

# COUNTRY MUSIC



**DWIGHT YOAKAM**  
Pull-Out Centerfold

**CLINT BLACK**

**LORRIE MORGAN**

**BARBARA MANDRELL**

**RANDY TRAVIS**

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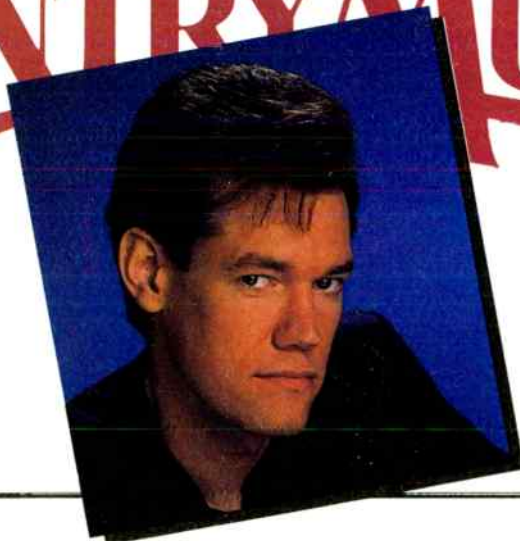
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# COUNTRY MUSIC



- 2 Letters**  
*Country Music Magazine* covers two issues' worth of letters in one: herewith what readers said about the September/October issue, headlined by Dolly, and the November/December, graced by Ricky Skaggs.
- 20 People** *by Hazel Smith*  
 President Bush goes country with George Strait, Barbara Mandrell goes Hawaiian, country music goes to South America, Dolly goes to Washington and Willie goes Number One. Shenandoah goes acoustic, and Garth Brooks goes parking. Plus a profile on CBS's Roy Wunsch.
- 28 Randy Travis: Research in RandyLand** *by Patrick Carr*  
 Much has been written about the public side of Randy Travis. Some say he singlehandedly saved traditional country music. Not much, however, has been reported about the man *behind* the voice. Patrick Carr gets to spend time with our hero and comes up with some answers and a few questions, too. Read on.
- 36 Dwight Yoakam: Pull-Out Centerfold**  
 Meet Dwight Yoakam in this issue's Pull-Out-Centerfold-of-the-Month. Catch some great photos and the facts of life on this hillbilly music-maker.
- 39 Clint Black: New Star on the Horizon** *by John Morthland*  
 Each year seems to bring an artist who takes the country music world by storm. This year's choice is Clint Black, the CMA's Horizon Award winner and country radio's favorite son.
- 44 Lorrie Morgan: Looks Back and Steps Ahead** *by Bob Allen*  
 Talking with Lorrie Morgan includes talking about her late husband, Keith Whitley, right now. Their's was a unique partnership-both personal and professional. Bob Allen gathers Lorrie's reflections on her past and her future.
- 50 Record Reviews**  
 Newest releases from Randy Travis, Marty Stuart, Highway 101 and Rodney Crowell. Plus some artists you may have been wondering about, including Hugh Moffatt, Katy Moffatt, James Talley, James McMurtry and those old favorites, Poco.
- 68 Buried Treasures** *by Rich Kienzle*  
 Rich has found gold in them thar reissue hills: big hits from Hall of Famer Hank Thompson, bluegrass songs from Porter Wagoner, gospel greats from The Louvin Brothers and Tennessee Ernie Ford's best material. Plus Connie Smith, Webb Pierce, Patsy Cline and more.
- 70 20 Questions with Barbara Mandrell** *by Michael Bane*  
 What's Barbara Mandrell really like? Whether she's on the road or at home, she always has lots to talk about. Michael Bane caught up with her recently and managed to keep her down to just 20 answers.

COVER: DENNIS CARNEY

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# Letters

## Tell Us, Ricky

I just wanted to say "thank you" for the article about Ricky Skaggs in your November/December issue of *Country Music*.

Patrick Carr quotes Ricky saying, "People don't want to be reading what I think about that kind of thing." I disagree. So, thank you, Patrick, for adding that. I think our entertainers don't realize how important their opinions are to the readers, young and old.

It is important for the entertainers to publicly voice their opinions on things like drugs and alcohol. They don't realize just how many lives they are saving from the "silent killer" by speaking up. Thanks again to all involved.

Sharon Legendre  
Thibodaux, Louisiana

## Family Matters

I would like to make a correction in your article about Ricky Skaggs in your November/December issue. The article stated "he would continue raising the four kids in their household..." Ricky's memory seems to be so precise on his recordings I find it hard to believe he can't remember he isn't raising four kids in his household. Mandy and Andrew are being raised by their mother, Brenda S. Eldridge (Rick's first wife), and have been in her care since birth. She has had full custody of them (since their divorce) when Mandy was two-and-a-half and Andrew was one. Note: Mandy is now 12 and Andrew 10.

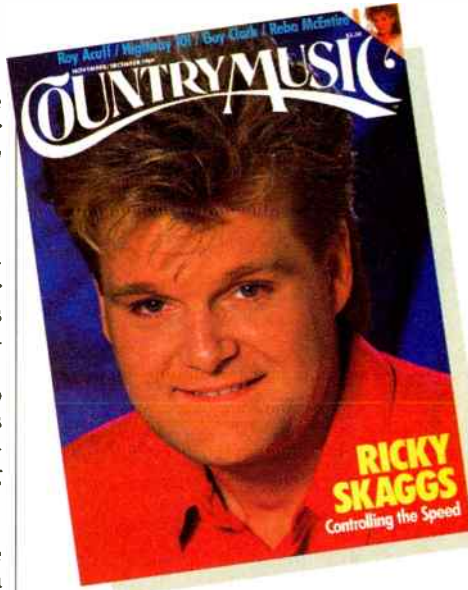
No hard feelings, Rick, just wanted to set the record straight.

Elizabeth L. Williams  
Copper Hill, Virginia

P.S. I can speak with some authority on the above as Brenda is my sister.

## A Picture Worth a Thousand Words or More Family Matters...

I've never written a letter to a magazine before, but I think you'll appreciate this story. The next day after I received my November/December issue, my three-year-old grandson, Nathan, came to visit. He went wild over it because Ricky was on the front. He loves him, and when he saw the picture of Lucas, you should have seen him laugh. But then, he started frowning and said, "Mama, where's Molly?" He looked and looked but, of course, she wasn't there.



He had seen them on TNN when Lucas was one month old, and he never forgot their names.

But the really funny thing was when he opened the centerfold and saw the lovely Reba. He fell instantly in love. I told him that Reba is going to have a baby just like his mommy and he was fascinated by that. Except, his mommy has found out she's having twins. I doubt if Reba is interested in that.

Janet A. Bloomfield  
Circleville, Ohio

## Who's Counting?

In the September/October issue of *Country Music Magazine* in the People section, Hazel stated that Lucas Buck was Ricky Skaggs' third child. Did he not have two by his first wife, and isn't Lucas Buck Ricky's second child by Sharon? That adds up to four, doesn't it?

Hey, Hazel, do you need a script girl? I would like the job.

Opal B. Norton  
Winona, Missouri

*Pushy, pushy. Actually Hazel did not make the mistake. Someone else needs the script girl.—Ed.*

## Wowed by Strait Centerfold

All I can say is *wow!* What a centerfold! I thought the best picture I had seen of George Strait was the September/October 1988 cover of *Country Music Magazine*, but this tops it. Getting home after a hard day's work and opening up the magazine to that gorgeous face star-

ing back at me...well, it just made my day! Actually, it's made my week!

Thank you for starting this new feature of *Country Music Magazine* with the best-looking man in country music. If George Strait isn't the sexiest man alive, I'll eat my western hat!

Sylvia Council  
Miami, Florida

## Wowed Again...

I was very pleased when I received the September/October issue of *Country Music Magazine* to find the centerfold of my very favorite entertainer, George Strait. He is as handsome as he sings. I would be proud to have him for a son, or even grandson. I am 81, so you see us grandmothers appreciate a wonderful and handsome singer. Hope to see a centerfold of Ricky Van Shelton and Dolly Parton, soon.

Thank you for a grand magazine and beautiful pictures.

Emma Townsend  
Yorktown, Indiana

*Thanks to all who wrote in approving our centerfolds of both George Strait and Reba McEntire and offering suggestions.—Ed.*

## Dolly Parton's Dreams Fulfilled

Your cover story on Dolly Parton in your September/October issue of *Country Music Magazine* was great. Dolly is a very special person. I have seen her at Dollywood—her beauty is breathtaking. She is so nice and kind to everyone.

Dolly is doing great things in her home county, Sevier County, especially for the students. She has a program giving students the incentive to stay in school.

Dolly comes straight from the heart. I know she is truly an inspiration to me and all her fans. Dreams definitely can be fulfilled. All you have to do is put your mind to it, and Dolly has proven it.

Belinda Reppert  
Berea, Kentucky

## Dolly's Cussing Makes Waves

I just finished reading your article on Dolly Parton in the September/October issue. I love Dolly and, mostly, her songs. The article was interesting, but why do some great entertainers feel they have to use cuss words to prove a point?

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**Russell D. Barnard**

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**Rochelle Friedman**

Editors-at-large  
**Michael Bane, Patrick Carr  
Bob Allen**

Art Director  
**Katheryn Gray**

Associate Editor  
**Helen Barnard**

Contributing Editors  
**Peter Guralnick, Leonard Kamsler,  
Rich Kienzle, Bob Millard,  
Mary Ellen Moore,  
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Associate Publisher/Advertising Director  
**Leonard Mendelson**

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Systems Development Director  
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Marketing Development Director  
**Warren Beardow**

Assistant to the Publisher  
**Beatrice J. Hanks**

Editorial Assistant  
**Melody Guarino**

Administrative Assistants  
**Rebecca Graviano, Melissa Lee**

## Editorial and Executive Offices

329 Riverside Avenue,  
Westport, Connecticut 06880.  
Telephone (203) 222-5800.

## Advertising Offices

**New York**, 342 Madison Avenue,  
Suite 2118, New York, New York 10173.  
Telephone (212) 503-0770.

**West Coast**, Leonard Mendelson,  
P.O. Box 5489,

Santa Monica, California 90405.  
Telephone (213) 207-4948.

**Ohio/Michigan**, Pete Kelly,

Peter Kelly Associates,  
725 South Adams Road,  
Birmingham, Michigan 48011.  
Telephone (313) 642-1228.

## Subscription Department

Country Music Magazine,  
P.O. Box 2000, Marion, Ohio 43305.  
One-year subscription, \$13.98. One year  
plus C/MSA membership, \$16. Change of  
address, include magazine label.

## COUNTRY MUSIC MAGAZINE

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such submissions should be accompanied by  
a stamped, self-addressed envelope.



I think it's very degrading to most country people when artists cuss on their records. Country is for family, and it's hard enough to find decent songs and entertainment for your children.

Marion Rogers  
Memphis, Tennessee

## Fan Proud of Ole Dolly

Three cheers for *Country Music Magazine*! My wife Lisa came in with the daily mail today and there was Miss Dolly on the cover of your September/October issue, smilin' at me! I knew I renewed my subscription for a reason.

I must say I'm proud of ole Dolly for bouncin' back after ABC messed up what could have been a good TV show. At least she's back on track now with a dynamic road show, her *White Limozeen* album and her movie *Steel Magnolias*. There's just no stoppin' Dolly!

Jeff Davidson  
Nashville, Tennessee

## Great Acuff

I want to say that I think that your magazine is the best one that I ever get. I am real glad to see articles on the new singers as well as the older ones.

The article on Roy Acuff in the November/December issue was very good. He is one of the great performers, and he has done so much for country music as well as the singers just getting started.

It would be nice to see more articles on people like Hank Williams Sr., Hawkshaw Hawkins, Kitty Wells and Patsy Cline.

Keep up the good work for many years to come.

Linda Hedrick  
New Market, Virginia

## Guy Clark, Her Favorite

Thank you, thank you, thank you for the story about Guy Clark, my favorite singer/songwriter, in the November/December issue!

I'm looking forward to more articles about songwriters. I'd love to read about Mickey Newbury, Herb Pedersen, Whitey Shafer, Townes Van Zandt and Jesse Winchester, to name a few.

Connie Smith  
Camphill, Pennsylvania

## Rodney Crowell's Career

Being an avid reader of *Country Music Magazine* since the very first issue, I wanted to write and tell you how much I enjoyed the article on Rodney Crowell in the September/October issue.

I have followed Mr. Crowell's career since the beginning and consider him one of the most talented entertainers I have ever heard. He can write, sing and produce, which not many artists can do anymore.



**Rodney Crowell and Skip Joens at a recent concert in Des Moines.**

Having met Rodney Crowell in person, I was also surprised to find him very friendly and has a deep love for his fans.

Skip Joens  
Des Moines, Iowa

## Multi-Talented Rodney

Hats off to Bob Allen for his in-depth interview with Rodney Crowell in your September/October issue. Rodney is finally receiving the long awaited credit due him. What a talented young man, writer, producer, performer, husband and father. He has captured me for life.

Thank you, *Country Music Magazine*, for another look into the life of one of my favorites.

Carol Nolan  
Albany, New York

## Highway 101 Has a Fan

I am a 15-year-old disk jockey from WSCG/FM in Corinth, New York. Highway 101 is my favorite group in country music, and I enjoyed the article on them in the November/December issue along with the article on Ricky Skaggs (who is my favorite of all). You'll never hear any of my shows without a song from Ricky Skaggs or Highway 101.

Kevin Richards  
Corinth, New York



**Kevin Richards and Paulette Carlson at Hunter Mountain Festival. Kevin's a DJ.**

## Opryland Mourns Maphis

Thank you for your article in the September/October issue on Dale Maphis and his tragic, sudden death. You were

1A. TITLE OF PUBLICATION: COUNTRY MUSIC. 1B. PUBLICATION NO. 4 4-1-R 9 0 2. DATE OF FILING: 11/17/88. 3. FREQUENCY OF ISSUE: BIMONTHLY. 3A. NO. OF ISSUES PUBLISHED ANNUALLY: 6. 3B. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION PRICE: \$13.98. 4. COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS OF KNOWN OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 342 Madison Ave., Suite 2118, New York, NY 10173. 5. COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS OF THE HEADQUARTERS OF GENERAL BUSINESS OFFICES OF THE PUBLISHER: SAME. 6. FULL NAMES AND COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS OF PUBLISHER, EDITOR, AND MANAGING EDITOR: PUBLISHER Russell D. Barnard, 342 Madison Ave., Suite 2118, New York, NY 10173; EDITOR Same; MANAGING EDITOR Same. 7. OWNER (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, its name and address, as well as that of each individual must be given. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, its name and address must be stated. FULL NAME: Silver Eagle Publishers. COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS: 342 Madison Ave., Suite 2118, New York, NY 10173; Mr. William H. Peck, Jr., Prentiss Non Martial Trust c/o Peck, Sprague & Poor, P.O. Box 239, Oyster Bay, NY 11771; Mr. Adrian Keller, 145 Central Park West, Apt. #11CC, New York, NY 10023; Mr. Werner Sonn, Henri Stern Watch Agency, 10 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10020; Mr. Alexander McFarren, 1130 Park Ave., New York, NY 10028; Mr. Ralph J. Weiger, Sand Spring Road, Mt. Vernon, NJ 07976; Mr. David Rosow, Moore & Munger, Inc., 140 Sherman St., Fairfield, CT 06430; Mr. Leonard Boehner, Morris & McVeigh, 767 Third Ave., New York, NY 10017; The Emjack Holding Co., 116 East 68th St., New York, NY; Mr. Barry Traub, The Boulder Company, 243 Vellejo St. San Francisco CA 94111; Mr. Russell D. Barnard, 145 East 74th St., New York, NY 10021; Mr. Bahman Khosrovani, 1619 Third Ave. New York NY; Mr. Paul Glen, 1216 Black Rock Trail, Scottsdale, AZ 85253; Mr. Henry C.B. Lindh, North Hock Ridge, Greenwich, CT 06830; Mr. John Bucher Stires & Co., 130 East 40th St., New York, NY 10016; Mr. Malcolm G. Chace III, Wanskuck Company, 304 Pearle St., Providence, RI 02907; Mr. Martin McNeil, 345 79th St., Brooklyn, NY 11209; Mr. John D. Archbold, Foxlease Farm, Upperville, VA 22176; Ms. Bertha Younkins, 508 Woodlands Ave., Greys City, PA 16127; Mr. John H. French II, 71 East 71st St., New York, NY 10021; Mr. Peter E. Bronstein, Bronstein, Vanveen & Bronstein, 400 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10017; Mr. Seth B. French, P.O. Box 314, Locust Valley, Long Island, NY 11560; Ms. Ellen Mercer French, 116 East 68th St., New York, NY 10021; Mr. Richard Metz, 580 Park Ave., New York, NY 10021; Mr. Michael Weatherly 1036 Harbor Rd., Southport, CT 06490; Mr. Dyan Stevens, Jr., Stillman, Maynard & Co., 61 Broadway, New York, NY 10006; Ms. Lydia Foteo c/o Leonard Boehner, Morris & McVeigh, 767 Third Ave., New York, NY 10017; Mr. John R. Winterbotham, 1 East Schiller St., Chicago, IL 60610; Mercer Investment Co., 230 Park Ave., New York, NY 10169; Mike Michaelson, 135 East 71st St., New York, NY 10021.

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9. EXTENT AND NATURE OF CIRCULATION

	AVERAGE NO. COPIES EACH ISSUE DURING PRECEDING 12 MONTHS	ACTUAL NO. COPIES OF SINGLE ISSUES PUBLISHED NEAREST TO FILING DATE
A. TOTAL NO. COPIES (Net Press Run)	501,234	502,598
B. PAID CIRCULATION		
1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and courier sales	8,409	8,135
2. Mail Subscription	465,090	469,754
C. TOTAL PAID CIRCULATION (Sum of 10B1 and 10B2)	473,499	477,889
D. FREE DISTRIBUTION BY MAIL, CARRIER OR OTHER MEANS SAMPLES, COMPLIMENTARY, AND OTHER FREE COPIES	1,067	1,146
E. TOTAL DISTRIBUTION (Sum of C and D)	474,566	479,035
F. COPIES NOT DISTRIBUTED		
1. Office use, left over unaccounted, spoiled after printing	2,923	2,748
2. Return from News Agents	23,745	20,815
G. TOTAL (Sum of E, F1 and 2—should equal net press run shown in A).	501,234	502,598

10. I certify that the statements made by the above are correct and complete, Russell D. Barnard, Publisher.

correct in that Dale had that "star" quality, and I felt his frustration at being unable to gain more attention by the industry.

As the writer and director of Dale's show, *Country Music U.S.A.*, I see many very talented and driven young performers as they scramble for a shot at fame. Some, such as Skip Ewing, Dean Dillon, Cynthia Rhodes (of *Dirty Dancing* fame), and most recently, Marsha Thornton (new MCA signee) have made more progress than others. Many more remain to be discovered.

Dale was more than an employee to many of us at Opryland. I considered him a "younger brother" and have been stunned by his loss, as were the members of his cast. His mother, Rosie, still works here and is doing well, though still hurting inside. She is a jewel to know, and her strength is inspiring.

It is heartening to see that someone spotted a seemingly unnoticed event and drew the true lesson from it.

Thank you from all of us. Joe Jerles  
 Opryland U.S.A.

### How I Found Country Music Magazine

I didn't know they had such a magazine as *Country Music!* I work for the United States Postal Service, and one day I came across your magazine while I was doing a change of address card. I quickly copied the address and sent in for my subscription. I just got my first copy!

Melody Bacani  
 San Jose, California

Many readers come across *Country Music Magazine* in interesting ways. If you have a story, let us know.—Ed.



Holly Dunn and Louise Buckles in Iowa.

### Hugging Holly Dunn

The first time I saw Holly Dunn was an accidental meeting at a Pizza Hut in Altoona, Iowa. She gave me an autograph and a hug. The second time was in Boone, Iowa, where I went to see her concert. This time I not only got a hug and an autograph but also a picture of myself taken with Holly. She was so sweet and pretty.

I love your magazine. Keep up the good work.  
 Louise Buckles  
 Altoona, Iowa

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**Ricky Van Shelton Shares Special Moment**

Our little boy, Yupey, has loved Ricky Van Shelton since he was one-and-a-half. When he grows up, he wants to be just like Ricky.

At a Father's Day concert at Tombstone Junction in Carbin, Kentucky, Ricky waved at Yupey and signed his cowboy hat. Thank you, Ricky, for making our little boy happy!

Barbara Hussain  
Williamsburg, Kentucky



**Yupey Hussain and Country Music Magazine's May/June 1989 cover star, Ricky Van Shelton.**

**Anderson Treats 'Em Right**

Thank you very much for the CMM Update on Lynn Anderson in the November/December issue.

Lynn is our favorite country music entertainer, and she is also our special friend. We have been to a few of her concerts, and she always makes everything so much fun. Lynn is a very great singer, and we hope that she will have a new recording contract soon.

John and Glenda Shipley  
Meridian, Idaho

**More Jody Miller**

I want to thank you for the wonderful CMM Update you did in the September/October issue on the lovely and talented Jody Miller and her daughter, Robin. She is my very favorite singer of all time, this wonderful bundle of talent. I'd like very much for Jody to get back to recording on a major label so she can put records out to the public.

Lorie Hall  
Valley Station, Kentucky

**Judds Come a Long Way**

When I got my September/October issue of *Country Music Magazine*, I read it through while my mom drove us home from work. Guess what I found, yep, an article on The Judds, two of my favorite women in country music.

Wynonna has a special voice, one of a kind. God gave Wynonna the talent to sing, to do something she loves and express her feelings.

Naomi and Wynonna have seen hard times, too. I know mothers and daugh-

ters don't always see eye to eye. The Judds have come a long way. Thank you, Bob Millard.

Judy McVey  
Kennard, Indiana

**Permission to Print**

I am writing in reference to the article about The Judds which appears in your September/October edition of *Country Music Magazine*.

For the record, I would like it known that the excerpts in this article from the book *The Judds* by Bob Millard were never authorized by The Judds.

I think the footnotes on the lead page of this article could be somewhat misleading to the reader, inasmuch as this statement, "excerpted with permission from the book, *The Judds*," could easily be interpreted to mean that this permission was granted by The Judds themselves.

Since this is certainly not the case, and the book itself contains many inaccuracies, we do not want the public to be under the impression that the original book or the excerpts from the book contained in this article has the permission of The Judds.

Ken Stilts  
The Judds' Personal Manager  
Nashville, Tennessee

*Permission was granted by Doubleday, which published the book.—Ed.*

**The Judds and George Strait**

I am a new subscriber, and I think your magazine is great. Your article on The Judds in the September/October issue was fantastic. Also, I would like to thank you for the George Strait centerfold in the same issue. George and The Judds happen to be our favorite performers, and it was a real thrill seeing them both in the same edition. I also think the Collections section in the *Newsletter* is great for finding hard-to-acquire items.

John and Sharon Rusovick  
Pueblo, Colorado

**What About Me and Anne Murray?**

Anne Murray recorded a song titled "What About Me?" in the early 1970's, and now I pose that question to you. What about me? What about me and all the other Anne Murray fans? How long must we wait for a feature story on our favorite singer?

I like your magazine very much and like to read about other artists...but a feature on Anne is long overdue.

Claude Packer  
Beech Creek, Pennsylvania

**Matta's Album Tops**

To paraphrase William Shakespeare, "Methinks the critic doth protest too much." I am writing, of course, in reference to Rich Kienzle's review of Kathy

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# CRUTCHFIELD

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Mattea's terrific album, *Willow in the Wind*, in the July/August issue. Apparently, Mr. Kienzle likes to create controversy where there is and should be no controversy, as indicated by the opening paragraphs of the review. He indicates he fully expects fans to write in in opposition to his review, as well the fans should.

I purchase approximately six to eight new cassettes per month and very rarely have I found a tape that I can listen to more than five or six times in a month. However, since purchasing *Willow in the Wind*, I have listened to the tape on my car radio on the way to work and on the way home from work, I have listened to the tape at home, I have listened while waiting in line—suffice it to say, I have listened to the tape many, many times. I have yet to find one dull, boring song that appears to be “a reject from Don Williams sessions” or “turkeys.” It appears that Mr. Kienzle and I are not listening to the same album.

Karen G. Sprinkle  
Danville, Kentucky

*Now we're happy. For feature on Kathy Mattea, stay tuned.—Ed.*

### Love That Rose Maddox

I was pleased to see your report on Rose Maddox in the People section in the November/December issue. I saw Rose and her brothers at Sunset Park in Pennsylvania in the mid-1950's. I still have their pictures and autographs.

Most recently I heard she was in the hospital. Glad to hear she's doing okay.

Mrs. Felix Long  
Youngsville, North Carolina



T.G. Sheppard and Kathy Merritt.

### T.G.'s Burrito Bash

Recently something very exciting happened here in Chattanooga, Tennessee. T.G. Sheppard opened a Mexican restaurant named “T.G.'s North of the Border.”

Having been a fan of T.G. for several years, I was anxiously awaiting the opening and made sure to be on hand for the occasion.

Everyone at T.G.'s was friendly and hospitable, but nobody worked harder than T.G. himself.

Kathy Merritt  
Chattanooga, Tennessee

### Yoakam Remembers His Heritage...

I say “hats off” to Valerie Croy who wrote a letter that was published in the November/December issue about Dwight Yoakam and his clothes. I have been a Dwight fan for years, and what stands out about Dwight is his music and the way he never forgets about those back in Kentucky. He lets everyone know that no matter how famous or rich he may get, those are the people he remembers. He is very dedicated to his fans also. When he performs a concert, I hear people cheering and yelling for his music, not putting down what he's wearing.

Cathy Carrigan  
Mt. Perry, Ohio

*For more on Dwight, see centerfold in this issue and watch for feature, coming soon.—Ed.*

### ...But Forgets to Patch His Jeans

I'm writing this letter in regard to Dwight Yoakam and his appearing in public (also the award shows, etc.) in those disgraceful jeans with holes in the knees.

The greats of Opryland were “Mr. Perfects” like Johnny Cash, Ricky Skaggs, Randy Travis, George Strait and many others who always look neat.

He may feel he is being humble. However, poor humble people patched the hole in their pants!

Marjorie Rayfield  
Phillipsburg, Kansas

### Dwight's Fancy Footwork

I was pleased to hear you have an article on Dwight Yoakam coming soon. For now, he is my favorite. I have a couple of his albums and one of his videos. In the video, I sure wish he had gone into the footwork he does when he performs.

Has he more than one video out? I have the one titled “Just Looking for a Hit.”

Mrs. Leroy Brooks  
Stuart, Oklahoma

### John Morthland's Book

I would like to know if John Morthland has any plans to update his superlative book, *The Best of Country Music*.

After all, it was he who turned me on to the authentic sound, along with Owen Bradley, Billy Sherrill and, of course, The Jordanaires.

Robert Brockman  
Lynn, Massachusetts

*John, are you listening?...—Ed.*

### Inflated Ego Just Ain't So with Billy Joe Royal

You certainly hear a lot these days about stars with inflated egos not caring about the fans who put them there.

Recently, while traveling from Texas to California, I ran into Billy Joe Royal

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at a filling station in Grant, New Mexico. Not only was Billy happy to stop and chat and pose for a picture, he also took the time to share a soft drink and more conversation inside the station. He is without a doubt one of the most down-to-earth people I've ever met in the entertainment business or anywhere else for that matter.

Jerry T. Ellis  
Hayward, California



**Billy Joe Royal and Jerry T. Ellis gas up in a filling station in Grant, New Mexico.**

### More About Steve Wariner

OK, fair is fair. I've yet to see Steve Wariner's handsome face in any part of your magazine except the Letters section. I know first hand that he really cares about his fans, so I'll keep hopin' and watching *Country Music Magazine* for more on Steve.

What a super, great, A-1 idea the centerfold is. I was so surprised and pleased with it, I had to let you know. From the few pictures of Russ Barnard I have seen, he'd make good one too!

Joan McDowell

Hayesville, North Carolina

*Food for thought. Actually, we did a feature on Steve back in November/December 1987. Back issues available in our New York office.—Ed.*



**Joan McDowell's sister-in-law, Judy Roe, and Steve Wariner backstage in Fayetteville, North Carolina. The photo was taken by Judy's husband, Sergeant Frank Roe of Fort Bragg.**

### Here's What Happened to Paul Warmack and The Gully Jumpers

In the Letters section in the September/October issue of *Country Music Magazine*, one of your readers asked what happened to Paul Warmack.

I just read in Chet Hagen's new book, *Grand Ole Opry*, that Paul Warmack is a skilled automobile mechanic who had his own shop for many years and now plies his trade for the State of Tennessee in one of its Nashville shops. The book also says The Gully Jumpers' name was invented by George Hay.

Eleanor Chamberlain

Olean, New York

*Paul Warmack, are you there? Come in, please.—Ed.*

### Where's Ferlin Husky?

I've not heard any new songs from Ferlin Husky since 1973, the year my middle son was born. I can't find any of his music anywhere, and he is such a great singer. I've loved his voice since I was a little kid, and the way he kicked up his heels when he walked out on the stage.

Nealla Day

Mt. Sherman, Kentucky

*Well, Nealla and other Ferlin Husky fans, read on... See also Buried Treasures this time for some of Ferlin's great past recordings.—Ed.*

### Husky Sings While Ceiling Burns

Following the orderly evacuation of Ferlin Husky's recent performance at the Ferlin Husky Jubilee in Myrtle Beach, North Carolina, Ferlin got all of us to join him singing, "I Saw the Light" and "Wings of a Dove." The ceiling had caught fire, and Ferlin sang while we all evacuated. His calm and reassuring handling of the fire turned a potentially dangerous situation into a heartwarming experience.

Ferlin is a true showman, a seasoned professional whom we all admire.

Tina L. Skenes

Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

### Nitty Gritty Dirt Band Second Time Around

Thank you so much for the wonderful article about The Dirt Band and their album, *Will the Circle be Unbroken II*, in the September/October issue of *Country Music Magazine*. It was a landmark project the first time around back in 1971, but that was two years before I was born. I'm so grateful they did it all over again so the people in my generation could experience the magic.

The entire project has a very homey feel to it. As Emmylou Harris put it, "The living room was put back into the music." Thank you, Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, for making it all happen both times, and thank you, *Country Music*

*Magazine*, for helping to bring it to us.

Brooke Ashley McAvory

Douglas City, California

### Thanks, Michael Martin Murphey

I would like to publicly thank Michael Martin Murphy and his manager, Jim Halsey, for the benefit concert for Sanpete and Gunnison hospitals in the rural areas of Utah.

As a photographer and country music lover, I am thrilled to see some top stars help rural America to upgrade itself in health care, and I hope to see more in the future.

Royal A. Holter

Dugway, Utah



**Michael Martin Murphey lent a helping hand in Utah.**

### Willie is a Poet

I am listening to Willie's new album *A Horse Called Music*, and Willie has recorded a very meaningful and beautiful piece of work. Willie Nelson is a "poet" and a keen observer of life—with a God-given talent to put these thoughts to music and touch your heart and, yes, sometimes your soul. Marty Robbins could do this, too.

We saw Willie and family in concert in Waterloo, Iowa, for the National Cattle Congress, and it had been about four years since we had seen Willie live in concert. Well, fans—Willie is still pouring out his heart to us. I left feeling like I better understood the "human situation." Bravo, Willie!

Virginia Engh

Silvis, Illinois

### Caught Us Horsing Around

Just got my November/December issue of *Country Music Magazine*. As usual, I love it. I had to write, though, to point out a slip. Coincidentally, it involves two of our favorite subjects—Willie Nelson's *A Horse Called Music*, and *A Man Called Horse*, a Richard Harris movie—and a true story, by the way. To see what I mean, turn to page 59 of Record Reviews in the November/December issue, last paragraph of the *Horse Called Music* review.

Willie is our all-time favorite, down-

to-earth, special Number One man. His album (we haven't got it yet, but we will) has got to be great if Willie did it.

Jack and Gayle Ennis  
Lafayette, Indiana

*We have a booby award, and we have just awarded it for a whole month to the person who let A Man Called Horse slip through. Keep watching us!—Ed.*

### Fancies Dean Dillon

I was thrilled to see the review on Dean Dillon's album *I've Learned to Live* in the November/December issue. However, I disagree with Rich Kienzle's statement about the title song.

I love the older, perhaps more experienced country music stars, but I appreciate the new ones a lot. I feel that Dean is to be commended for his album, which is just fantastic.

Please give us a feature article on Dean Dillon soon. A color photograph of him and his band would also be nice.

Pamela F. Peters  
Pineville, Louisiana

*Never satisfied...—Ed.*

### T. Graham Brown Has the Moves

I've been to 14 country concerts this year alone. One of the better concerts was performed by Mr. T. Graham Brown. He's got the moves. He doesn't act like a superstar off stage, but sure gives a performance on.

Mark Odewald  
South Suburban, Illinois



T. Graham with Mark Odewald.

### Right On, Michael Bane

I never write to express my opinions, but this time I must. Thank God someone finally cleaned out Michael Bane's ears. His review of Lorrie Morgan's album *Leave the Light On* in the November/December issue was right on. I think she's great. Well, Michael, one out of a hundred is a start in the right direction for you. You're learning.

David St. John  
Macclonny, Florida

### Shopping with Waylon

My husband and I had the good fortune to spend the day with Waylon Jennings, his wife Jessi, daughter Jennifer and



Waylon Jennings and Charlotte Warren shopping for new hats at Woods Boots in Odessa, Texas.

road manager Emmett Gillum in September. We got to escort Waylon and gang while they were here performing for the Texas Special Olympic party.

Waylon was the sweetest man I have ever met. He is just as much of a hero off stage as he is on.

Charlotte Warren  
Midland, Texas

### Reba's Sweet Sixteen

I am writing in response to Bob Millard's critique of Reba McEntire's latest album, *Sweet Sixteen*, in the September/October Record Reviews section. As I read the assessment of music artists by various writers in each issue of *Country Music Magazine*, I find the same disturbing fact glaring at me. Too many of your reviewers try to pigeon-hole the artist with their own preconceived ideas of what kind of music that artist should be producing: point-in-hand, Reba's *Sweet Sixteen* album. I personally loved the touch she gave The Everly Brothers' "Cathy's Clown."

Let's stop stereotyping everyone and allow them to stretch and grow as artists.

Reba Hall  
Duncan, Oklahoma

### Reba, Recapture the Sound

First, let me say your magazine is incredible! However, it never fails, the Record Reviews section always gets me wound up.

Mr. Millard, your review of Reba's *Sweet Sixteen* album, in the September/October issue, is right on the money. Reba does seem confused about where her career is going, and it's starting to show in her music. Reba needs to get

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back to basics...hard drivin', spirit-filled country music, not sissy, synthesized pop music. *Sweet Sixteen* has only two redeeming songs...“Til Love Comes Again” and “You Must Really Love Me.” These two songs represent the country music Reba does best...acoustic guitars, fiddles, steel guitars and chilling harmonies.

Mark Watson  
Colorado Springs, Colorado

### Seals Fan's Truck

Sure would like to thank Dan Seals for taking the time to stop and talk to a long time fan. Sure would like to see an article in *Country Music* on him. I just started getting your magazine and I enjoy it.

I named my truck after Dan's latest single and album, *They Rage On*. When Dan saw it, he said he sure liked my truck and would like a picture for himself.

R.L. Morgan  
Onarga, Illinois



R.L. Morgan and Dan Seals with “Rage On” at a truckstop on I-24.

### Vern Gosdin's Alone

I took Bob Allen's recommendation on Vern Gosdin's *Alone*, reviewed in the September/October issue of *Country Music Magazine*. Well, I have never purchased, borrowed or listened to a cassette that I loved more. Every song is super. Vern deserves an award, but knowing how Nashville usually does things, he will be forgotten again. I have been appreciating Vern's music for years, and still, as good as he is, when speaking of him, people say, “I've never heard of him.”

Vern, keep your chin up, you won't be “alone” for long.

Janie Waters  
Irving, Texas

### k.d. lang's Hoedowns o.k. With This Fan

I don't often find myself disagreeing with an entire record review, but such was the case after reading Rich Kienzle's September/October critique of k.d. lang's *Absolute Torch and Twang* album.

I've seen many country performers

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live, but they've never affected me the way k.d. lang has. She is incredible on stage, giving 100% to every song. Her rendition of Roy Orbison's "Crying" had the crowd on their feet and not because they were offended by her insincerity.

Mr. Kienzle should realize that miss lang, despite her lower case name, does everything in a big way, an attitude which would explain her exaggerated wee-hahs and hoedowns in the middle of her act. Perhaps Rich and many of the other people who are put off by her simply are incapable of embracing someone who doesn't fit the mold.

Theresa Ruland  
Levittown, New York

### Songwriter Credit

Louis Brown is one of three co-writers of "Tennessee Courage," included on Keith Whitley's album *I Wonder Do You Think of Me*, reviewed in the November/December issue. We regret the omission.

### k.d. lang, Trailblazer

Mr. Kienzle, in your review of *Absolute Torch and Twang* in the September/October issue of *Country Music Magazine*, you state that you just don't understand the reasons for k.d.'s popularity. It's apparent, then, that you've never experienced one of her live performances. Her fantastic vocal abilities as well as her grace, charm and sincerity shine through to young and old alike. I speak from experience because I'm young, but my mom, who happens to be 67 years old, loves k.d., and that's saying a lot because my mom generally dislikes most entertainers.

Personally, I admire k.d. for being different, because it's easy to emulate others, to follow the crowd, but it takes real courage and vision to travel down unbeaten pathways and to blaze new trails.

S. Thomas  
Tulsa, Oklahoma

### k.d. lang's Fan Club

I've written many fan letters over the years to a lot of old and new country stars, and one of the *very few* who ever bothered to take the time to autograph and send their photo to me is the fantastic k.d. lang!

How about printing the address of her fan club for all the folks out there who are just now discovering this talented young star.

Linda S. Wallace  
Westminster, California

k.d. lang Fan Club, c/o Bumstead Productions, 1616 West 3rd Avenue, Vancouver, B.C., Canada V6J1K2. -Ed.

### Letter to Lorrie Morgan

Lorrie Morgan Whitley, we watched you as a regular on *Nashville Now*. We

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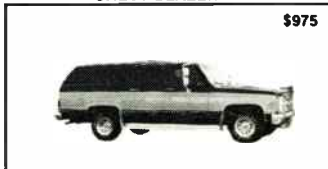
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always knew you had something to give to the country music world. We were very excited to see the video *Train Wreck of Emotion*.

We also followed the career of your late husband, Keith Whitley. We would catch him on the TNN programs. We saw him on *Nashville Now* when he told of how he loved you and was excited about your coming marriage.

You both had your music careers. You both always told the world that the business pulled you together-because you both understood it.

It was 2:30 in the afternoon when I heard the terrible news over the radio. I broke down and thought of you, Lorrie. Through your pain, this fan (and many others) respect the courage it took for you to play the Opry-to go on with life, with the terrible tragedy of Keith Whitley's passing.

Deborah J. Fodstad  
Circle Pines, Minnesota

For more on Lorrie Morgan, see feature in this issue.-Ed.

### Now for Keith Whitley...

"The Last Letter" written by Hazel Smith to Keith Whitley in the September/October issue was true, warm and loving. I never had the opportunity to meet Keith, but I personally know Lorrie Morgan, and she is a very beautiful, special person. Lorrie and Keith, as Hazel stated, were the most beautiful couple in show business, and to say the least, both extremely talented. Words cannot express how much Keith will be missed, but his great music will live forever.

Robbie Nelson  
Sarasota, Florida

### ...We Won't Forget You

I just finished the article by Hazel Smith in the September/October issue entitled "Keith Whitley-The Last Letter."

If people with drinking problems could realize how much we care and love them, maybe we could help more. But as many of us already know, alcohol makes people blind to the fact that people care and want to help.

We love you, Keith Whitley, and won't ever forget you. Thanks for everything you gave us while you were here.

Linda Nielsen  
Superior, Wisconsin

We received many letters in response to Keith Whitley's death and Hazel's Last Letter. It was a sad mail bag, but a full one. -Ed.

### Remembering George Morgan

I just finished reading your Legends of Country Music feature about the late, great George Morgan in the September/October issue of the *Newsletter*. Thank



you for expressing my thoughts. I have been a fan of George's since I heard him sing "Candy Kisses" at the Opry.

I met him many times, and he was as sweet as his voice. Only one correction, his father's name was Zack, not Jack. I met Zack before he passed away, also George's mother and most of his brothers and sisters, all the kids and Anna. I hope your article means George will be voted into the Hall of Fame. Wouldn't that be great!

I gave my George Morgan collection of old recordings to Lorrie and her brother and sisters. The Hall of Fame copied my photos and scrapbook that I had put together about George. I finally visited his grave—it took many years to give him up. His songs touched my heart and made me a better person.

Mary Thompson  
Urbana, Illinois

### Charlie Daniels' New Song

When Charlie Daniels' new album was released, I heard "Simple Man" for the first time on Owensboro, Kentucky's station KBKR and I told everyone what a good song it was and that it was about time someone wrote this type of song to wake everyone up to how the world is going today.

Evidently, some people interpreted it a different way and caused some hassles for Charlie Daniels. They said he was telling people to take the law into their own hands.

In the song he quotes from the Bible, "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." This doesn't mean you go out and do the same to someone else. It means that a person should be punished for the crimes they commit, if not here, then perhaps in the hereafter.

Mary S. Sommer  
Cannetton, Indiana

For another look at Charlie Daniels and "Simple Man," see the Newsletter this time.—Ed.

### 20 Questions with George Jones

I just received my September/October issue and had to say thanks! You made my whole day!

I am a fan of George Jones, so was very happy to see the 20 Questions article on him. I am so glad that he is doing so well now. I think his wife is a very special lady to have helped George the way she has.

Sandi Gearhart  
Santa Barbara, California

### Hall of Fame for George Jones

I have over 300 albums and singles, five scrapbooks of stories and miscellaneous items on George Jones. I also have over 30 live tapes, radio shows and interviews of George.

Are any of his early duet partners

still living? Band members? I would love to get more information on his earlier recording career, but when I called The Country Music Foundation, they said I had more information than they did!

Thanks again for the write-up on George in 20 Questions. I still think he should be in the Hall of Fame.

James L. Marchant  
Tampa, Florida

### Goofy About Garth Brooks

I recently attended a Garth Brooks concert at the Texas Longhorn Club in Orange, Texas. I don't know if it was his cute smile or the way he wore his Wranglers, but all the girls went crazy when he walked on the stage. In my opinion, he is ranked way up there with George Strait.

When he began to sing, everyone went wild, including the guys. The music was fabulous.

Lori Fontenot  
Lake Charles, Louisiana



Garth Brooks gets around—here he wows Marilu Eppes, Belinda Foree and Pam Oliver at a concert in Mexia, Texas.

### Oaks Raise the Roof

Thank you for the favorable comments about The Oak Ridge Boys in the People section in your November/December issue. Our family attended several Oak Ridge Boys concerts over the summer, and indeed your information was correct; they have as many fans as ever—in fact there weren't any empty seats to be seen at most venues. The audiences were so enthusiastic, they'd almost raise the roof.

The Oaks seem to have more fans than ever. They're great!

Dee Lee  
Wentzville, Missouri

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<b>VERN GOSDIN Greatest Hits</b> 351-361 (COMPACT)	<b>MARY CHAPIN CARPENTER State Of The Heart</b> 383-505 (COLUMBIA)	<b>RODNEY CROWELL Diamonds And Dirt</b> 366-211 (COLUMBIA)	<b>LARRY GATLIN PURE 'N SIMPLE</b> 385-641 (MCA)	<table border="1" style="width:100%; height:40px;"><tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr></table>			
<b>THE BELLAMY BROTHERS Greatest Hits, Vol. II</b> 349-738 (MCA/CBS)	<b>ROGER WHITTAKER Best Loved Ballads, Volume One</b> 400-747 (MCA)	<b>HOLLY DUNN To Cross The Rio Grande</b> 371-963 (BWE)	<b>LARRY GATLIN PURE 'N SIMPLE</b> 385-641 (MCA)	<table border="1" style="width:100%; height:40px;"><tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr></table>			
<b>RANDY TRAVIS STORMS OF LIFE</b> 346-965 (WARNER BROS.)	<b>BETTY CHRISTY CHASCOBOOK BACK ON TRACK</b> 384-404 (ATLANTIC)	<b>LARRY GATLIN PURE 'N SIMPLE</b> 385-641 (MCA)	<b>LARRY GATLIN PURE 'N SIMPLE</b> 385-641 (MCA)	<table border="1" style="width:100%; height:40px;"><tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr></table>			
<b>THE FORESTER SISTERS GREATEST HITS</b> 383-869 (WARNER BROS.)	<b>HOLLY DUNN The Blue Rose Of Texas</b> 384-222 (WARNER BROS.)	<b>LARRY GATLIN PURE 'N SIMPLE</b> 385-641 (MCA)	<b>LARRY GATLIN PURE 'N SIMPLE</b> 385-641 (MCA)	<table border="1" style="width:100%; height:40px;"><tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr></table>			



Randy Travis—Old 8x10. Honky Tonk Moon, more. (Warner Bros.) 370-643

Believe it or not, you can still get 12 cassettes for a penny! All you have to do is fill in and mail the application together with your check or money order for \$1.86 as payment (that's 1¢ for your first 12 cassettes, plus \$1.85 to cover shipping and handling). In exchange, you simply agree to buy 8 more selections (at regular Club prices) in the next three years—and you may cancel membership anytime after doing so.

**How the Club operates:** every four weeks (13 times a year) you'll receive the Club's music magazine, which describes the Selection of the Month for each musical interest...plus hundreds of alternates from every field of music. In addition, up to six times a year you may receive offers of Special Selections, usually at a discount off regular Club prices, for a total of up to 19 buying opportunities.

If you wish to receive the Selection of the Month or the Special Selection, you need do nothing—it will be shipped automatically. If you prefer an alternate selection, or none at all, fill in the response card always provided and mail it by the date specified. You will always have at least 10 days to make your decision. If you ever receive any selection without having 10 days to decide, you may return it at our expense.

The cassettes you order during your membership will be billed at regular Club prices, which currently are \$7.98 to \$9.98—plus shipping and handling (Multi-unit sets, special and classical recordings may be somewhat higher). If you decide to continue as a member after completing your enrollment agreement, you'll be eligible for our generous "buy one—get one free" bonus plan.

**10-Day Risk-Free Trial:** we'll send details of the Club's operation with your introductory shipment. If you are not satisfied for any reason whatsoever, just return everything within 10 days for a full refund and you will have no further obligation.

Order your first selection now at a big discount—and get 2 extra cassettes FREE! You may also choose your first selection right now—we'll give it to you for as much as 60% off regular Club prices—only \$3.98. Enclose payment now and you'll receive it with your 12 introductory cassettes. This discount purchase immediately reduces your obligation—you then need buy just 7 more selections (instead of 8) in the next three years. What's more, this discount entitles you to 2 more hit cassettes, FREE! Just check the box in the application and indicate your first selection and 2 free cassettes.

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## CBS/Columbia House

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Also send my first selection for up to a 60% discount, for which I am also enclosing additional payment of \$3.98. I then need buy only 7 more (instead of 8), at regular Club prices in the next three years.

This discount purchase entitles me to these 2 cassettes FREE.

I PREFER CDS—enroll me in the Club under the terms outlined. I am enclosing check or money order for \$1.86 (that's 1¢ for my first 8 CDs, plus \$1.85 for shipping/handling). I agree to buy 6 CDs, at regular Club prices, in the next three years—and may cancel membership anytime after doing so.

Send me these 8 CDs for 1¢	

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#### My main musical interest is (check one): (But I may always choose from any category.)

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Country                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Soft Rock                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Modern Rock                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reba McEntire, Randy Travis | <input type="checkbox"/> Tina Turner, Gloria Estefan     | <input type="checkbox"/> Sugar Cubes, Big Audio Dynamite |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hard Rock                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Pop                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Black Music                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rolling Stones, Aerosmith   | <input type="checkbox"/> Barbra Streisand, Barry Manilow | <input type="checkbox"/> Babyface, Soul II Soul          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heavy Metal                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Jazz                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Classical*                      |

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Do you have a credit card? (03)  Yes  No

Do you have a VCR? (04)  Yes  No

\*Note: We reserve the right to reject any application or cancel any membership. These offers not available in APO FPO, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, write for details of alternative offer. Canadian residents serviced from Toronto. Applicable sales tax added to all orders. \*Classical members serviced by the CBS Classical Club



# People

## POLITICS AND COUNTRY MUSIC MAKIN' HISTORY

Back in 1983 The Oak Ridge Boys were set to perform at the White House for the annual Congressional Picnic. The then Vice President, **George Bush**, had to fly off to China and couldn't make the actual concert, so he attended the sound check. Bush began requesting songs and the talented foursome obliged. Betcha they are glad now that they did. Seems they are on a first-name basis with our illustrious leader and his wife, and the Pres and **Barb** do sing-alongs with The Oaks' records. Of course they maintained their friendship after the election, and when the President needed entertainment for the recent annual Congressional Barbecue, he invited The Oaks to the South Lawn of the White House to entertain. After the performance he thanked the group and said, "I love these Oak Ridge Boys."

**George Strait** is another favorite of Mr. Bush. On his first visit to the White House, Strait was honored in a Rose Garden ceremony hosted by the President. Strait, along with 11 others, received the American Vocation Success Award in recognition of his involvement in vocational-technical education or training. As many of you know, this year's Entertainer of the Year, George Strait, holds a degree in agriculture from Southwest Texas State University and is qualified to teach agriculture.

As he presented Strait with the award, the President remarked to his fellow Texan what a great fan he was of his music. He also inquired as to the possibility of Strait one day performing at the White House. Of course, Strait said he'd be honored. The very next day, the White House was on the phone with Strait's management office to make all the necessary arrangements for the future performance.

### KIDDIE CORNER

**Marie Osmond** and hubby **Brian Blosil** named their daughter **Rachel Lauren**. She weighed in at 8 lbs. 9 oz. Sounds like the baby is almost as big as the mama.



SUSAN BIDDLE/THE WHITE HOUSE



The current administration does have taste when it comes to music. Above, President Bush congratulates George Strait, recipient of an American Vocation Success Award. Below, he introduces The Oaks at a Congressional Barbecue.

## NOT YOUR AVERAGE COUNTRY COOKBOOK

"Low cholesterol or low calorie," commented former heavyweight **Johnny Russell** about his new country cookbook. Forty-seven friends in the biz of music contributed to the cookbook—one that should prove either interest or indignation, I'm not sure which. Johnny decided on the cookbook following bypass surgery. The recipes were reviewed by the registered dietitian at Nashville Memorial Hospital where Johnny "took" his 'unfat' treatments.

Asking price \$10.00, plus \$2.00 postage and handling. If you are interested, you can order by writing: **Johnny Russell Cookbook**, P.O. Drawer 37, Hendersonville, Tennessee 37077.

### WST

Friends, it's that time: **Wariner Standard Time**. He sings. He writes songs. He picks great. Taken individually, any one of his talents should put **Steve Wariner** into the major league of hillbilly singers. Taken together, there cannot be a miss. Steve has done better than decent. He boasts Number One singles

Reporter: Hazel Smith

Editor: Rochelle Friedman

now that

# rodney crowell

is up to speed,  
there's no stopping him!

rodney crowell's new album,

## keys to the highway

is the hottest thing to come  
down the pike in years!

it's the first new album  
in over a year by the  
man who released  
5 consecutive #1 singles  
from his "diamonds  
and dirt" album.

whatever you do this  
month, don't forget  
your keys!

rodney crowell  
"keys to the highway"  
and  
"diamonds and dirt"  
on columbia cassettes  
and compact discs.



12  
songs



FEATURING THE NEWEST HIT  
"MANY A LONG  
& LONESOME HIGHWAY"



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World Radio History

**Knight**  
The Saving Place

# People

and his albums are selling. Still, that boost that takes an entertainer over the top where the Straits and Hank Jr.'s tread has not yet been had by Wariner. Not to worry...*I Got Dreams*, Steve's latest album, may be the rocket that shoots WST up there with the other chart powers. Me, I wish Steve high toppings and no seconds.

## WALKWAY OF STARS INDUCTEES 1989

Inductees into the Walkway of Stars during Country Music Month included Vern Gosdin, Desert Rose Band, Irlene Mandrell, the late Ralph Sloan, Curly Fox, the late Texas Ruby, Patty Loveless, Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Billy Joe Royal, Lacy J. Dalton and the late Keith Whitley. When you are in Music City, be sure and visit the Country Music Hall of Fame and see the Walkway of Stars at the entrance. You'll be glad you did.

## MY FRIEND SHOOTER

One of the nicest people I know (and don't see enough of) is ten-year-old Shooter Jennings. I'd even go as far as to say that the best thing Waylon Jennings and Jessi Colter ever did was Shooter. He is one of the nicest kids. Now I hear that Shooter has been playing drums onstage with his famous parents. The Jessi-penned "Storms Never Last" is my favorite duo by Shooter's parents, obviously also a fave of the masses. This would be the song that Shooter drummed on in Sault St. Marie, Michigan, to the delight of all.

## JUNCASH

Driving south on I-65 between Rivergate and Madison, I crept up on this big blue automobile that shined like new money. The license tag read JUNCASH. It was a female driver speeding along pretty good. I passed and I

looked. It was her all right, June Carter Cash driving her brand spanking new Rolls Royce gifted to her by hubby Johnny Cash, so I learned. The car was colored a real bright blue that I'd never seen before. But then, no Rolls ever drove in my driveway. We do have several foreign cars, however—Nissans, Hondas, Yugos and Toyotas.

## ALL KEYED UP

Becky Hobbs' *All Keyed Up* album, with songs written by the girl herself, is worth your time and money. It's her best album to date and expresses what the girl is all about. Hopefully, this one will take this faceless wonder into the front page of everybody's mind.

## ONE OF THEM PARTON GALS DRIVING YOU CRAZY

It's Stella Parton this time, and on the race track at that. Stella was one of the

## ROY WUNSCH: *Taking CBS All the Way*

A couple of years back, when Roy Wunsch was named Senior Vice-President/CBS and Affiliated Labels/Nashville, there were rumblings 'neath the neon where the great and near great gather to quench their thirst and sate their appetites. Maude's lunchers, Mario's munchers and The Cooker's saladeers flashing their Gold cards discussed how the mild-mannered St. Louis native would go about trying to rejuvenate the once powerful country music empire out of its backsliding condition. Many locals gave him little better than a snowball's chance in hell. I heard "He's too nice" until I thought I would puke in my guacamole. I gave him 18 months to mainstream the label because I believed he could. That's just about how long it's taken.

Let's look at the records of the records, friends. Since Roy took the reins, CBS vaunts (not flaunts) the following Gold (500,000 sales) and platinum (1,000,000 recordings): *Wild Eyed Dream* and *Loving Proof* by Ricky Van Shelton both are platinum, *A Decade of Hits* by Charlie Daniels is platinum, *Greatest Hits* by Tammy Wynette also platinum, *Pretty Paper* by Willie Nelson is platinum, *Take It*



Nashville's own Roy Wunsch.

*To the Limit*, also by Willie Nelson, is Gold, *Greatest Hits* by David Allan Coe is platinum, *Greatest Hits Volume II* by Johnny Paycheck is Gold and *Anniversary—10 Years of Hits* by George Jones is Gold.

Look a little further at some more of our favorites. Wunsch would kill me if I use the word "resurrect" to describe the single record action on three of his greatest acts, so I won't. Just look at the facts. Willie Nelson had his first Number One single,

"Nothing I Can Do About It Now," in almost four years. Ricky Skaggs scored a Number One chart-topper with "Lovin' Only You," his first in three years. Dolly Parton topped the country charts with "Why'd You Come in Here Lookin' Like That," and that was her first Number One in four years. Hmmm. Think about that.

Now let's talk about giving birth to a star who had knocked around as a singer without too much success though he'd done well as a songwriter. Who? None other than Rodney Crowell! Think about his *Diamonds & Dirt* album—a first of its kind—spawning five Number One singles, an accomplishment never accomplished before. This historic music was released and happened entirely during Roy's tenure.

When Roy took the position, he backed up and took a long hard look before he started shuffling his team. He knew he had the best country radio promotion man on the planet with Joe Casey. To Joe's team of Jack Lameier and Debi Fleisher they've just added Rob Dalton. Roy hand-picked Bob Montgomery, known as the best song man on Music Row, as Vice President of A&R. Bob's first string is Steve Buckingham, Director of A&R, Margie Hunt, producer, and

# People

drivers for the Dodge International Star Challenge. Stella allowed as how it was a perfect thing for her to do. Said she could drive as fast as she wanted to and not worry about getting a speeding ticket. That's a Parton gal for you, just driving you crazy.

## ANOTHER BIRTHDAY FOR HARLAN

After six consecutive years, the annual Harlan Howard Birthday Bash has become legendary. It is a night of love and let love for rich and poor, famed and unknown. The stage show this year was worth in the neighborhood of a million bucks, I'd say. The lineup included the likes of Rodney Crowell, K.T. Oslin, Holly Dunn and Bobby Bare, who sang "Streets of Baltimore" and several more Harlan P. Howard evergreens. Melba Montgomery, who performed the heart-wrenching Howard classic "No Charge," was there as well, along with the great Jack "Cowboy" Clement. The



K.T. Oslin and Daniele Alexander were among those who performed at Harlan Howard's party this year.

highlight of the evening was Whitey Shafer's performance of "All My Ex's Live in Texas," "Does Fort Worth Ever Cross Your Mind" and the Keith Whitley single, "Do You Ever Think of Me." Others who performed were Jim Rooney, John Prine, the great Max D. Barnes, Larry Henley, Paul Craft, Susanna Clark and hubby Guy Clark, Troy Seals, Thom Schuyler, Robert Earl Keen, Roger Brown, Dean Dillon, Pat Alger, Matraca Berg, Mike Reid and Nanci Griffith, who co-hosted the show with the birthday boy. Also on hand were Pam Tillis, Daniele Alexander and Dave Mallett. The mayor was there and so was Charlie Lamb.

## THREE QUEENS AT MAUDE'S

Yes, the rumor is true. The three queens did in fact dine at Maude's. The three queens are ASCAP's Connie Bradley, Tree's Donna Hilley and Hazel Smith, who is your friend.

Kay Smith. From home in St. Louie via New York, Roy named old pal Mike Martinovich to replace himself in the Marketing Division. Mike's cohort is Mike Kraski, and the star players who answer to him are Allen Brown and Fletcher Foster on the promotion side and Jim Carlson and Bill Johnson on the artistic side. Vicki Rowland was named Director of Retail Relations and Areeda Schneider is Manager of Operations. Call the roll and play the music.

With team in place and stars on charts, Roy, who doesn't want to sound like an idealist, says he wants an artist-oriented record label, one that artists and producers feel is the place they want to be. He further wants to give his artists the fairest possible chance, especially the newer ones. Roy is a huge fan of Mary Chapin Carpenter, whose career has started to bud under his regime. He's ready to point out how happy he is with young Shelby Lynne's recordings getting chart action. When he mentions Shenandoah's Top 10 album and two Number One singles, Roy's pride in this achievement is clear.

Roy likes being the center of an operation that has so many talented individuals. "It's overwhelming," he says, quick to add that members of the staff in their own way are just as

talented as the stars. Roy refuses to admit he is the leader. He says he suspects his staff is leading him. Whatever: It's working.

So much is expected of a man in Roy's position. He serves on the CMA Board, is Musical Advisor at Belmont College, Trustee at the CMF, on the W.O. Smith School Board, serves on Bob Clement's Music Advisory Committee and is on the Tennessee Film and Entertainment Committee.

Roy told me he went to college for a couple of years at the University of St. Louis. He also told me he got into show biz quite by accident. He went to an employment agency back home and applied for a job because he needed work. He got a job in the CBS branch office. This was 15 years ago. The man has promoted all kinds of music from black to country to pop and jazz. He headed the promotion department at Epic. He was a sales rep in St. Louis. Roy could be the only white man ever to win Promo Man of the Year for Black Music. He will not boast and takes very little credit. He will tell you nobody knows what marketing means. "It's a word that is thrown around. Everything happens with a piece of music. Once it's recorded, it has to be promoted. Like I said, I've worked in all areas, and it all boils down to selling the product."

Wunsch brought up the Vern Gosdin/Bob Montgomery team several times. Roy is excited that he and his team have had a stellar year with 18 Number One singles; chalk a couple of 'em up for Vern and Bob. "Rosanne Cash has new music coming out, and I'm excited about this," he adds. He's just as excited about George Jones and Merle Haggard, The Sweethearts of the Rodeo, young Tim Mensy and Zaca Creek.

You fans must know by now that your favorites are in good hands with Mr. Wunsch's hand on the wheel. You may hear his name mentioned on an award show or read it on some liner notes, but you'll never see him on the front row. He has no desire to be in the spotlight or to be a star. He does desire to be a dynamic leader. I think he already is. Any man who will say how fortunate he is to work in a business we all love so much is echoing my heart, so I cast my vote for Mr. Roy Wunsch even if he does play tennis in his spare time, which must be all of two days a year.

By the way, the talk of the lunchers, munchers and saladeers now-a-days is CBS is getting hot again... Wunsch has built a fire over there on 16th Ave. Some of 'em even say they knew he would, as they flash that Gold card again.

# People



Tony Brown, Al Teller, Reba McEntire, Bruce Hinton and Reba's husband and manager Narvel Blackstock at Reba's party. Awards surround this lady.

## REBA HONORED

The fancy Botanic Building at historic Cheekwood in Tennessee was the site of a party for the queen of country music charts, **Reba McEntire**. Looking *just* pregnant enough to be beautiful, with her red hair piled high on her head to compliment her flawless little-girl face, she shined. She wore black silk pants with a multi-colored overblouse. The event honored Reba three ways. First she received a Gold record for her current album *Sweet 16*, secondly she received platinum recognition for her *Greatest Hits* album, and thirdly her *Sweet 16* album set a precedent for females in country music by remaining in the Number One position on the charts for 13 weeks. That's a first!

It was a real special event for Reba and for her label, MCA Records. The newly named CEO **Al Teller** flew in especially for the occasion. Isn't that just the best? Teller had to be proud of the Music City staff. **Tony Brown**, handsome as a movie star, and all those MCA girls and guys looked scrumptious. Congratulations to Reba and to MCA. Reba makes me proud to be a hillbilly. And the hot artichoke dip was out of this world.

## METAL SMITHERY DEGREE

Do you believe that the above bigtime words are in my column? Why, even I am impressed! Now let me explain. Seems **Suzy Bogguss** plays a guitar and

sings hillbilly songs. The girl is pretty, too. I expect big things from Suzy because she is talented. However, that's not the whole story. Suzy, a graduate of Illinois State University with a degree in metal smithery, is not letting her college major go to waste, either. In addition to her music, she is designing earrings. So when you go to a Suzy concert and see original earrings besides the T-shirts, caps and scarves, just know they are Bogguss-learned and Bogguss-made.

## THE BIZ OF GARTH

Capitol Records won't be lagging behind what with young **Garth Brooks** on their roster. The Oklahoma native sings 'em, writes 'em and parks cars if he is needed. Garth's two singles have not made him a household word yet, but he will be. With "Much Too Young (To Feel This Damn Old)" and "If Tomorrow Never Comes" to his credit, he wowed them at the Opry. The crowd's reaction brought tears to his eyes. Ego is a word that don't apply. On another occasion, at Camden Park in West Virginia, it looked like the show was rained out, so the booker sent his hired help home to save money. The sun came out and the cars poured in. Garth's band and road crew helped park cars and so did Garth.

Garth referred to "listening to worn out tapes by Chris LeDoux" in the "Much Too Young" song. This mention inspired LeDoux to write Garth a letter and send him three tapes. Pretty cool, huh. Just so you will know that I know

them from start to finish, I talked with Garth the other day at Polygram Publishing. He's real close with the live **Kennedy Brothers**. FYI, the live Kennedy Brothers, sons of famed record producer **Jerry Kennedy** (who has worked with **Reba McEntire**, **Jerry Lee Lewis**, **Mel McDaniel**, to name a few), are **Brian Kennedy**, **Shelby Kennedy** and **Gordon Kennedy**. Watch their smoke.

## I CALLED TONY BROWN TO TELL HIM

*Hillbilly Rock*, **Marty Stuart's** new MCA album, is so hot. The tracks are as sizzling as any I've heard in quite a spell. Produced by **Tony Brown** and **Richard Bennett**, this record may help Stuart find his niche. I had to call and tell Tony how great the production was. See, you thought the only reason I call Tony is to tell him he is the best-looking guy on Music Row. There's other reasons, too.



Marty Stuart—this hillbilly rocks.



**Lenox.**

# HANNAH

The Little Dutch Maiden

**A hand-painted porcelain doll  
with the century-old heritage  
of fine Lenox craftsmanship**

She's all dressed up for her very first visit to the tulip festival. And the rosy glow on her cheek tells you just how excited she is.

This is the charm of *Hannah*. A collector doll so sweet and lifelike, she could almost be a real little girl. And hand finished with such superb quality, she could only be from Lenox. She's dressed in a classic hand-tailored folk costume—from her crisp, white bonnet to her hand-carved wooden shoes. Carrying a dozen miniature tulips in her wicker flower basket.

Like the great costume dolls of an earlier time, *Hannah's* head, hands and feet will be fashioned of fine bisque porcelain and delicately hand painted. Her sparkling blue eyes will be set by hand. And this 14" imported collector doll will also bear a hallmark—the prized Lenox® trademark.

To bring Hannah into your home—and heart—enter your reservation now. You need send no money at this time. 83305

**Please mail by February 28, 1990.**

Please enter my reservation for *Hannah*, an original collector doll from Lenox. I need send no money now and prefer to pay as follows:

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Expires \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

\*Plus \$4.25 per doll for shipping and handling. Sales tax will be billed if applicable.

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Hardwood stand provided.

# People

## A REAL LIVE BIRD ON HEE HAW

16th Avenue Records' Vicki Bird from Bird Hollow, West Virginia, has been named a regular on *Hee Haw*. When she salutes her hometown, it is sorta like killing two Birds with one stone.

## SWEETEST OF ALL FOR WILLIE

For the first time in four years, Willie Nelson topped the country singles charts. The song that took ole Willie to the top is "Nothing I Can Do About It Now," taken from his latest CBS album, *A Horse Called Music*. You'd think the Red Headed Stranger had been acco-laded to death. Nothing could be farther from the truth. According to Fred Foster, who produced the music and who had also suffered a long dry spell including bankruptcy, when someone asked Willie how he felt about being Number One again, he replied, "This one is the sweetest of all." To celebrate the fact that he hasn't lost the touch (better than Midas), the CBS staff honored Willie with a Number One party at their Music Row offices. After the party Willie went back and made sure that he shook hands with each and every employee on staff, all the way back to

## FINAL BOW FOR DEL WOOD: 1920-1989

On September 27, 1989, Del Wood, the Grand Ole Opry's best-known pianist and one of the very first great female country instrumentalists, suffered a massive stroke. At the time, she was preparing to perform at a Nashville benefit with other veteran female stars. Six days later, on October 3, she died, having never regained consciousness. She was 69.

Anyone who listened to the Grand Ole Opry knew Del Wood. If her name didn't immediately ring a bell, the melody of her 1951 hit piano instrumental "Down Yonder" did.

A Nashville native (born Adelaide Hazelwood), Del's bubbling, barrelhouse piano playing reflected the woman herself in her prime: large, always smiling and sure of herself. She didn't write "Down Yonder." It had been a hit in 1934 for fiddler Gid Tanner and his stringband,

The Skillet Lickers. But she made it her own.

She recorded her version on a small, independent Tennessee label in 1951. When it hit Number 10, she became the first non-singing country pianist with a hit instrumental and an established figure on the Opry. Her influence reached into unusual places. She befriended a young Jerry Lee Lewis during the time he lived in Nashville, before he had his big rockabilly hits. Not only did he acknowledge her influence, during one appearance on the Opry he joined her at the piano to reprise "Down Yonder." This was a compliment since Jerry Lee rarely shared a piano stool with anyone.

Clucked as it sounds, there was only one Del Wood. No one's following in her footsteps, so yet another unique voice on the Opry has been stilled. —RICH KIENZLE

the mail room. And that, my friends, is why Willie is and always will be great.

Another reason Nelson was in town was to talk about his Cowboy TV Network. Nashville's Channel 17 will be the base. Willie has purchased all the Multimedia TV stuff that all of us watched through the years before *TNN*, like *Flatt and Scruggs*, *Porter Wagoner*

(with Dolly Parton), *The Wilburn Brothers* (with Loretta Lynn), *The Billy Walker Show*, *Pop Goes the Country*, *Del Reeves*, *Nashville On the Road*, etc.—literally all the TV out of Nashville from 1966 to 1982 except for *Hee Haw* and the specials. I am impressed that Willie will own his own network. Let's see, he owns Austin too...no, just kidding.



Holly Dunn celebrates with (left to right) Vice President of Warner Bros. Eddie Reeves, her brother Chris Waters, and co-writers of "Are You Ever Gonna Love Me," Tree's Buddy Killen and Tom Shapiro.

## DECK THE HALLS WITH GOLD FROM HOLLY

"Deck the Halls with Gold from Holly" could very well be Warner Brothers' soon-to-be-sung song. Holly Dunn's new album *The Blue Rose of Texas* could provide the shove it takes to push Holly into the prestigious "Gold garden" where she deserves to be. The P.K. (preacher's kid) came to Music City from Texas in the early 1980's, following in the footsteps of her brother, Chris Waters, who by that time had scored a Gold record of his own as co-writer of "Sexy Eyes," performed by the rock group Dr. Hook. It's Holly's go-round now, and yours truly predicts that Gold will be hers. Holly's most memorable recording to date is the Grammy-winning "Daddy's Hands," a song she wrote. Holly and cohorts Kathy Mattea, Earl Thomas Conley and Steve Wariner played before 220,000 people at the Stern Wheel Regatta in Charleston, West Virginia, not long ago. Now, that's the kind of crowds I like for my folks to sing to. Congratulations to Holly, who is the 64th member of the Grand Ole Opry in the 64th year of the establishment.



# People

## AT THE CMA AWARDS

By now you know who all the winners were at this year's CMA Awards Show because you watched it on TV like the rest of the world. And a bunch of you watched because you love country music. Enough of you watched, in fact, so that CBS was the most watched network of the night for that time slot. So there. The winners and me are on a first-name basis. Like, before and after he won the Entertainer of the Year award, **George Strait** kissed me on the mouth. I've never seen George as flustered and as happy as he was following the show. For a quiet man, he talked a bunch. Male Vocalist **Ricky Van Shelton** was busy, but his manager **Mike Campbell** kissed me too. I met **Kathy Mattea** on the steps after the show and congratulated her on her award. We embraced. Hall of Fame inductee **Cliffie Stone** sat beside me in the press room. Cliffie was very thrilled. One of the Stone boys (he has three) came over and hugged his dad and kissed him. Brought tears to my eyes and to Cliffie's. Cliffie's son **Curtis**, bassist with **Highway 101**, allowed as how he was happier for his dad's award than his own, Vocal Group of the Year. **Hank Thompson**, another Hall of Fame inductee, just talked and rambled on to us press folks. He was surprised and thrilled. **The Judds**, **Wynonna** and **Naomi**, came back to talk live on radio (but not to us), but I did talk to the "other" Judd girl, **Ashley** (daughter/sister). We chatted over the chips and salsa, which was her supper and mine. And the other Judd was, of course, **Polly**, who is Naomi's mother and the girls' grandma. She is a spry little lady and seemed happy to meet me after reading my column all these years. I was thrilled to meet her. **Max D. Barnes** was so gracious after winning the writer's award with **Vern Gosdin** for "Chiseled in Stone." Max is such a good, kind, down-to-earth person. He's just like all of you all out there, been married to the same woman for 36 years and still loves her. **Lorrie Morgan** told me she was well pleased with **Keith Whitley** winning Single of the Year. She said that was the award she wanted for him. I congratulated **Clint Black** at the ASCAP dinner/banquet on his winning the Horizon Award. I did not see **Hank Williams Jr.** to congratulate him on Video of the Year and Vocal Event of the Year with his dad for "There's a Tear in My Beer," so I'm saying it now. Keep



Entertainer of the Year **George Strait** and **Country Music's Russ Barnard** celebrated in style at the CMA Awards.

'em coming, Hank.

Everybody was at the awards. I was hugged by **Roy Horton**, **Garth Brooks**, **Tanya Tucker**, **Erv Woolsey** (Strait's manager), **Sam Bush** with **New Grass Revival**, **Allen Brown** with **CBS**, **Sandy Neese** with **Polygram** and **Harold Shedd**, and waved at by **Randy Scruggs**. It was a night I won't be forgetting for a long time. I bet George Strait won't ever forget it. That Entertainer of the Year Award has been a long time coming for George. He said

the wait was worth it. My illustrious leader **Russell D. Barnard**, who also graced the Awards Show, partied down with George till the wee hours of the morning. Wish I'd a been there.

## DISCOVERED ON NASHVILLE NOW

**Shelby Lynne**, the girl singer who was discovered on TNN's *Nashville Now*, is stirring up some hillbilly dust these days. She's letting no grass grow under her feet, either. Busy Shelby spent a lot of last summer opening shows for **Randy Travis**, **George Jones**, **Ricky Van Shelton**, **Conway Twitty** and **Mel McDaniel**, and she performed on **Roy Acuff's** show at the Opry. The 20-year-old native of Jackson, Alabama, has a brilliant future ahead. When Shelby rares back, step back and listen. She's got a set of pipes that will blow you away. Watch for her on the road and request her records on the radio.

## REMEMBER PATSY? WHO COULD FORGET?

**Patsy Cline's** *Greatest Hits* album surpassed the two million mark recently. Her husband was presented with a double platinum album by **Bruce Hinton** of **MCA Records**.

## HOLIDAY TIME



Ever wonder what stars do when they go on vacation? Well, for **Barbara Mandrell** and her family, fishing in Hawaii is the perfect family getaway. Looks like the whole family had some luck.



**H**ere in the inner sanctum of RandyLand, in the presence of Randy himself, it's calm and easy. Randy, quietly welcoming, is showing off an old Colt Peacemaker revolver he was given when he did a bit part in a TV western (he played a prison guard, had the privilege of being choked to death by Bat Masterson). Pleased as punch by the Colt, he slides it carefully back into its holster and starts chatting amiably about what kind of shooting he likes to do on the now quite rare occasions when he gets the time.

He doesn't go hunting anymore, but "I'm tough on cans," he says, and laughs, the laugh, like the words, slow, casual, full of a country-evening kind of sound, *reeeeal* laid back. Even his admission that he hasn't been fishing in two years comes out smooth and edgeless. Oh yes, it's comfortable here in the sanctum, almost sleepy.

Outside it's a touch quicker. The air's humming, things are getting done; there's a whole three-story Music Row building putting in at least an

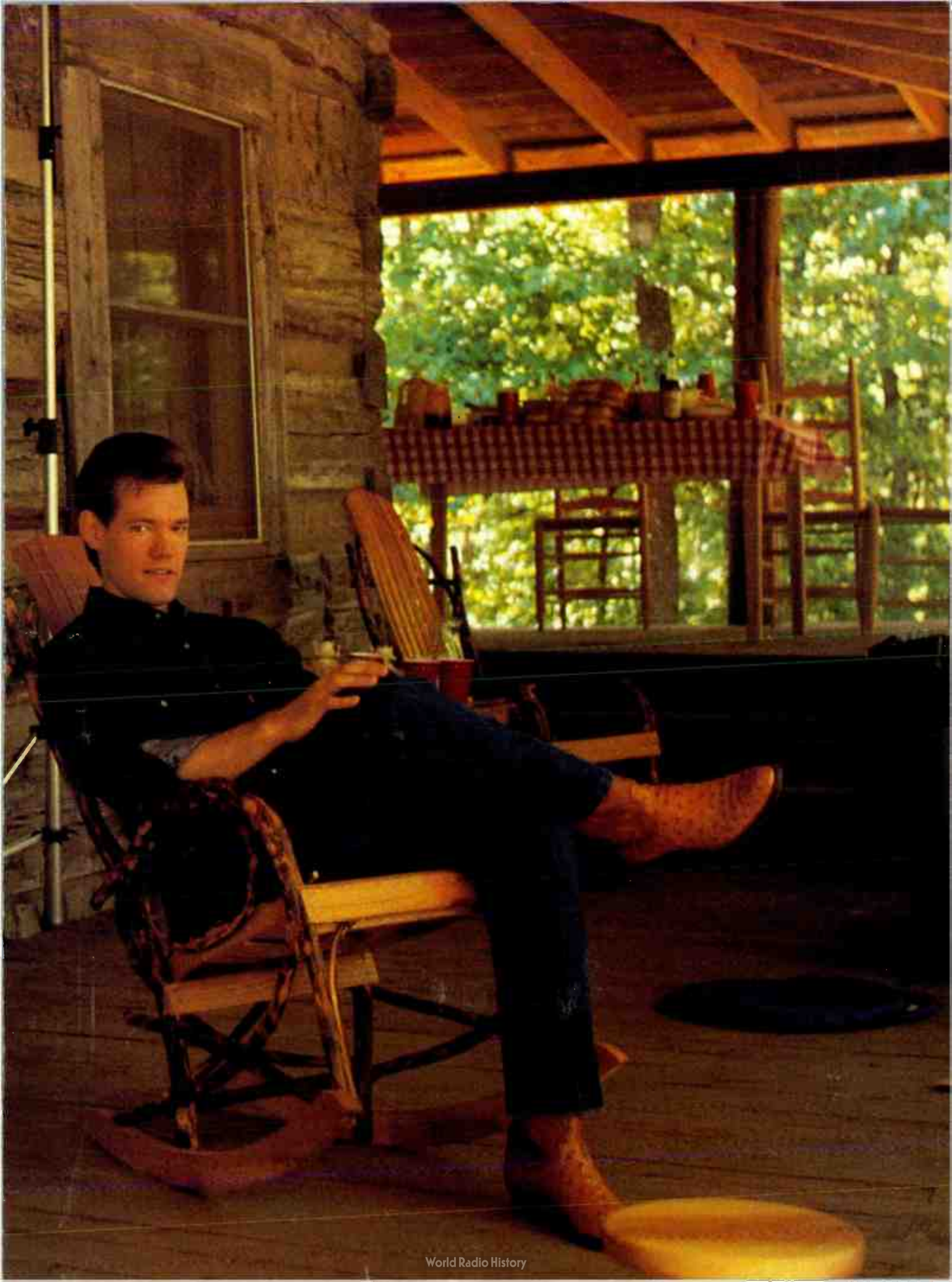
PHOTOS: JACKSON GOFF

# RESEARCH IN RANDYLAND

*Our writer gets to spend fifty minutes of quiet time with country music's acclaimed superstar Randy Travis. Herewith, his observations of the man many call the savior of the traditional sound.*

eight-hour day on the musical, logistical and economic complexities of the ever-expanding operations conducted under the banner of the Randy Travis name. Here in short is !!!MONEY!!! big time, coming in and going out fast, demanding attention in the most serious and interesting ways. RandyLand is hopping. RandyLand? Is there such a place?

Well, no, there isn't (which is not to say that someone somewhere in the Travis organization might not even now be seeing it in cedar and concrete, thinking acres and tons). In a sense, though, we're all living in RandyLand already, or at least we "in the business" are, for the nice, shy boy from North Carolina has assumed such gigantic proportions—such staggering sales figures, such stylistic influence on everybody else—that it's very difficult to imagine the shape of country music today without him. The thing about Randy, you see, is that he





Lib Hatcher saw star quality in Randy. Today they're constant companions.

*"I mean, every time I started drinking, I'd be gone until I was blind drunk, and that was it. But at the same time, I was able to put it down and walk away by myself."*

has been to Nashville in the 1980's what Willie Nelson was to it in the 1970's, Johnny Cash in the 1960's and Hank Williams in the 1950's: the sales leader, style setter and all-around savior of the music and the business. He's that big, and everyone in town knows it. If there's a King of Nashville today, he's it.

Therefore the inner sanctum, the living quarters built recently behind the Randy Travis business headquarters on 16th Avenue South, is a pretty special place: exactly, in fact, where country music's 'It' is at these days. Or at least that's the way I'm thinking as I look around while Randy visits the bathroom.

What I see confuses me at first because the decor of the place, a soft pastel Southwestern kind of look—Department Store Designer Adobe, perhaps?—doesn't seem to fit down-home Randy. When he comes back from the bathroom and sits down on the couch in his short-sleeved Adidas athletic shirt and black jeans, the Nautilus-developed muscles bulging discreetly but plainly, he clashes. But then I remember that the inner sanctum is not Randy's alone. Like most of the other space he occupies, it's shared by the second most famous person in the music business in Nashville, his manager/mentor/companion Lib Hatcher.

Just as I'm processing this thought, Lib herself comes into the living quarters from the

business headquarters, in stocking feet and hair curlers. She refreshes Randy's memory on the demands of his schedule today, then goes off into another room to dress and do her make-up. The king and I, she says, have fifty minutes.

**T**o business, then, but first the story so far. Unlikely as it seems, some readers may yet be unfamiliar with the broad outlines of the Randy Travis saga.

To begin with, he's not really Randy Travis but Randy Traywick of Marshville, North Carolina, the son of a farmer who was also a musician. Randy figures that his father never fully realized his own musical ambitions and was determined that his sons would go further; therefore Randy and his brother Ricky were steered into music from the git-go, parts of which Randy liked and some, like having to practice his music rather than have fun, he didn't.

For reasons he's always explained as rebelliousness and bad companions, Randy became a wild teenager—that is, a *wild* teenager, not just an expert in unremarkable adolescent arts such as surliness and secrecy. He fought openly with his parents, ran away from home with regularity, gobbled drugs and alcohol as often as possible, and took up hobbies like grand theft auto and breaking and entering.

Perhaps, as psychologists might suggest, Randy was trying to get attention. If so, he got it. Having somehow survived the fights, auto wrecks and toxic reactions which accompanied his lifestyle, he achieved his sixteenth year to find himself in a Charlotte courtroom facing five years in jail.

Enter Mary Elizabeth Hatcher, then a married woman in her thirties, the part owner of a club in which Randy had won a talent contest. She gave Randy a job, stood up for him in court, got him off with probation and had him come live in her house. The boy responded well; quit his nasty habits, started taking care of himself, and worked hard at singing and whatever other jobs needed doing around Lib's honky tonk.

Lib was convinced that Randy had star potential, but for the better part of a decade nobody powerful agreed with her. She and her husband went their separate ways, and she and Randy shifted their efforts from Charlotte to Nashville, but even though those efforts were intense and persistent, no banana; by the mid-1980's Randy had been turned down at least twice by every major recording label in town.

Enter another woman of vision, Martha Sharp of Warner Brothers Records. All by herself and in direct opposition to the wisdom then prevailing among the nation's radio programmers and record company bosses, Martha had figured out what every real country record buyer in the world already knew: that there was, and always had been, very substantial popular demand for singers who sound just like Hank, Lefty, George and Merle. Eventually Martha was able to convince her bosses to take a-uh-risk, on just such a singer (who also happened to be young, handsome, personable and uncomplicated by bad habits), and you know the

rest: *Always & Forever*, the Randy Travis album released when things had really gotten cranked up, hit the top of the country charts on June 20th, 1987, and stayed there for a staggering 43 weeks.

Today Randy's riding really high. As he and I sit down together, for instance, he has just returned from charming the urban cynicism off Los Angeles (causing one ecstatic critic to dub him "the Spencer Tracy of country music"), and is about to go do likewise to the even more formidable New York City before departing to set Europe aswoon. More immediately, right after our interview, he will be going out to Opryland, where he has the distinction of being the youngest man ever invited to join the Grand Ole Opry.

**N**ot bad for a juvenile-criminal hayseed, all this. It certainly makes our fifty minutes seem pretty valuable. Let's go to it, then. First that "Spencer Tracy of country music" business. That puzzles me. What exactly does it mean?

Well, Randy says, it puzzled him too until someone explained it to him: it means that he makes singing look as no-big-deal natural as Spencer Tracy made acting look.

I'll buy that. I think—I'll *certainly* buy that—as I experience a mental image of Randy's easy, all-inviting video smile sending women's hearts and accountants' computers into hyperdrive. For his part Randy says "singing the way I do just looks easy" and notes that a couple of the singers he really likes, Merle Haggard and Ray Price, also "just stand there and sing. I guess they're who I learned it from, or learned it was okay, anyway."

That raises the question of Randy's hard-core country roots. We know that his grounding in the classics is a tad firmer than, say, Lee Greenwood's, but let's get specific. Who exactly were Randy's singing heroes?

He doesn't have to think very long on this one. "Well, George Jones, of course," he says, "and Hag, and Lefty. Most of all, though I guess Hank. He was the first I really liked. Me and Ricky had this lady guitar teacher when I was eight, and she taught us some of his songs. What a writer, man. And a singer too. A real poet, you know."

Even when he was in a band with his brother Ricky, playing Creedence Clearwater songs and the like, Randy maintained his personal allegiance to the honky tonk verities: the only records he would actually go out and buy were hard-core country all the way. He's never had any real interest in singing pop or rock, he says, and anyway, "now I probably couldn't. I learned all my phrasing from Hag and Lefty and them, you see, so probably my voice just wouldn't fit rock or pop. I'll probably *never* do anything but country."

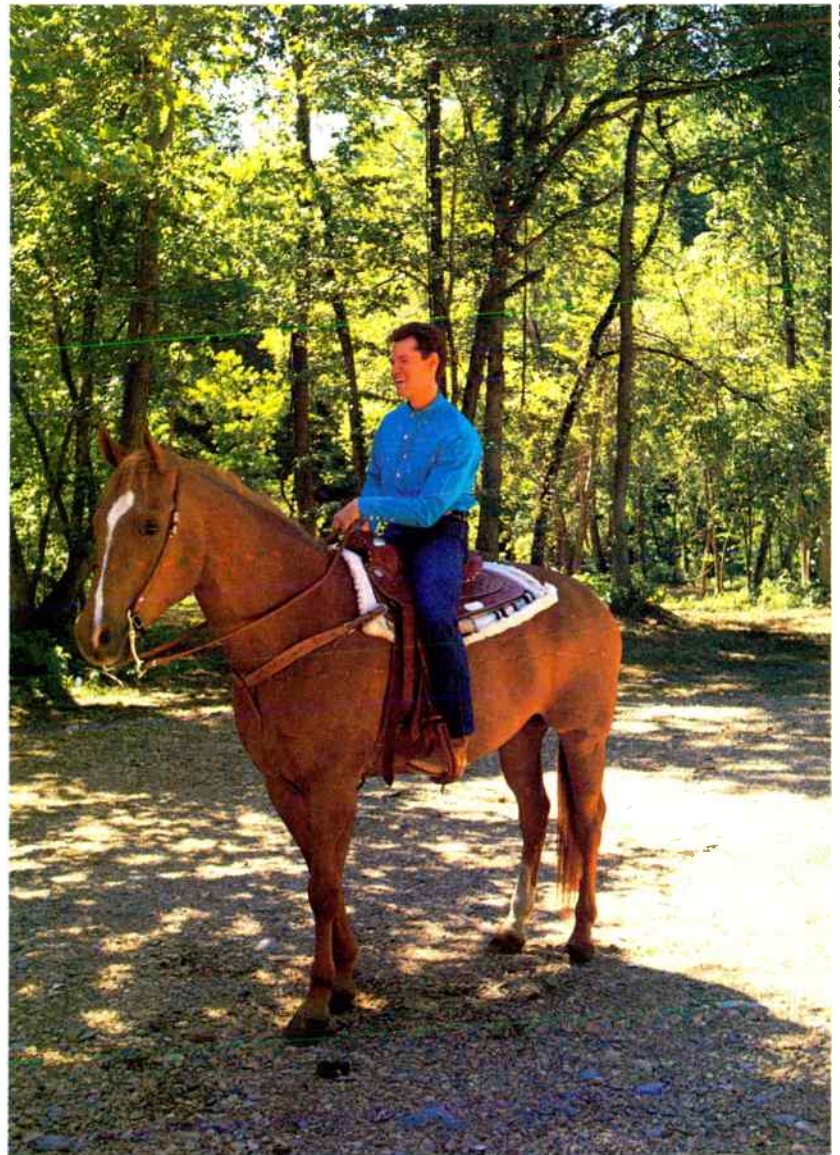
What he will do is something new to him, an all-duet album titled (by Lib Hatcher) *Heroes & Friends*. He already has several tracks recorded—with Dolly Parton, Roy Rogers, Tammy Wynette and the great George Jones himself—and schedules and circumstances permitting, he'll keep getting more. He wants to

record with, among others, Johnny Cash, Loretta Lynn, Willie Nelson and, of course, the mighty Merle.

The project, though, is somewhat more challenging than any Randy's faced so far. "Just getting me and the other person together is hard enough, what with everybody's commitments," he explains, "and then there's the song problem. It's a lot harder to find a good song for two people to sing, especially two guys, than it is to find one for one singer. I mean, it's tough—*really* tough."

All the same, I point out, it would be a whole lot tougher if a) Randy weren't the hottest act in Nashville and therefore the client of choice for several hundred very competent professional songwriters; and if b) he didn't have the extremely capable Kyle Lehning as his record producer. He laughs good-naturedly and tells me I've got *that* right, and we go on to talk appreciatively about Kyle, the Mr. Clean of neo-traditionalist country record production. Randy ties this conversation off with his ultimate compliment: "The thing about Kyle is that

*"I go fishing with my dad, go to horse sales with him, go out to dinner—you know, just the usual things. I'd never have thought it could happen, but it has."*



When Randy has time, he gets out alone and rides through the woods.

JACOBSON GORFF



*"I learned all my phrasing from Hag and Lefty and them, you see, so probably my voice just wouldn't fit rock or pop. I'll probably never do anything but country."*

no matter what else is happening on the record, you always know you're going to be able to hear the words. And to me, if you can't hear the words, there ain't no point in a person singing in the first place."

Okay. That's our boy, country all the way. Randy, I'm beginning to understand, is just exactly as unfauciful as he appears to be.

**U**nfauciful, yes, but hardly uninteresting. Randy does have his fascinating aspects.

The first, and the one on which the most words have already been expended, is of course his relationship with Lib Hatcher. Here, though, I can't offer any news. As far as I know, Lib and Randy still have no other intimate companions of the opposite sex (Randy, it's said, never has); Lib still wears the very large diamond ring Randy bought her recently; and neither Lib nor Randy has any comment.

I say "as far as I know" because sitting with Randy as Lib moves around in the background, I experience an attack of manners and can't seem to raise the subject. Therefore, while I could suggest a list of the possibilities inherent in the Hatcher/Travis situation, beginning with the most obvious and going on from there, so could you. I'll suggest, then, that inquiring minds keep a sharp eye on the checkout counter, and we'll move to another matter, the case of the teenage Randy Traywick.

It bears repeating: Randy was a *very* bad boy. He himself elaborates:

"I got into drugs and alcohol at a real young age, about twelve," he says. "I started with smoking pot, then got into speed and acid and stuff. I did MDA. I did psilocibin mushrooms once—man, you couldn't pay me a million dollars to do *that* again. I never ran anything; I never did use a needle.

"I have to say, you know, that it was like I was

another person because I was doing so many drugs. I mean, a *lot* of drugs. By the age of fifteen there wasn't a day that went by when I wasn't using drugs or alcohol or both. Even at work, cleaning out turkey houses and spreading the manure on the fields, I was stoned.

"And then I was running with the wrong people, too. I wanted to run with the big boys and be tough, so that's what I did, and we got into all sorts of trouble like that: fighting, breaking and entering, all kinds of things.

"I don't know why I didn't get killed. I totalled four vehicles. One time when I was fourteen, I took my brother's car, a 396 Chevelle which was real quick, and went drinking and driving. The police started chasing me, so I ran, and it went on till there was five or six of them on me. There was no way they could catch me in that car, but I wrecked it running about 130: hit the grass and lost it, ran backwards through a hedge, spun it around a few times into a field, tore everything up, bent the A-frame, totalled it. But it never turned over. That's the only reason I'm alive today. And there were a bunch of times like that."

I ask him how he quit his drinking and drug-ging, and he misinterprets my intent and begins the well-known story of Lib Hatcher's rescue mission. I stop him and ask him a better-defined question: Did he quit everything all together all by himself, or what?

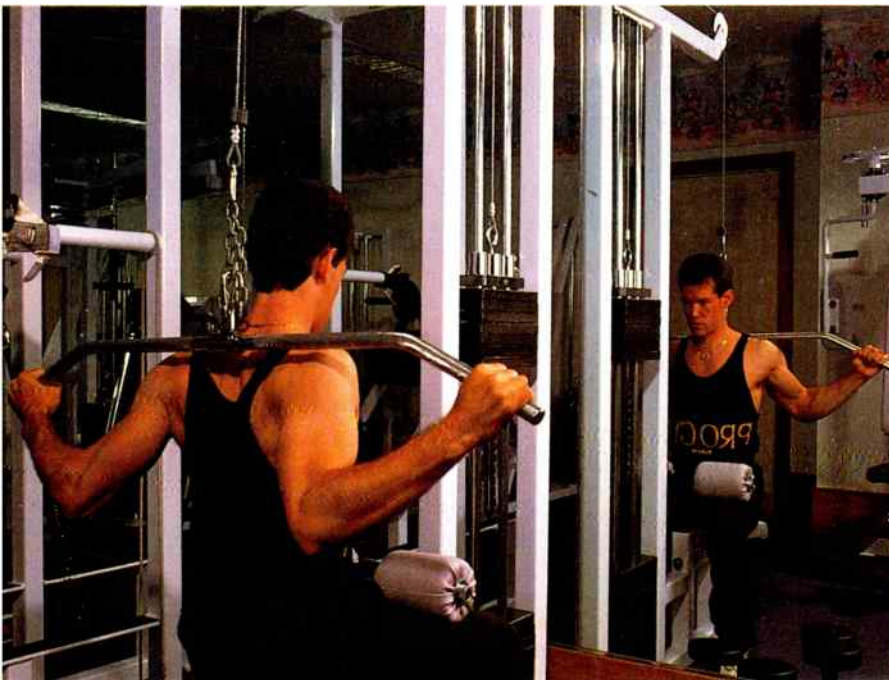
"Well, right at the beginning, when I was working for Lib at the club, I pretty much gave it all up," he says, "but once in a while I'd sneak around and drink. Then finally I did give it all up.

"It's strange. It seems like maybe I should have gone through some sort of withdrawal, with the amount of stuff I'd been taking, but I never experienced that. Maybe my age had something to do with it; I don't know.

"I never went to Alcoholics Anonymous or anything like that, either, and that's strange too, because I would have said I was an alcoholic. I mean, every time I started drinking, I'd be gone until I was blind drunk, and that was it. But at the same time, I was able to put it down and walk away by myself. Now I have the occasional glass of wine with dinner, but very seldom; *very* seldom. I'm so health-conscious now, you see. I'm in the gym or out running every morning, I'm eating the way I should, and I'm definitely staying away from drugs. I'm just taking good care of myself."

He shrugs. "It was a long process," he says. "A *slow* process. But I got it all together finally, and here I am."

A couple of observations about all this. First, it's fortunate that given the choice of classic hard-core country bad-boy paths, Randy followed the Merle Haggard as opposed to the Hank Williams route; far better, most would say, to be reformed than dead, however the reformation is accomplished. Second, Randy's account of the path he was taking at age sixteen makes it clear that he owes Lib Hatcher more than a criminal record clear of serious jail time. In fact, he is indebted to her for even more than his career, which we should remember is a mutual debt (for Lib owes just as much power



JACKSON GOFF

Staying in shape is important to Randy. He's health conscious now.



and money to Randy as he does to her). Very possibly, you see, Randy Traywick owes Mary Elizabeth Hatcher his life.

And one final observation. Search as I might, I don't see the bad boy behind Randy's somewhat guarded eyes. Either he's not there anymore, or he's well hidden.

**O**ur fifty minutes are not dramatic. We spend most of our time dropping in on various departments of RandyLand, checking progress and problems.

In the songwriting department Randy reports progress and problems too. His writing is coming along all right, he says—"I wrote two songs with Don Schlitz two weeks ago, and the time before that we did three in five hours"—but finding the time to write is a real problem. He's rarely home for more than a day or two, and on the road he's never alone. Sometimes it's just him and Lib on his bus (one of three in the Travis touring company of 32 souls), but more often there are at least five or six people around him. "On the road, you get *no* time for yourself," he says.

On the home front, what little of it there is, he still enjoys his farm in Ashland City 25 miles from Nashville. Sometimes he can get down there, way off the road away from everybody, and ride a horse alone through the woods for a whole day. That's pretty much his favorite thing to do, he says, explaining that "I've always been a loner. Ever since I was a little kid, I've liked to get off by myself." On the family front he reports only progress. The rift between himself and his father, opened when he rebelled as a young teenager and deepened when he took up with Lib, no longer yawns between Nashville and Marshville. "We get along great now," he says. "When I go down there, it's a nice feeling to be there. I go fishing with my dad, go to horse sales with him, go out to dinner—you know, just the usual things. I'd never have thought it could happen, but it has."

He adds that he remembers the way things used to be between him and his parents, and "my conscience bothers me a lot in that area. It's embarrassing. People are supposed to respect their mom and dad, you know, and I didn't. But I do now."

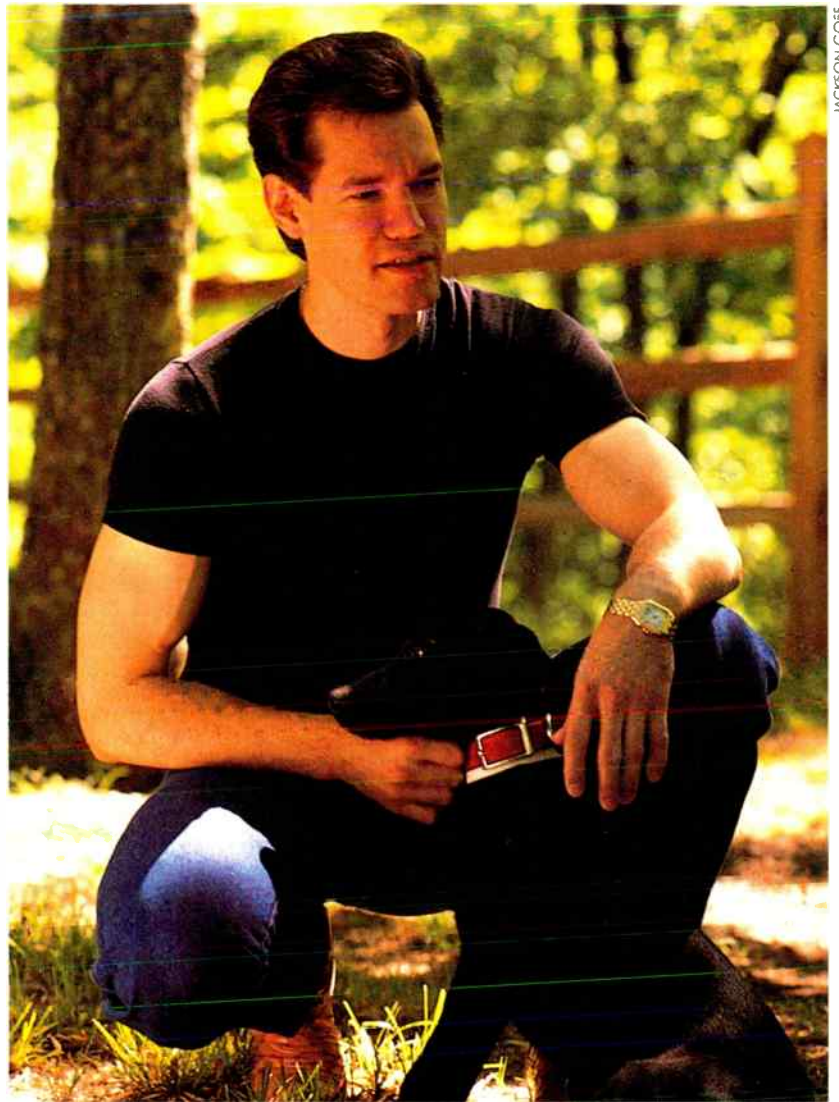
His brother Ricky, he says, is also back in the fold. Not as lucky as young Randy, Ricky did time for his felonies, but now "he's married, with two kids, very religious, and still doing music. I think his songs are good enough to be recorded, and he's a pretty good singer. More rockabilly than me." Randy adds that he himself is not as religious as Ricky, but he goes to church occasionally, and "I try to live a Christian way. I try to treat people honest."

I ask Randy what he thinks his main failings are, and he says, "I don't think I'm as stubborn as my dad—I give in a lot easier—but I'm rude sometimes. But I don't know. Really, I think I'm pretty easy to get along with."

Lib is circulating within earshot, so Randy asks, "What would you say, Lib? Am I easy?"

She looks at him mock-severely. "Well, *pretty* easy," she says.

"I'm good at seeking advice," Randy offers.



When his mind's not on music, Randy talks about animals and hobbies.

"Yes, that's true," says Lib to me. "Some people don't listen, but he does."

"There again. I need to," Randy responds. "I'm not an overly educated person."

Lib jumps in quickly, almost automatically, as if she does this often. "Don't sell yourself short, Randy," she says. "You don't need to do that."

Randy stares at his boots for a moment, then comes up with a slow grin. Lib looks at her watch. "Nine minutes," she says, and leaves the room.

We spend a couple of our minutes on some relevant matters, namely Randy's admission that he's not very ambitious and never has been, and his guess that his run at the top of the business will last about five years (which is okay with him, he says, because "by then I'll probably need the rest"). Most of our time, though, is spent on the kind of stuff with which we began our encounter, the kind of stuff Randy actually likes to talk about: dogs, horses, guns, hunting, fishing and other things that really matter. Time flies when you're having fun, so nine minutes becomes twenty pretty fast, and then Lib says that it's *really* time to quit. ■

**It's a lot harder to find a good song for two people to sing, especially two guys, than it is to find one for one singer. I mean, it's tough—really tough.**

**ROMPIN' STOMPIN'  
SINGIN' SWINGIN'**



**Pee Wee King Special**

Champion songwriter and country music entertainer Pee Wee King is featured in this issue's Legends of Country Music series in the *Newsletter*. Don't miss Rich Kienzle's write-up on this Hall of Famer and his Golden West Cowboys.

Irony of ironies, Pee Wee's two most enduring hits, "Tennessee Waltz" and "Slow Poke," aren't in print at this time. Three albums are available, however. *Rompin' Stompin' Singin' Swingin'* (Bear Family BF-X 15101), a German import, includes various songs from King's earliest days with RCA through the mid-1950's, complete with recording information, LP only, regular price \$14.98/member's price \$12.98.

*Ballroom King* (Detour Records 33-001) from England concentrates on some of the hotter rocking material King recorded from 1947 through 1956, some of it excellent country boogies like "Ten Gallon Boogie" and "Half a Dozen Boogie," some of it weak attempts at rock 'n' roll, LP only, regular price \$13.98/member's price \$11.98. *The Legendary Pee Wee King* (LH 1236) from Longhorn Records consists of radio transcriptions produced from 1951 to 1953, LP only, regular price \$12.98/member's price \$10.98. As usual, Redd Stewart is featured along with steel guitarist Bobby Koefler.

**George Morgan Special**

When we covered George Morgan in *Legends of Country Music* in the September/October *Newsletter*, CBS Records was planning to issue a George Morgan album in their American Originals series. Release date on that album is now firm: it's January 1990, with product in the stores around January 30th. Those who have already sent in orders, we will begin processing them in mid- to late January. Allow six to eight weeks for delivery. Those interested in ordering *George Morgan*, CD and cassette only, CD (CK 45076) regular price

\$9.98/member's price \$7.98, cassette (FCT 45076) regular price \$5.98/member's price \$3.98, please follow ordering procedure outlined in How to Order below. For songs included, see For CMSA Members Only page in our last issue.

**Buried Treasures Special**

Members may deduct \$2 from the price of any album offered in Buried Treasures in this and every issue. Include your CMSA membership number on your order. Artists covered in this issue include Hank Thompson, Ferlin Husky, Hawkshaw Hawkins, Connie Smith and more.

**Note on Country Hits**

Songs featured on *Country Hits of the '40's*, included on this page last issue, are by and large re-recordings of those great hits, not the originals. Jimmie Davis' "You are My Sunshine," Tex Williams' "Smoke! Smoke! Smoke!" and Al Dexter's "Pistol Packin' Mama," for example, are re-recordings. Margaret Whiting's and Jimmy Wakely's "Slippin' Around" and Jack Guthrie's "Oklahoma Hills," on the other hand, are originals. Thanks to Rich Kienzle for this clarification.



**Ilie Popovici, a winner.**

**Those Lucky Members**

Bernice Hartfield and Ilie Popovici, sweepstakes winners announced on this page last issue, have received their checks. "Needless to say," Bernice wrote, "I was totally surprised, had to pinch myself to make sure that I wasn't dreaming." "God bless you and your staff," she added. Ilie sent a photo.

**How to Order**

To order any of the albums mentioned on this page, send check or money order to *Country Music Magazine*, Dept. 1290N, 329 Riverside Avenue, Westport, Connecticut 06880. Add \$1.95 postage and handling for first item ordered, \$.95 each additional. Include membership number. Please allow six to eight weeks for delivery.

**MEMBERS POLL/JANUARY 1990**

**VOTE**

Your opinions can help influence record companies, radio stations, record stores, concert promoters, managers and performers. As a CMSA member, you have an organized way of making your opinion known, by filling out the Members Poll. We forward the results of the Polls to those involved in the business of country music who are interested in what fans are thinking and doing, and we publish the results.

**Bought Any Good Records Lately?**

1. Did you buy any albums (records, cassettes or compact discs) in the last month?  Yes  No  
How many records? \_\_\_\_\_ cassettes? \_\_\_\_\_ CDs? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Which ones did you like best? List performers and album titles.
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. \_\_\_\_\_

**Your Choice for Album and Single of the Month**

3. To vote, list the numbers of your top five favorites from the Top 25 on the last page in this issue.

Singles (list 5 numbers)                      Albums (list 5 numbers)

**Do You Shop by Mail or Phone?**

4. About how many purchases have you or someone in your household made by mail or phone in the last 12 months? \_\_\_\_\_
5. About how much was spent for all purchases made by mail or phone in the last 12 months? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Did you or anyone in your household buy any albums by mail or phone?  Yes  No  
How many records? \_\_\_\_\_ cassettes? \_\_\_\_\_ CDs? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you or anyone else in your household belong to any record clubs?  Yes  No
8. Check any of the following from which you or anyone in your household bought an album in the past 12 months.
  - Columbia Record and Tape Club
  - RCA Music Service
  - Time-Life Music
  - Reader's Digest Music
  - TV album offer

**Who Can Vote**

Only CMSA members are eligible to vote. If you are a member, write your membership number here. \_\_\_\_\_

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**DWIGHT YOAKAM**

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PULL-OUT  
CENTERFOLD  
OF THE MONTH

# DWIGHT YOAKAM

## Facts of Life

### Personal Data

*Birthdate:* October 23, 1956  
*Birthplace:* Pikeville, Kentucky  
*Family:* Mother, Ruth Ann; father, David; brother, Ronald; sister, Kimberly

### Vital Statistics

*Height:* 6'0"  
*Weight:* 147 pounds  
*Color eyes:* Blue  
*Color hair:* Light brown  
*Famous for:* Hole-in-the-knee blue jeans

### Recording Career

*Record Label:* Reprise Records, 1815 Division St., Nashville, Tennessee 37203

Albums	Release Date
<i>Guitars, Cadillacs, Etc., Etc.</i>	1986**
<i>Hillbilly Deluxe</i>	1987*
<i>Buenos Noches From a Lonely Room</i>	1988*
<i>Lookin' For a Hit</i>	1989

\*Gold Album, over 500,000 sold  
\*\*Platinum Album, over 1,000,000 sold

*Number One Singles*  
"I Sang Dixie"  
"Streets of Bakersfield"



Limelight on Dwight.

### Video

*Broadcast Videos*  
"Streets of Bakersfield"  
"Always Late With Your Kisses"  
"Little Sister"  
"Guitars, Cadillacs, Etc., Etc."  
"Honky Tonk Man"  
"Long White Cadillac"

*Home Videos*  
*Just Lookin' For a Hit.* Compilation includes six videos, "Streets of Bakersfield," "Guitars, Cadillacs" and "Little Sister" among them, plus new backstage footage. Release date: 1989.

Yoakam and his hero Buck Owens have appeared together a number of times, including on TNN.

### Musical Heroes

Johnny Cash                      Buck Owens  
Johnny Horton                  The Statler Brothers

Buck Owens was so important to Dwight Yoakam that he talked Buck out of retirement. Dwight was in Bakersfield in 1988 to play a fair date. At 4:55 P.M., he walked into Buck's office and asked to see him. As Buck told it later, "He don't write, he don't call, he just comes." They played together the first time that night at the fairgrounds.

### Fan Club

Dwight Yoakam International Fan Club membership includes membership card, color photograph, fan club button, two to three newsletters per year, biographical information and a tape of Dwight talking. Second, third and fourth-year membership kits differ from the first. Itinerary published separately. If you would like to join the fan club, see instructions below.

### How to Order

To join the Dwight Yoakam International Fan Club and get all the items listed above, send check or money order made out to *Country Music Reader Service* in the amount of \$14.25 (\$12.50 membership, \$1.75 postage and handling) to: *Country Music Magazine*, Reader Service Department, 329 Riverside Avenue, Westport, Connecticut 06880. To order the video, *Just Lookin' For a Hit*, send check or money order in the amount of \$20.70 (\$18.95 video, \$1.75 postage and handling) to *Country Music Reader Service* at the address above, or see Warner Bros. Records order blank on page 22 of the November/December 1989 issue of *Country Music Magazine*. Allow six weeks for delivery.



# CLINT BLACK

## *New Star on the Horizon*

**A**bout six months and one album into his major-label country music career, Clint Black already has a term for his new way of life. He calls it "road mode." "The idea of road mode is remaining with the traveling company, keeping only what you have," he explains. "You're basically out there with the guys, with the troops."

When you're in road mode, you pack one bag out of everything with you before hopping off the bus at each new motel; that one bag contains the day's clothes, a shaving kit and not much else. "That way it's like every town before or after," Clint says. "It lets you relax in the motel."

As we speak this September 1989 afternoon at the Washington County Fair in Brenham, Texas, barely an hour from where Clint grew up in Houston, he has been in road mode since March, when his "Better Man" video was first released. And since his album came out in May, he's hardly had a day off. When he returned to Houston for 4th of July weekend, for example, he wound up spending his two free days with a crew from *People*, and never set foot inside his house. Which wasn't bad anyhow, because when you're in road mode, your own house confuses

*by John Morthland*

you; it's too big, and you feel unnatural wandering from room to room.

You can tell from his itinerary that nobody had much idea how popular *Killin' Time*, Clint's debut album, would be or how quickly it would rise. Big artists don't have to play one night in El Paso and then drive a good 700 miles across Texas to a gig the next night in Apple Springs. (Where? Apple Springs. You know, right outside Nacogdoches.) Stars don't play an early evening gig in Dallas and then hop a plane to Austin to sing again later that night. That's what Clint's maiden tour has been like. One night, he's working a little club booked for him before his album came out; the next night, he's opening for Dwight Yoakam or K.T. Oslin in a huge auditorium or convention center.

But road mode ain't bad for a 27-year-old who's hardly been outside Houston in his life. And it keeps getting better, too. This tour began with Clint and a seven-piece band driving from Houston to L.A. in a 12-passenger van hauling a trailer full of equipment. Now they're in a nine-bunk bus with a portable recording studio in the back.

Make no mistake. Clint Black is hot. As he prepares for his sound check in Brenham, he reports that *Killin' Time* went Gold just a few days earlier. "Better Man," the first monster single, has been replaced on the country charts by the title song, which will go on to enjoy a long run at the top. In about three weeks, the CMA will be presenting him with its Horizon Award for best artist-on-the-way-up. Ralph Emery stokes the fires of the numerous female fans by having Clint on *Nashville Now* for reg-



*"I think we need to get you headed towards Nashville, get you headed into country music, just as fast as we can."*



ular updates on his love life, of keen interest to the young ladies because Clint is a known single man and something of a looker.

And on top of all that, he's got talent, too, which does still count for something in this business. Clint is arguably the best of the so-called "hatted acts," the western branch (Garth Brooks, Yoakam, et al.) of the New Traditionalist movement. He follows in the footsteps of his fellow Texan, George Strait. Like Strait, Clint reminds one of Merle Haggard—but he has youthful rough edges that have all been smoothed off the Strait sound. And he and his guitarist, Hayden Nicholas, write their own songs, which just happen to be strikingly bold and mature in a way that reinforces country tradition even while sometimes extending it ("Better Man" is certainly unlike any other break-up song around).

The County Fair gig this evening is something of a homecoming. In the fall of 1987, Black used the Gavel Club at the Coachlight Inn here in Brenham to break in his new band and test the new songs. At the time, he had just signed a management deal with a man known for his ability to make things happen, and Clint was confident that he would soon be making his breakthrough to a major label. Today, he returns not just with that mission accomplished, but as a household name, albeit one who still interrupts business to go over and give a big hug to the woman behind the motel desk, and who cheerfully breaks off an interview temporarily to sign an autograph and chat with a waitress whose shift is ending.

The swift turn of events in the two years since Clint and band were wood shedding in Brenham makes him look, of course, like an overnight sensation. As always, things are not quite that simple. Poking away at a chef salad in the motel dining room while waiting for the bus to leave for a sound check, Clint makes it clear that while he was always ambitious, he didn't always know what he was doing.

He grew up in various parts of the Houston area, the youngest of four sons in a family that wasn't particularly musical. His father is a construction equipment operator. But one brother had a little country band that played the club circuit, mixing in some country-rock and rockabilly with the country standards that keep 'em dancing in Texas. As a teenager, Clint played bass in the band and sang a few songs, though rarely his originals. ("If I'm lucky, nobody will ever hear those today, either," he quips now.) He'd also grab his acoustic guitar to play in the park, or at his parents' backyard barbecues or anywhere he could find a group of peo-

ple to listen.

By the late 1970's, though, he was working solo around Houston. He played country standards and country-flavored pop songs by crossover artists like Jimmy Buffett, The Eagles (whose Don Henley and Glen Frey he says influenced him most as a writer), Loggins and Messina, and Jackson Browne. Yes, he had drive and ambition, was in fact quite methodical about it. He built up his own mailing list of 700 names, and set up his own hotline so fans could call to find out where he was playing.

What he didn't have was connections. A local independent rock promotion man named Sammy Alfano—perhaps you heard Clint thank him when accepting the Horizon Award on the CMA broadcast—more or less managed him, but for most of the 1980's, Clint was one more singer struggling to break out of the club circuit. He and Alfano dissolved their managerial agreement early on, when it became apparent that the promo man had too many other duties to be able to do much for Clint. But they remained friends, and when Clint later told Alfano he was going to have to start selling pieces of his publishing to stay afloat if he couldn't get a "real" manager pretty soon, Alfano told him to sit tight.

Two days later, Clint was playing his songs to ZZ Top manager Bill Ham at Ham's Lone Wolf Management offices in west Houston. Though Ham had thus far operated only in the rock world, he had always wanted a country act, and he had the industry connections as well as the clout and the can-do to get things done.

"He said, 'I think we need to get you headed towards Nashville, get you headed into country music, just as fast as we can.' I said, 'If you'll run with me, I'll go,'" Clint recalls. "I don't know if in all the excitement it just felt like that magical moment when you know something's right and you feel like you'll never have to look any further, but I just knew he was gonna be my manager and that was all there was to it. From that point on everything was gonna be taken care of, and I would reach the highest level of success which I am aiming for."

And after that turning-point meeting, things *did* happen fast. While Ham put the business wheels in motion, Clint began putting together a band with Nicholas, whom he'd met when he cut a demo at the guitarist's studio. They also began writing songs together. Though Clint feels he was influenced as much by pop as by country writers, there was never any question what kind of songs he and Nicholas would write, and what kind of artist he would be now that he was ready to break out of Houston. As Ham observed, Clint was country.



Clint Black's hit the bigtime fast. Far left, top, after two shows at L.A.'s Universal Amphitheater, Clint poses backstage with Dolly Parton. Below, he joins producer James Stroud, RCA's Bruce Shindler, co-writer Mike Sirls, guitarist Hayden Nichols and producer Mark Wright, who helped make his debut single "Better Man" a Number One. Near left, fruits of his labors, he accepts the CMA's Horizon Award for significant career achievements by an artist just starting out in the country field.

**C**ountry music went from very traditional to very contemporary, and now we're back to very traditional and very contemporary."

"I just couldn't see myself doing country-rock or rock, whatever my influences," Clint says. "I wasn't ready to get up there and put on the glitter or try and keep up with trends in that style of music. To me, that would be just pretension, pretentiousness, whatever the word would be. The thing that made me stick with country is that I can dress the way I'd dress to go out to dinner, right on stage. I can dress that way the rest of my life. Country music went from very traditional to very contemporary, and now we're back to very traditional *and* very contemporary. But if

you're a traditionalist, you don't have to be trendy, you don't have to ever change. Your music or yourself."

The first song Clint Black remembers hearing, after all, is Merle Haggard's 1969 "Okie from Muskogee." At the same time, he's the first to admit that "I'm probably more ignorant about the origins of a lot of music than people might presume."

That makes him the archetypal New Traditionalist: a new artist doing old sounds, once removed. He remembers hearing Bob Wills' music "once or twice, but it was probably by somebody else," and he relates to Wills as an historical figure who had a lot to do with the birth of Western swing. But that doesn't mean he can't turn out a classy swing tune himself in "Straight From the Factory." He has an explanation that actually makes perfect sense.

"I didn't grow up with Bob Wills and Hank Thompson and all that; I grew up with the people that grew up with them, like Merle Haggard and Gene Watson and George Strait. Those are the people I can relate to," he begins. "It's kind of like your grandfather. I'm real close to my parents, and as I learn more about my grandparents, I feel more of a connection. But until you start saying, 'Who was my grandfather?' and then you see who he was and what an impact he made on the world and what he did with his life and how it came to put you



Clint, co-writer and guitarist Hayden Nichols, and fiddle player John Parmenter in a scene from "Killin' Time."

in the place where you are today—until you see that, it's just your grandfather. I never really gave those older guys like Wills any thought, so that's something I'm looking into more."

Meanwhile, the work he's turning out already is nothing to sniff at. By now, the story of "Better Man" has been told over and over—how Clint had just ended a seven-year, off-and-on relationship and was urged by his father to "write a good Joneser" to ease his pain. But the song he and Nicholas did write—the two contribute equally to both words and music—actually stands in opposition to every heretofore acceptable motif for a country break-up song. When Black sings, "Things I couldn't do before, now I think I can/And I'm leavin' here a better man," he is describing the no-fault ending to an egalitarian relationship. And those are new notions for this type of song, where the emphasis is usually on placing blame and on emphasizing what is lost rather than what is gained.

The rest of the debut album, is, perhaps, more conventional. But it's still a classic Texas dance hall set—one that pulls together a variety of styles (swing, Cajun, two-steps, blues and hokum, honky tonk ballads) while maintaining a consistent thread. Clint would rather think of it as a country dance

*"I just knew he was gonna be my manager and that was all there was to it. From that point on everything was gonna be taken care of."*

album than a Texas dance album, though.

"I try to write for radio, and not Texas radio, but radio in general," he emphasizes, adding a few moments later, "I mean, Texans are very prideful. When we talk about Texas, it's a great country, that's the type of attitude we take. It's like a mother who's real proud of her kids and goes over to a neighbor, and she's not gonna be very popular if she sits around bragging on

her kids all day."

Early that evening, the bus is parked adjacent to the fair grounds stage, and a crowd has gathered anticipating a pre-show glimpse of the star. Though there's a little bit of everything in the bunch, one group is predominant, and Clint doesn't miss that fact as he gazes out the tinted windows: "Young girls," he sighs wistfully. "I tell you, it's a wonderful thing, a wonderful thing."

By now his standard road mode uniform of sweat pants and tee-shirt, running shoes and gimme hat has given way to blue jeans and striped button-down, black Resistol and cowboy boots. Continuing to watch out the window, he points to a couple of band members hanging out on the fair grounds, talking to fans and doing the things all young men do at a county fair: "That's the one thing I miss now that I'm a star. I don't get to hang out in public anymore," he remarks. Then he catches himself and quickly adds, "But believe me, the bad aspects of being a star are so small it's like there's nothing to complain about at all. Especially compared to the way things were before. I always knew I'd be a star someday, and I always knew it would be great. And it is."

When things are going your way, even road mode can be an adventure. ■



*"The Spring Buggy"*

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# LORRIE *Looks* MORGAN *back and* *steps ahead*

by Bob Allen

One of the first things that strikes one on meeting Lorrie Morgan is the difference between her public personality and the real human being. The demure fragility that shines through her publicity photos and album cover shots is not in evidence. Instead, at 10:30 on a weekday morning in her manager's Music Row office, Morgan is distantly polite, even a bit guarded and hard-edged, scrupulously self-contained in a manner that conceals her physical and emotional exhaustion.

In this light, Morgan, the widow of singer Keith Whitley, comes across as a worldly-wise, slightly cynical survivor of the graduate school of hard knocks—a scrapper, and certainly no stranger to tragedy.

As she sits down in a quiet conference room safely removed from buzzing phones and busy fax machines, she apologizes for eating the fast food sandwich she's brought along with her. "I didn't have time for breakfast this morning," she shrugs wearily. She is 45 minutes late for our interview because she had to appear in court this morning. Whitley died without a will, leaving his survivors to deal with a thousand and one legal and financial hassles. This morning Lorrie was trying to get the titles to two jointly-owned automobiles switched over to her name.

Far more difficult for thirty-year-old Lorrie Morgan to deal with than her late husband's tangled business affairs are the twisted emotions associated with the odd situation in which she finds herself. On the one hand there is her lingering grief, made worse by all the unanswered questions that sprang up in the wake of Whitley's sudden death last May 9th of a massive alcohol overdose (an overdose which, depending upon one's interpretation of the troubling and still somewhat hazy circumstances, may have been either accidental or intentional). On the other are the demands of a rising career.



*Following the  
death of  
her husband  
Keith Whitley,  
Lorrie Morgan  
has lots to  
attend to—grief,  
the needs of  
her family  
and a career on  
the rise.*



After years spent going nowhere in the backwaters of Nashville's local music scene, Lorrie Morgan, widowed mother of two, has a critically acclaimed hit album on her hands (*Leave the Light On*), a pair of hit singles ("Dear Me" and "Train Wreck of Emotion"), rave reviews (*People Magazine* called her "a no-frills Dolly Parton") and a frantic schedule of tours and promotions to keep up with. And, ironically, it's all due in great part to her late husband: "Thanks to my husband Keith Whitley for teaching me how to sing with heart and giving me reason to," reads the dedication on her debut RCA album. Lorrie wrote those words before Keith died.

Such violent crosscurrents of elation and despair, triumph and defeat, exhilaration and depression, inevitably take their toll, as Morgan explains.

"I'm against alcohol, I'm against drugs," she affirms with a trace of both weariness and bitterness, "and I'll probably get in trouble somewhere along the line for saying this, but I don't give a damn. The way I've been living the last three months, the schedule that I'm on, the mind-boggling situations I've been in, the people I've had to deal with, I know if I were a drinker I'd get drunk right now.

"And knowing the incredible pressure Keith Whitley was under, I do not blame him for taking that first drink. Everybody needs an escape, but his schedule was so hectic that it didn't permit him one, did not permit him to just be Keith. And somebody with an illness like that can only go so far before he reaches the end of his rope."

Morgan's manager, Jack McFadden, also managed Whitley's career; in McFadden's spacious office the deceased singer's presence is eerily maintained by life-sized posters, laminated copies of *Billboard* charts showing his Number One singles and neatly stacked videos. The display fills a visitor with disbelief. How could a man of such monumental talent

who had touched so many people and opened so many doors with his music be irrevocably gone? The fact that he was at the peak of his powers and on the very cusp of fame makes the scattering of memories and images captured on vinyl, celluloid and videotape even more unreal.

"There's not a day that goes by that I don't cry about him, that I don't miss him or love him," Morgan says sadly. "Sometimes it's particularly hard to deal with at night when I see his pictures, his favorite chair or his pet dog.

"But I've got to go on with my life, for my sake and my kids' sake," adds the singer, who was en route to Alaska when word of her husband's death reached her, and who—as a matter of emotional survival—was back on the road again, touring in Kansas, Iowa and North Dakota, a week after his funeral.



"The people, the fans, have all been extremely understanding and good to me," she adds. "They have not asked me one question. It has been so relieving, because I really thought I'd get raked over the coals. But everyone who's come up to me has just said, 'We love you, we loved Keith, and we're proud of you.'"

Morgan realizes that Whitley's death has focused attention on her own life and career. This is ironic, for she is aware that even though Whitley was instrumental in helping her launch her career, he seemed to have mixed emotions about it. At times, she recalls, he even seemed to feel threatened by it.

"I think RCA believed in Keith so much, and Keith believed in me so much, that he did push me at RCA and get them to take notice of me. It seemed like he wanted me to have a career, yet at the same time he was kind of afraid for me to, even though he knew it was something I'd always dreamed of."

Born in 1959, Morgan's full name is,

coincidentally, Loretta Lynn Morgan—her parents named her long before they'd ever heard of the *other* Loretta Lynn. As she tells it, she's had her sights set on being a singer ever since she was a little girl.

For one thing, she was born into the profession: her father, the late George Morgan, was a star of the Grand Ole Opry who dominated the airwaves in the late 1940's and 1950's with hits like "Roomful of Roses," "Candy Kisses," "Rainbow in My Heart" and "Crybaby Heart." Lorrrie, whose own earliest musical heroes were Top 40 pop stars like The Beatles and Petula Clark (of "Downtown" fame), made her musical debut at age 13, singing with her father on the Opry. Throughout her formative years, the Opry was her second home.

"I grew up at the Opry," she recalls fondly. "Every Friday or Saturday

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

*"There's not a day that goes by that I don't cry about him, that I don't miss him or love him. But I've got to go on with my life, for my sake and my kids' sake."*

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

night, even in times when I should have been dating and the other kids thought it was uncool, I'd go to the Opry with my dad. I just loved it."

When her father died in July 1975, at age 50 (he suffered a heart attack in May of that year while installing a television antenna on the roof of his home near Nashville, then died of complications while undergoing open heart surgery two months later), Lorrrie took it upon herself to carry on the family tradition. For a couple of years she toured with her dad's road band, which included steel guitar legend Roy Wiggins. "But I found eventually that it wasn't fulfilling me like it should have," she explains. "It just wasn't happening."

In the years that followed, she pursued a solo career: "I learned the harder you run, sometimes the slower you get," she remembers ruefully. She sang in a bluegrass band at the Opryland U.S.A. theme park—the band included now-cele-

brated songwriter/artist Dean Dillon. A job singing demos at the powerful Acuff-Rose publishing company eventually led to a contract and a couple of minor chart singles on Acuff-Rose's subsidiary record label, Hickory Records, in 1979. Later, in 1984, she recorded briefly for MCA and had a modest hit with a song called "Don't Go Changing." That same year she also accepted an invitation to join the Grand Ole Opry, becoming one of its youngest members.

Along the way, her personal life was anything but uneventful. She married at age 20, had a daughter and was divorced at 21. At the suggestion of her ex-husband, George Jones' long-time bass player, she auditioned for a spot in Jones' road band in 1981.

"I had no intention of getting the job," she shrugs. "I remember that I was the third of three women to audition that day. I sang 'Golden Ring' with George, and he hired me on the spot. I stayed with the band for two years. I never got to know George that well, but he was a great man to work for. Seeing crowds react to him when he came on stage sent chills up my spine. But I'd have to say in all honesty that if I had to go back and do it all over again, I wouldn't do it. For someone as young as I was then, to step into something that mind-boggling was very hard. I just couldn't handle it. After that, I more or less left the music business for two years. I just didn't see any future for me there, and I was at a point by then where I was just trying to get through things from day to day."

Lorrrie and her young daughter, Morgan, moved back home with Lorrrie's mother. Lorrrie played clubs and occasionally sang on demos to support herself. Almost without meaning to, she made another professional connection that would later prove invaluable: Ralph Emery invited her to become a regular on his early-morning WSM radio show.

"I've always said that if I ever win any kind of award, my first thanks will be to God, but my second will be to Ralph Emery," she smiles warmly. "He's one of the unsung heroes of this business. I firmly believe that none of this would have happened for me if Ralph had not taken me with him from his radio show, which I did five times a week, and made me a regular on his show on *The Nashville Network*."

Ironically, all the exposure she'd gotten on Nashville radio and TV and on her home town club scene seemed to work against her for a long time. She learned that there was indeed some truth to the old adage about familiarity breeding contempt: she found herself stuck with an image within the recording industry as "local talent."

"It's kind of weird," she frets uneasily. "They take you for granted, they

really do. I sat for years and watched newcomers come into town and have hit records and become overnight sensations. I often wondered what it was that I was doing wrong, until it finally dawned on me that I was being taken for granted as just another 'local girl singer.'"

The occasional brush with fame only tended to make things more frustrating for her. At one point Dolly Parton happened to see Morgan on *The Nashville Network*. Parton called her manager in L.A. and told him he should take notice of Morgan and look into signing her. The manager had Morgan send him records and video tapes and even flew her to L.A. for a meeting. Then, before things could get rolling, the partners in Parton's management company dissolved their partnership and went their separate ways. Morgan got lost in the shuffle.

**T**he years passed and she kept right on grinding out a living, performing on the Opry and *The Nashville Network* and working the road. Time and again during this period, there was one name she kept hearing, one person she kept running into: Keith Whitley.

"I kept meeting Keith on and off for a couple of years—on *The Ralph Emery Show*, in the studio," she recalls with amazement. "There were so many coincidences that just led to us getting together. It seemed like I was always bumping into him somewhere, or someone would bring his name up. I remember once one of my band members brought tapes of the records Keith made with J.D. Crowe with him on the road. I normally don't like bluegrass, but I heard that wonderful voice and said, 'Leave it on!' Things like that just seemed to happen all the time, and he was just on my mind all the time. I just could *not* keep Keith Whitley off my mind.

"Then one night, I saw him at the Opry, and he came over and said, 'Lorrie, I'm Keith Whitley.' I just laughed and said, 'You don't have to tell me who you are!' I knew he was divorced by then, and he asked me for my phone number.

"I didn't give it to him at first, though," she shakes her head sadly. "I was all confused just then. The true story was, I was going to get back together with my ex-husband, for my daughter's sake. So, just then I didn't know what to do: I didn't know whether I should move back in with my ex-husband and try and make it work for the eighty-fifth time, or if I should give Keith Whitley my phone number. So, I left the Opry intending to do the right thing, and something just...." She



LES LEVERETT



Lorrie made her debut on the Opry in 1973, the same night her dad, George Morgan, celebrated his 25th Anniversary (top). In 1975 they met cast members of *The Waltons* backstage (middle), and celebrated George's birthday with Lorrie's sister and Opry members Skeeter Davis, Kenny Price, Jan Howard, T. Tommy Cutrer and Jeanne Pruett.

IFS LEVERETT



LES LEVERETT

shakes her head again, this time with a stunned look. "I stopped my car and said to myself, 'This could be what you've lived for all your life.' It dawned on me that I was not married, not committed, and there was no reason I shouldn't give this a chance. So I turned around and gave my number to one of the guards at the Opry House, and he ran it into Keith. Keith called me at 11:30 the next morning. I was at mass and his message was on my Codaphone when I got back. And we've been together ever since... right up until May 9th."


Morgan falls silent a moment, then adds softly, "I'm just very lucky that of all the women in the world I was in his life for three years, and I have his son Jesse Keith, who's two now, who looks just like him. Nobody can take that from me."

Morgan recalls that when she married Whitley in November 1986, she knew that he had suffered from a major drinking problem since he had been in his teens. But she was unaware of just how serious the problem was. She has since described his addiction to alcohol as "a ticking time bomb," and "like he had cancer and could not control it."

Still, his devotion as a husband and father was complete. He even went so far as to legally adopt Morgan, Lorrie's daughter by her first marriage.

"Keith treated me like a queen. In three years, he never once raised his voice to me. Even when he was completely worn out, he would always try to make my life better for me. Even when he was on the road, he would call four or five times every day. He just wanted everybody to be happy.

"We had six months of pure ecstasy. It was a heavenly marriage and home," Morgan told a U.P.I. reporter just a couple of weeks after Whitley's death. "Then all of a sudden there was somebody in the house that I didn't know.... Every time the phone would ring, it was in the back of my mind that someone was calling to tell me he'd been in a wreck or died of alcohol. It was a living

  
*"I was always afraid of leaving him, afraid of what leaving would do to him. I knew that when I was there I could take care of him, because I had for three years."*

hell. I was on pins and needles when he was on the road."

"Nobody really knew the depth of his problem," she adds today. "Keith wasn't just an alcoholic.... I don't even know a word to describe just how serious his illness was. The thing was, he did not want to drink—he did not *want* to drink. But that driving demon in him would just grab a hold of him every now and

then, and he would fall. He could only go so long without drinking, and nobody—not me, not any clinic, or any psychiatrist he went to—could help him."

Prior to his marriage to Morgan, Whitley had been hospitalized and undergone extensive treatment for his drinking problem. Yet even at that, many who knew him had no idea of the virulence of his addiction or the ferocity of his binges.

Whitley himself went public about his alcoholism in an interview with *Music City News* a couple of years before his death: "I was not the kind of drinker who would go out in public and stumble around. I did my damage when I was off somewhere by myself.... Actually very few people knew I had a drinking problem, because I didn't drink when I worked.... They say that once you start drinking heavily and it becomes a part of your everyday life, you don't mature from that point on. If that's true, I'm about fifteen or sixteen years old, 'cause that's about the time I started drinkin' heavy."

Morgan nearly seethes with bitterness when she adds: "It's just a damned shame that there are people out there who try so hard to get in good with entertainers and be their buddies, who will come up to them at a show with a fifth, or an ounce of cocaine, or some pot, or whatever. I've been at shows with Keith when people would shake his hand and hand him something, and he'd turn around and hand it to me to get rid of. But I'll never know how many times it was kept and used, you know? People who do things like that are so greedy: they don't realize that in their selfishness in wanting to be friends with a star, they're willing to risk that star's life and career to do it."

In the hours before he died on that morning in May, Whitley was by all accounts alone and, in an amazingly short time, consumed a staggering amount of alcohol. Lorrie, en route to Alaska when he passed away, relates the now-familiar story: Her brother-in-law (her sister's husband) stopped by the house around nine in the morning; he and Keith had coffee together. At the time, Whitley seemed in cheerful enough spirits. They spoke at length about riding their motorcycles, having a cook-out, and all the fun things they were going to do together when Lorrie got back home. When Lorrie's brother-in-law returned to Whitley's house about three hours later, he found him dead, lying fully clothed on his bed. The autopsy report revealed cocaine and Valium in his system, and an alcohol blood content of .477—nearly five times the legal level of intoxication in the state of Tennessee. In a matter of a few hours, Whitley had literally drunk himself to



**Lorrie and son Jesse Keith and the Harley Keith rode in his video, "When You Say Nothing at All." The motorcycle's now in the Country Music Hall of Fame.**

death.

Ironically, Whitley's death came at a point when, after years of struggle, his career was at last in full bloom. He'd had three consecutive Number One singles from his critically acclaimed 1988 album, *Don't Close Your Eyes*. He'd just completed work on his recently released album, *I Wonder Do You Think of Me*, which many consider his best work ever, and was in the running for several major awards nominations. Posthumously, he received three awards nominations from the CMA and won Single of the Year for "I'm No Stranger To the Rain."

But Morgan points out that there was a dark side to Whitley's brilliant success which few people glimpsed. "It wasn't like Keith had been sitting around all depressed or stuff like that," she elaborates, looking back at the final weeks of her husband's life. "He was healthy as a horse. He took Antabuse, which is a medicine that alcoholics take so that they get sick if they try to drink. It's bad for your liver, so he had to constantly get check-ups. His heart was great, his lungs were clear, even though he smoked three or four packs of cigarettes a day. And he looked healthy. He looked good; his weight was good. But there was a tiredness in his eyes," she says sadly. "He was just worn out. I don't think he could see any light at the end of the tunnel.

"Had I known—and I guess this is why I have some guilt about his death.... Had I known what his schedule was doing to him, I would have *made* him take some time off and regroup," she adds bitterly. "I'd tell him that, but everybody else would say, 'You can't slow down, you'll lose your career, you'll lose your momentum, you'll go bankrupt.' And it *scared* him. And after he'd finally had some Number One records, it was even more scary for him. It seems like it never let up: sometimes he'd want to just stay home and sit by the pool for a while. But he'd no sooner get out there than the phone would ring: 'You gotta come down town and do this interview, you've got to come to town for this meeting....'

"Maybe I shouldn't say this," she adds, the anger seething in her soft voice, "but there are people in this business who will push you until you drop dead, and then wonder what the hell happened to you. That's exactly what happened to Keith."

Others who'd known Keith through the years point to odd little quirks in his character that at times made him his own worst enemy. Beneath all that talent there lurked some massive insecurities. Also, a curious brand of romantic fatalism seemed to haunt him. After he and Lorrie bought their new house, he learned that his idol, honky



Recently Lorrie accepted a Gold album for Keith Whitley honoring sales of over 500,000 copies of *Don't Close Your Eyes*. With Lorrie are Joe Galante of RCA, Keith's mother Faye Whitley and manager Jack McFadden.

tonk singer Lefty Frizzell (who died in 1975, at age 47, after years of alcoholic self-abuse), was buried in a nearby cemetery. Frizzell's grave soon became something of a shrine to him. And of the many songs Whitley wrote in his lifetime, he left one, which was never recorded, with a particularly ominous title: "I've Done Everything Hank Did But Die."

**T**he last time Morgan saw her husband alive, two or three days before his death, she recalls that something else very strange and unsettling happened. "He drove me to the airport, and when he said goodbye, he gave me a card. Most of Keith's cards to me were always very romantic. But this one...it was pretty weird, it was unreal. I can remember it, almost word for word: 'If I could have but one wish... I'd wish you success in your path, to rise each day stronger and wiser from what you've experienced...I wish you all the love and happiness....Love, Keith.'" She shakes her head and continues, "After I'd read it and got to the Atlanta airport to change planes, I almost got back on another plane and came back home. I was always afraid of leaving him, afraid of what leaving would do to him. I knew that when I was there, I could take care of him, because I had for three years. But then I thought, 'No, that's stupid; you just

want to get out of this date.' But I wish now I would have," she sighs forlornly, her voice trailing off. "But all the wishes, all the 'ifs,' all that is stupid now...."

Morgan falls silent for a moment and looks up at some of the mementos on a nearby shelf: a Keith Whitley concert poster, a souvenir Keith Whitley hat, a copy of the rainy, almost ghostly, album cover photo from his *I Wonder Do You Think of Me* album, released after he died.

"I have no regrets, no guilt," she says softly, with an insistent shrug. "I can honestly say that for three years I devoted my whole life to Keith Whitley, and his children and his dog." She flashes a faint, sad smile. "I was a faithful wife for three years. I lived, breathed, ate, slept and drank Keith Whitley. And there's not one thing I feel guilty about, other than leaving that Sunday. And that was something he wanted me to do, and I wanted to do—*had* to do.

"You know," she adds candidly, "every day I hear rumors—people accusing me, or somehow putting his death on me, and it bothered me for a while. But I know what Keith would have said in times like these, and did say once or twice: that we're the ones who know, and we're the ones who had that special love that the rest of the world had looked for." ■

# Record Reviews

## Randy Travis

*No Holdin' Back*

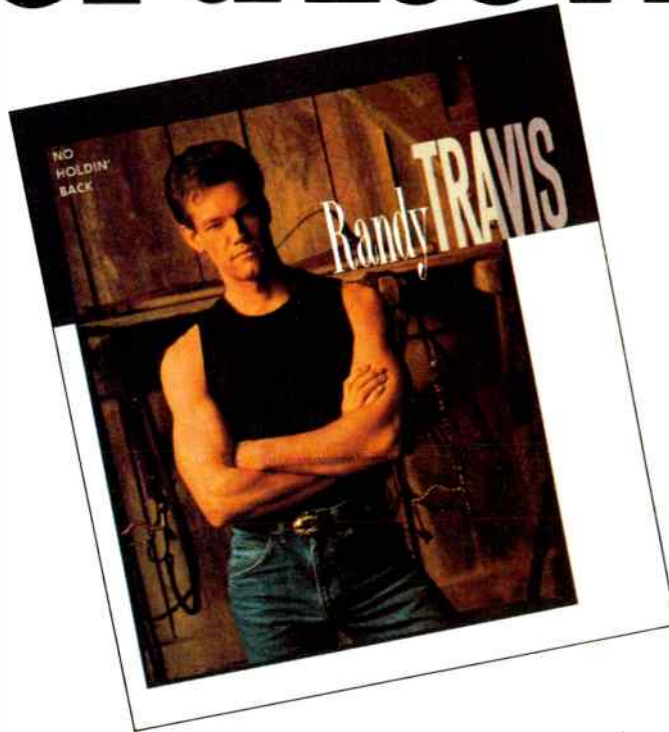
Warner Bros. 1-25988

Some of you out there haven't been pleased with my view that Randy's last two albums, *Always & Forever* and *Old 8x10*, were uneven. And I can see your point: implying Randy Travis would record anything less than a masterpiece is like (dare I say it?) desecrating the Flag. The fact that the albums and singles have sold despite my views has certainly proven your loyalty, but then critics' views seldom affect record sales anyway.

But sales success doesn't necessarily disprove my opinion, for that's what criticism is: *opinion*. My job (and that of the other reviewers) is to look objectively at what an artist has done and figure three things: one, did the album accomplish what he or she wanted it to? Two, how does it stack up against his or her past work? Three, what does it say about the artist today?

Let's face it. With *Storms of Life*, Travis and his producer Kyle Lehning set the standards for everything. The Conventional Wisdom holds that that particular album is a classic. I agree, and that fact complicated things for me. I know Randy's had one hellacious run of hits, but for the past couple of years, for me at least, something was missing.

Sure, he sang as great as ever. But the material went to extremes: a few blockbusters (often written by Randy himself) mixed with songs from Nashville writers, some good, others average. A few songs per record were even



out-and-out hack jobs unworthy of Randy's talent. He deserves only the best.

I don't know for sure, but I can just about guess why it happened. When success came three years ago, it hit, as it often does, hard and fast. When *Storms* and the hits, "Other Hand," "1982" and the rest, started coming, everyone had to move quickly.

Touring and doing what it takes to maintain (and, indeed, expand) one's celebrity can make it tempting to get a new record out quickly. And both those albums, to me, sounded rushed. Maybe that's what happened, maybe not, but in any case, it *didn't* happen this time.

One listen told me that they got it 100% right with nothing—literally nothing—dragging over the side. In the past, Randy's own songs often surpassed those by the other writers. The consistently high quality of *all* these songs, the production, and most of all of Randy's vocals make this album true cause for celebration.

His sole original, "No Stoppin' Us Now," is a fine and catchy love song, simple and direct like the other tunes he's written. And the best possible material was chosen by other writers—no filler, no drivel, but songs that make the most of all of Travis' skills as a vocalist. Two numbers feature his gift for dry humor: the Byron Hill-Tim Bays composition "Card Carryin' Fool" and Verlon Thompson's and Mark Sanders' sarcastic "Have a Nice Rest of Your Life."

The ballads are just as magnificent. "Mining for Coal's" analogies are similar to those used on "Diggin' Up Bones" from the first album. Hugh Prestwood's "Hard Rock Bottom of Your Heart" follows in a similar vein. "When Your World Was Turning for Me," a 15-year-old Whitey Shafer-Doodle Owens honky tonker, fits Travis perfectly. Even more moving is Allen Shamblin's "He Walked on Water." Randy makes this ode to a long-deceased great grandfather

real—no phony sentiment.

Unlike Dwight or Ricky, up to now Randy avoided tackling older hits. This time he does, and by picking the right song to cover, he makes first-rate music. Taking on "Singin' the Blues," forever identified with both Guy Mitchell and Marty Robbins, was a risky step, but one worth taking. No one else has come as close to catching the feeling of the original version, and Randy does it with nary an ounce of imitation.

His traditionalist fans can be forgiven a few seconds of panic over his version of the 1959 Brook Benton rhythm-and-blues hit, "It's Just a Matter of Time"—panic not about the song, but about the fact that he's backed by a full orchestra, the kind that smothered records just a few years ago. Is it the dreaded *crossover*? Is Randy on the road to ruin, to be forever swallowed up in the lobotomized schmaltz of the Nashville String Machine?

Relax. It's nothing of the kind. For one thing, he cut the song with pop producer Richard Perry for a 1988 anthology of Warner Brothers artists covering rhythm-and-blues classics. It was never meant to be a country release, but forget the damn strings and the categories. Like "Singin' the Blues," he makes it his own and walks away with it.

As I said before, Randy and Kyle Lehning set their own standards three years ago, back before Randy became a household word and the subject of an exhaustive article in no less than *The New York Times Magazine* (as he was earlier this year). This time he didn't just equal his best, he raised his standards.

—RICH KIENZLE



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TUMBLEWEEDS



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# Record Reviews

**Marty Stuart**  
*Hillbilly Rock*  
MCA-42312

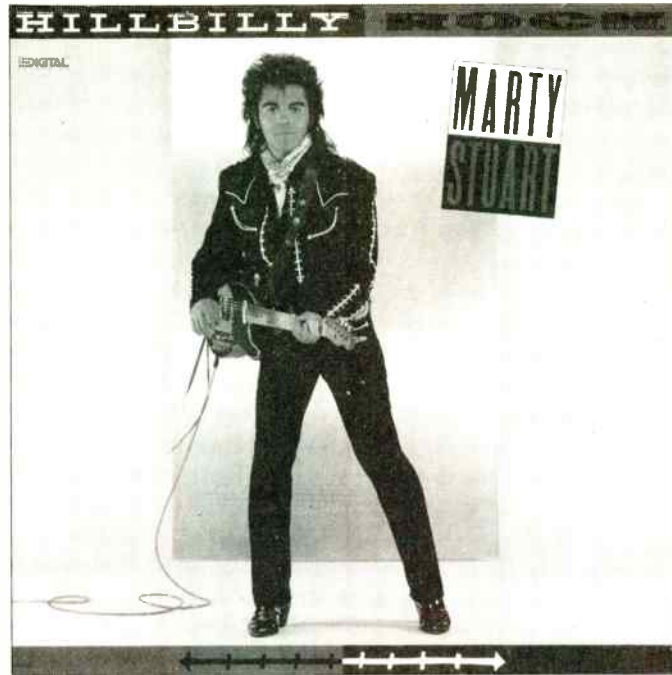
**I**t is ironic that in the country music field, as in other professions, there are always a select few who seem to be held back not by their lack of talent but by their *abundance* of it—artists who are capable of growing in so many directions at once that the question of *focus* can become a difficult one.

I'm thinking of Rodney Crowell, whose prodigious talents and unlooked-for success as a songwriter and producer got in the way of his solo recording career for years. And I'm also thinking of his ex-brother-in-law, Marty Stuart, a creative dynamo: a singer/songwriter/mandolinist - guitarist / producer par excellence, not to mention a fine journalist and photographer whose work has been in these pages.

I mean, what a portfolio this guy has! Joined Lester Flatt's band at age 13, then graduated to touring and recording with Johnny Cash a few years later. Produced his own first album, *Busy Bee Cafe* on Sugar Hill in 1982, which featured a "who's who" cast of supporting musicians, artists like Stuart's ex-father-in-law Johnny Cash, Doc and Merle Watson, and Jerry Douglas.

So maybe the world wasn't quite ready when Stuart made his major label debut on CBS in 1986. The album, *Marty Stuart*, may have been a little too energetic and wide-ranging and (with songs by Steve Forbert, Robbie Robertson, and the late Steve Goodman) a little too neo-rockabilly-folkish to pierce the iron curtain of country radio. Suffice to say, not enough of us in this business (present company included) really noticed at the time what a fine record it was.

But Stuart's latest, *Hillbilly Rock*, is such a power-



ful, confident and finely-tuned musical statement that I predict it will be impossible for anyone with an iota of musical taste to overlook it for long. With this one shining effort, the culmination of, among other things, three years spent between albums honing his songwriting talents, Stuart puts himself into the front ranks of modern country music, where he's belonged all along.

In fact, this album is not just an album. Like Rodney Crowell's *Diamonds & Dirt* or Steve Earle's *Guitar Town*, this set of tracks is an event—one which marks the official kickoff of what promises to be a brilliant "major league" recording career.

Having gotten burned with the "rockabilly" tag last time around, Stuart now prefers to call his music "hillbilly rock" (hence the title song, written by Paul Kennerley). But a name is just a name, as long as you don't go throwing the baby out with the bath water. With cuts like the title song or Stuart's own swaggering "The Coal Mine Blues," or his faithfully inspired version of John R. Cash's rockabilly classic, "Cry Cry Cry,"

Stuart sounds like some long-legged, revved-up, tight-pants, long-haired version of 1950's heroes like Cash or Carl Perkins, reincarnated in 1980's disguise. He's done more than get the quintessential attitude, swagger and pose of rockabilly down pat; he's got the spirit, as well.

But even so, that's merely one side of the immense talent he shows us here. For the making of *Hillbilly Rock*, Stuart teamed with producers Tony Brown and Richard Bennett, the same pair who did such a great job on Steve Earle's *Guitar Town* a few years back. Bennett's distinctive, vibrato-laden, low-string, neo-Duane Eddyish guitar signature is an essential stylistic ingredient here, just as it was on Earle's debut album.

Though Stuart and Earle are miles apart stylistically, *Hillbilly Rock* also bristles with the same sort of gutsy, imaginative, guitar-grammed arrangements and stormy sensuality that made the Earle album such a milestone.

Stuart, for his part, has given Bennett and Brown a hell of a lot to work with. His

singing has always been something to hear, and now he's raised his songwriting to an extraordinary new level. His six originals here (some of them collaborations with writers like Paul Kennerley and Mark Collie) run the gamut from heartsome country ballads ("I Don't Have You"), to revved-up, neo-hillbilly barn burners ("The Coal Mine Blues") and strutting country-macho, "Easy to Love (Hard to Hold)." For good measure he even throws in "The Wild One," an obscure road warrior/motorpsycho anthem of yesteryear written by Merle Kilgore and Tillman Franks.

The strongest cut of all, though, is Stuart's cover of Joe Ely's tongue-in-cheek, low-life gunfighter ballad, "Me and Billy The Kid." Stuart not only manages to capture the devil-may-care spirit of Ely's unforgettable story/song, he's also (wisely) copped the relentlessly compelling guitar arrangement of Ely's original version. Ely never got the hit he deserved with "Me and Billy The Kid"; maybe Stuart can get some mileage out of it now.

It would be easy for me to go on, since it's just as hard to stop raving about an album this good as it is to stop listening to it. Marty Stuart has finally hit the bull's eye.

—BOB ALLEN

**Rodney Crowell**  
*Keys to the Highway*  
Columbia 45242

**T**o start with, Rodney Crowell has always made good-sounding records, whether they were his own or Rosanne's, and this latest effort is no exception. Top that with a good round dozen songs on this album, and you ought to have enough information already to send you down to K-Mart for *Keys to the Highway* and a new pair of dancing sneakers.

Rodney and co-producer

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Things have changed now. I own four homes in Southern California. The one I'm living in now in Beverly Hills is worth more than one million dollars. I own several cars, among them a brand new Mercedes and a brand new Cadillac. Right now, I have a million dollar line of credit with the banks and have certificates of deposit at \$100,000 each in my bank in Beverly Hills.

Best of all, I have time to have fun. To be me. To do what I want. I work about 4 hours a day, the rest of the day, I do things that please me. Some days I go swimming and sailing — shopping. Other days, I play racquetball or tennis. Sometimes, frankly, I just lie out under the sun with a good book. I love to take long vacations. I just got back from a two week vacation from — Maui, Hawaii.

I'm not really trying to impress you with my wealth. All I'm trying to do here is to prove to you that if it wasn't because of that money secret I was lucky enough to find that day, I still would have been poor or may be even bankrupt. It was only through this amazing money secret that I could pull myself out of debt and become wealthy. Who knows what would have happened to my family and me.

Knowing about this secret changed my life completely. It brought me wealth, happiness, and most important of all — peace of mind. This secret will change your life, too! It will give you everything you need and will solve all your money problems. Of course you don't have to take my word for it. You can try it for yourself. To see that you try this secret, I'm willing to give you \$20.00 in cash. (I'm giving my address at the bottom of this page.) I figure, if I spend \$20.00, I get your attention. And you will prove it to yourself this amazing money secret will work for you, too!

Why, you may ask, am I willing to share this secret with you? To make money? Hardly. First, I already have all the money and possessions I'll ever need. Second, my secret does not involve any sort of competition whatsoever. Third, nothing is more satisfying to me than sharing my secret only with those who realize a golden opportunity and get on it quickly.

This secret is incredibly simple. Anyone can use it. You can get started with practically no money at all and the risk is almost zero. You don't need special training or even a high school education. It doesn't matter how young or old you are and it will work for you at home or even while you are on vacation.

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With this secret the money can roll in fast. In some cases you may be able to cash in literally overnight. If you can follow simple instructions you can get started in a single afternoon and it is possible to have spendable money in your hands the very next morning. In fact, this just might be the fastest legal way to make money that has ever been invented!

This is a very safe way to get extra cash. It is practically risk free. It is not a dangerous gamble. Everything you do has already been tested and you can get started for less money than most people spend for a night on the town.

One of the nicest things about this whole idea is that you can do it at home in your spare time. You don't need equipment or an office. It doesn't matter where you live either. You can use this secret to make money if you live in a big city or on a farm or anywhere in between. A husband and wife team from New York used my secret, worked at home in their spare time, and made \$45,000 in one year.

This secret is simple. It would be hard to make a mistake if you tried. You don't need a college degree or even a high school education. All you need is a little common sense and the ability to follow simple, easy, step-by-step instructions. I personally know a man from New England who used this secret and made \$2 million in just 3 years.

You can use this secret to make money no matter how old or how young you may be. There is no physical labor involved and everything is so easy it can be done

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### National Examiner:

John Wright has an excellent guide for achieving wealth in your spare time.

### Income Opportunities:

*The Royal Road to Riches* is an invaluable guide for finding success in your own back yard.

### News Tribune:

Wright's material is a MUST for anyone who contemplates making it as an independent entrepreneur.

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"As Mr. John Wright's accountant, I certify that his assets exceed one million dollars."

Mark Davis

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# Record Reviews

Tony Brown (of Lyle Lovett and Patti Loveless fame, for starters) must have spent weeks fiddling with electronic effects to come up with just the right echo combination to make these tunes sound as if they were recorded during a sound check in an empty 2,000-seat auditorium. The sound is big, yet intimate, and energized by the "live" feel of music and lyrics bouncing around tall walls and the sound trap under the balcony.

As I write, Rodney was putting out the most philosophical song of the set, "Many a Long and Lonesome Highway," as the first single off the album. "If Looks Could Kill" is a winning dancer in a honky tonk vein; "My Past is Present" gets more infectious the more times I play it. "Soul Searching" is an impressive number about looking for an old girlfriend, but it sounds a little too much like a Rosanne Cash number if you ask me.

There's a great guitar groove on "Don't Let Your Feet Slow You Down," the song that includes the album's title phrase, and if Roy Orbison were alive, he could knock "Now That We're Alone" right into the stratosphere. Oddly, only Rodney's collaboration with thinking man's Texan Guy Clark is a wash. Sounds like something tossed off in a hurry by slightly reworking half a dozen of the most over-used cliches in country lyric writing. Still, with twelve songs to choose from, one piece of fluff is no big deal.

All in all, there's enough top-notch material on this album to give Rodney a good run at matching his record-setting performance of five Number One singles from his last album. Maybe, if he does it two years in a row, the CMA will give him some of the recognition he's already earned.

Congrats, Rodney. You done good, bubba.

-BOB MILLARD

## Hugh Moffatt

*Troubadour*  
Philo PH 1127

## Katy Moffatt

*Walkin' on the Moon*  
Philo PH-1128

## James Talley

*Love Songs and the Blues*  
Bear Family BCD 15464

## Richard Younger

*Blue Horses*  
Rebel Toy RT 101

In any given season, if you have the time or inclination to venture beyond the major-label-monopolized wasteland of country radio's "Hot 100," you will find an abundance of fine music being made by artists either too new, too old, too off-the-wall or simply too untrendy to have entered the country mainstream. This year is no exception.

Though Hugh Moffatt has never had a very high profile as a recording artist, he has long been recognized as one of Nashville's most gifted songwriters. His material

has been covered by everyone from Alabama and Dolly Parton ("Old Flames Can't Hold a Candle to You") to Ronnie Milsap and Jerry Lee Lewis.

On *Troubadour*, his second album for the Philo label, Moffatt again showcases his vocal talents. His voice has a subdued, reedy, folksy quality vaguely reminiscent of James or Livingston Taylor. It works effectively on the eleven original songs here, the set rounded out by a live *capella* rendition of the Stephen Foster chestnut, "Hard Times Come Again No More" (on which Moffatt is accompanied by guest vocalists Wade McCurdy and Stuart Duncan).

Side One of *Troubadour* is a collection of conventional but moving country love ballads, which, if they aren't eventually hits for Moffatt himself, probably will be for more established artists, such as those mentioned above. On Side Two, however, Moffatt really lets his folksy roots hang out. "Last Night I Dreamed of You" is a haunting, almost Appalachian-sounding ballad of unrequited and near-maddening loss and desire, while "The

Devil Took the Rest" is a dark, bitter ballad about the vigilante-style vengeance two brothers wreak upon drug dealers who've raped their sister.

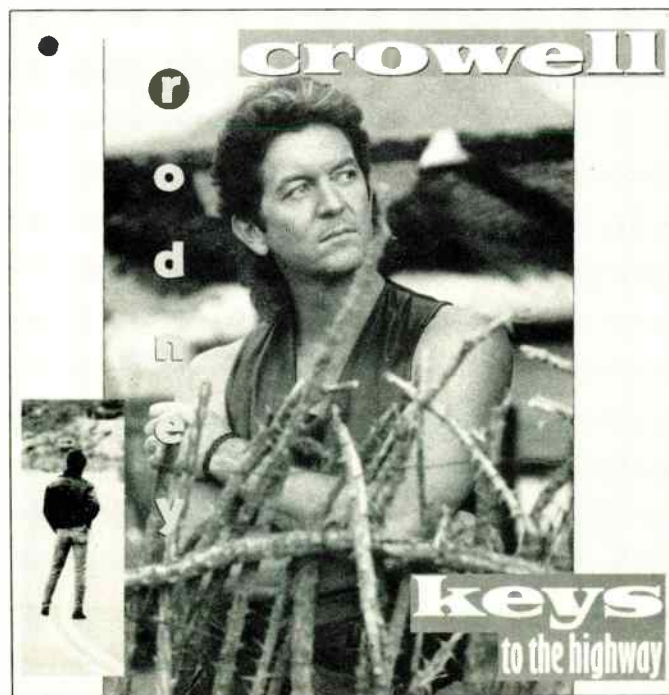
No less impressive is *Walkin' on the Moon*, the new album by Moffatt's sister, Katy. *Walkin' on the Moon* serves to remind us of Katy Moffatt's persuasive, sensual power. Katy was produced by the legendary Billy Sherrill during a brief period in the mid-1970's. At the time she was hailed as the next soon-to-be superstar (who never quite was).

In the years since, Moffatt has been singing back-up for everyone from The Everly Brothers and Jimmy Buffett to Willie Nelson and Tanya Tucker. Now, once again in the forefront, she unleashes her marvelously earthy, soulful, country voice on an acoustic collection of songs which runs the gamut from Ronnie Van Zandt's bluesy "Mr. Banker" to moving, sentimental country ballads like "I Know the Difference Now" (co-written by Katy's brother Hugh and Nashville writer Steve O'Brien).

*Walkin' on the Moon* makes it very hard to understand why Moffatt, after years of singing back-up to the stars and making the rounds of the independent labels, has not emerged as a leading lady in her own right.

While we are on the subject of recognition or lack of it, it seems a grave injustice that the music world has all but forgotten James Talley, an eloquent, socially conscious, country-folk balladeer who emerged from the same early 1970's post-Kristofferson wave of singer/songwriters as other lyric geniuses like Billy Joe Shaver and Guy Clark.

Before falling into obscurity and turning to real estate for his livelihood, Talley recorded a half a dozen or so memorable albums—*Trying Like the Devil*, *Black Jack Choir*, *We Got No Bread*,



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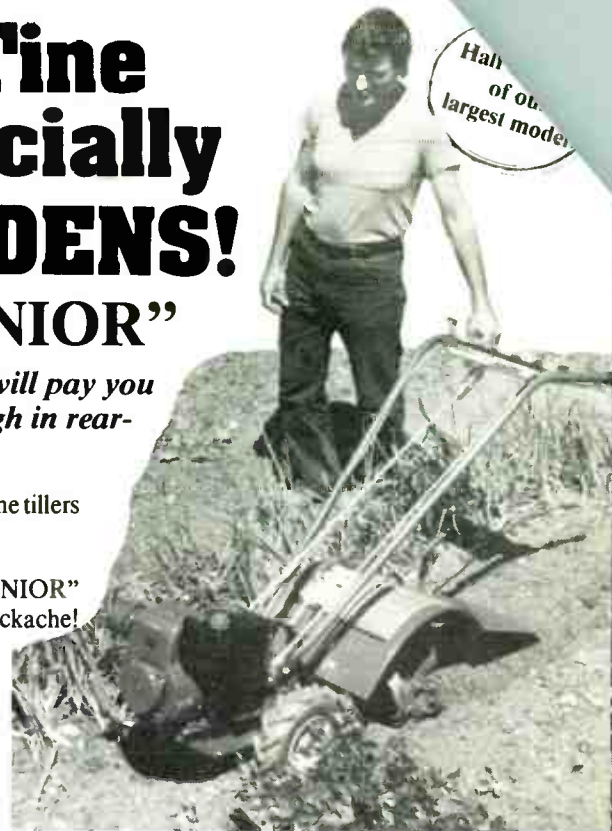
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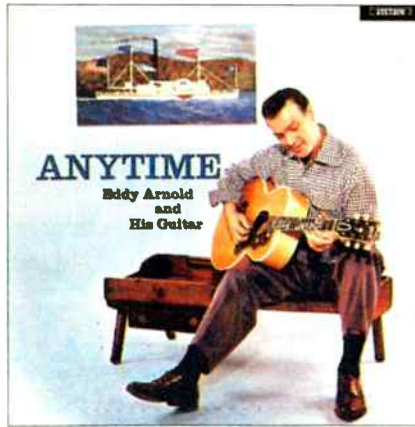
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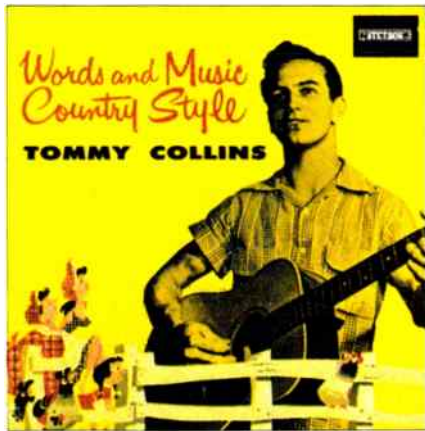
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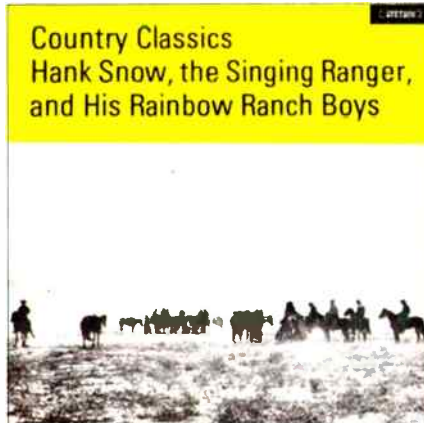
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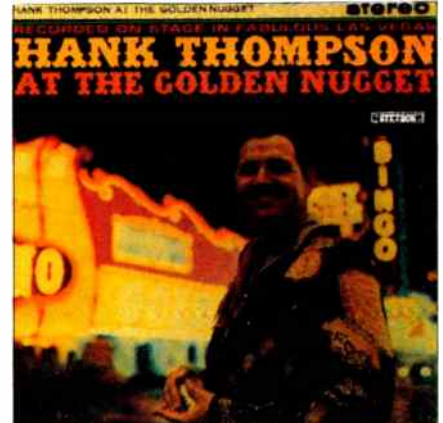
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**HANK THOMPSON AT THE GOLDEN NUGGET**

Honky Tonk Girl/I Guess I'm Getting Over You/I'll Step Aside/Orange Blossom/I Didn't Mean To Fall In Love/John Henry/Nine Pound Hammer/She's Just A Whole Lot Like You/Have I Told You Lately That I Love You/Steel Guitar Rag, and 2 MORE!

# IED URES ARADE

Hundreds of different albums have been featured in the *Buried Treasures* section of *Country Music Magazine* over the past two years. Readers like you voted the ones on these pages as the very best. So now, perhaps for the last time, we are giving everyone a chance to get any you may have missed.



## THE LOUVIN BROTHERS- TRAGIC SONGS OF LIFE

Kentucky/I'll Be All Smiles Tonight/Let Her Go God Bless Her/What Is Home Without Love/A Tiny Broken Heart/In The Pines/Alabama/Katie Dear/My Brother's Will/Knoxville Girl/Take The News To Mother/Mary Of The Wild Moor



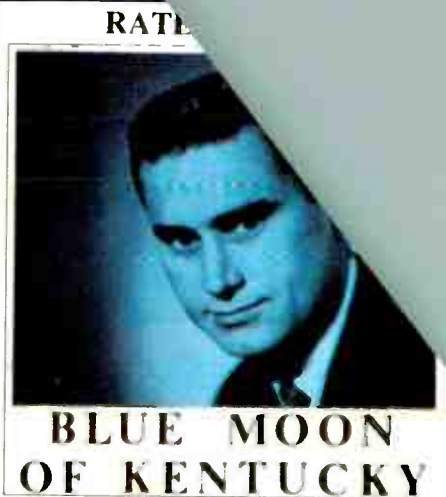
## ELTON BRITT YODEL SONGS

Give Ma A Pinto Pal/Maybe I'll Cry Over You/Chime Bells/That's How The Yodel Was Borry/St. James Avenue/The Alpine Milkman/The Yodel Blues/Cannonball Yodel/Tennessee Yodel Polka/Patent Leather Boots/St. Louis Blues Yodel/The Skater's Yodel



## ROSE MADDOX-THE ONE ROSE

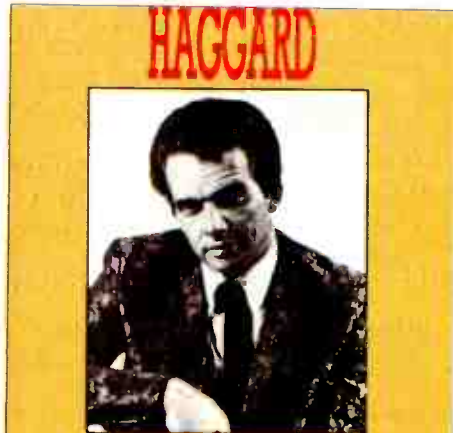
Honky-Tonkin/Why Don't You Haul Off And Love Me/Philadelphia Lawyer/Move It On Over/On The Banks Of The Old Pontchartrain/Whoa Sailor/Sally Let Your Bangs Hang Down/At The First Fall Of Snow/Live And Let Live/Tramp On The Street/Chocolate Ice Cream Cone/Gathering Flowers For The Masters Bouquet



## BLUE MOON OF KENTUCKY

### GEORGE JONES

I Get Lonely In A Hurry/Love's Gonna Live Here/Holiday For Love/Imitation Of Love/Beggar To A King/Ragged But Right/She's Lonesome Again/Brown To Blue/Lovin' Lies/Making The Rounds/The Same Sweet Girl/Please Be My Love/Blue Moon Of Kentucky/We Could, plus 6 MORE!



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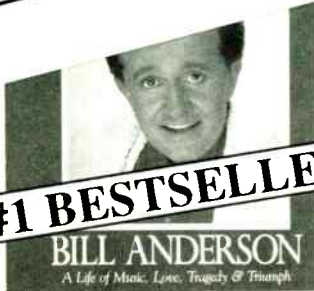
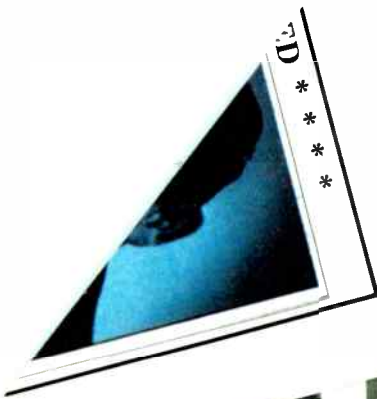
She Thinks I Still Care/Mom And Dad's Waltz/Makin' Believe/Moanin' The Blues/Lovesick Blues/Blues Stay Away From Me/You've Still Got A Place In My Heart/Right Or Wrong/Mule Skinner Blues/San Antonio Rose/This Cold War/Right Or Wrong, plus 8 MORE!



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# Record Reviews

*No Milk No Money, But We Sure Got a Lot of Love*—and for a while was more or less the unofficial musical spokesman of the Carter administration.

At long last, Talley is back, with a new album titled *Love Songs and the Blues* on the German Bear Family label. Bear Family has also reissued the four outstanding albums Talley recorded for Capitol in the early and mid-1970's.

Like Guy Clark and other wordsmiths of his era, Talley has pared his style down considerably in middle age. The bluesy, gospel-tinged songs on here (as the album title suggests) are lyrically spare and emotionally to the point. Talley's sweeping preoccupation with social issues, so evident on his earlier albums, seems to have mellowed into a deeper, closer-to-the-bone focus on affairs of the heart and soul.

In the long years since his last album, Talley has also matured as a vocalist: bluesy and soulful, he navigates a surprisingly broad range of styles. On "Your Sweet Love," the opener, he sounds like a sedate Charlie Daniels as he sings over a whining, electric blues guitar and an insistent country-rock back beat. "I Can't Surrender," by contrast, is a slow, plaintive, piano-draped ballad of a man trapped in a memory. "Little Child" is a hushed, melancholy, inspirational affirmation of love as redemption from the weight of the world.

Given an album as inspired as *Love Songs and the Blues*, one only hopes that another decade won't slip by before James Talley gets back in the studio.

Richard Younger's *Blue Horses* is one of the season's real out-of-left-field surprises. With it a virtually unknown artist on an obscure New York-based label has garnered an unusual amount of media attention. The eight fine original songs are balanced out by two electrifyingly performed oldies—

"Bony Maronie" and "Guitar Man," both featuring impressive guitar workouts by Paul Skelton. Younger himself comes across as a more youthful, twangy, surrealistic Marshall Crenshaw (Crenshaw seems to be Younger's songwriting role model). With his weird mixture of down-home earthiness and hip surrealism (as on cuts like the title song and "Phantom Street"), Younger may turn out to be *the* state-of-the-art 1990's cosmic cowboy.

—BOB ALLEN

**Poco**  
*Legacy*  
RCA 9694-4-R

**I**t could be said that old Southern California rock groups never die, they just fade away. At least that's how it often seemed with Poco.

From Poco's inception in 1969, the band enjoyed modest success, had a few hit records and endured numerous personnel changes until financial problems and lack of direction finally compelled steel player Rusty Young, the only remaining original member, to disband the group in the mid-1980's. So it's safe to say that, in this era of rock reunions, there's a certain degree of "musical-history - as - media - event"

calculation in the fact that, in this the year of Poco's twentieth anniversary, the five original members have chosen to reunite for an album called *Legacy*.

Fortunately, along with the calculation there's also no small amount of *inspiration* at work on *Legacy*. Despite the album's slightly pretentious title, it's an exuberant, enjoyable musical effort. Even though the five original Poco-ists are all in their early or mid-forties now, *Legacy* sparkles with the sort of direct, youthful enthusiasm and emotion that characterized the best music of California country-rock's long-gone heyday. Within this readily identifiable musical framework, the music on *Legacy* has a delightful and undeniable contemporary immediacy.

Poco's five original members, were, after all, there at the creation, so to speak: all five emerged from a relatively small community of musicians out of which grew formative bands like Buffalo Springfield (Richie Furay and Jim Messina were members for a time), Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, Loggins & Messina, Souther-Hillman (as in Chris Hillman)-Furay and The Eagles, whose ubiquitous sound Randy Meisner was such a crucial part of right up

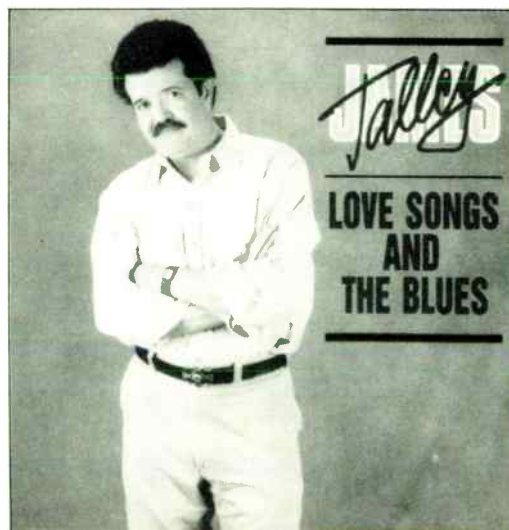
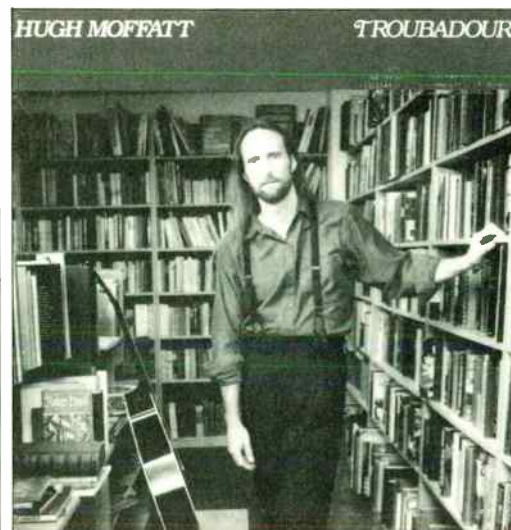
through the landmark late-1970's *Hotel California* album.

It's no wonder that quite a few of the harmony-laden country-pop cuts on *Legacy*, cuts like "Nothin' to Hide," echo with distinct reminders of these defunct but highly influential Southern California bands. "Who Else," where Rusty Young sings lead, for instance, could pass as an outtake from The Eagles' album, *One of These Nights*.

Needless to say, there is enough seasoned, top-flight talent here to sustain two or three bands. There are four excellent, distinctive lead vocalists (Richie Furay, Randy Meisner, Jim Messina and Rusty Young), two outstanding lead guitarists (Messina and Furay) and a steel guitarist (Rusty Young) who, when he wants to, can make his pedal instrument wail like a Telecaster from hell. Even better, all this talent seems focused and harnessed.

With an album as strong and impressive as *Legacy*, Poco—if it can sustain this energy level and avoid the sort of interpersonal pitfalls that sabotaged the group originally—may end up becoming what it seldom was in its first two decades of existence: a vital presence on the *Billboard* charts.

—BOB ALLEN



# Record Reviews

## Highway 101

*Paint the Town*

Warner Bros. 9 25992-1

Last October's CMA Awards were important for a bunch of reasons. For the first time since Bob Wills went into the Hall of Fame 21 years ago, the CMA actually acknowledged the existence of Western swing. Sure, Johnny Gimble won a couple of Instrumentalist of the Year awards in previous years, but that was only in one specific category. The awards won this year by George Strait and Clint Black coupled with Hank Thompson's induction into the Hall of Fame made me think there's finally been a change of heart among the CMA electors.

Plus, something even more significant happened: Nashville's establishment finally acknowledged the *West Coast's* contribution to the industry. For years, the California scene wasn't taken seriously (one reason the Academy of Country Music was formed). Even in the Country Music Foundation's recent megabook, *Country: The Music and the Musicians*, the Southwest and West Coast got far less space than they deserved.

Inducting legendary West Coast promoter, bass player and *Hometown Jamboree* host Cliffie Stone into the Hall of Fame was a start at righting past wrongs. Highway 101's win as Vocal Group of the Year for the second year in a row was the icing on the cake. Not only are they West Coast, Cliffie's son Curtis is their bass player.

What is it that makes 101 so impressive? For one thing, they know the difference between country and rock, and most of the time they respect that difference. When they mix the two, they know how to do it right. Some of their counterparts south and east of the Rockies are



too involved with shallow posturing and superficial Southern imagery to even know the difference.

But Paulette Carlson knows the difference, and her voice can more than cut it. It's a voice that grows on you, with a few more barbs than Emmylou's or Dolly's but just as much heart. She puts it to good use on the easy-going, laid-back boogie of "I Can't Love You Baby," a musical Dear John letter with a feel similar to the Foster & Lloyd hit, "Crazy Over You." The sound remains spare, tight and rocking. Highway 101's stylistic control particularly shows on "Who's Lonely Now," a take-your-love-and-shove-it number with a snarling Paulette vocal, gospel-style chorus and pedal steel in just the right places.

They don't flag on most of the ballads, either. The vibrant traditional edge of "If Love Had a Heart," co-written by Curtis Stone and Matraca Berg, Gretchen Peters' "I'll Paint the Town" and the Pam Tillis-Dennis Adkins number, "While You Slept Last Night," is exactly

the sound Dolly Parton tried (and failed) to capture on *White Limozeen*.

Both "Rough and Tumble Heart" and "This Side of Goodbye" have a pronounced California feel and a bit more pop flavor but are effortlessly integrated into the Highway 101 sound. The cut that follows presents a 180-degree turn: an incredible version of the Roger Miller-Justin Tubb song, "Walkin' Talkin' Cryin' Barely Beatin' Broken Heart," a minor hit for Johnny Wright in 1964. It's no remake. Highway 101 does it their way but preserves the original honky tonk spirit. Paulette's voice soars over the tight, spare arrangement. Those of you who remember Roger from "Dang Me" may not realize what a great honky tonk composer he once was.

Only one weak spot: the group's pancake-flat version of pop/folk balladeer James Taylor's "Sweet Baby James," which sticks out like Mister Rogers in a Hank Jr. video. Taylor's yammery music was hot back in 1970, and every aspiring hippie with a flannel

shirt and acoustic guitar sang every Taylor song ever written (my friends and I referred to him as "Lames"). I'm just glad producers Paul Worley and Ed Seay put this one at the end of the album where it doesn't hurt anything.

Strange as it may seem, it is perfectly valid to consider 101 (or, for that matter, The Desert Rose Band) in the same breath as Tennessee Ernie Ford, Tex Williams, Merle Travis or Buck Owens. They're the current generation of the West Coast sound, and this particular album is the latest reason that proud tradition deserves the recognition it's now getting.

—RICH KIENZLE

## James McMurtry

*Too Long in the*

*Wasteland*

CBS FC-45229

I could be wrong, but I don't hear much of anything on James McMurtry's debut album, *Too Long in the Wasteland*, that's going to make a dent in country radio playlists. In my perverse judgment, this shortcoming gives the album that much more musical merit. McMurtry's brilliantly composed, lyrically provocative songs—mostly about his native Texas—easily hold their own measured against the work of an older generation of Texas word masters—Guy Clark, Townes Van Zandt, Nanci Griffith and (more recently) Lyle Lovett and Robert Earle Keene Jr.—writers who've been mining similar musical territory and have influenced McMurtry.

There's already been a mountain of hype surrounding *Too Long in the Wasteland*. For one thing, it was produced by Indiana grass-roots rocker John Cougar Mellencamp. For another, McMurtry is the son of Larry McMurtry, the world's most famous Texas novelist, (*Lonesome Dove*, *Terms of Endear-*

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## Record Reviews

ment, *The Last Picture Show*, etc.). But this media overkill is not altogether unjustified: a remarkable way with words along with an uncanny eye for human pathos and emotional detail obviously run in the McMurtry family.

As a singer, McMurtry is ordinary. Yet his deadpan delivery works well on wry, sometimes disturbing commentaries on small-town life like "Talkin' at the Texaco" and "I'm Not From Here (I Just Live Here)." His grumbling, meandering vocals, almost conversational in their quality, are also effective on several compelling tales of rural isolation and loneliness. In "Poor Lost Soul" and the title song, it's as if Texas' daunting external geography of vast, empty spaces conspired with the tortured geography of McMurtry's characters to wreck marriages, ruin dreams and waste lives.

In the title song, you can almost hear and *feel* the painful, troubled solitude and alienation of the narrator, who sits on his porch listening to: *the trucks on the highway/and the ticking of the clocks/there's a ghost of a*

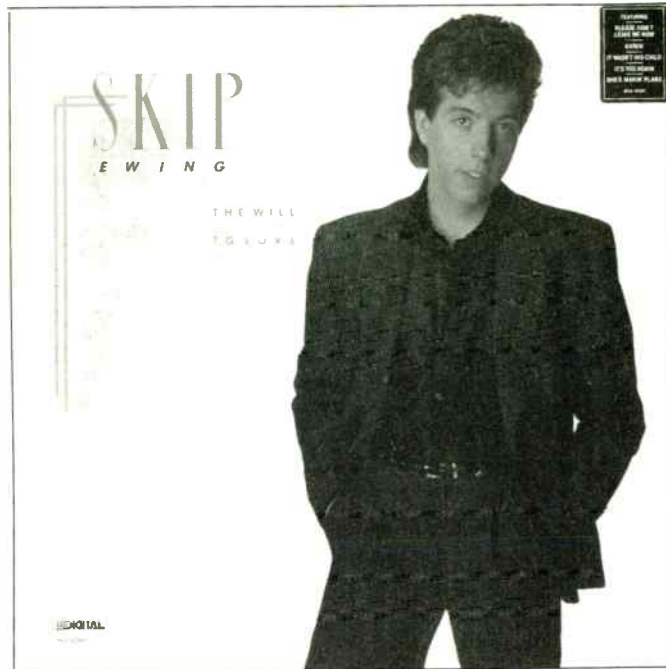
*moon in the afternoon/bullet holes in the mailbox.*

If, over time, James McMurtry can sustain the level of insight, craftsmanship and eloquence he displays on *Too Long in the Wasteland*, he could well become one of the major Texas singer/songwriters of his generation. —BOB ALLEN

**Skip Ewing**  
*The Will to Love*  
MCA 42301

**S**kip Ewing wants to sell records to a wide audience. Who doesn't? Dwight 'n' Randy do. Next point, Ewing is one of the more pop-oriented singers around in this traditional era. Nothing wrong with that, either. There's still room for singers with obvious pop roots to make it in in this business. The minute you say there's not, you're as bad as the crossover types who wanted to dump Roy Acuff, Bill Monroe and Webb Pierce in the Hall of Fame and forget they ever existed.

Thing is, even a crossover singer has to have some substance and artistic vision. And



despite this being Ewing's second album, I don't hear either of those qualities in his music. That he's a relative newcomer isn't the point. He writes his own material, and that's certainly no sin. Jimmy Bowen has produced him as a crossover artist. Nothing wrong with that, either.

But Bowen can't fix Ewing's voice, which lacks any real style of its own. In addition, Ewing's songwriting doesn't just lack polish, it's heavy-handed. The nature of the material and the man's mundane vocals throughout make Ewing come across as the Bobby Goldsboro of the 1990's, hardly something one would aspire to.

Ewing's songs wallow in poignancy to the point where you wonder if he's really serious. "It Wasn't His Child," a song about Jesus, sounds like an amateur's poem. Other Ewing numbers feature lyrics like "We've been down the road and back/Crossed a bridge or two/Some of them we left to burn/And some we painted blue." Worse yet is "Age Doesn't Matter at All," a dreadful number about a man in a nursing home that is so overwrought it sounds like a put-on. "She's

Makin' Plans," a song about impending fatherhood, sounds like it came off the inside of a greeting card. Read the lyrics on the back of the album and see.

Any way you slice it, this is pretty weak stuff. To compound the problem, the album is top heavy with ballads. "The Will to Love" is the sole exception to the standard fare offered here. The arrangements sound as if they were all played on synthesizers (even though they weren't). They're slick, predictable and so perfect that they, like the material, tend to run together. In fact, except for the opening title track, every number runs together, one syrupy love song after another.

I should have had an idea about this one when I noted that the back of the album carries credits for the hairstylist and makeup artist. There are great crossover singers and great pop singers: Neil Diamond, Elton John, Carly Simon and Paul Anka come to mind. All have their own voice, write their own material and do it well. Ewing has a long way to go to reach those levels.

—RICH KIENZLE

James McMurtry



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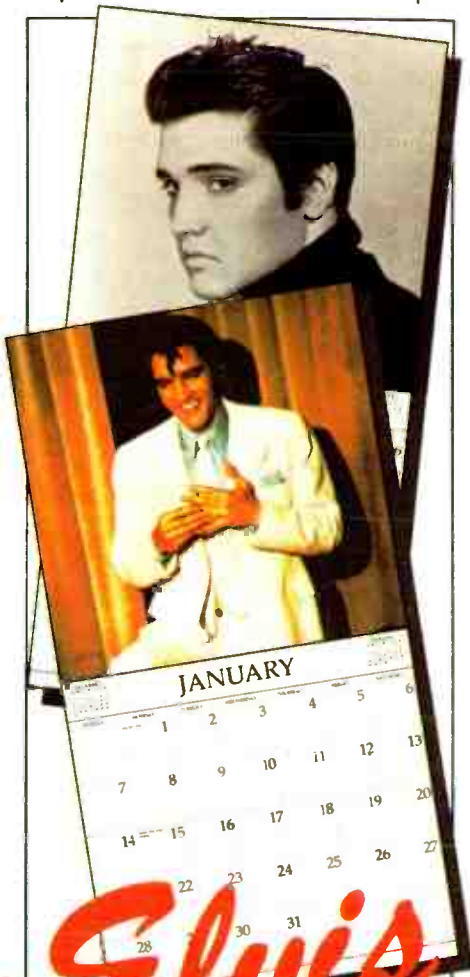
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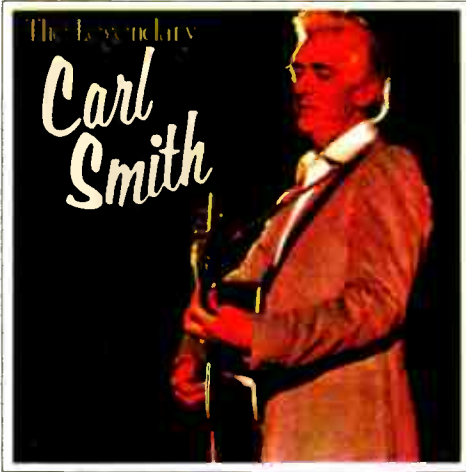
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# Buried Treasures/

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**Hank Thompson:** Hank Thompson's October induction into the Country Music Hall of Fame was long overdue. Capitol's 20-song *Collector's Series* volume on Hank (CDP-7 92124-2), available in CD only, appeared before Hank's induction, but was a happy coincidence nonetheless. If you've bought any of the Stetson albums reviewed in this column in recent issues, this set complements them. All of Hank's big hits from 1948 to 1961, starting with his 1948 hit "Humpty Dumpty Heart" through "The New Green Light," "Oklahoma Hills," "A Six Pack to Go" and "Hangover Tavern" as well as "Rockin' in the Congo" and "Honky Tonk Girl" are here. Hank's formula on these songs, mixing honky tonk and Western swing, is virtually the same style George Strait uses so well now.

In addition to the excellent sound, the packaging is way above average, including a beautiful color montage of some of Hank's old Capitol 78's, 45's, albums and sheet music. Given the shameful way Capitol's neglected their material in the past, it's almost amazing they've done this good a job. Notes by researcher Bob Furmanek and reissue producer Ron Furmanek are above-average with one exception: they state Thompson broke the Grand Ole Opry's ban on drums in 1954. Wrong. Bob Wills did it ten years earlier.

**Ferlin Husky:** Ferlin was another one of Capitol's top artists in the 1950's and 1960's, and his hits also haven't been around for years. This *Collector's Series* volume (CDP 7 916292), also in CD only, conceived much like the Thompson one, starts in 1954 with his first solo hit "I Feel Better All Over" and continues on through "Gone," "Draggin' the River," "A Fallen Star" and "Somebody



Save Me" to "The Waltz You Saved For Me," "Wings of a Dove" and "Just For You." It ends in 1970 with his last big hit, "Sweet Misery." I do wonder why his two 1953 hit duets with Jean Shepard, "A Dear John Letter" and "Forgive Me, John," were omitted.

Again, the sound is truly outstanding, and the packaging is quite nice. The notes are fine, though I was amused at the remark that Ferlin's atrocious film *Country Music Holiday*, co-starring Faron Young and convicted cop-slapper Zsa Zsa Gabor, "was based on real incidents in both Young (sic) and Husky's lives." Ferlin once told me the producers wouldn't let him and Faron sing anything but bad pop songs in the film, so I really doubt its "authenticity."

Stetson's also reissued Ferlin's old Capitol album, *Songs of the Home and Heart* (HAT 3115), with plenty of early Ferlin material, heavy on such old favorites as Bob Wills' "Hang Your Head in Shame" and "I Can't Go on This Way," Jimmie Davis' "I Dreamed of an Old Love Affair" and Gene Autry's "That Silver Haired Daddy of Mine" and "Rockin' Alone in an Old Rockin' Chair." A great companion to the *Collector's Series* set. And Stetson's got some more good material out. Read on.

**Hawkshaw Hawkins:** Hawkshaw Hawkins (to be profiled in a future CMSA Newsletter) was best known for his Star-

day and King recordings. His time with RCA in the early 1950's yielded no hits, yet much of what he recorded was excellent, pithy material. His energetic vocals, complemented by Chet Atkins' lead guitar and Bud Isaacs on steel guitar, deserved more success than they had. RCA didn't issue *Hawkshaw Hawkins Sings* (HAT 3111) until 1964, the year after he died in that 1963 plane crash with Patsy Cline and Cowboy Copas. Numbers like "Action," "I Don't Apologize" and "The Mark 'Round My Finger" also should have been more successful than they were, and even his two attempts at rock 'n' roll aren't bad. His duet with Rita Robbins (of Nita, Rita and Ruby) on the rhythm-and-blues "Ko Ko Mo" was the better of the two. It's a shame "Car Hoppin' Mama," one of his best RCA recordings, never made it on to the original compilation. Still, what's here is good indeed.

**Connie Smith:** Connie Smith fans know that her fan club has always tried to find copies of her out-of-print RCA albums. Another one is now back in print: 1971's *Where is My Castle* (HAT 3112). Cross-over songs were starting to gain popularity back then, but this collection, built around her Number 11 hit that year, shows that she stuck to her traditional guns. Connie's unaffected, expressive vocals were never less than stunning, and RCA producer Bob

Ferguson limited the "strings" to the fiddles, guitars and bass.

The other material was also first-rate. Roger Miller's "When a House is Not a Home," "I'm So Used to Loving You" and "Darling Days" stood out, as did the two hymns, "Clinging to a Saving Hand" and Merle Haggard's 1970 hit "Jesus Take a Hold." And her covers of Loretta Lynn's 1964 hit "Before I'm Over You" and Conway Twitty's "Hello, Darlin'" are far more than bland readings of someone else's successes.

**Porter Wagoner:** Of all Porter Wagoner's albums, *The Bluegrass Story* (HAT 3113) from 1965 has to be one of the strangest. It's not really true bluegrass since Porter sang bluegrass about as well as Bill Monroe would have sung Porter hits like "Misery Loves Company" or "Carroll County Accident." The title track, "Country Music Has Gone to Town," wasn't bluegrass, nor was "Howdy Neighbor, Howdy." And I think the world could have gotten along without another version of "Cotton Fields." Most of the other material is standard bluegrass fare from the Monroe school, including "Blue Moon of Kentucky," "Will You Be Lovin' Another Man," "Uncle Pen" (an early hit for Porter from 1956), "Little Cabin Home in the Hills," "I'll Meet You in Church Sunday Morning," etc. Porter's heart was in the right place, and his fans undoubtedly will be glad to get any of his old stuff, so little being available. There are other Porter albums from the 1960's that Stetson should go after in the future.

**Louvin Brothers:** *Satan Is Real* (HAT 3117), released in 1960, may well be the best Louvin gospel recording of all time. Kicking off with the tit' song, written by Ira and Charlie, it includes a stonking re-creation of a wild-e-backwoods church serr



The music is more primitive than their later gospel works and, as such, has greater authenticity. The kick in "There's a Higher Power" reminds me of some of The Carlisles' or Martha Carson's recordings. "The Christian Life" was recorded by The Byrds in their 1968 *Sweetheart of the Rodeo* album and sung by Louvin fan Gram Parsons. "The Kneeling Drunkard's Plea" has to be heard to be believed.

The weird cover photo, complete with construction paper rendering of Satan, looks like some fifth-graders did it. The notes indicate that The Louvins set up the cover photo (complete with real fire) and nearly scorched themselves in the process. Note nervous smiles on Ira's and Charlie's faces. The set-up works by complementing the fervor in the music, the same way those "Jesus Saves" signs along Southern roads once did.

**Tennessee Ernie Ford:** When I first heard the *Sixteen Tons* album (HAT 3118) by Tennessee Ernie Ford back in 1968, I knew it was something special. I simply couldn't believe that Ernie, the pious gospel singer I'd heard as a kid, was singing these hot, swinging country boogie tunes like "Shotgun Boogie," "Blackberry Boogie," "Smokey Mountain Boogie," "Country Junction" and "Milk 'Em in the Morning Blues." I never rested until I found myself a copy of the album a few years later. Of course, it contains his 1955 smash version of the Merle Travis coal mining classic. And the hit boogies and other hits like "Mule Train," all dating from the late 1940's to the mid 1950's, are here as well.

The excellent bass playing on these sides comes from none other than new Country Music Hall of Famer and former *Hometown Jamboree* host Cliffie Stone, father of Highway 101's Curtis Stone. This collection plus the See For Miles *Farmyard Boogie* album we mentioned last time will give you a substantial

chunk of some of the best material Ernie ever made. Stetson mistakenly used a cover from a later, ten-song reissue of this album, but the record itself has all 12 of the original numbers.

**Webb Pierce:** If one album qualifies as the Holy Grail for fans of Webb Pierce's greatest early hits, it's *The Wondering Boy* (HAT 3119). Originally released as a 10-inch album in 1953, it was reissued with four more songs in 1956, and those songs encompass nearly all of his best-selling early 1950's honky tonk recordings for Decca, including six of the best honky tonk recordings ever made by anyone: "There Stands the Glass," "Wondering," "Slowly," "Back Street Affair," "Love, Love, Love" and "I'm Gonna Fall Out of Love With You."

If Pierce had never made another record, these would remain some of the finest honky tonk performances ever created. And these aren't the later re-recordings, but the *originals*. "Slowly," featuring Bud Isaacs' pedal steel, was the record that sent steel players buying pedal steels or rigging up their own pedal mechanisms to get Isaacs' sound. This is an absolute must-have, and it's how Webb got that famous guitar-shaped swimming pool.

**Jimmy Bryant:** Not many issues back, we looked at Stetson's reissue of Jimmy Bryant's landmark Capitol album *Country Cabin Jazz*, one of the finest country guitar instrumental albums ever

recorded. No ment that e land's See f brings us (SEE 267) despite include gles ' amo Ch' Pe J On. ture Bry. guitarist pa. West backing othe. among them country bo. singer-pianist Merrill Moore.

Three mistakes shouldn't have been made. Ernie Ford's "Catfish Boogie" is a later remake that doesn't even feature Bryant. In addition, the producers used the wrong version of "Whistle Stop," and instead of "Bryant's Boogie," which the cover indicates was included, they mistakenly used another number, "Bryant's Bounce." British compiler John Firminger obviously knows less about Bryant than his liner notes (a fair portion lifted from my 1987 *Guitar Player Magazine* article about Bryant without crediting) would have you believe.

**Patsy Cline:** MCA Records' aggressive reissue policy on classic Patsy Cline material has taken care of much of the obvious material, the big hits and album cuts. The problem is, beyond that how much is available that hasn't already been issued? That's never certain. New and long forgotten recordings have ways of turning up. In any case, MCA's latest Cline reissue,

Slow. On In a. Home," "Stop, ten," the Sonny e. "For Rent," Webb Pie. "Yes, I Know Why" and the big pop hit of the year, "The Wayward Wind," Cline shows she possessed versatility even before "Walkin' After Midnight." All are backed by co-star Faron Young's band, The Country Deputies.

The 1960 numbers, recorded for the *Country Style USA* program sponsored by the Army, encompass two contrasting styles: "Stupid Cupid," Connie Francis' pop hit from two years earlier (with some hot guitar from Hank Garland), and Roger Miller's "When Your House is Not a Home." By the time the last numbers here were recorded, Patsy had finally achieved stardom, but she still stretched her repertoire with unexpected tunes.

The 1961 numbers recorded for the Air Force's *Country Music Time* were, for example, the pop standard "Side by Side" and "Just a Closer Walk With Thee." The later numbers, from a 1962 edition of *Country Music Time*, were both written by two of Nashville's best songwriters. "Shoes" came from Hank Cochran and co-writer (and pioneering Nashville female studio guitarist) Velma Smith, while "Strange" was co-written by Mel Tillis and Fred Burch. Cline fans looking for everything don't dare pass this one up.

-RICH KIENZLE

### How to Get These Treasures

Available in CD only at prices shown: Hank Thompson, *Collector's Series, Vol. 2* (CDP-7 92124-2), \$16.98/Ferlin Husky, *Collector's Series* (CDP-7 916292), \$16.98. Available in LP or cassette: Ferlin Husky, *Songs of the Home and Heart* (HAT 3115), \$10.98/Hawkshaw Hawkins, *Hawkshaw Hawkins Sings* (HAT 3111), \$10.98/Connie Smith, *Where is My Castle* (HAT 3112), \$10.98/Porter Wagoner, *The Bluegrass Story* (HAT 3113), \$10.98/The Louvin Bros., *Satan is Real* (HAT 3117), \$10.98/Tennessee Ernie Ford, *Sixteen Tons* (HAT 3118), \$10.98/Webb Pierce, *The Wondering Boy* (HAT 3119), \$10.98. Available in LP only: Jimmy Bryant, *Guitar Take Off* (SEE 267), \$14.98. Available in LP, cassette and CD: Patsy Cline, *Patsy Cline Live, Vol. 2* (MCA-42284), LP and CA \$10.98, CD \$19.98.

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RIC BOYER



stage left at a fair, mixing the sound, with headphones on. And one of the things that we had been told time and time again was, "Don't get too loud." So, anyway, there we were performing, and I look over there, and my band sees my face and they look, too. And we lose it, because smoke is pouring out of his headphones! And he starts sniffing, and then he's trying to pull the headphones off, because they're on fire. And we're dying! Of course, it was something electronic, but the picture was perfect: "Yeah, I guess we were a little too loud."

5

That's a good one. Irby's probably still trying to forget it. Any more?

Another time at a fair my cousin from Illinois, Imogene, who had a beauty salon, was there. And my father was starting to get a little gray in his sideburns. So since she was there, my father decided to have her put some color on his sideburns. And in the heat of the sun at a fair, you can imagine how hot it gets. I looked over at my dad, and his sideburns were touching at the bottom of his chin!

6

Your last few releases have had a good, real country feel to them. Gritsy...

Gritsy. Like grits the food? I hate grits!

7

How can you live in the South and hate grits?

I love fried okra. I'm sorry.

8

In any case, it seems like the musical cycle has swung back again toward country...

Well, you see, I've been asked, after "I Wish That I Could Fall in Love Today," the old Harlan Howard song, which did very well, and it's like, oh boy, you're starting to do this—how did they put it—new traditional? I'm thrilled and pleased they liked it, but it's almost—and I don't mean this in a derogatory sense—amus-

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...tional woman.

We caught up with her in Los Angeles, where she was getting ready to go on *The Arsenio Hall Show*, and she agreed to answer 50, that is, 20 questions.

1

All right, we'll bite. What is new with you, Barbara?

Well, I'm doing a lot of television because of the Musicians' Union strike that's on in Las Vegas. I work Bally's in Las Vegas, and even though I will not cross the line, I still have to be available as if the strike were going to be over soon to uphold my end of the contract. The strike is still on, so I've done *The Pat Sajak Show* and, night before last, I did a spot on a PBS special saluting the 25th anniversary of the Hollywood Symphony. I thought that was very important, because, of course, music to me is everything. This coming Thursday night, I'll be doing *Arsenio Hall*.

2

Are you nervous being on a flashy show like *Arsenio Hall*?

No. I'm a great big fan of that show. You know, a person who's interviewed a lot pays close attention to television hosts who interview celebrities.

3

He's a slick interviewer...

I agree with you, Michael. But it's in the same way...like when I was interviewed by Barbara Walters. That was

# 20 Questions with BARBARA MANDRELL

by Michael Bane

the only time I had ever been nervous and afraid before an interview, because I thought she might be rough on me. I must tell you, by the time we sat down to do the interview—it was in my home—she just embraced me with her warmth and caring, and I felt absolutely comfortable with her. And she did get more out of me. And that was a very difficult interview, because it was the first one after my car crash in 1984. She was magnif-

icent. I've never met Arsenio, but I feel that it should be fun.

4

We all know Irby Mandrell, your father, is also your manager, but tell me the funniest Irby Mandrell story you remember.

You know, you can only do what your income would allow you to do. So my father would drive the bus; mix the sound; do all the things a manager does, too. At any rate, he was

ing to me. I used to sing "I Wish That I Could Fall in Love Today" when I was in high school. I literally grew up not just as a country music fan; I grew up performing country music. So some things that are basically a "new" thing are not new to me. It's something I've already done.

9

**New audiences. New singers. New critics...**

That's true, too. But, you know, it always meant so much to me, and you must appreciate—and I think you've known me long enough to know this, Michael—I was a very privileged person in that, even though I was just a child, I had the chance to know, experience and work with people like Tex Ritter, Red Foley, Cowboy Copas and even Patsy Cline. I had just turned 13 years old when I had the chance to learn from and become friends with Patsy Cline. She took me under her wing for the weeks I was on tour with The Johnny Cash Show with Patsy Cline. So I was taught by really great people. And it amuses me too when I read that, "Oh, she's too much like a Vegas show...." Well, I'm sorry, but that's what I was taught. I worked with Tex Ritter and Merle Travis. I was taught that if you were going out on a stage, it had better be something visual, because, otherwise, they could just stay home and listen to records.

10

**So we shouldn't look for the Barbara Mandrell acoustic album and tour anytime soon?**

I don't think so. You know, though, one of the greatest honors of my life, Michael, if I can brag a little, was a few years back when Mr. Monroe was doing an album with various friends doing cuts with him on the album. And he asked for me, and I got to do one with him. Other than the Opry, I'd never had a chance to work with Bill Monroe. Gosh, I even asked Mr. Mon-

roe if I could play dobro with him, and he said sure. Later on, The Bluegrass Boys told me I was the only musician who'd ever played dobro with him on record. Boy, don't you know I felt like something! Although we're electric, I try to put a little of that flavor into my show with my banjo and dobro. Because that's what I am—variety.

11

**Someone wrote recently that there was no such thing as the past. Deejays used to say "oldies" and mean a song 20 years old. Now they mean a song from last summer...**

Yes, but there are songs that every country music fan should recognize, even if they didn't know the songs were country at the time. Seriously. I'm not being a smart alec. On this new album I'm working on, called *Morning Sun*, there are three old songs, two of which were old Ray Price songs. One was "You Wouldn't Know Love If It Looked You In the Eye"; the other was "Crazy Arms." Well, I sang "Crazy Arms" so much when I was in high school! We asked Ray Price if he would sing harmony with me, and he did. He told me later that it was the first time he had ever sung with a girl. I started thinking, any song of his you want to name, from "Crazy Arms" to...to.... Good, Barbara.

12

**"For the Good Times?"**

I was working on "Lay your head upon my shoulder..." Eventually, I'd have gotten to the chorus. But even if you didn't know that was country music, even a newcomer would remember it. Or "Nightlife." That is a lasting, wonderful song. It can never be an old song.

13

**Are there any Barbara Mandrell songs that fit into that category?**

Well, "Years." Remember the song "Years"? Also, "I Was Country When Country Wasn't Cool." To me, the

lyrics just hit me in my heart and gut or whatever you want to say. That was my life. 'Cause even when I was in grade school, out here doing a four-hour live television show with some of the people I've named, I would go back to school on Monday and the kids would yell "Yee-haw!" or "Hillbilly!"—poking fun at me. It continued through high school. In four years of high school I went to one football game, one dance, because on the weekends, I was busy playing country music for our servicemen in my daddy's band. So that song really meant something to me. Also the very first Number One record I ever had, "The Midnight Oil."

14

**Let's talk about "The Midnight Oil," since it's probably one of the greatest cheating songs ever sung.**

To my knowledge, that was the first time a girl had said, "Say, I'll cheat." It had always been him who was slipping around. You know how they say timing is everything? It is, in my opinion. I think "The Midnight Oil" is a great written song, but also the timing was right on. Girls just didn't...we were all angels; the men were not. In fact, at that time, Billy Sherrill was my producer, and, of course, he also produced George Jones. We were looking for songs for me, and he played me this song he was going to play for George—"The Midnight Oil." And I wanted that song! Billy said, "Okay, how can we fix it so you can use it?"

15

**You're also working on an autobiography?**

Right. Working on an album. Working on a book. Working on touring. Working on television. I'd go to the recording studio at ten A.M., work until four, when we'd start rehearsal. We'd do four or five hours of rehearsal, then I'd go home and start all over the next day. I'm really thankful that it worked. And that it's over.

16

**That sounds too much like work to me...**

It was, and I'm reaping the benefits of it now. When we put the show on the road and let my bosses judge it, I was pleased. We only had to change one song.

17

**Let's get back to the book, the one you're doing with George Vecsey.**

George Vecsey's the only person I ever thought of or ever wanted. A few years ago I did a three-day interview situation with him, and I loved it. I had started the book in long-hand on a legal pad. This is my life story, and even though moments are difficult, I feel they're important.

18

**Why did you decide to do a book? Haven't there been a number of other books?**

That's why.

19

**Elaborate...**

Well, since working on this book, I'm very aware that I've been blessed with a very interesting life. I've been on the mountaintop, and way down in the valley. And I think it's important for people to know the whole thing. That no one is picture perfect, does everything right.

20

**It's like an extended therapy session, isn't it?**

It really is! It's such an important thing...I care very deeply. It's not phony in any way. I don't know whether I'm right or wrong, and sometimes I think I'm wrong. But I really do care. I really do care what people think of me. It's not all my ego. I mean, I have an ego. Everyone has an ego....If you don't have self-pride, I'm worried for you. But I really think it's because I care about them. I know not everybody loves me. I know not everyone likes what I do. I know I can't please everyone. But I try desperately.

# TOP 25

## Singles

1. Randy Travis ..... *It's Just a Matter of Time*
2. Garth Brooks ..... *If Tomorrow Never Comes*
3. Shenandoah ..... *Two Dozen Roses*
4. Don Williams ..... *I've Been Loved by the Best*
5. Ronnie Milsap ..... *A Woman in Love*
6. Patty Loveless ..... *The Lonely Side of Love*
7. Lorrie Morgan ..... *Out of Your Shoes*
8. Holly Dunn ..... *There Goes My Heart Again*
9. Travis Tritt ..... *Country Club*
10. Highway 101 ..... *Who's Lonely Now*
11. Billy Joe Royal ..... *Till I Can't Take It Anymore*
12. Dolly Parton ..... *Yellow Roses*
13. Glen Campbell ..... *She's Gone, Gone, Gone*
14. Keith Whitley ..... *It Ain't Nothin'*
15. Vern Gosdin ..... *That Just About Does It*
16. Wild Rose ..... *Breaking New Ground*
17. Mary Chapin  
Carpenter ..... *Never Had It So Good*
18. Reba McEntire ..... *Til Love Comes Again*
19. Rodney Crowell ..... *Many a Long & Lonesome  
Highway*
20. The Charlie Daniels  
Band ..... *Simple Man*
21. Willie Nelson ..... *There You Are*
22. Skip Ewing ..... *It's You Again*
23. Sawyer Brown ..... *The Race is On*
24. Nitty Gritty Dirt Band ..... *When It's Gone*
25. Tanya Tucker ..... *My Arms Stay Open All Night*

## Albums

1. Randy Travis ..... *No Holdin' Back*
2. Clint Black ..... *Killin' Time*
3. Dwight Yoakam ..... *Just Lookin' for a Hit*
4. Reba McEntire ..... *Reba Live*
5. Ricky Van Shelton ..... *Loving Proof*
6. Sawyer Brown ..... *The Boys are Back*
7. Dolly Parton ..... *White Limozeen*
8. Shenandoah ..... *The Road not Taken*
9. Hank Williams Jr. .... *Greatest Hits III*
10. Keith Whitley ..... *I Wonder Do You Think of Me*
11. Garth Brooks ..... *Garth Brooks*
12. George Strait ..... *Beyond the Blue Neon*
13. The Charlie Daniels  
Band ..... *Simple Man*
14. Willie Nelson ..... *A Horse Called Music*
15. Lorrie Morgan ..... *Leave the Light On*
16. Kenny Rogers ..... *Something Inside so Strong*
17. Vern Gosdin ..... *Alone*
18. Patty Loveless ..... *Honky Tonk Angel*
19. K.T. Oslin ..... *This Woman*
20. Reba McEntire ..... *Sweet Sixteen*
21. k.d. lang ..... *Absolute Torch and Twang*
22. Rodney Crowell ..... *Keys to the Highway*
23. Alabama ..... *Southern Star*
24. Randy Travis ..... *Always & Forever*
25. The Judds ..... *River of Time*

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