

COUNTRYMUSIC



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20 Questions with
HARLAN HOWARD

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TRITT
His Own Game

HAL KETCHUM
Makes the Point

MARK COLLIE
Makes the Grade



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COUNTRY MUSIC

FEATURES

4 20 Questions with Harlan Howard *by Michael Bane*

Name any number of hit country songs of the past 35 years, and it's a safe bet that one of its writers is Howard. The master songsmith talks about his craft, his annual Birthday Bash and his passion—traditional country.

36 Lorrie Morgan Pull-Out Centerfold

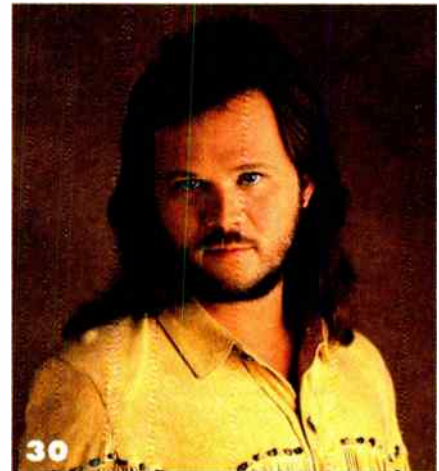
There's a lot going on in Lorrie's career, from hit records to TV pilots, and more. Get the photos and the facts.

40 Hal Ketchum: Songs from the Dark Side *by Bob Allen*

Call it instinct, inspiration or just plain gut feeling, Hal Ketchum's music has that special something. Add to that his good looks and his tenacity, and you have the audience wanting more.

44 Mark Collie: Candidate for Success *by Michael McCall*

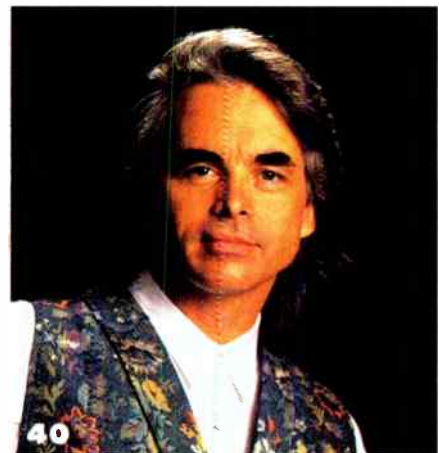
As a newcomer to country music, Mark Collie learned the tricks of the trade. His education is paying off in hit records and calls from Hollywood.



COVER STORY

30 Travis Tritt Plays His Own Game *by Michael McCall*

Disappointed with the Nashville music industry and irritated by the public's view of his feud with Billy Ray Cyrus, Travis Tritt has been on a roller coaster ride of ups and downs. But Travis says he won't conform to an establishment he doesn't believe in, and he's willing to pay the price.



DEPARTMENTS

People

by Hazel Smith

There's live music in Nashville, Dolly, Loretta and Tammy become Honky Tonk Angels, Sony makes some changes and parties are poppin' all over town. More platinum for Billy Ray, The Statlers get their due, Waylon's out with a boxed set and Pam Tillis has her second Gold. Plus, Hazel goes to Branson and reports.

Record Reviews

6 Letters

Billy Ray, Tippin and Loveless are cheered, Record Reviews are booed. Plus, sweeps winners and more.

Buried Treasures

by Rich Kienzle

Boxed sets on Elvis and Western music, reissues on Haggard, Wills, Moon Mullican, The Davis Sisters and more.

Essential Collector

by Rich Kienzle

Books and videos on the women of country, George Jones, Roy Clark, Skeeter Davis and more.

The Final Note

by Patrick Carr

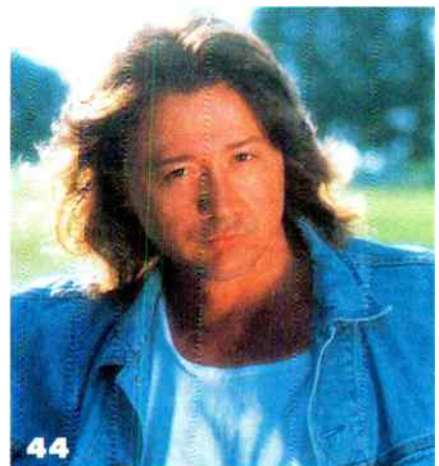
A visit to Dallas gets Patrick to thinking about Wills, Waylon and more.

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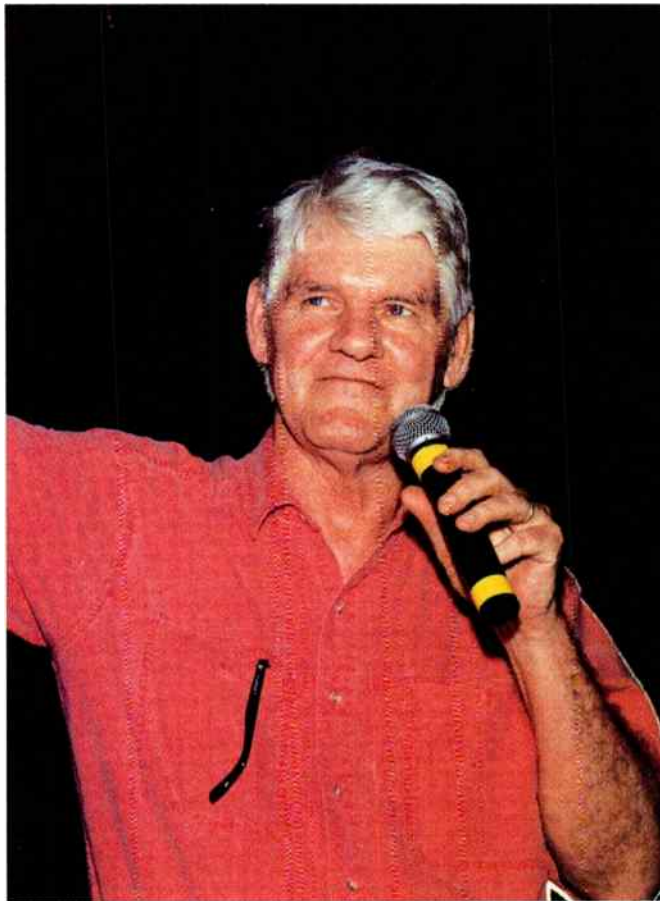


COVER PHOTO: BEVERLY PARKER

ANNE COLLIE

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"I Fall to Pieces," "Tiger by the Tail," "Too Many Rivers," "Somebody Should Leave," "Sally Was a Good Ole Girl," "I Don't Remember Loving You," "Heartaches by the Number," "Gone, Gone, Gone," "The Streets of Baltimore," "The Chokin' Kind," "Why Not Me," "Somewhere Tonight," "Blame It on Your Heart," "Don't Tell Me What to Do"—the song titles alone tell the story. Hit after hit after hit, from the 1950's through the 1960's, 70's, 80's and now solidly into the 1990's, Harlan Howard's love songs are the heart and soul of country music. Every year, Harlan hosts his Birthday Bash, an outgrowth of the old guitar-pullin's at Tootsie's Orchid Lounge, where young songwriters have a chance to show their stuff. We caught up with him after his most recent Bash, and he had all the right 20 answers.



20 Questions with HARLAN HOWARD

— by Michael Bane —

1 How did this year's Birthday Bash go?

Actually, this was the biggest, most well-attended one we've ever had. People keep saying it's getting to be *the* party on Music Row every year, and I'm pleased about that, because it makes the young writers shine. They only get to do a couple of songs apiece, but it makes for a wonderful evening. We party for about six hours, and then it's over.

2 What do you think of the new crop of "kids"?

I think there's a bunch of wonderful writers here, especially the ones who make a living at it. There might be two or three around I'm not aware of who are going to be great—there usually are. But I think we've got a lot more singers and records and product than we used to have, so you don't seem to hear a whole lot of "He Stopped Loving Her Today" and so forth. It doesn't seem to me that I hear as many classics, songs I think are going to be classics, as I did in the 50's and maybe the 60's. I'm not talking about my songs—I'm talking as a fan. There's just so darn many songs, I think the gravy is getting a little thinner as far as great songs.

3 With the huge success of country, it's brought a lot more people into the fold...

Well, there's always been all kinds of country music. There's been the middle of the road and the folksy country and the little bit bluegrass and so forth. But I've always been into the traditional. Still, there's people like Alan Jackson—he's pretty traditional and pretty refreshing. I think he in particular is kind of doing what I've always liked about country music. Just the good, hard-hitting songs. Good mu-

sic. There's a handful of other guys; some are not all that country, but they make good music. And the folks love them.

My position, I'm sitting here and I don't have a problem with any of that. It seems that a part of what used to be pop music has been captured by country music. Like The Eagles and so forth. So now we've got the good music from that. Hey, I don't have any quarrel with any music we capture. I just love my traditional stuff.

4 Heading through your sixth decade, do you find yourself slowing down any as a writer?

Oh, yeah, I would say if I could write 12 or 15 songs a year, which would also include some co-writing, I'd consider that a really productive year after 35 years of writing. And I still love to get a good record, so I want to stay at least partially active from here on out.

5 I'm sure you've had to think about why you're still producing hit songs while so many others have burned out...

I'm not sure, Michael. I do know when you get in a slump, you feel so bad you wonder who did write those songs, the ones that have your name on them. You lose your confidence. I've done that, but I've always fought my way back. I've just really bore down, and even if I have to write a few terrible songs, I eventually work my way back up to the mark. I don't quite understand it myself. I know when I was a kid, I admired not only the people in country music, but also the old Tin Pan Alley masters, and I always wanted to be like them. I considered that if I ever got in this profession, I was going to do it for the rest of my life.

6 I think you mentioned once that the basic theme of country music was, "I love you," and there are six variations on that theme. Still think that?

I think what I was saying was that the only songs that interested me were love songs, and there's only five or six different things to say about love. I miss you. I wish I could find you. It's like Archie Campbell told me years ago—there are only five jokes and a bunch of variations. I kind of took that thought and ran with it. There's only about five things, six at the most, to say about a man and a woman and this thing called love. But yet, within that, it's still refreshing how original writers can be within those five or six stories.

7 As a songwriter, have you ever cringed when one of your songs came on the radio? You know, I've had a lot of

records, and I've had my share that were not great. But I'll tell you what, usually the bad ones don't come out on the radio, thank God. Sometimes they don't even make the album. I've been disappointed a few times, but I've never really cringed. Actually, looking back, I've had so damn many good records—a superb job by the singers and the musicians and the engineers and the arrangers. I've really probably had more great records than I deserve.

8 *I know you've cut a couple of albums back when, but have you ever performed?*

No, except at this birthday thing, and I don't really perform there. I do a couple of songs at 6:30, when the show starts and there's hardly anybody there, so nobody hears me. I made five albums in the 60's and 70's, but actually, back then, they'd ask any writer who was a good professional writer to sing. It wasn't that unusual. I went out with Waylon and a few buddies like Buck Owens, so I knew how the road was, and I never really liked it. I hate driving. Those 500-mile jumps every day could get real old real fast to me. So I just said I'll write songs and let them sing 'em.

9 *So you never did a show?*

No, I did one, in Houston. I had a song that was a pretty big hit in the South, singing "She Called Me Baby All Night Long." It was weird, but this was like a Number One pop record in Houston. So they wanted me on this big package show featuring Johnny Cash and a lot of other people. I named such a ridiculous price that I figured I wouldn't have to do it. Anyhow, they paid me, and a deal is a deal, so I went and did it. I did it good, actually, but I didn't love it. When I got back, I thought, well, I had worried about that show for two months beforehand and I hadn't written any songs. Probably cost me a fortune.

10 *The Birthday Bash is the only taste a lot of newcomers get of what it was like in the old days at Tootsie's...*

Tootsie's is where it started. Then I used to have parties at my house, and we'd have 35 songwriters sitting around. We'd all do this two song thing—I'd sing then, just to get it started. We'd sing two, then pass the guitar on. Usually you'd sing once in the evening. The Birthday Bash is a spin-off of the old times.

11 *How does Harlan Howard write a country song?*

I've got kind of a system, and it's always been that way. I like to find a good title. Then I study it for a while, think about what stories I could write from that title. Then I'll pick out the one that I think most people will like, the most commercial story. Then I'll kind of have an inkling of whether it's going to be a slow ballad or a rhythm thing or so forth. Then I'll either reject the idea as not strong enough, or I'll keep thinking about it, and all of a sudden I'm thinking we've got to have a little chorus here, and a line pops to mind. And I start writing the stuff down. Sometimes it comes to me real quickly, and sometimes I might not get anything for a month or two. Then all of a sudden that little piece of paper becomes a song. I just write the lyrics, and the melody just appears in my mind. When I get about half-way through, I pick up the guitar and I mess around with the melody.

Finally, I put it on tape and see how it sounds, judge it against anything else I've written. I like to get five or six of them ready, maybe three that I think will get recorded; then I hire a band and go do a demo session.

12 *What are some of the ones that have come quickly?*

I remember hits like "The Chokin' Kind," where I just thought of it and wrote it down. It was only three verses, 12 lines. "Life Turned Her That Way" was quick. I was just fooling around. I actually found the title after I'd started writing the song, which is really unusual. Sometimes you just sit around and practice rhyming—I used to

do that 30 years ago a lot. Nowadays, I'm not frantic like I used to be. I was moving awfully fast in the 60's.

13 *Is there one song that you really had to agonize over?*

Yeah. You remember the song "No Charge"? Melba Montgomery did it, and it was a big hit all over the world. About the little boy who was charging his mama for everything? Well, it was quite a sentimental song, and that took me months and months. It wound up being my favorite song, but it was hard. A lot of the singing part was from her point of view, being pregnant, things I hadn't experienced, so I was kind of groping around for the words. Finally, they all fell into place. Then I didn't like the ending I had—the kid sounded like a spoiled little brat. So I wound up making him turn into a nice guy at the end. I guess that was the most painstaking I've ever been with a song, but I finally got what I wanted. There's nothing to change now. I'm satisfied with it.

14 *One that pops to my mind that is totally different from other Harlan Howard songs is John Conlee's "I Don't Remember Loving You."*

Oh, yeah. I had been in a slump for a while, and I took a couple of years off. Somewhere along the way, I just picked up a guitar. I'd been thinking about insanity and how women can drive you nuts and all, and I just invented this story. It's also one of my favorites—sad, but funny. You can only get into a song every so often that has those two moods.

15 *Are there any others out of the 4000 or so you've written that are your favorites?*

Oh, I don't know. I like "Too Many Rivers," both Brenda Lee's and The Forester Sisters' version. I really liked "Don't Tell Me What To Do" that I wrote with Max Barnes for Pam Tillis. I had a lot of fun writing with Kostas, including the Patty Loveless hit, "Blame It on Your Heart." We just

laughed our butts off and had fun. Then it was Number One for Patty, and we went to the party and had a great time. Patty's a little darlin'.

16 *It must have been cool writing for Pam Tillis; you wrote for Mel, too.*

Hey, I wrote each of their first Number Ones. Did you know that, Michael? "Life Turned Her That Way" was Mel's first, and "Don't Tell Me What To Do" was Pam's first. I think, historically, that's kind of interesting. Pam's got a little boy, you know, and I told her if that kid ever gets a record deal to let me know.

17 *Is there any song you ever wished you'd written?*

I don't know. I have thoughts of admiration, but I don't think I've ever thought "Damn, I wish I'd written that" in 30 years. I used to do that, say in the late 1950's, and that's kind of called coveting. And I fought that. I finally thought, "Damn, I can't write every hit that's on the radio." Instead of being jealous, I should enjoy these things. But I do admire, and I do listen—I'm an old pro, and I listen to every word. I loved "Wind Beneath My Wings." I think that's one of the greatest love songs I've ever heard. But I didn't wish I wrote it.

18 *Any artist you wish had recorded your song but hasn't?*

Well, Michael, I'd like to have all the artists cut one. I've had great singers, going back to a Bing Crosby cut.

19 *I didn't know you had a Bing Crosby cut...*

Yeah, on his last album, he cut "Heartaches by the Number." It pleased me a lot. I've never had a record by Kathy Mattea, and that would be very pleasing. I know there's a handful of people around I'd like to have records on.

20 *So, all in all, you can sum up this career by saying it beats the hell out of driving a forklift.*

Hell, I had worse jobs than that. Beats the hell out of working.

People

NASHVILLE ON STAGE

You fans asked for it, and you're gonna get it. Live music in Music City come '94. Nashville's hottest acts are set for Opryland's new concert series called Nashville On Stage, at the Opryland entertainment resort. From May 6th to October 2nd, 1994, Nashville On Stage will present three artists a night in three theaters at the complex. **Alabama** headlines at Opryland's Chevy/GEO Theater for 105 shows. **George Jones** is set to perform 108 shows in the Theater by the Lake. There'll be two shows daily at each theater. The Acuff Theater talent lineup reads like who's who on country radio, featuring artists such as **Marty Stuart**, **Doug Stone**, **Hal Ketchum** and **Patty Loveless**. Other artists performing in these venues are **Tanya Tucker**, **Tammy Wynette** and **The Oak Ridge Boys**. Tickets will range from \$12.95 to \$19.95. A free information package is available by calling 1-800-535-0200. See you there. And as I told you before, *Hee Haw Live* will also be performing at the Roy Acuff Theater during this time frame. Are you excited? I am.

SHIFT AT SONY

Sony Music, parent company of the Epic and Columbia labels, has announced major management changes for its Nashville division. Gone are president **Roy Wunsch** and VP **Mike Martinovich**. Taking the reins are **Scott Siman** as Senior VP, **Paul Worley** as Executive VP and **Allen Butler** as Executive VP and General Manager. Siman, who'll oversee day-to-day management, was a partner in the Nashville entertainment law firm, Benson & Siman. Worley has been a producer and a VP at Sony/Tree, and will be responsible for creative direction. Butler, who's worked at both RCA and Arista, will oversee artist development, promotion, marketing, sales administration and media. Sony Music Executive Vice President **Michele Anthony** will act in an advisory capacity for Sony Nashville's daily operations. Changes were announced by **Thomas D. Mottola**, President and COO of Sony Music Entertainment.



George Jones, Alabama, Marty Stuart, Tammy Wynette, Doug Stone, The Oak Ridge Boys and Hal Ketchum get set to kick off next season's Nashville On Stage, bringing live music from the best and the brightest to three stages in Nashville.

MURRAH HOT

My friend, **Roger Murrah**, wasn't always rich like he is now. I knew him poor, and I know him rich. Poor was just as good from where I sit. I'm sure Roger does not agree. Laying cuteness aside, Roger called to let me know that Murrah Music Corporation was named *Billboard*' Magazine's Number One independent publisher for 1993. Dig this: Murrah Music was also *Billboard*'s Number Five publisher overall, behind powerhouses like Sony-Tree, Songs of Polygram, Warner-Tamerland and Sony Cross Keys. Congratulations to Roger and staff. Wealth, fame and all the trappings that go with it couldn't happen to a nicer, more deserving guy.

HONKY TONK ANGEL DIVAS

My chill bumps got chill bumps. "Last night," answered **Loretta Lynn** when asked when was the last times her hands

were dirty. "Cleaned my oven. I'm just like you," she added. "You might not believe it."

"My daughter's expecting twins," said **Tammy Wynette**. "I've been down taking care of her. Another daughter already has a set of twins," allowed country's first lady.

"I have someone to clean once a week," said **Dolly Parton**, "I like to do my own cooking though, 'cause I like what I cook better than what anybody else cooks. I have a garden. You can really claw in the dirt with these things," she added holding up her hands with inch-long nails.

Together to publicize their Columbia CD, *Honky Tonk Angels*, the diamond trio drew a crowd at the Country Music Hall of Fame recently. "We've been talking about doing this project for years backstage at the Opry," confessed Dolly, whose low-cut dress featured a long-waisted black velvet top with purple, silver and black beads. There were sequins applied on the short skirt, and two-inch high heels of silver and black on Miss Dolly's feet. "Thought we'd better get on with it

Reporter: Hazel Smith

Editor: Rochelle Friedman



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*Franklin Mint Precision Models.
Simply Miles Ahead.*

People

before we got too old to sing," she said.

Diamonds on her fingers, black lace jacket and black sequined short skirt—Tammy Wynette was never more beautiful. With a new blonde coiffure, a fuller shoulder-length do, Wynette, the quieter of the three, at 50, could easily pass for 30. You'd never know she was a grandmother and just out of the hospital with stomach problems that have plagued her for years.

"Did I sing that?" asked Loretta Lynn when questioned as to how she felt singing to the late **Patsy Cline's** 1960 vocal of "Lovesick Blues." Parton allowed as how she did. 'Patsy gonna haunt us for this,' quipped Loretta. Dressed in a magenta sequined overblouse with black sequined pants, Loretta's still a beauty, but she looked tired. Four months at husband **Mooney's** bedside in the hospital after his open heart surgery and the complications that followed it have taken their toll on the lady known and loved as the Coal Miner's Daughter. Loretta's remarks on how to get into country music brought chuckles: "If I wanted something, I'd go out and get it. But I've done it all. So who cares?" I can't recall who made the rest of these cracks, but they are good uns: One was "We are sprung chickens, not spring chickens." Another was "One of the discarded titles for the album was *Hot Flashes*." And finally "We are as old as yesterday and as young as tomorrow." Amen, I added.

The first song on the tape is the **Kitty**

Wells 1952 classic, "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels." (For you kids: Loretta sings the first two lines, Dolly the second two, then the chorus, second verse, Kitty Wells sings the first two lines and Tammy sings the last two). Kitty Wells, the original Queen of Country Music, still reigns. Kitty joined the trio onstage midway through the question and answer period. When asked for advice for today's younger stars, Miss Kitty allowed: "Work hard, be dedicated and most importantly, be yourself." Kitty said some of her favorites today are **Reba, Tanya, Alan Jackson** and **Vince Gill**. "But they're all good," she added with a smile.

If I had died on the spot, it would have been okay. You see, I was in the presence of the diva angel trio—right in honky tonk heaven. Among the people present in that room, I wonder how many of those who know and love musical history were as thrilled as I was. And, fans, I do recommend this album. The music is almost as good as the moment. **Roy Wunsch** (President of Sony/Nashville at the time the press conference took place) was there to celebrate this historic occasion, as was the entire Sony staff. **Steve Buckingham**, who co-produced the project with Dolly, was all smiles; so were **Connie Baer, Jack Lameier, Kay Smith, Vickie Rowland** and **Doug Brusa**, and I was quite surprised to see Nashville native, the lovely **Rita Coolidge**, there as well.



Jack Lameier, Roy Wunsch, Loretta Lynn, Dolly Parton, Tammy Wynette, Steve Buckingham and Connie Baer at the Honky Tonk Angels press conference. I was there.

COUNTRYMUSIC

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People



The Statlers' Phil Balsley and Don Reid, Mercury execs Harold Shedd and Luke Lewis, and Statlers Harold Reid and Jimmy Fortune celebrate sales of 15 million records.

THE STATLERS HONORED

The most awarded act in country music history, **The Statler Brothers**, were honored yet again with 12 long overdue platinum and Gold albums. They've sold some 15 million albums in their 23 years with Mercury Records. Albums receiving awards were *Best of The Statler Brothers*—double platinum, *Christmas Card*—platinum, *Today*—Gold, *Gospel Favorites*—Gold and *Holy Bible New Testament*—Gold. **Luke Lewis**, President, Mercury/Nashville, and **Harold Shedd**, Senior Vice President of Creative/Nashville, made the presentation at TNN's studio, where the foursome tapes their popular television show. The Statlers are presently taping their third season for the network. Their show is TNN's highest-rated program. A new album, *Home*, is out now.

SYMPATHY (GEORGE, CALL HAZEL)

Love and sympathy to **Bobby, Susan and Lisa Heller** on the passing of Bob's father, (State? hb) Supreme Court Justice, the Honorable **Louis B. Heller**, following a long illness. Bobby is the "Heller" in Hazel and Heller Management. Guess who Hazel is...

I'M A BILLY RAY FAN, MAN

Remember me telling you all how much **Billy Ray Cyrus** helps people, especially kids? Recently others took notice of this fact, and, sure enough, he was presented

the Recognition Award by the Make-a-Wish Foundation. With his unbelievable schedule, Billy Ray made time to fulfill the wishes of 12 terminally ill children. Greater love can no one give than the love given a child with a short span on this earth. "Achy, Breaky Heart" is the song that made Billy Ray a household word. However, Billy Ray has a heart that aches and breaks for those little ones. I'm a Billy Ray Fan, man.

GIRL AT THE HOUSE

Tara Rose Smith, daughter of **Terry** and **Sharon Smith**, sister of **Tyler Smith**, made her debut into the world September 9, 1993. Oh, what a happy day for me. I've been folding jockey shorts all my life, so it's pretty amazing to have a beautiful little girl at the house. Terry is half of the **Billy** and **Terry Smith** duo.

WILD ME AT THE WILD BOAR

My engraved invitation from Mr. **Jimmy Bowen** was quite impressive for starters. And on a scale of one to 10, the Wild Boar restaurant is definitely 10-plus in anybody's book, so I was impressed again. "Honoring **Charles Koppleman**, Chairman and CEO of EMI Records Group of North America," the invitation read. I RSVP'd, naturally, and appeared on time. I must say it was truly an enjoyable luncheon. Excellent food. The bash was given by and for the people who smile all the way to the bank because of **Garth Brooks'** record sales. You see,

EMI is the parent company of Garth's label, Liberty.

I did find **Koppleman's** remarks quite humorous when he referred to Liberty head **Jimmy Bowen's** continual golf game and month-long Hawaiian vacations. What Mr. K. hasn't yet learned, but all of Nashville knows, is that Mr. B. actually resides in Hawaii and just drops by his Nashville digs when he gets lax on his golf game.

"Not enough to hurt my playing," the great **Chet Atkins** once answered when someone asked if he could read music. "Not enough to hurt my golf playing," Mr. B. answered when asked if he'd been in the office lately. Just kidding, Jimmy. But even if I wasn't, with the staff Mr. B. has put together at Liberty, the company just runs. Never forget for one moment, though, that Mr. B. is the leader, and he knows what goes on.

BABY HUGS

Not only did I get a hug and a kiss from **Sammy Kershaw**, I also held two-week-old **Emily Kristina Kershaw**. The baby, who had not previously said a word, told me that she liked me better than anyone there except daddy Sammy and mama Kim. Emily is the image of dear old dad right down to the hair and hairline. One beautiful baby.

KIERAN KANE

Kieran Kane's solo debut on Atlantic, *Find My Way Home*, was previewed at ASCAP. You know how we are in Music City...we party for new ones, Gold ones, old ones, platinum ones and this one, which is a good one. Not many frills but good listening.

KITTY AND JOHNNY

I'd wager they're the longest married couple in the biz of country music: The Queen of Country Music, **Kitty Wells**, and her King, **Johnny Wright**. They've been married since 1938. Female singers and songwriters still don't get the recognition they deserve, but, if it wasn't for this woman, Kitty Wells, it would be worse than it is. Did you know that Miss Kitty was twice banned by radio for singing "suggestive" songs? She paved the way for women with her million-selling single, the first Number One country single by a female, "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels." She and hubby still hit the highways singing them hillbilly songs and selling them tapes and pictures out of their bus. Long live the beautiful Kitty Wells.

People

G.B. STILL GIVES CREDIT

While at the celebration for his *No Fences* CD/cassette reaching sales of 10 million, I think I figured how **Garth Brooks** stays humble. First, the do was held at the Gallery, across from Rivergate Mall in Goodlettsville, 25 minutes north of Music City. "A hundred yards or so down the street at Cowtown Boots is where **Sandy** and I worked," allowed this big star. "Up the street at Flower Express is where Sandy had a second job or, actually, first job, starting at 6 A.M. working to 2 P.M. Then she sold boots till closing time." Secondly, old friends like **Charlie** and **Debbie** (mentioned in the **Stephanie Davis** song, "Learning to Live Again") from the days before Garth and Sandy were famous remain Sandy and Garth's best friends. He hasn't changed friends...just added a few.

Thirdly, not only did Garth recognize **Jimmy Bowen**, President, Liberty Records, and the entire staff with plaques, he also recognized the staff at the label, known as Capitol when he signed there in '89. He further presented plaques to managers, **Pam Lewis** and **Bob Doyle** and their entire staff, to his band, road crew, merchandisers, **Gurley** and Co. P.R., the sound and lights folks, producer **Allen Reynolds** and engineer **Mark Miller**, **Joe Mansfield** (who used to handle marketing at Liberty), to each and



NOW HEAR THIS

Pam Tillis has hauled in the second Gold record of her country career for the powerful *Homeward Looking Angel*. The album is further blessed with the chart-climbing single, "Do You Know Where Your Man Is." Along for the party was label boss **Tim DuBois**, shown here with Pam, and others, including **Allen Butler**, **Rhonda Farlaw**, **Romona Simmons** and all the chosen few with Arista.

every musician and songwriter who contributed to the project, to **Tony Conway** and **Buddy Lee Attractions**, to **Joe Harris**, to High 5 Productions who does his videos and TV stuff, to hillbilly lawyer **Rusty Jones** and to hillbilly accountants **O'Neill** and **Hagaman**. Over 100 plaques. And G.B. stood at the mike and an-

nounced all the names and gave each person a hug. Still giving credit, that G.B. Afterwards we munched on Mexican faves like ribs and chicken, a scrumptious cheese-layered dish that one eats with chips (yummy), bean dip, and guacamole dip chased by cake. Schmoozing were G.B.'s opening act, **Stephanie Davis**, the lovely **Sandy** in her cowgirl regalia of black leather top, black jeans, boots and a pancho hat...cute, Liberty's new VP, **Renee Bell**, her newly named assistant, **Mark Brown**, and moi, naturally.

HELPING EACH OTHER HELP REBA



Brother Phelps and **John Michael Montgomery** have been a threesome recently, opening several sold-out shows for **Reba McEntire**. The exposure hasn't hurt their own careers, either. Everyone's debut projects and current singles are doing fine. **Doug** and **Ricky Lee Phelps**, formerly of *The Kentucky HeadHunters*, are on *Asylum*. **John Michael** is with *Atlantic Records*. That's **Doug**, **John** and **Ricky Lee** above.

EMI PUBLISHING DOG DAYS

Celia Froehlig and staff at EMI Publishing hosted their annual Dog Days celebration with a whoop and a holler and **Ruth McCartney** (yep, **Paul's** sis) dressed to kill (seriously) in a blouse with huge ruffled sleeves (favors a lamp shade, said one of the old-timers), bikini-length shorts with nylons seamed up the back from heel to there, and made-for-Paris-or-Hollywood stack-heeled shoes. Her short, black-rooted hair with silver spikes was definitely not a Nashville do by any stretch of the imagination. Nevertheless, Ruth dined on hot dogs, potato salad and sauerkraut with the best of us. **Jimmy Gilmer**, **Al Gallico**, **Jerry Kennedy**, *Live 'n Kickin'*, **Marc Beeson**, **Billy Dean**, **Billy** and **Terry Smith**, **Robert Ellis Orral**, **Hal Ketchum**, **Kyle Lehning**, and at least 1,200 others had a lovely time with lovely people. And everybody stared at **Ruth McCartney**.

People

FROM THE HEART

Doug Stone titled his album *From the Heart* before his open heart surgery, but it did have double meaning for the Newnan, Georgia, native. Doug is healed and the album is certified Gold. The Sony folks celebrated at their beautiful building on Music Row. All the powers were there, but with the changing of the guard at Sony, what was power no longer is.

BMI NON-WORKING PARTY

Those wonderful folks at BMI thought about us press slaves prior to CMA week and hosted a wonderful Mexican feast and trough. Sorry I missed the do—wasn't well—but I do want to thank **Roger Sovine** and all the BMI-ers for thinking of moi.

TWITTY TRIBUTE

Bernie Nelson and **Robert K. Oermann** joined **Harlan Howard** at Douglas Corner for the "Conway Twitty Guitar Pull." Organized by Nelson and Oermann, the event drew a full house, including Twitty's widow and children. We heard 25 of Music City's top tunesmiths render songs and praise to "the best friend a song ever had," Conway Twitty. The great **Troy Seals** succumbed to tears as he tried to explain how Conway brought him to Nashville and encouraged him. The Dean of Hillbilly Songwriters, Harlan Howard, took over for Troy and explained how he took Conway's tape to **Owen Bradley** at Decca (now MCA) Records, and the rest is history.

MORE STARS IN THE WALKWAY

More great ones have been added to the Hall of Fame's Walkway of Stars: **Connie Smith**, **Doc** and **Merle Watson** and **Tanya Tucker**. Smith remains an Opry regular, Tanya is hotter than ever these days, and Doc was presented with one of this country's highest honors, the National Heritage Fellowship Award, in 1989, by former President **Bush**. Doc's son and performing partner, Merle, died tragically in 1985.

BILLY RAY PLATINUM

Billy Ray Cyrus, the pride of Flatwoods, Kentucky, celebrated the platinum success of his second album, *It Won't Be the Last*, with a party at the Belle Meade Mansion here in Nashville recently. Writers **Keith Hinton** and **Brett Cartwright**



New Walkway of Stars inductees Connie Smith, Doc Watson and Tanya Tucker.

were also honored for penning the Number One single off the album, "In the Heart of a Woman." Quite a do it was, with fab food, fun and liquids. Billy Ray was his usual honest-to-God country self, looking cute as ever and humble as could be. In the crowd were all the powers at Mercury: **Harold Shedd** (who signed Billy Ray), Prez **Luke Lewis**, **Steve Miller**, **Sandy Neese** and **Ann Weaver**, as well as producers **Jim Cotton** and **Joe Scaife**. I've sung the praises of Jim and Joe when nobody else did. BRC manager **Jack McFadden** was in fine form, too.

Why, Jack even made a speech. Lo and behold, Mayor **Phil Bredesen** was also on hand and looking spiffy. A good time was had by all, especially all of us young ladies who find it fun just staring at Billy Ray's biceps, triceps and insteps. Congrats to all involved for continuing good music.

BMI'S SONGWRITER/PUBLISHER PARTY ANOTHER REAL EVENT

Hostess **Frances Preston** is Queen Bee of the World at BMI. I mean, she is President/CEO, you can't get any higher than that. She was assisted by her Senior VP, one of the most loved people in the biz, **Roger Sovine**. The black tie gala honored "Achy Breaky Heart" as most Performed Country Song of the Year. Writer **Don Von Tress** and performer **Billy Ray Cyrus** were on hand to accept the award. **Tom Shapiro** was honored as Songwriter of the Year by BMI for his four hits. Sony-Tree captured 12 citations and was named Publisher of the Year. The debut presentation of the President's Award went to the Old Master Songpainter, **Harlan Howard**. Harlan held his silver bowl over his head and almost knocked down the ceiling fan. Ms. Preston, smartly dressed in a two-piece, black silk number obviously found on New York's Fifth Avenue, was the touch of class and elegance in a room filled with wonderful, lovable, talented hillbillies. Seated near

EMERY CLOSES OUT WITH THE DUKES



Tom Wopat and John Schneider dropped by to say goodbye to TV host **Ralph Emery** during his last *Nashville Now* show on TNN. The *Dukes of Hazzard* twosome ("Luke" and "Bo") performed the theme from their hit TV show of the late 70's-early 80's. Schneider also announced he was going to be a father.

“YOUNG PEOPLE FACE A TERRIBLE RISK.”



Garth Brooks



Did you know that one of the fastest growing groups of people with AIDS are in their 20's?

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People

me were Willie Nelson, Jimmy Dean and Donna Meade, legendary publishing magnet Al Gallico, legendary record man Billy Sherrill, Larry and Peggy Butler, Tammy Wynette and George Richey. Also Harold Shedd, Joel Katz, David Allen Coe, Grandpa Jones, John D. and Susie Loudermilk, Kitty Wells and Johnny Wright, my handsome escort John Brannen, Chuck and Sandy Neese, GMA's Don Butler, the beautiful Pam Tillis, Vince Gill, Marty Stuart, Clint Black and Lisa Hartman, Lee Roy Parnell, Diamond Rio, Aaron Neville, Kevin Welch (I walked out on his arm), Janie Fricke, Aaron Tippin, Hank Thompson, BMI's lovely and delightful Joyce Rice and hundreds of others. Truly a lovely dinner and party, the event was held under the big top in the BMI parking lot.

PRESIDENT BLACKBURN

It was no surprise to Music Row that Rick Blackburn was named President of Atlantic Records/Nashville. In three years Blackburn made the fledgling label into a major competitor. In the past few months, Tracy Lawrence, John Michael Montgomery and Confederate Railroad have all reached platinum (million sales!) status. These three artists were all virtu-

BACKSTAGE AT THE OPRY



When MCA newcomer Tracy Byrd made his first appearance at the Grand Ole Opry, Randy Travis was on hand to give the Beaumont, Texas, native a few pointers. The Opry was celebrating its 68th birthday that night.

MORE METAL FOR WYNONNA



Those Judd gals are so good-looking they take your breath away. With MCA's Bruce Hinton, Curb's Mike Curb, MCA's Al Teller, Wynonna, Ashley and Naomi Judd and their manager, Ken Stilts, all together, celebration was the order of the day. The occasion was the Triple Platinum success of Wynonna's debut MCA/Curb album, *Wynonna*. Wy is the biggest selling artist on MCA Records. Nobody else is triple platinum but her. To go one even further, she is the only hillbilly female to have sold three million on one record. Wynonna, I congratulate you.

ally unknown when Blackburn was hired. Congratulations are in order for Rick and his staff at Atlantic for the success and for the great music.

ATTENTION, WAYLON FANS

The boxed set is titled *Only Daddy That'll Walk the Line: The RCA Years*. I have mine and it is truly a masterpiece by the master. You know, heroes are scarce this day and time. **Waylon Jennings** wears the hero hat as well as anybody who ever wore one. His music is head and shoulders above what you hear today. He was the architect of a sound as original as **Jimmie Rodgers**, as honest as **Hank Williams** and as Waylon as the boots that only he can fill. And I hope he sells a blue zillion copies of this wonderful music. I just wonder if *Rolling Stone* and all trendy publications are hip enough to reach back and recall the real reason behind the music coined as outlaw. And Waylon was one of the biggest.

ANOTHER DO, OR PARTY HOPPING

Following the BMI awards, me decked out in my black dress with sequins and on the arm of the young and handsome **John Brannen**, we turned right (instead of left) and went to the Hall of Fame, where **Robert K. Oermann** and **Mary Bufwack** were being honored for their wonderful book, *Finding Her Voice—The Saga of Women in Country Music*. There I spied **K.T. Oslin**, **Live 'n Kickin'**, **Connie Smith**, **Kitty Wells** and hubby **Johnny Wright**, **Victoria Shaw**, **Bob Millard**, **Chet Flippo**, **Liz Thiels**, **Roy Wunsch** and **Mary Ann McCready**, **Donna** and **Patsy Stoneman**, **Sandy** and **Chuck Neese**, **Tommy Goldsmith** and **Renee Elder**, **Rose Lee** and **Jody Maphis**, **Marty Stuart** and **Bonnie Garner**, **Charlie Dick** (husband of the late **Patsy Cline**), **Lola Jean Dillon**, **Pam Tillis**, **Janie Fricke**, **Joy White**, **Suzy Bogguss** and Mercury Records fabulous promo man from Dallas, **Jeff Hackett**. Would you believe this party started around midnight, and there was all kinds of wonderful food, and we were eating it at that time of night? Only in Nashville.

SESAC PARTY

Damsel in black, the luscious **Diane Petty**, hosted the SESAC party which honored Warner Chappell as Publisher of the Year and **Susan Longacre** as Songwriter of the Year. Aboard the General Jackson Showboat, party-goers saw the wonder-

People

ful **Frank Dycus** get the award for Vocal Event of the Year for the George Jones song, "I Don't Need Your Rocking Chair." SESAC owners **Freddie Gershon, Ira Smith** and **Stephen Swid** were welcomed by SESAC VP **Vincent Candilora**. There were many who said this was the best party of the week.

GOLDEN PATTY

At our house, **Patty Loveless** has always been golden. All of us applauded when her wonderful Epic album, *Only What I Feel*, was certified Gold. Her first single from this record, the wonderful "Blame It on Your Heart," raced up the chart to the Number One position, and the second single, "Nothing But the Wheel," was a real winner as well. The record label got all excited, thinking of the "wheel" title, so they rented a ferris wheel in the parking lot at Sony for the party-goers to take a ride. Wandering around in the tent were new Sony leaders **Allen Butler** and **Scott Siman**, Patty's producer/hubby **Emory Gordy Jr.**, her former producer from MCA, **Tony (wow) Brown, Carl Jackson, John Van Meter, Tim Riley, Keith Bilbrey, Kathy Martindale, Gary Beatty, Paul Corbin** and **Brian O'Neill**, from TNN.

EYE SAW

Eye saw **Jim Varney** at Mid-Town. Speaking of Varney, the week after eye saw him, I went to see *The Beverly Hillbillies* on the big screen. The week

BOB ATCHER: 1914-1993

Bob Atcher, a mainstay of Midwestern radio, died of cancer at age 79 at his home near Louisville, Kentucky, on October 30th. The Kentucky-born Atcher, who briefly lived on a North Dakota ranch, first worked on Kentucky radio before moving to Chicago in 1932, then to Atlanta in 1935. He recorded for ARC (which later became Columbia) and had the first commercial recording of Bob Nolar's classic cowboy ballad, "Cool Water." After World War II service, he became a mainstay of Chicago's WLS *National Barn Dance*. In 1954 he moved to the Chicago suburb of Schaumburg, where he was instrumental in the town's growth, serving as mayor from 1959 to 1975.

—RICE KIENZLE

after that the movie was the top-grossing film in the country, raking in \$7.5 mil. This made me happy because Varney resides north of Nashville. Also, the soundtrack is 100% hillbilly us. Our people who participated in the music were **Dolly Parton**, who did a cameo appearance as well, **Aaron Tippin** (his version of **Hank Williams'** "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry" left me speechless), **Ricky Skaggs, Lorrie Morgan, Joe Diffie, Doug Supernaw, Sammy Kershaw,**

Steve Earle, Ricky Van Shelton, Texas Tornados, Bela Fleck, Jerry Scoggins, Oak Ridge Boys and, from Los Angeles, **Joe Walsh**. If you haven't seen the movie, you will want to. Varney does a real good job as Jed Clampett. **Dabney Coleman** as Mr. Drysdale and **Cloris Leachman** as Granny were really good, too. But **Lily Tomlin** as Miss Hathaway could very well garner an Academy Award nomination for Best Supporting Actress. Truly wonderful performance.



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ME AND BRANSON

Well, folks, there's been a lot of talk in the press about Branson taking over from Nashville. That's good P.R. for Branson, but anyone knowledgeable knows it just ain't true. Nashville is the creative and business center of country music by a mile, and that won't change.

But that doesn't take a thing away from Branson as the entertainment/vacation center of the world for hillbillies who love country music, country comedy and country cookin'. To prove that point, let me tell you about my recent visit:

Seeing Larry and Rudy Gatlin at the Branson Airport was a gas for starters. My hostess, the gracious and busy Jane Gallaher, drove me to the Grand Palace Hotel, the finest on the strip, where I was booked in the Penthouse, so I was told. Upon checking in, I realized that, in fact, I was booked in the "Conway Twitty Room," the room he stayed in the night before he died. Roy Clark's theatre was the first stop. Roy and his nine-piece band have always known how to entertain. He sang a couple of his hits—"Tips of My Fingers" and "Thank God and Greyhound She's Gone"—and picked a lot of guitar. Admitting his shoulder was in pain, Roy worked as hard as he did 45-plus years ago when he first joined Jimmy Dean's TV show in Washington, D.C. You could tell his voice was tired and his picking hand went to sleep, but his comedy and entertaining were as apt as any *Hee Haw* show ever.

Moe Bandy's Americana Theatre lobby is filled with memorabilia, including scores of photos of Moe and former President George Bush and Barbara. Moe's eight-piece band started the show with a rousing rendition of "Uncle Pen," and I knew I was at my kind of place. Moe hit the stage running and never stopped. Terri Williams, Moe's backup singer, the best female voice in Branson, did complete costume changes—dress, wig, jewelry, shoes—in seconds as she imitated a mightily endowed Dolly Parton, a gowned June Carter, a coal-black-haired Loretta Lynn with flowing dress and Patsy Cline with short brown hair. On her knees she became Brenda Lee wearing a tacky red wig and tacky dress which she held up, and lastly, she appeared as Tammy Wynette, a duet with Moe playing George Jones. "Why Moe?" I asked a couple of ladies from Illinois who'd come down for the second time this year. "Oh,

we always come to see Moe," one allowed. "Do you know, after the show Moe always comes to the buses and thanks us for coming?" The couple from Keota, Oklahoma, told me this was their seventh trip this year! "Moe and Mel know us," they said.

I didn't catch the Osmond Show but was told this: That when they moved to Branson, school enrollment increased by 48 in one day with all their kids, and that Marie Osmond's kids, being slightly out of hand, have strewn food in hotel rooms and backstage, causing quite a stir. Box Car Willie's theater, one of the older buildings, needs paint and patch, but the show is entertaining and fast moving, with train songs, traveling songs, blue-



Charley Pride and Don Williams are two more stars headed for Branson in '94. Don will headline at the new Charley Pride Theater in April.

grass songs and rock songs. Matter of fact, when Box Car sang "Achy Breaky Heart," this hilarious female comedienne rushed the stage and threw an item of clothing which turned out to be a pair of dingy ladies' drawers—big enough for an elephant, funny enough to bring a theater of laughter. Ventriloquist Patty Davis with her two puppets does one of the most entertaining and unbelievable singing acts I've ever seen. "It's a financial pleasure," Box Car said to his filled house. I understood. Branson has made the hobo wealthy.

There's 55,777 seats to be filled daily in Branson. Plus Factory Merchants Mall has 50 shops. Everytime a bus drives into the mall parking lot, a pretty hostess presents each person with a shopping bag and coupons from various shops. This too, I'd wager, is a financial pleasure.

Thirty-four years ago, the three Mabe Brothers launched The Baldknobbers, the first hillbilly show in Branson, to take advantage of the large volume of vaca-

tioners the area already enjoyed. Today, one brother is retired, one dons his cowboy clothes and sings one song, while the third brother is still Droopy Drawers with his dense look, long shirt, slouch hat and washboard. His partner in comedy, a toothless wonder called Stub Meadow, had me rolling on the floor—almost. Their trick fiddler for 12 years, Mike Ito, is Japanese, and three sons and one granddaughter are part of the cast.

Silver Dollar City amazed me with wood-carving, candle-making, broom-making, tinsmithing, quilt-making, crocheting—everything one could imagine that can be done by hand. I was most impressed with the food as well. Silver Dollar City has chefs who barbecue ribs, pork shoulders and hams, chicken and beef brisket. There's also burgers with real home-cooked fries, corn grilled in the husk, fresh cole slaw and baked beans, turkey legs cooked to perfection over an open flame and home-made desserts. And there is string music in every nook and cranny. Jim Stafford has a lovely theater and a wonderful show, however, the seats are so close together I found it uncomfortable to sit two hours. His show, fast moving and well paced, has a lot of good bluegrass. Rodney Dillard is a part of the action; this makes it even better.

Mel Tillis, what can I say. He's still slim, still sings great and still does a fantastic show. His 17-piece orchestra, three backup singers and eight dancers are all top notch. He sang his hits and a couple he'd written for others. His theater holds 2,400 people, but, according to Mel, his new one will seat 2,701. He is also constructing a recording studio and movie soundstage under the same roof. A soundstage is important because with it, a movie can be started and completed in Branson. Nashville does not have a soundstage. Mel also told me that he averages 35 buses daily for his shows. For the finale, Mel, dressed as Huck Finn, "floated" across the stage singing "River in the Rain" from the Broadway show, *Big River*, written by his friend, Roger Miller. Thunder, lightning and pouring rain fell on the stage....and it was over.

I wish that I was able to write from my heart the enjoyment I had at this Ozark Mecca. I cannot. Would I go back? In a heartbeat. To Jane Gallaher, Dawn Ericson with the Chamber of Commerce and all my other friends in the Missouri showplace, I say, thanks and, Lord willing, I shall return. —H.S.

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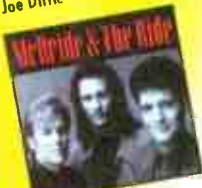
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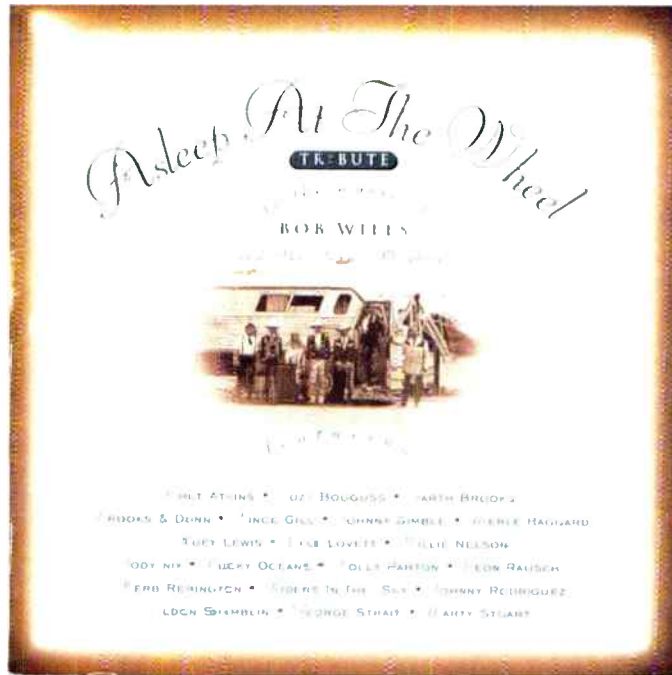
Asleep at the Wheel Tribute to the Music of Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys

Liberty C 81470

Twenty-three years ago, a much younger Ray Benson heard Merle Haggard's tribute album to Bob Wills, which virtually launched the revival of interest in Western swing. Over the next 20 years, Benson's band, Asleep at the Wheel, expanded the audience for Western swing through records and live performing. In the spirit of Wills, Benson—together with Leroy Preston, Link Davis and Chris O'Connell, all early AATW members—further broadened this already-rich musical mixture.

Except for Benson, those charter members have moved on. The current Asleep isn't quite as distinctive, yet still has the clout to pull off this tribute, a longtime dream of Benson's. What could have been an overhyped, all-star bust succeeds because Benson took care to do it right. He's bolstered in spots by former Playboys including old friend Johnny Gimble, who's played fiddle and electric mandolin on AATW records since their first album in 1973. Seventy-seven-year-old Eldon Shamblin, whose unique rhythm guitar helped keep Wills' rhythm sections together, plays as well as ever. Steel guitarist Herb Remington was a star of Wills' post-war Playboys, and Leon Rausch was the best vocalist Wills had after Tommy Duncan left. Long-departed AATW veterans including O'Connell, pianist Floyd Domino and steel guitarist (and charter member) Lucky Oceans also returned for guest shots.

Most guest stars aren't surprising; Garth, Vince, Bog-



guss, Strait, Willie and Haggard were naturals for such a project, as were Riders in the Sky. Surprises include Lyle Lovett, Brooks & Dunn, Dolly, Chet Atkins, Johnny Rodriguez and, particularly interesting to find in this context, rocker Huey Lewis, an old friend of Benson's from AATW's pre-Austin days in California.

Many of these Wills songs are now country standards, but because of the album's generous 18-song program, Benson was also able to use some obscure numbers. The instrumental "Red Wing" features Eldon, Gimble, Marty Stuart and guitar from both Chet and Vince Gill. "Big Balls in Cowtown," a Strait-Benson collaboration, is predictably solid. Unfortunately, "Yearning," featuring Vince on vocals, falters. Neither Gill's voice nor his guitar, both perfect on his own records, fits this type of song. Still, the intentions were good, and it's easier on the ears than Brooks

& Dunn's obnoxious line dance version of "Corrine, Corrina."

Those weary of Garth's pandering to rock fans should take heart at his rendition of "Deep Water," where he reveals an impressive grasp of the honkytonk style rarely heard on his own records. His admitted debt to George Strait's music is particularly clear on this one. Lovett similarly triumphs on "Blues for Dixie." It's exhilarating to hear another Texan, one known for his free-wheeling, Wills-like fusions of disparate musical styles, taking on this Western swing standard. Dolly's version of the lesser-known Wills ballad, "Lily Dale," is so good that it's pleasant to imagine an entire Dolly album sounding this natural. Benson teams with Rodriguez for "Across the Alley from the Alamo." Bogguss and Benson's collaboration on "Old Fashioned Love," another pop song Wills recorded, returns her to her early sound.

The mix of Benson, Willie, Huey Lewis and Jody Nix (son

of the late Texas Western swing bandleader, Hoyle Nix) works well, as does Willie's solo version of "Still Water Runs the Deepest." Lewis' version of another 1940's Wills obscurity, "Hubbin' It," is surprisingly strong; so is the final number, Cindy Walker's cowboy ballad, "Dusty Skies," sensitively performed by the Riders. One major surprise is Marty Stuart's soulful version of the somber, bluesy ballad, "Misery," not the upbeat song one would expect him to tackle. This is not the first time Haggard has recorded "I Wonder if You Feel the Way I Do"; the version included here works equally well as a tribute to Hag himself, whose love of Wills started it all. Benson's entertaining track-by-track liner notes drive that point home.

For those of us (myself included) who caught onto Wills through the Haggard tribute, then through Asleep at the Wheel and various Wills reissues, most of this is old hat (no pun intended). But for a younger generation unaware of Wills' joyous, uniquely American musical vision, Ray Benson provides a starting point that will hopefully leave them hungry for the real thing.

—RICH KIENZLE

Dolly Parton, Loretta Lynn and Tammy Wynette *Honky Tonk Angels* Columbia CK 53414

With just the mention of the first names—Tammy, Dolly and Loretta—any country music fan would know who you mean. These are three of the most important women—no, make that *people*—in country music history. Individually, they broke down doors, shattered stereotypes, sold mil-

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lions of records, earned countless awards and ruled the country charts. Collectively, they've now made an album that celebrates the heart and soul of country music and allows each of their distinctive personalities and vocal styles to shine. Given their stature and track records, our expectations for their work would naturally be high. They've about met them on this downright historic album.

Working with producer Steve Buckingham (who's worked with both Dolly and Tammy in the past), the three have lent their voices to classics and original compositions from each. Lead vocals are traded off either verse by verse or song by song, and, on the harmonies, there are spine-tingling moments. The three also get a little help from two equally important women: Kitty Wells and Patsy Cline. Kitty joins in, appropriately enough, on her own signature song from 1952, "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels," while Patsy is heard on a rollicking version of "Lovesick Blues" which she recorded in 1960. This type of recording, with additional vocals (or instrumentation) pasted on to a previously recorded track, is often a disaster. In this case, though, it works—it's respectful instead of exploitive, and the sound quality is superb.

Other fine moments include the first single, "Silver Threads and Golden Needles," a hit for Linda Ronstadt (among others). The three just zero in and nail it, leaving the listener awestruck and wondering if they've secretly been singing together their entire lives. Likewise for the cover of The Davis Sisters' "I Forgot More Than You'll Ever Know," Hank Locklin's "Please Help Me I'm Falling (In Love with You)" and the beautiful, plaintive "Sittin' on the Front Porch Swing."

But despite the pedigrees and "classic" status of many of these songs, the originals overshadow them. The Tammy Wynette-penned "That's the



Way It Should Have Been" is exquisite. It's vintage Tammy, full of tear-streaked imagery and longing. And Loretta's "Wouldn't It Be Great" (which first appeared on her 1985 album, *Just a Woman*) represents a still strong, but older, more wistful Loretta, the mature descendant of the spitfire protagonist of her earlier takes on the subject of excessive drinking. Dolly comes in with "Let Her Fly" and "Put It Off Until Tomorrow" (co-written with Bill Owens), both of which are well-suited for this project.

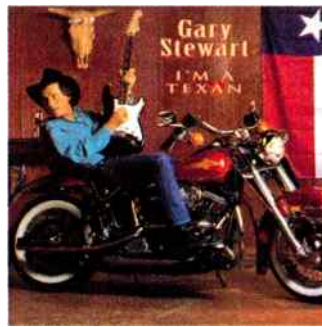
Instrumentation is staunch traditional country—at once nostalgic yet vibrant, subtle yet rich. Listen to Weldon Myrick's swooping steel on "That's the Way It Should Have Been" and the honky tonk piano of Pig Robbins on "Honky Tonk Angels," for instance. Music like this is becoming all too rare these days, making this album all the more satisfying—and important. If you're a long-time country fan, this is the way you remember it; if you've just signed on via Billy Ray and Trisha, well, this is the real thing.

The only sour note here is a remake of Tex Ritter's 1961 novelty recitation, "I Dreamed of a Hillbilly Heaven," which has been updated and includes the names of people *who aren't even dead yet* (according to Dolly's recitation, Roy Acuff and Tex Ritter have them on some sort of "hit list," or something, for the future). Granted, Tex's original did the same, but it's a little too surreal to fit in with...hell, it's just plain tacky. But that's just one small point, and can be overlooked on an album

that is so rich in significance.

The music press throws around the words "classic" and "legend" and "hero" almost indiscriminately, but no one can deny that those terms apply here. Tammy, Dolly and Loretta have proved themselves time and again, they've been through it all, and they've let us in on the resulting pain and joy and love and heartbreak through their work. Their individual efforts have stood, and will continue to stand, the test of time. So, too, will this collaboration.

—GEORGE FLETCHER



Gary Stewart *I'm a Texan* Hightone HCD 8050

Gary Stewart got his start back in the early 70's, around the time this magazine did. Maybe that's one reason why he's remained a sentimental favorite with quite a few of us *CMM* irregulars. The real reason, though, is because Stewart, in his prime and only to a slightly lesser extent today, is a once-in-a-generation singer: the moaning, yelping, trembling personification of the urgency and passion of 50's rockabilly/honky tonk remade for the 70's. Some would argue that not since Jerry Lee Lewis has there been a voice like Stewart's, a voice so fraught with sorrow, bottled-up rage, whiskey-tinged despair and erotic guilt and titillation.

Stewart's reputation to a large extent rests on a couple or three classic mid-70's albums—*Out of Hand*, *Your Place or Mine*, *Little Junior*.

His output in the years since has been erratic. For one thing, he's shunned the trappings of stardom, preferring instead to eke out a living on the Texas dancehall circuit. (Hence the name of his new release.) Then again, the power of his music—like George Jones' music—has seemed to stem from the fact that his personal life was often little more than a never-ending series of emotional fender-benders and head-on collisions.

In middle age, Stewart has found some small degree of serenity as well as a comfortable new niche for his music. His recent albums, *Brand New* and *Battle Ground*, which came after a quite lengthy hiatus from the recording studio, were released by Hightone, a fine California-based independent label. His current effort, *I'm a Texan*, also from Hightone, is a worthy follow-up. Hightone has also reissued some of his vintage 70's sides on CD. Commendable as this is, I think the Smithsonian should reissue some vintage Gary Stewart, too. After all, he could be a historic figure: As I listen to the reckless, drink-tinged and often somber barroom ballads on *I'm a Texan*, it strikes me that Stewart may be one of the last links we have to the dark spirit of the late 40's and early 50's honky-tonk era when much of America was caught precariously in a shaky new post-war world where the old values and the old ways didn't seem to work as well anymore.

True, Stewart's music—like the blues—is not politically correct. And its raw, often despairing mood is certainly a far cry from the yuppie-ish, pseudo-inspirational, country-flavored pop of a Garth Brooks. The songs on *I'm a Texan*—like the songs on previous Stewart records—are about life in the shadows, life on the edge, "Hand Me Another" (a Mickey Newbury composition), "Make It a Double" and "Draggin' Leather" (written by Bill and Jody Emerson who've been supplying Stewart with origi-

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nal songs since day one) are about people who drink too much, bloody each other's noses, break each other's hearts and set each other up for betrayal while suffering through remorse-fogged hangovers. These songs, which Stewart inhabits more than sings, are often about wild times, rather than good times—hard-partying born of desperation and the need to escape life's grim, narrow dimensions, if only for a while. They're about temptation—both fighting it and the guilt and forbidden pleasure of giving in to it.

Produced by Roy Dea, who's been Stewart's producer since his mid-70's glory days on RCA, *I'm a Texan* is highlighted by some bluesy vocal assists from country-belter Tracy Nelson, another immensely talented, half-forgotten 70's survivor. The two of them combine their voices to produce an acute kind of anguish on "Dark End of the Street" (written by Dan Penn and Chips Moman) and "Those Memories," a hard-edged remake of the love-torn Bill Monroe classic. Stewart also gets a chance to pay a moving tribute to his own influences on "One Night," a growling remake of an old Jerry Lee Lewis hit.

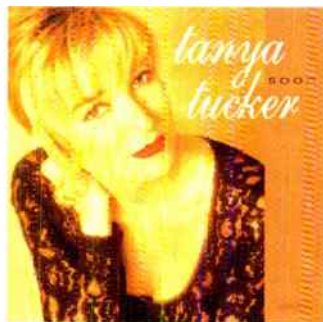
Admittedly, in the 20 years since he got his start, Stewart's yelp has mellowed into a lazy growl, and these days he sounds a lot more laconic and melancholy than manic. Still, the music on *I'm a Texan* is a healthy dose of the real stuff, and a much-needed alternative to the pallid imitators who rule the roost these days. —BOB ALLEN

Tanya Tucker

Soon

Liberty 89048

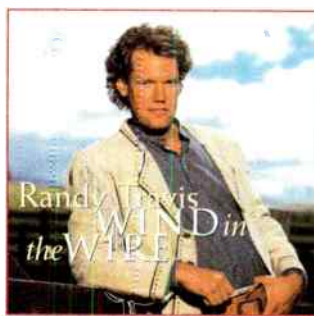
Throughout the last decade, Tanya Tucker has seemed perched to create a classic album, consistently powerful from start to finish. *Soon* is



that breakthrough, and it is pleasantly surprising that the best album of her career concentrates on mature, well-written ballads rather than rowdy rockers or steamy, sexually suggestive grinders. *Soon* is so emotionally affecting, so shockingly serious and so thoroughly well-made that it suggests some radical change in Tucker's annual recording routines. But there's nothing obviously different on the surface. Unlike Willie Nelson on *Across the Borderline*, she didn't hire a hip rock producer; unlike Emmylou Harris on *Cowgirl's Prayer*, she didn't change record companies.

But something happened: There's nothing conventional or methodical or predictable about *Soon*. Tanya and her longtime producer, Jerry Crutchfield, have woven a strikingly forceful album about the multi-hued sentiments of affairs of the heart. The arrangements are sparse and sympathetic, and Tanya gets inside many of the songs to give them a complex depth that acknowledges that nothing is easy about love. But it can be worth the risk, she suggests on "Hangin' In" or "We Don't Have to Do This," or it can leave a person desperate and reckless, as she portrays on "Soon" and "A Blue Guitar."

Tucker has always flashed an unusual level of talent and passion, and she commits herself to a song like few other vocalists. But as she built her comeback over the last 10 years, she relied more on attitude and spirit than on knockout material. She seemed to be taking it a little too safe. She put out songs that were cute



and sultry and entertaining but not very substantial; she released a handful of memorable singles, but, like so many country artists, only her greatest hits collection merited repeated listenings.

On *Soon*, even the sultry opener and the cute bouncy tunes come across as uncommonly amusing, even strong. "You Just Watch Me" is the kind of swampy, sexy, mid-tempo song that Tucker does better than anyone. This time, she offers a tantalizing threat, telling a man that she's gonna get him, no matter how he resists: *I'm the moon above/A blanket of night comin' down to wrap you up*. She applies a similarly sensual energy to "Sneaky Moon"—who could resist the way she growls *How am I supposed to stay in bed/With a crazy little love song in my head?*

On "Come On Honey," Tucker slyly prances onto fresh ground, putting a charming spin on this playful come-on by a woman who humorously lectures a friend while offering him her hand. He should have seen through his ex-lover's lies, she says; and he should know that when she whispers in his ear, she means what she says.

But it's the ballads that will make *Soon* last long after the hits subside. The title cut, already a hit, beautifully exposes the slow cruelty of empty promises. Just as stunning are "Silence Is King" and "Let the Good Times Roll": The former reveals how a couple watch their love wither because of hidden emotions and the fear of speaking out; the latter twists the familiar rock 'n' roll

cheer into something else altogether, as it portrays a woman looking at old home movies of herself and a lover who is no longer with her. "We Don't Have to Do This" is similarly persuasive, as a gal meets her man at the door and tells him that maybe they're a little hasty in saying their goodbyes.

Soon sounds like a keeper, an album to return to throughout the end of this century; it's about women in their 30's and 40's who must reconcile their dreams with their realities. It's the quiet reflection of the women K.T. Oslin so powerfully portrayed in "80's Ladies." They're still around, still struggling and laughing, and Tanya Tucker knows how they feel. —MICHAEL McCALL

Randy Travis

Wind in the Wire

Warner Bros. 45319

On the first song from his album, *Wind in the Wire*, Randy Travis sings. "In memories, I recall those simpler times," in his trademark baritone croon, as dark and smooth as apple butter. You might think he's referring to those golden days of 1986-88 when the square-jawed honky tonker from North Carolina was the undisputed King of Nashville. In those years before Garthmania, Travis proved you could sell a million country albums by invoking George Jones rather than Dan Fogelberg.

Of course, Travis isn't referring to the recent past in the song but to the distant past of cowboys, cowboy movies and cowboy songs. The album is the soundtrack to ABC-TV's recent special of the same name; in it Travis co-stars with Chuck Norris as a singing cowboy actor who befriends a young runaway while filming a new movie. The special's soundtrack is dominated by new songs written in the old cowboy-movie style, and Travis sings them with all the sumptuous tone and masterful

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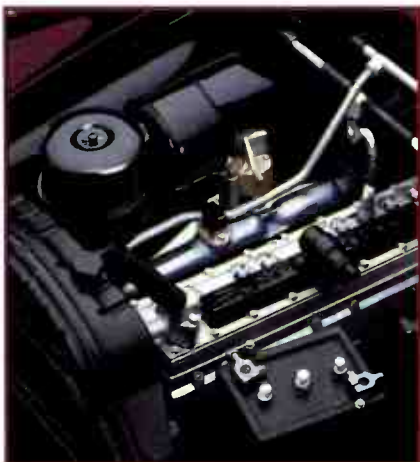
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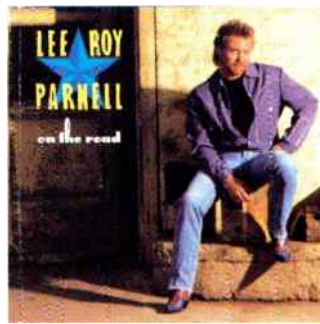
phrasing you'd expect. Best of all, there are no sucking-up-to-George-Bush songs.

Wind in the Wire may be Travis' most consistent album artistically since 1988's *Old 8x10*, though laid-back evocations of cattle drives and mesas at sunset, no matter how beautifully sung, may or may not move the boot-scootin' masses. You can tell Travis himself really loves these songs by the way he holds certain notes in his throat and savors them, as if he were reluctant to let them go. And cowboy music seems to be in the air anyway. Warner Bros. has launched a new label called Warner Western as a vehicle for the Western half of its Country & Western program, and Rhino Records has released a four-CD boxed set of cowboy music called *Songs of the West*. *Wind in the Wire* is easily the most stylish of all these related projects.

Roger Brown co-wrote four

of the album's first five songs, and his depictions of life on the cattle trails are full of sharply focused details and melodies just as picturesque, as in: *As blue shadows fall across the canyon walls, the cattle are quiet and still. Dusty, sore and tired, I build myself a fire, as the full moon peaks over the hill.* Because the songwriting does so much of the work for him, Travis can relax and fill the melodies with his rich voice.

The album, which was recorded in Maui, concludes with two Hawaiian songs, "Hula Hands" and "Beyond the Reef." Backed by the slack-key guitar and ukele of the islands' folk masters, The Pahinui Brothers, Travis proves that he can bend and warble notes as well as any islander. Overall, you have to admire a move like this, which flies in the face of commercial considerations, and results in such lovely music. —GEOFFREY HIMES



Lee Roy Parnell
On the Road
Arista 18739

On the Road might seem like a generic title, but there is nothing predictable or uniform about Lee Roy Parnell's third album. Like his previous work, it is a consistently rocking, soulful collection, and it sounds like nothing else currently climbing the charts. That last attribute, especially,

is about as rare as facial warts in country music these days.

As a title, *On the Road* in fact works well at getting to the heart of what makes Parnell's music tick. Like every other singer with a couple of Nashville hits notched into his (or her) belt, Lee Roy spends most of his time chasing the neon rainbow from city to city, satisfying that massive thirst for country music that's upturned the entertainment world in the last few years. So he knows the road. But he's different in that he's one of the few country newcomers to have formed his style while on that road rather than huddled with a producer in a Music Row studio.

"On the road" sums up Parnell's latest for other reasons, too. The order of the songs resembles the emotional ebb and flow of a long road trip. There's fast-paced excitement at the start, then a

With every sweet hymn,
every wild cry,
the cowgirl voices her prayer.

EMMYLOU HARRIS COWGIRL'S PRAYER

Emmylou Harris has never sounded so sweet or so strong as on her *Cowgirl's Prayer*, the new album featuring "High Powered Love," "You Don't Know Me" and "Crescent City."

Produced by Allen Reynolds and Richard Bennett

On Asylum Compact Discs and  Cassettes



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spell of slower moments when the mood turns quiet and the riders grow introspective. Then the exuberance begins to climb as the end nears, exiting with a swinging sense of fulfillment and with promises of yet more thrills ahead.

With a couple of exceptions, what lifts these songs isn't the lyrical themes; it's the personality and color Parnell gives them. Throughout the album, he takes decent songs and finds a way to make them shine like rare gems. This time, he's totally unleashed his rowdy, good-time side—heck, he even sings Hank Williams' "Take These Chains From My Heart" like he's already busted the metal in half and is tossing them back over his shoulder to his ex- as he smiles and flies off the front porch. His tenor is comfortable, unaffected and packed with life, and perhaps only Dennis Robbins comes close to playing slide guitar with such gusto.

Even when he's being sensitive, he can barely hold back his zest for life. The title song, written by Bob McDill, is about three sets of folks at various stages of life who are heading out of town with hopes of finding a better life somewhere down the highway. Parnell obviously empathizes with them, and he instills a low-key optimism into the lyrics. The tone of his voice is gentle and supportive, the way a family member might talk to someone preparing for a championship game or the first day of a new job. But his guitar works as a cheerleader, ringing out praise and enthusiastic blessings. On "Country Down to My Soul," Parnell takes a familiar sentiment—a rowdy singer pledging his allegiance to the first part of the country-rock equation—and makes his points with such good-natured glee that he'll have you wanting to see just how he spices his beloved black-eyed peas and hot tamales.

Like many people who feel so ecstatic about life, he taps

deeply into simple sentiments, too. "The Power of Love," a fine Don Cook and Gary Nicholson song previously recorded by Charley Pride and T. Graham Brown, is simple and straightforward, much like Parnell's hit, "Love Without Mercy." It's stripped of everything but flesh, guts and honesty. Parnell sings it beautifully. It's the kind of song that over-the-top vocalists would turn into a pyrotechnic showcase; Parnell delivers it with a quiet maturity that makes it believable.

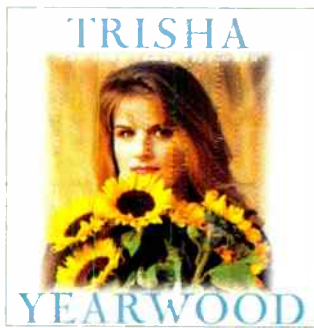
But he saves the best for last. "Straight and Narrow," a song he introduces as a true story, is a parable about enjoying life that opens with his father skipping Sunday services to go fishing. When the mother chides him, the father retorts, *Lord a mercy woman/ Missing preaching ain't no crime/ On a day like this I know the Good Lord/ He don't mind*. Similarly, the closing track, "Fresh Coat of Paint," is about all the fun he and his honey are going to have "painting the town" on the weekend. It's the perfect tune to play as the sun sets on Friday and the moon rises to announce the weekend is now open and ready to enjoy.

The running theme, whether conscious or not, is that most of us have a lot worth celebrating, that even hard times can flip into new adventures. Lee Roy knows about taking chances, and he knows about finding success on his own terms. He also knows how to share his celebration with others.

—MICHAEL McCALL

Trisha Yearwood *The Song Remembers When* MCA 10911

Everyone compares Trisha Yearwood to Linda Ronstadt, and it's easy to understand why listening to her wide-open country-rock vocal on "Better Your Heart Than



Mine," which was co-authored by Andrew Gold, a former member of Ronstadt's band. On songs like that and "If I Ain't Got You," Yearwood grabs hold of the rocking beat and belts out the melody as if her voice had the buzzing edge and rhythmic clout of an electric guitar.

The 29-year-old singer is capable of a lot more than that, however, and she proves as much with the rest of her breakthrough third album, *The Song Remembers When*. The key number is "I Don't Fall in Love So Easy." Written by Rodney Crowell, it's the kind of song he might have given to Rosanne Cash if they were still together. It loses nothing by being handed to Yearwood instead, for the young singer is able to communicate both the wariness of a woman who has been burned too many times by men and the willingness to overcome it—for the right man. Yearwood's ability to stretch a note with a bluesy fall in pitch as if torn between defensiveness and desire is a skill she shares with Cash and very few others.

Nothing else on the album is quite as powerful as that song, but several come close. When she sings Roderick Taylor's "Mr. Radio," for example, her hushed, high soprano quivers in a way that suggests radio waves washing through the rural night and filling a lonely farm girl with dreams, both true and false. A lot of singers can hit those high notes, but few can evoke both the thrill and danger felt by the farm girl.

Willie Nelson not only wrote the Mexican-flavored "One in a Row," he also plays the acoustic

guitar solo on it. The song has a great lyric hook (*If you can look into my eyes one time without telling lies, well, that makes one in a row*), and Yearwood makes the most of it. She understates the left-handed compliment of the verses with smartly clipped phrasing and then opens up with operatic grandeur on the honky-tonk bridge. Nelson, who obviously recognizes a kindred spirit in Yearwood's sly phrasing, also sings harmony behind her on Kimmie Rhodes' "Hard Promises to Keep."

The album falls short of true greatness due to a few questionable song choices. Kostas' "Here Comes Temptation" is too much the Ronstadt-by-numbers song, and the album's title track jerks at the tear ducts a little too conveniently. The album ends on a positive note, though. The singer shouts to the starry night sky that her lover will soon return, but her brassy chorus vocal collapses into the embarrassed realization that she has been "Lying to the Moon," that is, to herself. It's a masterful performance. Yearwood could well be the female country singer who best combines commercial appeal and artistic merit in the 90's. —GEOFFREY HIMES

Alabama *Cheap Seats* RCA 66296

Hey, remember Alabama? You know, the band from Fort Payne? The band from the 80's? The one that sold 40 or 50 million albums while serving as a fungo ball for the music critics? Well, guess what: Alabama's still around. Nobody seems to have gotten the message to them that it's the 90's now, and that the critics have their poison pens trained on a new clique of glorified non-entities who are currently busy trivializing mainstream country.

I mean, hasn't Alabama gotten the message that they're relics? That it's time for them

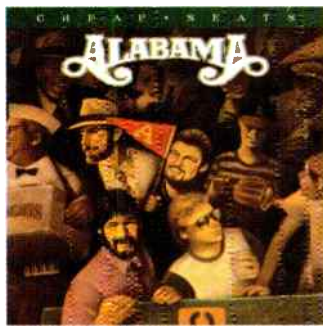
Record Reviews

to get lost and come back some time when they can't stay too long? Above all, someone needs to tell them to stop confusing things by making great albums like their latest, *Cheap Seats*, which is far, far better than anything we've gotten lately from Garth Brooks, Billy Ray Cyrus, John Michael Montgomery or anybody else in the latest class of country singers.

Cheap Seats. What a title! What an album! I've been chronicling Alabama's musical ups and downs for nigh unto 15 years now. And even to my cynical ears, they've never sounded so sweet, so energized, so exuberant. Relics, hell! They're in their full glory on great jukebox numbers like "Reckless" (the first single off *Cheap Seats*, written by Jeff Stevens and Michael Clark), "Still Goin' Strong" (Rick Bowles and Josh Leo), and "T.L.C.A.S.A.P." Written by Gary Baker and Frank Myers, the latter is an instant radio smash, if I ever heard one. Talk about great guitar hooks, talk about a groove....

The neatest thing of all is that the Fort Payne gang, with the help of Josh Leo and Larry Michael Lee (who share production credits with the band members themselves this time around), has discovered the fine intricacies of vocal harmonies as never before (though there was a hint of what was to come on "I'm in a Hurry," the hit single from their last album.) All four band members are in on the vocal mix on *Cheap Seats*. And never have their voices been put to such effective and clever use as they are on "Reckless" and on "Still Goin' Strong," which features an array of delightfully Beatlesque vocal and instrumental hooks.

The band members do seem to have run out of steam as songwriters, though. The two numbers that bear their credits are the two most forgettable. The "Jeffster" (as in Cook) is afforded his customary one song as lead singer and



writer, and, mercifully, no more. But not to worry: Owen, Gentry, Cook, Herndon and their co-producers have chosen outside material wisely and with great taste. And I swear, somebody—either Randy Ower, Leo, and/or the songwriters in question—have been listening to vintage Springsteen and Mellencamp-style heartland rock, to very good effect. I swear I hear echoes of a great Springsteen anthem to youth and the open road in "Reckless." "Cheap Seats" is an exuberant, country-rockin' ode to the magic of minor league ballparks and bush league baseball's poetic significance in a small town's best sense of itself. The title tune, written by Randy Sharp and Marcus Hummon, even features some chugging, moaning, Springsteen-style harmonic riffs, and it's charged with the same sort of bravado, bittersweet nostalgia, Americana and humor as The Boss' "Glory Days."

Owen in particular has always been a sap for syrupy ballads. But on *Cheap Seats*, he's managed to keep that routine over-indulgence in check. "Katy Brought My Guitar Back Today" (John Jarrard/Mickey Cates) is a ballad, for sure; but it's far more understated than overwrought: in its utterly moving reflection on the silencing of the music that once cemented a romance. "Angels Among Us" (Becky Hobbs/Don Goodman) certainly verges on being maudlin. But with its heartfelt message and moving vocal assists from the Sanctuary Choir and Young Musicians Choir of Fort Payne's First Baptist

Church, it's got undeniable power and utterly redeeming sincerity.

As a critic, I've certainly had a love-hate relationship with these guys for a long time. But this time around, I've got no ambivalence, no double-edged critical sword to wield against Alabama. I love this album, and all I can say is: Hey, guys, you owned the 80's; and after listening to *Cheap Seats*, I'll be glad to give you the 90's, too. —BOB ALLEN



Charlie Chase
My Wife, My Life
Columbia EK 57423

In this time of hat acts, regurgitated 70's rock and coffeehouse folksinging, it's a big event when one tough, uncompromising individual appears who ignores the trends. When someone stands by his musical conviction, despite Nashville's attempts to force conformity upon him...When you think of that, think of...Willie? No way. I speak of Charlie Chase!

Yep, Charlie Chase, the other half of Crook and Chase, Ralph's replacements on *Nashville Now* (oops, excuse me, *Music City Tonight*), has cut his first album. On it he reveals himself to be a tough traditional singer who doesn't have to blow up the stage or shake his butt to get attention. Traditional? You bet. Just listen to that title track, a recitation of the virtues of one's spouse. Listen to the feeling and passion as Charlie discusses how the "Better Half" is "the willow that grows at my side." Wow! If you recall

Red Sovine's timeless "Teddy Bear," Chase's performance easily marks his as the odds-on favorite to become the Red Sovine of the 1990's, no small achievement.

On "Out on Her Own," an ode to a daughter soon to be married, ol' Charlie captures the spirit of Mike Douglas' old hit, "The Men in My Little Girl's Life," with topnotch vocal support from Garth Brooks and Doug Stone. How does one persuade such hot stars to sing on a record by an influential TNN talk show co-host? Damned if I know. Charlie barely gets in a word edgewise until the final section when he dramatically bursts into song, showing his voice equal to that of the average Karaoke singer. Anyone who's sung in the shower will appreciate his cleverly placed "sour" notes. He croons throughout "My Home Town" (Rogersville, Tennessee), a tune perfect for somebody's future *Evening Shade*-style TV sitcom.

Note how he revives that grammatically incorrect "Old South" dialect on "Love, Me," reciting a story from his grandfather that states in part, "A long, long time ago, Grandma's daddy didn't like me none." And how about his powerful revival of The Oaks' "Thank God For Kids"? And surprise! The Oaks themselves even sing along. How ingenious! That's not all. On the cleverly-titled "When You're in Love," Chase sings the praises of love as the group Western Flyer adds squeaky-clean, doo-wop harmonies behind him. Few singers can make a two-and-a-half minute performance seem like ten minutes, but then Charlie isn't just any run of the mill artist.

You get the picture. This veteran of TNN's immortal *Funny Business with Charlie Chase* has outdone himself. Believe me, nothing he did for laughs on that show can even remotely approach this. If it doesn't go quintuple platinum, there's simply no justice in the music business.

—RICH KIENZLE

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TRAVIS TRITT

Plays His Own Game

*Not one to conform, Travis is willing to pay the price to be himself and do things his way. * By Michael McCall*

On stage, Travis Tritt looks like the modern musical embodiment of the Confederate flag. Dressed in red leather with fringe and blue jeans, his long hair fluttering away from his pale hotel tan, he's the picture of prideful defiance, roughneck confidence and unwavering sentimentality.

His image fits his music: During a concert that gallops quickly and smoothly toward the 90-minute mark, Tritt swaggers with rowdy assurance through redneck rockers and honky tonk anthems, then croons with reflective tenderness on his well-known power ballads. By the end of the night, when he leads concert mates Trisha Yearwood and the members of Little Texas in a big singalong of Hank Williams Jr.'s "Young Country," he's proven to be a convincing, even energizing representative of the rambunctious musical youth movement that the song celebrates.

But, just like the flag he resembles, there's something inherently controversial about Tritt these days. The issues surrounding Tritt aren't as shaded by the difficult history of The South as are those of its flag, but there's a rebel quality to Travis as well as a complexity of on-the-surface emotions that tend to embroil him in predicaments that have little to do with his music and a lot to do with his desire to speak his mind and stand up for what he believes is right, whatever the consequences.

During a lengthy interview in a plush hotel suite in Lexington, Kentucky, he offered his sincere belief that his public feud with Billy Ray Cyrus has been put behind him. As he says in concert, the two have now talked by telephone and made amends. "Billy Ray's all right," he says. "As a person, I think he's a cool guy. But just because I don't personally hate Billy Ray Cyrus doesn't mean I'm going to start singing "Achy Breaky Heart" or something."

BEVERLY PARKER



While the two stars are on speaking terms, Tritt still harbors some bitterness about how others reacted to the verbal brouhaha. As he speaks about making peace, he also presents several sharply pointed views that quite likely will prick a few egos and upset a few powers-that-be who aren't used to hearing one of country music's top young performers question their business practices and how they wield their influence. Tritt is unbendingly direct about his misgivings toward the Nashville music industry, his criticisms about how awards are handed out, and even his disappointment in how other artists play a game they don't necessarily like.

However, none of these things matter in concert, where Tritt potently drives through his set of hits and choice covers, including a lengthy version of Bob Seger's "Night Moves" that has been a part of his show for several years. A sell-out crowd at the enormous Rupp Arena in Lexington sits only when Tritt settles onto a stool for a brief talk and a couple of intimate ballads. At the first chance, they're back on their feet. From the front row to the highest seats in the back, they stay that way throughout the show.

But his music industry concerns do matter off-stage. While Tritt can proudly point out that his audiences have grown over the last year despite the competition of a growing number of country superstar concerts available to fans, he also will suggest that the reason his album sales have slipped and the reason he doesn't get nominated for most major country awards is because of his willingness to say what's on his mind and his unwillingness "to play the game," as he puts it.

"There's definitely a country music establishment out there," he says. "If you're different, then you're seen as a loose cannon, and they don't like loose cannons. They don't like 'em at all. It's always going to be tougher when you're playing on new ground, especially these days. You got so many artists out



"If you're different, then you're seen as a loose cannon, and they don't like loose cannons. They don't like 'em at all."

* * *



Travis with blues legend Buddy Guy. Buddy invited Travis to play on his record.

there who will come in and play the game and shut up and sit back and not rock the boat. They do what they're told, and they fit into the format they're told to fit into. They're told, 'Here's what you say, and here's what you don't say. You play the game and you'll be OK.' There are so many artists who are hungry, they're willing to do it. They won't say what they really think. They won't be anything except what the record labels or what the establishment wants them to be. I know a large majority of the artists who are that way. They refuse to rock the boat. They see what's happened to me and to Waylon Jennings and to Hank Williams Jr. and some other people, and they don't want that controversy. I've been there, and I'm willing to pay the price to be me."

The price has been stiff, Tritt contends. His second album, *It's All About to Change*, sold more than two million copies. His third, the aptly named *t-r-o-u-b-l-e*, has sold a respectable 1.2 million. The initial expectations were more than three times that number.

"I went from being the number two selling artist two years ago, beaten only by Garth Brooks, to still consistently selling albums, but not being nominated for CMA awards, not being in the Top Ten sales bracket anymore, and not having as many Number One records at radio," he says. "There has definitely been a cooling off period, and it all started in June of 1991."

It was then, at the beginning of Fan Fair, that the Associated Press sent out Tritt's barbs about Billy Ray Cyrus' "Achy Breaky Heart," which at that time was at the height of its popularity. "I'll be honest—I don't think 'Achy Breaky Heart' makes much of a statement," the AP reported Tritt as saying. "I just don't care for the song."

The next day, Nashville's top-rated radio station, WSIX-FM, asked fans to call in with their comments about Tritt's assessment. Marty Stuart, Tritt's well-known duet partner, called him and alerted him to the radio call-in show. "Are you listening to this?" Tritt remembers Stuart asking. "He was laughing like crazy. He says, 'Brother, you couldn't have stirred up a bigger can of worms if you'd have said Roy Acuff was gay.' He was laughing, I was laughing. We were having a big time with this."

Tritt called the station, too, and high-tailed it down there to explain his point of view. "I think it degrades country music," he said on the air. "It comes out and it says that everybody in country music, instead of us producing songs that really get to the heart of the matter and really talk to the public, it says instead of that, what we're going to have to do to be popular in country music is get into an ass-wiggling contest between one another."

He also underscored the fact that this was just his opinion, that he didn't have anything against Cyrus personally. He also told the story about Stuart contacting him earlier, and he quoted Marty's joking comment about opening a can of worms. "The reason I went down to the radio station was to say that this is

a big to-do about nothing," Tritt recalls.

The next day, Nashville's two daily newspapers trumpeted the brewing controversy, and Tritt didn't like the spin the press gave the story. The morning paper made it sound like Stuart called Tritt while he was at the radio station and that Stuart was criticizing his partner. Several deejays and fans were quoted chiding Tritt's stand, as was The Nashville Network's Lorianne Crook, who said, "Whatever happened to the days in country music when there was room for everybody?" The afternoon paper said Tritt's comments about Cyrus "sounded more like a school marm" than an musical outlaw.

Even the radio station that interviewed Tritt started airing a parody song called "Achy Breaky Butt" by "Wormy Ray Cyclone" that attacked Tritt directly. Set to the guitar riff of Cyrus' hit, the parody said, "I heard you on the air/Here's a quarter, I don't care/You should be ashamed/You took Randy's name/And you sound like Hank Jr. anyway/You can kiss my butt/My achy breaky butt/This butt looks better than your face...."

Tritt was stunned by the slant the conflict was given. "They took it and turned it against me to sell newspapers," he says. "I mean, everything was taken completely in a way that it was not meant or originally presented. I basically backed up from that and said, whoa, wait a minute here. I had done numerous interviews with these folks. Anytime they wanted to talk with me, I was more than happy to say yes. I'll do an interview. I never snubbed anybody. I had never been rude to anybody.

"I was asked a question, and I answered it honestly. As a result, I got a tremendous cold shoulder: If that's the attitude I'm going to get for being honest, then to hell with it. I'll pull out. I'll play my concerts, I'll do what I'm supposed to do, but I'll back away from the media in general. I'm not going to do every show on The Nashville Network now when they call me. I'm not going to do every show on the radio stations. I'm not going to do every interview that the local papers call and ask me to do. I felt like I was misrepresented. It was as if I'd broken an unwritten rule by speaking my mind. So I backed away, and I did it in a big way."

As fans might have noticed, he also skipped a major awards show or two. "If it's a question of how much do you want to go in and try to patch up a relationship to try to achieve awards, well, to me, awards shows don't mean that much. It's great to win, it's nice to be nominated—I'd be lying if I said it wasn't. But I'm happy selling records. I'm happy doing concerts. That's why I'm in this business. I'm out there for the fans. I think anybody who's in this business and is honest with you will tell you that the awards shows sometimes turn into a popularity contest more than an accurate description of what's going on in the business right now.

"Take the Entertainer of the Year award, for instance. There's no doubt in anybody's mind anywhere that Garth Brooks has far surpassed any possible markers that anybody else could make in being the Entertainer of the Year. The guy sells more tickets in one show than a lot of other people do the whole year. Vince Gill made that comment when he won. So I'm saying that if you're going to give the award out as it really is, then obviously the people who should be winning are not. If



GARY FALCON

Travis got to work with Kiefer Sutherland and Woody Harrelson in the new film, *The Cowboy Way*. Travis likes acting, though he knows he has a lot to learn. On stage, he keeps the audience going. They only sit down when he does, for a ballad or two. Travis says he's out there for the fans.



ROBIN LOVETT/EARO

you're going to give it out as a popularity contest, then you're going to give it to the person who does more in Nashville and who's the humanitarian and who contributes to everything and who plays on everybody's sessions and does all the right things. If we're going to do that, then we need to have the CMA Awards and the ACM Awards and then have the Nashville Popularity Awards. That's what they should be called."

Obviously, Tritt is blowing off a little steam, letting out a little pent-up exhaust after a year in which he took a beating he doesn't think he deserved. He hopes 1994 will be better in all respects. Just as he and Billy Ray have come to terms, he hopes to find common ground with the capital of country music.

"I like Nashville," he says. "It's like what Steve Earle said, 'I like Nashville an awful lot. I just wonder sometimes if Nashville likes me.' It's definitely a relationship I don't want to disintegrate. At the same time, I didn't have anything to do with it disintegrating in the first place. I'm not going to prostitute myself to make amends with a group of people who I didn't do anything to offend in the first place."

He admits he has a lot riding on the new year: He's currently finishing up his fourth album. He has a small but significant part in a movie, *The Cowboy Way*, starring Kiefer Sutherland and Woody Harrelson. He has an autobiography coming out that was written in collaboration with veteran journalist Michael

Bane, editor-at-large of this magazine.

There's more: His version of "Take It Easy," the song that kicks off the hit album, *Common Thread: The Songs of The Eagles*, is being considered as a single and might, by the time you read this, have been made into a video featuring one or more members of the Southern California country rock band that it celebrates. He also has recorded a duet with Patti LaBelle for an upcoming album pairing stars from country and rhythm-and-blues. (The two wail on a version of the old Sam & Dave hit, "When Something Is Wrong With My Baby.") Tritt also is close to signing a deal with the cable music channel, VH-1, to become the on-going host of its weekly country music countdown show. "We've had a good year on the road, and now we're focusing on getting ready to get everything else going next year," he says.

He delayed making the fourth album so he could concentrate on writing songs. "I wanted to get out of the schedule of touring for 11 months, then do an album, then tour for 11 months," he says. "Because I write so much of my own material, there really wouldn't have been time to do it right. It would have been a rush job. The biggest hits I've had so far have been songs I wrote or co-wrote, so I feel good about what we've got so far."

Tritt describes his upcoming album as delving deeper into his hardcore country roots as well as pushing into his rock 'n' roll personality more, too. The first single should come out in March, with the complete disc following in late April or early May.

As for his moves into big-time acting, he's turned down many more roles than he's accepted. After his appearance alongside Kenny Rogers and Naomi Judd in the network television movie, *Rio Diablo*, he received several inquiries. He's declined roles that later went to Randy Travis, Dwight Yoakam and Clint Black, he says, either because of his touring schedule or because the script didn't catch his fancy.

Still, he hopes to pursue acting more when time permits.

"I realized after *Rio Diablo* that I'd never be Robert DeNiro," he laughs. "But I like doing it because of the challenge." Part of the challenge, he says, isn't exactly fun. "They'll give you a call for six o'clock in the morning to do wardrobe and makeup, which means you have to get up at five. Now mornings are very overrated in my book," he says, laughing heartily. "If you're looking at five or six as the end of your day, that's fine. If the morning is the beginning of the day, it sucks big time. That's awful. But what happens is you get there at six, and you sit there all day in the bus. You eat breakfast in the bus, and lunch, and dinner. And they still haven't brought you out in front of the camera. They might pull you in any minute, and they might not use you all day long. So it's tough to keep your energy up."

Despite the crazy schedules and the boredom, Tritt is determined not only to keep making occasional cameos, but to grow and become better as an actor. "The whole process of going out and becoming a completely different individual than what you are is very intriguing to me. I enjoy that. I look at people like Kiefer Sutherland, who I worked with on this *Cowboy Way* movie. He had a very Southwestern kind of drawl in this movie. Then I saw him the other day in *The Three Musketeers*." Travis tries on his own exaggerated British accent, leaning forward



"The whole process of becoming a completely different individual than what you are is very intriguing to me. I enjoy that."

* * *

have gone on in my life that people never really know the truth about."

Will it be like many celebrity autobiographies, all cheery and heart-tugging stories but no grit or rough truths or controversies? Well, remember, this is Travis Tritt. "I think there's going to be some things in there that are going to surprise some people. There's definitely some things that I've never talked about before, especially from the early days, before the contracts were signed."

But will it put his feet back to the fire? "Well..." he says with a devilish smile, "I'm real direct with things. I tell it like I see it. I tried to be as honest as I possibly could. So there's some possibilities for controversies, I guess, depending on how you take them. If someone wants to make a deal out of them, they can. If they want to take them for face value and realize I'm human like everybody else, then it won't be a big thing."

So how about a little sneak preview? What might be potentially troublesome? He laughs long and hard.

"Oh no," he says. "I better wait until it's out. Knowing my luck, I'd probably say, 'Oh, yeah, this is going to cause some problems,' and if I didn't say it, people would zip right by it, no problem. I think I'll try to keep from putting the axe to my own neck for a while." ■

with dramatic flair as he continues, "So here Kiefer is, talking like this. It's amaaaazing, I say." Laughing at his own shenanigans, he adds, "That's neat, to see people go into characters and maintain it. I wish I could do that. I hope I can learn to do it one of these days."

Still, having recited the list of roles he knows other country stars are accepting, he worries that this trend of singers parading around on screen might do more harm than good to country music. "The fact of the matter is that everybody can't act," he states. "I'm not saying even I can. I've seen a lot of scenes I've done that I wish I could change. It's something I didn't feel comfortable with at the time. So everybody's not actors here. We have to realize that. I don't want to see every Tom, Dick and Harry that can't act get thrown into a movie and then, before long, everybody's saying, 'Well, these country music guys need to stay in country music and get off the acting screen.' If I'm going to do it, I want to be good at it, or at least the best I can be."

As for the book, Bane joined him on the bus, in hotel rooms, in backstage dressing areas, in his home and on movie sets. "We got hours and hours and hours of interview tape," he says. "The whole idea was not so much an autobiography but to give a look at what happens behind the scenes. All the fans, all they ever see is what we do on stage. That's the most fun that I have in my day. They don't see all the hours of travel, all the hours on buses, all the political things that go on behind the scenes with radio stations and award shows, all the other things that happen. They don't see the rough years of playing beer joints and clubs. So I gave a behind-the-scenes look at what it was like to be a struggling young artist trying to break into the business, and I showed what it was like once you get into the business. I brought it up to as current as last year and the relationships I've established with people like Marty Stuart, Waylon Jennings, Merle Haggard, Billy Ray Cyrus, and some of the things that

Newsletter

REVIEWS & FEATURES

Happy New Year!

Everyone makes resolutions for the new year. Keeping them, of course, is another story. Well, for any of you CMSA members who are aspiring songwriters, and have made a resolution to try and make a go of it, we've made it easier for you. In this issue, we've got information on two different songwriting contests that may be of interest to you. If you enter, good luck! And if you've made any other resolutions, good luck with those, too.

While on the subject of songwriting and songwriting contests, we should point out that the information provided here does not represent an endorsement of any particular contest. We're just keeping you informed on a topic in which you've shown interest.

Also, for your own protection, you should always have your material copyrighted before you send it anywhere. Copyrights are issued by the United States Government. Write to the Copyright Department of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., for applications and other information. You can also call them at 202-707-3000 for recorded information.

This issue also contains a variety of concert and record reviews by members, stories of your meetings with the stars, and some important Pen Pals information. In all, a wide variety of topics for a wide variety of members. Hope you find something in here for you. And once again, best wishes for the new year!

Attention: Songwriters

We know that there are many aspiring songwriters out there among you members. Your letters on the subject and your Readers Create entries prove it. If you count yourself among that group, the following information on two songwriting contests will be of particular interest. Remember, writers, always have your material copyrighted before letting it out of your hands.

THE CHRIS AUSTIN SONGWRITING CONTEST

WarnerSongs, a division of Warner Brothers Records, announces the second annual Chris Austin Songwriting Contest, occurring in conjunction with the Merle Watson Memorial Festival in Wilkesboro, North Carolina, during the weekend of April 28-May 1. Austin, who was a member of Reba McEntire's band and was killed in the 1991 plane crash, was also a songwriter and recording artist for Warner. The proceeds from the contest go toward a music scholarship endowment in Austin's name at the Wilkes Community College, host site for the Merle Watson Festival. The Merle Watson Festival itself is also a benefit, with proceeds used for the creation of a Memorial Garden for the blind. Merle is Doc Watson's late son.

The contest is open to songwriters whose primary source of income is not derived from songwriting. There are four categories of entry: country, bluegrass,



A songwriting contest remembers the late songwriter/performer Chris Austin.

gospel and general. Entrants may enter as often as they like. Tapes must be received by March 18, 1994. Three finalists from each category will be announced the week of April 4th, and those finalists will be asked to perform at the festival on April 29th. Prizes will be awarded for first, second and third place. Some of the prize sponsors include Taylor Guitars, D'Addario Strings and Writer's Digest Books.

Last year, the first year for the contest, some 400 entries were received from all over the country and from Europe. For more contest information, write: The Chris Austin Songwriting Contest, P.O. Box 121855, Nashville, TN 37212. Or call 1-800-799-3838.

"STUDIO FOR A SONG"

A slightly less conventional songwriting contest is going on now in Lewiston, Maine. A complete, professional multi-track studio is the grand prize in this contest. The studio in question is owned by Edward A. Boucher, a local promoter, record producer, booking agent and artist manager. He's owned the studio for 25 years and is looking to retire, or, at least, semi-retire from the music business, and would like "to see this equipment used by someone who can...appreciate the combination of vintage and new equipment."

All entries must be original compositions on individual audio cassettes and must be accompanied by an entry form, lyric sheet and an entry fee of \$100. Con-

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- Songwriter Information
- Members Meet the Stars
- Johnny Cash in Legends
- Collections and Readers Create

Editor: George Fletcher

Executive Editor: Helen Barnard

Art Director: Katheryn Gray

testants retain all rights to their songs. All entries must be received by March 31, 1994. Entries will be evaluated on originality, lyrics, melody and composition.

For an entry form and further details on the contest, and the equipment being offered, write: Studio for a Song Contest, P.O. Box 958, Lewiston, ME 04243-0958. Or call 207-786-3476.

More Songwriter's Notes

Songwriters in the Fort Worth, Texas, area may be interested in the following new organization.

We are looking for songwriters who are interested in joining the Fort Worth Songwriters Association. We are a non-profit organization that has been together for about a year. We offer several functions for the benefit of songwriters. There is a weekly open-mike session for members every Thursday from 7-9 P.M. at the Longhorn Saloon, 221 W. Exchange Ave. at the Fort Worth Stockyards. Writers bring instruments of their choice, or back-up tapes, and sing their songs. We also have a monthly critique workshop (on the third Tuesday of each month) offering feedback and support for writers. This takes place at the White Elephant in the Stockyards. Likewise, we hold a monthly business meeting with



Another contest gives this studio as the grand prize.

guest speakers on the second Monday of the month, same location. For information on membership, write Gayle R. Murphy at 8301 Boat Club Road #312, Fort Worth, Texas 76179.

**Gayle R. Murphy
Fort Worth, Texas**

Member Record Reviews

O.J. Sikes of Leonia, New Jersey, has found an album that many members may find of interest. It's a Western swing album featuring former Bob Wills sidemen. Here's his review.

PLAYBOYS II

Like cherished antiques and fine wine, Bob Wills' Texas Playboys have improved with age. The list of musicians on their new album, *Playboys II*, reads like a veritable Who's Who in Western swing! Herb Remington is certainly one of the best steel guitarists of all time, and no one would challenge Johnny Gimble's reputation as Number One on the fiddle. The great Bobby Boatright plays second fiddle and, with Gimble, produces a wonderful Texas twin fiddle sound. Leon Rausch handles the vocal chores and plays bass. I've heard critics acclaim him as the best Western swing vocalist ever. And Eldin Shamblin is widely recognized as "The World's Best Rhythm Guitarist." To complete the picture, Billy Briggs plays saxophone, Curly Hollensworth, piano, and Tommy Perkins, drums. All are former Texas Playboys, and their mastery of the music is certainly evident on this album.

Most of the 19 selections are instrumentals, and all are from the Wills songbook, beginning with a medley of greatest hits, followed by classics like "Trouble in Mind," "On the Alamo," "South," etc. You may have heard them before, but they've never been recorded with more skill and feeling. And with 1990's recording technology, you can hear and feel every note.

This album is a must for Western swing fans. Unfortunately, distribution is limited, but it may be obtained from: Mr. Herb Remington, 2102 Jean Street, Houston, Texas 77023. Cost is \$20 for the CD, \$15 for the cassette, post paid.

**O.J. Sikes
Leonia, New Jersey**

Attention: Pen Pals

Once again, a problem related to the Pen Pals section has been brought to our attention. We have been informed by three different members that a man by the name of Terry Schumaker, who is a prisoner in Mansfield, Ohio, has been passing himself off as a woman ("Teri") when writing to some female pen pals. The writers also state that "Teri" has given conflicting reasons for the prison term.

More Pen Pals

Dayna Wills of Stockton, California, sends in this remembrance of a pen friend she met through the Newsletter. Dayna wanted other Pen Pals of her friend to see this.

My friend, Felma Hicks, passed away October 13, 1993, due to complications following heart surgery. In 1984 I answered a request of Felma's through the Collec-

Kansas Fan Meets His Idols

Janice Cramer, the mother of Richard Cramer, sends in these photographs of her son with two of his country favorites. Janice says it was Richard's long-time dream to meet them.

Our son, Richard, was able to go backstage at Marty Stuart's show at the Cotillion Ballroom in Wichita, Kansas, thanks to our local radio station. Marty, one of Richard's favorites, was very nice, taking the time to speak with our



...and Marty Stuart.

son and pose for pictures. My husband and I appreciated that Marty gave credit to all of the older country stars (our favorites) during his show.

Another time, Richard was privileged to meet and talk to Bill Monroe when Bill came to Sedalia, Missouri, as part of a Hall of Fame show. Bill talked to Richard for about 30 minutes backstage. It really impressed us that he would spend that much time with people he didn't even know. It really made Richard a fan of Bill's.

**Janice Cramer
Topeka, Kansas**



Richard Cramer meets Bill Monroe...

tions column. I was living in Whittier, California, at the time, and Felma was living in Bell, just 12 miles away. We became friends, and I know she made a lot of other friends through *Country Music Magazine*. For those of you who didn't know her personally, I can tell you that Felma was a great gal, a good friend, and I will miss her and so will all who knew her.

Dayna Wills
Stockton, California



Barbara Sanders gave Billy Ray Cyrus a gift and got a kiss in return.

Billy Ray Makes Her Day

In the September/October issue of the Newsletter, we ran Brenda Harvey's piece on Billy Ray Cyrus' meeting with her daughter. Barbara Sanders was there, too, and she has a few things to add about BRC.

I am 57 years old and have never felt inclined to join a fan club, until I saw Billy Ray. I joined and have enjoyed it very much. I even went to his fan club picnic this year. Billy Ray has a lot more going for him than just his looks. If he has any vocal shortcomings, they're apparently not obvious enough for me, because I've missed them—and I consider myself a pretty good music critic.

Anyway, I just wanted to mention that I am "the nurse" referred to in Brenda Harvey's story. In fact, I took the picture you printed. I was travelling as a friend and fan, not in a professional capacity. And I, too, presented Billy Ray with a plaque.

Barbara Sanders
Tallulah, Louisiana

Concert Comments

Robin Sue Lehmann, of Aurora, Colorado, checks in again. Here's her review of George Strait's October appearance in Denver.

GEORGE STRAIT AND
CLAY WALKER
McNICHOLS ARENA, DENVER,
COLORADO

I have been to a lot of concerts in the past few years, but none as magical as this

night at McNichols Arena. For the first time George Strait has played McNichols, the stage had no backdrop, and the seats behind it were full. After an energetic and impressive opening set by Clay Walker, George arrived in a vivid red, yellow and blue patterned shirt. The rest of the night was pure energy. Several times, George and The Ace in the Hole Band could not go on with the show because the audience was cheering so loudly. The old songs were cheered, the new songs were cheered, and "Dusty" received some of the loudest cheers of all. George just tipped his hat to the crowd and kept on singing and singing—for close to two hours. He did five songs from *Pure Country*, six from *Easy Come, Easy Go* and 16 more on top of that. It was a night, and a feeling, I will never forget.

Robin Sue Lehmann
Aurora, Colorado

Sounding Off About Radio

Patrick Carr's Final Note column (July/August Country Music Magazine) about the state of country radio has given rise to an ongoing dialogue on the subject. Roxanne Johnston of Hibbing, Minnesota, thinks there's room for improvement at country radio.

Patrick Carr's Final Note was both disturbing and comforting at the same time. Disturbing because it was the truth, comforting because this awareness may lead to change. It took me back to May of 1993, when I experienced firsthand just how haywire everything pertaining to country radio had gone. I called the local radio station to request Marty Stuart's then newly-released single, "Now That's Country." I was told they wouldn't play it

because it wasn't country enough. By the end of the conversation, they decided to give it a "make it or break it" chance, and 98% of their listeners called in liking it, so it got added to the playlist. They admitted that sometimes they are wrong. And that's the point: Every song should have the chance to be heard, and we the listeners should draw our own conclusions.

When George Jones and Waylon Jennings can't get airplay on country radio (I know, I've tried!), you know it isn't about the music anymore. That's gotten lost somewhere along the way. As much as I like country music videos, I feel they're partly to blame. What you see has become more important than what you hear. And that's not what country music is about.

Roxanne Johnston
Hibbing, Minnesota

P.S.—Here are my Top Five albums for the year: *This One's Gonna Hurt You*, Marty Stuart; *Between Midnight and Hindsight*, Joy White; *A Lot About Livin' (And a Little 'Bout Love)*, Alan Jackson; *t-r-o-u-b-l-e*, Travis Tritt and *This Time*, Dwight Yoakam.



Connie T. Evans meets Doug Stone.

Doug Stone Helps Her Through

Connie T. Evans is a dedicated Doug Stone fan. His music has helped her through some tough times.

I am a dedicated country music fan. I love them all, but one really catches my heart—Doug Stone. I'm sending you a picture of me with Doug (a dream come true for me), and I'd love to see more of him in *Country Music Magazine*.

A little about me: I am a kidney transplant patient. I've had three transplants since I was 16. I also have pre-cancer, and they are treating it. My kidney is fine, though. I've liked Doug Stone and his music since he first started, and when I heard about his heart trouble, I could understand what he was going through. I pray for him and for his health. Hope you can use this.

Connie T. Evans
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

November Poll Results

Alan Jackson	<i>A Lot About Livin' (And a Little 'Bout Love)</i>
George Strait	<i>"Easy Come, Easy Go"</i>

No surprises here.... Alan Jackson tops the album chart again. In fact, your top three album choices haven't changed over the last three polls: Alan's again followed by George Strait's *Pure Country*, then Vince Gill's *I Still Believe in You*. Only fourth and fifth place are different: Sammy Kershaw takes fourth with *Haunted Heart*, while Dwight Yoakam's *This Time* rounds out the list. And in singles, George is tops, followed by Vince Gill's "One More Last Chance." Tracy Lawrence moves into third with "Holdin' Heaven," while fourth is sewn up by Patty Loveless' "Nothing But the Wheel." Fifth place goes to Joe Diffie and "Prop Me Up Beside the Jukebox (If I Die)." Get your vote in now for the January poll! See For Members Only.

CMSA COLLECTIONS

Collecting the Magazine

Members help each other complete their magazine collections.

•I have a big collection of *Country Music*, *Country America*, *Country Song Roundup*, *Music City News*. Will sell one or all. I also have numerous papers and magazines with stories of Elvis dating back to '77-'78. Send want list and SASE. **Frances Skopek, 1133 Mill St. Ext., Belton, SC 29627-8841**

Information, Please

Members write each other directly about information or items they need. When corresponding, include SASE. We reserve the right to edit for space and style.

•I'm a 34-year-old Dwight Yoakam fan. Would love to hear from anyone that has pictures, etc. to sell, reasonably priced. I especially need a T-shirt with his picture on it. **Kimberly A. Bozarth, P.O. Box 885, Boaz, AL 35957**

•Looking for the following shows on VHS. Willing to pay cost of tape plus postage for the following shows: *Minnie Pearl's 50th Anniversary Grand Ole Opry*, *Randy Travis' Wind in the Wire*. Also looking for *Travis' Tritt's Proud of the Country* on cassette. **David Berens, 1000 Orleans, Topeka, KS 66604**

•For sale: trading cards; \$2.00/card, all 100 available for trade for material of Marty Stuart, Tracy Lawrence and Toby Keith. **T.C. Greene, P.O. Box 315, Effingham, SC 29541**

•Wanted: copy of Wynonna's interview on *Dateline NBC* with Stone Phillips on August 24, 1993. Will pay or send blank VHS cassette. **Karen Cushing, 1620 Russell Ave., Louisville, KY 40213**

•Hello! I am looking for anything and everything on Little Texas. We can trade or I will buy at a reasonable price. Send list of your items. Also, if you love Little Texas and want a pen pal, write me. **Lou Ann Thornton, 6 Elizabeth St., Danville, VA 24541**

•Any photos (especially concert shots) of Travis Tritt, Alan Jackson and Little Texas. Am willing to trade as opposed to buying, if I have something that you might need. Also, CMA "Country Gold" trading cards. Will sell as individual card, or by pack. Have more than one card for some artists. Send SASE, long envelope for list. **Cindi Tittle, Route 1 Box 443, Parrish, AL 35580-9623**

•For sale: onstage/offstage photos of country artists, 1975-1993. Also, magazines, posters, LP's and other memorabilia. Looking for Crystal Gayle and Tanya Tucker memorabilia. Send SASE. **Galen Duncan, 3517 Grier Nursery Rd., Street, MD 21154**

•The following fan club newsletters for sale: Vince Gill, Alan Jackson, Tanya Tucker, Doug Stone, Sammy Kershaw. For a complete list of issues and prices, send SASE. **Anita Marie McNeill, P.O. Box 31584, Black Creek Postal Outlet, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6M 5G4**

•Looking for anything, especially photos, of Ricky Lynn Gregg. Will trade, buy or sell. Would like to hear from other fan club members. **Mary Hanna, 159 Cullman Rd., Columbus, OH 43207**

•Looking for photos, posters, articles, T-shirts, anything pertaining to The Judds and Wynonna. Will pay reasonable

price. **T.J. Smith, P.O. Box 219, Dry Run, PA 17220**

•Wanted: anything on Patsy Cline. Will pay reasonable price. Would like to hear from other Patsy Cline fans. **Robert L. Chudicek, 117 Northview Circle, Beaver, PA 15009**

•For sale: close-up concert photos of many country artists and complete set of Elvis collection cards. Send .29 stamp for list and sample photo. **Richard D. Moore, 20 Maple St., Hopedale, MA 01747**

•Following LP's for sale: *Frankie Laine/High Noon*, *Hank Snow/Hello Love*, *Kitty Wells/Queen of Honky Tonk St.*, *Webb Pierce/Golden Favorites*, *Dean Morris/Tex Martin Rides Again*, *Johnny Cash/The Fabulous*, *Eddy Arnold/Our Man Down South*, *Eddy Arnold/Have Guitar, Will Travel*, *Jim Reeves/We Thank Thee, Tenn. E. Ford/Hymns*, *Marge Singleton/Country with Soul*, *Ray Pillow/One too Many Memories*. Plus many more. SASE please. **Jane Irwin, Box 413, Peru, NY 12972**

•Looking for a good VHS copy of *George Jones' and Randy Travis' show*, *Influences*, and *Loretta Lynn's show*, *Seasons of My Life*, and any videos of their live shows. **Barry G. Long, 9 Laurel Place, Ulverstone, Tasmania, Australia 7315**

•Wanted: anything that can be found on Garth Brooks. I already have all his CD's, various interviews, videos, etc., but am especially looking for posters (promotional, etc.), tour items, photos, etc. **Scott Foster, Box 7801 FLC, Durango, CO 81301**

•For sale: on/off-stage photos of your favorite country artists, large selection. Magazines. Please send SASE to: **Linda R. Weyandt, Greenfields Apt. C-3, Rd. #1, Claysburg, PA 16625**

•VHS 6-hr. tape, \$25 includes S/H: Awards, CMA, ACM, TNN '83, '84, '89, '90-'93. Songwriter's Award, No Hats Tour, Alan, Dolly, Garth, Reba, Randy, Loretta, etc. Top 40 interviews, *Nashville Now* 10th Anniversary, Grand Old Opry Anniversary, country specials. SASE. **June Miner, 517 Edward Rd., W. Melbourne, FL 32904**

•Wanted: VHS tapes of Grand Ole Opry 65th Anniversary program in February 1991 and CMA Awards shows in October '89 or September '92. Will pay reasonable price. **Elaine Kroeger, 6405 Lakeview Blvd., #16, Middleton, WI 53562**

•Wanted: CMA trading card of Michael Martin Murphey. I have 200 cards; will trade any or all of them for one of Michael. Would also be interested in any other MMM memorabilia. **Karen Roberts, 3400 Fallmeadow #3129B, Denton, TX 76201**

•For sale: C & W albums. Bob Willis, Kitty Wells, Lefty Frizzell, Conway Twitty, Loretta Lynn, Dolly Parton, Charlie Pride, Hank Williams Sr. and Jr., Ray Price, Patsy Cline, Everly Bros., also some rock 'n' roll, too many to mention. Send 2 stamps for list. **Mrs. Mary Barker, 306 Young, Nocona, TX 76255**

•Wanted: Conway Twitty memorabilia. Candid photos, rare recordings, books, posters, etc. Also looking for pen pals who are true fans of Conway. I'm 39. Hope to hear from you. I also sell candid

country photos of many stars. **Leslie Gardner, 7533 Madora Ave., Canoga Park, CA 91306**

•Wanted: high quality VHS tape of 1993 Canadian CMA's aired 9/25/93 on TNN. Will pay reasonable price or will trade tapes of other shows I have. Can anyone help? Please! **Vickie Caylor, 608 S. Wisconsin, Mitchell, SD 57301**

•Wanted: information about the *Louisiana Hayride* on KWKH Shreveport, LA, 1955-1960. Information about *Louisiana Hayride* singers like: Carl Belew, Tony Douglas, James O'Gwynn, Margie Singleton. "Country" Johnny Mathis, Jeanette Hicks. Send SASE. **Earl F. Lopresto, 201 E. D'Amour, St. Chutnette, LA 70043**

•Serious collector looking for these Hal Ketchum promotional CD singles: "Small Town Saturday Night," "Past the Point of Rescue" and "Five O'Clock World." Also interested in other promo items. **Harry R. Wells Jr., RR #1 Box 32A, Noble, IL 62868**

•Wanted: *Dukes of Hazzard* memorabilia—toys, T-shirts, posters, etc. Will pay reasonable price. **Carol Steele, 305-C Jaycee Manor, Martins Ferry, OH 43935**

•For sale: two rare albums—Dolly Parton/*Hits Made Famous by Country Queens* (Somerset label) and Merle Haggard/*Land of Many Churches* (Capitol). Will sell at best offers. **Jane Irwin, 413 John Boxwell Rd., Peru, NY 12972**

•Wanted: album *Randy Ray Live at the Nashville Palace*. This is the first album made by the man now known as Randy Travis. Will pay reasonable price. **Deanna Laird, RRI Box 772, East Berlin, PA 17316**

•Looking for the CD, *All I Need*, and double album set, *Family Faith*, both by The Forester Sisters. Please send response to V.L. Siegrist, 3939 Russell Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63110-3709.

•Wanted: someone to record the show *Dukes of Hazzard*, at least five shows. Will pay for videos and shipping expenses. **Donna Bechtel, Rt. 2 Box 53, Leon, WV 25123**

•I would like a copy of the video of Ricky Van Shelton helping to light the National Christmas Tree in Washington D.C. in December of 1990. **Donna Barrington, 123 Brown Road, Pitts, GA 31072**

•For sale: many articles on Clint Black! All reasonable prices. Will be answered only if SASE is included. **Michelle Oeger, Rt. 1 Box 85A, Omaha, AR 72662**

•For sale: pictures of most country stars. Also, can put your favorite picture on T-shirt or sweatshirt. Send requests with SASE to Nancy Synnott, P.O. Box 180153, Richland, MS 39218.

•Looking for anyone that copied the *28th Annual Academy of Country Music Awards*. Also looking for two shows that aired on TNN: July 19, 1993, special on Alan Jackson, *One Night in Austin*, and August 2, 1993, special of *Return of the No Hats* with Travis Tritt and Marty Stuart. Will send blank tape for a copy. **Sharon J. Stizall, P.O. Box 153, Metaline, WA 99152-0153**

•I would like to get bumper stickers from KSN (San Francisco), KZLA,

WUSN (Chicago) and WYNY, New York. **John Maloy, 717 Lafayette Ave., Baltimore, MD 21228**

•Serious Travis Tritt collector (looking to add to collection): photos, articles, posters, videos etc. Also desperately trying to locate copy of Travis Tritt's *Proud of the Country* album and original issues of his 45's. Will pay reasonable prices if items are in good condition. I'll also trade from photos/articles I have of other artists. I also have excellent photos of Travis Tritt on stage (1993) for sale. Please send list and condition of items. **Tracy Frye, 1225 Sumach Way, Apt. 6, Manaca, PA 15061**

•For sale: over 2000 mint country LP's (many autographed), cassettes, CD's, autographed photos and memorabilia. Send SASE and priced want list with three loose .29 stamps for reply. Serious buyers only, please. No window shoppers! **Tom Weaver, 406 Winston Ave., Wilmington, DE 19804-1855**

•For sale: Tanya Tucker memorabilia collection. Extensive listing available with detailed description and price. Autographed LP, old newsletters, old and new articles, press kits, fan club merchandise and much, much more! Collection will be sold intact. No items separate. First come, first serve. Send long SASE with four .29 stamps for five-page listing. **Dana Stein, 345 East 80th Street #10 B, New York, NY 10021**

•Looking for LP's or cassettes: *Connie Smith/God Is Abundant* and *Kitty Wells/ Winner of Your Heart*. **Mel Gallup, Box 232, New Lebanon, NY 12125**

Pen Pals

Make new friends by mail. *Pen Pals* is a means of introducing CMSA members who wish to correspond. It is not a "personals" column. Physical descriptions and requests for romance will not be printed. We also reserve the right to edit for space and style. Parent's permission required for those 16 and under.

•Hi! My name is Kathy. I'm 30 and married. My two biggest loves are animals and country music. I would like to correspond with someone (male or female) 25-40 preferably living in Tennessee. No inmates, please. **Kathy Dieffenderfer, P.O. Box 231, White Deer, PA 17887**

•Hello. I'm a 32-year-old married male, avid C&W fan and record collector. Favorites are Glen Campbell, Emmylou Harris, Hank Snow. **Kevin Allen, Box 8535, Reno, NV 89507-8535**

•Hi, my name is Bertha. I am 37 and a widow. I live in WV. I love country music and love to listen to all the country stars. Would like to hear from another country fan, and make friends. Love to do all outdoor things, love to horseback ride (my favorite). **Bertha L. Yost, P.O. Box 196, Pursglove, WV 26546**

•Hello. I'm a 29-year-old divorced Navy Petty Officer who enjoys country music. Big fan of Diamond Rio, Little Texas, Travis Tritt, Garth, Brooks & Dunn. Enjoy music, camping, fishing, outdoors. Seeking young lady pen-pals from around the country. Photo appreciated. **Mike Harvey, 9954 Holly Lane, Apt. 1N, Des Plaines, IL 60016**

•Hi! I'm a 17-year-old looking for some friends. My favorites include: Garth, Reba, Alan and many more. Would like



World Radio History

LORRIE MORGAN

PULL-OUT
CENTERFOLD
OF THE MONTH

LORRIE MORGAN

Facts of Life

Personal Data

Name: Lorrie Morgan
Birthdate: June 27, 1959
Home: Goodlettsville, Tennessee
Family: father, George; mother, Anna; children, son Jessie Keith and daughter Morgan Anastasia
Personal Tastes: spicy chicken, Harley-Davidsons, 50's & 60's songs
Early Career Highlights: Debuted on the Grand Ole Opry stage at age 13. At 18 she worked in Nashville's Opryland shows. Toured with George Jones for two years, and was a demo singer for the legendary music publishing firm, Acuff-Rose, which led to a deal with Hickory Records. Lorrie is one of only two artists ever asked to join the Grand Ole Opry without having had a hit record (the other is Justin Tubb). The two were honored for their dedication.



Vital Statistics

Height: 5' 1"
Weight: 105
Color of eyes: Green
Color of hair: Blonde

Recording Career

Record Label: BNA Entertainment, 1 Music Circle North, Nashville, Tennessee 37203.

Albums:

Title	Release Date
<i>Leave the Light On</i> (RCA)	1989*
<i>Something in Red</i> (RCA)	1991**
<i>Watch Me</i> (BNA)	1992*
<i>Merry Christmas from London</i>	1993

New album, produced by Richard Landis, will be out at the end of March, with two songs penned by Lorrie.

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

Top Ten Singles:
 "Out of Your Shoes"
 "Five Minutes"

"He Talks to Me"
 "Something in Red"
 "A Picture of Me Without You"
 "We Both Walk"
 "Except for Monday"
 "Watch Me"
 "What Part of No"
 "I Guess You Had to Be There"
 "Half Enough"

Videos:
 "Trainwreck of Emotion"
 "Dear Me"
 "Out of Your Shoes"
 "We Both Walk"
 "A Picture of Me Without You"
 "Something in Red"
 "Watch Me"
 "I Guess You Had to Be There"
 "Half Enough"
 "Crying Time"
 (from *The Beverly Hillbillies* soundtrack)
 "My Favorite Things"
 (Christmas song)

Awards

1990: CMA Vocal Event of the Year (with Keith Whitley)
 1991: TNN/*Music City News* Video Collaboration of the Year (with Keith Whitley)

TV Highlights

48 Hours
Geraldo
The Tonight Show
TNN All-Star Salute to Ralph Emery
65 Years of the Grand Ole Opry (CBS)
Austin City Limits
Hee Haw
CBS New Year's Rockin' Eve
Farm Aid
Conversation with Burt Reynolds

Current Events

Has a one-year exclusive development deal with CBS-TV for a pilot. This comes after her work in the TNN-produced drama, *Proudheart*, which was nominated for an ACE Award for best cable television one-hour drama special. Voted 1993 Stylemaker of the Year by the National Cosmetologist Association, as a trendsetter in both personal and career lifestyles. Lorrie will be the NCA Spokesperson for the "Look Good, Feel Better" program, a national program developed especially for women undergoing treatment for cancer. The list of 1993 finalists included Hillary Rodham Clinton, Demi Moore and Reba McEntire.

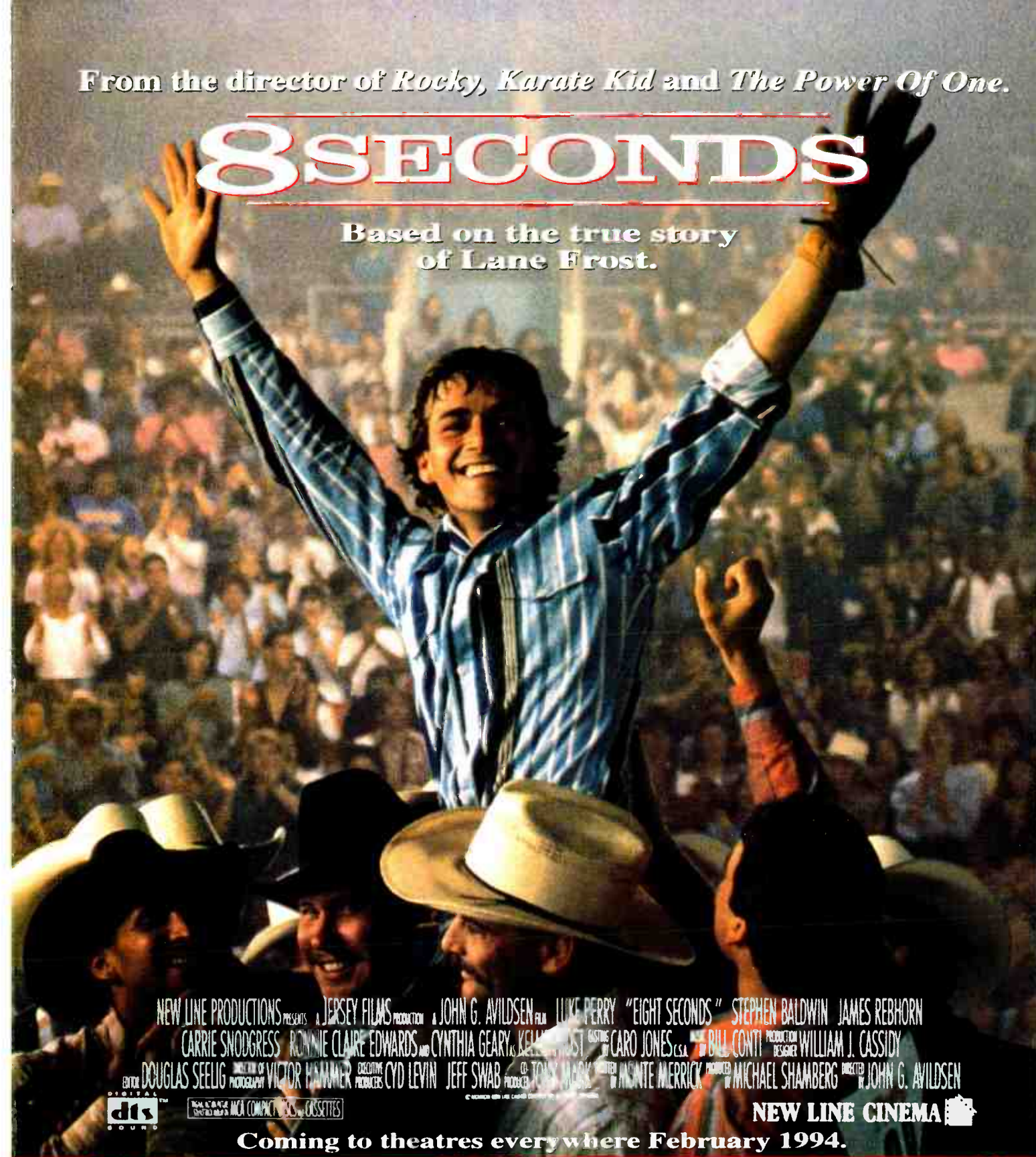
Fan Club

Membership in the Lorrie Morgan Fan Club includes an autographed photo, quarterly newsletters, biography, membership card which can be used as a backstage pass, touring schedule and merchandise information. To join, send \$10.00 to Lorrie Morgan Fan Club, P.O. Box 120964, Nashville, Tennessee, 37212.

From the director of *Rocky*, *Karate Kid* and *The Power Of One*.

8 SECONDS

Based on the true story of Lane Frost.



NEW LINE PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS A JERSEY FILMS PRODUCTION A JOHN G. AVILDSSEN FILM LUKE PERRY "EIGHT SECONDS" STEPHEN BALDWIN JAMES REBHORN
 CARRIE SNOODGROSS RONNIE CLAIRE EDWARDS AND CYNTHIA GEARY AS KELLIE JUST GASTING BY CARO JONES, C.S.A. MUSIC BY BILL CONTI PRODUCTION DESIGNER WILLIAM J. CASSIDY
 EDITOR DOUGLAS SEELIG DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY VICTOR HANNAWER EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS CYD LEVIN JEFF SWAB PRODUCED BY TONY MACK WRITTEN BY MICHAEL MERRICK PRODUCED BY MICHAEL SHAMBERG DIRECTED BY JOHN G. AVILDSSEN
 dts DIGITAL SOUND
 NEW LINE CINEMA

Coming to theatres everywhere February 1994.

MCA soundtrack features Vince Gill, Reba McEntire, Brooks and Dunn, Patty Smyth, McBride and The Ride, Hank Chesnut, Billy Dean, John Anderson, David Lee Murphy, Pam Tillis, and Karla Bonoff.



to hear from anyone 16-18 years old. Will answer all. No inmates, please. **Jaime L. Baker, 476 Craig Ave., Lawrenceburg, IN 47025.**

•Hello. My name is Marsha, 26, married with one child. Would like to hear from Bill Ray fans. Also like Tanya, Brooks & Dunn, Dolly and Reba, to name a few. Billy Ray is my very favorite. Any age (females only), will do my best to answer all. I love writing and getting letters! Please fill my box. **Marsha Taylor, P.O. Box 57, Sandersville, MS 39477.**

•Hi! I'm a single, 34-year-old female who loves country music. Favorites include Travis Tritt, Alan Jackson and more. Would love to hear from females 30+, especially those living in small towns. No inmates. **Kathy Brennessel, 4853 N. Winchester, Chicago, IL 60640.**

•Hi. My name is Laura. I'm 20 years old and new to country music. My absolute favorite is George Strait! But I also like Travis Tritt, Vince Gill, Reba, Little Texas, Martina McBride and others. I love to play sports, dance, go out for walks and go to concerts. I'm a huge Minnesota Twins fan. Would like to hear from anyone with similar interests. Age not important. Will answer all. Photo for photo. **Laura Thomas, 2209 23rd St. NW, Rochester, MN 55901**

•Hello! My name is Debbie. I'm 21 years old, married with children. I have lots of interests. I like country music and soft rock. Some favorites are Billy Dean, Billy Ray, Tanya, Reba, Kathy Mattea, Lorrie Morgan, Mark Chesnutt, Paula Abdul, Janet Jackson, Madonna, Richard Marx and lots more. Love hearing from pals and will answer all who write. I'll try not to bore you too much, so write soon. **Debbie Phillips, Rt. 1 Box 290, Washington, WV 26181**

•Howdy! This is Matt! I'm a 23-year-old veteran pen pal. "married with children"—but not to a pen pal. Ha! I love all kinds of music. Faves are: Tanya, Dolly, Reba, Madonna, Gloria Estefan, Taylor Dayne, Whitney and The Carpenters, for starters. I love author Dean R. Koontz, the comedy of Roseanne, Joan and Whoopi, Mexican food, listening to music, reruns of the *Golden Girls* and *Charlie's Angels*, laughing and enjoying life. I'll answer all. I try to write long, fun letters; I'm as open-minded as they come. So ya'll write and we'll have lots of fun. **Matt Phillips, RR 1 Box 290, Washington, WV 26181**

•Hi, from the beautiful city of Dahlonega, GA! I am a Sr. Citizen lady and have enjoyed country music all of my life. I like all of today's younger singers like Alan, Billy Ray, especially Sammy Kershaw and Radney Foster. Hobbies are fishing, sewing and ham radio. Will answer all. No inmates, please. **Mabel Seffens, 316 Skyline Dr., Dahlonega, GA 30533.**

•Don't pass me by before checking this out. I'm Danny, age 40. Just a country boy who is presently incarcerated. Favorite singers are K.T. Oslin, George Strait and Reba. Love country music and collecting stamps. Please enclose SASE. Come on ladies, fill my mail box. **Danny Davidson 196-779, P.O. Box 56, Lebanon, OH 45036.**

•Hey! My name is Mike, and I'm a 20-year-old, single male. I love country

music, especially Garth, Reba, Alan Jackson, Brooks & Dunn, Mary-Chapin Carpenter and Hal Ketchum, to name a few. I would love to hear from females around my age, but of course, I'll answer all. Hope to hear from you soon. **Mike Wilt, 4424 Vista St., Philadelphia, PA 19136-3709.**

•I'm a 35-year-old female with three cats who would like to hear from Collin Raye fans. I also love my hero, Jimmy Buffett (I've seen him 8 times). Interests include animals, poetry, drawing, crafts, bonsai, old B&W movies and lots of country music. Will trade articles for photos and info. on Collin and Buffett. **Karen Barnett, 2064 Peabody Ave., Memphis, TN 38104-4145.**

•"The only hell Momma ever raised," soon to be free and would love to make some new friends to start fresh. Any age 18+. My favorites are Reba, Garth, Alan and many more. Your photo gets mine. **R. Hickey #861953, Indiana State Prison, P.O. Box 41, Michigan City, IN 46360.**

•Hello! I'm a single female, age 20, looking to make new friends across the country. I love all kinds of music, especially country. Big fan of Wynonna, The Judds, George Strait, Clint, Pam Tillis, Vince Gill and many others. Also love sports and being outdoors. Like to hear from people 20-30 years. Will answer all. No inmates, please. **Le'Anna Haynes, 584 N. Harbin, Stephenville, TN 76401**

•Hi! This die-hard country fan would like to hear from fans of Alan Jackson, Marty Stuart, T. Graham Brown, Brooks & Dunn, Diamond Rio and Dwight Yoakam. I'm 36, married, mom to three. Ladies only, no inmates. Write soon! **Shelia Doty, 736 Francis Ln., Chillicothe, OH 45601**

•Hi! My name is Holly. I'm 23 years old. I'm a very big country music fan. Favorites include: Clint, Garth, Reba, Lorrie, George Strait, Chris LeDoux, Brooks & Dunn and many more. I love my home state, but I also love to travel. My hobbies include golf, hiking, studying, forestry and listening to country music. Would love to hear from you. No inmates, please. **Holly A. Haugen, 1516 Third Ave. N., Great Falls, MT 59401**

•Hi! My name is Donna. I'm a single mom, and I love country music—especially Clint, Alan, Tracy, Dwight, Travis and Marty. Would love to hear from country fans, ages 25-40. Will answer all. **Donna Sharp, 1283 44th Ave. H5, Sweet Home, OR 97386.**

•Hi! My name is Cindy, and I'm a 25-year-old married lady. My favorite country star is Clint Black. Other favorites are Vince, Alan, Vern Gosdin, Travis, Marty, Doug Stone, Reba, Keith Whitley, and more. I also like rock 'n' roll from the 50's, 60's and 70's. My hobbies are: writing and receiving letters, reading, ACC Basketball, writing poetry, dogs, the beach, camping, word games, playing cards, collecting postcards and collecting pigs (ceramic, etc.). Would love to hear from females of all ages with similar interests. Will try to answer all. **Cindy Griffin, 3015 Old Camden Rd., Monroe, NC 28110.**

•Hello! My name is Darlene. I am a 29-year-old single mom with an eight-year-old son. I am a Native American Indian

from the Laguna tribe. I live in one of seven villages. I have many favorite artists, but George Strait, Clint Black and Tracy Lawrence top my list. I enjoy reading, writing letters and making new friends. Would enjoy hearing from anyone interested in making a friend. Will answer all. **Darlene Encino, P.O. Box 1003, Pagueate, NM 87040.**

•Hi! I'm a somewhat new country music fan in prison who needs pen pals. Some favorites are Randy Travis, Garth, Hank Jr., Patsy, Carlene, Dolly and others. Also like rock from the 60's on. Enjoy all of nature, photography, racing, pool, bowling and a whole lot of other things I can't do right now. Picture for picture. **Eric Wilson, W152583, Potosi Correctional Center, RR2, Box 2222, Mineral Point, MO 63660.**

•Hi, my name is Jack. I'm 36, single and enjoy country music. I like Brooks & Dunn, Sammy Kershaw, Doug Stone, Garth, Clint and more. Also enjoy the older stars like George Jones, Tammy Wynette and others. Look forward to hearing from you. **Jack Adcock, 310 Hamilton, Judsonia, AR 72081**

•Howdy! Wanted: country music fans who love to write. I'm 15-year-old Kathie Scheibe, and I'd love to hear from you! A few country favorites are Garth, Kathy Mattea, Clint Black, Collin Raye, Vince Gill and more! Hobbies include tennis, volleyball, horseback riding, dancing and music. Will answer all. No inmates, please. Photo gets mine. **Kathie Scheibe, 16670 Leavenworth Rd., Basehor, KS 66007.**

Kathie has a parent's permission to participate in this column.—Ed.

•Hello! My name is Vickie. I'm 28, single, "south of Cincinnati," and I love country music. Would like to correspond with others in their mid-20's to mid-30's, male or female (no inmates, please). All time favorite is the one and only Mr. Dwight Yoakam. Interests include writing, reading, watching CMT and TNN and spending time with my dogs and cats. Interested in other Dwight fans to help me enhance my photo/article collection. **Vickie L. Kromer, 21 Edwards Ave., Walton, KY 41094.**

•Hi! My name is Pam. I'm 26 years old and single, and I'm a big country music fan. Favorites include Reba, Vince, Garth, Alabama and many more, old and new. Interested in hearing from guys and gals from all over, any age. **Pam Hoelscher, P.O. Box 523, Jackson Center, OH 45334.**

•Greetings from the City of Brotherly Love. I would love to hear from anyone who loves Randy Travis and thinks he's still the greatest. No inmates, please. **Bettie Thomas, 5338 Spruce St., Philadelphia, PA 19139.**

•Howdy! I'm almost a "legal eagle," single female, administrative justice college student. I love all country-western music, writing letters, watching sports live, and the state of Montana (I lived there before), and a lot more. I welcome all letters and will try to write everyone back. **Melissa Schaefer, 10906 NW 33rd Ave., Vancouver, WA 98685.**

•Hi, my name is Katie. I am a 55-year-old widow. Country girl who always loved country music. Like to make new friends. Favorites are: Hank Sr., Vince

Gill, Judds, Reba, Randy Travis and lots more. Men or women. I have lots of hobbies—too many to mention. No inmates, please. **Katie Clemmons, 5875 Cedar Tree Dr., Milton, FL 32570.**

•My name is Terry. I am 36, in prison. I'd love to correspond with single country girls, ages 21 up. I love country music. Favorites are Alabama, Tanya, George Jones, Willie, Reba, Mary-Chapin, Carlene Carter, to name a few. Hobbies are fishing, motorcycles, studying law, walks in the parks. Will answer all. **Terry Lee Canterbury, #149130, Potosi Correctional Center, RR #2, Box 2222, Mineral Point, MO 63660.**

•Hello from Texas! I'm a 17-year-old country music fan. Favorites include Reba and Garth. Write me, and I'll write you. Will answer all. **Diana Longoria, 332 N. Irby Ln. #368, Irving, TX 75061-7010.**

•Hi! My name is Sherry. I'm 25, single, and I love country music. My favorites are Reba and George Strait. I would like to hear from males, ages 25-35 (especially military). No inmates, please. Will answer all. **Sherry Vance, 12117 Baron Dr., Balch Springs, TX 75180.**

•Hi! I'm 26, married with two children. Favorites are Little Texas, George Strait, Tracy Lawrence and the Dallas Cowboys. Enjoy reading, exercising, cross stitch and sewing. Can't wait to hear from you! No inmates, please. **Lisa Haby, 104 Willow Dr., Castroville, TX 78009.**

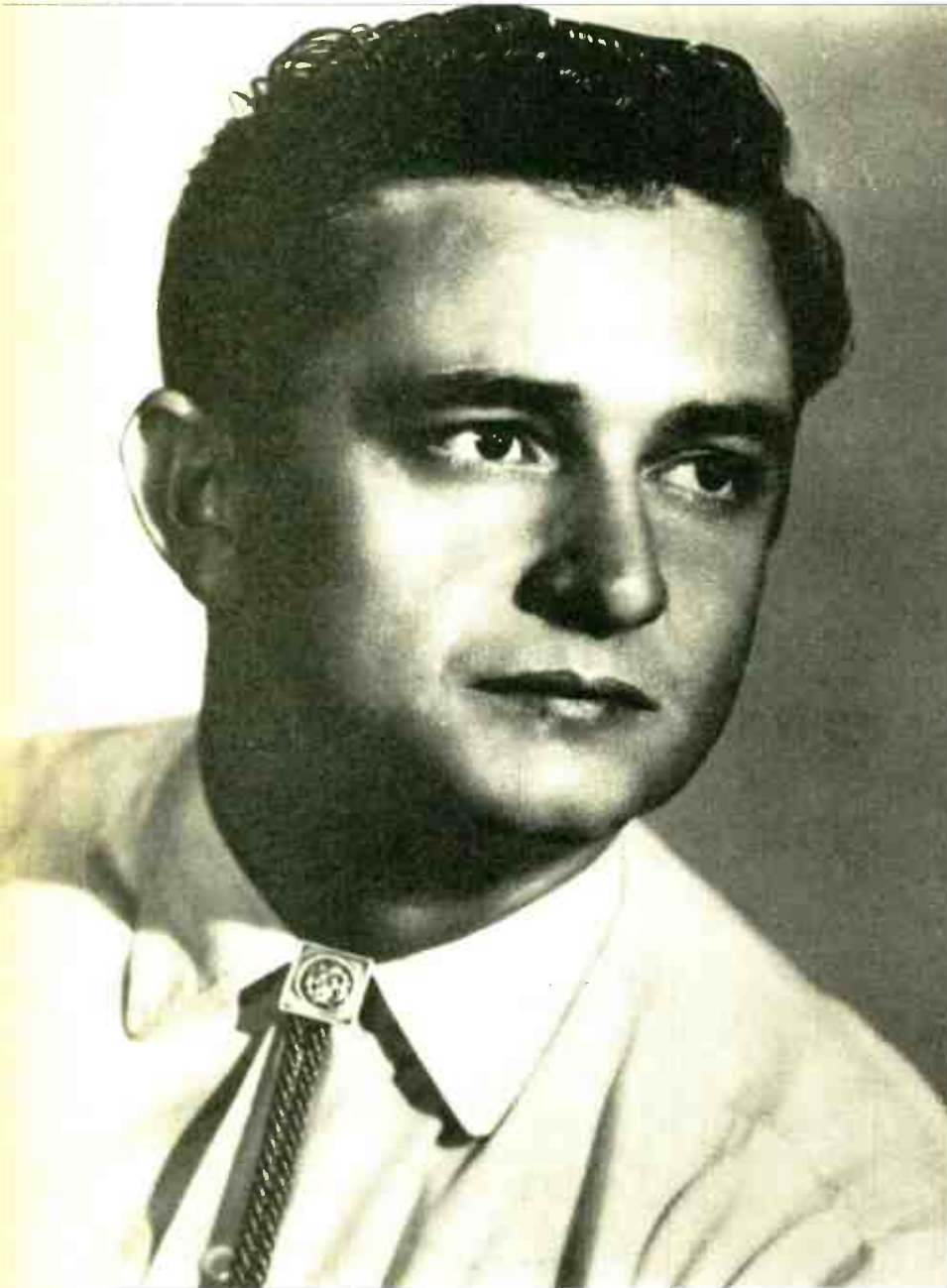
•Hello, I'm 23 years old and would like to hear from people of all ages. I like the outdoors, concerts, songwriting, music, travel. I will answer all letters, especially veterans. **Sherrrie Leslie, 4809 Oakwood Pl., Evansville, IN 47715.**

•Hello! I'm a 31-year-old male who would like to hear from single females, 18 to 40 years old, from all over who are in the military. My favorites are Alan Jackson, Tracy Lawrence, Doug Stone, Pam Tillis, Tanya, Reba and more. Like amusement parks, sports, traveling, long walks, nature, animals, the beach and going to county and state fairs. Will answer all. Fill my mailbox. No prisoners, please. **Mark McFadden, 3229 Agate Dr., Santa Clara, CA 95051-1107.**

•Hello, I'm 25 and love country music. Would love to hear from anyone. Some favorites include Marty Stuart, Gary Morris, Billy Dean, Martina McBride and Steve Wariner. Will try to answer all. **Cynthia Nafziger, P.O. Box 73, Perkinator, MS 39573.**

•Hi, country music lovers who would like a pen pal in Australia. I'd love to hear from you. Interests include collecting country CD's, videos, tapes, etc. All letters will be answered. **Barry G. Long, 9 Laurel Pl., Ulverstone, Tasmania Australia 7315.**

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Johnny Cash

Cash's originality, his integrity and his lifestyle brightened the American country music scene from the 1950's on, and broadened the audience to include mainstream America.

By Rich Kienzle

Garth Brooks was eight years away from appearing on earth when Johnny Cash, Luther Perkins and Marshall Grant auditioned at the Sun studios in Memphis in 1954. Billy Ray Cyrus was only eight years old in 1969 when Cash, riding a phenomenal wave of popularity, became a household word. In the course of his long career, Cash raised America's consciousness about country, enlightening millions who thought of Nashville only as Tennessee's state capitol, or associated the Opry with some kind of "hoedown" music.

The road to fame meant conquering poverty, working to succeed in a highly competitive profession and dealing with the demands of stardom. He defied those who urged him to remain silent on social issues. His complex personality and its darker sides were as open as the rest of his life. As a cultural icon, his appeal crossed age and class boundaries. But regardless of detours and downsides, Cash always held to the basics that defined both his music and himself.

Certainly the future was not that promising at first. J.R. Cash, born February 26, 1932, in Kingsland, Arkansas, was a child of the Great Depression. It wreaked havoc across America, hitting the rural South particularly hard. His parents, Ray and Carrie Cash, took the work ethic seriously and imparted it to all their children. As President Franklin Roosevelt was desperately trying to solve the problems of the Depression, Ray Cash elected to participate in one of Roosevelt's innovations: Dyess Colony. This experiment involved creating a farming community (with cotton the specialty) in the Delta country of Arkansas (near the Mississippi River) for those participating. The Cashes got 20 acres of land and a house when they moved there in 1935.

Ray Cash liked to sing; Carrie Cash played piano and guitar. The entire family knew the hymns from the Church of God. Roy Cash, J.R.'s older brother, played in a band called The Rhythm Ramblers. The death of another older brother, the deeply religious Jack, in a 1944 sawmill accident affected J.R. deeply. In school he acted and sang, listening to country singers on the radio whenever he could. By age 16 he became so serious about singing that Carrie Cash took in laundry to pay for his formal singing lessons. In 1950 he graduated high school. After a brief, miserable period working in a Fisher Body plant in Detroit, he joined the U.S. Air Force. He got the name "John" there.

Having spent much of his hitch in Germany, Cash emerged a civilian in 1954. He'd learned to play guitar in the service, and began writing songs, including "Hey Porter," published as a poem in the military newspaper, *Stars and Stripes*. After his 1954 discharge, he married Vivian Liberto, whom he'd met in San Antonio, Texas, during his basic training. They moved to Memphis to begin a family. Cash sold appliances while training to become a radio announcer.

A musical career was his true goal. Roy Cash worked in the garage of a local Chevrolet dealer and introduced John to two guitar-playing co-workers, Luther Perkins and Marshall Grant. Soon Cash, Perkins, Grant and a steel player (who later dropped out) were working out songs, many of them gospel. It was inevitable that they'd gravitate to Sun Records, the local label that discovered Elvis. Scotty Moore, Elvis' guitarist, suggested Cash contact Sam Phillips. It took many tries to get through. When John came in alone, Phillips was impressed enough to invite him back with his band. When they auditioned in the spring of 1955, Sam Phillips discouraged the religious music but recorded Cash's song, "Hey Porter," asking John to come up with a second song for the single. Cash returned with "Cry! Cry! Cry!"

The now-classic Cash "boom-chucka" sound wasn't a calculated creation but a product of the three men's considerable musical limitations. Without a drummer, Cash put tissue paper under his acoustic guitar strings to imitate a snare drum. Grant obtained a \$25 bass fiddle and had to learn it from scratch. Perkins, a primitive lead guitarist, could do little more than play simple licks and alternating notes on the lower strings. This was the Cash "boom-chucka" sound, and with the addition of the legendary Sun "slapback" echo, it became a sparse but powerful vehicle for Cash's voice. Issued in June, 1955, by late that year "Hey Porter," by "Johnny" Cash (an attempt to emphasize his youth) and The Tennessee Two, came in at Number 14 on the *Billboard* charts. Still, nobody quit their day jobs—yet.

Both sides of the next Sun single, "So Doggone Lonesome" and "Folsom Prison Blues," reached Number Four nationally. The third single, "I Walk the Line," stayed six weeks at Number One on the country charts and broke into the pop Top 20. Cash began making decent money, and in mid-1956, he joined the Grand Ole Opry. He began doing national TV appearances and worked with Sun producer Jack Clement, who added vocal choruses to later hits like "Home of the Blues" and

"Guess Things Happen that Way," another crossover hit. Cash eventually moved the family to California.

In 1957, Columbia country producer Don Law persuaded him to sign with them when his Sun contract ended in '58. Cash's momentum continued on Columbia. His first Number One on the label came as Cash began exploring American history in his songs, with the Western gunfighter song, "Don't Take Your Guns to Town," in 1959. It landed him an appearance on the *Ed Sullivan Show* on TV. In 1960 he added a drummer, former Carl Perkins drummer W.S. Holland (who remains with him today), and the renamed Tennessee Three continued touring.

The early 60's saw Cash beginning to abuse pills (and becoming legendary for "redecorating" his hotels on tour). Nonetheless he grew as an artist. He recorded historical albums; mariachi horns appeared on his 1963 crossover hit, "King of Fire." His growing maturity allowed him to perform at the Newport Folk Festival and strike up a friendship with a young Bob Dylan. Unlike many of his peers, Cash stared controversy in the face, recording the hard-hitting Peter LaFarge song, "The Ballad of Ira Hayes," and other songs protesting the mistreatment of American Indians.

His touring show improved, first with the addition of The Carter Family (Mother Maybelle, Helen, Anita and June), then with old Sun Records friend, Carl Perkins, and finally with The Statler Brothers. His personal life was less successful. In 1965, the same year he made a vocal hit out of the old fiddle tune, "Orange Blossom Special," he was busted for drugs in El Paso, Texas (and got off with a suspended sentence and fine). Following his divorce from Vivian in 1966, his relationship with June Carter grew, but his pill problems worsened. It took several near-fatal episodes and encouragement from friends for Cash to kick his addiction. In 1967, healthier than he'd been in years, he recorded a live album at Folsom Prison, the classic *Johnny Cash at Folsom Prison*. Things weren't totally triumphant—Luther Perkins died in a fire. But the *Folsom Prison* album had phenomenal sales far beyond the standard country audience. His new, live version of "Folsom Prison Blues" went to Number One and crossed over to pop success. By the time he married June in 1968, he was the subject of growing media attention.

His version of Carl Perkins' composition, "Daddy Sang Bass," spent six weeks at Number One late in 1968, and by 1969, Cash landed his own ABC-TV variety show. Bob Dylan did a rare guest appear-

ance on the premiere show, and the series did so well that ABC added it to the fall schedule. His 1969 version of Shel Silverstein's novelty, "A Boy Named Sue," recorded live at San Quentin Prison (part of another best-selling album), topped the country charts and came in at Number Two on the pop charts.

Cash's eagle eye saw new talent in Nashville songwriters like Kris Kristofferson and Larry Gatlin. In recording their songs and promoting them, he helped pave the way for the entire Outlaw movement, though no one realized that at the time (Waylon Jennings had been a former Nashville roommate for a time in the mid-60's). In 1968, 1969 and 1970, Cash won the CMA Entertainer of the Year Award, and Male Vocalist of the Year the latter two years. He won Grammys in 1969 and 1970 as well. Through the 70's, the TV show and tours continued. He produced a religious film, *The Gospel Road*, and appeared with Kirk Douglas in the film, *The Gunfighter*.

Losing his musical direction in the mid-70's by allowing his records to be slickly produced, he returned to the "boom-chucka" sound with the 1976 novelty, "One Piece at a Time." That sound remained in place when he celebrated his 25th anniversary in the business in 1980. That same year, at 48, Cash became the youngest inductee to the Country Music Hall of Fame. The Carters remained with his show; Perkins and The Statlers left.

Cash's personal problems weren't over. Pills resurfaced in the early 80's, and he nearly died battling abdominal problems. After 28 years, he and Columbia parted ways. Though always a strong draw in concert, his record sales inevitably trailed off, though his visibility remained high. He was part of the all-star quartet, The Highwaymen, with Willie, Kris and Waylon. A 1987 recording contract with Mercury yielded little success, but he starred in a number of TV movies. The pill problems persisted, and he wound up at the Betty Ford Center in 1985. In early 1989 he underwent open heart surgery.

Today, Johnny Cash is 62 years old, still touring with The Carter Family and a band built around Fluke Holland (Luther Perkins' replacement), Bob Wootton on guitar and pianist Earl Poole Ball. Onstage he jokes about his more re-strained style, minus the tight pants and "exploding stages" of other performers. But without Johnny Cash, many of today's hot country artists might not have a stage to explode.

Albums Available
See For CMSA Members Only page.

Readers Create

Remembering the Veterans

Member *Charles E. Coffee*, a member from *Portsmouth, Ohio*, wrote the following tribute to veterans of Vietnam. He dedicates it to his twin brother, *Jim*, who served two tours of duty during the war, and is now a mail carrier in Texas. *Charles and Jim turned 66 in November. Charles adds that even though he's dedicating it to his brother, it's not about him.*

Yesterday's Hero

On his shirt, there are no pockets
There's patches on his jeans
They're all the clothes that he has now to wear
His shoes are second hand
His socks are faded green
He's yesterday's hero, and he just doesn't care.

The world to him's a bottle
To keep his spirits high
It's all he needs to help him on his way
For it's his ray of sunshine
His only guiding light
He's yesterday's hero, with broken pride today.

He came out of the jungle
A decorated man
From a dreadful war the politicians planned



Missy Does Dolly

Missy Ray of Depew, New York, a town outside of Buffalo, says she's been drawing for several years as a hobby. Here's her sketch of Dolly Parton. Missy adds that she's a loyal reader of Country Music, and her mom is the CMSA member.

He came back home forgotten
There was no waiting band
He's yesterday's hero, with a bottle in his hand.

Just yesterday's hero—on a long road with no end
With misery for company—and a bottle for a friend
A barroom for a castle—where the wine and liquor flows
Just yesterday's hero—with nowhere else to go.
—Charles E. Coffee

Can You Say, "Doormat"?

Just kidding...here's Donna Lee Henry's light-hearted look at why she'd keep around the kind of guy Loretta would probably shoot. Donna Lee's from Tampa, Florida, and she says, "While quite a number of men have provided inspiration for this poem, in all honesty, Marty Stuart provided the greatest inspiration."

He's Walking Away

An old friend stopped by the house today.
She saw his car wasn't in the driveway,
and said, "Maybe we should have a talk."

She spoke in a whisper over her coffee.
As her voice filled with sympathy,
she began her little heart-to-heart.

She spoke of downtown hotel suites,
a long-legged blonde and a pretty brunette,
and some midnight rendezvous.

I just shouldn't be the last one to know.
So, she had to tell me where he really goes,
like any good friend would do.

I thanked her kindly as I walked her outside,
explaining that his love is still mine.
He just goes fishing with the boys on weekends,
and tonight he's working late again.

When he comes home, I won't notice the perfume,
or that lipstick on his collar.
Yet sooner or later, he'll say that it's over,
just like he's said it before.

He'll say that he's leaving, but I won't cry.
'Cause he'll be coming back when I don't ask why.
Now, you don't need to look at me that way.
I'm not about to ask for your sympathy.

I'm not blinded by love when he does what he pleases,
but I'll always take him back for one simple reason...

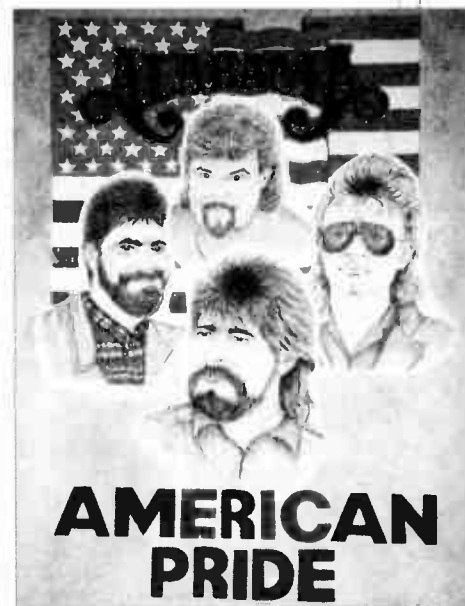
He looks so good walking away,
in them tight-fittin' jeans.
The way he fills out those faded Levi's,
he can say goodbye anytime.
And I'll stand at the door with a smile on my face,
and watch him as he's walking away.

—Donna Lee Henry



Tippin Is Tops

"I can't picture country music without him," Connie Ann Miller says of Aaron Tippin. Connie's from East Bend, North Carolina, and did this sketch in charcoal. She had him sign it when he came to Charlotte for a concert.



Alabama Assembled

Alabama is a favorite of Theresa Platz of Burton, Michigan. "They're been Number One with me," says Theresa. She adds, "The only thing that would make this complete is to have them autograph it for me!"

Only \$24!

IN DISGRACE

by Bessie Pease Gutmann

A classic painting by one of America's most cherished artists comes to life in a fine, hand-painted sculpture.

It was all an accident...but when she tossed the ball for her puppy to fetch, he trampled lots of Mommy's flowers. So now she must "think things over" in the corner. One look at her heartrending penance, however, and you know Mommy won't keep her there very long. She and her faithful collie pup will soon be prancing and playing again!

When it comes to capturing the gentle, innocent world of children, the art of Bessie Pease Gutmann is without rival. *In Disgrace*, one of the artist's most beloved paintings, has been brought to life in an enchanting sculpture brimming with warmth and appeal.

Loving attention to craftsmanship and detail.

In Disgrace is faithful to the artist's original painting and is expertly hand-painted in the lovely pastel shades that are the hallmark of

Bessie Pease Gutmann's art. The sculpture is painstakingly crafted of cold-cast porcelain -- a special mixture of resins and porcelain, prized by artists for its ability to capture minute detail.

Look at the puppy's floppy ears, the blue ribbons accenting the little girl's dress and the dimples at the back of her knees. Note, too, the exacting reproduction of Bessie Pease Gutmann's signature, clearly inscribed on the sculpture. Details such as these make *In Disgrace* a collector treasure.

Affordably priced; satisfaction guaranteed.

In Disgrace is available exclusively from the Danbury Mint, and is attractively priced at just \$24. Whether you're a collector of fine sculptures or simply a lover of Bessie Pease Gutmann's endearing art, *In Disgrace* will be cherished by your family for generations to come. Your satisfaction is guaranteed, so return the Reservation Application today!

The Danbury Mint • 47 Richards Avenue • Norwalk, CT 06857

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Shown actual size.



In Disgrace is true to Bessie Pease Gutmann's original art (shown above) and radiates the lovely pastel shades for which her work is renowned.

RESERVATION APPLICATION

The Danbury Mint
47 Richards Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06857

Send no money now.

IN DISGRACE

by Bessie Pease Gutmann

Please accept my reservation for *In Disgrace*, a hand-painted sculpture that faithfully re-creates the beloved painting by Bessie Pease Gutmann.

I need send no money now. The price of the sculpture is \$24*. If not delighted, I may return the sculpture within 30 days of receipt for a replacement or refund.

*Plus any applicable sales tax and \$1.95 shipping and handling.

Name _____ Please Print Clearly

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Signature _____

(All orders subject to acceptance.)

Name to print on Certificate of Ownership (if different from above).
Allow 2 to 4 weeks after payment for shipment.

699AIMJ

HAL KETCHUM

Songs from

the Dark Side

CALL IT INSTINCT, INSPIRATION OR JUST PLAIN GUT FEELING, HAL KETCHUM'S MUSIC HAS GOT THAT SPECIAL SOMETHING.

BY BOB ALLEN

“Harlan Howard opened an enormous door for me,” Hal Ketchum explains as he nibbles on his french fries and grilled chicken sandwich at Brown’s Diner, a dimly lit neighborhood bar and grill with a blue-collar ambiance that has, over the years, become a favorite of the denizens of Music Row, a mile or so away. Harlan Howard is, of course, the veteran songwriter of a huge number of hit songs and winner of more awards than you can shake a stick at.

“I met Harlan through Jerry Jeff Walker and his wife, Susan,” he adds. “When I started coming to Nashville about four years ago, I’d stay at Harlan’s house. We were talking about writing songs one day, and he told me the most important revelation he ever had was that it had all been said before, and that it’s more about saying something from your own perspective and being true to your own feelings instead of struggling to be unique. And I’ve really found that to be the truth.”

Up close, the 40-year-old, New York-to-Texas-to-Nashville-transplanted singer/songwriter—best known for smooth but irresistibly intriguing hits like “Past the Point of Rescue,” “Small Town Saturday Night,” “I Know Where Love Lives” and “Hearts Are Gonna Roll”—is charming and intense in an unassuming way. Though he doesn’t particularly stand out in the lunchtime crowd of songwriters and businessmen, there’s an undeniable

magnetism in the quietly impassioned and intent manner in which he discusses his music, and life. For want of a better description, Ketchum vaguely reminds me of the brilliant but erratic character actor, Willem Dafoe, whom I’ve never met but who has mesmerized me in movies like *Platoon* and *To Live and Die in L.A.* No wonder the ladies love Ketchum. No wonder four of his videos have leapt to Number One, thus, chartwise, usually out-performing the records themselves.

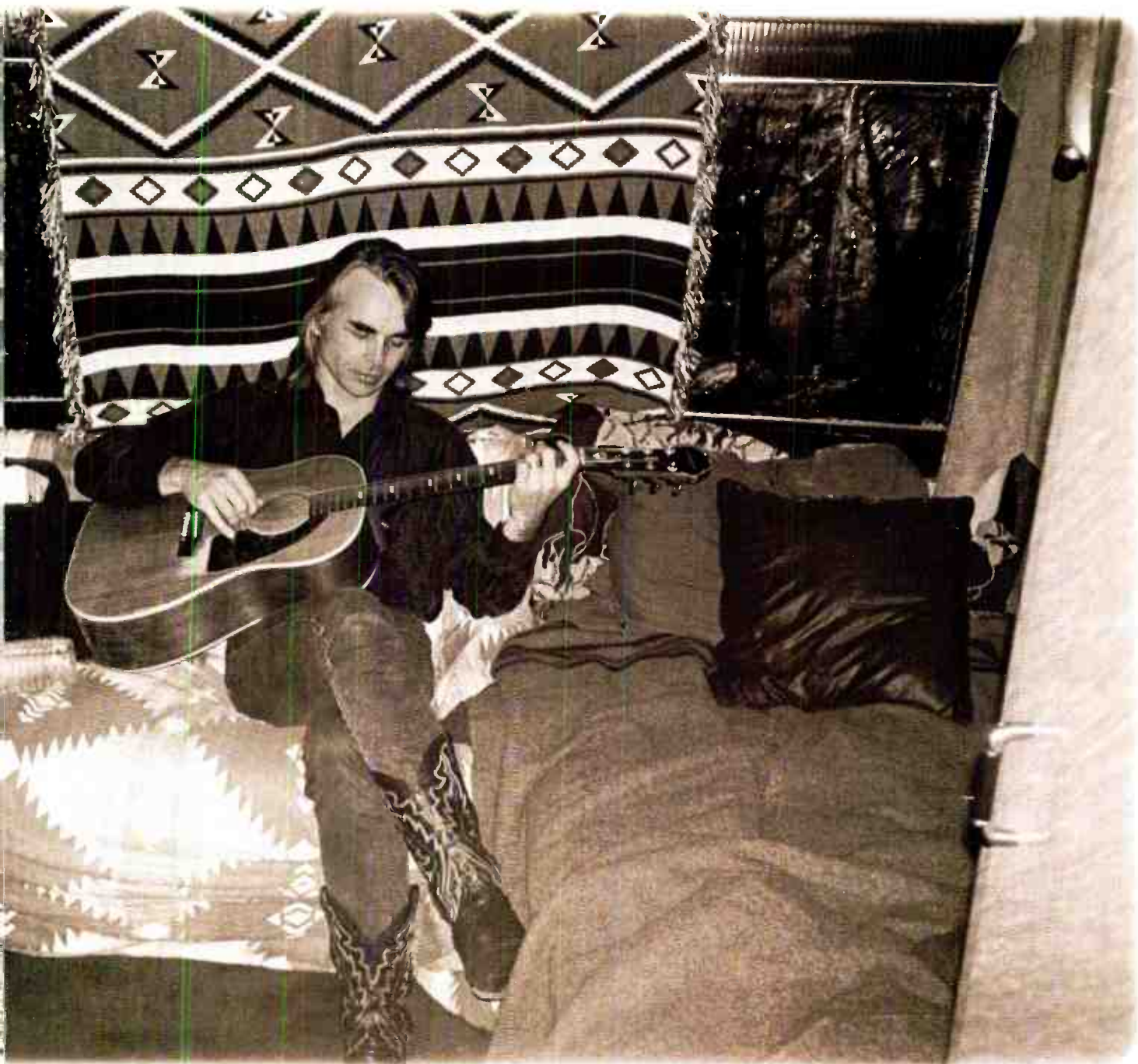
“Yeah, I try to acknowledge that reality,” Ketchum concedes with a bemused shrug after, at first, laughing off his unusually good looks as “a genetic fluke.” He pauses for another bite of chicken sandwich, then veers off on one of his scrupulously reasoned, introspective flights of New Age philosophy/analysis. Along the way, he seems to offer a glimpse of the sort of honest intensity he brings to his songwriting and singing as well.

“I think I’ve had the good fortune of being instilled with a lot of my mother’s philosophy,” he says softly as he pokes at his french fries with his fork. “I’m a man, so I don’t see things from a feminine perspective. But a lot of my beliefs are based on what my mother felt and what she perceived. I do think I’m a gentleman, and I do hope there’s a certain dignity to what I do. And I also think I have a certain sensitivity I gained from my mother. She had multiple sclerosis and went through some real hard periods. She had to perceive her



own mortality. I spent a great deal of time with her when she was incapacitated, and she had a great deal to teach my brother and I before she went on her way. And all the things I perceive and write and sing about and the things I’m drawn to are relative to the philosophy I got from her in a very formative period of my life.”

Whatever the sources of his inspiration, Ketchum has clearly heeded Harlan Howard’s advice well. Maybe at least on the surface his music is, as *People Magazine* put it, “a pleasant throwback to Nashville’s previous commercial high water mark, the much-maligned 70’s, when such singers as Kenny Rogers and Mac Davis crossed over to pop.” But this handy analysis overlooks his music’s true



LESLIE HODGKINS

allure: its simmering emotional undercurrents. In their best moments—as in “Past the Point of Rescue”—his performances hook you and hold you and simply won’t let you go. Palpable intimations of fear, helplessness, desire, compulsion and confusion all swirl just beneath the music’s seemingly placid surface.

And on a quietly arresting song like “Past the Point of Rescue,” Ketchum’s singing also sounds so hushed and effortlessly compelling that we’re actually a little startled when, for instance, he breaks into a yodel and reveals an impressive vocal range on a more upbeat outing like “Five O’ Clock World,” his hit remake of a Top 40 hit of yesteryear by The Vogues. (The song was actually written

many moons ago by Ketchum’s current co-producer, Allen Reynolds.)

Ketchum readily admits that, as an artist, a lot of his inspiration comes from what he calls “The Well”—the moody, melancholic side of his Scotch/Irish/Welsh genetic pool. “I think we live a lot more off our survival instincts than we dare say,” he offers with a tentative, eyebrow-crunching grin. “After all, we’re really not that many generations removed from the hunter-gatherers, and we all have that dark element in our lives. Country music, after all, is the evolution of the lament. The Celtic lament. Some of the most compelling songs are about separation and loss. It’s important to show irony and humor now and then, but also to acknowl-

edge that *dark side*.” He adds with an uneasy laugh: “I just wanta respect the dark side. I don’t wanta live there anymore. I’ve done that.”

Whatever you want to call this elusive quality in Ketchum’s music, it’s caught on quietly with listeners without a lot of hype or promotional pyrotechnics. His debut single, “Small Town Saturday Night,” not only made it to Number One; it was also *Radio & Records Magazine*’s choice as 1991’s top “Single of the Year.” *Past the Point of Rescue*, his first Curb album, has sold an estimable 700,000 copies since its release a couple of years ago. *Sure Love*, his most recent, released late last year, is selling at an even brisker pace.

Somehow, all the progress Ketchum has

made in this relatively short time is even more impressive when you consider that he's pretty much a late starter. Before going out on a limb in his mid-30's and deciding to devote his full-time energies to music, he'd already put in 20 years as a finish carpenter and furniture maker and had raised two kids. "This really is like a second life," he smiles and chews delicately on a wilted fry. "It was actually just dumb luck, I think, that inspired me to do this."

In the years prior to his move to Gruene, Texas, outside Austin, in 1982, where he first discovered his muse in earnest, Ketchum always dabbled in music; but he'd seldom been consumed by it. Growing up in New York State, in the small town of Greenwich, near the Vermont border, he was entranced by his father's extensive record collection, which included Buck Owens and the masters of bluegrass. And he drummed and sang in a rhythm-and-blues band during his high school years. As a kid, he was a voracious reader (which he still is today) and wrote poetry. "It was a great way of getting attention," he grins again. "Nothing like writing a poem for your mother. She was always very encouraging of any kind of literary attempts."

He left home at age 17. Though he played for a while in a bluegrass band, most of his creative energy went into finish carpentry and woodworking. After all, he comes from several generations of skilled craftsmen—furniture builders, cabinet makers and the like. Perfectionism is just something that seems to be in Ketchum's blood.

When he and his ex-wife and kids (now teenagers) did make the propitious move from New York to Texas, it was the prospect of carpentry work—and a warmer climate—rather than music that drew him to the Lone Star State. "I'd restored an old house, built in 1798, up on the Vermont border, and my ex-wife and I were living in it," he recalls. "We used to do that: buy a house that I could get for next to nothing and live in the kitchen for a year or two while we fixed the rest of it up. My wife was real tired of the winters up north, and I was flexible, looking for something else. Her sister lived in San Antonio, and I knew I could get a job there."

Never having lived in "the big city" before, Ketchum experienced culture shock in San Antonio, and, in 1982, bought a little house just to the north, between New Braunfels and Gruene, an historic town with a thriving music scene—which Ketchum, at the time, was quite unaware of. He recalls his first night in his new digs: Lying in bed, exhausted from moving, he heard music through the open window from across the river.

"I got up and got in my truck and immediately headed up Gruene Road and across the bridge, just following the mu-

sic. It was a wonderful experience, like driving into a B-movie. Here was this little town with an historic district and an 1885 dance hall—the oldest music hall in Texas—that I hadn't even known existed. The music I heard that night was Asleep at the Wheel. Later, I saw everybody there. Townes Van Zandt, Guy Clark, Butch Hancock, Gatemouth Brown.... I remember seeing Lyle Lovett staring at his shoes and playing for three or four people."

Ketchum was, by now, beginning to write his own songs and cautiously test them out on his trusted friends. After some hesitation, he ventured on stage at Gruene Hall one night, playing "beer inspired harmonica" behind his singer pal, the late John Vandiver. The next week he summoned up the nerve to get up and sing one of his own songs alone, with little notion that it was the first step of a new life adventure. "I was nervous as hell, but inspired more than intimidated," he remembers. "The beauty of the scene there

"I THINK WE LIVE A LOT MORE OFF OUR SURVIVAL INSTINCTS THAN WE DARE SAY."

at Gruene was that it was all quite painless. It was just music for music's sake. Everybody wasn't waiting for you to stumble. You could get up on stage and try anything, and people would embrace it. The whole experience ended up being like a four-year college course in music for me, with some of the best teachers in the world."

One thing led to another, and the open mike gigs at Gruene Hall led to a few (modestly) paying engagements. There were hard times a-plenty, what with trying to balance the demands of feeding his family and holding on to his 40-hour-a-week cabinet-making job with playing clubs four or five nights a week ("for maybe 40 or 50 dollars a week, tops"). Ultimately, it cost him his first marriage.

"I think it takes tenacity to do this," he adds. A glint of polite intensity flashes in his eyes as he finishes his sandwich and fries and sips his iced tea. "I think part of the reason some people survive and prosper and get along this far, myself included, is because we wouldn't stop.

"I wouldn't give up on it. Not even when a club owner turned on the jukebox in the middle of one of my songs, or when somebody came up to me and said, 'You better play a George Strait song in the near future, or else.' And even through the endless barriers we put up for our-

selves, or that other people put up for us, I just kept going."

Things definitely took a step in the right direction when Lost Gonzo troubadour Jerry Jeff Walker (another New York-to-Texas transplant) heard Ketchum performing a song called "The Belgian Team" on a radio station near Gruene one night and called him up out of the blue and invited him to open some shows for him. Soon, Ketchum was flying with Jerry Jeff and his entourage in Jerry Jeff's twin engine Navajo, shuttling to a series of shows in Arizona and up and down California's northern coast.

His career took another step in the right direction in 1986, when he recorded *Threadbare Alibis*, his first album. It saw the light of day on the tiny Austin-based Watermelon label, but nonetheless attracted music industry attention. "I'm still very pleased with that record; it still stands," says Ketchum, who plans to re-release *Threadbare Alibis* later this year.

Noted Nashville songwriter and sometime recording artist Pat Alger happened to see Ketchum at the 1987 Kerrville folk festival and, in turn, introduced him to the much esteemed country-folk producer, Jim Rooney. Ultimately, Rooney and Allen Reynolds (who's recently found success producing Garth Brooks and Kathy Mattea) ended up co-producing both *Past the Point of Rescue* and *Sure Love*.

Much to his own surprise, Ketchum recalls that the hardest part of all came when "Small Town Saturday Night" first hit in a big way.

"That's a period when a lot of self-doubt and fear of success enters into things," he reveals. "You know, you've been able to make your own music and follow your own musical vision up to that point. Then suddenly, there are a lot of offers to help."

But at long last, Ketchum is finally to the point of affording himself a quick sigh of relief over "the pleasant awareness that people really like what I do." His touring schedule, though still hectic, has settled into a slightly more manageable pace, and he and his three-piece band now travel in a bus instead of a van. He moved to Nashville in 1990, and is now happily married to a Nashville music publishing executive. He lives in Music City with his new wife and two young stepchildren.

And he says the new songs for his next album are coming so fast and furious that he's contemplating making a double album.

"The guy who plays accordion for me called me from Austin last week," he recalls. "I'd left an envelope in his car with the lyrics to a song called 'Love Conquers All' that I'd written in its entirety on the bus one day before sound check at a show and forgotten completely about. Fortunately, that's the way I write: anywhere, anytime." He laughs and scrunches those deadly eyebrows again: "I'm open 24 hours a day." ■

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MARK COLLIE

Candidate for Success

Hit records and phone calls from Hollywood have changed the game for Mark Collie.

— By Michael McCall —

Mark Collie cradles a cellular phone against his ear as he nervously paces the wood-paneled living room of a Nashville home that serves as his manager's office. On the other end of the phone, an agent has just informed Collie that a movie producer is asking the singer to audition for a small role in an upcoming film project. Collie shows an obvious, but wary, interest.

"Well, what do you know about these people?" he asks in a Tennessee drawl that is thick yet hurried. As he gets his answer, he responds, "Uh-huh," then continues, "What do you know about the movie?...Uh-huh, uh-huh." Looking over at his newly arrived guest, he smiles and says into the receiver, "So you're saying it's sort of a cross between *Pure Country* and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*."

As he listens some more, the singer tries to tie up the conversation. He tells his agent to call so-and-so to explore the background and credibility of the movie producers. "Find out if it's for real," he instructs. "Check it out. But tell 'em I'm interested. Tell 'em I'm very interested." Collie then places the phone on a coffee table and says, almost to himself, "Hollywood. Man, that's wild."

For Collie, such heady moments feel good. He's suddenly finding himself deluged with the kind of propositions that come to performers lucky enough to become marked as "hot property," as an agent might call Collie these days. After several years of struggle, after seeing his first two albums meet with great critical acclaim but little sales or radio play, Collie's seen his third disc, titled *Mark Collie*,

garner some of the recognition he's been looking for. For him, the breakthrough isn't so much a triumph as a release. After trying so hard for so long, he's just now beginning to feel as if he is establishing a career that might last.

"Man, this whole thing is one big insecurity blanket," he says about the music business. "You're only as good as your next record. If it's a hit, you feel a rush and get a bit of attention. If it's not, though, it's the worst feeling in the world, especially if you wrote that song."

Collie's career has turned a lucrative corner thanks to a string of recent radio-friendly hits ("Even the Man in the Moon Is Crying," "Born to Love You," "Shame Shame Shame"). Previously, he says, he tried to cover up how painful it was to lack widespread acceptance while several of his old friends and peers (Aaron Tippin,

Marty Stuart) zipped past him on the ladder of success.

Now, however, he's willing to admit that he outlasted a tough few years. "I don't think you ever accept the fact that your records aren't hits," he says somberly. "You justify it and everyone around you justifies it, and you look for those things so you can live with yourself. When you put so much of your heart and soul into something, and everybody seems real positive, and everybody's expectations seem real high, and then it doesn't happen, that can be devastating. It's not because you want to be famous or because you want to make a lot of money, it's because your music is such a personal thing. It's such a part of yourself. It's a total rejection at the highest level, at the most fundamental level. They're rejecting the honest expression of your emotion. Nobody wants that."

Collie always felt supported, he says. "The record company really believed in me, always, and stuck with me. The critics seemed to like my records. My buddies, my peers, they liked what I was doing. And the fans who had a chance to hear my music, they liked it. Even most of the people at radio found something to like about me. Everybody played at least one of my records; it just seemed like we could never get them all to like the same record at the same time."

But that changed with his recent string of hits. Now, it seems, everyone—even the hard-to-figure and even harder-to-please radio programmers—has fallen in line behind Collie. And they're probably all saying that they always knew he was going to be a star. "I can't say stardom has exactly been thrust upon me," the singer says with a wry laugh. "I've had to pull my way up one rung at a time."

It's always been that way for the thin, moody, hyper kid from Waynesboro, a small, working-class Tennessee town near the Alabama border. "Everything I've ever done or ever tried to do, I had to really work hard to get," he says. "When I was a kid, the first time I went out for Little League baseball, I didn't make the team. I was devastated. I was a little small, a little slow. I had a lot of desire but not a lot of natural talent. So I had to get focused and develop enough talent to get on the team. Then I had to get better to get in the lineup. Then I had to learn to hit the baseball better."

"It's been the same with music. When I look back and think about when I first wanted to get into the music business, I had a lot of desire but not a great deal of talent or skill. Maybe some raw talent. But more than anything just a



With Reba MacEntire, Marty Stuart and Liza Minelli at the 1993 CMA awards.



love for music. I had to learn to write songs and how to make records and how to communicate certain things that I wanted to say. I never was great, but I was competitive. There's one thing I know: If you don't stay in the game, you lose. I have stayed in the game."

Waynesboro is about equally as far from Nashville as it is from Memphis. It's instructive that Collie went to Memphis first to seek his fortune, for his music has as much to do with the traditional rock of Sun Studios as it does with the traditional country of Nashville. Collie acknowledges that he draws from the roots of rock as well as from country and gospel. "I'm kind of John Cougar Mellencash," he explains, saying he's a blend of the two famous Johns.

He's not the only person to notice the influence of Cash and Mellencamp on his style. When Collie opened a concert for Cash in New York, the legendary Man in Black teased his younger acolyte, saying, "I need to take you on the bus with me so when I'm not feeling good I can just send you out there." But the Hollywood calls may come because of another legend to whom Collie is frequently likened. His heavy-lidded gaze, brooding presence and an understated, virile charisma have drawn comparisons to actor Robert Mitchum. Collie even recorded the one hit song Mitchum co-wrote, the old teenage, bad-boy movie anthem, "The Ballad of Thunder Road."

Collie understands that his unconventional looks and style are what attracts the calls from movie producers. "It's because I'm ugly," he says flatly, a half-cooked smile creasing his face. "If you're ugly, they call it character. Someone once told me, 'Man, that's a good picture of you. It looks like you.' I said that when you look like me, you can't take a bad picture, because no matter what angle you get, it's going to look like it's going to look. You can't make me look pretty or different."

His slow, step-by-step walk up the yellow-brick road of success has taught him a few lessons, Collie says. "My friends, the people close to me, kind of keep me grounded, so I don't get too caught up in the star trip, the vainness of it all. It has an effect on you—it has to. It's a positive thing in so many ways, but it can also be negative because it gives you an unrealistic outlook. When you're very famous, when people you don't know are crazy about you and your music, it's a satisfying feeling, but it's also...well, I've seen it affect some people I've known. I've seen it turn a really nice, well-meaning kind of individual into a monster."

With Hollywood calling, and with other hit records likely, Collie plans to remind himself that it took hard work and a lot of support from those who cared before his face was a regular feature on video channels and in magazine articles. "They're coming after us hillbillies," he quips. "Country music is hot right now, so they want us for everything—concerts, TV, radio shows, movies, press. It's going to happen like it was during the Urban Cowboy craze. You see country stars on *Designing Women* and other TV series. And now film is jumping on it. As actors, there may be a few people who get some longevity out of it. The last time country got hot, there were people like Willie and Dolly and Kris Kristofferson out there. They've done great, but they took it really serious. There's a couple people now doing really well. Reba's done good with it. But she cultivated it. She's been real careful. She hasn't just jumped in there; she took it slow and she learned it."

Collie stops and contemplates. He's asked if that means he's interested in taking it seriously too. He flashes that half-cooked, sly grin again. "I wouldn't mind getting into motion pictures, but I wouldn't do a movie just for the sake of doing it," he answers. "I want to do it at some point, but shoot, I'm just now having hit records. I want to enjoy this before I start working on something else. It's been a long time comin'."

Letters

Billy Ray at Last

Just wanted to say thanks so much for the article on Billy Ray Cyrus in the November/December issue. I had just about given up on your magazine doing a cover story on my very favorite. I have followed this young man's career from the onset and have had the pleasure of seeing him in concert three times; each one was better than the last. I couldn't get over how he held his audience captive throughout the entire concert. I love the versatility of his music and find him to be a great singer and entertainer.

Joy Thomas
Cumming, Georgia

Ed. Is Rewarded

Dear Ed.,
I want to thank you for the very nice article on Billy Ray Cyrus in your November/December issue. In this new fad of Billy Bashing, it was very refreshing to have something good said about him. I thought it gave a good insight into his new lifestyle. Please have more on him real soon.

Barbara Staub
Louisville, Kentucky

Switching States with Billy Ray

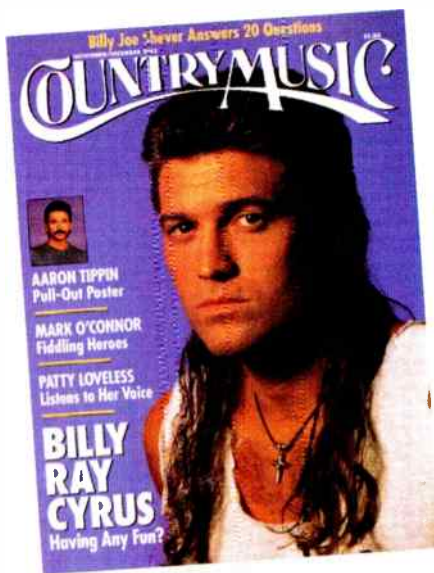
The article about Billy Ray Cyrus written by Bob Millard in your November/December 1993 issue was great and the photos were fantastic! However, it stated that the Ragtime Lounge was located in southern Ohio. Granted, it is *close* to the West Virginia/Ohio state line, but the Ragtime Lounge is unmistakably located in Huntington, West Virginia.

We love Billy Ray. We loved him when he was just a local boy playing in a local bar (his hometown of Flatwoods, Kentucky, is only 10 to 15 minutes from Huntington), and we love his success. As you drive by the Ragtime Lounge, you will see a giant sign on the top of the building that reads, "The House That Billy Built." I just thought ya'll should know!

Kimberly Porter
West Hamlin, West Virginia

Cyrus As Is

Bravo to Bob Millard for finally capturing Billy Ray Cyrus as the honest and sincere performer that he really is! The interview he did with Billy Ray was one of the best I have ever read. Most reporters seem to come into the interviews with a



bias; they seem determined to once again prove the theory that Billy Ray is a one-hit wonder. Bob Millard seemed determined instead to present a fair portrayal.

I've been to quite a few concerts in my life, and Billy Ray's was one of the best I've ever attended. The connection he made with the audience is rare. There is much more to him than his moves on stage and his good looks.

Ellen J. Vodak
Platteville, Wisconsin

Millard Helps CMM/Cyrus Helps Tot

I would like to commend Bob Millard for a great story on Billy Ray. It's writers like him who will keep people buying CMM. That story made me glad I bought the book. The pictures were great too!

My little girl, who is five, cried for two days because we couldn't afford to buy her the Billy Ray Cyrus wall clock. We wrote to Billy Ray to tell him how she feels. He sent her autographed pictures and arranged for her to have tickets and backstage passes to his concert. He cares that a little five-year-old girl loves him.

Patricia Knott
Alma, Illinois

Look Again, Ms. Garvin

My letters never get into the magazine, but I do love getting it and my subscription is good till 1999.

I love articles on Billy Ray Cyrus. There are five of us in this family that purchase Billy Ray things. He doesn't get

the recognition he deserves and doesn't get all he is entitled to. He should be a member of the Grand Ole Opry.

Irene Garvin
Lafayette, Tennessee

What You See is What You Get

Your story on Billy Ray Cyrus in the November/December issue was interesting but the experience we had at Redding, California, on August 20th was anything but what he or any of his fans have described his concerts as being.

When Billy Ray finally came on, my daughters and I couldn't see the concert because of all the people standing in front of us. The concert was 80 minutes long, and after it was over, Billy Ray didn't even stay to autograph pictures. We belonged to his fan club, and when my daughter wrote and asked if we could send in pictures to get autographed, we received no answer. Billy Ray is always saying he cares a lot about his fans and they are important to him; well, we sure didn't feel appreciated at that concert.

Marlene Beck
Willow Creek, California

What You See Not What You Want

This time around, I'm not going to remove the protective mailing cover on *Country Music*. This way I will not have to look at Billy Ray Cyrus each time I pick up the magazine.

Gerald Hill
Iowa City, Iowa

CMA Rewards Gill

I really enjoyed the September/October issue with Vince Gill on the cover. I'm a diehard Vince Gill fan (card-carrying member of his fan club). Vince has a beautiful voice, as do George Strait and Alan Jackson, but Vince won the awards and deserves them all. He has been working for a long time, and the CMA recognized this. Thank you, CMA! He did not win all those awards because he is friends with someone or because he's nice, even though he is. He's just plain good. Evidently a lot of people think so.

Vickie Belcher
Tampa, Florida

Fan Does, Too, and Vice Versa

As a member of the International Vince Gill Fan Club, I wish to compliment Patrick Carr on a beautiful article written

about a fantastic entertainer and person! (September/October issue). We saw Vince at Western Washington Fair in Puyallup on September 14th, which was sold out! What a show he put on! As spokesperson for the Seattle Vince Gill Fan Club, I gave a bouquet of roses and even got a kiss! Wow—haven't washed my face since (ha)!

Naturally the night of September 29th was a big celebration at my house. Such a quality person surely deserves all awards given him by the CMA!

Carol Lester
Seattle, Washington

Western Vince

A special thank you for featuring Vince Gill on the September/October cover. I am a dedicated fan and had the opportunity of being at one of his performances at the South East Idaho State Fair two years ago! He was terrific. His voice has a quality to be admired, but I also feel that he is a true gentleman. Out here we do love and appreciate good music too.

Lorene Roberts
Ovid, Idaho

From Strait to Gill to RVS...

As Gomer would say, "Thank Ya, Thank Ya, Thank Ya":

—For the George Strait centerfold in the September/October issue, dirty jeans and all. In my opinion he's one of the greatest, a very private person, a dedicated family man, a fantastic entertainer. I've missed a centerfold; are back issues available? In October, my daughter, granddaughter and I plan to drive 1,450 miles to see George in concert.

—For the Vince Gill article. This young man is so sincere, so caring, so believable, a real asset to country music. The "Possum" sure called this right—"Sweet Pea."

—For the update on Ricky Van Shelton. Ricky has been a disappointment of late with the "true confessions" of his personal life. Maybe these confessions were good for the soul but not the image. Money and fame seem to turn some of these people to drugs and infidelity. If this is the norm for the rich and famous, then I will be happy among the working middle class.

Bonnie Dickerson

Farmington, New Mexico
September/October '89 and January/February '91, and yes.—Ed.

Strait Stops Heart

My heart nearly stopped when I opened my September/October magazine and George Strait was looking at me as the "pull-out" poster. He is the absolute best. In looks, style and singing. Now I opened my November/December issue and read a letter from a fan, and you give the dates of two more back issues that George is the pull-out. Thank you. I had wondered if he was in any of the back issues. I sat right

down and ordered those two. Marty Robbins was my all-time favorite before he died, but nobody can beat my George Strait. He is the only one that makes my heart skip a beat just to look at him.

Reatha M. Spence
Bartow, Florida

BillyRayCyrusAaronTippin

I really love reading your magazine and love the poster of Aaron Tippin and story of Billy Ray Cyrus in the November/December issue. I recently had the chance to see Aaron in August at Smethport, Pennsylvania, and Billy Ray November 5th in Erie, Pennsylvania, and what shows they put on! They were fantastic.

Annette Spencer
Union City, Pennsylvania

Flippin' Over Tippin

Thanks for the great poster of Aaron in the November/December issue. I am a very proud fan club member. I saw him twice this year. He meets all fans and takes pictures also. He will go a long way. He is as *country* as the day is long. Never change, Aaron. Keep pumping out them great songs.

Carolyn Teague
Lenoir, North Carolina

Tip Top

Thank you for the writeup and centerfold of that gorgeous Aaron Tippin, in the November/December issue. He is the reason I buy *Country Music*. Aaron is my number one country singer. He is from my home town, and I'm so proud of him.

Judy Gilreath
Taylors, South Carolina

Just Loves Loveless

Loved the article on Patty Loveless in the November/December issue. I met her in 1990 at the Coliseum in Hampton, Virginia, when she was on the same bill with George Strait. Never have I met a sweeter person. I am very glad that her health is now in good shape and that she is back on tour. I am looking forward to seeing her as the centerfold in your outstanding magazine. Make it fast.

Robert E. Coleman
Newport News, Virginia

Listenin' to Loveless

It was great to read about Patty Loveless and her successful comeback from vocal cord surgery in your November/December issue. I am so glad she is still out there singing! As your article pointed out, she has been a bit overlooked in the past. But as far as I am concerned she is the best. I started listening to country music about three years ago at the age of 29 because of Patty Loveless. I now own about 40 country albums, but her six are my favorites.

John Steimer
State College, Pennsylvania



CHEVROLET presents the COUNTRY MUSIC QUIZ

Answers to these questions can be found by reading this issue of *Country Music Magazine*. Answers will be published in the March/April 1994 issue.

1. Which Hank Jr. song did Travis Tritt cover on his tour with Trisha Yearwood and Little Texas?
2. In what town was Mark Collie raised?
3. What famous songwriter does Hal Ketchum credit with helping him get established in Nashville?
4. What's the title of Lorrie Morgan's new Christmas album?
5. What big event does Harlan Howard host each year?
6. Chevy's new S-Series trucks have been redesigned from the inside out. The seats are more comfortable than ever. Why?

ANSWERS TO LAST ISSUE'S QUIZ:

1. "Wher'm I Gonna Live When I Get Home" 2. a skateboard 3. 1988
4. Pensacola, Florida 5. *Honky Tonk Heroes* 6. Aaron Neville 7. Chevy's SS packs 195 horsepower into its muscular V6.

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Underrated Patty

I really enjoyed the November/December interview with Patty Loveless. Without a doubt, she is definitely the most underrated singer in country music today. Reba is great, but Patty has better vocals, *by far*. Her band is also talented, especially Carmella.

Joseph Foley
Fayetteville, North Carolina

Mr. Mark O'Connor

Certainly did enjoy the nice article about country fiddler Mr. Mark O'Connor in your November/December issue. I appreciate *Country Music* for covering an instrumentalist like Mr. O'Connor (and not just another country singer). Often times, the fans (me included) forget about the hard work these musicians contribute to country music. I'm glad Mr. O'Connor is making a name for himself.

Martha Brazil
Lufkin, Texas

Bravo, Billy Joe

My compliments on the much deserved coverage given Billy Joe Shaver in the November/December issue. Both "20 Questions with Billy Joe Shaver" and Rich Kienzle's sparkling review of *Tramp on Your Street* reflected the amazing genius that is Billy Joe Shaver, a legacy Eddy Shaver has not only picked up but seems to be carrying into uncharted territory of his own. The combination of father and son is powerful and fresh on all levels and leads one to conclude that Shaver is indeed the hottest thing in town...Here's hoping Shaver will give us all some more.

Jana Pendragon
Long Beach, California

Steve Earle and Confederate RR

I have part of a story for you. It sure would be a good one for your People section. The story began when I saw a picture of my two favorite guys, Danny Shirley and Steve Earle, in another magazine. I recently attended a Confederate Railroad show, and I got to talk to Danny afterwards. So, I asked Danny about the picture. He told me about Steve's addiction and how well he is doing now. He confirmed what you had told us about the new songs he has written. But the most interesting thing to come from the conversation was that they had been doing session work together. This is where my story ends, because I can only assume the session work was for Confederate Railroad's new album, due out in January. But it also leaves me wondering if any of the songs on the new album may be written by Steve? I hope you enjoyed my story as much as I enjoy your People section. Thanks again.

Connie Bengé
Huntington, Texas

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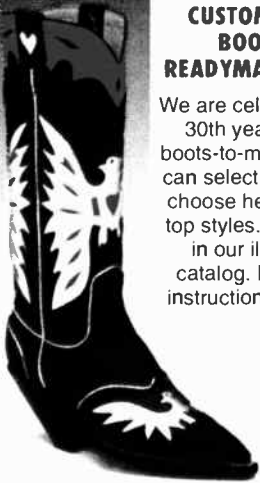
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Song-Hunting on David Wills

All we knew was the words, "Here's a twenty and give me my change in dimes." No one could come up with the name of the song and who sang it. We checked in Ft. Worth, Dallas, Waco, Nashville, Shreveport, California. We finally found the name of the song, "Song on the Jukebox," by David Wills. It's a wonderful tune. We found the tape in Tyler. I have been collecting records and such since 1942. Records, 8-tracks, cassettes, reel to reel, have over 8000 recordings, mostly country. This "Song on the Jukebox" was the hardest one to find.

George and Arzel Westover
Streetman, Texas

P.S.—Wish you would do an article on "The Old Fiddlers Reunion and Contest—The Blackeyed Pea Festival," Athens, Texas. Many country artists came by there, from time to time, Cliff Bruner, Little Red Hayes, Texas Shorty, Johnny Gimble, Waylon and Willie, Eddie Rabbitt, Johnny Rodriguez, and more.

Found! Ronnie McDowell

About time! Thanks to *Country Music Magazine's* November/December issue and to Clara Miller for providing the address for Ronnie's fan club. He's a regular on *Music City Tonite*, and am I happy! This guy has a great talent and personality. He is so refreshing with his easy, natural presentation of a song. In this era of so-called "greats," Ronnie is the one who fills the void in my life left from Elvis and Conway. Nothing fake about him—just music from the heart.

Mary Hathaway
Lake Havasu City, Arizona

How and Where Is Billy Joe Royal?

Please give us the latest news about Billy Joe Royal. Have not heard anything about him in the last year. Maybe Hazel Smith could check this out. Really like her column.

Mary Cox
Jackson, Mississippi

The Honky Tonk Angels

Yee haw! The *Honky Tonk Angels* album is finally in the stores. It's been worth the wait. What a performance, and what a thrill to have these three beautiful, talented and classy ladies forming this trio! Radio and record stores seem to cater only to the new artists, thinking that's what the young consumers want. Well, I'm 26 and here to remind everyone that Loretta is still the most awarded female in the history of country music, Tammy recently went Gold in 18 countries for "Justified and Ancient," and Dolly has the biggest-selling single by a female country artist with "9 to 5."

Louis Bia
Girard, Kansas

For more on *Honky Tonk Angels*, check out *Record Reviews and People*.—Ed.

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Hot 'n' Cold Running Warthman

Now that I've cooled off, I can write this letter. Yesterday I received my November/December issue. I'm afraid you have stepped on a lot of toes, thanks to Bob Allen's record review of Ricky Van Shelton's *A Bridge I Didn't Burn*. I know I speak for all RVS fans when I say this is one fantastic album. "Roses After the Rain" is one of the most beautiful love songs to come along in ages. With a voice as excellent as RVS', "100 Bottles of Beer on the Wall" would sound awesome.

RVS is the only reason that I subscribed to your magazine. Thanks to Bob Allen's trashing of him, it will be a cold day in hell before I ever read it again!

Dawn Warthman
Lancaster, Ohio

Comparison Shopping

Enclosed is a review of Ricky Van Shelton's album, *A Bridge I Didn't Burn*, written by Mike Greenblatt from *Modern Screen's Country Music*. As you can see, he is in total disagreement with your assessment of the tape. Thank heaven everyone doesn't have your senseless taste.

Rebecca Clark
Atalla, Alabama

Siddown, Saddam

How dare you write such an awful review about Ricky Van Shelton's latest release, *A Bridge I Didn't Burn*. Who do you

think you are? Someone important, a fan of good country music, or a critic? You are writing about Ricky Van Shelton! The "voice of perfection," the "man with the golden voice" and the man who can bring tears to your eyes when you hear him sing. A man who can prompt me to write you and let you know that I think you're the Saddam Hussein of country music.

For your information, RVS is a songwriter; but as he has stated in some interviews and TV appearances, his producer Steve Buckingham does not like or want to include his own songs on albums. Personally, I think RVS would do better with a different producer; but that's his own business.

Donna Barrington
Pitts, Georgia

Never Say Dare

I feel sorry for Bob Allen who reviewed Ricky Van Shelton's *A Bridge I Didn't Burn* in your November/December issue. *The poor man missed the whole point.*

Most reviews of this album have been extremely favorable. My answer to Mr. Allen is: Thank goodness for a major artist with the guts to put out a work of real country music at a time when country music is moving away from country and going who knows where. That glorious voice has never been more appealing. Mr. Allen, what's wrong with dipping into the traditional past?

I dare you to print this letter, but I

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know you will not because Mr. Allen wouldn't want the world to know how stupid he can be sometimes.

Ellen Morgan
Jackson, Mississippi
Let's not jump to conclusions.—Ed.

Bob Not Bill

Mr. Bob Allen,

I am sorry but you are way off base on your review of Ricky Van Shelton's new album. It seems like ever since Ricky stood up for himself, all you guys want to do is try to kick him down. But Ricky could sing "Yankee Doodle" and "Old McDonald Had a Farm" and still sound better than all the other ones put together. All your negative remarks about Ricky do not affect the way the fans and true country music lovers feel about Ricky's singing and his music.

You state he hasn't shown signs as a songwriter, but I say you are wrong again; just listen to his Christmas album. He may not be like Harlan Howard, but you are no William Shakespeare either.

Patricia Weaver
Porterville, California

For more on Harlan Howard, see 20 Questions in this issue.—Ed.

Strait Seller

In reading Geoffrey Himes' review on *Easy Come, Easy Go* in the November/December issue, I was in total agreement on just how terrific this album truly is. Being a Strait fan from the first time I heard "Unwound" and following his career over the years, I am constantly amazed at how he does it year after year. Seeing George in concert several times is a true treat for any country fan. No fancy lights, no wild backgrounds, just a man, a true entertainer in every song from the beginning to the end. I'm looking forward to many more albums to come in George Strait's future, and you can bet they will be Strait Sellers too.

Sheila Baker
Franklin, Ohio

Himes Has Her Vote

Since I would be the first to jump all over you if you did him wrong, it is only fair that I write to thank you for your excellent review of George Strait's *Easy Come, Easy Go* in the November/December issue. However, your opening paragraph and the comment about "Garth Brooks backs" could just as well have been deleted. Shame on you! Surely you don't believe that true Strait fans were ever really worried about such a thing or even thought the thought?

By the way, I remember Lefty Frizzell and Merle Haggard in their prime, and I still thank my lucky stars that I'm living through the "glory days" of George Strait.

Pat Geria
Harbor City, California

Bravo, Brooks, and CMM Should Get With the Program

In your November/December 1993 issue, there is a critical write-up of Garth Brooks' latest album, *In Pieces*. In speaking of one particular song, "The Night I Called the Old Man Out," I feel Mr. McCall did not actually listen to the lyrics, because he has twisted the storyline so much. Also, Mr. McCall states that because of the fist fight, there is a quick turnaround. Well, in the song, the lyrics are: "In memory of that fateful night; I know the greatest pain was his; And I just pray someday I'm half the man he is." The turnaround did not happen the way Mr. McCall described. It was merely a memory of the night's events.

I also feel that this magazine concentrates its efforts too much on the past and past artists. Country music, as you very well know, has hit a surge of popularity. Even though critics like Michael McCall and Bob Allen may not want to admit it, Garth Brooks should be given most of the credit for the growing popularity.

Paula Pasquantonio
Plainville, Massachusetts

Allen Nails Tippin Review

I remember back in the January/February '92 issue, you printed my letter about the article, "Aaron Tippin Looks to His Roots." (Many thanks!) At the end of that letter, I said, "Though he's been a songwriter for years, his star is just beginning to shine, and I know it's going to get brighter as the years go by." I was right!

To Bob Allen, your review of Aaron's *Call of the Wild* release hit the nail on the head, darlin'!

Connie A. Miller
East Bend, North Carolina
P.S.—The centerfold of Aaron was long overdue! Worth the wait, too!!

Allen Crucifies Tippin/Body Too

I was very happy to receive my first issue of *Country Music Magazine*, and find Mr. Aaron Tippin featured. There is no one in country music that can come close to matching his sincerity, talent and unique style.

However, I found Mr. Allen's record review very insulting. It is obvious that he has never been to one of Aaron Tippin's concerts, or he is simply blind. Mr. Allen writes as if Aaron Tippin is a strutting, muscle-bound airhead. I have talked with Aaron on several occasions, and although his interest in body building is apparent, nothing could be further from the truth.

From the title cut, "Call of the Wild," to "Whole Lot of Love on the Line" and everything in between, this is the best CD I have purchased this year, and I recommend it to everyone.

Lisa LaCombe
Grandview, Missouri

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Stoneman Says Thank You

Dear Rich:

I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciated your review of our new family book, *The Stonemans: An Appalachian Family* (Essential Collector, November/December 1993). Thanks so much!

Patsy Stoneman Murphy
Manchester, Tennessee

Outraged Male

I had to write this letter because I'm getting a little ticked off. I am a country music fan, and I am a male! I am sick and tired of hearing that the majority of country music fans are women. Who took this poll? Nobody asked me! If most country fans are female, then why is it that there seems to be a guy for every girl on those country dance shows? Why is it that so many artists and writers are male? Didn't these guys have to be country fans to get into the business?

I am also sick of hearing about the so-called "youth movement" in country music. Why can't we all just like the music? Why does anybody have to statisticize country music so that it cuts anybody out? How about this: The majority of country music fans are people who love country music.....period!

Jeffrey A. Cooke
Muskegon, Michigan

P.S.—I am a male, 35, married with three children. Is it okay if I go buy the new George Strait CD? Please?

Hazel says okay.—Ed.

New Country Fans...

Thought you might appreciate this. I was eating lunch at Hardee's in Branson, Missouri, the other day. George Jones was singing "The Right Left Hand" on the jukebox. The man in the next booth was trying to impress his wife with his knowledge of country music. "Sounds like Sammy Kershaw," he said. *Arrrgh!*

Keith Lawrence
Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer
Owensboro, Kentucky

Hooked on Sammy

Thanks for a great magazine. You could make it even better with a cover and a pull-out centerfold on Sammy Kershaw. He and his band sure know how to energize their crowds! I would enjoy his fresh, new face on the cover instead of the same old ones.

Sheila Hughes
Estes Park, Colorado
Eating at Hardee's too?—Ed.

Dieting with Dwight

I'm a new subscriber to your magazine and have enjoyed every issue. Dwight Yoakam is my Number One. He has a unique style and voice, and his music has inspired me. I went from a size 22 plus down to an 11/12 regular in four months

while listening to all his tapes. If I felt like eating, I put on his tape. I also walked and exercised to his music. Thanks to him, I feel wonderful and human again. I hope to read more about him in your magazine.

Jean Caporrella
Mansfield, Massachusetts

Front and Center with Yoakam

Your November/December issue contained a letter in which the writer, after attending a Dwight Yoakam concert, acknowledged his obvious singing talent but went on to describe him as "having an arrogant attitude toward the audience."

I also attended one of Dwight's concerts this past summer, and I could not have been more thrilled with his performance. The scenario was much the same: As soon as Dwight appeared on stage, he began to sing his songs back-to-back, stopping only two or three times to speak to the audience and thank his fans for their support, then upon completion there was a simple wave to the crowd and he sauntered off stage. The show was absolutely superb as he delivered a performance with that unmistakable style and flair that are uniquely Dwight. Thanks, Dwight, for including the Northeast on your 1993 tour.

Stephanie Sedlock
Massena, New York

One man's meat....—Ed.

Bye Bye

Of the five concerts I attended this summer, two of the best were Dwight Yoakam's. Arrogance is not a word I would even consider when describing Dwight. He thanked us for staying when it started to rain during his show. He sang everything from his early hits to his newest album, and did a three-song encore. Just before he disappeared backstage, he turned and waved one last time. If that's arrogance, I need a new dictionary.

Robin Winsor
Amesbury, Massachusetts
...is another man's poison.—Ed.

Reading Comprehension

This letter is in response to Elizabeth Berlind from Hillsdale, Pennsylvania (who wrote the letter titled "Fans Flout Expert" in the November/December issue), and her super-ego, reviewer John Morthland. By the time I was five years old, my reading and vocabulary skills were tested at a college-grade level. At the age of seven, I could read and pronounce clearly Spanish and French. In my senior year of high school, I was given an award for perfect marks in General Science, and upon my graduation, my overall GPA was 3.12—a B+ average. This hardly qualifies me as dumb. Although my vocal register is a tenor, I have been known to carry a tune. This does not make me tone-deaf. God gave me and millions of others the

wondrous gift of sight—even if Miss Berlind never bothered to use hers. So, no, I do not believe I was ever duped by Billy Ray Cyrus, of whom I am a fan and will be until he himself gives me a reason not to be.

La Martini Sterling
Compton, California

...And Then Some

This is in response to the 90 million dumb, tone-deaf Billy Ray fans letter to the editor titled "Fans Flout Expert" in the November/December issue. There are 90 million plus smart Billy Ray Cyrus fans who know good music and a great entertainer when they hear and see one. What makes you and John Morthland such experts? That many people couldn't all be wrong about the same person. I speak for all Billy Ray fans. You two get a life! Whoomp! There it is!

Marsha Taylor
Sandersville, Mississippi

So now you readers are dipping into the moonshine, too. Whoot! There it is!—Ed.

Old Friends are Good Friends

I've been buying your magazine since I was 17 years old. I'm now 29. It has been a long relationship. But lately my friends and I are very disappointed in you. All you ever do is feature the new stars on your cover. They are all talented, but so are the classics like my very favorite, Dolly. Also, what about Tammy, Kenny... people still love them just as much as I love Dolly.

Christine (Doesn't Wanna Tell
Us Her Last Name)
Queens, New York
Can't win (see Bravo Brooks above).—Ed.

Sully, Not Sally

I sent you a postcard in response to Patrick Carr's Final Note column which you printed in the Letters section in the September/October issue. It was about a disc jockey who plays "All Kinds of Country" on KSAN in the Bay Area. You printed her name as "Sally." It's really Sully, with a "u." Just wanted to set the record straight.

Janet Byron
Berkeley, California
Thanks, Janet.—Ed.

Sweeps Winners

Recent renewal sweeps winners are: Seymour Rosner of Forest Hills, New York, for April/May 1993; Richard Wooten of Baltimore, Maryland, for June/July 1993; and Denise Schilling of Columbus, Wisconsin, for August/September. They've each won \$1,000. Congratulations to all three.

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*“I wonder if I’ll
ever be as pretty
as Mommy...”*



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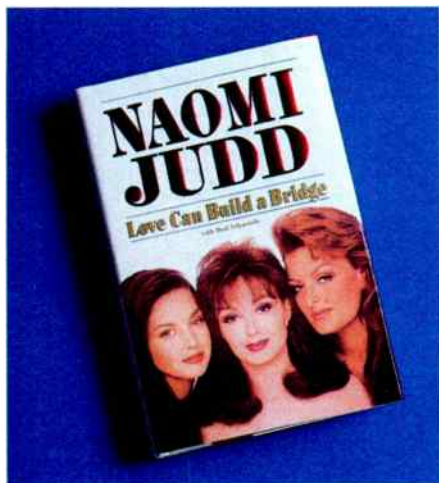
EDITOR'S CHOICE

NEW! NAOMI JUDD AUTOBIOGRAPHY & FAREWELL TOUR VIDEO

Here, at last, is the exquisitely personal story of a mother and daughter who sang like angels and fought like the devil—but loved each other through struggle, triumph and tragedy.

For eight glorious years, Naomi Judd and daughter Wynonna lived the American dream. They were signed on the spot to RCA in 1983 in a rare live audition and went on to set the music world on its ear. Their pristine harmonies, unique personalities, and stunning presence captured mainstream America's heart.

The Judds were country music's most honored and top-selling women. They were undefeated as Duet of the Year for eight years.



They picked up six Grammys, and won themselves a vast array of other awards. In the U.S. alone, they sold over 15 million albums and were the number one touring act in their industry for the year 1991.

They were on top of the world when Naomi made the shocking announcement that she was being forced to retire because of a life-threatening liver disease. Their Farewell Concert, televised on cable, was the most successful musical show in pay-per-view history. Their last song together broke America's heart and ended one of the most beloved acts of all time in country music.

Naomi spent the next two years in isolation, reliving her extraordinary life and career for the pages of this fascinating new autobiography. *Love Can Build a Bridge* is written with the same raw emotion and candor that made The Judds such electrifying performers. Funny, shocking, wise and inspiring, this behind-the-scenes look into The Judds' private lives spares no one and nothing. This 546-page, illustrated, hardcover edition sells for \$24, #B3M.

If you missed their fabulous Farewell Tour, be sure to order the 60-minute video now for \$19.98, V2T. Or get both for \$39.98, #B3M/V2T—YOU SAVE \$3.00!



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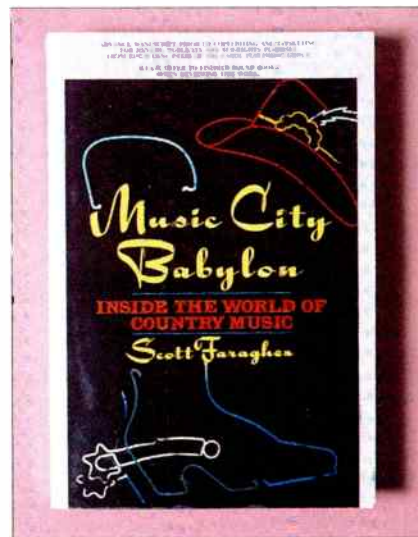
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"Dear Judge"/Marty Robbins—"I Can't Quit," "I've Gone Too Far," "Poor Unlucky Me," "Pretty Mama," "Tennessee Toddy"/Faron Young—"If You Ain't Lovin'," "If That's the Fashion," "A Place For Girls Like You"/Jim Reeves—"My Lips Are Sealed," "Bimbo," "Down in the Caribbean"/Carl Smith—"Satisfaction Guaranteed," "Darling," "Am I the One?"/The Carter Family—"That Ain't the Way I Heard It"/Jimmy Dickens—"Hillbilly Fever"/George Morgan—"So Lonesome"/Grandpa Jones—"Are You From Dixie?"/Cowboy Copas—"I'm So Blue I Could Cry"/Webb Pierce—"You're Not Mine Anymore" AND MORE! Request #V5W. If Ordered Separately—\$39.96—Get all four for only \$34.95. YOU SAVE \$5.00!

MUSIC CITY BABYLON

Author Scott Faragher is a talent agent who has represented country artists like Waylon Jennings, Tammy Wynette, George Jones, Billy Ray Cyrus, Ray Price and dozens more. For the past 20 years he has booked his clients into club dates, tours, exhibitions, fairs and concerts around the country. He has juggled talents and temperament, kept his clients happy and loyal and persuaded his customers to pay top dollar, while fending off sharklike competition. Now he takes you deep inside the country music business that generates over \$700 million in record sales alone. You'll see how agents and managers are on the take...why Loretta Lynn fired her agent of 14 years the week before Christmas with only two weeks' pay...and why Billy Ray Cyrus went from \$2,500 to \$150,000 a night as the result of one hit song. Plus a whole lot more. But *Music City Babylon* isn't only about big names and bigger egos. Faragher also reveals what actually happens to the wide-eyed innocent who brings a song, a guitar and a dream to Nashville. Stardom, fame and wealth are temptingly offered—for a

price. *Music City Babylon* is a revelation of arrogance, greed and excess at all levels. This expansive, 420-page, illustrated volume usually sells for \$19.95, but you pay only \$14.95 and SAVE \$5.00, #B6E.

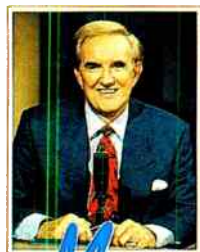


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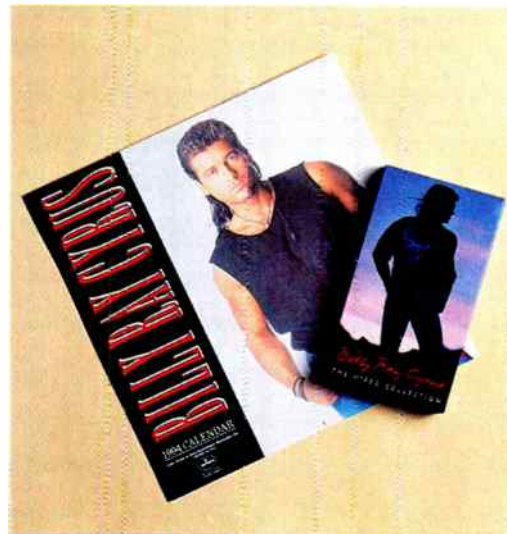
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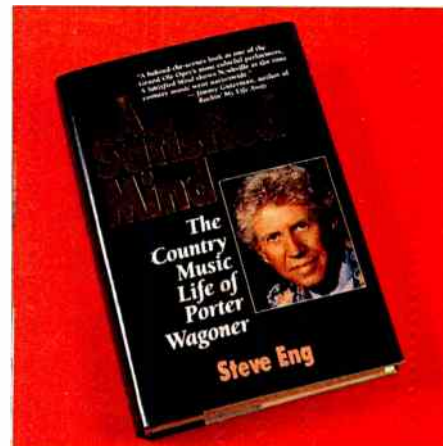
Here is one of country music's hottest commodities on two brand new releases. First, there is the big 12" x 24" 1994 Billy Ray Cyrus Calendar with twelve great photos for \$11.95, #G1A. Then there's Billy Ray's new *Video Collection*, #V3C, for \$19.98. It features "Achy Breaky Heart," "Could've Been Me," "Where'm I Gonna Live?," "She's Not Cryin' Anymore," "These Boots Are Made for Walkin'," "Some Gave All" and "In the Heart of a Woman." Order both *The Video Collection* and Calendar (#G1A/V3C) for \$29.93—YOU SAVE \$2.00!



A SATISFIED MIND: THE COUNTRY MUSIC LIFE OF PORTER WAGONER

Porter Wagoner. The name rolls across the memory and into the present like one of those rhinestone-spangled wagon wheels stitched onto his famous stage costumes. With the name comes a blur of images, facts, and snatches of gossip, like a kaleidoscope filled with sequins.

Behind Porter's glitter and showman's big grin lies a complex personality whose life story—until now—has never been told in detail. Country music fans are somewhat familiar with the rise of "The Thin Man from



West Plains" from working in a Missouri butcher shop to national prominence on the Ole Opry. Many know that for seven years he gave Dolly Parton immense opportunity on his television show and through live performances, and for nine years he produced her hit records. But the facts of his early life have remained obscured—until now.

A Satisfied Mind cuts through the tabloid gossip to show the complex, adventurous, and enormously methodical man behind the image. However, this is no standard country music biography. Reflecting more than three years' research and writing, it is rich in detail and historical perspective. The pages come alive with authentic dialogue from more than 160 interviews, with Porter himself, with Chet Atkins, Dolly Parton, Norma Jean, Si Siman (his first manager), and even his school teachers and members of his first bluegrass band.

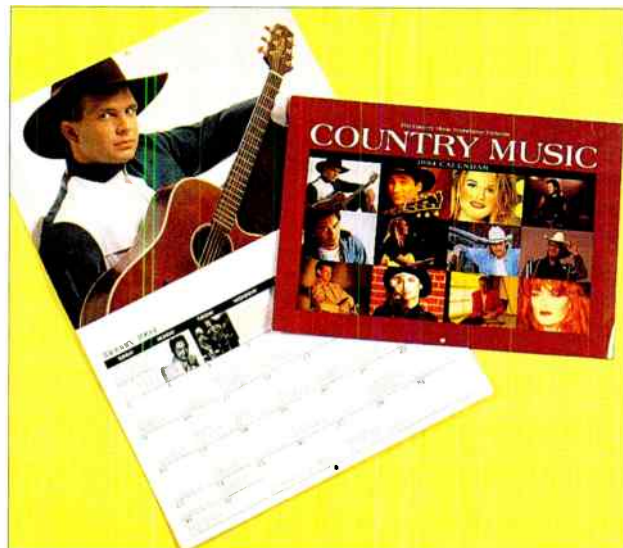
Porter's relationship with RCA, his financial entanglement with Dolly Parton (leading to lawsuits), and his behind-the-scenes leadership at the Grand Ole Opry have been brought to light with painstaking care. Hardcover—Illustrated. Item No. B1K—\$19.95.

THE OFFICIAL 1994 COUNTRY MUSIC FOUNDATION PHOTO CALENDAR

Here is the official calendar of the world's largest and most active research and exhibition center dedicated to an American musical art form. The Foundation's Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum hosts

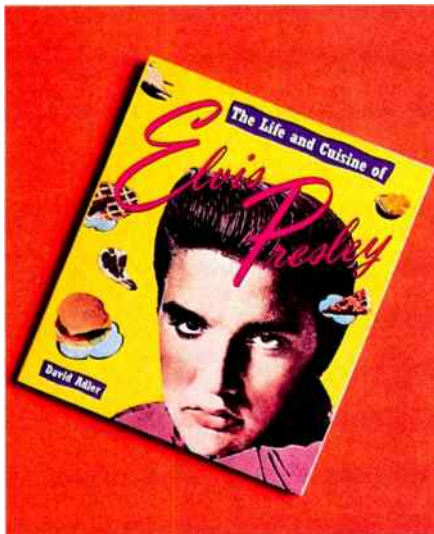
350,000 visitors annually, which should give you some idea of how highly country music fans regard it. Its new 1994 Allstar Calendar is just as popular. This year's edition features big color photographs of

Wynonna Judd, Mary-Chapin Carpenter, Travis Tritt, Trisha Yearwood, Alan Jackson, Marty Stuart, Ricky Van Shelton, Clint Black, Randy Travis, Emmylou Harris, Vince Gill, Garth Brooks, and Gene Autry. The Calendar is 14" x 10" and printed on heavy-duty, high quality glossy paper. It also features historic events in country music by date and year. To order, request #G1B for \$12.95. Or get two Calendars for \$23.90—YOU SAVE \$2.00!



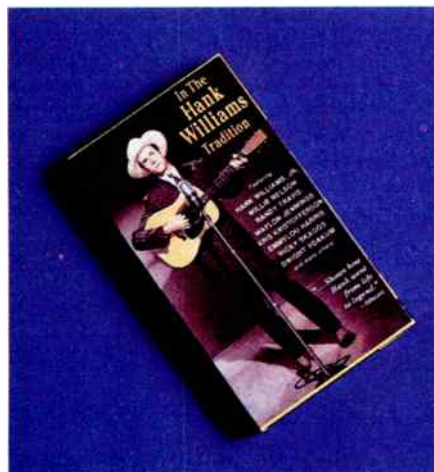
NEW! THE LIFE AND CUISINE OF ELVIS PRESLEY

Here is the most unusual and popular Elvis book to come out in years. Renowned columnist Liz Smith says, "...I heartily endorse it. Elvis was a man after my own heart when it comes to food. I'm going to try every single Elvis recipe; then I can die happy." But Elvis' unusual and fun recipes are only part of this great book, which received good reviews from everyone. Author David Adler traveled extensively to places where Elvis ate and talked to those he ate with to get not only more than 70 actual recipes, but also a book full of fascinating, untold stories. This 8" x 9" softcover edition is 159 pages and illustrated. Ask for #B3S for \$15.



NEW VIDEO! IN THE HANK WILLIAMS TRADITION—60 MINUTES

Here is Hank's incredible life story through rare film clips, music and revealing interviews with his friends and fellow performers such as Roy Acuff, Minnie Pearl and Chet Atkins. Included are performances of many of Hank's greatest hits by today's top performers. Also included is a rare film clip of Hank singing "Hey Good Lookin'," plus four other hits. Request #V2M for \$19.95. See page 67 for another great Hank video.

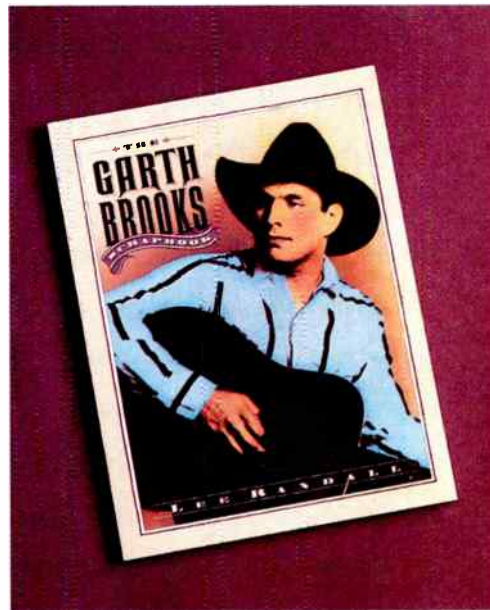


THE GARTH BROOKS SCRAPBOOK

Garth Brooks is country music's hottest star. In addition to having a loyal following of country listeners, Brooks has won over millions of non-country fans. His third album, *Ropin' the Wind*, hit Number One on both the country and pop music charts. Since he exploded onto the scene in 1989, his albums have sold millions of copies and charted scores of Number One singles. He recently hosted his own top-rated TV special—a rare feat for a country star.

How did this 30-year-old Oklahoman become America's most popular entertainer, seemingly overnight? In this profusely illustrated, immensely readable book, fans will discover Garth's surprising route to Nashville—via Billy Joel, Dan Fogelberg and James Taylor...his amazing decision to quit touring for six months at the height of his popularity and concentrate on his marriage...how Garth met his wife Sandy in a barroom brawl—she was the one fighting...why one of Garth's videos was banned from The Nashville Network (TNN) and Country Music Television (CMT)...Garth's ceaseless devotion to family and friends...and much more!

Brimming with anecdotes and quotes,



and loaded with great photographs, *The Garth Brooks Scrapbook* is the definitive book on the singer who is redefining country music. This 8 1/2" x 11" edition contains 108 pages. Order #B3N for \$16.95. If you would like to get Garth's celebrated 90-minute TV special video, ask for item #V3H for \$29.95. Or order both (#B3N/V3H) for \$42.90—YOU SAVE \$4.00!

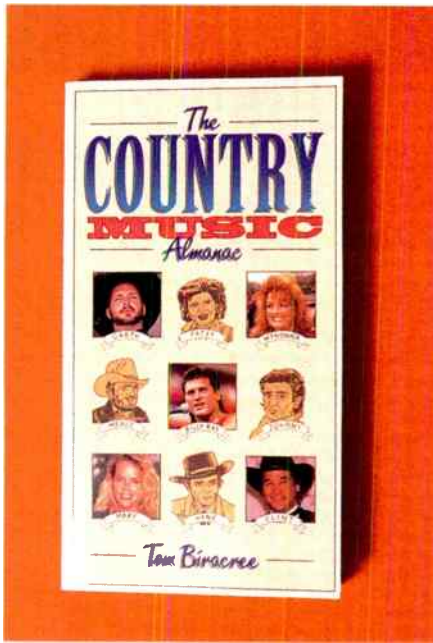
CHET ATKINS VIDEO INSTRUCTION COURSE: GET STARTED ON GUITAR

Here is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to learn to play the guitar (or sharpen your existing skills) from one of the grandmasters of guitar pickin'. With the *Chet Atkins: Get Started on Guitar* video course, beginners can have fun learning the basics, and advanced players will discover a goldmine of helpful hints and ideas. *Chet Atkins: Get Started on Guitar* includes a one-hour video cassette, a 112-page instruction book and a 40-minute audio cassette—all three components cross-referenced to each other and packaged in a sturdy plastic case for convenient carrying and access.

The instruction book will guide you through the music Chet plays in the video. Each tune has its own chapter complete with advanced tips and basic information. There are also special reference sections on



"Playing Chords," "Finger-picking Chords," "Playing Melodies" and "Playing by Ear." The video shows split-screen close-ups so you can see exactly how the techniques are done. Also included are on-screen chord symbols that let you play along as you watch...plus an on-screen clock to help you instantly go to specific places in the video. You receive the video, cassette, instruction booklet and the binder case all for \$69.95, #B2G.



NEW! THE COUNTRY MUSIC ALMANAC

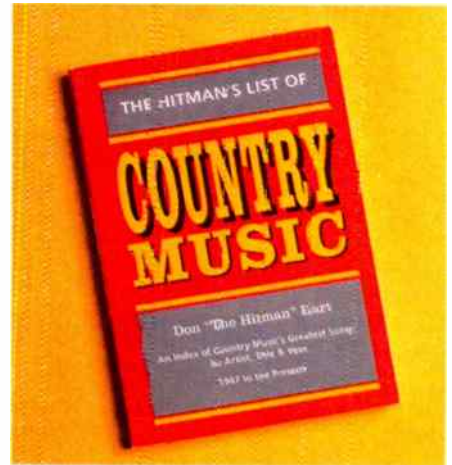
Like the *Trivia Book* we are offering on this page, this is another essential new edition that is sure to appeal to millions of country music fans. *The Country Music Almanac* is more fun than going backstage at the Grand Ole Opry. Here are profiles of the country greats—from Hank Williams, Jimmie Rodgers and Kitty Wells to Randy Travis, Billy Ray Cyrus and the rest of today's sensations—with little-known facts and juicy tidbits and the best country songs of all time, including the Number One hits and gold and platinum albums. Find out who's sold the most albums and who's garnered a Grammy. Read the behind-the-scenes stories of the great country songs. You'll get all this and much more in this 280-page illustrated edition for only \$10, #B10.

BRAND NEW! THE HITMAN'S LIST OF COUNTRY MUSIC

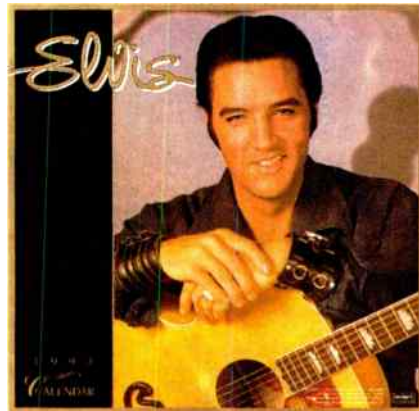
All his life, Don "The Hitman" Hart has loved country music. And from his first job at WSEM in Donalsonville, Georgia, to his current radio home at WLWI in Montgomery, Alabama, where he is one of the most popular disc jockeys in the South, The Hitman has deepened this love by accumulating a vast and intimate knowledge of country music and its greatest performers.

The Hitman's List of Country Music is an extensive compilation of the most important hits of country music. Covering 1947 to the present, The Hitman's list reflects the ever-changing yet constant and true face of this distinctive brand of American music.

Well over three thousand entries make up The Hitman's list, which can be used in countless ways for fun, entertainment and information. The Artist Index catalogs each artist or band alphabetically by name and lists the song title and the year the song charted for each artist. The Song Title Index gives each song title alphabetically by the first word of the title, and also includes the



name of the artist and the year the song charted. The Year Index, likewise, allows you to examine all of the hits of a particular year—from 1947 to the present—alphabetized by song title within the respective years. It's a great book for more serious country music fans. Order #B3T for \$12.95.



BRAND NEW! THE OFFICIAL 1994 ELVIS PRESLEY WALL CALENDAR

It is that time again for you Elvis fans to send for next year's new 1994 Elvis Presley Wall Calendar. As in previous years, it features 12 fabulous photos of the "King of Rock 'n' Roll" during his early glory years of super-stardom. The pictures measure 12" x 12", and the entire Calendar opens up to a big 12" x 24". There's also plenty of room to jot down appointments or important messages. As in the past, there are important facts about Elvis' life and career scattered throughout the Calendar. We have purchased only a limited number of Calendars for 1994. It's first come, first served. So order yours now. Order one for \$10.95 or two for \$19.90 and SAVE \$2.00, #G6F.

NASHVILLE WAREHOUSE EDITOR'S CHOICE

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FOR CMSA MEMBERS ONLY

THE ESSENTIAL JOHNNY CASH

1955-1963



C O L U M B I A
C O U N T R Y C L A S S I C S

Johnny Cash Special

Without question, the best single Johnny Cash collection available today is Columbia's *The Essential Johnny Cash* (CK 47991). Released as part of Sony Legacy's Columbia Country Classics series, the 75 selections lead off with 15 numbers from the Sun years and all the big hits and high points from Columbia (1958-1980) on three CD's or cassettes. Regular price \$35.95 cassettes, \$45.95 CD's. Members' price \$31.95 cassettes, \$41.95 CD's. See Buried Treasures in July/August 1992 for more details on this set.

For Cash fans whose interests run deeper, Rhino has a collection of just the Sun highlights. *The Sun Years* (Rhino 70950) has "Hey Porter," "I Walk the Line," "Get Rhythm," "Folsom Prison Blues," "Guess Things Happen That Way," "Rock Island Line," "Home of the Blues," "Big River," "Come in Stranger," "Train of Love," "There You Go," "Ballad of a Teenage Queen," "So Doggone Lonesome," "The Ways of a Woman in Love," and, on the CD only, the bonus tracks, "Luther Played the Boogie," "Mean Eyed Cat," "Next in Line," and "Give My Love to Rose." Available on cassette or CD. Regular price \$9.95 cassette, \$12.95 CD. Members' price \$7.95 cassette, \$10.95 CD.

For those who want everything, Bear Family's got a load of Cash compact disc boxed sets that cover virtually all the Sun Recordings and the first several years of his Columbia career in their entirety. *The Man in Black: 1954-1958* (BCD 15517) brings together—on five CD's—virtually all the Sun material, including his first audition recordings for Sam Phillips along with the entire first year (1958) of his Columbia recordings. Disc five is virtually his complete August 12, 1958, session with false starts, studio conversation, etc. Regular price \$129.95. Members' price \$109.95.

Another five-CD box, *The Man in Black: 1959-1962* (BCD 15562)

picks up where the other volume left off with all the Columbia sides done during those years, among them "I Got Stripes," "Five Feet High and Rising," "Tennessee Flat Top Box" and on disc five, an entire 1960 recording session. Regular price \$129.95. Members' price \$109.95.

Another Bear Family box, *Come Along and Ride This Train* (BCD 15563), covers his various albums of American history and Americana on four CD's, including the entire *Ride This Train*, *Bitter Tears*, *Blood Sweat and Tears* and *Ballads of the True West* LP's, and several others. This set was detailed in Buried Treasures in November/December 1991. Regular price \$109.95. Members' price \$89.95.

Buried Treasures Special
CMSA members get a discount on all Buried Treasures items. Members may deduct \$10.00 off the prices on RCA's new Elvis boxed set (covering his 1960's recordings) and Rhino's Western music anthology. Members take \$4.00 off the price of the Bear Family 2-CD sets on The Davis Sisters and Jimmy Work. You can deduct \$3.00 off the Bear reissues of Bob Wills' Longhorn Recordings and the Merle Haggard classic, *Same Train: A Different Time*. All other items, take \$2.00 off. Be sure to include membership number when taking discount. See ordering instructions in Buried Treasures section.

Essential Collector Special
CMSA members may deduct \$2.00 off the price of any products offered in Essential Collector. There are new books on Skeeter Davis, The Band and Roy Clark, plus histories of the harmonica, the blues and women in country music. Another book covers the contemporary country scene with facts, figures and anecdotes about the stars. Rounding things out is a live video on George Jones, where he rolls through hits both old and new. When taking the discount, remember to include membership number. See complete ordering details on the Essential Collector page.

How to Order

To order items listed on this page, send check or money order to *Country Music Magazine*, Dept. 010294N, 329 Riverside Avenue, Westport, Connecticut 06880. Include \$2.00 postage and handling for first item, \$.95 each additional. Canadian orders, add \$3.00 additional postage.

VOTE

MEMBERS POLL/JANUARY 1994

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

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? _____ CD's? _____

2. In the boxes below, write the numbers of any of the albums on the Top 25 list in this issue which you bought in the last month.

3. For any albums you bought in the last month not on the Top 25 list, write performer's name and album titles in the space below. (Attach a separate sheet if you need more room.)

Your Choice for Album and Single of the Month

4. List numbers of your five favorites from Top 25 in this issue.

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

Do You Shop by Mail or Phone?

5. a. How many purchases have you or someone in your household made by mail or phone in the past 12 months? _____

b. About how much was spent for all purchases made by mail or phone in the past 12 months? _____

6. Did you or anyone else in your household buy any albums (LP's, cassettes or CD's) by mail or phone in the past 12 months? Yes No

7. How many: LP's? _____ cassettes? _____ CD's? _____

8. Do you or anyone else in your household belong to any record clubs? Yes No

9. Check any of the following from which you or anyone in your household bought an album in the past 12 months?

- Columbia House Record and Tape Club
 BMG Music Service Reader's Digest Music
 TV album offer Time-Life Music

Who Can Vote

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

If you are not a CMSA member but would like to join and vote immediately, enclose your check for \$16 for a one-year CMSA membership (you get an extra year of *Country Music Magazine*, too).

Fill out poll and mail to: January Poll, *Country Music Magazine*, 329 Riverside Avenue, Suite 1, Westport, Connecticut 06880.

TOP 25

Singles

1. Garth Brooks *American Honky Tonk Bar Association*
2. Martina McBride *My Baby Loves Me*
3. Alabama *Reckless*
4. Alan Jackson *Mercury Blues*
5. Little Texas *God Blessed Texas*
6. Mark Chesnutt *Almost Goodbye*
7. Tracy Lawrence *My Second Home*
8. Lee Roy Parnell *On the Road*
9. Collin Raye *That Was a River*
10. Tanya Tucker *Soon*
11. Dwight Yoakam *Fast as You*
12. Sammy Kershaw *Queen of My Double Wide Trailer*
13. Trisha Yearwood *The Song Remembers When*
14. Doug Supernaw *I Don't Call Him Daddy*
15. Brooks & Dunn *She Used to Be Mine*
16. Sawyer Brown *The Boys and Me*
17. Doug Stone *I Never Knew Love*
18. Faith Hill *Wild One*
19. Billy Ray Cyrus *Somebody New*
20. Wynonna *Is It Over Yet*
21. Clay Walker *Live Until I Die*
22. Pam Tillis *Do You Know Where Your Man Is*
23. Shenandoah *I Want to Be Loved Like That*
24. Mark Collie *Something's Gonna Change Her Mind*
25. George Strait *Easy Come, Easy Go*

Albums

1. Various Artists *Common Thread: The Songs of The Eagles*
2. Garth Brooks *In Pieces*
3. Reba McEntire *Greatest Hits, Volume Two*
4. Alan Jackson *A Lot About Livin' (And a Little 'Bout Love)*
5. George Strait *Easy Come, Easy Go*
6. Vince Gill *Let There Be Peace on Earth*
7. Trisha Yearwood *The Song Remembers When*
8. Dwight Yoakam *This Time*
9. Wynonna *Tell Me Why*
10. Vince Gill *I Still Believe in You*
11. Dolly Parton, Loretta Lynn, Tammy Wynette *Honky Tonk Angels*
12. Mark Chesnutt *Almost Goodbye*
13. Alan Jackson *Honky Tonk Christmas*
14. Billy Ray Cyrus *It Won't Be the Last*
15. Clay Walker *Clay Walker*
16. Brooks & Dunn *Hard Workin' Man*
17. Confederate Railroad *Confederate Railroad*
18. George Strait *Pure Country*
19. Little Texas *Big Time*
20. Clint Black *No Time to Kill*
21. Sammy Kershaw *Haunted Heart*
22. Tanya Tucker *Soon*
23. John Michael Montgomery *Life's a Dance*
24. Garth Brooks *No Fences*
25. Brooks & Dunn *Brand New Man*

Make check payable to *Country Music*. Mail to: Top 25, P.O. Box 292553, Nashville, TN 37229

Check one: Cassette \$9.98, CMSA Members \$7.49
 CD \$16.98, CMSA Members \$12.74

Add \$2.00 postage and handling for one album, \$.95 each additional. Circle numbers you want from album list above.

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I want to join the CMSA and get Member's price. I'm adding \$16 for membership which includes an extra year's subscription to *Country Music Magazine*. 010294T

A 25% Discount For CMSA Members Only

Here it is, folks! Your quick and easy order form for your choice of the Top 25 Albums currently on the country music charts. Everyone may order, but members of *Country Music Magazine's* own Country Music Society of America get 25% off list price.

Albums listed on this page are available on CD or cassette. **Sorry, no singles, LP's or 8-track tapes available.** To order, fill out coupon on this page and include your check or money order. Be sure to specify format. Allow six to eight weeks for delivery. To join the CMSA and save 25% on every CD or cassette you buy, send \$16 to cover membership dues and use member's prices. Dues entitle you to an additional year of *Country Music Magazine*, the CMSA Newsletter with every issue, membership card, discount coupons, other merchandise discounts and more.

Bring home 8 CDs or 12 Cassettes for 1¢ PLUS A CHANCE TO GET EVEN MORE MUSIC FREE.

See details on next page...



Charlie Chase—My Wife... My Life (Epic) 467•530

Darryl & Don Ellis—Day In The Sun (Epic) 465•609

Matthews, Wright & King—Dream Seekers (Columbia) 463•455

The Gatlin Brothers—Larry, Steve, Rudy—Moments To Remember (Branson Entertainment) 461•210

Roy Clark—Great Picks & New Tracks (Branson Entertainment) 461•202

Ricky Lynn Gregg (Liberty) 458•869

Randy Travis—Wind In The Wire* (Orig. Sndtrk.) (Warner Bros.) 465•856

Conway Twitty—Final Touches (MCA Nashville) 466•607

McBride & The Ride—Hurry Sundown (MCA) 458•240

Skip Ewing—Homegrown Love (Liberty) 457•804

Hank Williams, Jr.—Out Of Left Field (Curb/Capricorn) 457•259

Essential Steve Earle (MCA Nashville) 456•723

Charlie Daniels Band—All-Time Grt. Hits (Epic) 456•608

Kentucky Headhunters—Rave On (Mercury/Nashville) 455•691

Palomino Road (Liberty) 455•584

Vern Gosdin—Nickels And Dimes And Love (Columbia) 454•603

Rosanne Cash—The Wheel (Columbia) 453•886

Texas Tornados—Hangin' On By A Thread (Reprise) 453•449

Steve Wariner—Drive (Ansta) 464•255

George Jones—Walls Can Fall (MCA) 450•296

Suzy Bogguss—Voices In The Wind (Liberty) 449•736

Mark Chesnut—Almost Goodbye (MCA) 463•273

The Chimpunks—Chimpunks In Low Places (Epic/Chimpunks) 448•779

Chris Ledoux—Under This Old Hat (Liberty) 461•871

Wynonna Judd—Wynonna (MCA/Curb) 435•909

Highway 101—Grt. Hits (Warner Bros.) 413•633

Little Texas—Big Time (Warner Bros.) 460•204

Reba McEntire—Grt Hits (MCA) 355•826

Diamond Rio—Close To The Edge (Ansta) 448•290

Collin Raye—In This Life (Epic) 447•268

Smoky Mountain Players—Smoky Mountain Hits (Brentwood) 446•310

Charlie Rich—Complete Smash Sessions (Mercury) 445•155

George Strait—“Pure Country” Orig. Sndtrk. (MCA) 448•753

Kenny Rogers—20 Grt Hits (Reprise) 444•885

Curtis Wright (Liberty) 444•810

Chris Ledoux—Whalcha Gonna Do With A Cowboy (Liberty) 444•562

Ronnie Milsap—True Believer (Liberty) 461•889

Patty Loveless—Grt Hits (MCA) 458•349

Garth Brooks (Liberty) 381•608

Waylon Jennings—Too Dumb For New York City (Epic) 444•430

Disney's Country Music For Kids (Walt Disney Rec.) 444•315

Ricky Van Shelton—Grt. Hits Plus (Columbia) 444•067

Johnny Cash—The Gospel Collection (Columbia/Legacy) 443•895

Marty Stuart—This One's Gonna Hurt You (MCA) 442•418

Michelle Wright—Now & Then (Ansta) 441•147

Mark Chesnut—Longnecks And Short Stories (MCA) 440•487

Oak Ridge Boys—Collection 1 (MCA) 440•412

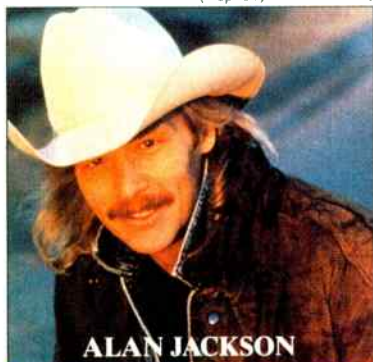
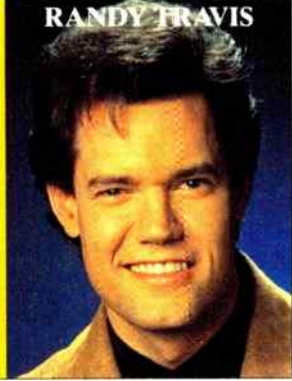
George Strait—Holding My Own (MCA) 440•396

Wind In The Wire. This original soundtrack includes *Hold Hands; Cowboy Boogie; Down At The Old Corral; Beyond The Reef*, more. (Warner Bros.) 465•856

Greatest Hits, Vol. 1. *Honky Tonk Moon; Too Gone Too Long; On The Other Hand; I Told You So; Heroes & Friends*, plus many more. (Warner Bros.) 448•654

Greatest Hits, Vol. 2. *Forever And Ever, Amen; I Won't Need You Anymore; Diggin' Up Bones; It's Just A Matter Of Time*, plus others. (Warner Bros.) 448•662

High Lonesome. Pandý's joined by Alan Jackson et al. *Point Of Light; Forever Together; Better Class Of Losers*, plus others. (Warner Bros.) 427•666



ALAN JACKSON

A Lot About Livin' (And A Little 'Bout Love). His down-home insights on *She's Got The Rhythm (And I Got The Blues); Tonight I Climbed The... Tropical...*, many more. (Ansta) 447•458

Honky Tonk Christmas. *I Only Want You For Christmas; If We Make It Through December*, title cut, many more. (Ansta) 467•142

Don't Rock The Jukebox. Smash follow-up to his debut! *Love's Got A Hold On You; Midnight In Montgomery; Dallas*, more. (Ansta) 420•935

Here In The Real World. Title cut; *Chasin' That Neon Rainbow; Ace Of Hearts; Wanted; Home; Blue Blooded Woman*, etc. (Ansta) 406•785

Charlie Daniels Band—America, I Believe In You (Liberty) 458•851

Pirates Of The Mississippi—A Sreet Man Named Desire (Liberty) 449•702

Hank Williams, Jr.—Maverick (Curb/Capricorn) 434•472

Ray Stevens—#1 With A Bullet (Capitol/Curb) 425•504

Tracy Byrd (MCA) 446•468

Travis Tritt—T.R.O.U.B.L.E (Warner Bros.) 445•767

Sammy Kershaw—Haunted Heart (Mercury) 456•541

Confederate Railroad (Atlantic) 439•158

Conway Twitty & Loretta Lynn—Making Believe (MCA) 376•509

Ricky Van Shelton—A Bridge I Didn't Burn (Columbia) 454•611



Reba McEntire—Grt Hits Vol 2 (MCA) 467•316

Kathy Mattea—Good News (Mercury) 466•920

Suzy Bogguss—Diamonds And Tears (Liberty) 465•997

Kelly Willis (MCA) 463•513

Holly Dunn—Milestones—Grt. Hits (Warner Bros.) 425•785

Joe Diffie—Honky Tonk Attitude (Epic) 454•629

Crystal Gayle—Best Always (Branson Entertainment) 461•228

Carlene Carter—Little Love Letters (Giant) 461•079

Tanya Tucker—Grt Hits 1990-1992 (Liberty) 458•935

The Best Of Lacy J. Dalton (Liberty) 458•166

Patty Loveless—Only What I Feel (Epic) 454•637

Dolly Parton—Slow Dancing With The Moon (Columbia) 454•264

Pam Tillis—Homeward Looking Angel (Ansta) 446•963

D. Parton/L. Ronstadt/ E. Harris—Trio (Warner Bros.) 352•633

Doug Stone—From The Heart (Epic) 444•075

Trisha Yearwood—Hearts In Armor (MCA Nashville) 444•042

Mary Chapin Carpenter—Come On, Come On (Columbia) 440•560

Best Of Barbara Mandrell (Liberty) 439•588

The Forester Sisters—I Got A Date (Warner Bros.) 436•956

The Brenda Lee Story (MCA) 432•757

Reba McEntire—For My Broken Heart (MCA) 430•090

Tammy Wynette—Anniversary: 20 Years Of Hits (Epic) 352•427

Best Of Emmylou Harris (Warner Bros.) 330•738

Tracy Lawrence—Albiss (Atlantic) 456•558



Patsy Cline—Grt Hits (MCA) 365•924

Reba McEntire—It's Your Call (MCA) 450•361

Kitty Wells—Country Music Hall Of Fame (MCA) 416•370

Loretta Lynn—Country Music Hall Of Fame (MCA) 416•339

Rosanne Cash—Hits 1979-1989 (Columbia) 376•665

Toby Keith—(Mercury/Nashville) 458•315

the stars...

Brooks & Dunn—Hard Workin' Man (Arista) 454•025

Willie Nelson—Across The Borderline (Columbia) 453•837

Roy Rogers—Country Music Hall Of Fame (MCA) 440•362

Bob Wills—Country Music Hall Of Fame (MCA) 440•354

Anne Murray—Fifteen Of The Best (Liberty) 439•620

Best Of Eddy Raven (Liberty) 439•554

Shenandoah—Grt. Hits (Columbia) 436•808

Ricky Van Shelton—Don't Overlook Salvation (Columbia) 436•360

Sawyer Brown—The Dirt Road (Capitol/Curb) 433•656

Tracy Lawrence—Sticks & Stones (Atlantic) 432•211

Arthur Smith & Don Reno—Original Dueling Banjos (CMH) 432•187

George Jones & Tommy Wynette—Grt. Hits, Vol. 2 (Epic) 432•179

Collin Raye—All I Can Be (Epic) 431•445

Sammy Kershaw—Don't Go Near The Water (Mercury) 431•437

Joe Diffie—Regular Joe (Epic) 431•262



John Michael Montgomery—Life's A Dance (Atlantic) 453•746

Billy Dean—Fire In The Dark (Liberty/SBK) 455•563

Tanya Tucker—Can't Run From Yourself (Liberty) 449•728

Freddy Fender Collection (Reprise) 430•934

Kris Kristofferson—Singer/Songwriter (SMSP) 430•165/390•161

Boxcar Willie—Best Loved Favorites (Ranwood) 428•060

Steve Wariner—Grt. Hits Volume 2 (MCA) 426•957

Ricky Skaggs—My Father's Son (Epic) 426•932

Trisha Yearwood (MCA) 426•148

Doug Stone—I Thought It Was You (Epic) 425•637

The Statler Brothers—Grt. Hits, Vol. 3 (Mercury) 425•108

Diamond Rio (Arista) 424•739

Hank Williams—40 Grt. Hits (Polydor) 423•863/393•868

Kentucky Headhunters—Pickin' On Nashville (Mercury) 423•533

Sons Of The Pioneers—Country Music Hall Of Fame (MCA) 422•477

Tex Ritter—Country Music Hall Of Fame Series (MCA) 422•436

Travis Tritt—It's All About To Change (Warner Bros.) 422•113

Garth Brooks—Ropin' The Wind (Liberty) 428•862

Garth Brooks—No Fences (Capitol) 411•587

Billy Dean—Young Man (SBK/Liberty) 422•527



#1 Country Hit Mix. Hits include *Take A Little Trip* (Alabama); *When My Ship Comes In* (Clint Black); *No One Else On Earth* (Wynonna Judd); *Sticks And Stones* (Tracy Lawrence); more. (Realm) 457•911

BILLY RAY CYRUS

Some Gave All. With his multi-platinum debut album, he brought a brand-new swagger to a whole generation of country fans—who couldn't resist the urge to get up and dance every time they heard the big hit *Act A Breaky Heart!* Also included: *Could've Been Me*; *Wher'm I Gonna Live?*; *These Boots*; etc. (Mercury) 441•451

It Won't Be The Last. Billy's second album: certainly "won't be the last"! Not when he can have songs like *Words By Heart*; *In The Heart Of A Woman*; *Talk Some*; *Only Time Will Tell*; others. (Mercury/Nashville) 463•240

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George Strait—Ten Strait Hits (MCA) 432•617

Brooks & Dunn—Brand New Man (Arista) 429•969

Tennessee Ernie Ford—Country Gospel Classics Vol. 1 (Capitol) 421•974

Tanya Tucker—What Do I Do With Me? (Capitol) 420•372

Roger Whittaker—The Country Collection (Capitol) 420•364

Pam Tillis—Put Yourself In My Place (Arista) 419•192

Vince Gill—Pocket Full Of Gold (MCA) 418•459

Billy Joe Royal—Grt. Hits (Atlantic) 417•774

Red Foley—Country Music Hall Of Fame (MCA) 416•347

Chris Hillman And The Desert Rose Band—A Dozen Roses (MCA/Curb) 415•281

Sawyer Brown—Buick (Capitol/Curb) 415•166

Dwight Yoakam—If There Was A Way (Reprise) 414•243

The Best Of Slim Whitman (1952-1971) (Rhino) 413•427

Vince Gill—I Still Believe In You (MCA) 448•571

Pirates Of The Mississippi (Capitol) 413•260

Dolly Parton—Eagle When She Flies (Columbia) 412•171

Mary Chapin Carpenter—Shooting Straight In The Dark (Columbia) 411•876

Sawyer Brown—Grt. Hits (Capitol/Curb) 411•363

Conway Twitty—Grt. Hits, Vol. 3 (MCA) 406•314

Travis Tritt—Country Club (Warner Bros.) 405•068

The Very Best Of Glen Campbell (Capitol) 403•444

Vince Gill—When I Call Your Name (MCA) 402•867

Highwayman II—Nelson, Cash, etc. (Columbia) 401•976

Dwight Yoakam—Just Lookin' For A Hit (Reprise) 389•718

The Rodney Crowell Collection (Warner Bros.) 386•094

k.d. lang & The Reclines—Absolute Torch & Twang (Sire) 381•624



George Strait—Easy Come Easy Go (MCA) 467•308

Carl Perkins—Orig Sun Grt. Hits (Rhino) 374•199

The Best Of Dan Seals (Capitol) 364•042

Lyle Lovett (MCA/Curb) 353•755

Johnny Cash—Columbia Records 1958-86 (Columbia) 352•765/392•761

Sweethearts Of The Rodeo (Columbia) 348•961

Exile—Grt. Hits (Epic) 346•635

The Best Of The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band—Twenty Years Of Dirt (Warner Bros.) 345•744

Merle Haggard—His Best (MCA) 335•539

Willie Nelson—Grt. Hits (And Some That Will Be) (Columbia) 311•001

Boots Randolph Grt. Hits (CSP) 376•426

POPULAR HITS

	Aerosmith —Get A Grip (Geffen) 458•075		Jimi Hendrix —The Ultimate Experience (MCA) 458•034
	Yanni —In My Time (Private Music) 458•018		Sting —Ten Summoner's Tales (A&M) 454•561
	Madonna —Erotica (Maverick/Sire/Warner) 453•555		Barbra Streisand —Back To Broadway (Columbia) 461•988
	Nirvana —In Utero (DGC) 467•159		Spin Doctors —Pocket Full Of Kryptonite (Epic/Assoc.) 428•482
	Mariah Carey —Music Box (Columbia) 465•435		Bonnie Raitt —Luck Of The Draw (Capitol) 423•186
	Pearl Jam —Vs (Epic) 465•427		Lynyrd Skynyrd —Skynyrd's Innyrds/Their Grt. Hits (MCA) 381•129
	Bob Dylan —The 30th Anniversary Concert (Columbia) 465•187/395•186		Roy Orbison —The All-Time Hits, Vols. 1 & 2 (CSP) 377•945
	Kris Kross —Da Bomb (Ruffhouse/Columbia) 463•703		Fleetwood Mac —Grt. Hits (Warner Bros.) 375•782
	James Taylor —Live (Columbia) 463•687/393•686		Journey's Grt. Hits (Columbia) 375•279
	Natalie Cole —Take A Look (Elektra) 460•741		Best Of The Doors (Elektra) 357•616/397•612
	Bette Midler —Experience The Divine: Grt. Hits (Atlantic) 460•386		Creedence Clearwater Revival —Chronicle—20 Grt. Hits (Fantasy) 308•049
	The Allman Brothers Band —A Decade Of Hits 1969-79 (Polydor) 430•439		Eagles Grt. Hits, 1971-75 (Asylum) 287•003
	Billy Joel —River Of Dreams (Columbia) 463•695		John Berry (Liberty) 463•265
	Nirvana —In Utero (DGC) 467•159		Jimmy Dean's Grt. Hits (Columbia) 335•836
	Mariah Carey —Music Box (Columbia) 465•435		
	Pearl Jam —Vs (Epic) 465•427		
	Bob Dylan —The 30th Anniversary Concert (Columbia) 465•187/395•186		
	Kris Kross —Da Bomb (Ruffhouse/Columbia) 463•703		
	James Taylor —Live (Columbia) 463•687/393•686		
	Natalie Cole —Take A Look (Elektra) 460•741		
	Bette Midler —Experience The Divine: Grt. Hits (Atlantic) 460•386		
	The Allman Brothers Band —A Decade Of Hits 1969-79 (Polydor) 430•439		
	Dwight Yoakam —This Time (Reprise) 456•913		

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Country Music VIDEOS



KARAOKE (NEW)

Top Country Hits - 48 mins.

Now you can have lots of foot-stompin', honky tonk parties in your own home whenever you want. You don't need special equipment, just your TV and VCR. All instrumentation and back-up vocals are provided as music videos and lyrics appear on your TV screen. Just follow the easy-to-read, on-screen words as they change color from phrase to phrase. It includes *Boot Scootin' Boogie/All My Rowdy Friends* and other favorites. Item No. V9L - \$9.95

ERNEST TUBB

Thanks Troubadour Thanks - 62 mins.

Here is the complete, true story of "America's Troubadour." From his birth in depression-era Texas, the early influence of Jimmie Rodgers, the first recording sessions, early radio shows and Hollywood movies, to the Grand Ole Opry, over 40 years on the road, and sales of over 20 million records. This fascinating video biography features classic performances and his top hits. It's a must for serious country music fans. Item No. V2N - \$19.95

COUNTRY MUSIC ON BROADWAY

Filed In New York City - 96 mins.

Here is the first full-length country music movie ever filmed. See Hank Williams in his only filmed appearance, uncut and crystal clear. Enjoy 30 full musical numbers by Hank and headliners like George Jones, Hank Snow, Porter Wagoner, Wilma Lee and Stony Cooper. Including: Hank Sr.—*Hey Good Looking/George Jones—White Lightning/Hank Snow—Moving On/Porter Wagoner—Satisfied Mind, AND MORE!* Item No. G8F - \$39.95

ROY ACUFF

Open House Vol. 1 & 2 - 60 mins. ea.

Despite the cheesy backdrops and minimal production values, these two videos give a good account of Roy's sound in the late 50's when they were recorded. They feature Roy along with the Smoky Mountain Boys and Girls, singer June Webb and The Wilburn Brothers. Roy sings a real variety of music: *Wabash Cannonball, The Sinking of the Titanic and There Is a Tavern in the Town* among them. Vol. 1 - No. V9E/Vol. 2 - V8H - \$24.95 Each

COUNTRY VIDEO HITS OF THE 90'S

15 Great Performances - 56 mins.

Here are the best of the best, including: *A Better Man* by Clint Black/*I Watched It All* by Lionel Cartwright/*Simple Man* by The Charlie Daniels Band/*Give a Little Love* by The Judds/*Out of Your Shoes* by Lorrie Morgan/*Crazy in Love* by Conway Twitty/*It Ain't Nothin'* by Keith Whitley/*Don't Toss Us Away* by Patty Loveless/*Cry, Cry, Cry* by Marty Stuart/*When I Call Your Name* by Vince Gill. **AND MANY MORE!** Item No. V6E - \$19.95

COUNTRY LINE DANCING

Featuring Achy Breaky - 35 mins.

Unlike other dance instruction videos that "break away" for you to practice alone, this one will practice each basic step with you until it's automatic. After learning the basic country line dance steps—vine, stomp, pivot hitch, strut, reggae—you will dance your way through the less complicated Electric Slide to the more demanding Achy Breaky. As new country line dances appear, you will know the basics and be able to learn them quickly. Item No. V9B - \$9.95

MORE COUNTRY LINE DANCING

Featuring Achy Breaky II - 35 mins.

Now that you can do the basic country steps (see *Country Line Dancing* above), you are ready to move on to increase your dance repertoire. You'll practice each step before learning the pattern. Audio cues will help you remember the pattern of basic steps unique to each line dance. Dances include: T.C. Electric Slide, Country Strut, Southside Shuffle, Cowboy Cha Cha, Achy Breaky II, plus the special bonus...Sixteen Step. Item No. V9X - \$9.95

HANK WILLIAMS SR. (NEW!)

The Show He Never Gave - 86 mins.

Using Hank's last ride as its dramatic context, this movie permits the haunted singer to play one final show, during which all his fears and passions—all his genius—tumble out for us to see. "Sneezy" Waters plays the self-destructive superstar and performs 23 songs. Adding to the authenticity of the project is the audience, supporting characters who populate the mythical roadhouse where Hank confronts his life, just as it is ending. Item No. V2L - \$19.95

MARTY ROBBINS

Super Legend - 120 mins.

This memorable video features 18 performances: *El Paso/White Sports Coat/Devil Woman/Ribbon of Darkness/Singing the Blues/I Can't Keep From Cryin'/Don't Worry 'Bout Me/This Time You Gave Me a Mountain*, and many more, including Marty's Grammy winning song, *My Woman, My Woman, My Wife*. It also includes rare appearances from early television shows and the big screen. **PLUS A LOT MORE!** Item No. G2A - \$39.95

MARTY ROBBINS

Best Of His TV Show Vol 1 - 55 mins.

Take a return visit to Marty's first syndicated TV show, (1968-1969). Thirty-nine shows have been edited into this classic collection of back-to-back performances. There are 21 songs along with a bunch of humorous excerpts: *I Can't Help It (If I'm Still in Love With You)/Take These Chains/Lovesick Blues/Low and Lonely/Are You Sincere?/Long Gone Lonesome Blues/Tumbling Tumbleweeds/El Paso/Running Gun, AND MORE!* Item No. V8E - \$29.95

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COLLECTOR'S VIDEO

Winner of Best Video at the 11th Annual Telly Awards, *Inside Country Music* is a rare on-stage and behind-the-curtains look at country music, featuring Randy Travis and Tammy Wynette on the American Music Tour, the Oak Ridge Boys in the recording studio, Roy Clark on tour, **AND MORE!** It's **100 MINUTES...a \$19.95 value...YOURS FREE** when you order just two items from these pages!

MARTY ROBBINS

Best Of His TV Show Vol 2 - 55 mins.

Here is the volume two of Marty's popular TV show. It contains more of the great standards of country music including: *Take Me Back To Tulsa/ Mississippi River Blues/Anytime/ Streets of Laredo/Deep Water/Heart Full of Love/Candy Kisses/Never Tie Me Down/Old Red/Devil Woman/El Paso/ Time Changes Everything/Kalua, 22 SONGS IN ALL.*, with various excerpts of the humor Marty was famous for. Item No. V9I - \$29.95

MARTY ROBBINS

Best Of His TV Show Vol 3 - 55 mins.

Here is the latest video release of Marty's popular TV show. It contains even more of the great standards of country music including: *Room Full of Roses/Red River Valley/Beyond the Reef/Oh How I Miss You/Now Is the Hour/Way Out There/ Chant of the Wanderer/One Kiss Too Many/Walk Alone/ Mr. Shorty/Rainbows/Lonely Old Bunkhouse/People's Valley/Billy the Kid, 22 GREAT SONGS IN ALL.* Item No. V2E - \$29.95

RAY STEVENS

Comedy Video Classics - 30 mins.

You may have seen this popular video advertised on TV. Now you can enjoy the outrageous musical/comedy talent of the legendary Grammy winning Ray Stevens at his hilarious best. Included are: *Everything Is Beautiful/It's Me Again Margaret/Santa Claus Is Watching You/Sittin' Up With the Dead/Surfin' U.S.S.R./Mississippi Squirrel Revival/The Streak and Help Me Make It Through the Night.* You'll love it! Item No. HJ90 - \$19.95

WEBB PIERCE (NEW)

Greatest Hits - 52 mins.

No country artist but Webb Pierce can claim 69 hit songs in a row. Shortly before his death he personally created, from rare filmed performances, a compilation of his greatest hits, narrating and providing background on the songs, their writers and their origins. This program contains seventeen of Webb's greatest hits including *Wandering/More and More/The Stands the Glass/In the Jailhouse Now AND MORE!* Item No. V3T - \$19.95

BILLY RAY CYRUS

Live On Tour - 60 mins.

Here is Billy Ray's latest video release featuring 14 great songs performed live on stage, including: *Should I Stay or Should I Go/These Boots Are Made for Walkin'/She's Not Cryin' Anymore/Wher'm I Gonna Live?/Someday, Somewhere, Somehow/Could've Been Me/I'm So Miserable/ Never Thought I'd Fall in Love With You/Ain't No Good Goodbye/Some Gave All/Only Time Will Tell/Achy Breaky Heart, AND MORE!* Item No. V2B - \$29.95

JIMMIE RODGERS

Times Ain't Like... - 70 mins.

In the early days of sound film, in addition to covering major events, newsreel cameras captured the sights and sounds of everyday life in America, including its music. The compelling performances assembled here communicate the innocence and power of that early American music. Besides Jimmie Rodgers, some of the other pioneers included are Bob Wills' Texas Playboys and Otto Gray's Oklahoma Cowboys. Item No. V1L - \$29.95

WAYLON JENNINGS

Lost Outlaw Performance - 60 mins.

The master recording of this memorable concert was never released and had been locked in the vaults of RCA Records, long forgotten since 1978. Now we bring it to you for the first time, in its entirety, exactly as it was recorded on August 12th at the Opry. Here is the "Outlaw" period in all its glory, with eight #1 singles including: *Good Hearted Woman/Luckenbach, Texas/Amanda/This Time/I've Always Been Crazy, AND MORE!* Item No. V4D - \$19.95

HIGHWAYMEN LIVE

On The Road Again - 60 mins.

Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson, Kris Kristofferson and Waylon Jennings are together again, in concert, on their first European Tour. You'll meet them backstage, talking candidly about their lives and their music. Then you'll see them on stage, firing up the audience and never letting go, from the opening bars of their theme song *Highwaymen*, through *Folsom Prison Blues* and *Crazy*, until the final chord of *On the Road Again*. Item No. V2S - \$14.95

MERLE HAGGARD

The Best Of - 60 mins.

"I have selected some of my favorite songs for this video...and I hope they will be your favorites too."—Merle Haggard. You be the judge: *My Favorite Memory/Stay Here and Drink/ Mama's Hungry Eyes/Today I Started Loving You Again/ Old Man From the Mountains/Kern River/If I Could Only Fly/When Times Were Good/Honky Tonk Night Man/ Big City/Okie From Muskogee/Footlights, AND 7 MORE!* Item No. G3F - \$19.95

Country Music VIDEOS



CHARLEY PRIDE An Evening With Charley - 48 mins.

Listen to the rich baritone sounds of Charley Pride, the Country Music Association's 1971 Performer of the Year. Included in this noteworthy live performance are: *Kiss An Angel Good Mornin'/Kawliga/So Afraid of Losing You/Oklahoma Mornin'/I's Going to Take a Little Longer/Crystal Chandelier/My Eyes Can Only See As Far As You/Me and Bobby McGee/Louisiana Man/Cottonfields Back Home*, AND MORE! Item No. V1C - \$19.95

REBA McENTIRE In Concert - 71 mins.

Now enjoy all the excitement and charisma of perhaps today's number one country music lady. Included are: *Love Will Find It's Way To You/Can't Even Get the Blues/Somebody Should Leave/One Promise Too Late/Let the Music Lift You Up/Whoever's in New England/Sweet Dreams/You Lie/Cathy's Clown/Oklahoma Swing/Rumor Has It/What Am I Gonna Do About You?/I Know How He Feels*, AND MORE! Item No. V3E - \$19.95

REBA McENTIRE (NEW!) Greatest Hits - 31 mins.

Reba fans, this is your lucky day. We also have her much anticipated brand new video ready to send out to you by return mail. You'll be among the first to bring country music's current reigning queen home for a private screening of her *Greatest Hits*. This video features the making of *The Night The Lights Went Out in Georgia* plus *Take It Back/The Heart Won't Lie* (Duet with Vince Gill)/*It's Your Call/Does He Love You* (Duet with Linda Davis). Item No. V3D - \$29.95

CONWAY TWITTY King Of Hits - 45 mins.

This video celebrates the basis for Conway's claim to greatness by taking a long look at his illustrious career. You'll see him as he performs early hits like *To See My Angel Cry* and *She Started To Stop Loving You*. You'll hear classic Conway hits like *Linda on My Mind* and *The Games Daddies Play* and come full circle with his more recent ballads like *Somebody's Needin' Somebody*. It's a fitting tribute to a legendary star. Item No. V2C - \$24.95

CONWAY TWITTY #1 Hits - 45 mins.

On this last video, Willie Nelson pays tribute to Conway's remarkable career in a nostalgic look back at his meteoric rise in rock and roll and then ultimate triumph in country music. You'll listen to Conway tell the story of *Hello Darlin'*. You'll hear him compare his early songs and performances with those later on in his career. It's all in this home video from Willie's personal library of country stars. Plus you get twelve #1 hit songs. Item No. V1K - \$24.95

OPRY STARS OF THE 50's Ray Price & Friends - 60 mins.

Volume 4 in this unique collection features Ray Price, June Carter, Jean Shepard, Ferlin Husky, Moon Mullican, Jimmy Dickens, The Jordaires, The Cherokee Cowboys, Webb Pierce and Red Sovine, to mention a few. The featured songs include: *Crazy Arms/You've Done Me Wrong/I'll Be There/I'm Real Glad You Hurt Me/Little Rosa/I'm Glad So Glad/Hello/Old Broken Heart/I Found a New Love/Looking Glass* AND MORE! Item No. V11 - \$24.95

OPRY STARS OF THE 50's The Legends - 60 mins.

Just some of the legendary stars featured on this great volume in the Classic Country Club Collection are Jim Reeves, Marty Robbins, Ernest Tubb, George Morgan, Red Sovine, Hawkshaw Hawkins, Stringbean, The Carter Family and Cowboy Copas. Some of the song titles included are: *You're a Little Doli/Little Liza Jane/Sugaree/Shine on Harvest Moon/Thea I'll Stop Loving You/I'll Be There/Josephine and Why Baby Why*. Item No. V1A - \$24.95

BILL MONROE (NEW!) Father Of Bluegrass Music - 90 mins.

Done with the cooperation of Bill Monroe, ex-Blue Grass Boys and other performers he influenced, this documentary clearly defines Bill Monroe's unique role in American music. It covers his early years in Kentucky with great video footage. The era of The Monroe Brothers, his early years on the Opry, the classic Flatt-Scruggs-Wise version of The Bluegrass Boys—all are covered. Even smaller details of his career aren't overlooked. Item No. V2K - \$19.95

TRISHA YEARWOOD (NEW!) The Song Remembers When - 60 mins.

Here is your chance to enjoy this hot country star at a concert performance recorded in June. There are fourteen hit songs including: *I Never Will Marry/Wrong Side of Memphis/Mr. Radio/The Woman Before Me/You Say You Will/One in a Row/The Song Remembers When/That's What I Like About You/Down on My Knees/Better Your Heart Than Mine/Love Has No Pride/She's in Love With the Boy/Walkaway Joe and Hearts in Armor*. Item No. V3M - \$29.95

GEORGE JONES (NEW!) Live In Tennessee - 54 mins.

This memorable new video is pure music with an introduction by superstar Alan Jackson. Live from the Knoxville Civic Coliseum, you'll see George thrill the audience with 15 of his biggest hits including *I Don't Need Your Rockin' Chair* and the #1 country song of all time, *He Stopped Loving Her Today*. There's also *The Race Is On/Who's Gonna Fill Their Shoes?/Bartender's Blues* AND 10 MORE! Item No. V1X - \$19.95

VINCE GILL I Still Believe In You - 24 mins.

Since the early 1980's when he first arrived in Nashville, Vince has contributed vocals and guitar licks to the studio sessions of some of country music's biggest stars. Now he has joined their ranks as one of country music's premier entertainers. Here's your chance to enjoy this popular star on his only video performing: *When I Call Your Name/Never Knew Lonely/Pocket Full of Gold/Liza Jane/Look At Us and I Still Believe In You*. Item No. V1M - \$19.95

CHARLIE DANIELS Homefolks And Highways - 90 mins.

Go behind the scenes with Charlie in the recording studio, on the road in his touring bus, on his ranch in Tennessee, at The Cowboy Hall Of Fame, even at his high school reunion. Watch and listen to Charlie perform hits like *The South's Gonna Do It/What This World Needs Is A Few More Rednecks/The Devil Went Down To Georgia/Simple Man/Long Haired Country/It's My Life/In America/Old Rock And Roller*, AND MORE! Item No. V5B - \$19.95

GENTLEMAN JIM REEVES (NEW!) The Story Of A Legend - 50 mins.

This is the story of the greatest country music ballad singer of all time, from his deep rural roots in East Texas, and his years as an aspiring baseball player, to his years as one of the most universally popular singers of the late 50's and early 60's. This program also features Jim singing excerpts from many of his hit songs including: *Four Walls/Am I Losing You?/He'll Have To Go/I Love You Because and Welcome To My World*. Item No. V2P - \$19.95

MARK CHESNUTT (NEW!) Almost Goodbye - 25 mins.

Here is your chance to be entertained by one of country music's fastest rising young stars. This is Mark Chesnutt's first entertainment video, and if you have not had the chance to catch his act, we highly recommend it. Featured on this brand new release are: *Too Cold at Home/Brother Jukebox/Your Love Is a Miracle/I'll Think of Something/Ol' Country/It Sure Is Monday* and the title song *Almost Goodbye*. Item No. V3N - \$14.95

AARON TIPPIN (NEW!) Great Video Hits - 25 mins.

Here is another bright rising star on today's country music circuit. His 1992 album *Read Between the Lines* went Platinum, selling over 1,000,000 copies. This brand new video features: *You've Got To Stand For Something/I Wonder How Far It Is Over You/She Made a Memory Out of Me/There Ain't Nothin' Wrong With the Radio/ Wouldn't Have It Any Other Way/My Blue Angel and Workin' Man's Ph.D.* Item No. V3R - \$14.95

DWIGHT YOAKAM Just Lookin' For A Hit - 30 mins.

Few can dispute the impact that this young star has had on the country music scene. And what better way to enjoy Yoakam country than with his first Warner video featuring: *Honky Tonk Man/Guitars, Cadillacs/Little Sister/Always Late With Your Kisses/Streets of Bakersfield/Long White Cadillac*. There's even a Yoakam interview as well as performance footage from the I.R.S. label hit *The Cutting Edge*. Item No. G1E - \$19.95

OPRY STARS OF THE 50's Jim Reeves & Friends - 60 mins.

Volume 3 in the Classic Country Club Collection features Jim Reeves, Marty Robbins, Faron Young, Carl Smith, Ernest Tubb, Webb Pierce, Kitty Wells, Grandpa Jones, Ferlin Husky and Cowboy Copas, just to mention a few. Some of the hit songs included are: *Mexican Joe/Don't Let Me Hang Around/If You Ain't Lovin'/If You Want It, I Got It/Bimbo/On the Lonesome Side of Town/Cherokee Boogie and New Silver Bells*. Item No. V1D - \$24.95

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Buried Treasures

by Rich Kienzle

Elvis: Volume 2 of RCA's definitive Elvis Presley boxed set is just out. This one, *From Nashville to Memphis: The Essential 60's Masters I* (RCA 66160), covers the period following his Army discharge through the remainder of the 1960's on five CD's (or cassettes). The 60's were, for Elvis, a pretty diverse era that accounted for some of his best



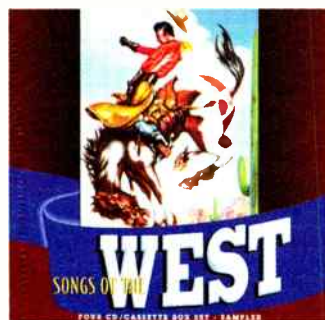
and worst efforts, from the post-Army giants like "Return to Sender," "I Need Your Love Tonight" and so on through a stretch of mediocrity (particularly on his movie soundtracks) and on to better material like "In the Ghetto." Once again, the idea is to make everything available, as did the *Complete 50's Masters*, released in 1992.

One reason this volume works is that it isn't a comprehensive set. His gospel material, the 1968 TV special, his first live recordings and (if anyone cares) the soundtracks will be covered in future collections. One live recording appearing legally for the first time is his "Love Me Tender"/"Witchcraft" duet with Frank Sinatra from Sinatra's 1960 Timex TV special. The set kicks off with the excellent material he recorded just after his discharge, including "Little Sister" and "I Need Your Love Tonight." It ends with some of his best late 60's hits, among them "In the Ghetto" and "Suspicious Minds." Some alternate takes and other oddities fill out the collection.

Some of the strongest moments are provided by the

1967 Nashville session that produced his powerful, rocking version of Jerry Reed's "Guitar Man" (with Reed on guitar). Peter Guralnick's excellent booklet tells the story of that session, including the way Elvis' handlers tried—without success—to persuade Reed to give the song to Elvis' music publishing company. Guralnick's notes provide a taste of his upcoming two-volume Presley biography. Rare photos, complete recording information and the kind of packaging RCA should apply to their other reissues of country artists enhance the collection.

Songs of the West: With Western films enjoying a resurgence in popularity, it's not surprising that Rhino Records would compile a broad-ranging collection of cowboy music. *Songs of the West* (R 71263) may bore some hardcore collectors who know this material frontwards and backwards. However, for the newcomer to Western music, it's a perfect way to sample some of the best of the genre. Each of the four 18-song volumes covers a specific area. *Cowboy Classics* assembles standards including Gene Autry's "Back in the Saddle Again" and "Cattle Call" (not Eddy Arnold's but the original version by its



composer, Tex Owens). Tex Ritter's "Take Me Back to My Boots and Saddle" and "The Wayward Wind" represent the early and later stages of his career. *Silver Screen Cowboys* concentrates on material by Roy Rogers, Jimmy Wakely, Rex Allen Sr. and Jr., Walter

Brennan, Foy Willing and The Riders of the Purple Stage, Bob Wills (who did his share of westerns) and, of course, Gene Autry (his original version of "That Silver Haired Daddy of Mine" with Jimmy Long).

Volume Three concentrates exclusively on the work of Autry and Roy Rogers while Volume 4 compiles classic TV-western themes. The booklet, on fine quality paper, features fantastically reproduced Western memorabilia and fine essays about cowboy music, culture and so forth. This is one of Rhino's finest efforts, easily on a par with Bear Family's. My sole complaint is the weird physical packaging, consisting of an odd-sized box and no jewelboxes for the CD's.

Moon Mullican: In the early 1980's, Western Records, a San Francisco-based reissue label, released *Seven Nights to Rock*, a compilation of Moon Mullican's more rocking King recordings licensed from Nashville's Gusto Records, which now owns King's back catalog. Not only were the performances excellent, the album drove home the debt owed Moon by Jerry Lee Lewis and other hillbilly boogie pianists past and present. The Western album is long out of print, but Britain's Ace Records has just released *Moonshine Jamboree* (ACD CDCHD 458), a worthy successor. It duplicates a few songs, like "Good Deal Lucille" and "Rheumatism Boogie," but most of the songs are reissued here for the first time, among them "What's the Matter with the Mill," "Lonesome Hearted Blues," "Moonshine Blues" and "I'll Take Your Hat Right Off My Rack."

Merle Haggard: In 1969, as Hag's stardom surged, Capitol released his *Same Train: A Different Time*, a double album honoring his idol, Jimmie Rodgers. This album introduced me to Rodgers' music, leaving me eager to hear the real thing (few Rodgers reissues

were available back then). The album became a classic, but Capitol Records, in their usual lack of wisdom, never reissued the set. Now Bear Family has, and they've done it right (BCD 15740), adding later Rodgers songs from



other Haggard albums and an unreleased track, "Jimmie the Kid," from the original 1968-69 sessions.

Haggard caught the nuances and the humor of Rodgers' singing without ever imitating him and, in the process, spelled out the musical connections between himself, Lefty Frizzell and Rodgers (Lefty did a Rodgers tribute album in the early 50's). Even the narrations from the original album appear, as does nearly complete session data (taken right from Musicians' Union contracts in L.A.), revealing Glen Campbell's participation on a 1966 Rodgers cover done before the tribute album. Veteran disc jockey Hugh Cherry's original notes remain, with new notes by Charles Wolfe revealing Cherry's crucial (and uncredited) role in conceiving this album.

Bob Wills: Many consider some of Bob Wills' best material to be the songs he recorded for Tiffany Music from 1945 to 1947. Recorded to be sold as repackaged radio shows on 16-inch transcription discs (sales never met expectations), many of the Tiffanies were released by California-based Kaleidoscope Records, a small folk label, from the early through late 1980's. Rhino now owns Kaleidoscope, and has re-

issued all but one of the previously issued Tiffany albums with the original packaging as *The Tiffany Transcriptions, Volumes 1 through 9* (Rhino 71469, 71470, 71471, 71472, 71473, 71474, 71475, 71476, 71477). (The tenth Kaleidoscope volume hasn't been reissued.) Some of these 128 songs were never commercially recorded by The Playboys, while others get totally new (sometimes longer) treatments here.

Bear Family's *The Longhorn Recordings* (BCD 15689) brings together his 1964-65 material for the first time since being reissued on two LP's in the 1980's. I annotated this one, so we'll stick to facts.

Wills gave up working with The Playboys in 1964 after chronic heart trouble began to plague him. He sold the Playboy name to a friend and eventually started working as a solo artist. That year Dewey Groom, owner of Dallas' Longhorn Ballroom, founded Longhorn Records. Most Longhorn recordings were 45's featuring



small bands of veteran Playboys. Wills cut only one actual album for Longhorn: *The Bob Wills Keepsake Album*, a collection of the traditional fiddle tunes he'd played since childhood. Backed by a guitar, banjo and bass, Bob laughed and reminisced and, at one point, after telling the story of how he learned it, played the first fiddle tune he learned as a boy.

Jimmy Work: Facts only again, as I annotated this one. *Making Believe* (Bear Family BCD 15650) is a two-CD, 48-song revision of Bear's two Work albums that not only encompasses everything on those albums but adds, for the first time ever on compact disc, the other material that Work re-



corded for numerous small labels like Trophy, Alben, Bullet and London. Combined with the previously issued material from Decca, Capitol and Dot, this provides a complete overview of Work's career from 1945-1959. The original 1948 Alben release of "Tennessee Border" is here, as are the London recordings from 1950-51, among them "Pickup Truck," "Southern Fried Chicken" and the original "Let's Live a Little," written by Jimmy and his wife, which became Carl Smith's first hit record. The backup musicians on the Dot material, the Casey Clark band, also backed The Davis Sisters. Besides the notes and discographical data, the revised booklet features much in the way of photos and old advertisements not included on the originally reissued albums.

Pete Cassell: Before anyone heard of Eddy Arnold, Georgia singer Pete Cassell anticipated Arnold's smoother vocal style without approaching Arnold's stardom. Arnold didn't imitate Cassell. They came up with

their styles separately. Blind since he was three days old, Cassell built his career at radio stations like WSB in Atlanta, WWVA in Wheeling and WARL in Arlington, Virginia, from the mid-1930's until his death in 1954. Despite its graceless title, Old Homestead's *Blind Minstrel Volume 1* (OHS-396) provides the first real insight into Cassell. A budget album—all that was available in the past—has been out of print for years. A couple of numbers come from transcriptions of Connie B. Gay's Washington, D.C.-based *Town and Country Time* (at WARL) hosted by Jimmy Dean. Gradually, the similarities to Arnold become clearer, and the music improves, particularly on "The Moss Covered Mill" and "It's Too Late to Say You're Sorry," with backing almost certainly by Red Foley's band (with Jerry Byrd on steel guitar). Wayne Daniel's ill-written liner notes nonetheless offer new information on Cassell's life.

Shelton Brothers: Bob and Joe Shelton (real name: Attlesley) would be noteworthy if only for two records: "Deep Elem Blues" and "Just Because." In an era when most mandolin-guitar duos like The Blue Sky Boys stuck to old-time songs, The Sheltons were more honky tonk oriented. None of their recordings have been reissued till now; Old Homestead's *Bob and Joe* (OHS-201) is a start.

Featured are "Just Because" and "Deep Elem Blues" (with Curly Fox fiddling) along with

their versions of traditional songs like "Ridin' on a Humpback Mule," "New John Henry Blues" and "Bury Me Beneath the Willow." Also covered are such old-timey tunes as "Sal, Let Me Chew Your Rosin Some." Not surprisingly, given their Texas origins, they drew on a fair amount of Western swing material, including "Four or Five Times" and the blues, "Sittin' on Top of the World." If you like brother duos that are different from the norm, The Sheltons are worth hearing, as they walked an important line between Western swing and honky tonk.



The Davis Sisters: After years of preparation and delays, the definitive Davis Sisters collection is finally here, Bear Family's *Memories* (BCD 15722). It covers their complete recordings except for a couple of lost RCA masters, bringing together 60 songs on two compact discs. These include not only the RCA recordings, but also 1952-53 live appearances, radio recordings done in Detroit and their work for the Detroit-based Fortune label. Skeeter and Betty Jack Davis weren't really sisters (Skeeter's real name is Mary Frances Penick) but were close friends. Four gospel numbers recorded after Betty Jack Davis' death feature Skeeter with Betty Jack's sister, Georgie, who replaced her in the group for a while until they broke up. The songs include "I Forgot More Than You'll Ever Know," "Sorrow and Pain," "Rock-a-Bye Boogie," "The Christmas Boogie" and more. The CD-sized booklet features photos from Skeeter Davis' collection, some taken during actual recording sessions.

How to Get These Treasures

Available in formats shown at prices shown: Elvis, *From Nashville to Memphis: The Essential 60's Masters 1* (RCA 66160), a 5-CD boxed set, \$99.95/Various Artists, *Songs of the West* (Rhino R 71263), a 4-CD or 4-cassette boxed set, \$59.95 CD, \$39.95 cassette/Moon Mullican, *Moonshine Jamboree* (ACD CDCD 458), CD only, \$26.95/Bob Wills, *The Tiffany Transcriptions, Volumes 1-9* (Rhino R 71469, 71470, 71471, 71472, 71473, 71474, 71475, 71476 and 71477), CD's only, \$11.95 each CD/Bob Wills, *The Longhorn Recordings* (BCD 15689), CD only, \$24.95/Jimmy Work, *Making Believe* (BCD 15650), a 2-CD set, \$44.95/Pete Cassell, *Blind Minstrel, Volume 1* (OHS-396), LP only, \$10.95/The Shelton Brothers, *Bob and Joe* (OHS 201), LP only, \$10.95/Davis Sisters, *Memories* (BCD 15722), a 2-CD set, \$44.95.

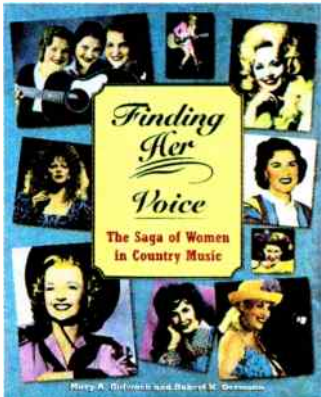
Send your check or money order payable to *Country Music Magazine* to Dept. 010291, 329 Riverside Avenue, Suite 1, Westport, Connecticut 06880. Add \$2.00 postage and handling for first item ordered, \$.95 for each additional item. Canadian orders add an additional \$3.00 postage. **CMSA Members, see For Members Only page for discounts on products offered here.**

Essential Collector by Rich Kienzle

▪ Books ▪

Right now, everyone and their brother is writing a book on country music. Regular Essential Collector readers know I'm not jumping up and down at all the great books out on the market. That's because in the greater scheme of things, many are forgettable works you'll find in budget sections of mall bookstores. A handful deserve to remain in print for years.

The Women of Country: I've always liked Bob Oermann. We've worked on projects, and he's always been helpful and kind whenever I needed a question answered. As a former Country Music Foundation staffer, he knows his history. He and wife Mary Bufwack have finally completed their lengthy study on the changing role of women country singers, and *Finding Her Voice: The Saga of Women in Country Music* is the result. They've done a tremendous job of scholarship, leading me



to remind those who write off Oermann as a Music Row "cheerleader" that he's always been a formidable historian.

They skillfully navigate through virtually the entire history of women's contributions to country music from folklorist Emma Bell Miles to the present. Chapters are well-organized, the photos smartly chosen and details reveal their exhaustive research. As a reference work alone, the book is

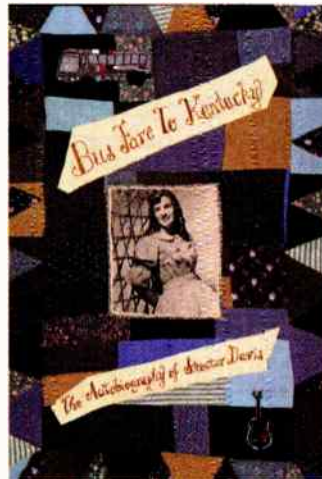
highly valuable. Certain revelations about things like the male-female carryings-on at the WLS *National Barn Dance* shed welcome reality on the truth behind the false prudishness of such shows. The authors measure the advances of women against the anti-feminist views of many older female singer. I am amazed they felt a need to include non-country Anita Bryant and Tammy Faye Bakker (Tammy—a singer? They gotta be kidding!).

Country scholarship and feminist rhetoric make an odd mix, but the real problem is their avoidance of critical analysis, particularly on present-day artists Bob's covered for years. Oermann, who no longer needs to toady to anyone, plays into his critics' hands by ladling out the kind of gushy superlatives that spark "cheerleader" accusations. True, Emmylou Harris gets much-deserved credit for her immense influence on today's scene. But given Loretta Lynn's mediocre later recordings, and Dolly's and Reba's controversial moves away from their traditional roots, frank discussion is important. Instead, we get fawning rhetoric about their greatness. Make no mistake: this is an important research work, one that would have enhanced its credibility with a bit more candor in the home stretch.

Skeeter Davis: *Bus Fare to Kentucky*, Skeeter's long-awaited autobiography (and the title of a 1971 single), reveals a troubled and complex life. Kentucky-born Mary Frances Penick emerged from obscurity when she and school-mate Betty Jack Davis began singing as The Davis Sisters. Their 1953 RCA hit, "I Forgot More than You'll Ever Know," showed their promise, until a car crash that year killed Betty Jack and severely injured Skeeter. During her recuperation, she fell under the power of Betty's domineering, ma-

nipulative mother, who forced Skeeter to continue singing with Betty's sister. Skeeter finally got married to escape before resuming her career as a successful solo artist.

Since ex-husband Ralph Emery criticized Skeeter in his



autobiography, it's no surprise that she spends over 50 pages returning fire. Her Ralph was a philandering, abusive, self-centered, pill-popping egomaniac who intimidated her and loathed most country music and performers. Only these two know how much of this is true, but if you find Ralph a bit phony, you'll find this entertaining. Now that both have had their say, I hope this is all. Davis had other personal heartaches and tragedies in her life, dealing with both through her Christian mysticism. Her accounts of dangerously crazed male fans should give any aspiring female superstar pause.

Roy Clark: I've always considered Roy Clark a great stage entertainer, a fast, flashy instrumentalist but one without his own style. His records have largely been mediocre (except for his early ones and a later collaboration with bluesman Gatemouth Brown). Certainly his role on *Hee Haw* was no challenge (one reason a bored Buck Owens finally left in 1986). To be fair, Clark knew what his audience wanted, and

the Vegas-style act he's done for years is the norm for most shows in Branson. Now Roy has joined the many artists writing autobiographies (Naomi Judd's is just out—Charley Pride's is coming, and Reba's got one due out next spring).

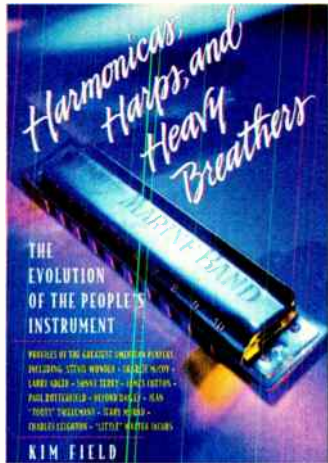
True to form, *My Life (In Spite of Myself!)* co-authored with Marc Elliott, plays to Clark's audience. Its most interesting portions deal with Clark's early career. Virginia-born, he spent his early days working in the Washington, D.C., country scene with Jimmy Dean's band (and a then-obscure Patsy Cline). Roy's casual approach eventually clashed with Dean, a hard-nosed, all-business artist who admired Roy's talents even while firing him for tardiness. Years later, as a TV star guest-hosting *The Tonight Show*, Dean gave Roy national exposure that helped his career. The *Hee Haw* anecdotes are predictable, though he is critical of the "modernized" version that many feel killed the show. He's also candid about his problems with MCA Records in the 1970's.

Most fans, I suspect, can do without Clark's "candor" regarding his material possessions. Who cares how many planes he owns? Will the average working person sympathize with Roy and wife Barbara's struggle to remodel and fix up their lavish mansion in Tulsa, after which they endured a "very bad period"? He milks a story about flying with the Navy's Blue Angels for many more pages than it deserves. Expect more such books in the future. Pray they have more substance than this.

The book's due out in March. I'm working from an advance copy. Expect some changes.

Inside Country Music: Once in a while, a work comes out of left field that may not be perfect but succeeds better than expected. Country Joe Flint and Judy Nelson's *The Insider's Country Music*

Handbook is just such a work. This one is by no means comprehensive. Flint and Nelson bypass all but the obvious historical figures. Everyone who's hot today gets an entry, even minor leaguers. Considering no encyclopedia of the contemporary artists focuses on these artists' careers, it fills a need. Birth dates, death dates, hits and personal information are all included. Personal problems of the stars are softened, even Lynn Anderson's court problems and, unbelievably, George Jones' past wildness. The second half of the book features current listings of Opry members, fan club addresses, a "calendar" and 800 trivia questions.

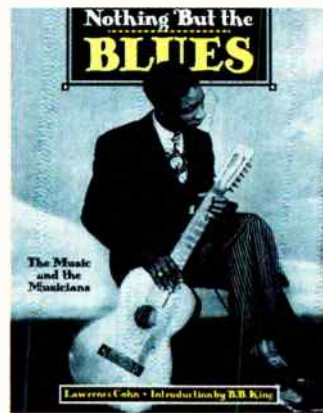


Harmonicas, Harps and Heavy Breathers: Kim Field's *Harmonicas, Harps and Heavy Breathers: The Evolution of the People's Instrument* is the first book to qualify as a definitive history of the harmonica and its place in American music. Field provides an excellent history of the instrument and sections on each musical style (folk, country, blues, jazz, classical, pop, rock, etc.) with overviews and profiles of each type's top players. The country section couldn't be more complete. Listed are biographical and musical profiles of Dr. Humphrey Bate, DeFord Bailey, Herman Crook, Jimmie Riddle, Onie Wheeler and Wayne Raney, all now gone. Field landed interviews with the legendary Lonnie Glosson (now in his 80's and rarely interviewed), as well as a lengthy one with Charlie McCoy; he also reached Don Brooks and Mickey Raphael.

The only surprising omission is Terry McMillan. Field, a harp player himself, has both the expertise and writing skills to pull this off.

Levon Helm: Levon Helm's name is best known as the actor who portrayed Loretta Lynn's daddy, Ted Webb, in the film, *Coal Miner's Daughter*. Helm made his name as drummer and vocalist of the legendary rock group, The Band. *This Wheel's on Fire: The Story of The Band*, by Helm with Stephen Davis, tells the story from Helm's viewpoint. For those unfamiliar, in the late 60's, The Band, previously Bob Dylan's backup band, struck out on their own. In that era of psychedelic rock, they didn't play "country" or "country-rock." Their earthy music hearkened back to an earlier time in America. And it certainly had more integrity than the dull California rock of modern country's heroes, The Eagles. Four Canadians and Helm (from Marvell, Arkansas), their Southern roots were undeniable. They came together playing gutwrenching rockabilly as backup musicians to Arkansan Ronnie Hawkins. Helm digs into that topic as he does into how The Band's success nearly destroyed the group's members before they disbanded in 1976. He discusses their rebirth without leader and guitarist Robbie Robertson (who's harshly criticized for his offstage dealings) and how they pressed on after the 1986 suicide of troubled pianist-vocalist Richard Manuel.

Blues History: CMM readers may not realize that while country's now the hottest form



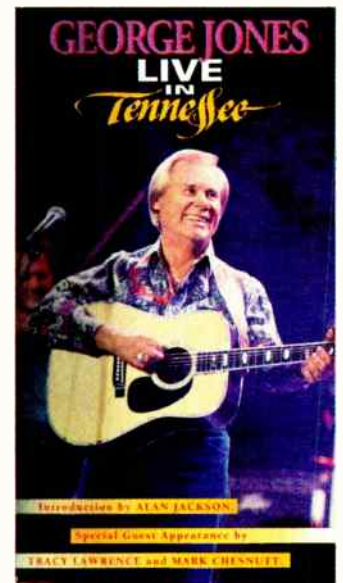
of American popular music, the blues also enjoy unprecedented popularity. New recordings and reissues of old blues records are swamping record store bins. Some of our greatest singers have been blues fans, from Bill Monroe, Bob Wills, Hank Williams and Merle Travis to Marty Stuart. Johnny Cash admired guitar-playing gospel singer Sister Rosetta Tharpe. Larry Cohn's *Nothing But the Blues* is a huge, lushly illustrated coffee-table book tracing the history of black blues and gospel through chapters by acknowledged experts.

Throughout, the authors make various references to country versions of numbers created and recorded by bluesmen. For example, the famous Light Crust Doughboys/Bob Wills theme song was adapted from The Hokum Boys' "Easy Ridin' Papa." Charles Wolfe's chapter on white country blues, black-influenced music made by white hillbilly musicians, covers everyone from the obvious (Jimmie Rodgers and The Delmore Brothers) to The

Stonemans and 1920's minstrel singer Emmett Miller, who first recorded "Lovesick Blues" and influenced Bob Wills and Merle Haggard.

■ Videos ■

George Jones: *Live in Tennessee*, with an introduction (taped elsewhere) from Jones disciple Alan Jackson, features George performing in Knoxville. The 54-minute video covers 15 songs old and new with a medley from his early and middle period (including "Walk Through This World With Me," "I'll Share My World With You," "The Grand Tour"). "No Show Jones" shows up, as does "The Window Up Above," "A Picture of Me Without You" and the more recent "One Woman Man." Jones masters the stage throughout, seeming far younger than his 62 years. Mark Chesnutt and Tracy



Lawrence stride onstage to sing along on the final minute or so of "I Don't Need Your Rockin' Chair." That's nice, but one whole number with him would have meant more.

A clarification: In last issue's review of the Bill Monroe video, we stated, "Ricky Skaggs was a bit too eager to grab the spotlight." I still believe the video focused too much in certain places on Skaggs. However, Skaggs points out that that was not his decision, but that of the video's producer Steve Gephardt.

How to Get These Collectibles

Books: Bob Oermann and Mary Bufwack, *Finding Her Voice: The Saga of Women in Country Music* (B2O) \$32.50/Skeeter Davis, *Bus Fare to Kentucky* (B3D) \$19.95/Roy Clark with Marc Elliot, *My Life (In Spite of Myself!)* (B4G) \$22.00/Joe Flint and Judy Nelson, *The Insider's Country Music Handbook* (B3L) \$12.95/Kim Field, *Harmonicas, Harps and Heavy Breathers: The Evolution of the People's Instrument* (B3E) \$14.00/Levon Helms with Stephen Davis, *This Wheel's on Fire: The Story of The Band* (B3Q), \$22.00/Larry Cohn, *Nothing But the Blues* (B3J) \$45.00. **Videos:** George Jones, *Live in Tennessee* (V1X) \$19.95. Send check or money order to Nashville Warehouse, Dept. 010294EC, P.O. Box 290216, Nashville, TN 37229. Add \$2.00 postage and handling for first item, \$.95 each additional. Canadian orders, add \$3.00 extra for postage. **CMSA members, see For Members Only page for discounts.**



Big Ball in Cowtown

I've been time traveling in Texas recently, and it's been—well, it's been all kinds of ways. Intense.

It began with a trip to beautiful Dallas, cradle of beef-based civilization and still a great place to get your face redecorated for no very good reason, or, as my TV keeps reminding me remorselessly, to have your brains blown all over the First Lady.

So why Dallas, especially around the 30th anniversary of you know what? That's easy. I went looking for fun. Ray Benson, the founder and sole original member of the veteran Western swing revival band, Asleep at the Wheel, had insisted that his record company throw their big shindig to launch his magnificent new album, *Tribute to the Music of Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys*, at the fabled Longhorn Ballroom, and I sure as shootin' wasn't going to miss that. Ole Ray has always run a pretty decent party band, for one thing. For another, the gig looked like my last chance to experience the Longhorn, which trades in wrestling and rap these days (the neighborhood's changed) but for three decades purveyed the hottest country music in Dallas, including Bob Wills himself and all his best disciples, from Merle and Willie down to the folks in the Wheel—Benson *et al.* last played there, as it happens, on the day Wills died in 1975.

Now the Longhorn is run by people from Argentina, but its most distinguished operator was the legendary Dewey Groom, and its first was Jack Ruby. The Argentines threw out Ruby's stuff, but his steel-gated office is still there, a humdrum little national shrine as unmarked and unremarkable as all the others: the hospital, the basement garage, the fence atop the grassy knoll. I stood there and wondered what the walls could whisper.

But hey, let's not get weird. Bob Wills didn't—he just got drunk and swung 'til it killed him—and Ray Benson didn't either. He spent most of his big night demonstrating the meaning of 'laid back', as did most of the ex-Texas Playboys, local legends, and former Wheelers who came and went across his stage, from the effortlessly organized Johnny Gimble to the deeply disoriented Johnny Rodriguez. Johnny knew where he was, I think, but he hadn't a clue about little things like song lyrics.

I also think ole Ray didn't give a damn

about that, but I've no idea whether he should have. The audience didn't seem to care either way, being far too busy drinking, dancing, and looking for a fight or the other "f" thing—although I must say I have enough faith in the Texas tradition of rabid support for good boogie to believe that had the musicians really taken it through the roof, the crowd *would* have been more than happy to ascend with them.

Which, by the way, was something Bob Wills understood to the bone. He made it his job to find out what got Texans giddy, then play it for them, and by all accounts he was damned good at it. So they must have been really something, those brilliant big balls in cowtown back when. You could almost feel their vibrations through the Longhorn's floorboards.

Not quite, though. The night was too low on energy, the ghosts too far back in the woodwork. And anyway, I was drawn more powerfully by my own memories of Texas musical legends. Even with the old Wills tunes in my ears I found myself time-tripping to the rolling hills outside Austin 20 years ago, to the moment when I crested a rise and saw spread out before me a scene that would blow my mind, and a lot of other folks', for years to come. Down there on an outdoor stage beside a pretty little bright-blue lake full of gambolling bikers in bandanas and teenage girls in skin, with moms and dads and cops and cowboys trying their best to keep their eyes from bugging *all* the way

out of their heads amid a reek of dope, sweat, sex and barbecue, Waylon Jennings was doing "Living in the Love of the Common People." The black leather, the greaser hair, the vampire complexion, the phase-shifting sound, the relentless bass/drum beat, the brilliant play of the boss hoss' chickin' pickin' Fender against Ralph Mooney's lustrous pedal steel...and of course that voice, the most exciting, expressive vocal instrument in country music at that or any time.

Wow. Talk about power. Even more than the scene and what it represented—which was nothing less than the flashpoint of the hippie/redneck/country/rocker fusion that would become the Outlaw movement, which would make fans of suburban baby boomers and thus lead directly to the robust good health of the

country music industry today—I remember the sheer thrill of that song blowing up that hill, and the revelation of a wonderful singer.

There, then, was a performance to remember—and, as it occurred to me in Dallas, there too was an anniversary to really celebrate, undemanding of angst or anger. So even after saying a late-night goodbye to the Longhorn Ballroom and an early-morning hello to the shooting ground at Dealy Plaza (where all I learned, observing the short ranges and user-friendly angles, was that nobody on November 22nd, 1963, had to be any great genius with a rifle), I came away with a good warm fire in my heart for Texas.



And then, home in Florida, I got a bonus. RCA's 40-song Waylon retrospective, *Only Daddy That'll Walk the Line*, came through the mailbox (better a decade late than never; much better). And *then*, just last night in my own backyard, the kicker: Waylon at the Hillsborough County Fair for \$3, fairground admission included.

It was the deal of the century. Very obviously, the elements Waylon has lost since '73—the vampire complexion and speed fixation, his stage fright, his general paranoia—needed losing, and the qualities he's gained—health, courage, balance—haven't just brought out the natural-born gentleman in him: they've made him a steadier, stronger singer than ever. Which for one thing makes his new recording deal with RCA very interesting indeed. Maybe we're about to hear some more real outlaw power.

Only about 800 souls caught Waylon's buzz at the fairgrounds. I for one am very happy I did—grateful for an artist as enduringly wonderful as Mr. Jennings, and glad I didn't stay home. It was the night of November 21st, and there was nothing on TV but assassination specials.

But that's a lousy final note, so here's another. You can't really bring back the past, either the thrill of a Bob Wills big ball or the way you felt before the limo made its turn into Dealy Plaza in '63, but as Waylon proved last night and Ray Benson *et al.* are proving right now on my stereo, you *can* do a beautiful job with the present.

Editor-at-Large Patrick Carr has been with Country Music Magazine since Day One—our first issue, September 1972.



THE ROPER SPIRIT

SUSIE LUCHSINGER

Occupation:
Christian Country Singer

Life on the Road:
"Touring across the country with our three children gets a little hectic, but it's important to keep the family together."

How I Got Started:
"I enrolled in a high school country music class with my sister Reba and my brother Pake. We had a talented instructor and many of us went on to play professionally."

Latest Achievement:
Recently signed with Integrity Music and will release a new album soon.

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