

December 1972, 75 cents



# COUNTRY MUSIC

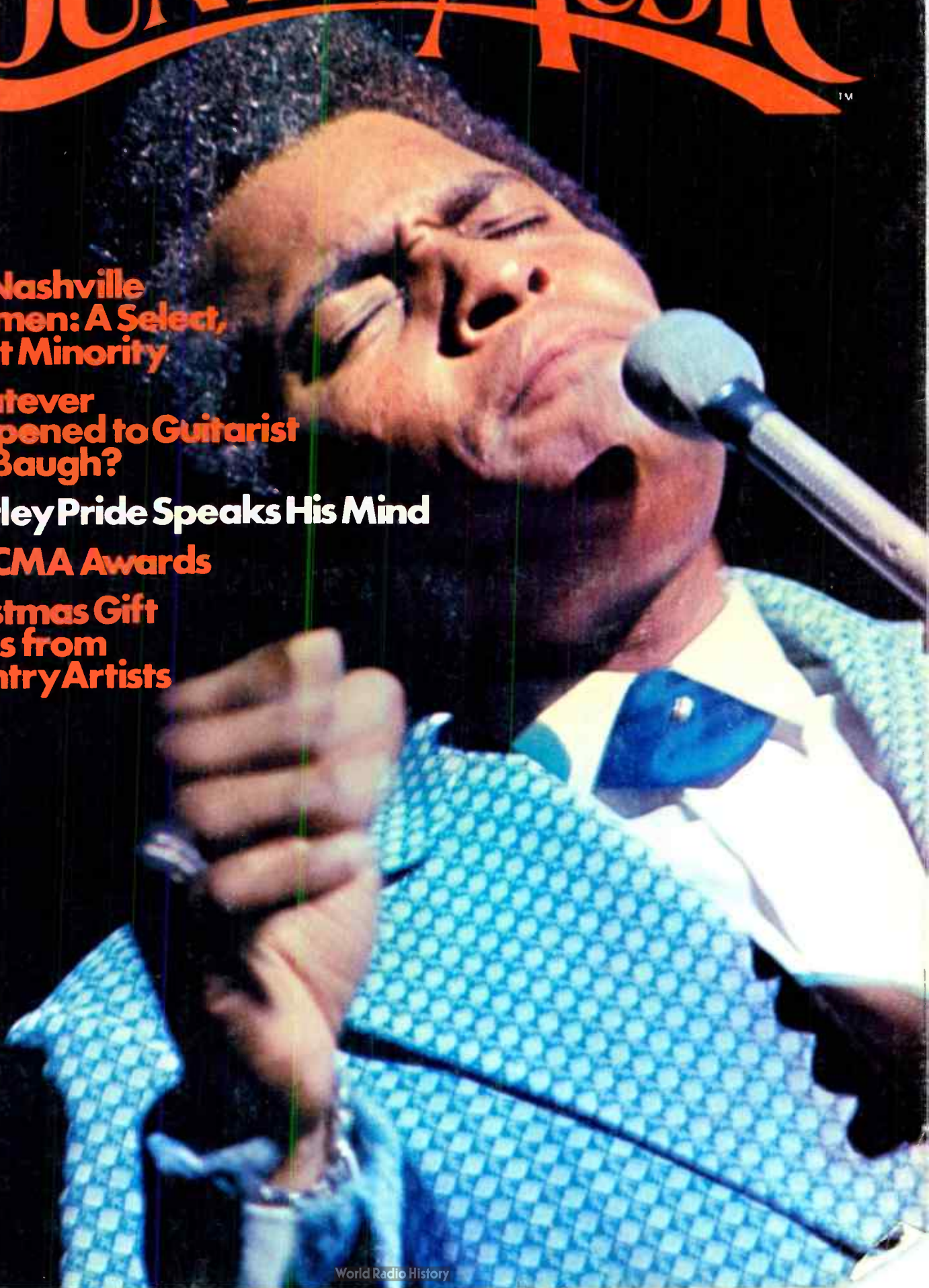
**The Nashville  
Sidemen: A Select,  
Silent Minority**

**Whatever  
Happened to Guitarist  
Phil Baugh?**

**Charley Pride Speaks His Mind**

**The CMA Awards**

**Christmas Gift  
Ideas from  
Country Artists**



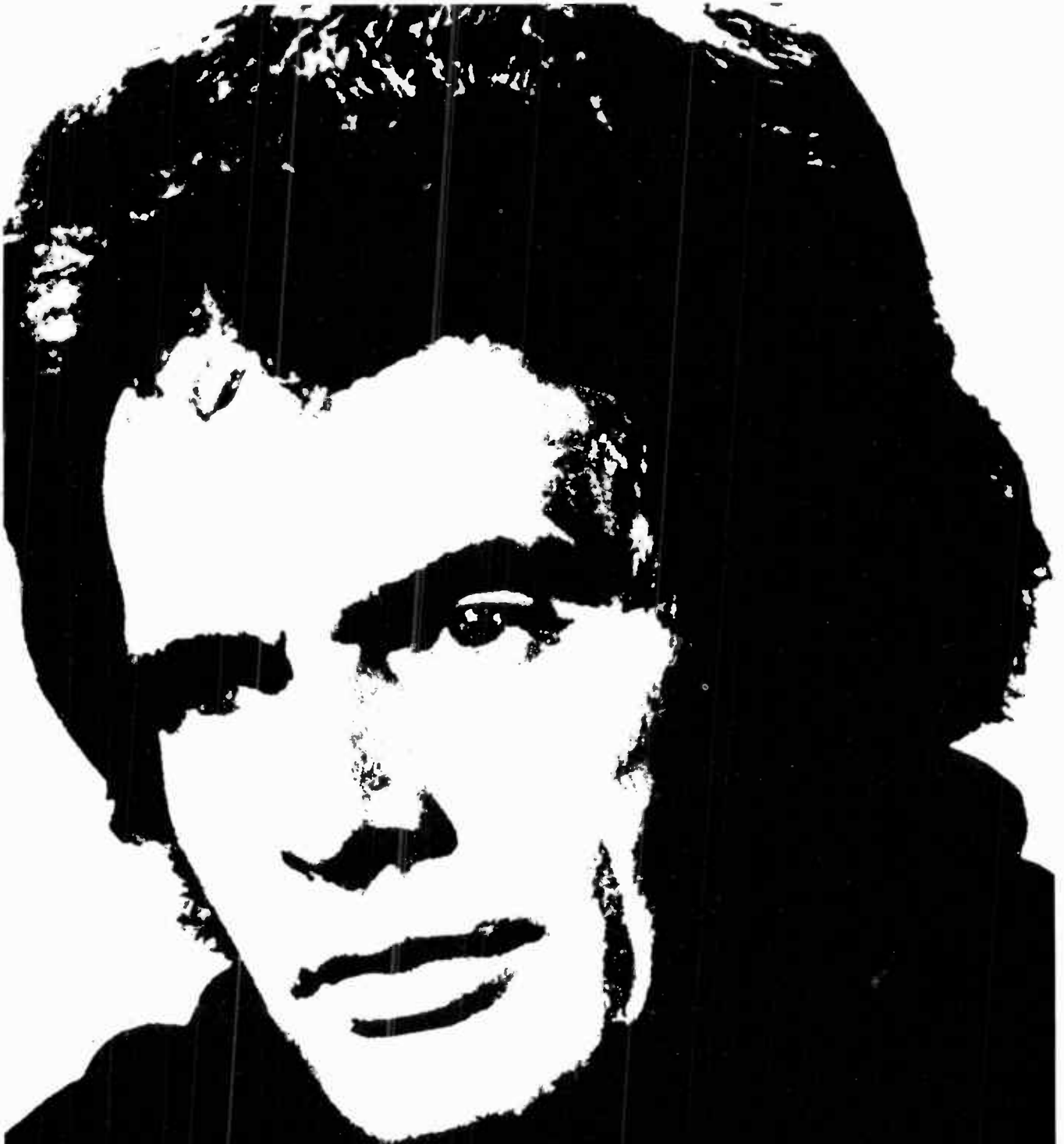


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## A Letter From the Publisher

There are a number of pulses we check daily to see how we are doing. We constantly ask ourselves: are potential advertisers giving us serious consideration for their 1973 schedules? How are our newsstand copies selling? Are our costs in line with our original plans? All of these are important, but the really critical issue we focus on is—how are our readers responding to the magazine?

Other publishers tell me that the number of letters we receive from readers is substantially above average. And so far, nearly every letter we have received, including the one from President Nixon which appears below, has been favorable. Of course, many of these letters offer suggestions for articles, or ask for special issues, or ask where can such-and-such a record be obtained. We appreciate these letters and we read every word. We answer the letters that need an answer, and consider every suggestion made. Reader response is the life blood of a magazine—new or old. It's important that you keep us on track by keeping that mail coming.

JACK KILLION, PUBLISHER

# Letters

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 25, 1972

Dear Mr. Killion:

Bill Brock passed along to me a copy of **COUNTRY MUSIC**. Needless to say, I enjoyed the opportunity of reading your magazine, especially the account of Johnny Cash's performance here, and I join with your readers in congratulating you and all the staff of **COUNTRY MUSIC** on this first issue.

With my best wishes for continued success,

Sincerely,



Unheralded, a copy of **COUNTRY MUSIC** arrived on my newsstand. It was the exact type of magazine I've hoped for for several years.

Since the early fifties when I was stationed overseas in Germany, I "discovered" country music. It was the *only* form of music that I could identify with in my longing for home. Carl Smith, Lefty Frizzell and Eddy Arnold were the good-ole-boys that kept me going so far

from home. Hank Williams became my favorite soon after, and country music has continued to be my interest ever since.

Your masthead, I predict, will become symbolic with the profession—a real and lasting achievement for all of those who will strive to become a part of it. The "Country News" should continue on the pulp-type paper, and must carry fresh inside news. This alone would

satisfy my yearning to know more of what my favorites are doing *today*. Needless to say I have subscribed. For I'd hate to run the risk of missing a single issue. If you had decided to publish bimonthly I would not have. As I said, your magazine denotes confidence, and the monthly printing schedule proves it.

BILL J. WHITE  
COLUMBIA, MISSOURI

When I went down to my favorite bookstore this week, I was surprised to see a new magazine devoted to my love of loves, country music. Several things prompted me to buy the book. I'll admit the biggest reason was the "lived in" face of one John R. Cash staring down at me. I'm the world's greatest fan of the Man In Black. Like millions of others.

Other things which made me buy it were:—it was the first *new* country music magazine I've seen in over a year and a half; also, the high quality of the book, the paper it was printed on and the contents of the magazine—like *Playboy*—only *better*!

RICHARD SAWYER  
LAPORTE, INDIANA

I honestly believe you folks have a successful venture. I really liked the full-length features, the pictures, and one can readily see that time, care and thought has gone into the first two issues. The Roy Acuff story was excellent.

HOWARD VOKES  
NEW KENSINGTON, PA.



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## About This Issue

It is surprising how a new magazine will bring good, new writers to the surface. Quite evidently, there are young writers throughout the country, who are thoroughly knowledgeable about country music and country lifestyles, and have been sitting for many months on a wealth of magazine story ideas. One such writer is John Pugh, who produced our feature on the Nashville sidemen in this issue.

Reporters and writers fall into many different categories. There are some who can best cover "hard news" stories. They might get a call from an editor who wants 500 words very quickly on such and such a subject. It may be something the reporter knows little or nothing about, but he will know how to go about obtaining the information, and he can be relied upon to turn in a thorough story every time. Other writers prefer more rarefied, or outlandish assignments.

Charlie Burton is not the sort of writer who will call an editor every other day to suggest a story idea. He is by no means the bloodhound reporter. More often than not, he's too busy working out with his own c&w rockabilly band in Nebraska to write long feature stories. Although he knows a great deal about country music, he's very modest about his familiarity with the country music industry. "I met Tex Ritter only once," he says, "and he was real nice to me. I had long hair then, too, and we talked about Berkeley University. Tex's son was going there."

The last major feature Charlie produced for COUNTRY MUSIC was his interview with Conway Twitty, which we published in our first issue, and for which both Charlie and COUNTRY MUSIC received a great deal of complimentary mail. Then early this fall, I got a call from him. He wanted to go down to Dallas, Texas to write a story about "the greatest country guitarist on the face of this earth."



Charlie Burton

"And who might that be?" I asked, not unnaturally.

"Feller by the name of Phil Baugh," Charlie replied with the utmost conviction.

"I can't say I've heard of him, but sounds interesting," I admitted. "How are you proposing to get together with this guy?"

"I'll drive down to Texas. Leave tomorrow if you like."

Charlie had just got himself the assignment.

Most editors, as you probably realize, are former reporters or writers. And once in a while, most editors feel an urge to get back out "in the field," armed with tape recorder, note-pad, eyes, ears and wits, in pursuit of a story that they *know* is going to make interesting reading.

This editor is no exception. When Charley Pride agreed to give COUNTRY MUSIC an interview, I decided to take a leave of absence from the editor's desk. The only location suitable for both our schedules turned out to be Hollywood. When I reached L.A. airport, I had a moment of trepidation. I'd only spoken to the people who manage Charley, never to the man himself. What if he turned out to be the shy, reserved, difficult to interview person that I'd heard he was? Fortunately, he wasn't.

PETER MCCABE, EDITOR

# COUNTRY MUSIC™

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<b>Charley Pride: 'What We're Really Talking About Is Change.'</b>	PETER McCABE <b>24</b>
<p>In 1964 a young man from Sledge, Mississippi gave up his ambition to become a baseball player and began to pursue a career in country music. This is the story of Charley Pride's rise to fame, the obstacles he overcame (for reasons that are obvious), and the men who helped him. Charley talks not only about his role in country music, but of the changes he sees taking place in America.</p>	
<b>It's the Gift that Counts</b>	<b>36</b>
<p>A few Christmas gift ideas from country musicians—what they would really like to give each other. Also, the staff of COUNTRY MUSIC has added a few ideas of its own.</p>	
<b>Those Unsung Folks Behind the Nashville Sound</b>	JOHN PUGH <b>40</b>
<p>If you took a handful of men—numbering about 50—out of the Nashville recording studios, the city's music industry would come to a grinding halt. These are the men who have created the so-called "Nashville Sound," and yet their names may never be in lights. John Pugh finds out what it takes to be a sideman.</p>	
<b>They Walk the Line Between Country and Rock</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>The Nitty Gritties and the Old Masters</b>	ELKIN BROWN DICK RICHMOND
<b>John Denver: From 'Jet Plane' to 'Country Road'</b>	
<p>Both the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band and John Denver are oriented toward country music. The Nitty Gritty boys have been involved with the old masters quite a lot recently and may be heading for more. As for John Denver—well, he isn't so sure.</p>	
<b>Re-introducing the Boy Who Played 'Em All... Phil Baugh</b>	CHARLIE BURTON <b>50</b>
<p>This is an unusual tale. It's written by a guy who has interviewed some of country music's greats, including Conway Twitty in COUNTRY MUSIC's first issue. Charlie Burton has nursed a long admiration for this "forgotten" guitarist and we agreed with Charlie that Phil Baugh's story was worth telling. We hear a lot about talented people who make it and not enough about the talented people who don't.</p>	
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24



40



47



50

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE:  
 A Never-before Published Interview with the late Hank Williams...  
 What Makes Jerry Lee tick...? Johnny Cash and his new movie...  
 Mac Davis... Changing styles in country music.



# Down Home and Around

by Dixie Hall

Who knows what could be in Tompall's stocking? . . .  
Faron and Connie make a deal . . . A portable parking meter  
for Henry Hurt . . . and Roy Acuff hits a clinker.

It seems COUNTRY MUSIC really started something when its editors began asking country music's personalities what each would like to give the other for Christmas this year. Long after the publication's main deadline, ideas were still being hung on the Music City "grapevine." **Tompall Glaser** called saying he would like to give **Bill Anderson** lessons in sincerity. "Tompall!" I told him, "you can't say that . . . people will think you're not being nice." "Well," he laughed, "I said it, didn't I? Go ahead and print it and at the same time throw in **George Hamilton IV** for good measure!" (We offer Bill Anderson and George right of reply.)

**Bobby Bare**, who gave a certain singer a kitten for his birthday is now planning to give him a cat house for Christmas. Recalling an incident when Bare stayed out one night, late enough to be too scared to go home, the same singer would like to give him a chicken house.

CMA's **Jo Walker** offered a "nice used car" to **Frances Preston** over at BMI. (Her husband, E. J. Preston, is one of Nashville's leading car dealers). Also, after reading the October issue of COUNTRY MUSIC, Jo would like to give a jeep to **Loretta Lynn**. Someone else (who shall remain nameless) suggested a life-line bra for **Dolly Parton**. If Dolly can find out who made the suggestion, she too, has right of reply.

Chappell Music really should give their Nashville General Professional Manager, **Henry Hurt**, a portable parking meter. Henry recently made the mistake of leaving on an early morning fishing trip with compadres **Bob Beckham** (Combine Music), **B. J. McElwee** (MGM) and **Norris Wilson** (Al Gallico Music), a bunch notorious for not being able to pass by the International House of Pancakes. On this particular morning their appe-

tites proved to be their undoing. They returned to find the law had hooked them for, not one, but two parking tickets . . . one on the car and one on the boat. Bet the waitresses would like to slap one on **Bob Beckham**. He can drink more coffee for 15¢ than anybody on Music Row!

Most of us are moved to do warm, charitable things during the Christmas season, but in the hearts of **Teddy and Doyle, the Wilburn Brothers**, the spirit of compassion lives all year. This was very much in evidence during the opening of the Wilburn Brothers Country Music Park at their birthplace of Hardy, Arkansas. "The proceeds," **Teddy** announced, "will go to help finance the Wayfarers Foundation whose projected program includes a rehabilitation center and a study of ESP and its application to the medical field." Sure would be great if ESP could be applied to the music business! When asked separately what they'd like to give each other

for Christmas, **Teddy** said he'd like to give **Doyle** a scholarship instruction course in patience. **Doyle's** gift idea was "I'd like to give **Teddy** 'Hell'". (**Doyle** says it's okay to print that word " 'cause you can say it on television.")

"Did you believe?" **Connie Smith** asked me recently. "Did you believe they had me and **Faron Young** teamed up to present an award on the CMA Kraft Music Hall Show? We had to make a deal with each other. **Faron** agreed not to cuss 'em, and I agreed not to bless 'em!"

Finally, **Roy Acuff** seems to have more money than he knows about, a theory that was borne out at the Grand Ole Opry recently. **Roy** was introducing **Bob Luman**.

"Here he is, **Bob Luman**!" **Roy** began. "What label do you record for, **Bob**?"

"I'm on **Hickory**, **Roy**, you know, *your* label," **Bob** replied.

"That's right, so you are," said **Roy**, scratching his head.



Connie Smith: "I agreed not to bless 'em."



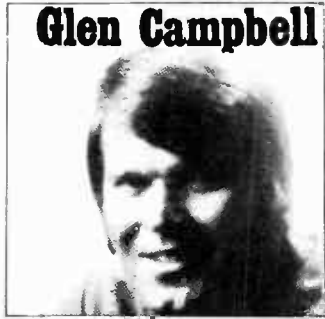
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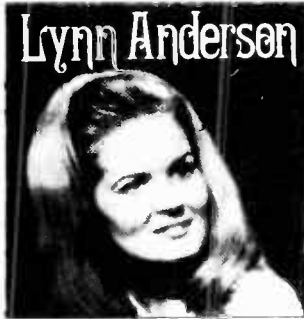
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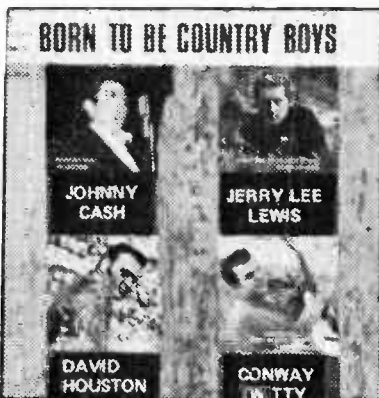
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# People on the Scene

by Gail Buchalter

Frances Preston probably has inspired more loyalty among songwriters and music publishers than any other person in Nashville. The reason? She cares.



PHOTO: MARSHALL FALLWELL

Frances Preston: she enjoys helping anyone in the field of the arts.

Nashville could hardly be considered a pivotal point for the women's lib movement. In fact, the term "male chauvinism" often has to be explained and is usually met with an agreeable smile, as if to say, is there any other way for things to be? There are, however, a few ladies holding executive positions in the country music industry. One is Jo Walker, Executive Director of the Country Music Association. But there's one other woman, less widely known, who is also a high-ranking and influential figure in Nashville's music business—Mrs. Frances Preston, Vice-President of Broadcast Music, Incorporated, in charge of the Southern territory.

In an industry where gratitude and ego constantly conflict, Frances Preston probably has inspired more loyalty among songwriters and music publishers than any other individual in Nashville, Tennessee and the sixteen states

for which she is responsible. The reason is simple—she *cares*.

This care and consideration for individual writers and publishers of all types of music personifies the basic principles of B.M.I., its "open door" policy and the reasons for its creation. Until 1940, practically all monies paid to composers for the public performance of their works (radio and concerts) were collected and distributed to them by The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (A.S.C.A.P.). Unfortunately, if a writer was not of the Tin Pan Alley School or part of the Hollywood movie music scene, he had a difficult, if not impossible, time gaining admission into this organization. Then the newly emerging sounds of rock 'n' roll, rhythm and blues—which was then referred to as "race music"—and what was sneeringly considered "hillbilly" music began gaining greater acceptance with the

public, and with the advent of B.M.I. these songwriters and publishers finally began to receive compensation for their efforts.

B.M.I. recognized the wealth of talent concentrated in Nashville and the South, and realized this would soon become a vital force in the entertainment industry. It also recognized the potential of Frances Preston.

"When I graduated from college, I intended to take up teaching," she said. "While I was waiting for a position to open up, I took a job as a receptionist at radio station WSM. Once I got there, it was so much more interesting than being a school teacher that I decided to remain. I began getting involved in different aspects of the music business, and one of the first projects I worked on was the WSM Country Music Festival. I called on record companies, performing rights organizations and just about anyone who planned to sponsor an event during the festival. I helped them organize particular projects. One man I met with regularly was Bob Burton, who was then Senior Vice-President of B.M.I."

Burton hired her to run B.M.I.'s Nashville operations.

"I devoted a good portion of the first year to learning what the organization was about. I worked out of my home and from a terrible place called the Clarkston Coffee Shop. That was where I held meetings with writers and publishers and spread the word about B.M.I. and its interest in their welfare. I would drink coffee all morning, have about four or five lunches per day and switch to drinking tea in the afternoons."

It was a year before Frances established an office (consisting of two small rooms in the Life and Casualty Tower in downtown Nashville), but with the opening of its



# Hank Williams, *The Legend*

**NEVER BEFORE** has such a complete book on Hank Williams been published. Here is a beautiful and fascinating new book, 8½" x 11" with 68 pages and a full-color cover: *Hank Williams—The Legend*.

Some years ago Jerry Rivers (member of Hank Williams' original Drifting Cowboys) wrote a story of his experiences with Hank and that book, published by Heather, sold over 100,000 copies. Now this new book fills the demand for more stories and photos on *Hank Williams—The Legend*.

We have found many more photographs of Hank, from childhood until his death in 1953, and have asked people who knew him to write for the book. There are articles in the book by many fine writers, as well as stories by his mother and sister. Bill Malone, author of *Country Music U.S.A.*, published by the University of Texas Press, has written a feature story especially for the book. Every Hank Williams devotee will give this new book a prominent place in their library.

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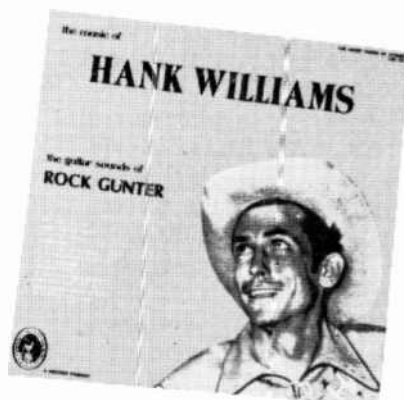
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Frances Preston's office. An environment where good taste prevails.

Nashville office, B.M.I. joined the Southern music industry world.

"We're involved in all types of music, and don't categorize our catalogue. I think B.M.I. is largely responsible for the growth of music all over, since it never tried to limit the nature of the music or the people we represent."

Frances Preston can sit at a conference table and negotiate a contract which may involve hundreds of thousands of dollars with apparent ease. But she is equally aware of the need for a starving young writer to sit down at a dinner table. And many of the young writers who were once fed encouragement by Frances during their leaner days successfully return to take their rightful place in the conference room.

"I enjoy helping anyone, especially in the field of the arts because I don't think we give enough recognition to our composers and artists. In other countries artists are put on pedestals. But here, they have to struggle to get by."

If B.M.I.'s operations in the South reflect Frances' dynamic personality, her Nashville office reflects her subtleness and good taste. With the help of her brother, interior designer Doug Williams, she has achieved an artistic environment in the context of a business atmosphere. Paintings, plants, and porcelain pieces make doing business at B.M.I. a pleasing visual experience in this day of plastic flowers and cheap reproductions. Vitally concerned with all art forms, Frances makes time to go to local galleries and exhibits. She has

created what could almost be considered a mini-gallery within the confines of B.M.I.

Despite her many career activities and artist involvements, Frances Preston considers herself first and foremost a wife and a mother. She is married to E.J. Preston, a prominent Nashville businessman. They have three sons. When two of her boys changed schools, she was concerned to get home to hear all about their first day in their new surroundings, even though it meant re-arranging her business schedule.

"I don't think it is the amount of time that you spend at home with your family that counts. I think it's what you do with the time that's important. I don't think a mother who stays home all day long with her child and leaves him sitting in the car while she goes shopping for groceries, or makes him play outside while she's at her bridge game is giving any more of herself than I am when I go home. I have a few hours to spend with my family and really devote myself to them without any interruptions.

"I see so many women who are active in the women's lib movement just sitting around and complaining. You have to give up a lot of things to have a career; men do it all the time. I think women who moan about not getting the good jobs just don't give the time and effort as I have done and a lot of other successful women have done. In fact, as a woman I have never found a door closed. I feel that in this business it may actually be an advantage to be a woman."

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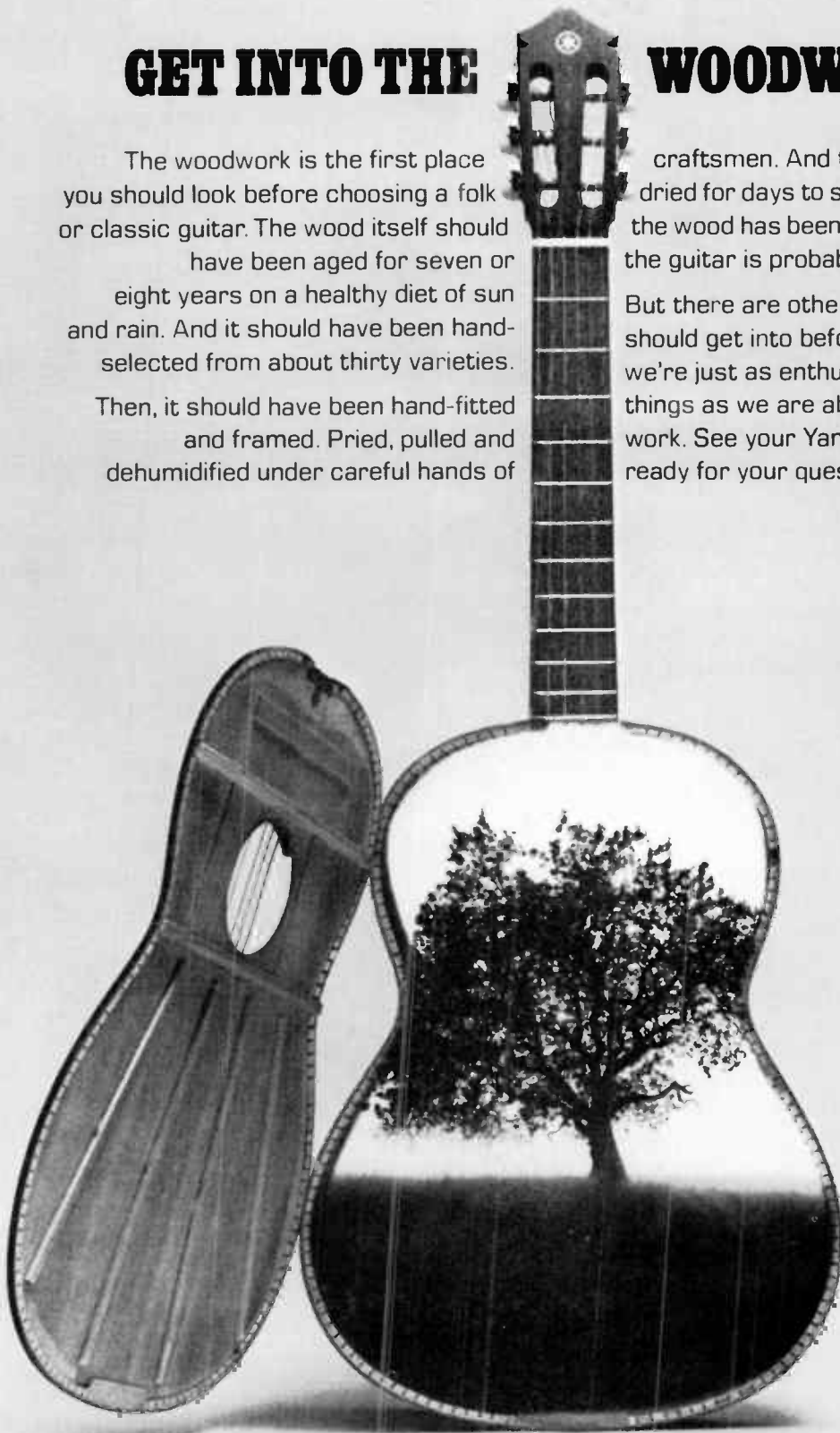
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# Country News

A glittering occasion, and when the lights came up for the last time, the moment belonged to the great coal miner's daughter, Loretta Lynn.

## The CMA Annual Awards Show



Minnie Pearl and Chet Atkins present Loretta with the most coveted award.

Once a year the Grand Ole Opry assumes a very different look. On the evening of October 16th, 1972 there were no babes in the arms of the people lined up outside Nashville's Ryman Auditorium. Folks weren't wearing open-necked shirts, nor were they munching on hot dogs. A few street vendors on Opry Place gazed in awe. Shoeshine boys might as well have stayed home. The headlights of passing cars enhanced the glitter from the fingers and necks of the ladies on the line outside the hall.

Inside the Ryman Auditorium the scene was equally at odds with the norm. No boards bearing the brand names of products to be advertised on WSM radio hung above the Opry stage. Instead, these had been replaced with a blue chiffon curtain. The stage itself had been extended forward into a semi-circular platform, covered with huge banks



Loretta Lynn, "Entertainer of the Year."

PHOTO: ALAN WHITMAN



Country music's leading ladies sing their way through a "country girl" medley.

of orange and yellow flowers. On either side was a vast battery of television lights, which could turn the hall into a sauna bath whenever they were switched full on. In the front row this evening there were no fans with Instamatics, but the stars themselves, such legends in their own lifetimes as Bill Monroe, Tex Ritter, Roy Acuff and Ernest Tubb.

The occasion was the Sixth Annual Country Music Association Awards Show. It is the highlight in a week of award presentations which includes such prestigious events as the BMI and ASCAP award dinners (at which songwriters and music publishers are honored). The CMA Awards show, sponsored by Kraft Foods, is televised live by CBS-TV. It is an evening when top honors are bestowed, an occasion which assumes a special significance for the entire country music community. It is the evening when country music is as formal as it can ever be. But how formal could country music's most formal event be when, at the evening's highpoint, a very nervous lady in a long flowing green dress clutched the coveted top award and told a star-studded audience and more than 34 million

TV viewers that she was a "little sad" because her husband had "gone huntin'." He couldn't make it back in time to share her happiness that evening.

Loretta Lynn had just become the first lady ever to be voted "Entertainer of the Year" by the CMA. She was delighted and quite evidently stunned, and her simple, almost naive, statement on receiving the award only added to the general glow of satisfaction which had already swept through the Opry when it was announced that Loretta was the winner. Although Loretta Lynn probably signs more autographs than any other lady in country music, she need not have signed any that evening. And yet when a few people pushed pens and paper in front of her, she reacted automatically. Habits acquired over ten years are hard to break. Loretta signed them, smiled and was ushered along to the next avid cameraman or interviewer.

One young radio interviewer even asked her if this was a victory for women's lib. Loretta stared at him; the question had thrown her off balance.

"I don't quite understand what



Merle Haggard accepts the "Album of the Year" award.

you mean," she began.

"Well, you're the first woman ever to win this award," the interviewer persisted, running down the list of previous winners—Eddy Arnold, Glen Campbell, Johnny Cash, Merle Haggard and Charley Pride.

"It could be, I suppose," Loretta recovered, "but right now you must excuse me, 'cause I hardly know what I'm sayin'."

The evening of October 16 had already brought accolades for Loretta Lynn. Even before Chet





Bill Monroe wound up a set of performances by country music's biggest guns with his rendering of "Muleskinner Blues."



Charley Pride:  
Male Vocalist of the Year.



"Instrumentalist of the Year"  
Charlie McCoy.

Atkins and Minnie Pearl presented her with the top honor, she had collected the award for "Female Vocalist of the Year." The award for "Vocal Duo of the Year" had gone to her, too, and of course to her singing partner Conway Twitty. "I may be a rock 'n' roll reject," Conway growled, "but country music has always been my first love."

The CMA Awards show is always a series of emotion-packed moments. This year it also contained some very imaginative and well re-

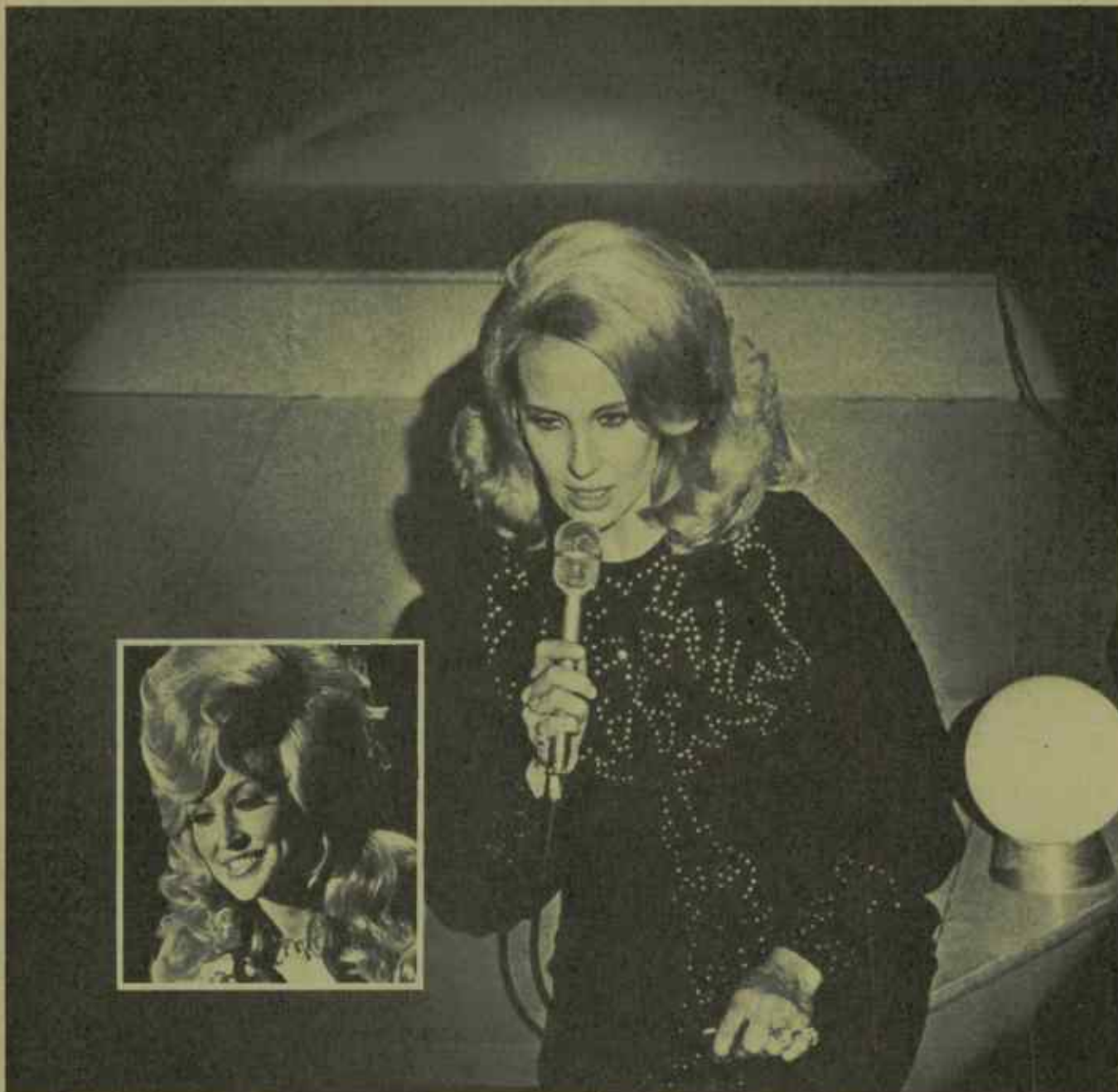
ceived programming. Between the presentations there was some unforgettable entertainment, such as Lynn Anderson, Dolly Parton, Dottie West, Loretta Lynn and Tammy Wynette all on stage in succession, singing their way through a beautiful medley around a "country girl" theme. And who could explain in words the impact of the following performances—again all in quick succession? First Tex Ritter singing "Green Grow The Lilacs," then Roy Acuff whirling his yo-yo and singing

"Wabash Cannonball"; back to stage center where Ernest Tubb launched into "Walkin' The Floor Over You"; and finally, Bill Monroe, whose rendering of "Muleskinner Blues" nearly brought down the house.

Before Loretta received the "Entertainer of the Year" award, the crowd had been on its feet offering a standing ovation to the former "singing governor," Jimmie Davis. Best known for his song "You Are My Sunshine," Davis had just been elected to the Country Music Hall of Fame.

There were two relative newcomers who received honors. Donna Fargo won the "Single of the Year" award for her "Happiest Girl In The Whole U.S.A." and Charlie McCoy's brilliance on harmonica won him the title of "Instrumentalist of the Year."

"It's a great victory for sidemen," Charlie confided later, over at Roger Miller's "King of the Road" nightspot, where all formalities had been dropped and the party that is Nashville during convention week had just begun. As for the rest of the awards—well, every picture tells a story.



Taking part in the country girl medley... Dolly Parton and Tammy Wynette.



Former "singing governor"  
Jimmie Davis joins the immortals.

### The CMA Awards

Song of the Year: "Easy Loving," by Freddie Hart

Vocal Group of the Year: The Statler Brothers

Vocal Duo of the Year: Conway Twitty and Loretta Lynn

Male Vocalist of the Year: Charley Pride

Female Vocalist of the Year: Loretta Lynn

Instrumental Group: Danny Davis and the Nashville Brass

Instrumentalist of the Year: Charlie McCoy

Album of the Year: "Let Me Tell You About A Song," Merle Haggard

Single of the Year: "Happiest Girl In The Whole U.S.A.," Donna Fargo

Entertainer of the Year: Loretta Lynn

Hall of Fame Award: Jimmie Davis



# Harlan Howard Remembers

By Dixie Hall

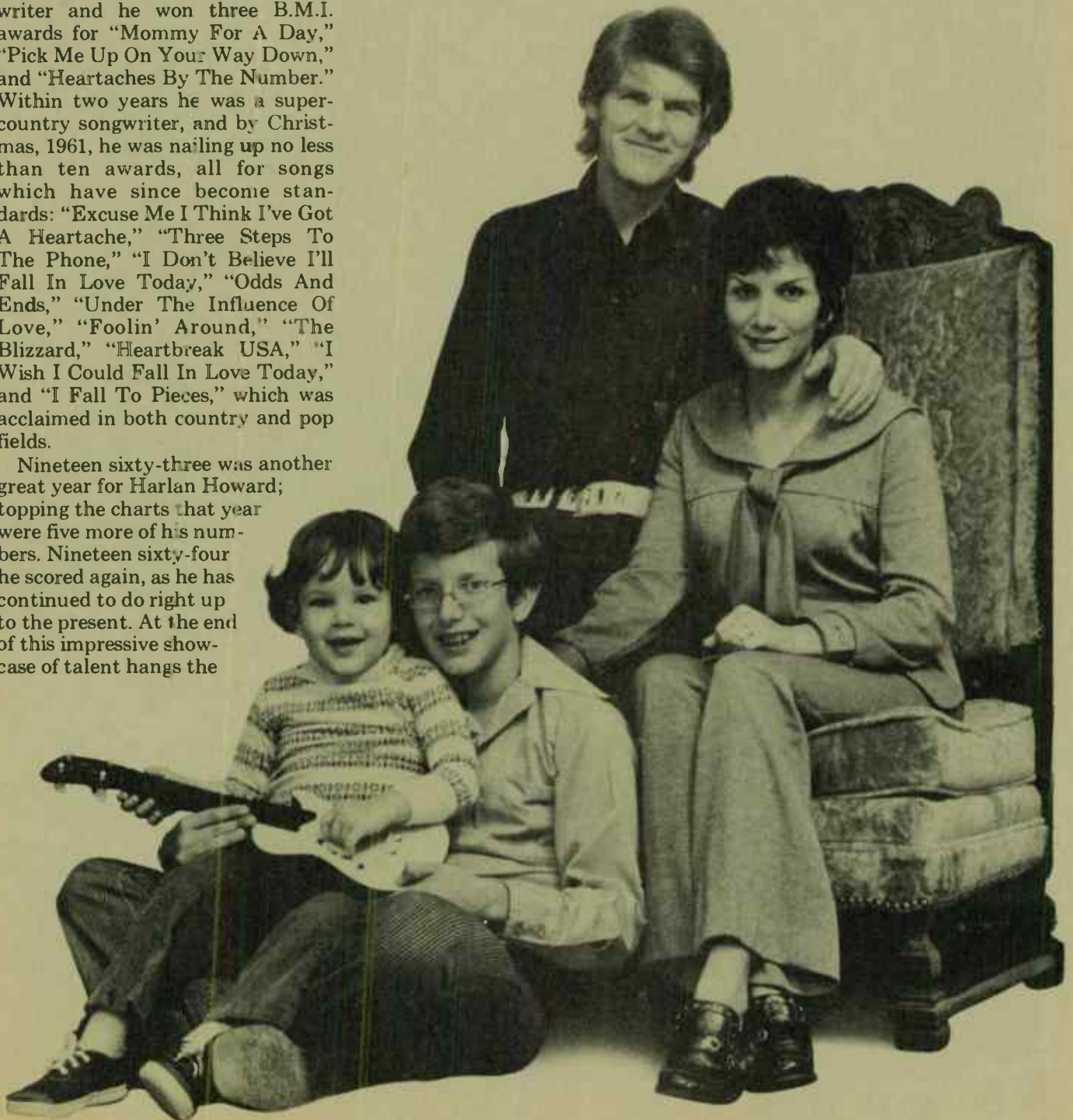
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There was a time he was happy when Christmas was over.

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Harlan Howard's wali started getting cluttered shortly before Christmas, 1959. It had been the first good year for the now famous songwriter and he won three B.M.I. awards for "Mommy For A Day," "Pick Me Up On Your Way Down," and "Heartaches By The Number." Within two years he was a super-country songwriter, and by Christmas, 1961, he was nailing up no less than ten awards, all for songs which have since become standards: "Excuse Me I Think I've Got A Heartache," "Three Steps To The Phone," "I Don't Believe I'll Fall In Love Today," "Odds And Ends," "Under The Influence Of Love," "Foolin' Around," "The Blizzard," "Heartbreak USA," "I Wish I Could Fall In Love Today," and "I Fall To Pieces," which was acclaimed in both country and pop fields.

Nineteen sixty-three was another great year for Harlan Howard; topping the charts that year were five more of his numbers. Nineteen sixty-four he scored again, as he has continued to do right up to the present. At the end of this impressive showcase of talent hangs the



most recent award winner, "She's A Little Bit Country," dated 1971.

"Looks like you've done alright over the years . . . all in all," I commented.

Earlier that day Harlan's wife Donna Gail and I had driven to a nearby shopping center, making an early start searching for Christmas presents.

"You know, Christmas never meant very much to Harlan before," Donna told me. "He used to regard it as kind of commercial, but I'm such a nut about it," she confided. "I hide his presents along with the kids' things and make such a fuss. I just know he feels differently now."

Later that evening, tackling steaks and baked potatoes, I decided also to tackle Harlan about Christmas. "Were you really a Scrooge once?" I asked bluntly.

"Christmas means a great deal to me nowadays because it meant so little to me most of my life," he replied, regarding me seriously. "Until a few years ago all Christmas made me think of was my childhood, growing up as an orphan in Michigan and being quite lonely and out of place. I lived in many homes, in many towns—some good, some bad—but always knowing that people were being paid to feed and raise me. So, naturally, I always envied the kids with real honest-to-God parents of their own, who probably put themselves in hock for a year just to get little Tommy or Betty that new bike.

"I remember running away from a foster home when I was fourteen. On my way to Miami, hitchhiking, a truck driver let me out on the north side of Atlanta on Sunday, Christmas Eve. I knew I had to walk completely through Atlanta before I could chance hitching another ride because the police frowned on young vagrants. As I walked through the cold in Atlanta that night, I passed hundreds of homes with Christmas trees in the windows, countless daddies and mamas unloading trunks filled with wrapped-up little goodies for the kids and for each other. I would have given an arm or two if someone had said, 'Come on in, son, and rest a minute,' or yelled out 'a Merry Christmas!' or just anything. But of course, I was just a kid passing by, and no one knew my situation. So I just kept walking, and as



In the last few years, Christmas has come to mean something to Harlan Howard.

usual I was very happy when Christmas was over."

"You don't feel like that any more though, do you baby?" smiled Donna Gail.

"No," replied Harlan, thoughtfully. "Because of childhood memories I developed quite a cynical, mercenary attitude towards Christmas, and only in the past few years, since I met and married Donna Gail, has Christmas become a time of pleasure and thankfulness to me. She always makes a big deal out of it, treats me like a kid, hides my presents, and her obvious delight in giving and pleasing me is quite infectious. She has also given me little Harlan Jr., and that is the greatest gift of all. Decorating the

tree and wrapping presents for him and our other boy, Kenny, has become a pleasure I never thought I'd enjoy. Their excited, pleased looks over some particularly well-chosen gift please me more than anything I might receive myself. So, lo and behold," he laughed, "that corny old saying that 'it's better to give than to receive,' becomes not quite so hokey as I begin to find myself feeling that way.

"All in all," Harlan concluded, "I have no regrets over my childhood, or any of my life. I believe it all happened for a purpose and a country writer who has had the experience that I have had to draw on is rich indeed."



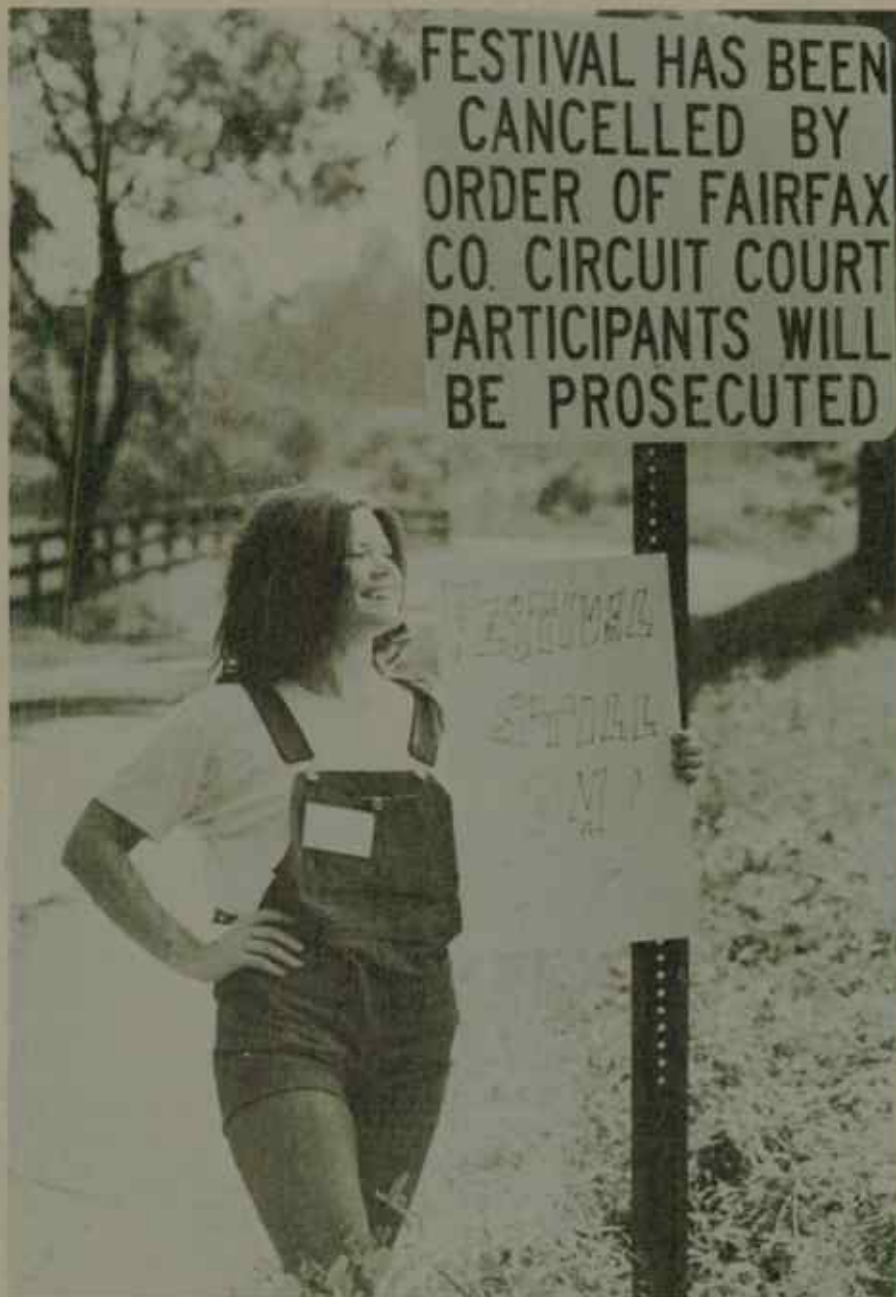
## Bluegrass Fans Defy Authority's Injunction

by Tom Miller

In the last few years, it has been quite common for local authorities to deny permits for rock festivals, but it now appears that the trend has carried over to bluegrass festivals. A three-day bluegrass festival at Timberlake Park in Fairfax County, Virginia this fall was harassed by the police and court injunctions up to and through the event itself. But despite the legal obstruction, promoters, audience and performers went ahead with the festival, even with a court injunction supposedly barring the proceedings.

In the heyday of rock festivals, promoters would often end up being banned in one county and kicked out of the next, until either a last-minute court order okayed the festival or the promoter finally gave up. Technical reasons cited were usually sanitation or traffic problems, inconvenience to neighbors or some obscure local law. The real reason, however, was usually that loud rock enjoyed by thousands of longhairs ran contrary to the local authority's idea of fun. Quite simply, it paid off for local politicians to be against rock festivals.

County officials around the country may be becoming squeamish again because as outdoor rock festivals appear to be dying out, they are being replaced by bluegrass and country gatherings. Last spring, Hays County officials in Central Texas wisely permitted the Dripping Springs Reunion Country & Western Festival to open up. Fairfax County officials were not so wise this fall. They convinced county circuit court judge James C. Cacheris to issue a temporary injunction to promoter Otis Woody restraining him from opening his three-day bluegrass shindig at Timberlake Park, a 100 acre private recreational area outside Washington, D.C. The official reasons given for issuing the injunction were zoning and health regulations, but it was widely speculated that with the rapidly growing bluegrass appreciation among college students and others in urban areas, county officials and local residents feared the same sort of thing a rock festival brings.



Three days of "Peace, Love and Bluegrass".

With the injunction in force county authorities put up signs warning: "FESTIVAL HAS BEEN CANCELLED BY ORDER OF FAIRFAX COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT. PARTICIPANTS WILL BE PROSECUTED." Next to the county signs festival workers held cardboard posters refuting them. They read simply: "FESTIVAL IS ON." Police counted cars as they entered, a county helicopter maintained surveillance from above, but early Friday evening, Charlie Moore and the Dixie Partners went out on stage—in defiance of—the injunction and started off three days of "Peace, Love, Blues and Bluegrass."

It was, as expected, a culturally

mixed crowd. Farmers, rural folk, streetpeople, longtime bluegrass fans, new college converts, and curious onlookers. The obligatory assemblage of hangers-on showed too, of course—frisbee enthusiasts, eastern religion meditators and others. And there was a pond for people to spontaneously jump into. Every good festival has a pond for people to spontaneously jump into.

If there's any measurement for quality, the Dillard's with their experimental bluegrass were the best group of the weekend. Also playing were the consistently fine Earl Scruggs Review, the Osborne Brothers, the Stonemans, the Country Gentlemen and a good local group, Seldom Scene. Everyone,

from 70-year-old Cajun accordionist Ambrose Thibodeaux to John Hartford on banjo, fit in nicely with the contented crowd.

Traditional bluegrass and the experimental progressive trends in bluegrass make for fine outdoor festivals. And like the music itself, the widening audience is finding itself some surprising company these days. It's a natural course of events for more and more such festivals to come about. Assuming they're well planned to begin with, resisting authorities are going to find themselves up against a mighty unusual and angered audience if they start banning bluegrass and country festivals, as often as rock festivals got the ax. In the case of the "Peace, Love, Blues and Bluegrass" gathering, "show cause" hearings by the health department and circuit court are upcoming. The promoters face potential fines, contempt of court citations, and possibly even prison time.

On a dove-shooting trip near Savannah, Tennessee a few months back, the singer, whose record of "I Ain't Never" has ridden all the way on the charts, met with a landowner who had been making news because of his success with an experimental crop of sunflowers. Jim Southern had been growing soybeans until he realized he could make more money from sunflowers, and at the same time benefit wildlife and the environment. Southern's sunflower seeds have raised 120,000 doves in the two years that he has been using part of his farm for the crop-growing experiment. After Tillis had bagged his limit, he and Southern got to talking. The free Tillis performance was the result of that conversation.

"I'm very interested in what Jim's doing," said Tillis. "Down here now, so much of the land has been bought up and built up by big corporations that a turkey can't even find a place to lay an egg any-

## Another Cap for "Cowboy" Jack

by Richard Harbert

Recently you may have been hearing a new version of Johnny Cash's mid-sixties smash, "The One On The Left Is On The Right." It is a new version, but in a way it's the *original* version. The artist is none other than independent record producer Jack Clement, who wrote the song.

A tremendously talented songwriter, instrumentalist and producer (he produces Charley Pride's records) and one of Nashville's more colorful personalities, "Cowboy" Clement finally broke down and cut a disc for J-M-I, the company he founded and owns. J-M-I's A&R chief Allen Reynolds supervised the production. He was the ringleader in the "conspiracy" to get Clement away from the control board and into the studio.



PHOTO PAUL LEVIN

Mel Tillis: a supporter of environmental control.



PHOTO YVONNE HANNEMANN

Jack Clement's staff "conspired" to get him into the studio.

### Mel Tillis Sings for Conservation

A developing interest in a unique wildlife conservation project has attracted the attention of singer Mel Tillis. Tillis grew up in the Florida Everglades, and has been a supporter of environmental control since his boyhood. Recently, he performed with the Statesiders at a West Tennessee dovehunters' dinner for free, instead of for the several thousand dollars he usually gets for an appearance.

more. Everywhere he tries to, there's a swimming pool."

On his way to a show in Dallas, Tillis stopped and performed for Southern's 200 guests—ordinary dovehunters and local politicians—at a restaurant in Shiloh. "Mel plans to do more of this during breaks in his performing schedule," said Tillis' secretary, Maggie Cavender, on the night of the free performance.

"'Course, if we can't get enough doves for the dinner, we may supplement them with catfish," added Tillis.

"Up until then, Jack had never found a recording situation that suited him," Reynolds said, "but we prevailed upon him. Some of his staunchest fans are the people who work for him.

"I said, 'Cowboy, go in and record. Do it as Jack Clement—songwriter—and just sing it sweet, like you do.' And that's what he did."

If you should happen to hear a new version of "Harper Valley P.T.A." in the next few weeks, don't be surprised if it ain't ole Shelby Singleton doin' the vocals!!



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PHOTO JOHN DONNIGAN



# Charley Pride:

## 'What We're Really Talking About Is Change'

The story of the man who sees himself *not* as a phenomenon, but as a true country artist.

By Peter McCabe

The Hollywood Roosevelt hotel strikes the same chords of nostalgia as the roar of the MGM lion. Both are legacies of a bygone era, a time when magnates of the world's former film capital used to think big—because they could afford to. Today the magnificent lobby of the Roosevelt with its worn, red leather armchairs stands as mute witness to this era, and there's a common look of sadness in the faces of the cast-offs from Central Casting, who sit for hours at the bar watching middle-aged couples on the dance floor fox-trot and tango to the uninspired rhythms of the house band.

Into this extraordinary setting walks the Charley Pride party. All the more modern hotels in Los Angeles are fully booked. Charley's party has to *make do* with the Roosevelt, while Charley spends a week here taping the Dean Martin show. Jack D. Johnson, Charley's manager, is striding out in front of the group. The flight in from Nashville has topped an exhausting day for him, and he's now anxious to register and cool his throat in the bar.

A few feet away, Charley is playing a cassette tape recorder for an RCA PR man. The music is blaring across the lobby, frustrating Johnson's attempts to sort out the room situation with the desk clerk.

"Turn it off Charley, c'm'on, don't play it here."

"You don't like it?"

"Well, play it over there," Johnson pleads.

Charley turns the volume down, grins widely, hands the recorder to



PHOTO: QUESADA-BURKE & BURKE

**“. . . Charley loves to talk on the phone,” says his manager. “When he’s got nobody to talk to, he’ll call up the operator . . .”**

the RCA man, and begins a conversation with the other desk clerk who has recognized him and has been holding pen and paper at the ready should Charley look his way. As soon as Johnson has registered, the banter between he and Charley begins again.

"Just think of all the rest you'll get here Charley," Johnson teases, surveying the row of old-timers at the bar. "Oh, and by the way, I've got a surprise for you. There ain't no air conditioning in this hotel."

"No what?"

"No air conditioning."

"When that sun comes up tomorrow, I'm gonna cook."

Charley picks up the phone as soon as he reaches his room, dials the Continental Hyatt House, a hotel Johnson and he have stayed at on previous occasions, and tries to win over the Continental's desk clerk.

"Hi there. This is Charley Pride over at the Hollywood Roosevelt. We've got no air conditioning here and I'm gonna cook. You have any rooms available . . .? You're full, huh . . . Yeah, the country music singer, that's right. You liked the album. Well, good. . . ."

By this time Johnson and his assistant Tom Collins are ready to hit the bar. Johnson evidently realizes Charley is just being Charley and can be safely ignored.

"We're goin' for a few beers," he tells him. "See ya downstairs."

"Charley'll be on the phone for hours," he chuckles. "He just loves to talk on the phone. When he's got nobody to talk to, he'll call up the operator."

Charley Pride loves to socialize. He never passes up an opportunity to make conversation. It comes naturally to him, as the saying goes. His smile is ready, open and infectious, a full-blooded grin which instantly softens his strong profile. It doesn't matter who stops him in public or how busy he is. Charley just isn't the kind of entertainer who constantly feels the need to be on his guard, who protects his privacy jealously.

And yet watching him in Los Angeles, I was surprised. Country mu-

sic has many firm friends in Southern California, but Charley could walk around virtually unrecognized. The man who recently sold out the Las Vegas Hilton for a whole week, who outsells Elvis Presley and Eddy Arnold in tape sales, who might just be the greatest country singer since Hank Williams, could come and go as he pleased.

"It's amazing really," Tom Collins confided, gesturing around the lobby of the Roosevelt. "Charley can walk through a place like this and nobody will bother him."

Part of the reason for this may be Charley Pride's manager's attitude toward publicity. Jack Johnson has not forgotten the expressions on the faces of most of country music's disc jockeys some seven years ago when he played Charley Pride's demo record for them, and then showed them a picture of the singer. He knew only too well that Charley wasn't going to need too many press releases. "I really don't go after this type of thing," he declared. "Why, sometimes I'm of the opinion that *no* publicity is *good* publicity," he added with a sly grin.

Jack D. Johnson is a major part of the Charley Pride story. He is recognized in Nashville's music circles as a character, a very likeable one, but also a very shrewd one. At first meeting his manner is gruff, but he quickly lapses into a dialogue which is as informal as the casual jacket and Tony Lama boots which he wears for all manner of business. He gives the initial impression that he is only interested in making light conversation, though after a few beers he is ready to debate the entire issue of gun control, carefully putting forward both sides of the argument, and explaining the issue in the context of basic American regard for individual freedoms. A very savvy individual, not to be taken lightly.

Johnson entered the music business after graduating in journalism from Tennessee State University. He worked for Cedarwood Publishing Company as a public relations man, which is perhaps where he acquired his easygoing attitude, a genuine affinity for people equalled only by Charley's. He likes nothing better than a good joke, as he demonstrated the following morning at breakfast.

The middle-aged waitress had



Jack Johnson, Charley's manager. A very savvy individual.

**. . . Jack Johnson has not forgotten the disc jockeys' expressions seven years ago. He played them Charley's record, and then showed them a picture of the singer . . .**

quickly decided that the only way to cope with Jack Johnson was to assume a stiff matronly attitude. She was obviously highly amused by him, but wasn't quite sure how far she ought to let things go. Johnson had already taken five minutes to order his breakfast and was now ready to order for "his friend" (Charley) who was still upstairs in his room, quite possibly talking on the phone.

"When my friend here comes down," Johnson drawled, "he would like two eggs, sunny-side, a large glass of orange juice with ice, toast and jelly, a large glass of milk . . . but no coffee."

"No coffee," the waitress repeated automatically.

"No coffee," Johnson confirmed. "Why he drank coffee once and he started turning black!"

The waitress lowered her note





"He is country. He loves country music. He feels it. He's sincere."

pad, looked at Johnson slightly uneasily, as if to imply that this last line might have been in bad taste. She shuttled off to get the breakfast. By the time she returned, Charley was seated at the table.

"Do you know what he said about you?" she began, "Oh, my Lord . . . it's Charley Pride!"

Johnson was chortling uncontrollably.

Jack Johnson relates to Charley Pride in that special way that so many successful managers have with successful artists. It is a com-

bination of man-to-man dialogue with many elements of father and son. Johnson has managed Charley since the latter first arrived at the door of Cedarwood Publishing Company in 1964, and the story of how this association came about is well worth a little more elaboration. Johnson is candid about what he had planned way back in 1964.

"I had been looking for a Negro singer to bring into country music for some time," he says. "I thought the industry was ready for it and I guess, in retrospect, I was right. I used to ask shoe shine boys if they

**" . . . I used to ask shoe shine boys if they knew any Negroes who liked country music. I got some pretty weird looks . . ."**

knew any Negroes who liked country music. I got some pretty weird looks.

"I was very fortunate running across Charley because, and I can't overemphasize this, Charley is special. You gotta realize that. He is country. He loves country music. He feels it. He's sincere. He understands what he's singing about, and you know as well as I know that a country audience can spot a phoney a mile away.

"Yet sometimes I wonder. I dunno, it's amazin' really. It still amazes me. I've seen big, burly red-neck truck drivers . . . if you told 'em they were gonna have a black guy as a co-driver, they'd go nuts. But I've seen 'em at shows right before Charley comes on stage. There's this something in the atmosphere, this electricity in the air. You can feel it. When he walks on stage they go crazy. He could be purple, and they'd still love him. It makes me wonder about everything. Ya know, sometimes I think white people in the south don't really dislike colored people. It's just this incredible competition thing."

"How come you don't sound like you're supposed to?" Charley Pride gets hit with that question often, and he's always slightly stumped for an answer. The explanation can safely be left for musicologists to puzzle over, but it is interesting to note this one particular anecdote. A reporter I know once heard an upstate New York farmer ask Hank Williams, "Where'd you learn to sing the blues?"

"I learned everthin' about singin' from a fine old Mississippi nigra I used to foller aroun' when I was a kid," Hank replied.

A few years ago the reporter was backstage at a Charley Pride concert in New Jersey.

"Hey Charley?" someone asked. "Where did you learn to sing the 'Lovesick Blues' like that?"

"From listening to Hank Williams," Charley answered. "Where else?"

Charley Pride grew up in Sledge, Mississippi. "I was as typical as any other Mississippi kid, but a bit of an individual," he recalls. "They used to kid me a lot, say that I was sort of an oddball. I think what they meant was that I was not just going to be a product of my environment."

The music that appealed to his ears even as a youngster was the music he heard on WSM radio. It was its earthiness that attracted him, he says, the feeling that he could relate to it, the joys and sorrows contained in the music. There was no one person who steered him toward country music; nobody in his family was particularly musical. At 14 years old he simply went out and bought his first Sears & Roebuck Silvertone guitar and sang along to the songs he heard on the radio.

**"... I wasn't goin' to deny myself the enjoyment of that music because people might ask, 'Why are you singing their songs?' ..."**

"I was blessed with five senses same as anybody else, and I heard music on the radio, broadcast from the Grand Ole Opry, that appealed to my ears," he began in answer to the inevitable question about what attracted him to country. "I wasn't goin' to deny myself the enjoyment of that music just because of my environment, because people might ask, 'Why are you singing *their* songs?' After all, I didn't make society, I was born into it.

"Music has been sliced up over the years into jazz, blues, rhythm & blues, country, rockabilly—all these terms are just connotations—to my way of thinking, it's *all* American music. A good example of this is 'When My Blue Moon Turns To Gold.' It used to be a country song. It was done straight country. But it became rock 'n' roll when another gentleman from my home state, Mr. Elvis Presley, did it. Like I say, it's all been sliced up, so now people say it's your music 'cause you're pink, or it's my music 'cause I'm purple, if there was any such thing as purple people.

"I've been told that I could sing anything. Well, I'm *not* of that opinion. Maybe I could do rock, or pop, if I worked on it. I don't know.

You see country music is the music that I chose to sing and I feel that I'm a *true* country artist.

"I've also been told that I sound like 20 different country artists. Basically, I think the reason for that is because I learned country music from the old school, back in the forties. But someone once told me that when people tell you that you sound like more than any one given artist, you have your *own* style, so I would say that I'm in pretty good shape from the standpoint of being original.

"All the same, I don't feel that I'm a phenomenon. I know that if it's a Negro talking to me, he might say, 'Well you look like *us*, but you

to make it as a baseball player. He played for a while with the Memphis Red Sox before he went into the Army. Afterwards, he wound up in Montana working as a smelter for the Anaconda Mining Company, and playing semipro ball. Occasionally, he'd sing between innings. One baseball fan took note of his voice, and Charley began singing in a night club.

One night he went to a show where Red Sovine was playing along with the late Red Foley. Charley went on in the second half of the show, did two songs, "Heartaches By The Number" and "Love-sick Blues" and came off stage to find Sovine and Foley waiting in



"How come you don't sound like you're supposed to?" people ask him.

**"... I'm no different from any other country artist, other than the pigmentation of my skin ..."**

sound like *them*,' and if it's a white person he'll say, 'Well you sound like us, and you look like them,' but I'm no different from any other country artist, other than the pigmentation of my skin."

Those were exactly the feelings of a small group of people in Helena, Montana at the club where Charley Pride first began singing. Charley had left Mississippi at seventeen, his single aim in life being

the wings, encouraging him to go to Nashville. That was the turning point in his life.

"People had been telling me they thought I was pretty good. 'Why didn't I try to do something for myself?' they would say. When I mentioned that this was *country* music I was singing, they didn't quite understand what I meant. They said, 'What about Nat King Cole and Sammy Davis, Jr.?' and I'd say, 'Well no, this is *country* music and I never heard of anyone being recorded in country music who had a tan this deep.' They said they didn't figure that would make any difference. Funny thing is it turned



**“... Lot of people said, ‘Well, who’s he gonna sell records to?’ Jack used to say, ‘Same people as all the rest of the country artists’ ...”**

out it didn't. Same thing happened when I first came to Nashville to audition for Jack Johnson. Lot of people said, 'Well, who's he gonna sell records to?' Jack used to say, 'Same people as all the rest of the country artists.' ”

It was Red Sovine's and Red Foley's encouragement that finally persuaded Charley. These people were in the music business. They ought to know. But Charley had one other thing on his mind. That early childhood ambition, to be a major league baseball player, just would not die. He decided to go to New York, to the Mets, for just one last crack at it. It was to no avail.

“They wouldn't even look at me,” he recalls, and even now there's no escaping the sadness in his voice at the memory of it. “I feel I could have done the job, too. I *still* feel I could do the job. 'Course their way of looking at it was at the age of 25, you should be starting to establish records in the majors in-

stead of trying to get in there. But I've been going back spring training with the Brewers for the last two years, and back a while ago, I hit one into the seats in Milwaukee during batting practice.

“I really threw hard that day. They were surprised to see how hard I was throwing. I'd been away from it for awhile. I'm not a vain or a boastful person, but I am a *good* hitter. I always have been. I've got good eyes and good coordination. I can read the copy of a paper from one side of the plane to the other.”

It was a disappointed Charley Pride who headed for Nashville. He'd taken a plane to New York, but by now funds were low. He made his trip to Nashville by bus. At one in the morning, he woke up Red Sovine. Red sent him over to Cedarwood Publishing the next morning where Jack Johnson was working as public relations director. Charley remembers that first meeting vividly.

Johnson was coming downstairs when he spotted Charley. He had put the word out recently that he was looking for a Negro singer, and one of the people he'd spoken to was a black “soul” singer named Obrey Wilson. “Did Obrey send you?” Johnson inquired of Charley. The answer was negative, but Johnson decided to audition him anyway.

Charley had come to Nashville intending to let anyone with any influence hear him. He was surprised and a bit annoyed after the audition when Johnson told him, “Go back to Montana. You'll hear from me in two to four weeks.” He immediately called Red Sovine and told him “this feller doesn't want anyone else to hear me.”

“Well, Charley, they're reputable people down there. I book out of there,” Sovine told him. “All the same I wouldn't let 'em keep you hanging on for six months with promises.”

Charley decided to go back to Montana. A few days later he got a manager's contract in the mail from Johnson. He called Red again.

“Red said, ‘You don't need a

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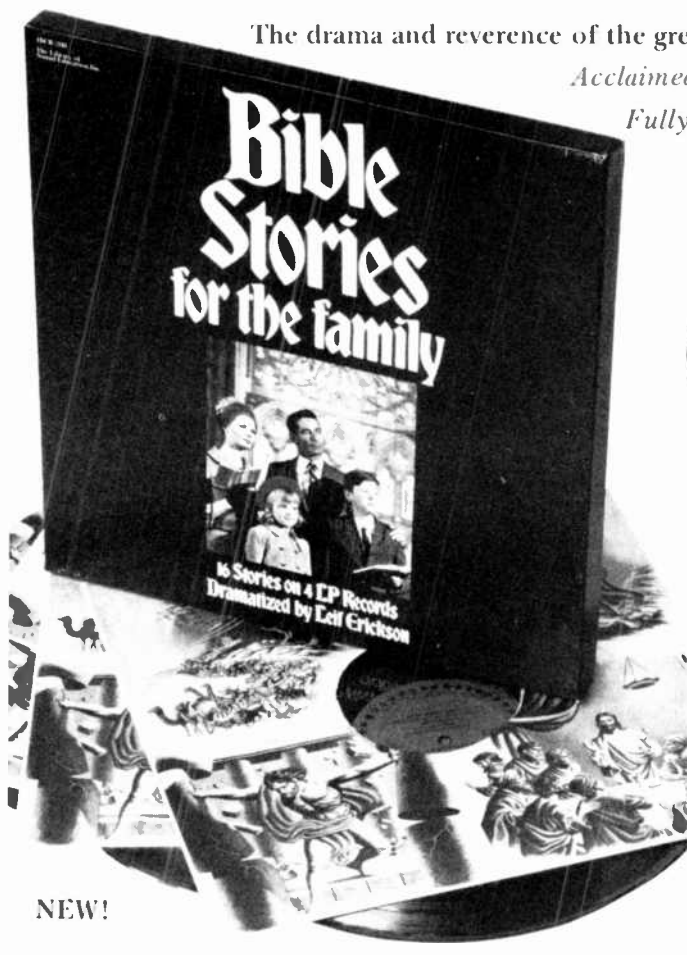
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manager,'—and then he said, 'Wait a minute you will need a manager, too. But you don't have to sign this contract right now; just keep it and let your lawyer look at it.'

A month later Charley signed the contract and sent it back. He and Johnson have been going strong ever since.

"I like the voice . . . it's a nice country voice," a record executive told Jack Johnson.

"Well, what do you think about recording it?" Johnson asked.

"Dunno, who is it?"

"Charley Pride."

"Who is he?"

Johnson would produce a picture.

"Oh my goodness, you're kidding! You're kidding!! He don't sound like no. . . ."

This went on for nearly a year. Charley was fed up. He was ready to come back to Nashville again and carry out his original intention—let everyone in town with any influence hear him. "I didn't know what Jack was going through," he admits now. When Charley told Johnson what he planned to do, he got a letter back immediately, telling him that an independent session had been arranged with producer Jack Clement. In the meantime Charley was supposed to work up some new material.

"They gave me seven songs, including what was to be my first single, 'The Atlantic Coast Line.' I worked 'em up, recorded 'em on a little Webcor tape recorder, and I was to mail 'em back from Mississippi where I was staying. But I said to myself, 'I think I'll take 'em back.' I drove back to Nashville, 270 miles, met Jack and we went over to Jack Clement's office. I played 'em for him, and he took up his guitar and picked right there in person, letting me sing them. Finally, he looked up at Jack and said, 'I think he's ready.'

"He asked me if I thought I could do two sides in three hours. I said, 'I can do 'em in an hour,' 'cause I was so enthusiastic about getting in there. When we got through, I went back to Mississippi. Chet Atkins was supposed to have been at the session, but he couldn't make it. So he didn't get to hear me record, but they played him the tape afterwards."

Then the delays began again.

Chet Atkins had now found himself in Johnson's unenviable situation. The record was fine, but was it possible to launch a black singer in country music? Charley kept calling Johnson from Mississippi.

"What's happening?"

"Well, Chet Atkins still has the tape."

"Well, if they don't want it, why don't we go somewhere else?" ("I wasn't really aware of the advantages of being on a big label," Charley admits now.)

Atkins finally brought the tape to a meeting of top RCA A&R men. Everybody liked the tape. Then Atkins broke the news. He told them the singer was a Negro. There was a

enteen albums ago. A lot has happened for Charley Pride since. Country music accepted him, just as easily as Charley Pride had accepted country music. Not only did it accept him, it made him number one in its ranks in terms of record sales and voted him "Entertainer Of The Year." The electricity which Jack Johnson spoke of is still quite apparent to anybody in an audience whenever and wherever Charley Pride is about to walk onstage. And 17 albums later, Charley Pride's records are every bit as good and as rich in quality and material as his first album.

Where does he go from here? As the latest in a line of country music



The music that appealed to his ears was the music he heard on WSM.

**“. . . They told me I was going to be on RCA Records. I said, 'Is that good?' They kid me a lot about that now . . ."**

deathly silence. Finally, someone suggested taking a chance, and they did.

On September 28, 1965, Charley got a call from Jack Johnson.

"They told me I was going to be on RCA Records. I said, 'Is that good?' They kid me a lot about that now."

That was seven years and sev-

stars—Jimmy Dean, Glen Campbell, Johnny Cash—to bring country music beyond its traditional environs to an even wider audience, the next logical step seems to be a TV show. And maybe that's what Jack Johnson has in mind, though if he has, he ain't sayin'.

Charley has a simple explanation for all his success.

"I feel music is just like buying and selling groceries, or insurance, or anything else," he says. "The better the product you've got, the better people like it and the better you can sell it. If it's got good lyrics and a good melody, I can do a much better job of selling it. But I have



to really like a song; I have to feel that I can put my heart into it because I sing from feelings, I mean from the heart.

"Why do I do mostly love songs? Well, I believe in love for one thing. And some of the songs that I've recorded remind me not only of situations that other people have been in, but of situations that I've been in. And I just love ballads. I don't believe music should be used to promote politics, or religion or whatever, but that's only my own individual feelings on it. I want to make that clear. And I am a staunch individualist.

"I think that explains a lot about why I'm in country music. I said to myself, 'Why can't I sing the kind of music I love?' I believe you should be your own individual self and not be molded into what somebody thinks you should be. I love to talk and visit with people, all people, but it was a long time before I would even venture to talk because I was afraid of saying 'they does' instead of 'they do,' until I learned how to listen and observe, and even now I'm still learning. People say, 'Where did you go to

school?' I say, 'Sledge Junior High'. They say, 'No, I mean college. Where did you learn to speak this well?' I'd say, 'Self-taught. Observing. Listening.' Because I make people my business.

"I'm a very curious person. I'm a Pisces. We're curious people. I believe in astrology. I've always started with the basis, 'Well, we're both Americans.' I've done that since I was old enough to learn a lyric."

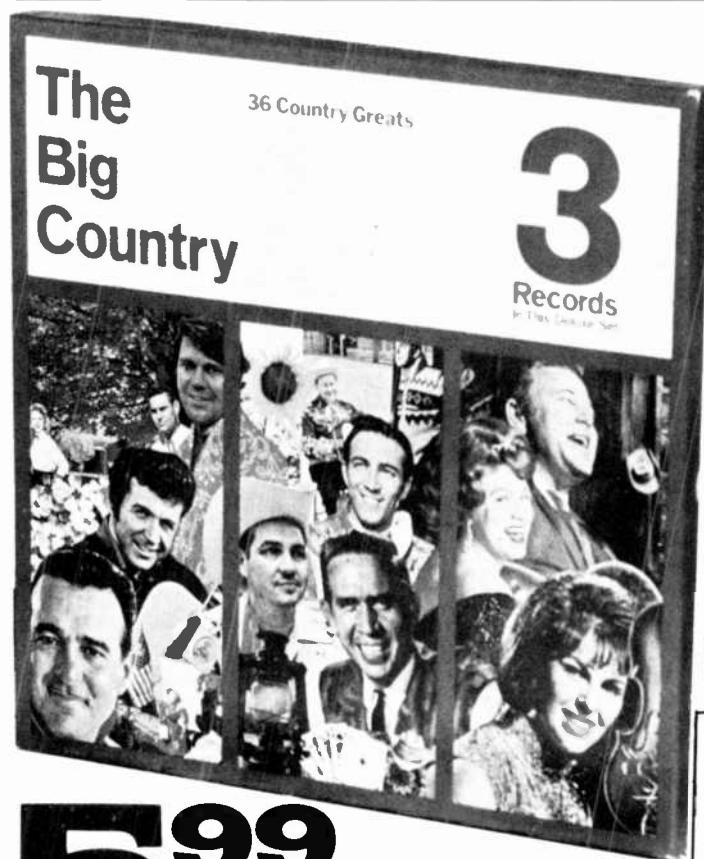
**"... I believe that if you put the right hand in space, you've got to put the left hand in there, too ..."**

In Sledge, Mississippi, a little boy named Charley Pride would sometimes have a dime to spend. He would head on down to an old country store to buy some "well, we called it liver cheese and Pepsi Cola." It was one of those old, typical country stores, where the guys sat around outside in rocking chairs, chewing tobacco and just swapping yarns. One day as Charley went into the store he overheard a

conversation about a guy from up North. "I don't like him, he's a Yankee," said one man in his rockin' chair.

"Something clicked in that kid's mind of mine," Charley recalls. "It would click in the mind of any little kid who was just goin' into a store to buy some liverwurst. At the time this man said that about the Yankee, Hitler was raisin' cane all through Poland and Austria. It all seemed so irrelevant to be worried about a Yankee.

"I don't think I grew up with any chip on my shoulder. I'd go to school and I'd pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, and those are beautiful words. I would look out of my broken windows and see the white school, and I knew things weren't quite what they was supposed to be, but I wouldn't feel any animosity or militancy because my mother had told me it was her belief that things were gonna get better. She was a great help, and I talked and listened a lot to her. She used to tell me, 'Don't go around with no chip on your shoulder.'



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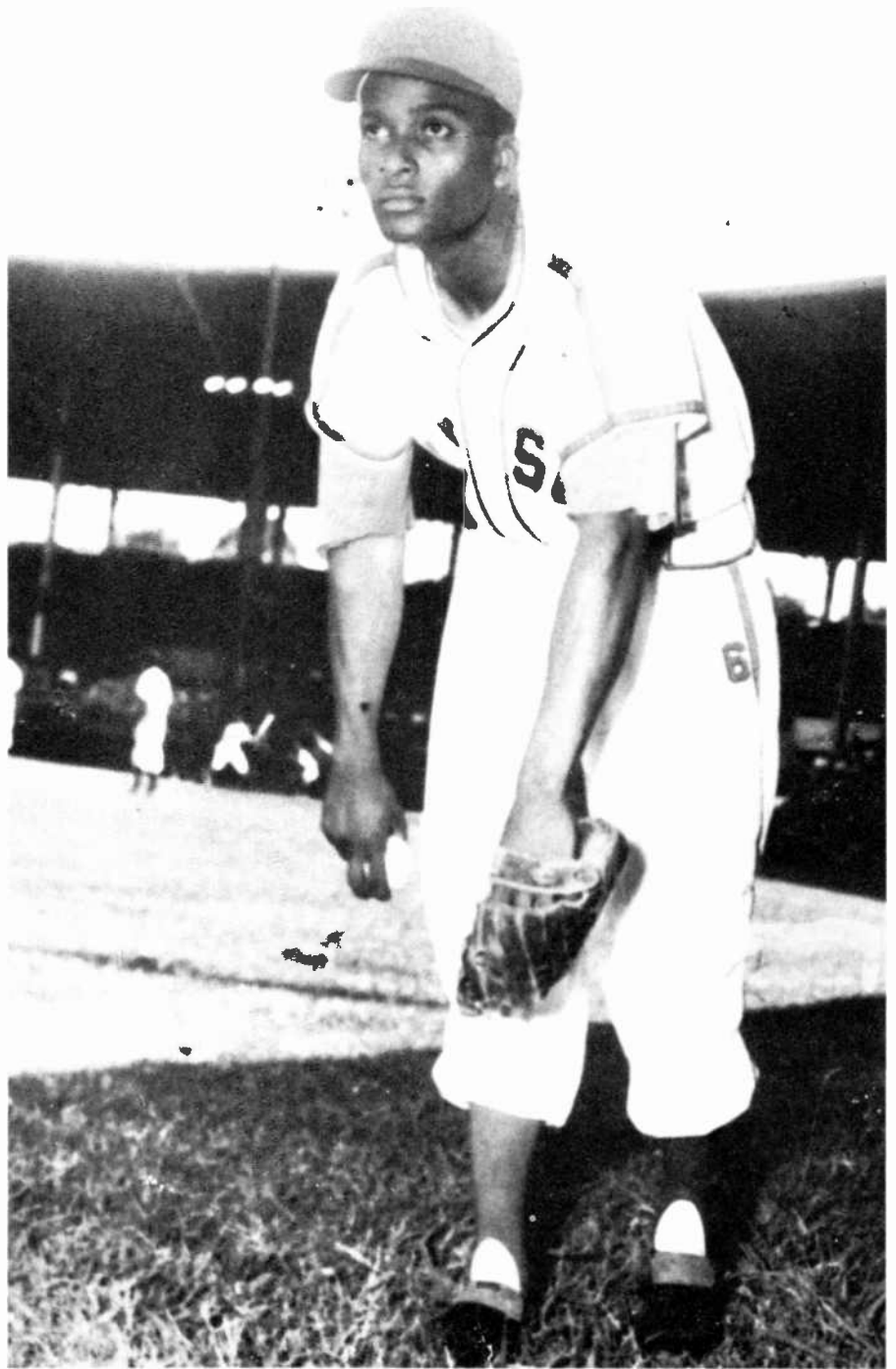
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That was a great help to me, and it all fits in with my philosophy as an individual. Now you might go and talk to my own brother, with the same mother and father, (I have seven brothers and three sisters) and you might find that all of them don't have quite the attitude that I have, in relation to me sittin' here talkin' to you."

Charley Pride refuses to speak for any minority group or any particular group. He doesn't feel he's an authority on anything, nor does he see himself as a phenomenon. He thinks of himself as a plain, average guy, who grew up in Mississippi, picked cotton, was blessed with a voice, wanted to be a baseball player but happened to make it as a singer after he didn't make it in baseball. He plays down the uniqueness of his situation in country music, preferring to talk more about the changes he sees taking place in people's attitudes in this country.

"I have three kids," he says. "My youngest is seven, and I guarantee you she knows where babies come from. I haven't told her. But you see it's a combination of TV, and everything else that's starting to loosen up people's minds. Like sex and anything else that for a long time was thought to be dirty and so forth. I mean that's a part of life, too. It needs to be explained. I think the best example to use is space. On the one hand, some people will say, 'Well, okay, I want to put my right hand in space, but I want to keep my left hand in the 17th century on other matters.' Well, I don't believe that will work. I believe that if you put the right hand in space, you've got to put the left hand in there too, and accept that what we're really talking about is *change*. If something hasn't worked for years and years, why keep holding on to it?"

"You see, I think a lot of the problems in this country are caused because people get frustrated. Everybody wants all those beautiful words we were talking about just before to come true. But a lot of people have different ways to get there. Some have militant ways, others form groups and others think it's gonna be done politically and educationally. I feel it has to be a blend of minds with the right attitudes, trying to avoid frustrating one another and trying to come to a



Charley still goes back to spring training with the Brewers.

sensible solution. 'Cause that's what we're really dealing with—minds and attitudes. Instead of gettin' angry and mad, let's help one another, instead of hating.

---

**"... You know ... if I'd still been pickin' cotton, you wouldn't have been here interviewin' me ..."**

---

"I consider myself a youngster, I'm worried about pollution and I'm worried about my country, and yet I'm not worried. It's just a mat-

ter of being an optimist. Like in England, they used to have people dropping in the streets from pollution; they finally did somethin' about it. Well, that will be done here. But let's not wait 'til finally we see our fellow Americans fallin' in the street from pollution. Let's look for it now. In other words, I'm not for forgetting outer space. I'm just for cuttin' back there a point. Why if we don't start with pollution, we ain't gonna have nobody to go to space anyway. So first things first. What is the priority?"

"I've been appointed to the



### 'The King of Country Music'

Irving Waugh, President of WSM Inc., made Roy Acuff's long-standing title official at a surprise tribute during Convention week. Waugh unveiled a bronze plaque honoring the first living musician to be elected to the Hall of Fame. It will be placed in the new Opry House, to be completed in early 1974.





# It's the Gift That Counts

## Christmas Gift Ideas From Country Artists

It's always a problem at Christmas—what to give as a present that's original. Just how many pairs of cowboy boots do you think Tex Ritter has stored away in a closet somewhere? And Merle Haggard probably has more fishing rods than he knows what to do with.

We decided it would be a test of the imagination for country personalities to think up original gift ideas for other artists and friends in the music business. We asked several people for their suggestions. Here's what they wanted to give to each other, and we added a few gift ideas of our own.



From Jerry Reed

To Chet Atkins

**The Chet Atkins Guitar Course.**

Just as well. Chet may have decided to give it to Jerry.



From Shelby Singleton

To RCA Records

**Bamboo plants grown under the SUN.**

You heard that record of "Blue Moon Over Kentucky" which Shelby released recently. Lot of folks thought it sounded a bit like Elvis. RCA, which bought the whole SUN catalog of Elvis' recordings in the fifties wasn't sure for a while either.

Shelby was recently found to be growing marijuana plants on his premises. When questioned by the authorities, he explained: "I thought it was bamboo."

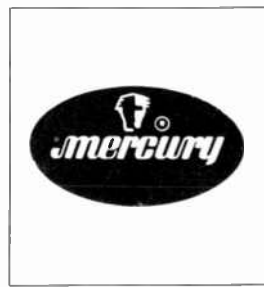


From Jerry Kennedy

To Mercury Recording Studios

**A gift certificate valid for one year entitling them to immediate piano repair service after each Jerry Lee Lewis recording session.**

If Jerry Lee can break fingers, as he did last year, it figures he can knock hell out of a piano, too.



From Red Simpson

To Dave Dudley

**A Cattle Truck.**

Dave recently recorded Red's song "Bull Shippers".



self-intensely interested in people, curious to the nth degree. Even today, after seven years of success, the idea of being interviewed still seems strange to Charley.

"You know . . . like if I had still been pickin' cotton, you wouldn't have been here interviewin' me. I got the same hands, same feet, same head, same eyes. Now if I'd still been pickin' cotton, what would you say? 'Well, I wouldn't go interview no cotton picker.' But I'm no different other than that I've been exposed, just happened to have a voice and wanted to pursue something and achieve something. So now you are sittin' here interviewin' a former cotton picker. People say, 'Oh yes, you are different, though. You *are* phenomenal.' But I'm not.

**" . . . I'm sure that Jackie Robinson would have loved to have been just another baseball player . . . I'm in the same position . . . "**

"I'd like to give you a completely clear example. I was livin' in Montana, and a kid walked up to me and said, 'my name's'—well, I won't say his name—but he gave me his name and he says, 'I'm a half-breed, the lowest thing on the face of the earth.' I said, 'What'd you say?' He said, 'I'm a half-breed, the lowest thing on the face of the earth.' He had been told this, and he had accepted this within him. I think this is where a person should use his brains, to the point of not gettin' angry at the persons that were persecuting him that way, callin' him these names, but to try to stand up and think about it for a minute and say, 'Why are they callin' me this? Are they jealous? What reason? I mean, what have I done?'

"You know, Negroes, a lot of 'em love country music, but all of what we've talked about previously still relates to this business of your music and my music, because of what I said earlier. In other words, the best way I can explain it is this way. I'm sure that Jackie Robinson would have loved to have been just another baseball player. But society put him in a position of being the first known Negro in the major leagues. I come along years later. I'm in the same position and it's slowly breaking down."

"Why do I do mostly love songs? Well, I believe in love, for one thing."

American Revolution Bi-Centennial Commission by the President. I explained to him earlier that I would try and make as many meetings as I can—it's the Commission on celebrating the 200 years of America. Now I'm not a politician—I don't care to be. I don't endorse anybody. I don't reject or condemn or condone. I just try to contribute the best I can as one little mortal on this planet and one little mortal within America and our society."

Charley got up and searched around for his cigarettes. He stared out of the Hotel Roosevelt window

at the Los Angeles smog which had started to spread out of the city up toward the canyons. "Horrible, ain't it?" he grumbled. Charley by now had gotten well into his stride. Dean Martin would have to wait. A few knocks on the hotel door had already been ignored. Charley had started to interview me, not just the sort of elementary questions one sometimes gets from an entertainer who's been through so many interviews, because Charley doesn't give many interviews. He is everything that Johnson said about him, and that he said about him-





From Dave Dudley

To Red Simpson

**One year's paid tuition at ACME Truck Driving School.**  
"And that's all I'm gonna give him," Dave added.



From George Jones

To Tammy Wynette

**George and Tammy say they would like to give each other the CMA Best Male and Female Singer awards.**  
Very nice, too. We think George may be giving Tammy "Something borrowed, something blue, something old," . . . and maybe something new.



From Donna Fargo

To Roy Clark

**A dictionary so he'll know how to spell "Malaguena."**  
Every time Donna appears on "Hee Haw" with Roy, he professes ignorance.



From Randy Scruggs

To Linda Ronstadt

**A carton of violin rosin to fiddle around with.**  
They're both trying to learn the violin.



From Danny Davis

To Buck Owens

**A gigantic can of "Lemon Pledge" so that next year Buck can polish up the Bakersfield Brass.**



From Bob Neal (Elvis' first manager)

To Elvis

**His own personal pink and black Brink's armored car.**  
Bob Neal's eleven-year-old son, Kevin, would like to give Ralph Emery and Tom T. Hall golf lessons. He's beaten them both.



Now a few gift ideas from COUNTRY MUSIC.



From Earl Scruggs

To Lester Flatt

**A Moog Synthesizer.**



From Roy Acuff

To The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band

**A pair of scissors.**

"They're just as fine as they could be," Roy said (in COUNTRY MUSIC's Oct. issue.) "But I haven't seen them. Their faces was covered!"



From the Los Angeles Dodgers

To Charley Pride

**A place at the end of the bench.**

Read the story in this issue to learn what Charley's first ambition was.



From Elvis Presley

To Col. Tom Parker (his manager)

**A copy of "Dare To Be Great," the Glenn Turner album telling the little guy how to be an overnight success.**



From The Lone Ranger

To Marty Robbins

**Tonto.**

Marty has signed film contracts to star in several westerns.



And finally,



From Faron Young

To Peter McCabe

**An autographed copy of MUSIC CITY NEWS.**





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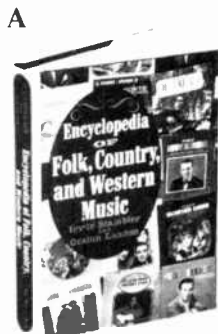
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# Those Unsung Folks Behind the Nashville Sound

It's nice work if you can get it . . . only a select few can.

By John Pugh

Buddy Spicher is 34 years old. He is of medium height, stocky build, has a round, pleasant face with brown eyes, sandy hair and a luxurious tuft of chin whiskers. He dresses casually, speaks softly, smiles easily, has a genial disposition and is somewhat shy. He lives in a modest home in a sunbaked subdivision with his wife and three children. He water skis on weekends and tends to his two horses daily. He drives a Karmann-Ghia and his wife takes the kids to school and does the shopping in a 1972 Chevrolet. He makes \$30,000 a year. He is politically conservative, quietly religious, a firm believer in the work ethic and the old morality, but also imbued with a judge-not-lest-ye-be-judged and a live-and-let-live philosophy. All in all, he fits the perfect stereotype of the typical rising young insurance executive. With one exception. When Buddy Spicher leaves for work in the morning he carries a fiddle instead of a briefcase. Buddy is a Nashville session man.

To most people, Buddy's world would seem very strange. He may go several days without working, then have a stretch of fifteen-hour days that have him running frantically between assignments, eating sporadically and badly, losing sleep, and — most calamitously — being drained of all energy and creativity. In a given week he will play for some of the best singers in the world and some of the worst. He will play for some of the biggest stars and some of the most hopeless dreamers. He will play country,

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**“. . . Take these people—numbering about 50—out of the picture, and Nashville's recording industry would come to a screeching halt . . .”**

---

pop, rock, middle-of-the-road, gospel, bluegrass, flapper-era standards and anything else they want to throw at him. And he will play it all with characteristic virtuosity. Basically, only one thing is certain:

he will play three hours on each session and he will be paid \$96 for his time, double if he is the session leader.

It's nice work if you can get it. Only a select few can. The ones



PHOTO: BILL GRINE

**Buddy Spicher: Lazy days on the lake, then frantic running between sessions.**





PHOTO BILL GRINE

The Nashville Edition follow those peculiar Nashville notations.

just so fantastic," gushes one. "That Buddy can play anything," says another in zealous amazement. "Fred's just got to be one of the best ever," says a third in tones usually reserved for motherhood and apple pie. When talking to each other it is as if they had just downed a quart of maple syrup. "Hey, man, you just knock me out on Johnny's new record. That's some of the greatest picking I ever heard." It has got to be one of the greatest mutual admiration societies in the world.

It has also got to be one of the most closed. The session pickers' fraternity—though totally devoid of snobbishness and pretentiousness—is as tough to get into as your most exclusive country club. These boys have picked together, fished together, got drunk together, and, in some cases, virtually lived together for years. They are extremely close-knit, stand united on all matters, and cast a dubious eye at any newcomer. The situation is a lot better than ten, or even five, years ago, but the truth is they have starved some good musicians out of town.

"I've been on both sides of the fence," says Spicher, "and I always said that if I had the chance, I was going to use some of the ones who were out there starving. But once you get in, you realize these guys are just so much better. There are some talented ones out there that could play on sessions, but nowadays if a guy is good enough he can get in pretty quickly. A producer not only wants the best men, but ones who know each other and can communicate with each other and with him. The rhythm sections have to be so tight that the guys almost have to be married to each other. And a producer has to get the right men for the right artist. He has to know, for instance, which guys play better on a rock record than a country record. And when a record company is putting several thousand dollars into a session, I can't blame them for not wanting to take on someone they're not familiar with. It's just hard to break into a situation like that. But that's life in general: you're always going to have the people on the inside and those on the outside looking in."

"I don't think the guys resent newcomers the way they used to. There's so much work here now that the record companies can't

who do, play on almost all the records cut in Nashville. Their names, with one or two exceptions, are not household words and never will be. But take these people—numbering approximately 50—out of the picture, and Nashville's recording industry would come to a screeching halt.

"Those hit records are being made right out there in that studio," says one sideman with a quiet intensity. "We get together and work out the arrangement, come up with ideas, help the artist and do everything possible to create a hit record. It's not coming from the control room. It's coming from us."

A biased statement, definitely; an overstatement, perhaps; but a very understandable one. The foremost attitude of all Nashville session pickers is this fierce awareness of their brethren and the part they have played in creating "the Nashville Sound." The second is the awareness that few others seem to know it. It is surprising how completely lacking in any star ambition the session clan is. "I've seen too many become stars and get messed up," says one.

"Still, the boys would like for someone to at least smile their way

**"... You're not the star,  
and it's not  
your record, so when  
you get mentioned  
it's a bonus ..."**

once in a while," he adds. "We've never gotten the credit we deserve, although if you're a studio musician you expect anonymity and learn to live with it. You're not the star and it's not your record, so any time you get mentioned, it's a bonus."

"The people on the inside recognize us," says Buddy Spicher. "They can tell on a record if it's me or Tommy Jackson or Johnny Gimble. When they say they like my work on a particular record, that's enough for me."

If many sidemen do take their unsung status fatalistically, it is for much the same reason the rabbit takes to the briar patch: it is all they have ever known. Realizing that the general public will never speak their names in the same breath as the stars they back—if at all—they turn to each other for praise. They are forever congratulating each other and/or commenting on what a super player one of their members is. "Kenny is

possibly use the same ones all the time, as they did previously. Besides, I've found most of the guys to be pretty big people; they're not jealous or afraid or trying to run anyone out. I myself welcome competition. It makes me work harder."

**"... Two pickers will meet and the first thing they ask each other is, 'You getting enough work?' ..."**

Contrary to what one is initially tempted to think, the prevailing sentiment among the pickers with regard to their elite position is not smugness or swell-headedness, but everlasting gratitude. They realize they are at the pinnacle of their profession, and they feel damn glad and damn lucky to be there, especially when they hear somebody who's just as good as they are, still playing for \$5 a night and all the beer he can drink. Indirectly they also keep each other in check. "I look at guys like Charlie McCoy and Norbert Putnam, who have such super ability and such super minds, and I ask myself sometimes what I'm doing in the same studio with them," says Spicher.

The uncertain demand for their product also makes for rampant insecurity. "Everyone feels it," says one sideman. "Two pickers will meet and the first thing they ask each other is, 'You getting enough work?'"

The recession of two/three years ago drove the point home hard. The pickers may tool around in Cadillacs, and get out there on the lake and raise hell in motorboats, but underneath it all they harbor a "this could all be gone tomorrow" feeling.

"It's the worst part of our job," says one. "Nashville kept going during the slump because of the steadiness of country music, but, from what I understand, New York was really hurt. I heard guys up there were working in Joe's Bar. Los Angeles was hurt some, too, but they had movie and TV soundtracks to tide them over. But if a real depression ever hit, we'd be the first to go, and we know it."

As a result, nearly all of them have some sort of investment to fall back on, usually, as in Spicher's case, land and livestock. "If I never picked another lick, it's a good feel-



Charlie McCoy, master of a dozen instruments, takes a turn on the vibes.

ing to know I've got a few acres bought and paid for," says one. "Even if they dropped a bomb on it, it's still going to be there when the smoke clears."

There is another type of fear that also gnaws at the pickers, the fear of rocking the boat. The session man, while outwardly as flip and hip as anybody at the Fillmore, is actually as much a grey flannel suiter as any junior executive at General Motors. Beneath the beards and bell bottoms beats the heart and soul of a company man, an edgy company man. The picker has built himself a nice, safe, ordered world, and he is wary—sometimes absurdly so—of doing anything that he feels may ever, remotely jeopardize his status. (Of the several pickers interviewed for this story, only one, as you can see, was willing to talk for the record.)

Horror stories abound about pickers who spoke their minds and ended up sitting home for six months for their trouble. "He was just running off at the mouth," they'll say. "He didn't mean half of

what he said. But as soon as that story came out, his session work fell off to almost nothing." So nobody talks—for the record, anyway.

The incontrovertible fact, regardless of their reluctance to discuss it, is that a good many pickers simply don't respect a good many producers.

"It's hard to knock success, and some producers have had some incredible success, or maybe just some incredible luck, but they just do so many things that are wrong musically," says one. "I think some of them would rather be playing or singing. But if they can't, they settle for producing. Now, there are some that I admire; mostly the ones that came up as musicians or writers themselves."

Many variables such as personalities, type of music preferred, how often a particular producer calls a picker's evaluation. But a basic rule of thumb is the last statement: sidemen like producers who were formerly musicians or writers; those who got into producing

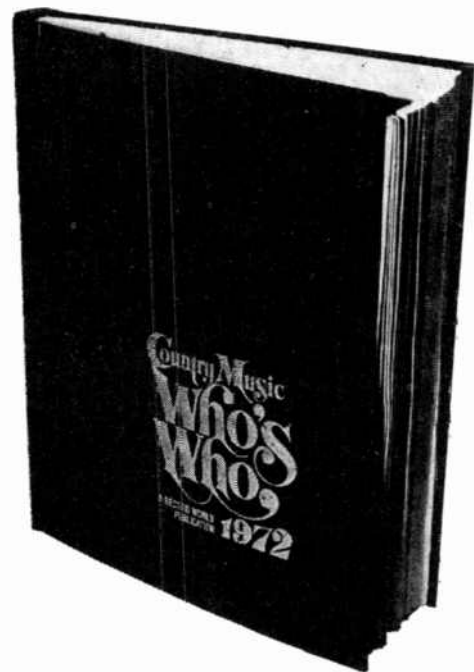


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World Radio History

through luck, or maybe one fluke hit way back in 1964, no. "It's a little hard to feel nice about a producer when he stands over you and says, 'Play me something else. That sounds like two cats strung out over a clothesline,'" says one picker, who again asked not to be identified.

"We'll be out in the studio really getting with it," says another. "We'll have this great mood worked up and everyone will be all hopped up and ready to go, and they'll press the intercom and say, 'You guys hold it a minute. We're not quite ready yet'."

In fairness to the producers, several attitudes of the sidemen must be understood. Many see themselves as doing all the work, while the producer takes all the credit. Some have no conception of the demands and pressures on the producers. And many feel like the perpetually-grumbling private, who is certain that if only he could take the place of his foot-dragging general, he could have the war over with in a week. The ultimate goal of all session men, therefore, is to produce.

"I can't see being a big producer, but ten years from now I'd like my own studio and three or four artists whom I could really relate to," says a wistful Spicher. "I'm not too much interested in it from a business standpoint, and I'd like it mostly for fun. I love to sit around home and overdub parts on the fiddle, any kind of pretty violin playing. I'm not known as a big arranger, but I enjoy that. I'd like to find hits and arrange them. And I'd like to play in the Nashville Symphony again."

Don't blanch at the last statement. Scratch a picker and you'll find a musician first, a country boy second. And country music is usually not his idea of the world's most demanding music, though from an economic standpoint—such as pulling him through the recession without missing a payment—he is grateful for it. One of the chafers says, "You go play your first session. The producer says, 'Just give me a good country record, fellows.' So you hit the same three chords over and over for three hours. You go to your next session. By now you're dying to hit a lick. So you throw one in. Immediately from the control room you hear, 'All right, boys, let's not



PHOTO: BILL GRAINE

Guitarist Pete Wade's home stands on the grounds that were originally part of Andrew Jackson's Hermitage

**“... If you're going to be a session man, you have to learn to give up your identity and not try to interject yourself into everything ...”**

get too carried away. Just stick to the basics.' It'll drive you right up the wall.”

“If you're going to be a session man, you have to learn to give up your identity and not try to interject yourself into everything,” one picker says. “You're not there to show what you can do; you're there to do whatever is required to best present the artist. It's not how much you can play; it's how little you can play and still fill a hole. It cramps your style sometimes, but you just have to accept it.”

Spicher: “I like the real down-to-earth country; things like Bob Wills and Bill Monroe, and any creative fiddle or steel guitar playing. Country music is just one type of music, and it may not be everyone's favorite. But if we didn't like it, how could we play it so often and so well?”

Still pickers hunger greedily for a Bob Dylan or Joan Baez session, a chance to open up. Turned loose at last, they resemble prisoners in the exercise yard. “Man, you should

have been at Linda Ronstadt's session last night. We were really getting with it, laying down some out of sight stuff, man. Fuzz tones and everything. I mean, really fuzzing them heavy. Sounded funky as hell.”

The pickers, though nearly all intelligent, agile-minded people, are almost maddeningly single-minded. With few exceptions, they eat, sleep and breathe music. Normally, it is all they're interested in, and definitely all they talk about.

“Some of the guys are hung up on fishing or something, but most of us just have our music,” says Spicher.

It is an unusual life, Buddy Spicher's, causing him a frequent, pensive loneliness, not only among outsiders, but with his peers. He longs for the good old times of two and three-day jam sessions, and laments the fact that the boys never get together like they used to. But he realizes that what broke up the old gang was work, more demand for country music in particular and





PHOTO: BILL GRINE

A sideman's expensive home. Buddy Harman's three-level, mod-Tudor house stands on top of a hill just outside Nashville.

for Nashville product in general. Nowadays, everyone's too busy—and making too much money—to pick and grin for the fun of it anymore. Even Buddy.

It is a harried life, with hectic scurrying between three and four daily sessions, and 10 p.m. sessions that drag on to two or three o'clock the next morning. "I work 12-13 hours a day, and when I get home I want to turn the music off," says one. "But sometimes it won't turn off. I fight it by exercise, mainly water skiing and tennis. Everyone just has to find his own way to stand the pace."

Nearly everyone needs a couple of cold Buds to get through that last session, though Spicher, a physical fitness bug of sorts, neither smokes nor drinks, and is mainly an exerciser too. It is, at times, a monotonous, frustrating, discordant life. But Buddy is not asking to trade places with anyone else. He is doing what he loves, he is one of the best at it, at least a few people know it, and he makes good money.

"The best part about session work?" he said, cruising his boat up the lake to see a friend on a day off. "Well, look at it today. Beautiful weather, water's nice, I'm out here enjoying myself, while everyone else is fighting the nine-to-five rat race. Man, it sure beats working for a living."



PHOTO: HERSHELL WATSON

Sideman Chip Young is an avid antique collector. Most conspicuous interior feature of his ante-bellum home is a 1775 Chippendale bed.

#### NASHVILLE SHORTHAND

"It's amazing!" Carol Channing once said of her Nashville recording session.

"They just write down these little numbers and then turn around and play the song."

What "they write" is the Nashville shorthand, a kind of hieroglyphic lead sheet that the pickers produce and use on most sessions. Its unique characteristic is that numbers represent notes on the scale. Say a song is to be in the key of C. Then the notation would be as follows:

C	D	E	F	G	A	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

If the song has the first two notes in C, then goes to the next two in D, it comes out in the shorthand as 1 1 2 2. If the keys are transposed into, say, D instead of C, the shorthand remains the same with D becoming 1, E 2, etc.

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# They Walk the Line Between Country and Rock



## The Nitty Gritties and the Old Masters

By Elkin Brown

... As Jimmy Martin put it:  
"They're strange  
looking boys, but they're  
damn good pickers" ...

The debate concerning the new country-rock performers continues. Are they country? Are they pop? When is a record pop, when is it country? Only one thing is certain: when a record crosses from the country to the pop charts, it sells more copies. Some artists prefer to be known as pop. Maybe they started out in rock, or pop, and worked their way back into country, as Conway Twitty did for example. Maybe they began as country artists and wound up as pop, like the Everlys.

In August last year an historic recording session took place. It featured the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, along with some of the stellar greats in country music—the real masters, in fact, such as Roy Acuff, Merle Travis, Doc Watson, Mother Maybelle Carter, Earl Scruggs (with Randy and Gary), and Jimmy Martin. The 3-record album



which resulted from that session, *Will The Circle Be Unbroken*, may well push the Nitty Gritties further along the country road. But more important, this assembling of talents from so-called "different areas of music" has been one more step toward breaking down unnecessary musical barriers.



*"I have never met a finer group of boys than the Nitty Gritty boys. I asked them why they objected to bein' called country, an' the only thing they said was the word 'country' can hurt the sales of a song."*

Roy Acuff  
COUNTRY MUSIC Interview  
(October, 1972)

Bill McEuen, the soft-spoken manager of the Dirt Band who conceived the session, explained it this way: "This is something the boys have always wanted to do. They grew up listening to the Grand Ole Opry and have always had a strong feeling for real down-to-earth country music."

At one point during the session, with Doc Watson recording, Earl Scruggs came in and it was decided that he would replace the Dirt Band's banjoist, John McEuen, on one particular number. McEuen more than willingly agreed, saying, "I've been listening to Earl Scruggs

**... Hippies, old boys,  
clean-cut fraternity types,  
they were all there  
for the Dirt Band . . .**

strange looking boys, but they are damn good pickers." Of course, Earl Scruggs felt totally at home in this situation, having previously been associated with Bob Dylan, the Byrds, and others far from the mainstream of country music. His reaction to the abilities of the Dirt Band was more one of confident satisfaction than half-stunned delight.

Almost everyone agrees that the

good old Mr. Bojangles."

The audience, however, was obviously in the mood for more down-home stuff, as evidenced by the rebel yells that went up as John McEuen broke out his electric fiddle and careened madly about the stage, and the other members of the band joined together for a rousing chorus of "Jambalaya". Getting further down to it, the Dirt Band called a balding ray of Tennessee sunshine from the audience by the name of Lightnin' Chance. Lightnin' was once a sideman and comedian on the Grand Ole Opry, and had written a song called "Alligator



Mother Maybelle Carter



Earl Scruggs



Doc Watson

ever since I was a kid." Then he added with a grin: "But I never thought I would have the privilege of being put out of work by him!"

Perhaps it was all best summed up, however, by Jeff Hanna, upon hearing Mother Maybelle pick her old Gibson in the now legendary Carter Family style: "These are truly the masters. If it weren't for them, we wouldn't have been able to learn the music we have, and it's really a trip to be able to actually see and work with those who have taught us through the medium of phonograph records for such a long time."

For the most part, the "Old Guard" were the stars, with the Dirt Band as accompanists, sidemen, back-up vocalists, etc., and the Nitty Gritty boys were clearly in a constant state of awe. But it was also clear that, for the most part, the admiration was mutual. As Jimmy Martin put it: "They're

album has been a major musical and sociological breakthrough. It was inevitable that the Dirt Band would come closer to the "Nashville scene." Sure enough, recently they appeared at the old War Memorial Auditorium, for one of the most motley audiences ever to grace those hard, pew-like seats. Hippies, old boys, clean-cut fraternity types were all there for the Dirt Band, and before it was over, they were all out of their seats doin' the combination double-shuffle boogie with big possum grins on their faces.

The boys started out with what Jeff Hanna announced was a "medley of our hits, which is gonna take about six hours, so you might as well relax (chuckle!)," and they launched into songs everybody knew from the *Uncle Charlie and his Dog Teddy* album, "Rave On", "House at Pooh Corner," and the all-time favorite, of course, the

Man," which was immortalized by Jimmy "C" Newman. An old standup bull fiddle was provided for Lightnin'. The Dirt Band asked him to play while they did their rendition of his song. He did, and the crowd went wild. Karl Himmel, sitting in on drums for a couple of songs, got up and did a jig, and I could swear I heard a big AAEEEE!! (Cajun yell) from somewhere in the audience. But even though it had reached such a high pitch, the show went a point higher. A call was made into the audience, and up came Jimmy Martin, who joined the Dirt Band to sing his classic, "Sunny Side of the Mountain". Martin was plainly quite exuberant. For many of the younger members of the audience, it was the first time they had seen an old great like Jimmy Martin. Judging from their reaction it won't be the last.



John Denver, who looks more like a mischievous school teacher than an entertainer, is baffled by it all.

It happens that way sometimes. One song sets a singer on a path different from the one he had been following and changes his career. Usually the story is about country singers breaking into the pop market. With John Denver and his "Take Me Home Country Roads" it was the other way around. Country found him in a big way.

"Country Roads," however, has universal appeal and folk singer John Denver has not yet become country singer John Denver. But his audience has expanded and country music fans, who demand good stories in their songs, apparently are attracted to Denver's love of the wilderness and the wide open spaces. When he sings, he sounds as if he were on a mountain peak



are basically the same song. They're all about leaving someone you love for whatever reason.

"I think each song is a little bit older. I'd like to think it's a sign that I'm maturing, but I don't know if I'm the one to judge that. I don't think I'm a very mature person sometimes. But I do think the songs are maturing."

Denver doesn't see himself as a very deep guy. He doesn't claim to have any remarkable insights. As an artist, he feels it's his job to record in a nice way things that everyone seems to see. "There are emotions that everyone feels and it's these emotions that I try to write about.

"I'm not from West Virginia, but I could have been. In my mind, it's a universal place, a country place for someone in the city who wants to be back home where there's

## John Denver: From 'Jet Plane' to 'Country Road'

By Dick Richmond

trying to reach out to someone on the next mountain. People who live apart from others can understand that.

"I get good reactions when I sing country numbers," Denver said, "but I really don't know if I would be accepted by a country audience. I've never performed in any kind of a country show.

"*Poems, Prayers and Promises* was a very big country album, bigger than 'Country Roads' was a single. But the next album, *Aerie*, didn't do that well in country and I really just don't know. It'll be interesting to see if my latest album, *Rocky Mountain High*,' penetrates that market at all."

Denver sipped his beer and took a bite of a big cheeseburger. He had just finished a two and a half hour concert at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, and was relaxing with members of his band. More than 8,000 people had stood and cheered at the end of his concert. Perhaps 200 had come backstage to catch a glimpse of the man whose first success as a songwriter was with "Leaving On A Jet Plane," recorded by Peter, Paul and Mary.

Denver's father was a pilot in the Air Force and holds three world records in military aviation. "Jet

Plane" was a phenomenon and a few years ago it changed Denver's life as much as "Country Roads" seems to be doing now. Someone asked him if he ever got tired of singing it at every performance. He grinned at the question.

**"... I think each song is a little bit older. I don't know if it's a sign that I'm maturing, but I do think the songs are maturing ..."**

"I'm so grateful for that song," he said, "that if my wife, Annie, and I ever have a baby, we're going to name it Jet Plane. When I wrote it, was with the Chad Mitchell Trio. But that wasn't the first song I wrote. The first was called 'For Baby,' which the Mitchell Trio did and which Peter, Paul and Mary later recorded. 'Jet Plane' really surprised everyone, because I wrote it three years before it became a hit, and Peter, Paul and Mary had it on an album for two and a half years before it came out as a single. It was crazy. It seemed to come from nowhere and suddenly it was a big smash record.

"It's funny about songs," Denver said. "'Jet Plane,' 'Follow Me' and my recent single, 'Goodbye Again,'

peace and quiet. Even people who have never lived in the country can understand that yearning; that's why I think 'Country Roads' hit."

Denver now lives in Aspen, Colorado, but he didn't only pick his last name because of his attraction to the high country.

"My real name is Deutschen-dorf," he admitted, somewhat embarrassed. "When I was working in California and started to become known, I had to change my name to get a recording contract and to work in clubs."

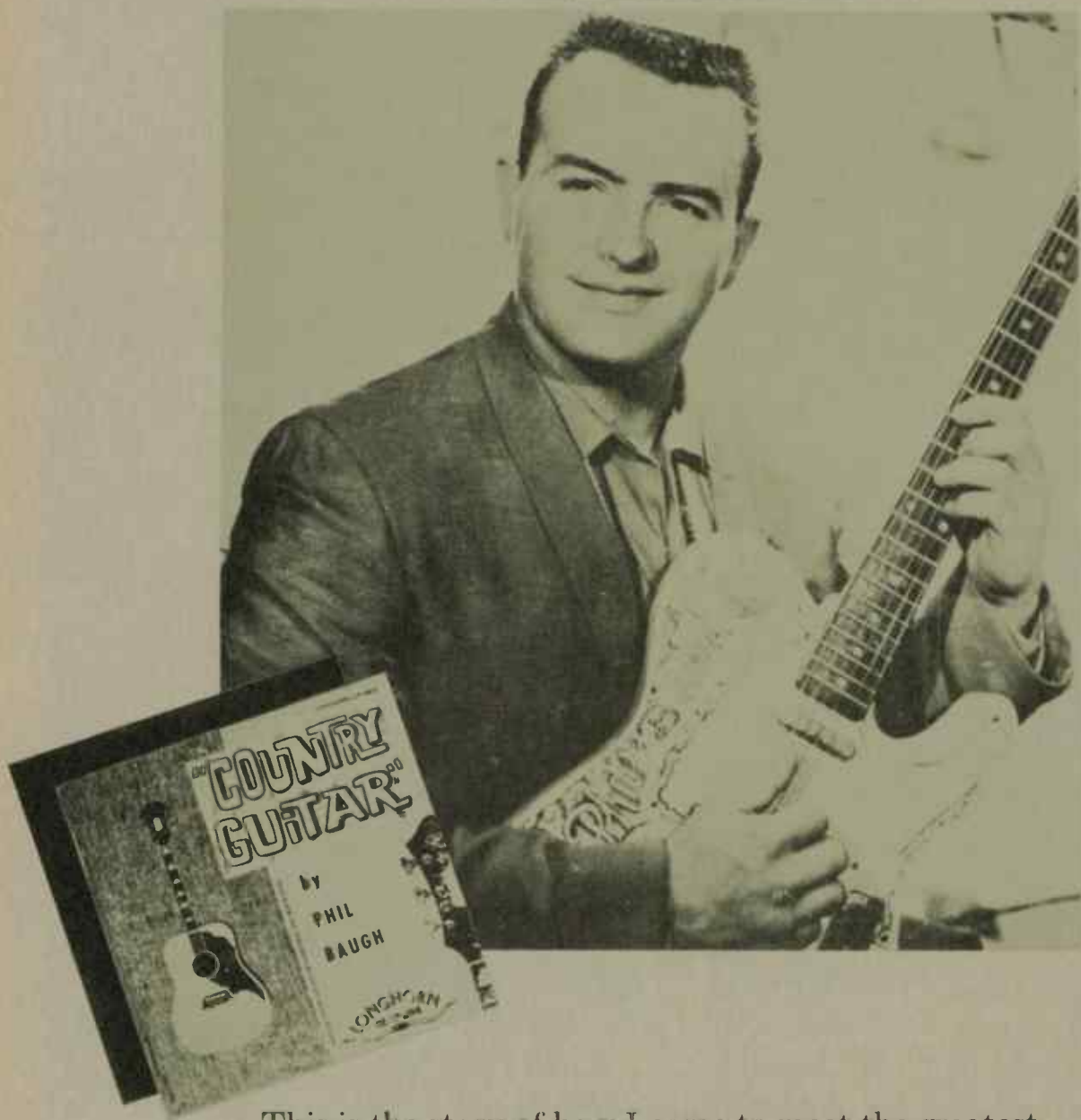
Denver's next album is going to be country and western.

"It's just an idea in the back of my head," he said. "Basically I want to show the progression of country music, but I don't necessarily want people to know that. I want to do research and find a pretty song that cowboys used to sing on the range. From that point I want to take it right up to the present."

Looking down the long table, he spotted a pitcher of beer. Someone handed it to him. It was almost empty and his wide mouth broke into a smile as he poured what remained into his glass.

"But right now," he said, then drained the glass, "the country album is just an idea."

# Re-introducing the Boy Who Played 'Em All



This is the story of how I came to meet the greatest country guitar player on the face of the earth.

## ...Phil Baugh

By Charlie Burton



It all started in the summer of 1969. Supposedly, I was going to college, but what I was *really* doing was driving my car between Xenia and Springfield, Ohio, looking for old country records and Marvel comic books.

On one of my runs into Springfield, I found this strange, little record shop that sold china figurines on the side (Springfield's other record shop also sold life insurance). And while picking through the store's \$1.00 record bin for any forgotten treasures of country and western lore, I stumbled on one that fairly cried out for my attention: *Country Guitar* by a fellow named Phil Baugh.

The album was on one of those labels that's hard to forget once you've seen it: "Longhorn." It had a cover that was the epitome of cheap design, a cutout catalog photo of an Epiphone jumbo guitar and in perfect funnybook lettering the words "Country Guitar." On the back of the jacket in the true "Bruno of Hollywood" tradition were photos of not just Phil, who was a new name to me back then, but also of Vern Stovall, whose name rang a bell up in the steeple of my mind. The notes said: "Vern does all the vocals on Phil Baugh's records, and is a great writer as well as an artist. Vern has been writing professionally since he was 16 years old, and has written such songs as 'Who'll Be The One,' recorded by Ray Price, 'Do My Heart A Favor,' recorded by Freddie Hart, and his biggest song, which was recorded by five different artists was 'Long Black Limousine.'"

"Long Black Limousine!" Of course! That's where I had heard of Vern Stovall. What a song—a bona fide country classic, recorded by artists from Merle Haggard to Elvis! The notes went on to say that "Vern, of course, is co-writer with Phil Baugh on 'Country Guitar,' which right now looks like it might be the biggest of all his songs. The nationwide acceptance of 'Country Guitar' has been tremendous. The critics say that this might be one of the all time great records." Hmmm. . . .

My eyes wandered to the picture of Phil Baugh, whose expression could only be called cocky. He was cradling a guitar—a Fender Telecaster, painted up in a way that could only be called "psychedelic."

And why shouldn't Phil have looked cocky? After all, he was just being recognized as one of the great guitar players in the country field. "In fact," the notes continued, "you can't limit this boy to just country music, though that is what he likes best. He can play just about any kind of music. He has to be good, or else one of the largest manufacturers of amplifiers and guitars in the nation, the Fender Company, wouldn't give him all his equipment free."

Free equipment? Mercy, I

What followed was a paraphrase of a Les Paul hit, played in the Les Paul style, but, well, not *exactly* in the Les Paul style. It had a crispness and precision and total *consciousness*, the likes of which I'd never heard before in a country—(or any) style guitar. Vern continued his verse:

*"Everyone is here tonight  
Playing it loud and playing it right  
Ole Ernest Tubb's most famous words  
Are 'Pick it out, Billy Byrd!'"*

Then came the famous in-

**“. . . You can't limit this boy to just country music, though that is what he likes best. He can play just about any kind of music . . .”**



Phil Baugh (right) plays for the public, not for other musicians.

thought, this guy has *got* to be good. I gave the lady my buck and sped home down the highway, little suspecting what a piece of vinyl dynamite I had on the seat next to me. Once home, I placed needle in groove, and was greeted by the rocking country-jazz opening bars of the song "Country Guitar," which led into Vern Stovall's narration:

*"Down in Nashville on the Opry show  
Where all the git-tar pickers go  
Everyone is having a ball  
Let's hear a little bit from ole Les Paul!"*

strumental break from "Walking The Floor Over You," but coming from the hands and guitar of Phil Baugh, it was far closer to "Sprinting The Floor," as his flair and technique of mammoth proportions tore into the song, jazzed the tune up to the imaginative hilt, and added a mind-boggling touch of vibrato on the last notes (though all the while he stayed perfectly true to the style of Billy Byrd).

And so the song continued—Vern introducing famous guitar players, and Phil proceeding to ape their styles, only for my buck, much better than the originals: Merle

Travis, Luther Perkins, Chet Atkins, Sugarfoot Garland, and Duane Eddy. And as though that wasn't enough, Vern concluded:

*"If you've all been listenin' You've heard the finest git-tar men Here's the boy who played them all Let's turn him loose—GO, PHIL BAUGH!!!"*

Phil's own break was truly the most magnificent of all, a searing, blazingly fast series of country boogie runs, so alive and jazzy as to defy the imagination. I played the first song over again to see if it was for real. It was.

Amazed, I sat through an entire album of astonishingly good instrumentals, each one seemingly hotter than the one before—"Dry Camel," "The Finger," "Live Wire," "Take One" and "Chattanooga."

**... Nearly all my friends asked the same question: "I wonder what this Phil Baugh fellow is up to these days?" ...**

I then began playing this incredible album for friends, and all were unanimous in their disbelief that there could exist such a wizard on the strings as Phil Baugh. Nearly every one of them asked the same question: "I wonder what this Phil Baugh fellow is up to these days?"

One day, I was surprised to see an ad in a Nashville trade paper announcing a new record release by Vern Stovall, "Salt Water," on a new record label, "Duck." Thinking this might be a lead to the whereabouts of Phil Baugh, I wrote to J&J ProDUCKtions, the folks who brought us the Duck label, asked for a copy of the Vern Stovall record, and, of course, "What ever happened to Phil Baugh?" A few days later, I received a copy of "Salt Water" (which was pretty disappointing), and a letter from "Joannie of Duck Records," who told me: "... Phil Baugh is currently appearing with the Phil Baugh Trio at the Pomona Bowling Lanes in Pomona, California."

It was hardly the stage of the Opry, but at least he was still alive and picking.

I had pretty much forgotten about Phil's whereabouts and contented myself with wearing out my copy of *Country Guitar*, when one day, a good friend called to say he had found a *second* Phil Baugh al-

bum for 75 cents in the used record section of an Omaha record store. It was on another fairly obscure label, ERA.

*California Guitar* was a whopping disappointment after the raw genius of *Country Guitar*. It was straight-ahead, easy-listening arrangements of pop hits, circa 1969, like "Little Green Apples," "Wichita Lineman" and "Birds And The Bees," and had obviously been intended for heavy airplay in supermarkets and dental reception rooms. But repeated listenings

VFW Halls, recording studios and motel rooms, I found Phil Baugh at a farm in Canton, Texas, about 25 miles east of Dallas. We arranged an interview and I headed down to Texas. By the time I got there, Phil had moved to Dallas, and was backing up a singing comedian for a week at a private club in a swank downtown Dallas hotel. It was a few minutes before showtime when I arrived, and Phil was there to greet me. He was short and stocky, but boyishly handsome and fashionably attired in his blue sport



PHOTO: LARRY JOHNSON

**He hung around in front of country bars and tried to get in to do some pickin'.**

made it plain that Phil had by no means lost his touch on the guitar. It had only been—well, *submerged* a bit. In fact, his new album was a *bonanza* for the Phil Baugh fan, as it was multi-tracked and offered Phil playing an array of six different guitar parts with himself. That record ignited the fire, and I was more determined than ever to find this unknown (relatively speaking) "King of the Strings," and through the good graces of this magazine, I started to do just that.

Beginning with a Duck Records tip, I started on a telephone trip around Texas. Finally, after a few

coat, blue pants, and white shoes, and he radiated the kind of feeling that people called "Good Ole Boys" radiate.

Suddenly, it was showtime. Phil was onstage cracking appreciative grins to the stale jokes of Alex Martin, the stuttering comedian of Marathon, Texas, who sang old country songs. But when Alex announced a Jimmie Rodgers song, Phil's smile dropped. He cranked up his Fender Jaguar and unleashed his stellar talents over the heads of the small, but well-oiled audience before him. It wasn't simply that he had gotten better—he



had positively become the true master of the electric guitar. He could make it sound *exactly* like a steel guitar virtuoso; he could sound like a saxophone; why, he could even give Alex the razzberry through skillful manipulation of his guitar and volume pedal.

Phil Baugh was born December 13, 1936, in Long Beach, California. When he was but a tad, his family moved to Northern California—Olivehurst. The Baughs were a religious and musical family—his father played piano for the local church gospel choir, and he taught Phil's sister to play piano and read music, though he could never quite get Phil to sit still long enough to do the same. Instead, little Phil could be found playing on a tenor banjo his father had given him. One day, Phil traded an old car radio he had found for a guitar, and, as Phil puts it, "I got kinda hung up on it." Phil's father bought him a single-pickup f-hole style Ward's electric guitar, and he started to pick on that a lot.

One day, the elder Mr. Baugh sold a piece of his land to a local VFW post, and a VFW hall was soon built. Phil started going to the Saturday night dances, and there, at the age of 11, he made his debut: "I played 'Rubber Dolly,' I think it was. They took up a collection and I made \$11.00." Phil practiced throughout the following week, but when he went back the next Saturday, a different band was playing, and they told him he was too young. So, he started hanging around in front of country bars in nearby Marysville, shining shoes and selling papers in order to be able to hear the music, and sometimes, to get in to do some picking.

When he was 17, he moved to Bakersfield and started to work his way into the thriving country music scene in that town. He was taken in by the legendary Bill Woods (made most famous, probably, by the Red Simpson song, "Bill Woods from Bakersfield"), who also helped out folks like Merle Haggard, Buck Owens, Red Simpson, and Tommy Collins, when they were young and struggling performers. While in Bakersfield, he played on his first record, "Cathleen,"—by Wally Lewis, which became a hit (originally on Fuzzy Owen's Tally label, later leased to Dot). He started touring with

Tommy Collins, and it was Collins who, as Phil puts it, "impressed on me the importance of playing not for other musicians, but for the public; the importance of being commercial." He cut another record of "Easter Parade" with Bill Woods, ("It was a big record. Bill had a copy and I had a copy"), and he also played on some of Merle Haggard's very first sessions, including the one that produced his first Big Hit, "Swinging Doors."

But Phil had to make a full-time living. He began driving a truck, all

to be pretty good friends, and about a year or so later, I sold my truck and went to work for him. He took me to Sylvester Cross of Crest Records—they'd just recorded 'Long Black Limousine' for them—him and Bobby George. So I cut 'Bumble Twist' and that got leased to Brookhurst.

"Vern and I got to writin' a lot and then workin' in the clubs," Phil continued. "I had been influenced by a record named 'Hot Guitar' by Eddie Hill, I think it was (this was a long time back). I used to do that

**“. . . Phil Baugh is appearing at the Pomona Bowling Lanes in California." It was hardly the stage of the Opry, but at least he was still alive and picking . . .**



PHOTO LARRY JOHNSON

Phil traded an old car radio for a guitar and, as he puts it: "I kinda got hung up on it."

the time leaving his guitar and amplifier in the cab of his rig, just in case he needed it. One night, near Pomona, he pulled into a truck stop and saw a sign announcing a country music dance that night. "So I parked my truck and went into the dance. This guy was up there singin' and he was just so *hoarse*." It was Vern Stovall. "He'd just had an operation—he's always had throat problems, but he just knocked me out the way he delivered. I mean his voice was gone, but the *delivery* was there. So I brought my guitar in, and, jeez, I liked the kind of music they played. We got

song, and this friend of mine would do the vocals—it was the same idea we used on 'Country Guitar' with the vocal introducing the different guitar breaks. Well, that song ('Hot Guitar') knocked me out. I wanted to do it, but, well, I didn't want to do it the *exact* same way. I figured I ought to have one of my own. So Vern and I got together one night and wrote 'Country Guitar.' We started doin' it in the clubs, and we got a lot of action out of it. We recorded it for Brookhurst, and it got leased to Longhorn some time in 1965. The thing just took off from there, and it got to number

two on the country charts. Then, we went in to cut an album. It took about three hours—part of it was my instrumentals, there were a couple of things with me and Vern, and a few things of just Vern that Dewey Groom of Longhorn had lying around. They just pieced a bunch of stuff together, and that was the *Country Guitar* album.”

Phil started thinking about something to follow up the big hit of “Country Guitar.” He got together to talk about it one night with a fellow Longhorn artist, the late Curtis Leach (most famous for his song “Golden Guitar,” recorded by Bill Anderson), who made his living as a roofer. Curtis got to mulling it over and wrote the rough lyrics for “One Man Band,” which went to number seven on the charts. (Phil Baugh considers “One Man Band” to be even better than “Country Guitar,” and I’m inclined to agree with him. On this record, the story line is a series of catastrophes; various members of the band can’t show up for the gig, so Phil imitates a steel guitar, saxophone, standup bass, and yes, he gets to “turn loose” again with a break so devastating as to make excellent guitarists quiver in their boots).

With *Country Guitar* riding high on the charts, and Phil having been voted Best Lead Guitar by the Academy of Country and Western Music in 1965, Phil’s luck took an unfortunate turn. He doesn’t want to point the finger of blame at anyone, but suffice it to say that he feels things weren’t exactly managed in his best interests. Phil and Vern were “promoted” by being booked on a series of wide-ranging tours. “We started playing these jobs, but half the people didn’t even know we were booked. They already had other bands. It was a mess, and we’d have starved to death. So I hooked on back to California right after ‘One Man Band’ came out.” He also wanted to change recording companies, “but I couldn’t get out of my contract.”

Phil was lined up to cut an album with a major company, but the company balked under threat of lawsuits from Longhorn Records. Eventually, Phil got to know Tommy “Snuff” Garrett (of the “50 Guitars of Tommy Garrett” fame) who had recorded one of Phil’s tunes. Snuff eventually managed to

get Phil out of the Longhorn contract, but the album deal had to pass. By then, Phil was again making his living playing a lot of clubs—bowling alleys were good for him, and he had his own band. He met a guy named Jesse Hodges of Hollywood Sound Recorders, and Jesse wanted to do a multi-tracked guitar album, “but not in the Les Paul style.” He wanted more of a “live” feel. They recorded the *California Guitar* album. It was hardly a success.

As far as his present life as a gui-

Phil has settled back in Dallas, where he gets plenty of studio work doing commercials. (When I spoke to him, he was about to do a session for a commercial with Nashville’s Charlie McCoy at a big recording studio.) His obviously overwhelming talents ensure that Phil won’t have to go back to driving a truck, but every so often I get to wondering what it would be like if Phil could ever make a record that he had some degree of control over. (So does Phil—he asked me what I thought might be a good idea for a

**“... We started playin’ these jobs, but half the people didn’t even know we were booked. It was a mess, and we’d have starved to death...”**



PHOTO: LARRY JOHNSON

The boy who played ‘em all—Phil Baugh.

tarist goes, Phil still plays a Fender. He used to play a Mosrite through a Standel amp, until Leo Fender saw Phil play on a pilot television show. After that, Fender suggested that Phil use Fender equipment, which he has done ever since. (He uses a Bigsby foot pedal to get the steel guitar and other unusual effects.) “I used to play the volume control with my little finger on my Telecaster, and then I saw this ad in a magazine for a Bigsby volume pedal, and I thought JEE-MANEE!! What I couldn’t do with that! So I got me one, and I’ve been using it ever since.”

comeback record: “I could record a 16-track thing with just me and a Martin, you know, playing all the guitar parts and tapping on the guitar for rhythm instead of a drum—that’d be easy.”) One thing is for sure. If there was a *third* Phil Baugh album, I’m willing to bet that the world of Country Music would never quite be the same again.

Okay, you’re probably wondering where you can find the *Country Guitar* album. I just called Jimmie Skinner Music Company, 5825 Vine Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45216. They’ve got a couple of copies.





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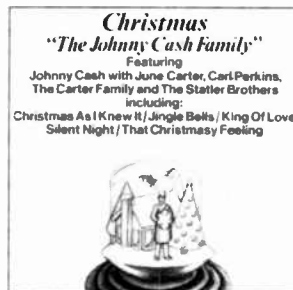
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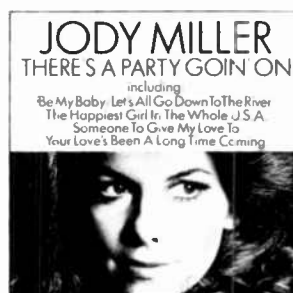
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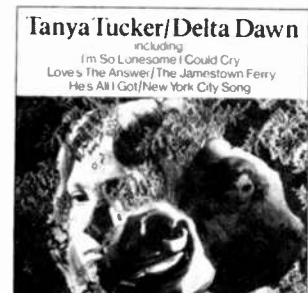
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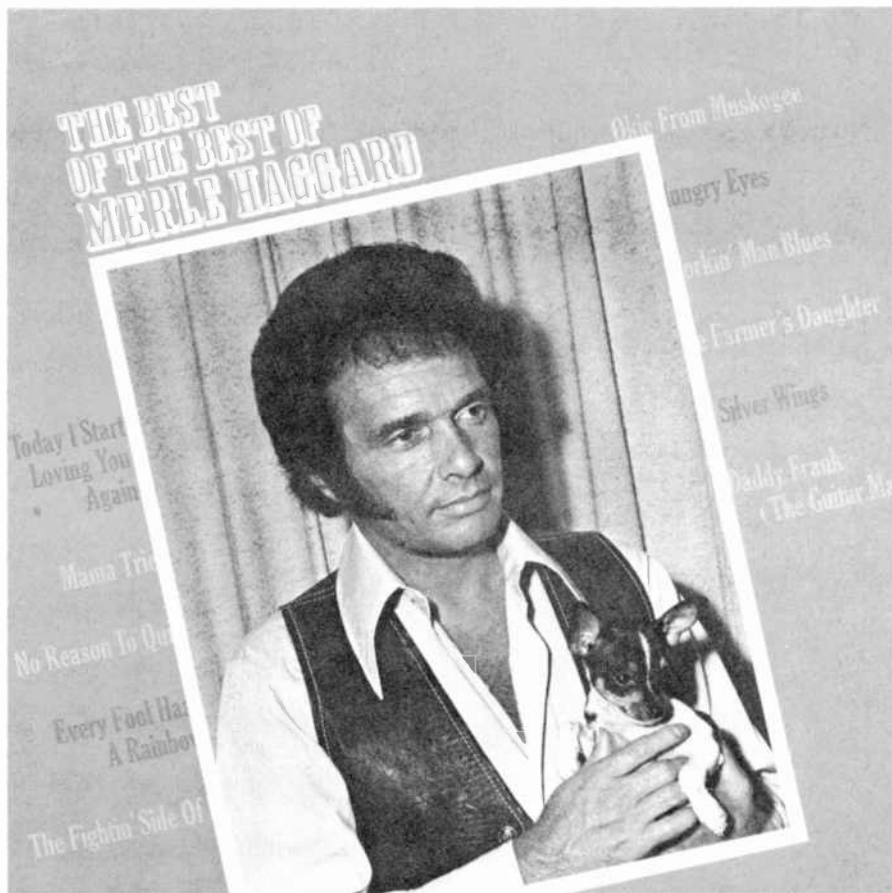
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# Records

Merle Haggard, best of the best... Mac Davis, new wave...



**Merle Haggard**  
The Best Of The Best  
Capitol ST 11082

Modern country music was born in Bristol, Tennessee when Jimmie Rodgers and The Original Carter Family spent some time in front of Ralph Peer's recording machine. Floundering in its youthful awkwardness, country music lived through its adolescence in Nashville. Now in its maturity, maybe (and it's only my opinion) pure country music resides in Bakersfield, California with Merle Haggard. "Hag's" current album, *The Best Of The Best*, is the best explanation of why country music moved west.

This album not only shows off the best works of Merle, but the

songs included also represent all the elements that define country music today: humor, "Okie From Muskogee"; hard times, "Got No Reason To Quit"; heartache, "Silver Wings" and the best heartache song ever written as far as lyrics, instrumentation, and presentation, "Today I Started Lovin' You Again"; prison, "Mama Tried"; hope and optimism, "Every Fool Has A Rainbow"; pride, "Fightin' Side of Me."

Merle's wife, singer Bonnie Owens, and the Academy of Country and Western Music award winning band, The Strangers, help add the finishing touches to this portrait of the man who in my opinion is responsible for the genius of country music today.

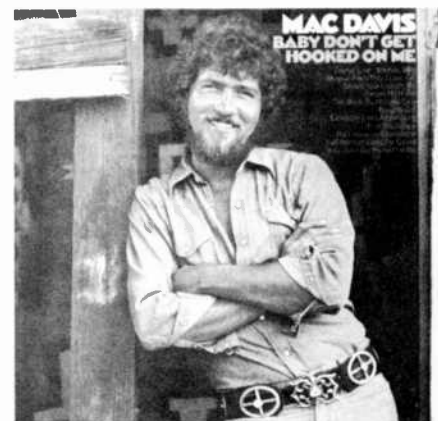
RICHARD HARBERT

## Mac Davis

*Baby Don't Get Hooked On Me*  
Columbia KC 31770

Mac Davis is a part of that breed which makes up the new wave of country music, artists such as Kris Kristofferson, Mickey Newbury and Waylon Jennings. Elvis' comeback in the late sixties was largely due to a song Mac wrote called "In The Ghetto." "Friend, Lover, Woman, Wife" put some more change in the pocket of O. C. Smith, and Ray Price's newest album featured a Mac Davis composition—the title tune, "Lonesomest Lonesome." Mac's contribution to other artists' success is very apparent, and the list could go on at great length.

His new album *Baby Don't Get Hooked On Me* is a combination of country, rock and top 40 tunes all of which enjoy some of the most unusual instrumentation offered so far in recording, including a wobble board, trash cans, spoons and cardboard boxes. One of Mac's songs seemingly tries to bridge the gap between two cultures with lyrics that tell the troubles of a hippie, hitch-hiking in vain at 2:00 a.m. in



Nashville, without a ride to Los Angeles and without his girlfriend. The song is called "Dream Me Home." Mac's own interpretations of "Friend, Lover, Woman, Wife" and "Lonesomest Lonesome" are



## Porter and Dolly...Waylon...Tennessee Ernie...

good but the title tune "Baby Don't Get Hooked On Me" ain't for me, though I wouldn't bet against its chart success.

RICHARD HARBERT



**Porter Wagoner and Dolly Parton**  
Together Always  
RCA LSP-4761

Somehow, many of the urbane sophisticates who have gotten on the country bandwagon have not been able to fully grasp the art of Porter Wagoner and Dolly Parton. I remember suggesting Porter and Dolly some time back for a feature segment of a series of radio specials and was told that they represented the sequined, spangled side of country music that this particular series was trying to stay away from. I sincerely feel that this inability to see the glow had a lot to do with the demise of that series.

Sequined, spangled? Maybe so. We respond to the circus for being likewise, but I don't know another road show in the whole entertainment industry with the track record of Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey. On the basis of the informality of the Porter Wagoner TV Show, one might even say sequined, spangled, and sloppy, but, again, when we talk about track records, one must concede that the Thin Man is doing *something* right. I think this album might provide a clue or two.

Porter wrote six of these songs and Dolly wrote the other four. This should give producer Bob Ferguson plenty of choices but it's always a difficult decision to pick a single. Singles from this collection could almost be decided on a dart board or by flipping coins—they're

all that good. If the fact that "Ten Four-Over and Out" got my wife to look up from an Emilie Loring book is any indication, that could be a heavy single. Bobby Dyson does some superb electric bass work on this cut, too. "Lost Forever In Your Kiss" is the kind of country ballad that confirms one's suspicions of the "sequined, spangled" protest. "Anyplace You Want To Go" is the kind of song that makes one proud to say, "Yes, I Know What Love Is" and "Love's All Over" (complete with some outta sight Pete Drake steel licks) is the kind of jukebox material that makes some say Budweiser would act wisely to finance a few of these country acts.

As of this writing I've not heard any airplay on any of these songs—titles like "Christina," "Poor Folks Town," "Take Away,"—but by the time you read this, my guess is that you will already have heard a lot of them.

BILL LITTLETON



**Waylon Jennings**  
Ladies Love Outlaws  
RCA LSP-4751

One of the forerunners of the new breed of Nashville's singer-songwriters, Waylon Jennings possesses a highly individualistic style whether he's leaning toward pop material such as "Never Been To Spain," or taking on such classic country standards as "Crazy Arms." He can manage all that raw vitality when the song calls for up-tempo treatment (lessons he learned in his early rock 'n' roll days as a bass player for Buddy Holly and the Crickets) or he can be 100 percent country when there's a story to be told.

The title song offers a look at the outlaw mystique which has been a recurring theme in country music. "Bessie was a lovely girl from West Tennessee/Leroy was an outlaw, hard-eyed and mean/Bessie saw him starin' and it chilled her to the bone/She knew she had to see that look on a child of her own."—completely upfront and honest, exactly what we have come to expect from Jennings. Perhaps it is this honesty that prompted Robert Hilburn of the *Los Angeles Times* to describe Jennings as a "somewhat renegade singer," and perhaps this is also why Waylon Jennings' fans form a fairly select group.

Among the pickers, special mention should be given to steel-guitarist Ralph Mooney. Also to Norbert Putnam, who is kickin' the band right in the—well, right where it should be kicked—with his honking electric bass. And how about some cheers for producer Ronny Light, or whoever it was that decided to give the echo chamber and other Nashville sound gimmickry a rest for the night.

ELKIN BROWN



**Tennessee Ernie Ford**  
It's Tennessee Ernie Ford  
Capitol ST-11092

Tennessee Ernie is more a personality than a musician. He always has been and always will be. But that doesn't mean Ford is uncomfortable recording. "Sixteen Tons" wasn't a fluke, merely an example of what he can do with a tailor-made tune.

This album leads off nicely with "The Pea-Pickin' Cook." The song is a bunch of down home recipes kneaded together by Ernie's sunny,

## “Superclaw” Jerry Reed...“The Very Real Red Simpson”...

fresh delivery and a joke or two like the country definition of a seven-course dinner (“one possum and a six-pack”). The second side recreates Ernie’s hit “I Don’t Know,” showing that Ernie’s place in the Country Hall of Fame is justified historically as well as emotionally. Here the dividing line between black and white country blues becomes a totally moot point as he conveys the Willie Mabon novelty with all the necessary and convincing “soul” he’ll ever need.

Right in Ernie’s ballpark is “Granny Dips Snuff.” The song is about habits, and it’s a total success in both the slapstick and true wit departments. But ballads are a sticky point in general for Ernie. “Yours And Mine” is a nice Italian-flavored number, but it’s more Dean Martin’s bowl of pasta than it is Ernie’s sack of grits. When there’s a slight touch of humor and beat, like in “It’s Good To Be Home Again,” we all feel a whole lot more comfortable. And for the album as a whole, there’s still a ton of enjoyment left for Ford fans old and new.

ROBERT MITCHELL



**Jerry Reed**  
Jerry Reed  
RCA LSP-4750

The momentum has been building, really building, for a couple of years now. “Amos Moses” and “When You’re Hot, You’re Hot,” made Jerry Reed a household word. He appeared on Glen Campbell’s show several times, impressing enough people to land his own summer show. His career hit steamroller proportions. Well, he was just gearing up, folks and it looks like his new album, *Jerry Reed*, is one of

those rare explosions of talent that transforms a star into a genuine institution.

Let’s dispense with the little stuff, such as the great backup people and the fact that Chet Atkins co-produced this album. Let’s simply recognize the fact that this record will be a trendsetter. Other country artists have cautiously felt their way through the foggy moors of rock rhythms, terrified of falling from country popularity. Well, Jerry Reed isn’t falling anywhere. This album contains a good deal of straight-out, unabashed, gospel singer - backed, screaming - saxophone type Rock with a capital R, and Jerry really puts it across. Hinted at in “Amos Moses,” and “When You’re Hot,” this stuff is *blazing*. It’s punctuated by some gentle, melodic numbers in between, but the meat of this record has a fast pulse.

The first track, a lowdown, funky version of “500 Miles From Home,” sets the tempo. The guitar work is as only Jerry can do it. “You Made My Life A Song” is softer, but he leans on a great hook line, building the arrangement through the chorus to maximum effect. The poignancy of “You’re Young And You’ll Forget” comes through better than most reluctant farewell numbers, but the best moment on the album is “Alabama Wild Man.” Two funny, catchy hits in a row was exciting, but now that he’s got his *third*, Reed is becoming a little scary.

Side Two maintains the level of excellence of Side One, winding up on a down-tempo but exciting version of “Careless Love.” The guitar work on this track merits a review in itself. It winds from country to jazz, to folk, a touch of flamenco, and a liberal dose of just plain Jerry Reed brilliance. No wonder people in Nashville have taken to calling him Superclaw.

TOM SZOLLOSI

**Red Simpson**  
The Very Real Red Simpson  
Capitol ST 11093

Rock ‘n’ roll—bah! Jazz—bah! It just seems that everybody making music these days is taking themselves with such stupefying serious-



ness that any sane and sassy listener would as soon kick the polecats straight up the river as listen to one more song on the state of the cosmos and the state of the nation and how come they don’t match up. Who needs it! The primal and prime purpose of music is to entertain, but these days it seems anybody with a sense of humor gets chucked out like so much excess baggage.

So I pick up the whole stack of vinyl records, in the jackets or out, ‘cause I don’t care if they all get scratched to slag, and I dump ‘em in a heap in the back of the closet. And then I pull out my good balm: my Hank Williams, my George and Tammy, my Loretta Lynn and Conway Twitty, my great billowing daydreams of Dolly Parton, my stacks o’ tracks about such earth-shaking subjects as divorce, spending your whole paycheck at the bar, drivin’ the big trucks far and fast.

The great thing about country & western is that even though you recognize all those roots and things, you don’t have to take it seriously at all, even when it’s coming on serious as hell. Because you know how much that dude is enjoying squandering the rent money. And when it’s *not* serious in front, well, it’s just a sheer delight.

This album is just that kind of record. Red Simpson ain’t gonna usher in no musical milleniums, and his chops are distinctly so-so. And he knows it, too. Working with the same modest voice, that sometimes verges on mere talking just like David Dudley, he knows when to crank that throttle up and when to let it out and turn the whole rumpus loose, too.



## Missing Jim Reeves...Dorsey Burnette's here now...

You heard his last big hit, "I'm A Truck." A classic song, built on the premise that nobody ever asks the diesel how *it* feels about all those long miles of abuse and exhaustion! Just when it seemed that Red was set to mine the truckload until it played out again, he turned up with this one, which is one of the best country albums of the year. Just slap that needle into "Hold On Ma'am (You Got Yourself A Honker)". If the title doesn't hook you, you're a lost cause. Then you can switch over to "Country Western 'Truck Drivin' Singer," a dose of pure fantasy about good ol' Homer Gootch who drove his rig all the way to the stage of the Grand Ole Opry and ends up "drivin' a Nashville garbage truck." Once again Red delivers those little extras that really make a song, like the tape cartridge fixation that he's mentioned at least once on two successive albums now. The capper is when Red takes it out with "I Wonder if he's got a tape in that truck . . . I wonder if he's got that cartridge of . . . 'Hello. I'm a Truck?'" And as if that shameless self-promotion wasn't enough, he follows it up with a little choochoo noise and a great hooting laugh: "Whaddaya think about that, Dudley?"

LESTER BANGS



**Jim Reeves**  
Missing You  
RCA LSP 4749

In contrast to Mel Tillis who wrote the testimony liner for this album, I never met Jim Reeves, not personally at least, but I have long been aware of his existence. There have been many of those personal, intimate, solitary moments when a

certain song soothed the jagged edges of my emotions.

The ability to communicate with the emotions of a listener is not all that unique in entertainment; Satchmo could do it, Jolson, Joplin and others; Loretta and Connie and Tom T. and Bare and Jerry Lee do it every day, each in a special, unique kind of way. And that's also where Gentleman Jim stood out in the field of entertainment like an oak tree among sagegrass—you just couldn't miss him. Pardon my patting myself on the back, but the oak tree simile was doubly appropriate, for oak also infers an enduring quality, and such was the art of Jim Reeves.

At this writing, the "Missing You" single is galloping the last furlong to the top of the charts. I don't remember how high it got the last time—whenever that was—but it has now become a legitimate smash hit twice, and that's pretty durable, both on the part of the singer and the song.

This album includes three previously unreleased Jim Reeves' songs—"I Let The World Pass Me By," "Draf Maar Aan Ou Ryperd" (translated from South African as "Why Do I") and "I'd Rather Not Know." At the other end of your familiarity bridge will be the title song and "I Missed Me" (which in my opinion could be a hit any time and as often as anyone decides to play it).

I can assure ardent Jim Reeves fans that from time to time during most of the next decade, "new" (read "previously unreleased") material from Gentleman Jim will come out on the market.

I don't think this album is especially spectacular, alongside all the other Reeves albums, but that wasn't the purpose. The album is quiet and smooth and timeless. Such was the art of Jim Reeves.

BILL LITTLETON

**Dorsey Burnette**  
Here and Now  
Capitol ST-11094

It's entirely possible that not too many people remember the name of Dorsey Burnette, except maybe for his two recent country hits, "In The Spring (The Roses Always



Turn Red)" and "I Just Couldn't Let Her Walk Away." But Dorsey's actually been around the music scene for some time now as a performer with that most frantic of rock bands of the fifties, the Burnette Brothers (with his brother, the late Johnny Burnette). Their one album, on the Coral label, was so incredible that most rock critics I know would swap their collections to have a copy of it. Dorsey and brother Johnny also wrote most of Rick Nelson's biggest hits like "Believe What You Say" (back when he was still known as Ricky). He also had a couple of medium-sized hits on his own on the ERA label, like "Tall Oak Tree," but he kind of faded away the last few years.

Fortunately for us, Dorsey's back now, and has released an album, *Here And Now*, that ranks in my book as the finest debut album of a rocker-turned-country-politician artist since the first Conway Twitty album on Decca.

Every song on this record is a killer—the aforementioned hits as well as fine, distinctively different interpretations of country standards like "Together Again," and Leon Payne's "I Love You Because."

And Dorsey's still writing good tunes, too. Besides being the composer of his former hit "In The Spring . . ." there are three new Burnette tunes, my favorites being the two masterpieces of country soul, "Cry Mama" and "The Same Old Me." Dorsey's singing style is very much in the country/folk/soul tradition of Conway Twitty, Charlie Rich, and Waylon Jennings (in fact, his voice is almost an amalgam of the singing styles of those

# The Best of Country

## Elvis Presley



Elvis' first appearance in New York ever! "Live" album includes Hound Dog, Heartbreak Hotel, Impossible Dream plus many others!

Record: A-1 Tape: A-1(T)



Includes Funny How Time Slips Away, Snowbird, many others

Record: A-2 Tape: A-2(T)



Incl. My Babe, Blue Suede Shoes All Shook Up and many more

Record: A-3 Tape: A-3(T)



Includes Trouble, Guitar Man, Miss Clawdy and more — \$ million seller

Record: A-4 Tape: A-4(T)



Incl. You Don't Have to Say You Love Me, Patch It Up, much more

Record: A-5 Tape: A-5(T)



Incl. A Whistling Tune, I'll Take Love, This Is Living, others

Record: A-6 Tape: A-6(T)



Incl. One Night, I Got Stung, I Need Your Love Tonight, 7 more

Record: A-14 Tape: A-14(T)



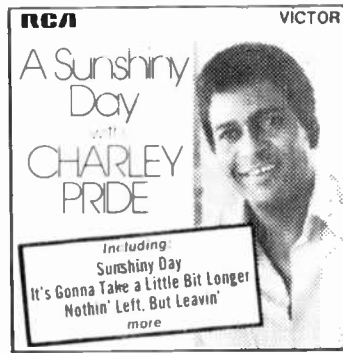
Incl. It's Now or Never, Fame and Fortune, I Gotta Know, 9 more

Record: A-15 Tape: A-15(T)



Incl. Witchcraft, What'd I Say, It Hurts Me, Love Letters, 8 more

Record: A-16 Tape: A-16(T)



The fantastic Charley Pride's latest includes A Sunshiny Day, Nothin' Left, But Leavin', It's Gonna Take a Little Bit Longer, plus many more

Record: B-1 Tape: B-1(T)



Includes I'm Just Me, Hello Darling, That's My Way, plus others

Record: B-2 Tape: B-2(T)



Incl. Good Morning, Once Again, You'll Still Be the One, others

Record: B-3 Tape: B-3(T)



Incl. Guess Things Happen That Way, Wings of a Dove, Baby is Gone, etc

Record: B-11 Tape: B-11(T)



Incl. The Snakes Crawl at Night, Detroit City, and plenty more!

Record: B-12 Tape: B-12(T)



Incl. (I'm So) Afraid of Losing You Again, It's All Right, others

Record: B-13 Tape: B-13(T)



Includes Let the Chips Fall, Before I Met You, more

Record: B-14 Tape: B-14(T)



Incl. Deck The Halls, Santa and the Kids, Little Drummer Boy

Record: B-15 Tape: B-15(T)



Incl. Is Anybody Goin' to San Antonio, Special

Record: B-16 Tape: B-16(T)



Incl. Let Me Live Again, Louisiana Man, Billy Bayou

Record: B-17 Tape: B-17(T)



2-record set! Incl. Busted, Frankie's Man, One More Ride, many more

Record: C-4 Tape: C-4(T)



Incl. Wanted Man, Walk The Line, Starkville City, San Quentin

Record: C-5 Tape: C-5(T)



Incl. Orange Blossom Special, It Ain't Me, Babe, Ring of Fire

Record: C-6 Tape: C-6(T)



All of Tammy's top hits (and there are quite a few) on one great record!

Record: D-1 Tape: D-1(T)



Includes Baby, Come Home, He Knows All the Ways to Love

Record: D-2 Tape: D-2(T)



Incl. It's My Way, Cry, Cry Again, I Stayed Long Enough, more

Record: D-3 Tape: D-3(T)

## Tammy Wynette



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Record: A-7  
Tape: A-7(T)



Incl. Put Your Hand in the Hand Hey Jude, plus lots more!  
Record: A-8  
Tape: A-8(T)



Incl. Suspicious Minds, Inherit the Wind, Hound Dog and many more  
Record: A-9  
Tape: A-9(T)



Incl. I Got a Woman, Tutti Frutti, Money Honey, + many others  
Record: A-10  
Tape: A-10(T)



Includes One Boy Two Little Girls, Once is Enough, plus ten more  
Record: A-11  
Tape: A-11(T)



Incl. Young and Beautiful, Is It So Strange, We're Gonna Move, more  
Record: A-12  
Tape: A-12(T)



Incl. I Want You, I Need You, I Love You, Love Me Tender, more  
Record: A-13  
Tape: A-13(T)

# Charley Pride



Includes Let Me Live, Whispering Hope, The Church in the Wildwood  
Record: B-4  
Tape: B-4(T)



Incl. I'd Rather Love You, I'm Just Me, Let Me Live plus others  
Record: B-5  
Tape: B-5(T)



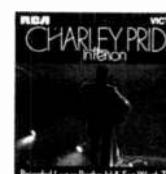
Incl. Apartment #9, I Know One, Just Between You and Me, more  
Record: B-6  
Tape: B-6(T)



Includes Does My Ring Hurt Your Finger, Crystal Chandelier, more  
Record: B-7  
Tape: B-7(T)



Incl. I Can't Believe That You've Stopped Loving Me, lots more  
Record: B-8  
Tape: B-8(T)



Incl. Streets of Baltimore, Cotton Fields, Kaw-Liga, much more  
Record: B-9  
Tape: B-9(T)



Incl. The Easy Part's Over, The Day You Stop Loving Me, more  
Record: B-10  
Tape: B-10(T)

# Johnny Cash



**JOHNNY CASH AT FOLSOM PRISON**  
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The Long Black Veil  
Green, Green Grass of Home  
25 Minutes to Go  
Dark as the Dungeon

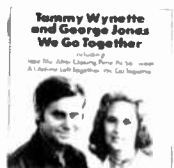
One of Johnny's most famous and important albums. A must for every serious fan's collection!  
Record: C-1  
Tape: C-1(T)



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Tape: C-2(T)



Incl. See Ruby Fall, Blistered, If I Were a Carpenter, many others  
Record: C-3  
Tape: C-3(T)



Incl. After Closing Time, It's So Sweet, other hit songs  
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Tape: D-4(T)

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## Dorsey Burnette... Jim Ed Brown... Roy Clark...

giants), and quite capable of a wide range of material. I wouldn't be too surprised if he develops into one of those "singer's singers," as respected by his fellow artists as he is by the record-buying public.

CHARLIE BURTON



**Jim Ed Brown**  
Brown Is Blue  
RCA LSP-4755

The most interesting aspect of *Brown Is Blue* is that it's a concept album—all the songs are down tempo, mellow, or if you will, blue. They are also quite pretty and soothing—and it is evident Jim Ed and producer Bob Ferguson put much thought and planning into the package.

Jim Ed has proven himself time and time again by keeping his hand firmly on the pulse of what his fans want. The reward has been an outstanding array of hit albums and

singles, the most recent being "Angel's Sunday" and "Morning." On this album there are several excellent cuts; "Helpin' Her Get Over Him" with words by Jim Ed, a nifty "I Guess I Had Too Much To Dream Last Night" (music by Faron Young), Ray Griff's "Darlin'" and a fine tune by Bill Graham called "Triangle."

"Unbelievable Love" opens the album with piano tones that you think will lead right into a gospel song. Instead Jim Ed sings of how his girl "puts her arms around me and gently loves all my cares away." Then there's the singer's new smash, "All I Had To Do." This tune, one of the most meaningful in the genre of "loved and lost" songs, is Jim Ed at his very best.

ELLIS NASSOUR

**Roy Clark**  
Roy Clark Country!  
DOT DOS 25997

You might expect this record to be a well-delivered joke, particularly since Roy Clark is a country humor mainstay, best known in television for "Hee Haw." But Roy has a serious side.

Roy and producer Joe Allison have constructed a tight, well-rounded record. Serving as backbone for the album is the material, which touches nearly every possible country music base. Roy has nosed



his way into almost every category you could think of on this record. He's got ecology on his mind in "Ode To A Critter," while "Kiss An Angel Good Morning" is the standard country love song, except it's much better than most.

"Carolyn," Merle Haggard's gem, spills over with imagery. Clark nurses lines about women in yellow dresses with strange perfumes as though he knew them well.

But his best effort is Johnny Paycheck's hit, "She's All I Got," ending Side One. A semi-rocker, the drum work stands out well, behind some great singing, of course.

Thinking it over, this is the kind of album that makes a person smile with or without its token joking, and smiling is what Roy Clark has made people do all along. For a lot of reasons.

TOM SZOLLOSI

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Maybe you want to sell some old Hank Williams albums?

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In our January 1973 issue we will be starting a Classified Advertising section—the Country Music Auction. All ads must be pre-paid by check or money order at the time you send us the advertisement. There are no COUNTRY MUSIC box numbers, but you are free to use your own—just give us full information about your name and address. (P.O. Box numbers count as three words, telephone numbers as two.)

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# Hi-Fi Corner

Headphones can transport you to another world.

If you still associate headphones with telephone operators and jet pilots, you are missing out on one of the biggest musical pleasure-boosters around. Sure, headphones started out in practical roles. Pilots needed to hear the voice from the control tower in spite of loud engine and wind noise, and telephone operators had to be able to hear the person on the other end of the line, and not the operators sitting next to them. Early hi-fi nuts used 'phones for isolation too, to listen to music in spite of screaming kids, vacuum cleaners, and the TV in the next room, and so as not to disturb other people with loud sounds late at night.

Phones are still used to lock in the music and lock out the sound, but now most people like headphones for their own sake, for the special, live, immediate, up-front clarity they provide. Headphones can transport you to another world, beyond care and annoyance, to a place where the music is everything. Old familiar records will reveal things you never heard before from regular "box" speakers. With headphones, low volume and high volume, low notes and high notes . . . *everything* is fed directly into your brain.

No sounds are absorbed by overstuffed furniture or crowds of people in the living room; nor are sounds harshly emphasized and distorted by bouncing and rebounding from speaker to wall, to window to table to ceiling before reaching your ears. Headphones form a tight, yet spacious, sphere of sound around your head, and within that sphere is reproduced all the music and atmosphere that was present when the recording was made. You are taken from your home and thrust into a recording studio or music hall. All the music is aimed right at *you* and all the noise is kept away.

If you think stereo is a great advance over monophonic sound,



Kenwood KH-71 cushion pad headphones



Koss Model K2 + 2 quadraphonic headphones

headphones will make stereo even better for you. When listening with normal speakers there is always some "leakage" of sound. Your right ear hears some sound coming from the left speaker, and your left ear picks up some from the box on the right. Headphones direct the sound right where it was intended, with no blending to decrease separation, and everything is stronger and clearer and more dramatic. The quality of the sound itself can often be better with headphones than with box speakers and often the price is the same or less because less material is used. There is no fancy wood cabinetry, no heavy magnets that can get out of alignment, and of course shipping charges are less.

Headphones are available from under \$4 all the way up to \$150 or more. Legitimate hi-fi reproduction starts around \$30, and for twice that much even the most demand-

ing audiophile will usually be satisfied.

Some recent developments you should be aware of include the new lightweight phones from Sennheiser and Koss that use a foam pad on your ear, instead of surrounding the ear with the common "doughnut" style insulator, and allow some of the outside sound to come through for a less isolated, but still most enjoyable listening experience. Quadraphonic headphones from Koss, Superex, Lafayette and others provide private 4-channel sound by mounting two separate speaker units in each ear cup.

The best possible headphone sound comes from the "electrostatic" units, available from Stanton, Superex, Koss, and Lafayette. Rather than use conventional vibrating paper cones to move the sound, they have thin metaled sheets that move in response to electrical charges. They are able to provide startling high frequency response and really sharp jumps from one sound to the next. Electrostatics are expensive (\$80-\$160) but once you've tried one, you may not settle for less.

Do you want to know more about a particular brand of headphones?

Maybe you're interested in reading about other hi-fi products?

If you have suggestions for topics which you would like to see reviewed in this column, or if you want more detailed information on the subjects we've reviewed so far, write us:

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COUNTRY MUSIC  
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New York, N.Y. 10036

# HEADPHONE BARGAINS FROM A-M SALES!



**\$13<sup>95</sup>**

## Model K-6LC

This is the basic stereophone design that started the art of headphone listening by Koss in 1958. Carefully designed, highly efficient 3½-inch reproducers deliver excellent low and mid-range musical tones. Unique, patented headband adjusts to any head contour in seconds. 3" side sponge foam pad makes the SP-3XC so light you hardly know it's on. Soft, washable vinyl-covered foam cushions provide comfortable, personal listening pleasure. Frequency response: 10-14,000 Hz. Impedance: designed to work from 4-16 ohm amplifier outputs. Convenient 10' extended coiled cord with standard jack plug.

## Model SP-3XC

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# Country Music's Christmas Quiz

Chances are you're a Charley Pride fan, especially since you're reading this issue. We'd also bet you've always wanted to test your knowledge with the best of 'em about who sang what, in which year, on what label and so forth. Well, here's your chance to put that knowledge to good use. If you know enough and you're quick enough, you could win a set of 14 Charley Pride albums.

COUNTRY MUSIC is offering these albums to the first 20 contestants who answer all the questions in the quiz correctly. The first 20 correct entries with the earliest postmarks will be the winners, so hurry! We'll publish the winners' names (and the answers) in our February issue.

1. In what year did Johnny Cash first record "Folsom Prison Blues"?  
A. 1953 B. 1956 C. 1966
2. Who recorded "Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer" and made it the largest selling single Columbia ever had?  
A. Roy Rogers  
B. Gene Autry  
C. Tex Ritter
3. Who sold more tapes in 1971?  
A. Elvis Presley  
B. Charley Pride
4. What was Faron Young's first million selling single?  
A. "Going Steady"  
B. "Wonderful World of Women"  
C. "Hello Walls"
5. Who wrote "Oh Lonesome Me"?  
A. Hank Williams  
B. Don Gibson  
C. Mel Tillis
6. What was the name of the town in which both Jimmie Rodgers and The Carter Family made their first recording on the same day?  
A. Knoxville, Tennessee  
B. Wheeling, West Va.  
C. Bristol, Tennessee
7. Which artist does *not* belong in the group and why?  
A. Elvis Presley  
B. Jerry Lee Lewis  
C. Carl Perkins  
D. Charlie Rich  
E. Johnny Cash
8. Who was the first country female artist to sell a million single records?  
A. Patsy Cline  
B. Patsy Montana  
C. Patti Powell
9. Where was the original home of the Grand Ole Opry?  
A. Ryman Auditorium  
B. WSM Studio  
C. Ernest Tubb's Record Shop
10. What was the name of the group Bob Wills first recorded with?  
A. Texas Playboys  
B. Light Crust Doughboys  
C. San Antonio Roses
11. In what year did Roy Acuff join the Grand Ole Opry?  
A. 1930 B. 1934 C. 1938
12. Which country artist has the most Grammy awards for one year to his credit?  
A. Roger Miller  
B. Johnny Cash  
C. Glen Campbell
13. What was Eddy Arnold's million selling single record of 1967?  
A. "Lonely Again"  
B. "Turn The World Around"  
C. "Here Comes Heaven"  
D. All of them
14. Finish Bob Wills' familiar quote, "Take it away,"  
A. Herb  
B. Tommy  
C. Leon
15. "Sunday Morning Coming Down" was first recorded by:  
A. Kris Kristofferson  
B. Ray Stevens  
C. Ray Price
16. Who was the first country performer to have his own TV show?  
A. Johnny Cash  
B. Glen Campbell  
C. Jimmie Dean
17. Fred Rose rewrote the songs of which famous country singer?  
A. Hank Williams  
B. Jim Reeves  
C. Carl Smith
18. Tammy Wynette's second million selling single was:  
A. "My Elusive Dreams"  
B. "I Don't Want To Play House"  
C. "We Sure Can Love Each Other"
19. "Almost Persuaded" was the first million seller of:  
A. David Houston  
B. Charlie Rich  
C. Hank Williams, Jr.
20. Jimmy Davis was the first country singer who became Governor of Louisiana.  
A. Yes B. No
21. There are now how many radio stations in the United States programming country music full time?  
A. 600 B. 800 C. 1,000
22. Name six country recording artists who reside in Southern California.
23. Ernest Tubb modeled himself after which country great?  
A. A. P. Carter  
B. Jimmie Rodgers  
C. Tex Ritter
24. What is Eddy Arnold's nickname?  
A. The Singing Sheriff  
B. The Tennessee Ploughboy  
C. The Killer
25. What was the name of WLS' Saturday night show that was the forerunner of the Grand Ole Opry?  
A. Saturday Night Barn-dance  
B. Louisiana Hayride  
C. National Barn Dance
26. "Blue Moon of Kentucky" was originally made famous by:  
A. Elvis Presley  
B. Lester Flatt  
C. Bill Monroe
27. Who was the first country performer to appear before a President of the United States?  
A. Elton Britt  
B. Buck Owens  
C. Johnny Cash
28. Which country artist had 26 consecutive number one single records?  
A. Buck Owens  
B. Johnny Cash  
C. Sonny James
29. Who makes a steel guitar "talk"?  
A. Charlie McCoy  
B. Pete Drake  
C. Jerry Kennedy
30. What year did Jim Reeves die?  
A. 1964 B. 1961 C. 1966

- |          |           |           |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 9. _____  | 16. _____ | 24. _____ | 7. _____  |
| 2. _____ | 10. _____ | 17. _____ | 25. _____ |           |
| 3. _____ | 11. _____ | 18. _____ | 26. _____ |           |
| 4. _____ | 12. _____ | 19. _____ | 27. _____ | 22. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 13. _____ | 20. _____ | 28. _____ |           |
| 6. _____ | 14. _____ | 21. _____ | 29. _____ |           |
| 8. _____ | 15. _____ | 23. _____ | 30. _____ |           |

All entries must be postmarked by December 12, 1972.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

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New York, New York 10036.

# Films

## Fat City

Directed by John Huston  
Starring Stacy Keach

FAT CITY starts out and ends up on skid row. We follow a former boxer, Billy Tully (Stacy Keach) on his dismal quest for a comeback, but we never stray far from the bottom. In a compassionate, yet stark and relentless way, director John Huston and writer Leonard Gardner explore the daily lives of the deadbeats of America's outback more skillfully than has been done in a long time.

When we first meet Billy Tully, he is nursing his dreams and memories, with the help of a bottle of whisky, in the half-light of a hung-over morning in a flea-bag hotel in Stockton, California. He is already down, but not totally out. For the rest of the film we just wait out the count. Because Billy never really gets up. His manager (played by Nicholas Colasanto) can't save him, the lady he hooks up with, Oma (Susan Tyrrell) is a pathetic lush, and the young protégé he introduces to the fight game (Jeff Bridges of "The Last Picture

Show" fame) doesn't feel he owes Tully anything.

"Fat City" doesn't delve at all into the really dirty aspects of big-time boxing; instead it takes us into the anonymous gyms and fight arenas where the small-timers, the has-beens and minorities try to slug their way out of anonymity. Director John Huston, making his own comeback after several years of absence from the American screen ("Treasure of Sierra Madre," "African Queen" and "The Misfits" are among his most renowned efforts), packs the film with real boxers and ex-boxers. Former welterweight champion Curtis Cokes plays Oma's off-again, on-again boyfriend. L.A.'s colorful "Golden Boy" Art Aragon is Tully's manager's sidekick. And retired boxer Bob Dixon plays a bemused field laborer working alongside Tully.

Keach and Bridges both went into training to prepare for their roles, though oddly enough it is the fight sequences in this movie which are the least convincing, especially the segment where the camera dwells on every exhausting detail of Billy Tully's comeback bout. It is

the glimpses into fourth-rate hotels and cafes, into the bars where the alcoholics hide from themselves, into the fields of the richest nation on earth where laborers cut and rake for less than \$10-a-day, that are the most successful sections of the film. It is the portrayal of these human beings eking out an existence from one day to the next, (for which the film's theme music, Kris Kristofferson's "Help Me Make It Through The Night" is so appropriate) that makes "Fat City" such a powerful documentary.

SUSAN WITTY



Stacy Keach (left) as Billy Tully. "Before you get rolling, your life makes a beeline for the drain."



# Will the Circle be Unbroken



Music forms a new Circle

**W**ill The Circle Be Unbroken" is really more than an album. It's a 6 sided documentary, a retrospective of American Country Music... As The Nashville Tennessean said, "The album the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band recorded with Roy Acuff, Jimmy Martin, Mother Maybelle Carter, Earl Scruggs, Merle Travis, and Doc Watson will be out in October and it may well be one of the most important recordings done in the 45 years, of the Nashville music business." On United Artists Records & Tapes.



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