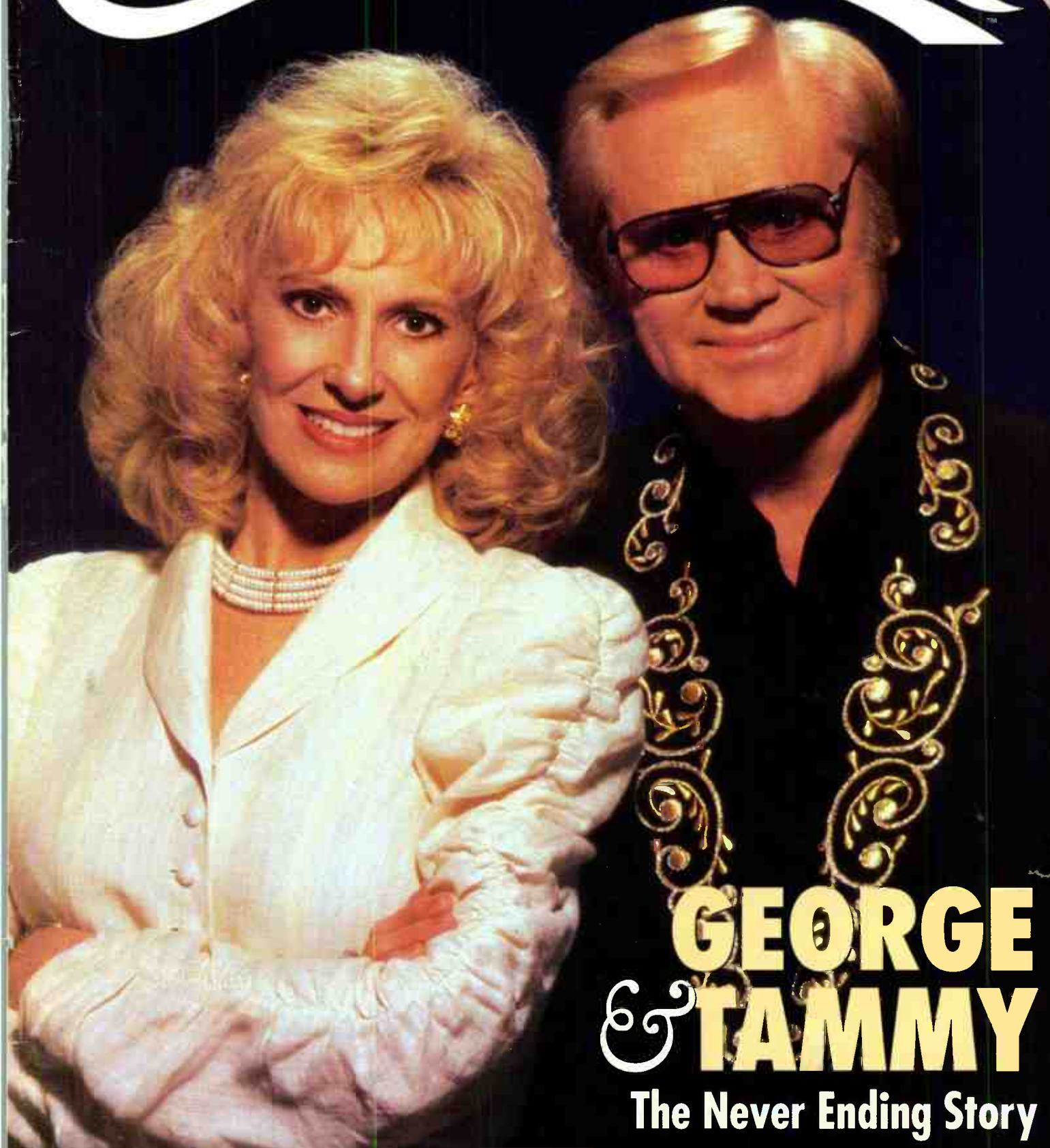


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COUNTRY MUSIC

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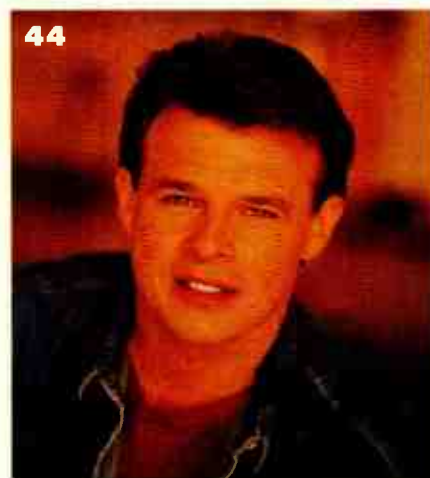
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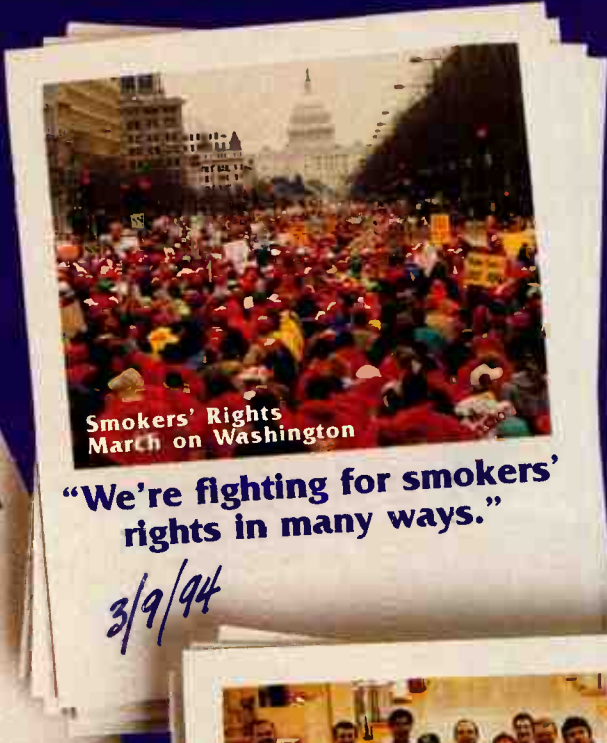
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People

CASH STILL HAS THE MAGIC

Four of us ladies took ourselves to Opryland's GEO Theater to watch the marvelous **Johnny Cash**. His black hair has turned gray with age, and the lines on his well-carved face have deepened. But The Man in Black is still that. He swaggers when he walks, teases when he talks and is a bigger star than any ten of these '95 tight-assed come-latelys. Listening to "Folsom Prison," "Get Rhythm," "Sunday Morning Coming Down"...it don't take a wise man to know the songs of the 90's, save a precious few, are not in the category with these. Son **John Carter Cash** played along on a flattop Martin while daddy sang "Ghost Riders in the Sky," "Ring of Fire" and "Orange Blossom Special." Drummer **W.S. "Fluke" Holland** has been with Cash 37 years...is that a record? As it happened, since it was Fluke's 60th birthday, granddaughter **Lindsay Holland** surprised "Grand Fluke" with a birthday cake onstage. Fluke was overwhelmed. John and wife **June Carter Cash** sang "Jackson" as good as they did 20 years ago. June then took the stage with her "funny stuff," informing the audience that some of their ex-sons-in-law are **Rodney Crowell**, **Marty Stuart** and **Nick Lowe**. "With six daughters," said June, "so far we have 14 sons-in-law. So far." For the first time in a year, ailing **Anita**, who suffers with arthritis, performed with June and their sister **Helen** singing **Carter Family** standards. Helen's son played guitar, June's daughter **Rosie** sang some blues. Anita soloed on "Till I Can Gain Control Again." John returned to the stage and introduced his daughter, **Cindy Cash**. John Carter and his father dueted on "Paradise," and he sang a couple of solos. Cashes, Carters and other family performed The Carter Family standard "Will the Circle Be Unbroken" and Cash's hit, "Daddy Sang Bass." I could carry on for three pages about the charisma of a man named Johnny Cash. He makes me proud to be what I am. Thank you, Johnny Cash, for an evening well spent. Following the show, Cash and the Carter entourage went to London to begin a European tour where Cash was again stricken with his recurring jaw ailment. He had to fly back to Los Angeles where he was hospitalized.

A NEW SEASON AT DOLLYWOOD



The '50s Are Back at



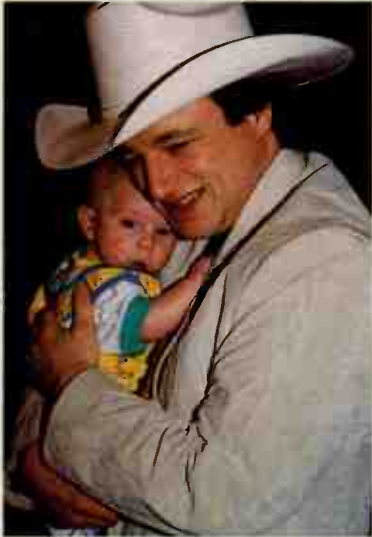
Dolly Parton opened the new season at her Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, theme park with a parade, Hollywood guests and a little rock 'n' roll. A new 50's-themed area brought out guests Jim Nabors, Tab Hunter, Park Overall, Carl Perkins, Mac Davis and Dolly herself. The opening day parade featured Dolly in a horse-drawn carriage. It's the park's 10th anniversary season.

Reporter: Hazel Smith

Editor: Rochelle Friedman

People

CHESNUTT AND SON



Attending his first platinum party is four-month-old Waylan Nelson Chesnutt. Waylan hung out with daddy Mark, the recipient of platinum certifications for his first three albums. The Decca artist's fourth and latest release, *What a Way to Live*, is Gold-and-climbing.

PROUD PAPA

Polydor's Clinton Gregory became a papa for the third time when wife Mary gave birth to their third daughter, Haley Marie, in Nashville on April 5th.

DUBOIS, MUSIC ROW GOD

Five years ago, Tim DuBois and a skeleton crew opened Arista Records-Nashville with the blessings of Arista prez Clive Davis, whose reputation preceded his visit. DuBois, given the reins by Davis, jumped on the Arista mule like it was his own. The man has done no wrong. So, he throws a by-invitation-only party called "We Think This Thing Might Just Work." In the morning was a private breakfast for press folks like your blonde-headed wonder (who used to be a redhead). Between 4 and 8 P.M., about a thousand, give or take a dozen or two, showed up and rubbed shoulders and smiled at the long-legged wonder, Alan Jackson, who obliged them with a song. The red-headed Texan, Lee Roy Parnell, played the fire out of his red guitar and sang like an angel with another guitarist, Indiana-born Steve Wariner....who just sings his butt off. Michelle Wright and newcomer Brett James

were also present. Our 8-year-old, Jeremy Smith, who accompanied me to the do, said the best part of the party was the barbecue. Ten years too young to know! Must you make me name the other acts that make the Music Row god shine? OK! Pam Tillis, Brooks & Dunn, Rodney Foster, Diamond Rio, Blackhawk, Tractors. DuBois, the man has a sixth sense in knowing what will work—plus he gets the best help available and pays them good. He also respects his help which is more than most. Lastly, Tim is the nicest, sweetest, kindest, most talented, down-to-earth guy you'd ever meet.

CAREER

In other Arista news, a new sister record label called Career Records has been announced by Clive Davis. It's also being run by Tim DuBois, who has slid Lee Roy Parnell over from Arista as the flagship act. Also on the Career roster is newcomer Brett James. He wrote all the songs on his album.

UNCOUNTRY COOKIN'?

Being a collector of cookbooks, why, I was excited when I got Stella Parton's *Country Cookin'* in the mail. "Good mountain recipes," thought I, as I thumbed past Mama's Fried Taters, Mama's Tater Biscuits and Mama's Gingerbread. Sister Cassie's Casserole, containing three kinds of frozen beans with Worcestershire and Tabasco sauce didn't read like Tennessee mountains to me, nor did sister Dolly's Dill Dumplings made with cholesterol-free Bisquick. Page 16 totally confused and addled yours truly when I came upon a recipe for Hummus, which contained tahini, garbanzo beans, cumin and olive oil....which doesn't even come close to catfish dipped in cornmeal and fried in hot pig lard by no stretch of the imagination.

Other "unmountain," "uncountry" recipes included in the book are curried liver spread, liverwurst pate (in the Blue Ridge Mountains!), broccoli and rice casserole (not a mention of poke sallet) and Zucchini Mexicali. I couldn't help but wonder where in Sevierville, Tennessee, Stella purchased porcini mushrooms for her Giuseppe's Tomato Sauce, or the ingredients for Tuna Fish Avocado Casserole. And don't you know, every day or so Stella and Dolly's mama musta served lobster stew, seafood coquilles and Quiche aux Crevettes, since they're in the book. Maybe Stella meant to call the cookbook *Another Country's Cookin'* or maybe *Beyond Our Raisin's*. Best I could read, the cookbook is more Hollywood than Dollywood.

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People

SYMPATHY

Our deepest sympathy to Mae Boren Axton and her son Hoyt on the passing of Johnny Axton, their son and brother, respectively. Johnny, an attorney from Oklahoma, was only 54 years old. He'd fought a long battle with cancer.

WHAT EYE SAW

Eye saw Sammy Kershaw at the International Market and Restaurant. Sammy stopped by. He said he had a blast doing the recent mini-tour with Randy Travis. Loved Randy and loved working with him. I got word from the Travis camp that Randy really liked Sam's show, remarking that Sam was a real live wire on stage. I must say, I second that statement. By the way, did you know that Randy received his sixth and seventh platinum awards? His *Greatest Hits Volumes 1* and *2* have sold one-million-plus each.

MARSHA, MARSHA, MARSHA!



Among the performers at this year's Fan Fest in Los Angeles was Maureen McCormick, the actress/singer best known as Marsha Brady on...now what show was it? She performed with Confederate Railroad on the un-Marsha-like tune, "Trashy Women." Her new album, *When You Get a Little Lonely*, is out now on Phantom Hill Records. Attended by about 25,000 people, Fan Fest, a Fan Fair-styled event, is sponsored by the Academy of Country Music. This was the second annual event.

BLAZING TO OHIO



Congratulations to Richard and Georgia Eveslage, winners of the 1994 Chevy Blazer—the Grand Prize in Country Music Magazine's 1994 Treasure Chest Giveaway Sweepstakes. The Eveslages hail from Amelia, Ohio, near Cincinnati. Here the happy winners—Georgia at the wheel, Richard beside her—pose outside CMM's offices with Senior Editors Helen Barnard and George Fletcher. Georgia is the subscriber. Maybe she'll let Richard drive it now and then...

WALMART'S COUNTRY TOUR

Getting up-and-coming acts in front of the fans is one of the aims of the new WalMart Country Music Across America Tour. A slew of the industry's "baby acts" will be performing at some 202 shows in the parking lots of WalMart stores all over the Southeast. Look for these artists and more at a WalMart near you: Noah Gordon, Lisa Brokop, Steve Kolander, Terri Clark, Billy Montana, Russ Taff, David Lee Murphy, Boy Howdy and Wade Hayes.

20 YEARS GETS 20 G'S

Barbara Mandrell's steel guitarist, Mike "Cookie Monster" Jones, has been a Do-Rite for 20 years. To honor Cookie Monster, Barbara, always the party thrower, threw a party for him at the palatial estate outside Music City where she resides with her family in the country's largest log house. For each year, Mandrell gave the Cookie a thousand bucks. Yep, you got it. Barbara Mandrell presented her steel guitar player \$20,000 printed on a check five-feet long. Takes a class act to do something like that.

MCGRAW MISSES DEER

Curb's Tim McGraw admitted to speeding "10 miles over the limit" when he crashed his new Lexus in Williamson County,

where he resides. Tim explained to the highway patrol that he swerved to avoid hitting a deer. Neither he nor his passenger were injured in the one-car crash. An \$84 fine closed the book on the saga.

CLINT UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

Clint Black has signed a new management deal with Allen Kovac and the Left Bank Organization. Clint, fresh from co-hosting this year's Academy of Country Music Awards, has been doing some in-store autograph signings.

LIBERTY'S NEW TOP DOGS

Walt Wilson, former Senior VP of Sales and Marketing for MCA-Nashville, has taken up the reins as Liberty's Executive Vice President and General Manager. Scott Hendricks, Liberty's new President and CEO—who himself joined the company just recently—made the announcement.

SAVE THE EAGLE

Ricky Skaggs is working to save the bald eagle. Joining Skaggs on this venture for our national symbol include Lee Greenwood, Tanya Tucker, Joy Lynn White, Deborah Allen, Ricky Lynn Gregg and Terri Clark. Let them eagles fly, Ricky. A video and song have been produced, with proceeds going to the National Foundation to Protect America's Eagles.

People



Ralph Emery and Crook & Chase: He's in, they're out.



year Garth was reading again; however, our kids no longer attend Chadwell. They're now at the Andrew Jackson School. When our Adam Smith's fifth grade teacher asked if anyone knew of someone who'd come in to read to his class, he allowed he did. "Her name is Hazel Smith," he said, "and she knows everybody in the music business." One phone call was all it took to Grand Ole Opry and Opryland Productions' Mr. Hal Durham, who—though he was in the middle of Gospel Music Week, the Dove Awards, etc.—took time out and went to "Read Me" Day at Andrew Jackson, where he read to the children. "Mr. Durham is cool," said Adam. "He was totally awesome," added our 11-year-old—about the best compliment a pre-teen gives. Being a former radioman, Durham has a clear, strong voice that really impressed the children. Wherever Mr. Ed Gaylord is, sir, you have a first-stringer in Mr. Hal Durham. Hope you know that. And I hope my friend Hal Durham knows how much I appreciate him.

RALPH RETURNS...

I predicted Ralph Emery would return, and he is returning at what he does best. A daily live TV variety show, talking with guests...all the things Ralph does and no one can touch him. Every morning—Ralph's always been an A.M. guy—he will visit via TNN at 9:00 EST from the Opryland Hotel. Hotel guests and fans can drop by Rhet's Courtyard and have breakfast and Ralph. I may move to the hotel myself, have breakfast with Ralph, lay around the pool, chase young guys, ride the General Jackson, go to Opryland, sleep and do it all over again the next day. Ralph Emery is one of the big reasons why there is country music, and his being back on daily TV is the best news I've heard since his *Nashville Now* folded its tent. First show, July 10. Get your VCR's ready to tape the show daily. Ralph Emery, I love you. Welcome home, darling.

...AND IN OTHER TNN NEWS

Say goodbye to Lorianne Crook and Charlie Chase come the end of the year. TNN and Jim Owens and Associates, who produce *Music City Tonight* and *Country News* for the network, will be severing their relationship effective December 29, 1995—the end of their current contract. Owens and the two *Music City Tonight* hosts claimed "significant creative and philosophical differences" with TNN management. TNN says they were looking at revamping the program anyway, citing that "TNN's mission is to reflect the constantly changing face of country music." The network is talking with other production firms and says it'll premiere a revamped *Music City Tonight*—with new hosts—on or before January 1, 1996. Crook and Chase had served as hosts

since *Music City Tonight's* premiere on March 18, 1993, when it replaced the Ralph Emery-hosted *Nashville Now*.

READ ME

You know about "Read Me" Day in Nashville and you know that Garth Brooks, superstar that he is, takes time to read to the kids at Chadwell School each year. This

BRC AND THE NANNY



Appearing as himself, Billy Ray Cyrus had a guest starring role on CBS-TV's top-rated sitcom, *The Nanny*. The Nanny herself, Fran Drescher, welcomes BRC to his first shot at acting. Keep an eye out for a summer rerun of the episode which first ran in early May.

BIG PROMOTION

Young Bob Frank, not yet 30, is Senior Vice President and General Manager of Mercury Records/Nashville. New Yorker by birth, "cutie" as I call him, hit this town running and hasn't stopped yet. Keep an eye on this one. I expect big happenings at the label. Congratulations, Bobby Doll.

GRAND LADIES OF THE GRAND OLE OPRY

Those grand ladies of the Grand Ole Opry, Jean Shepard, Jeannie Seely, Skeeter Davis and Jan Howard, took their act across the water and showed the Brits some awesome royalty. Shepard was the brainchild behind the show, so it was she who hosted the shows in England and Scotland. After welcoming the guests, she introduced Seely who did 20 minutes. Seely introduced Jan who followed with 20 minutes. Jan introduced Skeeter and she did 20 minutes. There was a short break, then Skeeter introduced Jean Shepard who did a complete show. Then the foursome performed "Rock-a-Bye Baby," our state song "Tennessee Waltz," and, as Seely called it, "the Tennessee National Anthem," "Rocky Top," before closing the show with "I'll Fly Away." Well, the crowds went crazy every night, and the great gals encored with a song by the grandest lady of them all, Kitty Wells: "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels." These gals are wanting to sing. Just ask them. They will oblige.

People

WFMS COUNTRY MUSIC EXPO

Indianapolis, Indiana, is in the heart of the country, where country music is alive and well. The event of the hour was titled WFMS Country Music Expo. I traveled up to be on various "How to" panels—"starting a fan club," "getting into radio," etc. Since I know it all (joke), I agreed to attend the event, and was I impressed mightily. The main stage opened on Friday night with **Mark Collie**, who just moved over to Giant Records from MCA. Saturday morning, Warner's **Russ Taff** opened the show, followed by RCA's **Ty England**. The afternoon began with Epic's **James House**, and, from Mercury Records, **Kim Richey**, **Wesley Dennis** and **Keith Stegall**, followed by Atlantic's **Woody Lee** and BNA's **Jesse Hunter**. Sunday, MCA's **Mavericks**, who were performing in the area, stopped by. They, as I, were overwhelmed by the crowd size. Giant's **Daron Norwood** began the afternoon, followed by MCA's **David Lee Murphy**, Decca's **Rhett Akins** and Giant Records' other new signee, **Ricky Lynn Gregg**. There was an **Elvis** impersonator; a cowkid contest with cute kids judged on their outfits, Western wear fashion show, live radio broadcast, band competition and line dancing. Every facet was planned and in control, not a dull moment. Thanks to the radio guys and gals **Charlie Morgan**, **J.D. Cannon**, **Julie Reyburn**, **Kay Feeney Caito** and **Jennifer Skjoat** who are doing such a grand job with the Daddy-o of stations, WFMS.

HI HO, MARIJOHN

Marijohn Wilkin rides again. From the ho ho days of **Harlan Howard**, **Hank Cochran**, **Willie Nelson** and **Cowboy Jack Clement**, Marijohn was one of the boys. She penned hits when **Mel Tillis** did at Cedarwood Publishing. She published **Kris Kristofferson's** first songs and she got his first song, "For the Good Times," recorded by **Roy Price**. Marijohn also co-wrote the award-winning "One Day at a Time" with Kristofferson. Come 1995, Marijohn is sizzling again. "Long Black Veil," the classic song she co-wrote with **Danny Dill**, which was a hit for the late **Lefty Frizzell**, is the title of **The Chieftains'** current hit album. Vocalist on "Long Black Veil" is none other than **Mick (Rolling Stone) Jagger**. Plus, "I Just Don't Understand," a song she penned with **Kent Westbury**, is on the current *Live at the BBC* platinum-and-climbing album by **The Beatles**. It may become a single. Hi ho, Marijohn. Way to go.

MAMA KNOWS/MAMA'S NOSE

I don't know about **Flora Diffie**, but the above certainly describes my sons' thoughts about yours truly. God didn't bless mamas to know where constructive criticism stops and meddling begins. When you're the president of your child's fan club, well, you talk about him all day long. That's what **Flora Diffie** has been doing for son **Joe Diffie**. With the tremendous success

STAR WALKING



Dwight Yoakam and hero/duet partner **Buck Owens** accept side-by-side stars in the Walk of Fame at the **Country Star Restaurant** at **Universal Studios** in California. Yoakam's latest album, *Dwight Live*, is out now.

of *Third Rock From the Sun*, **Flora**, who answers 1,000 pieces of mail weekly, had more than she could do. So **Joe** got mama a 900 number. Fans can get **Diffie** info and leave messages by dialing 1-900-420-SONG. Whether it's mama knows or mama's nose, either way, **Flora Diffie** is a real nice person, as is papa **Joe Diffie Sr.**

BEST PARTY OF ALL

The best party of all was hosted by **Pinycastle Records** at the **Texas Troubadour Theatre** in **Music Valley Village** near **Opryland**. **The Osborne Brothers** have new music out, a tribute to the late, great **Ernest Tubb**: *The Ernest Tubb Song Folio*. With Tubb standards like "Walking the Floor Over You," "Waltz Across Texas," "Letters Have No Arms," "Rainbow at Midnight" and eight more favorites, this is one of the finest collection of songs I've heard in quite a while. Using their hot shot band, **Sonny and Bobby** have a record to sell that they can be proud of. Performing live, the band literally blew everybody away. If you have a chance to catch this group at a festival or somewhere on the road this summer, please do. They are worth the price of admission and then some.



At WFMS's Country Music Expo in Indianapolis, Indiana, are DJ **Jim Denny**, Nashville songwriter **Anna Wilson**, the blond-headed yours truly, General Sales Manager **Julie Reyburn** and station manager/DJ **Charlie Morgan**.

People

FAN FAIR FEVER IN NEW YORK



New York City's country station, 103.5 WYNY was swamped with entries for their recent "Fan Fair Fantasy Flyaway." Morning DJ's David Temple and Katherine Brown sit atop 300,000 postcards and FAXes, all of them vying for the chance to attend Fan Fair for free, including hotel and round-trip flight on YNY's chartered 757 jet. Some 90 winners received the trip for two.

TO ASIA WITH LOVE

MCA opened offices in Hong Kong for all of Asia. My pal, **Tony (wow) Brown**, President/MCA Nashville, said he had a fabo time. Will we spread country music to Asia? We will see.

JOIN CONFEDERATE RAILROAD

The "when and where" said Nashville Country Club. When I saw a tent earlier in the day, I knew the party was in the parking lot. As I walked up, the scene favored a bikers' convention with all-American attendees: red necks (like mine), white teeth and blue jeans, especially the stars, **Confederate Railroad**. Heavy metal these hillbillies were by the time the presentation was over....laden with Gold and platinum. Between bites of picnic food and drinks of your choice, Atlantic's **Rick Blackburn** (who wore a suit and tie!), assisted by **Brian Switzer**, presented the band with double platinum awards for their first CD, *Confederate Railroad*, and a platinum plaque for their second record,

Notorious. MCA's **Tony (wow) Brown**, wearing brown slacks and a silk shirt, presented **Danny Shirley**, lead singer, with a Gold album for his participation in *Skynyrd Frynds*. If all that ain't heavy metal, there ain't a song on Music Row.

STRAIT—THE REAL HAT ACT

All up and down Music Row, in beautifully structured, glass-enclosed offices, seated around ornate tables of oak and walnut, the powers that be, whose six-figure salaries ease up toward the seven-figure mark, with a know-all-smirk on their face, wrinkle their forehead, and speak with, um, wisdom as they rare back in a chair that cost \$10 less than your average car... "What we are failing to do here, marketing department, is to attract the youth." And everybody seemed amazed at such a profound statement. Well, let me tell you right here and now, if you want to attract the youth, bring **George Strait** to town! While Mr. Big Shot hems and haws about maybe signing a 13-year-old, pimply-faced, puberty-stricken anorexic whose vocal register fluctuates somewhere between a bull frog and a cricket, George Strait is pulling them in: Youthful hatted beauties by the hundreds on the arms of youthful hatted studs; 16-year-olds singing along with every song; 14-year-olds screaming and clapping at

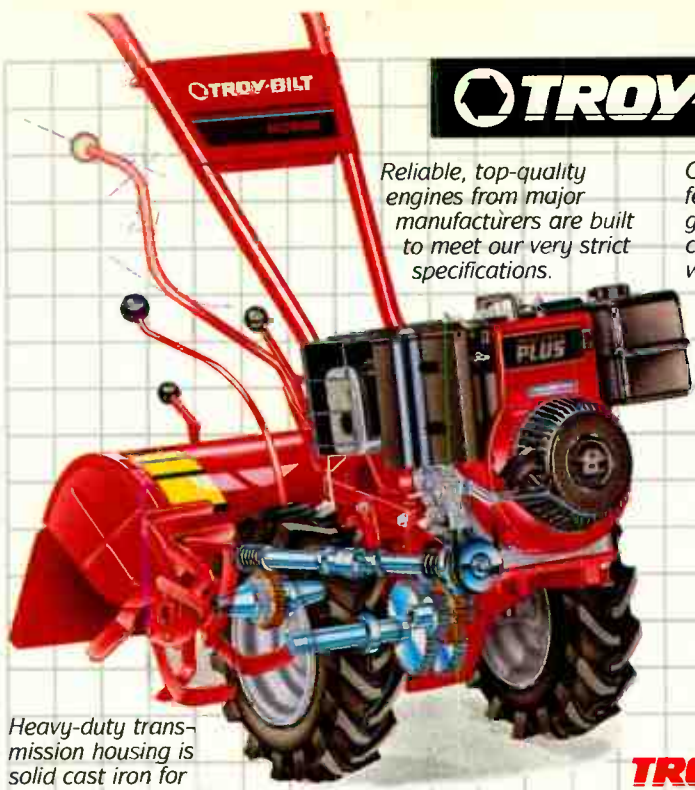
every break and each song ending, and the tiniest of cowkids stomping those size one boots just like their mamas and daddys. All these fans, who filled the Murfreesboro Coliseum, were royally entertained by the man of the night, the great Mr. George Strait. A 25-song set of solid, pure hillbilly entertainment backed by his seven-piece **Ace in the Hole Band**, there wasn't a missed note nor lick, from the intro to the encore. The late **Bob Wills** would've been "Texas Proud" of Strait's rendition of his fave, "Milk Cow Blues." The "in the round" stage served as a circle for youth who line danced to "You Can't Make a Heart Love Somebody." The Strait man's recent hit, "Adalida," caused a roar that would've made **Elvis** proud. Strait is the real deal.

OPRYLAND 95

Of course, I was there. I'm always there representing *Country Music Magazine* on opening day. What a turnout it was. Music, rides, sunshine, kids and fun. I don't think I've ever seen a livelier crowd than there was at the GEO Theater. Course, a body can't be mild what with **The Oak Ridge Boys** onstage frolicking and singing. Wore me plumb out! **Joe Bonsall**, **Duane Allen**, **Steve Sanders** and **Richard Sterban** work as hard as any act in the biz. You can't help but have a good time.



A look at George Strait's crack Ace in the Hole Band.



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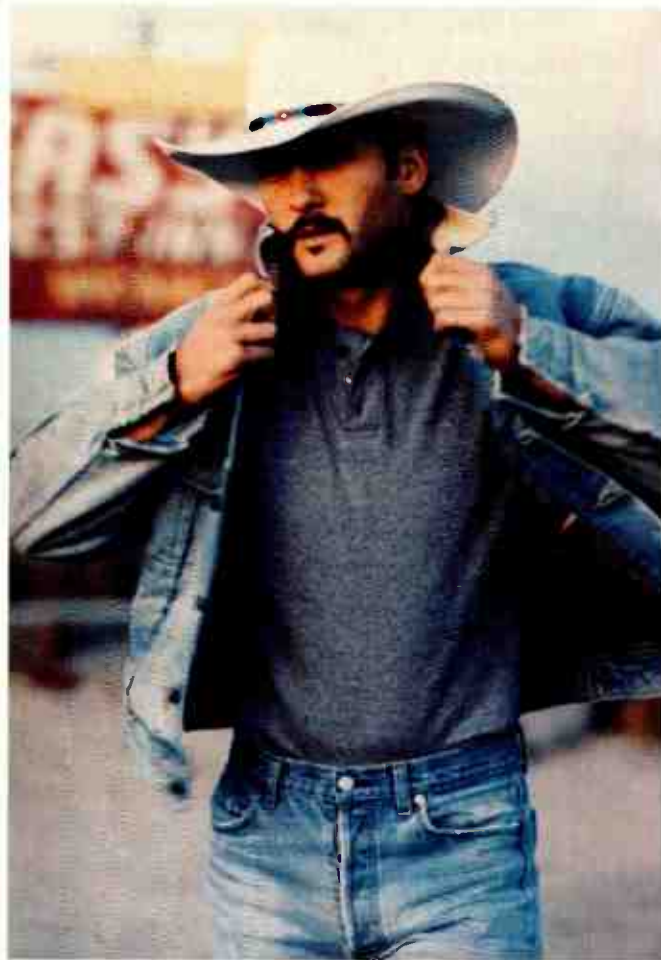
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It's been a wild ride for Tim McGraw. As recently as 1994, he was just another Music City wannabe, cranking out other people's hits nightly in a Printers Alley nightclub and trying to figure out how to get the attention of a major label. Even when he did finally land a record deal with Curb Records, and his first album was released, nothing much happened. Then along came "Indian Outlaw," a quirky novelty tune off his second album, Not a Moment Too Soon. This spirited ditty kicked off what USA Today has called "Music's most head-spinning success story of 1994."

"Indian Outlaw" hit Number One, as did three more singles off Not a Moment Too Soon. The album has since sold four-and-a-half million copies, and McGraw has become one of the hottest commodities on the country concert trail. We caught up with McGraw on a rare day at home, at his country place outside Nashville, and popped him these 20 Questions.

1 *Do you have to stop and pinch yourself sometimes? Not really. I spend so much time out there on the bus, in a controlled, isolated environment, that it's sometimes hard to get a sense of what's really goin' on in the real world. I'll probably do about 275 shows this year, and that doesn't count all the days getting back and forth. So you're either sleeping, or doing a sound check or doing a show, then you get back on the bus and go back to sleep. So it's kind of hard to get a grasp of what's going on out there. You're sort of caught up in the bus wheels! That's kind of how it stands right now. It's hard to really know what's happening. I'm just sort of going with the flow. (Laughs.) Maybe a year from now, I can look back and tell what this year feels like!*

2 *I hear that sometimes you're still surprised when people actually show up for your shows...that you still get your tour manager to peek out and see if there is really an*



20 Questions with TIM McGRAW

by Bob Allen

audience out there.

Oh, yeah, he still does that sometimes! I still have him check and make sure there's somebody there! (Laughs.) Believe me, we've had plenty of years when we looked out there and there was 30 people!

3 *Is all the scrutiny you get from the public unnerving sometimes? People are always asking things like, "Why don't you smile more?" and*

4 *In a lot of ways, you're still just a bashful small-town guy from Louisiana, right? Yeah, I really am. It's funny, but when I'm on stage, it's different. It's almost like nobody can touch me. Up there, you do what you wanta do, and you can be who you wanta be. There's security up there, there's a fence, and you've got your band, and nobody can touch you. Being on stage, for me, is like being in a rehearsal hall with my best friends. It's where I have the most fun, and it's where I can let out all the stuff that maybe I can't really let out the rest of the time. You get up there in the spotlight, and you can't really see the crowd, and I can hide under my hat! Really, the most nervous I get is after the show, when I go and meet the fans.*

5 *Can you remember the first time you ever heard "Indian Outlaw?"*

Yeah. I'd just come to Nashville, and I didn't have a clue about what I was doing. A friend of mine, Tommy Barnes, played it for me on his guitar, sitting in a bar. It immediately sounded like a hit to me. It sounded like something I could just see my mother cleaning the kitchen and dancing around to with a broom. But James Stroud, my producer, didn't like the song. I wanted to put it on my first album, but he didn't like it. But he did let me put it on the second album. (Laughs.) Now James laughs about it. I think he likes it pretty good now!

6 *But you didn't sit and wait for an opportunity to record "Indian Outlaw." You went ahead and learned it and started performing it anyhow, didn't you?*

Yeah. Just a couple days after Tommy played it for me, my band started learning it, and I started playing it in my shows. It became our signature song when we played it on the club circuit, because people would ask for it so much.

7 *Did you anticipate the tempest in a teapot the song would stir up because of its comic portrayal of Native*

Americans? Some Native American groups condemned it, and some stations wouldn't play it.

No, I really didn't see that coming. (*Shrugs.*) The song was never meant to make a social statement, and I didn't think anything like that would happen. I just thought it was a funny song. But at the same time, no matter what you do there's somebody out there who won't like it. And I respect their opinion.

8 Obviously, you were smart to follow "Indian Outlaw" up with a heavy-duty ballad like "Don't Take the Girl." It's like going from night to day. You seem to make a lot of stylistic change-ups from single to single. Is that a planned thing?

(*Laughs.*) Well, I mean, I get bored with myself real easy, and I know if I get bored, other people will, too. So you have to try different things, but still stay true to what you're doing. I just happen to like a lot of different kinds of songs.

9 You've got a distinct singing style, which some people have described as singing in "triplets." What is that exactly?

Well, I think that's how some other people have described it. Myself, I don't claim to be a great singer, by any means. If I can get by with being an average singer, I'm happy with that. I think the triplet thing is just a matter of me falling off a note now and then. (*Laughs.*) I think it's really more a matter of not bein' able to stay on pitch than intentionally fallin' off it!

10 Who are some of your own favorite singers? Your biggest influences?

Merle Haggard. I grew up listening to him. As far as singers go, it's hard to imagine anybody purer or better than Merle. And then when I got about 14 or 15, I discovered this guy singing on an album by J.D. Crowe & The New South: Keith Whitley. And from that time on, I can't remember a day when I didn't

listen to a Keith Whitley record. Keith was probably my single biggest influence. He was just one of the most soulful singers I've ever heard.

11 Speaking of influences, let's talk about your father, Tug McGraw, the great former Mets and Philadelphia Phillies pitcher. As far as I know, there's never been a similar kind of father-son/baseball star-music star thing, has there?

No, not that I know of. It's different, though, in that I grew up with my mom, and wasn't around my father's baseball career. I grew up with my mom and stepfather pretty much in a lower middle class, or even lower-lower middle class setting. So not growing up in any kind of proximity to my dad's career, it's kind of hard to draw a comparison. But I guess when you think about it, there are a lot of comparisons you can make. Both fields are pretty much entertainment. So maybe finding out he was my father may have given me some impetus to do what I'm doing now.

12 It's a strange story, from what I've read. Your father met your mother one summer, back in 1966, when he was pitching for a Mets minor league team. You were the product of a whirlwind summer romance, and never even knew Tug McGraw was your father until you were a teenager and accidentally discovered a copy of your birth certificate.

Yeah, it was strange. Looking back, after I did find out, there were a lot of clues. You know, comments made by my cousins, things like that. But as a kid, it doesn't sink in.

13 Yet long before you knew he was your father, you had his baseball card on the wall. That was sheer coincidence?

Yeah, it was! But at the same time, I played a lot of baseball as a kid. I was a pretty good shortstop, and really, sports was my whole emphasis until I went off to college. So I was

a big fan of his, I saw him pitch a lot on TV, and he was such a character he got your attention.

14 It turns out they even had a slang expression for kids like you who were fathered by players away from home in the Grapefruit Leagues—"Grapefruit Babies." Did you ever hear that expression when you were growing up?

No! (*Laughs.*) I'd never heard that before. But now it makes sense.

15 The very first time you met your father was at a Phillies/Astros game in Houston Astros' Stadium. That must have been a vivid experience for a kid.

Oh, yeah! I can recount just about every second of that day. The hotel we stayed in, having lunch with Tug, getting to meet other Phillies stars like Mike Schmidt. It was a great day. I got to go down and sit in the dugout with him and go out on the field and toss the ball. It was not only my first time in a big league stadium, it was my first time out of Louisiana. So, yeah, it was a big thrill.

16 For all those years you thought your stepfather was your father, right? When you found out Tug was really your father did it affect your relationship with your stepdad?

Yeah, I guess it did. It's bound to when something like that happens. But my mom had divorced him by then, so there was already some changes goin' on. But, even so, it made some more changes. It's still not a perfect relationship.

17 Wasn't your mom a big country music fan? Didn't she play a big role in your becoming a singer?

Oh, yeah. She still is a big fan. I got a lot of my talent from her. She's a pretty good singer and a good dancer, too. She's always listening to music. We never really went to that many shows when I was a kid, but she was a manager of a motel/restaurant/bar in West

Monroe, Louisiana, about 20 miles from Start, Louisiana, where we lived. There was a band she booked there, at The Rusty Nail Lounge, that I really liked, and I'd go out and see them when they played other gigs. I think that's really what got me started.

18 But then your father contributed a lot of money toward your education, and you spent several years in college. What was his reaction when you told him you were quitting college to go to Nashville?

He didn't like it much. He advised me to stay in school, and I brought up the fact that he'd left community college to play baseball. After I said that, there really wasn't much he could say. But the fact was, I'd already moved to Nashville by then anyway. (*Chuckles.*) I called him from there when I told him.

19 Did you know anybody in Nashville?

I had a friend I went to college with who lived there with his wife. That was it. I was there for about a year and a half before I even approached a major label and got my deal. I just felt like I had a lot to learn—still feel like I've got a lot to learn! I didn't have a demo or anything. I was just singing every night in a place called Skull's Rainbow Room, down in Printers Alley. That's really where I cut my teeth.

20 So tell me about your place out in the country, where you are today.

It's pretty neat. I've got about 200 acres, and it's pretty near the Natchez Trace. I can ride a horse for 75 miles without ever crossing an interstate. I've got a couple of 4-wheelers and a couple go-karts. I ride them around a lot, too. I've also got some great flower gardens. Wild flowers. This house was built in 1837, and some of the flowers have been there since then. It's fun to get out there and pull some weeds now and then. It's relaxing. Not today, though! I'll be on the phone all day doing interviews. Then we hit the road again tomorrow.

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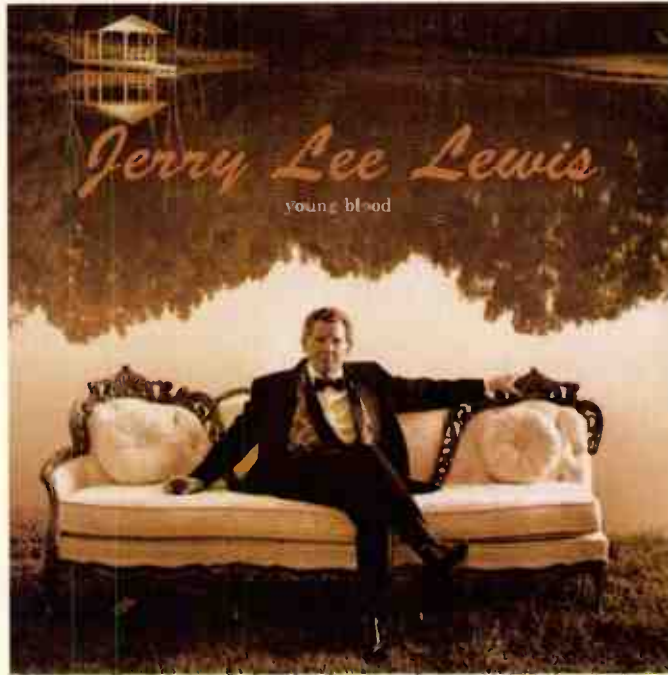
Jerry Lee Lewis *Young Blood* Sire 61795

These past couple of decades, Jerry Lee Lewis' career has been a portrait of slow descent from greatness to squalor. For a man who's achieved legendary status not once but twice—first as a 50's Sun Records rock 'n' roll firebrand, and later as an inspired honky tonker who helped set the tone for 60's and early 70's country music—he's fallen a long way. Most of his energy these past few years seems to have been spent dodging the IRS and acting out a tired parody of his former greatness as a co-headliner with Chubby Checker on the dinner club circuit.

Whoever coined the old phrase, "If I'd'a known I was gonna live this long, I would'a took better care of myself," must have had ol' Jerry Lee in mind.

That's exactly why *Young Blood*, Lewis' new album, is such a pleasant surprise. It, in fact, sounds more like a resurrection than a mere revival for the nearly 60-year-old piano-thumping Louisiana hellion. *Young Blood* never quite recaptures the inimitable manic intensity of Lewis' vintage 50's rock sides, mainly because he's lost some of his high vocal range to an even more menacing and oddly intriguing rustiness.

Still, his performances on these 14 sides, produced by Andy Paley (Brian Wilson, k.d. lang, etc.), are not only credible, but often incendiary. Lewis is backed by hotshot sidemen like guitarist James Burton, drummer Buddy Harman, steel guitarist Robby Turner and NRBQ's Joey Spampinato, and all are charged with reckless, seat-of-



the-pants rockabilly abandon. Lewis himself pushes so strenuously at the outer envelope of his vocal range and thumps and caresses the ivories with such ferocity that you're almost afraid he might burst an aneurysm. "Here we go, baby! Hang on to my shirttail!... Gimme another drink!" he hollers as the musicians serve up a delightful New Orleans-style horn arrangement on the old honky tonk chestnut, "It Was the Whiskey Talkin'." The 14 songs on *Young Blood* are a crazy quilt of rock, rockabilly, country and R&B gems. With homage and irreverence, Lewis reinvents many of the familiar titles with delightful results. He transmogrifies Hank Williams' "I'll Never Get Out of This World Alive" from a sardonic hillbilly lament into a testimonial of nonchalant rockabilly fatalism. Johnnie & Jack's gentle 50's hit, "Poison Love," becomes, in his hands, a scathing rock rave-up. With similarly de-

mented inspiration, The Killer reworks numbers like Bobby Darin's "Things," the old Billy Grammer hit, "Gotta Travel On," and the Leiber & Stoller-penned title song. By contrast, on the old Jimmie Rogers favorite, "Miss the Mississippi," he sounds downright plaintive and autumnal and even turns in a rousing blue yodel.

Who knows: *Young Blood* could either be Lewis' late life renaissance, or merely his last gasp. Whatever it is, it's pretty damned good. Every time I play it, I find myself muttering, "Good God! Who would have thought the old geezer still had it in him!"—BOB ALLEN

Dwight Yoakam *Dwight Live* Reprise 45907

Just as Dolly Parton has long been a prisoner of her bosom, Dwight Yoakam is a prisoner of his fanny. The biggest screams at a Yoakam show

come when he stops singing and rotates his hips in jeans so tight they seem to be painted on. His perfect buns may have been a useful attention-getting device early in his career, but now they've become a distraction. Many listeners are so obsessed—approvingly or disapprovingly—with the strategic tears in those jeans that they miss the fact that Yoakam is one of the finest honky tonk singers who ever lived.

That fact is reinforced on *Dwight Live*, Yoakam's new concert recording taken from two shows at San Francisco's Warfield Theater last July. When he sings, "Yo-o-o-u go-o-ot yo-o-our little ways of hurtin' me," he puts the first three words of the line through a note-bending, heart-twisting drawl far richer than even the original vocal on the hit single. The way he reluctantly slides into each word with a nasal twang sums up the song's mixed feelings: He's too hurt to go on and too much in love to leave. It also sums up the essence of great country singing—instead of overstating a single melodramatic emotion, Yoakam allows his voice to be knotted up in contradictions.

In an age when listeners are easily fooled by the showboating, overwrought warbling of Collin Raye and Doug Stone, the subtlety of a Dwight Yoakam or a Randy Travis is often overlooked. Like the movie cowboys played by John Wayne and Gary Cooper, though, Yoakam expresses himself with such self-contained restraint that the smallest gesture—the hint of forlorn despair in "A Thousand Miles from Nowhere" or the slight suggestion of working-class defiance behind the fatalism of "Streets of Bakersfield"—speaks volumes. And it's just as effective on a concert stage as in a studio—

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here's one singer who doesn't need a lot of second chances and technological band-aids to nail his notes.

Dwight Live, with its generous helping of 17 songs, provides a useful summary of Yoakam's career thus far. He's recorded all but one of the songs before, but the six numbers from the 80's are deepened by everything Yoakam and his terrific band have learned from their years on the road, and the six numbers from his '93 album, *This Time*, are liberated from their radio-ready studio arrangements to kick up a little dust. For example, the come-back-home plea of the '87 hit, "Please, Please Baby," takes on a new urgency as Yoakam and the band make the swing beat really jump. And the title tune of the '93 album has a new swagger to it.

As much as *Dwight Live* is a showcase for Yoakam's singing, it also shines a light on Pete Anderson's guitar work. Anderson is not just the vocalist's producer; he's also the arranger, studio guitarist, road guitarist and near-equal in creating the Dwight Yoakam sound. And in concert, Anderson stretches out on guitar a lot more than he ever does in the studio. This live album makes a convincing case for Anderson as one of the most distinctive instrumentalists in country music today—a master of low-string riffs, bluesy fills and rockabilly solos.

Dwight Live opens and closes with Elvis Presley songs, "Little Sister" and "Suspicious Minds," a reminder of how Yoakam has infused hillbilly music with boisterous rhythms, much as The King once did. The album's first video will be "Wild Ride," the hardest rocking number of all. By contrast, Yoakam delivers "Miner's Prayer" from his first album in an unplugged version and follows it with Bill Monroe's "Rocky Road Blues," the one song he hadn't recorded before. The indisputable highlight, however, is a six-minute version of "Long



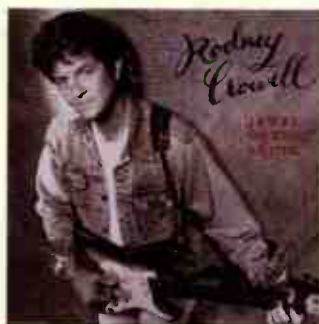
White Cadillac," Dave Alvin's immortal song about Hank Williams' last ride. Yoakam moans and wails like a man pursued by hellhounds, and Anderson's guitar notes sound like those snarling, yapping dogs themselves.

—GEOFFREY HIMES

Rodney Crowell *Jewel of the South* MCA 11223

Rodney Crowell albums of the past few years have been either tremendous or awful. Some, like *Life Is Messy*, which sounded great to me at the time, now seem pretentious and self-indulgent. *Let the Picture Paint Itself*, his MCA debut, was, to me, the worst album of his career. But now with *Jewel of the South*, the pendulum has swung again. Co-producers Crowell and Tony Brown have created Crowell's strongest effort since *Diamonds and Dirt*. Energy and earthiness swirl from each cut, be it one of the nine Crowell originals (five penned with topflight collaborators) or the two covers.

The music crackles with intensity beyond any of Crowell's recent work. The rocking "Say You Love Me," not a lyrically profound number, has a riveting arrangement that succeeds whether or not it was tailored for dance clubs and radio. He may not put a particularly new spin on Roy Orbison's 1961 hit, "Candy Man," yet this straight-ahead remake, with Charlie McCoy vamping away on harmonica, has enough



verve and good feeling to fit easily into the mix. Crowell's gutbucket rodeo story, "The Ballad of Possum Potez," is full of wit and satire.

Crowell and Lee Roy Parnell's "The Ladder of Love" fuses Parnell's grittiness and Crowell's sensitivity to create another simply joyous celebration "Just Say Yes," written with Keith Sykes, mixes honesty and confession with style. In this context, Crowell's other cover, a remake of "Storm of Love," a Buck Owens-Harlan Howard number that Buck recorded in 1961, seems totally right for the album. There's little poetry or depth in the vivid "Love to Burn," written with Will Jennings and Hank DeVito. Crowell's energetic performance minimizes the fact that it's the weakest number here.

The pretense that hobbled Crowell's ballads is absent on "Please Remember Me," which he wrote with Will Jennings, and on "Thinking About Leaving," an introspective masterpiece that succeeds largely due to direct, no-frills lyrics. Crowell's "Jewel of the South" overflows with haunting imagery that may reflect an idealized South, yet stands among his most poetic efforts. Its acoustic arrangement and his passionate vocal make it one of his most moving performances. The final track, the minute-and-a-half Tex-Mex fragment, "Que' Es Amor (What Is Love)," written by Crowell, Will Jennings and Roy Orbison, though totally out of place, is somehow the perfect climax.

Once in awhile, in all the

ebbs and flows of an artist's career, he or she hits the right combination and soars to a level beyond even his or her best previous work. Crowell hit it this time, and *Jewel of the South* will be a tough-tough—achievement to surpass. —RICH KIENZLE

Various Artists *Come Together: America Salutes the Beatles* Liberty 7243-8-31712

In a 1988 interview Buck Owens told me that his professed admiration for The Beatles' early music upset some of his fans, even before the Fab Four ever covered "Act Naturally." "You should be talkin' about country music," the fans said. And I said, "Why not? It's the truth! Why can't I say I'm a Beatle fan?"

I'm sympathetic. The Beatles were my obsession before I ever heard of Bob Wills or Merle Haggard. I played guitar along with their records, bought every new album, then lost interest when they went psychedelic and soon detoured into blues and country. The Beatles remain personal icons, however. I just paid plenty for an import CD boxed set of their 1962-65 radio performances.

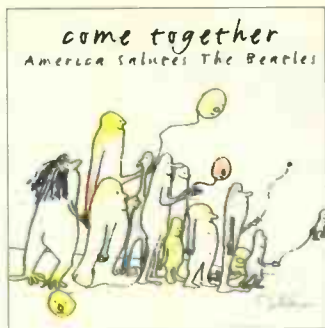
Country was never alien to The Beatles. The music was revered in their hometown of Liverpool. Ringo Starr even recorded a country album in Nashville after the group split in 1970. Buck or George Jones could easily have created masterpieces from early Beatle favorites like "I'll Cry Instead," "Baby's in Black" or "I'm a Loser." Country hits with Beatles material are nothing new either. Remember The Sweethearts of the Rodeo's 1988 hit with "I Feel Fine" or Rosanne Cash's "I Don't Want to Spoil the Party"? Dwight Yoakam did a searing non-hit version of "Things We Said Today" on an album released only overseas.

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Those three performances, unfortunately, surpass nearly everything on this, an offspring of the grossly overdone "tribute album" genre. In many ways it was a project doomed from the start. Overseeing it was mainstream Nashville producer Jerry Crutchfield and his son Martin, whose eyes were clearly focused on marketing, not music. In the liner notes, Crutchfield says he "immersed" himself in Beatle songs. If so, he emphasized the obvious tunes and ignored their early material, in many ways the most "country" of all. Aggravating the problem are the clumsy, Nashvillized rehashes of the original arrangements, which lack the inventiveness and excitement of the Beatle recordings.

Perhaps the artists chose to interpret the songs this closely to the original performances. If so, that was a mistake since those originals are impossible to improve upon. One way to beat this no-win situation would have been to redefine and reinterpret, the way Merle Haggard's songs were reworked on the *Tulare Dust* tribute. Instead, the results too often sound like an all-star Beatles Karaoke session. David Ball's "I'll Follow the Sun" and Sammy Kershaw's "If I Fell" fall into this trap. Collin Raye's vocal on "Let It Be" and Steve Wariner's "Get Back" sound like both singers are competing in a Paul McCartney imitator contest. Tanya Tucker's disinterested, version of "Something" is nearly as lifeless as Willie's "The One After 909." "Nowhere Man's" lyrics, a song of compassion and pity, should have been a natural for Randy Travis. Instead he sounds ready to fall asleep.

The few stabs at creativity fall flat. Christian performers Phil Keaggy and PFR's "We Can Work It Out" begins with an out of place string quintet, followed by a by-the-numbers rehash of the original. Shenandoah's "Can't Buy Me Love" and Little Texas' "Help!"



are embarrassing. "Help's" lyrics convey a desperation and urgency the Texas boys simply can't fathom. Poor Kris Kristofferson's "Paperback Writer" and Huey Lewis' "Oh! Darling" falter and die. Billy Dean's "Yesterday" and John Berry's "Long and Winding Road" favor pretense over pathos.

Only one artist rises above it all. Delbert McClinton, the man who taught John Lennon to play harmonica, kicks butt on "Come Together," a number close to Delbert's own blues-rock sound. He doesn't beat the original, yet his vocal performance shoots so many sparks I wish they'd have let him cover "Oh! Darling" as well.

The letters section may (or may not) be loaded with disagreement on this one, but to me, it comes down to this: country or not, The Beatles created a body of work that, like that of Hank, Hag or Cash, will outlast us all. With that in mind, this set should have reflected the crafting and care the group brought to their own music, not another me-too tribute fresh off a Music City assembly line. —RICH KIENZLE

Steve Earle

Train a Comin'
Winter Harvest WH 3302

Way back before he did a serious burn out and vanished from the music scene altogether, Steve Earle was a force to be reckoned with. His 1986 album, *Guitar Town*, came out around the same time as Randy Travis' *Storms of*



Life and Dwight Yoakam's *Guitars, Cadillacs, Etc., Etc.*, and had nearly as much influence in opening the floodgates of the "new traditionalist" movement.

But Earle was not then, nor is now, a new traditionalist. His earliest and best work is dark, scary and rebellious, owing as much to vintage rock 'n' roll as hard country. Stylistically speaking, Earle's most inspired music combined the wounded macho of a latter-day Waylon Jennings, the fatalistic story-song ethos of fellow Texans like Townes Van Zandt and Guy Clark, and the sneering, angry swagger of a stoned, shit-faced teenager.

But Earle, who's always tended to walk on the same wild side he sings so convincingly about, fell a long, long way. Fame went to his head; personal problems overwhelmed him, and he was never able to regain the focused brilliance of *Guitar Town*. Eventually he went from being one of Music City's most exalted newcomers to an almost forgotten figure, practically living in the street.

But long after many had given up on him, Earle is back. Back with a vengeance. On *Train a Comin'*, his first studio album in more than six years, he sounds a lot older, wearier and beat up—at times he slurs and mutters his lyrics like a punch-drunk fighter or a drunken old man. Yet all his scar tissue ultimately works to his advantage: His music still smolders with savage, tortured poetry that often seems to come from some dark place in the soul where desperation, fatalism,

violence and truth collide.

On *Train a Comin'*, Earle has taken a typically unorthodox approach. He's dusted off a handful of vintage songs he wrote but never recorded back in his early years, written a few new ones and thrown in three covers: Townes Van Zandt's "Tecumseh Valley," the reggae oldie, "Rivers of Babylon," and The Beatles' "I'm Looking Through You."

Eschewing the raunchy hill-billy country-rock of *Guitar Town* or the full-blown rock 'n' roll of later albums like *Copper Head Road* and *The Hard Way*, Earle has instead opted for an all-acoustic bluegrass/stringband sound on *Train a Comin'*. The handful of all-star musicians he's assembled may seem like an odd supporting cast for Earle—at least until you hear them in their full glory. Bluegrass/newgrass luminary Peter Rowan backs him throughout on vocals, guitar and mandolin. The great country blues guitarist Norman Blake not only contributes some brilliant guitar work, but plays dobro, fiddle and Hawaiian guitar, as well. Blake, who's taken the traditional Doc Watson flat-top guitar style into new, surrealistic territory, even has a track all his own here: a lovely instrumental called "Northern Winds."

Rounding out this amazing quartet (Earle keeps right up with them on acoustic guitar and occasional harmonica) is stand-up bass-player extraordinaire, Roy Huskey. Earle is also joined on a couple of cuts by Emmylou Harris, who's never sounded better.

The Clark/Van Zandt influence runs deep in the angry Civil War saga, "(Goddamn You) Ben McCulloch." In the song, Earle, in typical fashion, doesn't eulogize the Southern rebellion with glorious images of rattling sabers and charging cavalry; instead he depicts the war from the bitter perspective of a white trash foot soldier who realizes he's just a pawn for rich slaveholders and incompetent generals. "Tom

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Ames' Prayer" is the violent saga of a killer who, when finally cornered and near the end of the line, spits in the eye of God and the devil, both. In Earle's wonderfully demented hands, even a pop-rock standard like "I'm Lookin' Through You" becomes a sullen, drawling lament that sounds like one of John Mellencamp's surly odes to small town love gone bad.

I could go on waxing ecstatic about the richly eccentric pleasures of *Train a Comin'*. But I won't, mainly because I'm running out of space. Suffice it to say, if you were blown away by *Guitar Town* a decade ago, and if you've taken pleasure in the other fine Earle compositions recorded over the years by everyone from Waylon Jennings ("Devil's Right Hand") to Emmylou Harris, then check out *Train a Comin'*.

Steve Earle remains a singular voice in modern country music: dark, scary, rebellious and compelling as ever.

—BOB ALLEN

Marshall Chapman

*It's About Time...
Recorded Live at the
Tennessee State Prison
for Women*
Margaritaville 162-535-011

When a performer hits the stage with a lot of energy, he or she whips up the audience's enthusiasm, which further stimulates the singer, who makes the crowd even more excited. This back-and-forth energy exchange, with the musicians and listeners egging each other on, is what makes some concerts so special. And it's why so many live albums are disappointing, for they only document half the chemistry.

A happy exception to this rule is the new Marshall Chapman album, *It's About Time...Recorded Live at the Tennessee State Prison for Women*. Chapman's engineers

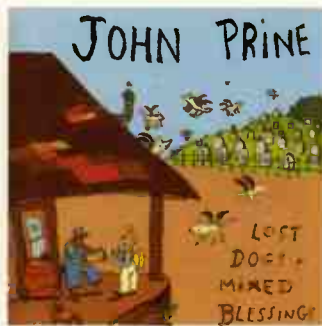


documented the audience's reactions as carefully as they did the singer's music, and the recording captures the ultimate example of the electricity which can be generated between a singer and his or her listeners.

Chapman has been an underappreciated presence in Nashville since 1976. She brings a tough, bluesy approach to hillbilly music, not unlike John Hiatt and Delbert McClinton (who have both recorded her songs). Chapman has released three major-label albums and three small-label albums and has written songs for the likes of Emmylou Harris, Ronnie Milsap and Tanya Tucker. *It's About Time* is her first major-label release in 16 years, though, and it should introduce her special talent to a whole new audience.

The live album opens with the sound of the prison's electric gates slamming open for Chapman and her band and then slamming shut behind them. The next thing we know, they're on stage, banging out a wild and wooly version of the most appropriate song for the occasion, "Jailhouse Rock." They follow it up with "Don't Want Nothing (If I Can't Have You)," which proves Chapman can write her own Elvis songs.

She then addresses her "captive audience" a bit nervously, confessing that the invitation to play there sat on her desk for three years. The line in the invite that scared her, she says, was, "We have no idea how you will be received." Chapman tells the audience, "I had a lot of fears about a lot of petty stuff in my



life, and I figured the way to get rid of them was to do something that really scares me. So I called 'em up and said I'm ready to play."

The female prisoners respond warmly from the start, but the sparks don't really fly until Chapman jumps into "Bad Debt," her rockabilly revenge on all the free-loading boyfriends she ever had. When she describes them "stretched out on my couch, drinking all my beer, I'm paying all the bills," cheers of recognition go up from the crowd. When she adds that she'd prefer "a man with a plan and a place of his own," the audience cheers turn into squeals of delight. After the song, Chapman asks, "Any of you know any bad debts?" and is answered by an immediate chorus of "Yeah!"

She introduces the next song, "Good-Bye Forever," by explaining, "Some people, you can't quit telling them goodbye." A woman in the audience shouts out, "You just keep on trying." Another shouts, "I like you." Chapman laughs and says, "I love you." At that point the connection between the band and the prisoners is sizzling, and the rest of the show is a performer's dream come true.

On a slow blues, the inmates cheer every tasty guitar lick, and Chapman adds a verse about slipping past a sleeping prison guard for a "Late Date with the Blues." When she sings about slapping some sense into a boyfriend with "Booze in Your Blood," the women gleefully sing along. On the Chuck Berry-ish romp, "Betty's Bein' Bad," the audience cheers along the descrip-

tion of Betty kicking her man out of the house.

Except for "Jailhouse Rock," Chapman wrote every song on the album, and except for a few duds ("Real Smart Man," "Beyond My Wildest Dreams"), the songs crackle with wit and energy. Six of the tunes came from the two fine albums she put out on her own Tall Girl Records label (1987's *Dirty Linen* and 1991's *Inside Job*), but the best songs are four of the five she had never recorded before, "Don't Want Nothing," "Late Date with the Blues," "Good-Bye Forever" and a raucous tribute to Southern women called "Alabama Bad." It's hard to imagine them ever getting more spirited performances than they did on October 29, 1993, at the Tennessee State Prison for Women. —GEOFFREY HIMES

John Prine

*Lost Dogs & Mixed
Blessings*
Oh Boy Records 013

John Prine's records have always had a loose, unselfconscious quality about them, rife with an unvarnished freedom that twinkles with laughter and suffers anguish without self-pity—until now. As the title suggests, straightening up the act can, especially in Prine's case, be a "mixed blessing."

The tracks on this first collection of new Prine music since *German Afternoons* are much bigger and slicker than I want from Prine, a long-time hero of mine. It's a big problem, like surrounding a Picasso sketch with an enormous gilded Italian picture frame. Gone are the ragged-but-right acoustic grooves pulled together by Jim Rooney; replacing them are Howie Epstein's loud, seamless West Coast rock instrumentals featuring former Desert Rose players John Jorgenson and Jay Dee Manness, Epstein and fellow-Tom Petty sideman Benmont Tench, and West Coast studio

Record Reviews

legend Waddy Wachtel.

On about half these tunes, Epstein excises that patented Prine vocal that instantly identifies the man: the sound of having been out all night chain-smoking, enjoying a little vodka, singing and laughing. God bless John if he is happier and better-rested thanks to his new marriage and the birth of his first child, but the swell of MIDI strings is overwhelming on "All the Way With You," and the vocals on "New Train" are way too smooth.

The big pleasure, which makes up for the stuff that is inevitably going to grow on me anyway, is John being John (usually with Gary Nicholson co-writing) on wacky, whimsical wonders like "Same Thing Happened to Me," "Big Fat Love" and "Quit Hollering at Me." The solo acoustic paean to a daytime lover in "Day Is Done" preserves this legend's essential pixie roguishness, despite the rest of the album's over-production. This 14-song offering, if aurally flawed in ways that are untypical of Prine's beloved and more characteristic flaws, is still brilliant in its own way simply because Epstein—try as he may—couldn't smother John Prine's own brilliance.

—BOB MILLARD

The Cox Family *Beyond the City* Rounder CD 0327

I hope the Americana radio format catches on. This newly-minted mix of alternative country, classic artists and new and traditional bluegrass has a freshness seldom heard on the big stations. One of Americana's top artists is Alison Krauss, who played an integral role in introducing the Louisiana-based Cox Family. Willard Cox, son Sidney and daughters Evelyn and Suzanne have always excelled in bluegrass, obvious on their 1993 debut and last year's gospel collaboration with Krauss.



The Coxes, as before, integrate bluegrass and other similar musical genres seamlessly into their sound. With Krauss and members of Union Station in the background and other selected Nashville studio musicians used where needed, the group's sound is enhanced without being overwhelmed. The material is first-rate, from The Carter Family's mournful standard, "I'll Be All Smiles Tonight," movingly performed by Suzanne, to "Little Birdie." The Lovin' Spoonful's oldie, "Lovin' You" (a very early country-rock number from the 60's), features Suzanne's lead vocal, offset by Evelyn's and Sidney's harmonies and some bouncy pedal steel from Nashville studio ace Bruce Bouton. Willard sings lead on Rose Maddox's "Beautiful Bouquet."

An ingenious acoustic arrangement of Roy Orbison's moody "Blue Bayou" is beautifully sung by Suzanne and Sidney in a way one suspects Orbison would admire. Their gentle acoustic version of "Lizzy and the Rainman." Tanya Tucker's excellent 1975 hit, features Evelyn's lead vocal and has an antiquity that Tanya's original can't match. Willard's rich, buoyant vocal on "Streets of Gold" is as traditional as a Stanley Brothers 78. Sidney's songwriting has potential beyond bluegrass, made obvious by "Cowboy's Dream" and the title song. The Louvin Brothers' rich repertoire provided their exquisite, satisfying interpretation of "Broken Engagement" with Evelyn singing lead. That's not all. The album's final track is a 1974 version of that same



song, with Evelyn still singing lead, Lynn Cox playing bass and singing alto, Suzanne on tenor, Sidney on banjo and Willard as one of two fiddlers. The sound's not digital, but it proves a point: excellence isn't easily achieved. Only a handful of acts like The Coxes are born to it.

—RICH KIENZLE

Doug Stone *Faith in Me, Faith in You* Columbia 64330

Doug Stone has spent the last few years trying very hard to establish himself as country music's Mr. Sensitive. On his new album, however, he makes an effort to broaden his musical direction, and he won't get any argument from this corner on his need to spice up his music.

Fans of his love songs need not worry; there's still plenty on *Faith in Me, Faith in You* to showcase the tender sob of a voice that has become his trademark. In fact, a couple of the ballads this time out are stronger lyrically than most of his recent work. But he also beefs up his sound with a couple of country rockers that, unlike most of his past uptempo hits, don't rely on preposterous puns or self-deprecating humor.

Stone introduced himself to country music fans five years ago with "I'd Be Better Off (In a Pine Box)," which still stands as one of the most memorable laments of recent times. From there, however, Stone seemed to mold himself as the most vulnerable soul in country music; by the time he'd racked up

enough hits to render a greatest-hits album, the resulting package sounded like a man ready to drown in his own self-pity.

Stone has an especially delicate baritone, and he can communicate the fragility of a broken heart with the flair of a master like Conway Twitty. But Conway balanced his vulnerability with virility; his hits alternated lust with deeply felt emotions, resulting in an image of a man who experienced passion as well as compassion. This time around Stone flashes a little more feistiness, which goes a long way toward making his tenderness appear to be backed by a heart that pumps as well as bleeds. "Enough About Me (Let's Talk About You)" is a slyly aggressive come-on, while "Look Where She Is Today" boasts about his good fortune with the woman he loves. "You Won't Outlive Me," the album opener, is a boisterous song about a man who prefers to cram experience into his life rather than spend all his time trying to extend it. It's an interesting choice of material for a singer who underwent heart surgery at an unusually young age, and one that might have been chosen because he identified with it rather than because it furthered his well-marketed image as a balladeer.

As for the ballads, "Sometimes I Forget" and "You're Not That Easy to Forget" confront familiar territory for Stone, but both ballads feature well-written, heart-fuging sentiments worthy of the singer's tender treatment. And the title song is a memorable portrait of people who stay in touch with their values and what's right in their lives. Only on "I Do My Crying (On the Inside)" does Stone slip from sensitive to spineless, and only "Born in the Dark" relies more on shallow word-play than on convincing emotion. All in all, *Faith in Me, Faith in You* is Stone's most varied outing since his debut—and his strongest.

—MICHAEL MCCALL

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Jon Randall

What You Don't Know
RCA 07863-66407

Jon Randall's impeccable musical credentials alone are reason enough to give *What You Don't Know*, his debut album, a serious listen.

Randall is a former member of Emmylou Harris' highly esteemed acoustic band, The Nash Ramblers. Backing Harris on flat-top guitar and vocals, he won a Grammy for his contributions on *At The Ryman*, Harris' critically acclaimed 1992 live album. Randall has more recently performed in a trio that also includes Sam Bush and John Cowan, immensely talented former members of the legendary acoustic fusion group, The New Grass Revival. That alone clues you in to the level of his musicianship.

Thus it's no surprise that *What You Don't Know* is a fantastic album, full of great vocal and instrumental performances on some unusually fine songs. It was co-produced by Garth Fundis (whose production credits include Trisha Yearwood, the late Keith Whitley and The New Grass Revival) and the above-mentioned Sam Bush, who was also Randall's bandmate in The Nash Ramblers.

This is one of those rare debut albums that works on just about every level. In listening to it, I feel the same sort of excitement I felt when I first heard earlier diamonds in the rough like Ricky Skaggs (whom Randall cites as a major influence) and the very early Judds.

Just about all of the other debut albums I've heard in the past year simply pale against the sheer expressiveness of Randall's tender yet gutsy tenor and his out-on-the-edge, take-no-prisoners acoustic guitar picking.

Randall has a newgrass heart, a rock 'n' roll temperament and a country soul; and he melds all these sensibilities



beautifully on *What You Don't Know*. If you ever had the pleasure of hearing The New Grass Revival (whose former lead singer, John Cowan, also contributes harmonies here) deftly graft together strains of country, blues and bluegrass while playing incendiary rock riffs on traditional bluegrass instruments, you've got some sense of the energy and innovation going on in these tracks.

I've heard people at RCA, Randall's record label, tastelessly refer to Randall as, "a Vince Gill with balls." (It's no wonder they talk this way. For years, the label had Gill under contract, but couldn't get his career off the ground; now, when RCA desperately needs some hits, Gill's across the street at MCA selling multi-millions.) But this description actually does both artists a disservice. Randall's lilting voice doesn't have the soaring, high lonesome power that Gill's does. Yet in his own right, he's an amazingly expressive singer. He more than proves this on first-rate ballads like Verlon Thompson's and Tommy Polk's "If Blue Tears Were Silver," Carl Jackson's "If I Hadn't Reached for the Stars," Russell Smith's and Vince Melamed's "Only Game in Town" and Bobby Charles' "Tennessee Blues."

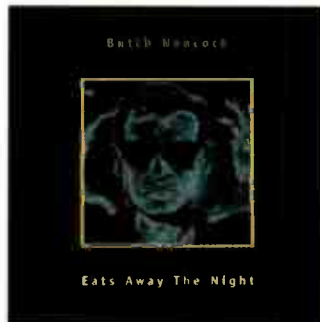
The uptempo stuff on *What You Don't Know* is just as irresistible. "They're Gonna Miss Me When I'm Gone" (Jeff Black) is a hot-pickin', freight train shuffle that echoes the dreams and discontentments of everyone who's ever struggled to escape a sleepy small town. The revved-up

dobro-piano-guitar-fiddle fiddle sounds like early vintage Skaggs.

The newgrass sparks also fly on the title cut (written by Jim Lauderdale and John Leventhal), where the driving rhythm and enigmatic lyrics combine for a haunting mood. On Kevin Welch's and John Jarvis' "I Came Straight To You," Randall shows he's also got a flair for contemporary love songs.

I know he's fallen out of favor as of late, but Ricky Skaggs is the name that keeps coming to mind when I play *What You Don't Know*. Too many people seem to have forgotten how Skaggs burst on the scene in the very early 80's and injected fresh life into Nashville's musical mainstream which, then as now, was mired in creative doldrums. It's a long shot, but maybe Randall could be a similar White Knight for the mid-1990's. Nashville sure needs one.

—BOB ALLEN



Butch Hancock

Eats Away the Night
Sugar Hill SHCD 1048

In the past 20 years Butch Hancock, along with fellow Texans Joe Ely and Jimmie Dale Gilmore, has made music covered with praise and acclaim. Actually, that triumvirate deserves far more credit than it gets. If John Anderson and Ricky Skaggs pioneered the New Traditional sound in the early 80's, Ely/Hancock/Gilmore paved the way for today's alternative country 20 years ago.

As for commercial success, well, they never worried about that. Ely and Gilmore have achieved a certain status as "artists' artists." Hancock's music and his Bob Dylan-ish voice don't lend themselves to dance clubs or narrow-minded radio formats. Despite years of admired self-produced records, he's never actually done a studio album. The two previous Hancock albums on Sugar Hill were reissues of earlier material.

There's a first time for everything, and this time, Hancock hit the studio with Lucinda Williams' band and other select musicians backing him, and Williams' guitarist Gurf Morlix producing. The result is a true alternative masterpiece—a masterpiece so unsuitable for line dancers, fans of countrified James Taylor retreats, or diehard traditionalists that a warning sticker may be in order. The Southwestern poetry in Hancock's lyrics remains undiluted. The music retains a moodiness with overtones of the Hammond organ-based sound of Bob Dylan's classic masterpiece album, *Highway 61 Revisited*.

Moods are Hancock's stock in trade, beginning with the self-analysis of "To Each His Own," and continuing on to "Moanin' of the Midnight Train" with its uncertainties and misgivings. The love songs "Eileen" and Hancock's previously-recorded "If You Were a Bluebird" take a look at the happier and sadder sides of love, respectively, without once falling into clichés.

The same goes for "Welcome to the Real World Kid." Both the atmospheric "Boxcars," an old Hancock favorite, and the moody, acoustic sensuality of "Pumpkineater" are best appreciated in a darkened room, while "Baby Be Mine" has witty, intelligent wordplay over a fiery rockabilly arrangement.

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yard in the Sun," boasts one of the more poetic lines I've heard in any song recently: "For every graveyard in the moonlight/There's a junkyard in the sun." Focusing just on songwriting for a moment, you rarely get such ingenuity out of those Music Row hacks with a hook. The same goes for the weary, cut-to-the-quick feel of "Eats Away the Night," featuring only Hancock's guitar and Morlix playing acoustic Hawaiian guitar. Ponty Bone's accordion fits Hancock like a glove. The rest of the backup band deserve equal credit, particularly the Texas guitar wizard Charlie Sexton and the Hammond B-3 organ of Riley Osbourn.

If Hancock ever has a shot at reaching a mainstream audience, this is it. The music he and his compadres helped create so long ago is, I suspect, about to fall upon the scene as New Traditionalism did a decade ago. If so, he deserves to reap the rewards.

—RICH KIENZLE

Kim Richey

Kim Richey

Mercury 314-526-812

Like a lot of singer-songwriters, Kim Richey got her start at the Bluebird Cafe in Nashville. Richey, though, wasn't a performer there; she was the cook. It was only after years of encouragement from her old college pal, Bill Lloyd, that she finally found her way to the stage. Now, after co-writing "Nobody Wins" for Rodney Foster and "Things We Said" for Trisha Yearwood and singing harmony for Yearwood and Pam Tillis, she has just released her debut album, *Kim Richey*.

Richey, like Yearwood, finds her inspiration in the Southern California country-rock of Linda Ronstadt and The Eagles and the folk-rock of Tom Petty and The Byrds. The newcomer doesn't have an overpowering voice like



Yearwood's, but Richey does have a very appealing soprano which fits comfortably in the lush, jangly arrangements of producer Richard Bennett.

Most Nashville singer-songwriters try to get over on the strength of their lyrics, but Richey's trump card is clearly her melodies. Her verbal descriptions of troubled romances are succinct enough, but it's the way her tunes always move to the unexpected note, the unpredictable chord, that gives the songs their emotional charge.

When she reluctantly gives in to a lover on "Here I Go Again," for example, you can hear the harmony slipping out of place, just like her heart. She underlines her determination that "You'll Never Know" how much she hurts by linking the catchy chorus perfectly to the aggressive beat. Every time you think you know where the melody or story is going on "Just Like the Moon," the tune leaps up to an unexpected note and the lyric confesses a secret weakness.

On her first single, "Just My Luck," the vocal stays close to the big mid-tempo beat as she describes how she has finally gotten her life in order. When she declares, "Then I went and fell for you—ain't that just my luck," however, the melody takes a big leap and somersault, as if mimicking the path of her heart. On the bridge, she stops the drums in their tracks with a siren call that starts high and goes higher and higher. Bennett then plays a George Harrison-like slide-guitar



solo against the Petty-like acoustic rhythm.

The album is full of Beatlesque touches, such as the string quartet on "Can't Find the Words," the odd McCartney-like intervals on "Let the Sun Fall Down" or the open tuning and uptempo, three-part vocal harmonies on "Good." If Nashville labels can keep releasing country tributes to The Beatles, surely there's room in town for a woman who can come up with new songs in The Beatles vein. And inasmuch as Richey is exploring the strain of The Beatles' music which comes straight out of The Everly Brothers and Buddy Holly, surely there's a country audience for her.

—GEOFFREY HIMES

Wesley Dennis

Wesley Dennis

Mercury 314-526-582

On "This Hat Ain't No Act," the fifth song on Wesley Dennis' debut album, the Alabama-born singer pleads that he was country when country wasn't cool. The sentiment isn't necessary.

From the note-bending slur in his natural Southern twang, from the genuine ache in his full-bodied voice, it's obvious that Dennis is as traditional as the fiddles, steel guitars and beat-up, non-neon honky tonks he celebrates in the song.

In an era when most new male country singers look like wide-eyed, rosy-cheeked recruits from a theme-park musical, Dennis comes across as

the real deal. At age 32, he's got a few years on most of the youthful country class of 1995, and his experience adds an undercurrent of authenticity to the feelings and stories he probes on his debut, which is produced by Keith Stegall, the same studio wizard who helps bring out the best in Alan Jackson.

On a tearjerker like "That's Why They Call It Cheatin'" (the album's stand-out track) or a solid dance-floor toe-tapper like his self-penned "In the Middle of a Little Love," Dennis sounds like a commendable torch-bearer for country's traditional wing, which has been lacking in authentic new talent recently.

Unfortunately, what could have been a classic debut on the scale of Randy Travis' *Storms of Life* or George Strait's *Strait Country* falters from too much corn and too many unrealistic scenarios. "Bubbaland," about an amusement park vacation as imagined by a dedicated country boy, is as dumb as it sounds. And it's hard to imagine a married man actually stating the central lines of "Don't Make Me Feel at Home" to a friendly woman in a hotel room, no matter how lonely things may be back at the ranch.

Dennis' debut has plenty of memorable songs, including the swinging "Who's Counting" and the dramatic "That Look Was Worth a Thousand Words," which portrays a fellow trying to sneak into the house late at night only to trip over his wife, who fell asleep on the living room floor waiting for him to come home.

The singer has the potential to fall in line behind Strait, Travis and Jackson as a star who keeps hardcore country alive in an era that keeps trying to bolt the door on old-fashioned honky tonk. With a little more grit and a little less silliness, Dennis might prove good enough to stand alongside his influences.

—MICHAEL MCCALL

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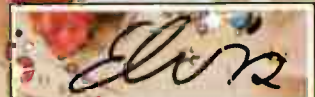


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JEB 105

*Twenty-four years ago, George Jones and Tammy Wynette became the most exciting duet in country music. Now they're poised to do it again, with a new album, *One*, and a tour.*

This special section, with features on both George and Tammy, is our tribute to the duet event of the decade.

GEORGE TAMMY

The Never Ending Story

by Patrick Carr

Their first duet appeared on the Billboard chart on Christmas Day, 1971, when Americans were still dying in Vietnam and a Coke cost a quarter. George, then 41, had been a top country star for 15 years. Tammy, a former beautician, was twelve years younger, but she too was a major force. Since "Apartment #9" in 1966, she'd clearly been the main contender for the crown of Miz Loretta Lynn. In today's parlance, both George Jones and Tammy Wynette were very, very hot. Together they were a sensation.

They stayed that way. Their run together had a kind of gaudily glorious drama no TV scriptwriter or tabloid hack could have invented. Between 1968, when twice-married George stepped in and stole Tammy from her second spouse, and 1980, when "Two Story House" closed the book on a duet partnership that had continued despite their 1974 divorce, their star burned lustrous and lurid through the country firmament of gossip, scandal, myth and music.

It's almost a cliché today, but the fact remains that during the violent turbulence of their love, the lines between art and life became hopelessly blurred, both intentionally and accidentally. And yes, very often the truth was stranger than the fiction. No shots were fired in the songs, no houses burned down, no men strapped into straightjackets, no women stalked, beaten or abducted.

George and Tammy weren't at all above exploiting their troubles. Indeed, it seems that the idea of not doing so didn't even oc-

cur to them or the men guiding their work. Billy Sherrill, who produced their records both together and separately, succeeded brilliantly in finding and/or creating songs as relevant as possible to the current state of affairs chez Jones/Wynette: the marriage-vow recitations in "The Ceremony" in '72; the wishful thinking of "We're Gonna Hold On" in '73 (following which Tammy withdrew her first divorce petition); the bleak, despairing verses of "The Grand Tour" in 1974, after Tammy let her second petition stand; "These Days I Barely Get By," written by Tammy and recorded by George on December 11th, 1974, two days before he finally moved out for good; and dozens of other songs both major and minor. After the divorce came equally autobiographical reflections of George's descent into alcoholic madness and Tammy's struggle, survival and eventual security.

Now it's years and marriages later (one for George, two for Tammy), and here we have them singing together again. It's a country music event—the event, really—that's been pending these past 15 years, but has never seemed very likely, and now that it's actually happened, it's a fan's delight. Its art/life interface may not, it's true, be nearly as entertaining as the George & Tammy show of '68-'80 (nothing in today's Nashville is, or could be), but its music, as always, is fabulous. For beyond the facts and fictions of their lives together, remember this: George and Tammy's music always was the best there is.



PHOTO: JIM COON



GEORGE JONES

Survives The Country Wars

Approaching George Jones at the midpoint of the century's last decade, the question is, what are the questions? There could be so many. It's been so long. He means so much.

First, though, there's the approach itself: the crossing of the line from the normal, randomly organized rural world thirty miles south of Nashville to the precisely landscaped, upper-upscale new subdivision over which George's mansion stands secure and supreme on its mown-perfect hill. You could be obvious about this, seeing "ACHIEVEMENT!" written all over the scene, and observing in its almost military order some messages about man's need for control over his environment, some insulation from the natural chaos of his roots. Or you could just note that George likes things neat.

That he surely does. Inside, the mansion is perfection in pastels, and the man isn't far short. Around that spectacular face of his—a visage on which several dozen heavy-footed crows look to have been two-stepping their little crow brains out ever since Patsy Cline's prom night—there sits that incredible hair. It's smooth, it's sculpted, it's a fabulous shade of silver-yellow, it's wonderful. It should be, too; George's publicist has said that he has his own fully equipped barber shop in the mansion, and gets himself done every day.


As I approach from behind, George is sitting erect but motionless in a deep pastel armchair with his forearms laid out along the armrests, Pharaoh style, watching a closed-circuit color image of his front gate on a (very) large-screen TV. Absolutely nothing is happening, either on the TV or in the room.

That seems odd, but it's okay. I've waited 22 years for this moment—correct; I began launching attempts to interview George back 1973—so I don't bat an eye. Neither do I care that after our introduction, George continues to face the giant TV, which continues to show nothing happening at his front gate, while I sit off to one side, speaking towards his left ear. Only when he gets excited does he turn to face me, and only when the light hits him just right are his eyes visible through his tinted lenses. At such times I can see

strong life in there, bright fires burning.

That's the interview's physical context. Its broader setting includes some well-established facts about George's life and career—he's still with MCA Records; he's still married to Nancy Jones, who continues to act as his manager; he's still working the road; he's still sober—and some items of more recent origin: He is recovering well from the coronary bypass surgery he underwent last September; he has quit smoking cigarettes; and recently he's been recording again with his old flame, ex-wife, and divinely ordained duet partner, Ms. Tammy Wynette.

And then there are the questions.


**The legendary
singer has
weathered it all:
Alcohol, guns,
drugs, divorce,
heart surgery
and even country
radio. He's still
a force to be
reckoned with.**


by Patrick Carr

George talks like a pretty straightforward, practical kind of guy. When we're on the subject of his new work with Tammy, for instance, his focus is on the marketability of the move.

"A lot of people liked our music back then," he explains, "so we just thought it might be a great thing to come up with all new songs and maybe put 20 or 30 days on the road in key cities, and put a good show together, ourselves plus maybe one of the hot new young country artists...I don't know how the young people are gonna take it, even though I still have a lot of young fans, but it's up to the older groups, I think, how successful the tours will be. 'Course, they've always been right in there buying my records and her records, so I think together, it being a new album and all, we're going to have a little bit of success out of it."

I agree with him on that (a new George & Tammy show would certainly get me out of the house), then ask him how it's going in the studio with Tammy. He misses the last part of the question, responding just to the "how's it going?" part.

"It's goin' great! My Lord, we're working more than we want to, and our price is still up there, and even better at times! [He doesn't mean himself and Tammy; he's using the royal "we"]. The only thing I've got to gripe about is, they work me too much. But naw, it's just been fantastic. It's just goin' great guns. I don't know, at 63 I'm still hangin' in there, so we don't need no rockin' chair, you know!"



He laughs heartily. The “don’t need no rockin’ chair” bit might be a tad past its prime (the song hit three years ago), but he still seems to get a kick out of it.

So again, how *has* it been going in the studio with Tammy?

“It’s going fantastic. It just seems like old times. I think by the time we get it finished and mixed and all that, we’re gonna be surprised how good it is.”

“Has Tammy’s voice changed any?”

“Tammy seems to sound like she always has. She’s still having her health problems, and it’s taken maybe just a little bit more time in the studio for her, but she’s sounding real good. She just has to overdub and work a little harder.”

“She was very sick around Christmas of ’93. She almost didn’t make it, right?”

“Yeah, she was in bad shape. We even went up, Nancy and I, to the hospital, and seen her up there. A lot of people had her gone, y’know. A lot of people had *me* gone for a while there, too!”

Before George starts talking about his surgery, which he does at great length, we should linger a moment on the subject of him and Tammy, which he doesn’t. That visit to Tammy’s hospital bed was by all accounts the end of a polite but mutually distant phase of the George/Tammy relationship, and the beginning of something else. Also, the hospital visit was

Nancy’s idea, as was Tammy’s subsequent inclusion in *The Bradley Barn Sessions*, the album of duets with various artists that George recorded under the hand of producer Brian Ahern in early ’94.

That studio reunion worked out well, with Ahern even going so far as to write that “George and Tammy Wynette seemed to step from a very public past of turmoil and love gone bad into the sunshine of music once again. Love gone good.” Or to put it less romantically, these days, the former Mr. and Mrs. Jones seem to be on good, simply friendly terms, with their emotional extremes behind them.

One is not, however, willing to bet money on such a view. Three times during our interview, George says “Tammy” when he means “Nancy,” and has to correct himself. Which of course could mean anything from nothing to everything.

It might seem tacky to report those slips, but let’s remember the context: a love/loss affair almost as significant to country music’s heart and soul as the fire that burned between Hank and Audrey Williams. Certainly, nothing in country’s modern era has been as emotionally powerful as the laments George directed towards Tammy during his time of greatest pain, a string of darkly beautiful pearls beginning with “The Grand Tour” in 1974, the year of the divorce, and ending with “He Stopped Loving Her Today” in 1980. That *was* one hell of a torch he carried.



We sit in the big pastel room with George watching his front gate and detailing his way through his heart surgery to the bottom line: Before the operation he was losing strength, energy, and even the ability to enjoy life and music, which for him are inseparable; since, he’s been gaining it all back. Now, he says, he figures he’s at about 80 percent of what he’ll be when all the benefits of the surgery have kicked in. Others who’ve been through it—Johnny Cash, Waylon Jennings, a guy at the local market, people he meets on the road—have been telling him it takes a year or so.

I’m wondering how he was feeling during the sessions at Bradley’s Barn, about six months before his surgery, so I ask him about that. How would he rate

“This new so-called country that helped country music to

his performances on those tracks?

“Well, I would say it was close to a hundred percent of what I could do on most of the stuff. I might have had a couple of days where my throat could have been in better shape, but then I went back and re-sung them when it was, so it worked out fine. I was really having a lot of bronchitis from smoking, smoking a couple of packs or better a day, and I was just run down from trying to stay too active and doing so much. With all that, and all of this coming on with my heart operation, I would really get pulled down. But we got the album all finished.

“I think what we’re doing now, though, you’re going to see a lot of difference in my voice. It’s going back to where I can hit my high notes good, and hold my notes out

longer since I'm not smoking any more."

"Yeah," I say, "I meant to ask you about that. It's sounded over the last few years like your voice has been dropping. Has that been intentional?"

"No. It's really dropped on me. Just certain days, I'd go up there and hit them real high notes like I used to, but there's not too many of those days. I just have to keep it down on a little lower key. In fact, most people tell me they'd rather me sing a note like that anyhow, instead of screamin' it out like I used to do, so high, on my old records."

A couple of things about this. George is right about most people preferring his later, lower, note-bending style: He's only been the official World's Greatest Country Singer since the mid-late 70's, when he began wrapping his tonsils so low-down sensuously around songs like "Bartender's Blues." Secondly, when he says "old records," he means *old*: hits that emerged from sessions in Texas when today's demographically ideal country fan wasn't even born; when her parents weren't even old enough to date. The first George Jones single on the *Billboard* charts was "Why, Baby, Why," which peaked at Number Four in the Fall of 1955.

Today, of course, George's longevity presents his marketeers with an obvious problem, and an equally obvious solution: Wherever and whenever possible, they simply arrange to have him appear with one or more of the young male sex objects duking it out for heavy Young Country radio rotation. Said sex objects, a long line of them beginning in Randy Travis's heyday and continuing at press time, do the rest of the job. So, it seems, does everyone else in the business. Rarely does half an hour of TNN go by without *somebody* telling you, one more time, that George Jones is totally wonderful.

The good thing, of course, is that it's true. The bad thing is that these days, you hardly ever get to hear George by himself. Usually, a singer with half his vocal talent, one-tenth his experience,



In April George and Tammy announced they'd be singing together again. It had been 15 years since their last hit and 17 years since they last sang together on stage.

about sparing no expense.

George had his problems with some aspects of the experience. He was unfamiliar with the studio itself, for one thing. Then too, it bothered him that Ahern's control room was a mobile unit in a truck parked outside. It bothered him even more that the rough tapes Ahern gave him at the end of each day's recording were "the

worst, worst, *worst* mixes on take-home copies that I ever got in my life from any recording...My God, he'd leave a couple of instruments off that was on there, and my voice would be down so low you couldn't hear nothin' but music, and that was the take-home copies. I said, 'What the hell? I can't tell anything about this. This is ridiculous!'"

George says that he asked Ahern to give him better mixes to take home, but Ahern never did. Therefore he went through the sessions with an attitude. "I kept telling my wife, 'My God, we've got all that talent, and we've got a *terrible* sound. I'm just

is nothing but rock stuff for kids to dance by...and to hell with the older people et established to start with. They've thrown them to the wolves."

and five times his asking price is trading verses with him.

George plays the part of token Living Legend Around Town quite gracefully—more cooperatively, perhaps, than Cash or Haggard would ever want to, or Hank or Lefty ever could have (though if they'd sobered up and survived, as George did, who knows?). That doesn't, however, mean he's happy with the situation that's created the role.

The subject comes up when we're talking about *The Bradley Barn Sessions*, which featured duets with Vince Gill, Alan Jackson, Mark Chesnutt, Trisha Yearwood, Travis Tritt, Dolly Parton, Emmylou Harris, and others including British rocker Mark Knopfler and the Rolling Stones' Keith Richards (yes, really, no kidding). Each "guest" got to pick his or her favorite song from a list of George Jones hits put together by MCA and producer Brian Ahern, then sing it accompanied by a band built around Ricky Skaggs, Marty Stuart, Mac McAnally, Jerry Douglas, Richard Bennett, Eddie Bayers, David Hungate, Glen D. Hardin and Pig Robbins, with occasional visits from the likes of Leon Russell and James Burton. Talk

very unhappy about it, but God dang it, I'm just going to go ahead and finish it. I'm obligated, so we'll just do it."

George was pleasantly surprised when he heard Ahern's final product. Most of the tracks, he says, "have a pretty good sound to them." Still, it's an awful shame he had to go through the sessions feeling the way he did. I say that to him. He agrees.

He's not exactly ecstatic about the rationale behind the whole project, either. As he puts it. "The way country music has strayed this other direction, with the new hot young country artists and radio down on the older artists, not playing them, I think you just have to do these different type of things to stay in competition."

The wider context draws stronger feelings. We'd need a much fatter magazine than this to contain everything George says about the state of country music in 1995, so we'll just have to settle for a few selected excerpts.

On radio's exclusion of older country singers:

"To start with, there's room. They don't have to stop playing us altogether. It's just ridiculous when you've still got the fans, and

you still draw the crowds, and you're still selling records—but they're catering just to young people, and to hell with the old people. I know a lot of the artists who are still great singers, like Faron and Ray Price and some of those people, I think they just laid down and quit. Gave up and got disgusted."

On how his own career has been affected:

"Well, I could work the rest of my life if I never put out another record...I like a statement Merle Haggard made a while back on the *Music City Tonight*. He said that actually, radio has done him a favor by not playing him any more, because now the people can't hear his songs on the radio, so they come out to the shows, and it's making his crowd a lot bigger...It just bothers your ego because you still love country music, and you've loved it all your life, and you've put your whole life into it. For them just to drop you and say we're not playing you no more, it makes you feel bad. But what can you do about it? You can't buck City Hall."

On the style of most "country" music coming out of Nashville today:

"In the truth, in reality, it's nothin' but rock music. Most of the stuff that's out today, up-tempo, is strictly in the rock vein, and most of the people who are successful at all with ballads are pop. With the arrangements behind country songs today, we're moving into the pop field and taking away their revenues, putting the Frank Sinatra's and people like that out of business. We're not country anymore.

"Even your pop and rock artists that can't sell pop or rock no more are coming into Nashville to get on *Music City Tonight* to try to get some exposure and use country music as a steppin' stone. To me, your Garth Brooks, Reba McEntire, some of your people like that, have used country music as a stepping stone. They've come in with a label when they first start off recording, they have 'em a couple of big hits that are pure country songs, and they're singing the fire out it country—and then, about the next album they cut, they've changed overnight. They got dollar signs goin' all through their little brains. They jump up, and all of a sudden they're so pop and rock, it's pitiful. They're screamin', they're up in the air, they're hitting notes we'd never understand as country folks.

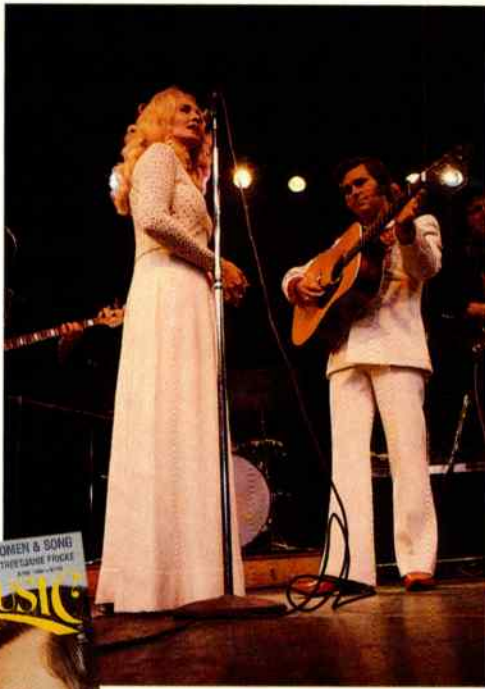
"That's what they're doin'. They've changed country music by doing it that way, and now, what you're hearing is, the soul and the heart is gone. All you got is framing. This new so-called country is nothing but rock stuff for kids to dance by and to get through to the kids, and to hell with the older people that helped country music to get established to start with! They've thrown them to the wolves!"

He pauses. He's looking straight at me. His voice has been getting louder; now it's shaking with feeling.

He begins again. "And I think they need to know that, they really do. They've thrown a lot of people—I'd say anywhere from 40 to 60 percent of fans are the older people—they've thrown them to the wolves! And I hope you print that."

I promise I will, then ask him who "they" are.

"The problem came from right here in Nashville. I won't mention any names, 'cause I have to live with them, but they control



Jones and Tammy in the early days on stage and the cover of CMM in 1980.

it, they're the roots of it. And they call this 'Music City, USA, the Home of Country Music'. They should be ashamed." He sits back. That's his final word on the matter.

I watch him for a moment with two scenes from the past running through my mind. One is from late 1974, when the Country Music Association gave Australian pop singer Olivia Newton-John its Female Vocalist of the Year award, and an angry group of genuine country singers gathered at George and Tammy's house to form the Association of Country Entertainers, a "Keep It Country" resistance movement every bit as passionate, and futile, as George's words today. The more things change.

The other time is a few years later: that infamous TV news footage of an emaciated, feral George Jones snarling out of his Cadillac and the fires of his biochemical Hell to rail against the traffic cop who'd pulled him over. *That* was a man you wouldn't want to cross.

Now I see there was something true in the moment, something that survived (and probably preceded) the booze, cocaine and psychosis. George's face during the final part of his monologue is frightening.

I'm pretty sure that the most important question about George's musical future has been answered—yes, he *does* still give a damn—so now I'm asking about his musical past. There's all kinds of stuff I want to know, and here's my chance. He's actually sitting in front of me, and this time nobody's drinking straight from whisky bottles, searching for misplaced Cadillacs, fondling firearms, or otherwise subverting the journalistic imperative.

We get to it, talking about Pappy Daily, Billy Sherrill, Melba Montgomery, Connie Smith; songs and recording sessions from "Who Shot Sam?" to "She Thinks I Still Care" to "Ya Ba Da Ba Do (So Are You)"; about gruesome politics at CBS/Sony and better ones at MCA; about times of George's life from the piney woods of southeast Texas to the bar at the Hall of Fame Motor Inn. We romance the notion of George recording the old way again, with him and his pickers running the sessions and the producer just doing the paperwork.

Here again, we need a thicker magazine. We don't have one, though, and time's ticking—George has a dinner date—so we have to answer questions of immediate import.

Is George going to Branson?

No, he isn't. He considered buying a theater across the street from Roy Clark's, but thought better of it. "It would get boring. If you bought a place, you'd have to work it every year, year after year, to ever get your money back. I don't believe I could enjoy it. It would probably drive me nuts...I really felt sorry for Mel Tillis and Roy and some of 'em, working that much and doin' that many shows." What George *will* do, he thinks, is cut down his road shows: "I'm gonna try to semi-retire and maybe work 30, 40, 50 days at the most next year."

And finally, a question I've been saving, because I feel it's almost impertinent. It relates to the greatest question, which in turn is contained in something Nick Tosches wrote in *Country on Compact Disc*: "There are moments in *Walls Can Fall*, his second MCA album (1992), that suggest there is a long and glorious coda to the Jones legacy yet to unfold."

The question: "George, do you still really feel the songs when you sing them?"

He doesn't hesitate. "Oh, yeah," he says. "I didn't for a while there, until I got my operation. Now I do. Oh, yeah." ■



PULL-OUT
CENTERTOLD
OF-THE-MONTH

PAM TILLIS

Facts of Life

Personal Data

Given Name: Pamela Yvonne Tillis
Birthdate: July 24, 1957
Birthplace: Plant City, Florida
Hometown: Nashville, Tennessee
Family: Father Mel; mother Doris; sisters Connie, Cindy, Carrie; brother Mel Jr.; son Ben; husband Bob DiPiero
Hobbies: Fishing, antiques, cooking, reading
Favorite Movie: *Thelma & Louise*

Vital Statistics

Height: 5'6"
Weight: 120
Color hair: Brown
Color eyes: Blue

Recording Career

Record label: Arista Records, 7 Music Circle North, Nashville, Tennessee 37203

Albums	Release Date
<i>Put Yourself in My Place</i>	1991*
<i>Homeward Looking Angel</i>	1992**
<i>Sweetheart's Dance</i>	1994**

*Gold album (500,000 units)
**platinum album (1,000,000 units)

Number One Singles
"Don't Tell Me What to Do"
"When You Walk in the Room"
"Mi Vida Loca"

Top Ten Singles
"One of Those Things"
"Put Yourself in My Place"
"Maybe It Was Memphis"
"Shake the Sugar Tree"
"Cleopatra, Queen of Denial"
"Do You Know Where Your Man Is"
"Spilled Perfume"

Awards
CMA Female Vocalist of the Year—1994

TV Appearances

The Late Show with David Letterman
The Tonight Show
CBS This Morning



Full Access: On Tour with Pam Tillis
Live at the Ryman with Pam Tillis
CNN's Showbiz Today
South Bank Show (UK)

Pam also had a starring role in an episode of *LA Law*, had an appearance in the film, *The Thing Called Love*, and a role in the TV movie, *XXX's and 000's*.

Quotable Quotes

"I grew up in the old Nashville, I know what real country music is, and I have a real love for it. But, I've always been open to all kinds of music. I love to sing

everything, including things that might seem kind of progressive or experimental. I like being on both sides of that fence and bringing it all to the table."

Career Highlights

- Currently producing her fourth album for Arista Records; this is the first time as solo producer.
- Recorded "Til All the Lonely" with her father, three sisters and brother for her *Sweetheart's Dance* album, written by Pam, Bob DiPiero and John Scott Sherrill. Bill Monroe solos on mandolin, and the fiddling is done by Sam Bush.

John Anderson Picks Gibson!



Joe Spivey and his Nighthawk CST

Vern Pilder and his Nighthawk CST

John Anderson and his Nighthawk CST

Mike Anderson and his Les Paul Bass

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“When I See My Ex-Boyfriend, I Have This Secret Trick I Play On Him...”

by Leslie McClennahan

Did you ever notice that when you're fat, men don't look you in the eye? They look across your shoulder. There's no eye contact.

My name is Leslie McClennahan. I'm a real person. I live near Goose Creek, South Carolina. Up until two years ago, I was never looked in the eye. By anyone.

I was falling asleep by 8 o'clock most evenings. When I did go out for an evening, my boyfriend was ashamed of me. And said so to my face. When I walked, my thighs brushed together. I couldn't even cross my legs. I was fat. Not just "overweight." Fat. I was 5'5" tall and weighed 205 pounds.

About 18 months ago, my boyfriend Darrell left a "Dear Leslie" letter on my dresser and broke off our relationship.

I went for counseling. I knew that my weight was the source of my troubles. But I'd tried 14 different diets. One by one. And I failed at all of them.

My counselor listened carefully and recommended an entirely different program. This wasn't a "diet." It was a unique new weight-loss program researched by a team of bariatric physicians — specialists who treat the severely obese. The program itself was developed by Robert Johnson, M.D. of Charleston, South Carolina.

I entered the program on October 2nd. Within the first four days, I lost only three pounds. So I was disappointed. But during the three weeks that followed, my weight began to drop. Rapidly. Within the next 193 days, I went from 205 pounds to 124 pounds. To me it was a miracle. This was the first time in my life I'd ever lost weight *and kept it off!*

The reason the program worked was simple. I was *always* eating. I could eat *six times every day*. So I never felt deprived. Never hungry. I could snack in the afternoon. Snack before dinner. I could even snack at night while I was watching T.V.

How can you eat so much and still lose weight?

The secret is not in the amount of food you eat. It's in the *prescribed combination* of foods you eat in each 24-hour cycle. Nutritionally dense portions of special fiber, unrefined carbohydrates, and certain proteins that generate a calorie-burning process that continues all day long ... a complete 24-hour fat-reduction cycle. Metabolism is evened out, so fat is burned away around the clock. Not just in unhealthy spurts like many diets. That's why it lets you shed pounds so easily. Without hunger. Without nervousness.

And it's all good wholesome food. No strange foods. You'll enjoy a variety of meats, chicken, fish, vegetables, potatoes, pasta, sauces — plus your favorite snacks.

This new program must be the best kept secret in America. Because, up until now, it's *only been available to doctors*. No one else. In fact, The Charleston Program has been used by 207 doctors in the U.S. and Canada to treat more than 6,250 patients. So it's doctor-tested. And proven. This is the first time it's been available to the public.

There are other benefits too...

- There are no amphetamines. No drugs of any kind.
- No pills. No powders. No chalky-tasting drinks to mix.
- There's no strenuous exercise program.
- You don't count calories. Just follow the program. It's easy.
- There are no daily charts or records to keep.
- You eat foods you enjoy. Great variety. Great taste.
- You can dine out.
- There's much less fluid retention.
- There's no ketosis. No bad breath odor.

But *here's* the best part...

Once you lose the weight, you'll *keep it off*. Permanently! Because you're not hungry all the time.

Let's face it. We all have "eating lifestyles." Our eating habits usually include three meals a day. Plus two or three snacks. We all love snacks. Especially at night.

But most diets try to force us to change all that.

And that's why we fail!

The Charleston Program lets you *continue your normal eating lifestyle*. You can eat six times a day. You can snack when you wish. So, when you lose the weight, you can keep it off. For good. Because no one's forcing you to change.

Here are some *other patients* from South Carolina who entered Dr. Johnson's program with me.

Marie C. is a 42-year-old woman who went from 167 to 139 pounds in just three and a half months.

As I got into the program, I began to feel better, to develop more energy. Now my husband has trouble keeping up with me — in every way! I'm proud of my new body.

Dr. Karl D. is a 36-year-old man who went from 237 to 168 in only *six months!*

...words cannot describe how good I feel. I'm not hungry or tired at all. I feel alive again!

Josette C. is a 33-year-old woman who went from 165 to 119 in four months.

My husband has started looking at me the way he did before we got married. He's starting to show jealousy when other men look at me or want to talk to me ... it's wonderful.

And then there's *me*.

Whenever I see my ex-boyfriend, I have this secret trick I play on him. I know a restaurant where he goes with some of his "buddies." I love to go there with a date — I have plenty now — stroll past his table and whisper, "Hello, Darrell."

I know through the "grapevine" that his friends often ask about me ... Who am I? ... Am I single? And he has to tell them. I love it.

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The parallels aren't quite uncanny, but they *are* striking. George, sober and securely married these many years now, has faced down death, undergone life-changing surgery, quit smoking, experienced what amounts to a rebirth of his vocal powers, achieved the rare status of a country music "legend" with a major recording contract, and reunited in song and professional partnership with a woman he once loved and hated with a terrible, destructive passion. Tammy, drug-free and securely married these many years now, has faced down death, undergone life-changing surgery, quit smoking, experienced what amounts to a rebirth of her vocal powers, achieved the rare status of a country music "legend" with a major recording contract, and reunited in song and professional partnership with a man who, among other things—many, many other things—once drew down on her with a .30-30.

He missed, of course (he was drunk, she was running, she's alive, he's running free), and now they're okay with each other. As Tammy says of the recording sessions for *One*, the first George Jones and Tammy Wynette album in 15 years, "It was just really a nice feeling that we could go back into the studio, and we're friends."

She adds that "I'd been willing to do this for a long time, but it just didn't come about 'til now," and acknowledges that George's visit to her hospital bed during her medical crisis in the final days of 1993 was a turning point. "I guess you could

let Richey come through here right now!" We can joke about it. It's the best thing we can do, and I'm glad that we both can do that. And we talked about our daughter and her twin boys. They're 15 months now, and we're both proud of them as we can be. She's a nurse married to a nurse in Tuskegee, Alabama, so all is well with the home front.

"We were very easy. George was asking me how I thought to do this or that in my house, what made me want to design it this way or that way. I didn't tell him—I wanted to, but I didn't—that everything I know about decorating, and I'm quite good at it now, I learned from him, because he's really excellent with it. We had a good day, talking about the old things and the new things and the future. We're both doing well."

The mention of George's passion for interior decoration triggers a whole slew of images—the gaudy grandeur he created in his and Tammy's house in Lakeland, Florida, in the early 70's, and Tammy's account in her autobiography of him smashing and ripping it asunder in a drunken rage a few months after the birth of Tamela Georgette, the only child of their marriage; the exquisitely ordered calm of George's home today, and a Nashville Fire Department photo of Tammy's Franklin Road bedroom after an arson fire, which was just one of the yet to be explained violences visited on her home and person during the dreadful months after the divorce. Then of course there's the decor of the house where



TAMMY WYNETTE

Turns Yet Another Corner

by Patrick Carr

call it that. I mean, we hadn't had much contact in years, but it was nothing—well, we weren't bitter and mad or anything. I just went my way and he went his. We both had good lives going for us, and there was just no reason to do or not do anything with him."

She also acknowledges Nancy Jones' role in the reunion (it was Nancy, after all, who suggested the hospital visit, and roped Tammy into George's *Bradley Barn Sessions* album). "I think Nancy has done a wonderful job with George. She's just been incredible for him. And I think she realized, and I realized too, that hey, you know, it's ridiculous for us to even *think* about squabbling and fussing and fighting! We can still record together, and enjoy it."

She sighs. "I had missed that so much, because of all the people I've done duets with, George is the person I really like to sing with. It was wonderful when I went into the studio. It was just as though we had never quit singing together. I seemed to know what he was going to do when he was going to do it, I was ready and expecting his little quick ways of phrasing—it was great. So I'm happy it came about, and I believe George and Nancy are, too."

The good feelings continue. "We had a photo session here at my house last week for the album, and George and I both had a real good time. George was saying, 'Where's Nancy? You're going to get me in trouble!' And I did the same thing. I said, 'Where's Richey [her husband, George Richey]? Don't

Tammy lives today with her husband, George Richey. It's Hank's house: the mansion where country music's great unholy angel made a home in his glory years, before he and Audrey Williams finally split and he went out to seek his death; where young Bocephus was raised and, once he'd gone on his own journey, Miz Audrey slipped down through her own dark final years.

Tammy pretty much gutted the place, distributing Williams artifacts among various keepers of the flame—the big, illuminated, red silk cheatin' heart from behind the bed to Ricky Van Shelton, "a truckload of stuff" to Randy Travis—and making it her own (though fans of the fascinating will be pleased to know that she sleeps in the huge, custom-built pedestal bed she found in the original Cheatin' Heart bedroom, and she bathes in the luxurious black marble tub Audrey installed in the master bathroom). Now, Tammy says, "We're just thrilled to death with it. It's the most comfortable home of any I've had. It's just so open and so...it's lovely. I'm very content here. It's hard for me to want to go out and work any more."

Work she will, though. If things go as planned, she'll be touring with George as you read these words, and together they'll be singing some of the great old songs from the 60's and 70's and some of the pretty good new numbers from *One*. It should be fun, even if the old songs aren't as dramatically, enthrallingly relevant to real life as they were the first

time around—a woman trying to break away from her man and singing about it to his face, a man standing with the woman he's losing, singing about the pain. Most of the new songs don't fit precisely, either. For the most part, *One* matches material to singers in a generic kind of way, with various approaches to the subject of enduring, bygone, or blooming love. Only one song, "Just Look What We've Started Again," really edges up the heart of the matter; suggesting a scenario that must be in lots of people's imaginations, and perhaps even in some people's hopes. A romantic rekindling between George and Tammy would, one must admit, be exciting in a terrible kind of way. At the very least, tabloid editors and record company accountants would love it.

Then, of course, there's the heart of the heart of the matter. Who else might love it? And who just might know that?

Back to those striking parallels. Like George, Tammy is the survivor of a sudden, life-threatening crisis, in her case a virulent bile duct infection that put her into a coma for a week in December 1993, and like George she'll talk about it in great detail—or at least about the part before she went into the coma, which she says just "felt like I was floating somewhere."

Again like George, the subject of her appetite is important to her, and she's happy to report that these days it's healthy indeed, and needs to be: Her job is to gain weight, thus avoiding dire consequences and getting the tabloids to stop calling her "Nashville's Walking Skeleton." Also like George, she finds that quitting smoking has helped in that regard (though George says it hasn't helped him as much as he'd like; *his* appetite is coming back, but only slowly), and yes, she feels that quitting smoking has helped her voice, too. "I can tell the difference on stage. My breath is better. I have a lot more control...I would think my voice is at a hundred percent right now. I've felt so good recording." That feeling communicates, too: apart from its many other virtues, which include a definitive re-statement of the classic hard-core country form (for which, thank you, producers Tony Brown and Norro Wilson), *One* is a purely exhilarating musical experience.

Tammy says she's been free of her primary addiction for a while now (eight years without Valium, Demerol, or other prescription drugs), and like George, she says it's been easy. "It's gone wonderful. No problems whatsoever." She says she lives a pretty settled, domestic life when she's not working—George has his cattle and his TV and his home improvements, she has her cooking and her shopping and her home improvements—and she too has both an in-house beauty parlor (hers is done in shocking pink) and a live-in manager. Her husband, whom she calls Richey, not George, and whose past includes the authorship and co-authorship of major hits for both George and Tammy, including "Til I Can Make It on My Own" and "A Picture of Me Without You," handles her affairs, and seems to be doing as good a job of it as Nancy Jones does for George. Tammy doesn't write songs these days, just as George doesn't, and she too says that that's because she doesn't really need to. "I think Richey and I just totally quit writing. I've had two or

three ideas, and I've jotted down some lines, but—well, we're just not as hungry as we were before. We don't get out there and scratch as hard. That's not good, but it happens." Tammy, after all, is not struggling financially. Her current personal automobile is a blue 1989 Rolls Royce Silver Shadow, her favorite clothing designer Richard Tyler.

Perhaps surprisingly, considering that in recent years she's been duetting with the likes of Sting and Elton John and has achieved worldwide status as a camp dance diva through her outing with British poppers the KLF, Tammy shares some of George's dismay over Nashville's embrace of pop sounds and values.

"I know what's good country music and I know what's hollow," she says. "I think I could sit down any night and write some of the songs that are hits today. They don't say anything to me."

She admires some younger country singers—George Strait, Randy Travis, Alan Jackson, Vince Gill, Mark Chesnutt, Lorrie Morgan, Pam Tillis, Bobbie Cryner, a few others; a list very like the one George will give you—but she too is a refugee from country radio. "I think the programming leaves a lot to be desired. I went to Birmingham last year to be with Georgette, and all the way down there I heard maybe 14, 15 songs, that just kept starting all over again...Nobody ever played any album cuts, and I like to hear little tidbits about an artist. I like to hear the DJ say, 'Well gosh, you know, I saw their show last week, and man, they were great!' or 'I saw this guy in a club twenty years ago'—whatever—but they don't tell things about the artist any more. You don't know who it is, and half the time I couldn't go out and buy the record if I wanted to, 'cause I don't know who's singing it. I go back to our era on that. When you heard Dolly, you knew it was Dolly. When you heard Loretta, you knew it was Loretta. Dottie the same way. Then there was Haggard, Cash, Jones; they were all so distinct."

"Our era." That has an odd sound to it. Tammy, after all, is only 53, and doesn't look or sound much like any kind of has-been. On the other hand, she sure started young—married at 17, divorced with three kids at 24, a chart-topping country star at 25, a grandmother at 41—and she's travelled a road no Young Country star has seen and precious few can even imagine. The days of starting in the cotton fields, as Virginia Wynette Pugh did in Itawamba County, Mississippi, in the early 1950's, are over. They're still alive for Tammy, though, and any time she needs to remember them, she can walk into the 55' x 55' x 45' living room of her mansion, reach out towards a \$1500 Lalique bowl, and touch what it contains: raw cotton from the fields she used to work.

Tammy spends the rest of our interview talking about kids, grandkids, and people she's known well and I've known passingly since she and I first met in '72—some gone now, most faded from the light that still shines on her and the man with whom she's once again sharing her stage. When we're done, I'm struck by the thought that finally, after all these years, I've been talking to a woman I'd call happy. ■



In the studio in the 70's with George and Billy Sherrill.

Country Music VIDEOS



DWIGHT YOAKAM
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Catch these two legends in the early days of their careers. There are 26 songs including "Walkin' the Floor Over You," "Singin' the Blues," "So Many Times," "Time Goes By," "So Doggone Lonesome," "Tomorrow Never Comes," "I Can't Quit," "Pretty Words," "They'll Do It Every Time" AND MORE! Item No. V2G - Was \$39.95 - NOW \$29.95

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Life and Legend - 60 mins.
This video opens Porter's life to you on a personal level seldom seen in documentaries. He talks about his ups and downs, his struggles and triumphs, his laughter and tears. He talks frankly about his relationship with Dolly Parton. And he shares anecdotes from his life on the road that will make you laugh as you watch. Item No. V2Q - \$19.95

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TAMMY WYNETTE (NEW)
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GEORGE JONES
Same Ole Me - 60 mins.
They call him "Possum." They also call him "Country Music's Living Legend." *Same Ole Me* is the story of George Jones, finally told his way with the help of such great stars as Roy Acuff, Loretta Lynn and Johnny Cash. It includes hits like "He Stopped Loving Her Today," "Bartender's Blues," "The Race Is On," "She Thinks I Still Care," "White Lightning," "Why Baby Why?" and "Some Day My Day Will Come." Item No. G4Z - \$19.95

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HANK WILLIAMS SR.
The Show He Never Gave - 86 mins.
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WEBB PIERCE
Greatest Hits - 52 mins.
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TANYA TUCKER
Tanya Tucker - 22 mins.
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The World According To **KERSHAW**



Slouched in an easy chair in a posh Opryland Hotel suite, his fancy yellow cowboy boots flung up over the coffee table, Sammy Kershaw looks like a dour cowboy nobleman holding court.

In all fairness, it's early, and The Samster's lack of cheer could stem from the task that lies before him this morning at the hotel, where the annual Country Music Radio Seminar is under way. Kershaw's label has rented this fancy suite, and The Samster is holding what Music Row publicists call a "Media Day." Like some politician on the campaign trail, he'll be doing interviews almost nonstop for roughly the next seven hours. It seems that I'm the first victim. (Oops! I mean, interviewer.) A couple of publicity representatives hover around the suite, ushering the assembly line of journalists and deejays in and out and helping them set up their taping equipment for their allotted quota of Sammy sound bytes.

Yet The Samster, who seems to have grown quite used to being the center of this kind of attention, appears to be ruffled, disgruntled. Much to everyone's annoyance (his included), a construction crew occasionally runs a jack hammer outside the window, creating a less than ideal atmosphere for taping interviews. Worse yet, here's Sammy in this elegant hotel suite, with two or three publicity minions at his beck and call, and he can't even get a cup of coffee. ("We still ain't got no coffee?" he growls with disbelief.)

Sammy Kershaw and I, it's worth noting, have crossed paths before. I first met the singer before his earliest records came out. Back in those days, he was a fun and unassuming soul, a man without airs. He could bend your ear with delightful tales of growing up in the Fi Fa

Fon (backwoods) of South Louisiana's Cajun country while whipping up a killer pot of crawfish etouffee.

But this morning, I'm seeing a different, somewhat grumpier and self-absorbed facet of The Samster's many faces. He is sitting regally in an over-stuffed chair, chain-smoking Kent 100's and looking put upon. The sleeves of his immaculately pressed blue shirt are rolled up to reveal beefy stevedore's forearms. He exudes a curious admixture of arrogance and defensiveness—qualities which, over the years, I've learned are not unusual in singers who are stuck in an insecure and slightly precarious career plateau somewhere between obscurity and superstardom.

It seems like the thing that the critics loved about Kershaw at the outset—that is, his rich George Jones-style voice—they later used to beat him over the head with. ("This man must be George Jones' illegitimate son," one reviewer raved. "How far can you go as a George Jones clone?" wondered a somewhat less charitable *L.A. Times* writer.)

Country music, politics, taxes, critics and honesty are just some of what's on Sammy Kershaw's mind these days. The outspoken singer's take on these matters just might surprise you.



By Bob Allen

Yet when I raise the subject of these constant comparisons to Jones (both pro and con), it rubs a nerve. Sammy levels me with a surly "Cadillac Style" Jack Nicholson frown and blows smoke in my direction. "What da ya mean?" he scowls. "Don't bother me! Hell, George Jones is the greatest country singer that ever lived. If I was playin' ball, I wouldn't be pissed off if they compared me to Babe Ruth or Pete Rose. You wanta compare me to the greatest country singer that ever lived, go ahead! That's fine, baby! All day!"

The coffee finally arrives. ("One cream and just a touch of sugar," The Samster instructs one of the p.r. assistants who's doubling as a waiter.) But it doesn't seem to unrumple him much. In another at-





tempt to get things off on the right foot I try to explain why I brought the George Jones comparisons up in the first place: Because they obviously had enough impact on Kershaw himself to induce him to make a rather drastic course correction with his music. After his solid debut album (*Don't Go Near The Water*—1991) which cast him as a contemporary George Jones disciple (okay, some would say imitator) and a fine second album (*Haunted Heart*—1993) in which he balanced the pervasive Jones influence with his own stylistic flair for humor and balladry, he changed everything around completely on *Feelin' Good Train*, his third and most recent album. I remind Sammy that he himself has often made a big issue of the fact that *Feelin' Good Train* was a conscious effort to escape those constant Jones/Clone critical notes—a deliberate attempt to cut the kind of material that Jones would never cut.

The Samster pauses to weigh my question, then finally gets around to spitting out what's really got him rankled. Turns out it's the mildly unfavorable review I gave *Feelin' Good Train* in these pages after I'd heaped praise on his first two albums.

"I wanta bring up somethin' here, and you may not like it, because I'm gonna say what I got to say," he levels me with another foreboding scowl. "I read the review you did on *Feelin' Good Train*. It wasn't a very good one....Wasn't a very good one at all."

There's a long pause as he snuffs out his cigarette and lights a fresh one. I guess I'm supposed to be squirming in my chair at this point, but I'm secretly delighted. As I brace for more scorn, The Samster's wrath momentarily subsides. "I remember that on *Don't Go Near the Water* and *Haunted Heart* I got two good reviews from you," he says in a calmer, almost reflective tone. "And you're right: On *Feelin' Good Train* I did try to pick music that George Jones wouldn't cut. It seems, after what has been said, that maybe all you all really liked [the Jones influence], and maybe I shouldn't have got away from it." He shrugs, puffs on his cigarette. "Maybe I shouldn't have tried to not cut things that George would cut....Know what I mean?"

The Samster sips his coffee and thinks it over some more. Then his defiance flares anew: "But I just wanted to show the industry that there was another side. That I can sing anything I want to," he says with a cocky edge. "I can sing rock 'n' roll. I can sing country, I can sing anything I want to. Anything, man! And it's my choice, whether I wanta be here or not. I think I can let it go on, or I can stop it, if I want to. I think whatever happens, it's totally up to Sammy."

"There's just some people never took me for real," Kershaw insists, despite two platinum albums, three Number One singles and numerous Top Ten hits. "I think it's because of that George Jones sound, ya know: 'We don't need another George Jones....' But hell, that's just the way I sound. That's just a natural harmonic in my vocals, and when I sing in certain keys there's nothin' I can do

about it, any more than somebody like Joe Diffie or Mark Chesnutt can help sounding like George sometimes. There's nothin' I can do about it, and really nothin' I wanta do."

Sammy finally gets back down off his high horse long enough for me to express surprise that he gives such weight to my little record reviews. "Bob, I read all reviews," he insists. There's a lingering hint of accusation still in his eyes, as if to remind me that ol' Sammy is always reading, always watching. "I read all the numbers on album sales. I watch the charts as my singles go up. I predict what's gonna happen, who's gonna jump my record, whose records I'm gonna jump. I read *Billboard*, and if the little Gold status or platinum status marker is missin' on my albums in the *Billboard* charts, I call 'em, and the next week it's back in there. That's how close I am to this business. I read everything and I watch everything. I'm involved in my career. Totally. I've seen artists in the past who weren't involved, and in the end, they really got screwed. Well, that's not gonna happen to 'ol Sam! I ain't no fluke. I'm gonna be around for a while.

"I'll tell ya something else about me," he adds, warming to the task of singing his own praises: "I can be one of the most honest fellas in the world. If I've got somethin' to say, I'm gonna say it. Some people like it, some people don't. That's tough. In the long run I think they're gonna have more respect for me, because they know exactly where I'm comin' from, right up front. A few people have given me a bad rap about that, have taken it that I'm a butthole. But I'm not a butthole. I'm just honest."

As I glance around the hotel suite—at the publicity aids fawning over their client's every request, at the other interviewers lined up in the hall waiting for their sound byte sessions—it suddenly strikes me how easy it might be for a formerly unpretentious, soulful guy like The Samster to become so thin-skinned and self-absorbed, so full of himself as he doles out his opinions on nearly everything, as if they were priceless pearls of wisdom. (Example: Income taxes—"I paid 'em over half the money I worked so hard for—it's not right, but I paid 'em!") He even expounds at length on his life-long ambition of becoming governor of Louisiana. "Yeah, hell, yeah, I'm serious! I wouldn't say anything like that unless I was serious! Hell, yeah, I'd love to be governor! I think I have some good ideas!"

The 37-year-old Kaplan, Louisiana-born singer's boundless self-assurance and curious sense of embattlement seem odd when you consider that, despite what he says, ol' Sammy's success is kind of a fluke. Or, at very least, he's a guy who got extremely lucky. This is, after all, a

former South Louisiana good ol' boy who lived by the seat of his pants and bounced around for years with no more direction than one of those little steel balls bouncing around in a pinball machine. Even his major label deal came when he was well into his 30's, as a sort of a lucky accident, years after he'd stopped looking for one.

Rice mill worker, rock singer, deejay, stand-up comedian, carpenter, welder, dry cleaning manager...those are all hats The Samster's worn over the years. From the time he made his professional singing debut at age 12, he's been dabbling in music. But for years, he did so with much passion, but little sense of direction. He recorded for independent Louisiana labels; he toured with bands as far afield as Dakota and Wyoming; he opened shows locally for George Jones. He lived the high life, lost two marriages, almost went bankrupt a couple of times and had the usual problems with alcohol

the tradition of Huey Long, Jimmie Davis, Edwin Edwards and other colorful and controversial Louisiana heads of state. Kershaw insists the notion of Governor Sammy Kershaw is really not as far-fetched as it sounds. The Samster, after all, has ideas. And opinions. Lots and lots of opinions. About nearly everything. "All I wanta do is serve people, man," he says earnestly. "That's all I've ever done my whole life. Every job I ever had has been servin' somebody....Sales, music...all kinda things like that...."

And on and on it goes, the home-baked political philosophy of Sammy Kershaw. As I listen, I'm ultimately reminded of the demagogic wisdom once offered by the late, great Southern comedian Brother Dave Gardener: "Let's legalize everything, and then, by God, there wouldn't be no crime!"

But I'm still somewhat amazed by this not so subtle before-fame-and-after char-

DON GRASSMAN



Former small town boy Sammy tours the nation. He sponsors his own NASCAR racing team. And he has journalists lining up to take down his every word. A big change from carpentry at Wal-Mart.

and drugs. He'd gotten out of the music business altogether, had married a third time. (He and his wife now live in an antique-filled log home near Nashville with a houseful of kids and stepkids.) And he had a real nice day job: traveling around the South doing carpentry remodeling in Wal-Mart stores.

But then fate intervened. A guy who remembered him from the South Louisiana nightclubs quite a few years earlier had since gone on to bigger things in Nashville. One day, the guy just happened to think about Sammy, about that marvelous Jones-style voice of his, and began to wonder what had become of him. He finally tracked Kershaw down by phone at a Wal-Mart where he was working. One thing led to another, and in a matter of months Kershaw found himself back in the business, in Nashville recording for a major label.

And today, the former small town hard luck kid who took all the wrong turns has come up a big winner. He tours the nation with his band; he sponsors his own NASCAR racing team, and he has music journalists lining up to take down his every overwrought word while he daydreams out loud about adding his name to

acter transformation I've witnessed here. I can't help but ask The Samster, as I'm gathering up my tape recorder and heading out the door, how he feels success changed him.

The answer, he insists, despite my observations to the contrary, is very little. "I'm still the same guy I was back then, except I probably work a little more than I did four years ago. I work all the time, man. That's all I ever do! Even when I'm home I'll be in that barn workin' by seven o'clock in the morning. and I don't get to the house until nine or ten at night sometimes. I think I work harder now than I ever have in my life.

"But that's fine," he insists. "I still appreciate everything that has come my way, everything that I've worked so hard for. And I'm gonna continue to work hard. I'm gonna just keep playin' as many dates as I've been playin' and keep tryin' to get on up to that next level and see where it goes from there.

"Nope, don't worry: Ol' Sammy ain't goin' nowhere," he assures me with a self-confident and slightly ominous "Sammy-Is-Watchin'-You" wink. "Like I said: Ol' Sammy ain't a fluke. He's gonna be here for a while." ■

Oh, Susannah!

A Musical Collector Doll

by Cindy Shafer

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Oh, Susannah!

by Cindy Shafer

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Don't feel guilty if you find yourself no longer able to match the names and faces of all these baby-faced, generic-looking, post-pubescent George Strait/Garth Brooks knock-offs, with their matching white hats, swivel hips and starched jeans, that the country music industry is currently foisting on the marketplace.

It reaches the point where all these "Young Hats" start to look and sound so much the same, that it's easy to imagine that there is some big cookie cutter on Music Row that turns them out.

But one stand-out, whose name and music is worth remembering, is Austin, Texas-born Rick Trevino. At age 24, Trevino is still cherubic-looking and a little wet behind the ears. But don't let his callow good looks fool you. As recent hits like "Just Enough Rope" (which was released in both Spanish and English versions last year) and "She Can't Say I Didn't Cry" (his first Number One single, also released in 1994) demonstrate, Trevino has a sure-footed honky tonk style and savvy that's already given him a leg up on the competition.

Trevino's confident, unadorned Texas-style hard country gusto gives a special edge to his Gold-certified debut album, *Rick Trevino*. And it's even more sharply focused on his 1995 follow-up, *Looking for the Light* (which, like the first album, has been released in both English and Spanish versions).

"People say to me, 'It's really been an overnight thing for you, hasn't it, Rick? You're just 24 years old,'" says Trevino, a fourth-generation Mexican-American who seems to possess a level-headedness and sense of purpose and perspective beyond his years. "The thing is," he adds, "I was practicing my music every day from the time I was six years old. My father, Rick Senior, was a professional musician. For years, he played in a Tejano band. He always encouraged me with my music in every way. He was a real inspiration when it came to impressing on me the kind of dedication and practice it takes to become a real musician—as opposed to someone who just calls himself a musician. When I was 14 or 15, he would take me out to see great Austin club bands like Extreme Heat, an R&B band that played on Sixth Street. My father wanted to expose me to that, to show me, 'Look how good these guys are, and look where they are: in a little local club.' It was his way of telling me not to get into music because you want to be popular. Get into it because you love it."

Trevino's musical tastes, though currently anchored in country, really reflect the diverse influences of his generation. ("I'm from the Garth Brooks era; I really am," he says unabashedly.) Though he grew up around his father's Tex-Mex music, he and his friends' determinedly mainstream American tastes ran more toward Journey, Van Halen and Billy Joel. "That's all me and my cousins wanted to listen to," laughs the singer who'd never even been to Mexico until recently, when his record label sent him there for intensive Spanish lessons in preparation for the bilingual release of his first album. "Our attitude was, 'Hey, let's get away from all this "Little Joe" Tex-Mex stuff!' But the older you get, the more you appreciate your culture. And that's where I am now."

Ironically, Trevino first cut his teeth on classical music. By the time he was five, his father had him taking piano lessons. Within a couple of years he was performing Bach, Beethoven and Debussy at school recitals. (Recently, he proved he's still got his classical chops when he duetted with classical pianist Van

Cliburn on Beethoven's "Pathetique" during a taping of *Entertainment Tonight*.) In concert today, the piano is still his instrument of choice.

"Once again, I owe a lot to my father," says Trevino, who made his professional debut at age 15 in an Austin Top 40 band called True Illusion. "My dad would always tell me, 'Look, tell me what you like to hear and I'll go buy the records for you, and you can learn to play it by ear.' So by the time I was 15, I was all set to play in bands."

Also a gifted athlete, Trevino turned down a baseball scholarship to Memphis State University to study (at various times) business administration, liberal arts and physical therapy at Texas A&M, which was closer to home. During that time he was working every weekend in South Texas clubs and restaurants like The Broken Spoke, The Lumber Yard, The Tin Hall, Dance Across Texas and Blue Bonnet Palace, either with bands or as a solo act. By this time his listening tastes had also taken a drastic swing toward country music.

"Over the years I'd always heard Ray Price, Mel Tillis, George Jones and people like that at our family functions," he recalls. "My grandfather, a World War II veteran, was a big Bob Wills fan, and was always trying to get me to play 'San Antonio Rose,' which I do play in concert today. The first album I ever went out and bought, when I was 18, was George Strait's *If You Ain't Lovin', You Ain't Livin'*. And I also bought records like Keith Whitley's *Don't Close Your Eyes*, and Clint Black's *Killin' Time*, and Garth's *No Fences*. Those artists all made a big impression on me during my college years and really shaped my musical direction. I still listen to George Strait's 'Baby's Gotten Good at Goodbye' every night before I go on stage, just to make me remember what I loved so much about his shows back when I used to go see him in concert."

"And, as odd as it may seem," Trevino adds a little sheepishly, "Garth had an impact on me. Listening to his music—'Unanswered Prayers,' 'If Tomorrow Never Comes,' 'The Dance'—made me think, made me want to write songs. I'd really like to meet him someday, just to shake his hand and say, 'Thanks.'"

At Texas A&M, Trevino studied hard and got decent grades; but he kept switching majors, unsure of his future career path. Meanwhile, the money and the bookings he was getting as a solo artist around Austin kept getting better and better. So finally, he decided to skip a year at school and give the music a full-time run. He got a tiny apartment in Austin ("just one big room with a fold-out bed and a bathroom"). He showcased at the prestigious South by Southwest Music Conference, held every spring in that city, and got a few—ultimately inconsequential—nibbles from major Nashville labels. He sank a big chunk of his club earnings into making a demo record, which he

RICK TREVINO Stands Out

With genuine talent and inspiration from his father, newcomer Rick Trevino is breaking from the pack and making his way up the country charts.

By Bob Allen



shipped off to various Nashville labels. The demo included a cut of the first song he ever wrote: "San Antonio Rose to You," about his grandfather and his love of Bob Wills, which also ended up on his *Looking for the Light* album.

As is so often the case, it was an odd stroke of luck that afforded Trevino his proverbial "big break." A high-ranking Sony Records pop A&R man was vacationing near Austin when severe floods hit the area. The only restaurant open where the record exec could eat was a place where Trevino often played. The night the Sony big shot showed up, Trevino was not playing, but on the wall was an advertisement for his next show with his picture on it. When the exec spied it and asked who Trevino was, the restaurant manager explained that he was a hot new country singer around Austin. Business cards were exchanged, and Trevino sent a demo tape off to the executive, who liked it enough to Federal Express it down to Sony/Nashville producer/A&R man Steve Buckingham. Buckingham also liked what he heard, and was particularly knocked out by Trevino's fine songwriting on "San Antonio Rose to You." He called Trevino in Austin. ("Was I surprised!" the then-20-year-old singer remembers with a look of wide-eyed amazement.) He told Trevino, "I like your voice, I like your picture, I'm gonna fly to Austin this weekend and hear you play. Don't call a bunch of relatives, don't make a big deal of it, don't do anything out of the ordinary. And don't be nervous."

Easy enough for Buckingham to say. Trevino was not only

nervous, but devastated, when Buckingham got up and walked out after only one song into the first set. "It made the 45 minutes it took to finish the set seem like a week," he recalls. "My mom was there, and afterwards I went up to her and said, 'Mom, what's the deal?' She told me Steve had told her he only needed to hear one song, and that he wanted me to meet him at his hotel in the morning to discuss the record deal. It killed me, man!" Trevino grins. "It really knocked my jock off!"

Buckingham, along with Blake Chancey, has produced both of Trevino's Sony albums. The roots-conscious, honky tonk-flavored confidence and bravado that made *Rick Trevino*, his debut, such a delight, is even more unrestrained on *Looking for the Light*. As far as Trevino is concerned, he's set his musical agenda on *Looking for the Light*, and he intends to stick to it.

"I feel like I've grown since the first album," says the smooth-faced, youthful-looking singer. "I've started to really focus on what I am now, which is authentic country music—Texas, the swing, the shuffles, the Merle Haggard-type stuff. We did 'Walk Out Backwards,' an old Bill Anderson song, on the first album, and we've got 'Poor, Broke, Mixed Up Mess of a Heart,' an old Merle Haggard-Tommy Collins tune, on the new one. It's my favorite up-tempo song on there, and I think it would make a great single.

"I'd like to take more old songs like that and bring 'em back," he adds enthusiastically. "I think it's important to do that, because the guys who stick around will be the ones who stick to country. I really believe that." ■

EDITOR'S CHOICE



ALL-NEW! THE 1995 SONGWRITER'S MARKET AND MUSIC ADDRESS BOOK

Get your songs into the right person's hands, and do it the right way, with this year's newly revised edition of the *Songwriter's Market*. This valuable reference tool contains 2,500 listings of song markets, each with the most complete and current information on contact names, royalty/pay rates, song submission, types of songs wanted and

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vital tips from the "buyers." There are lists of clubs, associations, contests, workshops and publications. You'll find sections on getting started in the business, submitting your songs, contracts, copyright, record keeping and co-writing. Even if you have a past edition, this new version is a must for the most correct and up-to-date information. It's your personal expressway to today's music buyers. Ask for Item #B5N, \$21.99.



TWO OF A KIND—DOLLY PARTON AND PORTER WAGONER

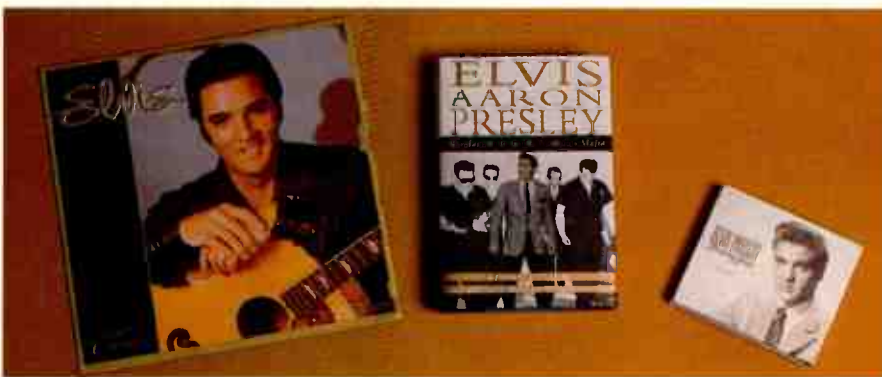
This budget-priced, 20-song package will thrill fans of both of these dynamic artists. *Two of a Kind* includes most of their biggest hits, such as "Fight & Scratch," "Daddy Was an Old Time Preacher Man," "Holding On to Nothin'," "We'll Get Ahead Someday," "The Right Combination," "Jeannie's Afraid of the Dark," "Better Move It On Home," "We Found It," "Two of a Kind," "I've Been Married Just as Long as You Have," "In Each Love Some Rain Must Fall," "You & Me—Her & Him," "Something to Reach For," "Please Don't Stop Loving Me," "The House Where Love Lives," "Before Our Weakness Gets Too Strong," "Just Someone I Used to Know," "The Power of Love" and "Say Forever You'll Be Mine." Item #PDC 2-1335. CD, \$15.95; cassette \$11.95.

Dolly Parton: My Life and Other Unfinished Business

In this exciting autobiography Dolly talks openly about her life—both public and private—for the first time. She reveals how she got to where she is today, her no-nonsense attitude and the down-home philosophy that has helped her from the start. Whether discussing her sense of style, her unique marriage, her inability to have children or her friendship with other stars, Dolly is candid, warm, wise and funny, proving again and again why she is so loved. Hardcover, 256 pages, illustrated. Item #B40, \$25.

Porter Wagoner: A Satisfied Mind

Many know about the "The Thin Man from West Plains" who went from working in a Missouri butcher shop to national prominence on the Opry. They know of his tumultuous relationship with Dolly Parton and his role at the Grand Ole Opry, but most know him from snatches of gossip presented by the media. This book cuts through myth to show the complex and methodical man behind the showman's glitter. There's dialogue from more than 160 interviews with Porter himself, Chet Atkins, Dolly, Norma Jean and other significant figures in his life. A definite page turner. Item #B1K, \$19.95.



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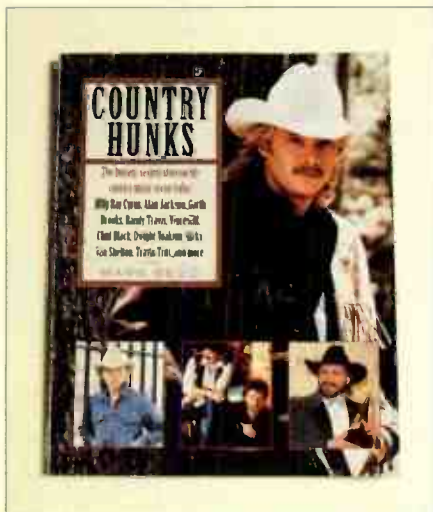
If you think you've heard all there is to know about Elvis, think again. Gregory Sandow, columnist and critic, says: "Imagine sitting down with three guys who knew Elvis intimately, and talking with them—for hours, days, weeks—until they'd told you everything. . . For anyone who cares about Elvis, this book is a dream come true." Billy Smith, Marty Lacker and Lamar Fike, Mafia insiders interviewed for this book, were not just three of Elvis' closest friends, they were protectors and rescuers. They were with Elvis from his teens to his last day on earth,

and they tell all, most of it never on record. *Billboard* Editor, Ed Morris, says, "You don't need to be an Elvis fan to be awed by this book. It is so detailed, gossipy, far-ranging and coherent that it becomes a clear window on an entire era." Hardcover, 42 b&w photos. Item B8F, \$25.00.

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George Jones is the only country singer to have had a Number One single in each of the last four decades and whose voice, some say, has a quality so powerful that it's "felt," not just heard. He also drank whiskey like water, shot at his best friend and destroyed his own home in a rage. This revised book, written by *Country Music's* Bob Allen, explores both sides of this complex man. It brings readers up to date as Jones marries his current wife, Nancy, stays clean and sober, and achieves the status of Grand Old Man of country music. Hardcover, 306 pages, illustrated. Item #B2Y, \$19.95.

NEW! LEFTY FRIZZELL: THE HONKY-TONK LIFE . . . (BIOGRAPHY)

One of his early hits, "I Love You a Thousand Ways," was written by young Lefty in prison, as a love letter to his wife. He was serving a short sentence for fighting and sent many such letters as a means of holding on to her affection. Frizzell, like his contemporary, Hank Williams, was a country music great, a singer who created the drawling, swooping style that would become a country and Western hallmark. Honky tonkers' songs about drinking, dancing and undying love were often matched by their lifestyles. While Williams died young, Frizzell lived life on the honky tonk circuit, which, with its excesses, eventually led to decline. Yet, time after time, new hits like the famous "If You've Got the Money, I've Got the Time," managed to set him back on his feet and on to the charts. This book, written with the cooperation of his family, is the first to trace the life and career of this honky tonk great. Item #B4I, \$22.95.



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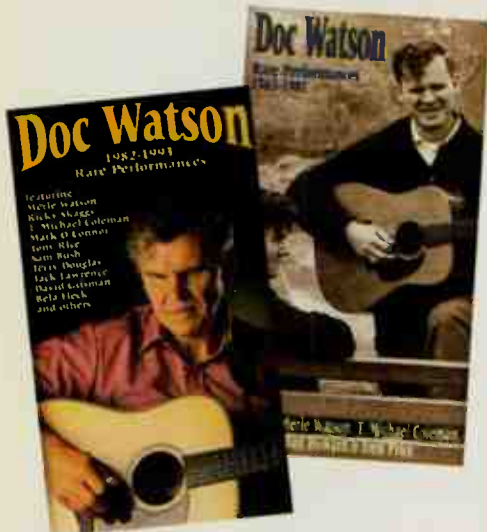
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"Together Again," "A-11" and nine more, with two bonus cuts. *I Don't Care* (#6046) includes the title track and "Buck's Polka," "Loose Talk," "Abilene," "Playboy," "Bud's Bounce," "Louisiana Man" and eight more, with two bonus cuts. Lastly, there's *I've Got a Tiger By the Tail* (#6047). Tracks include "Tiger By the Tail," "Trouble and Me," "Wham Bam," "Fallin' for You," "The Band Keeps Playin' On" and nine more. Order by number. Specify CD or cassette. Each CD \$13.95. (Bonus tracks on CD only.) Each cassette \$7.95. Order two or more and take \$2.00 OFF your order!



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CITY					
STATE ZIP					
ENCLOSED IS A CHECK OR MONEY ORDER FOR \$ PAYABLE TO NASHVILLE WAREHOUSE OR CHARGE MY: <input type="checkbox"/> MASTERCARD <input type="checkbox"/> VISA <input type="checkbox"/> DISCOVER EXP. DATE:					
ACCOUNT #		<input type="checkbox"/> YES, I ordered 2 or more Elvis items, send me my FREE Elvis Performance Video (G5F).			
SIGNATURE					

Add \$3.00 postage and handling for first item and \$.95 for each additional item.

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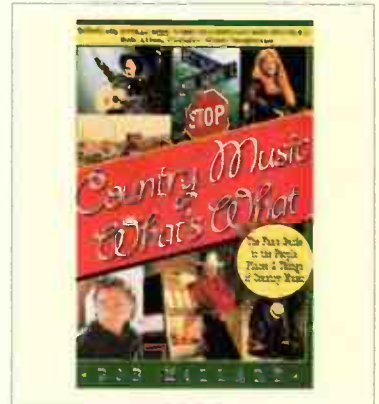


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First, there’s the Elvis Musical Wrist Watch. Not only is it hip but, with the push of a button, it plays “Love Me Tender,” Item #J2E, \$49.95. (A great conversation piece!) There’s the Elvis Profile Watch with a unique second hand—a rotating guitar. The watch face is gold, and the band is black. Male (larger face and band) or female (smaller face and band) sizes, Item #J2B, \$49.95. The other standard Elvis Photo Watch, with the profile of young Elvis in front of a microphone, also comes with a black band, male or female sizes, Item #J2C, \$49.95. These watches are Swiss quartz Analog and water resistant. Each comes with a two-year warranty. Please indicate size preference when ordering Item #J2B and #J2C.

NEW BOOK! COUNTRY MUSIC WHAT’S WHAT

Jay Orr of *The Nashville Banner* says, “As a journalist, author, performer, songwriter and buddy to the stars, Millard has looked at country music from every angle.” In this book, author Bob Millard reveals the movers and shakers, popular hideouts, idioms, slang and more on today’s country music scene. He answers questions like: Who’s Harlan Howard? Where’s Brown’s Diner? What does it mean to live on Elvis Standard Time? Divided into three sections (People, Places, Things), each alphabetically arranged by subject and illustrated, it’s the country music fan’s indispensable resource to the world of country music. *Country Music’s* own Bob Allen says, “Brilliantly witty . . . It’s about time a country music insider told it like this.” Item #B8C, \$18.00.



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These high-quality, popular country music T-shirts are Hanes 100% cotton, which makes them all-American, sturdy and guaranteed to last. Here are four T-shirts of country music’s best artists including the Travis Tritt T-shirt in black with his name and tour itinerary on the reverse side. The Tritt T-shirt is Item #G5X. Vince Gill fans will love this next T-shirt in white with Vince’s name in bold letters on the back. The Vince Gill T-shirt is Item #G5A. There’s the Alan Jackson T-shirt in black with *Who I Am* and his name on the back.

The Alan Jackson T-shirt is Item #G5J. Don’t miss the top-selling Dwight Yoakam T-shirt in black with the album cover shot from his popular 1993 release, *This Time*, on the front. The album title is on the back with a schedule of cities from that tour. The Dwight Yoakam T-shirt is Item #G5Z. You can get each T-shirt for only \$15.95. All of these T-shirts are concert quality—without the typically high concert price. When you order, please specify the Item Number. Choose from men’s sizes Medium, Large or X-Large.

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Doll shown smaller than actual size of 15" tall with base

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Respond by: August 31, 1995

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Jars shown smaller than average size of 3" tall

Respond by: August 31, 1995

Please accept my subscription application for "Friendship is the Spice of Life" Precious Moments® Spice Jar Collection. I will receive two spice jars every other month, payable at a rate of one per month. The issue price is \$19.50* per jar. I may cancel my subscription at any time without obligation.

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The Hamilton Collection
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Jacksonville, FL 32231-4051

Letters

Chapin's Got Staying Power

Thank you for the superb cover story on Mary Chapin Carpenter (May/June 1995). However, I have to take to task the reviewers who have criticized her current album because it lacks "radio hits." These people fail to realize performers' commercial prosperity and longevity depend on their artistic ability, not making sure every radio station plays their single release. The highlight of *Stones in the Road* is Chapin's impeccable songwriting, something that will keep her in the business long after her recording career ends.

Jeff Davis
Piseco, New York

Is It Really That Bad?

I enjoyed Bob Allen's story in the May/June issue about Mary Chapin Carpenter almost as much as I do her music. But I am tired of hearing/reading artists' complaints about how stressful their careers are. Why do they allow themselves to be put into this kind of situation? Is the artist in control of his own life or not? If artists don't want their own (presumably) employees running them ragged with personal appearances and interviews, can't they "just say no"? Whether they are singers, actors or politicians, they should remember who the boss is. And if I'm all wet, could *Country Music* run an article on just how this "celebrity machine" thing works?

Michael Shouse
Omaha, Nebraska

One Great Artist, One Great Station

Thank you for featuring Mary Chapin Carpenter on your May/June cover! I was fortunate enough to see her concert recently in Pittsburgh. She has been my absolute favorite since "How Do." On another note, after reading all the mostly negative comments on how country radio basically ignores older artists and a variety of others for reasons unknown, I felt the urge to put a plug in for my favorite station, WQRT, 98.3 FM in Salamanca, New York. They feature an "oldies night" once a week from 6:00 to midnight on which you'll hear the likes of Gene Autry and Patsy Montana up through the mid-80's. The best part about this station is that they always play oldies every day with the Top 40 hits. They also feature an "always open" request line and will play what you want.

Tammy Lapp
Port Allegany, Pennsylvania



Chapin and Lawrence a Hit

Country Music Magazine is tops. I read every issue cover to cover and look forward to the next. A special thanks for the May/June issue. Bob Allen's interviews with Mary Chapin Carpenter and Tracy Lawrence were super. Where else but CMM could you find your two favorite country music entertainers in the same issue? Since Chapin was on the front cover, for Tracy to have been centerfold is the only thing that would have made it any better. They are two great artists. Looking forward to more on both of them.

Mary Austin
Ruston, Louisiana

Thanks for B&D

Thanks so very much for putting two of my favorites in country music, Brooks & Dunn, on the front of the magazine (March/April 1995). Loved the story on them and the pretty pictures.

Barbara Eles
Walls, Mississippi

Loves Letters, Lawrence

The Letters section is one of my favorite parts of the magazine. I find it interesting to learn what other country music listeners' opinions are, and I believe most readers do also. Please don't cut Letters. Thank you for the terrific article on Tracy Lawrence. Tracy's music has consistently blown me away from the time I first heard him in 1991, and it was great to learn he is doing fine after his recent

problems. In fact, this "old country" fan feels that he and Alan Jackson stand alone musically among the myriad of "new country" acts that have come to prominence in the past few years.

Teri Nelson
Port Orchard, Washington

Chesnutt's Language Not Impressive

I sure enjoy your magazine, but this month I was disappointed to read about Mark Chesnutt. He had a lot of foul language in his interview. I don't like that. He could have used other words. Glad to see George Strait, my favorite country singer, in the centerfold. Keep up the good work. Would like to see more of Dwight Yoakam. Maybe a centerfold or story.

Mr. B. Childress
Abingdon, Virginia

Give Mark a Chance

Thank you for the fantastic article on Mark Chesnutt in the May/June issue. The interview was great. It will be too bad if Mark goes back to being an opening or middle act. His shows are the best I've seen. Mark, along with his band and crew, do a great job to make sure that nobody walks away disappointed. It is too bad that more people have not given him the chance he deserves.

Gloria Vitkus
Sycamore, Illinois

Keeping Up With Campbell

I thought Glen Campbell had lost all recognition until I saw 20 Questions with Glen Campbell in your May/June issue. He is my favorite singer of all time. I saw his show three times in one week at his Goodtime Theater in Branson last summer and must say he and his crew put on one helluva show. How 'bout making some of his "treasures" available to his fans in your Buried Treasures section?

Diane Kent
Staten Island, New York
You got it! Glen and Ernie Ford album in Buried Treasures this time.—Ed.

Aloha, Glen

What a wonderful surprise I received opening the cover on the May/June issue and seeing Glen Campbell Answers 20 Questions. Far too seldom is he mentioned in your pages. Thank you very much, *Country Music Magazine*, and aloha, Glen.

Mrs. Thelma Kramer
Aiea, Hawaii

Strait's Something Special

Happiness is a George Strait centerfold! Many thanks for the beautiful pull-out poster in the May/June issue. And thumbs up to Hazel Smith for her loving coverage of "The Gorgeous One." It's nice to read a magazine that recognizes that George is something special.

Tamara Tamura
San Antonio, Texas

Can't Go Wrong with Strait

Wow, thank you for the centerfold of George Strait. The picture of George was the best ever. It's good to see ya'll not overlooking him for all the new and upcoming artists. You can never go wrong with George.

Rebecca Sanders
Poolville, Texas

Strait Is Good but Gill Is Great

I recently started receiving your magazine (just received my second, May/June 1995) and really like the centerfold of Mr. George Strait. I think he's great...but...the person I think is a hunk is Vince Gill. I'd like to have his picture in your centerfold section. I understand he's married to one of the Sweethearts of the Rodeo, Janis. How come you never hear of the Sweethearts anymore? Does Vince have a fan club address?

Marilyn Winston
Costa Mesa, California

Vince centerfolds: March/April 1992, January/February 1995. Back issues \$3.00 each, Westport office. Vince's fan club: P.O. Box 1407, White House, Tennessee 37188. Sweethearts of the Rodeo now record for Sugar Hill Records.—Ed.

Way Cool!

I am a new subscriber to *Country Music Magazine*. My parents got this subscription for me for my birthday. I love your magazine! It's so cool...Brooks & Dunn! Tanya Tucker! The Mavericks! Billy Ray Cyrus! Please don't stop!

Dorothy L. Goff
Jefferson City, Missouri

Carr Makes Day with Mavs

Thank you for the fantastic article about The Mavericks in your March/April issue. The Mavericks' new sound is the greatest to hit country music. Raul's voice is so versatile, he can please all audiences. And the pictures were great. Thank you, Mr. Patrick Carr, you made my day.

Mable Stretanski
Hamtramck, Michigan

More Mavs, Please

Thank you *Country Music* and Patrick Carr for a wonderful article on The Mavericks in your March/April issue. I think these four gentlemen are extremely handsome, talented and sexy. I'm eagerly awaiting their next album and video (especially since the two I've got are almost

worn out). I hope we can plan on seeing more of these guys in future issues. Keep up the good work. Love your magazine.

Melissa Johnson
Swanton, Ohio

Certified Rich Kienzle

Rich Kienzle, who told you that you were a certified music critic? The article on various artists' tribute to Elvis was so crude and unfair to many good artists. I was amused at your praise of Travis Tritt. He's rude, crude, dirty looking and mean! Can't sing! The one that really angered me was your evaluation of Billy Ray Cyrus. Couldn't you have written a kinder, honest review? I hope I don't have to see your name again. I'm canceling my subscription.

Marjorie Moore
Vienna, West Virginia

"Another Jealous Person..."

Received my May/June issue. What Rich Kienzle said about the artists singing on *The Tribute to Elvis* upset me, especially about Billy Ray Cyrus, his "pathetic off-key version of 'One Night With You'" and "he couldn't shine the sequins on Presley's jumpsuit." That was uncalled for. Sounds like another jealous person. I can't believe these writers get paid to hurt people's feelings. It's only one person's opinion against many. Good thing I like the rest of your magazine.

Linda Frazo
New Bedford, Massachusetts

Standing up for Berry

Regarding the review of John Berry's *Standing on the Edge* (May/June 1995): John does not warble. He sings, and he does a darn good job at it. Perhaps Geoffrey Himes misinterpreted John's emotional singing as "oversinging." It is up to the fans to decide the best and the worst of this "new breed." We fans buy the CD's and tapes. Critics get them for free. A critic's "worst" can be a fan's "best." Incidentally, when I receive my magazines, I read Letters first, and the reviews last, if at all.

Sheila H. Price
Nashville, Tennessee

Raunchy Coverage?

I am offended by most of your coverage of Tanya Tucker. I was not impressed with her centerfold in the March/April issue. Her outfit was nice, but you couldn't even see her face. I couldn't wait for my May/June issue. I expected good, positive coverage based on her talent and music. What did I get: only two letters written in by fans, a stupid reply from Ed., patting himself on the back for putting a crappy centerfold of Tanya in the issue and a negative record review. It is ridiculous referring to Tanya Tucker's voice as raunchy and bitchy. However, to compare a legend to The Bee Gees, I can't



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 September/October 1995 issue.

1. George Jones and Tammy Wynette have recorded their first duet album in 15 years. Name it.
2. Sammy Kershaw's Cajun influences come from his birthplace. Where was he born?
3. How many albums has Rick Trevino released so far?
4. Who is Tim McGraw's famed baseball-playing father?
5. What 1994 CMA award did Pam Tillis win?
6. Chevy's new S-Series Extended Cab Pickup was designed from the inside out, with your comfort in mind. What does the extra notch of seat travel give you?

ANSWERS TO LAST ISSUE'S QUIZ:

1. *Stones in the Road*
2. "Rainy Day Woman"
3. Arkansas
4. *The Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour*
5. Buster
6. Chevy's new Full-Size Pickup features a driver's-side airbag as standard equipment

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take it. It's about time you people realize how much influence your negative coverage has had on her career. Raunchy, in my opinion, is the coverage she gets. Maybe ya'll think she's like an alley cat, but I don't. Your reporters are a bunch of dogs.

Rita May
 Gadsden, Alabama

One of a Kind Noah

I really enjoy all the different areas your magazine covers, but I felt compelled to write due to Michael McCall's review of Noah Gordon's *I Need a Break* debut album in the May/June issue. I sure hope and pray there are a lot of folks out there like myself who don't put a lot of stock into what demeaning critics write! With the abundance lately of new artists that too closely resemble already established artists, I found it extremely refreshing that Noah has a voice and style that cannot be confused with someone else. And what difference does age, looks or personal life have to do with talent?

Kathy Blake
 Hemlock, Michigan

Hot for Highwaymen

I am writing in response to an article that was in the May/June issue about the latest release by The Highwaymen, *The Road Goes on Forever*. In this, Bob Allen states, "Cash and Kristofferson do manage to hit the right notes most of the time." Bob, you have a right to your opinion and I have the right to mine. It seems that you are a Willie Nelson fan. You couldn't think of any flaws he had, or you didn't mention any. As for the "Man in Black," Mr. Cash, I think he is the best performer, entertainer and singer that there ever has been or will be.

Randy L. Hasty
 Somerset, Kentucky

Foster in His Element

Thanks loads, Bob Allen, for the brilliant review on Radney Foster's *Labor of Love* (March/April issue). As always, Mr. Allen comes across and really hits the mark. I've followed Radney's career since 1987 (Foster and Lloyd) and have seen him in concert now. Radney is really in his element on *Labor of Love*.

Diane Holland
 Freeport, Illinois

True of Tippin

Looks like Mr. Kienzle has been going to the Bob Allen School of Record Review. Hey, Rich, you hit the nail on the head with that review of Aaron Tippin's new CD, *Lookin' Back at Myself*. I couldn't agree more. I, too, will always think that Tippin's first was the best, but it's like you stated, "This one's right behind it."

Connie A. Miller
 East Bend, North Carolina

BRC Fan from Afar

Relax, Bob Allen, I won't put you in thumbscrews, although I consider myself a diehard Billy Ray fan (Record Reviews, March/April 1995). You didn't like what you heard when it all started, then admitted that the second album was better than the previous one, and now you even like some of the third. Now that's better than nothing. Believe it or not, I think you aren't that far away from admitting that Billy Ray is a damn good country artist. Wait till you've heard his fourth, fifth, sixth effort.... I liked your funny yet fair review a lot. Keep it up. While I'm at it, I loved that article on Billy Ray by Patrick Carr in the previous issue.

Ursula Wukovits
 Austria, Europe

Clay's Found His Niche

When I read your review of Clay Walker's *If I Could Make a Living* in the March/April issue, I was outraged. Clay Walker happens to be one of the freshest sounds to hit country music in a long time. Your statement that Walker is trying to become another George Strait is ludicrous. However, if Walker were to model himself after anyone in the business, Strait would be the best man for the job. Clay Walker emphasizes what country music is all about: honesty, individuality and sincerity. As for Walker finding his place in country music: I think, Mr. Allen, that he already has.

Kerri Story
 Cookeville, Tennessee

Keep It Up, Trisha

Geoffrey Himes' review of Trisha Yearwood's new release *Thinkin' About You* was favorable, and I agree with a good deal of what he said. However, I disagree heartily with his notion that Trisha should abandon her idol, Linda Ronstadt, for Reba McEntire. Mr. Himes asserts that Reba is the "master of mixed emotions." Obviously, Mr. Himes is one of the naive who believe that Reba's vocal range is an indication of emotional range. He is mistaken—warbling is no substitute for feeling. Also, "You Can Sleep While I Drive" is a much more complex song than he gives credit for. Perhaps if Mr. Himes had listened to songwriter Melissa Etheridge's version before Trisha's, he'd realize the song is as much about the quiet desperation of realizing a relationship is over and the faint hope that by running away from problems that they will disappear as it is about strength to face the problem. I don't hear "country music" songs—I hear songs of women, of real life, of real emotion.

Pam Ring
 Nashville, Tennessee

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COUNTRY DATELINE

Get a Life

I am writing to you today in response to a letter published in the May/June 1995 issue. (The writer) brings up a very valid point in her letter. It seems like the Letters sections of any and all country music publications I read devote too much of their space to fans who write in and all they do is state that they have seen country stars and how many times plus the less-than-noteworthy how far they traveled to see them. It makes me wonder if these so-called "fans" have anything better to do with their lives than follow stars all over the country and make pests out of themselves. These braggarts make me sick and their letters bore me to death. Don't get me wrong, it's perfectly all right to be supportive of your favorite artists, but these people carry it to an obsessive extreme.

Victoria Siegrist
St. Louis, Missouri

A Radio Tale

I read Patrick Carr's Final Note in the March/April and May/June issues. In 1984 I found radio station KIKK, 650 A.M. Larry Galla had a three-hour request show. Most were oldies. By 1986, it had expanded to five hours and become The Country Oldies Show. The music is

from the 20's through the 70's. In the ratings, this program regularly beats out some of the Big Boys. Now, Mr. Carr, here is some fuel for your fire: In early 1993, Westinghouse Corp. bought the station. Their research determined that there was too small a market for this kind of program. One morning in late October Larry gave us the sad news. His show had been canceled and Saturday at noon he and the Oldies Show would sign off. That station was overwhelmed with letters, faxes and phone calls of protest. At 10 A.M. Saturday morning he announced the good news. Management had just come into the studio and told him to report for work Monday morning as usual. He is still going strong. Wake up radio programmers, there is a much bigger market out there for oldies than you think. But you have to play it when they can listen, not some obscure late night three hours. (One huge complaint about New Country. Why can't they sing "can't" instead of "cain't"? Don Gibson didn't sing "I cain't stop loving you" and neither did 95% of the other artists of the day.)

Jake Mitchell
Katy, Texas

Oldies Loud and Clear

While paging through your May/June issue of *Country Music*, I could not help but read the letters on page 54. The station that I manage, WTTN in Watertown, Wisconsin, did something about country music radio on January 21st of this year. We switched our music format from "The One Hit Wonders of Country Music" to "Solid Country Legends." I was so sick of hearing new country, and so was my audience. We switched and have never been happier. We go back to the 40's and up until 1980 unless a song by a legend comes out. We play all new releases from the legends. Let your readers know that if they are within 60 miles of Watertown, Wisconsin, they can hear solid legends at 1580. We cover Milwaukee and Madison loud and clear.

Donald D. Sabatke
General Manager, WTTN
Watertown, Wisconsin

More on George D. Hay

This is to clarify some of the points made by Rich Kienzle in his wonderful discussion of WSM's George D. Hay in the May/June issue of the *CMSA Newsletter*. To say Hay was replaced by "Grant Turner and other announcers" is inaccurate. Hay's role at the Opry was taken over by the artists themselves, as the show evolved. By the mid-40's, the Opry's front-line artists, Roy Acuff, Red Foley and Ernest Tubbs, among others, had taken over some of Hay's duties as emcee while the announcers like Grant Turner, Louie Buck, Ralph Christian, David Cobb and Jud Collins took care of the "busi-

ness" part of the show. Another point to be made is that, because of his health problems, Hay hadn't been in actual control of the Opry for some time prior to his leaving the show in 1947. Although no one is clear on the chronology, the Opry had been run by WSM's program directors (who, in 1947, was Jack Stapp) for many years. Hay's title since the mid-30's had been Audience Relations Manager. He (Hay) was exactly what the show needed at the time, and, therefore we at WSM, as well as country music fans everywhere, owe him a generous debt of gratitude. Thank you for including him in your magazine.

Kyle Cantrell
Announcer, WSM Grand Ole Opry
Nashville, Tennessee

Dalhart Days

Just a brief comment to let you know how much I continue to enjoy your magazine. Luckily, the Country Music Society section does cover some of the old-time artists, which satisfies my desire to keep up with them. I would like to mention that Jefferson, Texas (the birthplace of Vernon Dalhart), will be celebrating its second annual Vernon Dalhart Days on September 2 and 3, 1995. Few people today seem to remember this early country artist who sold millions of records before Jimmie Rodgers ever made a recording. Since he is my favorite old-time artist (have over 1000 of his recordings), I will be there and would love to meet anyone with an interest in Dalhart and his fabulous career.

Jack Palmer
Battle Creek, Michigan

Have you seen our other magazine, The Journal? Dalhart cover story in the June 1995 issue.—Ed.

Name That Love Song

I am writing about a song that was sung by Archie Campbell and Lorene Mann. I don't remember the name of the song. It was a love song. I would say it has been 30 years. I have always wanted the record. When it first came out, it was played over and over on the radio. I'd like to know if you can get that record today. I've been taking your magazine for years. I like keeping up with all of the country music stars. They are great.

Barbara Watson
Jeffersonville, Indiana
You might be referring to their 1969 duet, "My Special Prayer." Check used record stores for copies.—Ed.

What's up With ETC?

I would like to read more about Earl Thomas Conley in your magazine. I can't remember the last time you did an article on him. I think his music is terrific, but I would just like to hear some more of it, and I need you to find out when that

might be. I want to thank Bob Allen for his article on Wade Hayes in the May/June issue. Wade is a terrific artist who I hope does exactly as Bob said, "stick around for awhile."

Crystal Faulkner
Osceola, Arkansas

Why, Why and Why No George?

Today I received my May/June *Country Music* magazine. I am 60 years old and have always been a country music person. George Jones has always been my idol. No one can even fill his shoes, but why isn't he, or his picture, ever in *Country Music*? He is supposed to be the Living Legend and all, but why can't he be a pull-out poster or just anything? Please tell me why?

Mrs. Dorothy Ezell
Gillbert, Louisiana

This issue's for you, Dot.—Ed.

Waiting for Loretta

How happy I have been recently to see legendary country stars like Johnny Cash and Willie Nelson on your covers. Now, how about a few of the lady legends? My all-time favorite, Loretta Lynn, is long overdue!

William E. Trevena, Sr.
Lake City, Florida

All Hail Hal and House

Let's see more on the wonderously talented, down-to-earth Hal Ketchum. Less repeated coverage on the "big name" artists and more focus on all the other brilliant but neglected talent out there, please! Also, I was disappointed in the review of James House's *Days Gone By* in the March/April issue. Each song on this album is outstanding in both writing and performance—most definitely a good investment in money and listening time.

Brenda Gray
Magnetawan, Ontario, Canada

Service Person Speaks Up

I would like to say thanks for your magazine and all of the great articles. I am currently deployed to Port-Au-Prince, Haiti, for Operation Uphold Democracy. I am an avid country listener and dancer. Your magazine has helped my friends and me (stay) in step with the latest albums and articles. Thanks!

Douglas A. Ford
Port-Au-Prince, Haiti

What Goes Around...

What sour grapes indeed coming from Waylon, Willie and Dolly that they aren't getting air play due to the new country of Garth, Reba and that crowd. It's sort of ironic justice if what goes around comes around. Waylon, Willie and Dolly didn't give a finger fudge that they were knocking Webb, Porter, Carl and Stonewall out of the running in old traditional country, replacing it with outlaw country, urban cowboy slop and all the rest that helped

ruin old-time country music. It's the crying towel turn for the outlaws now that they are knocked out like they knocked the previous over before them. Change brings change, sooner or later—it's whether you can handle it when it happens to you, when the boot is on the other foot.

Country Billy Wilkerson
West Columbia, South Carolina

Forgetful Shania

I love to watch CMT and TNN videos. I also love to watch country women performers in this day and age still perform with grace, style and natural sex appeal that makes country a cut above some other musical performers who can't make up their minds whether they are performing music or selling sex. I was offended that someone who might seem to have some talent such as Shania Twain forgot to wear a bra in her video, "Whose Bed Have Your Boots Been Under?" Sorry, but real Southern women have a lot more class than that. Maybe it has something to do with the producers, John and Bo Derek. It should have been called "Whose Bed Was Your Bra Left Under?"

Christine Humfleet
Atoka, Tennessee

Why Not White?

I love your magazine! There are so many talented women country singers today. But there is one, Lari White, that I would like to hear a lot more of. She is so talented, and I just don't think we hear enough. Maybe a story or 20 Questions?

Casey Crawford
Tuscola, Texas

Happy Happy, Joy Joy!

Thank you, thank you! I just received my sweepstakes prize—10 top CD's. They are terrific. Thank you for sponsoring this contest. I am renewing my subscription to my new address via your postage-paid postcard. Maybe next time the Blazer.... Oh well, I can dream. Thanks for giving me the thrill of winning the CD's.

Leone A. Dragon
Pittsfield, New Hampshire

Satisfied Sweeps Winner

I'm writing to tell you how excited I was to win the \$1000 in your sweepstakes. I hadn't ever won anything before. I am 77 years old and live on a fixed income. I can really use it. I will try and put every cent to good use. I really enjoy reading my *Country Music Magazine*. Keep up the good work. Thanks again.

Beadie Turner
Stuart, Virginia

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MEMBERS POLL/JULY 1995

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 Own These Things?

5. Do you own fishing gear? Yes No

6. Do you own hunting gear? Yes No

How Often Do You Do These Things?

7. How many times per month do you fish?

- Less than once a month Once a month
 2-3 times a month 4 or more times a month

8. How many times per month do you hunt?

- Less than once a month Once a month
 2-3 times a month 4 or more times a month

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: July Poll, *Country Music Magazine*, 329 Riverside Avenue, Suite 1, Westport, Connecticut 06880.

Johnny Horton Special

Unlike many of the artists covered in *Legends*, Johnny Horton's complete recorded legacy is available from beginning to end on two Bear Family boxed sets, and on some single LP's as well. First, the LP's: *Rockin' Rollin' Horton, Volumes 1 and 2*, concentrate on the early Mercury and Columbia material. *Volume 1* (BFX 15069) features the best of Horton's Columbia work before "Battle of New Orleans" (which is *not* on the LP). The 16 songs include "Honky Tonk Man," "Honky Tonk Hardwood Floor," "The Wild One," "I'm Coming Home," "The Electrified Donkey," "Lover's Rock," "Ole Slew-Foot," "Sleepy Eyed John" and eight more. LP only. Regular price \$17.95. Members' price \$15.95.

Volume 2 (BFX 15248) focuses on the unsuccessful Mercury period with 12 samples including "Tennessee Jive," "S.S. Lureline," "First Train Headin' South," "The Train with a Rhumba Beat," "Sweet, Sweet Thing," "The Devil Made a Masterpiece," "You, You, You" and five more. Interestingly, the masters for these recordings are owned by Billy Jean Horton. LP only. Regular price \$17.95. Members' price \$15.95.

Horton's complete legacy is included on these next two Bear Family collections. *The Early Years* (BFX 15289) assembles all of Horton's Cormac, Abbott and Mercury recordings on seven LP's. In some cases, multiple takes of the same song appear. A total of 74 released songs appear, plus 33 demos of Horton compositions to make a total of 107 recordings. Includes a 123-page booklet (see below for more details). Regular price \$119.95. Members' price \$99.95.

Johnny Horton 1956-1960 (BCD 15470) is a four compact disc set covering all of Horton's Columbia material (81 sides) plus 36 demo recordings made in New York City barely a month before he died. These mix his own songs with his versions of songs by Hank Williams, Hank Snow, Bill

Haley and Johnny Cash. Thirteen of these songs were overdubbed for the 1969 album, *On the Road*, and that material is included as well for a total of 130 songs. Both boxed sets features a 123-page booklet by Colin Escott with more substantive information on Horton than has shown up any place. The booklet was valuable for writing this article and features rare photos and a complete session discography. Regular price \$129.95. Members' price \$119.95. See ordering instructions at the end of this page, and include membership number when taking discount.

Buried Treasures Special

CMSA members are entitled to discounts on all products offered in *Buried Treasures*. Members may deduct \$20.00 off the regular price of The Osborne Brothers boxed set. Take \$10.00 off the Merle Haggard boxed set. On all other items, deduct \$2.00. Include membership number if taking discount. See complete ordering instructions in *Buried Treasures*.

Essential Collector Special

CMSA members also get a discount on all items in *Essential Collector*—deduct \$2.00 off regular price of each item featured this time. Include membership number and see ordering details on the *Essential Collector* page.

Classic Photo

This classic photo from the 1950's comes to us from Donna Kolby Jackson. Donna's first husband was drummer and bass player Keith Kolby, who worked with a number of Western swing and honky tonk artists, including Hank Thompson and George Jones. Here's Johnny Horton with Johnny Cash, Kolby and Horton's manager/bass player Tillman Franks.

How to Order

To order items listed on this page, send check or money order to Nashville Warehouse, Dept. 070895N, P.O. Box 292553, Nashville, Tennessee 37229. Include \$3.00 postage and handling per order. Canadian orders, add \$3.00 additional postage.



TOP 25

Singles

1. Clint Black *Summer's Coming*
2. Toby Keith *You Ain't Much Fun*
3. Alison Krauss & Union Station *When You Say Nothing At All*
4. Sawyer Brown *I Don't Believe in Goodbye*
5. Tracy Lawrence *Texas Tornado*
6. Wade Hayes *I'm Still Dancin' with You*
7. Patty Loveless *You Don't Even Know Who I Am*
8. John Berry *Standing on the Edge of Goodbye*
9. Travis Tritt *Tell Me I Was Dreaming*
10. Collin Raye *If I Were You*
11. John Michael Montgomery . *Sold (The Grundy County Auction Incident)*
12. George Strait *Adalida*
13. Kenny Chesney *Fall In Love*
14. Neal McCoy *They're Playing Our Song*
15. Ty Herndon *What Mattered Most*
16. Doug Stone *Faith in Me, Faith in You*
17. Vince Gill *You Better Think Twice*
18. Blackhawk *That's Just About Right*
19. David Lee Murphy *Party Crowd*
20. Shenandoah *Darned If I Don't (Danged If I Do)*
21. Kathy Mattea *Clown in Your Rodeo*
22. Mark Chesnutt *Gonna Get a Life*
23. Shania Twain *Any Man of Mine*
24. John Anderson *Mississippi Moon*
25. Hal Ketchum *Stay Forever*

Albums

1. John Michael Montgomery . *John Michael Montgomery*
2. Alison Krauss *Now That I've Found You: A Collection*
3. Garth Brooks *The Hits*
4. Shania Twain *The Woman in Me*
5. Tim McGraw *Not a Moment Too Soon*
6. Tracy Byrd *No Ordinary Man*
7. Jeff Foxworthy *You Might Be a Redneck If...*
8. Dwight Yoakam *Dwight Live*
9. Tracy Lawrence *I See It Now*
10. George Strait *Lead On*
11. Alabama *Greatest Hits Volume 3*
12. Reba McEntire *Read My Mind*
13. Alan Jackson *Who I Am*
14. Ty Herndon *What Mattered Most*
15. Travis Tritt *Ten Feet Tall & Bulletproof*
16. Sawyer Brown *Greatest Hits: 1990-1995*
17. The Mavericks *What a Crying Shame*
18. John Berry *Standing on the Edge*
19. Trisha Yearwood *Thinkin' About You*
20. John Michael Montgomery . *Kickin' It Up*
21. The Tractors *The Tractors*
22. Joe Diffie *Third Rock from the Sun*
23. Clay Walker *If I Could Make a Living*
24. Brooks & Dunn *Waitin' on Sundown*
25. David Ball *Thinkin' Problem*

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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 members' 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.

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Country Music VIDEOS



JIM REEVES

The Story of a Legend - 50 mins.
This is the Jim Reeves story 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 hit songs like "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

SHEB WOOLEY/BEN COLDER

Greatest Hits - 60 mins. (NEW)
Here is classic country humor from one of the best, including "Shakey Breaky Car," "Fifteen Beers Ago," "Almost Persuaded," "Running Bare," "Hello Walls," "Purple People Eater," "Folsom Prison Blues," and "That's My Pa." Item No. V8S - \$19.95

LITTLE TEXAS (NEW)

Kick a Little - 40 mins.
Here is The Academy of Country Music's Vocal Group of The Year in their debut home video, featuring the hits "What Might Have Been," "God Blessed Texas" and six more, plus behind-the-scenes interviews in the studio and on tour. Item No. V9S - \$19.95

GEORGE JONES

Live in Tennessee - 54 mins.
Taped 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," "Bartender's Blues," "One Woman Man" AND 7 MORE! Item No. V1X - \$24.95

RANDY TRAVIS (NEW)

This Is Me - 40 mins.
Here is Randy doing eight of his best hit songs including "Heroes and Friends," "Better Class of Losers," "If I Didn't Have You," "Look Heart, No Hands," "An Old Pair of Shoes," "Cowboy Boogie," "Wind in the Wire" and "Before You Kill Us All." Item No. V9T - \$19.95

TRAVIS TRITT (NEW)

10 Foot Tall . . . - 40 mins.
Travis' brand new video features nine songs including "t-r-o-u-b-l-e," "The Whiskey Ain't Workin'," "Outlaws Like Us," "Foolish Pride," "Take It Easy," "Anymore," "Lord Have Mercy on the Working Man," "Can I Trust You With My Heart" and "Ten Feet Tall and Bulletproof." Item No. V3W - \$19.95

TIM MCGRAW (NEW)

An Hour With Tim - 60 mins.
Here are interviews, behind the scenes footage and background information plus all five videos from *Not a Moment Too Soon* including "Refried Dreams." Item No. V7R - \$19.95

COUNTRY MUSIC STARS IN THE MOVIES - Two New Movie Video Releases - Each at a Special Low Price!

The Gambler Returns: The Luck of the Draw
This 180-minute movie stars Kenny Rogers, Reba McEntire and Rick Kossovich. Hawkes, Jones and Cassidy are on their way to the biggest game in history, but a few folks want to see them fold before they arrive. Heroes and villains, sharpshooters and card sharks, fistfights and shootouts. That's right, The Gambler's back! Item No. V7O - \$14.95

Rio Diablo
This 93-minute movie also stars Kenny Rogers along with Travis Tritt and Naomi Judd. They team up with Stacy Keach to bring you a classic action-packed Western. One's out for blood, the other's out for money. Together, they're in for an unforgettable adventure you won't want to miss. Item No. V7P - \$14.95

THE STATLER BROS. (NEW)

What We Love To Do - 40 mins.
Celebrating their 30th anniversary, this is their first video in over a decade. It features "Elizabeth," "My Only Love," "What We Love to Do," "Atlanta Blue," "Maple Street Memories," "Sweeter & Sweeter," "You've Been Like a Mother to Me," "Let's Get Started" AND MORE! Item No. V6A - \$19.95

KRIS KRISTOFFERSON (NEW)

Kris Kristofferson - 90 mins.
This long-awaited video profiles the extraordinary career and life of the actor, songwriter and performer. It includes interviews with such notables as Willie Nelson, Dennis Hopper and Johnny Cash and features such songs as "Me and Bobby McGee," "Sunday Morning Coming Down," "For the Good Times," "The Pilgrim," "Beat the Devil" AND LOTS MORE! Item No. V6H - \$19.95

NEAL MCCOY (NEW)

You Gotta Love - 45 mins.
This video includes "You Gotta Love," "For a Change," "If I Built You a Fire," "Day-O," "Wink," "The City Put the Country Back in Me," "No Doubt About It" AND MORE! Item No. V4N - \$19.95

RAY STEVENS (NEW)

Ray Stevens Live - 30 mins.
This memorable live performance includes "Shrinners, Convention," "I Saw Elvis In A U.F.O.," "Ahab The Arab," "Secret Agent Man," "The Streak," "Misty," "Everything Is Beautiful," "Amazing Grace," "You Gotta Have A Hat," "Sex Symbols," "Gitarzan" AND MORE! Item No. V8T - \$19.95

DWIGHT YOAKAM (NEW)

Pieces of Time - 40 mins.
Dwight's latest video features eleven songs including "Suspicious Minds," "The Heart That You Own," "Turn It on, Turn It up, Turn Me Loose," "Takes a Lot to Rock You," "You're the One," "Ain't That Lonely Yet" AND MORE! Item No. V9P - \$19.95

HANK WILLIAMS

Hank Williams Tradition - 60 mins.
In the *Hank Williams Tradition* traces Hank's life story through rare film clips, music and revealing interviews with friends and fellow performers such as Roy Acuff, Minnie Pearl and Chet Atkins. Included are performances of many of Hank's greatest songs by today's top country artists, who also tell how Hank inspired their careers. There are also five hit songs performed by Hank himself. Item No. V2M - \$19.95

MARTY ROBBINS

Super Legend - 120 mins.
This memorable video features 18 performances including "El Paso," "White Sport Coat," "Devil Woman," "Ribbon of Darkness," "Don't Worry 'Bout Me," "This Time You Gave Me a Mountain" plus Marty's Grammy-winning song, "My Woman, My Woman, My Wife." It also includes rare appearances from early television shows and movies. Item No. G2A - \$39.95

LEGENDS OF OLD TIME MUSIC - 58 mins. (NEW)

Here are 29 songs by some of the earliest artists. Included are Doc Watson, Clint Howard, Fred Price, "Way Downtown," "Daniel Prayed," "Lee Highway Blues"/Roscoe Holcomb, "Little Birdie," "Graveyard Blues," "Little Grey Mule"/Sam McGee, "Wheels," "Mississippi Sawyer"/Pete Steele, "Pay Day at Coal Creek," "Galilee," "Coal Creek March" and MORE! Item No. V8L - \$24.95

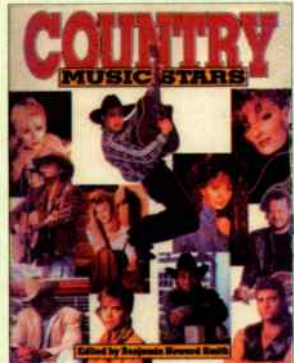
LEGENDS OF FLATPICKING GUITAR - 90 mins. (NEW)

Here are 24 hits like "Black Mountain Rag" and "Nine Pound Hammer" by such renowned pickers as Doc Watson, Tony Rice, Norman Blake and Dan Crary performing in various settings. Item No. V8M - \$24.95

THE OSBORNE BROTHERS

In Concert - 42 mins. (NEW)
Taped on August 6, 1992, at the barn in Renfrow Valley, Kentucky, this video features nine songs including "Fastest Grass Alive," "Doin' My Time," "Me and My Old Banjo," "Foggy Mountain Rock," "Kentucky," "Rocky Top," "Bluegrass Melodies" and a medley of "My Favorite Memory," "You Win Again" and "Today I Started Lovin' You Again." Item No. V7G - \$29.95

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BILLY RAY CYRUS

One on One - 25 mins.
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Buried Treasures

by Rich Kienzle

Merle Haggard: Times change. Two years ago, too few of Merle Haggard's classic Capitol recordings were available. Today, two tribute albums and a Hall of Fame induction later, Haggard fans can reap an abundance of his best material.

For the many Haggard-philosophers who want it all, Bear Family's *Untamed Hawk* (BCD 15744) begins at the beginning, reissuing all 133 Tally and Capitol recordings on five CD's. Eight were never before issued, and several are included with and without string or voice overdubs recorded from 1962 through 1968. That includes all his hit singles and LP's recorded during that time. Only *Same Train, A Different Time*, his Jimmie Rodgers tribute LP, previously reissued by Bear (with one unreleased song) is excluded. The earliest Tally material reflected a new artist finding his way. Even the "Bakersfield Sound" isn't as apparent early on. His first record, "Skid Row," was excellent, as was "Life in Prison." Others, like the lame Tommy Collins novelty, "Sam Hill," aren't even funny the first time. His first hit, Wynn Stewart's "Sing a Sad Song," reflects the strong vocal influence of Marty Robbins. He started finding his voice (and the distinctive instrumental sound of his band) on later Tally discs, including his rearranged "Walking the Floor Over You" and some great duets with Bonnie Owens.

Hitwise, Hag hit his stride in 1964 with his recording of "Strangers" on Tally. By 1965 he was at Capitol. The bulk of this material is beyond criticism, though the earlier songs are upbeat novelties, sung in a Buck Owens style. The Haggard we know really emerged in 1965 with "Swinging Doors" and in 1966 with "Someone Told My Story." Soon he was writing "Branded Man," "Sing Me Back Home" and other music for the ages.



Among the previously unreleased material is a 1966 Nashville session featuring his first version of "I'm a Lonesome Fugitive," cut nearly five months before the released version.

The booklet is loaded with excellent photographs and a fine discography. Annotator Dale Vinicur spent time interviewing Haggard, who totally cooperated for this project, as did some of The Strangers. Yet the notes themselves are disappointing and superficial. You wouldn't know Hag cooperated at all, as little as he's quoted. Too often, she winds up relying on his autobiography. Haggard's new insights into his older music and recordings would have been valuable, yet none of that appears. Worse yet, at times Vinicur waxes pretentious, particularly in her introduction.

Koch International has delayed their releases of several classic Hag Capitol LP's on CD until August, but they've just reissued Haggard's *A Tribute to the Best Damn Fiddle Player in the World* (KOC 7900). In the interest of full disclosure, the new liner notes are an expanded and reworked version of the Classic Albums article I wrote on this set that appeared in Issue Number 5 of *The Journal* (October 1991). This was the 1970 Bob Wills tribute album, the one credited with starting the Western swing revival.

On it, Hag (who taught him-

self fiddle in six months), various Strangers and six former Texas Playboys recreated the post-war Wills sound for an audience that in many cases had never heard it. To that audience of Haggard fans outside the Southwest, Wills' music was brand new. The selections include "Brown Skin Gal," "Right or Wrong," "Brain Cloudy Blues," "Stay All Night," "Misery," "Time Changes Everything," "New San Antonio Rose," "I Knew The Moment I Lost You," "Roly Poly," "Old Fashioned Love," "Corrine, Corrina" and "Take Me Back to Tulsa." The new version also includes complete recording dates and session personnel researched by Patrick Milligan.

The Osborne Brothers: The classic recordings of banjoist Sonny Osborne and his brother, mandolinist Bobby Osborne, have long been worthy of a boxed set. Bear Family's *The Osborne Brothers: 1956-1968* (BCD 15598) covers the first 12 years of their MGM and Decca recording career in its entirety (a second volume, covering later years, is in preparation). The 114 songs (on four CD's) begin in 1956 when The Osbornes were still working with singer-guitarist Red Allen and recording for MGM Records, where they had one mainstream country hit in 1958 with "Once More." Even then, The Osbornes were setting themselves apart from other bluegrass acts. They started

using studio drummer Buddy Harman on sessions in 1957. At their first session they recorded their original version of "Ruby Are You Mad?," a song that later became one of their most popular. After Allen left, Sonny and Bobby continued their individualistic direction, expanding it after joining Decca in 1963. Sonny became a five-string banjo innovator; together they created a unique vocal harmony style.

By 1966 they were recording with piano and electric bass, which enhanced their appeal beyond the bluegrass audience. Along with four unissued Decca sides, all the Osbornes' Decca hits including "Up This Hill and Down," "Roll Muddy River" and their classic version of "Rocky Top" (as well as their 1963 remake of "Ruby") are included. So is their 1968 RCA Camden acoustic instrumental LP, *Foggy Mountain Breakdown*, an album RCA recorded to cash in on the popularity of Flatt and Scruggs' "Foggy Mountain Breakdown," which was heard in the soundtrack to the hit film *Bonnie and Clyde*. The Osbornes couldn't use their names due to their Decca contract, so RCA issued it under the name of The Bluegrass Banjo Pickers. The 24-page booklet features a complete discography and outstanding notes by bluegrass authority Neil Rosenberg (who's written on the Osbornes before) and fiddler-researcher Eddie Stubbs explaining the evolution of their music.

Uncle Dave Macon: County Records has recently reissued their Uncle Dave Macon LP, *Go Long Mule* (CD 3505), on CD. It mixes material recorded by the Grand Ole Opry pioneer from 1926 through 1930 with The Fruit Jar Drinkers, among them such traditional favorites as "Go Long Mule," "Jordan Am a Hard Road to Travel," "Sail Away Ladies," "Rock About Saro Jane," "Over the Mountain,"

Jane," "Over the Mountain," "Hold the Woodpile Down," "I'm Goin' Away in the Morn," "Carve That Possum," "Rabbit in the Pea Patch" and "Backwater Blues." This was the Opry in its earliest incarnation, before Acuff or Bill Monroe ever set foot there, and reflects one of the show's earliest stars at his peak. More extensive reissues of Uncle Dave's material are needed. This one, however, is an excellent introduction.

Mountain Ballads: Another worthy County CD reissue is their *Old Time Mountain Ballads* collection (CD 3504), originally on LP. These are very early traditional songs recorded from 1926 through 1929, most of them from obscure artists. The best known names are those of folk balladeer Buell Kazee, Uncle Dave Macon, Kelly Harrell, Clarence Ashley and the team of Grayson and Whitter. Ashley's "Dark Hollow Blues" is a spooky mixture of blues lyrics. Harrell's "Charles Guiteau" is the story of the 1882 assassination of President James A. Garfield. Uncle Dave (with Sam McGee) sings "The Death of John Henry." This music is an acquired taste for even bluegrass fans, but it's a rewarding experience once one gets past the cruder sound and raw acoustic music. Annotator Charles Wolfe makes an excellent point: many early best-selling "story" records popular with the "old timey" audience were written by schooled composers, sung by equally schooled vocalists like Vernon Dalhart. Authentic mountain singers followed their lead, with far superior results.

Skeeter Davis: RCA's new Essentials series is the label's overdue attempt to redress their neglect of their classic country back catalog. *The Essential Skeeter Davis* (RCA 0763 66536) covers 20 selections from 1953 to 1971, starting with The Davis Sisters' hit, "I Forgot More than You'll Ever Know." The remaining 19 songs focus on Skeeter's solo career, beginning with her 1959 Top Five single, "Set Him Free." "I Can't Help You (I'm

Falling Too)" was her 1960 hit answer to Hank Locklin's "Please Help Me I'm Falling." "My Last Date (With You)" was her vocal version of Floyd Cramer's instrumental hit. Naturally, such later hits as "Optimistic," "Where I Ought to Be" and, of course, "The End of the World," "I Can't Stay Mad At You," "Gonna Get Along Without You Now" and her 1963 version of "Silver Threads and Golden Needles" are included. Her later career is represented by "What Does It Take (To Keep a Man Like You Satisfied)," "I'm a Lover Not a Fighter" and her 1971 "Bus Fare to Kentucky," which she also later named her autobiography. The sole flaw is the booklet design. Someone should throttle the RCA designer who superimposed a page of Colin Escott's notes over a photo. Since the print and the photo tint were identical colors, some lines on the page are nearly unreadable.

Liberty Classics: I've annotated the Liberty Classics Series of vintage LP's issued for the first time with original notes and cover art on CD and cassette, so here's who and what. **Merle Haggard:** In June, 1973, Hag took his Strangers to New Orleans to record a live salute to both Dixieland music and to singer-yodeler Emmett Miller, who made the first recording of "Lovesick Blues" and whose music influenced both Bob Wills and Tommy

Duncan. At the last minute, he decided to re-record the album live in New Orleans that June. The result was *I Love Dixie Blues*, recently reissued by Liberty on CD and cassette (Liberty 32465) as part of their Liberty Legends series. I also annotated the reissue, so facts and nothing more. The album mixed tributes to Miller with some new songs, including three that were hits for Haggard: "Everybody's Had the Blues," "The Emptiest Arms in the World" and Tommy Collins' "Carolyn." Augmenting the Strangers with a clarinet-trumpet-trombone section dubbed The Dixieland Express, he tackled Miller's "Big Bad Bill (Is Sweet William Now)," "Lovesick Blues" and "I Ain't Got Nobody." The show ended, as was customary then, with "Okie From Muskogee" and his POW song, "I Wonder If They Ever Think of Me."

Willie Nelson: In September, 1962, Liberty released *...And Then I Wrote* (Liberty 32464), the result of his successful 1961 hit songs for Faron Young ("Hello Walls"), Billy Walker ("Funny How Time Slips Away") and Patsy Cline ("Crazy"). Willie was not yet a successful solo artist when these songs hit. He was still working the road with Ray Price and his Cherokee Cowboys, but the success led to his Liberty contract in 1961 and

this album in 1962, which included his own Top Ten solo hit, "Touch Me," as well as "Three Days," which had been a hit for Faron in the summer of '62. "Undo the Right" would become a hit single six years later for Willie's old buddy Johnny Bush. The set also includes disc jockey Charlie Williams' original liner notes, which even then equated Willie with other great American pop lyricists.

George Jones: Liberty has also reissued George Jones' first United Artists album, *The New Favorites of George Jones* (Liberty 32463). Released early in 1962, it was built around his hit of the moment: "She Thinks I Still Care." Other numbers included "Root Beer," a spinoff of his earlier hit "White Lightning," the Buck Owens-Ray Price styled shuffle "Imitation of Love" and the haunting "Open Pit Mine," a song of love, murder and suicide that was George's third hit for UA. George also covered two songs by his old friend J.P. Richardson, better known as the legendary Big Bopper. One was "Running Bear," a hit for Johnny Preston, and the other was "Beggar to a King."

Ernie Ford & Glen Campbell: In 1975 Glen Campbell, Tennessee Ernie Ford and a bass player recorded *Ernie Sings and Glen Picks* (Liberty 32466). On this one, Campbell largely confines his contributions to the guitar, occasionally interjecting a comment or a vocal harmony as Ernie sings. Ernie did a similar 1964 acoustic LP for Capitol. Producer Steve Stone (son of Ernie's former manager Cliffie Stone) decided to revisit that acoustic concept. The songs were oldies, ranging from the blues "Trouble in Mind," Don Gibson's "(I'd Be) A Legend in My Time" and Dallas Frazier's "There Goes My Everything" to Harlan Howard's "She Called Me Baby," Floyd Tillman's "I Gotta Have My Baby Back" and three Kris Kristofferson tunes: "For the Good Times," "Loving Her Was Easier" and "Nobody Wins," as well as the Eddy Arnold oldie, "I Really Don't Want to Know."

How to Get These Treasures

Available in formats shown at prices shown: Merle Haggard, *Untamed Hawk* (BCD 15744), a 5-CD boxed set, \$149.95/Merle Haggard, *Tribute to the Best Damn Fiddle Player...* (KOC 7900), cassette or CD, \$12.95 cassette, \$22.95 CD/Osborne Brothers, *1956-1968* (BCD 15598), a 4-CD boxed set, \$119.95/Uncle Dave Macon, *Go Long Mule* (CD 3505), CD only \$19.95/Various Artists, *Old Time Mountain Ballads* (CD 3504), CD only, \$19.95/Skeeter Davis, *The Essential Skeeter Davis* (RCA 0763-66536), cassette or CD, \$13.95 cassette, \$19.95 CD/Merle Haggard, *I Love Dixie Blues* (Liberty 32465), cassette or CD, \$11.95 cassette, \$19.95 CD/Willie Nelson, *...And Then I Wrote* (Liberty 32464), cassette or CD, \$11.95 cassette, \$19.95 CD/George Jones, *The New Favorites of George Jones* (Liberty 32463), cassette or CD, \$11.95 cassette, \$19.95 CD/Tennessee Ernie Ford and Glen Campbell, *Ernie Sings and Glen Picks* (Liberty 32466), cassette or CD, \$11.95 cassette, \$19.95 CD. Send check or money order payable to Nashville Warehouse, Dept. 070895, P.O. Box 292553, Nashville, Tennessee 37229. Add \$3.95 postage and handling. Canadian orders, add an additional \$3.00 postage. **CMSA Members, see For Members Only page for discounts.** Offer expires November 30, 1995

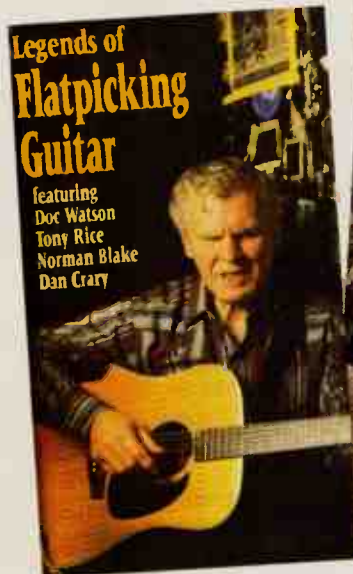
Essential Collector by Rich Kienzle

■ Recordings ■

RCA Essentials: It may seem odd to see reissues in Essential Collector, but there's a reason why they're sometimes here. Buried Treasures covers reissues from the beginning up to the early 70's. Anything notable from a later date (like the later Varese Sarabande reissues we covered last month) will appear here, though we can't cover every single hits package. Except for the Skeeter Davis release, the first round of RCA's Essentials Series (available on cassette or CD) concentrates on the work of more recent artists.

Vince Gill: *The Essential Vince Gill* (RCA 66535) covers the early portion of Gill's career, when he had his first RCA hits, from 1984 through 1988 (after that he went to MCA, where he found solid stardom). At RCA, his potential was clear early on, and this set covers all of his chart hits plus additional songs. He was fortunate in those days to have some excellent producers, most notably Emory Gordy Jr., who was just beginning his production career. Starting with his first RCA hit, a 1984 cover of Delbert McClinton's "Victim of Life's Circumstances," the line-up proceeds through "Oh Carolina," "Turn Me Loose," "Livin' the Way I Do," "True Love," "Oklahoma Borderline," "With You," "Cinderella," "Let's Do Something," "Everybody's Sweetheart" and "The Radio." Surprisingly absent from this collection is "If It Weren't for Him," his 1985 Top Ten single with a cameo appearance by Rosanne Cash. Included, however, is the previously unreleased original 1988 version of "I Never Knew Lonely," the song that when re-recorded would become his third Top Ten on MCA.

Dolly Parton: *The Essential Dolly Parton Volume 1* (RCA 66533) concentrates not on her early solo hits, recorded while still working with Porter Wag-



oner. Those will be covered on a subsequent volume. These 20 songs cover her glitziest pop period, from 1976 through 1984, when Dolly was focusing on her movie career and cross-over fare. Opening with "9 to 5," from 1980, it includes "To Daddy" (one of her later Porter-produced recordings), "Two Doors Down" (1978), "You're the Only One," "Old Flames Can't Hold a Candle to You," "Sweet Summer Lovin'" and "Starting Over Again" (1979) and "But You Know I Love You" (1980).

From 1981 comes "Single Women." 1982 saw the success of "Do I Ever Cross Your Mind," "Heartbreak Express" and the re-recording of "I Will Always Love You" that appeared in the movie, *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*. "Islands in the Stream," her hit duet with Kenny Rogers, and The Drifters' old hit, "Save the Last Dance for Me," came from 1983. From the final year, 1984, comes "Think About Love," "Real Love," "Tie Our Love (In a Double Knot)," "God Won't Get You," "Don't Call It Love" and "Tennessee Homesick Blues."

Ronnie Milsap: I certainly hope more volumes of *The Essential Ronnie Milsap* (RCA 66534) are projected, for any-

one expecting a complete cross-section of his music will be disappointed. The early material is completely ignored, and this set covers only a selected portion of his string of Number Ones and Top Tens from 1979 through 1991. This leaves open the possibility of volumes covering the 1973-1978 period plus the later material this set missed. There's no year by year chronology to the running order, though that's understandable for variety's sake. The earliest track is his 1979 hit, "Nobody Likes Sad Songs," followed by "He Got You" and "Cowboys and Clowns." Milsap's revivals of earlier pop and country hits, like The Tune Weavers' 1957 hit, "Happy, Happy Birthday Baby," Joe Henderson's 1962 "Snap Your Fingers" and Ray Price's hit, "Don't You Ever Get Tired (Of Hurting Me)," all dovetail nicely with Milsap's 1950's tribute, "Lost in the Fifties Tonight." Also included is his duet with Kenny Rogers, "Make No Mistake, She's Mine." Still, while his Number 11 hit, "All Is Fair in Love and War," appears, an awful lot of Number Ones are missing, including "Smokey Mountain Rain," "There's No Gettin' Over Me," "Am I Losing You" and so on. Also missing is his

biggest hit of all, "My Heart." Hopefully subsequent volumes will pick up the later material left behind. I also can't fathom why, when the other sets have recording information, this one has a pointless photo spread.

Time-Warp Tophands: Texas steel guitarist Tom Morrell has been making instrumental records for years, most of them excellent if underexposed. A few years ago he began organizing Western swing recording sessions (and occasional performances) with select groups of topflight Texas and Southwestern musicians, released as Tom Morrell and The Time-Warp Tophands. The uniformly high quality of Morrell's modern Western swing, combining sophisticated playing with an outstanding mix of swing, country, cowboy and jazz material, is easily on a par with Asleep at the Wheel's best Capitol material from the mid-to-late 70's. There are too many combinations of musicians to list, but in short, the "name" musicians include guitarists Tommy Allsup, Benny Garcia, ex-Pee Wee King/Bob Wills (non-pedal) steel player Bobby Koefler, vocalists Leon Rausch, Don Edwards, Craig Chambers and former Asleep at the Wheeler Chris O'Connell, pianist Johnny Case and former Texas Playboy pianist Pee Wee Lynn, drummer Tommy Perkins and a number of horn players.

Four of their albums were issued on cassette only. In 1994 they issued two albums on CD. Of the six, four feature cartoon covers drawn by Morrell himself. It's impossible to list all tracks, but among the high points of each album are as follows: *How the West Was Swung* (PTS-3002) features 13 numbers, among them the Noel Boggs steel favorite "Steelin' Home," Wills' "Texas Blues" and "When the Bloom Is on the Sage" sung by Don Edwards, and Leon Rausch singing Wills favorites "Sweet Kind of Love," "I Can't Go on This Way" and "I Didn't Realize," among others.

*Let's Ride With Bob and Tommy (How the West Was Swung Vol. 2—hereafter referred to as HTWWS) (WR 0002) features steel from both Morrell and Koefer and 11 songs, including "Let's Ride With Bob," a tremendous "Mean Woman With Green Eyes" sung by Rausch, and a number of swing instrumental chestnuts, among them "Stompin' at The Savoy," "My Mother's Eyes" and the closing tune, a roaring version of the 1940's Benny Goodman favorite, "Mission to Moscow." Let's Take Another Ride With Bob and Tommy (HTWWS Vol. 3) (WR 0003) continues the ideas of the earlier set with 11 songs (two repeated from the previous set) featuring terrific versions of "Ida Red" and "Ten Years" sung by Rausch, Lanny Long's vocal performance of "Don't Cry Baby" and two Koefer instrumentals, "Blue Mist" and "A Little Bit West of Dixie." Though a little of Morrell's humor in retitling songs and making lame puns goes a long way on this and later sets, the jazzy *Pterodactyl Tales (HTWWS Vol. 4) (WR 0004)* is even more potent musically, featuring as it does ex-Merle Haggard lead guitarist Clint Strong, one of the few great young country jazzers left. Their versions of "Mood Indigo," "I Can't Give You Anything But Love," "It Had to Be You" and particularly the Stan Kenton big band favorite, "Painted Rhythm," are the best among 11 outstanding performances.*

The CD's, both recorded in 1994, are better yet. The 17-song *Go Uptown (HTWWS Vol. 5)*, features performances so intense that they'd bring a smile to Bob Wills himself. Beginning with Tommy Dorsey favorite "Opus #1" (titled "Lupus #1"—another piece of weird Morrell humor), the band kicks through two Bob Wills blues favorites: "Stingeree" and "Blackout Blues." They also supercharge "Across the Alley from the Alamo," and "Trouble in Mind." The star of this album is Chris O'Connell, whose vocals on "I Got a Right to Cry," "If You're So Smart How Come You Ain't Rich," "Flippity Flop Flop" and particularly "It Don't Mean a Thing If It Ain't Got That

Swing" are, hands down, the best she's ever recorded. The ending song, the old Will Bradley orchestra favorite, "Celery Stalks at Midnight," is sheer perfection.

The 18-song *Smoke a Little of This! (HTWWS Vol. 6) (WR 0006)* focuses on more Western swing and cowboy favorites, most of the swing tunes sung by Rausch, the cowboy songs by Edwards, with a few others in between from Chambers and Long. Among them are "River Road Two-Step," the Cindy Walker novelty "Tater Pie," "Boot Heel Drag," "Sugar Moon," "Let Me Talk to You," "Empty Saddles," "Sioux City Sue," "End of the Line," "King Without a Queen," "Roly Poly" and nine more. I've heard great modern Western swing, but even the best of it takes a back seat to Morrell's phenomenal creativity. Not content to rehash the old favorites, he and his musicians give them the kind of life that reminds everyone of the enduring vitality and excitement of the music Bob Wills and Milton Brown created over 60 years ago.

▪ Videos ▪

Old-Time Music Videos: Now, for two videos I'm sure our esteemed editor in chief will want in his collection. *Legends of Old Time Music*, a 58-minute video, features 29 rare performances from a number of performers who played traditional Appalachian music, the kind that was around long

before anyone put it on record. The mix is impressive and the playing varied. The legendary "high lonesome" Kentucky singer-banjoist-guitarist Roscoe Holcomb, who mixed blues, gospel and traditional Appalachian music into his sound, can be heard on five solo performances, among them the incredible "Graveyard Blues" and the haunting "Little Birdie." Three other performances filmed at a square dance team Holcomb, a fiddler and a guitarist. North Carolina's legendary Clarence Ashley is featured on "Free Little Bird" and "The Cuckoo." Fiddler Tommy Jarrell performs "Drunken Hiccups" and uses a fretless banjo for "John Henry." Sam McGee, the Tennessee fingerpicking guitarist who worked the Opry for decades with his brother Kirk and with Uncle Dave Macon, picks out the more modern "Wheels" and the traditional "Mississippi Sawyer." Doc Watson, with guitarist Clint Howard and Fred Price, is heard in the early 60's doing "Way Downtown," "Daniel Prayed" and "Lee Highway Blues." Others featured include dulcimer player Jean Ritchie, Pete Steel, Corbett Grigsby and The Walker Family, all providing a sort of time travel to a day before records, radio and video.

Legends of Flatpicking Guitar, a 90-minute video, features some of today's best flatpickers, beginning with Doc Watson doing "Black Mountain Rag" and

"Peach Pickin' Time in Georgia" as well as performances with his late son Merle Watson and two other numbers with young guitarist Jack Lawrence. Tony Rice's All Star Jam features Rice, Ricky Skaggs, Mark O'Connor, Bela Fleck and Jerry Douglas on "Freeborn Man," "Nine Pound Hammer," "Cold On the Shoulder" and "White-water." Rice, better known for his progressive playing, teams with Skaggs for two old-timey duets. Two other traditional numbers feature Rice with his progressive acoustic band, The Tony Rice Unit. Bluegrass guitar virtuoso Dan Crary puts his spin on the old Reno and Smiley number, "Country Boy Rock 'n' Roll," "Lady's Fancy," a traditional medley, and "Black Mountain Rag." Five performances from Norman Blake and The Rising Fawn String Ensemble cover considerable traditional ground.

▪ Books ▪

Martin Guitar Book: A nice companion for the flatpicking video is Walter Carter's *The Martin Guitar Book*. Carter, who has done other outstanding work in researching and writing about vintage guitars, doesn't go into the same detail in this 108-pager as Martin historian Mike Longworth did in his earlier Martin book. Yet with scads of color photos of Martins dating back to the earliest surviving models from the 1830's (with a six-in-a-row headstock that anticipated Fender's by 120 years), this one's well worth having, even if you have Longworth's. Samples of each type of Martin appear, among them rarities like their 1902 harp-guitar. Surrounding each illustration are detail shots and Martin memorabilia including pages from old catalogs and old handwritten invoices. Throughout the book, large foldout pages of significant models and other sizes and styles to the present are well-represented. The book's current enough to include the company's 1994 limited edition run of Gene Autry's original 1933 D-45. A reference section in the rear details all body shapes and decorative styles.

How to Get These Collectibles

Recordings: Vince Gill, *The Essential Vince Gill* (RCA 66535), \$13.95 cassette, \$19.95 CD/Dolly Parton, *The Essential Dolly Parton* (RCA 66533), \$13.95 cassette, \$19.95 CD/Ronnie Milsap, *The Essential Ronnie Milsap* (RCA 66534), \$13.95 cassette, \$19.95 CD/Time-Warp Tophands, *How the West Was Swung (PTS-3002)*, *Let's Ride with Bob and Tommy (WR 0002)*, *Let's Take Another Ride with Bob and Tommy (WR 0003)*, and *Pterodactyl Tales (WR 0004)*, available on cassette only, \$11.95 each cassette/Time-Warp Tophands, *Go Uptown (WR 0005)* and *Smoke a Little of This (WR 0006)*, available on CD only, \$17.95 each CD. **Videos:** Various Artists, *Legends of Old-Time Music (VSL)*, \$24.95/Various Artists, *Legends of Flatpicking Guitar (V8M)* \$24.95. **Books:** Walter Carter, *The Martin Guitar Book (B9K)* \$22.95. Send check or money order to Nashville Warehouse, Dept. 070895EC, P.O. Box 290216, Nashville, Tennessee 37229. Add \$3.95 postage and handling per order. Canadian orders, add \$3.00 extra for postage. **CMSA members, see For Members Only page for discounts.**

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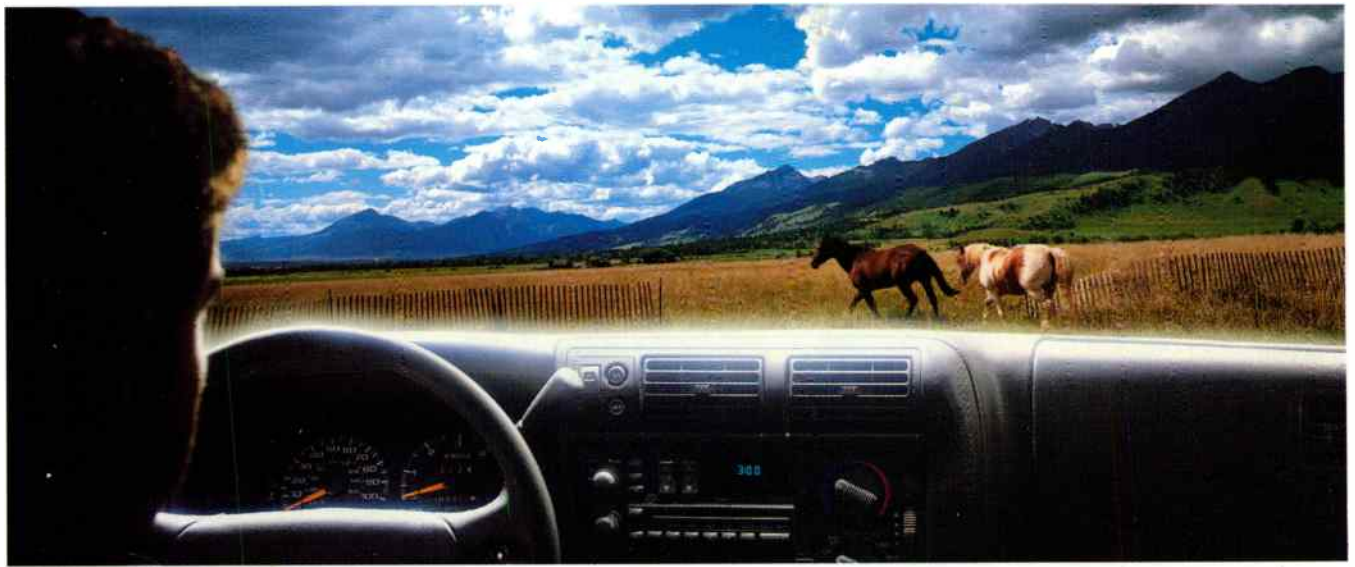


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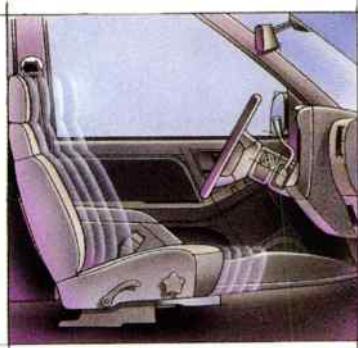
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