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COUNTRYMUSIC

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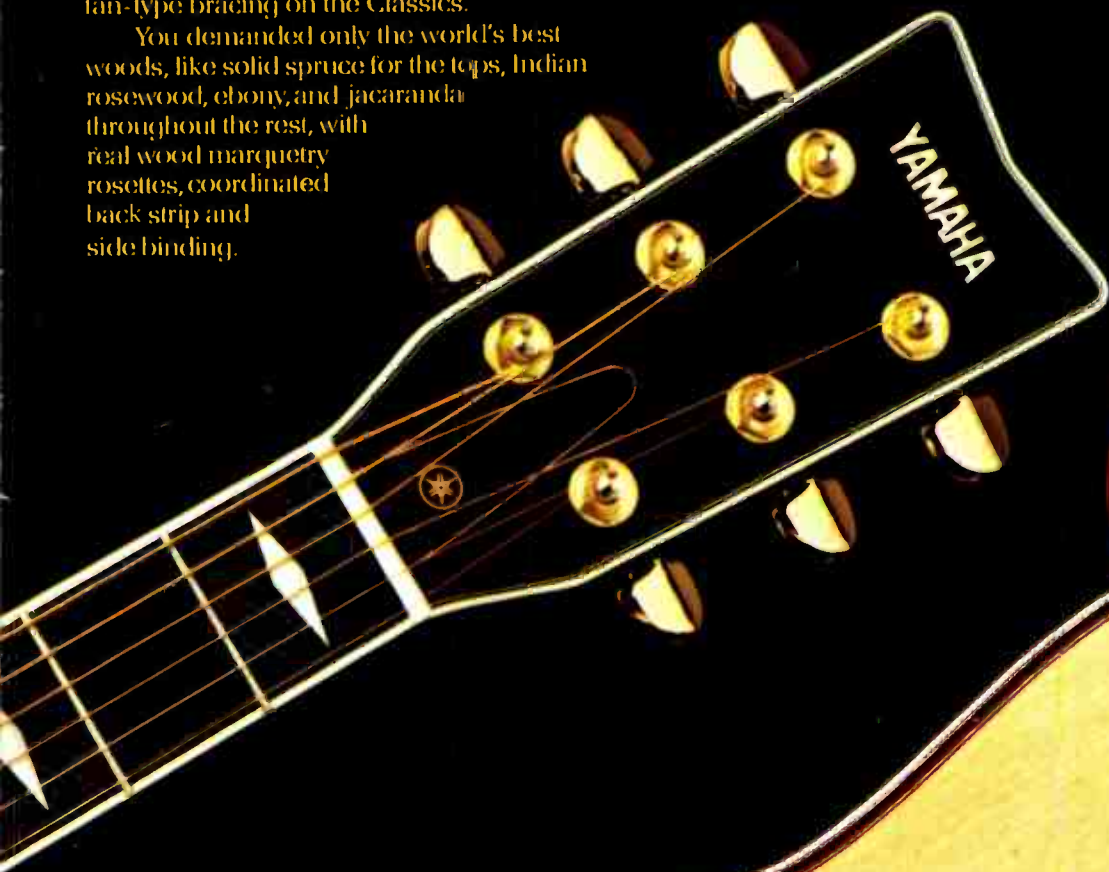
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COUNTRY MUSIC™



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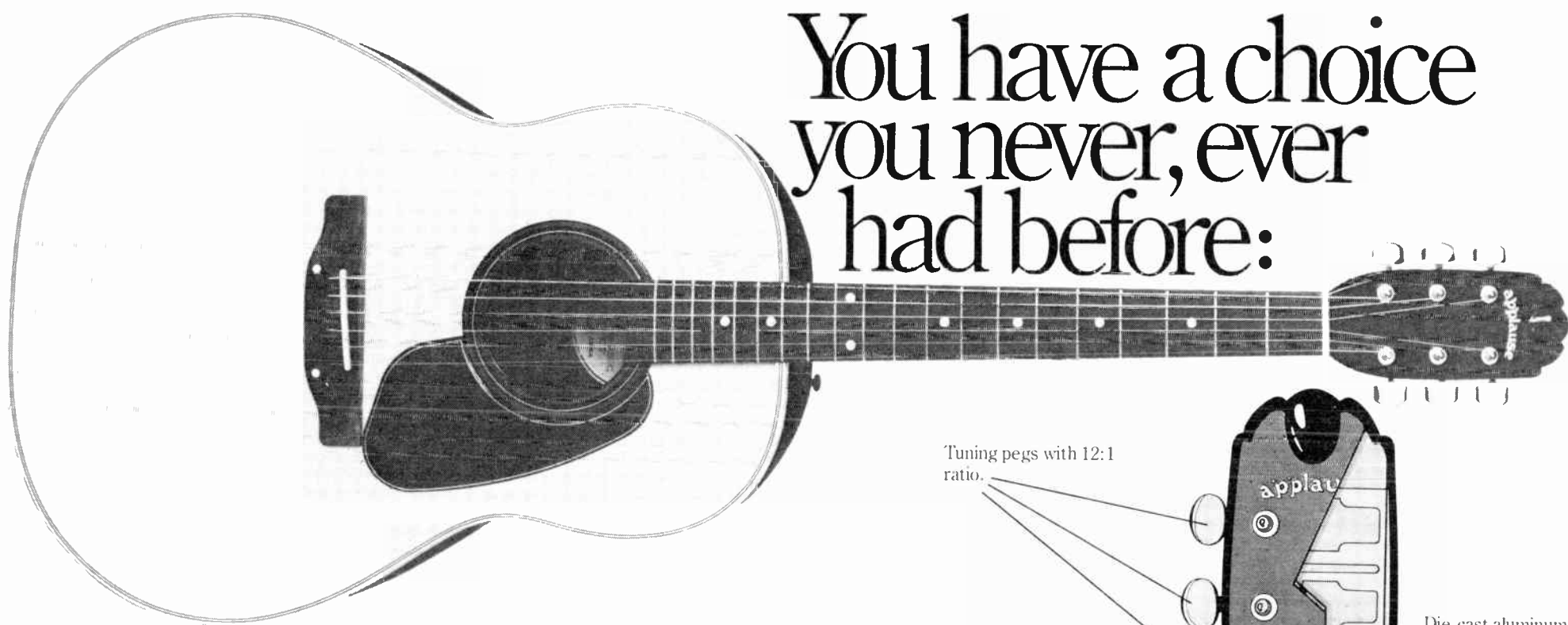
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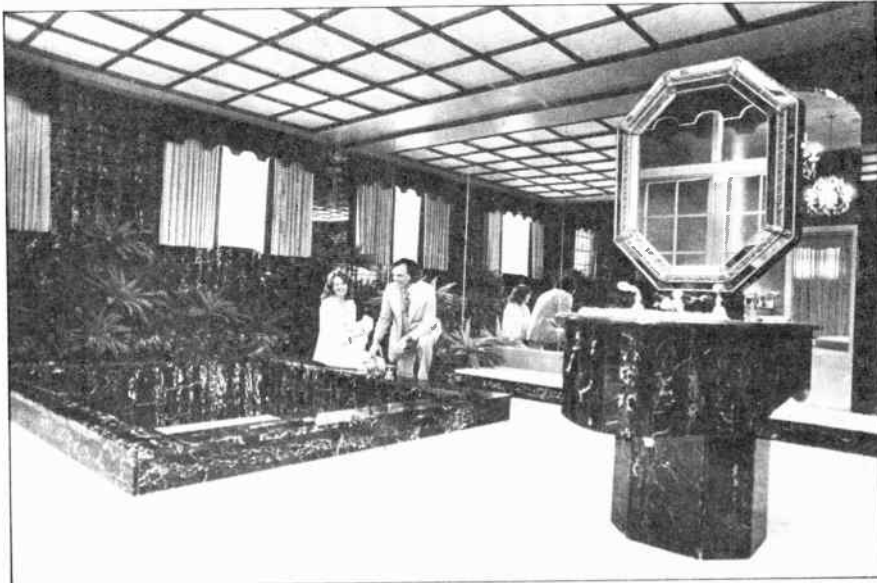
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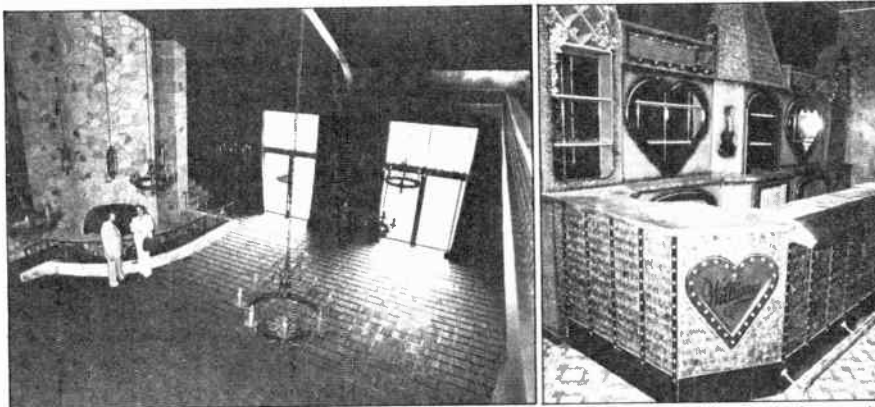
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Country Scene

Hank Williams' Old Nashville Home Gets A New Owner And A Face-Lift



Max Sanders and wife, Sherry Bryce, in their newly decorated bathroom.



Max and Sherry invested months of repair resulting in a showplace. Pictured above: A birdseye view of the living room (left) and the much-talked about bar (right).

One day nearly a year ago, WJRB radio station owner Mack Sanders, preoccupied with work, took a wrong turn going home and found himself in front of a dilapidated ranch-style house, whose sweeping lawns were overgrown with weeds.

"I thought it looked familiar, then I saw the 'For Sale' sign and realized whose house it was," Sanders recalled recently. "I went home and told my wife about it and two hours later we'd called and put in an offer."

The house, it turns out, was the home of the late Hank Williams, who bought it when he first moved to Nashville back in 1949. In later years, the three-bedroom home in one of Nashville's swankier neighborhoods became a dreamed-of showplace for his widow Audrey, who lavished care and money on elaborate improvements.

Following Audrey's death in 1975, though, the house became tied up in a complicated estate settlement. As time passed, the house (painted with 14-k

gold-flecked paint) became a local eyesore, if still a curiosity on the tour bus circuit.

"I don't think I've ever seen a house in worse condition than when we first saw it," Sanders said. "Mildew was everywhere, wallpaper was falling off the walls, the floors had buckled and the place had been vandalized several times. It was awful to think of it, after all that man had done for our music."

Undaunted, Sanders and his wife, singer Sherry Bryce, bought the place and settled down to months of costly repair work, much of which they did themselves, and finally moved in this spring. The results of their work are impressive.

Most of the house's more elaborate features were planned by Audrey but never finished, a task that fell to the Sanders. The result of their work is impressive.

What began as a modest small-family home, now boasts 14,000 square feet of living space, including a parquet-floored ballroom, seven bedrooms, six-and-a-half baths, a poolside gazebo (with bar, kitchen and dressing rooms), a game room and such niceties as gold ceiling moldings, solid marble sinks and steam and sauna baths.

The most spectacular room, the ballroom, is dominated by a massive cylindrical stone fireplace and a bar with lighted panels shaped like hearts to commemorate *Your Cheatin' Heart*.

Off the ballroom is what Audrey once called her "angel room," complete with white velvet walls and canopy bed, again decorated with a heart panel, and thick white carpeting.

Adjoining the bedroom is a gas-producing black marble bathroom, straight out of a '30s Hollywood extravaganza. Solid gold fixtures adorn twin hand-painted sinks and a sunken marble whirlpool tub.

The Sanders are intrigued by the house's unique features, but say for them it's "just home."

"We want to make it a relaxed and private place for our friends and family to enjoy," said Sanders. "I think Hank and Audrey would have wanted it that way."

LAURA EPPER

WATCH THIS FACE: DON KING

Timing, a lot of people will tell you, is the most important ingredient of success in the music business. Even if you have the talent you've got to be in the right place at the right time for somebody to discover that talent. For Don King it was being at the *wrong* place at the right time that did it. King, who grew up in Omaha, arrived in Nashville August, 1974 with a recommendation to see Chuck Glaser about becoming a singer. Glaser told him there were plenty of singers around, but if he could write, his chances were better. So Don returned to Omaha to try writing for the first time. On another recommendation he returned to Nashville to show his songs and within a few weeks had a singing job in the lounge of a Nashville motel, a much-coveted-type of job for aspiring talent in Music City. "A steady job is a pretty important thing to have if you're going to be consistent, and it's a heck of a lot better than pumping gas," King recalls. "I'm really grateful for the job because it gave me the chance to polish my writing and singing."

Now for the story about being at the wrong place at the right time. King tells it this way: "A man (Harry Warner) who runs a publishing company for Jerry Reed heard me play one night and liked a couple of my songs. He asked me to come to his office the next day and play more of them for him. He asked if I knew where he was located, and not wanting to be dumb, I told him yes. I later looked up the address in the phone book, but it turned out I used an old directory; they had moved about a month before to a different location. Con Brio now had the office and let me use the phone to call about my appointment, but the man wasn't in at the time.

"Mike Kosser, who was running Con Brio's publishing then, said, 'as long as you have time to kill why don't you play me some of your songs?' We really hit it off and he liked the songs I had, so he introduced me to Bill Walker, the head of Con Brio.

"Two weeks later, we went into the studio to cut a few demos. Con Brio really wasn't looking for any new artists but the session came off so well that we re-mixed and overdubbed and they signed me to the label. It was about two months from the time I walked in until I was on the label. It all just happened at once."

Under the tutelage of Bill Walker, things have continued to happen. Walker, with producer-arranger credits like *Happiest Girl in the U.S.A.*, *Funny Face*, and *Help Me Make It Through The Night*, has given King a modern country sound with full chart arrangements complete with horns and strings whenever called for. King's record *I've Got You To Come Home To*, made a major assault on the national charts and



was successfully followed by *She's The Girl of My Dreams*." His latest single being *The Feeling's So Right Tonight* should follow suit. Don is on the road and learning more about the business every day. "I've learned what it takes to be more commercial, that people want to hear at my shows. I find they want to hear familiar tunes for the most part so that's what I try to do. I'm on the road a lot now in front of so many different audiences; it's an education."

If you had to give Don King an image

now, it would be a singer of positive songs, he says. "If I had to classify myself, it would be as *modern country* or a *young sound*."

Since Don moved to Nashville, a lot of good things have begun to happen: First some songs recorded, then a chance to record himself, and constant touring to capitalize on the records. "I'll be the first to admit that I've had some lucky breaks," King says smiling. And I might add, the talent to make use of them when they happened. BOB ANDERSON

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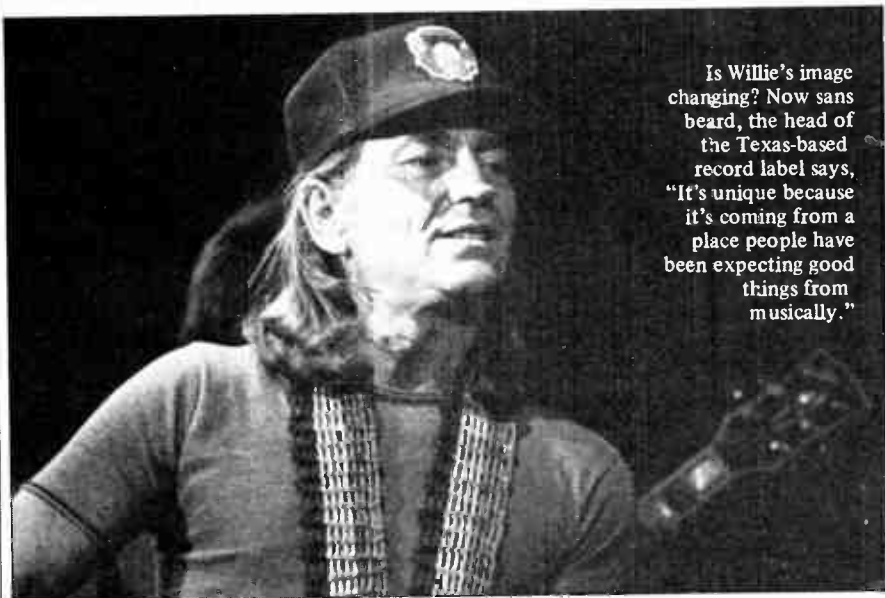
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Willie Nelson Launches His Lone Star Label



Is Willie's image changing? Now sans beard, the head of the Texas-based record label says, "It's unique because it's coming from a place people have been expecting good things from musically."

Willie Nelson and the staff of Lone Star Records gave the new Austin-based label a "deep from the heart" send-off amidst plenty of Lone Star beer, golden spirits from south of the border and enough Tex-Mex goodies to satisfy the host of music industry and media representatives who hit Austin for the christening festivities.

Launched by an informal gathering at Willie's ranch for executives of Phonogram/Mercury, distributors of the label, the activities were climaxed June 19 by a showcase at the Austin Opry House featuring the six acts on Lone Star's roster. Larry G. Hudson, whose musical versatility has captivated audiences from Kinshasa, Zaire to the nightclubs of rural America, commenced the night's array of talent followed by comedian Don Bowman whose rendition of his debut single, *Willon and Waylee*, was a fine example of why he's garnered Comedian of the Year awards from *Billboard*, *Record World*, *Cashbox* and the Country Music Association.

The Cooder Browne Band took the stage next and proved that the only proper musical category they can be placed in is "Cooder Browne." The Geezinslaw displayed another fresh approach to the world of music preceding Ray Willie Hubbard who penned *Up Against the Wall Redneck Mother*, recorded by Jerry Jeff Walker among others.

Steve Fromholz who was nominated for a Grammy award after Willie recorded his song *I'd Have to Be Crazy*,

aptly handled the last showcase spot before Lone Star's chairman of the board, none other than Willie himself, finished off the full night of music that revealed the diverse musical contributions the label will be making to the country and pop fields alike.

The first album to be released by the label is *Lone Star Six Pak, Volume I*, featuring performances by Nelson, Fromholz, Bowman, the Geezinslaw Brothers, Cooder Browne and Hubbard. In August, an album by Nelson comprised of songs recorded in 1961, will be released. September will bring Lone Star's debut release by Steve Fromholz, *Jus' Playin' Along*.

Telegrams came from President Carter and the First Lady, as well as governors from the states of Louisiana, Colorado, Delaware, Washington, Georgia, California and Arkansas, wishing Willie and Lone Star Records the best of success.

"I plan for the label to deal with artists the way I like to be dealt with," Willie explained earlier in the afternoon. "The basic idea of Lone Star makes it unique because it's coming from a place people have been expecting good things from musically. I feel like I'll be able to communicate with the pickers well because I'm one of them."

Will Willie ever record exclusively for Lone Star Records? "It's hard to say what will happen in three years when my contract is up with CBS," he answers, "but it only seems natural that if everything works like we plan that I

would eventually be on my own label."

Admiring laughter seemed to accompany most referrals to Willie as "chairman of the board" but if his contribution to music through Lone Star Records comes anywhere close to the inroads he's made personally for country music, Lone Star Records and Austin, Texas will become and remain a major star on the musical map.

PAT NELSON

WTRA-Radio Staff Shouts "Take This Job And . . ."

Latrobe, Pennsylvania is a placid community of about 7,000 nestled in the Allegheny Mountain foothills just forty miles east of Pittsburgh. Latrobe has given America three legends: Arnold Palmer, Rolling Rock Beer and quite possibly a world's record for the most plays of a Johnny Paycheck record in a four hour period.

It began at 6 A.M. on Saturday, July 8, when Scott Henry, deejay at WTRA radio opened the morning's programming with Paycheck's *Take This Job and Shove It*. Nothing unusual about that, especially since several of the factories in this industrialized area run seven days and few workers enjoy putting in eight hours on Saturday. The record ran through and was played again, and again, and again, and again, and again for the next four hours. Calls from numerous local officials and listeners poured into the WTRA switchboard, but Paycheck played on until slightly past 10 A.M., when Henry suddenly resumed a more diverse mode of programming.

There was no malfunction of equipment or human error involved. Henry, with the support of other WTRA staffers, used the Paycheck record to protest the fact that their own paychecks were overdue. It worked, for the station, owned by a corporation that includes an attorney and a Federal judge, came up with partial payment that day and promised the remainder soon.

One casualty, however, was the recording itself, which according to newspaper accounts was broken following the appearance of the station manager just before normal programming resumed. Maybe the Country Music Hall of Fame can acquire the pieces for permanent display—if the *Guinness Book of Records* doesn't ask first.

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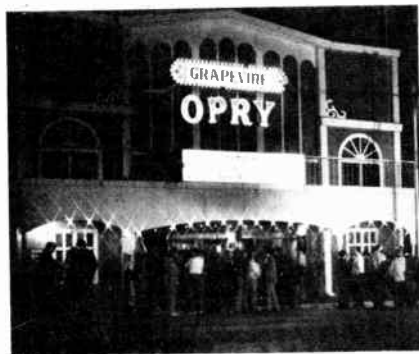
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THE GRAPEVINE OPRY: Saturday Night Fever, Texas Style

GRAPEVINE, TEXAS: It was a hot, lazy Saturday afternoon in this small, flat Texas town sandwiched halfway between the rising skylines of Dallas and Fort Worth. And it was weekly audition time at The Grapevine Opry.

"I sure would like to get on out here ... I think I'm gonna get hired to play at this place over here in Fort Worth pretty soon," said a nervous, dusty-voiced Tex Wheeler to no one in particular. Tex, a sixty-ish local laborer who has recently changed his name from Watson to Wheeler, was sitting near the stage tuning his guitar and waiting his turn to sing.

"I'll bet ole Tex has auditioned out here 50 times since we've opened,"



whispered Chisai Childs, co-host and sole owner of the 2½-year-old Opry. "We have always said we would give everybody a chance, so we let him keep coming back."

Small-town hopes and dreams—purest forms of idealism and innocence, are as much a part of America as the 35-cent rainbow snow cones served up here in a small stand across the street. And this is the beauty and charm of The Grapevine Opry, a weekly, Saturday night, country music show housed in a showcase theater smack in the middle of downtown Grapevine. The Opry gives everyone a chance.

At one point, not many folks gave The Opry much of a chance. But grinding hard work from Childs and Johnnie High, Opry co-host and general manager, and unlimited financial support from the wealthy Mrs. R. L. Slaughter (Childs' aunt, affectionately known around here as 'Aunt Susie'), turned a dream into a shining jewel on this North Texas Prairie.

Today, 500 faithful fans file in twice each Saturday night for two shows to hear local country talent in a splendid

facility decorated with expense and taste. The lighting and sound is excellent, and The Opry holds a 16-track console which allows professional live recordings. An eight-piece house band works each show.

Twenty acts, including Childs and High, perform two numbers during each two-hour show. Over 2800 acts have been auditioned since the Opry's inception, and now a nucleus of 100 acts is used on a rotating basis.

Now with the addition of a publishing company, a record label, music magazine and a management agency, the Opry complex is geared to expand as far and wide as the vast stretches of west Texas plains.

BOB CAMPBELL

An Elton Britt Retrospective

In an unmarked grave at the Odd Fellow's Cemetery in Broad Top, Pa., a little grassy mound right next to the fence, lies Elton Britt—ignored and forgotten in death as he was in life. Because he was one of country's greatest talents, you'd think he'd have come to a better end.

He was born James Britt Baker on July 7, 1912, near Marshall, Ark., although his fiddling father soon moved the family to Oklahoma, where Elton grew up, greatly influenced by Jimmie Rodgers, practicing his yodel while plowing the fields. He had an awesome natural talent, for few even approach his seemingly limitless yodeling ability.

His discovery was a Cinderella story. Talent scouts for a "hillbilly" talent search tracked him down, listened with awe as he sang and yodeled, and flew him to California, to become a featured singer on KMPC, Los Angeles, at age 19.

Elton left KMPC in 1935 and headed for New York, to become a star of that city's 1930s country music boom. After sessions with the American Record Company and with Decca, Elton signed with RCA in 1937, releasing discs like *Patent Leather Boots* and *That's How the Yodel was Born*. In 1942, his hit *There's a Star Spangled Banner Waving Somewhere* became an early crossover, and sales mounted into the millions, earning country music's first gold record. (There had already been country million-sellers, but they were before gold discs were actually awarded.) He racked up several

more big hits for Victor, including *Dr-tour*, *Someday*, *Lorelai*, the yodel spectacular, *Chime Bells* and *Quicksilver*, with Rosalie Allen, with whom he recorded many duets. He also appeared in three cowboy films: *Laramie*, *The Last Dogie*, and *The Prodigal Son*.

In 1952, he retired to raise horses in Damascus, Md., was back on the road the next year, only to re-retire in 1955 to become a prospector, filing over 2,000 mineral claims in Utah over the next two years. Then it was back on stage for another couple years, then yet another retirement in 1958, to raise cattle. Why the retirements? Fluctuating health, fre-



quent marriage and divorce (nobody is quite sure just how many) and career ups and downs. The total effect was to obscure the importance of his music.

He remained basically inactive from 1958 to 1968, while country music ruled first by rockabilly, then by the Nashville Sound, doing a bit of recording and performing. A major surprise was his 1968 hit, *The Jimmie Rodgers Blues*, a seven-minute blue yodel.

In 1972, Elton moved once again (having gone from Damascus to Broad Top, Pa., a decade earlier), this time to Tarpon Springs, Fla. But the bulk of his performances remained in the Northeast. It was on a three-week tour of the area that he suffered his fatal heart attack on June 23, 1972.

Elton Britt's career was filled with what-ifs: What if he hadn't remained in the Northeast, but had moved to the West Coast or Nashville? What if he hadn't entered singing cowboy films so late (1949), just as the fad was dying? What if the popularity of yodeling, so high in the late 1930s and 1940s hadn't disappeared in the 1950s? What if his personal problems hadn't kept him whirling in and out of retirement?

One can only speculate. But it is certain that one of country music's greatest talents has been largely overlooked.

DOUGLAS B. GREEN

“If you like country music in any form, this album is a must.”

Porter Wagoner



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Country Scene

"HARPER VALLEY P.T.A.": Ninety Minutes of R-Rated Three Stooges



One of the last credits from the movie *Harper Valley P.T.A.* is a reminder, "Original Soundtrack Available on Plantation Records," which seems almost to be saying that the only reason for the film was to make some money for Plantation owner Shelby Singleton, who has been known to let a dollar slip through his fingers now and then. If not, why shoot a film, the title

song of which is ten years old? Why have the climactic scene over and done with in the first ten minutes? Why fill up another 90 or so minutes with a sort of R-rated Three Stooges? The basis for the movie, like most of its plot, simply defies rationality.

Barbara Eden is cast in the title role of the song's sock-it-to-'em Mama who, after

delivering her tirade to Harper Valley's gentry, decides to run for President of the P.T.A., herself. The town's bluebloods try to stop her, the plot "thickens" with a kidnapping, an embezzlement and a series of pranks and hijinks reminiscent of the mischief of *Our Gang* comedies. In fact, with the exception of a little implied sex, *Harper Valley* is actually a kid's movie. In the end Eden wins by one vote, and marries Harper Valley's most eligible bachelor, to boot. And you thought this kind of dope went out with Doris Day-Rock Hudson. A plug for Ms. Eden is in order, though. For despite some gratuitous bun wiggling and boob bouncing, and out of the expected shallowness of her role, she somehow manages to emerge as a reasonably believable character—even if her ream out of the P.T.A. is awfully rushed and forced.

All in all, though, it's good that the theme is played twice during the movie, insuring somebody some royalties on the song. It's highly unlikely there will be many on the movie.

JOHN PUGH

READERS VOTE ELVIS NO.1 IN DESERT ISLAND POLL Office Swamped With Mail— Loretta, Dolly, Waylon and Johnny Cash Round Out Top Five

Country Music Magazine recently asked readers, "What five records would you take with you to a desert island?"

After tabulating over 15,000 votes. (there's still a half a room full of mail to be opened), it was clear that Elvis Presley was the overwhelming, all-time favorite among you readers, getting twice as many votes as anyone else.

Loretta Lynn placed second in the voting, followed very closely by Dolly Parton, third; Waylon Jennings, fourth; and Johnny Cash, fifth.

The top 50 vote getters are listed below. Some interesting names appear, such as Hank Williams, the Bee Gees, Barbra Streisand, Chuck Berry, and many more, because we asked for "all-time favorites" and not just current performers, and choices were not limited to "country music."

We asked Country Music staff members to pick the 25 artists they thought would get the most votes. None of the staff got more than 16 right out of 25. And, our Chinese art director was tied for second. (We don't know what to make of this, but the staff members who had to tabulate the votes unanimously agreed on one thing. "Never do this again.")

Lots of people in the record business think that if you are a country music

fan, you don't like other kinds of music. The results certainly prove that view wrong, with 20 names on the top 50 not being "country."

Some readers, naturally, have a narrow interest. Several selected five George Jones records as their all-time favorites; or, Roy Acuff, Hank Williams, or whoever.

But the majority listed a non-country performer for at least one out of their five choices. For example: one ballot

listed Larry Gatlin, Rod Stewart, the Oak Ridge Boys, Bee Gees and the Eagles. Another picked Loretta Lynn, George Jones, Barbra Streisand, Bob Dylan and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir...that's right.

One of our favorites was a reader who clearly did not want to get in a rut on the desert island. The collection was- Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Hank Williams Greatest Hits, the Beatles, Frank Sinatra and Tammy Wynette.

COUNTRY MUSIC MAGAZINE READER POLL

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Elvis Presley | 18. Glen Campbell | 34. Ernest Tubb |
| 2. Loretta Lynn | 19. Eagles | 35. Tammy Wynette |
| 3. Dolly Parton | 20. Bee Gees | 36. Bill Monroe |
| 4. Waylon Jennings | 21. Linda Ronstadt | 37. Debby Boone |
| 5. Johnny Cash | 22. Don Williams | 38. Marty Robbins |
| 6. Larry Gatlin | 23. Chuck Berry | 39. Mel Tillis |
| 7. Waylon Jennings & Willie Nelson | 24. Beatles | 40. Roy Clark |
| 8. Ronnie Milsap | 25. Barbara Streisand/ Barry Manilow (tie) | 41. Johnny Rodriguez |
| 9. Hank Williams | 26. Tom T. Hall | 42. John Denver |
| 10. Conway Twitty | 27. The Kendalls | 43. Johnny Paycheck |
| 11. Crystal Gayle | 28. Bob Dylan | 44. Emmylou Harris |
| 12. Kenny Rogers | 29. Englebert Humperdink | 45. Oak Ridge Boys |
| 13. Willie Nelson | 30. Kiss | 46. Mickey Gilley |
| 14. George Jones & Tammy Wynette | 31. Bing Crosby/Billy "Crash" Craddock (tie) | 47. Neil Diamond |
| 15. Charley Pride | 32. Fleetwood Mac | 48. Stevie Wonder/ Charlie Rich (tie) |
| 16. Merle Haggard | 33. Jim Reeves/ Freddy Fender (tie) | 49. Rolling Stones |
| 17. Statler Bros. | | 50. Dave & Sugar/ Rod Stewart (tie) |

SPECIAL NEW TALENT SUPPLEMENT:

The editors of Country Music Magazine take a look at some of the brightest new faces on 1978's country music scene.

Edited by BOB ALLEN

1978, like all years, has brought a significant crop of new faces and talent to the attention of the country music industry. Out of thousands of hopefuls who stream into Music City each year, there are a handful who manage to somehow cut through the ranks and make a foothold for themselves in this, perhaps the most competitive of all trades.

We have included here, some of our choices of newcomers who seemed destined to play a role in the future of country music.

Choosing these artists was no easy task. In fact, it put us, to some degree, in a no-win situation simply because no matter who we included we were bound to leave out somebody's favorite new talent.

Just how did we go about choosing the following artists? We began by trying to establish our own working definition of "new talent." Is a "new talent" someone who is brand new to the business? Do you confine "new talent" to just those who have had their first chart record in the

past year? Do you include artists who have perhaps been around for any number of years, but have only started to come into their own during the past year?

After numerous gallons of coffee and endless sessions of tearing out our hair, we realized that trying to categorize new talent along such guidelines was about the same as trying to define country music, or asking which came first: the chicken or the egg.

So after coming up with our own "non-definition," we approached it another way: we talked to numerous people in the music industry; we spent quite a few hours watching and listening for ourselves. Also, we took a look at the ultimate barometer: we looked at the record charts for the past year or so, to see how you, the public voted on this year's group of newcomers.

Finally, after sifting through all this information—and eliminating some newcomers who had already been featured in previous issues of *Country Music*—(and

this issue—Don King) we took it all into account, and then followed our instincts.

Breaking into the music business has almost always been an uphill fight for the new artist. The sheer volume of the competition, trying to break in at street level is enough to discourage many. And for those few who do go so far as to get records in the charts, they quickly find out that the competition to stay in the charts is just as intense. Added to this is the fact that today's music industry is, in some ways, much more responsive toward maintaining established artists than it is toward developing new ones. If, by giving a showcase for these promising newcomers, we can make the road a little smoother for a few of them, then it makes us feel that much better.

Enough said. Here then, are our choices for 1978's brightest and most promising prospects to the contemporary country music scene.

And remember: if we missed *your* favorite, there's always 1979. . . .

SPECIAL NEW TALENT SUPPLEMENT

Susie Allanson

Susie Allanson recently made record chart history when her single, *We Belong Together* debuted in the country charts at



number 32 with a bullet. (No new artist has ever debuted this high in the charts before.) Her most recent single release, *Maybe Baby* did nearly as well.

Ms. Allanson's records have been described as a remarkable re-creation of Linda Ronstadt's west coast sound. Her vocal talents are considerable, and she has been compared (favorably) with everyone from Ronstadt to Diana Ross. Her single releases have enjoyed equal success in the pop charts.

R. C. Bannon

R. C. Bannon's debut album on Columbia Records, *R. C. Bannon Arrives*, released earlier this year, is the culmination of a short, but increasingly successful recording career.

R. C. is an energetic young man with an enthusiastic stage presence and a clear instinct for commerciality—both as a singer and a writer.

Coming to Nashville in 1976, with 30 years worth of possessions loaded in his pick-up, this former club singer and DJ wasted no time landing a writer's contract with Warner Brothers Music. Since then, songs that R. C. has written have been recorded by numerous artists, including Harlan Sanders and Marty Robbins. R. C. also wrote Ronnie Milsap's recent hit, *Only One Love In My Life*.

Each of R. C.'s single releases (*Southbound*, *Rainbows And Horseshoes*, and *It Doesn't Matter Anymore*) have done well

in the charts. He recently gained further national exposure while touring with the Johnny Paycheck show.

Carlene Carter

Carlene Carter is only the most recently acclaimed member of a musical dynasty that is nearly synonymous with the roots of country music: Her grandmother is Mother Maybelle Carter; her parents are Carl Smith and June Carter Cash; and her step-father is Johnny Cash.

But her musical family should really only be mentioned by way of introduction because Carlene Carter is making it with a brand of music that is all her own, that



gives credit to her heritage without pandering it.

Carlene's debut album on Warner Brothers, *Carlene Carter*, was recorded in London. On it, she is accompanied by some of the best of the new-wave British rockers including Nick Lowe, Graham Parker and members of Parker's band, Rumour. The resulting sound leans much more heavily toward rock and pop than country.

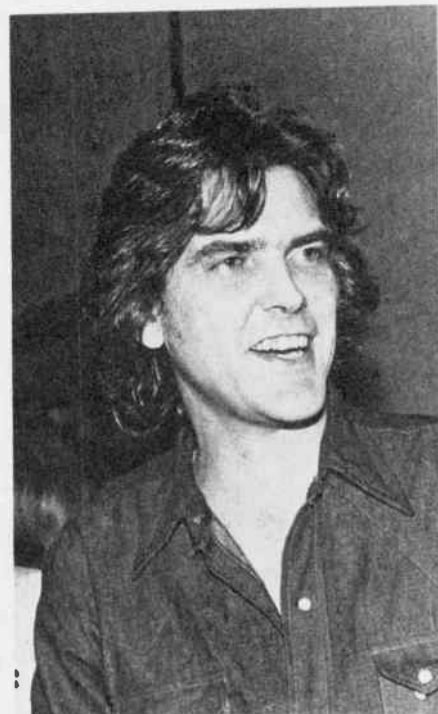
"People said I was too pop for Nashville," says 22-year-old Carlene. "Family connections didn't help that much. In fact, some of my best breaks have occurred outside of there."

Guy Clark

There could be an argument made against calling Guy Clark a "new talent." He's had two previous LP's on RCA (*Old Number One*, and *Texas Cookin'*), both of which were masterpieces—at least from

the standpoint of showcasing his awesome talents as a writer and musical raconteur. But the popular recognition that Guy Clark deserves has been slow in coming.

Clark is particularly gifted as a writer—one of the best on the contemporary



country scene. Though he's been in Nashville for the last six or seven years, he writes and sings most poignantly about the landscape and heritage of his native Texas. Songs of his, like *Desperados Waiting For A Train* (recorded by Jerry Jeff Walker and Tom Rush, among others) and *The Last Gunfighter Ballad and Texas*, 1947 (both recorded and released as singles by Johnny Cash) demonstrate the awesome sweep of his lyric cadences and his uncanny knack for creating dramatic tension.

Due to contractual difficulties, Clark has been unable to release any new material for the last year and half. But his third LP will soon be released on Warner Brothers Records.

Lee Clayton

The release of Lee Clayton's *Border Affair* LP, his first for Capitol, earlier this year, marked a new turning point in his somewhat arduous career.

Clayton (who recorded one ill-fated album for MCA in 1973) has already established his credentials as a writer. He penned *Ladies Love Outlaws*, which was recorded by Waylon Jennings in 1972, and more or less supplied the anthem for

MEL MCDANIEL

Oklahoma-bred and Nashville-based, Mel McDaniel is the country singer's country singer.

His latest album includes "The Farm," "The Grandes: Lady Of Them All" and his latest hit, "Bordertown Woman." "Mello" captures Mel McDaniel's deep rich voice with its rough edges and warm mellow tones, on Capitol Records and Tapes.



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the "outlaw" movement. Willie Nelson recently had a hit with Clayton's *If You Can Touch Her At All*.

Border Affair is one of the most unique and compelling albums to come out of



Nashville in recent memory. Produced by Neil Wilburn, it is full of haunting imagery and conveys an intensely personal poetic vision that sets it apart from the commercial contrivance that flaws too much of today's music. *Border Affair* promises to either establish Clayton once and for all as a major artist, or—at very least—to become a collector's item

John Conlee

After seven years as a rock 'n' roll jockey for Nashville's Radio-WKQB, ABC recording artist, John Conlee finally has a



hit of his own called *Rose Colored Glasses*.

Conlee, who originally trained as a mortician and worked in a Kentucky funeral home, signed with ABC several years ago and had several regional hits

before scoring with *Rose Colored Glasses*.

At last count, Conlee's radio station, which specializes in the likes of the Eagles and Fleetwood Mac, was still not playing his song—though it had risen high in the country charts. "I have to listen to other stations to hear it," says Conlee, "or go home and hear it on the stereo."

Paul Craft

Over the past several years, 39-year-old Paul Craft has been best known for his songwriting, and for his hilarious—often X-rated—live shows.

In 1974, Craft's *Keep Me From Blowin' Away* was recorded by Linda Ronstadt



and included on her *Heart Like A Wheel* LP. His *Midnight Flier* was included on the Eagles' *On The Border* LP. Dozens of other songs of his have been recorded by everyone from Bobby Bare (*Dropkick Me Jesus Through the Goalposts Of Life*) and Chet Atkins, to film star, Clint Eastwood.

Craft hails from Memphis, Tennessee. Before turning to songwriting, he was, at various times, a law student, a picker in a bluegrass band, and the owner and proprietor of a music store.

Before moving to Nashville about six years ago, he had a national hit on Memphis-based Stax Records with a novelty song about an obscene phone-caller, *Hello, It's Me Again Margaret*.

In his live performances, Craft often proves himself to be a gutsy, raunchy comedienne with a fine sense of timing. Perhaps Craft's biggest problem is that his humor often tends to obscure the fact that he is a very serious writer and a very accomplished singer and guitarist.

Having recently signed with RCA, Craft is being produced by Chet Atkins.

Randy Gurley

With precious little experience in the world of big-time professional music, ABC recording artist Randy Gurley has, on the sheer strength of her vocal talents,



become one of the most closely watched faces in the business. Unlike most new talents, Randy, with the help of managerial wizard, Jim Halsey and the financial backing of Texas oil investors, is being developed into a major artist before she

has a hit single—something that is rarely done.

Randy Gurley's live performances at major showcases have been received enthusiastically by audiences and critics alike. With her raw, but formidable vocal talents and her powerhouse backing, it seems only a matter of time before she makes an impact in the field of country music.

Con Hunley

It's not often that an ex-mechanic and filling station attendant suddenly finds himself besieged with bids from five major record labels. But that's exactly what happened to Con Hunley, and it is indicative of the kind of excitement he's been generating along Music Row.

Hunley first began gaining attention while packing in crowds at the 1500-seat Village Barn in Knoxville (where he still resides). Soon the Nashville record company people were making the trek down the interstate to catch Hunley's act.

Hunley signed with Warner Brothers a



few months ago, and his first two singles, *Cry, Cry Darlin'* and *Weekend Friend* have done more to establish his reputation as one of 1978's most promising new artists.

Zella Lehr

Zella Lehr (see *Country Music*, July, '78, page 32) was recently signed to RCA's Nashville division when vice presi-

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8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-486 \$4.98

JIMMY DAVIS - MCA-150 ALBUM \$2.98

Supper Time; My God Is Real; I'd Rather Have Jesus; Long Long Journey; Oh, Why Not Tonight; Where He Leads Me I Will Follow; When The Master Speaks; Battle Hymn Of The Republic; There Is A Fountain; When I Move To The Sky; Someday There'll Be No Tomorrow; What A Friend.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-150 \$4.98

JIMMY DAVIS' GREATEST HITS

MCA-269 ALBUM \$2.98
I Wouldn't Take Nothin' For My Journey Now; How Great Thou Art; One More Valley; Someone To Care; Wasted Years; Supper Time; When God Dips His Love In My Heart; Taller Than Trees; Who Am I; Near The Cross; His Marvelous Grace.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-269 \$4.98

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MCA-147 ALBUM \$2.98
Beyond The Sunset; Should You Go First; Peace In The Valley; Steal Away; Just A Closer Walk With Thee; Our Lady Of Fatima; The Place Where I Worship; Someone To Care; The Rosary; Will The Circle Be Unbroken; Old Pappy's New Banjo; I Hear A Choir; When God Dips His Love In My Heart.
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8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-8 \$4.98

LORETTA LYNN - MCA-7 ALBUM \$2.98

Who Says God Is Dead; I Believe; Standing Room Only; The Old Rugged Cross; Harp With Golden Strings; If You Miss Heaven; I'm A 'Gettin' Ready To Go; In The Garden; Ten Thousand Angels; He's Got The Whole World In His Hands; Mama, Why.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-7 \$4.98

SAMMY KAYE - MCA-191 ALBUM \$2.98

Harbor Lights; Walkin' To Missouri; Penny Serenade; Atlanta, G.A.; Roses; Laughing On The Outside (Crying On The Inside); It Isn't Fair; Chickery Chick; I'm A Big Girl Now; Blueberry Hill; Room Full Of Roses; The Old Lamp-Lighter.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-191 \$4.98

WAYNE KING - MCA-94 ALBUM \$2.98

The Waltz You Saved For Me; Josephine; Now Is The Hour; Near You; Dancing With Tears In My Eyes; Lonesome; That's All; Goodfuss; Where The Blue Of The Night Meets The Gold Of The Day; Together; True Love; Deep Purple; Meet Me Tonight In Dreamland.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-94 \$4.98

TED LEWIS - MCA-258 ALBUM \$2.98

When My Baby Smiles At Me; She's Funny That Way; Just Around The Corner; The Sweetheart Of Sigma Chi; The Old St. Louis Blues; Tiger Rag; Wear A Hat With A Silver Lining; Down The Old Church Aisle; I'm The Medicine Man For The Blues; King For A Day; Three O'Clock In The Morning; Good Night.
NO TAPE AVAILABLE

GUY LOMBARDO - MCA-103 ALBUM \$2.98

MEDLEY'S: Blues In The Night; The Birth Of The Blues; I Gotta Right To Sing The Blues; Memories; Let The Rest Of The World Go By; My Secret Love; Love Nest; Love Is The Sweetest Thing; Something To Remember You By; The Very Thought Of You; You're My Everything; Kiss Me Again; A Kiss In The Dark; I'll See You Again; By The Light Of The Silvery Moon; Shine On Harvest Moon; Moonlight Bar; As Time Goes By; Bidin' My Time; Breezin' Along With The Breeze; I Want To Be Happy; I'm Looking Over A Four Leaf Clover; Happy Days Are Here Again; April Showers; September In The Rain; I Only Have Eyes For You; If I Could Be With You; It Had To Be You; In A Shanty In Old Shanty Town; Three Little Words; Baby Face; Somebody Loves Me; Don't Take Your Love From Me; What Is This Thing Called Love.
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I'll Get Along Somehow; Slipping Around; Filipino Baby; When The World Has Turned You Down; Have You Ever Been Lonely; There's A Little Bit Of Everything In Texas; Walking The Floor Over You; Driftwood On The River; There's Nothing More To Say; Rainbow At Midnight; I'll Always Be Glad To Take You Back; Let's Say Goodbye Like We Said Hello.
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KITTY WELLS - DUST ON THE BIBLE

MCA-149 ALBUM \$2.98
Dust On The Bible; I Dreamed I Searched Heaven For You; Lonesome Valley; My Loved Ones Are Waiting For Me; I Heard My Savior Call; The Great Speckled Bird; We Will Set Your Fields On Fire; We Buried Her Beneath The Willows; One Way Ticket To The Sky; I Need The Prayers; Matthew Twenty-Four; Lord I'm Coming Home.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-149 \$4.98

KITTY WELLS - MCA-121 ALBUM \$2.98

It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels; This White Circle; Mommy For A Day; Release Me; I Gave My Wedding Dress Away; Amigo's Guitar; Heartbreak U.S.A.; I'll Repose My Heart; Password; Searching; Making Believe.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-121 \$4.98

KITTY WELLS AND RED FOLEY

MCA-83 ALBUM \$2.98
One By One; Just Call Me Lonesome; As Long As I Live; A Wedding Ring Ago; Make Believe; Candy Kisses; You And Me; Memory Of A Love; I'm A Stranger In My Home; I'm Throwing Rice; No One But You; I'm Counting On You.
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SPECIAL NEW TALENT SUPPLEMENT

dent, Jerry Bradley caught her act at a local nightclub. Her first hit record, *Two Doors Down*, (written and recorded earlier by Dolly Parton) quickly followed.



But Zella is no spring chicken to show business. With the rest of her family, she appeared for several years as part of a vaudeville act in which she juggled and rode the unicycle.

After singing in New York clubs and doing TV commercials, Zella put her own band together, began working the lucrative Vegas/Tahoe circuit, and landed guest appearances on several TV shows, including *Hee Haw*.

With her signing to RCA and her first hit single, her career is beginning to gain further momentum.

Ronnie McDowell

Shortly after the death of Elvis Presley, Scorpion artist, Ronnie McDowell went into the studio and recorded *The King Is Gone*. Riding the crest of the Elvis tributes, the record sold more than three million units world-wide.

McDowell's follow-up hit, *I Love You, I Love You*, *I Love You* also did extremely well; and the song sounded so much like the late, great Elvis that when we first heard it, we just assumed that it was another heretofore unreleased track by the King himself.

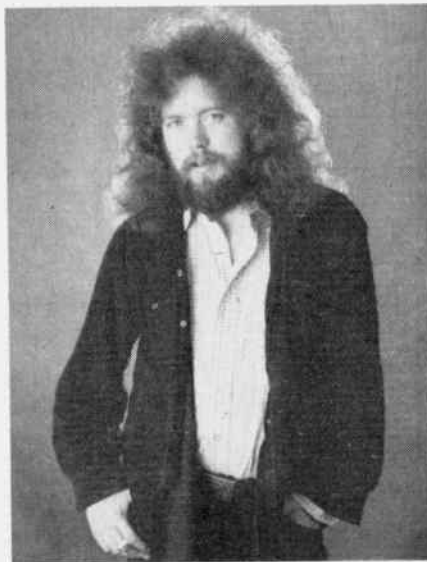
These records, along with McDowell's exciting stage presence and his outstanding vocal talents, have gained him considerable recognition among country music listeners. Unfortunately, they have also stuck him with the stigma of being an "Elvis imitator," which he has had some difficulty in escaping.

If McDowell, and those who are guiding his career, can shake free from the

shadow of Elvis, he may yet become a contender for a degree of stardom that is all his own.

Don Schlitz

Anyone who has managed to catch some of the "writers' showcases" in Nashville clubs during the last five years has surely heard the lyrically precise and carefully constructed songs of Don Schlitz. And most of those who have



heard his compositions, like *I Believe* and *The Gambler* have agreed that it was only a matter of time before Schlitz got to where he is today.

To date, Schlitz's biggest claim to fame is *The Gambler*. It has been recorded by at least seven different artists, including Bobby Bare (on Bare's newest LP, *The Gambler* holds its own—more yet, stands out on an album full of Shel Silverstein songs), Mac Wiseman and J. J. Cale.

For awhile, three versions of *The Gambler*, including Don's own version on Crazy Mama Records (later picked up by Capitol) were competing in the charts.

"Within the next few years, Don Schlitz will be the foremost songwriter in Nashville," says Bobby Bare. And it's an odds-on bet he'll make just as significant a contribution as a recording artist.

Sterling Whipple

At 29, Sterling Whipple has, in a relatively short time, established himself as one of Nashville's most inventive and successful young songwriters. The dozens of hits he has written, including *Blind Man In The Bleachers*, *Forever Lovers*,

and *Makin' Love Don't Always Make Love Grow*, have established him as one of the modern masters of the story-song.

Whipple, who recorded briefly for Columbia Records (where he wrote and released an excellent single, *Silence On The Line*, which unfortunately, went practically unnoticed), is a native of Oregon, and before coming to Nashville a few years ago, he collected a degree in psychology.

Whipple, who is also a singer of considerable ability recently signed with Warner Brothers. If he can bring to recording, the same sort of energy and inventiveness he has brought to songwriting, we'll be hearing a lot from him in times to come.

Also Mentioned



Bonnie Tyler, the Welsh rocker who has been branded "the female Rod Stewart" for her raspy, gutsy vocal qualities, recently crossed over into the country charts with *It's A Heartache*. Whether she continues to make inroads in the country field in the future, or whether her energies will be directed more toward rock and pop, remains to be seen.

There are several other promising vocalists who deserve to be mentioned here. Reba McEntire, who signed with Mercury Records not long ago, has been in the charts lately, singing a duet with Jackie Ward on *Three Sheets To The Wind*.

Patti Leatherwood (Monument) and Marcia Routh (Epic) are two other talented vocalists who have emerged recently on the Nashville scene. Though they both record in Nashville, their eventual impact is just as likely to be felt in the rock and pop fields as it is in country.

Joe Sun, Promotion man with Ovation Records, who is usually busy promoting the records of the Kendalls, now has had a hit of his own with *Old Flames (Can't Hold A Candle To You)*. Having helped put the Kendalls at the top of the charts, lately he's been on the phone to DJ's, plugging his own record. ■

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You'll Ever Know
The Everly Brothers
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No. 2
Hank Snow
Golden Rocket
Ernest Tubb
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*Some early hits were re-recorded in Electronic Stereo to simulate Stereo sound — they never sounded better!

How Much Power Do You Need?

Just about the costliest item in any stereo system is power. Price goes up steeply with extra wattage, so you can save yourself a bundle if you don't buy more power than you actually need. Which raises the question: How much is enough?

Ask the salesman at the store about wattage and he'll probably tell you: "The more the better." After all, the more powerful the rig, the bigger the bill. So everyone makes more money on the deal, including the helpful salesman. Where does that leave you? Probably with a good sound system, but paying for more power than you'll ever really use.

Chances are you could get just as good sound with less power for less money. All it takes is a rational attitude and a little figuring. We'll show you.

First let's clear up exactly what power means in terms of the sound you hear. Contrary to what most people believe, a lot of watts doesn't necessarily mean a lot of sound. A 100-watt amplifier, for instance, doesn't play ten times as loud as a 10-watt amplifier. That's because the human ear doesn't translate power directly into loudness. If you double the power of an amplifier, all you gain is about three decibels in loudness. You can hear it, all right, but the difference isn't very great. Well, what then do you gain from the added wattage? Basically, you gain not volume as such, but greater clarity of sound in the loud parts. As a result, you can turn up your rig to greater loudness levels without running into distortion.

Amplifier power is like horsepower in cars: the payoff comes in the tight spots. You don't always drive with the gas pedal jammed down to the floor, pulling every bit of available power from the engine. Similarly, an amplifier (or receiver) rarely operates at full output. But there are moments in the music—just as there are moments on the road—when ample power helps you over the hurdles. On the road, you may need that extra power surge to pull ahead of a trailer truck on a hill. In music, the equivalent of such a moment may be a big orchestral climax, a heavy chord struck full force on the piano, or the deep punchy thrust of the electric bass in a rock band. If you don't have the needed power margin at such moments, the sound breaks up. The music sounds *loud*, all right, but it gets full of rasping distortion. So what should have been a thrilling musical climax gets ground up

into sonic hash.

Even if this break-up lasts for only a fraction of a second—when the drumstick hits the skin or during that big, gutsy thump of the string bass—it spoils the overall effect. The human ear instinctively rejects distorted, unnatural sound. You get an edgy feeling when listening and, after a while, you just want to turn the damn thing off. By contrast, an amplifier with sufficient power glides smoothly over those loudness peaks and lets you listen for hours without getting restless.

But enough theory. Let's get down to practical matters. The amount of power you actually need to avoid any of these pitfalls depends on three factors: 1. Your choice of speakers; 2. The size and furnishings of your room; 3. Your musical taste.



JVC's Model JR-S61H stereo receiver, priced at \$180 and rated at 18 watts per channel, is typical of the low-cost, low-power receivers that can be used with efficient speakers.

As for Item 1, some speakers are more efficient than others. This simply means that they'll give you more sound per watt. An inefficient speaker isn't necessarily bad. In fact, many excellent speakers are notoriously inefficient and gobble up a lot of watts to produce room-filling loudness levels. But lately some new speaker designs have become available, using ported enclosures and so-called "passive radiators," that enable you to get the same loudness levels with much less power.

Just recently I installed some stereo systems using these new high-efficiency speakers, such as Radio Shack's Realistic Optimus 10, the Electro-Voice Interface 1, or B.I.C.'s Model 11. These fine-sounding speakers range in price from \$85 to \$140 and produce ample loudness with less than 10 watts per channel. Combining them with fairly inexpensive, low-powered receivers rated between 12 and 15 watts per channel, I was able to assemble budget stereo systems that sounded as rich as many high-

powered rigs costing a lot more.

Anyway, look on the spec sheet for the "minimum power requirement" for the speakers you have chosen. That number is your starting point for figuring your power requirement. If your listening room is "normal" size—anywhere from 2000 to 3000 cubic feet—all you need is the wattage suggested as "minimum power requirement" for your speakers. If you live in an exceptionally large room, add about 30 percent to this figure.

Next, consider your furnishings. Suppose your room has smooth plaster walls, hard floors with just a few scatter rugs, and no heavy draperies. This makes a "live" acoustic environment in which the echoes reinforce the output of your sound system. As a result, you can cut your power requirement by 30 to 50 percent. But if you've got wall-to-wall carpeting, lots of draperies and stuffed chairs and sofas, they soak up the sound and put an extra burden on your amplifier. In that case, increase the power figure by 30 to 50%.

Now about the last factor in considering your power needs—your musical tastes. If you mostly play country music, you're lucky because that type of sound doesn't require any extra wattage. So, if you've been doing all the figuring suggested so far, just stick with whatever number you've come up with. Even if you like to play heavy rock, you can probably get by with the wattage figure calculated by these rules. That's because the loudest sounds in rock are the big thumps at the beat, and they're spaced out far enough so the amplifier isn't continuously stressed and can, so to speak, "catch its breath" between beats. But if you also like to play heavily orchestrated symphonic music, you had better increase your power budget. The reason is that the loud parts of orchestral music often come in the form of a long, sustained crescendos that really drain the power from your rig. So if you really want to raise the rafters with orchestral thunder, slap another 50% power increase on the wattage you have calculated.

Maybe all this sounds complicated at first. But if you go through it once again, doing all the necessary figuring as you proceed from one paragraph to the next, I don't think you'll have any trouble figuring out just how much power you really need. In the end, you'll have the assurance of good sound and spending no more money than necessary. ■

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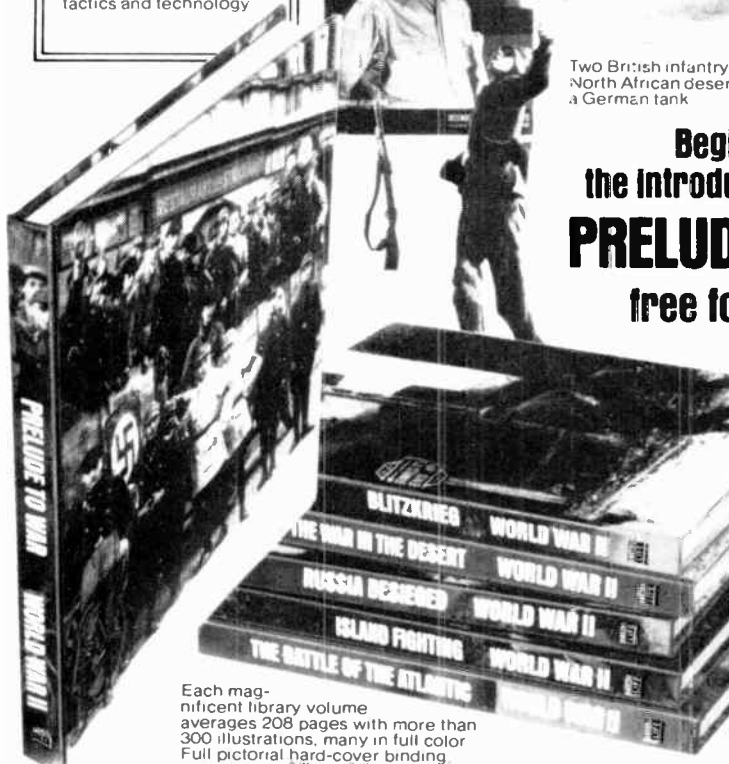


Two British infantrymen charge across the North African desert to accept surrender of a German tank.

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LETTERS

Concert Talk

I just got back from seeing the Oak Ridge Boys and I just wanted to comment on their concert. I think that they are fantastic. When they put on a show, *they put on a show* . . .

GRANT SMITH
CULLMAN, ALA.

La Costa

Sure enjoyed the article on LaCosta. Truly feel this young gal is just about to happen big. Her freshness, honesty and good looks puts her up front in today's market.

We met LaCosta at the Cabaret in Fort Lauderdale and were taken with her savy and slick show. We were equally impressed with LaCosta as a lady and an individual, off stage.

Thanks for the article.

CATHIE WATSON
FT. LAUDERDALE, FLA.

Is Debby Boone Country?

I had to write to somebody, because I'm mad. I think it is a real joke that Debby Boone was named the *Most Promising Country Female Artist* by two awards associations. I think anyone who calls her country is nuts. I, myself feel Stella Parton should have gotten those awards. If she (Debby) is so country, tell me where the steel guitars and fiddles are in her records?

KIM SINCLAIR
BRANTFORD, ONTARIO, CANADA

The Silver Fox

Rich Kienzle's review in the August 1978 issue of Country Music is from just one little man who doesn't know.

Everything Charlie Rich sings is great.

ELIZABETH ROCKEY
VIRGINIA BEACH, VA.

I enjoy your magazine very much, but I do not agree with one of the album reviews, from your August issue. It was a review by Rich Kienzle of the album *I Still Believe In Love* by Charlie Rich. I am a Charlie Rich fan and what was written about him being bored singing such songs as the *Saddest Love Song* and *Let the Little Bird Fly* in my opinion was wrong. Charlie sings these songs with true feelings. I think this is a great album and he is a great singer.

ANITA SARAFIN
BUFFALO, N.Y.

Will you please give this letter to your critic Rich Kienzle. I think he not only insulted Charlie Rich, Ray Price and Mr. Eddy Arnold, when he stated that Mr. Rich was hell-bent on squandering his talents, I think he should check with Billboard Magazine and see who is #1, with Mr. Price #4 really close by.

MARLON BENO
TUPELO, MISS.

More Thoughts On Stardust

I agree with your July issue *Stardust* reviewer on at least one point—the Red Head is no match for Old Blue Eyes. Fact is, there is no match for either of them.

Having recently seen each in concert, I more than ever appreciate their uniqueness. However, while their performing styles are worlds apart, their treatment of a lyric is not nearly so dissimilar as one might at first believe. Each weaves a magic through an audience few performers achieve.

As for the *Stardust* album, Willie has simply taken ten grand songs and made them sound the grandest ever—the hubristic ol' coot—he'll never learn his proper place.

BETTY L. TAYLOR
PROCTORVILLE, OHIO

Country's Hottest Duo

I just got my Country Music Magazine (August issue) and enjoyed every page.

Enjoyed the story, "Dottie & Kenny Host The World's Biggest Indoor Country Show." I won two tickets to the show in a contest of a local newspaper. It got me so high on country music, I wrote a song about my second row seat.

ALMA PAULSON
PONTIAC, MICH.

. . . just finished reading the August issue of Country Music. If this issue featuring Dottie West doesn't become a collector's item, then something is the matter with country music fans in this country.

The story was tops and the photography out of this world. The issue is already a *collector's item* in my private collection of Country memorabilia and shall have a shrine of its own. Thanks a million for featuring Dottie and her new partner (Kenny Rogers).

JOHNNY HORIZON
FAIRLAWN, N.J.

I just got my issue of Country Music at the newsstand and would like to thank you very much for the fine story on Dottie West. I'm a big fan of hers and love to see

her name in print and love even more to see pictures of her.

LARRY PROBST
CANTON, ILL.

We Keep Improving

A while ago I wrote and said I thought the June issue of Country Music was terrible and I might cancel my subscription.

Well I thought the July issue great and the August issue just about the best ever. Old Willie & Waylon were back and not being roasted. Stories on Dottie West, Ray Charles, Tompall, etc. Great short, interesting items in Country Scene. And as if this wasn't enough for any Country Music fan, a centerfold of Dolly "Mac" Parton. I guess I'll forget about cancelling my subscription.

FRANK VEGAZO
HALEAH, FLA.

I subscribe to several Country Music Magazines, but I believe that yours is the pick of the litter . . .

KENNETH EOFF
PASADENA, TEXAS

It has always been my belief that knowledge comes with age; so, when I read your editorial in the August issue of Country Music, it made me wonder if my belief was correct.

I did not know that Jack Clement could sing but after reading your "magic" words about his record I cannot sleep until I go out and buy it. It's really too bad that more do not understand and enjoy.

RANDY SAFFELL
WACO, TEXAS

Different Strokes For Different Folks

We love Country Music and did like your magazine. But we were totally disgusted with the Dolly Parton centerfold as a sex type. She is not a sex object to us, nor could I see any country singer as one . . .

AL MILLER
CHAMPAIGN, ILL.

I have viewed only two women in my lifetime whom I have rated as *The Most Beautiful Women In The World*—Elizabeth Taylor at 30, and, now, Dolly Rebecca Parton. That centerfold in the August issue of Country Music is fantastic. To the best of my knowledge, it is the first time ordinary mortals have seen any of her skin other than her head and arms. . . .

CACTUS BILL SLADE
VIRGINIA COUNTRY MUSIC ASSOC.



WRITE ON!

Your Lyrics Could Win You A Contract From Prestigious APRIL/BLACKWOOD MUSIC

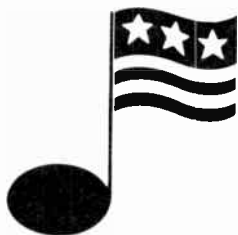
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COLUMN

by MICHAEL BANE

Country Music Sings The Blues

*"Just around the corner there's heartaches,
Down the street that losers use.
If you can wade in
Through the teardrops, my friend,
You'll find me at home of the blues. . ."*
—Vic McAlpine and Johnny Cash

The street that losers use is called Beale Street, and at one time it was the center of a universe that stretched from the coffee-brown Mississippi River for about ten blocks through downtown Memphis, Tennessee. It was as different from the fading plantation glory of the rest of Memphis as night and day, a black hole of gambling joints and honky tonks, of whorehouses and pawn shops. The kind of place where they hauled the bodies away at first light, where a man named Staggerlee killed a man named Billy over a Stetson hat, and nobody much cared.

For a while, just after the turn of the century, Beale Street became (dragging a reluctant Memphis along with it) The Murder Capital Of The U.S.A., the meanest street in America. Its alleyways and storefronts seethed with dark violence, its evenings exploded into violent death, to be washed away by the coming of the next day.

And it was in this caldron that the blues were born, though born is probably the wrong word. Tempered, perhaps, as a piece of steel is tempered in the flames. The blues came to Memphis from the surrounding Delta, brought by the black sharecroppers who remembered their shackles and left the land for a kind of freedom in the city. Just as New Orleans sang its siren song along the Gulf coast, the Memphis of the early 1900's beckoned to the poor and downtrodden of the mid-South. There were fortunes to be made in the City (never a name; there was no mistaking where); new lives to be had for the asking. There were wine, women and song; justice, of a sort, at the end of a gun; a culture where the black man ruled and the white man was only allowed to visit, one night a week.

So the blues came, only to be forged from its African roots into an urban lament. On the street corners and in the alleyways and honky tonks of Beale Street, men and women sang the blues, and everyone else stopped to listen.

Blues, you understand, are the Devil's music; eating, drinking and being merry (read: womanizing) while keeping an eye peeled over your shoulder for Old Nick. It's eat-your-guts-out music, as if the men and women who sang the blues were tearing off little pieces of themselves each time they opened their mouths. It's haunting music, the kind of stuff that comes

from the very darkest nights of the soul, where there's nothing left but a bottle and the sick realization that all those shiny tomorrows have run out.

A.P. Carter, that progenitor of now four generations of the Carter family and the watershed of country music, understood the blues. He knew that it did indeed take a worried man to sing a worried song. So did Jimmie Rodgers and so did Hank Williams. All the great country singers have understood the hopelessness of the blues, and that sense of the blues has found its way into all the great country songs. If there's a difference between early country and the blues, it's that country music did hold out a chance of redemption—although that redemption happened to be in the Great By-And-By.

It's not strange that country and blues got separated, another victim of the war between black and white, but it is odd that they've taken so long to get back together. I was at a party recently where I ventured the opinion that country and blues were inextricably linked, and one would think I'd passed out in the punch. That's ridiculous, one person patiently explained. One is for blacks; the other for whites. Simple.

Culture is never simple, and the culture that produced the blues and country music was one of the most complex this country has ever seen. It is interesting to note that blues was never a particularly commercial form—although popular music was certainly not as developed as it is now—and eventually it evolved into rhythm and blues, and ultimately, I suppose, disco. It gives one pause to wonder about the present evolutionary upheavals going on in country music these days.

As for Beale Street, Memphis was never a town that felt comfortable with its music, something that, years later, even Elvis Presley was to feel. In perhaps more ways than one Beale Street was a threat, and in some mysterious fashion the music of Beale Street came to symbolize that threat.

Beale Street today is caught up in a great urban renewal project, with the honky tonks and pool halls and whorehouses all nicely bulldozed to make way for what city fathers hope will be a "preservation hall" for the blues, utilizing, one backer told me, "the unique architecture of the period."

In the meanwhile, you can't hear the blues in the Home of the Blues, and the record store of the same name—the one that inspired Johnny Cash and Vic McAlpine—has been closed.

Sing them blues, Lord. Sing the blues.



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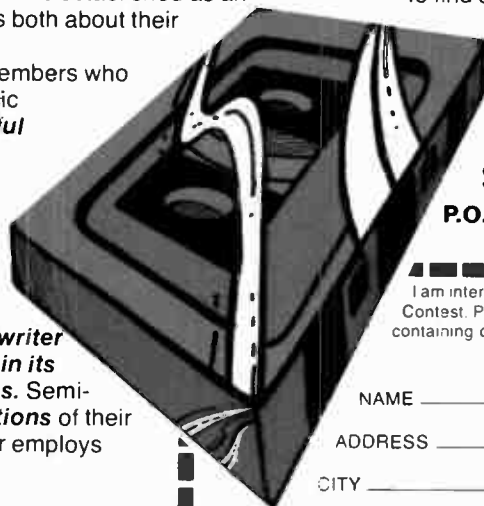
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World Radio History

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To learn more about your favorite country music personality, you decide to make a little trip to the local bookstore. Do you purchase . . . ?

- A) *Marriage Made Easy* by Tammy Wynette
- B) *How To Win Friends And Influence People* by Waylon Jennings
- C) *Call Of The Wild* by Jerry Lee Lewis
- D) *Little Women* by Jimmy Dickens
- E) *Baa Baa Black Sheep* by David Allen Coe
- F) *The Art of Cocktail Chatter* by Don Williams
- G) *Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Buck Owens* by Roy Clark
- H) One with an autographed picture of Chubby Checker
- I) One in a plain brown wrapper

Who first recorded the following songs?

- A *White Sport Coat*
- A) Willie Nelson
- B) Porter Wagoner
- C) Grandpa Jones

Lonesome, Ornery and Mean

- A) Sonny James
- B) Jim Ed Brown
- C) Lennon Sisters

Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On

- A) Ernest Tubb
- B) Freddie Hart
- C) The Three Shakers

There Stands The Glass

- A) Some of the above
- B) Marie Osmond
- C) 1952

Slippin' Around

- A) Elizabeth Ray
- B) Patty Hearst
- C) The Golden Slippers

Born To Lose

- A) Twiggy
- B) Minnesota Vikings
- C) Richard Nixon

Satin Sheets

- A) Emmylou
- B) Harris
- C) The Rolling Sheets

Match the following nickname with the star:

The Killer

- A) Hank Snow
- B) David Houston
- C) Roy Drusky

Cousin Minnie

- A) Minnie Ronstadt
- B) Conway Minnie
- C) Minnie Ha-Ha

Queen Of Country Music

- A) Little Richard
- B) False
- C) I think it's that gal with the real sexy voice

Mysterious Rhinestone Cowboy

- A) Walter Brennan
- B) Patti Page
- C) I can't think of his name, but he used to sing with the Happy Goodman Family

Cute and Country

- A) Tompall Glaser
- B) Fats Domino
- C) Isn't it that girl who starred in *Frances Joins The Wacs*?

The Singing Ranger

- A) Ray Price
- B) Pointer Sisters
- C) It must be John Wayne or Billy The Kid or one of them. Either that or Arthur Godfrey.

The Southern Gentleman

- A) Loretta Lynn
- B) Faron Young
- C) Billy Carter

The Silver Fox

- A) Tanya Tucker
- B) Charley Pride
- C) Tom Jones' horse

The Ole Wagon Master

- A) Eddy Arnold
- B) Annie Oakley
- C) Who was that guy who married Moms Mabley?

The Blue Yodeler

- A) Wilburn Bros.
- B) Crystal Gayle

C) Sonny and Cher

Complete the following statements:

To sing country music you have to sing from the:

- A) Heart
- B) Nose
- C) Pituitary gland

The star with the biggest bus:

- A) Gets to close the show
- B) Drives a Toyota
- C) Will soon file bankruptcy

The Outlaws are rebelling against:

- A) The Nashville establishment
- B) Our permissive society
- C) Always being thought of as sex objects

The Grand Ole Opry is:

- A) The home of country music
- B) Second only to the Metropolitan Opera
- C) The original name of *American Bandstand*

The Father Of Modern Country Music was:

- A) Jimmie Rodgers
- B) Danny and the Juniors
- C) George Washington

The Nashville Sound is:

- A) The modern sound of country music
- B) Webb Pierce played on 78
- C) Johnny Cash singing harmony to Roy Acuff

I buy Country Music magazine because:

- A) The pictures are easy to understand
- B) It has no redeeming social value
- C) Where I live we don't get *Amos 'n' Andy*

Scoring: If you had mostly A answers, pick a number between one and 50. Multiply by 2, divide by 6, add 37. If you came out with a different number from the one you picked, you did it wrong. If you had mostly B answers, add the total number of letters of all the words in the B column. That is not your score. But it will help if you are weak in addition. If you had mostly C answers, and you are a female, stand up and take your measurements. Add the three figures. If they total more than 60, it is just as you thought: you are starting to gain weight. If you are male, subtract your shoe size from your hat size. If the figure is more than 90, then Congratulations! You sure know your country music! ■

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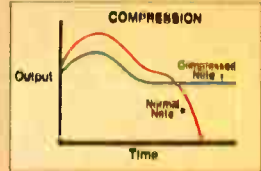
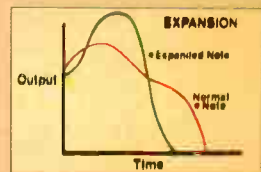
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A Close-up Look At That Other Parton **THERE'S NO DANGER OF STELLA BECOMING A STRANGER**

By ALANNA NASH

After a lifetime of being known primarily as somebody's relative, Stella Parton is finally emerging from the giant shadow cast long ago by her sister, Dolly. Already three songs from her first Elektra album, *Country Sweet*, earned respectable chart positions last year, and when one of them, *The Danger of a Stranger*, sold 30,000 copies in one week in Great Britain, Stella was invited over for tour. Earlier this year, she won the Most Promising International Artist award at England's prestigious Wembley Festival, and was one of five finalists for the Academy of Country Music's Most Promising New Female Vocalist award. Add to that the fact *Undercover Lovers*, the third single off her second Elektra album, *Stella Parton*, is in the top 40 on the country charts at the time of this writing.

"It takes you fifteen years to become an overnight success," Stella says with a sigh. "People think I started singin' because Dolly was a success. They don't know I've been doin' my own thing by myself forever."

Recently, Stella and I sat down together in her new Mt. Juliet, Tennessee, home. We had done her first *Country Music* interview some three years earlier—a piece that mistakenly carried a photograph of Florence Warner for that of Stella Parton! "I just flew to the store to get the magazine and see my picture, and all I saw was Florence Warner and her dog," Stella remembers good-naturedly. "I ain't never owned a dog in my life. Only pet I ever had was a crippled chicken once!"

The self-portrait that Stella unveils in the following interview is that of a sensitive, fiercely-determined young woman who, through the years, has struggled to save her identity, and who has gotten where she is today virtually on her own.

Before long, Stella Parton is likely to fit the "kid sister" role no more.



Alanna: *What changes have you seen in yourself since the first time we talked?*

Stella: I've gotten a lot busier—and a little more wrinkled. I've had two good albums since then and done a lot of national TV that I hadn't even dreamed of then 'cause I figured that would be a long time away. Then, I was mostly concerned about gettin' my records played. I think I had just had *I Want To Hold You In My Dreams*, and we were just lucky enough to get that out and distributed. But I didn't know what I was gonna do next.

Alanna: *What changes in your personality?*

Stella: I don't think there's any change in me as a person. I'm probably a happier person, but I think the more successful you become, the happier you become with yourself. But I won't say why I was unhappy. Success to me is being satisfied with yourself. It's not how much money you're makin', or how many hit records you have. It's knowin' who you are and bein' satisfied with who and what you are. That's success.

Alanna: *What motivates you to do what you do?*

Stella: My pride, my ambition. My son. My determination. If I couldn't do things for myself, when I really am too tired to do 'em then I do 'em for somebody else. Then I can go twice as long. Like, if I'm too tired to go out and do a good show, I still try to, not for myself, because I've done all I can do for myself. I mean, I give all I can give. But then I say, "Well, I have to give it just a little more, for Timmy." 'Cause I want to be successful for myself, for Timmy (her son from a former marriage), for a lot of people that have done a lot of gambling or taken a chance on me and believed in me.

Alanna: *Does Timmy go with you on many of the shows?*

Stella: Not too many. I don't like to take him to shows. That's not a normal growing-up atmosphere, seein' your momma signin' autographs and gettin' applause from thousands of people. Then you get to thinkin' your momma is somethin' other than your momma. I don't want Timmy to get the big notion that he's any different from the kid that sits across from him at school.

Alanna: *Tell me about the Parton sense of humor.*

Stella: We all have a sense of humor. My daddy's real quiet and reserved, so he's not a real excitable person. It takes a lot to get him really goin'. But he's very apt to throw a zinger once in awhile, or tell you an off-color joke. It's funny; it's great! Because you don't expect it of him. And I'm pretty much that way. I think we all have always had a good sense of humor. A lot of people describe my sense of humor as kinda dry, more or less like the English. Things that I think are just outrageously funny, other people don't think are funny at all. Once a person is around me for a while, they get to know what's funny to me, and what I'm meanin' when I'm tryin' to be funny. So they can appreciate me. But I guess it's a different sense of humor. It's corny.

Alanna: *I read that your family didn't have a radio and that you never heard the Grand Ole Opry growing up.*

Stella: We always had a radio ever since I can remember. And we could always get the Grand Ole Opry. First person I ever remember hearin' on the radio was probably Roy Acuff. And I remember one gory old song that he sung called, *Wreck on the Highway*. We slept with the lights out, but we heard WSM Grand Ole Opry with that beepin' noise, and I hate that beepin' signal to this day. It reminds me of bein' in the dark and tryin' to go to sleep and listening to Roy Acuff on the radio.

Alanna: *Is the family really as strong as it seems to be?*

Stella: Yeah, I think we are. Even me. I'm probably a loner. I'd consider myself the loner of the family. I never have spent

that much time really needin' my family around me all the time. I just do what I'm gonna do. I'm just a very independent person. But I'm pretty much that way with everybody. My family is very important to me. And anything that I read that's not good about Dolly, that hurts me. 'Cause she's my sister, and I love her. And the same with her. I don't mean that we're perfect with each other all the time. We have misunderstandings. But we don't ever come to the point that we don't speak to each other. Or if we had an argument over something—any of us—we don't ever leave without sayin', "Well, I love you." That's just the way we are.

Alanna: *I've always wondered what it would be like to have so many brothers and sisters.*

Stella: It's fun. It's always great to know you have at least ten friends that can't turn against you, regardless of what you do. They might get mad at you, but they always forgive you. Your friends—you can have friends, but they don't always remain friends if something really bad happens. But your family does; your brothers and sisters always do.

Alanna: *Was your mother sick a lot when you were growing up?*

Stella: Yes, she was sick an awful lot. So you learn to be very independent and responsible for everybody else. I don't remember when I wasn't responsible for a younger child. I was six months pregnant when I graduated from high school, so I've always been responsible for a young child.

Alanna: *Did each child help the next in line?*

Stella: Yeah. When the twins were born, I was nine and I got to pick which one I wanted—the boy or the girl. I wanted the boy, 'cause I was always drawn toward boy babies. Now that I'm older I think little girls are just as sweet as little boys. But Momma said, "Stella, you get the next one and if it's twins, Cassie you can have one of them." Cassie was a year younger than me. So that's how it turned out. I got the boy and Cassie got the girl—Frieda and Floyd. They were six-month babies and weighed only three pounds apiece. Floyd, when he was an hour old, had a collapsed lung and stayed in the incubator for six weeks; he almost didn't make it. Freida stayed in for five weeks. They brought him home and he was so ugly. Bless his heart, that was the ugliest kid I ever saw. Straight black Indian, you know the Indian part comes out! You've seen Momma I guess. He had that hair sticking out all over his head like a porcupine. His eyes were swollen shut from crying. . . his cheeks were all chapped and raw. So I tried to talk Cassie into trading babies with me, but she wouldn't. In a couple of days he got cute; his face and everything was alright so I thought. "I'm glad I didn't trade my baby." He's still real close to me. He kinda considers

me his second Mom. But we all have a second Mom in the family, more or less.

Alanna: *I didn't realize there was an Indian heritage.*

Stella: Momma is about one-quarter Cherokee. Daddy is Scotch-Irish. That's where I get the brown eyes and the high cheek bones and the Indian bone feature, but I get the color from Daddy—the Irish side.

Alanna: *Your father was a farmer?*

Stella: Yeah, he was a farmer until I was probably five. Then, he started working on a public job and he farmed, too. Daddy's the hardest working person I know.

Alanna: *Share a childhood memory with me.*

Stella: I got my little toe cut off. But it's still there.

Alanna: *Still where?*

Stella: (*Laughter*) On my foot! Cassie and me were in this room—actually a closet. It must have been intended for a bathroom. So Denver and David slept in there. They just had a mattress, the covers and pillows and stuff. Cassie and me were there playing on the mattress pretending the pillow was a watermelon and cutting it open. David was always pulling tricks on us kids and he came through and yelled, "The house is on fire, the house is on fire!" He closed the door, 'cause he knew that there was no light and he thought, "This would scare them." So we were screaming and what I was screaming about was that my toe was in the door! Finally he opened the door and my toe was just dangling there. Momma poured lamp oil or kerosene on it and just wrapped it up.

Alanna: *That really must have hurt!*

Stella: It hurt, but he thought we was screaming 'cause we was afraid in the dark. He didn't know that he had my toe hung in the door.

Alanna: *Tell me about your writing.*

Stella: I love to write. I think I've written a few good songs. I can't seem to get the time to write. That bothers me more than anything. Just because I don't really have the time to write. I can't be pushed into writing by a deadline, or by an album that is coming up. I can't go write songs. I just write when I have the time and when I'm in the mood with the time.

Alanna: *How many tunes have you written?*

Stella: Oh, I'm sure I probably have over one hundred songs that I've written. A lot of 'em are gospel songs. I'd say I probably have more gospel songs than I do any kind. I've recorded two gospel albums and I have quite a few of my songs on those.

Alanna: *What labels are they on?*

Stella: Inspiration. It's an independent company. I have one or two songs on *The Parton Family Sings in the Garden* that I wrote or co-wrote.



Alanna: *You would rather be a performer than a writer?*

Stella: Evidently, or I wouldn't spend so much time tryin' to get to and from shows.

Alanna: *A lot of writers, such as Tom T. Hall, hate performing, which is why I asked.*

Stella: I let my writing go because I don't want my performances to suffer. If I don't write a song, then nobody knows I was not prepared for the song. But if I spend all my time writing songs and don't take time to do my hair and put on a stage outfit and rehearse with my band, then the people are gonna know that. It's important that I do the best I can for the people, because they're payin' to see me. They're not payin' to see me get on stage unprepared because I've been wastin' my time in the back writin' songs. When I get to the point that I have time, then I'll write more. But right now, I have to let my writing go.

Alanna: *Do you find an outlet in song-writing?*

Stella: Yeah. But I don't write songs that necessarily express my feelings or experiences. I might write somebody else's experience and then exaggerate it somewhat.

Alanna: *You don't write from personal experience?*

Stella: I do some. But not all the time. I'll take a personal experience and then disguise it so nobody will recognize it. I'm just a very private person.

Alanna: *Are you secretive?*

Stella: Yeah. I'm not a deceiver, but I am a secretive person with my feelings, with my thoughts. Not with everybody, but with most people I'd say. The only people I care about really are people like say Timmy and Jim (Jim Malloy her producer) and I'm not going to lie to them. So if somebody asks me a question and I don't want to tell them, it's just because it's none of their business. I'm not going to

lie to them. There's nothing really complicated about me. I don't think.

Alanna: *Do you make friends easily? Have many close friends?*

Stella: I think I make friends easy enough, probably, but I don't have that many friends. I have a few friends. But I don't have come-over-for-coffee friends and go over to this friend's house for a party. I'm not a social person really. I like people, though. I don't need, I guess, to feel like everybody I meet is going to be my best friend. I like everybody, though. Actually, I love everybody, if they'll let me.

Alanna: *Sounds like something you might have learned at your Grandfather Owens' church.*

Stella: Yeah. He's a character. I like him a lot and learned a lot from him. I used to walk to church with him and talk. I don't talk a lot if there's a lot of people around. If it's just one-to-one, then I talk a lot.

Alanna: *Did growing up in that church inspire your love for gospel music?*

Stella: Um-hum. Growing up in that church, I would wait impatiently my turn to get up and do my song. When I got older, I started leading the choir and I used to get up and do youth services on Tuesday nights. That's where I started out wanting to be a missionary. And that's what I intended to be until I got married.

Alanna: *In a way you are doing missionary work.*

Stella: I don't ever get up on the stage and talk about religion. I talk about love. And sin. Clean sin, not bad things. I talk about love, and that's what I try to share with my audience. My show is not a dramatic performance. I don't want people to think I'm a religious fanatic. I want to be able to communicate. That's what I try to do.

Alanna: *You don't think of yourself as a religious fanatic, but you are deeply religious.*

Stella: With myself, yeah. But I've seen

so many people do the wrong thing by getting up talking about their personal beliefs, this, that and the other, and they turn people off. 'Cause they might not be ready to hear that, and you should use a lot of tact when you talk about religion and politics and morals.

Alanna: *Your church is Pentacostal Church of God. Can you outline the basic beliefs?*

Stella: Pretty much like Southern Baptist, a little more Charismatic and spiritualistic. Pretty much like a Southern Negro church.

Alanna: *Your Grandfather once told me, "People get saved here sometimes."*

Stella: I get a kick out of him. I took some reporters over there last summer. He was asleep on the couch. I said, "Grandpa, I got some people out here I want you to meet." He runs in and puts on the brightest red shirt he can find and comes over to the church. He was glad to see everybody; he just loves to get interviewed and have his picture taken. So I said, "Play a little bit on the piano for them." And he played, and got a kick out of it. He told them, "I am the old-time preacher man." He comes up with some really clever lines and wants you to laugh as he entertains you. He'd be preaching a real serious sermon once and then he'd say something real funny to see if they were paying attention. Which was smart. I thought.

Alanna: *Do you have any goals?*

Stella: I'd like to write more songs for my next album. I hope to have more than two or three songs, at least recordable and worthy songs. I'd also like to enlarge my road show. Not just enlarge the organization, but to make it better. Have different things in there. Maybe do some more things in the movies. Not as an actress, but just as myself. Let's face it, TV, movies, whatever—when people can put a face and a name and a voice together it's

(Continued on page 71)

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Johnny Cash - Daddy Sang Bass - 1969
(Entertainer and Male Vocalist of the Year)

Glen Campbell - Gentle On My Mind - 1968
(Entertainer and Male Vocalist of the Year)



Crystal Gayle
1977

Dolly Parton
1976

Freddy Fender
1975

Ronnie Milsap
1974

Danny Davis
and the
Nashville Brass
1973

Charley Pride
1972

Sammi Smith
1971

Merle Haggard
1970

Johnny Cash
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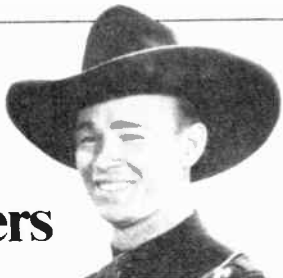
SONS OF THE PIONEERS

By DOUGLAS B. GREEN

Country music has taken a surprising number of twists and turns as it meandered through history, shaped and strengthened by the influx of numerous tributaries. Though long neglected, at one time western harmony singing was one of the most vital. At its source lay one of the most creative and inspiring groups in country music's convoluted history: The Sons of the Pioneers.

Their long and complex history began in October, 1933, when three young men, all veterans of several local southern California cowboy bands, decided to re-

Roy Rogers



The most interesting thing about the early career of the Sons of the Pioneers is that among the three co-founders it was not Nolan, the musical genius, nor Spencer, who for years was the band's rambrod, who was the real impetus behind the formation of the group, but Len Slye, its lead singer.

As the group struggled and faltered, dissolved and re-formed in its early years, it was Len who continued to try to get Nolan and Spencer together to practice, rehearse, and perform. He could not have known what it would lead to, for either himself or for the group; he had to have done it simply for the love of and belief in their music.

On his own, despite his overwhelming success on the screen as "King of the Cowboys," Roy's voice never seemed to have the sparkle it did as a Pioneer (though he remained a spectacular yodeler). Contributing to that feeling was a succession of soggy material which ranged from frothy to downright silly. (Does *My Heart Went That-a-Way* give you an idea? How about *Hawaiian Cowboy*?). Yet when he teamed up with the Pioneers on subsequent occasions—like *Blue Shadows On The Trail* in 1947, one of the great western records of all time—the old magic was still there.

form a trio which had been a fixture of a larger outfit called the Rocky Mountaineers. At the urging and insistence of lead singer Len Slye—later known to the world as Roy Rogers—Tim Spencer and Bob Nolan reorganized, calling themselves the Pioneer Trio.

It was a name which was not to last long, for they were joined early in 1934 by fiddler Hugh Farr, and not long after by his guitar-playing brother Karl, who was named by left-leaning relatives, Karl Marx Farr. In deference to the Farr Brothers' part Indian ancestry, and mostly because it was a lot catchier, they changed their name to the Sons of the Pioneers in 1934.

There had been western groups before, but it was *this* band that established the sound and style and wrote most of the repertoire for the country music offshoot called western. Western swing had Bob Wills, bluegrass had Bill Monroe, men who forged entire musical styles; and now western music had the Sons of the Pioneers.

By 1935, they had landed their first film work, sold the first of many hundreds of songs to movies, and recorded a good many songs for the brand-new Decca Record Company. The following year they added the final ingredient to their sound—tenor Lloyd Perryman.

These were palmy days, but they didn't last long, for in this early stage of their career this nucleus of a band was sundered when Gene Autry, country music's top singer of the time and one of Hollywood's top cowboy stars went on strike at Republic. Rather than accede to Autry's demands, Republic went out and hired their own competition, developing another singing cowboy. The young man chosen from hundreds of applicants was 25-year-old Len Slye, who was first renamed Dick Weston, then Roy Rogers.

Following Len's (Roy's) departure, the trio became Bob Nolan, Tim Spencer, Lloyd Perryman; and Pat Brady—who became well known later as Roy Rogers' TV sidekick—was added to play bass and do comedy. Still, it signaled the end of an era of building and the beginning of one of replacement as new members came and went as dictated by personal ambition, personality clashes and of course, by war.

The years before World War II were among the Pioneers' most productive, as they appeared in some 24 films, recorded



for Decca and ARC, and spent a year working out of Chicago, where among other things they cut some 200 sides on Orthacoustic Transcriptions. They returned to California in September of 1941, and soon after began filming *Red*



The Sons of the Pioneers: (left to right) Carl Farr, Bob Nolan, Tim Spencer, Hugh Farr & Len Slye.

River Valley, their first of nearly two dozen films with ex-Pioneer Roy Rogers.

In 1945 they signed with RCA Victor, and it was the wartime group of Ken Carson and Shug Fisher (who replaced servicemen Perryman and Brady) along with

Nolan and Spencer that recorded their biggest hit record, *Cool Water*, in their first session.

Although the postwar era was probably their most successful, in 1949, veteran Pioneer, Tim Spencer retired. The grind

of the road and a turn to religion had wearied him of the life of a touring musician. It came as no surprise to many when other veteran, Bob Nolan left the band within three months, also weary of the road and embittered by dishonesty he had

encountered within the music business. It was somehow never the same after their parting.

Spencer was replaced by a handsome ex-singing cowboy named Ken Curtis, a veteran of Tommy Dorsey's and Shep Field's bands, who possessed a smooth pop voice. It was he who sang lead on their hit recording of *Room Full of Roses* in 1949. He later donned a thick hillbilly accent and a few day's growth of beard to enjoy a long run as Festus on *Gunsmoke*.

Nolan's replacement was Tommy Doss, who had sung with Bob Wills', Luke Wills', and Ole Rasmussen's western swing bands, and whose voice was a remarkable facsimile of Nolan's. He was to remain with the Sons of the Pioneers some 14 years. Curtis didn't stay as long, and when he left in 1953 he was replaced by Dale Warren, a former member of Foy Willing and the Riders of the Purple Sage.

The fifties were harder years for the Sons of the Pioneers. The reasons were varied, but they added up to a decline in the fortunes of the outfit. For one thing, film making was off, as the popularity of the singing western had waned rapidly after World War II. And though their sound and songs (especially *Cool Water* and *Tumbling Tumbleweeds*) were known in virtually every American home, their records had never been really big sellers, and the result was that they were forced into constant touring to earn a living.

It all came to a head in 1958 when

Tim Spencer



Poor Tim Spencer. As one of the three founders of the Sons of the Pioneers, his personality always seems to have been over-shadowed by Roy Rogers' subsequent success and by Bob Nolan's genius.

Yet, he was the real Pioneer behind the scenes: If it was Roy Rogers' enthusiasm which sparked the creation of the band, it was Tim Spencer's hand which guided their personal and professional interests for over two decades. In addition to his gift for harmony, his importance as a singer was really felt after he left the Pioneers in 1949 and continued to manage the group until 1954.

He, like Nolan, was a gifted songwriter who wrote many of the all-time western classics. His own favorite was *The Everlasting Hills Of Oklahoma*.

Tim spent his final years administering a gospel music song publishing firm, Manna Music (now run by his son Hal), which controls *How Great Thou Art* and several other standards. He suffered a serious stroke in 1970 and died April 26, 1974.



Lloyd Perryman

Of all the Pioneers deserving the title Mr. Sons of the Pioneers, Lloyd Perryman, whose forty-one years with the group (including twenty-eight as leader) make him *by far* the longest term member. Hugh and Karl Farr (twenty-four and twenty-six years), Dale Warren (twenty-five years), and even founders Nolan (sixteen years) and Spencer (fifteen years) don't come close.

Lloyd joined in 1936 as a replacement for a temporarily disgruntled Tim Spencer, who rejoined the Sons within a year.

He had a glorious tenor voice as a young man which deepened with the years. When Nolan and Spencer both quit the group within months of each other in 1949, it was Lloyd Perryman who took over and guided the group.

Just as the Sons of the Pioneers' future looked bright again—especially with the release of their fine new Granite album—Lloyd suffered a heart attack. After forty-one years, twenty-eight of them as trail boss, Mr. Sons of the Pioneers had died in the saddle.

Hugh Farr, apparently unhappy with strained intraband relationships and his increasingly minor role on records, quit. To compound matters, Farr, figuring that he was now the senior active member of the group in length of service, decided to take the name with him. Charges, countercharges and lawsuits were flung about; ill feelings filled the air; and for a while two groups, *both* called the Sons of the Pioneers, toured and played shows, though eventually Perryman secured the rights to the band name. The explosion of rock & roll was no help either, as all tradition-oriented music suffered, as did anybody with a cowboy, i.e. old-fashioned, image. A music as complex and intricate as that of the Sons of the Pioneers was doubly suspect in an era where raw energy and emotion took precedence.

Yet somehow, they survived the lean years, and the death of Karl Farr (who was stricken on stage by a heart attack in 1961, at the age of 52), replacing him with current guitarist Roy Lanham; and they survived an increasing shuffle of personnel that saw some members coming and going two or three times.

Lloyd Perryman was a determined man, and he hung in there with grim tenacity, keeping the band together, painstakingly teaching each new member his complex harmony part, keeping them working. It began to pay off with their burgeoning "rediscovery." They appeared on *Hee Haw*, cut a fine new album for Granite Records, and began playing some col-

lege dates as a whole new generation began to discover their music. But 40 years on the road caught up with Lloyd Perryman in August of 1977 and he died following open heart surgery, leaving Dale Warren—former fresh faced rookie, now himself a twenty-five year veteran—in charge.

The current Sons of the Pioneers—Dale Warren, Rusty Richards, Perryman's replacement Rome Johnson, accordionist/arranger Billy Liebert, and Roy Lanham—are still at it, still hitting that road. It has been a long trail, one full of fulfillment, stardom, great music and innovative genius; and one also ruttled with conflict, endless touring, public indifference and academic neglect.

Still, they ride on, inheritors of one of country music's most exciting, complex, and innovative styles, carriers of a proud tradition. ■

(Many recordings by the Sons of the Pioneers are still available. Some of the best are: 25 *Cowboy Songs* (RCA LMP 1130), *The Sons of the Pioneers* (JEMF 102), *Tumbleweed Trails* (Vocalion VL3715) and *Riders In The Sky* (Camden ADL2 0336). Their most recent is *Western Country* (Granite GS 1007).

Bob Nolan



Fred Rose was surely the most commercial, Hank Williams possibly the most soulful, Willie Nelson one of the most memorable. But of country music's great songwriters, a strong case can be made for Bob Nolan as the finest.

Bob Nolan became entranced with the romantic poetry of Keats, Shelly, and Lord Byron while in high school in Arizona, and when he tried his own hand at it he wrote not of the lake country of England, but of the desert. Added to his remarkable poetic gift was a feeling for melody which is both dramatic and unusual, and an overall vision of the sound and sight of the west which mated words and music perfectly. *Cool Water* and *Tumbling Tumbleweeds* are universally known, but among his uncounted hundreds of songs are innumerable western greats, among which the metaphysical *Song Of The Bandit* and the powerful *Song Of The Prairie* are outstanding.

Bob is still hale and hearty in his seventies, often spending weeks or months on end in a reclusive hideaway in the California mountains. He has not had a song published in years, although he still writes compulsively. The man who virtually invented modern western songwriting some forty-five years ago, and who may well be country music's greatest songwriter of all time, has lost none of his creative genius.

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Linda Ronstadt

The Queen of Rock & Roll is also a Queen of Country Music

Using excerpts from her new book, the Linda Ronstadt Scrapbook, author Mary Ellen Moore analyzes Linda's important status as a queen of country music.

By MARY ELLEN MOORE

Linda Ronstadt is easily the most successful female rock and roll *and* country star at this time. Her last five albums, including *Simple Dreams* (her most recent), have each sold over a million copies. She's won numerous music awards, including three Grammys; she's paved the way for other female artists. And Linda manages to be, at once, music's most sexy and desirable heroine and an extremely intelligent and articulate person.

It's unlikely that there is anybody who has not heard of Linda. Her records are a mainstay of radio stations—pop, rock and country. Her life has become fair game for gossip columnists. And her face adorns more than just the music magazines—the national press has joined the Linda bandwagon, and she's been a cover girl for *People*, *Time* and *Us*.

Unlike other unfortunate cover girls, Linda's position as darling of the press is not a flash in the pan. She has not only been around for a long, long time, but the way things look, she's going to be around a lot longer.

Linda Maria Ronstadt was born July 15, 1946 in Tucson, Arizona. Like many musicians, Linda's interest in music began at a very early age, since she was surrounded by a musical family. The third youngest of four children, Linda had a sister and two brothers, and all four would play and sing with their father, Gilbert.

Gilbert Ronstadt insisted that his children listen to more styles of music than simply whatever the current popular music happened to be. And although

Linda, like most normal children, resented it at the time, she is extremely grateful now.

She grew up listening to and loving Mexican and country music—what she calls Mexican bluegrass. Her favorite female singer was a woman named Lola Beltran, and she believes that mariachi music had a strong influence on her own style.

Then, when Linda was six, her sister fell in love with Hank Williams and Linda was hooked. She and her sister would listen to radio station XERF from Del Rio, Texas—a station that played an amalgamation of Top 40, country, rhythm and blues and both black and white gospel. Linda credits the station as a strong influence on her music.

It was at age six that Linda decided she would make a career in music, and she started singing professionally as soon as possible, which was while she was still in high school, at age 14.

She, her brother and her sister started a folk trio and made the rounds of Tucson's clubs. They called themselves the New Union Ramblers and their repertoire included the music they grew up on—folk, country, bluegrass and Mexican.

During those years, Linda continued to do the things the daughter of a fairly prosperous family did. She went through debutante season and she attended Arizona State University for a semester.

But Linda did not plan, as did most of the girls she grew up with, to simply get married or join a convent. Although she wasn't quite sure what she did want to do, she was absolutely positive about what she didn't want to do.

In 1964, Linda left the coffee houses and clubs of Tucson, dropped out of college, said a temporary so-long to her family and headed for Los Angeles—with \$30 in her pocket and her childhood dreams still alive.

There, she joined a Tucson friend, Bobby Kimmel, and eventually met Kenny Edwards. Another trio was formed—and this one eventually became the Stone Poneys.

* * *

The name Stone Poneys was taken from the title of bluesman Charley Patton's song, *Stone Poney Blues*. The name might seem particularly fitting since the Stone Poneys were not a happy group.

Their sound was very much folk. In fact, on some of their cuts, they could be easily mistaken for Peter, Paul and Mary, another two-male, one-girl singing trio that was popular at the time.

Los Angeles at this time was rich with young people experimenting with music. Neil Young, Jackson Browne, Bonnie Raitt, Joni Mitchell, Frank Zappa, Jim Morrison, and Don Henley and Glenn Frey who later formed the Eagles (only after working with Linda for awhile) were all on the scene.

"We were all learning about drugs, philosophy and music," Linda told *Time*. "Everything was exciting."

The Stone Poneys signed with Capitol Records and, despite problems which eventually led to the disbanding of the group, recorded three albums together. The second contained Linda's big break, *Different Drum*.

With the success of this song, Linda's career as a solo act was launched—but it





took years before she really amounted to anything more than just another "chick singer."

* * *

Linda's first solo album, *Hand Sown, Home Grown* lacked cohesiveness—and response.

Her next album, *Silk Purse*, began to earn her the recognition she now has. It contained her first solo hit and won Linda her first Grammy Award nomination. The song is *Long, Long Time* and was written by Gary White. The album was recorded in Nashville, Linda's first and only attempt to record in the city of country music.

With *Silk Purse*, Linda's fascination with the range of her own voice reaches a high that was not evident in the earlier albums. *Lovesick Blues*, the Tin Pan Alley song that has become so identified with

for, because people heard it and said 'How syrupy—what are you going to do with that? It's a ballad, it's going to put everyone to sleep.' I was convinced it was a hit, and we went in the studio at ten

o'clock in the morning. And that was Nashville—those guys liked that song so much that they got out of bed at nine o'clock on a Saturday and came down to do it, which is really something. But I don't think I sang it very well, although I was into it at the time, believe me—I was really feeling that song, but what can you do at ten o'clock in the morning?"

Capitol executives finally agreed to release *Long, Long Time* as a single, reportedly telling her they'd do it this time, but she had to promise not to bring them another country record. The record hit and Linda was once again public property.

Although many people believe *Silk Purse* is one of Linda's finest albums, largely due to the superior musicianship of Nashville's session players, Linda herself decided not to record in Nashville again, explaining to *Country Music People*: "I wasn't keen on the idea. It was very interesting in that there's such an enormous difference between country music in Nashville and country music in California. It's just another situation entirely, and I don't think we had any business playing music together..."

* * *

"I get so overwhelmed when I meet somebody like Dolly Parton. Not to say that it doesn't hurt you when you know somebody can sing better than you can, because there is envy."

Hank Williams, is a difficult song for anyone to sing. Hank did it best, but Linda's version is excellent and is a perfect example of the heights she could reach when she really tried.

The hit, *Long, Long Time*, was another example, one that Linda told *Country Music People* nearly didn't happen:

"That was another song that I fought



So Linda headed back to California to record her next album, **Linda Ronstadt**. In her never-ending search for good musicians with whom she could communicate, she came upon a few newcomers—Randy Meisner, Glenn Frey and Don Henley.

Before they became the Eagles, they did play with her on the album. Linda Ronstadt is considered a forerunner in the area of country-rock music, including such country standards as *Crazy Arms*, *I Fall to Pieces* and *I Still Miss Someone*, mingling with such rock and rollers as *Rock Me on the Water* and *I Won't Be Hangin' Round*. The authors of these songs were an eclectic mixture of country and rock: Jackson Browne, Johnny Cash, Eric Kaz, Hank Cochran and Harlan Howard, Neil Young, Woody Guthrie and Livingston Taylor.

“The first thing I had to do after *Heart Like A Wheel* went platinum was stop feeling guilty about my success, stop walking around apologizing to every single person I knew.”

Although rumors persist that Linda Ronstadt denies her country leanings, this is not the case. She consistently points to her country influences, and believes that **Linda Ronstadt** is one of the first albums to really capture the essence of the possibilities of merging country and rock.

“It was beginning to be apparent that country music and rock and roll could be synthesized,” she told *Country Music People*. “People didn’t realize that the Everly Brothers and Elvis Presley had been making zillions out of the synthesis for years.”

Although Linda’s albums were obviously improving, she was still not much farther along than she had been five years previously. In similar circumstances, most artists tend to take a second look at the record company they’re with. Linda was no exception, and after promising Capitol one more album to fulfill her contract, she signed with Asylum Records.

She also latched onto a red-headed Englishman, Peter Asher, as producer—and her career began its upswing.

Peter Asher’s Midas touch began turning Linda Ronstadt’s albums into gold immediately.

Every album that has been produced and released after **Don’t Cry Now** has gone platinum, and the Grammy nominations began coming in album after album.

As her musical abilities increased, her self-confidence also increased. And as she took an active part in her own professional life, a definite image began to emerge.



The “cuddly chicklet” had become a musician. She became established as a singer of love songs. Somebody else may have written those songs, but nobody could sing them like Linda.

By no means did this indicate that she was totally problem-free. In fact, the success of **Heart Like A Wheel**, the first album produced completely by Asher and the first to go platinum, left her shaken and guilt-ridden. She told *New Times*:

“The first thing I had to do after **Heart Like A Wheel** went platinum was stop feeling guilty about my success, stop walking around apologizing to every single person I knew. The most miserable tour of my life was in 1975, after **Heart Like A Wheel**. It was as if all your dreams of success came true, and you still felt like the same old *schlep* you always felt like. You really freak. I was still feeling very unworthy. Now I realize that it’s not my

fault. I worked hard and I earned it, and it's up to me whether I enjoy it or not. I choose to enjoy it, and I'm really having a great time now. I've got a lot of politician friends, for instance. I tour in their world and they tour in mine. But that's not all. I'm learning faster and more now than I've ever learned. There's information coming into my brain like cannons. I feel like I have to run away sometimes so I can have a chance to store it in my memory banks so I can go out and get some more."

Heart Like A Wheel, released in 1974, marked a new beginning for Linda. It raked in the Grammy nominations, and Linda won her first for Best Country Vocal Performance/Female (for *I Can't Help It If I'm Still In Love With You*, another Hank Williams' selection). She was also nominated for Best Pop Vocal Performance/Female for **Heart Like A Wheel** and the album was nominated for Best Album.

To this day, Linda is equally recognized as a pop and country singer, and although she does rousing rockers such as *Heat Wave* superbly, her real strength lies in the ballads, the country music and the less demanding rock and roll.

For example, although **Hasten Down the Wind**, a later album, won Linda her second Grammy for Best Pop Vocal Performance/Female (1976), the outstanding cuts on the album were *Crazy* (a Willie Nelson song sung previously by country great Patsy Cline), and *That'll Be the Day*, an old Buddy Holly song.

* * *

Linda's natural ability to combine country with rock has made her an almost guaranteed cross-over hit; and it's paved the way for other artists, particularly women—and particularly Dolly Parton and Emmylou Harris.

It is ironic that insecure Linda has played such an important part in the widening and growth of the rock and roll field. Despite her insecurity, Linda is more than happy to see her competition grow and to see others make it. She told *The Boston Phoenix*:

"Competition is for horse races, not for art. I had to face all that when Emmylou came on the scene. Everyone was telling me for two years that there was this girl who was doing everything that I was doing, and they were raving about her. I felt threatened by it. I was scared; I was afraid to meet her. I thought, 'Oh, no, what if she's better than I am?' and I met her, and she was. I feel that she is the best country-rock person. I'm moving in more of a pop direction anyway. And I was stunned, because I had been doing this for a long time, and I knew exactly how her talents compared to mine. And I also loved her immediately when I met her, because she's honest and she's nice. There was no way I couldn't like her.

"I get so overwhelmed when I meet somebody like Dolly Parton. Not to say that it doesn't hurt you when you know



somebody can sing better than you can, because there is envy. I do envy Dolly. I do envy Emmylou and Bonnie (Raitt), but I don't begrudge them their success. I wish I could sing that well, but I can't. Them not being able to do it is not going to make me sing any better."

Linda and Dolly and Emmylou. Together, the trio is an indomitable combination of talent, beauty, freshness and mutual admiration.

The three have become close friends, singing on each other's records, making a rare television appearance on Dolly's syndicated series, and, most recently, recording a much-heralded album together.

It's natural enough that the three friends have gotten together professionally since each has always been an ardent admirer of the others. In fact, the admiration each had for the other two bordered on awe, and when they learned the admiration was a three-way street, relief and happiness were the prevailing sentiments.

Linda, Dolly and Emmylou share more than mutual admiration, however. Their love for music is the overwhelming force in their lives. And when they harmonize, it's possible to envision an all-powerful being putting them on this earth, then getting them together just for that purpose. Nothing is quite as moving as hearing the three perform *Silver Threads and Golden Needles*.

The culmination of this musical friendship is the album, at last word, scheduled for a fall release. The album was produced under the darkest veil of secrecy, but Emmylou told *Country Music*:

"Dolly came up with the idea of the three of us doing an album. Linda and I have been together, or Linda and Dolly, or Dolly and I, but the three of us have only been together a couple of times. We're all on the road so much that it's hard for us to just sit around and sing. We've figured out the only way we're going to be able to do it is to say we're

I NEVER WILL MARRY, I'LL BE NO MAN'S WIFE

Linda Ronstadt has a top-ten single called *I Never Will Marry*, which has been on the country charts for twelve weeks. It is a powerful statement about American music.

Her backup singer is a vivacious, platinum blond from East Tennessee—named Dolly Parton.

The version on this record was written in the 50's by Fred Hellerman, who had heard many earlier folk versions of the song, including one recorded by the original Carter Family. Hellerman was a member of The Weavers, a group which was the most popular "commercial" city-folk act in music till The Kingston Trio came along with a sound that almost made The Weavers sound like hard-core hillbillies.

The Weavers, and such songs as *I Never Will Marry* were instrumental in introducing traditional country music to a whole generation of urban kids, the cult which was to make Joan Baez and Bob Dylan stars, first of a new American folk music, and later, superstars of the rock generation when another branch of

the country music tree (which had spawned crazies like Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, Buddy Holly and the like), was fused with black rhythm and blues, becoming what is now the rich and varied music known as rock and roll.

Hard-core purists don't like this kind of cross fertilization. It has launched thousands of arguments. (In Nashville it even spawned a whole organization, when a group of "traditional" country performers formed the Association of Country Entertainers, using Dolly Parton as their symbol, to protest the Country Music Association's award going to Olivia Newton-John. Olivia, they said, was not "country," but John Denver's award was O.K. Now, a few years later, they are mad at Dolly because they think she has abandoned her roots). It goes on and on, Waylon is too rock and roll, Debby Boone isn't country, Tom Jones shouldn't sing country songs and, of course, Dolly should get back to her roots. And so on.

These bigoted arguments are a waste

of energy. Worse than that, they keep true lovers of one kind of music from appreciating a new variety which they would probably love if they would only listen. Like Bob Dylan told *Playboy*, "If I had known what I know now, I probably would have taken off when I was 12 and followed Bill Monroe. 'Cause I could have gotten to the same place." The point is that there is nothing pure about American music, therefore, purists should be a little more tolerant.

There is another, more dangerous side to this coin... the frenzied obsession in Nashville to produce "cross-over." More often than not, this frenzy takes great country talent and produces mediocre pop records. My favorite example is Ray Price, a true giant in country music, who went in what seems like an instant, from the top of the heap with the legitimate cross-over, *For the Good Times*, to apparent total obscurity in a sea of violins (he should go back to fiddles, and be a major country star again). There are many more examples.

The Ronstadt/Parton *I Never Will Marry* is a classic and an important statement about a whole slice of American music history. I'd gladly pay \$100 for a copy if that was the only way to own it.

RUSS BARNARD

going to make a record, and eventually everything will be put down on tape."

The plan worked and the trio met at Dolly's Nashville home in January 1978 to discuss what some people consider the album of the year.

"It was like a week-long slumber party," Dolly reportedly gushed.

Brian Ahern, Emmylou's husband and producer, produced the album for Electra/Asylum, Linda's label, after working out a deal with Warner and RCA (Emmylou's and Dolly's labels).

Everyone involved in the project was sworn to secrecy. The song list was not released, and the one crew member allowed to take photographs was not permitted to sell photos. The three trade off lead vocals and harmonies.

And, in keeping with Linda's earlier remarks about recording in Nashville, the recording was done at Ahern's Los Angeles studio with Emmylou's band, the Hot Band, used as the primary sessions players.

* * *

With such an involvement in country music, it's difficult to understand why some people continue to knock Linda Ronstadt as a country artist. Her cross-the-chart success is remarkable considering she once had a manager who told her: "Country music—don't be stupid! You're too country for pop and too pop for country, and you'll end up nowhere."

Linda, obviously, proved that rock and country could be fused, and she certainly didn't end up nowhere while proving it. Instead she proved that music is in the ear



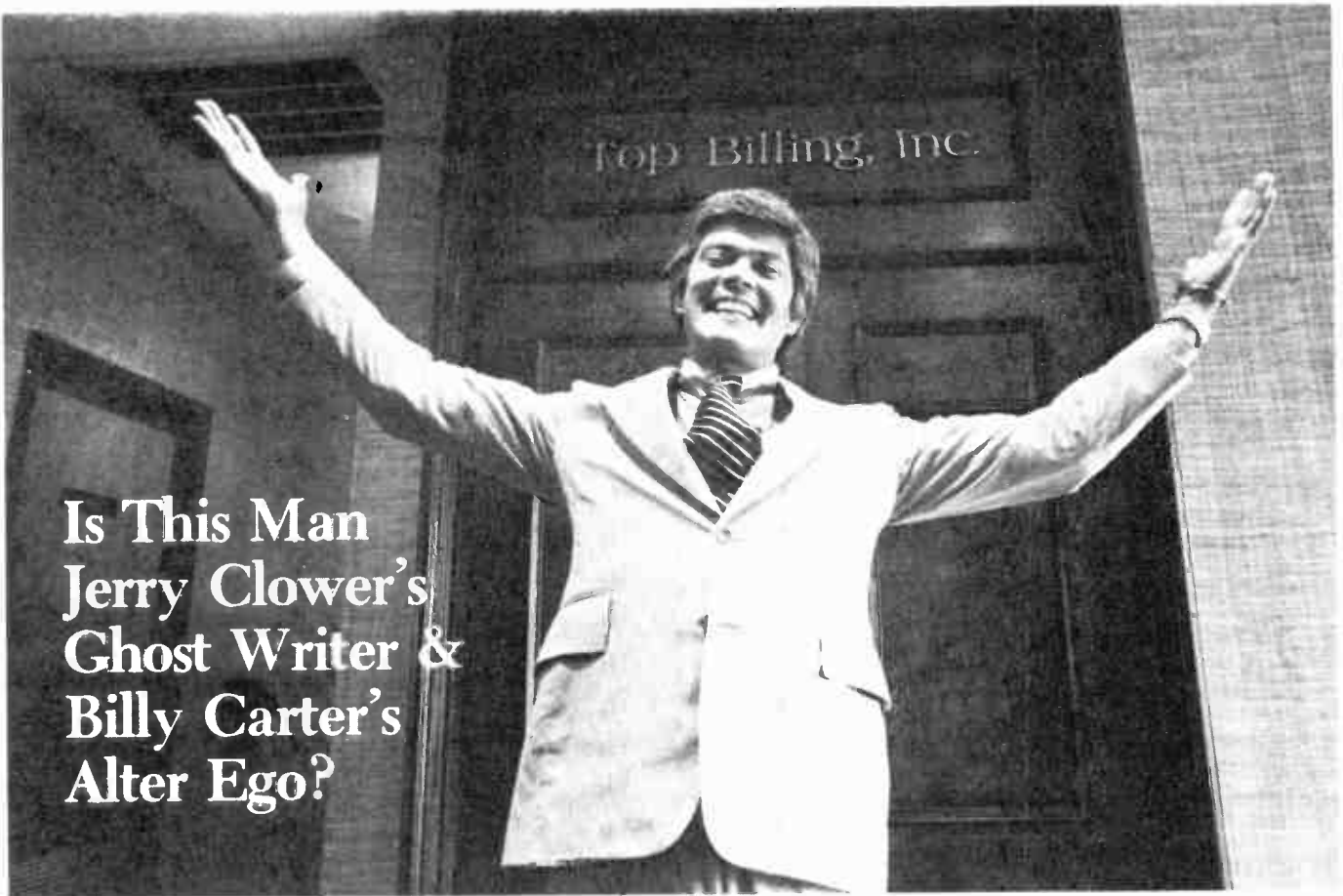
of the listener. And she perhaps summed it up best when she told Frye Gaillard, author of *Watermelon Wine*:

"There isn't any country left. When they closed the Grand Ole Opry, and I know they didn't really close it, but when they moved it out to an amusement park, that sort of officially closed an era. We're all suburban. We all have TVs and radios, and we're all exposed to a lot of different sounds.

"But there's a great thing about this

weird hodgepodge of music today. People don't have to be so hung up on labels. I'm a pop singer, I guess, but I grew up with country music. I sing it, and it influences most of what I sing, but it isn't the only influence. Music, to me, is music, and it's either good or bad and you judge it on that basis."

This article is based on excerpts from "The Linda Ronstadt Scrapbook" by Mary Ellen Moore, just published by Sunridge Press, New York, New York.



Is This Man
Jerry Clower's
Ghost Writer &
Billy Carter's
Alter Ego?

Tandy Rice: A Look At One Of Nashville's Most Notorious Flesh-Peddlers

By BOB ALLEN

In the mirrored-ceiling reception room of Top Billing, Inc., late on a Friday afternoon, all seven of the incoming phone lines are humming. The receptionist is working the switchboard a mile a minute, relaying messages over the office intercom: "There's a guy on line five from the West Coast who wants Billy... London, England's on line three..." Down the hall, a salesman is overheard hanging up the phone and telling an associate, "This guy in Tulsa wants one of our heavyweight acts in the middle of July. That's the middle of the fair season—it can't be done!... How about..."

Friday afternoons for most of our mortals are notorious braindrains; it's when the caffeine bands hit hard, the mind fizzes, and our metabolisms slow to a snail's pace. But when Tandy Rice, the lock-stock-and-barrel owner of Top Billing Agency, emerges from the inner offices, he looks as if he's

plugged into AC house current: He is immaculately dressed in a rep tie, a blue oxford shirt, and a cardigan sweater. He's got a thick, almost moppish head of slightly graying hair. His eyes literally sparkle with excitement. He is medium height, solidly built and youthful in appearance; and he walks so fast, he almost bounces. When he talks, it's in a fast, clipped voice, like some odd amalgam of Dan Rather, Oral Roberts, and a South Mississippi auctioneer.

"C'mon back!" He smiles broadly as he grasps a visitor by the arm like a long-lost friend, and almost runs down the hall. On his way, he sticks his head into one of the many offices: "Get the bloodhounds on Tom T. (Hall) and Jim Ed (Brown)." he tells one of his employees. "... And bring us two Cokes!"

* * *

"Let me explain my job to you in 'Route 4' talk," says

Tandy as he takes a seat behind his desk and leans back in the leather chair. "We're kind of like 'Manpower Inc.': If you're a singer, I go out and get you a job playin' at the ABC Beer Parlor for a hundred dollars. Then I give you your hundred dollars and take out ten or fifteen percent as a finder's fee.

"I've been called everything under the sun," he continues, "and when I try to explain to people what I do, I try to put it in terms they can understand. I tell 'em I'm a 'flesh-peddler,' a 'hustler,' and a 'promoter.' If I told you I was a booking agent, and also managed a couple of acts, and also did some promotion, you might not understand me."

Needless to say, some of the "flesh" that Tandy Rice peddles comes at a high price. Some of Tandy's more illustrious clients are Billy Carter, Tom T. Hall, and Jerry Clower (whose career he has literally

built, from the ground up). Also on the Top Billing roster are Jim Ed Brown, Cornelia Wallace (ex-wife of Alabama Governor George Wallace), Helen Cornelius, Kitty Wells, Dottie West, Jeannie C. Riley, Jack Greene, Jeannie Seely, Porter Wagoner, Red Sovine, Don Gibson, Dickie Lee, Jimmy Dickens, and a dozen or so others.

The vast majority of country music artists derive as much as 80 per cent of their income from personal appearances, and essentially, it is Top Billing's job to get these people onstage, and to see to it that they are paid for it.

As Tandy goes on to explain, the day-to-day operation of Top Billing's booking function—finding work for the artists and getting them paid for it—has been, by and large, delegated to Andrea Smith, the head of the sales department, who has been with Top Billing since before Tandy bought the

fledgling agency eight years ago.

"Right down this hall," Tandy gestures boastfully, "are four of the most skilled salesmen for country music in the U-nited States of America, PERIOD! And each one of 'em's better 'n me. I'd be number five. We'll put our sales staff against any staff in the country!"

Behind Top Billing's large wooden portals, there exists another separate company called Marcel Ledbetter Enterprises. (For those of you not familiar with the spoken word of Jerry Clower, Marcel Ledbetter is a character of his creation who "is always gettin' in trouble and whuppin' up beer joints with chain saws." Jerry claims there is a little Marcel Ledbetter in us all; Tandy goes on to say that his client, Billy Carter, is the personification of Marcel Ledbetter.)

It is with the day-to-day activities of Marcel Ledbetter Enterprises that Tandy and his trusted associate, Barbara Farnsworth, are mostly involved. Under this corporate umbrella, they handle the personal management of two artists, Jerry Clower and Jim Ed Brown. "Some of the artists that come to us, want more than just booking," Tandy explains. "They want *direction* in their careers."

As personal manager, Tandy involves himself in even the most minute details of these artists' careers. He negotiates



book contracts for Clower; he coordinates their promotion and publicity; he coaches his artists in their live presentations; and even has a hand in their album cover graphics.

"Now Jim Ed Brown is goin' to be flyin' in here in a couple of days for a graphic session to look at the tone and skin pallor of an album cover," he says incredulously. "Why, shucks! Thirteen years ago, when I

first got into this business, it wouldn't have mattered. . . ."

Momentarily, Tandy is interrupted by the buzzer of his intercom: "Excuse me, Tandy," an assistant tells him, "Jim Ed Brown has not checked into his hotel in San Antonio yet, and Tom T. is out buying a new guitar, and will call you when he comes in."

"Keep on Jim Ed Brown," he



"In the future, you will not be able to be an act of consequence without Management."

tells her. "I need to talk to him."

Taking a sip of his Coke, Tandy expounds on management, a subject that is obviously dear to his heart: "When I first met Jerry Clower, he said to me, 'Let me be specific and tell you what I want from you as a manager: I want somebody who, every morning, when they wake up, before their feet hit the floor, they think to themselves, 'what can I do for Jerry Clower today?' And by God! That impressed me! Now Jerry and me have been together for nine years, and there hasn't been a morning when these feet hit the floor, that that thought hasn't run through my mind!"

"Management is very definitely the wave of the future," Tandy continues. As he hits his desk lightly with the palm of his hand for emphasis, his eyes widen. "Now you can take a tatoo pin and tatoo that 'on your left wrist! I'm here to tell you that in the future—and remember I said this *now*—in Nashville, Tennessee, you will not be able to be an act of consequence without *management*. I believe that with every *fib*re in my *body*! . . . And here at Top Billing, we're gearing up to provide it."

After talking with Tandy awhile, he begins to come across like a walking Dale Carnegie course. ("You've got to get your attitude right before you can get your altitude right," he tells me.) Talking about his life's work and his dreams, his voice often quavers with excitement, and his face breaks into boyish enthusiasm. He seems to be in



constant motion.

"I couldn't get through the day without this," he picks up a tiny portable dictaphone. "When I'm ridin' in my car, I'm talkin' on the radio telephone with one hand and dictatin' memos to myself with the other. I almost run off the damned road!"

An obvious believer in the power of positive thinking, his walls are covered with inspirational quotations and messages, including a framed copy of Vince Lombardi's famous speech, *What It Takes To Be*



Number One. "Read that!" he tells me excitedly. "I mean this is a *helluva* thing! It's heavy, ain't it!"

"Just let me give you an idea of how much this business has changed in the 13 years I've been in it," he continues. "It use'ta be, you'd put your cowboy boots up on the desk and

say 'what the hell you want!' But you don't do that anymore, son! Now you've got to go out in the market place, and bring the buyers in here and set 'em down, and try to prove to them that your artists have bigger benefits to them at the box office than the artists of 'XYZ' Corporation. . . . You make presentations. . . . you show 'em graphics. . . . you show 'em video tapes. . . . You make *love* to 'em, see!"

It becomes clear after a time, that Tandy Rice believes in moving mountains. ("Now I've read this a lot, and I believe this: What you believe in your heart and mind to be true, ultimately has a tendency to become true.") And indeed, after a couple of hours, talking with him, he makes you feel like you can move mountains too.

"He's always optimistic. He's like a spring flowing with excitement," says Helen Cornelius. "I don't think I've ever seen Tandy when he wasn't excited. And he just creates the same enthusiasm in you, because he feels it so strongly."

* * *

A week or so later, I meet Tandy and Jerry Clower in the



"What you believe in your heart and mind to be true, ultimately has a tendency to become true. . . ."

lobby of the Spence Manor Hotel on Music Row, and we're off to a luncheon engagement at Nashville's Hyatt Regency where Jerry is to be presented an award as an "Honorary Pilot" by Delta Air Lines, for the number of times he has flown with that company. Tandy, again, is dressed impeccably. On the way, he and Jerry swap jokes and discuss the fine points of Jerry's career with the casualness that two life-long golf partners might discuss an impending wedge shot. They are totally at ease with one another.

Clower, in person, is a brash, opinionated bull of a man who has little patience with lispy waiters and menus with unpronounceable entrees. ("Run that past me again, son. I don't speak French too good!... Hell, all that is is chocolate puddin'. They just give it a fancy name and charge a dollar more!")

I am struck by the similarity in speech between these two: Either Tandy Rice takes lessons from Jerry Clower, or (more unlikely) Jerry Clower takes lessons from Tandy.

"I don't notice that until people point it out—and they point it out constantly," says Tandy, when asked about this. "Jerry is closer to me than a brother—and I don't just say that 'cause all I've got is sisters, either! Jerry is one of my closest friends, and he's one of the bulwarks and strengths of Top Billing. I'd kill for him if I had to; I'd lay down and *die* for him!"

Clower returns the compliment, and briefly recounts the story of how Tandy made him a star:

"Back when I was still a fertilizer salesman, I spoke at an awards banquet at the Nashville *Banner* (Nashville's evening paper). And the next morning, one of the finest sports writers in the world, Fred Russell, wrote 'Clower Is A Wower!' Well, Tandy here, read it in the paper the next day, and got in touch with me in Yazoo City. Later, I signed



with Top Billing, and that was the beginning of a relationship that's never had a valley. I've never made an album that wasn't a chart record; I'm the only member of the world-famous Grand Ole Opry that don't pick or sing; and I got my own syndicated TV and radio shows. And that's all happened since I started bein' a friend with Tandy Rice. It's wonder-

ful to be successful and do well financially with somebody you've learned to love and enjoy. . . . Anything else ya need t'know, Mr. Writer?"

During the luncheon, Tandy is the perfect politician, smiling, shaking hands, and demonstrating his uncanny ability for remembering first names. But I notice his eyes never stray far from the gold watch on his wrist (a gift from Clower). Suddenly, almost abruptly, he stands up, excuses himself, shakes hands all around, and leaves for a 2:30 appointment.

He is ten minutes late for a



"You can't imagine what a pressure-filled business this is. The possibilities for error are mind-boggling. . . ."

syndicated radio interview with local radio and television personality, Huell Houser. No sooner has he sat down to begin the interview, when he receives an urgent phone message. He returns in a few minutes with a harried look in his eyes. Sometime later, he explains the problem to me: "I had Tom T. Hall booked into a club in the Southwest for a Tuesday through Saturday engagement. Now it turns out, that same Saturday, he was plannin' a huge black-tie cocktail party at his home, and flyin' in a hundred or so people. It's a helluva problem," he grimaces. "And you know whose fault it was? It was mine! Sure, I coulda' blamed it on somebody else, but then I couldn't look those people I work with, in the eye!"

Tandy's carefully pressed shirt is now a little more wilted, and there's a trace of tiredness under his eyes as he takes his seat back in the studio. "You can't imagine what a pressure-filled business this is!" he shakes his head. "The possi-

bilities for error are mind-boggling!"

* * *

My next visit to Tandy's office is the day after the Grammy Awards, and Tandy is nearly ecstatic. This year's show was a real winner for Top Billing. Jerry Clower was this year's cohost. The Kendalls, another group Tandy represents, won a Grammy as the best duet. As he talks to Royce Kendall on the phone, his voice nearly cracks with emotion: "I'm *proud* of you, son!"

"You know, I was watching the Grammys last night," Tandy explains as he puts down the phone, "and my little daughter said to me, 'Daddy, in your wildest dreams, when you signed Jerry Clower eight years ago, did you ever imagine he'd be standing up there, before millions of people?'"

"I said, 'Sure!' In fact, the day I signed Jerry I had that in mind for him. In fact, it never occurred to me that he *wouldn't* be doing it!"

* * *

A native of nearby Franklin, Tennessee, Tandy recalls that when he came out of the Strategic Air Command, where he worked as an information officer, and returned to Nashville, he was oblivious to the country music industry.

"I didn't even know where 16th Avenue South was!" he laughs. "Not only did I not *like*



country music, I didn't even *like* people that liked it! I was doubled-up on prejudice!

"Now, here I am, one of its biggest salesmen," he laughs gleefully, "and a good one! Goin' all over the world, tellin' folks how great country music is, wearin' a 'Billy Beer' cap, drinkin' Billy Beer, and talkin' about Roy Acuff!" he grins, and shakes his head. "That just kills me!"

It was Minnie Pearl, a distant relative of Tandy's, who

steered him to one of the two talent agencies that then existed in Nashville. "They offered me \$25 more a month than one of the local insurance companies was going to pay me, and that \$25 is what got me into this business."

Tandy stayed in the music business, and he slowly learned to love it. Eight years ago, he acquired his own small talent agency, with a total of two



employees. It has since grown into the Top Billing Inc. of today, which employs 14 people, and according to Tandy's projections, stands to make a \$650,000 profit on approximately \$4 million worth of transactions in 1978. Interestingly enough, of Tandy's first three employees, two are still with him. This fact alone speaks well of the man.

"As I look back at the indices of those early years, my body almost pains and wracks!" he explains. "We literally had no money, no acts. . . . We were nobody. In those days, mind you, we didn't have a Tom T. Hall. . . . the name Jerry Clower was nonexistent. . . . Billy Carter was shellin' peanuts. . . . nobody'd even heard of Jimmy. . . . It was a helluva thing!"

One thing that Tandy Rice did have during those formative, financially cliff-hanging years was "a fierce, burning desire to be somebody," a desire that even now, seems not to have diminished. Tandy appears to have tapped some hidden source of energy, and is continually pushing his brain and his body to the outer limits—pushing himself at a relentless pace.

"I love to compete, almost to the point of being a fanatic about it," he explains. "I was Tennessee state mile champion for two years in a row in high school. Runnin' is in my blood. . . . Then I got caught up in the chase for *Mammon*. . . ."

* * *

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GUNNING FOR
BILLY CARTER

By late 1976, Tandy Rice had already built Top Billing into the powerhouse agency that today some call "the best pure country agency in town." But he already had his sights on bigger game: Billy Carter.

Tandy claims the idea for signing Billy came to him one day when he was in Jackson, Mississippi, and went by a newspaper stand, and saw on the front page where the William Morris Agency (a very large national booking agency that books hundreds of artists and public figures, including some major country artists) had signed Gerald Ford.

"It just by God! made me MAD!" he pounds his desk. "I had t'whup 'em bad. I had t'get even with 'em! Next day, I de-



To many Tandy Rice embodies the last of the old-line, Colonel Parker-type, wheeling-dealing, manager-agents. . .

ecided I was goin' after Billy Carter!

"Signing Billy Carter became one of the most overpowering obsessions I've ever had in my life!" says Tandy, his voice rising to an excited pitch. "I just believed with every fibre in my body that he was going to be a big, big, big celebrity, and I wanted to be a part of that so bad!"

As the oft told story goes, Tandy wooed Billy with a flurry of telegrams, letters, phone calls, and finally a personal visit. The pact was sealed with a handshake and later consummated by Billy's three American lawyers. "The eyes of the national media was on Top Billing, when we signed Billy," Tandy says quietly, almost reverently. "I'd go from here sometimes and the pres-

ures of the day, the phone calls, the demands, the hysterics of it all, would leave me with tears comin' down my face! It was the damndest thing I've ever been through!"

Signing Billy must have been one of the biggest steps that Top Billing had ever taken, I conclude.

"Well, that's not true!" he replies sharply. "From the point of view of our corporate life-cycle, good night! There have been all sorts of little milestones: Our association with Tom T. Hall. . . our connection with Jim Ed Brown. . . We recently signed Cornelia Wallace. . . Each of these has had tremendously exciting ramifications. . . .

* * *

To many, Tandy Rice, with his home-grown humor, his

hard east of eye, and his stable of hardcore country acts, embodies the last—and perhaps the best—of the old-line, Colonel Tom Parker-type, wheeling-dealing, fast-talking manager-agents—a fading breed of American entrepreneurs. Some critics will even speculate that the slow erosion of Nashville talent, in search of greater cross-over potential, to Hollywood and points west (i.e. Dolly Parton, Ronnie Milsap, Crystal Gayle) is due to people like him who lack the foresight and/or the resources to tap this cross-over market.

"Tandy's a hard man, and I respect the hell out of him, even though I don't particularly like him," says one music business executive, "he's probably Nashville's top booking agent. . . . But he's no Jim Hal-

sey." (The Halsey Agency is a prestigious and powerful firm that is based in Tulsa, Oklahoma and handles top acts like Roy Clark, Don Williams, Tammy Wynette, and dozens of others).

"Tandy's running about four



to five years behind Halsey," offered a record company representative. "He doesn't have the clout in working deals with record companies that Halsey does. They don't care if he's got Billy Carter. . . . Billy Carter can't sing!"

"Tandy's of the old-school of back-slappin' country boys," adds another music business insider. "Managers like him are the reason artists like Tammy Wynette leave Nashville in search of career direction. Take Roy Clark, for instance: When he was booked out of Nashville, he was just booked as a singer, but Jim Halsey developed him into a total entertainer—a one-man show, if you will. While Tandy is booking his acts into high school gyms and one-night gin mills, Halsey is getting his people in Madison Square Garden, Carnegie Hall, and *The Tonight Show*."

Tandy bristles slightly at the comparison with the Jim Halsey Agency. "I admire Jim Halsey," he says, "but he's only got one thing that I ain't got: It starts with a *Roy* and it ends with a *Clark*! Don't tell me Jim Halsey's a damned magician! If you give me Roy Clark, I'll give you *The Tonight Show*! It's that simple!"

Dolly Parton's recent departure from Top Billing, to a west coast agency was another disappointment that Tandy has had to face. Dolly was signed with Top Billing during her years with Porter, as well as during part of her early solo career. She and Porter (who is still with Top Billing) were a bedrock of the agency during

its formative years.

"After Dolly left here, she said in interviews, 'the people in Nashville didn't dream the same dreams that I did,'" says Andrea Smith, the head of Top Billing's sales (booking) department. "We kind of took that personally. Dolly never gave us the chance to dream those dreams with her."

* * *

For the most part, Tandy Rice is undaunted by the flack and criticism that occasionally falls on his ears, either about the Halsey Agency, or his "good-old-boy" approach to his business. Spend some time with Tandy, and you come away with the feeling that beneath his cultivated Southern inflections and his corn-fed humor, there lurks an astute and creative mind that can look horns with the best of them. Tandy has the energy level of a Zen Buddhist, and the determination and relentlessness of a Sherman tank. It's a good guess that you'd have to get up pretty early to catch Tandy Rice with his feet up on his desk.

"I'm here t'tell ya, we're gearing up right now to do combat with the Jim Halseys of



the world," he says emphatically. "I'm just lookin' for my big ace that's gonna start openin' doors there (the West Coast). . . . Within the next thirty days, we've got three acts we think we're going to commit to a marriage with—and by God! signin' an act is a marriage!"

"I can't think of anyplace I'd rather be right now than right here, doing what I'm doing," he adds enthusiastically. "And if the good Lord keeps smilin' on me and shinin' on me, I'll continue to do it at a profit."

"The challenges are there, and we're up to 'em, son! We're out for bear!"

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Conway Twitty & Loretta Lynn

Honky Tonk Heroes
MCA MCA-2372

Loretta and Conway are, needless to say, two of country music's top talents—individually and together. Their album, *Lead Me On*, still stands as one of the benchmarks others aim at.

Their latest, *Honky Tonk Heroes*, is a big improvement over their last couple. Hardcore Conway and Loretta fans will be glad for that, but it still doesn't match their best.

This one has some memorable songs on it (but not enough). It would be convenient to blame them for selecting songs from their own publishing companies, a fact which I think weakened their recent albums, but in fact that's where they got this album's best numbers: *You're the Reason Our Kids are Ugly*, *We've Made it Legal* and *Country Blues*.

They seem to have lost some of the passion of a few years back. Maybe this is the complacency of stardom, or, perhaps, the growth of their separate careers limits the time they spend together. I'm sure



no one is standing over them with a whip, forcing them to use songs like *How High Can You Build A Fire*, so why do they?

Still, the improvement here is welcome. Let's hope it means their next recaptures their full potential.

EDWARD



Susie Allanson

We Belong Together
Warner/Curb BSK 3217

Her recent stunning chart successes notwithstanding, Susie Allanson's debut LP on her new label comes across careful and calculated: as digestible as angel food cake, and as satisfying.

The arrangements and tracks are pure Linda Ronstadt, a remarkable recreation of her west coast sound. The same goes for the material: part soft rock, part soft country, a pair of old rock classics—Buddy Holly's *Maybe Baby* and Phil Spector's vapid *Be My Baby*—a new rock classic (*Desperado*, no less) and even the obligatory folkie-oldie, in this case *Shenandoah*.

Ms. Allanson's producer Ray Ruff has virtually served us Linda Ronstadt on a platter, the only discernable difference being Ms. Allanson's unique voice, a well controlled hybrid of Dolly Parton and Diana Ross. She is a skilled (but not an affecting) singer, and in the context of so obviously programmed an album, her voice seems like yet another carefully chosen element in a hit-making formula rather than a conveyor of feeling or passion.

The formula here is as calculated and businesslike as it programmed by computer. Judging by the three hit singles which have come off this album it is quite obviously a successful formula, but ultimately the music has none of the spontaneity, ingenuousness, or believability that makes for great country music.

DOUGLAS B. GREEN

Don Williams

Expressions

ABC AY-1069

There are two reasons behind the phenomenal success of Don Williams in the last few years. One is that he's still a great folk singer who never really abandoned his roots. Back in the Sixties, he led the Pozo Secos Singers—Corpus Christi, Texas, version of Peter, Paul and Mary—to the top of the national pop charts with a sweet, soft ballad called *Time*. Except for the fact that he no longer requires vocal support, his sound remains essentially the same.

The second reason is that



Williams is a master of love songs. When you get down to the sheer numbers of record sales, I think more people would rather listen to Olivia Newton-John or Williams than, say, George Jones or Johnny Paycheck, simply be-

cause more people understand the nuances of love than they do of cheating.

Williams' latest album reveals few new tricks. His soothing voice, economical instrumentation, and loping beat are as constant here as the west Texas wind. There is one uncharacteristic rocker, *Tulsa Time*, where he strays from his usual course, but even at his most raucous Williams makes J.J. Cale sound like a Mexican jumping bean.

Subtlety is the name of the game here, and Williams knows how to play it best (Jack Clement's recent album is a good example of how

(Continued on page 52)

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Williams

(Continued from page 50)
influential Williams currently is). Songs like *It Must Be Love* and *Lay Down Beside Me*—or anything else on this album, for that matter—are destined for airplay; such is his wide appeal. But even while he prefers the soft, sublime method of making records, and manages to cross over consistently into pop, he never sinks to total mushiness to get his point across. Which is why old folk(ie)s like Williams are the heirs apparent of modern country music.

JOE NICK PATOSKI

Tommy Overstreet Better Me

ABC AY-1064

Maybe every singer should go through the sort of apprenticeship Tommy Overstreet did. Before doing any serious recording at all, he spent several years working for Dot Records (now part of ABC) where he got a grip on the mechanics of the music business. Knowing the difference between the music *business* and the *music business* can mean the difference between a thriving career or an abbreviated one, and Overstreet has learned his lessons well. He



seems to know, for example, what sort of material suits him best, and stays with it, avoiding the overreaching that's undone many others. His music has considerable pop influences, but his basic thrust remains unmistakably country, as *Better Me* demonstrates.

There are strings here, background singers, too. But producer Ron Chancey knows where they belong (and where they don't). The material is

well-chosen and consistent with some odd slants. Sterling Whipple's *Better Me* and *Nice Guys Finish Last* are wryly moralistic love songs with a decidedly non-macho angle. *If This Is Freedom (Then I Want Out)*, *Stolen Wine* and *Cheaters' Kit* sink their fangs into the very concept of adultery. *I Can't Love Without You* and *Shadows Of Love* are straightforward laments. The love-radio station analogy of *Fadin' In, Fadin' Out* is clever and unaffected, buttressed by a hard-kicking arrangement. Another cheating tune, *One Lives In My Name (One Lives In My Heart)* is an updated variation of Jimmy Wakely's 1948 classic *One Has My Name, The Other Has My Heart*.

Overstreet obviously puts some time into his records, for *Better Me* confirms overwhelmingly my longstanding contention the country-politician needn't mean schlock.

RICH KIENZLE

Merle Haggard I'm Always On A Mountain When I Fall

MCA-2375

Considering that Merle Haggard has one of the great voices in country music, of course he's always on a mountain when he falls. And this album lives up to that title.

Most of the material is distressingly slow-moving, to the point where one ballad blends into another. If it weren't for two lines spoken in the middle of Merle's self-written, Don Williams sound-alike, *Love Me When You Can*, it would have passed me by all together. If you can get beyond the uninspirational music, however,

there are some very intriguing lyrics going on.

First, *There Won't Be Another Now*, which contains such poetic peaks as "Something deep inside of me/makes me want to kiss you on the mouth": up until then, I thought maybe it was about father-to-daughter, loss of innocence. Then *Ain't No Good Chain Gang*, which Haggard sings with somewhat more conviction, also features some fairly rhyming clichés. The big surprise, though, is *The Immigrant*, in which the *Okie From Muskogee* seems to be aging into liberalism. At least, he's coming out for wet-backs, the "Mexican immigrant" who's "helping America grow."

Well, at least he's not wasting away in Margueritaville, which is what the song sounds like at first. On the other hand, if new Haggard is needed, I'd stick to *The Roots Of My Raising* or *My Farewell to Elvis* before investing in this.

SUSAN TOEPFER

Carlene Carter Carlene Carter

Warner Bros. BSK 3204

The synthesis is intriguing: a genuine country blueblood backed by the spearhead of the back-to-basics British rock movement. When it clicks, Carlene Carter's debut album is a punchy halfway house between the pub and the honky-tonk, as the daughter of June Carter and Carl Smith is prodded into action by the accompanying members of The Rumour (the group generally plays with rocker Graham Parker, and two members, Bob Andrews and Brinsley Schwarz, produced the album) and other guest English musicians. On Rodney Crowell's reggae-tinged *Never Together But Close Sometimes*, Parker's *Between You and Me* and Carlene's own *Smoke Dreams*—where her lineage is absolutely evident: her pronunciation of the word "trains" is wholly Nashvillean—the band is hot, especially Schwarz on guitar, and Carter's voice has presence and range.

Too much of the album, however, fails to ignite as it

should, considering the talent involved; Alex Call's two songs are less than ordinary, Carlene takes on Tracy Nelson on her own turf and falls short (so did Ronstadt: Nelson is a formidable vocal model), and her own compositions are too centered in conventional female singer-songwriter modes without any real personality. But Carter's decision not to take advantage of her genealogy but to hook up with the class act of seventies British rock and roll makes the best parts of *Carlene Carter* crisp and forthright, totally contemporary, with enough family traits to justify Carlene's dedication of the LP to her grandmother, Maybelle Carter.

MITCH COHEN



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Room Service

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Freddy FENDER
SWAMP GOLD

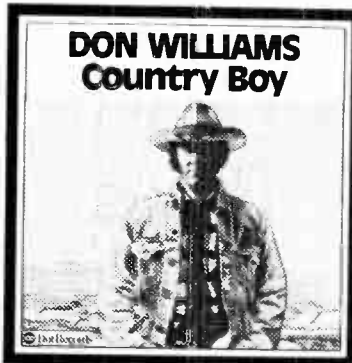
Freddy's new ABC album marks his return to the style that made him famous. "Swamp Gold," his most exciting album since "Wasted Days," contains 15 different Fender songs. Includes "Talk To Me," "When It Rains, It Really Pours," and "It's Raining."



TOMMY OVERSTREET
Better Me

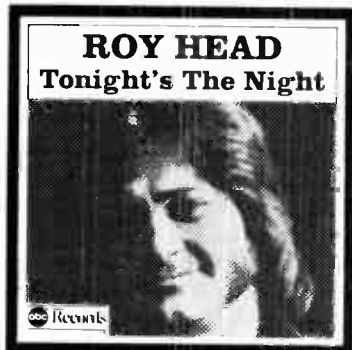
Tommy Overstreet's tenth anniversary album stays true to country sound, featuring "Better Me" and "Nice Guys Finish Last."

New albums on ABC Records and GRT Tapes.



DON WILLIAMS
Country Boy

He makes a brand of American music that's already taken England by storm. Don Williams and his latest album, "Country Boy." Includes "I've Got A Winner In You," "I'm Just A Country Boy," and "Rake And Rambin' Man."



ROY HEAD
Tonight's The Night

"Treat Her Right" was Roy Head's classic, but wait 'til you hear what this master performer has come up with on his brand new LP. Some of the songs he treats exceptionally right include "Tonight's the Night," "Pieces Of My Life," and "Now You See 'Em, Now You Don't."



OAKRIDGE BOYS

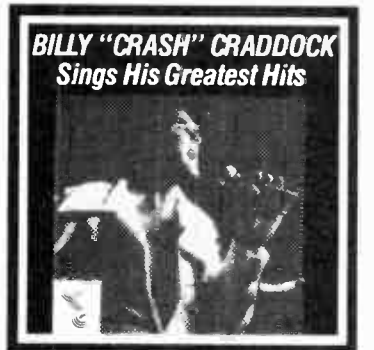
Y'all Come Back Saloon

The good times are on the house—and on the new Oak Ridge Boys album, "Y'all Come Back Saloon"! Includes "You're The One," "I'll Be True To You" and the hit single "Y'all Come Back Saloon."



ROY CLARK

Everybody's favorite singer and instrumentalist, Roy Clark, has put together a collection of new and old favorites, including "Southern Nights," "Must You Throw Dirt On My Face," "It Was Almost Like a Song," and more. A brand new album by Roy Clark is a reason for celebration!



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Here She Comes Again

Dolly Parton Heartbreaker

RCA AFL1-2797

If Dolly Parton is anything, she is controversial. Knowing that her new album would stir passions, we asked two of our top writers, both of whom are great admirers of Dolly and her talent, to give you their reactions. As you will see below, the storms are already brewing.



by ALANNA NASH

What a mindblower the new Dolly Parton album is! From the cover right on through the last cut on the second side, *Heartbreaker* is a brand new Dolly, a Dolly so different from her Jolene days that she is liable to cause mass apoplexy among the hard-core country fans who refused to follow her down the *Here You Come Again* route. It's always been hard to classify Dolly's music, even on her early albums, and it's difficult to attach labels here, but the majority of tunes on *Heartbreaker* fall into two categories: easy-listening and are you ready?--disco! Not

the soft hint of disco that appeared on *Here You Come Again* (and which was suggested more in the jacket photo than in the actual music), but get-down, get-it-on disco, the kind that has Dolly panting, "I'm undone, so come and do me!"

Overall, *Heartbreaker*, which credits Dolly, as the producer "with" Gary Klein who produced *Here You Come Again*, and Barbra Streisand's *Superman*, is far slicker than *Here You Come Again* ever dared to be. Never mind that the laid-back Dr. John (Mac Rebennack) drops in to play piano on a couple tunes. Jim Keltner (Leon Russell's old

drummer) adds special effects and Jeff Baxter (of the Doobie Brothers and formerly of Steely Dan) puts down a few licks on the guitar synthesizer.

It sure sounds strange hearing all this coming from Dolly's little-girl voice, but all the up-beat tunes are undeniably infectious and feel-good, from the funky horns on *Sure Thing* and *I Wanna Fall in Love*, to the Latin rhythms and congas on *With You Gone*, the latter tune also featuring Joe McGuffee on steel guitar! But, if you're looking for any more twinges of country on this album, recorded in California, better pull out your magnifying glass. *The Man*, one of six Parton originals (along with the three above) is essentially a country lyric—Dolly loves her father (as "the man" is revealed to be in a surprise ending, one of her devices from the country days)—but it's set to an electronic beat.

Dolly Parton is a very talented lady and there's no reason she shouldn't be allowed to sing and create whatever music she likes. But she is new to the pop style, and she is not yet able to write pop songs with the depth she brought to a good many of her country/folk tunes. This is pointed up

in her recording of the title tune, David Wolfert and Carole Bayer Sager's wonderful *Heartbreaker*, which is so solid and well-crafted that it makes a good deal of the other songs on the album look like fluff. But Dolly will be writing songs like this one before long, and singing them just as well as she does *Heartbreaker*.

But all these songs are still representative of Dolly Parton, who has a lot more music inside her than the stuff Porter Wagoner wanted her to do exclusively. And, who cares if some of these songs are shuck and jive? They're not supposed to be *Jolene* and *Coat of Many Colors*. Rather than fault the album for what it is not, let's celebrate the fact that Dolly is feeling free enough to experiment with all sorts of musical forms.

This album is fun and enjoyable listening. Yes, indeed! *Heartbreaker* is sure to live up to its title in Nashville, especially with the A.C.E. crowd, but the irony of it all is that hunched over the control board in Fireside Studio, Porter Wagoner is now working on his newest musical love—none other than disco! Sometimes it seems like the more things change, the more they stay the same.

by EDWARD

Let me get a couple of things straight right off. I listen to all different kinds of music, and enjoy them all. So if Dolly Parton wants to become a pop star, I'm not going to join in the chorus of people saying she's betraying country music or selling out to Hollywood. She's young, she's talented, and she's got only one life to lead. So whatever she decides to do with it is her business. Anyway, her voice is rich and pure, the perfect vehicle for any number of pop styles. If she can't find any good material, there are hundreds of fine songwriters who'd be glad to write her some, but there are already thousands of songs in the fields of soul, soft-rock, progressive coun-

try, and even regular country that she could choose. So I'm perfectly ready to accept and praise a great—or even a good—Dolly Parton pop album.

That way, when I tell you that everybody concerned with *Heartbreaker* should be tried for crimes against music, you'll know that I'm not just some cranky old guy who wishes that she go back to Porter Wagoner's TV show. From it's cover (which looks like the nightmare of an interior decorator who's eaten too much peach ice cream) to its deadening production, this is a disaster. Specific low points include: a song entitled *It's Too Late To Love Me Now*, which is virtually a note-for-note rewrite of *Lovin' Arms*, the Tom Jans song; the breathless duet vocal of one Rich-

ard Dennison on *We're Through Forever (Till Tomorrow)*, on which he sounds like a piano bar crooner who can't make up his mind if he's Elvis Presley or Barry White; and Dolly's disco song, titled *Sure Thing*, which is surely the worst song she's ever written, if not the worst song she's ever recorded.

But, even if *Sure Thing* is lyrically inane, and horrendously overproduced, Dolly's repeated "sure thing" line at the end shows her singing in a really interesting pop style. *The Man*, a tribute to her father, isn't a brilliant song, but it stems from a pretty creative concept. And on and on. Dolly sorely needs direction, someone to pick better songs for her, someone to provide her with more sympathetic backing, someone to steer her

clear of the disastrous course she seems hell bent on taking.

Hey, Dolly, go talk to Linda, go talk to Emmylou, and see if you can't learn something from them. Obviously, you don't want to be a country queen like Emmylou, and the hard-rocking edge of a lot of Linda's stuff might not become you, either. But a solid consideration of what they're doing might give you a clue of what you should do.

You are not Barbra Streisand, Carole Bayer Sager or Mae West. You are Dolly Parton, and a lot of us love you enough to forgive you a lot.

Heartbreaker, though, is too much: it's more than any of your fans, in and out of the country music field want to endure. Second rate songs, second rate production. That really is a *Heartbreaker*.

The Oak Ridge Boys

Room Service

ABC AY 1065

It is often bewildering how so many Broadway musicals—*Carousel*, *Showboat*, *My Fair Lady*, et al.—have earned an almost legendary status simply by virtue of one, two, at most three, memorable songs. And yet the Oak Ridge Boys have done exactly the same on their latest album, *Room Service*. There are only two cuts out of 11 really worth listening to, but those two songs—*If There Were Only Time For Love* and *I'll Be True To You*—are such priceless masterpieces that they elevate an otherwise average album into the category of greatness. In their median foray from gospel into country music (the boys had actually been planning such a move about three years before *Y'All Come Back Sa-*



loon) the Oaks have revived an almost lost art on Nashville's Music Row: i.e., the ability to pick a winning song. To the

uninitiated this may seem a rather easy task, but when 90% of today's country albums are the musical equiva-

lent of the Chinese water torture, hearing two such paragons on one disc is tantamount to finding two Hope Diamonds lying in the street.

As for the rest of the album, the songs are—surprise—about women and love affairs, and most of them—double surprise—on a positive note, and much of that on the order of *I've Had So Many Women And I've Had My Heart Broken So Many Times And I Guess I've Broken A Few Myself But Now I've Found You And Those Lonely Old Days Are Over At Last 'Cause I Just Want To Spend The Rest Of My Life With You Always And Forever*. Almost like a sinner finding Jesus.

But then about the time you get your fill of this, you hear one or the other of the two transcendent songs and realize that you are listening to an album that will be some time in being surpassed.

JOHN PUGH



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Nashville's Master Songwriters Sing Their Hits

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Do songwriters, like singers, have their own fans? Surely some of them do, and fans of those four writers might want to check out this album even though the vocal performances are rather erratic. For its first entry into the country marketplace, this small Nashville independent label asked Harlan Howard, Allen Reynolds, John Schweers, and Danny Dill to each record two of their favorite original hit compositions plus one "hit for the future." (Actually, all three Reynolds songs have already scored, but Allen cut *Ready For The Times To Get Better* before Crystal Gayle made it a hit.)

Now there are reasons why some people are writers and

others are singers, and only a select few manage to excel at both. Truth to tell, none of these four have that something extra that separates the adequate singers from the greats. Reynolds, for example, has a rather weak voice, but his attention towards the nuances of his songs still carries the day. Schweers' vocals are so strikingly similar to—who else?—Ronnie Milsap's that it's hard not to draw comparisons on something like *Daydreams About Night Things*. Schweers can't match Ronnie, of course, but his new *Early Fall* is such an obvious hit for somebody that he's hardly got anything to worry about. And Dill's voice has a pleasing old-timey quality. His semi-humorous *Don't Sell The Farm (And Move to Nashville)* is the perfect closer, since it is about the perils of pursuing a songwriting career. Like the other three, he should know.

JOHN MORTHLAND

Roy Clark/ Buck Trent Banjo Bandits

ABC—AY1084

When you turn loose the formidable banjo talents of Roy Clark and Buck Trent on an entire instrumental LP, you get exactly what you might expect: ten cuts of spirited acoustic music, brimming with excitement and enthusiasm. The range of material on *Banjo Bandits* runs the gamut from traditional bluegrass numbers

to some sparkling Clark-Trent originals.

But after a second or third playing, many of the cuts begin to sound the same. They are all dominated by the slick, flashy banjo duets, and underpinned by tasteful piano, guitar, mandolin and bass flourishes from some of Nashville's top instrumentalists.

Unless you're a die-hard banjo enthusiast, you're apt to find *Banjo Bandits* a little tiring. Despite the expertise and enthusiasm of the players, it ultimately sounds like out-takes from the soundtrack of *Hee-Haw*. Too often, the nuance and subtleties of the various musical styles become homogenized by the recurrent flourishes and interplays of this powerhouse banjo duet. *Banjo Bandits* is chock full of slick, high-caliber, good-time banjo music—nothing more and nothing less.

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BURIED TREASURES

These days you'll find but a handful of steel guitarists on major labels, unlike the Fifties and Sixties, when it was routine to see a Pete Drake or Jerry Byrd on artists rosters. Today smaller labels handle steel records, and the market is apparently thriving, if parochial.

Dewitt "Scotty" Scott owns Scotty's Music in St. Louis. Himself an excellent steel player, he founded the annual International Steel Guitar Convention several years ago. He also issues solo LPs by top steelers through his Midland label, including *All Those Years* (Midland MD-JD-10010) by Ray Price/Willie Nelson veteran Jimmy Day; it's a fine set of country classics complete with shuffle beat and twin fiddles. *Joaquin Murphey* (Midland JM-12), the first recording in years by the reclusive legend who worked with

If you know any "buried treasures" you think we should cover, write *Buried Treasures*, c/o Country Music, 475 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10016.

Spade Cooley, Tex Williams and Merle Travis, features his skillful treatments of *Honey-suckle Rose* and other pop-jazz standards and originals. Herbie Remington played ferocious steel behind Bob Wills in the Forties, but now sticks to standard lounge fare. *Strung Up* (Midland MD-19) spotlights lyrical renditions of rather mundane material. Pedal steel master Buddy Emmons was recorded at last year's steel convention with Buddy Spicher and pianist Randy Goodrum and the two-volume *Live At The 1977 ISGC* (ISGC 1, 2) set is as good as the previous Emmons-Spicher collaboration, *Buddies*

on *Flying Fish*.

Tom Bradshaw runs Pedal Steel Guitar Products from his Oakland, California, home. He recently instituted a Vintage Classics series, legal reissues of long out-of-print steel albums including Jerry Byrd's excellent *Steel Guitar Favorites* (Vintage Classics VC-2) and steel wildman Speedy West's *Steel Guitar* (Vintage Classics VC-8) and *Guitar Spectacular* (Vintage Classics VC-10) LPs.

Also from Oakland, Joe Goldmark plays steel for the Billy C. Farlow Band, a Commander Cody spinoff. *Pickin My Pleasures* (Lo-Ball 1) is his first LP on his own label, a mixed bag of imaginatively adapted rock tunes past and present with some equally facile swing and C&W. His innovative playing makes this 23 year old a future force to be reckoned with. RICH KIENZLE

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KING K

Shot Jackson: Evolution Of The Steel Guitar

"There's no end to the way the steel guitar is going. It's an entirely different instrument than when I first started playing, and these new boys want more changes and improvements every year." So says Harold "Shot" Jackson, and if anyone ought to know it is he, for as head of Sho-Bud steel guitars he's seen the instrument evolve from the Dobro and the "biscuit board" electric of the 1940's to the electronic and mechanical complexity it is today.

Shot started out down in Florida, coming to Nashville in 1944 with Cousin Wilbur Westbrook's tent show. After a short stint in the service he joined the then-popular Bailes Brothers on the Opry and moved with them to KWKH in Shreveport in 1948. There they were among the initial stars of the Louisiana Hayride when it was initiated in 1948. When the Bailes Brothers broke up in 1950, Shot went to work for Johnny and Jack—Johnny Wright's wife Kitty Wells was not yet a star—and moved back to the Grand Ole Opry with them in 1952.

Shot stayed with Johnny and Jack until 1958, and in the meantime he and ultra-progressive steel player Buddy Emmons started building pedal steels "in my garage, as a hobby." The pedal steel, though used as early as the middle 1930's by pop steel guitarist and big bandleader Alvino Rey (real name: Al McBurney), burst explosively on the country music scene with Bud Isaac's bending, insinuating pedal-pumping on Webb Pierce's hit *Slowly* in 1953. "Buddy and I weren't happy with any pedal steel we could buy in those days," recalled Shot between trips to the bathroom to expectorate a healthy wad of tobacco juice. "It was still a new instrument, with lots of experimenting going on. Once we built some to suit ourselves, everybody wanted one!"

In 1958, Shot had joined Roy Acuff's Smokey Mountain Boys and one day Acuff chanced upon the rampant clutter of Shot's garage, and horrified, staked the adventurous builders-pickers to a building of their own. Business boomed in the era, hurt though it was by the rock boom, and Shot became sole owner in the early 1960's, shortly before opening the famous retail store—a lower Broadway landmark like Tootsie's Orchid Lounge and Ernest Tubb's Record Shop—in 1963. It was during this era steel great Lloyd Green said of Shot: "I'd go in to see him with some wild new theoretical idea



Johnny and Jack c. 1950 with Paul Warren (fiddle), Shot Jackson (dobro).

about pedal and knee lever arrangements, and he'd shake his head and try to explain to me why it was impossible. Then a week or two later he'd call me and have it ready."

A serious accident on a rain-slicked highway in 1965 critically injured Roy Acuff and several of his Smokey Mountain Boys, among them Shot Jackson. Though they both vowed to retire Roy was soon performing on crutches and is still out there fiddling; Shot however, slowed down on touring considerably, playing a few weekend dates every so often since then with Donna Darlene, and more recently playing with the Clark Family on *Hee Haw*. He has instead spent his time overseeing the continually growing retail outlet on Broadway, and the development of the steel guitar factory on six floors of an old riverfront area warehouse at 178 Second Avenue North in downtown Nashville, about two blocks

from the Broadway store.

"Right now we're working our tails off. Every year we have to modify what we have because the boys seem to want new stuff every year. It keeps us busy just updating the changes we want. Like old Alvino Rey—yeah, he's still around—he plays a Sho-Bud guitar. We just updated his steel completely, made a new process we have of unlimited raising and lowering the strings.

"I see no end to it. It's so versatile with all these new electronic gadgets, it's a whole orchestra in itself—it can sound like a string section, or an organ, or a synthesizer, anything. Plus in all kinds of music, not only country. There's Buddy Emmons and Curly Chalker playing jazz, and it's in rock and gospel and Alvino Rey, you can't get any more pop than that. Shoot no," he said, expectorating a last bit of tobacco juice. "I don't see any end to it at all." ■

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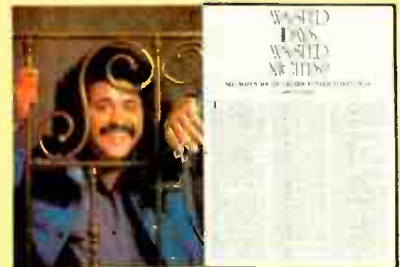
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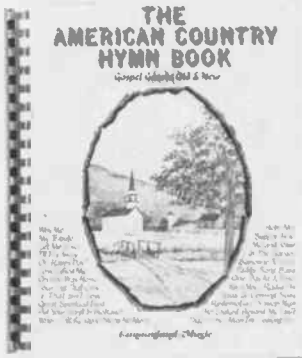
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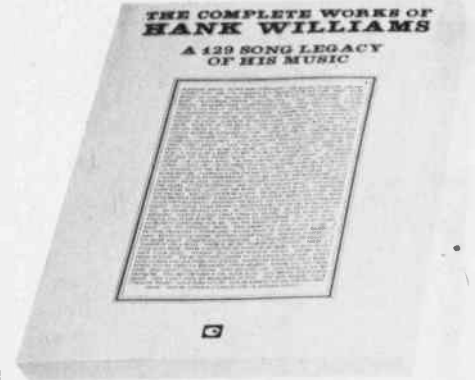
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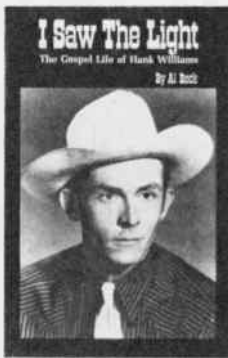
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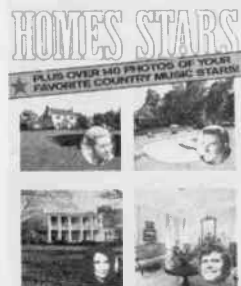


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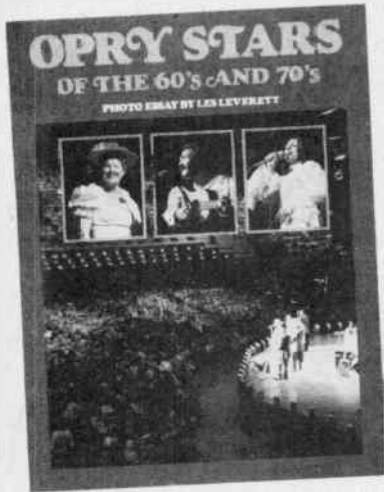
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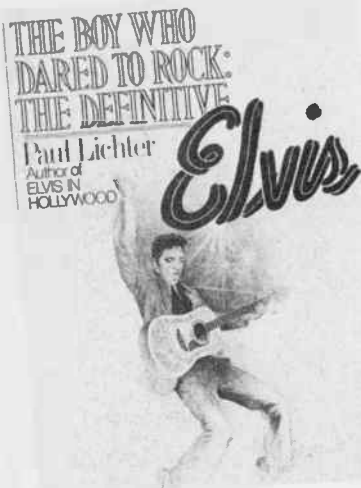
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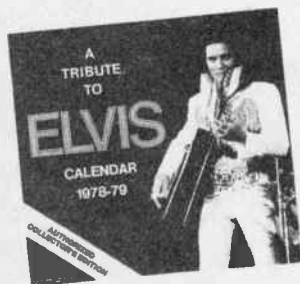
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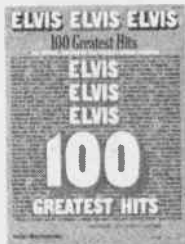
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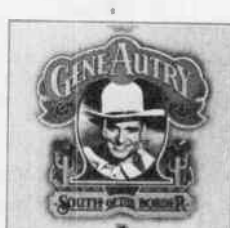
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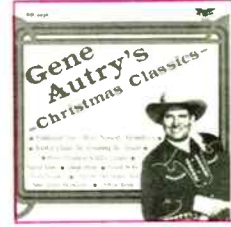
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STELLA

(Continued from page 32)

a lot easier to build a career.

Alanna: *How have your parents reacted to all this popularity you've received?*

Stella: I think they're proud. But then they always have been the type to say, "That's good, but I knew you could do it." You can do anything you want to. You're not too dumb, and you're talented. They never went around sayin', "You're beautiful and you're talented and intelligent." It was just an unspoken understanding that everybody could do what they wanted to do if they wanted to.

Alanna: *Would they rather that people left them alone?*

Stella: Yeah. When you're raised in the country and you're a hard worker like my daddy is, they'd just as soon be left alone. Daddy don't even like to go out and eat in restaurants. It's kind of a strain on you for people to come up to the house and knock on the door if you're havin' supper. I can understand how they would just as well be left alone.

Alanna: *I thought they were living in Lebanon, Tennessee.*

Stella: They were, but they sold that place and they're lookin' for another farm now. They hate it where they're at now (in a small home in Nashville). They don't like to live in an area that close. 'Cause they're from the farm.

Alanna: *How has Sevier County changed since you grew up?*

Stella: It hasn't. We got two new high schools and several factories that have helped as far as the income of the people there. But that's all that's really changed.

Alanna: *Does your management or record company plan to build a certain image for you?*

Stella: I don't reckon. I'm just me, and I guess that's what they're workin' with. If it was some made-up image of what somebody else in the record company wanted my image to be, I'm afraid I couldn't be that. I have to be me. And if they can work with that, then I'm glad. I don't know what my image is. Whatever it is, I hope it's good. And I don't know what my music style is. I guess I would have to describe it as a mixture of gospel, folk and country harmony. I don't know what else it could be. I think it's simple, and I hope it's pleasant.

Alanna: *What changes have you seen in your music or your style since the early album?*

Stella: I think it's better, all the time. But the more you hear yourself on tape, the better you become, because you're more critical of yourself than other people. Just like if you see yourself enough on TV, you're gonna become better on TV. We tape a lot of the road shows to make 'em better. Production-wise, I think

it's improved a lot. I think the songs we've chosen for the last album we were fortunate to get. The more people submit better songs to you, the more successful you become. So you should get better with every album.

Alanna: *How did you decide on your manager Norton Styne?*

Stella: Well, I was introduced to him, and I liked him as a person. He was a real nice, not-typical-manager type. You know how managers are. They want to promise you everything. "We can do this and that, and we're gonna do so and so." None of that. He'd never managed a country act before. But I just like him as a person because he didn't come on with all that bull.

Alanna: *It wasn't that he is in L.A.?*

Stella: No. Personally, I never have had anybody in Nashville that was a manager—that was in the capacity of a manager, that said, "I'd like to manage you." I've never had anybody in Nashville even ask me that. I've asked several booking agents to book me, in Nashville. I'm with John McMeen now, and he signed me before I ever had a contract. Before *I Want To Hold You In My Dreams*, John booked me as a single act, when I didn't have anything but a little independent record that I had produced myself and had out. But as far as anybody in Nashville ever offering to do me any favors or to believe in me to that point, nobody ever did. Because nobody ever took me serious before Jim Malloy—that was in any position to do anything for me. I've done a few things, like *I Want To Hold You In My Dreams*, but it wasn't because somebody said, "I'm gonna take you and make you a star. I'm gonna take you and help you get your record placed. *I Want To Hold You In My Dreams*, I placed myself. Bob Dean helped me produce the session, but I helped finance it, and I took it and placed the session. I got somebody to release it and distribute it. I took it to the record companies and tried to get 'em to take it, to pick it up and release it. Nobody else did it. I did it.

Alanna: *How many times were you turned down?*

Stella: I don't know. They thought, "She's Dolly's sister, and she just sings because Dolly works with Porter Wagoner, and Dolly's a good songwriter. We don't really care that much about Dolly's singin'." But she works with Porter, and so she's got a lot of exposure on TV, and Dolly's becomin' pretty much a household word." But that still didn't make 'em take me serious, because I just happened to be Dolly's kid sister. And I guess they just thought I wasn't serious.

Alanna: *So that's why you set up your own independent label?*

Stella: Right.

Alanna: *When did you begin to feel you were emerging from Dolly's shadow?*

Stella: I don't know that I have yet. I

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never went out on stage with the fear that they wouldn't like me because I was Dolly's sister, or they would like me because I was Dolly's sister. I went out there and hoped they would like me because I was Stella. And I will continue to do that, regardless of how big Dolly gets, or I get. It don't bother me that Dolly happened to become successful before me, I'm glad. But as far as bein' afraid to go out there and try what I wanted to do, because Dolly had made it, I'm not, and I never have been. Now, I have refused to let people book me—and it's on my contract—that they can't use Dolly's name to advertise my show. Because, a lot of times, I've worked shows and arrived at a club and Dolly's name would be bigger than mine on the marquee. And Dolly wasn't the one that was gonna be there at all—it was me. But the club owner or promoter was exploitin' Dolly, takin' advantage of Dolly, at my expense. And that ain't fair.

Alanna: How about your other brothers and sisters who aren't in show business?

Stella: They're honest, they work hard, they're country, they're Southern, and they're good. Two live in Sevierville, brothers, David and Denver. Bobby lives in the state of Washington now, and he's a carpenter. Denver operates heavy machinery, and David is a foreman on a construction job, and has been for several years. But they're just ordinary people, just like I'm ordinary.

Alanna: Do you think you sound like Dolly?

Stella: No, I don't, honestly. I think I talk like her some, and I can sound like her. The similarity is there because we're sisters and we grew up in the same family. How could anybody say, "Well, she's just tryin' to sound like Dolly?" If anybody has the right to sound like her, I do. But I don't even listen to Dolly's records, because I don't want to pick up any phrase or anything that she does that I might do.

Alanna: Do audiences usually yell "chest" comments at you?

Stella: Oh, yeah! They say, "What happened to you?" Just all kinds of stuff. But that's why I tell jokes myself, so that they know that I don't really care. I'm proud to be who I am. I might not be gorgeous. I might not be glamorous or sexy, but I don't think I'm ugly, either. So it doesn't bother me. If I was disappointed and unhappy with myself, because I didn't look like Dolly, then it might hurt my feelings. But it don't hurt at all. That's one thing we got from Momma. She don't want to be like nobody but Avie Lee. She don't appreciate somebody tellin' her what to do or what not to do.

Alanna: When she gets angry, I'll bet she's...

Stella: Whew! But you know, she don't get mad that much. She don't lose her temper that much with the family at all. Or if she is, we don't pay attention to it. She's not a real hateful person, but to hear

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Momma talk, you'd think she was the meanest woman to ever come out of the mountains. But that's Momma, and it don't matter. I figure if people don't understand then so what? I don't care. You can't get through when she does get upset about something. You just can't get through.

Alanna: Did Dolly give you any advice?

Stella: No. Dolly regards me as havin' as much smarts as she does. So she figures, "Well, if Stella don't know, then I sure don't know." And when somebody says, "What do you think about Dolly doin' this or that?" I always say, "Well, I figure Dolly knows what she's doing." And I honestly *do* feel like she knows what she's doin'. If she asks me, I tell her though.

Alanna: Why have you made hats your trademark?

Stella: I wear the hats because different hats give me different personalities. I can wear a junky-lookin' hat and feel real loose, like I'm real relaxed. Then I can wear one that's kinda sophisticated and feel that, too. I love 'em. I started wearin' 'em to dress up outfits that weren't really dressy. And I thought, "Well, I can wear a scarf around the hat and change it and wear another colored scarf with the same hat; that'll give everything a face lift." It was economical and it helped when you didn't have time to fix your hair. My hair was long and straight for a while, so I just plopped a hat on when I didn't want to fix it.

Alanna: When did you start doing this?

Stella: I'm not sure. Possibly seven or eight years ago.

Alanna: How did you feel when you heard you'd won most promising international artist at Wembley?

Stella: Great! It was a real surprise, because I didn't even know I was nominated. And I was nominated with people I respect an awful lot for their talent—Larry Gatlin, Billie Jo Spears and Moe Bandy. I was just really surprised that I won it.

Alanna: You were up for Best Female Artist, too.

Stella: Yeah. I was up for Top Female Vocalist. Dolly won that award. I couldn't have lost to a better person.

Alanna: Tell me about the movie you made, *Cloud Dancer*.

Stella: The movie stars David Carradine, Jennifer O'Neill and Joseph Botto. I understand the movie is based on a true story about an airplane pilot who does aerobatics. I play myself and sing *The Star Spangled Banner* at the start of the airshow before some 30,000 people in the audience.

Alanna: There are a few rumors about your plans for the summer. . .

Stella: I don't know where Huell Howser (a Nashville-based television reporter) got his information that I was gettin' married

this summer and that I was expectin'. Because if I'm expectin', I don't know it. I can't believe some of this stuff that people come up with. I guess it's a mark of success when people start gossipin' about you, but that's not true at all.

(Editor's note: At press time, *Country Music* learned Stella did indeed marry her friend and producer, Jim Malloy. The marriage was performed in Nashville on July 4th and son, Timmy, did the honors of giving Mom away.)

Alanna: Did you sit down and write out a plan for your life as Dolly supposedly did?

Stella: No. I always knew I'd have to work hard all my life and I know I'll continue to work hard; I don't mind at all. I like work and I like to be busy. But I always had a mental picture of myself as being a financially secure lady. And I still have a picture of myself as being that.

Alanna: What would that mean to you?

Stella: Bein' able to go on vacation if I wanted to. Bein' able to go out and buy a new wardrobe if I wanted to. Bein' able to give somebody that's down on their luck a thousand dollars if I wanted to. Bein' able to have at least twenty adopted children: I have two. But I'm gonna have at least twenty. The more money I make, the more I'm gonna get.

Alanna: You have two?

Stella: Yeah. I never have put that in print either. They're in this country, but I don't want to say where. I adopted them through the Children's Federation. And I'm gonna get more.

Alanna: Do you want more children of your own?

Stella: No. I don't think that would be fair. I'm 29 now, and I don't want to have any kids at this age. Timmy'll be in his 20's, and I'll still be in my 40's. And that's good. I don't want to be raisin' a kid when I'm in my 50's. Then, too, I have to stay away from Timmy so much, that I have enough guilt feelings about not givin' Timmy full time and attention, although I feel like I'm a good mother. I don't feel like I could be as good and effective a mother to three or four kids, or even another child, as I can to Timmy. Timmy had me a lot when he was smaller, but he don't have me that much now, 'cause I'm on the road so much. I think if you're gonna be a momma, you should be a full-time momma. A lot of women are mothers. They've had children, but I don't consider them mothers. Just because they've had babies doesn't mean they're good mothers.

Alanna: Do you have much of a fantasy life?

Stella: Not really. I try to think pleasant thoughts all the time, but they're usually realistic thoughts.

Alanna: What should people know about you that they don't already?

(Continued on page 79)

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POEMS SET TO MUSIC. Songs recorded. Send your best poems for prompt consideration. Nashville Music Productions, Box 40001-CM Melrose Station, Nashville, Tennessee 37204.

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STELLA

(Continued from page 74)

Stella: I think they know most about me, except my love life. I try to be very open, 'cause I think people in my business, the public, fans, deserve to know me and know me honestly. And I try to be honest with every person that interviews me. Interviews are real good for me. They're analysis for me. When you say it out loud, it comes back at you a lot better than it does if you just think it. It's therapy. I get to talk about myself, and someone has to listen. So that's fun. ■

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DOLLY PARTON

NEW ON A BIG 22" x 28" POSTER
 AND ON A 100% COTTON SHIRT



POSTER ONLY \$2.50
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TO: Country Music Magazine, Drawer C, Long Valley, N.J. 07853

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Here are the hottest NEW T-Shirts around. It's the title, notes and lyrics to 6 different Dolly Parton songs on 100% polyester shirts of assorted colors. Pick from Kentucky Gambler, I Will Always Love You, Hey Lucky Lady, The Seeker (not shown), Love Is Like A Butterfly (not shown), Too Far Gone (not shown). Adult sizes only.

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 Nashville Tennessee 37203

I have checked my choices below at \$6.95 per shirt plus \$1 post. & hand.:

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T-Shirts \$6.95
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Send me copy(s) of the **NEW LINDA RONSTADT SCRAPBOOK** at only \$6.95 each (\$5.95 plus \$1 postage & handling.) (B602)

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Hank Williams, Jr.



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Talking about his Hohner HG310, Hank says, "It's got the best tone, the best projection and the best acoustics I've ever heard." He uses his Hohner on the road, when he's writing, when he wants to work something out.

"It's got lots of treble, it really rings. And it feels

and looks so good. Black blues or Blue Grass, Hohner handles it."

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