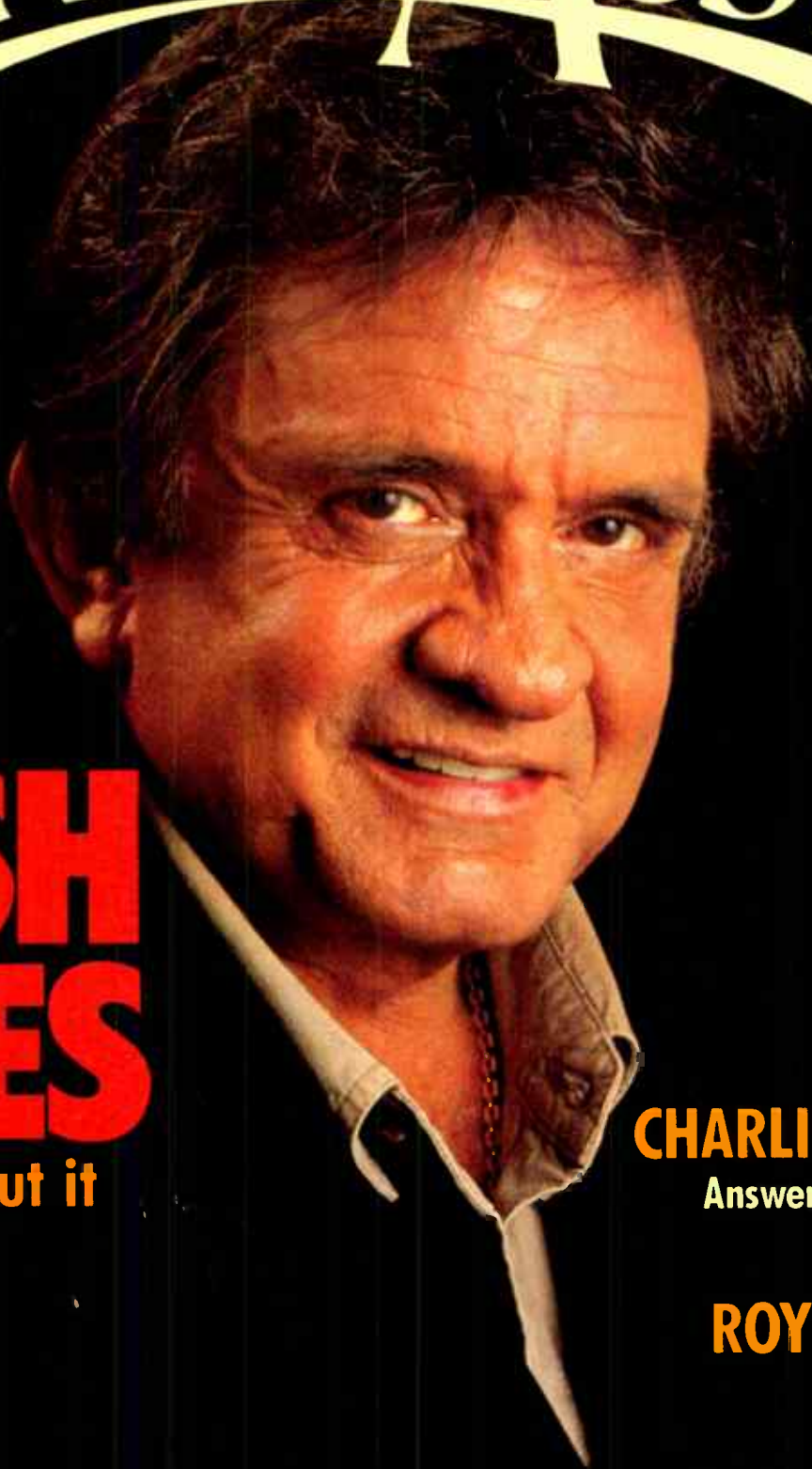


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Answers 20 Questions

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**ROY ORBISON**

1936-1988

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**PATTY LOVELESS**

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*by Rich Kienzle*

# RODNEY CROWELL

## #1 AFTER ANOTHER!



Rodney Crowell's "Diamonds And Dirt" is an album you can dig into! It includes the #1 Grammy-nominated hit "I Couldn't Leave You If I Tried," the #1 duet with Rosanne Cash, "It's Such A Small World," the #1 hit "She's Crazy For Leavin'," and his current smash "After All This Time." It's about time, Rodney!

## SHEN-SATIONAL!

Everybody's taken to Shenandoah's country soul sound on their new album, "The Road Not Taken!" Recorded at the legendary Fame Studios in Muscle Shoals, the album includes such certified smash hits as "Mama Knows," "She Doesn't Cry Anymore," "The Church On Cumberland Road," and "Sunday In The South." Mama told you there'd be albums like this!



## Shenandoah

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# Letters



## Willie Article Tops

Thank you ever so much for the greatest issue of *Country Music Magazine*. Your article on Willie Nelson was the best gift to me.

I've always wanted to see Willie in person and have him be the person giving me away at my wedding!

Everyone I associate with thinks I'm crazy being a fan of Willie's. But I'm *me* and he's the Number One country singer and person on my list.

Your pictures were great, and I thank you again for "Ol' Willie at Home."  
Mary Jackett  
Stuebenville, Ohio

## Carr and K.T.

Hooray for Patrick Carr! I think he wrote an excellent article on K.T. Oslin in the November/December issue of *Country Music Magazine*.

I'm only 14, and you don't find many country music lovers of that age. K.T. is a perfect example of the "woman" that I want to be.

She is one classy lady!  
My hat's off to you, K.T.!

Christy Buchanan  
Lillington,  
North Carolina



## K.T. Fan Finds Satisfaction—Or Does She?

Thank you for coming through for me. I trusted that soon you would do a feature on K.T. Oslin. Since I first heard K.T. singing "Do Ya" on the radio back in January 1988, I was back in love with

country music (my childhood roots). I was then inspired to subscribe to *Country Music Magazine* hoping to read all about K.T.

Since then, you have provided many tidbits on K.T., a lot of entertaining news about all the greatest country singers, and finally gave this devoted K.T. fan what she has been waiting for: a feature story on K.T. Oslin in the November/December 1988 issue. K.T. is OK! Thank you.

Mary Fiamara

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

P.S. When will K.T. be on the cover?  
*Never satisfied!*—Ed.



Pam Nickels likes to sing K.T. Oslin's songs.

## Inspirational Oslin

K.T. Oslin, you are truly an inspiration to the ladies of the eighties and to generations to come. One day soon, I'm going to meet you just so I can shake your hand and say thank you for your songs. What strength and emotion! And reading about your life story makes me admire you even more. Thank you, *Country Music Magazine*, for the insight into this magnificent lady.

Congratulations, K.T., on your recent awards—you are truly deserving. Keep it up; we need a songstress like you around to keep us going!

Pam Nickels

Las Vegas, Nevada

P.S. I can't compose like you do, but I do sing your songs in my shows out here in the west.

## From Raven to Canyon

I don't usually write to magazines to voice opinions mainly because I figure someone else will write to you and say the same thing I was planning to say, and it'll be tabled by the powers-that-be anyway.

But this time I have to write for two reasons. First, thanks to Bob Allen for the article on Eddy Raven in the November/December issue. I've seen him in concert twice and was lucky enough to meet him earlier this year. He's such a gentleman, lots of fun to talk with, sincere, and full of overdrive ambitions.

Second, how about a little inkling of information on Canyon! I know they were selected to go to Europe, and I know they are based in Texas, have one album out (which incidentally was pretty difficult to get a hold of), and that the five guys in question are polite and incredibly handsome! Anything else?

Sheila Poloney

Savannah, Georgia

*This sounds like Hazel's type of assignment.*—Ed.

## Eddy Raven Wows a Young Fan

I saw Eddy Raven at a concert in Chattanooga, Tennessee, on October 2. He spent a lot of his time on stage bent down shaking hands and singing at the same time. After the show, my brother and I got his autograph and had our picture made with him. I may be only a ten-year-old, but I can tell if people really care about their fans.

Even though my friends give me a hard time because they like rock 'n' roll, I like country.

The title of your article on Eddy in the November/December issue, "Eddy Raven Gets some Respect," is really good.

Stephanie Ann Allen

Charleston, Tennessee



Eddy Raven had a special word for Stephanie Ann Allen and her little brother after the Chattanooga show.

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## **MEL McDANIEL** the new album **ROCK-A-BILLY BOY**

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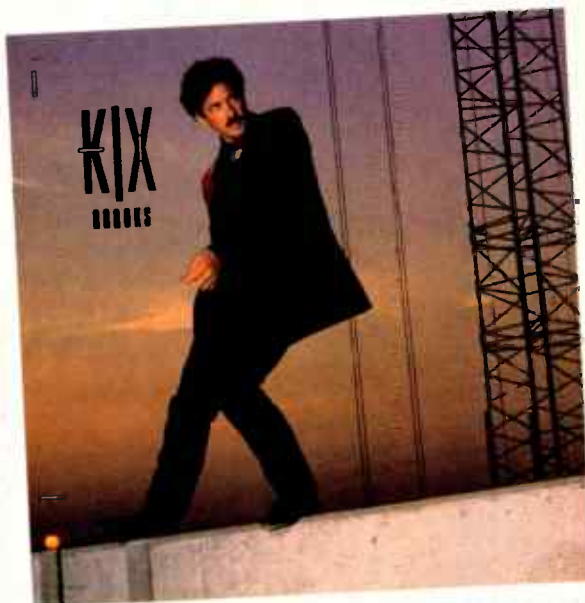
Produced by Jerry Kennedy for JK Productions, Inc.



## **KIX BROOKS** the new album **KIX BROOKS**

A dynamic debut from this award-winning singer/songwriter. His kickin', swamp-flavored style of music is reminiscent of his energetic and entertaining live shows. The album features the first single "Sacred Ground," and promises to stake a solid claim to country music stardom for Kix Brooks.

Produced by Rafe VanHoy.



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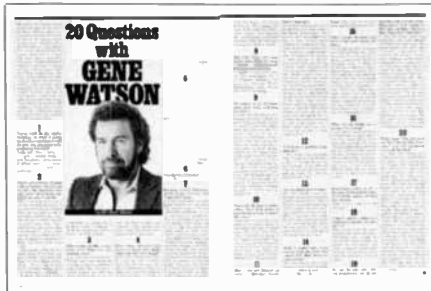
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## Watson Fan Wants More

I have just finished reading "20 Questions with Gene Watson" in your November/December issue. I have been a fan of Gene's for years and am delighted that he has finally been featured in your magazine. I was a little disappointed that the article wasn't a bit more personal.

How about having more about Gene in future issues? His "Farewell Party" is one of my all-time favorites.

Rita Hoke  
Terre Haute, Indiana

For more on Gene, see our May/June 1985 feature, "Body Work for the Soul." Back issues on sale in our N.Y. office for \$3.00.—Ed.

## Gene Watson—Great Guy!

I saw Gene a year ago last summer at the Erie County Fair in a special show before a country talent contest. He was great! He sang all the songs I remembered so well, especially, of course, "Farewell Party."

Although our guy in the talent show, Pat Shea, didn't win, Gene was very encouraging. He asked Pat for a tape of his original songs that he thought he might be able to use in a future show.

Carol MacDonald  
Boston, New York



George Strait graced Gilley's with Melinda Keefer and Josephine Barchers.

## Grateful George Strait Fan

My thanks to Bob Allen for the article on George Strait back in the September/October 1988 issue. I'm a fan of George's and have seen many of his concerts, but the one that thrilled me most was when



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he performed at Gilley's in Texas. At that time my friend and I got to meet George and his road manager, Tommy Foote, and personal manager, Erv Woolsey, and members of the band. We were so fortunate to have our picture taken with him—one of my most prized possessions.

Thanks again to Bob Allen and *Country Music Magazine*.

Josephine Barchers  
Kansas City, Missouri

For more on George Strait, see *People* in this issue. Feature on Mickey Gilley and Gilley's coming soon.—Ed.

### Carr's Right About McCarters

We thought Patrick Carr's article on The McCarters in the November/December issue was great. His description of them as hillbilly angels couldn't have been more appropriate.

We have been McCarter fans ever since "Timeless and True Love" came out back in December 1987. We had the pleasure of meeting them last summer at the Elk County Fair at Kelsey, Pennsylvania. They're really nice people, and their concert was first-rate.

Now on to Patrick Carr's review of their album, *The Gift*, in the same issue. I couldn't agree more. I hope Warner Bros. has the good sense to release the Hugh Moffet-penned song, "Loving You," as their next single. I bet if they do, it will be The McCarters' first Number One single.

Joan and Charlie Rothrock  
Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania

*You Rothrocks meet all the right people.*—Ed.

### Warm-Hearted Kitty Wells

My husband and I turn to your Letters section as soon as *Country Music Magazine* arrives. We enjoy reading about the stars and their fans. Here are some pictures of our own taken at the Hyattstown Carnival this past summer.

Johnny Wright, Kitty Wells and their son Bobby Wright are the warmest, most friendly people and very down-home. We love them more every time we see them. We would love to hear and see more of them in *Country Music*.

We also watch the *Ralph Emery*

### The McCarter Sisters with Joan Rothrock.



Show and see them on there. Keep up the good work and tell Ralph and Shotgun Red to do the same.

Phyllis Shane  
Barthlows, Maryland

### Longlost Travelers Band

I need some help from your readers. I wish to locate members of my old band, The Travelers, who toured with me in Japan in 1974. They are: Gilbert Crowe from Kentucky, lead guitar; Karl Onkhen from Pennsylvania, bass guitar; and Richard Vernon from Nevada, banjo.

If any of your readers know the whereabouts of any of the above people, I would like to hear from them. Many thanks for your help.

Harold Crosby  
Wichita Falls, Texas

*Anyone who knows, write to Letters to the Editor. We'll forward the mail.*—Ed.

### Where's Gordon Terry Now?

I am writing this letter in regards to Gordon Terry, a fiddle player who was with the Faron Young band, then the Johnny Cash band, then the last I heard, he was with Merle Haggard's group. Since then, I've lost track.

You are going to wonder where Guelph is. It is not far from Toronto. Gordy Lapp worked at CJOY, our radio station here, when it first opened. I know where Gordy Lapp is...like to locate Gordon Terry and know who he is playing with.

Glenna MacDermid Wilson  
Guelph, Ontario, Canada

*Gordon Terry or anyone who knows him, come in, please.*—Ed.

### Vanishing Playboys

Taken from an *Austin City Limits* program of the Texas Playboys, the band members were: Leon Rausch—vocals, Joe Ferguson—bass, Smoky Ducas—drums, Al Stricklin—piano, Bob Boatright—fiddle, Gene Gasoway—fiddle, Eldon Shamblyn—guitar, Leon McAuliffe—steel guitar.

Now that Stricklin and McAuliffe are gone, where are the rest of them?

Robert Reed  
Culver City, California

*Who knows the answer to this one? For more on Bob Wills and The Playboys, see this month's CMSA Newsletter.*—Ed.

### Whatever Happened to Mike Beagle?

About 10-12 years ago, I used to hear a local talent named Mike Beagle over radio station KPBC in Bakersfield. His biggest hit was "She Don't Care Now"—an absolutely great song and absolutely great singer. There was the usual hype about how he was going to release an album soon. I have never heard of him since. Whatever became of this great talent?

Now a suggestion: Have you ever considered having a forwarding service for fans who wish to write their favorite singer? Of course. I would expect you to charge a fee. I think it would be greatly appreciated.

Forrest Wass  
Mariposa, California

*We are not so interested in a forwarding service, but we are thinking about providing current, up-to-date fan club or other addresses of stars for everyone who asks, for a fee. Readers, what would you pay? As for Mike Beagle, who knows?*—Ed.

### Bravo, Hank Thompson

Thank you, thank you, for the CMM Update on Hank Thompson in the People section in the November/December 1988 issue. Hank has been my favorite for over 40 years. Growing up, I lived in a town close to Waco, Texas (Hank's hometown). So I have known about Hank and his music longer than Nashville or the world. I saw him at the Texas State Fair in Dallas a number of times while we were both "young."

To me there is nothing like Western



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| <p><b>ASSOCIATE IN SPECIALIZED BUSINESS DEGREE PROGRAMS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Business Management</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Accounting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Business Management with option in Marketing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Business Management with option in Finance</li> </ul> <p><b>ASSOCIATE IN SPECIALIZED TECHNOLOGY DEGREE PROGRAMS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Engineering Technology</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Civil Engineering Technology</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Electrical Engineering Technology</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Electronics Technology</li> </ul> <p><b>CAREER DIPLOMA PROGRAMS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Computer Programming</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> High School</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Catering/Gourmet Cooking</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Medical/Dental Office Assistant</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Microcomputer Repair</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> TV/VCR Repair</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Auto Mechanics</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Legal Assistant</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child Day Care</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bookkeeping</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hotel/Restaurant Management</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Drafting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Veterinary Assistant</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Travel Agent</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Air Conditioning &amp; Refrigeration</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Electronics</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Secretary</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Electrician</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Police Sciences</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Art</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Small Business Management</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Interior Design</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife/Forestry Conservation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Legal Secretary</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Diesel Mechanics</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fashion Merchandising</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gun Repair</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Motorcycle Repair</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Surveying &amp; Mapping</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fitness &amp; Nutrition</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Photography</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Journalism/Short Story Writing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Dressmaking &amp; Design</li> </ul> |
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Dorothy Gilbert stitched Haggard's songs into her historic quilt by hand.

swing or the honky tonk music sound. And Hank Thompson is the best person to give it to us. His old band, The Brazos Valley Boys, were great, too.

Lorraine Brown  
Athens, Texas

### Quilt Honors Merle Haggard

Back in the Letters section of the September/October 1987 issue, you had a picture of an Elvis quilt, and asked if there were any other quilts out there. The one I have now finished for Merle Haggard was in the planning stages then. It took over a year to complete the project—1100 hours of sewing and 8 months to stitch it. The quilt is registered with the Kansas Historical Society.

At the Oklahoma State Fair this past September, my husband and I had the honor of meeting Merle Haggard. Merle's office asked us to come. I gave Merle the quilt, visited and even took some pictures. This man is a true friend of the common man.

Thank you, Merle, for making an old Kansas farm couple's dream come true, and for sharing your music with us.

Dorothy Gilbert  
Marion, Kansas

### Reba is Her Sun and Hank Her Moon

I don't know who Ed. is, but he is expecting my letter.

First of all, I love Reba and her music; it doesn't matter what she sings, it's entertaining. Second, I have been to a Hank Jr. concert and left early. I was mooned by the Entertainer of the Year of 1987 and 1988. He was very disoriented (drunk)—could not remember words to his own songs. Third, I've been to a Randy Travis concert, and I could

have stayed home and listened to the radio for all I got out of that one.

After leaving Reba McEntire's concert, I did not even touch ground for three days after she left town. I didn't want to get out of my seat when the show was over. What an entertainer. So! Why didn't she win in 1988?

I have written this same letter to the Country Music Association, but have not received an answer.

Carolyn Flack  
Seffner, Florida

*We're not going to touch this one with a ten-foot pole. For a feature on Reba McEntire, stay tuned!—Ed.*



Rosemary Larsen and Louise Hughes caught up with Mel Tillis in Branson.

### Tickled to Meet Tillis

We went to Branson, Missouri, for a few days last September. We were so thrilled that Mel Tillis was playing there. He put on a very good show. We enjoyed every minute of it.

Mel was so gracious afterwards to pose for pictures. I'm thrilled to have them.

Louise Hughes  
O'Fallon, Illinois

### Can't Get Enough of That Dolly

Have you had any articles on Dolly Parton recently? I am an avid collector of items related to Miss Parton's career,

but cannot find your magazine for purchase in my area. I picked up my last copy of *Country Music Magazine* while visiting in Nashville a few months back.

Hope to see Dolly on your cover again soon as she is always very well represented by your staff, as are all the stars in country music. Thanks for the great work you do and I hope to hear from you in regard to these requests.

Tim Turner  
Greenville, South Carolina  
*We are on newsstands around the country, but not in every city. Our last feature on Dolly was July/August 1987. For more, stay tuned.—Ed.*

### Keep Them Coming, Dwight!

Just wanted to write and tell you how much I enjoy Dwight Yoakam's *Buenas Noches from a Lonely Room*. Bob Allen's review in the November/December issue was right on. It's his best yet, although *Guitars, Cadillacs, Etc., Etc.* and *Hillbilly Deluxe* still get played aplenty! Even the songs I'm not crazy about are always listenable. But the best by far are the ones he wrote himself. The voice, the music, there is none better! Keep them coming, Dwight!

Roxanne Johnston  
Hibbing, Minnesota

*It was Rich Kienzle's review.—Ed.*

### Kudos for Kienzle

In the People section in the November/December issue, the death of Leon McAuliffe caught my eye in Rich Kienzle's write-up, "Final Bows For Two Steel Guitar Legends." I knew Leon and most of the pre-World War II band of Bob Wills. As I read the Kienzle memorial, I was reminded how accurate and consistent his writing continues to be.

I was reading on through my *Country Music Magazine* and was musing over the CMM Update: Hank Thompson. Here again, I discovered Rich Kienzle weaving a beautiful web of circumstances surrounding Hank Thompson into a solid informative journalistic piece.

When I got to the Ernest Tubbs story in the CMSA Newsletter, in my excitement to read the article I failed to notice the writer. However, I felt the great sensitivity of the writer doing the article. The appealing and authentic tone tipped me off. I went back to the story title and sure enough there was his name...Rich Kienzle.

Oh yes, there were the Record Reviews. I was looking for Rich when I got to these highly opinionated reports. I could trust what he had to say about Dwight Yoakam and Randy Travis. From his "...you can reach out and touch them" songs of Yoakam to "...Kyle Lehning's production makes little sense" as he referred to Randy Travis'

*Old 8x10*, Rich Kienzle leaves you with a sense he is a man of integrity and musical sensibility.

I didn't miss Buried Treasures either. What a diverse and compelling writer you have in Rich Kienzle. Forgive me, Helen and hubby, but this man is *Country Music Magazine!*

William W. Russell  
Vega, Texas

### Kienzle on Target About Travis

This may seem like a real rarity coming from a Randy Travis fanatic like myself, but I agree with Rich Kienzle's review of *Old 8x10* in the November/December issue. If it takes forever to find really good material, let it take that long (we'll wait!).

I still consider Randy to be the best thing to come to country/western music since the steel guitar, but I don't think he has a lot of control over the songs picked. If you want to hear some really good, solid Travis, listen to the *Randy Travis Live* tape. This tape was recorded a few years before stardom hit. Here are some of the first versions of "Promises," "I Told You So," "Reasons I Cheat," etc...and three songs I think should be singles: "Future Mr. Me," "If It Was Love" and "You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet."

This new album is good but not good enough. Like a friend of mine said, "It's kinda stuck in the mud." And if anyone brings up the subject of the singles already released from *Old 8x10* being Number Ones, that's only because at the bottom it says, Artist—Randy Travis.

A concerned, very devoted enthusiast

P.S. I sure hope you print this so people will see that not all of us crazed fans oppose your reviews and are biased in our opinions.

Yeah!—Ed.

### Play It Again, Sam—er, Rich

I have to disagree with Mr. Kienzle's review of Randy Travis' *Old 8x10* in the November/December issue. If you liked *Storms of Life* and *Always and Forever*, you will like *Old 8x10*.

I think Mr. Kienzle was expecting too much. He needs to see Mr. Travis in one of his concerts or re-listen to *Old 8x10*. Randy will probably have several Number One songs on this one.

Stephanie Thompson  
Tuscaloosa, Alabama

### Nit Picker Outwits Rich!

I hesitate to be nit-picky with the best writer you've got, but would you please ask Rich Kienzle to tell us who really cut the first live country album? On page 27 of the November/December 1988 issue of *Country Music*, he says it was Hank Thompson in 1961, but on page 72, he says the RCA *Country & Western Caravan* album, cut in 1954, was the first.

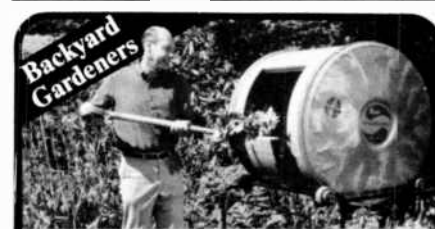
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**Country Music Magazine receives many interesting cards as well as letters. This one, one of our favorites, features the Wild Jackalope, a mythical beast native to the Southwest. Amy Clinkscales, a k.d. lang fan, sent it in. Her letter about k.d. appears below.**

I think you guys are making Rich work too hard. How about giving him a couple of weeks in Hawaii?

Orin Friessen  
Wichita, Kansas

*Rich likes your suggestion, and the truth is, the first live country album was the RCA Country & Western Caravan album. Hank's was the first live album by a solo artist.—Ed.*

### Lang Fan Throws Down the Gauntlet to Rich

If Rich Kienzle thinks k. d. lang is "all image," as he said in his review of Dwight Yoakam's latest album in the

November/December issue, he obviously hasn't heard her burn through a blues tune in concert and blow away an entire audience in the process. Perhaps he should try listening to her album *Shadowland* with his ears, not his eyes.

Amy Clinkscales  
Rio Rancho, New Mexico

P.S. I disagree with his comments on *Hillbilly Deluxe*, too.  
*Back to normal—Ed.*

### Stewart on Album, Tape and CD—Why Not on Radio, Too

I appreciate the great review of Gary Stewart's new album, *Brand New*, by

Patrick Carr in the November/December issue of *Country Music Magazine* so much. Gary is my favorite singer. I have about all of his albums and am very glad to see him come out with such a good new one.

When I first found his new album, I bought the album and the cassette. Later, I went back and bought the CD also, and I don't even have a CD player! I thought if I bought a CD player later, I would be ready with some great music!

I wish the major radio stations would play Gary's music. I have heard a television personality say, "Call your radio station and tell them what you want to hear." I have tried this, and some of them said, "It's not on my playlist." It seems to me the radio stations should play more than the top 8 or 10 country acts and give other artists a chance to be heard. When I called a couple of the smaller country stations and asked them to play Gary's first single—"Brand New Whiskey"—from the new album, they played it and got a very good response. Before long, both of the stations had it on their top playlist.

I saw a show on TNN showcasing Gary Stewart's new album recently, and I think they said it best when they said, "The great Gary Stewart is back where he belongs singing his songs for you."

Lorene Hopkins  
Kernersville, North Carolina

### At Last—John Anderson

Michael Bane has my undying appreciation and respect for his review of John's latest recording, *10*, in the November/December issue. Thank you, Michael, for your honesty. John Anderson has done exceptional work and has not received the recognition he deserves. He has the voice, singing style and songs that go straight to the heart. Since I don't drink or go to bars, I don't think I'd call his music "bar music," though. I have seen John Anderson at "Worlds of Fun" in Kansas City. Also, at the State Fair in Sedalia, Missouri. He was absolutely wonderful!

Even though I'm in my 30's, I have joined my first-ever fan club. You've guessed it! Here's the address if you'd like to share it with other John Anderson fans: John Anderson International Fan Club, P.O. Box 1679, Hendersonville, TN 37075.

Thank you for your time and your fine magazine. I do enjoy it and am still looking forward to an article about John Anderson.

Laska Sprague  
Holden, Missouri

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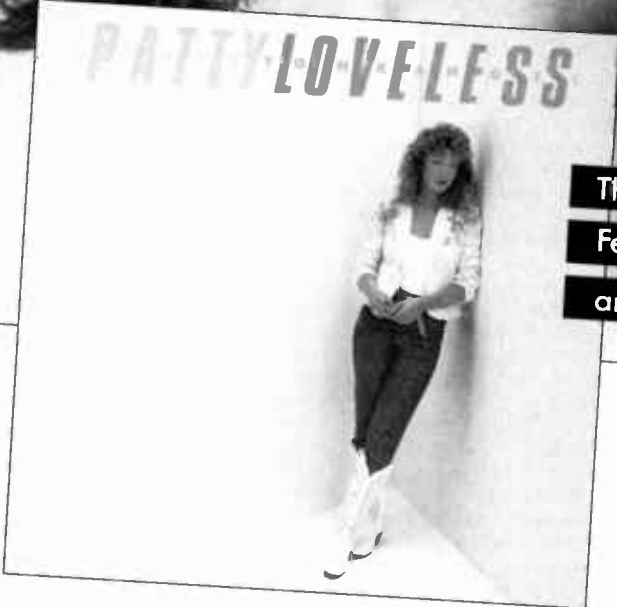
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# People

## WAYLON...NEVER LOSES HIS SENSE OF HUMOR

As the medics loaded the stricken superstar into an ambulance, Waylon Jennings, holding his chest in agony in what turned out to be a heart attack, kept repeating in his Redd Foxx/Fred Sanford voice, "Elizabeth, this is the big one." The pain came on as Waylon was performing at the Crazy Horse Saloon in Santa Ana, California, in late October. Just by luck, the bouncer happened to be a student of cardiology. He knew exactly what to do and where to go once he recognized the symptoms. Waylon's lovely better half, Ms. Jessi Colter, told me that everything worked like clockwork. They went right for a clinic located nearby where the doctor confirmed Waylon was, in fact, suffering a heart attack. The next day they moved Waylon by ambulance to a hospital where they performed the angioplast (or in layman's terms, they did the balloon/miracle in the clogged artery). Two days later the bestest/baddest outlaw of them all, Mr. Waylon Jennings, boarded a big bird and flew back home to Nashville where he commenced recuperating.

For your information, Waylon had been having "tingling pains" down his arms for some time. He had been diagnosed as suffering from tendonitis, when all the while it was his heart. A heavy smoker, the big guy stopped cigarettes on the spot. When the men in white told Waylon that smoking aggravated, abused and was a contributing factor to the attack, he resolved he'd never light another one. Know what? He'd been smoking 40 years...since he was 10 years old. That almost made me cry.

Fans know Waylon has always smoked cigarettes onstage. His first performance following the ordeal was an experience, I guarantee you. Waylon did tell the audience that was the first time in 40 years he hadn't smoked onstage.

But quitting smoking wasn't enough for our pal Waylon. He underwent triple bypass surgery in December. The Lit-



### A MATCHED SET

Now, mama, don't get your dander up. I was talking about the Hager twins. They are a matched set. You know, twins. Honestly, I hadn't even seen Dolly's. Anyway, left to right, actor John Cullum, Jon Hager, Dolly Parton and Jim Hager. Dolly and Cullum were in Knoxville where they were inducted into the East Tennessee Hall of Fame for the Performing Arts along with the late Archie Campbell. The Hagers performed with Campbell for years on *Hee Haw* and were there to honor their late friend.

tlefield, Texas, native is getting himself healthy. There is no telling what he might do next. One thing for sure, I know he and Jessi are really enjoying their kids these days. The entire extended clan gathered at home for the holidays. With daddy well, they have much to be thankful for.

### RICKY VAN SHELTON/MICHAEL CAMPBELL

Ricky Van Shelton was the new kid in town. Michael Campbell was the Belmont College student who was interning at CBS Records. Shelton had been discovered by Jerry Thompson, who writes for *The Tennessean*, our local newspaper. Thompson, great writer and humorist that he is, was not really part of hillbilly show biz. Next person in line, Rick Blackburn, former head of CBS, announced he would manage Ricky Van Shelton, but the plan fell through. Thompson is now out of the picture, too. So the team is the college

intern and the hillbilly. Congratulations, Michael. I'm proud to call you friend and proud of the job you are doing with Mr. Ricky Van Shelton. Yeah, Michael. I know *Loving Proof* went gold in a heart beat or ten (actually in four weeks), and I know it was Ricky's second album. And I know the single "I'll Leave This World Loving You" hung at the top of the country charts for a while. Hey, Michael, it's dinner next week and you pay. You've got the card! And everyone knows the one with the card pays.

### MANDRELL MOVES INTO THE LOG HOUSE

Barbara Mandrell and her family have moved into their new home, probably the largest log house ever built. There's woods and land surrounding it, and you cannot see the house from the road. The setting is so different from their former lakeside home. For one thing, they now have to drive to see their neighbors.

Reporter: Hazel Smith

Editor: Rochelle Friedman

# People

## CHARLIE & FRIENDS



Charlie's friends are Vern Gosdin and Carl Perkins, who got together after a live radio broadcast in Music City. The three have been in the music business for a lot of years and go back a long way.

Barbara, like many other people moving from Hendersonville, fought that Galatin Road traffic for years. Stars now look to Goodlettsville, Whites Creek and Mt. Juliet for space. All the land in Hendersonville is about gone. Hopefully the soon-to-be-completed bypass en route will relieve Hendersonville drivers.

By the way, when you say log house for Barbara, don't feel no pity. It has six bedrooms! Abe Lincoln never saw the like.

## BIG JOHN IS A POWERHOUSE

Sandy Neese has moved from her p.r. (that's public relations) position at MTM Records to a p.r. position at Polygram Records. I might add that wherever she is, Sandy is very good at what she does. Sandy herself told me this story. First day on the new job, her assistant says **Johnny Cash** is on the phone. Sandy, putting on her best phone manners, says, "Well, hello, Mr. Cash." Mr. Cash replies as only this great powerhouse can, "Sandy, just call me Johnny. Anything you need, just get in touch with Reba. Interviews or whatever, we do all we can." (Reba is Reba Hancock, John's sister.)

This mannerliness is out of sight for two reasons. One, Johnny obliged Sandy with a call her first day on the job. Two, he offered to help her help himself. Is it any wonder he has been around all these years? All the Johnny-come-latelys should take a lesson from this Johnny-come-greatly.

## MY FAVORITE HONKY TONKER

Patty Loveless and her former producer, Emory Gordy, may have said

their vows by the time you read this. They were planning to wed in January. Emory cut great records on Patty. He should still be producing her. **Keith Bilbrey** related to me that a Patty Loveless homecoming event was held in her hometown of Pikeville, Kentucky, recently. According to reports, all the homefolks turned out for the occasion, and poor Patty was so sick she could barely stand. She did perform seven songs for the friends, neighbors and kin, then she had to call it a night. Her Opry sister, **Connie Smith**, rode up with Keith for the affair, so I'm sure the audience was well entertained. Connie Smith can still sing her heart out even if she is a grandma. *Honky Tonk Angel* is Patty's new album title. Look for it. If you love country music like I do, you'll be glad you looked and found it. Patty is the heir apparent to the female hillbilly throne that has been vacant for a spell now.

## ALL OF YOU PROBABLY KNOW BY NOW

But I want to say it was good to see that **Phil Spector** got out of the house to accept his BMI Award for "Most Performed Country Song of the Year" which was "To Know Him Is to Love Him," recorded by none other than the Trio of **Dolly Parton, Linda Ronstadt** and **Emmylou Harris**. It made me proud that Phil chose to attend a country do. Someone told me that Emmylou Harris, the only member of the Trio in attendance, asked Spector for an autograph and he obliged her. Come to think of it, Linda didn't even show up with Dolly and Emmylou to pick up their CMA Award for Vocal Event of the Year. Now, where was that girl?

## VEGAS WILL NEVER BE THE SAME

**Johnny Russell** is trying the Vegas audience on for size, and I can give you a hundred big reasons why they may end up going steady. Both are big and both are out to give you their best. Russell's first appearance may not be his last. I could see a Russell Room on the strip. He is the funniest fat boy onstage that I've ever seen. He can make mean folks smile.

## AT THE ALTAR OF STRAIT

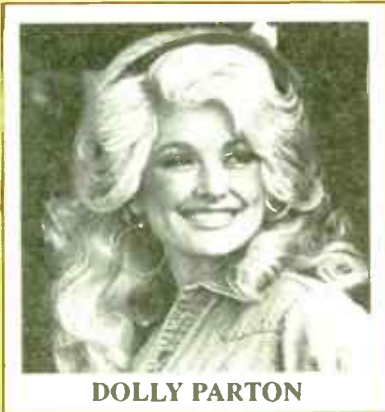
Females, eight deep, lined themselves stage front for the **George Strait** finale at the Starwood Amphitheater here in Music City. It was cold as blue blazes, but the true blues stayed until the end to hear the best-looking man in country music finalize his show. George just keeps getting better. And he sang all his hits to the delight of the crowd. It was definitely a Strait audience. The secret to George's success, in my opinion, lies in the fact that the cowboy's live show is just as good or better than his recordings. His raring-to-go **Ace In The Hole** Band is second to none. If you're coming to hear jokes or a bunch of talk-



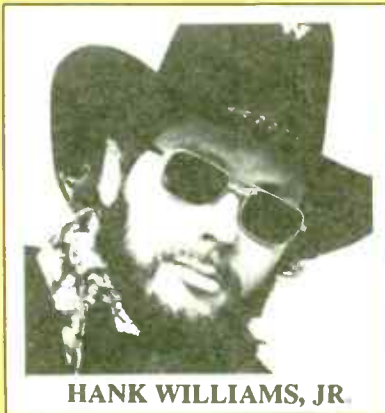
A photographer caught what some people consider George's greatest asset.

ing, you won't get that, but if you're coming to be entertained by the hits, you get your bellyful. Let me tell you, girls, Strait has the posterior that begs to be put in jeans. If I had a blue jean company, Strait's would be the backside

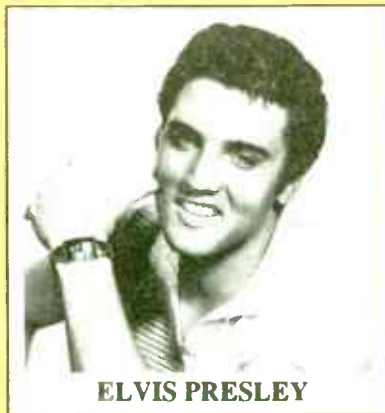
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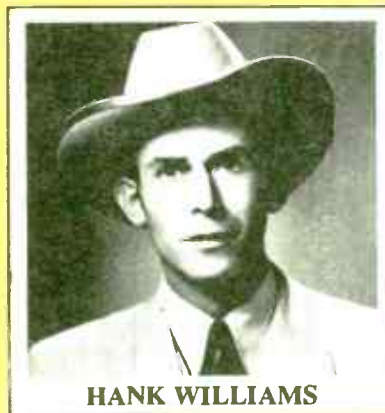
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# People

in them. Enough to make a honky tonk angel out of me, that boy is. No, I didn't make it all the way up to the altar of Strait with the other frenzied, screaming females this time. I do have my own private audience with his honor on occasions, though, I'll have you know.

## K.T. OSLIN OPENED THE SHOW FOR STRAIT

K.T. Oslin strutted across the Starwood stage and sang her hits like a champ out for the crown. And she accomplished what she set out to do. She did a great set. The girl is so smart. She squeezes the most out of every song. With her second album to her credit, plus some tunes she's written for others along the way, she has many songs which keep her audience on their toes. I was impressed with both her performance and her music.

## LINDA ALSO DEBUTS, OPENING FOR K.T. WHO OPENED FOR GEORGE

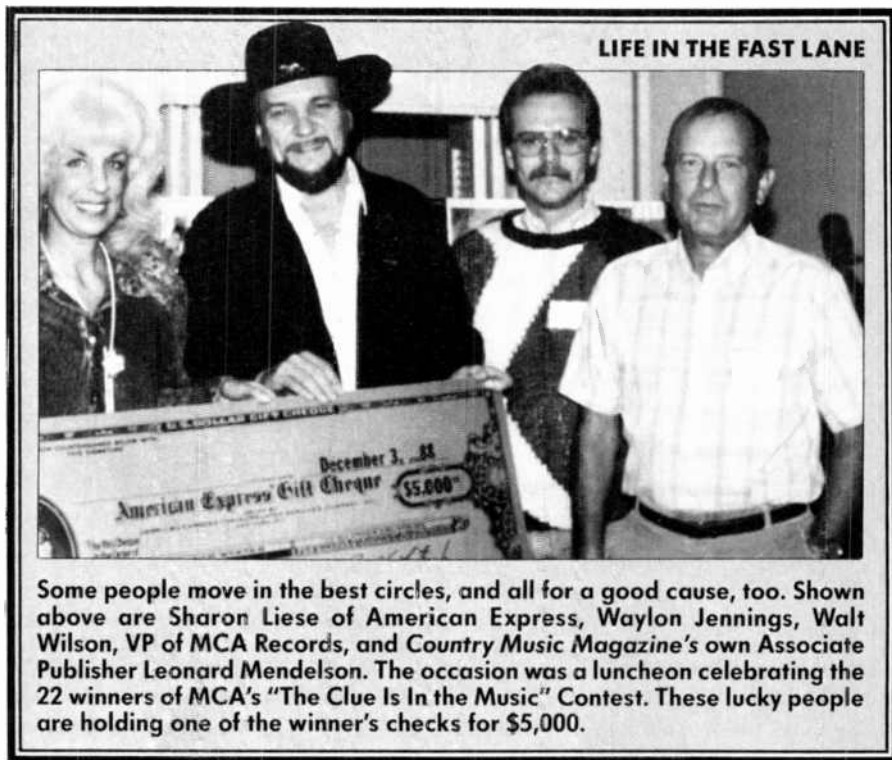
Linda Davis, Epic/CBS newcomer, debuted her new single "All the Good Ones Are Taken" on the same stage as the Strait/Oslin to-do. Linda sang eight songs, and I for one was pleased with her performance. The girl can sing and she is good-looking. Got a helluva producer in Bob Montgomery, too. Linda is managed by Mr. Erv Woolsey, who also manages George Strait. Get impressed, folks, for I have dined with Mr. Woolsey and plan to dine with him again. So there. He's got a card, too. You know, platinum card. Men who manage artists that have platinum records have platinum credit cards. Just to keep the record straight, I have also dined with Bob Montgomery. He's got a card too. A platinum card. Men who work at record labels also got platinum cards.

## NUMBER ONES FOR CAPITOL'S TOP TWO

Danny Seals scored a Number One record with his song "Addicted" while labelmate T. Graham Brown topped the charts with his hot-to-trot single, "Darlene." Proud for you, boys. Proud for you, too, Capitol.

## TOM T. HALL AND PREACHER WILL CAMPBELL

The above are a roomful in anybody's house. Tom T. and buddy Will and a bunch more authors and publishers



Some people move in the best circles, and all for a good cause, too. Shown above are Sharon Liese of American Express, Waylon Jennings, Walt Wilson, VP of MCA Records, and Country Music Magazine's own Associate Publisher Leonard Mendelson. The occasion was a luncheon celebrating the 22 winners of MCA's "The Clue Is In the Music" Contest. These lucky people are holding one of the winner's checks for \$5,000.

made their way to the University of North Carolina to sit on a panel where they discussed experiences with students of literature. I'm not a sit-down-to-dinner acquaintance of Tom T.'s but am awful proud of him as a songwriter/singer and novelist. As for Will Campbell, well, I have to have a Will Campbell fix ever so often or my wheels get rusty around my brain. I start thinking negative and fooling myself that I can't do something. Will can talk me out of that affliction in a heartbeat. Finest man I ever met. He does not know how to hate, does not have a jealous bone in his body and is loved far and near, especially by music folks.

Back to the star, Tom T. He and Miss Dixie opened their house at Christmas as usual for the Humane Society of Williamson County. The place was all decorated for the holidays, the couple charged \$6.00 per person to come in and look around and all proceeds went to the Society. Dixie also sells jellies and other items that she makes.

## FROM THE KIDDIE CORNER

• Our four-year-old, Adam Smith, saw a color photo of Johnny Cash on the cover of a local Sunday paper recently. "Oh, look," he said. "It's our friend." Adam has never met Johnny Cash. But kids know good people.

• Molly Kate Skaggs, who will be five years old in March, is excited that papa Ricky Skaggs and mama Sharon White are expecting a new baby in May. Says Molly, "I am going to be the best big sister in the world." I bet she will be.

• From Marietta, Georgia, I heard from Joan Burn, whose daughter Lorelei Burn is six years old. Lorelei asked to hear the *E.T.* tape. Mama, thinking the child meant the tape by Michael Jackson, presented her daughter with tape and book. What Lorelei had in mind was the Vern Gosdin song, "Set 'Em Up, Joe." The song has that great line about "playing E.T." referring to the late, great Ernest Tubb. Outta the mouths of babes!

## OLD ENOUGH TO VOTE

*Hee Haw* is old enough to vote in any of the 50 states—she turned 21 this year. Together to celebrate the occasion were Roy Clark, who was there when *Hee Haw* was born, and guest Waylon Jennings, who helped cut the 21st anniversary cake.

## 100 YEARS OLD

All 45 r.p.m. single records manufactured by RCA for distribution in 1989 will honor the jukeboxers with a stamp that says "Juke Box 100th Anniver-

# People

**RANDY, RICKY & RODNEY**



That's Travis, Van Shelton and Crowell. They got together recently to pose for Vogue Magazine photographer George Lange. They appeared in the February issue of Vogue Magazine in a feature called "Another Country." Really ripe readin'.



Another trio of R's. That's Rodney (again), Rosanne (Cash) and Russell (Barnard). After Rodney's performance at New York's Bottom Line, the Music City family, along with daughter Chelsea, got to visit with Country Music's publisher. Another very hip thing to do.

sary." See, the jukeboxers are having a 100th birthday. Nice, RCA. Darned nice, I say. I like it a lot.

## SKIP'S SKIPPING TILL THE WEE HOURS

MCA's golden boy, Skip Ewing, was seen dancing the night away at the Hall of Fame Lounge, an off-the-row night-

ery frequented by the great and near-great. Maybe he was getting some new song ideas? Just skipping the night away.

## BMI WINNERS

Last year when Paul Overstreet was named Songwriter of the Year by BMI, I sent him a congratulatory note. I also

sent a note to another close friend of mine, Roger Murrah, telling him he had one more year to get this honor. BMI Songwriter of the Year honors went to Paul Overstreet and Roger Murrah this year. My two friends shared the honor with two more friends, stars Holly Dunn and Dan Seals. Congratulations, friends.



The Shaggy Mountain Boys carried the country tradition from Japan.

## THE SHAGGY MOUNTAIN BOYS ON THE GRAND OLE OPRY

The Shaggy Mountain Boys are from Kobe/Osaka, Japan. Through the kindness of Ricky Skaggs and the generosity of Opry Manager Hal Durham, this marvelous group appeared on the Grand Ole Opry. Devotees of Flatt & Scruggs, Roy Acuff and other such luminaries, the group had mastered the music of the giants by listening to their recordings. Mr. Acuff was amazed and amused by the six-piece band. He listened and applauded from Dressing Room 3, backstage at the Opry. When the group performed his own "Wabash Cannon Ball," Acuff turned to Pete "Oswald" Kirby as the dobro player finished his break and said, "Oz, he copied your break exactly." Oz has played dobro onstage and has recorded with Acuff for 53 years. When the Shaggy Mountain Boys performed "Kaw-Liga," Mr. Acuff turned to Dr. Perry Harris and said, "They're doing Hank Williams' version." That gave me cold chills. Roy Acuff was Hank Williams' publisher, and he knew Hank's music as good as any man. Mr. Acuff made those six musicians so happy. He bragged on their musicianship and with good reason. They are a great band.

Then came the test of the night. The boys hit the stage of the Grand Ole Opry, a dream which they've had for 25 years. Dressed like Flatt & Scruggs in





## GMM Update: Boots Randolph

ten-gallon white hats, matching cowboy boots, white shirts and matching white jackets, black pants and red string ties, man, they looked the part. They swung into it and performed "Will You Be Loving Another Man." Every man took his break, sang his part and entertained with all he had. They encored! The energy was amazing. You could feel it, and the crowd just roared. For their encore number, they sang "Homestead On the Farm" and left the crowd screaming for more.

My sons and I returned with the band to the dressing room at which point the guitar player, filled with emotion, fell onto my shoulder crying as he tried to thank me for helping them to get on the Opry.

Seldom, if ever, does anybody garner an Opry encore. The Shaggy Mountain Boys brought down the house. I'm glad I was there and happy about my small part in this historic moment for the band. The leader of the group had been a karate champion when he was 18 but was badly defeated. He was laid up with his legs broken, one arm broken in two places and humiliated to death. Then he heard Flatt & Scruggs. They gave him a reason to live. He started trying to get the instruments and learning to play the music. Remember, bluegrass was only born in 1939, and there was no mandolin in all of Japan. From that to this, the first bluegrass band from Japan and maybe all of Asia encoring on the Grand Ole Opry. Thanks, Mr. Hal Durham, and the Grand Ole Opry.

### THE BAMA BAND

Hank Williams Jr.'s award-winning Bama Band is hot. Hot enough to have their own album on Polygram. Titled



The Bama Band—a class act.

**I**t's early January. In a few days Boots Randolph, his wife and his tenor saxophone leave their home in White Creek, just outside Nashville for Boots' annual two-week engagement at Harrah's in Lake Tahoe. Not only does he enjoy playing there, he also likes the fringe benefits. "We go out there and ski. I like to snow ski," he says. "I still do some one-nighters, but the only lengthy thing I do is Harrah's."

Thirty years ago Boots brought the saxophone to the forefront in Nashville. He played on hundreds of hit records from the late 1950's to the late 1970's and recorded over two dozen albums for Monument Records. He, Chet Atkins and Floyd Cramer also toured together for years, and his classic 1963 instrumental "Yakety Sax," now a standard, survives as the theme of Benny Hill's TV show. "I don't think there's a saxophone player in the world that's ever heard that thing that hasn't played it," he laughs. "Even an amateur could learn it."

As the recording scene changed in the mid-1970's, Boots finally ended his highly lucrative studio career, explaining, "I got to the point where I played all I want to play on somebody else's records. I wanted to play on *my* records." In 1982 his last album, *Dedication*, was released by Monument shortly before the label went out of business.

Boots began his career playing Midwestern nightclubs in the late 1940's and early 1950's before Chet discovered him. In May of 1977 he opened Boots Randolph's, a supper club in downtown Nashville's

Printer's Alley, catering mainly to tourists. He plays there six nights a week most of the year, and it's kept him close to Nashville, just as he wanted. To him it meant, "I could get up in the morning and go play golf, go out and work on my farm or go fishin'. If I'm on the road, I don't have those first-class privileges."

His personal life centers around his two children, who help Boots and his wife run the club. "My daughter and her family live next door to me, and my son lives about a quarter of a mile down the road from me, and my granddaughter has gotten married and lives in a little house back of my house and she has my great-grandson. I enjoy having them around me. They're my life."

But as Boots approaches his 62nd birthday, changes are in the offing. Though he's planning to make a record with his club's house band, he adds, "I'm at the point where I'm thinking of retiring from six nights a week. I don't even think I'll quit playing music, but I'll probably sell the club in another six months or a year and go do some more travelin'. I hate to sell, but there's got to be some options in my life. I don't have that now with six nights a week."

Most of all, Boots is proud of his achievements. "I feel very humble and thankful I had the opportunity to do it. Nashville has been so good to me. I've sat here a lot of years and made good money as part of the entertainment operation here. At the same time I've helped other people, I've played on a lot of records and have been instrumental in helpin' them. It's been a two-way street."

—RICH KIENZLE

*Solid Ground*, the record was produced by the great **Bob Johnston**, who has an uncanny resemblance to **Willie Nelson**. Johnston will be remembered for producing records by **Bob Dylan**, **Simon & Garfunkel**, **Aretha Franklin** and others. The boys in the band are: **Billy Marshall**, **Jerry McKinney**, **Wayne Turner**, **Bill Marshall**, **Ray Barrick-**

**man** and **Eddie Earheart**. As I scratch my head in wonderment and alarm, I wonder where is the Bama Band's fiddle player, the great **Vernon Derrick** from Arab, Alabama? All the worlds of bluegrass, acoustic and fiddle music are so delighted that Vernon fiddles for Hank Jr. I'm just curious as to why he isn't on this record?



# People

## WELCOME, UNI RECORDS



At a press conference announcing the formation of Universal Records, stars and executives got together to show off their talent. Pictured from left to right are: Scott Poston, Scott McQuaig, Joe Barnhill Jr., Carl Perkins, Lacy J. Dalton, James Stroud, Tim Malchak, Jimmy Bowen, Eddy Raven, Larry Gatlin, Abbe DeMontbreun, Preston Reed, Steve Gatlin, Joni Harms, Rudy Gatlin and The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band—Jimmy Ibbotson, Bob Carpenter, Jimmie Fadden and Jeff Hanna.

## HAGGARD HURT

Young Marty Haggard suffered back, neck and hip injuries and a bruised brain in a road accident in Missouri. His entire band was hurt. We hope them a speedy and complete recovery.

## DON'T SAY NO BAD STUFF ABOUT DWIGHT

Dwight Yoakam doesn't know me from Adam (or Eve). I was just there taking care of some business when he came into the Union Station Hotel right here in Music City to do interviews. He made a point to speak not only to me, but to everybody there. As far as I know, his arrogance does not exist. All I know is what I see.

## CBS UPS SMITH

One of the best-liked and brightest girls on Music Row, Kay Smith, has been appointed manager of Artists and Repertoire Administration for CBS Records. Having worked on Music Row many years, Kay has earned the respect of the entire music industry. Kay has the uncanny knack of being able to handle both executives and street people. If you ask me, she could run the entire music business. Just give her a phone, a typewriter and some good help. Congratulations, Kay. You're the best.

## WELCOME, MIKE MARTINOVICH

Good guy and good-looker Mike Martinovich has been appointed by Roy Wunsch to head up the marketing

department for CBS/Nashville. Mike departs a similar position with the label in New York. And I say, welcome, sit down, make yourself at home. This hillbilly town can sure stand a pretty face like yours. And, girls, hands off. This one belongs to me.

## WILLIE

The much heralded biography *Willie* is in the book stores. Bud Schrake wrote down what Willie Nelson said, so I understand. Wonder if Willie tells about all the hearts he broke and all those who broke his? A heart is a muscle, so it heals with just a little more love. Sounds like an unwritten hillbilly song. That is a theory that makes no sense, but probably it's good reading, I would say. Hope you fans caught the TV special *Some Enchanted Evening* on TNN, starring Willie. I was there for the filming of the show (of course).

## ELVIS A GRANDFATHER

Elvis Presley's little Lisa Marie Presley got pregnant and married the daddy, a musician named Danny Keough.

## COUNTRY MUSIC GAMING

Jerry Clower appeared on *Hollywood Squares* recently. Plus, he and wife Homerline have left Yazoo City, Mississippi, and moved back to Amite County where they grew up, attended school and fell in love. Jerry told me he wanted to be near his mother. The couple has built a home on their 400-acre farm near Liberty. I believe that be Route 4, Liberty, Mississippi, according to the saga

of the Ledbetter clan as related by Clower on record. The former fertilizer salesman strews a different kind of fertilizer these days and gets paid for it.

## AT SESAC IT'S K.T., THAT'S WHO

It was certainly no surprise that K.T. Oslin turned out to be Songwriter of the Year for SESAC, no more than it was a surprise that she won Songwriter of the Year from the CMA. "80's Ladies" was a phenomenal piece of humanity called song, as I am here to tell you. 'Course SESAC honored K.T. for "I'll Always Come Back" and "Do Ya," not "80's Ladies." SESAC also recognized Ralph Emery as Ambassador of Country Music. Ralph is definitely a winner. We should make note here of the grand job Dianne Petty does heading up the SESAC office. I've known Dianne a long time. She is one of the good ones. Oh, we should offer congratulations to K.T. for the Female Vocalist of the Year honor from the CMA, too.

## AND THE NAME OF THE GAME IS...

Everybody wants to know who's doing what to whom and why. Has Naomi Judd broken up with gospel singer Larry Strickland? Or are they still an item? Another question asked round about town was who was the hunk who escorted Wynonna Judd to the Bluebird Cafe during CMA Week? I called Chuck Thompson who works for The Judds and is supposed to know these things. According to Chuck, the handsome escort was just a guy who worked with CBS during the filming of The Judds' forthcoming TV special. So there. As for Naomi and the gospel number? I don't know. I am into the music more than the men. Personally, I have a hard time keeping up with my own men friends much less Naomi's and Wynonna's. And the name of the game is who is doing who....not love.

## GREATEST HITS SCORES

A Gold record is about as scarce as Japanese football players. Congratulations to The Judds for their recent Gold achievement with their RCA *Greatest Hits* album sales of 500,000. Double platinum is as scarce as Japanese football games. Hank Williams Jr.'s *Greatest Hits* album on Warner Brothers just reached double platinum, selling two million copies. Congratulations, Hank. I wonder if Hank Sr. sold two million records in his entire career.

**F**unny what sticks, what stays in the mind as the years pass.

My grandfather ran a drugstore in Memphis, one of the old-fashioned kind, marble soda fountain, juke box, pinball machine, a wooden magazine rack up front, pharmacy in the rear. Rough neighborhood; good neighborhood going to seed, really. Street toughs, all leather jackets and t-shirts, greased-back duck-tails and cigarettes dangling at just the right angle. Girls with blonde ponytails and hard blue eyes. The juke box played rockabilly, rhythm-and-blues, some old Sun blues; hit it hard on the side and get three plays for free.

It was just about heaven for a kid from the suburbs, where my parents moved as soon as they could hustle up the bucks, and I spent every weekend there, in fact just about every spare minute. First, just a little kid hanging around. Saw Jerry Lee there. Sun pickers. Learned to play pinball on an old Bally Fireball when my grandmother wasn't looking. Helped close up, sweep up, whatever a ten-year-old kid could do.

And every night after closing—midnight, seemed like—my grandfather would load me and my grandmother into his immaculate 1957 Chevy with wire wheels and drive us to the Dobbs House Restaurant, where I could order anything I wanted as payment for jerking sodas all day.

And I remember getting my grandfather to sit in the car a few more minutes, listening to deejay George Klein play, again, maybe for the 800th time that day, "Only the Lonely":

*Only the lonely  
Know the way I feel tonight  
Only the lonely  
Know this feelin' ain't right...*

That voice! That incredible voice! He knew things I could only dream about; touched feelings I was only just beginning to have. He wasn't the strutting rockabilly rebel, Elvis in his tight jeans, Jerry Lee and his sneer. But Elvis had gone into the Army and come out singing "Stuck On You." Jerry Lee was off the wall, flaming himself out of existence. The world on my grandfather's streetcorner was changing, and Roy Orbison was the voice of those changes.

*Just running scared  
Each place we go  
So afraid that he might show...*

Rockabilly was about fire, Roy Orbison



# ROY ORBISON

## 1936-1988

was about loss. The strutting rockabilly stumbling into women with minds of their own, a world of shifting emotions, shifting emotional relationships; a world already drastically more complex than when a white boy sang, "That's all right, mama." Even when he won, when she chose him, the outcome was never certain until the last moment, the last instant, when she turned. On the radio, teen idols were singing ballads to unrequited love, happy birthday sweet sixteen, doo-wah. On a streetcorner in Memphis, children with knives and chains fought other chil-

dren with knives and chains for no particular reason at all, over turf, motorcycles, music.

*A candy-colored clown they call the  
Sandman  
Tiptoes to my room every night  
Just a sprinkle of stardust and he  
whispers  
Go to sleep, everything is all right*

They played "Candy Man" and "Leah" until the grooves were worn out. I remember hearing "Candy Man" again

*by Michael Bane*

and again, four out of five songs. Rozelle, the delivery "boy," taught me how to handle a hook-bladed linoleum knife and how to play ice hockey in the frozen streets one winter with brooms and a tin can. I stumbled into Sandra, the counter girl, adjusting her stockings, who said she didn't mind if I looked, but I couldn't tell my grandparents. I figured out a way to hit the juke box and get it to play five cuts in a row.

*Your baby doesn't love you anymore...  
Golden days before they end  
Whisper secrets to the wind...  
It's over*

Incredible, but a black man could sit at the counter. I stood in the back and watched while a well-dressed man and woman sat on two red-upholstered stools and the world didn't come to an end. There was new music on the radio, music from California, about beaches, surfing. I was almost 15, and the world around my grandfather's streetcorner was beginning to change faster than any of us could believe, could even imagine. There was new music, new clothes, new hair, new ideas. I knew things the "old" guys in jeans and t-shirts didn't know. I knew things were going to be different.

How does it end?

Maybe it ends when the boys in jeans and t-shirts volunteered for the Army, for the Marines, their hair short, laughing, embarrassed, flicking the backs of their heads where the duck-tails used to be; their uniforms pressed and perfect, ready to go, someplace overseas, in some jungle, you know. Or maybe it ends when the city decides that a certain streetcorner is needed for one of those new-fangled expressway on-ramps. Maybe it ends with my grandfather connected to one of those medical horrors in a room where the lights never dim. Or maybe it ends when The Voice is still.

But I don't think so. I think it ends in my grandfather's immaculate 1957 Chevy with wire wheels, outside a Dobbs House restaurant in Memphis, about midnight, when a kid, almost 15, tries to convince a man who'd heard the best blues Beale Street had to offer that this song, *this song* on the radio, was the greatest song ever recorded.

*Hey, okay  
If that's the way it must be, okay.  
I guess I'll go on home, it's late  
There'll be tomorrow night... but wait  
What do I see?  
Is she walking back to me?  
Yeah, she's walking back to me.  
Oh, oh pretty woman!*



SHERRY BAYN BARNETT

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Rosanne Cash—King's Record Shop. If You Change Your Mind, Tennessee Flat Top Box, etc. (Columbia) 356824



George Strait—If You Ain't Lovin' You Ain't Livin'. Famous Last Words..., Baby Blue, more! (MCA) 366906



Reba McEntire—Reba. Sunday Kind Of Love, I Know How He Feels, etc. (MCA) 369215



Hank Williams Jr.—Wild Streak. If The South Woulda Won, etc. (Warner Bros./Curb) 370320



Randy Travis—Old 8 x 10. Honky Tonk Moon, Is It Still Over?, more! (Warner Bros.) 370643

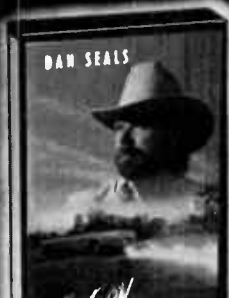
<b>THE FORESTER SISTERS</b> SINCERELY 372094 <small>WALDEN BROS.</small>	<b>TANYA TUCKER</b> Strong Enough To Bend 371948 <small>CAPITOL</small>	<b>HOLLY DUNN</b> To Cross The Rio Grande 371983 <small>NEW</small>	<b>JOHNNY DUNCAN AND JANE FRICKE</b> NICE 'N' EASY 360354 <small>COLUMBIA</small>	<b>KENNY ROGERS &amp; THE FIRST EDITION</b> Pieces Of Calico Silver 360743 <small>MCA</small>	<b>BECKY HOBBS</b> ALL KEVED UP 371815 <small>(MCA)</small>
<b>SOUTHERN PACIFIC</b> ZUMA 372011 <small>WALDEN BROS.</small>	<b>LITTLE FEAT</b> LET IT ROLL 373720 <small>WALDEN BROS.</small>	<b>KENNY LOGGINS</b> BACK TO AVALON 372961 <small>COLUMBIA</small>	<b>MANTOVANI ORCH.</b> Mantovani's Italia 372870 <small>WALDEN BROS.</small>	<b>KIM CARNES</b> View From The House 372898 <small>MCA</small>	<b>ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL</b> Western Standard Time 372193 <small>EPIC</small>
<b>GREGG ALLMAN</b> Just Before The Bullets Fly 372177 <small>EPIC</small>	<b>JIMMY BUFFETT</b> HOT WATER 370890 <small>MCA</small>	<b>ORIGINAL SOUND TRACK</b> COCKTAIL 373779 <small>COLUMBIA</small>	<b>HUEY LEWIS AND THE NEWS</b> SMALL WORLD 371419 <small>CAPITOL</small>	<b>NEW EDITION</b> HEART BREAK 370882 <small>MCA</small>	<b>T.G. SHEPPARD</b> BIGGEST HITS 370825 <small>COLUMBIA</small>
<b>FREDDIE JACKSON</b> Don't Let Love Slip Away 370734 <small>CAPITOL</small>	<b>ELTON JOHN</b> Reg Strikes Back 370536 <small>COLUMBIA</small>	<b>PAT BENATAR</b> Wide Awake In Dreamland 370528 <small>COLUMBIA</small>	<b>MICHAEL CRAWFORD</b> Songs From Stage & Screen 370411 <small>COLUMBIA</small>	<b>ROBERT PALMER</b> HEAVY NOVA 370395 <small>CH</small>	<b>JIMMY PAGE</b> OUTRIDER 370387 <small>MCA</small>
<b>BOB DYLAN</b> Down In The Groove 369926 <small>CBS A&amp;R</small>	<b>TRACY CHAPMAN</b> 369892 <small>ELECTRA</small>	<b>RICHARD MARX</b> 369611 <small>NEW BRUNSWICK</small>	<b>LEE GREENWOOD</b> This Is My Country 369553 <small>MCA</small>	<b>MOE BANDY</b> NO REGRETS 369249 <small>COPY</small>	<b>RODNEY CROWELL</b> Diamonds And Dirt 366211 <small>COLUMBIA</small>
<b>PRINCE</b> LOVE SEXY 369124 <small>EMBURY P&amp;M</small>	<b>LYLE LOVETT</b> PONTIAC 366229 <small>HEARST</small>	<b>NEIL DIAMOND</b> Hot August Night II 362277 392274 <small>COLUMBIA</small>	<b>LOUIS ARMSTRONG</b> What A Wonderful World 368852 <small>MCA</small>	<b>TONY BENNETT</b> BENNETT/BERLIN 362236 <small>COLUMBIA</small>	<b>CHICAGO</b> <sup>19</sup> 368829 <small>ATLANTIC</small>
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<b>CHEAP TRICK</b> LAP OF LUXURY 368050 <small>EPIC</small>	<b>TERENCE TRENT D'ARBY</b> 361618 <small>COLUMBIA</small>	<b>GEORGE HARRISON</b> CLOUD NINE 365494 <small>DARK HORSE</small>	<b>RAY STEVENS</b> Greatest Hits, Vol. 2 361592 <small>MCA</small>	<b>SADE</b> Stronger Than Pride 368027 <small>EPIC</small>	<b>JAMES TAYLOR</b> Never Die Young 365189 <small>COLUMBIA</small>
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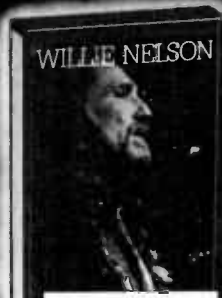
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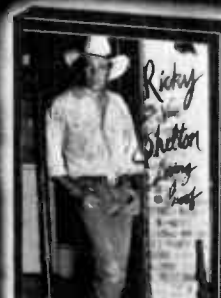
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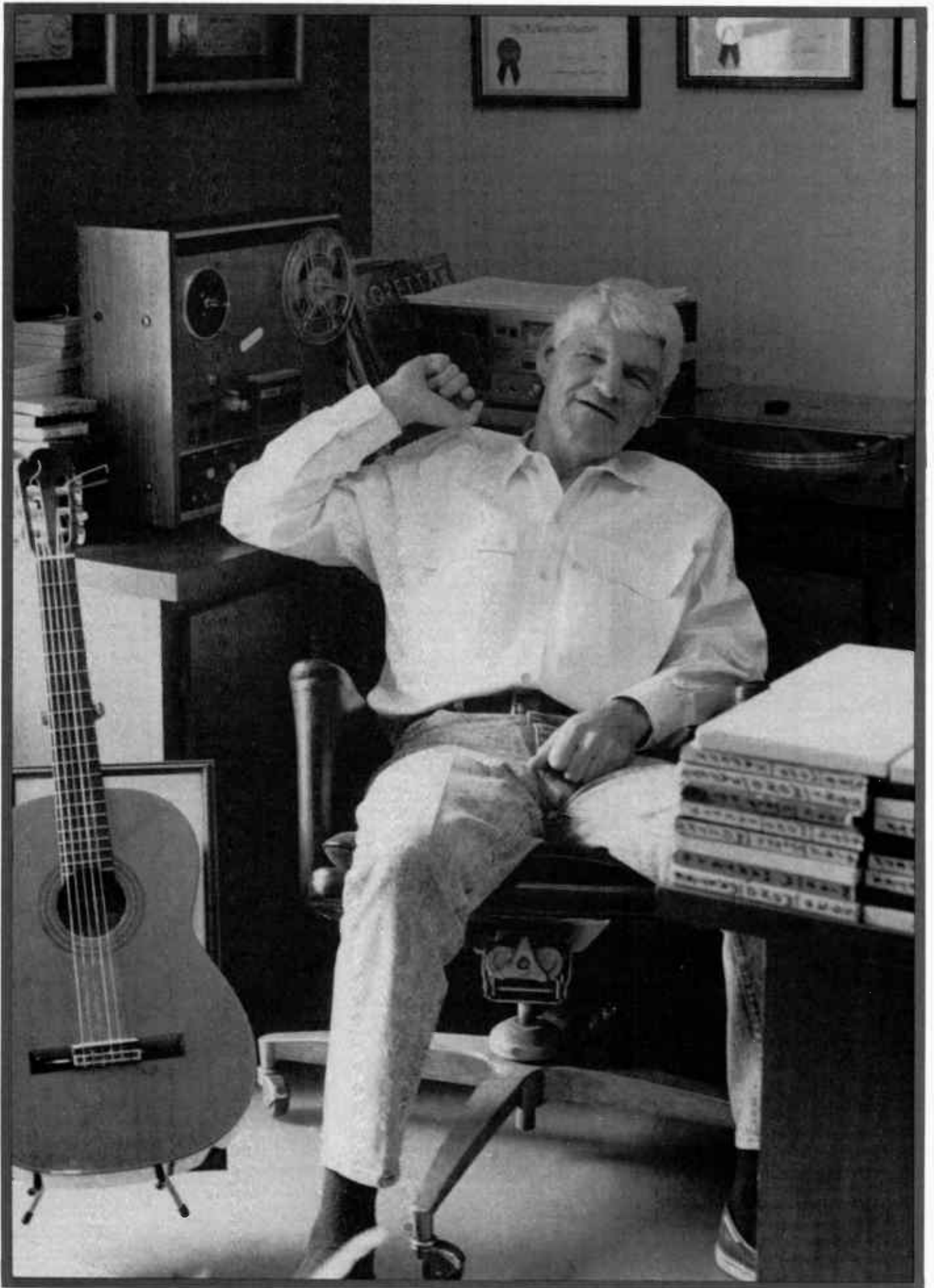
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# HARLAN Turning Heartaches Into Hits HOWARD

*The old pro of Nashville songwriters has doodled his way to the top of the charts so many times, he's become a legend in music circles. What's amazing is that after 30 years, he still loves his craft and his music still endures.*

*by Bob Allen*

**H**arlan Howard, the man who has written more songs and had more of them recorded more often than almost any other songwriter in country music history, recalls how, some 25 years ago, he wrote a song called "Life Turned Her That Way."

Howard figures that "Life Turned Her That Way" is one of maybe 4,000 or so compositions he has spun out in the last thirty years, and one of more than a thousand of his songs which have actually ended up as a record. To narrow the field even further, "Life Turned Her That Way" is one of maybe several hundred of his tunes which have been Number One records for one artist or another. It is also one of a couple of dozen or so which have made the trip to the top of the charts not once, but two or more times.

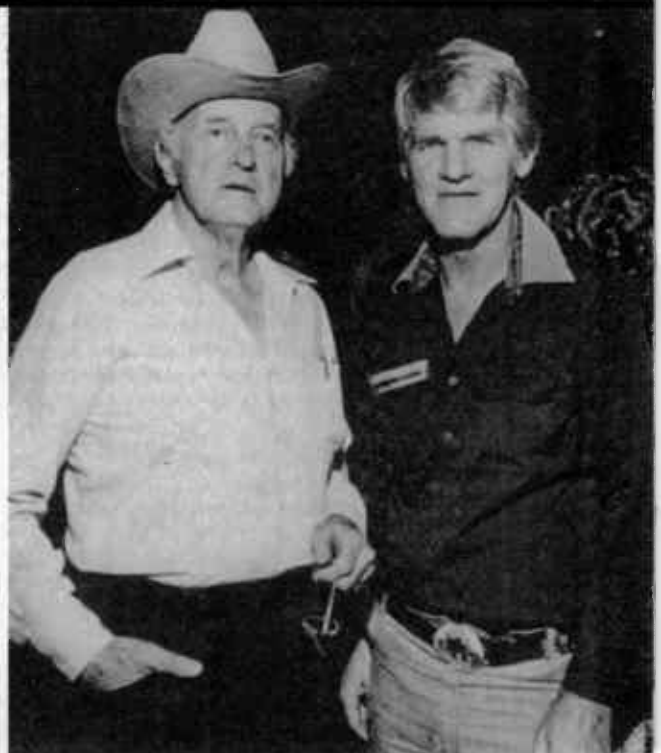
"Life Turned Her That Way" was a

Number One hit for the first time for Mel Tillis back in the 1960's, around the time Howard wrote it. Twenty-five years later, Ricky Van Shelton's reprise of "Life Turned Her That Way" stormed to the top of the charts all over again, a tribute to the unfading appeal of this particular song and, by extension, a tribute to Harlan's whole amazingly vast catalogue.

Ironically, Harlan Howard insists that he's really not sure just where "Life Turned Her That Way" actually came from. In fact, he talks like this about many of his songs, memorable standards forever associated with his name. "The day I wrote 'Life Turned Her That Way,' which was maybe twenty-five years ago, I started out with *nothing*." He raises his eyebrows in disbelief, as if after all these years, he himself is still awestruck by the power and mystery of the songwriting muse that has served



Harlan's been in Nashville since 1960 and over the years has collected many friends in the music business. Clockwise from top left: with Woylon Jennings in 1970, with Ricky Van Shelton in 1988, in the early days with Shel Silverstein, John D. Loudermilk and Chet Atkins, with good friend Bill Monroe and at his 1985 birthday bash with Rosanne Cash and Rodney Crowell.





him so well. "I didn't even have a title, didn't even have an idea, when I started writing it. I was just sitting there doodling one day, and it came out of nowhere."

No matter how self-directed the old Muse may sometimes be, it is hard to imagine anyone it has served so faithfully – even more, so splendidly – over the years as Harlan Howard. Let us not give the impression that Howard is the *only* old country boy from Nashville whose random doodlings with pen and legal pad have catapulted him into that rarefied stratosphere of the multi-millionaire country mega-hit writers. By no means. In fact, in any given season, or in any particular half-decade, there are always a couple of dozen Johnny-Come-Latelys—the Bob McDills, Sonny Throckmortons, Dave Logginses and Don Schlitzes of the world – who, at least for a spell, seem to more or less own the record charts. But it is hard to imagine any one writer who has dominated them for as long or as consistently as Harlan Howard. It is difficult to recall any other name so indelibly associated with that elusive craft of composing country radio hits.

"Harlan recorded several albums in the 1960's," recalls Al Cooley, a song-plugger for MCA Music, and a veteran insider on the country songwriting scene. "If you listen to them, you can hear exactly where Kris Kristofferson got that sort of frog-voiced style that he later made famous. Harlan was definitely the role model for Kristofferson and most of those other great writers who hit town in the mid- and late 1960's."

If you overlook one prolonged dry spell (which lasted for most of the 1970's!) when both his pen and his imagination seemed to run dry, Howard has stayed on the leading edge of his chosen field for nearly three decades—since practically the very first day that he hit Nashville in 1960. "It's kind of nice being an old pro," he smiles with a trace of well-earned self-satisfaction. "I can come down here to Music Row and pitch thirty-year-old songs I've written, or twenty-year-old songs, or six-month-old songs, or a song I wrote last week.

"It's also especially nice because you don't have to get suicidal if a week goes by and you haven't written a song," he laughs. "It doesn't mean I'm going to have to go back to the factory again to make a living! Plus, it's a comfort to know that you've got hundreds of 'em that you know are good, because they've already been recorded. It's like there's a whole bunch of pretty love songs that have already been written, and they're mine, and if anybody messes with 'em, they have to pay me!"

Take nearly any major recording

artist from either country music's not too distant past or its mercurial present, and you're likely to find at least one of that artist's enduring hits born of Howard's imagination: "I Fall to Pieces" (Patsy Cline), "Heartaches By the Number" (Ray Price), "I've Got a Tiger By the Tail" (Buck Owens), "Busted" (Johnny Cash and Ray Charles),

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*"During the hard times, I'm always collecting data, collecting emotions for future reference."*

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"Streets of Baltimore" (Bobby Bare), "Three Steps to the Phone" (George Hamilton IV), "Mommy for a Day" (Kitty Wells), "A Guy Named Joe" (Ernest Tubb), "Pick Me Up on Your Way Down" (Charlie Walker), "Excuse Me (I Think I've Got a Heartache)" (Buck Owens), "Yours Love" (Waylon Jennings), "Life Turned Her That Way" (Mel Tillis and Ricky Van Shelton), "I Don't Know What Love Is" (Conway Twitty), "Why Not Me" (The Judds)... The list goes on and on, almost *ad infinitum*.

Waylon Jennings, at last count, had recorded more than 40 of Howard's songs. Both Jennings and Buck Owens have, at one time or another, devoted entire albums to his work. Reba McEntire, Patty Loveless, Van Shelton, and Nanci Griffith are just some of country's newest batch of hit-makers who've not only committed Howard's songs to vinyl, but have also struck up morale-boosting, artistically inspiring friendships with him.

Not long ago, in fact, Howard was presented with a special commemorative silver plate from Broadcast Music Association (BMI) in recognition of his three decades of hit writing. At the time three of his songs were in the charts simultaneously as hits for The Judds, Reba McEntire and Conway Twitty. Meanwhile Howard's career earnings had, at last count, soared well past the \$2 million mark. Within the record industry itself, he has become, at age 60, a sort of grey eminence: a distinguished elder statesman who, without really trying, has become more of a celebrity than many of the artists whose hits he writes.

"I'm not the ball of fire I used to be. I

don't write nearly as many songs as I used to," Howard admits as he shrugs and leans his lanky 6' 3" frame back in the swivel chair in which he's sitting. He lights a Carlton and runs his fingers through his thick thatch of whitening gray hair. As he speaks, this Kentucky-born Grand Master of the country song displays an accent that is decidedly not southern; he still carries the distinctive inflections of the Midwest, of Michigan to be exact, where he spent his formative years.

"Even though I don't write nearly as many songs, I don't write nearly as many bad ones as I used to either," he continues with the matter-of-fact casualness of a farmer discussing the morning's livestock reports. "Back in the 1960's, I was writing like a machine. I'd write three or four songs a day. I'd just hit town and I was on fire with enthusiasm. I was just pouring out everything I could think of. But I was only getting about a fourth of those songs recorded. I've got it down now, I wouldn't say to a science, but to where most of the songs that I write, which is maybe fifty or sixty a year, do get recorded. I just have a lot better grasp now of which ideas are really worth turning into finished songs."

Through the years, Howard has weathered those periodic lulls when the pendulum of popular taste swung the music away from his brand of "hard-core country, honky tonk jukebox songs." "I just keep writing," he explains. "It gives me a chance to build up a stockpile." He also survived that one long dry spell when his own motivation, enthusiasm and perhaps even his ability to write temporarily abandoned him.

"I have to be happy to write," he says. "But during the hard times, I'm always collecting data, collecting emotions for future reference."

"Even though I've probably lived a happier life than most people my age, I'd say that about two-thirds of my life is spent writing negative or sad songs." He smiles softly at the inherent irony of this. "But I like drama, I like tragedy. I like those corny old tragic songs like 'The Soldier's Last Letter.'

"What I do is collect emotions," he emphasizes. "I'm sixty years old now, and I've had every emotion but death. I've been seriously ill (a youthful bout with polio). I've loved and won, and loved and lost. Been married and divorced. I've drunk too much. I've done some things I'm not proud of, and had them done to me."

As Howard speaks, he is in the spacious headquarters of Tree International, the Music Row publishing conglomerate with which he is currently affiliated. He is sitting in an office which he's "borrowed" from his friend,

fellow veteran and sometime co-writer, Curly Putman. His lanky frame is draped lazily over the swivel chair, and he is surrounded by the deceptively simple tools of his trade: a guitar, a note pad and a tape recorder. He's dressed casually in what seems to be his standard "uniform": form-fitting blue jeans and an immaculately pressed white dress shirt open at the collar.

There's little doubt that the powers that be at Tree International would furnish Howard with his own office if he ever asked them for it. But he never has:

*"The melodies just sort of take shape while I'm writing the lyrics, or even after I've finished them."*

he prefers to do most all of his writing at home, in the comfort of his own study, preferably between the hours of eight in the morning and noon. "I'm sharpest when I first wake up," he says. His chosen instrument of composition is, surprisingly, not a guitar, not a piano, but a legal pad and pen.

"I just take a legal pad and sit there and doodle like I'm writing a letter," he explains in a way that makes his craft sound much easier than it really is. "I'm primarily a lyricist. The melodies just sort of take shape while I'm writing the lyrics, or even after I've finished them."

He frowns and draws pensively on his cigarette. "I almost wish I didn't even have to write melodies. I only write them because I don't want to be a poet," he laughs. "Poets starve to death. I don't want to be one of those guys! All I'm ever really looking for in a melody is something that fits the words, something that *feels* like what the words are saying to you. If it's a mean song, then I want the melody to be hard-hitting. If it's gentle...."

"But the real challenge for me is always the lyrics." His eyes brighten and he shifts his weight forward in his chair for emphasis. "When I'm writing, I usually start with a title, or maybe with a little rhyme or a phrase of some kind—I've never known a melody to back lead me into a hit. I usually just sit there and see if I can doodle my way into something."

Howard does indeed have a way of making it all sound so effortless, so frightfully simple that's easy to forget that there are hundreds, thousands of would-be songwriters out there, anonymously toiling away in pursuit of their first hit, who would give their eye teeth, even sell their souls to the devil, to be in the position that he's in.

But in the same breath he admits that there are also hundreds of unfinished Harlan Howard compositions: songs that were still-born somewhere between the first embryo of an idea and the final form. Most of them were brainstorms, great ideas, which, when he took them to the drawing board, so to speak, either never led anywhere, or never quite fell together.

As if to caution himself against taking the Muse for granted, he keeps these little unfinished country symphonies, these still-born hits that never were, in

a big cedar chest in his study. Sometimes he'll pull one out and come back to it a month, six months, or even a year later, and try to finish it. But more often than not, he never does.

"I never labor long over a song. If I'm really feeling sharp and motivated, and the idea is *there*, then it doesn't take long for me to write a good song. A couple of hours or so. Hell, we're only talking about usually two verses and a chorus!"

Harlan Howard, born in Lexington, Kentucky, and named after Harlan, Kentucky, the small hard-bitten coal town where his people originally came from, recalls that he was an eleven- or twelve-year-old schoolboy in Michigan when he first caught the songwriting bug.

"We lived in various places in Michigan, sometimes on a farm," he remembers. "During World War II, I just happened to find the Grand Ole Opry on the radio, and I heard this wonderful young singer, Ernest Tubb. And Ernest was young then! He was the first macho-sounding country singer to come along. He had that low bass, he-man voice, and he had those wonderful songs, which I later found out he'd written himself.

"Not long afterwards I became a fan of Floyd Tillman—he was a great writer back then, too, and he sang kind of weird. But as time went on, and I started buying these people's records, I came to love the songs more than I did the singers. Sometimes I would learn the songs, but I would want to make them longer. So I'd just sit down and write a verse or two of my own. That's how I got started."

Later, when he was in training as an army paratrooper at Fort Benning, Georgia, a fellow recruit taught Howard

a few chords on the guitar. "I could accompany myself then, and I was on my way. By the time I got out of the army I had already written a pretty good batch of songs."

After a brief first marriage and the birth of a son, Howard lived in Phoenix for a time. But in 1959 he headed for the West Coast. He found work as a \$90-a-week apprentice bookbinder in the Los Angeles suburbs. In his off hours he began haunting the music publishing companies around Hollywood, looking for a shot at having his songs recorded. Cowboy singer/movie stars Tex Ritter and Johnny Bond, who then had their own publishing company, took a special interest in him. Bond soon became the first singer to ever record one of his songs.

In California, he also met a number of other young and hungry musicians whose days in the sun had not yet come: Buck Owens, Bobby Bare and Wynn Stewart... "They were all starving to death back then. But at least they were all in music full-time, and I wasn't. But for some reason they liked me and took me under their wing. Bobby Bare is one of my best pals, even today. Nearly thirty years, and there's never been a cross word between us. That's pretty rare, I think."

In 1960, when Howard finally arrived in Nashville, the town was as ready for him as he was for it. He recalls those early Nashville years as a golden era for country songwriters.

"I just happened to get here at a great time: the birth of 'Tin Pan Alley, Nashville,'" he says with almost reverent nostalgia. "I've never seen so many great writers all hit town at one time. Hank Cochran had been here a couple of months. Willie Nelson and I got here almost the same day. Roger Miller, Bill Anderson and Mel Tillis were already here. Wayne Walker, J.D. Loudermilk, and Boudleaux Bryant all got here around the same time I did.

"We were all new blood. We hit town starving to death and writing *good*. And we sure had an impact! Back then there were only about four labels and thirty singers signed to them, and we were providing almost all of the songs for them. None of the big singers then were songwriters, except Marty Robbins.

"It's funny," he muses. "Now that I'm sixty, I'll sometimes have aches and pains and touches of arthritis, and I'll hear myself say I wish I was thirty again. But really, I don't, because then I wouldn't have been able to come here in 1960 like I did. It was a wonderful opportunity to build up a large catalogue of songs rapidly."

As early as 1961, Howard's income from songwriting rose to more than

\$50,000 a year; he was beginning to win BMI awards by the dozens. Not that his nearly three decades in Nashville have been all brightness and no clouds, however. To start with, there are the three marriages and three divorces he's been through, not counting the very early, short-lived, first marriage in Phoenix. There was his \$200,000 house which burned to the ground with everything in it in 1976. He himself only escaped by jumping out of a second-story window. And there was a legally adopted stepson who was killed in Vietnam some years after Howard and the boy's natural mother had parted and another who died by his own hand.

Some particularly harsh fruits of vengeance and bitterness were reaped at Howard's expense by his second wife, singer Jan Howard, the mother of his two star-crossed stepsons. The portrait which Ms. Howard paints of her ex-husband and their tumultuous marriage in her recently published autobiography, *Sunshine and Shadow* (1988), is at best unflattering and at times devastating. An "insensitive bastard" is her final analysis of her illustrious "ex," who, she recalls, came into her life dead drunk one night, and disappeared from it just as unceremoniously one morning quite a few years later, leaving only a curt good-bye note.

But as Howard sees it, all those kinds of hard times and heartbreaks are grist for the mill: unavoidable passages of life which, in the final analysis, are the very stuff great country songs are made of. It is not so much cynicism as sheer matter-of-factness with which he points out that all these darker episodes—the leaving and the being left, the loving and the losing—do come in handy when you're in a business that involves "collecting emotions."

"I couldn't write songs about those things when they were happening to me," he emphasizes. "I can't write very well during those times when I've got the blues, or when I'm depressed, which fortunately, has never been very often, or for very long. But I do have a good memory. Let me get happy again, and let me get organized, and I'll write not one, but maybe five or six songs about a particular situation. I can be happy as a lark and write the saddest songs.

"I have gotten to a point where I've simplified what I'm after in my life," he says, smiling softly again, lighting another cigarette and once more stretching his lanky frame out in his chair. "My whole intent these days is to be healthy and happy and serene... to be with the one I love, or whatever... and..." His eyes suddenly widen again, as if he's just realized he was about to leave out something very important: "And—oh, of course—to write songs." ■



(Above) During the 1986 BMI Awards dinner, Harlan got together with Willie and Connie Nelson and Kris Kristofferson.

(Below) A work in progress: "I Don't Know o Thing About Love"

3/4 "I don't know a thing about love"  
- A -

- 1 - I talked to the man in the moon
- 2 - asked him if you'd be back ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~me~~ <sup>me</sup>
- 3 - ~~He said~~ <sup>He</sup> quietly stated - "Son I'm over rated"
- 4 - ~~He~~ <sup>He</sup> had too much credit in ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~best~~ <sup>best</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~world~~ <sup>world</sup>

- B -

- 1 - I don't know a thing about love
- 2 - I just kind of hang here above <sup>WATCH</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~sky~~ <sup>sky</sup>
- 3 - ~~with~~ <sup>with</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~sun~~ <sup>sun</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~moon~~ <sup>moon</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~stars~~ <sup>stars</sup> ~~at~~ <sup>at</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~end~~ <sup>end</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~world~~ <sup>world</sup>
- 4 - ~~He~~ <sup>He</sup> said I don't know a thing about love

- C -

- 1 - Then I asked him where is she tonight
- 2 - you must see all things with your light
- 3 - He said son I could tell you ~~some~~ <sup>some</sup> things that might kill you
- 4 - But I don't get involved in what's wrong or what's right

- D -

- 1 - He said I can make oceans - when I take a notion
- 2 - or make mountains tremble - + rivers run dry
- 3 - But in all matters human - remember there's some one
- 4 - ~~who~~ <sup>who</sup> ~~can~~ <sup>can</sup> ~~do~~ <sup>do</sup> ~~these~~ <sup>these</sup> ~~things~~ <sup>things</sup> - way above you + I



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# CMSA NEWSLETTER OF THE COUNTRY MUSIC SOCIETY OF AMERICA MARCH/APRIL 1989—HELEN BARNARD, EDITOR

# Newsletter

## REVIEWS & FEATURES

### Doing Your Own Thing

Genius is its own reward. Genius, like Bob Wills', featured in this month's *Legends of Country Music*, starts new things and makes the world re-shape itself to its own image. Just as nature is ever-originating, never repeating, with no two creatures alike in spite of the form, so individuals in every walk of life follow the spark that lies within them and make a unique contribution to what goes on

around them, individuals like Bob Whitney or Eva Fultz.

This *Newsletter* features many such individuals, who have been creative in a variety of local scenes, developing performance styles and new ways of bringing music to the public. Readers Create features other types of creative efforts, and Collections as usual is chockful of inquiries for everything under the sun.

### Spin That Song

Bob Whitney of Aberdeen, South Dakota, owns and operates Bob's Traveling Disc Jockey Show. He has never seen an article in *Country Music Magazine* about his kind of gig and thinks it's high time we did one.

Bob Whitney operates in the same high, lonesome plains part of the country as The Cosmic Cowboys, the group Loranda "Sam" Daniels was playing with back in 1986-87, featured in the March/April 1987 *Newsletter*. He thinks he may have heard of them.

Bob used to play in a band himself. He was active as a drummer for 20 years. His band, called Southern Fever, now Dakota Station, had the opportunity to share the stage, on occasion, with The Bellamy Brothers, Hank Williams Jr. and Rick Nelson. Bob has also worked as a security guard for Marie Osmond and Dan Seals.

But what of his traveling disc jockey show? Well, he currently covers an area including Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota, Wyoming and Montana and has done a stint at Johnny M's, a country music club in Kansas City. He carries about 5,000 songs on tape and record, usually playing 80 to 100 songs in a given evening. He starts out "mellow...so people have a chance to relax before getting wound up again." But as the night progresses, "so does the tempo of my music," says Bob.

To suit his audience, he can come up with songs from the 1950's and 1960's, country western, rock or polka. In the country field, his personal favorites are Hank Jr., the Outlaws and Johnny Paycheck—his audiences most often request Hank Jr.

Bob still enjoys playing with the groups he used to perform with, but, he says, "I also enjoy being that special breed of person that a traveling D.J. is." In addition to the challenges of setting up and traveling,



Bob Whitney (pictured leaning against his truck) averages 100 to 150 shows a year out of Aberdeen, South Dakota.

the show requires him to be "a cross between...a radio announcer and a live entertainer." "Actually, it's being both," he explains. "More than just having an ability to spin records, you must be an entertainer at the same time."

Bob likes his work and does not believe he's cutting into live band profits, although some people, he claims, feel this way. As he puts it, "People have been spinning records and tapes for audiences and dances since before Dick Clark and maybe longer. It's just nowadays we are a little more mobile and entertaining."

Bob is satisfied that he's making a contribution to music in general. "I take my show

within about a six-hundred mile radius and do about 100 to 150 shows a year or more, and if that's not pushing and helping to sell music for writers and artists, I don't know what is."

—H.B.

### CountryFest on the Prairie

Tex and Mary Schutz of Bennet, Nebraska, have turned pasture land near Firth, Nebraska, into the setting for a Memorial Day Weekend country music festival that is going into its second year.

Mary and Tex Schutz launched the Prairie-land CountryFest May 27-29, 1988, on land they developed themselves with a lot of help from friends. They're going into their second year with high hopes for the future. The festival was the outcome of some ideas that had been simmering in their heads for some time. "It's been our dream for several years to present a traditional country music festival that was tightly organized, free from alcohol, and fun for the entire family—from little tykes right on up to Grandma and Grandpa," says Mary.

### In This Issue

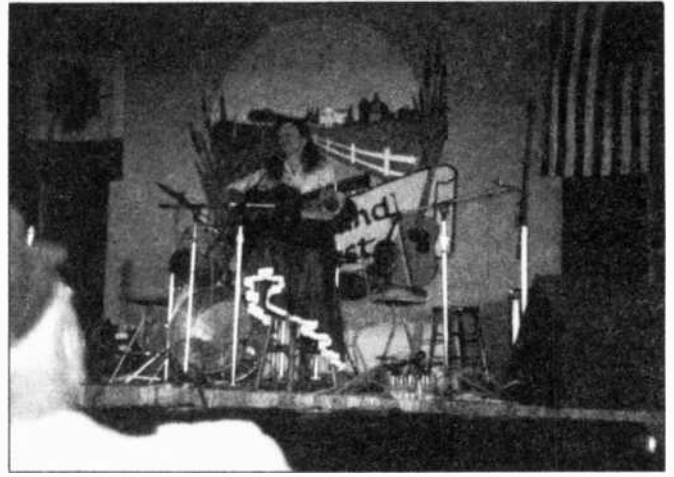
- Members Make Music
- Artistic Accomplishments
- Update on Past Issues
- Legendary Bob Wills
- Collections



M.C. Dick Zion of WOW radio in Omaha confers with Mary Schutz about last-minute CountryFest details.



A contestant performs in front of the Prairieland CountryFest logo.



Some 1500 fans and participants showed up last year in spite of some weather that Mary characterizes as "brisk Nebraska breezes and some occasionally threatening rain." The festival was headlined by Canadian singers Stew and Marge Clayton, traditional balladeers whose music (in Mary's words) dealt with "people who have made a mark on the world through their work, talent or just by being themselves, and songs that mark the passing of eras, like Stew's 'The Auction Sale' about the feelings surrounding the auctioning off of a farm that

had been in a family for generations." The weekend also featured other artists from the area and various competitions and activities: trivia contests, competitions for instrumentalists, singers, harmony singers and songwriters—not to mention a hay bale pitching contest. A nature walk and horse-drawn carriage rides rounded out the festivities. Prairieland Park includes an open-air auditorium, a new bathhouse and an outdoor secondary stage, plus lots of room for camping. The Schutzes welcome every-

thing from motorhomes (no electrical hookups available) to pup-tents and teepees. Dates for the 1989 festival are May 26-28. The Schutzes have more information on current plans available at Rt.1, Box 87A, Bennet, Nebraska 68317. Last year's prices were \$4 per day, \$11 for three-day weekend/per person, under 12 and over 65 half-price. Soft drinks and food available. Mary promises that "country music lovers will hear more country music in one weekend than they normally hear all year long." —H.B.



Happiness Group with Jodie (seated), one of their regular listeners at Woodland Nursing Home. "He's a darling," says Eva Fultz. Group members, left to right, are Lois Harris, Faye Hatcher and Eva Fultz. Mozell Reddell, now moved (inset), will be sorely missed.

**The Joy of Singing**  
Eva Fultz of Mabank, Texas, has found happiness in singing for her peers as she once did on radio long ago. Eva has been a subscriber to this magazine since 1978. Back in 1937 you might have heard Eva Fultz singing on radio station KRLD in Dallas as one of the Dawson Sisters with Pinkey Dawson's Music Makers. Eva was very young at the time. Jessie Milburn was the sisters' announcer. Today Eva Fultz has picked up singing again as the chief organizer and guitar picker for Happiness Group, whose current

members are Lois Harris, Faye Hatcher and Eva herself. The group began a few years back as Happiness Duet, featuring Eva and her friend Mozell Reddell. They played and sang for nursing homes, anniversaries and other events around Mabank and experienced a sense of being blessed by what they were doing. Eva and Mozell were cited by President Reagan for their efforts, and *The Ennis Press*, the local paper, has followed them faithfully. The two women added two more members, Faye Hatcher and Lois Harris; then Mozell moved to Amarillo late in 1988,

and the group is down to three. Happiness Group plays up to twelve concerts a month. They are regulars at Woodland Nursing Home in Malakoff and at Claystone Manor. One of their numbers for anniversaries is "What Would I Do If I Didn't Have You," written by Eva. Happiness asks no fee. "We do this," says Eva, "because we receive such a blessing and the people are blessed so much." —H.B.

## JANUARY 1989 POLL Album and Single of the Month

Ricky Van Shelton *Loving Proof*  
Ricky Van Shelton "I'll Leave This World Loving You"

Ricky Van Shelton scores a double win this month, with both the album and the single most favored by CMSA tastemakers. Second in albums is Dwight Yoakam with *Buenas Noches from a Lonely Room* and George Strait third with *If You Ain't Lovin', You Ain't Livin'*. Randy Travis is a close fourth with *Old 8X10*.

In singles, the number two song is Strait's "If You Ain't Lovin', You Ain't Livin'." Number three is Rodney Crowell's "She's Crazy for Leaving." Reba and Vern Gosdin are close behind.



Karl Davidson and his wife caught their hero, Wilf Carter, on stage in Seattle back in November 1986.

### Wilf Carter's Timeless Music

Karl Davidson of Olympia, Washington, appeared in the March/April 1988 Newsletter, talking about the lack of variety in country music radio programming. At the time he wrote, he was on his way to see a concert featuring some of the singers he wished he could tune in on the radio, including one of his favorites, Wilf Carter. Here is his review.

The concert took place a while ago, but the points Karl makes are timeless.

I have been a subscriber since Issue Number Two (and have them all) and greatly enjoy the articles about the old-time, real stars of country music. I would not subscribe if your magazine concentrated solely on the new people, so...here goes.

Yes, I did attend the country music concert at the Paramount Theater in Seattle on November 15, 1986, as I mentioned in my

letter published in the March/April 1988 Newsletter. It was gratifying to see a concert of such great singers—Jimmy Dickens, Hank Thompson, Ferlin Husky, Kitty Wells and Wilf Carter—attended by a sellout audience of several thousand fans. Makes you wonder why KMP5, the sponsoring radio station, didn't mind lending its name to a real country concert, yet will not play those artist's records.

I had to leave early, so missed seeing Leroy Van Dyke and Little Jimmie Dickens, who closed the show. But the rest of the show was just perfect. Hank Thompson opened with a half-hour of his fine songs. His voice has not changed a bit in nearly 40 years. The same can be said for Ferlin Husky, who did his Simon Crum routine, and for Kitty Wells, who did some fine duets with her husband, Johnny Wright. Their son Bobby Wright was very good as well.

My special reason for attending was to see Wilf Carter, Montana Slim himself, whose songs I have loved since I was a child in the late 1940's. His records were very popular on Seattle radio at that time.

Wilf was given a standing ovation the minute he walked on stage. The audience sure knew who he was even if the yuppies do not! To be honest, I was expecting to hear an 82-year-old voice. What a delight to hear him open with his great standard, "There's a Love Knot in My Lariat," with only a trace of age apparent. Wilf Carter is still a *damned good singer*, and I emphasize that! He also was still pretty good on his famous yodel. He thoroughly charmed the audience with his stories and reminiscences of more than 50 years as a recording artist.

Wilf sang about eight songs in his allotted half-hour. As I have seen almost all of the



Two of Karl Davidson's Wilf Carter albums, both by RCA. 50 Golden Years includes some historic Wilf Carter photos on the inside jacket cover.

top country and western singers since the 1950's, I was thrilled to finally be able to see the man who ranks with Hank Snow as one of my all-time favorite singers. I am sorry that I do not have any old photos of Wilf but am enclosing a couple of album covers.

My wife and I attended a concert by pop singer Roger Whittaker a few years ago. The highlight of his concert was when he told of being greatly influenced to become a singer after listening to Wilf Carter records as a child in Kenya, East Africa. He then did a fine rendition of one of Wilf's songs. So you see, Wilf was known around the world. A shame the U.S. audience is so fickle.

Since my last letter I have discovered that KUPL/FM in Portland, Oregon, plays oldies every Sunday morning. It really is a pleasure to hear Hank Snow on the radio again, along with Tex Ritter, Johnny Bond and even early Elvis and Buddy Holly records. The mixture works very well. Now, that's variety!

Karl Davidson  
Olympia, Washington

We put Karl in touch with Howard Halouska of Lexington, Nebraska, who asked about Wilf Carter records in last issue's Information, Please.—Ed.

### Updates

The following will update you on some of our members, past featured artists and issues or concerns.

- SILVER CREEK BAND, featured in the July/August 1986 Newsletter, has this to report: Thursday, September 15, we competed in the finals of the annual Marlboro Country Music Talent Roundup. Two years ago we tried to get into this competition and discovered one of the rules was, "all band members must be 21 years of age." This year we finally are "of age," with the exception of newest member Monty Devita, who is 19. We took a vote and agreed to go for it, minus Monty.

To get to the finals, Silver Creek Band had to make it through two levels. Level

one was the selection, by cassette, of 30 bands out of hundreds submitted from northern California. Level two, semi-finals, SCB, along with nine other bands, had 15 minutes to show the judges what we could do. We came up against some fantastic talent, but were judged good enough to be one of the three selected to go on to the finals.

At the finals, "the cream of the crop" came together in competition. To say competition would be an understatement. The California Cowboys took this one. We beat them in Madera with a full band; but they got us on this one, what with us being minus one member and on their home turf. We were more than a little disappointed, but to take this all the

way to the finals in our first try was, we felt, a tremendous accomplishment.

—S.C.B.

- HAROLD SWARTZ's call for distributors of independent records in the Suggestion Box in the November/December 1988 Newsletter has yielded a promising result. A free-lance distributor in Tennessee has contacted us and we are discussing ways to do business. Stay tuned!

—H.B.

- JAMIE RUSSELL WINTERS, Readers Create, September/October 1988 Newsletter, says: I have one major complaint. I'm from Jackson, Michigan, not Jackson, Mississippi. If there is some way you can amend this mistake, I will be grateful.

—J.R.W.

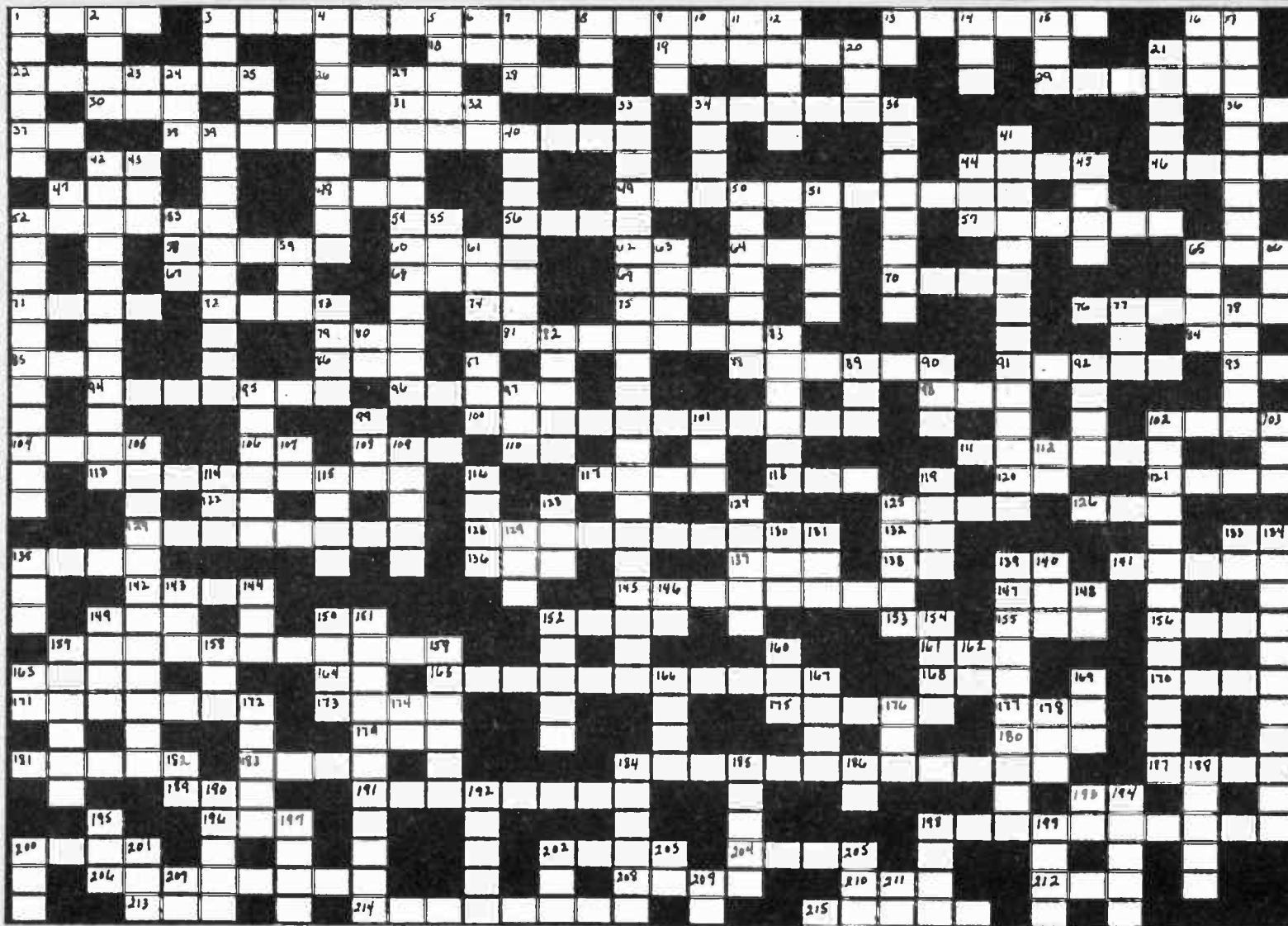
# Readers Create

## GIANT CROSSWORD

Gwen Cohen of Baltimore, Maryland, had so much fun making up this crossword of country music facts, songs and stars and doing it with her friends that she decided to send it in to the *Newsletter* in case other members would like to do it, too. Answers in next issue.

### ACROSS

1. Encore cry
3. PBS Country Concert Series
13. The Cannonball
16. 80's Lady Oslin
18. Endearment, for short
19. My one \_\_\_\_\_
21. Enemy
22. Mrs. Rodney Crowell
26. Musical "chamber" effect
28. Short snooze
29. The Man Called Hoss
30. Running bar bill
31. One of the Crazy or Empty ones
34. Dolly's first duet partner
36. No Good (abbrev.)
37. *Back \_\_\_\_\_ Baby's Arms*
38. Robber and Cop?
42. Us
44. *It Was Almost Like a \_\_\_\_\_*
46. Record
47. Evergreen
48. Nashville \_\_\_\_\_
49. On the other hand, he's gonna love you forever
52. The Alberta Rose
54. \_\_\_\_\_ *I Needed You*
56. Scotsman's apparel
57. Green-eyed *Fireman*
58. Hen houses
60. Aloha garlands





62. *Time Goes By*  
 64. Genetic substance  
 65. Best Male Vocalists are always these  
 67. *Rock \_\_\_\_\_ Ages*  
 68. Loretta or Anderson  
 69. He wears Blue Suede Shoes  
 70. \_\_\_\_\_ Walls  
 71. Pay mind to  
 72. \_\_\_\_\_ AID  
 74. Knockout (abbrev.)  
 75. Howdy!  
 76. Famous Country Music family  
 79. Dr.'s Org.  
 81. West Virginia City  
 84. She Lives in Texas  
 85. French Mrs.  
 86. Respectful term to a lady  
 88. Belly laugh  
 91. Special guitar  
 93. \_\_\_\_\_ *My Heart Had Windows*  
 94. The Coal Miner's Daughter  
 96. Horse's home  
 98. Old nickname for the sun  
 100. ABC Country superstar  
 102. I'll never love blue ones again  
 104. Horse speed  
 106. I \_\_\_\_\_ a lineman for the county  
 108. Wire measures  
 110. \_\_\_\_\_ *the Dark of the Moon*  
 111. Honky Tonker with a hat  
 113. Music City, USA  
 117. Not us  
 118. 1571's nickname's nickname  
 120. 12 Mos.  
 121. *Who \_\_\_\_\_ of Kentucky*  
 122. \_\_\_\_\_ EIO  
 125. All that glitter's is not  
 126. \_\_\_\_\_ Does the sun go on shining  
 127. Old term for a singer  
 128. He woke at 4 in the Morning  
 132. Morning hr.  
 133. Movie rating  
 135. Mr. Arnold  
 136. *I'll \_\_\_\_\_ Away*  
 137. Buck's girl  
 138. \_\_\_\_\_ Oldie Shoppo  
 139. Mr. Thomas  
 141. Essential singing tool  
 142. Dottie, Shelley or Wild  
 145. Barbara  
 147. Highway \_\_\_\_\_  
 149. Old-timey soap source  
 150. Consumption  
 152. Ernest's bath?  
 153. What's that again?  
 155. Leonard's nickname  
 156. I \_\_\_\_\_ the train a-comin'  
 157. Behatted comedienne  
 161. Feel poorly  
 163. Former jukebox cost
164. Home of Nome (abbrev.)  
 165. Easter Bunny's singing kin? (var.)  
 168. Vigor  
 170. She's from San Antonio  
 171. Old term for a record  
 173. Fake's big sister  
 175. Kenny or Ray  
 177. From a little acorn  
 179. Shotgun  
 180. Opp. of SSW  
 181. Eddie  
 183. Prohibitionists  
 184. The Ryman was home  
 187. Read  
 189. Raw metal  
 191. Woodcutter sisters  
 193. \_\_\_\_\_ *I Love You*  
 196. All right!  
 198. Legendary C.G.P.  
 200. Sacred song  
 202. Black diamond  
 204. Johnny Dough boy  
 206. Lefty  
 208. "Which twin has the \_\_\_\_\_?"  
 210. Sin  
 212. Psychic Geller  
 213. Miss Carter, formerly of D.C.  
 214. *Bob* man  
 215. 100A's old partner
43. Historical time period  
 44. Family member, for short  
 45. Fed. agent  
 47. Fire Department (abbrev.)  
 50. Endearment often in country songs  
 51. 13A was one  
 52. Her *Five and Dime* is gold  
 53. Sgt.  
 55. Elfin  
 59. Vince Gill's golf goal  
 61. Writing fluid  
 63. Go a-sea  
 65. Captain's aide  
 66. Neither \_\_\_\_\_  
 73. She's married to Daddy  
 77. Atmosphere  
 78. Elba's Country group?  
 80. Pa's wife  
 82. Miss Dunn  
 83. Essential country instrument  
 87. Not glad  
 89. Classic Cadillac feature  
 90. It broadcasts the Opry  
 92. Mr. Owens, he's a "dear"  
 95. Merle  
 97. Tennis shot  
 99. McDaniel or Tillis  
 101. Calif. based Country Music org.  
 102. Sally Rose creator  
 103. Mama's boy  
 105. She's on Higher Ground these days  
 107. Musical note  
 109. Travis, Haggard or Kilgore  
 112. Glen Campbell's Home St. (abbrev.)  
 114. Farm female  
 115. History  
 116. Fancy guitar work  
 119. \_\_\_\_\_ *Broken Hearts Never Mend*  
 123. 125D remade this classic  
 124. Both Naomi and Wynonna  
 125. Waterford songstress  
 129. Everything  
 130. Eur. Country (abbrev.)  
 131. Golly!  
 133. Personal Computer (abbrev.)  
 134. The Possum  
 135. Santa's helper  
 139. The Father of Bluegrass  
 140. Billy Royal's middle  
 143. Even, to poets  
 144. Digit  
 146. Alphabet start  
 148. *Talking \_\_\_\_\_ Your Sleep*  
 149. An Ohio bean?  
 150. Weepers raise this  
 151. Nashville West  
 152. The Hagars  
 154. Osh  
 157. Ronnie

## DOWN

- Star of *Les Misérables*
- Musical Pause
- Press clothes, Southern style
- Jemie and Kieren
- Guitar basic
- EIE \_\_\_\_\_
- Cable Country
- Half of a kissing pair
- Big or Davis
- \_\_\_\_\_ *My Dreams*
- Gridiron goal
- Branda Lee was so this
- Western State abbrev.
- Playboy Wills
- Il. A musical tool
- Prince Andrew's former filing
- T for \_\_\_\_\_
- Greenwood or R.E.
- Pianist Crater
- Egg grade
- TV network
- Some performers have a big one
- St. or Jr.
- Host
- Counting the pain
- Scheme
- The King of Country Music
- Johnny Cash fell into one
- He's *Movin' On*
- Stephen and Harold?
- An Outlaw and Highwayman

## MERLE HAGGARD DRAWING HOLDS PROMISE OF NEW CAREER

Debby McDaniel hopes to make a living from her artwork someday. Right now, she works in a hospital and draws as a hobby. She says the original of this pencil drawing of Merle Haggard is under consideration for the Country Western Music Museum in Bakersfield, California.

Debby lives in Elko, Nevada, an area so isolated her TV set can only pick up "about two-and-a-half stations...on a good day." She gets to see *Hee Haw* and *Austin City Limits* "occasionally" and loves *Country Music Magazine* and the *Newsletter* for keeping her in touch.

Debby's husband is a country music performer whom we may hear more about in an upcoming issue.



158. \_\_\_\_\_ *Got a Never Ending Love*  
 159. Front man  
 160. Code  
 162. Roman 2  
 163. Dolly's Nightclub initials  
 164. Not near  
 167. Dolly, Linda, and Emmylou  
 169. Short guitar for short  
 172. Sweethearts of the \_\_\_\_\_

174. *There'll \_\_\_\_\_ Peace in the Valley*  
 176. David Allen \_\_\_\_\_  
 178. Whichever  
 182. *I Can't Say \_\_\_\_\_*  
 184. Legends of music  
 185. Miss Griffith  
 186. 33 1/3  
 188. Patsy  
 190. Mr. Bailey

192. The King  
 193. Mr. Kettle  
 194. Permanent blot  
 195. Country Music historical org.  
 197. Retain  
 198. A crop or a joke  
 199. 134D's *Grand \_\_\_\_\_*  
 200. Hot selling record  
 201. Pistol Packin' Mama's org.

202. Tenn. based Country Music org.  
 203. Behold  
 205. \_\_\_\_\_ Haw  
 207. \_\_\_\_\_ *Walking the Floor Over You*  
 209. Opp. of SE  
 211. Nursing degree

**B**ob Wills was a musical revolutionary. Nobody thinks twice about horns, drums and electric instruments in country music today, but before he demonstrated their potential, they were taboo. He brought together the ethnic sounds of his native Texas—oldtime fiddling, Western and Mexican music and blues—then mixed them with pop standards, big band and small-group jazz to create a hybrid music called Western swing.

Several numbers associated with him—"New San Antonio Rose," "Steel Guitar Rag," "Time Changes Everything" and "Faded Love"—have become country music standards. For these contributions he was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1968, though he and most of his legendary Texas Playboys never considered themselves country musicians. Western swing became the musical basis of "honky-tonk" music. The twin fiddles/steel tonk sound used by everyone from Ray Price to George Strait was popularized first by Wills.

Shortly after James Robert "Jim Rob" Wills was born near Kosse, Texas, in 1905, his dad and grandfather, both gifted local fiddlers, made up their minds to nurture another prodigy. However, fiddling didn't interest the boy until one day in 1915 when his dad was late for a dance. Ten-year-old Jim Rob played the six fiddle tunes he knew—over and over—until his dad arrived. He discovered he so enjoyed playing for dancers that he became just what his elders hoped for.

His adolescence was a checkered one. He hoboed, worked odd jobs and preached before marrying and settling on a farm. Farm work battered his hands so he became a barber in Turkey, Texas, which he adopted as his hometown. He angrily left after being jailed for rowdiness in 1929. In Fort Worth he joined a medicine show, where he learned much about showmanship. Late that year he and a guitarist played dances and parties in the area calling themselves the Wills Fiddle Band.

At one party they met vocalist Milton Brown, then a young cigar salesman. Jim Rob, by then known as "Bob," brought him into the group and they became close friends. By 1930 they were performing on Fort Worth radio. Burriss Mill and Elevator Company, makers of Light Crust Flour, picked up their sponsorship in 1931 and Burriss' General Manager W. Lee O'Daniel renamed them the Light Crust Doughboys. Soon they were so popular that several other Texas and Oklahoma stations picked up the show.

O'Daniel, who later became Governor of Texas, was a hard man to work for. After he barred the group from earning extra income by playing dances in 1932, Milton

Brown quit and started The Musical Brownies, the first real Western swing band. Wills replaced Brown with vocalist Tommy Duncan.

Wills' drinking ended his relationship with O'Daniel in 1933, and intermittent binges caused him problems—some serious—throughout his career. He, Duncan and a fiddler moved to Waco and formed The Playboys, which at that point included his brother Johnnie Lee Wills. Though they did well there, Bob wanted a bigger audience and decided to move to Oklahoma in 1934.

He settled in Tulsa at radio station KVOO, boasting 50,000 watts, where he expanded the renamed Texas Playboys by adding horns, drums and three instrumental greats—steel guitarist Leon McAuliffe, pianist Al Stricklin and hot swing fiddler Jesse Ashlock. The band quickly became a success. Their daily broadcasts over KVOO and dances at Cain's in Tulsa and other towns made them stars, able to pack a dancehall even on weeknights.

In 1935 they began recording for the American Recording Company (later part of Columbia) with the legendary Uncle Art Satherly producing. Though Bob and Satherly initially disagreed over Bob's hollering and jive talking on the records (Bob won), they worked as a team in the studios for 12 years. Tommy Duncan's Bing Crosby-styled vocals gave the band a strong commercial edge, and their records sold well.

Bob's personal life was less successful. His first marriage ended in 1936. Over the next five years three more marriages failed. Money was no problem; The Playboys didn't mind his high standards, for he paid them top dollar. His generosity even extended to fans. O.W. Mayo, his Tulsa manager, recalled in 1982 that "Bob came up the hard way. He just had a big heart."

By 1938, at the height of the big band era, Bob wanted The Playboys to sound as good as the best orchestras. When he hired Tulsa guitarist Eldon Shamblin, a gifted arranger, their sometimes ragged sound improved to the point where they attracted jazz musicians and expanded to 18 pieces. That year he recorded "San Antonio Rose," a fiddle instrumental. In 1940 he recorded it again with lyrics sung by Tommy Duncan. "New San Antonio Rose" did well, and when Bing Crosby recorded it, the song crossed over to pop success.

At that point The Playboys were popular enough to merit a call to Hollywood to begin filming Westerns. For a while, they commuted between Tulsa and California. As World War II intervened, Bob started losing musicians (including Tommy Duncan) to the military. In 1942 he married Betty Anderson, a marriage that lasted 33 years. He disbanded The Playboys in 1943 to join the Army himself, but Wills was 38 and used to

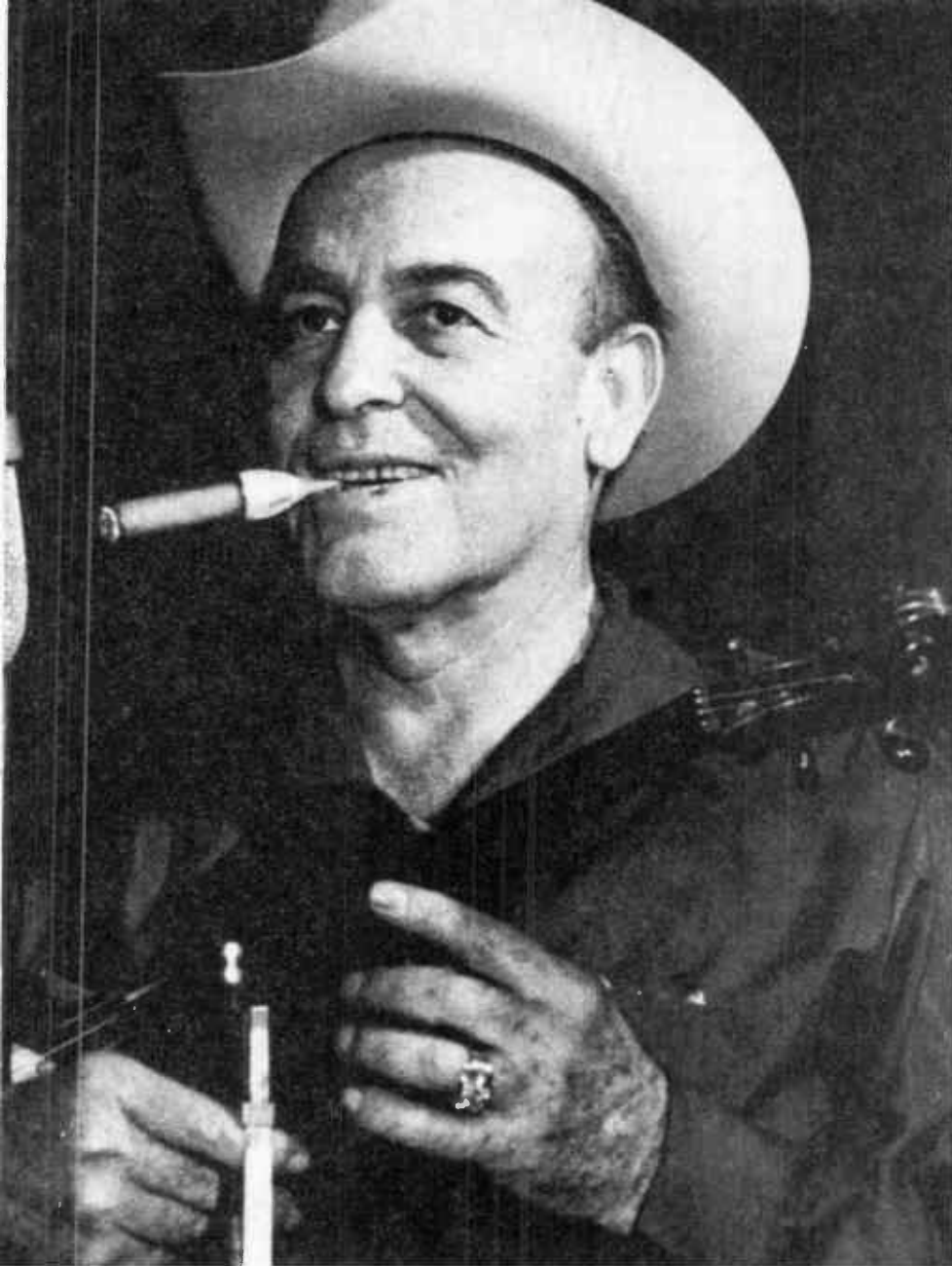
# BOB WILLS

*Eccentric, cantankerous and a genius—that's Bob Wills. He made a new music, Western swing, that the world can't do without.*

COUNTRY MUSIC FOUNDATION

Bob Wills with wife Betty and children, in the 1950's





being the boss: Private Wills and the Army didn't get along. He was discharged that July.

With Tommy Duncan also discharged, the two men moved to California that fall where Bob organized a smaller Playboy band truly ahead of its time. Horns were minimized. Instead electric steel and standard guitar (and later mandolins) played in harmony as horns would, an idea copied by many country acts. Wills had huge hit records on Columbia with "Roly Poly," "Hang Your Head in Shame" and "New Spanish Two Step," and the many Texans and Okies who moved West to find defense jobs packed dancehalls to see The Playboys.

Late in 1944 Wills and his band caused a stir when they played the Grand Ole Opry. Opry officials demanded that Wills conceal drummer Monte Mountjoy behind a curtain. At the last minute he defiantly moved

the drums out front, and though the audience (and many Opry stars) loved the music, the Opry's stuffed shirts denied an encore.

He bought a Sacramento ballroom in 1947, the same year he signed with MGM Records. Tensions between himself and Tommy Duncan, aggravated by Duncan's ego and Wills' drinking, led Bob to fire him in the fall of 1948. He had other fine singers but none comparable to Duncan.

Bob soon hit the road again. Fiddler Johnny Gimble, who joined The Playboys in 1949, recalled, "Bob had such a payroll (to meet) he couldn't stay in one place. He couldn't work the territory like he could in Tulsa before the war." He moved to Oklahoma City in 1949, then to Fort Worth in 1950 where he opened the Bob Wills Ranch House, a huge dancehall. He naively hired employees who stole him blind and left him deeply in debt.

He could still draw crowds at dances through the mid-1950's throughout the

Southwest, but as TV antennas sprouted, his dance audiences shrank. He made some mediocre recordings for Decca and though he returned to work in Tulsa in 1958, it just wasn't the same. A year later he and Tommy Duncan reunited to do shows and record some respectable music for Liberty.

After recovering from a 1962 coronary, Bob and The Playboys played to aging Southwestern audiences until a 1964 heart attack convinced him to disband the group and work as a solo act. The musical gulf that had existed between Wills and Nashville continued even into these last days of his career. Under contract with Kapp Records in 1964, he agreed to record with Nashville studio musicians. The resulting slick records sounded nothing like Bob Wills, and deeply embarrassed him.

On May 30, 1969, he was honored by the Texas State Legislature in Austin. The next morning at his Dallas home, he suffered a massive stroke that paralyzed his entire right side. He hadn't looked well for some time and strokes ran in the Wills family. When he recovered enough to function, he was confined to a wheelchair.

In April of 1970 Merle Haggard, a Wills fan since childhood, assembled his band, The Strangers, and several ex-Texas Playboys in Hollywood to record *A Tribute to the Best Damn Fiddle Player in the World*, a Wills tribute album that sparked a worldwide revival of interest in his music even among people who'd never before heard Western swing.

By 1971 Bob was well enough to attend various events in his honor, many featuring performances by various former Playboys. In December 1973, producer Tommy Allsup and Merle Haggard reassembled many of the Tulsa-era Texas Playboys in Dallas for a recording session with Bob (released in 1974 as *For the Last Time*). Though his speech was impaired, he managed to talk a bit on one number. Before the second day's session, another massive stroke left him comatose. On May 13, 1975, Bob Wills died; on May 15 he was buried in Tulsa.

Today his music remains a touchstone. In 1975 Leon McAuliffe assembled various ex-Playboys and other swing musicians as the Original Texas Playboys and worked together until pianist Al Stricklin, a member of the Tulsa band, died in 1986. They had promised to disband when the first of the old Tulsa group died, and they did.

No matter. More Bob Wills records are available now than when he was living. Haggard and Asleep at the Wheel pay constant homage to the Wills sound. Fellow Texans Waylon and Willie both consider Bob Wills a major inspiration, as does George Strait. It was Waylon who sang, "Bob Wills is still the King." And so he is.

—RICH KIENZLE

#### Albums Available

See For Members Only page.

## COLLECTIONS

### Collecting the Magazine

Members, help each other out.

• Have every issue of *Country Music Magazine* starting April 1979. All in excellent condition. Best offer (plus postage). Montez Ellis, 3451 Dunn St., Smyrna, GA 30080.

• Will give away *Country Music Magazine* from 1980 to 1988. Will you pay postage? Send SASE. Will answer right away. Mrs. B. E. Braxton, 2912 S. Marrs, Amarillo, TX 79103.

### Information, Please

Write to each other directly, and don't forget to enclose SASE if you must correspond.

• Wanted: Dolly Parton memorabilia, magazines, magazine articles, records in mint or excellent condition (including Porter and Dolly albums and material), video tapes, also 1976 Bicentennial poster of Dolly for *Country Music Magazine*. Pamela Nichols, Rt. 4, Box 182, West Plains, MO 65775.

• Looking for copy of book *Willie Nelson Family Album* compiled by Lana Nelson, H. M. Poirot, Amarillo, TX, publisher. Also Willie posters, especially the Matthew, Mark, Luke and Willie one, albums, books, pictures. Pat Shelton, 1231 Clairmont 34B, Decatur, GA 30030.

• Trying to find *Urban Cowboy* on video or audio cassette tape. Susan Pitlock, 4600 Florence Pl., Eureka, CA 95501.

• Looking for anything on The Statler Brothers after Jimmy Fortune joined—photos, records, books, magazines, posters, videos, especially their *Greatest Hits* album offered in *Country Music Magazine*. Will pay reasonable price. Anita Young, 690 S. Main St., Georgetown, OH 45121.

• Will send blank tape plus something to cover time, postage and handling to anyone with Margo Smith videos, especially her appearance on the Grand Ole Opry on June 25, 1988. Especially like Margo Smith's yodeling. Marie A. Grilli, 70 Dent St., W. Roxbury, MA 02132.

• Would love to obtain early Barbara Mandrell records, also photos, articles, magazines. Also love to hear from other Barbara fans. I've been a member about a year and have helped several others.

Janna D. Peck, 1302 Lincoln Rd., Marquette Heights, IL 61554-1447.

• Looking for mint condition copies of *Country Song Round-Up*, issues 1-100; Claude Grey and Dave Dudley LP's, Jimmy C. Newman, Louvin Bros. or Don Gibson MGM LP's. Have some extra issues of *CSR* for sale or trade, a Johnny Cash Song Folio for sale, and many country LP's in mint condition. Buddy Slaughter, Box 3148, Thomasville, GA 31799-3148.

• Wanted: *TV Guide* issue #898, June 13-19, 1970. Also issue #929, January 16-22, 1971. Mary Ann LeClaire, 1244 Center St., Ludlow, MA 01056.

• Looking for pictures, stories, articles, newspaper clippings, etc. on Hank Jr., Dolly, John Conlee and Restless Heart. Also words to Dolly's "Hard Candy Christmas." Anyone having any of this, please let me know. Debbie M., 917 East 5th Street, Dalhart, TX 79022.

• Wanted: VHS tapes of the following: *My Home's in Alabama* special, the *Dolly Show with Alabama* (Oct. 17, 1987), CMA Awards Show 1984, video versions of "Tar Top," "She and I," "Touch Me When We're Dancing." Also CMSA Newsletter July/Aug 1987 issue, Newsletter back issues from Alabama fan club 1987 and earlier; any Alabama news clippings, magazine cover stories, ticket stubs, memorabilia of Alabama's older days including albums *Wild Country* and *Deuces Wild*. Please quote price and write: Shannon Brotherton, Box 404, Agoura, CA 91301-0404.

• Wanted: two albums by The Everly Brothers, *Songs Our Daddy Taught Us* CLP 3016 and *The Everly Brothers* CLP 3003. Joan Morales, 775 Prescott Dr., Lebanon, PA 17042.

• For Sale: 3 Hank Sr. 78's. Also 45's by Hank Sr., Eddie Arnold, Everly Brothers, Bing Crosby and Grace Kelly, Marilyn Monroe, Jimmy Dickens, Red Foley, Ferlin Husky, Hank Snow, Red Sovine, Ricky Nelson, and many more. Mary Barker, 306 Young Avenue, Nocona, TX 76255.

• I need all the Donna Fargo on cassette I can find. Also, any recording of Larry Clinton's "Deep Purple." William Lee Drumbarger, Box 2000, Wartburg, TN 37887.

• Interested in receiving or buying any personal information and/or actual photographs of Dwight Yoakam. Lisa Kelly, 5661 Ash Street, Los Angeles, CA 90042.

• Trying to find Charlie Rich live performance tapes/cassettes (niteclub, TV, etc.); CBS Rockabilly album (EG37618-1981) with Charlie's "Feel Like Going Home"; Stoney Edwards albums; Dave Dudley's *Free and Easy* and *Travelin'* albums; Jerry Lee Lewis' albums *Return of Rock* and *Soul My Way* on Smash; Sir Douglas Quintet early albums; tape/cassette of Johnny Paycheck's 1980 *Austin City Limits* appearance. Ron Brackney, 2458 Rockridge Way, Santa Clara, CA 95051.

• Am looking to purchase any issues of *Country Music Magazine* featuring George Strait, Dolly, Linda and Emmylou (as a trio) and Olivia Newton-John. Also need help in finding past Rosie Flores recordings, articles, pictures, etc. Steve Flores, Box 2555, Ewa Beach, HI 96706-0555.

• Please let me know if you have a video cassette of *This is Your Life* with Barbara Mandrell. Also any fans of Barbara's, please write. Donna Robbins, Rt. 1, Box 153A1, Carson, MS 39427.

• Thanks to the many readers who responded to my earlier Ernest Tubb request. Now I'd like to buy the following Justin Tubb items: Decca Records EP-ED 2422, EP-ED 2559 and 45 r.p.m. 30606. Also need the *J. Tubb Song Book* and the *J. and E. Tubb Paper Doll Book*. Dena L. Rathburn, Box 6077, Sisters, OR 97759.

### Magazines and Newsletters

Back issues of *Country Music Magazine* and the *Newsletter* are for sale in our New York office. \$2.50 per issue for magazines, \$1.50 for *Newsletters*.

### Pen Pals

Members continue to make new friends by mail.

• My name is Lawrence Minervini. I would like to hear from anyone who is crazy about Dolly Parton like I am. I will answer all letters. Lawrence Minervini, Box 461, East Islip, NY 11730.

• I'm 36 years (young) looking for a special woman that enjoys life, good music and friendship. I enjoy Randy Travis, Lyle Lovett, K.T. Oslin, Dwight Yoakam, Reba McEntire, Restless Heart and many more. I'll answer all letters, so any single 25-40 year old country women that would like a friend, please write. A photo would be great! Paul W. Moberg, 100 W. Nopal Pl. #177, Chandler, AZ 85224.

• Hi! My name is Nancy Baker. I'm 26, single and I enjoy Randy Travis, Alabama, Merle Haggard, Reba McEntire and Gary Morris. I enjoy cooking, travel, baseball and football. Will answer all letters. Nancy Baker, 515 Taylor Apt. 1, Grand Ledge, MI 48837.

• Hi, I am 13 years old. I have been listening to country music for a long time. I would like to have a pen pal of any age. Tenna McBride, 226 Circle Dr., Concord, NC 28025.

• Howdy! I am 21 years old and I love Waylon. I would like to hear from other fans of Waylon. Carolann Babin, Box 1804, Sydney, Nova Scotia, Canada B1P 6W4.

• Howdy! I'm a 20-year-old female who loves Alabama, and I'd like to hear from guys and gals between the ages of 20-25. If there are any single cowboys out there, please write! Everyone send a picture, thank! Kathleen Lemke, Homestead Colony #52, Ames, IA 50010.

• Hi. I'm 22 years old, male, single, and love country music very much. I like The Statler Brothers, Holly Dunn, Ricky Skaggs and more. Would love to hear from other country music fans. I collect autograph albums and pictures of country music stars. James Cwiak, 1398 Kingston Terr. #4, Green Bay, WI 54302.

• I am a 13-year-old girl and I love country and rock. My favorite groups in country are: Crystal Gayle, The Judds, Randy Travis, Tanya Tucker, Alabama and many more. I also like horses, cats, dogs, writing, reading and 4-H. Please write. Crystal Stahler, R.D. 31 Box 109, Lehigh, PA 18235.

• Hi! I am a 17-year-old country music fan! A real country girl! My favorites are Alabama, George Strait, Reba McEntire, The Judds and Randy Travis. I am looking for a pen pal between 16 and 20 male (or female). Becky Allen, Rt. #2 Box 114 99 Ranch, Clifton, TX 76634.

• I'm a country music fan, 33 years old. My favorites are The Statler Brothers, Kenny Rogers, Dolly Parton, Gary Morris, Crystal Gayle, Jerry Reed. I'm a House of Loyd demonstrator for gifts and toys. If you love country music, *Santa Barbara* and pen pal-ing, please write. Shirley Swafford, Box 65, Novata, OK 74048.

• Would like to write to single women 20 to 40 who enjoy country music. I am a 26-year-old male, also single, a resident in a minimum security correctional center. I am not into playing mind games and am very sincere. Like John Anderson sang,

"I'm just an ol' chunk of coal, but I'm going to be a diamond some day." Charles Downing, Box 128, Winnebago, WI 54985.

• I am 32 years old and I live in Milan. I love country music very much. I would like to correspond with girls who are also fond of the same. I think R. Travis, The Judds, G. Strait and P. Cline are terrific. They are among my favorites. I can correspond in French. Riccardo Sens, 52, Via E. de Marchi, Milano, Italy, 20125.

• Hi. I am a 16-year-old female who is really into Foster and Lloyd, Dwight Yoakam, George Strait, Randy Travis and Reba McEntire. I'd love to hear from anyone my age or older. Chris Schuler, R.R. 1, Box 172, Nevada, IA 50201.

• I am a 16-year-old avid fan of Miss Barbara Mandrell. I would love to have some Barbara Mandrell fans as friends, any age welcome. Ava Gunn, Rt. 1, Box 2412, Lumberton, MS 39455.

• My name is Audra Lynn Bell. I am 21 years of age. I would love to hear from anyone who enjoys country music as much as I do. My favorites are Willie Nelson, George Jones, Johnny Cash, Merle Haggard and many, many more. Willie Nelson is my all-time favorite. Audra Lynn Bell, Box 893, Deer Park, TX 77536.

• Hello! I am a 16-year-old female, looking for some pen pals, male or female, ages 16-19. I love many country music singers. My idols are Patsy Cline and Reba McEntire. I love many other artists such as George Strait and Ricky Van Shelton. I will answer all letters. Jennifer Baas, 8543 Bristlecone, San Antonio, TX 78240.

• Hello! My name is Lillard Kennedy. I'm a 26-year-old divorced male into country and western music. My favorites are George Jones, Randy Travis, Merle Haggard, Loretta Lynn, Rosanne Cash, Alabama, The Bellamy Brothers, etc. I'd love to be pen pals with other single men and women country music fans. Please write and I will answer all letters. Lillard B. Kennedy, Box 1742, Lemon Grove, CA 92045.

• My name is Joyce Houser. I would like to hear from young men between 38-40, single, who drive motorcycles. I also like bowling, riding horses and church activities with men who enjoy clean fun and don't drink. In country music I like Ronnie McDowell, The Oaks, Gene Watson, Dallas Holm, The Imperials, Gary Morris, Duane Eddy, Johnny Rodriguez and others. Joyce Houser, Box 742, Douglas, KS 67039.

• Hello. My name is Merri Kopil. I am a 24-year-old female who would love to hear from all country music fans ages 21 to 30. I am planning a trip to Nashville this summer and would love to hear of places to go and things to see. Would also love to hear from fans of Kenny Rogers, Randy Travis, Lee Greenwood, The Bellamy Brothers and The Oak Ridge Boys. I will answer all letters as quickly as possible. Merri Kopil, 6640 Harrison Place, Merrillville, IN 46410.

Send material for Newsletter to *Country Music Magazine*, 342 Madison Avenue, Suite 2118, New York, New York 10173. Mark your envelope. Attention: Newsletter. Include membership number.

*"Coal miner's daughter" is not just a catchy phrase for this girl. Her daddy was a miner who wanted a better life for his kids. Patty's trying to make his dream come true. / by Patrick Carr*

# PATTY LOVELESS

*Faces the Music*

**W**atching Patty Loveless' road show, you get some pretty concrete impressions which add up to a pretty pleasant conclusion. You understand why, after three solidly commercial albums, she's already been accepted by the fans and is well on her way in the industry.

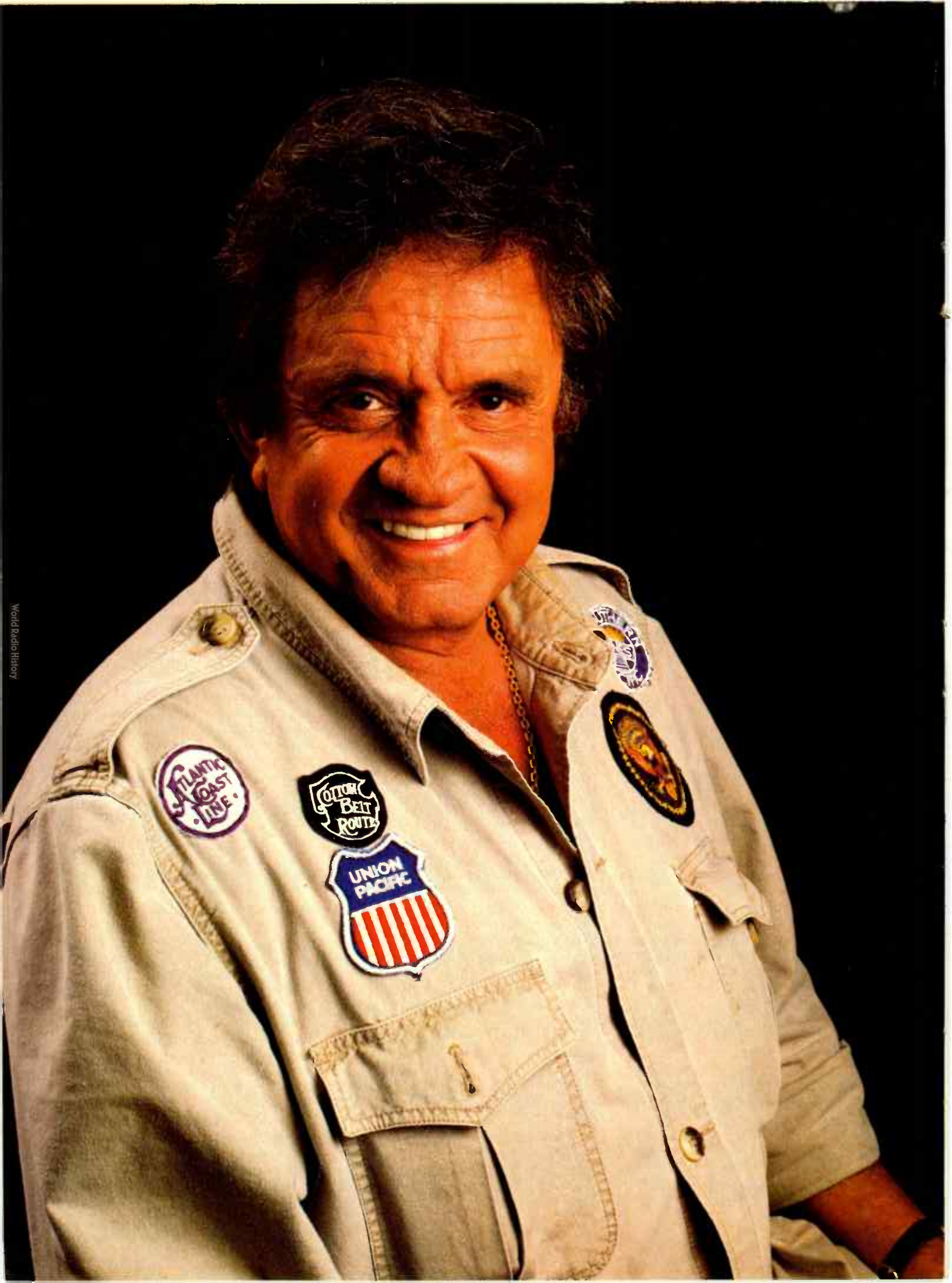
Basically, we have a live one here. She's got the good looks, clean and wholesome but not entirely unhip. She's got the good voice, supple and unstrained, clearly capable of more or less, whatever she wants it to do. And then too, crucially, she's got the songs which are both good in themselves and appropriate in the modern marketplace: a thoughtfully blended mix which jumps from riff-rich country-rock to heart-tugging country-country and back again, incorporating very few of the blander country-pop choices between those dynamic extremes. At the show I see, she applies these qualities to a tough audience—George Strait's crowd, the usual mixture of grownups more into clean-and-classic than contemporary and teenage girls more into George than music—and wins them over very nicely indeed: captures their attention quickly, keeps it all the way through, and leaves the stage to genuinely heart-felt applause.

That's quite an accomplishment for a new kid on the block, and I'm intrigued by the factors which make it possible. They're an unusual combination of obvious talent and professionalism (everything mentioned above plus very intelligent tension-and-release song pacing throughout the show), and something less tangible but just as powerful.

Patty, you see, works through her deftly crafted show with what appears to be the opposite of professional confidence—she says very little to the audience, she moves kind of stiffly, she seems like she has her heart in her mouth every minute she's up there on that stage—and that communicates. In fact, it gets your attention and forces your involvement a lot more powerfully than the more commonplace appeal of confident showmanship. Genuine vul-



CHRISTOPHER WRIGHT



# Patrick Carr talks frankly with The Man in Black before and after his recent near brush with death and finds that

# CASH LIVES

. . . in more ways than one.

**“H**ow am I these days?” he says, parroting my opening question of the first of our four interviews with something between the flicker of a light little smile and a Man in Black nervous tick. “Well, I’m doing okay. I guess I’m happy. In fact, I’m happier than I’ve ever been.”

I don’t doubt him for a moment, firstly because Johnny Cash is a truth-telling kind of person and secondly because the man before me today exhibits signs of greater content than the man I interviewed five years ago—or for that matter, fifteen years ago.

Basically, there is about him a certain lessening of tension, a quieting of the vibration in the air around him which warns *Cat on a hot tin roof, man pursued by demons, powder keg about to blow*. Cash’s body language still suggests a mild case of St. Vitus’ Dance, and that train-a-comin’ tremor still runs through his speaking voice, but other outward signs—a well-fed look, a cigarette habit which probably replaces more immediately threatening addictions—bear witness to a net gain in inner peace. Since his 1985 trip to the Betty Ford Center and subsequent commitment to a drug-free style of life, Cash doesn’t rattle near as bad as he used to.

**W**e’ll have to talk about drugs and health (both physical and spiritual) at some point in this year’s round of interviews, but today, in a suite at the Opryland Hotel on the day of the 1988 CMA Awards show, we begin where we usually do, with the man’s music.

It would seem that in this area, the more things change the more they remain the same. Despite the radical move he made a couple of years back, taking his business to the Polygram label after two decades at CBS, Cash’s basic ambitions and

dilemmas are almost exactly what they were when I first talked to him fifteen years ago. Then he was trying to break out of a rut both by doing something new (recording with Waylon) and by deepening something old (going back to the Tennessee Three/Johnny Cash bare-bones rockabilly sound). He was happy with his music, and unhappy with his music.

Ditto today. As we talk he has just released two radically different albums: the costly and ambitious *Water From the Wells of Home*, a collection of duets with Waylon, Hank Jr., Paul McCartney, Tom T. Hall, Emmylou Harris, the Everly Brothers and his wife June, daughter Rosanne and son John Carter Cash; and *Classic Cash*, a starkly simple double album in which he and his band set up in the Reverend Jimmy Snow’s church studio and cut new versions of all his favorite old hits the hard way. For “hard,” read cheap, fast, “live”—makes no difference.

“We brought the *Classic Cash* album in under budget, which was \$35,000,” he says, “and I think it sounds pretty good. You see, I asked for a budget that low, because I think that if you spend much more on a Johnny Cash album, you’re doing something wrong. You’re not doing it the way the fans like to hear Johnny Cash records sound. All my greatest successes—‘I Walk the Line’, ‘Folsom Prison Blues’, ‘A Boy Named Sue’—have had that simple Spartan sound.”

Given that statement, and almost identical statements in all our past interviews, I’m still wondering why on earth the majority of the Johnny Cash albums of the last fifteen years have not reflected such an approach to record making.

“Well,” says the man, “other people have all kinds of other ideas about how to make Johnny Cash records. I’ve always had the final word on what gets released and what doesn’t, but you

know, when you've been working with people for months on a project, you tend to go along with their ideas."

That makes sense, but while oversensitivity to the wishes of others probably plays a powerful role, it's just as often Cash himself who takes directions other than the one he keeps identifying as the one true musical path.

The *Water From the Wells of Home* album is a perfect example. He began, he says, with "four or five real strong songs by great writers, John Prine and people" as the basis of a hard-core Johnny Cash album, but then he decided to incorporate a duet with June Carter on one of their favorite recent songs, Dave Loggins' and Don Schlitz's "Where Did We Go Right." Then, when he and his son John Carter wrote "Water From the Wells of Home" together, he decided he had to include that too, and then...et cetera, et cetera, and pretty soon he was making an all-duet album, spending all the time and enduring all the costs and complications such undertakings entail.

He doesn't regret it, not one bit—he's proud of the album, as he is of most of his recent work—but it's interesting that now (again) he's sitting here saying "Now I'm going back to recording simply, doing my own thing. Everything I wanted to sing with other people is on that album. I mean, the record company gets all excited when some rock person does one of my songs, or I do a duet with someone like Paul McCartney, but I'm *not* going chasing after Bono or Springsteen, Iron Maiden, John Cougar Mellencamp, whoever someone thinks I ought to sing with. I haven't told my record company I'm not going to do that yet, but I'm not. I'm gonna do my own thing."

If you find the sum total of what Cash has said so far confusing, you're not alone. *Is* Cash really calling the shots? What *does* Cash really want to do?

The probable answer to the latter question is that what Cash wants to do changes all the time, both because he's a musical adventurer as much as he is a digger of his own roots, and because he's got a good ear for a convincing argument. Why else, for instance, would he have made an album as energetically roots-essential as his magnificent 1977 *Rockabilly Blues*, and then, just when he had us hard-core Johnny Cash fans on the edge of our seats for the first time in years, hand himself over to Billy "Sugar" Sherrill for the numbingly over-produced *The Baron*, the dullest album he's ever made?

Well, there is a "Why else?" It's called "sales." Hits. Top Ten records. Though Cash is beyond competition on the legend-in-his-own-time side of things, his last decade or so has been somewhat dry *vis a vis* chart action. And this has been more true of his "own thing" music—the great songs on *Rockabilly Blues* ten years ago, and the different but just as artistically successful selection on *Johnny Cash Is Coming to Town*, his relatively recent first Polygram album—than it has been of his musically adventurous and/or I'll-buy-that-idea records.

You can speculate why this should be so, second-guessing until you end up back where you started, but someplace between "What does Cash want?" and "What do the fans want?" you should at least consider the question of what record companies



**"All my greatest successes have had that simple Spartan sound."**

want, and how they want it. Cash, you see, may well have spent much of the 1970's and most of the 1980's in the commercial cool zone simply because no matter what kind of music he made, his style and that of CBS Records did not mesh.

"I live out in Hendersonville, and I refused to come downtown to join in the fight: participate in the cutting of throats, sit in on the meetings, court this executive and that executive, be available for anything they wanted me to do," he explains. "For a long time there I'd record an album and turn it in without even asking them what they wanted from me. I thought that if I did what I felt was right for me, and turned it in, they should just go with it—but maybe I was expecting a little too much. And as it turned out, album after album, it wasn't what they wanted. I saw the light when I did my dream gospel album, twenty songs I like to sing and feel good about. I finished it at great cost and turned it in, and they rejected it."

In Cash's words, he had ended up "out of sight, out of mind" at CBS. "They had their new artists they were all excited about—like Rosanne Cash, which was all right with me—but I needed to go with someone who was excited about *me*, who thought I still had potential."

Hence his move to Polygram, run by his old friend Dick Asher in New York and his buddy Steve Popovich in Nashville. At Polygram, he says, there is no lack of communication; he doesn't need an appointment to drop by Popovich's office for a chat, and whenever he's at home he and Pop-





**"I asked for a budget that low because I think if you spend much more on a Johnny Cash album, you're doing something wrong."**



ovich talk at least twice a week. "They've made me feel like I'm important on the label," he says.

But still, no banana. No big hit record, and a change in the wind to boot; Popovich is now on his way out at Polygram. So really, the more things change, the more they remain the same.

"In the end, it all comes down to the song, and the arrangement," says Cash, "and sometimes it comes down to who the company decides to spend their promotion money on this month. Polygram has new artists, too. They're selling records, and the company's got to support them, keep them going. But maybe one month will be my month, and that'll be all right. That's all I'll ask for."

It's a complicated business, this, and obviously it frustrates Cash; it's been frustrating him, and causing him to doubt his worth as a musician, ever since I've known him. His final statement on the subject is typical. "If you don't have it in the first place on the record, it's not going to fly no matter how hard you push it," he says. "I feel like we may have it on this *Water From the Wells of Home* album—but if we don't, that's nothing new to me, lately."

Two points to consider here. The first, which Cash may not grasp as firmly as he should, is that consumer taste and business politics aside, his music does still "have it" when he's following his strongest instincts, really doing his own thing. His *Johnny Cash Is Coming to Town* album proved that beyond a shadow of a doubt.

The second point is something Cash does seem

to have a handle on. There are more important things in life than hit records.

**T**here is for instance the continuation of life itself; heart beating, organs functioning, all that. On this issue Cash has a clear understanding: "I like drugs, but I can't have them, 'cause they'll kill me."

His understanding is somewhat clearer than it used to be, before the pain pills he took for an injury a few years ago kicked him back into the cycle of addiction he had broken in 1967. "I know now why I am the way I am, that chemical dependence is a disease," he says, "and I know it's a progressive disease. That second time around, I went down lower and hit the bottom harder than I'd ever imagined was possible, and if there's a next time it'll be even worse."

He also understands that there's no point in blaming anybody or anything else for the way he is. "I could blame my mother for the fact that I'm an addict, or I could talk about all the pressure I'm under, but really, I was in the supermarket the other day, watching one of the checkout girls bagging groceries, and I thought to myself, 'Cash, that girl right there is probably under more pressure right now than you've ever been'. It's simple: I'm an addict because I really like drugs."

Then too, he knows that his disease is a fact of life which demands constant attention. "I want drugs every day, and I think I always will," he says, "because I've got that wild streak, that black dog inside of me that wants to bite. So choosing not to take drugs is a daily thing, and I have to watch my flanks. Some mornings I have to sit quietly and say to myself, 'At this particular point in the day, Cash, you're going to be tempted, 'cause you're going to be seeing so-and-so, and he's gonna have a drawerful of stuff, so just before you get there, you start thinking about the—ugh! Betty Ford Center.'" He laughs at himself. "That works," he says.

That laugh is significant, evidence of some newfound self-acceptance at work, and so are other recently acquired habits: talking to his old drug-ging buddy and new sobriety partner Waylon almost every day, sharing his problem and its antidotes with other people who know what he's talking about, and, ultimately, realizing what life without drugs has to offer.

"Addiction is progressive," he says, "but so is sobriety. The more time goes by, the better I feel. The better life is. Now I'm so happy at home with June and John Carter. I can't wait to wake up in the morning. I didn't use to wake up; I'd 'come to' when the drugs wore off. I dreaded the light of day when it cracked through those windows. I'd have to pull the covers over my head, go take something else to make me sleep a little deeper.

"But now I'm up at 5:30 or 6, and I love my quiet time in the morning. I'll have my coffee, I'll read the Bible, I'll sit in front of the TV with the sound off and reflect on the day coming. Sometimes I'll make a list of things I want to do; not just appointments, but things I want to do, even things I want to think about. And I'm much more productive these days."

It's pretty nice, hearing our legendary Man Pursued By Demons talking like this, and it's also pretty nice to share his gratitude that not just his



*"I'm happier than I've ever been."*



"There's no rehabilitation and nothing much to recommend it at all, because nobody wants to spend any money on prisons. In fact, the whole judicial system in this country is a nightmare.

"So I'm tired of beating my head against that wall. I'm involved in things where I can actually help people: the Retarded Citizens of Tennessee, the American Cancer Society Sumner County chapter, Jessi Colter's shelter for battered women, children's things." He also continues to donate his services to Billy Graham's crusades, and remains impressed by the man. "He still lives in that log house on the mountain in North Carolina, he still wears those \$79 J.C. Penney suits, and he's still driving that 1973 Chrysler station wagon."

Even closer to home, Cash says, "I'm glad to see that Nashville finally realized the Urban Cowboy craze is over; that nobody in New York City is buying cowboy boots and overproduced, orchestrated, uptown country-politan-type records. At the Awards show I was struck by what a mixture of lifestyles and music types there was on that stage; everybody from me to Highway 101. I found myself thoroughly enjoying all of it."

I ask him to join me in praying that no new trend surfaces to wipe out today's unprecedented abundance of consumer choice in country music. "Sure, I'll do that," he laughs. "Things are pretty good the way they are."

**O**ur third interview session is an unscheduled bonus. I'm at Cash's house on the lake in Hendersonville, where I've been documenting June Carter's mind-boggling antique collection for another magazine—June's compulsive purchasing in this area being one form of addictive behavior as yet untreated in the Cash household—when John rises from his afternoon nap to join us in the family room. Here we have Cash at his best: rested, relaxed, candid and funny.

It's been a busy day. Rock megastar Bono and another member of U2, chaperoned by John's old friend and musical co-conspirator Jack Clement, came by to visit over lunch (a plan for a Cash/Bono song resulted), and before that June and the other women of the household spent the morning cooking and photographing favorite family dishes for an upcoming June Carter cookbook.

John enjoyed both events, particularly the morning cooking, which put him in mind of his childhood in Arkansas, receiving an education in the ways of the world from the talk of the women cooking and quilting together in those more communal times. We talk about that kind of thing for a while, until the subject leads to mention of June's late uncle, A.P. Carter, the reputedly straight-laced leader of the original Carter Family, and Cash can't resist. Over June's strenuous objections he tells his favorite A.P. story, the one about what his wife Sara and sister-in-law Maybelle did when they noticed the unmistakably circular impression made in the genuine cowhide of his wallet by one of those drugstore items carried hopefully, often for years, by country boys then and now. The women put A.P. in his place pretty good that time.

June wails. "What's the family going to think, John?"

"It's okay, honey, it's okay. Just tell 'em it was my fault. That trashy Cash boy shamin' you again." Right. The same pillar of the community who was



*"Everything I wanted to sing with other people is on that album."*



own house is in order. When June's daughter Carlene Carter sought help a year ago, she completed the set of Cash/Carter offspring in recovery. As we speak, all the kids who have travelled the road of the family disease are sober.

So much for the weightiest matters on our 1988 interview agenda. Cash goes off for his afternoon nap. Sober people who get up at the crack of dawn and work evenings do things like that.

**W**e go to it again the next day at the Polygram offices, after the CMA Awards show in which Cash inducted Loretta Lynn into the Country Music Hall of Fame (a great moment, that; Loretta's jewelry and Cash's TV dignity blown asunder in an explosion of country-girl glee). Today we're covering the concerns-and-causes areas of Cash's life, the things about which he cares and likes to speak his mind.

Politics come first, and there things remain the same. Cash still refuses to embrace the brand of conservatism with which most people identify him, ignoring abundant evidence to the contrary. He still believes, for instance, that the United States should not be trying to impose its political will on Central America by violence. "I see these politicians get up and say, 'We can't have another communist country in the Western Hemisphere', but who are we to say? Our whole thing is that we're free to choose our own form of government and worship as we please and say what we want, and I'm all American in that way; I think communism is a bad thing. But I can't tell another people who are hungry how to live. They'll follow anyone who blows in their ear. So I don't know what's best for Nicaragua, but I don't think that saying we don't want another communist country in Central America is a good enough excuse for a war."

On the home front of social justice and concern for the abused and underprivileged, Cash is still singing the same tune, but to different audiences. "I've pretty much given up on trying to do anything to change the prison system," he says.

# The Queen of Country Music

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### FAMILY: THE TIES THAT BIND

Clockwise from center, with daughter Rosanne, with wife and helpmate June Carter, his mother Carrie Cash, and son John Carter Cash some years back.

days nobody attending the patient could say with any certainty that his body would survive its latest trial.

Those bad days began because John's physical condition did not match up to his health in other areas. He suffered a "sick, fainting spell" a couple of weeks after our talk at his house, went for a check-up and was told that an artery leading out of his heart was 90% blocked. A heart attack could hit him at any moment.

Surgery was scheduled immediately, and it was successful. The artery was cleared without complications. But three days after John came out of the recovery room, pneumonia struck suddenly. His lungs filled with fluid, and he started to die.

It was a close run thing. Doctors had to insert a suction tube into his lungs through a chest just closed after surgery. John reacts badly to many drugs, so they had real problems finding a safe and therapeutic combination of medications under the worst kind of pressure. Everyone had very good reason to be as worried as they were.

But Cash himself, who was conscious throughout the excruciating procedures necessary to keep him on this earth, did not share their worst fears. He says that "it hurt like hell—really, it was by far the worst pain I've ever gone through—but I just didn't feel that it was my time to go. I knew I'd make it."

And so, obviously he did; the old good news is that he is still alive to tell me that. The newer good news is that he's well enough to answer his own telephone and tell me the best news of all.

"I'm feeling really good," he says. "I still haven't got all my strength back, but it's only four weeks and four days since the surgery, and I'm walking a mile and a half every day. There was still some fluid in my left lung three days ago, but it's gone now, and my heart's just fine. My heart recovery



rate—how long it takes for your pulse to get back to normal after exercise—is a third of what it was before the surgery. So really, I'm in great shape."

Moreover, he says, the recent crisis has brought on some welcome changes. He's quit smoking; easy, he says. He's on a new low cholesterol, low salt, low sugar, low carbohydrate diet which "is really good" and has already helped him shed 17 pounds. And he's in the process of arranging a future in which there will be less touring, more rest and recreation and whatever else he feels like doing. He's through being a slave to the road.

For us fans that last change is both good and bad. It's bad because we won't get to see the Johnny Cash road show as often as in the past. It's good because—well, because in my opinion John's road show has always been a trap. For too many years the musical adventurer in him, the creative artist, has suffered because he's been busy playing The Legendary (predictable, conservative) Johnny Cash live-in-person: now perhaps he'll have more time and energy for what he does best.

On that front we have a promising situation. John says that his new record producer, the veteran Nashville bass player Bobby Moore, "is another guy who says he knows how Johnny Cash records should sound, and I believe him." What he means is that Bobby and Polygram's new Nashville boss Harold Shedd are in perfect tune with the idea that the new album should consist of "good new songs done the Johnny Cash way, nice and simple like we used to do at Sun Records."

Let's hope that Cash holds onto that thought, that he actually does what he's been saying he really wants to do ever since I've known him. Adding some creative selfishness to the arsenal of other good new things in his life would be a smart move. Generous, too; my ears would certainly appreciate it.

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In the 80's, many major recording artists including Linda Ronstadt, Van Halen and Don McClean have enjoyed great success re-recording some of his biggest hits. His recent success as part of The Travelling Wilburys is rapidly gaining Roy yet another generation of fans throughout the world, demonstrating anew how his unique vocal stylings will never lose appeal.

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# Record Reviews

## The Seldom Scene

*The Seldom Scene*

*15th Anniversary*

*Celebration*

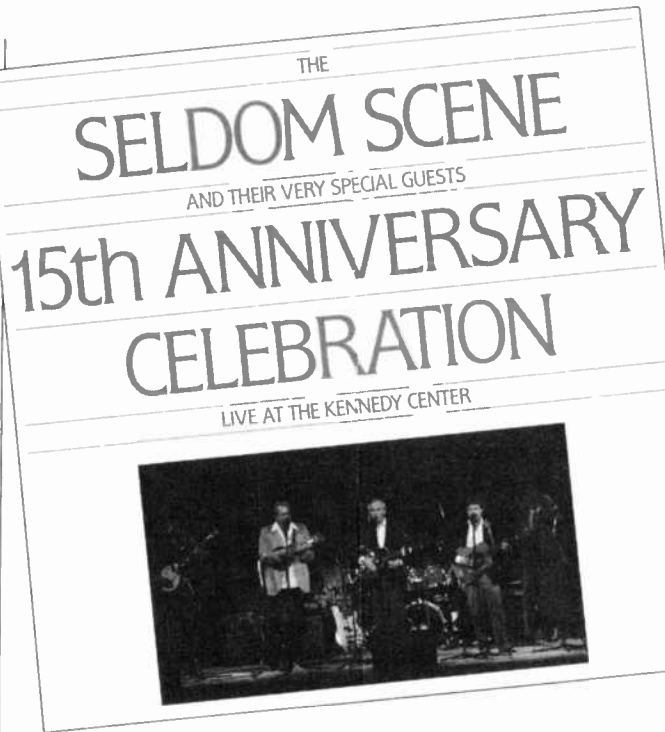
(Live at The Kennedy Center)  
Sugar Hill SH-2202

When The Seldom Scene, one of the world's foremost bluegrass bands, commemorated its fifteenth anniversary with a concert at Washington, D.C.'s Kennedy Center back in the autumn of 1986, it proved to be one of the great musical events of the season.

Not only was The Kennedy Center sold out weeks in advance, The Scene was joined by a distinguished roster of fellow musicians who've been associated with the band in one way or another over the years: Linda Ronstadt, Emmylou Harris, Ricky Skaggs, Sharon White, Tony Rice, Paul Craft, Jonathan Edwards, John Starlings and others.

The live double album that has, at long last, resulted from this star-studded evening is sure to be one of the most memorable bluegrass albums of the past few years. The 25 selections on *15th Anniversary Celebration* showcase, in no less than spectacular terms, the individual and collective virtuosity and power of The Seldom Scene, a band whose name has become almost synonymous with state-of-the-art, mainstream bluegrass music.

Each of the five members of The Seldom Scene (John Duffey—mandolin and tenor vocals, Mike Auldridge—



dobro and baritone vocals, Lou Reid—guitar and vocals, Ben Eldridge—banjo and Tom Gray—upright bass) is an acknowledged master of his chosen instrument. As they work together here, either as a seasoned, self-contained unit or in tandem with their various "guests," there is nary a dull moment on the entire four-sided set.

The Scene unleashes its power on a wide range of songs culled from its vast repertoire—everything from the old blues standby, "Sitting On Top Of the World," and the gospel favorite, "Working On a Building" (where John Duffey thrills the audience by sustaining a high note for longer than most people can hold their breath underwater), to John Fogerty's "Big Train from Memphis" and Paul Craft's "Keep Me From

Blowing Away."

There are far more magic moments and highlights here than can possibly be chronicled in one review. There's Ronstadt's and Harris' ethereal duet on "The Sweetest Gift," the Ricky Skaggs/Sharon White duet on "If I Needed You," and John Starlings', Paul Craft's, and Skaggs' emotional outing on Paul Overstreet's "Carolyn At the Broken Wheel Inn." And many, many, many more.

Perhaps, like me, you're not exactly a hardcore bluegrass fan. Even so, you can't go wrong with *The Seldom Scene 15th Anniversary Celebration*: it's one of the best bluegrass albums of either last year, or the new year: it's mainstream contemporary bluegrass at its most powerful, impeccable and stream-

lined best, and—even by any other name—just damned good music. —BOB ALLEN

## Joe Ely

*Dig All Night*

Hightone HT 8015

After a long dry spell, Tex-abilly country-rocker Joe Ely blasted back on the scene in late 1987 with his chaotically brilliant *Lord Of the Highway* album. The spirited *Highway* disk featured some of the best writing and singing of his career, and also marked the first time in his long, checkered career that he managed to capture on record the unrestrained energy and off-the-wall exuberance of his live performances. It was no surprise that everyone from leading music critics to members of the superstar Irish band U2 named the album as one of their 1987 favorites.

Featuring ten new Ely compositions and more spectacular playing by his three-piece band, *Dig All Night* carries forward the momentum generated by *Lord Of the Highway* in a slightly more restrained but still spectacular fashion.

Once again, Ely, as performer and producer, is at his best. But the real co-star on *Dig All Night*—as on its predecessor—is guitarist/vocalist/assistant producer David Grissom. Grissom, among other things, is one spirited, intelligent electric lead guitarist. On nearly every song—whether it's hard-driving numbers like "Settle For Love" or more subdued ballads like "Behind the Bamboo Shade"—he spurs Ely on,

*Latest albums from Charlie Daniels, Seldom Scene, Joe Ely, Guy Clark, The Burch Sisters, Marshall Tucker, The Bama Band, Mel McDaniel and The Crickets.*

framing his vocals with fiery guitar riffs, fills and flurries and precise vocal harmonies, thereby inciting the rest of this great band (Davis McLarty on drums, Jimmy Pettit on bass) to new and more frenzied heights.

Ely's offbeat, original compositions revel in imagery of the shadowy side of romance (check out, for example, "Maybe She'll Find Me" and the fatalistic south-of-the-border ballad "Behind the Bamboo Shade") and life on the run ("Drivin' Man"). Yet there's an irrepressible, tempered optimism here as well. In "Settle For Love," the narrator lays it on the line with his girlfriend: "You want drama, I'll give you drama/ You want romance!... (But) would you settle for love?/ Would you settle for love/ Would it be enough?/... Or do you need all that meaningless stuff?"

In the anthem-like title song, the singer laments the darkness and lack of love in the world, and cries out in the refrain: "Give me a shovel/ I'm gonna dig all night/ Give me a hammer/ I'm gonna chisel for light...." This glow of renewed possibility lurking among the usual hard-bitten road songs and queasy love laments is certainly fitting. With two great albums back to back in as many years, Ely's sure got a reason to feel that way. —BOB ALLEN

**Mel McDaniel**  
*Rock-A-Billy-Boy*  
Capitol C1 91133

**T**his is another Mel McDaniel album with

typical Mel McDaniel vocals and Mel McDaniel songs, enjoyable in places, designed to appeal to the widest possible audience. You're probably waiting for the other shoe to drop, so here goes. It's always bothered me that much of Mel's music, even big hits like "Big Ole Brew" and "Baby's Got Her Blue Jeans On," seem like advertising jingles: crafted strictly for the moment. They simply don't stick with you the way "On the Other Hand," "Crime of Passion" or any number of other recent megahits do.

I'm not knocking hits. Like it or not, they're the measure of the marketplace, but I get the feeling Mel and his producers—Jerry Kennedy in this case—concentrate only on what they think might sell even if the songs are lightweight, shallow and clearly beneath Mel's capabilities. If so, neither he nor his fans are being well-served, especially since there's quality material

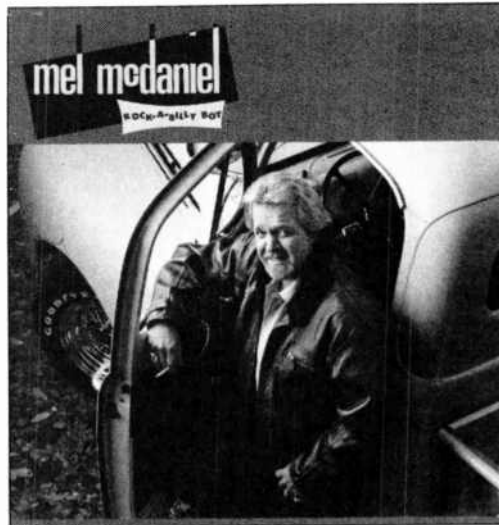
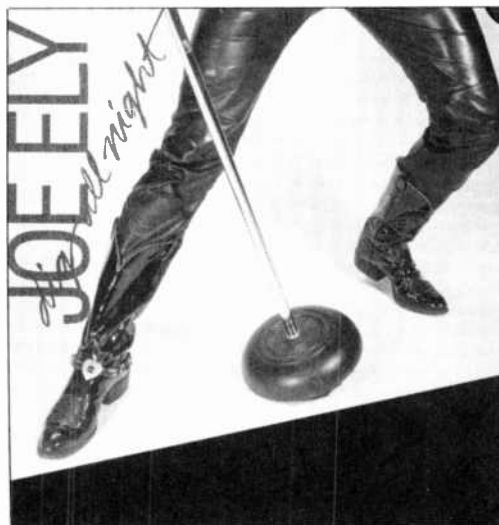
to be had with a little effort.

Listen to "Reverend Luther and the Madam." It sounds like the plot of a bad made-for-TV movie right down to the wholesome, uplifting, fun-for-the-family ending. I can already see Kenny Rogers as the Reverend and Delta Burke as the Madam. "Country Heart" is a watery pop ballad, slanted to Nashville only because it includes the word "country." The melody isn't even suited to Mel's voice.

Even "Tractor," the sole original composition, is a lightweight rural novelty (marred by an annoying synthesizer) that falls right into formula. The fact that the album's best moment is Mel's hillbilly version of The Temptations' Motown classic, "The Way You Do the Things You Do," sung with a zest and enthusiasm that retain the song's original spirit, says a lot about the album's problems.

Weak material also dominates Side Two. Only the witty "You Can't Play the Blues (In an Air-Conditioned Room)," a satire of blues singers who lose their inspiration as their bank accounts grow, rises above the rest. "Still Got You, Baby," co-written by Bob McDill, is a flat generic ballad, and Dennis Linde's trivial "Rock-A-Billy Boy" is far below his usual standards. "Blue Suede Blues" emptily strings together 1950's *Happy Days* images while "Oklahoma Shines" just as emptily assembles a batch of rural clichés. Both are depressing.

It's hard to dislike McDaniel. He's an engaging performer and his gravelly voice grows on you. He can make records that spotlight his talent, hit the charts and endure, but for some reason he's not. Given the Yoakams, Lovelesses, Travises, Van Sheltons and other formidable talents around who've



# Record Reviews

made it with honest, real music, it's not enough to record whatever chaff some producer thinks will sell, good, bad or indifferent, without any sense of what *the artists themselves* want. I thought we'd gone beyond that. That leaves me with just one question:

Who is the real Mel McDaniel?

—RICH KIENZLE

## The Crickets

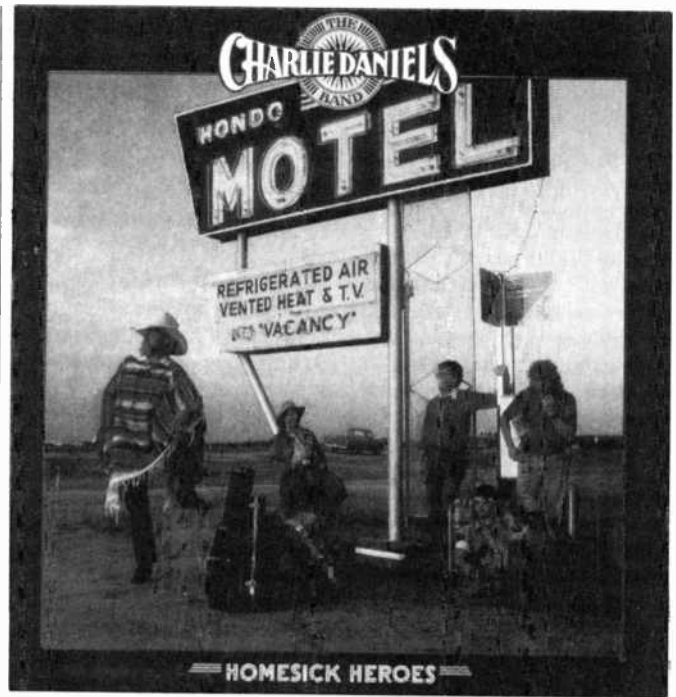
*T-Shirt*  
Epic 44446

**B**oy, here's an album I expected to hate! The Crickets—eeech! Old news and rehased blues. Well, here's a surprise: *T-Shirt* rocks on, and rocks good. I mean, they're not going to save the world or anything, but The Crickets have put together an album of finely crafted, good-time rock 'n' roll. The only real nod to the old days with Buddy Holly is a hard-rocking ditty called "Holly Would," which out-

lines, briefly, some of the people LA-wise you might want to drop in and meet, with the assurance that "Holly would, whenever he could." There are some killer horns here, and a rocking piano. Holly would like this one, I think.

The thing I like about this album is that the fun factor is pretty high. Lately I've been listening a lot to Guns & Roses, teenage-angst-serious-stuff-metal rock 'n' roll. I needed something to lighten things up a bit, lyrics like, "Don't tell me that love hurts. I read the book, saw the movie, got the t-shirt." Yo! Makes you believe that your love is still bigger than a Cadillac. You gotta love a band that sings about Studebakers—"I can cruise in it. Take off my shoes in it. Never lose in it..."

The other thing I like about *T-Shirt* is that it's not even close to studied nostalgia, recreating Those Fabulous Fifties for people with new Japanese poodle skirts and Brazilian-made saddle shoes. I think *T-Shirt* speaks to that part of us that always



remains 16 years old, and that's all she wrote.

—MICHAEL BANE

## Marshall Tucker Band *Hangin' Out in Smokey Places*

PolyGram 422 832 794-4

## Charlie Daniels Band *Homesick Heroes*

Epic FET44324

**I**nteresting point, the way music changes—or doesn't change. Back in the Old Days, I earned my daily bread writing about Southern music—The Allman Brothers Band, Charlie Daniels, The Marshall Tucker Band, Wet Willie, Elvin Bishop—which eventually led me to country music. It was never that far from Macon, Georgia, to Nashville, Tennessee. Southern rock, Southern bar music, Southern boogie, whatever, never really goes away. Sort of like squeezing a balloon, it always pops up somewhere.

What does change, though, is the music business. As fellow headbanger Patrick Carr has pointed out, half the groups on the country music charts—all the ones named after a place, state or planet—these days are making their livings by sounding like a slicked up, sanitized Allman Brothers Band or Marshall Tucker Band—a little country, a little rock, a little rhythm-and-blues, a little jazz, a little blues, some guitar riffs.

So what happens to the originals? What happens when The Marshall Tucker Band cuts a new album?

The answer is the strangely tentative *Hangin' Out in Smokey Places*, with the Tuckers, like Howard the Duck, trapped in a world they never made. Though it pains me to say it, this is a painfully bad album. It just doesn't work for me at all. For a start, if you want pop, those groups named after a place do it better. It's boring, but they got it down to a science. On another point, one of the things that set the Tuckers apart was just a twist of jazz. But when you twist jazz too





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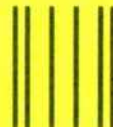


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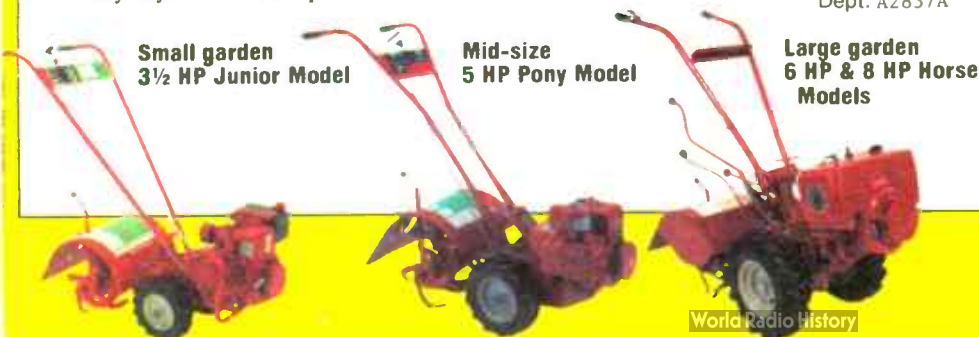
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## Bob Wills Specials

Bob Wills, featured in this issue's Legends of Country Music section in the CMSA Newsletter, was one of the most popular entertainers of his time. A wealth of material exists on record.

Several two-volume sets present an overview of Wills' golden era in the late 1930's and 1940's. Columbia Records' *Golden Era* two-record set (CS 40149) \$17.98, reviewed in Buried Treasures in May/June 1987, presents selections from 1935-1942. Eldon Shamblin's effect on the band shows up clearly. Set includes "Liebestraum," "Steel Guitar Stomp," "New San Antonio Rose" and more.



Columbia Historic Edition *Bob Wills* (FC 37468) two-record set \$12.98/CD \$24.98, with notes by Bob Pinson of the Country Music Foundation, also covers the 1930's and 1940's, including "Bring It On Down to My House," "Keep Knockin'" and "Blue Bonnet Rag." Columbia's *Bob Wills Anthology*, (KG 32416), also a two-record set, \$12.98, reviewed in Record Reviews in August 1974 (for you longtime subscribers and collectors), goes over the same ground again and radiates the same "freewheeling joy." Noteworthy here are "That's What I Like 'Bout the South" and a Jimmie Rodgers yodel, "Blue Yodel #1."

The Country Music Foundation's *Fiddle* (CMF 010) \$9.98, presents Wills alone with guitar accompaniment on side one, with the band on side two, also from 1935-1942, reviewed in Record Reviews in March/April 1988. As Merle Haggard said, "The best damn fiddle player in the world."

Another single album from this period, *Right or Wrong* (DPL 1181) \$7.98, reviewed in Buried Treasures in January/February 1987, dates from 1945-1946 when the band was based in Fresno. Tommy Duncan was still on board, and the band featured a three-fiddle line-up. The lighthearted performances

include "Right or Wrong," "Honcysuckle Rose," "Seven Come Eleven" and more.

Bear Family's box set, *Papa's Jumpin': The MGM Years of Bob Wills* (BFX 15179), a five-record set, \$96.00, covers Wills' years with MGM Records, 1947-1954, reviewed in Record Reviews in September/October 1985. Here Wills is without Tommy Duncan. The band is scaled-down, foreshadowing the honky tonk sound.

Radio transcriptions yield another view of Wills—often with even more of the fun left in—comments by Wills, laughter by Duncan and others, commercials. This music was all recorded for use on radio in California in the 1940's and early 1950's. *The Tiffany Transcriptions*, 1946-1947, present eight volumes of material: Vol. 1 (F16), Vol. 2 (F19), Vol. 3 (F20), Vol. 4 (F21), Vol. 5 (F25), Vol. 6 (F27), Vol. 7 (F29), Vol. 8 (F32), \$10.98 each. This material was recorded in Oakland, California.

Recorded in 1964, Stetson's *Time Changes Everything* (HAT 3024) \$10.98, includes "South of the Border," "Texas Double Eagle" and the title song, plus eight more.

*From the Heart of Texas* (HAT 3058) \$10.98, reviewed as *Deep In the Heart of Texas* in Buried Treasures in July/August 1988, dates from 1965, the first three Kapp sessions, when Wills recorded on his own without the band. Assorted Texas musicians, including ex-Playboy Leon Rausch, lent a hand.

All albums listed are available in records or cassettes, except the Bear Family box set available on records only.

## Member's Discount

CMSA Members, deduct \$2.00 from the price of every album listed here. Member's price on the \$96.00 Bear Family box set is \$69.98. CMSA members are also entitled to deduct \$2.00 from the price of every album in Buried Treasures in this and every issue. See page 71. Include membership number.

## How to Order

To order, send check or money order to *Country Music Magazine*, Dept. 3489-N, 342 Madison Avenue, Suite 2118, New York, New York 10173. Indicate record, cassette (or CD where available) for each album, and add \$1.95 postage and handling for first item ordered, \$.95 for each additional. Include membership number.

## MEMBERS POLL/MARCH 1989

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

### Bought Any Good Records Lately?

- Did you buy any albums (records, tapes or compact discs) in the last month?
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  - How many records? \_\_\_\_\_ cassettes? \_\_\_\_\_ CD's \_\_\_\_\_
- Which ones did you like best? List performers and album title.
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. \_\_\_\_\_

### Your Choice for Album and Single of the Month

- To vote, list the numbers of your top 5 favorites from the Top 25 in this issue.

Singles (list 5 numbers)

Albums (list 5 numbers)

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# Record Reviews

much, you get bad pop. There are songs on this album that would make Alabama blanch. Hard to believe that these are the same guys who electrified the charts with "Can't You See" and "This Ole Cowboy."

On the other hand (catchy title for a song, or what?), Charlie Daniels—thankfully—is as unchanging as the bedrock that lies under the hills of middle Tennessee. In *Homesick Heroes*, he once again shows himself to be perhaps the greatest bard of the hard-drinkin', hard-livin' Southern male, fraught as he is with the inconsistencies of the Twentieth Century. He has the courage of a thoroughbred, the tenacity of a pit bull, a factory job that stopped mattering a long time ago and nothing but the bright lights of a Saturday night honky tonk to look forward to. "We're all birds of a feather," Charlie Daniels sings. "Just trying' to make a living wage. Just tryin' to get by."

Charlie plays the fiddle, and the CDB plays some mean guitar licks. His music is a cauldron of styles, reminiscent of the pre-bluegrass hill ballads one minute, down and dirty blues the next. Charlie doesn't care. Violence, retribution, sin and Saturday night flicker through his lyrics like summer lightning. Bad women, big men brought low, the dance of a razor and a trick deck of cards, dark eyes in a murky swamp. Us versus them, with the music as a rallying point, an expression of the vitality, the life, of the hard men of Saturday night.

No other way to say it: after all the years and all the miles and all the changes in the music business and all the comings and goings, Charlie Daniels knows how to kick ass better than any other living picker.

That's not said lightly, either. Get some.

—MICHAEL BANE



## The Bama Band *Solid Ground* Mercury 834-627-1

**L**ord knows Hank Jr. needs a band that can play it on the road like they mean it. That's harder than it sounds. Nashville's loaded with pickers who play the notes but make them sound like they're coming out of a computer. One in particular who gets a lot of TV exposure comes to mind. He and his flashy instruments wouldn't last four bars in the Bama Band.

The band's centerpiece is singer/guitarist Wayne "Animal" Turner, whose incredibly expressive vocals (more on this later) make this record more than just a backup band's lark. Even when the material falters, as it does on Side Two, Turner doesn't. But none of his bandmates are slouches either. The solid rhythm section, bassist Ray Barrickman and drummer Billy Marshall,

never lets up, and Cowboy Eddie Long's steel, Billy Earhart's keyboards and Jerry McKinney's sax pop up in all the right places.

"Southern Accent" is as good as anything Alabama's done lately (and without a load of studio musicians to help). Bob McDill's "Real Old-Fashioned Broken Heart" is a tremendous honky tonker even if it comes with a couple of blatant plugs for the boss. Turner's expressive vocals are anything but throw-aways. Even the moralizing on the title track, "Solid Ground," has a light touch, and the performance is infectious enough to make the song a hit.

"I Got a Rocker in My Pocket," the Jimmy Lloyd (Jimmie Logsdon to you older readers) rockabilly chestnut, roars like crazy in the spirit of the original, with some slashing lead guitar from Turner and Earhart's Jerry Lee style piano. The good time feel of "When We Get Back To the Farm," aided and abetted by Hank Jr. himself, is loaded with good humor

and great sax work from McKinney.

"High School Buddies" differs from The Statlers' view of the same subject, as it thoughtfully injects the brutal realities of Vietnam, and Turner's vocal is truly outstanding. In fact, his singing rises above several bad ballads, "She Takes My Breath Away" and "Ellen B.," for example, while "It's Gotta Be Love" could be a great solo record for someone, even for Turner himself. "White Lightnin'" is fine, but I'd rather they'd have grabbed something less obvious.

At the risk of raising the wrath of Bocephus himself, I gotta say that Turner might have a formidable solo career ahead of him. He's a great guitarist, but his straightforward, expressive vocal style is better than his playing and imitates no one. I don't know where the Bama Boys go from here, but I'll warn Hank Jr.—you'd best give these guys a raise.

—RICH KIENZLE

## The Burch Sisters *New Fire* Mercury 386 711-1

**T**he era of the Sister act is upon us. The Whites, Foresters, McCarters, Sweethearts, you name it. The latest, Cathy, Charlene and Cindy Burch, seem funkier than any of these except The McCarters, with a sound that's looser, less formal and in a category with the best of the above.

One thing that shows through, and I normally hate using record company publicity handouts for reference, is the fact they had established careers in other fields before getting into music and sang simply for pleasure. Generally, performers who push hardest succeed the most, but not always. Sometimes those who do it as a sideline, feeling they've less to lose, succeed

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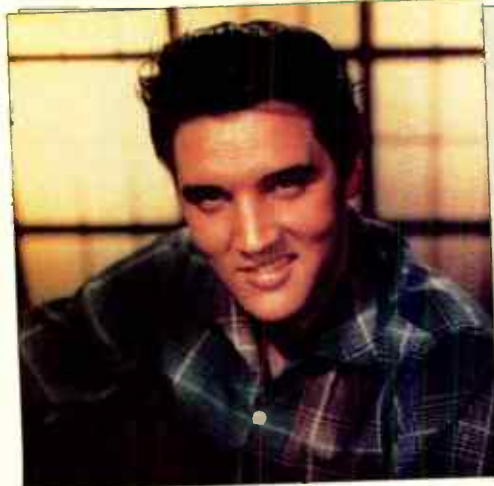
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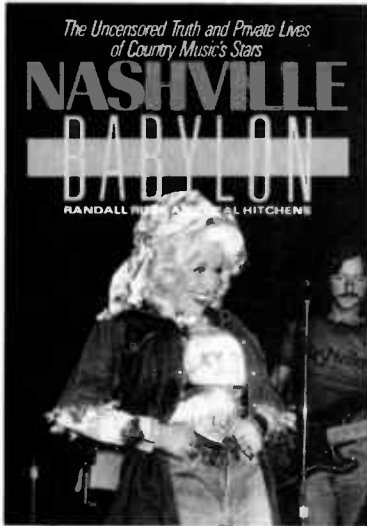
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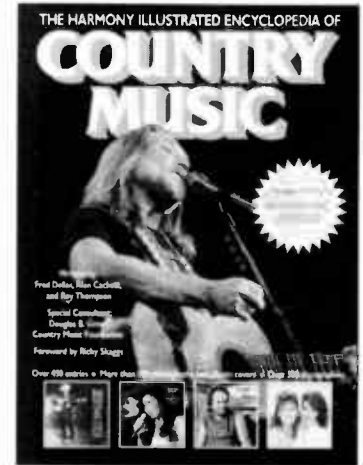
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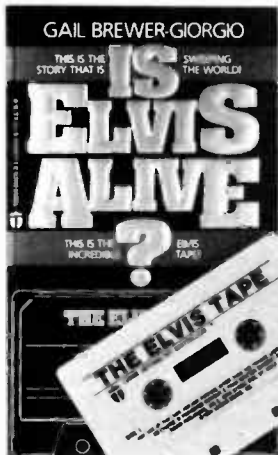
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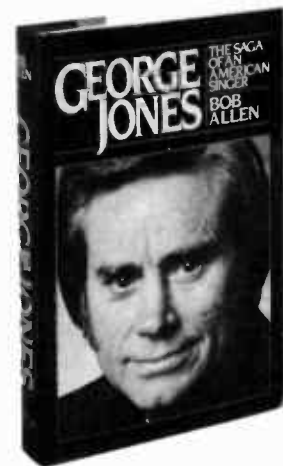
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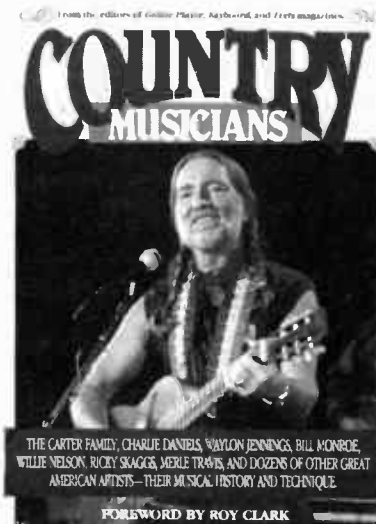


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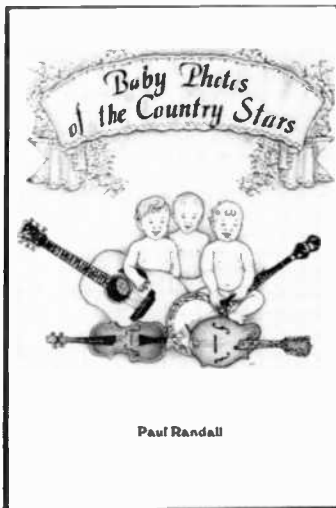


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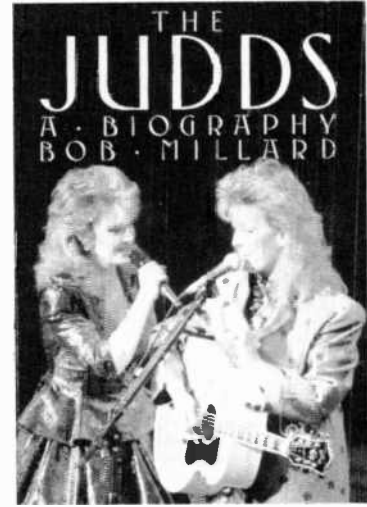


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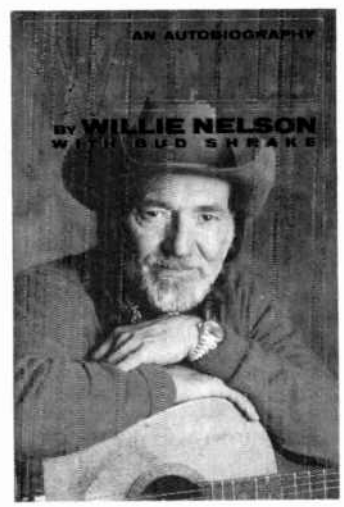
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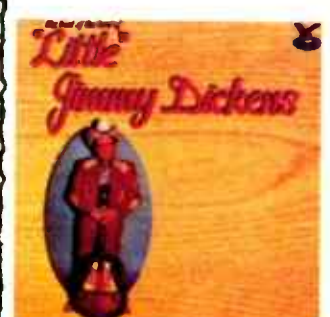
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**Rated ★★★★★ In Country Music, Sept./Oct. '85**

Hawkshaw began with King covering whatever Ernest Tubbs was doing. But "Sunny Side of the Mountain" and "Slow Poke" in 1948 and 1951 were enough to establish him as a force in his own right. Like Copas, Hawkins fell by the wayside, with no hit records, though he was a member of the Grand Ole Opry and had contracts with RCA, Starday and Columbia. Then in March 1963, just days before he died, his King recording of "Lonesome 7-7203" hit Number One. Hawkins, like Copas, made other fine records, "Rattlesnakin' Daddy" and "Dog House Boogie" among them, that hinted at rockabilly. *16 Greatest Hits of Hawkshaw Hawkins* (Gusto to SD-3013) covers all these and more.

Copas first made his mark as a vocalist with Pee Wee King's Golden West Cowboys... "Filipino Baby," his first hit, came in 1944. Throughout the 1940's he had still more hits—with "Tennessee Waltz," "Tragic Romance" and others. In the early 1960's, Copas was successful with Starday, with the hits "Alabam," and "Signed, Sealed and Delivered" in 1961. Some of his best-known songs are available on *16 Greatest Hits of Cowboy Copas* (Gusto SD-3012). Most of the material is from his Starday period, though "Filipino Baby" and "Tragic Romance" are also included. Copas never got the credit he should have, considering his rich, supple voice and laconic, offhand delivery.

Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper worked together nearly 40 years... *Early Recordings* (County CCS 103) compiles 12 Columbia songs, leased from CBS, that helped establish their reputation. A second Wilma Lee/Stoney album from the 1970's is *Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper Sing The Carter Family's Greatest Hits* (Starday SD 980), an outstanding salute to the Carters cut in the early 1970's. Wilma Lee and Stoney tackle such Carter classics as "Keep on the Firing Line," produce a delicate version of "You Are My Flower" and are back on Wilma Lee's stops-out treatment of "Lulla Walls." The Carter style and the Coopers' sound blend easily here.



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RICH KIENZLE, SEPT./OCT. 85  
PAGE 67, *Country Music Magazine*





**CARL SMITH: GREATEST HITS** In this album Carl sings better than ever, giving a warm new glow to these classic hits he created. Included are: Mr. Moon/Are You Teasing Me/Hey Joe/Deep Water/I Just Loved Her For The Last Time Again/You Are The One/Don't Just Stand There/If Teardrops Were Pennies/Take My Ring Off Your Finger/Kisses Don't Lie



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**BEN COLDER (SHEB WOOLEY): GOLDEN HITS** There are few aspects of the entertainment field that this star has not been highly successful in. This album is another success story with tunes like: Easy Lovin' #2/Almost Persuaded #2/Detroit City #2/Little Green Apples #2/Rollin' In My Sweet Baby's Arms/Don't Go Near Eskimos/Sunday Morning Falling Down/Games People Play/10 Little Bottles, and more!

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39-5

# Record Reviews

because they aren't neurotic about success and can concentrate on the music. Such was the case with The Burches.

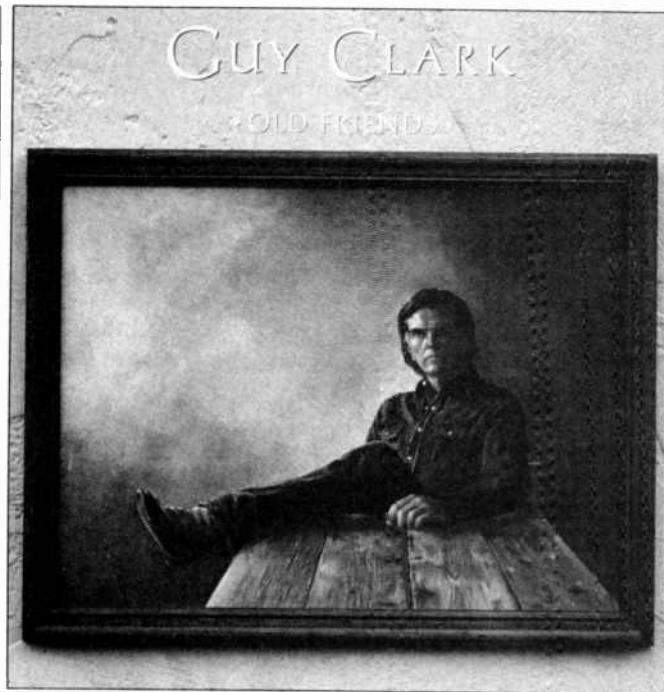
Side One is flatout funky. The girls strike just the right catty swagger on their single, "Everytime You Go Outside I Hope It Rains," which, awkward title notwithstanding, is delightfully snide. So is "I Don't Want to Mention Any Names," the Western swing number which first appeared on Reba's *The Last One to Know* album. Cathy Burch's formidable snarl is well-exposed on "The Way I Want to Go" and the obligatory rockabilly number, "I Missed That Train Again," while trio harmonies dominate the compelling Bob McDill/Paul Harrison ballad "Old Flame, New Fire."

The pop orientation is more pronounced on Side Two, and though they do a creditable job with Larry Gatlin's "Cold Day in My Heart," it sounds a bit too generic. Producer-engineer Doug Johnson's two mediocre, paint-by-numbers compositions aren't much help, either. "What We Don't Know Won't Hurt Us" is terminally bland, and "The Only Love You Need," well-performed as it is, sounds too much like rehashed Sweethearts of the Rodeo.

It's not that The Burches can't do pop songs, as their stunning version of the rock band Journey's ballad "Open Arms" proves, but "Arms" is a stronger number than anything of Johnson's, so the sisters' intensity really puts it over. Their version of Harlan Howard's "What Do Lonely People Do" is far more direct, and the song has all the makings of a hit single.

Johnson's production skills, on the other hand, are commendable. He accomplishes much with a small group of musicians that includes Paul Franklin on steel guitar and dobro and Mark O'Connor on fiddle and mandolin.

One of these days I'm sure I'll proclaim myself weary of sister acts, but not while



they're this good. It's still a bit early for Screven, Georgia, to start planning a monument, but if The Burches fulfill the promise they've shown here, maybe they oughta start thinking about it.

—RICH KIENZLE

## Guy Clark *Old Friends* Sugar Hill SH-1025

**O**n his previous five albums, largely overlooked masterpieces released in the 1970's and early 1980's, Guy Clark dazzled listeners with his amazing word play. The man has an uncanny and unequalled gift for constructing intricate story/songs like "Texas 1947" (popularized by Johnny Cash) and "The Last Gunfighter Ballad" (recorded by both Cash and Waylon Jennings): song-poems whose drama and suspense hang as much in the startling imagery and poetic tension of the words themselves as in the accompanying melody.

After some six years away from the studio, Clark, who

has long been especially influential in the Texas folk-country singer/songwriter movement, is back again. *Old Friends*, his newest, is a first-rate effort. It renewed my appreciation of Clark's superlative word-painting and his tougher-than-leather singing voice, and sent me—as it doubtless will send many other listeners—burrowing back through my record collection to resavor his earlier albums, many of which are now out of print.

Listening again to Clark's earlier work, then returning to *Old Friends*, one immediately senses some new directions that have emerged in Clark's writing during the half-decade since he was last in the studio. He's kept busy in the interim touring the folk circuit and writing songs for more mainstream artists such as George Strait, Waylon & Willie, Ricky Skaggs and Patty Loveless.

One of the reasons for the new directions is that Clark has been co-writing with particular effectiveness. Six of the ten songs on *Old Friends* were written in conjunction with songwriter notables

Richard Leigh, Roger Murrah, Richard Dobson and Guy's wife, Suzanna Clark. He even covers songs by two other Texas writers: "The Indian Cowboy" by Joe Ely and Townes Van Zandt's beautiful "To Live Is to Fly."

Clark has also taken to narrowing his songwriting canvas just a little. In delightfully word-heavy early masterpieces like "Desperadoes Waiting For a Train" he evoked the central themes and emotions by encircling them in a swirl of seductive visual images. By contrast, in some of the most powerful songs on *Old Friends*—like "Come From the Heart" (which reminds us that very little worthwhile comes without some emotional risks), "All Through Throwin' Good Love After Bad" (which makes the qualifying point that it's a waste of time throwing such risks away on the wrong people!), and the powerful title song—Clark has whittled the imagery down and uses disarmingly simple metaphors to focus as clearly as possible on the kernel of emotional truth that is the essence of all great songs.

*Old Friends* has its lighter moments, as well, which work just as well—"Heavy Metal" (another one covered recently by Johnny Cash) and "Doctor Good Doctor" ("I'm okay if you're okay...if the check's okay") are numbers which have been crowd-pleasers in his live shows for some time.

The production on *Old Friends* is delightfully austere. There are some wonderful guest harmony vocals from friends like Rosanne Cash, Rodney Crowell, Vince Gill and Emmylou Harris; and there are instrumental assists from Gill, Sam Bush and any number of others.

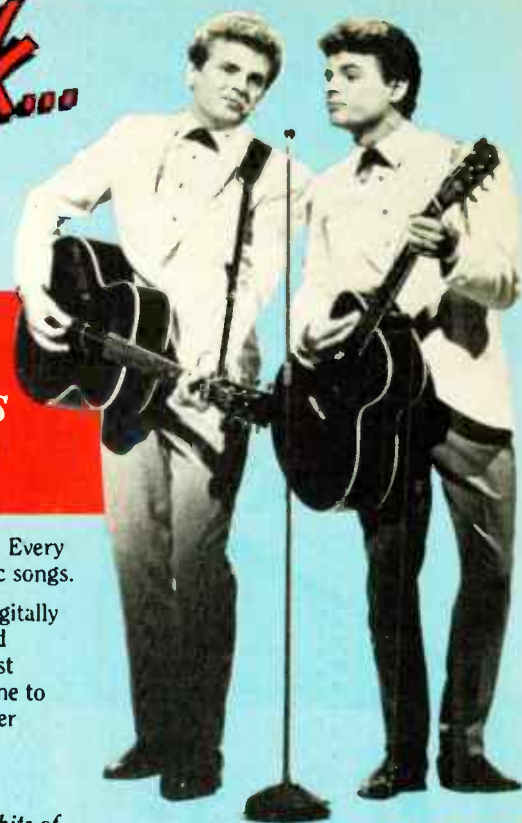
But mostly *Old Friends* is just Guy Clark, his growling baritone and his acoustic guitar, just doing what he does best, and doing it as good as he's ever done it.

—BOB ALLEN

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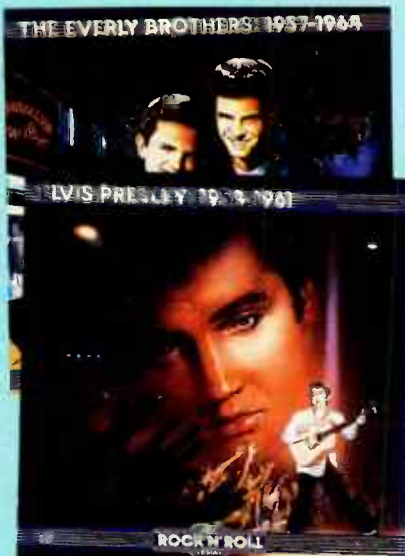
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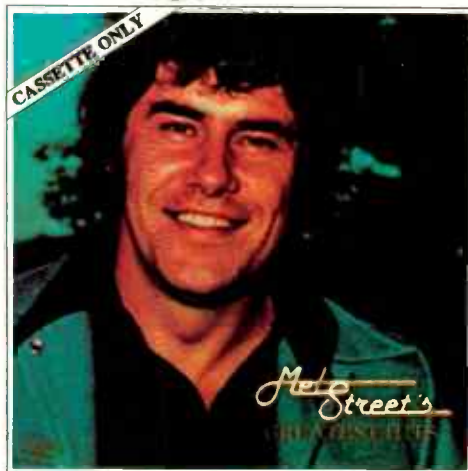
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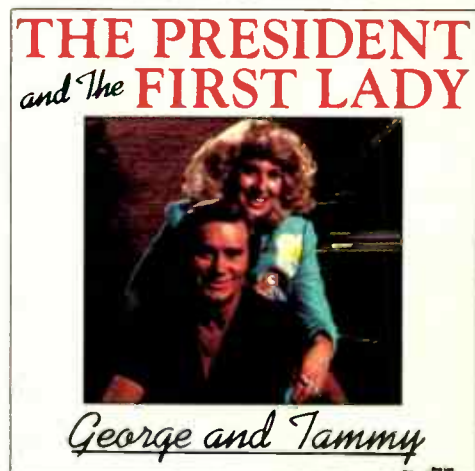
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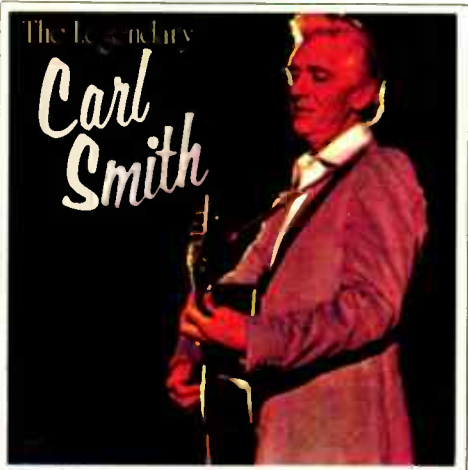
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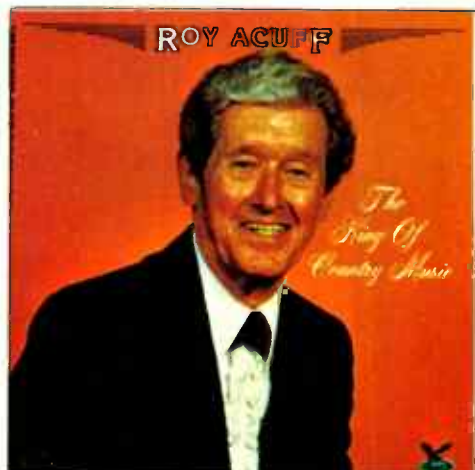
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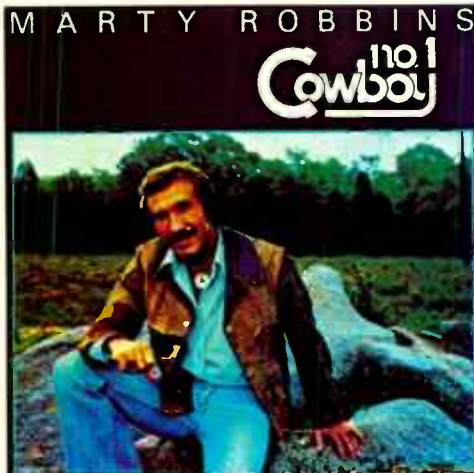
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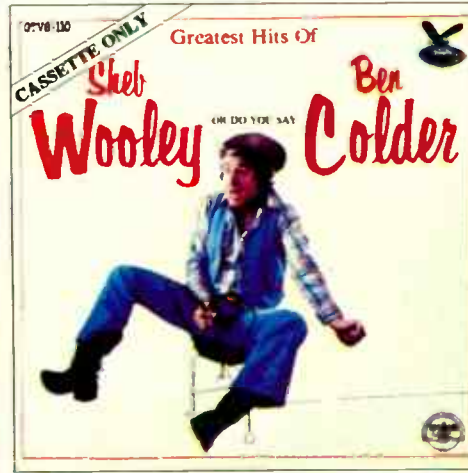
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# 20 Questions with CHARLIE DANIELS

At times it seems like Charlie Daniels has been around as long as the hills. He traded picking tobacco in North Carolina for picking guitar in Nashville, went on to become a hero in Southern music and cut some legendary records, including "Long-Haired Country Boy" and "Devil Went Down to Georgia." He still produces a hard-rocking, rollicking honky tonk record, and he's got no shortage of strong opinions—witness his recent "Uneasy Rider II," which takes a broad swat at gay bars. We caught up with Charlie on the way to a golf course in Tucson and convinced him to answer 20 Questions.

1

Listening to *Homesick Heroes*, I think I'm listening to a newer, revitalized sound.

Well, Michael, if you'll go back and listen to *Fire on the Mountain* and albums like that, I think you'll see that the music is basically the same, in the same vein. I mean, I hope our music is getting better, you know. But what we're doing is what we've always been doing. We were there when it first started happening, and we're still going at it.

2

Tell me a little about "Uneasy Rider II."

Well, it's just a song. It's been 18 years since "Uneasy Rider," and things changed so much over that period of time. Back then, people were worried about the Vietnam War and civil rights. Now, you know, almost 20 years later, the top entertainer in the country, Bill Cosby, is black, the top talk show host, Oprah Winfrey, is black—incredible the way things change. I mean, most of the guys in that bar I sang about in "Uneasy Rider" are probably in their sixties now.

3

Have you taken any heat from "Uneasy Rider II?"

by Michael Bane

I got a real nasty letter from a gay guy up north, and I'm gonna answer it when I get back to Tennessee. Over the years, I've made fun of everybody—preachers, rednecks, *everybody*. Now, you know I don't think gay is good. I think it's wrong. Bad. Brought us a lot of bad things. But that's not the point. The point is, if you want to come out of the closet, if you want to be a part of the mainstream, you've got to be willing to be picked on.

**4**

**Everybody has to take their hits?**

Yes. Right now, in this country, if you say anything against homosexuals or women, immediately you're a chauvinist. Don't matter what you say. Chauvinist! Heck, most of the people who call you a chauvinist don't even have any idea what they're calling you. Do you know where the word chauvinist came from?

**5**

**As a matter of fact, no. Where did it come from?**

From a French guy, Chauvin, who ran sweatshops. I think a lot of the people who call me a chauvinist are bigots...

**6**

**Considering we're probably going to get letters...**

Wait. There are some things a woman shouldn't do. Heck, there are some things a man shouldn't do. But I've seen women out front of the stage on the barricades, where if some of the things happened that I've seen happen, those women are going to get hurt. And some of the other people are going to get hurt because they're going to be trying to take care of the women. Now, when it comes to equal pay for equal work, that's something different. You talk to the women who work for me and see how they're paid.

**7**

Well, at least with "Uneasy Rider II," you don't have to



**play "Uneasy Rider" all the time...**

I've never minded playing that song, Michael. I think of it as one of the three or four classic songs CDB has done.

**8**

**What do you consider your other classics?**

"The Devil Went Down to Georgia," "Long-Haired Country Boy," maybe "In America." Oh yeah, and "The South's Gonna Do It Again," which is maybe the biggest classic we've ever done.

**9**

**Do you think Southern music is changing?**

You know, I never much considered Southern music as a genre, because all American music is Southern music. All America has given the world in music is jazz and country and blues, and they're all from the South. It's basic music. When you get back down to it, to blues, to country, to jazz, you always come back to the South. I don't even know what to call Southern music any more...

**10**

**It's a broader term...**

Right. People say Southern music, and they think of us and the Tuckers or the Allman Brothers or Lynyrd Skynyrd. But they should also be thinking of Wayne Cochran and Curtis Mayfield, people across the spectrum of music.

**11**

**Might be easier to suggest someone who isn't tied to the South...**

Michael Jackson doesn't fit my stereotype of Southern music.

**12**

**Not a fan of Top 40 radio are you?**

How much of that stuff can you stand? Michael, I would as soon crank up my chainsaw and sit out back and listen to it run as listen to this stuff on the radio.

**13**

**How about some specifics?**

Rap. That ain't music. The first time I heard it, I thought it was just a novelty song, you know. Like some people just took some machines and made noise. But then you hear another one and another one. Heck, it's nothing new—just the talking blues with all the talent taken out of it.

**14**

**Is there anything you like about it?**

I have liked some of all kinds of music, found some redeeming feature in every kind of music. But I'll tell you what, this stuff that's out now, some of this heavy metal satanic kind of stuff, I just wish someone would have enough guts to stand up and say, "Hey, people, this is bad. Wrong! Rotten!" I cannot understand what this generation sees in this music.

**15**

**How is the quarterhorse business going?**

Well, it's going real good, Michael. We've got about 30 or 35 head on the ranch. But we've been on the road so much lately that I haven't had much time to spend at the ranch. With "Boogie Woogie Fiddle Country Blues" in the Top Ten on the charts, you

got to get out there and work it.

**16**

**I hear you're getting your own office building out in Mt. Juliet.**

We got this two-story log building about a quarter-mile from the ranch that we're going to move the office to. Cowboy it up real good. You know, I've kind of got an allergy about going into Nashville—it's getting big and crowded and dirty, a real big city now. I think I'd rather stay out in the country.

**17**

**How is Charlie Jr.?**

One more year at the University of Tennessee. He's studying drama and theater, but when he gets out, I'd really like for him to come work with me. This business could use a steady hand like his. But if he wants to go to L.A. and be an actor, that's good, too.

**18**

**You guys did the video on "Boogie Woogie Fiddle Country Blues" yourself. Is that something you'd like to do more of?**

It is, and I can see us eventually being set up to do video things. But only if we have control of them. I don't like this talk about it, talk about it, break for lunch. When it's time to do it, do it.

**19**

**Is that how you do your albums?**

You bet. We put in some 12 or 13-hour days on *Homesick Heroes*. We got in there and got it done, because we wanted to do a good album. I seen some groups get in the studio and start writing their songs there, which is some mighty expensive writing time.

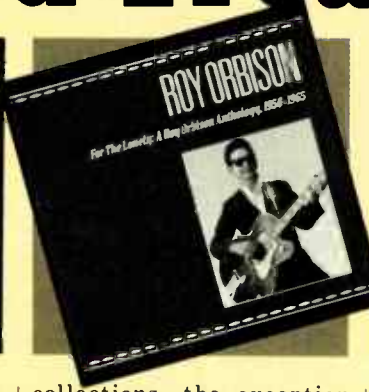
**20**

**How's your golf game?**

As lousy as ever. I'm going to go out this afternoon and see if I can lose 25 balls instead of just 12. ■

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Rarities and the  
Hard-to-Find



**Carl Smith:** The only Carl Smith music around the past couple of years has been the excellent Columbia Historic Edition album, released in 1984. Since that series appears to have ended, it's good that Rounder has picked up the ball with *Old Lonesome Times* (Rounder SS 25). This is vintage Smith from his greatest and most important period: 1951-56, when he piled up 22 Top Ten hits. There was nothing cute or smooth about his music, which had a drive few others could equal.

Twelve numbers, mostly hits, are here, all original versions, including "Let Old Mother Nature Have Her Way," "Hey, Joe!," "It's a Lovely, Lovely World" (which Gail Davies revived seven years ago), "Loose Talk," "Old Lonesome Times," "If Tears Were Pennies," "You Are the One" and Hank Williams' "Me and My Broken Heart." Smith's raw, throaty baritone stood out in those days almost as much as Lefty Frizzell's or Webb Pierce's. You knew who it was after the first few seconds. Charles Wolfe's excellent notes help make the music come alive.

**George Jones:** Someday someone will put together a complete collection of all George Jones' classic material. Considering how much he's recorded (spanning several labels), it will be high-priced and probably include several dozen albums' worth of material. Recently, however, there've been few Jones

collections, the exception being *Blue Moon of Kentucky* (EMI/Liberty EMS 1251). This new 20-song collection from his early 1960's period with United Artists focuses mainly on George's versions of other artists' hits, all done in his own style. from Buck Owens' "Love's Gonna Live Here" (Buck has cited George as an early influence) and Hank Williams' "I Heard You Crying in Your Sleep" to Webb Pierce's "Yes, I Know Why," Hank Locklin's "The Same Sweet Girl" and "Precious Jewel," the Roy Acuff favorite.

"Please Be My Love," his own 1964 hit with Melba Montgomery, is included, as are three selections from his ultra-rare United Artists album, *George Jones Sings Like the Dickens*, a collection of Little Jimmy Dickens favorites: "We Could," "Makin' the Rounds" and "Lovin' Lies" among them. If you like Dwight Yoakam's gospel material, then you'll like George's "Matthew Twenty Four" and "Beacon In the Night," which are in the same mold. The rest of the material consists of lesser-known performances, not hits, including a hot version of "Blue Moon of Kentucky" with Melba.

**Hank Williams Sr.** Several years ago, Polygram released *Hank Williams' 40 Greatest Hits*, an outstanding United States version of a two-album collection originally conceived and released in England. It had every Hank song

that mattered, rather than every single number as claimed by the series of two-album sets that purports to release everything by Hank. But until now, there have been no comprehensive Hank Williams collections on compact disc.

Polygram has just remedied that situation by issuing *40 Greatest Hits* (821 233-2) on a two-CD set to create the first-ever official Hank collection on CD. In the process they totally redid the record to maximize the sound. If you have a CD player, you need this. If you don't, you might think about buying one, because more contemporary and vintage country material is coming out every month in this format. The sound on this particular collection, though not fantastic, gives Hank's vocals more presence than any album on record. If you can think of a Hank song that was popular at all, it's on this one. The original notes by Tony Byworth of the British magazine *Country Music People* are still excellent. If you don't want CD's, the album is still available.

**RCA Heritage Series:** RCA's U.S. office has shamefully neglected its vast holdings of vintage country music in recent years, so their new Heritage Series, available only on compact disc, with incredible sound, is a clear step up. *Ragged But Right: Great Country String Bands of the 1930's* (RCA 8416-2-R) compiles 18 well-known pre-

bluegrass stringband numbers, among them Riley Puckett's "Ragged But Right," "Hawkins' Rag" with Ted Hawkins, Gid Tanner and his Skillet Lickers' "Ida Red," "Soldier's Joy," five numbers by the early Prairie Ramblers and a Patsy Montana cut that doesn't fit the collection's theme. More appropriate are the Wade Mainer/Zeke Morris sides that pointed the way to bluegrass. This is the first time any of this material's appeared on CD.

Eighteen well-known numbers from various 1930's duos make up *Are You From Dixie? Great Country Brother Teams of the 1930's* (RCA 8417-2-R), from the Allen Brothers' "New Salty Dog" to two by the Lone Star Cowboys. The Delmore Brothers' "Big River Blues" and two other cuts are here, but not "Brown's Ferry Blues," their best known early number. Of three Monroe Brothers songs, why was their best-known number, "What Would You Give in Exchange For Your Soul," left out? Where's the Rouse Brothers' original 1939 "Orange Blossom Special"? The problem may be producer Billy Altman, an ex-rock critic whose lack of expertise shows in the notes. Experts in early stringband music like Dave Freeman, Tony Russell or Charles Wolfe should have been involved at some point.

**Red Simpson:** If Dwight Yoakam has you hungering to hear the real Bakersfield



sound, you need Red Simpson's *Roll, Truck, Roll* (Stetson HAT 3074). This 1966 collection of trucker standards was recorded for Capitol some time before Simpson's big hit, "I'm a Truck." As you might expect, it includes his versions of trucker standards such as Dave Dudley's "Six Days on the Road," the Willis Brothers' "Give Me Forty Acres" and the first trucker tune, Cliff Bruner's "Truck Driver's Blues."

Most of the lesser-known material consists of original songs by Simpson's Bakersfield neighbors. Tommy Collins wrote the title track. Buck Owens and Red penned "Motivatin' Man," "My Baby's Waitin'" and "Runaway Truck." This great specimen of mid-1960's Bakersfield complete with twanging Telecaster and a high-pitched brittle-sounding steel that can only be Ralph Mooney is one you might be inclined to pass by because of Simpson's obscurity. Don't. Stetson soon plans to re-release Red's *Man Behind the Badge*, a Capitol album of songs about policemen also originally released about 1966.

**Wanda Jackson:** With all the reader interest in Wanda lately, it should please her fans that a reproduction of her 1967 Capitol album *The Best of Wanda Jackson* (SM-2883) is available, imported from Barbados. It covers her early 1960's successes; only one of her 1950's rockabilly performances appears, her explosive version of Elvis' "Let's Have a Party." However, it does include her biggest country hits, "In the Middle of a Heartache" and "Right or Wrong" (1961), "If I Cried Every Time You Hurt Me" (1962), "The Violet and a Rose" (1964) and "Tears Will Be a Chaser For Your Wine" (1966).

For some reason, lesser hits during this period, "Because It's You" among them, aren't included, while non-hits, including "Santo Domingo," "Kickin' Our Hearts Around" and "Reck-

less Love Affair" are. Since no album available covers *any* of her big hits at the present time, this one's certainly of value, and the liner notes by Hank Thompson, who discovered Wanda in the 1950's and helped get her signed to Capitol, are a charming account of how he first met her in Oklahoma City.

**Jerry Lee Lewis:** Sometimes when we jump up and down over various box sets that include every cough, strum and belch an artist laid down in the studio, we forget that some of you mainly want the essential hits. Rhino Records is a California-based label that specializes in reissuing comedy albums and vintage rock from the 1950's to the 1970's. They've done several albums of interest to Buried Treasures readers and, rumor has it, plan to go deeper into country music this year.

*Milestones* (RNDA 1499) is a two-album set covering Jerry Lee Lewis' biggest rock and country hits for Sun and Mercury. This one starts with "End of the Road," "Great Balls of Fire" and "Whole Lotta Shakin'" from the early Sun days and continues on to "What'd I Say" in 1963. A disc and a half cover the Sun sides. Side two, album two, covers the biggest hits from Smash from 1963 to 1977: "I'm on Fire," "Another

Place, Another Time," "What's Made Milwaukee Famous," "Me and Bobby McGee" and his last big hit with Smash, "Middle Age Crazy," from 1977.

**Roy Orbison:** Even before his death in December, a Roy Orbison revival was going on, what with his all-star Cinemax special and his recent work with Bob Dylan, George Harrison, Tom Petty, etc. as *The Traveling Wilburys*. One item long unavailable has been a decent collection of the material that earned him that fame. The bankruptcy of Monument Records, where he did his greatest work in the 1960's, was a factor. CBS Records now owns the Monument catalog, making it possible for Rhino to compile *For the Lonely: A Roy Orbison Anthology (1956-1965)* (R12P 71493).

It begins with his best-known work for Sun, the original "Ooby Dooby," "Go! Go! Go!" and "Rockhouse" that first gained him attention before he moved into the majestic ballads of the Monument era, ranging from "Only the Lonely," "Crying," "Blue Bayou" and Willie Nelson's "Pretty Paper" to rockers like "Candy Man," "Mean Woman Blues" and, of course, "Oh, Pretty Woman," all cut in Nashville. The album and cassette have 24 songs, the compact disc has 18. These

songs will serve as Orbison's musical epitaph.

**Johnny Cash:** Cash collections have been a dime a dozen in recent years, yet none (except one long out-of-print Time-Life set) has combined his Sun and earlier Columbia sides in a single package. Rhino's *Johnny Cash: The Vintage Years (1955-1963)* (RNLP 70229) does. You know the material—"Hey, Porter," "Folsom Prison Blues," "I Walk the Line," "Get Rhythm," "Home of the Blues," "Rock Island Line," "Guess Things Happen That Way" and "Ballad of a Teenage Queen" from Sun.

From his early days with Columbia come "Big River," "Always Alone," "Don't Take Your Guns to Town," "I Still Miss Someone," his version of George Jones' "Seasons of My Heart" and "Ring of Fire." The later Columbia period isn't covered, but other CBS albums fill in those gaps.

**Everly Brothers:** If you're a Sweethearts of the Rodeo fan, you've probably noticed the considerable influence The Everly Brothers have had on them. They even recorded at least one Everly number on both their albums. Though The Everlys were seen as a rock act, their country roots are well-known, and all their big hits for Cadence Records were recorded in Nashville with some of the city's hottest pickers, Chet Atkins, Hank Garland and Ray Edenton among them, and the biggest hits from these sessions crossed over to country.

If you don't have any of this material, and every collector should, Rhino's *The Best of the Everly Brothers* (RNLP 70173) covers all the essentials, including "Bye, Bye, Love," "Wake Up, Little Suzie," "Bird Dog," "Let It Be Me," "Dream," "When Will I Be Loved" and "Take a Message to Mary." This music blurred the boundaries between country and rock as much as anything did. As hard as some of it rocked, it was still in the tradition of The Louvin Brothers or Johnny and Jack.

—RICH KIENZLE

### How to Get These Treasures

Available on records or cassettes at prices shown: Carl Smith, *Old Lonesome Times* (Rounder SS 25) \$10.98/George Jones, *Blue Moon of Kentucky* (EMI/Liberty EMS 1251) \$11.98/Red Simpson, *Roll, Truck, Roll* (HAT 3074) \$10.98/Wanda Jackson, *The Best of Wanda Jackson* (SM-2883) \$11.98/Jerry Lee Lewis, *Milestones* (RNDA 1499) \$12.98/Johnny Cash, *Johnny Cash: The Vintage Years (1955-1963)* (RNLP 70229) \$9.98/Everly Brothers, *The Best of the Everly Brothers* (RNLP 70173) \$9.98. Available on compact discs, records or cassettes at prices shown: Hank Williams Sr., *40 Greatest Hits* (Polygram 821 233-2) \$12.98 for compact discs, \$9.98 for records or cassettes/Roy Orbison, *For the Lonely: A Roy Orbison Anthology (1956-1965)* (R12P71493) \$17.98 for compact discs, \$14.98 for records or cassettes. Available in compact discs only at prices shown: Various artists, *Ragged But Right: Great Country String Bands of the 1930's* (RCA 8416-2-R) \$11.98/Various artists, *Are You From Dixie? Great Country Brother Teams of the 1930's* (RCA 8417-2-R) \$11.98.

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# TOP 25

## Singles

1. Randy Travis ..... *Deeper Than The Holler*
2. Alabama ..... *Song of the South*
3. Earl Thomas Conley ... *What I'd Say*
4. Skip Ewing ..... *Burnin' A Hole In My Heart*
5. Dan Seals ..... *Big Wheels in the Moonlight*
6. Dwight Yoakam ..... *I Sang Dixie*
7. Kathy Mattea ..... *Life as We Knew It*
8. The Forester Sisters ... *Sincerely*
9. Rodney Crowell ..... *She's Crzay for Leaving*
10. The Desert Rose Band *I Still Believe In You*
11. Gene Watson ..... *Don't Waste it on The Blues*
12. Holly Dunn ..... *(It's Always Gonna Be)  
Someday*
13. Tanya Tucker ..... *Highway Robbery*
14. Steve Wariner ..... *Hold On (A Little Longer)*
15. J.C. Crowley ..... *Paint the Town and Hang the  
Moon Tonight*
16. Eddy Raven ..... *'Til You Cry*
17. Highway 101 ..... *All The Reasons Why*
18. Conway Twitty ..... *I Wish I Was Still In  
Your Dreams*
19. Southern Pacific ..... *Honey I Dare You*
20. Ronnie Milsap ..... *Don't You Ever Get Tired  
(Of Hurting Me)*
21. The Oak Ridge Boys ... *Bridges and Walls*
22. Larry Boone ..... *I Just Called to Say  
Goodbye Again*
23. Mickey Gilley ..... *She Reminded Me of You*
24. Sweethearts  
of the Rodeo ..... *I Feel Fine*
25. Ricky Van Shelton .... *From a Jack to a King*

## Albums

1. Randy Travis ..... *Old 8 x 10*
2. Ricky Van Shelton .... *Loving Proof*
3. K.T. Oslin ..... *This Woman*
4. Dwight Yoakam ..... *Buenas Noches From a  
Lonely Room*
5. The Judds ..... *Greatest Hits*
6. Reba McEntire ..... *Reba*
7. Hank Williams Jr. .... *Wild Streak*
8. Willie Nelson ..... *What a Wonderful World*
9. George Strait ..... *If You Ain't Lovin'  
You Ain't Livin'*
10. Restless Heart ..... *Big Dreams in a Small Town*
11. Highway 101 ..... *101 2*
12. Randy Travis ..... *Always & Forever*
13. The Oak Ridge Boys .. *Monongahela*
14. Rosanne Cash ..... *King's Record Shop*
15. Ricky Van Shelton .... *Wild Eyed Dream*
16. Tanya Tucker ..... *Strong Enough To Bend*
17. Steve Earle ..... *Copperhead Road*
18. Vern Gosdin ..... *Chiseled In Stone*
19. Dan Seals ..... *Rage On*
20. Rodney Crowell ..... *Diamonds & Dirt*
21. The Charlie Daniels  
Band ..... *Homesick Heroes*
22. The Statler Brothers ... *The Statlers Greatest Hits*
23. Kathy Mattea ..... *Untasted Honey*
24. K.T. Oslin ..... *80's Ladies*
25. Keith Whitley ..... *Don't Close Your Eyes*

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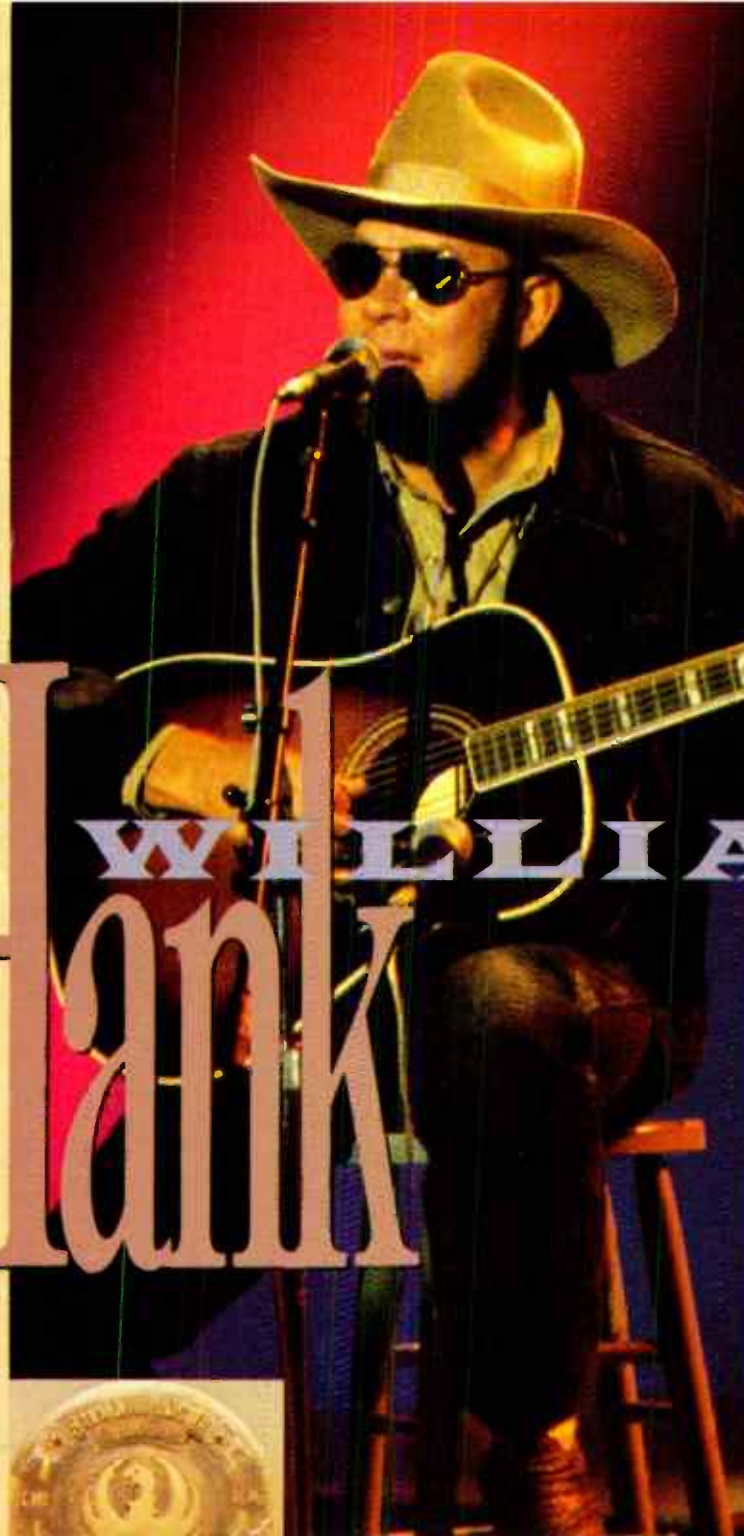
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