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## CONWAY TWITTY

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New Hairstyle

## CHARLEY PRIDE

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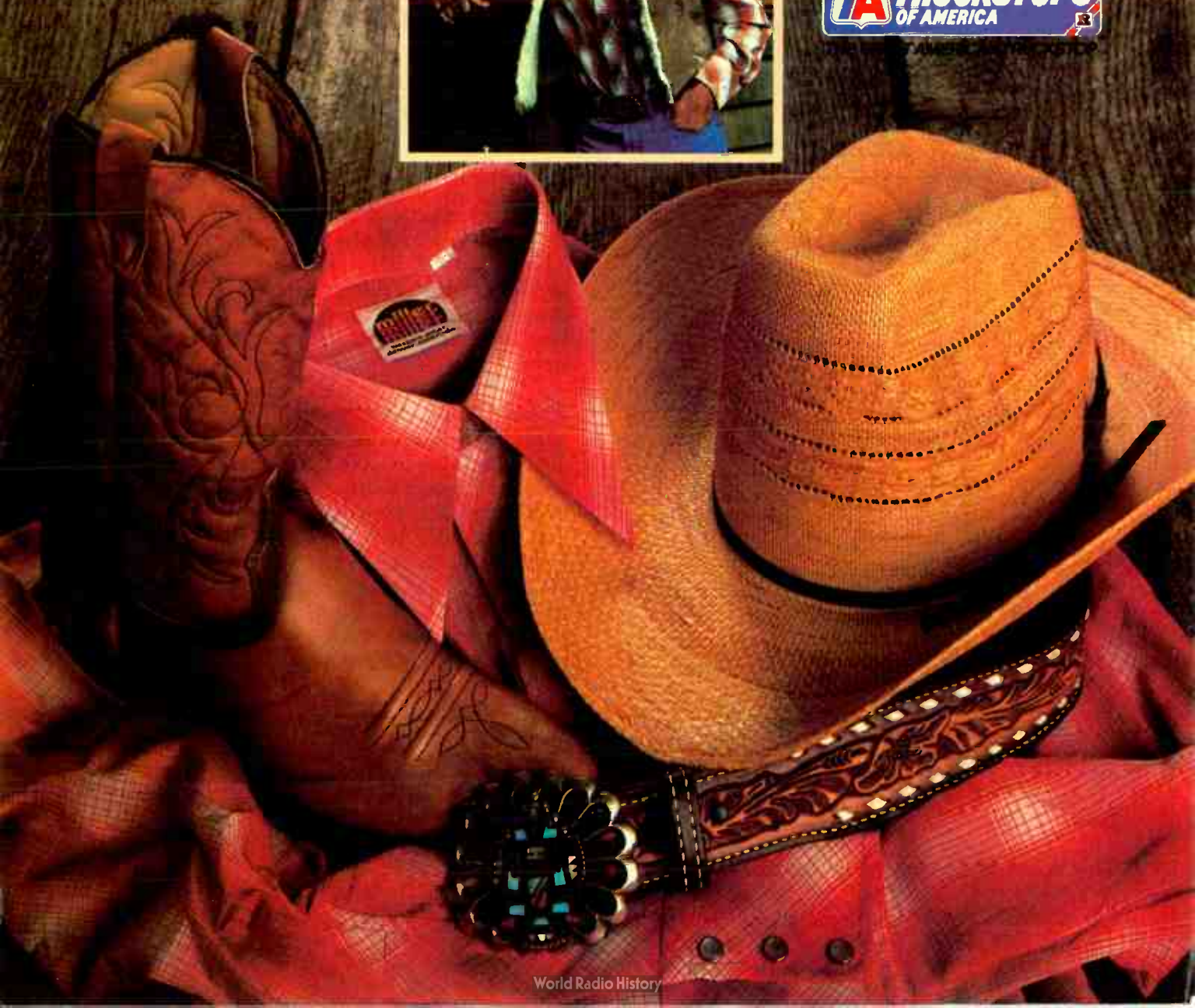
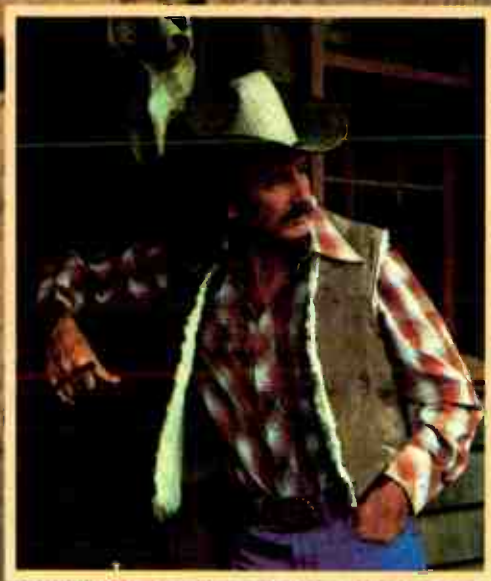
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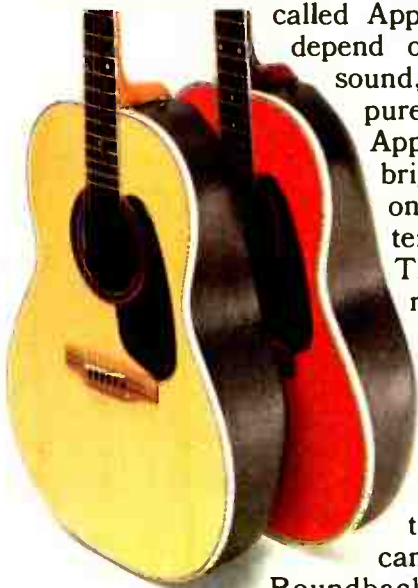


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# COUNTRY MUSIC<sup>TM</sup>

Volume Eight, Number One, September 1979



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Taking it slow . . . just coasting along.

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# LETTERS

## Oak Ridge Boys

Unless Raymond Hicks is playing another joke on me, Mickey Jones was the drummer when Kenny Rogers was in The First Edition. *Mickey Baker* is the Oak's manager. I should know, we spent a month with 'em.

GARTH  
KENNY ROGERS' ROAD MANAGER  
NEWPORT BEACH, CA.

*No joke, we just goofed. Ed.*

I once heard a man say "I don't care how good you can pick a guitar, how good you can sing . . . if you ain't good people, you ain't nothing." The Oak Ridge Boys are good people! They have learned to wear success and wear it with a style unlike any other act in any field of music. Success hasn't spoiled them or your fine magazine. Thanks for the article in the June issue. Fantastic!!!

REGGIE BRAUN  
RICHMOND, VA.

P.S. Thanks for showing a part of the Oaks I have seen for the several years I've known 'em. A great job!

## The Storyteller

I just finished reading Tom T. Hall's "Interview with Herman Woonzel," for the third time. It's a real treat to find an article written by the Storyteller himself.

I wonder if big T. would give me an interview for \$50. and two cans of Spam? (Heck, I'll give him a case of Spam and throw in a bottle of Gennessee beer!)

Let's see more articles by and about Tom T. Hall!

LELIA CARPENETTI  
NICHOLSON, PA.

I received my latest copy of Country Music yesterday, and read it from cover to cover as usual. I've been a subscriber ever since I first came across an issue of your magazine way back in the fall of 1972 and have enjoyed each issue.

The article in this particular issue that I read first was the one by Tom T. Hall. (Tom T. Hall Interviews Country Music Legend Herman Woonzel.) I think it is one of the best pieces of writing you have featured, and I hope you plan to feature more contributions by Tom T. in your future issues.

I think the observations of the mythical Herman Woonzel pretty well parallel the unvarnished opinions of The Storyteller himself.

All in all, this article has some of the best comments on what it's really like to be an "Entertainer" that I've read in a long while.

SONJA E. PEASLEY  
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

## David Allan Coe

I would like to tell of a recent experience at a concert by David Allan Coe. I've been a big fan of his and obtained tickets for his show and was looking forward to the event.

When I arrived with my girlfriend I was able to get third row seats by waiting in line 30 minutes. After we were seated for about 20 minutes, the air conditioner was cut off and it began to get hot very quickly. Finally the opening band came on and as they played the place got hotter. I then went up front and asked the fellow at the door about it and he said, Coe had requested it and would not appear if they put the air on. I then returned to my seat and waited through the first band. After they played I just couldn't bear the heat, so I went back up front and asked again. Much to my surprise I was told that if the management put the air back on Coe would have "Bikers" cut the wires. I then requested a refund but never received it, so I left mad as !?!? So Coe, if you read this you owe me admission for two!

D. BLAILOK  
MONROE, GA.

## "Crash"

Just finished reading your June issue of Country Music, and you are to be commended on the fantastic article on "Mr. Country Rock," Billy "Crash" Craddock; it was great. So nice to see "Crash" receive the attention your magazine gave him. True, he is the most dynamic entertainer I've seen in years. Once you see him in concert you are truly captured by "that irresistible charisma."

MARY S. SMITH  
MARIETTA, GA.

Many thanks to Michael Bane and Country Music Magazine. Just picked up your June issue and finally found what I've been waiting for. An article on Mr. Country Rock, Billy "Crash" Craddock. Therefore, I am now subscribing to your publication and hope to see many more "Crash" features in the future.

I love Country Music and go to see any of the stars who happen to be appearing in

my area. I enjoy them all, but none of them puts on a show, or turns on an audience, like "Crash." The fact that he sings country, rock and even gospel music, draws a large audience; as does the fact that he is so sexy and good-looking. I've never seen Dolly turn the men on the way "Crash" turns the ladies on. Make no mistake about it, his female fans do look upon him as a sex symbol. I feel I should mention his great band, "The Dream Lovers," and his new back up group, "The Southern Knights," who are also fantastic. In my opinion, you haven't lived until you've been to a Billy "Crash" Craddock concert. He rightfully deserves CMA's award for Entertainer of the Year, as well as Best Male Vocalist. And someday soon, his day will come, and he'll walk away with one or both of them. Just wait and see! We haven't heard the last of "Crash!"

I'm proud to be from his home state of North Carolina.

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## Jim Ed & Helen

You outdid yourself again.

Thank you so much for the great article on Helen Cornelius and Jim Ed Brown. They are a super duo!!!

My family and I were lucky to attend Fan Fair '79 this year. We all enjoyed it very much. We had the great honor of meeting Helen Cornelius. She is a warm, super person with a great voice. I'm looking forward to future issues of Country Music Magazine.

JUDY A. VLCEK  
NIANTIC, CONN.

## Moe Bandy

I take exception to Douglas B. Green's review of Moe Bandy's *Cheating Situation* album. His remark of "enough is enough" may suit him fine, but he does not speak for myself and many of Moe's other staunch fans. Let Willie & Waylon do their thing and let Moe do his by sticking with, as he himself calls it, hard country music. When it comes to hard or traditional country, Moe is right up there with the likes of George Jones, Webb Pierce, Jean Shepard, Conway and Loretta, etc.

Long live Moe Bandy, "King of the Honky Tonks."

GARY SPAETH  
MASTIC BEACH, N.Y.

## Concert Priorities

So Waylon doesn't talk enough at his concerts. And Gatlin doesn't sign autographs! I don't think they serve tea and cookies either. Maybe I'll go on a concert tour. I can't sing but I can talk and I sign a mean autograph.

A concert is music. And with both of these singers, that's what you'll get—and great music too. And you'll see not only first rate performers but first class human beings as well.

Come on now, where do your priorities lie?

DON HARKNES  
HIAWATHA, IOWA

## Con Hunley

I just finished reading the May issue and in the record review section I saw the article on Con Hunley and his new album, (which is great). Anyway I think that Country Music should do a feature article on him because he is not only a fantastic entertainer but a fine outstanding person. We here in Knoxville really love him and think that other country music lovers will too once they get to know him and hear his great singing. So what do you say, how about more news on Con?

C.S. WALKER  
KNOXVILLE, TENN.

## Ol' Willie

I received the May issue of Country Music one day last week. I really do enjoy reading every issue I receive. The cover photo of Willie was great and the other photos and the article was also. I think whatever Willie will do in the future will be as great as all he has done in the past. I want to see "The Electric Horseman" when it comes out. It would be great if Willie wins an Oscar for his performance.

Thank you again for the photos and article on my favorite Country male singer. You've made my week.

ALICE HUTTO  
PERRY, S.C.

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

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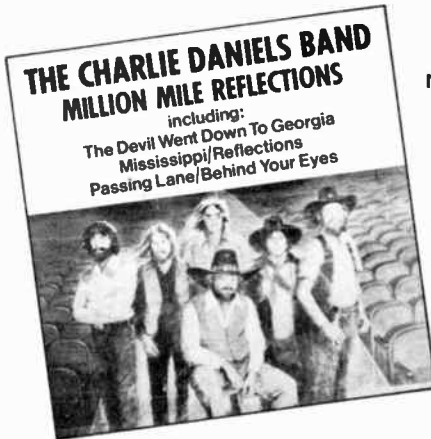
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# Randy Gurley's Wearing Cinderella's Slipper

## And It Seems To Be A Perfect Fit

by **BOB ANDERSON**

Have you ever wondered what it is to feel like a spin-off from the story of Cinderella? If you ever do, then just ask a petite 26-year-old songstress named Randy Gurley. In less than three years, she's gone from being an unknown with a disjointed career to her present position on the brink of bonafide stardom. That's something akin to going from zero to sixty in about four seconds. Born in Salem, Massachusetts, reared in Maine and California, Gurley had seen her share of dumps and dives since she started her career at age sixteen. In fact, she'd given up the business before things started to happen for her. And that's when her Cinderella tale begins.

Down on the tough grind of trying hard and seeing little results, Randy had to borrow money to leave Los Angeles for Dallas to stay with a friend and try to sort it all out. In Dallas she met David Van Cronkhite, a young political public relations specialist who believed in her talents. Van Cronkhite took her to Nashville where he convinced Harold Bradley, one of the town's most respected studio musicians, to produce her records. Then he talked Jim Halsey, the foremost booking agent for country talent, into handling Randy. It was at this time that ABC Records signed her to a recording contract.

And she has recently moved on to RCA, where she is being produced by veteran producer Roy Dea, who produces such notables as Tom T. Hall and Gary Stewart. She's now touring with people like Larry Gatlin, Mel Tillis and the Oak Ridge Boys.

In the music business, where few people want to have to give a definite answer, that's moving at a fast clip. But all that "overnight" sensation stuff only gets one to the starting line—then you've got to show what you can do in the big leagues. Randy realizes how fortunate she's been





to assemble such a strong team behind her, and knows that there's pressure on her to deliver all that these people believe she can. "I've gone from worrying about the day-to-day things when you're struggling to the responsibility of providing the public with creativity. When no one cares about you, you can go out and just cover other artist's material. But when you're out there as yourself there's a tremendous pressure to show something unique and creative. But pressure isn't negative, it just makes me work harder," says Gurley. "It looks easier when you have all those people pulling for you, but it remains a challenge. Until you've gotten a lot of hits you still don't have much security in this business."

That's certainly a healthy attitude for a new artist to take; especially when one hits the big time there's a tendency to stop and congratulate yourself for getting there. However, Randy knows that's only the beginning. "The thing that surprised me most has been the consistency of inconsistency—it's either feast or famine no matter who you are. I've realized that it's never going to be easy sailing. It's always hard. And that's good; it always keeps you on the edge and never lets you get lazy. You've got to reach to your audience every time because you're only as good as your last home run. People always want to be entertained and you've got to give them your best. For an artist it's always a big high or you're very low. You never have the security that most other people have."

But Randy does have the security that comes from the assurance of her own talent, and the peace of mind of knowing a skillful group is behind her to make sure her bouncy style is showcased in the right way. Plus she's taking an interest in how her career is being managed, learning as much as she can about the business side of music. "I'm always asking questions about why, and how is a

*(Continued on page 65)*

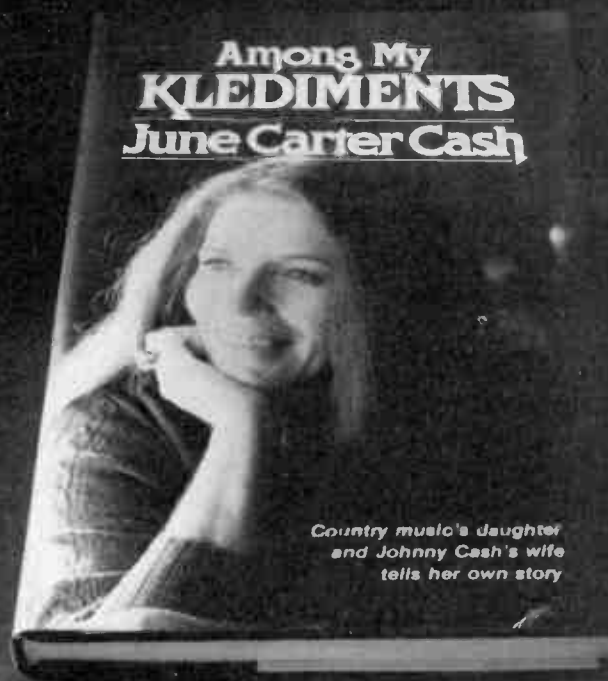
## "Among my klediments are loved ones and loved things, hard times and good times..."

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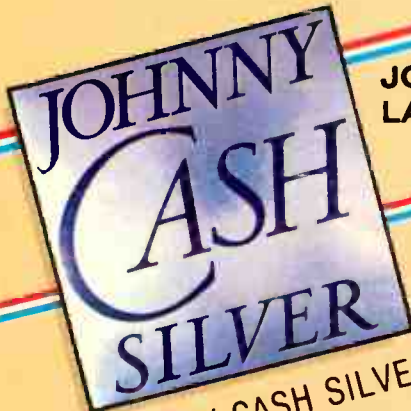
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# Country Scene

## The Best Little Dancehall in Texas

It's 10 o'clock on a Thursday morning. Inside the Palms Danceland the country-western band twangs, the booze flows and scores of couples are dancing the Texas waltz, where the women hook their fingers through the men's belt loops and the men put their arms around the women's shoulders. The majority of the dancers are bored housewives and wandering husbands.

Outside, the parking lot of the popular Dallas club—also known as the Palms Land & Cattle Company—is jammed with cars. In dry weather a nearby field handles the auto overflow. The variety of clientele is mirrored in the range of vehicles baking in the Texas sun: Toyotas, GMC pickups, Cadillacs, ancient and battered Chevys, Jeeps, Mark V's and a Rolls or two.

"We get the whole cross-section of people in here," explains Don Taylor, walking between two cars on the parking lot. Taylor and his wife, Carlene, own the Palms Danceland. He thumps a well-polished fender. "A heart surgeon owns this Mercedes . . . Rednecks and the so-called sophisticated upper-crust mingle in my place."

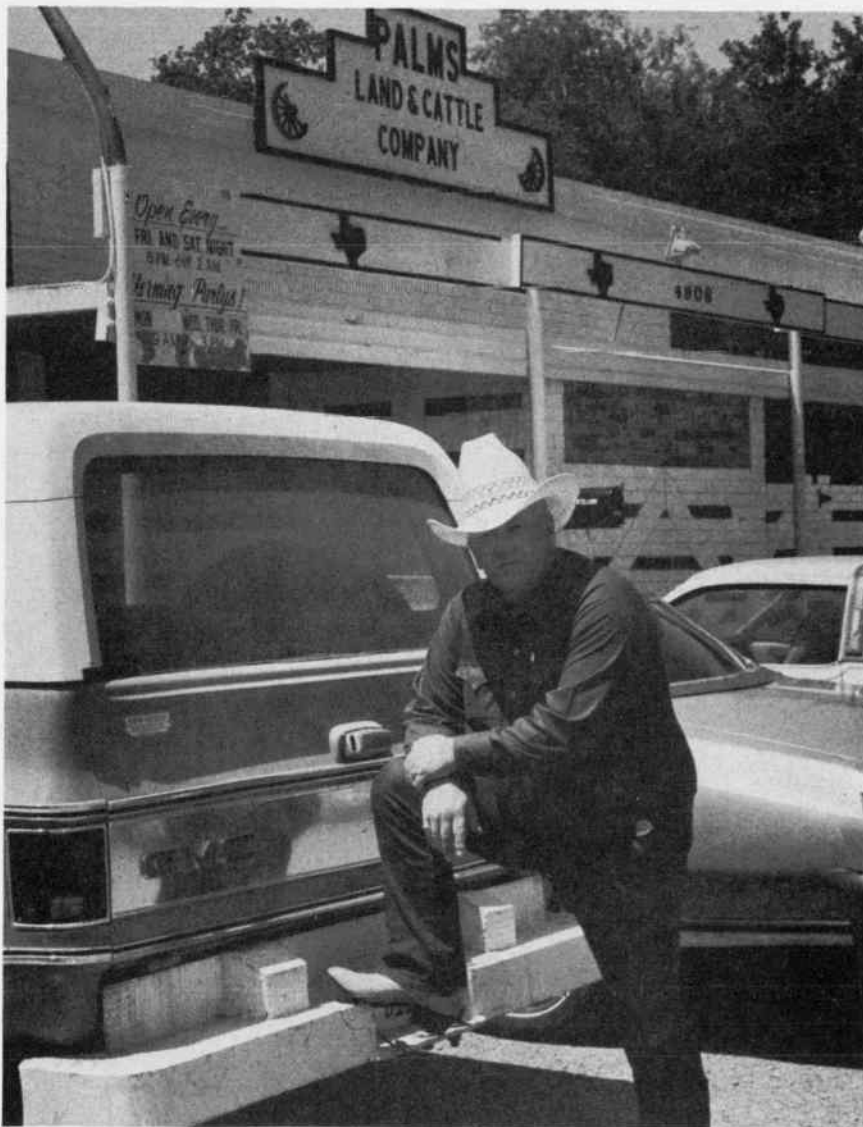
Mingle is the right word, since most of the 500 people packing the club daily come through the door alone. The goal of many is not to remain alone. Some come for the companionship of dancing and drinking; others seek the kind of companionship that's more stimulating than either music or alcohol. Motels in the area do a great daytime business. Plus two daycare centers give discount babysitting rates to Palms Danceland patrons.

Taylor candidly acknowledges the rendezvous nature of his unique dance hall, but insists its ridiculous to charge that his club ruins marriages. "People wouldn't come here if they weren't already running around. By providing a release for the frustrations caused at home, the club probably saves 10 marriages for every one that breaks up."

Open for business from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., places like the Palm Danceland used to be labeled "pressure cooker" clubs, in homage to the cooking aids that free homemakers to dance the day away and still have supper ready when hubby drags in from work. With the electronics revolution, such daytime spots have been renamed "microwave clubs." Ah, the impact of technological progress. . . .

Taylor says he closes promptly at three in the afternoon for two reasons: (1) "If I remained open later, some gals and guys would stay and they wouldn't get home in time to 'prepare' for their spouse. So it would cause trouble at home"; and (2) "Being open a short span, makes the Palms Danceland kind of like ice cream. If you don't get enough, you want more. But if you get as much as you want, you get sick of it."

The danceland's atmosphere is different from any open-at-night club. "The people act differently. The



Don Taylor, owner of the Palms says that "When the cars overflow...business is damn fine."

# Country Scene

belligerent attitude common to some night-time patrons is practically non-existent during the day. I've had three fights in 13 years during the day. I have about three a month with the night crowd."

Even the music is different for the daytimers. While the sun shines, the danceland's own band, Country Plus, lays down a variety of tunes, from progressive country to country rock to hard country. After sundown, the crowd goes strictly for hard country. "My daytimers won't allow a fiddle in the band," confides Taylor.

Even without a fiddle, the Palms Danceland is making beautiful music for the Taylors—and their satisfied customers—every weekday from 9 to 3. There's even a movie deal about the club in the works. At present, there's no official theme song for the unusual dance hall, but several come easily to mind. Johnny Rodriguez' *Alibi* is a natural.

LARRY HOLDEN

## Moe & Joe Twins Sons from Different Mothers



Joe Stampley receives his first place award in the Moe Bandy look-a-like contest. But which one's Joe and which one's Moe?...Actually, the two have been in the studio collaborating on their upcoming debut duet effort, Ansley Fleetwood's "Just Good Ol Boys," produced by Ray Baker. "Just Good Ol Boys" is the first double teamed single from Joe and Moe, each riding on the wave of independent success with their own hit singles.

## A Benefit By The Oaks



The Oak Ridge Boys hosted the first annual "Stars For Children" Benefit held in Ft. Worth, Texas for the prevention of child abuse. Top country entertainers performed at the sold-out 14,000 seat Tarrant Country Convention Center, in which \$65,000 was earned. Special guests (pictured above) were the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders.



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 From Cryin' Today; I Just Want To Look At  
 You One More Time; Somewhere On Skid  
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# Country Scene

## Dotsey Wants You To See Her When She Isn't Smiling

Dotsey's manager, Happy Shahan, stood in the doorway at RCA's Nashville offices, looking at me with a half serious, half foolish grin. It was as wide as his turquoise belt buckle. "Did you get fixed up with Dotsey?" he asked. After a friendly poke in the ribs, he quipped, "You're talking to the toughest man in Texas!"

To look at Dotsey, you might think she's just another cute, girl next door type, always posing with a beauty queen smile. Indeed, she's fun to photograph, with her pretty blue eyes and long, lustrous blond hair. And she still reigns as a hometown sweetheart when she returns to Seguin, Texas for shows and private weddings.

But that kind of image is very limiting in terms of a long shot at country stardom. These are the days of "concept packaging"—album covers and stage gimmicks bearing all the marketing appeal of "new improved" detergents. So, to find out if there was a "new" Dotsey just around the corner, I sat down to chat with her about it.

"I got into some trouble over the front cover picture on my current album, *Tryin' to Satisfy You*," she began. "People told me they liked the one on the back much better because of the smile. But to me it's more natural to show different moods. Nobody smiles all the time, including me. I'm interested in photos that are lifelike instead of the usual two-dimensional stereotypes."

The what-am-I-gonna-do-now look in the album shot suggests that she just got stuck with two flat tires in a no parking zone (though her hair is beautifully combed). The production on the record is new in that it steers away from overdone sweetness. There is an improved mark of confidence and maturity in Dotsey's voice. Apparently Waylon's contribution on the title song was more than just a one time fluke. "That was quite a thrill. We don't know each other real well yet, but we're developing a good working relationship. I just finished two new songs, and he said he hoped I left some room for him."

She stopped short of acknowledging any plans for concert appearances with Waylon, however. "He doesn't need anybody else on his show. He takes fifty people on the road with him already. Of course I'd like to do a package show that would include his and mine, just like I would with Charley Pride or Ronnie

Milsap." Unlike Willie Nelson, Waylon doesn't pop up on other people's records very often. Dotsey's modesty broke down when I asked her how it would feel to share a stage mike with him on a song they had recorded together. "Wow, it would be great!" she admitted. "Maybe we'll get to do it sometime."

Dotsey had some comments on the subject of live shows and the way they are put together. "You don't see many shows with two women co-billed or with a new female artist opening for a female headliner. Maybe it's different because there used to be fewer girl singers and they were billed with men for the sake of variety. They never used to play two records in a row by female artists on the radio. But I think the whole situation is gradually changing."

"I've got two girls in my new band, which we're calling Two-Way Street, after my record *Love is a Two-Way Street*. Suzie Raff plays piano and guitar and Lynette Fellows plays bass." She added that the three of them and the

three guys in the group are longtime friends, and they have "a blast" together on the road.

Although she hasn't had all the breaks (only two albums in four years) Dotsey is happy about some "really neat" things that have come along. "I especially liked the June awards show in Nashville. It was the first chance I've had to meet so many people in the business and have time to say more than just 'Hi!' I'll bet a lot of lasting friendships get started at those things."

Obviously, Dotsey is not the detached, sophisticated type. No matter how popular she gets, one can't picture her fixed like a stylishly painted mannequin. The last time I saw her, she was sitting on a table backstage, talking casually to some people she had just met. Suddenly, there was a blur of motion, as a contingent of security men hustled Eddie Rabbitt off to his dressing room. Dotsey and all five of her sisters gazed at him, but they didn't get to meet him. Maybe next time.

BILL OAKLEY



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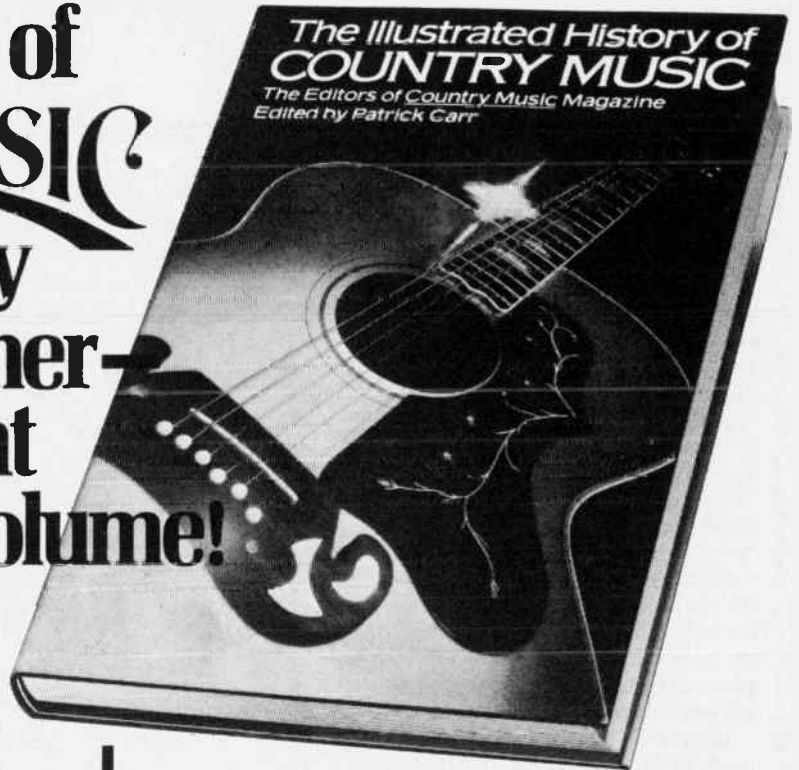
toric cutting of "Blues Moon of Kentucky" by 19-year-old Elvis Presley ("Hell, that's different," Sam Phillips said. "That's good!")

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## Jimmy James Tries for World Record

Singer Jimmy James decided that Fan Fair was the perfect time to take country music to new heights—or lengths, as the case may be.

Guitar in hand, the 41-year old entertainer set himself up on a platform in front of Nashville's Municipal Auditorium, and as 15,000 fans passed by, set the first world record for the longest country music show.

James had previously contacted the Guinness Book of World Records and has hopes that his feat will be listed right up there with the joke-telling (13 hours), guitar-playing (200 hours, two minutes) and solo singing (105 hours) records.

James fell short of his hoped-for 36-hour marathon, but still managed to put in a staggering 25 hours and four minutes on stage, resting only five minutes an hour.

"The only really bad time was about five in the morning," an exhausted but triumphant James said after pulling his last string.

In the course of his sing-in, James played 336 country songs, and repeated only requests—*Lucille* was the favorite.

Will he defend his record next year? "I'm not sure," James said reluctantly. "I may leave that to someone else."

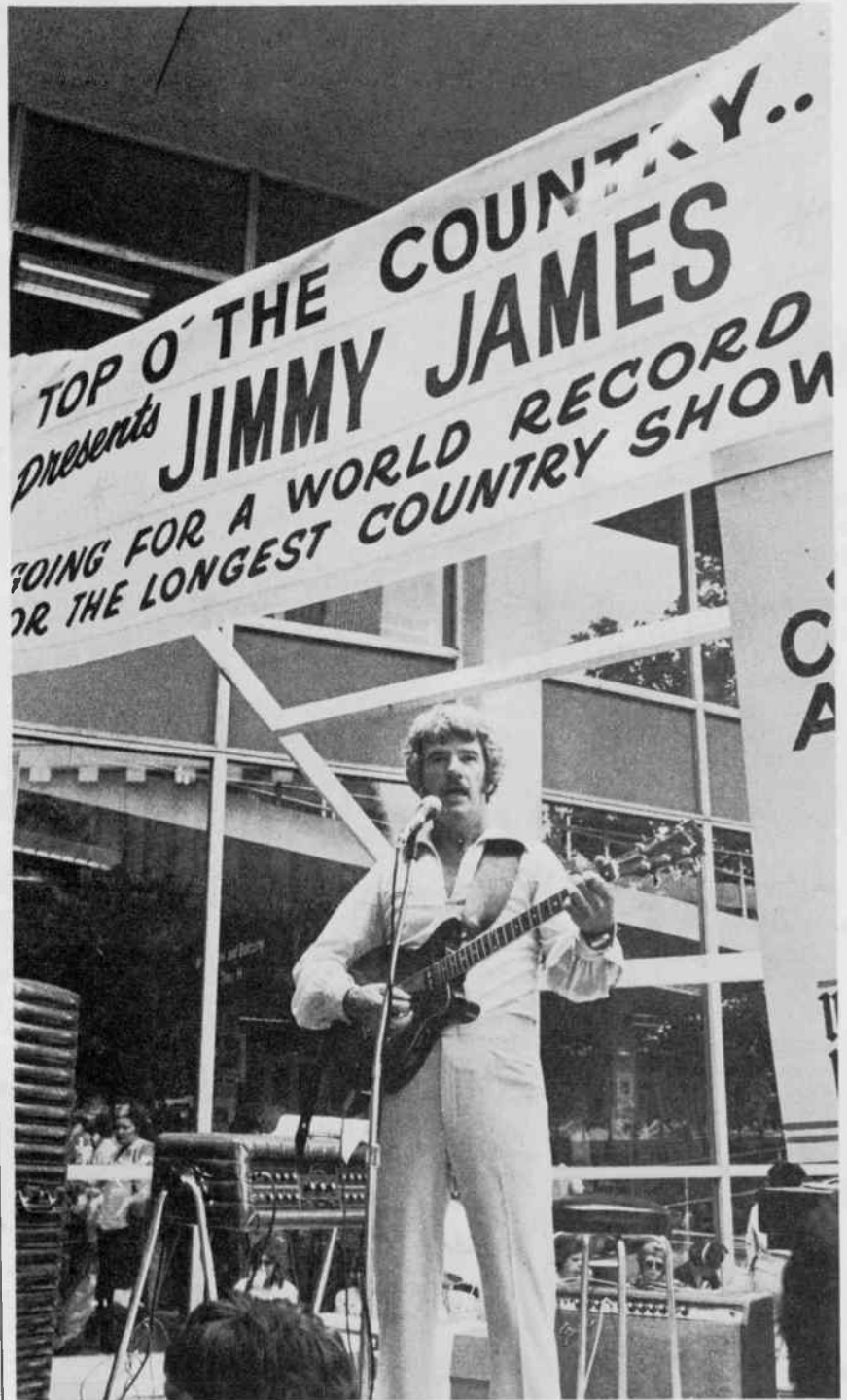
LAURA EIPPER

## "Concrete Cowboys" Filmed in Nashville

Nashville continued its headlong rush toward multimedia ascendancy with the filming of the CBS TV movie *Concrete Cowboys* in June, just as filming of Loretta Lynn's *Coal Miner's Daughter* was wrapping up.

*Concrete Cowboys*, a made-for-TV movie of the week, will air shortly, and stars Jerry Reed, Tom Selleck, Morgan Fairchild (of *Mork And Mindy*) and Claude Akins, with Jerry Reed's daughter Sadina landing a role as well.

There are feature appearances by Barbara Mandrell and Ray Stevens, who premieres his new song *Shriner's Convention* in a Printer's Alley night club scene. *Concrete Cowboys* boasts Ernie Franko as executive producer, Richard Newton



as producer, and Richard Kennedy as director, while Cindy McCall acted as casting director.

Ms. McCall was kind enough to arrange for your intrepid reporter to spend a day as an extra on the set. After

13 hours in which only five minutes were filmed, one came to the conclusion that it is even easier to starve out in acting than in music or journalism, and that's saying something.

DOUGLAS B. GREEN



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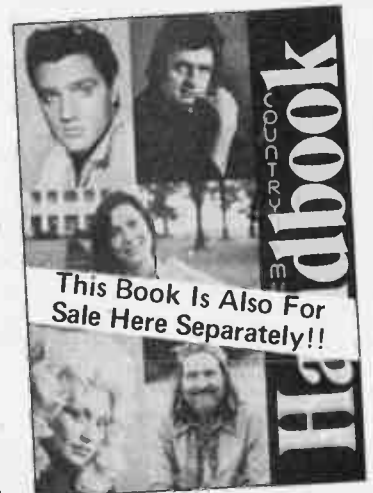
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## Watch this Face: Cristy Lane

Last month Cristy Lane, independently labeled and produced, received the Top New Female Vocalist award from the Academy of Country Music. The former housewife and her husband/manager, Lee Stoller, a former Fuller Brush salesman, have proven that hard work and big dreams do sometimes still work miracles in the razzle-dazzle world of country music.

With her current hit, *Simple Little Words*, presently on its way up the charts, Cristy's list of Top Ten hits is winging its way toward six-in-a-row. Her first album *Cristy Lane Is The Name*, released in 1977 on her husband, Lee's own LS Record label, spawned four Top 10 singles: *Penny Arcade*, *Let Me Down Easy*, *Shake Me I Rattle*, and *I'm Gonna Love You Anyway*. Her new album, *Love Lies* put forth *I Just Can't Stay Married To You*. All this has been accomplished single-handedly by the duo on the LS record label Lee created for Cristy. The label has served its purpose well, and though Cristy has just signed a contract with United Artists, the little label has expanded its roster to include other artists.

In the ten years Cristy Lane was working her way toward national recognition, her poise, style and audience rapport made her a favorite in clubs and concerts. She brought audiences to their feet on tours, both in this country and internationally. Yet she flunked high school chorus.

Her one year in high school chorus was in fact, Cristy's only "formal" musical training. Today, this tiny (5 feet, 102-pound) talent is at ease with audiences of thousands, but she remembers, "I was scared to death of performing in public, even in a chorus. The teacher graded us on our clothes, too." With a family of four sisters, Cristy didn't have the clothes other girls had. She made an "F."

"That discouraged me," she understates.

It wasn't until she married Lee Stoller that Cristy began taking her unique voice and style seriously. "I was still singing around the house," laughs Cristy, "usually while doing the dishes." Lee began taping her and sending the tapes off.

"I thought it was just a game at first," says Cristy. "Then WLS Barn Dance in Chicago called and invited me to be on the show. I was still extremely shy and there were some painful times in the



beginning. But Lee's always been a salesman and a positive thinker and he believed in me. He brought me out of my shell."

Juggling the duties of raising three small children and building a career, Cristy began appearing at clubs and fairs. By 1969, her success was inviting expansion so Lee and Cristy opened a nightclub, "Cristy's, Inc." in their home town of Peoria, Illinois. Nashville beckoned in 1972 and Cristy made her first recording. Then, with gamblers' instincts, Lee and Cristy moved the family to Nashville in 1973. Though major labels showed interest, none of the offers incorporated the comprehensive marketing campaign that Lee instinctively knew was necessary for stardom. After a few false starts while "playing by the rules," Lee took a chance created LS Records, and made himself a reckoning

force in the Nashville music business.

Meanwhile, Cristy and Lee have managed to keep their home life relatively quiet in the face of the drastic changes that have come hand-in-hand with a zooming career. Cristy has maintained her love for simple things. Her love of art extends beyond singing. She writes, sketches and paints (which she can do left-handed, right-handed, upside-down and backwards).

One of their secrets, says Cristy, is the ability to separate business from their personal lives. Now national television offers are pouring in and the road schedule looks grueling. Yet there's still a down-home quality to this husband-and-wife team—an aura of managing to have the best of both worlds. Team work—a solid marriage and a lot of love—has woven the success that is now theirs.

KAY MAUGHN

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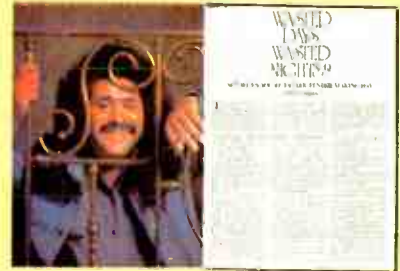
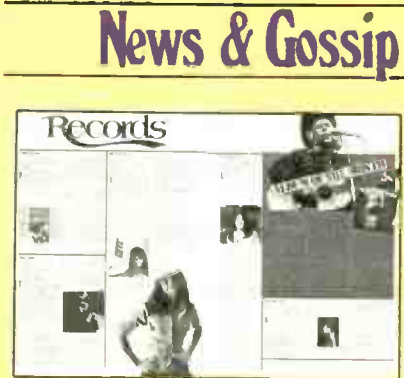
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# Conway

*After 20 years of success in the music business, Conway's got a new hairstyle and new music. But he's still the same old Harold Jenkins from Helena, Arkansas, guiding and directing what Conway does.*

## Makin' Changes

by **BOB CAMPBELL**

The crowd here at Herschel Greer stadium is in a festive mood this evening. Dusk is approaching and the June air is cool and clean. Detractors of the sport of baseball have never quite understood that a great deal of its charm lies in the deliberate cadence of the game. The rules of play leave room for idle conversation along with plenty of time for yelling at the umpire and all the peanuts, popcorn and beer one can hold. And the kids don't have to sit still all night long. Nashville's sophisticated bars may be dishing out Pina Colodas and mugs of beer by the acre to bored and lonely junior jetsetters and Vanderbuilt students, but 5,412 average folks are out here looking for a night's worth of entertainment at the ballpark.

Right now, the crowd's attention is riveted on a cow who is the star subject of a milking contest being conducted right on top of home plate a few minutes before the start of tonight's game between the Nashville Sounds and the Montgomery Rebels. Bent over a small stool on one side of the cow is University of Tennessee basketball coach Don DeVoe. On the other side is Sounds' Manager George Scherger. Whoever ends up with the most milk in his bucket after two minutes is the winner. But it's the cow that may come out on top in this little exercise.

"Don't think anything is in this back one," jokes Scherger, squeezing for all he's worth.

The crowd loves it, and so does Conway

Twitty, who is sitting directly behind home plate in one of the dozen or so box seats he owns.

Twitty is the majority stockholder in the Nashville Sounds Double A Baseball franchise, and he is understandably proud of the success of the organization. (The Sounds own the best attendance record of any minor league team in the country.) Conway could be in any of a number of places right now, but baseball is one of his great loves. If he is not on the road performing, Conway can usually be found right here when the Sounds are in town.

Back in the middle 50's, before he decided to pursue a career as a rock 'n' roller, Conway was a pretty fair country ballplayer. When he graduated from high school, Twitty had a contract in his hand to play for the Philadelphia Phillies baseball organization. But Uncle Sam had another kind of contract waiting for him, and Conway missed his chance. However, a social phenomenon called Fan Fair is going on this particular week in Nashville, and 14,000 country-music fans are swarming this town getting a close look at their favorite stars. The annual celebrity softball tournament took place yesterday and today, and Conway who plays for his own team has played three softball games in the last 12 hours.

So Conway is a little tired tonight. He also has to drive downtown to the Hyatt Regency Hotel right after the game, for a midnight interview with Larry King of the

Mutual Broadcasting Network. And at 10 o'clock tomorrow morning, he is scheduled to perform in the MCA Records Show at Municipal Auditorium.

If this pace seems a little demanding, Conway doesn't seem perturbed in the least. Dressed casually in tennis shoes, jeans and a blue windbreaker with a Twittybird baseball cap perched on his head, Conway, on the contrary, appears relaxed and right at home. Although he considers himself shy, Twitty carries conversation easily and seems genuinely interested in what others have to say. He is also busily wolfing down several slices of pepperoni and cheese pizza, prompting a young boy two or three rows down to ask, "Say, mister, how much is that pizza?" Conway tells him the price, not the least concerned the youngster failed to recognize him. About the only thing that seems to concern Conway right now is how his ballclub will fare tonight.

A devoted family man, Conway doesn't drink or hang out at parties. Baseball is his main diversion from the demands of a life in show business, one he has pursued with success for over 20 years. Conway well deserves a diversion these days because he served notice to the country music industry a couple of months ago that some changes were in the wind. After recording 30 straight number one singles over a ten-year period, Conway's records started falling short of the coveted top spot. Talk filtering in and out of music row had it that

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*“I made up my mind back then, that the one thing that can help you keep your sanity in this business is not to get the big head, your ego can get bigger than anything . . .”*

---

In between sips of black coffee, Conway rolled back the years and considered for a minute the philosophy which he feels has helped him survive all these years in a business which regularly chews up people like so much hamburger meat. Twitty has reached the top twice, first in rock, and then in country; and today he is still alive and well. If there are scars, he keeps them well hidden. If you want a living example of a well-adjusted entertainer, try Conway on for size. By his own reckoning, he is far from a saint, but he has found a way to live with stardom and himself too.

“I made up my mind back then, that the one thing that can help you keep your sanity in this business is not to get the big head; your ego can get bigger than anything else about you because people are always around telling you how great you are and all that stuff. You got no problem until you start believing all that stuff yourself. To



The slicked-back hairstyle that used to be Conway's trademark (as shown in the top photos from the fifties) has now been replaced by a natural wavy look which friends and fans tell him makes him look years younger.

me, what I do is like a truckdriver doing his job or you doing your job. I'm impressed by someone who can sit down and take an article like this and put it together right and really make it interesting. I would have a hard time doing that. Some truck driver might be impressed with the way I sing a song. But to me, what I do is no more important than what he does. I'm just a guy trying to make it in this world and am very fortunate to be doing something I love to do and making a living at it. I have never lost sight of that. The little things in your life have to be the most important. They still are to me. What I do is just a part of my life. It is not all of my life. It doesn't by any means guide the rest of what I do or what I am. I am still Harold Jenkins back in Helena, Arkansas. Harold Jenkins still guides and directs what Conway Twitty does. I drive a Pacer car which I love. I don't drive a Mercedes, and there is nothing wrong with anybody that does. It is a way for me to hang on to simple things. As long as I can hold on to that, I believe I will be all right."

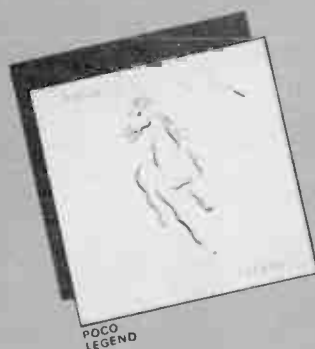
Every man is where he is by the law of his being; the thoughts which he has built into his character have brought him there, and in the arrangement of his life there is no element of chance, but all is the result of a law which cannot err.

“As A Man Thinketh”

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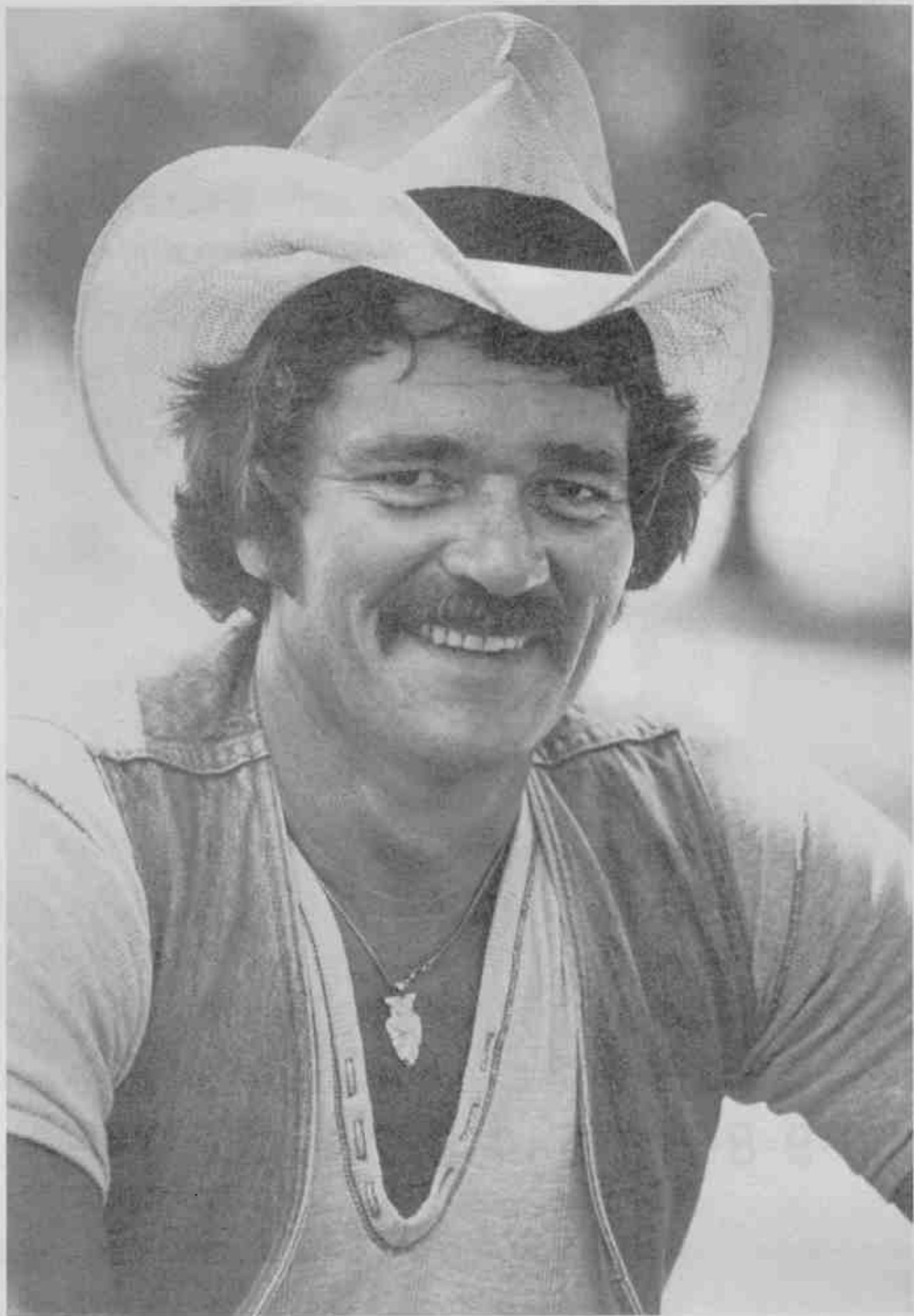


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# Ed Bruce

## “The Tennessean”

by **BOB MILLARD**

Songwriter/singer Ed Bruce lives so far back in the hills and hollers of Williamson County, Tennessee that you would never find it without a map. The fifty-acre farm where he lives with wife Patsy and a family of young Bruces is unmistakable though. The long red horse trailer sitting at the top of his hillside driveway says “Follow Me To Tennessee” just as big as you please, and there’s a likeness of Ed in a coonskin cap smack in the middle of it.

The horse trailer is just part of the legacy of Ed Bruce’s five-year tenure as the buckskinned “Tennessean.” Long rifle in hand, the author of such great country songs as *Mamas Don’t Let Your Babies Grow Up To Be Cowboys* (which was a top ten hit for Ed himself, and then later, became a number one hit for Waylon and Willie), *The Man That Turned My Mama On*, and *When I Die Just Let Me Go To Texas* (the song with which Tanya Tucker recently had a big hit, after she retitled it *Texas When I Die*), is seen on TV spots, and on billboards across the state, inviting both tourists and industry to come to Tennessee.

Ed’s role as the “Tennessean”—which he’s handled since 1975—is only one of around a hundred commercials he’s done in which he is actually seen. And what he does just as often, is sing jingles. Just a handful of his national and regional credits include: Ultra-Brite toothpaste, Schlitz and Coors Beer, Ford Motors, John Deere Tractors, Lava Soap, R.C. Cola, Maryland Fried Chicken and the “Tennessee Trash” anti-litter campaign.

But while doing all this, Ed has also had consistent, if not startling success in the country record charts as well. His strongest hits have tended to be strong ‘cowboy’ songs like his own version of *Mamas Don’t Let Your Babies Grow Up . . .*, and *The Man Who Turned My Mama On*. Over the years, he has moved from the

legendary Sun Record label, to RCA, Monument, United Artists, and finally to Epic, his present label.

But mostly, within the region of his home state, it is as the “Tennessean” that he is best known. “The ‘Tennessean’ has his own set of groupies and fans,” explains Patsy Bruce, Ed’s wife/manager/co-writer.

“Boys and girls, seven to 17 years old really like him,” she continues. “And older folks do too. One night we were out having dinner and this older couple came up and had bet the other that Ed was the ‘Tennessean.’ ‘Well, you win,’ Ed told her.”

Ed is a songwriter, country music artist on Epic Records, spokesman for a state and a highly successful jingle singer. That’s a lot of different hats for one person to wear. Just which one fits Ed Bruce best? Which is his favorite identity?

“Oh, I think he will tell you he’s a songwriter first,” Patsy assured me.

But getting Ed Bruce to tell you anything until he’s good and ready to sit down and talk about it is not easy. When I contacted Ed Bruce Enterprises to set up an interview I hit the jackpot. Patsy and Ed invited me to come to the cookout they have every year for friends on Memorial Day.

When I got there, Patsy took me back to where Ed was basting eight enormous beef briskets with their special recipe barbeque sauce. At first glance, Ed Bruce is a tall, husky, ruggedly handsome man. When he shakes hands and says ‘glad to meet you,’ you believe him. He just looks like the kind of guy who never had to smile at anyone he didn’t want to smile at.

“Now I want to tell you this,” he said at the beginning, “if you want to talk about business you need to talk to Patsy. I don’t know anything about that part of it and I don’t really care to. She takes care of that

for me.” There was a tone of amusement in this last statement; Ed Bruce’s booking agent and manager is his wife, Patsy.

“Ed is basically shy and conservative,” Patsy assured me early in the afternoon. “He’ll warm up in a little while and then he’ll talk to you more.”

Patsy sat down on their large, cool enclosed patio and began to fill me in on the areas where Ed’s interest didn’t lie, the business end. At that moment he was concentrating on a four-man game of billiards in their den. As Patsy started, I couldn’t help wondering if Ed Bruce was going to be the strong and silent type all afternoon. You never know in the interview game.

“People in Nashville used to laugh at us for doing ‘commercials.’ They quit laughing when they found out how much money was in it.”

Did she think Ed ran any danger of being type-cast as a jingle singer as opposed to an artist with the country fans.

“No. To the country fan, they just don’t think that way,” she explained. “The jocks learned to recognize his voice though. We’ve been out on the road and heard D.J.s announcing his commercials just like it was one of his records. In that way I guess it helps. It’s publicity for him.”

At one point while we talked Ed left the pool table and came out to check on us. “You need a beer?” he asked. I got the feeling he was warming up.

According to everything I had heard about Ed, there is a big element of autobiography in his song *Mamas Don’t Let Your Babies Grow Up To Be Cowboys*. In fact, “Cowboy” was a nickname his friends called him at the barbeque. His den is decorated with pictures of cowboys and frontiersmen, the rugged individualists of America’s yesterdays. In many ways Ed Bruce and his songwriting, pool-shooting buddies are the rugged individualists of our times. They would rather pick guitars or

---

## **"If I had to maintain one facet of what I do . . . it would be songwriting. I get more thrill out of hearing one of my songs recorded on the radio than I do hearing one of my own records."**

---

sip a cool one than read the fine print on a contract. That's where Patsy augments Ed perfectly.

"People make a big deal because Ed and I have the same last name and live together," said Patsy. "Every performer has a manager to take care of the business so they can concentrate on the creative end. I guess we are just lucky that our interests worked out that way."

"I really like working the deals and reading the contracts. It makes me feel just as good to get on the phone and negotiate a deal for Ed to sing a jingle as it does Ed to walk out of the wings on stage and sing for people."

Actually, her interests do overlap with his in some areas. For instance, they co-write songs together. She helped him write *Mamas . . . When I Die Just Let Me Go To Texas*, and *Restless*. *Restless*, which was recorded by Crystal Gayle, has an unusual story behind it because it was the first song the Bruces ever wrote together.

Ed, who was born in Arkansas and raised in Memphis, had come to Nashville to attempt a full-time music career after selling cars for a while. It was about 1972 and he was hosting an early-morning country music show on TV and singing in clubs all night until about two or three a.m. Patsy was driving to classes each morning.

To compensate for not seeing too much of each other due to conflicting schedules, they left long notes to each other taped to the refrigerator door. It wasn't the best possible situation but the notes did keep them in touch with ideas each wanted to share.

"I got this idea one day and wrote it down and put it on the refrigerator door for him," Patsy recalled. "He picked it up next day, made a couple of changes wrote a melody for it and there was *Restless*."

A little later in the afternoon I am watching Ed finish a game of nine ball when he turned around and said, "Do you play horseshoes?"

"Yeah," I replied.

"Lets go do it," he deadpanned.

He rounded up a couple of other guys and we all went out to the front yard. Ed let me team up with him, which was good for the game. The other guys were pretty good players, Ed was a deadeye shot. My tosses more often than not, got loose and rolled off threatening to cripple one of the many dogs that kept running in and out of the playing area. That balanced out the odds so the competition was fair, Ed tossed ringers and I kept the dogs on their toes. The game went on for over an hour. It was really more enlightening than a lengthy interview might have been earlier in the day. Patsy had said that Ed doesn't like to stay indoors too long at a stretch.

And he does seem more relaxed when he is outdoors, whether he's basting barbeque on the grill, pitching horse shoes or riding one of his 13 horses. He admits that 13 horses is really more than he needs. He says that he could have gotten along with just 11 but one, a beautiful brown walking horse named Tennessee Traveler was a gift; and his most recent purchase, Sam, well he just liked the horse's looks.

In addition to the 13 horses, Ed and Patsy have 5 dogs, 3 cats and 4 children. One of the children explained that a lot of their neighbors simply call the Bruce farm the "animal shelter." Their children are Beau, 9; Ann Marie, 11; Ginnie, 14 and Ed's son from a previous marriage, Trey, 19. Ann Marie looks like a small version of Sissy Spacek, the actress who plays Loretta Lynn in the forthcoming *Coal Miner's Daughter*. She has played small parts in several films now and is the only one of the Bruce children thus far with a serious interest in the entertainment industry.

Around six o'clock the dinner commenced, and a finer barbeque you could never want to see. Several gallons of potato salad, cole slaw, stacks of hot bread and a big casserole dish called "Bruce's Bean Surprise" were laid out, waiting for Ed to slice up the briskets. The meat had been slow cooking on the grill since about eight o'clock that morning and everybody was well primed from smelling its aroma all day.

"That's the key to a great barbeque," Ed said as he cut the beef into thick, juicy strips. "You let everyone get real hungry first, then you serve up the food. That way everybody thinks its terrific."

There was a sort of twinkle in his brown eyes and I knew he had finally warmed up. We sat down to more good food than is commonly regarded as safe to eat at one sitting and ate it anyway. If Ed Bruce ever decided to leave the entertainment business he could sure enough get on as a top chef in the best Texas barbeque pit. The fact that he and Patsy once owned and operated a restaurant might have something to do with his being such a good cook.

After dinner, Ed fixed a couple of huge cups of coffee and invited me to ride up to his high pasture with him. He drove his big four-wheel drive truck up a winding hillside that seemed to take us a foot higher in elevation for every foot farther we went. Way back in the woods, at the top of one of the highest points around, there is ten or 15 acres of high, rolling pasture where he keeps at least six or seven horses. When he got out of the truck he called down the hill and the horses started walking up to meet him.

It was late in the day by then. The sun was getting closer to going down behind

the green, wooded hills of Ed Bruce's little piece of Tennessee. Some low clouds skimmed over, just a few hundred feet above us. Off in the far distance you could barely hear a big truck engine whine. The main sounds were late afternoon bird calls and the clip-clop of horses hoofs. We sat quietly in the truck bed for a few minutes and just looked around.

"Lord, its peaceful up here," Ed finally said. The horses gathered around the truck and were nibbling at the bales of wheat straw there with us.

Which way do you see yourself, I asked, artist, songwriter, jingle singer?

"If I had to maintain any one facet of what I do," he replied, "I guess it would be songwriting. I get more thrill out of hearing one of my songs recorded on the radio sometimes than I do hearing one of my own records."

"I know a lot more rich songwriters than I do artists. Besides, the overhead is cheaper. All you gotta have is an old guitar, a pencil and some paper."

Earlier in his career Ed says he just wanted to be famous, just for the glory of it. He thought of girls falling at his feet and a big shiny car when he was getting started on Sun Records in Memphis as a teenager in the late 1950s.

"As I got a little older I got to thinking, hey, you know being rich *and* famous wouldn't be such a bad deal," he chuckled.

Actually, money appears to be important to Ed Bruce only so far as it allows him to have his farm and horses. In a lot of ways Ed *is* the cowboys he warned mamas not to let their babies grow up to be. He's a big hardy, honest sort of man who's pleasures are country pleasures, who values his independence perhaps above everything else.

"Patsy really understands me. You know that line in 'Mamas . . .' where it says 'If you don't understand him and he don't die young/he'll probably just ride away,'" Ed confided as he drove back down the hill.

"Well, Patsy knows I'm real independent like that and she understands it. Sometimes when I need to get away from everything and write I'll just get in the car and go off for a few days or a weekend she understands that. A lot of women wouldn't, you know."

Whatever else you can say about Ed Bruce, you have to say he's real. He's a lot like the people in his songs and he's a lot like the people he sings them for. He laughed when I told him how much I'd enjoyed the day and how unpretentious and "unshow biz" he and Patsy were.

"Shoot," he said in his deep resonating voice. "We were people way before we were entertainers." ■

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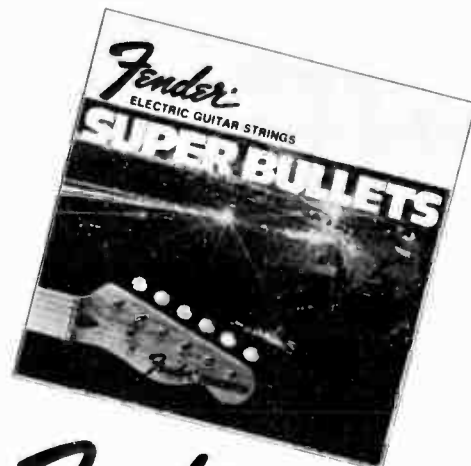
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# Loretta

*Twenty years have passed since Loretta Lynn broke into the Country Music field. She has become a world famous entertainer, a prime time TV regular and the author of a best-selling autobiography. Now in her early forties a movie based on her book *Coal Miner's Daughter* is in production, starring, Oscar nominee, Sissy Spacek in the title role.*

# Coal Miner's Daughter

It's late evening in Butcher Holler, Kentucky, a little foggy and cool, as the hills tend to be in the early spring. A solitary figure, with a lean, angular face sits on the front porch of the ramshackle cabin, thinking back, perhaps, on a long stretch in the mines that day. The moonlight makes eerie patterns through the fog.

A door opens, and from the brightly-lit cabin a stocky blond young man comes out on the porch and interrupts the stillness. "Excuse me, Mr. Webb," he says, and then asks the man for the hand of his 13-year-old daughter.

"Cut!" yells a voice in the front yard, and a dozen other figures begin to mill around in the moonlight, which is, in reality, the glow of high-watt theatrical lighting.

The strange music is lost for the moment, but for one spectator the emotion the scene evoked will linger.

She is Loretta Lynn, and she has just watched one of the most significant moments of her life recreated for *Coal Miner's Daughter*, the film based on her best-selling autobiography.

by **LAURA EIPPER**

A big-budget movie, scheduled for release next spring, the film stars Sissy Spacek as Loretta, Tommy Lee Jones as her husband Mooney Lynn, and Beverly D'Angelo as the late Patsy Cline, Loretta's best friend and mentor in her early days in Nashville. Roughly, the film follows Loretta from her childhood in Kentucky through her first major successes in country music.

It is, director Michael Apted says, a love story, not a documentary.

"It's a triumphant film, a legend. It's the American dream of two people who come from little opportunity and make it . . . it's the ups, downs and resolution of this remarkable marriage between Loretta and Mooney, but it's not sentimental either."

It's an ambitious undertaking, shot entirely on location in Nashville, rural Kentucky, West Virginia and Loretta's Hurricane Mills, Tennessee ranch. Under Apted's capable direction, production went smoothly during two months of

shooting in wildly varied weather. The film was completed on time this spring, and just slightly over budget.

For the dozens of technicians, camera-men, and crew members, it was all in a days work. For the thousands of extras who turned out for crowd scenes, it was a chance to see Hollywood at work. For the actors and director, it was an exciting project, one of the only films in memory that has been made about a living entertainer.

For Loretta Lynn, however, the experience was a milestone in a 25-year career that has taken her from that Butcher Holler shack to an international reputation as a country music star.

Known for her candor, Loretta has already shared some highly controversial parts of her private life with millions in her *Coal Miner's Daughter* book, which was co-authored with George Vecsey. She regularly makes the rounds of television talks shows, a charmingly open, no-bones-about-it guest. She has said on numerous

"I don't feel that I have ever not known her," Loretta says of Sissy Spacek, the star of *Coal Miner's Daughter*.





occasions that she wants, above all, for the film to be truthful.

But there is something about a movie, a larger-than-life quality, that exposes the private self more than a book. For all the headiness that has come with having a movie made about her while she is still in her prime, Loretta has had some painful moments and haunting experiences watching her own story re-told.

Shortly after 200 movie-makers and extras had left her house at the end of two weeks of shooting recently, Loretta took a breather one afternoon in her Music Row offices. She had been up until 7 a.m. the night before, recording with Conway Twitty, and she orders an early evening lunch of crackers, vienna sausages, Tab and an onion, while she snuggles into a large leather armchair.

She snacks on a candy bar, getting her bearings, and jokes about the turmoil her home has been in lately—furniture rearranged, storm windows removed—laughing and occasionally tossing her softly waved brown hair.

"It's a fantastic thing having a movie made out of your life when you're no older than I am—because I have just started," she says. "I really appreciate what's

happening, you know." But the film, she adds, has been a deeply emotional experience for her, marked with a sort of mystical quality since the project was first begun.

"I couldn't believe it. God has just been with us. He had to be," she says. "This movie was a thing where it wasn't someone on the outside looking in, we were all one big family. This is what was amazing about the whole thing. Everyone in the movie was meant to be there, like we were just waiting for the right ones to come along. People say, 'Loretta you're crazy,' but I feel like God moved every hand."

She points, as an example, to the casting of Sissy Spacek as the lead, a demanding role that requires her to age from a teenager to a rising country music star over a period of 20 years.

"You know, way back, two years ago now, I picked her from a stack of pictures they gave me to look at. I didn't even go all the way through the pictures. I went down to her and I said, 'This is the Coal Miner's Daughter.' It's weird, I don't know just what it's called. I don't know why we are so close.

"I don't feel that I have ever *not* known her," she adds. "Nobody had to even in-



This early photo was one of the first publicity pictures taken of Loretta in the fifties.

roduce her to me. She had read the book and heard about me saying that I wanted her to play it, so she came to see me one time when I was in Louisiana. It was like 'Well, it's been a long while since I seen you and we'll get together in a minute. Let me get in the bus and get my clothes changed.' And then I come back up in the front of the bus and we just start talking. I just said, 'Well, you're the Coal Miner's Daughter and so we got to get this together and that together, you need to do this and that.'

Over a period of months before and during the actual production, she and Sissy spent time together whenever possible; they worked on the music for the film (Sissy is an accomplished singer in her own right), and became each other's biggest fans.

So confident, in fact, was Loretta about Sissy's portrayal of her that not once during the actual filming did she watch her performance.

"I didn't watch because I figured she had me covered. Whatever she does is alright with me, good or bad. That's what I am," she says. "If she does a good thing, I say 'Well, maybe I wasn't too bad on that.' If she does a bad thing, I say, 'That's something I'll have to polish up on myself.'"

Similarly, she is impressed with the portrait of Mooney—Doo (her husband), as she calls him—created by Tommy Lee Jones, star of the recent television special about Howard Hughes, and the film, *The Eyes of Laura Mars*.

"I found it amusing watching Tommy Lee play Doo. I watched him a couple of times and he looked so much like Doo. I think he really is a whole lot like Doolittle. That look he gets on his face . . . I noticed that in *Eyes of Laura Mars*, he reminded me right away of Doo."

The third lead, she says, was initially the source of some problems, brought on by





Loretta and husband Mooney clown around in front of their genuine ante-bellum Southern mansion in Tennessee.

her feelings about Patsy Cline. Loretta retains a deep reverence for the late singer who befriended her early in her career, and even now, 16 years after her death, she finds it difficult to speak about Patsy. She was more worried, she says, about the characterization of her friend, than she was about herself.

"I'm always scared that somebody is going to do something about Patsy that I don't like. Because I'll defend her right down until I die, you know. She was her own woman, very strong as far as telling people where to go if they got in her way. But only if they were doing her wrong. She was never the kind of person that I've heard people say that she was—a person that could get a little too bad about things.

"Beverly sensed that I didn't take to her too well. I guess. She worried about me not liking her and she came in one afternoon and somebody said 'Oh, she sings just like Patsy.' I looked at her and I said 'Can you sing?' You know, real sarcastic. Which was a bad thing, I realize that now. Nothing she done could have pleased me, it was really bad. I left that night and she wrote me a long letter. Bless her heart, I thought it was so beautiful I kept it.

"She says, 'Loretta, I feel that you don't think maybe that I will do this role the right way. I want to go bad and I want to talk to you. I want to play Patsy the way you seen Patsy in your own eyes, not the way some people in Nashville have told me they saw her.' I don't know who it was she had talked to, but I appreciated what she said very much. And you know, that little Beverly D'Angelo has really got Patsy captured."

In the course of the two-month shooting schedule, Loretta spent hours on the set, and before that spent months going over several drafts of the script with the writers. But there were still some surprises, she says; scenes in the film that came as a shock to her, in particular those in which her late father, played by Levon Helm of

The Band, appears.

Loretta's devotion to her father runs deep. He is, she has repeatedly said, the finest man she ever met, and the memory of him is still painful. In the film she relived moments that she thought were long buried in her memory, and the experience clearly left her shaken.

"There was this bad scene. We went up to Kentucky because I was gonna appear the next morning. We got in just as it was dark, got out of the truck and walked up into the Butcher Holler set. I thought somebody had said to me that I was gonna see a scene where Sissy was sitting on the porch in a swing, singing *In the Pines*. I don't know now if they told me that or if it was what I wanted to see. I think I was afraid I would see something I didn't want to and I was afraid.

"I got there, I could see the old home place all lit up and as I got closer I could see there was someone outside. I looked over on the other end of the porch and there sat my Daddy. Well, for a minute I knew I was crazy. As I looked again I thought, 'Well, my mind is really playing tricks on me, cause there Daddy is, staring into space.' I thought maybe nobody else could see him, because he looked kinda like a shadow. Then all of a sudden the old door opened up and here come Tommy Lee.

"You know what it done to me? It's one of the saddest, emptiest, loneliest feelings I've ever had. It kinda put me back into a place where . . . where you don't know if you'll ever get out of it. A feeling that I was living it, that I was there. I wasn't really seeing it, you know, I was living it for a little bit. It was really kinda hard for me to come out of that for a while."

Seeing her "old home place" too, was a shock, although in fact the Butcher Holler scenes were shot in another nearby location in a carefully constructed replica of the house where Loretta grew up. Not too carefully, though, she points out. The

homecoming had its lighter moments, too.

"There they were, filming about a coal miner's daughter, and underneath the porch of the old place they had it full of cut wood. Just stacked, ricks of it. I said, 'A coal miner's daughter burning wood? We never burnt wood, we always burnt coal and we had a big pile of it in the front yard.' They took the wood out from the porch a little later on."

The advance rushes of the film are apparently creating quite a stir around Universal Studios these days, but Loretta has not seen even one. And she won't, she says, until it's all over and ready for the theaters.

"I haven't seen nothing and I don't want to. I haven't cared to, I guess. Maybe I just want to wait. I don't really know either if I want to see the movie when everybody else does the first time or not. I think it will be a little bit hard for me to take in spots, so I don't think I want to see it in front of everybody the first time."

With a modesty that would seem impossible from nearly anyone else, Loretta says what she hopes personally to get from the film is a better understanding of her flaws—not a glamorous two hours of flattery.

"Everybody has bad things they do, little habits. One of mine is my temper," she says, emphatically snapping her fingers. "What I have to say is said, over with, but in ten minutes I'm some place crying over it. There are a lot of things. This is the one thing out of the movie that I'll probably get, and that's enough for me: the things I don't want to see. Things I can polish up on. Nothing else means a thing, nothing."

And for the audience, fans and non-fans alike who come to see her extraordinary life played out, she harbors a wish.

More than 20 years from Butcher Holler, now the toast of Las Vegas, a prime time television regular, a world-famous entertainer, the subject of a book and now a film, there is still a poignant streak of the coal miner's daughter behind those startling blue eyes.

"There will be funny things and there will be sad things, but I think this movie will help American families. Because everyone is living the same way. A lot of people come up to me and ask to touch me, ask if I am real. It's good to take them into my house and show them how ornery my kids are, how dirty they get and how they fight and how me and my old man fight. How we disagree on things, how we agree. Things that we have lost and things that we have found. Every family goes through that whatever on a bigger or smaller scale.

"There aren't many films that let you see that side of people. All you see is the glamour, the big glamorous star things. They never see inside. I think by this movie they will know that we're not stars, hanging way up there shining. We're just right down here, a-grinding with the rest of them." ■

# Sissy...The Other "Coal Miner's Daughter"

When she was chosen for the part of Loretta in *Coal Miner's Daughter*, Sissy Spacek began months of research: reading and re-reading the original book, studying Loretta on stage and in pictures, listening to tapes of her speaking and singing, and getting to know Loretta as a friend.

"I'm probably the most prepared for this film of any I've ever done," said the young blond actress, who was nominated for an Oscar for her role as a frighteningly disturbed teenager in *Carrie*. "But at the beginning I felt most inadequate because I wasn't Loretta."

What happened to transform her from a 30-year-old Hollywood star, into a 13-year-old Kentucky hill girl, into a country music queen, both she and Loretta agree, may have been a little magic.

"You know Loretta and I are actually convinced that we knew each other in another life," she said one afternoon this spring, waiting in her backstage trailer to go onstage at the Grand Ole Opry for a scene. "She is psychic, I think. She had blind faith in me—I have to do good."

During the course of filming *Coal Miner's Daughter*, Sissy took on an almost uncanny likeness to Loretta, her hair dyed brown, her voice with a Kentucky lilt identical to Loretta's. On tape it was hard to tell them apart, and when the pair sang on the real-life Grand Ole Opry one night last winter, Opry stars backstage agreed they couldn't tell which one was singing what.

It was the intangibles, the things you can't see, though, that were Sissy's main concern.

"We had to realize that it's a movie, a fabrication," she said. "You capture magic in the scenes. What we've gone for is to get that essence of Loretta and Mooney, how they did things, how they felt, their ingeniousness."

The time she spent with Loretta was most valuable in that sense, a chance to study her closely, but also to become a close friend.

"It was frightening at first, because I didn't have enough time with her," Sissy said. "Just stolen moments. But when we were together it was so much fun! One night at the hotel here, it was just like a slumber party.

"Loretta slept on a roll-away bed, we pinned her sheet music up on the lamps and I played my guitar. We called up everyone we knew and sang to them. We even called up Michael (Apted, the film's director) in the commissary at the studio in California and sang."

It was the music, she said, that was the most difficult chore for her in preparing for the movie, as all of Loretta's singing



"I'm probably the most prepared for this film of any I've ever done," says Sissy Spacek.

is done by Sissy. As a teenager in Quitman, Tex., she had planned to be a singer, and has even recorded. She is comfortable singing in front of people, and was very at ease singing in front of Loretta, but Sissy remembers her debut on the Grand Ole Opry as one of the most nerve-wracking moments in her life.

"That first night at the Opry, Doo was holding me by the arm. I tried to run away, but he grabbed me again and just shoved me onstage, just the way he did with Loretta the first time she was on the Opry."

Her fears, it turned out, were unnecessary: she took the Opry by storm that night, and on a subsequent appearance.

The later parts of the film, too, posed their problems, Sissy said.

"I had more freedom with her early

years, more room to imagine what happened," she said. "I loved the early stuff. In the later stuff I'd find myself telling her how she felt about something that happened to her a few years ago. Can you imagine that? Who am I to tell her about her own life?"

For Sissy, as for Loretta, *Coal Miner's Daughter* was an emotional experience. When filming in Hurricane Mills was over, they both wept as they said goodbye.

Compared to her role in *Carrie*, Sissy said, playing Loretta was an even greater challenge—harder, but more rewarding.

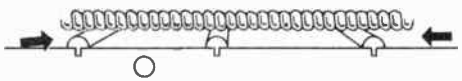
"This role is a bigger chunk I've bitten off, a wider range. It goes further. It's just as intense as the other, but this is a character you can run with. This is a much more positive, enjoyable role for me. Loretta has her own rhythm, her own humor. It's been a real up for me." ■

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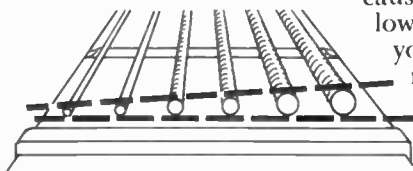
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# Charley Pride's Universal Appeal



*From the cotton fields of Sledge, Mississippi, to Country Music's number one black singer, Charley Pride is a prime example of the American success story.*

**by DOLLY CARLISLE**

The angry clouds hung motionless in the North Dallas, Texas sky. The tall, attractive, rotund black woman, who seemed to have a constant smile on her pleasant face, politely complained about the recent stormy weather. She moved heavily, but rapidly, through the rambling, expansive house that she shared with her husband, Charley Pride, and their three children.

Moving from one part of the house to another, helping her husband prepare for yet another airplane trip, she spoke only in passing. "I designed this house with the help of an architect," Rozene said with a casual glance from her intelligent, smiling eyes. "He was good to work with, because he didn't make me feel ignorant. I knew what I wanted. For one thing, I wanted the house designed around an atrium. But I just needed some help with the details," she said over her shoulder as she disappeared into a bedroom.

The barren-looking atrium to the left and toward the middle of the house had become wilted and yellow under the hot Texas sun. But the concept had been right. The rectangular-shaped house was wrapped around the centrally located atrium so that it could be viewed from almost every room in the house. With a little more rain, the atrium would once again be lovely.

The best view of the atrium was from the main room (the living room) that had ceiling-to-floor windows and one of the highest sloping ceilings imaginable. It stretched upward for some 25 feet before angling off to a point far above. An off-white fireplace recessed in one wall while the opposing wall served as the backup for a large General Electric, rear-projected television screen.

It was the house of a well-to-do man. The burnt orange, blonde and beige fabrics were ordered to specifications. The upholstery on the couch and chairs matched the throw pillows and the many built-in

cabinets. A swimming pool lay just off the kitchen and breakfast room and a tennis court could be spotted beyond the luxury car sitting in the garage. The house was contemporary in design with straight lines and a lot of open space. But it was not opulent. It did reflect, however, the taste of occupants who knew what they wanted and who had the money to purchase it.

When we had entered the house just a few moments earlier, Charley Pride had flicked on the huge TV with a push button remote control unit, and asked if I wanted to watch a movie on his Betamax. "But then, I guess you won't be able to see much of it, will you?" he added with a gleeful, boastful chuckle. Forty-one-year-old Charley Pride was proud of his accumulated wealth.

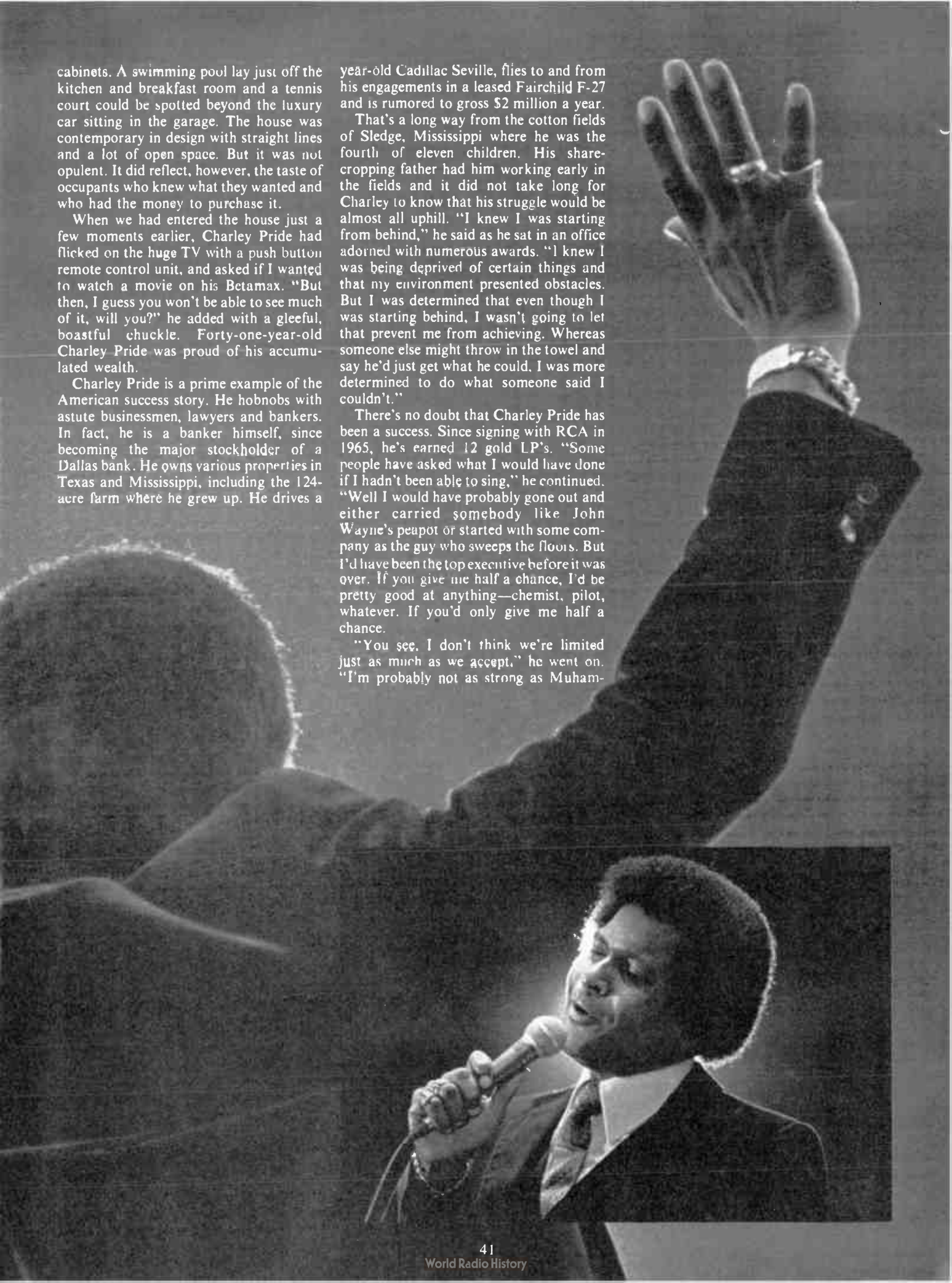
Charley Pride is a prime example of the American success story. He hobnobs with astute businessmen, lawyers and bankers. In fact, he is a banker himself, since becoming the major stockholder of a Dallas bank. He owns various properties in Texas and Mississippi, including the 124-acre farm where he grew up. He drives a

year-old Cadillac Seville, flies to and from his engagements in a leased Fairchild F-27 and is rumored to gross \$2 million a year.

That's a long way from the cotton fields of Sledge, Mississippi where he was the fourth of eleven children. His share-cropping father had him working early in the fields and it did not take long for Charley to know that his struggle would be almost all uphill. "I knew I was starting from behind," he said as he sat in an office adorned with numerous awards. "I knew I was being deprived of certain things and that my environment presented obstacles. But I was determined that even though I was starting behind, I wasn't going to let that prevent me from achieving. Whereas someone else might throw in the towel and say he'd just get what he could, I was more determined to do what someone said I couldn't."

There's no doubt that Charley Pride has been a success. Since signing with RCA in 1965, he's earned 12 gold LP's. "Some people have asked what I would have done if I hadn't been able to sing," he continued. "Well I would have probably gone out and either carried somebody like John Wayne's peapot or started with some company as the guy who sweeps the floors. But I'd have been the top executive before it was over. If you give me half a chance, I'd be pretty good at anything—chemist, pilot, whatever. If you'd only give me half a chance.

"You see, I don't think we're limited just as much as we accept," he went on. "I'm probably not as strong as Muham-



mad Ali, but maybe with my ability to move a little quicker, I'd be as good as him. Given the same amount of time and development as he has in his field, I'd give him a run for the money. I just don't like to get hit."

But not even Charley's unwavering determination and will power enabled him to attain one of his earliest goals—playing on a major league baseball team. In hindsight, Charley said he worked against himself. "Around age twenty-six, I started asking myself *why* about a lot of things," he reflected. (This was about the time Charley was turned down by the New York Mets, in what turned out to be his final effort to get a contract with a major league team.) "I asked myself if it was meant for me to sit on this planet and be negative and scared all the time, afraid to adventure and feel that I could achieve. I think for a long time back then, I had the desire and the ability, but I lacked the positiveness to move ahead. I decided I wasn't going to be afraid anymore. I decided that he, The Man, who I believe handles everything, meant for me to be

happy about what I'd been blessed with and to go forward and do. I decided it was up to me. I believe in the old adage, God helps those who help themselves. I made a firm decision that I was going to go forward and achieve with all due speed and with as little infringement on everyone else as possible."

But Charley willingly admits that a part of his success has been due to luck and timing. "At this moment, I am the epitome of American music," he said with confidence. "From the standpoint of who I am, what has made me what I am and what I've done with it represents a big slice of our society. I sound like Elvis, Ernest Tubb, B. B. King, Bob Dylan, Al Frasher, Nat King Cole and Frank Sinatra. When you hear me sing, you hear all of those combined into one. I am the epitome of the whole ball of wax—color, style and music. I believe in three ingredients of American music: country, gospel and the blues. When you hear those three, you hear it all. When you hear me, you hear those three."

"I'm also blessed with a voice that does something to people that I don't quite un-



derstand," he continued. "I had this couple from Canada who said their daughter couldn't keep down some allergy medicine she needed to take. One time, they happened to be playing my record and that



Charley jams with the Harlem Globe Trotters after proving that he too can play basketball.



the medicine stayed. So they started playing my record every time they gave her the medicine. It was a soothing effect, they said. They played other voices, but no one else worked. There's just something about my voice. I only believe that there's something that I've been blessed with that gives me an edge on someone else. I haven't had a big record since "Kiss An Angel Good Morning," but I still compete with all the biggies. I often wonder what I would get if I really had a monster (hit)."

In private, Charley Pride is a serious, reflective, and obviously intelligent man who has devoted much of his time to thinking and analyzing (even though he quit school in the eleventh grade and claims to rarely read). But a little later, sitting in a Mexican restaurant around the corner from his office, he ordered tacos and Margueritas (instead of the *burgers and fries and cherry pies* that he sings about) with an almost goofy demeanor, bobbing his head and eating fritos with simple-minded gestures. He greeted the waiters and waitresses with gullible intrigue, wrapping his long, gangly arm around a young

boy and acknowledging a pretty waitress with a loony gaze and shifting eyes.

Charley was an obvious patron of the place. "I loove Mexican food," he noted with some degree of enthusiasm. "I could eat it all day." Several of the restaurant's clientele came forward to exchange jokes or to volunteer the latest news on their children and families. One middle-aged waitress started talking about her school experiences and the tribulations of an authoritative teacher. "It never works," Charley commented with a great shaking of his large head. "That authoritative, controlling type. All of them failed—

Napoleon Bonaparte and Hitler. That's what Martin Luther King and Gandhi were trying to teach. But each generation that comes along thinks they can do it a new way. So the cycle begins all over again. You just can't hold people down for a long period of time. It never works. You have to let people go free. But then, I'm no philosopher," he added with a guileless grin.

Earlier, when he was in a more pensive mood, Charley had said, "I'm no crusader. I don't believe I know anything, but I believe I can talk about anything under the sun. I don't use my popularity to try and



"At this moment, I am the epitome of American music...color, style and music," says Charley.

get it the way I want it. I'm an entertainer. If I started pushing the way I see things, I would cease to be the entertainer. I would be known as Charley Pride, the cause-maker, the activist, the person who rattles the bushes."

But Charley is concerned with the mounting number of regulations and controls imposed by our government. Not in respect to how the controls affect our social structure, but how they limit the potential for success. "For a person to come from the cotton fields the way I did, this tax situation is in bad shape. I'm biting off a whole big chunk to try to even come close to the success of a Rockefeller or J. Paul Getty. The tax structure as it was then, gave them the opportunity to get where they are now. The government's got me stopped in so many ways. Used to, I wouldn't have to pay my taxes until the end of the year. I could get the use of that money longer. That's the way it was back then. Now you have to pay quarterly estimates and don't get the use of it," Charley said, but then hesitated and added, as though afraid he might be misunderstood. "I want to be as good a businessman as I am a singer."

Charley's business success will likely come in the same manner that his singing success has occurred, through steady, sedate, even-paced hits. Charley Pride has

not had a big record since 1971 nor has he won any major awards since his 1971 Country Music Association "Entertainer of the Year" award and his 1972 CMA "Male Singer of the Year" Award.

"In all honesty, it is not a disappointment that I haven't won any awards in recent years," he admitted. "What do awards stand for? They're nice to get and to be recognized by your peers is nice, but I'm still competing. Awards today don't mean what they once meant. We have so many award shows; semi-award shows and in-between award shows."

"I know I haven't had a big record, but I do think I should at least be nominated for Entertainer of the Year. I can stand up as an entertainer with anybody. If I was going to be disappointed, it would be because I haven't been nominated in that category. Even though I haven't had a big record, I've been consistent."

Even though winning awards may not be a goal for Charley, playing to larger crowds is. "We've got three billion people on the planet, approximately," he said. "I can see that giant screen up there in the sky and I come on and people see me at every place on the planet. And as I sing, they start to react the same way as those 10,000 or 40,000, screaming and enjoying." He leaned back in his chair and with a confident grin, asked, "Be nice, wouldn't it?"

The potential impact of Charley Pride is monumental. The sole black country music performer who sings before a predominantly white audience is a unique position to hold. As one musicologist, Jules Siegel observed in an *Esquire* Magazine article: "Until now, the black message has mainly flowed through white translators (Elvis Presley) to the white audiences. Its effect has been overpoweringly great. Those of us who watched and felt what Presley, The Beatles and Dylan did to American consciousness remember that potent sound was followed by the great wave of revolution. . . . If that was what happened when the voice of the black people was heard secondhand, we can only guess what may result when a black man like Charley Pride sings directly to Middle America. . . ."

"Charley Pride may not yet have chosen to deliver any special message, but he has proved that it is possible for a black man to sing in a white voice. When he or those who come after him begin to instruct as well as entertain, white Middle America will be changed forever," the article concluded.

"Black audiences tell me I look like them, but sound white," reflected Charley. "White audiences tell me I sound like them, but look black. But I don't see in color. I've just blocked all of that from my mind. I've been criticized for not doing more about the black objective. But we live in a world of comparisons. How do you think I compare in terms of success with those who are pushing the black cause? They're still out picking cotton and I'm the picker who ended up buying the farm. We live in 1980 and I don't understand why so much emphasis is put on black versus white. You get all bogged down thinking about it. I'd rather spend my time thinking about how I can move forward. In my own mind, black versus white is a non-issue."

After finishing his Mexican meal, his one meal of the day, ("I have to keep trim for myself and my fans," he commented with a few pats on his flat stomach.) he pulled out his Carte Blanche credit card and handed it to the waitress. As she sauntered off, he gulped the remains of his Marguerita. "There was a time when I just drove past these Mexican places," he noted. "But one day a friend treated me to a Mexican meal and I've loved it ever since. Discovering something new adds a spark to your life, don't you think?" he asked as he propped his chin on his hands and smiled devilishly, daring anyone to disagree with him.

Soon after, this country star with the permanent tan strolled gallantly back to his Cadillac, a fitting symbol of his acquired success. It is not likely that Charley Pride will ever have to speak a message. The fact that a Mississippi sharecropper's son has aspired and achieved success in the country music and business worlds is the message in and of itself. ■



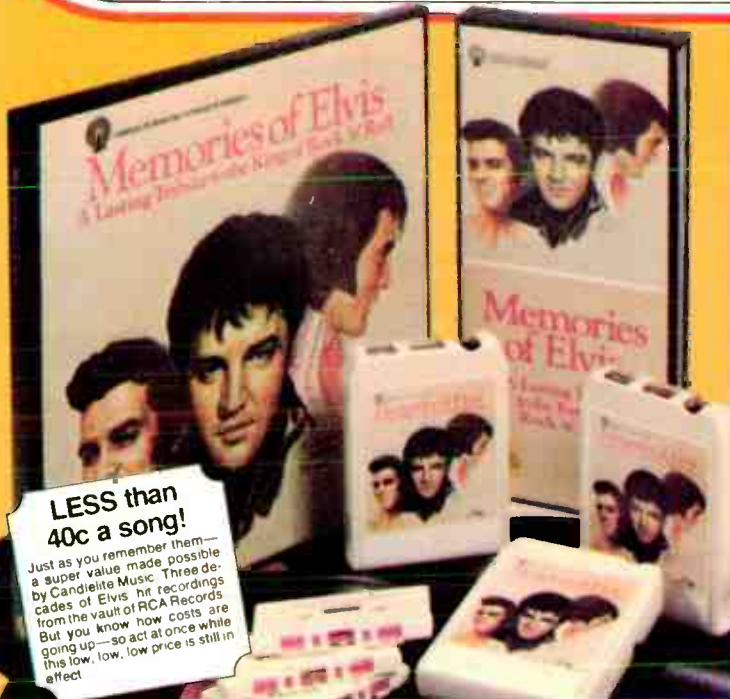


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When summer comes to Opryland '79, so does a lot of exciting new entertainment for the country music fan. First and foremost is the "Opry Star Showcase." You'll see individual stars of the Grand Ole Opry performing live in the Opry House in special one-hour concerts on Mondays through Thursdays this summer (June 11-Sept. 3). Names like Barbara Mandrell, Marty Robbins, Loretta Lynn, Larry Gatlin and Roy Acuff. Best of all, Opryland guests enjoy the Showcase *at no extra charge!*



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If you've ever been to Opryland, there's one show we *know* you can't wait to see again — "Country Music U.S.A." This singing, dancing salute to all the great stars and hits of country music...from Hank Williams to Bill Monroe to Dolly Parton and Larry Gatlin. All the immortals seem to appear on stage through the talents of our young Opryland performers. And Opryland has some living legends who perform regularly in the park...Bashful Brother Oswald and Charlie Collins are always dishing up some fancy licks and hearty laughs. And over in our Appalachian Hill Country, Mack Magaha with his Country Bluegrass Show and Russ Jeffers with Smoky Mountain Sunshine are settin' the woods on fire!

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Summer marks the opening of other great shows. In "Today's Country Roads," bright, young Opryland performers sing the top hits of the current country charts. And every Saturday night at our magnificent new, \$3 million Roy Acuff Theatre it's time for "Country Comin' Up!" You'll see the future stars of country music on their way to fame and fortune.\*



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\*A separate admission is charged for performances of "Country Comin' Up."

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# Records

**Jerry Lee Lewis**  
Jerry Lee Lewis  
Elektra 6E-184

**R**ight at the end of *Rockin' My Life Away* Jerry Lee Lewis shouts out, for all the world to hear and wonder, "My name is Jerry Lee Lewis and I'm darned sure here to stay!"

Couldn't be more true if it was carved in marble and passed down from the steps of the Grand Ole Opry! What we've got here is the album we've all been waiting for, where the godfather of rock and roll steps up and shows 'em how it's done. This album does for the Killer what Elvis' 1968 Christmas Special did for the King—it shows, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that Jerry Lee Lewis is still a *contender!*

And what an album it is: Oldies like *Don't Let Go*, *(You've Got) Personality*, *Every Day I Have To Cry*, done the way they *should* be done. Don't get the mistaken idea that Jerry Lee is some kind of oldie's act. Rather, what he has succeeded in doing is redefining these songs, placing them in a totally modern context. The Killer's been down the road since *Whole Lotta Shakin'* and *High School Confidential*, and that whole long trip is reflected in the incredibly subtled intonations in his voice.

In fact, this album—his first for new label Elektra, who deserve a heck of a lot of credit for this one—along with his previous two, have finally revealed Jerry Lee for the talent that he really is. *Middle Age Crazy* was the best country song to come down the chute in a long, long time—real country, a head and shoulders above the run-of-the mill pop pap we've been buried under lately. Ditto for *I'll Find It Where I Can*—a powerful, *mean*-sounding ballad that showed that the Killer was ready to put those wayward ladies in their



place if push came to shove. Yet those cuts didn't receive half of what they should have had coming to them—largely, I think, because of the Killer's reputation. No matter how you slice him, he's not a lounge singer, and he don't do *disco* country.

But this album is what it's all about. It's ageless, honky-tonk rock and roll, featuring the meanest, mutha-humpin' piano pounder of all times. No frills, no bull. The best album so far this year.

This man ought to be declared a national monument. Buy his record.

MICHAEL BANE

## Sammi Smith Girl Hero

Cyclone CYS 2000

**T**hough her voice is distinctive and capable, Sammi Smith, like the great majority of singers, depends more on material than on vocal abilities or, for that matter, arresting arrangements. She has had several successful records in the decade since *Help Me Make It Through The Night* established

her, but none of near that magnitude.

If *Girl Hero* is any indication, she has improved markedly as a singer, and the arrangements are generally complimentary to her husky, lonely voice, but the problem continues to be material. The songs are competent, well crafted pieces of work, but none are outstanding, with the possible exception of her hit *What A Lie*.

There was care and thought put into this album by all concerned, and for her part, Sammi seems to be singing her heart out; it's just that there's nothing here with that magic combination of voice, arrangement, and material.

So we are left with a good, solid album where we'd hoped for more; that's no small accomplishment, but it's still not what it could have been, or might someday be.

DOUGLAS B. GREEN



# Records

## Dolly Parton Great Balls of Fire

RCA AHL 1-3361

This album opens with Dolly in motion, climbing higher, higher, and still higher on a song called *Star of the Show*. If only it were a videodisc, we would see her spinning like a whirlwind, casting off dagger-like rays of energy in all directions. Goodness gracious, before she even gets to *Great Balls of Fire*, she sets our souls ablaze in the opener, telling us things we already know about her in the strongest, most defiant tones she can muster.

On the surface, *Star of the Show* is a blistering update of an old theme—that she will not play second fiddle, or should I say second set of string arrangements, to anyone. But underneath, we may assume that the reprehensible lover in the song is but a symbol for a real person (partner, not lover) from Dolly's recent past: "We sang a love song the day that we met. You thought that we made a perfect duet." "I'm nobody's co-star, I just play leading roles. I won't play a part unless it's star of the show."



The spotlight dims and we are taken "Down" on the second of four Parton compositions, followed by a very commercial break, *You're the Only One*. Then Dolly reaches briefly into the past for some *Help!* in remembering the Beatles, only to come back looking straight ahead with *Do You Think That Time Stands Still*.

The level of excitement, which by now has diminished somewhat, picks up again on side two. *Sweet Summer Lovin'* is a jewel of a mix. The "feeling' free" spirit is captured beautifully, with Dolly's voice held aloft by a unique blend of horns and banjos, enhanced by an understated beat. *Almost in Love* is pleasant filler, followed by a morsel of light supper club disco, *It's Not My Affair Anymore*. Alas, Dolly fades away with *Sandy's Song*, a haunting melody akin to *Greensleeves*. Although there is more motion than emotion throughout, this is quite an interesting show. And if you're expecting a knockout version of *Great Balls of Fire*, you won't be disappointed.

BILL OAKY

## The Marshall Tucker Band Running Like The Wind Warner Bros. BSK 3317

The middle of a blitzing rain in Austin and I see the post-man coming up the drive with a package. "It's another Tiny Tim record," he says handing it over. "That's not worth gettin' out in the rain for," I tell him. "You're right," he says and disappears back into the yuk. But



it's not Tiny Tim, it's the latest lp from Marshall Tucker, *Running Like The Wind*, their first for Warner Bros. since leaving Capricorn.

Nice design. There's a ghost horse on the front cover. I slap the record on the turntable and listen to the title cut. It seems to me there's a touch of Brazil in the middle of this. Flutes. And lotsa horns. Well, they recorded it in Coconut Grove and I guess that's closer to Brazil than Ft. Worth. *The Last of the Singing Cowboys* comes up and it's the same thing, I mean the jazzy/Brazil instrumentation, or maybe it's the rain, or . . . since one of my speakers is out it occurs to me that my equipment might not be doing justice to this stuff. Anyway, *The Last of the Singing Cowboisy* is not as energetic as *This Ol' Cowboy*, an earlier Marshall Tucker song which was one of the all-

time 10 most requested on Austin's KOKE-FM during that radio station's brief life span. *Answer To Love* ends the first side. Heavy guitars come in and Brazil disappears. Outside the rain gets worse.

Side 2 kicks off with *Unto These Hills*, a Toy Caldwell tune that's probably the best cut on the album. The guitar gets back into the thick of things. Nice horns. And, at least when Toy mentions a woman he couples it with "forever torture in my mind." Not so the next two songs: brother Tommy's *Melody Ann* and McCorkle's *My Best Friend*. Both are about how good it is to get off the weary road and come home to your old lady. Not a very original idea for a song. *Pass It On*, another ode to an old man, finishes off the album. It's not as dull as *Last of the Singing*

*Cowboys* which is in the same vein built around a romantic cliché/vision of old cowboys.

Most of the lyrics throughout the lp are weak. Few of them could hold up if performed with just a single acoustic guitar (a fair test I think), but the musicianship makes the difference. The music is sophisticated, even exotic, probably worth the trouble, and it's certainly what these guys are into. Sometime ago Marshall Tucker found their own space in the scheme of things and now they're exploring it with a vengeance. *Running Like The Wind* chronicles where they've taken it most recently.

You might want to buy this record. I recommend it. It's got a ghost horse on the cover, and it's got nothing to do with Tiny Tim, but when you play it it'll probably start raining.

NELSON ALLEN

# Records

## The Oak Ridge Boys The Oak Ridge Boys Have Arrived

ABC AY-1135

**O**ak Ridge is a famous oak tree dotted cliff somewhere in the south. Preachers preach from atop Oak Ridge and people sing hymns from up there. The Boys grew up under the ridge listening to people sing and preach. That's why and where they got their name. Now the Oak Ridge Boys are really out on a limb. Or is it a rim? Anyway the Oak Ridge Boys Have Arrived. They have risen, so to speak.

The rise of the Oak Ridge Boys has been one of the more explosive success stories in recent country music history.

Four ex-gospel singers who cater to the mainstream, they've managed to hang onto a single most important ingredient of gospel music, joy. The joy of singing. At least they're always smiling. On TV. On their latest lp they're smiling, and, if not jumping for joy, they at least look as if they're in a hurry to get it on. They wear various pieces from and slightly hipper versions of the gospel singer's uniform—the 3-piece suit. In other words these boys dress up as well as down. Clean cut with a very slight touch of raunch. That's pretty much where their music is as well.

So they've got this new album, *The Oak Ridge Boys Have Arrived*, with 10 songs. *Sail Away* will have you humming along if you don't listen to

it too closely. *Sometimes The Rain Won't Let Me Sleep* is one of those songs about a guy left alone with the kids, "how I love our little boy you trusted me to keep." What I want to know is—where are all these women going? Aw, well, that's another question. *There Must Be Something About Me That She Loves* has a nice country feel, *I Gotta Get Over This* is ok, and *Every Now And Then* manages to describe a unique relationship. The Boys seem interested in showing off their versatility and almost come off as a country version of the Persuasions on *My Radio Sounds Good To Me*. On *Dig A Little Deeper In The Well* one of 'em sings "if you want a good drink of cool water you gotta dig a little deeper in the well." Well,

they've got to dig a little deeper in the well than they have on this LP before they'll find anything cool enough for me. But no matter. They're hot, they're popular, and will probably be around for a long time.

The Oak Ridge Boys have arrived!

NELSON ALLEN



## Asleep At The Wheel

### Served Live

Capitol ST-11945

**T**ake a look at the fine print above the title on the cover: it says "The Grammy Award Winning Asleep At The Wheel." Yet, though they were nominated for several CMA awards when they were playing letter-perfect versions of old Bob Wills tunes, they always missed out in the final

balloting. Then they cut a version of Count Basie's 1937 *One O'Clock Jump*, and it wins a Grammy this year for "Best Country Instrumental." Well, it did sound a bit like Bob's 1940 big-band Playboys, but obviously The Wheel were changing direction.

Yet *Served Live* is a retrospective LP, recalling bits and pieces from their past. This is a new, slimmed down unit, without the great original tunes of Leroy Preston, the Cajun weirdness of Link Davis, Jr. or the piano genius of Floyd

Domino, so it's obviously a transition LP as well, though the band's sound is much the same as ever.

They run through a *Choo Choo Ch-Boogie*, Count Basie's *Jumpin' At The Woodside*, *Am I High*, *Route 66* and *Miles And Miles Of Texas*, all from previous albums. New vocalist John Nicholas, features on Sugarcane Harris' *The Last Meal* and his own *Too Many Bad Habits*, brings a raw, Delbert McClinton edge to the group. Chris O'Connell has traded her Loretta Lynn in-

fluence for that of jazz singer Billie Holiday and does a heartfelt, if tentative, rendition of *God Bless The Child*. Even their six-minute rendition of *Will The Circle Be Unbroken* owes more to Black Gospel than the Carter Family.

It's not like seeing the Wheel in person, of course, and I wish it had been a two-record set, but *Served Live* brings across much of their in-person boogie/swing ambience. And it's great accompaniment for a night's beer-drinking.

RICH KIENZLE



# COUNTRY

**For Col**

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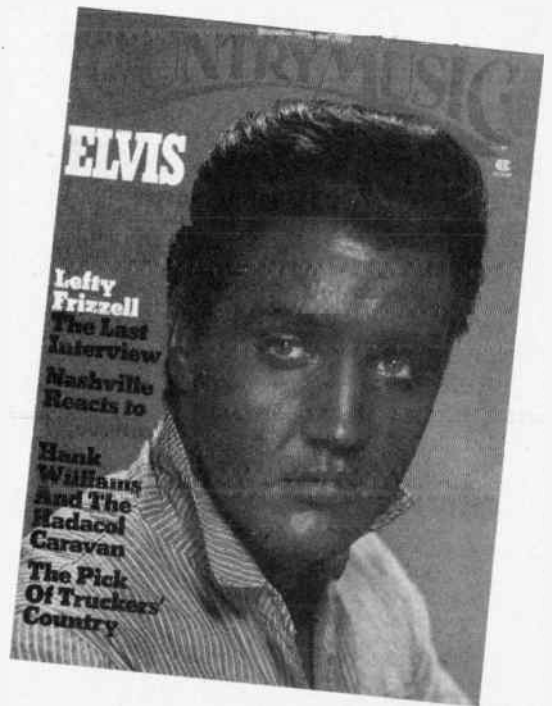
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**Roy Clark & Gatemouth Brown**  
**Makin' Music**  
 MCA 3161

With all his Hee-Haw hijinx, Las Vegas limpidity and Grammy geniality, the fact that Roy Clark is a damn good guitarist is often obscured beneath the murk. But in an apparent effort to reintroduce his guitar as something other than a TV prop, Clark has gotten together with 55-year old Louisiana legend Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown and a host of accomplished, diversified musicians to create one of the year's most delightful surprises. Even the fact that Clark and Brown share the same management, meaning that the concept for *Makin' Music* probably originated not with the artists but on hustling Jim Halsey's drawing board, fails to taint the considerable fruits of this unlikely musical marriage. This record cooks.

As one might suppose from the title, this is hardly a high-gloss production. Producer Steve Ripley has given the record the feel of a long, loose jam session, leaving in the whooping, exhorting and chatter of the studio. But he does not let things digress into sloppy croneyism, merely giving us enough behind-the-scenes color to let us know that the band is thoroughly enjoying itself. Along with Clark and Brown, the players include Garland Craft, the keyboard man in the Oak Ridge Boys' band; Tony Garnier, formerly bassist for Asleep at the Wheel; renowned session drummer Jim Keltner; Brazilian jazz percussionist Airtó Moreira; and the Memphis Horns. As the album opens, the group is still tuning up, momentarily jumping into Gatemouth's *Short Stuff*, a rollicking instrumental ditty which serves to get the band admirably warmed up. Things just get hotter from there.

Not surprisingly, there is a wide range of styles on *Makin' Music* (Gatemouth alone has



played everything from cajun to classical), focusing on an amalgam of blues, jazz and country swing. Due partly to the virtuosity of the musicians, the faster tunes are the most impressive, with the players losing none of their precision even at high speeds. A bop intro gives way to Fleecie Moore's *Caldonia*, featuring some fantastic guitar work by Clark, a nifty boogie-woogie bass, swing-time horns, and a throaty vocal by Brown. More in a night-club jazz vein is Billy Strayhorn's *Take the A Train*, a classic bluesy piece in which Clark gets off some astounding flurries of notes. And then there's Kent Harris' *Talk About a Party*, and *Four O'Clock in the Morning* (penned by Producer Ripley), both rocking blues with seemingly impromptu Gatemouth raps built in, further setting the informal tone of the disc. Only slightly less successful are the

more traditional blues numbers, *Justice Blues* and *The Drifter*. These two cuts ramble on too long, both clocking in at over 6 minutes, and some fine lyrics (and singing) by Brown are nearly lost in the shuffle. And a cover of Harlan Howard's classic *Busted* would have to be termed a disappointment; Clark really shouldn't sing the blues, especially with a Gatemouth Brown in the studio. Perhaps they should have left this one to Ray Charles.

Side one ends with an open mic in the studio picking up Gatemouth yelling, "Somebody went nuts!!" Well, if a bunch of top-notch musicians getting together to create 40 minutes of exceedingly enjoyable, although decidedly uncommercial, music is nuts, Gatemouth hit it on the nose. Let's hope there's more lunacy like *Makin' Music* in the offing.

GARY KENTON

**Mel Tillis**  
**Mr. Entertainer**  
 MCA 3167

In this era of country music's headlong rush to attain instant pop forgettability, it is refreshing indeed to see one of country's so-called superstars put out a solid, straightforward recording of good country music.

More refreshing yet is that these are not rehashed oldies (with the single exception of a fine rendition of Don Gibson's *Oh Lonesome Me*), but are contemporary songs by contemporary writers, indicating there is still much fine country music being written out there.

This is not to say that *Mr. Entertainer* is a perfect record. It has the air of not being well thought out, for one thing, *Coca-Cola Cowboy* and particularly *Tonight I Saw Three People (Throw My Autograph Down)* don't work as songs, as statements, or as arrangements. That kind of thing is best left to Hank Jr.

Still, *Mr. Entertainer* is as important and as exciting as a statement as it is a musical event. It is ample proof that there is plenty of vitality left in the steel guitars and fiddles school of country music, that in the hands of a master there is the excitement and force which has long made country music attractive to most of us.

The only thing *Mr. Entertainer* really lacks is one of the attributes which made Mel Tillis the entertainer he is: his songwriting.

DOUGLAS B. GREEN



## Willie Nelson and Leon Russell

### One For The Road

Columbia KC2 36064

Albums like this one often fail, generally because stars tend to have problems functioning as a unit and haven't worked together long enough. Not so here. Willie and Leon

arrangements that at their best, recall Gordon Jenkins' work on Frank Sinatra's old recordings, and surpass *anything* Nashville orchestrators have done. Willie's voice, as before, provides a harsh, cutting edge that helps such standards as *Always*, *Far Away Places* and *Summertime* transcend dull interpretations they often get. The high point, of course, is

*One For My Baby*, featuring the pair alone. Willie forcing the lyrics over Leon's spare, piano bar backing. His voice makes it the ode to utter desolation it was meant to be.

In any case, *One For The Road* proves that Willie knows how to follow up a masterpiece: he simply comes up with another one.

RICH KIENZLE



have been exploring each other's talents ever since Leon showed up at one of Willie's early picnics and Willie returned the favor by appearing on a Russell-produced TV show with Ernest Tubb and Roy Acuff. Despite his longtime background as a rock arranger, performer and studio musician, Russell also recorded *Hank Wilson's Back* several years ago, one of the better excursions by a rock artist into country.

Willie provides the basic direction here, leaving the flashing out [and sparkling keyboard work] to Leon much of the time. The collaboration is most obvious on Record One, which extends the *Hank Wilson* concept a bit as the duo alternate gritty renditions of country classics of the 40s and 50s like *Detour* (one of the most underrated songs in country music), *I Saw The Light*, *Don't Fence Me In*, the old Gene Autry hit *Ridin' Down The Canyon*, a semi-polka version of *You Are My Sunshine* and a vicious, searing *Heartbreak Hotel*.

Record Two is an extension of *Stardust*. Russell's contributions are the swirling, lush

## BURIED TREASURES

by RICH KIENZLE

Two years ago this August Elvis Presley died. And since that time there have been a veritable flood of collector's LPs released. Most are loaded with rare, uncommon Elvis material including recording session outtakes, obscure interviews he gave years ago and the radio and TV appearances he made in his early days. The sound quality varies from studio quality mono and stereo to crackly portable tape recorder sound. But it doesn't really matter. The best of these records provide some great insights into the Elvis phenomena from start to finish.

Two LPs provide a fascinating look at his early days: *Elvis, The Rockin' Rebel Volume 1* (Golden Archives 250) and *Volume 2* (Golden Archives 300). *Volume 1* features his guest shot on Milton Berle's TV show from June of 1956 where he performed *Hound Dog* and *I Want You, I Need You, I Love You*, the former tune with an unusually slow, bump-and-grind ending. Between the two songs, he does some wisecracking with Uncle Miltie himself. There's also a rare 1956 interview done in Wisconsin, as the fans tried to break into Elvis' dressing room. Side two is dominated by those legendary Sun outtakes of *Blue Moon of Kentucky*, *I'll Never Let You Go*, *My Baby's Gone* and *I Don't Care If The Sun Don't Shine*, which falls apart after the first verse, along with some good studio chatter

between Elvis, Scotty Moore, Bill Black and Sam Phillips. Two outtakes from *King Creole* round it out. *Volume 2* is even more precious, featuring a rare recording of a live show he did with Scotty and Bill at Eagles' Hall in Houston in early 1955. The sound's a bit spotty, but it's worth it to hear those first screams from the audience. Side two contains several airshots from the Louisiana Hayride, including studio-quality versions of *That's All Right (Mama)* and *Blue Moon of Kentucky* along with a flatout hillbilly version of the old R & B hit *Tweedlee Dee* done with the Hayride Staff band (with Floyd Cramer on piano and Jimmy Day on steel) from late 1954. The packaging of these sets is fantastic; *Volume 2* includes a book of rare 1955 photos.

British RCA Victor, who led everyone with their excellent repackage of the Elvis Sun Sessions a while back, recently issued *The '56 Sessions, Volume 1* (PL 42101), which compiles 16 numbers from the first four RCA sessions in original mono. All the early classics like *Heartbreak Hotel* and *Don't Be Cruel* are here, programmed in the order they were recorded in. The back cover provides complete recording data—and some interesting information. Floyd Cramer and Chet Atkins assisted on his first session in Nashville, but the vocals were done by one Jordanaire and two members of the gospel-singing

Speer Family. The Jordanaire didn't work with Elvis until his fourth RCA session.

*Eternal Elvis* (no label or number), pressed on clear red vinyl, is a mixed bag of recorded comments about Elvis from Glen Campbell and others, alternate takes of *Old Shep*, versions of his movie songs recorded from the soundtracks, his performance of *Fame And Fortune* from the 1960 Frank Sinatra TV special and a rare 1955 promotional interview he did with Scotty, Bill and his early manager, Memphis deejay Bob Neal.

*The Burbank Sessions, Volume 1 and 2* (Audifon 62728-62928), from Germany, compile the uncut soundtracks of the two live performances that resulted in his 1968 NBC TV special on a pair of two-record packages that include unusual photos from that show. The sound is perfect stereo.

*Cadillac Elvis* (TCB 1-8-35), another sampler LP pressed on pink vinyl is largely made up of songs recorded (but unreleased) from his seventies stage shows with a few curiosities. There's also two songs from his 1956 *Steve Allen Show* appearance.

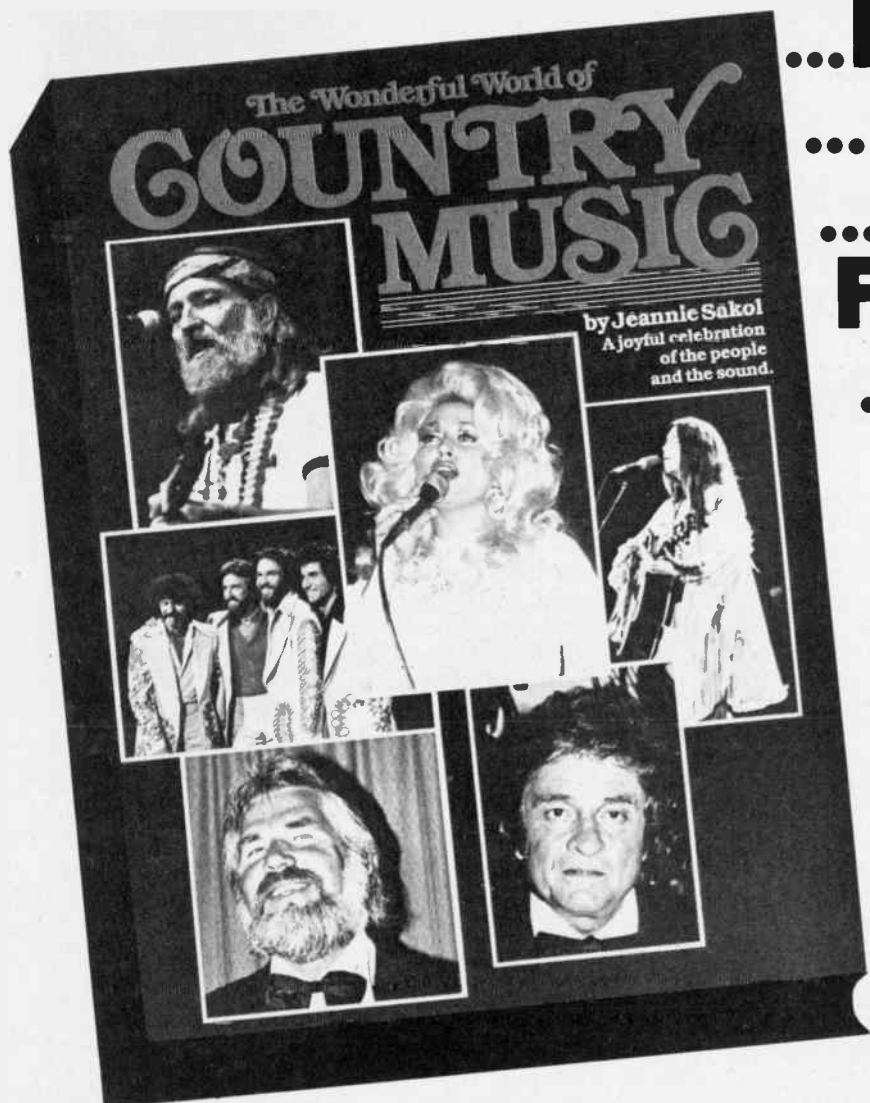
Finding these records can be rough, since few record stores stock them. But the so-called collector's stores and mail order houses dealing in imports and small-labels may have them. It takes time but considering the rarity of this stuff, I doubt Elvis fans will mind the search. ■

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# "The Holy Land Cross Brought Me \$60,000 -- How Can I Ever Say 'Thank You' Enough!"

If you desperately need MONEY... GOOD LUCK... HAPPINESS  
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be your answer!

6 months ago I was worse than a failure. For years I struggled along, barely making a living. Then, after reading several "get rich" books, I started my own business—but it failed almost immediately.

Before I knew what hit me I was snowed under by a mountain of bills. I had absolutely no money but that didn't stop the bill collectors. They called at all hours until my family was frantic with worry and my health started to fail.

Old friends began to avoid me. Even my family couldn't hide the fact that they thought I was bad luck. At times I prayed that a heart attack would end all my cares and troubles forever.

Then—suddenly—everything changed in one day!

## I DISCOVER THE AMAZING HOLY LAND CROSS

One morning as I was going out the front door of my in-laws' apartment—where my wife and I had moved to save money—my wife pushed a small brown parcel into my pocket. "Don't look at it," she said, "just forget it's even there." And I did forget—almost immediately—because of the worries on my mind.

My first stop that day was to meet a man who had threatened to sue me unless I paid everything right away. It made me sick to go to his office—I was that scared—and I didn't have any money.

Can you imagine my surprise when he told me, "Don't worry about the money. I think you are going to make a lot of money soon."

Next he offered me money to get back on my feet—and I left his office with a check for **\$1,000.00.**

I felt so relieved and happy that I hardly knew what to do with myself. When I passed a cigar store that sold instant lottery tickets, I couldn't help going in and buying one for 50¢. Can you imagine my surprise when I rubbed off the ink and discovered I had just won **\$50!**

By the time I got to my shabby little office, it was almost time for lunch. I unlocked the door and tried to push it open but it was stuck. Can you imagine my surprise when I saw that a huge pile of mail was blocking the door—and every letter was filled with money!

I was so shocked that I decided to take the afternoon off and go to the race track. I didn't really expect to win—I hardly ever did—but you can imagine my surprise when I placed three \$2 bets—and won **\$276.50!**

When I arrived back at the in-laws that evening, I was surprised when the neighbors greeted me with new respect, even though there was no way they could possibly have known about my good luck.

Inside the house, my wife asked "Did the Holy Land Cross help you today?"—Suddenly I remembered the brown parcel she had placed in my pocket!

## I DISCOVER A BEAUTIFULLY CARVED MOTHER-OF-PEARL CROSS

Immediately my hand reached into my pocket and I withdrew the small brown parcel my wife had placed there that morning. I tore open the paper wrappings and discovered a beautifully carved mother-of-pearl cross. I wondered at once if it was this beautiful cross that had brought me so much money!

Then my wife told me about the mother-of-pearl cross and how she had been told about the way it could bring HEALTH — HAPPINESS — GOOD LUCK — SUCCESS and MONEY to people who had given up all hope.

The cross, she said, was carved in an ancient design from the finest mother-of-pearl available. Over 1,000 strokes were required to create its intricate filigree pattern. Then, a secret polishing solution was used to give it a remarkable translucent luster that never fades. Finally, as a guarantee of authenticity, the word "BETHLEHEM" is permanently hand inscribed across the back and it is suspended from a beautiful 18" STERLING SILVER chain.

The art required to make it has been jealously guarded by a single family for almost 2,000 years and is handed down from father to son. Indeed, the Holy Land Cross is a precious heirloom to be treasured and preserved by a family for generations. Anyone who can obtain one is very lucky.

## MORE THAN A SUPERB PIECE OF JEWELRY

But the Holy Land Cross, my wife told me, is more than just a beautiful piece of jewelry. For centuries the power of the cross has wrought miracles for those who believe in it. The Holy Land Cross is a unique cross and she said that she believed it had a STRANGE and WONDERFUL POWER to bring MONEY and GOOD LUCK to anyone who carried it... even people like me who had carried the Holy Land Cross without even knowing it!



**\$60,000 IN 60 DAYS**

I was amazed to hear that the Holy Land Cross had already worked for so many others. From that day on, I carried it everywhere I went. Only now I wore it around my neck instead of carrying it in my pocket. But the good luck is always the same...

\*In the first 60 days the Holy Land Cross brought me **\$60,000—and the money is still coming in.**

\*My family life (including my sex life) had been going steadily downhill—but then everything straightened itself out as if by magic and my wife and I are passionate again.

\*My business—which I had been forced to close down—suddenly recovered and is now grossing thousands of dollars each week. People who a few months ago were trying to take me to court now go out of their way to do me favors and the money is coming in faster than I can spend it.

\*My health really improved too and now, instead of having to drag myself through each day, I feel full of life and energy again—ready for anything!

## IT WORKED FOR MY FRIENDS TOO

Even though my wife said that she had heard that the Holy Land Cross had been working for thousands of people the world over for as far back as anyone could remember, still I was very skeptical. Sure—it worked miracles for me—but maybe I was different. Would it also help my friends?

With my wife's help, I was able to obtain 5 more Holy Land Crosses from a man who had just returned from overseas. Believe me, we had to pay an arm and a leg to get all 5 of those crosses, but I was eager to find out if they too could bring money and success.

I gave them to five of my friends who were having deep troubles with love, money, health and bad luck. Can you imagine my surprise when all five friends reported almost immediately that their Holy Land Crosses were bringing them good luck too!

From what I've seen with people who have owned this cross, I believe it may very well work for everyone, which is what my wife tells me it is supposed to do. Based on the miracles it is bringing me now and what it is doing for my friends, I would say that here, at last, is a talisman that seems to bring everyone remarkably good luck.

Frankly, I am very grateful for all the GOOD LUCK... MONEY... HEALTH... HAPPINESS and SUCCESS that the Holy Land Cross has brought me. And, to show my appreciation, I now want to share the miracles of the Holy Land Cross with all who yearn to share in the riches that life has to offer.

## I WANT YOU TO HAVE A HOLY LAND CROSS TOO—

I was so impressed by the wonderful events that the Holy Land Cross brought me that I decided I could not just keep it to myself and my few friends. So, with the help of some people overseas, I made special arrangements to obtain a larger supply of Holy Land Crosses to give to people who really needed them.

Because of all the good things that have happened to me, I'm not trying to get rich selling these crosses—although I'm sure that I could. No, I just want to make them available to people who need them—really need them badly—for slightly more than they are costing me.

If you need \*\*\* MONEY \*\*\* GOOD LUCK \*\*\* HEALTH \*\*\* SUCCESS \*\*\* I believe the Holy Land Cross is your best answer. I will send you one for just \$6.95 plus 65¢ postage and handling which, for you, is an extremely good deal—because the Holy Land Cross could bring you so much.

But please act right away. I believe that a great many people will want the Holy Land Cross. Yet each one has to be specially made by hand and no matter how great your particular need may be, I must fill orders first come, first serve.

**YOU COULD ALSO RECEIVE \$1,000 CASH**



Once you receive the Holy Land Cross, I would like you to tell me about your experiences—because I expect you, too, will have fabulous stories to report.

You see, I am putting a book together which will tell about the miracles of the Holy Land Cross. I already have listed my miracles. Now—what can you anticipate? The best way to answer is to let you read what others, who have recently bought a cross, have written:

- \* "The cross sure brought me luck. I won a jackpot of \$300 at the Fireman's Bingo."
- \* "Within two hours after receiving the cross I attended a business meeting and during it, won a drawing of a \$100 bill."
- \* "Its first miracle was to bring my family back together."

I now want to hear from everyone who will write to me about this.

I could make you promise to share your good luck stories with me before I send you the Holy Land Cross, but I know something about human nature. Once you get your own cross and start having miracles, you're going to forget all about me!

Luckily, I know a way that will help you remember me—I'm going to offer you MONEY! Yes, I'm going to pay cash for each true good luck report you send me that I select for publication.

Once I read your letter and decide to publish it, I'll send you \$100 right away. Of course you must affirm the truth of your story and have your letter notarized. I want you to tell me about ALL YOUR MIRACLES—write me as many letters as you want. The more experiences of yours I am able to publish, the more money you'll get—up to \$1000.00.

## FULL MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

When you send your money to me for the Holy Land Cross, not only will I guarantee 100% satisfaction, I will also guarantee that it must bring you the MONEY—HEALTH—GOOD LUCK—SUCCESS that you want, immediately, starting the first day you receive it, or you may return it for your money back.

I truly believe that this cross will work for everyone. But, if for any reason, it doesn't work for you, there's no need for you to keep it.

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**Yes!** Rush me the Holy Land Cross immediately for just \$6.95 plus 65¢ postage & handling (= \$7.60). I understand that (1) I must be 100% satisfied and (2) it must bring me all the MONEY — HEALTH — GOOD LUCK — and SUCCESS I want, immediately, starting from the first day I receive it, or I can return it for my money back!

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# Don Gibson....

# Coasting Along

by DOUGLAS B. GREEN

After thirty years as one of country music's most reknown songwriters and singers, Don Gibson doesn't mind telling you that he's laying back, taking it easy; coasting. He is in an enviable position, having written four of country music's classic songs, that few of us will ever experience: "I've got it made the rest of my life. I don't even have to work. I mean, I'm grateful for that; I'm not bragging."

Don Gibson is a guilelessly sincere person; he does not, indeed, brag. Reserved and shy by nature, he does not desire the role of the superstar or superstar-pretender—he is content to play the sixty or so dates a year which bring him pleasure, and to let his songwriting record speak for itself, and it speaks with authority: *I Can't Stop Loving You*, *Oh Lonesome Me*, *Sweet Dreams*, and *I'd Be A Legend In My Time* have all been hit records time after time.

The road to this laid-back ambience has been a rough one, however, as frustrating and intense and painful as more celebrated cases like Johnny Cash's. It's just that Don Gibson, in his characteristically quiet way, has not received similar notoriety for his traumas which were just as acute. "I really messed up," he recalls now with a shrug which poorly disguises the intensity of his feeling, "because that was when I had the bull by the horns. I could have been as big as anybody in the business today if I hadn't went to drugs . . . oh, well; even if I hadn't, I would have laid back anyway. My ego is not that big; I never was one to be out in front too much. I just like to lay back and . . . I think to be in such demand is too much on a person. I wouldn't want that."

Don Gibson's remarkable story began on April 3, 1928, in Shelby, North Carolina. Influenced both by the rich country music tradition of his area (Earl Scruggs, for example, was a contemporary and a neighbor) and by the pop records an older brother brought home, Don decided early on a career in music, and was engaged semiprofessionally as a teenager. "I started out on the bass fiddle; I joined a little band—I can't even remember what we called ourselves—and they had all the instruments but one, the bass. Maybe if they'd needed an electric guitar that's what I'd be playing today."

Before long he had switched to guitar and began to achieve success as a singer, though then he had not yet developed the soulful, powerful style which is his hallmark. He seemed, in his early twenties, to vacillate between the tender, lyrical tenor sound of Eddy Arnold and George Morgan, and the then-still popular harmony sounds of the Sons of the Pioneers: "In the very beginning, way back there, I first cut for Mercury as part of a trio, the Sons of the Soil. *Billboard* compared us to the Sons of the Pioneers—we weren't bad!"

It was obvious indeed that young Don Gibson was a talented singer, but no label could seem to get a handle on him. Besides Mercury, he was recorded by MGM, RCA, Columbia, and others without much success for a decade, in a bewildering variety of styles, including even a bluegrass instrumental, *Charlotte Breakdown*: "RCA wasn't too sold on my singing; they thought I sounded too much like Eddy Arnold, and since he was their hottest act they didn't want to do anything to step on his toes. So they asked us to record a square dance number on a B side; the banjo player and the fiddle player wasn't regularly in the band—they was the Davis Brothers. I remember the first time we recorded in Charlotte, that was the first time I ever saw a tape machine."

Don quit his job stocking juke boxes in 1951, and moved to Knoxville. "A friend of mine, a radio announcer, told me there was an opening in Knoxville for a band, and he called and got me an audition, so I went and they accepted me. But Knoxville was a funny situation—back then I was doing things like Eddy Arnold and George Morgan, and that was foreign over there; the big acts there were bluegrass, and they were packing the schoolhouses. My kind of music, well I couldn't go out and draw *anything* at a school. I had to start over there in clubs, and that's how I made my living."

Don also got started as a songwriter while becoming extremely popular in Knoxville: "I was doing some work for a small recording company over there making demos, and one day I put a song of mine on a demo. Hank Snow heard it and

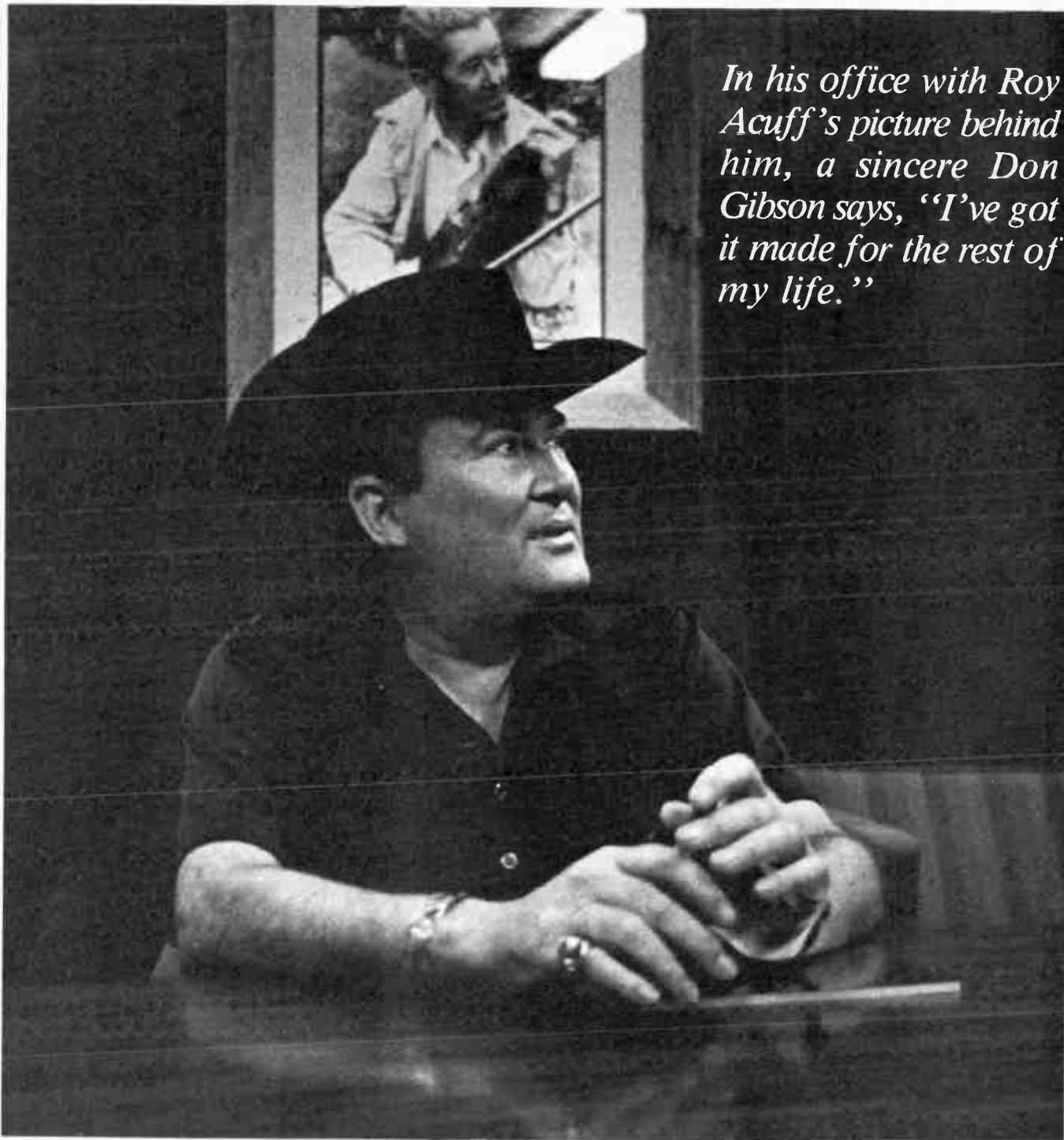
recorded it. It was called *I'm Glad I Got To See You Once Again*, and it never became popular, but that's what got me started writing. The next thing I wrote was *Sweet Dreams*."

It was *Sweet Dreams* which eventually got Don connected with the prestigious Acuff-Rose Publishing Company, and his long-time manager Wesley Rose. For it was because of that song, that song scout, songwriter, and Acuff-Rose publicity man Mel Foree became interested in Don. "Mel was living in Alcoa, and every so often they'd come out to the club where I was playing, and we'd gotten to know each other. One night he heard me sing *Sweet Dreams* and asked me 'Who recorded that song? I haven't heard it before.' I said 'That's something I wrote myself.' He said 'I'd like Wesley to hear that,' and brought him over. I've been with Wesley and with Acuff-Rose ever since; it amounts to about 120 recorded songs.

If he found it frustrating to be on a merry-go-round of labels, Don Gibson suddenly found it doubly frustrating to watch Faron Young's version of *Sweet Dreams* shoot to the top of the charts (as Patsy Cline's did not too many years later) while he remained a regional artist.

Don signed with RCA for a second time in 1957. "We were still doing steel guitars and fiddles on record, so Chet Atkins said one day 'We'll try one more thing, and if it doesn't happen, well, we just can't record you any more.' So we put the Jordanaires behind two of my songs, *Too Soon To Know* and *Blue Blue Day*, and *Blue Blue Day* took off; so they said 'We'll give you another chance.' So we went back in and I had written two songs the same day, called *Oh Lonesome Me* and *I Can't Stop Loving You*. I came down there with a boy from Knoxville who played drums, and we'd been carousing around, raising hell, hadn't had any sleep, stayed up drunk all night—oh, we was feeling awful coming in for that session. And I had gotten to the point where I just didn't give a damn. So we cut *Oh Lonesome Me*, and I wanted to do *I Can't Stop Loving You*, but they said it's just a simple old ballad. I said 'Well, if it ain't that good, just put it on the backside of *Oh Lonesome Me*.'"





*In his office with Roy Acuff's picture behind him, a sincere Don Gibson says, "I've got it made for the rest of my life."*

Chet Atkins recalled the creation of that huge hit similarly, noting the boost that it also gave his career as a fledgling A&R man: "One of the first artists I decided I wanted was Don Gibson. He had been on RCA at one time but hadn't sold. However, I had been working with him in studio sessions, and I knew he was good. When I told Steve [Sholes, Chet's supervisor in N.Y. at the time] I wanted to sign Don, he replied 'We had him once but he didn't sell.' 'I know that, but I'm sure he will now.' I countered. Steve agreed and we produced a pure country session with him. It didn't sell. About two months later we recorded *Oh Lonesome Me* and *I Can't*

*Stop Loving You* with a heavy bass drum beat, and when we released the recordings a few days later it was a smash, and I was an A&R man."

*I Can't Stop Loving You* laid there, as Don puts it, like a sleeping giant. Kitty Wells was the first to make a hit of it; but it was, of course, Ray Charles' 1963 hit that made the song a country classic, one of the top three most performed country songs of all time. In fact, it and *Oh Lonesome Me* are two of the 119 elite country songs to receive million-performance awards from BMI. "I think I'll be getting another pretty soon: I think Emmylou Harris' hit of *Sweet Dreams* will

help it reach that level in the next year or two, and then there's a chance for *I'd Be A Legend In My Time*—there's a song I wrote in a car with Mel Foree."

Mel Foree. That name comes up over and over again in Don Gibson's career. "Enough hasn't been said about Mel Foree, particularly in my career. He discovered me, he interested Wesley in me, he got me on record, and if it wasn't for Mel I probably wouldn't be in the business today, and I probably wouldn't even be alive."

The latter may be true, for after ten years of struggle for limited success, Don  
(Continued on page 64)



# A Tribute To John Wayne

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**DON**

(Continued from page 61)

Gibson was suddenly hot as a firecracker: he had hits with *Give Myself a Party*, *Blue Blue Day*, and *Oh Lonesome Me* in 1958, *Don't Tell Me Your Troubles* and *Who Cares* in 1959, his own *Just One Time* in 1960, and *Sweet Dreams* and *Sea of Heartbreak* in 1961. But like many introspective and sensitive entertainers, he was unable to cope with success: "After I got successful there I turned to pills. It just grew and grew. Oh, God, it was awful, it was a living hell. I had convulsions, hallucinations, the works.

"That's when Mel Foree really saved my life. I got myself into an awful shape. I got into a room upstairs and didn't have any food, just two or three packs of Oreo cookies—when you're on pills you always want something sweet. I lived on those cookies for about three weeks, just crawl to the bathroom and barely crawl back to bed. Mel came over and saw me there, he said, with Oreo cookies all over the bed, and I was just a living skeleton. He went straight to the phone and called an ambulance, and they carried me out of there, took me to Maryville, Tennessee, and put me in a hospital there and watched me a while, then they said they couldn't do nothing with me there, so they sent me to Asheville to a rehabilitation place for drug addicts and alcoholics."

That, in a phrase, is where Don Gibson lost it. He lost his membership in the Opry and his chance to make a huge name for himself as a performer. He struggled with liquor and pills for the next ten years—potentially the best years in his career—before finally straightening out in 1972. "I've been dry—off pills and hard liquor—since 1972. I'd never go back, not for nothing. The only think I ever have now is an occasional can of beer—a can of beer is about the best tranquilizer in the world. I think."

So Don Gibson never became the superstar he could have been, though his songwriting places him in the pantheon of all time greats. His unique singing style—a combination of sophisticated jazz phrasing and country feeling of searing intensity—has made him a cult figure among musicians and singers. He is stunningly creative and inventive with a musical phrase, yet sings with that same clamped-jaw Appalachian soul that distinguishes George Jones and Ralph Stanley as two of country music's most affecting singers.

Still, he is vague as to how this style developed: "I don't know how it came about; it just came. Red Foley was always my idol when I was growing up. I think some of it came from him. When I began recording, maybe I thought the mike wouldn't pick me up, so I got as close to

the mike as I could get, and getting that close, it picked up a lot of my breathing in between words, maybe that's how some of it came about. Really, I just don't know how that style came about."

# RANDY

(Continued from page 9)

No amount of pressing the point could obtain a clearer answer: he will not reveal the source, the inspiration, the genius which created one of the most distinctive and moving voices in country music history: make no mistake about it: Don Gibson's voice is one of the most supple, evocative, and highly charged instruments country music has ever known.

Once the days of wine, speed, and roses were behind him, Don Gibson's career has been smoother: if there haven't been the mountains there were before, there haven't been the valleys, either, and since leaving RCA for Hickory in 1970 he has had his share of successful records, including the number-one hit *Woman (Sensuous Woman)* in 1973.

Today, he's relaxed as can be: he enjoys his large collection of guitars (his special favorites are Gibson Super 400s and the Maccaferri which once belonged to his idol, jazz great Django Reinhardt), his Porsche 911 Targa, his large collection of books ("about a thousand hardbacks now, everything ranging from history to medicine to literature to Edgar Cayce . . . just everything I can get my hands on, I read"), and the writing of an occasional song.

"These days I just take one show at a time. I don't have any great illusions about doing anything spectacular anymore. I guess I'm ready now to sit back and coast. I'm going to continue writing and playing the road—I mean, that spark is still there; I want more big records. It's still there. I guess it never leaves you." ■

decision going to affect me in a year from now. I find myself planning things out, something I never needed to do before," she says. "Maybe I ask too many questions," Randy laughs. "Sometimes I find it harder because I'm a woman and the business is run by men. Maybe it's the stereotyped roles that most of the time the woman is supposed to sit in the corner quietly. It makes it harder, but I do it anyway. All that changes when I'm onstage. I'm in total control then."

One thing that doesn't look to be stereotyped is Randy Gurley's bright future. Her singing is controlled and adaptable to all styles of music, and the first ABC album, *Let Me Be The One* showed her raw ability to sing a multitude of different types of material. And that's just what she wants to do, since she hasn't been put into a particular mold yet. "It's great to be able to sing a Delbert McClinton song followed by a J.D. Souther song, then one by Hank Williams. It makes it more fun for me and for the audience as well. A good song is what's important." One good song Randy did was *Heartbreaker*, the first song she recorded on her first session. Dolly also recorded the song and went on to have the smash. Did that bother Randy? "Not really, because it told me that we had the ability to pick a hit song, and our arrangements were similar as well. It showed me that we were on the right track. I knew hers would be the hit. It did give me some recognition by having the same record released."

The recognition is sure to keep coming for Randy Gurley as long as she keeps putting her boundless energy into her performances and a special emotional quality into her records. She has a keen sense of herself and what she wants to do as a performer. "It's important to know what you want to convey when you're singing. Once you find that, then you've got to make sure you can get a lot out of it just being able to express myself."

For Randy Gurley, Cinderella's slipper seems to be a perfect fit. ■

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