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Lynn Anderson's Christmas Recipes

JANUARY 1975, 75 cents

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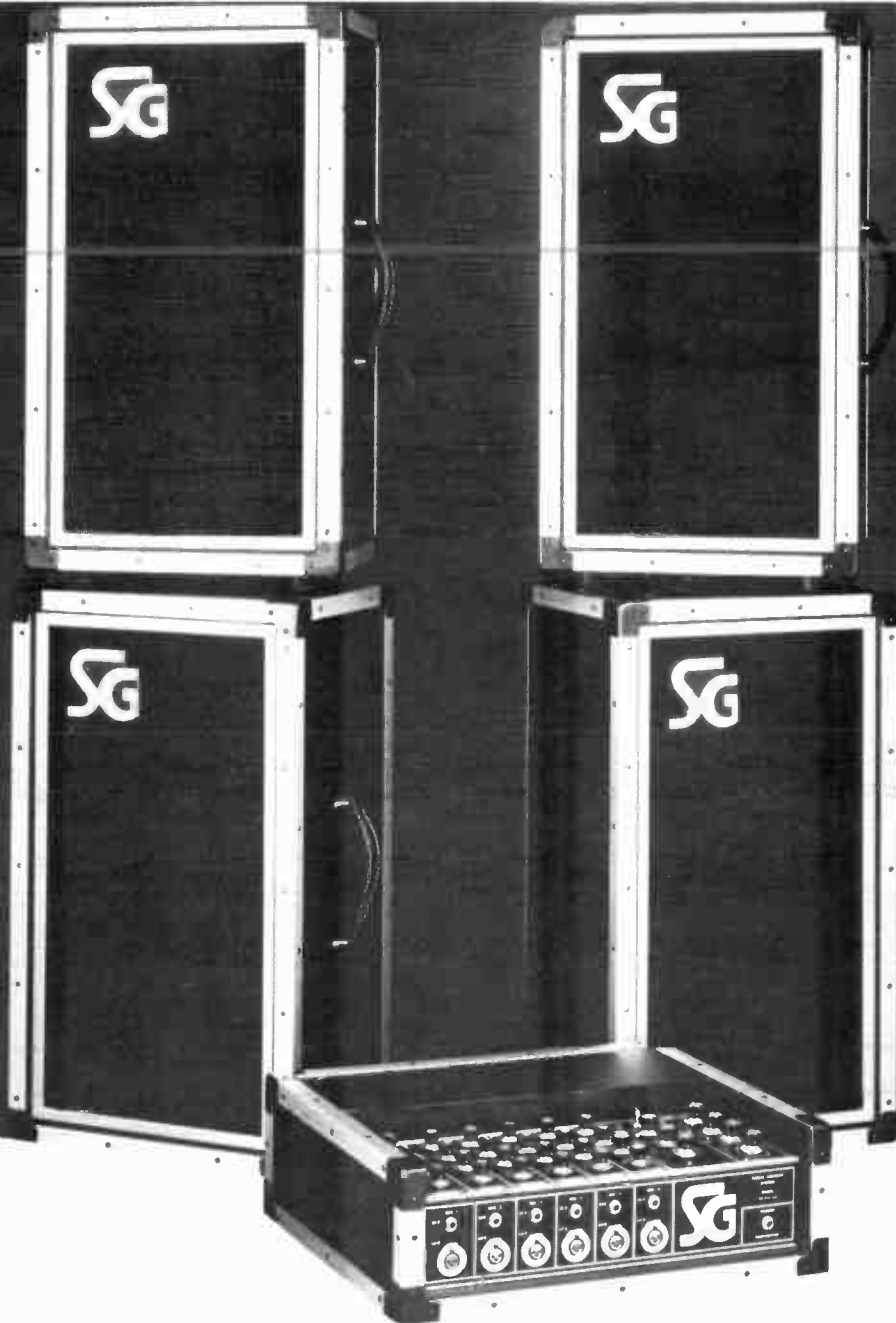
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Never Having You
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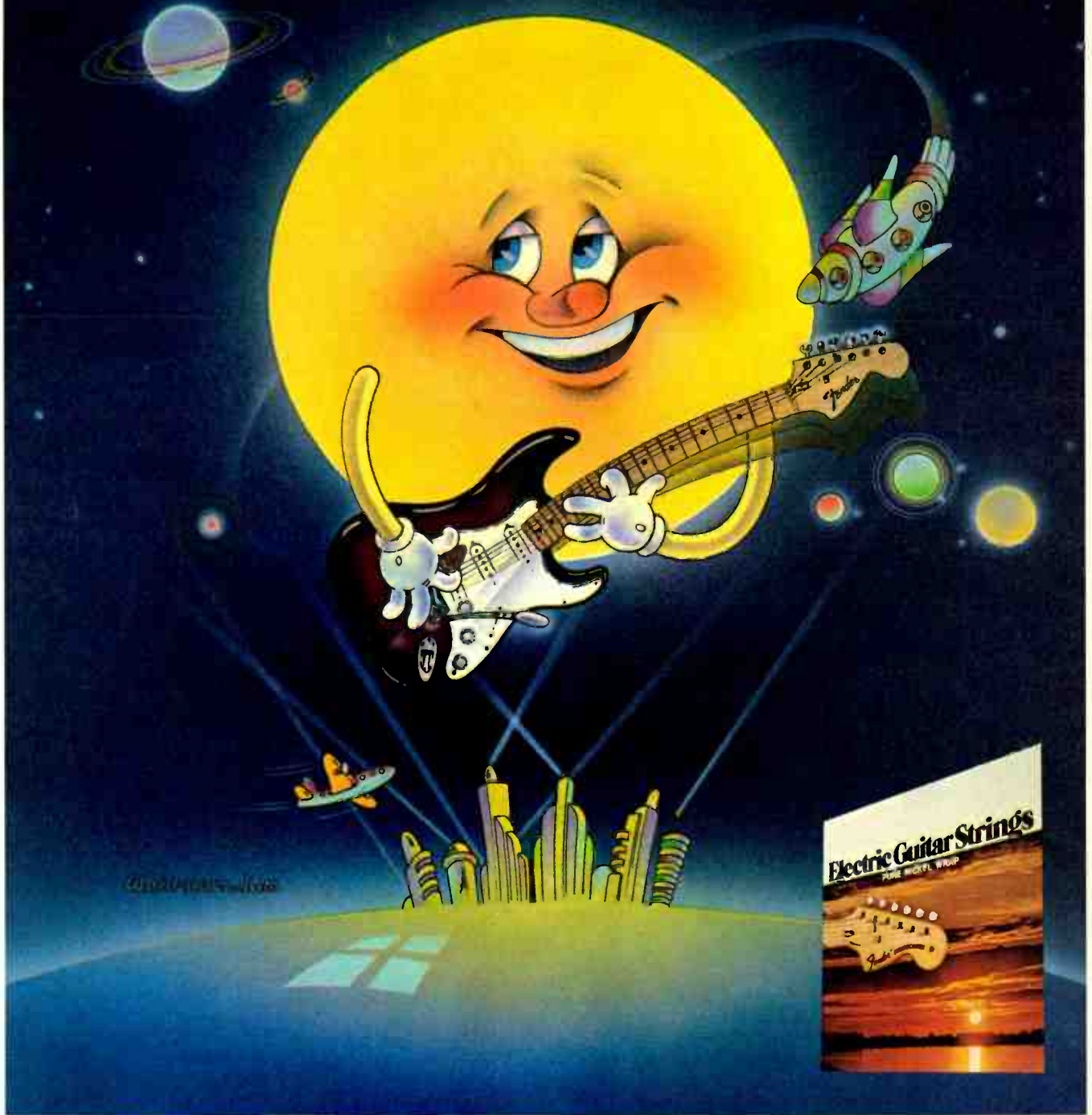


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brings out the wolf in werewolves and romantics, that turns tides and influences horoscopes, ought to be able to do some powerful things for your music. Yesiree. So, watch for our Fender man-in-the-sky to flash a full moon.

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It's strange, but in an increasingly non-Christian nation, sacred music is booming like never before. Now, Gospel is big business, and that means change. Here, in the first part of our special Gospel Issue, we have an intimate look at an industry that is part music, part hypocrisy, part showbiz, and part faith.		
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Letters

Although it wasn't our intention to create controversy, Paul Hemphill's recent Country View touched off a swarm of letters—every last one of them taking issue with Hemphill's contention that Johnny Cash's star was fading while Merle Haggard's was brightening the country music sky. We don't tell Paul Hemphill how he should think, nor how he should write—but we can't say we agree with his point of view in this case. We feel Merle Haggard and Johnny Cash have both made tremendous contributions to an understanding of country music among people everywhere.—The Editors

I am sure I will not be the only one who will object to the article written by Paul Hemphill speaking as if Johnny Cash were past his prime. I don't know what statistics Mr. Hemphill has, but on the country music stations I listen to in the San Diego and Los Angeles areas I feel sure that I hear four of Johnny Cash's to any one of any other country star. There were about fourteen thousand at his last concert in San Diego and they were wildly enthusiastic.

I keep a horse at Camp Pendleton and meet many Marines there. I was introduced to a group there as Kris Kristofferson's mother and the most attention that rated was for them to ask me if he wasn't a good friend of Johnny Cash's and did I know him, and what was he like, etc.

I enjoy your magazine and took no exception to the letter of Mrs. Calder's regarding Kris' Corpus Christi performance. Friends from the area wrote much the same thing.

MRS. MARY A. KRISTOFFERSON
FALLBROOK, CALIFORNIA

You're certainly not the only one, Mrs. Kristofferson. Read on.—Ed.

I would like to make a few comments on the article written by Paul Hemphill and his put down of

Johnny Cash in a pretty derogatory manner.

As to where history will place Johnny Cash—the Encyclopedia Britannica (1974 edition) in their article on Cash, credits him with taking country music out of the South and Southwest and exposing it to a national and world-wide market through his records and T.V. shows. It was *his* personality and *his* style of singing that did the trick.

As for a prison record—is that something to be proud of? There are thousands of us who grew up without material advantages but managed to keep our noses clean. Our alma mater was the local high school, not San Quentin.

As for Mr. Hemphill, the author of this opinionated "masterpiece," it takes a little man to degrade one man in order to uplift another. So not having the satisfaction of telling him off personally, I did the next best thing. I took my copy of *The Nashville Sound* and dumped it in the trash can. It afforded some satisfaction.

KATHY R. MOORE
STAMFORD, CONN.

I have always been told that it is not desirable to boost a person by saying derogatory things about his opponent. If you are strongly in favor of a person or cause, tell the good things, but don't run down others. One thing that can happen is leaving a bad taste in the reader's mouth. Another is that it can get contradictory, or verge on downright untruth.

MRS. O.J. STOUTNER
KEOTA, IOWA

Johnny Cash's image as a "bad man" was never preened by any promoter or agent, in any city, anywhere in the world. People form their own image of themselves, as well as other people. Ask Hemphill to take a peek at his own words about Johnny Cash in *The Nashville Sound*, a book he wrote in '69 or '70. Johnny

Cash hasn't been on a balloon to deflate—he's as turned on as anyone you'll ever meet—the public turned on to him because of his realness and his strong dedication to God.

To say Johnny Cash is a phony because he sings about being poor is untrue. He *was* poor. He didn't even know how poor until he left the farm at Dyess, Arkansas in 1955 and really saw how the other folks lived. He can be real when he sings about the truck drivers. He loved them—the ones that drove the ice truck, the ones in the Rollin' Store, and maybe once a month or so that big truck from Sears, Roebuck and Company would come through Dyess and he would be lucky enough to get to see it for just a few minutes, because it stirred up too much dust on the partially graveled roads to watch it too long. Or maybe, after he got a job as a water boy on the river crew, one of the men that came on the job from "town" had a truck that even had a radio in it. Yeah, he can sing about the trucks, about the broken hearts, because twenty acres of black gumbo dirt didn't raise enough cotton to tide the family over till spring. He can sing about the booze, the pills, the jails, the trains that don't run anymore. You bet he can sing about 'em and all without pretensions.

Our friend, Merle Haggard, is one of the finest entertainers in the business, yesterday, today or tomorrow. To tear down Johnny Cash bit by bit could never help any human being, much less Merle Haggard, who did make it because he is also real and has the talent that it takes to stay in this world of entertainment as long as they both have. I really think it's a little embarrassing for the both of them and so totally unnecessary. Johnny Cash and Merle Haggard are (to borrow a phrase from a friend) lifesize.

MRS. REBA HANCOCK
HOUSE OF CASH
NASHVILLE, TENN.

I am not only writing to express my views but also in behalf of the many hundreds of our Club's members who are also subscribers to your magazine. I am now receiving an alarming number of calls and letters from these members expressing their unhappiness and even anger in regard to the article written by Paul Hemphill. The article makes me very embarrassed for both Merle and Johnny. They are friends and I am sure that this article is just as offensive to them both as it is to me and our members. We all like *both* Merle and John, for the great artists that they are.

Why Mr. Hemphill thought he needed to be so rude by saying these many unkind things about Johnny, just to make his point about Merle being the outstanding artist that he is, is beyond my reasoning.

VIRGINIA STOHLER, PRES.
JOHNNY & JUNE CARTER CASH
INTERNATIONAL FAN CLUB
ANDERSON, INDIANA

Paul Hemphill may be disenchanted with Johnny Cash and think his popularity has declined, but let it be known there are plenty of loyal Cash fans who are not the least bit disillusioned with him.

Most true followers of Johnny always knew he was not actually an ex-con but that he identified with prisoners because of their feelings of frustrations and entrapment in one of life's vicious circles of being down and out—a feeling he has authentically experienced.

One wonders about the state of society when people reject a man because they find he is not as wicked as they had thought, but actually is a good human being. Is their need for someone to inspire them or someone by which they can excuse their own shortcomings?

Those looking for a super-human idol who fills all their psyche's empty spots may be disillusioned with Johnny Cash. Those who admire him because he is what he is—are not.

BETTY ANN KRACKER
MASSILLON, OHIO

Certainly Paul Hemphill is entitled to his views, and criticism, when justified, may even have a place in your magazine. However, in this case, your contributing editor is simply "all wet." Consider the following:

During the months of August and September, both Cash and Haggard were booked into Columbus, Ohio. Cash drew *two* crowds of over 30,000 in each of two performances at the Ohio State Fair. He outdrew Liza Minelli, Roy Clark, Charlie Rich, Olivia Newton-John, the Beach Boys, Red Skelton, and some Cash fans had to wait nearly four hours to see their favorite. Haggard, on the other hand, could draw only 3,000 to the 4,500-seat Veterans Auditorium (in a bill he shared with Dolly Parton).

In spring of 1974, Cash appeared as a guest star in the NBC television series, *Columbo*. During the Cash segment, *Columbo* reached the number one spot in the Neilson ratings, the only time it did so in the history of the show. Somebody out there must still like to watch Johnny Cash.

GARY T. HUNT
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Keep covering the *broad* spectrum of good country music—from Chip Taylor to Faron Young; from the Flying Burrito Brothers to the Statler Brothers, from Dolly Parton to Kris Kristofferson—and don't take seriously someone like Paul Hemphill (September *Country View*) who thinks he has the right to say who does and who doesn't "deserve to be called country singers."

DAVE JOYCE
TULSA, OKLA.

This is an abrupt answer to the letter from Bernard Batura. What kind of country stars are you talking about, bud? Where are these country *stars* who hurry off, refuse to sign autographs and just plain ignore their fans? I have yet to see one or meet one and I've been seeing country music shows faithfully for the last ten years.

Did you ever stop to think that maybe the guards, the hurrying away after shows, etc., was *not* the artists' doing? There are such things to be considered as managers, promoters and dozens of other individuals who may influence the stars. I grant you, this isn't how the game should be played, but this is the exception—*not* the rule.

I have seen, met and talked with dozens of artists over the years and have never yet been refused an autograph or a picture or a few words of conversation. Apparently, Mr. Batura, you are *not* talking about the same country musicians I am. I'm certain there are fans by the hundreds who will dispute your letter, as I do.

MRS. BETTY MASE
ATHENS, PA.

Judging from the letters we've received, most fans share your feelings, Mrs. Mase.—Ed.

What, may I ask, is a few autographs in the crowds of thousands who flood to see these stars today? How can they start to sign autographs and then stop, leaving hoards of disappointed fans behind? These stars have tight schedules and long journeys to make on the road. Sure I'd love to meet all the stars, shake their hands, get autographs, etc., but I'm realistic enough to know it can't always be done. I too have traveled over 100 miles to see stars, and if they gave a good show on stage I never felt cheated.

Of course, if a star has the time and stamina to meet everyone in the crowd and likes to do it, fine. I'm sure I love Loretta Lynn just a little bit more for all her giving towards her fans, but I wouldn't ask anyone to do what I saw her do one night in Rutland, Vermont, where she sat for hours signing autographs in bitter cold for thousands of people. It made us love her, but I sure hope it doesn't wear her out before her time.

Please, all you fans, be a little reasonable with our stars and we'll have them around a longer time to enjoy.

MARY E. ROONEY
SHELDON, VT.

People on the Scene

by Audrey Winters

Opry Benefit For Ivory Joe Hunter . . .
Merle Haggard Cuts An Album of Railroad Songs . . .
Audrey Williams Visits Hank's Grave, Plans Commemoration



Soul Singer Isaac Hayes, George Jones and Tammy Wynette turned out to cheer Ivory Joe Hunter.

A benefit performance for black singer **Ivory Joe Hunter** at the Grand Old Opry House was held on October 1. The 62-year-old entertainer is seriously ill with lung cancer, and his medical bills are huge. **George Jones**, **Tammy Wynette** and Memphis soul artist **Isaac Hayes** volunteered their talents for Ivory Joe, whose compositions of "Since I Met You Baby," "Empty Arms" and "I Almost Lost My Mind" have sold several million copies.

Ivory Joe was brought to Nashville from a Memphis hospital by ambulance, and wheeled to the center of the stage in a wheelchair. Emcee **T. Tommy Cutrer** read telegrams from **Bill Anderson**, **Pat Boone**, **Elvis Presley** and others. Although cancer had weakened Ivory Joe's voice, he took the micro-

phone and said, "I want to sing." After he had finished, the audience gave him a standing ovation. "Please let me sing another," he requested. He did, and got another standing ovation. **Tammy Wynette** stood in the wings with tears streaming down her face. "I can't stop crying," she said. "... his songs are so beautiful."

Ivory Joe said he is the only performer ever to play 93 one-night stands in a row. "That's a record," he added. "When I get well, I'm going to break that record."

Merle Haggard spent nearly two weeks in Nashville recently with his band, doctor, managers and buses. They opened an office for Shade Tree Music company and recorded between show dates. This was the first time Merle has been

in Nashville on a Saturday night in eight years. **Mrs. Ernest Tubb** insisted he work the "Midnight Jamboree," the world-famous live show that originates from Ernest Tubb's record shop. Merle worked it gladly and promised her he wouldn't wait another eight years.

Merle recorded an album of songs about trains. He told **Dolly Parton** he needed a train song. She went home and wrote him one. He recorded three of her songs and she picked rhythm guitar on one of the sessions.

Merle and **Fuzzy Owen**, his manager, have re-activated Talley Records, the label Merle recorded for before going to Capitol. It will be distributed by MCA and called Talley/MCA. Merle has been writing songs for his wife **Bonnie Owens**. He said, "I'm going to get Bonnie a hit. She has been recording 20 years and she deserves a hit... and it will be on my label."

More news from the Bakersfield front: The mother of Bonnie Owens Haggard suffered a stroke and died in Bakersfield. She was buried two days after **Don Rich**, in the same cemetery... and **Betty Azevedo**, long-time secretary for Merle Haggard Enterprises, resigned her post with the company due to recent surgery. Meanwhile, **Buck Owens** had unveiled the new location of the \$1,500,000 Radiation Oncology Center. The center, to be the fifth largest, will serve residents of northern California for modern cancer treatment. This is a project that Buck has worked long and hard for. His brother Melvin died of cancer four years ago.

Wilma Lee Cooper performed for the Smithsonian Institute in Wash-

2:15. And all's well.

It's a quarter after closing.

The room is winding down. Tables quickly cleared. Register rung out. Bar restocked. The group is taking a few minutes to get it all together before they hit the road for home. And their ladies in waiting know they won't have too much longer to wait.

A few hours ago, things were really cooking. It was a great night. Everyone could feel it. The customers. The waitresses. The bartenders. Each playing a vital part in the magic intimacy between artist and audience that can only happen in a club.

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Hank's first wife, Mrs. Audrey Williams, places roses on his grave.

ington, D.C. last month with her husband **Stoney**. It was part of the Institute's tribute to "Women In Country Music." Wilma Lee was recognized as one who has kept the traditional flavor of country music alive... **Minnie Pearl** performed a "first" at the Opry recently when she appeared on the boards without her regular stage costume. "I'll never do that again," she said. "I really felt naked without my garb, especially my hat." Minnie was visiting backstage and was persuaded to make an appearance... **Lynn Anderson's** horse "Lady Phase" won the Indiana State Quarterhorse Championship and her "Lots Of Bars" wound up with the title of "Reigning World Champion" in the quarterhorse division.

Mrs. Audrey Williams visited the grave of her late husband on the day of his birthday and placed several dozen roses on the grave. Had he lived, Hank would have been 51 years old. He died at the age of 29. A **Hank Williams Day** is being planned in Montgomery, Alabama for next year on his birthday.

Porter Wagoner reports his bus caught fire en route to Wheeling, West Virginia, causing him to miss a scheduled appearance there. It's the first time in Porter's career that he missed a date due to bus trouble... While in Toronto, Canada, taping two "Funny Farm" shows, **Vic Willis**, of the Willis Brothers fell off stage and broke his leg. Vic is on crutches and commented, "With our act, we need all the sympathy

we can get."... **Billy Joe Shaver** has signed a writer's contract with Baron Music, owned by **Waylon Jennings** and **Tompall Glaser**. Billy Joe was quite a catch. He has written some top tunes like "Ride Me Down Easy," "Old Five And Dimers," and Waylon's number one hit "You Ask Me To"... **Johnny Paycheck** has moved to Nashville from Denver. He bought a house that once belonged to **George Jones** and **Tammy Wynette**... **Ray Pillow** entered a tobacco-spitting contest while working a fair in Roanoke, Virginia, and finished as a runner-up.

Connie Smith and husband **Marshall Haynes** are expecting a baby in March. Connie wants lots of children. She has two boys and a 9-month-old girl... **Barbara Fairchild** has given birth to a baby daughter named **Randina Sierra**. She already has a two-year-old girl named **Tara Nevada**... **Jeannie Pruett's** parents celebrated 60 years of marriage recently. They live in Alabama... **Johnny Darrell** and wife are parents of a baby boy. They live near Atlanta. Johnny is recording again and has a new record, "Orange Blossom Special," for Capricorn Records... **Tammy Wynette** has been in the hospital again. She said "It's getting embarrassing, but I worked in 40-degree weather in North Dakota and I got pneumonia"... **Martha Carson** is recovering from surgery. Martha is retired from personal appearances, but active in songwriting. ■

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Bobby Bare's new album, "Singin' In The Kitchen," stars himself, and features his wife and the three little Bares. Catch them on **RCA Records and Tapes**



Country View

by Paul Hemphill

One of Nashville's more traumatic moments came some four years ago during the annual Country Music Association awards show, televised from the stage of the Grand Ole Opry when it was still headquartered at Ryman Auditorium. For nearly an hour there had been a procession of traditional country performers such as Tammy Wynette singing and being presented awards, but then the "Song of the Year" was announced. The award was to Kris Kristofferson, for writing "Sunday Mornin' Comin' Down." Wearing shoulder-length hair and a scruffy suede outfit, Kristofferson floated to the stage and stood with his back to the audience for nearly ten seconds, looking like a cowboy lost in a dust storm, before mumbling a few words and departing. He received cool applause and a lifted eyebrow from Tennessee Ernie Ford, the emcee. "Why, hell," an oldtimer drawled afterwards, "he didn't even wear a tux." The Godfathers of country music—people like Wesley Rose, whose father made Hank Williams a legend—were shaken to their teeth.

This was not, of course, the first time the purity of country music had been threatened. There had been many "new breed" entertainers to come along over the years—the soft pop style of Jim Reeves, the clattering "rockabilly" of Jerry Lee Lewis, the folkish stuff of Burl Ives, the slick commercialism of "the Nashville sound" itself—and the moguls in Nashville were even learning to adjust to seeing John Hartford knock around town in bluejeans and a shabby Volkswagen. But this time, they knew, it was different. Kris Kristofferson ("God knows what he'd been smokin' that night") symbolized a new breed of Nashville writers and performers who were, this time, formidable in number and influence.

The year or so before Kristofferson's victory I had felt something

like this change coming every night as I emptied my notebook for a book I was writing on the Nashville and country scenes. Almost everybody I talked to had the issue on his or her mind; choosing up sides, as it were. "We don't want to forsake country music, it's a tradition and they even oughta teach it in the schools," one small-time publisher told me. "Bob Dylan and Buffy Ste. Marie and all of those other folk stars coming in here to record narrowed the gap between pop and country," said Bill Williams of *Billboard*. Chet Atkins said he was "a little worried that country music is going to lose its identity." Glen Campbell, who was recording anything from gospel to Otis Redding, snapped, "I don't care whether it's country, pop or what, I just want a good song."

Today, however, country music is being virtually inundated by the new breed for whom Kristofferson was blazing a trail in 1970. Their dress is blue jeans and funky hats. Their hairstyle is long. Their pleasure is more likely to be smoke, rather than drink. They are playing clubs in Greenwich Village, rather than the Opry. But beyond their physical surface, and more importantly, they have brought a special new sound to country music that is almost impossible to define because its roots are everywhere: black blues, Jimmie Rodgers' country, Dylan folk and West Texas honky-tonk. Not surprisingly, perhaps, given the conservative thinking in Nashville, a passel of them like Willie Nelson and Waylon Jennings have set up shop in Austin, Texas.

It has taken me a while to accept any country music that wasn't Ernest Tubb or Merle Haggard or Dolly Parton. I am 38, and fear I got trapped between the generations. I was never able to get the hang of the cultural revolution of the Sixties, from whence sprang these latest troubadours like Kris-

tofferson. I'm still seething about the demise of the dirt stock-car tracks in the South, and the demolition of wonderful old baseball parks like Ebbetts field, and I may never get over either of those. But I have to admit that I am beginning to find a great freshness in this latest trend in country music (it will be debated, I know, whether it should be called "country"). Blasphemous as it may sound to the crowd in Nashville, I contend that it is even a great deal more honest than the majority of the stuff being written there all of these years.

The music has always had to change with the times, as everything else in America does, and when you look at the career of Waylon Jennings, for instance, you see nothing more or less than continuous transition with the times. He was raised in West Texas on hard country and "Western swing," and has characterized himself as "just a little old kid picking a broken broomstick trying to sound like Ernest Tubb." He began his career with Buddy Holly in the late Fifties when rock 'n' roll was the sound. He moved back to country, but then slid into folk. Finally, he began what is essentially a blend of folk and country, and he is doing it very well.

In a recent interview, Waylon articulated how he feels: "An executive once said to me, 'When are you gonna cut some country music?' I said, 'You're one of the problems we got because you don't know what it is.' I knew it would open up, though. The legends had to turn loose . . . If our audience has broadened, it's not because I've changed but because people are listening and finding they don't have to have a hayseed hanging out of their mouths. People want truth, and country music is that if it's nothing else. So is what I'm doing." I for one, stand convinced. ■

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Country News

The Country Music Association's annual award ceremony was spectacular. Guess who won 'Top Female Singer' honors . . .



CMA winners, left to right, are: Cal Smith (Top Single — "Country Bumpkin"); Charlie Rich (Entertainer of the Year and Top Album, "A Very Special Love Song"); writer Don Wayne (Top Song — "Country Bumpkin"); Danny Davis (Top Instrumental Group); songwriter Pee Wee King (Hall of Fame); MCA Records executive Owen Bradley (Hall of Fame); Loretta Lynn and Conway Twitty (Top Vocal Duo); Mel Tillis, who happened to be around when the picture was snapped; Ronnie Milsap (Top Male Vocalist); and Don Reid, Lew de Witt, Harold Reid and Phil Balsley of The Statler Brothers (Top Vocal Group). Top instrumentalist was the late Don Rich. Olivia Newton-John, who won Top Female Vocalist, was working in England at the time. She made a pre-recorded acceptance speech on video tape.

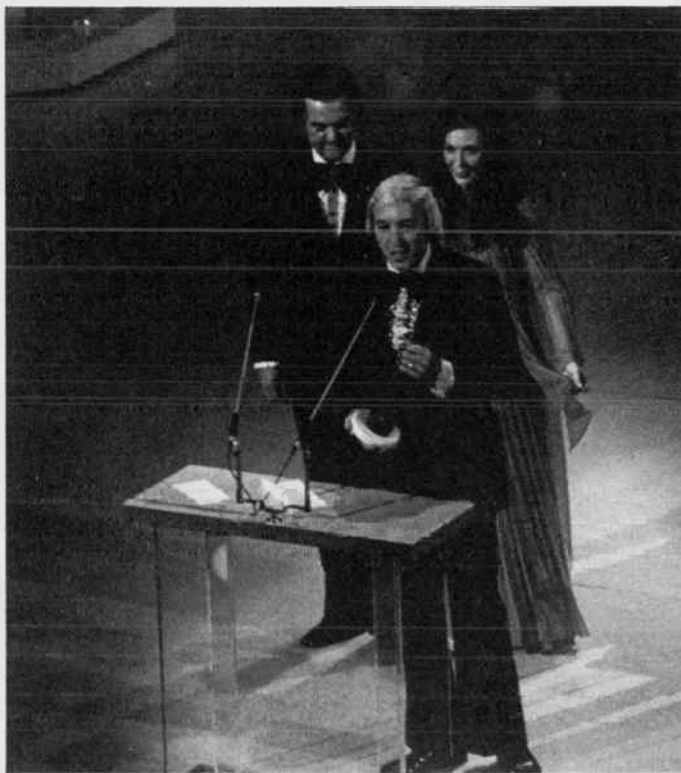
by The Grease Bros.

The third week in October is Country Music Week, by far the year's most spectacular in Nashville. It begins with the pro-celebrity golf tournament, followed by week-long music industry events including the Grand Ole Opry's birthday (49-years-old this year), a disc jockey convention, and perhaps most important, the Country Music Asso-

ciation's annual awards ceremony. This year there were a couple of surprises at the CMA awards, raising questions as to how they are given out.

To become a member of the CMA you *must* be in a music-related business and have proper references. You are then accepted or rejected by the 30-member board of direc-

tors who meet four times a year. Each of the 4,000 active members are eligible to vote in the annual awards poll. They mail in their choices for each category and after three elimination rounds, a single winner in each of the eleven categories is chosen. It's difficult to analyze just what the voting is based on—there are no real guide-



Songwriter Don Wayne offers a word of thanks while Conway and Loretta look on, and Bill Anderson, Kitty Wells, Little Jimmie Dickens and Hank Snow take a bow after performing.

lines. The whole process comes down to a popularity poll within the CMA membership—as opposed to recognition awarded on the ba-

sis of outstanding artistic contribution. An artist's popularity is often fanned by record company promotions. You figure it out.

One of the surprise awards went to Ronnie Milsap as "Top Male Vocalist." Other nominees were Merle Haggard, Charlie Rich, Cal Smith,



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SEPTEMBER 1974

Kris Kristofferson: Kingpin Of New Country; Melba Montgomery Hits At Last; Summer Country '74



Charlie Rich entertains with a song; Danny Davis grins; Olivia Newton-John beams thanks from abroad, and Pee Wee King sheds tears of joy as he is voted into the Hall of Fame. It was quite an evening.

and Waylon Jennings. Jennings was slated to perform at the ceremony but walked out in a dispute with the producers over the length of his song.

The real upset of the evening was the award to Anglo-Australian Olivia Newton-John as "Top Female Vocalist" over Dolly Parton, Loretta Lynn, Anne Murray and Tanya

Tucker. Her award surprised a lot of people not only because she is so new on the American music scene but also because it's debatable on which side of the country-pop line her music falls.

The awards have traditionally been held at the Opry, and this year's lavish setting at the *new* Opry—complete with full orchestra—looked and felt more like Hollywood than Nashville. It was a spectacular statement that served notice on everyone that country music had made it to the Big Time.

We came away from the event with some pretty good indications as to the direction country music is going. It was reassuring to have Little Jimmie Dickens, Hank Snow and Kitty Wells on hand to sing for us their painfully simple songs that somehow seem more beautiful and moving than ever, especially in such a spectacular setting. It reminded us of where the music really all begins. ■

Country In New York: Blowin' In The Wind

by Arlo Fischer
and Richard Nusser

Back in April, 1973, *New York* Magazine featured a cover portrait of Tony Randall with what appeared to be a large cob of sweet corn protruding from his ears, un-

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der the headline: "Will Country Music Move New York Into The Heartland?" The story inside—written in the hip, flip *New York*-style mix of advertising copy and Walter Winchellisms—was cynical in tone. It offered several glib definitions of country music, but got closest to the truth when it mentioned, in passing, that country music was a sound known "all across America, a consensus sound."

Elsewhere the story revealed that WHN—New York's powerful 100,000 watt, 24-hour-a-day country station—had based its decision to change to full-time country programming on the results of a listener survey that exposed New Yorkers to various "sample sounds." Their reaction to *country* music encouraged the shift in format, and country music thereby gained a most powerful voice. Since that time country music hasn't swept the city clean of sooty air and moral decay (with a "minty mist of mentholated Kentucky broadleaf," as *New York* phrased it), but there's every indication that at least a couple of million Gothamites prefer the clearer meaning and softer rhythms of country to the din of urban rock and roll.

In the heart of the city, country music is proving itself to be more than another expression of "radical chic." Square dancing hasn't replaced the Funky Chicken in discotheques yet, but country music *is* gaining a foothold amid the concrete canyons and glass towers.

Primarily, country air has been blowing from three directions. WHN (with the largest listening audience of any country station in the world) has probably done the most to promote and encourage the music's growth. Hugh O'Lunney, a genial Irishman who runs a popular bistro that showcases country talent seven nights a week, is another force. Up-and-comers like Crystal Gayle, Penny DeHaven and Sherry Bryce appear regularly, and local country bands round out the entertainment. O'Lunney's caters to displaced hillbillies, homesick tourists and—most importantly—media and showbiz types—the disc jockeys, talent managers, record promo men, national news weekly editors and writers who are the Big Apple's version of the town crier. O'Lun-

ney's has become, therefore, a sort of New York clearing-house for what's going on in country music.

The third gust of pure country air was brought in largely through the efforts of former pop columnist Al Aronowitz, who introduced country music to Philharmonic Hall and inaugurated the "Country In New York" series. While not a roaring financial success, the series has brought country stars to the attention of a far wider audience than they would have met say, at the Nebraska State Fair. Unfortunately, "Country In New York" seems to have foundered on the New York principle that anything worth doing is worth over-doing. Consequently, while country stars are normally content to be booked into 2500-seat auditoriums in the heartland, it was decided that nothing less than Madison Square Garden's 5,000-seat Felt Forum would suffice for "Country In New York" and that *three* major country acts should share each bill. The production and promotion costs of such an operation were, of course, staggering, and ticket sales couldn't quite match the expenses. As a result, after bringing Buck Owens, Susan Raye, Charlie Rich, Tom T. Hall, Lynn Anderson, Bill Monroe, Tammy Wynette, George Jones, Dolly Parton, Merle Haggard, Bobby Bare and Ronnie Mil-sap to town, Aronowitz was forced to cancel Willie Nelson, Billy Crash Craddock and the Carter Family's scheduled appearance in November.

One of the reasons for the lag in ticket sales has been that there are many small clubs ringing the metropolitan area that cater to country stars and rather than fight big town traffic and tariffs, suburbanites prefer to catch their country stars locally. Several clubs in New Jersey cater to country music exclusively. Freddy The German Cowboy's Blue Ribbon Inn in Hill-side draws big name acts and a steady clientele. On Long Island, the country faithful fill the Circle D Corral and the Three Star Inn to hear local bands and an occasional name act. Manhattan, in addition to O'Lunney's, now hosts the Stanbrooke Ranch (owned by former rodeo cowboys), a place called Molly Mog's, and last but not least, The Cow Palace, situated

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in the notorious East Village in the same building that was once rock's principle playground, The Electric Circus.

More recently, New York's very own country record label opened its doors. It's called Down Yonder Records. The grapevine has it that there is soon to be another country radio station. The Long Island Country Music Association is making itself heard. Begun in 1970 by country musician Jim Hilbert, the L.I.C.M.A. has grown from 10 to 1,400 members. Mickey Barnett, president of Eastern States Country Music Inc., heads an organization powerful enough to get New York's Mayor Beame to change the name of Times Square to Country Music Square for October, Coun-

try Music Month. New York had its first country music benefit in November, sponsored by the American Opera Theater. Proceeds from the event, which featured mostly local groups, went to a Greenwich Village Catholic church.

In retrospect, the year looked impressive, although the road was financially rocky. Two major festivals were cancelled for lack of strong ticket sales. Club attendance and concert sales could have been better, but all in all, the year was a good one. Country music may not have turned out to be the King Kong capable of toppling rock music's Empire State, but it proved what country fans have known all along—country music has staying power. ■

steam engines—the old 'tea kettles'—and I'm still trying to locate one, but they're mighty hard to come by nowadays."

The "Curless Line" includes a vintage snowplow, outfit car, boxcar, passenger car, and everybody's favorite, the caboose. Buying the train served several purposes for The Baron. It saved the train stock from the wrecker's hammer, fulfilled and perpetuates a boyhood dream, and it's also useful.

The actual purchase took place over a year ago, and since then extensive refurbishing has been changing the old cars into showpieces. Hay for Dick's horses is to be stored in the boxcar; his large collection of country music memorabilia is being displayed in the outfit car; the caboose provides him an office, and the old passenger car is for entertaining. The reasons for the unusual purchase go all the way back to the 1930's.

"I can remember the early days in Fort Fairfield, Maine, when I was a kid, just as clear as if they were yesterday. The schools would close for a spell and I'd spend ten hours a day picking potatoes during harvest time in the farm lands of Aroostook County. That was back during the Depression era and things were tough then, man. But my happiest memories of those days are the times at home in the evenings when my Dad would bring out the guitar and teach me a few new chords and songs. Many, many nights we'd put Jimmy Rodgers' Bluebird records on the gramophone and listen to the 'Singing Brakeman' yodeling about the railroads. By gawd, you know I've still got those records too.

"I use to walk over to the railroad tracks at Caribou, Maine, and talk to the hobos or railroad bums who'd be traveling through. I remember one morning in particular. I was 8 or 9 I think, and I met this old 'Bo beside a train trestle and listened for an hour while he told me about his experiences riding the boxcars. He asked me if I could round him up a little grub, and I said 'Yes Sir!' I was thrilled to do it. I snuck home, grabbed a loaf of bread and some bologna, and ran right back. He was very appreciative and continued telling those stories I



PHOTO: LOUIS LORD

It's full steam ahead on "The Curless Line."

The Baron From Maine Buys A 5-Car Train

by Major Benton

From listening to his songs, you probably think Dick Curless owns a truck stop or some big rig with fifteen gears and fourteen wheels. Well, guess again, 'cause you're wrong. Dick Curless owns a train. Not a toy, or a replica, but a *for real five-car train*, and it's sitting on his farm on the outskirts of Bangor, Maine. It's his. He bought it from the Bangor & Aroostook Railroad.

How did the man known as The Baron, a native of Maine who

vocalizes about "those big and burly men who roll the trucks along" happen to buy a train? "Well, I was out riding one day, just me and Honcho (Dick's faithful 14-year-old shepherd/collie who died early this year). I was taking a ride to see a disc jockey friend of mine up near that area (Derby, Maine) and I said 'Hell, I'm just going to go down to the railroad people and see if they've got anything for sale.' You know, trains. I was just going to start with a couple, you know? I wanted a caboose and a passenger thing, and I ended up getting five. I've always been fascinated by the

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loved to hear.

"The old-timer dug out a tin mirror from his ragged old carpet-bag—you know, one of those old-type mirrors with the hole in the top—and pinned it on a splinter of a beam supporting the trestle. Next came the shaving kit. He lathered his face from a shaving mug mixed with cold water, and continued telling stories and shaving with his straight razor at the same time. For me, man, this provided the authenticity to the records my Dad played at home, and has inspired me ever since. I realized then country music really could 'tell it like it is.'"

Obviously, trains have been on Curless' mind all his life and he finally decided to do something about it. It was no easy decision. He had a few dollars to spend—but he had to think the thing through to justify it in his mind. The man who did all the coordinating on the project—and there was a lot to be done—was Harold Bell, the purchasing agent who's been with the Bangor & Aroostook Railroad for over 25 years. Dick is very grateful to him. "He was awful nice. If it hadn't been for him being able to convince the railroad brass to go along with the idea, I wouldn't have my train today. He's the one that really done it."

Harold Bell was obviously impressed by Dick's sincere feelings concerning the railroads. "Dick, of course from being up there in Fort Fairfield, had ridden passenger trains when they existed," Bell said. "He saw the falling of the passenger train. He's very fascinated by railroads and has a strong interest in them."

On the day the five cars arrived, Curless didn't sit back and watch. He was helping put the track in, and taking up the old track. The railroad crew had to set in temporary lines to get the cars from their line onto the 450 feet of permanent track set up on the farm for "The Curless Line." When the train arrived, Dick was as happy as a little kid with a new Christmas toy.

"Yeah, you bet. I rode the damn thing in. It was in November and it was colder 'n' hell—about 10 degrees above zero. That train and farm are my pride and joy."

Curless made it from trucker to railroad president in one life-

time. But the thousands who have heard him belting out "Big Wheel Cannonball" at the Truckers' Jamborees, and those who have felt the authority in his voice on "Tombstone Every Mile," can rest assured. Curless knows how to handle a rig. He paid his dues

cutting, loading, and hauling logs from the Maine woods back in the late 1950's.

Now, if Dick finds an old "Tea Kettle" somewhere, he just might hook up "The Curless Line" and steam to Music City. He'll probably be carrying a few train songs. ■



The King Of Blues—Ray Charles—as he appeared on The Glen Campbell Show. Charles has cut three country albums since 1962.

Lest We Forget: Ray Charles Reflects by Don Rhodes

"When I was seven or eight years old, I used to listen to the Grand Ole Opry on the radio every Saturday night. I wouldn't miss it for the world—just like I wouldn't miss 'The Shadow.' I remember loving to hear all those people like Grandpa Jones, Roy Acuff, Ernest Tubb and Minnie Pearl. I thought she was so funny. Any kind of music you like becomes a part of you, leaving a scar... or rather a beauty mark. That's exactly what it is... a beauty mark."

The genius of the blues, Ray Charles Robinson, spoke with the voice of authority during a recent interview in Augusta, Georgia... talking about his deep love for country music that stretches back to his birth in Albany, Georgia, and his early boyhood years in Florida.

So it was in 1962 that he became one of the first pop singers to broaden the scope and listening

audience for country music by recording his now historic *Modern Sounds In Country And Western Music* album, which sold more than a million copies to an audience that may never had heard that side of America's musical culture. It wasn't only the public—country and pop fans alike—who profited. Country songwriters earned long-overdue exposure. Don Gibson's "I Can't Stop Loving You" was lifted from the album and released as a single. It sold nearly three million copies. The album also featured Ted Daffan's memorable "Born To Lose," which became a Charles' standard.

Although the release of the album was hailed by critics and public, Charles recently recalled in another interview a few months back, how friends and business associates had warned him that if he recorded a country album he stood the risk of losing his own fans, much the way country singers are warned about becoming too "pop." Nevertheless, Charles decided to follow his own instincts and try what he liked.

Since then, Charles has recorded two more country albums, *Modern Sounds In Country And Western Music, Volume II*, and *Country And Western Meets Rhythm And Blues*. Both enjoyed large sales and were credited with promoting country music to previously non-country music lovers. Since 1962 Charles has shot to the top of the pop and rock music charts with versions of Buck Owens' "Cryin' Time" and "Together Again;" Gov. Jimmie Davis' "Worried Mind" and "You Are My Sunshine;" Cindy Walker and Eddy Arnold's "You Don't Know Me;" Harlan Howard's "Busted;" and Hank Williams' "Take These Chains From My Heart." He recently recorded the Roy Clark hit, "Come Live With Me."

He speaks of his selection of country songs saying, "I'm not a Charley Pride, and I'm not a country singer. I just like to take country songs and sing them my way." Charles said the first country song he recorded was in 1959 when he did Hank Snow's "Movin' On" for the flip side of "I Believe To My Soul." (At this point in the interview Charles started

singing—with his famous wail—"Engineer moving down the track, your true love daddy ain't coming back")

Charles has appeared on the Hee Haw, Johnny Cash and Glen Campbell television shows and notes of these appearances, "People in the country music field seem to think I've done a lot for country music. They've given me all the praise and credit I could possibly want." Among his personal favorites he lists Buck Owens, Ernest Tubb, Johnny Cash, Roy Acuff, Gene Austin ("I thought he had a real pretty voice"), and Hank Williams ("He was a creator. He had a style of his own. He was a true talent ... a born talent.").

Pausing a moment, Charles commented, "If you really want to know who I like, it's George Jones. Does that surprise you?"

For two or three months in 1946, Charles toured with a white country music band from Tampa, Florida, called "The Florida Playboys." He wore a cowboy outfit. "That's when I learned to yodel. I was the only colored singing cowboy," he said. He conceded that his famous wail heard on many of his record-

ings "might be an off-shoot" of his early yodeling. "The difference is that in my falsetto, I may use several notes, but yodeling is generally going back and forth on two notes."

I mentioned to Charles that Merle Haggard once told me in an interview that there is a close resemblance between country music and black soul music. "Both are played by the ear and from the heart," Haggard had said. "I think a better name for country music might be 'white soul music.'"

Then, I asked if he thought the reverse might be true—that soul music might be classified as 'black country music'.

"To tell you the truth, if you wanted to give it a title like that, I think it is true," Charles replied. "Both are about plain, everyday people... about the commonplace. The words to country music songs are very earthy like the blues. Both types of songs tell it like it is. They're not glossy, and you don't have to be a scholar to understand it. I think people who love country music love the blues, and that people who love the blues love country music." ■



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COUNTRY MUSIC
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Watch This Face: Red Lane

Red Lane keeps a pretty low profile, so it's not very often anybody wants to know about him. He is not yet a star. He drives a truck, not a Cadillac. He doesn't want to wear sequins. Red is basically a simple man who has had to wade around most of his life, knee-deep in complications—not the least of which is Nashville, Tennessee.

Everybody in the music business knows Red Lane as one of the best and most successful writers anywhere. Often, somebody can make a fast killing by writing a hit song, but to keep it up, year after year, to make a real living at it, is something else. Red has been writing songs for Tree International since he came to Nashville in 1964. His catalog contains hundreds of songs. Most of them have been recorded, and some of them—like “Mississippi Woman” (Waylon Jennings) and “Darlin’, You Know I Wouldn’t Lie” (Conway Twitty)—have been big hits. Red says he doesn’t even know how many times some of his songs have been recorded.

For years Red has been making good money doing what he knows best, but his recording career hasn’t been quite as successful as it could be. He had one album and one single out on RCA two years ago. Neither did very well, although they were both well made. “Ronny (Red’s producer) and I were just low men on the totem pole at RCA, so the company didn’t get behind anything we did,” Red says. “So no hits.”

Red loves to sing for people, but *only* if they want to listen. Recently, he had a short-lived gig at a lounge in Nashville—short-lived because most of the people there were more interested in seeing how much liquor they could put away than in Red’s songs. So, Red said, “the hell with this,” packed up his guitar and songbook, and left.

Red is quiet, but not retiring. He

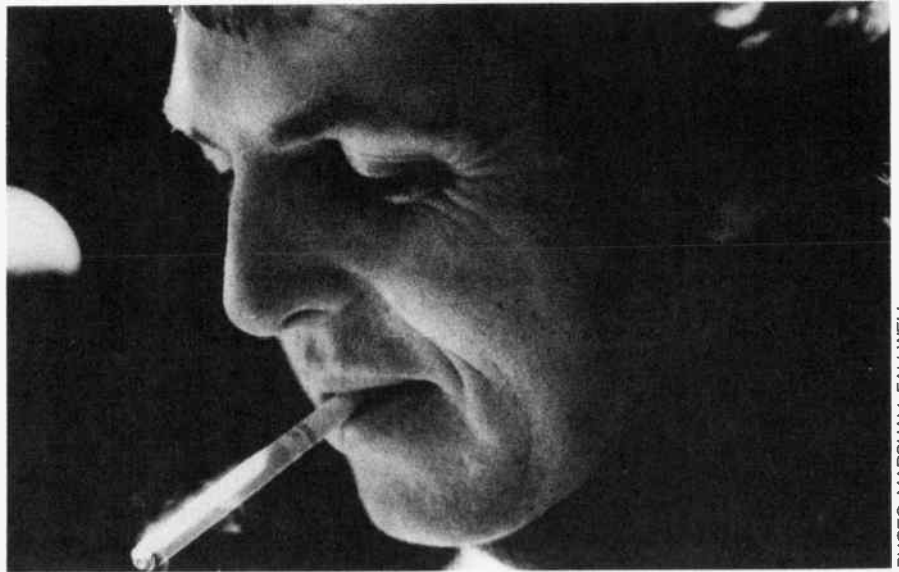


PHOTO: MARSHALL FALLWELL

Bobby Bare dropped Red’s name in Denmark.

has a phone in his truck. He owns a boat. He’s a licensed pilot and parachutist. (He wrote a song about parachuting.) But when Red relaxes, he means business. “When you’re on my boat,” he said, “you’re on it to relax. The only time you move is to get yourself another beer, and when you do *that*, don’t move too fast.”

Red draws the inspiration for his songs from many sources. One of them was Coach Darrell Royal of the Texas Longhorns. One day, Red was visiting the team’s practice, when a rainstorm blew up. One of the players, Earl Campbell, looked up at the sky and said, “If it’s gonna rain, I hope it rains on Mama’s roses.” Coach Royal explained: “You see, the young man was talking about roses his mother grew to sell. They were eatin’ roses, so rain was important.” Red loved the line, so he wrote a song called “Mama’s Roses,” which hasn’t as yet been cut by anyone.

Red is a fine guitar player, and he has a soft, melodic voice. He doesn’t jive around when he gets on stage; his songs are entertainment enough.

Red knows he’s good, so it doesn’t really wound him that he hasn’t yet made a hit as a singer. But Red likes the stage. He compared it to the rush you get when you are floating down several thousand feet of sky with your parachute billowing out above you like a huge parasol—once you feel it, you want it again and again. And I’m not talking about fame. That’s something I believe Red Lane can do without. “Bare (Bobby Bare) really got me one time on this fame thing,” he said. “We were talking about it, and how to get it, one time after Bobby got back from a trip all over Europe. ‘Red,’ he said, ‘I just want you to know I dropped your name in Denmark.’”

Red now has a very loose arrangement with Dial Records, the company owned by his publisher, Buddy Killen. Red’s hopeful but cautious about the deal. He knows that it is usually best for an artist to sign with a major label in order to take advantage of its more powerful promotional capabilities. But he’s willing to take a chance.

MARSHALL FALLWELL

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OZA5



Gospel Now

by John Fluck

Psalm 98

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth:
make a loud noise, and rejoice and sing praise. Sing unto the
Lord with the harp; with the harp and the voice of a psalm.
With trumpets and the sound of cornet make a joyful noise
before the Lord, the King.



It's going to be a big night — one of the year's two or three biggest — in Arab, Alabama, and the people are already staking out squatter's rights in anticipation. It's brutally hot, the kind of sticky, steaming heat sweated out of the earth that oozes up all around you. After five minutes of it, you're sweating so much your clothes melt onto your skin. But the good people of Arab and its environs are more than willing to endure an hour or so on the oven-like floor of the high school football field, because they know if they should wait until the sun sets and things cool off a little, why, by that time there won't be a decent spot anywhere, except back up in the bleachers, and what kind of place is *that* to be when the Oak Ridge Boys, the Thrasher Brothers, Coy Cook and the Premiers, the Statesmen Quartet with Hovie Lister and the Keystones are going to be performing an all night sing *live and in person*? So it is an early crowd in Arab, but a patient one, waiting to be entertained by some of the best in the business or to get a spiritual lift from some of the best at that, too. Or maybe because the way that tall, dark, good-looking tenor sings about Jesus makes one of them feel something special for him, and if he doesn't have to leave right after the show, perhaps she can repay him for all the peace and joy he's given her over the years. So they sit and wait, as some 6,000,000 others did this year, for another glory hallelujah celebration of that timeless medium of the Bible Belt—gospel music.

Their forbearance is rewarded. They love the screaming tenors, the foghorn basses, the tinkling, frenetic pianos, the songs that get them clapping with the beat, the songs whose beauty and message move them to tears and the songs that keep them ever mindful of how wonderful it is to have Jesus as a personal Savior because He'll be returning soon to gather in His flock and what a joyful noise unto the Lord we'll all make on that glorious day. They love the way the Oaks put so much enthusiasm in their music, the way they've got themselves so synchronously choreo-

graphed, yet with each individual still able to stand out. They love the way Willie Wynn hits and holds those incredible high notes with an almost inhumanly moving quality; the way Elmer Cole histrionically stomps his way back and forth across the stage, working himself into a lather singing about how real Jesus is to him, climaxing his number by jumping out into the audience and heartily shaking hands with the faithful; the way Hovie Lister—"Lord, how long we been coming to see ole Hovie, now?" a man asks his wife. "'Bout fifteen years, ain't it?"—gets up from the piano and shouts it clear down to Birmingham about the better world they're all bound for where there's no energy crisis, no inflation and no shortages, except those of earthly care and woe. They love the singing, the shows, the costumes, the chance to mingle with the performers, the browsing through the record racks... they love *everything* in Arab and they love it no less here in its traditional spawning ground than others love it in Philadelphia, Ontario or Stockholm. And by their rabid ardor the fans in Arab show why gospel music, with the exception of bluegrass, is the fastest growing music in America today.

"Fastest growing," of course, should not be confused with "fully grown." Gospel music, though no longer confined to its native Southeast, still finds the bulk of its audience there, along with certain steadfast pockets in the Southwest, the eastern Midwest and the middle and upper eastern seaboard. Many other sections of the country would more readily identify gospel music with the spirituals of Mahalia Jackson or the thundering hymns of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, and likely think of the Oak Ridge Boys as a bunch of Defense Department whiz kids. But the hard-core, white, Southern, quartet singing that comprises the largest segment of the many categories of gospel music (Sacred, Inspirational, Contemporary, Jesus Rock, *et al*) has begun to emerge from its life-long cocoon and spread itself a sizable pair of wings. The thought expressed most along Nashville's Music Row—where the bulk of the gospel music business is headquartered—is that "our music is right where

Psalm 135:3

Praise the Lord; for the Lord is good: sing praises unto His name, for it is pleasant.

country music was ten years ago." There is much to indicate this is true.

The analogy is apt, for country music and religious music have enjoyed a long and fruitful partnership. Any country artist of any stature inevitably cuts a gospel album and many make a point to include a religious song on every lp or every show, be it anything from "I'll Fly Away" to "Me And Jesus" to practically everything in between. In the old days of live radio "the time when we all gather 'round and do our song of faith and inspiration" was also the most awaited by listeners and performers alike.

The reasons for this kinship go back as far as the music itself. In the old rural South everyone got his

or her first singing experience in the church, which was not only the religious, but also the social and entertainment center of the community. In the 1920's and '30's a few itinerant singer-musician-preachers began traveling from church to church holding "singing schools," week-long sessions in which they taught the assembled choristers the rudiments of music. The more promising students would then form groups—usually quartets—and issue invitations to nearby churches for a "singing convention," which was actually more a singing *battle*, as each group would show off its tenor, show off its bass, show off its harmony, show off anything else it had learned and, by doing so, hope to show up the other groups. In

The Statesmen



The Statesmen were formed in 1948 in Atlanta by Hovie Lister, who, besides being the group's originator, is also its manager, pianist, emcee, and an ordained Baptist Minister. Once or twice a show, Hovie will spring up from the piano and lay some good old-time preaching on the audience. He is called—surprise—"The Showman of Gospel Music." But Lister, colorful as he is, is far more than flash and dash. He pastored a church in Georgia for eleven years, was

awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity from Burton College and Seminary in Colorado, and for fourteen years has preached the Sunday morning service at the National Quartet Convention.

The Statesmen were the first group to be nationally syndicated by a national sponsor on TV, and were the launching pad for Jake Hess (1948-64), known as "Mr. Personality of Gospel Music" through his successful Nashville TV show.

time, a few of the better quartets began journeying to neighboring towns, eeking out a precarious living singing for offerings in various Holy Sacrament Evangelist Calvary Temples of Christ.

In the late '40's and early '50's a few promoters began hiring a handful of the more well-known groups to tour their circuits—such as they were. The money, if forthcoming at all, was very meager, contracts were non-existent, disputes were frequent, and the whole business was strictly a wildcat affair replete with back-pocket offices, verbal agreements and faltering memories. Groups would forget they were to appear on shows, promoters would forget they booked them or advertise groups they hadn't booked, and spur-of-the-moment cancellations were common. One group, for example, drove all night from Dallas to Charlotte, N.C., and screeched to a halt at the church just in time for the show, only to have a child totter out and inform them that "My daddy said to tell you the show's been called off." Given the risky nature of their calling, the half-dozen or so "name" groups did everything in their power—usually suc-

cessfully—to keep the field, loosely speaking, to themselves. It wasn't until the late '50's and early '60's—when a few intrepid groups ventured out of the South, the now-institutional "all night sings" came into being, and gospel music began to use TV and Nashville recordings in a big way. The demand became such that it couldn't be filled by the same ole faces anymore.

Even today there is still no middle ground in gospel music. A group is either in the big leagues or the sandlots—although a scorecard is often needed to tell the difference, for only in gospel music does one find the small-timers adorning themselves with the trappings of stardom—bus, suits, p.a. sets—right apace with the big boys. There is an incalculable number of such groups across the country who hold down regular jobs, sing in the baritone's uncle's church on weekends, press 1,000 albums at some little four-track studio, have everything hocked but the fillings in their teeth, and pray that the Lord blesses them with a big-time contract—and quickly. And many of the Nashville groups are not far ahead

The Oak Ridge Boys



Probably the most well-known and most successful of all gospel music groups is the Oak Ridge Boys. The original Oak Ridge Quartet was formed in the early 1950's in the east Tennessee hamlet of Oak Ridge, and sang locally for several years before disbanding in late 1956. In early 1957 the current Oak Ridge Boys were formed and moved to Nashville. Today's group includes none of the original members of the second founding, but lead singer Duane Allen and baritone Bill Golden have been with the group ten and eight years, respectively. One reason for their longevity is that the Oaks are one of the most closely-knit and easy-going of all the non-family groups.

They are also the most innovative, being one of the first

groups—if not *the* first—to let their hair come down over their collars, to dress like *Esquire* fashion models, to take on a back-up band and to put a little shake, rattle and roll into their music. For these reasons, they are also the most controversial group, but the ongoing criticism has not stifled their spirit. On the latest album (the Oaks are—here we go again—also one of the handful of gospel groups to record on a non-gospel label) they do such decidedly non-gospel numbers as "Loves Me Like A Rock" and "Freedom For The Stallion." Whatever their bag, it is paying off. They have won one Grammy and nine Dove Awards, made appearances on the "Mike Douglas Show" and "Hee-Haw," and had several outstanding European tours.

1 Chronicles 15:16

And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of music, psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding by lifting up the voice with joy.

of them. There are only about a dozen supergroups in gospel music, and most of them are superstars only as gospel defines the word, getting at most \$1,500-2,000 per show.

Despite its mushrooming growth, gospel music is still financially chancy. There has only been one gold single by a gospel group, and no more than half-a-dozen gold albums. Distribution is lacking, so more record sales are done by the groups themselves at their shows, and since that is a gluttonous buyer's market, discounts, bargains and packages abound. Gospel writers don't get nearly their just royalties because most of the weekend wailers in the podunk studios don't bother with them and there is no way to keep tabs on their operations. (A SESAC executive estimates such losses run up to \$20,000,000 a year.) And the money that does come in has to be split six or eight ways equally. Then there are the payments on that Monster Cruiser, and a whole new set of white sport coats and pink carnations every three months.

About the only way to achieve any lasting stability and security in gospel music is to be a member of one of the numerous family groups. Harking back to its early days when Dad led the choir, Mom played the piano and little brother and sister joined right in there, there are several groups consisting of three generations, and it is not unusual for a man to celebrate his 47th birthday and his 40th year in gospel music on the same occasion. In addition to the evident economic advantages, (plus the way it grabs the fans to see one, big, happy, clean cut, well-scrubbed, All-American clan singing for Jesus), family arrangements also eliminate the constant friction and personnel turnover that afflict most other groups.

Again harking back to its early days (*everything* in gospel music harks back to its early days), the old feelings carried over from the claw-and-scratch struggle for survival die hard. Gospel groups are still notoriously jealous of each other, ever fearful that another will get a TV spot or a "hit" record or a book-

The Speer Family



The Blackwoods may be the most honored gospel group, but undoubtedly the most revered name in gospel music is the Speer Family, a name which goes back 53 years and includes three generations. The Speers started in Alabama with G.T. and his wife Lena, who later became affectionately known as "Mom and Dad Speer." Two of their children, Ben and Brock, head the present group, along with

their offspring, Steve and Susan, and four other members. They have won the Gospel Music Association's Dove Award for Best Mixed Group five times. Brock, in addition to being current President of the Gospel Music Association, holds a Bachelor of Divinity Degree from Vanderbilt University, and is a Commissioned and Licensed Song Evangelist of the Nazarene Church.

ing at a big state fair, and that instead of helping the overall business, this will somehow dilute their own money and prestige. Such attitudes throw a pall over many inter-group relationships. "I used to look forward to the day when there would be peace and harmony in our business," said one quartet singer. "But the longer it goes on, the more I realize it's impossible. I don't know of any other business where so many people are not on speaking terms, and *no* other business where many of the members in the same groups won't speak to each other."

The old days when groups were so intent on besting each other—even to the point of turning off another quartet's sound system in the middle of its act—still linger and account for much of the alienation. Groups will make snide little onstage digs at one another—particularly if the preceding group has gotten a big hand—and will invariably vie with each other to come on early in the bill so they can sing all the favorite songs of the following acts (besides getting first chance to plug their albums). Fragile egos and extreme sensitivities, which suffer no other talents, are also common.

And there's the somewhat expected *coup de grace*: many groups condemn others because they play in places serving liquor, or back up some pop singer, or use drums and horns and other such "secular" instruments in their act, or have long hair, or were spied smoking in the boys room. The accused group, in turn, then asks, "Who are you to judge me? Doesn't

the Bible say 'Let him who is without sin cast the first stone?'" After a few more such exchanges, another typical, good old-fashioned, Hatfield-and-McCoy gospel music feud will have gotten underway.

In their defense, gospel people repeatedly assert that "we're just people like anyone else," and at first you are tempted to write it off as a weak, transparent excuse, but after you're around them awhile and get to know them, you realize that it's true; that *singing* the gospel and *living* the gospel can be two very different matters. It requires no certificate from Heaven to do thirty minutes for Jesus each night.

It is a will-of-the-wisp subject, the question of how sincere or how committed or how straight gospel singers are, but it is also one of the most provocative.

Some comments from those in the business:

A producer: "Most of them believe in what they do. It's much more honest than it used to be."

An agent: "Ninety-nine percent of them while they're on stage and caught up in their show believe in it. But when they walk off that stage, it's another world."

Another agent: "I think any person in gospel music has to believe in it. He couldn't hear the words and the message night after night without its affecting his conscience to the point where he would change either his life or his music. This does not mean all gospel singers necessarily wear white hats, or that our business doesn't have its share of black sheep. But my

J. D. Sumner and The Stamps



The Stamps began in Texas in 1924 as an arm of the Stamps Music Company. J.D. Sumner (then bass singer with the Blackwood Brothers) and James Blackwood purchased the company—and with it the group—in 1962. In 1965 Sumner joined the Stamps as bass singer and manager, and quickly transformed the group into one of the leading quartets. Sumner is billed as "the world's lowest bass singer" and,

like the old wild West gunslingers, continues to shoot down a constant flow of upstart challengers. He is reportedly able to plunge his voice even lower than the lowest note on the piano. Innovative as he is talented, he was the first to put his group in buses for personal appearance travel, and helped conceive the idea for the annual National Quartet Convention.

PHOTO: COURTESY SKYLITE SING

Isaiah 12:5

Sing unto the Lord; for He hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth.

idea of a Christian is one who makes himself available to be used by the Lord. And this is what gospel singers do.”

A singer: “I’d say no more than 25 percent of them live what they sing.”

An executive: “I think anyone in gospel music at some time in his life had a experience with God that made him choose gospel music over country or pop. That person may not necessarily be the best example of a Christian today, and he may be in gospel music solely as an entertainer. But deep down he still remembers his motivating experience.”

Another executive: “Few of them are honest, dedicated Christians. I talked to NARAS about giving a gospel award and they said, ‘We’re not giving awards to the gospel people because most of them are such hypocrites.’ I couldn’t argue with them.”

Another agent: “There’s a certain amount of backsliding in our business. But there’s a certain amount of backsliding in any church.”

Another executive: “For the most part, you won’t find a more spiritually immature people than gospel

singers.”

Another producer: “There are a few of them that know what they are, make no bones about it, and don’t care who sees them walk off the stage, get a bottle, grab a girl and head for the motel. But they don’t hurt the image of gospel music nearly as much as the welchers and backstabbers—especially those who use the Lord to justify it all.”

A singer: “So many people expect you to be so many different things. All we’re really trying to do is entertain them.”

Perhaps, then, this is the crux of the matter. Debates over whether gospel music is or should be entertainment or ministry can get as involved as those concerning the uprightness of the performers. The phrase heard most often is “entertainment with a message,” a fit description, for these days gospel music—once the sole province of four guys standing at attention with frozen smiles and penquin tuxes—now features some of the best entertainment going with mod costumes, whole lotta shakin’ bands, and shows that could (and sometimes do) play Las Vegas. Where-

The Blackwood Brothers



The most honored and most acclaimed gospel group is the Blackwood Brothers, winners of a host of Grammy and Dove Awards (including five 1974 Doves). Their honors culminated in James Blackwood’s election to the Gospel Music Hall of Fame. The Blackwood Brothers go back to 1934, when they were formed in Texas. In the late 1940’s they moved to Memphis, their present headquarters. In 1954 two of the members were killed in a plane crash, but

the group replaced them and came back stronger than ever. Today, James Blackwood (“Mr. Gospel Music,”) is the only original member of the group, which consists of four members of the Blackwood Family—James, his nephew and two sons—and five others. He has been in gospel music for forty of his fifty-five years. The Blackwoods claim to hold the gospel record for most miles traveled, most people sung to, and most records sold—3,000,000 albums.

The Growth of Gospel Music, 1952-1973

	1952	1972	1973
Publishing Companies	57	93	105
Gospel Groups: Full Time	30	83	94
Part Time	100	335	351
Record Companies (Full Gospel)	5	33	35
Distributors of Sheet Music and Records	3	61	72
Talent Agencies	0	8	12
Radio Stations: Full-time Christian Broadcasting	3	52	66
Minimum 6 hours weekly	82	423	699
Total hours programmed weekly			21,328
Television: Full-time Christian Broadcasting	0	9	11
Publications: Full Gospel	0	10	12
Include Gospel in Format	0	10	16
Regularly Scheduled Concerts (monthly and quarterly)	115	365	381
Spectaculars (annual events)	2	9	12
Paid Attendance for concerts	2 million	4½ million	6 million
Recording Studios (specializing in Gospel Music)	0	35	35
Major Record Companies (combined gross income)	8 million	31 million	42 million
Performance Rights Organizations	3	3	3

as a few years ago country audiences were complaining about their performers "going too pop," the gospel fan is beginning to wonder if maybe his favorites aren't "getting too worldly." But gospel fans—many of whom forego most other forms of entertainment—expect a spirited performance and would probably still embrace a group that did a number from "Hair."

In fact, their loyalty and generosity are such that when radio stations go full-time gospel, fans have been known to donate records. One insider says, "If the energy crisis ever really hits where we have gasoline rationing, gospel will be the only music to carry on, because all the groups would have to do would be to tell the fans how much gas they need to get to the next town and the fans will supply it."

Not surprisingly, ardent female fans are also willing to do their part. "There's a certain type of woman who would never cheat on her husband or even think of going to a bar, but she'll go out with a gospel singer because she feels that it's all right to bestow her favors on a man who's doing the Lord's work," said another insider.

"We play a lot of little country towns and rural churches," explained one singer. "We're the only entertainment these people have ever had and we're almost like gods to them. The biggest thing that'll ever happen to these women is to make it with one of us."

And as one succinctly put it, "We've got the easiest racket in show business. We sing our way into their hearts and then right on into their pants."

But on this particular night in Arab, no such opportunity presents itself. The crowd, exuberant though it is, has come to hear the gospel sung to them; nothing less, but certainly nothing more. And the performers have no time for post-show dalliances, as they must immediately scatter for tomorrow night's shows in Texas, Missouri, Illinois. Watching them depart, one wonders how soon it will be before they embark for more virgin territory: Madison Square Garden, Carnegie Hall, the London Palladium, the Midnight Special. Can the White House, network spectaculars and million sellers be far behind? Gospel music has grown stronger than its internal squabbles, bigger than any one of its factions, and far more professional than any but the most far-sighted visionary would have dreamed of a decade ago. True, it is still lacking much of the big-time aura and glamor of most other forms of music. But, relatively speaking, country music hasn't been out of the little red schoolhouses that long. Today the music that was born in the little white churches in the vales—good old down-home, hand-clapping, soul-saving, Jesus-praising, singing and shouting music—has at last come of age. Like a robust stripling it now looks for new worlds to conquer. ■

Singing Schools: the Way to Make It

Ever mindful of its heritage and always on the lookout for new talent, gospel music still maintains one of its earlier unique foundations: the singing school. Such schools, though once abundant throughout the South, now number only two: the Videt-Polk School in Mississippi and the more prominent Stamps-Blackwood Summer Music Camp at Murray State University, Murray, Ky. The Stamps-Blackwood school was started by legendary gospel pioneer V.O. Stamps in Waxahachie, Texas in the 1940's, and was moved to Murray last year. It runs three weeks every summer, costs \$250, teaches theory, harmony, sight reading, composition, arrangement, choral techniques, stage presence, quartet training, history of gospel music and offers private voice and music lessons. Its 200 students (mostly under 20, split about 50-50 between males and females) all swear by it, not only because of what they learn, but for its invaluable contacts and exposure. In fact, there are only a handful of groups that don't have at least one member who hasn't attended one of the schools, often for two or more summers.

"This is my first summer and I've already had two offers," said one student. "I'm debating whether to take one of them or else go back home and form my own group. Either way, the school will have made it all possible."

Tennessee Ernie: The Fundamental Issue

by Patrick Carr

In the world of gospel music, Tennessee Ernie Ford is a special case. While it is true that most established country singing artists take gospel music seriously—to the extent of using one or two gospel songs per album, and usually devoting one or two entire albums to sacred songs—it is also true that “The Peapicker” has made gospel music his *speciality*. It is something with which he takes special care.

Tennessee Ernie was interviewed recently in Hawaii, on the eve of his trip to Russia with the Opryland touring show. It was certainly a somewhat bizarre setting for an interview about gospel music—a crowded, high-class oceanfront club complete with bikinis, Hawaiian steel guitar riffs, and a regular procession of Boeing 747’s shipping the American and Japanese tourists in and out of the island paradise—but it didn’t seem to put Ernie out of his stride. We began with memories:

“I sang in churches since I was three. My daddy was a bass singer—just a good country hymn singer, y’know? And my mother could sing. If somebody died back in those hills, or somebody got married—something like that—they’d call, ‘Y’all come and sing!’ Well, all right . . . we’d go back in those hills sometimes and there’d be a little old church, but no music. So we’d just sing, because we knew it—my dad and myself and my mother and sometimes two other men from the church, we’d sing and then we’d be pallbearers. This was my life. People were so *good*, and it was just . . .

“There’s a great story back there. My paternal grandfather was a big man—he was six-three and wore a great big black hat and a handlebar mustache, just like everyone’s doing today. Years ago, one of the good old ladies down there in the country passed away, and they came on up to my granddaddy at the house. So my granddaddy went to the cemetery at the old country church, and dug her grave. It was a bit misty and cold and rainy, but he finished the grave and went home, and he caught pneumonia. In those days, when you caught pneumonia, it was like catching cancer today. That was it. There was nothing for it. Your lungs just choked you to death. So my big granddaddy passed away.

“Well, the neighbor men picked him up and laid him out on a great long pine plank and covered him with a sheet. They stripped the bed and I paid my last respects to my grandfather in this old country home. Now, the correct procedure today for something like that is, you get a death certificate from the doctor, you

get the cause, then you call the mortuary, right? Not so then. In those days, the neighbor men—who knew him and worked with him—prepared him for burial. They gave him a suit—one gave him a tie, one man knew how he combed his hair, and a man in a wood-work shop made my grandfather’s coffin out of black walnut. Handmade. You could see your face in it. *That’s* how people were put away in those days.

“The years passed, and his wife—my grandmother—died. My father went down there. He had the little plot right next to Grandpa, and he was going to arrange for the grave to be dug. But when he got down there to the little church and went into the cemetery, there were two men digging the grave, next to my grandfather’s grave.

“Daddy said, ‘What are you boys doin’?’”

“‘Uncle Clarence,’ they said, ‘your daddy died digging our mother’s grave. We think we owe you this.’ That’s heavy. That’s country. That is *pure country*. I wonder if any of that happens now . . .?”

Ernie is a versatile performer, with a catalogue of material all the way from “Sixteen Tons” to the latest creations of young, gospel-oriented songwriters. Within reason, anything goes. Tennessee Ernie is a showman and a trouper. In 1955, he began his national evening television show on the NBC network, and it was everything a national television “entertainment” show should be—stars, laughs, dance routines, the works—but with this spectacular forum for communication, Ernie saw “a great opportunity” and became the first national television personality to bring gospel music to the television audience:

“A thing came to me—I was by myself—and I thought, ‘here’s an opportunity that I’ve got, and I may never have it again, of really doing this music and getting to millions of people who want to hear it *like they want to hear it*.’

“So we started writing scripts for the show, and every closing, we’d close with a sacred song. The producer and the director began to say ‘Hey, Ernie, you going to do this every show?’ I said, ‘Why not?’

“We’d do the black spirituals, we’d do the old hymns—and all at once the mail started pouring in like you cannot *believe*. 97% of all the mail I ever got while I was on that show mentioned that gospel music. All at once we’d educated all these people! Now, when I work in Nevada at the rooms in Reno or Las Vegas, the first question they ask me is, ‘Now, on this show you’re going to close with the sacred number too, aren’t you?’



Ernie Ford: A clash between treasured memories and the future.

“This music, I felt so blessed that I was able to do it. It’s hung in there and it *still* is. But I don’t know—some people think that to perform this music you’ve got to put on sackcloth and sit in a pile of ashes. I don’t believe that. That’s crazy. This is *happy* music. And this new album I’ve done—*Make A Joyful Noise*—is ten brand new religious songs, never been recorded, written by young people in their twenties. It’s some of the best material I’ve ever done. It’s today’s music with today’s sound with today’s instruments, but its original thought and meaning is right out of the texts—songs like ‘I Find No Fault In Him,’ which is about Pontius Pilate, and ‘I Wish We’d All Been Ready,’ which has to do with the second coming of Christ. Just fantastic material, and coming out of these young heads. God, it’s encouraging. It *really* is.

“Of course, nothing will ever take the place of ‘The Old Rugged Cross’ or any of those songs. But we don’t want it to. We just want something else to join them.”

There is a clash within Tennessee Ernie Ford—a clash between his treasured memories of how things used to be before Americans began to question their basic values and institutions, and his high hopes for the future. Ernie is both a traditionalist and a modernist, but you sense that like many of his peers, he has trouble dealing with a mixture of hope for the future and despair about the present. In Hawaii, Ernie had been

talking about his pending trip to Russia. He saw no conflict in his decision to go—the tour would only do good in spreading the values of country music and American culture. He had also been talking about his days in the Air Force, and how he still believes in the service as a fine training ground for young men, a place where they can learn a trade while defending their country . . . and it was at this point that the conversation turned to the issue of Godlessness in America:

“Quite a few areas of Godlessness are getting more space than they should, and quite a lot of the Godlessness is getting condoned. Nobody is defining—even in our very high offices—two simple words, what is right and what is wrong. And the definition of wrong, to the point of punishment, has slipped a great deal. Look—in our business, what we let go on today is just a crying shame. I’m sorry, but I still think that intimate moments between two people are their own business, and to put it in a magazine in a full-color picture is wrong. I’m sorry, but it’s immoral. I define immorality as immoral. When Christmas comes, I like to unwrap my own packages.

“I think that to the young eleven-to-fifteen-year-olds—male or female—what they’re allowed freely to buy on a magazine rack is *wrong*. And they can go see any motion picture they want to see—they’ll somehow get in. And yet, they can’t bow their heads in the classroom in school! Now, you tell *me* that the other is not going to influence them. People say ‘We find no reason why young people are going to be influenced by what’s going on.’ It would take you forever and eternity to explain that to *me*. Let them go visit with me sometime—a drug abuse hospital, the venereal ward in a hospital—and spend some time with me in there.”

Ernie was angry, his composure rattled by the tangled issues of Church and State and the obvious belief that too much freedom is a dangerous thing. His statement about drug abuse hospitals and venereal wards was not just so much hot air—not even just a strongly-held moral position—for our interview was interrupted by another task at hand. Ernie had an appointment with the parents of a young local man with a serious drug problem. “I think we’re going to win this one,” he said when he returned to the palm-shaded table. “It’s bad, but I think he’s going to pull through it.” It seemed like a good time to ask his opinion of the “new” Christianity—the “Jesus Freaks” and others whose cause recently produced a conflict between Skeeter Davis and the Grand Ole Opry, between the traditional ways of praising the Lord and the 20th Century fundamentalism of the “new” religions with all their rock & roll trappings, communal lifestyles and accusations of hypocrisy against the “old” ways. Ernie grimaced when the question was put. It was obviously distasteful to him, but his answer showed very clearly where one man stands on Christianity and an awful lot of other things in the New Age:

“Oh, my goodness. I hope they find a faith in *something*. If they truly become a Christian because of Christ and what they do, that’s fine. But their demonstrations—I don’t think God’s hard of hearing. But if it turns out that they find Christ and His true meaning, great. Because when they *do* find Him, that’s when the transformation will be truly fantastic.” ■

The Gospel... According To Skeeter Davis

Skeeter Davis has been one of the country music community's most outspoken Christians. So outspoken, in fact, that her comments in defense of a group of long-haired Jesus people who had been arrested in Nashville for their evangelical zeal, resulted in her suspension from the Grand Ole Opry in 1973. For this special issue devoted to gospel music, we asked Skeeter to write an epistle stating her views on the subject of gospel music and Christianity. Among other things, she reveals her intention to record a gospel album in the near future.



"Gospel music is going to be the music of tomorrow."

This is just a personal observation of mine, but I would like to share it with you. Yesterday, or the past for me, would be the year 1950. I had just accepted the Lord as my Saviour so I was starting a new year in the Lord. I went to a gospel singing. I just naturally thought that every gospel singer was a Christian and that each one must surely feel that they were really answering a call from the Lord singing His praises, even though it was a business or their "career." Everytime I'd go to a gospel sing I'd usually have a chance to talk with the group. I usually sang at all the songfests in Kentucky and Ohio close to my home. I was singing with a girl who was my sister in Christ. We were really seeking the Lord for His answer as to what we should do with our talent since we loved gospel music and also country music. It seemed the way was made for us to be on a local television country music show. As Christians we made a stand against alcohol and we would not sing on any of the programs that were sponsored by alcohol. Since we made such a stand, people would always say, "Why don't you get into gospel music?" We would pray about it but, even though our friends and our neighbors told us we should get out of country music, God never told us to. It seemed God used our popularity to draw crowds to church and to gospel

sings and also allowed us to always sing praises to the Lord and share our testimony. We met lots of people that still mean so much to me today. We sang with the Blackwood Brothers, The Chuckwagon Gang, The Speer Family and many others and we were really thrilled when we knew they were all really Christians and it was not just an "entertaining business." It saddens my heart to say this, but many times I saw more sin going on backstage at a gospel program than I'd ever seen with the country music entertainers. It was disillusioning to a young Christian who was being told by church members to get out of country music and get into gospel music.

Now I've been personal, but like I said, being one who loves the Lord and really gets involved in my beliefs, I couldn't help but get me into this article. I wanted to record a gospel album for RCA and have only had *one* in twenty-one years with the label. I hope this year I can record more. Now, I want you to know this is not my wish because of the commercial appeal, but because it's like I said, we've got to stand up and be counted! I want the Christians to know that I'm in their family! God has given

me so much success in the country music field and He has allowed me to sing my music all over the world. Last year I made a real stand for Jesus. I was suspended from the Grand Ole Opry for making a comment regarding some Christians being arrested and I sang "Amazing Grace" instead of the hit song I had at the time. Now, this makes me see the importance of gospel music for the future. After my suspension I went to Africa, Sweden and Norway, where I was the number one female country singer. Thousands of people came because of my popularity. I sang my country hits and the gospel songs. It was sponsored by the Full Gospel Businessmen's Association. People were not just entertained, but inspired! I think gospel music will be bigger and bigger tomorrow because all the other music has gone so far, dealing in messages of drinking and sex, that I believe the world is now looking for the truth.

The truth can only be found in the gospel. Gospel music is going to be the music of tomorrow, for "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make ye free." Jesus loves you and I love you.

Because of Him,
Skeeter Davis

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Rev. Jimmie Snow: "Live What You Preach"

by Arlo Fischer

The Rev. Jimmie Rodgers Snow is singer Hank Snow's son. Raised in show business, and a promising performer at one time himself, Jimmie Snow received his calling to the ministry early one morning in 1957. He was considered to be an up-and-coming country performer, but that changed when he decided to take an active role in the church. Today, Rev. Snow is a religious focal point in the Nashville community. As pastor of Evangel Temple Church, his congregation includes many people from all areas of the music industry.

What were the circumstances that led to your becoming The Rev. Jimmie Snow?

"If you mean, how did I get into the ministry... well, I've been in show business most of my life, travelin' with my dad since I've been four. At sixteen, I started recording with RCA and stayed with them for almost seven years. It was about the time I was starting to break successfully that I was morally going down hill. Then God got a hold of me. Right in my front yard, one morning around 3 a.m., I prayed to God for help and God answered. God called me to preaching. I was down and out and 22."

What was your religious background like?

"I was never raised in a church. Dad neither. See, he left home around seventeen and never had any church upbringing. And we were always traveling on the road, so I didn't either. My mother had a Church of England background, but I don't know how seriously or deeply involved, if any, she was. But I did get acquainted with religion when I was sixteen because of a girl I was dating. We broke up, but I got enough to make me

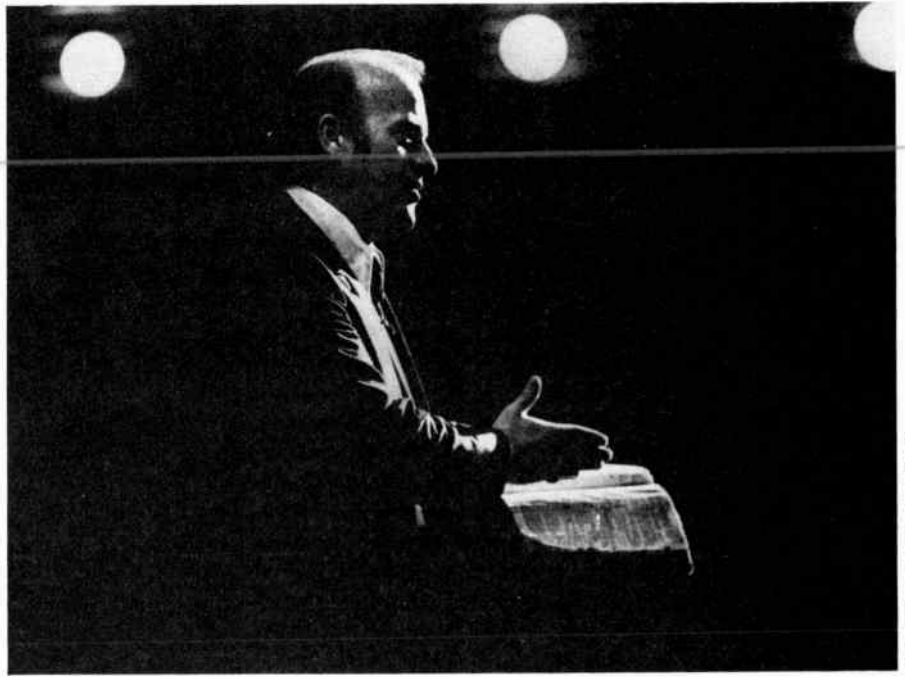


PHOTO: THE GREASE BROS.

stop and think. And in '56 I was in a very serious car accident... almost got killed. Thirty eight days on my back really made me stop and think about my life. In '57, God called me."

What did you do after God called you?

"Well, I gave up drinking, smoking, pills and show business. I repented in November... by August of the next year I was out of the business. I started preaching anywhere. I studied through correspondence and right now I'm working toward my Ph.D. I was an evangelist. But in '65 in Oklahoma at a revival, I knew I had to come back to Nashville and have a ministry among the entertainers."

How did you know?

I knew. Lots of people go to the ministry but shouldn't. No one should go unless God definitely calls them."

But how did you know God meant you for a ministry among the entertainers?

"It was an impression of the heart... I had a feeling about it... a premonition. You know sometimes you have a feeling or instinct about someone or something. Well, God works in similar ways, but the feeling is richer and deeper. With people you may have questions, but with God there are none. As far as coming back to Nashville, well, I knew I was losing my evangelical enthusiasm

... it was beginning to become a job. I felt God was trying to tell me something. The reason I knew I would come back among the entertainers was I just knew it. Besides, who can talk to someone better than somebody who's been down the road.

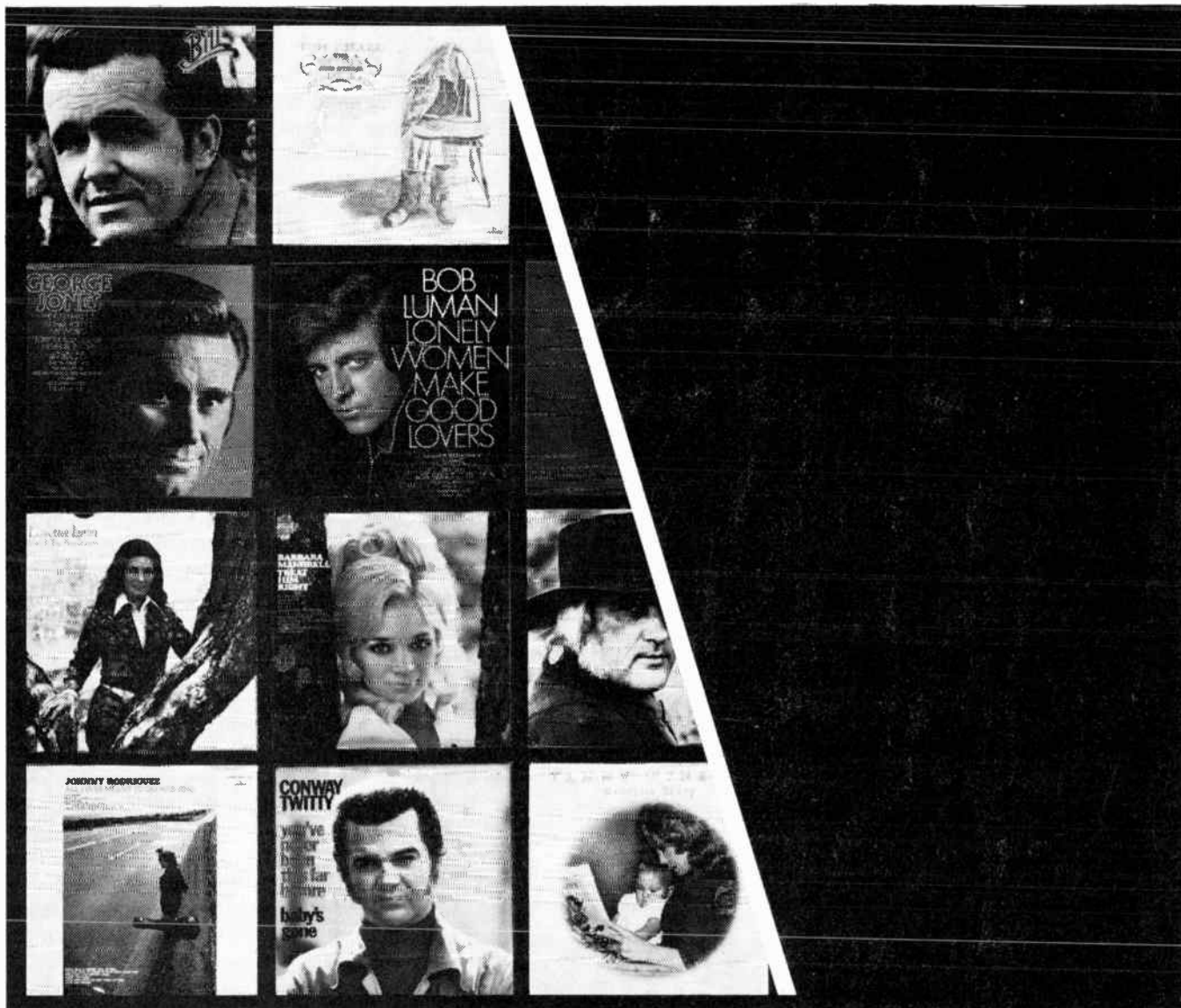
Do you think being Hank Snow's son helped?

"I think it helped when I was on the evangelical road. People came out of curiosity. But even then, you gotta give them more than a name if you want to get them back. People in Nashville aren't impressed. They're around it all the time."

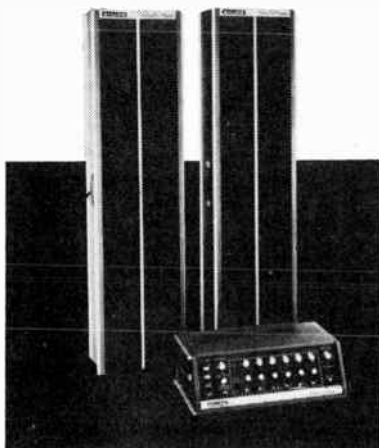
What are your feelings about the state of morality today?

"The world can't go on the way it's going on right now. Let me tell you something. I've spent a lot of time in Israel and the Jews are accepting Jesus. Historically, Christians have always been close to God, but now that's reversing. Jews are returning to Christ. We're all going to have to pray if we're going to stretch out the mercy of God. The Bible teaches, 'it's gotta get worse.' According to Noah, 'we're living in the last days.'

"The Church is definitely broken down... young people have just plain ole lost confidence in the Church... in the gospel... all because of the double standards we're living. We just gotta get hold of ourselves and *live what we preach.*"



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Larry Gatlin: Hymns For Today

by Richard Nusser

Some time ago the name of Larry Gatlin started turning up on albums performed by some of Nashville's superstars. Johnny Cash, Kris Kristofferson and even pop singers like Johnny Mathis were cutting Gatlin's poignant ballads, many of them laden with incisive lyrics and an ability to go beyond the surface of things. Gatlin was no stranger to music, nor to the religious orientation that marks many a country lyric. A member of the gospel-singing Gatlin family, Larry first sung the Lord's praises when he was six years old. After majoring in law at the University

of Houston he came to Nashville, and songs like "The Pilgrim," "Light At The End Of The Darkness," and "The Bitter They Are, The Harder They Fall," began making the rounds on Music Row.

At 26, Gatlin is now regarded within the music industry as one of the most promising new talents to come along since Kris Kristofferson. The reason for this optimistic forecast is based not so much on Gatlin's current success (although his single, "Delta Dirt," is holding its own in the marketplace) as it is in his future potential for hitting the same philosophical note as the record-buying public's. And that's what the folks at Monument Records are counting on.

"There's really not that much difference between country and gospel," Gatlin said recently. "I think that in the gospel end of it if you were sad and lonely you turn to God, and in country you turn to the bottle or another woman. It's just where you're gonna go for relief... I think it's better to turn to the first one rather than the second one.

"I think a lot of songs I write are not really heavy religious like "Light At The End Of The Darkness," he added. "I never come right out and say the end of the darkness is God, but I think by the way I do the song I hope everyone would know this is what I believe. You know... that's *my* feeling... and I'm not trying to cram it down your throat... I'm saying 'Here it is and I believe it, and if you can dig it, if you can hang your hat on it, super... but I'm not gonna be Billy Graham because that's not what I do. That's not what my calling is.

"My calling is to sit on a stool,

and to sing my songs... and if people can say—you know, if I do it well enough and with enough feeling—that they can say: 'Yeh, that rings true in my heart and I wanna feel like what he's doing is honest and I wanna try that and I think he's right...' then I've done my job..."

Many of Gatlin's songs have been compared to hymns, not so much for their content or melody, but for the implied moral message they carry. One of his songs, "Penny Annie," deals with a young girl's addiction to drugs, and is told like a story. Gatlin was asked if this was an example of the sort of "hymn" he writes.

"I guess it is kind of a hymn in a way. It's a little different... they're not gonna ever sing it at the First Baptist Church, but we've been singing hymns at the First Baptist Church for years and there are probably fewer *godly* people in the world today, even in the First Baptist Church, than there have been for years. The problem is that a lot of those great old hymns of the church are just... great old hymns. I think we need to extend that and to speak to people on a different level and go beyond 'Shall We Gather At The River.'

"Let's go out and live it every day instead of just sitting back and going to church on Sunday and then forgetting what the Book teaches on Monday through Saturday... if I can tell that to someone by singing "Penny Annie" or "Light At The End Of The Darkness" then I've done my job..."

"Most of my slow ballads are hymns in a way... because if it's about lost love, like it is in "Bitter They Are The Harder They Fall," no matter what it's about, it's about the heart, it's about feeling... emotions... and it's a great part of the religious experience, you know—*what you feel...*"

We asked Larry what he thought gospel music and interest in the religious experience could develop into in today's world. He said he considered gospel music to be very influential in bringing people around to discovering themselves—and what goes on inside their heads, rather than what goes around *outside*.

"I believe a lot of people are trying to be religious," he said, "but

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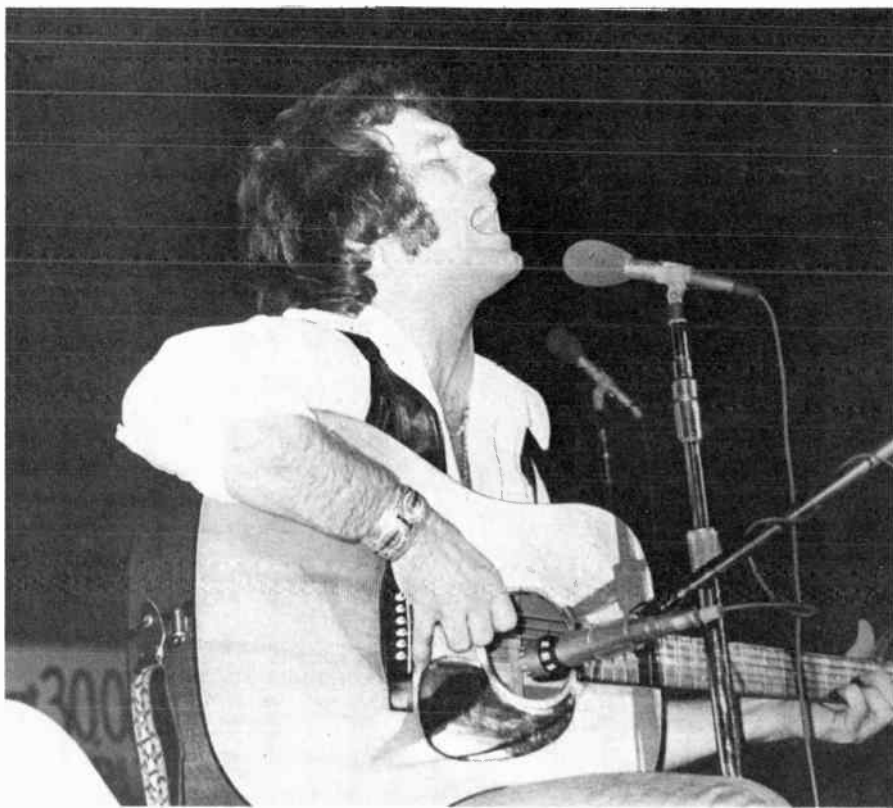
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"My calling is to sit on a stool and sing my songs . . ."

that's not it. They're trying to be religious because that's the thing to do, to go to church on Sunday morning and be seen. You know I

hate to go to church on Easter because all I see are the new hats and new outfits, and that's not where it's at . . . it should be in our hearts . . .

"Man looks on the outside and God looks on the inside . . . if we'd just quit worrying about these extraneous things . . ."

During the interview, the discussion got around to the subject of grace, and what it meant.

"Grace means unmerited favor. It means someone liking you and loving you and caring for you when you have no merit—when you have nothing to offer in return. That's grace . . ."

"I believe that people, if they will give that Power a chance to love them . . . you know . . . I used to break my leg kicking myself in the ass everytime I'd do something wrong. That's not where it's at. You should use that energy and the fact that you do make mistakes as a positive force to turn you back to the only source of help that you have. So every night when I hit that pillow I say, "Well . . . you probably did it again, but . . . Help me, Lord."

"You know, I have a standing appointment every night with the greatest shrink of them all . . . that's where I go. Other people don't allow themselves that privilege . . . it's really strange . . ."

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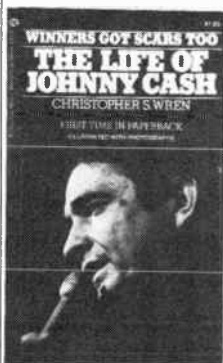
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Gov. Jimmie Davis: Gospel Will Endure

by Arlo
Fischer



Many political figures have found country music to be an invaluable asset in campaigning. One such politician is the gospel-singing, song-writing former Governor of Louisiana, Jimmie Davis. Davis rode to the governor's mansion in 1944 and again in 1960 singing songs like "You Are My Sunshine" and "Nobody's Darling But Mine," just two of the many song compositions he wrote or collaborated on. (One of Davis' political opponents was credited with the remark: "You can't fight Davis—how the devil can you fight a song?") In addition to his song-writing and political career, Davis is regarded as one of the best male gospel singers in the world.

Today Gov. Davis and his wife, Anna, live in Baton Rouge, the same city where he wielded power as governor. They both spend their time doing concerts in connection with religious services. Jimmie Davis is frequently asked to speak, as a layman, in churches throughout the Bible Belt. He continues to write, record and sing. The difference is that now he devotes his talent to songs like "Lord Let Me Be There," rather than the pop and country hits he turned out in the past.

There isn't a vast distance between the political arena and the pulpit, and in a recent interview, Gov. Davis explained just how he reconciled politics and country and gospel music.

"Politics and my music . . . that wasn't any problem. Whether it helped or hurt my political career is an intangible thing. But I had no choice. I had to sink or swim with it. I was branded, you see. The first time I *spoke* when I was running for office, I didn't *sing*. The people didn't like it. Thought I was getting uppity. So I went home that night and told my wife I was getting my band together again . . . was going to mix it up . . . talk a little, and maybe sing more. Singing doesn't hurt anymore than playing golf or fishing. When I was in office, a few of the boys, we'd get together and have a session at the Governor's mansion or down at the creek. You know, you can't carry your political burdens around 24 hours a day. When I recorded, I'd go on a Saturday afternoon, record that night and be back Sunday. 'Course you *never* stop going to church when you're in politics, guess you need to even more."

Jimmie Davis is one of those special people who are gifted and

successful in most of their endeavors. He traveled the country road performing and writing and won national acclaim. Twice he won the hearts and votes of Louisiana. A man who obviously excels in what he does, Davis answered the question—Why gospel?

"I like gospel more than any other kind of music. I like its meaning and message. Sure I like a good country song, as long as it's clean. But I like gospel more . . . I think we need more of it. I don't have a favorite gospel singer or group because I think it depends. Depends on the song—and depends on the group. But if you got a good gospel song, and someone who can do it well, you can put it into any club in the country and it will make it. I really believe that. Gospel's growing. There are more radio stations going part-or full-time gospel . . . and there are more people listening to it."

Jimmie Davis understands that people who sing, write and perform sacred music represent to a growing audience the only refuge in an otherwise seemingly corrupt world. In discussing this, Jimmie talked about the impact and effect of gospel on the youth of today.

"Are they going to church? Sometimes they are, sometimes they aren't. But I see and talk to a lot of them. In fact, I make a point to talk to them. Sure they have questions, doubts. There aren't a lot of easy answers any more. But I feel they are getting more interested in finding the way. Like I tell them, 'Get acquainted with God early, so you don't have to meet him as a stranger.' Hopefully, gospel and sacred music is helping them do that."

As far as young people "turning on" to gospel music, or spirituals supplanting rock and roll as a foremost musical idiom, Davis had this to say:

"Wait 'til they get a little age on 'em. Wait 'til they get married and have a few kids . . . wait 'til those close to them start dying. That's when they'll start worrying about more than raising Cain. Our moral condition isn't too good these days. Kids are too wild . . . expect too much. They're exposed to too much before they're ready . . . but I think gospel will be preserved . . . I know it will be. As long as people are born, and as long as people die . . . gospel will endure." ■

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World Radio History

OUR FAVORITE GRANDPA

by Don Rhodes



The occasion was Lester Flatt's Mount Pilot, N.C., Bluegrass Festival, and Grandpa Jones was on stage—where he's been most of his life—making people laugh, making them tap their toes as he plunked out neat rhythm on his five-string banjo. Alongside him stood his wife, Ramona. They are a handsome couple, and they have been performing together long enough now so that they only have to exchange glances to communicate.

"Hyeah, Rattler, here, here... hyeah, Rattler, here..." Grandpa chanted as he strummed. Ramona smiled as Grandpa began one of his favorite Rattler jokes. "I

didn't know Rattler could read, 'til he saw a sign saying 'Wet Paint,' and he did," Grandpa said. The audience cracked up. Ramona grinned from ear to ear. Grandpa looked pleased with himself.

Then, with Ramona accompanying Grandpa on fiddle, the couple ran through "Make Me A Pallet," "Mountain Dew," "The Baptism of Jesse Taylor," and other old standards, polishing off their performance with "Dooley," a song they've sung many times on the Grand Ole Opry. The audience loved it all, cheering and clapping with gusto.

When the curtain closed, Grandpa and Ramona left the stage,

applause ringing in their ears. By the time they reached the backstage area, Grandpa's composure changed. Suddenly he looked every bit of 60-years-old. He was tired and perspiring. He settled into an aluminum lawn chair backstage—still dressed in striped shirt, suspenders, French leather boots, battered hat and spectacles. Seeing how hot he looked, I borrowed a can of soft drink from the Lewis Family, whose bus was parked nearby, and offered it to Grandpa.

It seemed to revive him and moments later, he was laughing with the crowd of autograph seekers, friends and fans that had gathered around. I lost count of the number

of times people asked “What’s for supper, Grandpa?”—a line which he’s often asked on the Hee Haw program. Several times he responded with a long list of mouth-watering taste delights. But, to one person, he only gave a sly laugh and said, “Very little.” He rested in the lawn chair, taking sips from the cold soft drink—between signing autographs—for several minutes. Occasionally, he would get up and pose with someone who wanted to have their photograph taken with an Opry star. It was a distracting situation, so in order to interview him in a fairly peaceful setting, I lured him and Ramona onto The Lewis Family’s bus. The Lewis Family were about to go on stage, but they stopped to tell Grandpa how much they still enjoy his old gospel music recordings with The Browns Ferry Four.

That started Grandpa talking. “The Browns Ferry Four was formed shortly after I joined WLW in Cincinnati for the Midwestern Hayride Show in 1941,” he began. “The program officials wanted a gospel quartet, so the Delmore Brothers (Alton and Rabon Delmore from Elmont, Alabama), Merle Travis and I formed the group. It was Alton who taught us how to sing gospel harmony. Alton earlier had written a song called ‘The Browns Ferry Four.’ It was really just straight singing. We made two albums before we broke up. Now, on *Hee Haw*, we have started singing gospel songs with a quartet made of Archie Campbell, Ernie Ford, Roy Clark and myself.”

At about this point, Grandpa took off his tiny eye glasses, and wiped the dust off. He talked about how difficult it was to find an optometrist who could put glass in the tiny frames. “Why don’t you just leave the glass out,” asked Earl Phillips (a Lewis Family in-law and featured singer).

“Cause I couldn’t see!” yelled Grandpa. As The Lewis Family broke up in laughter, Grandpa looked at the rest of the family members on the bus and said of Phillips, “Are ya’ll sure you need him?”

A few minutes later, The Lewis Family left to do a second set at the bluegrass festival, and Grandpa started talking. “I had records

before *Hee Haw* like ‘Rattler,’ but they had died down. Most of the children in the country didn’t know I existed before *Hee Haw*. Now, they’re some of my biggest fans. They like the gestures I do on stage especially, but they don’t sit too still for my serious songs.”

Going back a few years, Grandpa described his early school days in Niagra, Kentucky: “I was sleeping during the day in school, and coon hunting all night.” Asked if the teacher ever got onto him for sleeping during class, he laughed. “I think she was asleep, too!” he replied.

Around 1926, Grandpa gained his first very own guitar. Earlier, while working on a saw mill crew near the Jones family home, he had learned a few chords and a little pickin’ from a lumberman who had a guitar.

“I was about 14 at the time. My brother bought the guitar for 75 cents in Cheap John’s pawn shop in Henderson, Kentucky. I learned to play by watching other people pick ... and I began to play at pie suppers and dances and the like. My daddy was a fiddle player, and played for a lot of dances. He was 86 when he died.”

Grandpa’s first banjo came several years later—also from a pawn shop. “I bought it in Akron, Ohio, in 1937. A woman entertainer of that time who went under the name of Cousin Emmy taught me how to play the banjo. It was unusual for a woman to be playing a banjo in those days, but she was really good. I just worried her until she agreed to teach me.”

Today, Grandpa stills loves playing the guitar, but he has become better known as a banjo picker due to his banjo song ‘Rattler.’

By March of 1929, the Jones family had moved to Akron, Ohio. It was in that month that Grandpa won first prize over more than 450 others in a contest conducted by Wendell Hall—then known as the ‘Red Headed Music Maker.’ Grandpa used the \$50 prize money to buy a better guitar, and began singing on KFJC radio in Akron. Around 1935, Grandpa teamed up with entertainer Bradley Kincaid in Clarksburg, West Virginia. They toured the New England coast for a year and a half. It was during this time in Boston that Jones’

nickname of Grandpa came about.

“Bradley would say to me, ‘Come on, and get up here next to the microphone ... you’re getting slow like an old grandpa.’” Jones was about 23 at the time.

It was Kincaid, also, who gave Grandpa the calf-high boots he still wears today. “Kincaid told me that the boots were made of French leather, and that they were 50 years old when he gave them to me. I didn’t believe him about the age until I once took them to a shoemaker to have them repaired.” Grandpa notes that his original moustache was false, although the one he wears today is quite real. “I’ve been through about three or four hats. Whenever I need one, I just take a new one and beat it up a bit.”

Following the New England years, Grandpa went to Wheeling, West Virginia, where he had his own radio show called “Grandpa Jones and his Grandchildren.” In 1944, Jones entered the Army, and, in addition to his regular duties, he played on the Armed Forces Network out of Munich, Germany, with a group called “The Munich Mountaineers.” It was in 1946, when he returned to the United States, that he joined the Grand Ole Opry.

In his private moments, Grandpa admits that besides being an outdoorsman, he loves good poetry relating to nature.

“I like Cullen Bryant and Robert Frost, because they write so well about the out-of-doors. Also, I like Edgar Guest. I’ve got books of his sayings.”

Grandpa has watched sadly through the years as ill-mannered and uncaring people have destroyed much of America’s beauty. “In Virginia not long ago, we were hunting in a national forest a few days after it had opened for the season. Already, there were mountains of beer cans and wrapping paper. That makes you sick to look at ... And I’ve seen so many freeways where I’ve thought they waste so much time and money mowing the medians. It looks like they would use the space to plant some good hard-wood trees.”

The rape of the land isn’t the only crime brought about by today’s environment that distresses Grand-

pa. The death of two of his closest friends, David "Stringbean" Akeman and his wife, Estelle, has left a deeper, more permanent scar on Grandpa's memory. In fact, the Akeman deaths have become as much a part of Grandpa's past as his leather boots or his banjo.

Besides living within a few miles of each other in the rolling hills outside Nashville, Louis Marshall Jones and David Akeman were old friends, going back to the days when they joined the Grand Ole

Opry in the 1940s. More recently they had worked together on the *Hee Haw* series. The bond of friendship grew stronger as they shared many hours together off-stage, visiting each other's homes or getting together for a hunting or fishing expedition somewhere.

The day that marked the end of their friendship was to have been the start of one of those trips. Grandpa had risen extra early that morning, packed his hunting gear and driven over to

Stringbean's nearby farm. Grandpa was in high spirits. He and Stringbean had been talking about the trip the Saturday night before, backstage at the Ryman Auditorium. They were planning to drive to Highland County, Virginia, for a few days of hunting and fishing.

Instead, what Grandpa found when he drove into the Akeman's yard about 6:30 a.m. on November 11th crushed his high spirits for that day and for many days to come. He found Estelle Akeman lying in the front yard and Stringbean lying in the house—both brutally murdered. The house had been ransacked, but Stringbean's banjo was left leaning on the front doorway.

The passing months have barely eased the pain for Grandpa. Their friendship was too deep. "Estelle and Stringbean and Grandpa and myself went out quite a lot together," recalls Ramona. "We were all very close."

I asked Grandpa if he had managed to erase the memory from his mind.

"I guess it never will be off my mind," he replied.

"Just yesterday when I played a show in Pennsylvania, they had three minutes of silence in memory of Stringbean. A week after the hunting trip Stringbean and I were planning to go on, we were scheduled to appear on a show together in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. It was to be the first date for both of us after the hunting trip to Virginia. I went ahead and did the show just a few days after Stringbean's funeral."

"I don't see how you got through that show," Ramona said softly.

I told Grandpa that maybe people asked him about Stringbean because so many people loved Stringbean and miss him so much.

In a very quiet voice, Grandpa replied: "Yes, I guess that's true."

The conversation had dropped to a very serious mood, so I reminded Grandpa of the happiness he has brought to so many millions. I asked him about the importance of humor in his life.

"It's meant a lot," he said. "You see crippled and sick people laughing, and it gives you a feeling of enjoyment. I'd might as soon be a comedian as be a singer, for I love to see people laugh."

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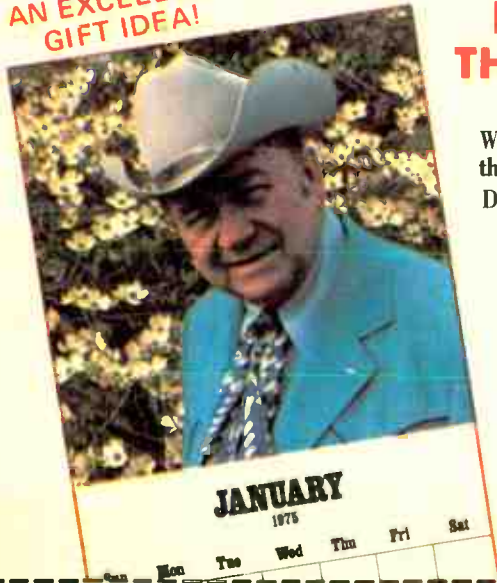
Cousin Emmy taught Grandpa Jones how to play banjo.

We chatted awhile longer and finally, Grandpa and Ramona left the bus. I thought as they left that if anyone deserves some

bright spots in this world, it is Louis Marshall Jones, who has done so much for others. As he stepped off the bus, I

heard the voice of a young child, calling to him. "Hey, Grandpa... what's for supper?" Grandpa smiled. ■

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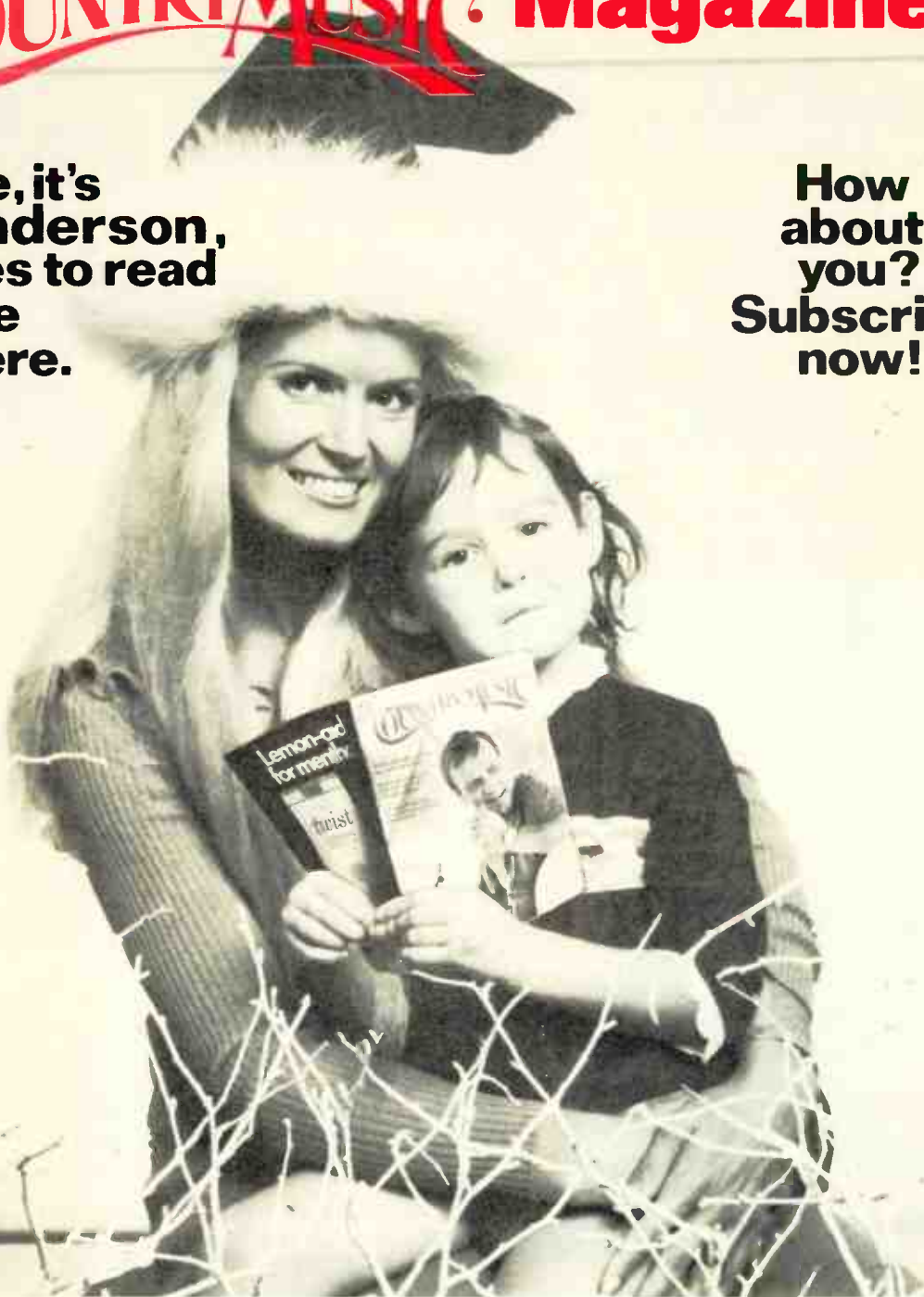
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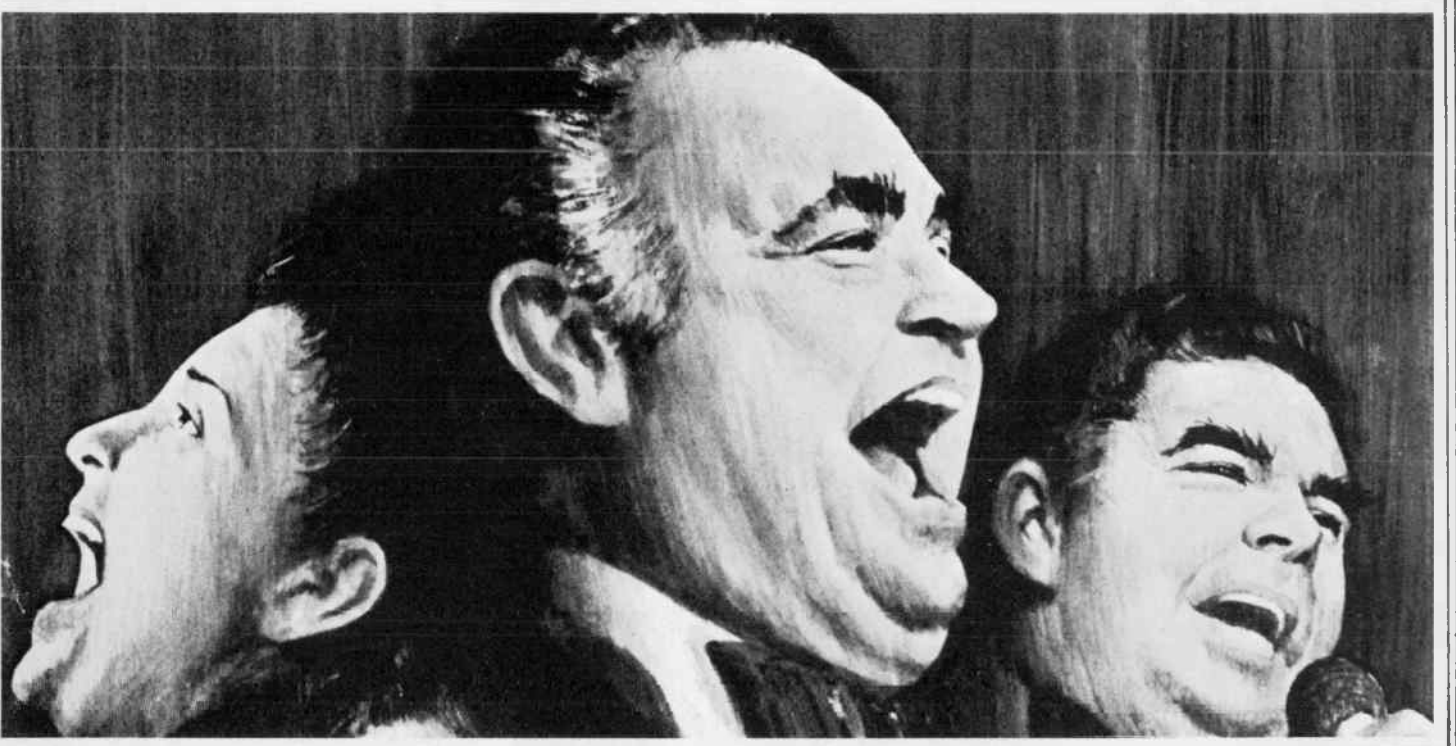
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Take The Message Everywhere / He Never Sleeps • Everywhere • The Broken Vessel • I've Got It • Without A Song • No, Not One • I'll Never Forget • The Blood Will Never Lose Its Power • Wade In The Water • What Makes A Man Turn His Back On God? • Precious Lord, Take My Hand
 *LS-5504 □5-5504 *LC-5504



Keep On Singin' / I Don't Know Why Jesus Loved Me • I'm Gonna Keep On Singin' • I'm Coming Home Dear Lord • Along Came Jesus • Jesus (Every Hour He'll Give You Power) • Take A Little Time • What Ya Gonna Do • I've Got Confidence • My Tribute (To God Be The Glory) • I Must Go Away
 *LS-5546 □5-5546 *LC-5546



Soulfully / Everything Changed • He Proved His Love To Me • Oh I Need Him • Satisfied • Through It All • I Come That You Might Have Life • You Don't Know What You're Missing • Leave The Devil Alone • It Won't Be Long • Try One More Time
 *LS-5581 □5-5581 *LC-5581



Live At Carnegie Hall / I Don't Know Why • You Don't Know What You're Missing • He Looked Beyond My Fault • I Didn't Think It Could Be • Hallelujah • Jesus Is The Answer • Can't Nobody Do Me Like Jesus • It Won't Be Long
 *LS-5602 □5-5602 *LC-5602

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FLORIDA BOYS, THE Hosts of the nationwide color TV show "The Gospel Singing Jubilee" feature "old time" and contemporary gospel singing.

The Florida Boys In Nashville / They Tore The Old Country Church Down • Many Miles Behind Me • You've Never Really Lived • We've Come This Far By Faith • Lord, Teach Me How To Pray • The Good Old Days • Jesus Be A Fence Around Me • Show Me Thy Ways, O Lord • I'm On My Way • Wait For Me • Dear Jesus • Abide With Me • It Was Jesus
 *CAS-9601



Singing Through Life / Singing Through Life • Precious Memories • Medley: Oh, How I Love Jesus and To Me It's So Wonderful • Just A Little Talk With Jesus • Glad Reunion Day • How Great Thou Art • Lead Me To That Rock • Just A Closer Walk • Amazing Grace • What A Day That Will Be • This Heart Of Mine • Lord, I'm Coming Home
 *CAS-9629

° = LP; □ = 8-track tape; • = cassette



Up Tempo / Old Fashioned Love • The Fire Song • Let God Abide • So Many Reasons • I'm Building A Bridge • Count Your Blessings • Palms Of Victory • I Wanna Know • He Cares For You • Who Am I • Higher Ground • The Master Locksmith
*CAS-9631 □3-9631



Make Happy Tracks / Happy Tracks • The Eyes Of Jesus • His Grace Is Sufficient • Unafraid • God's Way • I'm On The Right Road Now • I Came Here To Stay • Welcome Home • The Good Folks In My Life • Without God • I Found A Savior • Love Is The Key
*CAS-9639 □3-9639



Kinda Country / Keep On The Firing Line • My Heavenly Father Watches Over Me • Crying In The Garden • The Price He Paid • Troubles Can Break You • Great Is The Lord • Depart From Me • Power In The Blood • I Saw The Face Of Jesus • Guilty Of Love • Keep Your Mighty Hand On Me • Lead Me To The Altar
*CAS-9652 □3-9652



Your Kind Of Singing / Daddy Sang Bass • In An Old Folks Home • Jesus Is Coming Soon • That's Just His Way • After All • Live, Live, Live • Too Much To Gain To Lose • Then I Met Jesus • Big Homecoming • I Have No Regret • It Won't Be Long • Love Thy Neighbor
*CAS-9664 □3-9664 *CC-9664



The Many Moods Of The Florida Boys / The Little Boy From The Carpenter Shop • The Old Rugged Cross Made The Difference • Hear Them Bells • Jesus Took Care Of It All • He'll Hold My Hand • I Feel Like Traveling On • A Bible Loving Man • Homesick For Heaven • Wasted Years • God's Amazing Love • Lord To Be Used Of Thee • Love Lifted Me
*CAS-9680 □3-9680 *CC-9680



Sand In Their Shoes And A Song In Their Hearts / Put Your Hand In The Hand • The Days I Remember • Hide Me, Rock Of Ages • Yesterday • O What Love • I'll Be In The Rapture • Chicken On The Ground • When We Sing Around The Throne • When We All Get To Heaven • A Life Worth Living • My Heart Is Filled • I Will Serve Thee
*CAS-9695 □3-9695

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FOUR GALILEANS The 1970 Dove Award-winning Galileans sing these spirited gospel selections that have made them popular everywhere.

Gospel Fiesta / Thank God I'm Free • Without Jesus You Won't Make Heaven • What Would It Profit • A Way To Cross Over • He Filled A Longing • Yo Solo Espero Ese Dia (For That Great Day I Am Waiting) • Spend Me • Empty Hands • Glad Reunion Day • Until You've Known • How Great Thou Art • I've Been Born Again • There's Been A Lot Of Changes
*CAS-9672 □3-9672



The Four Galileans Today / Oh What A Happy Day • I Know • Someone To Meet Me • The Old Rugged Cross • He Leads Me • Plan Of Salvation • The Light Of The Shore • At The Cross • Redemption Draweth Nigh • That's My God • I've Never Passed This Way Before • The Answer Came
*CAS-9693 □3-9693



Encore / Thank God I'm Free • The Answer's On The Way • The Light On The Shore • Who Am I? • I Know • I'd Rather Have Jesus • Redemption Draweth Nigh • The Old Gospel Ship • Oh! What A Happy Day
*CAS-9711 □3-9711

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HAPPY GOODMAN FAMILY Winners of four 1971 Singing News Awards offer many fine albums including the Best Gospel Album of 1971, "Good Times With The Happy Goodmans."

The Happy Gospel Of The Happy Goodmans / Hallelujah • The One Who Died For Me • Pity The Man • The Keys To The Kingdom • Welcome Home • When They Ring The Bells • Great Is The Lord • I See The Lights • I'm Willing Lord • O Come, Angel Band • Savior Gently Take Me Home • Joy For Your Soul
*CAS-9644 □3-9644 *CC-9644



Legendary / How Much More • I Believe He Died For Me • He's Coming Again • Have Thine Own Way • I'll Soon Be Gone • Looks Like Everybody's Going Home • Joy In The Morning • Ready To Leave • Stand By Me • What A Lovely Name
*CAS-9736 □3-9736 *CC-9736

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HAVEN OF REST QUARTET This famed quartet, featured on the Haven Of Rest radio program, sings the songs listeners have come to love.

Shipmates Of Song / Make A Blessing • After • I'm Bound For The Kingdom • It Took A Miracle • Now I Belong To Jesus • Shine For Jesus • I Know That I Have Been Born Again • Close To Thee • Supper Time • I Know Who Holds Tomorrow • In The Hour Of Trial • Face To Face • Near To The Heart Of God • Only One Life
*WST 8335



Glory To His Name / A Flag To Follow • Like A Lamb • My Faith Has Found A Resting Place • In The Cool Of Evening • The Sea Walker • Follow Me • Glory To His Name • Savior Like A Shepherd Lead Us • Hold Out Your Light • On The Cross Of Calvary • Holy, Holy, Holy • The Saviour Is Waiting
*WST-8520 *2-8520 *WC 8520

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HEMPHILLS, THE SINGING A variety of gospel styles presented by the popular Hemphill family.

Old Brush Arbor Days / Old Brush Arbor Days • An Unfinished Task • Shoutin' On The Hills • God's Gonna Shake This World Again • Jesus Is Coming Soon • You're A Living Soul • Sing Me A Happy Song • Through Faith I Still Believe • Hallelujah, Anyhow • Move Up A Little Closer • No Disappointment In Jesus • On The Way Up
*CAS-9687 □3-9687 *CC-9687



Make Mine Gospel / If God Is Dead • I'll Soon Be Gone • I Wanna Do Right • And He Did • Oh, I Never Shall Forget The Day • Only Jesus • I Want To See Jesus • A Preacher's Boy • The Heart That Was Broken For Me • If I Could Talk With The Lord
*CAS-9708 □3-9708



Sweet Zion's Song / Sweet Zion's Song • Put Your Hand In The Hand • Make Calvary Real To Me • Lifting Up Jesus • Turn Your Radio On • Home Sweet Home • Way Up On The Mountain • Sing Me A Song • That Day Is Almost Here • Thirty Minutes Of Silence
*CAS-9726 □3-9726

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LEFEVRES, THE The Lefevres, now in their 52nd continuous year of gospel singing, blend their voices and instruments on these tremendous albums.

The Lefevres "Moving Up" / I'm One Of His Own • Beyond • I'm A Goin' • Broken Pieces • Count Me Worthy • The God I Have • Satan Has No Claim On Me • He'll Understand • The Beauty Of A Child • I'm Ashamed If I Forget Calvary • Going Over Yonder • Lord I've Tried To Be True
*CAS-9684 □3-9684 *CC-9684



Fifty Golden Years / Shake The Master's Hand • While Endless Ages Roll • Jesus Walked All The Way • You've Got To Live Your Religion Everyday • The Life Boat • I Know • I'm Going Up • Build My Mansion • When I've Gone The Last Mile • You Can Have A Song In Your Heart
*CAS-9694 □3-9694 *CC-9694



New Sounds Of The Lefevres / Wonderful Day • City Of Gold • In The Valley (He Restored My Soul • That's Why (I Love To Call His Name) • I Will Serve Thee • That Day Is Almost Here • I've Come Too Far • I Won't Have To Worry • Tear Stains • I Can Feel The Touch Of His Hand
*CAS-9721 □3-9721 *CC-9721



Now And Always / He Pilots My Ship • At The Judgment Day • Don't Ever Let Go • The Unseen Hand • Poor Rich Man • The Lighthouse • Gonna Keep On Holding On • Plenty Of Time • He Just Loves Me More And More • All Of This Is Mine • Somebody Loves Me • Because He Loves Me
*CAS-9723 □3-9723 *CC-9723

GOSPEL GREATS



HAPPINESS IS GOSPEL / Brush Arbor Days • It's Worth It All • Why Me Lord • King Jesus • Plain Old Country Folks • His Love Is So Boundless To Me • That's The Man I'm Looking For • I'll Soon Be Gone • Sweet Hallelujahs • He'll Hold My Hand • When Jesus Shall Reign • It's A Good Life Living For The Lord
 *CAS-9742 □3-9742 *CC-9742

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LEWIS FAMILY, THE The Lewis Family sings ageless gospel songs in their invigorating country style.

The Lewis Family Sing In Gospel Country / Sunday Christian • Noah • Something For You And Me • Alone In The Garden • There's A Light Guiding Me • He's Passing This Way • Jesus, Hold My Hand • Joshua • His • The Nearer, The Harder • I Want To Stroll Over Heaven • That Lonesome Valley
 *CAS-9676 □3-9676 *CC-9676



Lewis Country / Try A Little Kindness • O What Love • I'll Fly Away • Keep On The Sunny Side Of Life • The Glory Road • Way Up On The Mountain • I'm Bound For That City • I'm Using My Bible For A Roadmap • Jesus Take A Hold • Daddy Was An Old Time Preacher-Man • Going Up
 *CAS-9690 □3-9690 *CC-9690



The Colorful Lewis Family . . . Beautiful / Jesus Sure Changed Me • I'll Be There Anyway • Old Camp Meeting Days • When It's Lamplighting Time In The Valley • I'd Rather Be An Old Time Christian • I Know • That's All • They Crucified Our Saviour • Walking The Sea • Put Your Hand In The Hand • Children Talk To Angels • What Will You Say
 *CAS-9700 □3-9700 *CC-9700



Best By A Country Mile / Ezekiel Saw The Wheel • I Claim Jesus First Of All • You've Got To Walk That Lonesome Road • I Saw The Light • Step Out In The Sunshine • Let Me Live • Will You Be Ready To Go Home • Take Me Home, Please Jesus • Stormy Waters • When Mama Prayed • What A Saviour • I'll Be Satisfied
 *CAS-9709 □3-9709



Just Us / Marching Up The Glory Road • Joy, He Cares For Me • I've Got Jesus • I Can Feel Heaven In My Soul • By The Spirit I'm Lifted • Me And Jesus • Turn Your Radio On • Light Of The Lord • We Can't Serve Two Masters • Will The Angels Play Their Harps • Jesus Took My Burdens • He Whispers Softly To Me
 *CAS-9720 □3-9720 *CC-9720



Country Sunday / I Wonder How John Felt • Let's Have An Old Time Revival • Come Walk With Me • Those Happy Days • I Walk In The New Jerusalem Way • Sailing, Sailing • Let's All Go Down To The River • How Can You Refuse Him Now • Try Jesus • Jesus Loveth Even Me • Someday • Honey In The Rock
 *CAS-9730 □3-9730 *CC-9730



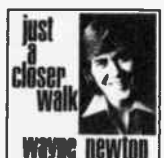
The Lewis Family Lives In A Happy World / Steal Away and Tell It To The Lord • Leaning On The Lord • He's All The World To Me • Only With Jesus • Will He Call Out My Name • I'm Living In A Happy World • Glorybound • The Preacher And The Bear • Nothing Fancy It Is • Someone Will Love Me In Heaven • Let Him Lead You • I'm Gonna Sing, Sing, Sing
 *CAS-9738 □3-9738 *CC-9738

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NEWTON, WAYNE Wayne Newton's sincere belief and committed faith bring an added dimension to traditional hymns on his first album for Word.

Only Believe / Only Believe • Pass It On • Shall We Gather At The River? • I Need You Every Hour • This Little Light Of Mine • Bring Back The Springtime • Amazing Grace • Would You? • Softly And Tenderly • Sweet Hour Of Prayer
 *WST-8586 □2-8586 *WC-8586



Just A Closer Walk / The Lily Of The Valley • In The Garden • Just A Closer Walk With Thee • The Church In The Wildwood • The Old Rugged Cross • In The Sweet By And By • Precious Lord, Take My Hand • Nobody Knows The Trouble I've Seen • Leaning On The Everlasting Arms • Beyond The Sunset • Now The Day Is Over
 *WST-8608 □2-8608 *WC-8608



SPURROWS, THE Thurlow Spurr and The Spurrows recreate their exciting concert sounds on this fine traditional album.

A Slice Of The Spurrows / A Wonderful Day Like Today • Sunrise, Sunset • My Favorite Things • Bridge Over Troubled Water • You've Got A Friend • Sunday Morning • Space Captain • We Need More Love • Scarborough Fair • Danny Boy
 *MST-6508 □6-6508 *MC-6508



SPURROWS, THE Thurlow Spurr and The Spurrows recreate their exciting concert sounds on these fine traditional and new albums.

High Time You Heard / He Keeps Me Singing • With A Song • Now Sing We Joyfully • Let's Go To Church • First Place • He's A Mighty Big God • Balm In Gilead • The Glory Road To Heaven • Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled • He's Got The Whole World In His Hands • Young Heart • Lead Me To Calvary • In The Garden
 *WST-8134



Christmas: Time For Song / Joy To The World • O Little Town Of Bethlehem • Away In A Manger • The First Noel • Hark! The Herald Angels Sing • Silent Night, Holy Night • Jingle Bells • White Christmas • Rudolph, The Red-Nosed Reindeer • The Little Drummer Boy • Winter Wonderland • The Christmas Song
 *WST-8310



Pages From The Old Hymnbook / The Haven Of Rest • Amazing Grace • Shall We Gather At The River? • Fairest Lord Jesus • Sweeter As The Years Go By • The Church In The Wildwood • What A Friend We Have In Jesus • My Redeemer • Sweet Hour Of Prayer • In The Sweet By And By • It Is Well With My Soul • Now The Day Is Over
 *WST-8355



The Spurrows Now / The Lord Is A Busy Man • He's Everything To Me • Wealthy Fellow • My Jesus Loves Me • Go Tell It On The Mountain • Better Life • This Little Light Of Mine • Illusive Dream • Power And Glory • His Name • I Know That This Is True • On Jordan's Stormy Banks
 *WST-8445 □2-8445 *WC-8445



The Original Splendour Production / This Little Light Of Mine • I Believe • He's My Rock • Especially You • He Touched Me • Gonna Come Alive • His Name Is Wonderful • Precious Lord • I Now Walk With God
 *WST-8535 □2-8535 *WC-8535



Sing, Men, Sing / Under His Wings • Blessed Assurance • Constantly Abiding • I'll Never Be Lonely Again • The Old Rugged Cross • Near To The Heart Of God • He Hideth My Soul • Stout-Hearted Men • The Solid Rock • Kneel At The Cross • No, No, No One
 *WST-8416 □2-8416 *WC-8416

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VARIETY These albums are carefully chosen collections of the best in gospel music . . . by various artists and groups you love.



Gospel Music's Top Ten For 1970 / Variety of great gospel groups present the 10 most effective and popular gospel songs of 1970. Had It Not Been (The Happy Goodmans) • He Looked Beyond My Fault (The Singing Rambos) • He Touched Me (The Blue Ridge Quartet) • I Believe In A Hill Called Mt. Calvary (The Rebels) • If That Isn't Love (The Imperials) • Jesus Is Coming Soon (The Oak Ridge Boys) • Thank God I'm Free (The Four Galleians) • The Night Before Easter (The Stamps Quartet) • The Old Rugged Cross Made The Difference (The Florida Boys) • Sheltered In The Arms Of God (The Speer Family)
 *CAS-9691



Gospel Music's Top Ten For 1971 / Variety of outstanding groups in the gospel music field sing the favorite gospel songs of 1971. I Know (Blue Ridge Quartet) • I Find No Fault In Him (Stamps Quartet) • The Old Rugged Cross Made The Difference (Oak Ridge Boys) • Build My Mansion Next Door To Jesus (The LeFevres) • He Touched Me (Statesmen Quartet) • Put Your Hand In The Hand Of The Man From Galilee (Florida Boys) • If That Isn't Love (Rambos) • The Night Before Easter (Blackwood Brothers) • The King Is Coming (Speer Family) • Jesus, There's Just Something About That Name (Gaither Trio)
 *CAS-9710 □3-9710

* = LP; □ = 8-track tape; • = cassette

THE BEST OF THE BEST

OVER 60 OF THE ALL-TIME GREATEST HITS BY COUNTRY'S GREATEST PERFORMERS



ROY ACUFF
GREATEST HITS / Night Train To Memphis; I Saw The Light; Where Were You When They Crucified My Lord; Mule Skinner Blues; Waiting For My Call To Glory
LP CS 1034 5.98

LYNN ANDERSON
GREATEST HITS / Rose Garden; Cry; How Can I Unlove You; Listen To A Country Song; Stay There 'Till I Get There
LP KC 31641 5.98
8TK CA 31641 6.98

EDDY ARNOLD
THE BEST OF / Bouquet Of Roses; Make The World Go Away; Anytime; I'll Hold You In My Heart; I Want To Go With You; The Last Word In Lonesome Is Me; What's He Doin' In My World; Just A Little Lovin' (Will Go A Long Way); I Really Don't Want To Know; You Don't Know Me; That's How Much I Love You; Cattle Call
LP LSP 3565 5.98
8TK P8S 1185 6.98

CHET ATKINS
THE BEST OF / Jitterbug Waltz; Peanut Vendor; Django's Castal; Blue Ocean Echo; Yankee Doodle Dixie; Swedish Rhapsody; Vanessa; Trambone; Malaguena; Meet Mrs. Callaghan; Main Street; Breakdown; Country Gentlemen
LP LSP 2887 (e) 5.98
8TK P8S 1562 6.98

ELTON BRITT
THE BEST OF / Chime Bells; I Almost Lost My Mind; The Rovin' Gambler; Detour; Driftwood On The River; There's A Star Spangled Banner Waving Somewhere; Mockin' Bird Hill; Someday; I Hung My Head And Cried; The Jimmie Rodgers Blues
LP LSP 4822 (e) 5.98
8TK P8S 2108 6.98

JIM ED BROWN
THE BEST OF / Pop A Top; Bottle, Bottle; Evening; How I Love Them Old Songs; Angel's Sunday; Morning; She's Leaving (Bonnie Please Don't Go); Unbelievable Love; Southern Lovin'; Broad Minded Man
LP APL1 0324 5.98
8TK APS1 0324 6.98

THE CARTER FAMILY
THE BEST OF / Four Strong Winds; Ring Of Fire; Big River; The Hammer Song; Michael Row The Boat Ashore
LP CS 9119 5.98

JOHNNY CASH
GREATEST HITS / Jackson; Ring Of Fire; Orange Blossom Special; It Ain't Me, Babe; I Walk The Line
LP CS 9478 5.98
8TK 18-10-0264 6.98

JOHNNY CASH
HIS GREATEST HITS VOL. 2 / A Boy Named Sue; Folsom Prison Blues; Sunday Morning Coming Down; Long-legged Guitar Pickin' Man; Guess Things Happen That Way
LP KC 30887 5.98
8TK CA 30887 6.98

ROY CLARK
THE ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR/Take Me As I Am; Silver Threads And Golden Needles; Happy To Be Unhappy; We Could; I'll Sail My Ship Alone; I Miss You Already (And You're Not Even Gone); When The Wind Blows In Chicago; Sweet Violets; Faded Love; Sally Was A Good Old Girl; St. Louis Blues; Turkey In The Straw; Overdue Blues; Caravan; The Drifter's Polka; South; Just A Closer Walk With Thee; Finger Lickin'; Malaguena; Twelfth Street Rag.
LP SABB-11264 7.98

BEN COLDER
THE BEST OF / By The Time I Get To Phoenix 2; Hello Wall 2; The Doo Hickey Song; Am I That Easy To Forget; The Green, Green Grass Of Home 2; Ain't It Funny How Wine Slips Away; Almost Persuaded 2; Detroit City; Great Men Repeat Themselves; Skip A Rope 2; I Walk The Line 3
LP SE 4530 6.98

JIMMY DEAN
GREATEST HITS / Big Bad John; P.T.109; Little Black Book; The First Thing Ev'ry Morning (And The Last Thing Ev'ry Night)
LP CG 9285 6.98

LESTER FLATT
THE BEST OF / Backin' To Birmingham; Father's Table Grace; Cabin On The Hill; Is Anybody Goin' North To Cincinnati; Roll In My Sweet Baby's Arms; Foggy Mountain Breakdown; Feudin' Banjos; The Country Boy; I'd Like To Have Papa Show Me Around; Before You Go
LP APL1 0578 5.98
8TK APS1 0578 6.98

FLATT & SCRUGGS
GREATEST HITS / The Ballad Of Jed Clampett; Petti-coat Junction; Jimmy Brown, The Newsboy; Pearl Pearl Pearl; Flint Hill Special
LP CS 9370 5.98

LEFTY FRIZZELL
GREATEST HITS / Saginaw, Michigan; Mom And Dad's Waltz; Release Me; The Long Black Veil; If You've Got The Money I've Got The Time
LP CS 9288 5.98

DON GIBSON
THE VERY BEST OF / Oh, Lonesome Me; (I'd Be) A Legend In My Time; Touch The Morning; Just One Time; Country Green; Blue, Blue Day; I Can't Stop Loving You; Give Myself A Party; Sweet Dreams; Woman (Sensuous Woman); Funny, Familiar, Forgotten Feelings; Lonesome Number One
LP H3G 4502 6.98
8TK H8G 4502 7.98

JACK GREENE
GREATEST HITS / Don't You Ever Get Tired; There Goes My Everything; All The Time; Wanting You But Never Having You; What Locks The Door; You Are My Treasure, Love Takes Care Of Me; Until My Dreams Come True; Statue Of A Fool; Back In The Arms Of Love; Lord Is That Me
LP MCA 291 6.98
8TK MCAT 291 7.98

MERLE HAGGARD
THE BEST OF THE BEST OF / Okie From Muskogee; Hungry Eyes; I Wonder What She'll Think About Me Leaving; Mama Tried; Silver Wings; Workin' Men Blues; Today I Started Loving You Again; Every Fool Has A Rainbow; No Reason To Quit; Someday We'll Look Back; The Fightin' Side Of Me.
LP ST-11082 6.98
8TK 8Xt-11082 7.98

FREDDIE HART
GREATEST HITS / Together Again; Only You; Hank Williams' Guitar; Misty Blue; Togetherness; There Goes My Everything; The Wall; Funny, Familiar, Forgotten Feelings; The Key's In The Mailbox; Let's Pretend We're Kids Again; I'll Hold You In My Heart
LP MCA 67 6.98
8TK MCAT 67 7.98

THE BEST OF THE BEST

JOHNNY HORTON

GREATEST HITS / The Battle Of New Orleans; When It's Spring-time In Alaska (It's Forty Below); North To Alaska; Sink The Bismark; I'm Ready If Your Willing
LP CS 8396 5.98
8TK 18-100106 6.98

DAVID HOUSTON

GREATEST HITS / Almost Persuaded; A Loser's Cathedral; You Mean The World To Me; My Exclusive Dreams; Mountain Of Love
LP BN 26342 5.98
8TK N18 10086 6.98

DAVID HOUSTON AND BARBARA MANDRELL

THE BEST OF / I Love You, I Love You; After Closing Time; A Perfect Match; Almost Persuaded; We've Got Everything But Love
LP KE 321915 5.98
8TK EA 32915 6.98

BURL IVES

THE BEST OF / Blue Tail Fly; Sad Man's Song; My Good Old Man; Goober Peas; Aunt Rhody; Old Dan Tucker; Foggy, Foggy, Dew; The Fox; Hush Little Baby; Molly Malone; Mrs. McGrath; Brennan On The Moor; And Many, Many More (2 Record Set)
LP MCA 2-4034 7.98
8TK MCAT 2-4034 9.98

BURL IVES

GREATEST HITS / A Little Bitty Tear; Funny Way Of Laughin'; Pearly Shells; True Love Goes On And On; Call Me Mr. In-Between; This Is All I Ask; Foggy, Foggy, Dew; Blue Tail Fly; Goober Peas; Cool Water; That's My Heart Strings; My Gal Sal
LP MCA 114 6.98
8TK MCAT 114 7.98

STONEWALL JACKSON

GREATEST HITS / Waterloo; B.J. The D.J.; I Washed My Hands; In Muddy Water; Don't Be Angry; A Wound Time Can't Erase
LP CS 9177 5.98
8TK 18-10-0280 6.98

GEORGE JONES

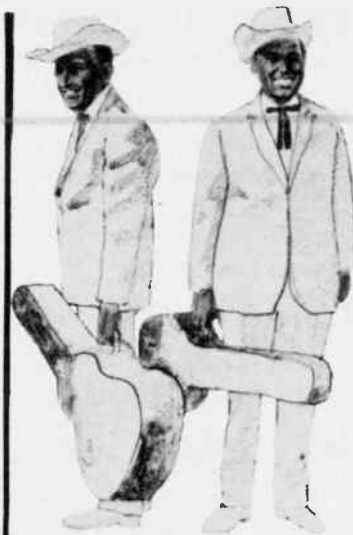
GREATEST HITS / Ain't It Funny What A Fool Will Do; You Comb Her Hair; Your Heart Turned Left; Not What I Had In Mind; My Tears Are Overdue; A Girl I Used To Know; Where Does A Little Tear Come From; Least Of All; She Thinks I Still Care; The Race Is On; Open Pit Mine; Big Fool Of The Year.
LP UAL 3532 6.98
8TK UAS 6532 7.98

GEORGE JONES

THE BEST OF / A Day In The Life Of A Fool; White Lightnin'; I'll Follow You (Up To Our Cloud); When The Grass Grows Over Me; Love Bug; Walk Through This World With Me; The Race Is On; A Good Year For The Roses; Family Bible; No Blues Is Good News
LP LSP 4716 5.98
8TK P8S 1952 6.98

BUDDY KNOX

GOLDEN HITS / Party Doll; All By Myself; Rock Your Little Baby To Sleep; Lovey Dovey; She's Gone; Hula Love; Ling Ting Tong; Somebody Touched Me; Slippin' And Slidin'; Chi-hua-hua; Open (Your Lovin' Arms); Dear Abby.
LP LST7251 6.98



BRENDA LEE

HER GREATEST HITS / Johnny One Time; All Alone Am I; Sweet Nothings; As Usual; Dum Dum; You Can Depend On Me; Coming On Strong; Losing You; Fool No. 1; Emotions; Just Out Of Reach; And Many, Many More
LP MCA 2-4012 7.98
8TK MCAT 2-4012 9.98

GORDON LIGHTFOOT

THE VERY BEST OF / Early Rain; I'm Not Sayin'; For Lovin' Me; The Way I Feel; Canadian Railroad Trilog; Walls; Did She Mention My Name; Black Day In July; Wherefore And Why; Last Time I Saw Her; Affair On Eighth Avenue; If I Could.
LP UA-LA243-G 6.98
8TK UA-EA243-G 7.98

CHARLIE LOUVIN

BEST OF / I Don't Love You Any more; Think I'll Go Somewhere And Cry Myself To Sleep; When I Stop Dreaming; The Kind Of Man I Am; Hey Daddy; See The Big Man Cry; What Are Those Things (With Big Black Wings); Love Has To Die (All By Itself); Here's A Toast To Mama; Will You Visit Me On Sundays?
LP ST-11112 6.98
8TK 8XT-11112 7.98

BOB LUMAN

GREATEST HITS / Just Enough To Make Me Stay; Neither One Of Us; Lonely Women Make Good Lovers; Still Loving You; Come On Home (And Sing The Blues To Daddy)
LP KE 32759 5.98
8TK EA 32759 6.98

LORETTA LYNN

GREATEST HITS / Don't Come Home A Drinkin'; Before I'm Over You; If You're Not Gone Too Long; Dear Uncle Sam; The Other Woman; Wine Women And Song; You Ain't Woman Enough; Blue Kentucky Girl; Success; The Home You're Tearing Down; Happy Birthday
LP MCA 1 6.98
8TK MCAT 1 7.98

BILL MONROE

GREATEST HITS / New Mule Skinner Blues; Uncle Pen; Cheyenne; Footprints In The Snow; Y'all Come; Gotta Travel On; Danny Boy; Roanoke; Four Walls; Molly And Tenbrooks;
LP MCA 17 6.98
8TK MCAT 17 7.98

WILLIE NELSON

BEST OF / Funny How Time Slips Away; Hello Walls; The Part Where I Cry; Undo The Right; Wake Me When It's Over; Crazy; Tough Me; One Step Beyond; Three Days; Half A Man; Where My House Lives; Mr. Record Man; Darkness On The Face Of The Earth.
LP UA-LA086-F 6.98
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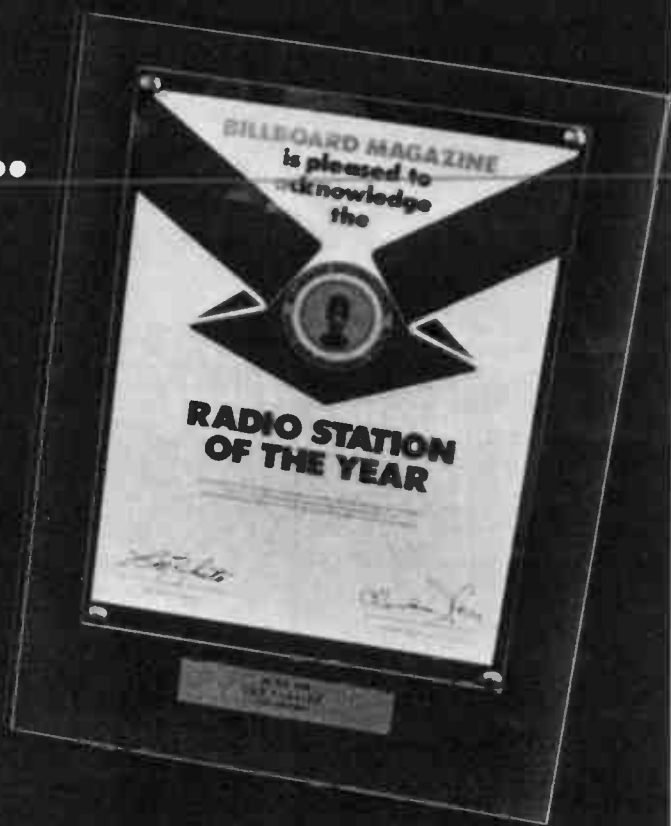
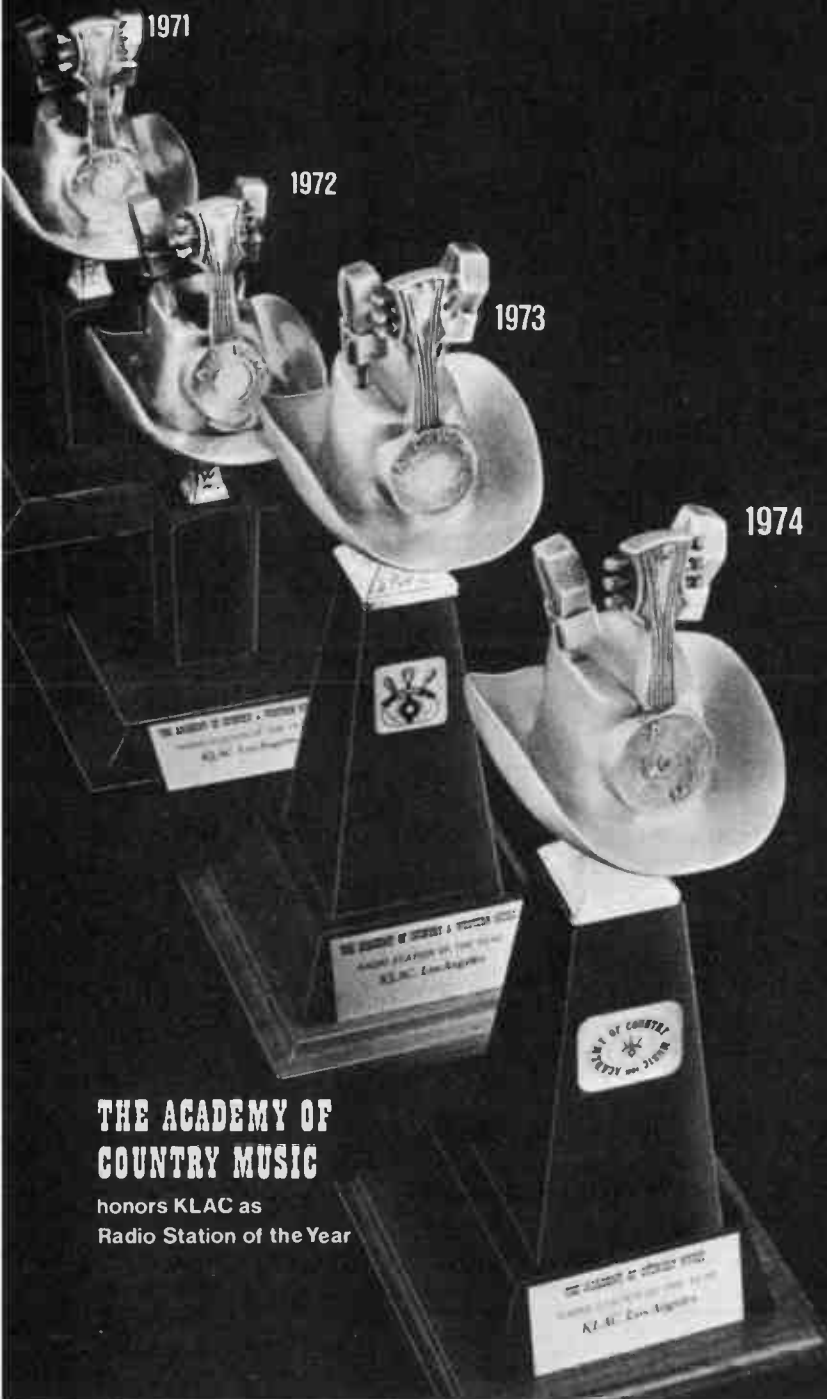
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"She started out washing other people's clothes...today she owns an entire town and has an annual income that surpasses that of the President of the United States..."

HANK WILLIAMS

"Two months later, in an almost unintelligible scrawl, Hank Williams wrote me: "Don't sweat, buddy. The world's not yet lonesome for me..."

MOTHER MAYBELLE CARTER

"She is short, but she casts a long shadow... long and a half - century wide..."

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MO15

What Now Charley Pride?

by Patrick Carr

Last month, we visited with Johnny Cash in his suite at New York's Plaza Hotel, and discussed his plans and hopes for the future—new directions and all. This month, Charley Pride was in town—again, at the Plaza—so we went along again. We have already told the stories of Johnny Cash and Charley Pride—and Merle Haggard, Roy Clark, Tammy Wynette and most of the other country superstars—but we feel that our readers should be finding out what country's top performers are up to on a continuing basis.

Charley Pride was relaxed, funny, and funky at the Plaza—a warm, self-confident man who seems to know exactly where he's going and why. Read on.

You've changed producers, haven't you?

Yeah. Jerry Bradley and I work together in Nashville now. Jack Clement and I just got to a point where we just weren't gettin' it, y'know? Take for instance my *Country Feelin'* album—it's off the charts now, and I believe that if it had all been there, it would still have been on the charts. I think that what we were coming up with in the studio just wasn't quite gettin' it.

Have you started to write any of your own songs yet?

No, but I'd like to. I hope to someday. I've got a lot of stuff in my head that I'd like to write—it's just a question of finding the way to do it. Writing is like putting all you want to say down in the least amount of words possible, and that's really the art of it. That's why I admire Kristofferson, y'know. A guy like that can write, and say *so much* in one line, like "Lovin' her was easier . . ." That's beautiful. Sure, I'll write songs one day.

How about playing an instrument? Are you interested

in doing that?

Ha! Well, I play guitar for two or three numbers in my show, but y'see, I played the guitar the wrong way until I started recording. In other words, I bought me a Silvertone and just tuned it straight across—straight open bar chords. I used to sit there by the radio and listen to each song. There's wasn't nobody out there in the country could show me how to tune it, but I wanted it to at least come close to what I was hearing on the radio. So I'd wait to the end of the song and keep each note in my head, and then tune the guitar straight across. Now, I'm playing it the right way, but the minors and augmenteds and all that—I'm limited, 'cause I played it the wrong way so long. I'd love to go further with it, but I don't take time to sit down and try to do it. I used to watch my guitarist's hands, just to see if I could learn it that way, 'cause I love to watch people do what they're good at. Baseball, football, basketball, music, running, boxing—I don't want to be a boxer, but I admire a guy who can do it good.

What about baseball? Are you still active?

For the last four years I've been in spring training with the Milwaukee Brewers, and this year I've been getting with Texas, which is where I live. We've had our team now two years. They sort of said to me that it seemed like if I was living there, I should support my own home team. So I thought about it and I figured they might have a pretty good point.

I'm interested in how you first came into country music. I mean, who did you listen to, to get that country twist?

Well, the biggies when I first started listening were all the people of what I call the Old School, like Roy Acuff Ernest Tubb, Eddy Arnold, all the way up through Hank Williams, There again, I heard all kinds of other music, but *that* was the music I chose to like and sing for my own individual benefit, not realizing that I was preparing myself to be here answering these questions. Of course, baseball was the original thing in which I would make my move, and get out of the cotton fields.

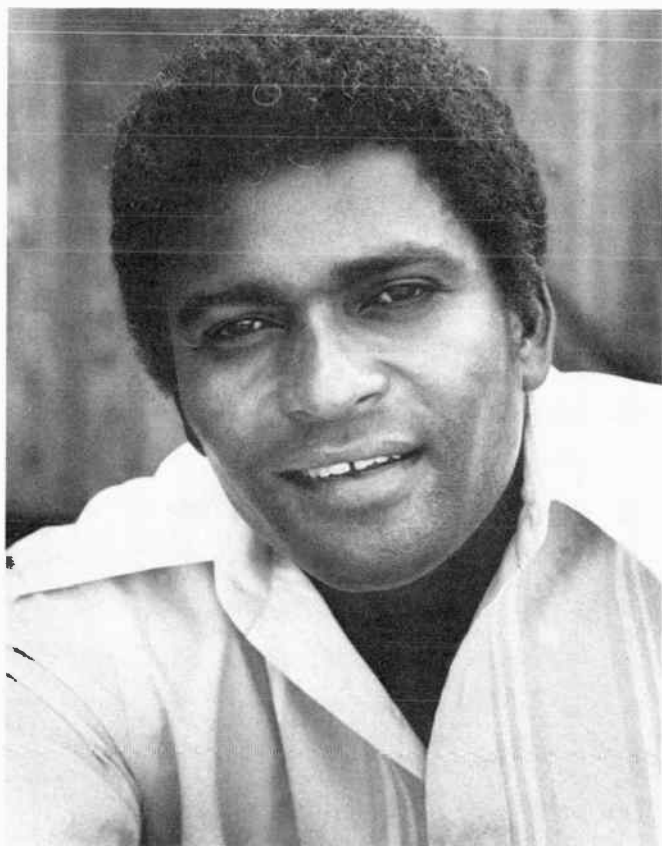
Your current single is about your home town. Have you been back there recently?

I was there in April. I wanted to get back before then, but I just hadn't had a chance to make it. I bought the farm I grew up on, y'know, and I leased it to this guy. There's been a lot of rain, and farming all over the country has had its problems. We raise beans, and my daddy tells me it's been fairly good—but a lot of people all over the country have lost their whole crop, not only down there, but in Iowa, Ohio, everywhere. So I want to get down there this month and see what's happening.

It's changed there. It's really quite something to see how it's changed since the time of integration and new ways for people to look at each other. It's a real difference in atmosphere.

How old were you when you started listening to country music?

About five years old. I think I first started thinking about the whole "them and us" process about that time—especially when I got in school. I remember an incident happening when I went down to the store—



this little store right behind the school—and I heard these two fellas talkin' about some Yankee down there doin' somethin' they didn't like. The first thing that crossed my mind was that they were talkin' about the Civil War. And my goodness, Hitler had done cleaned up Poland, and here I was picking up scrap iron for 15 cents a pound. I mean, Hitler didn't have no plans for *me*, with what he was doing to people over *there*. You know . . . things like that, and what my mother told me about not havin' a chip on your shoulder and things are gonna be all right . . . it was just a composite thing. I'm just trying to live and let live, do the best I can do, pay my taxes, raise my kids—whatever. I didn't make society: I was just born into it, so I just try to function the best I can with what I call *skin hangups*, all that. I'm just one mortal among many mortals.

Didn't you get a lot of kidding from your friends when you were growing up, being a black country music fan? Yup, but I didn't feel it was strange from the standpoint of my individuality. But I *did* understand why they felt it was strange for them, coming at it from what society had done to make them come at me that way. I was always sort of odd, y'know—because what I was doing in growing up and trying to be the way I was, was trying to be an *individual*. I always try to sample little bits of everything—the Bible here, astrology there, reincarnation, Methodist, Catholic, whatever the whole ball of wax is. I just try to sample a little bit, to try and blend all of these things. And I'm going to do the best I can to operate intelligently with whatever's coming at me. Where I sit, it's all there. It's all around me.

But no, I never felt it was strange when I was growing up, other than feeling that way, for my own self. I'm Pisces, you see. That's what I am. I'm an individual. If there's one fault about that particular sign as

related to astrology, it's self-emulation. I don't want to be like nobody but *me*. I mean, I admire Johnny Cash, Roy Acuff, Hank, Mickey Mantle, Willie Mays, Ted Williams . . . *but*, if I'd been in competition with any of these fellas, I wouldn't have broken away. I'm not out to out-*sing* anybody. I'm just gonna do the best I can with the God-given talents I have, and *sing*. There's enough room here for everybody.

How closely do you follow astrology? I mean, have you had your chart done?

Well, I follow it. I don't *depend* on it or anything—it's just a part of everything else. I did have my chart done one time. A fan wanted to do it for me, and she wanted to know the date and time I was born. I told her I was over thirty when she called me, and she said no, she had to have the date. So I said, 'No, I'll just tell you the day—March 18th', and she went and guessed within a year, and ran the thing. And I was so interested in what she did, I called my dad about what time I was born. He said between 6:30 and 6:45, as best as he could figure. So then she took that, and that was how I got into it. I didn't seek it or nothin'. It just happened.

Do you have any stylistic changes in mind for your music?

No, not no major changes. I'm just going to try to do it a bit better. Y'know, just try to expand what I've been doing, and do it better. Try to make it be *good*. Utilize everything to the point where it all fits together. And then it'll compete with music in *any* category.

I like to sing songs that *mean* something to me. If the song's about love or about my home town, I like to sing it with real *projection*, and get my fans to feel the same way, to relate to it the same way *I* relate to it. And that's about the way it adds up—in anything, not really just in music. Whatever endeavor you go into, it's a matter of communication, of having something in common.

A lot of people—myself included—believe that your voice and—more particularly—your style, is the "cleanest" country sound since Hank Williams. You've already said that you don't plan to change your style, but I'd like to hear more about that, and about how you arrived at that style in the first place, when you first started making records with Clement.

Well, about the time when Eddy Arnold and some others started to use strings on their records, I was approached by RCA, suggesting maybe a little tinge of strings or something. I said, 'no.' Jack (Clement) and I had to constantly say we weren't going to put strings on the records, and there were many discussions about what RCA wanted and what *I* wanted to do. Now, this was at the early part of my career, so I didn't have much to say. I'd never been in a recording studio before, so I had to learn. But I *felt* what I wanted to do when I first went in there. And Jack had a great influence then. We both had the same thing in mind.

Now, Jerry Bradley and I work together, and we work well. It's like it used to be with Jack. *We* fit, and together, we know *what* fits. You see, everybody needs somebody. *Everybody* needs help. ■

December is a very special month for Lynn Anderson and her producer/songwriter husband Glenn Sutton. Lynn, who works a good part of the weekends of the year on the road, spends her holiday time shopping and "just plain relaxing" around the couple's 16-room ranchhouse in Brentwood, Tennessee.

There is not much recording activity late in the year. All the new albums have been recorded and are ready for January release, so Glenn is able to do more puttering around the Brentwood farm's 60 acres.

December brings two big occasions into the Suttons' lives, besides rest and time off from work: The birthday of their only child, Lisa, who will be four this December 3, and a joyous holiday spent with both sides of the family and friends.

"Right after Thanksgiving, things start to steam down," said Lynn, just back from Hollywood where she and Lisa did several television commercials. "I start making plans about then to just do absolutely nothing. For us, Christmas is a time to see old friends and spend more than just a few moments with them. Also, we can let our hair down around the house and do house chores in old blue jeans if we want.

"Really, though, the best part of the holidays for me is my time with Lisa. It is rough on both her and me when I'm away so much during the year. So I think it vital to spend as much time as I can with her during the holiday season. We are trying to instill in Lisa the real, true meaning of Christmas. She is actually too young to understand the deeper meaning of it. I think last year for the first time she realized that something special happens—Santa Claus, gifts, surprises. She began church school (kindergarten) this year, so I am sure she will understand more about the religious significance of Christmas."

The festivities for the Suttons start the day before Christmas Eve when Lynn makes punch and eggnog for family and guests who drop by. Lynn also begins baking some of her popular cookies, cakes, and desserts for Lisa's young friends. The big meal at the Sutton home is on Christmas Eve.

Glenn's mother, Mrs. Ola Sutton, arrives from Jackson, Mississippi,



The Sutton Family at Christmastime: That's country star Lynn Anderson, husband Glenn Sutton (he writes songs and produces records) and their daughter, four-year-old Lisa at the front door of their Brentwood, Tenn., home.

along with his sister and her three children, aged 7, 12 and 16. Lynn's mother, songwriter/singer Liz Anderson, and dad—music publisher Casey Anderson—gather in Brentwood, and all the assorted presents are placed under the brightly-lit tree. Lynn serves her Christmas dinner about 7 p.m. The big meal, every other year (when Glenn and Lynn are not in Jackson), is the next day at Mrs. Anderson's.

"I know that the next day and really for the next few days, all we are going to do is eat, eat, eat," said Lynn, "so I try to make our Christmas Eve meal filling without taking it too far. The fun begins after dinner, and I don't want everyone falling to sleep because they ate too much."

Around midnight Glenn dresses as Santa Claus and distributes the gifts around the tree and the huge mechanical "twin" Santa Claus which dominates the living room. Early on Christmas Day the camera and flashbulbs come out, and Glenn takes several rounds of

family pictures. The Suttons and their family members attend morning services at the Baptist church in Brentwood. "Then it's over to mom's for more festivities," said Lynn.

Here are some of special Christmas treats from Lynn's personal recipe book:

CANDY CANE COOKIES

(May be prepared December 23.)

- 1/2 cup butter (soft) or oleo
- 1/2 cup canned shortening
- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1 egg
- 1-1/2 tsps. almond extract
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 2-1/2 cups flour
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. red food coloring
- 1/2 cup crushed peppermint candy
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar

Preheat oven to 375°. Mix butter, shortening, confectioners' sugar, egg, and extracts thoroughly. Blend in flour and salt. Fold into doughball, and divide ball in half.

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Glenn Suttons

PHOTOS: CHERYL SHAPIRO



Lynn and Santa (could that be Glenn in disguise?)

Mix food coloring into one half. Shave one teaspoon dough from colored and uncolored halves and shape each into 4-inch ropes. (For smooth, even ropes, roll back and forth on lightly floured board.) Place ropes side by side, place together one colored and one uncolored, and lightly twist together. Place on ungreased baking sheet. Curve top of twisted dough sticks down to form candy cane handle. Bake 9 minutes till firm or very light brown. Mix crushed peppermint candy and granulated sugar. While cookies are hot, immediately sprinkle them with the candy/sugar mixture. Makes about 4 dozen cookies.

"When the family gathers Christmas Eve there are a lot of children, and kids tire easily," Lynn explained. "Everyone fixes turkey, and after the holidays there are turkey sandwiches for several days. So for my dinner I try to capture the same atmosphere, but make it a bit

different."

ROCK CORNISH GAME HENS WITH WILD RICE STUFFING

8 1-pound Rock Cornish hens (add one hen for each family member), skinned
Paprika
Salt & Pepper
1/2 cup melted butter

Stuffing:

2 cups cooked wild rice
1/2 cup chopped almonds or walnuts
1/4 cup mushrooms, chopped
1 small or medium onion, finely chopped
Celery
1/2 cup chicken broth or broth from innards

Mix these ingredients thoroughly. Fill game hens with stuffing and brush melted butter over each. Sprinkle with condiments. Roast at 325° for approximately one hour. (Optional: Pour creme de cassis or any berry brandy in with butter when basting.)

One of the Suttons' favorite types of food is Mexican, which Lynn loves to cook. She does not overlook the Spanish flavor—even at Christmas—with this tempting item:

LYNN'S CHEESE WAFERS OLE

These make an excellent hors d'oeuvre served with a sparkling red wine.

8 oz. sharp cheddar cheese, grated
1 cup flour
1 1/2 cups Rice Krispies cereal
1 stick melted butter or oleo
1/8 tsp. cayenne pepper (more, to taste, if you desire more spicy wafers)

Pour butter over cheese and add other ingredients. Shape mixture into small balls. On a cookie sheet or double fold of tin foil, refrigerate overnight. Before serving, bake in preheated oven at 375° for 15 minutes.

MAPLE FROST COFFEE MUNCH

1 box Hot Roll Mix (yeast dough)
1/2 cup white sugar
1/2 cup brown sugar
3 1/2 tbs. maple extract
3/4 cup walnuts
1/2 stick butter (soft)

Make roll mix per instructions on package. Add white sugar to brown sugar, and pour in 2 tablespoons maple extract. Divide mixture into 3 balls. Grease 10" rounded pan. Roll out first ball onto pan and sprinkle the maple-flavored sugars over the dough. Top with 1/4 cup walnuts and one-third amount of butter. Add 1/2 tablespoon maple extract. Repeat this process until you have three layers. With sharp knife, halve dough, then quarter it, and so on until you have approximately 16 slices. Twist each section into a rope. Leave to rise for 1 hour. The dough will rise into large wedge shapes. Heat oven to 350° and bake for 1/2 hour. Dribble frost mix* over wedges.

*Frosting: 1 small box confectioners' sugar; 2 tbs. maple extract; and 1/2 cup (more or less to desired consistency) milk. Stir. Pour over cake.

From the Glenn Suttons and *The Country Hearth: A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!* ■

Records

Merle Haggard . . . Johnny Cash . . . Charley Pride . . .



Merle Haggard
His 30th Album
Capitol ST-11331 6.98
8XT-11331 (tape) 7.98

There's not too many people in the country music field, and there's probably less in the pop and rock fields, who can match Merle Haggard's record for excellence. Since 1960, he has been writing and singing his own songs and releasing them to worldwide critical acclaim and the appreciation of devoted fans. The quality of his writing, singing and musical ability has remained high despite the incredible volume of music he has produced over the years. You just can't name many other performers who haven't lost their touch over the course of 30 (count 'em—thirty) albums.

Sure, there's plenty of artists—country, pop and rock—who've churned out 30 albums over the same period of time. But hardly anybody in that category can match Haggard's record: he writes

most of his own material; he never strays beyond the traditional country sound—blues, Dixieland, Bob Wills' swing, or pure hard country; his material is *always* sensitive, polished, highly original and unmistakably his own.

His 30th Album is a perfect example of Haggard's genius. His voice, an incredibly earthy instrument that harkens directly back to Jimmie Rodgers' blue yodel, swings easily from tender ballads like "Things Aren't Funny Anymore," to brazen, up-tempo kickers like "Honky Tonk Night Time Man" and "Old Man From The Mountain." Always fond of referring to country music as "the white man's blues," Haggard delivers the proof in a song called "White Man Singin' The Blues" that features acoustic bottle-neck slide guitar, mouth harp, and a vocal that captures the feel of every low-down blues singer. "Holding Things Together" is a masterpiece that ranks with anybody's contri-

bution to the slice-of-life school of songwriting. "(The Seashores Of) Old Mexico" is a melodic dramatization of what could easily be an early Haggard adventure: A young man's flight from the law leads him to the sunny Mexican seashore, but thoughts of home are always present.

Haggard includes an original hymn here, "Don't Give Up On Me," an old Tiny Moore-Wills Brothers tune called "A King Without A Queen," and a nifty version of Mark Yeary's "It Don't Bother Me" that goes into a very basic R & B vamp featuring a raunchy Bill Black-style sax riff. Haggard has mastered every lick in the American musical vocabulary, in fact, and that's not only what makes this album so good, it's what makes Haggard so great. What's more, he's *at ease* with it all.

RICHARD NUSSER



Johnny Cash
The Junkie And The Juicehead (Minus Me)
Columbia KC 30086 5.98
CA 33086 (tape) 6.98

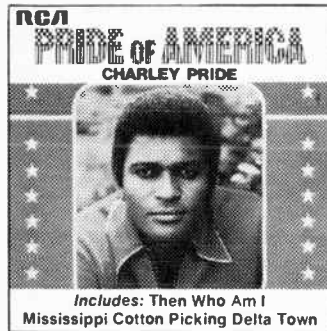
This album may have the junkie and the juicehead in its title but it is actually the Cash Family Singers in action. June Carter Cash we are used to hearing, of course, but now we have Rosanne Cash, Carlene Routh and Rosey Nix, either the start

of the Cash singing dynasty or the continuation of the Carter Family one, whichever way you look at it. Johnny Cash sounds very much at home (literally) as he dispenses paternal, if somewhat ordinary advice to Rosey on "Father And Daughter." It's very low key, the parent asking youth to slow down, and Rosey essaying some mild protest in an edgy but distinctive voice. Carlene gets a song all to herself, "Friendly Gates," a nice straightforward ballad, while Rosanne is a little better served with "Broken Freedom Song," a piece that has some meaning. June Carter Cash contents herself with an up-tempo, hoedown-alley fiddle version of the familiar "Ole Slewfoot."

The rest is Cash himself in a wide variety of material. "Don't Take Your Guns To Town" gets a routine treatment, and he has also written (to a "Streets of Laredo" melody) a salute to the evangelists of our era, the "good men of God" he calls them, in "Billy And Rex And Oral And Bob" following it with "Jesus," a modern gospel song about finding faith.

The title song, "The Junkie And The Juicehead (Minus Me)" is a Kris Kristofferson slice of low-life, abounding in moral and brittle-clever lines that made Kristofferson's reputation—"every empty bottle is my private crystal ball" and so on. Cash gets into and under the lyric and although it might not be the most commercial thing he has done it is the most interesting in a long time. Cash has real talent with the out-of-the-ordinary. It is the best Cash album for some time and, because of the emergence of the daughters, a really offbeat one.

IAN DOVE



Charley Pride

Pride of America
RCA APL1-0757 5.98
APS1-0757 (tape) 6.98

Even superstars need a gimmick now and then. The most successful of these gimmicks are the ones that match what is clever and appropriate in the artist's music with a catch-phrase or slogan. Charley Pride and RCA Records have come with just that in this latest album called, quite appropriately, *Pride Of America*.

"Then Who Am I" starts things out, a song from the team of Doodle Owens and Dallas Frazier who've been Charley's pen-pals since they wrote "All I Have To Offer You (Is Me)." Pride takes their latest song message and turns it into a really vibrant exercise in soul-searching. His "Mississippi Cotton Pickin' Delta Town" closes the first side with some of the most colorful images of Charley's career, but not before he treats Slim Whitman's '53 oldie "North Wind" and new tunes from Red Steagall and John Schweers to equally fresh displays of vitality and feeling.

One of the catchiest tunes Pride has ever cut—one to rival "Kiss An Angel Good Morning" for sure—is the bright "Mary Go Round," which is written by Johnny Duncan who has had no less than four other hits performed by Charley.

If you let that "Pride Of America" title twirl in your mind for awhile, you'll come up with more shades of meaning than there are painted ponies on a carousel. Charley Pride remains one of the most powerful forces in country not because of a trick, but because of his track record.

And it just keeps getting better.
ROBERT ADELS

Loretta Lynn

They Don't Make 'Em Like My Daddy Anymore
MCA 444 6.98
MCAT-444 7.98

The woman who named a publishing company after Daddy's now famous coal miner's profession takes the title of her latest album from her latest hit about him. This particular song was written for her by someone else who enjoyed the same kind of upbringing, but Loretta shows the universality of country



when she brings her own experiences to bear on the Jerry Chestnut-penned song. It's every bit as personal as her "Coal Miner's Daughter" was for her some four years back.

The dramatic and deftly-written liner notes to this album come from another author who can successfully sit in the shade of Mrs. Lynn's family tree without looking like a trespasser. The man is George Vecsey, who is helping Loretta with her upcoming autobiography. And the other contributors on this album have come up with songs that you can't beat with a stick: Kenny O'Dell ("Behind Closed Doors"), Tom T. Hall ("I Love"), John Rostill ("If You Love Me") and Dallas Frazier ("Ain't Love A Good Thing").

Despite the title, there's really no "family" concept linking these particular songs together. If you're looking to find out more about Loretta's daddy and family than her previous songs have told you, you won't find much in the way of specifics here. No doubt she's saving most of

the details for her forthcoming book. Here, the woman who's ever in country's public eye is content to give out with the musical side of her story. In this regard especially, were her Daddy alive today, he'd have ever so much to tell the neighbors about.

ROBERT ADELS

Johnny Rodriguez

Songs About Ladies And Love
Mercury SRM 1-1012 6.98
MC8-1-1012 (tape) 7.98

The title says it all—a gentle album, replete with strings, with Rodriguez's firm high voice riding through a series of songs that deal with both subjects, naturally dealing with them together. It may not be the most original album on the country market but the quality remains constant throughout—an album for the followers of the singer rather than something that will attract considerable outside attention.

Some familiar material emerges—"Have I Told You Lately That I Love You" in which Rodriguez lapses into Spanish for extra emotional effect; "I Can't Stop Loving You" the Don Gibson classic, gets yet another airing and brings out the full voice of Rodriguez. Cynthia Weil and Barry Mann's "We're Over"



gets an almost pop treatment and the singer also includes three of his own songs including a very wistful "Oh I Miss You," that is of high quality.

Rodriguez is a good singer in the country field, with his own audience and his own style. Albums like this can do no harm to his career, but it could have been made just a touch more distinctive. Much of the arrangements sound similar—the musicianship is impeccable, since there are

so many top names in the group of Nashville session men backing Rodriguez—and too many of the tempos are alike. It's a good album for late night listening; you don't have to concentrate too hard.

IAN DOVE



Sammi Smith

The Rainbow In Daddy's Eyes
Mega MLPS-601 6.98
8601 (tape) 7.98

Listening to this latest album from Sammi Smith makes you wonder why success has eluded her since she recorded Kris Kristofferson's "Help Me Make It Through The Night" and made it one of 1971's biggest hits. We've no idea where the problem lies: Lack of promotion, the wrong songs from the right writers or vice versa, or possibly, personal problems. Whatever the reason, it's a shame, because this album proves that Sammi Smith has one of the finest female voices in country music, and she's certainly one of the most capable, inventive and original song stylists in the field.

An example of this is her rendering of "The Last Letter," delivered with such emotion one wonders how she kept her composure in the studio while recording it. The rhythm track consists only of a soft guitar and the gentle strains of pedal steel that don't detract from Sammi's husky, bittersweet vocals. She makes Rex Griffin's lyrics crackle with feeling. Also smuggled away in this remarkable collection of 10 songs is Harlan Howard's "Deepening Snow." The lyrics may sound schmaltzy to some but Sammi turns the

complex story within a story into a masterpiece of song styling. The album is full of such moments.

This album should have been a hit had it been properly timed to coincide with Sammi's personal appearances or the release of a single. (Of course now she doesn't even look like the cover portrait. She's *much* cuter than that mug shot makes her appear.) I hope the dj's give this a spin before deciding it's too old to be commercially viable. There's lots of untapped gold in this little package.

ELLIS NASSOUR



that, although I don't consider myself a country singer—or any specific kind of 'singer' for that matter—I am extremely proud of the country hits I've had over the past four years."

So here collected on one album are those big singles (along with some important lp cuts) of which she's so deservedly boastful. These ten tracks trace the Canadian songbird's career back from her debut flight—"Snowbird"—and all the way up to her two most recent country landmarks—"He Thinks I Still Care" and "Son Of A Rotten Gambler."

Anne Murray

Country

Capitol ST 11324 6.98

8XT-11324 (tape) 7.98

Anne Murray has her own straightforward rationale for both the title and contents of her latest album: "It's my way of telling the audience

Producer Brian Ahern learned early in his association with Ms. Murray how to capture the Nashville sound all the way up in Toronto. He does it well, and he does it effortlessly. Anne records in other styles, but country has always seemed to be her most consistently brilliant way of displaying her talents. That's why a track like "Put Your Hand In The Hand" has become such an important part of country music's legacy even though she never released it as a single—and why it is included here.

That smoky, husky-sweet voice of Canada's foremost female musical attraction always seems to hit its stride when the song and the mood is countrified. Even though the strings may gush a half-mile over the pedal steel and the guitar pickin', it's always Anne's treatment of a song that sets the inner tone for the entire production.

Ms. Murray works almost all the same major fair dates and indoor arenas any Nash-

ville or Bakersfield-based act of her stature does—and many more in her home country as well. Yet every year, she sets one month aside so that she can return to her family in the rural beauty of Canada's Prince Edward Island. Maybe it's this physical going home which allows her roots to come through the fullest of orchestrations twelve months of the year on record.

Country music has a lot to be proud of in Anne Murray, and Anne Murray has a lot to be proud of in *Country*.

ROBERT ADELS

Mickey Gilley

Room Full Of Roses

Playboy PB 128 6.98

(no tape info available)

For 15 years, Mickey Gilley has been Houston's favorite local country star. Capable of playing the piano in cousin Jerry Lee Lewis' pounding fashion, he usually chose to sing his ballads with a western tenor twang



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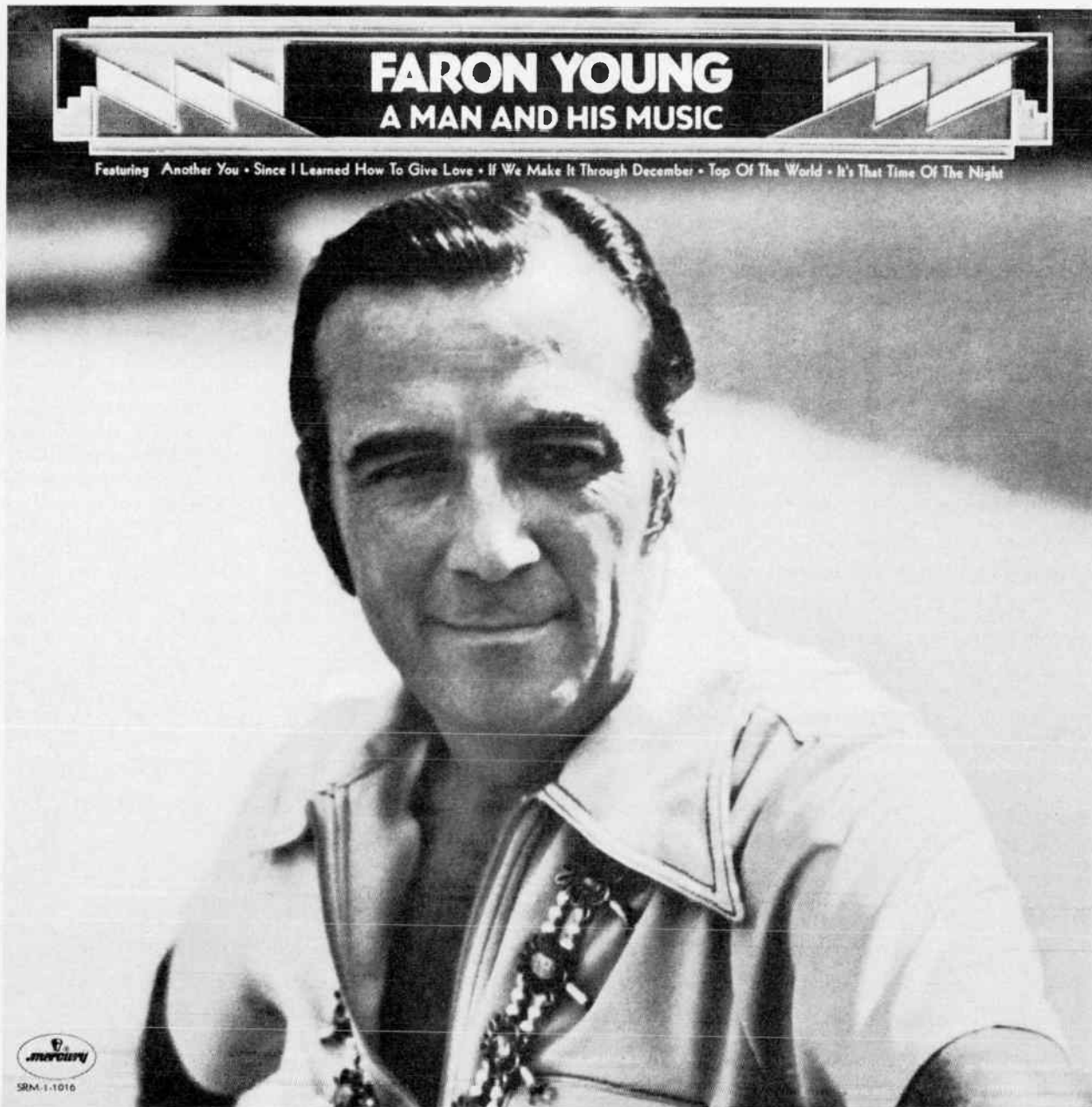
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"A Man and His Music" Mercury SRM-1-1016 8-Track MC8-1-1016 Musicassette MCR4-1-1016

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Highlighted by the sheriff's great new album, "A Man and His Music," featuring the hit single, "Another You."

Faron Young month. What a perfect time to complete your collection of all the sheriff's great Mercury albums. In fact, with the holidays coming up, isn't it a great time to complete your friends' collections, too?



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than a pure southern bass. He's still all that, but thanks to two big hits—this album's title track and its follow-up, "I Overlooked An Orchid"—he's now a favorite son of an entire nation of country fans.

It all didn't come the first year he began to take his performing seriously. Back in 1959, it was a struggle. It wasn't until about 1971 that a ramshackle club named Shelley's was transformed into the now prospering Gilley's. Playboy Records had barely wiggled its tail in the country market when they decided to take the national plunge with Mickey. And just

as his appearances packed them into that club, his first national release brought them into the record stores.

His first album as a coast-to-coast country singer sounds like an old jukebox revitalized with the proper touch of today. "Room Full Of Roses" itself dates back to the George Morgan original of 1949. Mickey refurbishes Elton Britt's "Some-day" from '46 and even "San Antonio Rose," Bob Wills' '40 classic.

The album cut that sounds to be the most recent—"She Called Me Baby"—is really an oldie too. Even though Charlie Rich just had a big hit on it, he cut that version over 10 years ago when Chet Atkins was producing him. Mickey cut his long before RCA released Rich's as a single—and had first thought it would be *his* big one. As it turned out, "Room Full Of Roses" was the Gilley side the deejays liked most. And as the storybooks say, "the rest is history."

It seems more than fitting that a talent as steeped in country tradition as Mickey Gilley should have so much of a future still ahead of him. And as his mean piano puts a fresh outlook on songs connected with people as diverse as Nat Stuckey and Merle Haggard, Mickey Gilley's voice gives every local star just about everywhere the guts to stick it out as best they can until they find their own room full of roses.

ROBERT ADELS



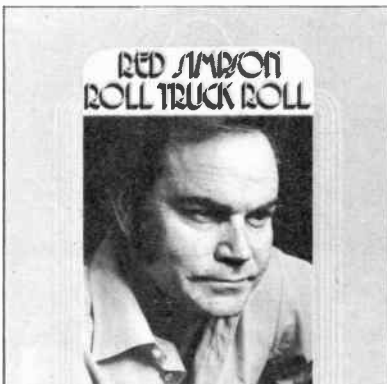
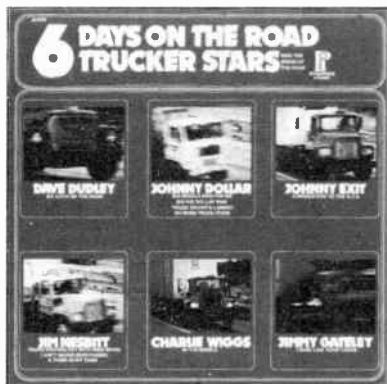
Marilyn Sellars
One Day At A Time
Mega MLPS-602 6.98
8602 (tape) 7.98

Marijohn Wilkin and Kris Kristofferson wrote a song based on the Alcoholics Anonymous slogan "One Day At A Time" and it became a successful single release for Mega Records' recording artist Marilyn Sellars, a raven-haired lass from Minnesota who proves, with this album, that she has what it takes to

sell a song.

Some traditionalists may have difficulty accepting this album because its approach is more middle-of-the-road than pure country. These days that consideration seems silly, however. Country music is big enough to contain many diverse elements, and the religious-orientation of several cuts on this album certainly keep it within the traditional fold.

I think Mega will most likely follow-up "One Day At A Time" with "Burden Of Freedom," another Kristofferson tune that should do well as a single release. As much as I like "Burden,"



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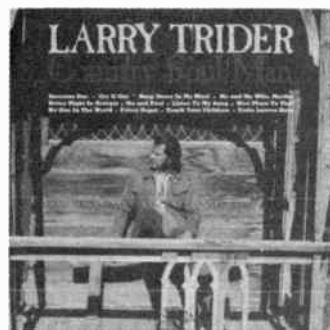
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though, my own choice for a single would be Kristoffer-son's "When He Loved Me," a great love story-song once recorded by Ray Price. It's the kind of song that grows each time you listen to it, and no one writes a love song better than Kris.

For me, the album would be stronger if there were more of Pete Drake. I think they lost him somewhere in the mix. With the exception of "California" and "The Rain's Got To Make A Living Too." David Briggs' piano is most effective throughout and the backing vocals selected by arranger-conductor Bergen White are subtle and effectively used. This debut album should win many fans for Marilyn Sellars.

STAN MARTIN



Larry Trider

Country Soul Man
Ranwood R-8129 5.98
(no tape available)

It's a pleasure to welcome another great debut album!

Country music is growing so fast that new performers who might have spent their lives in honky tonks are now getting a chance to make it big. The best thing about this is that regional artists are getting an almost-even break against Nashville on the airwaves and in the record stores. Texas' Moe Bandy was the most recent regional artist to break out. Another Texan, Larry Trider (who mostly plays clubs in Nevada and Oklahoma), should be next.

Country Soul Man is Trider's first album after years in the honky tonks. On the liner notes, Tommy Overstreet says that as good as it

is, this album is just a sample of what Larry Trider can do. I'm willing to believe him. In every way I know to measure a record, this one is terrific. Besides being fun to listen to, it holds up when you start looking at its parts. Trider has a languid, sexy voice, somewhere between Don Williams and Waylon Jennings, and he knows how to wrap it around a song.

The songs are first rate. Some of the best are originals written in various combinations by Trider, his guitarist James Pritchett and somebody named B. Havens. Trider-Havens' "Barroom Star" (should have been the name of the album) is a solid weeper that would be a guaranteed hit if released as a single. I'll bet it and "Nice Place To Visit," "Me And My Wife Martha" and "Listen To My Song" start turning up on other people's albums. I want to mention, too, that this label isn't trying to short-change you. Not only are there a full dozen songs on the album, but one side runs more than 18 minutes and the other better than 20.

JOHN GABREE

Kay Starr Country

GNP Crescendo
GNPS 2083 6.98
(no tape available)

Not too long ago, Brenda Lee was reunited with her first producer Owen Bradley to put her country recording career back on the hit track. It looks like the same thing's about to happen to Kay Starr as producer Cliffie Stone moves back into her professional life.



It was about 25 years ago that Stone teamed Kay up with Tennessee Ernie Ford

for the country classic, "I'll Never Be Free." She went on to record such hits as "Bonaparte's Retreat" and "Wabash Cannonball," but she's spent most of her recent past outside the studio in night-clubs and on the set of TV variety shows.

Her first album in too long a while consists of ten Stone-produced country gems, mostly from Memory Lane. Each song is treated to a clear, crisp approach which has more than enough elbow room left for Ms. Starr to spread out with her belt of a voice, a one-woman band of its own.

Tex Williams guests on a cleverly retreaded opener, "Frankie And Johnnie," but for the most part, it is Kay herself who carries the rest of the album off in style.

ROBERT ADELS

Jim Stafford

Jim Stafford
MGM SE-4947 6.98
(no tape info available)

There is no denying that Jim Stafford is talented. That's what makes this album such a disappointment. Stafford proved his versatility over the last year, first on Top 40 with "Spiders & Snakes," a



rollicking recreation of old-time rock and roll sound and ethos, then on both the pop and country charts with "My Girl Bill," a sly, suggestive take-off on show tunes.

The strengths and weaknesses of "My Girl Bill" also mark this lp. Stafford is a good songwriter and a first-rate performer. He knows how to write a convincing song and he is capable of coming up with just the right combination of voice, arrangement and instrumentation to make it work. Unfortunately, he seems to be afraid of his

talent, of trying to make a go of it as a straight entertainer. Instead, he does mostly cutesy pie parodies of rock, country and blues styles and subjects.

What are we to make of a record that has "I Ain't Sharin' Sharon" done with a lisp, two swamp rock parodies, two blues parodies, and two imitations of Walter Brennan. At first listen, Stafford reminds one of another big star who can't seem to resist hiding behind funny voices and musical take-offs. But where there is a frenzied genius about Ray Stevens' manic send-offs, Stafford is too careful, and not nearly inspired enough. Stafford usually has the sound about right, for which producers Phil Gernhard and Lobo can share the credit.

It is clear, however, that should Stafford ever turn himself loose, he might make great records. It certainly would be worth a try. As of now, he is like the man who was all dressed up with no place to go. JOHN GABREE

OTHER RECENT ALBUM RELEASES

Roy Acuff Jr.
California Lady
Hickory H3G4514 6.98
H8G4514 (tape) 7.98

Hank Williams Jr.
Living Proof
MGM M3G 4971 6.98
8G 4971 (tape) 7.98

Waylon Jennings
Ramblin' Man
RCA APL1-0734 5.98
APS1-0734 (tape) 7.98

Chuck Wagon Gang
Camp Meetin' Time
Columbia KC-32954 5.98
CA-32954 (tape) 6.98

The Plainsmen
Both Sides Of The Plainsmen
Hickory H3G4513 6.98
H8G4513 (tape) 7.98

Johnny Carver
Please Don't Tell (That Sweet Old Lady Of Mine)
ABC D-843 6.98
GRT 8022-843 (tape) 7.98

Redd Stewart
I Remember
Hickory H3G4512 6.98
H8G4512 (tape) 7.98

Hi-Fi Corner

by Michael Marcus

Have An Electric Christmas!

Here's Country Music's annual gallery of goodies. Some to give, some to get, some just to drool over. Have a good time.

If you like fine sound, convenience, and expensive toys, the **Scott T33S** FM tuner ought to make you very happy. Unlike most other tuners—even some of the most exotic and expensive ones—it uses a precise crystal-controlled *computer* to assure perfect tuning.

Instead of turning knobs to tune stations and watching a dial pointer, the T33S unit has push-button scanning and a digital frequency readout. If you want to really impress your buddies, you just shove a special card into a front panel slot and it tunes instantly to your favorite stations. Price? A thousand bucks.

A few years ago the folks at **Weltron** wowed the interior decorators with a spherical AM/FM/8-track combo. Now they've come out with a similar looking radio/cassette system. It has a pop-up handle for carrying, a hook for hanging, a swivel base for standing, and it works from internal batteries, a car or boat cigarette lighter, or an AC adaptor. There's a speaker in each side, a telescoping antenna, and it can play pre-recorded tapes or records from its own radio, microphone, or external record player or TV. List price is \$229.

Motorola has a great solution for luckless farmers who've seen their transistor portables fall off tractors and get ground up by a hungry harvester. Their model **FM205M** is a rugged, top-quality AM/FM radio with a large built-in speaker. It has an adjustable bracket so you can mount it securely just about anywhere, and it comes with a flip-down weather-tight protector and a mount for an external antenna. There's a head-



Motorola's AM/FM tractor radio has a rugged case. Price: Less than \$110.

phone jack for private listening if the machinery is noisy, or if you think Buck Owens will frighten the cows. It sells for less than \$110.

Cassette decks are compact, a breeze to operate and they can make mighty fine sounds; but until now, despite their small size, they took up an inordinate amount of shelf space because their loading slot and operating controls were on the top. **Pioneer's** new **CT-F7171** works from the front, so you can stack it with your other components. It has Dolby noise reduction, adjustable bias and equalization to handle the special new tapes, a memory rewind, and plenty of other features. Suggested retail price is \$370.

We've seen some terrific car stereo systems in the last couple of years, but unfortunately a lot of them didn't sound as good as they should have because the speakers were mounted in the wrong place. **Neosonic** offers a solution with their new **Sonosphers** speaker. It's self-contained in its own acoustically designed enclosure so it should sound good just about anywhere you put it. It has wider frequency response than

most car speakers and can play much louder without distorting or falling apart. It comes with a plastic base for easy installation, and is available in four color combinations. Price is less than \$30 apiece.

The latest direct-drive turntable from **Technics** is the model **SL-1300**, which features automatic single-play operation and can repeat a record up to five times if you want. The direct drive mechanism eliminates most of the moving parts of other turntable designs to avoid vibration, noise, and speed variation. Very sexy looking. \$300 with hinged, removable dust cover.

In the past any portable radio that worked in stereo was either huge or heavy, or had the two speakers so close together that they hardly sounded like stereo. **Sanyo's** line of **Stereocast** radios offer a nice compromise. They're no bulkier than regular monophonic radios, with only one speaker. But they receive FM stereo that you can listen to with an accessory headphone. The model **RP600** has a meter that indicates signal strength and battery condition, a built-in AC adapter, and a lot of power. List price is \$45.

Speaker placement for good stereo is never easy, and it can be a pain in the ear when you're dealing with 4-channel sound. Omni-directional speakers, which push out sound in all directions, can be a big help. The **Aquarius Q** from **JBL** can be put just about anywhere, and it's a joy to look at as well as listen to. It's available in walnut or white, with six different grill cloths. It comes with a removal smoked glass top for displaying plants, sculpture, or what have you. They go for \$600 apiece, or \$2400 for a 4-channel system. Merry Christmas! ■



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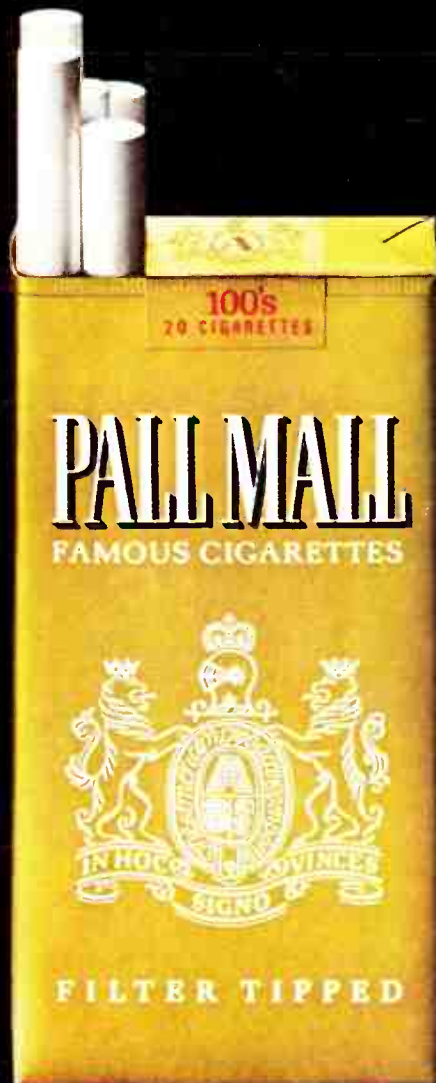
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