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AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1999

GARTH BROOKS Mogul or Madman?

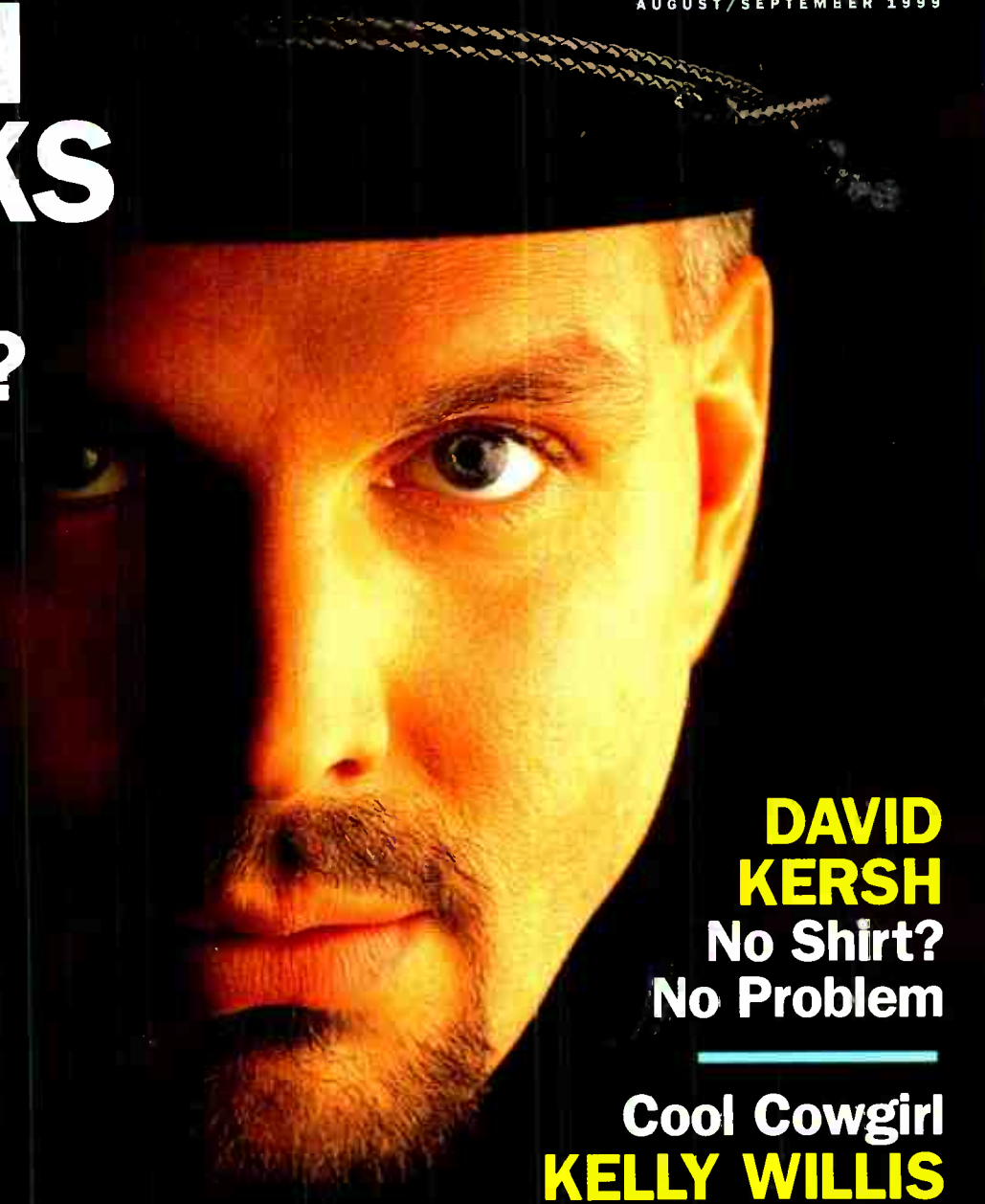
A 'Thousand' Reasons To Love **DWIGHT YOAKAM**

MICHAEL PETERSON
Too Sensitive For Country?

A Treasure Hunt With **DAVID BALL**

DAVID KERSH
No Shirt? No Problem

Cool Cowgirl **KELLY WILLIS**



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World Radio History

COUNTRYMUSIC

August/September 1999

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From country's biggest star to music's top-selling solo act; from Major League hopeful to movie mogul—these days Garth Brooks is a man of many faces. His fame is growing in all directions, with no apparent boundaries. Does he know when to stop?

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Every day in the *Country Music* offices, we receive at least a dozen faxes from news organizations and Music Row publicists, updating us about artists and industry happenings. And every day, without fail, a news item about Garth Brooks is near the top of most of those lists.

IN FACT, it's become the source of many an office joke: "Wonder if Garth's brushed his teeth today—check the fax and find out." "Time to make the coffee and pick up the latest Garth news!" "We're all-Garth, all the time!"

Kidding aside, there's a reason Brooks is the subject of so many news reports. He's always doing something to capture our attention—in fact, he's made a career of it. He seems to thrive on the intrigue he generates: Is he a down-home, humble Oklahoma boy or a viciously ambitious businessman? Is he refreshingly sincere or completely contrived? Has he become obsessed with his goal of selling 100 million albums? What *was* that whole take-me-out-to-the-ball-game deal—did he really believe he could make it in Major League Baseball? And now he's in high gear on one of the riskiest and most audacious career moves yet: A pop album by an alter ego, Chris Gaines, which serves as a "prequel" to a feature film, in which he hopes to star.

Reeling from the whiplash of assessing his widely varied endeavors, we (and a lot of other people) wondered: What is up with Garth? Brooks himself wouldn't give us an interview—his publicist said he was concerned that we'd give the story a "negative slant" because we were using a writer who'd been critical of Brooks in the past. So we were left to dig on our own, through interviews with friends and associates, for insights into the method behind this seeming madness. Were we fair and balanced with our story? We think so, but now it's up to you to decide.

Garth may not have been directly involved in his story, but several other artists in this issue went beyond the call of duty to make their features exceptional. David Kersh bravely faced a mob of adoring female fans for his photo session, and David Ball trekked with us into the Tennessee wilderness to dig up a bit of history (see photos above). Michael Peterson allowed us to poke, prod and pose him during an extended photo session at the Ryman Auditorium. And perched precariously amid a floor full of thorns, Kelly Willis gave new meaning to sitting pretty. Now *that's* paying dues!

DEBORAH BARNES
Editor-in-Chief



DANNY TURNER



CAROL HARPER

A hand-picked group of lucky David Kersh fans didn't have any trouble at all "ripping" into our photo shoot with the charismatic young hitmaker (top); David Ball "rocks" for photographer Alan Messer.

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DETROIT ADVERTISING OFFICE
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Southfield, MI 48076
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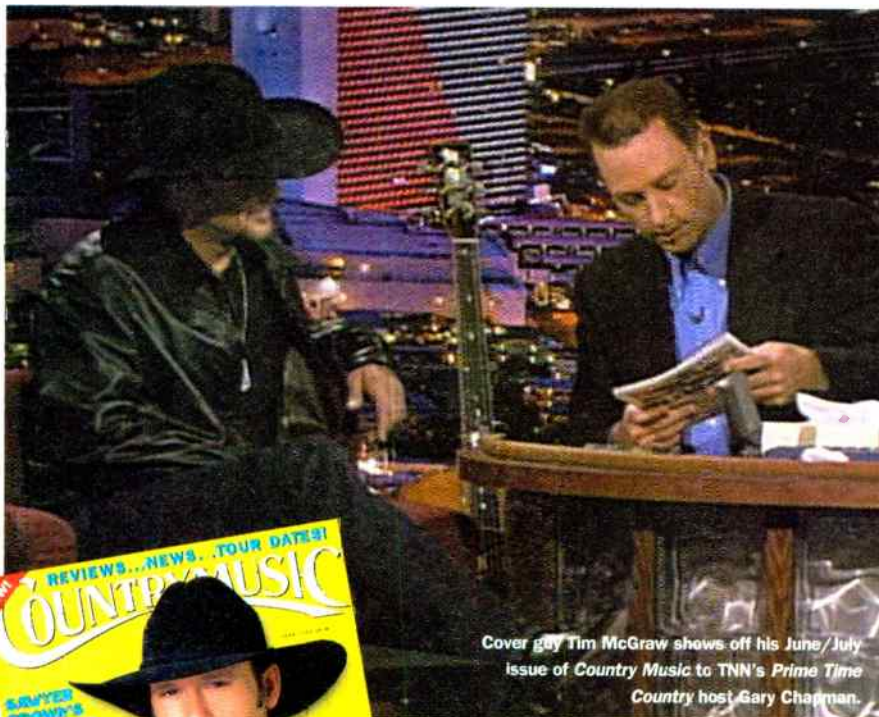
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Cover guy Tim McGraw shows off his June/July issue of *Country Music* to TNN's *Prime Time* Country host Gary Chapman.

article was well-written and informative. Mr. Ketchum may be "awaiting redemption" but his die-hard fans are "waiting for Hal."

James Chapin
Hanlontown, Iowa

SETTING THINGS STRAIGHT

THANKS SO MUCH for correcting my birthdate. I was actually born June 5, not April 4. It was printed wrong in a book years ago and nobody has ever bothered to correct it. I appreciate your commitment to accuracy. I also want to compliment you on the look of the magazine. I saw it on the newsstand and it really stood out. When I opened it up, I found an article on Mandy Barnett, an artist I used to produce for Liberty Records. It was well-written and informative, so I bought the magazine. It was money well spent. I've enjoyed reading everything in it—the debates, the interviews and the personal touches. Congratulations on a job well done.

Gail Davies
Nashville, Tennessee



this great artist for the first time. Kudos to Mr. Oermann for a job well done.

D. Kent Miller
Weatherford, Texas

NEAL APPEAL

LOVE YOUR MAGAZINE and the nice article about Neal McCoy. But I'm glad we live in a free country where everybody has a right to his/her opinion about Neal not being a "hunk of beefcake" like somebody else. Neal is just a *hunk*. Thanks for mentioning his TNN *Music City News* Entertainer of the Year award. Another magazine doesn't mention it at all because it's sponsored by a competing magazine. Neal deserves all the recognition he is getting plus much more. Love ya Neal!

Pam Johnson
Cresco, Iowa

HOORAY FOR HAL

I WAS OVERJOYED to finally see Hal Ketchum is on the "road to redemption" as you put it. I am a long-time country music fan, and Hal has always been No. 1 on my list. The

STOP ROASTING CHESNUTT

I MUST EXPRESS MY OPINION on Geoffrey Himes' review of Mark Chesnutt's *I Don't Want to Miss a Thing*. First of all, just because Aerosmith recorded the title song first doesn't mean it's rock. Mark does a wonderful job of keeping it country, not just on that particular song, but on all of his songs. Many so-called country stars today cross over to the pop charts all the time, and they try to pass their pop or rock-sounding music off as country. Mr. Chesnutt is sticking with his original style. For Mr. Himes to say that he is attempting to cross over is just wrong! I only hear Mr. Chesnutt on country stations. As for other so-called country mega-stars—well, let's just say they are the ones straying from their roots.

Cindy Christian
Macon, Georgia

LOOKING GOOD

I THOROUGHLY ENJOY the "new" *Country Music* magazine. The new format is easy on the eyes and the articles are most readable. I particularly liked the feature story on Ricky Skaggs in the June/July issue. The photo of Skaggs and Keith Whitley in their teens playing with Ralph Stanley's group is priceless. Regarding history, please keep the *Journal* alive. Perusing the *Journal* is the highlight of my reading experience when I receive your publication. Robert Oermann's treatment of Hank Thompson is especially effective in the June/July issue. Even though I have read much about Thompson over the years, Oermann treats the topic with such facility that it is like reading about

I JUST HAD TO COMMENT on Geoffrey Himes' review of Mark Chesnutt's "I Don't Want to Miss a Thing." He calls it a gooey, phony ballad. Did he really listen to the song? Yes, Chesnutt is a great hard-country singer, but he also sings Diane Warren's song beautifully. It's his fastest selling single and he took the song to No. 1. Chesnutt is one of the most underrated singers today. And although Mr. Himes calls Diane Warren a "Hollywood hack," I think her songs are fantastic. Look at LeAnn Rimes' version of "How Do I Live," which stayed on the pop charts for 56 weeks. Look at the success Trisha Yearwood had with the same song, and how popular Tim and Faith made "Just to Hear You Say That You Love Me." Enough said!

Helen Vitunjski
Burlington, Ontario

PARTY ON, GARTH

I AM WRITING TO SAY that I'm glad there are artists like Garth Brooks who aren't afraid to try new things when entertaining their fans. I feel that's why—along with his talent and sensitivity—he's achieved so much so fast. I have had the pleasure of seeing Garth in concert four times, and every concert contained that element. He was working as hard to entertain the nosebleed section as those in the front row. Garth makes sure every fan gets their money's worth and more. Thanks, Garth, for those wonderful nights. Keep doing what you're doing and you can't go wrong.

Cindy Worley
Tabor City, North Carolina

TREASURE TROVE

I'M WRITING TO TELL YOU how much I enjoy the *Journal*. It is my favorite part of *Country Music* magazine. While you feature the latest mainstream country superstars on the outside cover, the real treasures are tucked in the *Journal*. My all-time

favorite is the queen of country, Loretta Lynn. I've seen Loretta in concert over 150 times and it's a joy to see this living legend every time. Keep up the great work and I hope to see Loretta in your pages soon.

Rick Cornett
Toledo, Ohio

LOVES LORRIE

I WANT TO CONGRATULATE the sexiest woman in country music for her new album, *My Heart*. Lorrie Morgan is a true country singer. I love her choice of words in her songs. Her records make her No. 1. Keep it up, Lorrie, I'm pulling for you.

Al Baisley
Highland Mills, New York



SORRY, CHARLIE

AFTER READING THE interview with Charlie Daniels in your last issue, I wanted to write and remind Mr. Daniels and my fellow readers of a few reassuring facts. In this century alone, our country has survived two world wars,

two wars in Asia, an economic depression of global proportions and the exploding of the nuclear bomb. When you consider these things, what President Clinton may have done in his private life seems unlikely to threaten the foundation of the country, as Mr. Daniels suggests. Perhaps in a few years, instead of lamenting the President's behavior in his personal life, we will be remembering him for the many good things he did for all of us.

Chris Davis
Clayton, North Carolina

CHESNEY CHEERS AND JEERS

WHEN YOU'RE SICK OF BEING a sheep in the crowd you tend to lash out at those that have risen above and become successful. Kenny Chesney is living the American dream and making money at it. He has a strong voice and expresses his own unique personality. I am obviously not the only one that enjoys Kenny's music. Mr. Lanham's review of *Everywhere We Go* was out of line.

Jennifer Long
Honolulu, Hawaii

I COULDN'T AGREE MORE with Tom Lanham's review of Kenny Chesney's *Everywhere We Go*. Thanks for having the guts to buck the system and print an honest review. There is so much great country music that gets pushed to the side because of fluff like this. Like Mr. Lanham says, "It's just not funny anymore." Listeners need to know they have choices. Your album review department showcases a wonderful cross-section of those choices. Thanks.

Michael Reilly
Chicago, Illinois

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Country on the Town

By Robert K. Oermann

RIVERSTAGE, BACKSTAGE

Trisha Yearwood is a music fan who's as likely to be in the audience as on the stage. When rocker **Courtney Love** and her band, Hole, played at the Riverstages festival in Nashville, Yearwood showed up backstage to wish her well.



FANS FROM TV LAND!

◀ **Stonewall Jackson**, left, greets actor **Lane Smith**, formerly of TV's *Lois & Clark*, at the Opry. ▼ **Jessica Andrews**, center, met the cast of *Another World* when she performed on the late, lamented soap.



BIG COUNTRY



Martina McBride: Evolution Wrong Again, etc. (RCA) 20476
Martina McBride: Wild Angels (RCA) 03241

Mark Wills: *Wish You Were Here* (Capitol Nashville) 23073
 Clint Black: *Nothin' But The Tights* (Mercury Nashville) 20287

Shania Twain: *The Woman In Me* (Mercury Nashville) 06935
 Vince Gill: *High Lonesome Sound* (MCA) 13623

Emmylou Harris: *Duets* (Reprise) 00575
 Flatt & Scruggs: *The Complete Mercury Sessions* (Mercury) 02432

Shania Twain: *Come On Over That Don't Impress Me Much* more (Mercury) 21360

Dixie Chicks: *Wide Open Spaces* You Think Mine more (Sony) 23018

Wade Hayes: *Old Enough To Know Better* (Columbia/DKC Music) 05211

Joe Duffie: *Third Rock From The Sun* (Epic) 08237

Patty Loveless: *Unleashed* (MCA) #5860

Best Of The Kentucky Headhunters: *Still Pickin'* (Mercury) 06044

Amazing Grace—A Country Salute To Gospel (Various Artists) (Mercury) 08353

Hank Williams: *24 Greatest Hits* (Mercury Nashville) 08654

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Lyle Lovett: *Joshua Judge* Ruth (MCA/Curb) 10598

Keith Whitley: *Greatest Hits* (RCA) 10728

Mary Chapin Carpenter: *Shooting Straight In The Dark* (Columbia) 10697

Willie Nelson: *Always On My Mind* (Columbia) 11410

Rick Trevino: *Looking For The Light* (Columbia) 11150

BR5-49: *Big Backyard Beat* (Arista) 25082

Trisha Yearwood: *Where Your Road Leads* *Powerful Thing* more (MCA) 25189

David Allan Coe: *For The Record—The First 10 Years* (Columbia) 10903

Doug Supernaw: *You Still Got Me* (Giant) 11299

Ricky Van Shelton: *A Bridge I Didn't Burn* (Columbia) 11485

Ricky Van Shelton: *Greatest Hits Plus* (Columbia) 11486

Tammy Wynette: *Anniversary—20 Years Of Hits* (Epic) 11572

Vince Gill: *The Key* (MCA) 25622

Merle Haggard: *Vintage Collections* (Vintage/Capitol Nashville) 11764

Trace Adkins: *Dreamin' Out Loud* (Capitol Nashville) 13074

David Lee Murphy: *Gettin' Out The Good Stuff* (MCA Nashville) 13573

Carlene Carter: *Hindsight 20/20* (Giant) 15720

Pandy Travis: *Full Circle* (Warner Bros.) 15233

George Jones: *I Lived To Tell It All* (MCA Nashville) 15758

Deana Carter: *Did I Shave My Legs For This?* (Capitol Nashville) 15819

John Berry: *Faces* (Capitol Nashville) 15874

John Anderson: *Greatest Hits* (BNA) 16065

Darley Singletary: *All Because Of You* (Giant) 16063

Alan Jackson: *Everything I Love* (Arista Nashville) 16205

Johnny Cash: *Unchained* *W Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers* (American) 16310



Alabama: For The Record—41 Number One Hits (RCA Nashville) # 25521
Alabama: Dancin' On The Boulevard (RCA) 18205

Diamond Rig: *Unbelievable* (Arista Nashville) 25268

Reba McEntire: *What If It's You* (MCA Nashville) 16380

Mark Chesnut: *Greatest Hits* (Decca/MCA) 16550

Tracy Lawrence: *The Coast Is Clear* (Atlantic Nashville) #6988

Tanya Tucker: *Complicated* (Capitol Nashville) #8199

Big House (MCA Nashville) 18252

Clay Walker: *Rumor Has It* (Giant) 18324

The Essential Bill Monroe & The Monroe Brothers (RCA) 18423

Aaron Tippin: *Greatest Hits... And Then Some* (RCA) 18433

Jazz & Blues



Buddy Guy: Falls Like Rain (Savoy) 01264

The Immortal Charlie Parker (Savoy Jazz) 02413

Eric Clapton: *From The Cradle* (Warner Bros.) 06025

Sonny Rollins: *Saxophone Colossus* (Prestige Fantasy) 06244

Oscar Peterson: *The More I See You* (Telarc) 08825

Kenny Wayne Shepherd: *Leadbetter Heights* (Giant) 11561

The Best Of Ella Fitzgerald & Louis Armstrong On Verve (Mercury) 20485

Diana Krall: *Love Scenes* (Impulse) 20627

Kenny G: *Greatest Hits* (Arista) 21442

The Best Of John Mayall & The Bluesbreakers: *As It All Began* (Polygram) 21768

Muddy Waters: *Hard Again* (Blue Sky) 22396

Etta James: *Life, Love & The Blues* (Private Music) 24470

Gr8s Rush: *Any Place I'm Going* (House Of Blues) 25616

Bela Fleck & The Flecktones: *Left Of Cool* (Warner Bros.) 25811

Fourplay: *4 Bob James, Larry Carlton, Nathan East & Harvey Mason* (Warner Bros.) 25812

Medeski Martin & Wood: *Combustion* (Blue Note) 25850

Herbie Hancock: *Gershwin's World* (Verve) 26073

Keb' Mo': *Slow Down* (550 Music) 26273

Royal Crown Revue: *The Convender* (Warner Bros.) 26281

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Freddy King: *King Of The Blues* (EMI) #C 03845



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- METAL Iron Maiden, Pantera
- R&B Brandy, Luther Vandross
- ALTERNATIVE Sarah McLachlan, Beck
- RAP Queen Latifah, Wu-Tang Clan
- DANCE Backstreet Boys, Ace Of Base
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 Doc Watson: Portrait (Sugar Hill) 18544
 Neal McCoy: Greatest Hits (Atlantic Nashville) 18747
 The Best Of Billy Ray Cyrus (Mercury) 18773
 Toby Keith: Dream Walkin' (Mercury) 18774

Chris LeDoux: One Road Man (Capitol Nashville) 25759
 Pam Tillis: Greatest Hits (Arista) 18815
 Kenny Chesney: I Will Stand That's Why I'm Here, more (BNA) 18930
 Diamond Rio: Greatest Hits (Arista Nashville) 20048
 Ricky Skaggs: Life Is A Journey (Atlantic Nashville) 20080
 John Anderson: Takin' The Country Back (Mercury) 20095
 Michael Peterson (Reprise) 20156
 Dwight Yoakam: Under The Covers (Reprise) 20159
 Lila McCann: Lila (Asylum) 20252
 Blackhawk: Love & Gravity (Arista Nashville) 20274
 Bryan White: The Right Place (Alyrium) 20558
 Trisha Yearwood: Songbook—A Collection Of Hits (MCA Nashville) 20618
 Chely Wright: Let Me In (MCA) 20971
 Neal McCoy: Be Good All II (Atlantic Nashville) 21104

BIG SAVINGS!

Lee Ann Womack: Some Things I Know (Decca) 26102
 Mark Chesnut: Thank God For Believers (Decca) 21111
 Billy Ray Cyrus: Shot Full Of Love (Mercury) 26243
 Trace Adkins: Bigtime (Capitol Nashville) 21215
 Toby Keith: Greatest Hits, Volume One (Mercury) 26244
 Sammy Kershaw: Labor Of Love (Mercury) 21359
 Paul Brandt: Outside The Frame (Reprise) 21452
 Rhett Akins: What Livin's All About (Decca) 21729

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 Wade Hayes: When The Wrong One Loves You Right (Columbia) 23011
 Terril Clark: How I Feel (Mercury) 23070
 Tracy Byrd: I'm From The Country On Again Off Again (MCA) 23125
 Joe Ely: Twistin' In The Wind (MCA) 23126
 Gary Allan: It Would Be You (Decca) 23239
 Big House: Travellin' Kind (MCA) 23247
 Restless Heart: Greatest Hits (RCA Nashville) 23261
 Drew Womack: Somethin' Good (Arista) 23826
 Pam Tillis: Every Time (Arista Nashville) 24137
 Suzy Bogguss: Nobody Love, Nobody Gets Hurt (Capitol Nashville) 24162
 Sam Bush: Howlin' At The Moon (Sugar Hill) 24957
 Kevin Sharp: Love Is (Alyrium) 25410
 Ty Herndon: Big Hopes (Epic) 25551
 Billy Dean: Real Man (Capitol Nashville) 25698
 Eddie Rabbit: From The Heart—The Last Recordings (Intersound) 25721
 Willie Nelson: Teatro (Island) 25725
 Randy Scruggs: Crown Of Jewels (Reprise) 25737
 Dwight Yoakam: A Long Way Home (Reprise) 25738
 Collin Raye: The Walls Came Down (Mercury) 26222
 Steve Wariner: The Hits (MCA) 26239
 Brady Seals (Warner Bros.) 26371



Faith Hill: Faith This Kiss, Let Me Let Go, more (Warner Bros.) 25238

Faith Hill: It Matters To Me (Warner Bros.) 02190
 Lorrie Morgan: Secret Love (Arista) 26513
 The Tractors: Farmers In A Changing World (Arista Nashville) 26378
 Travis Tritt: No More Looking Over My Shoulder (Warner Bros.) 26723
 Crystal Bernard: Don't Touch Me There (Reprise) 26915
 Patsy Cline: 12 Greatest Hits (MCA) 53849



John Michael Montgomery: Leave A Mark (Atlantic) 25540
 John Michael Montgomery: Greatest Hits (Atlantic) 21101

Chart Toppers & Other Hits

Creedence Clearwater Revival: Chronicle—20 Greatest Hits (Fantasy) 01520
 Jewel: Pieces Of You (Atlantic) 03972
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 Sarah McLachlan: Surfacing (Arista) 20052
 Everclear: So Much For The Afterglow (Capitol) 21108
 Backstreet Boys: Everybody (Backstreet's Back), more (Jive) 21975
 Will Smith: Big Willie Style (Columbia) 21988
 Celine Dion: Let's Talk About Love (Columbia) 22036
 'N SYNC: I Want You Back more (RCA) 22535
 Natalie Imbruglia: Left Of The Middle (RCA) 22698
 Semisonic: Feeling Strangely Fine (Mercury) 22902
 Jimmy Page & Robert Plant: Walking Into Clarkdale (Atlantic) 24446
 The Best of Santana (Columbia) 24458
 City Of Angels/Sdtrk, Goo Goo Dolls, Sarah McLachlan, Alanis Morissette, etc (Warner Bros.) 24484
 Newsboys: Step Up To The Microphone (Star Song) 24912
 Madonna: Ray Of Light (RCA) 24984
 Point Of Grace: Steady On (Word) 25051
 Monica: The Boy Is Mine (Arista) 25259
 The Brian Setzer Orchestra: The Dirty Boogie (Interscope) 25515
 Barenaked Ladies: Stunt (Arista) 25736
 Deborah Cox: One Wish (Reprise) 25736
 Deborah Cox: One Wish Nobody's Supposed To Be Here more (Arista) 25777
 U.N.K.L.E.: Psyence Fiction (Mo Wax) 25944
 Bryan Adams: On A Day Like Today (A&M) 26199
 Korn: Follow The Leader (Immortal/Epic) 26228
 The Cardigans: Gran Turismo (Mercury) 26242
 Rusted Root (Mercury) 26245
 Enrique Iglesias: Cosas Del Amor (Fonovisa) 26383
 Jim Brickman: Destiny (Windham Hill) 26441
 Shawn Mullins: Soul's Core (Columbia) 26539
 New Radicals: Maybe You've Been Brainwashed Too (Mercury) 26553
 Joni Mitchell: Taming The Tiger (Reprise) 26556
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 Duncan Sheik: Humming (Atlantic) 26696
 Kirk Franklin: The Nu Nation Project (Gospo-Centric) 26777
 Grateful Dead: American Beauty (Warner Bros.) 34539
 ZZ Top: Greatest Hits (Warner Bros.) 83411
 Billy Joel: Greatest Hits, Vols. I & II (Columbia) 05443
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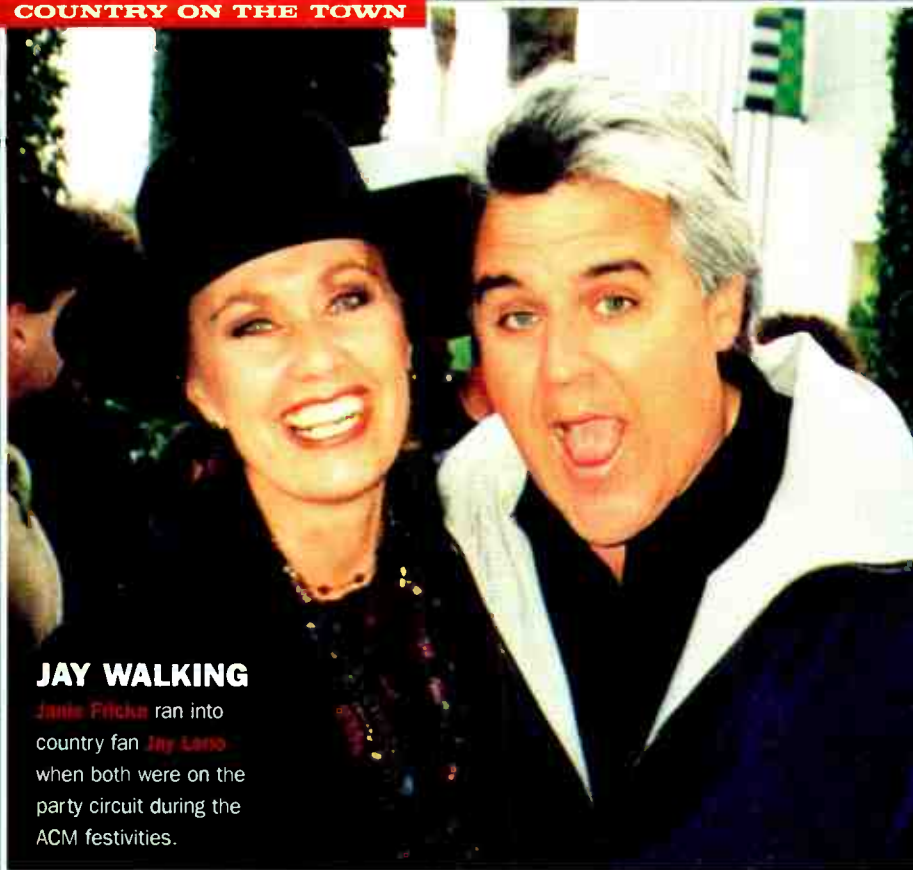
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JAY WALKING

Jamie Fricke ran into country fan Jay Leno when both were on the party circuit during the ACM festivities.



HOLLYWOOD HIGH JINKS

When country's stars take over L.A. during the Academy of Country Music awards, there's no telling what you'll see. ► From top to bottom at right: LeAnn Rimes yuks it up backstage with action hero Chuck Norris. Dixie Chick Emily Erwin arrives at the ceremony with her singing hubby Charlie Robison—they were literally celebrating their honeymoon at the event. Producer Dick Clark goes over the script with big winners Faith Hill and Tim McGraw. ▼ Tracy Lawrence and Kenny Chesney are longtime buddies who are always pulling pranks on each other, so when Lawrence puts a hammerlock on Chesney, the younger star gets all "choked up" for the camera.

ALL AROUND THE ACMs



TOP LEFT: MELISSA SHERGA; BOTTOM LEFT: WU/SUN; RIGHT TOP TO BOTTOM: ANSEL GOLDER/CELEBRITY PHOTO-AGE; FAITH HILL: HHS; TIM MCGRAW: PHOTOFEST; RON WILSON

MUSIC Awards

Esquire

MUSIC Awards



THIS KISS, THIS KISS

◀ **Jo Dee Messina** gets smooches from mom **Mary** and aunt **Theresa**, who are, of course, her biggest fans. ▼ Puckering up backstage are, left to right, **Billy Dean** and **Crystal Bernard**, **Tim McGraw** and **Faith Hill**, **Steve Wariner** and his winning statuette, **Mark Wills** with his, and **Bryan White** and his fiancée. *One Life to Live*'s **Erika Page**.



COUNTRY ON THE TOWN

CASH ADVANCES ONWARD

▼ **Johnny** and **June Carter Cash** joined some 250 of their closest friends at their home in Hendersonville, Tennessee, to celebrate the release of June's *Press On* CD. Below, top to bottom: Johnny, frail from the effects of Shy-Draeger Syndrome, joins the party with June: **Jane Seymour** and June share a quiet moment; **Mark Collie** pals with **George Jones**.

JUNE DAY

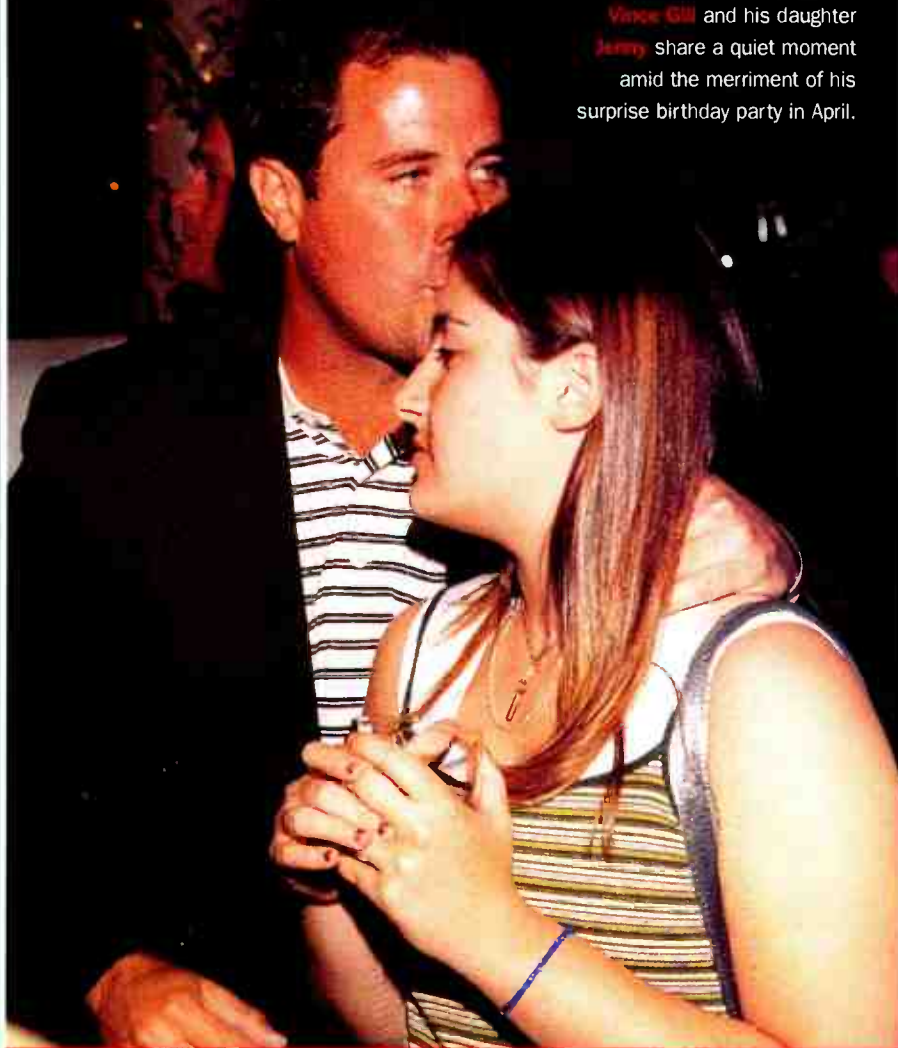


THE FAIREST OF THEM ALL?

▲ Making entrances to remember at the ACMs are, from left, gorgeously gowned gals **Martina McBride**, sleek in sieveless gold; **Faith Hill**, luscious in spiderweb mesh; **Sherrie Austin**, a knockout in strapless black; **Reba McEntire**, regal in silver and white and trailing a train; and actress **Jane Seymour**, a vision in silver appliquéd black.

SURPRISE PARTY OF THE YEAR

Vince Gill and his daughter Jenny share a quiet moment amid the merriment of his surprise birthday party in April.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY VINCE!



GOLF GAME CANCELLED

◀ Reba McEntire and husband Narvel Blackstock were among the folks who surprised Vince at his favorite golf course with a 42nd birthday party. ▶ From top to bottom at right: The birthday boy with Lee Ann Womack; with Chet Atkins and Leona Atkins and Randy Scruggs; and with a gift scrapbook. The event also marked Vince's 10th anniversary with MCA Records, which presented him with an award for selling more than 21 million albums. He was lured to the event under the pretext that he was making a presentation at a golf function. The biggest gift? A 60-inch wide-screen TV.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS

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LEADING LADIES

Lilith Fair founder Sarah McLachlan greets Wynonna, left, and Naomi Judd in L.A. at an event to raise awareness for women's rights in Afghanistan.

CAUSES AND EFFECTS



ON THE 'BENEFIT' BEAT

◀ Terri Clark hugs mom Linda at a benefit in Nashville for a domestic-violence shelter. ▶ Deana Carter tops a pyramid at the Al Del Greco Golf Classic. Del Greco, middle right, is kicker for the NFL's Tennessee Titans. Next to him is Diamond Rio's Marty Roe. On bottom are Titans Frank Wycheck, Jason Layman and Craig Hentrich. ◀ At lower left are Steve Wilkinson, Lila McCann, David Kersh, Amanda Wilkinson and Tyler Wilkinson at a cystic fibrosis benefit in L.A. ▼ Singing out against the death penalty are (below, from left) the Indigo Girls, Sister Helen Prejean, Steve Earle, Jackson Browne and Emmylou Harris.



CLARK: JEFFREY M. HARRIS; DEL GRECO: JEFFREY M. HARRIS; WYCHECK, LAYMAN, HENTRICH: GREGG DEGUZMAN; EARLE: JEFFREY M. HARRIS; PREJEAN: JEFFREY M. HARRIS; BROWNE: JEFFREY M. HARRIS; HARRIS: JEFFREY M. HARRIS

Down in Kaplan, Louisiana, **Sammy Kershaw's** Sam Jam has become quite the event with golf, a concert, celeb auction, softball and a sit-down dinner with all money generated going to kids. My man Sam told me



that his plan is that every child in his home state of Louisiana will have a winter coat. I dare say nobody is stupid enough to object to that plan.

With all the crap written and repeated referring to the late **Tammy Wynette**, it's time someone said thanks to Tammy for the music. Tammy's voice and **Billy Sherrill's** production made some of the finest music ever recorded in this town. Her music caused pop music fans to buy country records. Her honest tear-in-voice pulled heart strings and opened purse strings with standards like "Stand By Your Man," "D-I-V-O-R-C-E" and "I Don't Wanna Play House." The war over Tammy has divided her daughters and her husband and has been waged in front of the public. It's not a pretty sight, each blaming the other, people choosing sides. Whatever the outcome, I want to thank Tammy for the

music and remember her for her down-to-earth, real-life contributions to music. She sang songs to live by. It's sad to me there's not a song to sing now that would help her rest in peace.

Reading for Halloween, Warner Home Video sanctioned my pal **Billy Ray Cyrus** to record "Scooby-Doo, Where Are You." The song is the theme of their Halloween special, *Scooby Doo and the Witch's Ghost*. More and more, Billy Ray is getting into acting and his recording career is hot again. Radio can be sweet when it programs a song like "Busy Man," because the song needs to be heard.

Alabama has always done things differently during their illustrious career. Their latest "different" has got



the foursome looking good to their own teenagers and maybe even has them listening to their old dads' music. It started with a song titled "God Must Have Spent a Little More Time on You," a pop hit by the young group **'N Sync**. Alabama heard the song, liked it and decided to record it. Label boss **Joe Galante** wondered if 'N Sync would be interested in

THE BUZZ



BY HAZEL SMITH

recording the song as a duet with Alabama. They were. They did.

Free at last! Free at last! Good lordy mercy, **Randy Travis** is free at last. The Marshville, N.C., native grew up fast and turned out mean. He frequented bars and spent time behind bars before he saw his 20th birthday. By the grace of God and the love of a good woman named **Lib Hatcher**, Randy has walked the straight and narrow line for years. His days as a

history. A kinder, more gentle man you'd never hope to meet. So Randy, aware that some of his former running-around pals had been given clean records, wanted his own. I'm happy to tell you that **Jim Hunt**, governor of North Carolina, wiped Randy's slate clean. But I do believe Randy earned it, every inch of the way.

Lila McCann was booked in New York on *Live With Regis & Kathie Lee*. Her guitarist flew from Nashville non-

the Red-Headed Stranger. Before dawn broke, a guitar borrowed from Willie was on the way to the studio. The show came off without a hitch. Isn't that a cute story?

Jennifer and Heather, the Kinley twins, were presented an Alumni Citation for Excellence Award by their alma mater, Archbishop Wood High School, in Philadelphia. During high school, the girls were already performing and would sometimes do dinner theater, which often required that they leave school early for an occasional matinee performance. The principal, **Father Victor Sharrett**, used to lecture the girls' mother. "They won't be doing this all their lives," he'd fume. Hopefully, the principal came to eat his words—or at least ask for the hit duo's forgiveness!



From far left: Lorrie and Sammy Jam; 'N Sync members Lance Bass and Joey Fatone, Alabama's Mark Herndon, 'N Sync's J.C. Chasez, Alabama's Teddy Gentry, 'N Sync's Chris Kirkpatrick and Justin Timberlake in studio; the Kinleys.

juvenile delinquent with charges of weapon offenses, burglary and larceny are ancient

stop and, of course, the airline not only lost his clothes, they also managed to lose his guitar. Now a picker can get by wearing dirty underwear, but they sure can't go on television without a guitar. Someone recalled the legendary **Willie Nelson** was performing in New Jersey the night before, and made connections with

Wade Hayes moved into his Brentwood digs with his bride, the former **Danni Boatwright**. Like **John Henry** in the song, Wade does know which end of a hammer to use. He sold his Harley, bought the fixer-upper house and re-did one room at a time. You can glimpse Danni in Wade's video for "Tore Up From the Floor Up." She's a beauty. So's the house. But you and I will never see it, because Wade is a private person. *

MORELLO/GERBERIA



Faith Hill
Faith (Warner Bros.) 241356



Brooks & Dunn
If You See Her (Arista) 247759

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Shania Twain—The Woman In Me (Mercury)	119768
Alison Krauss—Now That I've Found You A Collection (Rounder)	120345
Marty Stuart—The Marty Party Hit Pack (MCA)	121350
Alabama—Greatest Hits (RCA)	123471
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Lorrie Morgan—Greatest Hits (BNA Records)	132480
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Collin Raye—I Think About You (Epic)	135814
Terri Clark (Mercury)	136291
Sammy Kershaw—The Hits Chapter 1 (Mercury)	136796
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Little Texas—Greatest Hits (Warner Bros.)	136838
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Sammy Kershaw—Labor Of Love (Mercury)	229039
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The Lyrens (Reprise)	233049
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243956

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- ZZ Top—Greatest Hits (Warner Bros.) 438010
- Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers—Grt. Hits (MCA) 474411



"Armageddon"
Aerosmith Journey, more (Columbia) 252890



Britney Spears
Baby One More Time (Enhanced CD) (Jive) ★ 269621



Martina McBride
Evolution (RCA) 220236



Vince Gill
The Key (Enhanced CD) (MCA) 256602

- Merle Haggard—16 Biggest Hits (Epic/Legacy) 253666
- George Jones—16 Biggest Hits (Epic/Legacy) 253674
- Willie Nelson—16 Biggest Hits (Columbia/Legacy) 253682
- Randy Travis—Greatest #1 Hits (Warner Bros.) 256685
- Dolly Parton—Hungry Again (Decca) 256701
- T. Graham Brown—Water Into Wine (Intersound) ★ 256719
- Charlie Robison—Life Of The Party (Luck/Dog/Columbia) ★ 256768
- Blackhawk—The Sky's The Limit (Arista) 259523
- Allison Moorer—Alabama Song (MCA) 259531
- Lee Ann Womack—Some Things I Know (Decca) 259549
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The flags in Branson flew at half-mast in April when Lecil Travis Martin, better known as Boxcar Willie, 67, died after a three-year battle with leukemia. "Box," as he was affectionately known, never had a major hit record, but he nonetheless sold millions of albums, at first through TV marketing and later over the counter at his Branson theater. The Texas-born entertainer adopted the persona of a singing hobo—and the name Boxcar Willie—in the '70s after seeing a homeless man sitting in the open door of a railroad boxcar who, he said, reminded him of Willie Nelson.

His songs romanticized an American past of railroads and the train-hopping hobos who rode them. One of his performing trademarks was his tone-perfect mimicry of a lonesome train whistle. Martin had railroad in his blood. He often told of skipping school to hitch a sightseeing ride with one of the trains that rolled through his hometown of Sterrett, outside Dallas. His father was a farmer who sometimes worked the rails.

After a 22-year stint in the Air Force, Martin dusted off the performing skills he'd nurtured since his teenage years, created his "singing hobo" character and perfected his soon-to-become-trademark look of overalls, beat-up hat and well-worn shoes. In 1987 he bought a 900-seat theater in Branson and relocated there, becoming one of the first nationally known country performers to set up permanent shop in the Missouri tourist town.

More than 1,000 mourners attended the memorial service held for Box at his Branson showplace. By request of his family, Vince Gill sang a Roy Acuff song,



"Drifting Too Far From the Shore," and Marty Stuart followed with "The Hobo's Prayer." Fellow Branson performers Mel Tillis, Andy Williams, Jim Stafford and Yakov Smirnoff were among the faithful. Country music's lovable hobo was laid to

rest on a hill in his adopted home in the Missouri Ozarks. Fans will always remember him when they drive down the street named in his honor, Boxcar Willie Boulevard, in the town that he helped turn into a major country music destination.



SHEL SILVERSTEIN
NOV. 23, 1932 - MAY 10, 1999

Famed and near-famed from all walks of life came to the Nashville riverside estate of John Hartford to pay their respects to the memory of noted songwriter, cartoonist, poet, author and recording artist Shelby "Shel" Silverstein, 66, who died of a heart attack at his home in Key West, Florida, in May. Chet Atkins and Harlan Howard were on hand, as were Bobby Bare, producer Kyle Lehning and Dennis Locorriere of the band Dr. Hook.

On Music Row, Silverstein was best known for penning "A Boy Named Sue," the song that catapulted Johnny

Cash's career into superstardom. His songs were also recorded by Bare, Dr. Hook ("Cover of the Rolling Stone" and "Sylvia's Mother"), Loretta Lynn ("One's on the Way"), Brenda Lee ("Big Four Poster Bed"), Dave and Sugar ("Queen of the Silver Doliar") and others. Silverstein also composed all the songs for the recent *Old Dogs* album by Waylon Jennings, Bare, Jerry Reed and Mel Tillis. He was best known in literary circles for his self-illustrated children's books, including *Where the Sidewalk Ends* and *The Giving Tree*. ★

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SOUL SURVIVOR

Label deals may come and go, but Jack Ingram keeps making his own kind of music.

It felt like pay dirt to Jack Ingram, felt like he'd finally hit the musical mother lode. After five years of roadhouse struggle—and three homemade albums he hawked at shows—the scrappy Texas troubadour had been snapped up by a hip new label (Rising Tide), given a decent recording budget and top-name producers Steve Earle and Ray Kennedy, and shuttled straight back into the studio again when his *Livin' or Dyin'* debut conquered the critics.

Everything was going so well, it seemed too good to be true, Ingram fondly recalls. It was. He was in a Nashville vocal booth, laying down the second track for his *Livin'* follow-up, when engineer Emory Gordy Jr. hit the talkback button: "Uhhhh...Jack? We need to talk for a minute."

The pair strolled down the street to the Universal-distributed Rising Tide. "I walked into the building, and as I was looking at people, I noticed they weren't looking at me," shudders Ingram. "I was thinking 'Man! I musta really pissed somebody off!'" Then Ingram discovered what was going on. Preparing for its monolithic merger with PolyGram, Universal had pulled the plug on the promising company, just as it was revving its indie engine. It felt, Ingram says, a growl forming deep down in his gut, "like you're running full-steam ahead, and you get clotheslined by a little fishing wire you never saw comin'. I was absolutely shell-shocked."

But Ingram doesn't drawl brawny boom-chorded anthems of working-class heroes for nothing—he's a fighter,

and he thought nothing of cranking up his old do-it-yourself distribution system again. That Texas training was arcane knowledge that Nashville would rather he not possess. "There's a lot of young artists that don't know that you can do that, record and release an album yourself," says the man who tray-snapped and booklet-inserted every one of his first thousand-disc run more than eight years ago. "And when they go in to talk about record contracts, they think they're getting this big favor from these major-label people."

Ingram gave himself a six-month vacation first. He tended his garden, sat around his patio and penned more leisurely ditties. His hands weren't fated to construct jewel boxes, however—Dixie Chicks producer Blake Chancey's new Lucky Dog label (through Sony) rescued Ingram at the 11th hour and tossed him into sessions with ex-Earle axeman Richard Bennett. The result, *Hey You*,

benefits from Bennett's Duane Eddy-ish style; Ingram, in turn, sounds saltier and more backwoods-nasty than ever on barbecue-smoked curs like "Biloxi," "Barbie Doll," and the bluesy "Mustang Burn."

Down in Dallas, far from the business what done him wrong, Ingram is trying to look on the bright side. "Yeah,

it really sucked when they finally sent around a letter that set me loose," he reasons. "But if it had to happen, I'm really glad it happened when it did, or else I would've done *Hey You* for them, and it would've instantly been shelved. But I'm gonna make records from here on out. That's what I do—I write songs

and I record 'em and then I go play 'em." Is it really that simple? Ingram guffaws. "Look, I love being back on a major label—don't get me wrong. It makes the possibilities greater. But you know what? Ultimately, it doesn't really make anything happen. That's my responsibility." —Tom Lanham

PLAYING A NEW GAME

Radney Foster
reinvets himself on
a rocking new album.



ED. RODE

After three successful Everly Brothers-type albums as half of the duo Foster and Lloyd, and two powerful country solo efforts, you'd think Radney Foster would be a country music lifer. But as Foster's new album, *See What You Want to See*, reveals, one should never assume anything.

"It's not country," Foster admits. "There's nothing country about it, but it's who I am."

For 40-year-old Foster, his movement away from mainstream country

and toward rock is just another step in a long creative evolution. In fact, Foster explains, he's simply remaking himself after a long period of personal and creative difficulties.

"My favorite artists have always remade themselves," Foster says. "It's a creative thing. I love country music, but this isn't country. I'm not going to try and disguise it. I mean, country went this way...and I went that way."

See What You Want to See comes after nearly a six-year absence from the

recording studio and has already gotten Foster the best reviews of his career.

Foster explains, though, that there was a point when he really thought no one would ever hear the album.

"It was delayed because of internal politics," he says.

When executives at Arista/Nashville finally heard the album, they decided—in a perceptive grasp of the obvious—it wasn't country. Foster found himself shifted to Arista/Austin, where he discovered a level of enthusiasm for the work that convinced him to stay with the label.

"They had this great marketing plan," Foster says. "And that combined with the excitement they exhibited over the album...well, I just don't think you can buy that kind of loyalty."

See What You Want to See is Foster's most emotionally powerful album to date. He runs the gamut from rage ("The Kiss") to bittersweet redemption ("Angry Heart") to a profound tenderness and love for a child ("Godspeed—Sweet Dreams").

The roots of the album lie in the well-publicized breakup of Foster's first marriage and the ensuing fierce, drawn-out battle for the couple's young son—a battle Foster lost. The singer even found himself testifying before the Tennessee state legislature on behalf of fathers' rights.

It was Foster's dark night of the soul, but he managed to survive and as a result, grew both as an artist and a human being. He's now happily remarried and about to become a father for the second time. He can even laugh about parts of it now, observing, "It's always great when you have to call your parents and tell them your divorce is going to be on the front page of *USA Today*." —Steven Womack

Do You Know

Baseball dreams, rock 'n' roll schemes—has Garth Brooks finally gone off the deep end?

By Dan DeLuca

THE BILLY JOEL SONG WITH which Garth Brooks is most closely associated is "Shameless." That ballad contains a pledge—"I'll do anything you want me to/I'll do anything at all"—that the most successful solo recording artist in history sings as if making a promise to satisfy his fans, whatever it takes.

But there's another Joel hit Brooks often performs that also might seem to describe recent career moves by the country megastar. "You may be right," this one goes, "I may be crazy."

On the surface, it does appear that Brooks may have gone bonkers. First, the self-described "plain old chubby guy from Oklahoma" tried out for a Major-League Baseball team, the San Diego Padres, this spring. (To no one's real surprise, he didn't make it.) Then he announced his

next project would be an outright pop album, with no country strings attached, sung "in the character" of a fictional rock star named Chris Gaines—a character Brooks will possibly later portray in *The Lamb*, a film that won't even begin production until the year 2000.

When confronted with the singer's Walter Mitty-esque baseball fantasy and his attempt to pass as a hip-rock dude on *In the Life of Chris Gaines*, the soundtrack "prequel" to *The Lamb*, even Brooks' country loyalists might well wonder: Has the G-man lost his mind?

In his decade-plus career, Brooks has dominated and almost single-handedly reshaped country music—some say for better, some

say for worse. He's continually left his competition behind as his career sped forward like a runaway train. But while his current maneuvering might seem a bit kooky, rest assured: There's a method to his madness.

From the very beginning, Brooks cultivated an image as a guy who just might do what you least expect. "Sometimes you can't be afraid to wear a different hat," he sang back in 1991. "Nothing ventured nothing gained/Sometimes you have to go against the grain."

"One thing we always thought about was the element of surprise," says Allen Reynolds,

This

A close-up, high-contrast photograph of Garth Brooks' face, focusing on his eyes, nose, and mouth. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows. The background is dark.

V

Man?

Garth's alter ego
Chris Gaines.

who produced Brooks' studio albums from his 1988 debut *Garth Brooks* to 1997's *Sevens*. "He knew that if you're going to grow, you have to try some different things."

Brooks colored outside country's musical lines with his cover of Joel's power ballad "Shameless" on *Ropin' the Wind*, with his pop-gospel single "We Shall Be Free" on 1992's *The Chase* (which generated controversy when it was construed as advocating gay rights) and with his recasting of Aerosmith's "The Fever" as a wild-ride rodeo song on 1995's *Fresh Horses*. Displaying an early flair for the theatrical, he jolted viewers of his video for "The Thunder Rolls" in 1991 with a powerful depiction of a philandering, physically abusive husband (played by Brooks, almost incognito in glasses and facial hair). In concert, he swung from ropes, danced inside a ring of fire, popped out of pianos, trashed guitars, flew from wires and sprayed his audiences with fire hoses.

Brooks has always been an artist who did whatever he chose—and chose to call it country. And by putting on live shows as action-packed as those of Van Halen or Kiss, he roped in young, energetic fans who'd grown up loving Journey as much

making you believe in his dream. He always wants to be the biggest, the most successful. [Former Capitol president Jimmy] Bowen used to tell him, 'You've got to stop trying to top yourself.' But he envisioned what he was going to do, and he did it."

"The guy's a genius," claims Nashville music-marketing professional Mike Martinovich. "Garth understood the importance of both the artist and the image better than anyone else, and he has a knack for connecting interpersonally—a way of making you feel he's the only person he's singing to—like no one I've ever seen."

Not surprisingly, Pat Quigley—whom Brooks ushered in as president of Capitol Nashville in 1997 after the singer was disappointed in the previous administration's marketing of 1995's *Fresh Horses*—agrees. "The greatness of Garth is he separates the art from the commerce, but understands the importance of both," says Quigley. "When he's making a record, he won't let me near the studio. But once he's done, he understands that the commerce takes over."

Brooks' apparent zeal for commerce has led many to wonder whether his push to rack up previously unthinkable sales figures—to pass the 100-million mark and leave his only remaining competition, the Beatles, in his wake—has come to drive the entertainer more than the music itself. In 1998, he packaged his first six albums in a boxed set called *The Limited Series*, while Capitol stopped supplying his individual (previously released) albums to stores. This lured his legion of established fans (many of whom undoubtedly already owned his entire body of work) to the box set—the only way they could get its half-dozen new, previously unreleased tracks. And guess what? Each box-set sale thereby counted as six toward Brooks' 100-million benchmark.



Brooks appeared humbled by his designation as the Academy of Country Music's "Artist of the Decade" (above). Left: Brooks is "shameless" in his admiration for Joel.

"He's very persuasive—some would say manipulative—in making you believe in his dream."

PAM LEWIS • BROOKS' FORMER MANAGER

as—or perhaps more than—they loved George Strait.

His ambitions were grandiose from the start. "I wanted to be America's guy," Brooks told *Playboy* in 1994.

"Garth is a visionary," says Pam Lewis, who managed him until 1994. "He's the most singularly focused man I've ever met in my life. He's very persuasive—some would say manipulative—in

June

By Patricia Rose

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By Patricia Rose

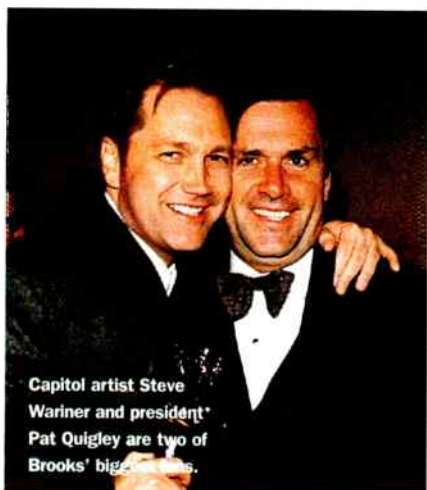
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mogul, called Brooks a "control freak" whose power at the label had gotten out of hand. "Like a giant bear in the woods, wherever he'd step, something underfoot



Capitol artist Steve Wariner and president Pat Quigley are two of Brooks' big names.

"The greatness of Garth is he separates the art from the commerce, but understands the importance of both...."

PAT QUIGLEY • PRESIDENT, CAPITOL RECORDS

would die," Bowen wrote. "Unlike Elvis or the Beatles, who both went to drugs, Garth's drug was power."

After *Fresh Horses* didn't meet Brooks' expectations, "there was no responsibility that he made a record that people didn't want," says Lewis. "He couldn't say, 'I'm glad 4 million people bought it.'" Instead, he initiated a display of "grandiose grandstanding," holding up delivery of his next album and blaming the failure on his label.

Brooks' unprecedented success has left Nashville a far different place from when he first arrived in 1985. Building on a foundation laid by Randy Travis, Dwight Yoakam and other acts, he both rode and drove the country boom of the early '90s, attracting legions of young fans to the format.

Steve Wariner, Brooks' labelmate at Capitol, credits Brooks with expanding

country's horizons. "We should be thankful for Garth," Wariner told the Nashville *Tennessean* this year. "He has opened a lot of doors for the very people that knock him. I really do think that for good or bad, however your viewpoint is on him, he's been good for the industry."

Many in the industry credit Brooks with raising country onto the same commercial playing field as pop and rock. "Just by selling more records than anyone else, he's shown that country isn't just regional music anymore," says Evelyn Shriver, head of Nashville's Asylum Records. But others worry that, by the same token, country runs the risk of losing its identity, if not its very soul. And some point the finger of blame at Brooks.

"[Country music]'s all plastic," Waylon Jennings said last year. "Garth Brooks is the most plastic thing I've ever seen, but he's making millions of dollars. He couldn't sing his way out of a paper sack, or write. He's a great merchandiser, though."

Others take an even darker view. Texas honky-tonker Dale Watson calls Brooks "the final stake in the heart of country music. It's like watering down strong whiskey till it doesn't have any taste left. He pushed it over the edge of homogenization into extreme mediocrity. He truly is the anti-Hank."

As the country boom receded in the late '90s—and Brooks' per-album sales figures also slipped—he took to the road for a massive tour of multi-night, record-breaking stands in both major and minor markets. And in doing so, some say, he sucked up every country dollar that was out there to be spent.

Brooks is "the 800-pound gorilla of country music," notes Gary Bongiovanni, editor of the concert-industry magazine *Pollstar*. "All the other acts need to get out of his way."

"With all due respect to Garth," says Asylum's Shriver, "he goes into a market for three to six days, and when he's done, there's no money left for anybody else. He keeps the prices down at \$18 a ticket, and that hurts baby [newcomer] acts. Everybody is trying to compete with the swinging on the ropes."

Some blame Brooks for fostering the flow of copycat acts aiming to duplicate his success—and thereby promoting a glut of musical product that eventually chokes, if not croaks, on its own sameness. "Record companies go around cloning substandard versions of whatever's hot," noted one major-label executive who asked not to be named. "And [Brooks is] substandard to start with."

But it's not Brooks' fault his success lit the fuse on an uncontrollable explosion, claims Amy Kurland, owner of Nashville's hallowed Bluebird Cafe, the intimate nightspot where Brooks performed early in his career. "His success may have kicked off the greed that brought on all the hat-act imitators," she says, "but you can't put that on him."

"He's enhanced consumers' expectations of what they get from a country act," says Martinovich, adding that most Garth-bashers in Nashville are "speaking out of envy. He's raised the bar, and if other acts haven't performed to his level, you can't blame Garth."

Brooks took heat from another group entirely earlier this year when he announced he was going for spring training with the San Diego Padres. Many baseball fans and sportswriters took issue with a superstar trading on his fame to gain a highly coveted training slot that would have otherwise gone to a "real" player. Brooks may not have ever had a real chance to make the team (he batted a dismal 1 for 22 at the plate), but playing a full season with the Padres was probably never part of his master plan, anyway: If he'd been busy playing full-season ball, *In the Life of Chris Gaines* wouldn't have been ready for release this summer.

Brooks all but admitted that his flirtation with the national pastime was



As a recording artist, Brooks has numerous hits under his belt. But he can't say the same about his brief Major League career.



JOEL ZWINK

at least in part designed to reap public-relations benefits. His mere presence at Padres exhibition games drew enormous crowds, and Brooks indulged them by signing autographs until every fan who wanted one got one. He impressed his fellow players by being the first one to arrive in the morning and last one to leave at night. He linked ball players and other celebrities by launching a new children's charity, the Touch 'Em All Foundation, that raised pledge money through home runs. All in all, Brooks' baseball fantasy was a double coup: Not only did he get to play ball with the "big boys," but he also managed to keep his celebrity profile in the news virtually every day of spring training.

In a *George* magazine cover story this spring, he told editor John Kennedy Jr. that "[Michael Jordan] got so big and everyone loved him so much that suddenly he was no longer the underdog. So when he decided to play baseball...my respect and love and admiration for him just went through the roof." Was Brooks suggesting that he, too, had gotten "so big" that he needed something to recast him in the public eye as a hard-working "underdog"—instead of a superstar who's actually got it all?

"He's in a position where he's able to fulfill his fantasies," says Shriver. "What guy wouldn't want to go play baseball, or play a rock star in a movie?"

"I think he's doing what anybody in his position would do," suggests Lewis. "He has money, he has power, so now he's dabbling. He's exploring."

But if Brooks' baseball career was a dalliance, *In the Life of Chris Gaines* and the rock-star murder mystery *The Lamb* (which is being co-produced by Brooks' own Red Strokes Entertainment) is much more serious business—and a career gamble. It's a long-term, multimedia project that's possibly the most ambitious thing Brooks—who's already possibly the most ambitious artist country music has ever seen—has ever undertaken.

The "prequel" album to a movie that won't be out until next year "is part of a marketing mix that sets up the next project," comments Brooks' publicist Karen Byrd. The strategy, according to Capitol chief Quigley, is to create a "back story" for the character of Gaines, whom Brooks conceived as a pop star who passed through many musical phases before being killed off

early in the film. Brooks will also appear as Gaines in an NBC-TV special to air in September, and he's announced that he may record as many as five additional albums "in the character" of his rock-star alter ego.

Asked if such a complex, multilayered project might be hard to communicate to the public, Quigley has an answer. "Not with the budget I've got," he quips.

At first listen, it's hard to believe that *In the Life of Chris Gaines* is the work of Garth Brooks. The first single and lead track, "Lost in You," rides a slinky, Babyface-like pop-r&b groove and is carried along by a falsetto vocal that's barely recognizable as the heretofore country crooner. On other tracks—the sneering rocker "Main Street," the funk-flavored "Snow in July" or the softly rocking "That's the Way I Remember It"—it's not so hard to hear Garth in Gaines' disguise.

Renowned producer Don Was, who has steered such rock powerhouse acts as the Rolling Stones and Bonnie Raitt, says he was cynical about Brooks before working with him previously on Bob Dylan's "To Make You Feel My Love" for the *Hope Floats* soundtrack. "I didn't understand how anybody could be 100 million albums good," he says, referring to Brooks' steady march toward sales history. Before starting on the *Chris Gaines* album,

"[Brooks is] the final stake in the heart of country music... He truly is the anti-Hank."

DALE WATSON • TEXAS HONKY-TONKER

Was did his homework by listening to Brooks' albums "to find out what makes him tick. I realized that almost every song has to do with overcoming your fears and not surrendering your dreams."

Was ultimately became convinced he was in the presence of "an unbelievable

**“He has this audiogenic quality...
He’s able to project his
inner feelings
to an audience.
It’s not about
technical ability.”**

DON WAS • PRODUCER

singer. He has this audiogenic quality. The only other person I’ve seen it in this strong is Mick Jagger. Garth’s got the same thing. He’s able to project his inner feelings to an audience. It’s not about technical ability. It’s about telling a story and getting under people’s skin.”

Brooks slipping into the role of a rock star for *In the Life of Chris Gaines* “really isn’t that weird at all,” explains Was. “Once you get over the first surprise, and get to what the songs are about, you’ll find the same guy there. Textually, the voice might freak you out, but it’s like he’s Jimmy Stewart; [he’s just] playing a different role.”

For the *Chris Gaines* project to be successful, Brooks will have to go where he’s never gone before: pop radio. Unlike Shania Twain, he’s never courted rock, Top 40 or adult contemporary airplay. Instead, he’s done boffo business by keeping his hat on to convince pop fans that country is cool.

In the past, Brooks didn’t allow his records to be sent to pop radio stations; he didn’t want to alienate country programmers, or to appear “disloyal” to the fans who fueled his career jets from the beginning. But with the *Gaines* CD, country’s 800-pound gorilla is making a play to conquer a new segment of the music market. With the album and the movie, Brooks may not only play a rock star; if the project succeeds, he’ll get to *be* one.

But rest assured: The invention of Chris Gaines doesn’t mean that Brooks is abandoning country music. Capitol’s Quigley says that Brooks will “put the hat back on” and “go back to being Garth” just as soon as the *Gaines* project runs its course.



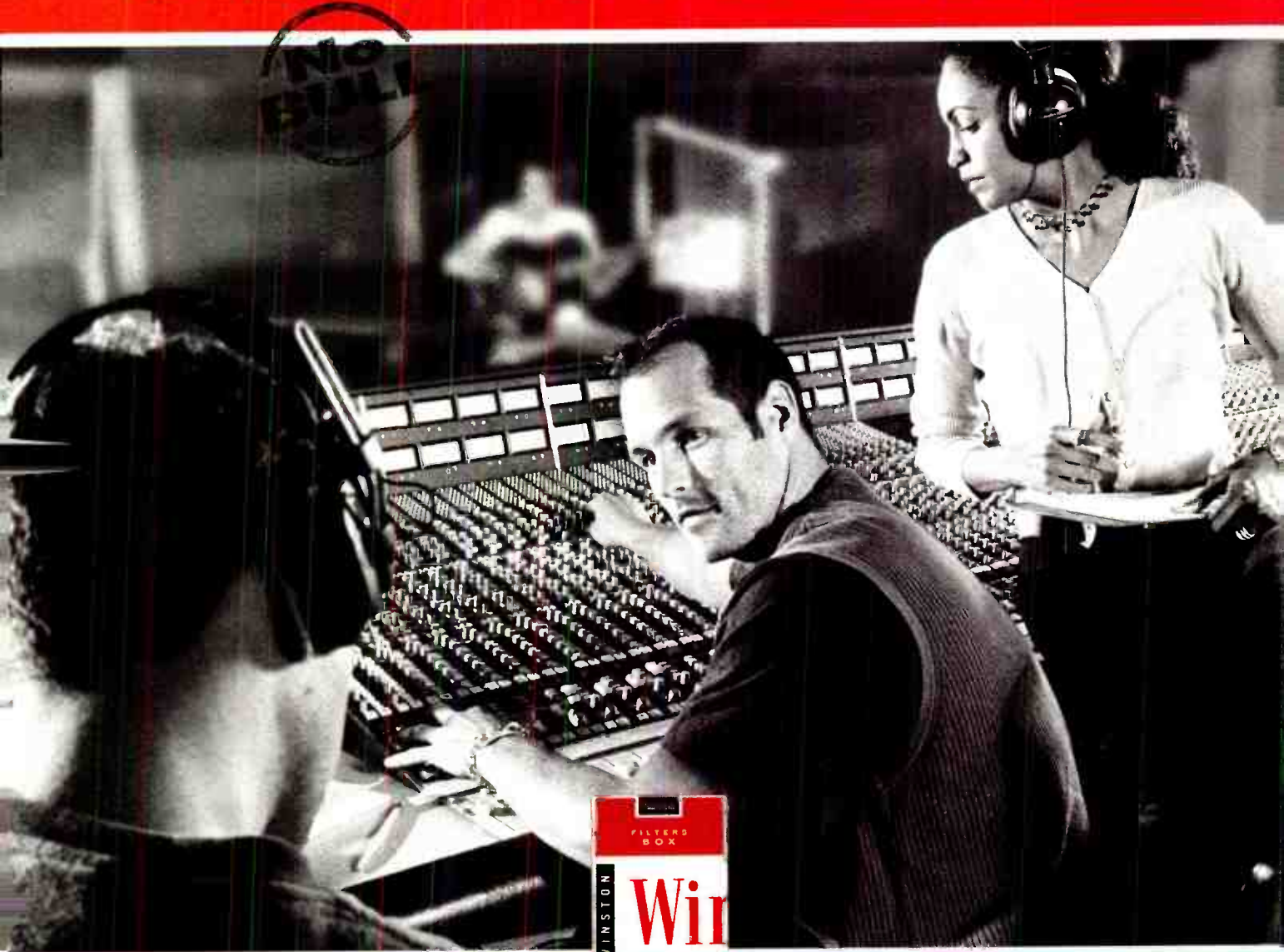
Country’s “800-pound gorilla” was among the first to incorporate rock-arena antics in his live shows, elevating country music showmanship to a new level.

In the big picture of Brooks’ career, where will *Chris Gaines* and *The Lamb* eventually fall into focus? As the latest carefully considered moves by an over-achieving Oklahoman who’s already reimagined what a country star can do? As just one more “crazy” career maneuver, one more wildly ambitious

swing for the fences, one more dream-fueled career milestone, one more colossal stride by this giant bear in the woods?

Whatever the case, Brooks—like that bear—may have indeed gotten so big he can do whatever he wants. But he continues to hunger for more. ★

Blue collar. White collar. How about no collar

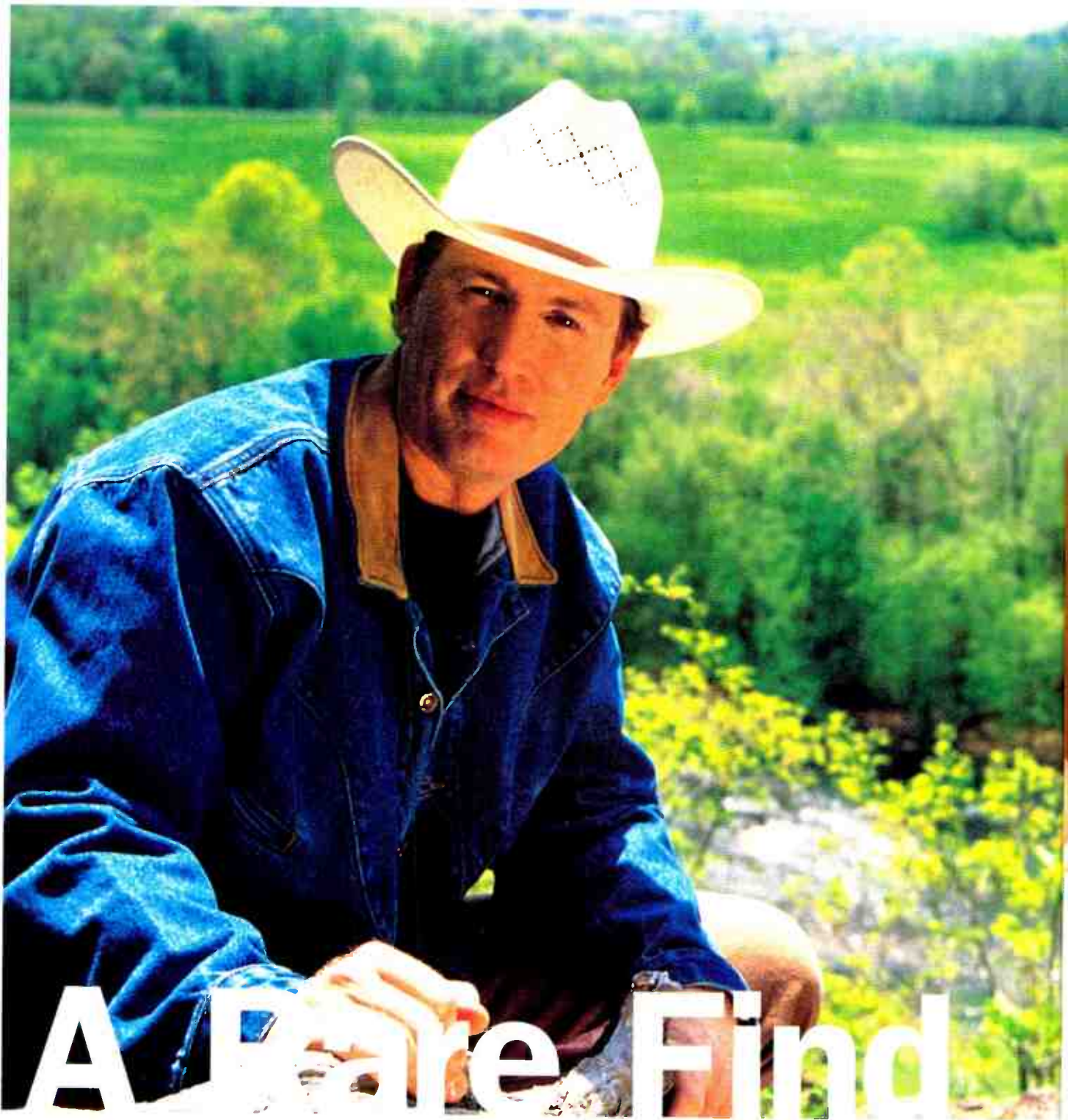


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A Rare Find

Honky-tonker and relic hunter David Ball loves digging up the past.
By Bob Millard

WAY OFF HIGHWAY 70 IN Cheatham County, Tennessee, past two old cemeteries and along miles of high limestone bluffs that

line the way, my car leaves a cloud of dust along an old road. The route parallels the shallow, meandering, horseshoe-shaped 180-degree bend in the Harpeth River

called Narrows of the Harpeth. As I near my destination, I pass an aging cast-iron historical marker for Mounds Bottoms, where gently rounded hills remain as silent testimony of the burial practices of an ancient race who fished, hunted, thrived and buried their dead here ten thousand years ago.

Near here I meet honky-tonker David Ball, at the outcroppings just below the



"You learn a little bit about reading history," says David Ball, perched above the Native American burial site Mounds Bottom, just outside Nashville. "But the deeper you go, you realize how little we know."

HAIR/MAKEUP: CANDY JOHNSON; THE GREY AGENCY; JACKET BY SCHAFER; FLEMING'S, NASHVILLE; JEANS BY WRANGLER; BELT BUCKLE BY DOUG MAGNUS; FLEMING'S

where I come from, mostly. The people who were here ten thousand years ago left markings in the bluffs that look sort of like cones. They had a written language, and a generally more complex and successful civilization than any of the Indians that were found roaming through Tennessee when the white man showed up."

So much for the classic image, left so indelibly by the late, great Faron Young, of the honky-tonk singer as affable igmo whose interests stop at easy money, fast women and high-octane whiskey. David Ball is clearly something else.

In the quiet of a fine spring morning, we sit down on the shady river bank and listen to the mating calls of mocking-birds, robins and cardinals, the shushing of wind through the leaves and the *shilooop-shilooop* of the muddy Harpeth lapping over rocks and mud below.

"So, you're really into the Indian thing?" I inquire.

"I have done the sweat lodge thing a couple of times, and that's really great for relaxing," he says. "Especially if you come out all hot and they pour cold creek water over your head! I haven't actually done it with the whole spiritual ritual and all, but it might be good to do that someday."

When he isn't making music or enjoying time with his family in his Franklin, Tennessee, home, Ball likes quiet, solitary pastimes, including hunting arrowheads and other relics of ancient, Native American tribal culture in middle Tennessee. He pulls out a plastic bag filled with flint arrowheads, broken and whole, and talks about the freshwater clamshell mounds that testify to a peaceful group of people who camped much of the year on and near the banks of the Cumberland River, which runs through Nashville. He wonders if people centuries from now will find *our* trash heaps as interesting.

Scouring around for evidence of pre-European America has been a part of Ball since childhood. Today he says it's also conducive to his songwriting, believe it or not.

"I'm just interested in gettin' out," he says, shooing a fly. "It was a great thing to do when I was in town just writin' songs. It gets you out and your brain goes to a different place. You're not really thinking about writin' songs, but songs

will sometimes just come and fall on you. Huntin' arrowheads was always somethin' that was just fun to do."

Hank Williams Jr. is also into Indian history, but his interests are primarily battles, weapons and massacres. Ball's focus is on the period long, long before the Native Americans traded Manhattan to the Dutch for a handful of beads. (Some of us still think the Indians got the better of that deal.) Hank Jr. is a collector; Ball is an explorer for whom the process of discovery overtakes any interest in amassing artifacts. For Ball, whether making music or digging up history, getting there is—at least—half the fun.

"I really didn't have any interest in drumming up a big collection, but we'd go out and find some stuff, and when you're in Scouts you always learn a little bit about it," he reflects. "You know, I remember being a kid and looking at [late-1800s] pictures of the Indians and thinking, *What a wild thing.*

"You learn a little bit about it reading history, but the deeper you go, you realize how little we know about that culture and how much there is. And actually, the older cultures were really smarter and better. Their workmanship and craftsmanship [were better], and then it sort of deteriorated up until when the white man came."

As long as we are talking history, we delve into Ball's. Only a few weeks before our interview, his mentor and former musical partner, Walter Hyatt of Uncle Walt's Band, had been posthumously inducted into the Austin Songwriters Hall of Fame in a town where Ball really cut his musical teeth in the '70s.

Now, nearly every country star has years of experience in honky-tonk or bluegrass bands, but those are typically cover bands, human jukeboxes playing other people's hits for line dancers and beer-guzzlers. Ball's experience in Uncle Walt's Band left three prized independent-label albums that melded acoustic western harmonies with New Orleans jazz and blues. Uncle Walt's also did cover tunes, but they tended to be songs originally done by Professor Longhair and other New Orleans legends from the '20s and '30s. Mostly, they recorded exquisite, mysterious, good-timin' or heartrending originals written by Ball,

mounds area, to talk about life, music and a people so long-gone from here that no one knows their tribal name.

"Was this the Cherokee nation?" Ball's assistant asks of the people who once made the area home.

"Nah," he says. "They came long after, and this wasn't really their stompin' grounds anyway; they were over in the southern Appalachians, in the Carolinas,



Less a collector than a discoverer, Ball picks through the gravel at the mouth of a cave for relic bits.

Hyatt and the third man in the trio, Champ Hood. They still have a legion of fans from Austin to Chapel Hill, and all in between—which makes Ball’s mastery of the honky-tonk genre, both as singer and writer, all the more amazing.

“After listening to your music since you were 17 or 18, and then hearing ‘Thinkin’ Problem’ go in such a different direction, I wondered if you might ever backtrack some and cut something from your old catalog,” I tell him. “Something like my favorite Uncle Walt’s Band ballad, ‘Don’t You Think I Feel It Too.’”

“Funny you should say that,” he says, grinning and running his fingers through his sandy red hair under his white cowboy hat. “Lyle Lovett is after me to recut that. He really thinks I should. I like that tune a lot.

“In a way, it makes sense to me. It’s kind of...well, that’s sort of what Uncle Walt’s Band was all about. Walter was a big influence on me. Back in those days, there was some mystery to the lyric. If it sounded right to me, I left it alone. I’ve since quit writin’ that way; I’ve changed all of that and just went for being more direct. Because years ago I was introduced to Bob Wills and those cats, and I became such a fan of simple, direct, brilliant lyrics.”

His new CD, *Play* (a double pun, as in “play ball” or, to radio, “!lay Ball!”), may even surpass his mega-hit debut album for 100-percent solid songs. For all his genius in the honky-tonk forms and the straight country story, there are still moments when he slips in a poetic hammer to the head.

“Yes, yes,” he says, enthusiastically. “I don’t think you can have a real balanced, well-rounded record without steppin’ out of the circle a little bit, you know. It’s not all about being commercial; it’s about tryin’ to reach people with your music.”

We break up our riverbank chat for a photo session, and Ball has a big time clowning around and talking all over the map of possible subjects. We start discussing the epic, classic, six-hour Japanese film, *The Seven Samurai*, after which Hollywood later modeled *The Magnificent Seven*. Ball takes a Samurai warrior’s stance and spouts angry, grunt-

ing, faux-Japanese to simulate a favorite scene. Then he rears back and laughs. Sure, we’re here to do a story and get some pictures to go with it, but Ball is having fun, enjoying the process.

As the photographer and the gaggle of associates and assistants head for cars to take David to a high cliff atop a stone bluff nearby, his face becomes especially bright and animated. He isn’t so much anticipating looking out over miles of verdant Tennessee bottom lands no doubt gazed upon by centuries of pre-historic Indians on spiritual “vision

quests.” He’s simply into the process of getting there.

“Hey,” he calls after me, as I break down my tape-recording gear and begin packing it away. “Come on, go with us.” And therein lies a hint of what makes David Ball tick, musically as well as personally. “Man,” he says, “we’re gonna go *climb* something big!” ★



A PRE-COUNTRY BALL, MIDDLE, IN THE GENRE-DEFYING UNCLE WALT’S BAND (WITH CHAMP HOOD, LEFT, AND WALTER HYATT).

BOB WILLARD PERSONAL COLLECTION

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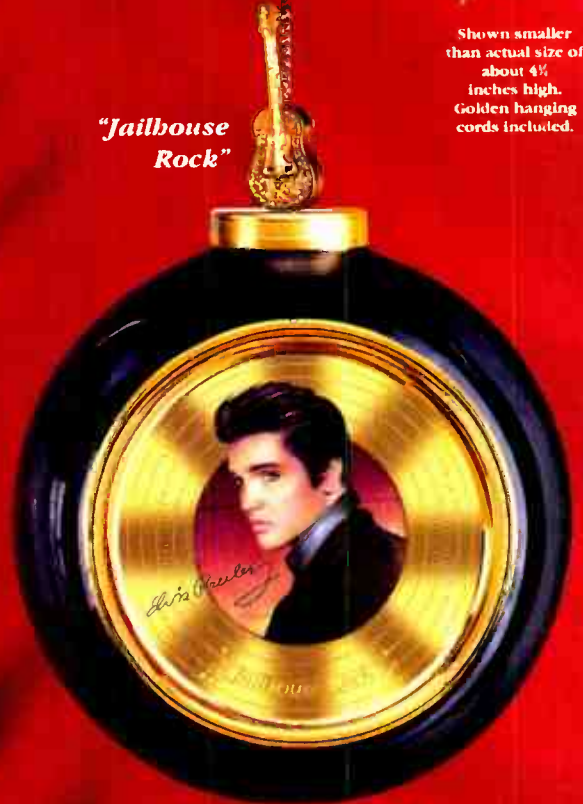
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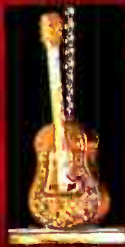
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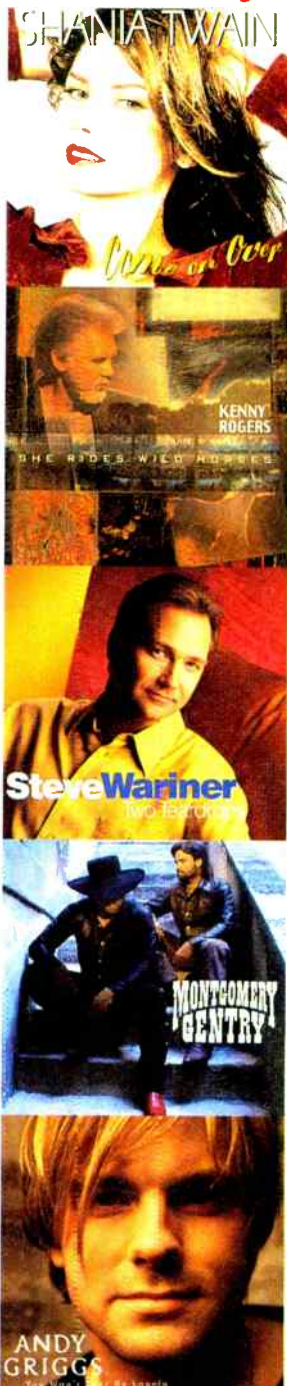
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Shania Twain accepts her Diamond Award for 10 million in sales at the ACM Awards.



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4. FAITH HILL **Faith (Warner Bros.) ●**
5. GEORGE STRAIT **Always Never the Same (MCA) ●**
6. KENNY ROGERS **She Rides 'Wild Horses (Dreamcatcher)**
7. GARTH BROOKS **Double Live (Capitol) ♦**
8. MARTINA MCBRIDE **Evolution (RCA) ●**
9. STEVE WARINER **Two Teardrops (Capitol)**
10. JODEE MESSINA **I'm Alright (Curb) ●**
11. KENNY CHESNEY **Everywhere We Go (BNA)**
12. SAMMY KERSHAW **Maybe Not Tonight (Mercury)**
13. TIM MCGRAW **Everywhere (Curb) ●**
14. LILA MCCANN **Something in the Air (Asylum)**
15. PATTY LOVELESS **Classics (Epic)**
16. MONTGOMERY GENTRY **Tattoos & Scars (Columbia)**
17. EMMYLOU HARRIS, LINDA RONSTADT, DOLLY PARTON **Trio (Asylum)**
18. ANDY GRIGGS **You Won't Ever Be Lonely (RCA)**
19. MARK WILLS **Wish You Were Here (Mercury) ♦**
20. LORRIE MORGAN **My Heart (BNA)**
21. JOHNNY CASH **16 Biggest Hits (Columbia)**
22. BROOKS & DUNN **The Greatest Hits Collection (Arista) ●**
23. SOUNDTRACK **Hope Floats (Capitol) ●**
24. ALAN JACKSON **High Mileage (Arista) ●**
25. LEE ANN WOMACK **Some Things I Know (MCA)**

Compiled by Country Music magazine. Based on a combined tabulation of sales and airplay data for the four weeks prior to publication.

♦ Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) certification for net shipment of 500,000 album units (Gold); ● RIAA certification for net shipment of 1 million units (Platinum); ♦ RIAA certification for net shipment of 10 million units (Diamond).

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DEAL!"
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"I AM VERY ENCOURAGED TO SEE
THAT ARTISTS LIKE BRAD PAISLEY
ARE KEEPING THE TRADITION OF
COUNTRY MUSIC ALIVE."
—PATTY LOVELESS

"BRAD PAISLEY (IS A) 26 YEAR OLD
SONGWRITER, SINGER AND SKILLFUL
LEAD GUITARIST WHO SHOWS THE
SMARTER, LESS BOMBASTIC SIDE OF
CURRENT NASHVILLE."
—JOHN PARALES
NEW YORK TIMES

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World Radio History

Square Peg

By Neil Pond

Although she never quite fit into the round-hole world of country radio, Kelly Willis found there's still life after Nashville.

TEN YEARS AGO, Kelly Willis packed up her Austin-based band and drove to Nashville for a showcase gig. "It was nerve-racking," she recalls. "You knew there could be someone there who might really change your career." Indeed, by the time she headed home, the 19-year-old fledgling singer/songwriter had sewn up her first recording contract.

But the real nerve-racking, she would find out, was yet to come.

"It was an exciting time, but also a scary time for me," admits the soft-spoken Willis, now 30, of her first years as a recording artist. "A lot of my memories are of being terrified in the dressing room, or terrified somewhere else."

It wasn't the musical requirements—the performing, the writing, the recording—that terrified her; it was the promotional strings attached to her recording deal. Barely out of her teens and painfully shy, Willis was woefully adrift in the public-relations whirlwind that swirled around her. She quickly found out she wasn't any good at—and certainly wasn't at ease with—the handshaking, backslapping and butt-kissing that are typically required to get a Music Row career up and running.

"I just couldn't walk into a room and charm people," she explains. "I couldn't



MOBILLO GHERGIA

even walk into a room and say *bello*. I was really awkward at it."

Willis released three albums on Nashville's MCA Records, all of which met with critical applause but virtually no airplay. None of her singles—"Baby Take a Piece of My Heart," "Whatever Way the Wind Blows" or "Heaven's Just a Sin Away," her remake of the Kendalls' 1977 smash—so much as cracked the Top 40.

Unable to turn her into a commercial starlet, MCA eventually cut Willis loose. After a brief, virtually undetectable stint at another Music Row label (A&M), she pulled up her Nashville stakes, returned to Austin and began work on a new musical project. The resulting CD, *What I Deserve*, was released on the indie Rykodisc label this spring. It was met with encouraging sales and glowing reviews, but—once again—no mainstream airplay.

Willis has always been a square peg in the round-hole world of radio, which tends to prefer its women to be either anthem blasters or teasing male bashers. She has a slurry, purry coil of a twang that needs a bit more room to roam, a bit more space to seep, creep and caress a song's soul, sensuality and dark corners.

Willis has come to accept that her style doesn't seem to fit neatly into country's '90s format. "I don't need to be a huge commercial success in order to feel like I'm doing a good job, 'cause that's like setting yourself up for failure," she says. "You have to find the little areas in your life that really matter and try to be successful in those, and hopefully everything else will fall into line."

One of those areas that matter is her marriage of nearly three years to Austin music-maker Bruce Robison, who contributed a couple of songs to *What I Deserve*. One of them is "Wrapped" (also the title track to his own current CD), a song Robison wrote after one of the couple's breakups.

"For years, we had a real tumultuous relationship, and he wrote a lot of songs about it," Willis says with a smile. And it's hard to believe, seeing the small-boned, delicately featured Willis in person, but she can apparently be one hell of a scrapper. "You can ask Bruce: I can be ferocious. I like to throw things," she says. "I beaned him with a salt shaker one time—but that's the only time I ever threw anything at him. I didn't think I was going to *bit* him; I wanted it to go *past* him. Then it was like, 'Oh—I'm sorry!' But I'm way better now. I've got much better control of my emotions."

She seems in better control of almost everything these days. She's even overcome her shyness. "I can converse with people now," she says. "I'm like a normal person. It's a combination of not being afraid and also not worrying about whether anyone thinks I'm perfect, great, charming, attractive, funny, all that stuff. It doesn't matter as much anymore. I'm not afraid of just going ahead and being who I am."

But does she feel that she's getting—as her CD title suggests—what she deserves? "I didn't really mean that [title] in terms of my career," she says. "It was more of a spiritual, all-around thing, longing for something, not knowing exactly what, but feeling like something is missing, whatever it is—just wanting someone to recognize you in some way. It wasn't necessarily about my career."

"But things feel really good right now. I feel happier than I have in a long time." She pauses. "I don't know if that's what I deserve or not—but I'll take it!" *



"I really don't want to come across as somebody who's trying really hard to look beautiful, 'cause I don't think that should matter," says Kelly Willis. "It's the music that should matter."



Cash Upfront

June Carter Cash reveals snapshots from a life filled with love, loss and lots of music.

June Carter Cash is a walking, talking country music hall of fame. The youngest daughter of “Mother” Maybelle Carter, a founding member of the famous Carter Family, June’s memories go back to the very beginnings of commercial country. When the original Carter Family broke up in the late ’30s, June and sisters Helen and Anita joined their mother as the second incarnation of the

legendary “First Family of Country Music.”

June married Johnny Cash in 1968. Since then, the couple’s music has been inextricably intertwined, complete with signature songs like June’s own “Ring of Fire” and “Jackson.” Today, as Johnny Cash copes with the rare Shy-Draeger Syndrome, June has just released *Press On*, her second solo album, on Risk Records.

CM: This has been some year for you hasn’t it? How are you?

JCC: It’s been a rough one. I lost Helen—that was the roughest thing, and I just didn’t believe I could stand to lose both my sisters in one year, with John havin’ been sick. He’s feelin’ well right now, he’s doin’ good. We spent about four and a half months down in Jamaica and we just played, and that’s about all we’ve done for the last year and a half.

CM: You must not have played all the time. You managed this album sometime in there. I was surprised to learn that this is only the second solo album of your career.

JCC: Well, I had a song with John on every album he did for 10 years. We were so busy together. Mostly after I married John I was just committed to doin’ what he wanted to do. But I always wanted to kind of do an album of some of these things I’d written. As long as John is doing well and I still have my priorities in order, I still would like to continue. I had a lotta grit to just cut [this] one that was really back to total bare bones.

CM: You’re kind of the matriarch of the Carter Family now, aren’t you?

JCC: I have never, ever thought of myself in that way. But listen, we’ve got to face it: I’m the only living antique still out there pressing on. I’ve been in this music thing all of my life and I’ll guarantee you, you won’t find one who’s had as many active years as I have. I’m it. Bill Monroe might have had two or three days on me, but I don’t think he did. I remember him coming to my house when I was a little tiny kid. I knew the Delmore Brothers, anybody you want to talk about in those old days.

CM: Do you still miss your mother?

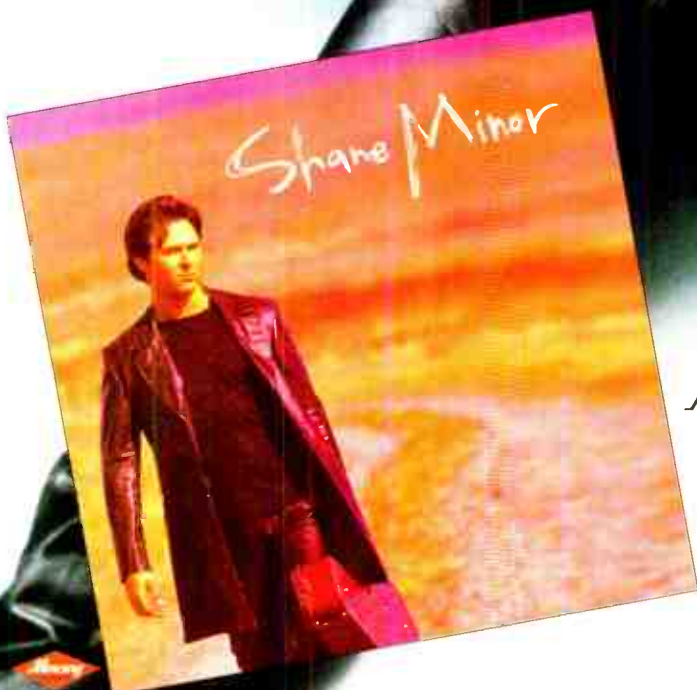
JCC: I’ve never let her go. I feel like she’s just gone to do somethin’ she likes to do. She’s either workin’ a show date, or she’s gone to watch the horses run, or down to her house in Florida or up to her house in Virginia, or she’s gone to Vegas or down to where the dogs run. It doesn’t matter. Mother was just really busy most of the time on the road, just havin’ fun. She was kind of a gypsy. I think that’s what John and I are as well. We don’t know how to stop. You get it kinda inbred in you and you just don’t get away from it.

A full-page photograph of Shane Minor, a young man with light brown hair, smiling and leaning forward. He is wearing a black leather jacket over a black shirt. The background is a bright blue sky with several tall, thin, silver, cone-shaped structures.

Shane Minor

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CM: Was it a given to you as a child that you would go on and be in show business?

JCC: No. I did everything my father would have had a boy do. I rode behind him on his motorcycle. I rode on the open-cockpit airplanes with him. I was a real tomboy. We had a little farm and we did some farmin', and we had a mill where we did grindin' on Saturdays, and I would help with that. I loved the outdoors. I milked cows, I gathered the hen eggs, did most of the hoein'.

CM: Then how in the world did you get to New York City to study acting and meet James Dean and Marlon Brando?

JCC: [Novelist] Budd Schulberg saw me when I was [touring] with Elvis, and he told [director] Elia Kazan to come down and meet me. I had been married to Carl Smith, and we'd been separated for about a year and a half. I wanted to get out of this town but I didn't think about ever gettin' out of country music. I was makin' a really good livin', but Kazan said, "What you need to do is just leave here and go to New York and study dramatics." So I went and stayed with him and his wife, Molly. I went first to [Lee Strasberg's] Actors Studio. Then I went to see Sandy Meisner at the Neighborhood Playhouse, and I liked Sandy better than I did Strasberg. It was just that Sandy was a much more gentle man and I was a gentle person. Lee was just so tough on those people. I did that for two years, but they allowed me to go on the road with Elvis and come back to New York to school. And I still would fly back on Saturday nights and do the Opry.

CM: Didn't you meet Johnny Cash about this time?

JCC: I ended up bein' divorced from Carl and there was a period of time when I married Rick Nix. He's Rosie's father. He was a great football player, and when I married him he was the world's champion hydroplane racer. Anyway, we were divorced. He was a great dancer, he was a nice man, but I was from a different world. I started to work with John then, startin' about '62. John had the biggest road show in country music then, and Elvis wasn't gonna work after he went to Hollywood.

CM: Did you fall in love right away?

JCC: I think I always felt very close to him and I was always intrigued by him, but I was frightened of him when I first went to work for him. I'd just watched Hank Williams die and I was afraid I was gonna watch him die. And I just didn't want to deal with that. I had the two little girls and I was so afraid that they wouldn't be happy. Finally, when I was firmly convinced that he was gonna be OK, I said "OK, he's made it six months. I'll marry him in six more months." I sweated it out a long time.

CM: It was worth it though, wasn't it?

JCC: Yes! I've always felt lucky to know that kind of a love, that God just puts his hand on us and says, "Okay, you can be June Carter and Johnny Cash."

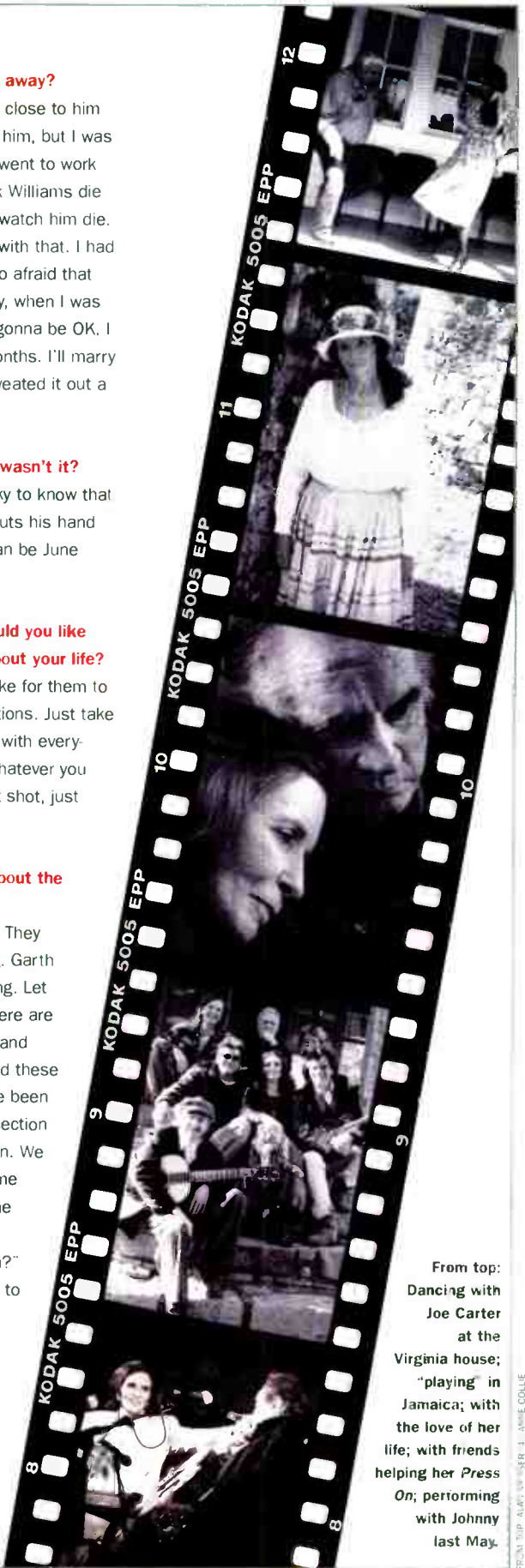
CM: When you die, what would you like your children to remember about your life?

JCC: If they're in music, I'd like for them to be honest to their own convictions. Just take it to heart and then work at it with everything you've got. If not that, whatever you do in life, just give it your best shot, just give it all you got.

CM: Are you worried today about the future of country music?

JCC: I'm not worried about it. They should take this as a blessing. Garth Brooks is doin' his honest thing. Let him do it. In the meantime, there are those who do old-time music, and John and I, since he's recorded these last two Grammy albums, have been playing to the greatest cross section of people that you've ever seen. We have the older people who come that have always come, and the young people come. They say, "Why do they like Johnny Cash?" And I say, "Because they want to hear what he has to say." And they listen when I'm performing. They listen to every word I say. This younger generation listens if you allow them to. They listen for an answer. And this answer will come in true country music, I think.

—Martha Hume



From top: Dancing with Joe Carter at the Virginia house; "playing" in Jamaica; with the love of her life; with friends helping her Press On; performing with Johnny last May.

FROM TOP: ALAN WATKINS; J. ANNIE COLLIE

GEORGE STRAIT

AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 1999

COUNTRYMUSIC



George Strait

“Success is a relative thing, and there are lots of other ways to measure it besides money,” says George Strait. “Money doesn’t solve all your problems. Sure, I’ve been real successful at what I do and I’ve made a lot of money, but it really hasn’t changed me. I just see myself as what I am, a country singer, nothing more.”

PERSONAL INFORMATION

BORN
May 18, 1952 in Poteet, Texas. He grew up in nearby Pearsall. His parents separated when he was young. George and his older brother, Buddy, were raised by their father, John, a math teacher and part-time rancher. “My dad raised my brother and me on his own, and he raised us in a real religious atmosphere. We’re all Baptists, and he always told me that the Lord would tell me what he wanted me to do with my life. I always believed that, but didn’t really know what I wanted to do until I was in the Army.”

CURRENT RESIDENCE
A home in San Antonio, Texas, and a south Texas ranch.

FAMILY
Eloped to Mexico with his high school sweetheart, Norma, and married in December 1971. Daughter Jenifer, born in Hawaii in 1972, died in an auto accident at age 13. Son George Jr. (“Bubba”), born in 1981.

MAJOR MUSICAL INFLUENCES
Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys, Hank Williams, George Jones, Merle Haggard, Frank Sinatra.

HOBBIES
Steer-roping, hunting, fishing, skiing, golf.

SIDELINES
Member of the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association. George and Bubba compete each year at the George Strait Team Roping Classic in Kingsville, Texas. Strait is a commercial spokesman for Tractor Supply Company, and has a signature line of pet shampoos, conditioners and creams with South Texas Pet Products.

PERSONALITY
Very private. Legend has it that a publicist once introduced herself to Strait and said, “Hi, I’m _____. I do publicity.” Strait responded, “Hi, I’m George Strait and I don’t.” Strait is loyal to his staff and has employed the same people for years. He’s known for his down-to-earth personality.

FOND MEMORY
Visiting President George Bush at the White House.

“George Jr. missed school that day. The President said to Bubba, ‘We can’t have you getting in trouble for missing school.’ So he wrote a note that said, ‘Please excuse George Strait Jr. for missing school. He was at the White House. Signed, President George Bush.’ That was really cool.”



PETS
A male Australian bluecheeler cattle dog named Bindarra Bounce—Bin for short. He was a gift from MCA in 1996 after Strait’s

beloved dog Buster disappeared from the ranch and was never found.

MOVIE ROLES
• 1982’s *The Soldier*, with his Ace in the Hole band. “We were in this scene in this club and a fight breaks out and we’re supposed to keep on playing like nothing ever happened,” Strait recalls. “That was pretty natural for us, since that did happen a lot back in the honky tonk days!”
• 1992’s *Pure Country*, in which Strait starred as Dusty Chandler, a country music star who tires of the spotlight and deserts his road show to find some normalcy.

VITAL STATISTICS

HEIGHT: 5’10”
WEIGHT: 160
HAIR: Brown
EYES: Green

RECORDING CAREER

CURRENT ALBUM
Always Never the Same

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY
Strait has released 24 albums since 1981, including *One Step at a Time*, *Carrying Your Love With Me*, *Blue Clear Sky*, *Strait Out of the Box* (box set) and *Pure Country* (movie soundtrack).

CONTACT INFORMATION

George Strait Fan Club
PO Box 2119
Hendersonville, TN 37077
(615) 824-7176

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THE JOURNAL

OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF OLD-TIME COUNTRY MUSIC



Cindy Walker

We travel to Texas to visit
with a songwriting legend.

World Radio History

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Editor: Robert K. Oermann

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Who Am I?

How much do you know about your country music favorites? Here's your chance to find out. Test your trivia knowledge about one of the greats.

CLUE #1 I met my idol, Hank Williams, at a radio station in Texas, which inspired me.

CLUE #2 A duo named Eddie and Pearl gave me my start in their nightclub.

CLUE #3 My first single was called "No Money in This Deal," and that was the truth: It bombed.

CLUE #4 I first made the charts in 1955, and I'm still on a major label today.

CLUE #5 My rockabilly billing was "Thumper."

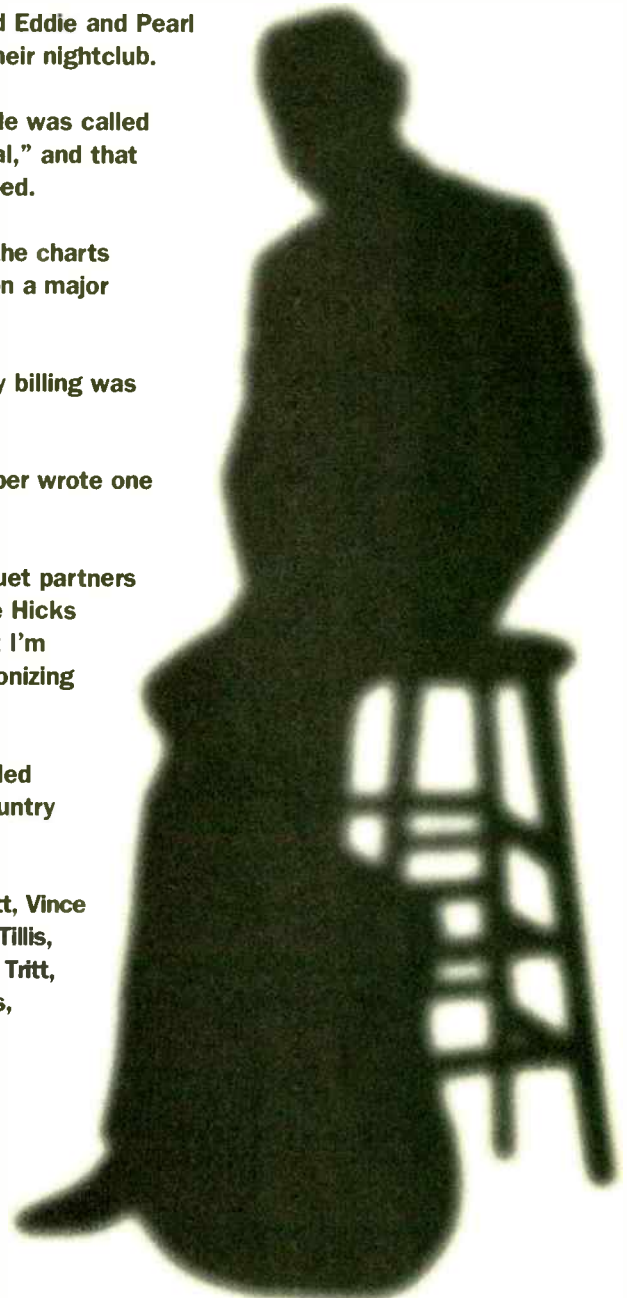
CLUE #6 The Big Bopper wrote one of my 1959 hits.

CLUE #7 My female duet partners have included Jeanette Hicks and Brenda Carter, but I'm better known for harmonizing with another.

CLUE #8 I've been called "the Rolls Royce of country singers."

CLUE #9 Mark Chesnutt, Vince Gill, Garth Brooks, Pam Tillis, T. Graham Brown, Travis Tritt, Joe Diffie, Patty Loveless, Alan Jackson and Clint Black shared a 1993 CMA Award with me.

CLUE #10 My signature song is "He Stopped Loving Her Today."



C O U N T R Y ' S

Family Reunion

LARRY BLACK AND HIS VIDEO crew are having a ball. The veteran radio broadcaster has been soaking up some of the greatest stories ever told by Nashville's classic stars. And along the way, he is preserving history.

Black's *Family Reunion* tapes are documents of the music and memories of dozens of country acts. Once a year he gathers a batch of stars, seats them in a big circle and videotapes them telling stories to—and about—each other. A “house band” is there to accompany them when they break into song, which they inevitably do.

The first tapings took place in May 1997. Black edited them into five home videos, showcasing 29 country legends.

The first features Hall-of-Famers Kitty Wells and Jimmy Dickens as well as 17 Grand Ole Opry members. They tell stories about the late Minnie Pearl and Roger Miller, both of whom were always good for a punch line or two. Several perform their “signature” songs, including Johnny Russell (“Act Naturally”), Jan Howard (“Evil on Your Mind”), Jack Greene (“There Goes My Everything”) and Jim Ed Brown (“Pop a Top”).

This debut edition of *Family Reunion* has extra poignancy because it features Justin Tubb's stories and his performance of “Lonesome 7-7203.” Tubb died the following year.

The second tape has the group reminiscing about Roy Acuff and Tex Ritter. This tape captured one of the last performances of Johnny Paycheck before he became desperately ill with a lung infection in 1998.

Highlights of the third tape include Margo Smith ripping through “Teach Me to Yodel,” Sheb Wooley doing his humorous “Hello Walls #2” and Jeannie C. Riley performing “Harper Valley P.T.A.” Along the way, the group tells stories about Ernest Tubb, Red Foley and

others. Again, there is an unforeseen benefit. This volume features some of the final videotaped moments with Grandpa Jones, who died a year later.

The fourth tape features the humorous recollections of Jeannie Seeley, who sings her Grammy-winning “Don't Touch Me.” Bill Anderson sings “Still” and Sheb Wooley makes fun of it with his “Still #2.” Merle Kilgore's “Wolverton Mountain,” Skeeter Davis' “The End of the World,” Billy Walker's “Cross the Brazos at Waco” and Jean Shepard's “Slippin' Away” are among the other performances. Dickey Lee sits in for the late Jack Anglin to sing “Ashes of Love” with Johnny Wright.

The fifth tape from the 1997 *Family Reunion* sessions is a “bonus tape” that includes stories that couldn't fit on the first four volumes. Of particular interest are the anecdotes about Hank Williams, Patsy Cline, Elvis Presley and Faron Young.

The second round of *Family Reunion* tapings was in March 1998 and featured 37 legends. Five more home videos resulted.

The first volume has Leroy Van Dyke singing “Walk On By” and Stonewall Jackson doing “Don't Be Angry,” among others. Once again, Black and his crew captured history as it was slipping away, for Boxcar Willie was present to reminisce and perform. The beloved entertainer died in Branson earlier this year.

Volume two features the group recalling practical jokes they've played on one another, as well as humorous recountings of the antics of Marty Robbins and Mel Tillis. Among those participating are Bobby Bare (doing “Detroit City”), Goldie Hill (in a duet with Jim Ed Brown on “Looking Back to See”) and Charlie Walker

(“Pick Me Up on Your Way Down”).

On the third tape, Melba Montgomery sings “No Charge” and Jimmy Dean sings “Big Bad John.” Everyone laughs at what a deliciously bad song Bobby Lord's “Pie Peachy Pie Pie” is, then makes Bill Anderson sing his “masterpiece” “Peel Me a 'Nanner.”

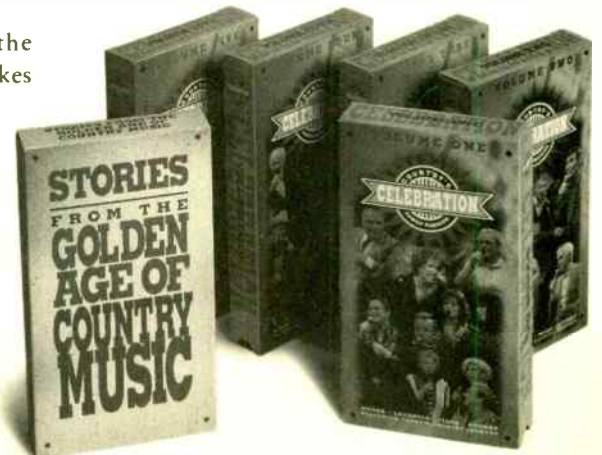
Jeanne Pruett provides “Satin Sheets,” Wilma Lee Cooper does “Big Midnight Special” and Mac Wiseman sings “'Tis Sweet to Be Remembered” on the fourth tape. Bill Carlisle, the Opry's oldest cast member, romps through a spirited “Too Old to Cut the Mustard” to the delight of his fellow performers.

Jeannie Seeley recalls her old friend Dottie West on volume five and sings the late West's “Here Comes My Baby Back Again.” Jan Howard provides another emotional moment when she recites a poem on aging.

Black is promising bonus tapes based on the 1998 sessions. One will feature footage shot behind the scenes where the participants joke, sing, tell stories and generally enjoy each other's company off the set.

And, yes, he's taping another *Family Reunion* this year. ●

Country's *Family Reunion*, P.O. Box 210709, Nashville, TN 37221. Order via 1-800-981-6733.



CINDY WALKER

“THE GREATEST LIVING
SONGWRITER OF COUNTRY MUSIC”

BY ROBERT K. OERMANN

AT THE 1997 COUNTRY Music Association Awards, a woman few viewers had ever heard of completely stopped the show. When Cindy Walker was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame, she did something completely unexpected, yet completely in keeping with her calling as a songwriter. Instead of thanking publishers, managers, family, business associates or stars, she recited a poem.

It was a gesture so perfect that Barbara Mandrell wept and the audience in the Opry House rose in a standing ovation. Walker just beamed.

One suspects she knew all along just how beguiling her acceptance “speech” would be. After all, Cindy Walker has been charming everyone who encounters her for more than 50 years.

She still lives in the modest home she and her mother bought in 1954. It’s on a side street in Mexia, Texas, surrounded by shade trees, gardens, roses and shrubs. Beside it is a huge pin oak.

“Isn’t it beautiful?” says Walker. “Mama planted that.” Mama, as we shall see, was a huge part of the Cindy Walker story.

“May I ask you just one thing?” she inquires. “Will you please not mention my age?” It’s a deal. She is, after all, still writing songs and doesn’t want people to feel that she is dated.

And so we chat. Out tumbles a lifetime’s worth of memories, all delivered in that marvelous combination of Texas grit, genteel manners, sparkling wit and touching sentimentality.

“I was Mama’s ‘play pretty,’ her little doll,” she explains. Her mother, Oree, was a gifted pianist, and her grandfather, F.L. Eiland, was a noted hymn writer (“Hold to God’s Unchanging Hand”). Mom raised little Cindy to love music with all her heart.



Walker figured she could write songs as easily at home in Mexia, Texas, as she could in Hollywood or Nashville.

COURTESY OF CINDY WALKER



Walker was the highlight of the 1998 Mexia Christmas parade.

Walker picked up the guitar and was making music from the time she could toddle. At 7 she danced and sang in a Dallas production called *Toy Land Review*. By 16 she was performing in Billy Rose's Casa de Manana club in Ft. Worth. She also wrote the club's theme song.

"My father was a cotton broker. He was going to Los Angeles on a business trip and asked Mama and me if we wanted to go. Does a sinner want to go to heaven? L.A. meant music to me. Mama worried about packing the right clothes while I worried about getting all my songs in one briefcase.

"We were driving down the street in Los Angeles and I saw a sign on a building that said Crosby Enterprises. 'Stop the car!' I said to Papa. 'I've got a song for Bing Crosby.' 'He's not going to be in there,' said Papa. 'Well it's his office, there's going to be somebody that knows him there,' I said. Papa thought I was squirrely."

"Foxy" is more like it. Walker talked her way past the receptionist, brought her mother upstairs to play piano and sang "Lone Star Trail" for Crosby's brother Larry. Bing recorded it in 1941 and Walker landed a recording contract of her own with his label, Decca Records.

"I saw this huge white bus with Bob Wills' name painted on the side. I knew he had to be in Hollywood, so I started calling all the hotels to see where he was registered."

Once again, her perseverance paid off. Within a week, Wills had recorded five of her tunes, including "Dusty Skies" and "Cherokee Maiden." He would go on to record more than 50 Cindy Walker songs, including "Bubbles in My Beer," "Blue Bonnet Lane," "Miss Molly" and "You're From Texas."

Walker added a third superstar to her conquests when she began providing songs like "Blue Canadian Rockies," "Silver Spurs" and "I Was Just Walking Out the Door" to Gene

Autry. Her blonde good looks made her a natural for the silver screen, and she appeared in Autry's *Ride Tenderfoot Ride* (1940) and *Trail to San Antone* (1941).

She also became country's first video star. "Soundies" were short film clips that were shown on jukebox-like machines in restaurants, clubs and bars. Walker made country music's first entry in the field, the humorous "Seven Beers With the Wrong Man," in 1941.

During our Texas visit, we paused for lunch—fried chicken and all the trimmings—then we watched her groundbreaking soundie, as well as "Bearcat Mountain Gal," "Election Day," "The Hillbilly Grand Opera," "The Farmer's Daughter," "Ti Yi Yippie Aye," "The Great Big Saw Came Nearer and Nearer" and "Hillbilly Ballerina." These ancestors of music videos proved not only that Cindy Walker had the beauty and vocal ability to have been a major star, but so much comedic talent that she could have been Lucille Ball if she'd wanted. Walker's other soundies included "He Took Me for a Sleighride (In the Good Old Summertime)," "The Wife of the Man on the Flying Trapeze" and "The Hokey Pokey Polka." She also made one of "Why I Don't Trust the Men," which promoted one of her Decca singles. She scored a Top 10 hit for the label in 1944 with "When My Blue Moon Turns to Gold Again."

But in 1947, she turned her back on her budding recording career to concentrate on songwriting. Back in Mexia, Walker's brother complained that his children would grow up not knowing their grandmother. Papa had died, so after 13 years in Hollywood, Walker and her mother moved back to Texas.

"Mama didn't want to go. She loved California. I figured I could write songs in Mexia just as easy as I could in Los Angeles," says Walker. Besides, by 1954, Nashville was a lot closer than California. The two women rented an apartment in Music City and began making regular trips there by train to pitch tunes. Oree would cook a splendid meal for

the producers, artists or publishers who were their guests, then sit at the piano and accompany her daughter. Few left without a hit in their hands.

Walker's ability to custom-tailor songs for specific voices became legendary and is illustrated by such diverse creations as "Distant Drums" and "Anna Marie" for Jim Reeves, "I Don't Care" (Webb Pierce,

revived by Ricky Skaggs), "Lorelei" (Elton Britt), "Sugar Moon" (Pat Boone), "In the Misty Moonlight" (Jerry Wallace, revived by Dean Martin), "The Gold Rush Is Over" (Hank Snow), "China Doll" (the Ames Brothers), "Flying South" (Hank Locklin), "Triflin' Gal" (Al Dexter), "You Are My Treasure" (Jack Greene), "Two Glasses, Joe" (Ernest Tubbs),



Walker's first songbook, left, appeared in 1941. Fifty-seven years later, her tunes are the subject of a tribute CD by Texas Playboys vocalist Leon Rausch.

"Fifteen Days" (Wilma Burgess), "Oklahoma Waltz" (Johnny Bond), "Dime a Dozen" (Margaret Whiting), "I Love Everything About You" (George Morgan), "Trademark" (Carl Smith), "Heaven Says Hello" (Sonny James) and "Jim I Wore a Tie Today" (Eddy Arnold).

"I was at the deejay convention in the old Andrew Jackson Hotel in Nashville when Eddy Arnold told me he had a great idea for a song called 'You Don't Know Me,' about a guy who was too shy to tell this woman he loved her. I wasn't sure I could write it, but I went back to Mexia and worked on it.

"The beginning finally came to me, 'You give your hand to me/And then you say hello/And I can hardly speak/My heart is beating so.' But I couldn't get the ending. Then I thought, 'You give your hand to me/And then you say goodbye/I watch you walk away/Beside the lucky guy.' I called Eddy and said, 'I've got it!' He said, 'Got what?' He had completely forgotten about the song."

"You Don't Know Me" became a standard, recorded by everyone from Ray Charles and Bette Midler to Mickey Gilley and Elvis Presley. Meryl Streep sang it in 1990's *Postcards From the Edge* and it was featured in 1996's *The Mirror Has Two Faces*, starring Barbra Streisand and Lauren Bacall.

"Because Eddy Arnold had a hit with 'I'll Hold You in my Heart ('Til I Can Hold

You in my Arms)', I told him I thought he should have a follow-up called 'Take Me in Your Arms and Hold Me.' So I wrote that." It, too, became a standard.

"[Producer] Fred Foster called and said Roy Orbison was looking for songs. I said, 'Well, he writes all his own, doesn't he?' Fred said to send him some anyway. I picked out three and put the tapes in a box to mail. Mama looked at the box and said, 'Why are there only two tapes in there?' I said, 'Oh, I took out "Dream Baby"; it's such a nothing song.' She said, 'If you don't send him "Dream Baby" you haven't sent him a thing. That is the one.'"

Oree was right. "Dream Baby (How Long Must I Dream)" entered the repertoires of Orbison, Glen Campbell, Lacy J. Dalton, Cher, Waylon Jennings, the Marvelettes, Bruce Springsteen and dozens of others. The call from Foster was to have another dividend. In 1964 he produced Walker's sole record album, *Words & Music*. It was reissued on CD by Sony in 1997.

Walker continued to write throughout the '70s and '80s. "Christian Cowboy" was featured in the 1990-91 Broadway musical *Smoke on the Mountain*. She wrote the theme music for Billy Graham's films *Mr. Texas* and *Oil Town, U.S.A.*

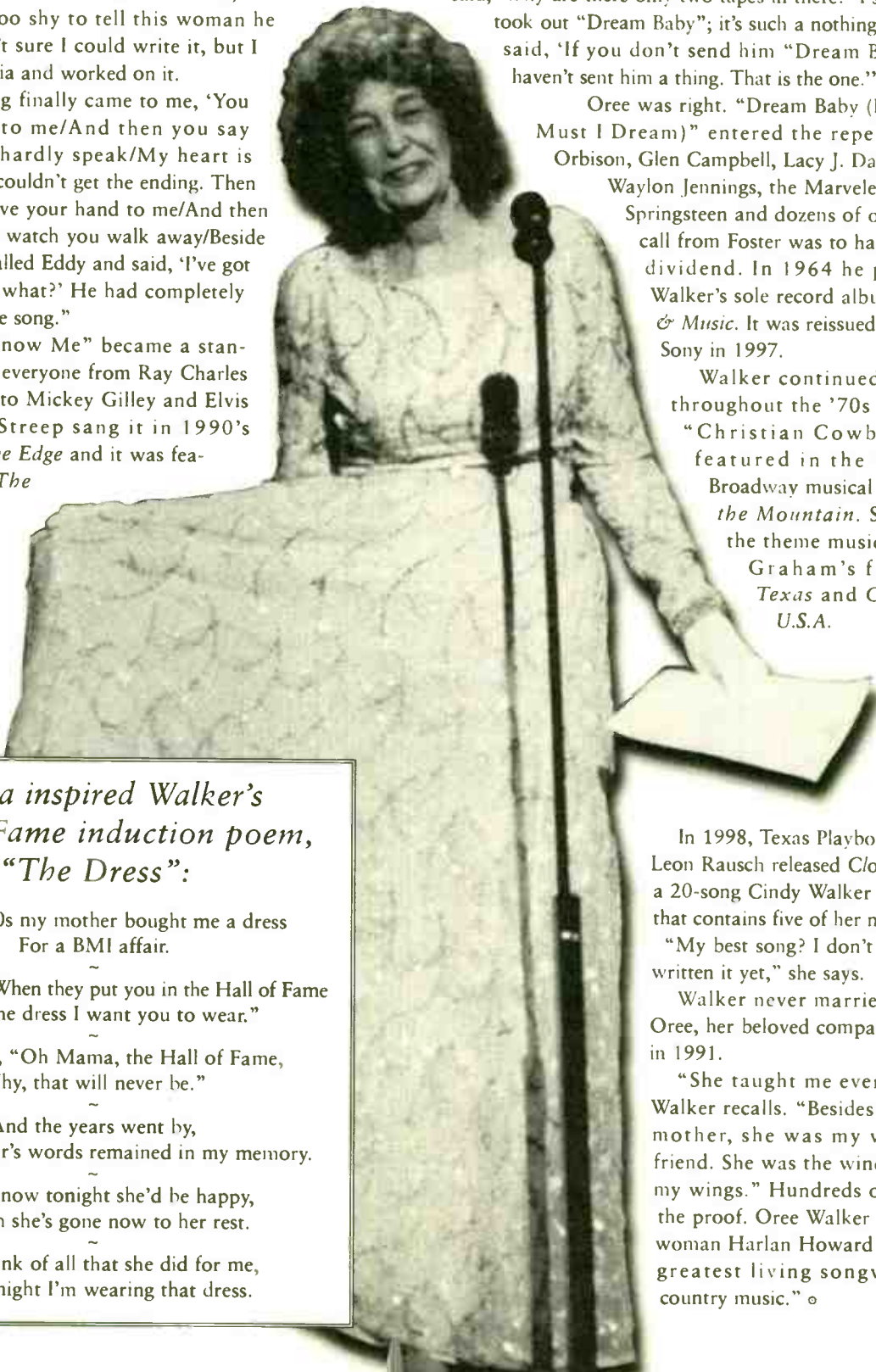
In 1998, Texas Playboys vocalist Leon Rausch released *Close to You*, a 20-song Cindy Walker salute CD that contains five of her new songs.

"My best song? I don't think I've written it yet," she says.

Walker never married. Mama Oree, her beloved companion, died in 1991.

"She taught me everything," Walker recalls. "Besides being my mother, she was my very best friend. She was the wind beneath my wings." Hundreds of hits are the proof. Oree Walker raised the woman Harlan Howard calls "the greatest living songwriter of country music." ◊

COURTESY OF CINDY WALKER



Mama inspired Walker's Hall of Fame induction poem, "The Dress":

In the 1980s my mother bought me a dress
For a BMI affair.

And she said, "When they put you in the Hall of Fame
That's the dress I want you to wear."

And I said, "Oh Mama, the Hall of Fame,
Why, that will never be."

And the years went by,
But my mother's words remained in my memory.

And I know tonight she'd be happy,
Though she's gone now to her rest.

But I think of all that she did for me,
And tonight I'm wearing that dress.

THIS DATE IN COUNTRY MUSIC

AUGUST

August 1

1927 Ralph Peer discovers and records the Carter Family in Bristol, Va.
1966 George Ducas born

August 2

1910 Opry comedian Rod Brasfield born
1935 Hank Cochran born
1953 Betty Jack Davis dies in a car wreck, ending the career of the Davis Sisters and forcing partner Skeeter Davis to continue as a solo act

August 3

1924 Jordanaires tenor Gordon Stoker born

August 4

1890 Carson Robison born
1927 Jimmie Rodgers' first recording session

August 5

1934 Vern Gosdin born



Vern Gosdin

1943 Sammi Smith born
1961 Fiddler Mark O'Connor born
1968 Terri Clark born

August 6

1977 "Heaven's Just a Sin Away" enters the charts for the Kendalls

August 7

1927 Songwriter Felice Bryant born
1942 B.J. Thomas born
1948 Hank Williams debuts on the Louisiana Hayride

1950 Rodney Crowell born
1971 Homer Haynes of Homer and Jethro dies

August 8

1926 Webb Pierce born
1932 Mel Tillis born
1944 Michael Johnson born
1950 Jamie O'Hara born
1987 K.T. Oslin's debut album *80's Ladies* enters the charts

August 9

1934 Merle Kilgore born

August 10

1926 *Hee Haw's* Junior Samples born

1927 Bluegrass great Jimmy Martin born
1928 Jimmy Dean born

August 11

1946 John Conlee born
1972 Elvis and Priscilla file for divorce



Elvis Presley

August 12

1929 Buck Owens born
1930 Porter Wagoner born

August 13

1924 Vernon Dalhart records "The Prisoner's Song," country's first million-seller

August 14

1941 Connie Smith born

August 15

1925 Rose Maddox born
1933 Bobby Helms born
1952 "Jambalaya" by Hank Williams debuts on the charts

August 16

1935 Patsy Montana records "I Wanna Be a Cowboy's Sweetheart"
1941 Billy Joe Shaver born
1977 Death of Elvis Presley

August 17

1796 Davy Crockett born
1955 Kevin Welch born
1958 Charlie Rich's first recording session

August 18

1963 Final performance of the Louvin Brothers

August 19

1945 Eddy Raven born
1969 Clay Walker born

August 20

1924 Jim Reeves born
1935 Justin Tubb born
1952 Rudy Gatlin born

August 21

1938 Kenny Rogers born
1939 Statler Brother Harold Reid born
1939 Guitarist James Burton born

1965 Waylon Jennings first appears on the charts
1975 Old-time music master Sam McGee dies

August 22

1957 Holly Dunn born
1959 Collin Raye born

1962 Ricky Lynn Gregg born
1996 Death of Oliver "Moonney" Lynn

August 23

1917 Tex Williams born
1947 Rex Allen Jr. born
1972 "The Happiest Girl in the Whole U.S.A." goes gold for Donna Fargo

August 24

1897 Fred Rose born
1988 Death of Nat Stuckey

August 25

1959 Tim Mensy born
1961 Billy Ray Cyrus born

August 26

1968 "Harper Valley P.T.A." becomes a gold record for Jeannie C. Riley

August 27

1925 Carter Stanley of the Stanley Brothers born
1927 Jimmy C. Newman born

1949 Jeff Cook of Alabama born

August 28

1965 Shania Twain born
1982 George Strait gets his first No. 1 single, "Fool Hearted Memory"
1982 LeAnn Rimes born

August 29

1987 Archie Campbell dies

August 30

1919 Kitty Wells' birthday

August 31

1984 Willie Nelson and Merle Haggard earn a platinum record for their LP *Pancho & Lefty*

SEPTEMBER

September 1

1931 Boxcar Willie born
1933 Conway Twitty born



Conway Twitty

September 2

1949 Margaret Whiting and Jimmy Wakely begin their climb to No. 1 with the landmark cheating duet "Slipping Around"

September 3

1925 Hank Thompson born
1933 Tompall Glaser born

September 4

1920 Steel guitarist Shot Jackson born

September 5

1958 Country Music

Association is chartered

September 6

1911 Zeke Clements born
1939 David Allan Coe born
1942 Mel McDaniel born

1958 Jeff Foxworthy born
1963 Mark Chesnut born

1984 Ernest Tubb born
1997 Bassist Roy Huskey Jr. dies

September 7

1936 Buddy Holly born

September 8

1897 Jimmie Rodgers born
1929 Harlan Howard born

1932 Patsy Cline born

September 9

1947 Freddy Weller born
1956 Elvis Presley appears on *The Ed Sullivan Show*

1996 Bill Monroe dies

September 10

1937 Tommy Overstreet born

September 11

1902 Jimmie Davis born
1967 Bobbie Gentry gets a gold record for "Ode to Billie Joe"



Bobbie Gentry

September 12

1927 Helen Carter born
1931 George Jones born

1958 Death of Rod Brasfield

September 13

1911 Bill Monroe born
1969 Barbara Mandrell debuts on country charts

September 14

1946 Hank Williams auditions for Fred Rose

1959 John Berry born

September 15

1903 Roy Acuff born
1948 Death of Vernon Dalhart

September 16

1946 Debut recording of Earl Scruggs in Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys
1950 David Bellamy born

September 17

1923 Hank Williams born

September 18

1918 Hank Penny born
1947 Grand Ole Opry troupe plays Carnegie Hall in New York

September 19

1958 Elvis sails for

Germany in the Army

1964 Trisha Yearwood born
1968 Death of Red Foley
1973 Gram Parsons dies

1895 Pioneer country songwriter Bob Miller born

September 21

1941 Dickey Lee born
1957 "Wake Up Little Susie" by the Everly Brothers enters the charts

1961 Bob Dylan records his first LP

1967 Faith Hill born

September 22

1912 Ted Daffan born
1930 Ray Charles born

1935 First recording session for Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys
1987 Death of O.B. McClinton

September 24

1977 "I've Already Loved You in My Mind" hits No. 1 for Conway Twitty

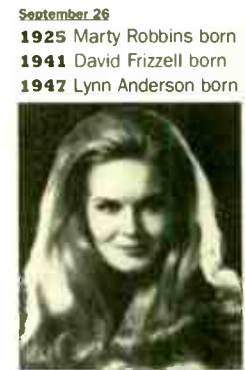
September 25

1933 Royce Kendall born
1965 Chart debut of "Flowers on the Wall," the first hit for the Statler Brothers

September 26

1925 Marty Robbins born
1941 David Frizzell born

1947 Lynn Anderson born



Lynn Anderson

1948 Olivia Newton-John born

1955 June Carter and Carl Smith's daughter Carlene is born

1970 Doug Supernaw born

September 27

1903 Train wreck in Virginia inspires country hit "The Wreck of the Old 97"

September 28

1926 Jerry Clower born
1928 First recording session held in Nashville

September 29

1907 Gene Autry born
1935 Jerry Lee Lewis born

September 30

1950 First television broadcast of the Grand Ole Opry
1953 Deborah Allen born
1958 Marty Stuart born

THE STORY BEHIND THE SONG

“CATHY’S CLOWN”

(Written by Don Everly)

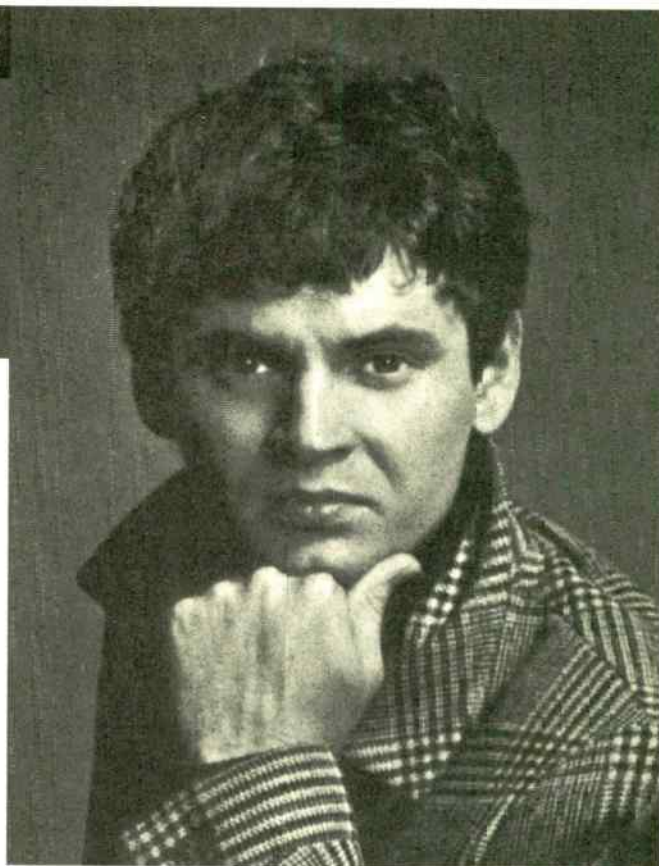
The way Don Everly remembers it, he was sitting in his house in suburban Nashville, just day-dreaming. The blocky rhythms of the *Grand Canyon Suite* by classical composer Ferde Grofe were running through his head.

THOSE RHYTHMS WOULD FORM THE DISTINCTIVE stomping, march-time introduction to “Cathy’s Clown.”

“My father [Ike Everly] had a girlfriend named Mary. He told me the kids used to tease him by saying, ‘Mary had a little Ike,’” recalls Everly. “‘Cathy’s Clown’ sorta transposed itself outta that. It just came to me.”

Don used an old girlfriend’s name for the title. Brother Phil helped him polish the song, and they were so certain of its hit potential that they recorded it as their debut single for Warner Bros. Records. The Everlys had just signed the music world’s first million-dollar recording contract, and the pressure was on to deliver something huge.

“Cathy’s Clown” was just the ticket. It was first issued in England, backed by a massive advertising campaign that coincided with the Everlys’ 1960 tour there. The record shot directly to No. 1 in Britain and remained at the top of the charts for two solid months. Eventually, “Cathy’s Clown” would become the Everlys’ top-selling international record.



ROBERT K. OERMANN PERSONAL COLLECTION

Back in the U.S., “Cathy’s Clown” was issued by Warner and repeated its overseas success. The record went to No. 1 and sold more than 2.5 million copies. It heralded a string of subsequent hit singles, including Phil Everly’s “When Will I Be Loved,” Don’s “So Sad (To Watch Good Love Go Bad),” Mel Tillis’ “Stick With Me Baby,” Sonny Curtis’ “Walk Right Back,” John D. Loudermilk’s “Ebony Eyes” and Carole King’s “Crying in the Rain.”

“Cathy’s Clown” wasn’t Don Everly’s first songwriting success. He had been performing on country radio shows from childhood, so when he graduated from high school in 1955 he headed for Nashville with Phil, two years younger, in tow. Chet Atkins had taken a liking to the teenagers and in 1954 took Don’s song “Thou Shalt Not Steal” to Kitty Wells, who made it a hit. The brothers used the \$600 in royalties as their “seed money” in Music City.

Anita Carter and Wanda Jackson both recorded Don’s song “Here We Are Again.” He also wrote “Keep a-Lovin’ Me” and “The Sun Keeps Shining,” which became the debut Everly Brothers single in 1956. The siblings were backed on that Columbia Records session by Carl Smith’s band, the Tunemiths.

Their career took off when they signed with Cadence Records in 1957. Don’s song “I Wonder If I Care as Much” was the B-side of their rockabilly blockbuster “Bye Bye Love,” and his “Maybe Tomorrow” was the flip of “Wake Up Little Susie.”

Although their most famous early hits were written by Boudleaux and Felice Bryant, “Should We Tell Him,” a Don Everly tune, was selected for the third Cadence single. Don



Neil Young inducts the Everlys into the Rock ‘n’ Roll Hall of Fame in 1986.

CATHY'S CLOWN

By DON EVERLY and PHIL EVERLY
RECORDED BY THE EVERLY BROTHERS FOR WARNER BROS. RECORDS

ROBERT E. OBERMANN PERSONAL COLLECTION #1

THE EVERLY BROTHERS

THE EVERLY BROTHERS

Walk Right Back

Heartaches & Harmonies

The sheet music of "Cathy's Clown" has the same portrait that's on the cover of a new Everlys biography. They also have a CD boxed set, above.

wrote "(Til I Kissed You" while the brothers were touring Australia in 1957. It was paired with his "Oh What a Feeling" to become the act's eighth single in 1959.

Phil blossomed as a composer as well. He wrote Pat Boone's 1958 hit "Gee, But It's Lonely," as well as the Everlys' 1960 standard "When Will I Be Loved," which was repopularized by Linda Ronstadt in 1975.

"Cathy's Clown" would prove to have a similarly long shelf life. Dolly Parton recorded it from a female perspective, but her version was never released. Reba McEntire heard it, however, and copied it for her *Sweet Sixteen* album of 1989.

McEntire's single of "Cathy's Clown" became a No. 1 country smash, winning Don the BMI award as the writer of the most played country song in 1990. The song has also been a country single for the Springer Brothers (1980) and Tricia Johns (1981).

The Everly Brothers released 1968's *Roots* as a masterpiece LP of their career, starred in an ABC variety series in 1970 and reunited with Chet Atkins for the *Pass the Chicken and Listen* album of 1972 before breaking up in 1973. During the next 10 years, Don and Phil both recorded fine solo efforts.

They reunited in 1983, entered the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame in 1986, and continue to tour today. They became the subjects of the musical *Bye Bye Love* in Nashville in 1998.

Don still has the Nashville house where he wrote "Cathy's Clown," but is now also operating Everlys' Lake Malone Inn. Situated on 100 lakeside acres, it has 55 guest rooms, lots of Everly career memorabilia and a nightclub where he often performs. The Inn is located 18 miles south of Central City, Kentucky, where Don and Phil have staged Labor Day weekend Homecoming shows annually since 1988. ●

"CATHY'S CLOWN"



By Don Everly*

DON'T WANT YOUR LOVE ANYMORE.
Don't want your kisses, that's for sure.
I die each time I hear this sound.
Here he comes, that's Cathy's Clown.

I'VE GOT TO STAND TALL.
You know a man can crawl
For when he knows you tell lies
And he lets them pass by
Then he's not a man at all

DON'T WANT YOUR LOVE ANYMORE.
Don't want your kisses, that's for sure.
I die each time I hear this sound.
Here he comes, that's Cathy's Clown.

WHEN YOU SEF ME SHED A TEAR
And you know that it's sincere,
Don't you think it's kinda sad
That you're treatin' me so bad,
Or don't you even care?

DON'T WANT YOUR LOVE ANYMORE.
Don't want your kisses, that's for sure.
I die each time I hear this sound
Here he comes, that's Cathy's Clown.

THAT'S CATHY'S CLOWN
That's Cathy's Clown
That's Cathy's Clown

*Phil and Don were jointly credited as writers on the original recording

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50 Years with the Opry: Jimmy Dickens Marks a Milestone

By Robert K. Oermann

IT HAS BEEN HALF A CENTURY SINCE Jimmy Dickens first walked out onto the Opry stage, but he remembers it as if it were yesterday.

"Remember it?" Dickens says backstage in his Opry dressing room. "How could I ever forget it? Mr. Acuff arranged for me to come in and do a guest appearance. I'd been on the radio a long time, and I thought I was ready. But when I walked out there I was a nervous wreck."

In late 1948, Dickens debuted on the Grand Ole Opry at the Ryman Auditorium singing "John Henry." Fifty years later, he is still a mainstay at the world's longest-running radio show.

After that first appearance, Roy Acuff told Dickens that he should be prepared to stay for a while.

"So I moved down here to Nashville," Dickens recalls. "I stayed at Roy Acuff's house for the first six months." At first, Acuff and Milton Estes featured him as a "temporary" guest on their Opry segments. Then he became a permanent cast member in 1949.

"I lucked out. When I went to put my first band together, [guitarist] Grady Martin told me about a band that was out of work, Paul Howard's. It was Grady, Jabbo Arrington, Red Taylor, Walter Haynes and Bob Moore. Jabbo and Grady were playing those twin-guitar leads, so we got into that sound."

Opry executive Jim Denny knew just what to do with that innovative, energetic sound. He hooked Dickens up with manager Dewey Moussant, who had show connections throughout the South. In no time, Dickens and his Country Boys were performing four shows a day between movies at theaters in dozens of states. That, coupled with his Opry appearances and a string of

"All my people were coal miners," he remembers, "but I never wanted to go into the mines. From my childhood on, I always wanted to be an entertainer. And I set out to do that early on, while I was still in high school.

"I was doing an early-morning radio show on WLW in Cincinnati in 1945 when Mr. Acuff came to do a concert. I got backstage...and he asked me if I'd like to sing a song on his show.

For ages after that, he joked with me about stealing the show from him. But he liked what I did. Later on, in 1948, I was in Saginaw, Michigan, working on WKNX. He came there for a concert and I opened the show. I remember it was February and it was awfully cold.

"He said, 'What are you doing in this cold country?' I said, 'Well, it's a job; I'm makin' a living.' That's when he mentioned about coming down to the Grand Ole Opry. I've been here ever since."

Backed by the propulsive sound he developed at the Opry, Dickens hit the popularity charts with "Take an Old Cold Tater and Wait," "Country Boy" and "My Heart's Bouquet," all of which became Top 10 hits in 1949. "Hillbilly Fever" and "A-Sleeping at the Foot of the Bed" confirmed his record stardom in 1950, as did such other '50s performances as "Pennies for Papa" and "Out Behind the Barn."

"After 'Old Cold Tater,' I got branded with that novelty material. But I did a



Jimmy Dickens and his road show get ready to face the camera for their first publicity photo. Dickens' twin-guitar sound was distinctive.

Columbia Records hits, made him a star. It was what he'd wanted all his life.

He was born in West Virginia in 1920 to a musical family. He says he was crazy about the country radio "barn dance" shows of the '30s and vowed at an early age to become a performer on one of them. After achieving prominence on radio in the Mountain State, he hit the road.



LITTLE JIMMY DICKENS.

lot of ballads, too. In my shows, I'd always do both."

Both styles have appealed to fans for generations. Many of his songs have become evergreens—Charley Pride ("We Could"), Gene Watson ("Farewell Party"), Ray Price ("Take Me as I Am"), Wanda Jackson ("The Violet and a Rose") and Martina McBride ("I'm Little But I'm Loud") have all repopularized numbers that Dickens originated. There has even been a tribute album, *George Jones Sings Like the Dickens*.

Ricky Van Shelton thought enough of Dickens' skills to revive both the ballad "Life Turned Her That Way" (1988) and the rocker "A Hole in My Pocket" (1989).

"After Ricky sang 'Life Turned Her That Way,' it was a year before I'd even try to sing that song again," says Dickens with a laugh.

One of Dickens' favorite current performers is Alan Jackson. When Jackson revisited the country-recitation style with 1998's "I'll Go On Loving You," he, too, was following in the older star's footsteps. Among the most emotional of the vintage Dickens recitations are "When You're Seventeen," "Alone With God," "Insured Beyond the Grave" and the tear-jerking "Raggedy Ann."

By turns sentimental, droll and warm, the personality of Jimmy Dickens is one of the reasons the Opry has retained its "just-folks" atmosphere. And his personal style has been a hallmark of the Opry through six decades of changing fads.

He made an impression from the start. It wasn't just that "Little" Jimmy Dickens was only 4 feet, 11 inches tall. Dickens was the first Opry star to sport the flashy rhinestone stage attire that gave country music its classic "look." The twin electric-guitar leads on his hot, uptempo records made him a fore-runner of the rockabilly movement. He was the first country star to circumnavigate the globe on tour.

"There are so many things I remember, so many moments," he says.

Dickens was there when the legendary Hank Williams staged his Opry debut.

"I thought I'd heard a lot of applause before, but the people just came unglued when he sang 'Lovesick Blues.' Hank and I became close. He was a very moody person. You'd be talking to him one time and he'd be laughing. The next thing you know, Hank would be deep in thought about something.

"But we were friends. We went rabbit hunting together with beagle

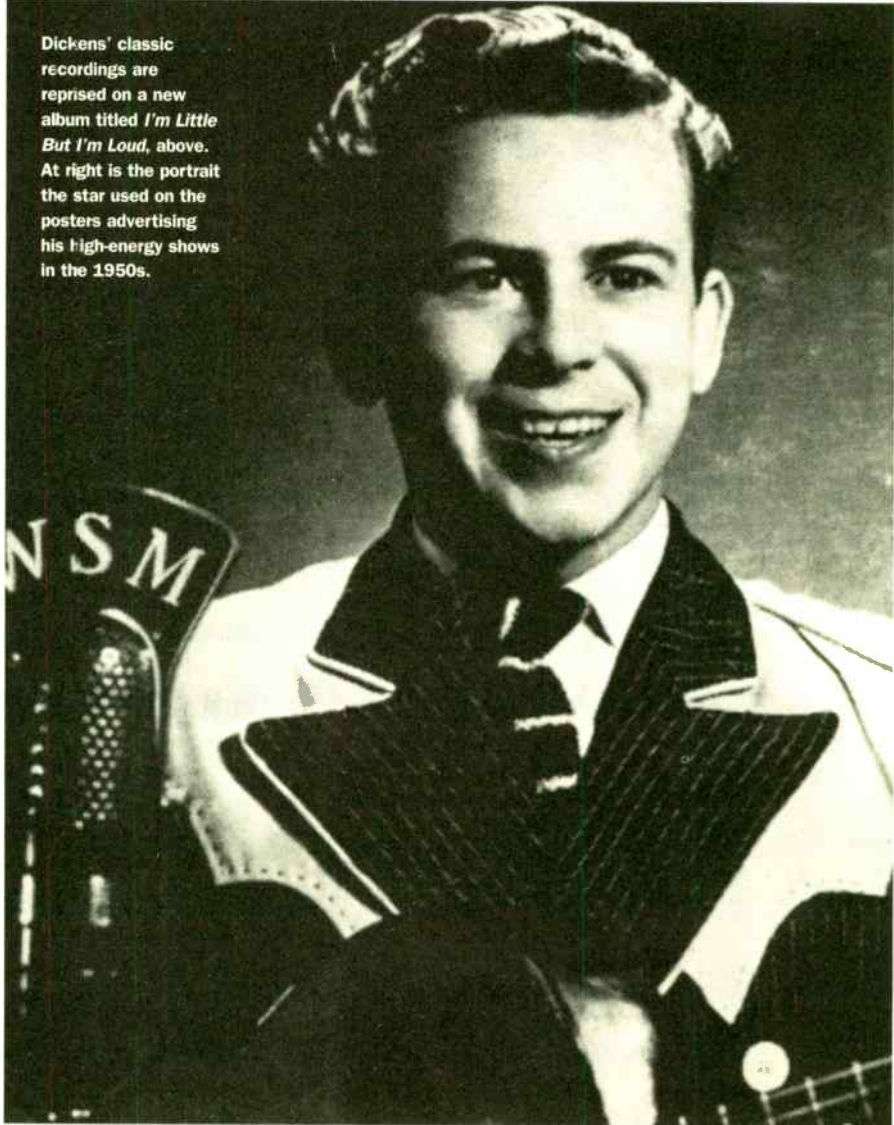
dogs; we went fishing together. We'd go to one another's house and visit. Not talk about country music, just visit.

"We went on tour together. We were in Oklahoma City when Bill Monroe and I were standing in the wings watching him work. He called us out on stage to sing a gospel song with him. I think it was 'The Old Country Church.' I stood on a chair between them. Hank sang lead; Bill sang tenor; I sang baritone."

Dickens was there when Patsy Cline first trod the Opry boards. He recalls, "Patsy was one of the boys; she talked that way. She was an honest person. And she loved her work."

On tour in Arizona in 1951, Dickens discovered another Opry legend, Marty Robbins.

"We were appearing in Phoenix. [Opry executive] Harry Stone asked me



Dickens' classic recordings are reissued on a new album titled *I'm Little But I'm Loud*, above. At right is the portrait the star used on the posters advertising his high-energy shows in the 1950s.

ROBERT K. OERMANN PERSONAL COLLECTION (2)

to go by the television station and plug our appearance that night. That's where I heard Marty Robbins sing. I'd never heard anything like that before. When we got to California, I told [Columbia executive] 'Uncle' Art Satherley about him.

"I said, 'Someone should be listening to this man in Phoenix. I think he'd be a great star if someone would just give him a chance.'"

He was on the Opry when Loretta Lynn and Dolly Parton came on the scene, there for the debuts of Reba McEntire and Emmylou Harris, and still there when Clint Black and Randy Travis became Opry members.

"I meet all the young artists who come out here. I've met their parents, their relatives and their friends.

"One night this man walked up to me and said, 'Can I talk to you? I'm Vince Gill's father and I've been looking everywhere for a tape of your song "Country Boy."' So I made a copy of it and sent it to him. I think Vince sang a verse and chorus of it at his funeral."

When Jimmy and Mona Dickens renewed their wedding vows on the Opry stage in 1996, Garth and Sandy Brooks stood with them.

When Diamond Rio became Opry cast members in 1998, Marty Stuart insisted that they ask Dickens to induct them.

"You've gotta be baptized by 'Tater,'" Stuart said, referring to the nickname Dickens acquired from his 1949 novelty hit.

"I just like being around him," says Gill, who has included Dickens in three of his videos. Last summer, the younger superstar surprised the veteran by walking onstage at the Opry to harmonize on Dickens' 1965 smash "May the Bird of Paradise Fly Up Your Nose."

"Boy, I have never been so surprised by a hit record," says Dickens of his most famous song. "I just thought it would be a good piece for my stage show. Hap Wilson had put a melody to an old comic poem. He brought the



tape to the studio and asked me to take five minutes to listen to it. We went back in the studio and ran it down. On the first take, we got it.

"Johnny Carson had been kicking that phrase around on *The Tonight Show*. So I wound up singing 'May the Bird of Paradise Fly Up Your Nose' on the Carson show."

Jimmy Dickens entered the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1983. He retired from the road Nov. 29, 1997, after a performance in Columbia, South Carolina. But he continues to do weekly appearances for convention groups at the Opryland Hotel and Opry House. The fan mail still arrives daily from around the world. And the tour buses still stop almost hourly in front of his Brentwood house, south of Nashville.

"If you see a guy in Bermuda shorts and cowboy boots with a weed eater in the ditch out front," he says, offering



Dickens' favorite spot is the Opry stage, where he's entertained for 50 years. He and his wife Mona renewed their wedding vows there, top, in 1996. At left they pose at his Opry anniversary.

some handy tourist advice, "that's me."

At home, he listens to the records of stars such as Gill and Jackson. Perhaps not surprisingly, Jackson's song "Little Man" is a particular Dickens favorite.

"It never bothered me in the least when younger performers would come on the scene," says Dickens, 78. "I'm asked about today's country music a lot. It's progress."

Only the late Roy Acuff, Minnie Pearl and Bill Monroe have been honored previously with golden-anniversary celebrations on the Opry.

"I'd play the Opry for free," says the grateful Dickens with a chuckle, "and in the beginning it was as close to playing for free as you can get." ◊

Hall-of-Famers

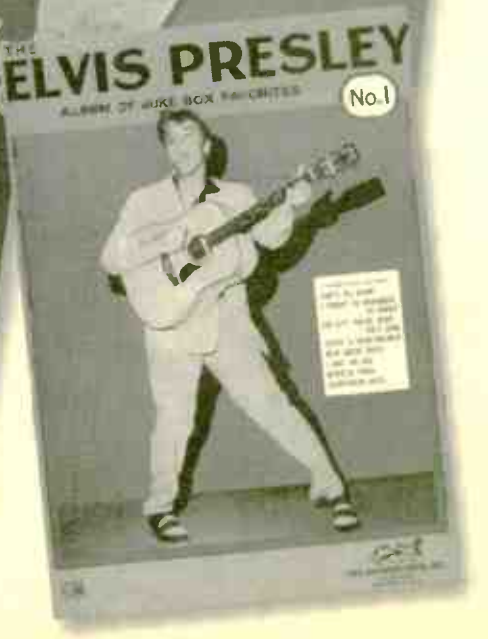
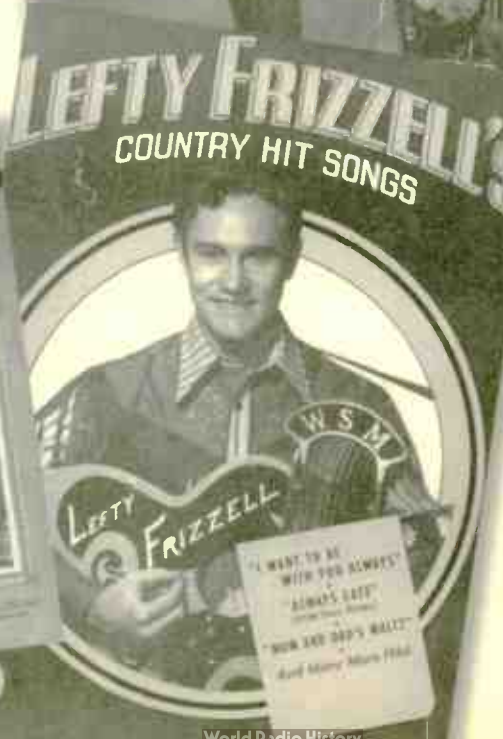
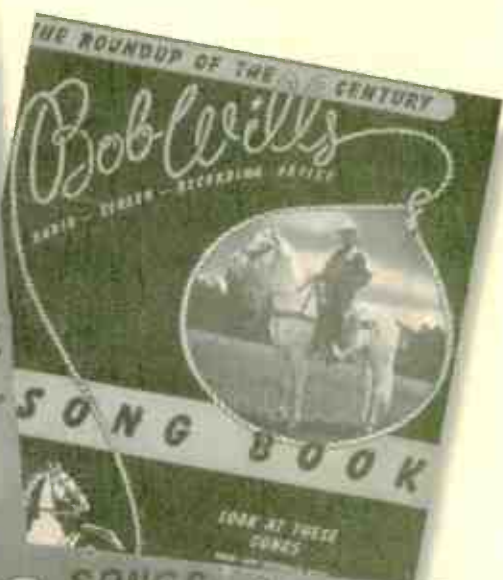
In the 1930s and 1940s, country performers made as much on songbook sales as they did on record sales—sometimes more. Fans didn't just listen, they wanted to learn to sing the songs themselves.

Bradley Kincaid was the first to discover this. In response to WLS radio listeners' requests in 1928, he published the first country-music songbook, below. After he sold more than 200,000 copies, the station offered to print them for him in exchange for a 50/50 split of the profits.

After that, it was expected that any country star would have a souvenir songbook. These examples by Country Music Hall-of-Famers

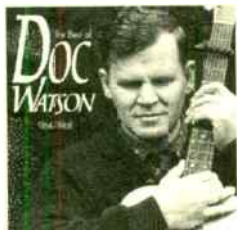
Jimmie Rodgers (1933), Roy Acuff (1941), Gene Autry (1942), Bob Wills (1942), Lefty Frizzell (1951), Elvis

Presley (1956) and Johnny Cash (1959) show the design work that went into these products. ●



ROBERT K. GERMAN'S PERSONAL COLLECTION (8)

NEW AGAIN NOTEWORTHY DISCOVERIES



DOC WATSON
The Best of Doc Watson
1964-1968

Vanguard Records

This is a total bonanza. If you've ever wanted to add a disc by one of America's finest old-time country stylists to your collection, this is that disc. Twenty-three tracks and more than an hour of playing time make this an exceptional value as well as a listening treat. Arnel Lane "Doc" Watson, born in 1923, is beloved by generations of folk fans. Blind from birth, the North Carolinian dazzled his neighbors in the 1950s by ripping through fiddle favorites like "Black Mountain Rag" (included here) on the acoustic guitar. His club debut in New York in 1961 got a similar reaction. Tracks from six of his nine subsequent Vanguard LPs have been selected for this gem of a reissue, including his versions of "Shady Grove," "Tom Dooley," "Tennessee Stud" and "Intoxicated Rat." Four performances are previously unreleased—"Crawdled Hole," "Grandfather's Clock," "The Cyclone of Rye Cove" and "Doc's Guitar."



WILLIE NELSON
The Very Best of Willie Nelson

Columbia Legacy Records

This two-CD, 30-song set probably contains most of your Willie favorites. "Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain," "Georgia on My Mind," "My Heroes Have Always Been Cowboys," "On the Road Again," and "Always on My Mind," are all included. There are no liner notes. The compilation is budget priced.



VARIOUS ARTISTS
Live at Gilley's

Q Records

The debut release from QVC's new label, Q Records, is a doozy, a four-CD set of memories of the world's greatest honky-tonk. Mickey Gilley's club on the outskirts of Houston attracted a who's who of country during its heyday. These 56 performances are from the

venue's weekly radio show of 1977 to 1989. Loretta Lynn, Jerry Lee Lewis, Willie Nelson, Faron Young, Rosanne Cash, Ernest Tubb and dozens of others are represented, as are, naturally, club mainstays Gilley and Johnny Lee. The set comes with a booklet that pictures lots of memorabilia from those "Urban Cowboy" days—Gilley beer, Gilley panties, Gilley T-shirts and, yes, the mechanical bull.



VARIOUS ARTISTS
Swing West!

Razor & Tie Records

The folks at Razor & Tie say they want to put the "western" back into country and western." So they've put together three CDs packed with California country. Volume 1 is called "Bakersfield" and reissues the hard-hitting sounds of Rose Maddox, Tommy Collins, Merle Haggard and the like. Volume 2 is devoted to "Guitar Slingers" and features thrilling work by Jimmy Bryant, Speedy West, Roy Clark, Les Paul and others. Volume 3 is "Western Swing," and brings back the country/jazz sounds of

Bob Wills, Spade Cooley, Hank Thompson, Tex Williams and the like. Each volume contains 20 tracks, fine liner notes by Rich Kienzie and historic photos. The real delights in these three albums are the tracks by lesser known acts that are nestled next to the big stars. The Farmer Boys, Merrill Moore, Ole Rasmussen and His Nebraska Cornhuskers and Roy Lanham never made the hit parade, but their sounds will tickle you all the same.



VARIOUS ARTISTS
Generations of Bluegrass,
Volume 3: Legendary Pickers

Vanguard Records

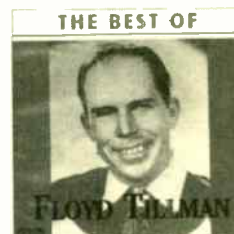
Vanguard continues its bluegrass series with this volume emphasizing flashy instrumental work. The Stanley Brothers track, "Big Tildy," comes from an appearance at the Newport Folk Festival, as does the Dillards performance. The Ricky Skaggs and Tony Rice collaboration is licensed from Sugar Hill, as is the Jerry Douglas piece. Others represented on the compilation include The Osborne Brothers, New Grass Revival, Alison Krauss and Union Station, Sam Bush, Doc Watson, Bill Monroe ("Wheel Hoss") and Flatt and Scruggs ("Fire Ball Mail").



RONNIE MILSAP
The Crazy Cajun
Recordings

Edsel Records

The British Edsel label is in the midst of a wholesale reissue of the recordings made by Huey P. Meaux, the "Crazy Cajun." He attracted an impressive talent roster to his studio near Beaumont, Texas. Future star Milsap arrived there in the late 1960s. These aren't hits, but they are an interesting look at an artist in development who would rise to fame at RCA in 1973.



FLOYD TILLMAN
The Best of Floyd Tillman

Collector's Choice Records/Sony

Floyd Tillman wrote and sang the landmark "cheating" song, "Slipping Around," plus such hits as "I Love You So Much It Hurts" and "I Gotta Have My Baby Back." This 24-song CD reprises all of those. The set includes informative liner notes by W.K. McNeil and Louis Hatchett. Several of the songs have never been available since their initial pressings on 78 rpm discs.

—Robert K. Oermann



TRIVIA ANSWER: George Jones

- ★ If you guessed after hint #1, consider yourself a country-music authority.
- ★ If you guessed by hint #5, you're a bona fide country expert.
- ★ If you guessed by hint #7, you're a fan.
- ★ If you had to go all the way to #10, you need to go buy some George Jones records immediately!



ROBERT K. OERMANN PERSONAL COLLECTION (5)

"POSSUM" PORTRAITS George Jones

sported a flattop haircut on the jacket of his 1967 LP *If My Heart Had Windows*. By the time he posed with an uncredited Tammy Wynette on *I'll Share My World With You* two years later, he'd adopted an Ivy League look. His *I Am What I Am* LP of 1980 showcased "He Stopped Loving Her Today" and a mod cut. He's silver-blond on 1995's CD *I Lived to Tell It All* and the autobiography of the same title.

COLLECTIONS

ATTENTION, MEMBERS! The Collections page is your source for buying, selling or trading country music-related merchandise and memorabilia. It's operated as a benefit to CMSA/Academy members, and entries are printed at the discretion of the editors. Please keep in mind the following guidelines when submitting your entry: 1) Membership number must accompany entry. 2) Entries must be kept to 40 words or less. 3) Only one entry per member per issue. 4) We reserve the right to edit for space and style. 5) Entries that do not follow these guidelines will be discarded.

Please write each other directly about information or items listed. Entries are printed at the discretion of the editors.

WANTED

WANTED: Albums by Kitty Wells, Dolly Parton, Dottie West, Brenda Lee, Peggy Lee, Jim Reeves, Johnny Cash, Jimmy Dean, Judy Lynn, Head East, Loretta Lynn, Crystal Gayle, Ed Ames, Ricky Nelson, Hank Thompson, Wanda Jackson. Please send list of what you have available, and prices. **Albert Arnat, 111 East 20th Street, Spencer, IA 51301-2320**

WANTED: Tape of George Morgan's "You Turn Me On." Would like to have "our special song" in time for our anniversary Sept. 1. Have been looking for a

couple of years. Please, someone help this aging couple out! Thank you! **Myrtle Taylor, 271 Bobby Lane, Picayune, MS 39466-3071.**

WANTED: The album and/or cassette *Froud of the Country* by Travis Tritt on Copperhill Records. **Tamm Miller, 10711 Johnford Road SW, Beach City, OH 44608.**

FOR SALE

FOR SALE: George D. Hay book, *A Story of the Grand Ole Opry*. **Brian J. Ross, George D. Hay Foundation, P.O. Box 772, Mammoth Spring, AR 72554.**

FOR SALE: Radio shows featuring Ernest Tubb, Roy Acuff, Hank Williams, Eddy Arnold, Red Foley, Jimmie Davis, Bob Wilis, many others. Has short commercials.

Two hours of country greats. \$15 includes mailing. Checks or money orders only. **Mel Price, 207 Sycamore Ave., Easton, MD 21601. Phone (410) 822-8180.**

FOR SALE: Send for a free catalog of thousands of country and western albums, CDs, 45s, promo items, plus a list of just Johnny Cash items. Request a copy of either list, or both, at no charge. **Paul Neil Anderson, 820 Lincoln Road, Apt. 108, Bellevue, NE 68005. Fax/phone (402) 293-5502. Email: vinylres@radiks.net.**

FOR SALE: Rare unpublished photos of Hank Williams Sr. Quality varies due to age, but satisfaction guaranteed or money back. Over 300 offered in lots of 10 per set. \$25 plus \$4 postage (total \$29). Check or money order only. Many other items in my collection of Hank Sr. memorabilia can be copied! Any particular interests? **Send list to T.H. Berry, c/o Hank Williams Foundation, P.O. Box 203, Allgood, AL 35013.**

FOR SALE: Records, tapes, video, magazines, sheet music, songbooks (some autographed). Artist or group listings, each \$5 (refundable with order). SASE and collect phone number for reply. All forms bought and sold (country, western, bluegrass, gospel). **Joel J. Hollin, 2113 Parkdale Ave., Glenside, PA 19038.**

FOR SALE: Over 6,000 concert and offstage photos. Also keychains, posters, LPs, videos, trading cards, magazines, etc., of country favorites. Send SASE and list of favorites. I'm also looking for photos, videos, magazine, etc., of Crystal Gayle, Martina McBride, George Strait and Dwight Yoakam. **Galen Duncan, 1204 Main Street, Darlington, MD 21034.**

FOR SALE: Kenny Rogers' "All American Cowgirl" blue jeans w/ Kenny's face/logo stitched on the jeans. Size 11-12 long. Approx. 20 years old. Never been worn or washed. Like new! What are they worth? **If interested, please call Linda Johnson, (612) 862-2563.**

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Treat yourself to somethin' special!

FIRST
TIME
EVER!



Shown slightly larger
than actual size
of 3 1/2" high

Squeaky Clean

From the *Farm Livin'* Collection

It's Time to Delight in Country Livin'!

If you're feeling frazzled, it's time for a change of scenery. Take a cue from our charming pig whose prescription for stress is a weekend in the country!

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"The top of my list—the very top priority—is to teach people," says Peteron. "I've found the 'grand calling' of being an entertainer—to lift people up, to say something of value to them. If I make great music, it will pick somebody up just a notch."

Man With a Mission

He has visions. He considers music a calling. But is Michael Peterson a prophet without honor in his own country?

By Deborah Barnes

I'm reading a book called *The Purpose of Your Life*," says Michael Peterson, making the kind of small talk seldom heard during a country artist's photo session. "It's written by the gal who wrote *The Celestine Prophecy* workbooks. It's about intuition and synchronicity and potentiality."

It's exceedingly rare to hear a country artist throw around words like *synchronicity* and *potentiality*. But it doesn't take much time with Michael Peterson to realize his vocabulary is just one way he's an anomaly. The words—and the book he mentions—are road signs to his psyche. And Peterson is used to being the exception to country music's rules.

For one thing, he talks. He talks a lot. Where many artists are reticent to discuss their personal lives or appear animated about anything save perhaps fishing, Peterson draws few boundaries and rarely hides emotions. Thoughts seem to form into words instantly and flow out of his mouth freely, in a soft voice and with a pensive manner that belie his imposing physique, yet command the listener's attention.

Then there's the whole matter of purpose. Peterson uses the word with zeal, and makes it clear he's not writing

his romantic ballads and feel-good tunes solely to express himself or to chart a hit. Before landing his record deal, the soft-spoken singer/songwriter spent 12 years as a motivational speaker in high schools, encouraging kids to respect and care for themselves and others. Those are the same themes he now seeks to promote with the songs he writes and sings.

"What happened was, I saw Garth Brooks on TV, and I had a vision," says Peterson earnestly, "and my vision was that as a speaker, I could speak to maybe 10,000 people a week. If I had a hit song, I could speak to millions of people. So I quit speaking and came to Nashville with the vision of having music be a larger platform for me.

"But my goals are a lot simpler now," he allows. "When I was speaking in schools, man, I wanted to change the world. Now I really just want to make people laugh, to lighten their spirits. I have found the 'grand calling' of being an entertainer, and I didn't always know that before: to entertain, to give people a moment of respite in the heaviness of their lives. All I ever really wanted to do, through music or speaking, was to lift somebody up a little. If I have a purpose in this business, it's to make great music, and if I make great music, it will pick somebody up just a notch."

Peterson's intensity is palpable, in spite of his calm, Zen-like manner. Fielding interview questions, he perches on the edge of a dressing-room chair and listens intently, apparently oblivious to the scurrying clock-watchers around him, anxious for him to end the interview and move on. Occasionally his gaze shifts heavenward as he organizes his thoughts, but when he makes a point, his eyes search the listener's face for a connection, a consensus. He knows how to be understood.

Peterson learned the value of communication early on. Sharing his feelings was one way he dealt with the pain of a difficult childhood. He grew up near the Columbia River in eastern Washington, barely knowing his birth father, who was shot to death when Michael was 15. His stepfather committed suicide two years later. "Those are still painful things," Peterson says. "But I've found a lot of healing in talking about it."

That may be one reason Peterson is able to display emotions most people hide. Discussing his days of speaking in high schools, he recounts an exercise in which he secretly hid a handcuff key with one of the "social outcasts" in the audience, then handcuffed two popular kids together. His eyes fill with tears as he applies the experience to the recent school shootings in Colorado.

"A kid would come out of the audience in front of all of his peers, and that kid who everybody thought was a loser had the [handcuff] key," he remembers. "And suddenly everybody sees a shift in their way of thinking. They realize how important it is to treat everybody with respect, because you never know when that person is going to help you."

"I thought about those kids in Colorado, telling the kids who had been nice to them to get out; they wanted to kill the kids—the jocks—who had been cruel to them," he says, his voice breaking. "Those kids...they were just in pain and thinking, *Nobody cares, so why should I care?* And I thought about my school assembly program. My wife said to me, 'Who knows how many kids you influenced who *didn't* do something like that?' It just reaffirms to me that I didn't waste those 12 years of my life."

Peterson seems determined not to waste any part of his life. In high school he was offered both music and football scholarships; he chose football at Pacific Lutheran, but continued nurturing his musical dreams. Two years after leaving the speaker circuit for Nashville, he hooked up with producer/songwriter Robert Ellis Orrall, who with Josh Leo helmed Peterson's self-titled 1997 debut. Peterson quietly became a commanding presence on the country music scene: He was the top-selling new male artist in 1997 and 1998; the No. 1 hit "Drink, Swear, Steal and Lie" was the highest debut single from a new artist in 1997; and his "From Here to Eternity" also topped the charts.

That's impressive commercial success for someone who creates his music with a more spiritual goal in mind. "I'm not saying sales aren't important to me," Peterson counters.

"Sales are a by-product of impact, and I want to have an impact. Look at the Dixie Chicks—why have they sold 5 million records? It's because they've spoken about issues that are relevant to young women."

Sales success aside, there's no doubt Peterson is serious about his intent. For him, it seems, nothing is serendipitous; every minute holds an opportunity, every move has a purpose. And what is his higher purpose, his musical platform? In light of the fact he considers

of thing as [when I was speaking], reaching people, trying to lift them up a little, only through a different vehicle. But the message is still the same: 'You think nobody cares? Start with yourself. And as your well gets full, learn to give it away.'

"There's an old illustration about the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee. They're both fed by the Jordan River. And the Sea of Galilee is full of life and fish, and the Dead Sea is dead. The difference is that the Sea of Galilee gives up of itself—

the water flows through it. That's the kind of person I'm trying to be. And I want my music to be like that."

The call for caring and understanding is apparent in the song "Being Human," but how do romantic ballads like "Two of the Lucky Ones," or light-hearted dance tunes like "Stomp" fit the program? "I guess if you look at them individually, you go, 'Whoa, what is this?'" Peterson allows. "But for me, the whole record is about two things: taking care of yourself—having fun and making time for yourself—and us, the universal us, our relationships."

Orrall, who with Leo returns as producer on *Being Human*, believes Peterson has polished both the music and the message on his second effort. "This album is a little more sophisticated," he says. "Michael has grown as a singer, and as a songwriter, sometimes it's tough to keep up with him. He's so intuitive. There's something that

comes from those years as a public speaker where he has grown to understand people and their emotions. The man's got a lot of wisdom."

Travis Tritt, who recently had a hit with Peterson's "No More Looking



AS A CHILD (RIGHT), PETERSON SAYS, "THERE WERE MANY TIMES I FELT NO ONE CARED." BUT WITH HIS MUSIC, HE ENCOURAGES PEOPLE "TO CARE FOR THEMSELVES AND OTHERS."



music another way to speak to people, and that he writes most of his own material, it's not surprising that his latest album, *Being Human*, is an extension of the message Peterson preached at schools years ago.

"From the tone standpoint, this record is pretty much about relationships and taking good care of yourself," he says. "I'm really doing the same kind

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Over My Shoulder,” agrees. “He’s one of the best songwriters to come along in a long time,” says Tritt. “The people I have the most respect for in this business are all-around entertainers—people who are capable of writing good material, who play an instrument and who know how to get onstage and entertain. Michael has all of that going for him.”

In spite of such accolades and the success of his first album, Peterson is noticeably unnoticed within the industry. He operates largely under the Music Row radar, even though he lives in nearby Franklin. Unlike other local celebs, he’s rarely seen at fundraisers, award shows and other community

“[Michael’s] greatest strength musically is his songwriting,” says friend Travis Tritt. “Even early in his career I thought he really had a way with a lyric. He’s the kind of artist I perk up and listen to.”

events. Perhaps his spiritual vocabulary is too new-age, too touchy-feely for most country hats. Or maybe, like John Denver in the ’70s, he’s seen as too far-west, too granola, too sunshine-on-my-shoulders to be accepted into country’s good-old-boy fraternity.

“I don’t know what it is, but this last couple of years I’ve experienced not being invited to the party on some levels,” Peterson admits. “And you know what, that bothers me. It bothers the daylights out of me. But it occurred to me one day, when I was feeling kind of funny about this, that I should not be surprised, because from the get-go, I’ve tried to set myself apart. I don’t want to sound like sour grapes, because I don’t feel that way. But if you’re going to say, ‘I’m gonna be different, I don’t want to get lost in the sea of hat acts making the same music,’ then don’t be surprised if people don’t consider you one of the gang.”

“If anybody has ever been considered an outsider of Nashville, that would definitely be me,” opines Tritt, who offers a

bit of advice. “Nashville is a very cliquish town, and it took me a lot of years before I ever really felt a part of the Nashville society. But I always enjoyed being considered ‘outside,’ because when I would come to Nashville to



IN ADDITION TO FRIENDSHIP, TRITT AND PETERSON ALSO SHARE A MANAGEMENT TEAM: JON GOODMAN (FAR LEFT) AND GARY FALCON (THIRD FROM LEFT).

work, people would make a bigger deal about it. You can use that kind of thing to your advantage.”

The industry’s generally underwhelming reception for Peterson includes critics who have dismissed him as too “slick”—some kind of all image, Chardonnay cowboy—or worse, labeled his music feather-light, highly polished non-country. Peterson wears his emotions too close to the surface to hide his contempt for such criticism; prick him and he will bleed.

“To those people I say, *listen* to my record. If you have any historical perspective *at all* about country music...” he begins testily, then shifts gears. “How do you answer this question: What is country music? Is it Eddy Arnold or is it Garth Brooks? Is it Hank Sr. or is it the Dixie Chicks? Country is all those things. I’m a country artist. I write country songs. This is a country record, and I don’t need to defend it.”

He quickly softens, the calm settling back into his whisper-soft voice. “I’m sorry if I come on strong. It’s a touchy

issue, because our industry right now seems to be looking for a definition, a slot to fit things in, because that makes things simple. But art is not meant to be simple. Art is meant to be provocative. Art is meant to be stimulating.

“It’s really easy to point to what is *country*,” he continues. “Real, true roots-country music, you know it the second you hear it. But whether we like it or not, that genre that is immediately identifiable as *country*—because of what’s going on in our format, our country and our culture—is quickly becoming an art form that falls into the same camp as blues and jazz. It’s a true American art form, but I dare anyone to listen to the Top 40 in our format and tell me you hear *that*.”

“So the question is, does this format have a right to redefine itself? Sure, it better, or we won’t have radio stations that play country music. I’m a country artist, hands-down. Am I like artist X or artist Y? No, and I don’t want to be like that. And I hope they don’t want to be like me.”

Whatever Music Row may think of the man, his music or his motives, the driven Peterson plans to continue carrying his uplifting messages, eventually into other fields. “I’d like to be an ambassador of some kind someday. I think my experience as a speaker and an entertainer, and my desire to touch people, lends itself to being an ambassador of some sort. And I’m going to be an author. I’m writing a children’s book that I’ve had in the back of my mind for 10 years.”

And however he’s perceived—prophet or pariah, sensitive songwriter or slick gimmick—Peterson’s sincerity is difficult to doubt. The songs he writes are who he is, and he believes every word he sings. “His power to inspire is one of his greatest strengths,” says Orrall. “He brings out the best in people—I know he brings out the best in me.”

Perhaps Richard Livingstone was right: Maybe it is better—or at least more refreshing—to be in the company of prophets than of critics. *

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LeAnn Rimes

How to Dazzle, Diva-Style

How does a 16-year-old get decked out for a big event without looking like she's trying to upstage the legends with whom she shares the stage? Or—worse—picking an outfit that makes her the target of trigger-happy fashion police in attendance?

That was the challenge facing diva-in-waiting LeAnn Rimes when she appeared as a special guest on VH-1's *Divas Live* program in April. Performing with the likes of Cher, Whitney Houston and Tina Turner—women known for their style as well as their music—Rimes wanted a youthful look that kept pace with these fashion icons, but also one that wasn't too showy.

Her solution: three outfits, all of which radiated hip elegance, complimented by simple hair and makeup. The showstopper of the evening was the full-length taffeta gown [pictured right] in which she performed "How Do I Live." The look was stylish, slightly sexy, and every bit the youthful diva.



HAIR Barbara Farman of L.A.'s Cloutier did Rimes' hair and makeup for *Divas*. Farman's A-list clientele includes actresses Jaclyn Smith, Teri Hatcher and Catherine Zeta-Jones.

The goal with Rimes' hair was simple: glamorous and pretty, not a fashion statement, just really, really gorgeous," says Farman.

Farman applied Sebastian's Hi-Contrast gel to Rimes' wet hair to give it body. Then, she blew the hair out with a large, round brush, then set it on large Velcro™ rollers. After she removed the rollers, she ran a small amount of KMS pomade over Rimes' hair to give it shine. Hairspray and Sebastian Shaper were then applied. "She's got very pretty blond hair, so you want to show a lot of hair," says Farman.

EYES Stila Moonlight shadow was used on the inner corners of the lid, and Nars Night Star was used on the outer corners. Maybelline black mascara provided the finishing touch.

FACE "She's got perfect skin, so there isn't any prep work," Farman says. "I used Prescriptives Virtual Skin for her base—it's very light and thin—because she doesn't need a lot of base." A small amount of MAC concealer was also applied under her eyes. "She doesn't need concealer," Farman says. "It's just pretty to have a lighter color under the eyes to reflect a little bit on camera." Farman applied MAC Luna Frost highlighter on the cheekbones and the brow bones with her fingers, followed by Trucco Shine Blush cream blush, which Farman says is "very natural and pretty, and great if you're young."

LIPS MAC's Ionic lipstick completed Rimes' glamorous makeup.

CLOTHES Los Angeles-based stylist Cary Fetman worked with Rimes for the first time on *Divas Live*.

"LeAnn really knows what she wants to look like," Fetman says. For the show, he explains, "she wanted to be young and hip-looking, elegant but with a little bit of funk. We did a little bit of stomach showing, and not a straight skirt that would be slinky and tight but a full taffeta gown. It was more hip and youthful."

As for accessories, Fetman kept it simple: earrings by Harry Winston and, for an added touch of sparkle, a diamond clip pinned into her hair.

If the routine sounds simple, it is. Which just goes to show, a true diva never needs to fuss over her look.

—Lisa Zbito

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YEP, MUTTERS DWIGHT YOAKAM AS HE pinballs around his high-rise Hollywood offices. Good thing visitors dropped by *today*, “because we’re getting ready to close the hatch and dive past periscope depth.”

And the licorice-lanky country crooner ain’t just yodeling “Dixie”—within 10 hours, he’ll be on a plane, bound for the desert set of his screenwriting/directorial debut, *South of*

line-dancing TV commercial for Gap khakis, spotlighting Yoakam’s rollicking slapback send-up of Queen’s “Crazy Little Thing Called Love.” The track (along with spanking-new covers of Waylon Jennings’ “I’ll Go Back to Her” and Rodney Crowell’s “Thinking About Leaving”) also rounds out *Last Chance for a Thousand Years—Dwight Yoakam’s Greatest Hits From the ‘90s*, his second best-of anthology. Then, there’s his huge

twist-tied plastic bag, containing—according to the colorful label—Dwight Yoakam’s Bakersfield Biscuits. *Just beat ‘em and EAT ‘em!* reads the instructions. Some kind of elaborate prank, like those fake newspaper headlines for tourists? Nosirree, Bob, says Yoakam. This is officially licensed product, the real butter-milk McCoy!

How did the Kentucky-bred, Los Angeles-based composer fall in league with the Keebler Elf and the pudgy Sunshine baker? Yoakam thuds into a swivel chair behind his monolithic desk, props his needlenose-booted feet up and happily tells the Simple Simon yarn. Seems his old Bakersfield buddy Buck Owens had been bugging him for a kitschy contribution for the grand opening of Owens’ Crystal Palace nightclub/eatery, something that customers would remember. A couple of weeks later—while choking on a lardy lump of refined sugar—Yoakam hit on a way-out idea. He recalls telling his lunch date, “We could do a biscuit, a *great* biscuit, without having all that sugar in it.”

“Right after that,” he continues, “my friend serendipitously ran into somebody else whose ex-husband was a biscuit manufacturer.” Yoakam was as tickled as that giggly Pillsbury doughboy. “I said, ‘You know what? I’m gonna *make* that biscuit! A Dwight Yoakam Bakersfield Biscuit for Buck’s restaurant!’ And so I did.” With fructose replacing the processed sugar.

Diners dug them. Orders started pouring in. Distribution networks were linked. So now, on top of all his other duties, Yoakam’s a pastry chef/entrepreneur, overseeing a popular product from the plant to the dinner plate. He’s serious about this venture. Serious about *everything* he undertakes, in fact.

Stroll through Yoakam’s spacious suite and you’ll get a solid impression, a good sense of the man himself, what makes him tick. Countless awards blanket the walls—BMI kudos, Grammy nominations, etc.—but you get the idea that they’re hung more out of convenience than hubris; they fill up vacant space, make the place feel more homey. The effect is enhanced by a cowhide couch, some ‘40s-vintage tube radios, old

Hillbilly Deluxe

By Tom Lanham

Performer, baker and now a filmmaker, Dwight Yoakam does everything in a big way.

Heaven, West of Hell. In fact, most of the cast is already on location—his old pal Billy Bob Thornton, Paul “Pee Wee Herman” Reubens, Peter Fonda, several Peckinpah screen vets and—last but not least—his girlfriend, Bridget Fonda. He’s harried, and doing his best to tie up loose ends before hightailing it out of town. Unfortunately for Yoakam, he has so many irons simultaneously in the creative fire, he has to screech to a halt to even discuss them.

Directing is only the tip of Yoakam’s Renaissance-man iceberg. And in no way is he coasting off the critical kudos he received for his villainous role in Thornton’s *Sling Blade*. There’s a new book from Hyperion, *A Long Way Home: Twelve Years of Words*, that gathers all his lyrics and poetry in one Flannery O’Connor-ish volume. And a

summer shed tour that kicks off just as filming wraps. And one more thing. Something that gets Yoakam’s hooded eyes to twinkling.

Biscuits. That’s right—biscuits.

Earlier in the day, having parked his bear-up old El Camino in the street-level lot, Yoakam had hiked up several stories, his arms straining beneath a load of big brown boxes. Once inside his air-conditioned suite, he’d rushed the parcels to a refrigerated pantry area, wiped the sweat from his brow, and commenced stocking the freezer. Job done, he’d ambled into his private office, doffed his trucker-rustic baseball cap and puffy sheepskin coat, and settled down for a conversation.

Now he jumps up to run excitedly back to the pantry. He returns with a tiny





Alan Jackson



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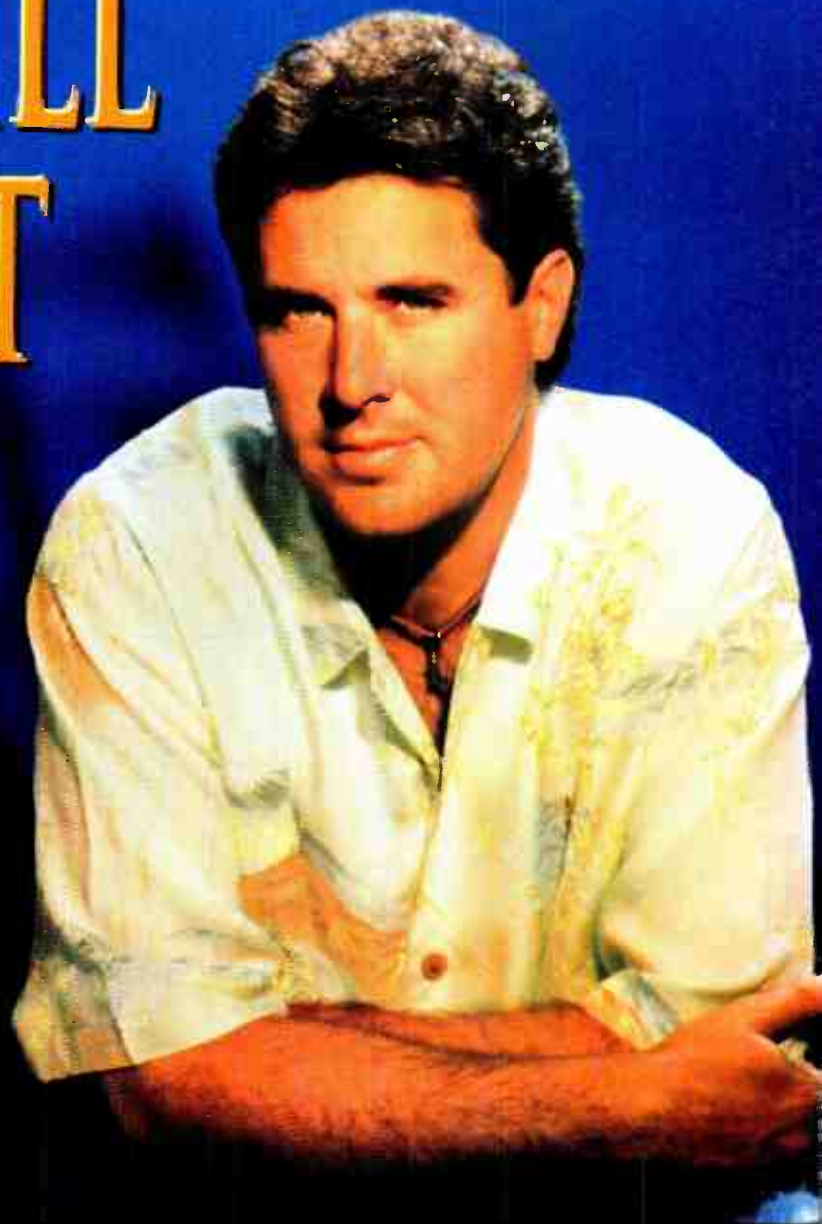
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World Radio History

Buck Owens concert posters, photo-finish shots of his racehorse Prince Reykjavik taking a Hollywood Park purse, and—for some inexplicable reason—a big leather saddle, parked precariously in a corner. The one modern concession is a hi-tech telescope.

Yoakam is sporting a magenta-hued velour dress shirt, its tail hanging out of those patented skin-tight Levi's that can set his female fans to screaming most any tour night. At 42, he's as enviably thin as when he first sashayed out with his "Guitars, Cadillacs" debut 15 long years ago; like any smart biscuit dealer, he

'60s-fey, wah-ooed ditty dubbed "Pocket of a Clown"; the pedal-steeled faux-chestnut co-penned with Roger Miller, "It Only Hurts When I Cry"; and the positively cheeky "Sorry You Asked," which punches mariachi trumpets into the galloping mix at the most improbable moment. Lyrically, the mach-'90s Yoakam was tearing his heart from his tell-all sleeve and cloaking it in increasingly cryptic allegory. Ask him about the transformation and you'll get an equally cryptic reply.



"I had an earnest and sincere obligation to make that historic country legacy a part of my music and deliver on my promise to myself to honor my family with this music, honor my culture and my past."

knows not to chow down on his own fattening product.

His loping speech and heavy-lidded gaze might create a rube-ish familiarity—innocent even—but make no mistake: Yoakam is as smart as a whip, and nobody's turnip-truck naïf. As he forms his thoughts, theories and conjectures—sometimes slowly, sometimes stream-of-consciousness quickly—he taps a razor-sharp, sterling silver letter opener on his desk for emphasis.

Yoakam's first retrospective from '89, *Just Lookin' for a Hit*, was fairly straightforward, stylistically. Such early hits as "Little Ways," "I Got You" and "Guitars, Cadillacs" tapped directly into his rural Kentucky roots and spoke in woodsy metaphors that were pure hilljack. *Last Chance for a Thousand Years* shows a marked, truly marvelous progression. With his guitarist/producer Pete Anderson in tow, Yoakam has quietly, almost unassumingly, built one of the most compelling and consistently inventive catalogs in modern music: the sanguine, sorrowful laments "Nothing," "You're the One" and "The Heart That You Own"; a Byrds-chiming "A Thousand Miles From Nowhere"; the roadhouse r&b growler "Fast as You"; a

"I think that I arguably *introduced* myself more and more over the years," he says. "I've written *much* more about myself, but it's written more metaphorically. Earlier songs like 'Bury Me' dealt with specifics in my life—being born on the banks of the Big Sandy River in Pikeville, Kentucky, and moving away from there as a child, and then moving here as a young adult. Later on, I'd said what I said, and to repeat it would've been redundant and uninteresting to me, personally, as a writer and singer. So I had to explore the other parts of myself, my evolution as a"—he gulps before uttering the word—"grownup. But I've tried, first and foremost, not to disappoint myself, to not do anything that I didn't feel emotionally committed to doing."

Yoakam pauses to ponder his multi-platinum career for a minute. "Fifteen years...15 years...." he repeats mantra-like. He has difficulty believing it himself. And today he's feeling especially reflective, eager to trip back down memory lane. He's been directing his own videos for several years now, and he's just put the



finishing touches on a clip for the new album's next

single "Thinking About Leaving." It intersperses dusty road footage (dating back to the mid-'80s) with ice-cool shots of Yoakam doing what Yoakam does best: staring pensively into the camera from beneath his custom Dwight Yoakam-brand Stetson, and bawling low, deep and stray-steer mournful.

Memory lane, for this renegade, is one hell of a place. Soon Yoakam is recalling his first gig in San Francisco, opening for Los Lobos at two separate venues in a single night. Lobos boosters stood slack-jawed as this jean-jacketed cowpoke—flanked by his maestro of roots-rocking riffology, Anderson—took the stage and started braying primitive fiddle-fired hoe-downs like "I'll Be Gone," "It Won't Hurt" and what would eventually become his first major-label hit, a faithful reading of Johnny Horton's "Honky Tonk Man." Yoakam's *Guitars* bow was still several anonymous months away, but



KATHY HUTCHINS AGENCY



THE KING OF ALL MEDIA
PREVIOUS PAGE, FROM TOP:
YOAKAM INDUCTS HALL OF
FAME HERO BUCK OWENS;
AS CINEMA BAD BOY DOYLE
HARGRAVES, AND ON SCREEN
WITH BILLY BOB THORNTON
(BOTH FROM SLING BLADE).
THIS PAGE, FROM TOP:
HE'S "FONDA" BRIDGET;
"CRAZY LITTLE THING" BRIDGES
THE GAP ON TV; HYPERION
PUBLISHES THE DWIGHT STUFF.



he was clearly set to become the next link in the retro-respectful chain that already extended from Gram Parsons to Emmylou Harris to the then-top-of-his-game Ricky Skaggs

"Good times, good times," nods Yoakam, leaning back in his chair and staring idly out the window at his smog-shrouded city. "It was a really interesting time in Los Angeles back then, really a golden moment from about '81 to '85.

There was a three- or four-year period where the scene just exploded. The Blasters, X, Gun Club, the Knitters. It was just this *wonderful* musical moment in L.A. Ironically, what we were doing was such hardcore hillbilly and honky-tonk music, plus accepting a lineage from the California, or 'Bakersfield' country music sound—that folks were inevitably gonna call it rock 'n' roll. We were so hillbilly the record industry just couldn't understand us anymore."

Yet punks from the X side of the tracks embraced the band, no questions, while Nashville simultaneously snubbed it. Reckons Yoakam, "I think our music had a great emotional accessibility to those punk audiences. Go back and listen to the Stanley Brothers in the late '40s on some live broadcast, listen to their *energy*. What we're dealing with is not so much the specifics, categorically, of the chord progressions, the melody and the music, as much as we're addressing the emotional affinity that our music has to punk, or rebellious infantile rock. And I mean pure rock 'n' roll—we had an emotional commitment to it, a commitment that was unquestioned by myself, Pete and the band."

And no great mystery where the commitment came from, Yoakam smiles sagely.

"Here's the deal—we meant it. The music I wrote and the things I felt about the opportunity that I was afforded to make a life for myself as a performer...I mean, I had an earnest and sincere obligation to make that historic country legacy a part of my music and deliver on my promise to myself to honor my family with this music, honor my culture and my past."

Now it's probably safe to stamp it with another, more appropriate title: "The Dwight Yoakam Sound." Nothing else on Earth feels even remotely similar.

"And that's why doing a Gap commercial doesn't scare me," Yoakam allows. "We're gonna do something that sounds...well, like *us*." Besides, he adds, the TV spot was "something we were

approached about doing. And 'Crazy Little Thing Called Love' is a perfect song for us to cover, because it was Queen's attempt to do an homage to rockabilly, Freddie Mercury's rockabilly echo. We thought *Hey, this'll be fun for the commercial, it'll be fun for the compilation, and who knows? Maybe we'll access an audience that we don't normally have the opportunity to access.*"

A knock on Yoakam's private door: A certain character is waiting in the foyer, and ready for his appointed screen test. Uh-huh. That's right: Yoakam is now a casting director, too. *South of Heaven, West of Hell*, he explains (without divulging too many plot points), is a grim little Gothic Western that had its genesis more than five years ago. At Thornton's urging, Yoakam tried his hand at screenwriting. Fun? He shivers. "It was the most draining and simultaneously exhilarating experience of my life. As a writer, it's served as my single greatest source of education to date, one remarkably interesting journey."

And its star, that Bridget Fonda gal? How *did* Yoakam track her down for the part? Yeah, yeah, he shrugs, rolling his eyes. "It's true—we've been dating for the past few months. We've *known* each other over the years as friends, so you just never know with someone that you're friends with, once you introduce a romantic involvement to a previously platonic relationship, what will fall from that. And hopefully it won't lead to the deterioration of the original friendship." And? "And it *hasn't*, so I'm not really worried in terms of that. But yes, we're dating. And she's genuinely...well, all the things that you see in her work and otherwise, she eclipses in terms of earnestness and honesty."

Outside the office, the actor who's come to audition is pacing, softly murmuring his lines to himself. Gruff and gravelly, he appears to be a *Heaven/Hell* shoe-in.

But before his visitors are sent packing, Yoakam makes doubly sure they've packed some of his biscuits to take along.

"These biscuits'll probably co-sponsor my tour this year. 'Brought to you by Dwight Yoakam's Bakersfield Biscuits!' An homage to the Martha White Flour Hour, but the West Coast version, from California, U.S.A. And *not* to be confused with Battle Creek." *

DALLAS GIRLS CAN SCREAM, NO DOUBT about it. And tonight, they're screaming—no, make that roaring—for David Kersh, who's working the stage of a club called Country 2000 on the city's north side. All he has to do is cast a glance at one corner of the hall, and that particular region *explodes* in squeals.

Kersh's piercing blue eyes peek out from underneath a cowboy hat when he performs, and on this warm Texas evening, he looks exceptionally buff in tight black Versace pants and a soft gray shirt. Though the chiseled Humble, Texas, native doesn't even have any songs on the charts right now, that doesn't seem to make a lick of difference to this crowd—or to any other crowd, for that matter. He doesn't *need* a hit song to attract women. He's blessed with a virtual embarrassment of fashion model-perfect physical riches. In Kersh's case, his music seems to simply be the icing on the cake. It's no wonder that wherever he goes, a plethora of females is sure to follow.

"I'm flattered by the attention and, of course, it feels good to be wanted," Kersh later admits with a smile. "I really don't know what I'm doing, but whatever it is, it's working! There are some crazy women out there—but I love them dearly. I love people that are uninhibited—that really live and like to have fun—because that's what I like to do."

Kersh first caught the attention of country fans in 1996 with the release of his debut album, *Goodnight Sweetheart*. The title cut and first single soared up the charts, and the young Texan was on his way. Heartwarming ballads like "Another You," "Day In, Day Out" and the Eric Clapton tune "Wonderful

Tonight" followed suit, and Kersh quickly became an object of adoration for young women.

In 1997, with four Top 10 hits under his belt, Kersh recorded his second album, *If I Never Stop Loving You*. The title track quickly took a spot in the Top 5 and became the 18th most-played song on country radio in 1998. Kersh hit the big sheds on the concert trail

answer them, but a few of these women actually got angry because they didn't get an answer from me. That's pretty weird."

Kersh admits he sometimes has to use an alias when he signs in at hotels just to get some sleep at night. "Luckily no one has ever gotten into my hotel room, but

lots of times women have figured out what room I'm in and they've kept me up half the night pounding on the door and calling the room," he says. "People come up with the most outlandish stories to get hold of me. I've had women tell the front desk it was a family emergency.

I've had women pretend to be related to me. It's amazing what people can get away with if they try hard enough. It's flattering that they go to such extremes to talk to me, but sometimes they get a little pushy.

"We played this one date in Norfolk, Virginia, and there was this girl beating on the bus—just screaming at the top of her lungs with this high-pitched scream—yelling 'Will you marry me?!' I'm sure she had a sore throat the next day." He shakes his head. "There are always girls rocking the bus and

knocking on it and screaming."

For Kersh, it's just another occupational hazard.

"There are two women who follow David all over the country," adds his publicist, Angie Watson. "They have to keep changing jobs because they are constantly getting fired for taking off to follow David around. The only reason they even have jobs is to pay for their credit cards so they can continue to follow him. They also have David's name tattooed on their ankles.



MISSY CARL/GAT

THE KERSH CURSE

LIFE CAN BE A HARD DAY'S NIGHT FOR DAVID KERSH, WHOSE FRENZIED FEMALE FANS LOVE HIM TILL IT HURTS.

BY TAMARA SAVIANO AND COREY JACKSON
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANNY TURNER

last year, performing on the fourth-highest-grossing tour with Reba McEntire and Brooks and Dunn.

As the infatuation with Kersh deepened, enthusiastic females grew into devoted followers. Women began throwing themselves at Kersh night after night. Some began following his concert tour across the country.

"Several women have seriously approached me and asked me point-blank to marry them," Kersh admits. "At first, I just sort of laughed it off and didn't



GOT A CRUSH ON YOU:
Kersh's lovestruck fans can't get enough of the genetically blessed singer.

HANDS-ON FANS:
A recent *Playgirl*
pictorial should
only intensify
Kersh's lust-object
status.



“David made an appearance on CMT’s *Hit Trip* last year and the camera shot him opening the door of his refrigerator on the bus,” Watson continues. “There was a jar of peanut butter and a jar of strawberry preserves in the refrigerator. After that, everyone started bringing peanut butter and strawberry preserves to the shows. David got so much of this stuff that he started passing them out to bus drivers to stock other artists’ buses.”

Watson says Kersh has more than 100 prom invitations waiting for him at his office.

“We’ve even received invitations from 14-year-old girls who won’t go to prom until the year 2002,” she laughs.

“I’d love to go with everyone that asks, but it would be too hard to choose just one, and I don’t want anyone to be unhappy,” Kersh diplomatically says.

Rabid fans who can’t get to Kersh personally get to him through the U.S. Postal Service. “I get some pretty graphic mail,” he laughs. “A lot of women write to me about their sexual fantasies and what they want to do to me. Several women have even sent Polaroid pictures of themselves—in

the nude—in pretty weird poses. These are women that I recognize! They come to a lot of my shows. I’ve even said to them after receiving these pictures, ‘It’s hard to look you in the eye after the pictures you sent me.’ Sometimes they blush, but more often than not the woman will say something like, ‘I’m glad you liked it.’ That is pretty embarrassing. Fortunately, most of my fans just write really nice letters about how my music has touched them, but there are those psycho exceptions.”

But Kersh admits he loves the attention, and he loves women—especially Texas women.

“I would say 80 percent of women in Texas carry a confident air about them, which is really one of the most attractive

qualities a woman can have,” he says. “They’re just blessed! I don’t mean to sound biased, but I must admit, I have played every state except Alaska, and the most beautiful women I’ve seen have been in Texas. It’s amazing.”

Tonight in Dallas, hundreds of Texan women—most of them so attractive, you don’t doubt Kersh’s opinion—are on their feet, the music is cranking, Kersh is running across the stage and the screaming is as constant as a jet engine’s roar.

“DAVID MAKES EACH PERSON FEEL SPECIAL,” SAYS PUBLICIST ANGIE WATSON. “HE TRULY LOVES PEOPLE, AND HE ALWAYS TREATS HIS FANS SO WELL.”



David & Rusty Kase



Denise Zahrenhussen
TX



David & Denise Zahrenhussen
Ames, IA

Kersh lifts off his cowboy hat momentarily and the screams—s o m e h o w —intensify. Clearly, there is a lot of love (or something lustfully related to it) in this room.

While Kersh tours relentlessly, Curb Records is preparing to release his third album later this year. According to Kersh, the new album will represent his varied influences more than his previous works did.

“I don’t want to be just a country artist,” Kersh candidly admits. “I want to be known as: ‘David Kersh—the artist who does everything.’ I think we stretched out just a little bit on *If I Never*

Stop Loving You, but not enough. Besides George Strait, I also love Aerosmith and Def Leppard. I was always into pop and rock music just as much as country. My new album [will be] a mixture of all my influences. More than anything, I’ve decided to be courageous enough to do the kind of music that’s a good representation of David Kersh. If my fans on the road are indication, I think they’ll love it. I’ve gotten great response in concert.

“One song I’ve fallen in love with on the new album is called ‘I Want You.’ It’s got one of those really infectious melodies. It just grabs you. Lyrically, it speaks of something that I want, that feeling of desire for one person.

There’s a line that says, ‘You move through me like whiskey, baby, and leave me so intoxicated.’ I just love the visual of soaking up this liquid love with your body like a sponge—from your toes to your head—and being totally infected with it. I think everybody wants that kind of love.”

The fans certainly want that kind of love from Kersh. And although he can’t exactly give it to them, he does offer himself in other ways.

“I want my fans to know *everything* about me. The more they know, the more they’ll feel they know me and hopefully the longer they’ll remain fans,” he says. “I want everyone to like my music, but I also want them to like me as a person. I want to be able to reach out and touch people. My relationship with my fans is very special to me. I love to sing and I love being able to do it for a living. If it wasn’t for my fans, I would be stuck singing in my shower.”

And wouldn’t those Texas girls be screaming to see *that*? *

Off the Charts

The country buzz outside the music biz

HOT PROPERTY

Hitmaker Toby Keith stirs up a new recipe for success.

Toby Keith knew he'd found something special 10 years ago when he first tasted the Mexican food in southern New Mexico. He was a struggling singer, but he and his friend Mark Haugo saw a future in the unusually flavorful red and green chiles of the Hatch Valley region.

"It was by far the best Mexican food we'd ever eaten," Keith says. "We knew if we could ever take it to a metropolitan area they'd go nuts for it." They did just that two years ago when they opened the Hatch Valley Chile Company outside Phoenix, and sure enough, people did go nuts. So last April the partners opened their second eatery, Hatch Two, in nearby Gilbert.

The specialty of the house is the chile con carne, both green and red. "I'm a green man, but it was the red that made me decide to open the restaurant," says Keith. "We also have a very, very hot one called 'Hatch Hot,' and a mild Las Cruces green that anyone can eat."



Keith and partner Haugo greet the first customers at Hatch Two, the newest restaurant in his chile empire.

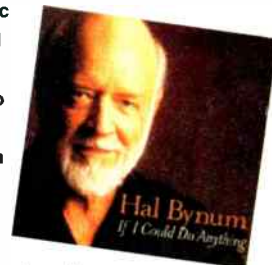
The Oklahoma City resident gets through town eight or 10 times a year to sample the wares, and occasionally has dinners overnighted to him on the road. "There are no preservatives, so it doesn't have a shelf life," he says. "It's all made from scratch—you won't find a can opener in the place. It's meant to be served hot and now."

Currently working on his first album for DreamWorks, Keith has no plans to leave the music business. But that doesn't keep him from dreaming of a chile empire. "We want to expand with three or four restaurants in Arizona. It will be a franchise situation from here on, though," he explains. "We also want to open stores in Oklahoma City and Nashville. But we can go anywhere people think it can work."

—Douglas Fulmer

ONLY IN NASHVILLE While driving around town recently, Vince Gill was involved in a minor accident: His car was rear-ended, sending it into the car in front of him. After confirming that no one was hurt in the fender-bender, one of the drivers recognized a golden Music City moment and slipped Gill a tape of a song he'd written.

BARREL OF TEARS If you get a warm, fuzzy feeling listening to those nostalgic Cracker Barrel radio commercials, say hello to the CD equivalent of a wool blanket. The soothing voice behind



those national ad spots, announcer/songwriter/raconteur Hal Bynum, has released a spoken-word album that makes the most of his warm-maple-syrup delivery. On *If I Could Do Anything*, Bynum ruminates about home, childhood and romantic love. Kleenex alert: If you're the kind who gets choked up by the occasional Hallmark card, listen at your own risk—the combination of his lovable-codger manner and his unabashedly sentimental stories is a guaranteed weeper for the faint-of-tear duct (and a sure-fire groaner for the more cynical). Available in Cracker Barrel gift shops and major music stores.



UPTOWN COUNTRY One day soon Elvis' gold Cadillac, Garth Brooks' smashed guitar and all the other collections and curiosities crammed into the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum will take up residence in new, flashy digs in downtown Nashville. Construction has begun on the museum's long-awaited

new home, set to open in 2001. The \$37 million, 130,000-square-foot building will boast triple the exhibit space of the museum's current location on Music Row, and will feature high-tech exhibits created by the designers of the highly lauded Holocaust Memorial Museum in D.C.

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State: Montana
Been there: Justin's, Sun, Lomo's and Espresso
Preferences: Steak, jeans, pliers and wide open spaces

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Off the Charts

FACE TIME Singer, mom and now model: Faith Hill has joined pop songstress Brandy and super-model Niki Taylor in a national ad campaign for Cover Girl cosmetics, set to begin this fall.



WHEELS

LEMON CRUSH He's known as a "Pickup Man," but Joe Diffie wasn't always savvy about automobiles. Diffie was totally carried away by his first set of wheels—but not very far. "My first car was a 1963 Pontiac Star Chief," he recalls. "A big old, ugly, faded-blue tuna boat. A land yacht! The thing would run for about 50 miles, and then it would die. You'd have to wait till it completely cooled off before it would start again. But I thought it was the most beautiful car I had ever seen.

"I was 16. I was hauling hay and I earned enough money to buy it. I saw it sitting out in this guy's yard with a sign on it, and we didn't negotiate. He asked for \$195 and that's what I paid for it. I had to have that car!

"It had an automatic transmission on the column, but reverse was all the way down at the bottom. So I was going to show off one time with my friends. I was going up this little hill, and luckily I wasn't going very fast. But I was gonna put it in low, and I put it in reverse. It stopped immediately, but

it didn't drop any parts. It kept going. I couldn't believe it!

"It was huge; it got about eight gallons to the mile. You could've put a small country in the trunk of this thing. You have big plans when you have a car like that. You think *I wanna jack it up in the back and put big tires on*. Of course, I never did, because I couldn't get it to run far enough to get to the parts store.

"I was so proud of it, and I thought it was beautiful till my friends wouldn't ride with me in it. I kept it about a year. It was the only car I never lost money on; I sold it for \$195 to a junk dealer a couple years later. I bet it's still in the junk heap somewhere."

—Richard Quinn



HO-HO-HOEDOWN George Strait fans should enjoy plenty of holiday cheer this year: The Strait man is recording a new Christmas CD, scheduled for release this fall.



BABS WITH A BULLET

AN AVID RECREATIONAL GUN ENTHUSIAST for years, Barbara Mandrell has lent her name to a limited-edition air pistol as a fundraiser for the U.S. Olympic Shooting Team. A specially designed Steyr-Mannlicher LPI, a highly regarded pistol of choice among world-class competitive shooters, sports Mandrell's engraved signature on its side. Proceeds from the sale of the pistol will assist the men and women of the U.S. team in funding their trip to next year's games in Sydney, Australia. Interested? Well, dig deep—each of the 250 limited-edition firearms costs a cool \$1,750. For more information, call (719) 578-4670.



SAMMY KERSHAW

ACTOR: "Joe Pesci. He's a good friend and I love movies about wiseguys."

MOVIE: "Caddyshack—because it's fun!"

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WAY TO RELAX: "Riding my tractor is my greatest relaxation."

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- Bellamy Brothers, *If I Said You Had A Beautiful Body Would You Hold It Against Me*
- Johnny Paycheck, *Take This Job And Shove It*
- Dave & Sugar, *Golden Tears* and *The Door Is Always Open*
- The Kendalls, *Thank God For The Radio*
- Johnny Lee, *Lookin' For Love*
- Freddy Fender, *Wasted Days And Wasted Nights* and *Before The Next Teardrop Falls*
- Jerry Lee Lewis, *Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On* and *Great Balls Of Fire*
- Razyzy Bailey, *She Left Love All Over Me* and *I Keep Coming Back*
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THE PILGRIM
Marty Stuart

MCA

Marty Stuart is country music's consummate multitasker (what we used to call a Renaissance man): a singer, songwriter, super-picker, antiquarian, photographer, essayist, fashion plate and honky-tonk bon vivant. He grew up a prodigy tutored by Bill Monroe, Earl Scruggs and other greats—and none of it was lost on him. He has

absorbed and cultivated every strain of music that ever stirred a hillbilly soul. And now, all that teaching and experience has been poured into *The Pilgrim*, a record that transcends anything he's ever done and that promises to be one of Music Row's strongest releases this year.

It sounds pretentious to call *The Pilgrim* a country/rock opera, but it fits the billing. Like the Who's *Quadrophenia* or Tom Russell's recent *The Man From God Knows Where*, the record takes its substance and shape from a narrative. The story, told in scraps and fragments, is of a love triangle that played out in Stuart's hometown. A man, the Pilgrim, falls in love with a woman, not knowing she has an estranged husband. The husband confronts them and then kills himself. The Pilgrim wanders, seeking

solace, and finally returns to make the original love work.

Of the 20 tracks, nine are songs that could either stand apart as strong singles or together as a fine album in their own right. We hear Stuart's mastery of honky-tonk in "Red, Red Wine and Cheatin' Songs" and "Goin' Nowhere Fast." He dives into classic hillbilly rock with "Sometimes the Pleasure's Worth the Pain" and "Draggin' Around These Chains of Love." The uncategorizable "Observations of a Crow" is just a wonderful song that proves Stuart isn't hamstrung by conventions.

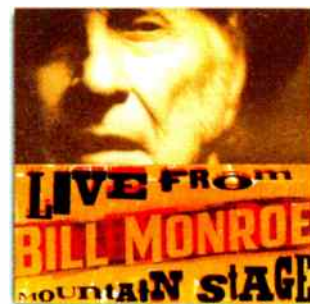
The CD's 11 other mini-cuts tie the project together and lend it texture. These interludes include the voices of Emmylou Harris, George Jones and Johnny Cash reading Tennyson, if you can imagine such riches. A short song that Stuart wrote especially for Ralph Stanley relating the husband's suicide sounds a thousand years old. Elsewhere, Beatles-like instrumental flourishes and the ambient sound of birdsong give *The Pilgrim* flair and soul.

But Stuart didn't get so caught up in the elaborate production that he forgot to pick. He brings in a dozen or so of the staggering guitars and mandolins from his collection and gets them up close to the mike. The mandolin work on the title cut is a *tour de force*. And the final cut, a mando/banjo duet with Earl Scruggs on "John Henry," is like dessert.

Stuart is a good, but not a great, songwriter. He borrows classic country conventions (the train in the distance, the road home) gracefully, but so often that it doesn't always leave him enough space to turn innovative phrases himself.

But, you know, who cares? This kind of commitment to creativity and the music's heritage should be more common in Nashville's mainstream.

—Craig Havighurst



LIVE FROM MOUNTAIN STAGE

Bill Monroe

BLUE PLATE MUSIC

When Bill Monroe died four days short of his 85th birthday in 1996, he left behind a large legacy of recorded music, including at least three still-in-print renditions of live performances.

Now comes another packaging of Monroe live, a relatively short (38 minutes) set recorded in Charleston, West Virginia, for the *Mountain Stage* radio show in 1989.

Longtime Monroe fans will certainly want this disc for their collections. But the more casual fans of his music should think about including it, too, since it's a perfect distillation of 50 years of Bill Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys' performances, with all the elements that made their shows such standouts: The signature songs ("Uncle Pen," "Blue Moon of Kentucky"); the extraordinary musicianship led by Monroe's mandolin and his powerful, close-chorded rhythm chop; his pulse-stopping tenor, rising and falling with fierce emotion; the lesser songs ("The Old Hometown," "Southern Flavor") designed to showcase the various members of the band; the soulful instrumentals and the stirring vocal blend on the gospel tunes; and the courtly banter between songs.

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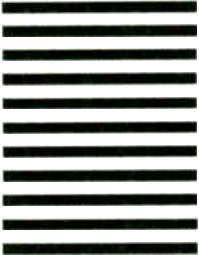
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Only one thing mars this fine moment—the unexpected appearance of Diana Christian, singing “My Blue Eyes from Heaven,” a song she wrote about the Father of Bluegrass himself. But it’s an odd moment, and arriving in the middle of the set, as she does, Christian amounts to little more than a jarring interruption that spoils the flow of the great Monroe repertoire, changes the mood and, for a moment, threatens to dampen the spirit.

And what a spirit it is! From the moment they take the stage with an electric rendition of “My Sweet Blue Eyed Darlin’,” Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys crackle with excitement, moving through unusually charged performances of Jimmie Rodgers’ “Mule Skinner Blues” (the first song Monroe ever sang on the Grand Ole Opry) and Lester Flatt’s “Roll in My Sweet Baby’s Arms.” But when Monroe turns to his own material, he makes the melancholy but fren-

zied instrumental “Southern Flavor” ache with sadness. And when he climbs atop the familiar chorus of “Uncle Pen” (“You could hear it talk/You could hear it sing”), it rings with the power of the ages.

At times, Monroe’s keening tenor fails to hit its mark, and his age begins to show in keeping up the drumlike tempo. But in the end, it hardly matters. This was bluegrass, played not only by its inventor, but its master.

—Alanna Nash



NIGHT IN A STRANGE TOWN

Lynn Miles

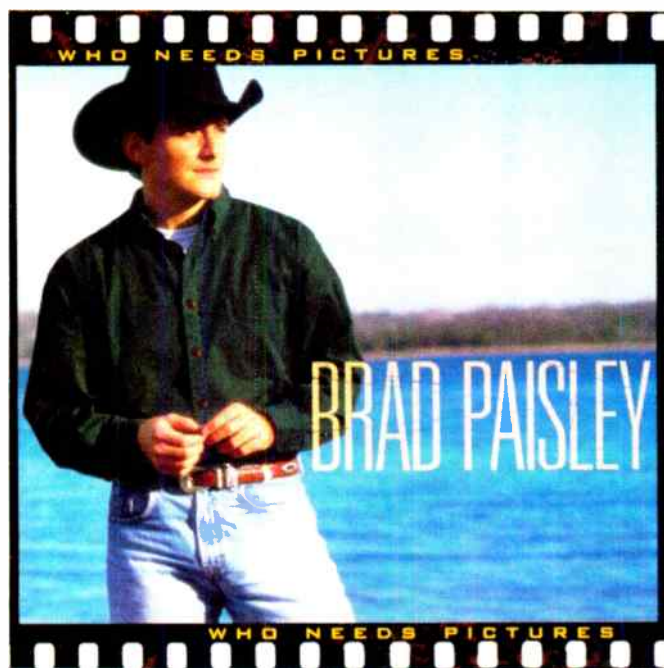
PHILO

Creating music—actually lifting that Gibson out of the case with a heaven-sent phrase in your head—boils down to just a few components: charisma, point-of-view and most important, the gift of simplicity. Lynn Miles has all three.

For her second Philo album, she’s prepared to hit the road, Jack. After years of driving across Canada, booking herself in clubs, it’s no wonder Miles sounds so restless. When your home is capable of hitting 70 mph, settling down can be a challenge.

The blackout between the stages, with all that time to wonder about stuff, inspires plenty of sincere revelations. On “The One You’re Waiting For,” Miles announces, “This is a song about the way life is/The way it rises and it falls.” Sure enough, that’s precisely what the song is about. With the drums banging away like a big heart, sounding healthy and exuberant, she still fears that she’s not in on the secret. So why does everyone else seem so content? How many more relationships have to fall apart until the right one comes along?

Traditional country music has many of these same themes: Loneliness, broken hearts, driving away from everything you’ve ever known. And like



WHO NEEDS PICTURES

Brad Paisley

ARISTA

Of all the dozens of big-hat, no-ranch twentysomethings who’ve flooded Nashville in the last decade, Brad Paisley will likely be one of the few still standing when the dust clears.

On his impressive debut, *Who Needs Pictures*, Paisley shines with the kind of confidence that only comes with having done something well for a very long time. A quick look at his bio

explains why: This 26-year-old West Virginian spent eight years as a regular on the famed “Wheeling Jamboree”; by the age of 13, he was opening for such acts as George Jones, the Judds, Ricky Skaggs and Steve Wariner.

Through the years, Paisley, who sings in a well-modulated, polished baritone, was shaped by such traditionalists, but he also learned how to put his own stamp on his music. Like Wariner and Skaggs, he aimed to be a virtuoso on his instrument, and on his debut, plays all the guitar parts, to

best effect on the hot instrumental “The Nervous Breakdown.” And like Jones, he knows the importance of setting up the emotion in the song, and then delivering it with a knockout punch.

In his quest to become a total artist, Paisley either wrote or co-wrote all 13 cuts on his album, from ballads to rhythm numbers to western-swing. While several songs (“Who Needs Pictures”) fall into the formula that’s seemingly necessary to court radio airplay in these days of lemming-like programming, Paisley, who’s already had cuts by David Ball, Tracy Byrd and David Kersh, generally goes for a different approach. “We Danced” brings a novel scenario to a believable love song, “Me Neither” and “It Never Woulda Worked Out Anyway” are among the most original (and humorous) pick-up songs in years, and “He Didn’t Have to Be,” about the importance of daddies and what happens to families who aren’t lucky enough to have them, burrows deep in the bones.

Look for Paisley to follow in the footsteps of George Strait, dedicating himself to consummate musicianship, sterling songs and integrity in everything that bears his name. Not bad, for starters.

—Alanna Nash

Vince Gill or Patty Loveless, Miles sings from a place where nearly every word comes out lonesome. Even on the clever "Perfect Romance," her vocals make you wonder if the romance in question truly is perfect, after all. But Miles excels on the tear-jerkers, with an honesty that stings. When she turns a lyric like "This love gave you sad answers and a hurt that won't heal," you want to turn your eyes away from the stereo.

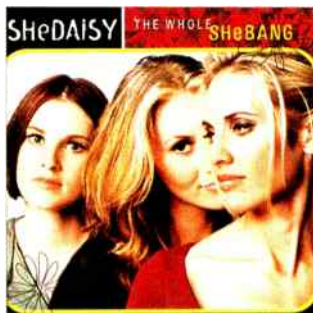
The album is a tough listen at first, but it unfolds like spending an intimate evening with a friend unafraid to tell it like it is.

—Craig Shelburne



GLIMMER
Kim Richey
MERCURY

Kim Richey has written No. 1 country hits for Trisha Yearwood ("Believe Me Baby (I Lied)") and Rodney Foster ("Nobody Wins") but she's never really been a country artist. She writes and sings the sort of smart, melodic, southern-California pop best exemplified by Tom Petty, Fleetwood Mac and Jackson Browne. On her third solo disc, Richey has cast off the last trappings of country, hired British rock producer Hugh Padgham (XTC, the Police, Genesis) and made her purest pop album yet. Richey is lucky that country radio has also put



THE WHOLE SHEBANG
SHeDAISY

LYRIC STREET

One of life's ideal moments (and of course it *never* quite happens this way) is when the shark pops his head out of the sea just before you dive in and points, cunningly, to his shiv-sharp choppers. Swim with me, he's revealing, and I'll slice 'n' dice your landlubber blubber like so much stale sushi. It's good to have those

aside country music for the most part and has embraced exactly the sort of So-Cal pop she's peddling.

When it comes to soft-rock about adult relationships with gorgeous harmonies, few folks do it as well as Richey. She's not a distinctive lyricist, but she hasn't lost her Music Row knack for catchy aphorisms. She tells an ex-lover, "You remember the way it never was," and she tells an insistent lover, "Honey, if you don't mind, put it off till tomorrow." These tag lines are backed by melodies so elegant that they grab not only the ear but also the heart. This time, though, those melodies are fleshed out not by pedal steel and mandolin but by the sustaining, weeping guitar lines of L.A. veteran Waddy Wachtel. Richey wrote or cowrote all 14 songs, and never has her songwriting or singing been so confident or so subtle.

—Geoffrey Himes

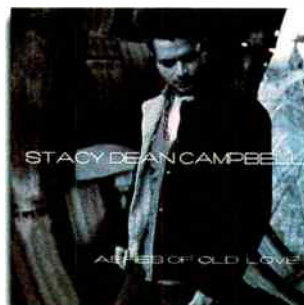
kinds of warnings from time to time, to get a clear and accurate picture of the enemy.

Ergo, when the charming, chipper and heavily lip-glossed SHeDAISY shows up on your doorstep (mercy, how *purty* they smile! Just like them thar Dixie Chicks!) you initially want to invite them in. *Don't!* Land-shark alert! This trio of simpering sisters chirrup songs the way small children construct scenes with ColorForms, while aping we're-new-Nashville mannerisms. It's as painful as a sharkbite to behold. Damn you, Dixie Chicks! Look what y'all done gone an' started! You *want* to believe in SHeDAISY, want to believe that their lowercase 'E' represents "elegance" or "extra effort." Nope. It's all sub-Spice Girls faff, dressed up in alt-country clothes, with girly-girl harmonies and Jack

Handy-ish "deep thoughts" such as "I won't be your Martha Stewart, baby/Or your all-night restaurant"; "Every I love you was just a whoop-de-doo....Da, doo, doo/Ooo, Ooo." The commas, of course, are of penultimate importance—they signal when the girls up the emotional ante with some true-blue country warblin' (*trademark; patent pending; check out the web page).

In the *Tiger Beat* world, fluffsters like Brandy and Britney, even the Spice Girls, are up-front about their snarky, sharky popisms. You can respect that, even if you don't respect the music. But SHeDAISY? They ain't country, kids. They ain't even palatable pop. But who knows? Perhaps these mindless Martha Stewarts will one day find gainful employment in some all-night restaurant in Stepford.

—Tom Lanham



ASHES OF OLD LOVE
Stacy Dean Campbell

PALADIN

Seek ye the middle path, they always say. Or "simplicity in all things." Even our this-porridge-is-just-right fairy tales point to the same universal truth—a truth that's not lost on crooner Stacy Dean Campbell. After wah-ooing through a couple of glossy rockabilly inflected releases, he's done the Confucian thing and trimmed back the sound, reined in the arrangements and surfaced with one of

the most stunning country records of the year—a gracious, gossamer exercise in acoustic alchemy that's just about perfect. The older-but-wiser Campbell now plays to his most telling strengths: a keen ear for Sun-Session melody and a wistful, hiccuppy voice that's so close to vintage Marty Robbins it's eerie. The rest appears to have taken care of itself. Relying mostly on his trusty acoustic, he spins simple working-class yarns, tales of fate-tossed Everymen struggling against the tide—such as the deceptively gentle "One False Move" ("Granddaddy handed down an old Colt revolver/And it's always been a tried-and-true problem solver") or the Cormac McCarthy-visits-"El Paso" tune "Five Texas Dollars" ("You better be a bad man if you're walking through the badlands/Mind what you say and what you do"). The characters in both songs, at the end of their respective numbers, end up



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disillusioned, nearly broken on the wheel of life. But, *a la* Tom Waits, Campbell lets a human heart beat deep within the decadence, and that makes all the difference. And if his choice of cowriters is impeccable—Chris Knight (“Train Not Running”); Kevin Welch (“Gone By Now”); Dean Miller (“Makin’ Good Time”)—his selection of covers is shrewder still: “Bidding America Goodbye” and “Some People (Just Can’t Walk the Line)” by the underrated Jamie O’Hara. But it’s the singer’s wheat-field warmth that gives flesh to his tattered scarecrows of Americana, that elevates a batch of good songs into a great folk-rooted hymnal. Campbell has found the middle road between soulful art and big-hat artifice. Now if only the rest of Nashville would try to do the same.

—Tom Lanham



ANGEL'S WINGS

Duke Bardwell

CLUB LOUISIANNE MUSIC

Elvis fans know him as the bass player who anchored the bottom of the King’s live music for a year and a half, starting in 1974. Fans of the Gulf Coast band Hubba, Hubba know him as a 10-year veteran of the group. And students of the Pelican State remember him as a homegrown product, born into a large and loving Baton Rouge, Louisiana, family as one

of seven children, all named for universities—Stanford Jr., Harvard, Princeton, Auburn, Cornell, and finally, Duke Kane and his twin sister, Tulane.

On his first solo album, Bardwell, who’s also played behind Tom Rush and Jose Feliciano, might appear to be little more than a middle-aged rocker, hoping to capture a little of the lost glory of his youth. Instead, he delivers a highly personal record about life and loving, about relationships whole and broken, about the cosmic and spiritual sources of right and wrong (“Jessie & Dan” can be read as a parable about Jesus and the Devil), and lessons learned from experience and hope.

Recorded in Austin, *Angel’s Wings* isn’t so reflective of geography (although there’s a slight western-swing feel to “Strandin’ Still,” one of Bardwell’s nine original songs) as it is just thoroughly deep-dish southern. Bardwell, who proffers a dry whiskey baritone, doesn’t so much sing a song as much as he

inhabits it, turning even the cover tunes like C.E. Hornsby’s “It’s Real” into a loose and funky amalgamation of rock and country-blues—some capped off by Memphis soul guitar riffs and spicy, blackened-Cajun accents—but all linked together by an organic and nearly homemade rhythm section including an old, deep snare played with thick brushes, and a fretless bass that echoes the softness of finger on wood.

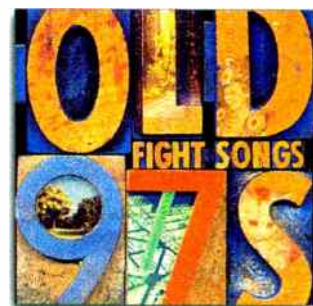
Originally conceived as a legacy for Bardwell’s children and grandchildren, the record works on a universal level as a timeless reminder of what matters in life, and how we’re all more alike than separate. As proof, anyone who isn’t moved by the title song—a due: with Bardwell’s 21-year-old son, T.K., which grew out of the family’s estrangement and temporary reconciliation when the boy was 6—just isn’t breathing.

In a voyage of self-discovery and self-administered therapy, Bardwell makes connections that will resonate with anyone who

likes music that’s unabashedly real, emotional and perhaps even capable of healing. This is a man who knows how to get the feeling in the grooves.

—Alanna Nash

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FIGHT SONGS

The Old 97’s

ELEKTRA

Rhett Miller liked himself. Liked himself a whole preening lot on past twang-tangy efforts from his quasi-cowpunk combo the Old 97’s. Of course, you couldn’t help but like him too, when he primped in front of the com-



PARTY DOLL AND OTHER FAVORITES

Mary Chapin Carpenter

COLUMBIA

It’s hard to believe it’s been 10 years since Mary Chapin Carpenter first showed up on the country consciousness, a folkie with spunk and spirit...and great songs. A decade later, she’s almost an insti-

tution, recognized throughout the music world as a singer/songwriter whose music is both challenging and immensely entertaining.

When she set out to put together a collection, Carpenter had in mind something more substantial than the standard greatest-hits package. *Party Doll and Other Favorites* is more like a treasure trove, mixing hits with previously hard-to-find tracks and live recordings from stops along the road.

The set opens with a spirited *Late Show With David Letterman* performance of “Can’t Take Love for Granted,” and moves from the joyful exuberance of “Down at the Twist and Shout” (recorded live with Beausoleil at Super Bowl XXXI) to a stark acoustic version of Mick

Jagger’s “Party Doll.” In between is the beautiful “Drearnland,” from the lullaby compilation *Til Their Eyes Shine*, “10,000 Miles” from the film *Fly Away Home*, as well as hits “Passionate Kisses,” “I Feel Lucky” and two new songs (including the album’s first single, “Almost Home”). In every case, Carpenter lets her words work their magic, whether they call for a quiet arrangement or room to growl.

With so many unexpected gems, this collection is a must-have for every Carpenter fan, as well as a great introduction to her artistry for those who only know her radio hits. Most important, it will make you remember why you fell in love with her music in the first place.

—Cyndi Haelzle

posing mirror with such cuter-than-cute-isms like “My angel of the morning isn’t”—rim shot—“mourning.” It was fey, it was fun, and all juiced up on booming Duane Eddy guitars. Lately, however, Miller seems to be more in love with the craft itself, enraptured by the pop possibilities his lofty IQ allows him. So on this—the band’s fourth—he trades brattiness for brilliance on anthem after quirky anthem. The southwestern motif is still there—nothing as obvious as, say, “Barrier Reef” from the previous *Too Far to Care*, but “Alone So Far” and “Crash on the Barrel Head” do maintain that loping, windswept-prairie kind of vibe that was becoming the group’s stock-in-trade. But Miller is now opting for skewed tangents, oblique strategies. “Busted Afternoon” blends his cheery, next-door vocals with a sleepy backbeat, timy harpsichord and nicely subtle ruminations: “There was a fine rain/There was a red wine/There was a long whistle/It was a good sign.” And the crescendo-ing “Oppenheimer” twists the traditional cowpunk sound into a fun, jangly balloon animal (complete with bell-tolling chorus and cheeky handclaps) that you simply weren’t expecting. And the girl-plus-boy storyline? Unclear. You fill in the rest of the picture, Miller seems to be hinting—I’m just the ketchy artist. Longtime fans might be stymied by this abrupt 45-degree turn. But Miller is exactly where he should be right now, artistically speaking—reexamining his stellar repertoire and understanding that he can push it, take his gift to the next equally remarkable level. It’s not hot-dogging. It’s a whole new humility.

—Tom Lanham



A PLACE IN THE SUN

Tim McGraw

CURB

We need to hear more *real* country songs featuring *real* country voices. Tim McGraw has one of those voices. It’s thick with inflection, loud when it needs to be and able to let fly with vocal acrobatics at the drop of a ten-gallon hat. Unfortunately, precious few cuts on *A Place in the Sun* stand up to his voice.

The notable exception is “She’ll Have You Back,” a classic country tune, perfect for McGraw’s classic country vox. This is a real drinkin’ song, authentic right down to the whiskey-drenched core. “She’ll have you back/Back to drinkin’ in no time”—perfect. An additional bright spot on *Place* is “Something Like That.” Lyrically, the song is empty, but it rocks really, really hard and the band obviously enjoyed recording it.

But for these two gems, there’s a bevy of disposable pop tunes that just happen to include steel guitar. For example, “Somebody Must Be Praying for Me” satisfies the album’s obligatory spiritual/female-empowerment/forgotten-dreams/finding-true-love song requirements in one swift blow. Unfortunately for all its ambition, it’s a bit forgettable. “Senorita Margarita” personi-

SINGLE WHITE FEMALE

Chely Wright

MCA

Chely Wright’s fourth album opens with the title song, a rhythmically grooving tune about a woman straining to capture the attention of an office mate she finds attractive. In a way, that’s a metaphor for Wright’s career: She’s an immensely likable talent with an expressive voice and a vibrant personality, yet she’s still trying to figure out a way to capture the attention of country music fans. In “Single White Female,” the woman uses a personal ad to catch the man’s eye. However, there’s little detail in the lyrics to separate her from other women: Saying she’s seeking a one-woman man doesn’t give much of an indication of what makes her special.

Fortunately, most of Wright’s new album does a better job than previous efforts in displaying what makes this singer worth getting to know. With arrangements that blend funky grooves with flourishes of mountain-based mandolin and fiddle, the album conveys the personality of a confident country gal who is ready to move into a contemporary setting and make her mark. Wright’s voice, a burnished and hearty instrument, conveys brashness with a playful grin, and

ties the drink as a surrogate for a woman who has left her lover. The tune attempts to be a pop-inflected interpretation of the classic “tear-in-my-beer” muse. Having my choice, I’d pick the “She’ll Have You Back” kind of song over the “Margarita” kind any day.

McGraw’s album demonstrates that country artists should leave the cheesy pop songs to Michael Bolton and Mariah Carey. Stick with country and everyone will be fine...I promise.

—Brett Ratner



emotion with a deep well of believability. Her sense of energy and personality lends aggressive songs like “The Fire”—a convincing tale about a woman embracing the inner passion that fuels her strong opinions and moody temperament—a humanity that adds to their impact.

Wright also shows she’s a capable songwriter. “Picket Fences,” which she wrote alone, finds a woman explaining how she’s happy without a husband, children or a picturesque home on a quiet street. But you gradually learn she’s only kidding herself, and Wright expresses the tangled feelings of the lyrics with just the right mix of veiled sorrow and mock self-assurance.

With *Single White Female*, Wright is striving to establish a foothold with country fans. She deserves it. And maybe once she gets it, she can open up and really show us who she is.

—Michael McCall

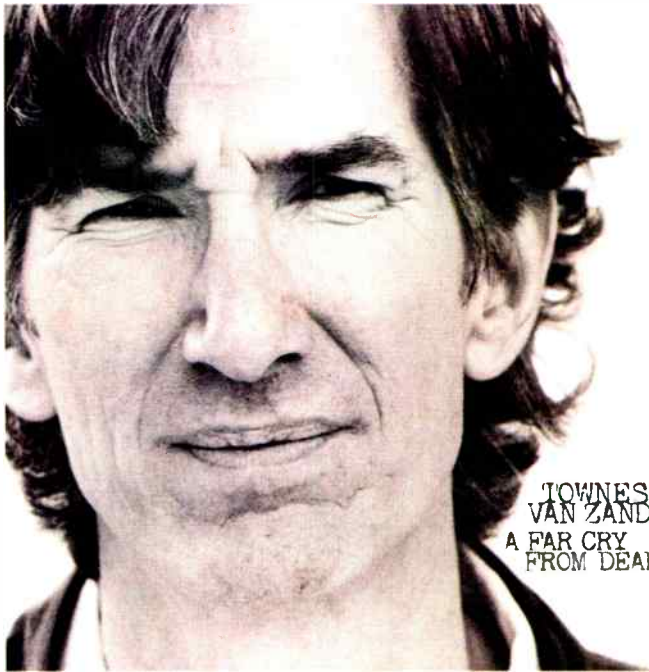


ANCIENT TONES

Ricky Skaggs and Kentucky Thunder

SKAGGS FAMILY RECORDS

Bluegrass music never grows old. The acoustic blend of mandolin,



A FAR CRY FROM DEAD
Townes Van Zandt
 ARISTA AUSTIN

By all accounts, Townes Van Zandt was a man who lived his legend. A truly gifted songwriter, he was also a manic-depressive who was constantly on the run from assorted demons. Yet he was able to see beauty deep down inside, chronicling the joy and pain of life's

fiddle and banjo, usually tiered with some lively picking and a somewhat complaisant attitude, creates a thoroughly refreshing breeze that pleasantly ruffles country music hairs whenever it blows through town.

It was a wind that first caught the attention of Ricky Skaggs as a Kentucky youth. At the age of 5 he was invited by Bill Monroe, the "Father of Bluegrass," to share the stage with his formidable talent, and later encouraged by bluegrass stalwarts Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs to continue his quest. At 15, he formed the immortalized East Kentucky Mountain

losers. After he died on New Year's Day, 1997, at the age of 52, Emmylou Harris, Lyle Lovett, Steve Earle, Nanci Griffith, Rodney Crowell and Guy Clark were among the many who showed up to say goodbye to a dear friend.

Given the awe and loyalty that Van Zandt inspired in those around him, it's no surprise that this project was undertaken with so much care. Working with just a box full of

Boys, a Stanley Brothers cover band, with Keith Whitley, and later served apprenticeships with Ralph Stanley's Clinch Mountain Boys, the Country Gentlemen, J.D. Crowe and The New South and Emmylou Harris before making an impressive run of his own.

On *Ancient Tones*, Skaggs' impressive sequel to 1997's *Bluegrass Rules!*, the memories flow. Skaggs relies heavily on the penmanship of Bill Monroe and the Stanleys for the majority of the album's dozen songs, offering respectful updates exhibiting his love for the music while preserving its integrity.

tapes that Van Zandt left behind, producer Eric Paul (Harris, Willie Nelson, Kris Kristofferson, Johnny Cash) took his original vocal and guitar tracks and built arrangements around them.

The results are astounding. Unlike some thrown-together posthumous releases, *A Far Cry From Dead* sounds completely organic, and Van Zandt's vocals have fire and urgency that wasn't always captured in his earlier recordings. Of the album's 13 songs, most are new versions of his classics, including "Pancho and Lefty," "To Live Is to Fly" and "Ain't Leavin' Your Love."

For the uninitiated, Van Zandt's voice and songs can be acquired tastes. His interior tours can be dark and intense; they make your eyes open wide, yet sometimes the pain is too real. Once, during an in-the-round concert, an audience member said, "I love your songs, but when are you going to sing a happy one?" Van Zandt just smiled at her and deadpanned, "Darlin', these *are* the happy ones."

If you've always wondered what all the fuss was about, this is an excellent place to start

—Cyndi Hoelzle

Ancient Tones works on both counts. Full of sublime moments that seem to occur whenever Skaggs tastefully picks his mandolin or Kentucky Thunder spruces up the arrangements with tender harmonizing, *Ancient Tones* is an obvious labor of love that embraces the high lonesome sound without resorting to contemporary embellishment. The charm begins with "Walls of Time," a solemn Bill Monroe wailer that aches with resolution, remorse, and guest Stuart Duncan's melancholy fiddle, before moving onto "Lonesome Night," written by one of the other

bluegrass giants, Carter Stanley.

Fingers fly on Stanley's "How Mountain Girls Can Love," a fiery Appalachian two-step that blazes in part to Jim Mills' gravity-defying banjo pickin' and Skaggs' 100-miles-a-minute mandolin. Other highlights include Skaggs' own call-and-response instrumental "Connemara," and Bobby Hicks' soaring fiddle on "Boston Boy," an instrumental written by Bill Monroe's mentor, Pendleton Vandiver.

Ancient Tones covers all the bluegrass bases: Its unbridled joy, its stinging sobriety and its impressive dexterity. Little wonder Ricky Skaggs is so smitten.

—Nick Krewen



LONELY GRILL
Lonestar
 BNA

Taking a peek at the jewel box of Lonestar's latest CD reveals a group of earthy, regular dudes hangin' out in Nashville's Printers Alley. Gone are the ridiculous caricatures of country stars gracing the band's former album photos.

Digging a bit deeper, Lonestar's recent changes yield an organic musical vibe as well. With Dann Huff wearing producer and lead-guitarist hats, the arrangements are still L.A.-slick. But the mixes feature that edgy, acoustic sound apparently

ushered in by the success of the ubiquitous Dixie Chicks.

With these improvements, you'd think someone would have thought to update the lyrics, too. The habit Nashville tunesmiths have of writing for the lowest common denominator has really gone too far. For example, the first words of the first chorus of the first song blurt out "S-A-T-U-R-D-A-Y night" as if we're oblivious to the fact that the 1970s pop group Bay City Rollers sang a completely different song using that exact chorus idea.

Worse still is "Don't Let's Talk About Lisa." It casually drops names like Marilyn Manson, Ally McBeal, Joe DiMaggio, Hanson, *X-Files* and other current hot topics. It's as if to say, "Hey,

we're hip! We know what's up!" Well guys, if you truly know what's up, how about taking it a few steps further? Instead of merely mentioning things, why not voice an opinion about them? Why not take a stand?

Sliding record sales seem to indicate an audience that is tired of being force-fed commercial McRecords. On top of that, aggressive new artists are stepping up to the plate, applying extra pressure to the status quo.

Lonely Grill is a step in the right direction. However, if this talented band wants to compete with country acts who are truly pushing the envelope, Lonestar is going to need a quantum leap.

—Brett Ratner



MY HEART
Lorrie Morgan

BNA

What's predictable about Lorrie Morgan is her unpredictability. You never know what she's going to do next. Just when you thought she might be veering off in the direction of lavishly arranged, fully orchestrated pop standards, as evidenced on 1998's *Secret Love*, she comes back in less than six months with *My Heart*—a stunning collection that brilliantly showcases her country roots as well as her trademark love-on-the-line balladry.

The CD kicks off with "The Things We Do," a playful tune about a woman's desire to break away from everyday sameness and take a little walk on the wild side—like fly the Concorde to Paris or throw food in a

restaurant. Tasteful Clarence White-like string-bending licks on the electric guitar add to the song's vibrant, fun-loving feel.

In a heartbeat, Morgan shifts gears and gets dramatic in the gut-wrenching "Where Does That Leave Me," a moving ballad about a woman whose lover has passed away. When she belts out the words "I know God needed you, but not more than I did," it's absolutely bone-chilling.

Morgan's biggest stretch is her rollicking remake of Canadian rocker Bryan Adams' "The Only Thing." Sizzling, dirty lead guitar work accompanied by a country-thumpin' rhythm section serve as the perfect backdrop for her searing, vampy, bourbon-soaked vocal performance. It's pure country-tinged sensuality at its best.

Perhaps the most moving tune on the album is its closer "On This Bed," written by Morgan's husband, singer/songwriter Jon Randall. The tune's narrator is a woman lying on her bed. She's near death, and she recalls all the memories and emotions she's encountered throughout her life in relation to the bed. On it, she's experienced birth, health, sickness, laughter, tears, love, possibly death, and perhaps, salvation. It's beautifully executed, and Morgan delivers one of the most stirring, emotive vocal performances of her career. As Gram Parsons aptly put it in one of his tunes, "Lord, but she sure could sing."

—Rick Petreycik

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NASHVILLE

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SHE'S A STAR.
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every groove."
—Robert K. Oermann,
Music Row

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Gary Allan

- 8/18 MIDLAND, MI**
517-835-7901
Midland Cty. Fair
- 8/19 ESCANABA, MI**
906-786-4011
Upper Peninsula State Fair
- 8/20 WILLIAMSBURG, MI**
Turtle Creek Casino
- 8/21 LANSING, MI**
Olds Park
- 8/25 AUGUSTA, ME**
Augusta Civic Ctr.
- 8/26 WARWICK, RI**
Warwick Musical Theatre
- 8/27 WALLINGFORD, CT**
SNET Oakdale Theatre
- 8/28 MANSFIELD, MA**
508-339-2331
Great Woods Ctr.
- 8/29 SYRACUSE, NY**
315-487-7711
New York State Fair
- September**
- 9/3 ELKHORN, WI**
414-723-3228
Walworth Cty. Fair
- 9/4 ST. PAUL, MN**
612-642-2200
Minnesota State Fair
- 9/5 HURON, SD**
- 9/6 LINCOLN, NE**
402-473-4110
Nebraska State Fair
- 9/10 FAYETTEVILLE, NC**
Cumberland Cty. Civic Ctr.
- 9/12 BRISTOL, TN**
Viking Hall
- 9/17 BURGETTSTOWN, PA**
412-947-7400
Star Lake Amph.
- 9/18 YORK, PA**
York Inter-State Fair

GARY ALLAN

- 8/4 GALLIPOLIS, OH**
Gallia Cty. Fair
- 8/5 MANNINGTON, WV**
Mannington Fair
- 8/14 SCHAEFFERSTOWN, PA**
Firemans Grounds
- 8/18 NAPOLEON, OH**
Henry Cty. Fair
- 8/19 FAIRBURY, IL**
815-692-2400
Fairbury Fair
- 8/21 DES MOINES, IA**
Iowa State Fair
- September**
- 9/3 MILLERSPORT, OH**
614-467-2903
614-467-3943
Sweet Corn Fest.
- 9/18 SULPHUR SPRINGS, TX**
Civic Ctr.

BILL ANDERSON

- 8/7 LAWN, PA**
Fireman's Carnival
- 8/12 MACKEYVILLE, PA**
Clinton Cty. Fair
- 8/20 BUNKERHILL, IN**
Grissom Fest
- 8/21 RENFRO VALLEY, KY**
800-765-7464
Renfro Ent. Ctr.
- 8/23/24 BRANSON, MO**
Branson Town USA
Dinner Theatre
- September**
- 9/3 DELTON, MI**
Prairieville Country
Music Show
- 9/9 UNIONVILLE, MO**
816-947-2776
Putnam Cty. Fair

JOHN ANDERSON

- August**
- 8/7 STRAUSSTOWN, PA**
610-488-1782
Pat Garrett Music Park
- September**
- 9/17-18 RED WING, MN**
Treasure Island Casino
- ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL**
- August**
- 8/12 BERLIN, MD**
Ocean Downs Raceway
- 8/13 BUFFALO, NY**
- 8/21 ARVADA, CO**
303-431-3080
Arvada Ctr.
- September**
- 9/4 EMINENCE, MO**
Cross Country Trail Ride
- 9/12 TURKEY, TX**
Texas Turkey Swing Fest

JOHN BERRY

- October**
- 10/30 OXNARD, CA**
Oxnard Performing Arts Ctr.

BLACKHAWK

- August**
- 8/2 TURLOCK, CA**
Stanislaus Cty. Fair
- 8/3 CORVALLIS, OR**
Benton Cty. Fair
- 8/4 LONGVIEW, WA**
Cowlitz Cty. Fair
- 8/6 SAN JOSE, CA**
Santa Clara Cty. Fair
- 8/7 PASO ROBLES, CA**
California Mid State Fair
- 8/8 VICTORVILLE, CA**
Cocky Bull
- 8/10 ROSEBURG, OR**
Douglas Cty. Fair
- 8/14 MARSHALL, MN**
Lyon Cty. Fair
- 8/19 BEAVER DAM, WI**
414-885-3586
Dodge Cty. Fair
- 8/20 PECATONICA, IL**
815-239-2319
815-239-1641
Winnebago Cty. Fair
- 8/21 MT. MORRIS, MI**
Genesee Cty. Fair
- 8/22 PITTSBURGH, PA**
Rosedale Fire Hall
- 8/27 MITCHELL, SD**
Corn Palace Fest
- 8/28 SPIRIT LAKE, ND**
Spirit Lake Casino

SUZY BOGGOSS

- August**
- 8/1 CAMBRIDGE, UK**
Cambridge Folk Fest
- 8/2-3 LONDON, UK**
Dingwalls
- 8/6 DUBLIN, IRELAND**
Vicar Street
- 8/13 SPRINGFIELD, IL**
Illinois State Fair
- 8/21 AURORA, IL**
Paramount Arts Ctr.
- 8/28 RHINEBECK, NY**
Dutchess Cty. Fair

BROOKS & DUNN

- August**
- 8/7 DETROIT LAKES, MN**
218-847-1681
WE Fest
- 8/10 JACKSON, MI**
517-788-4405
Jackson Cty. Fair

- 8/11 JACKSON, MI**
Jackson Cty. Fair
- 8/13 DES MOINES, IA**
515-262-3111
Iowa State Fair
- 8/14 SEDALIA, MO**
816-530-5600
Missouri State Fair
- 8/15 SPRINGFIELD, IL**
217-782-6661
Illinois State Fair
- 8/18 INDIANAPOLIS, IN**
317-927-7500
Indiana State Fair
- 8/19 LOUISVILLE, KY**
502-367-5000
Kentucky State Fair
- 8/20 CLARKSTON, MI**
313-377-8251
Pine Knob Music Theatre
- 8/21 COLUMBUS, OH**
614-644-4000
Celeste Ctr.
- 8/28 ST. PAUL, MN**
612-642-2200
Minnesota State Fair

- September**
- 9/2 ESSEX JUNCTION, VT**
802-878-5545
Champlain Valley Expo
- 9/3 ALLENTOWN, PA**
610-433-7541
Great Allentown Fair
- 9/4 SYRACUSE, NY**
315-487-7711
New York State Fair

T. GRAHAM BROWN

- August**
- 8/5 HAYS, VA**
Dickenson Cty. Fair
- 8/6 PETERSBURG, WV**
Petersburg Fair
- 8/7 ADDISON, NY**
Twin River CB Club
- 8/14 CORBIN, KY**
Nibro Fest
- 8/19 HILLSBORO, IL**
Old Settlers Fest
- 8/21 CLARKSVILLE, TN**
Ramada Inn Riverfront



ELLENNE HANDEBERGER

Brooks and Dunn

- 9/1 HICKORY, NC**
704-464-5433
American Legion Fair
- 9/12 HERSHEY PARK, PA**
717-534-3348
 Hershey Park Arena

TRACY BYRD

- August**
- 8/7 BOWLING GREEN, OH**
Wood Cty. Fair
- 8/8 PIGEON FORGE, TN**
423-428-9433
423-428-9492
Dollywood Celebrity Theatre

TRACE ADKINS

- August**
- 8/6 LITTLE VALLEY, NY**
Cattaraugus Cty. Fair
- 8/7 CLEARFIELD, PA**
Clearfield Cty. Fair
- 8/8 CUMBERLAND, MD**
Rocky Gap Fest
- 8/13 DES MOINES, IA**
515-262-3111
Iowa State Fair
- 8/14 SEDALIA, MO**
816-530-5600
Missouri State Fair
- 8/15 SPRINGFIELD, IL**
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Illinois State Fair
- 8/18 INDIANAPOLIS, IN**
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Indiana State Fair
- 8/19 LOUISVILLE, KY**
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- 8/20 CLARKSTON, MI**
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Pine Knob Music Theatre
- 8/21 COLUMBUS, OH**
614-644-4000
Celeste Ctr.
- 8/23 LURAY, VA**
703-743-5240
Page Valley Fair
- 8/26 ST. PAUL, MN**
612-642-2200
Minnesota State Fair
- 8/28 KESHENA, WI**
Fest Grounds
- September**
- 9/2 ESSEX JUNCTION, VT**
802-878-5545
Champlain Valley Expo
- 9/3 ALLENTOWN, PA**
610-433-7541
Great Allentown Fair
- 9/4 SYRACUSE, NY**
315-487-7711
New York State Fair
- 9/9 PRIMM, NV**
Star of the Desert Arena
- 9/10 DEVORE, CA**
G.H. Blockbuster Pav.
- 9/11 MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA**
Shoreline Amph.
- 9/12 KELSEYVILLE, CA**
Konociti Amph.
- 9/16 CONCORD, CA**
Concord Pav.
- 9/17 SALEM, OR**
L.B. Day Amph.
- 9/18 PUYALLUP, WA**
206-845-1771
W. Washington Fair
- 9/21 ALBUQUERQUE, NM**
New Mexico State Fair

ALABAMA

- August**
- 8/1 DEVORE, CA**
Blockbuster Pav.
- 8/2 KELSEYVILLE, CA**
Konociti Amph.
- 8/3 TURLOCK, CA**
Stanislaus Cty. Fair
- 8/8 DETROIT LAKES, MN**
We Fest
- 8/12 SEDALIA, MO**
Missouri State Fair
- 8/13 INDIANAPOLIS, IN**
317-927-7500
Indiana State Fair
- 8/14 COLUMBUS, OH**
614-644-3247
Ohio State Fair
- 8/15 HAMBURG, NY**
Erie Cty. Fair

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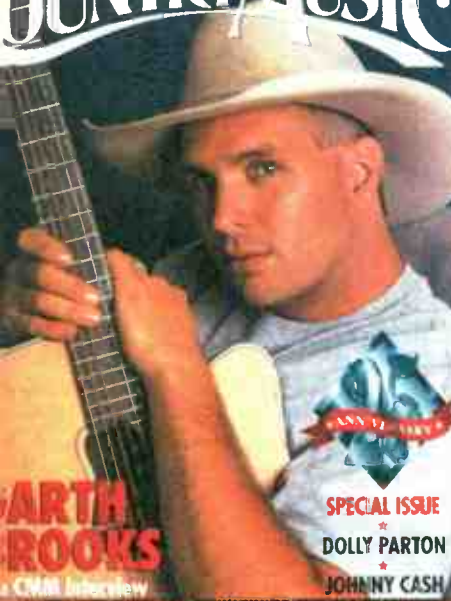
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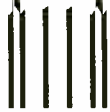
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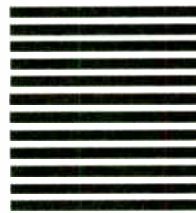
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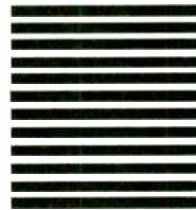
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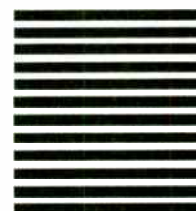
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- 8/14** LIBERAL, KS
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Five States Free Fair
- 8/16** VALENTINE, NE
Rosebud Casino
- 8/21** CUMMING, GA
770-887-7464
Lanierland Music Park
- 8/22** GREENVILLE, OH
513-548-5044
Darke Cty. Ctr.
- 8/24** GREENSBURG, PA
412-423-5005
Westmoreland Cty. Fair
- 8/28** FREEPORT, IL
815-789-3366
815-789-4581
Stephenson Cty. Fair

September

- 9/17** OLD WASHINGTON, OH
614-489-5888
Guernsey Cty. Agri. Fair

JEFF CARSON

August

- 8/5** PIKETON, OH
Pike Cty. Fair
- 8/6** PIKETON, OH
Pike Cty. Fair
- 8/7** ELIZABETH, WV
Wirt Cty. Fair
- 8/24** GREENSBURG, PA
412-423-5005
Westmoreland Cty. Fair
- 8/26** PRINCETON, IL
815-875-4151
Bureau Cty. Fair
- 8/28** WINDSOR, IL
Windsor Harvest Picnic

DEANA CARTER

August

- 8/1** THE WOODLANDS, TX
C.W. Mitchell Pav.
- 8/6** SEVIERVILLE, TN
Governor's Palace
- 8/7** CUMBERLAND, MD
800-242-2511
301-724-2511
Rocky Gap Fest
- 8/8** NORFOLK, VA
Naval Base
- 8/17** UNCASVILLE, CT
Mohegan Sun Casino
- 8/21** BEAVER DAM, WI
Dodge Cty. Fair
- 8/28** RALEIGH, NC
Walnut Creek Amph.
- 8/29** CHARLOTTE, NC
Blockbuster Pav.

September

- 9/17** ALBUQUERQUE, NM
Tingley Coliseum

MARK CHESNUTT

- 8/1** CAMROSE, ALB.
CANADA
Big Valley Jamboree
- 8/5** TOOELE, UT
Tooele Cty. Fair
- 8/7** SWEET HOME, OR
Oregon Jamboree in
Sweet Home
- 8/21** JACKSON, NJ
Six Flags Gr. Adventure
- 8/22** BETHLEHEM, PA
Bethlehem Musikfest

September

- 9/4** COCKEYSVILLE, MD
Oregon Ridge Bandshell

TREH CLARK

August

- 8/1** MENOON, IL
Adams Cty. Fair
- 8/8** JACKSON, MI
Jackson Cty. Fair
- 8/9** LUCASVILLE, OH
614-259-2726
Scioto Cty. Fair
- 8/10** PITTSFIELD, PA
Warren Cty. Fair

- 8/12** COLUMBUS, OH
614-644-4000
Celeste Ctr.
- 8/13** MALONE, NY
518-483-0720
Franklin Cty. Fair
- 8/14** JACKSON, NJ
908-928-2000
Six Flags Great Adventure
- 8/20** IMPERIAL, NE
Chase Cty. Fair
- 8/21** PUEBLO, CO
Colorado State Fair

September

- 9/1** FILER, ID
Twin Falls Cty. Fair
- 9/2** WALLA WALLA, WA
Walla Walla Frontier Oays
- 9/15** WOOSTER, OH
216-262-8001
Wayne Cty. Fair

CONFEDERATE RAILROAD

August

- 8/10** EMINENCE, MO
Cross Country Trail Ride
- 8/14** N. MARTINSVILLE, WV
Town & Country Fair
- 8/20** SMETHPORT, PA
McKean Cty. Fair
- 8/28** MERIDAN, CT
American Legion

September

- 9/2** CENTRE HALL, PA
814-355-2937
Centre Cty. Grange
Encampment Fair
- 9/4** CHESTERFIELD, VA
Chesterfield Fairgrounds
- 9/5** ROSSVILLE, GA
706-866-5681
Lake Winnepesaukah
- 9/13** LOGAN, OH
614-385-6704
Hocking Cty. Fair
- 9/18** WILLIAMSPT, PA
Deer Foot Fall

BILLY RAY CYRUS

August

- 8/8** WEBSTER, MA
Indian Lake Ranch
- 8/14** CATSKILL, NY
Friar Tuck Inn
- 8/19** HARRISONBURG, VA
Rockingham Cty. Fair
- 8/20** ZANESVILLE, OH
Muskingum Cty. Fair
- 8/21** HAVELock, ON
Cty. Jamboree



Mark Chesnutt

PATRICIA PRESLEY

- 8/22** NORVAL, ONT.
CANADA
Nashville North
- 8/26** DETROIT, MI
Michigan State Fair
- 8/28** GILBERT, PA
West End Fair

September

- 9/13** WOOSTER, OH
Wayne Cty. Fair

CHARLIE DANIELS

August

- 8/6** WOODSTOCK, IL
McHenry Cty. Fair
- 8/7** LA GRANGE, IL
Endless Summer Fest
- 8/8** WAUSAU, WI
Wisconsin Valley Fair
- 8/13** OLEAN, NY
Bradner Stadium
- 8/14** LAKE HARMONY, PA
Big Boulder Resort
- 8/15** MYRTLE BEACH, SC
800-905-4228
Palace Theatre
- 8/16** CHARLOTTE, NC
Conv. Ctr.
- 8/19** WASHINGTON, PA
412-225-7718
Washington Cty. Fair
- 8/20** HAVELock, ONT.
CANADA
Cty. Jamboree
- 8/21** WINDSOR, ONT.
CANADA
Malden Park
- 8/22** WEBSTER, MA
508-943-3871
Indian Ranch
- 8/24** WELLINGTON, OH
216-647-2781
Lorain Cty. Fair
- 8/26** SYRACUSE, NY
New York State Fair
- 8/27/28** HARRIS, MI
Chips In Casino

LINDA DAVIS

September

- 9/16** ABINGOON, VA
Washington Cty. Fair
- 9/27-
10/1** WEST SPRINGFIELD, MA
413-737-2443
Eastern State Expo.

DIAMOND RIG

August

- 8/2** IONIA, MI
Ionia Free Fair
- 8/5** SPRINGFIELD, MO
Osark Empire Fair
- 8/14** ATTICA, OH
Agricultural Fair
- 8/25** RHINEBECK, NY
914-876-4001
Dutchess Cty. Fair
- 8/28** JACKSON, NJ
Six Flags Gr. Adventure
- 8/30** UNCASVILLE, CT
Mohegan Sun Casino

September

- 9/10** FRANKLIN, IN
Johnson Cty. Park Amph.
- 9/18** HIWASSEE, GA
706-896-4191
Anderson Music Hall

JOE DITTEL

August

- 8/1** PIGEON FORGE, TN
Dollywood
- 8/7** CUMBERLAND, MD
Rocky Gap Fest
- 8/8** MALONE, NY
518-483-0720
Franklin Cty. Fair
- 8/9** URBANA, OH
Champaign Cty. Fair
- 8/11** JACKSON, MI
Jackson Cty. Fair

- 8/13** BELVIDERE, IL
815-544-4066
Boone Cty. Fair
- 8/15** WYOMING, RI
401-539-7042
Washington Cty. Fair
- 8/20** SMITHFIELD, OH
Jefferson Cty. Fair
- 8/21** STRAUSSSTOWN, PA
610-488-1792
Pat Garrett Music Park
- 8/28** BERRYVILLE, VA
Clarke Cty. Fair

September

- 9/5** CANTON, OH
Stark Cty. Fair
- 9/11** ARNOLD, MO
314-296-3244
Rickman Avd.

DIXIE CHICKS

August

- 8/5** STATE COLLEGE, PA
Byrce Jordan Ctr.
- 8/6** COLUMBUS, OH
Polaris Amph
- 8/7** MARYLAND HGTS., MO
Riverport Amph.
- 8/8** PELHAM, AL
Oak Mountain Amph.

EXILE

August

- 8/11** HOTCHKISS, CO
303-812-3379
Delta Cty. Fair
- 8/20** ATLANTA, TX
Forest Fest.



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- 8/28 TRAVERSE CITY, MI**
High School
- 8/29 BATTLE CREEK, MI**
436-968-8840
Kellogg Arena

VINCE GILL

- 8/4 CLEARFIELD, PA**
Clearfield Ctr. Fair
- 8/6 HARRISON, MI**
Clare Cty. Fair
- 8/7 CLARKSTON, MI**
Pine Knob Music Theatre
- 8/8 JACKSON, MI**
517-788-4405
Jackson Cty. Fair
- 8/12 COLUMBUS, OH**
614-644-4000
Celeste Ctr.
- 8/13 VIENNA, VA**
Wolf Trap Filene Ctr.
- 8/14 COHASSET, MA**
So. Shore Music Circus
- 8/15 WESTBURY, NY**
Westbury Music Fair
- 8/24 MEADVILLE, PA**
814-333-7400
Crawford Cty. Fair
- 8/26 BEVERLY, MA**
508-922-8220
North Shore Music Theatre
- 8/27 BALTIMORE, MD**
410-347-2020
Baltimore Arena

- 9/10 MYRTLE BEACH, SC**
Palace Theater
- 9/13 ALLEGAN, MI**
Allegan Cty. Fair

MICHELLE JOHNSON

- 8/11 WATKINS GLEN, NY**
Glen Theatre
- 8/13 LOGAN, WV**
Coal Field Jamboree
- 8/14 STRAUSS TOWNSHIP, PA**
610-488-1782
Pat Garrett Music Park
- 8/16 BARDSTOWN, KY**
J. Dan Talbott Amph.
- 8/19 RIPLEY, WV**
Sycamore Creek Country Club
- 8/20 NASHVILLE, TN**
615-889-6600
Ryman Aud.
- 8/21 ROBINSONVILLE, MS**
Sam's Town
- 8/23 PARIS, TX**
Red River Valley Fair

WADE HOYER

- 8/5 GALLIPOLIS, OH**
Gallia Cty. Fair
- 8/6 GEORGETOWN, IL**
Georgetown Fair
- 8/7 UNIONTOWN, PA**
Fayette Cty. Fair
- 8/14 WEST POINT, NE**
Cuming Cty. Fair
- 8/18 FARMINGTON, UT**
Davis Cty. Fairgrounds

- 8/8 HANOVER, MD**
Cancun Cantina
- 8/12 CHILLICOTHE, OH**
614-775-5085
Ross Cty. Fair
- 8/13 COURTLAND, VA**
Franklin Cty. Fair
- 8/14 WAYNESFIELD, OH**
Prairie Fest '98
- 8/19 TAMPA, FL**
Round-Up
- 8/20 FORT MYERS, FL**
Ricochet's
- 8/21 CUMMING, GA**
770-887-7464
Lanierland Music Park

September

- 9/15 ABINGDON, VA**
Washington Cty. Fair

ALAN JACKSON

- September**
- 9/11 YORK, PA**
York Inter-State Fair
- 9/12 YORK, PA**
717-848-2596
York Inter-State Fair
- 9/14 ALLEGAN, MI**
Allegan Cty. Fair

GEORGE JONES

- August**
- 8/14 GREENVILLE, SC**
Caroline Metroplex
- 8/15 FAIRLEA, WV**
West Virginia St. Fair
- 8/17 COLUMBUS, OH**
614-644-3247
Ohio State Fair
- 8/18 SEDALIA, MO**
816-530-5600
Missouri State Fair
- 8/20 FORT WORTH, TX**
Billy Bob's
- 8/21 MUSKOGEE, OK**
Muskogee Civic Ctr.
- 8/26 LOUISVILLE, KY**
502-367-5173
Cardinal Stadium
- 8/28 CUMMING, GA**
770-887-7464
Lanierland Music Park

September

- 9/3 CATTLETTSBURG, KY**
City Park
- 9/4 PIGEON FORGE, TN**
Governor's Palace
- 9/5 MT. PLEASANT, IA**
319-385-0557
Thresher's Reunion
- 9/11 RENFRO VALLEY, KY**
800-765-7464
Renfro Ent. Ctr.

TOBY KEITH

- August**
- 8/3-4 TURLOCK, CA**
Stanislaus Cty. Fair
- 8/5 YREKA, CA**
Siskiyou Golden Fair
- 8/6 SWEET HOME, OR**
Oregon Jamboree in Sweet Home
- 8/7 VENTURA, CA**
805-656-1260
Ventura Cty. Fair
- 8/8 RIDGEFIELD, WA**
Clark Cty. Fair
- 8/10 SIOUX FALLS, SD**
Sioux Empire Fair
- 8/12 SIKESTON, MO**
314-471-7196
314-471-3003
Sikeston Boothill Rodeo
- 8/14 NASHVILLE, IN**
Little Nashville Opry
- 8/18 ABERDEEN, SD**
Brown Cty. Fair
- 8/21 PAINESVILLE, OH**
216-354-3339
Lake Cty. Fair
- 8/23 GRAY, TN**
Appalachian Fair
- 8/24 RHINEBECK, NY**
914-876-4001
Dutchess Cty. Fair



George Jones

ELIYANNE HANBERGERS

- 8/26 RHINEBECK, NY**
Dutchess Cty. Fair
- 8/27 SYRACUSE, NY**
New York State Fair
- 8/29 PUEBLO, CO**
800-876-4567
719-561-8484
Colorado State Fair
- 8/30 LINCOLN, NE**
402-473-4110
Nebraska State Fair
- 8/31 PUEBLO, CO**
Colorado State Fair

WANDA JACKSON

- August**
- 8/7 MONROE, MI**
Monroe Cty. Fair
- 8/8 CUMBERLAND, MD**
800-242-2511
301-724-2511
Rocky Gap Country
- 8/11 SIKESTON, MO**
Boothill Rodeo
- 8/13 MT. PLEASANT, MI**
Isabella Cty. Fair
- 8/16 FAIRLEA, WV**
West Virginia St. Fair
- 8/18 DOUGLAS, WY**
Wyoming State Fair
- 8/19 ABERDEEN, SD**
Brown Cty. Fair
- 8/21 BAKER, MT**
Fallon Cty. Fair

HAL KETCHUM

- August**
- 8/4 PASO ROBLES, CA**
California Mid-State Fair
- 8/6 HERMISTON, OR**
Umatilla Cty. Fair
- 8/7 SWEET HOME, OR**
541-367-8800
Oregon Jamboree
- 8/15 SALT LAKE CITY, UT**
Red Butte Arboretum
- 8/18 LYNDEN, WA**
NW Washington Fair
- 8/22 BOTTINEAU, ND**
Border Line Country Jam
- September**
- 9/3 ST. PAUL, MN**
Minnesota State Fair
- 9/4 ST. PAUL, MN**
Minnesota State Fair

TRACY LAWRENCE

- August**
- 8/7 DETROIT LAKES, MN**
We Fest
- 8/13 LYNCHBURG, VA**
Cattle Annie's
- 8/14 DAYTON, OH**
Thomas Cloud Park

CHRIS LADDON

- 8/8 PASO ROBLES, CA**
California Mid State Fair
- 8/11 MYRTLE POINT, OR**
Coos Cty. Fair
- 8/12 VENTURA, CA**
Ventura Cty. Fair
- 8/14 MOLLALLA, OR**
Buckaroo Fair
- 8/15 SAN MATEO, CA**
415-574-3247
San Mateo Cty. Fair
- 8/17 EUGENE, OR**
503-687-4292
Lane Cty. Fair
- 8/20 ATHENS, TX**
Henderson Cty. Coliseum
- 8/21 FORT WORTH, TX**
Billy Bob's
- 8/22 BOTTINEAU, ND**
Border Line Country Jam
- 8/28 LINCOLN, NE**
402-473-4110
Nebraska State Fair

CONNIE STANLEY

- August**
- 8/6 DETROIT LAKES, MN**
We Fest
- 8/7 WAUSAU, WI**
Wisconsin Valley Fair
- 8/8 GRAND ISLAND, NE**
Hall Cty. Fair
- 8/14 FORT WORTH, TX**
Billy Bob's
- 8/20 ARMADA, MI**
313-784-5488
Armada Fair
- 8/21 DAYTON, OH**
814-257-8680
Dayton Fair
- 8/28 OTSEGO, MI**
Bresa del Rio

September

- 9/5 JOHNSTOWN, NE**
Brown Cty. Fair
- 9/8 GREENVILLE, SC**
803-269-0852
Upper SC State Fair
- 9/11 WARSAW, IN**
Wagon Wheel Theatre

LORETTA LYNN

- August**
- 8/1 SASKATOON, SASK.**
CANADA
PrairieLand Eah.
- 8/14 SUSSEX, NJ**
Sussex Cty. Fair
- 8/15 FAIRLEA, WV**
West Virginia St. Fair



Alan Jackson

- 8/28 COHASSET, MA**
617-383-1400
South Shore Music Circus
- 8/29 WESTBURY, NY**
516-334-0800
Westbury Music Fair
- 8/31 ST. PAUL, MN**
612-642-2200
Minnesota State Fair
- September**
- 9/2 WALLINGFORD, CT**
SNEF Oakdale Theatre
- 9/3 ATLANTIC CITY, NJ**
Trump Taj Mahal
- 9/4 WARWICK, RI**
401-821-7300
Warwick Musical Theatre

- 8/19 GORDON, NE**
308-282-0802
Sheridan Cty. Fair
- 8/20 GILLETTE, WY**
Cam Plex Ctr.
- 8/21 NORWOOD, CO**
Hitchin' Post

TY HERBICK

- August**
- 8/4 NEW PALTZ, NY**
Ulster Cty. Fair
- 8/5 HORSEHEADS, NY**
Chemung Cty. Fair
- 8/7 CUMBERLAND, MD**
Rocky Gap Fest

On the Road Again...

8/17 COLUMBUS, OH
614-644-4000
Celeste Ctr.

8/19 ADRIAN, MI
517-263-3115
Lenawee Cty. Fair

8/27 FREEPORT, IL
815-789-3366
815-789-4581
Stephenson Cty. Fair

September

9/4 MYRTLE BEACH, SC
803-272-5758
Alabama Theatre

9/5 MARIETTA, OH
614-373-1347
Washington Cty. Fair

9/10 RICHMOND, IN
Tom Raper RV

9/13 YORK, PA
717-848-2596
York Inter State Fair

KATHY MATYKA

August

8/3 VIENNA, VA
Wolf Trap Filene Ctr.

8/6 MYRTLE BEACH, SC
Alabama Theatre

8/7 DICKSON, TN
Renaissance Ctr.

8/14 ASHEVILLE, NC
Biltmore Estates

8/19-20 RISING SUN, IN
Grand Victoria Casino

8/26 CLIO, MI
Clio Amph.

8/31 ST. PAUL, MN
Minnesota State Fair

MAVERICKS

August

8/2 SAN DIEGO, CA
Humphreys

8/6 MORRISON, CO
Red Rocks Amph.

8/7 OLATHE, CO
Sweet Corn Fest

8/13 CHAUTAUQUA, NY
Chautauqua Institution

MARTINA MURPHY

August

8/2 IONIA, MI
Ionia Free Fair

8/3 SOUTH BEND, IN
St. Joseph Cty. 4H Fair

8/4 DAVENPORT, IA
Mississippi Valley Fair

8/5 WAUSAU, WI
Wisconsin Valley Fair

8/7 GRAND ISLAND, NE
308-382-4515
Hall Cty. Fair

8/11 OGDEN, UT
801-399-8542
800-442-7362
Weber Cty. Fair

8/19 GRANTS PASS, OR
503-476-3215
Josephine Cty. Fair

8/20 BOISE, ID
208-376-3247
Western Idaho Fair

8/21 KELLOGG, ID
800-325-SEAT
208-783-1111
Silver Mountain Amph.

8/22 EUGENE, OR
503-687-4292
Lane Cty. Fair

8/24 TACOMA, WA
Tacoma Dome

NEAL MCCOY

August

8/3 IONIA, MI
Ionia Free Fair

8/7 WISCONSIN DELLS, WI
Crystal Grand Theatre

8/8 WASHINGTON, MO
Town & Country Fair

8/11 NORWICH, NY
Chenango Cty. Fair

8/13 SUSSEX, NJ
Sussex Cty. Fair

8/14 SYKESVILLE, PA
Sykesville Ag & Youth Fair

8/17 ADRIAN, MI
Lenawee Cty. Fair

8/21 BERRIEN SPRINGS, MI
616-473-4251
Berrien Cty. Youth Fair

8/23 WELLINGTON, OH
216-647-2781
Lorain Cty. Fair

8/27 PRINCETON, IL
815-875-4151
Bureau Cty. Fair

8/28 WINCHESTER, IN
Winchester Speedway

8/29 PIGEON FORGE, TN
423-428-9433
423-428-9492
Dollywood Celebrity Theatre

September

9/4 ELKTON, MI
High School

9/9 WINDOW ROCK, AZ
602-871-6478
Navajo Nation Fair

9/11 MOUNTAIN HOME, TX
Yo Ranch

FUDGE

August

8/3-4 UNIVERSAL CITY, CA
Universal Amph.

8/5 PASO ROBLES, CA
California Mid-State Fair

8/7 KELSEVILLE, CA
707-279-4281
Kenocci Harbor Resort

8/21 DES MOINES, IA
Iowa State Fair

September

9/11 SHAKOPEE, MN
Cante-bary Park

JOHN MICHAEL MURPHY

August

8/3 DAVENPORT, IA
Mississippi Valley Fair

8/4 WAUSAU, WI
Wisconsin Valley Fair

8/11 MANSFIELD, OH
Richland Cty. Fair

8/14 HOUSTON, TX

8/22 HINCKLEY, MN
612-384-7101
Grand Casino

8/27 MEADVILLE, PA
814-333-7400
Crawford Cty. Fair

September

9/17 BARDSTOWN, KY
Bourbon Fest

9/18 FREDERICK, MD
301-663-5895
Great Frederick Fair

EDDIE MORGAN

August

8/7 MONROE, MI
Monroe Cty. Fair

8/8 PITTSBURGH, PA
Hartwood Amph.

8/11 SIKESTON, MO
Boots & H Redoe

8/13 MT. PLEASANT, WI
Isabella Cty. Fair



Reba McEntire

8/10 ANCHORAGE, AK
Sullivan Sports Arena

8/20 INDIANAPOLIS, IN
Indiana State Fair

September

8/12 INDIANAPOLIS, IN
Indiana State Fair

8/14 WISCONSIN DELLS, WI
Crystal Grand Theatre

8/16 FAIRLEA, WV
West Virginia St. Fair

8/21 COLUMBUS, OH
Cooper Stadium

8/25 WELLINGTON, OH
Lorain Cty. Fair

8/28 KESHEWA, WI
Fest Grounds

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56 Pet Groomer
35 Travel Agent
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02 Electronics
13 Secretary
06 Electrician
32 Art

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12 Interior Decorator
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30 Florist
26 Teacher Aide
15 Home Inspector
39 Medical Transcriptionist
31 Locksmith
58 Private Investigator
102 Professional Landscaper
149 Jewelry Repair Technician
89 Small Engine Repair
96 Tax Preparer
151 Plumber
152 Mason
158 Auto Body Repair Tech
148 Drywall Installer & Finisher
105 Computer Graphic Artist
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Phone () _____

On the Road Again...



Daryle Singletary

DAVID LEE MURPHY

- August**
- 8/5 CHISHOLM, MN
Ironworld USA
 - 8/6 CASHTON, WI
Cashton Ball Park
 - 8/7 LINCOLN, IL
Logan Cty. Fair
 - 8/10 PT. PLEASANT, WV
304-675-5463
Mason Cty. Fair
 - 8/13 BEVIER, MO
Bevier Homecoming
 - 8/18 HARFORD, PA
Harford Fair
- September**
- 9/2 PHILLIPI, WV
Barbour Cty. Fair
 - 9/11 EBENSBURG, PA
814-472-7491
Cambria Cty. Fair

- September**
- 9/5 COHASSET, MA
617-383-1400
South Shore Music Circus
 - 9/8-9 CHESTER, PA

NITTY GRITTY LIGHT BAND

- August**
- 8/5 CORVALLIS, OR
Benton Cty. Fair
 - 8/7 EVANSTON, WY
Unita Cty. Fair
 - 8/8 COLORADO SPRINGS, CO
Colorado Music Hall
 - 8/11 TILLAMOOK, OR
Tillamook Cty. Fair
 - 8/18 GRANTS PASS, OR
503-476-3215
Josephine Cty. Fair

WILLIE NELSON

- August**
- 8/1 THE WOODLANDS, TX
C.W. Mitchell Pav.
 - 8/4 WHITEFISH, MT
Big Mountain Amph.
 - 8/5 BIG SKY, MT
 - 8/6 MORRISON, CO
Red Rocks Amph.
 - 8/7 URLINGTON, CO
 - 8/8 DEADWOOD, SD
Biker Party
 - 8/10 COEUR D'ALENE, ID
415-967-3000
Shoreline Amph.
 - 8/11 VANCOUVER, WA
 - 8/12 BOISE, ID
 - 8/13 CONCORD, CA
510-798-3318
Concord Pav.
 - 8/14 MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA
415-967-3000
Shoreline Amph.
 - 8/15 RUIDOSO, NM
 - 8/25 PUEBLO, CO
800-876-4567
719-561-8484
Colorado State Fair
 - 8/27 LINCOLN, NE
402-473-4110
Nebraska State Fair
 - 8/28 HOPKINS, MN
Ctr. For The Arts
 - 8/29 HURON, SD
605-339-7178
South Dakota State Fair



Willie Nelson

- 8/19 CHEHALIS, WA
Southwest Washington Fair
- 8/20 PORT ANGELES, WA
206-457-3963
Clallam Cty. Fair
- 8/22 SAN MATEO, CA
415-574-3247
San Mateo Cty. Fair

- September**
- 9/4 MENDOTA, IL
815-539-7974
Mendota Tri Cty. Fair

DAK RIDGE BOYS

- August**
- 8/13 UNCASVILLE, CT
Mohegan Sun Casino
 - 8/14 COBLESKILL, NY
Sunshine Fair
 - 8/22 LOUISVILLE, KY
502-367-5000
Kentucky State Fair

- September**
- 9/1 CANFIELD, OH
216-533-4107
Mahoning Cty. Fair
 - 9/2 SYRACUSE, NY
315-487-7711
New York State Fair
 - 9/4 STRAUSS TOWN, PA
610-488-1782
Pat Garrett Music Park
 - 9/6 SO. WOODSTOCK, CT
Woodstock Fair

LEE ROY PARMELL

- August**
- 8/6 LOVELAND, CO
Larimer Cty. Fair
 - 8/14 SOUTH BOSTON, MA
Halifax Cty. Fair
 - 8/21 BOTTINEAU, ND
Border Line Country Jam

- September**
- 9/3 TUSKAHOMA, OK
Choctaw Fair

EDDY HAVEN

- August**
- 8/14 BANDERA, TX
Cabaret
- September**
- 9/9 EL PASO, TX
Stampede

- 9/10 AMARILLO, TX
Caravan
- 9/11 HOUSTON, TX
Firehouse Saloon
- 9/23 LAWRENCEVILLE, GA
Gwinette Cty. Fair

- December**
- 12/31 MILTON, IN

LEANN TIMES

- September**
- 9/23-24 ROBINSONVILLE, MS
Horseshoe Casino

BILLY JOE ROYAL

- August**
- 8/6 HARRINGTON, DE
Midway Slots and Simulcast
 - 8/7 HARRINGTON, DE
Midway Slots and Simulcast
 - 8/21 DAYTON, OH
Eastwood Metro Park

- September**
- 9/17 FLETCHER, NC
N.C. Mt. State Fair

SAWYER BROWN

- August**
- 8/4 AFTON, WY
Lincoln Cty. Fair
 - 8/6 DETROIT LAKES, MN
We Fest
 - 8/12 PORTLAND, IN
Jay Cty. Fair
 - 8/19 SEDALIA, MO
Missouri State Fair
 - 8/24 BOISE, ID
Western Idaho Fair
 - 8/25 KENNEWICK, WA
Benton-Franklin Cty. Fair
 - 8/26 SALEM, OR
L.B. Day Amph.
 - 8/29 CERRITOS, CA
Cerritos Ctr.
 - 8/30 SACRAMENTO, CA
California State Fair
- September**
- 9/4 NORWAY, MI
906-774-8021
Dickinson Cty. Fair
 - 9/5 ELKHORN, WI
414-723-3228
Walworth Cty. Fair

DAN SEALS

- August**
- 8/7 DIERKS, AR
Pine Tree Fest
 - 8/13 CORBIN, KY
Nibroc Fest
 - 8/21 ATLANTA, TX
Forest Fest.
 - 8/28 CHESTERFIELD, VA
Chesterfield Cty. Fair
- September**
- 9/3-6 ST. PAUL, MN
612-642-2200
Minnesota State Fair
 - 9/10 LEBANON, VA
Russell Cty. Fair

KEVIN SHARP

- August**
- 8/1 ENDICOTT, NY
Pine Valley Park
 - 8/4 MARTINSBURG, WV
Berkeley Cty. Fair
 - 8/6 CUMBERLAND, MD
Rocky Gap Fest
 - 8/7 SUTTON, WV
304-364-5860
Braxton Cty. Fair
 - 8/11 OGDEN, UT
Weber Cty. Fair
 - 8/14 BEVIER, MO
Bevier Homecoming
 - 8/22 HICKSVILLE, OH
419-658-2520
Defiance Cty. Fair
- September**
- 9/5 MESHOPPEN, PA
Wyoming Cty. Fair

VICTORIA SHAW

- October**
- 10/26-30 LANCASTER, PA
American Music Theatre

DARYLE SINGLETARY

- August**
- 8/6 WAYNESBURG, PA
Greene Cty. Fair
 - 8/7 COLUMBUS, OH
Ohio State Fair
 - 8/11 SHREVEPORT, LA
KRMD Radio Show
 - 8/14 BEDFORD, PA
Bedford Cty. Fair
 - 8/19 GAITHERSBURG, MD
Agricultural Fair
 - 8/27 ARENDTSTVILLE, PA
South Mountain Fair
 - 8/28 BROOKLYN, CT
Brooklyn Fair

HICKY SKAGGS

- August**
- 8/5 INDIANAPOLIS, IN
Fall Creek Baptist Church
 - 8/11 ATLANTA, GA
Chastain Park Amph.
 - 8/17 INTERLOCHEN, MI



Connie Smith

- Interlochen Ctr.**
- 8/21 FAIRLEA, WV
West Virginia St. Fair
 - 8/28 GETTYSBURG, PA
Bluegrass Fest
- September**
- 9/4 FISH CREEK, WI
Door Community Aud.
 - 9/5 BAYFIELD, WI
Big Top Chautauqua
 - 9/21 FAIRLEA, WV
West Virginia St. Fair

CONNIE SMITH

- August**
- 8/5 LANCASTER, PA
Union Cty. West End Fair
 - 8/9 MACKEYVILLE, PA
Clinton Cty. Fair
 - 8/14 FLAT TOP, WV
Lilly Reunion
 - 8/18 BATH, NY
Steuben Cty. Fair

DOUG STONE

- August**
- 8/7 POTOSI, MO
Washington Cty. Fair
 - 8/14 CASTLE ROCK, CO
Douglas Cty. Fair

MARTY STUART

- August**
- 8/14 WYOMING, RI
401-539-7042
Washington Cty. Fair
 - 8/18 SEDALIA, MO
Missouri State Fair

On the Road Again...

- 8/19 LAC DU FLAMBEAU, WI**
Lake Of Torches Casino
- 8/20 TREMPLEAU, WI**
Trempealeau Hotel
- 8/21 BOTTINEAU, ND**
Wild Rose Ridge Amph.
- 8/27 TUSCALOOSA, AL**
Cliffest

September

- 9/12 HEBRON, CT**
203-228-0892
Hebron Harvest Fair

AARON TIPPIN

August

- 8/6 DAVENPORT, IA**
Mississippi Valley Fair
- 8/7-8 HARRIS, MI**
Chips In Casino
- 8/16 MOUNT MORRIS, MI**
Genesee Cty. Fair
- 8/20 WILMOT, WI**
Kenosha Cty. Fair
- 8/22 LIMA, OH**
Allen Cty. Fair
- 8/27 TUSCALOOSA, AL**
Cliffest

THE TRACTORS

August

- 8/7 JACKSON, NJ**
Six Flags Gr. Adventure
- 8/21 BOTTINEAU, ND**
Border Line Country Jam
- 8/26 GRAY, TN**
Appalachian Fair

HANDY TRAVIS

August

- 8/12 MT. PLEASANT, MI**
Soaring Eagle Casino
- 8/13 SPRINGFIELD, IL**
Illinois State Fair

- 8/21 FAIRLEA, WV**
West Virginia St. Fair
- 8/28 DUQUOIN, IL**
DuQuoin State Fair
- 8/29 LOUISVILLE, KY**
Freedom Hall

September

- 9/10 DENVER, CO**
Fiddler's Green Amphitheatre
- 9/15 SEATTLE, WA**
Western Washington Fair

RICK TREVINO

August

- 8/6 STERLING, CO**
Logan Country Fair
- 8/8 BRIGHTON, CO**
Adams City Fair

RICKY VAN SHELTON

August

- 8/6 ALBERT LEA, MN**
Freeborn Cty. Fair
- 8/7 DAVENPORT, IA**
Mississippi Valley Fair
- 8/8 CROTON, OH**
Harford Independent Fair
- 8/13 BELVOIERE, IL**
Boone Cty. Fair
- 8/20 LYNDEN, WA**
NW Washington Fair
- 8/21 MOSES LAKE, WA**
Grant Cty. Fair

CLAY WALKER

August

- 8/1 JANESVILLE, WI**
Rock Cty. 4H Fair
- 8/3 SPRINGFIELD, MO**
Ozark Empire Fair

- 8/5 GRAND ISLAND, NE**
Hall Cty. Fair
- 8/6 STERLING, CO**
303-522-0888
Logan Cty. Fair
- 8/7 ROCK SPRINGS, WY**
307-352-6787
Sweetwater Cty. Fair

STEVE WARINER

August

- 8/1 WESTBURY, NY**
Westbury Music Fair
- 8/7 CUMBERLAND, MD**
Rocky Gap Fest
- 8/8 UNCASVILLE, CT**
Mohegan Sun Casino
- 8/11 SHREVEPORT, LA**
Captains Field
- 8/13 CHAUTAUQUA, NY**
Chautauqua Institution
- 8/14 RENFRO VALLEY, KY**
800-765-7464
Renfro Ent. Ctr.

- 8/16 SARATOGA SPRINGS, NY**
Performing Arts Ctr.
- 8/21 MONTGOMERY, AL**
Union Station
- 8/22 PIGEON FORGE, TN**
423-428-9433
423-428-9492
Dollywood Celebrity Theatre
- 8/28 SAN ANTONIO, TX**
Six Flags Fiesta Texas

September

- 9/5 SILVER SPRINGS, FL**
904-236-2121
Silver Springs Amph.
- 9/14 WOOSTER, OH**
216-262-8001
Wayne Cty. Fair

GENE WATSON

August

- 8/27 CENTRE HALL, PA**
814-355-2937
Centre Cty. Grange Fair

September

- 9/4 TUSKAHOMA, OK**
Choctaw Fair

BRYAN WHITE

August

- 8/6 DETROIT LAKES, MN**
We Fest
- 8/7 WOODSTOCK, IL**
McHenry Cty. Fair
- 8/8 CUMBERLAND, MD**
Rocky Gap Fest
- 8/12 VANCOUVER, WA**
Clark Cty. Fair
- 8/13 MT. VERNON, WA**
Skagit Cty. Fair
- 8/14 ELMA, WA**
206-482-3297
Gray's Harbor Cty. Fair
- 8/16 BILLINGS, MT**
406-256-2400
Montana Fair
- 8/19 HARFORD, PA**
Harford Fair
- 8/21 PECATONICA, IL**
815-239-2319
815-239-1641
Winnebago Cty. Fair
- 8/25 GRAY, TN**
Appalachian Fair
- 8/28 STRAUSTOWN, PA**
Pat Garrett Music Park
- 8/29 WEBSTER, MA**
Indian Lake Ranch
- 8/31 DU QUOIN, IL**
618-542-9373
Du Quoin State Fair

September

- 9/3 ST. PAUL, MN**
612-642-2200
Minnesota State Fair
- 9/4 MARSHFIELD, WI**
715-387-1261
Central Wisconsin St. Fair
- 9/6 WAUSEON, OH**
419-335-6006
Fulton Cty. Fair
- 9/15 KNOXVILLE, TN**
423-637-5840



ELIANNE HALBERBERG

Tennessee Valley Fair

MARK WILS

August

- 8/4 TURLOCK, CA**
Stanislaus Cty. Fair
- 8/5 YREKA, CA**
Siskiyou Golden Fair
- 8/6 SWEET HOME, OR**
Oregon Jamboree in Sweet Home
- 8/9 SANTA ROSA, CA**
Sonoma Cty. Fair
- 8/11 NAPA, CA**
Town & Country Fair
- 8/12 VENTURA, CA**
Ventura Cty. Fair
- 8/13 SAN MATEO, CA**
San Mateo Cty. Fair
- 8/14 LAS VEGAS, NV**
Texas Station
- 8/20 IMPERIAL, NE**
Chase Cty. Fair
- 8/23 PUEBLO, CO**
Colorado State Fair

September

- 9/3 WOODSTOCK, VA**
703-459-3867
Shenandoah Cty. Fair
- 9/5 COCKEYSVILLE, MD**
Oregon Ridge Bandshell
- 9/22 DOVER, OH**
216-343-0524
Tuscarawas Cty. Fair
- 9/23 DOVER, OH**
216-343-0524
Tuscarawas Cty. Fair

LEE ANN WOMACK

August

- 8/7 CLEARFIELD, PA**
Clearfield Cty. Fair
- 8/13 OGOEN, UT**
Weber Cty. Fair
- 8/15 BILLINGS, MT**
Montana Fair
- 8/17 BURLEY, IO**
Cassia Cty. Fair
- 8/18 KALISPELL, MT**
Northwest Montana Fair
- 8/20 ABERDEEN, SD**
Brown Cty. Fair
- 8/21 ST. JOSEPH, MO**
Trails West Fest
- 8/27 KENNEWICK, WA**
Benton Franklin Cty. Fair
- 8/28 KLAMATH FALLS, OR**
Ross Ragland Theater

September

- 9/1 PUEBLO, CO**
Colorado State Fair

CHELY WRIGHT

August

- 8/4 UNCASVILLE, CT**
Mohegan Sun Casino
- 8/5 OWINGS MILL, MO**
Mary Harrison Ctr.

NOTE: This concert listing contains the most up-to-date tour itineraries at the time of publication. *Country Music* is not in control of where and/or when an artist performs in a specific area or venue. Dates are subject to change without notice, so please check with the venue before traveling. If no telephone number is listed, we recommend contacting your local Ticket Master office listed in your telephone directory. If you come across an area code change and wish to share it with other readers, please send the complete venue name and location with the new telephone number by e-mail to: updates@thecrusader.net or mail to: Venue Updates, P.O. Box 120872, Nashville, TN 37212-0872. Tour dates are provided by Sheri Rettew.



Chely Wright

MATRICIA PRESLEY

STRAIGHT TALK FROM THE STARS

THREE DECADES WORTH OF CHART TOPPING HITS!

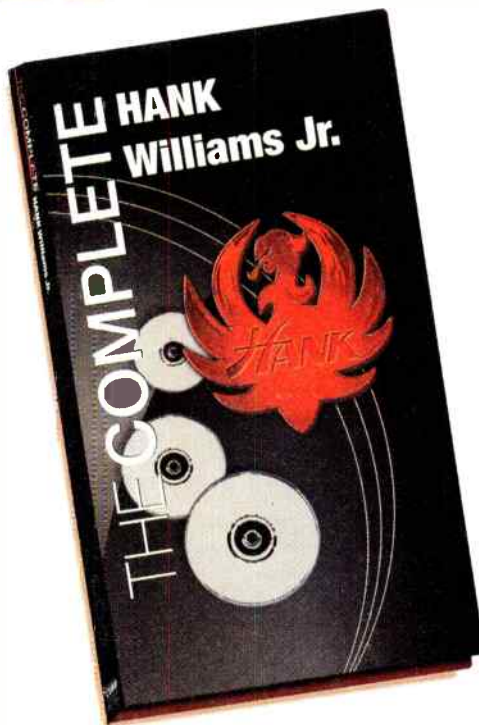
"You've discovered that the best way to live up to the family tradition is to play as hard, as deep, and as unashamed as you can. You can't escape who you were when you were born, but you can turn a curse into a blessing.

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- JIMMY GUTERMAN

INCLUDES THE #1 HITS:

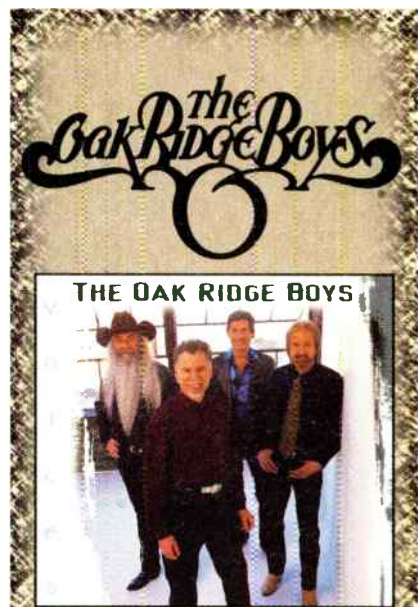
Texas Women
Dixie On My Mind
All My Rowdy Friends
(Have Settled Down)
Honky Tonkin'
I'm Fer Love
Ain't Misbehavin'
Mind Your Own Business
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Duane, William Lee,
Richard, Joe

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STRAIGHT TALK FROM THE STARS




ALLISON MOORE

"I grew up listening to classic country artists like Merle Haggard and Tammy Wynette, as well as renegades like Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings and Emmylou Harris. When we set about making my debut album, *Alabama Song*, we tried to embrace all the qualities of the music which has influenced and inspired me so much, while making it totally my own. The result is... well, I'll let you decide."



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JULIE REEVES

JULIE REEVES
IT'S ABOUT TIME
FEATURING THE SINGLE
"TROUBLE IS A WOMAN"
IN STORES NOW



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Way-Out Womack

Lee Ann Womack walks on the wacky side in a discussion about Becky Thatcher, Dean Martin and Mommy Bear.

Lee Ann Womack's motto is "work hard." The Texas singer has a Herculean work ethic that reaches into all areas of her life. "We're building a new house, I'm going back to school, I've got two children, and I'm trying to make it in a tough business. I am not afraid of hard work. But that's why you'll see me with my children in tow everywhere I go—doing business is great and all, but I think it is so important to spend time with them whenever possible." Womack took time out of her busy schedule to answer our off-the-wall questions.

If you could be an animated cartoon character, what would you be?

Actually, I did do the voice for an animated character, for the new Tom Sawyer project that's coming out next year. I'm Becky Thatcher, and I'm also a little cat. So I guess I might picture myself as a cat if I was an animated character.

Which would you rather do, give a speech or write one?

Definitely give a speech. I am more of an interpreter. I can do a good job of that, and I don't mind being in front of crowds.

Which book have you picked up the most times to try to read, but just couldn't finish?

My new accounting book. I'm going back to school to finish my degree, and I have to take classes like accounting and basic statistics. I have picked up that accounting book a hundred times, and I just cannot get into it!

Is your hero really Dean Martin?

Well, he was always so cool. Real suave, and he always got the girl, plus he was tall and dark-haired. I think I got hooked on Dean Martin from watching

those Jerry Lewis movies, and Jerry Lewis was so goofy and Dean was such a cool character. My dad would always go around the house singing like Dean Martin, because he knew I liked it.

What characteristics have you inherited from your parents?

They're both such hard workers, and I have definitely inherited that trait. Also, they are both very driven and I guess I am, too.

Let's do a little word association. What pops into your head when I say seahorse?

Comic book.

Bank? No reason to go there!

Eyebrows? Pluck.

Bacon? BLT.

Diamond? Baseball.

You know, lots of women might have said "ring" to that, but you're thinking about baseball....

That's a funny thing with me, I never wear jewelry, so I guess I don't think about it. The people who help me with my clothes and stuff, they bring loaner

outfits and they have to also bring jewelry for me because I don't have any. In fact, I went to do something on TNN the other day, and I didn't wear earrings, and they were going crazy about that. The women were digging in their purses, looking for some earrings for me to wear on TV!

Being a mom, what children's toys have you become fond of?

Well, there's this one toy I sort of adopted from [daughter] Anna; it's a bear called a Mommy Bear. When you turn it on, it makes the sounds of the womb and heartbeat sounds, it's supposed to be soothing. We got a new puppy and he was whining at night—I think he might have been too young to be away from his mother. So I took Mommy Bear and put it in his bed with him, and he just quieted down immediately. He loves that bear. ★



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