

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1997

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# COUNTRY MUSIC



**GEORGE STRAIT**  
Pull-Out Poster

**JOE DIFFIE**

**DEANA CARTER**

LETTERS FROM NASHVILLE:

**MARTY STUART**  
& THE COWBOY

**SHANIA**  
**TWAIN**

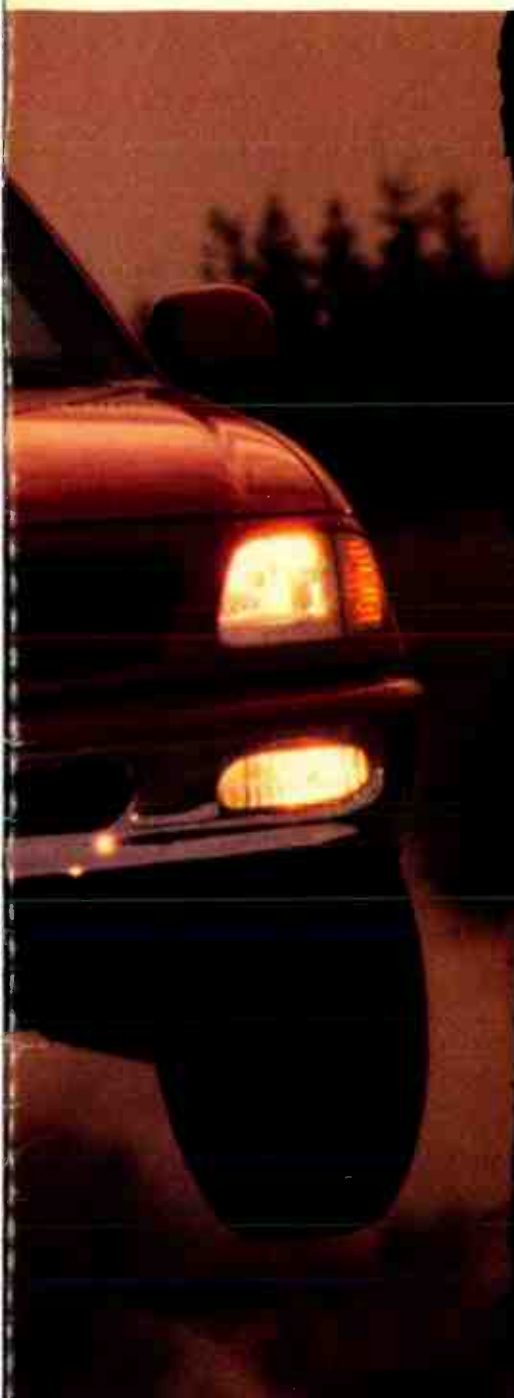
**After the Gold Rush**





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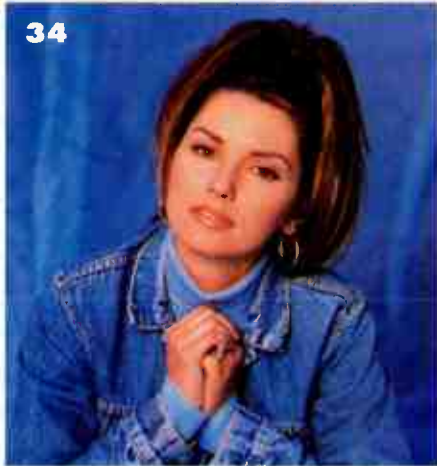


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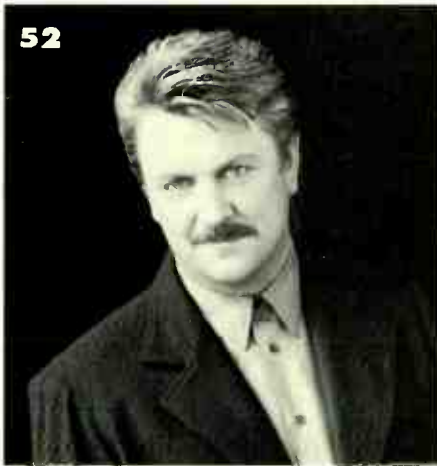
# COUNTRY MUSIC



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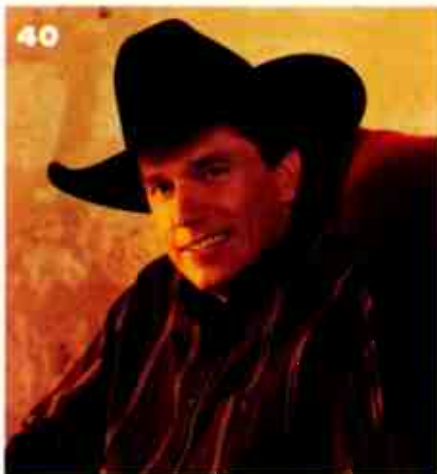
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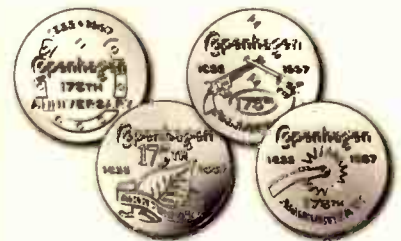
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World Radio History

# People

## I LUV KIM RICHEY

The old adage, "to know her is to love her," surely applies to **Kim Richey**. I'd love to see her at Number One on country radio, but this hasn't happened yet. Kim, however, was made aware that her music is "flying high." While attending Richey's show at the Birchmere in Alexandria, Virginia, **Bill Clinton**, the President of the United States, said to Kim, "You know, you've been on Air Force One." "I didn't even see the movie," replied the ever-quick-to-turn-a-phrase Kim. The prez replied, "Yes, you have. We have both your CD's on the plane." I wish radio was that smart. President Clinton was accompanied by First Lady **Hillary Clinton**, and Vice President **Al Gore** attended with his wife, **Tipper**. Reports are they all enjoyed the music.

## TRISHA SHINES

The call comes through at 11 A.M. and the party is at 4 P.M. that day. Can I make it? Can a duck swim? The "chosen few" esteemed hacks of Music Town gathered in the lobby of MCA Records to honor one of our great divas, **Trisha Yearwood**, whose brand new album, *Songbook: A Collection of Hits*, sold 125,000 the week before and debuted at Number One on the country charts. The 12-song record contains Trisha's recent Number One single, "How Do I Live," from the movie *Con Air*, as well as the hit duet with **Garth Brooks**, "In Another's Eyes," and most of her previous hits. A couple minutes after the appointed hour, up the steps came **Garth** and **Sandy Brooks** with flowers for Trisha. It was quite a moving tribute, each to the other, as Trisha and Garth described how both careers have influenced their friendship. Trisha was quick to give Garth credit for hers since she was his opening act, and Garth, of course, would not accept that. Trisha, sans makeup, wore a purple shirt with black pants. Sandy was in a stunning black number, and Garth wore his usual jeans, shirt and boots without his hat. Trisha's hubby, **The Mavericks' Robert Reynolds**, standing quietly on the side-



Kim Richey and her band members visit with **Tipper Gore**, Vice President **Al Gore**, President **Clinton** and First Lady **Hillary**.

lines, wore a burgundy embroidered stage shirt and jeans. When I spoke with Robert, he told me that he and Trisha had been together four days in six weeks. Robert, ain't show biz grand!

## DIAMOND DOLLY

We were made aware that the ever-enterprising **Dolly Parton** plans to appear in a musical she's writing about her life, skedded to premiere at her Dollywood amusement park in East Tennessee next season. Dolly said they were building the show so she could be "plugged in" whenever she is in town. She'll be there for the opening, and then various dates thereafter. Rumor has it that Dolly wants to spend more time at home in Tennessee. There are those who think part of the reason is the biased opinions of the powers that be in Hollywood about country music and country people. She's tried for a few years to get a sitcom off the ground there. The sitcom is now "on the back burner."

You know, during the tenure of his

sitcom, comedian **Jeff Foxworthy** faced the same bias and abuse in Hollywood as Dolly. I asked him about it during a press conference, and he confirmed. By the way, every pre-schooler in Sevier County receives a free book every month through "Imagination Express," one of Dolly's many charities to help educate the children in the hills where she was born.

## A WINNER

I am humbly proud to share with all you marvelous readers that WFMS in Indianapolis, the radio station that I flap my mouth on every morning with all the news from Twang Town, was named the 1997 Station of the Year in the large market category by the Country Music Association. I don't know exactly who chooses or how they choose the stations, but I know all year long WFMS sponsors live shows featuring baby acts showcasing their talent as well as superstar concerts. Plus, they do the annual Country Music Expo and an annual 4th of July Fan Jam.

Reporter: *Hazel Smith*

Editors: *Rochelle Friedman/George Fletcher*

# People



Steven Seagal's latest movie, *Fire Down Below*, co-stars Mark Collie, and features music by Jeff Wood among others. The three were on hand for an appearance on TNN's *Prime Time Country* the day of the movie's premiere.

## FIRE DOWN BELOW MUSIC CITY PREMIERE

Actor **Steven Seagal** came to town for the premiere of his movie, *Fire Down Below*, which was shot in Kentucky and has a country soundtrack. First week out of the box, the film generated a whopping \$6.1 million dollars, the biggest money maker of the week! Seagal co-wrote several songs for the movie with his hillbilly pals. Songwriters making big, big bucks! Local celebs **Ed Bruce**, **Mark Collie** and **Aaron Tippin** had prominent roles in the flick and walked the red carpet to the premiere and party which followed at Planet Hollywood. Also seen were **Ashley Judd**, **Vince Gill**, **Michael Bolton**, **Billy Ray Cyrus**, **Patsy and Peggy Lynn** (Loretha's singing twins), **T Graham Brown**, **Jeff Wood** and **Crystal Gayle**. Seagal's singing performance on-stage outside Planet Hollywood proved he ain't no **George Jones**, but he ain't bad. Listen, anytime Hollywood favors us by using our songs or our singers to make a movie, I am pleased. It's that looking down their noses, poking fun and lying that gets my dander up....

## CONGRATS, STEPHONY

Honoring songwriter **Stephony Smith**, who penned **Tim McGraw's** recent hit, "It's Your Love," not only did the singer and his duet partner/wife, **Faith Hill**, show up, they

brought baby **Grace Katherine**. The song was Number One for six weeks and won them the CMA Vocal Event of the Year award. Faith, back to her own svelte self, wore one of those black trendy pant dresses, and little Grace was dressed in denim coveralls. Daddy Tim wore the usual jeans, shirt, boots and hat. Congratulations, especially to Stephony, who's made it as a female songwriter on Music Row. No easy task.

## EVERYBODY'S MOVING ON MUSICTOWN

Used pop stars, famed and near-famed and even actors keep making their moves on Musictown. The latest is TV host **Larry King**. The much married King wed 37-year-old **Shawn Southwick**, a wannabe country music singer. Larry King has been trotting up and down Music Row with Southwick a-looking for a record deal. Ain't love grand.

## DIDJA TRACE

I love **Trace Adkins** and, shoot, yes, I attended his Number One party at ASCAP for "I Left Something Turned On at Home" (penned by Billy Lawson and John Schweers). Looking at Mrs. Adkins (**Rhonda Forlaw Adkins**), I don't believe Trace left anything turned on at home that needed turning off. Now didja, Trace? See, Rhonda is in the family way and wore her hatching jacket to the do. Trace is doing

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# People



**BOX CAR WILLIE FEELING BETTER** Box Car Willie received standing ovations at each of the four sets he performed the night of his triumphant return to the Grand Ole Opry. Box Car had been away from the Opry for ten months, battling leukemia, which has now gone into remission. Backstage, there were tear-filled smiles as his Opry brothers and sisters welcomed him back. Onstage, he acknowledged the warm welcome.

Why would Sam be showing baseballers Opry backstage? Cause his son, **Torey Lovullo**, also plays with the Bisons.

Funnyman **Mike Snider** said, "For the first time this year, me and **Alan Jackson** made the same amount of money." Course, all Opry stars get paid the exact same amount of money. Mike has used the same line with **Garth Brooks**, **Vince Gill** and other superstars, and it always gets a big laugh.

## RAY STEVENS ATTACKS CHRISTMAS

Dining with **Ray Stevens** is unlike viewing "Ahab the Arab" or "Mississippi Squirrel Revival" on video. But it is genuinely amusing and entertaining. As Ray, **Buddy Kalb** (who writes a lot of the demented stuff Stevens performs) and I had lunch at the Nashville Country Club, talking about his comedy Christmas record titled *Christmas Through a Different Window*, I smiled and laughed a whole lot. Ray does look at the world through a shattered windshield. He sees the "laugh with" humor of everyday life. Of such is his marvelous holiday record, which exaggerates to make a point, yet is an image of you and me during the month of December. After listening to the music, here's my conclusion:

*Christmas Through a Different Window* is for adults who hate shopping, especially for cynics who sing "'Tis the Sea-

some singing for Ford Trucks on TV in several states including Tennessee, Alabama, Louisiana and others.

And I was at ASCAP for **Shelby Kennedy's** farewell party. After ten years serving the cream of the crop of songwriters, Shelby joined the brand-spanking new Disney label, Lyric Street. He will work in the A&R department. **Randy Goodman** was named president of the label, and **Doug Howard** is Senior Vice President A&R/General Manager. First signees are **Aaron Tippin** and **Lari White**. Let Mickey sing!

## MR. FORD MAN

Word I get is Ford has sold more trucks and made more money on trucks in the seven months that **Alan Jackson** has been singing their praises than ever before in history. I wasn't able to get the amount in millions, but it's on up there, so reliable sources say. I'd suggested that Ford would be working 24-hour days, seven-day weeks with the long-legged wonder singing that he was gonna be driving one. Madison Avenue, are you listening? If the Jackson boy from Newman can sell trucks, so can a dozen more guys and gals. Just be sure the singers are traditional, like Alan. See, Big Apple, that's believable.

You all do know the Jackson five are doing fine in Tennessee, don't you? There's Alan and Denise and their three princesses, **Mattie Denise**, **Alexandra Jane** and **Dani Grace**. The girls are called Mattie, Ali and Dani.

## BACKSTAGE OPRY

Fabo **Sam Lovullo**, producer of the great *Hee Haw* TV show, was backstage with three baseball players from the Buffalo Bisons Triple A baseball team who were in town to play the Nashville Sounds.

## SARA TAKES A BITE OF THE BIG APPLE



RCA newcomer Sara Evans wowed the crowd when she made her New York City debut at Tramps recently. Sara, whose first album—*Three Chords and the Truth*—is out now, opened for Arista's BR5-49. Also on the bill that night was Wayne Hancock. Shown here, BR5's Chuck Mead, Maverick Nick Kane (who played in Sara's band for the evening), Sara, and another BR5-er, Jay McDowell.

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# People

son Not To Be Jolly." You will find yourself in "Guilt for Christmas." "I Won't Be Home for Christmas" is a message song to family members pleading for a non-invasion this holiday. As the title implies, they won't be home. A little bluegrass picking, as Ray threatens to combine every holiday into one for the "Greatest Little Christmas Ever Wuz." "Home for the Holidays" is not wanting to go through the same exact routine of driving all that mileage with kids to visit eccentric relatives every year. Course mama threatens daddy's death and off they go. "Redneck Christmas" is what the title says, sort of a **Jeff Foxworthy** story in song sung in the comedic manner of **Lonzo &**

**Oscar.** "Xerox Xmas Letter" is from the point of view of a 20-year veteran of the same double wide who has an aluminum tree, after he receives an annual greeting from former neighbors whose dreams turned to money. Eating pizza causes Ray a "Nightmare Before Christmas," when he dreams Santa Claus is cruel to reindeer. All of us have been unlucky enough to attend "The Annual Office Christmas Party" when somebody throws up on the boss or his wife. "The Little Drummer Boy-Next Door" ain't your ordinary "Little Drummer Boy." It's about a kid who lives next door and beats on a toy drum like beating a metal trash can lid with a hammer. Ray develops a fair

sounding lisp for "Bad Little Boy," while "Santa Claus Is Watching You" is a "used" Ray Stevens favorite.

## ON THE ROW

I was so relieved when I finally saw **Michael Peterson** in person. He so "unlooked" like the current crop of country stars it was comforting. Slouching as he walked, with his shirt tail out over a tee, jeans and hat, all so unaffected and comfortable. His pleasant countenance, his ease with people and the fact that he was weaned over 35 years ago all added to the obvious: a natural born star sans the manufactured look of tight butt, dimples and Elvis pout. Plus the fact he come out of the chute with "Drink, Swear, Steal and Lie," a killer record. His self-penned songs are worth your hard-earned money is the word on the Row. Would I lie to a country fan? Never.

## THREE MILLION AND STILL SELLING

**Deana Carter's** incredible climb to stardom is overwhelming. The Goodlettsville native was all smiles when we celebrated her success at the Hermitage Hotel recently. There were so many people in attendance it looked like one of the many cocktail hours preceding an awards banquet. By the way, didja know that her hubby, handsome **Chris DiCroce**, plays Deana's love interest in her Number One video, "We Danced Anyway." A nice touch.

## CHET'S SENSE OF HUMOR

Being ill from cancer and having surgery has not messed with the sense of humor of the great **Chet Atkins**. When Chet was honored by Nashville's Metro Council he quipped, "I've had so many accolades lately I think everybody thinks I'm gonna die." This ain't never gonna happen, Chester B.

## RANDY MOVES

**Randy Travis** who turned some hearts and heads around in the mid-80's with his traditional music, has left Warner Bros. and signed with the new Dream Works label headed up by **James Stroud** and **Byron Gallimore**. Not only will Randy make music there, he will also be involved in major films and TV projects. I am not at all surprised at his decision, what with Mr. *E.T.* himself, **Steve Spielberg**, being a major player at the West Coast parent company. I hope Randy makes some great movies, but I can't wait for him to record some more great records. I miss his music.

## MUSIC CITY TWINS



Two pairs of twin sisters are making their marks in Music City. At left, Epic Records is offering up new music on The Kinleys. Jennifer (left) and Heather (right) flank Sony Nashville prez, Allen Butler. Below, The Lynns, Loretta's twin daughters Patsy and Peggy, have new music out soon on Reprise. They're produced by Dale Dodson (left) and Don Cook (right). With them is Donna Hilley of Sony/Tree, where the girls hang their songwriting hats.



# People

## SOMETHING IN COMMON



Tennessee Senator Fred Thompson took in a Hank Williams Jr. concert recently, stopping by the bus before the show to trade stories on boots, football and growing up in Alabama. Both Tennessee-by-way-of-Alabama boys, the singer and the Senator have a lot in common.

The party was held at Harlan's digs at the end of Music Row and attended by everybody who was anybody. Some of the guests who dropped by were **Waylon Jennings, Bobby Bare, Sara Evans, Marty Stuart and Connie Smith, Joe Galante, John Prine, Bob DiPiero, Curley and Bernice Putman, John D. and Susan Loudermilk, Tom T. and Dixie Hall, John and Marie Hartford, Red Lane, Sherrie Austin, Robert Oermann, Guy and Suzanne Clark, Paul Kennerly, John and Brenna Van Meter, Jamie and Lola O'Hara, Al Bunetta**, Harlan's beautiful 17-year old daughter, **Clementyne Howard** (who looks just like her old man), **Bobby Braddock, Paul Worley, Renee Bell, Marion Williams, Bonnie Garner, Tom Littlefield, Tom Roland, Catherine Darnell, Jerry and Gail Kennedy, a frail Chet Atkins, Fred Foster, Kostas, Daniel Hill, Billy Lynn, Melba Montgomery, Jack Solomon, Jackie Solomon** and the hostess with the mostest, **Melanie (Mrs. Harlan) Howard**. No banquet or awards dinner in this town could be as great as this party for Harlan. Rain kept falling, but the tents out back kept the guests, the food and the booze dry. There was lots of kissing. Harlan kissed Waylon. Marty Stuart kissed Waylon and Harlan. Every man, woman and child kissed Harlan. Some don't know how to love but some do. Harlan's birthday guests knew

## STARWALK INDUCTION

The difference in great and greatness happened during the Starwalk ceremony at the Chevrolet/GEO Celebrity Theater at Opryland recently when **Brooks & Dunn, Earl Scruggs and Randy Scruggs** were the inductees. Brooks & Dunn, CMA Entertainers of the Year for 1996 and nominated again this year, were Grammy winners in 1997 for Best Country Performance by a Duo or Group for their single, "My Maria," and in 1993 for "Hard Working Man." Randy Scruggs, son of Earl, was inducted for his 1989 Instrumental Performance of "Amazing Grace" on the *Will the Circle Be Unbroken* album. Earl Scruggs, one of the most influential banjo players of the 20th century, was honored for his 1968 Best Country Instrumental Performance by Duo or Group for his self-penned "Foggy Mountain Breakdown." With so many awards to their credit and 15 million records sold, no one can deny Brooks & Dunn are great. A producer, musician and songwriter, the multi-talented Randy Scruggs is great. The applause throughout was huge, but when Earl Scruggs name was announced, it was thunderous—and was led by Brooks & Dunn and Randy Scruggs. Earl Scruggs is greatness.

## THE BIG SEVEN-OH FOR HARLAN

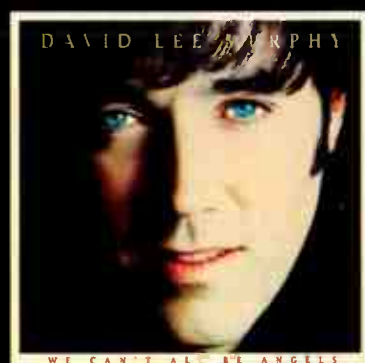
The most loved and respected country music songwriter on Planet Earth, and recent inductee into the Country Music

Hall of Fame (see elsewhere in this section for other inductees as well), turned 70 years old, and the great and near-great turned out to help **Harlan Howard** celebrate seven marvelous decades of life.

## 1997 CMA AWARD WINNERS

<b>Entertainer of the Year</b> .....	Garth Brooks
<b>Song of the Year</b> .....	"Strawberry Wine"
Songwriter .....	Matraca Berg/Gary Harrison
<b>Single of the Year</b> .....	"Strawberry Wine"
Artist and record company .....	Deana Carter/Capitol
<b>Album of the Year</b> .....	<i>Carrying Your Love With Me</i>
Artist and record company .....	George Strait/MCA
<b>Female Vocalist of the Year</b> .....	Trisha Yearwood
<b>Male Vocalist of the Year</b> .....	George Strait
<b>Vocal Duo of the Year</b> .....	Brooks & Dunn
<b>Vocal Group of the Year</b> .....	Diamond Rio
<b>Vocal Event of the Year</b> .....	Tim McGraw (with Faith Hill)
	"It's Your Love"
<b>Musician of the Year</b> .....	Brent Mason
<b>Horizon Award</b> .....	LeAnn Rimes
<b>Music Video of the Year</b> .....	"455 Rocket"
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# People

## HONORING THE VETS



Martina McBride was one of the participants in the President's Memorial Day Concert, an annual event honoring our armed services veterans. Others on hand included actor Tony Danza (left) and retired General Colin Powell. Martina's new music on RCA is available now.

how to love, and so does he. Happy Birthday, Big Daddy. The whole Smith shebang loves you. In 70 years, you'll be 140, and that's all right with me.

## WHADDA SHOW

George Jones and RCA newcomer Sara Evans put on one of the finest shows that has ever been my privilege to witness in my entire life. The site was the historic Ryman Auditorium. Sara was the opening act and, boy, was she hot. Her plain, fitted pink dress with matching shoes were stylishly 60's/90's as was her music. Sara was in unique form. Vocally she's never sounded better, and she's never looked better. Even her shoulder length hair enhanced her beautiful face and smile. She held the audience in her hands during her 45-minute set of pure magic. When an artist sings better live than on their record, they've done something, and that is what Sara did. This girl is a star.

And what can one say about George Jones except he is the greatest country singer who ever lived? George looked good and sang great. Trying to explain in words what I feel in my mind and heart about George Jones is impossible. I went from sitting to standing to applauding and thanking the Good Lord for the op-

portunity to witness what I consider a phenomenon. Hit after hit. Ovation after ovation. I've concluded that George Jones begins where every other singer leaves off.....if that makes sense. When George sings his first song, he surpasses every other singer who's done an entire concert including encore. When it was over, why I

realized I'd jumped up and down so much my slip had worked itself up around my waist (and the dress I was wearing was shamefully thin!). Surrounded by men, naturally there was nothing to do but ask them to turn their heads so I could redress. They did, and all was well except my hoarseness, which went to the house with me and plagued me for a week.

## CONDOLENCES TO VINCE

I cried for Vince Gill. I prayed for Vince. I hurt for Vince. I wanted someone to sing "Go Rest High on That Mountain" for Vince because he's sung it for everybody, including Bill Monroe. Vince, using his late dad's cassette player, played his own version of the song during the funeral service for his father, Judge Stan Gill. The 65-year-old retired federal judge died unexpectedly in Columbus, Ohio, where he resided. He'd recently undergone surgery for pancreatic cancer; however, the tumor was benign. Death was attributed to a heart attack. "Go rest high on that mountain/Son your work on earth is done/Go to Heaven a-shouting/Love for the Father and the Son." No better words than these from Vince's song can a son use to honor his earthly father as he takes his final journey. Little did Vince know when he penned the song—first verse and chorus for the late Keith Whitley and second verse for his late brother and now for his dad—that the song would become a nationwide eulogy. What a legacy. Hopefully the song and time will mend his broken heart. Hopefully it is of consolation to him to know he is truly one of the most loved people in this town.

## GOODBYE TO ROY HUSKEY JR.

In the midst of sadness over the tragic death of Princess Diana and the passing of saint-like Mother Teresa, as we sent prayers and thoughts of love and sympathy to Prince William and Prince Harry, the young sons of Diana, our hearts were stabbed deeply with the death of Roy Huskey Jr. Roy Jr., son of the late legendary bassist, Junior Huskey, was a fixture in the recording studios as well as at live performances whenever an upright bass/bass were required. I shall always remember watching two teenage boys, Roy Jr. and my son, Terry Smith, both tall and slim, standing in the wings of the Grand Ole Opry leaning on their instruments, talking "bass." "He was a good guy," Terry and my other son,

Billy Smith, said of Roy, who died of cancer at 41.

Vince Gill, Emmylou Harris, Ricky Skaggs, Carl and Goldie Hill Smith, Peter Rowan, Marty Stuart and Connie Smith, Alison Krauss, Viktor Krauss, John and Marie Hartford, Buck White, Steve Earle, Roland White and hundreds of others from the music business turned out to pay their respect to this wonderful man who is already missed. We send love and sympathy from *Country Music* and myself to his wife, Lisa, their children, Taylor and John, and his mother, Ruth. Quote from Lisa (Mrs. Roy Jr.) Huskey: "We had 20 wonderful years together. I only wish we could have had 20 more." September 8, 1997. —H.S.



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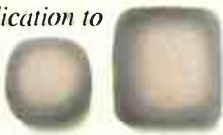
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# People

## KINKY FRIEDMAN AND WILLIE NELSON TAKE MANHATTAN

In the wacky world of Kinky Friedman, life imitates art and art imitates life, as was the case when "The Kinkster," as the notorious country singer is known to fans of his uproarious series of murder mystery novels, held court with Willie Nelson at a book signing at midtown Manhattan's Barnes & Noble bookstore.

Willie is the focus of Kinky's just published tenth novel, *Road Kill*, and he accompanied The Kinkster—who is his own lead character in the books—to the signing as well as to appearances on Don Imus' radio show, CNN, and the Vicki Lawrence and Charlie Rose TV shows. His presence, no doubt, helped sell over 200 copies of *Road Kill* at the Barnes & Noble signing, though another 150 flew out of the tiny Greenwich Village specialty bookstore, Partners In Crime, where Kinky read excerpts of *Road Kill* sans Willie.

Still, the Barnes & Noble midday session was a true media event, as evidenced by all the "celebrity photographers" snapping up shots of the two old friends and fellow country singers, brought together here by Kinky's mystical tale of saving Willie from the apparent terrible karma brought on after his tour bus accidentally flattens an Indian medicine man somewhere on the road in Arizona. In real life, as on the printed page, the two made quite a pair: Kinky, resplendent in his black suitcoat emblazoned with black leather music notes, his black boots and black cowboy hat, and Willie, decked out in his, well, traditional Willie outfit of T-shirt and ball cap. Beside his autograph hand was a half-full mini-bottle of tequila; next to Kinky's was a near-empty Irish whiskey—perhaps the author's closest friend in the novels, next to an ambivalent companion known only as "the cat."

There were a few human characters there, too—the "Village Irregulars," who play similar roles in both Kinky's lives, real and fictional. Most notable were Larry "Ratso" Sloman, the real-life journalist (he helped Howard Stern write his two massive best sellers) who is Kinky's closest sidekick, and Mike McGovern, another journalist and concoctor of



In the Charlie Rose Show green room, Willie and Kinky lived it up.

Kinky's "Chicken McGovern" and "Vodka McGovern" sustenance.

"I've always said that it's a very thin line between fiction and non-fiction," Kinky explained later, at a writers' hangout where the bartender knew how to make a stiff Vodka McGovern and the cigar-chomping Kinkster rewarded the faithful with a generous supply of Cubans. He chose Willie as his new book's subject, he said, "because Garth Brooks

was too busy to accommodate The Kinkster—and Willie's more important than Garth Brooks."

But The Kinkster offered another reason for what he describes as his "backstage, behind-the-scenes, on the road look at a jet-set gypsy," one going back to 1974, when he was Kinky Friedman, leader of The Texas Jewboys—the renegade country music group which—with song titles like "Get Your Biscuits in the Oven and Your Buns Back in Bed" and "They Ain't Making Jews Like Jesus Anymore"—virtually embodied political incorrectness long before there was such a term.

"I was thrown off the stage in Dallas, and Willie came to the rescue and put me out on the road with him," he said, then reverently added, "Willie has met adversity at every turn of the road—and always conquered it. He's transcended a whole lot of things, and one of

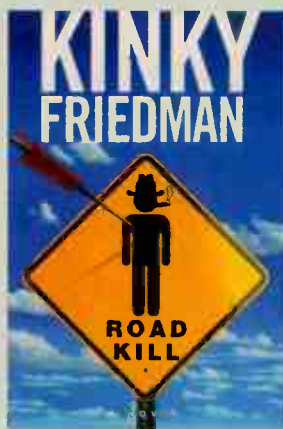
those things is country music."

In the *Charlie Rose Show* green room, Willie lived up to another appellation conferred on him by The Kinkster. "Spiritually speaking, Willie's a Zen Texan," said Kinky, and Willie was typically Zen-like in his simple response to the obvious question. "I thought it was funny," he said of *Road Kill*, his knowing eyes twinkling. "I assume it was supposed to be." Kinky had been around the band for years and years, he added. "The least I could do is be here with him. The book is about me, and I can't afford it being a flop."

Willie later told Rose that he'd only read the book to the part where he disappears, but that enough people whom he trusted had read the whole thing and told him that it turns out okay. For his part, The Kinkster explained to Rose that he had given up on singing and become a successful murder mystery writer to follow the cowboy's adage: "When the horse dies, get off!" He also presented the host with an "Honor America" Kinky Friedman flag bannana, and a Kinky Friedman Lucky Guitar Plectrum which, he claimed, Roger Miller once used during a classic songwriting session.

And, when Charlie Rose asked The Kinkster about his questionable choice of bolo ties—it bore a painting of Jesus—Kinky Friedman insisted that the man pictured was in fact Willie Nelson. As he said, there's a thin line between fiction and non-fiction.

—JIM BESSMAN





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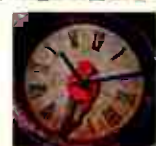
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# Record Reviews

## Mark Chesnutt

*Thank God for Believers*  
Decca 70006

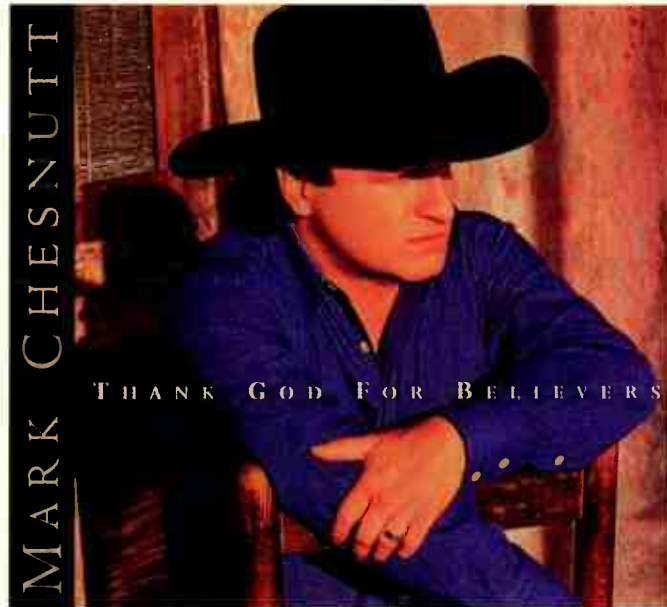
I find it encouraging that a few leading Nashville artists—most notably Alan Jackson—have simply grown tired of having their musical direction shaped by the superficial, ratings-driven demands of country radio, manifested in the format's current hunger for lightweight, adolescent-oriented country-pop.

Basically these artists have said the hell with it. They've forged ahead, letting their fundamentalist country instincts carry them back to a sound that at times is almost defiantly rootsy and twangy.

*Thank God for Believers*, Mark Chesnutt's new album, establishes him as a valiant front-rank foot soldier in this worthy crusade. Chesnutt has often been bluntly outspoken in his disdain for and dissatisfaction with the general direction in which country radio has pushed the music as of late. And on *Thank God for Believers* he strikes a bold blow for the cause by serving up a solid collection of what he himself calls "old-fashioned hurtin' songs that aren't pop-sounding."

*Thank God for Believers* brings him as defiantly close to his East Texas honky tonk roots as he's ever been—though, in all fairness, he's never strayed far away at all.

One song on here that really cleans my clock and, at least for me, exemplifies where Mark Chesnutt is going, is "That Side of You," a devastatingly sad, self-pitying tune which Chesnutt also had a hand in writing. In it, a man dreams of his own death and funeral, and wakes up to the realization that nothing short of dying is



going to get him any tears or sympathy from his cold-hearted woman. Chesnutt brilliantly delivers the song in the dead-on tradition of all those great, morbid, tear- and whiskey-stained George Jones tearjerkers of yesteryear. It's the kind of performance that makes the little hairs on the back of your neck stand up and do calisthenics.

In the title tune, Chesnutt, an uncommonly fine hard country singer—there's hardly anyone better in my book!—vividly conveys the suffering of a man who clings to a faint glimmer of hope amidst what may be an ultimately hopeless struggle against alcoholism.

Of course, no Mark Chesnutt album would be complete without a good, old-fashioned, Texas-style, belly-flop-in-a vat-of-beer barroom song. There's a couple of them on *Thank God for Believers*. "Numbers on the Jukebox" sounds like something ripped straight from the annals of Johnny Paycheck's long-gone musical heyday. "Hello Honky

Tonk" is a jaunty and not altogether regretful confession/celebration of a man who realizes he's just not cut out for domesticity and heads back through the swingin' doors to his real home.

The great music rolls on, from start to finish, on *Thank God for Believers*, until it finally dawns on me that the title may have a hidden meaning. That is to say, if you aren't yet a believer in Chesnutt's wonderfully headstrong, no-frills brand of straight-ahead East Texas sturm und twang, this album should make you one.

—BOB ALLEN

## Patty Loveless

*Long Stretch of Lonesome*  
Epic EK 67997

Be it singles or albums, few current artists equal Patty Loveless for consistency and excellence, a tribute to the vision she shares with husband-producer Emory Gordy Jr. Unlike some with traditional backgrounds, she's avoided the

mistake of casting her roots aside to embrace fleeting trends in order to broaden her audience. Arrangements, material and all the rest come together in a vibrant, life-affirming set of performances. Even when an occasional mistake creeps through, as they inevitably will, it's never disastrous.

*Long Stretch of Lonesome* is a crazy quilt of emotions and life stations. Wisely, they're not rigidly laid out in the birth-to-death concept Willie Nelson used on *Yesterday's Wine*, which would have made the album predictable. A slew of guest artists appear, no doubt welcomed by Patty. As usual, with a couple of exceptions, their presence neither helps or hurts (it is, however, a terrific hook for publicists). John David's joyous, life-affirming "The Party Ain't Over Yet," dripping with Patty's trademark effervescence, is followed by the album's only real misstep: "To Have You Back Again." Loveless readily admits she was trying to honor the solitary majesty of Roy Orbison here. Invoking his presence on record has been quite the thing in recent years. The Mavericks' Raul Malo and James House have done it admirably. Trouble is that over time such ideas wind up overused and collapse into trite cliché. Even with Malo's harmonizing behind her, Patty's performance feels too cold and mannered.

Strangely enough, the next song gets far closer to Orbison's lone essence though it sounds nothing like him. The Don Schlitz-Terry Radigan ballad, "I Don't Want to Feel Like That," reveals what for Patty is a drastically different vocal approach. The full-throttle voice is silent. As acoustic guitar and spare rhythm section kick in, she

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# Record Reviews

emerges, her voice almost a whisper, embracing the song's velvety, stream-of-consciousness mode, a near-hypnotic monologue of weariness laced with sorrow and anguish. Her controlled power is a triumphant departure for her. She uses a similar approach just as effectively on Gretchen Peters' redemptory ballad, "Like Water Into Wine," and on Stephen Bruton's "Too Many Memories."

Kostas' rip-roaring "High On Love" takes her back into explosive joy, and a pulsating arrangement frames her spirited vocal on Kim Richey's "That's Exactly What I Mean." She hits another peak with Jim Lauderdale's "You Don't Seem to Miss Me," a tale of frustration over a relationship where one cares and the other doesn't. Graced by a sublime performance (with George Jones in the background), its dark, brooding melody and lyrics further establish Lauderdale as one of this era's truly great composers. Typically, she telegraphs a desire to hang tough on the Gary Scroggs-penned title song, surrounded by a string arrangement that fits the song.

Historically, her albums have never ducked songs of adversity. As she did with "How Can I Help You Say Goodbye," Patty can sing songs about pain with authority. Her own recent rough times, the death of a beloved sister, victory over career-threatening vocal cord ailments and Gordy's health woes give her a deeper well of experience. Yet, the final number, "Where I'm Bound," a powerful Daryl Burgess-Tom Britt secular hymn to the afterlife, takes a decidedly positive, uplifting approach to the subject. Eerily arranged (The Cox Family definitely enhances the performance), it easily stands with Vince Gill's "Go Rest High on That Mountain." Overly sentimental? No. Haunting and moving? Definitely.

Anyone who wants this music to remain totally in the



past, never growing or evolving, condemns it to a certain death. The same goes for those who want to deny that past and put everything in the context of classic rock rip-offs, teen idols and boot-scooters, as if the music barely existed before you-know-who came along. There is a better solution: to stand still, look back and forge ahead all at once. There are plenty of different approaches to doing that. This time, Loveless and Gordy have created one for the books.

—RICH KIENZLE

## David Allan Coe *Live, If That Ain't Country...* Columbia CK 67996

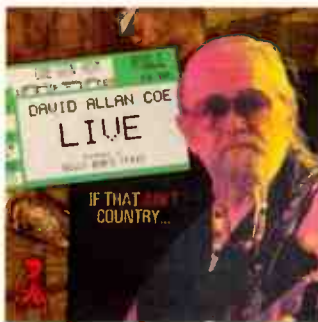
Though he was only a minor figure in the Outlaw movement of yesteryear, and never more than a sporadic presence in the country charts, David Allan Coe remains one of the most singularly fascinating and enigmatic figures to carve a niche in 70's and 80's country music.

Blustery, egocentric, knee-jerk defensive, larger-than-life, shamelessly self-promoting, occasionally X-rated... Coe, in his heyday, was all these things and more. He was a supreme master of colorful self-invention (he's the only person I've ever heard of who threatened to sue a journalist in order to prove that he did kill somebody in prison) and occasionally even a musical innovator.

Even in the free-wheeling 70's Coe was occasionally simply too politically incorrect for

those wild and woolly times, and needless to say he's way, way out of line for our present tepid, yuppified, "Garth in the Park" era.

That's why it makes me cackle with perverse delight and crank up the volume to once again hear Coe in his tarnished glory—warts, quirks, eccentricities, dirty mouth and all—on this new 15-song collection that was recorded at Billy Bob's in Texas in front of a wildly appreciative—or perhaps just plain wild—crowd.



*David Allan Coe Live* is a well-balanced, adroitly performed collection of familiar Coe anthems and lesser-known songs from "The Mysterious Rhinestone Cowboy" (as Coe has often billed himself). No doubt, Coe has sung hits like "Willie, Waylon and Me" (the ultimate in name dropping), "Long Haired Redneck" and "You Never Even Called Me by My Name" ten thousand times by now. And the way he tends to routinely rush through his big hits reminds us of that. Yet even these tossed off live versions, with their firecracker roadhouse instrumental backing, offer visceral and intriguing alternate takes to the familiar studio versions.

A magic moment comes when Coe does an a cappella rendition of "Would You Lay With Me (In a Field of Stone)," a hit he wrote for Tanya Tucker long ago. And he summons up all his characteristic bluster and defiance on his tongue-in-cheek version of "Take This Job and Shove It," a Coe original which Johnny Paycheck had the hit with a while back.

Most compelling, though, are the glimpses into Coe's own weird but utterly intriguing world view that come on obscure and quirky testimonials like "Jack Daniels, Jack Daniels, Jack Daniels Please" (about a man intent on drinking himself to death) and the hokey but haunting "The Ghost of Hank Williams" (not to be confused with "The Ride," a 1983 Top Five for Coe that's also heard here).

"Talkin' to the Blues" is another darkly introspective confessional, while "There's No Holes in These Hands" offers a very strange take on the theme of martyrdom.

Coe does some unapologetic reminiscing on the Southern rock-flavored "When I Was a Young Man," and "Son of the South" is a full-blown tribute to his Southern rock influences that also features some dynamite musicianship.

We only get the tip of the iceberg here in terms of the more surly, uncensored and down & dirty edition of D.A. Coe, and it comes on the mildly profane but hilarious "If That Ain't Country (You Can Kiss My Ass), Part 2."

But alas, these are the nice 90's, not the nasty 70's—the former era is but a fond dream now, and the gypsy cowboys like Coe no longer rule the roost. Considering that, I'll take David Allan Coe any way I can get him—even if it is a little watered down, as he is on *David Allan Coe Live*. This guy once was—and obviously at times still is—pretty damned awesome.

—BOB ALLEN

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**THE FRANKLIN MINT**

# Record Reviews

hit the table. Wait no longer; it's here, featuring the original guys, for the most part.

I have to say, there are only three records on the soundtrack of my life that I remember exactly where I was and what I was doing when I first heard them: "I Want to Hold Your Hand," The Beatles; "Sweet Revenge," John Prine; and "Third Rate Romance" by The Amazing Rhythm Aces. All three were startlingly revolutionary sounds when they hit my ears.

The Aces emerged in the mid-70's as a potent vehicle for the uniquely greasy, blues-coated Southern country sounds of Russell Smith. Unable to find a permanent foothold in either the country or rock formats, the band toured to the point of near-bankruptcy for Smith and finally broke up.

It remains to be seen if a short, middle-aged, barrel-bodied man with an inimitable, impish smile like Russell Smith can dominate the country charts like them long, tall, hat young boys in the ironed Wrangler jeans, but damn if The Aces didn't make some fine music for us again.

The title song, "Out of the Blue," is like "Shut Up and Kiss Me" with soul. "Waitin' on Sundown" is a classic of rural teen-storytelling about two love-struck kids named Johnnie and Shelby Jean planning a spur-of-the-moment elopement. Smith takes us into the depths of the country blues jungle where you might also find the likes of Bobby Blue Bland or B.B. King with "The Blue Room," exemplifying why The Aces are both great and still probably uncategorizable.

But all of these tunes aren't exclusively outside the mainstream. "Cold, Cold Rain," a strong ballad, could easily have been a huge Billy Ray Cyrus hit. Smith's writing has been applied to Music Row for so long now that it sounds much more "commercial" than ever before. That's more because Music Row has expanded its boundaries and has

come over his way than because he's bent to the commercial stream.

Butch McDade, original drummer and an alternate lead vocalist, shines here as well. McDade writes and sings "Oh, Lucky Me," a stark, stripped down, dirge-like blues, and "Get Down," conversely a rollicking roadhouse shuffle.

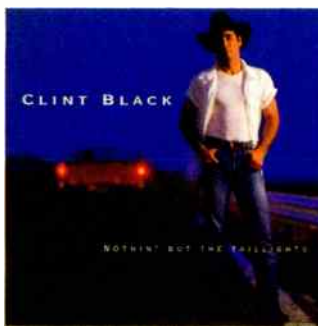
In the years since The Aces folded, Smith made some fine solo records for Capitol Records. Sadly, they didn't establish him as a solo country artist. A few years back, he participated in an elegant spoof band called Run C&W, doing R&B classics in bluegrass style, but has spent the last many years writing hits for other people in Nashville, raising his kids and staying away from making records.



This new effort sounds more like Russell Smith records than the old electric guitar-chunkin' hits like "Third Rate Romance" and "The End Is Not in Sight," but original guitarist Barry Byrd left the band in a huff 20 years ago and still hasn't made up with Smith. Current lead guitarist Kelvin Holley lacks that sort of personal sound of his own, but is still a great throwback to a better time. He brings to the band the Memphis country R&B sounds that Steve Cropper made for Stax Records in the late 1960's as well as "Layla"-era, Clapton-esque blues, among others.

Aces fans won't want to miss this one. It's a 12-song bargain at any price. The Aces are back, and as the man said in the song so long ago, "The end is not in sight."

—BOB MILLARD



**Clint Black**  
*Nothin' But the Tailights*  
RCA 67515

When Clint Black neared the end of his 1995 tour, he realized he had been on the album-tour-album-tour treadmill for seven years without a break—and he had been playing the Houston-Galveston bar scene five-to-seven nights a week for two full years before that. Even Black had to realize that he was beginning to repeat himself and to lose the freshness that made him sound so special on his 1989 debut effort. To his credit, he was smart enough to shut it down for a while—he stayed home for two years and recharged his batteries.

Now he's back with *Nothin' But the Tailights*, his first album of new, non-holiday music in three years. Despite the wishes of many of us, it's not a return to the hard-core honky tonk sound of his first album, but it is a top-notch pop-country recording and represents Black's best work since 1992's *The Hard Way*.

There are several reasons for this impressive comeback. The most obvious is Black's willingness to reach beyond his own insular camp to collaborate with other country music talents. The singer and his longtime songwriting partner, Hayden Nicholas, teamed up on five of the new songs, but Black co-wrote the seven other songs with new folks, who have injected some new juice into the Black formula.

Black had unveiled a new

song on last year's *Greatest Hits* album called "Cadillac Jack Favor" about a real-life rodeo champion who spent eight years in jail on a homicide charge before new evidence surfaced to acquit him. Black wanted to write a sequel about Favor's ability to sustain his relationship with his wife during those years, and he knew he'd need both a woman's perspective and a outsider's viewpoint. Matraca Berg of "Strawberry Wine" fame provided the former, and Marty Stuart, a member in good standing of country-music's independent/Outlaw wing, supplied the latter.

The resulting bittersweet ballad, "Still Holding On," included both the male and female angles on the story, so Black joined voices with labelmate Martina McBride, and the result was not only a smash single but also an interesting tug-of-war between a man offering freedom and a wife who refuses to take it.

That song gets the full pop-country treatment from co-producers Black and James Stroud, but the singer proves he can also thrive in a stripped-down bluegrass arrangement when he joins Alison Krauss & Union Station on "Our Kind of Love." This mid-tempo love song, co-written with Shake Russell, boasts the album's prettiest melody, which is braided into sweet harmonies by Black and Krauss. Another old-fashioned, lovely tune, "Something That We Do," is also given an understated, acoustic arrangement with the picking provided by Black, his co-writer Skip Ewing and fiddler Stuart Duncan.

While he was camped out at home, Black spent a lot of time woodshedding on the guitar, and he shows off the results by playing a lot of electric guitar as well as acoustic on the new album. No one would mistake Black for Chet Atkins, Steve Wariner, Larry Carlton, Dann Huff, Hayden Nicholas or Mark Knopfler, but he has improved sufficiently to hold his own with those six gentlemen

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# Record Reviews

as they all take guitar solos on "Ode to Chet," a tongue-in-cheek song about learning guitar to impress a young woman. Warner hung around long enough to co-write the album's title track, a country-rocker that somehow manages to combine a Merle Haggard drowning-my-sorrows song with a Chuck Berry car song.

*Nothin' But the Tailights* isn't a perfect album; "You Know It All" and "You Don't Need Me Now" are maudlin schlock that tempts Black into over-singing in the worst way. Nonetheless, the singer seems reinvigorated by his layoff, his new partnerships and his new guitar chops even as he's hung on to the best qualities of his early career. The album's best song, for example, was co-written with his old buddy Nicholas. "The Shoes You're Wearing" is a folk-rock anthem that declares that a man can't be judged by the shoes on his feet or the money in his pocket. And Black sings it with the fierce conviction of someone who still remembers what it's like to stuff cardboard in the holes of his cowboy boots.

—GEOFFREY HIMES

## Chely Wright

*Let Me In*  
MCA 70003

I've always liked Chely, and I felt that despite some excellent work on Polydor, she never got the success there or made the great album she had in her. MCA's Tony Brown, who's truly picked up the musician-producer mantles of Chet Atkins and Owen Bradley, obviously agreed. Wright's now with a label that, more than any other, treats artists with respect (though Bobbie Cryner deserved better from them). Given another chance to work out her driving style, which easily walks a line between traditional and contemporary, how does she do?

One of her assets is a voice carrying the inspiration of idols including Connie Smith and



Wanda Jackson, able to handle any material thrown at her. She's sharp and raw enough to handle down-home fare, strong and vibrant enough to carry a good ballad. The first two numbers are proof of that: the whirling "Your Woman Misses Her Man" and the reflective Deanna Bryant love song that serves as the album's title song. Her low-keyed restraint on "Shut Up and Drive," an inner voice pushing a woman to dump a manipulative love, delivers the staccato lyrics perfectly.

Without question, the high point comes with her sensitive interpretation of the story-song, "Emma Jean's Guitar," a Matraca Berg, Gary Harrison and Jeff Hanna chronicle about a young singer, the new owner of a 1950 Gibson acoustic. The instrument's wear is a silent chronicle of its original owner: a young woman who, like the new owner, had dreams of stardom. Wright's mature, knowing vocal is pure perfection. She doesn't do badly with the oldie, "Feelin' Single and Seein' Double." "I Already Do," which she co-wrote with Gary Burr, an optimistic, easy celebration of love, curls nicely around the lyrics. She snarls and growls her way through "Just Another Heartache" and "Is It Love Yet," a Wright collaboration with Kostas. It's the most hookish (therefore the weakest) song on the record, next to the flaccid, unimaginative "10 Lb. Heart," a love ballad containing just about every imaginable cliché.

Wright's two Polydor albums, *Woman in the Moon* and *Right in the Middle of It*, were uneven efforts with plenty of extremes, mixing

outstanding performances with wretched filler. This time, with Brown producing, the consistency is far greater. Whether the third time will be the charm for her isn't clear. If it is, she's surely earned it.

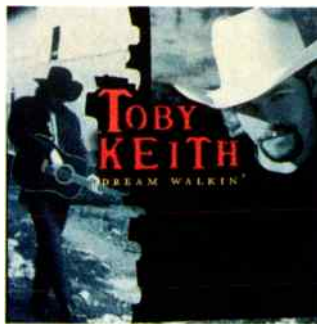
—RICH KIENZLE

## Toby Keith

*Dream Walkin'*  
Mercury 314-534 836

Toby Keith has always marched to the beat of his own drummer. Sometimes, as in the case of "What'll You Do About Me," it got him in trouble, making him look like a rabid stalker. Other times he just wrote himself a flock of barely decent songs and cut them anyway. He never claimed to be a great singer, either. He never nearly knocked me out.

Until now.



*Dream Walkin'* is hands down Toby Keith's best record and strongest vocal performance to date, with riveting delivery and vibrato power. Keith has had a lot of personal things to work through the past several years, things I imagine kept him from focusing and bringing everything he had to offer to the table. He seems to have done so finally, if the tunes here reflect anything other than hit-picking. There is some strong emotional portraiture here, delivered with believable passion. "We Were in Love" is a particularly evocative look over the shoulder at lost love. "Dream Walkin'" is forward-looking, imagining what a new love may turn out like. "Yet" is

a sweet ballad plowing the same field; dig that crying steel guitar.

What caught my attention here is the few occasions where Keith goes beyond incremental improvement and surpasses himself by a country mile. "Tired," which Keith wrote with Chuck Cannon, is extraordinary. It nails the ambivalent let-downs of hard working Joes and Janes when a life of doin' what you have to just wears you out. This is no cake-icing romance; it's to-the-soul insight of the first order. The survival of love in a hard situation is implied, however unmistakably, rather than slathered across these tracks like sweet barbecue sauce. I just plain loved it and identified with it because he left room for me to plug in my own experiences. Man, I've been there. I'm rarely far from there.

There is just-for-fun stuff here, too. "Jacky Don Tucker" is about a small town rebel, a relative whose motto is "Play by the rules, miss all the fun." "She Ran Away With a Rodeo Clown" is a humpty-bumpy, bass-thumping two-step with infectiously syncopated phrasing. Cool stuff!

"I Don't Understand My Girlfriend" puts Keith on the humorous side of the classic missed-signal situation. It's swing time, with a Jordanaires-like backing vocal that is pure fun. The most intriguing cut here is Keith's duet cover of Sting's "I'm So Happy I Can't Stop Crying," performed with the jazzy rock legend, Sting, himself. It's an edgy piece of existential irony, and for all its steel guitars and straight-time beat, you can't hide the different chorus chord structures or the depth of this lyric. How did Toby Keith fall into this particular song? I know he's been in this divorced, non-custodial father situation—"What can a father do but baby-sit sometime... I'm laughin' through my tears." All I can say is, Toby Keith rises above here, no doubt.

If I was right discounting much of his former work as "just okay" journeyman honky



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# Record Reviews

tonk—and that's always open to question, as his many fans have often suggested—I have a whole new respect for Toby Keith based on *Dream Walkin'*. I look forward to his next new music.

—BOB MILLARD

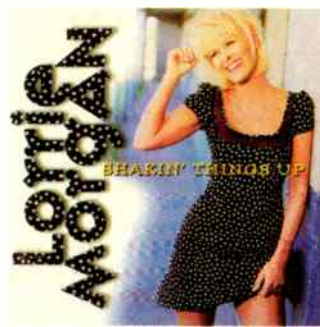
## Lorrie Morgan *Shakin' Things Up* BNA 67499

**W**ith a \$1-million-plus book/movie deal in the bank, Lorrie Morgan can afford to shake things up. I think it's interesting that she starts with the visual image, dressing "young" and demure, eschewing the sex-kitten image for once.

I like "Go Away" from the first: "Touché, touché. You're right, there's nothing I can say/I am a wishy-washy girl, but it's a wishy-washy world..." Lorrie does a good job of not taking herself too seriously.

Strangely, this sounds like a record produced in at least two different decades. Five of the first six tunes are heavily laden with late-60's rock guitar bombast, while the later five are more underplayed classic country: sort of a mish-mash of the theme from *Bonanza* and twobit ersatz psychedelia, perhaps meant to represent experimentation, but it seems as though other things had most of her attention. For instance, on the title cut, "Shakin' Things Up," island sounds abound, but it still sort of lays in the low-emotion part of her range, while "One of Those Nights Tonight" has cheesy wah-wah pedal and fuzztone rock guitar effects alongside country fiddle!

"Crazy From the Heat" has overdone minor key dronings too liberally borrowed from "Seminole Wind." Nothing wrong with the song; rotten overlaid production, too much echo, with Papa John Creach-style fiddle slapped onto three-decades old rock guitar passages (anyone remember the Leslie cabinet sound?). "I'm Not That Easy to Forget" is just an inferior song,



country-pop twaddle, but song choice has never been Lorrie's strong suit.

I found some things quite likable, though. ("Here, let's give this record to Mikey—he hates everything!") "I've Enjoyed As Much of This As I Can Stand," the old Bill Anderson/Jeannie Seely chestnut, is the first inkling of classic country—the first not overwhelmed with mish-mash—on this record. Everyone who remembers Porter Wagoner's 1963 original cover, raise your hand. Lorrie is killer on "real" country music. Lorrie delivers Bobbie Cryner's "You'd Think He'd Know Me Better" as a sparsely produced, gut-string and piano ballad of dissatisfaction and tragic miscommunication. She takes a surprising, acoustic, torchy attack on Carole King's "Will You Love Me Tomorrow," treating that Motown bouncer like Marianne Faithfull's "As Tears Go By." With "In a Perfect World," I found myself letting go of the critic's eyeglass and simply believing the sad lament. Sadly, it was the first time on this CD. "Finishing Touch" is classically torchy from the queen of willin' women. The lyrics ("Gettin' ready for him gives me such a rush...") have Lorrie getting dressed up and planning a seduction.

And that is probably what I missed here most of all. I longed for more of that true torchiness, like "Something in Red," for instance. But, Lorrie says she's shakin' things up, which is okay if you can put 'em back together right when you're finished. I say, pitch out the bombast and enjoy the rest.

—BOB MILLARD



## Trace Adkins *Big Time* Capitol 55856

**I** must confess that I maybe dug in my heels and refused to warm up to Trace Adkins' debut album, *Dreamin' Out Loud*, as much as I might have under less pressured circumstances.

At the time of *Dreamin' Out Loud*'s release, the publicists, promoters and spin doctors at Adkins' record label were hammering away and laying on the hype so relentlessly that for a while it almost seemed like they were promoting a new religion instead of a mere recording artist.

Past experience has taught me the hard way to beware of such overkill, whether it comes from members of a cult or record company professionals. The record company folks (some of whom are my dear friends) are paid handsomely to love the music they promote, whereas I am paid (modestly) to decide on my own whether I like it or not, and then write about it. My opinions, instincts (as infuriating as you readers sometimes find them) and credibility are, really, all that I have in this regard. Thus I tend to guard them zealously from outside persuasion.

That said, I'm now willing to concede that *Dreamin' Out Loud* is probably a lot stronger debut effort than I gave it credit for when I reviewed it in CMM a year or so ago.

Let me assure you, I'm not second-guessing myself, and I haven't been hammerlocked,

kicking and screaming, into saying nice things about *Big Time*, Adkins' second album. It's just that it's such a solid, assured effort that even leads me to believe that, despite my own gloom & doom prognostications, the future of country music, at least in the short run, may still be in safe hands.

On *Big Time*, producer Scott Hendricks has loosened up and given free rein to Adkins' earthy, drawling, yet regal baritone so that it breathes naturally. Adkins' vocals, as well as the lively arrangements, don't sound nearly as buffed, polished and smoothed as they did on *Dreamin' Out Loud*. The tracks are looser, grittier, with the fiddles and steels quite a bit more front and center.

Even the title tune (co-written by Paul Nelson, Larry Boone and Kenny Beard), though one of the more forgettable of these 11 fine tracks, proves a stalwart vehicle for Adkins' low-register power and expressiveness.

*Big Time*'s real emotional and artistic center of gravity comes on cuts like the moving, honky tonk love ballad, "The Rest of Mine," which Adkins co-wrote with Kenny Beard to go with his recent wedding vows. His singing on this testimonial is earnest, powerful and beautifully embellished with weeping steel and fiddle passages.

Quite a few of the other fine songs on *Big Time* (two of which Adkins co-wrote) are devoted to two universal country themes: one, romantic obsession (the compelling "Twenty-Four, Seven," the haunting "Out of My Dreams" and the haunted "Lonely Won't Leave Me Alone"), the other hang-dog heartache.

"See Jane Run" (co-written by Porter Howell and Tim Nichols) is one of the hang-dog heartache songs. It cleverly weaves a series of comically simple, first-grade-level phrases into a stick figure tale of bitter heartbreak and devastating disappointment. "Nothin' But Tail Lights" (Bob

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# Record Reviews

DiPiero, Jerry House and Devon O'Day)—not to be confused with the Clint Black song of nearly identical title—similarly mixes comedy and misfortune. “Snowball in El Paso” (Adkins and Trey Bruce) and “Took Her to the Moon” (Mark Nesler and Byron Hill) also use intriguing word plays and kicking arrangements to portray love run amuck.

Scott Hendricks deserves special credit for the muscular, straight-ahead country arrangements and the impeccable song choices that so effectively bring out the best in Adkins' roughhewn style.

This rock-solid second album has belatedly made a believer out of me, as I'm sure it will many others. As corny as it sounds, the *Big Time* sure seems to be where Adkins is headed. And on the fast track at that.

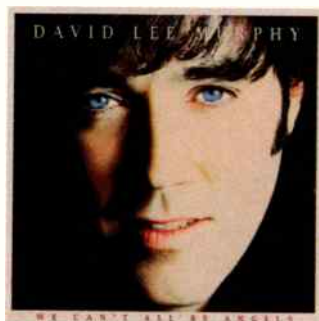
—BOB ALLEN

## David Lee Murphy

*We Can't All Be Angels*  
MCA 70002

**O**n the title track from his new album, *We Can't All Be Angels*, David Lee Murphy admits that he's no saint—he likes to drink with his disreputable buddies in smoky pool halls and to drive too fast down back-country roads—but he hopes his clean-living woman will love him just the same. It's a variation on a story Murphy has told with great success in the past on songs such as “Genuine Rednecks” and “Party Crowd.”

There's something less than genuine about the redneck in “We Can't All Be Angels,” however. The lyrics proclaim how wild and crazy the singer is, but the vocal and musical arrangement are as tame and polite as can be. The rhythm section sticks to the plodding beat; the guitars take it easy in the background, and Murphy's voice is strangely calm as if the wildest thing he ever did was cheat on his expense account. As a result, the pool halls and



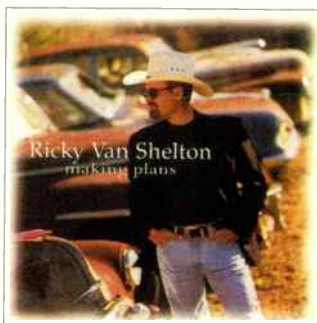
back roads in the lyrics sound like generic Southern clichés rather than real places.

This play-it-safe approach infects the entire album. It's as if producer Tony Brown and associate producer Murphy didn't want to risk offending the most conservative radio programmer in the land. It's too bad, for Murphy's first two albums were wonderful examples of an unvarnished, backwoods boy singing about his life with all his transgressions and twang hanging out. When he sang about drinking and loving, he had an eager-beaver yelp in his throat, and when he sang stories about “Dust on the Bottle” or “Pirates Cove,” they seemed like one-of-a-kind experiences. Now his vocals and lyrics seem to have been market-tested and universalized until they sound like everyone in general and no one in particular.

Murphy wrote seven of the songs all by himself, four others with collaborators. Some cuts—such as “Kentucky Girl” and “Just Don't Wait Around 'Til She's Leavin'”—boast bouncy, catchy chorus melodies, and others—most notably the Bill Lloyd-penned “Bringin' Her Back”—boast dramatic narratives, but never both at the same time. Some numbers, such as “She Don't Try (To Make Me Love Her)” and “That's Behind Me,” match an unfocused lyric with a lackluster melody. The first single, “All Lit Up in Love,” has an attractive pop-country hook, though it's unlikely any ex-lover ever mouthed, “There's a change, a burning bright, I'm seeing you in a different light.”

Murphy was such an appealing talent on his first two outings that one can only hope this disappointing third album is just an unfortunate detour. He encourages some hope on that score by ending the new record with “She's Not Mine,” the sort of slinky, swampy, minor-key country blues that J.J. Cale or Eric Clapton might have come up with.

—GEOFFREY HIMES



## Ricky Van Shelton

*Making Plans*  
RVS 100D

**S**ome time ago, Ricky Van Shelton and Epic Records parted ways, and three years have passed since he recorded. He hadn't had many hits in recent years, and it's a fact that many of the shining lights of the New Traditional era no longer record for the labels they started with. Times change. If it can happen to Johnny Cash (as it did when Columbia dropped him), it can happen to anyone.

Never one to grovel, Shelton had the answer right in front of him. He and wife Bettye's popular kids' books are self-published, why not his records? Doing so allows him to offer his CD's at a far cheaper retail price than major labels and also assures 100% creative control. But taking music directly to fans isn't easy. Major label artists willing to tailor their music to marketing and radio consultants (as opposed to fans) are blessed with big promotion budgets. Shelton, who used his own funds to produce the

record, realizes that. Nor did he go it completely alone. Steve Buckingham, his original Columbia producer, co-produces with Marshall Morgan, allowing him to focus on singing.

I didn't expect any surprises and there are none. It's not the blockbuster his early records were, yet it's a familiar mix to any Shelton fan. Though brand new, it could almost be an unreleased Columbia Shelton album from the late 1980's. The music is the usual Shelton mix of traditional fare: ballads, with rip-roaring stompers and a few oldies thrown in. Kicking off with the upbeat “Just Say Goodbye,” he easily tackles the ballads “The Best Thing Goin',” “He's Not the Man I Used to Be,” Joe Chambers' “I Wish You Were More Like Your Memory” and “It Wouldn't Kill Me.”

The album's first single, “She Needs Me,” another straight-ahead ballad, is precisely the kind of number Shelton always excelled with. Two George Strait-ish swing numbers, “Tic Toc” and “The Best Is Yet to Come,” and the rocking “Our Love” ramp up the tempo. He's still picking first-rate oldies like Merle Haggard's “When the Feeling Goes Away.” Older fans will recall “Borrowed Angel,” a haunting 1972 hit by Mel Street, the George Jones-inspired West Virginia singer whose career ended when he shot himself on his birthday in 1978. Shelton, born a state away, does the song proud.

Some veterans hold onto major label contracts at one hell of a price. Lacking the clout that recent big hits provide, they often wind up setting aside their strengths, bending to the whim of producers who promise to “put them back on the charts.” Sometimes they succeed, but not often. I give Shelton credit for turning his back on that grim scenario and sending a message to artists who still have plenty of fans. Recording for yourself is easy, marketing isn't, but it may be the answer.

—RICH KIENZLE



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# Shania Twain

## After the Gold Rush

By Michael Bane



*For the first time since she became a household name, Shania Twain is going on tour. Her new album is due out soon and the world is watching to see if her phenomenal success was luck, or talent, or being in the right place at the right time. There's a lot riding on Shania's follow-up, but she says she's ready.*

**T**here's something fundamentally spooky about the Adirondacks, strange for a mountain range within spitting distance of New York City. The woods seem denser and darker than they have any right to be; the waters colder and wilder. I take a morning run through the woods outside Lake Placid, in the heart of the mountains, and within a few steps I'm into the wild. I half expect to run into Native Americans.

Instead, I run into just one Native Canadian, and while she may be threatening to some, she doesn't appear hostile. At 32 years old, Shania Twain has literally changed the ballgame for women country music artists. Her second album, *The Woman in Me*, released two years ago, recently became the best-selling album by a woman artist in the history of country music, creeping past *The Best of Patsy Cline*.

We are both camped out in an Adirondack inn. I'm not saying it's exclusive or anything, but John Mellencamp is staying next door. For Shania, though, it's convenient, just a hop, skip and jump away from the 3,000-acre estate she shares with her husband, rock super-producer Mutt Lange, the driving force behind such legends as Def Leppard and Bryan Adams.

We're in a protected back room of the lodge, looking out onto a flawless lake marred only by a 1930's vintage wooden speedboat. I keep waiting for the great Gatsby to show up.

"You got to hear the loons," says Shania.

In the Adirondacks, "loon" has a different meaning than it might in downtown Music City. It is, in fact, an actual bird.

"There's a certain mystique about these mountains," says Shania. "The fog in the morning; the clarity that you have during the day. The lakes are kind of mysterious—not as panoramic as what you have up in the Rockies. But mysterious, with a haunting calm about it. And the loon adds to the whole thing. Have you heard a loon yet? Are you staying the night?"

As it happens, I'm in Travel Hell, constantly on the move. Shania shakes her patented tresses.

"I can't believe you're not going to hear a loon," she says. "They sound like a flute. When a loon cries out—and it has several different cries—it echoes throughout the foothills. It's a cry, too—not like a regular bird. And it sounds like someone has an echo effect on these things, a very throaty, very full-bodied sounding flute. I'm not kidding. It's beautiful."



*"I don't have to worry about what people are thinking and what's going on in the industry—I don't want that stuff to influence what I'm doing. Because I think it stifles you creatively. I don't want to have to care too much about that. All I care about is what the fans think. It's really all I care about—honestly."*



Leave it to Shania Twain to become increasingly enthusiastic over a bird. This is her country, not far from where she grew up and as different from the green hills south of Nashville as the moon.

"And I need to have it, Michael—the environment," Shania says. "There's no way I can step out my door everyday [like I would in Nashville] and have to worry about what I look like and things like that. I don't want to do that. I spend most of my time with my horses and my dogs, and they don't care how I look. And I really need to have times when I don't care. Because I love the contrast. I don't have to worry about what people are thinking and what's going on in the industry—I don't want that stuff to influence what I'm doing. Because I think it stifles you creatively. I don't want to have to care too much about that. All I care about is what the fans think. It's really all I care about—honestly."

You've probably noticed at this point that Shania Twain doesn't have a problem with talking. In fact, it's as if she was poised in the starting gate, waiting for the questions, for her chance to set the record straight.

And that's understandable, because Shania's meteoric rise has not been without its controversy.

When Shania Twain, fresh from the Canadian honky tonks, released her first record, the self-titled *Shania Twain*, the best that could be said about the Norro Wilson/Harold Shedd production was "pedestrian." It was Nashville all the way, and if you were blindfolded and couldn't read the label, you'd be hard pressed to separate the album from a dozen other rubber-stamped "girl singer" albums.

*Shania Twain* did have one tremendous consequence, how-

ever. It caught the ear of a South African rock 'n' roll producer named Robert John "Mutt" Lange, who thought La Twain's voice was just tremendous. Of course, to say Lange is a rock producer is a little like saying Mick Jagger is just another rock 'n' roll singer. Lange's production values had practically defined the big stadium rock of the late 1980's. Lange was a powerhouse, not really retired, but looking around for the next project. Out of the blue, he contacted Shania Twain and asked whether she'd be interested in working with him.

This is what, in the trade, is known as a "no-brainer."

The 12 cuts of *The Woman in Me*, all written by Twain and Lange, were made to Lange's standards, not Nashville's. They were eclectic, more pop-oriented, and made flawless use of Shania Twain's distinctive styling. And they were hits—good lord, were they hits!

So it's to the Adirondacks that she and Mutt have come to do two nearly impossible things:

- Create a follow-up to *The Woman in Me*, and
- Craft a final and definitive answer to the Touring Question.

I say nearly—but not—impossible, because Shania Twain is riding a tide of rising expectations. The totally unanticipated sales of *The Woman in Me* left Shania with the interesting conundrum of not being able to tour to support the record, because the record didn't need any tour support. The record sold like crazy, especially among young women, who saw Twain as a positive role model, and young men, who saw Twain, thanks to her videos, as a Serious Babe. Typically, a new artist would initially tour as an opening act for a more established artist. However, I don't know many artists who would be particularly en-

thusiased at having a mega-selling radio and video star as the opening act.

And, in fact, the success had caught Twain and Lange, who'd become an item and, eventually, married, by surprise. Twain didn't have the material to support a full-blown headlining tour, or the logistical support to pull one off on short notice.

So, going against every bit of conventional country music wisdom, she didn't tour.

Secondly, no doubt under the rock tutelage of Lange, she was in no hurry to record a follow-up. Contrast that with LeAnn Rimes, who appears to be releasing about an album a week! *The Woman in Me*, however, is still a strong seller. two years later, and the Twain and Lange combo felt no need to cannibalize the old record for a new one.

But now, it's time.

Do you, I ask, feel this tremendous pressure on you to follow up?

"I'm feeling more relieved by the day, I can tell you that," Shania says.

Really, I ask?

"Yeah, really," she replied. "I'm excited about the new record. It's surpassing...it's surprising me. So, it's turning out better than I had expected



**Six Top Tens, including four Number One hits, from *The Woman in Me*, Shania's second album, took the music industry, the radio-buying public and Shania herself by storm. Here she celebrates with Luke Lewis, President of Mercury Records, and Danny Goldberg, Chairman of Mercury Group. The best-selling album by a woman in the history of country music is still on the charts.**



it to be, even. And I feel so very relieved!"

Was there a lot of pressure when you were putting down the tracks, I press, because you had this single spectacular record, and now the feeling is, 'I've got to do it again?'

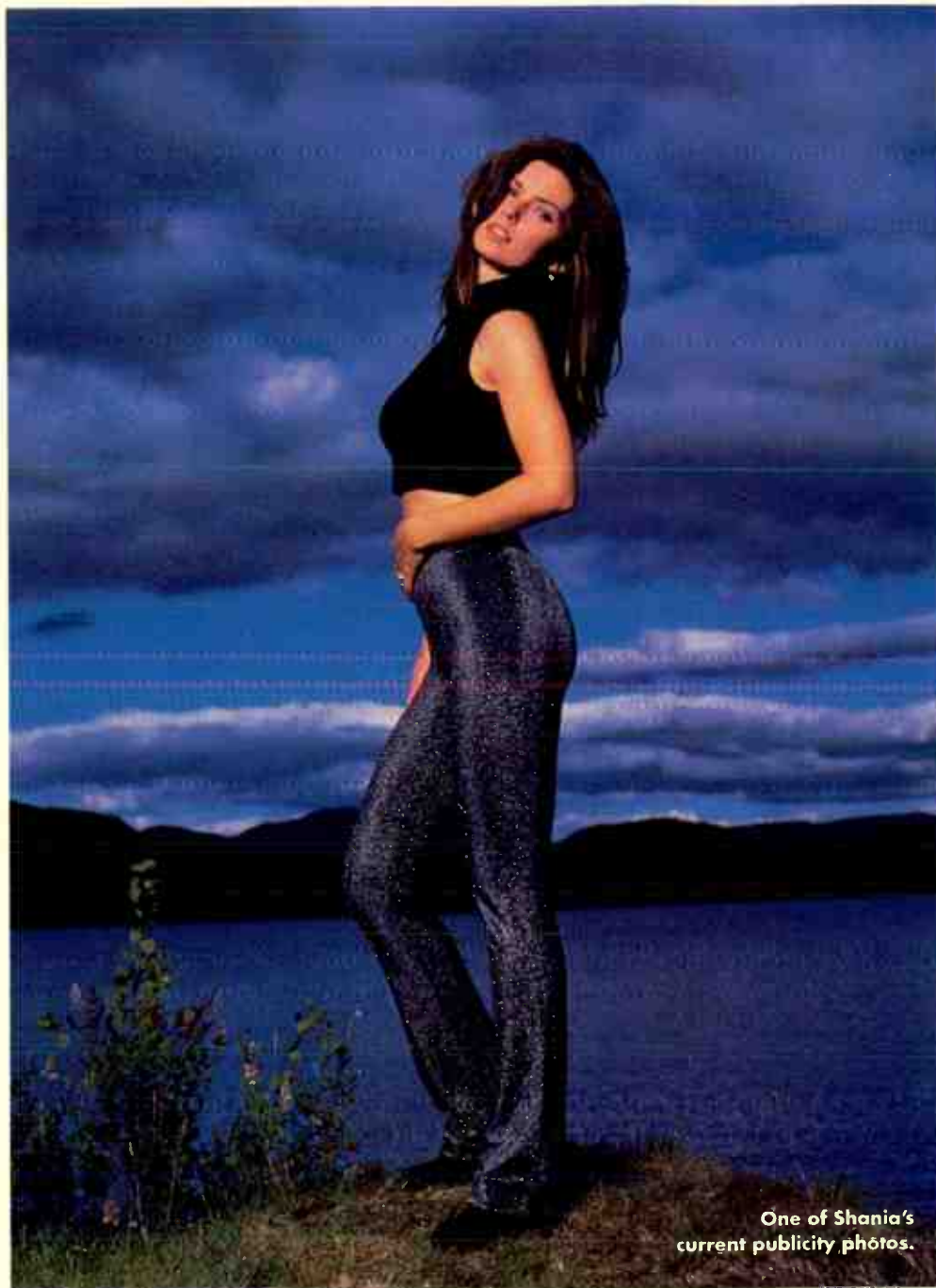
"Well, I'll tell you," she says. "Last year, while we were writing the music, I wasn't feeling any pressure yet. Because I felt like the writing was better. I really felt that I had improved as a songwriter; Mutt and I had improved as a songwriting team. I mean, naturally, you evolve. So I had experienced so much in those two years that it was just kinda natural to evolve. And I really felt that I had. I really felt that I've got a lot more to say. I think I've got better ways to say it. And I felt that I was coming into myself a lot more. So I really wasn't intimidated by the songwriting challenge—the ability to write better songs."

"The challenge started to come into play when I realized that country music was, in a certain sort of way...the profile of it was diminishing. And it worried me. When Garth had his concert in New York, I was so excited. Because I thought, please be a success. Be a big, big success. Because I want to keep the fans interested in what I do. If they're not listening to country music anymore, then that's going to bum me out right. I still want them to be listening to country music when I come back, is what I'm saying. Everybody's talking about how the industry is down. That's the only thing that worries me. It's not the music that worries me. I think that we're coming out with some pretty exciting stuff, and I'm loving it anyway. I'm enjoying it. You never know how the fans are going to respond, but that's just the risk that you take. You can't make compromises for those sorts of things; you just have to do what you do, and that's it. So, anyway, then when we got into the studio and we started actually recording these songs, the musicians were responding very, very positively. That helped reinforce it for us a little bit. I think you go through a period when you're writing it where you're not getting any feedback—it was just the two of us the whole time. And you start to wonder: What's going here? Does this make any sense?"

Whew!

That's the short answer. But it's hard not to get caught up in her enthusiasm for the music and her natural intensity. Even the tour—THE TOUR!—doesn't scare her...yet.

"The tour doesn't scare me at the moment at all," Shania says. "I'm very excited. I've kinda got those fidgeting nerves of anticipation."



One of Shania's current publicity photos.

When, I ask, do you think the tour will start scaring you?

"I don't know. I think I'm going to have these butterflies in my stomach for the next six months, and I'm just going to have to live with it," she says. "I'll probably get, like, really skinny. That's what happens. I've got these butterflies in my stomach. I've had them there for a few months. And they're going to be there until I go out on the road. I just have to live with that, because you can't help but have those nerves. Because you want everything to turn out good, you want it to be great. I'm a perfectionist. I pick at everything. I want it to be just right. I think I'm going to live with those nerves until it's actually out. So I don't think it's all of a sudden going to overwhelm me at any particular time. It's just going to be an ongoing thing."

Still, I say, I bet the closer opening night gets, the more those butterflies are going to take flight.

"Yes," she says, "but I plan on rehearsing so hard I'll be able to do the show in my sleep. Because I want to go out there and

*"I'm not actually going out of my way to look better than anyone else," Shania says. "I'm going out there to look my best. To sing my best; to perform my best; to write my best. To do my best at everything. I think everyone's doing the same thing."*



have fun. I don't want to be a wreck. I want to go out there and party. There's another side of me—I just can't wait to get out there and have fun with it. I want to get out there and sweat with this music. I want to get out there and make the audience sweat with this music. I want to have a good time. I don't want my first night to be a nervous wreck. And you know what it's like? It's like studying for an exam. So you know you're good at math. But that's not enough. You've got to study for the exam. If you don't study for the exam, you're going to be, you know..."

Dead. I suggest?

"Dead," Shania says, "come the day of the test. You have the confidence to get through it. And you're not going to sweat it. That's where I'm at. I'm very involved, creatively, with the show, with the whole creative production. So, I gotta work hard. It's not like, shut up and sing. I'm very much a part of everything, every little step. And there's a lot of steps. It's kind of like putting a wedding together. It's very complicated."

Weddings, I say, usually don't have so large a stage.

"No, but most people can relate to a wedding. They know how much of a nightmare it can be," Shania says. "And there you are, waiting and hoping that everything turns out great. You want everything to work out smoothly. You want all the bridesmaids' dresses to fit. All the details. So this is sort of what it's like trying to put a show together. You're hosting a party, and you've got to put the party together. And you've got to hope that the party is a success."

Do you, I ask, know where your first date will be?

"No idea," she says, waving her hands. "I don't even know the name of the album yet. I'll wait 'til the last minute. I'm being slightly indecisive at the moment; I'm so nervous to let this go. Because once it's gone, that's it."

Outside, a photographer is busily setting up for a series of photographs. We can overhear one of her press people explaining that Shania has the clothes she plans to wear, and Shania knows specifically how she wants the photos to look. She is, clearly, in control of this session. Shania recently turned down an interview with *Penthouse Magazine*, because she felt her fans wouldn't want to see her—fully clothed—in those kinds of pages.



PHOTOS: KADU ROBERTS/GETTY IMAGES

This brings us around to, for lack of better words, the Babe Factor. Shania's videos are right up there on the old Babe Chart, and her naval has gotten so much exposure it probably has an agent of its own. In one of her early reviews, the critic gushed, "Finally, country music has its own Video Babe!"

I decide to subtly slip into the subject—all this babe stuff, I ask, does she ever flinch?

Shania flinches.

"Well, it's kinda light, I guess," she says. "But, you know what? It's a compliment. I mean, if I didn't want people to notice the way I looked, then I wouldn't bother spending as much time on it. I'm sure that every artist out there is trying to look the best he or she can look. I'm doing the same thing. I'm not doing anything different..."

It is, she continues (she does continue!), a case of the bests...

"I'm not actually going out of my way to look better than anyone else," Shania says.

"I'm going out there to look my best. To sing my best; to perform my best; to write my best. To do my best at everything. I think everyone's doing the same thing. So if I'm getting that compliment, if people are saying that, then I take that as a compliment, because I'm putting effort into that. So I'm getting a compliment

back for it, then, damn it, I accept it as a good compliment."

But doesn't she ever get, well, offended?

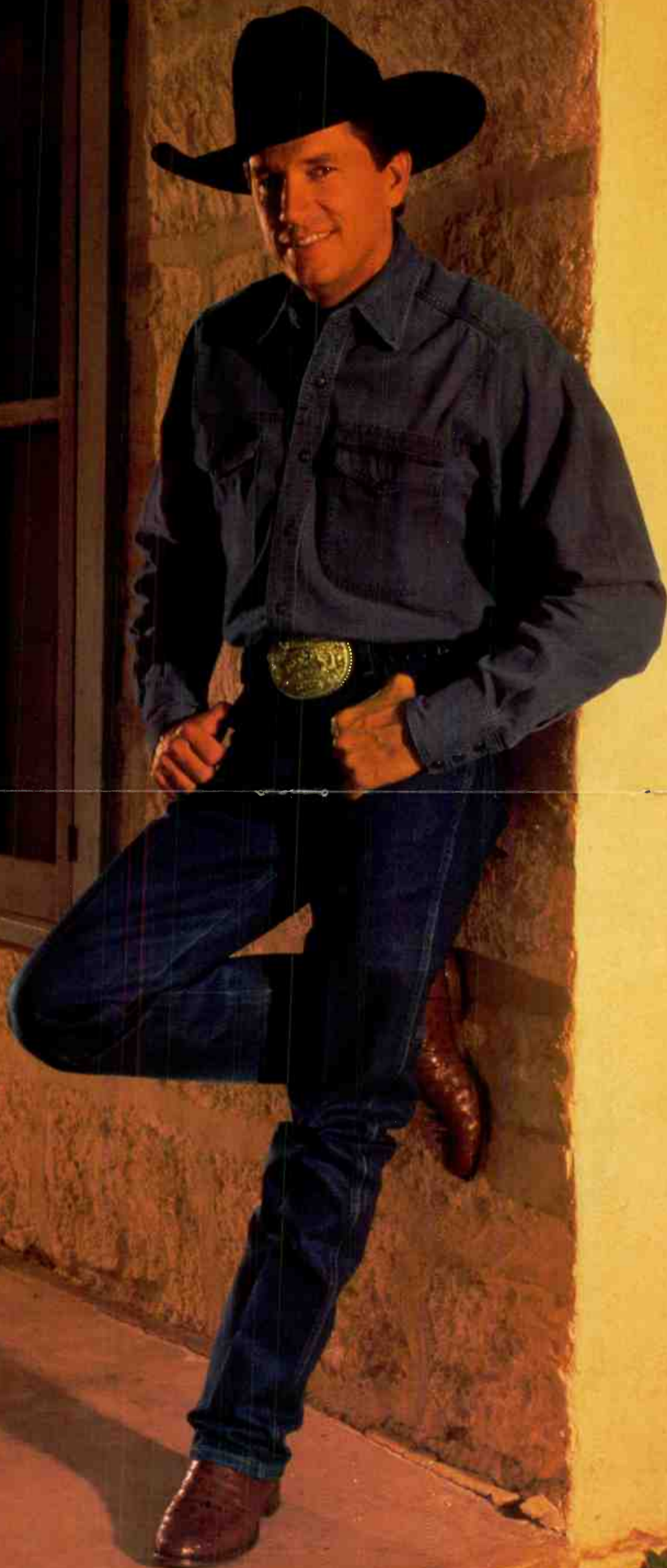
"I'm not offended by that at all," she says. "I think that's a wonderful compliment. And when I'm 50, and I'm not that role anymore, then I'll look back with a smile on my face on the role that I played. I don't find it sexist or degrading or any of those things."

Shania finally throws in a caveat, that she wouldn't want the image, or any single facet of her career, to overpower all the rest. Especially, she doesn't want anything to overpower the actual music.

"Otherwise, I'd just have become an actress or something," she says, with finality. ■

**At Fon Fair, Shonio belts it out for the crowd. Country comedian Cletus T. Judd paid her the ultimate compliment with his spoof, "If Shonio Were Mine."**





**GEORGE STRAIT**

COUNTRY MUSIC MAGAZINE NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1997

PULL-OUT  
CENTERFOLD  
OF THE MONTH

# GEORGE STRAIT

## Awards Update

### Personal Data

Given name: George Strait  
Birthdate: May 18, 1952  
Birthplace: Pearsall, Texas  
Family: Wife, Norma; son, George Jr.  
Height: 5'10"  
Weight: 160  
Color eyes: Green  
Color hair: Brown

### Awards

**1981**  
*Billboard* Male Country Singles Artist of the Year  
*Record World* New Male Artist of the Year

**1983**  
*Billboard* Male Singles Artist of the Year

**1984**  
Academy of Country Music (ACM) Top Male Vocalist  
*Billboard* Male Vocalist of the Year

**1985**  
Country Music Association (CMA) Male Vocalist of the Year  
CMA Album of the Year, *Does Ft. Worth Ever Cross Your Mind*  
ACM Top Male Vocalist  
ACM Album of the Year, *Does Ft. Worth Ever Cross Your Mind*

**1986**  
*Music City News* Awards Male Vocalist of the Year  
CMA Male Vocalist of the Year  
*Billboard* Overall Top Country Artist  
*Billboard* Top Male Country Artist

**1987**  
*Billboard* Number One Top Country Artist of the Year  
Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo World Record Attendance

**1989**  
CMA Entertainer of the Year



ACM Top Male Vocalist  
ACM Entertainer of the Year  
*Radio & Records* Country Performer of the Year

**1990**  
CMA Entertainer of the Year  
SRO Touring Artist of the Year  
*Radio & Records* Country Performer of the Year

**1991**  
American Music Awards Top Male Country Vocalist

**1993**  
ACM Tex Ritter Award, *Pure Country* (movie)

**1995**  
ASCAP Voice of Music Award

**1996**  
CMA Male Vocalist of the Year  
CMA Single of the Year, "Check Yes or No"  
CMA Album of the Year, *Blue Clear Sky*  
ACM Single of the Year, "Check Yes or No"  
TNN/*Music City News* Awards Single of the Year, "Check Yes or No"  
TNN/*Music City News* Awards Video of the Year, "Check Yes or No"  
TNN/*Music City News* Awards Album of the Year, *Lead On*  
*Country Weekly* Golden Pick Awards Favorite Song, "Check Yes or No"  
*Billboard* Country Artist of the Year

**1997**  
American Music Awards Favorite Country Album, *Blue Clear Sky*  
ACM Top Male Vocalist  
ACM Album of the Year, *Blue Clear Sky*  
*Country Weekly* Golden Pick Favorite Video, "Check Yes or No"  
*Country Weekly* Golden Pick Favorite Album, *Blue Clear Sky*  
CMA Male Vocalist of the Year  
CMA Album of the Year, *Carrying Your Love With Me*

### Postscript

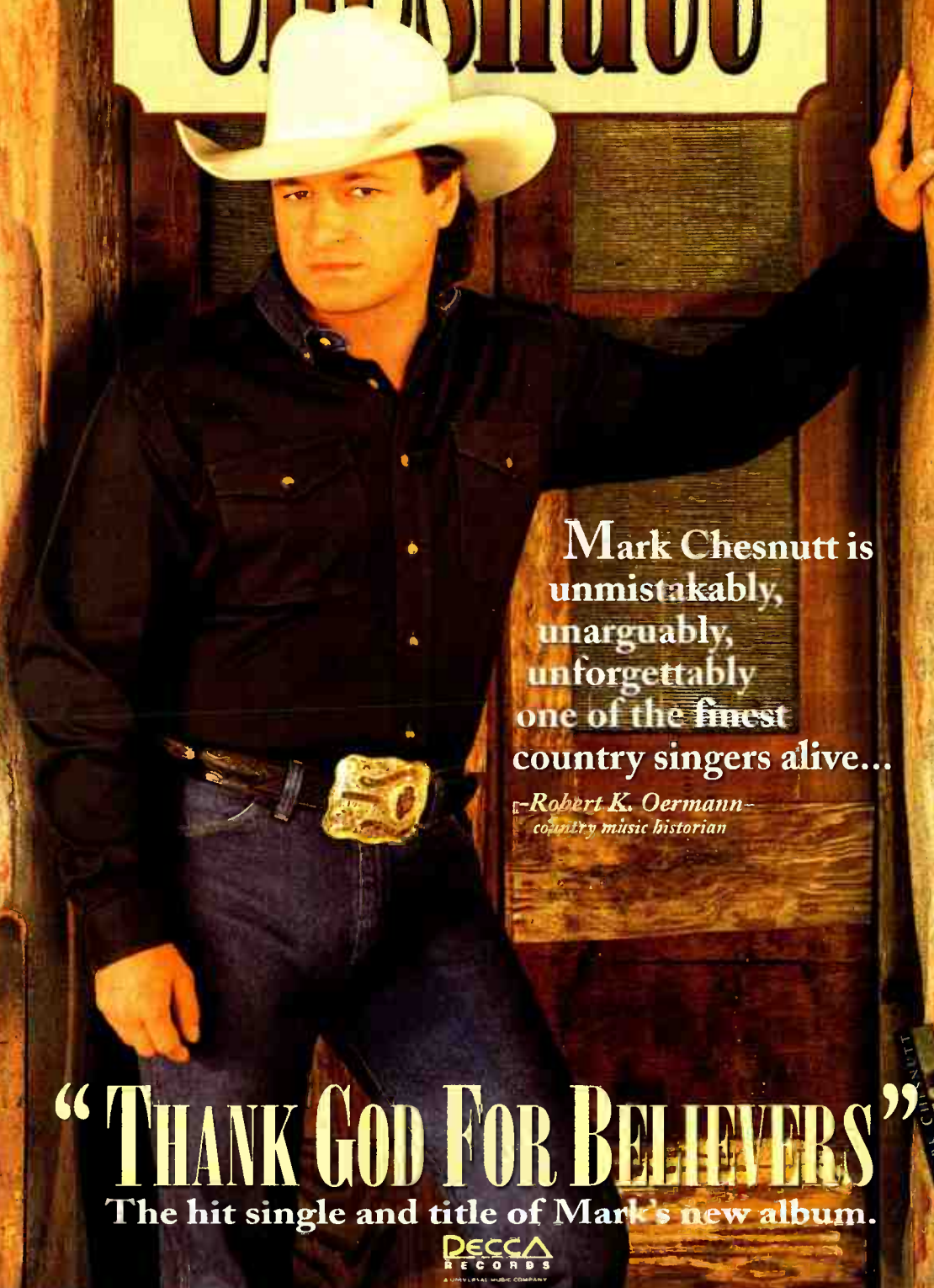
George Strait has been with MCA Records longer than anyone else currently on their roster. He's recorded for the company since 1981, and has sold over 41 million albums. Twenty out of George's 22 albums are certified platinum or multi-platinum. If sales continue at their present pace, his 1995 boxed set, *Strait Out of the Box*, will soon be the second largest-selling boxed set of all time.

Label Address: MCA Records, 60 Music Square East, Nashville, Tennessee 37205.

Fan Club Address: P.O. Box 2119, Hendersonville, Tennessee 37077.

# TRUE TODAY, TRUE TOMORROW

## MARK CHESNUTT



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—Robert K. Oermann—  
country music historian

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# KEVIN SHARP

## *Some Wishes Come True*

❖ By Bob Millard ❖

**F**ive years ago, most people wouldn't have bet a plugged nickel on Kevin Sharp's life, much less his career. Five years ago he was diagnosed with terminal cancer. Earlier this year, permanently hairless from the scorching chemotherapy that saved his life, he spent four weeks atop the country singles chart with his major-label debut, "Nobody Knows." It's a heartwarming, if very strange, story.

Kevin Sharp was born in 1970. He was reared in California in a large Mormon family. Between his seven blood siblings and the multitude of foster children and foreign students his parents brought into their home, Kevin grew up determined, long-haired and scrappy. He reached high school in Sacramento, disinterested in studying, but outstanding in sports and music.

"Books just weren't my thing," Sharp says. "I played tackle football and wrestled. I started lifting weights at a very young age. My friends liked to sit around and watch me, because I'd sing a song while I was lifting, and they thought that was funny."

In 1988, Kevin says he began suffering from chronic fatigue and spasmodic pain in his leg and lower back. Coaches and doctors dismissed it as a sport injury, but Kevin thought differently. By the time he graduated, in 1989, he felt so bad some mornings that he could not get out of bed. Nevertheless, he went on to join a theater company doing Broadway show tunes. He collapsed that summer and was finally diagnosed with bone cancer. Being misdiagnosed the year before had cost him heavily: cancer had spread to his lungs, and doctors were in a hurry to amputate his leg. He said no.

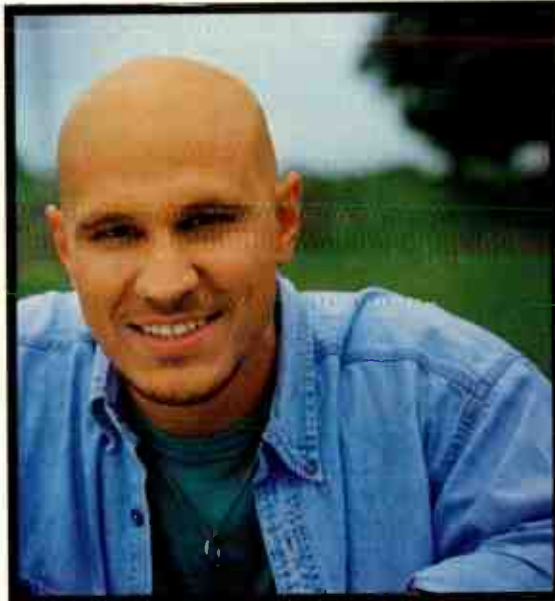
Eighteen and handed a death warrant, Kevin came to the attention of the Make-A-Wish Foundation; as in "make-a-last-wish." He wished to meet Los Angeles composer and producer David Foster. Foster gave the youngster a tour of his studio and told him the door was always open. Kevin went home elated, only to hear that his girlfriend had dumped him. Here's where the still hopeful publicity story begins to take the harrowing twists and turns of real life. It's not a pretty picture.

Kevin loaded his pistol, overdosed on pills and nearly died, lucky to have passed out before he thought to use the gun. He was sent to a mental institution for help. By the next spring, it seemed not to matter. The cancer was back. Foster's cheer-up call helped. "I kept listening to music all the time, especially David's music," Kevin explains. "It was so healing."

Foster was involved personally by now. As experimental

drugs, surgeries and radiation were applied, Foster kept telling Kevin that he'd help him with his music. Two years later, Kevin surprised everyone—himself included—by going into remission. Then he had to kick the pain pills, which led him through the hell of psychotic episodes and 30 straight days of 100-percent insomnia. It's hardly the happy-go-lucky beginnings of a country career.

Once he got the drugs and suicidal urges out of his system, he began performing in hospitals for other kids with cancer. He landed a job as lead singer in the Great American California



theme park in 1993, and, inspired by Garth Brooks' over-the-top intensity, pushed the troupe to include more and more country music. He sang everywhere he could, from funeral services to auditioning for TNN's *You Can Be a Star*. He even began making tapes of himself singing, and, in 1994, released his own CD called *You Can Count on Me*. A year later he began a brief, two-year marriage.

Through Foster, Kevin met Chris Farren, noted for producing Boy Howdy. After those two had worked in the studio a while, Kenny Rogers paid for a professional photo session, and Foster fixed them up with an audition for Asylum Records in Nashville. Having been in the wrong place at the wrong time much of his early adult life, Kevin Sharp was

finally in the right place with the right material when Music Row was smitten with the idea that if country songs could become R&B hits, the reverse might also work. The Tony Rich hit, "Nobody Knows," spent 48 weeks soaring through the pop charts. It would become the breakthrough single for Kevin's debut country album, *The Measure of a Man*.

Though Kevin wishes people wouldn't focus so much on his cancer, his hairlessness and the emotionalism that can wrench him toward tears at a moment's notice when he talks about his past, nobody knew when they bought "Nobody Knows" that he was a cancer and suicide survivor, and it is possible that in a couple of years, those facts won't be an issue. He's already at work on a second album, and two more singles have been released off of *Measure*: "She's Sure Taking It Well" and "If You Have Somebody," with plans for two more. In a nod to the Make-A-Wish Foundation, he had their wishbone logo tattooed on his chest at this year's Fan Fair.

"The real reason I'm here is that music has made a difference every day in my life," says the young man. "Now I'd just like somebody listening to me to feel 'that song by that bald guy really moved me, really helped me.'"

# TOP 25



## Albums

1. LeAnn Rimes ..... *You Light Up My Life—  
Inspirational Songs*
2. Brooks & Dunn ..... *The Greatest Hits Collection*
3. Trisha Yearwood ..... *(Songbook) A Collection of Hits*
4. Tim McGraw ..... *Everywhere*
5. LeAnn Rimes ..... *Blue*
6. George Strait ..... *Carrying Your Love with Me*
7. Bryan White ..... *The Right Place*
8. Deana Carter ..... *Did I Shave My Legs for This?*
9. Neal McCoy ..... *Greatest Hits*
10. Collin Raye ..... *The Best of Collin Raye—  
Direct Hits*
11. Clint Black ..... *Nothin' But the Taillights*
12. LeAnn Rimes ..... *Unchained Melody/  
The Early Years*
13. Martina McBride ..... *Evolution*
14. Alan Jackson ..... *Everything I Love*
15. Diamond Rio ..... *Greatest Hits*
16. Lila McCann ..... *Lila*
17. Lee Ann Womack ..... *Lee Ann Womack*
18. Trace Adkins ..... *Dreamin' Out Loud*
19. Pam Tillis ..... *Greatest Hits*
20. Clay Walker ..... *Rumor Has It*
21. Alan Jackson ..... *The Greatest Hits Collection*
22. Michael Peterson ..... *Michael Peterson*
23. Lorrie Morgan ..... *Shakin' Things Up*
24. Alabama ..... *Dancin' on the Boulevard*
25. Sawyer Brown ..... *Six Days on the Road*

## Singles

1. Diamond Rio ..... *How Your Love Makes Me Feel*
2. Deana Carter ..... *How Do I Get There*
3. Lee Ann Womack ..... *The Fool*
4. Tim McGraw ..... *Everywhere*
5. Lorrie Morgan ..... *Go Away*
6. Sawyer Brown ..... *This Night Won't Last Forever*
7. Kevin Sharp ..... *If You Love Somebody*
8. Vince Gill ..... *You and You Alone*
9. Brooks & Dunn ..... *Honky Tonk Truth*
10. Trisha Yearwood  
and Garth Brooks ..... *In Another's Eyes*
11. Collin Raye ..... *What the Heart Wants*
12. Alan Jackson ..... *There Goes*
13. Bryan White ..... *Love Is the Right Place*
14. Neal McCoy ..... *The Shake*
15. Shania Twain ..... *Love Gets Me Every Time*
16. Clint Black ..... *Something That We Do*
17. Mark Chesnutt ..... *Thank God for Believers*
18. Chely Wright ..... *Shut Up and Drive*
19. Travis Tritt featuring  
Lari White ..... *Helping Me Get Over You*
20. Kenny Chesney ..... *She's Got It All*
21. Reba McEntire ..... *What If It's You*
22. George Strait ..... *Today My World Slipped Away*
23. Clay Walker ..... *Watch This*
24. John Michael Montgomery ..... *How Was I to Know*
25. David Lee Murphy ..... *All Lit Up in Love*





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## LETTERS FROM NASHVILLE

# Marty's Real Life Country Music Story

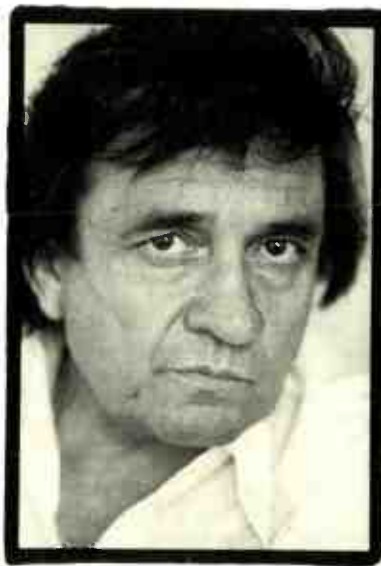
*Photos and captions by Marty Stuart*

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** To celebrate our 25th Anniversary, we asked our Nashville friends to write to us. Many did. Those from Marty Stuart and "Cowboy" Jack Clement were extra special. Marty not only sent the stunning photos you see here, he also sent the beautiful letter following, reflecting his feelings on our 25th anniversary and his as a professional musician. He was 13 when he left home in 1972.

Cowboy's letter reflects experience few can equal: since the 50's as producer, songwriter, publisher and Johnny Cash's favorite rhythm guitar player, Cowboy has cut records on Elvis, Jerry Lee, Carl. Cash and nearly everyone else who passed through the Sun studios...not to mention producing Number One singles for Charley Pride, Waylon's *Dreaming My Dreams* and his own album, *When I Dream*, which some of our editors list among their Top 25. Cowboy is a dreamer.

So here we present a new feature, Letters From Nashville, where in future issues you will also hear directly from other worthy voices.

—Russ Barnard



**JOHNNY CASH**  
*Sydney, Australia, early 1980's. I took this while we were on tour. Johnny Cash means something to everyone. To the world, he's the "Man in Black." June calls him John. Some people call him John R. His mama and daddy called him J.R. That's who he is to me. That's what this frame says to me. This is Ray and Carri's boy, J.R., from Dyess, Arkansas.*



### BILL MONROE

*Fall 1995. I spent the afternoon at his farm in Goodlettsville, Tennessee. We took pictures and played a little music. He wasn't feeling good, but he dressed up and gave me a full afternoon of photos, his last photo session. I cherished this day.*



### TRAVIS TRITT

*Key West, Florida, January 1996. Travis is my favorite singer, my favorite comedian and by far my favorite brother. We've shared it all: collecting awards, singing songs, hanging out with George Jones or The Rolling Stones, buying guitars, chasing girls or shooting pistols at bottles we'd named after old girlfriends who'd broken our hearts. Every memory is a treasure. And just as I had suspected, he snores better than most people sing.*



**EARL SCRUGGS**

*Winter 1996. Taken at Grandpa Jones' home during one of Grandpa and Ramona's famous picking parties. I love watching Earl walk into a room. People rise as if they're in the presence of royalty. I think you could set him in a chair in the middle of Times Square and five minutes later you'd hear nothing but his banjo. He is filled with magic.*



**BUCK OWENS**

*Bakersfield, Fall 1996. Without question my favorite eccentric uncle. I love him. At breakfast the morning he was inducted into the Hall of Fame, he told me he had a gift for me, but I'd have to go to Bakersfield to get it. I flew in for the grand opening of his new club. Before I went on stage, he presented me with Don Rich's guitar.*

**JOHNNY CASH & TOM PETTY**

*Winter 1996. Taken during the recording of Cash's album, Unchained. Tom Petty and The Heartbreakers and I were the backup band. Cash sang everything from Jimmie Rodgers' songs to music by Soundgarden. He re-set country music's clock and shook the lines of rock 'n' roll all in one sweep. He broke loose as only he can do.*

**CONNIE SMITH**

*Summer 1996. Home is where the heart is. She has mine. This was taken during the recording of her upcoming album. I like what Dolly Parton said, "There's only three singers, Connie Smith, Linda Ronstadt and Barbra Streisand. The rest of us are just trying."*





## LETTERS FROM NASHVILLE

Dear Russ:

Rule Number One, don't blink or you'll miss it. I'm talking about the next 25 years. Where did the last 25 go? They flew like passing through some small town whose welcome sign said "hello" and "good-bye" at the same time. Traveling took me by storm. I'm now a full-fledged motion junkie driven by whatever tomorrow holds all the while clinging to the memory of yesterday's kiss. I'm a cutting-edge interstate slave who secretly pines for the simplicity of the backroads. There's such a delicate balance in making the heart and soul of the backroads live in harmony with the commerce of the freeway.

Like the crow, I'm a witness. I was there when country music left the dirt roads and found its way onto the blacktop. It was thrilling. After years of struggle, we finally gained mainstream acceptance. Just like Burger King. Now we're everywhere. The sound of the 4/4 shuffles gave way to the ka-ching of the cash register. We all got more buses, more money and more fame than ever before. That's great. Isn't it? It's been a great ride. What a trip. But no matter how much fun and success any good road trip yields, there comes a time when your heart cries out and home weighs heavy on your mind.

Hanging around in a small town the day after a show has never been my style. Being the hero in last night's spotlight is reward enough. Then it's time to move on. That's the way I feel about my place in country music right now.

For the last decade country music has given the world a good show, but just like a trip down the interstate, after a while it's pretty much all the same. Burger King Whoppers taste the same in California as they do in Maine. They're predictable at any turn. It scares me to think that country music has to forfeit its character in order to survive in the mainstream. It's something to think about. Johnny Cash has a saying, "You've got to know where you've been so you can know where you're going." I believe there's always a point if you're playing connect the dots with the bugs on the windshield when they spell out, "Is it time to turn around, or do you prefer to keep going this way?" I'll admit, the going's been good but... Before I go any further into the future, I want to go home, and spend some time at the heart of country music. I want to rekindle my emotions.

After months of searching for a place to turn around, I discovered that it wasn't a turn-around I needed after all. It was a new intro. Specifically, it was Ralph Mooney's steel guitar intro to Merle Haggard's song, "The Days of Wine and Roses," that turned me around and put me on the road to home. I started looking for more signs and wonders, markers of any kind to guide me. The next song I heard that touched me was "You Don't Even Know Who I Am" by Patty Loveless. She

was singing close to home. I drove to Poor Valley, Virginia, and spent part of an afternoon at what's left of A.P. Carter's Clinch Mountain home. I picked flowers and ate a handful of blossoms off of his apple tree. I called my code-a-phone to get my messages. The first one said, "Hello, I'm Johnny Cash. I don't know my number, but you do. Call me when you get home, son." Just the sound of his voice moved me on. Travis called and left his latest joke. "What's the difference between a country music magazine publisher and a large pizza? A large pizza can feed a family of four." Buck Owens' message asked if I'd help him find a Martin acoustic guitar. He said he was tired of loud country

music, and he wanted to bring his songs a little closer to home. It made me wonder if everybody was thinking of home. I knew how much Earl Scruggs loves The Carter Family, so that led me to his house to tell him about the Carter Fold experience. We wound up having a living room concert. The sound of his banjo took me home.

Sadness sometimes surrounds the home. You can't imagine how much it hurt as Vince Gill, Ricky Skaggs, Patty Loveless, Alison Krauss, Ralph Stanley, Stuart Duncan, Roy Huskey Jr., Connie Smith, Emmylou Harris and I stood on the stage of the Ryman Auditorium and sang a song and played Bill Monroe home. After the funeral, without a word being said, I understood that regardless of what is happening in the stratosphere of country music, from time to time the children are needed at home.

One of the things I rediscovered along the way was how much I love the mandolin. The end of the day usually finds me by myself in a dark corner playing my mandolin. Somehow, through the melodies, my mother's words find their way to me. "When you're weary, and confused, be still and wait. Go home and regain your power and vision. Do whatever your heart tells you to do. When you see clearly, observe and you'll find a new beginning." She told me this a long time ago, but it's a timeless piece of advice. I minded her, I minded my heart and I followed the spirit, and here I stand at the heart and soul of country music feeling brand new and ready for the new millennium.

As the song says, "It's a long journey home." Tomorrow, perhaps I'll be like Woody Guthrie, and ride me a boxcar across the world singing about what I see as I go, or maybe I'll inhabit a small town somewhere and fly around the high line poles observing life below me like some old squawking crow, or I might just do what I do and keep on being me. I may as well because I guess that's who I was meant to be. Or maybe I'll just sit on the porch at home and do not one single thing except think about my friends at *Country Music Magazine*.

Marty Stuart



We stood on the stage...and played Bill Monroe home.

Dear Russ,

From the day I read the first issue of *Country Music* 25 years ago, I have always believed that *Country Music* is maybe the voice of the true believer. True believers do more than just listen to the music:

1. They love the music for private and personal reasons and let the rest of the world go by.

2. They all enjoy a frequent batch of old-time picking and singing.

3. Many of them are proud and honored to be known as "shit kickers," "hillbillies," "rock 'n' rollers" and Boy Scouts.

4. They worry about Johnny Cash.

5. Most of them would probably agree that George Jones is the greatest country singer who ever lived.

6. They try to protect the music by remembering the real stuff, buying CD's of it and propagating it to their friends.

7. They listen to the radio less and less as they discover to their personal delight just how much music from the past is currently available on CD's...digital and durable.

8. They upgrade their sound systems so they can really hear stuff for the first time.

9. Sooner or later, most of them become Johnny Cash fans for one reason or another.

10. They believe that to not pray is not fair to others.

11. They believe that the funk will always come back around.

12. Most of them like the current crop of country girls more than the current crop of country boys.

Russ, you probably realize that I have been grossly overexposed to music to the point that I like less and less of what I hear, old and new. But, hey, I'm 66 years old and jaded beyond belief since 1956, maybe '57. That's 40 years on the firing line, Russ, gimme a break.

The point is, Russ, my job is not to accept music as it is, but to change it. That's what a producer does. All I want to do is produce some records that people will be groovin' to in a thousand years. I've only got about 960 years to go on a couple of them already...perhaps "Raunchy," for it is an instrumental. Words can be a nuisance in terms of planning thousand year tracks, but as the song says, "You don't have to know the language with the moon in the sky and the stars up above." And I think that "Whole Lot of Shakin' Going On" will survive well into the next century, to say the least. Why? Because of CD's and the fact of digital recording, which is here now and which lasts forever. I don't have to worry about analog deterioration any longer. Hooray, ha ha, bansai. I seem to be running out of excuses for not producing some records, but don't sweat it. Remember what I always say, "The best things in life are quick." Speaking of quick, "Whole Lot of Shakin' Going On" was done in one take, sans dry run. Just, blap, three minutes later, there it is, finished, ready to go to market. No overdubs,

no mixing, no deadline delays, and you have the record pressed and in stores in two or three days if you wanted to. Nowadays it generally takes six to 12 months to get your record on the market. So it would seem that record producers must try to think nine months ahead. A lot could happen in nine months. I hope it's good. I predict that it will be based on my personal, though possibly jaded, observations.

1. I think country music will improve during the next nine months, for it has improved during the last nine months. I believe the music is starting to flow in a positive direction again. The fans are starting to say, "Hey, where's the funk?"

2. The country girls are singing better and with better and more varied songs than the boys are, and they seem to take more chances musically. Somebody's got to show the way. Sick 'em, girls. Somebody's got to do it. Patty Loveless endures as

one of my favorites. I love Terri Clark in spite of the hat. LeAnn is in a class by herself though I would like to hear her yodel more and sing more oldies. Why? Because they're harder to sing, that's why. I'm pretty sure that "Blue" is a thousand-year record.

3. There is a growing resurgence of independent record labels because the major labels have become such "big business." And because of the new and direct avenues to consumers, such as the Internet. The entire record industry is going through vast changes at this time, and those are the times when independents can slide in there and invent some new funk. The audi-

ence is more or less demanding changes. The friends and neighbors will only take so much abuse, you know.

4. Bluegrass music is growing in several directions at once. Many of the most talented young musicians are playing bluegrass. Why? Because it's harder to play, that's why. Some of these young bluegrass players are in a whole new ballpark, remembering the bluegrass and rock 'n' roll are kissing cousins to say the least. I think bluegrass can become a bigger and better business. But I hope it never becomes "Big Business." That could kill it for a quarter century or more.

I think you and your magazine have done a really good job of celebrating, protecting and remembering the old while working diligently at finding good things to say about the new. I am proud of you for having a good story in the first place, sticking to it in the second place, and for always, deep down, being in it more for the music than the money.

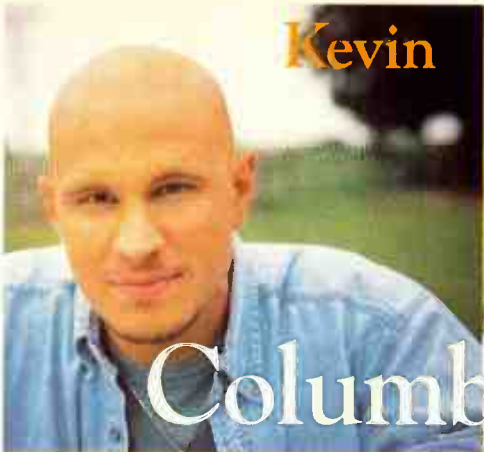
*Country Music Magazine* is part of my life. Thanks, Russ, I needed that.

So keep up the good work, Russ, and keep remembering that we're in the fun business, and if we're not having fun, we're not doing our jobs. Aloha Oe, Nui, Nui,

Pineapple Jack Clement



The point is, Russ, my job is not to accept music as it is...



**Kevin**



**Deana**



**Terri**

# Columbia House Brings You

Alan Jackson—Who I Am (Arista) 486•233

**Ricochet**—(Columbia) 148•916  
Patsy Cline—Grt. Hits (MCA) 365•924

Little Texas (Warner Bros.) 188•821

Aaron Tippin—Greatest Hits... And Then Some (RCA Nashville) 188•532

**George Jones**—Super Hits (Epic) 362•699  
Alabama—In Pictures (RCA) 137•018

Suzy Bogguss—Grt. Hits (Capitol Nashville) 476•051  
The Very Best Of Glen Campbell (Capitol Nashville) 403•444



**George Strait**—Blue Clear Sky (MCA) 168•583

**NASCAR—Hotter Than Asphalt**—Various Artists (Columbia) 147•850

Outlaws—The Outlaws (RCA) 155•465

John Michael Montgomery (Atlantic Nashville) 121•467

Lee Roy Parnell—We All Get Lucky Sometimes (Career Records) 133•603

Loretta Lynn—Country Music Hall Of Fame (MCA) 416•339

George Strait—Pure Country (MCA) 448•753

**The Essential Marty Robbins** (Columbia) 432•252/392•258

Diamond Rio—IV (Arista Nashville) 149•146  
Bluegrass Masters (Vanguard) 163•238

The Best Of The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band—Twenty Years Of Dirt (Warner Bros.) 345•744

Billy Dean—It's What I Do (Capitol Nashville) 153•965

Confederate Railroad—Greatest Hits (Atlantic Nashville) 158•063

Wynonna Judd—Wynonna (MCA/Curb) 435•909

Best Of Chris Ledoux (Capitol Nashville) 476•044

Jeff Foxworthy—You Might Be A Redneck If... (Warner Bros.) 474•833

Kevin Sharp—Measure Of A Man (Asylum) 173•641

**Collin Raye**—I Think About You (Epic) 135•814

**Doug Stone**—Super Hits (Columbia) 182•873

**Collin Raye**—Extremes (Epic) 473•025

**Mary Chapin Carpenter**—Stones In The Road (Columbia) 101•543

Kenny Rogers—20 Greatest Hits (Reprise) 444•885

Shania Twain (Mercury/Nashville) 458•273

**George Jones**—Super Hits Volume 2 (Epic) 186•353

**Shenandoah**—Grt. Hits (Columbia) 436•808

Kim Richey—Bitter Sweet (Mercury/Nashville) 182•816

Hank Williams, Sr.—40 Greatest Hits (Polydor) 423•863/393•868

Brooks & Dunn—Hard Workin' Man (Arista) 454•025

George Ducas—Where I Stand (Capitol Nashville) 179•242

Tracy Byrd—Love Lessons (MCA Nashville) 168•526

The Essential Waylon Jennings (RCA Nashville) 159•160

Elvis Presley—Great Country Songs (RCA) 169•391

Pam Tillis—All Of This Love (Arista Nashville) 142•687

Eagles Grt. Hits, Vol. 2 (Asylum) 317•768

Sheryl Crow (A&M) 165•969

**Alanis Morissette**—Jagged Little Pill (Maverick/ Reprise) 131•623

AC/DC—Back In Black (Remastered) (ATCO) 120•337

Jimmy Buffett—Songs You Know By Heart (MCA) 339•911

Jewel—Pieces Of You (Atlantic) 137•463

Madonna—The Immaculate Collection (Sire/Warner Bros.) 414•557

**Indigo Girls**—Shaming Of The Sun (Epic) 194•555

**Bruce Springsteen**—Grt. Hits (Featuring The E Street Band) (Columbia) 119•354

Bob Woodruff—Desire Road (Imprint) 182•121

Mark Chesnut—Greatest Hits (Decca) 173•476

Kentucky Headhunters—Still Pickin' (Mercury/Nashville) 103•358

The Essential Keith Whitley (RCA Nashville) 159•020

**Willie Nelson**—Stardust (Columbia) 283•887

Blackhawk—Strong Enough (Arista) 137•059

Deana Carter—D Did I Shave My Legs For This? (Capitol Nashville) 166•397

BR5-49 (Arista Nashville) 166•546

George Jones—I Lived To Tell It All (MCA Nashville) 168•609

**Ricky Van Shelton**—Super Hits, Vol. 2 (Columbia) 151•761

Common Thread: Songs Of The Eagles—Clint Black, Vince Gill, Trisha Yearwood, many more. (Giant) 469•999

Tracy Byrd—Big Love (MCA Nashville) 170•464

David Lee Murphy—Gettin' Out The Good Stuff (MCA Nashville) 168•575

**Willie Nelson**—Super Hits (Columbia) 186•866

Trisha Yearwood—Thinkin' About You (MCA Nashville) 118•703

The Essential Eddy Arnold—Learnin' As You Go (RCA Nashville) 159•145

**George Jones & Tammy Wynette**—Super Hits (Epic) 127•605

George Strait—Grt. Hits (MCA) 334•466

Emilio—Life Is Good (Capitol Nashville) 139•931

**Rick Trevino**—Learnin' As You Go (Columbia) 161•976

Marty Stuart—Honky Tonkin's What I Do Best (MCA) 176•263

Steve Wariner—Greatest Hits Volume II (MCA) 426•957

Jeff Wood—Between The Earth And The Stars (Imprint) 182•113

Gary Allan—Used Heart For Sale (Decca) 173•633

**Ty Herndon**—What Mattered Most (Epic) 127•779

**Ray Price**—American Originals (Columbia) 384•453

John Michael Montgomery—Kikin' It Up (Atlantic) 473•157

Jack Ingram—Livin' Or Dyn' (Rising Tide) 186•734

Randy Travis—Full Circle (Warner Bros.) 164•038

Reba McEntire—Rumor Has It (MCA) 411•538

John Anderson—Greatest Hits (BNA Records) 169•409

Travis Tritt—Greatest Hits—From The Beginning (Warner Bros.) 136•812

Robert Earl Keen—Picnic (Arista Austin) 188•540

Dwight Yoakam—Just Lookin' For A Hit (Reprise) 389•718

David Lee Murphy—Out With A Bang (MCA Nashville) 488•916

Faith Hill—Take Me As I Am (Warner Bros.) 473•728

Eddie Rabbitt—All Time Greatest Hits (Warner Bros.) 477•133

Conway Twitty—20 Greatest Hits (MCA Nashville) 470•955

Bob Carlisle—Shades Of Grace. Feat. the hit "Butterfly Kisses" (Diadem) 164•996

**Jerry Jeff Walker**—Great Gonzos (MCA) 428•664

Bob Willis—24 Greatest Hits (Polydor) 160•150

**Joe Diffie**—Life's So Funny (Epic) 144•287

Dwight Yoakam—Gone (Reprise/Sire) 139•634

John Michael Montgomery—Life's A Dance (Atlantic) 453•746

The Del McCoury Band—The Cold Hard Facts (Rounder) 166•793

Ernest Tubb—Country Music Hall Of Fame (MCA) 416•354

Vince Gill—I Still Believe In You (MCA) 448•571

Patty Loveless—Grt. Hits (MCA) 458•349

Bryan White (Asylum) 110•734

**Garth Brooks**—Fresh Horses (Capitol Nashville) 141•952

**Charlie Daniels Band**—Super Hits (Epic) 456•608

The Essential Charley Pride (RCA/Nashville) 188•656

Daryle Singletary—All Because Of You (Giant) 169•078

**Merle Haggard**—Super Hits (Epic) 186•379

Little Texas—Grt. Hits (Warner Bros.) 136•838

Brady Seals—The Truth (Reprise) 170•605

**Dolly Parton**—I Will Always Love You & Other Grt. Hits (Columbia) 153•932

Reba McEntire—For My Broken Heart (MCA) 430•090

**Wade Hayes**—Old Enough To Know Better (DKC Music/Columbia) 117•028

Martina McBride—The Way That I Am (RCA) 123•760

Mavericks—Music For All Occasions (MCA Nashville) 168•286

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Marty Stuart—The Marty Party Hit Pack (MCA Nashville) 121•350

**Wade Hayes**—On A Good Night (Columbia) 160•606

Mavericks—What A Crying Shame (MCA Nashville) 474•403

The Essential Hank Snow (MCA Nashville) 188•664

Reba McEntire—Starting Over (MCA Nashville) 168•294

The Essential Jimmie Rodgers (RCA Nashville) 188•698

## POP HITS

**Shawn Colvin**—A Few Small Repairs (Columbia) 167•593

No Doubt—Tragic Kingdom (Trauma Records) 163•436

James Taylor—Hour Glass (Columbia) 211•128

Stevie Ray Vaughan & Double Trouble—Greatest Hits (Epic) 140•939

Elvis Presley—The Number One Hits (RCA) 125•591

Michael Jackson—HIStory, Past, Present And Future, Book 1 (MJJ Music/Epic) 132•126/392•126

Bush—Razorblade Suitcase (Trauma Records) 173•518

Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers—Grt. Hits (MCA) 474•411

Hootie & The Blowfish—Fairweather Johnson (Atlantic) 154•229

Dave Matthews Band—Crash (RCA) 156•703

The Wallflowers—Bnnging Down The Horse (Interscope) 163•477



**Eagles**—Their Greatest Hits 1971-1975 (Asylum) 287•003



**Vince Gill**—High Lonesome Sound (MCA Nashville) 168•567

Rice, Rice, Hillman & Pederson—Out Of The Woodwork (Rounder) 179•457

Steve Earle—Guitar Town (MCA) 345•793

The Statler Brothers—Greatest Hits, Vol. 3 (Mercury/Nashville) 425•108

Lonestar (BNA Records) 140•772

The Buffalo Club (Rising Tide) 186•742

Alabama—Alabama Live (RCA) 123•455

Johnny Rodriguez—Greatest Hits (Mercury) 160•143

Mark Willis (Mercury Nashville) 159•285

Sawyer Brown—Greatest Hits (Liberty Curb) 411•363

**Best Of Lari White** (RCA Nashville) 179•291

Randy Travis—Greatest Hits, Vol. 1 (Warner Bros.) 448•654

**Asleep At The Wheel**—Back To The Future Now (Lucky Dog/Epic) 211•169

Lorrie Morgan—Greatest Hits (BNA Records) 132•480

Tracy Lawrence—Time Marches On (Atlantic Nashville) 147•082

Big House (MCA Nashville) 186•759

Neal McCoy—You Gotta Love That (Atlantic Nashville) 117•119

Brooks & Dunn—Watin' On Sundown (Arista Nashville) 102•277

John Berry—Standing On The Edge (Patriot) 120•956

George Strait—Ten Strait Hits (MCA) 432•617

**David Allan Coe**—For The Record—The First 10 Years (Columbia) 329•813/399•816

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Bryan

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**George Strait**—*Lead On* (MCA Nashville) **111-583**

**James Bonamy**—*What I Live To Do* (Epic) **144-279**

**Jeff Foxworthy**—*Crank It Up—The Music Album* (Warner Bros.) **164-806**

**Tracy Lawrence**—*I See It Now* (Atlantic) **102-582**

**Toby Keith**—*Boomtown* (Polydor Nashville) **103-325**

**Texas Tornados**—*4 Aces* (Reprise) **161-539**

**John Berry**—*Faces* (Capitol Nashville) **165-738**

**Reba McEntire**—*It's Your Call* (MCA) **450-361**

**Ty Herndon**—*Living In A Moment* (Epic) **164-079**

**Bill Engvall**—*Here's Your Sign* (Warner Bros.) **155-945**

**Clay Walker**—*Hypnotize The Moon* (Mercury Nashville) **139-626**

**Ronnie Milsap**—*The Essential Ronnie Milsap* (RCA) **123-729**

**David Ball**—*Starlite Lounge* (Warner Bros.) **159-434**

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**Kenny Chesney**—*A You* (BNA Records) **157-917**

**Paul Brandt**—*Calm Before The Storm* (Reprise) **159-053**

**Billy Ray Cyrus**—*Trail Of Tears* (Mercury) **164-632**

**Alan Jackson**—*A Lot About Livin' (And A Little 'Bout Love)* (Arista) **447-458**

**Sammy Kershaw**—*The Hits Chapter 1* (Mercury/Nashville) **136-796**

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**Joe Ely**—*Letter To Laredo* (MCA) **173-286**

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**"Grease"**—*Orig. Sndtrk.* (Polydor) **424-721**

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**Mindy McCready**—*Ten Thousand Angels* (BNA Records) **155-473**

**Toby Keith**—*Blue Moon* (A&M Nashville) **153-973**

**The Essential Gary Stewart** (RCA Nashville) **179-283**

**Royal Wade Kimes**—*Another Man's Sky* (Asylum) **167-320**

**Mary Chapin Carpenter**—*Shooting Straight In The Dark* (Columbia) **411-876**

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**Lorrie Morgan**—*Greater Need* (BNA Records) **157-859**

**Shania Twain**—*The Woman In Me* (Mercury/Nashville) **119-768**

**Tanya Tucker**—*Complicated* (Capitol Nashville) **185-108**

**Faith Hill**—*It Matters To Me* (Warner Bros.) **134-908**

**Alison Krauss & Union Station**—*So Long So Wrong* (Rounder) **188-524**

**Mary Chapin Carpenter**—*A Place In The World* (Columbia) **167-858**

**Martina McBride**—*Wild Angels* (RCA) **139-071**

**Trisha Yearwood**—*Everybody Knows* (MCA Nashville) **168-591**

**Suzy Bogguss**—*Give Me Some Wheels* (Capitol Nashville) **161-729**

**Regina Regina** (Giant) **179-143**

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# Joe Diffie, Ben Hogan, Elvis and Me



*When the interview didn't go exactly as planned, it didn't throw our writer off. He just went with the flow. ■ By Bob Millard*

**W**alking down the dimly-lit corridor behind the management company's factotum, on my way to meet with my favorite musical good ol' Oklahoma boy, Joe Diffie, it occurs to me that I have been in this business a long time. Everyone knows what Diffie's manager's building used to be—the sun-bleached outline of “MCA Records” still shows on the polished stone exterior. Entering the last office on the right, next to the back door, I realize that this was the office from which MCA national promotions chief Erv Woolsey managed George Strait from unknown San Marcos club act to Father of a Thousand Hat Act Neo-Traditionalists to come.

#### **Occupational Hazard #137: Trivia Flashback Distraction**

I am primed to reminisce about “the old days” with Diffie, but he has only been a recording act in this decade. Besides, he's more interested in golf than record company trivia, and catches me completely off guard, opening our interview posing a brain-teaser question of his own.

“Look!” says Diffie, pointing to an 11x14 black and white photo on the wall behind the couch. He is beaming with enthusiasm. “You know who that is?”

The tone of the voice assumes I am an initiate, that I know a nine iron from a travel iron, implies that only the lamentably undereducated, those deserving pity, would not immediately recognize the man in full swing from the tee whose back centers a picture framed by deep lines of gallery flanking a beautiful golf course. I can identify long-forgotten faces in a 1933 cast picture from the Grand Ole Opry, but this famous golfer's back stumps me. After all, I only know two and a half golfer's names—Arnold Palmer, Bobby Jones, and that new kid, Tiger Somebody. Judging from the age of the photograph, I guess Jones.

“Aw, no,” says Diffie, disappointed. “It's Ben Hogan making that famous shot at blah-blah-blah back in 19-blah-blah-blah, the shot that really made his reputation.”





"Oh," I reply, fumbling for a comeback. "Hey, this used to be Erv Woolsey's office."

"Oh," says Diffie.

As the man says at the dog track, "And...they're off!"

#### **Occupational Hazard #6: Interview Topic Meltdown**

Diffie is not a difficult person to interview. He's articulate, accessible, affable to the point of being genuinely friendly, but hitting on a topic he wants to talk about this afternoon is a game of pin the tail on the donkey. I try his much ballyhooed love life, but the widow Liz Allison, with whom Diffie is still linked, elicits monosyllabic responses. Next topic: NASCAR. Diffie dismisses this with a "been there, done that" roll of his eyes toward the ceiling.

So far, the conversations have gone like this:

"Well," I say, "I've tried to find some topics that aren't golf or race cars..."

"Yeah, I'm sick of that stuff," he replies, laughing.

"Really?"

"Nah."

"How's Liz?"

"She's a sharp one," he gets cagey.

"You all still hanging together?"

"Yeah."

Diffie is so bright and pleasant that this is becoming funny rather than embarrassing.

#### **Occupational Hazard #7: Having To Go With Plan "B," When There Is No Plan "C"**

Okay, I think, lives there a recording artist who doesn't want to talk about her- or himself?

Yes, actually, and his name is Joe Diffie.

But luck is with me. Diffie quickly warms to explaining why he's tired of talking about himself, and we're off to the races for a fun and informative conversation—just Joe Diffie, me, and Ben Hogan's back, in Erv Woolsey's old office.

"To be honest—I guess this sounds kind of weird—but I just don't find myself that interesting sometimes," Diffie says, and he laughs like a guy at the end of the bar who has just cracked a good joke.

"I try to live as normal a life as I can, you know. Even when I'm on the road I try to stay within myself and within my means and everything. People ask, 'Do you have any funny road stories?' No, I really don't. You know, I got some really nice things that have happened; interaction with fans and stuff.

"I guess other people find stuff interesting, and people wanna know stuff about you when you're a celebrity, they wanna know what you eat for breakfast and all this stuff. I've got this [Internet] web page, and I get on there. People always ask me, 'When you gonna come to Indiana? When you gonna do this or that?' I guess that's just part of it, but when I get up every morning and look in the mirror, I'm like, it's not that fascinating. I gotta shave and everything in the morning just like everybody else.

"I mean, unless you're some major egotist, would you think that everything you do is just so interesting to people? You know what I mean? That's where I was coming from trying to explain that I didn't think I was all that fascinating."

#### **Occupational Hazards #15 & #16: Jesus and Elvis**

So, after a long day of phone interviews, what would he really like to talk about?

"Oh, anything," he says, narrowing my field down considerably. "I try to think of myself as widely versed on a number of subjects. I could talk about football or music or history.... Whatever, you know."

If he could sit down one-on-one and have a conversation with anyone in the world, who would it be and what would they talk about? His answer is off-handed, yet thoughtful.

"No particular person would be especially interesting," he says, pausing to mull further. "Though it would be interesting to talk to Jesus, you know. That'd be an interesting conversation. I think my questions would be answered if I could actually sit down and talk to him in the flesh. I wouldn't have to ask him any questions. I think I could feel that aura, you know? Or, I'd ask Elvis if he really ate peanut butter and banana sandwiches—and could I have one. 'Thank ya, thank ya vurah much...'"

Nothing like a good Elvis send-up to break the ice on Music Row.

At this point, we are both laughing. Diffie is an easy-going fella, salt of the earth. He's also a fine singer who has broken through some important barriers with amusing, immaculately-crafted hits like "John Deere Green" and "Third Rock from the Sun." He's into the one- and two-million unit sales plateaus now.

His current CD, *Twice Upon a Time*, has already seen three singles, "This Is Your Brain (On Love)", "Somethin' Like This" and "The Promised Land." "This Is Your Brain" was a light, uptempo number with a humorous twist. It's right in there with some of his most popular records of the last few years.

"Thanks for not calling 'em 'novelty songs,' Diffie says. "I get that once in a while. Hey, you know what, it's a niche. You know what I mean? You just don't jump off the horse you rode in on, to use a worn out cliché. Certainly on this new record I haven't completely abandoned that. I did try to find a few more songs that appealed to me but had a little more straight-ahead story line. But "John Doe" and "Hard to Be Me" are a little left-field and strange. I just try to find songs that..."

He veers into more self-deprecating humor before finishing this thought.

"I have a certain sex appeal, man—it's subtle. I don't know... I think it boils down to songs, basically. Radio has become real song-oriented rather than being artist-oriented in the majority of cases. I think Conway said it a long time ago: 'You live by the song and you die by the song.' Fortunately, I got a great producer who has a great ear for songs. And I seem to have sort of a knack for picking songs that'll appeal to people. I think that's probably the answer."

By now, of course, I have completely lost track of the original question.

#### **Occupational Hazard #20: Hard Left Turn, At High Speed, With No Signal**

I actually kind of like this particular occupational hazard of interviewing country music artists, a job that (as Diffie puts it) "beats working at the foundry." Unexpected changes in direction can be stimulating. A large portion of the 200 some-odd officially recognized occupational hazards have to do with the publicists from hell, the tedium of "talking about the new album" to the exclusion of all else, forgetting to empty your bladder before sitting down with Garth or some other impossible-to-get artist, and malfunctioning interview recording equipment. (For a complete list, send \$5, two box tops and a SASE to me, in care of this magazine...just kidding.)

Anyway, just when I am becoming resigned to the idea that Joe Diffie doesn't really change, he merely mellows, out of the blue Diffie lets drop that not only did he have a small cameo roll in the TV show, *Murder, Country-Style*, but he has gone Hollywood, and very nearly likes it: During last winter's hiatus and recording season, Diffie acted in a made-for-TV movie starring Wilford ("Oatmeal... it's the right thing to do") Brimley, Johnny



*"I just try to pick the best songs I can get... and do the best job I can of singing 'em, and that's about all I can do about it."*



Cash, June Carter and Ty England.

"It's called *All My Friends Are Cowboys*," Diffie explains. "It's kind of a celebration of all things cowboy: cowboy poetry, cowboy music. But we got to do a little acting, riding around, and act like we're getting bucked off horses. It was a neat experience getting to do it, but it was just an excruciatingly long video was what it seemed to be."

*All My Friends Are Cowboys* is likely to air some time in 1998, and Diffie didn't simply walk on and play himself in this one.

"Yeah, I guess it's one of the main roles in there," he elaborated. "Like I say, I got to act with Wilford Brimley. The thing I learned from him was you don't have to blurt out your lines. You don't have to get 'em out in a hurry. You can kind of relax and have a little pregnant pause there, then say your line."

Of all the hat hunks available in country music today, Diffie was an interesting choice for this. He is hardly typecast in the cowboy bag.

"Actually, I thought it was kind of odd that they cast me as a cowboy—they had me wearing a cowboy hat and all this stuff—because I don't wear cowboy hats," he muses. "But it was fun. It felt like at least I was stretching my wings out and trying something else."

He hasn't hired a Hollywood agent, though he has been asked to fly out there and screen test for a few other potential roles. The main reason he did the cowboy film was that they promised, like the nurse who gives you a tetanus shot, that it wouldn't hurt much or take too long.

"I had time, and it was only supposed to be a seven-day shoot, so, 'Sure, I'll do it,'" he said, chuckling again. "Apparently, that's the trouble with a lot of actual movies. You gotta take two or three months off to go do it. I enjoyed it, and if I get offered, I might do some more, but I'll stick with music—something I think I might actually know something about."

And what does he think about the popular NBC-TV sitcom, *Third Rock from the Sun*, which took its title from his hit single, though he doesn't benefit in any way?

"Someone asked me how it feels that they made a TV series out of that title, but I don't have the theme song," he says. "It's kind of like watching your mother-in-law drive over a cliff in your new Lexus, you know? You sort of have mixed emotions."

#### **Occupational Hazard #199: Just When You Get Relaxed, The Interview Is Over**

When our formal interview time ends, Diffie hops up like a cat off a hot stove, lights a cigarette and begins pacing the room with relief. Neither of us is doing our jobs now. While I pack my gear, we talk for a while, one comfortable middle-aged guy to another, about family, work, life, retirement and dream houses in the country, which neither of us owns. This surprises me.

"I've just in the last couple of years been able to put a little something away," he tells me. "It's amazing. The overhead will just eat you alive. Now if you want to run around and swing on things and smash guitars and stuff, that's fine, there's nothing wrong with that, I just don't think it's absolutely necessary to put on a great show. I learned that from George Strait the first year I was touring..."

"Shoot," he says, "I just try to pick the best songs I can get from what's offered to me and do the best job I can of singing 'em, and that's about all I can do about it. Like Johnny Cash told me, 'Take care of the music, and it'll take care of you.'"

And that's Joe Diffie in a nutshell. What you see is what you get; and what you hear is usually going to be something you'll like. ■

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by Patricia Rose

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After a year of runaway success, with a triple-platinum debut album, *Did I Shave My Legs for This*, two Number One singles, "Strawberry Wine" and "We Danced Anyway," two additional Top Ten singles and the CMA Single of the Year award, Deana Carter is predictably busy, to say the least. Nevertheless, we managed to catch up with the Capitol artist and were able to pop 20 Questions at her.

**1** Wow, what a year you've had! Besides the three-million-plus sales, you were voted Number Three on Rolling Stone's annual short list of best country artists—behind only Johnny Cash and LeAnn Rimes. Then People Magazine put you on their "Most Beautiful People" list. I dunno what to think about that. I mean, look at me! (Deana giggles and assesses her baggy baseball shirt, blue jeans and bare feet.) All my friends were like, "How did 'ja pull that off!?" I subscribe to People, and to have that issue come to my address, with my name on it, and to be in it...I was just thrilled to death. And Tom Cruise on the cover! That was killer!

**2** And it turns out you wear the same jeans size as Sharon Stone, to boot. Okay! (She hoots with laughter.) I mean, I'm your average, Joe Blow American dude, right? And how many times do people, especially women, tend to do what you might call comparative analysis? So I was just reading this article about Sharon Stone, about how she looks great in 28/32 Levis. And I said, "Damn! That's what I wear! I'm not doin' too bad!"

**3** You had a somewhat different response when somebody recently referred to you as following in the footsteps of Shania Twain and Dolly Parton as the next country music sex symbol. (Rolls her eyes.) I just remember reading that and looking down at my chest and thinking, "Yeah, right!" My husband, Chris, and I actually live



## 20 Questions with DEANA CARTER

By Bob Allen

in a house that Dolly Parton used to own. My running joke is, now I know why the sink is so far from the wall!

I'm just kidding, of course. If I could ever be lumped in with an artist like Dolly Parton, that's a wonderful thing. I think she's great. A really strong woman—particularly in the way she created this persona that was almost comic, but she made it her legitimacy at the same time. That's so brilliant. Not many people could pull that off. So believe me, I have no problem being compared with Dolly...

except for the obvious... (Giggles)...which is not true.

**4** It's ironic that you've come leaping out of the chute with so much success after languishing on Capitol for three or four years. What took them so long?

Well, actually, I was 18 and just out of high school when I first shopped a demo tape around town. Now I'm 30. I did a lot of other things in between and went through some hard times. And then, when I finally did get a major label deal, all those years of delays

and uncertainty, and waiting for the call that said you were no longer on the label were kind of hard for me. But Amy Grant said it best: You've got to go through the bad stuff to appreciate the good stuff. You hate it, but thank God for the bad stuff, too.

**5** It would seem like having Fred Carter Jr., one of the most respected session guitarists on the face of the earth—who's played on everybody's records from Marty Robbins and George Jones to Bob Dylan—for a father might have made things easier.

I love my dad—that's what your magazine should do someday: an interview with him. He's worked with so many great people, and I was just really fortunate to have the kind of upbringing he and my mom gave me.

But if you look at people like Pam Tillis and Lorrie [Morgan] and Carlene Carter [no relation] and those who grew up in the business, people just have a harder time accepting that they're just a little bit different from the icon who happens to be your mom or dad. Often, the fans want you to be like the icon that they already love so much. They want you to be what your parents were.

**6** I understand that the first person who really gave you your big break was producer Jimmy Bowen. In fact, he talks about you a little in his new autobiography.

Mr. B. I call him. (Grins warmly.) I'm a big fan of Jimmy's. He did a lot for me, and I love him for it. He just saw something in me that he believed in. Jimmy's just so cool. He's one of those people who walks into a room and makes the hair on everybody's neck stand up.

**7** You and Bowen have another connection, don't you? Years ago, he produced the late Dean Martin and cut a song on Dean that your father wrote called "It Just Happened That Way."

Yeah, that's right. Dean used to do the song on his TV show. But it goes further than that.

I'm actually named for Dean Martin. He and my father were friends. He's the one person in life that I really am sad about not getting to meet. I wanted to meet him so bad...*(Laughs.)* But I'm sure I'll meet him one of these days!

**8** *I'm sure that in the beginning a lot of people got your name wrong, didn't they? It's one of those trick names that doesn't sound the way it looks. It's not Dee-Anna, it's not Di-ana, it's Dee-na.* Oh, yeah. A lot of people still get it wrong. Like even when we started rehearsals for this show last night, all the crew backstage was introducing me as Dee-Anna...Dee-Anna...Dee-Anna.... I kept goin' Dee-na...Dee-na...Dee-na.... But I don't get chapped about it. I think it's a great thing: I could end up being a part of the "Artists-With-One-Name" Club.

**9** *You kicked off your career with a lovely but improbable song: "Strawberry Wine," a ballad written by Matraca Berg, who also wrote "We Danced Anyway." I hear that you were initially squeamish about going with "Strawberry Wine" as your debut single.* I loved "Strawberry Wine" from the first time I heard it. Matraca is one of the best writers I've ever heard—she's got her own album out this fall.

*(Laughs.)* Here lately I've been beatin' her over the head to please give me more songs! But at first I wasn't sure we'd be able to get "Strawberry Wine" past the people at the record label. I mean, it's an alternative country song. And there's no eye glazing over about what's going on there. The message is very real. But when Scott Hendricks [who replaced Jimmy Bowen as Capitol/Nashville's label chief after Carter's signing] heard it, he loved it too. And ultimately, even though it wasn't my decision to release it as the kick-off single, I'm really glad it was.

**10** *Still, even then, you had your doubts, right?* Well, it was a slow song, a serious song. We all thought it was gonna be an uphill battle at radio.

**11** *"Strawberry Wine" is one of those songs that different people bring different meanings and associations to. But on one level it's about, uh, "the first time," right?* Right. Obviously it's going to remind a lot of people about when they lost their virginity, which is a very personal thing to all of us—I mean, come on, folks, we can talk about this, we're adults. At the same time it's a very personal song for people of all ages. The really young kids just associate it with strawberries. On the other hand I've had couples in their 70's come up and tell me, "That's our song!"

**12** *It's funny, you write and sing quite a few songs about tortured relationships—even a tongue-in-cheek number like "Did I Shave My Legs for This" falls into that category. Yet your own marriage has a sort of romantic, storybook quality to it.* That's right! The very first time my husband Chris met me, he told this mutual friend of ours, "I'm gonna marry that girl." To be honest, I barely remember the meeting. After I left, he asked our friend who I was. My buddy said, "Oh, that's just Carter." And Chris said, "I'm gonna marry her." My buddy's response was something to the effect of, "Yeah, right. Nobody's gonna marry Carter. She's like...out there." But guess what? *(She throws up her hands.)* He was right.

**13** *You also did your time as a Music Row staff writer. I take it that sort of assembly line process wasn't always such a happy time for you.* No. I remember this one publisher I wrote for even had a motto he used to always remind his writers about: "Buy Art. Don't Write It." It was sort of the reverse philosophy of what's happening in the industry now. Maybe other people can function like that, having to quell their creativity. But I sure couldn't.

**14** *But along the way, due to your insider's upbringing, you also got to meet*

*a lot of really special people—like Kris Kristofferson.*

Oh, yeah! Kris was a great help to me. He always told me that my dad really helped him and encouraged him to do what he eventually went on to do. Besides having people like Kris over for dinner, my mom and dad also instilled in us kids the need to make a difference. My parents gave me the values and encouragement to be a leader, as opposed to a follower. And they impressed upon us the need to be creative and take risks. Every night when I walk out on stage, I think about that.

**15** *In that environment you must have gotten started early with music.* I did. I took piano lessons when I was little—which I hated. *(Giggles.)* I sang in the choir at church. I was singing harmony long before I sang much lead. Even today, I will brag on myself about only one thing in life: I can sing any harmony put in front of me. *(She laughs.)* I'm still workin' on the melody!

**16** *Did your background also give you an insider's view of the music business?* Oh, yeah. My dad used to have his own little record label, Nugget Records. I used to paste the labels on the records and pack the 45's into little boxes. And since I was a kid, I've just loved being in the studio. I love it. I just wanta sleep on the couch and be there all the time.

**17** *Your dad and mom must be really proud now.* *(Grins.)* Actually, it was about two weeks ago that my dad said to me, "I guess I can quit worryin' a little bit." I think he was concerned there for a while that I wasn't gonna eat or have a roof over my head. Chris and I just now got our house paid off, and I can tell you, that was a big day for my dad, too.

**18** *Because "Strawberry Wine" struck such a chord of recognition among younger people, I understand that you've made a number of*

*appearances in high schools around the country. Tell me about that.*

That's been great. We went around to various schools and held press conferences for high school journalism students. Well, at least they started out as press conferences, but they turned into something I enjoyed even more. Something like journalism revivals! Or motivational meetings—for all of us! I really hope we can do more of those. I know if someone had come around when I was 17 or 18 years old and cared enough about my opinion to listen to it and actually give me some first-hand advice on the entertainment industry, I would have killed for the opportunity.

**19** *Did their enthusiasm bring back memories of your own youth?* Yeah, it reminded me how I just wasn't taken seriously at 18. I'd take my tapes around, and it was mostly like I'd get pats on the head from people. It's great that LeAnn Rimes is doin' what she's doin'. She's just 14, and she's kickin' everybody's butt!

But I also realize that, in my case, it's for the best that things took so long. I couldn't have made the music I'm making now ten, or even five years ago.

**20** *After all those years has there been a moment when you had to say, "Hey, I'm finally here."*

There was one special moment I'll never forget. I'd been out on a radio tour and flew back into Nashville on a Saturday, and Chris picked me up at the airport. It was a beautiful day. About 1:30 in the afternoon. We were on the entrance ramp of Interstate 40, heading home, and "Strawberry Wine" came on the car radio. I'll always remember looking at my watch and saying, "Ding! I'm gonna remember this!" Right after it, Bruce Springsteen—who's one of my favorite artists—came on. It was like...poetic justice. It couldn't have been any better than that.



# Letters

## Good for Garth

Thank you, Hazel Smith! Finally, someone defends Garth against the bashers. What does he do or say that keeps getting him bashed? I have never heard him say anything against anyone. He is always so nice and polite, it's always "Yes, Ma'am," "Please and Thank you." He is the only one I ever see that takes his hat off when he goes up to accept an award, or as a show of respect to some of his heroes or fans.

There is no one that gives more to his fans, like hours and hours singing autographs at Fan Fair. He gives his all at his concerts. I have seen him in concert eight times and have never been disappointed.

He does so many good things for others, much more than we hear about I'm sure. As impressed as I am with his talent, like you, I am much more impressed with him as a husband, dad and son. He is just one good person, and he can always count me as a fan.

Faye Edwards  
Fort Worth, Texas

Michael Bane had his two cents in there, too.—Ed.

## Another Voice

Attention: Michael Bane and Hazel Smith. In regards to your article on Garth Brooks in your *Country Music* September/October issue, I am very disgusted and disappointed that you would print what Mr. Brooks said about Randy Travis and that he would say his career is on a downfall. Maybe when Mr. Brooks is as great as George Jones and doesn't have to show off breaking guitars, ruin pianos, etc., he would be able to sing with George Jones or Randy Travis.

As far as I am concerned, Randy is the greatest. At least when he sings, you know it is him singing. One reason why Mr. Brooks is so big, he has the younger set who like the things he does, but being a senior citizen, I feel he does not teach the young generation respect for the things he destroys. I could go on and on, but enough said.

Lee Wright  
Jackson, Michigan

## Congrats on 25

Congratulations on the past 25 years of *Country Music*. Your September/October edition is great—just what we readers want—keeping up to date on all as-



pects of country music, with focus on the songs and the stars. I especially liked the fabulous magazine covers—what a lineup!

Much success in the years to come. Keep the same format and *Country Music* will continue to fly off the store shelves and into our hearts.

Charlene A. Frommelt  
Dubuque, Iowa

## Keep That Issue!

Your 25th Anniversary issue's a keeper! The 25 years of covers was especially fun for those of us who haven't subscribed long. We need more George Strait covers! Barring George on *all* the covers, I have some favorites I'd like to see as well: Prairie Oyster, The Mavericks, Suzy Bogguss, and Chris LeDoux.

I loved the interview with Garth, but I wish to comment on the concept of Greatest Hits albums. In the early 1990's, so many new country stars came into the music scene that it was impossible to buy every good album produced. I have greatly appreciated recent Greatest Hits packages to fill in the corners of albums and specific stars I did not yet have. It's good for country music.

Paula L. Jones  
Fridley, Minnesota

## Dig That Road Map

Over the past few years, country music has taken many different directions. Some good, and some, well, you can't

even find on a country road map. In any event, one thing has remain constant, *Country Music Magazine*.

I've been a subscriber to *Country Music Magazine*, on and off, for a number of years. Even when I didn't renew my membership, I bought CMM off the rack. And so, as I sat down to read your latest issue (September/October '97), I was reminded once again, how great this magazine really is! I thoroughly enjoyed the cover story on Garth, the CD reviews, and seeing all of those wonderful CMM covers of years gone by.

Reading *Country Music Magazine* is truly like sitting down to a buffet, sampling a fine wine, singing a classic country song, visiting the Smoky Mountains, or...oh, well, you can choose your very own superlatives. My point being, the experience doesn't last long enough. As I turn each page of CMM, I'm only closer to the end. I was very sad a few years back when you guys went bi-monthly, but even the "monthly" or "weekly" magazines cannot compare to your quality, substance or style. Pat yourself on the back.

Keith Rivers  
Saraland, Alabama

## Cover to Cover

Happy 25th Anniversary to you all. I really did enjoy reading my copies of 25 years. Thanks for the pretty picture of Garth Brooks on the front of the 25th Anniversary Issue. Will be looking forward to the story and pictures of Marty Stuart. Yes, Connie is a very sweet, beautiful lady. I also love her singing. I know they sing just beautifully together.

Thanks for the story and pictures of Garth Brooks, but he is no favorite of mine. Thanks for the pretty pullout on Dolly Parton. Enjoyed reading and looking at the list of *Country Music* covers. Just wondering if by chance any of them can still be ordered. Enjoyed reading all the letters, and the stars' letters to the magazine. Enjoyed 20 Questions and answers on Johnny Cash. Would like to see one on Loretta Lynn, Cissie Lynn, Melba Montgomery.

Looking forward to your next issue. Sorry Merle Haggard, Chet Atkins and Carl Perkins are not feeling well. Hope by now they are all better.

Walter and Barbara Estes  
Aline Branch, Mississippi  
*Working on Loretta Lynn. Back issues*



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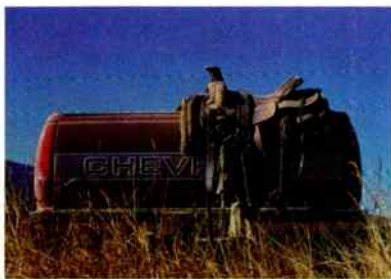
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## COUNTRY MUSIC QUIZ

Answers to these questions can be found by reading this issue of *Country Music Magazine*. Answers will be published in the January/February 1998 issue.

1. Shania Twain's last album is now the top-selling album by a female country artist. Name it.
2. Who wrote Deana Carter's breakthrough hit, "Strawberry Wine"?
3. What organization helped get Kevin Sharp's career started?
4. On what TV show did Joe Diffie have a cameo role?
5. Which country artist recently had President and Mrs. Clinton in attendance at a concert?
6. What brand of truck does Steve Baney rely on?

### ANSWERS TO LAST ISSUE'S QUIZ:

1. 25th Anniversary
2. Opry membership
3. 10
4. Roger Miller
5. Bobby Bare, Waylon Jennings, Jerry Reed, Mel Tillis
6. Chevy's Vortec engine is designed to go 100,000 miles before its first scheduled tune-up.

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available for the last year only. CMSA/ Academy members may seek issues through the Collections page.—Ed.

### Awesome Issue

I just received my 25th Anniversary Edition of *Country Music Magazine*! It's great! I haven't been a subscriber for very long, but so far I think your magazine is awesome! The only thing you could do to improve is have some articles on Collin Raye.

Linda Russell  
Gohanna, Ohio

### BRC Deserves Better

I was reading along, enjoying your 25th Anniversary issue, when I came to the year 1992, and I noticed what I think was a misprint of some sort. Where you said Billy Ray Cyrus "refused to go away," I'm sure you meant to say "his blockbuster hit, 'Achy Breaky Heart,' brought worldwide attention to the country music industry at a time when it was sorely needed." This is a comment much more appropriate to the great year 1992, and to Billy Ray's contribution. I'm glad he "refused to go away," and he deserves a position of much more respect when that year in country music is mentioned.

Gail Blevins  
Baltimore, Maryland

### Considering Conway

In your 25th anniversary issue, I was reading about the first 25 years. I was very surprised and upset that you didn't even mention his passing, but you mentioned in 1977 the passing of Elvis Presley. Don't get me wrong, Elvis was one of the best the music industry has ever seen. I feel that Conway Twitty was also one of the best that country music has heard of, with hits from "It's Only Make Believe" to all the duets with Loretta Lynn and "Don't Call Him a Cowboy," just to mention a few. You have greatly overlooked a superstar that has passed on but was not forgotten by fans and entertainers alike.

James T. Juan  
Bakersfield, California

### Counting on Loretta

I just received my copy of your 25th Anniversary issue. Congratulations on 25 years of covering the greatest music on earth.

As I reviewed each and every cover that you have printed over the past 25 years, I could not help but notice that Loretta Lynn has only appeared on the cover four times. Her last cover came almost 20 years ago in 1979. You have devoted nine covers to Dolly Parton, Tammy Wynette has had six, Barbara Mandrell, Reba McEntire and Emmylou Harris have been given five covers each, and Loretta Lynn and Tanya Tucker each have four covers.

Loretta Lynn is one of the most loved and respected women in country music, and the undisputed "Queen of Country Music" as well. I do hope that next year will bring a cover story to Loretta Lynn and her millions of loyal fans.

Rick Cornett  
Toledo, Ohio

### Hazel's People

Tell me, does Hazel Smith ever meet ordinary people? I haven't even finished reading her column in the current issue, and so far I've run across: two "cutes" and a "cuter than ever"; a "fabo" and a "fabulous"; a "beloved" and a "much-loved"; a "sweetheart" and a "darling"; and a "marvelous," a "handsome," and a "great." Also a "tacky," for Tanya Tucker, which was richly deserved.

At least we were spared a Tony (wow) Brown, which was getting old years ago.

Please tell Hazel that a show-must-go-on type is a "trouper"; a "trooper" is a state cop on a Harley.

Helen Busch  
Hemet, California

### Dig That Dale Watson

I am writing in response to Rich Kienzle's review of Dale Watson's new record, *I Hate These Songs*, in the September/October issue. I agree with Kienzle that what Watson does is "wonderful," but I think your fine critic is wrong in saying Dale has not developed his own distinctive style.

That said, your magazine is the best out there. It is great to see all of the attention you give to artists regardless of the airplay they receive. Almost nowhere else can you read about artists such as Dale Watson, Marty Brown, Bob Wooldruff, Buddy Miller, The Backsliders and Joy Lynn White, who are truly modern country music's greatest treasures. I look forward to seeing future full-length articles on them all. I also think it would be great to see them on your cover. I am getting tired of seeing Vince Gill and Garth Brooks' mugs on the covers of all country music magazines.

Corey Charron  
Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada

### Loves That Issue and Dwight

I just bought my first issue of CMM, the 25th Anniversary issue, and I really liked it. I used to get *Country Weekly* but it did not have what I was looking for. I really enjoyed the review on Dwight Yoakam's *Under the Covers* in Record Reviews. I belong to the D.Y. Fan Club and am always looking for some news on him. After seeing the covers of 25 years of CMM, I could cry! I just sent in for my one-year subscription and hope I'm lucky enough to see Dwight on the cover again.

Phyllis Sottele  
Mt. Vernon, Indiana

### Miller, Campbell and More

Thank you to George Fletcher for mentioning Stacy Dean Campbell in his review of Dean Miller's album, *Dean Miller*, in Record Reviews in the September/October issue. Campbell has to be the most overlooked talent in country music. His sophomore album, 1995's *Hurt City*, was brilliant, yet all but ignored by radio. Since Campbell's retro style isn't appealing to 13-year-old girls or line dancers, I guess there just wasn't a place for him in the New Country. So while I'm not surprised that Columbia dropped him from their label, I am sorely disappointed. Perhaps a smaller, independent label will reward Campbell's efforts, and our ears, by adding him to their roster.

Scott Chapman  
Enterprise, Oregon

### Don Gibson Still With Us

I just finished reading Patrick Carr's column, *The Final Note*, in the September/October issue, and something you wrote caught my attention. Every one of the artists you listed as now-gone from this world is deceased except for Don Gibson, who is very much alive and working the Opry on occasion. Don will soon turn 70 and sounds as great as ever! He along with Webb Pierce, Faron Young and George Morgan "should" have been in the Country Music Hall of Fame years ago.

George Morgan Shannon Ellington  
Loganville, Georgia

Thank you for this correction. We apologize to Don Gibson and his fans for not having caught it ourselves.—Ed.

### Carr Calls It Like It Is

My hat's off to Patrick Carr! His *Final Note* in the September/October issue was right on the money.

Garth Brooks promotes Garth Brooks before anything else, and just in time for the CMA awards. If because of this New York concert he is given the Entertainer of the Year award, I will truly be disappointed in the voting members.

Thanks to Mr. Carr for calling it as he sees it. Although in his list of favorites my favorite is missing, I still love his *Final Note* in every issue.

Loved "The Times of Our Lives" article. And thanks for the centerfold of Dolly. She is always a spark of excitement wherever she shows up.

Benella Chavez  
Evansville, Indiana

### Sharing Our Celebration

Dear Editor Barnard:

Congratulations on your fabulous 25th anniversary celebration issue. As usual, your "Letter From the Publisher" has something interesting and informative to say. The People portion, reported by Hazel Smith, is varied, all-inclusive and timely. I never miss reading every word

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of this section. That is not to say I remember it all, however.

Of course, being older, I am very taken with *The Journal* portion. I always look forward to *Country Music's* Top 25 listing. Many thanks for pages 47-58, "The Times of Our Lives," featuring 25 years of covers. You were ingenious to think of this feature.

I find the Letters section quite readable, too. I might tell you the Chinook Winds Casino in Lincoln City, Oregon, features some of the Western entertainers. We had the good fortune to hear Loretta Lynn. We heard Willie Nelson at Seaside and at our county fair. He was top-of-the-line. We hate missing any of them.

Lucille Harwood  
Vancouver, Washington

### Editor and Crew Earn Praise

Dear Mr. Barnard and "the Crew":

Just a note of congratulation for a good country magazine. I read it from cover to cover every time I receive a new issue. I was 80 years young this year, and every year I think, "My, how did I live this long?"

Say thanks to all the staff. I never see a mistake while reading through. That takes diligence. I know—I used to be a church secretary a long time ago, and I know what it means. We put out a bulletin every week.

Good luck for another 25 years.

Altha Mae Masterson  
Columbia, Missouri

### Long-Time Sub Remembers

Happy 25th Anniversary, *Country Music Magazine*, from one of your long-time subscribers! I was one of those you contacted when you started it up again in 1983. It was the very first I'd ever subscribed to.

Country music has always meant a lot to me. And I've been lucky to see some of my all-time favorites through the years,



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such as Johnny Cash, Waylon, Merle Haggard, Tom T. Hall, Gary Stewart, Loretta Lynn—and Marty Stuart about 17 times! I can be in the worst mood, sad or hurt—put on a couple of records, and my mood has lifted! Music makes me feel good inside. I couldn't make it through a day without it.

So, you'll understand when I say the highest point came when I went to Nashville for the first time in 1991. I couldn't believe I was standing on the stage of the Ryman Auditorium. To hear about it all of my life, see it on TV—and there I was! And all of the music! I felt I was in heaven. I went back in 1995. Hopefully, I'll be back again soon.

Keep up the good work. Your magazine is still my favorite.

Roxanne Johnston  
Hibbing, Minnesota

### Country Music's Here to Stay

I love writing poetry, so I'm including one I wrote for your 25th anniversary.

The music in the 50's and 60's still beats out music of today. Loved your covers from the last 25 years, knowing I missed all those great years. But will take advantage of the years to come.

My mom always loved Elvis Presley, Jim Reeves and Minnie Pearl even though she's no longer with us. Keep up the good work. You all deserve a big round of applause.

Rosie Scharschmidt  
Markesan, Wisconsin

### COUNTRY MUSIC

*Happy 25th Anniversary I know I'm one issue late,  
there's so many things to write about, how did you celebrate?*

*I'm writing this poem for all the enjoyment and memories of fans,  
who have enjoyed Country Music Magazine,  
singers and bands.*

*Many great songs from those singers of today and in the past,  
the love, music and friendship in our hearts to last and last.*

*I'm a newcomer and have gotten your magazine for two years,  
loving your articles of laughter sometimes with sadness and tears.*

*My favorites are Reba, Alan Jackson, Kenny Rogers and many more,  
with Elvis, Buddy Holly and Ricky Nelson at Heaven's doors.*

*I read your magazine from front to back with pleasure and love,  
have another 25 years of good luck with help from God above.* —R.S.

### Congrats from Tom Noonan

Dear Russ:

While I made it a point in the latest Columbia/Epic Records Alumni Association newsletter to single out specifically the

25th Anniversary of your magazine, I would be remiss if I did not write you directly to add my personal congratulations.

I loved the 25th Anniversary issue itself (a true collector's item, for sure). Sincere congratulations to you and your entire staff on a magnificent job with this issue, in particular, but also for 25 years of solid pleasure you all have delivered to your readers.

I had the good fortune of being introduced to country music by the late Paul Ackerman, Music Editor at *Billboard*, when I joined them at a very young age in 1949. I have since met and had some very good times with many country artists, while at *Billboard* (both time, 1949-1965 & 1975-1990) in charge of all charts and research, as Associate Publisher, and while at Columbia Records and Metro-media Records. So I come at you from both directions, a good knowledge and a fan of country music, but also a very good understanding of the magazine publish-



ing industry. I know what it's like to put an issue to bed, and all that goes into doing it successfully for 25 straight years.

I wish you many more years of continued success, good health and always good times. Take care, Russ. Sincerely,

Thomas Noonan  
Los Angeles, California

### Hank Jr. Checks In

Dear Russ:

Congratulations, not only on your anniversary of *Country Music Magazine*, but for putting up with that sly, inventive, gun-toting, arrow-slinging Michael Bane. Seriously, Michael is a great writer, and I think you should pay him more money.

Russ, may I say that I look forward to receiving my copy of *Country Music* not for just the news, but the great heritage of my father, Jimmie Rodgers, Johnny Cash and those who are the bedrock of country. Your magazine has something for everyone. I guess that's the secret of your success. Best Regards,

Hank Williams Jr.  
Paris, Tennessee

*If Michael had more money, we wouldn't get any work out of him.*—R.D.B.

### Kilgore Comments on Our 25th

I read the news about *The Journal* merging with the *CMSA Newsletter*. This is a marriage made in country music Heaven. Lest we forget, thanks for keeping our great history alive and showing us the new faces of country. Congratulations for 25 wonderful years. I haven't missed an issue! You have set the standard for excellence. Sincerely,

Merle Kilgore  
Nashville, Tennessee

### Looking Back at 1986

Operator, please connect me to...1986! What a year for country music and the year I started my subscription. It's fitting that the very first issue I received in January/February 1986 featured Merle Haggard, who is, in my opinion, country music's all-time greatest artist.

Think about 1986. For starters, Hag, Jones, Cash, Willie, Waylon, and other greats and near-greats were still getting radio airplay. Picky Ricky Skaggs was riding high as Entertainer of the Year in 1985. Reba was still making great country music. George Strait was just picking up momentum, and there were four outstanding veteran singers: Vern Gosdin, Don Williams, Gene Watson and John Conlee. None will ever likely make the Hall of Fame (though Gosdin's talent certainly deserves it), but these four gentlemen are a prime example of the type of artist who does *not* receive airplay today. I challenge anyone to name any of the current hatted crop who sings with half the depth and emotion of those four.

Finally, 1986 was significant for the beginning or breakthrough of Randy Travis, who is a Hall of Famer in my book even if he never cuts another record; Dwight Yoakam, and Steve Earle. Marty Stuart's eponymous debut album didn't do that well in 1986, but in 1997 he represents what integrity is about in an often brutal business.

I've stayed with *Country Music Magazine* through all of it and am most grateful to you for not forgetting the true artists, young and old alike, who really make country music what it is. Sure, the marketplace demands that the current flavors-of-the-week get their ink as well, but what sets *Country Music* apart is your respect for the rich tradition of the art form and not just the commerce. Congratulations on 25 years! I'll be with you for the next 25 (Good Lord willing and the creeks don't rise...).

Carter J. Betz  
Watkinsville, Georgia

### Starting with Jerry Lee

The first time I saw an issue of CMM I think was in 1972. I believe it might have been the second issue—the cover was Jerry Lee Lewis, with a great story. The article made you feel as if you were there

yourself. I subscribed that year and continue to, to this day. I would like to see another feature on Jerry Lee Lewis, what he's doing these days, etc. There's many Jerry Lee Lewis fans that would enjoy an up-to-date story.

Wayne Collins  
Cincinnati, Ohio

*Jerry Lee's cover was January 1973.—Ed.*

### Starting with the 60's

When I was a teenager in the 60's, my favorite music was rock 'n' roll until *Western Hayride* came on TV on Saturday nights. My parents and I would watch first before coming to Sidney, to the Eagles Club, to the dance.

Through the years I bought country music tapes and am still buying. I miss all the country singers who have passed away, but we'll have them in our hearts and still can listen to their music.

I love it when all these singers sing the songs of the ones that passed away! I love the new songs too. But when they sing the old songs that were sung 25 years ago or more, it takes me back to the good ole days. I think there should be a special day or a weekend, some time every year, and have country singers sing the songs of the ones who have passed away. Also have videos or whatever.

Country music will live forever.

Susan Byerly  
Sidney, Ohio

### Country Music's Ambassador

One of my fondest memories in country and western music was seeing and meeting my favorite country music singer, George Hamilton IV, better known as "The International Ambassador of Country Music." He's done more to spread country music worldwide. He deserves to be inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame. It was Sunday, July 27, 1980, at Bill Monroe's "Indiana Folk Festival," Bean Blossom, Indiana. Seems I recall it rained most of the day! But George IV still put on a wonderful show, which will live forever in my memory.

After the show, George IV took the time out to talk to me, Mom, and my aunt and uncle. We talked about the old days, country music, and how much country music has come along. And how Mom got me started (hooked) on George IV's music. It was a dream I wish would never end. George IV, I'll never forget you or the kindness you showed me and my family. I'll always be your fan and friend!

Phillip Paulson  
Indianapolis, Indiana

### Your Special Singer

My specific country music memory came in late 1992. I was watching the community billboard channel, which had the local country music station as background music. I'm listening to all the forgettable

music, like Yankville.

Then I heard "Something in Red" for the first time. God, what an awesome song. That song got me listening to country music. 95-96% of it is still forgettable. A lot more important: I discovered my special singer, Lorrie Morgan. Getting married and having a baby are the only two things better than listening to your special singer sing.

Tim Moule  
Marysville, California

### Taking Part in the 25th

I read your request in my March/April issue asking our participation in the 25th Anniversary issue. Here is my request:

Please please please have articles on the old singers because they are of course oldies but goodies like Bill Anderson, Jim Ed Brown and his former duet partner singer Helen Cornelius, and also some of the few new but yet popular ones like Vince Gill. Tammy Wynette would also be nice to hear from, and Dolly Parton. Their lives have touched mine, like in the "Coat of Many Colors" song. Even though I have never had to wear such a coat. P.S. Marty Stuart also.

Cynthia Gartner  
Mid-Florida PDC, Florida

### Memories, Memories

I have many pleasant memories of country music and its performers. I have seen many of the greats of country music—Loretta Lynn, George Jones, Tammy Wynette, the late Faron Young and Bill Monroe, the late Ernest Tubb, Dolly Parton and Johnny Rodriguez, to name a few—as well as today's stars—Alan Jackson, Alabama, Mark Chesnutt, Joe Diffie, and Vince Gill. I have also seen many Cajun performers. (I have met most of them, too!)

While the concerts and meeting the performers have been the most treasured memories, I have also met many interesting people, young and old alike, and I have amassed an extensive music library. Country music has been very important to me, and it's gotten me through some tough times. I like to say that country music has kept me sane!

Congratulations on your 25th Anniversary, *Country Music Magazine*! May you continue to be successful and God bless!

Karen Lynn Vidra  
Mansfield, Ohio

### Sweeps Winner

Winner of our June/July 1997 \$1000 Renewal Sweepstakes is Martin Kempf of Louisville, Kentucky.

*Send Letters to the Editor to Country Music Magazine, One Turkey Hill Road South, Westport, CT 06880. Mark your envelope, Attention: Letters. We reserve the right to edit for space and style.*

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# A Portland Physician Reveals How He Helped a Desperate Woman to Lose 47 Pounds in 9½ Weeks Without Dieting, and . . .

**... how 3,193 other people melt away a total of more than 90,000 pounds (more than 40 tons) with the same incredible discovery revealed below.**

**Dr. Robert R. Kester, M.D. (Portland, Maine)**



**F**ew discoveries have received as much attention as this one. It was broadcast on all major TV networks, including CNN, and was featured on the Good Morning America show. Plus hundreds of articles have been published in all leading newspapers and magazines, like the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, USA Today, Newsweek, Time, and Life... to name a few.

It doesn't happen every day that someone makes such an astounding breakthrough. Researchers who had made this discovery spent several years of their life developing and perfecting it. They then tested it for 6 months on 3,193 people. And not the easy ones:

- people from families in which excess weight was a problem;
  - people who had already tried a total of 66 diets and methods of different kinds to lose weight!
- Plus, these researchers asked them to do 2 things before starting:
- (1) *Not* go on any diet and eat as usual
  - (2) Do *no* more exercise than they had been doing before

Naturally, there was absolutely no medication to take. The results? They exceeded everything these researchers could imagine...

- More than 98% of these people lost weight. They lost a total of more than 90,000 pounds! That's more than 40 tons!! And the most astonishing follows:
- One woman lost 38 pounds the first month.
- The others easily lost up to 20, 30, 50, 75 and even more than 100 pounds.
- Some even lost *too much* weight

and had to stop. *That's the main inconvenience of this discovery.*

And you? Do you want to lose weight? Really lose weight. Naturally. Easily. Quickly. With no diet and no particular effort. Eating everything you like, without ever feeling hungry... Then read the testimonial of Angela Allister below. As she herself says: "I thought I was a hopeless case." Today she's the happiest woman on earth. The following describes exactly how she lost weight so easily with this discovery. And how she went from being "Miss Fatty" to "Miss Fabulous" in only 9 ½ weeks.

**Exclusive: extracts from the testimonial of Angela Allister, Florida\***

**"T**he story I am about to tell you is very embarrassing. But you'll soon understand why I must tell it to you.

My name is Angela Allister. I'm very proud of my figure today. I never felt so good about myself before. What happened to me was so incredible I thought twice about writing to you: I wanted to make sure my vanished weight wasn't going to come right back.



**BEFORE**

"When that picture was taken, I thought I would be overweight for the rest of my life... I had tried everything to lose weight, but nothing seemed to work. Then, I discovered Dr. Kester's discovery..."

Since my weight has remained stable. I really want to tell you how, to my great astonishment. I lost

all this weight by the easiest way in the world.

One thing is sure, I didn't get so fat by eating carrot salads. I love cooking and I like to stuff myself. And like many women I gain weight easily. Too easily.

I weighed 150 lbs when I was 24. That was certainly too much, but I wasn't worried. Plus my boyfriend at the time liked what it did for me: gave me bigger breasts!

Then, one day, I lost my job. I wasn't

too worried at first. In fact, I was pretty happy just to stay at home. But I eventually began to get "cabin fever".

That's when I really began to eat. Everyone could see me getting fat.

With all the fat I had to lug around with me, the slightest effort would exhaust me and leave me breathless.

**«In some cases patients lost too much weight and had to go off the program»**

Michael G., Science Editor, Good Morning America — December 13<sup>th</sup> — 4.7 million viewers

The effect all this had on my morale was even worse. People called me "Fatty" or "Big Blondie." Everyone laughed. Except me.

I felt really bad. I couldn't get into my clothes. I didn't know how to dress myself anymore.

My love life was almost nonexistent. I had so many complexes I never approached my boyfriend anymore. In any case, I was always too tired to have much of a love life. I was really obese. Not just overweight. Obese.

**Then, one day, things completely fell apart**

My boyfriend wrote me a "Dear Angela..." letter... and dumped me.

If you only knew what I suffered from my excess weight. A real martyrdom.

Fortunately, all that's behind me now. I understand suffering. I know what those who are too fat go through. You have to look at yourself in a mirror, as I did, without recognizing yourself and being ashamed of the way you appear, to understand.

I told myself that if I wanted to lose weight, I'd have to start eating less. I

COPYRIGHT ©1997 IMPORTANT NOTICE: IF YOU READ NOTHING ELSE, READ THIS. THIS WEIGHT LOSS PLAN IS NOT DESIGNED TO DIAGNOSE OR ANALYZE ANY ILLNESS OR PATHOLOGY OF ANY KIND, NOR TO PROPOSE ANY METHOD OR TREATMENT OTHER THAN THAT WHICH YOU MAY CURRENTLY BE TAKING. YOU MUST FOLLOW DR. KESTER'S EASYTRIM DEVICES AS INDICATED TO OBTAIN THE BEST POSSIBLE RESULTS. ANGELA ALLISTER'S AND CANDY S.'S TESTIMONIALS ARE ATYPICAL. OF COURSE THE RESULTS VARY FROM ONE INDIVIDUAL TO ANOTHER, DEPENDING ON EXCESS WEIGHT AND OTHER FACTORS. THE MORE OVERWEIGHT A PERSON IS, THE FASTER SHE OR HE SHOULD LOSE WEIGHT. YOU ARE ADVISED TO SEE YOUR DOCTOR BEFORE BEGINNING THIS OR ANY WEIGHT LOSS PLAN. DOCTORS RECOMMEND THAT PEOPLE REDUCE THEIR CONSUMPTION OF LIPIDS AND INCREASE THEIR ACTIVITY LEVEL. ANYONE IN GOOD HEALTH CAN FOLLOW THIS PROGRAM. HOWEVER, PREGNANT WOMEN, CHILDREN, THE ELDERLY, THOSE SUFFERING FROM THE HEALTH PROBLEMS LISTED, BUT NOT LIMITED TO PATIENTS UNDER A DOCTOR'S CARE FOR A SERIOUS HEALTH PROBLEM, OR TAKING MEDICATION PRESCRIBED BY A DOCTOR FOR A SERIOUS HEALTH PROBLEM, PEOPLE SUFFERING FROM ASTHMA, FROM DIABETES, FROM HEART OR THYROID PROBLEMS, FROM HYPOTENSION, AND PEOPLE WITH ANY PRE-EXISTING MEDICAL CONDITIONS SHOULD NOT FOLLOW THIS WEIGHT LOSS PLAN - NOR ANY OTHER WEIGHT LOSS PROGRAM - WITHOUT, AT LEAST, THE AUTHORIZATION AND/OR SUPERVISION OF THEIR PHYSICIAN. THIS ADVERTISEMENT IS NOT, IN ANY WAY, INTENDED AS A MEDICAL ADVICE FOR WHICH YOU SHOULD ALWAYS CONSULT YOUR PHYSICIAN. THIS ADVERTISEMENT IS VOID WHERE PROHIBITED BY LAW AND THE RESALE OR REPACKAGING OF THIS WEIGHT LOSS PLAN WITHOUT PROPER LICENSE COULD BE A VIOLATION OF BOTH FEDERAL AND STATE LAW. \*ANGELA ALLISTER IS A PEN NAME.

tried low calorie diet menus.

Two months later, I had lost 18 pounds. But what a crusade it had been. I was always hungry. It was that simple. I couldn't think of anything else.

So I started eating as I had before. And gained weight. Within a month, I weighed the same as I had before starting to diet.

I tried every kind of diet there was during this period. And they all failed. The fat always returned to the same places. My stomach, my hips, my butt, my thighs.

I began to take hunger suppressants. But that was the worst of all. I was nervous and irritable. I couldn't sleep. So I stopped taking these "drugs". Otherwise, it would have been a catastrophe.

I think I tried every kind of weight-loss product there was. In the best of circumstances I would lose 5 lbs. Then regain 6.

All these trials taught me a lot... about what doesn't work for losing weight.

I was desperate. I was ready to accept it. Accept bearing my extra weight for the rest of my life. But fate decided otherwise.

### **I'd lost all hope — then a "miracle" occurred**

Like some 5 million other viewers, I tune into Good Morning America every day on TV. One Monday, a program feature caught my attention: a doctor had just demonstrated the effectiveness of a new scientific weight-loss discovery.

This new discovery had nothing to do with dieting. It was three small weight-loss devices.

When you use these devices only three times as indicated, it works directly on the hypothalamus.

I admit, none of this was very clear in my mind. But I did recall this discovery lets you lose weight automatically.

This discovery was even more incredible because it didn't involve any diet. Tests conducted proved it resulted in weight loss with no effort, and eating all you like.

### **Yes. My new life began that morning...**

I couldn't believe it at first. It seemed too nice and simple to be true. Even more so because there was no medicine to take, no strenuous exercise to do, nothing to give up of any kind. I who thought I had tried everything, was deeply skeptical. But when I realized the physician who had made this discovery was a renowned specialist in the successful treatment of a countless number of obese persons, I said to myself: "I should try it. After all, you never know!"

### **That was when I made an even more amazing discovery...**

What I am about to tell you may seem incredible. I was at my hair parlor reading the papers when I saw an article about these researchers' discovery in the New York Post.

The article said they had tested these devices over a 6-month period on some 3,193 patients. Most had problems of excess

weight almost as severe as mine. Some were even really desperate cases. Patients participating in the study had already tried 66 different methods for losing weight without success.

### **What surprised me the most were the results**

I couldn't believe so many men and women had succeeded in losing 20, 30, 45, 50, 75, and as much as 100 pounds, effortlessly, without medication, and continuing to eat everything they liked. These researchers had succeeded in making them lose a total of more than 90,000 lbs! That is more than 40 tons!!

Some of these people even lost too much weight, and they were told to stop using these devices.

If I hadn't seen these facts on television and read about them in the paper with my own eyes, I doubt I would have believed them. I told myself: "This is truly amazing. And the results have been proven". A telephone number was given. I called....»

### **IMPORTANT**

If you want to lose at least 10 pounds and are interested in a risk-free trial of the *EasyTrim Devices*, we give you the address, and the phone number, of the distributor in the USA further on. Just mail them your full name and address, or call them, for a risk-free home trial of the *EasyTrim Devices*.

Each device acts NATURALLY and directly on the hypothalamus in a different way. By using the 3 devices at the indicated times, I was told I would obtain the *quickest and most effective results possible*, effortlessly.

### **In any case, I could take a risk-free trial, I didn't hesitate for a second**

I ordered the *EasyTrim Devices*.

The mailman brought me a small package containing my *EasyTrim Devices*. Each device was tiny. No larger than a pen.

I must add that I was burning with curiosity to try out the *EasyTrim Devices*. It was so simple. So easy to use. Almost too simple. I wanted to start right away.

But I waited a few days for January 1st. This was my New Year's resolution. Before starting, I showed this discovery to my personal doctor. He was immediately impressed by it and strongly urged me to give it a go, particularly since it was 100% natural.

From that day on my life changed. I remember inviting all the members of my family to eat at my place that New Year's Sunday. I fixed a large meal. I ate everything. No one would have guessed I had just begun using the *EasyTrim Devices* to lose weight.

### **On January 1st, I began using the EasyTrim Devices, as indicated**

I was afraid to weigh myself. I finally stepped onto the scale 48 hours later. I couldn't believe my eyes. The needle showed I had lost 4 lbs.!

Over the next few days, my weight continued to disappear as if by magic. I had lost 10 lbs. the first week. I was full of joy. Imagine! Me who had tried everything. I was losing weight at the rate of more than one pound a day.

After only a week, my losses were not all that visible, but I felt my clothing was much looser on me.

I lost 6 lbs. the second week. The most incredible thing was, I felt in such good shape. At the end of three weeks, everyone mentioned my clothing was looking baggy on me. My dresses were too big.

Then I steadily continued to lose 4 lbs. per week.

After 9 1/2 weeks, I had lost 7 inches from my waist, 8 off my hips, 5 off my breast and 4 off my thighs.

In a little more than 2 months, I lost 47

lbs. I couldn't believe it!

### **For me, it was a real miracle**

This was the first time in my life I had managed to lose all my excess weight.

As you can see, I'm slim now. I've achieved the goal I set. My friends, my family, and my neighbors haven't gotten over their shock at my losing so much weight so easily, and so quickly. When I think of their reactions, today, I know how much importance people place on physical appearance.

With the *EasyTrim Devices*, I was never hungry.

I had no calories to count. No portions to measure. The only thing I had to weigh was the weight I lost, and mark it on my chart.

I never had to exert any willpower. I was able to eat any kind of meal or food I liked. Even "fatty" foods. There were absolutely no restrictions.

My body has been able to burn accumulated fat reserves with the *EasyTrim Devices*. I was able to lose weight everywhere there was excess fat. Even in difficult spots, and not at the expense of my beautiful breasts.

Not only have I gotten slim, but my body has been completely remodeled. And my new weight has remained stable.

After having tried everything else, the *EasyTrim Devices* was the only process that really let me lose weight. To the best of my knowledge, everyone I know who tried the *EasyTrim Devices* lost weight. Today, they are slim. This includes a doctor I know who had been fat for years, and who had 50 excess pounds to lose. He said this was a real "miracle" for him.

### **I want to close by saying how difficult it is to express...**

... how well you discover a new life when you are slim.

People became more interested in me. I finally found work I liked. I often model.

What a pleasure it is to feel good in my clothes. I have completely redone my wardrobe. When I buy new clothes, I have a much wider selection. I rediscovered the joy of being able to be flirtatious again, to look good, go out. To discover there are indeed other pleasures and joys in life than just food.

You cannot imagine the joy of seeing your new body in the mirror. Of not being ashamed of the way it looks. Of looking younger.

And now, I want you all to know, this time I am sure. I have found the man of my life. My new love is so sweet with me. He never misses an opportunity to take me in his arms and show me with his hands how much my body pleases him.

I am not the same anymore. I feel good about myself. Yes, it's really different to be slim. Life is so different. People look at me in a different way. They feel differently about me. They love me differently...

I feel so much at peace. And so happy to be able to enjoy life to the fullest.

*Angela Allister*  
Angela Allister

If you wish to take a risk-free home trial of *Dr. Kester's EasyTrim Devices* all the details are on the next page.

*please, turn over ->*



**AFTER**  
"I never would have imagined I could lose my 47 excess pounds so easily, and so fast. Now, I've found a great job, I've been posing regularly as a model, and best of all, I met a very nice man. My love life has never been so beautiful. Dr. Kester's discovery really let me discover a new life."

Important research notice for a new study planned by Dr. Robert Kester, M.D.

# WEIGHT-LOSS: Dr. Kester Is Seeking More People Who Wish to Take a Risk-Free Home Trial of the *EasyTrim* Devices . . .

**ATTENTION.** Only those with **AT LEAST 10 pounds** excess weight may participate in this new research project.

The testimonial of Angela Allister that you have just read may surprise you. However, it is really no surprise at all. This discovery has already made 3,193 people easily lose a total of more than 90,000 pounds.

Now Dr. Kester wishes to extend a new study with people all over the country. That is why he has given distribution rights for the *EasyTrim* Devices to WideWell Inc. They are only available through the address appearing below.

If everything you've already tried for losing weight has not given you the results you wanted, Dr. Kester tells you why it is probably for one of the following 3 reasons:

- (1) You love to eat. But most weight-loss methods try to keep you from eating what you want.
  - (2) Weight losses you have achieved have not been significant enough. Or not quick enough. You get discouraged. And stop.
  - (3) You lose weight. But once you stop, you always *regain* the weight you've lost.
- With this new discovery, the opposite happens. You lose weight automatically. Naturally. Rapidly. With no effort. Eating everything you like, without ever feeling

hungry. And the results last."   
 *Dr. Robert Kester, M.D.*

What are your real reasons for losing weight? Just think about this for a moment. Think about all the good and all the joys you will discover once you lose your excess weight.

Do you *really* want to lose weight as well? Easily achieve long-lasting results? And rediscover your beautiful body? Do you want to help Dr. Kester pursue his research study and be part of his next set of successes? Yes...

**Here is how to take your risk-free home trial of Dr. Kester's *EasyTrim* Devices**

You must need to lose a *minimum* of 10 pounds. If that is so, answer today.

**Risk-free home trial**  
Results are 100% guaranteed. If for any reason you are not completely satisfied, just return your devices to receive an *immediate full refund*. This trial will then have cost you *nothing*.

**How much does it cost to lose weight with Dr. Kester's *EasyTrim* Devices?**

Thousands of people have travelled to one of the medical clinics directed by Dr. Kester. Depending on the amount of weight they wanted to lose, they had to pay between \$300 and \$1000 to lose their excess weight with the *EasyTrim* Devices. And that's a bargain when you think about how many people have told Dr. Kester - *after seeing their results for themselves* - that they would have been willing to pay several times the price of the treatment if they had found earlier such a simple and effective way to lose weight naturally.



## Meet Dr. Robert R. Kester...

...the physician who - after he himself lost 53 pounds with the *EasyTrim* Devices - stakes his entire medical reputation on the incredible effectiveness of the *EasyTrim* Devices, the most recent and fastest growing weight-loss innovation in America.

Dr. Kester is a board-certified physician and surgeon. He is presently the Director of several specialized Medical Weight-Loss

Clinics in which hundreds of overweight people attend each month, losing and maintaining their weight-

loss with Dr. Kester's *EasyTrim* Devices.

All those familiar with his successful research career respect Dr. Kester's meticulousness and Integrity. His ongoing studies are bringing a new and revolutionary solution in the weight-loss field.

Today Dr. Kester believes the *EasyTrim* Devices are so effective that he can guarantee that you are going to lose all the weight you want faster and easier than you have ever imagined.

However, if you don't want to go to one of Dr. Kester's clinics, and don't want to pay hundreds of dollars to try Dr. Kester's *EasyTrim* Devices, here is how you can receive, and take a risk-free trial at home (without any obligation to buy), the same *EasyTrim* Devices that Dr. Kester has used to enable his patients to lose weight.

Thanks to a special agreement between Dr. Kester, the manufacturer, and the distributor, now you can receive a set of 3 Dr. Kester *EasyTrim* Devices for only \$39 by ordering directly from the distributor (at the address indicated below). Of course, your order will be accompanied with a complete guide-book written by Dr. Kester that will indicate in detail how to obtain maximum benefits. In this way, you will be able to lose weight as effectively as Dr. Kester's patients, in your own home, without having to travel to one of his clinics, without having to pay hundreds of dollars, and without any obligation to purchase anything.

Remember, you only pay for Dr. Kester's *EasyTrim* Devices if you are 100% delighted

with your results. And you are the judge.

**+ FREE**  
Dr. Kester has just developed a fourth device similar to the 3 *EasyTrim* Devices: the *MAX EasyTrim* Device. When used with the 3 *EasyTrim* Devices, the *MAX EasyTrim* Device maximizes the results and will help you to lose weight even more quickly.  
Dr. Kester has authorized that a *MAX EasyTrim* Device be included in your order for *free* (a value of \$19). But there is one condition: you *must absolutely* respond to this offer *within 48 hours*.

Act right away. That way you won't forget and regret having missed this unique offer which may never again be repeated.

**Doctors:** If you are a medical doctor and would like to receive Dr. Kester's *EasyTrim* Devices, just send your business card.

**Warning:**  
Studies have demonstrated that some people tend to abuse Dr. Kester's *EasyTrim* Devices and lose too much weight. Make sure you stop using Dr. Kester's *EasyTrim* Devices once you have achieved your ideal weight.

1-888-248-8809

**Only read this if you have decided not to take a risk-free home trial of Dr. Kester's *EasyTrim* Devices**

Maybe you think you are a difficult case? Even a hopeless one? Or do you believe you have had too much weight to lose for too long? Then read this sample testimonial (copy of the original available upon request).

*"I have been heavy all my life. This is the easiest way I've ever lost weight. I've lost about 45 lbs. My husband has lost about 60. I have one sister that has lost 65 lbs. and my other sister has lost 45 lbs. So between 4 in our family we've lost 215 lbs. That's a whole person! It feels wonderful. It's really enjoyable."*

Candy S. ref.: 3016  
**If you still are unsure, you should consider the following**

1. The testimonial you have just read is one of many. It comes from a person who was probably just as skeptical as you before she took the trial.
2. The results are proven. They are 100% guaranteed. And the test is totally risk-free.
3. Quantities are limited. Once this offer expires, you may never again be able to take a trial of Dr. Kester's *EasyTrim* Devices.  
What do you have to lose by at least taking a trial? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. Reply today.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

The free trade agreement between the United States and Canada has recently come into effect. In addition, as you probably know, for several months now, the exchange rate between the American dollar and the Canadian dollar has been VERY FAVORABLE for Americans. So we have looked into it and found a way for you to benefit from this situation. Here's how:

By ordering your sets of 3 Dr. Kester's *EasyTrim* Devices directly from Canada and paying, as usual, in US dollars, YOU can take advantage of this exceptional exchange rate and save (see the comparative chart below). Furthermore, you have no tax to pay.

To turn these benefits to good use - with the assurance of the same written guarantee of a *complete* refund if you're not 100% satisfied - just mail the Coupon today with your *usual* method of payment (check or money order).

Dr. Kester's <i>EasyTrim</i> Devices	Prices in Canada (in Canadian dollars)*	Prices for American residents**
1 set of 3 devices	\$52.43	Only US \$39
2 sets of 3 devices	\$104.86	Only US \$69
3 sets of 3 devices	\$157.29	Only US \$99
4 sets of 3 devices	\$209.72	Only US \$129
5 sets of 3 devices	\$262.15	Only US \$149

## SPECIAL COUPON Risk-Free Trial Offer Absolutely No Obligation

Mail this Special Coupon to the distributor: **WideWell, 2 Laird Drive, #1785, Station R, Toronto, Ontario M4G 4A3 CANADA**

32c stamps if you do not have exactly 52c in stamps).

without asking me any questions. A check in my name for this full refund will be promptly mailed to me.

This is a written formal guarantee, enabling me to try the new Dr. Kester's *EasyTrim* Devices without any risk or obligation on my part.

In accordance with this written guarantee, please send me (in a plain, unmarked wrapper):

**Phone Orders**  
For the fastest possible service, you can order your Dr. Kester's *EasyTrim* Devices by simply dialing toll-free 1-888-248-8809 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week). Have your credit card handy, Visa or Mastercard, (or you can order C.O.D.).

**IMPORTANT:** Affix 52c in stamps on your envelope (or two

**YES** I must need to lose AT LEAST 10 pounds. I would like to take an at-home risk-free trial of the new Dr. Kester's *EasyTrim* Devices. It is agreed that, if, for any reason whatsoever, I'm not 100% satisfied with the results I obtain with the Dr. Kester's *EasyTrim* Devices, I can simply send them back to you. If I do, you formally agree in writing to send me a 100% refund. And you'll do so

I want to lose:	Dr. Kester recommends I order:	Special Price
<input type="checkbox"/> between 10 and 20 pounds	1 set of 3 <i>EasyTrim</i> Devices	Only US \$39
<input type="checkbox"/> between 20 and 30 pounds	2 sets of 3 <i>EasyTrim</i> Devices	Only US \$69
<input type="checkbox"/> between 30 and 40 pounds	3 sets of 3 <i>EasyTrim</i> Devices	Only US \$99
<input type="checkbox"/> between 40 and 50 pounds	4 sets of 3 <i>EasyTrim</i> Devices	Only US \$129
<input type="checkbox"/> more than 50 pounds	5 sets of 3 <i>EasyTrim</i> Devices	Only US \$149

**+ FREE:** I answer within 48 hours. Don't forget to include in my package for free a *MAX EasyTrim* Device. When used with the 3 *EasyTrim* Devices, it will maximize the results and it will help me to lose weight even more quickly.

I add +\$6 for first-class shipping and special handling, no matter how many sets I wish to receive.

I enclose  a check or  a money order for a total of \$\_\_\_\_\_ made out to: WideWell Inc.

PLEASE PRINT  Ms.  Miss  Mrs.  Mr.

First name \_\_\_\_\_ Last name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

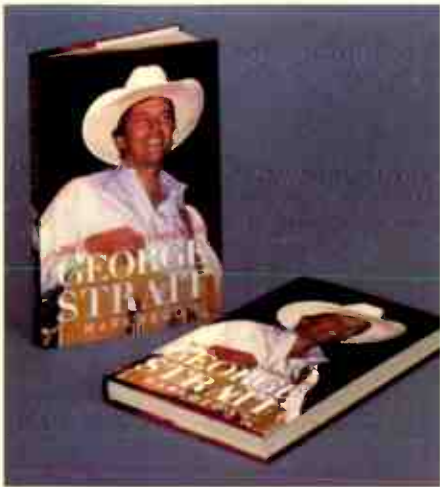
I would prefer paying on receipt (COD), although it will cost me \$7 more for extra C.O.D. charges and insurance.

(Sorry, but no C.O.D.'s at P.O. Box numbers.) Allow up to 3-4 weeks for delivery. ET7033





## EDITOR'S CHOICE



### BEST SELLER! GEORGE STRAIT: THE STORY OF COUNTRY'S LIVING LEGEND

His albums and singles shoot right to the top of the charts. He's made *People Magazine's* "50 Most Beautiful People" List. He broke Elvis Presley's record for consecutive sold-out performances at the Las Vegas Hilton. And, he holds the record for the longest list of Number One hits of any male country music star. He's George Strait, and in this biography, journalist Mark Bego presents the story of his dazzling career, both on the stage and behind the scenes. Here's the fascinating story of a small-town Texas boy who was groomed to take over his father's ranch after he got out of the Army. But—thankfully, for country music fans—George was bitten by the music bug while stationed in Hawaii, and he taught himself to play guitar. Soon he was on his way to stardom, playing around the local honky tonks with his crack Ace in the Hole band before heading off to Nashville for a chance at the big time. Recognizing his pure talent, MCA signed him to a contract and released his first album in 1981. He's been with the label ever since, racking up hit after hit, and gaining millions of fans the world over. Through it all, though, he remains the same family man he always was. *George Strait: The Story of Country's Living Legend* is a book you don't want to miss! 188 pages, plus 16 pages of Personal and Performance Photographs, and Complete Discography. Item #B9G, \$22.95.

Not pictured, but also available on George Strait.... *An Illustrated Musical History*, by David Cantwell with Dave Marsh of the *New York Times*. This best-selling "compact book" lets fans follow the story of this boy from a small Texas town who made it big in Music City. Photos, timelines, historical data and music reviews combine to make this book absolutely indispensable for any George Strait fan. The unique design—the shape and size of a CD package—is a perfect touch. *George Strait: An Illustrated Musical History* is Item #B10B, \$7.95.



### TOP SELLER! COUNTRY MUSIC T-SHIRTS

Any time is the perfect time to wear the widely-recognized *Country Music Magazine* logo on a heavy-duty, made to last T-shirt. The *Country Music* logo T-shirt is 100% cotton and Made in the USA by Champion. Available in navy blue or red, both featuring a classic white logo. Or, you can choose the "I Love Country Music" T-shirt. This navy blue shirt features a guitar and banjo with red and white lettering. It, too, is a high-quality, 100% cotton garment...and it's Made in the USA. For the *Country Music Logo T-Shirt* in navy blue, ask for Item #G2P. For red, ask for Item #G2Q. The "I Love Country Music" T-Shirt is Item #G2O. Order adult sizes M, L, XL or XXL. Each shirt is \$14.95.

### Gift Idea! Roots of Country Set



### BRAND NEW! THE ROOTS OF COUNTRY BOXED SET

This gorgeous boxed set is an absolute must for any country fan! A true collector's item, the four-CD package includes a lavishly-illustrated, 144-page, hard-cover history of country music, a 16-page booklet detailing the songs included here, and, of course, 60 all-time country music favorites by the legendary artists you know and love! It's all here, from mountain music of the 1920's to the traditionally-rooted sounds of the 80's. Among the stars you'll find here are Gene Autry, The Carter Family, Bob Wills, Ernest Tubb, Eddy Arnold, Bill Monroe, Lefty Frizzell, Ray Price, George Jones, Johnny Cash, Marty Robbins, Roger Miller, Patsy Cline, Buck Owens, The Statlers, Loretta, Merle, Tammy, Dolly, Waylon, Willie, Rosanne Cash and Marty Stuart—to name just a few! Each artist sings one of the songs they're best known for, like Bill Monroe's "Blue Moon of Kentucky" and Charley Pride's "Kiss an Angel Good Morning." Whether you're a long-time fan or a brand-new listener, you'll love having all of these classic songs together on *The Roots of Country*. Ask for Item #BD-07, \$69.95.



## Spotlight Product

### TOP-QUALITY BRASS BELT BUCKLES

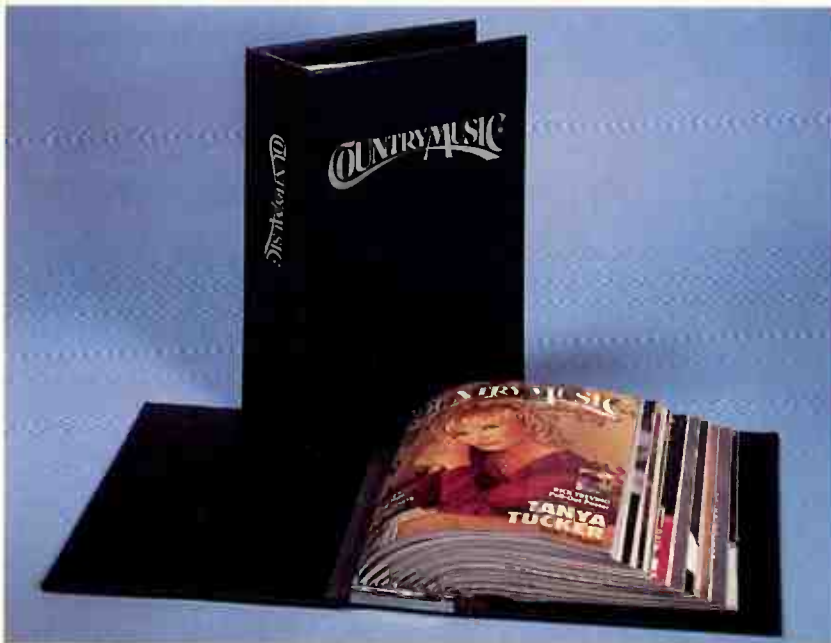
In honor of the 25th Anniversary of *Country Music Magazine*, we've brought back these high-quality, solid brass belt buckles, one featuring the well-known *Country Music Magazine* logo, the other sporting the phrase "I Love Country Music." Each buckle is finely crafted and fits any 1 1/2-inch width belt. They're the perfect complement to any outfit. Both of these items were big sellers the last time around, and likely will be again. Don't miss your chance to get one—or both—of these fine belt buckles before they disappear again! The *Country Music Logo Belt Buckle* is Item #G6C, Price \$9.95. The "I Love Country Music" Belt Buckle is Item #G7S, Price \$9.95.



### BEST SELLER! DOLLY PARTON DOLL

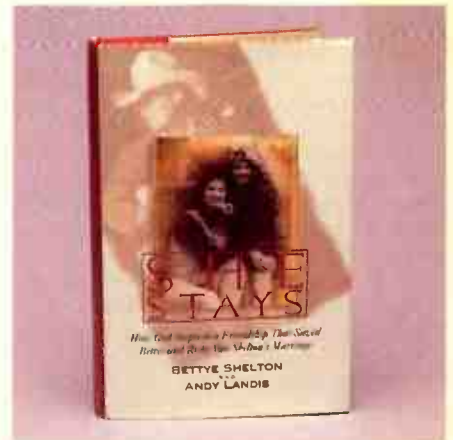
Here's something for Dolly fans young and old! This collectible replica of Dolly Parton stands one-and-a-half feet tall, and nicely captures the one-of-a-kind image of this beloved country legend. The Dolly Doll wears a red leatherette dress accented with gold trim and white lace. In her gold-tone belt is a red, ruby-like stone, and the whole ensemble is topped with a gold-tone necklace and a red hair ribbon. The Dolly Doll costs \$49.95 and comes with a convenient display stand. Ask for Item #D1A.

## New! Country Music Magazine Binders!



### COUNTRY MUSIC MAGAZINE BINDERS

If you're like many *Country Music Magazine* readers, you save your magazines for future reference, to enjoy again and again. But how best to store and protect them? Since they're not hard-cover, magazines don't stand up well on their own. Laying them down flat in a pile makes it hard to get to the ones on the bottom. Plus, if you just leave them on a shelf or in some other storage area, your collection can become dog-eared or torn. Here then, is the perfect solution to your magazine storage problem: Sturdy, hard-cover *Country Music Magazine* binders! The deluxe *Country Music Magazine* binders come in an attractive deep-blue, and are tastefully embossed on the front and the spine with our well-known logo in silver. Each binder holds 12 issues—two years worth!—of *Country Music Magazine* issues. The magazines are held in place by durable, rust-proof steel rods that don't require you to hole-punch or otherwise damage your collection. These heavy-duty binders will provide a lifetime of safe, attractive storage for your magazines, while still making it easy to enjoy your favorite photographs and articles over and over. They make a great gift for any *Country Music Magazine* subscriber! Binders are \$10.95 each. Ask for Item #M2B.

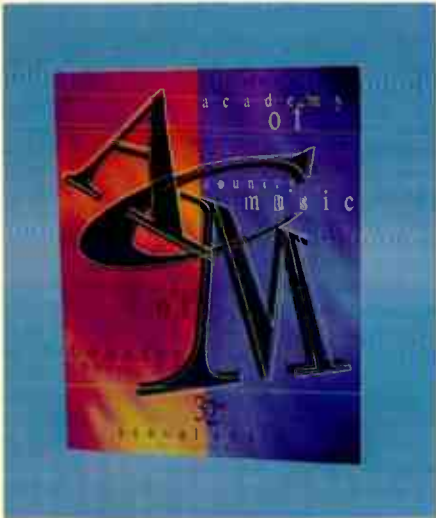


### SHE STAYS: HOW GOD INSPIRED A FRIENDSHIP THAT SAVED BETTYE AND RICKY VAN SHELTON'S MARRIAGE

Here's an intimate portrait of the marriage of Bettye and Ricky Van Shelton. Written by Bettye, *She Stays* is the personal account of a woman's commitment to her marriage in the face of turmoil that threatened to destroy it. It was a long struggle, but with the help of God and a close friend, Bettye worked through the pain and managed to forgive what many would think unforgivable. An honest look at how love was saved, and one of our most popular items. Item #B6M, \$16.99.



# Nashville Warehouse Country Christmas

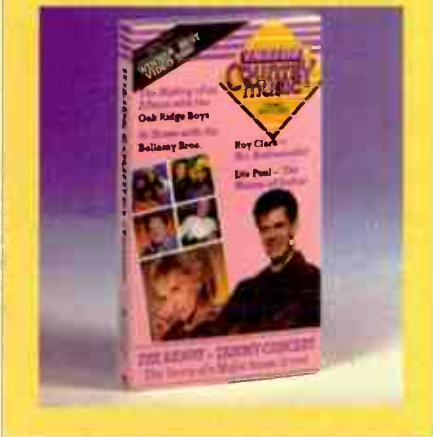


## OWN A PIECE OF COUNTRY MUSIC HISTORY: THE OFFICIAL ACM AWARDS SHOW PROGRAM BOOK

Here's another great gift idea! For the first time ever, the Academy of Country Music has made its *Official Souvenir Program Book* available to country fans! This is the same book given out to the stars and ACM members who attend the annual awards show. This year's 184-page program book is filled with gorgeous color photographs and biographies of all the ACM nominees for 1996, along with a complete listing of award winners from 1965 through 1995, behind the scenes photographs for years past, and an exclusive look at ACM Awards Show highlights from the past 30 years. The candid, backstage photos alone make this well worth having! You'll also find a complete history of the Academy of Country Music, and a detailed explanation of all the awards categories.

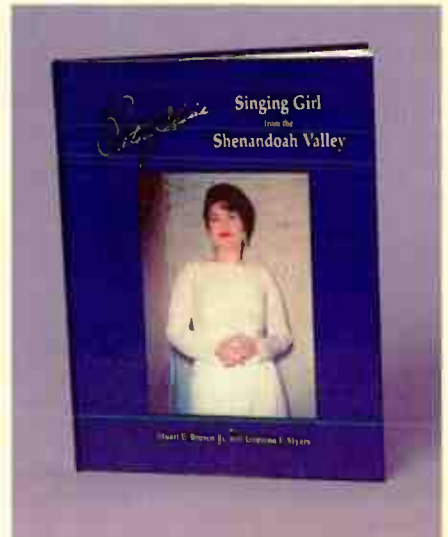
You watched the show on April 27, 1997. Now you can treasure the memories with this one-of-a-kind Collectors' Item. Order your *Academy of Country Music Official Souvenir Program Book* today! Item #B5Z, \$19.95.

## FREE "INSIDE COUNTRY MUSIC" VIDEO WITH EVERY ORDER!



## A MUST-HAVE! THE ALAN JACKSON BIOGRAPHY: GONE COUNTRY

Loaded with more than 100 full-color and black-and-white photographs, *Alan Jackson: Gone Country* is a detailed look at the life and music of one of country music's top stars. It examines his hardscrabble roots, his childhood and his first steps toward a music career playing small clubs and bars in a band called The Strayhorns. Then came his move to Nashville, and his breakthrough in the early 1990's. Soon he was topping the charts and selling millions of records. Best-selling author Mark Bego details all of this and more, including insight into Alan's philosophies about his music, his inspirations and his off-stage pastimes. *Alan Jackson: Gone Country* is a candid but affectionate look at the popular singer. Jackson's life has been as vivid and unusual as any country lyric. Here's your chance to read all about it. Ask for Item #B5A, \$19.95.



## PATSY CLINE: SINGING GIRL FROM THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY

Born Virginia Patterson Hensley in Winchester, Virginia, Patsy Cline was raised in the Shenandoah Valley, hence the title of this new biography. Here's the story of her early life and career, delving deeply into her first 27 years. You'll read all about her pre-teen years with her family always on the move, her performances at age 13 at Winchester's Patton Dance Hall, her first marriage that gave her the last name Cline, and finally, the success that took her out of the Shenandoah Valley and on to national stardom and a whole new life in Nashville. *Patsy Cline: Singing Girl from the Shenandoah Valley* includes many rare, previously unpublished photographs. Ask for Item #B6T, \$19.95.



## NEW 1998 EDITION! THE OFFICIAL ELVIS PRESLEY WALL CALENDAR

Don't miss the brand-new edition of this popular item. An official product of Elvis Presley Enterprises, the 12 high-quality color and black-and-white photographs included in this deluxe wall calendar are guaranteed to delight and amaze. Each picture measures a big 12"x12", and the entire calendar opens up to 12"x24". Among the 12 vintage photos of a young Elvis are many that have rarely been seen before. Plus, each month includes important facts about The King's life. Item #G6F-98, \$10.95.



## Best-Sellers...Big Discounts...Up to 66% Off!

Nashville Warehouse still has limited quantities available of some of our most popular products from the past several years. Here's your chance to pick up some of the most exciting books, videos and more at low, *Close-Out Prices!* Order something for yourself—or take care of some of your Holiday Shopping! There's something here for everyone. Order now, as these products are in limited supply, and once they're gone, they're gone.



### REBA MCENTIRE BIOGRAPHY

*Reba: Country Music's Queen*, by noted writer Don Cusic, tells the life story of one of the most popular women ever in country music. Read all about her childhood in Oklahoma, her rodeo days, and her struggle to make it to the top in Nashville. Through both triumph and tragedy, Reba's hard work has paid off. 234 pages, includes 8 pages of photographs and a Discography! Item #B6G. Was \$10.95—Now just \$7.95!

### DOLLY PARTON'S EARLY CAREER

In the fascinating biography, *Dolly Parton: The Early Years*, you'll read all about Dolly's amazing rags-to-riches story, from her Appalachian childhood to worldwide fame in music, movies, television and more. Here's your last chance to order this great story of a great star! Item #B3V. Was \$12.95—Now just \$7.95.

### GARTH BROOKS BIOGRAPHY

Garth has been all over the place lately, with his Central Park concert and a new album on the way. Here's a biography by *Country Music Magazine* writer Michael McCall that gets to the heart of the Garth phenomenon. Read all about the man and his music, from his childhood right up through his incredible rise to fame in the early 90's. *Garth Brooks* is 186 pages, with 16 pages of photographs. Item #B8K. Was \$4.99—Now just \$3.99!

### DELUXE COUNTRY MUSIC T-SHIRTS

While our standard *Country Music* logo T-shirts in Red and Blue are longtime favorites, these Deluxe Editions in fashionable

Purple or Turquoise were Limited Edition specials, and most sizes sold out quickly. Only a few remain in each color in the sizes specified below. Get them while you can, at more than 50% off! A great deal on a great shirt! **Purple, Large—Item #G7A-L. Purple, Medium—Item #G7A-M. Turquoise, Medium—Item #G7C-M. Were \$21.95 each—Now just \$9.95 EACH!**

## SPECIAL BONUS!

Buy three or more Close-Out items from this page, and receive a FREE country cassette! Use Code #M3F for your free cassette.

### THE JOHN MICHAEL MONTGOMERY STORY

Here's the story behind one of today's top hitmakers—his life, his music and his family. In *Life's a Dance*, by Paul Prather, you'll read all about John Michael's rise to fame, and his years of paying his dues as a bar-room picker. There are more than 100 photos, too! Item #B2V. Was \$14.95—Now \$9.95!

### MANDRELL FAMILY PHOTO ALBUM

Sisters Barbara, Irlene and Louise Mandrell, along with the rest of the Mandrell clan, are featured in this gorgeous

volume, written by Louise with Ace Collins. In 192 pages, you'll get to know this close-knit, talented family, through personal photos and interesting anecdotes. Discography information is also included in *The Mandrell Family Album*. A vintage collectible from 1983 that you won't find anywhere else! Item #B1E, Was \$14.95—Now \$5.95!

### REBA'S TOP HITS ON VIDEO

In *Reba*, one of the most successful women in country music gives you a personal look at some of her remarkable videos. This VHS tape, a must for any McEntire fan, includes interview footage and more. Item #G4E, Was \$19.95—Now \$12.95!

### MOST EMBARRASSING MOMENTS

Finally back in stock in limited quantities.... In this amusing book, top country stars reveal their most embarrassing moments, both on stage and off—sometimes hilarious and sometimes humiliating. Stars like Marty Stuart, Mark Chesnutt, The Statler Brothers, Garth Brooks, Vince Gill and Aaron Tippin tell all. Item #B8L, Was \$7.95—Now \$7.45!

### THE LIFE OF DOTTIE WEST

Known for both her talent and her kindness to fans and fellow performers, the late Dottie West was a much-loved country music legend. Here's the story of her life, from childhood through the tragic end. Her life ended too soon, but fans can remember her with the biography, *The Life of Dottie West*. An informative, affectionate portrayal! Item #B2V, Was \$12.95—Now \$7.95!

## NASHVILLE WAREHOUSE EDITOR'S CHOICE ORDER FORM

111297-1

MAIL TO: Nashville Warehouse, P.O. Box 292553, Nashville, TN 37229

For Customer Service Inquiries, Call 615-360-6888

NAME	ITEM #	QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION/COLOR/SIZE	ITEM PRICE	TOTAL
ADDRESS					
CITY					
STATE	ZIP				
ENCLOSED IS A CHECK OR MONEY ORDER FOR \$ PAYABLE TO NASHVILLE WAREHOUSE OR CHARGE MY: <input type="checkbox"/> MASTERCARD <input type="checkbox"/> VISA <input type="checkbox"/> DISCOVER					
ACCOUNT #	<b>FREE BONUS: You Get An "Inside Country Music" Video With Your Order! (V5R)</b>				
EXP. DATE:					
SIGNATURE	Add \$3.00 postage and handling for first item and \$.95 for each additional item.				
<b>This Offer Expires On 2/28/98! ALLOW 6 TO 8 WEEKS FOR DELIVERY!</b>			TN residents add 8.25% Sales Tax/Canadian orders add \$3.00 extra.		
					Amount due \$

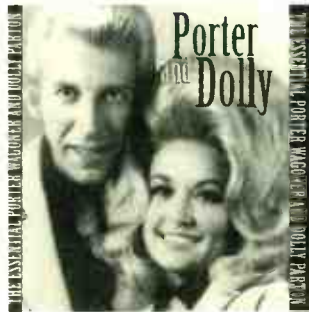
# FOR CMSA/ACADEMY MEMBERS ONLY

## RECOMMENDED RECORDINGS

Notable reissues on artists covered in this issue of *The Journal*.

**Dolly Parton:** *The Essential Dolly Parton Volume 2* (RCA 66933), covers 20 numbers from 1970 through 1978, starting when she was still working with Porter. While this set includes some of her best material, there are a couple of flaws: It omits two of her greatest 60's compositions, "In the Good Old Days (When Times Were Bad)" from 1968 and "My Blue Ridge Mountain Boy" from 1969, and instead includes a pointless rendition of Ferlin Husky's hit, "Wings of a Dove." Among the highlights here are "Just Because I'm a Woman," her first RCA hit in 1968, along with her hot version of "Mule Skinner Blues" and "Joshua" (1970), "Coat of Many Colors" (1971), "Touch Your Woman" (1972), "My Tennessee Mountain Home" and the original "I Will Always Love You" (1973), "Jolene," "The Seeker" and "Love Is Like a Butterfly" all came from 1974. "The Bargain Store" and "We Used To" from 1975 and "All I Can Do" from 1976. From then on, the album focuses on her early excursions into glitzy country-pop. Songs from this phase of her career include "Light of a Clear Blue Morning," written near the end of her days with Porter, and more pop-flavored fare like "Here You Come Again," "Me and Little Andy," "It's All Wrong But It's All Right," "Heartbreaker" and "I Really Got the Feeling." Available on cassette or CD. Regular price \$9.98 cassette, \$12.98 CD. **Members' price \$7.98 cassette, \$10.98 CD.**

The best volume out there of Porter and Dolly's duet material—in fact, one of the only sets out there—is *The Essential Porter Wagoner and Dolly Parton* (RCA 66858). This collection features 20 of their best collaborations, most recorded from 1967 through 1972, when they were working together regularly. A few later cuts, from well after Dolly's solo move, when they would only occasionally record together, are also included. The 20 tracks here are "Holding On to Nothin'," "Daddy Was an Old Time Preacher Man," "We Found It," "Better Move It on Home," "Just Someone I Used to Know," "The Right Combination," "We'll Get Ahead Someday," "Burning the Midnight Oil," "Say Forever You'll Be Mine," "Please Don't



Stop Loving Me." "The Last Thing on My Mind," "Yours Love," "Always, Always," "Tomorrow Is Forever," "Lost Forever in Your Kiss," "Together Always," "If Teardrops Were Pennies," "Is Forever Longer Than Always," "If You Go, I'll Follow You" and "Making Plans." Available on cassette or CD. Regular price \$9.98 cassette, \$12.98 CD. **Members' price \$7.98 cassette, \$10.98 CD.**

**Red Ingle:** "Tim-Tayshun." the subject of this issue's Off the Record, has been reissued several times during the past decade, most recently on Bear Family's new Ingle collection, *Tim-Tayshun* (BCD 16115). It features all 21 of Ingle's hilarious Capitol releases from 1947 to 1951, plus six unissued songs and one number which only appeared in Australia. Besides the title track, this compact disc includes such Ingle favorites as "Cigareetes, Whuskey and Wild. Wild Women," "Those Durn Fool Things," "Nowhere," "Pagan Ninny's Keep 'Er Goin' Stomp" and "Serutan Yob." After a half-century, these records remain fresh and funny, with terrific backing from Country Washburne, Les Paul, Speedy West, Jimmy Bryant, Noel Boggs, Carl Kress, the Armstrong Twins and others. For additional details on this set, see Rich Kienzle's Buried Treasures column in this issue. Available on CD only. Regular price \$27.50. **Members' \$20.75.**

**How to Order:** To order items listed here, use the coupon on this page (or write your order out on a separate sheet), and send check or money order to Nashville Warehouse, Recommended Recordings, Dept. 111297N, P.O. Box 292553, Nashville, TN 37229. Include \$3.95 postage/handling per order. Canadian orders, add \$3.00 additional.

## SPECIAL DISCOUNTS...FOR MEMBERS ONLY

CMSA and Academy Members are entitled to discounts on products offered in the **Buried Treasures** and **Essential Collector** sections. Members deduct \$2.00 off the regular price on each product in these sections, except for the following, which feature larger discounts: On the following Bear Family items, members save 25%. For the Wilf Carter box, *Cowboy Singer* (BCD 15939), members pay \$185.00. On Red Ingle's *Tim-Tayshun* (BCD 16115), members pay just \$20.75. Likewise, members pay just \$20.75 for Jimmy & Johnny's *If You Don't Someone Else Will*.

Include membership number if taking discount. See complete ordering instructions on the Essential Collector and Buried Treasures pages.

## MEMBERS POLL/DECEMBER 1997

# VOTE

CMSA and Academy members, get your vote in now for the Album and Single of the Month. And, if you don't mind, please tell us about your album purchases this month. We'll publish the results in the next issue—your opinion counts!

### Bought Any Good Records Lately?

1. Did you buy any albums (records, cassettes or compact discs) in the last month?  Yes  No  
How many records? \_\_\_\_\_ cassettes? \_\_\_\_\_ CD's? \_\_\_\_\_

2. In the boxes below, write the numbers of any of the albums on the Top 25 list in this issue which you bought in the last month.

3. For any albums you bought in the last month not on the Top 25 list, write performer's name and album titles in the space below. (Attach a separate sheet if you need more room.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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### Your Choice for Album of the Month

4. List numbers of your five favorites from Top 25 in this issue.

Singles (list 5 numbers)      Albums (list 5 numbers)

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# Buried Treasures

by Rich Kienzle

**Wilf Carter:** Before he died last December at age 81 of stomach cancer, Canadian singer-yodeler Wilf Carter, also known as "Montana Slim," had a career that spanned over 60 years, having completed his farewell tour in 1993. Like Hank Snow, he was born in Nova Scotia, though he later headed to Western Canada,



where he worked in farming and as a cowboy before launching on a singing career in the early 1930's. Throughout his career, he rarely if ever compromised or deviated from his original, very personal musical vision, a sentimental style steeped in the rugged Western Canada that he loved.

*Cowboy Singer* (BCD 15939) covers Carter's complete 1933-1941 recordings for the RCA subsidiary Bluebird and his rare 1935 Decca recording, a total of 204 tracks on eight CD's, all in chronological order. The earliest material was produced by Hugh Joseph, the Canadian executive who discovered Hank Snow. Carter's songs, nearly all of them self-penned, were typical of the sentimental fare of the time: love songs, tunes about hoboing, prisoners and, of course, cowboys, as well as the occasional comment on current events ("The Life and Death of John Dillinger").

Carter's style remained his own. Only a handful of these songs feature a full band. For the most part, he recorded alone with his guitar and at most, a steel guitarist. While the material pretty much speaks for itself, the booklet,

with the usual photos and discography is a departure. The notes were written by Carter himself, taken from the complete text of his rare 1961 autobiography.

**Sonny James:** *Young Love: The Classic Hits of Sonny James* (RT 2150) is a 21-track set summarizing his big hits for Capitol from 1953 through 1971 (a package of James' Columbia hits would cover another full CD).

I annotated this set, though Razor had already compiled it, so facts only. No unreleased tracks are featured (though some terrific early unissued James material does exist), just the biggest hits, beginning with his 1953 ballad, "That's Me Without You." It continues with the original "Young Love," "You're the Reason I'm in Love," "First Date, First Kiss, First Love" and "Uh-Huh-Mm." James left Capitol for several years and didn't return until 1964. When he did, he got back in harness with "You're the Only World I Know" and discovered a winning formula of covering 60's pop hits like "A World of Our Own" and "I'll Never Find Another You" in the mid-to late 60's.



In this vein, he revived everything from the Johnny Preston pop hit, "Running Bear," to Roy Orbison's "Only the Lonely" and Jimmy Reed's blues, "Bright Lights, Big City." He adapted the songs to his style, giving him a string of Number Ones that spoke for itself.

One criticism: be forewarned, the initial CD run has

a mistake. His second big country hit, "For Rent (One Empty Heart)," is not the original but a wretched stereo re-recording. Unfortunately, no one at the label reviewed a tape to verify the correct tracks before the CD's were pressed. Whenever an artist's early hits have been re-recorded in stereo, as Sonny's were, the potential for confusion is high. The correct version has been included on the cassette version and subsequent CD pressings.

**Jimmy & Johnny:** Late in 1954, *Louisiana Hayride* duo Jimmy Lee Fautheree and Johnny Mathis (later known as "Country" Johnny Mathis to distinguish him from the pop singer) had exactly one big hit: "If You Don't, Someone Else Will." That song was the only big country hit to appear on Chess Records, the Chicago blues and R&B label. And while it was the only hit for the upbeat hillbilly act, it was far from their only recording. Bear Family has chronicled their entire career with *If You Don't Someone Else Will* (BCD 15771), a definitive collection including their complete Chess, Decca, D, Vin and Republic output, a total of 33 tracks.

The pair didn't harmonize much, but instead sang in raw, loose unison. Their influences were all over the place. "Flying," for example, has strong Hank Snow overtones. "All Day Long" carries the spirits of Hank and Lefty, while The Louvins' influence permeates "The Fun Is Over." The Everly Brothers echoes on "What'Cha Doin' to Me" are as obvious as the Buddy Holly flavor of "Look What Love Will Do." Walker's "Sweet Love on My Mind," recorded after Jimmy Lee's brother Lynn joined, is a rockabilly favorite today, though its brooding lyrics were too strong to score with teenagers in the 50's. This chameleon-like approach may have undermined

their chances to stand out.

Nonetheless, the energy and excitement is beyond question. The duo also had more than one "Johnny." When the hard-living Mathis quit in 1955, after doing one session with songwriter-singer Wayne Walker, Jimmy replaced Mathis with his brother, Lynn Fautheree. After he left, Jimmy and Mathis recorded together again, though each



had a solo career by then. The rough edges might be intolerable for fans of the bland harmonies of current bands, but taken on its own terms, it remains exciting and enjoyable.

**Red Ingle:** In this issue of *The Journal*, you'll find Dave Samuelson's "Off the Record" story of Red Ingle's 1947 comedy hit, "Tim-Tay-Shun," a madcap hillbilly satire of the sultry pop standard, "Temptation." Bear Family has just released the first-ever Ingle CD compilation: *Tim-Tayshun* (BCD 16115), a 28-track set featuring nearly all the Capitol tracks, six of them never before issued.

Violinist-saxophonist Ingle, a veteran of 1920's and 30's pop and jazz orchestras, developed his comedic skill in the 1940's working with legendary musical comedian Spike Jones. Ingle didn't pioneer the idea of performing hillbilly-style renditions of pop songs, but took it to an entirely different level. As Samuelson points out in his exhaustive liner notes, while pop fans bought "Tim-Tay-Shun" for the humor, many country fans accepted the single for the hot music.

Ingle did other countrified parodies of pop faves, including "Song of Indians" ("Song of India"), "Cigardust" ("Stardust"), "Them Durn Fool Things" ("These Foolish Things") and so on. He even spoofed "Nature Boy," one of 1948's biggest pop hits, as "Serutan Yob" (named for the era's popular laxative, its name is actually "Nature's" spelled backward). Ingle also rearranged old folk tunes and even spoofed the talking blues of Tex Williams and Phil Harris in a crazed rearrangement of "Nowhere" (with Tex doing a cameo). Another number, "Moe Zart's Turkey Trot," was a brilliantly played satire of Mozart's classical "Rondo Alla Turca."

Plenty of subtle musical jokes ran under the surface. Humor aside, Ingle's studio sidemen included some of L.A.'s best pop and western pickers, like Les Paul (on "Chew Tobacco Rag"), steel guitarist Noel Boggs, various Western swing sidemen and on one session, Jimmy Bryant and Speedy West. As usual, Bear Family's remastering from the original Capitol acetate pressings is phenomenal, as close as anyone can come to being in the studio.

**Merle Haggard:** Razor & Tie recently reissued Merle Haggard's double LP, *Land of Many Churches* on a single CD. Originally recorded for Capitol in 1971, it was later reissued on LP by a British label. This marks the album's debut on CD. Though the idea of recording an LP in a church wasn't new at the time (Tennessee Ernie Ford, among others, had done the same), this 24-song collection of material featured Hag with wife Bonnie Owens performing gospel with The Strangers, The Carter Family and an all-star group of musicians including Johnny Gimble on fiddle. Two sets were done with The Carters (Anita, Helen and Maybelle). One was recorded at Big Creek Baptist Church in Millington, Tennessee, where they worked with the local minister. Merle singing such gospel standards as "Take My Hand, Precious Lord" and "Precious Memories," and Bonnie singing "Turn Your Ra-

dio On" with The Carters. A second four-song set at Nashville's Union Rescue Mission has The Carters featured on "Life's Railway to Heaven," "On the Jericho Road," Red Foley's "Steal Away" and "I Saw the Light."

Two other shows featured Hag with The Strangers, at San Quentin Prison's Garden Chapel (including a song by the prison choir). Hag sang "Amazing Grace" and "The Old Rugged Cross," while Bonnie tackled "Where Could I Go." At Keyes, California's Assembly of God Tabernacle, Haggard sang Johnny Gimble's original "Guide Me, Lord," Willie Nelson's "Family Bible," a hand-clapping version of the traditional anthem, "I'll Be List'ning" and, with the congregation, closes the album with "Just a Closer Walk with Thee."



**Tammy Wynette:** Tammy Wynette's 1968 LP *D-I-V-O-R-C-E*, her second LP, named for her fourth Number One single, has been reissued by Koch International (KOC-CD-7945). Tammy was the era's brightest new female star, but despite being reissued, this is not a

classic album, as it suffers from the same problems as other albums of the era: At the time, most country albums were taken less seriously than, and considered secondary to, singles. Except for Johnny Cash—one of the first to take albums seriously—most artists focused on singles, filling up their albums with a few hits and a lot of filler, some throw-away songs, and covers of country and pop hits.

The title song was the only hit here. The remainder included covers of Merle Haggard's "The Legend of Bonnie and Clyde," Glen Campbell's "Gentle on My Mind," Bobby Goldsboro's sickeningly sentimental "Honey," Patsy Cline's "Sweet Dreams," Andy Williams' pop hit "Lonely Street" (penned by country singer Carl Belew) and The Beatles' "Yesterday."

Producer Billy Sherrill and his Epic associates were responsible for "Come On Home," by Jack Rhodes and George Richey, Tammy's husband. Tammy's then-husband Don Chapel wrote "All Night Long," while Sherrill and another Epic associate, Glenn Sutton, were co-writers on "Kiss Away."

Though the album is hardly a classic, Laura Cantrell's sloppily researched, uneven notes attempt to infuse it with non-existent qualities. Those notes also suffer a further indignity not her fault: the first page of text was printed at the end of the booklet. Nothing against Tammy (most albums of this

era were just as mediocre), but Koch could be reissuing more worthwhile projects than this. **Marty Robbins:** Happily, Koch did just that with their newest release. Much was made of Willie Nelson's 1978 *Stardust* album of pop standards, a landmark in Willie's career. Many erroneously viewed it as



the first serious stab any Nashville singer made at singing pop standards. As usual, that presumption was off by nearly 20 years. Ferlin Husky recorded his pop album, *Boulevard of Broken Dreams*, in 1957. Five years later, in 1962, Marty Robbins recorded *Marty After Midnight*, which remains one of his most underrated albums, recently reissued by Koch (KOC-CD 7933).

Marty, of course, had ample experience recording pop, having done New York record dates in the late 1950's with pop arranger Ray Conniff. This, however, was different. With music that conjures up the feel of a jazz club at 3 A.M., he handled these 12 songs with hip, finger-popping class. "I'm in the Mood for Love" and "Misty" are hip and jazzy. The R&B favorite, "Looking Back," has a late-night blues feel Patsy Cline fans will love. "September in the Rain," Marty's own "Don't Throw Me Away," "Pennies From Heaven," "All the Way," "It Had to Be You" and the rest have the same class and finesse that marked his approach to Hawaiian, rockabilly and cowboy material.

Given the current craze for lounge music, and for Tony Bennett, it was a smart release. Today, the album seems a lot less exotic, and also serves to remind us of Robbins' exquisite versatility, which remains unequaled.

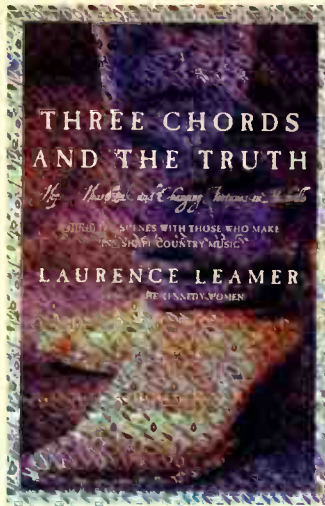
### How to Get These Treasures

Available in formats shown at prices shown: Wilf Carter, *Cowboy Singer* (BCD 15939), an eight-CD boxed set, \$247.50/Sonny James, *Young Love: The Classic Hits of Sonny James* (RT-2150), available on CD only, \$17.98/Red Ingle, *Tim-Tayshun* (BCD 16115), CD only, \$27.50/Jimmy & Johnny, *If You Don't Someone Else Will* (BCD 15771), CD only, \$27.50/Tammy Wynette, *D-I-V-O-R-C-E* (KOC-CD-7945), available on CD only, \$14.98/Marty Robbins, *Marty After Midnight* (KOC-CD-7933), available on CD only, \$14.98/Merle Haggard, *Land of Many Churches* (RT-2158), available on cassette or CD, \$10.98 cassette, \$14.98 CD. Send check or money order payable to Nashville Warehouse, Dept. 111297, P.O. Box 292553, Nashville, Tennessee 37229. Add \$3.95 postage and handling. Canadian orders, add an additional \$3.00 postage. CMSA Members, see **For Members Only** page for discounts. Offer expires February 28, 1998

# Essential Collector by Rich Kienzle

## ▪ Books ▪

**Today's Nashville:** "We take these kids. Never sung anywhere, never paid their dues. Run 'em through media training. Turn 'em into something they're not. Throw 'em out in the road. And a couple years



later they're through, outta here. We destroy them, their marriages, their lives. You don't want it."

Those were the words of Tony Brown, Vice President for A&R of MCA Records in Nashville, as quoted by New York writer Laurence Leamer on page 66 of his book, *Three Chords and the Truth*. Unlike fellow New Yorker Nicholas Dawidoff's *In the Country*—which was aimed at educating pseudo-sophisticates, newspaper review editors, academics and yuppies about traditional country while titillating them with Southern culture's darker side—Leamer's *Three Chords and the Truth* examines today's Nashville for a different audience altogether.

The book has infuriated many industry managers and publicists, since his portraits of today's artists are at odds with the manufactured images Music Row expects fans (and journalists) to accept without question. On the one hand, this shadow play is old hat. For decades, certain male Nashville

stars portrayed by publicists as "family men" were in reality sodden, violent, woman-chasing drunks. But until recently, the music, "what really counts," has stayed real. Any book challenging Nashville's current state, where producers too often try to make superstars of mediocrities, relying on the same phony imagemaking used on rock stars, is worth examining.

Despite protestations on Music Row, Leamer's chronicles aren't totally negative. He clearly admires Brown, Vince Gill, Emmylou Harris, Linda Hargrove and Harlan Howard. He explores Gill's complex personality and basic decency. Accompanying Emmylou on a European tour, he listens while she openly discusses how her fame is at odds with her rather modest means and also talks about her reputation as a musical fountainhead. He paints Hargrove's struggles to stay in music (and to stay alive) movingly, and his portrait of legendary songwriter Howard is both informative and entertaining.

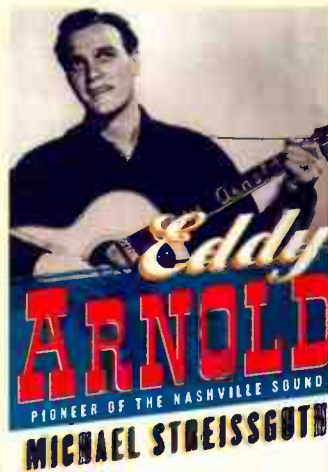
The chapters that stirred the pot in Nashville include a largely favorable account of Garth's stamina while meeting fans at the 1996 Fan Fair, though granted, Leamer covers too much old ground taking us through Brooks' battles with Capitol and Jimmy Bowen. Reba McEntire appears as starstruck as her company (Starstruck Entertainment), casting aside her hard-country roots in favor of phony pop-country records, glitzy, overblown Vegas-style shows and Nashville moguldom. He concludes that in the end, she's still on top, though now co-headlining on tours with Brooks & Dunn, who once opened for her.

He also explores the truth and the hype surrounding Shania Twain, Mandy Barnett's weight and drug problems, Mindy McCready's legal woes, and a troubled Ron Wallace pulling out of his record deal. Not only is Leamer's chapter on

Mary-Chapin Carpenter's emotional turmoil disturbing, it raises further questions as to why anyone marketed her music as country. His account of Wynonna's extremely bumpy personal and professional life carries more impact than the finely crafted PR that surrounded The Judds. He also examines BR5-49's loss of innocence from the vantage point of their old Nashville hangout, Robert's Western Wear.

The book isn't perfect (it's tough to imagine how he can read artists' thoughts), but nobody's (yet) threatened any libel suits. Disagree if you will. I see this as a damning indictment of the worst excesses of today's Nashville, which too often seeks to expand the audience at the cost of the music's soul.

**Eddy Arnold:** After years of being ignored by historians, Eddy Arnold is the subject of not one but two biographies. He cooperated with both authors, so their basic biographical information is similar. Yet Michael Streissguth's *Eddy Arnold* and Don Cusic's *I'll Hold You in My Heart* differ vastly in scope and quality.



For *Eddy Arnold*, Streissguth, an admitted Arnold fan, not only spoke with Arnold, but interviewed his family, friends, sidemen and musical associates, including Chet Atkins and never-before-interviewed RCA official Charles Grean. Many

details about Arnold's life and rise to fame have never appeared anywhere else, and he delves deeply into Arnold's rise on the Opry before he quit the show in 1948. New details also emerge about his relationship with second manager, Colonel Tom Parker, and the mechanics of making his early RCA hits. The author discusses the singer's peak years of fame in the late 40's and early 50's, followed by his abrupt comedown in the wake of rock 'n' roll. That lasted into the mid-1960's when he made a remarkable comeback with smooth, easy-listening country that angered older fans but made Arnold the country-politan singer of the decade, with a strong audience beyond country. It was what he always wanted: to hold his country roots, but escape hillbilly stereotypes. The complete sessionography is an added asset.

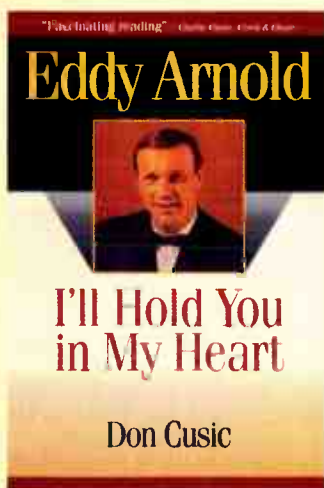
Some flaws exist. Too often, Streissguth's admiration for his subject undermines his objectivity, rendering his narrative in the style of a gushy, uncritical fan, a tack more appropriate to some of the record collector magazines he's written for. In addition, he seems ill-versed in country history beyond Arnold. A brief biographical sketch of Colonel Parker refers to him as a Florida native, ignoring his documented birth in Holland. And he wrongly assumes Buck Owens' famous 1965 "Pledge to Country Music" was prompted by his early experiments with rockabilly. Not so. Nonetheless, Streissguth has done groundbreaking research. Now if RCA would only reissue the early Arnold hits that the singer prefers not be issued...

As for the other book, *I'll Hold You in My Heart*, friends of Don Cusic, whose work I've criticized in the past, tell me he's a decent guy and a fine Music Business educator. I'm sure he is. But looking solely at his work, I must say that after nine books, he has yet to learn from past mistakes. Cusic decided to mix Arnold's story



with a history of country music in Nashville, an ambitious idea that scholars more capable than he would have trouble pulling off. As always, his writing is dreadful, as he rambles on and off the subject. Compared to Streissguth's exhaustive research, his details are shallow.

Not only does Cusic repeat various points (such as discussing Arnold's political conservatism), when he shifts focus from Arnold's life to Nashville music business history, he even digresses from *that* digression. A chapter on rock in the 1950's winds up as a long discussion of country's rise in the 1940's. A chapter on the Outlaws doesn't belong, nor do the many news-



paper quotes from reviews of Arnold concerts that pad out a later chapter. The result is an appallingly superficial Arnold biography and an incoherent history of Nashville's music industry. As usual, none of Cusic's noble intentions bear fruit.

**Elvis:** Guess what? Someone close to Elvis in the most important moments of his career didn't rush to write a book the minute he died. June Juanico of Biloxi, Mississippi, was Elvis' steady girlfriend through most of 1956-57. Though that didn't please Colonel Parker, who didn't want him seen with any one girl, she and Elvis carried their relationship through the period where the magnitude of his stardom, and the beginnings of rock 'n' roll mania in America hit him like a roaring freight train.

June was around before the

Memphis Mafia, before he owned Graceland, and thus saw him in a very different light. She also saw his parents, Vernon and Gladys Presley, who clearly approved of her; up close. Her credibility is further enhanced by a foreword by Peter Guralnick, who interviewed her extensively for *Last Train to Memphis, Volume One*, the first half of his definitive two-volume Elvis bio.

In touring with Elvis, something which had to be handled very carefully those days, June saw the impact that fame had on him, even though at the time he was still very much the innocent kid from Tupelo who'd made good. He had fun with his fame, and the portrait of Gladys Presley is a far cry from the morose, insanely possessive woman we've heard about in the past. June herself found the attention that swirled around her unnerving, and in the end, though their parting was emotional for her, she seemed almost relieved when it ended.

Despite an awful lot of questionable word-for-word dialogue, she regales us with no kinky stories, nor theories or beliefs that Presley is still among us. Though gossipy, Juanico's refreshingly honest memoir, *Elvis Presley: In the Twilight of Memory*, shouldn't be lumped in the vast sea of "junk" Presley literature.

### ■ Recordings ■

**Rebel Records:** In 1960, Dick Freeland and his friend Bill Carroll founded Rebel Records, a label that evolved into a bluegrass specialty label at a time when the music's

popularity was confined mainly to the rural South and a few college campuses. On a shoestring budget, Freeland built Rebel into America's most potent label for new bluegrass, when only the big names like Monroe, Jimmy Martin, The

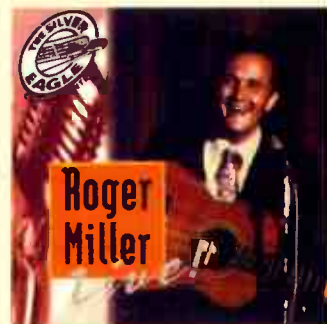


Osborne Brothers and Flatt & Scruggs had major label deals. Freeland ran the label until he sold it to County Records' Dave Freeman in 1979. Ever since, Freeman has continued Rebel's mission, and, to celebrate its three and a half decades, recently compiled the four-CD, 105-song retrospective boxed set, *Rebel Records: 35 Years of the Best in Bluegrass* (Rebel REB-4000).

Among the greats associated with Rebel through the years were the legendary, Washington, D.C.-based Country Gentlemen and The Seldom Scene. The label also recorded veterans like Ralph Stanley, Jethro Burns, Bill Grant and Delia Bell, Larry Sparks, Jim Eanes, Red Allen, Buzz Busby, Don Reno and Bill Harrell. Likewise, they presented the early, youthful work of guitarist Tony Rice, Rhonda Vincent, the team of Keith Whitley and Ricky Skaggs, and some early

Skaggs solo work. Many of the acts here, well-known in bluegrass, are unknown to the mainstream fan. The constant is the excellence; even when the music gets progressive, its roots remain in the past. The package is outstanding, and the liner notes are the final work of bluegrass writer-disc jockey Bill Vernon, who died late last year.

**Roger Miller:** The late Roger Miller remained a vital performer long after his days on the charts. In 1982, as he was working on the score to the Broadway musical *Big River*, Silver Eagle (not related to the publishing arm of this magazine) recorded him onstage at the renowned Dallas nightclub, Billy Bob's Texas. This burning, 12-song set is captured on *Silver Eagle Presents Roger Miller* (Silver Eagle 61774-7000). With wife Mary (formerly of Kenny Rogers' First Edition) singing backup vocals, Roger starts with a strong performance of Kris Kristofferson's "Me and Bobby McGee," and the other 11 songs here are quintessential Miller.



A medley of "You Can't Roller Skate in a Buffalo Herd" and "Chug-a-Lug" moves into "England Swings," then "That's When the Loving's Done." After the Millers sing "Husbands and Wives" as a graceful duet, Roger follows with smoking versions of "In the Summertime," "Dang Me," "Engine, Engine #9," "Old Friends," the Bobby Helms honky tonk hit, "Fraulein," and his most enduring number, "King of the Road." Miller's done other great live performances that belong on CD, but this excellent set reminds everyone of what was lost when he died of cancer a decade later.

### How to Get These Collectibles

**Books:** Laurence Leamer, *Three Chords and the Truth* (B8N), \$24.95/Michael Streissguth, *Eddy Arnold: Pioneer of the Nashville Sound* (B9R), \$19.95/Don Cusic, *Eddy Arnold: I'll Hold You in My Heart* (B9M), \$19.95/June Juanico, *Elvis Presley: In the Twilight of Memory* (B8P), \$25.95. **Recordings:** Roger Miller, *Live* (SEG 61774-70005), cassette or CD, \$9.98 cassette, \$15.98 CD/Various Artists, *Rebel Records, 1960-1995: 35 Years of the Best in Bluegrass* (REB-4000), a 4-CD boxed set, \$46.98. To order, send check or money order to Nashville Warehouse, Dept. 111297EC, P.O. Box 290216, Nashville, Tennessee 37229. Add \$3.95 postage and handling per order. Canadian orders, add \$3.00 extra for postage. **CMSA members, see For Members Only page for discounts.** Offer expires February 28, 1998

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DEKA RECORDS is accepting material for artist development department. Submit tape and information to: P.O. Box 22147, Nashville, TN 37202. (615) 230-7865.

PERFORMERS: Try melody lease. Millar, #604, 1202-13 Avenue S.W., Calgary, AB T3C 0T1.

## RECORDS/TAPES/CD'S

WE CAN FIND ANY RECORD or CD ever made! Send requests, plus \$1.00 for sales lists: Shane, Box 751556, Petaluma, CA 94975.

BANTAM RECORDS. www.ban-tamrecords.com Selling all styles of music worldwide.

## RECORDS/TAPES/CD'S

HUNDREDS OF HARD TO FIND COUNTRY CD'S. CAS Independent Labels. \$2.00 U.S. Foreign \$3.00. Catalog, RR1, Box 172C, Telephone, TX 75488.

## SONGWRITERS

AWARD WINNING SONGWRITER/recording artist credited with 8 chart records, offering co-writing on accepted material. Send best song lyrics to: Ramsey Kearney, 602 Inverness Avenue, Nashville, TN 37204. 1-(615) 297-8029.

POEMS/LYRICS NEEDED by hit songwriters. Win awards! Free evaluation! Send poems: Edlee Music, Box 15312-CMM, Boston, MA 02215-5312.

CALL FREE, Nashville singer and songwriter information. Free publisher's list. 1-(800) 345-2694.

POEMS, SONGS WANTED. \$100,000 - recording contract possible! Free appraisal. Majestic Records, Box 1140, Linden, TX 75563.

URGENT! SCNGS, POEMS NEEDED. Radio, TV, royalties. Hollywood Records, 6000 Sunset, Studio M, Hollywood, CA 90028.

WANTED COUNTRY GOSPEL song poem hits! \$5,000 cash advance royalties information! Top Records, Box 23505-K, Nashville, TN 37202.

POEMS WANTED FOR MUSICAL SETTING and recording. We pay above costs on selected poems. Jeff Roberts Publishing, 299 Newport Avenue (CM), Wollaston, MA 02170.

NASHVILLE NEEDS SONGS! Hollywood Record-ers makes song demos for songwriters. Free information. 603 Seagate, #138, Oceanside, CA 92054. (760) 757-7446.

LYRICS, POEMS FOR MUSICAL SETTING and recording. \$1,000 for best poem. Publishing available. Talent (CM), P.O. Box 31, Quincy, MA 02169.

YOUR OWN SONG! Write just lyrics or lyrics and music. Nashville singers and musicians will bring your song to life. Visa/Master accepted. Information and sample available. Nashville Digital Demos, 113 Catawba Court, Nashville, TN 37013. 1-(800) 484-8581, Code 3631.

DEMOS AS LOW AS \$40/SONG! Demos, P.O. Box 463, Beaver, PA 15009-0463. (412) 847-1651.

COMPOSERS! LYRICISTS! Contests galore. Cash awards, merchandise, recording prizes, etc. Send \$10, SASE to: PMT Associates, Box 1116, Gloversville, NY 12078.

SONGS NEEDED. Culpepper Music, B.M.I., P.O. Box 271656, Nashville, TN 37227-1656.

## CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING INFORMATION

**Rates:** Regular classified ads are \$6.50 per word. Minimum ad 10 words. All advertisements are set uniformly. They are set solid with the lead words set in caps. Abnormal capitalization, type variations, illustrations and borders are not permitted. The classified display rate is \$340 per column inch. The magazine will pub-set most regular type faces at no charge. The column width is 2.25 inches including border. For ads using either an illustration or halftone, send negative film, 133 line screen.

**Payment:** All classified advertising must be prepaid with order. Make check or money order payable to *Country Music Magazine*. For credit card orders (Visa or MasterCard only), please include account number, expiration date, signature and the amount you authorize *Country Music Magazine* to charge your account.

**Closing Date:** *Country Music Magazine* is published 6 times per year. The next available issue is January/February, which closes November 14th; the March/April issue closes January 15th.

Mail advertising copy, payments and production materials for display ads to: *Country Music Magazine*, Classified Department, P.O. Box 570, Clearwater, Florida 33757-0570. For overnight courier service send to: 1510 Barry Street, Suite D, Clearwater, Florida 33756. Telephones: 1-(800) 762-3555 • International (813) 449-1775 • Fax (813) 442-2567 • E-Mail rpiads@aol.com



## Word Bites

**B**ite-sized chunks of country music reading matter, made in America by Americans! That's the ticket! I personally can't get enough, and I'm guessing you can't, either.

Here you go, then. Here's a mix of meaningful morsels from *Twang! The Ultimate Book of Country Quotations* by professional author Raymond Obstfeld and "die-hard gospel and country music fan" Sheila Burgener (Owl/Henry Holt, paperback, \$12.95). Have at 'em, they're good!

"In country music we want wet eyes, not wet crotches." (Bobby Bare, 1984)

"If Randy Travis had come to Nashville last month, he probably wouldn't have gotten a record deal. He's too good and too original. And he doesn't wear a hat or pimple cream." (George Jones, 1996)

"Nobody laughs outrageously loud and makes a scene and falls over in Nashville. Everybody is very, very well behaved. I always refer to them as housebroken Texans." (K.T. Oslin)

"Bar fights are tough on guitars...Harder on acoustic guitars than an old Stratocaster. You could probably chop wood with a Strat." (Travis Tritt)

"The reason I got into this business in the first place was so I could drink whiskey, chase women, and have a good time." (Tom T. Hall)

"I tend to average about ten hit songs per ex-wife." (Vern Gosdin)

"I gave God a prayer, and He let me find Tanya Tucker." (Glen Campbell, 1988)

"I gave God a prayer, too, and He let Glen find Tanya Tucker." (Sarah Davis Campbell, Glen's former wife)

"I write about things I know: depression, guilt, despair, failed relationships. Everybody has moments of despair; it's just that I exploit mine." (Mary Chapin Carpenter)

"The sad part about happy endings is there's nothing to write about." (Tammy Wynette)

"It's funny how a chubby kid can just be having fun, and people call it entertainment." (Garth Brooks)

"Playing the road is like robbing Wells Fargo. You ride in, take the money, and ride out." (Marty Robbins)

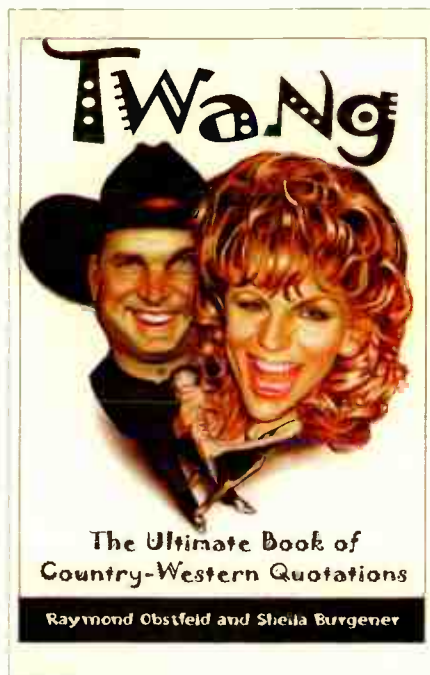
"I can't sleep in a bed that's not moving." (Tracy Lawrence)

"I came home from a long road trip, and my three-year-old son asked my wife, 'Mommy, is he spending the night here

tonight?'" (Ronnie Dunn)

"What I dislike most is the traveling. The main trouble and danger, maybe, with tours, is getting there and back." (Jim Reeves)

"A fan came up and showed me she had my name tattooed on her breast. I asked her what her husband thought of that, and the woman said, 'Oh, it's all right.



Try this on for size, says Patrick.

He's got *Lorrie Morgan* tattooed on his butt." (Marty Stuart)

"This ain't a proper job. It's strange. It doesn't feel like work...Sometimes all I have to do is turn up; everything else has been done." (Alan Jackson)

"I knew I'd made it when I had a stranger training my dog for eight months." (Kris Kristofferson)

"I don't know if I'd go into show business again. It's an unnatural life. And it's cut-throat. People are always doing and saying ugly things." (Loretta Lynn)

"I know it's a part of fame. People who don't know me want to hurt me." (Lorrie Morgan)

"I'm changing my image, to one who gives a lesser shit than he used to." (Merle Haggard)

"Booze was always easy to come by. Folks were always wanting to buy me a drink, and they'd get mad if I turned

them down. They didn't get mad very often." (George Jones)

"I'm not offended by all the dumb-blonde jokes because I know that I'm not dumb. I also know that I'm not blonde." (Dolly Parton)

"[Waylon] would swallow a doorknob if you offered him one." (Carl Perkins, 1985)

"My God, the time you waste with drugs. Getting them, doing them, recovering from them." (Rosanne Cash, 1993)

"Sex feels good, Jim Beam tastes good, but cocaine will kill your ass." (Hank Williams Jr., 1979)

"Smoking pot keeps me from killing people." (Willie Nelson, 1995)

"As we all know, country music radiates a love of this nation. Patriotism. It's good for Americans to hear it. We come away better having heard it." (Richard Nixon, 1974)

"The only good thing that ever came from a war was a song, and that's a hell of a way to get them." (Johnny Cash, 1993)

"Hank Williams kept saying, 'My throat's sore. I can't record right now.' And the record people kept calling, wanting him to record something, and finally they said, 'What the hell is it gonna take to cure your sore throat?' And he said, 'About \$25,000 ought to do it.'" (Chet Atkins)

"When I was on the road with Faron [Young], Mel Tillis, and George Jones, they'd tell me jokes—none of which I understood. Then they'd say, 'Hey, Brenda, go tell so-and-so that.' And I'd go up to someone and do it. They'd say, 'Lord, all that coming out of a kid's mouth!' The guys were on the floor laughing." (Brenda Lee)

"Women haven't sold in the past because men told them what to sing." (Jimmy Bowen, 1993)

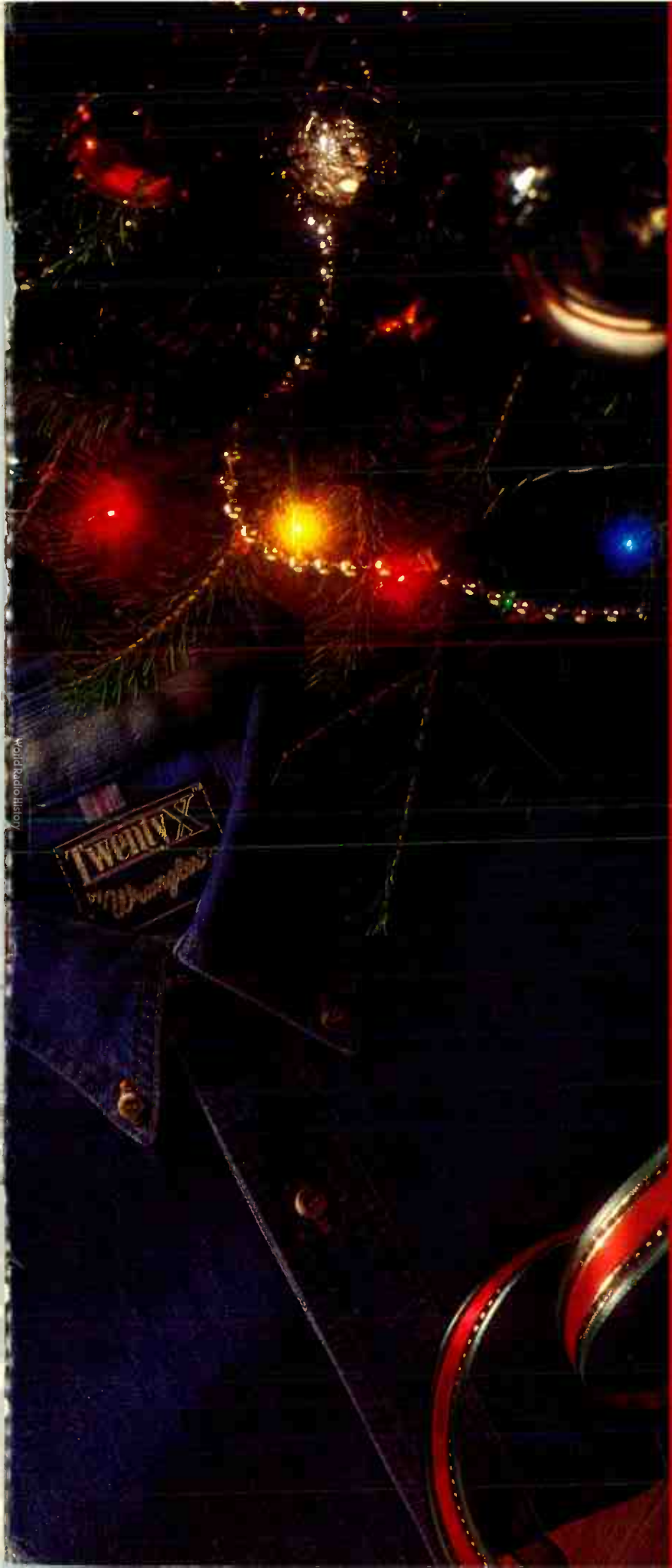
"It's a good thing I was born a woman, or I'd have been a drag queen." (Dolly Parton, 1984)

"Country music hasn't been on the radio for years." (Dale Watson, 1995)

Yum. Tasty, huh? Want more? Then call your bookstore and ask them to order you *Twang!*, since my guess is that they're not likely to be giving it shelf space. Which is a shame, because for insight into the wise, witty, wonderful world we call country music, this hard-packed little product has the big books beat.

Editor-at-Large Patrick Carr has been with CMM since September 1972.





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