizon is no reason to put her down. A lady who has performed before SRO audiences from New York to San Francisco, been CMA Female Vocalist of the Year twice, and has three other CMA Awards under her belt cannot be easily dismissed.

So, in the future, let's hear it for Dolly. It's about time her talent was recognized.  
 JULIO ALONSO III  
 PIERMONT, N.Y.

I feel I must take exception to what I consider a put-down of Dolly Parton, this time in the form of your critique of her *Here You Come Again* album. Again, as with your recent article on Ms. Parton, you have proved the press through the use of semantics can distort the truth of her current success. I believe it's time to refute those statements.

You imply that she has deserted her country heritage and has the Big City Lust. Her new single has topped the Billboard magazine country charts for the last four weeks and the success has not been at the cost of Georgia and Oklahoma as you state— it has been in those states plus the other areas where Dolly had never been that big before. For that matter, Country Music Magazine, long before Dolly slicked up her image, slicked up its image of five years ago and went after the suburbanites and hoity-toity. Besides, Ms. Parton's goals are much the same as yours—to bring country music to the city.

You criticize Ms. Parton for less self-penned material in the new album, but as a recent Billboard article explained, she had mixed feelings about using others'

material for that album. Gary Klein her producer, explained her commercial hit was to expand her audience—that Dolly firmly stated she would trust him no longer if the country people did not like it, and further, that Dolly would have more original works in her next LP. And, as for her works included in *Here You Come Again*, I can tell you that when Dolly does *Me and Little Andy* in person, it is indeed a classic Dolly Parton sad song. Uninspired? Hardly—it was a high point in her show long before it was recorded.

Face it—country music no longer has its hold on Dolly Parton. The situation has reversed—Dolly has her hold on country and any other music she may try—because she's *that good*.

MIKE EGGLESTON  
 KIRKWOOD, N.Y.

Mr. Patoski, what is a hoity-toity? I know that I am not a "suburbanite" and, since I have been a country music fan for many years, perhaps I would not be considered a "hoity-toity". On the other hand, Dolly Parton's latest LP, *Here You Come Again*, sure does appeal to me . . . a hoity-toity, huh? Well, it really does not matter, because I do not believe Dolly subdivides her fans any more than Dolly's fans subdivide her music. For you see, be they from Alaska or Washington—hard core supporters from Georgia or Oklahoma—Dolly's fans are unique. I choose to believe that all who support Dolly, do so out of the deepest respect for her as an individual. Any song she sings becomes her song—and, if it is her song, then it is our song too. We have set no boundaries for Dolly and she in return has set none for us.

It would neither surprise nor disappoint fans to hear anything from Camelot to Luckenbach, Texas (*Back to the Basics of Love*) on her next album. *New Harvest—First Gathering* gave us a touch of Smokey Robinson/Roland White. *Here You Come Again* has given us a touch of Bobby Goldsboro and Kenny Rogers. Great writers and great songs; I'm sure you will agree. But, to consider songs written by Dolly—*God's Coloring Book*, *It's All Wrong, But It's All Right*, and *Two Doors Down*, "pallid imitations of yesterday," might bring a rise from more than just Dolly's fans.

It would seem that your greatest disappointment lies not with the quality of Dolly's current material, but rather



# The Word Is Out. Some Great New Music Just Got In!

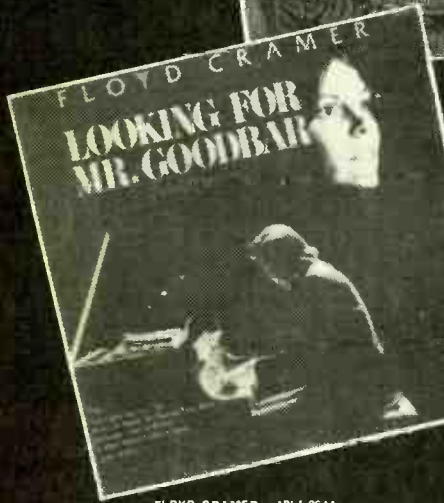
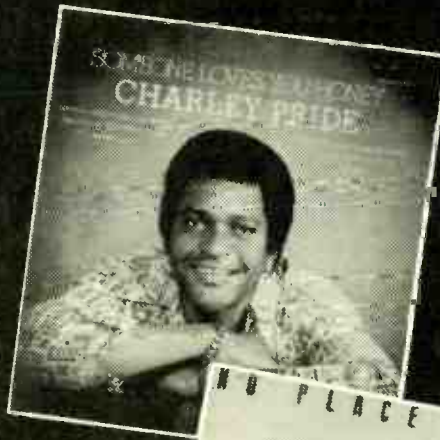
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with the changes taking place in Nashville and the restlessness of country music artists. How do you keep them in Nashville after they've seen LA? Well, maybe you don't and maybe it's unfair and selfish to try. If their country roots are strong, they will have a far greater influence on the big city than the big city will have on them.

When an artist—country, rock, pop, jazz, soul or whatever has the ability and the desire to make their music universal, they have not compromised their talents. Their talents have broadened, and, if their talents are broadened then any audience that sits before them will receive the maximum in entertainment.

P.S. Mr. Patoski never stop reviewing. I enjoy giving you my opinion of your opinion.

ELLA NETHERTON  
HUMMELS WHARF, PA.

*Regardless how popular an artist is, when he or she shifts direction as radically as Dolly Parton has, it is the critic's duty to nit-pick as much as possible because the record company and the PR firm certainly won't undertake the task. To me, the big change in Dolly Parton's music is its new sophisticated tone. If trade magazines like Billboard are to be believed, the new image works. But chart position and cash flow didn't figure in my analysis; nor did the crusade to bring country to the city. I was more concerned how this album compares to Parton's previous work and how they all relate to country music. My position remains—it is a good pop album, but a poor media diluted version of c&w. I would rather hear Parton has selected Porter Wagoner as her next producer than know Here You Come Again is the most popular record in the world.*

JOE NICK PATOSKI

### On The Return Of The "Big O"

I just finished reading John Pugh's article on Roy "The Voice" Orbison, and wanted to write and tell you how much I enjoyed it. Pugh brought back a lot of thoughts regarding Roy's records and early career. I sure hope he can come back bigger than Sedaka. If the American public needs yet another "comeback," it must be the Big O.

Also, I enjoyed your editor's note. I think you hit the nail on the head. . .

MIKE HYLAND  
CAPRICORN RECORDS

### A Thank You From The Oaks

I want to thank you for the great story on us in Country Music Magazine. Bob Anderson did a great job capturing the Oak Ridge Boys on paper, and we certainly appreciate your printing it in the best country music publication around. . .

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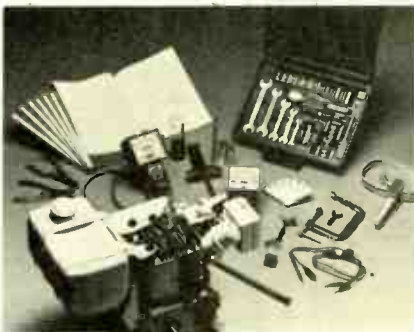
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# Country Scene

## Mamas, Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up To Be Cowboys, Indeed...

What you see here is Ol' Waylon (and a little bit of Ol' Willie) come to the big city to premier their new RCA duet album, titled, rather appropriately, *Waylon and Willie*. The boys flew straight from the Super Bowl to New York, into the waiting arms of the press, a whole slew of dignitaries and octopus salad at the Rainbow Room, perched atop the RCA Building.

Perhaps because of shorter notice, the party lacked the heavyweight celebrities of last year's Dolly Parton bash, and the two wayward cowboys were quickly submerged in hordes of flash-snapping photographers and trapped in the far corner of the room with the *Today Show*'s Jane Pauley (Her office later reported that she "liked Waylon very much." No word yet on Willie).

The high point of the evening, though, came when some well-meaning soul played Tom-pall Glaser's version of *T For Texas*. Tom-pall, as you know, is Waylon's estranged business parter. Guess they figured if you'd heard one cowboy, you'd heard them all.



Ol' Waylon lifts a glass.



Waylon and manager Neil Reshen.



Willie, Waylon and Jane—are these two men *Today Show* material? Well, if Barbara Walters can interview Dolly...



# Bring a needy child into your life

Let us introduce you to a child you can love and help

## A child needs you

Each day, thousands of weakened, impoverished children die quietly in the streets of India, Haiti, Bolivia and other "third world" countries. Many others, like little Daniel, die in spirit as they realize that life holds absolutely no hope for them . . . they will never have the strength, education, or medical care to lift themselves from abject poverty and hopelessness.

You can bring one desperate child such as this into your heart and life as a Childcare sponsor.

## What is a sponsor?

A sponsor is a concerned individual (or family or group) who wants to love and uplift a completely destitute child. You may choose a boy or girl from the country of your choice (see list at bottom of coupon).

The child you help remains in his own country. You receive his photograph and personal story, and you provide for many of his basic needs by sending regular monthly support.

Sponsoring a child is a very special "one-to-one" way of sharing your love. Your child will know you by name and will treasure the thought that *you* really care. Letters and photos may be exchanged, and you can even provide a small gift for Christmas and special occasions.

## Cooperating with Christians overseas

Care for your child is supervised by Compassion's field staff, who cooperate with evangelical missions and local churches overseas.

Your monthly support provides your child with decent clothes, money for school fees and supplies, supplementary food, and basic medical care. Also, every child receives regular Christian guidance and has the opportunity to learn about Jesus Christ as Savior.



## What is my commitment?

The cost of providing this important, life-changing care for one child is just \$15 a month. In the impoverished areas of our world, your \$15 will go a long, long way and will be vital to the health and well-being of your child.

Your life will be enriched, too, as you share your Christian love and prayers with a child who really needs you.

**You can begin without sending any money.** Mail the coupon below, and we'll send you a photo and information packet introducing you to one needy child on our waiting list.

If you decide to sponsor the child, then send your first monthly support check for \$15 at that time. Sponsorship is tax-deductible, and you may discontinue at any time.

Please write today! Your love will make a crucial difference in the life of a needy boy or girl.

### Cooperating Missions

Here are just some of the many evangelical missions who cooperate with Compassion to provide care for needy children:

- TEAM (The Evangelical Alliance Mission)
- Salvation Army
- American Baptist Churches
- Southern Baptist Convention
- Christian and Missionary Alliance
- Evangelical Mennonite Church
- Assemblies of God
- Evangelical Free Church Mission
- Free Methodist Church of North America

**COMPASSION, INC.** — Organized in 1952, Compassion now cares for over 33,000 needy children in 24 countries.

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- Please send a photograph and information packet introducing me to a specific child. If I decide to sponsor the child, I'll send my first monthly support of \$15, or return the material to you.
- I have already decided. My first support check for \$15 is enclosed.
- Enclosed is a special gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to help needy children.
- Please send me more information about sponsorship.

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Please make checks payable to Compassion, Inc. Your gifts are tax-deductible.

Sponsors now needed for children in: Haiti, Korea, Latin America, India.

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8 TRACK TAPE - P85-1244 \$6.98  
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8 TRACK TAPE - P85-5144 \$8.00  
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ELVIS PRESLEY - CPL1-0341 ALBUM \$5.50  
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8 TRACK TAPE - CPS1-0341 \$6.98  
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ELVIS PRESLEY - CPL1-1349 ALBUM \$5.50  
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ELVIS PRESLEY - APL1-1506 ALBUM \$5.50  
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8 TRACK TAPE - P85-1923 \$6.98  
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ELVIS PRESLEY - ANL1-1319 ALBUM \$3.98  
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8 TRACK TAPE - ANS1-1319 \$4.98

ELVIS PRESLEY - CAS-2518 ALBUM \$2.98  
C'mon Everybody; A Whistling Tune; Angel; Follow That Dream; Easy Come, Easy Go; Today, Tomorrow and Forever; I'm Not The Marrying Kind; King Of The Whole Wide World; This Is Living; I'll Take Love.

8 TRACK TAPE - C85-7013 \$3.98  
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Toes twinkle when boot tips are topped with silver or brass rodeo tips. Besides being fancy, they add years of life to your boots, plus, they make a handy weapon.

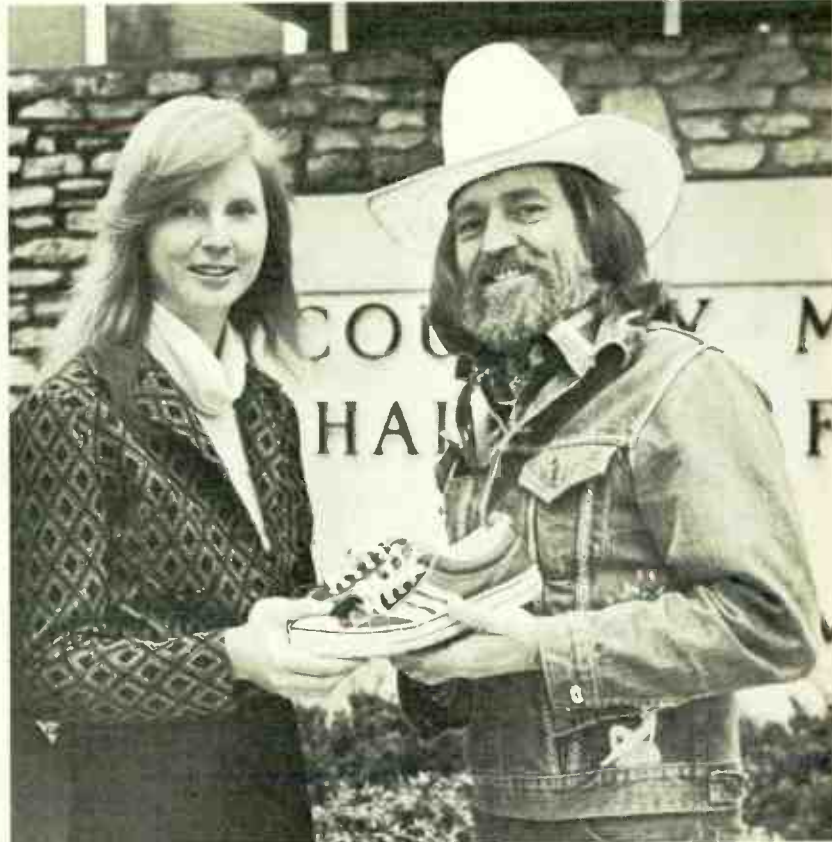
Though tips are available for the first time in New York, they are not new. Tips were popularly flashed by the rodeo circuit in the 40's and 50's. Roy Rogers has his tips with the famous double R in gold, on silver, decorated with coiled ropes and desert scenes. And today, Mexico manufactures them in stainless steel.

Alex Streeter, custom-makes them in his New York studio. He pours liquid metals in plastic molds. Design your own, and Streeter will make them for you. Streeter often incorporates initials, stones, and even sea horses in the motif.

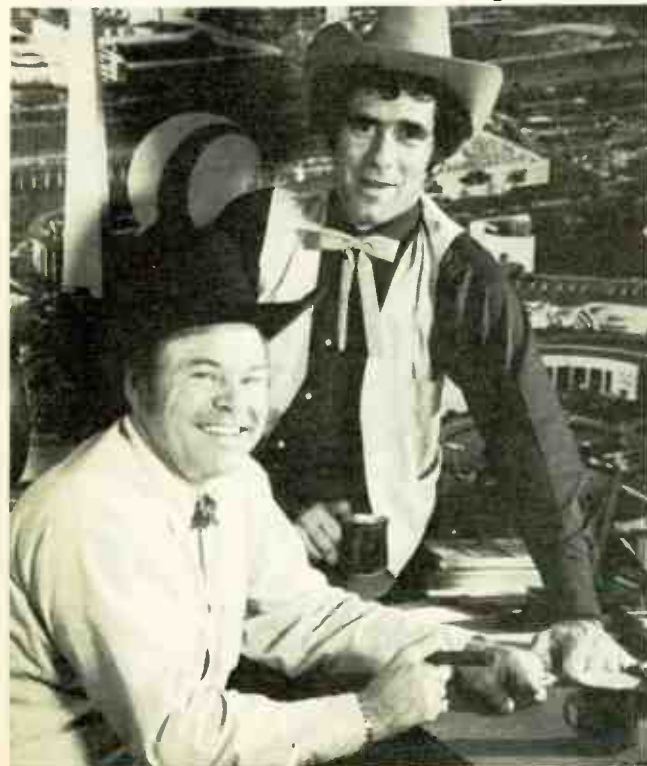
"If boots are a cowboy's home, rodeo tips are his front porch," said Streeter, who was introduced to cowboys by his grandmother who took him to rodeos.

To order your own rodeo tips, write to Alex Streeter, 152 Prince, New York, N.Y. Price is \$50 for brass and \$75 for silver. Specify whether your boots are pointy or round and include your design. Allow four to six weeks, nail them on, and put your best tip forward.

NANCY TRACHTENBERG



## No, It's Not Butch Cassidy



Roy Clark and Elliot Gould star in *Matilda*, a film on boxing, scheduled for release in mid-summer.

## Willie's Sneakers Come Home . . .

The Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum received a pair of size 9 tennis shoes and a well-worn headband from Willie Nelson. The Museum encourages artists to donate items that the public will recognize. These are no exceptions.



## . . . Along With Jimmy's Pants

Another recent donation was one of Jimmy Dickens' earliest stage suits. Dickens was one of the first of the Grand Ole Opry's entertainers to adopt the vivid rhinestone suits made by Nudie's of Hollywood.



# Country Scene

## Horsing Around In Denver—'Equus,' The Western World Fair



Ramblin' Jack Elliot tries out a Bucking Saddle.



Asleep At The Wheel was one of the many country groups to perform.

EQUUS, The First Western World Fair, opened last November at the Western Complex in Denver. The 10-day event featured entertainment to celebrate the culture of the American West. Included was the world's largest horse show, the premiere of major league rodeo and numerous youth events.



Time out for some serious hand-holding.



Bull Riding at the Little Britches Rodeo.



Time to dance.



Cowboy Polo was one of the major events between





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The Bayou)" • "Crying In The Chapel" • "You Win Again" • "I  
Can't Help It If I'm Still In Love With You" • "I'm So Lonesome I  
Could Cry" • "Secret Love" • "You'll Never Walk Alone"  
• "Crazy" • "Everybody's Somebody's Fool" • "I Fall To  
Pieces" • "Memphis Tennessee" • "500 Miles (Away From  
Home)" • "I'd Be A Legend In My Time" • "City Light"  
• "Moments To Remember" • "Oh, Lonesome Me" • "Release  
Me" • "Heartaches By The Number" • "Sunday Morning  
Coming Down" • "Amazing Grace" • "Peace In The Valley"  
• "You Are My Sunshine" • "Sweet Dreams"  
• "Convoy" • "I Love" • "By The Time I Get To  
Phoenix" • "Four Walls" • "All I Have To Do  
Is Dream" • "There Goes My Everything"  
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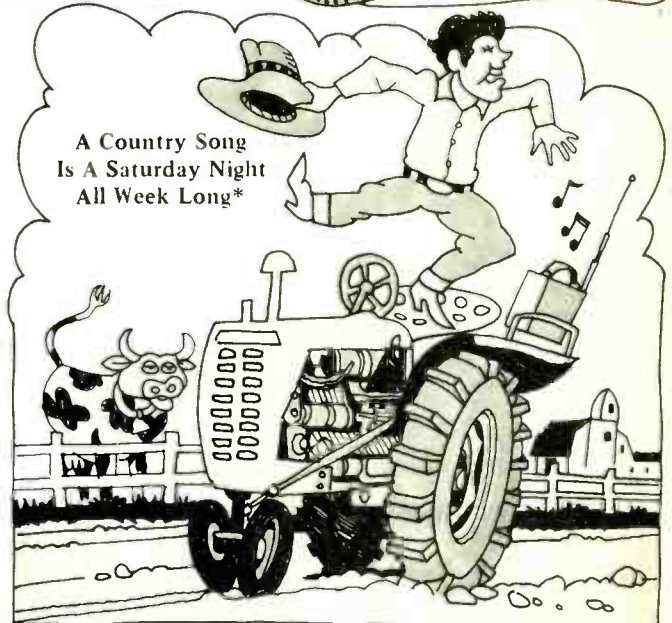
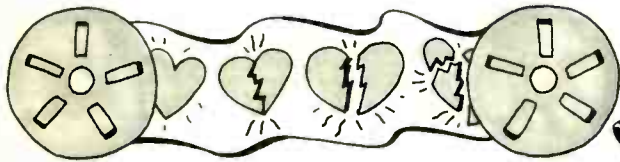
# HOOKS

Well folks, it was rough, but we finally chose a winner in our "Put Country In Its Place" slogan contest. Country Music Magazine's New York offices were flooded with entries--some 1,200 in all--from as far away as Denmark and Finland and most of the 50 states. Like we said, it was rough, and it did prove one thing we've suspected all along: A lot of you people out there are really *strange*.

Mary Silas is our first place winner. Mary, from Los Angeles, Calif. wins our \$545 Guild S-300 electric guitar, compliments of Guild Guitars. This beauty--one of the latest in Guild's fine line--is everything the professional or amateur picker would want. The S-300 sports two pick-ups, a brass tailpiece, contoured all-mohogany solid body with a new Guild shape and a 24-fret neck - two full octaves of extra-wide frets on a curved fingerboard.

Without further ado, our winning slogan:

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\*Second Place Winner



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Blue Collar Executive



Country Music Gives You That  
Sittin' On The Front Porch,  
Eatin' The Heart Out Of A  
Watermelon Feeling

*Markings*

Country Music Never Played To A Stranger\*

I Listen To Country Music Because I Am  
Will'e Wail'on Forever?  
Not Now Dear, I'm Listening To Country Music  
What This Country Needs Is A Good 5 Cent Guitar

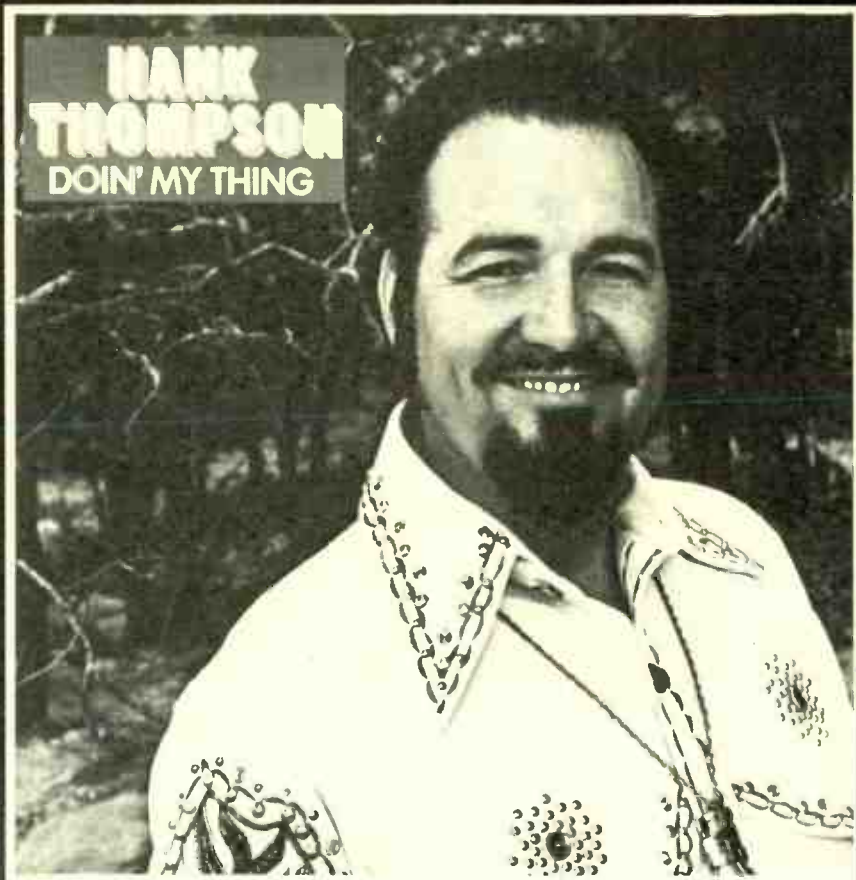
IF YOU like me  
You'll love  
Country music.

\*Third Place Winner



# An Album For Country? An Album For Rock? Most Emphatically An Album For All Music Fans.

John Rockwell, noted columnist and music critic for the New York Times, has some fine things to say about this unique, special album by Hank Thompson which draws fans from both rock and country.



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together, folkier roots of certain kinds of country music, and this revivalism tends to appeal to the same audiences that enjoy country rock. So Mr. Thompson has returned to his Western Swing roots, which turn out themselves to indicate the way country turned into "rockabilly" — the mixture of rock (or "blue music") and country (or "hillbilly") that first indicated the overt connections between those two forms of music.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, JANUARY 1, 1978

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# HOOKS

Mary, a married 36-year-old government worker, was delighted to have won the guitar, since Santa had failed to bring her one for Christmas. Second place prize of 50



top country lps goes to Don Minikus of Milington, N.J. and third prize of 25 top country lps goes to Charles Hawks of Circleville, Ohio.

Runners-up include J.T. McCall of Richmond, Ky., for **Music That Sticks To Your Boots**, Donna Napier of Paragould, Ark., for **Country Music Is Recycled**

**Happiness**, Mrs. D.R. Roningen, of Coon Valley, Wisc. for **If It Ain't Country, Kill It**, and Bryan Munson of Seattle, Wash. for **Of All Noises, I Think Country Is The Least Disagreeable**. Donna & Edward Szczepanski of Bethlehem, Pa. were awarded a runner-up prize for their 82 some odd entries.



1st Place: Mary Silas



Top row: D. Minikus, C. Hawks & Mr. & Mrs. D.R. Roningen/below: J.T. McCall, D. Napier & D. & E. Szczepanski

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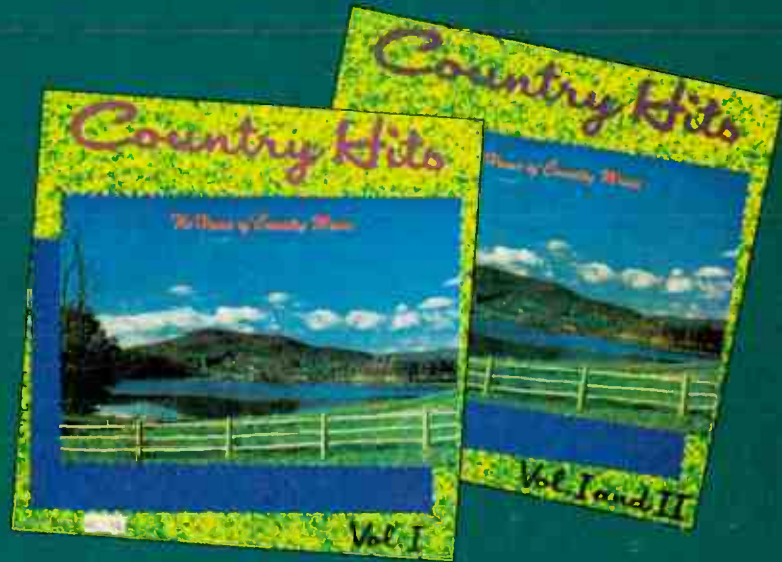
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# It Was Almost Like A . . . **SONG?**

**A**nd a happy song at that.  
Few choices for CMA Entertainer of the Year  
have been met with such overwhelming enthusiasm  
as that of Ronnie Milsap . . .

by JOHN MORTHLAND

Ronnie Milsap was born to be the CMA's Entertainer of the Year, or so it might seem in retrospect.

Certainly in all of Nashville it would be difficult to find another artist who so fully personifies country music's current self-image, who goes with the mainstream flow so effectively, and who makes it seem so natural. For better or for worse—and that depends mostly on how you view country music's increasing sophistication and easy-listening bent—Milsap embodies most of the impulses present in the industry today.

Though he was slow in getting to Nashville, Milsap's story parallels that of country music as it moves from the hills of the Southeast to the cities and suburbs everywhere. He was born in the Smoky Mountains of western North Carolina, and currently lives right around the corner from the governor of Tennessee. He's a steadfast family man, married 12 years to a Georgia woman named Joyce; they have an eight-year-old adopted son. Milsap is a collector of old-time radio show transcriptions, a ham radio operator and an electronics whiz. In short, he's a country boy gone somewhat urbane.

Unlike the most countrypolitan artists, the blind singer-pianist keeps his music firmly rooted in traditional country. But his records do favor the string sections and soft background voices and special effects and even synthesizers that Nashville artists utilize increasingly as they move more towards a middle-of-the-road audience.

Though he is properly respectful towards such fading institutions as the Grand Ole Opry, he doesn't stake his career on them, as others did in the past. By recording mainly upbeat love songs, he spurns the stereotype that defines country as music for drinking and divorcing. He puts on a slick, family-oriented stage show, and unlike so many of the current overnight sensations, Milsap paid a decade's worth of dues before earning recognition. Even after his first hit in 1973—(*All Together Now*) *Let's Fall Apart* and *I Hate You*, a two-sided single—he came up through the ranks, opening shows for Charley Pride rather than going out on his own.

All of this serves to create the Milsap image, and it is one he carefully nurtures and protects.

"I feel that it's very important to sing the kind of things that are gonna reflect you, what you are. I don't sing songs that don't reflect my lifestyle. That's just an honest approach to your music. Fans are really . . . they listen to a song and if they really like it, they think it's you. They think you wrote it and lived it," he says in reference to that image.

"When I started in country music, it just seemed there was so

much stress on pain and misery, cheating songs and drinking songs, and sadness in country music. And I thought there's gotta be people who are really happy, wanna hear something about the good things in life. I guess I was one of the first in country music to sing only about the positive. I've been accused of being 'always happy' or even of being *too* happy, maybe, in my songs. But I'm a happy person. I got a lot to be happy about."

Shortly after he received the entertainer award, Milsap came to New York to talk business and do the round of interviews obligatory for any Entertainer of the Year. Wearing a black western shirt emblazoned with red roses and dark glasses that have his initials in silver glitter in the corner of one lens and a starburst in the corner of the other, he sat rigidly in a chair in his suite at the posh Plaza Hotel and explained what the award means to him.

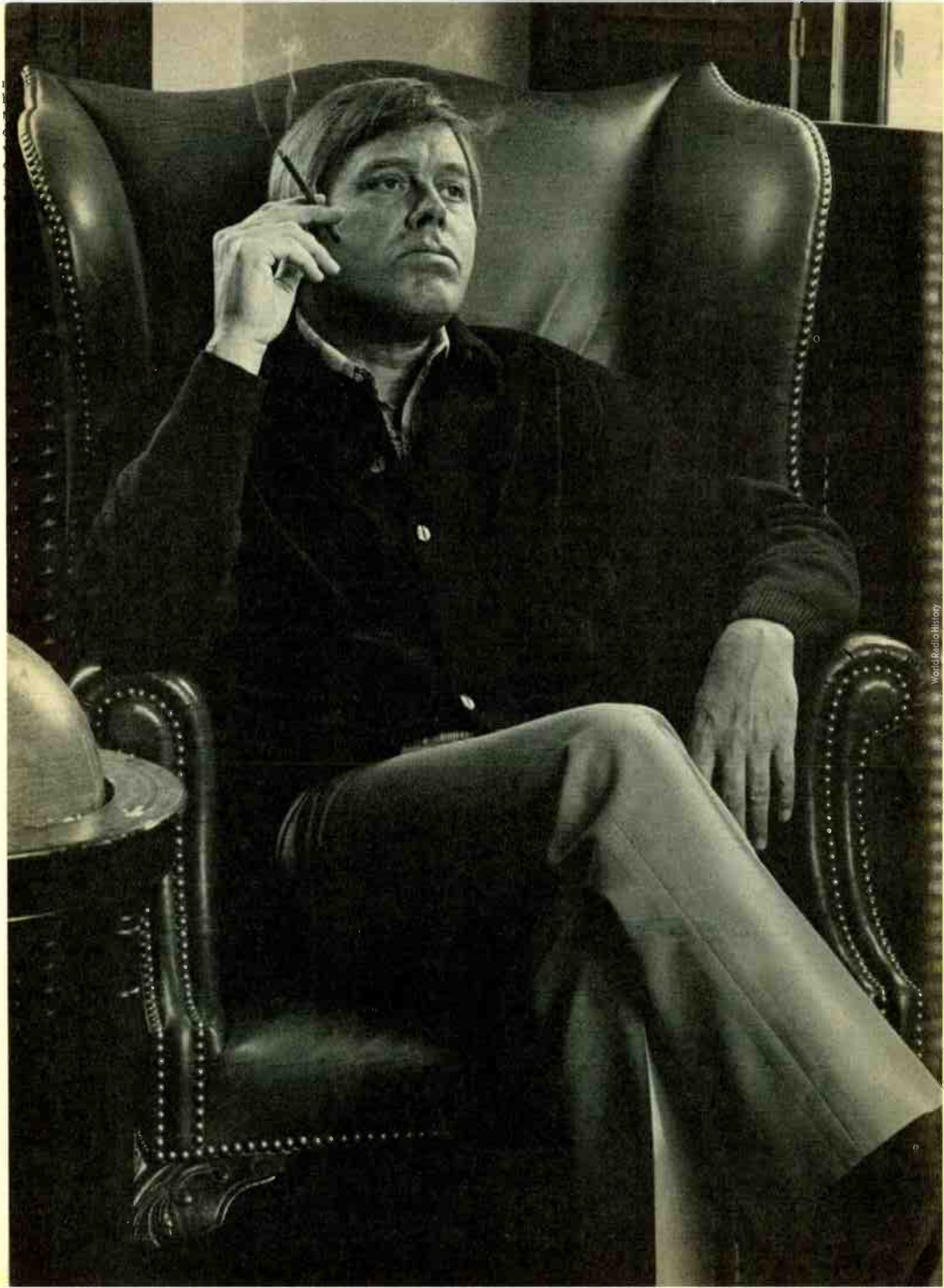
"I won Male Vocalist of the Year twice before this, but I really couldn't feel those awards did an awful lot," he said. "This is the only award that seems to me to really change your life, your career. For instance, in the fair season, July through October, we do a lot of outdoor things. Last year I couldn't get into some of those places. This year, everybody wants me."

It also means he can boost his concert fee and spend less time on the road. That's important to him because he feels he's never had as much time in the studio as he wanted. It attracts classy bookings such as the Nevada casinos and rock showcase clubs. And it opens up television—possibly a special, but certainly the more prestigious talk shows and variety shows.

The biggest irony, of course, is that Milsap began his career in rhythm and blues, playing the nightclubs of Atlanta and Memphis, earning a small reputation as "the white Ray Charles." He says that while it was always his goal to play country music, the opportunity simply wasn't there for years.

Milsap was born blind. His father was an epileptic who did hard labor (in saw mills, for the TVA, whatever he could find), and apparently felt unequipped to raise a blind child. The baby was quickly sent to his grandparents, who raised him until he was six-years-old, then sent him to the Raleigh (N.C.) School For the Blind, where he learned to play violin, piano and guitar. Though it was the era of Elvis and Chuck Berry, he played only classical music, because that's all the school allowed. "Anything else was considered just noise," he reports with some amusement.

Ronnie looks back on this era with fondness, not only for his musical training, but also for how the school prepared him to deal with a world of sighted people. Hence, he says, his blind-





# the **LEADER** of Fox Hollow

Detractors and “no-talent bastards” aside

Tom T. Hall just may  
have the world at bay...

by **ALANNA NASH**

You get your first look at it rounding the curve of Berry Chapel Road, between Franklin and Brentwood, Tenn., just outside of Nashville. The long white fences with their bright red trim suggest what is to come, but it isn't until you reach the front entrance, with the high towers and the gatekeeper's box—more inviting than intimidating—that you get the full, breathtaking view of Fox Hollow, Tom T. Hall's near-legendary 60-acre farm. Just the sheer physical layout of the farm suggests a scene out of a fairy tale. But aside from that, there is the unmistakable charge of magic in the air, magic that comes from knowing that while you cannot actually see Sneaky Snake, Ole Lonesome George, the Basset, and the One-Legged Chicken, you know they are there, probably watching as you drive through the gate and up the gentle slope that leads to the house.

It's Christmas time at Fox Hollow, and a film crew from a local television station is there to shoot a special on how the Halls spend their holiday. Stepping through the door of Tom and Dixie Hall's exquisitely furnished home and spying 13 stockings—all for Miss Dixie's beloved bassets—hung upon the mantle in the den, it occurs to a visitor that growing up in the country outside of Olive Hill, Ky., young Tom Hall (the “T” was added in his adult years to distinguish him from Tompall Glaser and a host of others with similar names) would probably not have dreamed that one day such a fine place would ever be his—or that he would have a Christmas so grand.

*“I remember one Christmas when it snowed, beautifully or terribly, depending on whether you were traveling,” Hall was to recall years later. “I was watching it. It was a very sad kind of Christmas, because there were 10 children in our family, six of them boys, and we hadn't seen any of our older brothers and sisters. They were coming back from the industrial North with all the gifts they were supposed to bring.*

*“The day wore on, and it was about 10 o'clock at night, but we tired early in those days. Suddenly, we saw coming a jeep, of all things—the only thing that could get back into that part of the country. It was loaded with goodies, and some of those were 78 rpm records—the new Hank Williams records and the new Bill Monroe records. And there was a guitar in that, too...”*

Even if it were not especially decorated for Christmas, Hall's den would be fit to be photographed for *House Beautiful*. It's a large, comfortable room, furnished in brown leather and muted tweeds, accenting the dark wood paneling and shutters and the white walls, on which hang several trophies and plaques Miss Dixie has brought home from dog shows. A friendly fire crackles in the hearth, and above it, a fox, perhaps the farm's namesake, stands attentively in a glass case. There are other animals about, too—a ceramic basset and a stuffed mallard and raccoon which look to be permanent fixtures, and some that seem to be only visiting for the holidays—a couple of reindeer with their masters, Mr. and Mrs. Claus, and another raccoon, this one playing guitar.

And sitting on the leather sofa is one of the best-known canines in America, none other than Jonathan Rebel. Jonathan, who was modeled on a real-life dog of Miss Dixie's, is to be one of the stars of the television show, which is to stress two of the things Mr. and Mrs. Tom T. Hall care most about in life—pre-

ventive pet care and control, and children.

Although 41-year old Hall has only one child, a 16-year old boy from a previous marriage, Fox Hollow is full of children this cold, December morning, all from Chattanooga's Bethel Bible School, actually a children's home of which Hall is said to be almost the sole support. Each spring he sponsors a celebrity golf tournament, the proceeds from which go to maintaining the school, attended by children of incarcerated parents. (Bethel is only one of Hall's many charities; the others he will not allow publicized “because I don't want to have to be questioning my motives.”)

There's been a breakdown in filming for a reason which is not clear to all of us, and the children are making a constant stream through the den door, which, incidentally, is said to have come from a British castle. The kids excitedly examine the pile of wrapped presents under the tree and on the ornate pool table, hoping to find their names on the attached tags.

Meanwhile, Hall, dressed in a maroon sweater and slacks, is in his library, a handsome, oriental-rugged room stocked with the works of Dickens, Hemingway, Michener, Jim Bishop, Alistair MacLean and Gay Talese, to name a few. Most of the adults in the gathering have followed Hall there—not only the film crew, but a veterinarian who knows the Halls from their work with the humane society and the Tennessee Department of Public Health. Barbara Mandrell, a close friend of the Halls, and Miss Dixie are there, too.

The room is a small one, and with members of the production crew running in and out asking this and that, Hall is beginning to look uncomfortable, a stranger in his own home. Everybody's been waiting quite a while now, and one can make small talk only so long. Finally, with everyone's patience wearing thin, a man from the television station comes in and announces that, believe it or not, the compressor for the video tape recorder wasn't any good, and a second one brought from town blew out. Verdict: they'll scrap the whole project.

Hall's facial muscles visibly tighten and a glaze forms over his eyes. As he moves toward the small bar in the corner he is heard to say, “Someone get me a brandy.”

*Christmases when I was a boy weren't so much religious observances as they were homecomings, times for us all getting together and having something a little special. My father was a very good storyteller, and every year he'd tell us the same stories. We'd sit around the kitchen table late in the evenings and he'd tell us all these very dramatic stories about the history of Carter Country and some of the fascinating people who grew up and died there.*

*“It was very trying times for a lot of people where I was born and raised because the economy was terrible. There was absolutely nothing that you could do for a living that was honest in Eastern Kentucky. There were no industries and the farms were not productive. Why people settled that part of the country, I have no notion, except that my ancestors were all hermits, or something.”*

There are some in Nashville who will tell you that, apart from his charitable work, such as the golf tournament, his support of

*(Continued on page 57)*

6 He was of the Old South, where a man was a man. He tried to be an



The first and only time Jim Owen ever heard Hank Williams, he knew he was in the presence of greatness. Many years later, he turned that feeling into a stage show, Owen's personal salute to Ol' Hank.

# The Man Who Would Be 'Hank'

by DOUGLAS B. GREEN

Perhaps one of the most interesting and intriguing phenomena in recent years has been the recreation of historical figures such as Mark Twain and Theodore Roosevelt by gifted actors. While such imitations have been the staple of the music business for years (witness Elvis imitator business, currently booming), only Jim Owen has taken the next step, from simple musical imitations into a full-scale "recreation" of his own idol, Hank Williams.

Called *Hank*, the show is a remarkable tribute, not only because of the skill with which it is presented, but also for the total devotion of the man presenting it. Jim Owen seeks to recreate the magic Hank Williams inspired in him and communicate that magic to those who now consider Hank legend without having ever experienced his presence.

But Jim Owen is not Hank Williams, does not care to be Hank Williams. He is a performer serious about his work—of which he considers his Hank re-creation merely a segment—and very much in charge of a career of his own.

He was born in Robards (which he pronounces "Robberds") Kentucky, not far from Evansville, Indiana, on June 1, 1941. When he was eight or nine he saw Hank Williams for the first and only time, and the incident galvanized his life: "It just blew my mind. I couldn't believe what this guy did to an audience."

Jim grew up in Henderson County, went to Murray State, and aspired to be a psychologist. He eventually attained that goal, and became an OEO councillor at Ft. Breckenridge, Kentucky. But, he says, "by the time I reached that goal I found that it had disappeared. Music—the desire to sing and to write—had taken over."

This was not new to him—while still in school he was known as a singer, and, in fact, when the singing started it was always he who was called on to sing the Hank Williams songs, because he could break his voice in that same lonesome, peculiar way, and none of the other children could.

In 1969, "At the age of 28 I hung it all up and said 'I'm going to Nashville.' It was either come here or die."

He ended up working for Mel Tillis as a songwriter, bus driver, road manager—"anything"—and began to get some of his songs cut, the biggest of the lot being *Too Lonely Too Long* by Tillis. He went on the road for small wages and played the usual round of night clubs, honky-tonks and dives.

*Louisiana Woman*, *Mississippi Man* (for Conway and Loretta) and *Southern Loving* (for Jim Ed Brown) both went to number one, while a set of impersonations he'd worked up as part of his act—"If you think I can do Hank, you should hear me do Mel!"—went over extremely well, especially his impressions of Hank Williams, which reactivated his old fascination with the man that eventually became an obsession. He scoured and ferreted out facts and built an entire show in song and speech, around Hank Williams, which he called simply *Hank*.

With a surprising bit of brazenness Jim approached Nashville's public television station, WDCN, with the idea of filming *Hank*, and to his surprise they were enthusiastic and eager. The resulting program went on to win an award for excellence.

A musical meeting between Jim and the original Drifting Cowboys—Jerry Rivers, Don Helms, Bob McNett, and Hillous Butrum—seemed inevitable, particularly since the recent reformation of the band, and none other than that hard-core traditionalist in progressive's clothing, Charlie Daniels, took on the task of producing a recording of this musical collaboration, a double set on Epic called *A Song For Us All*. It is not a perfect effort, but it is a good one, and while Jim really *doesn't* sound awfully much like Hank, he has captured his inflections with the skill of a mimic, and captured much of the feeling with the devotion of the most sincere of admirers.

Unlike a Cadillac limousine-full of Elvis imitators, Jim is not putting all his marbles on his Hank impression. It's merely a part of his total musical persona. He's now doing everything possible to make sure the sum of his total works, not simply the devotion to Hank Williams, will be remembered.



outlaw before there were outlaws; he was the original Waylon or Willie. . .

## “Hank” On Hank

*An Interview With Jim Owen  
by Douglas B. Green*

*CM: Jim, you've been researching and interpreting Hank's career for three years now; you probably know as much about him as a person as anybody not his contemporary. Still, in all that's been written about Hank no very clear picture stands out of the kind of man he was; only the sensational stories stand out. Have you gained any insight into Hank the man?*

JIM OWEN: Yeah, through all the years of studying him and his music, I think I know what kind of person he was. He was the perfect brother—the kind who would help you. He liked his time alone, but when he *didn't* want to be alone he couldn't stand it. He was very generous, very insecure, filled with his insecurities by being on stage. Probably a dreamer—I don't mean in the way of never getting anything done, but dreaming of a better world, a better life for people. He was the kind who would go through towns and give a town he didn't know anything about a couple of hundred dollars or a couple of thousand dollars toward a new church. He donated \$400 a month from the time he was a superstar to the day he died to an orphanage in Montgomery, a Catholic orphanage, and he was a Baptist. He was a very gentle man—not counting his drinking; I'm talking about his personality. He was of the Old South, where a man was a man. He tried to be an outlaw before there were outlaws; he was the original Waylon or Willie. He was doing it because he was living out all of the things he'd never gotten to do before and that he felt inside.

*CM: I'm not sure I see that. If anything, his music and his career seem to be very much a part of the establishment of his time.*

JIM OWEN: I don't think so. I don't think he was at all. He was using pills—when the rest of them were using them to stay awake, he was using them to get high. He was the one who walked into the producer's office in Hollywood and propped his feet up on the desk and sat there and smoked a cigar with his boot propped up on the guy's desk, and finally got himself thrown out of the office—well, not exactly thrown out, but he lost a movie role with Janet Leigh and someone else. He refused to take off his hat in a New York restaurant—he had thinning hair and just didn't want to take the hat off. He had a little trouble with a waiter over in Germany—and this was right after the war!—and he was going to fight him. He weighed all of 140 pounds and he was ready to bust the guy! He had trouble with Steve Sholes at RCA, who weighed about 300; Hank was going to pop him! They had to hold him back. And somebody who is really in the music business and trying to be an integral part of it wouldn't have threatened to hit the head of RCA's country division!

*CM: What in the world could have been the problem? From everything I've ever heard Steve Sholes, though big, was the gentlest of men.*

JIM OWEN: It had to do with a Hank Snow recording—he wrote a song for Hank Snow and Snow didn't record it. Snow didn't care for the song, but he didn't want to tell Hank he didn't care for it, so the blame somehow got shifted over to Steve Sholes, and Hank was going to bust him! I think he was a whole lot like the guys of today.

A lot of people in the music business, a lot of his peers, liked him. And, a lot of his peers *did not* like him. So he had to be pretty normal that way. (Jimmy) Dickens thought he was great; a lot of the guys did. George Morgan didn't like him at all.

*CM: Speaking of Jimmy Dickens, I've always wanted to hear one of those legendary Opry air checks where Hank, Dickens, and Bill Monroe sang trios.*

JIM OWEN: They did some things on the road together, too. They held Dickens up off the floor so he could reach the mike!

Monroe would get over on one side and Hank would get him over on the other, and they'd lock arms and pick him up! I wish I'd heard some of those trios—you know they had to be great.

*CM: You can only speculate, of course, but do you feel that given today's less restrictive atmosphere Hank wouldn't have felt so compelled to rebel against whatever strictures he felt?*

JIM OWEN: I don't think he rebelled. I don't think he was a rebellious type outlaw. He was progressive in what he could do, like using the piano, and late in his career, the drums on his recordings. I don't think he was rebellious, I think he was trying to solve his own problems by drinking; I don't think he was rebelling against anybody, really.

*CM: Yet that kind of drinking is often thought to be a very aggressive act. . . .*

JIM OWEN: Well, I think it's aggressive to yourself more than it is to anybody else: I never had the feeling that he was trying to fight anything. I just have the feeling that he couldn't handle what was on him, and *instead* of fighting, he drank. That's my feeling. Instead of being a rebellious person—and maybe you're right, maybe it is a form of aggression—but instead of lashing out and the hell with it all, I'll do it this way, he just would get him a bottle. And it finally got to the point where that's all he would do. That's my feeling on it; it's just my personal feeling. I don't think he was rebellious, or if he was, I don't feel he was on purpose. I don't think he was that kind of person. He didn't have any trouble with Fred Rose and Fred treated him as an equal. On a lot of those shows when he was drunk, he really didn't want to go on. He would ask not to be put on, and the promoters would sometimes make him go on. That's when he quit showing up. He couldn't help the drinking, but he could just not show up and they couldn't make him, so that's why he did that.

*CM: What do you think of the standard explanation of his behavior which says that because he was ill-equipped by his background he was incapable of coping with or handling the sudden overwhelming success that came his way?*

JIM OWEN: I think a lot of that's true. Ray Price said once that Hank was “socially unaware,” and I think he was. I really think he felt inferior, and all of a sudden he's into a situation where they're throwing banquets in his honor and he's hobnobbing with the cream of society, and he wasn't ready for that. I think he got put into a lot of situations where he felt uncomfortable.

And another thing, I don't think he or Audrey (Williams) either one were ready for all the money they suddenly came into. They were from lower middle class backgrounds—well, Audrey might have been middle class, probably was, but Hank was from a lower middle class family—and they just weren't ready for sudden wealth. They had a lot of money all of a sudden and neither one of them handled it well. It even took her years after his death for her to adjust to being an influential person.

*CM: As a songwriter yourself you must have thought a lot about the long-debated question of the amount of influence Fred Rose had on Hank Williams' songs, particularly given the well-known fact that Fred contributed frequently and substantially to the songs of Gene Autry, Jenny Lou Carson and a great many others. Many people have claimed that Fred took the major part in a great many of Hank's songs—what are your conclusions?*

JIM OWEN: Yes, that was pretty close to the way it was, but Hank was much more of the songwriting team than Fred Rose advocates think, and Fred was more a part of it than the Hank advocates think. What I can find—and Wesley Rose won't talk about it: he says it doesn't matter—is something that Roy Acuff said, that Hank would come to Fred with good ideas and maybe the song half written, or three quarters written, or something like that, and then Fred would change this line, let's change this word, and so on. But Acuff's statement was that Fred might change some of the songs, but he didn't change Hank's thinking.



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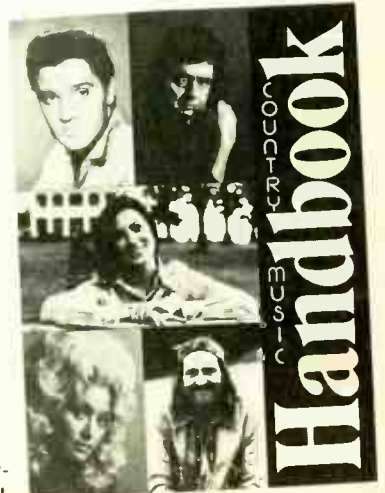
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Whatever Hank's idea was on the song, then that's what they went with, and Fred would merely doctor it. Now to give you an idea, Fred took part, or put his name on, only five songs. In *Kaw-Liga* he changed the thinking from Kaw-Liga being a real Indian to being a wooden Indian, so he took part of that song. So on the songs that he worked a whole lot on, apparently he put his name on those, and there's only five. Now, there are places where you can see Fred Rose in those songs; I can see him in *I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry*. and I can see him in *May You Never Be Alone Like Me*: "Like a bird that's lost its mate in flight... like a piece of driftwood in the sea..." I can see Fred Rose in those songs, in some lines, in some words. But from what I can see of melodies—other than, perhaps, *Rambling Man*—I can't see that Fred Rose ever influenced the melodies that much, because the melodies have a very basic three or four chord structure.

CM: Even *I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry*? That descending chord structure seems to come straight out of pop music, and therefore out of Fred Rose.

JIM OWEN: Yeah, but *I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry* was originally recorded as a three chord song; the minors that B.J. Thomas put in it were not in Hank's recording. *Cold Cold Heart* was out of meter, and had Fred played a great part in it, he would have changed it. When Tony Bennett recorded it, he recorded it in meter. Really, we've changed them ourselves. Apparently they were written pretty simply. That's what makes his songs—other than the fact that they were Hank's—so successful: you can do anything in the world with them. You can record them bluegrass, you can record them Dixieland, however you want to record them you can do them that way.

Sure, I think Fred played a tremendous part in his songwriting. The thing you can't determine is how much was actual writing and how much was influence. I think the influence was *fantastic*, because when he went with Acuff-Rose, his early songs are totally different. Say from 1951 on, they're a different batch of songs, almost as if two different people wrote them. When you get into *Hey Good Looking* and *I Can't Help It If I'm Still In Love With You*, he's a totally different songwriter then he was when he wrote *I Don't Care If Tomorrow Never Comes*.

CM: So you feel, then, that that's why this opinion lingers on?

JIM OWEN: I think that a lot of it might be. We don't look to see how many years Harlan Howard went to school, because he's not associated with anyone who might be fixing his songs. We just don't think that much about it. But here, in Hank's case, a lot of people have to say, well here's a tenth grade education and not a good tenth grade education at that, writing all those great songs. It's just hard for a lot of people to accept that. It



“  
Believe me, country  
music did start  
with Hank Williams.  
”

shouldn't be—we don't know that Shakespeare went to school at all! If he had only been associated with, say, Vic McAlpin or Jimmy Work or some of the good songwriters of the time who didn't become

legends, then I think there wouldn't be these questions.

CM: Okay, then, a final question. There seems to be a certain revisionism among historians of Hank's career, an attempt to formulate a reality of what had become an overblown legend. For a while there it seemed as though some people thought country music started with Hank Williams. . . .

JIM OWEN: I'm not so sure it didn't. Believe me, country music did start with Hank Williams. It was hillbilly music before that—he took it to the city. He was the first crossover.

CM: Not Bob Wills? Not Gene Autry? Not Al Dexter?

JIM OWEN: They were there, but only occasionally. They'd have a record cross over occasionally. Dexter crossed over with *Pistol Packin' Mama* and *Too Late To Worry*. Autry crossed over with *Be Honest With Me* and *Tweedle-O-Twill*—both written by Fred Rose, by the way—but those were the only ones. Tubb crossed over with *Walking The Floor Over You*. But Hank crossed over *continually*. After 1951 he was played as much on pop stations as he was on country stations, either that or his songs. He was really a superstar, and pop stations were playing him. Hank Williams was country music's first superstar, and really, I'm not so sure that it really didn't start with him. ■

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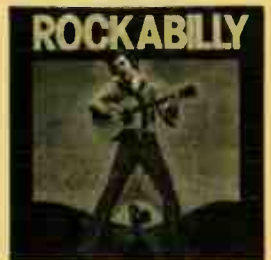


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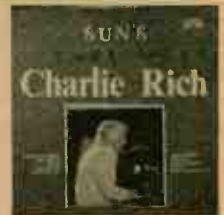
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**Freddy Fender-Inside Louisiana State Prison: Our Pledge Of Love/Hello Loneliness/The Village Queen/Carmelia, more! Power Pak LP No. PO-280 8TK No. PO-1280**



**George Jones-Golden Hits: Why, Baby, Why/Color Of The Blues/I Gotta Talk To Your Heart/Just One More, 7 more! Starday LP No. SLP-440 8TK No. SLPT-1440**



**Jerry Lee Lewis-Golden Hits Vol. 1: Great Balls Of Fire/It'll Be Me/Breathless/Whole Lotta Shakin' Going On, 6 more! Sun LP No. S-102 8TK No. ST-102**



**George Morgan-Steal Away: Beyond The Sunset/Beautiful Isle Of Somewhere/Softly & Tenderly/Precious Memories, more! Sun LP No. SLP-413 8TK No. SLPT-1413**



**Carl Perkins-Golden Hits: Matchbox/Blue Suede Shoes/Dixie Fried/Right String But The Wrong Yo Yo/Only You, more! Sun LP No. S-111 8TK No. ST-111**



**Jeannie C. Riley-Greatest Hits: Duty Desire/The Girl Most Likely/The Rib/The Man/Harper Valley/Back Side Of Dallas, more! Sun LP No. PLP-13 8TK No. PLT-13**



**Flatt & Scruggs-Golden Hits Of: Foggy Mountain Breakdown/Salty Dog Blues/Roll In My Sweet Baby's Arms, and 7 more! LP No. PO-297 8TK No. PO-1297**



**Grandpa Jones-Other Side Of: My Darling's Not My Darling/Any more/You'll Miss Me When I'm Gone/Trouble, more! Starday LP No. KLP-888 8TK No. KLPT-1888**



**Jerry Lee Lewis-Golden Hits Vol. 2: Save The Last Dance For Me/Fools Like Me/I'll Sail My Ship Alone/Candy Money, 7 more! Sun LP No. S-103 8TK No. ST-103**



**George Morgan-Best Of: You're The Only Good Thing/Room Full Of Roses/I'll Sail My Ship Alone/Candy Kisses, more! Starday LP No. SLP-957 8TK No. SLPT-1957**



**Carl Perkins-Blue Suede Shoes: All Mama's Children/Movie Magg/Glad All Over/Gone, Gone, Gone/Forever Yours, more! Sun LP No. S-112 8TK No. ST-112**



**Jeannie C. Riley-Harper Valley P.T.A.: The Little Town Square/Harper Valley/Widow Jones/Run Jeannie Run, much more! Sun LP No. PLP-1 8TK No. PLT-1**

**MORE ALBUMS ON BACK PAGE - TURN PAGE TO ORDER**





Jeannie C. Riley-Country Gold: Many People Play/Children/Oakie From Muskogee/That's A No No, more! Power Pak LP No. PO-250 8TK No. PO-1250



Red Sovine-Phantom 309: In Your Heart/That's Me/Bummin' Around/Same Old Situation/Phantom 309, more! Power Pak LP No. PO-270 8TK No. PO-1270



Red Sovine-Teddy Bear: Teddy Bear/It Ain't No Big Thing/Little Rosa/Last Mile Of The Way/Love Is, much more! Starday LP No. SD-968 X 8TK No. SDT-1968 X



Carl Story-Best Of: I Didn't Hear Nobody Pray/Light At The River/Tramp On The Street/Family Reunion, much more! Starday LP No. SLP-956 8TK No. SLPT-1956



Mel Tillis & Friends: Stateside/Mr. Dropout/Wine/Honey Hungry/Faded Love/I'm Gonna Move, much more! Power Pak LP No. PO-295 8TK No. PO-1295



Dottie West-Country Singing Sensation: Big John/Walking In The Dark/I Should Start Running/Crazy, many more! Power Pak LP No. PO-274 8TK No. PO-1274



Jean Shepard-Best Of: Many Happy Hangovers To You/Haul Off And Love Me/Satisfied Mind/2 Little Boys, 6 more! Power Pak LP No. PO-278 8TK No. PO-1278



Red Sovine- Best Of: Giddy Up Go/I Know You're Married/One Is A Lonely Number/I Didn't Jump The Fence, more! Starday LP No. SLP-952 8TK No. SLPT-1952



Red Sovine-Woodrow Wilson Sovine: You Left Your Door Wide Open/Daddy's Girl/It'll Come Back/Little Joe, more! Starday LP No. SD-970 X 8TK No. SDT-1970 X



Stringbean-Salute To Uncle Dave Macon: Tennessee Farmer/I'm The Man Who Rode Around The World, 10 more! Starday LP No. SLP-215 8TK No. SLPT-1215



Copas, Hawkins, Cline-Gone But Not Forgotten: Love Sick Blues/Wings Of A Dove/Deck Of Cards/I Suppose, more! Starday LP No. SLP-346 8TK No. SLPT-1346



Don Williams-Poco Seco Singers: Ruby Tuesday/Tears/Storybook Children/On Her Way To Be A Woman, more! LP No. PO-285 8TK No. PO-1285

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# HILLBILLY CONFIDENTIAL

Wasted days and wasted nights with Tompall Glaser, the real truth about Hillbilly Central and all manner of other madness in this excerpt from *The Outlaws*, our second Country Music Magazine/Doubleday book.

**I**t was right about the middle 1960's when, according to Tompall, everything started going to hell in a handbasket. Call it the rise of the Nashville Sound; call it the near-crippling effects of the birth of rock and roll; call it whatever you like—but things *changed*, and, from the vantage of people like Tompall Glaser and Captain Midnight, things changed for the worse.

"Everybody got into this business thing," says Midnight, still sorrowful after all these years. "See, when this thing of offices started, people started having office hours and secretaries and they started wearing coats and suits and things. They took the fun out of it, you know. You couldn't walk into somebody's office, jump up on somebody's desk, kick their f—g door in as a joke. Really took the fun out of it, 'cause they started taking that shit seriously."

The changes in country went a whole lot deeper than simply not being able to kick somebody's door in for a little recreation. Country music was becoming big business, and big

by MICHAEL BANE

business meant big money—for someone. The rock and roll scare had proved that if country was to survive, it had to be real sure of its power base—and to expand that power base if possible. A bunch of irresponsible hillbillies tuning into the Grand Ole Opry once a week doesn't translate into record sales. Crooners sell, so go with crooners. Keep the records as cheap as possible and try to get away from that "hillbilly" sound, steel guitars and stuff like that. Roy Acuff, Ernest Tubb, Hank Snow, Lefty Frizzell—scrap 'em. They're not commercial. Tompall and the Glaser Brothers—shelve 'em. They don't fit in.

...

When the point finally sank in, it was like swallowing a mouthful of castor oil. There were two things that Nashville didn't want any more: controversy and hillbillies. Controversy didn't sell to the middle-of-the-road market, and hillbillies were just plain embarrass-

ing. If you like *country* country music, says Tompall, you were automatically provided with someone to harass and degrade you. It simply didn't matter that the previous year you and your brothers had been named the top vocal group in country music by the Country Music Association, or that your song, *Gentle On My Mind*, had made a star out of an unknown called Glen Campbell and a cult hero out of that guy who hung around all the time, John Hartford, and had then gone on to become the most-recorded song in the history of BMI. It didn't mean a damn that you were *right*, only that you were out of step.

"You know how many times people use their musical taste for their social status," says Tompall. "For a long time, people who really liked country music never had a socially sophisticated reason to. And there were some, when the old originals came along, there was a certain amount of pride in a hillbilly or a cowboy or a

farmer living their own life. They owned themselves, y'know. People wouldn't give up that much to do that, but they like looking at it, and the hillbilly singer represented that type of people.

"Then, though, it got shameful; people inventing life stories to go with the trade of country music. Made me ill. I found *myself* trying to do it at one point, and that was what *really* made me ill. I thought that was what was needed, but I just never could go far enough to please them."

The idea was slow in coming, but when it finally arrived, it exploded like the dawn over Interstate 40. All right, dammit, if the money men won't deal with an artist, Tompall reasoned, maybe they'll deal with a fellow *businessman*. It was one of those painfully simple ideas that tolled the end of an era.

"You didn't know what the hell went on," Tompall told interviewer Nelson Allen in 1976. "They wouldn't talk to the artist. They didn't have to. The artist didn't run the business.

(Continued on page 61)

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- ..... Grand Ole Opry

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MO48



# This Summer, Enjoy A Tennessee Vacation

Still wondering where to go and what to see this summer? If you love country music, adventure and some of the prettiest country this side of heaven, why not try a Tennessee vacation? Visit the Grand Ole Opry and Opryland, explore Tennessee's many and varied historic attractions and spend some time in the great outdoors, canoeing, biking or hiking.

You're already sold—then follow us.



Dorothy Ritter (above, l.), Nashville's Ambassador for Country Music, Governor Ray Blanton (above, r., with Jim Chapman, left) and Nashville Mayor Richard Fulton (left, center, with CM's own Russ Barnard, Jim Chapman, Debby Dunn & Jack Killion) welcome Country Music Magazine to Nashville and are more than willing to welcome you, too, for a special vacation in Nashville and Tennessee.

In a very real sense, Tennessee—and especially Nashville—is the spiritual home of country music. While it's true that the influences of country stretch from ocean to ocean, all those influences really didn't come together until late in 1925 with the advent of the soon-to-be called Opry.

Since then, Nashville has served as a lightning rod for music of all types, drawing from across the country until Music City became the recording and business center it now is. But Nashville and Tennessee are more than country music, and any died-in-the-wool country

fan with an eye on Nashville for this summer's vacation would do well to widen that glance to include some of Nashville and central Tennessee's other attractions.

There's historical sites and tourist attractions and Tennessee's very special outdoors and... well, just take a look.

# Understanding The Opry

Before heading off into the wilds of Tennessee, a stop at the Opry is in order. The new Grand Ole Opry House, located in the heart of the 217 acre Amusement Park complex, is the busy home of country music, with weekend performances featuring the all-time greats of country music.

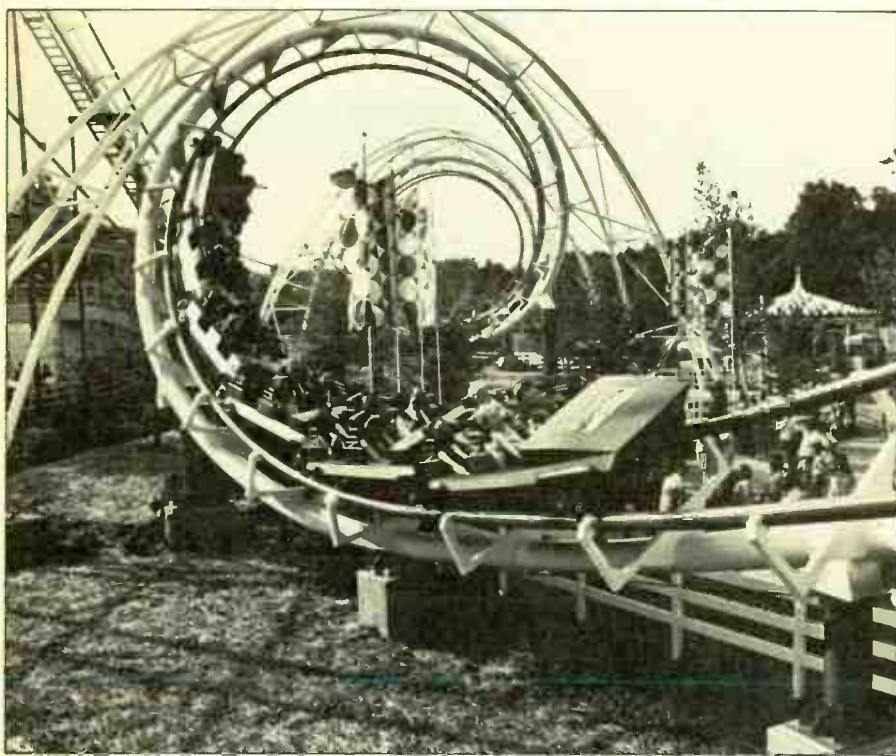
The Opry moved from its original home in the Ryman Auditorium in downtown Nashville in March, 1974. The new facility, featuring the largest and most modern television facilities in the country, offers 4,400 fans the opportunity to see each Opry show in air-conditioned comfort.

If you're planning (and who wouldn't be) to visit the Opry during your trip to Tennessee this summer, order your tickets *now*. General admission tickets are on sale beginning on the Tuesday prior to each performance, but the only safe bet for getting a seat at the Opry is a mail-order reserved seat. Tickets may be ordered from the address listed in our *access* section for \$6 each for Friday and Saturday night shows, and \$5 each for matinees.





## The Opry, Of Course, Is The Spiritual Home of Country Music . . .



Once you've heard all that fine country music, it's time to grab the kids, pick up a big sack of popcorn and head for the amusement park. Opryland is a theme-type park, and, not surprisingly, the theme is the music of America. Five music areas, all designed and decorated in period Americana, are the settings for 13 live musical shows, offering everything from bluegrass to rock.

The Opry Plaza offers grand old country music and includes not only the Opry House but the Roy Acuff Museum as well. Hill Country highlights folk and bluegrass music in an Appalachian setting, while the blues and jazz can be heard in the New Orleans area. Then there's the American West—built, oddly enough, like El Paso, Texas, in the late 1800s—and the 50s Rock area, with genuine rock and roll (hard or soft—your choice).

Besides the hot and cold running music, Opryland has all manner of other attractions, from craftsmen at work to wild buffalo and elk to Riverside Gardens, a two-and-a-half acre walk along the beautiful Cumberland River when all the noise and popcorn takes its toll.

## . . . But Opryland Has Other Attractions As Well

While you're out walking that river road along the Cumberland, you might want to commit the kiddies to the wilds of the Wabash Cannonball, that infamous corkscrew roller coaster inhabiting Opryland. If the speeds of 50 miles-per-hour don't sate Junior's (or your own) lusts for adventure, there's 18 other Opryland rides just waiting, including the Country Bumpkin (bumper cars), the Tennessee Waltz (a carousel) and the Rock 'N' Roller Coaster. New for this year is the Barnstormer, where passengers are loaded into biplanes and then (according to our information) dropped from a 108 foot tower. Hummm . . . wonder if Ol' Hank ever figured it'd come to this.



### access . . .

**Grand Ole Opry Tickets**  
Grand Ole Opry Ticket Office  
2800 Opryland Drive, Dept. J  
Nashville, TN 37214  
(615) 889-6600 EXT: 440  
Reserved seats (evening) \$6.00  
Reserved seats (matinee) \$5.00

#### Performances:

Through May 27: Friday: 7:30 p.m.  
Saturday: 6:30 and 9:30 p.m.

Through August 25: Friday: 6:30 and  
9:30 p.m.; Saturday: 6:30 and 9:30 p.m.

Through December 30: Friday: 7:30 p.m.  
Saturday: 6:30 and 9:30 p.m.

Friday Matinee: June 23-August 25,  
3-5 p.m.

Saturday Matinee: March 25-October  
28, 3-5 p.m.

Sunday Matinee: June 25-August 27,  
2-4 p.m.

**Opryland General Admission**  
Adults (12 and over) \$8.00  
Children (4-11) \$7.50  
Children (3 and under) Free

For groups of over 25, a special adult rate of \$7.20 and child rate of \$6.75 is available. Group reservations for special rates are available through the Opryland Sales Department.

Parking is available on the 8,800 parking lot for \$1 per vehicle.

Opryland is located on Briley Parkway North, just off Interstate 40, nine miles from downtown Nashville.



# Tennessee Outdoors

Spring, summer, fall or winter, a great time is waiting for you outdoors.



Skiing in Gatlinburg, rock climbing on Tennessee bluffs and canoeing on the Emory River are just a few of the outdoor activities offered in Tennessee. Sightseers will enjoy Fall Creek Falls (highest waterfall east of the Mississippi) while wildflowers seem to appear everywhere.

A few suggestions for the outdoorsperson while in Tennessee.

*For Campers:* Tennessee is dotted with campgrounds—just choose your terrain. Try the mystery lands of reelfoot Lake in West Tennessee, created by an earthquake in 1811, or a mountain camp in the Cumberlands, near Nashville.

*For Canoers:* Try float trips down the Harpeth, Duck or Buffalo rivers—all situated within easy afternoon drives from Nashville. Or for the less adventuresome, try one of Tennessee's

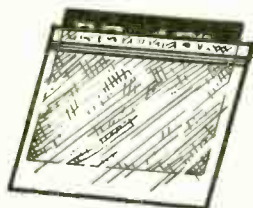
many lakes (Old Hickory, for example, north of Nashville, where you can also see the stars' floating homes).

*For Fishers:* Don't let the wife and kids con you into just floating on all that water—Tennessee offers some great fishing. How about an 11-pound smallmouth bass? A 26-pound trout? A 38-pound rockfish? A catfish big enough to swallow Chattanooga? Well, at least three out of four were caught in Tennessee, and we'll leave it to your imagination as to which three.

*For Hunters:* The state remains a haven for hunters, with huge herds of deer throughout the state and such trophy animals as Russian boar and black bear in the mountainous regions. Small game and birds, including the elusive wild turkey and migrating ducks, make Tennessee even more attractive to the sportsman.

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Want to know more? For camping, hiking, canoeing and similar activities, contact the Mid-Cumberland Tourist Organization of the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce (161 4th Ave. N., Nashville, TN: 615/259-3900) for full information, and be sure to ask for a complete list of state parks. For wildlife information, contact the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (P.O. Box 40747, Ellington Agricultural Center, Nashville, TN 37204) for full information on seasons and licenses.



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# Attractions & Events



Jack Daniels Distillery



The Parthenon

Tennessee has something for everyone, be they died-in-the-wool sightseers or unrepentant outdoorsmen. For the country

music buff, a trip to Nashville assumes the aspect of homage to Mecca. There's the Ryman and Tootsie's Orchid Lounge in

downtown Nashville, across the street from the old Ernest Tubbs Record Show and the Alamo, a clothing store with a twist—you just might run into your favorite country star getting outfitted for their next tour.

There's also two of the most important music clubs in the country—the Exit/In and the Old Time Pickin' Parlor. Both are showcase clubs for hot new country talent, and it's not at all unusual to see tomorrow's superstars performing today in an intimate club atmosphere.

There's a wealth of other attractions, from Printers' Alley with its big name nightclubs, to the Parthenon in Centennial Park, built as a temporary exhibit in 1876 and recently used as the set for the climax of the movie *Nashville*. There's the homes of the stars, historic Southern mansions (some on the hill) such as the Belle Meade Plantation and some of the finest cooking this side of France (try breakfast at the Loveless Motel, ten miles out of Nashville on Highway 100, for example. It's Charley Pride's favorite restaurant).

The Cumberland area around Nashville features such interesting sidetrips as tours of the Jack Daniel's Distillery and the George Dickel Distillery, arguably two of the most famous spots in the state; the oldest still-operating blacksmith shop in the United States (Fayetteville) and many other great attractions. We'd suggest contacting the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development (505 Fesslers Lane, Nashville, TN 37210) for the complete lowdown.

Tootsie's: Ernest Tubbs' Record Store; the Alamo; the Ryman Auditorium—South Broadway in downtown Nashville. Homes of the Stars—Gray Line Tours (615) 244-7330 Belle Meade Mansion—110 Leake Ave., Nashville TN 37205 Hours: Daily, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Blacksmith Shop—Near Winchester in Franklin County Jack Daniels—Lynchburg, in Moore County George Dickel—near Tullahoma in Coffee County.

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Unlike their western brothers, the grandeur of the Smokies is not in the height of its peaks. Rather, there is a sense of history that seems to pervade even the deepest reaches of the mountains, as if the many waves of residents have left their own personal marks in the rocks themselves.

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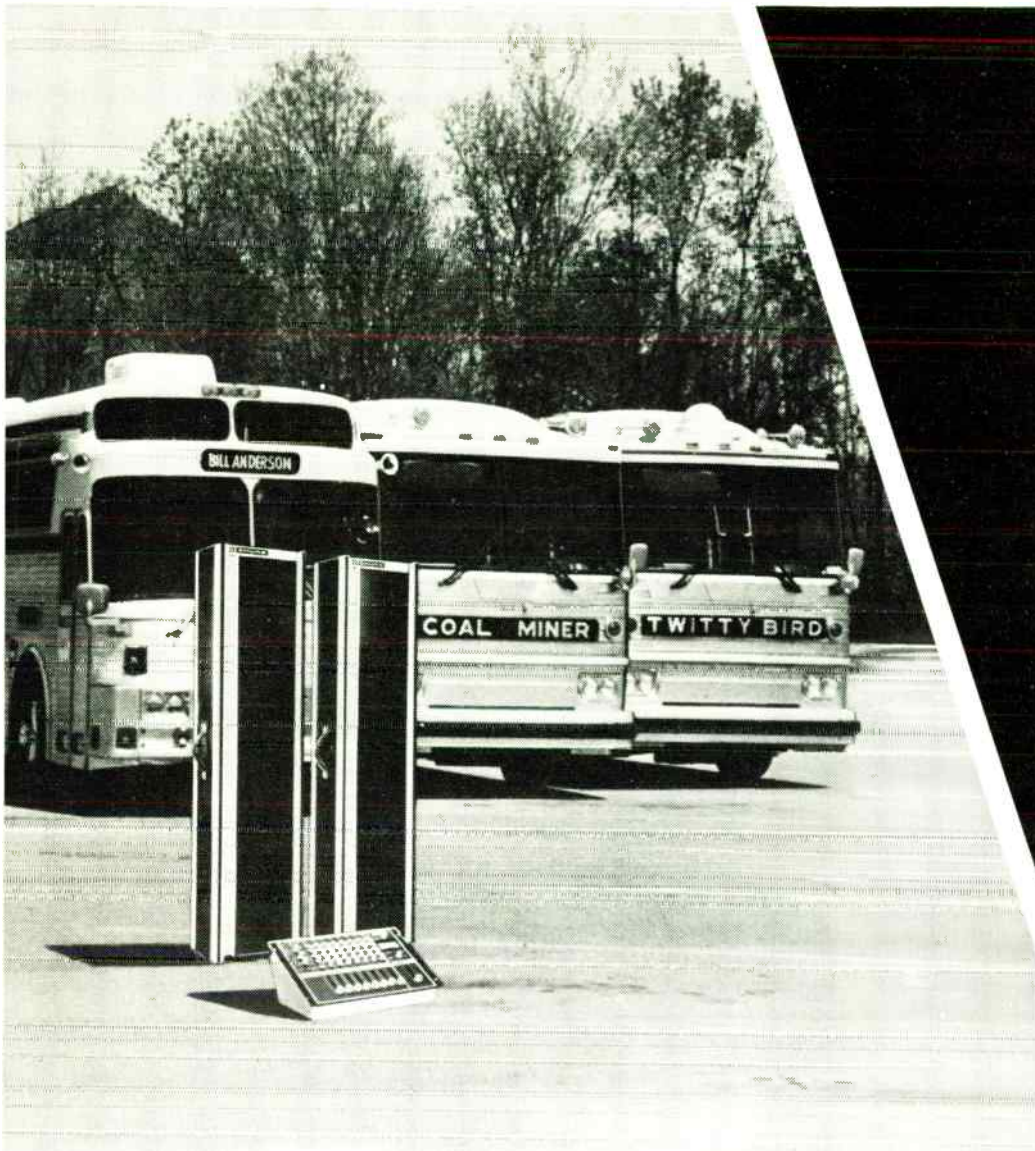
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# Starsigns



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You're ready to follow the stars with audiences cheering to the heavens. Your star sign is *AmpliFlyer*—carrier of sound.

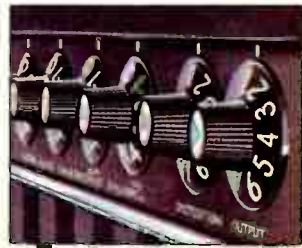
Your Fender® amplifiers are designed by "engineers"—technicians who know music because they *play* music. That's why Fender amps offer larger, more powerful transformers—encapsulated to eliminate hum and bolted down (not pop-riveted) to withstand the rigors of earthly roads. Fender insulates circuit boards to protect against vibration. Installs electrostatic magnet shields to eliminate RF interference. And features tubes developed to rigid specifications.

Now, Fender points you skyward with the new Super Twin Reverb—the all-tube, integrated amp/reverb unit. The Super

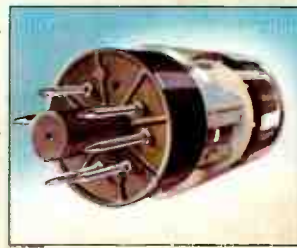
Twin's 180 watts RMS power explodes sound into the farthest corner of the galaxy—an unlimited spectrum of sound you create with five-band equalization and harmonic balance pre-amp controls. The 600 ohm, medium impedance line output for direct-to-PA board, monitor and record functions enables you to run longer cable lengths with negligible signal loss. And Fender's hum balance lets you fine-tune the Super Twin Reverb to suit yourself.

So start your journey at your authorized Fender dealer. Energize the Super Twin Reverb with a Fender Mustang® Telecaster® Deluxe or other matching Fender guitar—and let the force of Fender sound be with you.

Then follow the AmpliFlyer. And steer the course of the stars.



Fender quality linear controls respond in full spectrum.



Exclusively-designed tubes are the heart of Fender sound.

